

CORNUCOPIA

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IDEAS THAT BRING ME HOPE

GIVEN THE CHANCE TO RAVE ABOUT THE things that truly matter to me, I respond with relish. In many ways, I suppose, the things most worth raving about are antidotes for the things we rant about. I'm not talking about traffic jams or Rush Limbaugh and his local mimics. I'm thinking about the tragic ironies in our civilization. For all the twentieth century's miracles in medicine, communication, computation, travel, and material production, I look out from my perch and see a world in terrible distress—an American culture in denial and a human family in mortal danger.

The things that I rave about, therefore, are the ideas that bring me hope, offer me perspective, and give me courage. I need these qualities more than anything. Against the depravities of terrorism and war and the capriciousness of new viruses and old injustices—not to mention the “ordinary” brutality toward unloved children and rampant daily offenses against the dignity of life—I anchor my hopes on four things:

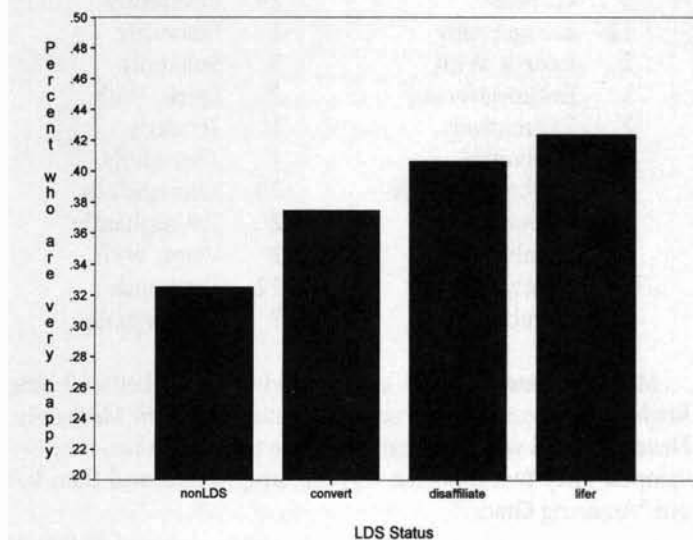
THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY. The idea of a great and free university is the noblest of all human inventions. Obert Tanner said this, and I believe it. Universities are the only institutions on earth that have as their purpose the unfettered quest for knowledge and truth. Every business, church, and

government aims to indoctrinate us to its view of the world. Universities often do, too, but when they try to indoctrinate us, they violate their own most venerable ideal. Universities strive to be sanctuaries of free thought where information and ideas collide and the best will survive to be tested another day. I take pleasure in trying to make the university to which I am most committed live up to the ideal.

PERSONAL REVOLUTION. The power of personal revolution as a means of addressing society's ills offers more hope and fewer avenues of escape than any other philosophy I know. Both Socrates (Know thyself!) and Jesus (Go and sin no more!) taught that the hope for a better world is rooted not so much in changing others as in governing ourselves. Many dictators and well-meaning politicians believe that panaceas for human suffering exist in the form of one “ism” or another. But these two remarkable historical figures took a different tack: discipline ourselves, commit ourselves, and let our lives shine brightly enough that others will choose to do likewise.

EPIPHANIES. Paradoxes are at the center of living itself—and epiphanies associated with resolving them are the basis of personal change. Who would deny the bursts of insight that come when opposites suddenly yield fusion? When, for instance, we realize that our quest for solitude and for deep connections with others are each necessary to the fulfillment of the other, that personal freedom and self-discipline are inexorably connected, or that faith and doubt are inter-

PECULIAR PEOPLE



PERCENT WHO ARE VERY HAPPY

LIFETIME MEMBERS of the LDS church are more likely to say they are very happy than are residents of the United States in general. Disaffiliates report higher levels of happiness than converts, and both of these groups fall in between lifetime members and the national population.

Results were obtained by combining many national probability surveys of adults taken by the National Opinion Research Center between 1970 and 1991. Respondents were classified on the basis of religious affiliation at age 16 and at the time of the survey. “Lifers” reported being LDS at both times. “Converts” were not LDS at 16, but had joined by the survey date. “Disaffiliates” said they had been LDS at age 16 but no longer are. Everyone else was classified as non-LDS.

dependent, as are life and death, and that individualism cannot be enjoyed without healthy communities and that healthy communities cannot exist without authentic individualism. Many other paradoxes lurk around us, and we all have our favorites. Whatever our favorites, however, there are few things that match the exhilaration I feel each time I discover, or rediscover, that two profound truths, which appear to be opposite, are not opposite at all, but simply two concepts necessary to each other's realization. These epiphanies are among my richest moments.

TEACHING. Creating conditions that may bring others to their own moments of insight, regardless of the subject, is my chief protest against reality. It brings me in contact with two wellsprings of constant renewal: enduring ideas that have lasted millennia and youthful minds who see life afresh. I speak of the ideas that have shaped civilizations and endured through life, literature, and history: justice and mercy, liberty and equality, truth and beauty, and many others. Every youth and each rising generation must learn to understand and give life to these ideas, but students (whatever their age) tend to embrace them with enthusiasm, wrestle mightily with the paradoxes among them, and seek valiantly to place them at the center of their lives. Being a part of this ceaseless process is truly a privilege worth raving about.

The ideas we carry around in our heads make all the difference in our lives because they shape our understanding of ourselves and give meaning to our world. These four ideas—university, personal revolution, epiphany, and teaching—give me reason to rejoice. And I do.

—L. JACKSON NEWELL

REVERENTLY, QUIETLY, . . . MAJESTICALLY?

My soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads.

—Doctrine and Covenants 25:12

ALEXANDER POPE, in "An Essay on Criticism," wrote that "some to church repair, / Not for the doctrine, but for the music there." I have found considerable peace in this approach. I no longer struggle with questions like "When is the world going to end?" My mind is now free to dwell on weightier matters like "What are those directions in the upper-left-hand corner of each hymn?" The First Presidency's preface to the current LDS hymnal advises all to "ponder [the hymns], recite and sing them" (x). With that in mind, I turned to "Using the Hymnbook" where I learned that "The mood markings, such as *Prayerfully* or *Resolutely*, suggest the general feeling or spirit of a hymn, although the mood of some hymns may vary according to the occasion or local preference" (379).

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hymnbook. For example, hymn #268 is to be sung *With Motion*. What does that mean? Is it anything like *Broadly* (#269), or is it closer to *Reflectively* (#154)? I know nothing about music theory, and from my admittedly naïve point of view, I struggle to find the distinction between *Exultantly* and *With Exultation*, *Reverently* and *Worshipfully*, or *Gently* and *Tenderly*.

Here is an alphabetical list of all the mood marks along with the number of times they appear in the hymnal. As you can see, *Fervently* is the big winner, while twelve hymns have mood marks that are unique to them.

18	Boldly	27	Joyfully
19	Brightly	2	Jubilantly
1	Broadly	2	Lightly
8	Calmly	18	Majestically
4	Cheerfully	1	Meekly
1	Confidently	1	Motion, With
1	Contemplation, With	12	Peacefully
4	Conviction, With	20	Prayerfully
2	Devotion, With	1	Reflectively
22	Dignity, With	22	Resolutely
5	Earnestly	24	Reverently
12	Energetically	1	Smoothly
2	Energy, With	5	Solemnly
1	Enthusiastically	2	Spirit, With
2	Expressively	1	Tenderly
4	Exultantly	1	Thankfully
1	Exultation, With	23	Thoughtfully
30	Fervently	2	Triumphantly
3	Firmly	2	Vigor, With
14	Gently	12	Vigorously
1	Humbly	7	Worshipfully

My own musical skills are so lacking that whether I sing *Brightly* or *Solemnly*, I am sure it sounds like *With Mediocrity*. Nevertheless, I wonder what they were thinking when they developed forty-two different ways to sing hymns and then left out "Amazing Grace."

—KAI PEARSON