

The end better than the beginning

Mothers have the special opportunity of bringing children into the world; they can also play a significant role in bringing to pass their success and happiness here as they prepare them for life eternal.

The economic conditions of today present problems to women and their families that have many implications and far-reaching effects. A woman can find solutions as she recognizes the needs that only she can fill and the part that she must play in the Christlike development of her children. As she lives close to the Spirit, that way will be made clear for her. A wife may be compelled to help with the finances of her family. In this matter we have been given direction. President Kimball has stated:

“Some women, because of circumstances beyond their control, must work. We understand that. . . . Do not, however, make the mistake of being drawn off into secondary tasks which will cause the neglect of your eternal assignments such as . . . rearing the spirit children of our Father in Heaven. Pray carefully over all your decisions.” (ENSIGN, Nov. 1979, p. 103.)

In “A Little Parable for Mothers” by Temple Bailey, a young mother setting out on her path of life

was told that the way would not be easy but that the end would be better than the beginning. She taught her children that life was good. She gave them courage, fortitude, and strength. And finally she was able to teach them to look above the clouds that bring shadows of darkness into this life, to see the glory of God. Knowing how to find their Heavenly Father through the darkness and living by the light of his glory, her children could walk alone. The mother’s journey was over, but the end was better than the beginning because of what she was able to teach her children. (Typescript, LDS Church Historical Dept., Salt Lake City, Utah.)

In the end it is you wonderful, wonderful mothers—you who have put your families first, who have helped each child come to feel the acceptance of your love and the love of our Father in Heaven, and to know the truth of the gospel as your life bears witness of it—it is you whose children will “arise up, and call [you] blessed.” (Prov. 31:28.) I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder J. Thomas Fyans

With the headlines of newspapers and cover stories of magazines full of doom and gloom about the economy, it is well for us to recall the counsel which we as a church have heard for years. That counsel has included such things as obtaining a year’s supply of food, staying out of debt, and preparing for employment. Following this counsel has meant financial salvation to many who have found themselves unemployed during the past year.

Stand independent

The Lord has commanded us to remain self-sufficient, thus retaining our independence. He has said:

“Behold, this is the preparation wherewith I prepare you, and the foundation, and the ensample which I give unto you, whereby you may accomplish the commandments which are given you;

“That through my providence,

notwithstanding the tribulation which shall descend upon you, that the church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world." (D&C 78:13-14.)

How are we to "stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world"? In 1946, Elder Albert E. Bowen had some thoughts on this scripture which struck a familiar chord in my heart. He said:

"The only way the Church can stand independent is for its members to stand independent, for the Church IS its members. It is not possible to conceive of an independent Church made up of dependent members—members who are under the inescapable obligation of dependency. The Lord must want and intend that His people shall be free of constraint whether enforceable or only arising out of the bindings of conscience. It is not believed that any person or people can live from gratuities—rely upon them for means of subsistence and remain wholly free in thought, motive and action. History seems to record no such instance. That is why the Church is concerned that its members, who have physical and mental capacity to do so, shall render service commensurate with their capacities for aid extended. That is why the Church is not satisfied with any system which leaves able people permanently dependent, and insists, on the contrary, that the true function and office of giving is to help people into a position where they can help themselves and thus be free.

"Hesitancy to extend basic welfare principles to this previously unthought of application arises, no doubt, out of a natural human reluctance to forego an apparent benefit which may be had for the taking and ostensibly without price, though this latter is a delusion, since no one ever gets something for nothing, the recipient always pays; if not in money, then in forfeiture of some invaluable right or freedom." (Albert E. Bowen *The*

Church Welfare Plan [Gospel Doctrine manual, 1946], p. 77.)

The Church can be no more independent than the collective independence of its individual members. We fear that some may misunderstand the intent of the resources of the welfare program of the Church and fall into a false sense of security that will lead to reduced efforts toward self-sufficiency. It is not financially possible, nor is it sound in principle, for the Church to amass the assets necessary to take care of the members of the Church who are physically able to work. All the efforts of the welfare program are directed to helping people become self-sufficient. The exceptions to this, of course, are those who cannot take care of themselves. The program provides a brief, temporary port in the storm for the able-bodied and is not meant to be a permanent home. The welfare program of the Church does not represent Church independence, but is a means toward the end of making individuals independent. For the Church, as an organization, to be independent, it would basically have to duplicate the economy of the individual members. This is neither practical, possible, nor prudent. We have all been taught that dependence on the government is not good. Neither is dependence on the Church—that principle runs as deep as free agency itself.

Employment problems

In order to become independent, members must be employed. The economy today is not conducive to obtaining employment with ease. Here are some of the problems with which we are faced:

Last year in the United States there were 1.1 million new homes or apartments started. This was the lowest number since 1946. The first few months of this year show signs of being even more challenging. Mortgage interest rates have climbed from

9 percent in 1977 to over 17 percent in recent months.

Last year, automobile sales were the lowest they have been in twenty years. Losses of United States auto makers have been astronomical. Companies that supply auto makers, such as steel companies, are beginning to feel the seriousness of the situation.

The result of these conditions is a large increase in unemployment. Currently, unemployment is very close to 9 percent, and many economists project it will go even higher before there is a substantial reduction. This 9 percent unemployment equates to 9.5 million Americans being out of work.

These unemployment problems are not limited to the United States. The unemployment rate is 8.6 percent in Canada and 9 percent in Europe. In other places, such as South America, great numbers of people are without work.

Proceed with optimism

These economically turbulent times should not come as a shock to members of the Church who have been listening. Neither should they be devastating to those who have followed the counsel which they have heard. The scriptures tell us we will have this and much more, while at the same time whispering, "Peace, be still." (Mark 4:39.) "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear." (D&C 38:30.) And "All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good." (D&C 122:7.)

Therefore, at this time of economic difficulty, let us rejoice in the fact that we have the restored gospel which gives perspective to the ups and downs in life. Let troubled times serve as a catalyst for introspection and soul searching—followed by increased spirituality. We need to be more sensitive to those around us who may be affected more than ourselves and help each other through this valley. As a people, we should rise to the challenge

and grow from it. We need to proceed with optimism and not fall victim to the debilitating effects of negative, doomsday attitudes.

Church employment system

I would like to direct the balance of my remarks to a program which will have a great impact on helping us meet today's challenges. I speak of the Church employment system. This is not a new program, but, as is so often the case, it is not appreciated or understood until such time as it is dearly needed.

Priesthood leaders will receive a copy of the *Church Employment System Guidebook*, which details the workings of the system. You will also be taught in the various councils of the Church. The objectives of the Church employment system are (1) to help individuals find gainful employment by collecting and quickly sharing job information from members and others in the community; (2) to provide counseling and improved opportunities for those in need of better employment or rehabilitation; and (3) to help parents, through priesthood quorums and Relief Society, to counsel family members about employment and career planning.

To help coordinate this effort, ward and stake employment specialists are called. Careful thought should be given to the persons selected as employment specialists. You bishops know the amount of time and energy you are directing to problems either directly or indirectly related to unemployment. Let this employment specialist serve as a resource in helping you solve some of these problems. We would encourage every ward and stake to have qualified employment specialists called in the near future.

At the request of local priesthood leaders and as approved by the Executive Administrator and General Welfare Services Committee, an employment center may be set up. The

objectives of employment centers are to (1) coordinate job opportunities; (2) place applicants who are not placed at the ward level; (3) at the invitation of priesthood leaders, train stake and ward specialists; and (4) coordinate job solicitation in the business community.

Individual's responsibilities

Let us emphasize that the success of the employment program of the Church lies with the individual members. National studies have shown that 80 percent of all job opportunities are filled by word of mouth, as opposed to employment services, newspapers, or other types of advertising. If 10 percent of our members are unemployed, 90 percent of our members are employed. It is through the employed members of the Church that job opportunities are initially uncovered. We urge each of you who do have jobs to be on the lookout for openings which can be filled by members of your ward who are out of work. In a time when jobs are scarce, priesthood participation is absolutely vital.

Let's not underestimate the strength of our position. As employment center managers contact businesses, they have learned that, in general, members of the Church enjoy a good reputation as employees. Indeed, any member who is living what he has been taught represents an ideal employee. During times of heavy unemployment, employers can be very selective about the people they employ. We feel our members are prime candidates for the limited jobs available at this time.

We encourage members of quorums to work with those who are unemployed and help them with skills needed in looking for employment. Many people who are unemployed now are unemployed for the first time. They may need additional help in such things as writing an adequate resume and in being effective in job interviews. Resources of the quorum can

do much to help members with proper techniques when applying for a job. Another area where quorums and employment specialists can be of much help is underemployment. Many of our employed members live in constant fear of losing their jobs; others are not being fulfilled by the job which they have. Therefore, another purpose of this program is to upgrade employment.

We counsel bishops to use ward employment specialists in coordinating temporary job opportunities for those who are out of work and who are receiving assistance. We can do much more in the area of providing an opportunity for people to work for that which they receive while they are temporarily unemployed.

Work within the law

This program is one which can be applied in most countries. Obviously, nothing should be done which is contrary to the laws of the land in which you live. It is our feeling that in light of today's economy and in view of our objective to remain independent, the employment program has much to offer. No one can see the deterioration which takes place in a man's spirit when he is unemployed without wanting to do something to help. It is desirable not only to relieve human distress but also to prevent and eliminate its causes. Progress *can* be made with the generous use of talents, time, and resources of many individuals. The Church employment system allows the 90 percent of the Church who are employed to help the 10 percent who are unemployed.

May we be committed and involved in this modern-day response to the Savior's command, "Love one another; as I have loved you" (John 13:34), I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Brother Ripplinger will now lead