

Have Compassion, Making a Difference



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Foundational Speech
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There is an overpowering spirit that I feel being in this room with those who follow the Savior's admonition to share. In this take-and-get world, you share and give. I realize that oftentimes this is a result of your desire to give back—an acknowledgment of gifts and talents given you by the Lord. I thought today I'd share a scripture or two that I believe set the stage relative to who you are and what you provide. The first scripture I want to give is from Jude. It reads, "And of some have compassion, making a difference" (Jude 1:22). This verse was important to me as a bishop, and this is what I'd like to address today. In Jacob, a book in scripture that I love, it reads: Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted. [Jacob 2:17–19] When you give to Brigham Young University Hawaii, you've done all of that and more. I thought about this just now as I had the opportunity to be with these student performers and talk to them a little bit about their backgrounds. We heard the young man from New Zealand give his testimony—his is just one of the stories—of what a difference you made for him and his family. He is the first to go to college in his family. He has broken the cycle. And he wants to give back in future years for all that has been given to him. Let me read another scripture—this one from Mosiah: And again Alma commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and to him that had not should be given. And thus they should impart of their substance of their own free will and good desires towards God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul. And this he said unto them, having been commanded of God; and they did walk uprightly before God, imparting to one another both temporally and spiritually according to their needs and their wants. [Mosiah 18:27–29] Isn't it interesting that Alma spoke of a naked soul and not of a naked body? The soul has to be clothed first with goodness, with love, and with caring. That is how a soul is clothed, and then the body can be taken care of. Years ago I had the opportunity of taking a dear friend—a Jewish businessman who donates a lot of money to the universities in California—to the BYU campus in Provo. We walked for a bit and then visited a classroom and met some of the students. He observed their countenance and looked into their eyes and felt their spirit. He wanted to help them and asked what they needed. Shortly after, he wrote a letter to the president and enclosed a generous, heartfelt donation. That is the spirit of giving that is in this room. I've watched a number of you—many of you—do the same thing when it was dearly needed at BYU–Hawaii. I went back and was able to get some BYU–Hawaii donation information: Donor generosity for 2004 and 2005 combined to exceed \$20 million. For the years

before this leadership council was founded, \$1 or \$2 million was raised; after the leadership council was founded, that number went to \$4 and \$5 million dollars per year; and in these last two years, \$9 and \$10 million was raised. To me this level of generosity says a great deal about who you are and that you have incredible compassion and make a remarkable difference. When I am with you, I am reminded that it isn't just the men and the women who are giving; you have taught your families to give, to share, to lift, and to strengthen others. The children who are here should know that it is more than enough to be born in the covenant; but to be born in the covenant, to be given much, and then to be taught to share—it doesn't get any better than that. President Eric Shumway has told me that most of the donors to BYU–Hawaii and PCC were unconnected with BYU–Hawaii until the spirit touched you to become part of the leadership council or to visit the campus and see for yourself. Thank you for your goodness. I refer you to page 1 of the handout prepared for this meeting. It begins, “Three years ago the Brigham Young University Hawaii Board of Trustees approved a \$47.5 million fund-raising initiative to benefit students at BYU–Hawaii and the Polynesian Cultural Center” (see figure 1 on page 5). It lists the fund-raising priorities and the programs that have been fully funded through the generosity of donors in the recent past, including: The Mark and Laura Willes Center for International Entrepreneurship: With all of the Willes's anonymous giving, when we first discussed naming the center for them, they were a little embarrassed, and it took a nudge or two. But we now have on campus a well-named center that teaches students how to be entrepreneurs—and for many who will return home to developing countries, this is the only type of employment available. The center provides classes and a lecture series; it works closely with the university's internship and placement offices to provide in-country experiences and networking. It is a marvel. Construction costs for the Iosepa canoe's boathouse at the Polynesian Cultural Center: While the boathouse has not yet been built and an endowment must be raised to maintain the structure, thanks to a generous donor the money for construction is in the bank. Iosepa will be a wonderful addition to the PCC. I used to worry that the PCC tail would wag the university dog, but it doesn't because of those like President Von Orgill and his predecessors who acknowledged the center's educational purpose to, in essence, provide scholarships for 600 or more deserving students each year. The multigenerational effect of this experience on students is staggering when viewed over years. We just watched a sweet sister—who must have been very young when she began to work at the Polynesian Cultural Center—come up and dance with one of today's students. Here we can begin to realize the heritage that exists. Return-ability internships for international students in their home area: This unique initiative provides airfare, living expenses, and supervision for students to fulfill an internship in their home region. It is all done through the goodness of those who are here in this room. In-country internships enable students to reconnect in their home area, create networks with alumni and others, and scout full-time employment opportunities. Indications are that 70 percent of the students who experience such internships return home after graduation. In addition to these, a distance-learning feasibility study has been completed; curriculum in many disciplines has been enhanced; a mentored-student learning initiative is in place; and the campus entrance has been beautified. The David O. McKay Center for Intercultural Understanding and the Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian Language and Cultural Studies have been completely endowed by donors. These successes would not have happened without you. Of that I want you to know. Donor gifts in 2005 exceeded \$10 million. The BYU–Hawaii Board of Trustees is acutely aware and greatly appreciative of you. When President Gordon B. Hinckley speaks of you, he cannot at times find the words to express his gratitude for your generosity. It is beyond words for me. I am overcome with appreciation for the powerful impact for good you are on the students, the university, the center, the community, the Church, and the nations that are blessed by these students. One of the core competencies of BYU–Hawaii is its international nature. We now have 50 percent of the students coming from the islands of the sea (including Hawaii), from Asia, and from countries other than the United States. This is a remarkable achievement of a goal that was set a number of years ago. In fact, BYU–Hawaii students come from some 76 countries, making it the most ethnically diverse campus, per capita, in the United States. It was President Marion G. Romney who coined the phrase “living laboratory” in reference to this campus. He said: This college is a living laboratory in which individuals who share the teachings of the Master Teacher have an opportunity to develop appreciation, tolerance, and esteem for one another. For what can be done here interculturally in a small way is what mankind must do on a large scale if we are to ever have

real brotherhood on this earth. [Aloha Center dedication, 26 January 1973] President David O. McKay's prophetic statement that the campus would produce the leaders that all the world is hungering for is being realized. As I have met with the leaders of some of our students' nations, the leaders say: "Where can we get more? Will you provide us with more?" And I assure them that we will. BYU-Hawaii is a mission-driven institution. There is clear buy-in from the board, from the administration, and from you that we will specialize in teaching entrepreneurial business and English to speakers of other languages; that we will be a positive example of intercultural harmony; and that we will demonstrate the gospel of Jesus Christ in action. Recently an accreditation team was at BYU-Hawaii. We met with them as the board prior to their visit, and they wanted to know what our goals were. We told them our goals and showed them the list of funded priorities. We said, "This is what has been provided by those who give to the university." Let me just finish with some of their responses so that you will see the impact on those who came and you will see what your generosity has done. One of the visitors wrote: "What you do with such diversity of students and culture is amazing. . . . I am not sure there is any other institution like it. You are to be complimented." Another wrote: "Your trustees are very supportive and generous. You are handling fiscal matters very well and with integrity." I think this speaks of you and your donations. Another wrote: "I reviewed over 30 different syllabi—both lower and upper divisions—and I am profoundly impressed by the intellectual breadth and depth of these documents. Perhaps I was expecting something less from a faith-based institution, but these demonstrate high academic standards." And: "We applaud your return-ability goals. We know of no other institution that is working so energetically to help the students return to strengthen their home areas." The one that touches me the most comes from Richard Winn, one of the associate directors of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. He wrote, "I came to your campus with this accreditation team expecting to be impressed. I am going away inspired." I think that says it all. In conclusion let me read this: "We have found brightness and enthusiasm across campus in every department. Everyone we have talked with seems excited to tell us what they are doing and how they fit into the mission of this university." That to me is the key to everything we have spoken of. There is not a student, there is not a professor, there is not a member of the board nor a donor who does not know the mission and believe that what is happening at BYU-Hawaii is in fulfillment of the words of prophets. I want to give you my testimony of your goodness and the potential we are just beginning to realize. And as we go forward, I ask the Lord's blessing to be with each of you—individually and with your families. I am so happy to see the children here. We hope that they might understand the goodness of their parents and their parents' friends. May the Lord's choicest blessings be with you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. Presidents' Leadership Council Hawaii members: The BYU-Hawaii Board of Trustees is acutely aware and greatly appreciative of you. When President Gordon B. Hinckley speaks of you, he cannot at times find the words to express his gratitude for your generosity. It is beyond words for me. I am overcome with appreciation for the powerful impact for good you are on the students, the university, the center, the community, the Church, and the nations that are blessed by these students. —Robert D. Hales