

Dedication of the Aloha Center, Church College of Hawaii



Marion G. Romney
Foundational Speech
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After that introduction, Brothers and Sisters, it would be appropriate to sing "Rest, Rest on the Hillside, Rest." Commissioner Beesley, President Brower, Dr. Cook, distinguished guests, faculty and students and friends of this great college, I greet you all as brothers and sisters. It is a distinct privilege for me to be here with Sister Romney on this important occasion. It isn't the first time that I have been here. I first came to Hawaii in 1920. I was going on my way to Australia on a mission. I didn't get out here to Laie. When I came back in 1923, I didn't get here either. I didn't have the price of bus fare out here, but I have been back several times since. I was here when they were building these first buildings here. They had the forms all built and lying on the ground. I came here with President McKay in 1958, I believe it was, when the school was dedicated, and I am happy that President Lee asked me to come back at this occasion.

This school is distinguished for many reasons. It is situated and qualified to render much service. Its greatest potential, however, lies in the fact that it is part of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is God's agency to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. He told us when he restored the gospel what he told Moses long ago, that His work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. And while we do not anticipate that the Church College of Hawaii will ever become an institution with a large enrollment, we do desire and we expect the spiritual and academic and social life to be as rich as possible.

This center provides something that has been missing heretofore on this campus. In this building will be held various cultural, social, and recreational activities, [they] will complement and add much to the learning that occurs in the other classrooms. We desire, therefore, that the concerts, movies, and the dances and the forums, which will be held here, will always be in harmony with the standards of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We desire and expect that the student organizations who meet herein will want to and, in fact, will be directed by those standards and the goals that grow out of the special mission of this college. We hope that when all members of the college family meet here and use this lovely facility, that it will always be with a special appreciation to our Father in Heaven for the many bounties of life He has given us and for the helath which permits us to enjoy these opportunities.

This building was built with sacred tithing funds paid by the members of the Church. It is beautiful without being elaborate; it is functional without being drab. Some of the students here will be the first to realize that it goes far beyond the facilities available to Saints in the islands and many other places in the world. We hope therefore, that you will treat this facility carefully and appreciatively and use it with a sense of gratitude,

because it has been built with money donated by many who themselves have nothing as nice as what they have helped to provide here.

I am glad that the name Aloha Center has been selected because it is suggestive of the welcome and the spirit of friendship which is characteristic of the peoples of the Pacific Basin Area. Though this facility will perform many of the functions traditionally performed by student union buildings, it ought to have, in addition, a special flavor and an added purpose – just as this four-year college does more than simply provide a traditional four-year education. The games and the activities engaged in here by students should provide them with immediate relaxation and informality without detracting too much from their studies or from their spiritual growth, which constitute two of the purposes for the existence of the college. Many students have come here for special reasons, and this center should be used to compliment those reasons. Weekday activities should be so conducted as not to detract from the spirit of reverential religious services conducted here at other times.

One of the great strengths of the Polynesian member is his ability to find happiness in small things and to feel good about the gift of life. His normal, joyful countenance and basic disposition are completely compatible with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Man is that he might have joy. The Lord does not expect us to be gloomy or sad in order to live the gospel. Let this place be one in which there is a natural happiness, friendship, concern, and love for each other and for things physical.

We thank and congratulate all those whose efforts have made the building of this lovely facility, possible, including President Owen Cook, the faculty, administration, and student body who have helped to plan this center and to oversee its construction.

We now charge those who administer this building to be true to the purpose for which it has been built, to be worthy of the confidence which the Church Board of Education has in this college. Of course, no building on this campus can or should be separated from the unique purposes of the Church College of Hawaii. This is one of the few campuses in the world, as indicated by Commissioner Beesley, where a governing board who oversees an educational institution is not concerned with enrolling large numbers of students, but rather with carrying out of the special educational mission assigned to such institutions.

The mission of this college is to serve members of the Church in Polynesia and, just as important, members from along the east rim of Asia. While we must seek efficiency in the use of tithing dollars and increase in effectiveness in the educational purposes here on this campus, we hope that you are not disturbed if the enrollment of the college plateaus and then grows slowly. We hope, too, that those who instruct here are ever willing to see what might be done to improve their personal effectiveness in teaching, but also to be concerned about the content of what is taught here in terms of its specific, practical value to the students and to the cultures of the Pacific Basin, whom we hope the graduates and alumni of this institution will seek to serve. This college cannot fulfill its purpose if it is simply a way-station used by the students on their way to the mainland, nor can it fulfill its purpose if in addition to doing the traditional and necessary educational tasks, it doesn't take into account in its curriculum the added and special needs of the cultures whom its faculty and students both represent. Neither can it fulfill its purpose if it does not give attention to the spiritual growth of its family – the faculty, the staff and the students. The mere accumulation of facts without the guiding and controlling values to pursue, which The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints maintains in its educational programs, including this school is an empty exercise.

The extent to which education in America has lost its way is due to the separation of learning from fundamental values and truths. That separation must never occur here. The life of the mind does not require separation from spiritual things. The spirit will quicken our desire for knowledge and also our desire to use knowledge to serve our fellow men. Because the student body here is such a marvelous and representative group, 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 larger scale, if we are to ever have real brotherhood on this earth.

Some fourteen years ago, December 17, 1958, President David O. McKay dedicated the then new buildings on this campus. At his invitation I was present. His remarks preceding the dedicatory prayer, I quote from President McKay's remarks on that occasion:

Fellow citizens and brothers and sisters, let us face clearly and forcefully the fact that the paramount ideal permeating all education—in the grades, the high school, throughout college and the university—should be more spiritual than economic for the good of our country.

He concluded with this statement:

"The church and school systems are separated in our land. There are those, great teachers too, some of them, who think they may teach no religion and not violate part of our Constitution. Our church schools are free to teach all good things, to teach and train boys and girls to be more useful citizens in various walks and trades in life, but they are also free to teach that which is higher that is a belief in God, in His goodness, in His existence and to teach without hesitancy, condemnation of any group or nation which cries disbelief in a Creator, disbelief in the home, disbelief in the free agency of man. I refer to Communists who have come out, not as a nation, but as a group in condemning the very things which our country needs; faith in the Eternal Creator, belief in the universal brotherhood of man, and that man is God's greatest blessing and has the responsibility of glorifying Him, for He has said, 'This is my work and my glory to bring to pass the eternal knowledge and everlasting existence of man.' This is His glory. All of these things I have named this school stands for. I congratulate all who have participated in its erection. I commend you for your efforts, for your self-denial. I pray to God to guide you members of the faculty now, today, and in the future that you may be leaders, inspirers of the youth who come to trust you and to learn of you in this, The Church College of Hawaii." (*The Founding and Early Development of The Church College of Hawaii*, pp. 253, 255, 256.)

On another occasion President McKay said,

"This school is being built for, first, the things pertaining to God and His Kingdom...what that means toward...establishing peace in the world.

Secondly, that those who are obeying those principles will develop manhood, character, and (become) noble men and women... That is what this school is going to produce. More than that, they'll be leaders. Not leaders only in this island, but everywhere."

President Harold B. Lee made this significant expression, " ...that the College will become a beacon light of truth to Asia." You can see why, with this kind of destiny and unique mission, we must always do things here in a special way and for special reasons, while, at the same time, we must not leave other educational things undone—the traditional and important educational tasks concerning which we are just as interested as are others in the world."

I hope and pray that every student who comes to this college and this center will be concerned that he leaves those whose lives he touches here better than when he found them. That every student's storehouse of memories of his time here will be filled with good things rather than any cause for regret, and that the students who come here will do so in order to prepare themselves to serve their fellowman and particularly those of their own country and culture. I am equally hopeful and prayerful that the faculty and the staff here will esteem their students as their eternal brothers and sisters who will need and deserve to draw, not only upon the educational expertise of the professor, but also upon him or her for spiritual strength and example.

"Be assured that those of us who are miles away care about you; we have concern for your welfare and have confidence and trust in you. Support your administration. Seek to be excellent in your field, both as students or as faculty. Seek to improve continually the quality of life on this campus, in and out of the classroom, so that when we build structures such as this we build not in vain, and so that those things that matter most are not at the mercy of those things that matter less."

"Wherever those of us who have special responsibilities are sent to assist the saints, we give substantially the same counsel. We as members of this church are to keep the commandments of God, to witness by our works as well as by our words, that God lives and that His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is the Redeemer of all men everywhere, to live and behave in such a way that others seeing us, know that we know that The Church of Jesus Christ is the only true and living Church. Love one another. Avoid gossip, rumors and the bearing of false witness, for if we can do these things in a small way in a community like Laie, then we can help our fellowmen to achieve those objectives in the larger world which so desperately needs models of righteous living."

I bear you my testimony, brothers and sisters, that this Church school of Hawaii is an institution established by and under the inspiration of the Almighty and that in his economy it has a great future for the lifting of his children toward that eternal life which he says it is his purpose and work and glory to bring about.

Now, if you will join with me in the dedicatory prayer, we shall dedicate this building.

Our beloved Father in Heaven, we come before thee on this occasion in deep gratitude unto thee. We are so grateful that we know that we are thy children, that thou art our Father and that we may draw near unto thee and that thou wilt hear our prayers if we pray by the direction of the Holy Spirit. We are grateful unto thee, Heavenly Father, that thou hast in these latter days revealed thyself again to men, that they might know thee, even as thou didst reveal thyself to the Prophet Joseph Smith with thy Son, so that he might know and teach us that thou art indeed our Father and we are thy children, born unto thee as spirits in the spirit world.

We are grateful, Father, that we can have the witness of the Holy Spirit to the truths of the restoration of the gospel. We are grateful, Heavenly Father, that thou didst reveal to the prophets that the Glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth. We thank thee, Father, for giving commandments to the prophets in the early days of the Church that thy children were to learn and study and to get knowledge by faith and also by studying and works. We are grateful that thou has directed the leadership of &,is Church of thine, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to carry forward in the educational fields. We are grateful for the success that we have had in developing educational systems and a system which covers so many of thy children in the earth. We are grateful for the light and the inspiration and the revelation which leads those in charge of the educational system now in this day.

We are grateful that thou didst inspire thy servants to begin this great school years ago in this land and schools in other lands, but because we are here now today, we are particularly grateful and express that gratitude for the Church College of Hawaii. We are grateful for the labors of the honest men and women and boys and girls which have gone into the establishment of this institution, not only for its magnificent buildings, including this building, but for the spirit that's here and for the power of God, conversion to Jesus Christ that emanates from this building.

And now, Father, thou knowest that this building, this Aloha Center, has been built here with much effort and devotion and love and faith. Thou knowest that it is finished as thou seest it here today; it is a glorious place. We are grateful for the Spirit of the Lord now that fills this room and fills our hearts as we plead with thee to accept this effort in this building. And in the authority of the Holy Priesthood, acting in behalf of the Presidency of thy Church in the earth, I hereby, and we who are here, dedicate this building, this great center, to be used for the purposes for which it was built. We pray that thou will accept it as a part of thine educational system and let thy Spirit be here. Let it dwell in the halls and in the rooms. Oh God, as strangers come and as we come, let us feel thy Spirit here, something different than in the world. Help us to leave, as we come onto this campus and into this building, evil thoughts and evil purposes and practices on the outside, that we may come here and feel thy Spirit.

Oh God, bless the youth that come here, that they may be inspired, that they may carry on various activities in this building in such a way as will help them grow in faith and power, that they may be representatives of thee on the earth, to reach out and touch as far as possible all mankind with the influence of thy Spirit and the knowledge that thou dost live and that Jesus is our Savior. And so we dedicate this particular spot unto thee, the floors, the walls, the ceilings, the roof, the appurtenances and everything in this building, Father, we dedicate for the use of the blessings and the educating of thy children, not only for success in this life, but for success in the life to come. Move them on toward that eternal life which is thy great work and glory to bring about. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.