

Healing the Cracks

Gérald Caussé was first counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this address was given at the twenty-fifth annual conference of the LDS International Society at Brigham Young University on 7 April 2014.

For several years now I have closely followed the work of the LDS International Society. As a General Authority coming from outside the United States, I have a special and passionate interest in the worldwide growth of the Church. My responsibilities in the Europe Area Presidency and now in the Presiding Bishopric have led me to face the modern miracle of this growth and the immense challenges it represents. I thank you for the very useful perspective that you bring on this essential aspect of the work of the Church in our day.

I would like to share some thoughts about one of these challenges: providing Church welfare services in the growing international Church. Although my remarks will primarily address helping Church members, it should be noted that the Church also devotes considerable and growing efforts to humanitarian aid across the world intended to assist those not of our faith who face challenging situations.

I vividly remember my first visit to Welfare Square, which occurred almost six years ago around the time I was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy. This visit filled me with enthusiasm! It expanded my vision for accomplishing the mandate to help the poor and needy of the Church. Welfare Square is such a unique and extraordinary place. With its bishops' storehouse, bakery, Deseret Industries, cannery, dairy, employment resource center, and gigantic grain silo, this facility supports bishops who assist needy members. The kinds of resources available in that one small area are mostly unknown to members living outside the United States. I began to dream that one day similar resources would be available to members throughout the world—that welfare operations like those on Welfare Square would cover the entire earth. Today, as a member of the Presiding Bishopric, caring for the poor and needy throughout the world is part of my daily work and responsibility.