

*“When we fast, . . . we feel hunger. And for a short time, we literally put ourselves in the position of the hungry and needy. As we do so, we have greater understanding of the deprivations they might feel. When we give to the bishop an offering to relieve the suffering of others, we not only do something sublime for others, but we do something wonderful for ourselves as well.”*

**Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin** (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Law of the Fast,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 90; *Ensign*, May 2001, 73.



*The Saints in California’s Central Valley provide the labor for a Church-owned vineyard in Madera, California, USA. The vineyard produces hundreds of tons of raisins to be used by the poor throughout the world.*

## Catching the Vision of Self-Reliance

Many members might think of welfare as a program to help members in temporarily difficult circumstances. But the intent of the Church’s welfare plan is much more vast; it also involves promoting self-reliance as a way of life. President Thomas S. Monson has taught that self-reliance—“the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the necessities of life for self and family”<sup>1</sup>—is an essential element of our temporal *and* spiritual well-being.<sup>2</sup>

A mere desire to become self-reliant is not enough. We must make a conscious, active effort to provide for our own needs and those of our families. Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop, reminds us that when we have done all we can to be self-reliant, “we can turn to the Lord in confidence to ask for what we might yet lack.”<sup>3</sup> Being self-reliant allows us to bless others. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles says, “Only when we are self-reliant can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others.”<sup>4</sup>

Self-reliance involves several facets of a balanced life, including (1) education, (2) health, (3) employment, (4) family home production and storage, (5) family finances, and (6) spiritual strength.



*Left, top: Dutch Saints harvest and load potatoes for German Saints in 1947. Above: Food-production training in Ecuador has helped members grow more productive gardens.*



### 1937

- The Church establishes the first Bishops’ Central Storehouse, in Salt Lake City.



### 1938

- Welfare Square property is purchased in Salt Lake City, and construction begins.
- April: Church security plan is renamed Church welfare plan.
- August 12: The Church opens its first Deseret Industries thrift store, in Salt Lake City.



### 1. Education

The Lord commands us to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught: “We believe in education. This Church encourages education. There is incumbent upon every member of this Church, as a mandate from the Lord, to get all the education you can get. . . . There is incumbent upon the Latter-day Saints a dictum from the Lord Himself to educate our minds and our hands.”<sup>5</sup>

Gaining an education was the goal of Roberto Flete Gonzalez of the Dominican Republic, who enrolled in college shortly after returning from his mission. His father agreed to cover his living expenses so that Roberto could focus on his studies, but a short time later, Roberto’s father died, leaving the family in a dire financial situation.

Roberto quit school and began working to support himself, his mother, and his sister. He wondered how he’d ever be able to finish school.

Weeks later President Hinckley announced the Perpetual Education Fund, “a bold initiative” that would help youth in developing areas “rise out of the poverty they and generations before them have

known.”<sup>6</sup> Roberto applied for and was granted a PEF loan, which allowed him to continue his studies. This opportunity not only helped with immediate finances, but it also helped Roberto have the faith to marry and form an eternal family because he knew he would be able to provide for them.

Roberto finished medical school while serving as a bishop and became the first Church member on the National Board of Dominican Medical Schools. But the best results, he says, have been at home. “There have been changes in my family as we are now further removed from the cycle of poverty,” he says. “I am grateful that my son won’t have to live the same way I did because we’ve stepped out of that cycle.”

For more information, visit the Education and Literacy section of [providentliving.org](http://providentliving.org) and visit [besmart.com](http://besmart.com), a website to help Latter-day Saint youth prepare for higher education.

*“All we can learn that is true while we are in this life will rise with us in the Resurrection. And all that we can learn will enhance our capacity to serve.”*

**President Henry B. Eyring**, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Education for Real Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 21.



#### 1939

- The first storehouse and cannery at Welfare Square begin operation.

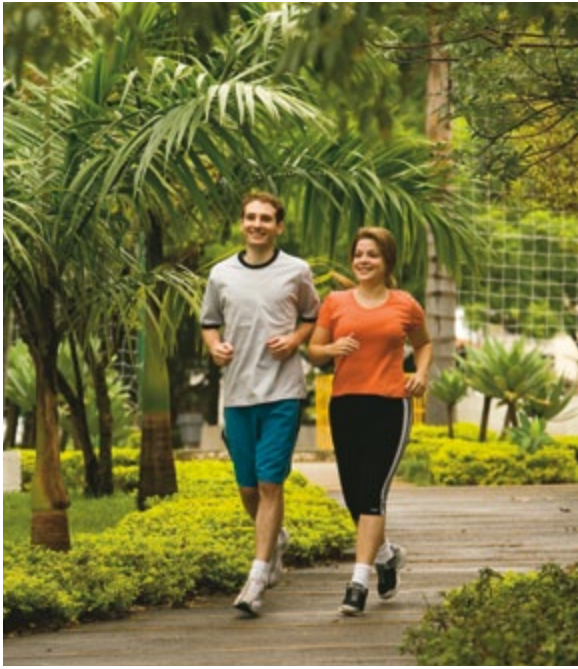


#### 1940

- August 27: President David O. McKay dedicates the Welfare Square grain elevator. Church members donated over 70,000 hours of labor to build it.

#### 1941

- April 20: Original Welfare Square milk-processing plant begins operation.



Far left: Latter-day Saint students pursue education to be better prepared to meet the rigors of today's competitive world. Left: Exercise and good nutrition are an important part of treating our bodies with care and respect.

## 2. Health

Because we are created in the image of God (see Genesis 1:27), our bodies are temples and should be treated with care and respect (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17). The Word of Wisdom, found in Doctrine and Covenants 89, is the Lord's code of health and was revealed to Joseph Smith in 1833. It teaches that we should eat nutritious foods and avoid harmful substances. Apostles and prophets have since taught that we should shun all substances or practices that abuse our bodies or minds and that could lead to addiction.<sup>7</sup>

Sainimere Balenacagi of Fiji learned this lesson as a teenager when she was attending a wedding with some friends who were not members of the Church. Many people there, including Sainimere's friends, were drinking and smoking and invited her to drink. "I was taught my whole life to live the gospel standards, so I rejected the offer without hesitation," Sainimere says.

She knows that the blessings of adhering to the Word of Wisdom go beyond physical health: "I have found extra protection in the sense that I am able to make better choices because of the closeness of the Holy Spirit. I see clearly that standards do not restrict our freedom; they protect us from consequences that lead to restricted freedom."

For more information, see the Physical Health section of [providentliving.org](http://providentliving.org).



Sainimere Balenacagi knows both the physical and spiritual blessings of following the Word of Wisdom.

*"Our physical bodies indeed are temples of God. Consequently, you and I must carefully consider what we take into our temple, what we put on our temple, what we do to our temple, and what we do with our temple."*

**Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Ye Are the Temple of God," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 18.

ABOVE, FROM LEFT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN LUKE, ISRAEL ANTUNES, AND CRAIG DIMOND



### 1948

- March 1: The Church opens a regional employment office in Salt Lake City.



### 1960

- March: New Welfare Square milk-processing plant is completed.

### 1963

- Pasta manufacturing plant and new Welfare Square cannery begin operation.



Top: A young woman is helped at an employment resource center in Mexico. Above: Oséias Portinari says the employment resource center in São Paulo, Brazil, “gives unemployed members a better vision of life.”

### 3. Employment

In many wards and branches, finding employment is the most pressing need members face as they strive to become self-reliant. Priesthood quorums and Relief Society sisters can help these members. They should work closely with these individuals, identifying helpful community resources, mentors who can personally assist those in need, and available job opportunities. The power of members working together in faith to bless those in need will often lead to successful employment.

In some areas of the world, the Church has

*“Our Heavenly Father asks only that we do the best we can—that we work according to our full capacity, however great or small that may be.”*

**President Dieter F. Uchtdorf**, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Two Principles for Any Economy,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov 2009, 56.

established employment resource centers. Currently, there are more than 300 centers in 56 countries that offer services such as career workshops, networking meetings, and individual job counseling. The new Church website [LDSjobs.org](http://LDSjobs.org) also provides resources for jobseekers, employers, and Church leaders.

After Oséias Portinari of Brazil was laid off at work, he spent more than two months searching for a new job. Unable to find a position, he volunteered at his local employment resource center in São Paulo. Helping others in their job searches offered Oséias an opportunity to improve his own interviewing and job search skills. He took the career workshop several times and eventually became an instructor. To his surprise, as he diligently served others, Oséias soon began to receive calls from prospective employers, which led to gainful employment.

Oséias is grateful for Church resources that give unemployed members a better vision of life. He says, “I know that as we put in effort, the Lord opens doors.”

For more information, visit [LDSjobs.org](http://LDSjobs.org), [employment.lds.org](http://employment.lds.org), or your nearest employment resource center.

#### 1973

- The Church creates LDS Social Services to help families.



#### 1976

- Welfare facilities are expanded throughout the United States and Canada.
- March 29: New Welfare Square bishops’ storehouse is completed.

#### 1978

- The Church forms the Emergency Response Committee to help millions of people around the world affected by disasters.

#### 4. Family Home Production and Storage

In 2007 the Church introduced *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*, a pamphlet that provides a simplified approach to family home storage. The First Presidency encourages members worldwide to focus on having a basic supply of food and water and some money in savings. Members can begin by producing or purchasing a few extra items and setting aside a little money each week as their circumstances allow. Following this pattern over time, members can establish a home storage supply and a financial reserve suitable for their needs.<sup>8</sup>

After learning of this counsel, the Lugo family of Valencia, Venezuela, felt inspired to begin their own home storage. Each week they began setting aside a small amount of food, water, and money. Even with their limited resources, they were able to gather a modest reserve after only a few months. Later that year a workers' strike in Venezuela put many local workers' jobs in jeopardy. Brother Omar Lugo was among those who eventually lost their jobs.

It took nearly two years for Brother Lugo to find new employment. During that time, Brother Lugo and his family lived on their savings and food storage. Despite the difficult challenges of unemployment, the Lugos experienced peace and comfort because they were prepared. They faced the uncertain future with confidence, knowing they had followed the counsel to gradually build their home storage.<sup>9</sup>

For more information, visit the Family Home Storage section of [providentliving.org](http://providentliving.org) or refer to the pamphlet *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*.



Families in the Democratic Republic of Congo work together to grow cassava as a food staple and to process the root into flour for daily use and for longer-term storage.

*"This new [home storage] program is within everyone's grasp. The first step is to begin. The second is to continue. It doesn't matter how fast we get there so much as that we begin and continue according to our abilities."*

**Bishop H. David Burton**, Presiding Bishop, in "Family Home Storage: A New Message," *Liahona*, Mar. 2009, 14; *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 60.

TOP LEFT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN; TOP RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHS BY HOWARD COLLETT



#### 1980s

- First employment centers outside the United States are established, in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

#### 1981

- The Church builds a Deseret Industries thrift store at Welfare Square.



#### 1982

- September 10: U.S. president Ronald Reagan visits welfare facilities in Ogden, Utah.



Devon and Michaela Stephens say that creating a budget helped them gain “firm control” of their finances.

### 5. Family Finances

Another aspect of provident living is wisely managing income and expenses. The First Presidency has counseled:

“We urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt. . . .

“If you have paid your debts and have a financial

*“All of us are responsible to provide for ourselves and our families in both temporal and spiritual ways. To provide providently, we must practice the principles of provident living: joyfully living within our means, being content with what we have, avoiding excessive debt, and diligently saving and preparing for rainy-day emergencies.”*

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 8.

reserve, even though it be small, you and your family will feel more secure and enjoy greater peace in your hearts.”<sup>10</sup>

Successful family finances begin with the payment of tithes and offerings. When members put the Lord first, they are better able to care for themselves and others.

Another part of successful financial management involves knowing your income and expenses and controlling money rather than letting it control you. When Devon and Michaela Stephens of Arizona, USA, created a budget, they had only a vague idea of how much money they spent each month. But making a budget with specific categories helped them “come out of the clouds and down to earth,” Michaela says. “It was alarming to find we had less money than we thought, but it was also intensely exhilarating to suddenly feel that we had firm control of what we had.”

For more information, visit the Family Finances section of [providentliving.org](http://providentliving.org) or refer to the pamphlet *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances*.

#### 1983

- The Presiding Bishopric is designated to direct the welfare program.

#### 1985

- Church Humanitarian Services program begins.



#### 1990s

- The Church uses its Humanitarian Service Center to sort surplus clothing and other goods for shipment throughout the world in response to poverty and disasters.

#### 1996

- The Church establishes Latter-day Saint Charities as a nongovernmental organization to facilitate humanitarian activities in select countries.<sup>1</sup>
- Welfare Services builds its first bishops’ storehouses and home storage centers outside the United States, in Mexico.
- Renovation of Welfare Square begins.

## 6. Spiritual Strength

Spirituality is essential to our temporal and eternal well-being. We all experience trials. Striving to increase our spirituality will help us face these trials well and give us hope for better days.

Nirina J-Randriamiharisoa of Madagascar currently lives in France while she pursues her education. When she first arrived, she struggled with loneliness and homesickness. “I sought for solace through prayer, scripture reading, and the gentle whisperings of the Holy Spirit,” says Nirina. “These things brought me closer to Heavenly Father and the Savior, and I felt peace.”

In time Nirina made friends and participated in activities within and outside the Church and found happiness. But then some tragic news from home shook her world. “One morning I received a message telling me that my brother had died. I had no idea I could feel such sadness. In the days and weeks that followed, I struggled through moments of loneliness, anger, and despair. Doing even the most basic things became serious challenges.”

A few months later, a close friend also passed away. The added sorrow increased Nirina’s already-heavy burden. For just a moment Nirina considered not attending church, but then she remembered that the same things that had buoyed her in her earlier difficulties could bolster her now.

“As I had when I first moved to France, I sought comfort in prayer, scripture reading, and the Holy Ghost. Through this I discovered more strongly that the Spirit and the doctrine of eternal families can bring us comfort and that the Atonement of Jesus Christ has a real effect in our lives,” she says. “Whatever trials we face, there are no ‘dead ends’ with the Lord. His plan is a plan of happiness.”

For more information on self-reliance and provident living, see *Providing in the Lord’s Way: Summary of A Leader’s Guide to Welfare*, available in many languages at [providentliving.org](http://providentliving.org).

### NOTES

1. *Providing in the Lord’s Way: Summary of A Leader’s Guide to Welfare* (booklet, 2009), 1.
2. See Thomas S. Monson, “Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare,” *Tambuli*, Feb. 1987, 3; *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 3.
3. H. David Burton, “The Blessing of Work,” *Liahona*, Dec. 2009, 37; *Ensign*, Dec. 2009, 43.
4. Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 2.
5. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 724.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Perpetual Education Fund,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 62; *Ensign*, May 2001, 52.
7. See, for example, Russell M. Nelson, “Addiction or Freedom,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 6; M. Russell Ballard, “O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 108.
8. See *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage* (pamphlet, 2007).
9. See “Family Home Storage: A New Message,” *Liahona*, Mar. 2009, 12–13; *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 58–59.
10. *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances* (pamphlet, 2007).



Nirina J-Randriamiharisoa has found that consistent gospel living can buoy us up even through the most difficult times.

*“A strong testimony gives peace, comfort, and assurance. It generates the conviction that as the teachings of the Savior are consistently obeyed, life will be beautiful, the future will be secure, and there will be capacity to overcome the challenges that cross our path. A testimony grows from understanding truth distilled from prayer and the pondering of scriptural doctrine. It is nurtured by living those truths with faith anchored in the secure confidence that the promised results will be obtained.”*

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Transforming Power of Faith and Character,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 46.



### 1997

- LDS Social Services makes a record number of adoption placements in one year with 629—the highest number the agency achieved in the 20th century.<sup>2</sup>



### 1999

- March: Welfare Services begins a major employment initiative to establish up to 50 new employment resource centers throughout the world.
- LDS Social Services is renamed LDS Family Services, and programs are expanded.