

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE TEMPLE

Rebecca Robinson—Editor

In many ways the construction of the Rexburg Temple has paralleled my education at Brigham Young University–Idaho. Ground was broken and foundations were laid during my freshman year. As a sophomore I noted daily progress as the temple’s framework was erected and the exterior walls were put in place. I stood amidst a crowd of thousands one cold and rainy morning in my junior year to watch the Angel Moroni ascend to the top of the temple spire. Work on the interior continued and the finishing touches were applied as I rounded out my senior year. The Rexburg Temple was completed when I graduated in December. Just a few short weeks after I began my first semester teaching College Writing, I sat in the foyer just inside the temple doors to witness the dedication of the Lord’s House. Since then, I have had occasion to reflect on the extraordinary experience of the last few years.

At the temple’s groundbreaking ceremony, those present were counseled to build their lives so as to be worthy to enter the temple and receive its blessings. The image of building lives resonated powerfully with me; it seemed to capture the essence of who we are and what we are trying to do here at BYU–Idaho, both individually and institutionally. I believe the way we build our lives should be a reflection of the way we build our temples, and that such a vital construction project cannot be accomplished without the spirit of consecration. Chuck Frost’s account of his missionary experience monitoring the temple’s construction emphasizes the continual and thorough cleaning of the temple during the construction process. This cleanliness, from bedrock to steeple, illustrates one aspect of the special nature of temple-building.

Elder Bednar has called this university a “temple of learning” and a “Disciple Preparation Center”¹ in which students and faculty are engaged together in learning how to become more Christlike. Peculiarly, much of this process is accomplished through the study of secular subjects. This is possible because our dedication to the gospel of Christ is the foundation of everything we do. As a new freshman I was excited by the possibility of relating gospel principles to mathematics, but though such occasions did arise once or twice, I soon found that studying math at BYU–Idaho consists primarily of studying math. We didn’t talk much about the gospel in my Theory of Language class, either, but we did spend a great deal of time diagramming sentences. Yet all the while, my testimony grew right along with my scholarship.

Likewise, while building a temple is certainly more than just a construction project, the work requires a great deal of practical knowledge,

skilled effort, and sweat. As I watched the temple slowly rising on the hill, and as my education continued, I became increasingly aware that the distinction between sacred and secular is artificial, not eternal. In their expression of gratitude, Brent and DonnaJean Kinghorn invite us to see the temple as the capstone of BYU–Idaho’s development from academy to university. In another expression of gratitude, Henry J. Eyring compares devoted teachers whose love of learning transforms the lives of their students to missionaries bringing “good tidings” to humble seekers of truth. And Jim Papworth glimpses heaven in the act of cleaning a handrail. Just as dedication transforms a very fine building into a temple, so can consecration transform a task into an offering, a job into a vocation, a well-lived life into the life of a disciple.

When the ancient Israelites were preparing to build the temple of Solomon, King David asked them, “And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?” The Israelites responded joyfully, and “with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord” (1 Chronicles 29:5, 9). This same spirit of consecration remains central to latter-day temple construction and to the building of Christlike lives. Each of us has had the opportunity to respond joyfully to the call to “consecrate his service... unto the Lord,” not only in the building and continued operation of the Rexburg Temple but in our work and in our studies, in our homes, and in our community. These offerings are not of gold, silver, and precious ores, but of our time, talents, and means.

The words and images contained within these pages represent a few such offerings, each an individual expression of gratitude made by willing hearts for blessings received and blessings still anticipated. Among them are works of art and scholarship, simple accounts of service rendered, and even a quatrain honoring President Hinckley. Each reflects the desire for consecration, shared by all of us, to make the temple a part of ourselves and ourselves a part of the temple. ∞

NOTE

David A. Bednar, “Brigham Young University–Idaho: A Disciple Preparation Center (DPC),” *BYU–Idaho Devotional*, 31 August 2004.