

President Spencer W. Kimball

Pioneer character molded in crucible

My beloved brothers and sisters: As I have pondered the social and economic conditions which confront us today, my thoughts have taken me back to our pioneer heritage. Our people have always been challenged by many and varied hardships which have tried our faith. It has been so from the beginning.

During the winter of 1846-47, when the Saints were at Winter Quarters preparing for their long and difficult trek across the plains, my grandfather, Heber C. Kimball, for twenty-one years a counselor to Brigham Young, was one of them. During that winter the Lord declared in a revelation to President Young, "My people must be *tried* in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom." (D&C 136:31; italics added.)

Few miracles in our history exceed that of establishing our settlements in a desolate land no one else wanted and then making the desert blossom as a rose. Our people not only survived but flourished because of their *faith* and their *family solidarity*. Our pioneer character was molded in the crucible of hard work, sacrifice, pulling together, and depending upon the Lord.

How well I remember my boyhood years in Arizona. Our living came from the soil. There was little money and seldom enough to go around. Going without and making do was our way of life. We learned to share; we shared the work; we shared joys and sorrows; we shared our food and our means. We had genuine concern for one another. Our daily prayers reminded us how dependent we are upon the Lord. We

prayed and worked continually for our daily bread.

Need for pioneer discipline

Out of those pioneer experiences were formed strong family ties. Now, once again, our resources are being severely strained. But once again our pioneer discipline can and will see us through.

Though we have held these welfare sessions over the years, we have never held one at a time more important than right now. As we concern ourselves with the basic economic needs of our people, we must go back to basic principles. I am grateful for the lessons of our pioneer past in which our people were rich, spiritually, even though they had to do without much of this world's goods.

Those of us in the Lord's work must recognize that work is a spiritual necessity as well as an economic necessity. Our pioneer forebears understood this.

Just as the pioneers shared what they had with the poor among them, we must do likewise by the giving of more generous fast offerings—not merely the cost of two meals.

Our pioneer ancestors did not look to government to care for their families. They knew that their families were their treasure and their own responsibility.

Follow the fundamentals

Brethren and sisters, plan and work in a way that will permit you to be happy even as you do without certain things that in times of affluence may have been available to you. Live within your means and not beyond them. Where you have a plot of land, however small, plant a garden. Staying close to the soil is good

for the soul. Purchase your essentials wisely and carefully. Strive to save a portion of that which you earn. Do not mistake many wants for basic needs.

Teach your children these basic principles in your family councils. Our pioneer forebears used to sing those lyrics about how "sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven." (*Hymns*, no. 147.) It still does, my brothers and sisters! Let us not forget the uses of adversity.

Let us be serene and filled with peace and love as we live in a world that is unfortunately filled with increasing crime and violence. Let us remember and keep the Lord's great commandment to love our neighbors. Where there are differences or misunderstandings, let us resolve or diminish them through kindly, brotherly service and genuine concern and regard.

We speak not by way of alarm

but by way of gentle counsel. Let us go back to the basics and follow the fundamentals. Thus we will experience a spiritual resurgence in our lives which will help us through these tempestuous times.

I am grateful for the welfare instructions we receive in this session of our conference. They are timely and worthy of both our attention and our action. May the Lord bless us to heed them and then to lead our people in the path that has been marked for us by our leaders and by the Lord, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Kimball

We shall now be pleased to hear from Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. He will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, General President of the Relief Society.

Bishop H. Burke Peterson

This morning I've been asked to speak about the responsibilities families have to care for their own. This counsel will apply to the immediate as well as to the extended family. The scriptural admonition outlining this charge is clear.

Do things of eternal worth

However, before going into the subject, I wish to build a threshold from which to enter these hallowed halls of family responsibility. As we walk through life, each of us becomes involved in a variety of interests and activities. Ofttimes, our judgment of their relative importance is subject to question. I fear that some of what we do is of little worth from an eternal perspective. In fact, some of our interests may even detract from what good we may otherwise accomplish. There are some ba-

sic, fundamental activities of life that are far more productive as preparatory steps for exaltation than many others with which we may busy ourselves. Some of our number have been known to be busily engaged in the "thick of thin things." The Master undoubtedly was speaking of this group as he taught us with the parable of the ten virgins.

Here were ten believing members of the Church. They believed enough that they were going, as a body, to meet the Bridegroom. It appears that they were not wicked, as we think of that descriptive term. I assume they had spent their lives, to that point, in "church activity"; however, as in the parable, five of them had been doing things of more import than had the other five. Half of them had been involved during their lives in doing things of consequence—in doing things that mat-