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A MAN'S RELIGION AND AMERICAN POLITICS: AN INTERVIEW WITH GOVERNOR ROMNEY

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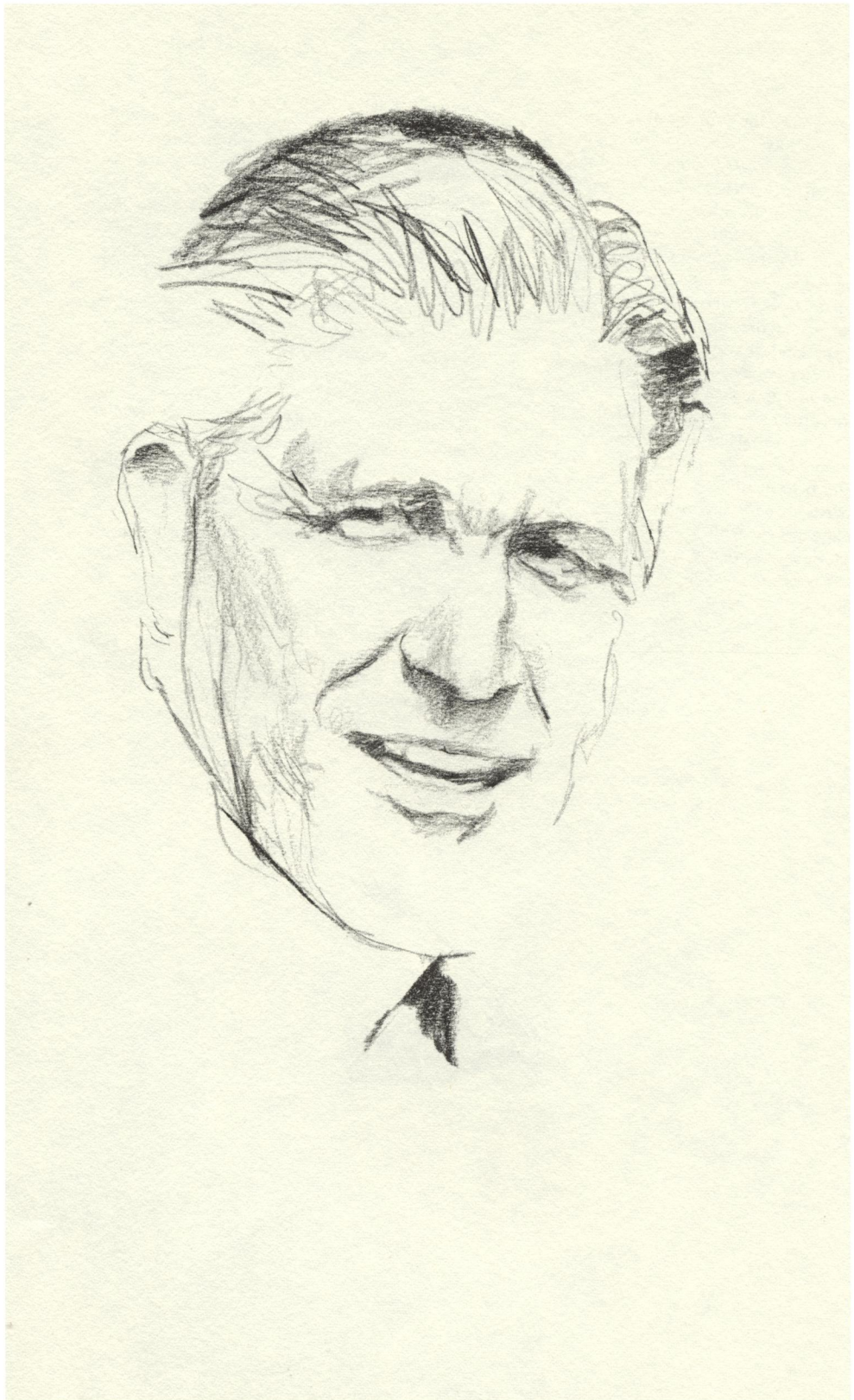


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*A MAN'S RELIGION
AND
AMERICAN POLITICS*

AN INTERVIEW WITH GOVERNOR ROMNEY

On August 23, 1967, Dialogue editors Eugene England, Joseph Jeppson, and Paul Salisbury taped the following interview with Michigan's Governor George Romney in Salt Lake City, Utah; since he was the only Democrat in the group, Joseph Jeppson was selected to give the nearest thing to an objective impression of the occasion.

While running between the Alta Club and Hotel Utah, I found out why people can't keep up with George Romney: the other people chasing after him block the sidewalk. The Governor's son, Scott, had graciously taken time, while trying to get ready for his wedding, to arrange for *Dialogue* to interview his father between a breakfast with potential political allies and the Temple ceremony—but the breakfast had taken too long and we editors (puffing only slightly) ended up squeezed into the hotel elevator with the Governor while he took us to his room to find another time. In those close quarters, I was introduced to the Governor as “the son of one of the Democrat judges in town,” but I don't think he held it against me. After all, President Hugh B. Brown, a faithful Democrat, was about to officiate at his son's wedding.

After introducing us to Mrs. Romney and discussing the day's plans with her, he asked if we might meet him for an hour after the wedding breakfast—and just before his plane took off. Good as his word, he burst into the living room of his suite at the appointed hour, seated himself abruptly on a couch, and announced, “Let's go.” Paul Salisbury and I worked the tape recorders while Eugene England asked the questions. Behind us, artist Dale Kilbourne sketched the scene.

Governor Romney's manner during the interview was markedly relaxed and straightforward. Even when a question allowed him to reel off a near-memorized set piece, he seemed sincere and candid. The main negative impression he leaves results from his tendency toward moral abstraction that many have noted. He seemed unable to take a question, analyze its particular implications and possibilities, and deal with it specifically and with intellectual depth. Rather, he seemed to draw, from ideas and positions already thought through and firmly held, answers which were in some general way associated in his mind with the terms of the question.

Nevertheless, I think the thing that most impresses me about the man is his almost paradoxical (in the light of what I have just said) willingness to re-assess situations without fearing censure for having changed his position. It is very difficult for a prospective candidate to remain open to advice and to new ideas. It is far easier for him to assume dogmatic and inflexible postures. I cannot understand why some people believe that intractable ideas, viewpoints, platforms, and principles should be regarded as valuable assets in the hands of a politician who would be called upon to face a rapidly-changing world. While he spoke with us, it occurred to me that Romney had enlarged his "world" several times—from the small Mormon farming community, to Salt Lake society, to high-level business, to national politics. Was it really inconceivable that he could acquire an international viewpoint? "Almost he persuadeth me. . . ." I thought to myself.

Time ran out. His aide (who told us he was not a Mormon, but didn't smoke or drink) sounded the "all aboard." People moved through the room with baggage at Romney pace. But last to leave was the Governor himself, who paused to tell us how to get mail past his office and directly to him when we sent the questions he had not had time to answer for written response.

DIALOGUE: You have said you are "completely the product of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." What do you mean, and can you distinguish between how the Mormon Church has shaped you and how America has shaped you?

ROMNEY: In saying that I'm completely the product of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I mean that the basic spiritual and moral areas of my life have been shaped by the *principles* of the Church, and that in my youth my training was importantly Church training, with the missionary experience very significant in developing a clear and unquestioning faith in our Creator and His commandments and concern for all His children.

This faith is basic to an understanding of America, because America has a religious foundation. America is not just another nation. America is founded on belief in a Creator, and those who wrote the Declaration of Independence made this belief the cornerstone of freedom. After all, the very opening words emphasize the endowment of individuals by their Creator with inalienable rights, and the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States are basically religious documents in the political area.

Obviously, other experiences of my life have done a good deal to shape my present approach to domestic and international problems.

DIALOGUE: *Would you say there is anything unique about your Mormon training (as opposed to that of other Americans) that has fostered your approach to domestic and international problems?*

ROMNEY: I don't think you'll find any faith that offers clearer support for the basic principles of this nation than The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I don't think you'll find elsewhere the unqualified validation of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence by divine revelation. Consequently, no member of the Church who really has an understanding of Church doctrine and principles should ever have any uncertainty about our basic American principles being sound principles of good government and human development and well being. From that standpoint, I think the Church does give one an assurance concerning the Constitution and the Declaration that you don't find elsewhere. We do not have to wonder about the efficacy of the various conflicting "isms." We know our Constitutional Democracy is superior.

DIALOGUE: *The L.D.S. people talk about a time when the Constitution will "hang by a thread" and about the saving role of Mormon leaders in the government during such a time. Would you tell us your interpretation of the Constitution "hanging by a thread" and whether you think that such a condition is present now or will be in the foreseeable future?*

ROMNEY: Anyone can look at the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith in this respect, as reported by Brigham Young and others who apparently heard him make the statement. I have always felt that they meant that sometime the question of whether we are going to proceed on the basis of the Constitution would arise and at this point government leaders who were Mormons would be involved in answering that question.

I think that we are increasingly straining the Constitution and that constitutional government in this country is increasingly in jeopardy. A specific example is the extent to which the traditional division of governmental responsibility between state government and the federal government is being eroded. Certainly within the next ten to twenty years we must either reverse this trend and keep the state governments as a means of protecting individual freedom, or we are going to continue to concentrate governmental responsibility in Washington—and the heavy concentration there has been accelerating. The constitutional means of providing ultimate decisions by the people and resting ultimate power in their hands is really dependent upon this division of governmental power and governmental responsibility. If that gets wiped out as a result of the state governments becoming dependent upon the federal government—mere appendages—you wipe out a major constitutional means of protecting human freedom and self government.



DIALOGUE: *As a national leader how would you go about trying to reverse this trend? Who is responsible—the states for abrogating their responsibilities or the federal government for improperly assuming power?*

ROMNEY: There is considerable truth to the charge that the state governments were not sensitive to changing needs and have failed to recognize their responsibilities in meeting those needs. To some extent it has been the case of the federal government stepping in to occupy vacuums, but that was truer earlier than it is today. I don't know of anything that the governors, as a whole, are more aware of today than the need to strengthen state and local governments to prevent this complete erosion of state responsibility. There is increasing recognition of the need for a decentralization of the governmental effort in our society, and even some of the architects of the Great Society are saying that we have centralized too much and as a result the programs are not producing results. This is true of such individuals as the Budget Director, the head of Health Education and Welfare, John Gardner. It's true of Senator Robert Kennedy.

Even Richard Goodman, who is reputed to be the author of the President's first Great Society speech, in an article in *Commentary* last month, said that not only was this heavy centralization of governmental responsibility failing to produce results, but the great issue politically in the years ahead would be decentralization. You have to have organization that is close to the people and can be responsive to the needs of the people in order to deal with our current human and social problems effectively.

There are many things needed to bring this about. Perhaps the most important is national fiscal reform. As a result of the federal government preempting the largest single source of public revenues (income taxes), it has most of the money to be used to deal with problems—while the local governments and state governments have most of the problems. The federal government has been increasingly using this revenue power, this money power, to make the state and local governments dependent on the federal government for funds and also on *direction* by federal officials, *appointed* officials. The governors as a whole, Democratic and Republican, are in agreement that we must have a fixed sharing of public revenues with state and local governments by the federal government if we are going to avoid the state and local governments' becoming dependent upon the federal government and subject to the dictation and direction of the federal government.

I happen to be Chairman of the Governors' Committee that has been dealing with this problem for the past two years and am scheduled to make a report at the next Governors' Conference in the Virgin Islands in October. I am sure that what we need is a combination of three forms of sharing federal revenues:

- (1) Block Grants, which gets away from all the detailed direction for the use of funds in specific areas, such as education, mental health, crime, and law enforcement.
- (2) Actual Revenue Sharing, where a fixed percentage of the federal revenue is distributed to the states without regard to the use they make of it. And through the states the local units of government gain strength in their ability to finance their own programs to deal with these problems.

(3) Tax Credits, where the local and state taxpayers get a greater credit for local and state taxes paid against their federal tax payments.

This is one of the important and essential means of avoiding the erosion of this aspect of the Constitution.

DIALOGUE: *What effect do you think your Mormon beliefs and background have on your ideals about American life and your ideas about how to achieve them. For instance, in reference to rural and urban slums, what long-range programs do you think might arise out of your Mormon belief and experience in a specific way, or do you see any relationship?*

ROMNEY: Well, I think that the fact that in our Church activities we are heavily involved in helping each other in a cooperative way, in a voluntary way, is very important in demonstrating how we can deal effectively with the human and social problems we face today in America—the race problem, the poverty problem, the education problem, the mental health problem, the juvenile delinquency problem.

We are finding in our efforts in Michigan that the most needed item is an individual who cares enough to try to help another individual who needs help. The Church gives us a realization of how you can really help people by being interested in them and by being willing to give of your time and talents to do so.

Also there is the Church's experience in settling desolate parts of the country. We had to develop a degree of cooperation that wasn't needed to the same extent in some other parts of the country, so that the willingness of people to work together cooperatively to do tough jobs became a major part of our background. Of course, our organizational structure is very meaningful; it affords *opportunity* at least for everyone to contribute and participate and encourages *everyone* to do this.

DIALOGUE: *Do you see ways to apply these lessons on a national level?*

ROMNEY: We're undertaking in Michigan to stimulate the participation of citizens in political affairs and social affairs and in economic problems and racial problems. I happen to believe personally that we're not going to really deal adequately with problems like the race relations problem without getting the federal government, the state governments, and the local governments to play their full roles; and private institutions, private organizations, and private individuals to recognize that they each have a direct responsibility too.

DIALOGUE: *How would a national leader encourage private institutions to do this?*

ROMNEY: First by recognizing the part they have to play and that they have an essential and indispensable part to play and that you can't really organize programs adequately without making them take responsibility. There are limits to what you can do through just governmental effort.

Second, by giving them incentives and stimulus to take their full part.

And, third, organizing on that basis.

DIALOGUE: *What do you feel about current domestic poverty programs? Which have real value and should be expanded, and which don't fit your ideals?*

ROMNEY: The ones that have shown the most value are the ones that have involved education or training or development programs that are not completely new. The Head Start program has proven helpful. It relates to the educational process. The teaching of illiterates so they can get the educational background they need to get training in some vocational skill has shown results. Manpower

development and training programs are worthwhile. The training of those who are not skilled and need skills—all these are basic programs that can be very helpful. But again, what we are finding is that when such programs of job training are just undertaken through government they barely scratch the surface. We need more effective programs of vocational training. We must provide incentives for employers to provide job training and employment for the hard core unemployed.

DIALOGUE: *Recent studies suggest that the breakdown of family strength among Negroes, caused by slavery and discrimination, could be a real source of our present difficulties and seem to imply the need for massive intervention, on the part of both public and private facilities, between parents and their children. How would this fit with your ideals of self-determination and freedom of people to direct their own lives and their families? Does Society have the right to go into situations like this, where it seems a real social danger is being perpetuated from generation to generation?*

ROMNEY: With society largely responsible for the lack of family strength among the Negroes, I believe that society not only has the right, but the moral obligation to make amends by encouraging every good influence that affects family life. The methods we use to do this can reach the core of the problem or they can be superficial or even damaging.

As you indicated, Negro families were torn apart during the days of the slave block. Later, a matriarchal society was fostered among Negroes due to welfare policies and discrimination against Negro male labor, with the result that the woman, as a domestic servant, became the wage-earner in the family. Man became emasculated as the head of the house and lost his self respect.

Some of our national policies, whose goal is to aid dependent children, have actually encouraged the husband and father to leave his home, and thus perpetuate the matriarchal society—and worse, encourage illegitimacy. The program Aid to Dependent Children makes the family better off economically without the father than with him, in many instances. This is intolerable and must be corrected.

On the other hand, personal concern and involvement is vital. In Michigan we have a Human Resources Council which is testing new and exciting ways of attacking the problem. We have married couples who have been successful in their family life who are volunteering to go into culturally deprived homes where the couples are having difficulty and are teaching through example and practical experience. The problem couples respond dramatically because they are finding others are concerned about them personally and their welfare. We have over 8,000 college students who have volunteered to teach potential drop-outs and to involve themselves in their personal life and interests. This too is proving astonishingly successful. We have many centers where those with problems can receive qualified help as well as be directed to other agencies for help. We have



a state-wide organization through this Council directed exclusively toward strengthening family life in all its aspects.

We also are trying to improve our educational programs as they relate to deprived children and the adult members of the families. One of the most meaningful and effective educational programs in Michigan is the Community School program where the school becomes the focal point for identifying weaknesses in every home and school district and the needs of the families. The school is open all year long and provides programs after school for family fun, instruction, and strengthening. Through the school organization and the Community School coordinator, individual families are given programs directly related to their own needs, including help from both public and private institutions.

Even without a moral obligation, it is vital for our own survival that we concern ourselves with the youngsters down the street. No matter how educated or motivated your children may be, the youngsters down the street can knife yours in the back and later vote for the things that will destroy America. One of the greatest things about a democracy is that it is based upon character and that its very survival is dependent upon the interrelation of all members of the society. Thus, to protect ourselves, we must see that others are given the opportunity to live in beauty, and to have education and opportunities whereby each person may reach his potential.

DIALOGUE: *You mentioned the role of churches. Do you think that Mormons, with their particular ideals and energy, could make a specific contribution in this area?*

ROMNEY: I don't think there is any question but that our concept of the importance of family life is outstanding and consequently can make a tremendous contribution, a very essential contribution. As I have pointed out on many occasions, I believe that the things that threaten us most are things from within rather than from without. I know as serious as the external threats are—intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear warfare, Viet Nam, deterioration of our relationships with European and other nations, Communism, you name it—the greatest threats to the future of this country come from within. The greatest threats are decline in religious conviction, decline in moral character, decline in the quality of family life, and the decline in the understanding of the principles of personal responsibility on which this nation was founded. In all these areas, I don't personally believe there is any group given greater resources of strength than members of our faith.

DIALOGUE: *The Book of Mormon states that America is a “. . . choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested.” Would you comment on that passage as it may apply to America at the present time? If the gravest threats to the future of America are “the decline in religious convictions and the decline in moral character” how, as a national leader, would you work in specific ways to correct these somewhat intangible threats?*

ROMNEY: In addition to that warning in the Book of Mormon, we are also cautioned about an age in which there would be a form of godliness but the people would deny the power thereof—when we would be lovers of our own selves, breakers of treaties and disobedient to parents.

I believe the vast majority of American citizens would agree that we would more surely prosper if we did serve the God of the land. Yet the problems of our age are in the headlines every day: Riots of the disadvantaged in the ghetto. Riots of the affluent on the campus. Crime in the streets. Juvenile delinquency in the suburbs. Dishonesty in high places. Drug addiction. LSD. Alcoholism. Tranquilizers. Sexual promiscuity. Marital infidelity. Family breakdown. Personal irresponsibility in all its forms.

What a paradox! In the land of the free, men and women are increasingly dependent—whether on drugs or alcohol, on a psychoanalyst, on sensual stimulation, or on government handouts.

In the home of the brave, men and women are increasingly afraid—whether of personal insecurity and failure, or personal responsibility, of vast impersonal forces and institutions they can neither control nor comprehend, or even of other men and women, perhaps with different colored skins.

The story of America has been a story of a great people creatively working together to build a great nation—where the rights of men were first defined and



defended in such a way that they electrified the world; a story of personal responsibility, private initiative, voluntary cooperation, and above all the Western promise that man—regardless of his attributes—that man alone was the measure of all things. A story of a people who were dedicated to a proposition and whose cornerstone was the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This universal bond is of such magnitude that it lifts the hopes of mankind on every portion of the globe. But if we are so dedicated and committed, are we not also committed to serve that God and keep His commandments?

As Abraham Lincoln once observed, we have been blessed beyond that of any other nation on earth, we have grown enormously in numbers, wealth and prestige—but we have forgotten God. We have believed, in our arrogance, that all the progress has been due to our own skills and power.

The historian Arnold Toynbee warns that unless we return to the ideals of the Christian republic upon which we were originally founded, our civilization will be but rubble and ashes.

What a tremendous responsibility and magnificent opportunity is ours—to turn the hearts of this potentially great people back to their root strength and thus rekindle the hope and fulfillment of all peoples everywhere, and keep freedom in this great land of ours.

DIALOGUE: *In regard to what our real dangers are, some have suggested that the greatest problem developing is the population explosion. Suppose in your research as a national leader that it became apparent that a massive government program of birth control seemed warranted, how would your Mormon beliefs affect your actions?*

ROMNEY: Well, you are dealing with a hypothetical situation and I'm not going to deal with a problem of that character on a hypothetical basis. I think there is every indication that through the use of modern methods already available to produce food that nobody needs to be hungry in this world. As you add to modern methods that have been developed the possibility of harvesting food from the sea and other sources that we haven't yet tapped, I am personally of the opinion that the idea that we are confronted with a situation that we can't handle, if we apply ourselves properly and encourage others to apply themselves properly, is not accurate.

Another factor in the situation is that the population explosion is greatest among the poverty stricken nations. Experience shows that as nations rise in their level of economic well being and in their cultural development, the family size tends to decline rather than explode. This was true in Japan and other nations. So, while we have to be very conscious of the population problem, I think we could better devote energy to increasing the ability to produce food. I believe the world is full and has enough for all if we make proper use of our manpower and knowledge and skills.

DIALOGUE: *In that regard, how would you reconcile the fallow fields all across America with the starvation in the world?*

ROMNEY: I can't. As a matter of fact, one of the tragedies, economically, in this country is that we have been dealing with the agriculture problem on the basis of economic nationalism at a time when food is the most needed commodity on earth.

We've got to put our agricultural policies on a basis that will enable us to make full use of our present ability to produce food more abundantly and cheaply than it has ever been produced in the history of the world. Actually, the ability to produce food as cheaply and abundantly as we can produce it in America means that we should be in a position to greatly expand our agricultural markets around the earth, particularly if we coupled that with sound programs of economic development assistance to those nations that are prepared to play the part they have to play in bringing about economic growth and development so that they would have the purchasing power to buy the food that we are fully capable of producing.

I happen to have gone to Washington in the years when the subsidization of farmers as a means of dealing with our agriculture problems started, and we still haven't solved these problems. We're still failing to make use of our great agricultural potential in a way that will serve our interests best and will also help the hungry and impoverished peoples of the earth.

DIALOGUE: A major issue in the 1960 presidential campaign was whether one candidate's church might control him in his political responsibilities. What are your feelings about the separation of Church and State?

ROMNEY: I have no question about the absolute essentiality of the separation of Church and State. Otherwise, the authority of the Church will tend to take precedence over the authority of the State, because the authority of God is certainly superior to the authority of man. Thus, it's essential to have a separation of Church and State in order to have a genuinely free society.

DIALOGUE: How is your position on right to work laws affected by the letter from the First Presidency of the Church in 1965 asking Mormon Congressmen to resist repeal of those laws?

ROMNEY: I've never understood that the First Presidency issued that as an official statement, as an official *Church* position. As far as I am concerned, I personally favor the present situation where states are individually free to adopt right to work laws or not to adopt right to work laws. My position in that respect has been misrepresented at times by others, or misunderstood. Actually, my position is that the states should be free to act on this. The collective bargaining situation in Michigan is quite different from the collective bargaining situation in the Rocky Mountain states and different from the condition in some other states.

The key problem in the collective bargaining area in my opinion is the excess concentration of collective bargaining power on the part of employers and unions. A right to work law doesn't really get at that problem. In a state where collective bargaining has been in operation for some time and union power is highly organized, a right to work law doesn't mean very much. In fact, it is this excess concentration of collective bargaining power that is threatening to destroy our dynamic, progressive, competitive economy.

DIALOGUE: We'll return to the union structure in America, but first just one other question on the letter from the First Presidency: How would you respond if you received such a letter concerning an area of your political responsibility?

ROMNEY: In areas of public responsibility I act on the basis of my own best

judgment and on the basis of my responsibility as a public official, and I would continue to do so.

DIALOGUE: *Back to the union structure, could you tell us specifically how you might propose a change in the union structure in America?*

ROMNEY: This excess concentration of collective bargaining power on the part of both union and employers (and I emphasize *employers*) has created some very serious problems for us:

(1) It is one of the two major reasons for continuing inflation; as a result of not having acted earlier and not having handled it well in recent years we are facing wage-cost-price hikes in the period ahead that are likely to be a good deal bigger than they have been in any year since the years immediately after World War II.

(2) The effect of this concentration of power has resulted in unions and companies absorbing the economic progress we make so that none of it reaches the average person in the market place, the consumer. One of the things that built the American economy was adopting principles that put the consumer in America in the driver's seat. Henry Ford is a dramatic illustration. He recognized that if he could make automobiles cheaper and shared such economic progress through price rebates, he would enable more people to drive automobiles. He also made customers out of workers by paying good wages that were thoroughly justified by the economic progress that was being made. As a result, there would be a balance of economic growth and development and everybody would benefit from the economic progress. But that has changed now, with the collective bargaining power so concentrated and so great that the economic progress doesn't reach the consumer. The consumer is the forgotten man in America, and we've got to put the consumer back into the driver's seat in America.

(3) This concentration of power is bringing about a great distortion in the relationship between the compensation of different people in our society. I think the American economy reached the point where we were closer to rewarding people on the basis of their contribution than almost any other economy that has developed. But we're getting away from this sound principle of rewarding people on the basis of their contribution. Good evidence of that is the fact that a carpenter's helper gets paid more than a veteran Detroit policeman. A boy just out of high school can get a job as a plumber's helper at \$3.75 an hour. That is \$7,800 a year, and that's more than the average teacher compensation in the state of Michigan. Another evidence of the distortion is demonstrated by our agriculture problem. Farmers are making a net of a dollar to two dollars an hour and yet they have to buy products produced by people who are getting paid four, six, seven, eight dollars an hour.

Now, to deal with this we just have to do the same basic things we have done in other fields before. When the founders wrote the Constitution to give expression to the principles of the Declaration of Independence and self government, with the people exercising ultimate power, they did it by dividing the power of government into the three branches and into federal and state governments. When Jackson had to deal with the Bank of the United States to prevent an excess exercise of financial or banking power, he divided the banking power.

When the trust and monopolies developed as we began to industrialize in the latter part of the last century, we adopted the anti-trust laws to divide the power of trusts and monopolies. The anti-trust laws basically required competition in industry—more than one company producing a product or rendering a service so that people could choose between competing products and services. This required companies to compete in meeting the needs of the people in a free market.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt came along, the power of business had grown so great that they had domination politically and economically in this country, so he encouraged the organization of unions and the building of strong unions to offset this strong business-political power in America. But the mistake that was made was to place no limits on the concentration of this collective bargaining power and indeed to encourage the development of monopoly power on a national and industry-wide basis. And so now the basic thing we have to do is to divide that power adequately. As far as I am concerned that means to divide it so that we can retain a competitive economy that will be disciplined primarily by the competition between enterprises competing for the free patronage of free customers, rather than by government decision-making and authority.

The ultimate road that we are headed down economically is very clear on the basis of this concentration of economic power. That road is the road that Britain has already traveled, and for essentially the same reason. Britain today has lost her ability to compete in world markets, she is battling for her economic future, and she has a state-controlled economy. There is no free collective bargaining in Britain. The *Government* determines wages and wage policy. There is no free market in Britain. The *Government* controls prices. Our economic system, that has permitted more individuals to have more freedom in contributing what they can contribute than any other, is in the gravest jeopardy, in my opinion. We've got to divide this excess power if we want to prevent the creation of some form of state-directed economy in America. There are only two ways to discipline our economy: competition or absolute authority.

DIALOGUE: *Do you believe that God directs the course of the United States by inspiring its leaders?*

ROMNEY: When He feels that it is necessary and they seek His guidance. I think most of the time He expects us to do things on our own. We have the correct principles through the Doctrine and Covenants and the Constitution. God will never force us. When we need His help, it is there if we will seek it diligently. If we do not, we will be left to face the consequences of our own inadequacies.

DIALOGUE: *Do you think that a Mormon leader would have any special right to that inspiration?*

ROMNEY: I don't think he would have any special conduit. After all, "Ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened"—that isn't said just to people who join a particular church, including this Church. "If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God." That passage in James doesn't say you have to have the Priesthood or belong to the Church to get that help. I haven't any question but that George Washington and the early founders of the nation were given such inspiration as was needed. Lincoln indicated he thought he had been helped when he needed help. As a matter of fact, the Book of Mormon indicates that

God inspires the leaders throughout the earth—the leaders of peoples of all nations and races.

DIALOGUE: *Even Russia and China?*

ROMNEY: Yes, to the extent that's possible. I guess some of us become so corrupt at times in our thinking and actions that we're not receptive, we're not responsive, but it's available.

DIALOGUE: *Do you believe co-existence with Russia and Red China is possible and to be actively worked for through peaceful means such as trade, cultural and educational exchange, economic aid, etc?*

ROMNEY: Yes, I do, particularly over the long run. This is the situation, in effect, with Russia today. Communist China's destructive international behavior makes any kind of co-existence extremely difficult, but we must be prepared for the time when she will be ready to enter into more rational relationships with the outside world. An essential element of co-existence and of improving relations with the Communists is that we remain firm with them and insure that we are operating from a position of strength, militarily, politically, and economically. Weakness or lack of resolution on our part would be the first thing which would encourage instability in relations between East and West and which would tempt the Communists toward a more aggressive posture. Peaceful efforts should be pursued resourcefully and persistently but not impetuously or impatiently—there are strict limitations on any short-term improvement in relations between the Communists and the Free World.



DIALOGUE: *Do you believe there is an international communist conspiracy with central control and common purpose of taking over the world and which, therefore, we must oppose in every form; or could Ho Chi Minh, for instance, conceivably be another Tito and form an acceptable buffer out of a united Viet Nam?*

ROMNEY: The Communist nations share a common doctrine which is international in its outlook, and they seek to spread their power and influence wherever and whenever possible. We must not delude ourselves about that. But over the years the unity and the means with which these ends are pursued have changed substantially. The Communist world is no longer a monolith. The Soviet Union and Communist China are split apart by differences in ideology and in national interest. There are strong signs of economic independence in Eastern Europe. Blocked by our effective deterrent posture, the Soviet Union has been forced to pursue political rather than primarily military offensives. Even Communist China is cautious about military confrontation with the United States, preferring to goad other Communist nations or movements into so-called "wars of national liberation" largely on their own. I believe the day has passed when Ho Chi Minh could have adopted the role in Asia that Marshall Tito has in Europe, but there are many differences today among the Communists, and

we must be alert not only to guard against their destructive intent but also to recognize the potential for cooperation when it genuinely exists.

DIALOGUE: *Could you clarify your recent statement that the war in Viet Nam has been Americanized? Why shouldn't it be?*

ROMNEY: We are involved in Viet Nam in order to assist the Vietnamese to protect their own freedom and independence against outside aggression and ultimately to be able to govern themselves according to the manner of their own choosing. This simply cannot be done if we take over the whole effort. It is clear that the military side of the struggle is almost exclusively an American show. I am concerned that the pacification effort—those non-military programs which will bring essential services to the villages, forge a real relationship between the central government and the people, and provide the basis for effective self-government—is also becoming Americanized.

As we do more, the South Vietnamese are not doing more. We have not yet seen an adequate enough demonstration of their motivation and capability to do the job. We must bring the South Vietnamese into a stronger and growing role through better training programs, a clearer definition of roles, and a less pre-emptive impatience on our own part. Through such a revised approach, we might increase the chances of bringing the American and South Vietnamese effort into better balance. Military success against the enemy must be backed up by progress on the political, social and economic front or you have nothing other than stalemate.

DIALOGUE: *Do you agree with Senator Javits that if there is evidence that free elections are not possible in Viet Nam we should begin to consider phasing out our commitment?*

ROMNEY: The recent elections represent a significant accomplishment, given the inexperience of the South Vietnamese in self-government and the conditions of insecurity which existed. But this is just a small step and must be followed by sustained progress. How well will the legislature work? How genuinely responsive to the needs of the people will the new regime be? How hard will the pacification program be pressed? How effectively will the new regime seek to organize the national effort? Will the government in Saigon really press forward with talks with the Viet Cong toward a settlement of the war? The answers to these questions will determine just how meaningful the elections are, whether they represent a real contribution towards evolutionary growth of effective, representative government, or not.

DIALOGUE: *What do you see your Mormon faith contributing to your idea of the proper role of America in the modern world?*

ROMNEY: Primarily, the unqualified knowledge of the inspired character of the Constitution, the declaration of our basic government principles, which are based on government by consent and the inherent right of every individual to be free in his choices.

DIALOGUE: *How would that determine, for instance, our role in relationship to other nations? Do you see America primarily as an ensign or example to these nations or as a missionary to go out and convert them to our principles or as a policeman to enforce our principles?*

ROMNEY: As a nation, we are in the process of trying to think through what our basic role should be, and I don't think we are very far along. In the inter-

national field, we are dealing with the relationship between peoples, between nations, and, therefore, to whatever extent our Church experience with spiritual matters and social matters gives us an insight into sound human relationships, I think it has some application in anything involving human affairs or international affairs, but specific international policies are really beyond the area dealt with directly by the Church doctrines. Yet, as a Church, we are admonished to study the history of nations, to study the history of races and peoples. I am sure we are urged to do that so that we will have adequate secular background to deal with international problems.

DIALOGUE: *You have said a number of times that God has a purpose for this nation.*

ROMNEY: I think the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants as respects the Constitution make it very clear that the United States has a three-fold role. (1) To use its influence to help peoples all over the earth to be free of all forms of bondage—religious, political, economic and social bondage. (2) To be sufficiently powerful to protect the awakening peoples of the earth at the present time so that they can make a free choice between tyranny and freedom, and to be wise in the use of that power. But we've got to cut our suit to fit our cloth. I think we are too inclined to exaggerate our power and what we can do in the world at the present time. In any event, we have a big and important function to play in that area. (3) We need to make America a better example of what freedom can mean so that these awakening peoples of the earth will *want* freedom instead of tyranny.

We have a *long* way to go before we make this country a really convincing example of what freedom can be. The best examples of how far we have to go are the deficiencies we have in our race relations in this country and our failure to be able to extend to all citizens equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. Unless we can demonstrate that we really *do* believe that every human being is endowed with the same inalienable rights by his Creator—and particularly demonstrate it with regard to American citizens, whether they are black, white, yellow, red, or brown—we will not be able to communicate effectively with most of the peoples of the earth, because our practice will be so short of our ideals and our principles that other peoples will think we are hypocritical. That's one of our most urgent problems at the present time.

And the hard facts are such that a member of the L.D.S. Church should be particularly aware of his obligation to help those who have been denied equal opportunity and equal rights and equal responsibilities for so long. There is no distinction made in the scriptures as to our obligation to help others to enjoy full and equal citizenship rights. As a matter of fact, the Book of Mormon indicates that "all are alike unto God"—black and white, Jew and Gentile, all peoples. Basically, I think one of our biggest challenges is to demonstrate as members of the Church and as American citizens that we really believe what the Church teaches us about our relationship to others and also what our American principles teach us with respect to our relationship with others. With two-thirds of the earth's population consisting of hungry, diseased colored people, if we want to avoid catastrophe down the road, we'd better intensify our efforts to see that *no* American citizen is denied his rights and opportunities and responsibilities simply because of race and color.

Contrary to current criticisms, no people on earth have been admonished more thoroughly by their own teachings and sacred scriptures to be their brothers' keepers than have the Mormons. We teach that to assassinate someone's soul is more grievous than to assassinate his body. In our Doctrine and Covenants, we are taught to "esteem all men as ourselves." There is no restriction, no reservation, we are not just to tolerate or to accept one another, but we are to *esteem* each of God's children. We know that the scripture constantly reminds us that we are "to judge not," that God will forgive whom he will forgive, but that it is expected of us that we forgive all men and let God alone be the judge. Thus, it is impossible to teach inferiority. The scriptures state that "when you do it unto the least of these your brothers, you do it unto Me." This makes it perfectly plain that the so-called least are no less than Christ Himself.

We also teach that we cannot be heaven bound if we let those about us freeze and starve. The physical welfare and well being of each person is importantly related to his spiritual progress and is thus of vital importance and concern.

Living the gospel of Jesus Christ has as its prime purpose the perfection of all mankind through individual effort and divine inspiration. We are all inter-related and dependent upon one another. We are told that we cannot be saved without our family, and as part of the great family with God as the Father of all, it is of prime importance to teach all His children and to preach to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. Our responsibility for brotherhood is world-wide and our moral concern universal.

