

SLIDE	NOTES
1	In this first module in politics, we review philosophy man and discuss the relationship of the Church to politics.
2	<p>BRANCHES REVIEW (philosophy man)</p> <p>As a review, let's go through the components of Philosophy Man...They compose a "Hierarchy of Facts" which means as we discuss any higher branch (such as politics), we can't neglect or forget about the dependent parts from lower branches already in place.</p> <p>Anim1: It all starts with the Axioms (Existence, Consciousness, Identity)... These are the SELF-EVIDENT FACTS upon which all other knowledge depend. The axioms are irreducible, inescapable, invincible ... They are present in every word you utter, though you think, or action you take.</p> <p>Anim2: Metaphysics are the SELF-EXISTING FACTS of reality. In the previous course, we discussed the various ontological frameworks and aligned ourselves with the primacy of existence or God-inside-the-box.</p> <p>Anim3: Epistemology deals with DISCOVERED FACTS...These are the descriptive truths of what IS via the correspondence definition of truth. * The correspondence definition of truth is defined in D&C 93:24 which describes truth as the correspondence of thought or knowledge with reality.</p> <p>Anim4: Ethics deals with PURSUED FACTS...These are prescriptive truths telling us what we OUGHT to do according to our values. By knowing and valuing what is good, we know what actions are right. All philosophical branches from Ethics and above are colored as to how they relate to me personally: Anim5: Neutral to me (yellow) Anim6: Against Me (red) Anim7: For Me (green)</p> <p>Anim8: Politics deals with PROTECTED FACTS pertaining to rights, justice, and the interactions between people.</p> <p>Anim9: Co-equal with politics is aesthetics which deals with CELEBRATED FACTS...These facts display our sense of life, and the values we celebrate. * The conceptual nature of man (the head on philosophy man) is what makes these 5 philosophical branches available to us.</p>
3	<p>POLITICS DEFINED</p> <p>Anim1: Quote Merriam Webster Definition</p> <p>Anim2: Quote Mortimer Adler So when we say "politics" we simply mean "the interaction between two or more people".</p> <p>Anim3: Quote Ayn Rand</p> <p>Anim4: POLITICS AND THE CHURCH Q: Is it OK to bring up politics in a Church setting such as Sacrament Meeting, Sunday School, Elders Quorum, or Relief Society?</p> <p>Anim5: George Orwell George Orwell pointed out the dangers of staying out of politics. He authored various classical anti-communist political literature such as 1984 and Animal Farm.</p> <p>Anim6: QUOTE George Orwell Q: Is he correct? Can we avoid politics altogether? We are all deeply affected by the politics that surround us. We either get involved or are at the mercy of others who are involved.</p>

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THREE-TIER APPROACH

The Church has directed us to take a "Three Tier Approach" to politics in our church meetings:

Anim1: QUOTE Elder Oaks

Anim2: QUOTE (no specific affiliation)

Anim3: QUOTE (Church speaks out on specific issues)

Anim4: QUOTE (Seek to Unify)

Q: When and for what should we advocate, and for what should we not advocate?

Q: On contested political issues, how do we go about the process of unifying?

TRAFFIC LIGHT

A quick way of relating to the Church's position on politics is to think in the metaphor of a traffic stop light.

Anim5: A Red "Stop" Light is for steering clear of all Partisan Politics in Church which consists of advocating for specific parties, specific platforms and specific candidates...

Anim6: A Yellow "Caution" Light consists of carefully discussing Moral Political Issues that directly affect the interests of the church, where Church leaders have explicitly commented such as Marriage between a man and a woman, Abortion, and specific legislation affecting religious liberty.

Anim7: A Green "Go" Light is for openly advocating for general principles of the proper role of government... This means engaging thoughtfully with others on Political Philosophy.

* With Latter-day Saint scriptures and General Authority talks full of political declarations, political neutrality, then, cannot possibly mean anything more than steering clear of partisan politics (the red stop light) or else we Latter-day Saints end up throwing the political baby out with the partisan bathwater. The dirty bathwater the church wants to avoid is the Red, the desirable BABY is the yellow and green.

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POLITICS AND THE CHURCH

The church has published this 3-tier position in its official newsroom.

RED LIGHT

Anim1: Quote The Official Statement from the Church says:

When it comes to specific political parties, platforms and candidates, Political Neutrality is the Church's officially stated position.

Q: Why can't we run with Partisan Politics discussions in Church?

We are a diverse Church. Elder Oaks said:

"There are many political issues, and no party, platform, or individual candidate can satisfy all personal preferences. Each citizen must therefore decide which issues are most important to him or her at any particular time." (Defending Our Divinely Inspired Constitution, Apr. 2021 General Conference)

YELLOW LIGHT

Anim2: QUOTE

* The Church IS NOT politically neutral in all political matters or moral issues.

Q: Can anyone think of examples when the church does get involved in partisan politics?

* The Church's official stance on abortion, and same-sex marriage are well known examples of the Church addressing moral issues which double as hotly debated political issues.

* Proposition 8 was tied to a specific party sponsoring it.

Q: Why are Moral Policy discussions in cautionary yellow?

The minute you bring up the policy it infers a political party. That is why these are yellow. Slow down and be careful. Steer the conversation away from the party, and stick to the policy.

GREEN LIGHT

Anim3: QUOTE The third position on talking politics in Church is little understood by most members. It too, is mentioned in this same official news release under the heading of "Relationships With Government".

* Perhaps many among us misunderstood what it means about not talking politics in Church, so we incorrectly avoid all discussion whatsoever.

Anim4: QUOTE 12th Article

Our scriptural 12th article of faith also falls under the above heading of "Relationships With Government". Sustaining means actively participating in the political process, not passively observing.

	<p>Anim5: QUOTE Being Subject</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Many people take article of Faith 12 about being subject in an absolute sense which can be dangerous. <p>Anim6: QUOTE D&C 134:5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * There is a qualifying key phrase in D&C 134:5 that should ALWAYS be quoted together whenever Article of Faith 12 is recited, to show the non-absolute nature of Article of Faith 12: <p>Anim7: "while protected"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * We support kings, presidents, rulers, and the law, ONLY when they are not violating individual rights. Surely, we are not told to befriend tyrants who trample on individual rights.
6	<p>CONNECTING THE DOTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The threefold position of the Church regarding discussing politics, disguises a deeper and contentious problem though. * Political neutrality, seems relatively innocent until one realizes that all of this political talk <i>actually means something in real practice.</i> <p>Q: Does the Book of Mormon teach general political principles?</p> <p>Q: Does the Book of Mormon takes sides with specific political parties?</p> <p>Anim1: As an example, let's consider Alma chapter 51 from the BOOK OF MORMON as it relates to politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Alma 51:1-9 describes two specific partisan political parties: The "Freemen" and the "King-Men" <p>POLITICAL PARTY (RED)</p> <p>Anim2: QUOTE: Book of Mormon Statement</p> <p>The partisan politics and political platforms (Red Stoplight) are: Political Liberty, Religious Freedom, and Free Markets vs. Elitism, Authoritarianism, Economic Favoritism</p> <p>POLITICAL POLICY (YELLOW)</p> <p>Now consider the specific "Political Policy" (Yellow Caution Light) associated then with each political party:</p> <p>Anim4: Statement (Read Book of Mormon statement)</p> <p>To be settled by the voice of the people was whether "Voluntary Based Free Offerings" should support Priests and Teachers or whether compulsory taxes should force Elitism, Priestcraft, and Indoctrination.</p> <p>POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (GREEN)</p> <p>Lastly, let's review the "Green Light" of general political philosophy</p> <p>Anim5: QUOTE: Book of Mormon Statement</p> <p>The general question they dealt with then was between a representative republic (via elected judges), or a Monarchy with titles of nobility under Kings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Book of Mormon says that the voice of the people voted in favor of the Freemen... * So, in our day, general Church members can talk about the Political Philosophy, Church leaders can preach on political policy, and neither members nor leaders, can talk about specific political parties in a Church setting as a practical way of avoiding contention. * But there is a deeper problem as to why there is no such thing as keeping out of politics. <p>Anim6: Connect The Dots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Once you begin to discuss Political Philosophy, the proper role of government, and the relationship between the government and the governed you are "deep into the thick of political things". * It just doesn't take a genius to "connect the dots" in both directions (forward and back-ward) in a logical connection showing what "voice of the people" means. * There is a simple logical connection between one's Political Philosophy, Moral Political Policy, and Political Party. * People quickly learn to connect the dots between Philosophy > Policy > and Party. * That partisan politics matter and cannot simply be ignored as an "everyone wins" scenario is self-evident. * In the case of the Freemen and King-Men political parties, they were not simply engaged in interesting partisan politics but were in a life and death struggle between liberty and tyranny...If tyranny wins then liberty loses. Likewise, if freedom wins then authoritarianism loses. * A lot is at stake even now.

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POLITICS IN CHURCH

* Political Philosophy then, has primacy in politics...We always start there and expect people to connect the dots for themselves.

* Many faithful and well-meaning Latter-day Saints have come to believe however, that it is “highly inappropriate” to discuss ANY politics including political documents such as the Declaration of Independence, or The Constitution in a Church setting.

Anim1: The United States Constitution

Q: Is it appropriate to bring up specific things such as the Founding Fathers, The Declaration of Independence, or The Constitution in a Church setting?

* Some believe the political nature of this discussion would detract from the spiritual nature of our Church meetings.

* This reluctance comes despite the numerous articles and Conference talks given by General Authorities on the subject of the divine origin of the constitution.

* While it is clear that General Authorities are free to openly talk and make reference to the Constitution, the average Church member is often hesitant (on a Ward and Stake basis) as to whether or not it is appropriate to even bring it up.

Anim2: Quote Joseph Smith

* Joseph Smith had no problem lumping the Constitution in together with scriptures as being true.

* Either the Constitution IS a divinely inspired document or it ISN'T.

* If it **ISN'T** divinely inspired, then we Latter-day Saints should stop treating it as if it IS, and we should keep such political topics outside of a church discussion setting.

* If it **IS** divinely inspired, then we Latter-day Saints should stop treating it as if it ISN'T and it would be “highly inappropriate” NOT to bring it up.

Q: But the question is, can we show this to be true ... not from a sentimental, nationalistic, or patriotic position, but from a doctrinal and scriptural position?

Anim3: The Bar

* There is a universal religious test we can apply to ANY question in order to put an end to the debate and know with *certainty* whether the topic is appropriate to bring up in a church setting.

Q: What do you think this universal test is?

Anim4: Christ

Q: Can the topic be tied directly to Christ?

* If the topic can be tied directly to Jesus Christ then it clears the bar, and is deemed universally appropriate, and we should feel perfectly comfortable in discussing it in any Church setting.

* But, if the intended topic cannot be tied directly to Jesus Christ, then it fails to meet the standard or clear the bar, and ought not to be shared in a Church setting.

* In other words, “Never share a message in church without it being tied directly to Jesus Christ.”

Anim5: Clearing The Bar

* When it comes to gospel topics or messages that we are all familiar with, such as faith, the Scriptures, or Prophets, it is quite easy to pass this test and meet this standard by clearing the bar.

Q: But what of the Constitution? Can it also be doctrinally and scripturally tied directly to Jesus Christ?

Constitutional Tie to Christ

In one scripture verse alone we can tie not only the constitution, but also, the founding fathers and the revolutionary war directly the Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:80 is very specific and direct. In it, Christ says:

Anim6: Quote

Anim7: Christ says He established The Constitution

* Jesus Christ, then, is the ultimate Founding Father and ought to be recognized as such if we are to fully appreciate the divinely inspired nature of the Constitution.

Anim7: Founding Fathers

* Also notice that we can directly tie the Founding Fathers to Christ!

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * It has become popular in some political affiliations to cancel these "old white privileged men" cancelling them and their contribution. * We should not be embarrassed by the Founding Fathers, nor sympathetic to those who desire an unsavory, revisionist history, designed to tear them down. The Founders obviously were not perfect men, but according to this scriptural verse, Christ claims He raised them up for a specific purpose. <p>Anim8: Revolutionary War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Notice also that the American Revolutionary War and consequently The Declaration of Independence, are directly to Jesus Christ as well! * Christ claims the land was redeemed, by design, through war (the shedding of blood). Mankind is justified in fighting for our Inherent Natural Rights.
8	<p>SUMMARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * When we say "politics", we simply mean "the interaction between two or more people". * When we talk about the "Traffic Light Model" we are talking about the application of discussing politics in a Church setting. * Discussing the Revolutionary War, the Founding Fathers, and the principles embodied in America's founding documents, in any setting, clears the bar of being tied directly to Christ in our Doctrine and Covenants. * If we ignore the principles found in the Constitution, or are embarrassed by discussing it, we put our own Liberty and religious freedom in general at risk. <p>Anim1: Everyone should know at this point then, what is appropriate and not appropriate discussing in a Church setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Partisan Politics is a "Red Light" stop... * Specific Moral Political Issues are a "Yellow Light" proceed with caution... * Political Philosophy regarding the proper role of government is a "Green Light" to openly discuss. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The rest of this politics course will also follow this pattern. We will not discuss particular parties, platforms, or candidates. * We will focus on analyzing the various contrasting <i>political philosophies</i>, and attempt to come to a conclusion as to what specific general political principles we Latter-day Saints are doctrinally committed to.
9	Questions?