

Hibbert, there was sorrow—but not grief. The family had developed the skills it takes to remain close and loving. They were prepared.

### Need to place proper priorities

As you can see from the heavy responsibilities given to the quorums and the Relief Society, careful practical training must be given to those officers. This must be supplied by the ward organization, presided over by a bishop.

As chairman of the ward welfare services committee, the bishop directs all welfare services in the ward. He seeks out the needy and distressed. He coordinates the teaching of gospel principles and programs fundamental to welfare services, coordinates efforts to teach the law of the fast. He sees that members with special needs are assisted with the dignity and love so important to them. He coordinates confidential assistance to those in need. When necessary, he calls qualified resource specialists. (See *Welfare Services Resource Handbook*, 1980, p. 9.)

Supporting the bishop is a stake organization. The bishop can request assistance from the stake president in the training and qualifying of his leadership. The stake president has a high council and a stake Relief Society organization to furnish the training support required.

Look at the impact the Lord's organization can have on assisting the membership in their personal and family preparations as the work load is distributed down to a workable

level of effectiveness. At the stake level the ratio is one stake president to about 1,180 families. At the ward level the ratio is one bishop to about 108 families. At the quorum level the ratio is one quorum leader to about 60 families. The home teacher's ratio is one home teacher to 3 families.

The foundation of the Church welfare program is personal and family preparedness. The organizational support is in place to train and prepare the membership in this basic responsibility. What is needed is for each priesthood and Relief Society leader to place the proper priority on this important work.

Now, it may be that the old man in New Hampshire carried personal and family preparedness too far, with digging his own grave and all. But I would love to see all of our people moved by that same spirit of self-reliance and preparedness.

God grant us to see what must be done in our own wards and stakes, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Kimball

It will now be our pleasure to listen to President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be our concluding speaker.

Following President Romney's talk, we will sing the closing hymn no. 23, "Come, Ye Children of the Lord," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## President Marion G. Romney

### Security: fruit of righteous living

Brothers and sisters: I have listened with interest this morning to what has been said. For forty years

now I have been coming to this building twice a year to receive instruction regarding what we today refer to as Church welfare services. Originally, this program was known as the

*Church security plan*; that is the name it was given when it was started. What was then meant by that title needs to be understood today; namely, that security, *true security*; comes only by living the principles of the gospel. *Security is the fruit of righteous living.*

The Book of Mormon contains the history of a people who over the course of a thousand years demonstrated the fruits of righteousness and of wickedness. Whenever they kept the Lord's commandments, they prospered in the land; when they were disobedient, they fell into wickedness, war, famine, and enslavement. Time and time again we read of families, tribes, and whole nations keeping the Lord's commandments and making covenants with him and being blessed by his Spirit. Because of righteousness, they prospered both spiritually and temporally. When they did not keep his commandments, they deteriorated both temporally and spiritually.

The Book of Mormon contains principles which, if we would follow them, could bring us true security in a world wracked by wickedness, fear, and a host of economic problems. I believe our people want to achieve true security, but many of us are not following the course which leads to it. Today, individuals and governments seem to think that they can achieve economic prosperity in spite of a spendthrift mentality. They spend and spend, mortgage and mortgage, pile up debts and obligations and thereby lose stability, lose security, and lose independence.

### **Welfare plan based on Christian principles**

May I emphasize here that the point so easily forgotten is that *the Lord is interested in everything we do in our lives*: our families, our work, and our personal development. He has given eternal truths to guide

us in these matters. Further, he gives us his Spirit to help us apply these principles. But only as we follow him can we have security.

Recently, I reread some of the talks given by the Brethren at the time of the original announcement of the Church's so-called security plan. I was thrilled with the power and solemnity of the thoughts expressed by the Brethren. Here is a quote from President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.'s, statement made at the October 1936 conference, the day that President Heber J. Grant read a letter by the First Presidency establishing the Church security plan. Notice how President Clark emphasizes that this security plan is simply a true expression of the basic Christian tenets contained in the gospel. He said:

"We have proclaimed to the world, and we have proclaimed what we knew, that we have the Gospel plan, and that the Gospel plan not only takes care of our spiritual needs, but our temporal needs as well. . . . It teaches us how to live in a group under an organization and principles which enable us to live together as brothers and sisters, equal in all things insofar as we live for that equality.

"That places upon us a responsibility because this plan which has been given to us is a plan by which Christian rule can come and will come to the nations of the earth." (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, pp. 113-14.)

### **Basics of Church welfare**

On April 4, 1943, at this pulpit, we stated that the Church's security, or welfare, plan consists of three basic elements:

"First, every individual should value his or her independence and labor with all his might to maintain it by being self-sustaining. This the Lord enjoined upon us when from the Garden of Eden He sent forth our

first parents under the stern command, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground' (Gen. 3:19).

"Second, next to himself, the responsibility for sustaining an individual rests upon his family—parents for their children, children for their parents. It is an ungrateful child who, having the ability, is unwilling to assist his parents to remain independent of relief.

"Finally, the individual having done all he can to maintain himself, and the members of his family having done what they can to assist him, then the Church, through the Welfare plan, stands ready to see that its members, *who will accept the plan and work in it to the extent of their ability*, shall each be cared for 'according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs' (D&C 51:3)." (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1943, pp. 27-28.)

### Self-reliance

I'm sure that many of you old-timers have heard this doctrine repeated many times by the Brethren, but I wonder if perhaps some of our younger people, our young bishops and stake presidents, have taken the time to really grasp its meaning. More importantly, I wonder if we as a people, as a nation, and as a world community really understand the basic premise on which all of this rests—namely, *self-reliance*.

The principle of self-reliance grows out of a fundamental doctrine of the Church, that of agency. Elohim, in creating man and placing him on this earth, gave him his agency to act for himself.

"For," said he, "it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. . . .

"For the earth is full, and there

is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be *agents* unto themselves." (D&C 104:13, 17; italics added.)

Just as each individual is accountable for his choices and actions in spiritual matters, so also is he accountable in temporal matters. It is through our *own* efforts and decisions that we *earn* our way in this life. While the Lord will magnify us in both subtle and dramatic ways, he can only guide our footsteps when we move our feet. Ultimately, our own actions determine our blessings or lack of them. It is a direct consequence of both agency and accountability.

### Family reliance

The principle of self-reliance is also given expression in a larger context, that of the basic unit of the Church—the family.

In the Church the concept of providing for one's family and of relying on one's family for growth, mutual care, and help (or *family reliance*) is equally fundamental to self-reliance. The family *is* the basic organizational unit of the Church. No agency or institution can or should replace the family. By sacred covenant and eternal priesthood government, the eternal family unit is established. The same covenant that obligates parents to care for their children obligates children to care for their parents when they need it. The commandment to "honour thy father and thy mother" (Ex. 20:12) extends to modern Israel and is required for all who are faithful members of the Church.

As a consequence of the principle of family reliance, we should realize that, generally, one has no claim on Church resources to resolve personal temporal problems and needs until the family has done all it can to help. This is the doctrine the

Lord established when he said:

"And after *that*, they have claim upon the church, or in other words upon the Lord's storehouse, if their parents have not wherewith to give them." (D&C 83:5; italics added.)

### Church reliance

Finally, I suppose we could think of *Church reliance*; that is, when all has been done at the individual and family level, then the Lord has given instructions how we should provide for one another as a Church family. The extent of this care and the basis on which it is given, however, again must be bound to fundamental principles. May I share a very insightful thought on charity given by President Joseph F. Smith in the general conference of April 1898: (That, of course, was before the welfare program as we understand it.)

"Men and women ought not to be willing to receive charity unless they are compelled to do so to keep them from suffering. Every man and woman ought to possess the spirit of independence, a self-sustaining spirit, that would prompt him or her to say, when they are in need, 'I am willing to give my labor in exchange for that which you give me.' No man ought to be satisfied to receive, and to do nothing for it." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1898, p. 48.)

If every able person who seeks out his bishop for help followed this rule of charity, then true blessings would accrue to both giver and receiver. Everyone would feel good about contributing to the Church welfare plan when the needy come in this spirit. Motivated in this way, people in need desire to quickly become self-sustaining again; they also desire to contribute all they can to the program when they are back on their feet.

### Gospel in action

It has been my desire today, brothers and sisters, to refocus our attention on the basic, fundamental principles of welfare services. I reiterate that welfare services is not just a program; it is the gospel in action. Its principles are the principles of the gospel. It is the Christian rule in temporal affairs. It is my desire that we learn from the scriptures and from the counsel of the living prophets and do our part to sustain ourselves, to care for our families, and with generosity and humility to contribute our share to maintaining those less fortunate than we.

May I close by quoting from King Benjamin (you've heard him quoted already today—King Benjamin, the great leader of the Nephites), who at the close of his ministry had this sage advice for the members of the Church who had lived under his kind and inspired leadership for many years:

"And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; . . .

"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.

"And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order." (Mosiah 4:12, 26-27.)

That we may have the wisdom and the discipline and live to implement these great principles is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.