Becoming the Pure in Heart
President Spencer W. Kimball
President of the Church
(Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 119-124; or Ensign, May 1978, 79-81)

My dear brothers and sisters, what a beautiful sight you are! The radiance of your faces and the beauties of nature on this Temple Square make my heart swell with thanksgiving for the blessings of the Lord. As we meet together in conference, I hope the spirit of gratitude permeates all we do and say, for truly the Lord delights to bless those who love and serve him. (See D&C 76:5.)

With the help of the Lord, I should like to remind us of several truths and obligations that should never be forgotten by us as leaders and as a people. Following these reminders, I should like to talk about the building of Zion through sacrifice and consecration. ...

Establishing Zion

Now, brothers and sisters, would you put aside for a moment the pressing demands of this day and this week, and permit me to establish some very important perspectives about welfare services. For many years we have been taught that one important end result of our labors, hopes, and aspirations in this work is the building of a Latter-day Zion, a Zion characterized by love, harmony, and peace—a Zion in which the Lord’s children are as one.

The vision of what we are about and what should come of our labors must be kept uppermost in our minds as we learn and do our duty in the present implementation of welfare service. This applies equally to all Church activities. In the fifty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord shares with us a glimpse of this Latter-day Zion:

“Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation.

“For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand.

“Behold, verily I say unto you, for this cause I have sent you—that you might be obedient, and that your hearts might be prepared to bear testimony of the things which are to come;

“And also that you might be honored in laying the foundation, and in bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand;...

“And after that cometh the day of my power; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come.

“Behold, I, the Lord, have spoken it.” (D&C 58:3–12.)

This day will come; it is our destiny to help bring it about! Doesn’t it motivate you to lengthen your stride and quicken your pace as you do your part in the great sanctifying work of the kingdom? It does me. It causes me to rejoice over the many opportunities for service and sacrifice afforded me and my family as we seek to do our part in establishing Zion.

Obedience

In the earliest years of this dispensation the people faltered in attempting to live the full economic plan of Zion, the united order. Because of their transgressions, the Lord chastened them in these words:

“Behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them;

“And are not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom;

“And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.” (D&C 105:3–5.)

The Lord further counsels that we must learn obedience and be developed in character before he can redeem Zion. (See D&C 105:9–10.)

A few verses later in this same revelation, the Lord repeats the law of Zion in these words and with this promise:

“And let those commandments which I have given concerning Zion and her law be executed and fulfilled, after her redemption.

“And inasmuch as they follow the counsel which they receive, they shall have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion.” (D&C 105:34, 37.)

The length of time required “to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion” is strictly up to us and how we live, for creating Zion “commences in the heart of each person.” (Journal of Discourses, 9:283.) That it would take some time to learn our lessons was seen by the prophets. In 1863 Brigham Young stated:

“If the people neglect their duty, turn away from the holy commandments which God has given us, seek their own individual wealth, and neglect the interests of the kingdom of God, we may expect to be here quite a time—perhaps a period that will be far longer than we anticipate.” (Journal of Discourses, 11:102.)

Zion built among pure in heart
Unfortunately we live in a world that largely rejects the values of Zion. Babylon has not and never will comprehend Zion. The Lord revealed our times to the prophet Mormon, who recorded this statement in a closing chapter of the Book of Mormon:

“Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But . . . Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. “For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.” (Mormon. 8:35, 37.)

This state of affairs stands in marked contrast to the Zion the Lord seeks to establish through his covenant people. Zion can be built up only among those who are the pure in heart, not a people torn by covetousness or greed, but a pure and selfless people. Not a people who are pure in appearance, rather a people who are pure in heart. Zion is to be in the world and not of the world, not dulled by a sense of carnal security, nor paralyzed by materialism. No, Zion is not things of the lower, but of the higher order, things that exalt the mind and sanctify the heart.

Zion is “every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.” (D&C 82:19.) As I understand these matters, Zion can be established only by those who are pure in heart, and who labor for Zion, for “the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish.” (2 Ne. 26:31.)

As important as it is to have this vision in mind, defining and describing Zion will not bring it about. That can only be done through consistent and concerted daily effort by every single member of the Church. No matter what the cost in toil or sacrifice, we must “do it.” That is one of my favorite phrases: “Do It.” May I suggest three fundamental things we must do if we are to “bring again Zion,” three things for which we who labor for Zion must commit ourselves.

Eliminate selfishness
First, we must eliminate the individual tendency to selfishness that snares the soul, shrinks the heart, and darkens the mind. President Romney recently referred to the tragic cycle of civilization, a cycle propelled by anyone who seeks for power and gain. Was it not this that led Cain to tragic cycle of civilization, a cycle propelled by anyone who

people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world.” (3 Ne. 6:15.)

If we are to avoid their fate, we must guard against the very things that caused their downfall. The Lord himself declared to our grandparents: “And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine property.” (D&C 19:26.)

He further counseled his young church by saying:

“If they do not forsake their sins and their wicked ways, the pride of their hearts, and their covetousness, and all their detestable things, and observe the words of wisdom and eternal life which I have given unto them.” (D&C 98:19–20.)

It is incumbent upon us to put away selfishness in our families, our business and professional pursuits, and our Church affairs. I am disturbed when I hear of stakes or wards having difficulty dividing equity in welfare projects or making equitable storehouse commodity production assignments. These things should not be. Let us resolve today to overcome any such tendencies.

Work in harmony
Second, we must cooperate completely and work in harmony one with the other. There must be unanimity in our decisions and unity in our actions. After pleading with the Saints to “let every man esteem his brother as himself” (D&C 38:24), the Lord concludes his instructions on cooperation to a conference of the membership in these powerful words:

“Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.” (D&C 38:27.)

If the Spirit of the Lord is to magnify our labors, then this spirit of oneness and cooperation must be the prevailing spirit in all that we do. Moreover, when we do so, we are told by the Prophet Joseph Smith that “the greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always come from faithfulness and concentrated effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 183.) There are few activities in the Church that require more cooperation and concerted effort than Welfare Services. Whether it is rallying to find employment for a displaced quorum member, toiling on a production project, serving as a lead worker at a Deseret Industries, or accepting foster children in the home, it is cooperation and mutual concern that determines the overall success of the Storehouse Resource System.
Sacrifice

Third, we must lay on the altar and sacrifice whatever is required by the Lord. We begin by offering a “broken heart and a contrite spirit.” We follow this by giving our best effort in our assigned fields of labor and callings. We learn our duty and execute it fully. Finally we consecrate our time, talents and means as called upon by our file leaders and as prompted by the whisperings of the Spirit. In the Church, as in the Welfare system also, we can give expression to every ability, every righteous desire, every thoughtful impulse. Whether a volunteer, father, home teacher, bishop, or neighbor, whether a visiting teacher, mother, homemaker, or friend—there is ample opportunity to give our all. And as we give, we find that “sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven!” (Hymns, no. 147.) And in the end, we learn it was no sacrifice at all.

Charity

My brothers and sisters, if we can do this, then we will find ourselves clothed in the mantle of charity “which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—

“But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.” (Moroni 7:46–47.)

Let us unite and pray with all the energy of heart, that we may be sealed by this bond of charity; that we may build up this latter-day Zion, that the kingdom of God may go forth, so that the kingdom of heaven may come. This is my prayer and testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.