America's War on Terrorism: One Latter-day Saint's Perspective

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[God] maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. (Ps. 46:9)

Every road towards a better state of society is blocked, sooner or later, by war, by threats of war, by preparations for ward.

—*Aldous Huxley*[1]

EVER SINCE THE DARK HOURS OF SEPTEMBER 11, I have been disquieted about what is now called "The War on Terrorism." While I share America's moral outrage over the barbaric attacks on our nation and its people, I have also felt uneasy about the quick polarizing rhetoric, the boasting of our power, the clamoring calls for revenge, and the military force we have unleashed upon other countries. I have wondered if there weren't a better alternative than to launch an all-out assault on a country (Afghanistan) that had already been devastated by recent wars (and which had suffered a million casualties in the decade of the nineties), to wage a preemptive war against another nation (Iraq) on the supposition that it was tied to the September 11 attacks, and to undertake the seemingly impossible eradication of terror from the face of the earth, if not from the hearts of its inhabitants.

The problem with declaring a war on terrorism is that it is no more practicable to win a war against a military tactic than it would be to win a war against an attitude or a belief. As Chris Hedges argues, "We Americans find ourselves in the dangerous position of going to war not against a state but against a phantom."[2] There is no universal agreement as to what constitutes terrorism. Like

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1. *Ends and Means* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), 89.
2. Chris Hedges, *War: A Force that Gives Us Meaning* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002), 10.

beauty, it is in the eye of the beholder. If we call what happened on September 11 "terrorism," as I believe we must, should we also include what our government did to undermine democratic processes in such places as Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua (where we funded the terrorism of Contras by selling arms to Iran, a country that sponsors terrorism!)? What about the firebombing of Dresden and the use of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Was our use of napalm in Korea and Vietnam "terrorism"? As we are learning from the tenuous alliances put together by President Bush since September 11, one country's "freedom fighters" are another country's "terrorists." As Lewis H. Lapham has observed, "When wrapped up in the ribbons of patriotic slogans, terrorism becomes a show of diplomatic resolve or a lesson in democracy [to be used against] Cambodian peasants, dissident Soviet intellectuals, Israeli disco dancers, Chechen rebels, Palestinian refugees, Iraqi children. . . .Except as a form of terrorism, how else do we describe the Mutual Assured Destruction that for the past fifty years has trapped the civilian populations of the earth?"[3]

Anyone can define terrorism on a basis which suits the expediency of the moment. We considered Osama bin Laden a freedom fighter when the CIA trained him and other Muslims in terrorist tactics to defeat the Russians in Afghanistan. Ironically, he then used the tactics he had been taught against his teachers. Similarly, we condemn Saddam Hussein as a terrorist for using weapons of mass destruction against his own people even though we supplied him with chemical weapons and registered no protest when he used them in his war with Iran.

During President Bush's visit to Asia in February 2002, he called North Korea "evil" for its nuclear weapons program and for selling missiles to Iran and Pakistan.[4] In Beijing the next day he called China a friend and praised its support of the American war on terrorism, knowing full well that, like North Korea, China was developing its own nuclear arsenal and was also selling missile technology to Iran and Pakistan. (China was eager to join the anti-terrorism team, of course, to justify its actions against "terrorist" Tibetans.) President Bush failed to mention the subject of Pakistan's purchase of these deadly goods during an earlier visit to the U.S. by President Perrez Musharraf. One can understand why the president couldn't be too hard on those who do dirty business with the "Axis of Evil" since his own vice-president, Dick Cheney, immediately prior to taking office, was CEO of Haliburton Industries, which, contrary to federal law, has been selling equipment and technology to Iran, Libya, and Iraq.[5]

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3. "Spoils of War," *Harper's* (March 2002): 8-9.

4. David E. Sanger, "China is Treated More Gently than North Korea for Same Sin," *New York Times*, 21 February 2002, A8.

5. Carola Hoyos, "A Discreet Way of Doing Business with Iraq," *London Financial Times*, 3 November 2000. See also Bob Herbert, "Dancing with the Devil," *New York Times*, 22 May 2003, A 31. Herbert notes the irony of Haliburton's being awarded billions of dollars to manage Iraqi oil and help repair the damage done by our bombing.

One of the most egregious examples of our inconsistency was our long-time support of one of Africa's most notorious terrorists—Jonas Savimbi, the Angolan rebel leader who, according to Chris Hedges, "murdered and tortured with a barbarity that far outstripped the Taliban."[6] As Nicolas Kristof declared in an article entitled, "Our Own Terrorist," "Savimbi. . .murdered and tortured countless civilians over the years; the Angolan civil war that he sustained may be responsible for 500,000 deaths since 1975." Kristof added, "But he was our warlord, not the other side's, and so we were as blind to his brutality as the Saudis and Pakistanis are to the sins of their terrorists."[7]

Nowhere is our inconsistency on terrorism more evident than in our relations with Saudi Arabia, our long-time ally in the Middle East and home to fifteen of the nineteen September 11 hijackers who killed over 3,000 civilians on their suicide missions. Even though the Saudi royal family has created economic and social conditions which breed terrorism, even though a number of Saudi organizations fund Islamic terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda, and even though the Saudi government funds hundreds of Madrasa schools across the Islamic world which train hundreds of thousands of young Muslims to hate America—even so, because of its oil, Saudi Arabia is seen as our partner in the war against terrorism. Oil (and arms) may also explain why, last August, following years of business dealings between Presidents George H.W. and George W. Bush and members of the bin Laden family, the latter President Bush, much to the dismay of FBI agents, called off investigations of Osama bin Laden's brothers, Omar and Abdullah, and of WAMY, a charity suspected by the FBI of funding terrorism. As Gregory Palast of the BBC reported, "[The government] wanted to keep the pro-American Saudi royal family in control of the world's biggest oil spigot, even at the price of turning a blind eye to any terrorist connection."[8] It is ironic that our military presence in Saudi Arabia was one

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6. Hedges, *War*, 24. He further notes, "We too have our terrorists. The Contras in Nicaragua carried out, with funding from Washington, some of the most egregious human rights violations in Central America, yet were lauded as 'freedom fighters'" (24).

7. Nicolas D. Kristoff, "Our Own Terrorist," *New York Times*, 5 March 2002, A23. A further example of our inconsistency with regard to terrorism occurs when we send American troops to the Philippines to fight Islamic terrorists. The only problem with this, as Kristoff observes, is that those terrorists include "Philippine troops, our new partners in the war on terrorism." He says, "We are unwittingly about to join a 'dirty war' in Basilan, siding with murderers and torturers in a way that dishonors our larger purposes. . . .To go ahead with joint military exercises on Basilan would risk our most valuable possession in the war on terror—our integrity—by adding American firepower and troops to an operation that is brutally out of control" ("Sleeping with the Terrorists," *New York Times*, 12 February 2002, A23).

8. Transcript of a BBC broadcast, "FBI and US Spy Agents Say Bush Spiked Bin Laden Probes before 11 September," 6 Nov. 2001 (http://www.gregpalast.com). The same report was published under the title "FBI and U.S. Spy Agents say Bush Spiked Bin Laden Probes before 11 September" in *The Guardian*, 4 Nov. 2001. See http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,589168,00,html.

of the precipitating factors in Osama bin Laden's antipathy toward us and his desire to destroy us.[9]

The more we see terrorism as unrelated to our own international policies and the more aggressively we pursue strategies that are likely to inflame terrorists (e.g., being unequal in our policies toward Israel and Palestine), the more we are likely to nourish the ground from which terrorism grows.[10] Those who see themselves as commissioned by Allah to destroy the United States are only confirmed in their hatred and in their determination by acts we take to destroy them, especially when we do so with our high-technology warfare which inevitably kills civilians and which tends to destroy the infrastructure of those societies we attack. As the Israelis have learned, or should have learned, for every suicide bomber you retaliate against, you unleash a dozen more who eagerly wait to take his or her place. There are literally hundreds of thousands of young Muslims all over the world who can think of no greater honor than to sacrifice their lives to defeat and destroy "terrorist" America. There aren't enough smart spies in our agencies or smart bombs in our arsenal to stop all of these would-be martyrs, as we will learn in the years ahead unless we change our strategy. As the Algerian writer, Mohamed Moulessehoul has observed, "The war is lost if the West plays the game of the fundamentalists, which is violence, because you cannot frighten someone who accepts death with devotion."[11] Or, as Jonathan Schell writes, "The terrorist bent on self-immolation with a weapon of mass destruction is the nemesis of balance [of power]. Deterrence has no purchase on the dead."[12]

THE EXAMPLE OF AFGHANISTAN—AND IRAQ

The first and most important advice that I can give to my successors and people to make Afghanistan into a great kingdom is to impress upon their minds the value of unity; unity, and unity alone, can make it into a great power.

—Abdur Rahman Khan
Amir of Afghanistan (1880-1901)[13]

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9. It is perhaps indicative of our recognition of this fact that as of 1 May 2003, President Bush announced that the United States was removing its military bases from Saudi Arabia.

10. The report of 1 May 2003 by the government that there has been a decrease in terrorist acts since the United States began its campaign against terrorism is not reassuring since terrorism tends to wax and wane depending on world conditions. (Also, the main reason for the overall decline in terrorist attacks was related to a dramatic decrease in terrorist attacks in Columbia.) Since poverty and oppression are among the main causes of terrorism, the degree of both portends a continuation and possibly even escalation of terrorism in the years ahead.

11. Alan Riding, "Losing Pseudonym, Gaining Notoriety," *New York Times*, 21 February 2002, B3.

12. Jonathan Schell, "No More unto the Breach, Part II: The Unconquerable World," *Harper's* (May 2003): 44.

13. http://www.afghan-web.com/history/quotes.html

For five hundred years, Baghdad had been a city of palaces, mosques, libraries and colleges. Its universities and hospitals were the most up-to-date in the world. Nothing now remained but heaps of rubble and a stench of decaying human flesh.

—On the Holocaust of Baghdad (1258 C.E.)
perpetrated by Hulagu Kahn[14]

The complexity of our war on terrorism becomes obvious when we examine Afghanistan. As it moved on to the war on Iraq, the U.S. administration spoke of having achieved most of its objectives in Afghanistan, but—as recent events have shown—the jury is still out on this matter. Consider the following:

(1) Thousands of Taliban and Al Qaeda soldiers and their leaders (including Osama bin Laden) are presently unaccounted for. Many apparently slipped over the border into Pakistan or other countries during the early days of U.S. bombing. According to the *New Yorker*, between 4,000 and 5,000 Taliban and Al Qaeda soldiers, including members of the Taliban leadership, flew out of Kunduz in November 2002 on planes carrying Pakistani military personnel who had been advising the Taliban.[15]

(2) As of this writing (May 2003), Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters continue to wage terrorist attacks against American and U.N. forces in Afghanistan. After an attack which killed several American soldiers on 25 April 2003, the *New York Times* reported, "In a very real sense, the war here has not ended. . . .Nearly every day, there are killings, explosions, shootings and targeted attacks on foreign aid works, Afghan officials, and American forces."[16]

(3) U.S. intelligence agencies estimate that Al Qaeda cells exist in at least sixty countries, and members have sophisticated methods of communicating with one another. In an article entitled "Terror Crackdown Has Not Reduced al-Quaida Threat," Richard Norton Taylor, reporting on a study conducted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, states, "Al-Qaida remains a 'potent' international terrorist network with more than 18,000 trained members at large in up to 90 countries, and could take a generation to dismantle. . . .The report warns that al-Quaida has reconstituted itself since the war in Afghanistan and was now 'doing business in a somewhat different manner, but more insidious and just as dangerous as in its pre-September 11 incarnation.'"[17]

(4) Afghan warlords, reviving ancient enmities, are fighting one another and resisting the authority of the fragile U.N.-sponsored central government. According to a report in the *New York Times*, "The Central Intelligence Agency

14. http://www.cyberistan.org/Islamic/quote2.html

15. Seymour M. Hersh, "The Getaway: Questions Surrounding a Secret Pakistani Airlift," *New Yorker* (28 January 2002): 36-40.

16. Carlotta Gall, "In Afghanistan, Violence Stalls Renewal Effort," *New York Times*, 26 April 2003, A1.

17. *The Guardian*, 14 May 2003, http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianpolitics/story/0,3605, 955333,00.html.

has warned in a classified report that Afghanistan could once again fall into violent chaos if steps are not taken to restrain the competition for power among rival warlords and to control ethnic tensions." The threat of inter-tribal conflict, the report said, is fostered by the fact that "the power of the warlords themselves has been enhanced by the money and weapons that the United States has funneled to regional leaders who have helped Washington to root out Al Qaeda fighters and the former Taliban government."[18] We must remember that the majority of the Afghan people welcomed the Taliban as a lesser evil than the warlords. Tribal loyalties sealed with blood for centuries will not easily or quickly be persuaded to support either a democracy or a central bureaucracy.

(5) Resentment continues to build over the killing and wounding of civilians by American military personnel. According to William Arkin, Human Rights Watch advisor, "We've got about 300 incidents [of casualties in Afghanistan] in our database, and I'd say about a third involve some civilian casualties."[19] As of spring 2003, there continue to be civilian casualties inflicted by both American and Taliban firepower. The resentment against the United States caused by such casualties increases with each incident and with each denial or dismissal of responsibility by military leaders.

In the late winter of 2003, the U.S. government—against the will of the U.N. Security Council—extended the war against terrorism into the Valley of the Euphrates. In a period of weeks we dropped tens of thousands of bombs on Iraqi military installations, strategic locations, palaces, etc. We do not yet know how many civilians we have killed,[20] but the number increases almost daily as we attempt to secure what seems a tenuous control of the country.[21]

This phase of the war on terrorism likewise seems fraught with the possibilities of failure. Military and political advisors predicted we would be welcomed in Iraq as liberators, but a few short weeks after we began occupying Iraq there appeared a growing hostility toward U.S.-led coalition forces, a growing divisiveness among the disparate segments of Iraqi society, and increasing social chaos throughout the country.

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18. Michael Gordon, "C.I.A. Sees Threat Afghan Factions May Bring Chaos," *New York Times*, 21 February 2002, A1.

19. Barry Bearak et al., "Unknown Toll in the Fog of War: Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 10 February 2002, 1:1.

20. In an article entitled, "How Many Iraqis Died? We May Never Know" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 May 2003, A13), Edward Epstein reports that one organization estimates the number at between 2,197 and 2,670, much below what had been anticipated, and significantly below that of other previous wars. Nevertheless, the question remains whether pursuing a more peaceful approach could have spared even these lives. For widows and orphans statistics have no meaning.

21. See Dexter Filkins and Ian Fisher, "U.S. Now in Battle for Peace after Winning the War in Iraq," *New York Times*, 3 May 2003, A1, 9.

POWER AND PRIDE VS. PEACEFULNESS AND HUMILITY

By building a huge armed establishment, we shall belie our protestations of peace and peaceful intent and force other nations to a like course of militarism.

> —*George Albert Smith, J. Reuben Clark,*
> *David O. McKay (1945)*[22]

Part of what makes our goal to defeat terrorism challenging is that others are unable to distinguish our actions from those of terrorists. Many Iraqis see the U.S.-enforced U.N. sanctions against Iraq over the past dozen or so years as a weapon deliberately employed to kill great numbers of people. As Joy Gordon argues, "The United States has consistently thwarted Iraq from satisfying the most basic humanitarian needs, using sanctions as nothing less than a deadly weapon. . . .Since the program began, an estimated 500,000 Iraqi children under the age of five have died as a result of the sanctions—almost three times as many as the number of Japanese killed during the U.S. atomic bomb attacks."[23] While the United States has attempted to shift the entire blame for these deaths onto Saddam Hussein, the fact is, a half million Iraqi children are dead from malnutrition, disease, and lack of adequate medicine related directly to the sanctions. In no civilized context can a government justify punishing a tyrant in a way that kills hundreds of thousands of children.

While we don't classify them as such, some of our own weapons could be considered weapons of mass destruction. How else to describe the euphemistically labeled "daisy cutter" bomb, a 15,000-pound mega-bomb we dropped on Afghanistan, or the 21,500-pound MOAB bomb we tested as a possible weapon for use in Iraq? These weapons have the force to kill, "as Cain could, but with multitudinous will."[24] The United States, which is the only country to ever use nuclear bombs as weapons of mass destruction, has an enormous arsenal of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, in addition to the new mega-bombs and other weapons meant to "shock and awe" the enemy.

Contrary to what our government believes, one of the biggest barriers to a peaceful resolution of the war on terror is our newly stated policy to become not only the most powerful military power in the world, which we presently are, but so powerful that no other nation would even consider attacking us. Our new national policy of waging preemptive strikes against other nations which threaten

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22. "Letter of the First Presidency," *Improvement Era* (February 1946): 76-77.

23. Joy Gordon, "Cool War: Economic Sanctions as a Weapon of Mass Destruction," *Harper's* (November 2002): 43. Gordon also observes, "Perhaps what we should learn from our own reactions to September 11 is that the massive destruction of innocents is something that is unlikely to be either forgotten or forgiven. If this is so, then destroying Iraq, whether with sanctions or with bombs, is unlikely to bring the security we have gone to such lengths to preserve" (49).

24. Richard Eberhart, "The Fury of Aerial Bombardment," http://www.solarwinds.com/users/chrish/bombardment.html.

our security and sovereignty, including the possible use of nuclear weapons, is designed to cause cooperation and acquiescence by intimidation, not by persuasion. In a letter to the Utah Congressional Delegation in 1945, the First Presidency warned that such policies have serious consequences: "By the creation of a great war machine, we shall invite and tempt the waging of war against foreign countries, upon little or no provocation; for the possession of great military power always breeds thirst for domination and for a rule by might not right."[25]

Our view of ourselves as the superior power in the world is revealed in Vice President Dick Cheney's address to the Council on Foreign Relations in February 2002. Among other things, Cheney said, "America has friends and allies in this cause, but only we can lead it. Only we can rally the world in a task of this complexity against an enemy so elusive and so resourceful. The United States and only the United States can see this effort through to victory. . . .We are in a unique position because of our unique assets, because of the character of our people, the strength of our ideas, the might of our military and the enormous economy that supports it."[26]

As Robert F. Worth has observed, "While all nations regard their causes as just, and all demonize their enemies, the combination of American might and its longstanding self-image as uniquely virtuous irritates even its enemies." Worth concludes, "The history of American crusading, even against unmistakable evil, suggests that it can be more effective to start from a position of humility. Righteousness easily becomes self-righteousness and it can be hard for crusaders to distinguish between the two."[27]

Such braggadocio not only inflames our enemies, it also alienates our allies. In the Muslim world, the United States is viewed as ever more "ruthless, aggressive, conceited, arrogant, easily provoked and biased."[28] Our allies have responded in a similar way. Chris Patten, chief of the European Union's external affairs department, called such language reckless, even dangerous: "The Afghan war perhaps reinforced some dangerous instincts; that the projection of military power is the only basis of true security; that the U.S. can rely on no one but itself; and that allies may be useful as optional extras."[29]

Such sentiments increased exponentially as the United States declared its ability to wage war against Iraq without the support of the U.N. Security Coun-

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25. Letter of the First Presidency, 76-77.

26. Michael Gordon, "Cheney Rejects Criticism by Allies Over Stand on Iraq," *New York Times*, 16 February 2002, A8.

27. Robert F. Worth, "A Nation Defines Itself by Its Evil Enemies," *New York Times*, 24 February 2002 ("Week in Review"), 1, 7.

28. "Muslim Antipathy toward U.S. Is Pervasive," *San Jose Mercury News*, 3 March 2002, A1, 3.

29. Ibid.; see also Steven Erlanger, "Europe Seethes as the U.S. Flies Solo in World Affairs," *New York Times*, 23 February 2002, A8; Elisabeth Bumiller, "Axis of Debate: Hawkish Words," *New York Times*, 3 February 2002, 4, 5; and David E. Sanger, "Allies Hear Sour Notes in 'Axis of Evil' Chorus," *New York Times*, 17 February 2002, A12.

cil—or anyone else for that matter—and then, after using overwhelmingly superior firepower to defeat the Iraqi army, exulted in a spirit of triumphalism, with some administration officials hailing the victory as one of the greatest in the annals of military history. As Shakespeare says in *Measure for Measure*:

O, it is excellent to have a giant's strength;
but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant (2.2).

NONVIOLENCE AND PEACE

For years it has been held that peace comes by preparation for war; the present conflict should prove that peace comes only by preparing for peace, through training the people in righteousness and justice, and selecting rulers who respect the righteous will of the people.

—President Joseph F. Smith (1914)[30]

How might we have acted differently to the terrorist attacks? How might we still do so? In an article entitled "With Weapons of the Will: How to Topple Saddam Hussein-Nonviolently," written before our invasion of Iraq, Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall suggested that Saddam could have been defeated by nonviolent means, especially if the United States and its coalition partners had been willing to employ nonviolent strategies. Based on the fact that "22 million Iraqis detest Saddam Hussein," Ackerman and DuVall argue that a "civilian-based, nonviolent resistance by the Iraqi people, developed and applied in accordance with a strategy to undermine Saddam's basis of power," could have been effective in bringing down the Iraqi dictator."[31] For those who argue that such strategies wouldn't work against a regime as oppressive as Saddam Hussein's, Ackerman and DuVall give examples of how similar strategies worked against the Nazis, the Pinochet regime in Chile, and even in Iraq when tens of thousands of Muslims gathered in Karbala for a religious celebration successfully defied Saddam's army.

In *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, Ackerman and DuVall chronicle a number of instances in the twentieth century in which nonviolence worked to bring down repressive regimes or to counter state-sponsored terror and repression. These include: Gandhi's campaigns against imperialism in Africa and India; the Dutch resistance to the Nazis during World War II; popular uprisings in El Salvador, Chile, and Argentina; the campaign against Apartheid in South Africa; Lech Walesa's Solidarity movement in Poland; the popular uprising against Ferdinand Marcos's government in the Philippines;

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30. "Editor's Table," *Improvement Era* 17, No. 11 (September 1914).
31. *Sojourners: Christians for Justice and Peace*, September-October 2002, http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?

Martin Luther King's Civil Rights revolution in the United States; the Intifada campaign in the Middle East (which later lost its effectiveness when it turned violent); and the democratic tide that has swept through China, Mongolia, and Eastern Europe, resulting (in the latter case) in the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union.[32] This is an impressive list of victories—all achieved through nonviolent means. As Gene Sharp, a theoretician of nonviolent power, has asserted, "Nonviolent action is possible, and is capable of wielding great power even against ruthless rulers and military regimes, because it attacks the most vulnerable characteristic of all hierarchical institutions and governments: dependence on the governed."[33]

Scott Atran has argued in the *New York Times* that "[s]hows of military strength don't seem to dissuade terrorists." He cites a United Nations' report indicating that as soon as the United States began preparing to invade Iraq "Qaeda recruitment. . .picked up in 30 to 40 countries. . . .Volunteers are beating down the doors to join." Atran also reports that, contrary to popular belief (and the assertions of government leaders), "poll after poll of the Muslim world shows opinion strongly favors America's forms of government, personal liberty and education. . . .It is our actions that they don't like." Atran adds that, according to a Defense Department report, "historical data show a strong correlation between U.S. involvement in international situations and an increase in terrorist attacks against the United States."[34]

JESUS AND NONVIOLENCE

We see that war is incompatible with Christ's teachings. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of Peace. War is the antithesis and produces hate. It is vain to attempt to reconcile war with true Christianity.

—*David O. McKay (1942)*[35]

A nonviolent strategy for defeating terrorism seems consistent with the ethic of countering violence in the New Testament. Christ's teachings on this matter are straightforward and unambiguous: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). The Lord makes it clear that calling ourselves Christian is dependent on such an attitude, for he adds that we must behave in such a way "[t]hat you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth

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32. Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 9.

33. Gene Sharp, "The Role of Power in Nonviolent Struggle," Monograph Series, no. 3 (The Albert Einstein Institution, 1990), 18, as cited in Ackerman and DuVall, *A Force More Powerful*, 9.

34. Scott Atran, "Who Wants to Be a Martyr?" *New York Times*, 5 May 2003, A27.

35. *Gospel Ideals* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Improvement Era, 1953), 285.

rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). In other words, if God blesses those whom we consider our enemies with both light (sun) and nourishment (rain), then he expects us to do no less. Furthermore, we cannot claim to be his children unless we act this way.

Why is this the case? Because, I believe, God, who knows each of us intimately and who counts our individual souls as being of infinite worth, knows that redemption does not come by revenge or retribution, but rather by love and sacrifice. This is the lesson which humankind has refused to learn through the ages and for which it still pays an enormous price. The Lord hopes for the redemption of all his children, and he knows that when we engage in violence against our enemies, it cankers our souls and wreaks destruction on those against whom our hatred is aimed, thus denying them a greater opportunity to find redemption as we lock them into a cycle of violence. While one could argue that they, too, have choice in the matter, we must remember that as "the children of light" we have the greater responsibility both to stop the violence and to let love work its redemptive power.

Some would argue that Jesus didn't really mean that we should love our enemies, that we should turn the other cheek, or that we should forgive others seven times seventy—that this is an ideal ethic by which we aren't really expected to live. This is the argument made by Plotinus Plimlimmon, a character in Herman Melville's novel *Pierre, or the Ambiguities* (1852). Plimlimmon argues that God does not really expect us to abide by such a higher law, that "the highest abstract heavenly righteousness is not only impossible, but would be entirely out of place, and positively wrong in a world like this." He adds, "In things terrestrial. . .a man must not be governed by ideas celestial. . .he must by no means make a complete unconditional sacrifice of himself on behalf of any other being, or any cause, or any conceit."[36] It is clear within the context of the novel that Melville intends us to see Plimlimmon as a morally bankrupt person, who excuses his lack of charity to justify his unwillingness to live by a higher law.

Unfortunately, the majority of humankind seems to share Plimlimmon's sentiments because they probably do not understand what Jesus was saying when he taught such principles. Most interpret his teachings as passive nonviolence, but as Walter Wink has suggested, Jesus was being both more subtle and more subversive than this:

Jesus clearly rejected the military option as a way to redress Jewish grievances. He refused to lead troops in war against Rome, or to defend his own cause by violent means. He endured the cross rather than prove false to his own nonviolent way. Through the history of his people's violent and nonviolent struggle for survival,

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36. Herman Melville, *Pierre, or the Ambiguities* (Chicago: Newberry Library Press, 1971), 213-14.

Jesus discovered a way of opposing evil without becoming evil in the process. Here at last was a full-blown alternative to the politics of 'redemptive' violence.[37]

Wink suggests that what Jesus was really teaching was a third way, a way between violence and total submission to evil (although, as the anti-Lehi-Nephites in the Book of Mormon demonstrated, that too at times has proved more powerful than violence). Wink argues that instead of teaching nonresistance to evil, Jesus tells us "to refuse to oppose it on its own terms. . . .He is urging us to transcend both passivity and violence by finding a third way, one that is at once assertive and nonviolent."[38] Wink then shows how three of Jesus' otherwise perplexing commands—to turn the other cheek, to give a person who sues you not only your cloak but your coat as well, and to walk not one mile but two—are really not meant as passive acts, but rather as nonviolently subversive ones. He argues, for example, that in the story of a rich man taking a poor man to court and humiliating him by asking for his cloak, if the person being sued gave all his clothing (also his coat) to the one suing him, he would stand naked before the court. As Wink observes, "Nakedness was taboo in Judaism, and shame fell less on the naked party than on the person viewing or causing the nakedness (Gen. 9:20-27). By stripping, the debtor has brought shame on the creditor. . . .The poor man has transcended this attempt to humiliate him. He has risen above shame. At the same time, he has registered a stunning protest against the system that created his debt."[39]

The result of such an action, Wink argues, is dramatic: "Imagine the debtor leaving court naked. His friends and neighbors, aghast, inquire what happened. He explains. They join a growing procession, which now resembles a victory parade. This is guerrilla theater! The entire system by which debtors are oppressed has been publicly unmasked. The creditor is revealed to be not a legitimate moneylender but a party to the reduction of an entire social class to landlessness and destitution. This unmasking is not simply punitive, since it offers the creditor a chance to see, perhaps for the first time in his life, what his practices cause, and to repent."[40]

Christ was against violent solutions. As Isaiah said, "He has done no violence" (Isa. 53:1-12). When Peter drew his sword to defend Jesus, the Lord rebuked him, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). Then, to show Peter that violence was an option open to the Lord but that he eschewed it, Jesus added, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently [that is, immediately] give me more than twelve legions of angels?" In other words,

37. Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 69.

38. Ibid., 100-01.

39. Ibid., 104-05.

40. Ibid., 105.

had violence been his way of dealing with hostility, Jesus could have called sixty thousand angels to defend himself against a small band of conspirators (odds, by the way, not unlike those enjoyed by the United States military in Iraq).

Those who cite Jesus's statement that he "came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34) to justify war,[41] fail to acknowledge that Jesus was speaking metaphorically of his gospel, for as Paul said to the Hebrews, "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). This seems to be confirmed by Jesus's statement soon after he spoke of bringing a sword, indicating that the sword of truth would divide his true followers from the false: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:38-39). In other words, it is the cross of Christ (his gospel of redemption) which we should take up, rather than swords. Hugh Nibley states, "If we persist in reversing the words of the Savior, 'Who takes up the sword shall die by the sword' (cf. Rev. 13:10) to read perversely, 'who does not take up the sword shall perish by the sword,' we shall deserve what happens to us."[42]

Nonviolent solutions were evident throughout Jesus's life. In his daily gifts of mercy, in the acts he performed during his final week in mortality, and in his ultimate acts of redemption in Gethsemane and Calvary, the Savior loved those who rejected and mocked him, who betrayed him, who bore false witness against him, who spat upon and beat him, and who drove nails into his hands and feet. By his nonviolent response to violent attacks against him, he accomplished the greatest redemptive act in the history of the world—the potential salvation of humankind *and* greater peace in the world.

Christ invites us to participate in our own and others' redemption by committing to nonviolence. He asks us to love our enemies, to do good to those who despitefully use us, to return good for evil. As Walter Wink observes, "The God whom Jesus reveals refrains from all forms of reprisal. God does not endorse holy wars or just wars. God does not sanction religions of violence. Only by being driven out by violence could God signal to humanity that the divine is nonviolent and is opposed to the kingdom of violence."[43]

LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND PEACE

LDS theology offers a guide to better conduct. I believe its fundamental message is that 'effective pacifism'—even unilateral disarmament if accompanied by massive

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41. President Hinckley in his April 2003 general conference address, "War and Peace," seemed to use this scripture to justify the war in Iraq.

42. Hugh Nibley, "Renounce War, or, A Substitute for Victory," as quoted in Boyd Jay Peterson, *Hugh Nibley: A Consecrated Life* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002), 216-217.

43. Wink, *Powers*, 88.

efforts to extend intelligent, creative, tough-minded but loving help to other nations. . .is the ideal solution, the only one that could make our enemies no longer enemies.

—Eugene England[44]

As Mormon Christians I believe we have a moral responsibility to try to make Christ's way work in the world, especially in regard to war. Specifically, what can we as Latter-day Saints do to make peace more possible? As members of the church we need to cultivate a spirit of humility when it comes to war. Believing ourselves to be a "peculiar" (read "chosen") people, some of us assume that God manipulates world affairs for our benefit. Thus, we manufacture myths to support our pro-war attitudes. An example of this was made apparent to me in a recent conversation with a sister in our ward. She said that the reason she believed some wars are justified is that one of the apostles had said that the Vietnam War was fought in order to open Vietnam to the teaching of the gospel. I was nonplussed that someone could believe that God allowed (or caused!) 58,000 American deaths and more than a million Vietnamese casualties so that the gospel could be introduced in Vietnam. (As of 2003, there are a total of one hundred members in two English-speaking branches, one each in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, "attended almost exclusively by English-speaking expatriate families."[45]) Such beliefs are not isolated sentiments: Bonner Ritchie has reported that, since the beginning of the Iraqi war, he has heard a number of Mormons say that the war was being fought so that Iraq could be opened to the preaching of the gospel.[46] With such sentiments we deconstruct the moral architecture of the world and diminish rather than increase the prospects of the good news of the gospel going to all nations, for when we link God with violence and use the gospel to justify war, we erode the fragile faith by which Christ's message can survive in an increasingly hostile world.

Latter-day Saints could set an example to others by renouncing violence, including our celebration of the gun culture. The fact that Utah has one of the highest *per capita* ownership of guns in the nation and among the most permissive gun laws (including permission to carry guns to school campuses and churches) suggests that as a people we may be a long way from the Zion idealized in our cultural imagination. An indication of the violence produced by guns in the United States can be seen in the fact that each year *ten times* the number of people who died in the World Trade Center are killed by guns in America—as though, as a minister once put it, we had become terrorists to our own people.

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44. "Can Nations Love Their Enemies?" in Eugene England, *Dialogues With Myself* (Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1984), 148.

45. http://www.newsroom.LDS.org.

46. Reported during a panel discussion on the Middle East at the Sunstone West symposium in San Francisco, 19 April 2003.

With the prospect of eventually achieving that perfectly peaceful state of society called Zion, Latter-day Saints could take the lead in helping our nation progress from the desire to be the most powerful nation in the world to becoming the most peaceful and the most benevolent nation in the world, a nation that uses its resources not to build an enormous military force, but to fight disease and poverty, to share its beneficence with less prosperous peoples, to be a healer of the world's wounds.

Another way in which Latter-day Saints could set an example of working for non-violent, nonmilitary solutions would be to cultivate independent convictions about war and violence. Because we are used to being obedient and following those in authority, we may have a tendency to yield our moral responsibility to others, to accept what the government or the authorities of the church say without examining it in our own hearts and minds. We join the crusade to war without consulting our souls as to whether this is the best cause for our allegiance, and once we have done so, we feel we are doing God's bidding. As Chris Hedges says, "Once we sign on for war's crusade, once we see ourselves on the side of the angels, once we embrace a theological or ideological belief system that defines itself as the embodiment of goodness and light, it is only a matter of how we will carry out murder."[47] Unless we recoil at the thought of our government dropping four megabombs on a Baghdad restaurant on a hunch that Saddam Hussein might be there, we have given away too much of our hearts and minds to those who make and celebrate such decisions. Unless our hearts break at each incidence of "collateral damage"—women, children, and the elderly, to say nothing of conscripts forced to fight against us, who are killed or maimed in our name—then our hearts remain hardened and unbroken.

As Latter-day Saints we have an advantage (and perhaps greater responsibility) over other believers because of what the scriptures of the Restoration counsel us about war. We are particularly indebted to the Book of Mormon, a book written for our time. One of its overriding lessons is that war is destructive of both individuals and nations. As Hugh Nibley has observed, "Mormon and his son [Moroni] are summing up the situation [about war] after spending most of their lives in the field—and they hate it. For them war is nasty, brutalizing, wasteful, dirty, degrading, fatiguing, foolish, immoral, and above all unnecessary."[48] One of Moroni's final messages concerned the utter futility of war. As the last Nephite witness to his nation's decline and fall, he wrote, "The Lamanites are at war one with another and the whole face of this land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed; and no one knoweth the end of the war" (Moroni 8:8). Since, as Will Durant calculates, "there have only been twenty-nine years in all of human history during which war was not underway somewhere,"[49] this is a lament for all the ages, including our own.

47. Hedges, *War*, 9.

48. Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah: The Book of Mormon in the Modern World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 329.

49. Hedges, *War*, 10. According to Ellen C. Collier, from 1798 to 1993, there have been 234

No Book of Mormon lesson about war is more dramatic or profound than the story of the Jaredites, who were completely destroyed by violence. In the death throes of their civilization, "blood and carnage cover[ed] the land" (Ether 14, chapter note) as millions destroyed one another (something like, one imagines, the Hutus and Tutsis hacking one another to death at the end of the twentieth century). Finally, each side was reduced to one representative, Coriantumr and Shiz, who destroyed one another. I believe this story is a warning and foreshadowing of what we might bring about unless we turn away from war, with our highly technical warfare and our weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear bombs.

Modern scripture also instructs us about war. While the scriptures taken as a whole admonish us to choose peace over war, perhaps the clearest message on this subject is found in D&C 98. As context, this revelation was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith at a time when the Saints had been terrorized by government officials, gangs, and ordinary citizens in Missouri. The introductory commentary to this section says, "It is natural that the Saints, having suffered physically and also having lost property, should feel an inclination toward retaliation and revenge," but it is clear that the Lord forbade them such a course. As a prelude to his position on war, the Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith, "I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake *all evil* and cleave unto *all good*" (D&C 98:11, emphasis added). To underscore what he considers "all evil" and "all good," the Lord then says, "I will prove you in *all things*, whether you shall abide in my covenant. . . .Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children" (D&C 98:14, 16, emphasis added). As Hugh Nibley has said, "'Renounce' is a strong word: we are not to try to win peace by war, or merely to call a truce, but to renounce war itself, to disdain it as a policy while proclaiming. . .peace without reservation."[50]

What this scripture means, I believe, is that one way in which the Lord proves or tests our obedience to his word and our willingness to "abide in [his] covenant" is whether we renounce war and proclaim peace. There also seems to be a direct connection between these two actions (and I think both are necessary) and the turning of intergenerational hearts to one another. Since in Mormon doctrine the turning of such hearts is the key to vicarious, participatory redemption through temple work, this scripture seems to imply that our refusal to renounce war and proclaim peace may hinder such work. It also hinders the turning of the hearts of living fathers and mothers and their children to one another, as I believe it certainly did during the Vietnam War.

"instances in which the United States has used its armed forces abroad in situations of conflict or potential conflict for other than normal peacetime purposes" ("Instances of Use of United States Forces Abroad, 1798-1993," Naval Historical Center Home Page, http://www.history.navy.mil).

50. Hugh Nibley, "Renounce War!" *BYU Daily Universe*, 26 March 1971, as quoted in Gordon C. Thomasson, *War, Conscription, Conscience and Mormonism* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Mormon Heritage, 1972), 24-25.

That the Latter-day Saints have a particular charge to renounce war and pro-claim peace can be seen in a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith on 7 March 1836. In this revelation the Lord indicates that the Saints should establish "a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God." In the last days, this will be the only place where those committed to nonviolence, those who "will not take up [their] sword[s] against [their] neigh-bor[s]," can flee for safety, for these will be "the only people that shall not be at war one with another" (D&C 45:66-69). Further, the Lord suggests that this peaceful, nonviolent people will have a power much greater than arms and war-fare, for the wicked will say, "Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the in-habitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand" (D&C 45:70). I hope no one will be offended by my observation that for such a time and place to be realized, Mormon culture must undergo something of a sea change in its atti-tudes toward war and peace.

This scripture seems to suggest that preparation for Zion requires that we pursue a course of nonviolence. Those who will be worthy to inhabit Zion will not take up the sword against their neighbors, among whom (the parable of the Good Samaritan suggests) are those we consider our enemies. Thousands of years of human conflict have proved again and again that violence always begets violence. As Michael Nagler has observed, "Nonviolence sometimes achieves the success that was immediately aimed at, just as violence sometimes does; on the other hand, nonviolence always does what violence can never do: it brings into play forces that will bring about, sometimes invisibly, a better situa-tion for all concerned. In the end, nonviolent means always bring about nonvio-lent ends."[51]

Latter-day Saints could well follow the example of the Reorganized Church, now known as the Community of Christ. In a statement entitled "Pro-claiming Peace in a Time of War," the church's First Presidency called on all fol-lowers of Christ "to seek every peaceful avenue to resolve the conflict." It adds, "Our church has dedicated itself to the pursuit of peace. That is not a statement of political philosophy or even social conscience. It is a divine call to us as a people, inspiring us to erect a temple as a symbol of our commitment to peace." The proclamation ends with a plea: "May we see the face of Jesus Christ in all of God's children, including those defined as enemies. May God's grace touch each of us with a full measure of love and may our lives and voices be tirelessly devoted to proclaiming peace in the world."[52]

51. Michael Nagler, *The Steps of Nonviolence* (Bronx, N.Y.: Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1999), 23.

52. http://www.cofchrist.org/iraq/default.asp

THE WORK OF PEACE

And the work of righteousness shall be peace. (Isa. 32:17)

Peace will not come without work—and it will take enormous effort as well as faith and courage to overcome the tide of war and violence. During the Vietnam War as editor of *Dialogue* I wrote an editorial entitled, "A Christian Peace," in which I said, "The Christian does not withdraw into the security of a private peace, but risks sharing it with others, suing for peace, working for peace, even in a world in which, as the Psalmist said, 'I labor for peace, but when I speak unto them thereof, they make ready to battle.' "[53]

During the Easter season following the September 11 terrorist attack on America, I attended services at St. John the Divine Church in New York City. It was a refreshing service amidst the violence of our bombing of Afghanistan and in the face of a national sentiment for retribution and revenge. One of the scriptural readings for the day was from the first epistle of Peter with its admonition "Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. For Those who desire life and desire to see good days. . .let them seek peace and pursue it. . . .For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil" (1 Pet. 3:8-18).

The minister who addressed us that day, 5 May 2002, was the Reverend Michael Lapsley, Director of the Healing of Memories Institute of South Africa. He had been the victim of state-sponsored violence: Religious magazines sent to him by the South African government contained a bomb which blew his hands off. He spoke of his journey from victim to victor through Christ, who helped him transform the violence perpetrated against him and his initial feelings of revenge into something redemptive—a ministry to the suffering. He had come to New York City to console those who had lost loved ones in the World Trade Center attack. Reverend Lapsley, aware of widespread feelings of revenge, counseled that while such feelings were natural, they would destroy us, not our enemies, if we gave in to them. He then said, "The greatest revenge the United States could repay to Al Queda would be to create a different kind of America—one that would end the death penalty, take care of the poor and homeless, and end racial hatred." He added, "America can become a leader through its moral values, not its military power. You can have power, but while people are hungry you will not have security."

The service at St. John the Divine ended with a prayer, part of which continues to echo in my heart: "Eternal God, heavenly Father. . . .Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart, through Christ our Lord."

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53. Robert A. Rees, "A Christian Peace," *Dialogue* 7, no. 3 (Autumn 1972): 5.

THE PROMISES OF PEACE

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. (John 14:27)

What are the promises of the Lord to those who make peace? First, we are promised that we "will become the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). No matter how much we may argue to the contrary, violence cannot strengthen that filial relationship. Second, we are promised that we will enjoy the companionship of the Lord. As Paul promises, "Live in peace and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11). Third, we are told our righteousness will grow as we seek to be peaceful. As James says, "Righteousness is sown in peace to them that make peace" (James 3:18). Fourth, as we walk the path of peace, our feet—like all those who "publish peace"—"will be beautiful upon the mountains" (Isa. 52:7). Abinadi extends Isaiah's promise to the present and the future: "O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet! And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that are still publishing peace! And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who shall hereafter publish peace, yea, from this time henceforth and forever." Abinadi then acknowledges that this beauty is connected inexorably to Christ: "And behold, I say unto you, this is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people" (Mosiah 15:14-18).

Finally, we are promised that only by following peace will we be able to see God. As Paul said to the Hebrews, "Follow peace. . .without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

GRACE NOTE

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 1:7)

My father witnessed some of the most devastating destruction of World War II when he was a sailor in the South Pacific. He once described to me the scenes of horror on Iwo Jima and the fear he felt when a kamikaze pilot aimed his plane at my father's small ship, only to change his mind at the last moment and dive into a larger destroyer. My father bore the physical and psychic wounds of that war to his grave.

It has been one of the great blessings of my life that I have been spared going to war; it has been more than a double blessing that my sons have not had to take up arms. Among other reasons, I am interested in our finding a better, nonviolent strategy than our present one because I do not want to see my five grandsons or my granddaughter—or any of their generation—go to war. That's why, among other reasons, I am committed to proclaiming peace and renouncing war.

I firmly believe that if we were to go into the world in peace and seek a nonviolent, spiritually transformative approach to combating terrorism, we would

be more successful than in the war we are presently waging; we would also reach our goal more quickly, and it would cost fewer lives than our current policy. Were we truly to follow the principles taught by the Prince of Peace, we might, in addition to transforming our enemies (or at least persuading them that there are non-violent solutions to resolving their grievances), show them a better way to live in the world. The irony is that unless we do this, we will add to the suffering of him who suffered all for us, for his present suffering is increased as the evil and suffering of the world multiply. Ultimately, his way of peace will prevail, but wouldn't it be a wonderful gift to him if we caused it to prevail now, without the cost of violence?