

Chapter 4: Life Accelerates

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The dissertation defense went well, and after two years in Pullman Dale was awarded his Ph.D. He felt he and the family had run out of energy and money. Joe J. Christensen was appointed the new director of the Pullman Institute of Religion in 1957 after Dale accepted an offer to join the faculty at Brigham Young University in Religious Education. He taught Book of Mormon, Church history, and Sharing the Gospel (missionary preparation) classes. During one Tuesday morning class, he had an unusual experience. While teaching, he noticed a young woman toward the back of the room. A distinct voice said to him, “Speak to that girl.” No one else seemed to notice the voice, and Dale continued with the lesson. Again the voice said, “Speak to that person.”

At the end of class, as students were filing out, he was unsure of what he ought to say, but he asked if he could talk with her for a moment. When the others had gone, he told her about twice hearing a voice and asked if that made any sense to her. She indicated she was in a real quandary. She was engaged to a nonmember in Washington who had been feigning interest in the Church but who had recently given her an ultimatum that if she really loved him, she would marry him and not insist that he join the Church.

She felt that their conversation that day in the classroom was an answer to her fasting and prayers and asked if Dale would help her. He talked to her about the hazards of marrying out of the covenant and went over the facts and consequences related to marriage outside the temple. He tried to let her know that the Lord was concerned. She asked if Dale would pray with her and he said he would, but added, “Then I want you to pray also, after I finish.” He recorded that her prayer was beautiful and that the experience was powerful for both of them. Next day in class, she said she had decided not to marry the young man. When Dale ran into her a few years later, she had happily married a returned missionary in the temple and had two beautiful children. She said, “Oh, this has been a great blessing. To think that I almost married out of the Church and would have missed all this is just awful.” Dale reflected, “Here was a very devout follower of the Lord, seeking help, and the Lord used me as the vehicle to get His message to her; it was a fantastic experience for both of us.”^[1]

While teaching at BYU during the 1957–58 school year, Dale was called as bishop of the BYU Eighteenth Ward, one of the two very first married students’ wards on campus. One of his counselors was J. Marvin Higbee, who would have a long association with Dale. The other counselor in the bishopric was Joseph Brinkerhoff. The ward met in the old Page School building. This married student unit was part of the original BYU Stake and covered the married student housing area called Wyview Village, which sat where the Marriott Center basketball arena and parking lot are today. Antoine Romney, the brother of President Marion G. Romney, was stake president and taught in the College of Education on campus.^[2] The other married students’ ward was the BYU First Ward, which covered the new Wymount Terrace married student housing complex.

The Tingey family had moved into Wyview Village, and when Dale was called as bishop he took the high councilor (Leland E. Anderson, his old teaching partner at Brigham Young High School) and went door to door looking for counselors. Marv Higbee was actually in the process of unloading his furniture when Dale and Leland walked up to him. They had never met before this time. Marv said, “They came walking down the sidewalk toward me. We sat down together and talked. I found out he was the bishop, but there was no bishopric yet. He was looking for counselors. A day or two later he invited me in to be his counselor. I was 24 years old.”^[3] It was his very first Church administration experience, and he learned to love Dale. Forty-five years later, Marv remarked that “the people in that ward are still

people we know and see and care about.”^[4] He also recounted an experience about which he had teased Dale for decades. He was taking a religion class from Dale at that time. Marv said:

I worked in a faculty reconditioning program (like fitness) for faculty at BYU. I gave them massages after their workout. I would give Dale a massage more often than anyone. I really took good care of him. One time he needed a substitute for his Book of Mormon class for a week and asked me if I would teach it for him. I asked, “Are you serious?” In spite of my fears, I took it for a week. Dan Ludlow helped me. I think I did a pretty respectable job for my age and experience. Then when finals came Dale gave me a “B.” I was carrying twenty-one hours in school. For nineteen hours I had all “A’s” and for two hours, that one “B,” from Dale. I did all that stuff for him, plus I’m his counselor and he gives me my only undergraduate “B” ever! I’ve razzed him for years about that.^[5]

Marv went on to become president of Snow College in Ephraim, Utah, and Utah Technical College, which became Utah Valley Community College during his tenure and Utah Valley State College shortly afterward. He laughed about the grade and enjoyed hassling Dale about it. Dale even commented one time that he’d check to see if he could change that grade after all those years, saying, “Maybe I can get you off my back!”^[6]

One day, a young husband with a wife and two children at home showed up at Bishop Tingey’s door. He said, “I want you to take my name off the member list and off the records of the Church.” Dale replied that he couldn’t just take a name off Church records and asked the man why he wanted him to do such a thing. “It’s very important; just do it,” he urged. Dale insisted that he could not do it and asked again why the young man wanted his name removed. “Because I’m going to kill my neighbor, and I don’t want to be a member when I do it,” was the response. Dale tried to invite him into the house, but the young man would not come inside. “No, I won’t come into your house. I just want you to take my name off the records so I can go kill this man. I’ve been a marine and I’ve killed people.”

Dale learned that the man’s wife had been patted on the backside by a neighbor at a party, so the ex-marine felt that another man had designs on his wife. The young husband was adamant about it and it seemed to Dale like he really would follow through with his threats. “I had just finished a doctorate in psychology and counseling; here was my chance, and I just fell apart. It was awful. I didn’t know what to do. I was panicking. So I said to him, ‘You just go get into that car and hold on. We’re going down to my office to talk this out.’ He didn’t want to do that either, but I said more firmly, ‘You just get in that car. We’re going down to my office on BYU campus. We’ll figure it out when we get there.’ I grabbed my coat and was walking out the front door.”^[7]

When Dale walked down the halls of the old Page School building where his ward met and where his office was, he heard a voice saying to him, “Pray with this man.” Dale said to him, “We’re going to have a prayer about this.” The man petulantly dropped on his knees with one elbow on the floor and blithely said, “Well, go ahead and pray, let’s get it over with.” Dale said he really prayed that the Lord would help him and that the man’s heart would be softened. When he finished, Dale said, “I want you to pray.” It was when the man prayed that Dale heard a key to the problem. As the man prayed and talked about his own problems, he asked for forgiveness and acknowledged he had committed adultery with a married woman while he was single and in the military. He said in the prayer that he knew he could not be forgiven for this and that he did not want his neighbor to be in the same situation. Dale said that when he finished, he told the man that he could be forgiven for adultery, but the man did not believe him. Dale insisted, “The scriptures tell me you can be forgiven.” He responded, “Show it to me!” Dale wasn’t sure he could find the scripture. But as he thumbed through the triple combination, it fell open to Doctrine and Covenants 42:24–25 and he read aloud, “Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out. But he that has committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive.” The young husband whispered, “Oh my God,” and Dale said it seemed like he forgot all about killing; it was as if a whole new world opened up to him. Dale had earlier been trying to get this couple to go to the temple, but the man wouldn’t hear of it. After this ex-marine went through the repentance process and had some time for spiritual preparation, the couple was sealed in the

temple.

Dale felt that teaching at BYU was much easier than teaching seminary classes with rowdy teenagers whose interest had to be piqued if a teacher was to survive. In fact, it felt too easy to Dale. He felt that what was more critically needed was someone to get “out in the field” to find and recruit seminary students, get them to come to class, and teach them the gospel.

When William E. Berrett, vice president at BYU and lead administrator for seminaries and institutes, spoke to Dale and indicated that Paul H. Dunn, the first full-time coordinator of institutes in the Church, had requested that Dale be assigned to southern California to work with him and assist in establishing institute programs there, he was eager to go. ^[8] It was a time before elaborate moving programs were available to full-time seminary teachers. He and Jeanette drove a truck with what Dale termed a “rickety old trailer” to east Los Angeles. They lived in an older home purchased by the Church for an institute facility. It seemed like an exciting assignment to the Tingeys, and when they pulled up to unload their furniture, the house was dark. Dale records:

We arrived there at 11:00 that night. There was no electricity in the house, and we were all very tired. So we lit some candles and laid some mattresses out for the children. The three children were all set to go to sleep. We had lit a candle and put it in the middle of the room. About a half-hour later, we found all three children, sitting around the candle, smoking cigarettes. At the time, Scott was five, Mike was four and Shannan was three. We were utterly aghast. When we were able to speak, we asked them what they were doing. They informed us that they were smoking. We asked them why and they said, “Well, everyone down here smokes. Every place we have been, people are smoking.” So we asked where they got their cigarettes. They told us they put quarters into a machine and the cigarettes had come out. I figured it was a great time to let them know what smoking really was, so I said to them, “If you want to smoke, then come to the bathroom and I’ll show you how to smoke.” I showed them how to inhale, and I got all three of them really sick. Then I said, “You can stay in here and smoke as long as you want.” They answered, “No, we don’t want to smoke.” “No,” I replied, “you bought that pack of cigarettes, and now you’ve got to smoke them up.” They learned a great lesson, and we’ve laughed about that ever since. ^[9]

Working with Paul Dunn was fun and exciting. Dale felt the assignment opened a new chapter in his life, and soon a close bond developed between them that would last their lifetimes. Paul was an organizer. He was also a motivating teacher and was effective in establishing close relationships with California stake presidents. The growth he instigated in the institute programs in southern California was unprecedented at the time. ^[10]

Finances were tight because of the higher cost of living in California, but Dale and Jeanette compensated by shopping at the new Deseret Industries store. They felt that the California members were very devout, and, combined with the wonderfully temperate weather, life was ideal. Dale even bought an old Ford convertible for Jeanette to drive while he was away teaching in the various institutes. He loved serving as a counselor in a student ward bishopric and noticed how the students lived the gospel. Dale commented, “I learned that the gospel can only have value as you apply it in your life. Some students knew all the answers, but didn’t understand how to live the gospel. Others had a small understanding, but they were strong in their applications and their dedication and willingness to serve; they had a real understanding of the true principle of charity and how to apply it.” ^[11]

A big surprise for the Tingeys occurred in April 1960, when President Berrett called from Provo and indicated that A. Theodore Tuttle would no longer be serving as assistant administrator of the Unified Church School System. ^[12] He had been called to be a General Authority in 1958 but had continued to serve in the school system. He said that he wanted Dale to come and be the second assistant with Boyd K. Packer. All the seminary and institute men at that time knew Boyd and Ted to be the best of friends, and their friendship became a motivating and unifying factor throughout

the whole Church school system. Dale told him he felt he was neither worthy nor qualified for such an assignment. President Berrett responded quickly, “We know that already, but we’re willing to work with you.” President Berrett would later confide that he had wanted Dale to come into the central office as a result of an object lesson he watched Dale teach when training seminary teachers at Brigham Young High School. It involved two cakes prepared for a lesson on teaching the gospel with spiritual sensitivity. Dale asked students if they would like a piece of cake. When some responded positively, he reached into the cake with his fingers, scooped some cake and threw it at them. The rest of the students didn’t want any cake! He then brought out the other cake and carefully cut it, put it on a small plate and offered it to the students. Once assured there would be no more cake throwing, several students wanted cake again and were reminded that *how* the gospel is presented is indeed important.

Leaving southern California was difficult because of the close relationships the Tingeys developed while there and the scariness of the new assignment. They had enjoyed two great years there from 1958 to 1960 and had grown to love Paul and Jeanne Dunn and the institute staff, as well as their neighbors and Church friends.

Dale’s new assignment meant lots of travel. Jeanette would face many decisions that would need to be made in his absence. She felt very alone at times and struggled with raising a large family without her husband coming home every night. But she supported Dale and felt the sacrifice was worth the contribution her husband was making to the whole seminary and institute program.

Dale enjoyed his work and especially appreciated his companionship with Boyd K. Packer, who would ultimately become a General Authority and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He described their work together:

Sometimes we would leave Monday morning and be gone all week; when we traveled long distances, like to Canada, we’d stay longer. It was difficult. Boyd had a large family, and we had six children of our own by that time. I enjoyed working with Brother Packer; he was devoted to the General Authorities. He taught all of us that our main responsibility was to follow the Brethren, teach the gospel, and set a worthy example. As teachers, he instructed, we weren’t to say just anything we wanted. The teacher’s responsibility was to support the leaders of the Church. We were not to criticize them or make light of any of their teachings. That was sometimes difficult for our older teachers who had felt for some time that they had great academic freedom. I appreciate the good example Brother Packer set for me as a servant in the Church as well as a father and a husband. His main concern was always with his family. He was a great family man and taught me that the family should always come first. When we arrived at a seminary or institute, he would always call his family. At that time, when there was an economic crunch, I thought that was a waste of money, but now I can see the value of it. [\[13\]](#)

When Elder Packer was called as a General Authority, Dale was close at hand, and he recorded his impressions regarding the calling:

In 1961, Brother Packer and I were holding a workshop with the seminary supervisors who came in at conference time. A call came through on Friday morning from President Hugh B. Brown’s secretary. Brother Packer said that he’d return the call as soon as the workshop was over. Immediately, President Brown called back in person and said, “President Brown wants to see you now!” That previous Thursday night as I was going home, I had a deep impression that Boyd Packer would be called to be the new General Authority. We both knew that a General Authority would be called. He asked who I thought it would be, and I said, “I think that it’s going to be you.” He said, “No really, come on. Who do you think it will be?” I just knew that he would be the new General Authority. [\[14\]](#)

Elder Packer said nothing about his interview with President Brown, but Dale waited with high spirits and “threw a big hug on him” after his friend was called as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve on 30 September 1961. Ernest L. Wilkinson, BYU president, had included Dale and Boyd on his administrative council, and when he saw Elder Packer after his call he drew him into an alcove at the tabernacle on Temple Square and pumped his hand in congratulations. Dale records, “I was standing a little distance away, waiting for him (Wilkinson) to finish, when Ned Winder walked by. Ned has his own way with things, and as he walked by he facetiously called, “Now you can tell him [where to] go . . . , Boyd!” (Everyone had been scared of Ernest Wilkinson because he was tough as nails.)”^[15]

But Dale felt, as did others, that having Elder Boyd K. Packer in the ranks of the General Authorities, along with Elders Marion D. Hanks and A. Theodore Tuttle, two other seminary veterans, would increase the support of Church leaders toward the seminary and institute program.

Elder Packer's eventual replacement as an administrator in the Unified Church School System was Alma P. Burton, who had been serving as dean of admissions and records at BYU.^[16] According to Dale, the assignment of Burton was met with disappointment by some seminary teachers who felt that someone from within the seminary system itself should have been called. But Dale, who in his heart had hoped that his good friend Paul Dunn would get the assignment, enjoyed their companionship and felt that Burton's associations and connections within BYU were very helpful. The two of them continued to travel throughout the United States and Canada, visiting teachers at seminaries and institutes.

On 6 April 1964 Paul H. Dunn, Dale's California colleague, was called to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Elder Levi Edgar Young (who had ordained Paul a Seventy back in 1950) of the First Council of the Seventy (now the Presidency of the Seventy).^[17] Thrilled by the call of another close friend, Dale welcomed the Duns to Utah and visited them often in their Highland home. President Wilkinson had been prepared to have Paul Dunn recommended to head a sort of “BYU—California” he envisioned for the West Coast. When Church leaders determined it was cheaper and better to support institutes of religion rather than build university campuses around the country and the world, these plans were shelved.^[18] Paul would become an influential and popular speaker as a General Authority. His affable manner and riveting stories kept listeners spellbound.

^[1] Tingey journal, 50.

^[2] J. Marvin Higbee interview, 5 December 2001, interviewed by author.

^[3] Higbee interview, 5 December 2001.

^[4] J. Marvin Higbee interview, 29 March 2002, interviewed by author.

^[5] Higbee interview, 29 March 2002.

^[6] Higbee interview, 29 March 2002.

^[7] Tingey journal, 51.

^[8] Berrett, *A Miracle*, 92.

^[9] Tingey journal, 43–44.

^[10] Anderson, *A Historical Survey*, 306, 308.

^[11] Tingey journal, 44.

^[12] Berrett, *A Miracle*, 64.

^[13] Tingey journal, 45–46.

[14] Tingey journal, 47.

[15] Dale T. Tingey interview, 11 December 2000, interviewed by author. Of William E. Berrett, Dale said, “You know, one of the things that he [Berrett] taught me (being on that administrative council)—President Wilkinson, jumped on William E. Barrett one day and he sat there just took it, you know. Boy, when we were walking back to the office I asked him, ‘Why don’t you respond to him? You could handle Wilkinson, why don’t you speak up?’ And he said, ‘Well, Dale he’s probably right anyway.’ He [Wilkinson] was really criticizing him, really criticizing him. He said, ‘He’s probably right and besides, Dale, you always overlook a lot of things when the man gets the job done. And Ernest gets the job done.’ So that was a good lesson for me. Overlook a lot of things if the man gets the job done.”

[16] Berrett, *A Miracle*, 64; see also “Death,” *Church News*, 9 May 1998, 13.

[17] Arnold J. Irvine, “California Educator Fills Vacancy in Council of Seventy,” *Church News*, 11 April 1964, 8.

[18] Tingey interview, 11 December 2001.