

As We Now Go Forth

MATTHEW N. DALEY

My wife's great-uncle and great-aunt are two of the kindest, most spiritual people I know, but financially their life together has often been less than comfortable. He worked as a schoolteacher, and she stayed home with the four children. From a fairly young age, the great-aunt suffered from various medical problems, and medical expenses put an almost unmanageable strain on the family's modest income. One of their few possessions was a beat-up, unreliable old car.

One day a woman unknown to the family arrived unannounced with the key to a new automobile, donated by an anonymous individual. To this day, this couple still does not know the identity of their benefactor.

Fellow graduates, think for a moment upon ways in which you have been blessed. Perhaps foremost among our blessings, and far more valuable than an automobile, is an education at one of the finest institutions in the world. Reflect for a moment upon what made this education possible. Many had a portion of their schooling financed by scholarships or grants. Perhaps parents, high school teachers, Church leaders, mentors, or college professors encouraged us in our education or supported us during times of self-doubt or other challenges. All of us have benefited from BYU's

renowned reputation, forged by earlier graduates who built careers and communities based on integrity and intellectual achievement.

Today as we look around us, we see men and women trained "even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118), and we find ourselves prepared to enter the Lord's and society's service in new and thrilling ways. Dividends of many types will certainly accrue as we reap the rewards of our training. Undoubtedly we have been given much, and "unto whom much is given much is required" (D&C 82:3).

I recently read in the BYU Marriott School alumni magazine an article that related the following inspiring story of a man who lived the spirit of giving:

On 23 December 1999 there was a poor man in Kansas City looking for some warm winter clothing in a Salvation Army thrift shop. He had seventy-five cents in his pocket. Suddenly someone approached him from behind and said, "Excuse me." He turned around, and a man pushed a hundred-dollar bill into his hand, said, "Merry Christmas," and walked away.

Matthew N. Daley spoke as the representative of his graduating class at BYU commencement on 24 April 2008.

That wasn't the first time something like this had happened. It had been going on for years, and no one knew the giver's identity. He was only known as Secret Santa. He would walk around during the Christmas season giving money to people who needed food, clothing, or shelter.

He came forward in 2006, because he had terminal cancer and was given one month to live. His doctor told him that if he wanted anybody to understand his mission then he should reveal his identity. Secret Santa's real name was Larry Stewart, and he was a very wealthy entrepreneur.

He'd given away \$1.3 million in hundred-dollar bills, but he had also given away tens of millions of dollars more in traditional philanthropy. . . .

When the press asked him why he gave so much, he said, "I'm just doing what the Lord is directing me to do. I'm just a pair of hands and feet. He's using me. He's lighted my path. Part of my daily prayer was, 'Lord, let me be a better servant.' I had no idea this is what he had in mind, but I'm happy. I'm so thrilled he is able to use me in this way."
[Arthur C. Brooks, "The Privilege of Giving," *Marriott Alumni Magazine*, winter 2008, 16–18]

What a tremendous example of one who used his resources to help meet community needs. For many of us the time is still far distant when we can donate millions of dollars to philanthropic causes, but even the graduate's \$10 bill, like the widow's mite, can bless giver and receiver alike.

In his book *Winners Never Cheat*, self-made billionaire Jon Huntsman, Sr., devoted an entire chapter to charitable giving. Mr. Huntsman has given hundreds of millions of dollars to worthy causes, including the famous Huntsman Cancer Institute. The avid philanthropist arose from humble beginnings, earning only \$320 a month early in his married life, but he and his wife made the conscious decision to give to worthy causes every year. He wrote, "You don't have to be a billionaire to be a philanthropist. . . . All that is required to be a philanthropist is a passion for making a differ-

ence" (Jon M. Huntsman, *Winners Never Cheat: Everyday Values That We Learned as Children* [Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Wharton School Publishing, 2005], 169–70).

I should note, however, that financial contributions are not the only means by which we may serve others. My wife, a recent BYU graduate, is a superb example to me in this regard. For the past two years she has worked as a special education teacher at a local elementary school. With the upcoming birth of our daughter, she looks forward to early retirement as a public educator and the beginning of a full-time career as a mother. Nonetheless, she's already eager to use her training as an educator to bless the lives of individuals outside of our family. In the fall we'll relocate to Dallas, and my thoughtful wife has already begun searching for voluntary child welfare organizations in which she can serve.

Her example teaches me that ultimately a BYU education isn't about what it can do for us. The real question is: How can the skills and training received at BYU bless the lives of those around us? Examples may include the accounting graduate who provides free income tax return assistance to low-income families, the nursing graduate who volunteers to teach a car seat safety course in the community, the political science graduate who helps citizens register to vote, or the English graduate who tutors disadvantaged children. Each of us is in an exciting position to determine how our individual skills and knowledge may best be used to meet community needs. My friends, there are endless ways in which we may serve and thus meet the call of the Master, who proclaimed that what we do unto the least of God's children, we do unto Him (see Matthew 25:40).

May we always stay close to Him, may we cherish our BYU experience, and may we seek always to share our blessings with others. Congratulations, fellow graduates, and best wishes for future success and service. Thank you.