

New loan program to help LDS youths

Pres. Hinckley unveils efforts to help the needy get an education

By Twila Van Leer

Deseret News staff writer

Announcement of a new educational loan program intended to help young Latter-day Saints in Third World countries capped the first day's proceedings of the 171st Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Saturday.

President Gordon B. Hinckley told male church members attending the General Priesthood Session that interest from a fund created largely with donations "from faithful Latter-day Saints who have and will contribute for this purpose" will help youths in Mexico, Central and South America, the Philippines and other areas who otherwise have little chance of rising above the poverty that pervades life in their countries. The program will begin this fall on a limited basis, with the first aid going to young people who have served missions, often with the help of the church's General Missionary Fund.

Although many of these youths are faithful in the church, their outlook is limited, he said. "Because of limited abilities, they are not likely to become leaders in the church. They are more likely to find themselves in need of welfare help. . . . Their future is bleak indeed."

The announcement, which President Hinckley alluded to during his opening remarks to a packed Conference Center

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BY AP/WIDE WORLD

President Gordon B. Hinckley waves to a crowd of conferencegoers on Saturday.

Education fund is a hit

By Jerry Johnson
and Lynn Arave

Deseret News staff writers

President Gordon B. Hinckley's announcement of the creation of a worldwide Perpetual Education Fund builds on a concept that has taken root internationally with several private economic development organizations, which offer small "micro-enterprise" loans to help the poor start their own businesses.

Warner Woodworth, a Brigham Young University professor who

last year founded a nonprofit organization of LDS Church members seeking to eliminate economic suffering, was elated by the announcement.

He began speaking to groups about starting such a fund in 1969. "I've given about a hundred talks about it," he said from Provo Saturday night.

"So tonight I came home, knelt down and poured out a prayer of

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DAVID MACDONALD

Dianna Annotte and John Hughes and Robin Montgomery, all of Mesquite, Nev., take notes on Temple Square during Saturday afternoon's session.

INTERVIEWS

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thanks. The Perpetual Education Fund is an answer to prayer. Right now, my family and I are here writing out checks and dating them with today's date.

"I know they have been talking about this fund for about three years. Mainly what I've been doing is working on loans to start businesses, not so much the education.

"What the education fund does is so wonderful because it complements these loans. It will give young people greater training.

"The beauty of the Perpetual Education Fund is the church doesn't have to be in the business of running schools. They give this young person a small amount of capital and it will go to invest in their future."

Reaction was also positive around Temple Square Saturday night.

"It's pretty great, especially for the missionaries," Gustavo Falcon of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., said after General Priesthood Session. Born and raised in Mexico, he knows of many relatives and friends who will benefit from it.

"I think it's wonderful to give them an opportunity," Audrey Nielsen of Portland, Ore., said after being told of the announcement.

"This way more church members can learn a trade or get an education and take care of themselves and their families."

"I think it's going to benefit everybody," Roberto Caballero of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, said. "I come from a third-world country (El Salvador) and I know what President Hinckley is talking about. Lots of people will be able to see a better way of living."

"I think it is pretty good. There are a lot of people not able to get

an education, but who are willing," Noe Zapata of Sacramento, Calif., said. Born in Mexico, he knows many church members back in his homeland who could greatly benefit from the new program.

"I know it's a good idea. It's definitely needed," Lyle Kinikini of Salt Lake City said. Born in Hawaii, he said many Tongans, like South Americans, will prosper with the program.

"I've often thought about having this type of program before," he said. "The problem is many missionaries return home and if they

JASON OLSON, DESERET NEWS



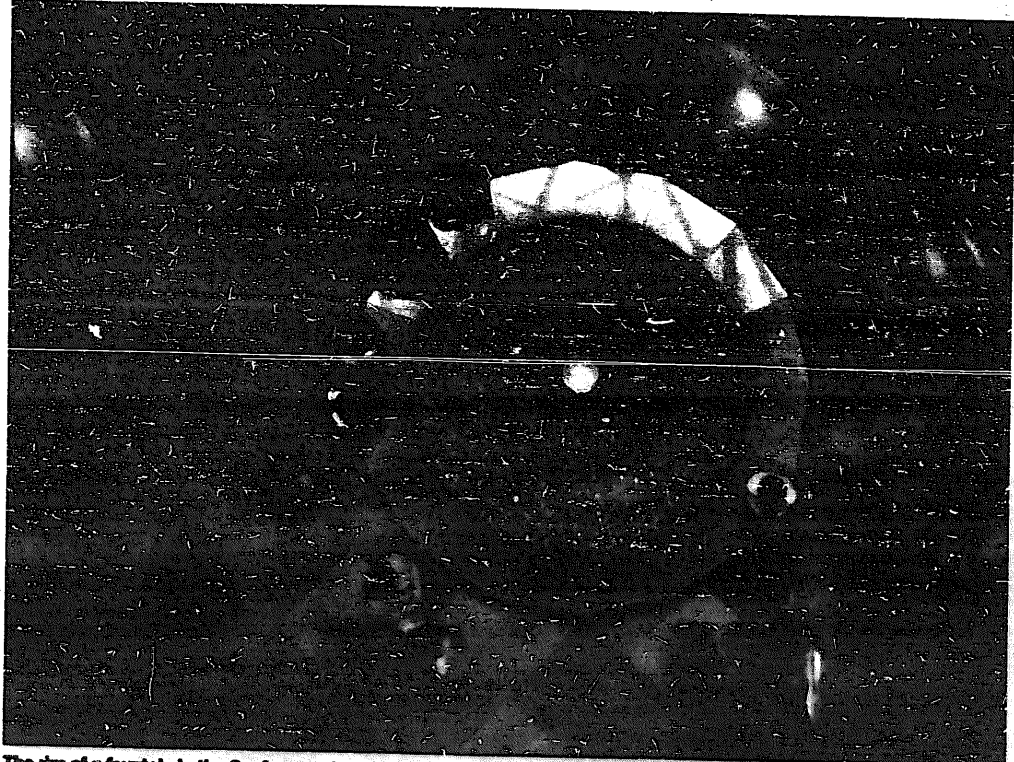
Idahoans Bryce, Vlahweg and Collin and Cameron Ray play near a fountain.

are unable to go to Ricks or BYU, they are unable to receive an education. It's an inspired program."

"I'm just for it," Tony Colindres of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, said.

"It's just what we need. There's a lot of people I know it will help to have a better life."

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KEITH LARSON, DESERET NEWS

The rim of a fountain in the Conference Center lobby offers a welcome respite during the Saturday afternoon session.