

Toward More Charity and Understanding



It has been almost a year since Brigham Young University suspended regular classroom instruction in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our teaching continued, however, as did our research, committee work, and administrative duties, usually under innovative arrangements that have required most of us to experiment with new ways of doing things. We want to sincerely thank everyone who has helped make these adjustments possible, and everyone who has willingly adapted to the new arrangements. It hasn't always been easy, and we look forward to the day when we can teach, meet, and study in more traditional settings, but the effort to continue the work of the university under less-than-ideal circumstances has clearly been a success.

As much as I'm looking forward to a return to "normal," I'm also hopeful that the experience of the last year has made us better in important ways, and that the "normal" we return to will bear the marks of the difficulties we've experienced. Most of us, hopefully, will have a greater appreciation for things we took for granted before—a warm handshake, a good laugh in the open air, and the fun of interacting with students in classrooms and hallways. Hopefully, too, our deprivations of the last year will put other things into perspective,

helping us be more charitable and understanding as we interact with others whose political, social, and religious views may differ markedly from our own. In many ways, I know, the pandemic so far seems to have only heightened those differences, but I'm hopeful that in the end the trial we've endured together will lead to an overwhelming empathy for each other's situation and perspective.

Again, thanks to all who have helped Religious Education and BYU meet the challenges of the last year. May we continue to think, work, and talk together as we move forward into this new year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andy Hedges".

Andy Hedges
Associate Dean, Religious Education

BYU

Religious Education