

#14: The Law of Consecration

Monte F. Shelley, 3 May. 2009

Quotes

- If you chase two rabbits, both will get away.
- Life is like riding a bicycle. You fall off if you stop pedaling.

1. “They had all things common”

Early Christians “were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” (Acts 4:32; 4 Ne 1:2–3)

There were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another. And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift. (4 Ne 1:2–3)

The Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them. (Moses 7:18)

Jamestown: 1607 Investors who sponsored the colony insisted that the settlement be operated as a commune so that private property and private incentive was completely lacking. Captain Smith → martial law to force the men to do their assigned tasks. Malaria → of the original 93 only 50 survived. New 500 settlers had worst winter and only 60 alive in spring. In 1619, private property and no martial law were needed.

Plymouth, Pilgrims: Investors insisted that for seven years the colony have “all things in common” and then the fruits of their effort were to be divided up. Pilgrims maintained only a bare survival existence. Governor Bradford: “This community ... was found to breed much confusion and discontent and retard much employment that would have been to their benefit and comfort. For the young men that were most able and fit for labor and services did repine (complain) that they should spend their time and strength to work for other men’s wives and children without recompense. The strong ... had no more in division of victuals and clothes than he that was weak and no able to do a quarter the other could; this was thought an injustice ... and for men’s wives to be commanded to do service for other men, as dressing their meat, washing their clothes, etc., they deemed it a kind of slavery, neither could many husbands well brook it.” The colonists faced starvation. “At length, after much debate ... the governor, gave way that they should set corn every man for his own purpose, and in every regard trust to themselves ... and so assigned every family a parcel of land according to the proportion of their number.” After one year, “this had very good success; for it made all hands very industrious, so that much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been. ... The women now went willingly into the fields, and took their little ones with them to set corn, which before would alleage weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression.” Years later, Bradford wrote: “The experience that was had in this common cause and condition, tried sundrie years, and that amongst godly and sober men, may well evince (demonstrate) the vanity of that conceit of Plato and other ancients—applauded by some in later times—that taking away of property, and bringing it into a commonwealth, would make them happy and flourishing as if they were wiser than God.” (William Bradford, *History of Plymouth*, 160–162)

From the 1820s to the Civil War, reform movements in the northeast US sought to correct the evils of society, including poverty, slavery, working conditions, etc. Christian and secular

model communities often advocated similar programs, such as equitable division of labor, or community ownership and control of property. Secular experiments did not last long. Religious experiments lasted a bit longer. (Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph Smith and The Law of Consecration*, 1985, 2–3)

2. New Converts in Kirtland



“The Saints in Kirtland were all recent converts. They knew the Bible, were determined to obey the scriptures, and had been looking forward to the restoration of apostolic authority. Joseph’s history says they ‘were striving to do the will of God, so far as they knew it, though some strange notions and false spirits had crept in among them.’ Many of the Ohio Saints belonged to a communal ‘family,’ as they called it, in which they pooled their property in an effort to emulate the Christians described in the New Testament, who ‘were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common’ (Acts 4:32).” {Harper, 139}

“The disciples had all things common, and were going to destruction very fast as to temporal things; for they considered from reading the scripture that what belonged to a brother, belonged to any of the brethren. Therefore they would take each other’s clothes and other property and use it without leave which brought on confusion and disappointment, for they did not understand the scripture.” (John Whitmer)

3. Timeline

02/1831: §42—The Law of the Church (Kirtland, Ohio)

The Lord promised a month earlier that if the Saints would gather in Ohio, he would give them his law (D&C 38:32). Section 42 contains the law of the Church.

Response: “Joseph’s history says they ‘readily abandoned’ their errors ‘for the more perfect law of the Lord’” {Harper, 139}

Some would not receive the Law. There were some who thought that all things were to be common, therefore they thought to glut themselves upon the labors of others. {Robinson, 2:10}

05/1831: §51—Instructions (Thompson, Ohio)

Leman Copley, a new convert, had offered to let the Colesville Saints settle on some of his 759 acres in Thompson, Ohio. When they arrived in Ohio, bishop Partridge asked Joseph what to do. → D&C 51

Outcome: When Partridge went to Copley for a deed, Copley refused to sign over the land and forced the saints off of his land. James Knight recalls, “We all went to work and made fence and planted and sowed the fields. About this time we were called to consecrate our properties. But Brother Copley would not consecrate his property, therefore, he was cut off from the Church. Then we were commanded to take up our journey to the regions westward to the borders of the Lamanites [Missouri]. And we sold out what we could, but Copley took the advantage of us and we

could not get anything for what he had done" (*BYU Studies* 17:1 [Autumn 1976]:39).

In Missouri, people received land and had to build houses.

1832: §70, 78, 82—United Firm: Kirtland + Zion (Missouri)
#70: Stewards assigned for the revelations. (Nov. 1831)

Section 70 → stewards for publishing revelations. → Literary Firm setup to provide income for stewards with profits to be given to the storehouse.

#78, Go to Missouri and "sit in council with the saints" (78:9)

#82: Organize and combine Kirtland and Missouri

Sections 78 and 82: The United Firm was setup as a corporation. In essence, they joined the Church's two storehouses and made them a parent company of the Church's printing projects. The Firm operated like a Church-owned corporation with the managers taking a salary sufficient for their needs while the profits went toward providing for the poor.

The United Firm operated for about two years in Kirtland, with a branch in Missouri. Up to twelve men were given stewardships in this business venture to support their families, with the surpluses to go into the storehouse to support printing and other Church needs. When a mob destroyed the Missouri press, the loans could not be paid. (Pinegar, 169)

Bishop Whitney (Kirtland) and Sidney Gilbert (Missouri) were appointed agents for the branches of the Firm. The Firm decided to borrow \$15,000 to build Zion. 'Possessing managerial, financial, or publishing skills, members of the United Firm consecrated their time, money, property, and energy and pledged their cooperation to advance the business of the new joint stewardship.' They each maintained private ownership of their own properties but pooled the resources these generated to advance the causes of Zion. ... They acquired properties, published the revelations, two newspapers, and a hymnal. They operated two stores until mobs destroyed the press. {Harper, 280}

1834: §104—Dissolve United Firm; Two Treasuries set up
#104, disbanded, and Kirtland/Missouri separated. Code names used. United Firm → united order or order of Enoch. Two treasuries set up: Sacred vs general.

Members of the United Firm in Kirtland were mired in debt. The members of the Firm in Missouri had been driven from their land, store, and printing office and therefore were unable to make money to pay the Firm's bills. Joseph and others were unable to get money from Church members in the east. Firm members in Kirtland decided to dissolve the firm and make its members individual stewards over its properties. {Harper}

Kirtland and Missouri branches of the United Firm were to become independent.

1838: §119—Tithing restored; Co-ops in Far West, Missouri

The command to pay tithing required greater sacrifice of property than that required by the law of consecration. Few of the saints at the time had much, if any, surplus goods, and of those that did, very few considered their property to be surplus.

1839: Quincy and Nauvoo, Illinois

JS (1839) asked leaders in Quincy, Illinois to avoid organizing themselves into "large bodies upon common stock principles" because these systems "opened such a dreadful field for the avaricious and the indolent and corrupt hearted to prey upon the innocent and virtuous and honest." He was referring to the co-ops

or common stock firms that the Saints had operated at Far West which had resulted in much dissatisfaction. (L. W. Cook, 87)

1841: Church incorporated so it could hold and sell property

1842: Temple Endowment includes consecration covenant

In 1836, Kirtland temple completed and used for preparatory ordinances. In 1842, temple endowment included covenant to live law of consecration. In Missouri, signed documents were required as proof of inner spiritual commitment. At Nauvoo the verbal covenants of the faithful were sufficient. (L. W. Cook, 93). Joseph killed 1844. Nauvoo Temple dedicated Apr. 1846.

(*Our Heritage*, 58–60) **The Nauvoo Temple**, "The Prophet also received an important revelation concerning the teachings, covenants, and blessings that are now called the temple endowment. This sacred ordinance was to enable the Saints "to secure the fullness of those blessings" that would prepare them to "come up and abide in the presence of ... Eloheim in the eternal worlds." After receiving the endowment, husbands and wives could be sealed together by the power of the priesthood for time and all eternity. Joseph Smith realized that his time on earth was short, so while the temple was still under construction, he began giving the endowment to selected faithful followers in the upstairs room of his red brick store. [1842]

"Even after the murder of the Prophet Joseph Smith, when the Saints realized they must shortly leave Nauvoo, they increased their commitment to completing the temple. The attic of the unfinished temple was dedicated as a part of the structure where the endowment would be administered. The Saints were so anxious to receive this sacred ordinance that Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and others of the Twelve Apostles remained in the temple both day and night, sleeping no more than about four hours a night. Mercy Fielding Thompson had charge of the washing and ironing of temple clothes, as well as overseeing the cooking. She too lived in the temple, sometimes working throughout the night to have everything ready for the next day. Other members were just as devoted.

"Why would these Saints work so hard to complete a building they would soon leave behind? Almost 6,000 Latter-day Saints received their endowments before leaving Nauvoo. [Dec. 1835–Feb. 1836] As they turned their eyes toward their western migration, they were bolstered in faith and secure in the knowledge that their families were eternally sealed together. Tear-stained faces, ready to move on after burying a child or spouse on America's vast prairie, were resolute largely because of the assurances contained in the ordinances they had received in the temple." The Temple was completed and dedicated in May 1836 after saints had left.

1870s–1880s: Utah United Orders

Orderville and Brigham City : "Two of the better-known examples of these orders as practiced by the Saints in Utah in the 1870s and 1880s were located in Orderville and Brigham City. ... The united order movement was generally short-lived. In the mid-1880s the First Presidency counseled the few remaining orders to disband. ... As we look back over these noble experiments in Utah, we now see that the original law of consecration, revealed through the Prophet Joseph in the early 1830s, was never strictly followed in any instance, either in Utah or in Missouri." (Victor L. Brown, "The Law of Consecration," *BYU* 11/7/76, speeches.byu.edu)

04/1942: Isms and the United Order

We ... warn our people in America of the constantly increasing threat against our inspired Constitution. ... The proponents thereof are seeking to undermine our own form of government and to set up instead one of the forms of dictatorships now flourishing in other lands. ***These revolutionists are using a technique that is as old as the human race—a fervid but false solicitude for the unfortunate over whom they thus gain mastery and then enslave them.*** They suit their approaches to the particular group they seek to deceive. ***Among the Latter-day Saints they speak of their philosophy and their plans under it as an ushering in of the United Order.*** Communism and all other similar *isms* bear no relationship whatever to the United Order. (First Presidency, Apr. 1842)

WHEN FIRST TIME false solicitude for poor used to get power? Satan's plan

First Presidency, Apr. 1842: [Above then]They are merely the clumsy counterfeits which Satan always devises of the gospel plan. Communism debases the individual and makes him the enslaved tool of the state to whom he must look for sustenance and religion; the United Order exalts the individual, leaves him his property, "according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs," (D&C 51:3) and provides a system by which he helps care for his less fortunate brethren; the United Order leaves every man free to choose his own religion as his conscience directs. Communism destroys man's God-given free agency; the United Order glorifies it. Latter-day Saints cannot be true to their faith and lend aid, encouragement, or sympathy to any of these false philosophies. They will prove snares to their feet. (A message from the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 88-97; Read by President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., at the final session of the 112th Annual Conference, Monday, April 6, 1942, in the Assembly Hall, Temple Square, Salt Lake City. — James R. Clark, compiler, Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols., 1965-75), 6., p.151; <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,4889-1,00.html>)

10/1942: Welfare plan and the Law of Consecration

"There is a growing ... sentiment that communism and the United Order are virtually the same thing. ... Bishops, who belong to communistic organizations, are preaching this doctrine. ... In practice the brethren in Missouri got away, in their attempts to set up the united order, from the principles set out in the revelations. This is also true of the organizations set up here in Utah." (President J. Reuben Clark, Oct. 1942)

Central control, uniformity, judging neighbor

"The ***basic principle*** of all the revelation on the united order is that ***everything we have belongs to the Lord***; therefore, the Lord may call upon us for any and all of the property which we have, because it belongs to Him. (D&C 104:14–17, 54–57)"_JRC Oct. 1942

For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and ***all things therein are mine.*** (D&C 104:13)

4. Initial Consecration and Stewardship

Thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a ***covenant*** and a deed which cannot be broken. ... Every man shall be made accountable unto me, a steward over his own property, or

that which he has received by consecration, as much as is sufficient for himself and family. (D&C 42:30, 32)

"There were some of the disciples who were flattered into the church because they thought that all things were to be in common, therefore they thought to glut themselves upon the labors of others." (John Whitmer, Robinson 2:10)

BY (JD 2:305) "A man ... said, ... 'I am going to consecrate all my property, could you buy me a farm?' ... I told him I did not want anything to do with such men. Another says, ... 'I want to consecrate all I have, but you must build me a house for it, or get me my wood.'"

1833 letter: "Brother Edward Partridge, sir, I proceed to answer your questions, concerning the consecration of property: First, it is not right to condescend to very great particulars in taking inventories. The fact is this, a man is bound by the law of the church, to consecrate to the bishop, before he can be considered a legal heir to the kingdom of Zion; and this, too, without constraint; and unless he does this, he cannot be acknowledged before the Lord, on the church book: therefore, to condescend to particulars, I will tell you that ***every man must be his own judge, how much he should receive, and how much he should suffer to remain in the hands of the bishop.*** I speak of those who consecrate more than they need for the support of themselves and their families. ¶ The matter of ***consecration must be done by the mutual consent of both parties***; for, ***to give the bishop power to say how much every man shall have***, and he be obliged to comply with the bishop's judgment, ***is giving to the bishop more power than a king has***; and, upon the other hand, ***to let every man say how much he needs, and the bishop be obliged to comply with his judgment, is to throw Zion into confusion, and make a slave of the bishops.*** The fact is, there must be a balance or equilibrium of power, between the bishop and the people; and thus harmony and good will, be preserved among you. ¶ Therefore, those persons consecrating property to the bishop in Zion, and then receiving an inheritance back, must shew [show] reasonably [reasonably] to the bishop that he wants as much as he claims. But ***in case the two parties cannot come to a mutual agreement, the bishop is to have nothing to do about receiving their consecrations***; and the case must be laid before a council of twelve high priests; the bishop not being one of the council, but he is to lay the case before them." (HC 1:364–365)

5. Assigning portions, inheritances, or stewardships

Let my servant Edward Partridge ... appoint unto this people their portions, every man ***equal*** according to his family, according to his circumstances and his ***wants and needs.*** (D&C 51:3)

You are to be ***equal***, or in other words, you are to have ***equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships,*** every man according to his ***wants*** and his ***needs,*** inasmuch as his ***wants*** are just (D&C 82:17).

"There is not one use of the noun 'want' anywhere in the D&C that has the meaning of 'desire.' ... The word 'want' used to express the sense of 'lack or deficiency.' ...

WELFARE SURVEY: All live in same houses, wear same clothes, etc.

EQUAL CLAIMS to improve stewardships (lo cost / hi income)

JRC Oct. 1942: One of the places in which some of the brethren are going to stray is this: There is continuous reference in the revelations to equality among the brethren, but I think you will find only one place where that equality is really described, though it is referred to in other revelations. That revelation (D&C 51:3)

affirms that every man is to be "equal according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs." (See also D&C 82:17; 78:5–6) Obviously, this is not a case of "dead-level" equality. It is "equality" that will vary as much as the man's circumstances, his family, his wants and needs, may vary."

BY (JD 18:354, 357) "Instead of teaching them personally, [the Lord] has raised up his authorized teachers to do this work. ... He requires ... us to take [converts] and teach them how to live, and how to become healthy, wealthy, and wise. ... ***[If] the property of the whole community were divided today equally amongst all, ... a year from today we should need another division, for some would waste and squander it away, while others would add to their portion.*** The skill of building up ... Zion ... is to take the people and teach them how to take care of themselves and that which the Lord has entrusted to their care. ... ***If we could take this people, in their present condition, and teach them how to sustain and maintain themselves and a little more, we would add to that which we already have; but to take what we have and divide amongst or give to people, without teaching them how to earn and produce, would be no more nor less than to introduce the means of reducing them to a state of poverty. I do not wish for one moment to recognize the idea that in order to establish the United Order our property has to be divided equally among the people,*** to let them do what they please with it. But the idea is to get the people into the same state of unity in all things temporal, that we find ourselves in with regard to things spiritual. Then let those who possess the ability and wisdom direct the labors of those not so endowed, until they too develop the talents within them and in time acquire the same degree of ability. ... ***I am opposed to taking away property from one man and giving it to another who knows not how to take care of it.***"

McC: "In the division of properties, the number of children in a family, as well as the ages and abilities of the children, are taken into consideration. ***A farmer would receive farm land as his stewardship; a printer, a printing office; a tanner, a tannery; and a businessman, a mercantile establishment*** (D&C 57:8, 11; 104:19–42). 'And all this... for the benefit of the church... that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents' (D&C 82:18). In this manner the needs of the poor were provided for and individuals were placed in a position in which they could supply their own wants and aid others in doing the same thing." (McC 389)

6. Private Ownership (42:42, 53–55)

Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer. ... Thou shalt stand in the place of thy stewardship. Thou shalt not take thy brother's garment; thou shalt pay for that which thou shalt receive of thy brother.

Relate to communal/family beliefs of new converts.

JRC: "The fundamental principle of this system was the private ownership of property. Each man owned his portion, or inheritance, or stewardship, with an absolute title, which he could alienate, or hypothecate, or otherwise treat as his own. The Church did not own all of the property, and the life under the ***United Order was not a communal life***, as the Prophet Joseph, himself, said, (HC 3:28). The United Order is an ***individualistic system, not a communal system.***" (JRC, Oct. 1942, 57)

7. Righteous and law abiding people

Thou shalt not kill; ... steal; ... lie; ... commit adultery; ... speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm. ... Thou shalt live together in love. (D&C 42:19–27, 45)

Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God. (82:19)

8. Storehouse for residue (D&C 42:34, 55; 51:13).

If there shall be properties in the hands of the church, or any individuals of it, more than is necessary for their support after this first consecration, ... it shall be kept to administer to those who have not, from time to time, that ***every man who has need may be amply supplied and receive according to his wants.*** The residue shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the ***poor and the needy***, as shall be appointed by the high council of the church, and the bishop and his council; And ***for the purpose of purchasing lands for the public benefit of the church, and building houses of worship, and building up of the New Jerusalem.*** (42:33–35)

9. Annual Surplus (D&C 42:55)

If thou obtainest more than that which would be for thy support, thou shalt give it into my storehouse, that all things may be done according to that which I have said. (D&C 42:55)

BY (JD 2:307) "The brethren wished me to go among the Churches, and find out what surplus property the people had, with which to forward the building of the Temple ... [in] Far West. ... Before I started, I asked brother Joseph, 'Who shall be the judge of what is surplus property?' Said he, 'Let them be the judges themselves, for I care not if they do not give a single dime. So far as I am concerned, I do not want anything they have.'"

10. Two Treasuries (D&C 104:54–77).

"The Lord created two other institutions besides the storehouse: one was known as the Sacred Treasury, into which was put 'the avails of the sacred things in the treasury, for sacred and holy purposes.' ... The Lord also provided for ... 'Another Treasury,' and into that other treasury went the general revenues which came to the Church." (JRC, Oct. 1942, 56).

And there shall not any part of it be used, or taken out of the treasury, only by the voice and common consent of the order. And this shall be the voice and common consent of the order—***that any man among you say to the treasurer: I have need of this to help me in my stewardship— ... the treasurer shall give unto him the sum which he requires to help him in his stewardship— Until he be found a transgressor, and it is manifest ... plainly that he is an unfaithful and an unwise steward.*** (D&C 104:71–74)

11. Is Socialism the United Order? (04/1966) (2nd time)

"When Zion is redeemed ... it will be redeemed under a government and by a people strictly observing those "just and holy principles" of the Constitution that accord to men their God-given moral agency, including the right to private property. If, in the meantime, socialism takes over in America, it will have to be displaced, if need be, by the power of God, because the United Order can never function under socialism or "the welfare state," for the good and sufficient reason that the principles upon which socialism and the United Order are conceived and operated are inimical." (Marion G.Romney, April Conf. 1966)

Similarities: Both

- (1) deal with production and distribution of goods;
- (2) aim to promote the well-being of men by eliminating their economic inequalities;
- (3) envision the elimination of the selfish motives in our private capitalistic industrial system. ...

Differences

- (1) The cornerstone of the United Order is ***belief in God*** and acceptance of him as Lord of the earth and the author of the

United Order. Socialism, wholly materialistic, is founded in the wisdom of men and not of God. Although all socialists may not be atheists, *none of them in theory or practice seek the Lord to establish his righteousness.*

(2) The United Order is implemented by the *voluntary free-will actions of men*, evidenced by a consecration of all their property to the Church of God. One time the Prophet Joseph Smith asked a question by the brethren about the inventories they were taking. His answer was to the effect, “You don’t need to be concerned about the inventories. Unless a man is willing to consecrate everything he has, he doesn’t come into the United Order.” (DHC, 7:412-13.) On the other hand, socialism is implemented by *external force, the power of the state.*

(3) In harmony with church belief, as set forth in the Doctrine and Covenants, “that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property” (D&C 134:2), the United Order is operated upon the principle of *private ownership and individual management.* Thus in both implementation and ownership and management of property, the *United Order preserves to men their God-given agency, while socialism deprives them of it.*

(4) The United Order is *non-political. Socialism is political*, both in theory and practice. It is thus exposed to, and riddled by, the corruption that plagues and finally destroys all political governments that undertake to abridge man’s agency.

(5) A *righteous people is a prerequisite* to the United Order. Socialism argues that it as a system will *eliminate the evils of the profit motive.* The United Order exalts the poor and humbles the rich. In the process both are sanctified. The poor, released from the bondage and humiliating limitations of poverty, are enabled as free men to rise to their full potential, both temporally and spiritually. The rich, by consecration and by imparting of their surplus for the benefit of the poor, not by constraint but willingly as an act of free will, evidence that charity for their fellowmen characterized by Mormon as “the pure love of Christ.” (Moro. 7:47.)

12. Welfare Plan and Perpetual Education Fund

It is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine. But it must needs be done in mine own way (D&C 104:15–16)

“The activities of the Welfare plan have provided the greatest opportunities for spiritualizing this Church that perhaps have ever been given this people in our generation.” (H. B. Lee, Apr. 1942, 86)

“The United Order was primarily designed to build up a system under which there should be no abjectly poor, and this is the purpose, also, of the Welfare Plan.” (J. R. Clark, Oct. 1942)

AGARIAN SOC: giving land → give job & home; now education

CHURCH CORPS: businesses DI,

EDUCATION: BYU, church schools, PET

Perpetual Education Fund (2001): “18,900 [of 35,600] have finished. ... With the 2.7 years of education ..., they are increasing their income by three to four times. What a blessing this is in their lives!” (Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, May 2009, 4–6)

13. Time, talents; sustain, defend, build up, establish

Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness ... (JST Matt. 6:38; see footnote to Matt. 6:33)

RIGHTEOUSNESS → Zion

SUSTAIN: sacrifices → food for priests, paid costs of govt.

DEFEND: gave food and men to defend kingdom (Cap. Moroni)

BUILD UP: increase membership → missions, genealogy

ESTABLISH: perfect the saints

TALENTS: money

“You are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships, every man according to his wants and his needs, inasmuch as his wants are just— And all this for the benefit of the church of the living God, that every man may *improve upon his talent*, that every man may *gain other talents*, yea, even an hundred fold, *to be cast into the Lord's storehouse, to become the common property of the whole church*—Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.” (D&C 82:17–19)

“Sacrifice and consecration are inseparably intertwined. The *law of consecration* is that we consecrate our time, our talents, and our money and property to the cause of the Church: such are to be available to the extent they are needed to further the Lord’s interests on earth. The *law of sacrifice* is that we are willing to sacrifice all that we have for the truth’s sake—our character and reputation; our honor and applause; our good name among men; our houses, lands, and families: all things, even our very lives if need be.” (Bruce R. McConkie, “Obedience, Consecration, and Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 50)

14. How can we living the law of consecration now?

BRM: “It is our privilege to consecrate our time, talents, and means to build up his kingdom. ... It is our privilege ... to go on missions. ... We can respond to calls to serve ... in our various church organizations. We can labor on welfare projects, engage in genealogical research, perform vicarious ordinances in the temples. We can pay an honest tithing and contribute to our fast offering, welfare, budget, building, and missionary funds. We can bequeath portions of our assets and devise portions of our properties to the Church when we pass on to other spheres. We can consecrate a portion of our time to systematic study, to becoming gospel scholars, to treasuring up the revealed truths which guide us in paths of truth and righteousness.” (Bruce R. McConkie, “Obedience, ...” *Ensign*, May 1975, 50)

MGR: “While we await the redemption of Zion ... we ... should live strictly by the principles of the United Order insofar as they are embodied in present church practices, such as the fast offering, tithing, and the welfare activities. Through these practices we could as individuals ... implement in our own lives all the basic principles of the United Order. ... The law of tithing ... implements ... [the] principle of stewardships, for it leaves in the hands of each person the ownership and management of the property from which he produces the needs of himself and family. ... ‘In lieu of residues and surpluses which were accumulated and built up under the United Order, we, today, have our fast offerings, our welfare donations, and our tithing all of which may be devoted to the care of the poor, as well as for the carrying on of the activities and business of the Church.’ What prohibits us from giving as much in fast offerings as we would have given in surpluses under the United Order? Nothing but our own limitations. ... We had under the United Order a bishop’s storehouse in which were collected the materials from which to supply the needs and the wants of the poor. We have a bishop’s storehouse under the Welfare Plan, used for the same purpose. ... ‘We have now under the Welfare Plan all over the Church, ... land projects ... farmed for the benefit of the poor. ... Thus ... in many of its great essentials, we have, [in] the Welfare Plan ... the broad essentials of the United Order. Furthermore, having in mind the assistance which is being given from time to time . . . to help set people up in business or in farming, we have a plan which is not essentially unlike that which was in the United Order when the poor were given portions from the common fund.’ It is thus apparent that when the principles of tithing and the fast are properly observed and the Welfare Plan gets fully developed and wholly into operation, ‘we shall not be so very far from carrying out the great fundamentals of the United Order.’” (Marion G. Romney, Apr. 1966, 51-58.)

15. Keeping back a part

“Ananias and Sapphira, otherwise good members of the Church, ‘kept back’ a portion instead of consecrating their all. (Acts 5:1–11.) Some would never *sell* Jesus for thirty pieces, but they would not *give* Him their all either! Unfortunately, we tend to think of consecration only in terms of property and money. But there are so many ways of keeping back part. One might be giving of money and time and yet hold back a significant portion of himself. ... If we have grown soft, hard times may be necessary. Deprivation may prepare us for further consecration, though we shudder at the thought. ... Instead of striving for greater consecration, it is so easy to go on performing casually in halfhearted compliance as if hoping to ‘ride to paradise on a golf cart.’” (*Ensign*, Nov 1992, 65)

“Consider three examples of how honorable people in the Church keep back a portion and thus prevent greater consecration.

A sister gives commendable, visible civic service. Yet even with her good image in the community, she remains a comparative stranger to Jesus’ holy temples and His holy scriptures, two vital dimensions of discipleship. ...

An honorable father, dutifully involved in the cares of his family, is less than kind and gentle with individual family members. Though a comparative stranger to Jesus’ gentleness and kindness, which we are instructed to emulate, a little more effort by this father would make such a large difference.

Consider the returned missionary, skills polished while serving an honorable mission, striving earnestly for success in his career. Busy, he ends up in a posture of some accommodation with the world. Thus he forgoes building up the kingdom first and instead builds up himself. ...

So many of us are kept from eventual consecration because we mistakenly think that, somehow, by letting our will be swallowed up in the will of God, we lose our individuality (see Mosiah 15:7). What we are really worried about, of course, is not giving up self, but selfish things—like our roles, our time, our preeminence, and our possessions. No wonder we are instructed by the Savior to lose ourselves (see Luke 9:24). He is only asking us to lose the old self in order to find the new self. It is not a question of one’s losing identity but of finding his true identity! Ironically, so many people already lose themselves anyway in their consuming hobbies and preoccupations but with far, far lesser things. ...

The submission of one’s will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God’s altar. The many other things we “give,” brothers and sisters, are actually the things He has already given or loaned to us. However, when you and I finally submit ourselves, by letting our individual wills be swallowed up in God’s will, then we are really giving something to Him! It is the only possession which is truly ours to give! (*Ensign*, Nov 1995, 22)

16. Conclusion

They entered the law of consecration by a covenant and a deed to their property. We make a temple covenant regarding our time, talents, and resources. Both methods acknowledge that all things are God's.

They received a stewardship (often a portion of land) sufficient to provide for their families. The Church encourages and provides education to help people develop or improve skills so they can provide for their families. The Church offers some employment opportunities and helps people find work via Church and ward employment services.

They consecrated surplus annually and declare what is surplus. We have annual tithing settlement and declare full tithing or not. This donation is used to sustain, defend, and build up the kingdom of God. We also are invited to donate to the missionary, temple, and Book of Mormon funds.

Their surplus helped the poor have the necessities (food, clothing, shelter) and provide for themselves. We do the same with our donations to fast offerings, humanitarian aid, Deseret Industries, perpetual education. We may also be directed to use our time or money to help others directly. Many have helped hurricane victims. As we do so, we are developing charity or the pure love of Christ for our neighbors.

The Church, then and now, helps people learn to manage their resources so they can avoid or get out of debt, have a surplus, and be prepared for times of need.

They had equal claim on the storehouse in times of need as do we.

The law of consecration is an organized way in which individuals consecrate their time, talents, and possessions to the Church to build the Lord's kingdom and serve His children.

Increased consecration is not so much a demand for more hours of Church work as it is for more awareness of Whose work this really is! For now, consecration may not require giving up worldly possessions so much as being less possessed by them. (Neal A. Maxwell, "'Settle This in Your Hearts,'" *Ensign*, Nov 1992, 65)

"The Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them." (Moses 7:18)

All we possess belongs to the Lord. May we each seek to know and do the Lord's will each day so that we may use our time, talents, and other resources as he directs. By so doing, we are living the law of consecration, helping to build up his kingdom and establishing his righteousness.

Quotes

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