

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY AND THE CHURCH

ELDER ROBERT S. WOOD

Elder Robert S. Wood, then a released member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, presented this essay at “The Church and International Diplomacy,” the International Society’s twenty-fourth annual conference, April 2013, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

In the prefatory section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord declared, “And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouth of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days.”¹ The foundation of the Church’s international diplomacy is the great commission given to His faithful Apostles by the resurrected Lord: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.”² This commission was renewed with the restoration of the priesthood and Church and is preeminently in the hands and under the direction of the living Apostles.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord specifies the responsibility of the Apostles:

The twelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling. . . . The Twelve are a Traveling Presiding High Council, to officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church, agreeable to the institution of heaven; to build up the church, and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations, first unto the Gentiles and secondly unto the Jews. . . . The Twelve being sent out, holding the keys, to open the door by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.³

In this responsibility, they are to call upon and to be assisted by the Seventy.

Although the restored Church was initially small and concentrated within the United States, from the beginning, the Apostles were sent outside the center of the Church and beyond the borders of the United States. Even during the trouble in Kirtland in 1837, they and others were sent to Great Britain, and in the summer of 1839, during the construction of Nauvoo, seven members of the Twelve went to England. The building of Zion in the Great Basin was strengthened by the flood of immigrants from Great Britain, northern Europe, and finally elsewhere—a process that continued well into the twentieth century. The apostolic commission to proclaim the gospel and the early community building laid the foundation for the diplomatic role of the Church in the twenty-first century.

INDEPENDENT ABOVE ALL OTHER CREATURES

As I approach this subject, I think of the general subject of diplomacy itself. Diplomacy in the popular sense simply refers to words and behaviors calculated to soothe feelings and improve social intercourse. In the technical sense, it refers to the representation of sovereign powers, including the gathering of information, the communication of attitudes and policies, and the process of winning assent to particular policy objectives. This latter function has not always been portrayed in flattering terms. Indeed, the best-known quip about diplomatic representation was given by the seventeenth-century ambassador Sir Henry Wotton, who observed that a diplomat is “an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country.”⁴

This sentiment, it should be noted, did not sit well with his sovereign James I of England. However, for much of history, diplomats engaged in a range of chicanery from interception of diplomatic dispatches to bribery to stealing to even more nefarious acts. The British diplomat and historian Sir Harold Nicolson argued that diplomatic behavior improved by the mid-nineteenth century as public opinion played a greater role in the affairs of nations and as a sense of international community developed. As one scans news reports today, one is not entirely convinced that diplomacy's reputation has been entirely redeemed.

I hasten to add that these reflections on the darker side of diplomacy have nothing to do with the Church's diplomatic role. But I would argue the Church does occupy, in an important sense, a global position of "sovereign independence," and the theory and practice of diplomacy traditionally defined does apply to its mission and roles.

In a revelation counseling the Saints to organize and establish a storehouse and to make wise use of their properties, the Lord declared all things be done that "the church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world."⁵ From the earliest days of the Church, there has been a concern for establishing not only the spiritual but the temporal foundations of this independence. This was concretely manifest in community building in Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and later in the Great Basin. The integration of the Church into the broader American society and the extension of its fellowship to the world as a whole have largely superseded these early attempts at constructing independent communities. Nonetheless, the Church still maintains its claim to an agency separate and independent of any earthly authority and shapes its policies to defend its independence of action. In a broad sense, this attitude and the historical evolution are not entirely dissimilar from that of the Roman Catholic Church.

The papacy has long maintained not only that there are separate temporal and spiritual spheres, but that, among the rulers of the earth, the Roman Catholic Church stands as an independent authority. This claim was initially underpinned by the Papal States and other political jurisdictions. Since the unification of Italy, this territorial jurisdiction has been reduced to the tiny Vatican state, but the sovereign claim remains.

Similarly, while the restored Church is not organized into a separate territorially based political jurisdiction, it remains concerned for the integrity of the Church, its governance, its doctrine, and its mission to proclaim the gospel. Moreover, while it seeks to use its influence to favor legislative and administrative norms in harmony with its teaching on Christian behavior, it is also active in supporting broad norms favorable to freedom of religious conscience and practice.

The Church, as the visible kingdom of God on the earth, does embody concerns for its independence and institutional integrity that make the application of the term “diplomacy” apt not only in a popular but in a technical sense as well. Joseph Smith and the early Brethren saw the Church not as simply a denomination but as a Zion society that would ultimately form the basis of a millennial government.⁶ If the nineteenth-century projects of independent community building and an active discourse concerning a millennial political community have passed, the unique status of the Church as an independent entity under the sovereignty of heaven remains.

In 1993, I gave a keynote address on BYU campus to a symposium on moral perspectives on American security policy and mentioned the notion of *raison d'état*, or reason of state. I noted that it is not a concept that applies exclusively to the state but to any group or organization for whom security or survival is a fundamental need. It arises whenever a group reaches a stage wherein it can assert its right to exist independently in the face of other powerful forces. Indeed, the Jesuits essentially used a reason-of-state argument in defense of the Catholic Church, whose existence and institutional health were seen as critical to the salvation of the individual.

Reason of state is the doctrine that the preservation of the group is so critical to the maintenance of such important values that the individuals responsible for the group will take the necessary measures to secure and advance the group. Some, such as Machiavelli, argued that they may even be compelled to take measures contrary to the normal standard of personal ethics. A godly society, however, does not have the option of separating institutional ethics from personal ethics. Although the Church is to endure, even to the filling of the earth, its stewards, disciples of the

living Christ, represent a kingdom not of the worldly mind but must act in accord with celestial norms.

The mastery of diplomacy in its grandest sense is essential to its mission, and the counsel of Christ to His early Apostles remains true: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”⁷⁷ In latter days, in another context, the Lord added an assurance and a promise to this mandate: “Therefore, be ye as wise as serpents and yet without sin; and I will order all things for your good, as fast as ye are able to receive them.”⁷⁸

Perhaps I may lay out some general thought on the conduct of diplomacy useful to those charged with the wisdom of serpents and the gentleness of doves. Cardinal Richelieu, first minister of France from 1624 to 1642 and in most respects the founder of modern statecraft, was certainly not the most pious member of the Catholic hierarchy. At his passing, Pope Urban VIII remarked, “If there is a God, the Cardinal de Richelieu will have much to answer for. If not . . . , well, he had a successful life.”⁷⁹ Whatever his defects of character and duplicity in the service of his sovereign, he had an uncanny grasp of the essentials of international relations. One of the wisest—and perhaps for our purposes the most relevant counsel he gave—was that diplomacy should not aim at ephemeral or opportunistic arrangements but at creating solid and durable relations.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH

Although the universal implications of the Restoration and the relation of the Church to foreign governments were early recognized, for over a century, the most pressing issue was to establish such a solid and durable relation with the United States and its subordinate jurisdictions. In a real sense, the twelfth article of faith and the 134th section of the Doctrine and Covenants represent the ground principles upon which this relationship was to be built.

The twelfth article of faith states the Latter-day Saint general attitude toward the relationship of the Church and its members, on the one hand, and the state, on the other: “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the

law.”¹⁰ In a fundamental way, this restates the New Testament understanding that the state is in fact legitimate and is owed general deference. It recognized, as Jesus did, that there are both divine obligations and temporal political obligations incumbent upon us. If we must render unto God His due, we are obliged to render unto Caesar his.¹¹

The Apostle Paul counseled in his first epistle to Timothy that we pray “for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”¹² To Titus, Paul wrote that he should counsel the Saints “to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready for every good work.”¹³ In this vein, the Apostle Peter admonished the Saints, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.”¹⁴ Respecting even the institution of slavery, Peter, as also Paul, counseled servants to “be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward [wicked]. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.”¹⁵ Of course, the ancient Apostles counseled forbearance on the part of the master, but it is clear they were not interested in fomenting rebellion even as they sought to realize their apostolic mandate. And so it is in latter days.

Mindful of the renewal of this apostolic mandate to preach the gospel, declare repentance, and baptize, the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued in April 1845 a proclamation drafted by Wilford Woodruff “to all the Kings of the World; to the President of the United States of America; to the Governors of the several States; and to the Rulers and People of all Nations.”¹⁶ In that remarkable though not widely distributed statement, the latter-day Apostles, looking forward to the millennial day and emphasizing the mission of the restored Church, extended an invitation to the political authorities of the world: “Come, then, to the help of the Lord and let us have your aid and protection—and your willing and hearty cooperation, in this greatest of all revolutions. . . .

Open your church doors and hearts for the truth. Hear the Apostles and elders of the church of the Saints, when they come into your cities and your neighborhoods.”¹⁷ It invited them to exemplify the spirit of Cyrus, “to aid and bless the people of God,” or of Ruth, “who joined with the people of Israel.”¹⁸ The proclamation saw a great division between those rulers and peoples who take “a lively interest with the Saints of the Most High, and the covenant people of the Lord” and those others who become “their inveterate enemy, and oppose them by every means in [their] power.”¹⁹ To those nations—specifically the United States—that remove obstacles to the latter-day work, the proclamation promises a prosperous and enlarged dominion constituting “one great, powerful and peaceful empire of Liberty and Union.”²⁰

In 2002, while serving in Recife, Brazil, I was invited along with the Brazil South Area President to attend a solemn assembly in Brasilia sponsored by the House of Deputies (the House of Representatives of the Brazilian Congress). In attendance were senators and deputies. Their whole purpose was to honor the Latter-day Saints in Brazil. The other Area President and I sat upon the dais while one congressman after the other got up and said truly remarkable and complimentary things about the Church. As I sat there, I thought to myself, “These people are really going to receive the blessings pronounced in that earlier nineteenth-century proclamation.” One of the deputies got up and said, “You know the old story that Brazil is the country of the future and always will be. But I want to tell you that I believe the future has arrived. And it has arrived to a substantial degree because of the Latter-day Saints. As they’ve gone to the various communities throughout Brazil, they have spread a spirit of optimism and a different set of expectations and values and a desire for improvement, which is filtering throughout our society. And I pay tribute to what they are doing in our society.”

I was most impressed by a deputy from Recife—I believe the longest-serving member of the House of Deputies. He said, “Before I became a member of Congress, I was a professor of civil engineering at the University of São Paulo, and I noticed something—that none of my friends who were professors in the School of Theology and Religion believed in the miracles of the Bible, including the miracle of the Resurrection. But

then I came across a book which I have now read." He held it up, and it was the Book of Mormon. He continued, "Having read this book, I have concluded that this book [the Book of Mormon]," and then holding up the Bible, "has established once again the truthfulness of this book, deepening my faith in the resurrected Lord as never before."

We did meet with him thereafter. He never did join the Church as far as I know, but he certainly gave a witness to the central work of the gospel. And that is precisely what the Apostles in 1845 had in mind when they issued that proclamation.

As you can imagine, of central concern in the proclamation was the plight of the Latter-day Saints within the United States. It called upon the political authority to "Protect the Saints; give them their rights; extend the broad banner of the Constitution and law over their homes, cities, firesides, wives and children; that they may CEASE to be BUTCHERED, MARTYRED, ROBBED, PLUNDERED, AND DRIVEN [emphasis in original], and may peacefully proceed in the work assigned them by their God."²¹

The proclamation petitioned the political authority both to allow the peaceful propagation of the gospel and to redress the ills visited upon the Saints. In its scope, it was a powerful statement of the reality of the Restoration and of the duty of the Church to boldly carry forth the apostolic mandate. However, like the ancient church, it resisted any call for rebellion in order to sustain just claims and resist unjust deprivations.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord counsels broad obedience to the political authority even in the face of outrageous persecution. Although laws are given by the Lord to govern the Church, He declares within the broader political community, "Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land. Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet."²² The Lord explicitly justified the constitutional order of the land and counseled the Saints to seek redress under its banner and through its democratic processes, while acknowledging that "when the wicked rule the people mourn."²³

It is of note as well that the Lord also saw the American constitutional order as providing, in a broad sense, a universal standard: "And as

pertaining to law of man, whatsoever is more or less than this, cometh of evil.²⁴ This statement suggests the broad set of principles on the proper relation between the Church and the political authority enunciated in the 1835 “declaration of belief regarding governments and laws in general.”²⁵

As the histories of the early Christian church and the restored Church demonstrate, there is inevitably a tension between the apostolic mandate and integrity of the Church and the profession of fealty to the political authority. In the epistle of Peter cited previously, a juxtaposition of two exhortations suggests that tension: “Fear God. Honour the king.”²⁶ The tension and open conflict between the Church and the federal authority in the late nineteenth century illustrates the extraordinary difficulty on occasion of both following the commandments of God and abiding by the commands of Caesar. The lessons derived from that experience are not irrelevant to the diplomatic role of the Church as it operates upon a much broader stage today. If that experience can be said to have shaped our understanding of church-state relations, so section 134 provides the basic principles by which we formulate the stance we seek to take as we operate in different political jurisdictions.

While recognizing that “all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside,” the 1835 declaration adds the clause “while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments.” It continues, “And that sedition and rebellion are unbecoming every citizen thus protected, and should be punished accordingly; and that all governments have a right to enact such laws as in their own judgments are best calculated to secure the public interest; at the same time, however, holding sacred the freedom of conscience.”²⁷ It further asserts that “no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life.”²⁸

The Church further believes that there should not be such a comingling of civil and religious authority as to foster or proscribe free religious practice. Moreover, each religious society should be left free to determine its membership and preach the gospel without assuming civil power or disrupting the established order of the civil society.²⁹ It should be obvious

that to weave a path through these requirements and desiderata will require a high level of skill and at times subtlety on the part of the representatives of the Church.

The sentiments expressed in section 134 echo those principles enunciated in the American Declaration of Independence, the American constitutional tradition, and James Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*. And this tradition in turn reflects John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. However, the authors of these political treatises were keenly concerned about maintaining the stability of the civil order. Disobedience to even unjust laws and practices, as John Locke wrote, is not to be taken lightly. Only a "long train of abuse, prevarications, and artifices, all tending the same way . . . , much worse than the state of nature or pure anarchy," would justify, and even then within the bounds of prudence, acts of rebellion.³⁰ If this circumspection is evident directly in the arena of political commentary and action, even greater circumspection has always prevailed in the church of Christ as it pursues its universal mission.

Such circumspection is particularly evident in times of upheaval and war. Perhaps the most comprehensive statement on the relationship of the Church and its members to political authority was given in a message of the First Presidency at the general conference of the Church on 6 April 1942. As might be expected in a time of global war, it gave reassurance to the Saints and reasserted the fundamental tenets and mission of the restored Church. While decrying war and proclaiming the gospel of love, it also condemned "false political -isms" and reiterated the words of the 134th section that "no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life."³¹

While stating again the injunction to the Church to "renounce war and proclaim peace,"³² the First Presidency reemphasized that "the Church membership are citizens or subjects of sovereignties over which the Church has no control" and that the members on all sides of the conflict are subject to the commands of their governments. While counseling all its members to eschew hatred even in the midst of conflict and to act

honorably, it reassured those engaged in the conflict that the Lord “will not hold the innocent instrumentalities of the war, our brethren in arms, responsible for the conflict. . . . For it would be a cruel God that would punish His children as moral sinners for acts done by them as the innocent instrumentalities of a sovereign whom He has told them to obey and whose will they were powerless to resist.”³³

Within this context, the First Presidency restated again the basic relationship between the Church and the state. In so doing, and in counseling obedience by its members to political authority, it reasserted the independent mission of the Church and subtly put its members on the side of free institutions. As they stated,

The Church has no civil political function. As the church may not assume the functions of the state, so the state may not assume the functions of the church. The church is responsible for and must carry on the work of the Lord. . . . The state is responsible for the civil control of its citizens or subjects, for the political welfare, and for the carrying forward of political policies, domestic and foreign, of the body politic. For these policies, their success or failure, the state is alone responsible and it must carry its burdens. . . . But the Church itself, as such, has no responsibility for these policies as to which it has no means of doing more than urging its members fully to render their loyalty to their country and to free institutions which the loftiest patriotism calls for.

In that clause, the First Presidency, while counseling obedience, also put itself and its members on the side of free institutions as outlined in the 134th section—demonstrating once again the narrow and sophisticated path the Church must weave in its relationship with the powers of the earth.³⁴

More contemporaneously, President Gordon B. Hinckley, in the April 2003 general conference, essentially reiterated the principles of the 1942 First Presidency statement and added that “self-defense” is justified and may transcend simply responding to a direct attack: “There are times and circumstances when nations are justified, in fact have an obligation, to fight for family, for liberty, and against tyranny, threat, and oppression.”³⁵

DURABLE RELATIONS AND SETTLED PRINCIPLES

All that I have said is preliminary to the broad principles undergirding the Church's attempt to create solid and durable relations with the nations of the earth and that are the foundations of its diplomatic role. In 1999, Elders Dallin H. Oaks and Lance B. Wickman contributed a chapter to a book entitled *Sharing the Book: Religious Perspectives on the Rights and Wrongs of Mission*. It is a comprehensive and, I would judge, definitive statement on the Church's missionary role. Near the conclusion of that piece, they have a section entitled "Relations with Governments," with the subtopics of "A Commitment to Obey, Honor, and Sustain the Law" and "Government's Duty to Guarantee the Right to Worship." In that section, they state seven minimal requirements in the Church's relationship with government.

It is often stated that the Church's relationship with government will be transparent and supportive of obedience to law and respect for the rights of all people. The intent is to promote harmony and understanding and not to undermine the trust essential to civil society and public peace. In terms of fulfilling the great commission to preach the gospel and to establish Zion, it is said that we "enter by the front door," that is, with the assent of the political authority. This will protect the integrity of both the Church and the state. Hence, Elders Oaks and Wickman stated seven desiderata undergirding the Church's request to enter or to continue within a political jurisdiction. It may be worth including in full those criteria:

1. The right to worship. Church members should have the right to practice their religion without interference by the agencies of government.
2. The right to meet together. Church members should have the right to meet together in public and in private in adequate facilities and without government scrutiny. The right of assembly is basic to religious freedom.
3. The right to self-government. The Church claims the right to noninterference by government in its internal affairs. Church doctrine and practices should be free from government regulation.

The Church has the right to determine who will serve as its officers, how long they will serve, and how the affairs of the Church will be conducted.

4. The right to communicate with Church members. Church members should have the right to regular communication with Church leaders and other members, whether in person, in writing, or electronically. Such communications should not be prohibited, impeded, monitored, or otherwise interfered with.

5. The right to legal entity status and action. While the Church respects the right of government to establish reasonable requirements for churches to become recognized as a legal entity, it asserts that it has a right to legal recognition upon reasonable conditions. Thus recognized, the Church should be able to acquire, hold, and dispose of property, to open bank accounts, and to transact business necessary to Church operations.

6. The right to declare beliefs publicly. Church missionaries should have the right to proclaim the gospel individually or before assemblies of people. This should include the right to print and distribute literature explaining the teachings and doctrines of the Church; the right to display videos, tape recordings, and other electronic or graphic presentations concerning the Church and its beliefs; and the right of reasonable access to the public press, radio, and television to disseminate messages and information concerning the Church and its teachings.

7. The right to travel freely. Church members should have the right to travel freely to attend Church meetings and activities and to visit with other members. Similarly, full-time missionaries and other Church representatives, even if citizens of another nation, should have the right, consistent with reasonable government regulations, to enter the government's jurisdiction and to proclaim the gospel and participate in Church meetings and activities.³⁶

It is clear that, while these principles define the framework within which the Church approaches political authorities, the actual activities of

the Church may be more restricted than these criteria prescribe. Nonetheless, they define general parameters far beyond what the Church cannot and will not operate. For those regimes that will not allow either the assembly of our members or our proselytism, the Church may carry out more restricted roles, such as humanitarian assistance or cultural contacts. However, I believe the seven points well delineate the settled, long-term policy of the Church in its dealings with political authority.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND THE PERPLEXITIES OF NATIONS

Let me conclude with some observations on the contemporary international role of the Church. As the Church has become established throughout the world, the complexity of its relations with civic authority has been magnified, as has its sophistication of approach. Moreover, as many commentators have noted, throughout much of the world, including in North America and Europe, a hostile political and legal environment is developing against the free exercise of religion. Some of this stems from heightened secularism. Some of it stems from religious fanaticism itself and what Alma would recognize as priestcraft. This has called forth multifaceted and long-term approaches, joining in greater coordination the resources of Church headquarters and of those laboring in the field.

In one form or another and under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, there has developed at headquarters various instrumentalities to facilitate communication and coordination on international matters and to identify issues or opportunities in the global arena that should be brought to the attention of the senior Brethren. This involves all the key departments. I would highlight not only the various functional divisions—such as missionary or temple activities, welfare services, the Priesthood Department—but the central role of the Public Affairs Department, the Office of General Counsel, the Presidency of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric. An important forum in which these matters are often discussed, with decisions deferred to the regular meetings of the First Presidency and the Twelve, is the Area Committee, which is composed of the Twelve Apostles, the seven Presidents of the Seventy,

the Presiding Bishopric, several other members of the Seventy, and others that might be invited from time to time.

Within the United States and Canada, the Presidency of the Seventy, as agents of the Apostles, exercises oversight of those matters that bear not only upon the internal operations of the Church but its external role as well. In other areas of the world, Area Presidencies, composed of General Authorities and Area Seventies, exercise that oversight, again under the direction of the Apostles and the seven Presidents of the Seventy. The various jurisdictions throughout the world have been directed to develop government-relations plans and organize government-relations councils. The purpose of this planning and organizing is to identify and develop relationships of trust and understanding with government and civic leaders and associations, as well as to define and achieve both short- and long-term objectives and maintain continuity across those assigned to each Area Presidency.

The spectrum of diplomatic activities is both vast and diverse, and some Area Presidencies are extraordinarily busy. The issues can range from establishing relationships with key decision makers and opinion leaders to regularizing the Church's legal status to visa problems to humanitarian assistance to the basic principles underpinning Church activities. Some matters are of such sensitivity that they are handled directly from Salt Lake, and in any event, the travel of the members of the First Presidency, the Twelve, and the Presidency of the Seventy inevitably involve meeting with key political and civic leaders. Harking back to the observation of Richelieu, in seeking to carry out the mission of the Church, its representatives are increasingly engaged in a focused, continuous, and varied role of establishing solid and durable relations that transcend changes of government and personalities. Given that we live in a world always in flux and often in turmoil, this is becoming ever more demanding.

In addition to specific church-government relations, the Church now has continuous representation at the UN in New York and Geneva and at the EU in Brussels. In addition, there are active hosting operations in Salt Lake; Washington, DC; and elsewhere. The number of occasions for senior Church officers to interact with foreign dignitaries both in this country

and abroad has expanded enormously, and many important events are designed to include government officials and ambassadors.

Flagship institutions such as Brigham Young University are consciously employed both as venues and sponsors of important meetings with a range of citizens and officials of countries around the world. Notable in this regard is the annual International Religious Liberty Symposium held at the time of the October general conference of the Church. Working closely with senior Church officers and Area Presidencies, government officials and advisors, judges, academics, attorneys, writers, and commentators from around the world are invited to a symposium in Provo and Salt Lake. The symposium addresses a range of questions affecting religious liberty around the globe, including the Church's mission and role pertaining to this vital foundation for church-state relations. A closing lunch is held with the First Presidency, the Twelve, and other senior Brethren.

Many crucial church-state issues have reached a successful conclusion through the forging of relations and understanding through these multiple forums, as well as personal contacts by individual Church members. For instance, the registration of the Church in Slovakia was the result of fifteen years of Church diplomacy. As in many other things, the activities of the Church throughout the world depend both on the continual forging and strengthening of personal ties and on the development of formal understandings that transcend these contacts.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell once observed that we do not move up and down in the Church, but we move around—pointing to a key component of Church diplomacy. This is a lay Church. The bulk of Church leadership comes from people who are engaged in a vast range of occupations and professions both in the public and the private sector, as well as homemakers. In every country, the Church is not divided into clerics and laity. A very small percentage of Church leaders and, therefore, representatives, are engaged in full-time Church service. And often the governments with which the Church deals include members of the Church who may also be bishops, stake presidents, or Relief Society presidents, as well as others who may hold other Church callings. The Quorums of the Seventy represent a powerful contemporary example. Those who have been called to serve as a Seventy throughout the world are often prominent members of

their nations and communities. The Church hierarchy is, therefore, something that is never entirely external or separate from the nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples into which the world is divided. In an extended sense, the local members represent the Church not only to their immediate neighbors but to their country and its political authority. This gives an even more powerful meaning to the exhortation to be an example of the believers.³⁷ Continual and positive participation by local members in civic and political activities provides both a context and a potential key to the success of more formal diplomatic activities.

Former secretary of state Madeleine Albright once commented that she often told foreign ministers and other officials that they should welcome Mormon missionaries into their country, as these missionaries would thereby become lifelong friends of their people and country, in effect informal representatives of the countries from which missionaries came. As she later wrote, they also happen to represent to the countries where they serve some of the best traits of this country: "By the early 1900s, tens of thousands of American missionaries were established in foreign countries. They came from virtually every Christian denomination, with heavy representation from a movement that began in the United States, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, referred to commonly as the Mormons. The missionaries carried with them both the good news of the gospel and the democratizing influence of American values and culture. Missionaries were among the nation's first experts on foreign customs and the first to learn foreign languages."³⁸ While missionaries are not sent forth to represent the countries from which they come, Secretary Albright's point is well taken and applies not only to missionaries but also to Latter-day Saint citizens throughout the world. Their activities profoundly shape the more formal and explicit diplomatic activities of the Church.

CONCLUSION: ARM AND SHIELD

Today, as in times past, the diplomatic role of the Church stems from its position as the earthly embodiment of the kingdom of God, mandated to preach the gospel and to bring forth and establish Zion. Its success depends not simply on the skill and sophistication of its leaders and people

but is ultimately vouchsafed by the Lord, from whom the divine commission came. As He declared: “Wherefore, I call upon the weak things of the world, those who are unlearned and despised, to thresh the nations by the power of my Spirit; and their arm shall be my arm, and I will be their shield and their buckler; and I will gird up their loins, and they shall fight manfully for me; and their enemies shall be under their feet; and I will let fall the sword in their behalf, and by the fire of mine indignation will I preserve them.”³⁹ To recall the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith in another context, “shall we not go on in so great a cause?”⁴⁰

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 1:4.
2. Matthew 28:19–20.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 107:23, 33, 35.
4. Henry Wotton, written in the album of Christopher Fleckmore, 1604.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 78:14.
6. See Hyrum L. Andrus, *Joseph Smith and World Government* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes, 1972).
7. Matthew 10:16.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 111:11.
9. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 58.
10. Articles of Faith 1:12.
11. See Matthew 22:21.
12. 1 Timothy 2:1–2.
13. Titus 3:1.
14. 1 Peter 2:13–16.
15. 1 Peter 2:18–19; see also Ephesians 6:5–8; Colossians 3:22; 1 Timothy 6:1–2; Titus 2:9–10.
16. *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. James R. Clark (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 1:252–66.
17. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 1:256.
18. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 1:257.
19. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 1:257.
20. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 1:262.
21. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 1:261.

22. Doctrine and Covenants 58:21–22.
23. Doctrine and Covenants 98:4–10.
24. Doctrine and Covenants 98:7.
25. Doctrine and Covenants 134.
26. 1 Peter 2:17.
27. Doctrine and Covenants 134:5.
28. Doctrine and Covenants 134:2.
29. See Doctrine and Covenants 134:10–12.
30. See Locke, *Second Treatise*, 224.
31. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6:148–63.
32. Doctrine and Covenants 98:16.
33. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6:148–63.
34. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6:148–63.
35. Gordon B. Hinckley, “War and Peace,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 80.
36. Dallin H. Oaks and Lance B. Wickman, *Sharing the Book: Religious Perspectives on the Rights and Wrongs of Mission*, ed. John Witte Jr. and Richard C. Martin (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 247–78.
37. See 1 Timothy 4:12.
38. Madeleine Albright with Bill Woodward, *The Mighty and the Almighty* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), 26.
39. Doctrine and Covenants 35:13–14.
40. Doctrine and Covenants 128:22.