
Question Time — Are we an Incendiary Fellowship?

Using quotes from the book *The Incendiary Fellowship*, by Elton Trueblood, the priesthood met in February for study and discussed the concept of “True Christianity” and how Saints need to better understand the dynamic qualities of the Church. Trueblood, who published the book in 1967, was a lifelong Quaker, well-known public speaker, and prolific author.

Elder Aaron Smith, who led the discussion, noted how he was struck when he recognized the many correlations in the book to the Restoration and the concept of Zion-building, and how our latter-day movement suffers due to complacency and inaction.

Here are some selected quotations from the book:

“. . . the Christian philosophy of freedom has always involved discipline as its price. In other words, according to Christ, freedom is not a *starting* point, but always a conclusion; it is something to be *earned*.”

[True Christianity] “is a faith marked by a burning conviction and the consequent desire to see it spread. It is exactly the opposite of mild religion with easy tolerance.”

“Those who try to follow the narrow way must expect to be part of a minority all of their lives.”

[In regard to mild religion participants] “. . . they maintain an *un-costly* membership in some church . . . The strange fact is that these people, who constitute the obvious majority, are almost universally opposed to the kind of Christianity represented by the New Testament.”

“We are far more effective if we know that the Gospel will never be entirely acceptable, and that the Christian movement will continue to be a minority movement.”

“We need to be reminded that the Church exists for men and not men for the Church.”

“Every day there are public attacks on the being of God, on the objectivity of the moral order, and on the value of the Church. If these attacks are not met, the battle is lost by default and the majority of Christians become utterly confused. The Christian must learn to out-think the opposition . . . But thinking is hard work and we must have men prepared to engage in it.”

“Perhaps renewal [Zion], like happiness, being always a byproduct, can never be achieved by direct seeking. . . To build a new building today is a costly undertaking, but the building of a genuine Christian fellowship is far more costly. It cannot be done either by a new set of gadgets or by the rearrangement of the lives of uncommitted people.”

“. . . the totality of the Gospel [means] that it must be both *social* and *individual*.”

“We seek a new order [Zion] in the world, but the order will not be established by legislation or by social engineering, important as these may be.”

“The Christian who rejects inner controls, supposing that free self-expression is the essence of the Gospel, will never contribute to the renewal of the Church.”

“If the Christian witness is relegated to a building, with four walls, the

harm comes, not in what occurs within . . . but in the consequent easing of the conscience about what goes on elsewhere.”

“The Christian who understand his calling is humble for two reasons: first, the demand exceeds his powers, and second, the essential calling is that of a servant. This is the fundamental reason why all committed Christians must see themselves as ministers.” [Our highest calling is said to be that of member.]

“The metaphor of the fire would be meaningless without the fellowship, because it has no significance for merely individual religion. . . A fire that does not spread must eventually go out . . . There are meant to be exactly as many missionaries and evangelists as there are members.”

[All Saints must seek to overcome what Trueblood calls, in his hymn *Baptism by Fire*, the following:] . . . “sinful calmness . . . the smallness of our vision . . . placid peace . . . complacency . . . satisfaction, when we privately are free, yet are undisturbed in spirit by our brother’s misery.”

After considering these statements, what is the Lord revealing to you in your own life that He desires for you to change? Is He calling you in a new direction? Do you feel convicted of complacency? What will you do TODAY for the cause of His Kingdom?

Need an idea for service? Seek out a member of the pastorate, the priesthood, or the women’s department for suggestions.