

ELDER HENRY D. TAYLOR

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

● The month was July; the year, 1959. My family and I were on a vacation trip in western Canada. On Thursday, July 2, we were visiting with friends in Lethbridge when the telephone rang. The long distance operator had inquired for me. Upon picking up the receiver, I became aware of a familiar voice that said something like this: "Henry, this is Marion G. Romney. Congratulations."

I was greatly startled and replied: "Thanks very much, Brother Romney, but for what?"

Call to Welfare Program

He continued: "I have just come from a meeting of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. You were named to be the managing director of the General Church Welfare Program to succeed Elder Harold B. Lee. I have been selected to be chairman of the committee to succeed Elder Henry D. Moyle, who, as you are aware, is now a member of the First Presidency." He went on to say: "I have been authorized by the Brethren to advise you of this appointment before you read it in the newspapers. I will talk with you further when you return to Salt Lake."

It has been a wonderful ten years since this calling came to me. While I have had a constant and continuing appreciation for the Welfare Program ever since its inception, this appreciation has increased and deepened as I have become more intimately acquainted with its operations, with its many ramifications, its lofty purposes and objectives.

Care of poor and needy

It is pleasing to the Lord that the poor and needy be provided for. Running like a golden thread through the scriptures, which contain the word of the Lord, comes a message loud and clear: "Thou shalt remember the poor and the needy."

The Lord has affirmed and reaffirmed that it is his purpose to see that they are cared for, but he has

made it equally plain and clear that it must be done in the way and manner that he will indicate or prescribe.

In spite of the Lord's concern for the well-being of the needy, he has pointed out and proclaimed emphatically that they themselves have a responsibility, and if they find it necessary to seek assistance from the Church, they are under obligation to work to the extent of their physical ability for that assistance. Idleness has been designated by the Lord as being a curse, and to receive without giving is contrary to his desires. The beautiful and vital principle of work removes the Welfare Program from the category of a dole, which has been denounced as an evil. To re-enthroned work and make it a ruling principle in the lives of the Church members is one of the primary purposes of the Welfare Program.

Rewarding principle of work

A man over 30 years of age had never been able to work, due to cerebral palsy, from which he had suffered since birth. He was brought by his bishop to a Deseret Industries plant, where someone with love and kindness patiently taught him to cut the buttons from old clothes that were brought daily into the Deseret Industries plant. This became something he could do, and fairly skillfully, too. For the first time in his life this man felt he was a useful member of society. With joy and pride he turned each day to his humble task. And then came the day that he received his first pay check. With trembling, uncontrolled movements he took the check, read the amount eagerly, and proudly placed it in his wallet as he had seen others do, but which he had never been able to do in all his 30 years until this great moment. What a blessed privilege is the rewarding principle of work!

People to help themselves

The Lord expects each individual to care for himself. Faithful Latter-day

Saints have traditionally taken pride in maintaining their own independence. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Each individual will strive to live within his income. He will avoid debt as he would a plague. When times are good he will lay a little aside each month in storage of commodities and cash, to provide for the "rainy days." Then, in the event of ill health, unemployment, or other justifiable conditions, he will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has done all possible to provide for himself. But after he has exhausted his own resources, his family then has not only the responsibility and obligation, but also the *privilege* of helping him. When the individual and his family have done all within their power to provide for his needs, he may then look to the Church for assistance.

Preferential claim on funds

It would seem that the care of the needy has always had a preferential claim on the funds of the Church. President Heber J. Grant, as he instructed a stake presidency, gave the comforting assurance that "before the Church would allow its members to suffer want, it would close every Church School, every Seminary and every Temple." (Albert E. Bowen, *The Church Welfare Plan*, p. 144.)

The bishop is the key figure in the Welfare Program, and its success depends upon him. The Lord by revelation has placed upon him the responsibility for determining those who are to receive Church assistance and to what extent.

In this way the Lord has outlined his way of caring for the poor and needy.

A sense of security

Although we are presently living in prosperous times and all seems well in Zion, the situation could change and change rapidly. In our lifetime we have seen the nations of the world in death struggles, have seen a devastating depression and several economic recessions. The Lord's way—the noble Welfare Plan of the Church—gives to

each of us, especially the fathers, who are usually the breadwinners, and the widows, a solid sense of security. For we know that the Church stands ready, in the background, to assist in a crisis or emergency.

Blesses people spiritually

As we view the operation of the many types of welfare projects—the farms, the cattle ranches, fruit orchards, citrus groves and poultry flocks, the canneries, the coal mine and flour mill, the cheese and soap factories, the Desert Industries plants—we get the impression that all these are physical and temporal in nature. But President McKay has reminded us that to the Lord nothing is temporal; to him all things are spiritual, and the Welfare Program must do more than just feed the hungry and clothe the naked if it is to achieve its intended purposes. It must uplift, build, and bless the people spiritually. There are undoubtedly more persons in the world today who are spiritually hungry than who are physically starving.

It has been a rich and rewarding experience to associate during these many years in the welfare cause with President McKay, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., and President Moyle; with Elder Lee and Elder Romney, our advisers; with the First Presidency; and with Bishop Vandenberg and his counselors.

I am deeply grateful for my association with the personnel in the welfare office. These, my colleagues, are faithful, devoted, loyal, and dedicated workers in the program.

An inspired program

The Welfare Program is an inspired program because it is of the Lord and not of man. Brethren who are in a position to know have borne testimony that as a result of inspiration and revelation through the Holy Ghost to President Grant, the Welfare Program was introduced back in 1936. It is truly the gospel in action.

In the early days of the program, President McKay made this prophetic promise: "The Church Security [now Welfare] Plan has not come up as a

mushroom overnight. It is the result of inspiration, and that inspiration has come from the Lord. . . . Those who have selfishness in their heart would like to see it fail, but it is *not* going to fail."

And to these testimonies I would add

mine: that this unselfish, wonderful program is an inspired plan, and I bear witness that I know it is the Lord's way for providing for the poor and needy in this, our day, to which I testify in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

ELDER PAUL H. DUNN

Of the First Council of the Seventy

● President McKay, my beloved brothers and sisters, and friends everywhere:

This is always a most humbling experience, and I too seek an interest in your prayers in my behalf as I attempt to share some of the feelings of my heart. I was so edified last evening, as I have been throughout this conference, with the missionary zeal and spirit that has been evident. Last night we of the priesthood were able to recommit ourselves to building the kingdom of our Heavenly Father in a missionary cause.

I am thankful for you parents who sacrifice so much in so many ways to send into the mission field the young people you do in a way that we might work together. They are tremendous, and you can be very proud.

Gratitude for optimism

I have been uplifted today and the previous days by the optimistic sermons of those who have preceded me. I am grateful for a happy church, a church that brings security and understanding and faith in the lives of its people. This is a church that is not only optimistic but also has a firm foundation. It has been reiterated many times already.

The optimism of this conference brought to my mind the little experience of two Vermont farmers. It seems that in Vermont we get a great deal of rain, and the hills are green as a result. One day a farmer was walking down a back road, and it was very muddy, and suddenly he came upon a large puddle, and in the middle of the puddle he saw a straw hat. He thought he recognized it. He tiptoed over and lifted it up, and lo and behold under it was his friend Zeb, and

he was right up to his neck in the mud.

He said, "Zeb, it looks like you have a problem. Do you need some help?"

Zeb said, "No thanks, Zeke, I'll be all right. I have got a good horse under me."

Well, I have felt that kind of optimism throughout this conference. Spiritually speaking, we have some great horses under us, and I am grateful for that kind of faith and testimony.

Has God spoken today?

Just the other day Sister Dunn and I had a sweet experience in the mission home in Cambridge. A very wonderful couple sat before us investigating the Church, seeking answers to searching questions. In the course of our conversation the question was raised, Has God really spoken to man today?

I would like in these moments allotted to me to answer that question again for other honest seeking people.

It was Tuesday—three days before the crucifixion. Standing in the courtyard of the temple, the Savior looked down upon the dark faces of those who were plotting to take his life. Said he:

"Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." (Matt. 23:27.)

And while he was on the subject of dead men, Jesus pointed out to these people that they had no capacity to honor God's prophets, until they were dead. He said again:

". . . ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

"And say, If we had been in the