
Law of Consecration

D&C 51:3

In May 1831 Bishop Edward Partridge was in need of divine guidance for his assignment to distribute land in the greater Kirtland area among the New York Saints. Concerned about his ability to fulfill the assignment to the satisfaction of all concerned, the bishop sought “instruction on the matter” (D&C 51: Introduction). The Prophet Joseph Smith inquired of the Lord in behalf of Bishop Partridge and received a revelation that he should “appoint unto this people their portions, every man equal according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs” (v. 3). This was the second revelation the Prophet Joseph had received on the law of consecration (D&C 42). In this revelation, the Lord revealed how to implement the law in caring for the poor and needy that “ye may be one” (D&C 51:9).

Implementing the law of consecration was important in antiquity. In the days of Enoch, his people were of one heart and one mind, and there were no poor among them (Moses 7:18). In early Christianity, the Apostle Paul wrote of believers having all things common (Acts 2:44–45). After the appearance of the Resurrected Lord in the Americas, there were no rich and poor (4 Nephi 1:3).

The principles of the law of consecration have not changed over time. The divine principle is that faithful men and women dedicate their time, talents, and means to the establishment and building up of God’s kingdom that we may be one. However, the application of the principles has changed from time to time.

Elder O. Vincent Haleck in his general conference address in October 2017 told of witnessing consecration in American Samoa:

Some years ago I was a young counselor to a bishop in a new ward in American Samoa. We had 99 members, consisting of subsistence farmers, cannery workers, government employees, and their families.

When the First Presidency announced in 1977 that a temple was going to be constructed in Samoa, there was joy and thanksgiving expressed by all of us. Going to the temple from American Samoa at that time required traveling either to Hawaii or New Zealand. This was a costly journey that was beyond the reach of many faithful Church members.

During this period of time members were encouraged to donate to a building fund to assist in the construction of temples. In this spirit, our bishopric asked the ward members to prayerfully consider what they could give. A date was set for families to gather to offer their donations. Later, as these donations were opened in private, our bishopric was humbled and touched by the faith and generosity of our wonderful ward members.

Knowing each family and their circumstances, I felt a deep and abiding sense of awe, respect, and humility. These were, in every way, modern-day widow's mites given freely from their "want," with a joy in the promised blessing of the construction of a holy temple of the Lord in Samoa. These families had consecrated all that they could to the Lord, with the faith that they would not be left wanting. Their gift manifested their widow's hearts. All who gave did so willingly and joyfully because the widow's heart within them could see with the eye of faith the great crowning blessings in store for their families and for all of the people of Samoa and American Samoa for generations to come. I know that their consecrated offerings, their widow's mites, were known and accepted by the Lord."¹

¹ O. Vincent Haleck, "The Heart of the Widow," *Ensign*, November 2017.