

D&C#38 "In Mine Own Way"

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I. Introduction

Some years ago, a colleague and myself, due to our joint interest in addressing the emotional needs of parenting children who were between the ages of 8-12 years, offered a 12-week program of group therapy. At the first meeting, my colleague provided a demonstration for the eight mothers who were present. She gave each mother an empty cup, which in response to various issues regarding children between the ages of 8 and 12, she would pour water from her pitcher into their cup. As the discussion progressed, it became apparent to all in attendance, an important fact. Her pitcher, that in the beginning had been full, was now almost empty. She then asked those in attendance what the cup represented. All recognized that it symbolized the needs of their children. She then asked, "What does the pitcher represent?" One mother immediately stated, "it is me, the parent, who is trying to meet the needs of my child." My partner then stated, "Before you can provide meaningful parenting for your own child, you must make sure your own needs are being met." She then added, "If you fail to do so, you will find your own emotional reserve being depleted and your resentment and anger increasing toward those who most require your assistance."

This simple truth applies to anyone who is in a position of providing care for another. It involves those who care for children, a spouse, or an elderly parent. It applies to those who are in the helping profession, including doctors, nurses, teachers, or therapists. It even applies to religious leaders as well as the members of their congregation.

Victor L. Ludlow states,

"In order to better serve others, we usually need both temporal resources and spiritual strength. Indeed, it is difficult to assist others when we are weak or destitute ourselves...[A religious leader], Marion G. Romney...encouraged us to develop our means and our talents so that we can be more profitable servants. [He said], 'Without self-reliance one cannot exercise these innate desires to serve. [He then asks], 'How can we give if there is nothing there? Food for the hungry cannot come from empty shelves. Money to assist the needy cannot come from an empty purse. Support and understanding cannot come from the emotionally starved. Teaching cannot come from the unlearned. And most important of all, spiritual guidance cannot come from the spiritually weak.'

"[Victor L. Ludlow continued], 'To enable ourselves to serve others well, we should be mindful of all temporal and spiritual areas of [our] personal welfare. (*Principles and Practices of the Restored Gospel*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992, 323).

As we proceed, we will address the important issues of spiritual and temporal self-reliance as a prelude to our being able to follow the admonition to care for the needy.

NT, James 1:27

27 Pure religion and undefiled [not polluted] before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

II. Developing Spiritual Self-Reliance

Doctrine and Covenants 38:30

30 I tell you these things because of your prayers; wherefore, treasure up wisdom in your bosoms, lest the wickedness of men reveal these things unto you by their wickedness, in a manner which shall speak in your ears with a voice louder than that which shall shake the earth; but if ye are prepared ye shall not fear.

*What does this passage teach about the importance of self-reliance?

We are to "treasure up wisdom" so when the time comes, we will be prepared to refute the falsehoods that are presented to us by "the wickedness of men."

*How have you found this counsel to be true in your life?

Following my call to serve a mission, I received this important advice. "God can and does inspire us, but it works best when we have something inside our minds upon which He can draw." In this light, we recall the counsel the Lord gave to Oliver Cowdery.

Doctrine and Covenants 9:7-8 [underline added]

7 Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

8 But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

The Lord's message to Oliver Cowdery, and to each of us, underlines the importance of our studying out the issue before we ask for His confirmation. Some have erroneously assumed that all one has to do is ask, and God will answer, without us first doing our homework.

*What does it mean to be self-reliant in spiritual things?

In order for us to become spiritually self-reliant, we must become familiar with the teachings found in the scriptures. In this manner, we come to understand the process by which God speaks to man. We also have the opportunity to learn how those in the past were able to resolve the challenges they experienced. It was a Book of Mormon prophet named Nephi who taught this concept to us.

B/M, 1 Nephi 19:23 [underline added]

23 And I did read many things unto them which were written in the books of Moses; but that I might more

fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning.

As we daily study the scriptures, we will become familiar with the lessons that are found within its pages. We will then find that the challenges and adversity the people of the scriptures faced are not so different from the challenges and adversity we face. If we "liken all scriptures unto us," we will increase in our spiritual understanding so that we will be better prepared to meet the challenges of our day. In other words, our spiritual muscles have been strengthened.

As a new missionary I recall being confronted by an individual whom we were teaching regarding the importance of being baptized. I found myself unprepared to direct them to a scripture that would support its importance. Fortunately, my companion was prepared. He suggested we turn first to the Bible and then to the Book of Mormon where the importance of being baptized was taught. As we become spiritually informed, we will then be better able to teach others from the scriptures. As we do so, the Holy Ghost will then bear witness to them, and us, of their truth. We will also be able to declare our beliefs when we meet those who are interested, but misinformed regarding our teachings. We shall not be fearful to open our mouths.

Boyd K. Packer states,

"We have been taught to store a year's supply of food, clothing, and, if possible, fuel—at home...Can we not see that the same principle applies to inspiration and revelation, the solving of problems, to counsel, and to guidance? We need to have a source of it *stored in every home*...If we do not do that, we are quite as threatened spiritually as we should be were we to assume that the Church should supply all [our] material needs.

"If we lose our emotional and spiritual independence, our self-reliance, we can be weakened quite as much, perhaps even more, than when we become dependent materially."
("Solving Emotional Problems in the Lord's Own Way," in *Ensign*, May 1978, 91-92).

In order to better understand the meaning of spiritual self-reliance, it may help to contrast it with spiritual dependency.

When we are initially introduced to the gospel, we are spiritually dependent upon others for their support as we strive to learn for ourselves the truths. We hold firm to those whom we trust, while we are in the process of developing our own testimony. During this time, we are especially vulnerable to new truths we are learning as we continue our gospel study.

It is not uncommon as we continue our study, that we will be exposed to information regarding the Church that may cause us to doubt our faith. Satan is ever aware of our vulnerability during this time and is delighted when we stumble as our learning continues. In the words of Laman and Lehi, to their brother, Nephi,

B/M, 1 Nephi 16:1

1 ...behold they said unto me: Thou hast declared unto us hard things, more than we are able to bear.

When doubts occur, we must not let go of our faith and trust in the initial truths we had previously learned were true. If we do, we may begin to question our previous witness of the truth.

The antidote to doubt is faith, and to hold on to truths we individually know for ourselves are true. As we continue to hold on and to question our doubts, the darkness will begin to lift and the light increase as we exercise our faith and obedience to the truth. As we do so, we are moving from spiritual dependency toward spiritual self-reliance. Our testimony is beginning to deepen and our desire to know more increases.

We feel the witness of the Holy Ghost as we continue to read our scriptures, weekly worthily partake of the sacrament, and follow the counsel of our leaders. As we come to know for ourselves the truths of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us and the restoration of His Church in these latter days through the Prophet Joseph Smith, our doubts fade, and our faith is increased.

As we continue our individual gospel study, we feel our testimonies increasing. We still may not know all things, but, we are no longer shaken by the questions of others regarding our faith. We are also no longer dependent upon others for our testimonies of the gospel. We know for ourselves. Our spiritual self-reliance has increased.

We have learned that our spiritual self-reliance is founded upon our relationship with the Lord and our attunement to the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. Our willingness to align our will with our Heavenly Father provides the fuel for our actions. When our focus is on our own will, the fulfillment of our temporal needs or the satisfaction of our physical desires, we move away from our Heavenly Father and his guidance and direction.

We are, after all, spiritual beings having a mortal experience. We are here, in a fallen world, striving to overcome our natural tendencies and become our best selves. Because we are not just physical beings, the pursuit of fame, fortune, and worldly possessions brings only fleeting happiness. More never seems to be enough. It is only when we change our focus and instead strive to overcome the natural man, and seek to become like our Savior, Jesus Christ, are we then able to find true happiness in our lives.

It was based upon this truth that Jesus gave this counsel to those who seek to become like Him.

NT, Matthew 6:33

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

III. Developing Temporal Self-Reliance

*What does it mean to be self-reliant in temporal things?

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"We should use the blessings the Lord has given us to take care of ourselves and our families. When we are physically and emotionally able, we should not shift the burden of our

own or our family's care to someone else." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 221).

*How can we become more self-reliant in temporal things?

We can gain a good education, learn to work, develop a food storage program where we store food and other essentials for a future time when we may be in need. We can also seek to assist others, and educate ourselves so that we may manage our money wisely.

A. Work

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Manual states,

"Soon after arriving in the Salt Lake Valley, President Brigham Young named the region *Deseret*, which is a word from the Book of Mormon meaning 'a honey bee' (B/M, Ether 2:3). President Young wanted the Saints to be industrious in their new home and to work together for the common good, similar to honeybees. We should have this same attitude toward work in our lives." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 221).

William G. Hartley states,

"On December 28 [1847], the city council enacted several ordinances designed to deal with unacceptable behavior. [One addressed the issue of idleness.] To punish idleness, trustees would be appointed to take charge of the person's property and put that person into paid employment." ("Surviving the First Year in the Valley," in *History of the Saints: The Mormon Exodus and the Establishment of Zion*. Glen Rawson, Dennis Lyman, and Bryant Bush. General Editor: William G. Hartley. American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, Inc., 2012, 136).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:42

42 Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer.

17 Wo unto you poor men, whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men's goods, whose eyes are full of greediness, and who will not labor with your own hands!

This counsel, given by the Lord, recognizes that some individuals may choose not to work either to provide for themselves, or others who are dependent upon them. They must be given the opportunity to obtain employment. Those who are unemployed by choice, are treated unfairly when we provide for them without requiring any response on their part for goods received. We may think we are helping them, when, in fact, we are contributing to their fate. The adage, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime," is true. Opportunity to work is essential if change is to be effected.

*What value does work have in our lives?

The Church Handbook of Instructions states,

"To become self-reliant, a person must work. Work is physical, mental, or spiritual effort. It is a basic source of happiness, self-worth, and prosperity. Through work, people accomplish many good things in their lives." (*Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998, 257).

Neal A. Maxwell states,

"Work is always a spiritual necessity even if, for some, work is not an economic necessity." ("Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," in *Ensign*, May 1998, 38).

B. Storage of Food and Other Necessities

For many years, the latter day prophets encouraged the membership of the Church to have a year's supply of food available. As you went into the homes of the Latter-day Saints, you saw tin cans of wheat stored in their garage or

even under their beds. It was during times of sporadic unemployment, rather than in response to a disaster, that those who had heeded their words of counsel were grateful they had a year's supply of food available. As we follow this counsel, we will become more self-reliant as we will be able to care for ourselves during times of need.

The *Church Handbook of Instructions* explains,

"Church leaders have not given an exact formula for what to store. Rather, they suggest that Church members begin by storing what would be required to keep them alive if they did not have anything else to eat...

"Through careful planning, most Church members can store a year's supply of the basic items needed to sustain life. However, some members 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 store as much as they can according to their circumstances. All members can provide for themselves with added security by learning to produce and prepare basic food items." (*Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders*. Salt Lake, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998, 258).

*What are the food essentials that can be stored in your area?

Answers will vary depending upon the area where the individual is living.

*What have you or others done to build up a supply of food storage?

We have several boxes that contain sealed dry-food cans necessary to support a family of four for one year. We also have stored two fifty-gallon containers of water as well as a number of sturdy containers of water in our tub. We have also purchased a year supply of food from Costco, and we each have a bag with sufficient supplies to cover a 72-hour period in case of emergency.

*How can having adequate food storage be a spiritual blessing as well as a temporal blessing?

Some have teased me regarding the containers of wheat that we have stored in our garage. They are convinced that over the years, the wheat is no longer good, nor the cans of food we have stored. I have told them that if an emergency occurs and we need to live on the wheat and other items we have stored and they are no longer good, I will not hesitate to appeal to the Lord for His guidance. I have been obedient to the words of His servants, and, I have the faith that He will bless me. It has been my experience, that when I have been obedient to gospel direction, blessings from the Lord follow. I also take comfort in these words of the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 82:10

10 I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.

C. Financial Security

In order to achieve self-reliance, we must be able to manage our money. We cannot let our expenses become greater than our income. Poor money management attributes to many family problems that could have been avoided if the members were committed to financial solvency.

The *Church Handbook of Instructions* states,

"To become self-reliant in resource management, Church members should pay tithes and offerings, avoid unnecessary debt, save for the future, and satisfy all of their personal obligations. Members also should use their resources, including time, frugally and avoid wasting them." (*Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders*. Salt Lake, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998, 258).

*How can paying our tithing help us better manage our resources?

I have found over the years of paying my tithing and offerings to the Lord, his blessings have followed. While I can't explain it, I do know that paying tithing is the first step to financial solvency. Some families whom I have known, when they came upon hard times, made the decision not to continue to pay their tithing. Following their

decision, their financial problems seemed to increase, rather than decrease despite their additional income. When they determined to again pay their tithing, though their spendable income decreased, they were able to meet their needs. The blessings that come from paying your tithing are not only spiritual, but also financial.

*Why is it important that we avoid unnecessary debt?

I believe that until our indebtedness is eliminated, our financial security is in jeopardy. The amount of income we have available is reduced as a result of our debt payments. As a consequence of our debt, our cash is now limited as we strive to stay even with our on-going expenses. As a result of the incurred interest charges, we pay a higher price for the item, than if we had been willing to wait until we had the money to pay for our purchases. As a result, we often pay a high price as a result of our impatience and impulsiveness.

*What practices have helped you avoid debt or get out of debt?

Our family policy has been to limit our indebtedness to the necessities of life. This has meant that we have had to delay purchases that were not considered necessities, or done without, but in turn we have also reduced the stress on our budget and our marital relationship. We have also agreed not to make purchases over fifty dollars without discussing the purchase with our spouse. Fortunately, we are both frugal individuals and, for us, money issues have been minimal.

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourself from bondage..

"...If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you have shelter for your wives and children and peace in your hearts." ("To the Boys and to the Men," in *Ensign*, November 1998, 54).

IV. Caring For the Needy

The following scriptures from the Doctrine and Covenants, underline the responsibility the Lord has placed upon each of us to care for the needy amongst us, and the blessings we will receive for our obedience.

"a. When we give our substance to the poor, we are doing it unto the Lord."

Doctrine and Covenants 42:30-31 [underline added]

31 And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.

31 And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me; and they shall be laid before the bishop of my church and his counselors, two of the elders, or high priests, such as he shall appoint or has appointed and set apart for that purpose.

"b. We must visit the poor and needy and administer to their relief."

Doctrine and Covenants 44:6 [underline added]

6 Behold, I say unto you, that ye must visit the poor and the needy and administer to their relief, that they may be kept until all things may be done according to my law which ye have received. Amen.

"c. If we do not remember the poor, the needy, the sick, and the afflicted, we are not the Savior's disciples."

Doctrine and Covenants 52:40 [underline added]

40 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. If we are rich and do not share with the poor, our riches will canker [corrupt] our souls."

Doctrine and Covenants 56:16 [underline added]

16 Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls; and this shall be your lamentation in the day of visitation, and of judgment, and of indignation: The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!

"e. We should love one another and give to each other as the gospel requires."

Doctrine and Covenants 88:123 [underline added]

123 See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.

"f. If we do not impart of our abundance to the poor, we will dwell among the wicked in torment."

Doctrine and Covenants 104:18 [underline added]

18 Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.

(a-f *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 223).

The Lord's plan for providing for the temporal needs of His children is noted in D&C 104:13-18.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:13-18

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

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

15 And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

16 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.

17 For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

18 Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.

The Lord's plan for caring for the needy involves "helping those who are in need by giving according to what we have received from God. It [also] means giving freely and lovingly, recognizing that Heavenly Father is the source of all blessings and that we are responsible to use them in the service of others. [In turn], those who receive this help should accept it with gratitude. They should [then] use it to release themselves from the limitations of their needs and to become more able to rise to their full potential. They should then reach out to help others." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 223).

*How are we blessed when we give to others who are in need?

As we share our temporal goods with others, we have the blessing of being an instrument in the Lord's hands to provide assistance to those in need. As we do so, we have the inner joy and happiness that comes to those who willingly share with others. In the Book of Mormon, it is King Benjamin that reminds us that each of us are beggars.

B/M, Mosiah 4:19, 21

19 For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind?

21 And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, in faith, believing that ye shall receive, O then, how ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have one to another.

*How have you been blessed because others have given to you in a time of need?

There was a time in our lives when both of our children desired to serve a mission. We had sufficient for one child, but not for both. With the support of the Stake President, an individual offered anonymously to provide assistance so both of our children could serve. It was not only a great blessing to us as parents, but a blessing to each of our children as their lives were enhanced by serving a mission. In sincere gratitude, I have always sought to be generous in contributing to the missionary fund.

There are ways that each of us can quietly care for those around us. One way is to contribute generously to the fast offering fund. The fast offering funds are funds that are contributed by the Church members as they fast on the first Sunday of each month.

*How are fast offerings used to care for the poor?

The bishop of the ward [designated geographic area] uses the funds that are received to provide temporary food, shelter, clothing, and other relief to those in need.

*How much should we contribute in fast offerings?

The *Church Handbook of Instructions* states,

"The Church designates one Sunday each month as a fast day. On this day Church members go without food and drink for two consecutive meals. They...give to the Church a fast offering at least equal to the value of the food they would have eaten. If possible, members should be very generous and give much more than the value of two meals." (*Church Handbook of Instructions*, Book 2: *Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998, 257).

Another way to contribute to the care of the needy, is to donate to the Church's humanitarian aid program. For many years, the Church has been involved in humanitarian relief and self-reliance efforts throughout the world. This assistance is given to members and non-members alike to help alleviate the devastating effects of poverty, war, and natural disasters.

*How can individual members make donations to the Church's humanitarian aid fund?

An individual can either fill out a donation slip or go on line to www.ldg.org/donations and complete the requested information. At the end of the year, the individual may obtain a total of their charitable donations.

Thomas S. Monson shared,

"In 1992 a devastating hurricane...struck the east coast of Florida, leaving a path of ruin behind it, with homes battered, roofs gone, people hungry. Our members were there to help. Home after home was cleaned and repaired without charge. It mattered not the faith or color of the person who occupied the home...

"Far away in the foothills on the western slopes of Mount Kenya, along the fringe of the colossal Rift Valley, pure water is now coming to the thirsty people. A potable water project has changed the lives of more than 1,100 families. When we originally became aware of the need for pure water, we were able to help fund a project in cooperation with TechnoServe, a private voluntary organization. With villagers providing the labor, drinkable water now flows through 25 miles of pipes to waiting homes in a 15 village area. The simple blessing of safe drinking water recalls the words of the Lord, 'I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.' (NT, Matthew 25:35)." ("Our Brother's Keeper," in *Ensign*, June 1998, 37).

In addition to opportunities provided by the Church, we should seek other ways to bless those around us who are in need.

26 For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

27 Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

28 For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

*How can we apply this scripture in our efforts to serve the poor and needy?

It is important that we consider various ways in which we may assist the poor and the needy. We then take our choice to the Lord. As we do, He will bless us that we may know His will in this important matter.

*What are some obstacles we may encounter in caring for the poor and the needy?

We may experience some feelings of judgment toward the poor and needy as a means of inhibiting our desire to share our means with them. We may be concerned they will use the assistance we offer unwisely. We may even be upset when they do not appear to be grateful for our offering.

*How can we overcome these obstacles?

We have been given the mandate from the Lord to care for the poor and needy, in whatever way we are able. It is the responsibility of the recipient of our donation or service as to how they receive or use it. We should never let their agency or lack of appreciations regarding our offering be an excuse for us to not share.

V. The Church Welfare Program

On November 23, 1918, Heber Jeddy Grant was set apart as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was the seventh President of the Church during these latter days.

Our Heritage states,

"President Grant was a wise and successful businessman whose skills helped him lead the Church through a worldwide financial depression and the personal problems that resulted from it. He firmly believed in being self-reliant and in depending on the Lord and his own hard work, not on the government...

"In the 1930's the Saints, like many other people in the world, were struggling with unemployment and poverty during the Great Depression." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 108).

Gordon B. Hinckley, reflecting upon the Great Depression, states,

"I hope with all my heart that we shall never slip into a depression. I am a child of the Great Depression of the thirties. I finished the university in 1932, when unemployment in this area [Salt Lake] exceeded 33 percent.

"My father was then president of the largest stake in the Church in this valley. It was before our present welfare program was established. He walked the floor worrying about his people. He and his associates established a great wood-chopping project designed to keep the home furnaces and stoves going and the people warm in the winter. They had no money with which to buy coal. Men who had been affluent were among those who chopped wood. I repeat. I hope we will never again see such a depression..." ("To the Boy and to the Men," in *Ensign*, November 1998, 54).

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"...in 1936, as a result of inspiration from the Lord, the First Presidency established the Church Welfare program as an organized way to encourage self-reliance and help those in need." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 225).

The First Presidency declared,

"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 help themselves. Work is to re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership." (In *Conference Report*, October 1936, 3).

Our Heritage continues,

"A General Welfare Committee was established in 1936 to oversee welfare efforts in the Church. Harold B. Lee, president of the Pioneer Stake, was made the committee's managing director. Later, Deseret Industries stores were developed to help the unemployed and handicapped, and farms and production projects were established to help the needy. The welfare program continues to bless thousands of people today, both needy Church members and others in destitute circumstances throughout the world." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 109).

The focus of the LDS Church welfare has always been focused on returning the individual to the work force. The Church provides temporary assistance with the necessities of life, including assistance with rent. It is the position of the Church that the assistance is only temporary until the individual can receive the training and employment necessary to return them to the work force. The foundation of individual support is based upon the concept that employment serves to increase the self-reliance and personal dignity of the individual.

At the conclusion of World War II, Europe was in great need of assistance. There were many who did not even have the basic necessities to sustain life. George Albert Smith served as the Prophet and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1945 to 1951. It was during this time that President Smith met with Harry S. Truman, who as then the President of the United States, to obtain approval to send the food, clothing, and bedding, the Saints had collected to Europe.

Our Heritage states,

"President Smith described the meeting this way:

President Truman: 'What do you want to ship it over there for? Their money isn't any good.'

President Smith: 'We don't want their money.'

President Truman: 'You don't mean you are going to give it to them?'

President Smith: 'Of course, we would give it to them. They are our brothers and sisters and are in distress. God has blessed us with a surplus, and we will be glad to send it if we can have the co-operation of the government.'

President Truman: 'You are on the right track,...we will be glad to help in any way we can.'

"While the donations were being sorted and packaged in Utah to ship overseas, President Smith came to observe the preparations. Tears ran down his face when he saw the great volume of commodities that had been so generously contributed. After a few minutes, he removed his new overcoat and said, 'Please send this.' Although several people standing nearby told him that he needed his coat on the cold wintery day, he insisted that it be sent.

"Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve was assigned to reopen the missions in Europe, see to the distribution of relief supplies, and administer to the spiritual needs of the Saints." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 112).

If you interested in gaining further information regarding Ezra Taft Benson's experience in Europe following the conclusion of World War II, may I refer you to "*A Labor of Love: The 1946 European Mission of Ezra Taft Benson*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989.

*What impresses you most about the efforts of those involved in these projects?

The willingness of the Saints to contribute to the war relief of those in Europe, that included members as well as non-members, stands as yet another example of the generosity of the Saints to assist those who are in need. One can only imagine the blessing it was to those in Europe.

It is a great blessing to be a member of the Church that promotes self-reliance of each individual and seeks to lift them up during their time of need. If we are to become a Zion's people, **we too must also learn** to be generous with those in need.

VI. Conclusions

It is a simple truth that before we can assist others we must ensure that first we have both the strength and the means to share. If we try to run faster than we are able, we may lose our balance, or even come to resent those who are in need of our assistance.

Developing Spiritual Self-Reliance: It is important before we endeavor to assist another spiritually that we have obtained a personal testimony of the truth.

Harold B. Lee states,

"You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You must be sure, if you would rescue a man, that you yourself are setting an example of what you would have him be. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul."
(*"Stand Ye in Holy Places,"* in *Ensign*, July 1973, 123).

Once we have gained a testimony of the truth, we are less swayed by the wickedness of others who seek to undermine the truths of the gospel. Those who are misinformed are receptive to our sharing with them the truth. Those who are malicious are often unable to hear or even consider the truth and instead become more aggressive. Your simple declaration of the truth you know may be all they can receive at this time.

Developing Temporal Self-Reliance: We specifically addressed three areas of importance as we seek for temporal self-reliance. These include:

(a) Work. Work or employment is essential if we are to achieve temporal self-reliance. Idleness sooner or later begins to affect our self-image and, in turn, lessens our self dignity. As we return to the work force, our self-esteem also begins to increase.

(b) Storage of food and other necessities. While having a year's supply of food and other necessities, including cash, will be a great blessing in the event of a national disaster, it will equally be a blessing during a time, for example, of temporary unemployment.

(c) Financial security. During our productive work years, it is important that we set aside some savings as well as being frugal in our expenditures. The plague of debt has been well-documented as a contributor of marital and family stress and discord. When our impatience and impulsivity govern our spending, we are on a slippery slope and are in need of immediate assistance so matters can be improved.

Caring For the Needy: The Lord has provided specific counsel regarding our responsibility as to the care of the poor and needy. These instructions include: (a) When we give our substance to the poor, we are doing it unto the Lord; (b) We 'must visit the poor and needy, and administer to their relief; (c) If we do not remember the poor, the needy, the sick, and the afflicted, we are not the Savior's disciples; (d) If we are rich and do not share with the poor, our riches will canker [corrupt] our souls; (e) We should love one another and give to each other as the gospel requires; and, (f) If we do not impart of our substance to the poor, we will dwell with the wicked in torment.

The Church Welfare Program: In the 1930's, under the direction of President Heber J. Grant, the Church Welfare program was developed. It came as the result of the 1929 Depression, which resulted in high unemployment and poverty conditions. Harold B. Lee was appointed to oversee its' implementation in 1936. The goal was to establish once again independence, industry, thrift, and self-respect among the people. Later, Deseret Industries became the Church's operated outlet where the lives of the individuals could be blessed.

Under the Welfare Program of the Church commodities were both produced and then packaged for distribution to the needy members through an extension of the Bishop's storehouse. At the conclusion of World War II, under the direction of then President George Albert Smith, the surplus in the warehouse, including donations by the Saints, was sent to those in need in Europe. (see *Our Heritage*, [1996], 108-112).

The programs of the Church have greatly blessed both the recipient of the goods, (member as well as non-member), by members who have contributed. As we continue to donate our time and means to the care of the poor and needy, the Lord will bless our offering for the good of others as well as ourselves.

In our next lesson [D&C#39], we will address the Family History Program, and the direction from the Lord to seek out our ancestors that they may receive the ordinances necessary to continue their spiritual growth.