

# PURE RELIGION

## An Outsider's Look

We see it so often—the service projects, the dinners, the visits, the quilts, the hours on welfare farms, the time spent helping others in need—we see it so often that sometimes we fail to appreciate just how remarkable this compassionate effort of the Church and its members truly is. Every once in a while, it's nice to hear from those who are not of our faith and see from their perspective how extraordinary the humanitarian efforts of the Church and its members truly are.

During the summer of 2002, fires scorched Eastern Arizona, displacing thousands of people. One volunteer distributed hygiene and school kits that had been assembled by members of the Church for humanitarian relief. He later wrote of his experience in a letter to the Church: “We could not believe the reaction from the children, who had lost everything to the fires, when they realized they could keep these items. I am not an emotional person, but the tears of gratitude on the faces of appreciative moms were enough to give me goose bumps.”

The executive director of a series of food pantries in Texas said: “We have had a wonderful experience with the LDS Church. One thing I especially remember was the summer that our food pantry shelves were empty. And we got a call saying, ‘Could we take a truck of 40,000 pounds of food?’ It was a miracle, an answer to a prayer. Not only did they deliver the food, but they sent about 50 volunteers to unload the truck. . . . If the LDS Church had not helped us . . . I'm afraid that we would have probably turned away folks from the pantry, because we just wouldn't have had the money and the food to help them.”



The director of an employment program for low-income people in Chicago said: “I was looking for a model to help people who were unemployed. . . . I was very impressed with the LDS Church Employment Resource Center, because people here are offered a sense of community and a sense of possibility. They have a positive, upbeat approach and when people walk in here, they feel the hospitality. I've seen lives change.”

A Canadian reporter who came to Utah to report on the Olympic Games wrote of his visit: “My last days in Salt Lake were spent visiting the Church's humanitarian operations. When it comes to compassion and helping others, the Latter-day Saints take a back seat to no one. . . . Joseph Smith would be proud of his flock today.”

When we look at ourselves through another's eyes, it can sometimes remind us of what we already know: as a result of the compassion of the Church and its members, millions throughout the world are a little bit happier, a little bit kinder, a little bit more grateful that there are those who follow the teachings of the Savior to love one another.

“My hope is that these words find their way to the people responsible for doing the work of putting the items together,” the Mesa fire volunteer wrote. “Your thoughtfulness and giving are a testament to your commitment to mankind.”