

Bishops of the Church

Doctrine and Covenants 41



"And the storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor. Amen."

D&C 83:6

Lucy Mack Smith

Lucy Mack Smith led a group of 80 Church members from Fayette, New York, to Ohio.

As they traveled by boat on the Cayuga and Seneca Canal to Buffalo, New York, Lucy reminded the Saints that they were traveling by commandment of the Lord, like Lehi of old when he left Jerusalem.

She counseled the Saints that if they would be faithful, they “had the same reasons to expect the blessings of God”

Lucy Mack Smith



Arrival in Buffalo



When they arrived in Buffalo, they found that the harbor was jammed with ice, preventing boats from coming and going.

“After several anxious days in Buffalo, a number of the children had become sick, and many of the group were hungry and discouraged.

They took deck passage on a boat, put their things on board, and obtained temporary shelter for the women and children until early the next morning.

When they were back on board, Lucy persuaded the still murmuring group to ask the Lord to break the twenty-foot clogs of ice that jammed the harbor”

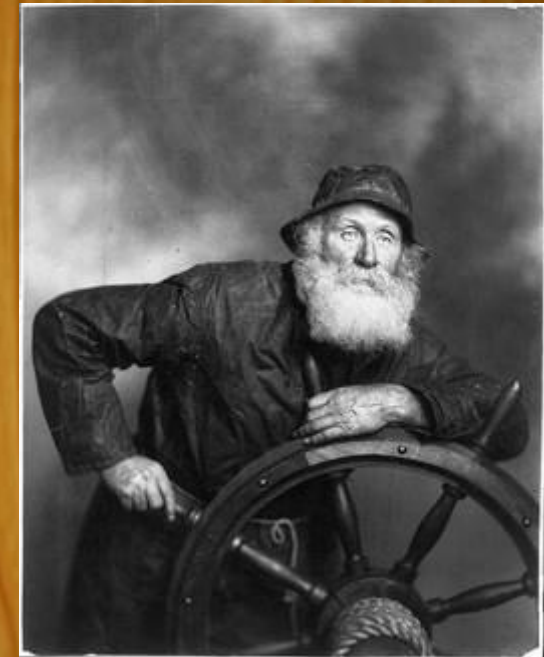
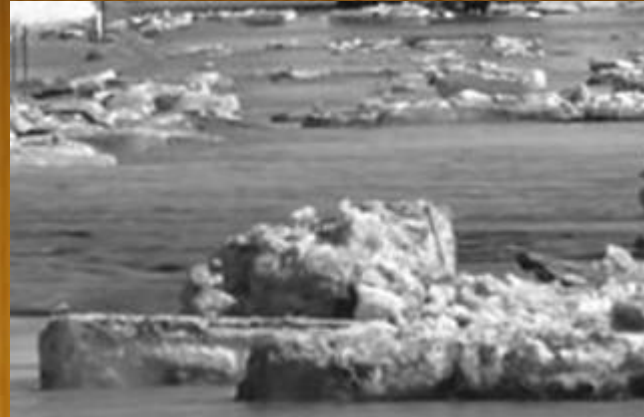
“Have Faith”

Lucy exhorted her group to have faith in God and promised that if they would unite in prayer and ask God to break the ice that jammed the harbor, it would be done.

Lucy described what happened next: “At that instant a noise was heard, like bursting thunder.

The captain cried, ‘Every man to his post.’ The ice parted, leaving barely a passage for the boat, and so narrow that as the boat passed through the buckets of the waterwheel were torn off with a crash. ...

We had barely passed through the avenue when the ice closed together again”



Background

January 1831

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma, as well as Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, left New York for Ohio. Most of the New York Saints followed during the next five months.



They found that the Kirtland Branch had grown to nearly one hundred members. Many of the new converts had belonged to a religious society known as “Disciples.”

Common Stock

Even after joining the Church, these converts continued to practice what was called “common stock,” or the holding of all property in common.



But discord arose among members over the manner in which this system should operate. Some considered that what belonged to one member belonged to anyone in the branch.



“Therefore,” wrote John Whitmer, “they would take each other’s clothes and other property and use it without leave, which brought on confusion and disappointments, for they did not understand the scripture”

Prophet Joseph Smith



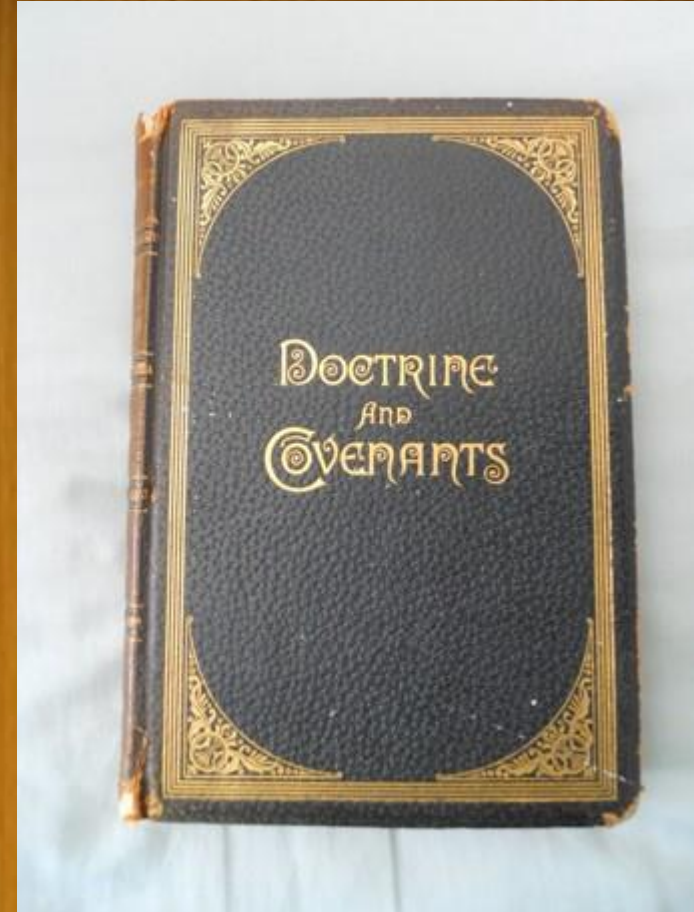
A More Perfect Law

“The branch of the Church in this part of the Lord’s vineyard, which had increased to nearly one hundred members, 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.

With a little caution and some wisdom, I soon assisted the brethren and sisters to overcome them.

The plan of ‘common stock,’ which had existed in what was called ‘the family,’ whose members generally had embraced the everlasting Gospel, was readily abandoned for the more perfect law of the Lord; and the false spirits were easily discerned and rejected by the light of revelation.”

Prophet Joseph Smith



As a result Section 41 was revealed

Abandon “Common Stock”

The Prophet Joseph Smith persuaded the members of the Kirtland Branch to abandon the “common stock” plan for the more perfect law of the Lord to be revealed according to the promise given at Fayette, New York.



The Lord directed the elders of the Church to assemble in Kirtland to receive this law. The law was given a few days later and is known as the law of consecration

Laws

He commanded the elders of the Church to assemble to agree upon the word, pray with faith, receive His law, and see that His law was kept by the members of the Church.



Law of Consecration



To establish storehouses to assist with the temporal needs of Church members, especially those who were poor.



Disciple

Two characteristics of disciples of the Lord: they receive his law, and they do it



“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.’”

Spencer W. Kimball

Meet--House



“Earlier definitions of the word *meet*, which are now listed as archaic in some modern dictionaries, include the idea of being proper, fit, acceptable, permissible, right, necessary, or desirable.

Ludlow

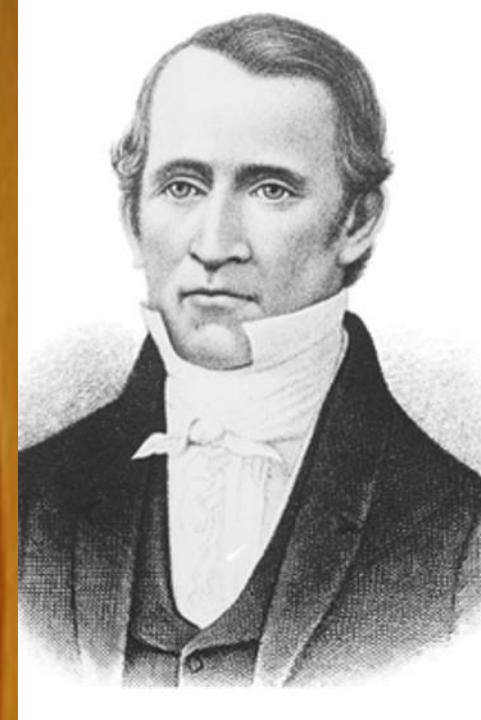
When the Lord’s people relocate there is always a commandment to build a “house” unto Him.



Spiritual Agent

In the law of consecration, the bishop was the spiritual and temporal agent who directed the program, assigned inheritances, received properties, and so on.

The law was to be revealed shortly, so it was appropriate that Edward Partridge should be called as the first bishop in the Church.



Bishops

Bishops are called of God, sustained by the voice of the members, and ordained by the proper authority



Bishop H. David Burton (1996)

Appointed by the voice of the church-- the members of the Church have pledged their support to, or sustained, the person who has been called of God.



Presiding Bishop Gérald Caussé (2015)

Sources:

Video:

Price of Discipleship (1:25)

Lucy Mack Smith (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 195–96; *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 91).

(*Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 92).

(*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 197–205).

Prophet Joseph Smith (“Church History,” *Journal of History*, Jan. 1908, p. 50).

(*History of the Church*, 1:146–47.)

Spencer W. Kimball (In Conference Report, Apr. 1978, p. 122; or *Ensign*, May 1978, p. 81.)

(Ludlow, *Companion*, 2:175.)

D&C 41:6

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: “The things of the kingdom are not for the unworthy, whether they are in or out of the Church. It is the duty of the members to hold in the most solemn and sacred manner every commandment, every covenant, every principle of truth which the Lord has revealed for their salvation. He has given to the members, if they will humbly receive them, covenants and obligations which are not for the world. Things that are most holy and sacred, which are revealed to those who have made covenant to be ‘just and true,’ and who have ‘overcome by faith,’ things which are imparted to them as a means of bringing to pass their exaltation, should not be lightly treated, ridiculed, or spoken of before the world. ‘For it is not meet that the things which belong to the children of the kingdom should be given to them that are not worthy, or to dogs, or the pearls to be cast before swine.’ Yet how often do we see the foolish, the ignorant and those who fail to comprehend the vastness of these sacred principles and covenants, treating them lightly and unworthily even before the world!” (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:179–80.)

More History—Introduction of Newel K. Whitney:

In late January 1831, Joseph and Emma Smith left New York to travel nearly 300 miles by sleigh to Kirtland, Ohio. When Joseph and Emma arrived in Kirtland, they stopped in front of the Gilbert & Whitney Store:

“[Joseph] springing up the steps walked into the store and to where the junior partner was standing. ‘Newel K. Whitney! Thou art the man!’ he exclaimed, extending his hand cordially, as if to an old and familiar acquaintance. ‘You have the advantage of me,’ replied [Newel K. Whitney], as he mechanically took the proffered hand, ‘I could not call you by name as you have me.’ ‘I am Joseph the Prophet,’ said the stranger smiling. ‘You’ve prayed me here, now what do you want of me?’” (*History of the Church*, 1:145–46).

Joseph explained that he had previously received a vision in which Newel was praying for him to go to Kirtland. The Whitneys received Joseph and Emma Smith with kindness, and Joseph and Emma lived with them for a time. (See *History of the Church*, 1:146; see also *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 90–91.)

Edward Partridge’s willingness to “leave his merchandise” (D&C 41:9) and spend his time building up the Church is confirmed in the following account:

“Partridge’s daughter later recalled that after this revelation was dictated, her father sold his property and ‘realized but little’ from the transactions. She added, ‘My fathers course in joining the Mormon religion and sacrificing his property caused his friends of the world to think him insane. They could not see what there was in religion to make a man give up all worldly considerations for it’”

(*Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, vol. 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* [2013], 244).

Edward Partridge and Sidney Rigdon had journeyed to New York to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith. “According to Philo Dibble, Partridge also went in behalf of others. [Philo Dibble] was told by a neighbor, ‘We have sent a man down to York State to find out the truth of this work, and he is a man who will not lie.’ [

Dibble, “Philo Dibble’s Narrative,” p. 77.]” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 82). Joseph described Edward as “a pattern of piety, and one of the Lord’s great men” (in *History of the Church*, 1:128).



Presiding Bishopric of the Church (left to right): Bishop Dean M. Davies, First Counselor; Presiding Bishop Gérald Caussé; Bishop W. Christopher Waddell, Second Counselor.
(2015)

THE PRESIDING BISHOPRIC is the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood throughout the Church. The Presiding Bishop and his two counselors also serve under the direction of the First Presidency to administer the temporal affairs of the Church. Like other General Authorities, members of the Presiding Bishopric travel frequently to meet with and teach members of the Church throughout the world. When they are not traveling, they counsel with other Church leaders regarding the Young Men program and temporal matters such as tithing and fast offerings, welfare programs, humanitarian service, building projects, and much more.