

**President Marion G. Romney**

We have just listened to Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us, following which it will be my obligation to speak to you.

**Elder James E. Faust**

The Psalmist asked the question, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Ps. 137:4). In every age, including our own, the Lord's message has been brought into lands that were strange to the messengers. They have sought to establish a Zion where the Lord is God.

Since early in the history of our dispensation, through the successive revelations now recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord has sought to establish his church, "giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!" (D&C 128:21).

**Process of establishing the Church**

We affirm that this process yet continues, and we know that as we reach out into all the world, as the Lord has prompted us and commanded us to do, we will see special challenges before us in establishing the Lord's church. Hundreds of millions of our Father's children face poverty and illiteracy and other problems—both temporal and spiritual—that are almost beyond our comprehension. Of such people President Kimball stated: "Give these people to us and we'll open their eyes to a vision of eternity and show them how to reach up to the stars" (Dec. 1974).

We recognize that the process of establishing the Lord's church encompasses much more than baptizing people. In the first chapter of Alma in the Book of Mormon we

find an instructive sequence of events outlining the way by which the Lord's church is established. Beginning with verse 26 we read:

"The priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people. . . . And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; . . . and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength.

"And they did impart of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted; and they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely" (Al. 1:26-27).

Let us take note of this process:

First, the doctrines are taught (see v. 26).

Second, members esteem each other as themselves (see v. 26).

Third, they all labor; they work and earn that which they receive (see v. 26).

Fourth, they impart of their substance to the less fortunate; they serve one another (see v. 27).

Fifth, they discipline their own appetites while at the same time caring appropriately for their own needs (see v. 27).

Now, listen to the declaration of the prophet:

"And thus they did establish the affairs of the church. . . .

"And now, because of the steadiness of the church they began to be exceeding rich, having abundance of all things whatsoever they stood in need" (Al. 1:28-29).

This mighty change happened, not because the people were given things, but rather because they were taught and began to help themselves and to care for those who were less fortunate. It was when they gave of themselves in the Lord's way that their circumstances began to improve.

This process of establishing the Church can apply anywhere. However, in areas of the world where human and other resources are inadequate, priesthood leaders may be able to use some technical know-how in helping their members become self-reliant. This support is currently being given in a splendid way by a dedicated group of skilled technical and professional people whose principal ministry is to foster practical, Christlike service. They are called as welfare services missionaries. There are at present over seven hundred of these missionaries serving in almost sixty missions throughout the world, helping local leaders to establish the Church.

### **Welfare services missionaries**

An important function of welfare services missionaries is to assist local priesthood leaders in teaching the fundamental principles of welfare. They may also, under priesthood direction, teach members how to improve their manner of living. Although we do not have storehouses and production projects everywhere, we must have basic welfare principles taught and applied even in the smallest of branches. At the heart of welfare in the Church are six gospel principles: love, service, work, self-reliance, stewardship, and consecration (which encompasses sacrifice). These principles undergird the other fundamentals of welfare, which are the law of the fast, quorum service and Relief Society compassionate service, personal and family preparedness, and functioning welfare services committees.

Participating in the activities of basic welfare gives members the opportunity to incorporate fundamental gospel principles into their lives.

For example, by living the law of the fast members learn of love and selflessness. As home teachers help a family mend a fence, or as Relief Society sisters prepare food for a neighbor who is ill, they experience the meaning of service. In seeking to be prepared individually and as a family, members practice self-reliance and work. The local welfare services committee coordinates the Church's role in these aspects of basic welfare.

Welfare services missionaries serve under the direction of their mission presidents as resource persons to local priesthood leaders responsible for moving the work forward. Utilizing their experiences and training, welfare services missionaries, as resources to leaders and members, can identify ways in which the members can take better care of themselves. These leaders in turn help members to begin practicing a gospel-centered way of life.

Welfare services missionaries are, therefore, not just teaching and following welfare principles; they are an important part of the process of establishing the Church.

Elder L. Tom Perry last month returned from Tonga and reported as follows:

"I was also extremely impressed with the welfare services missionary couples in Tonga. I am enclosing a picture of Brother and Sister Duane C. Thorn standing behind some sheet-metal ovens he has constructed. Brother Thorn has made over a hundred of these, and his wife has been teaching the women how to use them over a regular bonfire to bake bread. It's the first time many of these families have had a facility to do any baking. He has also made large tubs for them to do their washing in to improve their sanitation.

"Another couple, by the name

of Spencer, has done an outstanding job in improving the harvest of the agricultural farms of Tonga. Brother Spencer invented and taught the local people how to use several machines, including a tapa-cloth machine which has saved them many hours of difficult labor. This machine also caught the eye of the king. He has become a very close personal friend of the king. In fact, for the next month he traveled with the king and his party to all of the islands on an agricultural fair where he was a guest of the king.

"Both of these couples will be returning home within a month."

Brother Spencer has taught others so that there may be a continuation of these skills. All help given must be in the Lord's own way under priesthood direction as we saw happening in Alma's day. Ours is a practical religion based upon the gospel of work that elevates and prospers both the body and the spirit.

### **Qualifications and needs**

The work of the welfare services missionaries is an ongoing work. Let me therefore briefly review some important information:

First, those who are eligible to serve as welfare services missionaries include couples and single women who meet the regular missionary qualifications.

Second, they must have professional and vocational skills and experience in dealing with practical challenges. Social workers, farmers, career counselors, skilled tradesmen, home economists, and nurses are some examples of the types of skilled missionaries that are needed.

Third, bishops or stake presidents should have qualified couples or single sisters attach to their regular missionary application a brief outline of their education, their work experience, and their hobbies or other talents. You should know that there is

currently a need for couples with ability in languages other than English. At present, the greatest needs are for Spanish speakers.

Fourth, to obtain welfare services missionaries, priesthood leaders identify temporal problems among their members which cannot be handled through local resources. They set forth the specific helps they desire from welfare services missionaries and then consult with their Regional Representative and mission president. The requests will be forwarded to the Missionary Department as approved by the General Authority Executive Administrator. Missionaries with specific skills are then assigned to meet the identified needs.

Fifth, the Church's system of welfare is designed to develop character and to help people help themselves. The Church must be constantly aware of the need to build and lift people temporally and spiritually. Paradoxically, the most successful way to assist someone in need is by leading them into the service of others.

A key figure in ensuring that this happens is the General Authority Executive Administrator. It is his responsibility to regularly review the progress of welfare services missionary efforts with Regional Representatives representing the stake presidents, mission presidents, and with the other leaders who function in the temporal offices in the area council. In this council meeting, welfare services missionary work can be incorporated into the area master plan for welfare services. This planned, unified approach will insure order and constancy as we proceed to establish the Church.

### **Testimonials**

We have received numerous testimonials from priesthood leaders who have experienced the benefits of

this valuable resource. A branch president writes:

"I know that with time I will not need welfare missionaries because with each day I will become more and more self-reliant. I just have to seek the guidance of the Lord and depend on him.

"I know that the principles of welfare have always existed. It's just that we have not given them their rightful importance." (Angel Majia Ruiz, Huacho Branch president, Peru Lima North Mission).

Furthermore, the enthusiasm and confidence the local leaders have gained has naturally had an effect on missionary work. As members experience the benefits of fundamental welfare activities in their lives, they are moved to want to share their joys with others.

Recently in the small village of Ubon, Thailand, a member family by the name of Tan was beset with what seemed to be insurmountable problems. The father had lost his job, they had no money, the children were sick and malnourished. They were being forced to remove their humble home from the government land upon which it was built, and they had no place to go.

At this point a fine priesthood leader, who had been using welfare services missionaries as a resource, stepped in and averted what could otherwise have been a tragic situation. Under his guidance and with the assistance of all the branch members, a piece of land was obtained, and the Tan family home was dismantled, transported, and rebuilt. Brother Tan began farming the land and started a family produce business which is now flourishing. Some hard work, dedication, and love from local leaders and members, aided by the suggestions of welfare services missionaries, caused a miracle for one family and a great learning and growing experience for a whole branch.

## Preparation

To you couples and single sisters who may in the future be desirous of helping, we say:

Prepare yourselves professionally.

Study a language. It will be beneficial even if you are not called where the language is spoken.

Work and get your personal affairs in order so that you are in a position to be considered.

To you bishops and stake presidents presiding over those who are worthy and able to serve, we say:

Invite them to prepare and enlist their talents as welfare services missionaries in this great effort of establishing the Church.

Increase your efforts in interviewing and recommending those who can be called by the prophet of God into the Lord's service.

To Executive Administrators, stake presidents and mission presidents, and temporal leaders in areas where the needs warrant, we say:

Be aware of the valuable resource we have in welfare services missionaries.

Identify those temporal challenges blocking the spiritual prosperity of your members, and systematically proceed to help them find ways in which they can overcome such deterrents and enjoy a full and Christlike life.

May the Lord bless us all as we seek to establish his church. May we learn how to sing the Lord's song in strange lands and help the less fortunate "open their eyes to a vision of eternity and show them how to reach up to the stars" (Spencer W. Kimball, Dec. 1974), I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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