

**Alma 61:3**

1 Let us not presume that because the way is at times difficult and challenging, our Heavenly Father is not mindful of us. He is . . . sensitizing us for our great responsibilities ahead.”

James E. Faust, Ensign, February 1998, 7

**Alma 61:9, 19**

2 *Supporting our leader*

When faced with an angry accusation, Pahoran teaches us by example that a wise and great man tries to learn from the accusation, greets it calmly and thoughtfully, and acts according to righteous spiritual impulses.

Elder John K. Carmack, “Pahoran, Wartime Statesman, Defender of Freedom,” *Heroes of the Book of Mormon*.

3 We must always realize that in a perfect church filled with imperfect people, there are bound to be some miscommunications at times. A noteworthy example occurred in ancient American Israel. Moroni wrote two times to Pahoran complaining of neglect because much-needed reinforcements did not arrive. Moroni used harsh language, accusing the governor of the land, Pahoran, of sitting on his throne in a state of “thoughtless stupor.” (Alma 60:7.) Pahoran soon made a very patriotic reply, explaining why he could not do what Moroni wanted. Though censured, Pahoran was not angry; he even praised Moroni for “the greatness of your heart.” (Alma 61:9).

Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, p. 119

4 Parley P. Pratt recalled an episode when President Brigham Young chastened him and others for their management of the westward migration. In this instance also, there were two letters of a scolding nature, even alleging insubordination. Of this Elder Pratt wrote, “I could not realize this at the time, and protested that in my own heart, so far as I was concerned, I had no such motive; that I had been actuated by the purest motives. . . .” Later it became clear to Elder Pratt that some of those scolded had motives that were not as pure as his. He commented further, “. . . yet I thank God for this timely chastisement; I profited by it, and it caused me to be more watchful and careful ever after” (Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, pp. 341-42).

It is worth remembering that Elder Pratt protested in his heart, not publicly. He took it. Perhaps President Young, like Moroni, might have taken note of how Elder Pratt was even sick at the time—but, like Moroni, President Young did not know of the full conditions.

The stuff out of which offense is made is all around us, if we wish to seize upon it. What we learn, however, from men like Pahoran and Elder Pratt should give us pause, especially when we may be inclined to take umbrage instead of following the Brethren.

Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, pp. 119-20

5 The men under you will never be loyal to you if they see that you are disloyal to those who preside in authority over you.

Harold B. Lee, *BYU Speeches to CES*, 8 July 1966.

6 It is better to carry out a plan that is not so wise, if you are united on it. Speaking generally, a plan or a policy that may be inferior in some respects is more effective if men are united upon it than a better plan would be upon which they were divided.... When they carry that counsel out unitedly and in the same spirit, they will be blessed, and the Church will be blessed, and, as I have said, God will supplement our weakness by His strength and our want of knowledge by His infinite knowledge and His great power.

George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truths*, ed. by Jerrald L. Newquist [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974], 163-164.

7 God will not ennoble a person, man or woman, who refuses to uphold by faith, prayer, and works those whom God has called and ordained to preside over them.

James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1998 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998], 97.

8 I have worked with seven Presidents of this Church. I have recognized that all have been human. But I have never been concerned over this. They may have had some weaknesses. But this has never troubled me. I know that the God of heaven has used mortal men throughout history to accomplish His divine purposes. They were the very best available to Him, and they were wonderful.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1992 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992], 53.

9 What is meant by sustaining a person?... For instance, if a man be a teacher, and I vote that I will sustain him in his position.... I will do everything I can to sustain him.... I would not say anything derogatory to his character.... And then if anybody in my presence were to whisper something about him disparaging to his reputation, I would say, Look here! Are you a Saint? Yes. Did you not hold up your hand to sustain him? Yes. Then why do you not do it?... If any man make an attack upon his reputation—for all men's reputations are of importance to them—I would defend him in some such way. When we vote for men in the solemn way in which we do, shall we abide by our covenants? or shall we violate them? If we violate them we become covenant-breakers.

John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1881], 21:207-208.

10 Our critics at home and abroad are watching us. In an effort to find fault, they listen to every word we say, hoping to entrap us. We may stumble now and again. But the work will not be materially hindered. We will stand up where we fell and go forward. We have nothing to fear and everything to gain. God is at the helm. We [the leaders] will seek His direction. We will listen to the still, small voice of revelation. And we will go forward as He directs. His Church will not be misled. Never fear that. If there were any disposition on the part of its leaders to do so, he could remove them.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1997 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997], 83.

11 In my lifetime, there have been very few occasions when I questioned the wisdom and inspiration given by key priesthood leaders. I have always tried to follow their counsel, whether I agreed with it or not. I have come to know that most of the time they were in tune with the Spirit and I was not. The safe course is to sustain our priesthood leaders and let God judge their actions. In the early days of the Church, many fell away because they would not sustain Joseph Smith as the Lord's anointed. In fact, the Prophet Joseph said of some of the leaders in Kirkland that 'there have been but two but what have lifted their heel against me--namely Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball' (*History of the Church*, 5:412). Because of their faithful loyalty, the Lord called Brigham Young to lead the Church west, and when the First Presidency was reorganized, Heber C. Kimball was called as First Counselor to Brigham Young. I do not speak of blind obedience, but rather the obedience of faith, which supports and sustains decisions with confidence that they are inspired. I advocate being more in tune with the Spirit so we may feel a confirming witness of the truthfulness of the direction we receive from our priesthood leaders. There is great safety and peace in supporting our priesthood leaders in their decisions.

James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1997 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997], 42-43.

12 People are not necessarily called to positions of responsibility because they are the most qualified, the most talented, or the best informed. Our challenge is to sustain, that is, give our full loyalty and support, to people who are often less than perfect, even people that we might feel to be less capable than ourselves.

Robert L. Millet, CES Symposium, BYU, Aug. 1993.

13 Rejection of or murmuring against the counsel of the Lord's servants amounts to actions against the Lord himself. How could it be otherwise? The Lord acts through his servants.... His servants are not perfect... But if we murmur against the Lord's servants, we are working against the Lord and his cause and will soon find ourselves without the companionship of his Spirit. So what do we do when we feel that our Relief Society president or our bishop or another authority is transgressing or pursuing a policy of which we disapprove?... The question is not whether we have such differences, but how we manage them.... We should conduct ourselves in such a way that our thoughts and actions do not cause us to lose the companionship of the Spirit of the Lord. The first principle in the gospel procedure for managing differences is to keep our personal differences private.... We know that such differences are discussed, but not in public.... All of this is done quietly and loyally.... Why aren't these differences discussed in public? Public debate—the means of resolving differences in a democratic government—is not appropriate in our Church government. We are all subject to the authority of the called and sustained servants of the Lord. They and we are all governed by the direction of the Spirit of the Lord, and the Spirit only functions in an atmosphere of unity. That is why personal differences about Church doctrine or procedure need to be worked out privately. There is nothing inappropriate about private communications concerning such differences, provided they are carried on in a spirit of love.

Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, Feb. 1987 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987], 71.

14 We have a stewardship for a season, then move on to other things and sustain someone else in his or her stewardship, with perhaps a different style for another season. It seems that is as it should be. In all of this shifting we should be loyal to one another and to ourselves. If we do not understand, or if we disagree with those who currently administer a program, let us do as the Lord directs and go to them privately and discuss the matter. To do otherwise seems out of harmony with gospel teachings, does not resolve the issues at hand, and does not bring peace. What I am asking for is that we help one another move individually and collectively to a higher level than we are now—that we strive for more meekness.

Larry E. Dahl, address given to BYU Religious Educators, 27 Aug. 1992.

15 A few do's and don'ts may be helpful: **Do** learn to take counsel. Seek direction from file leaders and receive it willingly. **Don't** speak ill of Church leaders. **Don't** covet a calling or position. **Don't** second-guess who should or should not have been called. **Don't** refuse any opportunity to serve. **Don't** resign from a call. **Do** inform leaders of changing circumstances in your life, knowing that leaders will weigh all factors when prayerfully considering the proper timing of your release.

Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, <ay 1993 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993], 39.

16 One who rationalizes that he or she has a testimony of Jesus Christ but cannot accept direction and counsel from the leadership of His church is in a fundamentally unsound position and is in jeopardy of losing exaltation.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, May 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 64.

17 I remember years ago when I was a Bishop I had President [Heber J.] Grant talk to our ward. After the meeting I drove him home... Standing by me, he put his arm over my shoulder and said: "My boy, you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it." Then with a twinkle in his eye, he said, "But you don't need to worry. The Lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray."

Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Oct. 1960 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960], 78

18 While in Kirtland, John Taylor encountered much criticism of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Frequently outspoken apostates held meetings in which they would criticize the Prophet. Toward the end of one such meeting in the Kirtland Temple, Elder Taylor requested permission to speak, and he fearlessly defended the Prophet. "It was Joseph Smith, under the Almighty, who developed the first principles," he said, "and to him we must look for further instructions. If the spirit which he manifests does not bring blessings, I am very much afraid that the one manifested by those who have spoken, will not be very likely to secure them. The children of Israel, formerly, after seeing the power of God manifested in their midst, fell into rebellion and

idolatry, and there is certainly very great danger of us doing the same thing.” While many of the apostates continued their same course, the faithful Saints were strengthened by Elder Taylor’s loyalty and conviction.

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church—John Taylor* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001], xiv-xv

19 A story is told of an encounter between the Prophet Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. In the presence of a rather large group of brethren, the Prophet severely chastised Brother Brigham Young for some failing in his duty. Everyone, I suppose somewhat stunned, waited to see what Brigham’s response would be. After all, Brigham, who later became known as the Lion of the Lord, was no shrinking violet by any means. Brigham slowly rose to his feet, and in words that truly reflected his character and humility, he simply bowed his head and said, “Joseph, what do you want me to do?” The story goes that sobbing, Joseph ran from the podium, threw his arms around Brigham, and said in effect, “You passed, Brother Brigham, you passed” (see Truman G. Madsen, “Hugh B. Brown—Youthful Veteran,” *New Era*, Apr. 1976, 16).

Richard C. Edgely, in Conference Report, Oct. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 103-104.

20 One of the first conditions that will bring about disunity will be selfishness; another will be envy: “Brother So-and-so passed me by and said nothing to me about the matter.” “The bishopric chose Sister So-and-so to be organist, and she can’t play half as well as I.” “I’m not going to priesthood meeting any more because the bishopric appointed a certain man to act as adviser of the priests.” “The Sunday School chose So-and-so as a teacher.”...”The presidency of the stake has never recognized me, and I feel offended.” “The General Authorities do not always see eye to eye.” Oh! A hundred and one little things like that may come up—little things, insignificant in themselves when we compare them with the greater and more real things of life. And yet, I know from experience that the adversary can so magnify them that they become mountains in our lives, and we are offended, and our spirituality starves because we entertain those feelings.

There is another element—fault-finding—associated with that spirit of envy. We find fault with a neighbor. We speak ill of each other....

May we go forth with greater resolution.... Not to speak against our neighbors, nor against authorities of the Church, local, stake, or general. Let us avoid evil speaking; let us avoid slander and gossip. These are poisons to the soul to those who indulge. Evil speaking injures the reviler more than the reviled.

There are destructive termites of homes, as well as of houses, and some of these are backbiting, evil-speaking, faultfinding on the part either of parents or of children.... In the ideal home, there is no slanderous gossip about... schoolteachers, about public officials, or Church officials. I am more grateful now as years have come and gone, to my father, who with hands lifted said, “Now, no faultfinding about your teacher or anybody else.”

*Teachings of President of the Church—David O. McKay* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 42-43.

21 Whenever stake presidencies and bishoprics call new leaders and teachers in stake and ward organizations, it's a time of testing for the members.... On occasion, you may have wondered about a person who was called whose weaknesses you knew. Perhaps someone was called... whom you didn't admire or perhaps didn't ever like....

Doctrine and Covenants [sec.1], verse 23, which says the Lord intended "that the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers."

Now, why in the world would the weak and the simple be sent to kings and rulers? You and I sometimes feel that we are wise and we know a good deal. We have increasing experience. So why should a Sunday School teacher who seems to us weak and simple and less experienced be called by inspiration to teach us?

One reason is that it requires humility on our part. It requires a humble heart to believe that you can be taught by someone who apparently knows a good deal less than you do, and perhaps seems less likely to get revelation....

Clearly, my problem and your problem is to hear the word of God from and through imperfect teachers and leaders. That is your test and mine.... God has said that if we are going to make it home again, we must not only hear his voice privately by our own effort, but also through the voice of his servants who, when they speak by the power of the Spirit, speak as if it were his voice. [D&C 1:38.]

Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 11-13

22 Follow the leaders who are called to preside over you, for the promise is given: "If my people will harken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants who I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto to you, they shall not be moved out of their place" (D&C 124:45).

Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, May 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 80.

23 It has always been hard to recognize in fallible human beings the authorized servants of God.... Joseph Smith's cheerful disposition was seen by some as not fitting their expectations for a prophet of God....

The warning for us is plain. If we look for human frailty in humans, we will always find it. When we focus on finding the frailties of those who hold priesthood keys, we run risks for ourselves. When we speak or write to others of such frailties, we put them at risk....

To keep ourselves grounded in the Lord's Church, we can and must train our eyes to recognize the power of the Lord in the service of those He has called.

Henry B. Eyring, in Conference Report, Oct. 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 29-30

24 About 1896, Moses Thatcher, an apostle of the Church, was suspended from service in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Brother Thatcher, a man of unusual gifts and most charming personality, was very popular in his home town of Logan, as throughout the Church. His suspension caused widespread discussion, and many of his intimate Logan friends felt that he

had been treated unjustly, and took his side against the action of the authorities of the Church. The temporary upheaval was tempestuous. Men's feelings ran high. While the excitement was at its height, two of the ward elders called at the Widtsoe home as ward teachers. The widow's two sons were home, and the whole family assembled to be instructed by the visiting teachers. Soon the visitors began to comment on the "Thatcher episode," as it was called, and explained how unjustly Brother Thatcher had been treated. The widow answered not a word, but there was a gathering storm in her stern eyes and high-held head. After some minutes of listening to the visitors find fault with the Quorum of the Apostles with respect to Brother Thatcher, she slowly walked to the entrance door of the house which she threw wide open. With eyes now blazing she turned to the two brethren and said: "There is the door. I want you to leave this house instantly. I will not permit anyone in this house to revile the authorities of the Church, men laboring under divine inspiration. Nor do I wish such things spoken before my sons whom I have taught to love the leaders of the Church. And don't come back until you come in the right spirit to teach us the gospel. Here is the door. Now go!" The visitors hurried out shamefacedly, for the widow had chastised them thoroughly. In defense of the gospel, Sister Widtsoe knew no fear.

Anna Karine Gaaarden Widtsoe; as quoted in John A. Widtsoe, *In the Gospel Net* [Salt Lake City: The Improvement Era, 1941], 97-98.

25 A word to those of us who are served by those who are newly called.... Most of us carry.... The attitudes we learn in the world, where we may be quick to notice inferior service....

One [way] is to express or show our displeasure. I've been the beneficiary of another way, the better way. I've sensed when I was not doing very well when I was speaking or teaching or leading in a meeting.... I have been able to tell when I have been not doing well and I've looked out and seen someone in the audience... with eyes closed... And then they've opened their eyes and smiled at me, with a look of encouragement that was unmistakable. It was a look that said as clearly as if they had spoken to me: "... I'm praying for you."... You could serve that way when you see people struggling in their service.

Henry B. Eyring, in Conference Report, Apr. 2000 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000], 83-84.

26 Criticism, fault-finding, evil speaking—these are of the spirit of the day.... There is heard so much the snide remark, the sarcastic jibe, the cutting down of associates—these, too often, are the essence of our conversation.... Criticism is the forerunner of divorce, the cultivator of rebellion, sometimes the catalyst that leads to failure. In the Church, it sows the seed of inactivity and finally apostasy....

I am suggesting that as we go through life we try to "accentuate the positive." I am asking that we look a little deeper for the good, that we still our voices of insult and sarcasm, that we more generously compliment virtue and effort....

When I was a young man and was prone to speak critically, my wise father would say, "Cynics do not contribute. Skeptics do not create. Doubters do not achieve.

*Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley* Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 2:383-384.

27 While the commandments of God are to all the world, there are some special commandments that are applicable to the Latter-day Saints only. What are they? One of these commandments is, that we shall honor those who preside over us; in other words, we shall honor the priesthood....

When a man says: “I am a Latter-day Saint; I am a member of the Church, in good standing, because I know what the principles of the gospel are, and I know what the principles of government are in the Church,” for that man to say, “I oppose the bishop because I don’t like him” or “because I haven’t faith in him,” is proof by that very act that he does not understand the principle of government and submission to divine authority....

Therefore, I say to you, honor the Presidency of the Stake and your Bishops, and all who are placed to preside in your midst. Sustain them in their positions by your faith and your prayers, and show them that you will help them in every good word and work, and God will bless you for it.

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church—Joseph F. Smith* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998], 212, 217.

28 Moroni was not the first underinformed leader to conclude that another leader was not doing enough (see Alma 60). Nor was Pahoran’s sweet, generous response to his “beloved brother” Moroni the last such that will be needed (see Alma 61).

Neal A. Maxwell, *Peace, Essays of Hope and Encouragement* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998], 115.

29 One of the greatest weaknesses in the leadership of this Church throughout its stakes of Zion, its wards and mission fields, is the weakness, you might call it in crude terms, “back-biting” or criticizing. I suppose we are all more or less guilty of that, but when we acknowledge the fact that God calls us to these positions... then we are not fighting against men who may have their weaknesses; we are fighting against God and his will.

*Matthew Cowley Speaks* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954], 323.

30 I have watched it from the time I became a member of this Church, there is no man who undertakes to run counter to the counsel of the legally authorized leader of this people that ever prospers...

When men went contrary to the counsel of their leaders... they always became entangled and suffered a loss by so doing.

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church—Wilford Woodruff* Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 202.

31 What do we do if we feel that our Relief Society president or our bishop or a General Authority is in transgression or pursuing a policy of which we disapprove? Is there no remedy?...

There are remedies, but they are not the same remedies or procedures that are used with leaders in other organizations.

Our Father in Heaven has not compelled us to think the same way on every subject or procedure. As we work to accomplish our life’s purposes, we will inevitably have differences

with those around us—including some of those we sustain as our leaders. The question is not *whether* we have such differences, but *how we manage them*.... We should conduct ourselves in such a way that our thoughts and actions do not cause us to lose the companionship of the Spirit of the Lord.

The first principle in the gospel procedure for managing differences is to keep our personal differences private and not allow them to be a source of contention. In this we have worthy examples to follow. Every student of Church history knows that there have been differences of opinion among Church leaders since the Church was organized. Each of us has experienced such differences in our work in auxiliaries, quorums, wards, stakes, and missions of the Church. We know that such differences are discussed, but they are not discussed in public.... Counselors acquiesce in the direction of their president. Teachers follow the direction of their presidency. Members are loyal to the counsel of their bishop. All of this is done quietly and loyally, even by members who would have adopted a different policy if they had been in the position of authority.

Why aren't these differences discussed in public? Public debate—the means of resolving differences in a democratic government—is not appropriate in the government of the Church. We are all subject to the authority of the called and sustained servants of the Lord. They and we are all governed by the direction of the Spirit of the Lord, and that Spirit functions only in an atmosphere of unity. That is why personal differences about Church doctrine, policy, or procedure need to be worked out privately. There is nothing inappropriate about private communications concerning such differences, provided they are carried on in a spirit of love. Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord's Way*, pp. 200-201.

32 When we believe or say we have been offended, we usually mean we feel insulted, mistreated, or disrespected.... However, it ultimately is impossible for another person to offend you or to offend me. Indeed, believing that another person offended us is fundamentally false. To be offended is a *choice* we make; it is not a *condition* inflicted or imposed upon us by someone or something else....

To believe that someone or something can *make* us feel offended, angry, hurt, or bitter diminishes our moral agency and transforms us into objects to be acted upon... However, you and I have the power to act and to choose how we will respond to an offensive or hurtful situation....

In many instances, choosing to be offended is a symptom of a much deeper and more serious spiritual malady....

In some way and at some time, someone in this Church will do or say something that could be considered offensive. Such an event will surely happen to each and every one of us—and it certainly will occur more than once.

Though people may not intend to injure or offend us, they nonetheless can be inconsiderate and tactless.

You and I cannot control the intentions or behavior of other people. However, we do determine how we will act. Please remember that you and I are agents endowed with moral agency, and we can choose not to be offended.

During a perilous period of war, an exchange of letters occurred between Moroni, the captain of the Nephite armies, and Pahoran, the chief judge and governor of the land. Moroni, whose army was suffering because of inadequate support from the government, wrote to Pahoran “by the way of condemnation” (Alma 60:2) and harshly accused him of thoughtlessness, slothfulness, and neglect. Pahoran might easily have resented Moroni and his message, but he chose not to take offense. Pahoran responded compassionately and described a rebellion against the government about which Moroni was not aware. And then he responded, “Behold, I say unto you Moroni, that I do not joy in your great afflictions, yea, it grieves my soul. . . . And now, in your epistle you have censured me, but it mattereth not; I am no angry, but do rejoice in the greatness of your heart” (Alma 61:2, 9).

One of the greatest indicators of our own spiritual maturity is revealed in how we respond to the weaknesses, the inexperience, and the potentially offensive actions of others. A thing, an event, or an expression may be offensive, but you and I can choose not to be offended—and to say with Pahoran, “it mattereth not.” . . .

If a person says or does something that we consider offensive, our first obligation is to refuse to take offense and then communicate privately, honestly, and directly with that individual. Such an approach invites inspiration from the Holy Ghost and permits misperceptions to be clarified and true intent to be understood.

David A. Bednar, *Ensign*, Nov. 2006 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006], 90-92.

33 We can all progress in making the soft reply a part of our nature most of the time. Unlike the Savior—who exemplified the ability to submit the tendencies of the flesh to the Spirit and never take offense, never feel insulted, and never want to fight back—we may not reach that degree of perfection in this life. But without the soft reply it is a simple fact that we will never become as Christlike as we someday hope to become. Indeed, He suffered “afflictions and temptations of every kind” (Alma 7:11) and “pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death” (Mosiah 3:7).

In a devotional address at Brigham Young University, Terry Warner taught that no one had more justification to respond to others in a less than loving manner than the Savior. No one had more reason to rebuke, scold, or react in such “oh-so-human” ways that did the Savior, but he did not do these things. He endured, often without saying anything and without taking offense or retaliating. Suffering more humiliation than any group of minorities, including African Americans, Native Americans, the victims of the Holocaust, and the early Saints in Missouri, the Savior felt no vindictiveness; his love for those whose sins he would bear and atone for never diminished. Unlike the Savior, when we respond to others for any reason in a less than kind manner, others feel used and slighted by this form of subtle violence. When we are tempted to speak harshly in volume or content in any circumstance, like the Savior we must strive to resist.

Quoting Brother Warner directly:

[The Savior] defeated all the pressures that push humanity toward enmity and discord. He absorbed the terrible poison of vengeance into himself and metabolized it by his love. . . .

This long-suffering love changes everything. . . . For if we heed its invitation, we are stopped short in our arrogance. . . . We are humbled in our pride or anger or selfishness.

How then shall we come unto Christ . . . ? By sacrificing all taking of offense. By giving up criticism, impatience, and contempt, for they accuse the sisters and brothers for whom Christ died.

Barlow L. Parker, *The Soft Reply*, p. 90-92

### **Alma 61:15, 17, 18, 21**

34

A very interesting thing happens at this point in Pahoran's letter. Consider this: in a democracy, does ultimate military authority reside with the military or with the elected representatives of the people? Who was the supreme commander of the field troops: Captain Moroni or Governor Pahoran? Before answering, consider Alma's situation as chief judge. Notice that the military leaders are called Alma's "captains, and chief captains," and that he, as "chief judge and the governor," personally led his armies against the Amlicites to battle." (See Alma 2:16. Emphasis added.) Moroni himself had been "appointed to be the chief captain over the Nephites," and "the chief captain took the command of all the armies of the Nephites." (Alma 43:16.) Who appointed Moroni to his post, and, more importantly, under whose authority did he serve? The answer is obvious: under the authority of the chief judge, who in turn received his authority by election from the people.

Thus it is that Pahoran, at this point, assumes his right as commander-in-chief of the armies and issues orders to Moroni (see Alma 61:15, 17, 18, and 21).

Book of Mormon Student Manual, p. 347