



# Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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# INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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## President Samuelson Remembers Elder Maxwell in Institute Lecture



Recalling how his longtime friend and mentor inspired others without preaching or condemning, President Cecil O. Samuelson shared memories of Elder Neal A. Maxwell at a lecture on March 23, 2007. The president of Brigham Young University and a member

of the First Quorum of the Seventy, President Samuelson spoke at the inaugural annual lecture of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.

Members of Elder Maxwell's family, including his widow, Sister Colleen Maxwell, were among the hundreds who gathered on the BYU campus to hear President Samuelson speak. Noting the importance of transmitting to future generations of students and scholars "the touch and feel of the man Neal Maxwell," President Samuelson related several first-hand experiences that had enriched his life and the lives of others.

"I felt like I knew Neal Maxwell for many years before he really knew me," said President Samuelson. When he was about 10 years old, President Samuelson's mother worked with Elder Maxwell's mother in their stake Primary. Later, when President Samuelson was a student at the University of Utah, he recalled that "many of my friends knew Neal Maxwell personally, and he was greatly admired as a superb teacher, an aggressive basketball player with very sharp elbows, and a true friend to many students."

By the 1980s, President Samuelson enjoyed increasing opportunities to be with Elder Maxwell. Frequently, several friends gathered at Elder Maxwell's office for a sack lunch and discussion. "Rather than talk, Elder Maxwell asked questions that involved everyone. It was clear that he expected us to ponder the future of the kingdom [of God]. 'What do you feel will be the greatest opportunities

or challenges the Church will face in the next 20 years?' he would ask."

On one church assignment, Elder Maxwell was experiencing serious back pain, as he did from time to time. "No one would have known about this except for the small cushion he used to get through long meetings and plane trips." When President Samuelson herniated a disk in his own lower back helping a fellow passenger with luggage, Elder Maxwell was especially solicitous. "At a meeting the next day I thought I had masked my discomfort well when Elder Maxwell handed me his cushion and said, 'You need this more than I do.' And he would not take no for an answer." This experience was typical of Elder Maxwell's continual thoughtfulness for others.

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## Institute Supports Graduates and Undergraduates

The Maxwell Institute continues to encourage and support the work of graduate and undergraduate students through two funds.

### Nibley Fellowship Program

Each year at this time we remind graduate students about the Nibley Fellowship Program and its application deadline. Named in honor of the late eminent Latter-day Saint scholar Hugh Nibley, this program provides financial aid to students enrolled in accredited PhD programs in areas of study directly related to the work and mission of the Maxwell Institute, particularly work done under the auspices of one department of the Institute, the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, such as studies of the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Old and New Testaments, early Christianity, ancient temples, and related subjects. Applicants cannot be employed at the Institute or be related to an Institute employee.

Those interested in applying for the first time or who wish to renew their fellowships for the

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Neal A. Maxwell  
Institute for  
Religious Scholarship  
200 WAH, BYU  
Provo, Utah 84602  
(801) 422-9229  
(800) 327-6715  
maxwellinstitute.byu.edu

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## Welch Expounds the Sermon on the Mount at Museum of Art Lecture

On January 31, John W. Welch addressed the topic “The Five Faces of the Savior in the Sermon on the Mount” as part of the Museum of Art lecture series on the life of Christ, which has now concluded. Welch, Robert K. Thomas professor of law at BYU, editor in chief of *BYU Studies*, and the founder of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, spoke about five specific layers of instruction within the Sermon text in Matthew 5–7. As Welch related, “the Sermon on the Mount is not a scrapbook” of moral maxims, but more importantly it reveals the Savior’s different “faces of salvation.”

Expressing his love and appreciation for this text, Welch first addressed the ethical, moral, and allegorical meanings taught by the Savior in his Sermon on the Mount. With these first three layers, the Savior taught basic principles of and directions about leading a Christlike life. For example, when Christ instructs his disciples to “Pray for them which despitefully use you” (Matthew 5:44), Matthew uses the Greek word *eulogeite*, which means not just to pray for them privately, but also “to speak well of, to thank, and even to praise.” Christ gave his followers clear instructions on how to implement this higher moral law: the ser-

mon concludes by instructing listeners and readers to build our “house upon [the] rock” of Christ (Matthew 7:24).

Welch noted that most people see only the first three faces or meanings in the Sermon on the Mount. Yet, as Welch emphasized, “Jesus was more than a moral philosopher.” If Christ only offered advice on a good way to live, his message would not have been so astonishing. According to Welch, the amazing power of the Savior’s sermon is found in the fourth uniting face: Christ taught with divine authority, which enabled him to confidently extend promises and signal warnings. He also taught sacred ritual (which becomes especially evident when the Sermon text is juxtaposed with 3 Nephi 12–14, the Sermon at the Temple in Bountiful). For example, Welch noted that in Matthew 5:48 Christ invites us to become “perfect,” or “the Greek word *teleios*, [which] when used in ritual settings means to become fully and completely initiated and introduced into the sacred experience” of ritual worship. Thus the Sermon is not simply moral theology but also divine revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The BYU Museum of Art’s exhibit of *Beholding Salvation: Images of Christ* will continue through June 16. The lecture series has been cosponsored by the Religious Studies Center at BYU. It is anticipated that a CD containing all the lectures will be available from Deseret Book in the fall of 2007. 📺

## President Samuelson Remembers Elder Maxwell

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In his last visit to BYU in 2004, Elder Maxwell spoke to the President’s Leadership Council. “In a way,” said Elder Maxwell, “LDS scholars are a little bit like the builders of the Nauvoo Temple, who worked with a trowel in one hand and a musket in the other. Today, scholars building the temple of learning must also pause on occasion to defend the kingdom. I personally think this is one of the reasons the Lord established and maintains this university.”

Concluding his tribute, President Samuelson advised that “the magnificent charge to those privileged to serve in and with the Maxwell Institute is to be men and women of faith and to influence

others as well who have high levels of Christian devotion, expertise in their areas of scholarly endeavor, and accomplishment with both trowels and muskets.”

Video of President Samuelson’s address is now available to view on the Institute’s Web site at [maxwellinstitute.byu.edu](http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu). 📺

