

HIRED: COVENANT AND CONTRACT

Bruce Kusch—Department of Business Management

As I reflect on the process of being hired as a member of the BYU-Idaho faculty, there was a particular question asked of me that stands out in my mind. It was posed by Elder Charles A. Didier of the Presidency of the Seventy during my General Authority interview.

Elder Didier dutifully asked the questions I brought in the sealed envelope sent in preparation for the interview. Many of the questions were similar to those asked in a temple recommend interview, but one in particular caught my attention. The question went something like this: “Because Brigham Young University-Idaho is sponsored by and affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you will be expected to incorporate Church doctrines and teachings in the courses you teach. Do you have any problem with that?” I distinctly remember my answer. I said, “Elder Didier, it will be a pleasure.” I also remember thinking, “It will require some adjusting to do so, but what a wonderful thing.”

Prior to coming to BYU-Idaho, I was not a professional educator. I am here directly from the hectic pace of Silicon Valley, California, and the high technology industry. While I made no secret of my religious affiliation, overtly incorporating gospel principles into my work was not part of my daily activities. I have chosen to begin each class meeting with prayer. I have sought ways to bring gospel principles into the business courses I teach. Given current events in the business world, it has been relatively easy to discuss principles of honesty, integrity, and gospel-based ethical behavior. The description of Captain Moroni in Alma 48:17 provides a wonderful example of how we should conduct our lives. In studying a business case describing some rather sleazy business practices, it seemed natural to refer to the 13th Article of Faith: “If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.” While students may be accustomed to such discussions, they have been a delight for me. I have commented to my classes several times what a blessing it is to bring a gospel perspective to a secular topic.

There have been multiple opportunities to bring a gospel perspective into class, coupled with the language of the scriptures. When discussing leadership and the traits of exemplary leaders, we referred to many examples from the Savior’s life. In the Doctrine and Covenants 121:45 we are taught “let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly” and can apply this when carefully considering our use of the Internet. As we study business strategy, we learn in Alma 43 that strategy played a part as Moroni led the Nephite armies. We also learn in Proverbs 29:18, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” In learning how good leaders delegate, we can

**I have sought ways
to bring gospel
principles into
the business courses
I teach.**

I have prayed that I
might measure up.

refer to Exodus 18: 13-24 and glean much from Jethro's counsel to Moses. And in learning how to make sound decisions, we learn from Section 9 of the Doctrine and Covenants as the Lord chastened and taught Oliver Cowdery.

Since arriving at BYU-Idaho, I have given much thought to my covenant and contract relationship with the Church and the University. This topic was also discussed in a recent new faculty training session. I believe, for many of us new to BYU-Idaho, the opportunity to come here feels as much like a calling as it does a profession. I have spent much time in kneeling reflection, praying for spiritual gifts in areas of concern and weakness. I have prayed that I might measure up. I have experienced the same feelings as my children who have served full-time missions and expressed their own doubts about their ability to be what the Lord needs them to be. I assured them that because they were on the Lord's errand, He would magnify them and give them the tools to be the instruments they were called to be. In each case He did, and they came to know the joy and wonder of consecrated service.

When my children expressed their concerns about becoming good missionaries, I shared with them my Parable of the Jeans: There was once a man who purchased a new pair of jeans. They were stiff and uncomfortable and not at all like the soft, faded ones he loved that fit so well. But now the new jeans were all he had to wear. As he wore them, he found they became softer and more comfortable. The stiffness disappeared, and before long he found the new jeans fit him perfectly. I find myself in a similar situation. I love my new life as a member of the faculty of BYU-Idaho. But it is a new experience for me—one that I am growing into. I am learning to balance the spiritual and the secular—to fulfill both my covenants *and* my contract.

In personal ways I too have felt the same magnifying as my missionary children. Perhaps one or two examples: I resolved that I would do my best to know each of my students by name. In addition to printing off class rolls with pictures, I made it a matter of prayer, asking Heavenly Father to bless me with the ability to remember. I reviewed the pictures and found that indeed I was able to remember their names. I am able to greet each student by name as they enter my class each day. When I call on them in class, I am now able to use their names. I often see students on campus and greet them by name. I have found them, on occasion, going out of their way to say hello to me. In a private conversation one student commented that I seemed to know everyone's names and asked how I was able to do that. I replied, "I prayed to be able to, and the Lord has helped me do it." My seeking the gift of remembering has been answered.

Blessed (or cursed) on occasion with a short attention span, I have felt prompted to leave my office and just take a short walk around campus.

Oftentimes I find that I have run into a student, providing the opportunity to have a one-on-one experience. It may have been someone from our former state in California, a student from one of my classes whom I had wanted to see, or just someone I needed to meet. In each case I do not feel we met by chance. To some it may seem a small thing; and to some, a coincidence, but I choose to believe the Holy Spirit had something to do with it, and our meeting was not by chance.