



Seventy-Five Years of Living Providently

Although the Church welfare plan was not yet formalized, the early Saints recognized the importance of living a self-reliant life, caring for the poor and needy, and serving others. The Prophet Joseph Smith stated, “A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race.”¹

Not long after the Church was established, small bishops’ storehouses and tithing offices were erected to help the needy. Joseph Smith instituted the gathering of fast offerings in Kirtland, Ohio, during the 1830s.² The principle of tithing was also introduced during this period (see D&C 119). Tithing and fast offerings were paid in the form of labor, produce, and other commodities. Bishops and branch presidents oversaw the distribution of these resources as they do today.³

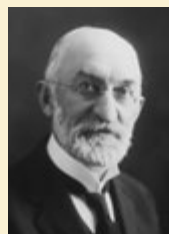
Many of the early Saints struggled to support themselves. To combat idleness, Church leaders and members united to find ways to create sustainable livelihoods. Some found work constructing Church buildings and completing public works projects. Others farmed and sold goods to provide for themselves and their families. As they labored together, the Saints were blessed with enough to meet their needs.

While the challenges of our time are different, Latter-day Saints continue to provide for themselves and care for the poor and needy by following the teachings of the Savior and the example set by previous generations.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 330–31.
2. See Howard W. Hunter, “Fast Day,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 72.
3. See Glen L. Rudd, *Pure Religion* (1995), 2, 4.

Information in this time line comes from the following sources, unless otherwise noted: Susan Clayton Rafter, Supporting the Rescue of All That Is Finest (2005); Glen L. Rudd, Key Moments in Church Welfare Services (2008); Glen L. Rudd, Important Events for Historical Church Welfare (1999); Glen L. Rudd, A Brief History of the Church Employment Program (1998); Glen L. Rudd, Pure Religion (1995).



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- April 6: President Heber J. Grant and his counselors announce the Church security plan in general conference.
- October: The Church forms the General Welfare Committee.