

# Spreading Zion Southward, Part II: Sharing Our Loaves and Fishes

*Bradley Walker*<sup>1</sup>

For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your Churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and afflicted (Mormon 8: 37).

Woe unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls (D & C 56:16).

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matthew 6:21).

IN A 1993 ADDRESS, Elder Glenn L. Pace asked the question, "Faced with ever-louder cries for help from the world, how do we determine where to focus our efforts?"<sup>2</sup> This essay asks a related question: How efficient and equitable is the allocation of the church's charitable resources? As we compare the distribution of these resources to the poorer, less-developed countries (LDCs) with the distribution to wealthy countries (WCs), could efficiency and equity be improved? In my previous study, the focus was on the internal welfare program of the church.<sup>3</sup> The present study has a more external focus on global humanitarian aid, on the allocation of missionary time and resources, and on spending for post-secondary vocational and university education—disbursements, in other words, which assist non-Mormons as well as some segments of the church membership in LDCs.

1. I wish to thank Armand Mauss for his assistance in editing this study.

2. Glenn L. Pace, "Infinite Needs and Finite Resources," *Ensign*, (June 1993): 50.

3. See my "Spreading Zion Southward: Improving Efficiency and Equity in the Allocation of Church Welfare Resources." *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no.4 (Winter 2002): 91-109.

Prior to World War II, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with fewer than a million members, took in a very small world. To be sure, church leaders and members have always conceived of the restored gospel as ultimately a world religion, and have sustained a relatively large missionary force throughout our history. Yet, in practical terms, the membership and influence of the church were limited to a few states in the American west. The ten-fold growth of the church during the second half of the twentieth century is remarkable in sheer numerical terms, to say nothing of the political and economic implications. Just since 1970, the church has more than quadrupled in size to its present membership of twelve million. Of special importance for this present essay, however, is the fact that more than half that membership now lives outside North America.<sup>4</sup> This development has forced the church to reconsider, more fundamentally than ever before, how and where best to allocate its material resources.

In our exuberant (and often self-congratulatory) appreciation for the church's recent growth and prosperity, we have tended to lose sight of the overarching reality that most of this growth has taken place in the LDCs of Africa, Asia, and especially Latin America. Responsible management of our growth in such areas has entailed an obligation to share our resources, both spiritual and material, not only with those who join the church, but also to some extent with their surrounding communities. Although we trust and expect that embracing the gospel message will itself improve the lives and prospects of converts, we have also learned that the most desperate people will also need care and nourishment to their bodies before they can fully experience the spiritual nourishment of gospel teachings.<sup>5</sup> As the church has increasingly gained an enduring presence in much of the world, it has also tried to share its material, intellectual, and spiritual resources more broadly than it was able to do as an isolated American sect. We can see this effort in three important ways, particularly in the less developed countries: a broadening humanitarian outreach to the world's peoples without regard to religious membership or missionizing prospects; the commitment of time and resources to various forms of missionary service; and the extension or subsidy of educational opportunities, especially at the post-secondary level.

---

4. Lowell C. Bennion and Lawrence A. Young, "The Uncertain Dynamics of LDS Expansion, 1950-2020," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996) 8-16.

5. This was a lesson recognized by church leaders in their dealings with the first "LDCs" in North America itself, namely the aboriginal peoples in the mountain west. The expectation of Joseph Smith and the earliest leaders—that the Indians would first be converted and then become "civilized" and prosperous—was reversed after the Utah experience made obvious the need to "civilize" the Indians before they could be converted. See the review of these developments in Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), ch. 3.

## HUMANITARIAN OUTREACH

Just who are the poor and the needy mentioned in the scriptures which introduced this essay? Are they only the poor Latter-day Saints? Are they only those who "qualify" according to some standard of "worthiness"? Recent teachings and policies from church leaders make it clear that if such a parochial view ever made sense, it certainly cannot be justified in the contemporary world.<sup>6</sup> To some extent, the church has always felt an obligation to help relieve human suffering, not only among its own members, but also more broadly as its resources have permitted. Among the better-known examples are the large-scale shipments of food and clothing to Europe in the wake of both world wars of the twentieth century, but there have been many other examples, as well.<sup>7</sup> Throughout most of its history, large-scale humanitarian assistance by the church has been possible only on an episodic basis.<sup>8</sup> Since the mid-1980s, however, we can see a more sustained and comprehensive humanitarian program throughout the world, which apparently began with the special fast days and fast offerings collected for famine relief in Africa during 1984 and 1985. By 1990, the church had a score of its own agricultural development projects in the various countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Much of the food and funding for relief have been distributed through reputable international agencies such as the Red Cross, CARE, and Catholic Relief Services, but now the church has established its own Humanitarian Foundation and international distribution network.<sup>9</sup>

Now that the church has a more durable and extensive humanitarian outreach in the world, many Saints have an exaggerated impression of its effectiveness and scope, an impression inadvertently encouraged by favorable press

---

6. See, for example, Elder Thomas S. Monson, "Our Brothers' Keeper," *Ensign* (June, 1998): 33; and as quoted by Sarah Weaver, "We Will Be Asked 'How Many People Did You Help?'" *Church News*, 28 October 2000, 4. See also President Gordon B. Hinckley, as quoted in "No More Tender and Beautiful Picture," *Church News*, 23 September 2000, 2; and Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, "The Law of the Fast," *Ensign* (May, 2001): 74.

7. See the brief historical overview by Isaac C. Ferguson, "Humanitarian Service," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1992), 661-63.

8. During the 1970s, several hundred "welfare missionaries" were called, and during the 1980s a few hundred more with special skills in the health services and agriculture, many of whom were retired couples or persons. In 1997, the church reported 1,272 welfare missionaries in service, both in the U.S. and abroad (the church's website, [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org), put the figure at about 2,400 in 2002). However, these are relatively small numbers compared to the 60,000 proselyting missionaries (Ferguson, "Humanitarian Service," 662; see also Richard N. Ostling and Joan K. Ostling, *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise* [San Francisco: Harpercollins, 1999], 129).

9. Ferguson, "Humanitarian Service," 662-63; Ostling and Ostling, *Mormon America*, 128-29. See also brief references to various humanitarian projects in the *Deseret News 2001-2002 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2000), 13-16, 551-69.

reports and LDS commentary.<sup>10</sup> Such an impression also comes from an erroneous belief that a significant portion of general church tithing and fast offering funds goes to humanitarian aid. Furthermore, some humanitarian projects undertaken by the Saints in WCs are rather inefficient on a cost-benefit basis, for they draw upon costly labor, materials, and transportation from countries like the United States for goods that could be acquired much more cheaply in the LDCs if cash donations were sent from WCs instead of labor or materials. Yet the well-intentioned donors remain unaware of the diminished impact of their in-kind contributions.<sup>11</sup>

Actually, the proportion of our available resources going to humanitarian services is not very great when compared to the tithing received by the church or to the amount invested in proselyting missions. Other well-known denominations of comparable size, such as the Lutherans and the Seventh-Day Adventists, devote far more to humanitarian service, in part because they allocate a lot less to proselyting.<sup>12</sup> Since the LDS church, for its own reasons, has always allocated most of its missionary resources to proselyting, the comparison with other denominations may not be entirely appropriate. However, there might be other appropriate comparisons within the LDS organizational framework itself.

One reasonable comparison might be the amount or value of cash, goods, and services actually donated in contrast to the amounts that would seem readily available to contribute to the LDCs from the wealthier countries (WCs). As of 2002, a reasonable estimate of the annual amount of cash and material assistance going from the church to LDCs is \$20 million. This includes disaster aid sent from church storage facilities in Salt Lake City, plus non-emergency assistance from LDS wards in cash and goods, and from a variety of local projects in LDCs.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, some 2,400 humanitarian missionaries are serving in

10. For example, see Thomas S. Monson, "Our Brothers' Keeper," noted above; also "Making an Accounting," *Church News*, 5 December 1998, 16; "Church Ships Food Aid to Africa," *Church News*, 11 March 2000, 6; Mangum and Blumell, *Mormon War on Poverty: A History of LDS Welfare, 1830-1990* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 249-53; Glen L. Rudd, *Pure Religion: The Story of Church Welfare since 1930* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1995), 219-28; and James W. Lucas and Warner P. Woodworth, *Working toward Zion: Principles of the United Order for the Modern World* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1996), 174-80, 198-213, 231-40.

11. For examples of collecting goods in wealthy countries for shipment to LDCs, see Shaun Stahle, "Shoes of Service," *Church News*, 3 November 2001, 16; "News of the Church: Women Produce Thousands of Humanitarian Service Items," *Ensign*, August 2002, 78; and Neil Newell, "Pure Religion: Serving Thousands," *Church News*, 28 September 2002, 16.

12. Ostling and Ostling (*Mormon America*, 128-29) report that from 1984 through 1997, the LDS Church made a total of \$30.7 million in cash donations for non-Mormon humanitarian aid (not counting the many tons of food, clothing, and medical supplies). Yet the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America, with about the same U.S. membership, contributed half that much cash to humanitarian relief in only *one year* (1997). See also the following Adventist websites: [www.adra.org](http://www.adra.org) and [www.adventist.org](http://www.adventist.org).

13. The "Welfare Services Fact Sheet," published for a while on [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org), stated that the LDS church had donated a total of \$300 million in cash and material to humanitarian assistance between 1985 and 2000, for an average of \$20 million per year during that period. This fact sheet has recently been replaced by less specific information.

many different areas of the world; these are usually retired adults, with significant experience and expertise, who are self-supporting. We might also consider the donations of twenty hours per week of humanitarian service authorized for each of the proselyting missionaries, but the actual nature and extent of these donations would be difficult to identify and quantify without an extensive survey.

However this humanitarian aid is accounted for, the total of \$20 million, plus the 2400 humanitarian missionaries, might seem quite generous at first glance. On the other hand, that portion (\$20 million) representing any actual outlay of cash or resources by the five or six million LDS members in the wealthier countries would constitute an average of only about \$4 per capita. The Seventh-Day Adventists, with a comparable membership size but an annual budget only one-fourth that of the LDS church, contribute five times as much through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (about \$100 million). Stated in a different way, the Adventists donate 7 percent of their \$1.5 billion annual budget to humanitarian aid, while the LDS church donates 0.3 percent of its estimated \$6 billion budget.<sup>14</sup> If we considered the size of church budget as the main criterion for comparison, LDS humanitarian aid would have to be four times that of the Adventists, or \$400 million, which would place the church's humanitarian budget in the same general "league" with such international humanitarian organizations as Catholic Relief Services, the Christian Children's Fund, Save the Children, CARE, and OXFAM.<sup>15</sup> Four dollars per capita per year contributed by LDS members in the United States does not seem particularly generous by such comparisons.

If LDS leaders were to ask more of us for global humanitarian aid, above and beyond our current contributions, it would probably be done in General Conference sermons. However, a review of such sermons in recent years (via the *Ensign* for May and November each year) reveals that there have been few if any injunctions to increase our contributions to world humanitarian relief. Nor does the LDS Humanitarian Foundation receive any appreciable visibility in our ward or stake gatherings through "firesides" or other presentations on its needs and potential accomplishments in various parts of the world. No systematic attempt is currently made to solicit contributions from WC ex-missionaries on behalf of the LDS or other poor in the LDCs where they served their missions. The Saints would almost certainly be as responsive to such appeals as they have been to the oft-reiterated calls for tithes and fast offerings, but why should we wait for special appeals? If the WC Saints could be persuaded to donate, say, only one dollar to the Humanitarian Foundation for every dollar in fast offer-

---

14. See the Adventist Development and Relief Agency website, [www.adra.org](http://www.adra.org). Some of the ADRA budget comes from governmental and non-governmental international institutions. See also Ostling and Ostling, *Mormon America*, 129, on this point, and 395-400 for their calculation of the annual LDS budget and finances.

15. A summary of the budgets for some of these world organizations will be found at the website for the International Medical Volunteer Association, [www.imva.org/Pages/orgfrm.htm](http://www.imva.org/Pages/orgfrm.htm).

ings, the Foundation would have an annual budget perhaps twenty times its present size. An additional increase could be achieved by transferring surplus fast offerings from WCs to humanitarian aid by improving the "use efficiency" of that fund in ways discussed in my previous *Dialogue* essay, "Spreading Zion Southward." This does not seem a lot to ask of a people who have idealized the Law of Consecration, and, in many cases, have taken solemn covenants to observe it when called upon.

### MISSIONARY TIME AND RESOURCES

As noted above, current church policy encourages proselyting missionaries to donate twenty hours per week in humanitarian services, which could add up to tens of millions of dollars worth of labor in construction or other work projects; in publicity, fund-raising, and other support services for public health projects; and in teaching literacy (in the native language or in English). However, it is important to recognize that the global proselyting program by itself contributes both directly and indirectly to the enhancement of material conditions in the LDCs. In an indirect sense, if accepting and living gospel teachings can improve the prospects for greater material success among convert families, then clearly those teachings have implications for the temporal world as well as for the next life. In that sense, missionary work contributes to the material well being of communities, whether or not everyone in a community (or even in a given family) is a member of the Church.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to this indirect benefit, however, there is also the direct infusion into local economies of the funds spent by the church and by its missionaries. The "good news" is that the money spent by missionaries in the communities where they serve amounts to probably about \$500 million annually.<sup>17</sup> Ironically, however, the "bad news" is that most of this money is spent in WCs, because some 60 percent of the missionary force is serving in WCs, where expenditures for missionary living costs and supplies are much greater than in LDCs. If we make a fairly generous assumption that the 40 percent of the missionaries in LDCs spend about half as much per missionary per year as their counterparts in WCs, then perhaps only one-fourth of the \$500 million total gets spent on missionary work in the LDCs. Still, that is a net transfer of \$125 million from WCs to LDCs just for missionaries and their expenses.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, as growing mem-

---

16. On this point, see, e. g., Henri Gooren, "Analyzing LDS Growth in Guatemala: Report from a Barrio," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 97-115.

17. My estimate of \$500 million here is based on the following assumptions: For each of 60,000 missionaries, one year would cost between \$8,000 and \$9,000, including living expenses, transportation, health care, books and educational materials, promotional materials, and mission home costs. Families in WCs usually cover \$5,000 per missionary-year (or a total of \$200 million), and the remaining \$300 million would come from tithing funds.

18. Of course, we must keep in mind that some of the money spent in LDCs comes from missionaries who are themselves called from wards and branches in LDCs. However, in recent years

berships require additional Church capital expenditures for buildings and other facilities, still more funds are transferred from North America to LDCs.

The sheer number of missionaries serving in LDCs, therefore, has some economic implications for the communities in which they serve, in addition to the more obvious implications for church growth *per se*. It is well known that (other factors being equal) the single most important correlate of baptismal rates is "missionary density"—the number of missionaries per million in a given mission.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the ratio of convert baptisms to member child baptisms has been 12:1 in LDCs, compared to 1:1 in WCs.<sup>20</sup> If we take this differential into account, then we can estimate that some 2.7 million adult converts were baptized during the 1990s, of whom about three-fourths were in LDCs.<sup>21</sup> It would thus appear that historically the missions in LDCs (with only 40 percent of the total missionaries) experience approximately three times the adult baptismal rates per missionary of those in the WCs (and the gap might be widening).<sup>22</sup> One wonders why the LDS missionary force around the world is not distributed in such a way as to exploit that differential more fully.

President Hinckley and other leaders have recently called for a doubling of the missionary baptismal rate in the church.<sup>23</sup> Achieving such a goal will require not only divine assistance, but also new tactics and strategies. One strategy

---

especially, such local funds have been a declining proportion of total missionary expenditures. As an example, many missionaries from Ecuador are paying only about one percent of the total cost of their missions. During the 1980s, the church stopped sponsoring many potential poor LDC missionary applicants due to a concern that some were serving more for economic than for spiritual motivations. One apparent result was to forego thousands of potential missionary-years and tens of thousands of conversions, so the policy was reversed in the early 1990s. A new church policy has just been announced that discourages any missionary from serving out of motivations other than spiritual, regardless of the missionary's sponsorship, family income, or geographic origin.

19. Gary and Gordon Shepherd, "Membership Growth, Church Activity, and Missionary Recruitment," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring): 34-5.

20. Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1992), 1526.

21. Church growth in various regions for the decade of the 1990s can be calculated by comparing the church membership listed for 1991 in *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (p. 1756) with that listed in the *Deseret News Almanac*, 2001-2002, for December 2000.

22. When we consider that only 40 percent of the missionary force is in the LDCs, then the adult baptismal rate might be as high as 5:1 (LDCs:WCs). However, any LDC advantage in convert baptisms would have to be offset by lower retention rates when compared to WCs. Precise estimates are difficult to calculate, of course, but retention rates probably range from 20 to 30 percent in LDCs, and from 40 to 60 percent in North America, depending on the time-frame measured. See, e.g., Wilfried Decoo, "Feeding the Fleeing Flock," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29 no. 1 (Spring 1996): 98, and other essays on LDS retention rates in that same issue. However, conversion rates in the U.S. might be declining toward the low levels seen in the more secularized countries of Europe. During 2002, I heard two church talks, one by a former stake president and the other by a current mission president, both discussing the decreasing conversion rates in the U.S. and citing their involvement in a church study underway on how to reverse that trend.

23. Quoted in H. Bruce Stucki, "The Faith of a Sparrow: Faith and Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, (November 1999): 44.

would be a partial reallocation of our missionary force from WCs, which have historically had modest baptismal rates, to LDCs, which have proved more receptive to the message of the restored gospel. We can calculate that since 1970 the LDCs, with only a third of our missionaries, have yielded about five million converts, compared to only 1.5 million in the WCs. If 80 percent of our missionaries were serving in LDCs, instead of the present 40 percent, the number of new converts, currently around 300,000 annually, could be almost doubled. Indeed, if missionary-years had been allocated in such a way since 1970, one might estimate that total church membership would now be larger by as much as 4.5 million, and perhaps an additional two million members could be converted between now and 2013.<sup>24</sup> The largest LDCs, such as Brazil, Mexico, and the Philippines, where missionary density tends to be lowest, would have been especially productive with more missionaries.<sup>25</sup> Population growth rates, moreover, have been (and will continue to be) much larger in the LDCs than in the WCs, further diminishing the "density" of our missionary force in the LDCs. By 2020, well over half the LDS membership will reside in either Latin America or the Philippines.<sup>26</sup>

It is not entirely clear why the church has allocated fewer missionary-years to the LDCs, where converts-per-missionary are the most numerous. One reason might be economic, in the sense that more rapid growth in the LDCs could outstrip the ability of WC members to sustain the material subsidies required by that growth—or, at least, such might be the fear among church leaders. If so, the church is faced with a troubling irony: On the one hand, our scriptures enjoin us to teach the gospel especially to the world's poor, and we are regularly asked to pray that the doors of all nations will be opened to the missionaries.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, in sheer economic terms, we don't seem to be able to afford much increase in the church growth-rate among the poorest nations. Even with a welfare

---

24. These calculations are distilled from my study of Shepherd and Shepherd, "Membership Growth," 32-57; Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1756; and the *Deseret News Church Almanac* 2001-2002, 148-52 (see also 426-28 for the dates of the establishment of the missions in question, and 152-421 for historical and statistical information on each mission separately).

25. This is suggested by an item in the "News of the Church" section of the *Ensign* (January 1993), which reveals that one-fifth of all Brazilian cities with populations over 100,000 had never yet had missionaries while relatively small U.S. cities of only 30,000 have had missionaries for decades. Calculations from the pages of the *Church Almanac*, cited above, would provide ample support for this generalization.

26. Bennion and Young, "Uncertain Dynamics," 16-22; David C. Knowlton, "Mormonism in Latin America: Towards the Twenty-First Century," page 157-69, both in *Dialogue* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 166-71.

27. See, for example, the scriptural injunctions in Matt. 11:5; Luke 4:18; 1 Cor. 1:26-29; James 2:5; and D&C 1:18-23; 35:15; 58:7-12; and 88:17. There is a practical reason, as well, for making sure that the poor are amply included in our missionary efforts: They tend to be younger and more receptive than the wealthy and sophisticated. Consider that 90 percent of the world's births during the twenty-first century are expected in the LDCs, where 70 percent of the world's Christians already live. As this century progresses, the LDCs are therefore likely to be much more fertile fields for missionaries than are the aging and increasingly secularized populations of the WCs.



program that calls for as much "self-sufficiency" as possible among the Saints in LDCs, church members in WCs will need to provide much more support if LDC members are to achieve minimum acceptable levels of nutrition, health care, and education (as per my earlier essay in *Dialogue*), and if we are going to expand both our humanitarian outreach and the proportion of our missionaries serving in LDCs. All such considerations require a somewhat less costly model for the future expansion of the church in terms of land acquisition, new buildings and other facilities, stake and ward budgets, and paid employees in the various bureaucracies.

Besides whatever economic constraints there might be against increasing the missionary density and rate of growth in LDCs, there is also the problem of providing leadership for the new branches, wards, and stakes that must be created. This is a greater problem in the LDS church than in other denominations which do not depend as heavily on an elaborate lay-leadership structure. Some of the wards and stakes in LDCs are twice as large (or even larger) than their counterparts in WCs because of a shortage of priesthood holders, which results, in turn, from failed retention efforts after new converts are baptized (actually, retention failures and priesthood shortages have a "vicious circle" relationship).<sup>28</sup> This problem of overwhelming numbers is well illustrated by the observations of Elder Neal A. Maxwell and others about the problems of "managing" church growth and welfare needs in Africa. Such management has required that the church be "built from centers of strength" (meaning the more modern urban areas rather than among the hundreds of millions out in the bush). The church in Africa was "born in a day, and it had the potential to become too much too fast." Indeed, "this is a continent that could swallow a Church."<sup>29</sup> Many such comments would be equally appropriate about other LDCs in the southern hemisphere.

Re-allocating missionary-years might also entail a reduction in our historic (and understandable) dependence on the English language. North American missionaries are still called disproportionately to serve in English speaking areas, where they can function without learning a new language, although missions in Hispanic or other language areas would seem to offer far more promising prospects. The United States and Canada contain roughly the same number of missions as do the LDCs of Latin America and the Philippines, but only half the population.<sup>30</sup> This dependence on English reduces the access of missionaries to

---

28. See Shepherd and Shepherd, "Membership Growth," especially 45-52.

29. See Bruce C. Hafen, *A Disciple's Life: The Biography of Neal A. Maxwell* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2002), 41, 463, 467-68, 473. The quoted phrases included comments of the author as well as some quoted from Elders Holland, Maxwell, Morrison, and Tanner.

30. If the LDCs of sub-Sahara Africa are included, then the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Great Britain contain only one-third of the population of LDCs, and if India is included, less than one-fifth. Yet these English-speaking countries, with far lower conversion rates per missionary-year, contain a number of missions roughly equal to the total number in India, the Philippines, and Latin America. (These generalizations are based upon my calculations from the *Deseret News 2001-2002 Church Almanac*, 155-66).

Spanish-speaking populations within the U.S., where more than 12 percent of the population is Hispanic but a far smaller proportion of missionary-years is allocated to work with Hispanic populations. It must be acknowledged that the church has established a few special "enclave missions" within North America to serve populations speaking Spanish and other languages, but not yet with a number of missionaries (or missionary-years) proportional to the population sizes of these non-English-speaking enclaves. This disproportion is exemplified by the Las Vegas East Mission, in which I live, where 33 percent of the population is Hispanic with only 15 percent of missionary-years allocated to them. The demonstrably greater conversion rates among the Hispanic population in Las Vegas might well justify allocating at least 50 percent of the missionary force to work with the Spanish-speaking population there.<sup>31</sup>

The recurring bias in favor of English can also be seen in the church's inconsistent policy on language-based branches and wards within English-speaking stakes. Some church leaders have favored the maintenance of Spanish-speaking (or other language) branches, wards, or even stakes in the U.S. as a means of fellowshipping new members in gospel teachings and church procedures within familiar and comfortable environments. Other leaders have preferred a more accelerated integration of foreign-language converts into a "normal" American environment for the benefit primarily of second- and third-generation youth in convert families. Throughout the twentieth century, church policy has alternated between these two arrangements in confusing and unpredictable ways, with drop-outs and other casualties occurring each time the policy changed in one direction or the other.<sup>32</sup> The most recent effort to "integrate" Spanish-speaking members in the U.S.—with no more success than earlier efforts—occurred in 1996, when the church announced the dissolution of all non-English-speaking congregations. Implementation of this policy encountered considerable resistance at the grassroots and a great many practical difficulties, so enforcement has proved desultory, although it has never been formally withdrawn.<sup>33</sup>

---

31. A similar disproportion in missionary allocation can be seen in the African-American neighborhoods of the U.S., which also receive little missionary attention. Given that both the black and the Hispanic populations are younger on average than the surrounding Anglos and typically show higher levels of general religiosity, they would probably yield far more converts per missionary-year than the Anglos.

32. The history of this process has been traced particularly well by historian Jessie L. Embry in the following articles: "Ethnic Groups and the LDS Church," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 81-97; "Ethnic American Mormons: The Development of Community," 63-67 in Douglas J. Davies, ed., *Mormon Identities in Transition* (London and New York: Cassell, 1996); and "In His Own Language": *Mormon Spanish-Speaking Congregations in the United States* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998).

33. In actual practice, the number and durability of Spanish-speaking congregations has been left to local LDS leaders to decide. According to the *Deseret News* 2001-2002 Church Almanac (573), there are approximately 150,000 Spanish-speaking LDS members in the United States.

This brief digression into the language issue should not divert our attention from the main point of this section of the essay—namely, that missionary labor and success make important contributions to the lives of people in three general ways, especially in LDCs. (1) People who accept the message of the missionaries and adopt a lifestyle built on LDS standards improve the circumstances of their lives in material as well as in spiritual dimensions. Therefore, the larger the proportion of the LDS missionary force that can be allocated to LDCs, especially with the appropriate language facility, the greater will be the material improvement of the peoples in LDCs collectively. (2) The funds expended in LDCs by the missionaries individually, and by the church as an institution, will provide a direct infusion of cash into LDC communities. (3) The twenty hours per week of humanitarian service by proselyting missionaries, if well organized and focused, carries a great potential for material improvements in the communities where they serve. In all these ways, we are sharing material resources with our less fortunate brothers and sisters as a secondary but still important consequence of spreading the gospel.

### EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

At the April 2001 General Conference, when President Hinckley announced the establishment of the new "Perpetual Education Fund," primarily for members in LDCs, many Latter-day Saints were understandably enthusiastic about the potential impact of such a project in the years to come.<sup>34</sup> However, for many of us with knowledge and experience among the Saints in LDCs, our enthusiasm about this announcement was qualified by the realizations that (1) such a program was long overdue, and (2) it was stringently limited, especially by contrast with the lavish Church resources made available to LDS college-age youth in North America.<sup>35</sup> Educational opportunities for faithful youth in LDCs had long been dependent on various private funds provided by groups of returned missionaries and others with charitable interests in the Saints among whom they had served. Their efforts had been supplemented for some years by a limited "International Education Fund" administered by the Church Education System in Salt Lake City, which had provided loans for books and tuition (but not for living expenses) for some two thousand students per year. Yet this fund, and the various private programs, fell far short of the resources needed for the youth in those countries, and in any case, were completely unknown to many church leaders in LDCs.<sup>36</sup>

---

34. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Perpetual Education Fund," *Ensign* (May 2001): 51-53, and the subsequent elaboration by Elder John K. Carmack in "News of the Church," *Ensign* (September 2001): 76-77.

35. As indicated in notes below, even at the present time, 99 percent of what the church spends on post-secondary education goes to the 60 percent of college-age members living in the United States, while only 1 percent goes to the 40 percent living in LDCs.

36. See "Returning Missionaries to Receive Helping Hand," *Church News*, 14 April 2000, 3; and Garth L. Mangum and Bruce D. Blumell, *The Mormons' War on Poverty: A History of LDS Wel-*

The new Perpetual Education Fund (PEF) was intended to supplant the earlier International Education Fund, and with the announcement at General Conference by President Hinckley himself, has been much more widely known than its predecessor. Eventually the PEF will also be vastly superior to all earlier efforts. Yet, for the immediate future, it is important to recognize its limitations: First, the PEF has no reliable base in tithing funds, as does the church university system, but rather is dependent entirely on the interest from an endowment fed by special contributions; for some years, the yield from that endowment will be very small. Second, the PEF is a program of loans, which will be very difficult for many LDC youth to repay, as contrasted with the tuition subsidies available to WC students at BYU, which are, in effect, grants from the tithing funds of the church.<sup>37</sup> Third, the PEF loans are intended to cover predominantly vocational education and training (except funding for nurse and physician training), at least for the foreseeable future, not general university education. Certainly vocational training will have an immediate practical benefit for its recipients, and is the more important component, but again will not be comparable to the more extensive education routinely available to LDS students in the church university system.<sup>38</sup>

Such invidious comparisons between LDC and WC students in the opportunities afforded by church membership should not be ignored or forgotten in our rightful enthusiasm about the new PEF. We can fully appreciate the potential of that inspired program while still pointing to the enormous disparity remaining in the ways in which church resources are allocated between the WC and LDC youth. At the BYU campuses, tuition for church members is kept artificially low (compared to other private universities) so that it will compare favorably to the tuition for state residents at public universities.<sup>39</sup> This policy requires a church subsidy of \$350 million per year for some 50,000 students, almost all of whom come from the United States, where a fully adequate education would be readily available to them at state universities.<sup>40</sup> In effect, this constitutes a duplication (one could even say a subsidy) by the church of state services. This subsidy ben-

---

fare, 1830-1990 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 255. Church funds for these loans to LDC students amounted to about a million dollars a year, or \$500 per student, at a time when probably two hundred times that went to BYU and other institutions for LDS youth in the wealthier countries. In addition, LDS students in the U.S. can easily obtain a variety of government loans and grants, unlike most of their counterparts in LDCs.

37. According to one informed estimate, 70 percent of the total budget at BYU comes from general tithing funds. See Ostling and Ostling, *Mormon America*, 222.

38. From notes taken by Armand L. Mauss at a talk given by Elder John Cormack in southern California, January 2003.

39. This subsidized cost of a premier education is so low compared to that at other private institutions that the *U.S. News and World Report*, in its 1999-2000 annual report on universities, ranked BYU as the "best buy" in the nation among private universities. See also Ostling and Ostling, *Mormon America*, 222.

40. Of a total budget of \$500 million, only about one-third comes from student tuition, which means that about \$350 million comes from tithing funds and solicited donations. BYU has been bringing in about \$100 million per year through fund-raising campaigns (see "Capital Campaign Achievements," *BYU Magazine* (Fall 2000): 9).

efits only a minority of worthy LDS students, even in the United States, where only about 20 percent of entering freshman are able to gain admission to LDS colleges or universities.<sup>41</sup>

Most faithful LDS youth in LDCs can only dream of comparable educational bargains in their own countries, and only rarely find any way to cover their living expenses even if their tuition and books are provided.<sup>42</sup> How many such potential LDS students in LDCs are we talking about? At recent rates of church growth in LDCs, we could soon have as many as twice the number of active or "faithful" college-age youth in LDCs as in WCs.<sup>43</sup> If we base our estimates on information in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, perhaps 20 percent of the total LDS population is between 18 and 26 years of age, which would lead to an estimate of 300,000 faithful LDC youth of college age, of whom between 10 and 30 percent might require assistance for post-secondary education.<sup>44</sup> The church could cover the cost of tuition, books, and living expenses for that many LDC students in their own countries, at \$1,000 per year each, for \$30-\$90 million annually, an amount that could be raised immediately by a substantial tuition increase at church universities and colleges. Such a range of support would constitute less than one-fourth of the subsidy going to faithful WC students now attending church institutions. A much smaller amount, of course, would be needed for a program of loans instead of grants, which could operate on the same basis as already established for the new (but severely limited) PEF discussed above.<sup>45</sup>

In pointing out the disparity between WC students and LDC students in the allocation of church funding for education, I do not mean to question the good intentions of the church leaders or professionals responsible for this allocation. There might be many reasons for the disparity, and certainly there are many

---

41. See "University Strives to be 'BYU East,'" *Las Vegas Review Journal*, 2 June 2001, 9.

42. A high quality private university education in most LDCs would cost only about 20 percent of a comparable private education in the U.S., but some of the public universities in LDCs are of dubious quality with a Marxist ideological slant. See, e. g., the review of the public university system in Mexico, the LDC where LDS youth are most numerous: "UNAM: Mexico City's Giant School for Scandal," *Wall Street Journal*, 25 February 2000, 1.

43. See Bennion and Young, "Uncertain Dynamics," 8-32, and Knowlton, "Mormonism in Latin America," 157-69.

44. Tim B. Heaton, "Vital Statistics," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1992), 1528-31.

45. Some LDC students have been able to attend church universities through the largesse of U.S. sponsors (usually former missionaries they have known), and they have consequently enjoyed the usual church subsidy for such students, amounting collectively to about \$20 million a year. This is twenty times what the church has been spending directly on students in the LDCs through its erstwhile "International Education Fund" (Mangum and Blumell, *Mormons' War on Poverty*, 255). Ironically, there is a scholarship program to bring students to BYU-Hawaii from Polynesia, Micronesia, and Mongolia at a total cost of \$2 million annually, but no such scholarship program has been established for LDS students from Latin America and the Philippines where 95 percent of the LDC membership lives.

ways in which it can be remedied. We can trust that the same inspiration cited by Elder Carmack as responsible for the PEF will be available as the church addresses the chronic needs remaining even after the PEF is fully operational for the faithful students in the LDCs. The disparity will continue until the church finds a way to make a more general university education available to its LDC students, such as that now available to its students in North America. One possible means for achieving this goal would be gradually to convert BYU into an international university, either by building campuses in other countries or by allocating an equitable proportion of its admissions to qualified and worthy students from LDCs.<sup>46</sup> Greater parity could also be achieved, of course, by a new policy moving in just the opposite direction—namely, continuing the subsidy from tithing at BYU, but only for students from LDCs (and elsewhere) who could pass a "means test" (i.e., the worthy poor without access to government grants or loans), up to perhaps 40 percent of all admissions each year. All other worthy students admitted to BYU could easily pay "the market rate" for their education, especially with all the government grants and loans available in WCs.

### CONCLUSION

LDS Church members have demonstrated many times their generosity and sincere concern for the well being of the world's less affluent peoples, whether or not these have been fellow church members. However, if we pose the question differently, that is, "How generous and equitable are we in sharing our 'loaves and fishes' with the world?" then we must also ask the follow-up question, "Compared to what?" As in my previous essay, I have been asking readers to consider not only the sheer volume of the resources we share with others, but also the proportional allocation of those resources between and among the LDCs and the WCs. With that kind of comparison, the church and its members seem to be more generous in distributing our welfare and humanitarian resources to the relatively wealthy segments of the world, where the need is relatively small, than to the impoverished and malnourished segments where the need is demonstrably urgent.

There could be many reasons for such misallocations, many of which might not be readily apparent, and certainly I harbor no suspicions of malevolent motives among these possible reasons. Even with the best of intentions, large bureaucracies often struggle with inefficiencies and obsolescent policies. I wish only to point to the apparent inequities and inefficiencies in the present alloca-

---

46. Deciding on an "equitable" figure in this instance would require careful calculation and judgment, but it might be as high as 40 percent, considering how few alternative opportunities are available to the LDC faithful as compared to those routinely available to faithful WC students at state universities. The current percentage of LDC students in church colleges and universities around the world is 5 percent while an estimated 40 percent of the faithful LDS college-age youth live in LDCs. Preparing LDC students for BYU admission might also entail providing a program of English language instruction in their home countries prior to admission.

tion of our resources, both as a people and as a church, and to suggest ways in which we might do better by our numerous brothers, sisters, and friends in the LDCs with but little additional sacrifice among those of us blessed to live in affluence. We can all begin immediately by increasing our donations to the Humanitarian Fund of the church, but the fundamental inequities cannot be changed without important changes in certain church policies.