

# PROVIDING IN THE LORD'S WAY



*Wilt thou be made whole? . . . Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.*

*John 5:6, 8*



# PROVIDING IN THE LORD'S WAY

*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.*

*J. Reuben Clark, Jr.,*

*Special meeting of stake presidents, 2 Oct. 1936*

Cover painting: *Infirm Man at the Pool of Bethesda*,  
by Carl Bloch (see John 5:1-9)

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by Heinrich Hofmann

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# INTRODUCTION

This leader's guide is for the use of all members of stake and ward welfare committees, area welfare directors (in the United States and Canada), directors for temporal affairs (in other areas), Regional Representatives, and Area Presidencies.

Part 1 explains the way the Lord has revealed for his Saints to care for themselves and the poor and needy. Part 2 discusses principles of the gospel that apply to welfare and the welfare responsibilities of each member of the Church.

The leaders who read this guide should teach the principles and responsibilities discussed in parts 1 and 2 to the leaders and members under their jurisdiction. They should encourage the members to fulfill their welfare responsibilities and suggest ways in which they can do so. They should encourage parents to teach welfare principles to their families. One of the primary responsibilities of ward and stake welfare committees is to see that members understand and apply welfare principles.

Part 3 explains the responsibilities that Church leaders have in providing Church welfare assistance. The information in part 3 should be discussed and used as training in ward, stake, and regional committee meetings and area meetings.

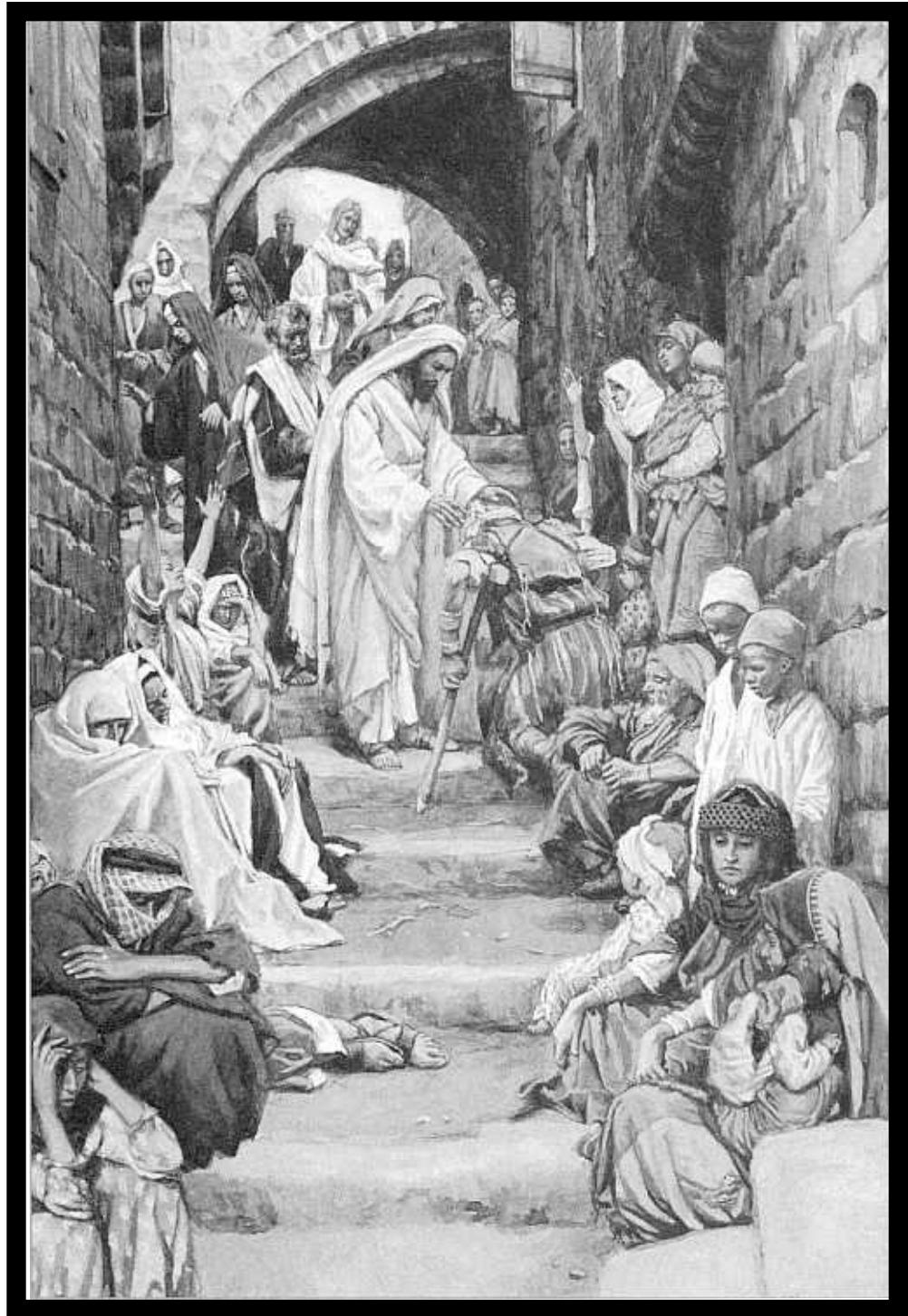
Leaders should study the scriptures quoted and referred to in this guide and use these scriptures and others related to welfare in their teaching and training.

Providing in the Lord's way for ourselves and others is a sign of the true Church and evidence that we are disciples of Christ. Church leaders should teach and testify of the principles contained in this leader's guide by precept, by personal example, and by ensuring that the cries of the poor and needy do not go unheeded.

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*For I was an hungred, and  
ye gave me meat:  
I was thirsty, and ye gave  
me drink:  
I was a stranger, and  
ye took me in:  
Naked, and ye clothed me:  
I was sick, and  
ye visited me: I was in  
prison, and ye came  
unto me. . . .  
Verily I say unto you,  
Inasmuch as ye have done it  
unto one of the least  
of these my brethren,  
ye have done it  
unto me.*

*Matthew 25:35–36, 40*





## PROVIDING IN THE LORD'S WAY

The responsibility to provide for ourselves, our families, and the poor and needy has been part of the gospel since the beginning of time. As disciples of Christ, we should give of ourselves—our time, talents, and resources—to care for those in need. We are better able to fulfill this responsibility if we are striving to become self-reliant, for we cannot give what we do not have. When we wisely use those things that the Lord gives us, we become more able to give to the Lord's work and provide for others.

When Jesus Christ came to earth, he spent much of his ministry caring for the poor and needy. He commanded his disciples to do the same. He explained that when we care for others, we are serving him:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . .

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:35–36, 40).

In our day, the gospel has been restored to the earth in its fulness through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Lord has once again commanded his people to care for the poor and needy. He said, "And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple" (D&C 52:40).

The Lord has established a way for his Saints to care for the poor and needy and thereby bring blessings into their own lives. Providing for the poor

and needy in the Lord's way means that the giver helps those who are less fortunate by giving according to what he has received from God. He gives freely and with a true spirit of love, recognizing that his Heavenly Father is the source of all his blessings and that he is responsible to use those blessings in the service of others.

The receiver accepts the offered help with gratitude. He uses it to release himself from the bondage and limitations of his need and become more able to rise to his full potential, both temporally and spiritually. He then reaches out to help others.

Providing in the Lord's way humbles the rich, exalts the poor, and sanctifies both (see D&C 104:15–18). Both are blessed as they keep the Lord's commandments (see D&C 130:20–21). Both become more able to give as Christ gives.

The Church is organized to help all members become more self-reliant and provide for the poor and needy in the Lord's way. The Lord's way embraces welfare. Welfare means temporal and spiritual well-being. As we apply welfare principles in our lives, we become more like God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, and we prepare ourselves to live with them eternally.

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*Isn't the plan beautiful? Don't you thrill to this part of the gospel that causes Zion to put on her beautiful garments? When viewed in this light, we can see that [welfare] is not a program, but the essence of the gospel. It is the gospel in action. It is the crowning principle of a Christian life.*

*Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, pp. 123–24*



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*And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld  
how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were  
rich cast in much.*

*And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites,  
which make a farthing.*

*And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them,  
Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they  
which have cast into the treasury:*

*For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in  
all that she had, even all her living.*

*Mark 12:41-44*

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Each member of the Church has welfare responsibilities. These are to become self-reliant and to care for the poor and needy.

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### BECOMING SELF-RELIANT

We are children of a Heavenly Father, and we rely upon him to sustain us in all that we do. All things on earth and in heaven belong to him, and he has given us everything we have—our talents and abilities as well as our material goods. He has given us a stewardship over the things with which he has blessed us (see D&C 104:11–14). He never forsakes us, but he does not do for us what we can do for ourselves. He has commanded us to use the things we receive from him to take care of ourselves and our families. When we do so, we are self-reliant.

The Church and its members are commanded to be self-reliant and independent (see D&C 78:13–14). Latter-day prophets have explained the responsibility each of us has to be self-reliant:

“The responsibility for each person’s social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church if he is a faithful member thereof.

“No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family’s well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life. (See 1 Timothy 5:8.)” (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference

Report, Oct. 1977, p. 124; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, pp. 77–78).

When we accept the responsibility for our own and our family’s well-being, we are better able to sustain ourselves in our everyday lives. We are better prepared to endure times of adversity without becoming dependent upon others. We also honor the sacred relationships that the Lord has established between husbands and wives, parents and children (see Mosiah 4:14–15; 13:20; D&C 83:2, 4).

There will be times in our lives when we will not be able to meet our needs without the help of others. In these circumstances, we should turn first to our families for help. If necessary, we can also turn to the Church. As part of his Church, the Lord has organized a way to help members as they work to regain their self-reliance. Members who need this kind of assistance should call upon their bishops.

We should receive necessary help in the proper spirit. We should not be proud, but we should be willing to graciously accept the help that someone else offers. We should receive the help with humility, thanking the Lord for his goodness and the goodness of our fellowmen (see D&C 56:18; 78:19). We should determine that we will use the help we receive to become more self-reliant and more able to give to others.

We cannot be self-reliant without being willing to work. Work is physical, mental, or spiritual effort. The Lord has commanded us to work (see Genesis 3:17–19; D&C 42:42; 56:17), for work is the source of happiness, self-esteem, and prosperity. It is the way we accomplish good things in our lives.

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*Let us work for what we need. Let us be self-reliant and independent. Salvation can be obtained on no other principle. Salvation is an individual matter, and we must work out our own salvation, in temporal as well as in spiritual things.*

*Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, p. 167*

In clarifying the purposes of welfare, in 1936 the First Presidency of the Church made this statement about the importance of work in helping Church members to help themselves:

“Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be reenthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3).

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*Knowing a trade has helped me provide for my own needs and those of my family. Through the years, I have had the opportunity to help others in the ward learn the skills needed to support their families. Doing so has fulfilled my desire to serve and has brought me joy.*



As we work toward self-reliance, we should prepare ourselves in the following areas: education; health; employment; home storage; resource management; and social, emotional, and spiritual strength. The following material describes some characteristics of a person who has become self-reliant and suggests areas of effort and achievement.

#### EDUCATION

When we have knowledge and wisdom, we are able to discern truth from error and make better choices. We are better able to understand God and our fellowmen, and we have a deeper

love for them. The Lord has commanded us to gain knowledge (see D&C 88:77–80, 118; 93:53; 130:18–19; 131:6). To become self-reliant, we should—

- Improve our ability to read, write, and do basic mathematics.
- Study the scriptures and other good books.
- Learn to communicate effectively with others.
- Take advantage of opportunities to gain more knowledge.

#### HEALTH

One of the reasons we came to earth was to obtain bodies, a necessary step in becoming like our Father in Heaven. The Lord has commanded us to keep our bodies and minds healthy (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; D&C 88:124; 89). When we do, we are better able to take care of our own needs and serve others. To become self-reliant, we should—

- Obey the Word of Wisdom.
- Exercise regularly.
- Provide for adequate medical and dental care, including appropriate insurance where possible.
- Keep our homes and surroundings clean and sanitary.
- Shun substances or practices that abuse our bodies or minds.

#### EMPLOYMENT

When we have honorable employment, we are able to provide for ourselves, our families, and others by working as the Lord has commanded. Suitable employment also gives us opportunities to improve our talents and develop the divine attributes within us. We are happier if our employment suits our interests and abilities and meets our needs. The Lord has commanded us to work and provide for the needs of ourselves and our families (see Genesis 3:17–19; 1 Timothy 5:8; D&C 42:42; 56:17). To become self-reliant, we should—

- Prepare for and carefully select a suitable occupation.

- Become skilled at our work through training and experience.
- Be diligent, hard working, and trustworthy.
- Give honest work for the pay and benefits we receive.

#### HOME STORAGE

In order to be self-reliant, we should have sufficient food, clothing, and shelter. We are therefore counseled to store, use, and know how to produce and prepare essential items. We are more secure if we are able to provide for ourselves in times of adversity (see D&C 38:30).

Church leaders have never given an exact formula for what members should store. But they have suggested that we begin by storing what would be required to keep us alive in case we did not have anything else to eat. Depending upon where we live, those basics might include water, wheat or other grains (corn, rice), legumes (dried beans, peas, lentils), salt, honey or sugar, powdered milk, and cooking oil. When we have stored enough of these essentials to meet the basic needs of our families for one year, we may decide to add other items that we are accustomed to eating. We should regularly use and replace all stored items in order to keep them from spoiling.

Most Church members have the means to store a year's supply of the basic items needed to sustain life. Some, however, do not have the money or space for such storage, and some are prohibited by law from storing a year's supply of food. These members should try to store as much as they can according to their circumstances. All members can provide themselves with added security by learning to produce and prepare basic food items.

#### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

We should be wise stewards by exercising good judgment in managing and replenishing the resources with which the Lord has blessed us (see Matthew 25:14–30; 2 Nephi 9:51; D&C

59:16–21; 104:11–18, 78–79; 119). To become self-reliant, we should—

- Pay tithes and offerings.
- Avoid unnecessary debt and save for the future.
- Satisfy all of our promised obligations.
- Use our resources frugally and avoid wasting them.
- Use our time wisely.
- Be willing to serve those in need by sharing our time, talents, and resources with them.

#### SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

We should strive to live righteously, to develop good relationships with family members and others, and to feel good about ourselves (see Matthew 7:1–2, 12; Luke 10:27; D&C 64:9–10). To become self-reliant, we should—

- Study the scriptures and the teachings of the living prophets.
- Obey God's commandments and heed the counsel of Church leaders.
- Exercise faith in Christ and cultivate humility.
- Pray frequently and fervently.
- Strengthen our relationships with family members, neighbors, and friends.
- Shun things that are morally and spiritually degrading.
- Work toward worthy goals.
- Do the best we can to adjust to change and recover from misfortune.

#### CARING FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY

As we prepare ourselves in the six areas just discussed and become more able to care for ourselves and our families, we also become more able to care for others. As disciples of Christ, we should honor our covenants to consecrate ourselves—our time, talents, and resources—to build up the kingdom of God and to care for those in need.

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*I ask you earnestly, have you provided for your family a year's supply of food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel? The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah.*

*Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, p. 61*

Nearly all of us can give something to others, no matter how little we have. When Jesus saw rich people contribute large amounts of money to the temple treasury and a poor widow contribute a very small amount, he said to his disciples:

“Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

“For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mark 12:41–44).

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*I am thankful that Aaronic Priesthood holders come to my home each month and give me the opportunity to contribute a fast offering. I feel that the Lord blesses me when I do my small part to help care for those who are less fortunate than I am.*



Those who have little are blessed because they have the desire to give. In the Book of Mormon, we are taught:

“I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give.

“And now, if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless” (Mosiah 4:24–25).

When we strive to give and serve as Christ did, we are abundantly blessed. We overcome selfishness and greed, and we temper our appetites and passions. We develop the desire to give all that we have to the building of the Lord’s kingdom (see D&C 42:31), we

retain a remission of our sins (see Mosiah 4:26), our confidence grows strong in the presence of God (see D&C 121:45–46), and we are filled with joy (see D&C 11:12–13). We become more like our Father in Heaven and his Son, our Savior.

#### **FASTING AND CONTRIBUTING FAST OFFERINGS**

There are many ways in which we can give to the poor and needy. One of the most important ways that the Lord has established is by fasting and contributing fast offerings.

Fasting, accompanied by prayer, is a form of true worship. The Lord has commanded us to fast in order to help us draw close to him, overcome worldliness, gain spiritual strength, increase our compassion, and prepare ourselves for service. Fasting is fundamental to our temporal and spiritual well-being.

The Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, described the true nature of the fast as well as the blessings that come to those who fast:

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

“Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.

“Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted

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*We hope that through the payment of liberal fast offerings there will be more than enough to provide for the needs of the less fortunate. If every member of this Church observed the fast and contributed generously, the poor and the needy not only of the Church, but many others as well, would be blessed and provided for.*

*Gordon B. Hinckley,  
Special Budget Fireside,  
18 Feb. 1990*

soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

“And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not” (Isaiah 58:6–11).

When we fast, we follow the pattern set by the Savior. We set aside food, drink, and worldly concerns. We commune with our Father in Heaven and turn our hearts to him and to the welfare of others.

The Church has designated one Sunday each month as a fast day. On this day, members of the Church who are physically able go without food and drink for two consecutive meals. They attend the fast and testimony meeting and give to the Church a fast offering. Those who have little can give an offering at least equal to the value of the food that they would have eaten. Those who are in a position to do so should be very generous and give much more than the value of two meals.

These fast offerings are used by the bishop to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, and relieve the afflicted. Fast offerings are one of the most important ways in which we care for those in need.

#### **OTHER WAYS TO CARE FOR THE NEEDY**

There are many other ways in which we can show compassion for the poor and needy. We can minister to them using our time, talents, spiritual and emotional support, and prayers of faith. The Book of Mormon explains some of our responsibilities to the poor:

“Ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will

administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain. . . .

“ . . . 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” (Mosiah 4:16, 26).

When we have love in our hearts, we do not need to be told all the ways in which we should care for the poor and needy. Some opportunities for such service will come to us through Church callings and assignments. Other opportunities are present all around us in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities if we are willing to see them. There are no limits to what a person may freely offer. Examples include service to the homeless, the disabled, the emotionally and spiritually distressed, the widows and fatherless, and other poor and needy people.

If we begin to reach out to those who are less fortunate, we will become more conscious of their needs. We will become more compassionate and eager to relieve the suffering of those around us. We will be guided by the Spirit of the Lord to know whom to serve and how to best meet their needs.

The Lord taught, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). The measure of our love for the Lord is the love we show to our fellowmen by serving and blessing them in their times of need.



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*And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do  
to inherit eternal life?*

*And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good,  
save one, that is, God.*

*Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill,  
Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father  
and thy mother.*

*And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.*

*Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou  
one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor,  
and thou shalt have treasure in heaven:  
and come, follow me.*

*Luke 18:18–22*



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## PROVIDING CHURCH WELFARE ASSISTANCE

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### THE LORD'S STOREHOUSE

When members are doing all that they can to provide for themselves and their families and still cannot meet their basic needs, the Lord's Church stands ready to help them. The Lord has declared that he will hear their cries and will not forsake them (see Isaiah 41:17).

To help these members meet their needs, the Lord has commanded his Saints to offer their resources to the poor. In the Doctrine and Covenants, he explained that the Saints should give their offerings for the poor to the bishop. These offerings are to be kept by the bishop "to administer to those who have not, from time to time, that every man who has need may be amply supplied and receive according to his wants." These offerings are to be kept "in [the Lord's] storehouse, to administer to the poor and needy" (D&C 42:33–34; see also 42:29–36; 78:3–7, 13–14; 82:14–19).

The Lord's storehouse receives, holds in trust, and dispenses consecrated offerings of the Saints. In form and operation, the storehouse is as simple or sophisticated as circumstances require. It may be a list of available services, money in an account, food in a pantry, or commodities in a building. A storehouse is established the moment faithful members give to the bishop of their time, talents, skills, compassion, materials, and financial means in caring for the poor and in building up the kingdom of God on the earth.

The Lord's storehouse, therefore, exists in each ward. The bishop is the agent of the Lord's storehouse. Guided by the inspiration of the Lord, he

distributes the Saints' offerings to the poor and needy. He is assisted by the priesthood quorums and Relief Society. He is trained and supported in his responsibilities by stake, regional, and area leaders.

As the bishop administers the resources of the Lord's storehouse to help the poor and needy, he should ensure that organized Church welfare assistance does not replace personal, compassionate caring of individuals for one another.

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### THE SCOPE OF CHURCH WELFARE ASSISTANCE

There are many reasons why Church members do not have the resources to meet their basic needs. They may be elderly, handicapped, or otherwise disabled. They may have made unwise choices, either deliberately or because their families or cultures have taught them incorrect values and habits. They may have been deprived of necessary resources because of natural disasters or because of economic and political problems in their nations.

Church leaders should do what they can to help meet the basic needs of members in any of these circumstances and to help the members become self-reliant. But in their work as Church leaders, they should not concentrate on solving economic and political problems in their communities or nations. Church welfare initiatives by ward and stake leaders should concentrate on helping people overcome those causes of welfare need which the individual or family can remedy.

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*The Lord's storehouse includes the time, talents, skills, compassion, consecrated material, and financial means of faithful Church members. These resources are available to the bishop in assisting those in need.*

*Thomas S. Monson, Ensign, Sept. 1986, p. 5*

Individual Church members, as citizens, may work toward solving economic and political problems by participating in worthy projects sponsored by their communities.

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## DUTIES OF THE BISHOP

The office of bishop in the Aaronic Priesthood carries with it a special mandate to care for the poor and needy (see D&C 84:112; 107:68). The bishop is the Lord's agent in distributing the resources of the Lord's storehouse, and he is also a common judge in Israel (see D&C 107:74).

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*As a bishop, I have learned that ward members receive temporal and spiritual blessings when they give and serve freely. Recently, members of our ward built a ramp for an elderly sister now confined to a wheelchair. As we were finishing, one of the priests said to me, "Thanks, Bishop. I hope I don't ever forget how good it feels to really help somebody."*



### PROVIDE WELFARE ASSISTANCE IN THE PROPER SPIRIT

The bishop provides welfare assistance to members to help them develop spirituality, become self-reliant, and learn to provide for others. If he provides help in this spirit, he will be successful in blessing the lives of the needy. The following guidelines will help him provide welfare assistance properly.

#### *Seek Out the Poor and Needy*

The bishop should know the temporal circumstances of his ward members and ensure that proper care and attention are given to those in need. It is not

enough for him to respond only when asked for help. To serve effectively, he must seek out the poor. In this responsibility, he may be assisted by priesthood quorum leaders and Relief Society leaders, home teachers and visiting teachers.

#### *Study the Circumstances*

The bishop should determine the causes of members' need and what the members have done to provide for themselves and their families. He lists the members' needs and the resources that are available to help the members using the Needs and Resources Analysis form (32290; a copy of this form is included at the end of this guide). The bishop authorizes the Church's distribution of any goods and services to needy ward members.

When appropriate and without breaking confidences, he may involve the Relief Society president in his study of the members' circumstances. He may assign her to visit members to determine their needs and find ways to resolve the needs (see "Guidelines for Family Needs Visits," *Relief Society Handbook* [31462], pp. 36–37).

#### *Use Discernment*

Through his priesthood office and calling, the bishop determines to whom, when, how, and how much shall be given to any member of his ward as Church welfare. To enable the bishop to properly discharge his responsibilities, the stake president ensures that the bishop understands welfare principles. Though individual circumstances vary, the bishop, as a common judge, must live worthy to receive guidance from the Lord for each situation.

#### *Assist with Necessities*

The Church helps needy members by providing them the goods and services necessary to sustain life. It does not provide members the means to maintain affluent living standards. Members who are temporarily unable

to provide for themselves may need to alter their standards of living until they are able to provide fully for themselves. Members should not rely upon Church welfare to insure them against temporary hardship or to allow them to continue their present standards of living without interruption.

### ***Give Members the Opportunity to Work***

The bishop should give members who receive Church welfare assistance opportunities to work to the extent of their ability for what they receive. When members work for assistance, they remain industrious, maintain their self-respect, and increase their ability to be self-reliant. The bishop considers the following guidelines when making work assignments:

- Assign meaningful work that will help the members being assisted learn to provide for themselves and their families.
- Ask the members to commit themselves to fulfilling the assignments. If they refuse to work, help them understand that the assignments are given to bless them.
- See that the members are trained to fulfill their assignments.
- Assign tasks that benefit other members, thus enabling those in need to serve others.
- Have the ward welfare services committee compile a list of work opportunities.

### ***Keep Needs and Assistance Confidential***

The bishop keeps confidential the needs of members and the help the members receive. He is careful not to embarrass those needing assistance. If the bishop calls upon the Relief Society president or others to help, he shares only that information needed to enable them to fulfill their welfare duties, thus safeguarding the privacy and dignity of those being assisted.

## **ADMINISTER THE LORD'S STOREHOUSE**

### ***Administer Fast Offerings***

Fast offerings are a primary resource of the Lord's storehouse. The bishop should use fast offerings to provide necessities to the poor and needy. To the extent possible, he should give members goods rather than cash. If necessary, he may buy the goods with fast offerings. The members can then use their own cash to pay their obligations. If the members do not have the cash to pay all of their immediate and essential obligations, the bishop normally makes payments directly to the provider of the goods or services.

In some circumstances, the bishop may decide to give cash directly to reliable, faithful members being assisted. They can then use the cash to pay their obligations or make necessary purchases.

The bishop should not loan fast offerings to members, and members are not required to repay welfare assistance that they receive from the Church. If members wish to repay the assistance, they may do so by making a contribution to the fast-offering fund.

Normally, the bishop should not use fast offerings to pay off members' consumer debt or obligations incurred in business failures or speculative ventures.

When fast-offering expenditures will exceed donations, the bishop and stake president should counsel together beforehand to ensure that correct principles are being applied. They should discuss whether the bishop and the ward members, both those who give and those who receive, correctly understand and apply the principles of self-reliance and providing for the poor and needy. The current instructions for ward and stake financial clerks outline the procedures for obtaining additional fast offerings from the Church or remitting surplus fast offerings to the Church.

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*Whom should I assist?*

*How much assistance should I give? How often and how long should I assist? No hard-and-fast rule will ever be given in answer to these questions. As the common judge, you [the bishop] must live worthy to get the answers for each case from the only source provided—the inspiration of heaven.*

*Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 140*

The bishop encourages members to fast each fast Sunday for two consecutive meals and to donate a fast offering at least equal to the value of the food they would have eaten. He encourages those who are in a position to do so to be very generous and give much more than the value of two meals. (See pp. 8–9.) He teaches members that fasting and donating fast offerings will bless their lives as well as the lives of the needy in their ward and in other wards and stakes. He sees that these principles are taught in priesthood quorum, Relief Society, and other auxiliary meetings; home visits; and sacrament meeting talks. He should teach these principles in temple recommend interviews and tithing settlement interviews.

Under the direction of the bishop, Aaronic Priesthood holders, especially deacons, contact every household in the ward each month and give the family or individual the opportunity to donate a fast offering. Where distances or other circumstances make it necessary, Melchizedek Priesthood holders may assist. Some members may decide to contribute by using the envelopes for tithing and other offerings rather than by donating through visiting Aaronic Priesthood holders. The priesthood holders should continue to give non-contributing members the opportunity to donate.

The bishop makes sure that all fast offerings are promptly accounted for and deposited in the bank according to current instructions for ward and stake financial clerks.

#### ***Administer Other Ward Resources***

In caring for the poor and needy, the bishop directs the use of ward resources other than fast offerings, including the time, talents, skills, compassion, and materials of ward members. He does this as chairman of the ward welfare committee by directing the committee's efforts; by counseling, as appropriate, with priesthood quorum leaders and

Relief Society leaders; by asking families, home teachers, and visiting teachers to serve the needy in particular ways; and by using resources made available to the ward by the stake welfare committee.

#### ***Use Services of Church Welfare Operations, Where They Exist***

In some parts of the world, the Church has established welfare operations. These include Church employment offices, Deseret Industries stores, storehouses, canneries, grain storage facilities, and a variety of commodity production projects. The Church also contracts with LDS Social Services to provide counseling, foster care, assistance to unwed parents, and adoption services to members.

Where they exist, these welfare operations and contracted services provide resources that bishops can use to help the poor and needy. In many cases, the operations also provide work opportunities and training for those needing Church assistance. If a bishop desires information about any Church welfare operations in his area, he should contact the chairman of the stake bishops' welfare council or his stake president.

#### ***Help Needy Members Obtain Health Care***

The bishop may arrange and pay for health care for needy members of the ward. In order to decide whether the Church should pay for health care, he should determine—

- Whether the health care that the member requests is necessary.
- Whether the member is fully using insurance benefits.
- Whether family members can assist.

If the bishop feels that the Church should assist the needy member, he should—

- Ask the healthcare providers if they will reduce their fees.
- See that the Church promptly pays its obligations for health care.

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*I am satisfied, my brethren, that there is enough of expertise, of knowledge, of strength, of concern in every priesthood quorum to assist the troubled members of that quorum if these resources are properly administered.*

Gordon B. Hinckley, Ensign, Nov. 1977, pp. 85-86

- If a member's medical expenses that will be paid by the Church are expected to exceed \$1,000, obtain the approval of the stake president before making a commitment to healthcare providers. If these expenses are expected to exceed \$5,000, contact the stake president, who will contact the Area Presidency for instructions.

### *Assist Transients*

The bishop may assist members or others who are transients, but he should be discerning about the type and amount of assistance he gives. Whenever possible, he should contact the transient's home ward bishop before providing assistance. When several wards are close together, the stake president may appoint one bishop to handle all requests from transients, thereby avoiding duplication or confusion.

treatment services. The bishop should become familiar with the resources available in the community and help members understand how they can maintain gospel standards while using such services.

Latter-day Saints have the responsibility to provide for themselves and their families. Individual members, however, may find it necessary to receive assistance beyond that which the family can provide, in which case they may turn to the Church for help. In some instances, individual members may decide to receive assistance from other sources, including government. In all such cases, members should avoid becoming dependent upon these sources and strive to become self-reliant. Where possible, they should work in return for assistance rendered.

The bishop should advise members to comply with any laws that regulate the receipt of non-Church aid, especially while receiving Church welfare assistance.

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*Our ward has many poor people. The bishop alone cannot help everyone. Through the priesthood quorums and the Relief Society, we help those who are less fortunate and are blessed for our efforts. We no longer view welfare as help from outside but as an opportunity to share help among ourselves.*



### *Become Familiar with Community Resources*

Members may choose to use services in the community to meet their basic needs. Such services include hospitals, physicians, or other sources of medical care; job training and placement services; services for the handicapped; professional counselors or social workers; and alcohol or drug

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### **DUTIES OF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD QUORUMS AND RELIEF SOCIETY**

While the bishop is responsible to help ward members meet immediate needs, the priesthood quorums and the Relief Society have the responsibility to help members resolve long-term needs. To fulfill this responsibility, priesthood quorum leaders and Relief Society leaders should become well-acquainted with members and regularly visit their homes. They teach members to live providently, provide for themselves and their families, and care for others. They direct priesthood quorum and Relief Society members in teaching new skills to the needy and helping them to become self-reliant. They are assisted in these duties by home teachers and visiting teachers.

The bishop may direct priesthood quorum leaders and Relief Society leaders to help him fulfill his responsibilities for the poor and needy. Without

breaking confidences, these leaders should tell the bishop about members' welfare needs and may assist the bishop in finding work opportunities for those being helped.

Priesthood quorum leaders are instructed to organize a committee to advise them on temporal and spiritual welfare matters (see the *Melchizedek Priesthood Leadership Handbook* [31184], pp. 10, 15). The quorum presidency looks to this committee to suggest welfare topics for instruction, arrange service opportunities for members, suggest ways to meet needs of members, and help with the ward employment program. The committee reports to a member of the priesthood quorum leadership and meets as often as needed.

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*The family . . . seeks first to solve its own problems, seeking assistance, when necessary, through the Priesthood quorum, the Relief Society, and the ward. When each of these units has exhausted its ingenuity and resources, the reserves of the stake are utilized.*

*Henry D. Moyle,  
Improvement Era, Dec.  
1937, p. 787*

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#### **DUTIES OF THE WARD WELFARE COMMITTEE**

The bishop is chairman of the ward welfare committee. This committee consists of the priesthood executive committee and the Relief Society presidency. It meets at least monthly, either in place of or in addition to one of the priesthood executive committee meetings. This committee makes sure that the following things are done:

- The efforts of the priesthood quorums and Relief Society are coordinated to meet the specific needs of ward members.
- Ward leaders and members seek out the poor and needy and help them to provide for themselves.
- Those receiving Church assistance are given work or service opportunities.
- Members are taught to provide for themselves and their families.
- Members are taught to fast and to contribute a generous fast offering.
- Members are taught to prepare for unexpected adversity.
- The ward has a simple written plan for responding to emergencies. This plan should be coordinated with

similar plans in the stake, region, and community. Ward leaders should report to stake leaders the condition of members and Church property during an emergency. They should understand that civil authorities have priority in directing efforts to respond to emergencies that involve the community.

#### **Ward Welfare Committee**

*Bishopric*  
*High priests group leader*  
*Elders quorum president*  
*Ward mission leader*  
*Young Men president*  
*Relief Society presidency*  
*Ward executive secretary*  
*Ward clerk*

The bishop may call welfare specialists to assist the ward welfare committee as needed. These specialists should be ward members who can assist other members in such things as finding employment, improving nutrition and sanitation, storing food, obtaining health care, improving literacy, managing finances, meeting social and emotional needs, or any other welfare needs.

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#### **DUTIES OF THE STAKE PRESIDENT**

##### **TEACH WELFARE PRINCIPLES TO STAKE MEMBERS AND LEADERS**

The stake president should make sure that stake and ward leaders and members know how to be self-reliant and care for the poor and needy, as outlined in this guide. He should teach leaders and members in stake welfare committee meetings, stake priesthood and auxiliary meetings, and personal interviews.

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*Sometimes bishops struggle with how to best meet the welfare needs of ward members. The final decisions about whom, when, how, and how much to help rest with the bishops. But I have found that as a stake president, I can help the bishops in my stake to discern the will of the Lord by counseling with them about difficult welfare problems.*



He instructs ward leaders to search the scriptures to learn their welfare responsibilities so that they know how to provide for the poor and needy in the Lord's way. He also instructs ward leaders to teach welfare principles in quorum and auxiliary meetings. They can use welfare-related lessons in priesthood and Relief Society personal study guides and other curriculum materials.

He should see that stake and ward welfare committees are organized and functioning and that committee members understand their responsibilities for welfare.

#### **TRAIN AND COUNSEL BISHOPS**

The stake president should train and counsel bishops in the principles and practices outlined in this guide. He makes sure that each new bishop learns his welfare duties by watching the videocassette *Caring for the Needy* (53257) and studying the accompanying guide (32294). (This videocassette is also useful for training stake and ward priesthood leaders and Relief Society leaders.)

In personal interviews with each bishop, the stake president inquires about the welfare of individual ward members, discusses the use of fast offerings and the welfare assistance given to members, and teaches welfare principles that the bishop needs to consider in making decisions.

When fast-offering expenditures will exceed donations, the bishop and stake president should counsel together beforehand to ensure that correct principles are being applied. They should discuss whether the bishop and the ward members, both those who give and those who receive, correctly understand and apply principles related to self-reliance and providing for the poor and needy. The current instructions for ward and stake financial clerks outline the procedures for obtaining additional fast offerings from the Church or remitting surplus fast offerings to the Church.

The stake president should instruct the bishops in the stake to contact him if a needy member's medical expenses to be paid by the Church are expected to exceed \$1,000. In this situation, bishops will need the stake president's approval before making a commitment to healthcare providers. If a needy member's medical expenses to be paid by the Church are expected to exceed \$5,000, the stake president should contact the Area Presidency for instructions.

When several wards are close together and many transients are in need of assistance, the stake president may appoint one bishop to handle all requests from transients, thereby avoiding duplication or confusion.

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#### **DUTIES OF THE STAKE WELFARE COMMITTEE**

The stake president is chairman of the stake welfare committee. This committee consists of the stake priesthood executive committee, the stake Relief Society presidency, and the chairman of the stake bishops' welfare council. It should meet at least quarterly, either in place of or in addition to one of the stake priesthood executive committee meetings. This committee does the following things:

- Sees that priesthood quorum leaders and Relief Society leaders are trained in their welfare duties.

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*What kind of organization will we have to have, to [set up a welfare program]? . . . Nothing is greater than the priesthood organization. All in the world you need to do is to put the priesthood to work.*

*Harold B. Lee, Welfare Agricultural Meeting, 3 Oct. 1970*

- Sees that welfare resources within the stake are made available to the wards as needed.
- Develops ways to encourage members to be self-reliant.
- Develops ways to provide help to members with special needs.
- Provides opportunities for the chairman of the stake bishops' welfare council to report on welfare matters during the stake welfare committee meeting.
- Sees that resources within the stake are available to assist the bishop who handles all requests for assistance to transients, if a bishop has been appointed.
- Sees that the stake has a simple written plan for responding to emergencies. This plan should be coordinated with similar plans in the region and community. Stake leaders should report to their priesthood leaders the condition of members and Church property during an emergency. They should understand that civil authorities have priority in directing efforts to respond to emergencies that involve the community.

The stake president may call welfare specialists to assist the stake welfare committee as needed. These specialists should be stake members who can assist other members in such things as finding employment, improving nutrition and sanitation, storing food, obtaining health care, improving literacy, managing finances, meeting social and emotional needs, or any other

**Stake Welfare Committee**

*Stake presidency*

*High council*

*Stake bishops' welfare council chairman*

*Stake Relief Society presidency*

*Stake executive secretary*

*Stake clerk*

welfare needs. These specialists may be invited to attend stake welfare committee meetings as needed.

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### **DUTIES OF THE STAKE BISHOPS' WELFARE COUNCIL**

The stake bishops' welfare council includes all bishops in the stake. The stake president appoints one bishop to be chairman of the council. In consultation with the stake president, the chairman arranges meetings, prepares agendas, leads discussions, and arranges for instruction. The council meets at least quarterly and more often when circumstances require.

**Stake Bishops' Welfare Council**

*Chairman (a designated bishop)*

*Bishops*

*Stake clerk*

To ensure that the bishops can discuss welfare matters freely and openly, the stake president attends council meetings only occasionally to give instruction. The council enables bishops to do the following:

- Receive training in welfare responsibilities.
- Exchange ideas and experiences relating to welfare responsibilities.
- Review agencies and services in the community and determine which ones could be used to assist members.
- Review trends in fast-offering contributions, welfare needs, and welfare assistance.
- Discuss ways to encourage members to serve each other.
- Identify work opportunities for those who receive welfare assistance.
- Discuss ways in which the priesthood quorums and Relief Society can help to meet welfare needs in the stake.



- Evaluate the services and management of Church welfare operations where they exist.

The stake bishops' welfare council does not make policy. The council should refer policy matters to the stake president.

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## **DUTIES OF THE AREA PRESIDENCY**

The Area Presidency sets welfare priorities for the area, clarifies welfare policies, and oversees Church welfare operations.

Under the direction of the Area Presidency, the Regional Representative provides training in welfare principles and practices. He may do so in area and regional training meetings, in regional welfare committee meetings, and in stake conferences he attends.

The area welfare director (in the United States and Canada) or the director for temporal affairs (in other areas) is the welfare specialist assigned to the Area Presidency. He helps make plans for meeting welfare needs in the area; trains local leaders as requested; gives advice on technical issues such as government regulations, safety matters, or financial procedures; and supervises the management of Church welfare operations where they exist.

### **OVERSEE CHURCH WELFARE OPERATIONS**

Church welfare operations include Church employment offices, Deseret Industries stores, storehouses, canneries, grain storage facilities, and a variety of commodity production projects. The Area Presidency oversees the work of these welfare operations through the area welfare director or the director for temporal affairs, and through presidents of agent stakes assigned to individual Church welfare operations where they exist.

The Church contracts with LDS Social Services to provide counseling,

foster care, assistance to unwed parents, and adoption services to members.

Church welfare operations and contracted services provide resources that bishops can use to help the poor and needy. In many cases, the operations also provide work opportunities and training for those needing Church assistance.

### **APPROVE REQUESTS FOR CHURCH- SERVICE WORKERS**

An Area Presidency may call full-time or part-time Church-service workers to assist in welfare operations or in other specialized welfare tasks in the area or any of its regions. The Area Presidency may also approve requests to call such workers from the area welfare director or director for temporal affairs, a regional welfare committee, or the president of a stake that has been assigned to be the agent stake for a Church welfare operation.

Area Presidencies should make every effort to use Church-service workers in Church welfare operations, avoiding the use of paid personnel to the extent possible.

If Church-service workers are called to serve for twenty or more hours a week, the Area Presidency will normally extend the call to them through a letter. All other Church-service workers are normally called by their stake presidents.

If Church-service workers must relocate in order to serve, they are called by the First Presidency as missionaries with additional assignments in welfare.

### **APPROVE REQUESTS FOR MISSIONARIES WITH ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS IN WELFARE**

A mission president may request that full-time missionaries with additional assignments in welfare be assigned to his mission. He sends a request for such missionaries to the Area Presidency for approval, using the

form entitled Mission President's Request for Missionaries with Additional Assignments (31984). If the Area Presidency approve the request, they forward it to the Missionary Department of the Church.

*As missionaries with additional assignments in welfare, we have many opportunities to help needy members of the Church learn the basic skills needed for self-reliance. We are assigned by our mission president to work in many branches where these basic skills are needed.*



These missionaries may be either couples or single sisters. The mission president is responsible for their welfare and for supervising their proselyting efforts. With the help of the area welfare director or the director for temporal affairs, he may also give direction to their additional assignments. (See the *Mission President's Handbook* [31153], pp. 21–22.) These missionaries may help priesthood leaders and Relief Society leaders to train members in welfare practices such as those outlined in the *Basic Self-reliance* lessons (32293).

#### **OBTAIN APPROVAL FOR HEALTH CARE**

A stake president should contact the Area Presidency if a needy member's medical expenses to be paid by the Church are expected to exceed \$5,000. The Area Presidency should seek approval for the proposed health care from Church headquarters through Welfare Health Services, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84150.

#### **GIVE WELFARE TRAINING IN AREA TRAINING MEETINGS**

Area Presidencies train stake presidents in area training meetings. At least annually, they should train stake presidents in welfare matters. When practical, the area welfare director or the director for temporal affairs should attend these meetings when welfare is discussed. Welfare training could include the following:

- Instruction on welfare principles and practices.
- Discussion of trends in fast-offering contributions and welfare assistance.
- Discussion of ways in which stake presidents can train stake and ward leaders and members in welfare principles and practices.
- Planning and approval of area and regional welfare activities.
- Discussion of recommendations to be made to the General Welfare Committee.

#### **Area Training Meeting**

*Area Presidency  
(or member of the Presidency)*

*Regional Representatives*

*Stake presidents*

*Area welfare director or director for temporal affairs (attends when welfare is discussed)*

#### **DUTIES OF THE REGIONAL WELFARE COMMITTEE**

In the United States and Canada and in other areas where Church welfare activities need to be coordinated above the stake level, Area Presidencies should organize a regional welfare committee in each region within their areas. This committee consists of all stake presidents, all chairmen of stake bishops' welfare councils, and all stake

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*I am grateful my welfare roots go deep into the soil of the Pioneer Stake and the Pioneer Welfare Region, where giants of our time . . . taught, testified and inspired. There is currently a pressing need for members of regional and area councils to assume their full responsibility and be similarly taught and inspired.*

*Thomas S. Monson,  
Church News,  
26 May 1990, p. 8.*

Relief Society presidents in the region. The Area Presidency appoints one stake president to be chairman of the committee. The committee meets at least twice a year and more often if needed.

### **Regional Welfare Committee**

*Chairman (a designated stake president)*

*Regional Representative  
(attends when practical)*

*Stake presidents*

*Stake bishops' welfare council chairmen*

*Stake Relief Society presidents*

*Regional welfare agent (executive secretary)*

The committee has the following responsibilities:

- Implement instructions from the General Welfare Committee and the Area Presidency.
- Encourage stake and ward leaders to train members and other leaders in welfare practices.
- Review the production and labor assignments of Church welfare operations for consistency and fairness. Recommend any adjustments in assignments to the

presidents of agent stakes or others who are responsible for the operations.

- Review the services of Church welfare operations. Recommend needed improvements in the services provided by these operations and suggest to the presidents of agent stakes, bishops, and others ways to use the services most effectively.

When a regional welfare committee is organized, the Area Presidency appoints a regional welfare agent. The regional welfare agent should be a Melchizedek Priesthood holder with welfare experience. He reports to the committee chairman and serves as executive secretary to the committee. He may serve as the regional welfare agent to more than one regional welfare committee.

Although the Regional Representative is not a member of the committee, he may attend occasionally to convey messages from the Area Presidency and to assist in training stake and ward leaders and members in welfare principles and practices.



Name of member

Address

Telephone

Ward

Stake

Where employed

Occupation

Telephone

Names and ages of dependent family members

**Instructions**

The bishop helps the individual with immediate needs as the ward welfare committee, including the priesthood quorum and Relief Society leaders, assists with a plan leading to self-reliance.

1. Determine individual and family needs.
2. Identify individual, family, Church, and other resources.
3. Help the member develop a self-reliance plan.
4. Make work assignments so the recipient can work to the extent of his or her ability.

**Immediate Needs**

Determine with the member his or her immediate needs. Needs should be listed below and may include: food, clothing, and housing; money for medical or utility bills; or other needs.

**Resources to Meet Immediate Needs**

Resources from individual, family, ward welfare committee, other Church resources, and community.

1. Individual resources

2. Family members and how they can help (parents, children, siblings, others)

3. Other resources and how they can help

Self-Reliance Needs	Plan to Meet Self-Reliance Needs
<p>Determine with the member what is needed to become self-reliant. Needs should be listed below and may include housing, employment, job training, education, and so on.</p>	<p>Determine with the member a self-reliance plan which includes how to obtain needed resources and timelines.</p>

**Work or Service to Be Performed** Note below the assignments accepted by family members to work to the extent of their abilities for commodities or services received.

<b>Signatures</b>			
Signature of member	Date	Signature of bishop	Date

Note: The terms *bishop* and *ward* on this form refer also to branch president and branch.

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