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## Book of Mormon and Peace

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**Abstract:** From the Nephites, this article states, we learn the importance of self-defense to protect one's homeland, freedom, and religion, but also the necessity of finding lasting peace. McGavin contrasts two individuals—Moroni and Zerahemnah.

## Book Of Mormon And Peace

By E. CECIL MCGAVIN

**W**E often hear this question today, "Does God approve of war? If not, why does he permit it?" In 1833 the Lord revealed His will on this subject to Joseph Smith, which was thus recorded:

"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. . . .

"Behold, this is the law I gave unto my servant Nephi, and thy fathers, Joseph, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham and all mine ancient prophets and apostles.

"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 if any nation, tongue, or people should proclaim war against them, they should first lift a standard of peace unto that people, nation, or tongue;

"And if that people did not accept the offering of peace, neither the second nor the third time, they should bring these testimonies before the Lord:

"Then I, the Lord, would give unto them a commandment, and justify them in going out to battle against that nation, tongue or people.

"And I, the Lord, would fight their battles, and their children's battles, and their children's children's battles, until they had avenged themselves on all their enemies, to the third and fourth generation."—Doctrine and Covenants 98: 16, 32-37.

Since the dawn of history the prophets have been inspired to denounce wars of aggression. Hands stained with blood were never acceptable in the sight of God except when that blood was shed in defence of one's land, religion and family. King David was not permitted to build the temple because he was a man of war. He lived at a time when godless warriors were trying to overthrow the kingdom of Israel and expel the Israelites from the land the Lord had promised to them.

The scriptures recommend the peace conference and arbitration as a means of settling disputes. "Turn the other cheek" policy is insisted upon as a means of first resort, yet when all these peaceful efforts fail the Lord does not declare that the sword should not be lifted in defence of one's homeland, family and freedom.

From the Nephites we learn a lesson in self defence and the insistence upon a lasting peace. About seventy-five years before the birth of Christ a savage horde of Lamanites invaded the peaceful valleys of the Nephites and sought to subjugate their inhabitants.

A glory-seeking dictator named Zerahemnah had exalted himself to a position of leadership among the Lamanite warriors. The account of this struggle reads much like the history we have read in recent years. Zerahemnah's "designs were to stir up the Lamanites to anger against the Nephites: this he did that he might usurp great power over them, and also that he might gain power over the Nephites by bringing them into bondage."

The Nephites were a peace-loving people comparable to the

nations in Central Europe, who were quickly conquered at the dawn of the present war. We read of them:

... now the desire of the Nephites was to support their lands, and their houses, and their wives, and their children, that they might preserve them from the hands of their enemies; 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.

"For they knew that if they should fall into the hands of the Lamanites, that whosoever should worship God is spirit and in truth, the true and the living God, the Lamanites would destroy."—Alma 43: 9-10.

A young man named Moroni was made General of the Nephites. At the age of twenty-five he began to prepare his people for defence. He knew the futility of begging for peace with the foe. He realized that if any peace conference would ever be held it would not assemble until the power of the enemy had been destroyed. "All out for defence" became the motto of the Nephites as they prepared "to defend their lands and their country, their rights and their liberties."

Like modern aggressors it was the intention of the Lamanites "to destroy their brethren or to subject them and bring them into bondage that they might establish a kingdom unto themselves, over the land."

After full preparations were made to repel the invasion of dark-skinned warriors, the Nephites at once achieved remarkable success in the first engagements. The historians attributed the success to these reasons:

"The Nephites were inspired by a better cause, for they were not fighting for a monarchy nor power but they were fighting for their homes and their liberties, their wives and their children, and their all, yea, for their rites of worship and their church.

"And they were doing that which they felt was the duty which they owed to their God; for the Lord had said unto them, and also unto their fathers, that: Inasmuch as ye are not guilty of the first offence, neither the second, ye shall not suffer yourselves to be slain by the hands of your enemies.

"And again, the Lord has said that: Ye shall defend your families even unto bloodshed. Therefore for this cause were the Nephites contending with the Lamanites, to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion."—Alma 43: 45-47.

In the present world conflict it is a far greater incentive to be inspired by the desire to protect one's homeland, freedom and religion than to be intoxicated by the lust for power and dominion. It was this spirit of self defence which the ancient Joshua had said would enable "one man among you to chase a thousand; for the Lord your God, He it is that fighteth for you." At a time when the outnumbered Nephites showed signs of discouragement and were being driven back toward their homeland, Moroni "sent forth and inspired their hearts with these thoughts—yea, the thoughts of their lands, their liberty, yea, their freedom from bondage."

Inspired by these thoughts they achieved a miraculous victory, which is thus described:

"And it came to pass that they turned upon the Lamanites, and they cried with one voice unto the Lord their God, for their liberty and their freedom from bondage.

"And they began to stand against the Lamanites with power; and in that selfsame hour that they cried unto the Lord for their freedom, the Lamanites began to flee before them; and they fled even to the waters of Sidon."—Alma 43: 49-50.

between Missionaries and many other vital problems were very adequately and beneficially taken care of.

Several Missionaries were called out to demonstrate the method of tracting. Full Time Missionaries should cultivate the art of conversation and making friends. It was stressed that 75 per cent of Missionary time should be spent in tracting and preaching the Gospel, and 25 per cent on other Missionary work. "The whole need no physician." The time of the Missionaries should be spent in visiting inactive members in the evenings. At least, four hours a day must be spent tracting, as is being done today by our fellow Missionaries in the States. 10.0 to 1.0 o'clock around the Branches; 2.0 to 5.0 p.m. in the rural districts. The slogan of President Iverson was recommended to our Missionaries.

**"I'll do my best, there may not be another to take my place."**

The session closed at 1.0 p.m. by singing "Ye Elders of Israel." Benediction by Sister Doris M. Allison.

25 Full Time Missionaries were in attendance; 6 prospective, 15 returned, and 13 visitors. Total 59.

After this session a buffet was arranged by Brother and Sister Thomas for those present. A long table was spread in the forecourt of the Chapel and in the beautiful sunshine the food was enjoyed immensely.

The sixth and the final session of the Conference convened at 2.45 p.m., conducted by Elder James R. Cunningham. After the opening exercises and the scriptural reading from Ezekiel 3: 17, 19, and a duet, "Old Rugged Cross," by Sisters Myrtle and Lillian Foster, President Anastasiou continued his instructional discussion with the Missionaries. Education through study; leadership in Theology; power of speech; dress for male and female Missionaries; true companionship and conduct; tracts, literature and "Star" distribution; reports; and finally the plan for training Missionaries at the Headquarters were dealt with. The Conference closed with singing "God be with you." Benediction was pronounced by Mission President A. K. Anastasiou. In attendance 49.

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peace table at the end of the conflict with determined ambitions, such as Moroni's, that the enemy must not be permitted to renew the attack after a few years of preparations for war. The spirit of Moroni must be at the battlefield on all the war fronts, but at the end of the struggle that same spirit must dictate the terms of peace. Only in that way can this war put an end to war.

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## Missionary Movements

RELEASE.

Sister Olga Sophie Emery was honourably released on the 1st November, 1942, after having completed an eleven months' Mission. The last three months were spent in the Manchester District.