

“No Man’s Land”:  
The Place of Latter-day Saints  
in the Culture War

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Frederick Mark Gedicks

The initial phase of the First World War saw numerous offensives and counteroffensives in northeastern France, as the German Army sought to capture Paris in the face of French and British resistance. Less than six months after the war started, however, the two sides were stalemated along a 600-mile front that ran from the Belgian coast all the way to Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>

Separated by only a few hundred yards, the armies on each side dug elaborate systems of trenches, reinforced by timbers and sandbags to protect against artillery fire and ringed by barbed wire to thwart infantry charges.<sup>2</sup> So effective were these fortifications that for more than two years the opposing lines moved less than ten miles in either direction. Artillery barrages and the newly invented machine gun soon chewed up the sliver of land separating the armies, converting it to “a muddy . . . impassable desert” devoid of “habitation and vegetation.”<sup>3</sup> The soldiers called this space, “no man’s land.”

By my title, I mean to suggest that the scarred and forbidding middle ground between two warring armies is an apt metaphor for the position of Latter-day Saints in contemporary cultural conflicts. The use of “warfare” as a metaphor for these conflicts was popularized by James Davison Hunter several years ago in his book, *Culture Wars*.<sup>4</sup> According to Hunter, current cultural conflicts stem less from denominational differences than from “political and social hostility rooted in different systems of moral understanding.”<sup>5</sup> On one side are the “orthodox,” cultural traditionalists who are committed to “an external, definable, and transcendent authority,” which represents an “unchangeable measure of value” and “tells us what is good, what is true, how we should live, and who we are.”<sup>6</sup> On the other side are “progressives,” cultural liberals with a libertarian social agenda, defined by “a spirit of rational-

ism and subjectivism.”<sup>7</sup> Their first instinct is not to affirm traditional Judeo-Christian beliefs, as the traditionalists do, but to reinterpret them “according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life.”<sup>8</sup>

These cultural attitudes cut across denominational lines.<sup>9</sup> The orthodox wings of different denominations often have more in common politically with each other than they do with their more liberal brothers and sisters within the faith.<sup>10</sup> The result is the drawing of political battle lines on the basis of cultural attitudes rather than denominational beliefs.

As support for this thesis, Hunter cites, among other evidence, the extent to which Latter-day Saints have been drawn into political cooperation with conservative Christians in recent years.<sup>11</sup> Here Hunter echoes Dean Kelley, who nearly twenty years earlier linked Latter-day Saints with fundamentalist and evangelical Protestants as examples of the dynamic growth of conservative religion.<sup>12</sup>

Of course, on cultural issues there is little question that Latter-day Saints are closer to the “orthodox” right than the “progressive” left. Conservative Latter-day Saint beliefs and practices include a traditional allocation of gender roles within a two-parent family;<sup>13</sup> a moral code that condemns all extramarital sexual relations;<sup>14</sup> a law of health that prohibits consumption of coffee, tea, alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs;<sup>15</sup> and a hostility to abortion rights<sup>16</sup> and same-sex marriage.<sup>17</sup> Virtually all of these Latter-day Saint attitudes and practices are shared with other conservative Christians.<sup>18</sup> “A moralism that rejects social and individual permissiveness,” concludes one study, “is where Mormons and Conservative Christians stand on common ground.”<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, Hunter’s interpretation of the sources of cultural conflict oversimplifies the political relationship of Latter-day Saints

to other conservative Christians, especially conservative Protestants. Notwithstanding their similar cultural attitudes, Latter-day Saints and conservative Christians are divided on at least three important issues. First, Latter-day Saints have a historically shaped consciousness of the precariousness of minority religious status, a consciousness that is *not* generally shared by conservative Christians in the United States.<sup>20</sup> Second, their radically different understanding of Christianity makes Latter-day Saints a target of criticism and attacks by more “orthodox” Christians, especially fundamentalist and evangelical Protestants.<sup>21</sup> Finally, in contrast to the resurgence of conservative Christian activism in the last two decades, the orientation of the Latter-day Saint church as an institution has remained largely apolitical since the 1960s.<sup>22</sup> The first two of these differences actually place Latter-day Saints as close to the cultural left as to the cultural right, if not closer, while the last places Latter-day Saints altogether outside the “culture war” paradigm. All of these differences suggest that Latter-day Saints should not be uncritically grouped with conservative Christians on cultural issues.<sup>23</sup>

I will start with some caveats and definitions. First, I am an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and teach at Brigham Young University, but I have no position in the church that entitles me to speak on its behalf. I would be surprised if all Latter-day Saints agreed with the theses I will advance, and many of them may strongly *disagree*.

Second, it is impossible to capture the diversity of both Latter-day Saint and conservative Christian thought in a lecture. Roman Catholics are particularly difficult because of the broad range of cultural views within that denomination. I have tried not to

caricature the views of any group in my development of their differences, but a certain amount of generalization is unavoidable; I trust it is not over-generalization.

Third, any generalized description of a group runs the risk of degenerating into an argument that particular persons in that group do not fit the generalized description. That is especially true when one attempts to generalize about a group from the views of those of its members who participate in politics; as Hunter has pointed out, “the polarizing tendencies in American culture” are the strongest among those “who have an interest in promoting a particular position on a social issue.”<sup>24</sup> My argument does not depend on whether any of us, or our Latter-day Saint or conservative Christian acquaintances, display the group characteristics that I will assert. My argument depends only on the larger part of each group holding the generalized characteristics that I will describe.

Finally, a few words on terminology. I use the term “conservative Protestants” to refer to evangelical and fundamentalist denominations generally associated with the theological and cultural right, such as Southern Baptists, Assemblies of God, and Pentecostals. I use the term “conservative Christians” to include Roman Catholics as well as conservative Protestants. “Latter-day Saint” is often abbreviated to its initials, “LDS.”<sup>25</sup>

## 1.

The story of the LDS church’s fifty-year struggle with the federal government over the question of plural marriage in the late nineteenth century is well-known. Congress passed legislation that revoked the corporate charter of the church, authorized territorial authorities to seize virtually all of the church’s assets and property (including its places of

worship), and eliminated or revised common law protections for criminal defendants in order to facilitate successful polygamy prosecutions. All of these actions were constitutionally upheld by the Supreme Court.<sup>26</sup> At the height of the struggle, Congress considered legislation that would have disenfranchised all Latter-day Saints, based on their mere status as members of a religion that believed in plural marriage; similar legislation enacted by the Idaho territorial legislature had already been validated by the Supreme Court.<sup>27</sup> When it became apparent that Congress was going to enact this legislation, Latter-day Saint leaders realized that the church would not survive if its members continued to practice plural marriage.<sup>28</sup>

On September 25, 1890, Wilford Woodruff, then the president and prophet of the LDS church, issued a proclamation that the church would immediately cease all belief in and practice of plural marriage.<sup>29</sup> Woodruff was clear that he had seen a prophetic vision in which the LDS church was utterly destroyed for persisting in the practice of plural marriage: “I have arrived at a point in the History of my life as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” declared Woodruff,

where I am under the necessity of acting for the Temporal Salvation of the Church. The United States Government has taken a Stand & passed Laws to destroy the Latter day Saints upon the Subject of polygamy . . . . And after Praying to the Lord & feeling inspired by his spirit, I have issued the following Proclamation [abandoning plural marriage].<sup>30</sup>

The federal government’s relentless pressure on the Latter-day Saints to abandon plural marriage is known as one of the worst religious persecutions in American history.<sup>31</sup>

Latter-day Saints were subjected to other state-sponsored persecutions, however, that are less well known, but were in many ways worse than the conflict with the federal government over plural marriage.

In the late 1830s and early 1840s, government authorities actively collaborated with anti-Mormon vigilantes to forcibly expel Latter-day Saints from Missouri and Illinois. In Missouri, Governor Lilburn Boggs issued an executive order directing that “[t]he Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state.”<sup>32</sup> The Saints fled to Illinois, where Joseph Smith, the first president and prophet of the LDS church, was later murdered while in the custody of the local militia. The Saints were subsequently driven from that state as well.

In both Missouri and Illinois, losses of Mormon life and property were enormous. Vigilantes raped Latter-day Saint women and killed scores of people outright. Hundreds more later died from exposure after being forced to abandon their homes in the middle of winter without adequate food or clothing. Losses of farms, livestock, and other property expropriated from or abandoned by the Latter-day Saints totaled millions of dollars.<sup>33</sup>

Knowledge of this history of violent persecution of their religious forebears is an integral part of contemporary Latter-day Saint identity. Every Latter-day Saint knows of the “Trail of Tears” out of Missouri, the assassination of Joseph Smith, the crossing of the frozen Mississippi when the Saints were expelled from Illinois, the suffering and death along the prairie during the western migration, and the extreme hardships that accompanied the settlement of the barren Salt Lake Valley. These events are regularly taught as part of the church’s Sunday School and youth education curricula. The church commemorates them each year on “Pioneer Day,” which

celebrates the arrival of the Mormon Pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Many American Latter-day Saints are descendants of those who suffered and perished for their faith, and the memory of these sacrifices is kept alive in the telling of family stories.<sup>34</sup>

For Latter-day Saints, then, the memory of religious persecution is vivid and strong. It is also unique among American Christians. No other Christian denomination in the United States, not even Roman Catholics, can lay claim to such a recent and violent legacy of persecution at the hands of American government authorities.

Perhaps as a result of their history, Latter-day Saints tend to be significantly more liberal than conservative Christians in their attitudes toward religious and other minorities. Latter-day Saints strongly support broad readings and applications of First Amendment rights, exceeding nearly all other Christian denominations, including Roman Catholics, in endorsing civil liberties for unpopular groups.<sup>35</sup> Studies also show that Latter-day Saints are significantly more religiously tolerant than conservative Protestants (and, ironically, more tolerant of conservative Protestants than such Protestants are of them).<sup>36</sup> Latter-day Saints are also more tolerant on racial issues than conservative Protestants,<sup>37</sup> despite the fact that the church did not begin ordaining African Americans to its lay priesthood until 1978.<sup>38</sup> In May 1998, Gordon Hinkley, the current president and prophet of the LDS church, delivered the keynote address and received a distinguished service award at the western regional conference of the NAACP.<sup>39</sup>

This Latter-day Saint sensitivity to minority rights is especially evident in the level and intensity with which Latter-day Saints support legislative initiatives that enhance protection of the free exercise rights of members

of minority religions. Although conservative Christians support the free exercise of religion, they often allow commitments to other values to override their commitment to the free exercise of religion for religious minorities. For example, when the Supreme Court held in *Goldman v. Weinberger* that the free exercise clause did not protect an orthodox Jewish officer who wished to wear his yarmulke on duty in violation of Air Force uniform regulations,<sup>40</sup> Latter-day Saints in Congress supported subsequent legislation to overturn the decision by a two-to-one margin.<sup>41</sup> Other conservative Christians were more ambivalent about interfering with military discretion, even to protect the free exercise of religion: Conservative Protestants concentrated in the pro-defense South generally opposed the legislation, and most of the Senate's evangelicals voted against it.<sup>42</sup>

The same pattern emerged with respect to the coalition that lobbied for the passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). RFRA was designed to reestablish the protective compelling interest test under the free exercise clause, the test that the Supreme Court had abandoned in 1990 in *Employment Division v. Smith*.<sup>43</sup> The LDS church was a strong, early supporter of RFRA, from the beginning of the lobbying effort to secure its passage through its (regrettably) unsuccessful defense before the Supreme Court last term in *City of Boerne v. Flores*.<sup>44</sup> The church made clear that the basis for its support was RFRA's protection of the free exercise rights of unconventional religious minorities. Testifying before Congress in support of RFRA as an official representative of the LDS church, Elder Dallin Oaks of the church's Quorum of the Twelve linked the church's support of RFRA directly to its history of persecution: "I know of no other major religious group in America," he

declared, "that has endured anything comparable to the officially sanctioned persecution that was imposed upon members of my church by Federal, State, and local governments."<sup>45</sup> Oaks continued:

Although my church is now among the five largest churches in America, we were once an obscure and unpopular group whose members repeatedly fell victim to officially sanctioned persecution because of religious beliefs and practices. We have special reason to call for Congress and the courts to reaffirm the principle that religious freedom must not be infringed unless this is clearly required by a compelling governmental interest.<sup>46</sup>

Oaks was emphatic that RFRA was needed precisely to protect the rights of unconventional religious minorities:

I wish to point out that most of the court cases involving Government interference with religious liberty involve religious practices that appear out of the ordinary to many. By their nature, elected officials are unlikely to pass ordinances, statutes or laws that interfere with large, mainstream religions whose adherents possess significant political power at the ballot box. But political power or impact must not be the measure of which religious practices can be forbidden by law.

The Bill of Rights protects principles, not constituencies. The worshippers who need its protections are the oppressed minorities, not the influential constituent elements of the majority.<sup>47</sup>

The reaction of conservative Christians to RFRA was somewhat different. While RFRA was pending in the early 1990s, it appeared that the Supreme Court was poised to overrule *Roe v. Wade*.<sup>48</sup> As a result, many conservative Christians, such as Missouri Synod Lutherans and Roman Catholics, re-

fused to support RFRA, for fear that it might create a religion-based statutory right to abortion at the very time that the Supreme Court would have eliminated the constitutional basis for abortion rights. The Roman Catholics ultimately joined the RFRA coalition, but only after the *Casey* decision in 1992 made it clear that an abandonment of *Roe* was not forthcoming.<sup>49</sup>

Many conservative Protestants were also late in supporting RFRA. Judging from their comments in the wake of RFRA's invalidation, their belated support of RFRA seems to have been motivated less by a desire to protect religious minorities than by political commitments to weakening the power of the federal judiciary and relaxing establishment clause restrictions on government endorsement of religion.

For example, conservative Protestant law professor Phillip Johnson was rather unconcerned about RFRA's invalidation, observing that many conservative Christians were reluctant to defend RFRA "at the cost of establishing a principle that federal judges have a power to exempt an open-ended category of 'religious activities' from non-discriminatory regulations which other citizens must obey."<sup>50</sup> Similarly, Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of The Rev. Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice, argued that the significance of the Supreme Court's invalidation of RFRA "is not its effect on religious liberty," but the Court's endorsement of "judicial supremacy at the expense of congressional prerogative, and ultimately the people's right to govern themselves, by claiming authoritative constitutional interpretation as solely the Court's domain."<sup>51</sup>

Even more revealing is the effort of some conservative Christians to link the invalidation of RFRA with current efforts to weaken the establishment clause by constitutional amend-

ment. Christian Coalition President Don Hodel labeled the invalidation of RFRA "blatant discrimination against people of faith," which demonstrated the necessity of passing the proposed Religious Freedom Amendment (RFA), endorsed by many conservative Christian political action groups.<sup>52</sup> Ironically, the RFA is sponsored by a Latter-day Saint, Rep. Ernest Istook (R-Okla.), who has candidly admitted that its purpose is to overrule Supreme Court decisions prohibiting government-sponsored prayer,<sup>53</sup> to eliminate the constitutional requirement of cultural and denominational neutrality when the government uses religious symbols,<sup>54</sup> to remove obstacles to receipt of government benefits by religious institutions,<sup>55</sup> and to narrow the meaning of "establishment of religion" so that the clause prohibits only government endorsement of a particular denomination.<sup>56</sup>

I am not arguing that Missouri Synod Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and other conservative Christians were wrong to rank the possibility of protecting unborn human life above protecting minority free exercise rights, or that some conservative Protestants are wrong to rank judicial activism above religious liberty, or to see the principal problem of religious liberty as discrimination against conservative Christianity. (I will say, however, that there is something fundamentally unpersuasive in the argument that Christians in this country – even conservative Christians – are suffering persecution that can only be remedied by weakening the establishment clause.<sup>57</sup>)

But that is not my point. The point is that in their respective hierarchies of religious and political values, Latter-day Saints rank protecting the free exercise rights of minority religions higher – perhaps much higher – than conservative Christians. The LDS

church did not allow the risk of creating a statutory abortion right or of encouraging judicial activism to weaken its support for RFRA, although the LDS church is clearly opposed to abortion and its leaders and most of its members are politically conservative. Nor did the church see RFRA as a means of removing constitutional obstacles that prevent government endorsement of religious practices, although both the leaders and members of the LDS church are culturally conservative believers.

Latter-day Saints were once violently persecuted by the Protestant majority in the United States, and they remain a religious minority in every American state except Utah. It is no coincidence that they are especially sensitive to the protection of minority religious freedom. Thus, despite their general conservatism on cultural issues, Latter-day Saint attitudes on religious and other minorities are significantly different from those of conservative Christians, as close to the cultural left as to the cultural right.

## 2.

Latter-day Saints and conservative Christians are deeply divided over (at least) three fundamental theological issues – the nature of God, the primacy of the Bible as scripture, and the relationship of faith and works to salvation.<sup>58</sup>

Latter-day Saints do not believe in the orthodox triune God, as do conservative Protestants (and, indeed, most other Christians).<sup>59</sup> Although Latter-day Saints believe in Father, Son and Holy Ghost,<sup>60</sup> they believe them to be separate beings united only in purpose, and not in substance.<sup>61</sup> Nor do Latter-day Saints believe that the human and the divine are essentially different,<sup>62</sup> as do most other Christians.<sup>63</sup> Lorenzo Snow, president

and prophet of the LDS church at the turn of the century, taught that “[a]s man is, God once was: As God now is, man may be.”<sup>64</sup> Latter-day Saints believe that this teaching applies to our Heavenly Father as well as to his Son, Jesus Christ; thus, they maintain that the Father as well as the Son has a tangible, resurrected body,<sup>65</sup> and that human beings have the divine potential to become gods themselves.<sup>66</sup>

Latter-day Saints do not restrict the scriptural canon to the Old and New Testaments, as do virtually all other Christians. In addition to the Bible, Latter-day Saints include *The Book of Mormon* and two collections of the revelations and writings of Joseph Smith and some of his successor prophets as scriptural works equal in authority to the Bible.<sup>67</sup> Protestants interpret these additions as a rejection of the principle of *sola scriptorum*, which vests “final authority in The Word only as it was manifested in the Old and New Testaments.”<sup>68</sup> Most Christians also dispute that these additions are authentic revelations from God, as Latter-day Saints believe. Some Christians further maintain that the Latter-day Saint additions contradict the Bible,<sup>69</sup> and they object to the LDS claim that its leaders are living prophets who can authoritatively interpret scripture.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, Latter-day Saints differ dramatically from conservative Christians in their understanding of the experience of being “born again.” This experience, in which one accepts Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior and is thereby “saved,” is central to the religious experience of conservative Protestants.<sup>71</sup> For Latter-day Saints, however, salvation through the “Atonement of Christ” is available only by “obedience to laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”<sup>72</sup> In other words, spiritual rebirth is not sufficient by itself for salvation, but must be combined

with faith and good works.<sup>73</sup> This doctrine often prompts conservative Protestants to accuse Latter-day Saints of believing they can “earn” salvation,<sup>74</sup> a proposition that Latter-day Saints actually reject. “[I]t is by grace we are saved,” states *The Book of Mormon*, “after all we can do.”<sup>75</sup> Still, Latter-day Saints place a greater emphasis on works than conservative Protestants, and they generally do not identify themselves as “born again” Christians.<sup>76</sup>

These disagreements are not merely minor theoretical details. They are the source of intense animosity by conservative Protestant denominations and many of their members toward Latter-day Saints and the LDS church. Sociological data shows that conservative Protestants are substantially less tolerant of Latter-day Saints than they are of any other Christian group.<sup>77</sup> The “social distance” of conservative Protestants from Roman Catholics “is considerably less than that from Mormons, though Catholics constitute the second least desirable group for the Conservatives.”<sup>78</sup>

In fact, it was evangelical Protestants who supplied the strongest political pressure for the anti-polygamy laws that nearly destroyed the LDS church in the late nineteenth century.<sup>79</sup> Calls by contemporary conservative Protestants for the re-establishment of the United States as a “Christian Nation” have an unsettling resonance with arguments used by the nineteenth century Supreme Court to justify dismantling the LDS church and curtailing the civil liberties of its members,<sup>80</sup> especially when conservative Protestants continue to be the source of some of the most vicious attacks on the LDS church and its beliefs and practices.<sup>81</sup>

These theological disagreements are also the basis for the persistent and frustrating accusation that Latter-day Saints are not

Christians. To the extent that this claim means that Latter-day Saints do not believe in or worship Christ as the only means of overcoming death and sin, it is simply false.<sup>82</sup> Some conservative Protestants, however, interpret – I would say misinterpret – LDS beliefs as rejecting the divinity of Jesus Christ and diminishing the importance of his sacrifice on the cross, and thereby classify the LDS church as a cult.<sup>83</sup> Latter-day Saints do not contest their theological differences with conservative Protestants, but they deeply resent the way that they are excluded from the Christian mainstream and allocated to the theological fringe with Heaven’s Gate and the Branch Davidians.

Again, my purpose here is not to show that Latter-day Saint beliefs are superior to conservative Protestant theology, but to show that theological differences are the source of animosity between the Latter-day Saints and conservative Protestants, especially at the institutional level. Their cultural conservatism notwithstanding, the theological ground occupied by Latter-day Saints puts them in the conservative Protestant line of fire.

### 3.

The last difference between Latter-day Saints and conservative Christians is in the realm of politics. I will argue that the LDS church is fundamentally apolitical, although I need to qualify this assertion somewhat. First, the LDS church has long been involved in the state politics of Utah and the surrounding Rocky Mountain states, although somewhat less these days than in the past. My argument about the church’s stance of political neutrality applies to national and international political issues. Second, the contemporary church is far less political than

the church of 50 or even 25 years ago. My argument focuses on the LDS church of today.

Finally, even with these qualifications, it remains the case that the apolitical stance of the church is sometimes more aspirational than actual, and certainly more aspirational than LDS church leaders sometimes would like. The church makes a conscious choice to leave local leaders with a large amount of discretion in interpreting and applying church policy; occasionally that discretion is abused. There are doubtless examples of LDS bishops and stake presidents whose actions are inconsistent with the description I will offer. I maintain, however, that they stand out as exceptions to a general rule of political neutrality.

Now, with those qualifications out of the way, one confronts a puzzling curiosity – where *are* the Latter-day Saints in politics? In contrast to literally hundreds of political action groups sponsored by Roman Catholics, Protestants and Jews, there are no such Latter-day Saint groups. Individual Latter-day Saints are active in groups sponsored by others, especially secular conservative groups like the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation. When it comes to distinctly Latter-day Saint political action, however, there is only the church itself.

There are other curiosities in this area. It is common for priests, ministers and rabbis to preach from the pulpit about certain political issues, especially in an election year. Churches and synagogues frequently distribute voter guides in conjunction with worship services, and offer their chapels and buildings for candidate speeches, debates, and other political meetings.

By contrast, the LDS church instructs its local leaders not to endorse candidates or causes, or to allow any sort of political activ-

ity in LDS meetings or buildings.<sup>84</sup> Since 1960, church leaders have taken care not to disclose their preferences in presidential and other elections,<sup>85</sup> a practice that was formalized as policy in 1988.<sup>86</sup> “We have no candidates for political office,” stated the church’s First Presidency, “and we do not undertake to tell people how to vote.”<sup>87</sup> When he testified in favor of RFRA, Elder Oaks pointed out how remarkable it was for a general authority of the LDS church to take a public stand in favor of a particular piece of legislation.<sup>88</sup>

The LDS church encourages its members to be active in politics, “and to vote for those who will most nearly carry out their views of government and its role,”<sup>89</sup> but rarely allows political activity in the church’s name. It does, however, take public positions on what it calls “moral issues.” That included opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment in the late 1970s,<sup>90</sup> but these days is limited primarily to opposing abortion rights, same-sex marriage, legalized gambling and the production and distribution of pornography.<sup>91</sup> (Indeed, the church has been especially visible in its opposition to same-sex marriage initiatives.) The church also takes positions on legislative initiatives, such as RFRA, which affect the ability of the church or its members to practice the LDS faith. Even when taking a public stand on an issue of morality or the free exercise of religion, however, the church generally keeps a low profile, often preferring to work through individual Latter-day Saints and non-LDS organizations.

The LDS church’s narrow and cautious political profile stands in stark contrast to that of the many conservative Christian political action groups. The Christian Coalition, for example, has a detailed and comprehensive political agenda, which calls for a school-prayer amendment to the Constitu-

tion, a private school voucher system, balanced budgets, term limits, anti-euthanasia laws, restrictions on the availability of divorce, a nationwide ban on gambling, eliminating various federal departments and agencies, canceling tax penalties on two-parent families, limiting access to abortion and pornography, privatizing public welfare programs, enacting a parental rights act, rejecting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and creating federal incentives for victim restitution and prisoner work programs.<sup>92</sup> Gary Bauer, president of the conservative Family Research Council, has argued that conservative Christian beliefs require support for “expanding NATO, rebuilding U.S. defense forces, including a missile defense system, and investigating human rights policies of Chinese companies seeking trade with the United States.”<sup>93</sup>

Of all these conservative Christian initiatives, the LDS church has articulated official policies on only two – opposing abortion and euthanasia – and has taken public positions in support of only two others – opposition to pornography and legalized gambling. It has never taken a position on the advisability of a constitutional amendment to return group prayer to public schools.<sup>94</sup>

The LDS church’s low political profile is the result of a clear understanding among both leaders and members that nothing should stand in the way of their fulfilling the primary mission of the church – namely, to preach the Gospel. One group of sociologists has described Latter-day Saints as possessing an “ingrained religious pragmatism which is preoccupied with expansion of the Church through vigorous internal and external proselytizing.”<sup>95</sup> From the standpoint of the church, political activity risks internal divisions among its members. “The result,” warned Spencer Kimball, president and prophet of the LDS

church in the 1970s and early 1980s, “would be to divert the Church from its basic mission of teaching the restored gospel of the Lord to the world.”<sup>96</sup>

The risks of political activity by the church were evident in its involvement in the Equal Rights Amendment controversy of the late 1970s (which, ironically, occurred during President Kimball’s tenure as prophet). The church formally opposed the ERA, fearing that it would drive mothers into the workplace and otherwise undermine the traditional family.<sup>97</sup> The church’s organizational and fund-raising efforts were decisive in defeating ratification in several states, but the church’s active opposition to the ERA split the membership.<sup>98</sup> As a young law student at that time, I well remember the animated arguments in the congregations I attended about whether the brethren were correct to have aligned the church with anti-ERA forces, and whether this stand precluded members from supporting the amendment or, indeed, required their opposition. In late 1979, the LDS church excommunicated Sonia Johnson, reportedly for certain feminist and pro-ERA statements and activities. This action drew intense and generally uncomplimentary media scrutiny and further fueled divisive arguments among members.<sup>99</sup>

The LDS church’s fundamental apoliticality is especially evident outside of the United States. The church has virtually no public political profile in foreign countries, not even in liberal democracies that guarantee religious freedom, like Japan, Australia or the countries of the European Union. Moreover, it never allies itself with agents of revolution or reform, not even in countries saddled with dictatorships or totalitarian regimes. The result in some countries is the embarrassing perception that the

church is aligned with oppressive or reactionary political forces.

What matters most to the LDS church is not the elimination of political oppression (although it obviously opposes it), but the ability of its missionaries to proselytize and its members to practice the essential elements of the LDS faith and implement the church's programs. Acquiescing to the prevailing political order ensures its ability to carry out this mission with the minimum of government interference, though at the cost of eliminating itself (and sometimes its members) as a source of social and political reform.<sup>100</sup> It is a cost, however, that the church historically has been willing to pay.

For example, prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain, the LDS church had long been interested in gaining institutional recognition and missionary access to the Soviet Union and its client states in Eastern Europe. It had a particular interest in East Germany; proselytizing in the first half of this century had yielded a large number of German converts, many of whom did not emigrate to the United States.<sup>101</sup> When the Soviets partitioned Germany after World War II, nearly 5,000 Latter-day Saints were caught behind the Iron Curtain without the supervision and support of the institutional church.<sup>102</sup>

The strategy undertaken by the church to gain admission of its missionaries and recognition of the church in East Germany was repeated emphasis that the church and its members were "good citizens" who represented no threat to the Communist regime.<sup>103</sup> The church used its apolitical orientation to full advantage, emphasizing that it had no interest in supporting counter-revolution or political reform in East Germany, but desired only to proselytize and provide funds and other institutional support so that Latter-day Saints in East Germany would have access to

the full range of LDS programs and services.<sup>104</sup> In the mid-1970s, it succeeded in obtaining exit visas for East German Latter-day Saints to attend church conferences in West Germany and the United States,<sup>105</sup> by promising that none of them would defect to the West.<sup>106</sup> The East German Saints were instructed that the future activities of the church in East Germany depended on their returning at the conclusion of the conferences, and all did.<sup>107</sup>

The church eventually built an extraordinary cooperative relationship with the East German government, receiving permission to send American missionaries and to build a number of buildings,<sup>108</sup> including a temple, thereby enabling the East German Saints to participate in the most sacred aspect of Latter-day Saint worship.<sup>109</sup> In 1988, the church received government permission not only to send American missionaries into East Germany, but to call East German missionaries on two-year missions outside East Germany, in Argentina, Canada, Chile, Great Britain and the United States.<sup>110</sup>

The LDS church has consistently followed this accommodationist policy for decades all over the world. It enjoyed as much growth under rightist dictatorships in South America as it has under the liberal democratic regimes that succeeded them. During President Hinckley's tour of Africa in March 1998, he issued to the President of Ghana, who originally came to power in a military coup, the familiar assurance that Latter-day Saints are "good citizens" who obey the law and represent no threat to the government of their country. In contrast to conservative Christians, who oppose most-favored nation trading status for China as a lever against its persecution of Christians,<sup>111</sup> the Latter-day Saints are sending English teachers and folk dancers to China at their own expense, to

show the Chinese government that they have nothing to fear from us.

Both inside and outside the United States, the LDS church strongly encourages obedience to the existing political order and condemns extremism at both ends of the political spectrum. “Let no man break the laws of the land,” states the LDS *Doctrine & Covenants*, “for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land.”<sup>112</sup> And just in case anyone misunderstands, the scripture continues, “Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet.”<sup>113</sup> To be sure, Latter-day Saints are not religiously obligated to uphold evil or unjust laws; LDS scripture elsewhere suggests that Latter-day Saints are not required to sustain governments that do not respect basic human rights.<sup>114</sup> Still, this rule is an exception, a release of individual members from the more general rule of obedience to and respect for all laws.<sup>115</sup> Revolutionaries and activists are rare among the Latter-day Saints, and the church itself rarely deviates from its course of political accommodation in service to its mission of preaching the Gospel.

That is not to say that the LDS church is not interested in changing society, but only that it is generally uninterested in devoting its resources to effecting such change through political activism. Political change, if it is to come about at all, will occur indirectly, as the result of world’s gradual embrace of the fullness of the Gospel, and the church is for the most part content to effect that embrace within existing political and governmental structures.

#### 4.

Latter-day Saints occupy an ironic middle ground in the culture war. They have little in

common with the cultural left beyond a sensitivity to the plight of minorities, and they are frequently lumped with conservative Christians as targets of criticism by the left. Nevertheless, the conservative Christians who dominate the cultural right are not as sensitive to the situation of religious minorities in general, and they are intolerant of Latter-day Saints in particular. Additionally, conservative Christians are far more invested than Latter-day Saints in using the power of government to alter social and cultural norms so that they are more supportive of their religious beliefs.

What difference should that make? I draw two conclusions. First, the cultural right should not take Latter-day Saint support for granted in the culture war. Latter-day Saints have a fundamentally different normative conception of church/state relations than do conservative Christians. They are generally uninterested in re-establishing a “Christian Nation” through political activism, especially when the activists most interested in that project do not consider Latter-day Saints to be Christians. The sensitivity of Latter-day Saints to the plight of religious and other minorities in the United States also makes them unlikely supporters of many items on the conservative Christian agenda, and potential allies on these issues with the cultural left.

Second, Latter-day Saints themselves should be wary of uncritically adopting the agenda of the cultural right, even though they share some cultural attitudes with conservative Christians. While life for Latter-day Saints would certainly be easier if society had cultural norms that affirmed our culturally conservative beliefs instead of undermining them, the cultural norms advanced by conservative Christians are not necessarily an improvement on the secular status quo. Sec-

ular background assumptions may well be easier for Latter-day Saints to cope with than the dangers that would attend government endorsement of conservative Christian religion, particularly in the public schools. In any event, it is far from clear that Latter-day Saint interests are better served by a public morality defined by a majoritarian religious movement little concerned about minority rights, instead of a secular morality that disdains religion as anachronistic and irrelevant, but nevertheless is committed at least formally to protecting the rights of religious minorities.

In the end, the discomfiting reality for Latter-day Saints is that they are caught out in the open of the culture war, not welcome in

the trenches of either side. From the standpoint of the left, the sensitivity to minorities that we share with them is simply not enough to overcome the broad range of issues on which our views are unquestionably conservative. That same sensitivity to minorities, however, along with theological difference and political neutrality, prevents us from becoming allies of the cultural right.

So it is that Latter-day Saints occupy the cultural no-man's land between left and right. That place is uncomfortable, inhospitable and dangerous. Nevertheless, it is where we are and, ironically, where we seem to be thriving.

### Notes

1. "The Technology of War," 29 *Encyclopedia Britannica* 585 (15th ed. 1987).
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. See James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).
5. Ibid., p. 42.
6. Ibid., pp. 44, 46.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., pp. 44-45.
9. Ibid., pp. 42, 43.
10. Ibid., p. 47.
11. In *Culture Wars*, Hunter notes that Latter-day Saints were among the founding associations forming the conservative "Religious Network for Equality for Women" in 1976 (p. 100); groups Latter-day Saints with evangelical Protestants, charismatic Catholics, and orthodox Jews in their attitudes on abortion (pp. 129-30); suggests that conservative Catholics, evangelical Protestants, and Latter-day Saints are equally concerned about the secularization of America (p. 145); and observes that conservative Catholics, evangelical Protestants, and Latter-day Saints "generally view the survival of the bourgeois family as essential, not just because it is ordained by God, but because it is believed to foster social harmony." (p. 181).
12. Dean Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).
13. See, e.g., "The Family: A Proclamation to the World (hereinafter "The Family")," ¶8 (September 23, 1995), reprinted at LDS Church Homepage (last visited May 19, 1998), <<http://www.lds.org/Policy/Family.html>>:  

Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. . . . By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.
14. See, e.g., "The Family," ¶¶ 5, 8 and 9.

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15. See *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* §89 (1989) (1835) [hereinafter *Doctrine and Covenants*].
16. “Abortion” in *The General Handbook of Instructions* (hereinafter *General Handbook*) at 11-3 to 11-4 (1989) [hereinafter *General Handbook*] describes abortion as a “revolting” and “sinful” practice and instructs members to consider undergoing an abortion only in cases in which the mother’s life or health is seriously threatened, the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest, or the fetus is unlikely to survive birth. See also “The Family,” ¶5: “We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God’s eternal plan.”
17. See, e.g., “The Family,” ¶1: “[M]arriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God.”; *ibid.*, ¶3: “Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”; *ibid.*, ¶5 “[T]he sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between a man and a woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.”
18. See Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987), pp. 212, 214; Merlin B. Brinkerhoff, Jeffery C. Jacob and Marlene M. Mackie, “Mormonism and the Moral Majority Make Strange Bedfellows?: An Exploratory Critique,” *Review of Religious Research* 28 (1987): 236, 238, 239; Armand L. Mauss, “Assimilation and Ambivalence: The Mormon Reaction to Americanization,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22 (1998): 30, 41, 42.
19. Brinkerhoff, Jacob and Mackie, “Mormonism and the Moral Majority,” p. 246. See also Albert J. Menendez, *Evangelicals at the Ballot Box* 224 (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1996), observing that Latter-day Saints and Southern Baptists constitute the two most politically conservative religious voting blocs in Congress.
20. See Part 1.
21. See Part 2.
22. See Part 3.
23. See Part 4.
24. Hunter, *Culture Wars*, p. 43.
25. Compare Mark G. Emerson, “Methodology for Religious Studies of Cities in the United States,” pp. 3-4 (unpublished ms., n.d.), suggesting that in the study of religious denominations in the United States, Roman Catholics and Latter-day Saints should be placed in their own groups, and conservative Protestants should be placed in a group denominated “Fundamental/Evangelical/Pentecostal Protestants,” defined either by belief in the Bible as the “inerrant, infallible Word of God,” or belief in the “gifts of the spirit, most notably the power to heal and to speak in tongues.”

26. See *Late Corp. of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States*, 136 U.S. 1 (1890); *Murphy v. Ramsey*, 114 U.S. 15 (1885); *Reynolds v. United States*, 98 U.S. 145 (1878).

27. See *Davis v. Beason*, 133 U.S. 333 (1890).

28. For accounts of the federal government's campaign against the Latter-day Saints over polygamy, see James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2d. rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1992), pp. 399-419; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter Day Saints* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1979), pp. 176-84.

29. *Doctrine and Covenants*, Official Declaration – 1, p. 291.

30. *Wilford Woodruff Journal*, vol. 9, pp. 112-14 (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983), pp. 112-14. See also vol. 9, pp.167-71, reprinted in part in *Doctrine and Covenants*, "Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto," pp. 291-92:

The Lord has Commanded me to put the following question to the Saints and those who will give Attention to it shall have the Holy Ghost to be with them to inspire them to Answer that question for themselves and the Lord has promised that the Answer will be to all alike. The question is this. Which is the wisest course for the Latter-day Saints to pursue, to continue to attempt to practice plural marriage, with the laws of the nation against it and the opposition of sixty millions of people, and at the cost of the confiscation and loss of all the Temples, and the stopping of the ordinances therein . . . , and the imprisonment of the First Presidency and the Twelve and the heads of families in the Church, and the confiscation of personal property of all the people . . . . Confusion would reign . . . , and many men would be made prisoners. This trouble would have come upon the whole Church, and we should have been compelled to stop the practice.

Or After doing and Suffering what we have through our adherence to this principle to cease the Practice and submit to the law and through doing so have the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers at home so they Can instruct the People and attend to the Duties of the church, also leave the Temples in the hands of the Saints so they Can attend to the ordinances of the Gospel. . . . Now the inspiration of the Lord will reveal to any person which Course wisdom would dictate us to pursue. [Spelling modernized.]

For accounts of how the nineteenth century church dealt with the dilemma of faithfulness versus survival, see Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, pp. 419-22; Frederick Mark Gedicks, "The Integrity of Survival: A Mormon Response to Stanley Hauerwas," *DePaul Law Review* 42 (1992): 167.

31. See, e.g., Douglas Laycock, "The Religious Freedom Restoration Act," *Brigham Young University Law Review* 221 (1993): 222-24.

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32. Quoted in Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, p. 136.
33. For accounts of the persecutions in Missouri and Illinois, see *ibid.*, pp. 129-45, 193-234 *passim*; Arrington and Bitton, *The Mormon Experience*, pp. 44-98 *passim*.
34. Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? – A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997), pp. 12-13: “For many Latter-day Saints, [the expulsions from New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois] are not yet ancient history. The murders, the rapes and the burnings are still a deeply felt part of our family heritage. Many still cherish the memory of each nineteenth century outrage committed against their forebears. . . .” See, e.g., Dallin H. Oaks, Testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee 35 (September 18, 1992). Oaks notes that his ancestors immigrated to America “as refugees from religious persecution in their native lands,” that most of them “suffered with the Mormons in their earliest persecutions,” and that his third great-grandmother was among those expelled from Missouri and Illinois, and later “died on the plains of Iowa, a martyr to her faith” (p. 35). He recalls that his grandfather’s oldest sister was sentenced to three and a half months in the territorial penitentiary for refusing to testify against her husband in a polygamy prosecution (p. 36).
35. See Roof and McKinney, *American Mainline Religion*, pp. 191-95; Mauss, “Assimilation and Ambivalence,” p. 39. Although overall, Latter-day Saints are more supportive than Roman Catholics of civil liberties for unpopular minorities, they are slightly less supportive than Catholics of civil liberties for homosexuals. See Roof and McKinney, *American Mainline Religion*, pp. 192-93.
36. Brinkerhoff, Jacob and Mackie, “Mormonism and the Moral Majority,” pp. 240, 242. These authors note, however, that “while Mormons appear to be more tolerant of Conservative Christians than the conservatives are of them, the absolute social distance scores are still high, indicating only a degree of acceptance on the part of Mormons for the Conservative Christians.” (p. 242)
37. Roof and McKinney, *American Mainline Religion*, pp. 197-200; Mauss, “Assimilation and Ambivalence,” p. 41. See also “Myth-Conceptions” about the Church, LDS Church Home Page (last visited May 19, 1998) <[http://www.lds.org/Global\\_Media\\_Guide/Myth-Conceptions.html](http://www.lds.org/Global_Media_Guide/Myth-Conceptions.html)>: “We repudiate efforts to deny to any person his or her inalienable dignity and rights on the abhorrent and tragic theory of the superiority of one race or color over another.” Mauss reports that levels of racial tolerance seem to be somewhat less among LDS converts than among those raised in the church. Mauss, “Assimilation and Ambivalence,” p. 41. Brinkerhoff, Jacob and Mackie, “Mormonism and the Moral Majority,” report that the statement, “It is a sin to discriminate against people because of their ethnicity,” failed to differentiate Latter-day Saints from conservative Protestants and other religious groups. (p. 238)
38. See *Doctrine and Convenants*, Official Declaration – 2, pp. 293-94.

39. Lois M. Collins, "Bridge racial barriers, Pres. Hinckley says," *Deseret News*, Apr. 25, 1998, p. A1 col. 1, A10 col. 1.

40. 475 U.S. 503 (1986).

41. Menendez, *Evangelicals at the Ballot Box*, p. 235.

42. *Ibid.*

43. 494 U.S. 872 (1990).

44. 117 S.Ct. 2157 (1997).

45. Oaks, Testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, vol. 35, p. 30.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

48. 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

49. See *Planned Parenthood of S.E. Penn. v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992).

50. Phillip E. Johnson, "Afterword," *Nexus 2* (Fall 1997):169, 173. See also *ibid.* at 169, 170:

The package of decisions [i.e., *Boerne*; *Agostini v. Felton*, 117 S.Ct. 1997 (1997); and *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 117 S.Ct. 2258 (1997)] gives just about everyone something to applaud and something to deplore, and thus makes it difficult to make a case that the Court has done something terrible that justifies some drastic response. . . . Even conservative Christians are divided over whether we have more to complain about or to cheer about in the current decisions, and also over whether we really want to trust our liberty to a Congress that can overrule the judiciary.

51. See, e.g., Jay Alan Sekulow and John Tuskey, "City of Boerne v. Flores: The Justices Know Best," *Nexus 2* (Fall 1997): 51, 53.

52. See, e.g., "Supreme Court strikes Religious Freedom Restoration Act: Amending the Constitution is the only way to restore America's liberty protections" (June 25, 1997) <<http://www.cc.org/publications/ccnews/ccnews97.html#rfra>>; "Christian Coalition Applauds Protection for Religious Freedom in Federal Workplace: Calls for Religious Freedom Everywhere Else, Too" (last visited May 1997) <<http://www.cc.org/publications/ccnews/ccnews97.html#fedwork>>.

The RFA is supported by the American Center for Law and Justice, the Catholic Alliance, the Christian Coalition, Concerned Women of American, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Salvation Army, the Traditional Values

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Coalition, and the U.S. Family Network. See Tom Strode, "Supporters, Foes of RFA Wrestle over Its Impact" (last visited July 25, 1997) <<http://www.erlc.com/RLiberty/RFAmend/1997/725Wrestle.htm>>; 144 *Cong. Rec.* 39, H1838, H1844 (1998) (statement of Rep. Istook).

53. Testimony of Rep. Ernest Istook, *Congressional Record* 144 (1998): 38, H1770, criticizing *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577 (1992) and *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38 (1985). Rep. Istook said, "We have had a lot of senseless decisions from the U.S. Supreme Court when it comes to prayer in public schools. . . ." (H1774).

54. See, e.g., Statement of Rep. Istook (*Congressional Record* 144 [1989]: 38 H1770), criticizing *County of Allegheny v. ACLU*, 492 U.S. 39 [1989] and inability "to have the Ten commandments [sic] displayed in public places, or a nativity scene, a menorah, or it might be an emblem of some other religious holiday at an appropriate time of celebration" (1774).

55. Testimony of Rep. Istook before the House Judiciary Committee, 1997 WL 465241 (July 22, 1997), endorsing *Marsh v. Chambers*, 463 U.S. 783 (1983); *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the Univ. of Vir.*, 115 S.Ct. 2510 (1995).

56. See, e.g., statement of Rep. Istook, *Congressional Record* 144 (1998): 39, H1840, 1842, and statement of Rep. Blunt (H1841).

57. Cf. Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, "Conclusion: The Christian Right in Campaign '96" in Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, eds., *God at the Grassroots 1996: The Christian Right in the 1996 Elections* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), pp. 255, 267: "Recent efforts by the Christian Right leaders to frame many issues in terms of discrimination against Christians . . . may prove counterproductive. It is difficult to convince most Americans, themselves Christians, that the large Christian majority in America suffers from widespread discrimination."

58. The depth of these differences may be more apparent than real; conservative Protestants and Latter-day Saints who have attempted genuine conversation about these issues are often surprised by the amount of theological agreement. See, e.g., Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*

59. See, e.g., The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Lutherans – What We Believe (last visited May 19, 1998) <<http://www.lcms.org/www/lcms/what.html>>; The Baptist Faith and Message – A Statement Adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention (last visited May 19, 1998) <<http://www.utm.edu/martinarea/fbc/bfm.html>>.

60. *The Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 1 [hereinafter *Articles of Faith*], in *The Pearl of Great Price: A Selection from the Revelations, Translations, and Narrations of the Joseph Smith, First Prophet, Seer, and Revelator to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 60 (1989) (1851) [hereinafter *The Pearl of Great Price*].

61. *Core Beliefs and Doctrines – Godhead* (1996), LDS Home Page (last visited May 19, 1998) <[http://www.lds.org/Global\\_Media\\_Guide/Core\\_Beliefs\\_and\\_Doctrines.html](http://www.lds.org/Global_Media_Guide/Core_Beliefs_and_Doctrines.html)>. Stanley Hauerwas suggested to me that many conservative Protestants are actually so focused on Jesus Christ to the exclusion of the Father and the Holy Ghost that they may be closer on this issue to Latter-day Saints than they are to Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants.
62. See Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1992, vol. 2, pp. 548-49 (entry for “God the Father”).
63. See, e.g., Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, p. 97: “Evangelicals are determined to maintain the distinction between the Creator and the creation.”
64. Quoted in Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, p. 549. Joseph Smith also taught this doctrine. See The King Follett Discourse in Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1972), pp. 342, 345-46. Although this teaching has not, strictly speaking, been canonized, it is “so widely accepted by Latter-day Saints that this technical point has become moot.” Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?* p. 85.
65. *Doctrine and Covenants*, supra note 15, §130:22; Ludlow, “God the Father,” p. 548.
66. Ludlow, “God the Father,” p. 548; “The Family,” ¶4. See also Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, p. 82: “The soil from which the LDS doctrine of deification grows is the belief that humans are of the divine species and that the scriptural language of divine paternity is not merely figurative.”
67. Articles of Faith 8, in *The Pearl of Great Price*, p. 60; *The Book of Mormon – Another Testament of Jesus Christ*, title page (1989) (1830) [hereinafter *The Book of Mormon*]; Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, p. 76.
68. Jan Shipps, “‘Is Mormonism Christian?’ Reflections on a Complicated Question,” 33 *Brigham Young University Studies* 33 (1993): 439, 447.
69. Stephen Robinson maintains that any such contradictions are not with the Biblical text but with the nontextual creeds through which other Christians read the text. Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, pp. 59-60.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
71. See Brinkerhoff, Jacob and Mackie, “Mormonism and the Moral Majority,” p. 238; Shipps, “Is Mormonism Christian?,” p. 454.
72. Articles of Faith 3 in *The Pearl of Great Price*, p. 60.
73. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 1, pp. 218, 219 (entry for “Born of God”).

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74. Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, pp. 175-76.
75. 2 Nephi 25:23, *The Book of Mormon*.
76. Brinkerhoff, Jacob and Mackie, "Mormonism and the Moral Majority," p. 240.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
78. *Ibid.* (data citations omitted).
79. See, e.g., Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, pp. 401-02; Arrington and Bitton, *History of the Latter-day Saints*, pp. 177-80; John T. Noonan, Jr., "The End of Free Exercise?" *DePaul Law Review* 42 (1992): 567, 580.
80. In *Late Corp. of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States*, (136 U.S. 1, 48, 49 [1890]), the court described plural marriage as "a crime against the laws and abhorrent to the sentiments and feelings of the civilized world," a "barbarous practice . . . contrary to the spirit of Christianity and of the civilization which Christianity has produced in the West." In *Davis v. Beason* (133 U.S. 333, 341 [1890]), the court wrote that by threatening monogamous marriage ("the union for life of one man and one woman in the holy estate of matrimony"), "bigamy and polygamy are crimes by the laws of all civilized and Christian countries." Compare those statements with *Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church Communicator*, 38.241.170.2/communicator: "[C]hurches today are obligated to seek to overturn the sinful nature of our land and the world and discover the truth of what our Founding Fathers started – a Christian Nation." In "Was America a Christian Nation?" *Focus on the Family Newsletter*, November 23, 1996, Dr. James Dobson quoted with approval John Jay's assertion, "[I]t is the duty . . . of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers," and the opinion in *Holy Trinity Church v. United States* (143 U.S. 457 [1893]): "This is a religious people, this is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation . . . . We find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth . . . . These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation." Summit Ministries, "The Role of the Bible and Christianity in America" (last visited May 19, 1998), <[http://www.christiananswers.net/summit/amer\\_her.html#AMER\\_HER\\_L4](http://www.christiananswers.net/summit/amer_her.html#AMER_HER_L4)>, states, "When one examines history, one cannot avoid the conclusion that America was founded on Christian principles and the assumption that her citizenry would adhere to these same principles."
81. See generally Mauss, "Assimilation and Ambivalence," pp. 54, 60.
82. See generally Dallin H. Oaks, "Have You Been Saved?," *The Ensign* (May 1998), p. 55.
83. See Shipps, "Is Mormonism Christian?," pp. 456, 461-62.
84. "Business Schemes and Political Causes" in *General Handbook*, pp. 11-12.

85. See “Contemporary American Politics,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol.3, p.1107.
86. “Political Neutrality and Non-Use of Church Buildings,” First Presidency Letter dated June 9, 1988, reprinted in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol 4, p. 1733.
87. Ibid.
88. Oaks, Testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, p. 30:
- As a general rule, our church does not take positions on specific legislative initiatives pending in Congress or state legislatures. Our action in this matter is an exception to this rule. It underscores the importance we attach to this congressional initiative to restore to the free exercise of religion what a divided Supreme Court took away in *Employment Division v. Smith*.
89. Ibid., reprinted in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 4, p. 1734.
90. See Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America’s Saints* (New York: Putnam,1984), pp. 200-210.
91. See *Core Beliefs and Doctrines – Morality*, LDS Home Page, last visited May 13, 1998 <[http://www.lds.org/global\\_media\\_guide/core\\_beliefs\\_and\\_doctrines.html](http://www.lds.org/global_media_guide/core_beliefs_and_doctrines.html)>: “The Church . . . opposes abortion, pornography, gambling, and other evils.”
92. Rozell and Wilcox, “The Christian Right in the 1996 Elections,” p. 260; Ralph Reed, *Active Faith* (New York: Free Press, 1996), p. 192.
93. Jessica Lee, “Religious-right leader sets foreign policy goals,” *USA Today*, April 14, 1998, p. 6A, col.1.
94. Robert Riggs, “Government-Sponsored Prayer in the Classroom,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (1985): 43, 52.
95. Brinkerhoff, Jacob and Mackie, *Mormonism and the Moral Majority*, p. 243.
96. Quoted in Riggs, “Government-Sponsored Prayer,” p. 51.
97. See Gottlieb and Wiley, *America’s Saints*, pp. 203-04.
98. Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, p. 659; Gottlieb and Wiley, *America’s Saints*, pp. 28, 204-206.
99. Gottlieb and Wiley, *America’s Saints*, pp. 27-28, 206-209.
100. See Brinkerhoff, Jacob and Mackie, *Mormonism and the Moral Majority*, p. 244.

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101. See Thomas S. Monson, *Faith Rewarded: A Personal Account of Promise to the East German Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1996), p. 132; Thomas S. Monson, *The Church in the Changing World* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1989).
102. Monson, *Faith Rewarded*, p. 12; Monson, *Changing World*, p. 5.
103. See, e.g., Monson, *Faith Rewarded*, pp. 60, 133.
104. See *ibid.*, pp. 53, 84, 113, 126; Monson, *Changing World*, pp. 11-14.
105. See, e.g., Monson, *Faith Rewarded*, pp. 20, 49, 83.
106. See *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
107. See *ibid.*, p. 27.
108. See *ibid.*, pp. 63, 134-35, 139.
109. See *ibid.*, pp. 70, 73, 88; Monson, *Changing World*, pp. 9-10.
110. See Monson, *Faith Rewarded*, pp. 158-59; Monson, *Changing World*, pp.12-14.
111. See, e.g., “Christian Coalition Opposes MFN for China” (last modified May 21, 1997) <<http://www.cc.org/publications/ccnews/ccnews97.html#mfnc>>; “Christian Coalition to Include MFN Vote on Its 1997 Congressional Scorecard: Family Group Opposes Renewal of MFN for China” (last modified June 23, 1997). <<http://www.cc.org/publications/ccnews/ccnews97.html#mfnscore>>.
112. *Doctrine and Covenants*, §58:21; accord *Articles of Faith* 12 in *The Pearl of Great Price*, p. 60: “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, and in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.”
113. *Doctrine and Covenants*, §58:22.
114. See *Doctrine and Covenants*, §134:5: “We believe that all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside, *while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments*; and that sedition and rebellion are unbecoming every citizen *thus protected*, and should be punished accordingly.” (Emphasis added).
115. See, e.g., *Doctrine and Covenants*, §134:1: “We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them for the good and safety of society.”