

## “Pathway is for the Kingdom”

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Is there any doubt that God loves His children? It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life to be involved in BYU-Pathway Worldwide, and I'm so grateful to so many of you here in this auditorium and those of you who are watching this from around the world that you are exercising your faith to become something more in Jesus Christ by accessing an education that will change your life forever.

May I first provide of a word of support for President and Sister Ashton. I have watched and admired them since we were university students together nearly 30 years ago. They have shown a pattern throughout their lives of letting God prevail.<sup>1</sup> I have watched them put the Lord first in every life decision: from their family; to their education; to their professional service; and, of course, their Church service, including their time as mission leaders and President Ashton's time in the General Presidency of the Sunday School. To draw on the words of President Russell M. Nelson, they have shown a repeated pattern of being “willing to let whatever [God needed them] to do take precedence over every other ambition [in their lives].”<sup>2</sup> I have also watched President Ashton in his time at BYU-Pathway Worldwide. He is a man of God, he puts the Lord first, and he wants every decision he makes for BYU-Pathway to be aligned with heaven and with prophetic direction.

To better understand the nature of BYU-Pathway, I would next highlight a simple but profound statement from President Nelson that speaks to the very purpose and design of this remarkable institution. When BYU-Pathway was first starting to expand across the Church, President Nelson remarked to Elder Kim B. Clark, a former Church Commissioner of Education: “Pathway is for the kingdom.” That statement is visually captured on the of the executive conference room where President Ashton and his leadership team meet.

As I have reflected on this statement, I have felt at least three implications of what it means. First, BYU-Pathway was not created for any one university or institution — BYU-Pathway must be a resource for the entire Church. This starts with the Church Educational System. Beginning with its historical and foundational connection to BYU-Idaho, BYU-Pathway must continue to work across the entire Church Educational System, drawing on its collective resources to serve a worldwide Church. BYU-Pathway provides access to curriculum from BYU-Idaho and Ensign College, it is partnering with BYU-Hawaii to reduce time on campus in Laie, it draws on English language learning resources from BYU for BYU-Pathway's EnglishConnect program, and of course it relies on religious instruction from Seminaries and Institutes of Religion. Nowhere does the Church Educational System come together as a “system” more effectively and more profoundly than through BYU-Pathway Worldwide. Another aspect of the idea that “Pathway is for the kingdom” is how it works with the departments of the Church, including its long partnership with the Welfare and Self-Reliance and the Missionary departments. BYU-Pathway must also continue to meet the needs of the areas of the Church as it responds to real and pressing needs from Area Presidencies across the world.

Above all, I believe that when we are taught that “Pathway is for the kingdom,” we must remember its deepest purpose: to develop disciples of Jesus Christ who are leaders in their homes, the Church, and their communities. I believe that BYU-Pathway was created in part to prepare the Church for the return of the Savior. BYU-Pathway is one of the resources the Lord has prepared for His great gathering ahead of His return to the earth. One of the ways this will happen is by helping students all across the Church deepen their discipleship so they can in turn build others and build the Church.

This is Christ's work. This is His Church. BYU-Pathway Worldwide is for the kingdom of God. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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<sup>1</sup> See Russell M. Nelson, “[Let God Prevail](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 92

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*