At the heart of this material we have the story of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, converts of the sons of Mosiah. That story has a great deal to teach us today, but it may not be what we expect, whether we read it as a story of pacifism or as something else.

Alma 23

Verses 2–3: The king of the Lamanites has been converted, and he decrees protection for the missionaries. He does so in order that “the word of God might have no obstruction” (which seems to be the same as going “forth throughout all the land”) and so that people will obey the commandments (“that they ought not to murder,” etc.). He also does so in order “that his people might be convinced concerning the wicked traditions of their fathers, and that they might be convinced that they were all brethren.” Are being convinced that the traditions of their fathers are wicked and being convinced that they are all brethren two things or one? If two, how are they related?

Do we have wicked traditions that we have inherited? If so, can you think of some examples? Do those traditions interfere with our ability to see others as our brothers and sisters?
**Verse 6:** What can we make of the fact that none of these Lamanite converts ever fell away? Does that say something about them? About the missionaries who taught them? Neither? Both? Is it just a fact with no other significance? If that, why is it mentioned in the scriptures?

**Verse 7:** Why are their weapons of war called “weapons of rebellion”? Against whom were they rebelling? The Nephites? They warred against them, but would that be called rebellion?

As we have it, this verse equates being righteous with laying down their weapons. Why? Is Alma 26:32 relevant?

**Verses 8–15:** In some cities and regions all, or almost all, of the inhabitants are converted; and in others none, or almost none, are converted. What would account for these differences?

**Verse 16:** Why do you think a new name would be so important to these converts? Do you have any ideas as to why they might have chosen the name that they did? Your guess would be as good as anyone else’s.

In *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Reynolds and Sjodahl suggest that the word *anti* seems to have meant “hill” or “region of hills.” Many Book of Mormon scholars have suggested that the “Nephi-Lehi” part of the name refers to the lands of Nephi and Lehi rather than to their descendants. However, Hugh Nibley tells us that the Indo-European root is relevant: “to imitate” or “face-to-face” (though he doesn’t explain why the Indo-European root rather than the Semitic root is relevant; see *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Semester 2, 404–5). On that evidence, “Anti-
Nephi-Lehies” could mean “those who imitate Nephi and Lehi,” or it could mean “those who bring together the Nephite and Lehite traditions.” Kent P. Jackson suggests that the name means “descendants of Lehi who are not descendants of Nephi” (Studies in Scripture, 7:337).

Note that this name doesn’t stick; they are later referred to as “the people of Ammon.” Why do you think they were called that rather than “the people of the sons of Mosiah”? (See Alma 27:26.)

Alma 24

Verses 12–13: Why does King Anti-Nephi-Lehi command that the people should not take up arms against the Lamanites who were about to attack? If they were to take up their swords again, it would be in self-defense. So why does he worry that if they were to do so, the Atonement might not apply to them any longer? Does the Anti-Nephi-Lehi experience tell us anything about our own repentance?

Verse 15: How does the king explain the symbolism of hiding away their swords?

Verse 18: What is the significance of this testimony? What does bearing this testimony require if it is to continue to be a true testimony?

Verse 21: Why do the Anti-Nephi-Lehies go out to meet the Lamanites? Wouldn’t it have been better to wait for them to arrive? The covenant that they made didn’t require that they offer themselves for slaughter, did it?
Verses 23–24: What does this experience teach us about our own relations with others?

Verses 28–30: Why is it significant that none of the Nehors were converted? Mormon, the editor, interrupts the narrative here to write in his own voice: “And thus we can plainly discern.” How is Mormon’s observation important to us?

Alma 25

Verse 1: Why do the unconverted Lamanites leave off killing the Anti-Nephi-Lehies and turn on the Nephites?

Verses 15–16: The sacrifices of the law of Moses were a type of Christ’s sacrifice, of course, but how was the law a type of his coming? Is there a connection between the covenant that the Anti-Nephi-Lehies have made and their understanding of the law of Moses?

Alma 26

Verses 1–9: We usually think of blessings as good things that come to us. Why is it a blessing (verse 2) to be an instrument in God’s hands (verse 3)? Does that suggest that perhaps we should reconsider how we think about blessings?

Verse 10: What in Ammon’s exulting might have made Aaron think that Ammon had begun to boast? Why is Aaron so concerned about that possibility? Is Mosiah 4:5–11 relevant?
Verses 11–12, 16: Why does Ammon call what he has been doing both boasting (verse 12) and rejoicing (verses 11 and 16)?

Verse 17: What does Ammon find amazing about the gospel? How does that apply to him personally? To the Anti-Nephi-Lehies? To us?

Verse 22: What mysteries does Ammon have in mind? Has he been speaking of them in the previous verses, such as verse 17?

Verse 35: Is Ammon using hyperbole here? If not, how can this be true?

Alma 29

Verses 1–2: What does Alma desire?

Verses 3–4: Why is his desire sinful? Is sinful too strong a word, or does Alma really mean what that word connotes? If Alma isn’t using hyperbole when he calls his desire sinful, what in our own experience might be comparable?

How do we avoid such sin?

What does it mean to say that the Lord grants “unto men according to their desire”? Does that suggest anything about the nature of reward and punishment in the gospel?

Verse 5: How does this verse qualify what Alma taught in verse 4?

Verse 6: Alma speaks here of his desires and what he should desire. How is that related to what he has just said about desire?
Verse 9: How is what Alma says here related to Moses 1:39?

Verse 10: How is Alma’s missionary experience related to his own history?

Verses 11–12: How is Alma’s missionary experience related to the experience of his ancestors? Is there a common theme in these three events: the conversion of the Lamanites, Alma’s conversion, and the history of Alma’s ancestors?

Verse 16: What is Alma talking about here? If we were traditional Christians who believe that the body is an impediment to spiritual experience rather than something necessary for becoming like our Father, this verse would be easy to explain. How do we explain it as latter-day saints?