

(*MFP* 6:156). The combatants are “the innocent instrumentalities of the war,” who cannot be held responsible for their lawful participation (*MFP* 6:159). At the same time, reference to “free institutions” and the observation that “both sides cannot be wholly right; perhaps neither is without wrong” (*MFP* 6:159) point out that there are other grounds on which to evaluate one’s participation in war, just cause and just conduct.

Echoing the concerns of the Book of Mormon for just war, the First Presidency warned people not to convert a legitimate war of self-defense into a bloody search for vengeance or the killing of innocent civilians. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., held that “to be justified in going to war in self-defense, a nation must be foreclosed from all other alternatives” (Firmage and Blakesley, p. 314). President Joseph F. SMITH identified wickedness in the whole system of states as the root of world war: “I presume there is not a nation in the world today that is not tainted with this evil more or less. It may be possible perhaps, to trace the cause of the evil, or the greatest part of it, to some particular nation of the earth; but I do not know” (*MFP* 5:71). At the same time, he also affirmed “that the hand of God is striving with certain of the nations of the earth to preserve and protect human liberty, freedom to worship him according to the dictates of conscience, freedom and the inalienable right of men to organize national governments in the earth” (*MFP* 5:71). Accordingly, the Church supported the war “to free the world from the domination of monarchical despotism” (*MFP* 5:71).

Although some used the global threat of nazism, fascism, and communism to justify war beyond a reaction to direct and immediate threat to American territorial integrity or political independence, others such as J. Reuben Clark in the 1940s continued to plead for a neutral, unarmed United States: “Moral force is far more potent than physical force in international relations. I believe that America should again turn to the promotion of peaceful adjustment of international disputes” (cited in Firmage and Blakesley, p. 298).

Since World War II, the LDS stance toward just cause and just conduct in war has provided guides by which to evaluate participation in specific conflicts without departing either from the obligation of civic obedience or the generalized condemnation of war. These attitudes accommodate the cross-cultural and millennial aspirations of a worldwide church and the demands placed on

citizens in a world of competing secular states whose ultimate demise is inevitable.

[See also *Military and the Church.*]

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WASHING OF FEET

The ordinance of washing of feet performed by Jesus Christ after the Last Supper with his apostles was a gesture of humility. Amidst discussion of who would be the greatest in the kingdom, Jesus, demonstrating what he had taught, removed his outer robe and performed this menial task, teaching that one who would be a leader must be a servant (John 13:1–8; cf. D&C 88:141). The Joseph Smith Translation adds this explanation about this incident: “Now this was the custom of the Jews under their law; wherefore, Jesus did this that the law might be fulfilled” (JST John 13:10). By this clarification it appears that the washing of feet was an ordinance of the law of Moses.

There is no clear explanation of the washing of feet in the Old Testament, although it is evident that it was a social custom for administering kindness to a guest. The washing of feet is not mentioned in the Book of Mormon, and it is spoken of only briefly in the Doctrine and Covenants in 88:138–41.

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