

ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Never before has the word *home* meant so much to me as it did this week when I came with others into New York harbor, saw Old Glory and the Statue of Liberty, and as I flew west and saw the dry plains, and the high mountains of the Uintahs, and the frost-colored Wasatch Mountains, and then landed at the airport here in Salt Lake City and to be met by my family and my brethren.

When we landed in Hannover, Germany, many weeks ago, Sister Gregory said to me, as we drove away from the airport, "Now, Brother Kimball, you have been all over Europe. What did you see that was the most interesting?" I do not know what she had in her mind, but I am sure there would be many who would be thinking of statues and monuments, cathedrals and museums, rivers and glaciers. It did not take me long to give her the answer: "The most interesting thing I saw was the people."

In 1937, Sister Kimball and I went to Europe as tourists. We took with us a camera and much film. We saw all of the strange, funny things in Europe. We went through many of the museums, and I think most of the cathedrals. We saw the monuments and much that was of interest. We saw bicycles by the millions, we saw women working in the fields, and we laughed as we wrote in our journals about the odd, unusual things.

In 1955 we went to Europe without a camera—the only persons in Europe, I think, who did not have a camera. We saw the bicycles as means to an end, to take people to their work and to bring people to Church services. We saw women not only working in the fields, digging potatoes and planting crops, but we saw them also in their homes and in the Church work. We saw into their hearts; we heard their testimonies; we felt their love.

I was grateful for this privilege that came to us, to meet the people and to

see what the gospel does for them when it enters their lives. We realized before that there were Norwegians and Finns and Germans and French, but when the gospel comes, they all melt into one composite figure.

We bring to you the greetings of your missionaries who are in the European countries, a thousand of them. We heard a thousand testimonies, sweet, resonant, glorious testimonies from hearts filled with faith and sacrifice. I looked into their hearts, and I found them good. They love you folk at home more than they have ever told you. One young man said, "Oh, I hope my sick father will live until I return so that I can tell him what I really think of him—how much I appreciate him."

I learned from these testimonies, of hundreds of people who have become active in the Church through their missionary sons and daughters, some who have joined the Church, even fathers and mothers. One example: A mother dissuaded her eldest son from going into the mission field. She and his father were not members of the Church. They said, "You are wasting your time. Go to college instead; do something that is worth while. Do not go on a mission." They used all of their persuasive powers, but finally, when they realized that he was positively going, they said, "All right, go ahead." Two weeks before the boy sailed from New York, his mother approached him one morning and said, "Son, today I am being baptized."

Another boy said, "My mother works fourteen hours every day to sustain me on my mission." Another boy said, "I am on my mission because of the blessings of the Lord. My highschool graduate brother could not go to college if I went on my mission, but my mother said, 'You are going on your mission.' And as I was about ready to leave, we had word that my younger brother had received a scholarship to the university, and good neighbors brought in a hundred dollar bill to put into my hand, and I am still in the

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mission field and nearly ready to go home."

I shall never forget a certain testimony meeting. A young man who was still quite emotional after the upset of the week said to us: "I just got a cablegram last week telling of the death of my father." He continued: "I telephoned across a continent and across an ocean, and I heard my mother's voice on the wire, the sweet voice of my newly widowed mother." He said, "I am the youngest of her eight children, and I said to her, 'Mom, how are you?' and she said, 'I am all right, son; I want you to stay and fill your mission. The Lord will take care of us.'"

That kind of faith in parents, that kind of faith in sons and daughters, brings rich dividends.

I bring you greetings from your servicemen, men in the military. Your boys, some of whom have their families with them, love the gospel with all their souls and show that love by their actions. We met eight hundred of them down in the Bavarian Alps at Berchtesgaden, underneath Hitler's famous Eagle's Nest which stands high on the Alpine mountain above. The hotels were evacuated and turned over to this great concourse of men and their families.

I remember just as the four-day program was ending how the servicemen with their families were moving out of the hotel. There had been no smoke, no rowdiness, but as they moved out, there came in a woman's club, women with their cigarets, fouling the air in the hotel lobbies which had been so clean and sweet for four days, something those hotels, perhaps, had never seen before.

I remember well the banquet which we held down on Chiemsee Lake, in another building built by Hitler and his associates, but which now is used by the United States Army and which they turned over to our boys for the retreat program. I remember this long hall, surely as long as this tabernacle, with 650 people sitting around the tables—mostly our own people, but a few other chaplains and special guests. There were 650 glasses of milk sitting on those tables, and not one glass or cup of anything else. I think that Eu-

rope has never seen anything like that before.

I remember these servicemen as I saw them assisting elderly women, Austrians and French and Germans, up the two or three or four flights of stairs to the branch houses.

I think of these young men and their financing chapels which they would never inhabit. Down in Heidelberg they were raising the money to build a chapel which would be used by the local Saints and which they themselves would never occupy. Again at Salzburg, Austria, thousands of dollars were raised by them to match that which was so generously given by the Church, and another beautiful structure is being erected there. Tall, clean handsome, stalwart young men, in England, France, Germany, Austria, even in Austria where they are now watching with great interest the packing of the suitcases and trunks by the eastern neighbors.

I bring you greetings from the members, 36,000 of them over there, about half of whom we saw and to whom we bore witness, and many of whose testimonies we heard. We saw them in all these many countries. In Norway from Oslo north, through all the principal cities. At Trondheim our hearts beat a little faster as we realized that that was Brother Widtsoe's home, and we flew over the little island where he was born, and we knew how happy he would be to see the chapel which is now being erected in his home town. Here in Norway we found happy people, handsome and healthy, too proud to be petty. We flew low over the fjords in seaplanes. We could see all the little fishing villages and the beauty of the fjords and the mountains.

We came to Boda, up in the north part, way up in the Arctic Circle, and there we saw a sign which said, "twenty-two hours to Los Angeles" over the North Pole. In fact, we went so far north that we could almost smell the sulphur in the Southern California smog.

In Narvik the lights went out at 10:30 every night, according to city ordinance. After our meetings we sat eating some refreshments furnished by kind friends, and the lights went out, but

we hardly knew it. We went right on eating and finished our evening and then went home, and at two o'clock that morning, as we prepared to go into Sweden, I read the newspaper outdoors and then again in the room, without any lights. We were far up in the north country.

We crossed over the Swedish border and the fjords and the thick ice, and the deep snow. We saw the Laplanders and the reindeer; we saw nearly everybody but Santa Claus there in the north country.

We found the Swedes were solid, reliable, wonderful people, and we traveled three weeks down through Sweden, to all the principal cities, dedicated eight chapels in that area and came to the beautiful green carpet of the level country of the south where they have more windmills, they say, than are found in Holland.

Finland was a place which brought us a great joy, and we found youth gathered together there, Finnish youth, strong and resolute. Finland has been the football of neighbor nations through the centuries—Finland, little Finland, the honest little country that pays its debts, Finland that has just paid its war assessment, not debt, and has just completed paying the levy which was assessed by its eastern neighbors. They never call them by their names; they always call them the neighbors. Little Finland is on a granite peninsula which the glaciers cleaned of its soil and left hard and difficult, but these people, solid and determined, are like the granite on which they builded their houses, and they carry on. We found the people, and especially the members of the Church there, 400 and some odd in number, growing and faithful, devoted missionaries among them.

Denmark has its level country, so level in fact that you sometimes wonder if you are seeing a great ocean liner crossing the land. It does not seem that there is water beyond. They are a happy, independent people.

We went to Britain, over to Britain where four societies are rolled all into one—four societies that have been likened by one writer to a horse, a bull, a mule, and a deer: the Scotsmen with their thrift and their conscientious

loveableness; the Welsh people with their shrewd, intense, patriotic devotions; the Irish, with their whimsical, mystical, delightful personalities; and then the English with their determination—the people who sang as they were being bombed almost to the last inch, "There will always be an England."

We went to the Netherlands and found strong people there. They have been fighting against the ocean and other elements all their eternities. They are wholesome, warmhearted people who take their families with them everywhere they go, even on their bicycles. Two bicycles will take a family of four or five or six to Church, to the beach, riding. They go as families.

Belgium is in both the French and the Netherlands missions. Here we find people much like the French, to whom I had difficulty at first to get close, but they grow on one, and I found sweet, lovable people, old women who loved the gospel as any of our mothers love the gospel, and youth who are willing to sacrifice and give themselves to it.

We have found some Spanish members in France, Italian members in Switzerland. We have Indonesian brothers and sisters in Holland and Yugoslavs in Austria, members of the Church, faithful members. Greeks, we found, and even Russians in East Germany belonging to the Church. One of our East German lady missionaries was begging for the privilege of going on a mission among the Russians over in East Germany or in Russia.

We went into the Saar, to Saarbruchen, and saw the devastation there. One cannot forget the war; its ruins are everywhere present, though it has been ten years. I cannot imagine what Brother Benson saw a decade ago, when there is still so much destruction. I crossed the Sarr at early dawn. I walked with the workers as they went with their lunch baskets over to their employment, and I came to a section of the city, the old section, which has hardly had a broken brick disturbed since the bomb dust settled, and all of the ugly terrible things that were there ten years ago still remain ghosts of the past.

The first morning in Berlin we came

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to the Charlottensburg Chapel for our meeting with the missionaries. We had already become somewhat used to the sight of armless men and legless men on the streets. We saw sightless men and crutch-supported men and battle-scarred men, but we were wholly unprepared for the experience that was to meet us on the path before the chapel when there came running to us a human form like a derelict at sea. His hair was disheveled, his eyes glaring, his face unshaved, his clothes in tatters. He came shuffling to us almost as much like animal as man. He wrapped his arms around our feet; he kissed our hands; he hugged our arms, all the time uttering a plaintive cry and finally spreading his fingers over his eyes to simulate prison bars he cried out in anguish, "Six years in prison. Today, released from enemy prison." We wept inside as we saw this reduced human, this being who like many tens of thousands of others had suffered similar fates.

Other heartaches came in various parts of the city: old women pacing long-worn station platforms meeting trains and busses, their placards reading, "Have you seen my boy?" Sometimes his picture was on the placard, and pictures and descriptions were in newspapers of lost sons and husbands and fathers.

The husband of one of our own lovely sisters disappeared ten years ago. A twenty-five year prison term was meted this political prisoner, but for five long years the family never knew whether he lived or died. After five years he was located in a prison with twenty more years to serve. Now his wife may visit him under guard a half hour each three months; he may write twenty lines once a month, letters which are censored.

I arose very early one morning in Berlin and walked out to see the ruins on every hand—across the street, around the block, everywhere they were. I plunged into a sad, reminiscent reverie and fell into the mood to write it down and returned to the typewriter.

May I quote a few lines from my journal:

Friday, August 26, 1955:

Ten years now since the world war tragedy!

Here were fences around the former grand estates
Wire fences,
Rusty fences,
Wind-blown rotting fences,
Proud, haughty fences leveled in humiliation.

Metal gates hanging unkept; creaking hinges.

Naked walls, irregular walls, pock-marked walls, and weeds growing from their toothlike stabbing jaggedness;

Green ivy trying hard to cover the nakedness of walls—gaping walls—absent walls but with scores of broken bricks still indicating where—

Chipped walls,
Grass atop the jagged walls holding brave little flowers struggling for existence.

There were windows, too many windows, cold, open windows, open to storm and sky

Boarded-up windows,
Bricked-up windows,
Glassless windows.

There were jagged chimneys piercing skys, Iron bedsteads hanging from chimneys, Plumbing pipes reaching into space like dragons' claws.

Here were trees—
Limbless trees except for new growth,
Tall trees leaning, branches all one side,
Amputated limbs and trunks, but not with saw.

Jagged arms pointing at—at whom are they pointing?

Vines climbing naked trunks to cover broken limbs and torn and battered trees.

Small trees, ragged shrubs growing from the rubble where once were pianos, rugs and pictures;

Trees growing untended
Vines climbing and spreading to cover ugliness.

Nature trying to sweeten sourness.
Grotesque figures standing out against the sky, pointing into space like accusing hands and fingers.

Empty pools,
Broken swimming pools, a reminder of leisure and luxury of forgotten rich.

Twisted steel,
Arches without buildings,
Doorways without walls
Porches and doorways, nothing else, porches and doorways.

Sagging floors,
Ceilings of splintered wood, shattered plaster hanging like cobwebs.

Excavations like graves,

Excavations which are graves—
Excavations where rodents play and insects
find their homes.

Proud estates, quarter blocks, ghost yards,
spectre houses, all so still.
Silence, silence, deathly silence
No playful shouts, no children laugh.
Silent walls, silent houses, silent blocks,
silent death.
Bricks are here—
Broken bricks,
Pulverized bricks,
Piled up bricks, covering bones of humans
never found.

Rubble, rubble, rubble,
Foundations up-ended,
Rotting wood,
Twisted steel,
Destruction, devastation, desolation,
Broken fountains,
Shattered statues,
Creaking shutters
Rusty mail boxes,
Rustiness!
Ugliness!
Jaggedness!
Screaming jaggedness!

Unmolested squirrels scampering,
Tiny birds twittering
To bring back life to deadness.

Walls, chimneys, trees, grotesque writhing
apparitions!
Persons? Things? Dragons? Disfigured, de-
formed things
Slumped in misery and shame.

We went across the corridor into Berlin. We came to feel much as they seemed to feel, I think. The slamming of a door startles one. A new voice one has not heard disturbs one for the moment. There is the corridor with its numerous inspections by Americans and Russians. I went to catch the train as we came out, and as I got out of the car at the depot, in the dark, I heard a strange voice which startled me. It said, "Mr. Kimball. Let me see your passport and travel permits with the Russian translations." I found it was only one of the United States Army boys, but coming out of the darkness it was quite a shock.

We held a meeting all day with the district presidents, about a hundred of them from the Russian Zone, from Koenigsberg down to Dresden and Leipzig. From all over the area they had come in for this meeting, and I stood

three hours without interruption explaining to them the doctrines, the program, the policy, the plan of the Church. They cannot get much help from the mission because the mission authorities cannot pass through the iron curtain. They can come over to the American sector once in a while with some jeopardy to themselves.

Another day we had thirty-four missionaries from beyond the curtain, wonderful missionaries, in an all-day session of testimony and instruction. There were twelve young women and twenty-two young men, just like your own sons, not quite so expensively groomed, few cameras, little money to spend. Many of them average about \$3.40 a month.

That is what sustains a missionary with the depreciated currency of East Germany. Thirty-four dollars would take care of ten missionaries a month; a hundred dollars would nearly take care of the whole mission for a month or would sustain one missionary through a mission. They do not have many luxuries, very few indeed, but their testimonies are warm and convincing. I could have spent weeks with them, they inspired me so!

We met many families that have been disrupted. One sweet member's husband had been the district president and had disappeared ten years ago and has never been heard from since. The little ten-year-old son who played about his father's knees at the time he disappeared, has been the branch president over in a place in West Germany to which they had been evacuated, and now he is on a full-time mission. It was my privilege the other day to see that mother and that son together in the Swiss Temple through the blessings of a kind soul in America who made it possible for this woman to go to Switzerland. I saw the sweet mother and the stalwart son embrace and kiss as they met in the holy temple in Bern, and they went through the temple together for their endowments and are waiting now, of course, until they find their husband-father or know that he is dead so that the rest of the temple work may be attended to.

The privilege of my attending the temple dedication was a glorious one: to be with President McKay; to feel the

inspiration of that occasion; to feel, as he has expressed, the nearness of those who may generally be thought to be far away; to see the glistening eyes of the Saints coming from all these countries; to hear their whispered gratitudes; to feel their newly found peace. Someone said yesterday, there never should have been a Babel. There having been a Babel, it is in reverse now. The confusion of Babel is being overcome. The Finns and the Dutch and the British, the Germans and the French and the Hollanders, the Scandinavians, Italians, Austrians all meeting under one roof! All of them heard the voice of the prophet of the Lord. Everyone of them heard his message in his own tongue. Everyone of them heard the ordinances of the gospel, the ordinances of the temple, in his own tongue. The confusion of Babel is in reverse.

The hatreds so prevalent in the past, are melting—French, Britishers, and Hollanders, and Germans, all together with love for each other. I am sure the hatred is not all gone in the nation, but I feel it is greatly reduced among the Saints, and they love each other, and their is sacrifice, and there is devotion, and there is faith, a great faith among those good people.

So I come home from Europe, after six months of glorious experiences with the people, with the fine leadership, with the excellent missionaries, the faithful servicemen. I come home with a deeper appreciation for the gospel and the Church and its people.

Nineteen hundred and fifty-five is an important year. If the press of Europe knew what had actually happened in 1955, every paper would have had screaming headlines and full-page, front-page articles, about the happenings of the year. But we know that when the Father and the Son appeared in 1820, there were no headlines, and perhaps no newspaper heralded the coming of the Melchizedek Priesthood to the world in 1829 or the organization of the Church in 1830 or the dedication of the temple in Kirtland in 1836. In 1955, the priesthood quorums came to all the missions of the Church, including the European missions; the temple came to Europe; and the Church came to Europe as it has never come before;

and now, as we have told the Saints in Europe in hundreds of meetings in many different locations, if the Saints in Europe will remain in their lands and will build the Church and the kingdom in Europe and train and hold their children and bring them into the holy temples in Europe for marriage, the kingdom can grow and prosper, and God will bless them, and that I know.

I bear you my testimony, as I express my gratitude upon returning home. I bear you my witness that the gospel is true, it is glorious, it is good, it is wholesome, it is divine, and I say this earnestly but humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Will you please take note of the following:

He who has just concluded speaking is Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve who has just completed a six months' mission visiting the European Missions of the Church.

The following announcement is of importance as regarding the Sunday morning broadcast. The broadcast of the Tabernacle Choir, to be heard in this building tomorrow morning, was recorded in Zurich, Switzerland. This broadcast will be heard in the Tabernacle and on the air from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. The doors of the Tabernacle will be opened at 9:15 tomorrow morning. Those who enter the building after 9:30 a.m. are asked to do so quietly, and without conversation, so that visitors assembled here may hear the recorded broadcast undisturbed.

As we have listened to your inspirational singing, you dear young folks, I have been reminded of the poet's tribute to youth:

How beautiful is youth! how bright it
gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!
Book of Beginnings, Story without End,
Each maid a heroine, and every man a
friend!

I wish to add to that, how inspirationally you have sung this day, and awakened righteous pride in our hearts for your willing service rendered; and