

GENERAL WELFARE SESSION

A Welfare Services Session was held in connection with General Conference on Saturday morning, April 1, 1978, at 7 o'clock. Invited to attend this meeting were General Authorities, regional representatives, stake presidencies, high councilors involved in welfare work, bishoprics, and stake and ward Relief Society presidencies and others responsible for operating welfare production projects.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and conducted this session.

President Kimball opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Spencer W. Kimball

We are happy to welcome you to this General Welfare Services Meeting attended by general and local piest-

hood leaders and sisters of the Relief Society. The matters to be presented at this meeting are of vital importance to the effectiveness of the welfare program and we, therefore, request that you instruct those under your direction in the things you will be taught here.

Under the direction of Brother Jerold Ottley with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ, we shall begin this meeting by singing hymn No. 206: "The World Has Need of Willing Men."

The invocation will be offered by Elder Robert E. Wells of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The congregation sang, "The World Has Need of Willing Men."

Elder Robert E. Wells offered the invocation.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My dear brothers and sisters, what a beautiful sight you are! The radiance of your faces and the beauties of nature on this Temple Square make my heart swell with thanksgiving for the blessings of the Lord. As we meet together in conference, I hope the spirit of gratitude permeates all we do and say, for truly the Lord delights to bless those who love and serve him." (See D&C 76:5.)

With the help of the Lord, I should like to remind us of several truths and obligations that should never be forgotten by us as leaders and as a people. Following these reminders, I should like to talk about the building of Zion through sacrifice and consecration.

Provide opportunities for self-reliance

First, may I remind bishops of the vital need to provide recipients of welfare assistance with the opportunity for work or service that thereby they may maintain their dignity and independence and continue to enjoy the Holy Spirit as they benefit from Church Welfare Services self-help efforts. We cannot be too often reminded that Church welfare assistance is spiritual at heart and that these spiritual roots would wither if we ever permitted anything like the philosophy of the dole to enter into our Welfare Services ministrations.

Everyone assisted can do something. Let us follow the order of the Church in this regard and insure that all who receive give of themselves in return.

May we be on guard against accepting worldly substitutes for the plan to care for his poor in this, the Lord's own way. As we hear talk of governmental welfare reforms and its myriads of problems, let us remember the covenants we have made to bear one another's burdens and to succor each according to his need. President Romney, our dean of Welfare Services, gave good counsel when several years ago he made this statement:

"In this modern world plagued with counterfeits for the Lord's plan, we must not be misled into supposing that we can discharge our obligations to the poor and the needy by shifting the responsibility to some governmental or other public agency. Only by voluntarily giving out of an abundant love for our neighbors can we develop that charity characterized by Mormon as 'the pure love of Christ.' (Moro. 7:47.) This we must develop if we would obtain eternal life." (*Conference Report*, 1972, p. 115.)

No "ism" should confuse our thinking in these matters. As a reminder of Church policy regarding individuals receiving government or other forms of charity, may I emphasize the following declaration of principle:

The responsibility for each member's spiritual, social, emotional, physical, or economic well-being rests first, upon himself, second, upon his family, and third, upon the Church. Members of the Church are commanded by the Lord to be self-reliant and independent to the extent of their ability. (See D&C 78:13-14.)

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 work to the extent of his ability to supply himself and his family with the

spiritual and temporal necessities of life. (See Gen. 3:19, 1 Tim. 5:8, and Philip. 2:12.)

As guided by the spirit of the Lord and through applying these principles, each member of the Church should make his own decisions as to what assistance he accepts, be it from governmental or other source. In this way, independence, self-respect, dignity, and self-reliance will be fostered, and free agency maintained.

Underlying this statement is the recurring theme of self-reliance. No amount of philosophizing, excuses, or rationalizing will ever change the fundamental need for self-reliance. This is so because:

"All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, . . . as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence." (D&C 93:30.) The Lord declares that herein lies "the agency of man" (see D&C 93:31), and with this agency comes the responsibility for self. With this agency we can rise to glory or fall to condemnation. May we individually and collectively be ever self-reliant. This is our heritage and our obligation.

Personal and family preparedness

The principle of self-reliance stands behind the Church's emphasis on personal and family preparedness. Our progress in implementing the various facets of this personal and family preparedness is impressive, but there are still far too many families who have yet to heed the counsel to live providently. With the arrival of spring we hope all of you will put in your gardens and prepare to enjoy their produce this summer. We hope you are making this a family affair, with everyone, even the little ones, assigned to something. There is so much to learn and harvest from your garden, far more than just a crop itself. We also hope that you are maintaining your year's supply of food, clothing, and where possible, some fuel and cash savings. Moreover, we hope

that you are conscious of proper diet and health habits, that you may be fit physically and able to respond to the many challenges of life. Would you see to it that in your quorum and Relief Society meetings the principles and practices of personal and family preparedness are taught.

Fast offerings

We wish to remind all the Saints of the blessings that come from observing the regular fast and contributing as generous a fast offering as we can, and as we are in a position to give. Wherever we can, we should give many times the value of the meals from which we abstained.

This principle of promise, when lived in the spirit thereof, greatly blesses both giver and receiver. Upon practicing the law of the fast, one finds a personal well-spring of power to overcome self-indulgence and selfishness. May I refer you to bishop Victor L. Brown's masterful talk on this subject given last Welfare Conference and published in the November 1977 *ENSIGN*.

Establishing Zion

Now, brothers and sisters, would you put aside for a moment the pressing demands of this day and this week, and permit me to establish some very important perspectives about welfare services. For many years we have been taught that one important end result of our labors, hopes, and aspirations in this work is the building of a Latter-day Zion, a Zion characterized by love, harmony, and peace—a Zion in which the Lord's children are as one.

The vision of what we are about and what should come of our labors must be kept uppermost in our minds as we learn and do our duty in the present implementation of welfare service. This applies equally to all Church activities. In the fifty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord shares

with us a glimpse of this Latter-day Zion:

"Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation.

"For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand. . . .

"Behold, verily I say unto you, for this cause I have sent you—that you might be obedient, and that your hearts might be prepared to bear testimony of the things which are to come;

"And also that you might be honored in laying the foundation, and in bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand; . . .

"And after that cometh the day of my power; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come.

"Behold, I, the Lord, have spoken it." (D&C 58:3-12.)

This day will come; it is our destiny to help bring it about! Doesn't it motivate you to lengthen your stride and quicken your pace as you do your part in the great sanctifying work of the kingdom? It does me. It causes me to rejoice over the many opportunities for service and sacrifice afforded me and my family as we seek to do our part in establishing Zion.

Obedience

In the earliest years of this dispensation the people faltered in attempting to live the full economic plan of Zion, the united order. Because of their transgressions, the Lord chastened them in these words:

"Behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of

their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them;

"And are not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom;

"And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself." (D&C 105:3-5.)

The Lord further counsels that we must learn obedience and be developed in character before he can redeem Zion. (See D&C 105:9-10.)

A few verses later in this same revelation, the Lord repeals the law of Zion in these words and with this promise:

"And let those commandments which I have given concerning Zion and her law be executed and fulfilled, after her redemption.

"And inasmuch as they follow the counsel which they receive, they shall have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion." (D&C 105:34, 37.)

The length of time required "to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion" is strictly up to us and how we live, for creating Zion "commences in the heart of each person." (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:283.) That it would take some time to learn our lessons was seen by the prophets. In 1863 Brigham Young stated:

"If the people neglect their duty, turn away from the holy commandments which God has given us, seek their own individual wealth, and neglect the interests of the kingdom of God, we may expect to be here quite a time—perhaps a period that will be far longer than we anticipate. (*Journal of Discourses*, 11:102.)

Zion built among pure in heart

Unfortunately we live in a world that largely rejects the values of Zion. Babylon has not and never will com-

prehend Zion. The Lord revealed our times to the prophet Mormon, who recorded this statement in a closing chapter of the Book of Mormon:

"Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But . . . Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.

"For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted." (Morm. 8:35, 37.)

This state of affairs stands in marked contrast to the Zion the Lord seeks to establish through his covenant people. Zion can be built up only among those who are the pure in heart, not a people torn by covetousness or greed, but a pure and selfless people. Not a people who are pure in appearance, rather a people who are pure in heart. Zion is to be in the world and not of the world, not dulled by a sense of carnal security, nor paralyzed by materialism. No, Zion is not things of the lower, but of the higher order, things that exalt the mind and sanctify the heart.

Zion is "every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God." (D&C 82:19.) As I understand these matters, Zion can be established only by those who are pure in heart, and who labor for Zion, for "the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish." (2 Ne. 26:31.)

As important as it is to have this vision in mind, defining and describing Zion will not bring it about. That can only be done through consistent and concerted daily effort by every single member of the Church. No matter what the cost in toil or sacrifice, we must "do it." That is one of my favorite phrases: "Do It." May I suggest three fundamental things we must do if we are to "bring again Zion," three things for which we who labor for Zion must commit ourselves.

Eliminate selfishness

First, we must eliminate the individual tendency to selfishness that snares the soul, shrinks the heart, and darkens the mind. President Romney recently referred to the tragic cycle of civilization, a cycle propelled by anyone who seeks for power and gain. Was it not this that led Cain to commit the first murder “for the sake of getting gain”? (Moses 5:50.) Is not this the spirit of the anti-Christ in which “every man prospered according to his genius, and . . . every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime”? (Al. 30:17.) Did not Nephi single this out as the spirit which led his generation to destruction:

“Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world.” (3 Ne. 6:15.)

If we are to avoid their fate, we must guard against the very things that caused their downfall. The Lord himself declared to our grandparents: “And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine property.” (D&C 19:26.)

He further counseled his young church by saying:

“Behold, I, the Lord, am not well pleased with many who are in the church at Kirtland:

“For they do not forsake their sins, and their wicked ways, the pride of their hearts, and their covetousness, and all their detestable things, and observe the words of wisdom and eternal life which I have given unto them.” (D&C 98:19–20.) It is incumbent upon us to put away selfishness in our families, our business and professional pursuits, and our Church affairs. I am disturbed when I hear of stakes or wards having difficulty dividing equity in welfare projects or making equitable storehouse commodity production assignments. These things should not be. Let us resolve

today to overcome any such tendencies.

Work in harmony

Second, we must cooperate completely and work in harmony one with the other. There must be unanimity in our decisions and unity in our actions. After pleading with the saints to “let every man esteem his brother as himself” (D&C 38:24), the Lord concludes his instructions on cooperation to a conference of the membership in these powerful words:

“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 38:27.)

“If the Spirit of the Lord is to magnify our labors, then this spirit of oneness and cooperation must be the prevailing spirit in all that we do. Moreover, when we do so, we are told by the Prophet Joseph Smith that “the greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always come from faithfulness and concentrated effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 183.) There are few activities in the Church that require more cooperation and concerted effort than Welfare Services. Whether it is rallying to find employment for a displaced quorum member, toiling on a production project, serving as a lead worker at a Deseret Industries, or accepting foster children in the home, it is cooperation and mutual concern that determines the overall success of the Storehouse Resource System.

Sacrifice

Third, we must lay on the altar and sacrifice whatever is required by the Lord. We begin by offering a “broken heart and a contrite spirit.” We follow this by giving our best effort in our assigned fields of labor and callings. We learn our duty and execute it fully. Finally we consecrate our time, talents, and means as called upon by our file leaders and as prompted by the whis-

perings of the Spirit. In the Church, as in the Welfare system also, we can give expression to every ability, every righteous desire, every thoughtful impulse. Whether a volunteer, father, home teacher, bishop, or neighbor, whether a visiting teacher, mother, homemaker, or friend—there is ample opportunity to give our all. And as we give, we find that “sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven!” (*Hymns*, no. 147.) And in the end, we learn it was no sacrifice at all.

Charity

My brothers and sisters, if we can do this, then we will find ourselves clothed in the mantle of charity “which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—

“But charity is the pure love of

Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.” (Moro. 7:46–47.)

Let us unite and pray with all the energy of heart, that we may be sealed by this bond of charity; that we may build up this latter-day Zion, that the kingdom of God may go forth, so that the kingdom of heaven may come. This is my prayer and testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will now address us.

He will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, General President of the Relief Society.

Bishop J. Richard Clarke

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

A bishop's ministry is blessed with joy-filled opportunity to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.” (D&C 81:5.) As the father of the ward, he is looked to for answers to a whole range of human problems:

- To an unemployed father—a job
- To a family home gutted by fire—furniture and clothing
- To a grateful recipient harvesting the corn crop—meaningful work
- To an unwed mother—a new home and loving parents
- To an emotionally disturbed couple—a trained therapist
- To a willing but unemployable member—dignity through labor

Temporal and spiritual needs

Each bishop knows that min-

istering to the temporal needs of stricken members awakens in him a spark of the divine nature. The Savior taught us that all things are spiritual unto him. Elder B.H. Roberts declared that the highest development of the spiritual is in its connection with the physical. (See B.H. Roberts, *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity*, Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1903.) In our temporal world, the problems of the flesh are real and constant and demanding. The Church has been commissioned of the Lord to provide the means by which its members may solve these problems. President McKay was once challenged by a man who said, “*If yours is the only true church, then it must have the answer to every problem of the human soul, spiritually, temporally, and socially.*” Brothers and sisters, we do have the answers!

It has always been the disposition of the true disciples of Christ, as they