

Society general board. We have also written to the stakes and the missions recorded as holding wheat certificates as of 1 July 1957 and have received their unanimous support.

With President Kimball's permission, I would like to ask the sisters present in this meeting also to affirm this action. All sisters in favor of joining with us in the decision to include the Relief Society wheat in the worldwide Church grain storage program please signify. Thank you.

It is with great pride in the accomplishments of the past and with tenderness of heart that we, the women of Zion, place our wheat and wheat assets at your disposal, President Kimball, to be used for grain storage purposes under your administration, through the General Church Welfare Committee.

We pray that the Relief Society wheat will continue to be considered a sacred trust. May it bless the lives of all who are its recipients. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President Kimball**

#### **Acceptance of Relief Society Wheat**

Sister Smith, in behalf of the brethren of the Church and the Church in general, we accept this great gift that you have given to us from the Relief Society with gratitude and appreciation for its deep significance. We are conscious of the considerable sacrifice and diligence of the Relief Society sisters, who for over a century have faithfully discharged this sacred wheat trust. We

are confident that the Welfare Services Department, under the direction of the General Welfare Services Committee, which is composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, the Presiding Bishopric, and the Relief Society General Presidency, will continue wheat reserves management in the same fine manner in which it has been operated by the Relief Society in the past. We will see that the Relief Society gift is used, as has been intended, for a time of need to bless the lives of Church members everywhere worldwide.

We are proud of the accomplishments of the women in the past and the present. Now we ask you sisters to continue in your good works and to support the programs of the Church, particularly those of your own organization, the Relief Society.

We ask you also to support the Brethren, and we ask them to support you and to work together as partners and companions in furthering the work of the Lord and your own salvation. Let this gift from the Relief Society today be an example of the cooperative effort and harmony that can enrich our lives in the Church and in the home.

May the Lord bless us in this great and divinely inspired welfare work, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President N. Eldon Tanner**

Bishop Victor L. Brown will now speak to us. He will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, President of the Relief Society.

## **Bishop Victor L. Brown**

My brothers and sisters, this morning I would like to share with you a presentation which dramatically illustrates what can happen when Church leaders and members begin to apply the

basic principles of welfare services in their lives. This is a factual account of the accomplishments of a small branch of the Church in the village of Bermejillo, near Torreón, Mexico.

### Bermejillo branch

Come with me to Bermejillo, a typical village in north central Mexico, with dusty streets and adobe buildings.

Eight years ago a small branch of the Church was established here. Church meetings have been held in one room of this rented building [slide shown], which the members call "the prayer house."

A majority of the men in the branch work in the fields on land assigned to them by the government. Their crops consist mainly of cotton, corn, and beans. Their harvest is sent through a small co-op bank, which in return pays them approximately \$3.00 to \$5.00 a day, hardly enough to take care of only basic needs.

The strength of this small branch rests in the Castañeda family. The mother, her six sons, and one daughter accepted baptism when the gospel was first brought to Bermejillo eight years ago. Since that time, the boys have married and brought their wives into the Church. The family is currently making plans to be sealed in the Arizona Temple.

Julian Castañeda has served as branch president for the past five years and has given direction to the temporal and spiritual affairs of this branch.

### Welfare services missionaries

Since 1975, welfare services missionaries have been visiting Bermejillo on a weekly basis. They teach discussions to the leaders and members on such subjects as personal hygiene and nutrition and serve as a resource to the branch president in welfare services-related matters.

In the years following the welfare services missionaries' arrival, President Castañeda has met frequently with his welfare services committee. Several projects have been undertaken to help members in the areas of personal and family preparedness.

A couple serving as welfare ser-

vices missionaries were asked to assist members in planting family gardens. Seeds were obtained by President Castañeda through community resources and distributed to the members. He took the lead by planting the first garden. Almost all of the members followed his example.

It was soon found that in order to raise a garden, provisions had to be made to keep the pigs from running loose. Pens also had to be constructed for the chickens; it seemed that they were able to scratch out the seeds and young plants faster than they could grow.

### Improvements made

In addition to the gardens, storage also became a part of the program. Members were taught how to dry fruits and vegetables, and canning was done on a small scale. Jams and jellies were made, using appropriate local methods. Part of their year's supply included grains grown in their fields and then stored. They had to learn how to keep them from being infested by insects and rats. Wood which was brought in from the mountains and stored was later used as fuel for cooking as well as for heating water to wash dishes and clean the house.

As cleanliness and sanitation were emphasized, the members began building bathrooms adjacent to their homes. Prior to the project, members in Bermejillo had no bathrooms.

In this small building [slide shown], the first flush toilet in Bermejillo was installed with a septic tank dug in the courtyard to contain the waste. A shower was also built. It consisted of a fifty-gallon drum on the roof which was filled with water in the morning, warmed by the sun during the day, and was ready for a warm shower in the evening.

Gardens and bathrooms became a reality. Dirty, neglected homes with dirt floors and no beds—where cooking was

done inside on open fires of twigs and sticks with no stovepipe or chimney—now have cement floors, cooking stoves with proper ventilation or an outside cooking house, clean tables and chairs, and orderly rooms.

Five years ago most of the buildings in Bermejillo looked about the same, but now, homes of Latter-day Saints have become the show places of the village. They are easily identified by their fresh paint, green trees, and beautiful flowers.

Members in Bermejillo had access to water which was piped from a nearby city but which was unsafe to drink. Boiling the water was too difficult because of the scarcity of fuel. So mothers were taught to purify it by putting three drops of chlorine bleach in each quart of water. Purifying the water has reduced illness due to diarrhea, amoebae, and typhoid fever.

Welfare services missionaries were assigned by the branch president to visit the home of every newly baptized family. In carrying out this assignment, the missionaries often found emergency teaching situations.

For example, one day upon entering the home of a newly baptized member, they were greeted by the mother, who invited them to sit down and then began to cry. Her baby was sick. Its stomach was badly bloated.

Upon investigation, it was found that the child had never had anything to eat except flour and water or powdered milk. For eight months the mother had been afraid to give the baby any other food because it was so sick, and it was sick because it was starving!

The missionaries taught the mother how to include cereals, fruits, and vegetables in the child's diet. Now the child is on the road to normal health.

As the result of projects such as this one in Bermejillo, the death rate among member children in the whole mission has dropped from approximately forty per one hundred to ten per one hundred.

## Members assist each other

Other personal and family preparedness projects were also carried out, including one planned to help an inactive family clean up their home, which President Kimball has asked all of us to do.

This eight-member family lived in a little ten-by-twelve-foot, one-room home with a dirt floor, two double beds, a small table, and a small kerosene stove. There was neither electricity nor running water.

The branch welfare services committee organized to solve the problem. The Relief Society sisters carried many buckets of water to clean the house. They helped the family take the furniture outside in the sun and remove the accumulations of years.

Home teachers and other priesthood brethren assisted in the repairing of the furniture.

The welfare services missionaries participated by giving lessons on cleanliness and personal hygiene.

Another way the missionaries were of assistance to the branch was through presentations of special lessons, such as baby care, to the Relief Society sisters. They have taught principles and techniques in family health care. The sisters have now learned to make their own clothing and to use sound judgment in shopping.

These activities have increased the sisters' love for Relief Society, and now, for the first time, regular visiting teaching has become a reality.

The children have also benefitted from the personal and family preparedness projects in Bermejillo. The mothers now make sure the children are well groomed before sending them to Primary.

Older children are developing teaching skills as they help younger children learn the lessons of the gospel.

## Power of example

The missionaries have found that

just by being an example to the children they teach them important principles. Children have learned of President Kimball's counsel about saving money for their missions. They also now spend any of their extra pesos on fruit rather than candy.

Nonmembers have been influenced by the example of members in Bermejillo, and a number have been taught the gospel.

As the branch grew, the rented facilities became too small for them. So President Castañeda obtained permission for the use of this plot of land [slide shown], upon which to build a chapel. Other branches in the mission had met with extreme difficulty in obtaining such permission, but the village officials in Bermejillo were aware of the accomplishments of the branch and were pleased at the prospect of having a chapel built here.

A small, temporary, adobe chapel has been erected on the property and is now serving while the Saints raise their share of the funds for their new meeting place, which they have been authorized to build.

Much of their portion of the money is being earned through branch projects. Every Tuesday and Thursday the Relief Society sisters divide into small groups to make doughnuts and tamales. They then sell them in the parks or door-to-door. One of the sisters reported how difficult it was to sell door-to-door, but she said, "We want our chapel, and we are willing to do whatever it takes to earn enough money."

To date they have met all their commitments, and the construction of a chapel on this site is scheduled to begin before the end of this year.

What we have just reviewed is a marvelous example of what can take place in any Church unit, regardless of circumstances, when the leaders and members begin to understand fully and live the basic principles of welfare services. In four short years, look what these Saints have accomplished. They have begun to raise gardens and store their

produce, paint their homes, plant trees and flowers, build toilet and shower units, clean and fix up the interiors and exteriors of their homes, purify their water, properly prepare their food, and provide more nutritious diets for their children.

### **Increased spirituality**

Beyond this, the members have extended the hand of fellowship by helping inactive families solve their temporal problems, by friendshiping nonmembers, and by setting a good example of Latter-day Saint living.

The spirituality of this branch has been enhanced through increased member activity, better preparation by class instructors, more effective home and visiting teachers, additional converts to the Church, branch projects, and personal sacrifice. It is interesting to note that there has been more than a tenfold increase in the per capita fast offering donations from this small branch over the past four years.

The principles of love, service, work, self-reliance, consecration, and stewardship are all evident in the accomplishments of the branch in Bermejillo. Indeed, these members are well on their way to establishing the ideal of Zion.

I am persuaded that any ward or stake in the Church can experience the same kind of success as the branch in Bermejillo. It will come as a result of organizing welfare services committees and of teaching and living the basic principles of welfare services. Many wards and stakes have their own resource people to call on, but where local resource people are not available, welfare services missionaries may be called through proper channels to assist Church units in emerging areas where temporal problems are critical.

May each of us catch the vision of welfare services as these Saints have in Bermejillo. By working together we can fully establish the latter-day Zion. That we may do this, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.