

## D & C Lesson 14

# THE LAW OF CONSECRATION

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, April 2001

*“Ye are eternally indebted to your Heavenly Father,  
to render unto him all that ye have and are.”* [Mosiah 2:34]

### 1. Definitions and perspectives

#### A. Definitions:

1. **Consecrate** means to set apart or dedicate something to the service of God.
2. The **Law of Consecration** is an organized way in which individuals consecrate their *time, talents, and possessions* to the Church to build up the Lord’s kingdom and serve his children.

**B. An eternal law, a spiritual law:** “It is clear that the law of consecration is not just a temporal or economic program. It is also a spiritual law that helps members grow spiritually and prepare for eternal life.” (See D&C 29:34-35: “*All things to me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal . . .*”)

Accounts of the Lord’s people living this law are included in the *Pearl of Great Price, New Testament*, and *Book of Mormon*. [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 77.]

1. *Moses 7:18* - The people of Enoch
2. *Acts 4:32, 34-35* - The Saints after the Savior’s resurrection
3. *4 Nephi 1:1-3, 12-13, 15* - The Nephites and Lamanites in the Americas

**C. Historical Summary of the law of consecration in early days of the Church:** “The fulness of the law of consecration has been lived only at certain times as commanded by the Lord. Some of the early Saints attempted to live the law for periods of time in Ohio, Missouri, and Utah. However, the Church as a whole failed to live it, and the Lord suspended it. At some time in the future He will ask us to live the fulness of the law.” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 76.]

### 2. The Lord revealed the law of consecration to the Saints in Kirtland in 1831 and named the organization the United Order in 1833

- A. In February 1831, soon after the Saints began to gather in Kirtland, Ohio, the Lord revealed that they should begin to live the law of consecration. [*D&C 42:30*]
- B. In March 1832, the Lord revealed that there should be an organization to regulate and administer the law of consecration among His people [*D&C 78:3*].
- C. In March 1833, the Lord named this organization the **United Order** and instructed the Saints to be “lively members” of the order. [*D&C 92:1-2*]
- D. In April 1834 He gave extensive instructions on how the United Order should function. [*D&C 104:1-86*]

### 3. What are some of the revealed purposes of the law of consecration?

- A. To help bring about the “salvation of men” until the Lord comes. [*104:1*]
- B. To care for the poor and needy. [*42:30, 34*]
- C. To purchase lands for the public benefit of the Church, build houses of worship, and

build the New Jerusalem. [42:35]

D. To help the Lord's people be industrious and avoid idleness. [42:42]

E. To help the Lord's people improve their talents for the good of all, seek the interest of their neighbor, and do all things with an eye single to God's glory. [82:17-19]

F. To help the Lord's people to deal honestly and be unified (be "one"). [51:9]

G. To help the Lord's people overcome pride. [42:40]

H. To help the people obtain heavenly rewards. [78:3-7]

I. To help the Church "stand independent above all other creatures." [78:14]

J. To make every man accountable for the stewardship which is appointed unto him. [104:12]

K. To deliver the Saints from financial bondage. [104:78-80]

L. To prepare the Saints to be able to manage God's mansions in heaven. [72:3-4]

#### 4. How did the law of consecration function?

A. **Consecrating possessions:** "Under the law of consecration, Church members voluntarily consecrated their possessions to the Church by legal deed." [42:30]

B. **Receiving a stewardship:** "After Church members consecrated their possessions, the bishop granted them stewardships, or portions, from all the properties received." [Usually all or a portion of the same property they consecrated.]

1. "The size of the stewardship depended on the circumstances and needs of the family, as determined by the bishop in consultation with a member who received it." [42:32]

2. "The stewardship was given with a deed of ownership so each member would be fully responsible and accountable for managing it." [51:4; 72:3-4; 104:11-13]

3. "The stewardship, then, was treated as private property, not common or communal property, even though all property ultimately belongs to God." [Mosiah 2:17-25, 34]

C. **Surpluses:** "If members produced a surplus from their stewardship beyond what was necessary for their families, at the end of the year they gave it to the bishop to put in the bishop's storehouse (D&C 42:33; 51:13). The bishop used the surplus to care for the poor, to build houses of worship, and for other worthy purposes (D&C 42:34-35)." [Ibid., p. 76]

5. **We can consecrate our lives to the Lord now.** "As Saints of God, we must be prepared and willing to live the law of consecration in its fulness. But we do not need to wait for a future day to consecrate our lives to the Lord. As we do all we can to live the law of consecration today, we will be better prepared to live the fulness of the law when the Lord asks us to do so." [Ibid., p. 77] What can we do now?

A. **Realize that everything we have belongs to the Lord, and overcome covetousness.** Read D&C 104:13-17, Psalm 24:1. "Thou shalt not covet . . ." [Ex. 20:17] The Lord told Martin Harris, "Thou shalt not covet *thine own property*, but impart it freely" [D&C 19:26]. Said **Brigham Young:** "I am more afraid of covetousness in our Elders than I am of the hordes of hell . . . All our enemies . . . all hell with them marshalled against us, could not do us the injury that covetousness in the hearts of this people could do us; for it is idolatry." [Journal of Discourses 5:353]

B. **Make the sacrifices the Lord requires now.** Pay tithing and fast offerings. Give generously in other ways. Serve willingly in the Church [D&C 107:99].

C. **Develop Christlike love for others.** Read D&C 82:19, Jacob 2:17-19.

D. *Strive to consecrate all aspects of our lives to the Lord.* Read *D&C 64:34*. (See statements by Elder Neal A. Maxwell in *Ensign*, November 1992, p. 65-67, and *Ensign* November 1995, pp. 22-24.)

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