

mittee meeting, the monthly Stake Welfare Services Committee meeting, and the monthly Stake Bishops Council meeting. (See *ENSIGN*, May 1977, pp. 88-90.)

4. *Teach Welfare Services principles and exemplify them in your own life.* Make it a habit to read the report of these Welfare Services sessions of conference. They contain splendid material on the principles of Welfare Services. Today we have been instructed as fathers in what to teach to our families, as bishops in what to teach our wards. And President Kimball has reminded us of the foundational principles of this Welfare Services work with which we should all familiarize ourselves.

5. *Establish and maintain those facilities and systems required to respond to needs.* Much has been said over the years regarding establishing production projects, storehouses, the employment program, appropriate use of LDS Social Services agencies, and Deseret Industries. I needn't elaborate on what ought to be or how it should be established. Simply let me remind you that, according to an appropriate plan, we must go forth in establishing the Lord's complete program.

6. *Keep the program volunteer centered.* As a stake president, I observed the transformation in lives and the happiness gained by those who, on a Church service and volunteer basis, gave of themselves as Good Samaritans and as good Christians to heal and prosper the lives of others. I believe it was President Lee who said that we must never let this program become one of professionals. To the extent possible, we should rely on church service—brothers and sisters—to accomplish much of this work. When it is required that we have full- or part-time employees, then let us make certain that those we hire are fully qualified.

My brothers and sisters, the work of this Church is moving forward as perhaps never before. May each of us give of ourselves wherever we can in the building of this kingdom and be fully self-reliant and compassionate; and then, as appropriate, help others help themselves in this great Welfare Services work and maintain their dignity and self-respect.

I leave with you my testimony of the truthfulness of this most important work. It is the work of the Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Singing this song ["Improve the Shining Moments"] takes me back some generations. My beloved mother, who died early in my life, used to hum this song as she went about the house preparing the meals and taking care of our home. So it's very dear to me.

Grasp of welfare principles

It's good to meet with you again in conference—to consider our covenants, our duties, our blessings, and to learn

the mind and will of our Heavenly Father.

As I considered my remarks for this welfare session, I was struck by the thought that if we measure a generation as forty years, then a generation has passed since the reestablishment of this great welfare work in October of 1936. In my mind's eye the great leaders of this effort passed in review: Presidents Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., David O. McKay, Henry D. Moyle, Harold B. Lee, Marion G. Romney, and

many more too numerous to review. So also their counsels and their teachings of the scriptures have been recalled to mind.

As I recounted their contributions and the Church's splendid growth in Welfare Services, I encountered this question: Do our people today and more particularly do our regional, stake, and ward leaders today *have the same grasp of welfare principles and the same commitment to welfare services work as did those of this previous generation?*

I am constrained to agree with President Romney's assessment of this, when in an instructional session of General Authorities several years ago he stated:

"As 'There arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph' (Exodus 1:8), so there has arisen in the Church a new generation of bishops and stake presidents who have not been taught and trained as were their predecessors." (Marion G. Romney, *The Basics of Church Welfare*, March 6, 1974.)

Because of the overriding significance of this great welfare plan, I thought it appropriate to restate the fundamental truths of this work and to emphasize how we should apply these in this generation. My hope is that we may intensify, if possible, our spiritual heritage in this work and, building on their foundation, lengthen our stride in its present implementation.

Commanded to love our neighbors

Since the first dispensation of time on this earth the Lord has required his people to love their neighbors as themselves. Of Enoch's generation we are told that "the Lord blessed the land, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish.

"And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart

and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them." (Moses 7:17-18.)

All through the Book of Mormon we see leaders teaching and generations learning this truth as spoken by that benevolent king, Benjamin:

"And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants." (Mosiah 4:26.)

In Fourth Nephi we witness the blessings of the Nephites as they subdue selfishness and prosper in perfect righteousness for four generations. Who does not thrill to this picture of the ideal of Zion?

"And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift. . . .

"And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God." (4 Ne. 3, 16.)

It is now nearly four generations ago in this, the last dispensation, that the Lord again laid down his precepts for modern Zion when he said:

"And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.

"And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.

"For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in

robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?

“Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.” (D&C 38:24-27.)

Temporal and spiritual salvation

President Joseph F. Smith foreshadowed the reestablishment of welfare work in 1900 when he reminded us.

“You must continue to bear in mind that the temporal and the spiritual are blended. They are not separate. One cannot be carried on without the other, so long as we are here in mortality.

“The Latter-day Saints believe not only in the gospel of spiritual salvation, but also in the gospel of temporal salvation. . . . We do not feel that it is possible for men to be really good and faithful Christian people unless they can also be good, faithful, honest and industrious people. Therefore, we preach the gospel of industry, the gospel of economy, the gospel of sobriety.” (*Gospel Doctrine*, Deseret Book, pp. 208-9.)

Thus you can see that when in 1936 the First Presidency re-enunciated these precepts in the form of the present-day welfare plan, they were merely extending to that generation a more complete opportunity for establishing the ideal of Zion. In this generation their words may have even deeper meaning.

“Our primary purpose,” said the First Presidency, “was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership.” (*Conference Report*, October 1936, p. 3.)

There is no mistaking their intent; and while often seen as temporal in nature, clearly we must understand that this work is spiritual at heart! It is people-centered and God-inspired and, as President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., put it, “The real long term objective of the Welfare Plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them, and bringing to flower and fruition the latent richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this Church.” (President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., special meeting of stake presidencies, October 2, 1936.)

As we travel and visit the people throughout the world, we recognize the great temporal needs of our people. And as we long to help them, we realize the vital importance of their learning this great lesson: that the highest achievement of spirituality comes as we conquer the flesh. We build character as we encourage people to care for their own needs.

As givers gain control of their desires and properly see other needs in light of their own wants, then the powers of the gospel are released in their lives. They learn that by living the great law of consecration they insure not only temporal salvation but also spiritual sanctification.

And as a recipient receives with thanksgiving, he rejoices in knowing that in its purest form—in the true Zion—one may partake of both temporal and spiritual salvation. Then they are motivated to become self-sustaining and able to share with others.

The Gospel in action

Isn't the plan beautiful? Don't you thrill to this part of the gospel that causes Zion to put on her beautiful garments? When viewed in this light, we can see that Welfare Services is not a program, but the essence of the gospel. *It is the gospel in action.*

It is the crowning principle of a Christian life.

So as to better visualize this process and firmly fix the specific principles that undergird this work, may I rehearse to you what I believe are its foundational truths.

Love

First is *love*. The measure of our love for our fellowman and, in a large sense, the measure of our love for the Lord, is what we do for one another and for the poor and the distressed.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34-35; see Moro. 7:44-48 and Luke 10:25-37, 14:12-14.)

Service

Second is *service*. To serve is to abase oneself, to succor those in need of succor, and to impart of one's "substance to the poor and the needy, feeding the hungry, and suffering all manner of afflictions, for Christ's sake." (Al. 4:13.)

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27.)

Work

Third is *work*. Work brings happiness, self-esteem, and prosperity. It is the means of all accomplishment; it is the opposite of idleness. We are commanded to work. (See Gen. 3:19.) Attempts to obtain our temporal, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being by means of a dole violate the divine mandate that we should work for what we receive. Work should be the ruling principle in the lives of our Church

membership. (See D&C 42:42; 75:29; 68:30-32; 56:17.)

Self-reliance

Fourth is *self-reliance*. The Church and its members are commanded by the Lord to be self-reliant and independent. (See D&C 78:13-14.)

The responsibility for each person's social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church if he is a faithful member thereof.

No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family's well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life. (See 1 Timothy 5:8.)

Consecration

Fifth is *consecration*, which encompasses sacrifice. Consecration is the giving of one's time, talents, and means to care for those in need—whether spiritually or temporally—and in building the Lord's kingdom. In Welfare Services, members consecrate as they labor on production projects, donate materials to Deseret Industries, share their professional talents, give a generous fast offering, and respond to ward and quorum service projects. They consecrate their time in their home or visiting teaching. We consecrate when we give of ourselves. (See ENSIGN, June 1976, pp. 3-6.)

Stewardship

Sixth is *stewardship*. In the Church a stewardship is a sacred spiritual or temporal trust for which there is accountability. Because all things belong to the Lord, we are stewards over our bodies, minds, families, and properties.

(See D&C 104:11-15.) A faithful steward is one who exercises righteous dominion, cares for his own, and looks to the poor and needy. (See D&C 104:15-18.)

These principles govern welfare services activities. May we all learn, obey, and teach these principles. Leaders, teach them to your members; fathers, teach them to your families. Only as we apply these truths can we approach the ideal of Zion.

Zion

Zion is a name given by the Lord to his covenant people, who are characterized by purity of heart and faithfulness in caring for the poor, the needy, and the distressed. (See D&C 97:21.)

"And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them." (Moses 7:18.)

This highest order of priesthood society is founded on the doctrines of love, service, work, self-reliance, and stewardship, all of which are circumscribed by the covenant of consecration.

May I turn now to some of the activities and programs that represent ways to live these principles.

As you know, in the recent past we have placed considerable emphasis on personal and family preparedness. I hope that each member of the Church is responding appropriately to this direction. I also hope that we are understanding and accentuating the positive and not the negative.

"Provident living"

I like the way the Relief Society teaches personal and family preparedness as "provident living." This implies the husbanding of our resources, the wise planning of financial matters, full provision for personal health, and adequate preparation for education and

career development, giving appropriate attention to home production and storage as well as the development of emotional resiliency.

I hope that we understand that, while having a garden, for instance, is often useful in reducing food costs and making available delicious fresh fruits and vegetables, it does much more than this. Who can gauge the value of that special chat between daughter and Dad as they weed or water the garden? How do we evaluate the good that comes from the obvious lessons of planting, cultivating, and the eternal law of the harvest? And how do we measure the family togetherness and cooperating that must accompany successful canning? Yes, we are laying up resources in store, but perhaps the greater good is contained in the lessons of life we learn as we *live providently* and extend to our children their pioneer heritage.

Think of the learning that accompanies a family council on the family budget. How do Mom and Dad feel when a teenage son who, because he is included and understands the budgeting process, volunteers part of his summer's income to help replace that tired refrigerator?

Personal and family preparedness

We speak of literacy and education in terms of being prepared for a better occupation, but we cannot underestimate the present pleasure of our reading in the scriptures, Church magazines, and good books of every kind. We teach of emotional strength in terms of family prayer, kind words, and full communication, but we quickly learn how pleasant life can be when it is lived in a courteous and reinforcing atmosphere.

In like manner we could refer to all the components of personal and family preparedness, not in relation to holocaust or disaster, but in cultivating a life-style that is on a day-to-day basis its own reward.

Let's do these things because they

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are right, because they are satisfying, and because we are obedient to the counsels of the Lord. In this spirit we will be prepared for most eventualities, and the Lord will prosper and comfort us. It is true that difficult times will come—for the Lord has foretold them—and, yes, stakes of Zion are “for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm.” (D&C 115:6.) But if we live wisely and providently, we will be as safe as in the palm of His hand.

I hope that in our priesthood quorums and Relief Society meetings the concepts of personal and family preparedness are being properly taught and with the kind of positive approach that we all respond to.

Law of the fast

Let's also teach our obligations relative to the law of the fast. Each member should contribute a generous fast offering for the care of the poor and the needy. This offering should at least be the value of the two meals not eaten while fasting.

“Sometimes we have been a bit penurious and figured that we had for breakfast one egg and that cost so many cents and then we give that to the Lord. I think that when we are affluent, as many of us are, that we ought to be very, very generous. . . .

“I think we should . . . give, instead of the amount saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more when we are in a position to do it.” (*Conference Report*, October 1974, p. 184.)

Fast offerings have long constituted the means from which the needs of the Lord's poor have been provided. It has been, and now is, the desire and objective of the Church to obtain from fast offerings the necessary funds to meet the cash needs of the welfare program; and to obtain from welfare production projects the commodity needs. If we give a generous fast offering, we shall increase our own prosperity both spiritually and temporally.

Formal welfare activities

Now, turning from personal and family responsibilities to the Church's formal welfare activities—sometimes referred to as Church preparedness but perhaps better understood as the Storehouse Resource System—let me emphasize briefly several points.

1. Make adequate provision for those who receive Church assistance to work or serve, according to their ability, for what they receive.
2. Use good judgment in acquiring and managing your welfare production project. Be businesslike and frugal, recognizing that we are growing people—both givers and receivers—more than food and merchandise.
3. Follow the Spirit in knowing to what extent individuals and families can and should care for themselves on their own.
4. Use local resource persons to the fullest extent possible.
5. Finally, regularly hold effective Welfare Committee meetings at all administrative levels.

Emulate the Savior

Brothers and sisters, with these thoughts in mind may I urge you to go forward in this great work. So much depends upon our willingness to make up our minds collectively and individually, that present levels and performance are not acceptable, either to ourselves or the Lord.

You leaders presently serving are as great as or greater than those of this past generation. Learn your lessons well. Emulate the Savior in your life by serving and consecrating, by overcoming temporally so that you might more fully achieve spiritually.

If we all so labor, then it will eventually be written of us that “surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.”

It is wonderful to be associated with this work and to be given the inspiration of it. I bear my witness of it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.