
IN MEMORIAM

MAURINE WHIPPLE

By Veda Tebbs Hale

MAURINE WHIPPLE, author of *The Giant Joshua*, died in St. George on 12 April 1992. She was eighty-nine. She was born on 20 January 1903 in St. George and lived there most of her life. *The Giant Joshua*, a 637-page novel published in 1941 by Houghton Mifflin, celebrates the history of her Southern Utah city; the richness of texture, the vividness of its characters, and its forthright treatment of the rigors of both pioneering and polygamy have insured that it has never lacked for enthusiastic admirers during the past fifty-one years.

Maurine's serious writing began, she said, when she hitched a ride with a tourist to Salt Lake City to begin her college education with only her dreams and a cheap cardboard suitcase containing two middy blouses and one skirt. She grew up envious of girls who had social skills, financial backing, nice clothes, and important family names. However, her high school education, experience as the editor of the school paper, keen mind, and determination combined to help her graduate with honors from the University of Utah in 1926. She financed her college education by working wherever she could—laundry, housework, library, or cafeteria. Sometimes she held two jobs at once, sacrificing her social life.

In high school and college, she observed the romances of other girls and ached to find love herself. She was sure that it was her own inability to play insincere flirting games that stranded her on the beaches of unpopularity. This view often depressed her; but in other moments, she was willing to wait for the unusual man who would see and love her for her honesty. Her only diary, covering less than a year but describing her first year as a high school teacher, candidly records her bright hopes and dreams, most of them



dashed by the end of the school year. In fact, it concludes with her premonition that she would never find the love and marriage she so desired.

But Maurine did not become that staple of small-town society—the unmarried schoolteacher. She had trained as a teacher because teaching was the only profession her father could visualize for her, and his patriarchal opinions dominated the family. During the six years she did teach, she greatly enjoyed working with young people, idealistically rejoiced in helping them become their best, and delighted in imparting knowledge and seeing ideas strike roots. Unfortunately, whatever Maurine's skills with young people, her ability to deal successfully with her colleagues—and more particularly with her principals—shortened her career. With her strong, vivacious personality and original ideas, she was impatient with their conservatism and resentful of their heavy-handed imposition of authority.¹ When, for instance, one of her dramatic productions needed lighting that the principal said they didn't have, Maurine hitchhiked to a neighboring town and convinced J. C. Penny's to lend some they owned. On another occasion, the principal informed her that there wasn't any money for girls' gym equipment. Maurine organized a dramatic production, charged

admission, and made enough to buy what she needed. Former students remember her as "having red hair (hennaed), friendly and innovative, with great vitality and a good dancer."² However, none of her principals ever offered her a contract for a second year.

In 1928-1929, her third year of teaching, she taught in a two-room school in the tiny community of Virgin, Utah. She liked being free to organize in her own way, but it was a lonely time, a time of reflection. She was twenty-six years old, felt she had missed her chance to marry, and knew that she was overqualified to teach in a small rural school. She spent many hours sitting on the bank of the Virgin River meditating. She claimed that the germ of *The Giant Joshua* had been in her mind for as long as she could remember. Her despondent musings on her personal life beside the Virgin gradually turned to serious thought about the characters and the story line of her future novel.

The next year the students of the Virgin school were bussed to Hurricane, so Maurine went to California to do post-graduate work that summer. Supervised recreation was a new and popular profession across America then, and Maurine studied that field along with her specialty, dramatics. She remembers that summer as one full of promise. She lived near the beach and rapidly made friends with other young people, even having a boy friend; but the feeling that her mother needed her steadily grew.

Finally, the feeling was too strong to resist and Maurine went home. Her mother had, in fact, been wishing for her, lying on her bed saying her name over and over. And so Maurine was once again pulled into the continuing conflict between her parents—her father, strong, virile, harshly authoritative and selfish, was interested in a wider world; her mother, sweet, passive, and faithful to Mormonism, was content within the outlines of her culture steeped in Victorian attitudes. Maurine's fiction gave her tools to analyze her parents' unhappiness and also a way to distance herself emotionally from it. But she was never successful at effecting enough change so that she could move on. It may have been one reason why she did not

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finish a sequel to *The Giant Joshua*, in which the protagonist was Jimmy, the son of Clory and Abijah MacIntyre, who was patterned after her own father, Charlie Whipple. Despite her resentment of her father, she understood that he grew up abandoned by his own father and forced at an early age to take on a man's burdens.

After Maurine finally abandoned teaching in 1932, she found a job in recreation management on the west side of Salt Lake City. She worked hard with disadvantaged children and received rewards and commendation for her efforts. But because of cuts in federal funding, her opportunity disappeared. It was a time of losing on every front as one romance after another ended tragically. By 1936 she found herself stranded in San Francisco contemplating suicide. But then she found her friend, Lillian MacQuarrie, from her St. George school days. Lillian, whose husband had left her for her daughter from another marriage, was also in the depths of despair and in the last stages of pregnancy.

Maurine postponed taking any self-destructive action to see her friend through childbirth. Between contractions, the two women discussed their options. Lillian had seen some of Maurine's early stories, and insisted that she attend the Rocky Mountain Writers' Conference held each summer in Boulder, Colorado. She later forced Maurine's hand by submitting a manuscript, "Beaver Dam Wash," that Maurine had written during the winter of 1928 while recuperating from an appendectomy in a hotel room in Pocatello, Idaho.³ Maurine borrowed the money for busfare and registration. This was the beginning of the events that led to her winning the 1938 Houghton Mifflin fellowship and much national attention. Not understanding that the prize was, basically, an advance against royalties and that the publishers would reap most of the benefits, Maurine, instead of writing a few more chapters to lengthen "Beaver Dam Wash," found herself committed to writing the epic she had been carrying in her mind for as long as she could remember.

Ferris Greenslet, her editor at Houghton Mifflin, soon recognized the importance of her efforts and gave her the attention, encouragement, and added time needed to bring this book to completion. Three agonizing years later, Maurine delivered *The Giant Joshua*. In many respects the book was her child. She usually referred to it as "he," for example, even though its protagonist was female. Like Margaret Mitchell, author of the South's great epic *Gone with the Wind*, Mau-

rine emptied all of her feminine energy into a self-consuming and sacrificial writing effort that gave the novel genuine power. But unlike Margaret Mitchell, Maurine received little financial reward and never acceptance by most of her own people. She claimed she never received much more than \$7000 in royalties spread over a forty-two year period.⁴ The money she did have she generously shared with her family, particularly with her younger sister whose husband was paralyzed.

The publication of *The Giant Joshua* in January 1941 came almost simultaneously with the release of the Hollywood movie, *Brigham Young*, which was given a hearty endorsement by Heber J. Grant, president of the Church. The film undoubtedly won many friends and even converts for the Church. Maurine's book did not receive Church endorsement, and she suffered from the fact. However, she kept hundreds of fan letters expressing admiration for the spirit of the Mormons in Southern Utah.

Also the publication of *The Giant Joshua* coincided with World War II, and the book's portrayal of the spirit of dedication amidst great hardship was appreciated by another generation fighting for freedom. Maurine, herself, threw her considerable energies into the war effort, lecturing in behalf of a national speakers' bureau of writers. She traveled as far east as Chicago and remembers that the groups to whom she spoke always asked for an encore. The lecture, an emotional appeal for greater unity, lent itself well for adaptation to different audiences.

In 1943, she set aside her work on the sequel to *Joshua* and began "The Golden Door," a vigorous attack on the futility of war, following that with "The Arizona Strip," a novel of romance and outlawry. She finished a detailed synopsis and two chapters for each, but received no encouragement from publishers. Somewhere in this time she also produced about two hundred pages of text for the sequel to *The Giant Joshua* called "Cleave the Wood." She also wrote numerous short stories. Two of the most interesting, "The Pickle Is a Dilly" and "The Time Will Come," deal with nuclear testing in Nevada and about a woman's rage at her son's attraction to war. Both themes sound surprisingly contemporary in light of today's interest about downwind effects, the peace movement, and differences between male and female perspectives. They were both turned down with the same kind of comments that came back on her war novel, which was that nobody wanted to hear that kind of peace rhetoric. It has often been said that Maurine

was fifty years ahead of her time.

In 1945, she published her only other book, a travel book for tourists called *This Is the Place: Utah*. Although it was a critical success outside the state, it was a financial failure because of her criticism of some Church policies. Maurine then turned to article writing, trying to make her association with other journalists compensate for her lack of companionship. She felt obligated to write more novels and hoped to provide an income that would allow her the freedom to write a novel in the long, painful way she knew. Particularly she felt compelled to write the sequel to *Joshua* because she had to end it before she had originally planned due to its length. Her editor assumed she could finish the rest of it in two more books, making a trilogy. But it wasn't to be, much to the sorrow of the many fans of *Joshua*.

Her national periodical publications include "Anybody's Gold Mine," an exciting account of possible treasure buried near Kanab, Utah, published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1949; "The Arizona Strip, America's Tibet," in 1952, *Collier's*, a history of the area cut off from state government by the Grand Canyon; "Why I Have Five Wives," published in *Collier's* in 1953, the story of the massive and disastrous raid on Short Creek's polygamists by Arizona law enforcement officials with moral support from Utah government; and "Atlantis on the Muddy," a reminiscence with the people of St. Thomas, Arizona, after waters backed up by Boulder Dam covered their community.

Maurine's poor business sense combined with her ill health, her sensitivity to criticism, and her inability to attract long-term relationships meant that she was without a secure environment in which she could write in peace. As a result, after publishing *The Giant Joshua* when she was thirty-eight, she endured fifty years of disappointments, loneliness, and poverty, sometimes so paralyzed by despair that she was incapable of working.

It is ironic that Maurine did not benefit more directly from her one great success. *Joshua* was a best seller that at one time was ranked second only to Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, was translated into ten foreign languages and Braille, and was chosen as part of the Allied Forces library during World War II.⁵ It wasn't until 1983, when Maurine was eighty years old that she sold the movie rights. Sterling Van Wagonen and others paid a sum that gave her a few years of financial security. Although the movie has not yet been made, Van Wagonen has not abandoned his plans.⁶

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

Cole R. Capener

JUSTICE

Maurine contributed much to human understanding, Mormon culture, and especially Mormon literature; sadly these contributions were undervalued during her lifetime. Although she failed to completely realize her own ambitions for a Southern Utah trilogy that would capture the Grand Idea that she saw working itself out through Mormonism, she did leave her testimony that it could eventually be successful:

The dream of brotherhood is possible, though only time can tell. Meanwhile, all any member of the human race can do is to seek the Holy Grail amid the dream's debris—that despite what Thomas Wolfe said, I think you *can* “go home again”; in fact, you must. For “going home again” is a prerequisite to going anywhere else! Spiritually at least.⁷

In her last year, Maurine was gratified to find herself once more contributing to increased brotherhood. Before Christmas 1990, a mutilated copy of a Christmas story she had written in college was found. As a Christmas gift, Maurine sent copies of this story to friends; two of them, Curtis Taylor and Stan Zenk of Aspen Books, generated the idea of asking noted Mormon writers to contribute an original Christmas story to a collection and donate the proceeds of its sale to help children of the European countries struggling for democracy. *Christmas for the World* sold out in its first printing in 1991 and will be offered again in 1992 for the same purpose. They gave the credit for the idea to Maurine, and it is a fitting tribute to her. ☞

NOTES

1. She taught in Monroe, Utah (1926-27), in Georgetown, Idaho (1927-28), and then in four more Utah schools: Virgin, Nephi, Heber City, and Helper.

2. Interview 12 April 1992 with Roland Bee from Escalante, Utah; comments in the *Wasatch Nineteen Thirty One*, the yearbook for Wasatch High School, Heber City, Utah.

3. Unfortunately the complete manuscript has not been found; however, two versions of a synopsis and a much-altered short story, “Quicksand,” published by the University of Utah *Pen* literary magazine, are in the Maurine Whipple Collection, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University Archive, Provo, Utah.

4. Maurine's summation in an undated first draft of a holograph letter to Norman Cousins in 1974, Whipple Collection.

5. *The Giant Joshua* placed fifth in Harper's *Poll of the Critics* on the Ten Best Books. For several months in the *N.Y. Herald Tribune's* best seller listed it was seventh out of twenty-one, ahead of Soroyan, Buck, Douglas. Once the *Herald Tribune* ran Roberts, Hemingway, Hilton, Cather, and Whipple, in that order. The *Denver Post* best-sellers listed Hemingway first, Whipple second, and then Roberts, Douglas, Cather following. From clippings in Whipple papers, Brigham Young University Archive.

6. Chris Hicks, “LDS Filmmaker Dreams of ‘Giant Joshua,’” *Desert News*, Metro edition, Weekend Section, Friday, 31 January 1992, W-3.

7. Incomplete and undated letter to Charley Steen, ca. 1961-62, Whipple Collection; photocopy in my possession.



There is an inextricable link between righteousness and economic quality. Reestablishing pioneer Orderville's on a large scale may not be realistic, but recapturing and teaching the spirit of egalitarianism is.

THE KING JAMES translation of the New Testament uses the word *judgment* as one of the weightier matters Christ chastised the Pharisees for neglecting (Matthew 23:23). However, the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, as does nearly every other modern translation, translates the original Greek (*crisis*) as “justice.” What did Christ mean by this word “justice”?

In our own religious tradition, and particularly in contemporary Mormon rhetoric, justice is virtually always portrayed as the

victim of a robbery perpetrated by mercy. This is regrettable. First, because I have always felt that like Robin Hood—or any good robber—mercy *can* (and should) rob justice. After all, that's what mercy does, doesn't it? Second, the two terms are typically juxtaposed in a false dichotomy to try, feebly and erroneously, to explain how or why the Atonement works. I have always found this usage unsatisfying since I believe, as did the heretic Abelard, that the Atonement is a process that occurs within the disciple of Christ rather than an event that purports to balance some abstract ledger book of the Universe.

I submit that Christ did not use justice in this balance-sheet sense. And even though my own legal training might prefer it, I do not believe Christ was referring to the legalistic sense of the word—justice here does not mean the determination of rights according to legal principles such as the axiom “an eye

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for an eye and tooth for a tooth.” Rather, Christ was admonishing the scribes and Pharisees to practice the justice expressed elsewhere in the Mosaic law.

Christ’s admonition to practice justice calls to mind those aspects of the Law that addressed socioeconomic inequality among God’s people. According to Professor Moshe Greenburg, professor of Bible at Jerusalem’s Hebrew University, a clear intent of the Law was to diffuse material resources more equally. (Greenburg actually argues that the whole purpose of the Law was to diffuse economic, political, and religious power so that such power would not be concentrated and abused, thus becoming a challenge to God’s authority.) The prohibition of interest on loans, the emancipation of slaves every seventh year, the commandment not to harvest crops so the poor could collect and eat the food, and the mandated celebration of Jubilee (once every fifty years) where title to parcels of land sold in the prior fifty years reverted to the original owner, all militated against economic concentration and grossly unequal distributions of income. Greenburg further reminds us that the Torah is also replete with references that God conveyed but a mere tenancy with respect to the land of Israel, a tenancy that could be revoked for failure to obey God’s law.¹

Catholic commentary on the Mosaic law is remarkably in accord. “Central to the biblical presentation of justice,” U.S. Catholic bishops wrote in a recent pastoral letter, “is that the justice of a community is measured by its treatment of the powerless in society.”² The Law and other writings of the Old Testament share deep concern for the proper treatment of these people. They are vulnerable and have no protector or advocate. “God hears their cries and the King, who is God’s anointed, is commanded to have special concern for them.”³

If this is Christ’s view of justice then we must recognize a new challenge. If we accept Christ’s exhortation to do justice we must, in the words of Mortimer Adler, commit ourselves to acts that “serve and promote the general welfare or the common good.”⁴ To be sure, we must broaden our horizons about what justice means. Not only must we rethink our definitions, we must also rethink our priorities. Christ unequivocally taught that doing justice was a *weightier* matter of the law. By choosing these words he established a pecking order of commandments beyond the two greatest. We are to pay tithes, of course, and obey the other commandments—but to do justice is *more* important.

The need to enlarge our vision of respon-

sibility is well illustrated in an insightful article by Professor Richard E. Johnson in *BYU Today*. Johnson criticizes those in the Church who lament the declining moral state of contemporary American society, saying they define morality too narrowly. “We might gain valuable insight,” he writes, “by broadening the measure of morality beyond the traditional sins (sex, crime, drugs and violence) to include such variables as poverty, homelessness and socioeconomic inequality.”⁵ To Johnson, the most powerful and consistent scriptural warnings given to those who live in the “last days” (especially those contained in the Book of Mormon) center around the evils of materialism, consumerism, worldly vanity, and socioeconomic inequality. When measuring morality by these less conventional measures, we do have reason to lament the contemporary state of America and the world. Despite the extravagance and wealth-creation in America during the 1980s—or perhaps because of it—the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. According to Census Bureau statistics Johnson cites, the richest one-fifth of American households now receive almost ten times the average income of the poorest one-fifth, the highest ratio of inequality since World War II. Moreover, the top one-tenth of U.S. households now own 70 percent of the wealth.⁶

In addition to widening income disparities, U.S. infant mortality rates are also rising and among America’s poor now exceed those in many Third World countries, far surpassing the rates in other Western countries. The percent of Americans in poverty increased significantly during the 1980s such that more than 33 million Americans now live in poverty. Many of these poor are single mothers and their children. In fact, almost one-fourth of *all* children in this country live in poverty. For many of these children, basic health care is lacking. Measles vaccinations for poor children in the United States now lag far behind other developed countries. The rate of homelessness also continues to grow. The traditional homeless—alcoholics, addicts, unemployables—have been joined by single mothers and their children, working poor, and deinstitutionalized mental patients: All of this in a country with massive material wealth.

In the world at large the injustice further abounds. Carlisle Hunsaker wrote that “at least fifteen million children under the age of five die of starvation each year (roughly one child every two seconds). Millions more will sustain physical and mental impairment because of malnutrition. Billions of persons

live in absolute poverty and the gap between the rich and poor is striking.”⁷

When I reflect on Christ’s admonition to do justice, to right moral wrongs, I cannot ignore these statistics of affliction, suffering, and inequality. I cannot help but rehearse Christ’s words:

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord when saw we thee an hungered, or a thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them saying, . . . Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. (Matthew 25:44-45.)

I also recall the words of N. N. Riddell who reportedly said, “Let no man count himself righteous who permits a wrong he could avert.”

I recognize that some might argue that inequality of income is beyond the scope of religious obligation and doing justice. To such people I would simply cite the remarkable yet chilling revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants:

But it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin (D&C 49:20).

In your temporal things ye shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the spirit shall be withheld (D&C 70:14).

For if ye are not equal in earthly things, ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things (D&C 78:6).

These scriptures demonstrate the inextricable link between righteousness and economic equality. Indeed, it is no coincidence that in those few instances in sacral history when God’s people have reached a higher level of righteous living, in each instance their communities have taken action against poverty and inequality of income. Thus, the Book of Moses records that in the City of Enoch the “Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18). And later in Jerusalem, after the Holy Ghost descended on the disciples during Pentecost, the Book of Acts informs us:

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . . And all that believed were together and had all

things common. And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need. . . . Neither was there any among them that lacked. (Acts 3:42, 44-45; 4:34.)

And finally, in the Western Hemisphere after Christ's visit, Fourth Nephi reveals:

And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another. And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free and partakers of the heavenly gift. (4 Nephi 1:2-3.)

Having seen that Christ himself has admonished us to do justice, and noting the salutary effects on those communities of Saints who the scriptures record acted justly, it should be clear that it is our responsibility—both the Church as an institution and each individual member—to work for justice in this world. While the Church's activities cannot substitute for individual action, the Church should take a leading role in creating justice. It should be recalled that in Matthew Christ chastised the ecclesiastical leadership of his day, those who sat "in Moses' seat" (Matthew 23:2). It was they who were under obligation to observe the weightier matters of the religious law. The contemporary Church is subject to the same obligation. Regrettably, this critical element is omitted from the oft-expressed three-fold purpose of the Church: preaching the gospel, redeeming the dead, and perfecting the Saints. Doing justice or succoring the needy just doesn't seem to fit in any of these folds. A new fold is needed—at least a new wrinkle—to accommodate this paramount objective of the Church. Christ's own life vividly demonstrates that one of the Church's principal roles should be to combat poverty, homelessness, world hunger and malnutrition, and socioeconomic inequality, and to use its other influence, resources, and moral suasion to condemn and oppose these evils and other injustices throughout the world.

CATHOLIC ACTIVISM FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

IN this regard, we as a Church can learn much from the intellectual traditions of our Catholic brothers and sisters. The year 1991

marked the one hundredth anniversary of the first modern Catholic social teachings. On 15 May 1891 Pope Leo XIII issued the church's first collection of social teachings in a document entitled *Rerum Novarum* (*The Condition of Labor*), which addressed the then-pressing problems of industrialization and the oppression of workers. This tradition continued with Pope Pius XI's 1931 publication of *The Reconstruction of the Social Order* which responded to the impact of the economic depression by condemning unequal distribution of wealth and opposing both unrestricted capitalism and Marxism. More recently, in 1971 the Synod of Bishops released a significant encyclical entitled *Justice in the World* which declared: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a *constitutive* dimension of the preaching of the gospel."⁸

In the same encyclical, the bishops also declared that action for justice is a central part of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and the church's purpose to liberate humankind from every oppressive situation.⁹ Noting the massive divisions in the world between rich and poor and the resultant marginal lives, illiteracy, hunger, inadequate housing, and patent lack of human responsibility and dignity, the Catholic bishops taught that the gospel demands justice for these people as an essential expression of Christian love. To love God is to love our neighbor and this love of neighbor cannot exist without justice.

Perhaps the finest example of Catholic social teaching in their rich tradition, is the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1986 pastoral letter "Economic Justice for All." This letter cited many of the same statistics of economic inequality in the U.S., and concluded that "basic justice demands the establishment of minimum levels of participation in the life of the community for all persons." "Basic justice," or "biblical justice," as the Catholic bishops wrote, consists of three dimensions:

1. *Commutative justice*—which calls for fundamental fairness in all agreements and exchanges between individuals or private social groups—a call for fair wages and working conditions.
2. *Distributive justice*—which requires that the allocation of income, wealth, and power in society be evaluated in light of its effects on persons whose basic material needs are unmet—reflecting the Second Vatican Council's statement that "the right to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family belongs to everyone."

3. *Social justice*—which implies that persons have an obligation to be active and productive participants in the life of society and that society has a duty to enable them to participate in this way. Or in the words of Pope Pius XI, "It is of the very essence of social justice to demand from each individual all that is necessary for the common good."¹⁰

LDS APPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

AS a church, we need to embrace the spirit of this Catholic social teaching. LDS bishops (who are responsible for the temporal welfare of the Church) should join together with Catholic bishops in teaching justice. How this abstract value can be translated into concrete practice is, of course, more problematic. Reestablishing pioneer Orderville on a large scale may not be realistic, but recapturing and teaching the spirit of egalitarianism is. The Church welfare system—as remarkable as it may be—can be used to create more justice, beyond helping our own needy. Perhaps the homeless and needy can be encouraged to participate in welfare projects in exchange for welfare and Church social service benefits wherever Church welfare facilities exist (instead of just Welfare Square). There are no doubt countless other ways in which the Church's welfare aims can be broadened. Indeed, over the last five or six years, at least one part of the institutional Church seems to share this vision. Under the direction of presiding Bishop Glen Pace and Apostle Thomas Monson, a small group within the Church welfare department known as Humanitarian Services has transformed the Church's aid program from isolated disaster relief aimed primarily at Church members to participation in a wide range of ecumenical humanitarian assistance and development directed at both disaster victims and the poor and homeless.¹¹ Christian international relief organizations that used to assume the Church would never work together on such relief projects now communicate and cooperate frequently. Joint efforts with local food banks, shelters, and literacy projects are common. Even non-proselytizing "service missionaries" are now being called to serve Peace Corps-like missions.

In addition to our responsibilities as a church, we as individual members face the challenge, as David S. King expressed it, of translating "our love for mankind [and desire to do justice] from a theological abstraction into a practical instrument for servicing human needs."¹²

First, of course, we must acquire the will to "bear one another's burdens," even the burdens of those unknown to us. Our resolve must project beyond our immediate families, congregations, and fellow citizens and indeed stretch to the ends of the world. Joseph Smith once said that a person "filled with the love of God is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges though the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race."¹³ As one who believes in the efficacy of prayer, I am convinced that making this a subject of our daily prayers is absolutely vital. Even as we expand the scope of our empathy, it is clear some may find it easier to work for a more just society by striving to eradicate poverty and homelessness in the local community. The efforts of Lowell Bennion and others like him are fine examples of this spirit of volunteerism at work. Others target their relief efforts at the victims of drought and famine in Africa. An outstanding example of a secular eleemosynary organization set up and run by Utahns of a variety of religious and non-religious affiliations is the Ouelessebouyou Utah Alliance which fights human suffering in the west African country of Mali.

Second, we must resist the sophistry that argues because we can't help everyone we should not act at all. Every little bit helps. We must personalize the problem and address it at all levels. For the ubiquitous beggar asking for work, money, or food, keep granola bars in the glove compartment, and, better yet, be familiar with the local community services available where he or she can find real help. For the homeless, consider, as we did in the Santa Monica II Ward, organizing a periodic "meals on wheels" night to deliver hot meals to the homeless. In Los Angeles, a voucher program has been established where one can purchase coupons that can be distributed to the poor and homeless who then can redeem them for food and clothing. For the starving in East Africa and elsewhere give generously of your financial resources. You can even help the Church's humanitarian relief efforts by giving on the "other" line of your tithing contribution slip. "Ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish" (Mosiah 4:16).

Third, even though we as Christians have a duty to assist the poor through acts of charity and voluntary action, these are not sufficient by themselves. Our direct individual efforts on a small scale must be corroborated by collective efforts on a large scale. We must, as the Catholic bishops have said "carry out our moral responsibility to assist and empower the poor by working collectively through government to establish just and effective public policies."¹⁴

Although government involvement in social issues may seem inappropriate to some Mormons, interestingly the 1939 Melchizedek priesthood study guide noted that all capitalist systems create inequalities of ownership and income and require public policy initiatives to correct such abuses. It specifically called for a system of progressive taxation "so that every one will contribute according to his financial ability." It also called for progressively higher estate and inheritance taxes to prevent the inter-generational transfer of wealth so that the "so-called idle rich who have been living on the earnings of past generations will be no more."¹⁵ This is but one way public policy might be adopted to address this wide-ranging problem. Other policy initiatives directed at ameliorating poverty, homelessness, and hunger demand our active support.

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed peace as the work of justice (Isaiah 32:17.)¹⁷ Let us strive toward the fulfillment of the words of the psalmist: "Mercy and truth have met together; justice and peace have kissed each other" (Psalms 45:10).

NOTES

1. Quoted in Cole R. Capener, "Aim of God's Laws to Curb Power, Seminar Told," *SUNSTONE* 10 (April 1985): 54-55.
2. "Economic Justice For All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy," National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986, 26.
3. "Economic Justice for All."
4. Mortimer J. Adler, *Six Great Ideas*, (New York City: Collier Books, 1981), 237.
5. Richard E. Johnson, "Socioeconomic Inequality: The Haves and the Have-nots," *BYU Today* (September 1990): 49.
6. Johnson, 50-51.
7. Carlisle Hunsaker, "Mormonism and a Tragic Sense of Life," *SUNSTONE* 8 (September-October 1983): 32.
8. Quoted in Kenneth R. Overberg's "100 Years of Catholic Social Teachings," *Catholic Update* (November 1990): 4.
9. See also Cardinal Roger Mahony's "Sharing our Heritage in the Marketplace: A Pastoral Reflection for the People of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles," 28 November 1991. ("The central message is very simple—our faith is profoundly social. We cannot call ourselves "Catholic" unless we hear, heed and then embody the Church's call to serve those in need and work for justice and peace.")
10. "Economic Justice for All," 35-39.
11. For a sampling of Bishop Pace's thoughts on these efforts, see "A Thousand Times," *Ensign* (November 1990): 9.
12. David S. King, "The Principle of the Good Samaritan Considered in a Mormon Political Context," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5(4): 13.
13. *History of the Church*, 4:227
14. "Economic Justice for All," 93.
15. Johnson, 49.
16. See also "Out of Peace, Justice" Joint Pastoral Letter of West German Bishops, in *Title of Boval*, ed. James V. Schall (Ignatius Press 1984), 33, 40-42.

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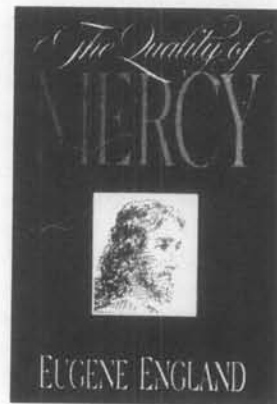
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