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## ECONOMIC AID

Economic aid offered by the Church to needy people in various countries is intended to promote the well-being of individuals and families. In addition to temporary welfare assistance given by the Church to its members and to a variety of emergency and HUMANITARIAN SERVICES, the Church has rendered longer-term economic aid to many groups in a variety of nations. Church members are taught that family well-being depends upon, among other things, the means to provide food, clothing, and shelter. Just as individual members are taught to acquire skills necessary for this economic well-being (see EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS; SELF-SUFFICIENCY), the Church encourages nations to provide economic opportunity for their citizens and to establish an economic atmosphere wherein individual skills can be used for the benefit of families and the nation.

The Church has not established political criteria for selecting recipients of its economic aid. Joseph SMITH echoed the counsel of the Savior to feed the hungry and clothe the naked (Matt. 25:35–40; *T&S* 3 [Mar. 1842]:732).

Many of the humanitarian projects supported by the Church have had a monetary component to them. In addition to the food and blankets sent to many peoples in Europe after World War II, money was sent to purchase land and buildings to be used for longer-term relief. In 1983, the Church sent emergency food and clothing to both Colombia (earthquake) and Tahiti (hurricane), and Church funds also were used to provide building materials for those whose homes had been devastated (“News of the Church,” *Ensign* 13 [June 1983]:77). Similarly, aid to both Armenia and Africa included funds for economic development in addition to monies used for more immediate relief. As part of the 1989 aid to Armenia following earthquakes in the region, materials and tools were donated by the Church to allow craftsmen to rebuild homes and businesses (*The Daily Universe*, Dec. 6, 1989, Provo, Utah, p. 2). And in the \$10 million aid to Africa in 1985 and 1986, approximately one-third of the funds were used to support long-term economic development projects (Ferguson, pp. 10–15). For example, in concert with Africare, some of the funds were used to construct dams, develop irrigation and other water projects, and train farmers in Ethiopia. Economic aid from the Church also supported vocational school develop-

ment and marketing cooperatives in the Sudan, and agricultural rehabilitation in Chad, Niger, and Cameroon (“News of the Church,” *Ensign* 15 [Nov. 1985]:109). Special funds also have been used to support local self-sufficiency enterprises, literacy and health services, and agricultural development in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zaire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Chad, and in Central and South America.

One of the more extensive and systematic resources to provide Church economic aid has been the Ezra Taft Benson Agriculture and Food Institute located at BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY. This institute, founded in 1975, was commissioned to raise the quality of life through improved nutrition and introduction of more effective agricultural practices. The institute conducts research, teaches, and carries out agricultural projects in countries around the world. It is well known for its development and promotion of small-scale food-growing projects that have been effective particularly in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico. The Benson Institute conducts nutrition assessments and training; has developed, for small-scale farms, appropriate technology in developing countries (tractors, solar-powered water pumps and grain grinders, and wind-driven water pumps); trains students from developing countries; and has entered into several agreements with governments of developing countries to assist them in their agricultural development efforts. The institute collects and sends abroad medical and agricultural equipment and coordinates volunteers who wish to live in a country for varying periods of time to help with health, nutrition, and agricultural development (see various issues of the semi-annual *Benson Institute Review*).

In 1977, E. W. Thrasher donated \$14 million as an endowment to the Church to be used to benefit the health of children throughout the world. A member of the PRESIDING BISHOPRIC of the Church is chairman of the executive committee of the Thrasher Research Fund. The fund has expended millions of dollars since 1977 to support research in nutrition and infectious diseases and to promote the health of children, primarily in developing countries. In one instance, the fund ran a project in a small village in Nigeria to demonstrate that low-cost appropriate health care technology and knowledge can be transferred to local residents (see *Annual Reports* of the Thrasher Research Fund, Salt Lake City, Utah).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

From their beginnings Latter-day Saints have regarded economic welfare as an indispensable part of religion. An 1830 revelation received by Joseph SMITH stated, "Verily I say unto you, that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal" (D&C 29:34–35). Accepted as part of the revealed word of God, this principle implied that every aspect of life had to do with spirituality and things eternal. For President Brigham YOUNG, who led the Church in the West for thirty years, this revelation meant that "in the mind of God there is no such a thing as dividing spiritual from temporal, or temporal from spiritual; for they are one in the Lord" (JD 11:18).

We cannot talk about spiritual things without connecting with them temporal things, neither can we talk about temporal things without connecting spiritual things with them. . . . We, as Latter-day Saints, really expect, look for and we will not be satisfied with anything short of being governed and controlled by the word of the Lord in all of our acts, both spiritual and temporal. If we do not live for this, we do not live to be one with Christ [JD 10:329].

Emphasis on economics was strengthened and supported by the social and economic experiences of the early Saints. Two early decisions were extremely important. The first was to move the headquarters and body of the Church from New York to KIRTLAND, OHIO, and to MISSOURI. This meant that leaders had to devise ways of helping poor members move westward. The move also involved Church leaders in buying land and formulating plans for community development (see CITY PLANNING), and in initiating financial enterprises and industries to provide employment. As the germ of the KINGDOM OF GOD, the Church was to gather and organize its members, settle them, and



The first Utah gold coins were minted in September 1849. Designed by Brigham Young, John Taylor, and John Kay, the obverse reads, "Holiness to the Lord," with a crown emblem of the priesthood over an All-Seeing Eye of Jehovah. On the reverse is "G.S.L.C.P.G." (Great Salt Lake City Pure Gold) and two clasped hands. Reprinted by permission from Alvin Rust, *Mormon and Utah Coin and Currency* (Salt Lake City, 1984).

assist them in creating an advanced society. Ultimately, according to LDS belief, the Church must establish ZION, the literal and earthly kingdom of God over which Christ will one day rule in person.

The second decision came as a reaction to PERSECUTION. Church leaders assumed responsibility for coping with persecution and looking after the welfare of its persecuted members. Persecutions thus created cohesiveness and community identity. They also necessitated frequent remov-



From 1857 to 1860, paper currency backed by livestock was printed over the signature of Brigham Young. These notes provided a medium of exchange for domestic growth and to finance the defense against the Utah Expedition. Brigham Young won a lawsuit in 1859 when the U.S. marshal confiscated the printing plates. Nearly all of these notes were redeemed by 1860. Reprinted by permission from Alvin Rust, *Mormon and Utah Coin and Currency* (Salt Lake City, 1984).