

“Go Forth to Serve”

BEN B. BANKS

I am certainly humbled and honored to be here on the beautiful campus of Brigham Young University and to be in the presence of President Bateman, the administrators and faculty, and the many members of the student body assembled here at the Marriott Center.

I would like to take a moment and express my great love for President Bateman. It has been my privilege for the past several years to sit next to him at general conference, since seating for the Brethren is arranged alphabetically. I'm grateful for the opportunity of becoming acquainted with him and feeling of his great spirit, dedication, love, and leadership.

My wife and I are also thankful for the influence Brigham Young University has had on our children and for the education they have received here. Perhaps even more important, we're grateful for the continued spiritual guidance and direction the university has provided for them to help fortify the teachings they have received in our family as well as on their missions.

I received the assignment to participate in this devotional just a little over a week ago. I have to admit this last week has been somewhat hectic and also intimidating. I'll explain the intimidating factor in just a moment. Last week I received a letter from Vice President

R. J. Snow extending an official invitation for me to speak at the devotional this morning. President and Sister Snow and Sue and I were called as mission presidents at the same time in 1987—President and Sister Snow to serve in Africa, my wife and I to serve in Scotland. We had the opportunity of becoming well acquainted with each other while attending mission presidents' seminars. It's good to be with the Snows once again.

I would like to share with you one sentence in the letter I received from him: “We hope you will select a topic important to you, knowing that this will be an important opportunity for the campus community to benefit from your experience and testimony.” I have always been impressed upon entering the campus of Brigham Young University with the inscription that greets everyone: “The world is our campus. Enter to learn; go forth to serve.” Both Sue and I were raised in Salt Lake City, but we have spent the better part of the last nine years with the world being our home. We spent two years

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in Scotland as I served as a mission president. Then our service took us from Scotland to the South Pacific, where we lived in Australia and had the blessing and opportunity of serving in Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Cook Islands, and the Kirabati Islands.

Our most recent service has given us the opportunity to serve in the Philippines/Micronesia area, where we've been for the last four years. We returned home a little more than a month ago and are loving the opportunity of getting reacquainted with our children and grandchildren—our newest grandchild here on the front row being about two weeks old.

The intimidating part of preparing to be with you this morning is shared in a very brief story of an experience Sister Banks and I had while touring one of the missions in the southern part of the Philippines several years ago. After one of the zone conference meetings, the mission president's wife, who was a local Filipino sister, came to me and with some hesitation said, "I hope I will not offend you, President, but I thought perhaps you would like to know you were using some words we don't use or understand here in the Philippines."

I assured her that she would not offend me and that I would appreciate her sharing with me what she meant. The Philippines is often referred to as an English-speaking country, but that is true only to a certain extent. The sweet wife of the mission president, Sister Amistad, then proceeded to tell me, "President, you used the word *photograph* today. In the Philippines, we really don't understand what photograph means. What you really mean is 'picture.'" Then she said, "Another word you used throughout the meeting was *bashful*." (I had invited the missionaries to participate with me and not be bashful.) She said, "I went home and looked up in the dictionary what *bashful* meant, and what you really meant is 'shy' and 'timid.'"

I thanked her for sharing this with me and asked her in our meeting the next day if she would write down all the words I used that would not be understood by the Filipinos. She hesitated at first, but with my encouragement she said she would. The next day she produced another 20 words, and I have tried to adapt my vocabulary accordingly.

The intimidating factor I mentioned earlier is that I really believe I have lost much of my vocabulary in the many years I have been gone in trying to learn to converse in understandable terms with the wonderful people we have been blessed to live with throughout the world.

I realize there are many here in this audience this morning who have served missions or have lived in third-world countries. Perhaps there are even those here who have served in the Philippines/Micronesia area. Nevertheless, I felt impressed this morning to share with you for a few minutes what is happening in the Lord's kingdom in the beautiful islands of the Philippines and Micronesia.

The Lord's directive to "send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea" (D&C 133:8) has surely come to pass in the Philippines/Micronesia area. Today there are approximately 1,700 missionaries proclaiming the gospel to nearly 70 million people on the 7,100-plus islands that make up the Philippines and on the major Micronesian islands of Majuro, Ebeye, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, Palau, Saipan, and Guam. In the Micronesia Guam Mission, the missionaries are still mostly Americans, but there are local Micronesians and some Filipino missionaries serving here as well. It is a completely different picture in the Philippines. More than 69 percent of the missionaries are local Filipinos, and many are first-generation converts with only two or three years of Church membership experience.

We have witnessed with amazement the spectacular growth of the Church in the area. President Hinckley often refers to this as "the

miracle of Manila." We have felt the influence of the Holy Spirit distilling over the islands and their peoples. We have watched miracles brought about by the Lord as he has opened the way for the gospel to go forth. Official missionary work really started as a result of President Hinckley's visit to the country in 1961. Calling a special early-morning meeting at the Fort McKinley War Memorial Cemetery, President Hinckley spoke and prayed for the commencement of missionary work in the country. Speaking of that meeting, he said:

I arose at 4:30 a.m. to go out to the American War Memorial Cemetery on the outskirts of Manila. Here are buried 17,168 war-dead, and on the walls are inscribed the names of an additional 36,230 who are missing. At this hour of the morning with the sun rising over the mountains and the sea to the east, and the golden clouds in the sky, it was a marvelous setting. Here we met to invoke the blessings of the Lord upon the missionary work in the Philippines. Surrounded by the reminders of war, we met in the name of the Prince of Peace. I was the final speaker at that early morning meeting. To those present I said, "This is an occasion you will never forget. What we begin here will affect the lives of thousands and thousands of people in this island republic, and its effects will go forth from generation to generation for great and everlasting good."

Today there are more than 375,000 members of the Church in the area. Growth has been stunning. From just 100 members at the end of 1961, the Church in the last decade alone has tripled in size. If this pattern of growth continues, there will be more than one million members in the Philippines by the year 2005. The Church in the Philippines/Micronesia area is in its infancy right now and, just like dealing with infants, needs extra-special care and attention. It is growing quickly and, I believe, will mature into a fully developed entity. The transition to maturity will require lots of

resources for many years to come. If we continue to respond to those needs, the results will be a beacon of hope and light for all to see and recognize in all of Asia.

On a lighter note, Sue and I have battled the traffic, encountered the numerous electrical brownouts, persevered without water, shaken with the earth tremors, and witnessed countless tropical storms and typhoons and the volcanic devastation that continues today from the lahar from Mount Pinatubo. Yes, we would not have missed a minute of it.

Let me share with you one of those lighter moments I think you can relate to. A couple of years ago, while visiting the southern islands of Mindanao for the purpose of organizing a stake from a district in General Santos, Sue and I had the following experience that I will never forget. On Sunday morning, while showering in preparation for our meetings, the water went off. I called to Sue and said, "Sue, the water has just gone off in the shower. Is there any water in the sink?" She checked and said that there was a slight dribble. I said, "Quick, put the dipper under and get me some water so I can get the soap off of me."

As she did, she said, "The water has stopped in the sink also."

So I proceeded to take the towel to wipe off all of the soap. After getting out of the shower, I turned to Sue and said, "What am I going to do? I haven't shaved yet, and I didn't bring my electric razor. I can't go to Church without shaving."

She looked at me and said, "Well, there's still some water in the toilet. I guess you'll just have to shave in the toilet."

I said, "You're kidding!"

She said, "What choice do you have?"

So there I was kneeling on the floor and shaving in the toilet. Her final remarks to me were, "I wish I had a camera to take a picture of this."

There were many similar experiences. But the ones we will remember most are the ones

demonstrating the faith, commitment, dedication, and the example of love for our Father in Heaven and for living prophets and apostles exemplified by the wonderful people in the Philippines and the Micronesian Islands. The Filipino and Micronesian Saints have been endowed with great faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and gifts of the Spirit are very abundant in their lives. I'd like to share some of those spiritual experiences with you. Some of these experiences I have had personally and some have been related to me by members.

Story number one:

Malou Ducta shivered in the darkness as she prayed. The typhoon, still raging out of control, was threatening to shatter the small house where she and the others were huddled. The friendly sea had become a violent stranger. Everybody was crying.

Hours ago, Malou and her family had evacuated their small house of nipa palms and wood at the edge of the sea near the city of Sorsogon. They had waded through chilling chest-deep water and muddy debris to reach a friend's house higher on the hill.

Now, as the tumult outside continued, Malou kept praying. Suddenly she thought of her college notebook! How could she have forgotten it? Tucked inside its cover was the money she had been awarded from a Church scholarship fund. This money would pay for her final exams. With the money, she could take the exams and graduate. Without it, her dreams of graduating—and getting a job to help support her family—would shatter like a tiny nipa hut in a storm.

"I was praying as if talking to a friend, and I said to the Lord, 'It's your money, and you know that if I don't have it, I can't graduate from college.' I kept praying, asking Heavenly Father to save the money."

At 2:00 a.m., the men ventured outside. "They found out that there were no more houses by the seashore," Malou says. In tears, everyone ran to see for themselves. "All were destroyed. All gone."

The shore was littered with debris and with bodies of people and animals that had died in the storm.

"We were just thankful that no one in our family had died," she says. "The only things we were able to save were our lives and the clothes that we wore. I felt comforted about losing my tuition money, because it was only money."

People started digging in the sand and mud, trying to salvage whatever they could find. "One of my cousins shouted at me: 'Oh, this is your folder!' I ran and got it. It was wet, but the money was all there!"

As Malou recalls that moment, she again begins to cry. "Heavenly Father really knows my need."

*The only other belongings Malou's family recovered were some irreplaceable photos — photos of her parents when they were young, a photo of the family dressed in white on their baptism day, and a photo of the family in white on the day they were sealed in the Manila Temple. [Marvin K. Gardner, "Philippine Saints," *Tambuli*, September 1991, pp. 8–11]*

Story number two:

"When I got married," says Consolación Pilobello of Pasay City, "I didn't know how to cook, and I was too superstitious to go to a doctor and get prenatal care. Our first baby died."

She begins to cry. "If only I had been a member of the Church then, we could have saved that baby!"

After baptism, she learned in Relief Society about water purification, sanitation, nutrition, first aid, and immunizations. "I learned how to take care of my children, myself, and my family," she says. Her next seven babies were healthy. [pp. 11–12]

The youngest of those babies now serves as a full-time missionary in the Philippines Baguio Mission, which I recently toured before returning to America.

Story number three:

To get to the Monares family's one-room home in the city of Cebu, you have to walk through a maze of narrow, crowded alleys. When you enter

the tiny room, the first thing you see is a New Era poster. . . .

One shelf of a small bookcase is filled with new copies of the Book of Mormon to give away. "Our son is on a mission," Santos Monares explains.

Brother Monares buys and sells merchandise on the street, hoping to transact enough business to feed his family. When he and his wife, Julieta, first started talking about going to the temple, Julieta didn't want to build up her hopes. She felt it was useless to even try to save enough money for the boat trip. And then Brother Monares was sick for a long time. But somehow, they got enough money together for themselves and four of their children to make the trip.

When Sister Monares went to the market to buy food for the journey, someone pickpocketed all her food money. Again she was tempted to give up. But fast-offering funds helped pay for food, and they finally made it to the Manila Temple. . . .

"In the temple, we forgot all the problems of the outside world," says Brother Monares. [pp. 14–17]

The fourth story is told by Gemma Penafiel:

I was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on May 25, 1991. I was visiting my aunt in Laguna, and she encouraged me to let the missionaries teach me about the Church. . . . It is a very funny story how my two aunties joined the Church. They were sitting under a mango tree when two missionaries passed by. My auntie Cita, who is a very funny woman, told the two missionaries, . . . "Hey Jo, give us chocolate Jo." When the two missionaries heard what she said, they stopped by and arranged the first visit with them. . . .

My daughter Pinky was two and one-half years old. . . .

Our home in Banago was very little, about 6' x 8' . . . with no furniture, but I was happy with that house because Pinky, my auntie, and I have a place to sleep. . . .

I looked for employment and found a job working in a bag factory, where I worked for two and one-half years earning 35 pesos a day [or the

equivalent of \$1.10]. The company I was working for moved to . . . Manila, and I did not want to move there. Pinky was too small for me to make the move. To support my family I began washing clothes for some of my neighbors. I could provide for our food, but if one of us should get sick I did not have enough money to buy the medicine.

One day I was invited to a birthday party in our ward, and the bishop introduced me to two missionary couples, the Broadbents and the Blackhams [former professors of chemistry here at Brigham Young University]. They knew that I knew how to make scripture cases, bags, wallets, and belts. They asked me to make some covers for the mission office in Bacolod. [They] gave me good advice, and I am grateful that I listened to them. . . .

The couples in the mission office helped me a lot, especially . . . Sister Broadbent. . . . You could see all the coin purses that I was making at the top of her table. [They] tried to help me find someone who would buy my products. . . .

. . . When I first joined the Church I started paying tithing at five pesos. I was jobless at the time, but now I am paying much more. When I pay my tithing and fast offerings I always pay a little extra because the Lord has been so good to me.

When the typhoon came in November 1995, we had much difficulty. Half of the roof blew off our house. In front of our house is my mother's store. It is about 6Cx 8C in size. The only roof that was left was over her store. We stayed inside the store the whole night. Ten persons, seven adults, and three kids and three dogs. . . . Our house was fixed with the help from friends and the Church. I was grateful for that. The Lord blessed me with many friends both American and Filipino. They have been an instrument of the Lord to help me. . . .

The scriptures tell us that if we live the commandments as we should, the Lord will bless us. He will provide the way. He is the only one who knows our needs in life and will help us to each reach our goals if we pay our tithes and fast offerings in the Church. . . . I know that the talents he has given to us we must exercise so that he will not take them from us. In all our dealings with others we must

deal with honesty so that we can maintain our integrity. It is important that we do these things so that everywhere we go people will trust [us]. . . .

Each one of us is blessed with different skills, and it is up to us to improve it and share it with others if it is a good quality. . . .

My dream for my family is that we can be sealed in the temple for time and all eternity. . . . I would like to [find] a steady buyer for my products. I would like to send Pinky on a mission some day—that would be a fulfillment of my dreams, that and to let her finish her studies and to have enough food every day of our lives. . . . This is just a dream that I am relying on the Lord to bring to pass, because I believe that “with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). . . .

I am very thankful to the Lord for the talent and all the things that he has given to me and to my family.

This next story is by Elder Ruben G. Gapiz, again showing the tremendous faith of these wonderful people.

In October 1975, I was diagnosed with cancer of the naso-pharynx. The doctor told me I had only five years to live. I underwent chemotherapy for the next three years and had to eventually retire from my job three years later. In August 1978, I received my patriarchal blessing from Patriarch F. Briton McConkie. My wife was in the room with me as he pronounced my patriarchal blessing. Patriarch McConkie did not have any prior knowledge of my affliction. Toward the end of the blessing, he pronounced these words which really struck me and brought tears to my eyes and caused me and my wife to sob softly: “You will live your life to the fullest and will be called to serve in many leadership positions.” After the blessing was over, Patriarch McConkie asked me the reason for my tears. I told him that I had been diagnosed with cancer and that I only had two years to live and that the blessing he pronounced was almost too good to hope for. He assured me that it was the Lord’s blessing and he was only a conduit.

Ever since that visit to the doctor’s office, I have always had a prayer in my heart. I didn’t want my children to grow up without a father. My father was killed in the war, and I had a difficult childhood. I knew that day that the Lord had answered my prayer. It has been 21 years since that day, and I am grateful to the Lord for extending my life.

Brother Ruben Gapiz now serves in a leadership position as one of our area authorities in the Philippines.

There have been many natural and man-made disasters in the Philippines. Stories often appear on TV news around the world of ferry-boats sinking with hundreds losing their lives. You may recall a recent disco fire that killed 160 young people. The frequent typhoons make thousands homeless—all of which serve to remind us that life can be very perilous for many Filipinos.

During the aftermath of Typhoon Rosing in 1995, I visited some of the members’ homes that had been damaged or destroyed. I’d like to share with you two short paragraphs I wrote in my journal on that trip. Here is the first entry:

There was not one home that was not severely damaged. Many were completely leveled to the ground to where it was only a rubble of materials that previously had been their homes. One of the circumstances where children with their mother were having to sleep under tarps would have made you cry had you seen their situation.

And here is the second journal entry:

We took photographs of a building site that had been purchased for a new meetinghouse in Milor. There was a member family staying [there who] had been flooded out of their own home. They are a new convert family. Their home that is flooded and uninhabitable at the present time is located back of the current property where we will build a new chapel. In observing their home this morning, there

was a cobra snake swimming around in their home—which they tried to catch, but it got away.

Everywhere I went I was struck by the power of the typhoon. Little homes that had stood one minute were rendered flat the next. Our people had every reason to be despondent. Scores of towns suffered terrible flooding, with a few of our chapels severely damaged. I noticed many palm trees that had been easily blown over because they had not put their roots down far enough into the earth.

I am reminded that as servants of the Lord it is our duty to make sure that gospel roots are deep and numerous in the developing lands where we serve. Yet despite all these adversities, all the trials and tribulations that the people in the Philippines and Micronesian Islands are subjected to, they maintain faith, commitment, and dedication and the desire to be of service to their fellowmen.

Recently Sue and I had the opportunity and privilege of accompanying President and Sister Hinckley as they attended a special conference in Manila and Cebu. It was a glorious experience, and one that we will never forget. We were reminded yet again of the love our prophet has for those special humble Saints. I don't think I will ever forget the feeling shown by the 35,000-plus members at the Manila conference and the 9,000-plus members in Cebu toward our prophet.

Presiding in the Philippines has taught me that some of the things we take for granted here require huge sacrifices from many Latter-day Saints elsewhere. After the Manila conference with President Hinckley was over, I started to hear stories of sacrifices endured willingly so that members and their families could attend. One family spent most of their life savings so they could travel and see the living prophet. Another large group of Saints journeyed in an open bus in the heat for three days and nights to attend. Even so, such was the number of those wanting to be there in the

presence of President Hinckley, it was still not possible for all to get into the meetings.

Let me tell one last story. Recently a husband and wife traveled to a hospital in Manila to collect their young daughter who was dying of cancer and who the doctors could not save. As they traveled home by cab, the child died in her mother's arms. Instead of going home, the parents immediately instructed the cab driver to take them to the temple. As you can imagine, the arrival of the grieving parents with their dead child caused some heartaches for the temple staff. However, it was significant to me that when this family needed comfort and help the most, their thoughts turned to the temple.

Generally speaking, during times of tragedy, the spirit of the Church membership in the Philippines is not downtrodden. The Filipinos have exceptional resilience and faith in God and an expectation of better things to come.

Few Filipino Saints will ever have the opportunity for the type of education you wonderful young people are receiving here at Brigham Young University. Few will ever have the opportunity to fully develop the talents the Lord has blessed them with by virtue of the circumstances they live in.

I hope as I have shared with you what I feel are many heartrending stories of faith, testimony, commitment, and dedication, you will more fully appreciate the opportunities that are yours. As mentioned earlier, obtaining an education from this wonderful institution of learning is not only to prepare you for your chosen vocations but to help you learn how to use the talents the Lord has blessed you with to be of service to others who are less fortunate.

I remind you again of those inscriptions I referred to earlier: "The world is our campus. Enter to learn; go forth to serve." I encourage you to accept every opportunity that comes to you to develop your talents and to share them with enthusiasm in helping to bless the lives of others. The Lord will certainly make you equal to the task that lies ahead of you when you are

called to use the talents you have been blessed with.

We are all blessed with different talents and different potential. One of the great tragedies of life is when a person classifies himself or herself as someone who has no talents or gifts. In the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby. [D&C 46:11–12]

The late Elder Bruce R. McConkie said:

When we come into mortality, we bring the talents, capacities, and abilities acquired by obedience to law in our prior existence. Mozart composed and published sonatas when but eight years of age because he was born with musical talent.

*Melchizedek came into this world with such faith and spiritual capacity that “when a child he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire.” (Gen. 14:26. Inspired Version.) [“God Foreordains His Prophets and His People,” *Ensign*, May 1974, p. 73]*

I believe each of you young people here today have a responsibility not only after you complete your education but while in the process of completing your education to lose yourself in righteous service to others.

President Lorenzo Snow said:

When you find yourselves a little gloomy, look around you and find somebody that is in a worse plight than yourself; go to him and find out what the trouble is, then try to remove it with the wisdom which the Lord bestows upon you; and the first thing you know, your gloom is gone, you feel light, the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, and everything seems illuminated. [CR, April 1899, pp. 2–3]

Nicholas Murray Butler, the former president of Columbia University, said there are three kinds of people in this world: (1) those that make things happen; (2) those that watch things happen; and (3) those who have no idea of what is happening (“These United States,” *Looking Forward: What Will the American People Do About It?* [New York, London: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1932], p. 17). Where do you classify yourself?

From the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. [D&C 130:18–19]

And section 60 states: “Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known” (D&C 60:13). Maybe you might find yourself some time asking yourself the question “How do I find my talents?” It is not difficult for you young people to sometimes have feelings of inadequacy and failure as you watch the success and acclaim that accompany the performances of some with remarkable talents or gifts. It is understandable how many of us can say to ourselves, “What’s the matter with me? I can’t do anything really well.”

The following story may help those of you who might question if you have the talents we speak of.

The famed naturalist of the last century, Louis Agassiz, was lecturing in London and had done a marvelous job. An obviously bright little old lady, but one who did not seem to have all the advantages in life, came up and was spiteful. She was resentful and said that she had never had the chances that he had had and she hoped he appreciated it. He took that bit of a lacing very pleasantly and turned to the

lady and, when she was through, said, "What do you do?"

She said, "I run a boarding house with my sister. I'm unmarried."

"What do you do at the boarding house?"

"Well, I skin potatoes and chop onions for the stew. We have stew every day."

"Where do you sit when you do that interesting but homely task?"

"I sit on the bottom step of the kitchen stairs."

"Where do your feet rest when you sit there on the bottom step?"

"On a glazed brick."

"What's a glazed brick?"

"I don't know."

"How long have you been sitting there?"

"Fifteen years."

Agassiz concluded, "Here's my card. Would you write me a note when you get a moment about what a glazed brick is?"

Well, that made her mad enough to go home and do it. She went home and got the dictionary out and found out that a brick was a piece of baked clay. That didn't seem enough to send to a Harvard professor, so she went to the encyclopedia and found out that a brick was made of vitrified kaolin and hydrous aluminum silicate, which didn't mean a thing to her. She went to work and visited a brick factory and a tile maker. Then she went back in history and studied a little bit about geology and learned something about clay and clay beds and what hydrous meant and what vitrified meant. She began to soar out of the basement of a boarding house on the wings of words like vitrified kaoline and hydrous aluminum silicate. She finally decided that there were about 120 different kinds of glazed bricks and tiles. She could tell Agassiz that, so she wrote him a little note of thirty-six pages and said, "Here's your glazed brick."

He wrote back, "This is a fine piece of work. If you change this and that and the other, I'll prepare it for publication and send you that which is due you from the publication." She thought no more of it, made the changes, sent it back, and almost by return mail came a check for 250 dollars. His letter

said, "I've published your piece. What was under the brick?"

And she said, "Ants."

He replied (all of this by mail), "What's an ant?"

She went to work and this time she was excited. She found 1,825 different kinds of ants. She found that there were ants that you could put three to the head of a pin and still have standing room left over. She found that there were ants an inch long that moved in armies half a mile wide and destroyed everything in their path. She found that some ants were blind; some ants lost their wings on the afternoon they died; some milked cows and took the milk to the aristocrats up the street. She found more ants than anybody had ever found, so she wrote Mr. Agassiz something of a treatise, numbering 360 pages. He published it and sent her the money and royalties, which continued to come in. She saw the lands and places of her dreams on a little carpet of vitrified kaolin and on the wings of flying ants that may lose their wings on the afternoon they die.

[Jeffrey R. Holland, "Borne upon Eagles' Wings," in *Speeches of the Year, 1974* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), pp. 402–3; see also Marion D. Hanks, *The Gift of Self* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974), pp. 151–53]

Yes, daily unselfish service to others is one of the rudimentary mechanics of a successful life. The Lord counsels us as follows: "The works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do" (3 Nephi 27:21).

Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned. [D&C 58:27–29]

I believe that each of us have a responsibility to search for good causes in using the talents that the Lord has blessed us with to be of service to others. In his October 1984 conference address, Elder Dallin H. Oaks said:

Service is an imperative for those who worship Jesus Christ. To followers who were vying for prominent positions in his kingdom, the Savior taught, “Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” (Matt. 20:27.) [“Why Do We Serve?” Ensign, November 1984, p. 12]

If our service is to be most efficacious, it must be accomplished for the love of God and for the love of his children.

It has been said, “Service is the rent we pay for our own room on earth.” Yes, peace and joy and blessings will follow those who freely give service to others. Service changes people. It refines, purifies, and brings out the best in each one of us as we freely give of ourselves to those in need.

In a conference address in October 1991, President Monson said:

Should our load seem heavy or the results of our efforts discouraging, we may well recall the words of President Kimball to some who noted his undeviating devotion to his calling even in his advancing years: “My life is like my shoes—to be worn out in service.” (“He Is at Peace,” Ensign, Dec. 1985, p. 41.) [Thomas S. Monson, “Called to Serve,” Ensign, November 1991, p. 48]

In his great farewell address, King Benjamin taught: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). There are few rewards in life that bring greater feelings of satisfaction, joy, and peace than when one gives meaningful service to a fellow being standing in need.

Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, was the perfect example of the two great commandments:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. [Matthew 22:37–40]

Though your life’s journey, my young friends, may never take you to places like the Philippines or Micronesia, I suspect that there is no place upon this earth where there will not be needs for your love and your service in blessing others and touching their lives and helping to bring joy and peace to them.

Yes, the world will continue to be your campus. As you have learned, learn the most important lesson of all as you go out to serve in giving of your time, talents, and all that the Lord has blessed you with for the building of the kingdom of God. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ certainly gave us the greatest example as he spent his life ministering to other’s needs. He taught both through word and deed that “he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:11). Doing likewise is the ultimate demonstration of a person’s love for God and for others. One’s treatment of others is a true manifestation of his or her love of God.

I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to be with you today. And I pray the Lord’s blessings upon you, that his Spirit will touch each of your hearts and souls with a greater commitment to be of service to your fellowmen and to bless their lives with your testimony, your faith, and your example.

I bear my witness and testimony to you that the church to which you and I belong is the only true church upon the face of the earth today, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I bear my humble witness and testimony to you that I know that Joseph Smith saw what he said he saw. As the Father turned to the Son with those seven words,

“This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (JS—H 1:17), the Prophet then became the instrument in the hands of our Father in Heaven to establish his church and kingdom here upon this earth never to be taken from the earth again. I bear my witness and testimony to you that I know that President Gordon B. Hinckley is a prophet of God who holds all the priesthood keys of the kingdom that are necessary to prepare for our Lord’s eventual millennial reign.

I bear witness that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. I try to comprehend how one could have such great love, even allow his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, a god himself, to come to earth to offer himself a sacrifice to fulfill the Atonement and Resurrection that you and I might live again. Of these things I bear testimony and pray the Lord’s blessings upon you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.