THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE GOALS OF BYU-HAWAII CAMPUS

by

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The leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have long been advocates of education. The reason for this is that modern L.D.S. Church scriptures support education and learning.(1)

Because of this belief in education for all members, the Church has had a history of establishing schools in areas lacking adequate private or government institutions.(2) For example, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has operated both elementary and secondary schools, when they have been needed, in Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, and New Zealand.

On July 21, 1954, David O. McKay, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, announced the intent of the Church to establish a college in Hawaii. The site selected for the college was in Laie, Hawaii, on the north shore of Oahu approximately thirty-eight miles from Honolulu. Groundbreaking services for the new campus were held on February 12, 1955; and in September, 1955, 153 students enrolled and attended classes in temporary buildings. The new school was named The Church College of Hawaii and began its existence as a junior college.

The first permanent facilities were completed by December, 1956. In July of 1959 the third and fourth years were added to make the college a four-year institution offering the bachelors degree. The Church College of Hawaii continued to prosper as a liberal arts college with a strong vocationl emphasis.

On September 1, 1974, The Church College of Hawaii was renamed Brigham Young University-Hawaii Campus. Dr. Dallin H. Oaks, President of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, was named head of the school and Dr. Dan W. Andersen was named Dean and chief administrator in Hawaii. In 1976 Dr. Andersen's title was changed to Executive Vice-President and in 1979 to President to better express his actual duties on the new Hawaii Campus of Brigham Young University.

A knowledge of the commitment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to learning and the early development of the LDS Church in Hawaii is necessary to fully understand how the objectives of BYU--Hawaii Campus evolved.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE L.D.S. CHURCH IN HAWAII

Some significant events took place during the development of the LDS Church in Hawaii which paved the way for the eventual founding of The Church College of Hawaii.

THE MORMON MISSIONARIES

The first group of Mormon missionaries arrived in Honolulu from California on December 12, 1850. The next day, after resting from their long journey, they climbed into the hills above Honolulu. There they built a crude altar from a few rocks and dedicated the Hawaiian islands to missionary work. A beautiful mural honoring this event is now located in the lobby of The Church College of Hawaii.(3)

These first Mormon missionaries found very little success among the haoles (whites) in Hawaii. Some of the missionaries eventually became discouraged and returned home. The youngest missionary in the group, George Q. Cannon, decided to stay and work among the Hawaiians. He learned the Hawaiian language and started to teach, with great success, the restored gospel.

The decision by George Q. Cannon, and the other remaining missionaries, to preach among the Hawaiians proved to be inspired. The members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that the Polynesians are a branch of the House of Israel.(4) They came to the Hawaiian Islands from America by ship in approximately 55 B.C. Over the years they lost their knowledge about God and began to worship false deities. Mormons believe that many of the Polynesians will eventually accept the restored gospel and join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.(5)

The success of Mormon missionaries in converting large numbers of Polynesians to the L.D.S. Church and the conviction that they are a branch of the House of Israel who need to be retaught their lost beliefs were major factors in the eventual founding of The Church College of Hawaii.(6)

LAIE, THE GATHERING PLACE

The success of the early Mormon missionaries in converting large numbers of Hawaiians to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints soon made it necessary, in the opinion of L.D.S. Church leaders, to establish a gathering place. The purpose of the gathering was to establish a place where members of the Church could live together and strengthen each other economically, culturally, intellectually, and spiritually.

Land was first leased on the island of Lanai where members of the Church settled. Because of the dishonesty of a member named Walter Gibson, however, this settlement was soon lost. Gibson was excommunicated from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At that time, it was discovered that all of the Church land on Lanai was in Walter Gibson's name and he refused to return ownership of it. President Brigham Young
promptly sent two former Hawaii missionaries, George Nebeker and E.A. Hammond, to locate a new gathering place. Laie was selected and approximately 6,000 acres of land was purchased by the Church in 1885.

President Young immediately instructed Elder Nebeker to organize a group to colonize Laie. He recruited mechanics, farmers and other experts in Utah who went to live in Laie. Care was taken to pick family men who had been missionaries in Hawaii and could speak the language. Word was sent throughout Hawaii that members of the Church could find a home in Laie. When they arrived, they were given the use of leasehold land large enough to build a house and to grow much of the food they needed for their families. In this way Laie gradually became the gathering place for members of the Mormon Church in Hawaii.

This early period in the history of Laie, although a difficult one for members who lived there, is considered a time of preparation for the eventual establishment of The Church College of Hawaii. During this time, certain events took place that were of major importance in this preparation.

FUTURE OF LAIE PREDICTED. The early settlers of Laie lived through very difficult times. Two of the most difficult problems were a shortage of fresh water and the strong salt winds that blew through Laie killing much of what was planted. Many of the settlers became discouraged and were about to leave. A meeting was held to seek a solution. Attending the meeting was Joseph F. Smith, a member of the First Presidency and a future President of the Church. He listened to the problems and then spoke to the group. His answer to the problems and the desire of some to leave came in the form of the following prophecy:

My brothers and sisters, do not leave this land, for this place has been chosen by the Lord as a gathering place for the Saints of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hawaii. Do not complain because of the many trials which come to you, because of the barrenness of the land, the lack of water, the scarcity of foods to which you are accustomed, and poverty as well. Be patient, for the day is coming when this land will become a most beautiful land. Water shall spring forth in abundance, and upon the barren land you now see, the Saints will build homes, taro will be planted, and there will be plenty to eat and drink. Many trees will be planted and this place will become verdant, the fragrance of flowers will fill the air, and trees which are now seen growing on the mountains will be moved by the Saints and will grow in this place near the sea, and because of the great beauty of the land, birds will come here and sing their songs.

And upon this place the glory of the Lord will rest, to bless the Saints who believe in Him and keep his commandments. And there are some in this house who will live to see all these things fulfilled, which I have spoken from the Lord.

Therefore, do not waiver, work with patience, continue on, stand firm, keep the commandments and also the laws of the gathering, and you will receive greater blessings, both spiritual and temporal, than you now enjoy or have enjoyed in the past. May the Lord be with all of us. (8)

Joseph F. Smith's prophecy inspired these faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to stay and to continue the work that would lead to the eventual fulfillment of the promises made to them. Many of those who were at the meeting lived to see these things come to pass. The work of these early settlers in bringing about the fulfillment of this prophecy was a major step in the development of Laie. Their sacrifices led to greater economic security and greater spiritual growth. Their work toward the accomplishment of these goals made it possible for other important events, necessary for the fulfillment of all the purposes of the gathering, to take place.

THE MORMON TEMPLE. In 1900, George Q. Cannon, then a member of the First Presidency of the Church, returned to Hawaii to take part in the jubilee celebration of the founding of the Hawaiian Mission. While in Hawaii, he predicted that a temple would eventually be built in Laie. This came to pass when the site was dedicated on June 1, 1915, by President Joseph F. Smith. Construction began the next year; and the Temple was dedicated on November 27, 1919, by Heber J. Grant, then President of the Church. During the dedication President Grant predicted that many people would visit Laie and be inspired by this place. The Temple, a magnificent structure with grounds that are beautifully landscaped, became one of the outstanding tourist destinations in Hawaii. (9)

Of greater significance, however, was the role the Temple played in the spiritual lives of members of the L.D.S. Church in Hawaii, the South Pacific, and Asia. The building of the first L.D.S. Temple outside of the continental United States in Laie made this small village the center of spiritual life for this part of the world. It made the development of a higher quality of spiritual living for Church members in Laie and full achievement of this particular goal for the gathering possible. (10)

THE CHURCH COLLEGE OF HAWAII

The purpose of the gathering was to establish a place where members of the Church could live together and strengthen each other economically, culturally, intellectually, and spiritually. Much progress had taken place in the economic and spiritual
development of Laie due to the sacrifices and faith of the people. The fulfillment of President Joseph F. Smith's prophecy about the future of Laie and the building of the Hawaii L.D.S. Temple were important events in this progress.

Intellectual development, as has already been stated, has always been an important goal of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It should be no surprise that it was an important part of the gathering. Economic and spiritual development in Laie made intellectual growth, in harmony with the restored gospel, possible.

THE VISION OF THE CHURCH COLLEGE

The first school in Laie was started by one teacher in 1873 who taught only English. After eight years, the Hawaiian Mission took over operation of the school. They appointed a missionary principal and teachers. The staff developed a typical elementary curriculum and operated the school until 1907 when it was taken over by the Territory of Hawaii. It was at this small elementary school in 1921 that Elder David O. McKay, later to become President of the Church, saw the vision that a college would eventually be established in Laie.

Elder McKay, a teacher by profession, attended a flag raising ceremony at the Church school on the morning of February 7, 1921. He described what took place and the lasting impression it made on him in a talk thirty-four years later:

In that little group of students were Hawaiians, what do you call them -- Haoles, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and Filipinos. We listened to each one, a representative from each of these groups, pay tribute to the stars and stripes as the flag was pulled up there on the flagpole and all vowed allegiance. That ceremony brought tears to my eyes. Truly the melting pot, but more impressive than that was our assembly in the old chapel that stood by. There we met as members of the Church of Jesus Christ--Hawaiians, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, all the races represented on this island. There we met as one, members of the church, the restored Church of Christ. What an example in this little place of the purposes of our Father in Heaven to unite all peoples by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Further understanding of this important event can be gained by studying a quotation from Elder McKay's diary for Monday, February 7, 1921, the day the ceremony took place:

As I looked at that motley group of youngsters, and realized how far apart their parents are in hopes, inspirations, and ideals, and then thought of these boys and girls, the first generation of their children, all thrown into what Israel Zangweil had aptly called the "Melting Pot" and coming out American, my bosom swelled with emotion and tears came to my eyes, and I felt like bowing in prayer and thanking for the glorious country which is doing so much for all these nationalities. But more than that, when I realize that these same boys and girls have the opportunity of participating in all the blessings of the Gospel which will transform the American into a real citizen of the Kingdom of God, I feel to praise His name for the glorious privileges vouch-safed to this generation. We held short services in the school room in which all-American, Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino--participated as though they had belonged to one nation, one country, one tongue.

America and the Church of Christ will truly make of all nations one blood. May God hasten the day when this is accomplished.

Because of this choice experience, Elder McKay saw that the people in Laie had progressed sufficiently in meeting the goals of the gathering that a college would eventually be needed for them to be able to advance further. He also believed that the college would not only bring together the many races who now lived in Hawaii, but the entire Pacific as well.

The building of the L.D.S. Temple established Laie as the center of spiritual life for members of the Church in the Pacific. The eventual building of the college would further assist in spiritual growth and establish Laie as the center of intellectual development for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in this area of the world.

A beautiful mosaic honoring this important historical event is now located above the entrance of the David O. McKay Building on the campus of The Church College of Hawaii. The campus, like the Temple, attracts many thousands of visitors every year.

TEACH ALL GOOD THINGS

Early Church leaders dedicated Laie as the gathering place for the many races who live in Hawaii. The original purpose of the gathering was to establish a place where members of the Church could live together and strengthen each other economically, culturally, intellectually, and spiritually. Considerable progress had taken place in the economic and spiritual development of the people in Laie; and President David O. McKay believed that a college was necessary for further advancement. He also believed that the original goals of the gathering place should be expanded. The building of the L.D.S. Temple in Laie established this small village as the center of spiritual life for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Pacific. The founding of The Church College of Hawaii--which became a reality on September 26, 1955--
would further assist in spiritual growth and establish Laie as the center of intellectual development in this part of the world. The goals of the gathering needed to be expanded, President McKay believed, to prepare the residents of Laie for this role of Church leadership and service. (16) These expanded goals were not new to President McKay and other leaders. They had become a part of L.D.S. doctrine as early as 1832. On December 27, 1832, Joseph Smith, in a statement Mormons believe is scripture inspired by God, instructed members of the church as follows:

And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the Kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;

Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms.

That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you. (17)

David O. McKay, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, referred to these verses on two important occasions related to The Church College of Hawaii to explain the purpose for which that school was established. The first time was at the ground breaking and dedication services. (18) The second was in the dedicatory prayer for the new buildings at the permanent campus. (19) Elder Marion G. Romney also cited these same scriptures, used by President McKay supporting his beliefs about Church education, as the source of his own views on the subject. Elder Romney, now a member of the First Presidency of the Church, supported this concept of education during a talk given in Hawaii when he said, "The objective of Church education is, therefore, to teach the truth, all truth, in the light of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ." He also said that once a person learns sufficient truth, it is his duty to serve in church positions. (20) It is clear, then, that The Church College of Hawaii, in the view of Church leaders, was established to help students develop spiritually and intellectually, and, in so doing, provide educated persons to serve in leadership and service positions.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. President David O. McKay considered spiritual development of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to be the most important goal for the new college. In a meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Monday, June 13, 1955, he told President Reuben D. Law to always bear in mind the following charge as he proceeded with the new college:

The students must be imbued with the fact and be led to feel the most important thing in the world is the Gospel, and that observance of its principles in their lives brings happiness and joy in this life and further joy, progress, and exaltation in the life hereafter. (21)

Elder Marion G. Romney added additional understanding about this goal when he made the following statement in a talk about The Church College of Hawaii:

The peculiar educational function of the Church, however, even in its schools, does not lie in the area of secular learning. It lies, as already indicated, in the field of religious education. The Church's mission is now, as it has always been, to teach the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. (22)

The most important goal for The Church College of Hawaii, as can be seen from these two quotes, is to teach students the gospel of Jesus Christ and an understanding of the importance of living its principles to their future success and happiness.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT. The objective of Church education according to Elder Marion G. Romney is to teach all truth in light of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. This includes both spiritual and intellectual (secular) education. (23) President David O. McKay separated intellectual education into two important segments, vocational (economic) and general:

1. In a talk given at The Church College of Hawaii, President David O. McKay said, "Students enter school primarily to gain economic or social advantage." He went on to say, "We must not underestimate the value of obtaining an education for a livelihood." President McKay further stated that education for economic advancement is a good investment for the individual and that is should be included as part of intellectual training. He believed, however, that the highest purpose of secular education can be achieved only through general education. (24)

2. The most important outcome of general education is the same as spiritual education and that is to teach correct principles. President McKay said:

It is principles, and everlasting principles, not data, not facts, not helpful hints, but principles which the rising generation requires if it is to find its way through the mazes of tomorrow. Only through proper education can these fundamental principles become fixed and guiding influences in the lives of human beings. (25)
President McKay believed that students who learn correct principles, consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ and who are obeying those principles will develop manhood, character, and make noble men and women. The world needs them. One man said the world needs men who cannot be bought or sold, men who will soon to violate truth, genuine gold. That is what this school is going to produce.(26)

LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE. A natural and intellectual development, church leaders believed, would be to provide educated persons to serve in leadership and service positions in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and throughout the world. David W. Cummings in his book, CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF LAIE, commented:

...the eye of prophecy forsees a lofty destiny of international sweep for Laie. Learning and wisdom and moral strength are nourished on its soil. Seers again and again have predicted that the youth who come out of Laie will wield a far-reaching influence in the spread of liberty and truth among the nations rimming the Pacific.(27)

This far-reaching influence should, according to Church leaders, include: (1) service in the Church, (2) teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, (3) service to mankind, and (4) work for world peace:

1. Elder Ralph E. Woolley, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Church College of Hawaii, in an address to graduating students at the school on June 1, 1957, made it clear that it was their duty to serve the Church. He instructed them to go back to your homes and into your wards and your branches, wherever it may be, to ask the Bishop or the Branch President for an opportunity to give of yourselves unselfishly for the advancement of others who haven't had the opportunity that you have had.(28)

Elder Marion G. Romney supported this same view in a talk given at The Church College of Hawaii on December 17, 1958.(29) It is clear from the statements of these two Church leaders that a major goal of the college was to provide educated persons for key positions in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hawaii and other areas served by the school.

2. The mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, according to Elder Marion G. Romney, has always been to teach the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to all of the world.(30) President David O. McKay, in a statement Mormons consider to be prophecy, made the following prediction:

We dedicate our actions in this service unto thee and unto thy glory and to the salvation of the children of men, that this college, and the temple, and the town of Laie may become a missionary factor, influencing not thousands, not tens of thousands, but millions of people who will come seeking to know what this town and its significance are.(31)

One of the major reasons for the establishment of The Church College of Hawaii was to prepare persons to fulfill this prophecy by teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, and Elder Ralph E. Woolley made this clear to students at the school when he told them, "You will be the missionaries who go into the fields of labor and preach Jesus Christ and his mission."(32)

3. President Reuben D. Law understood that one of the major goals of The Church College of Hawaii was to prepare persons for service to mankind. In a talk at the school on February 12, 1955, he made this comment:

I sincerely pray that our Father in Heaven will bless every righteous endeavor of this college, that those who come here may develop in their souls a burning testimony and a desire to serve our fellowmen, that we might always have a desire to enlarge ourselves, to learn, not being content with a little knowledge but to convert that knowledge into wisdom, to weave it into the fiber of our lives.(33)

President David O. McKay agreed that the college should develop men and women of high moral character who can go into the world and be of service. He said that the value of these people would be as "golden goyle in the world needs them. They will not just serve as teachers in Hawaii but everywhere. President McKay said that the Church had many good men and women in leadership positions throughout the United States and that they were recognized for their fine moral quality and as an influence for good. He stated that this is the kind of person The Church College of Hawaii is going to produce, one who radiates an influence that is the very best of the blend of spiritual and intellectual ideals that the college had been charged to teach.(34)

4. Elder David O. McKay attended a flag raising ceremony at The Church College of Hawaii on December 17, 1958. He was from this experience that he envisioned the need for a college to be established in Laie to serve the people of Hawaii and other areas of the Pacific. From this experience, also, came inspiration for the major goals for the new school. As the flag raising ceremony progressed, he became very interested in the different races represented at the Church school. He observed Americans, Hawaiians, Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese and Filipino children, many of the races represented in Hawaii, united in expressing loyalty to their new country. As he looked
at this group of children, he realized how far apart they were in hopes, aspirations and ideals and was impressed with the sense of unity that seemed to bind them together. When the flag raising ceremony was over, the group moved into the old chapel where a devotional assembly was held. There they met as members of The Church of Jesus Christ as Latter-day Saints. Elder McKay understood that the source of the unity that brought these different races together to live in relative peace and harmony was the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. He knew that what was taking place in Laie, if duplicated on a larger scale, could make a significant contribution to world peace. The memory of this event was a lasting one for Elder McKay. Thirty-four years later, when he was president of the Church, he commented about the experience in a talk in Hawaii by saying, "What an example in this little place of the purposes of our Father in Heaven to unite all peoples by the Gospel of Jesus Christ." President McKay believed strongly, "that the gospel plan, as revealed by our Father in Heaven through His Son to the Prophet Joseph, is the only plan by which the world, by obedience, may obtain peace." During the same talk, in a statement that Mormons consider to be inspired, he predicted that "from this school, I'll tell you, will go men and women whose influence will be felt for good toward the establishment of peace internationally." (35) President McKay believed that this prophecy would eventually be fulfilled by leaders who have been educated at The Church College of Hawaii as they serve in Church positions, teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and serve mankind. (36)

THE COLLEGE SHOULD BE CREDITABLE. President David O. McKay instructed President Law in a meeting on November 4, 1954, that the new college should be, "thoroughly creditable." On November 1, 1954, "He reaffirmed his desire to have everything about the school substantially built and a credit to the Church." Seven months later he again emphasized the importance of this goal when he said, "The college must be fully creditable in all instruction and activities." (37) In the dedicatory prayer for the permanent buildings at the college on December 17, 1958, he asked God to, "Bless this institution that it may hold the respect of sister educational institutions and wield an influence throughout the world for good in all educational circles." (38) From these quotes, there can be little doubt that President McKay considered this goal to be of utmost importance for the success of the college.

NOTES


4. Cummings, p. 3.


6. Law, p. 16.


8. Cummings, pp. 3-10.


11. Cummings, pp. 8, 15, 17.


13. Law, p. 28.


15. McKay, Ground Breaking.


18. McKay, Ground Breaking.

19. Statements by David O. McKay, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the Dedicationary Prayer at the Dedication of The Church College of Hawaii, Laie, Hawaii,
December 17, 1958.


22. Romney, Dedication.

23. Romney, Dedication.

24. Statements by David O. McKay, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in an address at the Dedication of The Church College of Hawaii, Laie, Hawaii, December 17, 1958.

25. McKay, Dedication.


28. Statement by Ralph E. Woolley, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of The Church College of Hawaii, in an address at their Second Annual Commencement Exercises, Laie, Hawaii, June 1, 1957.

29. Romney, Dedication.


31. McKay, Dedicatory Prayer at the Ground Breaking.

32. Woolley, Second Annual Commencement Exercises.

33. Statements by Reuben D. Law, President of The Church College of Hawaii, in an address at the Ground Breaking and Dedication Service, Laie, Hawaii, February 12, 1955.

34. McKay, Ground Breaking.

35. McKay, Ground Breaking.

36. McKay, Dedicatory Prayer at the Dedication.

37. Reuben D. Law, "Diary of Reuben D. Law."

38. McKay, Dedicatory Prayer at the Dedication.