The Possibilities of Mormon Peacebuilding

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IN 1992, BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI, then Secretary–General of the United Nations, announced his *Agenda for Peace*. Within it, he encouraged member states to become more actively involved in "peacebuilding," a vaguely defined term that seeks to go beyond the traditional concepts of peacemaking and peacekeeping.[1] Although over the course of the past decade there has been debate about the precise theoretical meaning and practical implementation of this new concept, there is general consensus that peacebuilding is more than simply stopping the shooting. Indeed, peacebuilding includes a range of attitudes and actions that seek to transform violent conflicts into environments in which long-term development and sustainable peace are created through just and stable political, eco-

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1. Boutros Boutros–Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping*, Document A/47/277-S/241111 (New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, June 17, 1992).

nomic, legal, social, and cultural institutions and relationships. More concretely, peacebuilders are involved in a wide variety of activities, including peace education, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, conflict prevention and early warning, establishing and administering truth and justice commissions, interreligious dialogue, caring for the specific needs of women and children affected by conflict or underdevelopment, business and micro-enterprise development, (re-)construction of civil society, higher level diplomacy, trauma healing and psychosocial work, and voter education and registration.[2] All of these activities are done with the purpose of long-term reconciliation and sustainability in societies previously (or currently) torn apart by conflict.[3]

Regardless of its precise definition or location, however, peacebuilding is a daunting task. The scope of what needs to be done to increase peace, security, and human dignity in communities throughout the world leaves one wondering where to start. At the risk of sounding parochial, I would suggest that perhaps the best place to begin is in one's own community. While communities are variously constructed and often denote either political or geographical affiliations, here I want to talk about the possibilities of peacebuilding within Mormonism—as an institution, a religious and cultural system, and a community of believers. In fostering this

2. For an excellent example of an internationally respected organization dedicated in part to religious peacebuilding, see the website of Catholic Relief Services at http://www.catholicrelief.org.

3. A closely related concept used by many peacebuilders and peacebuilding organizations as a guiding set of principles is "conflict transformation." In this approach, conflict is not something that should necessarily be avoided ("conflict prevention") or eliminated ("conflict resolution"). Instead, conflict transformation assumes that, while conflict certainly has tremendous capacity to do harm, it should also be viewed as a natural part of human relationships that can be constructive when channeled into positive and nonviolent forms. Scholar-practitioner John Paul Lederach writes: "Conflict transformation provides a comprehensive set of lenses for describing the ways conflict emerges from, evolves within, and brings about changes in the personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions, and for developing creative responses that promote peaceful change in those dimensions through nonviolent mechanisms." *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 83. The most accessible summary of conflict transformation theory is Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003).

culture of Mormon peacebuilding, the primary goals, at least in my vision, would be twofold: first, to make nonviolence a viable, if not necessarily preferential, alternative to the unblinking nationalism (and its associated militarism) often associated with LDS rhetoric and culture; and second, to create a climate within Mormon individual and group life in which religious-based peacebuilding efforts can be actively sustained in communities around the world, finding institutional expression through either local congregations or nongovernmental organizations. To these ends, this essay will assess the extant resources for peacebuilding within Mormonism, paying special attention to the tradition's rich theology, history, and culture, and then turning to organizational and institutional possibilities. In all these areas, I propose that the resources for a distinctive brand of Mormon peacebuilding are already in place and simply have to be creatively and effectively put to use, preferably by those who are steeped in the tradition and whose commitment to peace and social justice comes as a primary result of their faith.

FOUNDATIONAL THEOLOGY: THE BOOK OF MORMON

Any consideration of the possibilities for Mormon peacebuilding must take the Book of Mormon seriously. As a general rule, Latter-day Saints are highly committed to the text and its integrity; and perhaps more than any of the other Mormon scriptures, the Book of Mormon serves as a kind of standard for Church doctrine and practice and a measuring stick for individual Church members' faithfulness. In addition, the Book of Mormon has direct bearing on issues of war and peace, as a significant percentage of its pages deals with the numerous, often epic, conflicts between the Nephites and Lamanites. The very title of the book is telling in this respect, as it is named after the prophet-general Mormon, its chief editor and compiler. Indeed, considering who was involved in putting the plates together in their final form before Joseph Smith translated them, it should not surprise us that so much of the Book of Mormon is concerned—at times, almost obsessed—with war. But while substantial portions of the book can be tedious reading for those who are not particularly interested in military exploits, it serves as a fascinating source for the study of violence and must be the foundational text for any examination of Mormon peacebuilding. A systematic analysis of the themes of war and peace in the Book of Mormon deserves its own treatment; however, here I will consider just a few highlights that touch on my larger argument.

Mormon historian Ronald Walker has suggested that "Mormon scriptures somewhat clarify the LDS position" on war.[4] Where Walker sees clarity, however, I see ambiguity in how Mormon scriptures define the nature and limits of Christian pacifism and what exactly it means to seek peace and have God fight your battles (e.g., Mosiah 7:19; Morm. 8:20; D&C 24:16, 98:16, 37; Moses 7:13-17). Indeed, if one word might be used to describe the attitude of the Book of Mormon toward war, *ambivalent* would be a good place to start. As mentioned above, the record was largely compiled by military leaders, and a significant portion of it involves detailed tactical accounts of battles.

But this is no glorified bloodletting. Even in his hagiographical descriptions of the presumably righteous Nephite armies of the first century B.C., Mormon takes care to attribute much of their greatness to the fact that they were hesitant to take up arms and kill their enemies, the Lamanites. In fact, Captain Moroni, whom Mormon admired so much that he named his son after him, is specifically praised as one who "did not delight in bloodshed" (Alma 48:11, 16, 23). Later on, in his scant reportage of the utopian society that existed for two hundred years after the appearance of Jesus to the Americas, Mormon makes considerable effort to contrast the peacefulness of Zion with the conflict, prejudice, and violence of the subsequently degenerate Nephite and Lamanite civilizations.[5] And perhaps most significantly, as part of his final message to the Lamanites in particular and all future readers in general, Mormon writes, certainly with a tinge of pathos at the end of a life drenched with bloodshed and carnage, "Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and delight no more in the shedding of blood, and take them not again, save it be that God shall command you" (Morm. 7:4). Although Mormon spent the majority of his life as a warrior—he was chosen to lead the Nephite armies at age fifteen—it becomes clear upon studying the text

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4. Ronald W. Walker, "Sheaves, Bucklers, and the State: Mormon Leaders Respond to the Dilemmas of War," *Sunstone* 7, no. 4 (July/August 1982): 53; reprinted in *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past,* ed. D. Michael Quinn (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 287.

5. 4 Ne. 1:15-17, 24-34. The most graphic description of Lamanite and Nephite violence toward one another, at the low point of their respective civilizations, is Moroni 9.

that he was personally ambivalent about both the justification for war and its utility. His divided soul is reflected in the writings he left behind.

The tension within the Book of Mormon between the roots of a kind of just war theory—a set of standards determining when it is just for believers to go to war—and a legitimation of outright Christian pacifism is nowhere more starkly evident than in the book of Alma. On the one hand, it presents the example of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, a group of Lamanite converts whose adoption of the Nephites' religion also included a total rejection of their former militarism. At one point, the Lamanites, their former compatriots, become so angry with these converts that they march against them, creating a dilemma among the community of converts. They unanimously decide that they will not take up their swords, even in their own defense. Voicing the consensus of his people, their king proclaimed, "Since it has been all that we could do . . . to repent of all our sins and the many murders which we have committed . . . since God hath taken away our stains, and our swords have become bright, then let us stain our swords no more with the blood of our brethren" (Alma 24:11–12). Not only did they covenant not to take up arms against the invading army, but they buried their weapons in the earth and literally lay down in the face of the Lamanite onslaught, resulting in the massacre of 1,005 men, women, and children. The tragic story ends by demonstrating the moral power of nonviolence, as many of the attacking Lamanites were profoundly moved by the bold action of their victims, prompting over a thousand of them to throw down their arms and join the converts in rejecting violent force; as Mormon recounts, "the people of God were joined that day by more than the number who had been slain" (Alma 24:26). The prophet-general offers high praise to the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, commending them because "rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives" (Alma 24:18).

Only a few chapters after this stirring, if somewhat controversial, example of nonviolence comes the recounting of an extended series of Nephite campaigns against the aggressor Lamanites. It is in these passages that something resembling a Book of Mormon just war theory emerges.[6] Both from his general tone and his more explicit comments, it is clear that Mormon considers the war to be righteous (for the Nephites), and he repeatedly gives reasons why the Nephites were justified in their battles

6. While the Book of Mormon has multiple passages, including the ones I

with the Lamanites. The latter were unjustified because they were alleg-edly conducting war for the purposes of gaining power and dominion. (To be fair, Mormon is obviously not terribly concerned with providing an in-depth and objective treatment of the Lamanites' side of the story, and we are thus forced to rely on Nephite portrayals of Lamanite motives.) The Nephites, on the other hand, were waging a defensive campaign "to sup-port their lands, and their houses, and their wives, and their children . . . and also that they might preserve their rights and their privileges, yea, and also their liberty, that they might worship God according to their desires" (Alma 43:9). In fact, Mormon quotes an otherwise unknown revelation that "the Lord has said that: Ye shall defend your families even unto bloodshed." As part of the Nephites' just war ethic, the defense of these ideals and institutions and people—family, homes, rights and liberties, and religion—was in fact "the duty which they owed to their God." But the caveat was that the war must truly be defensive and that the followers of God must "not [be] guilty of the first offense, neither the second" (Alma 43:46–47).

In these passages, Captain Moroni, leader of the Nephite forces, is held up as a shining example, both as a warrior and a Christian. After re-citing Moroni's various attributes, including his love for God and his peo-ple and his aversion to blood for blood's sake, Mormon gives one of the more remarkable epigraphs in history: "Yea, verily, verily I say unto you, if all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men" (Alma 48:17). Thus, the archetypal Christian warrior earns his place in heaven beside the pacifist martyrs.

Clearly, Mormon's ambivalence about the bloodiness and evils of war does not necessarily extend to all those who wage it. But his willing-ness to canonize both pacifist martyrs and Christian warriors within a few pages of one another leaves us with no clear and consistent message about

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cite, that suggest when and how believers may justifiably conduct war, I hesitate to say that the book includes a "just war theory," which suggests a more systematic approach than the Book of Mormon actually takes. I tentatively use the phrase, however, for two reasons: first, its parallels to traditional Christian just war the-ory; and second, the lack of any better nomenclature.

which path is most appropriate for a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, in the face of violent conflict.

THEOLOGY MEETS HISTORY: THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS AND EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

In addition to the Book of Mormon, any investigation into LDS approaches to violence and peace must include early Church history and the Doctrine and Covenants, which is particularly fascinating because, unlike any other book of scripture in a major world religion, it has come about in a modern historical context. The various revelations can thus be readily situated within the particular circumstances that the early Latter-day Saints faced, allowing us some insights into the intersections of sacred and secular history. A discussion of early Mormon theology must therefore also relate to the accompanying historical narrative; indeed, hearkening back to the notion of a premodern sacred cosmos, one revelation asserts that any dichotomy between the spiritual and temporal—including historical events—is artificial.[7] Taken on their own terms, Mormon history and scripture are thus intertwined and must be considered together.

After the Church was officially formed in April 1830, Mormons were consistently pacifistic in relation to their many detractors and persecutors at least through 1833 and generally until October 1838.[8] Like most people, individual Mormons were not accustomed to either dispensing or receiving violence, and they saw themselves as peaceable, law-abiding American citizens. In addition to the numerous passages from the Book of Mormon and Bible about forgiveness, tolerance, and mercy, early revelations given to Joseph Smith were clear on the point that the Saints should seek to be a peaceful people, trusting in the Lord for their protec-

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7. "Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created" (D&C 29:34). My phrase "sacred cosmos" derives from discussions with Ronald K. Esplin about early Mormonism.

8. I have adapted much of this section from my "Traditions of Violence: Early Mormon and Anti-Mormon Conflict in Its American Setting," unpublished paper presented at the symposium "Joseph Smith and His Times," sponsored by the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, August 3, 2000, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

tion. One of the strongest of these pronouncements came in August 1833:

> Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace. . . .
>
> And again, this is the law that I gave unto mine ancients, that they should not go out unto battle against any nation, kindred, tongue, or people, save I, the Lord, commanded them. . . .
>
> And I, the Lord, would fight their battles, and their children's battles, and their children's children's. (D&C 98:16, 33, 37)

In fact, the early Mormons were so committed to nonviolence that, reflecting back on the Mormons' initial response to the Missouri turmoil, the disaffected John Corrill wrote in 1839: "So tenacious were they for the precepts of the gospel . . . the Mormons had not so much as lifted a finger, even in their own defence [sic]."[9] Restraint seems to have been the Church's official policy at least through mid-1838; and even toward the end of his life and despite all the violent mob actions to which he and his people had been subjected, Joseph Smith continued to call for personal pacifism:

> Wise men ought to have understanding enough to conquer men with kindness. . . . It will be greatly to the credit of the Latter-day Saints to show the love of God, by now kindly treating those who may have, in an unconscious moment, done wrong; for truly said Jesus, Pray for thine enemies.
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> Humanity towards all, reason and refinement to enforce virtue, and good for evil are so eminently designed to cure more disorders of society than an appeal to arms, or even argument untempered with friendship.[10]

Beginning with acts of mob violence perpetrated against their leaders, continuing with the 1833 expulsion from Jackson County, Missouri, and especially in the conflicts with non-Mormon Missourians culminating in the Mormon War of October 1838, the Mormons saw their pacifistic stance become increasingly untenable if they were to survive. Efforts to obtain redress from both the state and federal government proved futile, essentially leaving the Mormons to deal with their problems on their own. "Zion's Camp," the 1834 military march from Ohio to Missouri, was the first organized Mormon military effort; and although no battles were

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9. Quoted in Walker, "Sheaves, Bucklers, and the State," 268.

10. Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* edited by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 6 vols. published 1902–12, vol. 7 published 1932; 1948 printing), 6:219–20.

fought, the camp's stated intention was to "defend ourselves and posses-
sions against another outrageous attack from the mob," by force if neces-
sary.[11] By mid- to late-1838, Joseph Smith and his followers had adopted
a policy of self-defensive violence, asserting that the Mormons "would be
justified by the law of both God [and] man, in defending themselves, their
families and houses."[12] As with everything else in Mormon society,
self-defense had taken on religious dimensions.

Trying to decipher Joseph Smith's precise attitudes toward war and
peace, and what that means for Mormonism's theological and historical
heritage, is problematic. Ronald Walker has ably framed the dilemma:

> Like other Christians, Latter-day Saints mix pastoral and martial im-
> ages. . . . The example of Mormonism's founding prophet seems as ambiv-
> alent. "Renounce war and proclaim peace," Joseph Smith recorded in a
> formal revelation. . . . Yet he bore the title of Lieutenant-General, com-
> manded over 2,500 troops, took sword exercises, possessed an "ar-
> mor-bearer," exuded the expansionist spirit of "Manifest Destiny," and
> dedicated the sacred Nauvoo Temple while dressed in full military rega-
> lia.[13]

An honest reading of the sources reveals that Smith undoubtedly
preferred peaceful coexistence to conflict. However, out of necessity and
desperation, Smith and his followers sometimes resorted to violence, par-
ticularly during the Mormon War in frontier Missouri. Usually their vio-

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11. *History of the Church,* 1:490. The leaders of Zion's Camp submitted an ar-
ticle in the [Columbia] *Missouri Intelligencer* on July 12, 1834, which read in part,
"It is not our intention to commit hostilities against any man or body of men. It is
not our intention to injure any man's person or property, except in defending our-
selves. . . . We have brought our arms with us for the purpose of self defense, as it
is well known to almost every man of the State, that we have every reason to put
ourselves in an attitude of defense, considering the abuse we have suffered in Jack-
son county. We are anxious for a settlement of the difficulties existing between us,
upon honorable and constitutional principles." Quoted in Peter Crawley and
Richard L. Anderson, "The Political and Social Realities of Zion's Camp," *BYU
Studies* 14 (Summer 1974): 416-17.

12. *Times and Seasons* 1 (December 1839), 19; quoted in Walker, "Sheaves,
Bucklers, and the State," 268.

13. Walker, "Sheaves, Bucklers, and the State," 287.

lence was of a strictly self-defensive and reactive character, but occasionally it spiraled into aggression and even preemption.[14]

Thus, the early Mormon heritage, both in terms of history and scripture, leaves us with no clear guide about a consistent Mormon doctrine of war and peace. Indeed, the very same 1833 revelation that told the Latter-day Saints to "renounce war and proclaim peace" also gave them guidelines about when they would be justified in taking up arms against their aggressors (D&C 98:23-48). Rather than seeing Mormon texts as being hopelessly confused and contradictory, however, it is fairer to say that they place before us a series of profound paradoxes, leaving us with principles rather than formulas that individual believers are then left to use as they negotiate a moral, sanctified life in an immoral, fallen world.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORMON TRADITION

The early Latter-day Saints' seeming inability to make peace, either with dissenters or other settlers, says more about intergroup relations, life on the frontier, and the intolerance of their non-Mormon neighbors than it does about the personal character of Smith or the inherent nature of Mormonism. However, the Mormons' turn to violence as a viable communal strategy and ethic in 1838 marked a profound shift from pacifism, a position Mormonism has all but abandoned ever since. I will not attempt a detailed chronicling of the sweep of Mormon history, but some key developments in the past 150 years have significantly contributed to the current set of notions and practices among Latter-day Saints regarding war, peace, and peacebuilding. Although much research remains to be done, we can sketch the general contours of the evolution of what has become the general Mormon position.[15]

After a half century of fairly pronounced alienation from American society, by the 1890s the Mormon leadership had resolved that the Church could survive only if it made peace with the nation, which meant

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14. Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987).

15. The secondary literature on Mormon attitudes towards war and peace is relatively undeveloped, but another good article besides Walker, "Sheaves, Bucklers, and the State," is Grant Underwood, "Pacifism and Mormonism: A Study in Ambiguity," in *Proclaim Peace: Christian Pacifism from Unexpected Quarters,* ed. Theron F. Schlabach and Richard T. Hughes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,

giving up such trademarks of nineteenth-century Mormonism as theocratic politics, communitarian economics, and certain theologically rooted social and cultural practices (plural marriage in particular). One of the markers of this accommodation to American culture occurred when the Church eagerly participated in the Spanish–American War with only sporadic resistance among Church leaders and members concerned with the move toward militarism and increasingly friendly relations with the state.[16] Two decades later, although Church president Joseph F. Smith was initially reserved in his support for the Allied cause in World War I, he and most Church members came to see the war in millennialist terms. This position was popular among many of their contemporaries in American Christianity. In this view, the war pitted freedom, democracy, and faith in God against tyranny, despotism, and atheism; a victory by the forces of good would open the way for Christianity's spread throughout the world. While the war itself might be lamentable, they thought, it would ultimately become a means of accomplishing God's will in the world.[17]

When World War II approached, the Church's leaders were even more skeptical than Joseph F. Smith's administration had been about entering the previous war. Along with most other conservative religionists in America, Mormons felt a sense of betrayal at the unfulfilled promises of the interwar peace. In addition, the First Presidency was deeply alienated from Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. Church president Heber J. Grant thought Roosevelt sought dictatorial powers, and he privately remained suspicious of the president and his motivations throughout the war. Grant's

1997), 139-56. I have relied heavily on these two sources for the historical narrative in this section.

16. D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Church and the Spanish–American War: An End to Selective Pacifism," *Pacific Historical Review* 43 (August 1974): 342-66.

17. On the LDS Church leadership's eventual support of the war, see Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 46-49. For a fuller treatment of conservative evangelical Protestant views about World War I, see George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 141-53.

two counselors in the First Presidency, David O. McKay and especially J. Reuben Clark, were committed pacifists, and their position strongly influenced Grant. In 1942, the First Presidency issued a lengthy statement, penned by Clark but wholly endorsed by Grant, which still remains the most detailed official treatment of the LDS position toward war.

Like the Book of Mormon, the 1942 document is ultimately unclear in establishing a definitive policy on how Mormons should approach war. It roundly denounces the theory and practice of war in general terms, proclaiming that "Christ's Church should not make war, for the Lord is a Lord of peace. . . . Thus the Church is and must be against war. . . . It cannot regard war as a righteous means of settling international disputes; these should and could be settled—the nations agreeing—by peaceful negotiation and adjustment." But because members of the Church are also citizens of sovereign nations, they have the "highest civic duty" to "come to the defense of their country when a call to arms was made."[18] This argument—that Church members have a moral duty to support the nations in which they live—is rooted in a reading of the Twelfth Article of Faith: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."[19]

For at least the past hundred years, loyalty to the state has typically drowned out discussions of any fundamental moral problems that may

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18. "Message of the First Presidency," *Report of the General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1942), 94. This statement has often been repeated from the pulpit and in semi-official Church writings since first being issued. For two examples, see Boyd K. Packer, *Conference Report*, April 1968, 34–35, and Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 694. In its original formulation, this message represents the burdens of institutional leadership, as McKay and especially Clark were, in their personal opinions and individually authored addresses, much more antagonistic toward the idea of giving loyalty to the nation at the price of peace.

19. Article of Faith 12. This position towards human government is consistent with a long Christian tradition stretching back to Paul (Rom. 13:1–4). An 1835 "declaration of belief regarding governments and laws in general," later canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants, states that "governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man." As long as a government protects the basic freedoms and rights of its citizens—especially freedom of conscience—then as part of the pursuit of "public peace and tranquility," citizens have a duty to "sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside" (D&C 134:1–8).

arise as a result of such loyalty. Examples of Mormons engaging in civil disobedience are isolated and little known.[20]   Since the First Presidency's 1942 statement, LDS General Authorities have reconciled the inherent immorality of war with the Saints' civic duty to participate as combatants for their respective sovereign nations by saying that, as long as they fulfilled their duty and did not violate the agreed-upon codes of war, they would not be held accountable before God for the people they killed. However, while the Church leadership has by no means actively endorsed the practice, they have allowed for individual Church members to become conscientious objectors, although the radicalism of the anti-Vietnam protest movement soured the socially conservative Church on flagrant displays of opposition to the nation, which most Mormons believed were invariably connected with some kind of moral "looseness."[21]

THE MEANING OF "PEACE" IN CONTEMPORARY MORMONISM

By no means should any of the foregoing history be interpreted as suggesting that contemporary Mormons—either the Church leadership or general membership—are unconcerned with peace. On the contrary, peace is a common element of Mormon discourse on all levels and is seen as one of the central goals and desired ends of a Zion society. The question arises, then, what Mormons mean when they use the word "peace" and,

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20. Probably the most poignant example of Mormon civil disobedience is the story of a German teenager, Helmuth Hübener, who along with some of his friends (both Mormons and non-Mormons) published leaflets protesting Hitler's regime. When Hübener was caught by the SS and eventually executed, the Church was forced to denounce and excommunicate him or risk severe repression throughout Germany by Nazi authorities. He was reinstated (posthumously) after the war was over. *When Truth Was Treason: German Youth against Hitler; The Story of the Helmuth Hübener Group; Based on the Narrative of Karl-Heinz Schnibbe with Documents and Notes,* comp., trans., ed. by Blair R. Holmes and Alan F. Keele (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

21. Consider, for instance, this remarkable statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer in April 1968 at the height of the Vietnam War: "I have worn the uniform of my native land in the time of total conflict. I have smelled the stench of human dead and wept tears for slaughtered comrades. I have climbed amid the rubble of ravaged cities and contemplated in horror the ashes of a civilization sacrificed to Moloch; yet knowing this, with the issues as they are, were I called again to military service, I could not conscientiously object!" *Conference Report,* April 1968, 35.

perhaps even more importantly, what they imagine when they think about what peace might ultimately look like.

I would argue that when Latter-day Saints conceptualize "peace," they are, almost without exception, using one of three definitions or types. The first is *personal, inner peace*, achieved when an individual obeys God's commandments and fosters a vibrant and faithful relationship with God and the Church. The second type is *peace with others*, especially focusing on relationships with one's family, fellow Church members, and non-Mormon friends, neighbors, and other associates. Here the emphasis is on the virtues of harmony, charity (Christ-like love), and selfless service, based on the twin principles of love of God and neighbor. The third type is *eschatological peace*, referring to the future Second Coming and ensuing millennial reign of Christ when, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4). This blessed state will come about only through direct divine intervention, following a prophesied period of massive wars and conflicts leading up to Christ's coming.[22]

Of course, all three of these types of peace are important, and have parallels within secular models of peacebuilding. But what is missing among them is a presentist structural approach, or *peace as social justice*. A social justice approach first requires an astute understanding of the nature of violence. Normally we think of violence as a physical act: hitting, shooting, bombing, and so forth. While this kind of "direct violence" is indisputable, it does not encompass the full range of violence and may, in fact, represent only the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. It is essential in our analyses also to include a recognition of the structures of violence built into any given relationship, institution, or society.

"Structural violence" differs from direct violence in that the actors consciously intended the latter, while the former is built into social structures. As peace research pioneer Johan Galtung points out, structural violence can take many forms including economic exploitation, political repression, and social or cultural marginalization; examples would include

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22. The Bible is replete with images and prophecies of the last days, apocalypse, second coming, and millennium, particularly in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Distinctive Mormon sources on the topic include, to name just two, JS—Matthew and D&C 45.

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apartheid, colonialism, and certain features of global corporate capital-
ism. The common feature in structural violence is exploitation of the un-
derdog, whether intended or not.[23] Structural violence is often a by-prod-
uct of "cultural violence" in which culture becomes "a source of violence
by allowing a dehumanization of certain persons or groups." Thus, "cul-
tural violence leads to structural violence when it is incorporated into for-
mal legal and economic exchanges. While individual acts of direct vio-
lence have many causes, their occurrence is frequently predicated upon a
larger and often hidden structure that induces violence."[24] It is evident
that a structuralist approach to peacebuilding requires at least an elemen-
tary recognition of the meaning and effects of structural and cultural vio-
lence.

Even when Mormons talk about world peace, it is almost always
within the framework of the three types outlined above (inner peace,
peace with others, or eschatological peace). Rarely is there any mention,
let alone serious discussion, of structural or cultural violence. Some may
even demonstrate a rejectionist attitude toward structural peacebuilding,
equating it with liberal politics and hippie culture, and thus automatically
invalidating it. However, for most Mormons, particularly in the United
States and other developed countries, a substantive approach to social jus-
tice is simply a blind spot, lying almost entirely outside the realm of their
current mindset, dominated as it is by conservative religion and politics, a
materialist middle-class ethos, and an often-insular devotion to church
and family. Even for the large pool of Mormon returned missionaries who
have spent significant time in impoverished communities around the
world, the nature of their own upbringing and experience—including the
general mood and tenor of Church teaching—militates against a structural
analysis of social injustice, in turn precluding a structural or social justice
approach to peace and peacebuilding.

Statements by General Authorities tend to simultaneously reflect
and shape the general mood of most Church members. While these lead-

23. See Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," in *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace
and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: Sage Publications, 1996),
196-210; and Galtung, "Religions, Hard and Soft," *Cross Currents* 47 (Winter
1997-98): 437-50.

24. Marc Pilisuk and Jennifer Tennant, "The Hidden Structure of Violence,"
ReVision 20 (Fall 1997): 25-31.

ers generally communicate compassion and a desire for peace, their statements provide no framework within which to discuss structural violence in its various forms. Furthermore, they often convey a degree of skepticism about the efficacy of peacebuilding efforts before the millennial return of Christ. The mainstream view might be characterized as a "keep the commandments" approach, aptly summarized by Elder Richard P. Lindsay of the Seventy in a 1992 address to African Latter-day Saints: "The blessings of the gospel are universal, and so is the formula for peace: keep the commandments of God. War and conflict are the result of wickedness; peace is the product of righteousness."[25] Particularly conspicuous here, especially considering the context in which the address was given, is the omission of any of the arguably "real" causes of conflict in Africa—such as diamonds, oil, religious and ethnic rivalries, and the vagaries of postcolonial nation-building. However acceptable and even persuasive from the pulpit, especially in the ears of American Saints, a straightforward "keep the commandments" approach to peace simply lacks the ability to adequately confront many realities of the political economy of Africa and other war-torn parts of the world.

The administration of President Gordon B. Hinckley in many ways represents the culmination of the teaching and experience of the LDS Church in the twentieth century. Consistent with his lifetime experience in public relations, Hinckley's prophetic tenure has been marked by the Church's engagement with the outside world, swinging the pendulum as far from nineteenth-century Mormon parochialism as it has ever been. Although the Church has long been noted for its remarkable welfare program and nondenominational humanitarian efforts worldwide, the latter particularly has received special emphasis in the past two decades, tied in part to the Church's rapid expansion into the Third World. In general, the strong Mormon commitment to welfare and humanitarianism, which would seem a logical outgrowth of social justice concerns, is in fact very much rooted instead in the concepts of inner peace and peace with others, rather than in a diagnosis of structural injustice. However, while

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25. "Most-Ever LDS Gather for Meeting in Africa," *Church News*, March 7, 1992. Other notable recent examples of this approach are Dallin H. Oaks, "World Peace," *Ensign*, May 1990, 71–73, and Thomas S. Monson, "The Path to Peace," *Ensign*, May 1994, 60–62, both of them general conference addresses by members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Hinckley and his fellow Church leaders may not speak the language of structural and cultural violence, and they are understandably concerned first and foremost with the salvation of souls, it would be unfair to say that they are blind to structural and cultural inequalities that especially ravage underdeveloped nations.

This is most apparent in the recent establishment of the Perpetual Education Fund, which seeks to ameliorate, on an individualized basis, the poverty and lack of access to opportunity experienced by Latter-day Saints in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. It is also evident in Church co-operation with prominent religious peacebuilding groups, such as its recent partnership with Catholic Relief Services and other Christian organizations in Madagascar to establish nutrition centers in areas racked by poverty and famine. In total, the Church has given approximately $89 million in cash and $456 million in material assistance to worldwide humanitarian aid since the mid-1980s (coinciding with Hinckley's rise to the First Presidency). In 2002 alone, it was involved in aid projects in 108 countries.[26] These humanitarian and development projects are important components of a peacebuilding agenda, and the Church should be congratulated and supported in its current efforts. Certainly no one can accuse the Church leadership under Hinckley of hunkering down in comfortable Salt Lake City and ignoring the plight of the rest of the world.

Moving from practice to rhetoric, President Hinckley's closing address in the Sunday morning session of April general conference, 2003, typified long-standing LDS ambivalence toward war and peace. Early in the talk, Hinckley lamented the terrible abuses and waste of war. But when turning from generalities to the specifics of the U.S. war with Iraq, he echoed many of the core principles of the 1942 First Presidency statement, then expressed his personal support of the war. He concluded by admonishing members of the Church to "cultivate in our own hearts, and proclaim to the world, the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ," testifying that "even when the armaments of war ring out in deathly serenade and darkness and hatred reign in the hearts of some, there stands immovable, reassuring, comforting, and with great outreaching love the quiet

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26. Matthew Baker, "Faiths Unite in Island Mission," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 18, 2003, online edition.

figure of the Son of God, the Redeemer of the World."[27] Hinckley's ad-
dress thus demonstrates the focus of Church teaching and attitudes on
the three types of peace outlined earlier. He reminds people of the ulti-
mate importance of an active personal relationship with Jesus Christ
(personal, inner peace); he emphasizes the importance of loyalty within
the world Church community and denounces prejudice and ill-will to-
ward Muslims and all people of other faiths (peace with others); and he
prays for the ultimate culmination of history, when God—and God
alone—will bring about true world peace (eschatological peace). In sum,
Hinckley's address stands as an important marker, both in terms of re-
flecting the general Mormon attitude toward war and peace and in set-
ting the tone and shaping the direction of both current and future dis-
course within the Church.

MILLENNIALISM AND INTENTIONALITY

The primary case against my general argument—that we can develop
and promote a distinctive brand of Mormon peacebuilding that features
a structural and cultural approach—is that, especially from a faithful Mor-
mon perspective, nothing remotely compares to the critical necessity of
preaching the gospel and bringing souls to Christ, before and above any
other considerations. In addition, there is a belief that no great change
will happen, either in the world or in individuals' lives, without first
adopting the principles of the gospel. I don't want to suggest that this fa-
miliar argument is wrongheaded in any kind of fundamental way but
rather that it represents and leads to a shortcoming in the Mormon
moral imagination on both a personal and group level. The problem is
that, in its least thoughtful forms, a "keep the commandments" approach
to peace can lead to passivity (not to be confused with pacifism) and qui-
escence—a kind of unstated belief that if I obey the Word of Wisdom, go
to church, and do my home teaching, then I am no longer responsible
for, or entangled in, the sins of a fallen world and particularly in the
seemingly distant problem of violence. Besides the fact that ignoring vio-
lence and structural injustice is a luxury enjoyed only by members of the
Church in prosperous circumstances, particularly in developed nations,
in large part this neglect is rooted in a particular kind of millennialist be-
lief. Thus, it may be helpful to consider briefly the nature and implica-

27. Gordon B. Hinckley, "War and Peace," *Ensign*, May 2003, 78–81.

tions of Mormon millennialism, especially in its application to peace and peacebuilding.

Historically, there have been two basic kinds of millennialists within Christianity: premillennialists, who believed that the second coming of Christ would initiate a thousand-year (millennial) period of peace and righteousness at the end of the world; and postmillennialists, who believed that Christ would appear at the end of a thousand-year period of peace and righteousness brought about by the spread of Christianity and Christian culture throughout the world. Postmillennialism was particularly strong in antebellum American Protestantism, but premillennialism began to gain a greater popular and intellectual following by the end of the nineteenth century. The carnage of the twentieth century's wars all but extinguished the hope of most Christians that the world could be perfected through human endeavor.

Although the historical reality is substantially more complicated, the long-accepted view was that postmillennialism led to social activism and that premillennialism led to social quietism. The primary rationale behind the pessimistic retreat of premillennialists from social issues was the feeling there was nothing they could do about the world—it was going to hell one way or the other—but they could work to save as many souls as possible in the meantime.[28] Dwight Moody, the nation's foremost revivalist in the late nineteenth century, perfectly captured this view when he exclaimed, "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.'"[29]

Mormon premillennialism is, like most LDS versions of familiar Christian doctrines, distinctive. On the one hand, there is no avoiding the fact that, if one takes Mormon scripture at face value, the world as we know it will end—and end badly—before Christ's coming intervenes to save it from total destruction. Consequently, it makes perfect sense for the Church to throw itself into missionary work and forget about things like soup kitchens which, however nice in the short run, aren't going to do anybody any good at the eternal judgment bar. On the other hand, Mor-

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28. One of the best treatments of these issues, at least in the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American Protestantism, is Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 48–51 (definitions), and 80–93 (the "Great Reversal" in which premillennialists retreated from social issues).

29. Quoted in ibid., 38.

mon scripture is equally clear that Latter-day Saints have a duty not just to gather people to Zion, which is usually construed as bringing people into the Church. They also have a duty to build Zion, which implies not only adding people to the Church, but also creating an actual Christian society. In addition, Joseph Smith and virtually every other modern prophet have taught that the latter-day kingdom of God would include non-Mormons, both before Christ's personal reign on earth and during it.[30] And so there is a sense that, unlike Moody, Mormons cannot just let the rest of the world sink while they float in the true gospel lifeboat a safe distance away from the chaos. From this perspective, the Church's welfare and humanitarian work, in conjunction with its constant missionary effort, makes perfect sense.

This is precisely where Mormon peacebuilding might enter the picture and where Mormonism, in this respect, has a distinct advantage over many strains of conservative Protestant evangelicalism and fundamentalism. Peacebuilding requires, if nothing else, getting one's hands dirty. It is the complete antithesis of the retreat from culture—the holy hovering above the fray—so common among many fundamentalists of all religious traditions, not just Protestantism.[31] Peacebuilding involves a willingness to work with, and even embrace, complexity, hardly the forte of fundamentalists who see the world through the lens of cosmic dualism, where

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30. It is significant that Smith included three non-Mormons in the original Council of Fifty, a key component of his planned government of the kingdom of God. See Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seemed Like Heaven Began on Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies* 20 (Spring 1980): 257. Brigham Young taught that the beliefs of people of all faiths would be protected under the kingdom of God; see *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-86), 6:343, 12:274.

31. This pattern of "world renouncing" is one of four common "patterns of fundamentalist interaction with the world." See Gabriel A. Almond, Emmanuel Sivan, and R. Scott Appleby, "Explaining Fundamentalisms," in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, vol. 5 in *The Fundamentalism Project*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 425-29. On dynamics of the enclave, common to many fundamentalist groups, see the brilliant essay by Emmanuel Sivan, "The Enclave Culture," ibid., 11–68. For other typical characteristics of comparative fundamentalisms, see Almond, Sivan, and Appleby, "Fundamentalism: Genus and Species," ibid., 399–424. It should be noted that world-renouncing is not just an aspect of fundamentalist communities

everything is black or white, good or evil. Mormonism's rich theology of the mortal probation—Paul perhaps says it best when he says "we see through a glass, darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12)—is in many ways the ideal foundation for working in the world with a high sense of moral purpose and even divine calling. While conceding that we cannot achieve a full measure of truth, justice, and peace in this life, we cannot only strive for it but are, in fact, expected to do so as part of our discipleship, always retaining the humility that we act with a limited view. Once peacebuilders recognize that their perspective is incomplete at best, their newfound humility often leads to greater empathy and respect for others, and they become increasingly willing to consider multiple points of view. Humility and self-criticism, continually monitoring and checking and chastening one's own motives and intentions, thus become part of the foundation for effective peacebuilding—along with perseverance, compassion, and justice. The bottom line is that Mormon millennialism, in other words, can be a steppingstone rather than a stumbling block in the development of a Mormon peacebuilding tradition.

What such a development would require is a thoughtful and conscientious approach to the paradoxes inherent in the issue. As shown earlier, both the scriptures and the statements of Church leaders are primarily characterized by ambivalence on issues of war and peace. While shades of gray can be frustrating for some, a tendency toward ambivalence in gospel teaching is not only pragmatic in terms of recognizing the complexities of mortality but also constructive by way of encouraging people to live by principles rather than legalisms. However, difficulty arises when ambivalence, a natural byproduct of a theology of mortal probation, gives way to ambiguity. The pattern of seeming double-talk evident in statements from the pulpit at least since 1838 and especially since the Spanish-American War potentially begets confusion among the Church membership about what to do in the face of violent conflict. When combined with the conservative politics of most Latter-day Saints (at least in the United States), this ambiguity essentially quiets any real possibility for the establishment of a vibrant Mormon peacebuilding community. What is needed is greater intentionality—albeit not pharisaical prescriptions—from both

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but is also connected to a long history of asceticism in virtually all world religious traditions.

Church leaders and the general Church membership in their discussions of war and peace.

One hopeful illustration of what I am suggesting is the October 2002 general conference address of Elder Russell M. Nelson.[32] He began by repeating the traditional explanation that the cause of war is sin and that the prescription for peace is the gospel of Jesus Christ, in particular loving one's neighbor and living the Golden Rule. He also repeated the scriptural and prophetic theme of civic obligation and the duty to participate especially in defensive wars. But the second half of the address is particularly interesting. Nelson observes, "Because of the long history of hostility upon the earth, many feel that peace is beyond hope." This, of course, is reminiscent of the despair attendant to traditional premillennialism. But, he continues, "I disagree. Peace is possible. We can learn to love our fellow human beings throughout the world." He specifically recounts the "pivotal position" of descendants of Abraham—including not just Mormons, but all Christians, Muslims, and Jews—"to emerge as peacemakers" and to "direct their powerful potential toward peace." He wisely counsels, as any good peacebuilder would, that "resolution of present political problems will require much patience and negotiation." But recognizing that pragmatic patience need not diminish hope and determination, he concludes with a remarkably optimistic admonition:

> These prophecies of hope could materialize if leaders and citizens of nations would apply the teachings of Jesus Christ. Ours could then be an age of unparalleled peace and progress. Barbarism of the past would be buried. War with its horrors would be relegated to the realm of maudlin memory. Aims of nations would be mutually supportive. Peacemakers could lead in the art of arbitration, give relief to the needy, and bring hope to those who fear. Of such patriots, future generations would shout praises, and our Eternal God would pass judgments of glory.

Without sacrificing doctrinal purity—he uncompromisingly asserted the centrality of the teachings of Jesus Christ to any pursuit of peace—Nelson provided a vision of what religious peacebuilding could accomplish, even within a premillennialist mindset. He also acknowledged that violence includes not just armaments, but the structures of poverty and oppression as

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32. Russell M. Nelson, "'Blessed Are the Peacemakers,'" *Ensign*, November 2002, 39–41; all quotations in this paragraph come from this address.

well. Finally, he redefined patriotism, decoupling it from militarism, and opened a theological and cultural space in which Mormon peacebuilders could not only work but even thrive. It is this model of intentionality and openness, rooted in authority, that provides positive direction to would-be peacebuilders. Thus, the talk and work of peacebuilding need not come at the expense of orthodoxy; and General Authorities, with their varying perspectives and emphases, need not be pitted against one another. In the end, it does not have to be an either-or proposition: there is room in Mormonism for *both* soul-winning *and* peacebuilding.

NONOFFICIAL THEOLOGY: EUGENE ENGLAND

Part of the significance of Elder Nelson's talk is that it brings to the table the relatively neglected topic of actively working for structural peace and does so with the ecclesiastical and cultural authority of an apostle. Because of Mormonism's epistemology of revelation—that is, the belief that all truth comes from God and is revealed through the Holy Spirit, sacred scriptures, or God's chosen prophets and apostles—many manifest skepticism toward purely intellectual pursuits, no matter how solidly based on scriptural texts. While it would be unsympathetic, unfair, and untrue to say that Mormon culture is intellectually stifling, the importance of obedience to sacred authority (whether in the form of inspiration, scripture, or Church leadership) and the desire for unity among the Saints precludes contentious internal debate on many divisive issues, including war. So one of the consequences—intended or not—of Elder Nelson's address may be to open up a faithful discussion of peace and peacebuilding. And while this discussion may just now be reaching into Mormon public discourse, it has been present in the writings of a handful of Mormon intellectuals who, for various reasons, have remained off the radar screen of most mainstream Mormons.

One of the few "mavericks" who wrote critically about sensitive issues but remained personally faithful to the Church was Eugene England, a professor of literature at Brigham Young University for most of his career. Some of his most poignant critiques relate to peace and nonviolence, much of which is represented in his collection of essays, *Making Peace,* one of the only significant explorations of these issues in contemporary Mormon literature. Although England died in August 2001, his writings provide an important jumping-off point for those interested in considering the possibilities and capacity for peacebuilding from and within Mormonism. His general position

was that the gospel of Jesus Christ, as revealed anciently and restored through modern prophets, calls us to be actively engaged in being peacemakers: in our homes, our schools, our churches, our communities, our nations. While he did not espouse absolute pacifism in all instances, one of his core beliefs was that God calls us to rise above a culture of violence and embrace a higher standard of nonviolence, a position that may seem natural and simple enough, at least until its full implications are considered.

While there is not space here to do justice to the richness and variety of England's writings, I will briefly highlight some of the more poignant passages from *Making Peace* on three topics: scriptural violence, Christian nonviolence, and diversity and multiculturalism. These insights may well lay the foundation for a distinctly Mormon brand of nonviolence and peacebuilding. First, in examining violence in the scriptures, England argues that instances apparently suggesting God's endorsement of violence (for example, God's order to utterly destroy the Amalekites or the Holy Ghost's instruction for Nephi to kill Laban) are exceptional cases at the very least and may in fact be "examples of humans engaging in wish-fulfillment, *imagining* that God condones their 'just' vengeance." Some passages may simply "show God doing the best he can with rather intractable people." The Old Testament in particular thus largely becomes a record of a people who have an imperfect understanding of the nature of God and his relationship to humanity, a misunderstanding that can even be expressed sometimes by their prophets: "Though they have claimed or received some kind of revelation, and have understood it violently, God is trying to lead them beyond that."[33] Here England follows closely on the heels of the more explicitly Christian writings of Rene Girard and his interpreters, one of whom argues that the profundity of the Bible is that "it is a text in transition, one that clearly is moving *away* from myth—the story that flatters the victimizers and sanctions their violence—and toward 'gospel'—the story that exposes the violence, strips it of its religious justifications, and reveals to the world a God of powerless love."[34]

In addition to a powerful critique of violence, England highlights one of the central messages of the gospel of Jesus Christ: the dictum to

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33. Eugene England, *Making Peace: Personal Essays* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 160, 232.

34. Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads* (New York:

love one's neighbor. Of course, this concept is anything but neglected in Mormon congregational and personal life, but its implications on a broad social and political level, especially when it comes to the questions of war and peace, are infrequently considered. For instance, on the issue of nuclear armaments, a moral quandary that Protestant and especially Catholic just war theologians have extensively considered,[35] England suggests that Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, as well as at other points, "imply that planning and organizing to kill millions with nuclear missiles may be the same as actually *doing* it. It may be the ultimate dehumanization, targeting for destruction whole cities of people whom we will never face, and our silence on this issue may well qualify as 'thought sin.'"[36]

But what is one to do in an international system in which loving one's neighbor takes a back seat to *realpolitik* (that is, if it's even in the same car)? Or in communities where a certain percentage of people are, frankly, just plain thugs? England writes that while a Mormon "theology of life" may not "dictate an absolutely non-violent national policy or even a personal one," it does "dictate an absolute ethic which stands in judgment over all compromises we make with it." Thus, while violence may in fact be used as a last resort in certain extreme circumstances—he cites the possibility of a direct violent attack on his wife or children—a Mormon ethic of nonviolence

> would call me to do everything possible, long before the attack, to avert the threat of attack (including building a less violent and sexist society where attacks on my wife and children would be less likely), to use an absolute

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Crossroad, 1995), 44. Girard's most relevant work for England's purposes is *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Meteer (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987). Also see *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); and *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, trans. James G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001).

35. Just two examples of a large literature are William V. O'Brien and John Langan, eds., *The Nuclear Dilemma and the Just War Tradition* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1986); and Marcia Sichol, *The Making of Nuclear Peace: The Task of Today's Just War Theorists* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990).

36. England, *Making Peace*, 171.

minimum of violence, and to follow up with doing good to the victimizer as well as the intended victim. . . . The highest ethic would also serve as a constant reminder that I must try constantly not to dehumanize my enemy, to draw back as soon as possible, and to mourn rather than rejoice at my necessity.[37]

Here England fits into a small but significant number of Christian theologians such as Mennonite John Howard Yoder and Catholic Thomas Merton. Largely inspired by the life, work, and teachings of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., these theologians have in recent decades begun to take the "hard sayings" of Jesus seriously, transforming Christ's teachings from what many felt was too often interpreted as an overly individualistic and, in some ways, complacent moralistic system into a radical social and political ethic.[38]

An essential aspect of both Christian nonviolence, based as it is on the injunction to love one's neighbor, and peacebuilding, built largely on the recognition of universal human rights, is a genuine tolerance of and respect for diversity. This concept is important both in local communities, particularly where there are significant racial, ethnic, or religious divisions, and also in the global community, where interdependence is increasingly becoming a fact of life. Recognizing that Mormonism, as a theology and a cultural system, contains within it a strong strand of exclusivism, England seeks to highlight what the gospel command to

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37. Ibid., 172–73.

38. For a sampling of this literature, see Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1966); Merton, *Faith and Violence: Christian Teaching and Christian Practice* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968); and John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972). Also see Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992). For an important counterpoint to the new Christian pacifism (that actually preceded it), see the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr, especially *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1932); and *Christianity and Power Politics* (Harnden, CT: Archon Books, 1940/1969); also see Paul Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience: How Shall Modern War Be Conducted Justly?* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1961). Two helpful one-volume treatments of the multiplicity of Christian views towards war are Robert G. Clouse, ed., *War: Four Christian Views* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981); and Lisa Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994).

show charity and goodwill toward all—regardless of "irrelevant matters" such as "race, gender, creed, intelligence, politics, wealth, sexual orientation"—really means.[39] He asserts that Mormonism has at its core a profound respect for diversity but that cultural constraints have limited the Church (and most individual Mormons) from fully living up to this ethic.

> God revealed to Joseph Smith a remarkable theology of diversity, which seems to have been followed by a sometimes swift, sometimes gradual, decline from that theology in popular Mormon thought and custom. . . . The Restoration was a stunning rejection of the racism, sexism, and general fear of diversity that had plagued even the great world religions for thousands of years. God revealed to Joseph that most explicit, foundational claim in the Book of Mormon, that "all are alike unto God"; then, through continuing revelation and Joseph's own developing character and insights, came many remarkable specific advances directly contrary to the views and customs of early nineteenth century America.[40]

Among these remarkable revealed aspects of the Restoration were a rejection of economic exploitation and radical disparities in the distribution of wealth (the law of consecration); a rejection of status based on title, land, or birth (a universal male priesthood); a rejection of gender inequality (Mother in Heaven); and even a rejection of absolute religious exclusivity (the Light of Christ available to all people).[41] Of course, reality often diverges sharply from ideals, while the precise meaning and application of these abstract principles can be debated. But what is most important is that these aspects of diversity and respect for others are key, not only to Christian discipleship, but also to effective peacebuilding; England properly and insightfully points to the possibilities of enhancing both.

England is still perceived in many circles, even posthumously, as a radical and a kind of troublemaker. Indeed, some of his readings and interpretations of scripture fall outside the bounds of mainstream Mormonism, and consciously so. Reconciling England's insights with LDS orthodoxy will be one of the tasks of future Mormon peacebuilders, and his writings should thus be seen as a platform for departure rather than the definitive word on the subject. However, most of his observations are rooted deeply enough in Mormon scripture and tradition that they still

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39. England, *Making Peace*, 178.
40. Ibid., 185–86.
41. Ibid., 190, 200.

succeed at being faithful while leveling poignant critiques at an unthinking acceptance of a culture of violence; indeed, many of his passages might be widely heralded if his name was removed and they were read from the pulpit by a Church leader, especially a General Authority. While this scenario is not likely in the foreseeable future, it would become more probable with the development of a livelier sense of Mormon peace education that exposes young Latter-day Saints, the future leaders of the Church, to such ideas.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

A consideration of the possibilities for Mormon peacebuilding should include not only the theological, historical, and cultural dimensions, but also the organizational and institutional resources that would provide both opportunities and challenges. First is the Church's worldwide membership and presence. Membership is now over 11 million, with members in virtually every non-Muslim or non-Communist country, and statistical studies predict that there could be as many as 250 million Latter-day Saints worldwide by 2050, making it truly the next major world religion.[42] As more members of the Church are present in communities throughout the world, they will naturally play an increased role in those communities. In the world of politics size does matter. Not only will tens (or hundreds) of millions of people be hard to ignore, but Mormons' presence around the globe will create networks within which potential peacebuilders might work, having ready contacts available wherever conflicts arise.

Another resource is the Church's massive missionary effort. While peacebuilding and active proselytizing are usually not mentioned in the same breath (except as antagonists), full-time missionaries are encouraged to participate in approximately four hours of community service per week. This is no small contribution, especially when multiplied by the approximately sixty thousand missionaries around the world—not to men-

42. See Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," *Review of Religious Research* 26 (1984): 18–27; reprinted with a new postscript in James T. Duke, ed., *Latter-day Saint Social Life: Social Research on the LDS Church and Its Members* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1998), 9–27; also see Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

tion a significant number of older couples on full-time humanitarian missions. Already much good is accomplished through this means. Although community service often becomes a low priority for many young missionaries, particularly those who are more interested in padding their proselyting statistics, it is one example of an already existing program that could easily be given more emphasis and direction, thus becoming a powerful tool for Mormon peacebuilding work around the globe.

In addition to those currently serving missions, the missionary program of the Church produces, among other results, a substantial number of men and women who have spent up to two years fully immersed in a foreign culture, living, eating, and working with local people and learning their language, traditions, and customs. Ideally, these missionaries also develop a genuine love for the people among whom they serve. These returned missionaries represent an incredible untapped resource for peacebuilding. Already government agencies, especially the FBI and CIA, have seen their potential and actively recruit at Brigham Young University, partly because its student body has so many individuals with significant fluency in foreign languages and cultures. A major obstacle to grassroots peacebuilding efforts in general is finding people (usually Westerners) with education, training, and funds who can go into a community with a ready understanding of both the language and the culture. Such characteristics greatly enhance the ability to work both compassionately and effectively with local people. The pool of returned missionaries, with their experience and acquired sympathy for people in the places they served, would give Mormon peacebuilding a tremendous jump start.

One more institutional resource that is unavoidable is the very structure of the Church itself. Of course, the LDS Church is extremely hierarchical, and members of the Church are, for the most part, dedicated to that hierarchy; remarkably, but with generally good reasons, there is little fear of abuse of power among the general membership. This inherent belief in hierarchy is not just a matter of trained obedience but also results from having a lay clergy, where all worthy men are ordained to priesthood office and both men and women, where worthy and willing, participate in various teaching and leadership capacities in their local wards and stakes. With no distinction between clergy and laity, Mormons manifest more willingness to trust that those in leadership positions are acting in good faith, if not always with a consistently high degree of competence (one of the side effects of a lay clergy). This faith in leadership extends especially

to the highest levels. Members exhibit an extraordinary amount of love and trust toward their leaders, particularly the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve Apostles. In fact, most Mormons are skeptical of any kind of program that does not originate at the top. Although members of the Church are expected to show initiative and creativity, born of prayerful inspiration, in their callings, they look to Salt Lake City to make sure they are in line with basic Church programs and teachings. They believe that God is a God of order who reveals his will through designated channels.

As a result, the Church's verticality could potentially be either a boon or a bane to Mormon peacebuilders. If they were to gain the trust of the leadership, especially at the general Church level, and if the platform of peacebuilding could be promoted through the Church's semi-annual general conferences and/or official Church publications and curricula, then virtually the entire membership of the Church could become involved with relative ease. If, however, Mormon peacebuilders were seen as radicals or troublemakers, they would be tolerated personally but their message and program would be marginalized, either through nonsupport or through subtle warnings from the pulpit.

CONCLUSIONS

Speaking in 1914 when World War I had broken out in Europe, Joseph F. Smith taught: "Peace comes only by preparing for peace."[43] The ultimate question is: What might Mormon peacebuilding actually look like? To begin with, it must be acknowledged that Mormonism is not a peace tradition and that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not and will not become a peace Church.[44] Although the early Latter-day Saints were unwavering pacifists, it was more a marker of their small size and marginalization than a theological imperative. As has

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43. Joseph F. Smith, "The Great War," in *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1919-39), 421.

44. By "peace tradition" and "peace church," I mean those denominations who historically have held pacifistic positions as a central component of their theology and identity; examples include the Mennonites, Quakers, and Church of the Brethren. Interestingly, the Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) has adopted peace as its primary mission and message. Comparisons between it and the majority LDS Church and their respective trajectories would be interesting as well as instructive.

been demonstrated, Mormon theology and history are ultimately ambivalent rather than providing an absolute stance on war and peace. Historians have recognized this ambivalence. Grant Underwood observed: "A major theme in the history of LDS attitudes toward peace is that the outer limits of pacifist expression have usually been drawn at the point where pacifism clashes with legal and civic duty."[45]   Furthermore, Ronald Walker refers to a general tone of "'qualified' pacifism . . . tentative and conditional, more often vocal than substantial."[46]

Historically this has meant the leaders and general membership of the Church were typically engaged in peacetime support of conciliation, arms limitation, disarmament, and a general normative commitment to peace. A fairly recent example is the Church's strong stand in the 1970s against basing MX missiles in Utah. However, as has been the case for most American Christians, Mormon peacetime pacifism usually dissipated in the expediency of wartime conditions. At least since the Spanish–American War, many Mormons have enthusiastically participated in the armed forces in whatever country they lived; and conscientious objection has been either discouraged or only barely tolerated. In addition to the historical experience of the Church, Mormon scriptures allow for a wide range of options, from extreme pacifism (as in the case of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies) to something like a principled just war ethic (as in the case of Captain Moroni). With the vast majority of Mormons falling into the latter camp and feeling generally dismissive of the former's potential to work in the "real world," a major role that Mormon peacebuilders can play is to educate their own communities that an ethic of nonviolence is not only potentially compatible with scriptural teaching but may in fact be the default setting, with any principled move to violence being reluctant at best and certainly not as something in which to glory.

Latter-day Saints are already well known for their welfare and humanitarian work, and they pride themselves not only on taking care of their own but also on providing money and emergency supplies for disaster relief throughout the world. In fact, a significant portion of the time and effort of the Church as a whole and of individual Church members is in what the NGO world would call "community building."

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45. Underwood, "Pacifism and Mormonism," 139.
46. Walker, "Sheaves, Bucklers, and the State," 288.

Such efforts go a long way toward mitigating, though perhaps unconsciously, the effects of structural violence. Grassroots peacebuilding work seems to be a natural outgrowth of this humanitarian work; and with proper training, as well as encouragement from Church headquarters, each congregation could become a major force for constructive change in its community. Mormons are generally wary of trading doctrinal purity for humanitarianism—a slope they generally see many liberal and mainstream (social gospel) Protestants having already slid down—but most of the elements of sustainable development are already present in Mormon thought and practice. With the introduction of a suitable framework, peacebuilding would not have to represent any compromise on the Church's primary mission, which is (and will continue to be) to bring people to Christ.

In addition to using the existing resources of local congregations, individual Mormons might create NGOs committed to peacebuilding efforts. These organizations could be modeled on existing religious peacebuilding groups (prominent examples include Catholic Relief Services and Sant'Egidio), but determining the distinctive contributions of a Mormon approach would require careful thought; in other words, why not just join one of these other groups, or even the Peace Corps? Returned missionaries who were so inclined would surely be a key component, as they could go back to the areas in which they previously lived and served and thus build on the relationships and experiences they already have. One of the great advantages that Mormon peacebuilding efforts would have is that the primary networks (of local congregations, returned missionaries, etc.) are already in place, and they simply need to be effectively put to use.

Having said all that, however, potential Mormon peace-builders—and the peace community in general—should remain circumspect. Even if one finds within Mormonism the rationale, and even moral obligation, to engage in a life of peacebuilding, it must be remembered that Mormon theology, history, and culture are ultimately ambivalent about how a believer should respond in the face of violent aggression. What I am arguing for is the creation of a space within Mormonism in which peacebuilders could work without being marginalized. I am not arguing that all Mormons will, or even should, be persuaded by the logic of Christian pacifism or that the Church should transform itself into a peace church. Although hopefully most Church members can re-

spect the choice of those who do follow the path of nonviolence, they will most likely continue to follow a kind of Captain Moroni model of justifiable, self-defensive violence. If a small but substantial community of Mormon peacebuilders were to emerge, they could do much to faithfully remind the just war majority of the dilemmas inherent in such a position. On the other hand, the just war majority can provide an invaluable service in pragmatically reminding peacebuilders that the liberal pie-in-the-sky peace agenda is in many regards practically and even ethically untenable, no matter how morally sound, in a modern political economy. In general, the lack of a vibrant peacebuilding community impoverishes Mormonism, but its creation will be a positive development only if it helps Mormons take both sides of the debate seriously and sift through the paradox of the mortal probation rather than simply providing two separate camps dedicated to argumentation and name-calling.

At the end of the day, Mormons are believers—millennialist believers at that—and with that identity comes more urgency to save souls rather than to save the world. But a message frequently heard in sermons and Sunday School classes is Jesus' injunction for his followers to be "in" but not "of" the world (see John 17:14-16). Mormonism demands that its followers be committed to both the spiritual and temporal well-being of their neighbors. Brigham Young taught: "Before you preach to a starving man to arise and be baptized, first carry him some bread."[47] Therefore, Mormons have both normative and utilitarian motivations for building peace in their communities—as followers of Christ they are commanded to be "peacemakers" (Matt. 5:9; 3 Ne. 12:9), and their commission to preach the gospel to all the world cannot be fulfilled unless communities are stable and people's basic needs are fulfilled, thus allowing them to ponder on more eternal concerns. As one who uses Mormonism as the principal lens through which I interpret the world, I consider nonviolence and peacebuilding to be imperatives primarily because I believe that our purpose in life is to become as godly as possible ourselves and to help others do the same, and I firmly believe that God is, above all else, a God of peace and love. If we are to create a substantial peacebuilding community within Mor-

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47. Brigham Young, "Forming a State Constitution—Raising Agricultural Products—True Riches," in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:34.

monism, committed to an ethic of love and nonviolence, the most im-
portant place to begin, as Church leaders have reminded us since the
beginning of the Restoration, is by following the Prince of Peace.