

Beacons Reflecting the Light of the World

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During my time at Brigham Young University, I learned what it means to be a beacon of light—instructed by compassionate and Christlike professors, refined by life’s natural challenges, and inspired by service to my Church community and beyond. BYU did more than offer general education. It gave me vision, community, and a sense of divine mission. My experiences at BYU as both a student and now as a full-time employee have helped me to become a beacon reflecting the Light of the World, Jesus Christ.

Finding My Light at BYU

When I came to campus, I wanted to make a difference in the world, but I lacked direction. BYU professors showed me how to lead with light. As a freshman, I learned that true leadership comes from emulating and reflecting the true Light of the World, Jesus Christ. My understanding of that principle grew in my first religion class on the Book of Mormon. I pondered the Savior’s words to the people in the Americas: “*Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do*” (3 Nephi 18:24; emphasis added). We share with the world the beacon, or signal light, of Jesus Christ and his restored gospel. We hold up the Savior’s light to shine on the covenant path back to our Father in Heaven.

BYU professors taught me more than facts—they showed me compassion and expected excellence. Whether in my freshman honors colloquium on harmonizing science and religion or in my English classes exploring empathy through literature, I learned that Jesus Christ was the ultimate example of how we can live our lives and lead our communities.

That gospel message traveled with me to far-off Micronesia, where I served two years as a full-time missionary. I shared served on the isles of Guam and Pohnpei. Our mission theme was “Great are the promises of the Lord unto them who are upon the isles of the sea” (2 Nephi 10:21). It was there that I learned to love the people, cultures, and languages of Micronesia. Later, based on my missionary experiences, I worked with Rose Ram, an Indigenous scholar from Guam, to compile and edit a book titled *Battlefields to Temple Ground: Latter-day Saints in Guam and Micronesia*. Our book showed how the gospel message resonated with Micronesians, with three of its nations achieving the highest percentage of Latter-day Saints globally.

Publishing Peace Through Church Venues

While finishing my master’s degree at BYU, I worked at Deseret Book and learned how to blend editorial precision with gospel messages. I evaluated manuscripts, coached authors such as Jack Weyland, and supervised the digital content of the LDS Collectors Library. I later worked at the *Ensign* magazine, where I supervised teams of editors, helped resolve doctrinal and historical issues, and oversaw conference issue production. I led the editing team that posted the first conference talks on the Internet—a pioneering step that has helped millions access living prophets’ words from anywhere in the world. There we celebrated being part of a team that published peace, yea tidings of great joy” (1 Nephi 13:37).

Inspired by the last conference talk of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, I composed a hymn with Daniel Carter that is called “Long Ago, Within a Garden.” We testified of the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, then shared how Christ came to win a pardon for us in the Garden of Gethsemane. We testified that he rose from a tomb within another garden. The chorus shares heartfelt gratitude for Christ as our ultimate source of hope:

Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus came to set us free!
Lamb of God and true Messiah,
Songs of joy we raise to Thee.

That hymn has sold a hundred thousand copies and was accepted this year for the new hymnbook, so our testimony of Christ will be shared with millions.

Spreading Light at BYU and Beyond

I have enjoyed spreading gospel light globally through my editing and publishing work at the BYU Religious Studies Center. Since being organized by Dean Jeffrey R. Holland in 1975, the center has focused on refining, publishing, and distributing gospel-centered scholarship that reaches around the globe. Over the past fifty years, the center has published more than four hundred books on many gospel topics. We have worked with 1,275 authors in producing all our publications, from books to the free articles available on the RSC website. Our page has over 1.85 million active users, with 3.6 million page views from 187 countries worldwide.

I have traveled around the world to present at conferences in Guam, Samoa, Taiwan, and throughout the United States. I’ve presented on publishing, Church history, and writing—with an eye toward building faith and strengthening community. As an author of more than seventy published articles and five books, I’ve tried to balance faith with accuracy.

As a founding board member of Latter-day Saints in Publishing, Media, and the Arts and the BYU Latter-day Saint Educators Society, I’ve planned dozens of conferences. My service on the BYU Church History Symposium, the BYU Easter Conference, and the Sperry Symposium committees has spread gospel messages worldwide. These events have helped us build bridges across disciplines and departments, always with a gospel-centered focus.

Mentoring the Next Generation of Professionals

Perhaps the most rewarding part of my BYU experience has been mentoring more than seventy student editors. Some have gone on to become professional editors, writers, professors, or media producers. As I have trained them in grammar and style, I’ve also taught them about integrity, faith, and using their gifts to build the kingdom. At BYU, mentoring isn’t just academic—it’s spiritual. Many of my students have told me that working at the RSC helped them improve in both their professional and spiritual goals.

Reflections

Hymn writer Philip Paul Bliss wrote a beloved song about lighthouses, “Brightly Beams Our Father’s Mercy.” As the lighthouse keepers along the shore, we must trim our feeble lamps to shine brighter, for “some poor seaman, tempest-tossed, trying now to make the harbor, in the

darkness may be lost.” We are not the Light of the World, but we reflect that light to guide and protect others.

Because of my undergraduate and graduate studies at BYU, I found my calling as a beacon bearer. I carry that light with humility, gratitude, and joy. I do not always reflect the Savior’s light as well as I should. Sometimes my light flickers. Sometimes I feel like I’m holding a candle in a hurricane. I felt that way when my daughter was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor. But I try to hold up the light, and I try to lift and strengthen others with hope and compassion.

Ultimately, BYU’s highest mission is not only to produce graduates but also to nurture disciples-scholars who teach, write, heal, and lead with light. Let us reflect the Light of the World as it shines “brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (Doctrine and Covenants 50:24).