2002

The Historical Debate Among Leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on the Topic of the United Nations

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THE HISTORICAL DEBATE AMONG LEADERS OF THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS ON THE TOPIC
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

by

Katie Marie Lenhard

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

The David M. Kennedy Center
Brigham Young University
August 2002
of a thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORICAL DEBATE AMONG LEADERS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS ON THE TOPIC OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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The David M. Kennedy Center
Master of Arts

Since the inception of the United Nations in 1945, leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have made public statements regarding the international peace and security organization. To the confusion of many Church members, who often look to their leaders for prophetic guidance on numerous spiritual and temporal topics, these statements have been conflicting. Some Church leaders have clearly opposed the United Nations and others have openly supported it, offering various ideological explanations for their beliefs. Yet, it is evident that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has never made an official position on the topic of the United Nations. Church members are free to exercise their agency and either oppose or support the organization as they deem necessary. Regardless of personal opinions, a relationship has emerged between the Church and the United Nations in the past few decades through joint humanitarian
efforts, as well as official and unofficial interactions. Since the United Nations is most likely a permanent fixture of the political world, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is concerned with topics of international importance, it appears this relationship will continue to blossom throughout the future.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my family, friends, and committee members for their patient guidance and constant support.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The following is an excerpt from a letter received by Brigham Young University President Merrill J. Bateman on 29 July 1996:

Until a few days ago . . . I was unaware that BYU participates in the Model United Nations program and Conference, and, moreover, consistently ranks in the top five of participating universities.

This program was instituted at BYU long before you became president. Furthermore, your duties as a General Authority over the years, may have kept you from knowing about it. And, I assume, you have not had time to study the history of, nor the intentions of those who founded the United Nations Organization after World War II. If not, and you wish to understand all of this, I will be pleased to refer you to, or furnish you with, books or materials so that you may focus on the possibility, rather the probability, that the United Nations is an integral part of those Secret Combinations President Ezra Taft Benson . . . [warns] our generation about . . .

. . . Rather than teaching our returned missionaries how to think in terms of a one world government controlled by agents of Satan, would it not be better to institute a program teaching the Constitution of the United States and how to effectively combat and get rid of the United Nations? Those behind the United Nations cannot achieve their goal of one world tyranny without abolishing the Constitution which they fully intend to do, and which Joseph Smith prophesied when he said that one day, the Constitution would “hang by a thread.”

As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a participant of the Brigham Young University Model United Nations program for several years, such statements have caused me to wonder what the leaders of the Church think about the United Nations. Research shows that many of the statements made by Church leaders on

1[Name Withheld to Protect the Privacy of the Author], Salt Lake City, to Merrill J. Bateman, Provo, 29 July 1996, Model United Nations' files, David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
the topic of the United Nations have been contradictory, which is significant because of leaders’ capacity to speak prophetically. Thus, many Latter-day Saints have been unsure about how they should approach the idea of such an organization in the present international world system. This thesis attempts to trace the historical debate among Church leaders on the topic of the United Nations. It outlines the various ideological explanations provided by Church leaders encouraging opposition to and support for the international organization since the 1940s, as well as describes the pragmatic relationship that has developed between the two global entities over the past thirty years.

The United Nations

The nations of the world sought to establish peace and to institute a permanent end to war during World War II. To this end, the United Nations, a peace and international security organization, was created on 24 October 1945 when China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and several signatory countries\(^2\) ratified its Charter.\(^3\) The Charter of the United Nations had been written in San

\(^2\)Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Belarus, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Yugoslavia.

\(^3\)The Preamble of the United Nations Charter reads:

"WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED
• to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
• to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
• to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
• to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS
Francisco, California, from 25 April to 26 June 1945 during The United Nations Conference on International Organization. Representatives of 50 countries gathered together at the conference to establish a charter, as chairman of the United States delegation Edward J. Stettinius Jr. described, “through which the nations of the world might work together in their common hope for peace.”

Although the organization was not established until the end of World War II, the foundation for the international organization had been laid several years earlier. United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt first devised the name “United Nations” on 1 January 1942 after representatives of twenty-six nations pledged their governments to continue fighting together against the Axis Powers during the war. These nations felt that a coalition of allies working together against their common enemies would prove more successful than fighting independently. When the United Nations’ Charter was finally ratified in 1945, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints did not issue an

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- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations” (United Nations, “Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations,” found at <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/preamble.htm>, accessed on 13 February 2001).


official statement on the new international body although some leaders opposed the organization and others supported it.  

*The Necessity of Education*

While no official view on the United Nations was provided to members at that time, leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were unified in their teachings following the war that the world needed faith in God and Jesus Christ more than any international organization, and that obedience to the principles of the gospel was the only hope for lasting world peace. Nevertheless, Church leaders did stress the importance of being educated about the international organization. Education allowed members to see both its weaknesses and strengths.

Many talks have been given at Brigham Young University that have provided insight into the United Nations. Similarly, many publications with predominant Latter-

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day Saint readerships have included informational articles about the organization. As early as July 1946, articles in the Church publication *The Improvement Era: The Voice of the Church* explained the basic organizational structure of the international body. The *Improvement Era* was the official monthly publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints until 1970. It regularly included commentaries on the United Nations written by G. Homer Durham, an associate professor of history and political science, the Director of the Institute of Government at the University of Utah, and a soon-to-be


11 One of six publications begun as Church auxiliary magazines between 1866 and 1902, the *Improvement Era* (1897-1970) was the official arm of the Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA, which became the young men in 1977). It followed the demise of the contributor magazine (1879-1896), an independent journal associated with the YMMIA. Joined officially to the YMMIA, the *Era* immediately became the premier adult periodical of the Church through its General Authority sponsorship and its focus on theology, history, contemporary affairs, and life in the Church. Its name reflected its sponsor’s goal to be for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual mutual improvement of its readers in a new Church era just one year after Utah achieved statehood. The *Era*’s preeminence from 1901 onward for more than half a century was in part due to the participation of the President of the Church as its principal editor; thus, its pages were often used to voice concerns important to Church leadership and to respond to queries concerning Church doctrine and LDS lifestyle. Its circulation of 2,000 in 1897 reached 275,000 when it was succeeded by the *Ensign* in January 1971” [Jay M. Todd, “Improvement Era,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 678].
prominent Church leader. Durham's column entitled "These Times" ran from August 1946 to December 1950. In January 1949, he also began a three-part series entitled "The Church and Modern Society," in which he addressed the role of the Church in regards to current political issues, including the United Nations, in light of gospel principles. In March of 1949, Durham wrote:

It is . . . important to understand the limitations as well as the possibilities of the United Nations. . . . The Assembly is a world center for political discussion. It is not a world legislature. But as a world center for political discussion it is an instrument for achieving consensus. . . . The Assembly, if nothing else, if no agreements were ever made (and there are many), outlines the current state of disagreement. To know the status of disagreement at least gives the politicians and people of the world a sense of objectives, of things to be accomplished, of the ground to be covered. This is the essence of reducing international relationships to manageable proportions. The Assembly of the United Nations is a potentially great achievement.

The Security Council, the Secretariat, the International Court of Justice, are all devices for getting to work on the problems coming to them directly, or revealed in discussions. They are human institutions.

Surrounding the Assembly and the "political" organs of the UN are over twenty specialized commissions and agencies, such as the Economic and Social Council.

In June 1950, an article written by Durham encouraged all Church members to read the Charter of the United Nations as part of this necessary education. If members of the Church did not understand the organization, then it would be to their detriment. He wrote:

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12 G. Homer Durham was a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, Managing Director of Church Historical Department, and Church Historian from 1977-1985. He was also a president of Arizona State University and a Commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Utah.


In the shuffle, the United Nations is too much forgotten and overlooked. . . . Required reading for every literate human being on this planet this month should be the Charter of the United Nations. (Why not study it in your Church history club some night?). . . .

The future of the United Nations rests with the men and women of this generation. We cannot be saved from the ravages of war in ignorance of the basic agreement it represents. We can expand the area of agreement only as we are informed as to the provision of the charter and can demand expansion and usage of its provisions. . . .

The sober facts of life are that we can only control and use that which we know. The United Nations will be used only at the whim of those immediately concerned with it unless world opinion becomes informed as to its future potential and makes effective political demand for its usage. It is an instrument worth repairing and strengthening. What does the charter provide? If you do not know, why not secure a copy and find out? Meantime, prayers for peace and wisdom must go hand in hand with knowledge. But we shall not be saved in ignorance in these times.15

It is understandable that Latter-day Saints reading these articles would assume they should pay attention to the topic of the United Nations. Additional articles educating members of the Church on the United Nations were written after Durham’s series ended. In 1960, Brigham Young University professor of political science Robert Riggs wrote an article for BYU Studies,16 the official academic journal of the university. Entitled “The United Nations as a Policy Instrument,” this article sought to educate readers on the organization’s strengths and weaknesses in influencing national policy.17


16. "BYU Studies is a publication dedicated to the correlation of revealed and discovered truth and to the conviction that the spiritual and the intellectual can be complementary and fundamentally harmonious avenues of knowledge. This periodical strives to explore scholarly perspectives on LDS topics. It is committed to seeking truth "by study and also by faith."" (Brigham Young University, "BYU Studies—Author Guidelines," found at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/authorguidelines.asp>, accessed on 24 June 2002).

17 Riggs, “Policy Instrument,” 149.
Although, these few articles emphasized a need for education, not all commentaries on the United Nations were merely for objective educational purposes. Many references to the organization made by Church leaders were meant to either dissuade or encourage members of the Church to support it. Opponents of the United Nations wanted to expose its weaknesses and prevent the support of Church members. Supporters of the United Nations desired to elucidate the good accomplished by the organization, as well as show its potential in alleviating the suffering of mankind and in combating the oppression prevalent in many societies.

_Differing Viewpoints_

Two of the most oft quoted leaders of the Church who were openly opposed to the United Nations were J. Reuben Clark Jr. and Ezra Taft Benson. In addition to being a member of the First Presidency, Clark was also a well-known lawyer, scholar, and civil servant in the United States State Department. He described himself as:

> Pro-liberty, pro-freedom . . . pro-local self-government, and pro-everything else that has made . . . the free country we have grown to be in the first 130 years of our national existence. It necessarily follows that I am anti-internationalist, anti-interventionist, anti-meddlesome-busy-bodiness in our international affairs. In the domestic field, I am anti-socialist, anti-Communist, anti-Welfare State.\(^{18}\)

This frame of mind led Clark to openly take issue with the idea of America\(^ {19}\) getting involved with an international organization like the United Nations.


\(^{19}\)References to America are intended to imply the United States. The two terms are used interchangeably throughout this thesis.
From June to August 1945, J. Reuben Clark Jr. compiled his observations of the United Nations’ Charter at the request of the editor of the *Deseret News*. Clark referred to the rough draft as a cursory analysis of the Charter and the United Nations and, for unknown reasons, he never published the manuscript. Over the years, the memorandum, as it was called, became well known in private circles of Church leaders as many individuals requested to read it. Clark lent out the manuscript several times, emphasizing that it was unfinished and the copies were to be returned to him by specific deadlines. Although Clark’s manuscript, which now resides with his personal papers in the Special Collections department of the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, was never made available to the public, his overall objections to the United Nations were understood. The contents of the manuscript became widely known through secondary sources when individuals who had borrowed it referred to the memorandum in their own talks and publications. Clark also outlined his opposition to the United Nations in an address entitled “Our Dwindling Sovereignty” given to the Fourth Annual Pi Sigma Alpha Lecture at the Institute of Government at the University of Utah on 13 February 1952.

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20 The *Deseret News* newspaper began circulation on 15 June 1850 under the direction of Brigham Young and has had uninterrupted publication since then. First a weekly newspaper, it began daily circulation on 21 November 1867. Established by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it has promoted the U.S. Constitution, truth and liberty, free enterprise, work ethic, and high moral values. From 1850 to April 1931, the news of the Church was covered in a separate Saturday section entitled “Church Section.” In 1943, the name was changed officially to *Church News*. This weekly supplement to the daily *Deseret News* covers the happenings of the Church [Wendell J. Ashton, “Deseret News,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 377; and J. Malan Heslop, “Church News,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 281].

21 Two such individuals were Ezra Taft Benson on 11 March 1953 and Ernest L. Wilkinson on 25 September 1961. Copies of their requests can be found in Clark’s papers in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, MSS 202 Box 231.
Ezra Taft Benson was another opponent of the United Nations. Benson was an apostle and future President of the Church, as well as the United States Secretary of Agriculture during the 1950s. A compilation of Benson’s talks and ideas edited by Latter-day Saint author Jerreld L. Newquist was published in 1969. Entitled *An Enemy Hath Done This*, this book dealt with many subjects important to Latter-day Saints, including national and international political topics such as the United Nations. Many of Benson’s objections to the United Nations were included in Newquist’s collection, such as: “We should get out of the U.N. and get the U.N. out of the United States.” Benson openly supported and agreed with J. Reuben Clark Jr. on the topic of the United Nations even though the conservative anti-United Nations outlook was not widely accepted after World War II, a time when many individuals throughout the world were looking forward to peace. The sentiments of Clark and Benson led many members of the Church to oppose the United Nations.

Since the 1940s, other leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have openly supported the United Nations. Positive commentaries on the United Nations were regularly included in the series written for *The Improvement Era* by G. Homer Durham. These articles appeared to have the endorsement of Church leaders since the editors of *The Improvement Era* consisted of the current Church President and an apostle.


which at the time were Church President George Albert Smith and Apostle John A. Widtsoe.

Other Church leaders also endorsed the United Nations. In early June 1953, Church President David O. McKay was one of 180 national leaders in attendance at a two-day conference in Washington, D.C. During the conference, McKay was present at several meetings held by United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and other foreign affairs officials. In an article about these meetings appearing on the front page of the 5 June 1953 edition of the Deseret News, McKay is quoted as agreeing with Dulles when he said that “there is enough good in the U.N. to justify its existence.”

Conflicting Messages

Obviously, leaders of the Church both opposed and supported the organization, although it appears that the anti-United Nations sentiment was more adamantly and openly expressed. One example was when Jerreld L. Newquist published a compilation of statements in 1964 made by Church leaders on various issues, including the topic of the United Nations. His book, entitled Prophets, Principles, and National Survival, was heavily endorsed by Ezra Taft Benson to members of the Church on at least three occasions as “the consistent position taken over the years by the prophets of the Church


on vital issues facing this nation." Benson vigorously encouraged members to read the book, which only contained statements that were overtly against the United Nations. Newquist’s failure to include any positive statements made by Church leaders regarding the international organization led many members to believe that the Church, as a body, officially opposed the United Nations. This directly contradicted the teachings of other Church leaders who supported the organization. The blatant diversity of opinions among Church leaders on the issue of the United Nations was potentially disconcerting for Church members.

*Discovering the Relationship*

Outlining the historical debate against and for the organization, as well as discovering the relationship that has emerged between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the United Nations is intriguing for those interested in the Church’s involvement in international affairs. The subject has not been well researched to date, yet it is deserving of attention. Its importance is clear when the potential good resulting from Church interaction with the United Nations is realized. Other topics that arise naturally in regards to this issue and that must be addressed include twentieth-century Church history, the divine destiny of America, isolationism versus internationalism, and how Latter-day Saints are affected when leaders differ on political issues.

A basic doctrinal background is also necessary for the reader to understand the role of Church leaders and the destiny of America in Latter-day Saint theology. This thesis attempts to provide the necessary framework and concentrates on the writings of

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mainstream Latter-day Saints, primarily twentieth-century Church leaders, since these statements have directly affected the attitudes of members. Also, to help understand the ideological debates about the United Nations between Church leaders, it is helpful to look at a foreshadowing subject about which much analysis is available: The Church's response to the League of Nations, the precursor to the United Nations.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that the gospel of Jesus Christ embraces all truth and knowledge revealed to mankind and is the method by which a person may attain salvation. In the meridian of time, Christ organized His Church, or the kingdom of God on earth, and called apostles to be special witnesses of His divinity. These men devoted their lives to teaching His gospel as they sought to bring salvation to all inhabitants of the earth through the power of the priesthood, the "exclusive right to act in the name of God as his authorized agents to perform ordinances for the purpose of opening certain spiritual blessings to all individuals." Following the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the eventual death of His apostles, Latter-day Saints believe a period of apostasy occurred when the priesthood was lost and man-made doctrines and practices perverted much of the gospel. The kingdom of God on earth can only exist if the priesthood of God is present, therefore, Latter-day Saints believe that it


was taken from the earth at that time. There followed what many historians refer to as the Dark Ages and then the Renaissance, a time of experimentation and achievement throughout the world. During this historical period, a religious reformation took place as individuals aspired to practice the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Latter-day Saints believe that a reformation of existing religions was insufficient and only a complete restoration of those things which had been lost could bring the kingdom of God back to the earth.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints asserts that this necessary restoration had its early beginnings in upstate New York in the spring of 1820 when a young boy named Joseph Smith was visited by God and Jesus Christ. Through this experience and subsequent visits by other heavenly messengers, Smith was instructed and prepared to be a prophet of God. Latter-day Saints believe he was given gold plates which contained ancient records of the early inhabitants of the Americas that testified of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Smith translated these plates into The Book of Mormon. He was also instrumental in restoring the ancient priesthood authority and the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth. As a result of this restoration, Christ’s Church was organized once again on 6 April 1830 and later became known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Jesus Christ directs His Church through revelation found in scripture and

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32 In Latter-day Saint theology there are three distinct members of the Godhead: “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost” (First Article of Faith, The Pearl of Great Price).


34 Scripture used by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes The Holy Bible, The Book of Mormon, The Doctrine and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price. The Holy Bible contains the writings of early prophets of God in the Old and New Testaments. The Book of Mormon is described above. The Doctrine and Covenants is a collection of modern-day revelations received by Joseph Smith and subsequent prophets. The Pearl of Great Price consists of the Books of Abraham and Moses, translated by
modern-day revelation received by prophets. These prophets\textsuperscript{35} and their counselors make up the highest governing quorum of the Church, the First Presidency, and united with twelve apostles, they have governed the temporal kingdom of God since the restoration of the gospel.\textsuperscript{36} As in times past, these leaders teach of the divinity of Jesus Christ and those things which are necessary for the salvation of the world. They will guide His Church until the millennium when Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth to rule in righteousness over the kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{37} At this time, Satan will be bound and peace will finally be enjoyed by the inhabitants of the earth as Christ reigns from two geographic centers of Zion,\textsuperscript{38} the Jerusalem in the Holy Land and a New Jerusalem found in America.

\textsuperscript{35}The fifteen modern-day prophets are Joseph Smith (1830-44), Brigham Young (1847-77), John Taylor (1880-87), Wilford Woodruff (1889-98), Lorenzo Snow (1898-1901), Joseph F. Smith (1901-18), Heber J. Grant (1918-45), George Albert Smith (1945-51), David O. McKay (1951-70), Joseph Fielding Smith (1970-72), Harold B. Lee (1972-73), Spencer W. Kimball (1973-85), Ezra Taft Benson (1985-94), Howard W. Hunter (1994-95), and Gordon B. Hinckley (1995-).

\textsuperscript{36}Leaders of the Church, referred to as General Authorities, “are men called to serve at the highest levels of leadership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As general priesthood officers of the Church, they have Churchwide rather than local stewardship and may receive assignments anywhere in the world. In order of precedence, the General Authorities include the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, quorums of the seventy, and Presiding Bishopric. . . . Although they have general administrative authority and are entitled to inspiration regarding the governing of Church affairs, General Authorities respect the right each member of the Church has to receive personal revelation” [Marvin K. Gardner, “General Authorities,” in Encyclopedia of Mormonism, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 538-40].


\textsuperscript{38}Latter-day Saints also use the term Zion to describe any group of God’s followers, the pure in heart, or any place where such a group lives.
The role of revelation is integral to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Latter-day Saints believe that every decision can and should be tested by the standards of the gospel. As an apostle, Joseph Fielding Smith stated the scriptures “are the measuring rods the Lord has given us by which we are to measure every doctrine, every theory and teaching.”39 Latter-day Saints often turn to their leaders to help them understand the scriptures and gospel principles. They believe that the only man on the earth who speaks for Jesus Christ and in behalf of the Church is the living prophet. He is the most important source of revelation at any given time, surpassing past prophets and even scripture. Ezra Taft Benson taught “when speaking under the influence of the Holy Ghost, [the living prophet’s] words are scripture.”40 Blessings come by following the prophet and his counselors, whereas rejecting them will result in suffering.41

Some members have felt that revelation should be restricted to spiritual matters. Yet Apostle John A. Widtsoe affirmed that “Church leaders feel themselves free and under obligation to discourse on any and every need of the day and of man, no matter under what man-given name it appears. They would be poor leaders if silence was enjoined upon them within any field of human interest. Indeed, the very life of the

39 Joseph Fielding Smith, Signs of the Times (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1952), 22.

40 Ezra Taft Benson, “First Day–Morning Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1963), 17.

Church is involved in this free discussion of man's welfare." J. Reuben Clark Jr. taught members of the Church:

There is no limitation as to the matters to be covered by that scripture of which the Lord speaks. Having in mind that this Church... deals with temporal as well as with spiritual affairs, I submit that whatever comes from the voices of those who hold that authority is scripture, no matter of what they speak... Anything and everything that affects the well-being of us Latter-day Saints or that has to do with our religion, may become a part of that scripture... 43

The Divine Destiny of America

One intrinsic belief of the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the divine destiny of America and the sacredness of the United States Constitution. Because America was the site of the restoration of the gospel and is the location of the New Jerusalem, it is considered a promised land. Latter-day Saints believe the authors of the United States Constitution recognized and accepted Jesus Christ as the Savior of mankind. 44 Early Church leader George Q. Cannon felt that "there is no liberty that a human being can desire, neither a right that can be exercised properly, that we do not have under the Constitution of our land. It needs no amendment about it; it is broad enough, if interpreted in its true spirit, to cover the individual... and


44 David O. McKay, "The Light that Shines in Darkness," Improvement Era, November 1942, 750.
furnish freedom for all.” A long period of preparation preceded the restoration of the gospel. In a 1978 *Ensign* article, Church President Spencer W. Kimball affirmed:

The Pilgrims and other Europeans were inspired to find this American haven of refuge and thus people this land with honest and God-fearing citizens. Washington and his fellows were inspired to revolt from England and bring political liberty to this land, along with the more valuable treasure of religious liberty so that the soil might be prepared for the seed of truth when it should again be sown.

These individuals were foreordained and prepared to organize a society in which the kingdom of God could be established. In the 6 April 1930 *Centennial Message to the Church*, the First Presidency declared, “It was not by chance that the Puritans left their native land and sailed away to the shores of New England, and that others followed later. They were . . . predestined to establish the God-given system of government under which we live. . . .”

Latter-day Saints also believe no other nation nor governmental system would have allowed the freedoms which were requisite for the restoration of the gospel of Jesus

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46 Since 1971 the full title of the official monthly magazine for the English-speaking adult members of the Church is *The Ensign of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Printed in ten regular issues and two General Conference issues (May and November), the *Ensign* is the publication link between Church headquarters and its adult members and friends, serving as a general-interest magazine, house organ, and instructional guide. It replaced the *Improvement Era, Instructor*, and the *Relief Society Magazine* in serving members of the Church eighteen years and older” [Jay M. Todd, “Ensign,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 460].


Christ. In fact, they view the democratic government that exists in the United States as inspired and unequaled by any other form of government in the world.\textsuperscript{50} Ezra Taft Benson taught that “only in [America], under this God-inspired Constitution, under an environment of freedom, could it have been possible to have established the Church and kingdom of God and restored the gospel in its fullness.”\textsuperscript{51} Thus, Latter-day Saints are instilled with a sense of reverence for the United States of America and its Constitution.

Church leaders have entrusted members with the great responsibility of safeguarding the Constitution\textsuperscript{52} and promoting its principles to all nations of the world. As a member of the First Presidency, David O. McKay declared that “men and women who live in America, ‘the land of Zion,’ have a responsibility greater than that yet borne by any other people. Theirs is the duty, the obligation to preserve not only the Constitution of the land but the Christian principles from which sprang that immortal document.”\textsuperscript{53} Basic constitutional principles are not secular, but eternal truths inspired by God.\textsuperscript{54} They are to be enjoyed by all peoples and nations. America is to be an ensign unto all nations through lawfulness, peace and the persuasion of a righteous example. Apostle and later Church President Harold B. Lee taught: “The question is . . . whether or not we can make a Republican form of government work, not merely for America but for the

\textsuperscript{53}McKay, “Light that Shines,” 750.
world, as all other nations under Heaven may be persuaded of the blessings of freedom enjoyed by the people of this land and to adopt similar governmental systems.55

The Political Neutrality of the Church

Their belief in the destiny of America clearly encourages American members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to be politically active and patriotic. Director of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University, Ray C. Hillam and graduate student David M. Andrews asserted in 1985:

Church members are enjoined by scripture and their prophets to be good citizens, to vote according to their conscience during elections, and to participate in the political process. . . . They are likewise enjoined by scripture to be “anxiously engaged” in the cause of peace. Our constitutional system requires citizen participation in all its affairs, including foreign relations . . . The proper concern of Latter-day Saints is . . . that all participate and exercise their capacity as wise moral agents, “free to choose for themselves.”56

Church leaders, primarily in the twentieth century, have advocated that all members actively participate in political affairs. Ezra Taft Benson taught Latter-day Saints to test every governmental policy by its effect on the “morale and character of the people.”57 Members are prompted to be good citizens and to vote for those leaders who they feel have their best interests in mind. The First Presidency has exhorted members to “study the issues . . . carefully and prayerfully and then vote for those they believe will most nearly carry out their ideas of good government. Latter-day Saints are under special


obligation to seek out and then uphold leaders who will act with integrity and are 'wise,'
'good,' and 'honest.' . . ."  

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints maintains a position of neutrality on political matters while encouraging its members to think for themselves. In 1963, the First Presidency wrote, "We deplore the presumption of some politicians . . . who undertake to align the Church and its leadership with their partisan views. We encourage our members to exercise the right of citizenship, to vote according to their own convictions, but no one should seek or pretend to have our approval of their adherence to any extreme ideologies." The Church respects the right of all individuals to express their own political views and loyalties and does not intend to interfere with their political franchise.

Even though the Church practices political neutrality, leaders of the Church are able to receive revelation and give guidance on political affairs. Nineteenth century Church President John Taylor taught that revelations about government were as necessary as any other subject. God can dictate all things to the inhabitants of the earth, including political, social, and religious matters. Yet, according to Secretary to the First Presidency Francis M. Gibbons, Church leaders have gradually withdrawn from the


public arena during the twentieth century and tried to refrain from speaking out on political issues, except when the Church considers them to be of a moral nature.\textsuperscript{62} Joseph Anderson, former secretary to the First Presidency, wrote:

The question has occasionally been asked by Latter-day Saints when the First Presidency has issued a statement to the Church whether they were setting forth their opinion or whether the Latter-day Saints should accept the pronouncement as the word of the Lord. In other words, would the members be out of harmony with the Lord’s will if they acted contrary thereto.

Members of the Church, and others, have their free agency to accept or reject the advice of the First Presidency. There is no coercion ... when these brethren unitedly give advice and counsel to the Church, whether it is over their signatures or by oral expression, they are speaking for the Lord. Those who think their understanding is better are at liberty to act as they see fit, but they must accept full accountability for their actions.\textsuperscript{63}

\textit{Making Political Decisions}

Latter-day Saint historian and former Brigham Young University professor James B. Allen noted that forming opinions on political issues can cause frustration for many Church members trying to adhere to their leaders’ counsel.\textsuperscript{64} Some members desire to know if scriptures outline any discourse on a given subject or if any leaders have received revelation and taken a stand on the issue before they make up their own minds. If they disagree with what has been said by Church leaders, confusion and frustration

\textsuperscript{62}Francis M. Gibbons, \textit{The Expanding Church: Three Decades of Remarkable Growth Among the Latter-day Saints, 1970-1999} (Bountiful, Utah: Horizons Publishers & Distributors, Inc., 1999), 132. Such topics include pornography, child abuse, gambling, racial equality, aids, same-gender marriage, The Equal Rights Amendment, and the M-X Missile project. For a detailed look at the Church’s reaction to these issues, see chapter 4 of \textit{The Expanding Church: Three Decades of Remarkable Growth Among the Latter-day Saints, 1970-1999}.

\textsuperscript{63}Joseph Anderson, \textit{Prophets I Have Known} (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1973), 10.

could result. Some Latter-day Saints might justify their opposing views by claiming that leaders should not speak about or even comment on any political matters if the Church is truly politically neutral. Others might struggle with reconciling their opinions because, as described by author Sheri L. Dew, they trust that “living oracles are not only authorized, but are obligated to give counsel . . . on any subject which is vital to the welfare of this people and the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.” And, some individuals, like Jerreld L. Newquist, even believe Church members are out of harmony with the gospel if they disagree with a political statement a Church leader has made. Newquist taught:

A person who is in harmony in his life, in thought and practice, with the gospel and its requirements, who loves truth so well that he is willing to surrender to it, will recognize a message from the Lord. . . . Thus, the burden of proof is upon the hearer, not alone upon the speaker. Whoever quibbles about the validity of a message of the prophet would do well to engage in a serious self-examination. . . . Perhaps he is not “in tune” with truth. Perhaps he does not live the law of the gospel in such manner as to respond to the message of truth. . . .

Obviously, a delicate balance exists between the right of Latter-day Saints to exercise their agency and think for themselves and the desire to strictly follow the guidance of the scriptures and their leaders. Also, while there is much commentary on the propriety of Church members disagreeing with Church leaders on political and other issues, there is much less available on how Church members should respond to a divided

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64 Dew, Ezra Taft Benson, 371.
65 Ibid., 427.
Church leadership. As previously noted, one example of this problem is Church leaders’ disagreement on the proper view and role of the United Nations. A subject which acts as historical precedence for this topic is the controversy between Church leaders over the League of Nations in the early part of the twentieth century. A discussion of the transition of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from an isolated body to a great international presence is important in understanding the League of Nations controversy.
CHAPTER 3
FROM ISOLATIONISM TO INTERNATIONALISM

Once considered a predominantly American institution, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has become a global entity over the past fifty years. From 1947 to 2000, the number of Church members has increased from approximately one million individuals living in 29 countries to eleven million in 162 countries. By May 2002, there were 112 temples and more than 330 missions around the world. Although it was more inwardly focused in the nineteenth century, the Church has increasingly looked outward throughout the twentieth century. Interestingly, this transition coincided with the transformation of American foreign policy as it shifted from isolationism to internationalism.

The Transition of the Church

Church leaders have always sought to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all countries. A revelation received in September 1830 declared that Latter-day Saints should gather together. Later, it was announced that the place they were to gather was the land of Zion, or America. Although missionaries were sent to many areas of the

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69 The Doctrine and Covenants 29:7, 8.

70 The Doctrine and Covenants 133:4.
world during the nineteenth century, Latter-day Saint converts were encouraged to gather to America as soon as possible. Secretary to the First Presidency, Francis M. Gibbons felt one purpose of this gathering was to standardize administrative and teaching methods and develop a unique Latter-day Saint culture through which members could be unified. However, in the 1890s, an economic depression in the United States led to the discouragement of convert immigration. At this time the idea of "gathering to Zion" changed emphasis. Another definition of Zion was anywhere God's followers or the pure in heart were located. Rather than gathering to Zion in America, Church leaders began to stress that members were to gather to the "stakes of Zion," which meant any place in the world where Church members lived as the pure in heart. Thus, at the turn of the twentieth century, as Gibbons described, "the meaning of the command to 'gather to Zion' shifted focus from America to any place in the world where . . . Zion existed."

During the twentieth century, international Church growth was greatly impacted by world events. Missionary efforts were interrupted as international travel became

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72 Including Canada, the British Isles, the South Pacific Islands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Bohemia (Czechoslovakia), Hungary, Malta, Turkey, South Africa, India, Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, Hawaii and Chile [Donald Q. Cannon, "The Globalization of Mormonism," in *The International Church*, by James R. Moss, R. Lanier Britsch, James R. Christianson, Richard O. Cowan, Donald Q. Cannon, and David F. Boone (Provo, Utah: Religious Education, Brigham Young University, 2001), 4; and *Historical Atlas of Mormonism* (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 32-3].

73 Gibbons, *Expanding Church*, 104.

74 Ibid.; and George Q. Cannon, "First Day-Morning Meeting Address," in *Conference Report* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1898), 8.


more difficult during World Wars I and II. Also, fewer missionaries were called to serve as Church leaders heeded the United States government’s call for young men to fight as soldiers in the wars. However, international missionary work did not cease since the wars brought many Latter-day Saints into contact with areas of the world previously unexposed to the Church. Following the end of World War II, many members of the Church left their war-torn countries and migrated to America. Still, the counsel of Church leaders for members to stay in their homelands to build up the Church locally was generally heeded and soon international growth was noticeable.

Significant international growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has occurred since World War II. David O. McKay’s administration as Church President, beginning in 1951, is recognized as the transitional time of becoming a truly international church. Brigham Young University religion professors James R. Moss and Richard O. Cowan affirmed, “When the Church was first organized, it was relatively weak. During the nineteenth century converts and resources flowed inward from abroad to strengthen the center. As this center became strong enough, the direction of resource flow was reversed at the beginning of the twentieth century, and strength was directed

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76 Cannon, “Globalization of Mormonism,” 5; and Church Educational System, Church History in the Fulness of Times (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993) 491, 529-33.

77 Gibbons, Expanding Church, 104; and Deseret News Church Almanac 1995-1996 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News, 1996), 295.


outward to surrounding areas and eventually to more distant regions of the earth." The Church quickly expanded into many areas of the world during the postwar years, at which time membership grew rapidly. Church leaders made great efforts to be legally recognized in each country, and soon, many new missions were created and temples were built abroad. The new emphasis of gathering to Zion was further strengthened as Church members were encouraged to remain in their homelands and frequent the temples there.

Additional evidence shows that dramatic international growth has been experienced by the Church over the past fifty years. In 1950, 92 percent of all Latter-day Saints lived in the United States and Canada, with 62 percent of these living in the Intermountain West (Arizona, Idaho, and Utah). Speaking at the first Area General

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80 Moss and Cowan, "International Growth," 308.

81 Including Japan, the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Spain, Turkey, Guatemala Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, Ghana, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe (Cannon, "Globalization of Mormonism," 5; and Historical Atlas, 122-2, 130-5).


84 Victor L. Ludlow, a religion professor at Brigham Young University, has found eight key variables which are reflective of the dramatic international growth of the Church over the past half century. He studied the change in these variables from 1955 to 1999. They include the number of copies of The Book of Mormon sold; the enrollment of students in the Church Educational System classes; General Authorities serving from foreign countries; membership outside of the United States; missions in foreign areas; missionaries serving in foreign lands; stakes outside of the United States/Canada; and temples in international areas [Victor L. Ludlow, "God’s Love for All Mankind: The Internationalization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” 29th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, September 2000; and Victor L. Ludlow, “The Internationalization of the Church,” in Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 2000), 204-41].

85 Statistics compiled by Richard O. Cowan based on information provided by the Church Membership Department.
Conference in Manchester, England, in August 1971, Church President Joseph Fielding Smith stated:

Now we are coming of age as a church and as a people. We have attained the stature and strength that are enabling us to fulfill the commission given us by the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith that we should carry the glad tidings of the restoration to every nation and to all people. And not only shall we preach the gospel in every nation . . . but we shall make converts and establish congregations of Saints among them. And so I say, we are and shall be a world church. That is our destiny. . . . Thus the Church is not an American church, except in America. In Canada it is a Canadian church; in Australia it is an Australian church; and in Great Britain it is a British church. It is a world church; the gospel is for all men.86

By February 1996, more members of the Church were living outside of the United States than inside.87 And, by 2000, only 48 percent of Latter-day Saints lived in the United States and Canada, with 21 percent of these living in the Intermountain West (Arizona, Idaho, and Utah).88 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has most definitely become an international entity.89

The Transition of the United States

The United States has also grown to international importance over the past century. The United States’ governmental policy of isolationism, advocating minimal participation in the affairs of other nations,90 was championed in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century. For the most part, isolationism encouraged the United

86Gibbons, The Expanding Church, 107.


88Statistics provided by the Church Membership Department.


States to focus on itself. Only direct aggression could induce America to enter World Wars I and II. Yet, these wars, along with the growing strength of United States' manufacturing, transportation, and communication capabilities that increasingly sought world markets, prompted America's traditional foreign policy of isolationism to change to one of internationalism.

The new policy of internationalism, which led individuals to look to common interests outside of the country, was emphasized briefly in 1918 and also after involvement in World War II became imperative. As more Americans recognized a need for international interdependence in order to maintain peace, internationalism began to increase in popularity. Clearly, the transition from isolationism to internationalism was not hasty nor absolute. Political leaders would disagree on which was the optimal foreign policy of the United States for many years. Similarly, Latter-day Saints would disagree on whether isolationism or internationalism would best serve the United States. This would have an impact on how Church leaders viewed the United States role in the increasingly international world. In turn, it would affect the opinions of Church leaders regarding the creation of and involvement in international organizations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations.

Conclusion

There is an interesting parallel between the development of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the United States. The Church grew to international distinction as America increasingly entered the international political world following the

91Ibid., 177.
close of World War II. Although the Church was involved with many countries throughout the nineteenth century, members were encouraged to immigrate to America. Similarly, although the United States had relationships with foreign countries at that time, the strict policy of isolationism limited its international influence.

American governmental policies had a powerful impact on international growth of the Church because The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was generally associated with America. Moss and Cowan noted that “a country having good relations with the U. S. has often proved to be of assistance in sharing the gospel. The presence of anti-American feelings on the other hand has often proved detrimental.” Clearly, positive ties between America and foreign countries have been greatly beneficial to Church growth. The expansion of American influence throughout the world has directly affected the success of Latter-day Saints in spreading the gospel. Therefore, the shift of American foreign policy from isolationism to internationalism facilitated the transition of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from an American church to an international church.

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93 Ibid.
94 Ibid., 306.
CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL PRECEDENCE

One of the main tenets of United States President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points of Peace Program was “a general association of nations . . . formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small powers alike.” In the Treaty of Versailles, negotiated during the Paris Peace Conference and signifying an end to World War I, this association of nations became known as the League of Nations. The idea of United States participation in the League prompted great controversy throughout the country. Debates also existed among the leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who felt that the League of Nations undermined the divine role of America and the United States Constitution and the leaders who felt that America should have been an active participant in the organization. A problem arose in the Church because leaders were divided on the issue of the League and many of them used doctrinal and scriptural evidence to support their respective arguments. Since both sides used the scriptures to either oppose or support the League, many Church members were unsure about which

viewpoint to advocate. It was difficult to determine any official position of the Church regarding United States involvement in the organization because of the ambiguity.

**Opposition to the League of Nations**

The main similarity between Church leaders who were opposed to the League of Nations was a strong inclination for isolationist foreign policy. Anything that was perceived as infringing on national sovereignty or the United States Constitution was regarded suspiciously. The passion of isolationists was captured in an address delivered to the United States Senate on 12 August 1919 by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. on the issue of the League of Nations:

> You may call me selfish, if you will, conservative or reactionary, or use any other harsh adjective you see fit to apply, but an American I was born, an American I have remained all my life ... I can never be anything else but an American, and I must think of the United States first. ... I have never loved but one flag and I cannot share that devotion and give affection to the mongrel banner invented for a league.

It is not surprising that isolationist leaders of the Church could feel as threatened as political leaders by the League of Nations if it appeared to undermine America and the Constitution. Although evidence shows Rudger Clawson, David O. McKay, Charles W. Nibley, and Joseph Fielding Smith were prominent Church leaders who publicly opposed the League, most research on the topic has focused on Reed Smoot and J. Reuben Clark Jr. Smoot was a United States Senator as well as an apostle for the Church in the early

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96 Sovereignty is defined as “freedom from foreign control” and “independence under international law.” States increasingly find that “full sovereignty does not mean they are free from outside influences in economic or political decision-making” (Nolan, *Longman Guide*, 359).

part of the twentieth century. James B. Allen has described Smoot as “a man of unquestioned integrity, . . . [who] displayed an intense nationalism that led him to question anything, including the League of Nations, that would tend to undermine the total independence of America.”

Smoot was aware that his view of the League of Nations would affect his run for Senate reelection in 1920. Although many people in Utah supported the League, he was very strongly opposed to the idea of such an organization, and he boldly and publicly expressed his anti-League sentiment.

Smoot’s main reason for opposing the League of Nations was that he felt it was impossible to have lasting peace in the world until Jesus Christ would return to reign during the millennium. Brigham Young University history professor Thomas G. Alexander affirmed that some differences in opinions regarding the League resulted from contradictory interpretations of scriptures about the millennium. Smoot felt the scriptures clearly taught that war would exist until Christ returned. This view left little room for believing that an international organization could succeed in creating lasting peace and Smoot felt justified in using the scriptures to prove that the League of Nations would ultimately fail. “Mormon Bible Becomes Issue in League of Nations Fight,” an article published by the Pacific N.E.A. Bureau, claimed that the “unique stand taken by United States Senator Reed Smoot, in basing his opposition to the League upon prophesies and

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revelations cited from the Book of Mormon, . . . stirred up a discussion in Mormon circles that [was] ringing throughout the United States.\textsuperscript{101}

J. Reuben Clark Jr. also openly opposed the League of Nations. Although he was not a Church leader at the time of the controversy, his political views were well known in the Church. Brigham Young University professor Ray C. Hillam wrote that Clark abhorred American involvement in international political organizations and felt that the United States should have a policy of strict neutrality toward disputes of other countries.\textsuperscript{102} America was not supposed to impose its solutions upon the rest of the world but to be a compelling attraction to other nations through its example of peace, justice, and freedom.\textsuperscript{103} Clark biographer D. Michael Quinn wrote that Clark "attacked the League of Nations provision of the Treaty of Versailles and the treaty itself in ghostwritten talks for U.S. Senator Knox, and told a crowd of 10,000 people in the Salt Lake Tabernacle in 1919 that the United States should refuse to compromise its sovereignty and reject the League of Nations. . . ."\textsuperscript{104} He assumed loyalty to international political associations threatened the sovereignty of the United States and weakened the Constitution. Like Smoot, Clark felt religiously justified in opposing the League.

\textsuperscript{101} Pacific N.E.A. Bureau, "Mormon Bible Becomes Issue in League of Nations Fight," 1 September [191-], an N.E.A. Staff Special Article, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.


\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 26.

\textsuperscript{104} Quinn, \textit{Clark}, 199.
Support for the League of Nations

Just as isolationists tended to oppose the ideology of the League of Nations, the main similarity between Church leaders who supported it was a strong inclination for internationalist foreign policy. Internationalists saw the League of Nations as a necessary organization responsible for promoting the greatly desired worldwide peace by maintaining positive relationships between countries. An example of strong internationalist sentiment is seen in Senator John Sharp Williams’ speech on 12 August 1919 before the United States Senate in reply to Lodge’s isolationist view:

Ties of commerce, literature, law, religion, ties of history, ties of future idealism as well as of past traditions bind us to the balance of the world; and the man who stands forward in the twentieth century and says that any country . . . can direct its own course to please itself, regardless of the balance of the world, has not enough sense to deserve to be a member of a town council. . . .

. . . Do you imagine . . . that I surrender my nationalism whenever I confess myself an inhabitant of the earth? . . .

Are we, individual against individual, to fight our quarrels out? Are we, State against State, to fight our quarrels out? Are we, nation against nation, to fight our quarrels out, when we can of our own free will construct some machinery that will come to a fairer and more just conclusion of our quarrels? I imagine not. . . .

There cannot be a war started . . . tomorrow that will not sooner or later, under the present modern system of commerce and intercourse, bring the United States into it, in spite of the fact that we want to stay out of it. . . .

Are you going to leave our necessary entanglement to accident or are you going to direct your part in it? . . . Are you going back to the conditions of 1914 and leave it to accident and incident and murder and midsea assassination to bring us in or are you going to say beforehand upon what grounds we are going in and upon what grounds we are going to stay out?104

Early twentieth-century Church leaders in support of the League of Nations, according to Thomas G. Alexander, saw the organization as a “means of spreading

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Christianity throughout the world." It was an appropriate forum at which America could be an ensign unto all nations. One outspoken individual who supported the League was Church President Heber J. Grant. Grant openly disagreed with other leaders about the League and felt that the scriptures were not opposed to the organization. In 1919, Grant signed a declaration in support of the League, along with former United States President Howard Taft, the president of Harvard University, and other well-known national figures.

Additional Church leaders in support of the League of Nations included George H. Brimhall, Anthony W. Ivins, Richard R. Lyman, Stephen L. Richards, George Albert Smith, James E. Talmage, and Orson F. Whitney. Apostle George F. Richards felt the League was inspired by God like the founding of America. In response to leaders of the Church who quoted scriptures that appeared to oppose the organization, B.H. Roberts, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, used the Book of Mormon to give a complimentary analysis of the League of Nations’ Covenant.

There is no doubt that United States involvement in the League of Nations provoked controversy within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The previously mentioned article published by the Pacific N.E.A. Bureau advertised that “a series of meetings that [would] undoubtedly arouse a high pitch of excitement [had] been

105 Alexander, Mormonism in Transition, 52.
107 George F. Richards, “First Day–Afternoon Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1919), 64-5.
arranged for the Mormon tabernacle" where "Mormon religious and legal authorities 
[would] discuss the League from their respective angles."\textsuperscript{109} James B. Allen alleged that 
no one in the Church was unaffected, and many members "were not reluctant to debate 
the issue, even though it meant arguing with an apostle of the Church."\textsuperscript{110}

\textit{Conclusion}

The United States eventually decided to not participate in the League of Nations 
organization for three main reasons: a fear of lost national sovereignty, monetary costs of 
membership, and concern about diminished approval from the American voting public. 
Over the next couple of decades several incidences occurred which proved to the 
international audience that the League of Nations was weak and indecisive.\textsuperscript{111} Without 
moral, economic, and political support from the major world powers, the members of the 
League liquidated its assets on 8 April 1946. In the end, the Church never announced an 
official position on the matter except that any person using the scriptures to try to prove a 
particular viewpoint regarding the League, whether in opposition or support, was out of 
harmony with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This experience illustrated that leaders of the Church could have differing 
opinions on issues, just as members did, but they must be extremely cautious in

\textsuperscript{109}Pacific N.E.A. Bureau, "Mormon Bible," 1 September [191-].
\textsuperscript{110}Allen, "Personal Faith and Public Policy," 87.
\textsuperscript{111}The Manchurian Test and the Italian/Ethiopian Test proved the League of Nations was weak. 
The Manchurian Test began in 1931 when Japan invaded Manchuria violating the League Covenant. The 
League ruled against them in 1933, yet Japan vetoed the condemnation and left the League with Nazi 
Germany. The Italian/Ethiopian Test occurred in 1935 when Italy invaded Ethiopia and Emperor Haile 
Selasse appealed in person to the League in Geneva but the League failed to act.
expressing these opinions, since some members were inclined to believe public statements without personal study of the issues. Instead of discussing the benefits of belonging or not belonging to the League in the years before World War II, the First Presidency taught "that all international controversies may be settled by pacific means if nations will but deal unselfishly and righteously one with another. We appeal to the leaders of all nations and to the people themselves thus to mend and adjust their differences."\(^{112}\)

Understandably, Church members could have been frustrated if they sought to support an official position of the Church on the issue of the League of Nations. James B. Allen suggests that "perhaps at no time in [the Church's] history had there been such divergence of opinion among its leaders...."\(^{113}\) Latter-day Saints probably felt greater allegiance to those leaders who represented their own personal opinions. Although there was frustration experienced over the issue, the differing views on the League of Nations were not contrary to the gospel, and the Church continued to prosper. Similar to this topic, leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have differed in their views of the United Nations.

\(^{112}\)G. Homer Durham, ed., *Gospel Standards* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Improvement Era, 1941), 147.

\(^{113}\)Allen, "Personal Faith and Public Policy," 98.
CHAPTER 5
OPPOSITION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Over the past fifty-seven years several leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have spoken out against the United Nations. They have encouraged members to oppose the organization for various reasons. One of their objections is that the United Nations is a man-made peace and international security organization which has been, for the most part, ineffective. These leaders have objected to the international organization because they feel its weaknesses have kept it from ultimately accomplishing its goals. Another criticism is the perceived lack of God and prayer in its meetings. An assumed loss of American sovereignty and a presumption that the United Nations is a world government are two additional arguments encouraging anti-United Nations sentiment among Church leaders. The final grievance offered to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been its inclusion of evil governments and individuals.

*Man-Made Peace and International Security Organization*

Some leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been diametrically opposed to the idea of having a man-made organization established centrally for the promotion of peace throughout the world. They have felt that
negotiations or bargaining tables cannot create real peace.\textsuperscript{114} Peace between nations is the result of individuals living the gospel of Jesus Christ, therefore, it is only through Jesus Christ that lasting world peace and security can be established. Members have been taught “there will be no peace again among the nations of the earth, until the Prince of Peace comes to cleanse the earth and establish His righteousness.”\textsuperscript{115} Thus, many Church leaders have felt it is foolish and futile for men to assume that they can lay the groundwork for lasting peace upon the earth before Christ returns. Ultimately, this has caused the ineffectiveness of the United Nations.

Even before the United Nations was officially organized in 1945, some leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were critical of such an international organization. They spoke out publicly against all ideas of a man-made peace and security body, including the League of Nations as previously outlined. One such individual was John A. Widtsoe. In 1943 Widtsoe taught members of the Church that “peace upon earth is not to be established by Congress or Parliament, or by a group of international representatives. . . . Peace cannot be legislated into existence.”\textsuperscript{116} He did not want members of the Church to rely on the leaders of nations to create lasting world peace for them through an international organization. Instead, Widtsoe encouraged members to remember that “individuals make up the community, and the nation . . . and the only way

\textsuperscript{114}Joseph L. Wirthlin, “Third Day–Morning Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1952), 107.

\textsuperscript{115}The Doctrine and Covenants 97:23; and Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, Doctrine and Covenants Commentary (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1978), 386.

\textsuperscript{116}John A. Widtsoe, “Third Day–Afternoon Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1943), 113; and Newquist, ed., Prophets, 482.
to build a peaceful community is to build men and women who are lovers and makers of peace. Each individual... holds in his own hands the peace of the world.” Peace came through personal righteousness and obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, each person is “individually responsible for the peace of the world. The responsibility cannot be shifted to someone else. It cannot be placed upon the shoulders of... any... organization of men with governing authority.” In effect, his message to members of the Church was that individuals, not political bodies, were personally responsible for creating peace.

Later during the 1960s and 1970s, leaders of the Church emphasized the home as the appropriate place where individuals should learn how to be peaceful. David O. McKay felt “home is the chief school of human virtues...” In March 1972, Apostle and future Church President Gordon B. Hinckley, spoke to students at Brigham Young University about the home as an ideal setting for learning how to solve problems. He said, “The family is the center of all things... It is in the home that most of the problems of this world will be settled, not in the federal government, the U.N., or any other organization.” Families were ultimately responsible for creating an environment of peace in their homes. In 1947, the First Presidency reaffirmed these concepts when they stated that “peace... is an individual acquisition, a family duty, a community

117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
120 Ardeth Greene Kapp, My Neighbor, My Sister, My Friend (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1990), 104.
attainment, a national possibility, a world conquest.”¹²¹ If individuals were not peaceful, it was futile to assume the United Nations could achieve lasting world peace.

Still, individuals seeking peace collectively did not guarantee lasting peace among nations. Church leaders felt there were other requisites. One necessity was mankind’s understanding of their role as the spirit children of God; Latter-day Saints believe He is their literal Heavenly Father. “Only through an acknowledgment of the Divine Being as Father can the sense of human brotherhood have potency. Only thus can life have purpose and humanity as a whole live in peace.”¹²² Church leaders felt the knowledge that people were fighting against their spiritual siblings would deter war. Faith in and reliance upon Jesus Christ was also fundamental to creating world peace.¹²³ If individuals relied solely on their own efforts, then they would fail. Member of the First Presidency Marion G. Romney acknowledged “... there are those who pin their hopes on the United Nations. Others contend that the solution depends upon education. Some say it depends upon a knowledge of economics. Others put their hopes in armaments... . In my judgment, no one of them nor all of them together will cure our fatal weakness.”¹²⁴ He taught that mankind’s only hope for peace was God.¹²⁵ Individuals must recognize that only through Him can true peace be realized. Therefore, the combined effect of all of


¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.


mankind's individual efforts at righteousness, including their understanding of Heavenly Father and acceptance of Jesus Christ, would be the only true means of maintaining peace in the world.

Other leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would echo these concerns about relying on a man-made peace and security organization to establish peace among all nations of the world. Regarding the United Nations, Church President George Albert Smith admonished members in 1949: “We can legislate until doomsday but that will not make men righteous. It will be necessary for people who are in the dark to repent of their sins, correct their lives, and live in such a righteous way that they can enjoy the spirit of our Heavenly Father.”126 Joseph Fielding Smith taught, “If men would only remember their Redeemer and serve him, then he would come to their aid and fight their battles, but they have placed their strength in their own puny arms.”127 After World War II:

The world found itself sick and feeble spiritually, mentally and morally. However the end of hostilities did not bring to the world peace. The unrest, bickerings and disagreements among the nations still go on. At the present writing delegates from the nations are in solemn conclave endeavor to work out some sort of world system of United Nations, upon which there may be universal agreement that will end war. It is very apparent that such efforts will eventually fail, for there is only one principle upon which such universal peace can come; that is an acceptance of the saving principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and this the world is not willing to do. When selfishness and ambition for power dominate the hearts of men and nations, there can come no permanent peace. . . . there will be

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126 George Albert Smith, “First Day–Morning Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1949), 6; and George Albert Smith, The Teachings of George Albert Smith, edited by Robert McIntosh and Susan McIntosh (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, Inc., 1996), xxiii.

127 Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1950), 529.
no peace until the Prince of Peace comes and brings it and cleanses the earth of its iniquity.\textsuperscript{129}

One of the first hurdles members of the United Nations faced was in January 1950 when North Korea attacked South Korea, igniting the Korean Conflict that lasted until 1953. Although fifteen nations committed to combat the aggression against South Korea, most of the fighting was done by United States and Korean troops.\textsuperscript{130} During a General Conference session in 1952, Church Patriarch Eldred G. Smith stated that “circumstances are so complicated I wonder whether mortal man has the ability to solve them without the help of the Lord.”\textsuperscript{131} After three years, and at least three million dead,\textsuperscript{132} efforts to end the conflict failed and the area was left in discord. This military conflict affected all Americans and it showed that the man-made international organization was, for the most part, impotent. Many supporters of the United Nations had their hopes of lasting peace destroyed by the seeming ineffectiveness of the organization during this event. Those who were critical of the organization before the Korean Conflict felt justified in their opposition after it failed to end it. Some leaders of the Church used the conflict to further illustrate their anti-United Nations sentiment to members.

Although the political climate of the world has changed considerably over the past fifty years, time has not lessened the desire of some leaders of The Church of Jesus

\textsuperscript{129}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{130}Nolan, \textit{Longman Guide}, 204.

\textsuperscript{131}Eldred G. Smith, “Second Day–Afternoon Meeting Address,” in \textit{Conference Report} (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1952), 62.

\textsuperscript{132}Casualties included unknown numbers of Chinese, and 30,000 American dead (108,000 wounded) . . . as well as 15,000 more dead and many more wounded from other UN contingents” (Nolan, \textit{Longman Guide}, 204).
Christ of Latter-day Saints to teach members that the United Nations is an ineffective means of establishing peace and security in the world. In the April 1961 General Conference, Marion G. Romney declared:

We have come to this conference from many nations of the world—not, however, as representatives of the governments of these nations. We are here representing the leadership of the kingdom of God. This Church is the literal kingdom of God in the earth. We did not come to argue, to jockey for position, to compromise differences and establish policies. . . . We know that the gospel of Jesus Christ, of which this Church is the repository, is the one and only way of peace. We know that to everyone who accepts and lives it there comes peace—peace in his heart—even in the midst of turmoil in the world. We know that if the people of the world would accept it and live it, we would have peace in all the world.  

Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, taught Latter-day Saints in 1987 that, “The Security Council of the United Nations attempts to maintain peace among the nations of the world. . . . However, despite all our efforts, we still do not gain the real security that we seek. Is it because we put our trust in the arm of flesh? . . . Security cannot be guaranteed because free agency also brings insecurity. . . .” Once again, if individuals did not seek peace in their own lives, there was no reason for the United Nations to assume they could establish world peace and security.

Members were provided with further opposition to the United Nations on the issue of man-made peace during addresses at Brigham Young University. Since The

132 Marion G. Romney, “Third Day–Afternoon Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1961), 117.


134 There are several instances of individuals speaking at Brigham Young University, whether at forums, devotionals, building dedications, or graduation commencement exercises, who had/have an affiliation with the United Nations. In fact, many of their addresses involved issues about or before the United Nations. For a list of examples see footnote 7 in chapter 1.
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sponsors Brigham Young University, it is possible that some individuals assume that the beliefs of the scholars invited to speak at the university, specifically at weekly devotional and forum addresses, are reflective of those of the Church. Thus, although members are taught that the Prophet is the only man who speaks for the Church, some might equate the opinions expressed by various speakers at university meetings as representative of the official views of the Church. In 1961, Dr. Charles Habib Malik of Lebanon, a professor of philosophy at the American University of Beirut and former president of the United Nations General Assembly from 1958-1959, spoke to a Brigham Young University audience at a weekly campus-wide devotional on the United Nations’ role in the current political state of the world. During his introduction of Malik, Brigham Young University President Ernest L. Wilkinson affirmed that the Church “believes that the dignity of the individual and the brotherhood of man transcend all government and will ultimately have more influence in bringing about peace . . . than any political organization.” Another statement that was critical toward the ability of the United Nations in establishing worldwide peace was given by

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135 The mission of Brigham Young University—founded, supported, and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life. That assistance should provide a period of intensive learning in a stimulating setting where a commitment to excellence is expected and the full realization of human potential is pursued.

All instruction, programs, and services at BYU, including a wide variety of extracurricular experiences, should make their own contribution toward the balanced development of the total person. Such a broadly prepared individual will not only be capable of meeting personal challenge and change but will also bring strength to others in the tasks of home and family life, social relationships, civic duty, and service to mankind.

To succeed in this mission the university must provide an environment enlightened by living prophets and sustained by those moral virtues which characterize the life and teachings of the Son of God” (Brigham Young University Board of Trustees, “The Mission Statement of Brigham Young University,” approved on 4 November 1981).

James J. Wadsworth, the former United States Ambassador to the United Nations for President Eisenhower, at Brigham Young University on 8 October 1962. Wadsworth gave his audience an insider’s view of the organization when he admitted that:

> When they first join [the United Nations], we have the nations of the world state solemnly that they are not only peace-loving, but that they ARE WILLING and ABLE to carry out the obligations of membership in the body. As one reads the United Nations Charter, one becomes more and more of the opinion that one of the obligations of membership is to do things in a peaceful way, to exhaust all possible avenues of peace before doing anything else, and to exhaust all possible avenues of peace at home and in regional organizations before bringing their quarrel before the main body. I think all of you know your current history well enough to realize that a great many countries have not done that.  

Thus, members were provided with many objections to the United Nations being a man-made peace and international security organization.

*The Exclusion of God and Prayer*

The exclusion of God and prayer from the proceedings of the international organization also has caused many leaders of the Church to question its effectiveness in attaining its goals.  

In 1947, the First Presidency wrote: “It is folly for the United Nations now seeking ways and means to permanent peace to exclude the idea of God from their deliberations.” That same year, Apostle Stephen L. Richards asked:

> Have you ever heard of a voice being raised in any of the sessions of the United Nations since its inception more than two years ago protesting the infractions of God’s laws or importuning his help in achieving the purposes of that organization? I think you have not, unless perhaps in some innocuous way,

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because I suspect that it is tacitly agreed that God and religion shall be shut out of the proceedings. Well, my friends, it is a part of the message that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints bears to the world that God and religion cannot be shut out from the consideration of world affairs without mortal hazard to the cause of goodness and peace.\textsuperscript{140}

Apostle Matthew Cowley questioned how the organization could bring peace to a world full of confusion without praying.\textsuperscript{141} During the Korean Conflict, Apostle Albert E. Bowen stated that the United Nations was an organization "whose proponents and sponsors cannot even invoke divine blessings upon their deliberations or its destiny. What chance do you think it has to heal the wounds of the world?"\textsuperscript{142} Similarly, Presiding Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin regretted that the name of Jesus Christ was not used when the United Nations was founded in 1945.\textsuperscript{143} Without the support of God, Wirthlin believed the United Nations was even more limited in its ability to bring an end to hostilities.

After the Korean Conflict, leaders of the Church continued to express dismay in the exclusion of God and prayer from the United Nations meetings. In response to this absence, member of the Presiding Bishopric Thorpe B. Isaacson asked members of the Church in 1956: "What would our Founding Fathers think of that? Our Pioneer fathers? Our Pilgrim fathers, and those who formed the Constitution of this land? They did not lean on their own understanding. I hope the leaders of the nations of the world will

\textsuperscript{140}Stephen L. Richards, "Third Day–Morning Meeting Address," in \textit{Conference Report} (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1947), 133.

\textsuperscript{141}Matthew Cowley, \textit{Matthew Cowley Speaks} (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1954), 409.

\textsuperscript{142}Albert E. Bowen, "Second Day–Morning Meeting Address," in \textit{Conference Report} (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1950), 75; and Newquist, ed., \textit{Prophets}, 457.

\textsuperscript{143}Wirthlin, "Third Day–Morning Address," 107.
change that policy in the United Nations and lean not on their own understanding."

Isaacson determined that the lofty goals of the United Nations were unattainable without prayer. He stated:

I have always felt bad to think . . . the United Nations, composed of representative leaders throughout the world—studying and planning and trying to solve the problem of a last and everlasting peace, do not open their sessions with prayer. A man who attended that session once reported to me that he went away from there sad. There was confusion; there was anger; there was disagreement. There had been no petition to the Lord asking for divine guidance, and yet the very peace of the world largely hinges on that great body of men. Because some disbelieve and some will not admit divine guidance, we are denied the blessings that would result if that very important group of men would call upon the Lord for inspiration and guidance.

Clearly one objection to the United Nations was its exclusion of God and prayer.

_A Loss of Sovereignty_

Another objection to the organization has been the belief that membership sacrifices the sovereignty of America. Since Latter-day Saints believe the United States has a divine destiny to fulfill, some Church leaders have viewed America’s participation in the United Nations as diminishing, and possibly losing control of, its destiny. Furthermore, leaders have objected to America lowering itself as “one country among many” in the organization.

Fearful that the United States would lose its sovereignty if it sought membership in the United Nations, J. Reuben Clark Jr. stated in 1944:

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144 Thorpe B. Isaacson, “First Day—Morning Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1956), 11.

145 Ibid.
It is not necessary to point out to you just what could happen to us in any world organization where we are 1 out of 59 or 60 in all matters of voting; nor how hazardous our situation could be if the organization should put us by its votes under any obligation as to military expeditions against recalcitrant members or as to financial aid and assistance to the indigents. . . .

This is a problem for all citizens. . . . It is the problem of every industry, of every farm, of every profession, of every household, of every man and woman of the nation, for if the present plans shall carry through they will want our money to pay their bills, and want us and our sons to police the world.  

As previously mentioned, Clark was adamantly opposed to the League of Nations because of concerns over the loss of United States sovereignty. Similarly, he objected to the idea of United States participation in the United Nations and publicly argued that the Charter was adopted before the American public was able to carefully analyze and understand it. Furthermore, he felt it was written without conscientious thought about how it would affect the welfare of America. Clark taught members that all treaties and alliances, including the United Nations Charter, impair United States sovereignty because “every alliance requires a surrender of rights, since mutual aid in strictly non-sovereign interests, is the purpose of the alliance.” Likewise, “every engagement with a foreign nation . . . deprives us of the power to determine our own course at the moment of implementation. . . .” Thus, Clark argued, when the United States ratified the “. . . the United Nations Charter . . . [it] surrendered some of [its] sovereignty.” In 1973, James


\[147\] Clark, “Dwindling Sovereignty,” 454-5.

\[148\] Ibid., 438.

\[149\] Ibid.

B. Allen wrote an article which addressed the specific concerns Clark had with the United Nations and other international organizations. His article stated that:

Clark maintained that the United Nations Charter violated American sovereignty in at least three ways. First, the United States had lost the right to make the treaties it wanted to make, since all treaties must conform to the provisions of the charter. Next, it lost the sovereign right to adjust its own international difficulties, for at any stage in a dispute the Security Council might intervene and recommend a course of action. Such recommendations, he said, “do not fall far short of commands, with attaching sanctions.” Even the obligation imposed by the Charter to settle disputes peacefully was anathema to Clark, though he approved of peaceful settlements, for the imposition of a method of settlement was itself an impairment of sovereignty. Finally, he said, America’s war powers were impaired, since the Charter took away from the members “those great attributes of sovereignty, upon which the very existence of sovereignty depends: the power to declare war . . . the power to decide against whom we shall make war, and the power to conduct war, and the power to make peace and to determine its terms.”

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints listening to the objections of Clark would understandably believe the United Nations infringed on United States national sovereignty. Although he was a member of the isolationist minority, which was less popular following World War II, Clark’s arguments were well researched and supported. He recognized the need for the United States to be involved in world affairs, yet, he staunchly opposed interventionism and felt that the role of America “should be limited to mediation and arbitration. Beyond this, his isolationism was firm, severe, and unequivocal.” Allen captured Clark’s vision of America in regards to world affairs when he explained that Clark felt:

America was not in the business of world conquest but rather, was to be a light on a hill, a great independent beacon showing to other nations and peoples the


152 Ibid., 360.
way toward peace and prosperity. Everything he said about this divine destiny, whether associated with a specific discussion of world political organization or not, emphasized at least implicitly the mission of America, acting alone, to be the great example to the world.\textsuperscript{153}

Even if members of the Church did not agree with Clark’s objections, there were other leaders encouraging them to be wary of the United Nations because of the issue of sovereignty. In light of hostilities such as the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War,\textsuperscript{154} Ezra Taft Benson also objected to the United Nations. Although many of his arguments were given to audiences in secular meetings, his messages and feelings about the organization were well known among members of the Church. In 1968, when Benson addressed the Farm Bureau in Idaho, he asked members of the audience:

Should we enter into treaties such as the U.N. Covenants which would obligate our citizens to conform their social behavior, their educational systems, their treatment of the news, and even their religious practices to rules and regulations set down by international agencies? Such treaty obligations amount to the voluntary and piece-meal surrender of our political independence. The answer to all such questions is a resounding “no,” for the simple reason that the only way America can survive in this basically hostile and topsy-turvy world is to remain militarily, economically and politically strong and independent.\textsuperscript{155}

He was extremely concerned the United States might pass legislation that would allow the United Nations to have control over, however limited, the United States armed forces.\textsuperscript{156} Furthermore, Benson argued:

\textsuperscript{153}Ibid., 358.

\textsuperscript{154}The Vietnam War lasted from 1959-1975; the start of heavy U.S. involvement began in 1965.

\textsuperscript{155}Ezra Taft Benson, “United States Foreign Policy,” Farm Bureau Banquet, Preston, Idaho, 21 June 1968; and Benson, \textit{An Enemy}, 153-4.

\textsuperscript{156}Ezra Taft Benson, “It Can Happen Here,” American Wake Up Committee Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri, 28 February 1966; and Benson, \textit{An Enemy}, 105.
There is one and only one legitimate goal of United States foreign policy. It is a narrow goal, a nationalistic goal: the preservation of our national independence. Nothing in the Constitution grants that the President shall have the privilege of offering himself as a world leader. He’s our executive; he’s on our payroll, if necessary; he’s supposed to put our best interests in front of those of other nations. Nothing in the Constitution nor in logic grants to the President of the United States or to Congress the power to influence the political life of other countries, to “uplift” their cultures, to bolster their economies, to feed their peoples or even to defend them against their enemies.¹⁵⁸

Any sensed loss of American sovereignty, however small, caused Benson to distrust the organization. Nonmembers would also teach Church members that a perceived loss of sovereignty had impacted the effectiveness of the United Nations. In 1962, James J. Wadsworth told Brigham Young University students the issue of sovereignty was one of the main reasons that kept the international organization from succeeding in its goals.¹⁵⁹

A World Government

Similar to the perceived loss of sovereignty resulting from participation in the United Nations, the common assumption that the United Nations was a world government has also caused objections from leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Even though the framers of the Charter were quick to deny the accusation, many believed that it was a political entity capable of controlling all nations belonging to it. Ezra Taft Benson advised members to be cautious of the United Nations because it was one of the “present-day proposals for world government.”¹⁶⁰ In response to members who felt the world would benefit from a central world government, Church

¹⁵⁸ Benson, “Foreign Policy,” 21 June 1968; and Benson, An Enemy, 150.


¹⁶⁰ Benson, “Foreign Policy,” 21 June 1968; and Benson, An Enemy, 160.
leaders emphasized that the only government that would ultimately succeed is that which will be established during the millennium under the direction of Jesus Christ. Benson urged members of the Church to:

Pay no attention to the recommendations of men who call the Constitution an eighteenth-century agrarian document—who apologize for capitalism and free enterprise. We should refuse to follow their siren song of concentrating, increasingly, the powers of government in the Chief Executive, of delegating American sovereign authority to non-American institutions in the United Nations, and pretending that it will bring peace to the world by turning our armed forces over to a U.N. world-wide police force.¹⁶⁰

Regardless of the obvious lack of peace and security in the world at that time, Latter-day Saint scholar William E. Barrett wrote an *Improvement Era* article which stated that as much as:

We may desire national reform and international peace, we must not be misled into supposing that these ends can be achieved by new legislation alone, or by the setting up of new political reform, like the United Nations. Without spiritual reform, the new legislation is likely to become the tool of knaves, and political organizations like the United Nations but screens behind which flourish new forms of international chicanery.¹⁶¹

Another concern for Church leaders opposed to the United Nations because of its similarity to a world government was that many individuals accepted the organization simply because the Charter and organizational structure of the United Nations resembled the United States Constitution and government. Ezra Taft Benson sought to warn all Americans that the United Nations and the United States were very different. He

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reminded Americans that the United States was founded on a concept of limited government, complete with checks and balances, to protect its individual citizens. In contrast, the United Nations consisted of several kinds of governments, which when acting together as an organization, places no limitations on their power. Thus, Benson objected to the United Nations because there was no guarantee individual liberties would be protected.  

Clearly, the appearance of the United Nations as a world government caused many Church leaders to oppose it.

*The Inclusion of Evil Governments and Individuals*

A final basis for opposition to the United Nations among Church leaders has been the inclusion and involvement of evil men and governments. Acknowledging and interacting with corrupt governments, especially those that are communist, appears to go against the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because of the prophetic warnings that they are anti-Christian governments and Satan’s counterfeits for righteous democracies that allow freedom of choice. In the 1950s, the United Nations was perceived by many to be procommunist, and several nations participating in the international organization were communist. As Marion G. Romney stated:

"Communism—and all other similar isms," in the words of the First Presidency of the

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163 Communism is “(1) A theory of social organization based on collective ownership of the means of production, and rational and equitable redistribution of goods, services and wealth. (2) An actual system of social and political organization in which ownership of property resides with a centralized and totalitarian state, run in the name of the proletariat by a highly privileged, ideological and managerial elite” (Nolan, *Longman Guide*, 69).

Church, 'are merely the clumsy counterfeits which Satan always devises of the Gospel Plan.' It is understandable that individuals would be suspicious of any international organization whose participating delegates were representatives of governments that were enemies of the United States and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Members of the Church were well versed in the dangers of communism. As early as 1936, the First Presidency gave the following warning on the subject:

Communism is not a political party nor a political plan under the Constitution; it is a system of government that is the opposite of our Constitutional government, and it would be necessary to destroy our government before communism could be set up in the United States.

Since Communism, established, would destroy our American Constitutional government, to support communism is treasonable to our free institutions, and no patriotic American citizen may become either a communist or supporter of communism.

Furthermore, it is charged by universal report, which is not successfully contradicted or disproved, that communism undertakes to control, if not indeed to proscribe the religious life of the people living within its jurisdiction, and that it even reaches its hand into the sanctity of the family circle itself, disrupting the normal relationship of parent and child, all in a manner unknown and unsanctioned under the Constitutional guarantees under which we in America live. Such interference would be contrary to the fundamental precepts of the Gospel and to the teachings and order of the Church.

Communism being thus hostile to loyal American citizenship and incompatible with true Church membership, of necessity no loyal American citizen and no faithful Church member can be a communist.

. . . The safety of our divinely inspired Constitutional government and the welfare of our Church imperatively demand that communism shall have no place in America.

Later, in 1966, David O. McKay reiterated the Church’s position on communism when he told members of the Church:

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The position of this Church on the subject of Communism has never changed. We consider it the greatest satanical threat to peace, prosperity, and the spread of God's work among men that exists on the face of the earth.

The entire concept and philosophy of Communism is diametrically opposed to everything for which the Church stands—belief in Deity, belief in the dignity and eternal nature of man, and the application of the gospel to efforts for peace in the world. Communism is militantly atheistic and is committed to the destruction of faith wherever it may be found.

The Russian Commissar of Education wrote: “We must hate Christians and Christianity. Even the best of them must be considered our worst enemies. Christian love is an obstacle to the development of the revolution. Down with love for one’s neighbor. What we want is hate. Only then shall we conquer the universe.”

On the other hand, the gospel teaches the existence of God as our Eternal and Heavenly Father and declares: “... him only shalt thou serve.” (Matt. 4:10.)

Communism debases the individual and makes him the enslaved tool of the state, to which he must look for sustenance and religion. Communism destroys man’s God-given free agency.

No member of this Church can be true to his faith, nor can any American be loyal to his trust, while lending aid, encouragement or sympathy to any of these false philosophies, for if he does they will prove snares to his feet.  

How could the United Nations create peace if its communistic member nations were disinclined to allow it? Ezra Taft Benson taught “actions continue to speak louder than words, and certainly the communists have shown no indication of a sincere quest for peace.” And, J. Reuben Clark Jr. warned that interacting with communist governments would not help correct the evils they committed. He taught, “In the mad thrusting of ourselves, with a batch of curative political nostrums, into the turmoil and tragedy of today’s world, we are like a physician called to treat a virulent case of smallpox, and

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167 David O. McKay, “General Priesthood Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1966), 110.

whose treatment consists in getting into bed with his patient. That is not the way to cure smallpox.\textsuperscript{170}

Leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints cautioned members about the inevitability of communist nations fighting against the United States because of differing political ideologies. It seemed foolish to try to work with these nations under the premise of the United Nations. Benson, who felt communism was the major enemy to the American way of life,\textsuperscript{171} was even concerned that the ideology was infiltrating the United States under the auspices of the United Nations. He stressed there had been an "increase of espionage activities by Soviet and satellite agents in our country, particularly those who strive to penetrate our government processes from the protection afforded them by diplomatic assignments in New York in the United Nations and in Washington...."\textsuperscript{172} He wanted members to know the first Secretary General of the United Nations, Alger Hiss, who was also an advisor to United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt was part of the first communist cell in the United States.\textsuperscript{173} Benson was adamantly opposed to the organization because of communist government involvement. He felt:

We have witnessed ... the gradual assumption of control in the United Nations by the communists and the so-called neutralist nations most of which are under communist control or are dominated by fear of the communists. ... I do not share the feeling of some that it would be a great disaster if we should withdraw from the United Nations. I see very little hope of getting very far with

\textsuperscript{170}Clark, "Dwindling Sovereignty," 364.

\textsuperscript{171}Benson, "Race Against Time," 18.

\textsuperscript{172}Ibid., 12; and Newquist, ed., \textit{Prophets}, 304.

\textsuperscript{173}Benson, "Race Against Time," 13; and Newquist, ed., \textit{Prophets}, 305.
the present situation. The UN is very largely a failure. What we need is a strong organization of free nations. . . .

Surely “freedom” would be a more worthy purpose than the present United Nations’ goal of “peace” especially when aggression is constantly undertaken in the name of peace. . . .

. . . Unless the UN is completely reorganized without the communist nations in it, we should get out of it.174

There were other concerns among Church leaders in addition to communist participation in the United Nations. On 10 December 1963 Ezra Taft Benson told Brigham Young University students to “never forget that history is filled with examples of men who mean to be good rulers but who nevertheless mean to rule.”175 Not only did the United Nations cause the United States to sully their hands with communism, but the power given to the delegates of representative countries could lead to pride and their downfall. Even if the delegates had good intentions initially, the power afforded them could eventually prove destructive. Benson taught:

Even if we assume that all of the people at the U.N. representing the various nations were of the highest moral caliber and prompted only by the most pure and selfless motives, there still is every reason to believe that the concentration into their hands of the absolute power of a nuclear monopoly, plus a military land, air, and naval force superior to any nation, would be a mighty tempting influence. In time, the flesh could weaken, even the best of men would be caught up in the inevitable struggle for world power, and finally, the whole planet would be subject to an unchallengeable dictatorship of the few over the many. True, such a development conceivably might not materialize for years, but it would materialize. The only legitimate question open to speculation is how soon.176

In 1952, Church Patriarch Eldred G. Smith spoke on the ineffectiveness of the United Nations because of the unrighteousness of the participants. He posed the

174 Benson, Red Carpet, 193-7; and Newquist, ed., Prophets, 458-61.

175 Benson, “Race Against Time,” 15.

176 Benson, An Enemy, 178.
following question to members of the Church: "... how long would this Korean conflict last if ten percent of the United Nations armed forces were living righteous lives? Then go another step in your imagination, say, if ten percent were Latter-day Saint men living the gospel, and about fifty percent of all the servicemen were living righteous lives, the power of God would touch the hearts of men and bring peace into the world."  

During that same meeting, Presiding Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin also publicly criticized the efforts of the United Nations in their peacemaking efforts during the Korean Conflict. He stated, "Those who have been sitting around the so-called peace tables of the world, have been cunning and cagey men, negotiating for the sole purpose of acquiring more power, more territory, and in the final analysis of it all, millions of people now find themselves under the heel of the dictator; they have lost their free agency and liberty. They have lost their land." He felt the individuals involved in the United Nations efforts at ending the conflict did not "... have in their hearts the real spirit of peace. The spirit of peace is the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. ... I feel the genuine spirit of peace has not and does not influence the dealings of peace negotiations." Similarly, Marion G. Romney found the name "United Nations" ironic since there was very little unity felt among many members of the organization. In an address to students at Brigham Young University, Romney declared that the United Nations was impotent. He spoke of members of the organization

179 Ibid.
openly opposing it, as well as lending support to nonmember nations in their disputes against fellow member states. Instead of countries supporting each other and working together to create peace in the world, Romney felt the United Nations had failed in such efforts.\textsuperscript{181} Obviously, the inclusion of evil governments and individuals was another reason why leaders of the Church objected to the international organization.

\textit{Conclusion}

Many leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints expressed reservations about the United Nations both before and after its creation following World War II. These leaders were instrumental in molding the opinions of many members of the Church with their anti-United Nations rhetoric. The objections were diverse, including the distaste of a man-made peace and security organization, a lack of God and prayer in the United Nations proceedings, questions of sovereignty, its appearance as a world government, and the involvement of communistic regimes and evil men.

Some Church leaders, like Marion G. Romney, felt the United Nations' meetings were great gatherings where "representatives from the governments of the world convene to deliberate, to reason, to argue, to compromise, to try in every way divisible by the human mind to resolve differences. I suppose most of them come with honest hearts to try to bring peace to the world."\textsuperscript{182} Yet, other leaders who objected to the organization felt it necessary to expose the reality of the organization's inability to accomplish such tasks. Ezra Taft Benson concluded: "The U.N.'s potential for evil far outweighs its

\textsuperscript{181}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{182}Romney, "Third Day–Afternoon Address," 117.
potential for good . . . the very nature of the organization is such that this evil cannot be corrected without disbanding and starting all over from the bottom up.”

Regardless of the ideals set forth in the United Nations Charter, many leaders of the Church, like Benson, reminded members, “The outlook for world peace and security is dark indeed. The gravity of the world situation, it appears, is increasing almost daily. The United Nations seems unable to settle the troubles of the world. In truth we are faced with the hard fact that the United Nations, it seems, has largely failed in its purpose.”

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CHAPTER 6
SUPPORT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

Not all leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been opposed to the United Nations. There are several reasons why leaders in favor of the organization have encouraged members of the Church to support it. One argument is that leaders have felt the United Nations has been a viable means for the maintenance of peace for the past fifty years. The idea of an international organization united in increasing harmony around the world has been attractive, even if the organization has had visible weaknesses. The scientific work of the United Nations which has led to the improvement of human conditions around the world has been another reason for endorsement. Although opponents of the United Nations would argue that there was a lack of God and prayer in the organization, supporters have taught that the attempts to include God and prayer were commendable. Church leaders have also favored the organization because of their interpretations of the destiny of America. The involvement of the United States provides an opportunity for it to be a leader in the international community. Similarly, the United Nations acts as a convenient audience for teaching Christian principles to the world. These diverse arguments have led many leaders of the Church to promote the United Nations.
A Viable Means of Achieving Its Goals

One reason leaders of the Church have supported the United Nations, in spite of its imperfections, is that it has been a viable means of achieving the goals it outlined in its Charter. It was established to prevent war and destruction and to encourage peace and harmony between the nations of the world.\(^{184}\) Although members of the United Nations, whether delegations as a whole or their individual representatives, might not be motivated to act for the good of humanity, the international body had the potential to be a great influence for good. At the least, the compromise and diplomacy encouraged in its meetings offered hope and an alternative to the destructive method of force that often resulted in war and had existed throughout the world.\(^{185}\)

In November 1948, an *Improvement Era* editorial written by the Associate Editor read:

The United Nations, . . . although not perfect, has won the support of nearly all parties and peoples throughout the world. In the short time of its functioning, this program has evidenced sincerity of purpose that augurs well for the movement. Naturally, such an organization will of necessity be slow of development, but the important factor is that it is developing. While there are violent disagreements—and even walkouts—in the pursuance of the meetings, the fact that the delegates of many nations have been forced by the machinery of the United Nations to face their problems, discuss them openly, and listen to others discuss them is a tremendous stride forward in the procedure of understanding. . . .

. . . All should be informed on the work that is being done by this organization and should try to implement it where it is weak and give it support where it is


strong that we may indeed bring about "peace on earth, good will to men," rather than resort to devastating wars.\textsuperscript{186}

In 1947, G. Homer Durham suggested that the positive impact of the United Nations might not be felt until a much later time. It took time to transform the United States into a powerful nation, just as the United Nations would need time to reach its potential.\textsuperscript{187} Two years later, Durham felt that it had already begun to do so when he wrote that "the treaty device has been fruitful in attempting to guide and influence power and in developing hopeful international practice, custom, and cooperative organization."\textsuperscript{188} In the 1950s, Church President David O. McKay asked Church member O.C. Tanner to prepare a book for the Sunday School.\textsuperscript{189} In this publication, entitled \textit{Christ's Ideals for Living}, Tanner wrote: "Let school children be taught loyalty to the United Nations as well as loyalty to their respective countries."\textsuperscript{190} He continued: "Presently men give their faith or doubt to . . . the United Nations. Progress will be greatly advanced if men give up war as a means of settling differences. At present the United Nations offers hope for this advancement. There is no other international organization, and if men have faith in it, the day may not be far off when war will be outlawed. . . ."\textsuperscript{191}

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\textsuperscript{186}Marba C. Josephson, "Humanity Calls," \textit{Improvement Era}, November 1948, 724.
\textsuperscript{187}Durham, "'47 These Times," 134.
\textsuperscript{188}Durham, "International Warfare," 139.
\textsuperscript{190}Obert C. Tanner, \textit{Christ's Ideals for Living} (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1955), 306.
\textsuperscript{191}Ibid., 382.
\end{flushright}
Robert Riggs taught, in spite of its weaknesses, the organization was one tool of international politics and diplomacy available to the United States and other countries in the world.

Each political organ of the United Nations offers its own special capabilities as an extension of diplomacy, a propaganda forum, a source of information, a center for international cooperation, a channel for influence or a means of coercion. Considered as one tool among many available to the United States for dealing with limited aspects of international conflict and cooperation, it modestly fulfills the intent of its founders in extending the ultimate reach of policy.\textsuperscript{192}

In October 1996, John Hughes, a Brigham Young University professor of communications and former Assistant Secretary-General and Director of Communications for the United Nations, spoke to the United Nations Association of Utah about the misconceptions Americans have about the international organization. Hughes claimed "one of the myths surrounding the United Nations is that it is attempting to become a world government that threatens the sovereignty of the U.S. But ... the United Nations was established by independent sovereign nations who vigorously debate issues and wield veto power to preserve their own interests."\textsuperscript{193} Statements such as these attempted to clear up any misconceptions about the organization and emphasize its strengths. Church members were shown that the United Nations was a viable solution to the political instability present throughout the world.

Many leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been laudatory of the organization because they have felt its potential for good far outweighs its weaknesses. As mentioned previously, David O. McKay felt there was enough good in

\textsuperscript{192}Riggs, "Policy Instrument," 175.

\textsuperscript{193}Mouritse, "Image Inaccurate," 24 October 1996.
the United Nations to justify its existence. Soon-to-be Church leader Hugh B. Brown also thought that the good accomplished by the organization justified its existence. He ultimately felt that the purpose of the United Nations was positive, although its weaknesses were apparent and at times the actions of the organization did not always seem harmonious. In January and February of 1946, Brown attended some meetings of the international organization in London. In the February 1946 edition of the *Millenial Star*, Brown wrote an editorial about his experience at the 10 January 1946 opening session of the General Assembly session, addressing the concerns of some individuals over the issue of sovereignty in the United Nations. He wrote:

> All partnerships involve some sacrifice, some surrender of cherished rights and privileges, some accommodation to new and changed conditions. And this great partnership may and doubtless will involve some adjustments on the part of all its members. If a central body is to be given powers and authority there must be a corresponding limitation of certain rights and privileges theretofore enjoyed by the members who endow that central body. To suggest to any sovereign nation that she surrender any part of her proud sovereignty is to touch one of the most sensitive nerves centres [sic] of her national anatomy which may be answered by a cry of pain and protest. But if the object of that surrender is to secure and protect and guarantee the continued life of that nation without the ruinous and tragic cost of recurring wars, then will the arrangement be seen to be an investment and not a sacrifice.

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194 See chapter 1.
195 Brown served as an Assistant to the Twelve, an apostle, and a member of the First Presidency.
196 Brown’s “appointment as a delegate for the National Order of Women Legislators was arranged by a Utah friend” (Campbell and Poll, *Hugh B. Brown*, 185).
197 Ibid., 184-5.
198 The *Millenial Star* was a monthly publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England until 1970.
What appeared to some leaders as weaknesses in the organization appeared to others as strengths. Brown taught members of the Church:

We of the United Nations are convinced that we fight only to resist aggression and to thwart the ambitions of power-maddened tyrants. We have found it necessary to use some of the measures adopted by our enemies in order to prevent their domination and subjugation of the world. But only to the extent that we stamp out the satanic doctrines which they have sought to impose shall we ourselves be worthy of victory...201

To Brown, such actions were excusable in the battle for peace, a battle ultimately against Satan.

In the early 1980s, General Church Young Women President Elaine Cannon further emphasized this worthy campaign for peace by quoting United States President Ronald Reagan who said:

The United Nations was founded following World War II to protect future generations from the scourge of war...to replace a world at war with a world of civilized order...where freedom from violence prevailed. Whatever challenges the world was bound to face, the founders intended this body to stand for certain values, even if they could not be enforced, and to condemn violence, even if it could not be stopped.202

In response to the tragic losses experienced throughout the world during the war, Apostle Charles A. Callis told members of the Church during the April 1946 General Conference:

"It will be a pity if this United Nations shall fail to harvest the fruits of this victory which was won by the shedding of rivers of blood. May the Lord grant them wisdom; may they listen to peace, and the call of peace. May they have the Golden Rule always before their eyes; and in their hearts the fear of the Lord, who shall come to the earth as the Prince of

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201Hugh B. Brown, Continuing the Quest (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1961), 323-4.

peace.”

He desired the United Nations to succeed and believed that it could. Many members who heard similar words of Church leaders understandably gained a sense of respect for the United Nations as it strived to accomplish its worthy goals. It was a viable means for maintaining peace and security throughout the world. Although it might not have been as successful as originally expected, the potential of the United Nations led many leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to support it.

The Improvement of Human Conditions

Leaders of the Church also have been impressed with the United Nations because of its efforts at improving the quality of life for mankind. Many leaders have praised the improvements in social conditions prompted by the organization and have supported “the provisions in the United Nations charter for universal respect for, and observance of, human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.” This approval seems independent of the peacemaking efforts of the United Nations.

In March 1949, G. Homer Durham wrote:

*For the first time in human history representatives of mankind as a whole have within grasp the understanding of the human problems that dislocate society.* But what are the facts regarding the world itself? The world crowds in on us, producing war and economic dislocation. . . . The fact-finding scientific instrumentalities of the United Nations and similar undertakings are perhaps the best investment for any one’s research dollar in the world today.

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203 Charles A. Callis, “Third Day–Morning Meeting Address,” in *Conference Report* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1946), 148.

204 Benson, *Shall Ye Reap*, 65.

205 Durham, “International Warfare,” 188.
The following month, he commented:

Mankind are approaching a situation where the condition of all our Father’s children can be viewed and understood factually . . . thanks to the foresight of the framers of the American Constitution in requiring an accurate, scientific census, and similar developments in many fields in the nineteenth century, we of the twentieth may be able to surmount the difficulties posed by Malthus. For this we are also indebted to the scientific work performed by . . . the United Nations.\(^{207}\)

In October 1953, member of the First Presidency Stephen L. Richards commented that one aspect of the organization was to “improve the conditions among suffering and underprivileged peoples, and thereby create better understandings and good will among men and women all over the globe. If it is in position to contribute to this betterment, I am sure that all men of good will would wish it success. . . .”\(^{208}\) Additionally addressing the potential of the United Nations to this end, Assistant to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles Thomas E. McKay told members of the Church in October 1947 that he “would like to see this great gathering endorse a resolution to the United Nations recommending as a means of helping the starving millions in the war-torn countries the adoption of the fast offering plan of the Church.”\(^{209}\) He saw the United Nations as a means of bettering human conditions.

Interestingly, it appears some anti-United Nations Church leaders, including J. Reuben Clark Jr. and Ezra Taft Benson, were supportive of the charitable bodies established within the United Nations. James B. Allen suggested:


\(^{208}\) Stephen L. Richards, “Third Day–Morning Meeting Address,” in *Conference Report* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1953), 98.

\(^{209}\) Thomas E. McKay, “Third Day–Morning Meeting Address,” in *Conference Report* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1947), 131.
Clark’s condemnation of the United Nations seemed generally to be political, and did not suggest his attitude toward other phases of the world body, such as the World Health Organization, UNESCO, and other charitable bodies. While he may have objected to them simply because they were part of the United Nations, thus seeming to require American support without direct American consent, one is hard-pressed to speculate on what he would say about either the objectives or successes of these U.N. groups.  

On 22 September 1960, United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed Ezra Taft Benson’s “Food for Peace” program to the United Nations. “Food for Peace” was a program through which “farm surpluses would be used to establish and reinforce friendly ties with foreign nations.” President John F. Kennedy later expanded the program “to support both humanitarian effort and economic development in more than eighty countries.” These humanitarian accomplishments were reason enough for some leaders of the Church to support the organization.

_The Inclusion of God and Prayer_

Another aspect of the United Nations that prompted support from Church leaders was the idea that many nations of the world sought to include God and prayer in its proceedings. This was in direct contradiction to the opponents of the United Nations who felt His help would not be offered nor would any good ever come from their efforts since the international organization did not explicitly include God. It is true that many attempts to include God and prayer were unsuccessful because of a few governments that opposed the idea. Yet the mere endeavor to include God was impressive to the Latter-day Saint

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210 Dew, _Ezra Taft Benson_, 337.

211 Ibid.
supporters of the United Nations. It gave them reason to believe that the motivations of many participants were righteous, and they encouraged members to assume as such; to expect the best from the United Nations’ delegates.

Several Church leaders discussed the experience of the original nations involved in the United Nations when they first convened in San Francisco. On several occasions, David O. McKay commended Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., the United States Ambassador to the United Nations at the time, for suggesting that “God should be openly and audibly invoked at the United Nations in accordance with any one of the religious faiths which are represented there.” McKay emphasized that this effort by Lodge “said, in effect: ‘As we sit here as the chosen representatives of . . . nations with the avowed purpose of establishing and of maintaining peace in the world, let us acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, and invoke his divine guidance as we seek the noblest accomplishment of all times—peace on earth, good will among men.’” Although Russia formally rejected the idea on 31 January 1946, this event proved there were individuals involved with the United Nations who wanted to include God in the quest for lasting peace. During the dedicatory services of the Church’s Tabernacle on 12 February 1956, McKay again spoke about the memorable day in United Nations history when Lodge attempted to have God officially recognized by the international organization.

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213 Ibid.

214 Jeanette McKay Morrell, *Highlights in the Life of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1966), 175.
McKay would applaud the international organization for further attempts to include God and prayer. He commended the efforts of another delegate who suggested they insert the name of God in the United Nations' Charter.\(^\text{216}\) Although that suggestion also failed, McKay was impressed with the action. Furthermore, he noted: “Recently, the United Nations Committee sensed the absence of something from that charter, and again the resolution was introduced that they offer prayer and appeal to God. . . . So they compromised, sensing the need of divine help, but not wishing to offend atheistic nations, to rise and bow their heads in silence so that each one may pray as he wishes.”\(^\text{217}\)

Member of the Seventy Oscar A. Kirkham described the situation as such:

They said, “No, we cannot have vocal prayers. Here is the Confucianist, here is the Buddhist, here is the Jew, here is the Christian. We must have no certain prayers.” . . . Soon they found that something greater than themselves must come among them if they accomplished that which was in their hearts to do. They agreed on one minute a day of silent personal devotion. . . . They have built a great building . . . And in the center of it is a chapel to prayer. There are no pulpits, no stained windows, merely a granite slab . . . above [which], a shaft of light falls from the heavens, representing that eternal power and promise which will strengthen the hearts of men and give them faith in the great cause of peace.\(^\text{218}\)

During the Korean Conflict, Thorpe B. Isaacson was impressed with the desire of the United Nations leader, United States General Douglas MacArthur, to pray. Isaacson’s faith was renewed when he found out MacArthur directed the Lord’s prayer. He felt “it was truly the act of a Christian gentleman. Oh, that that same spirit, that same confidence

\(^{216}\text{David O. McKay, Steppingstones to an Abundant Life (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1971), 160-1.}\)

\(^{217}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{218}\text{Oscar A. Kirkham, “Third Day–Afternoon Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1950), 151.}\)
in God, our Eternal Father, could be in the hearts of all men who are holding responsible positions!" Later during the Korean Conflict, David O. McKay publicly marveled at the combined efforts of so many nations involved in the great fight against evil represented by the communist regimes throughout the world. McKay believed the United Nations wanted to include God in its efforts and, as a body, was ultimately capable of doing good. He stated:

> At the moment there is being enacted a great world drama, the final act of which we can only dimly surmise. In Korea, one of the bloodiest wars of modern times is raging. But here is a singular thing. Engaged in it are soldiers from South Korea, United States, Great Britain, France, Turkey, Greece, Netherlands, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines, South Africa, and one or two other nations—all enlisted under the United Nations' banner.

Political relationships leading up to their fighting as an international army need not concern us this morning, but there is one significant fact most worthy of attention: Battling for the same cause are Buddhists, followers of Confucius, Moslems, and Christians. Opposed to these are Communists, openly avowed to be anti-Christ.

Clearly, Church leaders publicly applauded those who included God and prayer in the organization. Even United Nations opponent Ezra Taft Benson stated in October 1956, “I am pleased that this nation, on several occasions, has appealed to the United Nations to

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220 In a later General Conference, McKay would declare “Last Monday morning, October third, the Premier of Soviet Russia threatened that if the United Nations does not reorganize as he demands, the communist bloc will ‘rely on their own strength to block us.’ He also threatened to ignore the United Nation’s peace-making machinery unless the Secretary General of the United Nations resign, and his position, that is, the Secretary’s position, be replaced by a communist-styled, three-man presidium armed with veto powers.

Who is this man who presumes to tell the United Nations what to do?” [David O. McKay, “First Day–Morning Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1960), 5].

221 David O. McKay, “Second Day–Morning Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1951), 96.
open the General Assemblies with an appeal to the Almighty. . . . There is probably no
single thing that the United Nations can do which will so move and touch millions of
people around the world and will give them such confidence in the United Nations." 221

The Role of the United States

Another reason for leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
supporting the United Nations was their understanding of the role of the United States in
international affairs. In 1940, J. Reuben Clark Jr. declared that "America’s ultimate God-
given destiny, planned by the Creator and testified by ancient and modern prophecy and
revelation, is that out of her shall go forth the law." 222 G. Homer Durham taught members
of the Church that this law included humility, righteousness, liberty and justice. 223 In the
international world, there were many times during which America could act as a beacon
on a hill. Some anti-United Nations Church leaders, specifically isolationists, interpreted
America’s role to mean it was not expected to become directly involved with the other
countries of the world, rather, the United States was merely to be an example to them. In
contrast, other leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints supported the
United Nations because of their belief in the importance of the United States taking an
active role in the international community. Instead of being satisfied with the role of
example, these leaders felt the United States should not be afraid of being involved with
international organizations and could act as a beacon on a hill through leadership roles.

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221 Ezra Taft Benson, “Third Day–Morning Meeting Address,” in Conference Report (Salt Lake
City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1956), 96.


223 Ibid.
George Albert Smith Jr., a son of Church President George Albert Smith and the assistant dean at the Graduate School of Business Administration at Harvard University, told an audience at Brigham Young University:

Organization allows us to do collectively what we cannot do individually. So with the Church, with corporations, unions, a university such as this, political parties, foundations, national associations of all kinds, governments, the United Nations, and so on. We must not be afraid of organizations, even though some be large and some be governmental.

It is up to us to use our individual strengths to see to it that the organizations in which we participate strive in appropriate ways for good ends.

Although improvements were necessary, the United Nations was one organization in which the United States should seek involvement. Many leaders even felt that the presence of the United States was necessary for the organization to succeed.

At the beginning of the first “The Church and Modern Society” article, written by Durham in 1949 for the Improvement Era regarding the state of political affairs in the United States, the following questions were posed: “What is the role of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in modern society? How are we concerned with the United Nations, with Communism, with starvation in India, with atomic energy, with labor needs?” Durham’s articles sought to bring understanding to the pressing political issues of the time and he encouraged readers to learn about the vast facets of human life. Many individuals agreed with Durham’s belief that “more than any other power,

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226 Ibid., 11.
including the U.S.S.R., the United States of America will determine the U.N.’s 1950 role in human affairs.\textsuperscript{227}

In 1949, Durham also wrote about Douglas MacArthur being accepted by the Security Council as the "... supreme commander of a United Nations' contingent; and also recognizing, in effect, the U.S. troops as the military arm of the UN, together with such additional forces as might be made available by members. ... The U.S., as the core representative of UN military police action, thus finds itself in the ... responsible seat of western world power."\textsuperscript{228} Since the United States military was involved in the United Nations organization, it was in a position of world leadership. Thus, members were encouraged to edify those involved with the military. To this end, Assistant to the Twelve Apostles Hugh B. Brown emphasized the importance of supporting the United States military in light of its participation in the United Nations. He taught:

Anything ... which will sustain and strengthen the individual serviceman will aid the cause of the United Nations. Any act or influence which lowers his morale or impairs his physical fitness is an act of sabotage. You can make your greatest contribution by making sure that every serviceman you contact is strengthened by your influence, made better by your presence; that when he leaves you, he will respect you and retain his own self-respect, which is indispensable to high morale.\textsuperscript{229}

\textit{A Convenient Audience}

A concluding explanation for leaders' support of the United Nations is the opportunity it provides in promoting the principles of the gospel to the many nations of

\textsuperscript{227}G. Homer Durham, "What’s Ahead?," \textit{Improvement Era}, January 1950, 5.

\textsuperscript{228}G. Homer Durham, "The Korean War," \textit{Improvement Era}, October 1950, 832.

\textsuperscript{229}Hugh B. Brown, \textit{The Eternal Quest} (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, Inc., 1956), 342.
the world. Early Church President John Taylor taught in the nineteenth century: "We have another mission, namely, the perpetuation of the free agency of man and the maintenance of liberty, freedom, and the rights of man." Later, G. Homer Durham wrote in an October 1949 *Improvement Era* article:

> Has the Church of Christ a mission in modern world society? It certainly has. Let there be no doubt about it....

> The gospel was certainly not restored for the purpose of adding calamity to calamity, but its principles were made available for the purpose of benefitting mankind.

> It becomes the responsibility of the Church, the conservator of our religion, to provide means and direction whereby humanity may be led into the paths of happiness. This responsibility includes every need of man. Whatever pertains to human welfare must be the concern of the Church.

> ... Knowledge does not save, but the use of knowledge may. To use knowledge requires, first and foremost, possession of the knowledge, and secondly, the sense of purpose, personal intelligence, and social responsibility... revealed in the gospel.... Mankind cannot be saved in ignorance. Neither, possessing knowledge, can men be saved unless knowledge is used. A definite mission of the Church in modern society is to show how knowledge may be gained and used for human betterment—in "all the world."

Leaders of the Church saw the United Nations as a convenient audience for teaching Christian principles to the world. David O. McKay said, "Unless the spirit of Christianity permeate the deliberations of the United Nations, dire tragedies await humanity." He further taught that "in the United Nations are assembled men of different political views and of varying opinions as to the best form of government. No matter what their political

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232 David O. McKay, "Third Day–Morning Meeting Address," in *Conference Report* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1947), 117.
differences may be if they would but apply fundamental Christian principles the objectives of this great organization for peace would be attained.\textsuperscript{233}

The principles of respect and toleration of all peoples were integral to this endorsement of the United Nations by Church leaders. These principles have surfaced numerous times throughout the history of the Church. Brigham Young University religion professor James Toronto taught:

The Prophet Joseph Smith . . . encouraged the Saints to expand their vision of the human family, to view people of other faiths and cultures as our Heavenly Father does and not according to the "narrow, contracted notions of men" . . . the Father will take complex personal, political, and social circumstances into account at the last day and render final judgment based on a divine, merciful perspective that surpasses our limited human understanding. . . .\textsuperscript{234}

In April 1917, the First Presidency stressed, "In the Church . . . there is neither Greek nor Jew nor Gentile; in other words, there is neither Scandinavian nor Swiss nor German nor Russian nor British, nor any other nationality. We have become brothers in the household of faith, and we should treat the people from these nations . . . with due kindness and consideration."\textsuperscript{235}

This same message continued to be emphasized even after the end of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{236} In October 1991, Apostle and future President of the Church Howard W. Hunter said: "We seek to enlarge the circle of love and understanding among all the peoples of

\textsuperscript{233} McKay, \textit{Steppingstones}, 25.


\textsuperscript{235} Clark, \textit{Messages}, vol. 5, 61.

\textsuperscript{236} The Cold War is defined as: "The period in world affairs from c. 1947-90, marked by ideological, economic and political hostility and competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and drawing in other powers at various levels of involvement" (Nolan, \textit{Longman Guide}, 67).
the earth. Thus we strive to establish peace and happiness, not only within Christianity but among all mankind." 237 Likewise, the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve Apostles issued a public statement in October 1992 calling upon:

All people everywhere to re-commit themselves to the time-honored ideals of tolerance and mutual respect. We sincerely believe that as we acknowledge one another with consideration and compassion we will discover that we can all peacefully coexist despite our deepest differences. . . . Together we may stand, intolerant of transgression but tolerant of neighbors with differences they hold sacred. Our brothers and sisters throughout the world are all children of God. 238

According to Toronto, Church President Gordon B. Hinckley has also:

Consistently advocated dialogue and mutual respect in interfaith relations. He has admonished members of the Church to cultivate "a spirit of affirmative gratitude" for those of differing religious, political, and philosophical persuasions . . . Hinckley's emphasis on building interfaith understanding is rooted in fundamental gospel principles—humility, charity, respect for eternal truth, and recognition of God's love for all mankind. 239

Many leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints emphasized the importance of promoting these principles of the gospel at United Nations meetings. Similarly, Church members were reminded that the governments represented in the United Nations consisted of individual people. 240 Members had a responsibility to respect, serve, and love all individuals even if they came from extremely differing political circumstances, including communist regimes. In fact, a fear of evil governments and individuals was not a good enough excuse to justify avoiding the organization. In

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237 Ibid.
238 Ibid.
239 Toronto, "Perspective on Muhammad," 51.
240 G. Homer Durham, "A Suggestion To Mr. John Foster Dulles the United States Secretary of State," Improvement Era, February 1953, 66.
opposition to Church leaders who were teaching members of the Church that they should be wary of the United Nations because of the participation of evil governments, others taught that the presence of communistic governments should be an impetus for increased involvement in the organization. If Christian ideals were not being included in the United Nations, these governments would succeed in propagating their teachings. If the United States or the Church hoped to influence these countries, it would have to be through the promotion of gospel principles. In 1953, Durham wrote:

_The United States realizes that peace and prosperity are not the fruit of one great world conference or any single effort, but are goals to be realized every day, day by day, in the life of men and nations._ . . . An editorial in _The Deseret News_, May 11, 1948, “United Nations Needs Russia,” bears comment in this connection: “Americans should realize that what Russia needs is conversion, not eviction. She is a necessary member of the family of nations, and with patience, understanding and firmness . . . she may yet make her contribution to human welfare.” Some folk expected magical results from [the United Nations], then, disappointed, urged a new UN without Russia. The _News_ editorial points the sober way.²⁴²

Additionally, Apostle James E. Faust noted that Satan was capable of cleverly masking his evil objectives through the United Nations.²⁴³ If Christian principles permeated its meetings, Satan would be unsuccessful. As a world forum for discussion, the United Nations was a convenient audience for teaching these principles, as well as practicing respect and toleration.

²⁴² Durham, “Significance of ECA,” 419.
²⁴³ James E. Faust, _Finding Light in a Dark World_ (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1995), 72.
Conclusion

There are several reasons why leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have supported the United Nations. Many of them saw the international organization as a viable means of achieving its goals, in spite of its weaknesses. The United Nations was applauded for its involvement in improving the conditions of life around the world, and also was admired for its inclusion of God and prayer. Additionally, Church leaders have endorsed the United Nations because of their interpretation of the destiny of America and the convenient audience the organization provides for the promotion of gospel principles, including respect and toleration of all peoples. These varying explanations have proven to members that the United Nations was worthy of support. Obviously, favorable statements from leaders could have caused members of the Church to believe that the Church officially advocated the international organization.
CHAPTER 7
THE RELATIONSHIP

Unquestionably, there have been conflicting messages offered by Church leaders on the topic of the United Nations since 1945. No official declaration has ever been given by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the international organization which could clear up any confusion that might have been created by these ambivalent messages. In spite of the historical debate among leaders, the Church has had a formal relationship with the United Nations since the 1970s. The United Nations serves as a means through which the threefold mission of the Church as outlined by President Spencer W. Kimball can be furthered. As the Church interacts with the international organization it is able to establish diplomatic relationships with various governments. These relationships act as vehicles for increasing effectiveness at distributing humanitarian aid to people in need, in allowing missionaries to enter and proselyte in foreign countries, in ensuring continued construction of temples throughout the world, and in guaranteeing that members of the Church are supported in their respective homelands. Also, some Church members who have believed a relationship between The

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244 1) To proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; 2) To perfect the Saints by preparing them to receive the ordinances of the gospel and by instruction and discipline to gain exaltation; and 3) To redeem the dead by performing vicarious ordinances of the gospel for those who have lived on the earth" (Spencer W. Kimball, “A Report of My Stewardship,” *Ensign*, May 1981, 5).
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the United Nations would be beneficial to have sought ways to support the organization independently of the Church. The evident relationship, although it has not been widely publicized, seems to indicate greater Church support for the United Nations in today’s world.

**Humanitarian Efforts**

One of the most evident ways in which The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been involved with the United Nations is through its numerous humanitarian efforts. During the 2002 Winter Olympics, the First Presidency of the Church met with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. During this meeting, they:

- Discussed the Church’s ongoing humanitarian aid efforts in a number of troubled areas in the world and how the Church and the United Nations might cooperate further to relieve human suffering. President Hinckley ... commended the "tremendous work [Annan’s] doing in trying to bring peace and goodness to the people of the world." Secretary-General Annan expressed appreciation ... for the Church’s humanitarian service, saying, “I’ve enjoyed the exchange we’ve had and the work you do around the world.”

In 1999, member of the First Presidency Thomas S. Monson emphasized the impetus for such humanitarian service when he said, “Each time we watch the news on television or pick up a newspaper, we learn of terrible human suffering as a result of tornadoes, floods, fires, drought, hurricanes, earthquakes or conflicts of war. I ask the question: ‘Do we have a responsibility to do something about such suffering?’ The answer is, ‘Yes.’”

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245 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “UN Secretary-General Meets with First Presidency,” News Releases: Official News Releases From the Church, 9 February 2002.

The responsibility of Church members to provide aid to those in need is clearly independent of the debate among Church leaders on the topic of the United Nations and dates back to several years before World War II. In 1936, the Church established the Church Security Plan, the precursor to Welfare Services which oversaw welfare and humanitarian efforts around the world. J. Reuben Clark Jr. declared: “The real long term objective of the Welfare Plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them, and bringing to flower . . . the latent richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this Church.”

Originally focused on helping and taking care of Church members, Welfare Services has made increasingly greater efforts in providing aid to nonmembers around the world. The shift to helping all peoples corresponded with the transition of the Church into a greater international entity. Working with other government and relief agencies, such as Mercy Corp, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, the American Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the United Nations, the Church has been able to increase its effectiveness in relieving suffering, especially to individuals who are not Latter-day Saints. Garry Flake, current director of Humanitarian Affairs for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commented, “The United Nations and Red Cross officials and government leaders have . . . recognized The Church


of Jesus Christ for its welfare services program because of the quality and relevancy of its response and the ability to continuously provide its services. . . . 249

The Church's international humanitarian response began "through an agreement with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), with a team of Welfare Services missionaries at the Phenot Nikom Refugee Camp in Thailand." 250 This was a result of the proliferation of refugees coming from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in the 1970s. Since 1978, service missionaries have taught refugees in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Thailand lessons on the English language and American culture. 251

Marion D. Hanks, a member of the Seventy, commented on this humanitarian missionary service when he wrote:

For many years, our young Latter-day Saint missionary representatives have given selfless, significant service in the refugee camps of Southeast Asia. . . . Faithfully keeping United Nations camp rules, which appropriately restrained denominational instruction from various faith groups and agencies serving in the refugee camps, our representatives . . . accepted the opportunity and responsibility to prepare the refugees to speak English as a second language and to provide the cultural orientation that would qualify them to be received in a third country. 252

*The Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article on humanitarian service notes:

By 1980, some 768 Welfare missionaries (volunteers to give humanitarian aid) were serving in more than forty Church mission areas throughout the world. By 1990, more than 350 missionaries with specific professional backgrounds (nurses, doctors, educators, agricultural specialists) also were providing temporal

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251Ibid.

assistance in many nations (including countries in eastern Europe), primarily in health, agriculture, and leadership development.²⁵²

In addition to the work of these service missionaries, humanitarian initiatives for those areas of the world in which no missionaries lived began in the mid-1980s when Church leaders encouraged members to fast for Africans starving from a famine.²⁵³ Through collected fast offerings,²⁵⁴ the Church is able to fund many humanitarian projects, and Church leaders work through local leaders to coordinate the assistance.²⁵⁵ The Church also maintains a Humanitarian Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, which "processes, transports and distributes thousands of tons of commodities and equipment to needy people around the world every year,"²⁵⁶ as part of the larger humanitarian effort.

During the 1990s, the Church:

Conducted more than 7,500 humanitarian aid projects, shipping and distributing commodities and equipment to needy people around the world. . . . In March 2001 alone, the center processed 72 shipments to nearly as many countries. During the year 2000, the center shipped more than 11 million pounds of clothing. . . . From 1985 through 2000, the Church rendered cash assistance totaling $60.8 million. The value of non-cash items given to needy people during this same period is valued at $291 million.²⁵⁷

²⁵²Ferguson, "Humanitarian," 662.
²⁵⁴One Sunday each month members fast for two meals. Money that would have been spent on these meals is donated to the Church as fast offerings.
²⁵⁷Ibid.
This assistance was given to 147 countries, distributing 32,734 tons of food, "3,622 tons of medical equipment, 2,223 tons of education supplies and 37,483 tons of surplus clothing..."  

Contributions from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been given directly to the United Nations on several occasions. In 1991, representatives of the Church went to Turkey to aid Kurdish refugees fleeing war-torn Iraq in the Middle East. Blankets and clothing were sent to the refugees, and funds for the purchase of medical supplies were made available to the United Nations and other agencies. In a 1994 *Ensign* article written by Thomas S. Monson, Latter-day Saints read about humanitarian efforts in Africa. Monson wrote:  

Following its colonial period, a series of tribal conflicts has decimated the population of Rwanda in Africa. In the spring of this year, open hostilities resumed, resulting in the deaths of more than half a million people. Refugees huddle in squalid and unhealthy camps within the borders of neighboring Zaire, Uganda, Tanzania, and Burundi.  

Joining with the efforts of other agencies in the international community, this church has committed $1.2 million in goods and cash for refugee relief. Most of the promised assistance has already been consigned or shipped through four helping agencies—even Catholic Relief Services, the International Committee of the Red Cross, C.A.R.E., and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.  

In December 1996, the First Presidency "announced the establishment of Latter-day Saint Charities, a charitable, nonprofit corporation designed to help the Church deliver

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260 Monson, "Brother's Keeper," 43.
humanitarian aid to poor and needy people of the world.  

Previous to this time, humanitarian relief was distributed primarily through other existing relief agencies. As the official nongovernmental organization for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,  

LDS Charities was set up to supply aid directly to those who needed it.  

Yet, the Church continued to work with other humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations. When refugees began fleeing Kosovo for Macedonia in 1999, the Church prepared 200,000 pounds of clothing, shoes, personal hygiene items, supplies for newborn children, and blankets to be shipped in coordination with efforts by the United Nations, the Red Cross and other organizations. Mercy Corps, a Christian relief agency already working among the refugees in Macedonia, was responsible for distributing the clothing.  

During a 1999 General Conference address, Gordon B. Hinckley remarked, “Our hearts reach out to the brutalized people of Kosovo . . . I am grateful that we are rushing humanitarian aid to the victims of these atrocities.”  

In early 2000, the Church began working with government officials, the United Nations, and nongovernmental organizations in trying to determine the best way to assist more than 100,000 refugees who had fled East Timor during its civil war.  

The Church purchased hundreds of

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266. Ibid.

thousands of pounds of rice and 20,000 hygiene kits in Indonesia, to be distributed to the refugee camps by the Bina Bingsa Foundation, as well as eight 38,000-pound containers of warm-weather clothing.\footnote{Ibid.} In mid-2000, the United Nations made an international plea in behalf of eight million Ethiopians and Eritreans facing starvation.\footnote{The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Africa Famine Victims Receive Church Wheat,” News Releases: Official News Releases From the Church, 16 June 2000; “LDS Church Shipping Wheat to Ethiopia and Eritrea,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 18 June 2000, B4; and “News of the Church: British, Canadian Saints Help Church Send Wheat to Horn of Africa,” Ensign, September 2000, 79.} The Church Humanitarian Service field assessment team traveled to Ethiopia and confirmed that there was an immediate need for grain.\footnote{Church, “Famine Victims,” 16 June 2000.} Church farms in Cambridge, England, quickly bagged eight million pounds of wheat at the direction of the First Presidency. Half of the cost of the shipment was covered by donations from Church members in Canada and the remaining half was paid by the farm in Cambridge. Missionaries in Ethiopia helped with the distribution of wheat,\footnote{“News: British, Canadian Saints,” 79.} which was some of the first aid received by the African countries during the drought.\footnote{Ibid.} Both the United Nations and Ethiopian government leaders expressed appreciation for the Church’s quick response.\footnote{Church, “Famine Victims,” 16 June 2000; and “Shipping Wheat,” B4.} The Church has obviously found the United Nations to be a valuable organization to work with in their humanitarian efforts at helping the peoples of the world.
Official Interaction with the United Nations

In addition to being involved with the United Nations through humanitarian efforts, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has also had direct official interaction with the organization through its International Affairs offices, a division of the Church's Public Affairs department. Charged with building and maintaining bridges of trust with the countries of the world in furthering the threefold mission of the Church, International Affairs has sent several individuals to attend United Nations meetings as the Church's official representatives and observers. Not only are they able to observe the current political debates and discussions of the United Nations so that they can keep the leadership of the Church abreast of what is going on in the world, but these representatives are able to make contacts and strengthen relationships as they promote gospel principles.

Beverly Campbell, a former director of the Church's International Affairs office in Washington, D.C., commented: "Our purpose is to open doors and build bridges, to provide accurate information so the Church can move forward in the countries of the

274 United States offices are located in Los Angeles, California, New York City, New York, and Washington, D.C.


276 Santini, interview by author, 26 September 2001, tape recording; and Trotter, interview by author, 28 September 2001, tape recording.
world." She emphasized that these diplomats are welcomed in the United States as the Church hopes “they will welcome missionaries and members of the Church who reside within their countries’ borders.”

There are several events which International Affairs offices organize each year in order to host ambassadors, key embassy officials, and their families.

As stated in a Deseret News article, these social activities provide diplomats with “a sense of American culture and history. The Church is part of that culture and history. . . .” Ann Santini, current director of International Affairs in D.C., has commented that these events give “diplomats the opportunity to become familiar with who we are and what we stand for as Latter-day Saints. . . . When they return to their countries, we have developed a unique friendship and they have a basic understanding of what we believe.”

The Public Affairs office in New York City, New York, has the


279 Public Affairs Offices have hosted (among other events): an annual Ambassadorial Picnic on the Marriott Ranch in Virginia; the Festival of Lights in D.C.; the Ambassadorial Lecture Series in conjunction with Church Headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah (Santini, interview by author, 26 September 2001, tape recording); various diplomatic receptions and firesides (“Be a Thankful People, Members Urged,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 9 May 1998, Z5; and Cala Byram, “20,000 Expected in N.Y. for Pres. Hinckley Fireside Visit,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 26 April 1998, A1); and events such as the gala dinner and reception at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on 17 March 1999 honoring Brigham Young University’s Islamic Translation Series [Michael R. Leonard, “Islamic Diplomats Hosted in New York,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 3 April 1999, Z6]; as well as when “Wives of 68 United Nations’ ambassadors, diplomats and consuls spent a morning at the Church’s New York City visitors center recently, learning how LDS teachings help families meet the challenges of today’s society. Representing 34 nations as diverse as China, Nepal, the USSR, Guatemala, Fiji and several African countries, these women came to learn more of the Mormon family life style and ethic, and to become acquainted with the Family History Center” [“N.Y. Center Hosts International Guests,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 25 November 1989, Z11].


unique experience of working directly with ambassadors assigned to represent their countries at the headquarters of the United Nations. Through this office, Latter-day Saint missionary couples work as liaisons to the international organization. Former New York City missionary Karl Snow noted their work was “part of continuing church efforts to build friendships around the globe... It’s simply an opportunity for them to know who we are so that whenever we have occasion to deal with the government we’re not strangers...”

Additionally, the Church has been officially involved with the United Nations through its support of the actions and declarations of the organization. The Relief Society Gospel Literacy Effort, which was launched as part of the 1992 Relief Society sesquicentennial celebration, endorsed the International Literacy Day, which was initiated by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the International Reading Association. In January 1994, the First Presidency endorsed the United Nations’ designation of 1994 as the International Year of the Family. In conjunction, the Church sponsored a booth at a National Family Day carnival on 19 June, recognized the week of 20 November as National Family Week in the United States, and participated in the “Festival of the Family” in the Royal Ontario Museum.

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Museum in Canada. In early 1995, Thomas S. Monson was a speaker at the first ever global conference on the family. A Deseret News article reported,

More than 500 delegates from 52 nations participated in the three-day conference, which was billed as the culminating event of the United Nations’ International Year of the Family. Social workers, government leaders, corporate officials and numerous experts split up into dozens of working groups to share strategies for bolstering the family and produced a series of sweeping recommendations.

In March 1997, the Church appointed official delegates to represent it in Prague, Czech Republic, at the World Congress of Families. The World Congress is “an international group of family activists, parents, and scholars that meets yearly to discuss ways to counter what they call anti-family initiatives advanced at the UN and other world bodies.” Charles Didier, a member of the Seventy, served as the presiding Church leader at the meetings. Bruce C. Hafen, also a member of the Seventy, and the General

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289 The convening committee of the World Congress of Families wrote: “As the year 2000 approaches, defenders of the family from about the globe must come together to restore the family as the first social institution and as the center of civilization in all places.” Its three major purposes are to: “Explore common sources of family decay; Define social and economic settings which most encourage the flourishing of family life; Develop and issue ‘A Declaration from the Families of the Nations to the Governments of the Globe,’ laying out the proper relationship between the family and the state” [“LDS to be at World Congress of Families,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 15 February 1997, Z3]. Many articles have been written about the World Congress of Families, particularly regarding LDS involvement. These include: Susan Whitney and Jennifer Toomer, “Family Advocates Find Common Thread—Hope,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 25 March 1997, B1; “LDS Join World Emphasis on Families,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 29 March 1997, Z3; “Disintegration of the Family Decried,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 29 March 1997, Z7; Carrie A. Moore, “World Meet to Promote Natural Family,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 31 October 1999, B1; and Carrie A. Moore, “Faiths Unite in Plea for Family,” Salt Lake City (Utah) Deseret News, 16 November 1999, A1.

Relief Society Presidency of the Church, Elaine L. Jack, Lucie L. Didier and Marie K. Hafen, were present as well. Regardless of the historical debate among Church leaders on whether members should oppose or support the United Nations, the Church presence at the World Congress of Families proved that it was necessary to stay informed about the activities and issues before the international organization. Commenting on the importance of having a Church presence at the international conference at which 41 nations attended, Apostle Dallin H. Oaks said:

The Church is anxious to have official representation to show support for an effort that is itself supportive of wholesome values. It shows our interest as a worldwide Church in having a voice in a conference with these kinds of objectives. In view of their stated aims, it is appropriate for us to participate in the World Congress of Families to reinforce what that congress is seeking to accomplish.290

Most recently, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has interacted with the United Nations through its application for official accreditation of Latter-day Saint Charities.291

*Unofficial Interaction with the United Nations*

Although The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sent representatives to the World Congress of Families in 1997, it was quick to note that it was not an official sponsor of the event. Yet, many members of the Church took up the cause of the organization and began participating in subsequent meetings regarding the family. In January 1997, NGO Family Voice was created by the J. Reuben Clark Law School and

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290“LDS to be at World Congress,” Z3.

the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University. Using "The Family: A Proclamation to the World"\(^{292}\) as its basis for promoting the traditional family, this organization began lobbying for family-friendly policies at United Nations conferences.\(^{293}\) It was "established to ensure world-wide democratic input to the United Nations and its various agencies while building support for the family."\(^{294}\) NGO Family Voice attended the World Congress of Families in Prague, and played an integral role in the World Congress of Families II held in Geneva, Switzerland, in November 1999.\(^{295}\) By that time, the name NGO Family Voice had changed to the World Family Policy Center, but the mission was the same, to restore the family as the first social institution and as the center of civilization. Its website states that it serves:

> As an exchange point for the discussion and evaluation of emerging international legal norms and as active participants in the debate, adoption, and implementation of UN norms. World Family Policy Center pursues these objectives by various means, including a site on the World Wide Web, consistent attendance and participation in major UN Conferences, and the sponsorship of significant worldwide conferences on family policy.\(^{296}\)

Although the Church's Relief Society was a sponsoring organization of the World Congress of Families II, Church spokesman Mike Otterson emphasized, once again, that

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\(^{292}\)A document issued by the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1995.


\(^{295}\)World Congress of Families II was hosted by Brigham Young University’s World Family Policy Center (also known as NGO Family Voice), in conjunction with the Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society in Rockford, Illinois.

the Church itself was not a sponsor. Although he did not explain how the Church could not be a sponsor of the conference if the Relief Society was one, Otterson noted that Church leaders felt the conference was deserving of Church members' support.

Another organization involved with the United Nations that maintains Latter-day Saint membership is the Worldwide Organization for Women (WOW), a Salt Lake City-based organization that also lobbies United Nations meetings on topics concerning the family. WOW hosted a conference in September 2000:

To showcase ways to strengthen families and also serve as a forum to teach people about positions under consideration by the United Nations that the organization feels will undermine families. One of the featured speakers was Elder David B. Haight of the 12 and his wife, Ruby. Representatives Richard Wilkins and Kathryn Balmforth from the World Family Policy Center at BYU also spoke.

In addition to these organizations, there is further evidence of unofficial involvement between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the United Nations.

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298 A letter about the congress was sent to general and local church leaders on Aug. 18 from President Boyd K. Packer, president of the Church's Quorum of the Twelve. 'We commend the efforts of any responsible group which maintains and strengthens the family as the fundamental unit of society. We note that one of the major activities in preparation for the (World) Congress is the gathering of signatures in support of the family. As a matter of policy, the church does not allow its meetings or facilities to be used for such purposes. We raise no objection to having members as individual citizens support this worthy cause.'

Following that letter, Elder Merrill J. Bateman, a member of the Church's First Quorum of the Seventy and president of BYU, sent out his own letter to the university's faculty, staff and administrators in September, with an attachment describing the World Congress and urging each to consider support... 'as a private citizen. You will find that the aims of the movement... are deserving of widespread support.'

The letter also noted that 'Because The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no formal connection with the World Congress of Families II, it would not be appropriate to distribute these materials in church facilities or meetings' (Moore, "Promote Natural Family," B1).

299 Ibid.


301 Ibid.
Nations through the many Church members who have worked directly with the organization in their day-to-day jobs or in addition to Church assignments. Some of the Church leaders involved with the United Nations were Ezra Taft Benson, Levi Edgar Young, Alexander B. Morrison, and Hugh B. Brown. Several members of the Church have worked for the United Nations as well. As leaders and members actively support the United Nations, the relationship between the Church and the organization is bolstered.

**Conclusion**

In spite of the conflicting statements that have been issued by Church leaders regarding the United Nations, there are many evidences of a mutually-beneficial relationship existing between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the international organization. One reason for this relationship is the opportunity provided to

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304 Alexander B. Morrison served as an advisor to many committees of the World Health Organization (WHO) and also chaired the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee to the WHO’s Special Program for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases [“News of the Church: Elder Alexander B. Morrison of the First Quorum of the Seventy,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 91; and Derin Head Rodriguez, *From Every Nation: Faith-promoting Personal Stories of General Authorities from Around the World* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1990), 160].


the Church in facilitating humanitarian efforts. It also helps in establishing diplomatic
ties with the countries of the world so that the Church’s threefold mission will continue
to be advanced. Through official involvement, including Humanitarian and Public Affairs
efforts, as well as the unofficial involvement of members of the Church, the relationship
between the Church and the United Nations has been continuously strengthened.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints seek to follow the counsel of their leaders while living in an increasingly international world setting. Although members reside in almost every country, the divine destiny of America is still central to the Church's beliefs. Ezra Taft Benson taught, "Every true Latter-day Saint throughout the world loves the USA. The Constitution of this land is part of every Latter-day Saint's religious faith. This is not just another nation, not just a member of a family of nations. This is a great and glorious nation with a divine mission and a prophetic history and future. It has been brought into being under the inspiration of heaven."306 One organization which exists in today's international world and counts the United States as an important member is the United Nations.

Dating back to the end of World War II, the United Nations has acted as a deterrent to war and as a promoter of world peace. C. Gwendolyn Landolt, a speaker at the World Congress of Families II, believes the United Nations "was established as a forum for the nations of the world to meet in a spirit of dignity and goodwill, to discuss problems and reach consensus all the while, respecting the national sovereignty of

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306 Benson, *Title of Liberty*, 86; and Cannon, *Latter-day Prophets*, 175.
member countries and their differing cultural and religious values. Over the years, the international organization has become increasingly involved with humanitarian efforts.

The official website of the United Nations states:

Eighty per cent of the work of the UN system is devoted to helping developing countries build the capacity to help themselves. This includes promoting and protecting democracy and human rights; saving children from starvation and disease; providing relief assistance to refugees and disaster victims; countering global crime, drugs and disease; and assisting countries devastated by war and the long-term threat of land-mines.

Landolt feels the United Nations also "serves a noble purpose in its famine and disaster relief, and health care and peace-keeping capacities. This essential work makes the world a better, safer place in which to live."

Many members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have desired to know how their leaders feel about such an organization and if any official stand has been made in opposition to or in support of it. Although Church leaders have encouraged members to personally study political issues before making decisions, they are still greatly influenced by what their leaders say. Edwin B. Firmage, biographer of Hugh B. Brown, wrote that Brown believed:

When it comes to expressing an opinion on some ... organization or some political or quasi-political question, one hopes that the authorities of the church will have the good grace not to be extreme, to keep near the center of the road ...

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people in and out of the church should think through every proposition presented to them. Positions may be modified as time passes by discussing them with others, but there should be no question that both liberals and conservatives in the church are free to express their opinions.\textsuperscript{311}

Yet, some members of the Church fail to study the issues on their own and base their personal opinions solely upon the public statements of their leaders which could be problematic if leaders have made contradictory comments.

Historical research shows that Church leaders' statements regarding the United Nations have been both positive and negative. These conflicting messages were very prevalent during the 1940s–1970s. Since then, it appears that Church leaders' objections to the United Nations have all but disappeared. Past anti-United Nations leaders of the Church were adamant about avoiding the international organization. Yet those leaders who were outspoken shortly after the end of World War II and throughout much of the Cold War, have slowly quieted their voices of opposition. Perhaps it is because the number of internationalists has grown significantly since the inception of the United Nations. It is possible that the opposition has lessened because many of the staunchly outspoken anti-United Nations leaders of the Church are now deceased. The fall of communism throughout much of the world could be another reason. Perhaps it is a result of the increased involvement on the part of the United Nations in humanitarian efforts, which is also central to the mission of the Church. Maybe prominent Church leaders have become increasingly more cautious in their public references to political topics. There are a number of factors which could explain the shift in the historical debate.

What is clear is that an official position on the United Nations organization has never been issued by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Evidently, the United Nations is still disconcerting for some conservative circles in the United States and the Church, as shown in the letter quoted in the introduction of this thesis regarding the Model United Nations program at Brigham Young University. Some members incorrectly believe that the Church has taken an official stand on the issue of the United Nations. Although it is unknown if the following was sent to the author, here is one possible response to the aforementioned letter which was found in the Model United Nations files:

Many scholars recognize that the United Nations system is flawed. Like most institutions, it is not a perfect organization. Some even note that the United Nation’s general ineffectiveness may be its downfall. The Model United Nations course at BYU does not advocate a particular position in favor or against the United Nations. . . .

... Students are encouraged to scrutinize the organization, and as with other academic courses, a diversity of opinion is welcomed. Since there is not an official statement on the United Nations from our prophets (including Presidents Hinckley, Hunter, Benson, and Kimball) the program, as it currently runs, does not appear to contradict any Church or University standards.

Interestingly, a relationship between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the United Nations has blossomed over the past few decades. The world is much more globally minded today than fifty years ago and it appears that the world’s

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312 See letter on page 1, chapter 1.

313 [Draft of a Response to the Author], Provo, to [Name Withheld to Protect the Privacy of the Author], Salt Lake City, n.d., Model United Nations’ files, David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
estimation of the United Nations is also much more supportive.\textsuperscript{314} Therefore, it follows that the United Nations organization could be an essential actor in the international community\textsuperscript{315} and it is possible that the Church would greatly benefit if America would take its place as the leader of the international forum. I see validity in the concerns of many Church leaders regarding the international organization and I understand why the

\textsuperscript{314} "Surveys have shown for years—and today more than ever—that the UN enjoys widespread popular regard around the world. Even in the United States, often thought to be the home to the UN’s most persistent critics, the majority of Americans when polled express support for the Organization. Consider these facts:

Fully 70 per cent of Americans surveyed have a favourable opinion of the United Nations, according to a poll completed in April 1999 by Zogby International and GfK Great Britain. This placed the United States fourth highest in positive regard for the UN out of thirteen countries polled. Among young Americans age 18 to 29, over 80 per cent had a favourable opinion of the world body. Youth worldwide gave the UN higher ratings than their elders, a fact attributed to growing global awareness.

Other recent surveys showed similar support. An August 1998 poll by Wirthlin Worldwide found that 60 per cent of Americans thought that the United Nations was ‘doing a good job,’ up from 49 per cent in 1996. And 64 percent of Americans gave the UN a favourable rating in 1997, a figure that fluctuated between 62 and 76 per cent for the past few years, according to the Pew Research Center (formerly Times-Mirror Center).

Of Americans polled, 72 per cent feel it is ‘very important’ for the US to be an active member of the United Nations, up from 54 per cent just three years ago, and an additional 21 per cent believe it is ‘somewhat important.’ In another sign of warming US sentiment, 53 per cent approved of Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s job performance, compared to 30 per cent for his predecessor three years ago (Wirthlin, August 1998)" (United Nations, “What Do Americans Really Think of the UN?” found at <http://www.un.org/News/facts/think.htm>, accessed on 13 February 2001).

\textsuperscript{315} "... the United Nations is a world necessity and the world is better with it than without it. ... The debates that take place at the United Nations have helped more than anything else in educating the peoples of the world as to the great issues facing the nations today.

Because the world has become physically one, it is absolutely essential that some international forum exists where the nations can come together to discuss issues and to negotiate, and that necessary world forum is the United Nations. ... Now all this requires leadership. It will not come of itself, therefore a leader must arise. The mantle of leadership has fallen upon the United States. I know the United States never sought it, and part of the difficulties of the present world situation arises from the fact that because the United States never sought the role of leader, the United States now is coy and hesitant and uncertain in performing this role.

But in history, my friends, one accepts the role which God has assigned to him. Therefore the deepest question today, so far as history is concerned, is this: Will the United States of America produce in the near future the required quality of leadership which—in making freedom secure and in preserving and strengthening and extending the tested and received values of civilization—will redeem the mistakes and delinquencies of the past and, in decisively beating back the forces of darkness under whatever form they hide themselves, will help in ushering in a dawn of human dignity not only among the American people but among the struggling and expectant peoples of the world? That is the first and last question of the present world situation" (Malik, “Danger and Hope,” 1).
opponents of the United Nations have spoken out against it. Nevertheless I agree with Brigham Young University professor of political science Stan A. Taylor who declared: “The United Nations is an instrument and like any other instrument it can be used for good or ill. Today, perhaps we ought to stop asking whether the United Nations is good or bad and ask what can be done to make the United Nations more responsive to what Americans have traditionally desired—international peace with justice.”

British political philosopher Edmund Burke remarked, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” There is a definite necessity for more courageous individuals willing to speak against all forms of evil and oppression, whether physical, spiritual, or mental. Since the United Nations was created to combat this oppression, to preserve international peace, to cultivate friendly relations, and to promote social progress, better living conditions and basic human rights throughout the world, involvement in the organization is perhaps one way through which The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can help work toward this end.

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317 Hillam, J. Reuben Clark, 88.


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