

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY  
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MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON'S REMARKS  
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH COMMENCEMENT  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Today I have seen ever so many reasons why you love your state. These rugged mountains, called Wasatch, this great salt lake, which was once a mere drop in a giant sea, the history of this valley, transformed from a barren sagebrush into green fields by dedicated men and women. And then there is the university, founded in 1850, less than three years after your pioneers entered this valley, the embodiment of your dreams and hopes, a place where you can acquire the tools to strengthen this region and this nation.

The spirit of the pioneers who opened up this beautiful valley was the spirit of tremendous vitality. Because I was to travel over this route in a few hours that they so laboriously crossed in 3 1/2 months, I recently read about your pioneer ancestors. It is hard to conceive of the physical torment of these men and women. Persecuted, they fled across the Mississippi, across the great plains and rugged mountains, harassed by enemies and persecuted by extremists. Theirs is one of the greatest stories of bravery and fortitude and America will always be proud of it.

But for those who settled, experimented, and built a flourishing society under such hardships, there was a propelling force which no obstacle could daunt. It was the faith that what they were doing was right and necessary. It was the faith that men and women together could build a great society on this earth -- one that would give character and compassion to its inhabitants. They were not interested in security or comfort. They were interested in an ideal.

They overcame discomforts because they had a mission they believed in. And by their sense of mission, they nurtured within themselves the virtues they wished for their children.

Today the problem is no longer to forge civilization out of wilderness. We have tamed our virgin continent, and perhaps all too well. We have built our cities, often too quickly. And we have achieved great material wealth. Some say all too obsessively.

What then is to be the test of your generation, if not these things? What is to be your sense of mission?

For you too are, in another way, a generation of pioneers.

Our test is the difficulty of grasping the problems of a complex society -- the social problems, the growth problems, the spiritual problems. It is the difficulty of understanding the kind of world we live in -- the dangers, the frustrations and the possibilities. And it is the difficulty of understanding your personal role in both our society and our world.

Second, we face the test of becoming concerned about the wrongs of our society, and the wrongs of our world. There is no single vice in a citizen of a democracy greater than apathy. The vitality of our system depends upon an informed electorate with beliefs about what is right and wrong.

And third, there is the test of involvement. What good is intelligence, if it is not put to use? This American society can never achieve the destiny that it seeks, can never remove the slums, or the prejudice, or the ugliness, unless citizens join in the great adventure of our time.

Brigham Young said, "Suppose there was a union of effort in every political and financial matter, undertaken for the benefit of the whole people? Who cannot see the good that would result?" It was this same union of effort that our late President Kennedy spoke of when he declared, "Ask what you can do for your country."

This is the test that I see for your generation. This is your frontier hardship. As Brigham Young, Jim Bridger, and Peter Skeen Ogden welcomed the challenge of their trek across this continent -- a trek which I made yesterday in a few hours -- so should you welcome the challenge of our times. As they found satisfaction in the fruits of their labors, so you will find your satisfaction in the betterment of your society.

Let me quote to you a passage from the famous French philosopher, Paul Valery. "Any interesting period," he said, "is always an enigmatic one, promising little repose, continuity or security. We live in a critical age; that is to say, an age in which a number of incompatible things are found together, none of which can either vanish or prevail."

That is both the difficulty and the interest of the age that you have inherited. But you young people of this region have what it takes to meet this challenge. "The glory of God is intelligence", states the Mormon Doctrine of Covenants, and this quest for understanding has infused your state since its beginning. And you have a heritage of compassion toward your fellow men.

May you bring these qualities to bear on the problems of our time. Utah has made her past record. May her future contribution to American greatness, through you fine graduates, be as rich.

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