



By President
Thomas S. Monson

ARE WE Prepared?

In the vicinity where I once lived and served, the Church operated a poultry project, staffed primarily by volunteers from the local wards. Most of the time it was an efficiently operated project, supplying to the bishops' storehouse thousands of fresh eggs and hundreds of pounds of dressed poultry. On a few occasions, however, being volunteer city farmers meant not only blisters on the hands but also frustration of heart and mind.

For instance, I shall ever remember the time we gathered the Aaronic Priesthood young men to give the project a spring-cleaning. Our enthusiastic and energetic throng assembled at the project and in a speedy fashion uprooted, gathered, and burned large quantities of weeds and debris. By the light of the glowing bonfires, we ate hot dogs and congratulated ourselves on a job well done.

However, there was just one disastrous problem. The noise and the fires so disturbed the fragile population of 5,000 laying hens that most of them went into a sudden molt and ceased laying. Thereafter we tolerated a few weeds so that we might produce more eggs.

No member of the Church who has helped provide for those in need ever forgets or regrets the experience. Industry, thrift, self-reliance, and sharing with others are not new to us.

We should remember that the best storehouse system would be for every family in the Church to have a supply of food, clothing, and, where possible, other necessities of life.

Of course there may be times when our members are in need of help from the Church. The Lord's storehouse includes the time, talents, skills, compassion, consecrated material, and financial means of faithful Church members. These resources are available to the bishop in assisting those in need.

We urge all Latter-day Saints to be prudent in their planning, to be conservative in their living, and to avoid excessive or unnecessary debt. Many more people could ride out the storm-tossed waves in their economic lives if they had a supply of food and clothing and were debt-free. Today we find that many have followed this counsel in reverse: they have a supply of debt and are food-free.

I repeat what the First Presidency declared a few years ago: "Latter-day Saints have been counseled for many years to prepare for adversity by having a little money set aside. Doing so adds immeasurably to security and well-being. Every family has a responsibility to provide for its own needs to the extent possible.

"We encourage you wherever you may live in the world to prepare for adversity by looking to the condition



of your finances. We urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from this bondage. Save a little money regularly to gradually build a financial reserve.”¹

Are we prepared for the emergencies in our lives? Are our skills perfected? Do we live providently? Do we have our reserve supply on hand? Are we obedient to the commandments of God? Are we responsive to the teachings of prophets? Are we prepared to give of our substance

to the poor, the needy? Are we square with the Lord?

We live in turbulent times. Often the future is unknown; therefore, it behooves us to prepare for

uncertainties. When the time for decision arrives, the time for preparation is past. ■

NOTE

1. The First Presidency, *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances* (pamphlet, 2007).

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Considering the needs of those you visit, think of ways you can help them become more self-reliant in employment, finances, food storage, or emergency preparedness. Think of a skill you could share with them, such as gardening or money management, that would empower them to follow President Monson’s counsel.

For ideas on teaching this message to youth and children, see page 6.



I Served Again

By Jaíne Araújo

One day, after finishing a service project, I was walking past our meetinghouse and saw two sisters who were cleaning the building. My words simply came out: "Sisters, do you need some help?" One of them smiled at me and said that I had arrived just in time because they were the only ones cleaning and they were very tired. She said that she had prayed that the Lord would send someone to help. I was very happy to be an answer to her prayer. I had just finished giving

service to someone else and was also tired, but I followed my heart and offered to serve more.

It is a commandment to work with joy (see D&C 24:7). When we have the desire to serve at all times, we can help miracles happen in other people's lives. Our lives become more meaningful when we serve. The Lord really does love us, He helps each of His children, and He will give us the strength to serve.

The author lives in Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil.

CHILDREN

Are You Prepared?

President Monson has asked each of us to be prepared for hard times and to help others during their hard times. Take this true-or-false quiz to see if you're ready!



I can always find someone to help. True False

I can be grateful for everything I already have. True False

I don't have any talents to share with anyone. True False

Saving money for later is a good idea. True False

I need new toys and clothes to be happy. True False

Answers: True, True, False, True, False

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