

# Spiritual “Welfare”

Dub McClish

The last several years have seen our nation move increasingly closer to becoming a “welfare state.” Few are those who object to helping those who truly need help and are not able to help themselves. Most Americans consistently prove that they have a deep compassion for the unfortunate, including those in other nations. We should not begrudge help for those who are truly helpless, nor should they be considered “second-class citizens” in any sense. But surely, there is something perverted about a system that evolves to the point of paying an able-bodied person who is not working (and often one who **will not work**) as much as or more than he or she could earn if he or she were working. Numerous scandals have rocked government welfare offices. One woman and her children were housed in a plush New York hotel for several days. In Chicago a woman was caught using over a dozen aliases and drawing welfare from various offices that enabled her to live like a queen. In Carlsbad, New Mexico two cases of theft occurred that involved large quantities of food stamps **and** considerable sums of cash— from the same purse. If God has repealed the principle, “If any will not work, neither let him eat” (2 The. 3:10), I’ve failed to discover it. Easy and uncontrolled welfare is sapping the initiative of our great nation. Much of it would be more accurately named, “**unwelfare.**”

But is spiritual “welfare” any more justifiable? Some who would prate against social welfare’s abuses may all the while be practicing spiritual “welfare.” By this I mean that, though able-bodied, they never make any effort to become involved in the congregation’s work or fellowship activities apart from its meetings for worship and Bible study, and that only at their whim. They have no conscience when it comes to spending their money, while giving only a token portion of their income to the most important work in the world.

But let one of these “welfare” cases be admitted to a hospital and said admission be accidentally overlooked, he, she, or family members may be heard to whine loudly. Or, let there be a death in the family of such a one, and the church is expected to furnish food, flowers, singers, and a preacher— all of which may be taken for granted. Or let a son or daughter get married and at least one shower hosted by church members is expected, besides perhaps the assumed service of singers and a preacher for the ceremony. Or delete some member’s name from the new church directory following his or her perfect record of not being seen inside the church building for three years and folks in the next county can hear the hollering.

Such folks have a spiritual "welfare" mentality, whether or not they realize it. Brethren with this attitude expect to be served and provided for spiritually, despite their refusal to contribute time, effort, or resources to the church for which the Lord bled and died (Acts 20:28). Both of these welfare patterns are contrary to God's Word. Let all hear the admonitions from Paul to the Galatian churches: "For each man shall bear his own burden. ...And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faith not" (Gal. 6:5, 9).

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