Mormon Poor Relief: A Social Welfare Interlude

Betty L. Barton

Scholars have devoted considerable attention to analyses of the law of consecration and the united order experiments and later to the origin and development of the Church welfare plan, but they have said little about the evolution of Mormon poor relief policies from 1850 to 1930. Especially during the Brigham Young period there were poor among the Saints who were not cared for under the united order system, yet the Church made provision for these people. A careful study of this neglected area reveals an interesting chapter in the history of the development of Mormon relief policies and closes the seemingly wide gap between early Mormon practices and the institution of the welfare plan in 1936.

Throughout the Joseph Smith and Brigham Young periods of Mormon history, Church poor relief practices followed a consistent and predictable course, set a precedent for later Church welfare doctrines, and led to the establishment of many of the physical structures of the Church.[1] During much of this time, Mormons were generally a very poor people. Hounded from Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, they lost virtually all of their possessions; and for many years after their arrival on the arid Rocky Mountain plateau, they barely eked out an existence, often facing starvation and contending with hostile Indians.[2]

Moreover, the destitution of the vast majority of converts who followed the initial pioneers into the Salt Lake Basin forced upon the Church the problems of charity. In most cases Mormon missionaries made proselyting appeals to the agricultural or poorer urban classes. The Church hierarchy worked hard to find ways of

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Betty L. Barton is a visiting assistant professor of history at Brigham Young University.

[1]See Feramorz Y. Fox, "The Mormon Policy of Relief," *Deseret News,* 4 July 1937; and John A. Widtsoe, "What Did the Pioneers Contribute to the Welfare of Others," *Improvement Era* 50 (September 1947):597.

[2]See Hamilton G. Gardner, "Communism Among the Mormons," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 37 (November 1922):156; and Harold Lundstrom, "Ten Decades of Church Welfare," *Improvement Era* 50 (July 1947):432-33.

caring for these indigent new converts and often brought them to the Great Basin by charity. Having to adapt to new surroundings, the new immigrants required considerable help and encouragement, and consequently, pockets of poverty persisted among the Saints throughout the nineteenth century. One observer expressed his amazement at the privation of some Mormon farmers. "They exist, and that is about all that can be said of them," he noted.

> They accomplish their work with ramshackle implements, and ride into town for supplies on saddleless ponies; their feet, in winter, wrapped in burlap to keep them warm. Some of them wear a fierce and hungry aspect; others appear stolid, as though all ambition, if they ever possessed any, had been killed.[3]

Rejected and ridiculed for their religious beliefs, the Saints developed an "indigenous" or "exclusive" poor relief policy—they took care of their own and asked nothing from government or from private charity.[4] As one Church leader remarked,

> We have abundantly proved our experience that if we do not sustain ourselves no other people will sustain us, and that we must be united . . . in our temporal as well as in our spiritual affairs; and that if we would build up and strengthen ourselves in the earth, it must be by union of effort, and by concentrating our means in a way that shall produce the best results for the work with which we are identified.[5]

Moreover, lack of capital among the Saints necessitated a cooperative social arrangement, rather than a capitalistic one with its accompanying system of taxation to provide for the poor.

When the Saints first arrived in the arid Rocky Mountain Basin in 1847, they faced near-starvation when livestock, Indians, and wild animals almost completely destroyed their first crop.

> My family went several months without a satisfying meal of vitals [Priddy Meeks recorded in his journal]. I went sometimes a mile up Jordan to a patch of wild roses to get the berries to eat which I would eat as rappid as a hog stems and all. I shot hawks and crows and they ate well. I would go and search the mire holes and find cattle dead and fleece off what meat I could

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[3]"Mormon Poor Relief," *The Charities Review,* July 1899, p. 303.

[4]This was a particularly common practice among immigrant groups at the time. Jews and Scots, for example, formed their own charity organizations to help new arrivals among their nationality groups find jobs and adjust to the new surroundings. Many others formed close-knit groups and settled in the same neighborhood, refusing to part with many of their Old World ways.

[5]George Q. Cannon in *Journal of Discourses,* 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1854-86), 18:13. Hereafted cited as *JD.*

and eat it. We used wolf meat which I thought was good and made some wooden spades to dig segoes with but we could not supply our wants. We had to exert ourselves to get something to eat. I would take a grubing hoe and a sack and start by sunrise in the morning and go, I thought six miles before coming to where the thisel roots grew, and in time to get home I would have a bushel and sometimes more thisel roots. And we would eat them raw. I would dig until I grew weak and faint and sit down and eat a root and then begin again. I continued this untill the roots began to fail.[6]

In order to keep the more distressed from starvation, Brigham Young organized a special committee "empowered to receive donations, buy, sell, and make all exchanges and distributions" in behalf of the destitute.[7] Young also imposed a system of rationing and price controls on food items.

During the winter of 1848, hordes of desert crickets destroyed almost the entire crop again. This led to dire circumstances among the majority of Saints. No really poor classes existed, for all were poor and hungry as agricultural surpluses remained inadequate throughout the first decade in the settlement of Utah. Beginning in 1855, a series of natural disasters reduced already meager surpluses to such a dearth that nearly 35,000 Mormon colonists faced starvation. At first grasshoppers and severe drought destroyed almost all the crops. Then an extremely harsh winter killed four out of every five head of cattle in the northern counties. Indians, also facing starvation, stole cattle, adding to the Mormon losses. Famine reigned throughout the land, and the people again turned for food to weeds, roots, dead cattle, cowhides, and blood.[8]

In an 1856 letter to all Church members, the First Presidency urged the Saints to put forth every possible effort to fill the storehouses. "Let every inch of field and garden be put in the highest state of cultivation; let those who have more acres than they can till in that manner loan or rent to those who have none; let those who have thoughtfully saved more seed than will supply their wants import to those who lack."[9] Young also encouraged bishops

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[6]He went on to describe how he then turned to making horn combs which he exchanged for buttermilk. Journal of Priddy Meeks, MS, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[7]Manuscript History of the Church, Brigham Young Period 1844-77, April 1848, p. 27, MS, Church Archives.

[8]Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 151-52; Journal of Priddy Meeks, pp. 68-69.

[9]"Letter to the Saints throughout the Territory of Utah," *Deseret News,* 13 February 1856.

to limit food consumption and organize the poor to glean the fields of any ungathered grain.[10]

The Saints always operated under the assumption that common effort could banish poverty and want. In wards where it was organized, the women's Relief Society provided innumerable services for the poor, while quorums of Mormon elders helped the men find jobs and other means of supporting themselves. In addition, the Saints developed make-work projects to aid the poor and unemployed. On 26 January 1850, Brigham Young made the public works organization permanent, and appointed Daniel H. Wells as the first superintendent. In 1870, supervision of public works became the duty of the Presiding Bishop. Young usually retained authority to direct the general course of labor, but he delegated to the superintendent as well as to the Church architect responsibility for recruiting labor and purchasing building materials. These work projects served a dual public service: public buildings and services were provided which were beyond the realm of private enterprise, while at the same time, less skilled immigrants received employment and learned many of the techniques which they could later use as a profession in the frontier society.[11]

Public works projects kept large numbers of men busy manufacturing pottery, cutlery, kitchenware, household furniture, and other items needed by the pioneers. Workers on other Church projects also built the temple, the massive wall around Temple Square, the Spanish-type mud wall around Salt Lake City, canals, a council house and a bathhouse, as well as a storehouse and a granary.[12]

Other projects were undertaken solely for the purpose of providing much-needed employment. Often those who failed to see the utility of some of the work projects criticized Brigham Young, but he quickly and indignantly rebuked the faultfinders:

> I have very little to say to men who are dissatisfied with my course, or with the course of my brethren. Some have wished me to explain why we built an adobe wall around this city. Are there any Saints who stumble at such things? Oh, slow of heart to understand [and] believe. I build walls, dig ditches, make bridges, and do a great amount and variety of labor that is of but little consequence only to provide ways and means for sustaining and preserving the destitute. I annually expend hundreds and thousands of dollars almost solely to furnish employment to those in want of labor. Why? I

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[10]"Counsel from the First Presidency: Gleaning and Saving," *Deseret News,* 9 July 1856.

[11]Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom,* pp. 108-12.

[12]Fox, "The Mormon Policy of Relief."

> have potatoes, flour, beef, and other articles of food, which I wish my brethren to have; and it is better for them to labour for those articles, so far as they are able and have opportunity, than to have them given to them. They work, and I deal out provisions, often when the work does not profit me.[13]

President Young later added that no one had the right to complain if he decided to level Twin Peaks as long as he paid the laborers for their toil.[14]

Poverty among the Saints, however, did not represent an isolated instance but rather a common phenomenon of the times. As America industrialized, the gap between the classes widened. The rich became richer and the poor, poorer. Increases in the number of immigrants as well as massive migrations to the cities eventually produced a permanent and noticeable class of poor; but at the same time, poverty became less tolerable. Additionally, the depressions of 1873 and 1898 threw hundreds of thousands of people out of work. Big industrialized cities were characterized by disorder, violence, crime, and above all, apathy. To rationalize their unconcern, industrialists adopted the reasoning of Herbert Spencer, who transformed Charles Darwin's biological hypothesis of the "survival of the fittest" into a social theory agitating for complete abolition of the already emasculated poor laws.[15] Public officials, on the other hand, often viewed poor laws only as a stabilizing factor in society to prevent antirent wars, violence, and looting.[16]

Despite the general malaise which characterized nineteenth-century relief-giving, some truly benevolent groups did emerge as champions of the poor. Churches especially came to their defense and often instituted soup kitchens during periods of particular economic distress. Some newspapers conducted drives to raise money for charity purposes, and a few local governments provided public work for the "honest" unemployed. Yet the belief that outdoor relief (relief given outside the almshouse, usually as a simple dole) had a particularly detrimental effect upon the poor persisted.[17]

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[13]Feramorz Y. Fox, "Background of the Welfare Program," reprint of address delivered over radio station KSL, 1 September 1940. Church Archives.

[14]Fox, "Mormon Policy of Relief."

[15]See Herbert Spencer, *The Principle of Ethics,* 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1892-93), volume 1; Richard Hofstader, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (New York: G. Braziller, 1959), p. 57; and Blanche D. Coll, *Perspectives in Public Welfare* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 41.

[16]Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Random House, 1971).

[17]See David M. Schneider, *The History of Public Welfare in New York State, 1609-1866* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 213.

During the depressions toward the end of the century, several individuals, concerned with the growing numbers of poor and the bewildering maze of social welfare programs and goals, advanced radical schemes which they thought would solve the problem of poverty. Henry George, annoyed by the persistence of poverty in a land of great industrial wealth and convinced that poverty was actually becoming more widespread as wealth increased, prescribed the abolition of private ownership of land, while Laurence Gronlund found the capitalistic system at fault.[18] Mormons also advanced new schemes for the elimination of poverty, but the century, was much more moderate than it was radical.[19] The law of consecration, for example, promised each member who was willing to work a means of livelihood. Members unable to work were provided with reserves from the bishop's storehouse. Failure of the law of consecration led Mormons to simple cooperation and sharing, interspersed with several economic experiments to provide employment, stimulate production, and produce some degree of economic equality.[20]

Brigham Young's association of economic industry and self-sufficiency with "building the Kingdom of God" was not so much a new religious doctrine as it was an economic necessity among the Latter-day Saints.[21] During their first years in Utah, the Saints found themselves in hostile surroundings with few of the necessities of life. Sheer survival dictated that they cooperate with one another and that they preach the nobility of industry and thrift.

Despite the simplicity of the nineteenth century Mormon economic program, however, Mormon relief policies differed considerably from national poor relief trends of the day. Unlike most charitable institutions, the Church believed that outright charity led only to loss of motivation and more dependence, and that once charitable support was withdrawn, the recipient would grow still poorer and less self-sustaining.[22] Where public and private charities failed to implement these ideas, the Saints succeeded because they tied them

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[18]Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (New York: Random House, 1879). This book marked the beginning of real concern about poverty in the United States.

[19]J. Keith Melville, "Brigham Young's Ideal Society: The Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies* 5 (Autumn 1962):4.

[20]See Glen Miller, "The Mormons: A Successful Cooperative Society," *The World's Work* 5 (December 1902):2881-2894.

[21]Gardner, "Communism Among the Mormons," p. 157; see also Dean D. McBrien, "The Economic Content of Early Mormon Doctrine," *Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly* 6 (September 1925): 179-91; and *JD,* 8:89.

[22]See Franklin S. Harris, "Charity Among the Latter-day Saints," reprint of address delivered over radio station KSL, 31 January 1932. Church Archives. See also, Brigham Young in *JD,* 11:297.

in with the doctrinal teachings of their Church. Mormons strove to help one another help themselves, and used charity only as a last resort. At a time, then, when most charitable organizations resorted to the dole, Latter-day Saints clung to ideas of independence and resourcefulness.

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of Mormon poor relief in relation to other relief institutions was the Church view on the causes of poverty. While most relief-giving agencies in the first half of the century, such as the prominent Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor, taught that moral weaknesses completely within the control of the victim (such as improvidence, extravagance, idleness, and intemperance) caused most cases of poverty, Mormons postulated the then rare belief that poverty was caused by both controllable individual weaknesses and uncontrollable environmental circumstances. Not until the latter half of the 1800s did Protestant ministers begin refuting individualism and preaching the "social gospel"; and the century was almost over before the Charity Organization Society (COS) and the settlement house movement hesitantly accepted both economic and social conditions as "unavoidable causes" for poverty. Like Mormons, the COS also supported abolition of outdoor relief, yet COS spokesmen continued to represent pauperism as primarily a disease resulting from personal defects and evil acts. And they actually increased the stigma attached to being poor by advocating the doctrine of "less eligibility," which stated that the poor were always to receive less than the poorest paid independent laborers.[23]

Additionally the Church recognized perhaps better than any other group at the time that the material needs of man must first be met before he could be expected to exhibit either spiritual or moral virtues. As a result, Smith and Young continued the contemporary dual classification of the poor, and the size and closeness of the

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[23]Although the 1800s saw local and state governments rationalizing the need for welfare and becoming increasingly more sensitive to the problems of the poor, virtually no welfare institution lived up to its expectations. Cities often expended more to have the poor moved to a different location than a simple dole for their support would have cost. Almshouses, or workhouses as they were often called, usually failed miserably also because of seasonal variations in working conditions and working capabilities of the occupants. During the winter, the almshouses were filled to capacity with unskilled farm laborers unable to find work until the spring. But the houses, usually set up as farms themselves, were equally unable to provide work for their occupants during those winter months. During the spring and summer, however, almshouses usually had to hire farm labor from the public work force. Because of the difficulties involved in such attempts at poor relief, most agencies resorted to outright charity as the only workable scheme; philanthropic societies perhaps realized that their efforts offered no real solution to the problems of poverty. See Coll, *Perspectives in Public Welfare,* pp. 55-61.

Mormon community allowed for successful discrimination between the "worthy" and "unworthy." Brigham himself classified the poor as either "the Lord's poor," "the Devil's poor," or "the poor devils."[24] He taught that the Lord's poor were worthy of both consideration and respect and that they added strength to security programs, but he also taught that the Devil's poor and the poor devils undermined programs of relief and cooperative endeavors. Thus Mormon leaders would not countenance idlers living on the efforts of others and realized that there was such a thing as encouraging idleness and fostering pauperism among men. Yet they regarded the majority of the poor not as outcasts or as morally defective individuals, but as potentially respectable members of society. Church policies consequently exhibited much more leniency than those of either secular or private institutions.

Instead of engaging in "moral preachments" to end poverty, Church leaders set the poor to work.[25] They taught relief recipients to be humble and the wealthy to give willingly of their substance for the support of the poor. Contrary to the national trend, only the truly helpless received sympathy and a bowl of soup.[26]

Knowledgeable Latter-day Saints, then, placed care of the poor high on the list of Church priorities and almost always assured the disabled, infirm, and unemployed a respectable place within their community. From the earliest days the Church stressed the need for unity and brotherhood and proposed to abolish class distinctions based upon wealth and special privilege.[27] "It is the duty of the rich to relieve the suffering poor, to administer to their necessities, and

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[24]Fox, "Mormon Policy of Relief."

[25]Joseph F. Smith, "The Message of the Latter-day Saints on Relief for the Poor," *Improvement Era* 10 (August 1907):831-33.

[26]"Men and women ought not to be willing to receive charity unless they are compelled to do so to keep from suffering," one Church leader remarked in 1898. "Every man and woman ought to possess the spirit of independence, a self-sustaining spirit, that would prompt him or her to say, when they are in need, 'I am willing to give my labor in exchange for that which you give me.' No man ought to be satisfied to receive, and do nothing for it. After a man is brought down to poverty and is under the necessity of receiving aid, and his friends give it to him, he should feel that it is an obligation under which he is placed, and when the Lord should open his way he would return the gift. This is the feeling we should cultivate in our hearts, to make us a free and independent people. The cultivation of any other feeling or spirit than this is calculated to make paupers, to degrade and bring mankind down to beggary, which is a most wretched condition to be in." *Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* 6-8, 10 April 1898, pp. 48-49. See also Joseph F. Smith, "The Message of the Latter-day Saints on Relief for the Poor," pp. 831-33.

[27]Albert E. Bowen, *The Church Welfare Plan* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1946), p. 13; Orson F. Whitney, *Saturday Night Thoughts: A Series of Dissertations of Spiritual, Historical, and Philosophic Themes* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1927), p. 180.

faithfully apply their means to the gathering of Israel, the spread of the Gospel, and the building up of the Kingdom," the First Presidency told the Church membership in 1854.

> And to the poor we say, be industrious and faithful; and so soon as you shall be able to return in some available means the advances which have aided you in your deliverance, remember those who, in like circumstances with yourselves, are anxiously looking to the same source for relief.[28]

Mormon welfare policies developed during a period of hard times for the Church. Latter-day Saint leaders stressed industry, thrift, mutual helpfulness, and charity not only as worthy virtues to be cultivated but also as necessities for community survival.[29] By the time of Brigham Young's death in 1877, the Saints had become a financially viable and relatively independent people. Hundreds of converts flocked to the territory from different parts of the world. And responding to their leader's urgings, they worked hard to become economically prosperous. Gold fever and the railroad brought outside capital and economic stimulation. The Church itself invested heavily in industrial enterprises, banks, insurance companies, railroads, sugar beet land and refineries, department stores, radio stations, newspapers, and hotels. The Church membership as a whole shared in sponsoring the first cooperative department store, while other joint endeavors of the Church made possible further colonization of the Great Basin. As the decade of the 1880s came to a close more than 140,000 Latter-day Saints were scattered throughout the intermountain region in some 360 settlements. And the Church held thousands of dollars in monetary and physical assets.[30]

The resulting modifications in Church procedure represented a process of accommodation with secular institutions taking place within Mormonism.[31] As the Saints strove to achieve acceptance in a society which deified the dollar and ridiculed people who differed from the norm, they relegated many of their previous ideals of exclusiveness and community to a lower position in their roster of

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[28]Eleventh General Epistle of the Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Millennial Star,* 8 July 1854, pp. 422, 427, reprinted from the *Deseret News,* 13 April 1854.

[29]McBrien, "Economic Content of Early Mormon Doctrine," p. 179.

[30]Richard T. Ely, "Economic Aspects of Mormonism," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 106 (1903):667-78; William Mulder, "Immigration and the 'Mormon Question': An International Episode," *Western Political Quarterly* 9 (June 1956):416-33; Josiah F. Gibbs, *Lights and Shadows of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Salt Lake Tribune Publishing Co., 1909).

[31]Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 222-63.

values.[32] The years of persecution worked, paradoxically, both to increase the feeling of oneness and also to eliminate much of the force behind the once-powerful Mormon communitarian spirit. The anti-polygamy raids and enforcement of the Edmunds-Tuckér Act led to the imprisonment of many of the Church leaders, drove many more into hiding, and made centralized Church planning and cooperation practically unworkable.[33] Moreover, dissolution of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund eliminated the means of facilitating the "gathering" of the Saints, while general overpopulation and lack of irrigable lands led the Church to its 1899 position discouraging new converts from immigrating to Utah.[34] Saints had already started settling in parts of Wyoming, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Canada, and even Mexico. As the Church grew and physical distances between the Saints increased, much of the original feeling of closeness which the pioneers had experienced in living and working together also disappeared.

Yet Utah's susceptibility to the boom and bust of the national economy and a series of critical economic depressions in the last decades of the 1800s combined to keep a vestige of the spirit of cooperation alive, just as the series of natural disasters in the 1850s had worked to increase the number of poverty programs and public works projects among the Saints. The western states were particularly hard hit by a critical agricultural and mining depression lasting from 1873 to 1896. This long depression produced a noticeable increase in poverty and unemployment among the Saints remaining in the valley and led to renewed efforts to deal with economic shortages. Home industries and makework projects and a general, more equitable redistribution of Church wealth received renewed emphasis as a means of keeping the Church afloat and pulling the membership through the financial crisis. The unemployed could usually find jobs in Church-subsidized wool, cotton, silk, clothing, and leather industries, or iron, sugar, salt, soap, and paper manufacturing plants. And resources continued to be shared commonly through the tithing and fast offering funds and through Church-sponsored employment on common public work projects. In the 1870s the Church expended $19,000 annually for relief of the poor and $8,000 annually for the Indian welfare program.[35]

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[32]See Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom,* pp. 380-412.

[33]Leonard J. Arrington, "Mormon Economic Idealism," address delivered in Salt Lake City, 25 October 1968, p. 9, Church Archives.

[34]Gustive O. Larson, "The Story of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* 18 (September 1931):184-94.

[35]See Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom,* p. 355.

A temporary Church program foreshadowing the later "Share Our Wealth" campaign of the Great Depression days developed in 1880 when the Church attempted to redistribute the wealth and income of the membership as part of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Church.[36] John Taylor, Young's successor to the presidency, advised bishops to canvass their wards and allow the "deserving" poor who were indebted to the Church or delinquent in their tithing to cancel one-half of their debts. Taylor announced that this action was taken to benefit the poor, not to "soften" those individuals able to pay. Additionally, the poor of the Church received a gift of 1,000 head of cattle and were loaned some 34,761 bushels of wheat free of interest. The Church leadership also encouraged Mormon capitalists, bankers, and business houses to cancel the debts of those whom, after study, they considered eligible and worthy for such beneficence.[37]

Church leadership at the turn of the century continued to lead the Church to prosperity. Mormon institutions, more than ever before, came to resemble those of American capitalism, and instead of continuing to invest in cooperative ventures, the Church began investing in other large business enterprises, many of which were non-Mormon concerns. To replace its once exclusivist economic philosophy and its ascetic habits, the Church adopted the American capitalistic business philosophy of competitive profit-making. Thus the once-isolated community became part of the mainstream of American life.

As Church membership rapidly increased and more attention was given to the worldwide mission of the Church, concern for relief outside the individual wards faded. Tithes "in kind" almost completely disappeared, being replaced largely by payments in money. Consequently, the idea of storehouses fell largely into disuse. At a time when national social welfare programs appeared to be coming of age, Mormon welfare efforts reached a nadir.[38] The majority of Mormons no longer regarded poverty as a major problem, and as a result, they relaxed their previous emphasis on wel-

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[36]*Salt Lake Tribune,* 7 April 1880.

[37]*Conference Report,* 17 April 1880, pp. 61-65. This Year of Jubilee celebration of the Church was an adaptation of the Jewish celebration which occurred every fiftieth year. According to Jewish custom, all enslaved Jews were freed and all property which had been sold was returned to its original owner. It was a time for proclaiming "liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants." See Leviticus 25.

[38]Public and private relief agencies at this time, however, were still characterized by considerable overlap and inefficiency. An effort was made during World War I to coordinate these efforts through the Community Chest movement, but continued talk about reform lasted throughout the 1920s.

fare. The Church hospital system and the Relief Society remained the only Church-wide efforts to meet the welfare needs of the Church membership.

The first Church hospital had opened in July 1882 under the auspices of the Deseret Hospital Association. Directed by the general Relief Society presidency, Eliza R. Snow, Zina D. H. Young, and Emmeline B. Wells, Deseret Hospital functioned until the Church founded the Dr. William H. Groves LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City, which remained the largest hospital in Utah until 1952.[39] Later the Church founded additional hospitals. All of these units provided free care to those unable to pay for medical services but charged a fee to more financially stable patients.

In 1922, the Church took a step forward in its welfare program for children with the opening of the Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City. Initially funded by the First Presidency, but maintained and managed by the Church Primary Association, the hospital offered medical care to all children, including those whose parents lacked financial means to provide for such needs.[40]

The hospital system, however, existed only in the more densely Mormon-populated intermountain regions. With the rapid spread of Mormonism to other areas, many Saints found themselves out of reach of health and other welfare services. The Relief Society women of the Church filled part of the resulting welfare "vacuum." During World War I, the Relief Society cooperated extensively with the Red Cross in carrying the burden of relief. By close association with the more highly trained Red Cross social workers (as public relief workers were then called) the Mormon women were introduced to new techniques and trends in poor relief.[41] In 1918, President Joseph F. Smith requested that Relief Society president Amy B. Lyman attend a social work colloquium at the University of Denver. And in January 1919, in the hopes of improving its welfare work and implementing many new ideas, including standardized social case work, the Relief Society organized a welfare department at its

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[39]Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1941), p. 184; Ralph T. Richards, "The History of Medicine in Utah," address to the graduating class, School of Medicine, University of Utah, 3 March 1946, p. 9, as cited in Dean R. Zimmerman, "For the Health of the Saints: The Development of Health Work of the Church Throughout the World," paper on file with the Health Services Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[40]Isabelle S. Ross, "The L. D. S. Children's Hospital," *Deseret News,* 18 February 1933, Church Section.

[41]Mayola Miltenberger, "Some Aspects of the Welfare Activities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," (M.S.W. thesis, Tulane University, 1938), p. 37.

general headquarters in Salt Lake City as part of its formal organization. Although without funds, building, or facilities at first, the department managed to survive until 1921 when the Church authorities appropriated money for emergency purposes and permitted it to register cases with the Social Service Exchange and acquire membership in the Council of Social Agencies in Salt Lake City. Thus empowered, the department not only acted as a center for cooperation between different units of the Church but also served to coordinate work between Church and secular welfare agencies. It also served as a center for Relief Society women wishing to engage in charity and relief work, and as the official child placement agency for the Church.

During the economic depression of 1921 and 1922, the department established an employment bureau for women and also helped to find jobs for other members of the Church.[42] In 1927, the general board of the Relief Society drew up a policy statement to clarify the work of this social service department, deciding to limit its assistance to families in which the head of the family held membership in the Church.[43]

In 1920, shortly after the department was organized, the Relief Society sponsored an intensive six-week seminar on family welfare work. The women considered such things as the history of social work, they read extensively in related areas, and they attended lectures on such subjects as physical and mental health, juvenile delinquency and child welfare. Periodically thereafter, the Relief Society offered study institutes and fieldwork experience in different localities.[44]

An interesting and unusual feature of Mormon welfare work during the first part of the twentieth century was its continued belief that the causes of poverty were more environmental than innate, and that distress increased as modern life became more complex. As chief spokesman for Church welfare during those years, the Relief Society listed physical and mental illness, unemployment, old age, disaster,

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[42]Amy B. Lyman, "Social Work in the Relief Society," *Deseret News,* 29 October 1932, Church Section.

[43]Miltenberger, "Some Aspects of the Welfare Activities of the Church," p. 42.

[44]In 1932, for example, Amy B. Lyman reported that by that time, sixty-five had been held in thirty-six different locations, with a total attendance of approximately 3,000. By 1932, seventy-two stake social service aids had received field work training of about 100 hours each, twenty-four of the regulars in the Welfare Department had received extended training and training working within the department, fifteen entered the professional field, and twelve became members of the American Association of Social Workers. See Lyman, "Social Work."

lack of training, and mismanagement as the prime causes of indigence.

The work of the health organizations and the Relief Society, then, provided the only real system of welfare services in the Church after the decline of the Utah united orders in the 1880s. Throughout its first years of existence, the Church had struggled to gain its economic independence. It had encouraged thrift, started industries, created employment for members without jobs, and stood ready to help needy, faithful Latter-day Saints. With the rising numbers of members and a new-found prosperity, however, the Church placed concern for the poor in a secondary position and concentrated much of its efforts on correcting misunderstandings about the Church at home and abroad, stabilizing its institutions, overcoming slanderous publicity, ending political embroilments, and adjusting the Church program to rapid urbanization and industrialization. A spirit of altruism and brotherhood prevailed, yet the Church had become too large for each member to become intimately concerned about the welfare of every other member. Church leaders placed more emphasis on the duty of family membrs to care for their own, and bishops were given almost complete responsibility (without coordination or guidance) for directing welfare work in their respective wards.

The tendency toward individualism presented a real problem to the Church beginning in the early 1920s. As the Saints became more prosperous, some wards succeeded in completely abolishing poverty within their boundaries. But as prosperity increased, individualism gained predominance over cooperation. Bishops of the wealthier wards, forgetting their obligation to other members of the Church, failed to press for a collection of the monthly fast offering, and the burden of poor relief fell heavily upon the wards comprised of poorer members.[45] Thus welfare ceased to be an organized Church-wide effort.

Mormons might have realized that they had lost much of their exclusiveness, identity, and economic independence when a severe depression hit the agricultural areas of Utah and the rest of the nation in the early 1920s. During World War I and the years following it, agriculture had become increasingly more specialized. As production rose, farm prices fell. Farmers, struggling to maintain their standard of living increased the size of their farms, purchased more modern machinery, and thus aggravated the economic situation.

[45]Bowen, *Church Welfare Plan,* pp. 135-36.

Partly due to the inability of some to compete under these conditions and partly due to the attractiveness of industrial work in the cities, families, and single individuals often moved from rural areas to urban centers. During this migration from the country to the city, many farms were lost through the inability of owners to pay taxes and others were left idle, only to deteriorate and lose value. Latter-day Saints followed these nationwide trends. Great numbers of them congregated in the more densely-settled areas, and cast the occupation of their forefathers aside for industrial employment. It seemed that American farms had ceased to perform the function of absorbing the unemployed and providing a place of self-sufficiency.[46] Mormonism lost much of its agrarian flavor.

On the other hand, between 1919 and 1929, American businessmen saw the greatest acceleration in economic growth in the history of the nation. Increased business activity meant more jobs, higher incomes, and much speculation and buying on credit. Mormons, relying increasingly upon business and industry as a means of livelihood, naturally participated in the business boom of the day. Throughout the decade, however, Church leaders counseled members against getting in bondage to debt, and condemned waste, extravagance, and spendthrift living. They urged instead that members be frugal and industrious and live within their means.[47] Church leaders also advised Latter-day Saints not to seek after wealth as an end and purpose in itself. "If used properly it is a great benefit and blessing to mankind. But if sought for simply to satisfy one's appetites and desires in a carnal way it will prove a curse rather than a blessing," Sylvester Q. Cannon taught.[48]

At the peak of this agricultural stagnation and business acceleration, the dark days of economic depression descended. Following the stockmarket crash in October 1929, previously wealthy men became poor as fortunes were wiped out and factories, businesses, and banks closed their doors. Industrial expansion ceased, and agri-

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[46]J. H. Paul, "Land Poor!" *Improvement Era* 34(January 1931)):135-36.

[47]Almost every Church leader at one time or another discussed this subject and laid emphasis on its importance in furthering the progress and happiness of Latter-day Saints. One of President Grant's most pointed statements was made at the April conference of the Church in 1926: "I want to say to you that those who discount their future, who run into debt for the ordinary necessities of life and for the luxuries of life, are laying burdens upon themselves that will come back with compound interest to cause them great trouble and humiliation." *Deseret News,* 17 September 1932, Church Section. These admonitions continued throughout the 1920s. See also W. Seegmiller and Anthony W. Ivins, "The Bondage of Debt," *Deseret News,* 16 January 1932, Church Section.

[48]S. Q. Cannon, "Facing the Economic Situation," *Deseret News,* 20 August 1931, Church Section.

cultural markets dried up. During 1929 and 1930, national farm income dropped some fifteen to twenty percent and this was followed by another drop of twenty percent during 1932 and 1933. When the depression deepened, employers cut work forces in farm-related supply, processing, and transportation industries.[49]

As business adjusted to depressed conditions and agriculture reduced its labor force, millions were thrown out of work. The number of unemployed increased from 1,499,000 in 1929 to 4,284,-000 in 1931. By 1933, the number of jobless had increased to 12,-634,000, encompassing over one-fourth of the nation's labor force. During the 1920s, people had lived extravagantly, failing to lay up provisions for hard times. When they lost their jobs during the 1930s, they had no money for either rent or food. Relief rolls became overburdened, breadlines formed, and want, hunger, and despondency threatened. With "Hoovervilles" dotting the outskirts of large cities and hunger marches in the nation's capital, the time seemed ripe for social change and economic experimentation.[50]

The Depression served also to stimulate poor relief activity among the Mormons. At the beginning of the financial collapse, Church authorities expressed a genuine desire to provide for the welfare of their people. Remembering anew that temporal as well as spiritual salvation were cardinal doctrines of Mormonism, the Church accordingly offered the membership much practical advice: keep out of debt, patronize home industry, and pay tithes and offerings.[51]

To the question, "Can the Depression be cured?" Church leaders responded affirmatively, stressing that "despondency and pessimism will never better the situation."[52] They also emphasized that prosperity would return when men discarded selfishness, strife, and bitterness, and reestablished brotherhood in economic relations.[53]

George F. Richards of the Council of the Twelve, reminding Saints of the Church's plan of fasting and giving of fast offerings for the care of the poor, remarked that if Church members had

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[49]Economist Irving Fisher pointed out that increasing mechanization throughout the 1920s had actually produced a substantial employment lag long before the depression struck in 1929 and that large numbers of the unemployed were layoffs from the building and manufacturing industries. Joseph F. Merrill, "The Problem of Unemployment," *Improvement Era* 42 (December 1939):716; address by Henry D. Taylor, "The Principles of the Welfare Plan," 16 May 1962, typescript, Church Archives.

[50]See Dorothy Day, *Loaves and Fishes* (New York: Curtis Books, 1963).

[51]Editorial, *Improvement Era* 34 (May 1931):379; "Financial Report Ideas," *Improvement Era* 34 (January 1931):158; Cannon, "Facing the Economic Situation."

[52]Joseph F. Merrill, "Can the Depression Be Cured?" *Improvement Era* 36 (November 1932):5.

[53]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

lived fully the law of tithing and fast offering, they would not need government assistance. And in 1930, the Presiding Bishopric of the Church sent out a statement suggesting various methods of treating charity cases.[54] It placed responsibility for care of the worthy poor upon the ward bishopric, and urged Relief Society officers, who operated under the direction of the bishop, not only to use tact, sympathy, and common sense in their labors, but at the same time to secure training in the essentials of social service. "The important thing in relief work is to help people to help themselves," the Bishopric urged.

Since in Mormon principle and under many state laws relatives were held responsible for caring for those in need, the Church decided to limit financial assistance to emergency cases, and even then provide relief in only a supplementary way:

> Our efforts should be directed largely toward methods of permanent relief, such as, —securing employment; providing free medical assistance; helping families, where necessary, to secure financial aid from the sources above mentioned; and assisting in the budgeting of the family income. Ward authorities should undertake to see to it that the family secures the relief needed to put them on their feet.[55]

Priesthood quorums were consequently urged to assume responsibility for helping their members find employment. And ward bishops were asked to appoint a ward employment committee, composed of a high priest, a seventy, an elder, and a representative from the Relief Society, to function in conjunction with a proposed stake employment committee. Recognizing that much of the economic achievement of the Mormon people in the past had accrued from their willingness to work together in a spirit of tolerance, Church authorities urged cooperation among the Saints similar to that of the earlier period.[56]

Church efforts at relief, however, provoked only a feeble response. The pioneer virtues of independence, thrift, and diligence had long since been eroded as twentieth century Mormons continued the process of secularization and accommodation to the national pattern which had begun during the 1890s.[57] Weaned from their

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[54]*Ward Charity: Details of Administration* (Salt Lake City: Presiding Bishopric's Office, 1930). See also, "Securing Employment for Church Members," *Improvement Era* 34 (January 1931):154.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Lowry Nelson, "The Next Hundred Years," *Improvement Era* 36 (December 1932):71-73.

[57]See Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom,* pp. 380-412.

self-supporting ways and their "do-for-themselves" attitude, and feeling the pinch of depression like everyone else, Mormons consequently clambered aboard the federal relief wagon.[58] In 1932, normally Republican Utah, Idaho, and Arizona went Democratic to support the new administration which proffered economic relief to a suffering populace. The response was not so much political as it was a political necessity. There was a real need among the Mormons.

In addition, Church authorities emphasized that it was the major function of the government to promote the general welfare. "This is the one cause that ranks above all others in bringing about the social justice so much desired in governments," one editorial in the *Deseret News* reminded the public.[59] With most Mormons being faithful taxpayers, moreover, it seemed only logical that those in need should accept tax benefits.

By early 1931, and with little functioning welfare machinery itself, the Church leaned heavily in favor of joint efforts with the federal government for ending the Depression.[60] The nation as a whole tended to believe that the Depression would be of short duration; moreover, in 1931, the federal government was still attempting to stimulate local philanthropy by reminding people that relief was a local problem. During that year local community chests managed to raise ten percent more than during the previous year, yet the inadequacy of local relief showed up in statistics which revealed that seventy-five percent of relief came from public funds.[61]

Beginning in 1932, then, the federal government saw the need of funding relief through state tax arrangements. The action seemed justified when private donations during the year dropped some twenty-two percent, forcing ninety percent of relief costs upon public sources.

Finally in July 1932, Washington acknowledged the need for national efforts to aid the poor and passed the Emergency Construction Act with an appropriation of $300 million to be administered through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Governors of the various states received strict warning that the funds represented only supplements to their own resources, yet within the first

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[58]By 1935, 88,000 of the Church's 638,000 members were on relief rolls. See Cannon, "Facing the Economic Situation."

[59]"The General Welfare," *Deseret News,* 7 December 1934.

[60]*Deseret News,* 28 January 1931; Editorial, *Improvement Era* 36 (September 1933):672; *Conference Report,* 6 October 1933.

[61]"State Body for Social Work Urged," *Salt Lake Tribune,* 5 April 1933.

year, all but $70 million of the original appropriation (which had been intended for a two-year period) had been depleted.[62]

With the depression worsening and no promise of respite, the federal government instituted its first antipoverty program, involving regulation, stimulation, and unemployment relief to achieve economic recovery. It poured millions of dollars into make-work projects, which could have been modeled after the Brigham Young efforts the century before, and into other ameliorative measures.[63] With the establishment of the public employment office in 1933, the Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and the National Youth Administration emerged, providing work opportunities for thousands of people. And with the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935, President Roosevelt moved to the political left as he allowed the nation to take the unprecedented step of providing direct relief for its constituency. As a result, a national program of old age assistance, general public relief, and unemployment insurance solidified. The failure of private means had necessitated governmental action at the national level.

Throughout the first year of the Roosevelt administration, the Church continued to support increased federal relief activity as well as governmental attempts to stimulate local philanthropy. At the Church conference in 1933, Presiding Bishop Sylvester Q. Cannon quoted President Roosevelt when he urged that

> we must redouble our efforts to care for those who still need relief, to prevent disintegration of home life, and to stand by the victims of depression until it is definitely past. The federal government cannot do the whole job. Every community and every state must do their share.[64]

And a message from the Church Presidency spoke of the "beneficent government" and appealed

> to members of the Church who may be in financial circumstances to justify, to give liberally in support of the agencies which have been set up by the Government, the States, the Counties, cities and private charitable organizations, to the end that the necessities of the needy may be provided for during the present winter.[65]

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[62]Ibid.

[63]Harry Hopkins himself acknowledged his indebtedness to Brigham Young for originating the idea of work relief. See "Origin of WPA Plan Laid in Utah," *Deseret News,* 10 September 1936. Actually, however, some local governments had been using the idea of public work years before Brigham Young adopted the idea.

[64]*Conference Report,* 6 October 1933; see also "The Crisis—Our Opportunity," *Deseret News,* 20 August 1932, Church Section.

[65]"A Message and Greetings from the First Presidency," *Improvement Era* 37 (December 1934):3. This attitude had been similarly expressed by the Church fol-

Yet as time progressed, the Church became increasingly more wary of the growing number of governmental "handouts." Although it recognized that it was often difficult to secure employment, it also continued to teach that idleness was a crime and that everyone who wants work should be able to obtain it.[66] It therefore urged the federal and local governments to make work for the people. "For one to ask for work and not be able to obtain it is, so to say, asking for bread," one outspoken Church member wrote. "We are willing and liberal enough to provide schools of various kinds to educate our children to better prepare them to fight the battles of life. Why should we not be as willing and eager to provide them labor as schools?"[67] And in one editorial the Church argued that money should be spent, not as gifts to those who are hungry or need clothing, but in providing work for those who are unemployed. It suggested that road building or lining ditches and canals with concrete would create good federal employment programs.[68] And for those "honest" unemployed who were then receiving relief, Church leaders suggested that they engage in some home improvement projects such as remodeling the home or working in the garden.[69] The Church stressed work as the most important basis for economic security.[70] No one should be allowed to suffer,

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lowing the passage of the Industrial Recovery Act: "In order to be as helpful as possible in the efforts of the President to relieve the conditions of distress throughout the country, the Church gladly joins in the measures the President has inaugurated. . . ." Editorial, *Improvement Era* 36 (September 1933):672. And Mormons in general probably shared the enthusiasm expressed by Hugo Anderson of the Salt Lake Community Chest in hoping that "the federal government, by assuming the relief burden, will take every possible step to prevent unemployment in the future. This may be one of the lasting benefits of federal aid. The government may develop a preventative medicine, just as England did after the enactment of the poor laws in Queen Elizabeth's time." *Salt Lake Tribune,* 5 April 1933. See also *Conference Report,* 7 October 1933, pp. 63-65.

[66]"Securing Employment for Church Members," p. 154; Merrill, "Problem of Unemployment," p. 716.

[67]Joshua H. Midgley, "A United Order of Labor, Being an Exposition of the Causes of Poverty and Suggesting an Effective Remedy," 1900, pamphlet in Church Archives. Midgley continued by stating that "Whether worthy or unworthy, the poor are our brothers, and on the ground of common humanity we owe them our help and sympathy. It is easier to sympathize with the worthy than with the unworthy poor. Yet the poor who are so as the result of their own faults are really more in need of both our pity and help. The work of lifting them up to the level of self-respect and self-support is much harder than the mere giving them material aid. Yet nothing less than this is our duty. The mere tossing of pennies to the tramp and beggar is not by any means a satisfaction of their claim upon us. Indeed such indiscriminate giving does more harm than good. It increases rather than relieves pauperism and dependence. So that the first duty of charity is to refuse to give in this indiscriminate way. Either we must give more than food, clothes and money, or else we must give nothing at all. 'Indiscriminate giving merely adds fuel to the flames.'"

[68]*Deseret News,* 7 August 1931.

[69]"Poverty Relieved," *Deseret News,* 9 January 1932, Church Section.

[70]*Deseret News,* 19 September 1931, Church Section.

the Church stressed, but at the same time, great care should be taken that those not needing relief should not sponge off the government. "I believe that every able-bodied person who needs help should give labor or service for the relief that is extended," President Grant stated. "Any other policy is destructive of good citizenship."[71]

The Church became rightfully alarmed in 1933 when it learned that one out of every four families in Utah was receiving relief, and that Utah had expended more per capita than any other state with the exception of Illinois.[72] Moreover, Church authorities received numerous reports about able-bodied Latter-day Saints who accepted government relief yet who had sufficient cattle, hay, and chickens to provide for their needs. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., former U. S. Ambassador to Mexico and first counselor in the First Presidency, remarked in 1933 that "the thought [among Latter-day Saints] that we should get all we can from the government because everybody else is getting it, is unworthy of us as American citizens. It will debauch us."[73]

Foreseeing the disastrous consequences of continuing the "character-weakening process of doling out relief on such a wholesale scale," and facing the imminent possibility of the discontinuance or drastic curtailment of federal relief programs, the First Presidency began urging Church members to prepare to shoulder the burden of providing for their own welfare.[74] The government had simply made it too easy for Mormons to lose their compunctions and accept government gratuities.[75]

As early as 1933, the First Presidency considered the relief problem serious enough to request all stake presidents to conduct a survey to determine the extent to which the Mormon citizenry were prepared to take care of themselves in an emergency situation. Stake

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[71]*Conference Report,* 6 October 1933, pp. 4-10.

[72]Utah was expending $5.00 per capita when the national average was only $1.87. The national average also showed that one out of every seven families was on relief. *Salt Lake Tribune,* 5 April 1933.

[73]*Deseret News,* 8 October 1933.

[74]"The Mormons Offer the Nation an Example of Cooperative Relief," *Washington Post,* 31 May 1936; *Deseret News,* 2 September 1933. In 1935 Roosevelt had announced his intention of discontinuing federal aid and shifting the burden to states and localities.

[75]"The cries of those in distress must be hushed by our bounty," the First Presidency announced. "The works of the Lord require this from us. A feeling of common humanity bids it from us. . . . If we shall full observe the law, the Lord will pour out His richest blessings upon us; we shall be better and happier than ever before in our history; and peace and prosperity will come to us." "A Message from the First Presidency Concerning Preparation for Relief Measures," *Millennial Star,* 12 October 1933, pp. 657-59.

leaders were instructed to indicate resources they had available, areas of need, and employment opportunities in order to plan for a comprehensive Church relief program. An opening remark in the survey stated that

> the Lord will not hold us guiltless if we permit any of our people to go hungry, or to be cold, unclad, or unhoused during the approaching winter. Particularly will he consider us gravely blameful if those who have heretofore paid their tithes and offerings to the Church when they had employment, shall now be permitted to suffer when the general adversity has robbed them of their means of livelihood.[76]

The First Presidency thus turned to the organizations which Joseph Smith had set up during the early days of the Church, with the objective of coordinating them and making them function as successful relief agencies. The Presidency urged ward and stake leaders to develop private employment, while at the same time stressing that "relief, except to the sick, infirm, or disabled, should not be extended as charity. Our faithful Church members are independent, self-respecting, and self-reliant; they do not desire charity."[77] In addition, each bishop and stake president was directed to provide other less fortunate wards and stakes with food, supplies, and other necessities. An editorial in the *Deseret News* called the instruction from the First Presidency a noteworthy phase in cooperative efforts against poverty in Church history and said that the Church program would be for those whom public work had not brought relief.[78]

It was hoped that results from the survey would enable the Church Presidency to issue instructions for relief work for the July 1933 to July 1934 period.[79] The survey showed that 88,460 (18 percent of the entire Church membership) received relief; that 80,247 (16.5 percent) received relief from Church funds; that 13,500 were on relief because of unemployment; that approximately 11,500 to 16,500 persons received relief who either did not need it or who had farms that might, if farmed, have kept them off relief; that county relief probably totaled more than five and a half million dollars and Church relief approximately a quarter of a million dol-

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[76]First Presidency to the presidents of stakes and counselors, 28 August 1933, Church Archives; see also letter from David A. Smith (first counselor in the Presiding Bishopric) to ward bishoprics, 28 August 1933, Church Archives.

[77]"A Message Concerning Preparation for Relief Measures."

[78]*Deseret News,* 2 September 1933.

[79]This period was chosen because the winter season occupies a two-year period.

lars during the year 1935; and that county relief cost approximately $5.41 per person and Church relief $2.48 per person per month. The investigation thus confirmed the Church leadership's premonition that heretofore active and responsible members were becoming dependent on and subservient to the "easy" relief money policies of the government. Church leaders asked what had happened to the once virile and self-contained religious commonwealth. Then they recalled the ideal which Brigham Young had expounded some fifty years before: "My experience has taught me, and it has become a principle with me, that it is never any benefit to give, out and out to any man." Within a few years, that sentiment would be both the banner of rebellion as the Mormons rejected government welfarism in favor of their own "Security Program" and the abrupt end of a comparatively passive chapter in the history of social welfare activity among the Latter-day Saints.