

to obtain by ourselves. That's the gospel of Jesus Christ in its truest sense. As the family and the individual are strengthened through service to others, they are blessed, and a Zion people is prepared.

I know that Jesus Christ lives, that this Church contains his complete gospel plan, that welfare principles are the gospel in action. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Brother Ripplinger will now lead us in singing hymn no. 27, "Do What Is Right," following which we shall hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The congregation sang "Do What Is Right."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

During a recent department session of Education Week sponsored by Brigham Young University, a wise teacher and stake Relief Society president, Sister Leisel McBride, flashed a large picture on a screen. It showed a bright-eyed boy with unkempt hair and folded arms, deep in thought. The caption read, "I know I'm somebody 'cause God don't make no junk." Please let me repeat, "I know I'm somebody 'cause God don't make no junk."

"Two are better than one"

With the grammar improved, that caption could well be the theme of welfare services.

Every human being in every walk of life needs help in building his self-respect and self-reliance. To be truly effective, welfare services must be concerned with the betterment of the total individual. A person's image of himself is nothing more or less than what he has learned through his experiences and his interactions with others. It is rewarding to note that someone has helped a typical boy develop his personal identity. Someone, perhaps a mother, a Primary teacher, a neighbor, or even a song like "I Am a Child of God," has made this little boy realize he is someone.

He knew he wasn't junk. He knew he wasn't impossible. He knew he was a human being loved by his Heavenly Father.

In Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 we read: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour."

"For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."

Proper application of welfare services principles is simply providing opportunities for one person to work with another to the mutual betterment of both.

It was recently said of a teacher of the year, "He gives no answers to life's questions, but, rather, he directs each student to find his own answers. He doesn't make you feel dumb. He gives you confidence, encourages, doesn't push."

Opportunity to serve and learn

This great arm of the Church about which we are talking today is instituted to instill in all of us a feeling of individual worth by teaching and developing skills, self-sufficiency, and personal pride in a similar way. Welfare services offers us the opportunity to serve and learn on a continuing

basis. Through it we can learn the lessons of never giving up on ourselves or others, or never being defeated by our situations.

The only time we fail in welfare services activities or in the home is when we give up on each other. Patience, long-suffering, and true love can best be taught and learned as we become anxiously engaged in trying to lift all of God's children.

The other day following a Sunday School class a teacher came up and wanted me to shake hands with a special child. As I held my hand out and greeted the boy, I became aware that perhaps the only meaningful thing this child could do was carry the teacher's books to class. What did this empathetic teacher have the boy doing? Carrying the books. Thank God for leaders who know how to teach self-reliance on a level commensurate with the capabilities of those they lead.

Robert Louis Stevenson used these words to remind us of this fact: "To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life." (Bergen Evans, *Dictionary of Quotations*, New York: Crown Publishers, p. 393.) Our Savior said it this way, "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you." (John 20:21.) Each one has something special to live for. Some can find their special niche by themselves, but many need added help. All of us are a part of this inspired welfare activity as we assist each other in fulfilling our purposes here on earth.

Beacon to the world

Satan will do his best to deter us and let discouragement impede our progress. Through trying times we would do well to remember and repeat the famous words of Sir Winston Churchill, England's Lion of Courage, during some of his country's darkest days. With character and strength pe-

culiar to himself, he said, "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never." (Robert Rhodes James, ed., *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches, 1897-1963*, 8 vols., New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974, 6:6,499.) This mighty statesman in his own way was echoing the words of another mighty leader, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32.)

Paul Harvey, news analyst and author, said, "Someday I hope to enjoy enough of what the world calls success so that someone will ask me, 'What's the secret of it?' I shall say simply this: 'I get up when I fall down.'"

There are those who would have us believe that the present welfare services principles are outdated, over-emphasized, and impossible under existing world conditions. To them we would declare it is easier for some skeptics to give up than to learn. It is no doubt easier to be a critic than a servant. In the uncertain days of the present and of the future, welfare services will remain a beacon for the world to see. Its very foundation continues to be built on the rock of helping people to help themselves. Properly implemented, most human needs can be met through this important program of the Church.

Develop self-reliance

Welfare services is God's way. We must have this belief and trust if we are to properly involve ourselves. Besides materials, commodities, money, supplies, labor, and skills, there must be faith—faith to help, lead, and obey in God's way. For guidance and strength may we refer to that great, oft-repeated scripture found in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 104, verses 14 and 16: "I, the Lord,

stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low."

Self-reliance is developed through a proper balance of agency and accountability. As we live, teach, and share, we develop self-reliance in ourselves and others.

Involve everyone

For welfare services to be viable and successful, every member of the Church must be appropriately involved. The Lord's way always involves the individual, the family, and the Church working together. A close tie between welfare services and the home is a necessity. Human understanding, wise preparation, and guidance through prayer are essential ingredients. For order and effectiveness, all action should be taken through proper channels.

It is not enough to make elaborate plans, set up programs, and give serious thought to preparation. Most of us can do that, but many have a hard time really practicing the principles we believe. Some of us have a tendency to shun the fight.

May we remind each other that the strongest helping hand is most often the one closest to ourselves—our very own hands. Can you consider your own options for self-help as problems arise? Or do you toss your arms in the air and say, "Oh, no!" or "Why me?" Can you quietly sit down, review the facts, and list all the possible courses of action? Can you identify causes and determine remedies? Quiet contemplation can solve problems more quickly than frantic force.

Home, the heart of welfare

President Marion G. Romney has said so often, "No self-respecting Church member will voluntarily shift the responsibility for his own maintenance to another. Furthermore, a man not only has the responsibility to care for himself; he also has the responsibility to care for his family." (ENSIGN, May 1981, p. 88.) Paul, speaking to this point, said, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5:8.)

The home, which is the heart of welfare services, and its members should always become involved in all we do so self-respect may be maintained. We must constantly bear in mind that if the total well-being of the individual is to be realized, all members of the family must participate.

Family members usually understand each other best. By working as a team, they may see problems from different points of view. When family councils can be held without destructive arguments, new and better solutions to challenging situations may become evident. Pooling of efforts and resources gives family members a chance to reap the rewards of confidence and security as they help each other solve problems and make progress toward self-reliance and accountability.

Of course, there are times when some of us must turn to the Church resources for help. What a comfort it is to know such resources are available when the needs cannot be met by the individual or his family. Here, too, action is to be taken through proper channels which are well defined. Emotion or panic do not determine the path to follow. All things are to be done in the Lord's own way as specified by our modern-day prophets.

Avoid debt

One of the most rewarding projects for the individual and the family is to avoid debt whenever it is possible. Debt in itself is neither good nor bad. It is a financial tool with the potential of being either. Debt in business may be used to increase productivity or aid in expansion. However, most individuals in debt are usually average people, but they are temporarily out of financial control. They are the victims of poor monetary habits and often have no idea of the importance of proper money management. They misuse credit, especially credit cards, and don't live within budgets or wise operational guidelines. For many of us, credit is like a magic carpet on which we can fly to places we couldn't ordinarily get to. We ride free at first, but forget that a little later we will have to pay for the magic carpet. Bondage-producing interest rates added to the original amount will turn out to be staggering.

Debt can cause serious family conflict. Often couples who have trouble stretching their paychecks find their marriage stretched to the breaking point.

In today's marketplace—yes, in your own neighborhood, town, and cities—scheming, deceiving promoters are making available to gullible purchasers all kinds of enticing offers. We are sorry to report thousands within our ranks are being duped by the glib tongues of those who offer and solicit in whispers. "Once in a lifetime opportunities" and "Just for you" approaches are unusual no more. Such offerings and deals should be avoided like a plague.

I believe the Lord wants us to become alarmed and concerned when we see the wicked and unscrupulous taking unfair advantage of the weak and uninformed. No Latter-day Saint should exploit another man's situation, manipulate, lie, steal, cheat, or deceive. Our responsibility is to assist

each other in avoiding involvements that can be devastating to our welfare.

The practice of thrift is not outdated. We must discipline ourselves to live within our incomes even if it means going without or making do. The wise person can distinguish between basic needs and extravagant wants. Some find budgeting extremely painful, but I promise you, it is never fatal.

Debt can be destructive, causing financial bondage and bankruptcy and the loss of self-respect. A family who can manage money wisely and budget well, including tithing and fast offerings, is helping itself and others in the Lord's own way. Just debts should be paid. I believe the Lord wants us to be successful in our honorable occupational pursuits and use wisely our means for the benefit of the individual, family, Church, and community.

Actions show love

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." (John 21:16.) You can't feed them if you don't know where they are. You can't feed them if you give them reason to resist you. You can't feed them if you don't have the food. You can't feed them if you don't have charity. You can't feed them if you aren't willing to work and share.

Wherever these lost sheep may be, a necessary ingredient for helping is empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand someone else's feelings and to feel what he feels. Meaningful help can never be given without empathy for the recipient. This requires gaining the confidence of the person; listening with eyes, ears, and heart; trying to comprehend how this person feels; and then letting him know by your personal performance that you really understand. One who really understands and practices empathy doesn't solve another's problems, doesn't argue, doesn't top his story, make accusations, or take away

free agency. He merely helps the person build his self-reliance and self-image so he can try to find his own solutions.

Those who need help come in all age brackets. Some of His sheep are young, lonely, and lost. Some are weary, afflicted, and worn with age. Some are in our own family, in our own neighborhood, or in the far corners of the world where we can help with fast offerings. Some are starving for food. Some are starving for love and concern.

If we give His sheep reasons to resist us, the feeding process becomes difficult, if not impossible. No one can teach or help with sarcasm or ridicule. Dictatorship or "I'm right and you are wrong" will negate all efforts to feed a wandering sheep. A wall of resistance will be built, and no one will benefit.

Never encourage a man to do something that causes him to lose his pride, or he will turn away and you will have lost the opportunity to help. May we also bear in mind that we never give one of God's children a lift when we give him a free ride. Every person in the Church should possess a self-sustaining spirit of independence that insists he work for what he receives. The best foods with which to feed His sheep are charity and the restoration of dignity.

By our actions we show our love. Expressions of affection are empty if actions don't match. All His sheep need the touch of a shepherd who cares—who leads His flock along upward paths where they can see the value of walking in obedience to God's laws and feel the dignity of reaching lofty goals.

Charity should start in our own homes. Too many of us extend charity to others when it is often most needed within the family circle.

An old Serbian proverb says, "Kindness is the only service that power cannot command and money cannot buy." The best way to show our love in caring and feeding is to

take time to prove it with kindness hour by hour and day by day. True love is as eternal as life itself.

Suggested goals for welfare services

During the last few days while President Kimball has been recovering from his recent surgery, I have heard many of you express your love and gratitude for him. Many are looking for ways to show sincere gratitude to him for his service and selfless love. From a priceless, intimate association with President Kimball, I think I can give you some guidelines. Learn to love, unconditionally, all of God's children, regardless of race, creed, or color, and try to serve as he serves. This principle is the foundation of welfare services. Each of us could do well to remember Doctrine and Covenants 50:26: "He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all."

The Lord cares enough about us to give us direction for serving and the opportunity for developing self-reliance. His principles are consistent and never changing. Practices may be altered as situations warrant, but the Lord's principles are ever stable. The success of welfare services depends on obedience to the basic gospel laws upon which it is built. There is room for innovation and use of free agency when we look for wise ways to serve as long as we stay within the framework of the gospel.

May 1, in conclusion, suggest some basic goals as we participate in welfare services:

1. Build self-respect by building self-reliance.
2. Give help and service in the Lord's own way, which is a balance of agency and accountability.
3. Realize the proper sequence of sources of help is (1) the individual, (2) the family, and (3) the Church.
4. Be aware that to feed His

sheep, one must know who and where they are.

5. Proper assisting requires love, empathy, and the restoration of dignity.

6. Finally, welfare services requires planning, obedience to basic gospel principles, and above all the willingness to serve as our prophet serves, with unconditional love.

May God help us to give of ourselves with wisdom that they may receive with dignity. Truly, "God makes no junk." We are His children. He loves us and wants us to love

ourselves, our families, and our neighbors in a meaningful way. I am pleased with this great arm of the Church. It is an inspired way of life. It is the implementation of eternal principles for the welfare and benefit of all mankind. It is welfare services. To this I leave my witness, testimony, and love in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney speaks without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

"Building character in the givers and receivers"

It is now my responsibility to say a few words about living welfare principles. For over forty years I have studied and taught the principles of the Church welfare program. I love its principles and know they constitute the capstone to a Christian life. I appreciate what has been said by those who have just spoken to us this morning. They have demonstrated the effect living welfare principles has on us individually and collectively.

In 1936 President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., said, "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 fruitage the latent richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this church." (Special Meeting of Stake Presidencies, 2 Oct. 1936.)

Most of us have experienced the joy of observing someone who has been in need of help receive that help and, consequently, become self-sustaining. Many of us have become

witnesses to the truth that the poor can be exalted when they are administered to in the Lord's way.

Today, however, I would like to direct my comments to the effect living welfare principles has on the giver, as opposed to the receiver. Repeating President Clark's statement of 1936, "The real long-term objective of the welfare plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers." The Lord doesn't really need us to take care of the poor. He could take care of them without our help if it were his purpose to do so. "I, the Lord," he said, "stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine." (D&C 104:14-15.)

Care for others and develop Christlike love

It would be a simple thing for the Lord to reveal to President Kimball where the deposits of oil and precious ores are. We could then hire someone to dig them out and we could float in wealth—and we would float in wealth