

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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WASHINGS AND ANOINTINGS

Ritual anointings were a prominent part of religious rites in the biblical world. Recipients of the anointing included temple officiants (Ex. 28:41), prophets (1 Kgs. 19:16), and kings (1 Sam. 16:3; 1 Kgs. 1:39). In addition, sacral objects associated with the Israelite sanctuary were anointed (Ex. 30:22–29). Of equal importance in the religion of the Israelites were ablutions or ceremonial washings (Ex. 29:4–7). To ensure religious purity, Mosaic law required that designated individuals receive a ritual washing, sometimes in preparation for entering the temple (Ex. 30:17–21; Lev. 14:7–8; 15:5–27).

The washings and anointings of the biblical period have a parallel today in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In response to a COMMANDMENT to gather the SAINTS and to build a house “to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings, and anointings” (*TPJS*, p. 308), these ordinances were introduced in the KIRTLAND TEMPLE on January 21, 1836 (*HC* 2:379–83). In many respects similar in purpose to ancient Israelite practice and to the washing of feet by Jesus among his disciples, these modern LDS rites are performed only in temples set apart and dedicated for sacred purposes (D&C 124:37–38; *HC* 6:318–19).

Many symbolic meanings of washings and anointings are traceable in the scriptures. Ritual washings (Heb. 9:10; D&C 124:37) symbolize the cleansing of the soul from sins and iniquities. They signify the washing-away of the pollutions of the Lord’s people (Isa. 4:4). Psalm 51:2 expresses the human longing and divine promise: “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (cf. Ps. 73:13; Isa. 1:16).

The anointing of a person or object with sacred ointment represents SANCTIFICATION (Lev. 8:10–12) and CONSECRATION (Ex. 28:41), so that both become “most holy” (Ex. 30:29) unto the Lord. In this manner, profane persons and things are sanctified in similitude of the MESSIAH (Hebrew “anointed one”), who is Christ (Greek “anointed one”).

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DONALD W. PARRY

WEALTH, ATTITUDES TOWARD

[For related articles, see Business; Consecration; Equality; Financial Contributions; Poverty, Attitudes Toward; Zion. *The blessings of eternal wealth are discussed in Riches of Eternity.*]

Latter-day Saints view wealth as a blessing and also as a test. The Lord has repeatedly promised his people, “Inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land” (Alma 36:30). But wealth can lead to pride and inequality: “Woe unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures” (2 Ne. 9:30). Therefore, attitudes toward wealth and the use of material abundance reveal a person’s priorities: “Before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good” (Jacob 2:18–19). To those who will inherit the celestial kingdom, God has promised the RICHES OF ETERNITY.

LDS beliefs about the nature and purpose of life influence Church members’ attitudes toward wealth. Thus, the concept of wealth has both materialistic and spiritual dimensions: wealth is an accumulation of worldly possessions; it is also an acquisition of knowledge or talents. Since MATTER and SPIRIT are of the same order, material wealth can become refined and sanctified by the influence of God’s spirit as it is consecrated to his purposes. Latter-day Saints are encouraged to increase in all honorable forms of wealth, knowledge, and obedience, which increase the “wealth” or worth of the human soul and to “lay up . . . treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:20; D&C 18:10; 130:19; see EDUCATION, ATTITUDES TOWARD).

The world and its resources belong to the Creator. Material blessings may be delivered from heaven if the recipient conforms to the Christian ideals of integrity, honesty, and charity. All people are of divine origin and have come to earth to know good and evil and to be tested to see if they will choose the good. By the grace of God and by their diligent labors consistent with divine law, both the earth and mankind can be perfected and glorified.

If the earth’s resources are not wisely and carefully husbanded, however, wealth can become a curse. It is the “love of money,” not money itself, that is identified as the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10).



Christ and the Rich Young Man, by Heinrich Hofmann (1889). Jesus counsels a rich young man who has asked how to obtain eternal life: “Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor” (see Matt. 19:16–22).

President Brigham Young warned that wealth and perishable things “are liable to decoy the minds of [the] saints” (*CWHN* 9:333). Wealth may result in misuse and un-Christian conduct, immoral exploitation, or dishonesty. Greed and harmful self-indulgence are sins, and the pursuit of materialistic goals at the expense of other Christian duties is to be avoided. People with materialistic wealth draw special warnings regarding responsibility toward the poor; riches can canker the soul and make entrance into heaven exceedingly difficult (Matt. 19:24; D&C 56:16).

Thus, the accumulation and utilization of wealth confront the human family with some of its major challenges in determining the righteousness of goals and the correctness of behavior. “In many respects the real test of a man is his attitude toward his earthly possessions” (F. Richards, p. 46). The prosperity that results from honest and intelligent work is not necessarily repugnant to the spiritual

quality of life, but the Church consistently warns of the risks of “selfishness and personal aggrandizement” that lurk in accumulating wealth (S. Richards, *CR* [Apr. 1928]:31).

Personal reflection, prayer, and inspiration are needed in deciding how to use one’s wealth. Fairness, justice, mercy, and social responsibility are individual requirements; improper behavior is not to be excused by the behavior of others, reflected in market forces or windfall accumulations. The responsibility of each human being is to think and act in ways that ennoble the divine nature. President N. Eldon Tanner outlined five principles that epitomize the Church’s counsel on personal economic affairs: pay an honest TITHING, live on less than you earn, distinguish between needs and wants, develop and live within a budget, and be honest in all financial affairs (*Ensign* 9 [Nov. 1979]:81–82).

While not taking vows of poverty, Latter-day Saints covenant to use their wealth, time, talents, and knowledge to build up the kingdom of God on earth (D&C 42:30; 105:5). Providing for a family is a sacred requirement (1 Tim. 5:8). The mission of the Church in many countries of the world requires considerable resources to sustain Church members in seeking the spiritual growth and perfection of themselves and others. Ignorance, disease, and poverty can be overcome only with the assistance of material assets that result from the wise use of human talent and the resources abundant in nature. Thus the Church and its members seek to obtain the material resources that are needed to build the kingdom of God.

The principles taught in the STANDARD WORKS concerning the accumulation and use of wealth are sufficiently broad to permit an ongoing dialogue among Church members about what is pleasing in the sight of the Lord. Some emphasize that man must work and that the fruits of his labor are his due and right (D&C 31:5). Others point out that although man must work, God makes life and its abundance possible, and thus everything rightly belongs to him (Mosiah 2:21–25) and comes to man “in the form of trust property” to be used for God’s purposes (S. Richards, *CR* [Apr. 1923]:151). Some suggest that there are no limits on the profits one may gather provided the pursuit is legal and the ultimate utilization is appropriate. Others see business and legal standards of secular society as falling short: “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall

in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 5:20; 6:24). Having taught correct principles in the scriptures and through his priesthood leaders, the Lord leaves it to Church members to govern themselves through individual righteousness, with knowledge that all will be held personally accountable for the choices they make.

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WELFARE

[It is a major concern of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to care for the physical, as well as the spiritual, welfare of its own members, and of others as far as possible. There are theological foundations for LDS attitudes toward such subjects as Blessings; Community; Love; Matter; Physical Body; Poverty; Righteousness; and Wealth.]

Institutionally, the Church operates an extensive program that delivers food, clothing, and other essentials of life to those in need. See Bishop's Storehouse; Compassionate Service; Deseret Industries; Elders; Fast Offerings; Hospitals; Relief Society; Social Services; Ward Welfare Committee; Welfare Farms; Welfare Services; and Welfare Square.

It encourages and assists members in finding suitable employment. See Business; Deseret Industries; Education; Occupational Status; Social Services; and Work.

For specialized services to the disabled, see Blind, Materials for and Deaf, Materials for.

The Church counsels all its members to store food and commodities in preparation for possible disasters. See Emergency Preparedness and Self-sufficiency.

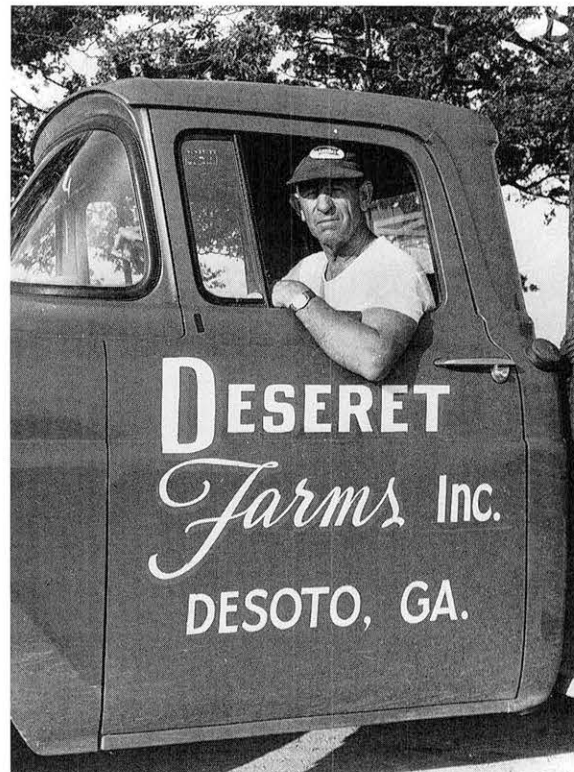
It also extends aid and assistance to other peoples of the world in times of emergency. See Calamities and Disasters; Economic Aid; and Humanitarian Service.]

WELFARE FARMS

The purchase of farmlands by the Church began in the late 1930s. The intent was to give unemployed people an opportunity to work and to produce

commodities to help the poor and needy. In the 1940s, stakes and groups of stakes began purchasing farms as approved welfare projects. Sometimes the Church would purchase a farm, and the local unit would repay the Church loan from farm revenues. In the 1970s, farms were purchased on a shared basis, with half of the funds coming from the local unit and half from Church headquarters. All new farmlands are now purchased solely by the Church. In 1990 the Church owned and operated about 160 localized welfare farms, which raised many kinds of produce for its welfare program. In addition, it had extensive farm holdings in its welfare reserve system and investment portfolio.

Produce from the welfare farms is canned in local Church canneries and transferred to the BISHOP'S STOREHOUSES. Surpluses are sold on the open market, and the revenues from these sales are used to help pay for the production overhead of the farm. Under the supervision of a stake president, a stake farm committee from the local priesthood units involved directs the local welfare farm



The Church owns and operates farms as a part of its charitable welfare program and as reserve investments. Most of these farms are in Utah, Arizona, Idaho, and California. Photo c. 1959.