

## PURE RELIGION

# The Desert Shall Rejoice, and Blossom as the Rose

In an effort to revitalize the 2,000-acre welfare farm in Nephi, Utah, Church members in 1997 donated more than 8,000 hours replacing fences, filling ditches, repairing irrigation lines, and restoring buildings.

Among those who worked tirelessly is 82-year-old Heber C. Taylor, a retired farmer and heavy equipment operator from Levan, Utah. Painful arthritis had all but crippled Brother Taylor, making it necessary for him to undergo three hip operations. The medical procedures left him able to walk, but only haltingly and with the help of a cane.

But this didn't stop him from volunteering one day a week at the Nephi farm.

"Somedays, we'd work all day repairing sprinkler pipe," Brother Taylor says. "Other days, I'd drive tractor and haul hay or plow the fields."

Having served as a bishop for eight years, Brother Taylor has an appreciation for the welfare program. "Most of what we grow doesn't stay here," he says. "The grain in those fields there could end up feeding a family whose

house has been destroyed in an earthquake on the other side of the world. Most of us here just feel real fortunate that we don't need this grain to feed our own families. It feels good knowing it's going to help someone else."



As to why so many members sacrifice their time to volunteer on the farm, Brother Taylor replies in his typically taciturn way, "We're just Latter-day Saints. It's a good thing to do."

The fact that he's well past his 80th birthday doesn't seem to slow Brother Taylor too much. "After you pass a certain age, most folks think there's not much you can do," he says with a wry smile. "But when I come here and work on the farm, it makes me feel good to think I might be doing some good for someone else."

Brother Taylor and hundreds of others exemplify an unselfish willingness to sacrifice for others. Indeed they have made "the wilderness and the solitary place . . . glad for them." They have made the desert "blossom as the rose" (Isaiah 35:1).