Unpopular Views of Peace: The Great War and the Transformation of Southern Religion

by

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Abstract

The Great War erupted in Europe in 1914. Initially, most Americans viewed the war with horror, and many actively advocated the United States stay out of the conflict. Southern churches were part of this wave of opposition to the European war, speaking out against the savagery of war and the unnecessary nature of the present conflict. However, three years later, the United States declared war on Germany and entered the Great War. Americans generally viewed this decision positively and supported the war effort. Southern denominations were again consistent with the general population, largely abandoning their earlier rhetoric of opposition to the war overseas. Nevertheless, there were elements within many churches in the South that were reluctant to support the war or vigorously opposed the decision to declare war. The general abandonment of earlier views about the war was part of southern churches' larger transition away from pacifism and antiwar sentiments, which originated for many in the nineteenth century. The Religious Society of Friends (North Carolina Yearly Meeting); the Churches of Christ; the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee); the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the National Baptist Convention were representative southern churches that, to varying degrees, experienced this transformation in their religious views. Since these denominations had already begun the shift away from antiwar sentiments in the nineteenth century, the Great War was more of an accelerant than a catalyst. As a result of the wartime pressures from the government and civilians, these southern churches attempted to complete the process of leaving behind their traditional antiwar views and embracing mainstream society.

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List of Abbreviations

AFSC	American Friends Service Committee
COC	Churches of Christ
COG	Church of God
MECS	Methodist Episcopal Church, South
NBC	National Baptist Convention
NBCI	National Baptist Convention, Incorporated
NBCU	National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated
NBPB	National Baptist Publishing Board
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NCYM	North Carolina Yearly Meeting
PAFA	Peace Association of Friends in America
SBC	Southern Baptist Convention
WMC	Woman's Missionary Council
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Introduction

Weeks before the United States entered the Great War, former president William Howard Taft conducted a lecture tour throughout the South on behalf of the League to Enforce Peace, a progressive peace organization advocating increased international cooperation after the war. Days before the declaration of war, Taft exclaimed to reporters, "This great section of the country…has not one ounce of anti-war spirit…. The people of the south…feel that war is inevitable, and they are willing to go into it to defend our rights. In fact they do not want to stay out any longer, and they feel that their battles are being fought by somebody else. They are willing to pay in men, in money and in munitions."[1] Early historical studies of the wartime South did not challenge this portrayal. Ray Abrams' *Preachers Present Arms*, first published in 1933, described how southern churches eagerly consumed government propaganda, and castigated the clergy for perpetuating the hysteria from their pulpits. He noted, "The members of the cloth and their followers were susceptible to war psychology and crowd-thinking in the same manner as were the other citizens."[2]

Although many in the South were ready for and excited about war, and zealous in their support of the government, the climate was not exactly as uniform as Taft and Abrams described. A number of American denominations had traditions of pacifism or antiwar views, and many

[1] "Must Not Play War Game Like Bowling Contest, Taft Says," *Montreal Gazette*, April 2, 1917, 9.

[2] Ray H. Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms: A Study of the War-Time Attitudes and Activities of Churches and the Clergy in the United States, 1914-1918* (New York: Round Table, 1933), 246.

southern churches, or at least factions within them, still upheld these doctrines during the early twentieth century.[3] Due to the centuries of Christian pacifist thought and action that had come before, southern churches in the early twentieth century had rich pacifist traditions available to them, and many drew upon these historic roots.

The earliest European settlers in the Thirteen Colonies brought with them religious traditions that spoke to the relation between church and war. Religious scholar James Turner Johnson argues there were two ethical attitudes about war held by Christians during the colonial era: just war and pacifism. Advocates of the just war doctrine ranged from those who viewed wars for religion as the only just form of war, to those who saw religious causes as exactly what made a war unjust. Pacifism was a similarly diverse doctrine, though with fewer adherents. Some Christian pacifists forsook all ties with war, and others saw nonviolent actions to support a warring government as acceptable. While followers of the just war doctrine were found throughout American churches, Christian pacifists were most commonly from the historic peace churches, including the Quakers, Mennonites, and Church of the Brethren.[4]

For many American Christians, these doctrines and theories about war were put to their first major test with the Revolutionary War. Many who favored the just war doctrine saw the conflict as just, viewing United States as God's chosen nation trying to gain freedom from oppressive Britain. Many in the peace churches felt their pacifism did not allow participation in

[3] For the purpose of this study, "pacifism" is defined as the renunciation of war. Using this term is complicated because not all members of churches with pacifist traditions were pacifists themselves. Many sought to avoid war at all costs or promote peaceful relations but drew short of complete repudiation of war, and in those cases "antiwar" or "pro-peace," respectively, are terms that more accurately reflect their views. The terminology used in this study reflects the variety of stances found in these churches.

[4] James Turner Johnson, *Ideology, Reason, and the Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts, 1200-1740* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 3-11.

the war, and sought to separate themselves from the conflict.[5] Less than a century later, the Civil War provided another opportunity for Americans to interpret an earthly conflict from a Biblical framework. Many northern churches saw the Union as God's chosen side and the war as a crusade, and thus allowable under the doctrine of just war, while numerous southern Christians viewed the conflict as the Second Revolutionary War, connecting it with the earlier rebellion against Britain and the ostensive righteousness of that cause. Pacifism still existed in North and South, but advocates of this position in both parts of the country faced hostile reactions from neighbors who supported the war.[6]

For churches in the South, the overarching story after the Civil War and into the early twentieth century was one of transition away from the outside of American religious society and into the mainstream, which affected their views of war.[7] Those churches on the outskirts sought to leave behind certain doctrines, like pacifism, that were seen as outdated, and those denominations constituting the mainstream of society looked for ways to distance themselves from such doctrines found earlier in their history. Many churches, regardless of an official policy on peace or war, were split between those with antiwar views and those without qualms about fighting in wars. Those in the first group often held to these views because they were seen

[5] Mark A. Noll, *Christians in the American Revolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian University Press, 1977), 126.

[6] James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 43-44.

[7] Using the concept of a religious "mainstream" is tricky, as it can be employed to imply value or exclusion. As used here, this term refers to the dominant American religious culture, made up of so-called "mainline" denominations that had long histories in the country, considered themselves and were considered by others to be well established, and more often than not were well represented in government through the political careers of their members, and thus more tied to the course of the nation. Mainstream churches would include the major Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations, among others.

as either mirroring the doctrines of the New Testament church, or following in the footsteps of the founders of their denomination. By the Great War, this segment had declined in numbers. Over the course of the war, pressures from the government, neighbors, and even within the church caused many of these members to leave behind the remnants of their antiwar doctrines. Thus, although the Great War seemingly caused churches to abandon pacifism, in reality the war simply illuminated the changes already present by the early twentieth century and accelerated the process of transition away from historic antiwar views.

This war that would have a role in the decline of southern religious pacifism first erupted in Europe in 1914. The United States, an independent nation outside of Europe with a history of isolationism, was at first not involved in the largely continental struggle. However, during the years of official neutrality, 1914-1917, the American nation was disingenuous in its noninvolvement. Although not sending troops into battle, the United States mostly supplied the Allied nations of Britain, France, and Russia with necessary resources. There was also significant pro-Allies and anti-Central Powers propaganda, which was often evoked the idea that most Allied nations were democratic, while the Central Powers had authoritarian governments. While the public still remained divided, with large numbers of Irish-Americans and German-Americans sympathizing with the Central Powers, the nation generally leaned heavily toward favoring the Allies. After the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, public opinion grew even more supportive of the Allies.[8]

This war was the nation's first large-scale conflict overseas, and its first major war since the Civil War of more than half a century earlier. In contrast, the European belligerent nations had decades of preparation and earlier wars, and in the current conflict had almost three years of

[8] David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-44.

combat experience. President Woodrow Wilson believed the American military, after years of relative peace and inaction, would need to institute a draft in order to catch up with the warring nations. Wilson's draft was the country's first nationwide draft, creating a national army, and thus abandoning the Civil War era practice of state militias comprising the country's fighting force. The Selective Draft Act, signed on May 18, 1917, authorized the immediate conscription of 500,000 men, aged 19 through 25, with the possibility of expanding this count to another 500,000 at a later date. The range of the draft was later extended to men beyond the initial count and age span. Unlike in previous wars, the government did not allow draftees to avoid fighting by paying a fee or purchasing a replacement.[9]

Not all those drafted would see combat, however. The draft act allowed limited deferment and exemption based on certain grounds. For example, ministers and seminary students, married men, and those in essential industries could apply for exemption from military service. Local draft boards handled these requests and determined whether a draftee should be given a deferment. Those who for moral reasons opposed fighting could also apply for a deferment. However, the draft act only permitted deferments for members of "well-recognized" pacifist churches. How to interpret "well-recognized" was left to the discretion of local draft boards, and this interpretation varied widely among different boards. Some draft boards did not approve any deferments because they believed the government should not accommodate conscientious objection, while others offered no opposition to approving deferment requests. Another problem surfaced over what deferments signified for conscientious objectors. Unlike ministers and other exempt individuals, conscientious objectors were not freed from military service. If the local draft board approved a man's request for a deferment on moral grounds, he

[9] John Whiteclay Chambers II, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 153-177.

was still drafted as a noncombatant. In theory, this meant the individual would not see combat. However, these men were still sent to army camps, and it was left to their commanding officers how this noncombatant status was interpreted. As a result, many were pressured into combatant service even after receiving a deferment.[10]

To ensure Americans soundly supported the war effort, the federal government used a two-pronged approach comprising both the carrot and the stick. The primary way the Wilson administration sought to foster a positive response from the public was through propaganda. Posters and other publicity campaigns framed the war as a fight for democracy, and encouraged citizens to buy war bonds, ration food, and generally become involved in the war effort. The government also urged draft-aged men to enthusiastically do their part to win the war. Many enlisted immediately and were inducted into the military, but others desired to finish their college degrees. For college students wanting to serve, the Student Army Training Corps was a common option. Students in the Corps program enlisted in the army but stayed on campus temporarily to train as privates and continue taking classes. The best recruits would eventually be admitted to an officers' training camp, while the rest served as enlisted men.[11]

If the encouragement was insufficient to engender support for the war, the government was also willing to use harsher tactics. The Espionage Act of 1917 outlawed the making of false statements meant to interfere with the success of the military; its successor, the Sedition Act of 1918, extended the wording to cover anyone who "shall willfully utter, print, write, or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language" about the United States government or

[10] Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 36-41; Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 215-218.

[11] Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 3-7; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 56-65.

military, or use language intended to bring them "into contempt, scorn, contumely, or disrepute."[12] These laws increased the government's power of surveillance and censorship, and the Bureau of Investigation, the precursor to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was the primary agent of government involvement. The Bureau investigated suspected cases of sedition throughout the war, including many originating in southern churches and particularly their presses. If a periodical was deemed to have published seditious material, the Bureau was authorized to shut it down or arrest the publishers. The Postmaster General also had the authority to label certain issues as unmailable, which would prevent their delivery.[13]

At the time of the Great War, there was not a favorable constitutional environment for religious liberty. In theory, the First Amendment had instituted religious freedom by stating Congress would make no law to prohibit the free exercise of religion. However, how this clause was to be interpreted and enforced was left to future generations. One of the ways the amendment was applied prior to the Great War was with conscientious objection. Since volunteers and state militias constituted the nation's fighting force in the American Revolution, War of 1812, and Mexican War, conscientious objection did not become a national issue until the Civil War. During the conflict between the states, Congress approved noncombatant service for religious conscientious objectors, though determining the sincerity of a person's abhorrence of war remained a difficult problem. In contrast to the work for conscientious objection, there were fewer efforts to preserve the freedom of speech of those same people. In this era before the rise of free speech advocacy groups, there were limited resources for those, religious or

[12] H.C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917-1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1957), 215.

[13] Mark Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance: African Americans and the United States Government during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 101-105.

otherwise, who expressed views unpopular with state or federal governments.[14] The Wilson administration decided to allow the relatively few religious pacifists to opt out of combatant service, but drew the line at permitting them to spread their views and potentially convince others to become conscientious objectors. As a result, the Espionage and Sedition Acts had a large impact on a number of denominations that had expressed antiwar views prior to 1917. Many found their presses closed or seriously hampered by federal officials, and those that sought to avoid this fate had to adopt patriotic language for their periodicals to pass inspection and be approved for mailing.[15]

Several historical works are important to the understanding of southern religious opposition to war, and the degrees to which it was present during the Great War. One relevant work is R. Laurence Moore's significant 1986 study on the intersection of identity and faith, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*. The book argues certain denominations' self-identification as "outsiders" "is a characteristic way of inventing one's Americanness," and in fact it states these churches gained an understanding of what being an American meant "by turning aspects of a carefully nurtured sense of separate identity against a vaguely defined concept of mainstream or dominant culture."[16] Moore also discusses how outsider churches, although often small, have been able to cultivate fiercely loyal adherents through forming a distinctive culture separate from the mainstream, and by embracing both dissent and conflict.

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[14] Possibly the most well-known of such groups, the American Civil Liberties Union, was formed in 1920 in response to the struggles of conscientious objectors and those convicted under the Espionage and Sedition Acts during the Great War.

[15] Louis Fisher, *Religious Liberty in America: Political Safeguards* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002), 53-57, 82-96.

[16] R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), xi.

His prime examples are the Mormons, as founder Joseph Smith sought difference in both doctrine and practice, and gained a stalwart following. Moore illustrates how one might paradoxically consider these outsider groups as more "American" than the larger insider denominations due to the embracing of difference and distinctiveness. The draw of being an outsider was visible in many southern denominations as well. In the roots of a number of churches was the desire for separation from society, the government, and other forces of the world. However, over the course of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, the pressures of conformity from the larger society made this separateness more difficult to maintain. As denominations' memberships gained greater standing in their communities and emerged into the middle class, the aspirations of church members increasingly drifted away from the traditions of dissent and conflict that were present during the churches' outsider origins.

Another pertinent study is Grant Wacker's *Heaven Below*, published in 2001. Wacker writes on early Pentecostals and employs the concepts of "primitivism" and "pragmatism." He defines the former as otherworldliness or heavenly mindedness, signifying "believers' yearning to be guided solely by God's Spirit in every aspect of their lives."[17] However, even in the early years of the movement, this fundamentalist approach never fully described Pentecostals' actions. Though many wanted to lead revivals and evangelize, there were the realities of life to be considered. Pentecostals had to be financially responsible, plan and schedule with an eye to the future, and generally make decisions that were in their own best interests. Wacker believes realities like these demonstrated Pentecostals' pragmatism, a shrewdness or practicality at odds with the essence of their primitivism. He believes these two impulses often created tensions, with many Pentecostals arguing primitivism defined their lives and pragmatism did not factor

[17] Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 12.

into any of their decisions. However, Wacker also finds Pentecostals' belief that the Spirit was responsible for all things allowed them to take pragmatic steps without fear of losing their primitivist devotion to God. This tension between primitivism and pragmatism mirrors the situation for southern denominations during the Great War. While many church leaders and adherents desired a close following of peace doctrines they interpreted from Scripture, the potential social ramifications of these views became more difficult to ignore during wartime.

Another study, Jeanette Keith's *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight*, published in 2004, is the seminal work in southern dissent in the Great War. The author looks at how southerners reacted to discussions of militarism and preparedness prior to 1917, and how they responded to the draft and government interference after American intervention. Keith demonstrates antiwar sentiments and draft resistance were present in the South, and not necessarily just from socialists or those sharing ethnic ties with the warring nations, but rather from poor southerners in rural areas. She explains this situation partially by pointing to a tradition of agrarian radicalism and holiness movements, but also looks at draft records, which show the rural working class was disproportionately conscripted. Keith argues "race did not trump class" with southern draft boards, which would rather give exemptions to the sons and black workers of middle-class and upper-class men and send poor farmers, white or black, to the war.[18] The book also advances the idea that the federal government's suppression of dissent was done in a calculated way, demonstrating the reason behind the wartime hysteria, and that it was conducted at the invitation of southerners, bringing into question the region's supposed dedication to the principle of states' rights. Although she does not focus extensively on religion, Keith notes some southern churches

[18] Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 199.

had histories of pacifism, which was one possible reason why some southerners claimed conscientious objector status.

These works touch on issues that pertain directly to the transition away from pacifism in southern religion. Moore highlights the complexity of the insider-outsider dynamics in American religion, which matches the story in the South as well. Many southern churches took pride in speaking in tongues, refraining from politics, or other actions that set them apart from the larger society. However, the pull toward acculturation was strong, leading many to abandon those practices in the twentieth century. Wacker discusses this trend as the shift from primitivism to pragmatism. Numerous religious traditions in the South strove to imitate the New Testament church or follow the teachings of the founders of their denominations, attempting not stray from those beliefs or accept compromises. However, the move toward the mainstream gradually progressed from the nineteenth century into the first decades of the twentieth century, and the wartime pressures brought these changes to the surface. In many situations, adherents left primitivist beliefs and practices for more pragmatic choices, which resulted in the turn from pacifism. Keith points to the rural South as the location for much of the remaining antiwar sentiments, and shows how class was key to this situation. As many of the outsider denominations were in rural areas, the adherents of pacifist ideas were present more frequently in these regions, whereas the cities with their mainline churches were typically strong areas for support of the war effort.

Five southern churches highlight the dynamics of this shift of religious doctrine and practice. Roughly in order from the most to the least closely tied to peace doctrines during the war, they are the Religious Society of Friends (North Carolina Yearly Meeting); the Churches of Christ; the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee); the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and

the National Baptist Convention. Despite the range of reactions to the Great War, the churches shared many similarities. Prior to American intervention, members from all five saw the war as distasteful, though this should not be uncritically interpreted as evidence of pacifism, since churches rarely adopted a pro-war attitude during times of peace. This group of denominations also experienced splits, two during the mid-nineteenth century and three within a decade of the Great War. Thoughts of reunification in the first group and current controversies in the second group preoccupied many in these churches, occasionally overshadowing the war. When leaders and member did discuss the war, a frequent topic was how the conflict might or had affected missions, both at home and abroad. For those denominations with few ties to antiwar views, women's boards tended to be the major holdouts, often because of their connection to missionary activities or social reform efforts.

For all their similarities, there were perhaps more differences between these bodies. During the neutral years, denominations varied in their opinion of the war in Europe. Some saw this as a punishment of Europeans for the sins of colonialism or false doctrines, others were sympathetic and considered the suffering of the European branches of their denominations, and a third group remained indifferent. Though none of these denominations should be considered pro-war in terms of their doctrine, they ranged in their commitment to pacifism or antiwar views. As highlighted by other authors, smaller and more rural churches were more often adherents to some sort of pacifist or antiwar belief. Of these five, the larger denominations were more quickly to embrace the war effort once the United States declared war, and the smaller denominations held onto their opposition to war for a longer time. When considering the declaration of war, some churches viewed the fight as something forced onto members, while others seemed to forget ever talking disparagingly about belligerent nations fighting an

unnecessary war. These reactions also related to these denominations' relationship with the government and politics in general, which ranged from expressing loyalty and patriotism, to desiring isolation from the forces of the world. During the war, the antiwar elements within the churches also differed widely, with church leaders, specific boards, or newspaper editors as the primary source of opposition to the war.

In these five churches, some type of antiwar belief was present in their founding or early history. However, over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this doctrine gradually eroded. In each case, pacifism or opposition to war was never universal for all members, and in fact was a minority position in some cases. As the decades passed and more wars transpired, the antiwar factions grew smaller. When the United States entered the Great War, the shift away from these early doctrines was already partially realized. The mobilization for war and the accompanying hysteria for the fight were successful in further decreasing the numbers of members opposed to war. The postwar era would be one of reflection and reevaluation of historic antiwar views, and many churches would never return to those traditions.

Chapter 1: The Religious Society of Friends

The Religious Society of Friends is a religious movement with a long and well-recognized history of pacifism. From the colonial period into the nineteenth century, Friends, also known as Quakers, generally refused military service and sought to maintain peaceful interactions with all people. Yet when the United States entered the Great War in 1917, the church was split. While many Friends stayed out of the war, there were others who rejected the traditional views of their predecessors and enlisted in the military. This was not a sudden shift away from the peace witness of the early Quakers, but rather the manifestation of a decades-long transition, revealed by the pressures of a major war. Peace would continue to be an important tenet of the Quaker beliefs, but the way it was defined and how it was applied were different than in the early history of the Friends. The experience of southern Friends mirrored that of other American Friends in many regards. However, to a certain extent the history of Quakers in the South was distinct from that of Quakers elsewhere, notably in the lack of major doctrinal splits and in a more complicated relationship with war due to the trials of the Civil War years. Thus, in the Great War, southern Quakers developed a response that was more unified than that of Friends in many other regions of the nation.[19]

[19] This treatment of southern Friends in the Great War will focus almost exclusively on the North Carolina Yearly Meeting, which essentially was the whole of southern Quakerism. In order to provide this history in context, the introductory section will highlight the most relevant elements of the history of American Quakerism, and the exploration of the war years will reference general experiences of Friends around the country.

The origins of Quakerism lie in mid-seventeenth-century England with the teaching of George Fox (1624-1691), a shoemaker-turned-preacher. Despite having no formal training as a minister, he gained a following of like-minded people disenchanted with the English Puritanism of Oliver Cromwell's England. Fox taught his flock to abandon the follies of Puritan ritualistic practices and doctrinal contrivances. Instead, the religious leader spoke about the "Inner Light," the immediate presence of God inside each Christian. Individuals who listened to this Inner Light could have a direct connection with God, and bypass many of the complexities of church hierarchies and Biblical debates. Several names were associated with the group, including the Children of the Light and the Friends of the Truth, before the Religious Society of Friends became the widely recognized name in the eighteenth century. As their numbers grew, Fox and his followers looked to teach those outside England's borders about the Inner Light. In addition to Europe, Fox traveled to the English colonies in America to spread his ideas, and other Friends followed his example. Although some colonists converted to Quakerism, the number of Friends in the Thirteen Colonies also increased through immigration, particularly to Pennsylvania, a colony founded in 1681 by a fellow Quaker, William Penn. By the end of the colonial period, Friends lived throughout the Thirteen Colonies, with the lowest numbers in the southernmost colonies.[20]

The lack of a strong top-down hierarchical order allowed Quaker beliefs to spread to new areas more easily. The different organizational levels were named after the frequency in which members met to discuss church business. The Quaker version of a congregation was a monthly meeting, which met monthly for church business, as well as weekly for services. Several

[20] Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988), 25-37; Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 13-36.

monthly meetings met together in a quarterly meeting, and a number of these constituted a yearly meeting, which were often formed for each state or region. This structured allowed the monthly meetings to determine their own doctrines and choose like-minded monthly meetings with which to form a quarterly meeting, and then similarly choose a compatible yearly meeting. Another factor that allowed Quakerism to spread easily in the colonies was their strong conviction in the "sainthood of all believers," the idea that all Christians were equal in spirit and authority. For early Friends, this was interpreted as a call to abandon the office of pastor, thus monthly meetings had no minister. In place of a sermon Friends would sit together and wait until the Inner Light led one of their number to share a thought or revelation. Another important application of the sainthood of all believers in Quaker circles was gender equality. As both were hosts to the Inner Light, men and women were to take part equally in Quaker meetings.[21]

While the eighteenth century had its trials for American Quakers, particularly during the American Revolutionary War, the nineteenth century promised even more change for Friends in the new United States, with the transition from traditional Quaker views and practices to a more mainstream approach as the general theme. This began with the first major Quaker doctrinal split, which transpired in the 1820s in response to the Second Great Awakening. The Orthodox Friends embraced Quakerism's recent drift toward other Protestant denominations in its emphasis on Biblical authority and Jesus' divinity, while the smaller Hicksite faction desired a closer following of traditional doctrines such as the Inner Light. Shortly after, in the 1840s and 1850s, the Orthodox contingent divided between Gurneyites and Wilburites. The former and larger faction continued to follow the shift toward mainstream Protestantism, now through reform efforts and humanitarian programs, while the latter shied away from what they saw as

[21] Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 1-11.

abandoning unique elements that defined Quakers. Further changes occurred when American Quakers, particularly Gurneyites, experienced a period of holiness revivalism in the 1860s and 1870s. As a result, many Quakers left behind traditional views and adopted more mainstream practices, such as having pastors and using programmed worship services. The last major shift in the century appeared first in the 1890s, when many Quakers began to embrace the liberal theology of the Social Gospel by deemphasizing creeds and doctrines, focusing on the ethical teachings in the Bible, and looking for applications of these teachings in society.[22]

The general history of American Quakerism mirrors many of the experiences of southern Friends. However, due to their geographic location and the unique elements of that region's history, Quakers in the South faced some additional complexities and had different involvement with some of the trends occurring elsewhere. These differences were seen even in the earliest days of Quaker presence in the South.

Although Friends settled in other southern colonies, North Carolina soon became the hub for southern Quakers. Hoping to encourage more settlers, authorities in that colony promised religious tolerance, which attracted Quakers to move south from Virginia, the first arriving in the 1660s and the 1670s. The earliest monthly meeting organized in 1680, and by the end of the century local Quakers had founded the North Carolina Yearly Meeting (NCYM). The numbers and influence of Friends in North Carolina grew, and eventually both the governor and half the assembly were Friends. However, opposition from the Church of England led to the decrease in Quaker influence until none remained in government.[23]

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[22] Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 169-184, 203-229; Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism*, 12-35.

[23] Seth B. Hinshaw, *The Carolina Quaker Experience, 1665-1985: An Interpretation* (Greensboro: North Carolina Friends Historical Society, 1984), 1-29.

In addition to political problems, Friends also struggled with the practice of slavery. Since Quakers believed all people could have direct contact with God through their Inner Light, it was difficult to meld their views with owning slaves. Most North Carolina Friends were farmers but not plantation owners, so only a small percentage owned slaves. The NCYM first advised members to treat their slaves well, and eventually in the 1770s outlawed buying slaves at all.[24] Although the opposition to slavery occupied Quakers' attention into the mid-nineteenth century, the years between the Revolution and the Civil War were more internally peaceful for southern Quakers than for Quakers elsewhere. North Carolina, due partly to its more homogenous Quaker society, was the only major region that did not experience the two major splits of the early nineteenth century. However, their opposition to slavery made North Carolina a difficult place for Quakers to live, and many migrated into the Midwest in the years leading up to the Civil War.[25] After the war was over, North Carolina was in ruins and a majority of the southern Friends who remained took this opportunity to migrate to the Midwest, where many had relatives who had moved in the previous decades. The Civil War also had a strong impact on Quakers elsewhere in the South. Meetings in South Carolina and Georgia dissolved and those remaining in southern Virginia, which had long been part of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting, joined the NCYM. As a result of these developments, after the 1860s nearly all southern Quakers lived in North Carolina, and most of those who did not were part of the NCYM. The

[24] Hiram H. Hilty, *Toward Freedom for All: North Carolina Quakers and Slavery* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1984), 13-43.

[25] Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 178; Peter Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony, 1660 to 1914* (York, UK: Sessions Book Trust, 1990), 173.

departure of so many Friends over the course of such a short time left many who remained feeling isolated from the rest of the Quaker community.[26]

One of the focuses of the NCYM in the post-Civil War years was rebuilding Quaker education in the state, particularly by strengthening the New Garden Boarding School in Greensboro. The NCYM had initially founded the school in 1837 to counter the problem of Quaker youth switching to other denominations or committing infractions against Quaker beliefs. The school began as a Quaker-only institution, but was opened to non-Quakers for financial reasons in 1846, and by the end of the Civil War a majority of the students were not Quakers. In order to provide for more of the educational needs of North Carolina Friends, especially the training of teachers for other Quaker schools, the NCYM transformed New Garden into a college, which opened its doors as Guilford College in 1888. Non-Quakers were still allowed entrance, but all trustees had to be recognized Quakers, and attendance to Sunday meeting and daily chapel was required.[27]

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, North Carolina Quakers experienced many of the same trends occurring in other yearly meetings. Quaker scholar Damon Hickey states, "In almost every area of its development, southern Quakerism after the Civil War represented a compromise and a blend, not always comfortable, among traditionalists, progressives, and revivalists. North Carolinians had a chance to look at what was going on

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[26] Damon Douglas Hickey, *Sojourners No More: The Quakers in the New South, 1865-1920* (Greensboro: North Carolina Friends Historical Society, 1997), xi-xv; Daisy Newman, *A Procession of Friends: Quakers in America* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Company), 115.

[27] Gwen Gosney Erickson, "Guilford College," in *Founded by Friends: The Quaker Heritage of Fifteen American Colleges and Universities*, ed. John W. Oliver, Jr., Charles L. Cherry, and Caroline L. Cherry (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 22-38.

elsewhere in the Quaker world and to avoid at least some of its extremes."[28] Many of the issues causing problems in other yearly meetings, such as the pastoral system, became topics of debate in the NCYM. However, North Carolina Quakers did not experience the same splits that took place in other states, partly because of the way they blended the modern with the traditional at the turn of the century. For example, by the 1910s, most monthly meetings of the NCYM had abandoned their simpler buildings of the nineteenth century and had built meetinghouses that more closely resembled other Protestant churches. Most also had parted with tradition by hiring pastors, who instituted programmed worship services during meetings. Nevertheless, North Carolina Quakers had resisted some new elements found in yearly meetings elsewhere in the nation. Although adopting more church-like structures, southern Friends had kept components of their historic simplicity, eschewing some of the more ornate decorations found in other Protestant churches. In addition, many in the NCYM maintained a number of more traditional views and practices, such as prohibiting tobacco and refraining from speaking in tongues.[29]

One final and major piece to the early history of southern Quakerism is the connection between Friends and pacifism. The belief in peace and the refusal to fight in wars date back to the early years of the Quakers. George Fox taught the Inner Light was the presence of God in every person. This concept suggested to Quakers two reasons why fighting in wars was wrong. First, because all have a divine connection due to the universality of the Inner Light, life should be viewed as sacred. Second, if everyone were to commit fully to the Inner Light, there would be no cause for war, and thus fighting only continues the sinful state. Fox also strongly believed

[28] Hickey, *Sojourners No More*, 141.

[29] Hickey, *Sojourners No More*, 98-135.

government was divinely created, so he encouraged others to obey all government edicts, unless they commanded Christians to fight or disregard God's laws.[30]

The first issuance of Fox's views in an organized manner was in a statement to Charles II in 1661, and from there the policy of pacifism spread among his followers, and eventually to the Americas.[31] For Quakers, it was not enough to merely avoid fighting in wars, but also to maintain peaceful relations with others, which in the colonies included fair dealings with Native American tribes. However, this peaceful approach occasionally caused problems for the Friends. After an Indian attack in North Carolina in 1711, many settlers blamed Quakers for the colony's unpreparedness for war.[32] The Revolutionary War added to the conflict with their communities. Since respect and obedience for government was a key belief for Friends, most could not conscientiously support the patriots' cause, though a small number did enlist and were later disowned by their meetings.[33] Even more problematic for the Quakers was the Civil War. Friends on both sides supported the Union due to their continued opposition to rebellions, as well as their distaste for slavery. For these reasons, many northern Quakers broke with the peace tradition and enlisted in the Union army, while southern Quakers actively sought to avoid service in the Confederate army. Southern Friends particularly suffered during the war because neighbors and officials knew of their antislavery and anti-secession stances. After the close of

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[30] Albert N. Keim and Grant M. Stoltzfus, *The Politics of Conscience: The Historic Peace Churches and America at War, 1917-1955* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988), 21; A. Glenn Crothers, *Quakers Living in the Lion's Mouth: The Society of Friends in Northern Virginia, 1730-1865* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012), 21, 40.

[31] Peter Brock and Nigel Young, *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 7.

[32] Hamm, *The Quakers in America*, 33; Steven Jay White, "The Peace Witness of North Carolina Quakers during the Colonial Wars," *Southern Friend* 5, No. 1 (Spring 1983): 15.

[33] Hamm, *The Quakers in America*, 35.

the war, northern Quakers were faced with the problem of deciding whether to disown those who had fought in the war or overlook their actions. Overwhelmingly the meetings chose to be lenient and welcome back their members.[34]

In the decades following the Civil War, the issue of pacifism became divisive for many Friends. Some debated whether there might be occasions when war was acceptable, such as in defense. Others saw the need to lower the intensity of the Quaker antiwar sentiment, which could drive away potential converts among the large number of Civil War veterans.[35] Fearful of the decline in pacifism they noted particularly among western yearly meetings, concerned Quakers from North Carolina and others states formed the Peace Association of Friends in America (PAFA) in 1867. Through the publication of peace pamphlets and a periodical, the *Messenger of Peace*, the organization hoped to strengthen Quaker pacifism and spread their ideas to other denominations.[36] The holiness revival of the late nineteenth century had a large impact on this peace witness because it led many Quakers in a more modern and more mainstream Protestant direction. The holiness movement deemphasized social ethics such as pacifism, and stressed continually looking toward the Second Coming of Christ, the only event that could bring peace to the world. There was also a conflict with the holiness doctrine of sanctification, which posited that Christians who had experienced the Holy Spirit no longer sinned. However,

[34] Thomas D. Hamm, et al., "The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century: Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends as a Case Study," *Indiana Magazine of History* 96, No. 1 (March 2000): 48; Crothers, *Quakers Living in the Lion's Mouth*, 269.

[35] Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism*, 69, 108.

[36] Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 871-873.

Quakers traditionally viewed participation in war as sinful, and yet many of their non-Quaker holiness brothers had fought in the Civil War.[37]

At the turn of the century, there was a slight change in the Quaker relation to peace. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the rise of the Social Gospel led to a rejection of holiness views, particularly among Quaker academics who were experimenting with social approaches to the Bible. With its focus on social reforms to limit suffering, the Social Gospel meshed with traditional Quaker pacifist views.[38] Comparing the Quaker press' coverage of peace issues compared to previous decades, historian Peter Brock notes, "The discussion was more intelligent, better informed, and, above all, wider in scope; it included more frequent articles on arbitration and the various economic and political aspects of pacifism…as well as protests against the growing militarism and expansionism displayed by the United States."[39] This renewed interest in pacifism centered mostly on the East coast, where yearly meetings created peace committees and held peace conferences, while western Friends typically strayed further from the peace tradition. However, even in the East there was a detachment from earlier approaches to peace. Instead of the peace witness implying a strong opposition to war and militarism, the emphasis had instead shifted to a commitment to peace itself, which in theory could happen as a result of war. Thus in the early twentieth century, Friends were divided on the

[37] Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism*, 108; Cecil B. Currey, "The Devolution of Quaker Pacifism: A Kansas Case Study, 1860-1955," *Kansas History* 6, No. 2 (June 1983): 124-125.

[38] Hamm, et al., "The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century," 49.

[39] Brock, *Pacifism in the United States*, 870-871.

peace issue, which had transitioned into being largely a matter of individual conscience and interpretation, with no uniform definition of pacifism or the peace witness.[40]

When the Great War erupted in Europe, Friends in the United States responded with sadness, particularly sympathetic to the large number of English Friends now living in a belligerent country. During the United States' neutral years, American Quakers sought ways to contribute to ending the war. Due to the recent developments in Quaker peace efforts, there were numerous Quaker societies, such as the PAFA and the peace committees in individual yearly meetings, available to pool resources for this mission. Mirroring similar strategies prior to the war, the PAFA and other Quaker organizations focused heavily on printing pro-peace literature, particularly newspapers and pamphlets, advising against going to war. For example, one the PAFA pamphlet from 1915, titled "The Spiritual Danger to the United States from the War in Europe," stressed the problems of preparedness. Highlighting the ill effects of this policy, the pamphlet argued the only ways the government could build a larger military were by resorting to conscription, which limits liberty, or by stirring up men to volunteer through militarist propaganda, which distorts history. Turning to application, the author stated, "We appeal to you to help put away from our hearts the race hatred and the national greed and lusts from which wars and fightings come; to oppose the spirit of war in whatever guise it may appear, to preserve our national life from the hurt of militarism; and to seek that fruit of righteousness and the faith in God which is brotherhood and peace."[41]

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[40] Brock, *Pacifism in the United States*, 883-886; Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 162.

[41] "The Spiritual Danger to the United States from the War in Europe: A Message from the Society of Friends," Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College, Greensboro, NC, 6.

North Carolina Friends had similar concerns during the years of American neutrality. In the *Friends Messenger*, the official newspaper of the NCYM, the editors argued in 1914 that while militarist policies had led to the outbreak of war, disarmament advocates called for actions that would have prevented war. The editors concluded that this result proved the falseness of equating military buildup with American security.[42] The NCYM Peace Committee shared the same worries. The primary figures of the board were J. Franklin Davis, professor of Greek and German at Guilford, and Franklin S. Blair, an important figure in the Sunday school movement in the NCYM. In their annual report in 1915, they expressed uneasiness in how some Americans were becoming involved in the European war through selling war munitions, which obscured the neutrality of the nation. The committee membership could see no good in aiding a war that had spread with "satanic fury" to nations that had "yielded to the god of war, destroyed multitudes, caused distress and starvation" and "sent scores of our fellow citizens to the bottom of the seas."[43] The editors of the *Friends Messenger* agreed, focusing particularly on the possibility of financial ruin as leaders sunk Europe "into an abyss of war, doubtless drawing their nations and peoples into irremediable disaster."[44]

The harsh words for militarism and the war in general did not express merely the horror these Friends felt. Many worried about the possibility of other Quakers falling into line with the militarist spirit they witnessed outside their denomination. The Peace Committee was particularly attuned to this concern, and Davis and Blair repeatedly mentioned their uneasiness in

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[42] Editorial, *Friends Messenger*, August 1914, 2.

[43] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held at Guilford College, N.C. from the Fourth of Eighth Month to the Ninth of the Same, Nineteen Hundred and Fifteen* (Greensboro, NC: Jos. J. Stone & Company, 1915), 11.

[44] Editorial, *Friends Messenger*, August 1914, 2.

their reports. In the 1914 annual report, the committee alluded to the Biblical story of Elisha's servant, whose eyes were opened to see a vast army of angels providing protection from the Syrian army. The report offered up a request, "Let our prophets and people pray that our young men may by faith see the invisible army of angels and agencies marshaled for the protection of the kingdom of the Prince of Peace and so help in the propagation of the peace principles."[45] The 1915 report expanded the source of their concern, stating, "The committee being painfully conscious of lack in ourselves and in our membership as to a knowledge of Scripture concerning peace and war and the spirit of them, and the lack of believing the same as taught by the Master, interpreted by the founders and later by the upholders of our denomination, think the gravity of the situation should cause pause."[46]

There did appear to be some cause for worry, particularly with the younger generation's commitment to peace teachings. A 1916 letter to the editor of the *Guilfordian*, Guilford College's student newspaper, represented some of the ideas present among those of draft age. The author noted the peaceful nature of Americans, but stated, "I desire to see a reasonable military preparedness in this country.... We must have a proper preparation suited to our defense, and I would have our defense adequate for every emergency."[47] The letter concluded by endorsing Charles Evans Hughes, the Republican presidential candidate who advocated preparedness and increased defense spending. A large percentage of the teachers of North

[45] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Seventeenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held at Guilford College, N.C. from the Sixth of Eighth Month to the Tenth of the Same, Inclusive, Nineteen Hundred and Fourteen* (Greensboro, NC: Jos. J. Stone & Company, 1914), 11.

[46] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 12.

[47] "American Protection," *Guilfordian*, October 18, 1916, 4.

Carolina Quaker schools earned their degrees at Guilford, which made the school crucial for the future of Quakerism in the state. Thus ideas and opinions present among the student body could easily find their way into local classrooms.[48]

Regardless of the dangers abroad and at home, North Carolina Friends had hope for peace. Blair and Davis in the 1914 Peace Committee report commented on the increase of "wars and rumors of war" but argued this development accompanied a similar rise in commitments to peace around the world.[49] Friends also highlighted when the government seemed to be supporting a position of peace. The PAFA annual reports were typically read at the NCYM so North Carolina Quakers might keep up to date with the progress of the peace witness nationally. The 1915 PAFA report proclaimed its support for the federal government's foreign policy, which they believed was maintaining the United States' good relations with other countries, despite international conflicts.[50] The Peace Committee agreed on the wisdom of the government, particularly under the capable supervision of President Wilson, a known supporter of peace who helped steer the nation away from a war with Mexico in 1916. That same year at the NCYM, the Peace Committee presented a letter to be sent by the yearly meeting to Wilson. The letter conveyed "a general expression of thankfulness that our country had been spared what a short time ago seemed a threatening horror of impending war with Mexico," and furthermore wanted

[48] The school was open to non-Quakers, which makes it difficult to know if a particular student, especially an author of an anonymous letter or article in the school newspaper, was from a Quaker background or not. However, regardless of who expressed a specific sentiment, the school body was small and close-knit, and orations and debates from students were highly regarded, so ideas easily spread around campus.

[49] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Seventeenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 10.

[50] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 15.

to "covey to our beloved President…our confidence in his desire to preserve peace with all nations."[51]

North Carolina Quakers did not simply send letters and exclaim relief at the continuance of peace. There was also a regular schedule of peace-related activities, in which members of the Peace Committee were heavily involved. One strategy was to write about peace, which resulted in numerous pamphlets, newspapers, and even letters. Another option was to present peace ideas through talks and lectures. Franklin Blair was perhaps the best traveled of the committee in this regard, reportedly speaking at hundreds of schools and dozens of monthly meetings all over the state during the country's neutral years. A third approach was to organize oratory contests on peace. Run in large part by Blair and Joseph Peele, the NCYM representative on a national Quaker peace society, these contests attracted participation from students in colleges around the state. Another Friend who was actively involved in peace efforts in North Carolina was L.L. Hobbs, the President of Guilford until 1915, and a strong advocate for pacifism. Like Blair, Hobbs gave numerous lectures on peace topics, but also served in national peace organizations, notably as secretary of the North Carolina State Peace Committee and as a member of the executive committee of the American Peace Society. The Peace Committee reports also noted numerous examples of ordinary Quakers' involvement with peace activities, which included preaching about peace topics in monthly meetings, presenting the Quaker views on peace to non-Quaker audiences through lectures and literature, sending petitions and letters to congressmen advising caution with preparedness efforts, and organizing Bible school curriculum to

[51] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Nineteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held at Guilford College, N.C. from the Ninth of Eighth Month to the Fourteenth of the Same, Nineteen Hundred and Sixteen* (Greensboro, NC: Stout Brothers, 1916), 32.

incorporate lessons on peace. One Quaker teacher even used peace literature in a high school English class.[52]

The Peace Committee, knowing many North Carolina Quakers had lost touch with the peace testimony, made recommendations each year at the NCYM. Davis and Blair called principally for "much more effort…put forth to inform and indoctrinate our entire membership on the subject of war as taught in the Scriptures, expressed, interpreted and exemplified by George Fox."[53] In order to achieve these ends, the committee suggested monthly and quarterly meetings increase their efforts by creating local peace committees, which could help organize peace contests and spread the word about peace. Also realizing the costs of large-scale peace advocacy, they repeatedly requested appropriations to help fund the work of the Peace Committee, as well as the PAFA.[54] The reports from the PAFA, read at each convening of the NCYM, also contained suggestions for Quakers. The 1915 report argued the work of the organization would be for nothing "unless Friends as individuals, by their daily thought, daily talk and daily deeds keep alive the principles and ideals of peace and brotherhood."[55] The London Yearly Meeting, which annually issued a letter to American Friends, urged their brethren

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[52] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Seventeenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 11-12; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 11-12; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Nineteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 11-13.

[53] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 13.

[54] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Seventeenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 12; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 13; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Nineteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 13.

[55] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 15.

to continue to trust God, not only with their lives but also with their nation.[56] Suggestions were also made to students, principally through the *Guilfordian*. In one issue, a contributor referred to a recent prayer meeting on campus where a staff member of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was present. The organization was involved in relief efforts in Europe, and at the meeting there was a call for students to give money to help soldiers in prison camps, which the newspaper reprinted.[57] The goals for Davis, Blair, and others discussing the war were for Quakers to understand the horrors of the war and try to ameliorate the conditions in Europe through prayer and aid, which ultimately would keep Quakers aware of the problems of war and focused on ways to limit the suffering of those affected.

Although many recommendations were made to North Carolina Quakers, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent these were followed. Reports of the peace activities of a number of monthly and quarterly meetings indicated many in the NCYM were at least interested in continuing the conversation about peace. However, there are scant references to any fulfillment of the actions recommended by the Peace Committee. Even the NCYM as an organization did not follow through with some of the suggestions. Despite regularly hearing of the monetary needs, the yearly meeting repeatedly underfunded the Peace Committee, which resulted in members occasionally paying out of pocket for committee expenses. The NCYM also had a poor record of giving to the PAFA, only allocating $10 in 1915, tying the California Yearly Meeting with the lowest donation that year. In 1914 and 1916 the NCYM sent no money at all.[58]

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[56] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 13.

[57] "Students Asked to Aid European Prisoners," *Guilfordian*, November 15, 1916, 1.

[58] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 15; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Nineteenth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 17; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twentieth Annual*

The minutes do not state the reasons behind these financial decisions, so it is not clear whether these were unconscious oversights, hard decisions based on small budgets, or the prioritizing of other efforts over peace.

Quakers did not long need to wonder how best to promote peace in a neutral country. In April 1917, the United States entered the Great War on the side of the Allies. The prime question now was to what extent Quakers should participate in the war effort. The views of American Friends toward war varied widely among and within the yearly meetings, making it difficult to generalize the denomination. Since at its roots Quakerism was a movement of people listening to their Inner Light, that meditation could lead to very different results depending on the individual. Using broad categories, three basic stances toward war became apparent in the early months after the declaration of war. The most traditional Quakers held close to the historic peace testimony and professed conscientious objection to war. Another group felt a strong connection to pacifist views, but, following the example of many Quakers in the Civil War, decided an exception should be made in the case of the current war because of the righteousness of its cause. Lastly, some Friends were already far enough removed from early Quaker pacifism, so the war provided no obstacle for their consciences.

The first group was the most dominant in terms of official yearly meeting policies. All American yearly meetings from all branches of Quakerism officially remained pacifist, and several national Quaker organizations issued statements of pacifism as well. Among these yearly meetings, some segments of the Quaker population tended to more frequently assert conscientious objection to war. The non-pastoral meetings, which were the most conservative

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Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held at Guilford College, N.C. from the Eighth of the Eighth Month to the Thirteenth of the Same, Nineteen Hundred and Seventeen (Greensboro, NC: Stout Brothers, 1917), 18.

and traditional, largely opposed fighting in the war because of their ties to historic Quaker views. In addition, those Friends most involved with progressive reforms, many of whom had connections with some of the liberal Quaker schools, stayed close to pacifist views because of their participation in prewar peace campaigns.[59]

North Carolina Quakers found themselves on all sides of the war issue. However, like other yearly meetings, the NCYM officially proclaimed pacifism. Reports from monthly meetings published in the *Friends Messenger* indicated the continued peace efforts of North Carolina Quakers after American intervention in the war. For example, members of the Winthrop Monthly Meeting organized a peace gathering with special lectures on peace topics.[60] The Peace Committee also maintained its pro-peace activities, reporting in 1917 that it was conducting peace contests, giving talks, and distributing literature.[61] The next year, the annual report of the committee, now renamed the Peace and Arbitration Committee, noted the increased difficulty of planning peace meetings, likely because of the pro-war spirit of the country. Instead, they focused on peace sermons and demonstrating how the peace witness was a positive effort aimed at helping the world.[62] When explaining why this work was necessary, Franklin Blair argued, "We have not kept ourselves educated on the Bible reasons for peace and…do not

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[59] Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 251; Allan Kohrman, "Respectable Pacifists: Quaker Response to World War I," *Quaker History* 75, No. 1 (April 1986): 39-40; Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism* (New York: Macmillan, 1942), 517.

[60] "Winthrop," *Friends Messenger*, September 1917, 11.

[61] Franklin S. Blair, "Medal Peace Contests," *Friends Messenger*, April 1917, 7; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twentieth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 14.

[62] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twenty-First Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held at Guilford College, N.C. from the Seventh of Eighth Month to the Twelfth of the Same, Nineteen Hundred and Eighteen* (Greensboro, NC: Stout Brothers, 1918), 65-66.

have a strong conscientious conviction against war and for peace which [our parents and grandparents] had…. When this world war closes we shall be much better prepared to do constructive work for the permanent peace of the world."[63] Others agreed with Blair about the decline in Quaker education on peace, including one contributor to the *Friends Messenger*. The Friend stated most people knew about the Quaker views on peace, yet in Bible schools it was noted "some of the boys are indeed a little ashamed of this principle of Friends in these stirring times."[64]

The worry about outside perceptions of the peace witness was present for many Quakers. On numerous occasions Friends took care to express their loyalty to the United States and announce the patriotism they felt. Since pacifism was a historic stance for Quakers, it was not unusual for more traditional Friends to also express the respect and obedience for government found in the early history of their denomination. So although many Quakers unabashedly declared their views on war, they often then mentioned their patriotic fervor. The 1918 minutes of the NCYM noted, "While opposed to war on principle American Friends are loyal to our government."[65] Mary Mendenhall Hobbs, wife of former Guilford president L.L. Hobbs and daughter of the head of the boarding school that predated Guilford, attempted to dissuade any from seeing disloyalty in the Quaker position. She wrote in the *Friends Messenger*, "There is no disloyalty in [the peace witness]. We would lay down our lives rather than betray in the slightest

[63] Franklin S. Blair, "Peace and Peace Medal Contests," *Friends Messenger*, June 1917, 3.

[64] "Peace Instruction for Bible Schools," *Friends Messenger*, July 1917, 4.

[65] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twenty-First Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 15.

degree the land we love."[66] Fred Smith, editor of the *Friends Messenger* criticized the war spirit of the time, stating, "The whole nation is caught in the mighty cyclone of sentiment that is drawing young men…and this sentiment we call 'patriotism,' but this is only the emotional, the temporary, the impulsive." Regarding the labeling of Quaker pacifists as cowards and traitors, he argued, "The student of history knows that these criticisms are unwarranted…. There has never been a more loyal, patriotic people in the world, but their patriotism was based not upon the sensational but upon the eternal principles of the Fatherhood of God…. Therefore all war was wrong, and they could not conscientiously fight."[67] Quoting a statement from the Friends' National Peace Committee in Philadelphia, the *Friends Messenger* suggested true patriotism at that time entailed "not a resort to the futile methods of war but for the invention and practice of new methods of reconciliation and altruistic service."[68]

In North Carolina there were many Quakers who expressed this type of patriotism, most notably the large number of draft-aged men who refused to fight. Early in the intervention years, monthly meeting reports in the *Friends Messenger* began to mention instances of drafted men identifying as conscientious objectors. In some of these cases, the reports indicated the men were discharged because of their views.[69] Yet because of the traditional stance on the authority of the government, Quaker leaders did not encourage young men to disregard the law. This conundrum revealed an important need. Young Friends had to find a way to demonstrate their

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[66] Mary M. Hobbs, "Our Testimony," *Friends Messenger*, April 1917, 2.

[67] [Fred E. Smith?], "Friends and Patriotism," *Friends Messenger*, April 1917, 5.

[68] "A Message from the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in America," *Friends Messenger*, April 1917, 7.

[69] Hinshaw, *The Carolina Quaker Experience*, 259; "Union Cross," *Friends Messenger*, September 1917, 11.

pacifism while also showing their patriotism through noncombatant service.[70] Fred Smith summed up the situation for young Quakers: "While we are not responsible for the war, we must not shirk our duty now that the crisis faces us. There will be plenty of opportunity for all of our young men and women to volunteer."[71]

Friends did not have to wait long for suitable service opportunities to arise. The recently passed draft bill allowed members of recognized peace churches to attain exemptions from combatant roles, but these men would still be required to enlist for noncombatant positions. However, some Quakers saw being part of the military, even in a noncombatant role, as against their consciences. Thirteen Quakers met in Philadelphia within a few weeks of the declaration of war to discuss this issue. The ultimate result was the founding of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), modeled on similar organizations created by British Friends. The purpose of the AFSC was twofold: to aid Quakers in attaining exemptions from military service, and to create a program of alternative service satisfying both governmental requirements and Quaker consciences. The organization operated under the umbrella of the Red Cross and with government approval. After only a few months, an apparatus was in place for Friends to fulfill their duties, working in different relief efforts in Europe through the AFSC rather than serving as noncombatants in the military.[72]

Once the AFSC was in operation, North Carolina Quakers readily declared their support for the organization. Mary Mendenhall Hobbs recommended draft-aged men seize this

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[70] Hickey, *Sojourners No More*, 106; Anthony Manousos, "Guilford College, North Carolina Friends, and the First World War," *Southern Friend* 25, No. 1 (Spring 2003): 28.

[71] [Smith?], "Friends and Patriotism," 5.

[72] Keim and Stoltzfus, *The Politics of Conscience*, 29-30.

opportunity to answer their nation's call without resorting to violence.[73] After seeing the reports, Franklin Davis of the Peace and Arbitration Committee praised the work of the organization for making a "'great constructive contribution of love and service' in the war-stricken regions of Europe, especially in France."[74] The NCYM took steps to help young men desiring this type of alternative service. The editors of the *Friends Messenger* published a set of instructions for those interested in applying for placement in the AFSC reconstruction unit, and the yearly meeting established the Committee on Friends Service to aid conscientious objectors in obtaining alternative service.[75]

A number of North Carolina Friends took the opportunity of alternative service and worked with the AFSC during the war. Of the six hundred men the AFSC sent to France, the NCYM contributed at least eleven, including one member of the Peace Committee.[76] Some Quakers also served in noncombatant roles outside of the auspices of the AFSC. The Springfield Monthly Meeting reported one of its members was serving as the YMCA secretary at Camp Jackson.[77] Also working for the YMCA at the same camp was Thomas Newlin, the man who had succeeded L.L. Hobbs as president of Guilford only to resign after two years. Newlin wrote to the *Friends Messenger*, "The Y.M.C.A. is undertaking one of the greatest pieces of work ever

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[73] Manousos, "Guilford College, North Carolina Friends, and the First World War," 31.

[74] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twenty-First Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 66.

[75] Vincent D. Nicholson, "American Friends Reconstruction Unit," *Friends Messenger*, June 1917, 3-4; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twenty-First Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 15

[76] William J. Frost, "'Our Deeds Carry Our Message': The Early History of the American Friends Service Committee," *Quaker History* 81, No. 1 (April 1992): 15; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twentieth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 14.

[77] "Springfield Meeting," *Friends Messenger*, April 1918, 4.

entered into by any Christian organization. I feel that I am representing the church in this work."[78] For those who were not of draft age, the editors of the *Friends Messenger* reprinted a letter from a national Quaker organization calling for Friends to send money to feed the people in warn-torn areas of Europe. At least some monthly meetings followed through on the suggestion and sent aid. In one example, the Deep River Monthly Meeting reported raising money for the Armenian relief efforts as well as making clothes for the Belgium relief efforts.[79]

Despite the service of Quakers in the AFSC, the YMCA, and elsewhere, they did not always receive good treatment during the war years from those outside their denomination. Much of the persecution related to Quakers' interaction with the military. Even for those who received noncombatant positions, including Friends in the AFSC reconstruction units, there were restrictions. The military leaders were worried open discussion of Quaker views would lead to unpatriotic feelings among the soldiers, so Quakers were forbidden to discuss their peace witness with other people while in Europe.[80] Based on reports from Quaker noncombatants in military camps, there frequently were difficult interactions with military officers, who often held Quakers in low esteem and did not believe the genuineness of their beliefs.[81] There were also accounts of poor relations with soldiers stationed in the same camps. One noncombatant writing to Mary Mendenhall Hobbs outlined a particularly troublesome interaction at Camp Jackson. He related how a band of soldiers with handkerchiefs covering their faces confronted a group of Quakers in

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[78] Thomas Newlin, "Letter from Dr. Thomas Newlin," *Friends Messenger*, September 1917, 2.

[79] Walter C. Woodward, "To Friends Congregations in America Including Yours," *Friends Messenger*, May 1917, 1; "Deep River," *Friends Messenger*, April 1918, 4.

[80] Frost, "'Our Deeds Carry Our Message,'" 13-14.

[81] Manousos, "Guilford College, North Carolina Friends, and the First World War," 34.

their lodging, harassed them verbally, forced them to strip, stole their clothes, and told them to wait until they were issued uniforms. The author further described how the soldiers mocked them at meals to the point where the Friends decided they could no longer eat with the other men, instead requesting friends and family send food from home.[82]

Some Quakers also had problems obtaining noncombatant status in the first place. Early in the war, Quaker leaders had been optimistic about young men being able to easily acquire conscientious objector status, which would allow them to serve in noncombatant roles. In the end, there were enough Quakers having problems with this process that L.L. Hobbs wrote a set of instructions for obtaining noncombatant status. In the article, he admitted "in some instances it may be necessary to use a degree of persistence and some explanation of the rights which Friends have according to the law exempting conscientious objectors."[83] Ultimately, however, only thirteen American Friends went to military prisons for refusing to serve after being denied the ability to follow their consciences. This number is fairly low compared to other pro-peace denominations, which might be due to Quakers' openness about their patriotism and support for the government, despite their adherence to pacifism.[84]

Although a number of Quakers faced difficulties obtaining exemptions or encountered persecution while in the service, there were many Quakers who did not share these experiences. The most traditional Friends held close to the historic peace witness, but there were also large numbers of Friends who supported fighting in the war, either because they believed the cause

[82] Letter to Mary Mendenhall Hobbs, January 18, 1918, Box 2, Folder 10, Hobbs-Mendenhall Family Papers 1787-1949, Louis Round Wilson Library, University of North Carolina.

[83] L.L. Hobbs, "Friends' Exemption," *Friends Messenger*, December 1917, 5.

[84] Russell, *The History of Quakerism*, 515.

was just or because they did not ascribe to the traditional peace doctrines. Although it may appear strange for a denomination with such a long history of pacifism to have so many members willing to fight, there are a number of explanations for this division.

One major reason for the two camps among Friends during the Great War was the fact that changes in Quaker beliefs and practices regarding peace had already occurred in previous centuries. Early in the history of the denomination, one of the Quakers' chief aims was the transformation of the earth into a land of the saints. Taking up arms in combat would go counter to this ideal, which was one reason for the early doctrine of pacifism. Friends eventually deemed this goal unattainable, however, and turned to other pursuits. Their revised aim was the more achievable task of reforming society, which again had ties to peaceful activities, but not as strict a connection as their initial goal. This distinction caused a gradual reorientation in regards to peace. How Quakers defined the peace witness reflected this transition, which is particularly noticeable in the nineteenth century. In the 1800s and 1810s, Quaker opposition to war and refusal to fight were more ubiquitous, but toward the end of the century these stances had transformed more into an advocacy for peace, mirroring the sentiments found in many of the progressive peace organizations of that time. Thus the Great War did not represent a moment in history when Quakers abandoned their pacifist views, but rather an event that brought to light the changes already occurring in the denomination. The presence of this transformation explains why many Friends enlisted in the Union army during the Civil War.[85]

The record of Quakers in earlier wars highlights another explanation why some Quakers elected to fight in the Great War. The Friends had a long tradition of differing opinions on doctrinal matters, which resulted in the several splits of the nineteenth century. These

[85] Brock and Young, *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century*, 7; Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism*, 139, 162.

disagreements did not always lead to a schism, and often within a yearly meeting there were multiple interpretations of Bible verses, including those relating to peace. The carrying out of the peace witness was thus never uniform in the Society of Friends. Although Quaker pacifism had its roots in the early years of the church, how this was to be defined was a topic of debate. For example, Friends disagreed on whether paying taxes used to wage war, being a passenger on an armed vessel, or holding office during wartime were contrary to the peace witness. Some Quakers also thought specific wars to be just, which they believed permitted their participation. The Civil War was a prime example of this type of war, as many saw it as a fight to end slavery, but earlier Friends had also fought in Indian conflicts, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. When the peace witness was more closely tied to the opposition to war, those who fought in war could face disownment from their yearly meetings. However, by the time of the Civil War enough Quakers had made the same decision about certain wars being just, and as a result disownments were rarer.[86]

The reason why this variety of opinion was possible among the Quakers was due to the decentralized nature of their church. The organization of yearly, quarterly, and monthly meetings resulted in a less hierarchical structure than found in many other denominations. Like-minded monthly meetings grouped together to form quarterly meetings, and similarly for yearly meetings. Even for issues that gained widespread support, such as the prohibition against owning slaves, it took decades before all yearly meetings passed the appropriate measures. In addition, decentralization was also present in the relationship between the individual and the church. Since Friends followed the guidance of the Inner Light, they could not fault other Friends who gained different insights from the Inner Light in them. A different experience with

[86] Hamm, et al., "The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century," 163; Keim and Stoltzfus, *The Politics of Conscience*, 40.

the Inner Light could easily lead to a completely different realization about Scripture and the Christian life. Earlier in Quaker history, the Inner Light was seen as slightly more corporate, as evident by the general outlawing of slaveholding in the eighteenth century rather than leaving the issue to individuals. Over the course of the nineteenth century, mirroring similar transitions in the denomination, the Inner Light became more individualistic, which gave more weight to Friends' personal consciences, allowing more diversity in views on peace. Outwardly, however, these changes were not always apparent, due to the methods Quakers used to make decisions. Just as a Friend would not correct another's interpretation of the Inner Light, voting would devalue the insights that the Quakers in the minority gained from the Inner Light. Instead, yearly meetings sought spiritual consensus to make rulings, which could allow a strong traditionalist minority to prevent changes to historic doctrines, such as pacifism.[87]

These developments explain how some Quakers were able to transition away from a strict refusal to engage in warfare, but do not address why these members chose to do so. There is evidence of at least a couple reasons why some Friends took this approach to the historic peace witness. One explanation is tied to Quakers' connection to society and the larger American culture. When Friends immigrated to America they often lived in Quaker settlements, setting up a monthly meeting to serve local Friends. Except for some early involvement in colonial governments, American Quakers generally stayed out of politics and in some areas, such as the South and Midwest, became isolated from many other Americans. Gradually, however, Quakers became involved more and more in national life. In the centuries between the first Quaker

[87] Keim and Stoltzfus, *The Politics of Conscience*, 40; Elfrida Vipont, *The Story of Quakerism through Three Centuries*, 3rd ed. (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1977), 252; Steven Jay White, "Quakers, Conscientious Objectors, the Friends Civilian Public Service Corps, and World War Two," *Southern Friend* 14, No. 1 (Spring 1992): 7; Hamm, et al., "The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century," 50.

settlements and the Great War, many Friends became absorbed into the larger American social and cultural life. This trend was at the root of the two major splits in American Quakerism in the first half of the nineteenth century, as in each case the majority of Friends were adopting beliefs and practices that were common among the mainstream of American Protestantism, and smaller factions rejected these developments. Most Americans throughout the nation's history did not ascribe to any type of pacifist view, so this acculturation accompanied a similar embracing of war as acceptable under certain conditions. North Carolina Quakers were also part of this transition, as the vast majority was part of the Orthodox contingent, which was less strongly tied to the historic interpretations of Scripture. One example of their increased contact with non-Quakers was Guilford College, which had long accepted students from outside the church, and as a result Quaker students were exposed to different ideas and opinions.[88]

Another reason why Friends were abandoning the strict pacifist stance of early Quakerism was the lack of peace training. With the emphasis of many Quakers focused on other issues in the nineteenth century, such as evangelism or revivalism, the emphasis on the peace doctrine waned. By the turn of the century, this shift in focus, combined with a lack of recent major wars to renew an interest in peace, resulted in a de-emphasis in the history and nature of the peace witness in the education of young Quakers. Therefore, when the United States entered the Great War in 1917, draft-aged men had much less familiarity with Quaker pacifism and its reasons than previous generations, a point Franklin Blair of the Peace Committee was readily willing to admit. Due to the lower emphasis on pacifism during the decades of peacetime leading up to the Great War, the peace testimony also lacked a recent critical reappraisal. Although some Quakers involved in more progressive reform campaigns considered the social

[88] Hamm, et al., "The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century," 47; Hamm, *The Quakers in America*, 162.

and economic issues involved in war, many were ignorant of these connections and the contemporary scholarly conversations on the subject.[89] As a result of the lack of peace education and critical reevaluation of peace views, some Friends considered the peace testimony either outdated or insufficient. The fact that Quakers' refusal to fight and advocacy for peace had not prevented new wars, hindered ongoing wars, or converted others to pacifism gave some members cause for concern. The question was whether the peace testimony, as constructed, had any effect, or if it was a product of an earlier time and not relevant for the present age.[90]

The weakening of the pacifist stance was not contained to one area. After American intervention, excitement for the war was widespread, present in both Orthodox and Hicksite yearly meetings. This was particularly true of the meetings in the Northeast and Midwest, but was not absent from the South as well. Statistics on the proportion of Quakers who served in combat positions are difficult to determine, but most scholars agree it was probably around two-thirds. However, this number would also include those who attempted to attain an exemption, were denied, and decided to enlist rather than face possible prison time. The primary reason Friends gave for knowingly enlisting for combatant service was the importance of the nation's war aim, namely to make the world safe for democracy and free from tyranny. Some took a historical approach, noting similarities to the Civil War, a conflict fought for the lofty goals of preserving the Union and freeing the slaves.[91] The large number of Quakers who served as combatants indicates a majority of the younger generation either no longer had a connection to

[89] Brock, *Pacifism in the United States*, 881; Blair, "Peace and Peace Medal Contests," 3; Kohrman, "Respectable Pacifists," 37.

[90] Hamm, et al., "The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century," 45; Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 251.

[91] Russell, *The History of Quakerism*, 511-516; Kohrman, "Respectable Pacifists," 46; Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 251; Hamm, *The Quakers in America*, 51.

pacifism or felt the nation's quest for democracy trumped pacifism. The fact that there was no mass condemnation of members who enlisted for combatant service suggests the older generation had convictions similar to draft-aged Friends, or perhaps realized there was nothing to be gained from disowning the thousands of Friends who fought in the war.[92]

North Carolina faced its share of these developments as well. Although there was support for pacifism, due in large part to the efforts of the Peace and Arbitration Committee, there was also in the NCYM evidence that the peace advocacy of earlier decades was tempered. Perhaps most telling at the yearly meeting level was the continued lack of funding allocated for the PAFA and its peace activities. After giving only $10 in 1915, tied for last among all the contributing yearly meetings, the NCYM did not appropriate any additional funds for the remainder of the conflict, including the years when the United States was at war. It is difficult to know the reasons for this decision. The NCYM was not among the smallest yearly meetings and North Carolina Quakers did not seem to have problems raising money for relief efforts. Yet they did not include the work of the PAFA among their supported causes for any of those years.[93]

One explanation for the diminished support for peace was the level of community pressure and war propaganda, which encouraged members to agree with the justness of the war. Certainly by the end of the war this development was evident, as seen in a letter from Thomas Newlin, former Guilford president, published in the *Friends Messenger* in November 1918.

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[92] Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*, 251; Currey, "The Devolution of Quaker Pacifism," 123.

[93] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twentieth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 18; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twenty-First Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 64; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twenty-Second Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held at Guilford College, N.C. from the Sixth of Eighth Month to the Eleventh of the Same, Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen* (High Point, NC: W.A. Barber Printing, 1919), 79.

Newlin wrote movingly about the "atrocities committed upon the Belgians, French, Rumanians, Arminians and other peoples by the Germans," and argued German "education has been so materialistic for the last fifty years that they have lost all nobler aspirations and humanitarian feelings."[94] Another cause for the decreased intensity of the yearly meeting's support for pacifism may have been a realistic assessment of North Carolina Quakers and their views. The lack of peace education among the younger generation was known to NCYM leaders, which affected how they discussed wartime service.[95] In an article in the *Friends Messenger* explaining the process for conscientious objectors, L.L. Hobbs noted, "Each young man upon presenting himself to the encampment should make up his mind what stand he is going to take; if he is conscientiously opposed to bearing arms, he should maintain that attitude consistently from the start."[96] Rather than speak of conscientious objection as a foregone conclusion in line with the traditional Quaker teachings, Hobbs acknowledged the likely option of Friends not feeling this objection to war.

This prediction of the sentiments of draft-aged Quakers proved true. Many North Carolina Quakers voluntarily enlisted or were drafted for combatant military service. One letter written to Mary Mendenhall Hobbs even described one man who went to Canada to join the British army and fight in the war early. Many of the men and women who served in other positions, such as with the Red Cross and YMCA, did so not only because they felt it was their civic duty, but because they wanted to strengthen the soldiers to better fight the righteous war.

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[94] Thomas Newlin, "A Note from the Army Y.M.C.A.," *Friends Messenger* (November 1918), 1.

[95] Blair, "Peace and Peace Medal Contests," 3; Hickey, *Sojourners No More*, 106-107.

[96] Hobbs, "Friends' Exemption," 5.

Newlin, in the same letter where he criticized the German people, declared his goal in the YMCA was "to make the men better soldiers because I have ministered to their needs."[97]

As the most important educational institution for the NCYM, Guilford College was an important part of the response of North Carolina Quakers to the war. Enrollment was 233 in 1916-1917, roughly ten fewer students than the average of the previous five years, and was down to 184 the next school year. Dorothy Lloyd Gilbert, who arrived at Guilford as an English professor in 1925, wrote in an early history of the school that the principles of peace were widely supported on campus during the war, and relatively few students left to enlist. However, the atmosphere may not have been as strongly pacifist as described.[98]

One way to chart the opinions on campus is to note the content of public addresses. In regards to chapel talks and other lectures on campus, the war was clearly among the most popular subjects, and peace was part of that discussion. In November 1917, former college president L.L. Hobbs talked in chapel about the probable terms of the future peace, and the next month an English Quaker spoke about the wartime work of Friends in Europe. However, also in November 1917, a different speaker discussed how the war was a conflict between democracy and autocracy, and in February and March of 1918, two additional lecturers addressed the campus on the nature of democracy and its connection to the nation's war aims. One lecture in

[97] Manousos, "Guilford College, North Carolina Friends, and the First World War," 32; Letter to Mary Mendenhall Hall, May 23, 1917, Box 1, Folder 9, Hobbs-Mendenhall Family Papers 1787-1949, Louis Round Wilson Library, University of North Carolina; Newlin, "A Note from the Army Y.M.C.A.," 1.

[98] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twentieth Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 95; *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twenty-First Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 54; Dorothy Lloyd Gilbert, *Guilford: A Quaker College* (Greensboro, NC: J.J. Stone and Company, 1937), 258.

March 1918 even discussed the debt the United States owed to England due to the latter's honorable actions toward the younger nation.[99]

Although the *Guilfordian* editors typically noted students found campus addresses interesting, it is difficult to ascertain whether students felt more moved by the peace-oriented talks or the lectures emphasizing the nobility of the war. However, there is some additional evidence pointing to the existence of the war spirit on campus. In one instance detailed in the school newspaper, a campus literary society debated whether Robert La Follette, an antiwar senator from Wisconsin, was a patriot or a traitor. While the arguments for "patriot" essentially highlighted only the senator's years of service and conscientious objection to war, the arguments for "traitor," described by the editors as "sound" and "logical," called out La Follette as "an enemy to Democratic measures" and an abuser of "freedom of speech which is necessarily diminished in time of war."[100] On another occasion, as described in Gilbert's work, half of the men in the senior class planned to go to war, but changed their plans only after L.L. Hobbs counseled against this action. Even if large numbers of students did not enlist, these incidents indicate many students were at least caught up in the war spirit of the time.[101]

Although half the men in the senior class at least momentarily changed their minds about enlisting, there were a number of students who did fight in the war. The *Guilfordian* faithfully followed the movements of students who joined the military, publishing letters from them and printing any details gleaned second hand. As early as May 1917, the newspaper called attention

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[99] "Here and There," *Guilfordian*, October 17, 1917, 4; "English Friends in Wartime," *Guilfordian*, November 28, 1917, 1-2; "Miss Elliott Talks to Guilford Students," *Guilfordian*, February 13, 1918, 1; "Dr. Ward on the 'Spirit of Democracy,'" *Guilfordian*, March 20, 1918, 1, 4; "America's Debt to England," *Guilfordian*, March 3, 1918, 1-2.

[100] "Traitor or Patriot?" *Guilfordian*, November 28, 1917, 1.

[101] Gilbert, *Guilford*, 258.

to two students and one professor, who was also an alumnus, and their success at passing the examination for admission to officer training camp. The article writer concluded, "Guilford can well afford to take pride in her representatives and can feel assured that they will assist in upholding the noble record of North Carolina in other wars."[102] Another student left slightly before graduating to work in the chemical service of the army. The yearbook editors proudly declared, "We are sure that he will prove a valuable asset to [that] department."[103] Once enough information was gathered on Guilford men in the military, the *Guilfordian* published a list of men connected to the school and known to be in the military, along with details about their ranks and locations. In another article, the editors mentioned two alumni serving with the AFSC in France, indicating at least some adhered to the traditional Quaker pacifism. Based on these and other articles mentioning individuals serving overseas, at least forty Guilford students, alumni, and faculty were in some type of wartime service, and roughly half of these men appeared to be combat positions. The other half consists of those in noncombatant roles of varying descriptions. However, except for the two in the AFSC, there is no mention of whether those noncombatants obtained their posts due to exemptions from combatant service or by chance.[104]

When the fighting ended in November 1918, there were celebrations throughout the NCYM. At Guilford, an impromptu parade and series of orations ensued, with classes quickly forgotten for the day. The festivities lasted into dinner, where "Frankfurters better known by their pro-ally name of 'hot-dogs' were destroyed in great numbers, it having been ascertained

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[102] "Guilford to be Represented at Fort Oglethorpe," *Guilfordian*, May 16, 1917, 1.

[103] Guilford College, *Quaker 1918 Yearbook* (High Point, NC: Petrie Complete Service), 21.

[104] "A Partial List of Guilfordians in Military Service," *Guilfordian*, January 30, 1918, 3; "Scattergood Lectures on Reconstruction," *Guilfordian*, April 24, 1918, 3.

that they were invented by the Germans."[105] North Carolina Quakers continued to closely follow the news about the men who went overseas, but sad news was quick to arrive. Two days after the armistice, the *Guilfordian* reported the death of a 1918 graduate, Dalton Smith, who served in the engineering corps and died from wounds suffered in battle. In her history of Guilford College, Gilbert reported a total of three students were killed in action, though she does not clarify if this number included alumni. In addition, at least three monthly meetings had casualties from among their membership, which they announced in the *Friends Messenger*.[106] Newspapers brought good news from overseas as well. One issue of the *Guilfordian* discussed some of the Guilford men who achieved renown on the battlefield, including one former professor cited for bravery and another man who was part of a battalion awarded the French Croix de Guerre.[107]

Although the Society of Friends had a long history of pacifism prior to the outbreak of the Great War, most draft-aged American Quakers did not choose to pursue noncombatant positions. The roots of this break from the traditional peace testimony were present in American Quakerism at least as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century. Due to the organization and nature of the yearly meetings, an absence of pacifist sentiments did not result in automatic disownment. A large percentage of Quakers willing to fight was evident in the Civil War, and the numbers continued to grow in the decades following. When President Wilson called men to fight the war for democracy, two-thirds of draft-aged Quakers, including numerous North Carolina Quakers, answered that call by joining military units, while the remaining third pursued

[105] College Celebrates Conclusion of Peace," *Guilfordian*, November 13, 1918, 1.

[106] "Lt. Dalton Smith Dies from Wounds," *Guilfordian*, November 13, 1918, 1; Gilbert, *Guilford*, 258; "News from the Field," *Friends Messenger*, December 1918, 4.

[107] "Alumni Notes," *Guilfordian*, February 5, 1919, 3.

nonviolent ways to show their patriotism. This result did not destroy the peace testimony, but it did demonstrate with finality the minority position pacifism held in the circles of American Quakerism.

Chapter 2: The Churches of Christ

When the twentieth century began, the Churches of Christ (COC) already had a long tradition of pacifism and a track record of opposing American wars. This legacy continued into the years of the Great War. However, once the United States entered the war, the church experienced more conflict, both internally and externally, over this pacifist stance than ever before. Ultimately, church leaders made the shift from pacifism, first by dropping their advocacy for pacifism, and later by overtly supporting the American war effort. In many cases, these changes simply mirrored the shift already taking place among congregations throughout the South, and which finally manifested itself during the war. After the armistice, the COC entered the postwar years searching for its place in society.

The COC was the largest denomination to emerge from the Restoration Movement, or Stone-Campbell Movement, which originated during the Second Great Awakening in the early nineteenth century. The Restoration Movement originated out of the teachings of several American preachers, principally Barton Stone (1772-1844) and father and son ministers Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) and Alexander Campbell (1788-1866). The central thrust of their doctrine was in seeking Christian unity through a return to the primitive church of the New Testament. They did not see their followers as a denomination, but as a continuation of the early Christian church before schisms and divisions had fragmented it. However, at the very

beginning there were differences in their reasoning.[108] Religious historian Richard Hughes writes, "While Stone was a pietist who insisted that a return to apostolic holiness was the surest means to Christian union, [Alexander] Campbell was a rationalist who based Christian union on adherence to the New Testament as a kind of scientific blueprint for the church."[109]

The movement took as its only organizational structure the descriptions of the early church as found in the New Testament. Anything not mentioned, such as Sunday school and modern instruments, would then necessarily be unscriptural and improper for the restored Christian church. Since the Bible does not describe a central ruling church body, Stone and the Campbells argued individual congregations must govern themselves, using only the Bible as a guide. In lieu of a general assembly or conference, editors of major church periodicals adopted the roles of church leaders, discussing issues of church doctrine and suggesting certain interpretations of the Bible.[110] One major doctrinal stance emerging from early in their history was a rejection of participation in politics. The implications ranged from abstention from voting to refusal to fight in wars. However, since there was no central authority to officially clarify this doctrine, periodical editors took different approaches, and individual congregations varied on the extent to which they kept out of political life.[111] However, even here the two groups differed, particularly in the worldviews expressed by the founders, which affected their outlook on public

[108] Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 1-14.

[109] Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 12.

[110] Mark Alan Elrod, "The Churches of Christ and the 'War Question': The Influence of Church Journals" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1995), 3. In the absence of general assembly minutes or records from other organized groups, church periodicals provide the main source of information on the Churches of Christ and its doctrines and practices. Thus for this chapter, there will be a heavy emphasis on periodicals.

[111] Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 110.

life. Whereas Barton Stone "held to an apocalyptic worldview that rendered him pessimistic about his culture and his age," Alexander Campbell "entertained an optimistic, postmillennial perspective that rendered him an apostle not only for primitive Christianity but also for science, technology, and American civilization."[112]

The Restoration Movement was more accurately a joining of two movements formed separately and each without knowledge of the other. The followers of Alexander and Thomas Campbell were known as the Disciples of Christ, and Barton Stone led what he preferred to call the Churches of Christ. Finding they had similar goals and purposes, the two groups joined officially in 1832. However, the merger was never entirely complete, and would form the basis for a later split in the twentieth century. The Campbells' group was more northern in geographic scope, generally drew from the urban middle class, and held to a postmillennial view that saw the transformation of society as possible and predicted Jesus' return after this change was accomplished. Stone's followers were quite different, centering in the South, coming from more agrarian and rural communities, and supporting a premillennial position that viewed humanity as too fallen to be renewed except by Jesus' Second Coming.[113]

After the Civil War, theological divisions began to show between the southern and northern churches, aided by the recent sectional strife that put both segments on opposing sides. The southern churches were particularly aggrieved by the fact that the northern congregations had supported the Union instead of staying out of political affairs.[114] However, this was just one

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[112] Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 12.

[113] Richard T. Hughes and R.L. Roberts, *The Churches of Christ* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 1-10.

[114] David Edwin Harrell, Jr., "Disciples of Christ Pacifism in Nineteenth Century Tennessee," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 21 (September 1962): 270.

piece of an existing problem. The southern churches looked in horror at some of the liberties taken by the congregations in the North. Particularly egregious were the formation of a missionary society and the introduction of instrumental music, neither of which the southern brethren argued had precedent in the New Testament. When the federal census of religious bodies was conducted in 1906, it noted two different denominations, the northern Disciples of Christ and the southern Churches of Christ, which was the first official recognition of the divided movement. The two groups considered themselves distinct from each other throughout the rest of the twentieth century.[115]

For followers of both sides of the movement, pacifism was linked to their history from the very beginning. Alexander Campbell believed Christians should abstain from war and described the economic, social, and moral consequences of warfare.[116] Barton Stone viewed war as contrary to the Kingdom of Heaven because it killed those the Christian should instead be trying to save through evangelism.[117] Pacifism also connected to the movement's rejection of politics and goal of emulating the New Testament church, as they understood it. Many in the Restoration Movement stated there was no precedent for fighting in the early church, which had existed within the then non-Christian Roman Empire and yet had not presented armed resistance to persecution.[118] Others pointed out how fighting would necessitate killing Christians on the

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[115] Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 12.

[116] Thomas H. Olbricht, "The Peace Heritage of the Churches of Christ," in *The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking*, ed. Jeffrey Gros and John D. Rempel (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 205.

[117] Casey Spradling, "Pragmatism and Piety: Pacifism and the Churches of Christ," (MA thesis, University of Mississippi, 2007), 36-37.

[118] The history of Israel's wars with neighboring tribes chronicled in the Old Testament was not part of the movement's thoughts on war. Due to the heavy emphasis on the New

enemy side, and furthermore argued no one had the authority to correct a Christian if he or she interpreted pacifism in the Bible.[119] For some, pacifism was part of their current distancing and alienation in the world, and for others it grew out of their continual yearning for the Second Coming of Jesus and the church's final triumph over sin and wickedness.[120]

The movement's varied views of pacifism developed over the course of the nineteenth century. Since individual congregations were free to form their own opinions and interpret the Bible for themselves, there was also a non-pacifist tradition within the Restoration Movement. One of the major church leaders connected to pacifism was David Lipscomb (1831-1917), the longtime editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, published in Nashville. In his book *Civil Government*, published in 1889, he argued human governments were a result of the fall of man and throughout history their primary occupation had been to wage war, a byproduct of humanity's attempt at self-government.[121] To fight in carnal wars was to align oneself to the human governments that arose from sin. The Christian should therefore be in the world, but not of it, which would mean nonparticipation in political matters.[122] Lipscomb was a persuasive writer, and with his editorial

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Testament and the early church, the Old Testament was less often discussed, unless the conversation turned to prophecies.

[119] Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 98.

[120] David Edwin Harrell, Jr.*, The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century: Homer Hailey's Personal Journey of Faith* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000), 51; Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 119.

[121] Michael W. Casey, "From Pacifism to Patriotism: The Emergence of Civil Religion in the Churches of Christ during World War I," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 66, No. 3 (July 1992): 377.

[122] Elrod, "The Churches of Christ and the 'War Question,'" 20.

position was able to influence many within the Restoration movement, but his was not the only opinion available.[123]

For those who advocated pacifism, their views were not merely academic, but were applied during wartime in the conflicts of the nineteenth century. Alexander Campbell opposed the Mexican War, and many church leaders followed his example. However, there were also members who viewed the war positively, seeing it as a means of freeing people from Catholic despotism.[124] Two decades later, the Civil War was the first major challenge to the beliefs of pacifist members. During the war, there were two main groups who opposed fighting: those centered particularly in the border states who opposed the Civil War specifically, and those largely from Tennessee who maintained an opposition to all war.[125] Lipscomb, who lived in Nashville, was a major reason for the prevalence of this second type of pacifism in Tennessee. He was especially active during the Civil War, organizing church leaders to petition Union and Confederate authorities in Tennessee for conscientious objector status for congregants, and advising churches not to support any aspect of the war effort of either side.[126] Nevertheless, as with the Mexican War, there were congregations that supported war activities and members who enlisted. The northern churches tended to be more supportive of the war, which caused problems within the movement.[127]

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[123] Olbricht, "The Peace Heritage of the Churches of Christ," 197.

[124] Johnnie Andrew Collins, "Pacifism in the Churches of Christ, 1866-1945" (DA diss., Middle Tennessee State University, 1984), 36; Harrell, "Disciples of Christ Pacifism in Nineteenth Century Tennessee," 266.

[125] Harrell, "Disciples of Christ Pacifism in Nineteenth Century Tennessee," 267.

[126] Michael W. Casey, "From Religious Outsiders to Insiders: The Rise and Fall of Pacifism in the Churches of Christ," *Journal of Church and State* 44, No. 3 (Summer 2002): 458.

[127] Harrell, "Disciples of Christ Pacifism in Nineteenth Century Tennessee," 270.

During the rest of the nineteenth century, the northern churches withdrew from earlier ties to pacifism, while the Tennessee contingent grew stronger in their resolve. Due to the recent war of the 1860s, pacifism and the distancing from political matters became especially appealing to southerners. Lipscomb used his newspaper, the *Gospel Advocate*, first published in 1855, to broadcast pacifist issues to a willing audience over the next several decades. The periodical published articles on a variety of topics, including criticism of northern churches that supported the Union government, disapproval of the activities of Civil War veterans groups and Civil War commemorations, and opposition to imperialist actions of the U.S. government abroad.[128] When the Spanish-American War began, the *Gospel Advocate* and the *Firm Foundation*, published in Austin, became the two biggest critics within the movement, while northern presses generally joined in the jingoistic atmosphere.[129] Pacifism continued among some northern Christians, as did martial support among some southerners. By the time the twentieth century dawned, the southern Churches of Christ, soon to be officially recognized as separate from the northern Disciples of Christ, had inherited a mixed peace heritage. For the churches in the Lipscomb camp, the principles of pacifism and non-involvement were strong, but elsewhere in the South there was a diversity of opinion on these issues. Going forth, the stronghold of pacifist views would increasingly concentrate in middle Tennessee and parts of Kentucky.[130]

The COC soon had the opportunity to explore their distinct tradition and its connection with pacifism. When war erupted in Europe in 1914, most editors of COC journals believed the United States should stay out of the conflict, and praised Woodrow Wilson for taking a strong

[128] Casey, "From Religious Outsiders to Insiders," 459; Harrell, "Disciples of Christ Pacifism in Nineteenth Century Tennessee," 271-273

[129] Collins, "Pacifism in the Churches of Christ," 113-115.

[130] Harrell, *The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century*, 51.

stance for neutrality.[131] Two journals, the *Gospel Advocate* of Nashville and *Word and Work* of Louisville, were initially the most vocal about their opposition to war. Others, such as the traditionally pacifist *Firm Foundation*, now owned and edited by educator G.H.P. Showalter, wavered in their views and even published articles supporting early entry into the war.[132]

The two main figures of the *Gospel Advocate* and *Word and Work*, J.C. McQuiddy and R.H. Boll, respectively, were extremely influential in their periodicals' approach to the war. Jephthah Clayton McQuiddy (1858-1924) was born and raised in Tennessee, and after a brief time as a preacher, entered the printing world in his late 20s. In 1885, he became office editor and business manager of the *Gospel Advocate*, and worked at the journal for the rest of his life. A skilled businessman, he founded the McQuiddy Printing Company, which eventually printed the *Gospel Advocate*, and helped the periodical grow during his tenure as editor, building on its already well-established readership.[133] Robert Henry Boll (1875-1956) also spent the formative years of his life in Tennessee, emigrating there from Germany as a teenager. He attended David Lipscomb's Nashville Bible School and later taught there. After leaving the classroom, he spent the rest of his life preaching and working in publishing. He was a front page editor at the *Gospel Advocate* for several years before being forced to step down in 1915 due to his premillennial views. The next year, Boll took over editing responsibilities at *Word and Work*, a new periodical

[131] Casey, "From Pacifism to Patriotism," 379; Collins, "Pacifism in the Churches of Christ," 138.

[132] Robert E. Hooper, *A Distinct People: A History of the Churches of Christ in the 20th Century* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing, 1993), 111.

[133] H. Leo Boles, *Biological Sketches of Gospel Preachers* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1932), 435-439.

first printed in 1906, and moved the journal from New Orleans to Louisville, where he was minister of a church.[134]

Due to McQuiddy's relationship as co-editor with Lipscomb, and Boll's as a student and co-editor, the *Gospel Advocate* and *Word and Work* were the journals with the closest connection to Lipscomb's pacifist views. The two men also spent important periods of their lives in the traditional stronghold of COC pacifism: middle Tennessee. Following the course of pacifism within the COC during the Great War is best accomplished by tracing the trajectories of these two journals. Although the chief editors did not always hold similar views, and indeed by the end of the war the journals had diverged significantly, the arguments and opinions presented in these journals' articles are representative of the pacifist segment within the COC during the early twentieth century.

At the beginning of the war, the two journals advanced similar views about the conflict, although neither focused extensively on what was then a foreign conflict. A.B. Lipscomb, nephew of David Lipscomb and a managing editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, decried those who looked in anticipation to the possibility of war, pointing to the Biblical principle of loving one's neighbor and arguing for placing this teaching above national pride.[135] The journal increased its discussion of pacifism as the war raged in Europe, claiming that letters received from readers proved "practically all" were pacifist.[136] In an article titled "Why I Am a Pacifist," A.B. Lipscomb answered the title question by simply stating, "Because Jesus was," arguing, "'When

[134] *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), s.v. "Robert Henry Boll."

[135] A.B. Lipscomb, "Edifying As the Need May Be," *Gospel Advocate*, February 15, 1917, 145.

[136] A.B. Lipscomb, "Some Letters on the War Subject," *Gospel Advocate*, March 22, 1917, 281.

he suffered' he 'threatened not,' but 'committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.'"[137] The editors of *Word and Work* made a similar statement, but emphasized that Christians were not pacifists in the sense that they were opposed to war out of a humanitarian concern, but rather they did not fight in wars because they must serve God before human governments, and God forbids killing.[138]

The editors of *Word and Work* went beyond stating their pacifism and attempted to explain the war from a Biblical perspective. The journal was the primary premillennial COC periodical, and thus frequently published articles dealing with prophecies. During the war, the editors looked to understand the conflict using a Biblical framework. Soon after the outbreak of war, Stanford Chambers, the owner and editor before Boll, stated, "It would be the height of folly to take no special interest, from a prophetic viewpoint, in the present world-crisis, or to say it has no prophetic significance. It is a time for Christians to watch and be ready, for Jesus is coming!"[139] He clarified that although this was not Armageddon, it potentially might be the beginning of the tribulation that must come before that final battle.[140] The journal also published articles deriding recent attempts at international peace, arguing no reader of prophecy could believe the world could be ready for peace without making peace with God.[141] R.H. Boll

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[137] A.B. Lipscomb, "Why I Am a Pacifist," *Gospel Advocate*, March 3, 1917, 225.

[138] [R.H. Boll?], "The Christian's Attitude toward War," *Word and Work*, April 1917, 195-196.

[139] [Stanford Chambers?], "Christians' Present Duty," *Word and Work*, August 1914, 3.

[140] [Stanford Chambers?], "Is This Armageddon?" *Word and Work*, August 1914, 4.

[141] Augustus Shanks, "The World Crisis," *Word and Work*, October 1914, 12; Stanford Chambers, "What Shall Be Next?" *Word and Work*, November 1914, 13.

maintained the premillennial position after purchasing the periodical.[142] During his editorship, the journal continued to declare the war was not Armageddon and the world's peace propaganda was futile. However, at least one author emphasized international peace would come, but not until the Second Coming of Christ.[143]

Editors of both journals offered their readers a number of suggestions for conducting themselves during the neutral years. The editors of the *Gospel Advocate* called for readers to pray for the war to end soon.[144] Realizing the temptation for the nation to stray into the war, they expanded their advice to also include avoiding inflammatory speech and patriotic activities aimed at promoting war, such as singing the national anthem in church.[145] In addition to listing what activities to avoid, the editors also began to give suggestions of what readers should do. One constant in the *Gospel Advocate* throughout the war years was a listing of donations to relief organizations, such as those for Belgians and Armenians, since the editors believed Christians should support those suffering from war.[146] Another common theme was the need for evangelism in the world, and A.B. Lipscomb supported that mission by suggesting only conversion to Christ could lead to peace.[147] Boll and his contributors had similar thoughts to add

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[142] Boll was a leader of the premillennial camp of the Churches of Christ, which had been a source of conflict during his tenure at the *Gospel Advocate* and the reason why he ultimately had been forced to leave.

[143] R.H. Boll, "Is This Armageddon?" *Word and Work*, August 1916, 362; D.M. Panton, "Universal War," *Word and Work*, November 1916, 506; E.L. Jorgenson, "Has God's Church Failed?" *Word and Work*, April 1917, 155.

[144] J.C. McQuiddy, "The Spirit of the Press," *Gospel Advocate*, August 13, 1914, 869.

[145] J.C. McQuiddy, "Our President," *Gospel Advocate*, May 20, 1915, 490; J.C. McQuiddy, "Spirit of the Press," *Gospel Advocate*, July 15, 1915, 701.

[146] A.B. Lipscomb, "'Rescue the Perishing,'" *Gospel Advocate*, March 8, 1917, 226.

[147] A.B. Lipscomb, "Word and Work," *Gospel Advocate*, July 8, 1915, 665-666.

in *Word and Work*. One article from J. Edward Boyd illustrated the journal's suggestions. The writer advised, "One thing which should be a prominent characteristic of the followers of Jesus is a peace-loving, peace-seeking disposition."[148]

After years of uncertainty, the United States entered the war in April 1917. COC periodicals debated the situation extensively. The *Firm Foundation*, which had published articles form a variety of viewpoints prior to intervention, continued to take a multi-perspective approach, now focusing on arguments for and against pacifism.[149] The *Gospel Advocate* and *Word and Work*, mirroring their pre-intervention articles, held firmly to their support of pacifism in the initial months after the United States entered the war.

One issue present in the journals' pages was how to think of the war now that the United States was a participant. The *Gospel Advocate* editors particularly wrestled with how the war had come to the United States. A.B. Lipscomb pointed to the Old Testament for explanation. He described how God used various civilizations to bring judgment on the Israelites, and wondered if the present war was not a similar situation for the United States.[150] J.C. McQuiddy wrote, "God has overruled cruel wars in the past for his own glory, and no doubt he will overrule this war for the good of his people as well as his glory."[151] In particular, he hoped the war would bring an end to authoritarianism and religious intolerance. In *Word and Work*, co-editor E.L. Jorgenson explained the reason for the war simply: "Those who know the Word know that the

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[148] J. Edward Boyd, "Follow After Peace," *Word and Work*, December 1916, 540.

[149] Elrod, "The Churches of Christ and the 'War Question,'" 93.

[150] A.B. Lipscomb, "Jehovah Holds the Reins," *Gospel Advocate*, May 31, 1917, 522.

[151] J.C. McQuiddy, "Some Results from the War," *Gospel Advocate*, May 3, 1917, 432.

cause of all fighting is the corrupted human heart."[152] Although the journals did not blatantly criticize the government for taking the nation to war, they did highlight negative results of this action. Most in the COC supported prohibition, so a constant worry was soldiers coming into contact with alcohol in camps. The camps were also seen as hives of gambling, profanity, and sexual immorality.[153] In addition, some were worried about the effect of the war on the general population, pointing out how the conflict had caused many to preach the necessity of killing others because of the evilness of those people's nation.[154] Another concern was how the war would impact COC members. E.A. Elam, one of the *Gospel Advocate* editors, argued, "One of the most grievous things is that, with this great war and all its horrible consequences upon us, a great many church members are rushing right along in carelessness, indifference, worldliness, pleasure seeking, and even wickedness."[155] Ultimately, according to J.C. McQuiddy, the war would make any type of religious revival impossible.[156]

Understanding the war and its perils was motivation for the editors to keep members from conscription. Both journals focused heavily on supporting pacifism and conscientious objection in the early months of American intervention. The historical precedent for pacifism was chief among the points discussed. A.B. Lipscomb went back to the Old Testament and argued Daniel and his three friends, who had refused to abandon God during captivity, were early examples of

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[152] E.L. Jorgenson, "Words by the Way," *Word and Work*, September 1917, 375.

[153] J.C. McQuiddy, "The Saloon and the Soldier," *Gospel Advocate*, June 14, 1917, 579; [R.H. Boll?], "Will He Come Back Clean?" *Word and Work*, June 1917, 291-292.

[154] E.A. Elam, "'What Must We Do?'" *Gospel Advocate*, July 5, 1917, 648.

[155] E.A. Elam, "'What Must We Do?'" *Gospel Advocate*, July 19, 1917, 696.

[156] J.C. McQuiddy, "No Revival of Religion Can Be Expected," *Gospel Advocate*, November 8, 1917, 1077.

people who stuck to their conscience despite extraordinary circumstances.[157] The *Gospel Advocate* also referred back to historical reasons for pacifism by reprinting an article titled "Should Christians Go to War," first published in another Restoration journal in 1866, which stated Jesus never commanded his disciples to go to war.[158] J. Edward Boyd, a contributor to *Word and Work* argued Christians should only do what met God's approval, and Jesus, even when confronted by soldiers, ordered his disciples to put down their weapons. He concluded the desire to protect Christ greatly outdistanced any other "righteous cause" to fight, including that which brought the United States into the Great War.[159] In response to questions from readers, the editors answered, "Let the 'ifs' come, and consider whether we are to obey only in fair weather or in storm and tempest also."[160]

Some took these pacifist principles and tied them to political issues. J.C. McQuiddy was quick to highlight nonparticipation in politics, arguing that opposed to the COC member, "the man who holds office, who votes, and who is an active member of the political government, when his nation is involved in war, is logically called upon to shoot, if necessary, in order to maintain the principles of his government."[161] H. Leo Boles, a regular contributor to the *Gospel Advocate* and president of the Nashville Bible School, did not believe Christians who killed in war could simply pass the responsibility on to the government that conscripted them.[162] At a

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[157] A.B. Lipscomb, "The Plumb Line from Heaven," *Gospel Advocate*, July 12, 1917, 665.

[158] "Should Christians Go to War," *Gospel Advocate*, August 2, 1917, 763-764.

[159] J. Edward Boyd, "The Christian and War," *Word and Work*, May 1917, 214-216.

[160] [R.H. Boll?], "'If,'" *Word and Work*, June 1917, 290.

[161] J.C. McQuiddy, "Conscientious Objection," *Gospel Advocate*, July 26, 1917, 720.

[162] Olbricht, "The Peace Heritage of the Churches of Christ," 214.

church meeting in Murfreesboro, Tennessee he explained his ideas further, arguing Christians must obey God before the government, and regardless of the extent of one's love of country, to follow the order to kill is in opposition to the spirit of Christ.[163]

Although the COC had a history of nonparticipation in politics, this was not used as justification to disregard laws. The editors of these journals supported pacifism and conscientious objection, but they advocated following the legal processes in place. The *Word and Work* editors were hopeful the government would honor the wishes of conscientious objectors, based on the policy in earlier conflicts, and immediately after the declaration of war called for both congregations and individuals to send petitions to the president or secretary of war to plead for exemptions.[164] The *Gospel Advocate* had similar advice in the first month of intervention, pointing to the similarities between the current conflict and the Civil War, when Christians had received exemptions. The editors suggested purchasing David Lipscomb's *Civil Government*, which contained petitions sent to the Union and Confederate governments.[165] Once the government set up the draft and determined the process for exemptions, the journals published the details for their readers and called for all members to register for the draft, as required by law, and apply for exemptions on religious grounds, following the government's guidelines.[166] The *Gospel Advocate* editors went to great effort to prepare a folder for members petitioning the government for exemptions, which drew heavily from the requests submitted

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[163] H. Leo Boles, *Christian Warfare* (Cincinnati, OH: F.L. Rowe, [1917?]).

[164] [Boll?], "The Christian's Attitude toward War," 196.

[165] "How to Prepare Petitions against Carnal Warfare," *Gospel Advocate*, April 5, 1917, 334.

[166] E.A. Elam, "Submit to the Powers that Be," *Gospel Advocate*, August 9, 1917, 769.

during the Civil War.[167] Apparently a significant number of congregations took the journals' advice, because in Texas alone several churches reported they had submitted petitions for the whole congregation. One church even sent a delegation to Washington to present their petition in person. On the campus of the Nashville Bible School, petitions were made available to students who wished to apply for exemptions.[168] Due to the number of congregations sending petitions, the editors of the *Gospel Advocate* found it necessary to later print a second edition of their exemption folder.[169]

Although the periodical editors supported conscientious objection, they drew the line at absolutism, refusing even the noncombatant service offered to those given exemptions from combatant roles. R.H. Boll made it clear conscientious objectors must obey the government and labor in the assigned noncombatant service, even if that labor indirectly helped the war effort. He pointed to Biblical passages commanding Christians to obey governments, unless they ordered one to disobey God, and argued taxes and other services also indirectly allowed the war to be fought.[170] The *Gospel Advocate* editors agreed, though they questioned whether some tasks, like digging a trench, might not be too related to the killing.[171]

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[167] "Folder Relative to Exemption," *Gospel Advocate*, July 5, 1917, 648.

[168] W.T. Carter, "Can a Christian Go to War," *Firm Foundation*, April 24, 1917, 1; J.C. Estes, "The Master's Vineyard," *Gospel Advocate*, May 31, 1917, 540; A.B. Lipscomb, "An Appeal for Exemption," *Gospel Advocate*, June 28, 1917, 617-618; Harrell, *The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century*, 52.

[169] "Another Edition of Exemption Petition," *Gospel Advocate*, August 2, 1917, 740.

[170] R.H. Boll, "When Conscience Leads Wrong," *Word and Work*, September 1917, 404-405.

[171] A.B. Lipscomb, "How Christians Can Help the Country," *Gospel Advocate*, April 26, 1917, 401; A.B. Lipscomb, "Should Christians Dig Trenches?" *Gospel Advocate*, April 26, 1917, 401.

Despite their distancing from politics, the journal editors had a positive view of the government. The *Gospel Advocate* editors in particular were open about their respect for the government, calling it "the greatest human government on earth" and stating it respected serious conscientious convictions against combatant service.[172] Later in the year, A.B. Lipscomb reported they had been right because the government had honored its commitment to approve cases of conscientious objection."[173] The editors also supported acts of patriotism, arguing Christians had many blessings living in the United States. However, they believed patriotism should be demonstrated in Biblical ways, hence the support for members serving in noncombatant roles.[174]

At the time of the Great War, the members and congregations of the COC ranged in their views of government from those who completely opposed participation in political affairs and interaction with the government to those who rejected the anti-political tradition and embraced voting and other civic acts. Due to their positive view of the government, the editors of the *Gospel Advocate* and *Word and Work* fell somewhere in the middle. They did not vilify the government, but continued to advocate nonparticipation in political life and war.[175] However, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a large number of members had moved and were still moving away from the more traditional stance to one supporting full integration into public life, and the war accelerated this shift. Editors at both journals observed these changes taking place and continued to advocate a moderate approach, though with time they also

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[172] E.A. Elam, "'What Must We Do?'" *Gospel Advocate*, July 5, 1917, 648.

[173] A.B. Lipscomb, "Disposition of 'Conscientious Objectors,'" *Gospel Advocate*, November 8, 1917, 1073.

[174] McQuiddy, "Some Results from the War," 432.

[175] Collins, "Pacifism in the Churches of Christ," 133.

followed the majority, aided by wartime pressures coming from both factions inside the church and government and community forces outside of it.

Historian Richard Hughes suggests a number of possible explanations for this change. First, David Lipscomb, the longtime voice for pacifism in the COC, died in November 1917, and had already stepped down from heavy involvement in the *Gospel Advocate* before the end of his life. With Lipscomb no longer championing the anti-political and pacifist views, the church drifted away from these traditional stances. Also, the recent split from the Disciples of Christ placed the COC in a more socially marginalized position, and embracing the war and military service was one way to avoid further social isolation. In addition, pacifism had never been the majority position within the COC, and was becoming less prominent with each passing decade. As with other denominations during this time, the new generation coming to age was the least tied to pacifism and more often desired to hold more mainstream views on the world and political issues such as war. Thus many draft-aged men rejected the position held by some in their parents' generation. In fact, sons of some of the more vocal COC leaders, such as J.C. McQuiddy, enlisted and fought in the war, demonstrating the extent of younger members' break with the church's views on pacifism.[176]

The rejection of the pacifist view was evident in several ways. Perhaps most tellingly, relatively few COC members declared conscientious objector status when registering for the draft. Military records were incomplete in regards to conscientious objectors, particularly their number and denominational affiliation. One source puts the number of COC conscientious objectors in military camps at thirty-one, but other records have different numbers.[177] By all

[176] Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 146-147.

[177] Michael W. Casey, "New Information on Conscientious Objectors of World War I and the Churches of Christ," *Restoration Quarterly* 34, No. 2 (1992): 84.

accounts, a sizable percentage of those who attempted to receive noncombatant service came from Lipscomb's Nashville Bible School. In fact, many of these students and alumni signed a petition early in the war asking for exemption from combatant roles.[178]

Another sign of the lack of pacifist spirit in the church was the embracing of the political system, to the point of even mixing religion and politics. Historian Michael Casey argues, "For the first time in the Churches of Christ the fate of America was intertwined with the fate of Christianity. The barrier between politics and religion that the sectarian theology of David Lipscomb had erected was now breached."[179] This was visible in the way many members embraced the patriotic war spirit of the time and accepted the idea of a religious cause behind the war. They believed the United States was chosen by God, so it made sense for the war to be a God-given opportunity for the nation to improve the world.[180] For this reason, many journals, such as the *Christian Leader* of Cincinnati, quickly supported the U.S. war effort.[181]

If the United States was a nation chosen by God, and was fighting in what some viewed as a holy quest, then it logically followed that Germany, the principle opponent, was evil. In many COC journals all things German were condemned and vilified, and some ministers encouraged the troops to kill as many Germans as possible. The *Apostolic Review* of Indianapolis argued that since Germans were murderers, God would want the murderers killed. For those who rejected the government propaganda against Germany, the recent German theological trend of higher criticism of the Bible was enough reason to despise the country and

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[178] Hooper, *A Distinct People*, 114.

[179] Casey, "From Pacifism to Patriotism," 384.

[180] Casey, "From Pacifism to Patriotism," 382-383.

[181] Spradling, "Pragmatism and Piety," 75.

view it as anti-Christian. For a people trying to return to the New Testament church, attempts at discrediting the Bible were seen as especially threatening to their beliefs.[182]

The decline of pacifism was also evident in the actions of the draft-age COC members. Many schools created Student Army Training Corps on campus during the war, and COC colleges, such as Abilene Christian College and Thorp Springs Christian College in Texas, were no different. Oftentimes the administration introduced the program at the insistence of its students.[183] Some students did not wait to graduate, instead leaving school to enlist. In fact, most draft-age COC went into the military, including relatives of important pro-pacifism leaders such as J.C. McQuiddy and J.N. Armstrong, president of Cordell Christian College, the largest COC school at the time.[184]

A final clue to the shift away from pacifism was the extent those with pacifist views faced harassment and persecution from fellow COC members. The easiest group to ridicule was the absolutists, and even the *Gospel Advocate* and *Word and Work* did not support their position. G.H.P. Showalter of the *Firm Foundation*, although opposed to war, called absolute pacifism unbiblical. He condemned even those outside the COC who held to this stance, and in the case of Mennonite pacifism, called it the result of German agents.[185] Many did not stop at targeting absolutism and criticized pacifism in general. After H. Leo Boles gave his speech on pacifism in

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[182] Casey, "From Pacifism to Patriotism," 385-388; Hooper, *A Distinct People*, 110.

[183] Collins, "Pacifism in the Churches of Christ," 161; Casey, "From Pacifism to Patriotism," 385.

[184] Hooper, *A Distinct People*, 113; L.C. Sears, *For Freedom: The Biography of John Nelson Armstrong* (Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing Company, 1969), 156.

[185] G.H.P. Showalter, "The Relation of Christians to War," *Firm Foundation*, June 11, 1918, 2; G.H.P. Showalter, "So-Called Conscientious Objectors," *Firm Foundation*, June 11, 1918, 2.

Murfreesboro, he reportedly received letters condemning his views and calling him a slacker.[186] The journals highlighted the anti-pacifist rhetoric during the war years. One *Gospel Advocate* contributor, S.H. Hall, bewailed how members were calling other members slackers. Editor E.A. Elam stated pastors were beginning to shame from the pulpit those who would not fight, but observed none of these pastors were enlisting in the military. In *Word and Work*, R.H. Boll reported a number of COC ministers had undermined noncombatant exemptions by testifying to draft officials that the church did not teach Christians should not go to war. He responded by giving a number of Bible references concerning Jesus' views of war.[187]

Some members were not content to merely voice their disapproval of conscientious objection and went to greater efforts to hinder pacifist activity. For example, in Kentucky some COC ministers were reported to the authorities for opposing the government, though the ministers would have argued they were only preaching peace.[188] Another instance of anti-pacifist activities occurred in Cordell, Oklahoma, the location of Cordell Christian College. Founded in 1907 by the founder of the town of Cordell and two other COC members, the college became the largest COC school in the nation. Cordell president J.N. Armstrong and many of the faculty favored noncombatant service for Christians, and local COC members tried to get the school into trouble over these views by stirring up government and community opposition. Some pointed to the school's German language classes as evidence of pro-German activity. Despite the fact that many on campus supported the war effort through rationing and war bonds,

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[186] Leo Lipscomb Boles and J.E. Choate, *I'll Stand on the Rock: A Biography of H. Leo Boles* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1965), 178.

[187] S.H. Hall, "The Intolerant Spirit," *Gospel Advocate*, July 19, 1917, 693; E.A. Elam, "'What Must We Do?'" *Gospel Advocate*, July 19, 1917, 695; R.H. Boll, "What the Church of Christ Teaches," *Word and Work*, March 1918, 122.

[188] Casey, "From Pacifism to Patriotism," 385.

the local draft board and county council, as well as the Bureau of Investigation, targeted the school. Ultimately, the college shut its doors and never reopened.[189]

These instances highlight the increasing involvement of federal officials into the activities of the church. Often more than internal or community pressure, government action was a major reason why many COC pacifists during the war either abandoned their stance or kept quiet about their views. Due to the organization of the COC, the church was already at a disadvantage when the nation entered the war. Since they had no central governing body, the highest level of authority was the congregation, and individual congregations could have very different opinions on particular issues. Without a general assembly or council of elders, the church had no standard creed shared by all members, which meant pacifism, even if it had been universal throughout the church, could not be proven to be a church teaching. Some COC leaders, including J.C. McQuiddy, tried to convince the government to grant the Churches of Christ status as a peace church, but all failed due to the lack of a uniform church teaching on pacifism.[190] As a result, most COC conscientious objectors found themselves in military training camps where the veracity of their convictions was tested. Although many were allowed to serve in noncombatant roles, not all members received this consideration. Of those that did not, some refused the combatant service and were court-martialed and thrown into military prisons.[191]

For COC pacifists who were not draft-aged men, harassment from the federal government was most felt in censorship. With the passage of the Espionage and Sedition Acts in

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[189] Michael W. Casey, "The Closing of Cordell Christian College: A Microcosm of American Intolerance during World War I," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 76, No. 1 (March 1998).

[190] F.W. Smith, "A Matter of Simple Justice," *Gospel Advocate*, September 23, 1920, 931.

[191] Casey, "New Information on Conscientious Objectors of World War I and the Churches of Christ," 83-84.

1917 and 1918, it was illegal to do anything that hampered the war effort. At times, and depending on the investigating official, even supporting conscientious objection was considered seditious. Once again, in many cases COC members, not outside observers, were the individuals alerting government officials to suspicious activities of their fellow members. Flavil Hall, a Georgia minister, preached a pro-pacifism sermon, and after being reported by a congregant, the Bureau of Investigation dispatched an investigator to warn him against further sermons on that topic. Even if not reported by other members, COC ministers could still become a target for the Bureau. In Tennessee, another minister, A.N. Trice, voiced his opposition to a United War Work fundraising event held at his church building. A local branch of the American Protective League, a civilian group that informed the Bureau of unpatriotic activity, heard of the incident and made the report.[192]

Oftentimes the suspected unpatriotic activity was written, not spoken. The post office had the authority to mark certain periodicals or pamphlets as unmailable if they violated the Espionage and Sedition Acts. After William Jasper Miller, a minister in Texas, published a pamphlet about pacifism, complaints reached the post office, which called for him to desist and ordered his pamphlets seized. The *Christian Leader* described the case of another southern minister who, after writing an antiwar article, received a visit from a government official who searched his house.[193] The major blow to the pacifist segment of the COC came only a few months into the war. A reader of the *Gospel Advocate* complained to the local district attorney about the periodical's pacifist stance. The official chose not to prosecute, but warned the editors

[192] Michael W. Casey and Michael A. Jordan. "Free Speech in Time of War: Government Surveillance of the Churches of Christ in World War I," in *Free Speech Yearbook 1996*, ed. John J. Makay (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1997): 107-108.

[193] Casey and Jordan. "Free Speech in Time of War," 105; Fred Rowe, "An Official Warning," *Christian Leader*, June 11, 1918, 5.

to change the tone of the journal or face arrest. Beginning in the late summer, the editorial stance of the *Gospel Advocate* changed noticeably. Articles that fervently argued Christians should not go to war would no longer be found in the journal's pages. Instead the editors frequently focused on positive actions members could do to alleviate the horrors of war.[194]

In addition to reacting to religious, community, and government forces, journal editors at a basic level needed to sell subscriptions to stay in business. The war years were difficult for smaller newspapers, since certain materials were subject to rationing programs and costs in general increased. In addition, many subscribers had less money to spend on luxuries, which meant the number of newspaper subscriptions declined. As a result throughout the war years there were frequent calls in both the *Gospel Advocate* and *Word and Work* for readers to renew their subscriptions. The editors even pleaded for readers to find new potential subscribers. One way to win more readers was by publishing stories they wanted to read and discussing ideas they found agreeable. Reducing the intensity of pacifist views and adopting a more positive view of the war effort were two ways newspapers could more closely mirror the sentiments of the time and maintain an audience.[195]

Thus due in large part to the strong reaction to pacifist sentiments from both church members and government officials, the *Gospel Advocate* and *Word and Work* began to follow the shift already taking place in the COC in general, departing from their hardline prewar pacifist views. Initially, the editors pursued a path of cautious peacefulness, lightening the intensity of their pacifist stance. Gradually, throughout the rest of the war, they began to embrace more of

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[194] Spradling, "Pragmatism and Piety," 78; Collins, "Pacifism in the Churches of Christ," 151.

[195] [R.H. Boll?], "The Last Call," *Word and Work*, June 1917, 246; J.C. McQuiddy, "Denominational Papers," *Gospel Advocate*, August 23, 1917, 817.

the war fever prevalent in much of the church and the nation. Due to the differences between the various editors and contributors of the two journals, these two stages overlapped greatly and occurred at different times. *Word and Work*, as the smaller of the two journals, was fortunate to avoid intense investigation from government officials. As a result, the first stage is less apparent in its pages when compared to the *Gospel Advocate*, and the second almost nonexistent.

One of the first signs of the cautious approach was the "decriminalizing" of fighting in the war. In contrast to the *Gospel Advocate*'s stance earlier in the conflict, that all Christians should be opposed to war, in late July J.C. McQuiddy, wrote, "A man should not plead conscientious scruples who really has none. Men should not be shirkers now."[196] One month later, S.H. Hall mentioned a group of men arriving at a training camp and stated, "It is reasonable to suppose that many of these men are church members and that many others will come from homes where father and mother are members of the church of Christ."[197] Although he mentioned conscientious objection later in the article, he did not condemn the men for choosing to fight. Within a few months, the journal was collecting donations to finance mailing issues to all the church members in military camps.[198] In early 1918, McQuiddy stated the editors' new view: "While this journal discourages war, yet it is not disposed to disfellowship the young man who feels that it is his duty to take up arms to oppose the tyranny that he has been taught to hate all of his life and to defend the religious freedom that he so dearly loves."[199] The fear of the evils of

[196] McQuiddy, "Conscientious Objection," 721.

[197] S.H. Hall, "Important Request to Our Tennessee Readers," *Gospel Advocate*, August 30, 1917, 837.

[198] "The Soldier Boys' Fund," *Gospel Advocate*, December 20, 1917, 1229.

[199] J.C. McQuiddy, "The Need of Religious Workers in the Camps," *Gospel Advocate*, February 7, 1918, 125.

military camps apparently, one early hindrance to supporting the war, was apparently no longer a concern in 1918. The journal included quotes from another periodical, the *American Boy*, which had reported there were hardly any vices in the camps in Europe.[200] At the end of the war, McQuiddy wrote, "Far be it from me to detract anything from the splendid valor and glory attained by our young men for their love of freedom and the truth and for their determination to uphold the right. For them I have only words of praise and commendation."[201] Although the journal never advised men to fight in the war, by Armistice Day they no longer spoke negatively about those who did take combatant roles.

One explanation given for why the *Gospel Advocate* editors changed their views was the goal of ending the war quickly. McQuiddy stated, "While this journal doubts not that war is antichristian, the time for the discussion of this war is passed…. Christians should not be so stupid as to do anything that will prolong the war or that will result in the sacrifice of more lives."[202] In another issue, he added, "The sensible and right thing to do is to get out with the least possible bloodshed and loss of life. Christians should do all within their power to bring this war to a righteous conclusion and a lasting peace."[203]

Since bringing the war to a conclusion quickly was a chief objective, the editors also supported efforts other than fighting that would help the war effort. One of the easiest ways for a church to provide assistance in wartime is through spiritual aid, and both journals discussed the

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[200] J.C. McQuiddy, "Christians Should Be of Good Cheer," *Gospel Advocate*, August 3, 1918, 754-755.

[201] J.C. McQuiddy, "Does Fighting and Dying for One's Country Atone for Sin?" *Gospel Advocate*, December 12, 1918, 1184.

[202] J.C. McQuiddy, "Buy a Liberty Bond," *Gospel Advocate*, May 2, 1918, 420.

[203] J.C. McQuiddy, "An Official Warning," *Gospel Advocate*, June 20, 1918, 581.

religious work in military camps. To help local churches coordinate worship services, one *Gospel Advocate* contributor asked readers to send in the names of members going to military camps in Georgia. Another member wrote about efforts to construct a church building at a military camp in Texas. In *Word and Work*, there were good reports of successes at camp services in South Carolina and Georgia.[204]

Once members were in Europe, it became more difficult to look after their spiritual wellbeing. McQuiddy threw his support behind the interdenominational drive to establish a chaplaincy program for the men overseas. With the chaplaincy program established and set in motion, most then focused their attention on the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), a nondenominational organization that provided religious services for soldiers. This was a concession for some members, since the COC had traditionally not formed any organizations for church work. One member wrote a letter to the editor of the *Gospel Advocate* asking whether Christians could do work through the YMCA. In his response, McQuiddy argued a Christian could contribute to such organizations as long as their work did not undermine the church.[205] R.H. Boll agreed, calling for Christians to join in supporting all relief organizations, even those not focused on spiritual aid, since God had "enjoined upon the members of the Body of Christ, that, as they have opportunity they should do good unto all men."[206] By the end of the war, some had begun to see weaknesses in the YMCA. E.A. Elam, drawing on a recent article in the

[204] Morgan H. Carter, "Do You Know Any One in the Drafted Army?" *Gospel Advocate*, August 23, 1917, 813; J.H. Lawson, "What Shall We Do?" *Gospel Advocate*, February 28, 1918, 194; "News from the Camps," *Word and Work*, July 1918, 252.

[205] J.C. McQuiddy, "Chaplains for the Army," *Gospel Advocate*, December 13, 1917, 1211; J.C. McQuiddy, "Query Department," *Gospel Advocate*, January 24, 1918, 77.

[206] R.H. Boll, "Christians Relation to Relief Organizations," *Word and Work*, January 1918, 2.

Literary Digest, described some of the shortcomings of the organization, mainly stressing the lack of substance in its religious services. McQuiddy, responding to another letter to the editor about the YMCA, stated Christians should not expect to glorify God through the YMCA, since it was a human institution. Although the COC generally supported the YMCA and similar organizations, members did see the flaws in providing spiritual assistance outside of the work of the church.[207]

Journal editors also pressed members to give their support to the war effort in ways other than spiritual aid. For example, the *Gospel Advocate* frequently encouraged readers to follow the federal food conservation guidelines, and even used Bible references to illustrate how Christian principles supported conservation efforts. The periodical also occasionally discussed the good work carried out by the Red Cross, arguing no Christian could object to the services they provided the soldiers. However, readers again found problems in this organization as well. One letter to the editor expressed concern over the practice of raffling to raise money for the Red Cross. J.C. McQuiddy confirmed the practice was gambling and therefore to be avoided, but encouraged his readers to not fail to help out in any way they could, even mentioning that he gave money to such organizations.

Another way to give financial support was by purchasing war bonds. This was the least desirable option for the editors of both journals, since the bonds were used to fund military activities, and thus killing.[208] However, McQuiddy justified the purchase of war bonds by arguing, "It is far better to voluntarily buy Liberty bonds in order to uphold and maintain the

[207] E.A. Elam, "'Imperfect Religion in the Y.M.C.A.,'" *Gospel Advocate*, December 12, 1918, 1182-1184; J.C. McQuiddy, "Query Department," *Gospel Advocate*, December 12, 1918, 1187.

[208] J.C. McQuiddy, "Food Conservation," *Gospel Advocate*, November 22, 1917, 1126; J.C. McQuiddy, "Query Department," *Gospel Advocate*, January 17, 1918, 59.

government that guarantees to us religious freedom and which is striving to insure lasting peace to the governments of this world than it is to be forced to pay an indemnity to Germany."[209] In *Word and Work*, R.H. Boll was less enthusiastic about the prospect of buying war bonds, and his lack of interaction with the Bureau of Investigation meant he was able to speak his mind a little more freely. He argued war bonds allowed more people to be killed, and therefore should not be voluntarily bought. However, when discussing the possibility of decreeing mandatory purchases of war bonds, he stated, "We very much wish the government would do so—it would deliver us out of a very unwelcome conflict and difficulty. If the government would demand our money of us we could and would let it go willingly and cheerfully; for in that case it would come under the head of taxes, tributes, and customs which the Lord commanded us to pay."[210]

Backing down on their criticism of fighting and generally supporting the war did not mean the journal editors abruptly rejected their commitment to pacifism and conscientious objection. Articles portraying these views in a positive light continued to grace the pages of the two periodicals. *Word and Work*, as the smaller and newer of the two, had been able to avoid a Bureau of Investigation inquiry and was able to maintain its support of pacifism a little easier. R.H. Boll, however, was careful to clarify that Christians were not pacifists, since they did not believe war was avoidable and did not stay out of wars for humanitarian reasons. They should simply try to follow God's commands. Boll was not the only one to hold this position. Don Carlos Janes, a contributor to the journal, related the stories of John and Peter, who had refused an order to stop evangelizing, and of Daniel and his friends as examples of conscientious

[209] McQuiddy, "Buy a Liberty Bond," 420.

[210] R.H. Boll, "Christians and War Investments," *Word and Work*, April 1918, 172.

objectors in the Bible. He suggested Christians must not do what violates their consciences.[211] The *Gospel Advocate* necessarily had to be more reserved in its support of pacifism. When talking about conscientious objection, the editors edged into apologetics. E.A. Elam explained conscientious objectors were not opposed to this particular war, but any war. He wrote, "Thousands in the church of Christ…, however much they love their country and are willing and ready otherwise to do for it, cannot conscientiously engage in carnal warfare."[212] Another approach was to undermine arguments for war. In one issue, A.B. Lipscomb addressed a certain passage by the apostle Paul, and stated it was not meant as an encouragement for Christians to go to war.[213] Ultimately, although there were pro-pacifism articles in both journals, their number and the intensity of their arguments declined starting in the second half of 1917.

One topic discussed early in the war was the ill effects of the war, particularly on people. As the journals became more cautious in their approach, the editors handled this topic more carefully. For the *Gospel Advocate*, the issue of anti-German views and behavior was troubling. J.C. McQuiddy looked ahead to the end of the war and considered how the nation would treat Germany. He argued Christians should not be dominated by hate, but act as Christ-like as possible. In another issue, McQuiddy counseled for the postwar peace settlement to be based on the Bible, cautioning Christians to avoid vengeance. There was also a worry about the impact of

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[211] R.H. Boll, "Peace against Pacifism," *Word and Work*, March 1918, 123-124; R.H. Boll, "Sons of Peace," *Word and Work*, March 1918, 124-125; Don Carlos Janes, "Conscientious Objectors," *Word and Work*, March 1918, 103-104.

[212] E.A. Elam, 'Defining the Conscientious Objector,'" *Gospel Advocate*, April 25, 1918, 390.

[213] A.B. Lipscomb, "Remission of the Soldier's Sins," *Gospel Advocate*, March 21, 1918, 266.

anti-German sentiments on German-Americans.[214] One issue included an excerpt from another journal on the variety of Americans who had died in the war effort. The author noted how ethnic Germans died for the United States as much as other races, and thus had as much right to be considered Americans. He concluded, "In these days of hysteria, which have already brought us the disgrace and humiliation of mob violence, that is a truth which should not be forgotten."[215] In addition to how the war caused a dangerous change in attitude toward Germans, another problem was how the war distracted from other more important issues. Both journals considered the money raised for the war and how much better that money could be used for evangelistic purposes or education. In these topics, the editors were careful not to place blame, and focused primarily on highlighting key issues, such as the need for better attitudes toward Germans and more focus on missionary activity.[216]

Toward the end of the war, due to increased pressure from government officials, neighbors, and church members, as well as the desire to find readers, the journals experienced the second phase of the shift away from the historic COC views on pacifism. Depending on the editor, this transition was quick or gradual, and usually overlapped with the previous phase. The *Gospel Advocate* editors experienced this shift significantly more than R.H. Boll and his staff, due to the first journal being under the scrutiny of federal investigators. Having already "decriminalized" combatant service, the main difference between this stage and the first was how the editors joined in the war fever found in much of the rest of the church and the nation.

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[214] J.C. McQuiddy, "Conditions after the War," *Gospel Advocate*, June 6, 1918, 540; J.C. McQuiddy, "A Peace Should Be Declared in Accordance with the Bible," *Gospel Advocate*, October 31, 1918, 1042.

[215] "What Is an American?" *Gospel Advocate*, July 18, 1918, 676.

[216] J.C. McQuiddy, "The Greatest Loan in History," *Gospel Advocate*, October 31, 1918, 1042; "What War Costs in Money, *Word and Work*, September 1917, 405.

One way this next phase was seen was in the way the editors embraced the government and its actions. Many had already praised the government very early in the war for providing avenues for conscientious objectors, but now they would expand their commendations. For a church that had long rejected interaction in the political realm, it was a major step not only to accept the wartime behavior of the government, but also to approve of it. The roots of this development were seen in the *Gospel Advocate* within the first six months of American intervention. Pope Benedict XV had attempted multiple mediations to end the war early, none of which were accepted by either side. J.C. McQuiddy praised Wilson's rejection of one peace proposal, explaining, "The President proceeds to show that the object of this war is to deliver the free people of the world from the menace and the actual power of the vast military establishment controlled by an irresponsible government," and furthermore, "The reply to the peace proposal…will very likely be indorsed by all people who respect the truth."[217] McQuiddy added to his support for the government during the next year. He argued in one issue, "For me to decline to do all that I can conscientiously to aid and support the government of the United States would be rebellion against God and an encouragement to the German Kaiser and the brutal militarism for which he stands."[218] In addition to supporting the government and its war effort, the journal also adopted more patriotic language and messages. In one issue, E.A. Elam defined patriotism as the love of country, and declared, "Patriotism is the purest and greatest thing on earth, except Christianity."[219]

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[217] J.C. McQuiddy, "America Rejects the Peace Proposal of the Pope," *Gospel Advocate*, September 6, 1917, 861.

[218] McQuiddy, "Buy a Liberty Bond," 420.

[219] E.A. Elam, "But Can God Really Stop the War?" *Gospel Advocate*, September 26, 1918, 922.

R.H. Boll and *Word and Work* did not experience the same major shift as seen with McQuiddy and the *Gospel Advocate*. However, Boll's stance did change slightly in 1918, and in the same direction as that of his counterparts in Nashville. He mentioned the war less frequently that year than in the previous one, but his view of the government improved. Boll still supported pacifism in 1918, but in one article he spoke fondly of the nation and discussed the Christian's duty toward it. He exclaimed, "We love our country. The liberty and protection it has afforded to its people has been a precious boon to us. Shall our nation come to harm and loss for the failure of those who have blood-bought access to God? Shall we not pray that she may, in God's mercy, be preserved safely through this storm?"[220] In another issue, Boll discussed the allowances given to conscientious objectors, and proclaimed, "Words fail me to express adequate gratitude and appreciation for the generous and merciful attitude of Woodrow Wilson."[221] Earlier in the war, he had discussed the role of Christians as needing to obey their government when the commands did not contradict God's law, and that same message was still present in 1918. However, Boll seemed to become more vocal and passionate about the righteousness of the government as the nation entered its second year of war.

Toward the end of the war, the stance of the *Gospel Advocate* moved quickly away from its prewar pacifism to a more socially mainstream message, as seen in its extremely positive and supportive view of the government. In a very small way, *Word and Work* experienced a similar shift, while not letting go of its pacifism. The major area where the *Gospel Advocate* outpaced the other journal in embracing the spirit of the times was in its attitude toward Germany. During the first stage of the transition away from the traditional pacifist stance, the journal editors had

[220] R.H. Boll, "The Champion Slacker," *Word and Work*, April 1918, 173.

[221] R.H. Boll, "Non-Combatant Service," *Word and Work*, June 1918, 239.

cautioned their readers against anti-German sentiments. However, when their view of Germany turned hostile over the course of 1918, it signified they had entered the second stage. Since J.C. McQuiddy wrote the journal's column on current events, this transition is particularly seen in his articles. Also, as a man with two sons in the military, he had a vested interest in the actions of Germany and the warfare overseas.

The *Gospel Advocate* editors focused on two issues with their attack on Germany: false religious views and barbaric military actions. Mirroring the strategy of other COC journals earlier in the war, much of their religious attacks were directed at the development of higher criticism in Germany. McQuiddy wrote early in 1918 about the German approach to the war, and stated, "As the Germans have lost all sanity and have no respect whatever for the religion of Christ, no one in this country who believes in standing for the religion of Christ in its simplicity and purity can uphold the action the Germans are taking."[222] In another issue, McQuiddy reprinted an excerpt on German doctrine from another journal and concluded, "It is to be hoped that the people of this country will free themselves from German infidelity. American people do not need such "kultur," for it destroys faith in God, faith in Christ, and faith in the Bible."[223] In attempting to determine the origin of these errors, he concluded, "A wrong faith led the German people into a wrong life."[224] However, McQuiddy did not place all the blame on the people. In an article titled "The Kaiser Rules the Churches of Germany," he explained how German

[222] J.C. McQuiddy, "The German View of the War," *Gospel Advocate*, January 31, 1918, 104.

[223] J.C. McQuiddy, "German Theology," *Gospel Advocate*, May 16, 1918, 468.

[224] J.C. McQuiddy, "As a Nation Thinketh," *Gospel Advocate*, August 1, 1918, 728.

ministers must swear an oath to the king, which required them to do all they could to support the sovereign, including preaching the Bible "as his gracious Majesty dictates."[225]

After dismissing the Germans' religion as heretical and serving the Kaiser's purposes, it was an easy step to accept the propaganda about German barbarity in war. When a German U-boat sank a British carrier transporting American soldiers to Europe, McQuiddy described the German strategy as a "savage and brutal mode of warfare" and argued the act would reinforce Americans' "determination to oppose tyranny and barbarism."[226] In some cases, he reprinted articles from other journals to highlight the horrors of German warfare. For example, he included one scathing article from the *Literary Digest* describing German attacks on the Red Cross and other noncombatants.[227] McQuiddy was also not the only *Gospel Advocate* editor who attacked Germany from the journal's pages. In one issue, E.A. Elam discussed some of the violent sins prevalent in the war-torn world, such as murder and greed for conquest, and pointed to Germany as the key offender. He concluded, "Who can doubt that God is using the entente allies to punish and correct Germany, and, if she does not repent and put violence out of her hands…to destroy her."[228]

Although many COC members supported the war effort, there were others who disagreed with the alteration of the editorial stance at the *Gospel Advocate*. Some leaders, such as J.N. Armstrong, took issue with McQuiddy and the changes in the journal, particularly in supporting

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[225] J.C. McQuiddy, "The Kaiser Rules the Churches of Germany," *Gospel Advocate*, July 18, 1918, 684.

[226] J.C. McQuiddy, "Sinking of the Tuscania," *Gospel Advocate*, February 28, 1918, 197.

[227] J.C. McQuiddy, "War on Noncombatants," *Gospel Advocate*, April 25, 1918, 396.

[228] E.A. Elam, "When Will God Stop the War?" *Gospel Advocate*, September 12, 1918, 875.

non-church religious organizations and withdrawing support for pacifists. In one article in the *Christian Leader*, Armstrong stated the YMCA was no different from the missionary societies the COC had long opposed.[229] Another reason for dissatisfaction with the new stance in the *Gospel Advocate* was editor-imposed censorship. After the change in position, McQuiddy declined to publish a number of articles with pro-pacifism messages. On one occasion, Armstrong and another minister went to Washington on the behalf of some imprisoned conscientious objectors, and were unable to get the story about the men published in the journal. In another instance, a group of COC leaders attempted to publish an article about the COC stance on war, and were refused.[230] The journal's transition from advocating pacifism to supporting the war effort was seemingly complete.

When the fighting ended in November 1918, most in the COC had already moved away from their traditional ties to pacifism. Of the two journals most closely connected to the peace heritage of David Lipscomb, the *Gospel Advocate* no longer actively advocated conscientious objection by the end of the war, and *Word and Work* had limited its emphasis on the subject. Members and ministers were also more active in society than before the war, when the anti-political stance was stronger. Since many had either fought in the war, worked with the YMCA or Red Cross, participated in government rationing and fundraising programs, or taken part in other activities supporting the war, congregations were now more involved in their communities.

The Churches of Christ entered the twentieth century with a history of nineteenth-century pacifism. However, a large percentage had already left this tradition and embraced a more

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[229] J.N. Armstrong, "The Gospel Advocate and the YMCA," *Christian Leader*, February 5, 1918, 9.

[230] Casey, "New Information on Conscientious Objectors of World War I and the Churches of Christ," 90; Sears, *For Freedom*, 194.

mainstream lifestyle. When the Great War brought pressure from government and civilian forces, including some from within their own church, the segment that supported pacifism was pushed to join their fellow members in embracing a turn to the mainstream of society. A remnant remained after the war ended, but severely reduced.

Chapter 3: The Church of God

The Church of God (COG) had a complicated history with pacifism during the course of its early history, and the Great War added an extra hurdle in the path of COG pacifists.[231] The minutes of the 1917 COG General Assembly, which met seven months after the United States declared war on Germany, included a statement "against members going to war" at the bottom of the list of church teachings.[232] However, this teaching did not exist in the 1916 minutes, and was gone again after the 1921 assembly.[233] Since church teachings required a unanimous vote to be added, ostensibly all 500 persons present voted to accept this new teaching. Yet the process of adding this teaching was never mentioned in any church document. Despite the temporary presence of this teaching, peace was never a general organizing principle for the church. The denomination and Tomlinson had peace elements in their backgrounds, and largely were peaceful in their beliefs and actions, yet peace doctrines, antiwar views, or statements of

[231] A large number of different denominations use the name "Church of God." The church that is the focus of this chapter is usually designated as the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) when mentioned alongside other similarly named groups. Divisions within the Cleveland church led to the creation of some of these other denominations, such as the Church of God of Prophecy and the Church of God (Huntsville, AL). The Cleveland church was always the largest of these groups, and is usually considered to be the original denomination throughout these divisions. There are also unrelated groups, such as the Church of God in Christ and the Church of God (Anderson, IN). For the sake of brevity, "Church of God" will refer to the Cleveland church, and all other denominations will be differentiated with their usual designations.

[232] *Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God, Held at Harriman, Tenn., November 1-6, 1917* (n.p., n.d.), 65.

[233] *Minutes of the Sixteenth Annual Assembly of the Church of God, Held at Cleveland, Tenn., Nov. 2-8, 1921* (n.p., n.d.), 72; *Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God, Held at Harriman, Tennessee, November 1-7, 1916* (n.p., n.d.), 46.

pacifism do not appear in a prominent way until after the United States entered the Great War. In light of this history, the peace teaching was more likely a means to better allow COG members the ability of asking for a combatant service exemption.

As a Pentecostal denomination, the Church of God had its roots in the holiness movement of the nineteenth century. The movement originated in the Methodist-inspired revivals, often called the Second Great Awakening, which emerged in the early part of the nineteenth century. Evangelists such as Charles Finney and John Humphrey Noyes distanced themselves from the Calvinist Protestant tradition of early America and taught perfectionism, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a means of attaining entire and permanent sanctification. This became known as the "second blessing," following after the "first blessing" of conversion. Vinson Synan argues perfectionism, by 1840, "was becoming one of the central themes of American social, intellectual, and religious life," from which "sprang the many reform movements intended to perfect American social life," such as abolitionism and temperance.[234] Possibly because of the movement's growing link to abolitionism, holiness enthusiasm abated in the South around 1830, and the climactic holiness revival of 1858 largely bypassed the region.[235]

Following the Civil War, the holiness movement resurfaced again, this time with much stronger support in the war-torn South. White and black, rich and poor, urban and rural, southerners of all walks of life clamored to the revival camp meetings. Randall Stephens links this development to the history of religious dissent in the South, but also highlights the connection to the fear of urbanization expressed by a large number of southerners. Many converts were drawn to the restorationist, back-to-the-basics nature of the holiness views, and

[234] Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 17.

[235] Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 1-43.

applied these doctrines to defend a type of rustic legalism that frowned upon everything from Coca-Cola to neckties. Interestingly, the holiness movement also had the impact of causing some of its followers to become more egalitarian in their views about race and gender, since they believed the Holy Spirit could work in anyone from any background. As the nineteenth century came to a close, small independent holiness sects became more common, springing up as a result of people's dissatisfaction with established denominations not embracing their particular ways of interpreting holiness.[236]

Pentecostalism emerged out of the holiness movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, became its defining characteristic, though this practice was not unknown in the holiness movement in the 1890s. Many historians point to a three-year revival, which started in 1906 and was held at the Azusa Street mission in Los Angeles, as the catalyst sparking a Pentecostal movement. The defining feature of this new revival, glossolalia, became a key component of the sanctification doctrine. Whereas holiness advocates had no outward sign of inward entire sanctification, Pentecostals saw speaking in tongues as a type of "third blessing," an outward sign of an inner work of the Spirit occurring sometime after the baptism of the Spirit, which itself, as under the holiness interpretation, took place separate from conversion. Many holiness believers accepted this new teaching. R.G. Robins argues "Pentecostal logic appealed to Holiness 'common sense,' drawing on its received proof texts, shared assumptions, common experiences, and accepted standards of evidence while building a case for new exegetical and experiential conclusions."[237] It was in the South that Pentecostalism had its largest growth, with entire congregations of holiness believers converting.

[236] Randall J. Stephens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 56-98.

[237] R.G. Robins, *Pentecostalism in America* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 31.

The rise of Pentecostal belief was not universally welcomed, however, and many holiness sects split over the new ideas.[238]

One of the beliefs found in many Pentecostal churches was an adherence to pacifism. Jay Beaman argues the "pacifism of the early Pentecostals was closely related to their world view, especially eschatology, which informed much of their ethical behavior."[239] Many wrote about the end times, which they believed to be soon, drawing from their knowledge and interpretation of the book of Revelation. Since they determined Christ would return in the near future, they put a premium on missions and evangelism, which were efforts particularly disrupted by war and violence. Beaman also notes the Pentecostals' view of the early Christian church facilitated pacifist belief. Since Jesus had spoken about peacekeeping and love while on earth, and his followers had initially striven to keep these commands after his death, many Pentecostal churches emphasized pacifism as a way to return to historic Christianity. Numerous Pentecostal denominations adopted pacifist stances or issued antiwar statements during the first decades of the twentieth century, including the Assemblies of God, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, the United Pentecostal Church, and a number of different sects that used the name Church of God.[240]

One of the largest and most widely spread of the Pentecostal denominations in the early twentieth century was the COG. Although some scholars debate this early date for the founding of the COG, most studies place the church's origins in August 1886, when Baptist preacher R.G. Spurling, Sr., his son R.G. Spurling, Jr., and a handful of others formed the Christian Union in

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[238] Robins, *Pentecostalism in America*, 21-48.

[239] Jay Beaman, *Pentecostal Pacifism: The Origin, Development, and Rejection of Pacifist Belief among the Pentecostals*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), vii.

[240] Beaman, *Pentecostal Pacifism*, 21-36.

Monroe County, Tennessee. Their purpose was to restore primitive Christianity and unify the churches. A second church was founded across the border in Cherokee County, North Carolina in 1892, in the house of Baptist lay preacher W.F. Bryant. For the next four years, Bryant and the younger Spurling traveled around the countryside, preaching and evangelizing. In 1896, a revival began in the region around the second church, and many claimed to have witnessed the speaking of tongues and faith healing. The growth in the church following this revival was troublesome for two reasons: it led to persecution from neighbors, and it yielded some radical beliefs about asceticism and religious experiences. Both of these factors caused a decrease in membership. To handle this dangerous situation, the church reorganized in 1902, setting up a plan of government and choosing Bryant as leader. The group also changed their name to the Holiness Church. Five years later they made one final revision, choosing the Church of God as their name. The church began to grow again in the years following the reorganization, aided in large part by the leadership and tireless work of A.J. Tomlinson, who joined the small rural church in 1903.[241]

From almost the moment he joined, Tomlinson (1865-1943) was intricately tied to the inner workings of the church. Up until he left the church in 1923, he continued to work tirelessly for the church, taking more and more tasks under his supervision or direct handling. Tomlinson was born on September 22, 1865, near Westfield, Indiana, to a family with a Quaker background. A large number of scholars have made much of the fact that Tomlinson's grandparents were abolitionists and had moved from North Carolina to Indiana to escape the horrors of slavery, and

[241] Charles W. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army: A History of the Church of God, 1885-1976*. Rev. ed. (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1977), 1-45.

that several members of his family had actively avoided fighting in the Civil War.[242] However, many of these historians do not mention Tomlinson's immediate family was not active in the Quaker church. In fact, as R.G. Robins notes, "the Tomlinsons had eschewed formal religious affiliation since being disowned by their monthly meeting for conducting their marriage out of order and neglecting church attendance."[243]

The future general overseer appears not to have carried much of this Quaker heritage with him, since throughout his grade school years he showed little interest in serious Christianity. Instead of following classmates to revival meetings, he chose to become involved in politics. It was not until he was 24 that he had a conversion experience, and a short time later became acquainted with holiness teachings. After attending God's Bible School in Cincinnati, Tomlinson traveled around the eastern United States, selling Bibles, publishing religious pamphlets and newspapers, and worshipping with different churches. After several years of interaction with Bryant and Spurling, he joined their church in 1903, soon becoming a pastor of one of the congregations. In 1907, he fully embraced the Pentecostal movement and began to speak in tongues and teach the baptism of the Spirit.[244]

Tomlinson's rise to leadership in the COG was steady and unwavering. In 1906 there were four churches in the small denomination, and the First General Assembly was held, with Tomlinson serving as moderator. At the 1909 General Assembly, this position became yearlong

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[242] J. Don Amison, "The Church of God and Its Early Pacifism," *Reflections upon Church of God Heritage* 2, No. 3 (Winter 1999): 1.

[243] R.G. Robins, *A.J. Tomlinson: Plainfolk Modernist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.

[244] James Stone, *The Church of God of Prophecy: History and Polity* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 1977), 17-22; *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1988), s.v. "A.J. Tomlinson."

when the body appointed Tomlinson as general overseer. In 1914, the General Assembly elected to make this a lifetime appointment, largely due to the fact that Tomlinson claimed the Holy Spirit had appointed him to this position.[245] In the years following his elevation to general overseer, Tomlinson brought dramatic growth to the church, starting offices for foreign missions, a church periodical, and Sunday school curriculum. Over each of these, Tomlinson was firmly in control. He was also constantly on preaching trips across the southern states, and even in the Caribbean. Under his leadership the church grew substantially, from roughly twenty-five members in 1903 to just over 1000 in 1910. The church was also growing in area as well as numbers. By 1913, the COG had state overseers in fourteen states, primarily in the South, but also with the addition of some western states such as Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona.[246]

Though the church had made no pacifist statement at this point in its history, several key teachings laid out during the prewar years played large roles in the sect's official pacifism of 1917-1920. The first of these was the disavowal of creeds and any other non-inspired text that tried to dictate belief or practice. This can be seen as a primitivist impulse, as church leaders believed they needed to keep a simple and uncomplicated approach to the Word of God. Tomlinson compared the early church's turn to creeds in the third century as similar to the Israelites abandoning God and Moses to worship the golden calf. He believed at that point the church ceased to be the Church of God. Tomlinson and the other leaders saw their Church of God as a return to the original Church of God, and therefore eschewed any type of creed.[247] It

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[245] Robins, *A.J. Tomlinson*, 220-221.

[246] Conn, *Like a Mighty Army*, 93-101, 434-435; Mickey Crews, *The Church of God: A Social History* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 19-23.

[247] A.J. Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict* (Cleveland, TN: Press of Walter E. Rodgers, 1913), 144-147.

was not until 1910 that the church published a list of beliefs in an edition of the *Evangel*, the denomination's periodical, and even this was only meant as a guide in the instruction of new ministers. In addition, the list contained only brief descriptions of each teaching, relying wholly on attached Scripture references to expound on the doctrines mentioned.[248] However, the COG did not solely rely on the Word of God found in the Bible. They also acknowledged direct revelation to individuals. On a number of occasions, Tomlinson claimed to speak divinely inspired words. For example, at his annual address at the Eighth General Assembly in 1913, he stated, "This that I am about to produce was principly [sic] prepared at the midnight hour when alone with God that it might not be a second-handed production but purely first-handed."[249] Even his decision to join the church in 1903 was the result of a vision he experienced on a mountain, in which Jesus told him that this was the true church.[250] One COG history compares Tomlinson's experience on the mountain to when "Moses descended Mount Sinai with a new revelation from God."[251]

Tomlinson's belief in the COG as the only true church was representative of a key doctrine taught from the early years of the sect. The Christian Union had first organized around the purpose of restoring primitive Christianity and uniting all of the Christian denominations.[252]

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[248] Handwritten Minutes of the Fifth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God, Box 24, General Assembly Minutes 1906-1910, Dixon Pentecostal Research Center, Lee University; [A.J. Tomlinson?], "The Church of God," *Evening Light and Church of God Evangel*, August, 15, 1910, 3.

[249] Handwritten Minutes of the Eighth General Assembly of the Churches of God, Box 24, General Assembly Minutes 1906-1910, Dixon Pentecostal Research Center, Lee University, Cleveland, TN.

[250] Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 75.

[251] Stone, *The Church of God of Prophecy*, 24.

[252] Conn, *Like a Mighty Army*, 7.

Due to the church's involvement in the revival of the 1890s, members faced persecution, primarily from ministers and leaders from other denominations, which brought the church closer together and strengthened their resolve.[253] Tomlinson's entry into the group led to a further definition of the church's role. After a religious experience on a nearby mountain, he visited the congregation and began to ask questions regarding their beliefs. Tomlinson wrote about the incident, "I ventured to ask if they would be willing to receive me into the Church with the understanding that it is the Church of God of the Bible."[254] Not only did members understand the church (now under the appellation of Church of God) to be the only true church, but it was also believed to be the same original church founded in the New Testament by Jesus and his disciples. These two beliefs had implications for how members viewed other Christians. Church leader M.S. Lemons wrote, "The members of Christ's Church obey the teachings of Jesus perfectly, while the other churches obey the teaching of their founders."[255] According to one scholar, the group believed the visible church was "a literal institution commissioned by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost," and thus members of the Body of Christ were "only those who had been properly received in a duly-ordained branch of that institution," which they believed only to be their organization, the COG.[256]

Since members viewed their church as the true and historic Church of God, they had a unique relation to the rest of Christianity, and to the nation as a whole. Tomlinson believed his

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[253] C.T. Davidson, *Upon This Rock* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 1973), 1:296.

[254] A.J. Tomlinson, *Answering the Call of God* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, n.d.), 17-18.

[255] M.S. Lemons, *Questions Answered* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Evangel, n.d.), 16.

[256] Robins, *Pentecostalism in America*, 41.

church "was in the world but not of the world."[257] The exclusivity of the COG bound members together and created a sense of loyalty.[258] This contributed to the degree of separation from the world the church felt it needed. Even under Bryant and Spurling, the church had always held to a complete rejection of society. This primitivist impulse included the denunciation of medicine, candy, bottled drinks, tobacco, neckties, and other items deemed worldly and unbiblical.[259] Separation for some also meant distance from politics and the nation in general. Tomlinson, for example, had been heavily involved in politics in his early twenties. After his holiness conversion, however, he disavowed politics in every form, even voting, claiming he would "only vote for Jesus."[260] The belief that the COG was set apart was strengthened by the holiness teaching of entire sanctification, which meant an end to sin in one's life. The Pentecostal addition of glossolalia meant this sanctification could be verified. In his 1913 book *The Last Great Conflict*, Tomlinson declared, "The entire Church must be robed in garments of salvation separate from the world."[261] Further on, commenting on his book's title, he wrote, "I expect my life to count for God and humanity in this last great conflict, as we wage a warfare against sin and satan."[262] As a result of the exclusivity of their doctrine, the COG constructed an "us-versus-them" mentality, which pitted the church against other denominations, sin, the devil, and even the government. This doctrine had implications for how members functioned in the world.

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[257] Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 60.

[258] Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 77.

[259] Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 73.

[260] Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 209.

[261] Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 133.

[262] Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 219.

One example of how this separation worked out for the average member was the church teaching that outlawed membership in labor or secret organizations. The Tenth General Assembly of 1914 declared the church's opposition to people "being members of lodges and all oath-bound organizations and labor unions."[263]

Separation from society was tied to another element of COG doctrine: premillennialism. As with the rule against lodge membership, premillennial belief was codified in the official list of church teachings. In fact, it was one of the original twenty-five teachings mentioned in the first publication of the list. As it was described in the list of teachings, this doctrine involved Jesus coming down to earth to resurrect the dead saints, carry away the living saints, and then reign over the world for one thousand years.[264] Tomlinson believed the obedient faithful would "constitute His great host of rulers and governors during His thousand years reign on earth."[265] It was therefore wise to follow the primitivist impulse to obey God before men, as life on the world was a temporary experience. This doctrine impacted how church members viewed the world. Many leaders wrote about the end times, particularly in regards to what was written in the book of Revelation.[266] There was also the general belief that the end times were coming soon, which caused many people to be vigilant and look for the signs mentioned in Revelation. F.J. Lee, a major church leader, gave many sermons on the topic, particularly mentioning how

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[263] *Echoes from the Tenth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God, Held at Cleveland, Tennessee, November 2-8, 1914* (n.p.: n.d.), 29; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 195.

[264] [Tomlinson?], "The Church of God," 3.

[265] Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 61.

[266] F.J. Lee, ed., *Book of Prophecy: Questions and Answers on the Entire Book of Revelation* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1923); F.J. Lee, *Demonology* ([Cleveland, TN?]: [Church of God Evangel?], n.d.; Lemons, *Questions Answered*; Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*.

recent earthquakes, floods, and other disasters might be ushering in Jesus's second coming. He and other ministers also gave much thought to the Antichrist, who was to come in the last days.[267] Upon its arrival the Antichrist was supposed to wield a large amount of power in the world, which led many members to distrust the government due to its considerable influence internationally. Premillennialism also caused distrust of the government because the doctrine included the belief that no government would be blessed by God prior to Christ's return.[268] Another church figure, T.S. Payne, believed members were "becoming more and more awakened to the fact that [they] are in the time of the end," but also stated they had "begun to realize that this world must be evangelized."[269] Thus, there were the competing tensions of trying to stay separate from the world while simultaneously realizing the need to evangelize before the end came and it was too late for sinners to repent.

Though these doctrines did not include an explicit statement about peace or pacifism, they were influential in the turn to pacifism during the Great War. Tomlinson, however, apparently believed the sect had always held a pacifist stance, even prior to the war. Writing during the war itself, he wrote in the *Evangel*, "We have been non-resistant from the very beginning."[270] Whether or not Tomlinson personally held to a pacifist belief is difficult to ascertain, but there was certainly no official statement about pacifism prior to the Thirteenth

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[267] Mrs. F.J. Lee, *Life Sketch and Sermons of F.J. Lee* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1927).

[268] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 143.

[269] T.S. Payne, *Signs of the Times* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Evangel, n.d.), 15.

[270] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "War Notice," *Church of God Evangel*, July 28, 1917, 2. The term "non-resistant" was roughly equivalent to the modern use of the word "pacifist," and was employed particularly at this time to describe the historic peace churches, namely Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren. The word "pacifism" was not coined until around 1902.

General Assembly in November 1917. In fact, there were several incidents during the prewar years that seem to indicate the church, its members, and even Tomlinson, were not overly inclined to pacifism during that time.

Perhaps the most revealing events during the prewar years were the disputes that erupted over doctrinal issues. In the late nineteenth century, the early leaders of the sect had shepherded their flock and taught them to follow the holiness doctrines. According to these teachings, conversion occurred at a fixed time in every believer's life, and at a later date they experienced entire sanctification, which cleansed them of sin. The first codified list of teachings did not appear until 1910, but from all accounts, although there are some rumors of glossolalia in the 1890s, the church did not appear to teach the "third blessing" during its early years. However, over the course of the first decade of the twentieth century, judging from Tomlinson's journal, speaking in tongues became more and more integrated into church and camp meetings. This development was troubling to some members of the church. In late 1909, this conflict came to an apex. While on one of his many trips away from his Cleveland congregation, where he was senior pastor, Tomlinson received word on November 10 that his assistant pastor had turned against him. John Goins and a number of supporters disagreed strongly with the Pentecostal teaching of glossolalia. Before Tomlinson was able to return, the situation escalated. First, there were threats of burning down the church building and the use of dynamite. Sometime later it came to blows, in which at least one man gave another "a good shaking," three men "piled on" another, one belligerent "took up a chair and struck" another with it, and one man told a minister who was about to pray "that he had better pray for it would be his last prayer."[271] The COG had the unfortunate experience of several messy divisions, notably also in the 1890s, 1919, and 1923,

[271] A.J. Tomlinson, Unpublished Diary, December 28, 1909, William G. Squires Library, Lee University.

but on this occasion in 1909 the situation turned violent. Tomlinson does not make any mention about disappointment in the violence, only commenting, "It seems awful to me for such to be going on in that sacred place."[272] This also does not seem to be the only occasion in which church members perpetrated violence. The church brought many people with colorful pasts into their fold through camp meetings all around the Southeast. One such man, J.W. Buckalew, was a former gambler and alcoholic who once considered murdering another man. Though his conversion affected Buckalew in many positive ways, Vinson Synan notes he still "often came to blows over Pentecostalism."[273]

In addition to these physical demonstrations of a lack of non-violence in church disputes, leaders and members of the COG also wrote and said many statements that seem to contradict Tomlinson's belief that the church had been pacifistic from the beginning. First, Tomlinson himself did not always portray pacifist sentiments in his own rhetoric. Though not evidence of an absence of non-resistance, he did clearly distance himself from any potential Quaker influences he may have had. Some scholars have overestimated the importance of the fact that Tomlinson was born to a former Quaker family, and assume he always had a strong belief in pacifism because of this background.[274] However, in his first book, Tomlinson only speaks in passing about the Society of Friends, mentioning he was "reared…among Quakers," not as one, and noting how he never attended services.[275] Interestingly, in the same book, *The Last Great Conflict*, he also used military expressions and metaphors extensively. For example, when

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[272] Tomlinson, Unpublished Diary, December 28, 1909.

[273] Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 194.

[274] Beaman, *Pentecostal Pacifism*, 91.

[275] Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 199.

discussing how to resist attacks on Pentecostal teachings, he writes, "'Press the battle' as a slogan or war-cry should be taken up by every lover of truth end echoed and re-echoed over every plain and hilltop until those who have had a tendency to compromise healing, tongues, the gifts of the Spirit etc. will become ashamed, ask forgiveness of their Captain, raise the red flag of war and rush into the battle with a holy zeal."[276] Furthermore, he outlines how Christians are enlisted in God's army and how in the spiritual battle must attack those who oppose the COG, which includes the devil and his demons, as well as the mainstream religious press, ministers of all denominations, and even other holiness sects.[277]

Of all the COG leadership, Tomlinson was by far the most prolific writer, and so it is easiest to point to his views when attempting to determine the sentiments of the church.[278] However, there is some evidence that others were not entirely pacifistic in their views. First, although more of evidence through omission, it is interesting to note that of all the church leaders who wrote memoirs, pamphlets, or other publications, none reflected sadly upon earlier wars or fervently hoped no future wars would occur. One particularly significant example of an individual who did reference war was Homer Tomlinson, who frequently proved to be an unconventional COG member, particularly when compared to his father, the general overseer. Heavily involved in the church from an early age, Homer often preached at church meetings, even while still a young man. On one occasion, despite the church's separatist practices and

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[276] Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 10.

[277] Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 9-18.

[278] Tomlinson was also the most influential church leader. Until the early 1920s, when he believed a policy or doctrine was best for the church, the General Assembly usually stood by his decision. A glance through the annual meetings' minutes uncovers how frequently others defended or supported his suggestions. Therefore, determining his views is helpful in understanding how the church operated as a whole.

policies, the Tomlinsons' Cleveland congregation held a special Fourth of July service. Homer, moved by the Spirit, gave a sermon that outlined American history, highlighting the fight for liberty and religious freedom, enjoyed "at such a cost of bloodshed and sacrifice."[279] He then compared this narrative to the story of "the Christ of Calvary that freed us from the bondage of sin and made it possible for us to escape the tortures and pangs of hell if the freedom was accepted."[280] The patriotic language used in the sermon is particularly remarkable in light of the timing of the occasion. Within seven years, the church would oppose the United States fighting a war ostensibly to further democracy and freedom.

When war erupted in Europe in the summer of 1914, COG members did not write much about the conflict from which they felt so far removed. However, when the United States entered the war in April 1917, the church responded with sorrow to the news. However, most were fairly reserved in regards to the draft that followed soon after the declaration of war. Tomlinson addressed the issue in an article in the *Evangel* two weeks after the Selective Draft Act was passed. He recommended "men that come within the age limit of the conscript law should be sure to register on June 5, according to the law, and enter a plea for exemption on the grounds that the church of which they are members objects to its members going to war."[281] Tomlinson went on to argue the church must obey the government when laws are not in conflict with the Bible and God's laws. Although he stated the church was opposed to war and its members could not participate in the fighting, he did not see a problem with hospital or chaplain

[279] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "Fourth of July at Tabernacle," *Evening Light and Church of God Evangel*, July 15, 1910, 1.

[280] [Tomlinson?], "Fourth of July at Tabernacle," 1. A.J Tomlinson described the impromptu patriotic sermon as being very moving, causing many of those present to have emotional experiences.

[281] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "The War Draft," *Church of God Evangel*, June 2, 1917, 2.

work as an alternative to combatant service. However, if there was no way out of fighting, and if laws were "made to oppose the laws of the Bible," ultimately the general overseer believed the church would "have to obey God and submit to the penalty."[282] Despite his brave words, Tomlinson seems to have believed his denomination would have no problem being recognized as a peace church, thus allowing members to easily qualify for exemption status.[283]

It was in this context that the COG General Assembly altered its list of teachings in November 1917, to contain a statement "against members going to war," which incidentally was the exact phrasing used in Tomlinson's guidelines for seeking exemption status. There is no further mention of the teaching in the rest of the minutes from that year, so the exact reason for its inclusion is unknown. However, in light of the *Evangel* articles from the preceding months, it is likely Tomlinson, and possibly other church leaders, wanted to further strengthen the case for members' exemption statuses. As Tomlinson noted in an August edition of the *Evangel*, the draft act allowed men to apply for exemption on religious grounds if their denomination's "creed or principles forbade its members to participate in any war in any form."[284] Tomlinson followed this by stating the church had been non-resistant from its inception, since "turning the other cheek" had been one of their founding principles. Since the sect had an official list of teachings, of which "cheek turning" was not one, it seems highly probable that at least Tomlinson wanted to make opposition to war an official tenet to better facilitate members' attempts to apply for exemptions.

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[282] [Tomlinson?], "The War Draft," 2.

[283] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "Editorial," *Church of God Evangel*, May 26, 1917, 2; [A.J. Tomlinson?], "Editorial," *Church of God Evangel*, July 14, 1917, 2; [A.J. Tomlinson?], "Editorial," *Church of God Evangel*, August 4, 1917, 2.

[284] [Tomlinson?], "War Notice," 2.

Interestingly, there was no record of any debate on the issue of opposing church members fighting in war, which was not the norm. Per church bylaws, all changes to the list of teachings had to be made unanimously, so ostensibly, the more than 500 delegates in attendance all approved of this additional teaching.[285] Other doctrines adopted by the church at previous General Assemblies had elicited at least some note of discussion in the minutes. For example, the Sixth General Assembly debated "at length" about how to approach tithing.[286] Furthermore, they decided not to phrase the doctrine of baptism as performed solely by immersion "on the ground that immersion is not a Bible term," even though they agreed immersion was the proper way to baptize.[287] In the case of the 1917 General Assembly, either there was no discussion of the issue at all, or debate occurred but was not recorded. If the former, the unanimity must have been due to Tomlinson's own belief in the necessity of the teaching, since he was the only one with the power and authority to push the vote through without significant debate. If the former was true, the oversight must have been intentional, as the minutes were quite detailed on every discussion and the person who published the minutes was Tomlinson, who was present and would have caught the omission. If new teaching was indeed primarily added to strengthen the case for members' exemption statuses, it is possible that discussion about it was kept out of the records to prevent the draft boards from discounting the additional teaching as a wartime excuse to help members escape combatant service. In either case, the general overseer would have been intricately involved.

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[285] Crews, *The Church of God*, 116.

[286] *Minutes of the Sixth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God, Held at Cleveland, Tennessee, January 3-8, 1911* (n.p., n.d.), 6.

[287] *Minutes of the Sixth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God*, 6.

The church was now officially a "peace church," in the sense that it had a doctrinal basis for an antiwar stance. The General Assembly had approved the teaching that opposed fighting in war, supported by Tomlinson's heavy emphasis on the importance of applying for exemptions. However, the church now boasted over 300 congregations and more than 10,000 adherents, so governing the actions of members would be difficult.[288] Tomlinson went as far as to write in the *Evangel*, "If any of our members should in any way advocate war, or try to persuade any of these registrants to go on to war, or urge or enthuse them into a desire to fight, such members will be considered disloyal to the Church and also to the Christ of the Bible."[289]

Whether or not this warning was necessary is unknown, as there is some evidence showing COG members followed through on Tomlinson's and the General Assembly's strong recommendations to resist conscription. Religious historian Jay Beaman has conducted extensive research on Pentecostal pacifism, which has included an ongoing project to collect names of Pentecostals who filed for exemption status on religious grounds. By the time of the second printing of his book in 2009, he had found records of more than sixty COG members requesting exemptions.[290] By the spring of 2012, this number was up to over 115.[291] These numbers prove members did apply for exemptions, but do not give a good indication of the extent of conscientious objection in the church for several reasons. First, there are very few church membership lists, so it is extremely difficult to collect names to compare with draft cards. Second, when filling out the exemption field on the draft card, many wrote "Pentecostal" or

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[288] *Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God*, 40.

[289] [Tomlinson?], "War Notice," 2.

[290] Beaman, *Pentecostal Pacifism*, introduction to the 2009 edition.

[291] Jay Beaman, email message to author, March 20, 2012.

"holy roller" rather than their specific denomination. Third, it was much simpler to ask for an exemption based on family dependents or employment in an essential industry, so a large number of members would have opted for this choice.[292] In addition, it is impossible to know how many of these conscientious objectors had personal convictions and how many were just following the teachings of their church. It is also possible some members had no moral problem with fighting, but did not want to risk their lives overseas and saw the church's teaching as a good way to avoid combatant service.

Tomlinson's antiwar sentiment exceeded simple opposition to fighting, extending to include opposition to mechanisms that supported the war. He wrote in one issue of the *Evangel*, "Contributions to the Red Cross, or to send aid to the soldiers, or purchasing liberty loan bonds, or doing service of any kind and in almost any manner is assisting in the war directly or indirectly."[293] The third item he lists, the sale of Liberty Bonds, was one of the primary methods the government used to acquire additional funds for the war. Tomlinson opposed purchasing these because they were voluntary and went directly to the war effort. In March 1918, the government requested ministers preach a patriotic sermon and encourage their congregations to purchase bonds. Tomlinson refused to do so, and instead stated it was his "purpose to persuade people to accept salvation instead of supporting something that will send millions of souls to

[292] Beaman, *Pentecostal Pacifism*, introduction to the 2009 edition.

[293] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "Days of Perplexity," *Church of God Evangel*, January 26, 1918, 1.

hell."[294] This was not a conviction held by Tomlinson alone, as other ministers, such as James Ellis, state overseer for Alabama, followed his example and refused to purchase bonds.[295]

Though it is probable the church's official pacifist stance was largely a way to facilitate members' exemption requests, it would be unfair to divorce this teaching from the beliefs that may have also motivated it. Even with the authority and power Tomlinson wielded, he probably would not have been able to convince the church to resist fighting in the generally popular and patriotic war if there was no doctrinal basis for pacifism already in the church. Of primary importance were their expectations of the coming of the Antichrist and the apocalypse and their belief in a radical separation from society. These sentiments increased in intensity during the war years. The church "based most of their eschatological beliefs upon the idea that the Antichrist would possess great authority," meaning "any person or government that exercised excessive powers was suspect."[296] Regarding government-mandated food rationing, Tomlinson noted, "The spirit of the anti-christ is already working and it is becoming emboldened so as to march into our own towns and cities and commanding prices and placing a limit on the amount you purchase."[297] Furthermore, commenting on government censorship, he wrote, "This same antichrist spirit has brought about such a spirit state of affairs that we cannot communicate with

[294] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "Editorial," *Church of God Evangel*, March 16, 1918, 2.

[295] James B. Ellis, *Blazing the Gospel Trail* (1941; repr., Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1976), 110.

[296] Crews, *The Church of God*, 113.

[297] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "The Mark of the Beast," *Church of God Evangel*, February 9, 1918, 1.

our missionaries and friends across the sea without somebody opening the letters and reading the contents."[298]

The coming of the Antichrist was tied to the coming of the apocalypse, and thus discussing the signs of one invariably led to discussing the signs of the other. Prior to the war, many had written about the end times, informed by their premillennial interpretation of the book of Revelation. Tomlinson penned his major work *The Last Great Conflict* the year before war broke out in Europe, and thus at the time he was writing he could not yet link the apocalypse to an actual event. Once war was a reality, and particularly once it involved the United States, many began to connect the conflict with the apocalypse. Commenting on the possibility of the United States soon entering the war, Tomlinson stated, "Now is the time for us to live in constant expectancy of our Lord's return to redeem us from awful tribulations that it seems are almost ready to burst forth with all the hellish fury of his satanic majesty."[299] Another church minister, C.A. Churchill, wrote, "The devil is mustering his forces, using every possible scheme to populate hell and drag down, if it were possible, the very elect. God's people are aware of the fact that this is the last great conflict."[300]

Despite their fears about the Antichrist and their foreshadowing of the apocalypse, and in the face of the church's official unanimously-approved stance against members going to war, church members frequently showed a surprising lack of pacifism and of general concern about the war. Tomlinson made the claim late in the war that the sect had always been pacifist, but this

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[298] [Tomlinson?], "The Mark of the Beast," 1.

[299] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "The Awful War Seems Near," *Church of God Evangel*, March 31, 1917, 1.

[300] C.A. Churchill, "Beginning of Sorrows," *Church of God Evangel*, July 6, 1918, 4

argument becomes hard to defend when placed alongside other pieces of evidence.[301] Of particular note are the church's early leaders, Bryant and Spurling. For the first twenty years of the church's existence, prior to Tomlinson's arrival, they had been the denomination's undisputed leaders and ministers. They believed there were just motivations for fighting, which calls into question the church's position on war prior to Tomlinson's arrival.[302] Others apparently followed in their footsteps during the presidential election of 1916. Historian Mickey Crews interviewed church members decades after the war and was told by interviewees that a large percentage of the church voted for Republican candidate Charles Evans Hughes in 1916. Incumbent president Woodrow Wilson ran for reelection partially on the platform that he had stayed out of the Great War. Hughes, on the other hand, backed by militarist Theodore Roosevelt, favored preparedness and sizable defense spending. Though some, including Tomlinson, chose to separate themselves from the political process, there is evidence that COG members were largely Republican supporters. This could suggest that for many members the issue of staying out of the war versus preparing for war was not one of the important topics of debate in the election that year.[303]

Perhaps members voting for Hughes did not feel sufficiently convicted by the church's official pacifist stance. Revealingly, of all the Pentecostal sects with pacifist statements on record, the COG has one of the shortest and least detailed. Their five-word policy "against members going to war" is the only official pacifist statement the church leadership ever enacted. Compared with the ways other Pentecostal sects decreed their opposition to war, the COG was

[301] [Tomlinson?], "War Notice," 2.

[302] Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 248.

[303] Crews, *The Church of God*, 109-110.

extremely conservative and reserved. For example, the Assemblies of God leadership wrote up a document outlining their church's official stance on combat. The final paragraph read, "Therefore, we, as a body of Christians, while purposing to fulfill all the obligations of loyal citizenship, are nevertheless constrained to declare we cannot conscientiously participate in war and armed resistance which involves the actual destruction of human life, since this is contrary to our view of the clear teachings of the inspired Word of God, which is the sole basis of our faith."[304] They then sent the statement to President Wilson. In an attached cover letter, they made sure to note their allegiance to the United States, in order avoid being convicted of treason.[305] The Church of God in Christ had a similar statement prohibiting military service. Their doctrine read, "We believe the shedding of human blood or taking of human life to be contrary to the teaching of our Lord and Savior, and as a body, we are adverse to war in all its various forms."[306] Both of these churches' pacifist statements declared their reasons for prohibiting warfare and left little room for doubt. The Church of God statement appears half-hearted and poorly constructed in comparison. It does not detail why the church is against members going to war, or even explain whether being "against" means an absolute prohibition or not, which raises the question of whether the COG was really committed to their antiwar policy.

Accompanying the church's brevity in articulating their pacifist stance is a surprising lack of discussion of the war by many church members. In almost all the pamphlets and tracts printed

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[304] Paul Alexander, *Peace to War: Shifting Allegiances in the Assemblies of God* (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing, 2009), 30.

[305] Alexander, *Peace to War*, 181-182.

[306] Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., "Race and Conscientious Objection in World War I: The Story of the Church of God in Christ," in *Proclaim Peace: Christian Pacifism from Unexpected Quarters*, ed. Theron F. Schlabach and Richard T. Hughes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 61-62.

by the Church of God Publishing House, there was little to no mention of the war in any capacity, curiously mirroring the secondary literature on the church that would appear in the following decades. One popular form of church publication during the 1910s and 1920s was the memoir. Important ministers and evangelists, as well as regular church members, wrote autobiographical works during and after the war years, discussing at length their conversion experience, life in the church and on the mission field, and particularly the persecution that they experienced because of their beliefs and practices. J.W. Buckalew's memoir, written sometime between 1916 and 1918, discusses in detail the opposition he faced as an evangelist, including violence and arrests, but never mentions the war in any of the 148 pages.[307] Another memoir-like work is an anthology of F.J. Lee's sermons, some preached during the war, which his wife compiled in 1927. Though a few of the sermons deal with apocalyptic topics, there is no direct mention of opposition to war or the war in general.[308] One last example is the memoir of church member Louise Werner, which discusses joining the church and her family's reaction, but then skips from 1915 to 1918 in a paragraph without further explanation.[309] Ultimately, if not for the *Evangel*, there would be almost no published account of how the church, particularly Tomlinson, thought about the war.

This absence is not only seen in published works. Tomlinson's own diary also has conspicuous omissions. Though he was quite detailed in many aspects of his life, such as his preaching trips, issues of the church, persecutions faced in different arenas, and family life, there

[307] J.W. Buckalew, *Incidents in the Life of J.W. Buckalew* ([Cleveland, TN?]: [Church of God Evangel?], [1918?]).

[308] Lee, *Life Sketch and Sermons of F.J. Lee*.

[309] Louise Werner, *Life, Incidents, and Experiences of Louise Werner* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1920).

is little mention of the war. The first entry written after the United States joined the Great War mentions preaching at funerals, the cost of additions to his own office, and plans for a printing press. The only mentions of the war in any capacity begin in the second half of 1918, and those brief interludes deal exclusively with how his son, Homer, is doing in the war. The war is never mentioned again after Homer returned home.[310]

The case of Homer Tomlinson is one of the more interesting in the history of the church's pacifist years. A.J. Tomlinson's opposition to war was clear in the *Evangel*, where he threatened to excommunicate any member who enlisted, caused another to enlist, or in any way advocated war. His son Homer, however, was a bit of an anomaly since he enlisted to fight in Europe during the first half of 1918, at around age 26. In light of the church's official pacifist stance, there is understandably little mention of Homer's militaristic activities in church publications. However, some of the story can be gleaned from Homer's comments in his edited version of his father's journal, published several years after A.J. Tomlinson's death. The editor's note that accompanies the entries from the end of 1918 mention Homer had been a "cadet officer in the Cadet Corps at the University of Tennessee," as well as "Summer School Secretary of the Culver Military Academy…for three years," and "President of the Junior Plattsburg Military Training Camp," which were the "largest and most expensive private military summer schools in America."[311] His enlisting in the army in 1918 was clearly not a whimsical decision, nor was his father unaware of the direction his son was going. In addition, his time in the military schools and the Cadet Corps had been prior to the war, which supports the view that the COG did not always hold strong views about peace. It is difficult to ascertain how many others sided with

[310] Tomlinson, Unpublished Diary, June 6, 1918-April 21, 1919.

[311] Homer Tomlinson, ed., *Diary of A.J. Tomlinson* (New York: Church of God World Headquarters, 1949), 1:249.

Homer and either desired to enlist or actually enlisted. Considering the general overseer's then-firm stance on the church's antiwar position, it is likely most at this point did not feel they could voice openly their opposition to this stance.

With the exceptions of Homer's candid explanation of his wartime activities and several articles found in the *Evangel*, church members generally did not publish comments about the war. This omission speaks to how the war and pacifism ranked in their priorities. In the absence of much discussion on the war, it is interesting to note what members did write about. Although Tomlinson, Lee, Buckalew, and others frequently noted persecution they faced, they also focused heavily on evangelistic endeavors, particularly camp meetings and publications. Tomlinson wrote in the *Evangel*, "While the wars rage we must nesttle [sic] closer to God and be on OUR battlefield winning precious souls for our Lord."[312] Despite their teaching of separation from society, COG ministers saw no contradiction. They wanted the church to keep itself pure, but they also desired for those outside in society to join their fellowship. Since they taught the COG was the only true church, ministers had extra need to reach those outside their sect. The minutes of the Thirteenth General Assembly, the same assembly that passed the teaching against members going to war, give some indication of what ministers and members thought was important at that time. While there is no explicit mention of the Great War, there is significant discussion about evangelism, particularly foreign missions. The focus was on being faithful, and Tomlinson gave several examples in his annual address of apostles who had obeyed God rather than the government.[313] He summarized, "It is by His light, by following His teachings, by doing His will, by serving under His government, doing business according to His laws,

[312] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "While the Wars Rage," *Church of God Evangel*, July 8, 1916, 1.

[313] *Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God*, 14-16.

spreading the gospel according to His commands, seeking first the kingdom of God according to His command, that we will move on toward the Millennium."[314]

The church was aided in their focus on evangelism by their relative lack of radical antiwar rhetoric. Some Pentecostal churches, such as the Church of God in Christ and the Assemblies of God, encountered resistance from the government because of their more adamant stance against the war. Even the Church of God had at least some problems with the censors, as a few issues of the *Evangel* were deemed in violation of the Espionage and Sedition Acts. However, the press was not shut down and, compared with other Pentecostal denominations, the church was not heavily censored.[315]

Although the church presses stayed open, the Post Office's minor censorship of the *Evangel* brought Tomlinson some unwanted attention. The Bureau of Investigation sent an agent to determine if the COG was guilty of any treasonous sentiments. The Bureau inspected many Pentecostal sects during the war, so their scrutiny of the COG was not remarkable. However, their fairly light treatment of the denomination was slightly more unusual. After questioning Tomlinson about his pacifist views and opposition to church members fighting in combat, the agent confiscated some publications and records and returned to Washington. Though the official report pointed to Tomlinson as the originator of the disloyal language in the *Evangel*, nothing ever came of the investigation, and the church was not officially targeted again during the war.[316] Other Pentecostal denominations received far more persecution from federal agents.

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[314] *Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God*, 14.

[315] Stephens, *The Fire Spreads*, 262.

[316] Crews, *The Church of God*, 19-121.

The Church of God in Christ, for example, was the subject of an extensive federal investigation that led to several arrests of key leaders.[317]

One possible reason for the light treatment was that the church did not advocate outright resistance. Though Tomlinson found war repulsive and even hinted at excommunication for anyone who sought to enlist, he still recommended men register for the draft and go through the proper channels. Even after draft boards rejected some members' exemption requests, he did not change his view. Other church leaders expressed similar sentiments in regards to obeying the government. F.J. Lee preached a sermon that explained how Jesus had been a law-abiding citizen who paid taxes, and instructed the congregation to do likewise. He ended with a quote from Cardinal Mercier: "There is no perfect Christian who is not also a perfect patriot."[318] Ultimately, compared to other Pentecostal sects, and despite comments made by Tomlinson earlier in the war about obeying God rather than man, the COG was not especially extreme in its approach to peace and did not approve of breaking the law to avoid military service. Apparently the Bureau of Investigation came to a similar conclusion.

Persecution was not a new phenomenon for the COG. They had long suffered opposition from neighbors and other denominations who ridiculed their "holy roller" practices of speaking in tongues and being physically moved by the Spirit. Even within the Pentecostal community, the church was not well regarded since Tomlinson and others taught that their body was the only true church, the Church of God seen in the New Testament. The strict rules outlawing bottled drinks, chewing gum, neckties, and other common items further separated the church culturally as well as religiously, giving outsiders more ammunition for their ridicule and harassment. Yet

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[317] Kornweibel, "Race and Conscientious Objection in World War I."

[318] Lee, *Life Sketch and Sermons of F.J. Lee*, 77.

the persecution did not seem to faze church members, but rather in an interesting symbiotic relationship, it propelled them onward. Historian R. Laurence Moore's points to a similar situation with the early Mormons. He explains that "as their opponents charged again and again, [Mormons] fed on their persecution" and "memorialized it in ways that seemed to invite more of it."[319] The COG also devoted large amounts of space to the discussion of persecution in the *Evangel*, pamphlets, memoirs, and diaries. Moore comments on a similar occurrence in the Mormon experience, particularly as Mormon newspapers made persecution the dominant topic of their articles in the 1830s. Ultimately, he finds "persecution became the distinctive badge of membership in the church; it was the test of faith and of one's chosenness."[320] Even outside observers noticed the connection between the COG and persecution. Sociologist Liston Pope conducted a study of Gastonia, North Carolina in the 1940s, an area with a distinct COG presence. Writing about the church and similar holiness sects, he observed, "The Sects thrive on persecution and exult in the harassment they afford to older denominations."[321]

In general, the persecution suffered by the COG prior to the war was not excessive. Usually it took the form of ridicule or attempts to stop camp meetings, and these predominantly occurred on trips rather than in the towns of established congregations. During the war, however, the harassment intensified. This increase of opposition from civilians and local authorities put pressure on the church's already tenuous pacifist stance. Although many members prior to 1917 happily followed Tomlinson's prewar charge that "Christ must be honored and obeyed rather than the world governments even at the peril of our lives," they found

[319] Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*, 32.

[320] Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*, 34.

[321] Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1942), 139.

it much more difficult to continue this path after American intervention in the Great War.[322] Tomlinson initially believed the United States' entry into the war changed nothing, and stated, "When the laws of our country are made to oppose the laws of the Bible we have to obey God and submit to the penalty."[323] Since persecution was essentially part of the church's identity, harassment was not a concern, and perhaps the general overseer believed the wartime opposition would be equivalent to the manageable level experienced prior to the war.

Unfortunately for members, the COG managed to stir up a considerable amount of animosity over the years of its existence. As mentioned earlier, Pentecostals in general faced opposition due to their practices of speaking in tongues and being moved by the Spirit, and the COG in particular encountered more than its fair share of the persecution because of its doctrine of exclusivity, which upset even other Pentecostals.[324] Homer Tomlinson believed the hostility was due to the fact that people left the mainstream churches to join the COG, and Liston Pope's observations appear to support this thesis as a possible explanation.[325] Prior to the war, nonmembers were partially constrained in their opposition, as law officers frequently prevented excessive persecution and violence. During the war, however, there were more avenues for harassment. The easiest way for people in the community to show their opposition to the sect was through the local draft boards. Per the wording of the Selective Draft Act, the draft boards determined whether conscientious objectors belonged to a "well-recognized" pacifist church. Historian Jeanette Keith notes Pentecostal denominations "had little hope of being acknowledged

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[322] Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 60.

[323] [Tomlinson?], "The War Draft," 2.

[324] Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 124.

[325] Tomlinson, *Diary of A.J. Tomlinson*, 250; Pope, *Millhands and Preachers*, 139-140.

as 'well-recognized' peace sects," and finds in general "southern rural draft boards gave pacifism short shrift."[326]

In addition to denying combatant service exemption, nonmembers turned to other methods, both legal and illegal, for harassing church members. Since the church was officially pacifist and stood against supporting the war, other people in the community frequently called ministers and members unpatriotic and even accused some of being German spies. The most important case of this type of harassment was when the Bureau of Investigation was alerted to the church's antiwar rhetoric and conducted an examination of Tomlinson and the church offices.[327] Persecution also originated from local authorities. James Ellis, state overseer for Alabama, encountered resistance when he refused to purchase a Liberty Bond, which caused a Methodist minister to label him a "traitor to his country and lower down than a suck-egg hound."[328] After the incident, men followed Ellis wherever he preached, and he was eventually arrested during a camp meeting. He was not allowed to send or receive messages and local officials eventually charged him with being a German spy, a charge which took a great deal of effort to overturn.[329] Another member, W.L. Hance, was circulating copies of the *Evangel* in North Dakota when a neighbor accused him of being a German spy distributing literature. Police arrested him and tried to convict him for vagrancy."[330] Though there was no lack of harassment through ostensibly legal means, some law officers and townspeople eschewed even the

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[326] Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight*, 181, 182.

[327] Crews, *The Church of God*, 119-123.

[328] Ellis, *Blazing the Gospel Trail*, 110.

[329] Ellis, *Blazing the Gospel Trail*, 109-114.

[330] *Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual Assembly of the Church of God, Held at Cleveland Tenn., Oct. 29-Nov. 4, 1919* (n.p., n.d.), 28.

appearance of lawfulness in their persecution of the church. In a few extreme examples, some even killed church members. The *Evangel* conveyed the story of one man, Dave Allen of Alabama, who apparently had not registered for the draft. According to the account given by his wife, two law officers came to the house to arrest Allen for avoiding the draft, handcuffed him, beat him, and shot him twice. The man died later that same day.[331] According to Homer Tomlinson, J.W. Buckalew was shot at least seven times during his ministry, and his death in early 1918 was attributed to the last occasion.[332] Harassment could also be addressed to an entire church. Townspeople accused one congregation in Rara Avis, Mississippi, of being German spies "because of their unique worship style and speaking in a language other than English."[333]

The available sources indicate the church's pacifist convictions weakened as 1918 progressed, no doubt motivated by the persecution faced by members all over the country.[334] One example of this development was the softening of the church's opposition to purchasing Liberty Bonds. By May 1918, Tomlinson went as far as to state, "There is nothing against members investing in 'liberty bonds' if they choose to do so…but we would rather use our money to propagate the gospel. Each individual will need to satisfy his own conscience about the matter."[335] This shift in stance was representative of the change in how Tomlinson voiced his opposition to war, and how he applied that position to the church. By early 1918, he altered

[331] J.B. Ellis, "The Murder of Brother Dave Allen," *Church of God Evangel*, April 27, 1918, 4.

[332] Tomlinson, *Diary of A.J. Tomlinson*, 249-250; Buckalew, *Incidents in the Life of J.W. Buckalew*, 149.

[333] Louis F. Morgan, *Streams of Living Water: 100 Years of the Church of God in Mississippi, 1909-2009* (Published online at louismorgan.info/mshistory.html, 2009), 1:30.

[334] Stephens, *The Fire Spreads*, 263.

[335] [A.J. Tomlinson?], "Editorial," *Church of God Evangel*, May 11, 1918, 2.

the application of his belief. While writing about the "days of perplexity" that beset the church in the midst of the war and persecution, he commented on his stance against fighting, "I doubt if I could take the obligation to become a soldier in the first place. I do not say that others should not."[336] This is an extremely significant development in the history of the church's governance. Prior to the war, Tomlinson had often spoken with the authority of the Holy Spirit. Church members considered the vision he had in 1903 as the beginning of the great reformation that would bring all to the Church of God. They also viewed him as chosen by God to be the general overseer for this one true church. After 1914, he clearly opposed the war, and largely due to his influence the church adopted a similar stance. Now, Tomlinson—general overseer, editor of the *Evangel*, head of numerous church offices and departments, pastor of the main congregation—was speaking only for himself, and leaving the crucial decision of military service to the individual consciences of church members. No longer did he claim to speak universal truths.

Soon after Tomlinson toned down the severity and wide application of his antiwar rhetoric, members began to show signs of sympathy or support for the war effort. The most conspicuous example of this was Homer Tomlinson's enlistment in the army. As previously discussed, Homer had been enrolled in several military schools and academies, but he did not enlist until the last year of the war, and did not actually arrive in France until just before the armistice. Although the general overseer did not comment much on Homer's actions, he apparently did not forbid his son to go. As the war neared its conclusion, other members followed Homer's example and demonstrated their support of the war, seemingly no longer concerned about A.J. Tomlinson's threat of excommunication to those supporting the war,

[336] [Tomlinson?], "Days of Perplexity," 1.

voiced in the *Evangel* in July 1917.[337] Church historian Charles Conn mentions other men from Tomlinson's home congregation in Cleveland followed suit and enlisted, but does not give the number of enlistees or mention when they enlisted.[338] In addition, at the end of the year, two apparently unconnected women in Florida expressed their views of the war through letters sent to the *Evangel*. One related a dream she had, in which God told her the draft "was His plan for sending the gospel of the Kingdom to hundreds of people who would never hear it any other way."[339] The other member, on a similar note, commented, "Never in the world's history has there been such a grand opportunity for real work for souls as now."[340] What is interesting about these letters is not only their support of military service, but also the fact that Tomlinson, still editor of the *Evangel*, published them. Although he had always been partly restrained in what he could publish in the *Evangel*, since the Bureau of Investigation and other groups were constantly reviewing Pentecostal periodicals for infractions of the Espionage and Seditions Acts, he was not required to publish pro-war or pro-military content. Even in late 1918, he could have easily not included the two letters in the *Evangel*. However, at this point Tomlinson appeared to be more open to supporting the war, since he published all five verses of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in a November issue just prior to the armistice.[341] Thus, by the end of the conflict, the church had made a remarkably sharp turn in its position on the war, evident both in the general overseer and in regular church members.

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[337] [Tomlinson?], "War Notice," 2.

[338] Charles W. Conn, *Cradle of Pentecost* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1981), 59-60.

[339] Mrs. F.M. Rogers, "Plant City, Fla.," *Church of God Evangel*, October, 19, 1918, 3.

[340] Margaret Richie Pake, "Osprey, Fla.," *Church of God Evangel*, November 9, 1918, 3.

[341] "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," *Church of God Evangel*, November 2, 1918, 3.

The Church of God had a mixed experience with pacifism in the Great War. Some members followed through on the church's antiwar doctrine by requesting draft exemptions based on pacifism, Tomlinson wrote on many occasions about the Great War and his opposition to it, and several important church figures linked the war to the end times. Nevertheless, although the COG was used to persecution prior to the war, and indeed seemed to thrive on the opposition to its primitivist view of Scripture and doctrine, the persecution soon became greater than they expected. Also, as the war neared its conclusion, the end times seemed less likely to be connected to the conflict in Europe. Ultimately, the church and the general overseer adopted a pragmatic approach that allowed members to do what was in line with their own consciences. In the years and decades following the Great War, the church progressively became less tied to its earlier official pacifist stance.

Chapter 4: The Methodist Episcopal Church, South

At the time of the Great War, Methodism was one of the oldest and largest Christian traditions in the United States. Although a number of different Methodist denominations existed at the turn of the century, the most dominant in the southern United States was the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS). During the three years of American neutrality, southern Methodists were critical of the Great War and advocated arbitration and other methods to end the war quickly.[342] Once the United States entered the war, some shifted abruptly to an anti-German and pro-war stance. However, many other members were more cautious in their support of the nation's war effort, viewing the war as a necessary evil forced on the United States.

Methodism began as an early-eighteenth-century revival movement in the Church of England led by brothers John Wesley (1703-1791) and Charles Wesley (1707-1788). Methodism's American history has its roots in a missionary trip the Wesleys took in the late 1730s. Although growth was slow at first, more Methodist ministers traveled to the thirteen colonies in the decades following, building on the work from that first missionary trip. The most important of these Methodist ministers in the growth of American Methodism was Francis Asbury, who was heavily involved in teaching the Wesleys' theology and style of church organization in the colonies. Soon after his arrival, the first American Methodist conference met in Philadelphia in 1773. After the American Revolution, the Wesleys sent more ministers across

[342] Following the convention of other works on Methodism in the South, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South will be called southern Methodists for ease of use, despite the fact that there were southern members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and other Methodist denominations.

the Atlantic, eventually allowing American Methodism to transition from a lay movement to a church with ordained ministers. This important transformation provided the American congregations to become independent from England. The Methodist Episcopal Church in America formed out of a mass conference of American Methodist ministers in 1784.[343]

The new denomination grew over the course of the early nineteenth century, aided in large part by the successes of revivals and camp meetings, and the hard work of circuit riding ministers. Due to these methods, Methodism fared well in rural and frontier areas in particular, such as the southern United States. However, the unity of the church was not to last. Although other fragmentations occurred earlier, such as the separation of the Methodist Protestant Church from the larger Methodist body in 1828 over issues of church government, the major division occurred in 1840s. Slavery, the issue that was increasingly splitting northerners and southerners politically also affected the spiritual arena as well. At the General Conference of 1844, pro-slavery and anti-slavery elements in the church clashed. The controversy arose when a southern bishop acquired slaves through marriage. When northern ministers called for his suspension, the southern contingent drafted a plan of separation and broke away from the main denomination. Meeting one year later, this majority of the southern ministers formed the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The church would remain divided geographically until well into the twentieth century.[344]

The Civil War was a blow to the southern Methodists, but the church recovered and grew in the following decades. Increases in the foreign missions activities of the MECS marked the

[343] James E. Kirby, Russell E. Richey, and Kenneth E. Rowe, *The Methodists* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 1-14; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1974), 23-118.

[344] Kirby, Richey, and Rowe, *The Methodists*, 32-37.

post-Civil War years. As progressive movements surfaced in the nation, the church also experienced its own reform efforts, focusing on immigrant populations and social justice. Internally, the two most important reform goals sought by Methodist reformers were lay representation and increased roles for women. This was also a time when the MECS sought more ecumenical involvement, ultimately joining the Federal Council of Churches. In addition, the denomination began taking the first slow steps at reunification with the northern branch. These were the issues dominating the southern Methodist agenda when the Great War erupted in Europe in 1914.[345]

Throughout its history the Methodist tradition has never had an official pacifist stance, though there were times when different Methodist denominations have adopted pro-peace programs. The Methodist history of peace advocacy begins at the very beginning with John Wesley. Although he never overtly supported a pacifist viewpoint, Wesley did believe in the individual liberty of conscience, which for some Christians could mean espousing an opposition to war. On a related note, he also believed strongly in honoring human governments, unless they commanded Christians to disobey God's law.[346] The first test of this view in the Western Hemisphere came during the American Revolution. Wesley initially tried to remain neutral but eventually expressed his opposition to the revolution. However, most American Methodists supported independence, though at least some ministers refused to take up arms in the conflict.

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[345] Morris L. Davis, "Christian Unity and Civilized Races: The Methodist Joint Commission of Unification, 1916-1920" (PhD diss., Drew University, 2003); Robert Watson Sledge, *Hands on the Ark: The Struggle for Change in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1914-1939* (Lake Junaluska, NC: United Methodist Church Commission on Archives and History, 1975), 7; William Warren Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1954), 366.

[346] Stanley Ronald Parks, "The United Methodist Conscious Objector in the Vietnam War Era: A Study of Ethical Formulation and Implementation" (PhD diss., Drew University, 1992), 12.

Generally, the issue of conscientious objection was left up to the individual.[347] This approach continued into the nineteenth century, though some important figures spoke out against war. Francis Asbury suggested wars only be fought in cases of defense, and Charles Finley spoke out about war's terrible effect on ministers.[348]

The Civil War brought about a change in the Methodist policy. By this point, the church had split in two denominations, which now found themselves on opposite sides of the war. The MECS General Conference did not meet during the war, so no official guidance was given. Some members argued the church should keep above the conflict, but the majority viewed the war either as a noble cause or as an unfortunate conflict that must be won. Very few maintained any type of pacifist view, though there were a number of members expelled for disloyalty to the Confederacy, marking an end to the idea of the liberty of conscience as a general policy for the MECS.[349]

In the Spanish American War, many Methodists supported the nation's war effort, buying into the yellow journalism describing the plight of the Cuban people, and oftentimes seeing the conflict as an opportunity to spread the Gospel into Catholic lands. The MECS appeared to be more reluctant in their support than their northern brethren, though they did take advantage of the situation and set up three schools in Cuba in the aftermath. Following the end of the war, discussions of war or peace were less frequent in MECS writing, since large numbers of

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[347] Parks, "The United Methodist Conscious Objector in the Vietnam War Era," 13-16; Herman Will, *A Will for Peace: Peace Action in the United Methodist Church: A History* (Washington, DC: General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church, 1984), 7-8.

[348] Will, *A Will for Peace*, 10.

[349] Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 244; Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jeanne Miller Schmidt, *The Methodist Experience in America* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 1:198.

Methodists were focused on the progressive reforms and many of these saw war as a fossil of an older, non-progressive era.[350]

When the Great War erupted in Europe in the summer of 1914, discussions of war and peace quickly entered some southern Methodist sources. Many were quick to critique the war and the belligerent nations. Some saw the conflict as a sign of problems with European nations, which they saw as clinging to outdated forms of government and lacking the modernization of the United States. For others it was a religious issue, and they argued the Catholic influence in Europe was to blame. Regardless of the reasons given for the war, southern Methodists appeared united in their condemnation for the war and their fear for what the conflict could mean for the United States.[351]

The major southern Methodist newspapers flooded their pages with theories on the causes of the war and opinions about the problems in Europe. The *Raleigh Christian Advocate* attacked how Europe had prepared for war in the years prior to 1914. One month after the start of the war, the editors commented, "Four nations in Europe with five million trained soldiers encamped year in and year out must not be expected to live in peace long at the time."[352] The editors ultimately focused their critique on the Christian elements in these countries. Early in the war they noted, "The nations at war are generally recognized as Christian nations; but in our view they are not exhibiting the Spirit of Christ."[353] They saw this as a general lesson to Christians, arguing aggressive war was unpatriotic because it "does not furnish the elements upon which a

[350] Will, *A Will for Peace*, 17; Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt, *The Methodist Experience in America*, 358-359.

[351] Davis, "Christian Unity and Civilized Races," 97.

[352] "Notes," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, August 20, 1914, 14.

[353] "Notes and Comments," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, September 3, 1914, 2.

nation may feed and grow strong" and unchristian because "its whole principle is in striking contrast to the principles of Christianity."[354] Ultimately, although they saw the war as a terrible sin perpetuated by a supposedly Christian Europe, they did not believe it demonstrated a failure of Christianity. Instead, the editors stated, "Our faith in Christianity is not disturbed…but we hold the men, whoever they were, that brought on this conflict, responsible for a most flagrant violation of the principles of Christianity.[355]

The *Christian Advocate* of Nashville published similar thoughts about the war. The editors were particularly amazed at the seeming suddenness and unexpectedness of the war. Explaining their surprise, they wrote, "With more than nineteen centuries called Christian behind us, and having among us the most gigantic peace propagandas the world ever saw, to see fall as a bolt from the sky a war which convulses the globe is enough to make us think and feel as never before."[356] As with their colleagues in Raleigh, the editors in Nashville focused on the Christian nature of Europe and how the war could potentially put Christianity in a bad light. However, they trusted in what they thought Jesus would do in this situation. Focusing on this ultimate end of the war, they stated, "When these clouds of war shall have lifted…the Prince of Peace will be found standing…[and] his victorious march will not cease until real, lasting peace shall have been secured for the nations. There is no justification for the Christian's pessimism. God works sometimes strangely, but always victoriously."[357] After several months of reflection, the editors began to suggest possible reasons why ostensibly Christian nations could go to war. In one

[354] "Notes and Comments," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, October 1, 1914, 2.

[355] "Notes and Comments," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, October 1, 1914, 2.

[356] "The War," *Christian Advocate*, August 28, 1914, 5.

[357] "The War," 5.

issue, they considered the steps taken for international peace in the previous decades, but concluded, "The mighty peace propaganda of the twentieth century have not been rooted in the fundamental teaching of Christ. He taught…the immortality of peace in the individual. Yet our peace propagandists…have assumed that peace among nations can come through congresses."[358] In a later issue, one author added, "The war does prove…men have so far disregarded the teaching of Christianity as to fail to feel the kindliness and affection toward each other that the Bible…teaches."[359]

Although southern Methodist presses were full of condemnation for the war and criticism for the lack of Christian values displayed in Europe, ministers and members of the MECS realized they were not completely isolated from the conflict overseas. During the years of American neutrality, many southern Methodists eagerly supplied their opinions of what the United States should and should not be doing during the war. For most of the three neutral years, the message proclaimed repeatedly was for the United States to stay out of the war, and for the government to take proactive steps to make sure there was no gradual drift into the conflict. This was for practical reasons, such as preventing further bloodshed, but there were also significant religious motivations as well, as many were worried fighting in the war would affect mission efforts abroad.

This pro-neutrality view was advanced frequently in the denomination's periodicals. Both Nashville's and Raleigh's *Christian Advocate* frequently discussed the need for maintaining American neutrality through the turbulent war years. As soon as the war broke out, there was a general belief that the United States would certainly stay out of the war. When

[358] "Interrogation Marks," *Christian Advocate*, October 2, 3.

[359] William Thomas M'Elroy, "Has Christianity Failed?" *Christian Advocate*, October 23, 1914, 13.

reporting on the situation in Europe, the editors of the *Raleigh Christian Advocate* stated, "The United States will not, of course, become involved in the war," and in another issue, "The United States, of course, will maintain a strict neutrality in the war."[360] One author in Nashville added, "The United States is committed to a peace policy. Our leading statesmen are loyal to the Prince of Peace," though he also admitted this would be challenging to the United States, which would need to stay neutral, pursue peace, give aid when needed, and ultimately follow Christ.[361] Other writers focused on the steps the United States would need to take in order to stay out of the war. One article compared the military buildup in Europe with the current situation in the United States, which was expanding its navy. Writing as if he was Europe giving advice to the American people, the contributor, C.E. Jefferson, proclaimed, "Armaments are not guarantees of peace. They are not insurance. They are not instruments of reason or righteousness. They create first suspicion, then hatred, and at last lead young men by the million to the fields of blood."[362]

In many cases, these articles supported pro-neutrality programs by highlighting the activities of government officials who were trying to keep the nation out of the war. Like many in the South, southern Methodists had great respect for President Woodrow Wilson, who was the first southern president since the Civil War, and only the second from the Democratic Party in that same time. Discussing a recent peace-supporting speech by Wilson, the editors of the *Raleigh Christian Advocate* noted, "Preaching peace in the midst of war is a very wholesome

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[360] "Editorial," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, August 6, 1914, 2; "Editorial," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, August 20, 1914, 2.

[361] William F. Quillian, "The Moral Equivalent of War," *Christian Advocate*, October 30, 1914, 11.

[362] C.E. Jefferson, "European Warning to Us," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, December 3, 1914, 6.

doctrine…. It is ours…to stand by the truth whatever may be the attitude of the times toward it. President Wilson's message…is one of the wisest utterances of this remarkable man who is looming larger in the world's vision every day."[363] Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan also made a frequent appearance in southern Methodist periodicals. The *Christian Advocate* of Nashville made an effort to follow the secretary's pro-neutrality activities. Early in the war, the editors highlighted Bryan's success in passing individual arbitration treaties with eighteen nations, which was an attempt to keep the United States from resorting to war.[364] Later, the newspaper reported on Bryan's comments in opposition to a preparedness policy. The editors commented, "We believe the American people…[think] that we are fairly well prepared for any war that may come, and beyond that they do not propose that our government go in its expenditures for the army and navy."[365]

In addition to the work of pro-neutrality politicians, southern Methodists also followed the efforts of various peace societies. When the war began, one MECS bishop responded to news from Europe by summarizing the struggle for peace from a number of organizations and conferences, such as The Hague Arbitration Council, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the International Peace Congress, the Church Peace Union, and the Lake Mohonk Peace Conferences.[366] Throughout the months following the outbreak of war, news from peace organizations frequently appeared in southern Methodist sources. This included both reports

[363] "Notes and Comments," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, September 3, 1914, 2.

[364] "The Bryan Peace Treaties," *Christian Advocate*, August 28, 1914, 6.

[365] "Preparedness the Cause of War," *Christian Advocate*, December 18, 1914, 7.

[366] E.R. Hendrix, "The Passion for Peace," *Christian Advocate*, August 7, 1914, 10.

from the meetings and conferences of these organizations, as well as their programs, activities, and appeals to government officials.[367]

There is also evidence that at least a small number of southern Methodists joined peace organizations beyond the church. William Few, president of Trinity College (later renamed Duke University), was a delegate to the North Carolina Conference of the League to Enforce Peace shortly before the United States entered the war.[368] However, though most southern Methodists were not dues-paying members of these types of societies, some did participate in programs from these organizations. Throughout the war, one of the most common programs run by peace societies were essay and speech competitions. The *Campus*, the school newspaper of Southern Methodist University, frequently discussed current peace contests and the successes of students who entered them. Discussing the merits of the Texas Oratorical Peace Contest, in which competitors would attempt to find solutions to the war in Europe, the editors proclaimed, "At a time like this when one-half the world is war-mad and the other half is preparedness crazy, we ought to, at least, welcome a few gentle whispers about peace."[369] At least some students were eager to participate in such events, since announcements of peace contests peppered the issues during the neutral years, mentions were made of students who entered the contests, and one student was even the past winner of the North Carolina Peace Contest.[370]

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[367] "Plans of the Church Peace Union," *Missionary Voice*, February 1915, 51; E.R. Hendrix, "Break the Sword, Not Sheathe It," *Christian Advocate*, September 4, 1914, 10; "Appeal to the President," *Christian Advocate*, September 4, 1914, 13.

[368] League to Enforce Peace Certificate, March 22, 1917, Box 16, Folder 193, Office of the President William Preston Few 1910-1940, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[369] "Peace Contest to Be Held Soon," *Campus*, February 25, 1916, 2.

[370] "Intercollegiate Debates Monday," *Campus*, April 13, 1917, 1.

Perhaps the most pro-peace and antiwar segment of the MECS during this time was the Board of Missions, and in particular the Woman's Missionary Council (WMC). Southern Methodist women had a history of missions work, first organizing for missions in the nineteenth century. In 1910, the General Conference placed the Woman's Missionary Council, against the wishes of its members, under the control of the male-dominated Board of Missions. As one of the most progressive elements of the church, the WMC ran into conflict with the more conservative Board of Missions. This reorganization was a major cause of the women's laity rights movement in the MECS, which sought full representation for women in denominational conferences.[371]

One of the most important figures in MECS women's mission efforts during this time was Belle Bennett, who was president of the WMC from its creation in 1910 until 1922, as well as president of one of the society's predecessors, the Home Mission Society, from 1896 until 1910. In her dedication to ameliorating the economic, racial, and gender conditions of the South, Bennett was representative of many of the members of the WMC. As president of the WMC she was heavily involved in MECS mission activities, notably in fundraising and education. Perhaps her most noteworthy accomplishment was the founding of the Scarritt Bible and Training School in Kansas City in 1892, for which she was the primary fundraiser and supporter. The institution, which later moved to Nashville in the 1920s, was created as place to train southern Methodist women who intended to enter home or foreign missions. Bennett was also initiated southern Methodist women's laity rights movement, which strove for the General Conference to grant full laity status to women, a goal finally realized in 1918. She was the first woman to address the

[371] Mi-Soon Im, "The Role of Single Women Missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Korea, 1897-1940" (PhD diss., Boston University, 2008), 28-40; Noreen Dunn Tatum, *A Crown of Service: A Story of Woman's Work in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, From 1878-1940* (Nashville, TN: Parthenon Press, 1960).

General Conference as well as the first female delegate elected to the General Conference. Due to her familiarity with southern Methodist boards and governance, she was an influential figure and frequently worked with other church leaders.[372]

Under the leadership of Bennett, the WMC expressed a progressive attitude toward the world. Historian John Patrick McDowell argues the committee focused heavily on social concerns, running programs similar to those of the secular progressive efforts concentrated largely in the Northeast and Midwest. For the women in the WMC and its predecessor organizations, this focus was rooted in their belief that the United States held an important role in the world, leading the way for increased missionary activities around the globe. Before looking abroad, these women saw the importance of focusing on social concerns closer to home. One of their first targets for social relief was the urban poor and immigrant populations. The first southern Methodist settlement house opened in 1901, and others quickly followed. For many progressive reformers in the United States, their efforts targeting the social problems of the day led to a fervent support of peace and harmonious international relations, and for women in the WMC it was no different. McDowell states, "Race relations, the role of women, industrial relations, and rural work all received the women's attention. Yet the issues of peace and international relations were also a significant focus of their work."[373] Historian Noreen Dunn Tatum argues, "The Woman's Missionary Council was always a strong advocate of peace. The very nature of its mission, involving relationships with the various peoples and nations of the

[372] John Patrick McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South: The Woman's Home Mission Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1886-1939* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 26; Virginia A. Shadron, "Out of Our Homes: The Woman's Rights Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1890-1918 (PhD diss.: Emory University, 1976), 43-66.

[373] McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South*, 72.

world, was predicated upon a broad base of Christian concern for the universal well-being and salvation of humanity."[374] These women saw war as particularly damaging to the social wellbeing of nations and an enormous waste of money and lives. This was also not a recent development in response to the Great War. There had been criticism from southern Methodist women during the Spanish-American War, since the war effort was seen as diverting reasons from more deserving efforts.[375]

As soon as war broke out in Europe, women in the WMC, and the Board of Missions generally, devoted significant attention to the conflict. In many ways, they followed some of the same strategies and patterns as other southern Methodists when discussing their opposition to the war. Many of these similarities are seen in the *Missionary Voice*, the official periodical of the Board of Missions. Frequently during the neutral years, the editors highlighted the activities of peace organizations and reported the details of various peace prizes.[376] In some cases, WMC members were involved with these organizations. During the first year of the war, the *Missionary Voice* reprinted a statement of allegiance to the peace cause from an interdenominational group of women involved in missions organizations. Among the signatories was Belle Bennett, who in her various roles in southern Methodist missions organizations had been a major force in missions since the 1880s.[377]

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[374] Tatum, *A Crown of Service*, 362.

[375] McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South*, 61-73.

[376] "$5,000 in Prizes for Peace Essays," *Missionary Voice*, November 1914, 613; "Plans of the Church Peace Union," *Missionary Voice*, February 1915, 51; "More Peace Prizes," *Missionary Voice*, August 1915, 343; "International Peace Congress," *Missionary Voice*, September 1915, 390.

[377] "Women and World Peace: An Address to the Missionary Women of the World," *Missionary Voice*, April 1915, 183-184.

Although they discussed some of the same topics as seen in the regional periodicals, the WMC and the Board of Missions devoted more effort to discussing the war and proposing plans of action, and they often went into more depth on those topics than other southern Methodist boards and periodicals. Since these organizations were focused particularly on missionary activities, the effect of the war on missions was a special area of interest for them. This interest was present at the very beginning of the war. In one of the first mentions of the Great War in the *Missionary Voice*, the editors hypothesize the war will cause a decline in missions support from Europe, the need for the United States to step up its missionary efforts, and a possible disruption in missions to European colonies in Africa.[378] Over the next few years, the idea of using the war as an occasion to increase missions surfaced regularly. Another issue of the *Missionary Voice* printed a graph comparing the Great War with the war for the Gospel, illustrating all the negative aspects of the physical war and the much more noble cause of spreading the Gospel.[379] Another major issue discussed in the *Missionary Voice* was how non-Western nations would view the warring nations. Like other southern Methodists, the WMC and the Board of Missions rejected the idea of the war as a sign of Christianity's failure. However, they were constantly worried non-Christians would view the war in that way, and thus making missionary efforts more difficult. After only a few months into the war, foreign missionaries began to report receiving difficult questions. One wrote, "The Chinese are asking some very hard questions about the war. They ask: 'Since Christian nations are seeking to destroy each other, how much better are they than the non-Christian countries?' 'Does Christianity teach people to war?"[380] However,

[378] "The European War and Missions," *Missionary Voice*, October 1914, 545-546.

[379] J. Campbell White, "The Two Greatest Wars," *Missionary Voice*, August 1915, 344.

[380] A.C. Bowen, "Chinese Asking Hard Questions," *Missionary Voice*, January 1915, 32.

another missionary in China reported how American neutrality caused potential Chinese converts to view American missionaries more favorably, and thus giving them more opportunities for evangelism.[381]

Due to the war's negative impact on missions, a primary focus of the WMC and the Board of Missions was supporting the United States in its current position of neutrality. The WMC advocated peace and opposed preparation partially based on the strong belief that the American people would be decidedly against any form of intervention into the war.[382] At the 1916 annual meeting of the WMC, one woman called for members to pray for the United States to "stand true to the principles of peace and the great law of the brotherhood of man."[383] Devotion to praying for peace was important because, unlike some more optimistic editors of regional newspapers, others worried the United States was not above entering the war, despite the wishes of the population. Soon after the war began, one author in the *Missionary Voice* commented, "We of America, God's greatest gift to Christianity and civilization, bound and chained to crass principles, precedents, and limitations…go right on creating standing armies and building monster battleships in order that the American steel plants, gunmakers, and bankers may find an outlet in every land."[384] The ultimate worry would be that the United States follow the course set by Europe, since the editors argue the Christian populations there were also against

[381] S.J. Corey, "What Does It Mean?" *Missionary Voice*, November 1915, 506.

[382] W.R. Lambuth, J.R. Pepper, Belle H. Bennett, "An Address to the Church," *Missionary Voice*, December 1914, 644.

[383] *Sixth Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for 1915-1916* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, n.d.), 60.

[384] William C. Deming, "The Waste of War," *Missionary Voice*, September 1914, 513.

war, but felt forced into battle by their rulers.[385] Some also worried that the American population would be led into believing the war was necessary. As one missionary pointed out, "Our country is not too good to engage in war should some question of 'honor' arise."[386] The editors agreed with this concern, arguing the "my-country-right-or-wrong" style of patriotism is not Christian and does not support the idea of world brotherhood.[387]

The *Missionary Voice* was not hesitant to attack any measures that seemed to draw the United States closer to war. The most important of such debates was the one over preparedness. The editors dedicated a whole issue of the *Missionary Voice* to summarize their opposition to preparedness, which was then being discussed in Congress. They prefaced, "Nobody will question the propriety of a religious periodical devoting some of its space to the promotion of peace. The desire for peace and for the final end of the war is so essentially Christian that its expression anywhere will be universally approved."[388] Among other issues, they contended preparedness would be unnecessary because the United States was not at risk from a war-weakened Europe, it was what led Europe to war in the first place, it would be a departure from the standards of American democracy, and it would prevent the United States from being a leader in disarmament and peace.[389] To reinforce their arguments, in the same issue the editors reprinted anti-preparedness excerpts from several eloquent Americans, including John Day, chancellor of Syracuse University; Washington Gladden, famed Social Gospel minister; and

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[385] "The European War and Missions," 545.

[386] Bowen, "Chinese Asking Hard Questions," 33.

[387] "A Voice from the Dark Ages," *Missionary Voice*, January 1916, 6.

[388] "What Has 'The Voice' to Do With It?" *Missionary Voice*, January 1916, 4.

[389] "'Preparedness'—A National Peril," *Missionary Voice*, January 1916, 1-3.

Lucia Ames Mead, national secretary of the Woman's Peace Party. Also included was a statement of pacifism from the Religious Society of Friends, which the editors praised for staying true to their peace tradition despite the rise in militarist sentiments in the nation.[390]

It does not appear the editors of the *Missionary Voice* were alone in their feelings about preparedness. The next two issues contained numerous letters of support from subscribers. One letter, illustrating the level of opposition to war found among some of the journal's readers, stated, "I am very glad you are opposed to war and preparedness. It is wrong. God says: 'Thou shalt not kill.'"[391] Some believed other southern Methodist periodicals should be more vocal in their peace views, as one respondent noted, "It is a matter for supreme regret that a much larger number of our Church organs have not found a voice to proclaim the opposition of the Christian principle to the program of militarism."[392] Southern Methodist readers were not the only ones to agree with the periodical's coverage of the dangers of preparedness. William Jennings Bryan also read the issue and wrote an article for the *Missionary Voice*, detailing his views on preparedness and criticizing those who tried to use the Bible to justify preparedness measures.[393]

Despite opposition to preparedness, the nation increasingly readied for war. When the United States declared war in April 1917, southern Methodists dropped the majority of their

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[390] James R. Day, "War Preparedness as 'National Hysteria,'" *Missionary Voice*, January 1916, 11-12; Washington Gladden, "The World Looking Forward to Permanent Peace," *Missionary Voice*, January 1916, 12-13; Lucia Ames Mead, "National Dangers and National Defense," *Missionary Voice*, January 1916, 15; "Quakers Reaffirm Opposition to War," *Missionary Voice*, January 1916, 9-10.

[391] "Commending the Peace Number," *Missionary Voice*, March 1916, 105.

[392] "Brickbats and Bouquets: What They Say about the Peace Number," *Missionary Voice*, February 1916, 57

[393] William Jennings Bryan, "Christian Preparedness," *Missionary Voice*, March 1916, 109.

objections to the conflict in Europe and mustered support for the nation's war effort. Historian Robert Sledge argues the war was easier for southern Methodists to accept because Woodrow Wilson was from the South, a Democrat, a Protestant, and a supporter of progressive reforms.[394] The MECS had declared their admiration for Wilson during the neutral years, so it was no major complication to continue their pro-Wilson attitudes into the war. Not only did southern Methodists support the president and his decision to go to war, but also, with very few exceptions, they did so with enthusiasm.[395] At the next General Conference, the MECS bishops asked members to support the war, praising the president for his patience and restraint over the previous three years. Wilson showed his support for the MECS by sending a telegram, which was read and printed in the conference minutes.[396] The thought of not falling in line behind their country in this time of war was not considered by many southern Methodists. Methodist publications noted this patriotic turn was not unique to them, quoting favorably from A.T. Robertson, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, who summarized the view of many in his denomination when he wrote, "The Christian citizen is compelled to be loyal to the position of his own country or be guilty of treason."[397]

The transition from opposition to the war to support for their nation entering that war was not taken in one step. Although southern Methodists did support the president and saw the need to follow the direction of their government, there were other causes and justifications for their

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[394] Sledge, *Hands on the Ark*, 50.

[395] Will, *A Will for Peace*, 30.

[396] *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for the Year 1918* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House Methodist Episcopal Church, South, n.d.), 32, 103, 341.

[397] A.T. Robertson, "Paul and Patriotism," *Methodist Review Quarterly* (July 1917): 407.

change in policy. One major shift occurring over the course of the war was the increasing anti-German propaganda permeating in American society. Southern Methodists possibly had been less susceptible to the growing distrust of Germany because the MECS had several German-speaking conferences within their denomination. In the pre-intervention years, Germany was typically not mentioned at least neutrally, except when the discussion turned to their invasion of Belgium. Periodicals rarely used the pejorative term "Hun," and almost never in the first two years of the war. Gross Alexander, editor of the *Methodist Review* and a former professor at Vanderbilt University, conducted a study of the war in 1915, and determined that although much of the cause of the war lay with Germany, the Allies were guilty as well and were "paying the just penalty for their wrongdoings and their oppressions of weaker peoples."[398] In addition, he placed the blame on the German leadership rather than on the German people who he claimed were actually peace loving.[399]

However, when the United States declared war on Germany, any hesitation about blaming Germany for the war dissipated. The U.S. government's propaganda campaign against Germany quickly turned the denomination against Germany, uniting both conservative and progressive factions of the denomination.[400] Robert Sledge states southern Methodists "were caught up in the general wartime hysteria and indulged themselves in orgies of printed hate."[401] In addition to blaming the cause of the war on Germany, southern Methodist newspapers around

[398] Gross Alexander, *The War: A Study of the Purposes of God in Permitting It* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1915), 17.

[399] Alexander, *The War*, 11.

[400] Nancy Keever Andersen, "Cooperation for Social Betterment: Missions and Progressives in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1894-1921 (PhD diss.: Vanderbilt University, 1999), 224.

[401] Sledge, *Hands on the Ark*, 50.

the nation focused on various sins of Germany, including failing to honor the Sabbath, advancing ideas of higher criticism of the Bible, and controlling the brewing industry, which many temperate members saw as a subversive element of society.[402] The revulsion of Germany also was present in sermons. One southern Methodist minister from North Carolina, Creasy Proctor, delivered a sermon titled "Can a Christian Fight?" He stated two truly Christian nations could not go to war against each other, so either the United States or Germany must not be Christian. Proctor answers his own question by stating the idea of Christ is repugnant to "Prussianism," so instead the German leaders had interpreted Christ in a certain way and drawn from only parts of the Bible so as to conflict with their nationalism. Instead of a Christian nation, he believed Germany was an incarnation of the devil, a materialistic and Christ-less nation, a manufacturer of terrible weapons, and a perpetrator of atrocities such as the slaughter of innocents.[403] The change in views on Germany was also seen at the highest levels: the General Conference. At the 1918 meeting, the General Conference adopted a resolution stating the MECS was supporting the war due to "the vicious ambitions of the German leaders."[404]

The opposition to Germany also trickled down into suspicion of German-Americans. Within a few months of the declaration of war, Professor A.T. Robertson cautioned German-Americans to be loyal to their new country, since they were Americans now.[405] However, the question remained of how much proactive patriotic action was necessary to demonstrate loyalty.

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[402] Sledge, *Hands on the Ark*, 50-54.

[403] Can a Christian Fight, Box 1, Folder 1, Sermons of Creasy K. Proctor, 1915-1940, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[404] *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for the Year 1918*, 128.

[405] Robertson, "Paul and Patriotism," 407.

The result, as with German-Americans outside of the MECS, was assimilation. Early in the American phase of the war, the German-speaking southern Methodist conferences were dissolved, their congregations were dispersed among the English-speaking conferences, and the practice of speaking German in those churches was heavily discouraged.[406]

As a Christian denomination, much of the southern Methodist opposition to Germany after the declaration of war was tied to religious issues. As with their views of Germany, many of these religious justifications for fighting the war appeared around or after American intervention. For example, some southern Methodists, like the Board of Education in the Memphis Conference, argued the war was more than merely a fight against autocracy, but a religious war at its heart.[407] In addition, the MECS also had religious reasons for supporting the war that were unrelated to Germany. For many, supporting or fighting in the war was tied to some sense of Christian duty. Bishop James Atkins pointed out most of the warring nations were Christian, and were fighting against all Christian principles, so concluded it was up to Christians to do something.[408] Another bishop, John Kilgo, was even more direct. Tying religion and patriotism together, he declared, "In our duty to our country in this hour it is our sacred privilege and holy task to demonstrate a Christian type of patriotic devotion and fidelity."[409] For H.C. Morrison, bishop and president of Asbury College, the transition to support for the war was not

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[406] Robert Watson Sledge, *"Five Dollars and Myself": The History of Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1845-1939* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, 2005), 315.

[407] Andersen, "Cooperation for Social Betterment," 224.

[408] Missionary Centenary Commission, *Missionary Centenary World Survey, 1819-1919: A Program of Spiritual Strategy and Preparedness* (Nashville, TN: Missionary Centenary Commission, 1919), 95.

[409] John C. Kilgo, "An Open Letter," *New Orleans Christian Advocate*, June 27, 1918, 1.

contrary to the pre-intervention southern Methodist rhetoric. Explaining the difference, he wrote, "All Christian men must be opposed to war; and yet, intelligent Christian men must, some time, fight for the great underlying principles of righteousness, without which Christian civilization would be impossible."[410]

Regardless of how they supported their shift in rhetoric, within a month of the American entry into the Great War, the majority of southern Methodists were clamoring to show their support for the war effort. This transition influenced the ways southern Methodists thought and acted during the rest of the war. One of the first changes was a reversal on any positive view of pacifism. Although some MECS publications had quoted or referenced pacifist denominations and their views, and some MECS members had worked alongside religious pacifists in various peace organizations, a new perspective on pacifism emerged soon after the declaration of war.[411] H.C. Morrison was particularly vehement in his condemnation of pacifists. In a passage filled with similes comparing pacifists to simpletons who would ignore charging bulls or snarling dogs, he argued, "There would be just as much solid and logical reason in the methods of the pacifists with the German war lords, as the proposed treatment of furious bulls and mad-dogs."[412] However, he did not believe all pacifists had this lackadaisical view of the world, and instead suggested, "Most of the pacifists of this country who claim to be opposed to war, are hypocrites and liars…. They wanted to escape military service in Germany and enjoy the privileges of this

[410] H.C. Morrison, *The World War in Prophecy: The Downfall of the Kaiser and the End of the Dispensation* (Louisville, KY: Pentecostal Publishing Company, 1917), 69-70.

[411] "A Voice from the Dark Ages," 6; "The Christian in Time of War," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, April 19, 1917, 2.

[412] Morrison, *The World War in Prophecy*, 71.

free and democratic country."[413] John Nelson, a southern Methodist from Texas, saw ministers as having a higher standard. In a pamphlet on war work in Texas, he wrote, "What about the young preacher within the draft age…who takes shelter behind the 'cloth' and neither enlists as a private nor offers his services as a chaplain? The soldiers now call him a 'slacker,' and, after the war, the 'slacker' preacher will be without a congregation, without a hearing."[414]

Another result of the change of views on the war was an accompanying shift in interpretation of sections of the Bible. Before American intervention, southern Methodists often pointed to verses in the Bible that were more condemning of war, and used this evidence to show the European nations, or at least the leaders, were clearly no longer Christian. Once in the war, southern Methodists began to reinterpret those sections or draw from other parts of the Bible when discussing the application of the Bible to the current day. Some looked at Jesus' teachings, since many of them address peace, such as "blessed are the peacemakers." One possible way to handle the seeming dissonance between Jesus' peace teaching and the current war was outlined in the *Epworth Era*, the official periodical of the Epworth League, an organization for southern Methodist young adults. In a lesson plan on the war, the editors wrote, "'Having made peace through the blood of the cross' is the Father's way of making peace. 'Blessed are the peacemakers,' who in their own sphere make peace by the blood of their own cross, 'for they shall be called the children of God.' This is the peace the United States is standing for and fighting for to-day."[415] Such articles, because of their younger audience, were subject to a particularly high level of scrutiny from southern Methodists, who would want the paper to reflect

[413] Morrison, *The World War in Prophecy*, 71-72.

[414] John R. Nelson, *War Work of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in Texas* (n.p, 1918?), 10.

[415] "Prayer Meeting Topics," *Epworth Era*, December 1917, 119.

the views of the denomination. Others approached the issue by tying Jesus' teachings to the idea of democracy. Sarah Patten, of the WMC of the North Carolina Conference, defined democracy as an association of men who put a true value upon every man, and points to Jesus as the one who introduced the doctrine of individual worth. She argued, "This very war is giving us one opportunity to press the claims of Jesus…in all the collective life of man."[416] Another approach was to pose a situation where Jesus would have turned to force. J. Tillerry Lewis, a southern Methodist from Mississippi, categorized people into four groups, and placed Jesus and the U.S. government into the last and highest one. Defining the inhabitants of the last group, he wrote, "[It contains] those who, like our Savior, recognize the fact that property rights are not of sufficient value to shed human blood over, but who, for humanity's sake and for the sake of truth and righteousness, will, if necessary, appeal to the sword.[417]

Although Jesus spoke the most about peace in the New Testament, the apostle Paul contributed the most doctrine, so other southern Methodists tried to wrestle with understanding Paul's letters in the context of fighting a world war. Professor A.T. Robertson attempted this task with an article on Paul and patriotism published in the *Methodist Review Quarterly*, a scholarly journal published by the MECS. In the article, Robertson explained how Paul was in a similar situation as southern Methodists, caught up in the politics of the world. Paul taught the origin of governments' power was God, and the author employed this teaching as a way to discredit the autocratic Central Powers. Robertson also described Paul as a supporter of patriotism and not as a "peace-at-any-price" person. After considering Paul's view of patriotic

[416] *Sixth Annual Report, Woman's Missionary Society, North Carolina Conference, M.E. Church, South, Held in Edenton St. Church, Raleigh, April 16-19, 1918* (Goldsboro, NC: Nash Brothers, 1918), 38.

[417] J. Tillerry Lewis, "World Democracy," *Methodist Review Quarterly* (January 1918): 39.

military service, Robertson argued Paul would have enlisted in the Roman military if called, and if the cause was right. The author concluded, "He would have opposed a war of conquest and pillage…. In a war of defense, Paul would have been ready to 'do his bit,' I believe. He spoke kindly of soldiers and used them as illustrations of service for Christ."[418]

In addition to a change in views, the war also led to a wide range of activities within the MECS. As missions was central to the church's worldview, many southern Methodists tried to tackle the issue of promoting missionary activity during the war, and looked for any opportunities the war brought. In some ways, the Great War merely intensified the direction the MECS was heading prior to the war. When the war broke out, the denomination was in the midst of preparing for the one hundredth anniversary of Methodist missions in 1919.[419] As the United States entered the war, the church incorporated elements of the war effort into their own evangelistic mission. Discussing the government's slogan of "making the world safe for democracy," the Missionary Centenary Commission stated, "The safety of democracy for the world depends wholly upon the character of the democracy. The task of the Church, therefore, is, by its evangelical and educational processes, to transform the citizenship of the world into preparedness for meeting the issues of this new and larger scheme of life."[420] Another reason the war necessitated a rise in missions was highlighted at the 1917 annual meeting of the Holston Conference of middle Tennessee. The conference's Committee on Evangelism consulted reports from previous years and concluded, "We have not had overwhelming displays of revival power in as many places as in other years, and fear that the great World War has to some extent

[418] Robertson, "Paul and Patriotism," 413.

[419] Sweet, *Methodism in American History*, 381.

[420] Missionary Centenary Commission, *Missionary Centenary World Survey*, 95.

distracted the mind of the Church."[421] Not only did the war bring about a need for missions to restore stability, but also it was undermining the existing missionary spirit.

The war was tied up with the need for evangelism, and it also gave southern Methodists the opportunities and tools need to increase missionary efforts. Prior to the war, MECS foreign missions had taken place outside of Europe, but this conflict gave the denomination the opening they needed to add another continent to their missionary scope. With southern Methodists arriving in Europe in large numbers—as soldiers, chaplains, and war correspondents—interaction between members and Europeans increased. Citing a time when a French soldier brought a Bible to Mexico, Bishop W.R. Lambuth, stated, "Soldiers who have gone into distant lands under the exigencies of war have frequently been instrumental in pioneering the way for the gospel…. Who shall say what will be done, in the providence of God, in the wake of these men who go to France and Italy."[422] However, the MECS would not rely solely on the results of handing out Bibles. Much of the European missions began initially as relief efforts, and transitioned to spiritual matters. Due to the complications of wartime, many of these ventures were not able to occur until after the war was over, although planning began during the war. One element of the planning was funding. In this area the MECS was also influenced by the war. Drawing inspiration from the government's war bond drives, southern Methodists began drives for missions, combining the occasion of wartime evangelism with the lead-up to the missions centenary, ultimately setting their sights for raising $35 million.[423]

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[421] *Official Record of the Holston Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Ninety-Fourth Session, Held at Pulaski, Virginia, October 10-16, 1917* (n.p., n.d.), 61.

[422] "Proceedings," *Daily Christian Advocate*, May 11, 1918, 60.

[423] Sledge, *"Five Dollars and Myself,"* 315-316, 336.

Southern Methodists did not respond to American entrance to the war by merely stepping up their missions activities, but also wholeheartedly took part in all matter of work supporting their country's war effort. The MECS coordinated most of their assistance through the Committee on War Work, which was formed by the College of Bishops soon after the declaration of war. During the General Conference of 1918, delegates voted to upgrade the committee to the Commission of War Work, consisting of three bishops, five ministers, and five laymen. It was also determined each of the regional Annual Conferences would have their own commissions to coordinate the local war work. These commissions focused on such tasks as working with local military bases, coordinating food conservation programs, and any other activity to help the war effort.[424] At the General Conference the men involved proclaimed, "This is the greatest task the Church has ever faced in an hour of crisis…. In short, it involves the physical, the moral, and the religious welfare of our boys, and through them the winning of the war, the vindication of the rights and liberties of the weaker nations, the establishment of the righteousness in the earth, and a permanent and world-wide peace."[425] The church particularly singled out ministers as important to the denomination's war work. Another wartime church board, the Committee on Patriotic Resolutions, stated, "We declare it our conviction that all our preachers are and ought to be willing freely to offer the use of their buildings and organizations for all war purposes consistent with Christian patriotism."[426]

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[424] *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for the Year 1918*, 49, 100, 201, 268.

[425] *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for the Year 1918*, 99.

[426] *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for the Year 1918*, 129.

One aspect of the southern Methodist war work was support for temperance. This had been a goal of many in the denomination before the war began, so it was a smooth transition to see this as a wartime necessity. During the war, many in the MECS considered the consumption of alcohol one of the worst dangers confronting American soldiers, second only to enemy troops. The General Conference of 1918 created a Commission on Temperance and Social Service partially to oversee this element of the church's work, hoping to limit soldiers' access to alcohol.[427] When the government responded with some limits on alcohol, southern Methodists responded enthusiastically.[428]

Throughout the church, many embraced the nation's war effort, changing their view of the war and the nations involved, and taking actions to show their support. However, as a large denomination, one set of reactions cannot define the whole of the MECS. Although most seemed to enthusiastically throw their support behind the government, there was a small minority who were not as convinced. Of this minority, a few proclaimed pacifism and refused to serve in the war in any combatant role. Since Methodism was not rooted in a history of pacifism, these instances were extremely rare. Slightly more common were southern Methodists who wished to avoid combat for themselves or for their sons, but did not claim to hold to any type of pacifism. This was a difficult position, since many in the denomination were openly incensed by the arguments for pacifism. One father of a student at Trinity College experienced this issue, and ultimately decided to enlist his son, Claude, in the National Guard on the hope this would keep him from being shipped out to Europe. Writing to William Few, president of the college, the man stated, "It might be that we could have kept Claude out of the army altogether by making an

[427] Andersen, "Cooperation for Social Betterment," 228.

[428] Andersen, "Cooperation for Social Betterment," 223-224.

effort, but really we do not want someone a quarter of a century from now to accuse him of being a slacker."[429]

Much more common in this small minority was a cautious approach to the nation's war effort. Some southern Methodists who supported the war effort remained unsure whether the nation had acted rightly, or even believed it had been a mistake to go to war. Many were overwhelmed by the war's terrible impact on the nation. One major worry was the decline in honoring the Sabbath. A group of southern Methodists in Washington argued, "The capital of our nation has recently shown evidence of a decline to a moral plane…indicated by Sabbath desecration."[430] One woman wrote an entire pamphlet outlining ways the war has led to dishonoring the Sabbath, particularly when military training is done on Sunday.[431] The Memphis Conference had a Committee on Sabbath Observance, which reported about the loss of sanctity of the Sabbath. Another Memphis board, the Committee on Spiritual Interests broadened the war's impact to more than just the Sabbath. They believed the war had affected people's minds to the point where religion was not even taken seriously anymore.[432] Those in Europe were also worried about the behavior they witnessed there. Elmer Clark, a minister-turned-war correspondent, had bleak pictures to report from his time in Europe. He wrote about how prostitution, profanity, and hatred had increased during the war years, and churches either

[429] Letter to William Preston Few, May 28, 1917, Box 16, Folder 202, Office of the President William Preston Few 1910-1940, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[430] "Leaguers at Work for Civic Righteousness," *Epworth Era*, May 1918, 286.

[431] J.W. Downs, *War Work and the Sabbath* (Nashville, TN: Woman's Missionary Council, 1917?).

[432] Andersen, "Cooperation for Social Betterment," 224.

ignored these trends or offered unhelpful platitudes.[433] Ultimately, as a response to this situation, he reported, "Men reject Christianity and they attack the Church."[434]

The largest group of this cautious minority came from the WMC. As the most progressive element of the MECS, it is not surprising the WMC would be hesitant to support the war effort. Many progressive organizations during the Great War felt the difficulty of balancing their patriotism for their country, which was now taking part in a destructive war, with their mandate to better the world. As a MECS board, this issue was doubly problematic for the WMC, as they had to also navigate the question of the church's place in wartime, and whether a religious organization could enthusiastically support this killing overseas.[435] These types of views soon became unpopular. After the declaration of war, formerly pro-peace and anti-intervention groups around the nation shifted their rhetoric to fall in line with the government's stance. Although many of them followed in this trend, it was progressive reformers who constituted the majority of those who continued to oppose the war. This experience also held true in the MECS, as the WMC was the least inclined to follow the rest of the denomination in backing the nation's involvement in the Great War.

Unlike some progressive peace organizations that defied the government and refused to waver from their opposition to the war, the WMC did not attempt any act of disloyalty or subversion. When the United States joined the war, they resigned themselves to that fact. Some women within the WMC took even part in the enthusiasm seen in other MECS members, but a

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[433] Elmer T. Clark, *Social Studies of the War* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 17, 31, 36, 115, 124, 136.

[434] Clark, *Social Studies of the War*, 177.

[435] John Olen Fish, "Southern Methodism in the Progressive Era: A Social History (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 1969), 215.

large percent of the leadership maintained a restrained level of support for the nation's decision. At their 1917 annual meeting, less than two weeks after the declaration of war, a motion was carried stating the WMC had the "deepest sympathy with our country in this time of national peril," but was "looking to that time when the Prince of Peace shall come into his own."[436] Even in just this first section their restraint is noticeable, since they do not make any attempt to declare the United States is choosing the correct path, or has been forced to this action. They continued their statement by requesting the College of Bishops set up a denominational day of prayer "that the barbarities of war may not take hold upon our nation, and especially upon the defenders of the nation, that love and mercy may govern us in our thought and acts toward enemy peoples, but especially toward those in our midst from countries with which we are at war."[437] Of the official statements the WMC issued during the war, this was among the most supportive of the nation's war effort. Most avoided discussing the fighting and instead focused on relief efforts such as various Red Cross activities.

This restraint was related to the WMC focus on missionary work, and particularly their civilizing mission to the world. The missionaries they sponsored were to establish Christian civilization in faraway lands, but the war was seen as a sign of the decline of Christian civilization in the West. This failure at home would have large implications for missionary efforts abroad, which would no longer be able to draw from the strong Christian base in the

[436] *Seventh Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for 1916-1917* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, n.d.), 40.

[437] *Seventh Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for 1916-1917*, 40.

United States.[438] The war showed a serious straying from Biblical principles, and continued warfare would only worsen the situation. At the 1918 annual meeting, Belle Bennett, president of the WMC, declared, "The proud and haughty spirit of nationalism, fostered and developed in Church and State, with patriotism as its slogan, has for so long rejected the overtures of [Jesus]…that the vision of God's people has been darkened, and they have failed to realize that glorious international brotherhood for which He died on Calvary."[439] When the war dragged on into 1918, the WMC sought to expand the initial idea of a day of prayer into a formal recurring activity. At the annual meeting the Committee on Home Base submitted a recommendation for prayer leagues to be formed in every auxiliary, "praying for the nations at war, that a righteous peace may come; for our own nation, that she may steadfastly maintain those high ideals with which she entered the conflict."[440]

However, instead of merely bemoaning the country's failed neutrality, the WMC turned to focus on what they could do in spite of the war. Soon after the declaration of war, the women organized to promote war work, such as food conservation, liberty bond sales, and Red Cross activities. Some women even went abroad to serve in the Red Cross in Europe.[441] This was not a difficult transition for these women, as many saw war work as an outgrowth of their missionary

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[438] Im, "The Role of Single Women Missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Korea," 70.

[439] *Eighth Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for 1917-1918* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, n.d.), 67.

[440] *Eighth Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for 1917-1918*, 186.

[441] R.W. MacDonell, "Methodist Women and the War: Comprehensive Program of Service Outlined by Woman's Missionary Council," *Missionary Voice*, July 1917, 200-201; R.W. MacDonell, "Our Wesley Houses and War Work," *Missionary Voice*, December 1917, 363-365; Tatum, *A Crown of Service*, 362.

efforts. Home missions had always been a large part of the council's activities, so trying to improve the lives and spiritual wellbeing of soldiers in military camps came naturally to the WMC.[442] In fact, many of the war work efforts were conducted in the WMC settlement houses throughout the South, which one woman saw as opportunity to "work for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth."[443]

However, the WMC did not forget its primary calling during the war, and continued to advocate traditional missionary activities. This appears to have been a difficult task, as many women were heavily involved in the council's war work. Even though war work for the WMC was connected to their missionary goals, it did reduce the amount of overt missionary efforts. One WMC member from Tennessee argued, "The great need of the present and greater need of the future should convince one of the need of missionary work in time of war."[444] Yet she concluded, "Despite the great need, only one-eighth of the women of the southern Methodist Church are enlisted in the great cause of missions."[445] Countering the seemingly diminished emphasis on evangelism, the WMC used current situations as an opportunity to refer back to missions, trying to keep that goal present in the minds of southern Methodists. For example, using the popular wartime slogan of "do your bit," one woman wrote an article titled "Do Your Bit for Christ" in the *Missionary Voice*. Repurposing the wartime slogan for missions, she wrote, "As our nation's call is being carried to the remotest sections of the land and is meeting with a response firm and true, another call keeps ringing in my ear…a call to the young

[442] McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South*, 76.

[443] MacDonell, "Our Wesley Houses and War Work," 365.

[444] A.B. Smith, "Why Missions in Time of War?" *Missionary Voice*, January 1918, 26.

[445] Smith, "Why Missions in Time of War?" 27.

womanhood of southern Methodism."[446] Referring to missions efforts to Japanese immigrants living in California, and using words from a Woodrow Wilson speech, she continued, "This call, too, is given for the liberation of oppressed and burdened human souls and 'for the future peace and security of the world.'"[447]

The WMC also looked toward the end of the war in their thoughts and actions. Some members took part in the Conferences on the Cause and Cure of War, the Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom, and other organizations devoted to ending the war and finding ways to prevent future war from occurring.[448] Many realized ending war would require more than the efforts of national governments. Belle Bennett declared, "No league of nations nor might of armies can cause wars to cease. Love, not law, must be the controlling passion of the world before there can be a world peace."[449] Lucy Foreman, a member of the WMC in the North Carolina Conference, believed missions was vital to world security. She proclaimed at a WMC meeting, "If the world has an antidote for war…it is evangelism—the only thing which will make the world a safe place to live in."[450]

When peace did arrive, the MECS would once again shift their course. The American declaration of war had jolted the fairly pro-peace sentiment of the pre-intervention years to a more aggressive anti-German and pro-intervention stance. Now with the end of the war, many southern Methodists reevaluated their wartime record and some sought new goals. Some, like

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[446] J.W. Perry, "Do Your Bit for Christ," *Missionary Voice*, July 1917, 223.

[447] Perry, "Do Your Bit for Christ," 223.

[448] Tatum, *A Crown of Service*, 362-363.

[449] *Eighth Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for 1917-1918*, 67.

[450] *Sixth Annual Report, Woman's Missionary Society, North Carolina Conference*, 25.

the WMC, built off their wartime conduct. The council maintained its more pro-peace approach, and even became more organized in their campaigns for international peace.[451] With the war over, other southern Methodists abandoned the crusader spirit of the wartime years and joined the WMC in their pursuit of peace. When Congress was debated the Treaty of Versailles, which include creating the League of Nations, the MECS threw its support behind the treaty, hoping the League would secure peace for future generations.[452] Others looked forward to the reduction in militaries in the postwar years. One minister, Worth Tippy, predicted a Christian society, aided by the forces of democracy, where war and armaments would be brought under control and ultimately outlawed.[453] Paul Kern, a professor at Southern Methodist University, believed war would be impossible in the postwar world. He argued, "The World War has completed the destruction of racial barriers and impresses forever upon us that no nation or people is independent of its neighbors."[454]

However, like many Americans, some in the church felt a sense of disillusionment about the war later in 1919 and into the 1920s. The racial and labor violence prevalent in the postwar United States worried many, and the debate over the League of Nations had others concerned about whether the United States would follow up on its mission for world peace.[455] Also, southern Methodists increasingly became doubtful of large centralized programs, again mirroring the course of the nation. As the United States veered away from supporting the League of

[451] McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South*, 78-79.

[452] Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt, *The Methodist Experience in America*, 361-362.

[453] Worth M. Tippy and Paul B. Kern, *A Methodist Church and Its Work* (Nashville, TN: Smith and Lamar, 1919), 74.

[454] Tippy and Kern, *A Methodist Church and Its Work*, 108.

[455] Davis, "Christian Unity and Civilized Races," 175-176.

Nations, so the MECS largely abandoned the drive for raising $35 million for the missionary centenary. Although more than that amount had been pledged, collections dwindled after the war, and ultimately most viewed the program as a failure.[456] By the late 1920s, the view of the war and southern Methodists' part in it had grown sour. Paul Kern, writing in 1926, noted the heroic actions of the church and its members, but also believed propaganda had duped southern Methodists into supporting the war. Looking at the war from eight years later, all he can think about was the loss of life, resources, and moral ideals, and in return they had not achieved an end to war.[457]

With a denomination as geographically and numerically large as the MECS, it is difficult to encapsulate the response of members across the many local congregations. Southern Methodists were largely aghast at the events in Europe for the first three years of the war, and then shifted to support the nation's actions once the United States intervened. However, a small but vocal minority maintained their opposition to the war while doing their part to support their country. After the war ended, the horrors of the previous eighteen months of the American wartime experience would cause southern Methodists to reevaluate their views. In the postwar decade and beyond, they had to come to terms with what their wartime experiences meant, and what they would do if a world war ever erupted again.

[456] Sledge, *Hands on the Ark*, 73-77.

[457] "Eight Years After" Outline, November 14, 1926, Box 4, Folder 104, Paul Bentley Kern Collection 1829-1960, United Methodist Church General Commission on Archives and History, Drew University.

Chapter 5: The National Baptist Convention

At the time of the First World War, the National Baptist Convention (NBC) was the third largest Christian denomination in the United States, smaller in size only to the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church.[458] Despite its size, this African American church had been organized for less than two decades when the Great War broke out, but had grown rapidly during that short time, particularly in the southern states. During the years of American neutrality, National Baptists soundly condemned all aspects of the war, including its origins, the nations involved, and their wartime goals. However, National Baptists did not come from a pacifist tradition, and thus under the pressure of a number of factors they changed their rhetoric about the war once the United States joined the Allies in 1917.

The Baptist tradition dates back to sixteenth-century Anabaptists in Europe, those who held to the then-radical belief in adult baptism over the more common practice of infant baptism. The history of the Baptist tradition in the United States begins a century later. The most famous of the earliest Baptists in the British colonies was Roger Williams (c. 1603-1683). Beginning as a Puritan minister in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Williams left the colony after disagreements developed between him and colonial Puritan colonial leaders forced him into exile. The controversy arose partly due to his views on the separation of church and state, which were in

[458] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 6.

sharp contrast to the Puritan government. While in exile, Williams founded the town of Providence in 1636, and three years later the first Baptist church in America.[459]

The Baptist church spread from New England to other parts of the colonies. Its southern expansion was seen initially in Virginia and the Carolinas in the mid-eighteenth century, with associations of multiple congregations forming as early as the 1750s. Northern and southern Baptists first met at a national convention in 1814, which led to a rise in Baptist voluntary organizations for different aspects of church life, such as home and foreign missions. This cooperation was soon diminished by increasing tensions over the slavery question. This conflict came to a head in 1844, when southern Baptists broke away to form the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Unlike previous Baptist organizations, the SBC exerted more central control over member denominations, with membership limited to specific congregations and persons contributing to the larger body.[460]

From the early days, backcountry white and black southern Baptists worshiped in the same congregations. As the church grew, this fellowship became more distant, particularly as pro-slavery rhetoric became increasingly prevalent among white southern Baptists. Prior to emancipation, black Baptists were not able to establish their own denominational structure in the South. Slaves were able to have their own Baptist churches in some places, but with oversight by the white ministers and limited participation within the SBC. After the Civil War, African Americans increasingly yearned for a separate Baptist organization as segregationist practices became more standard in the white-led church and as their own ministers became more

[459] Bill J. Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 13-14.

[460] Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 5-8.

experienced.[461] Historian James Melvin Washington describes in *Frustrated Fellowship* this separatist impulse as containing hints of nationalist sentiments. He points to the fact that most black Baptist leaders in the late nineteenth century were from the younger generation that had not grown up in slavery, and were intent on taking advantage of the rights and freedoms that African Americans were legally guaranteed.[462] Furthermore, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham adds in *Righteous Discontent* that this push for denominational and racial independence was championed not only by ministers and conventions, but women and women's organizations within the black Baptist church.[463]

Increased black Baptist collaboration over the course of the nineteenth century made the eventual emergence of the NBC possible. The earliest examples of cooperation took the form of missionary activities, such as efforts to fund African American missionary Lott Carey in the early nineteenth century. The Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, founded in 1880, was the culmination of much of the mission-centered fervor of the previous century, and also served as the base for future collaboration. When this convention met in 1895, it formed the National Baptist Convention, which became the denomination for the overwhelming majority of black Baptists. Unlike the SBC, with its central control over church boards, the NBC had a more light-handed approach, with many of their boards having significant levels of autonomy within the

[461] Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985), 43; Harvey, *Redeeming the South*, 8-12.

[462] James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 188, 196.

[463] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 3.

convention.[464] Over the next two decades, the denomination grew in membership to its position as the country's third largest denomination at the time of the Great War.

These early decades provided unique challenges for National Baptists, particularly because of their dual identities as both African Americans and Baptists. Black Baptists had a long history with white Baptists prior to the formation of the NBC, they frequently collaborated with the SBC after the formation of their own convention, and they continued to share many of the same traditional Baptist doctrines. In this sense, the NBC went about its affairs strongly rooted in its identification as a Baptist church. However, despite the number of similarities between the NBC and the SBC, a color line firmly divided the churches. Paternalism marked many efforts of Southern Baptist ministers as they worked with their National Baptist counterparts, emphasizing the perceived difference between the Baptist denominations. Perhaps more glaring was the contrast in how each church viewed civil rights. While National Baptists spoke continually about the need for the nation to right the wrongs done to African Americans, Southern Baptists largely opposed this type of social change, defended white supremacy, and perpetuated an interpretation of Reconstruction as a "tragic era."[465] Ultimately, National Baptists entered the twentieth century with the often-conflicting dual identities of "African American" and "Baptist."

In order to understand how National Baptists handled the Great War years, it is important to consider their identity as Baptists and understand how Baptists had generally responded to warfare in the past. Prior to the founding of the NBC, the Baptist tradition had some history with

[464] W.H. Moses, *The Colored Baptists' Family Tree: A Compendium of Organized Negro Baptists Church History* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 1925), 11-16; Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 200.

[465] Harvey, *Redeeming the South*, 41-43, 182-184.

pacifism and peace advocacy. This tradition can be traced back as far as the Anabaptists, who emphasized peacemaking and justice.[466] Roger Williams, the most influential early American Baptist, had beliefs in line with pacifism, though he did not explicitly advocate that view. Commenting on conflict in the colonies, he wrote, "The God of peace hath taken peace from the Earth, [so] one sparke of Action word or Cariage is too too powerfull to kindle such a fire as burnes up Families Townes Cities Armies, Navies Nations and Kingdomes…[and thus] to try out Argumts by Armes and Swords is cruell and merciles."[467] Williams also demonstrated the traditional Baptist stance on the separation of church and state in the founding and organization of Providence, a stance that could and occasionally did connect to issues of war throughout the next several centuries.

This tradition of church-state separation was particularly tested in the South during the Civil War, when the southern states were mobilized in the Confederacy's fight with the Union. In many cases, Southern Baptist men enthusiastically joined the Confederate army, fully confident in the righteousness of their cause. However, as historian Bruce Gourley argues in his study on Baptists of middle Georgia, there were elements of church-state separation that continued, particularly in the reluctance to accept government money to support Baptist chaplains. He also finds many rural congregations in this region resisted the call to arms, showing a marked lack of Confederate patriotism.[468] At the time of the First World War,

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[466] Glen H. Stassen, "Baptists as Peacemakers," in *The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking*, ed. Jeffrey Gros and John D. Rempel (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 189-190.

[467] Roger Williams, "To the Town of Providence, 31 August 1648," in *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, ed. Glenn W LaFantasie (Hanover, NH: Brown University Press, 1988), 1:238.

[468] Bruce T. Gourley, *Diverging Loyalties: Baptists in Middle Georgia during the Civil War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2011), 10-15.

Baptists continued to advocate a level of religious and political separation, still without explicit relation to warfare. However, there were some in the SBC and their northern counterpart, the American Baptist Convention, who expressed opposition to the Great War. Some state conventions even condemned the militarism that had led to the outbreak of war.[469]

As a fairly new denomination at the time of the Great War, the NBC had not had an opportunity to formalize a response to war. The major conflict that had taken place since their founding was the Spanish-American War of 1898. For many black Baptists, the war was an effort to liberate Cubans from Spanish barbarity. As African Americans living in the Jim Crow South, they empathized with the Cuban people.[470] E.C. Morris (1855-1922), the first president of the NBC, believed the United States could not keep its honor without helping Cuba escape out from under Spain's control. He also believed that the war could make it easier to spread the Gospel to Cubans. However, black Baptists viewed with less favor the Philippine-American War that followed, waged to maintain American control of the Philippine Islands that were gained as result of the war with Spain. During that war, Morris stated Christians were opposed to armed conflicts, and on that basis argued international disagreements should be settled by arbitration.[471]

In addition to Baptist tradition and NBC history, some of the opinions prevalent in the African American intellectual world affected National Baptist views of the Great War. Two men

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[469] Bill Sumners, "Swords into Plowshares: Southern Baptists, World War I, and the League of Nations," *Quarterly Review: A Survey of Southern Baptist Progress* 41, No. 3 (April-June 1981), 74-75.

[470] Bobby L. Lovett, *The African-American History of Nashville, Tennessee, 1780-1930: Elites and Dilemmas* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999), 99.

[471] E.C. Morris, *Sermons, Addresses and Reminiscences, and Important Correspondence* (1901; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1980), 65, 80, 96.

in particular were important to this intellectual milieu. The first was Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), educator and founder of Tuskegee Institute. He argued African Americans should postpone efforts to achieve political equality and focus instead on self-improvement through industrial or agricultural education, which might require a certain amount of collaboration with white elites. Washington viewed the war in Europe with horror, seeing it as a sign of European moral inferiority, and contrasting that behavior with the sensibility of the black race, which he believed would never have started such a war.[472] Writing in May 1915 to the *New York World*, he stated the United States, despite any provocations, needed to maintain its position as mediator throughout the war. Furthermore, he stated, "President Wilson is exhibiting more courage in fostering peace than are the rulers in Europe who are promoting war."[473] In September 1915, Washington also provided a statement for the Woman's Peace Party, which declared war created suspicion and hate that "can never settle with Christianity and civilization."[474] The educator did not live to see his country enter the war, dying in 1915.

The other major figure was W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), newspaper editor and co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He disagreed with Washington on a number of points, pushing for immediate progress with civil rights, advocating education not tied to manual labor, and in general depending less on white

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[472] David H. Jackson, Jr., *Booker T. Washington and the Struggle against White Supremacy: The Southern Educational Tours, 1908-1912* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 104.

[473] Booker T. Washington, "To the New York *World*," in *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, ed. Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 13:291.

[474] Booker T. Washington, "A Statement Written for the Woman's Peace Party," in *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, ed. Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 13:365.

collaboration. Du Bois was critical of the war from its inception, claiming the greed and violence in Europe was present because European Christianity had changed to legitimize the continents' exploitation of Africa.[475] However, in July 1918, fifteen months after the United States entered the war, he wrote an editorial in the NAACP periodical *The Crisis*, which declared, "Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder and shoulder with our own white fellow citizen and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy."[476] Other black intellectuals responded in surprise to the sudden, seemingly accommodationist, shift in Du Bois' rhetoric, wondering if he was trying to win special favor for himself or black Americans through his words. Historians, also at a loss, have continued to debate the motivations behind the editorial.[477] What is apparent, however, is the complicated nature of the war years for African Americans. The war brought to the surface some of the glaring wrongs perpetuated against black people around the globe, but it also had the potential of providing some opportunities for African Americans if they collaborated with the government's military efforts.

Mirroring the reactions of Washington and Du Bois, the NBC expressed sorrow and disapproval when the Great War erupted in Europe. This attitude continued throughout the years prior to American intervention. A common theme of most mentions of the war in National Baptist publications was criticism about its causes. Reactions among church boards ranged from the scathing condemnation of the Woman's Convention, which called the war "the most inhuman

[475] Edward J. Blum, *W.E.B. Du Bois: American Prophet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 122-123.

[476] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Close Ranks," in *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Reader*, ed. David Levering Lewis (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995), 697.

[477] Mark Ellis, "'Closing Ranks' and 'Seeking Honors': W.E.B. Du Bois in World War I," *Journal of American History* 79, No. 1 (June 1992): 96-124.

and injustifiable [sic] conflict ever waged in the history of the world," to the more restrained response of the Foreign Mission Board, which simply declared, "trivial causes seemed to have incited the war."[478] Individual members also joined in condemning the war. W.N. Hartshorn, writing in the *Union-Review* called the war "the most unnecessary, the most destructive of life and property of all the wars of all the ages."[479] Another member, Myra Viola Wilds, published a collection of verses that included poems about the war. In one titled "The War in Europe, 1914," she wrote, "Why this needless cause of battle? Who can answer? No, not one; Nations, like dumb driven cattle, Fall as grass before the sun."[480]

In addition to the needlessness of the war, many also focused on its purpose. A common idea discussed in National Baptist publications was that the war was some type of punishment from God. The particular sin most members pointed out was European behavior toward Africa and Africans over the previous century. Editor R.H. Boyd wrote in a *Union-Review*, "The editor has long held a grievance against England because of her robber-like methods in Africa and her tolerance of Boer insults to the natives. Perhaps Great Britain needs to be humbled."[481] Others focused on the war as a punishment for Belgium. The *Mission Herald* set up the parallel concisely, declaring, "Poor Belgium, her leaders hard-hearted, forgetful of an denying the

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[478] *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention, Held with the Holy Trinity Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pa., Sept. 9 to 15, 1914* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1914), 162; *35th Annual Report, Foreign Mission Board, National Baptist Convention, Chicago, Ill., Sept., 8-13, 1915* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1915), 101.

[479] W.N. Hartshorn, "In Germany August 1, 1914," *National Baptist Union-Review*, November 14, 1914, 11.

[480] Myra Viola Wilds, *Thoughts of Idle Hours* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1915), 75.

[481] "The Germans and Victory," *National Baptist Union-Review*, July 24, 1915, 9.

Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man…outraged and murdered Africans in the Congo…[and] now Belgium, poor Belgium is conquered by another people."[482] However, the paper saw the war as a wake-up call for Belgium, a God-given second chance to right their wrongs.[483] Adding to the discussion of divine punishment, the Foreign Mission Board claimed, "Already the world has seen the just retribution that comes to all doers of evil visited upon the participants in this bloody struggle," but also saw this as an opportunity for the warring nations to rededicate themselves to Christ.[484]

Concern for Africa, and disapproval of European actions there, was heavily related the emphasis the NBC place on missionary activities. The Foreign Mission Board believed the war was extremely damaging to National Baptist mission efforts. Their 1915 annual report states, "This war has blotted out some of the finest mission work in the world. Station after station has had to be abandoned. Hundreds of hospitals and dispensaries have ceased operations; thousands of schools have had to be closed; many advanced movements have had to be stopped."[485] They also expressed concern about the cost of the war, particularly in terms of finance, human lives, destruction of property, and the loss of Europe's reputation as a land of Christian nations. This last point was particularly troubling to the Foreign Mission Board, and their report shows some suspicion about the sincerity of European Christianity. Being the mission-oriented church they were, they looked forward to the day when enough missionaries would exist "to help the people [distinguish] between pure Christianity and so-called civilization; between Christianity that is a

[482] *Mission Herald*, January 1915, 2.

[483] *Mission Herald*, January 1915, 2.

[484] *35th Annual Report, Foreign Mission Board, National Baptist Convention*, 101.

[485] *35th Annual Report, Foreign Mission Board, National Baptist Convention*, 101.

sham and real Christianity, and to assure them that what is now taking place in the world is not caused by Jesus Christ, but for a lack of Jesus Christ."[486]

The fact that the war was due ostensibly to sins or crimes of the belligerent nations, and that these so-called Christian nations were not acting like Christians, further removed National Baptists from the events in Europe. In fact, many National Baptists looked to Europe as a source of examples of what not to do. R.H. Boyd admitted on a number of occasions that he had German ancestry, but spoke out against that nation's militarism and preparation for war prior to 1914.[487] The *Union-Review* believed readers "should learn a valuable lesson from the folly of this stupendous crime of all the centuries, this European war, and they should adopt this as their motto: "Peace and good-will shall abide with us as we go about the discharge of our duties…. Peace has its victories more renowned than those of war with its unseemly and deterrent bickerings and fighting."[488] In the *Mission Herald*, the editors pushed the National Baptist role further, arguing, "While the blessing pronounced upon the peacemaker belongs to all who help to end public wars or private feuds to reconcile belligerent nations, or estranged neighbors, it belongs no less to the one whose wisdom and kindly tact prevents the break from occurring."[489] In their reasoning, not only should peacemakers try to end current wars, but also prevent new fighting from breaking out, possibly implying the United States should follow the same advice and stay out of the war.

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[486] *35th Annual Report, Foreign Mission Board, National Baptist Convention*, 101.

[487] "The Germans and Victory," 9.

[488] "Peace and Good-Will," *National Baptist Union-Review*, December 12, 1914, 8.

[489] "A Silent Peacemaker," *Mission Herald*, December 1914, 1.

Some of the church publications point to a general sentiment that the United States should avoid any path that might lead to war. One hint of National Baptist opposition to American military preparedness came from the *Union-Review*, which published an open letter from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends. In the letter, the Quaker authors argue war is not the will of God, but if nations oppose that will and give over to militarism, God may let them reap what they have sown. Furthermore, they see the growth of militarism as a country's greatest fear, and believe "battleships and armies and forts have proved beyond doubt that they cannot keep the peace; they have been tried and found wanting."[490] The *Union-Review* also described the amount of abuse they believed the nation should sustain before thinking about war. The editors called upon national leaders to avoid the conflict at all costs, advising, "Much more than the sinking of a few ships, or the slaying of a number of American citizens should intervene before war is declared. In fact, perhaps, only an invasion by the enemy should be allowed to impel the government to declare hostilities; insults to national honor we can afford to endure till by another method than resort to arms reparation is made."[491]

However, resisting the pull of war and overlooking insults to national honor did not mean the United States should remain completely uninvolved. The Foreign Missions Board argued while some warred unnecessarily in Europe, "some of God's chosen vessels have labored on in His Name and have bound up the wounded and bleeding and have comforted the bereaved and have sent supplies of food to the hungry and have prayed, prayed that out of the turmoil [they] should have…peace that surpasseth all understanding."[492] The board members believed it was

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[490] John B. Garrett, et al., "The Lesson on the War in Europe," *National Baptist Union-Review*, December 26, 1914, 5.

[491] "To Avert War," *National Baptist Union-Review*, March 27, 1915, 9.

[492] *35th Annual Report, Foreign Mission Board, National Baptist Convention*, 102.

worth fighting for this type of peace, but instructed the fighting should be done "on bended knees with prayers and supplications and in wholesome lives that exalt the Christ," not with physical weapons, since "he that fighteth by the sword shall perish by the sword."[493]

The comments of one board in particular provide perhaps the strongest opposition to the war. The Woman's Convention, as referenced earlier, declared the war was inhuman and without just cause.[494] Like many National Baptists, these women were intensely interested in foreign missions, so many of their views of the war were influenced by events in Africa. The Woman's Convention argued Europeans had "killed the African to get rubber and gold and diamonds [while] the civilized world took no account of this alarming death roll of these helpless people."[495] They saw the war as an opportunity to punish Europe since they believed God "will balance accounts, as surely with nations as with individuals."[496] As the war continued to rage in Europe, members of the Woman's Convention repeatedly expressed regret and sorrow for the needlessness of the conflict and the suffering of those overseas, where men were "being slaughtered as grass before the scythe."[497] Another common theme of the Woman's Convention publications was the worry that the postwar world would not long enjoy peace. Members had little trust in the leaders of the belligerent nations, and argued the peace proceedings would need

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[493] *35th Annual Report, Foreign Mission Board, National Baptist Convention*, 102.

[494] *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 162.

[495] *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 162.

[496] *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 162.

[497] *Journal of the Thirty-Sixth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention (Unincorporated) and the Sixteenth Annual Session of the Woman's Auxiliary Convention, Held with the Baptist Churches, Kansas City, Mo., September 6-11, 1916* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1917), 199.

to somehow involve Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, or else "the conditions of the world [would] be far worse."[498]

As the war dragged on, some National Baptists expressed discontent about the likelihood of American involvement. The *Union-Review* lamented, "We have never understood the governmental policy that devotes abundant concern to adjustment of the foreigner's trouble, neglecting those of its own citizens at home."[499] Citing the Spanish-American War, interventions in Haiti, conflict with Mexico, war and then ownership of the Philippines, and even programs for immigrants arriving in the United States, the editors proclaimed their amazement at the extent to which the United States government has become invested with the lives of non-Americans. They also criticized the government's actions at home, which they claim showed "a shameful disregard for the rights, civil and industrial, of colored Americans, and a set purpose to allow a ruthless, unlawful deprivation of their political privileges."[500] As the authors contemplate the possibility of American involvement in the war, they express ignorance at how such a nation could expect African Americans to "march patriotically to the defense of the States."[501]

Throughout the years of American neutrality, National Baptist publications continued to speak out against the war. However, the denomination did not always focus extensively on the war and related issues, though these topics were never completely absent from their periodicals,

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[498] *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention, Held with the Baptist Churches, Savannah, Ga., September 6th to 11th, 1916* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 1916), 184.

[499] "If War Is to Be," *National Baptist Union-Review*, January 1, 1916, 8.

[500] "If War Is to Be," 8.

[501] "If War Is to Be," 8.

board meetings, convention minutes, or personal writings. Their focus was on missionary efforts, Sunday school curriculum, and other concerns closer to the denomination's missions. Until the United States declared war, the fighting in Europe would have appeared very distant from the day-to-day interactions of the NBC. Ultimately, theirs was not a pacifist tradition, although there was an antiwar slant to their views during the years of American neutrality, so massive efforts to lobby against preparedness legislation or send peace negotiators to Europe would have been out of character for the church.

After years of neutrality, the United States entered the Great War on the side of the Allies in April 1917. Suddenly, war-related issues became much more relevant to the National Baptists, and as a result their attitude toward the war changed. After years of condemning the war and the actions of the belligerent nations, extolling the virtues of peacekeeping, and even occasionally warning against preparedness efforts, National Baptists overwhelmingly supported the American war effort. Illustrating the stark contrast to earlier views about the unjustness of the war and the trivial motives behind its origins, a speaker at a 1918 convention declared, "The principles on which our country entered the war, and for which she and all her allies are now fighting, are right and must win."[502] Throughout the remaining year and a half of the war, nearly every National Baptist mention of the war proclaimed national pride and patriotic fervor.

One of the ways to disperse widely this demonstration of patriotism was through denominational periodicals. From April 1917 until the armistice in November 1918, virtually every issue of the major newspapers discussed war-related topics and mentioned how National Baptists could do their part or reported ways they were already aiding in the war effort. The

[502] *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention, Held with the Baptist Churches, St. Louis, Mo., September 4-9, 1918* (Philadelphia: Lisle-Carey Print Shop, 1918), 28.

editorial staff of the *Union-Review* frequently included a full-page flier declaring, "Stand by the president. We must win this war! Don't be a slacker!"[503] Members contributing to the newspaper also followed this same line of thinking. One minister writing in the *Union-Review* stated the case simply, "War on the American people is war on the colored man."[504] Another writer insisted, "Now that enemies are aiming to destroy us, there arises within our bosom the sense of patriotism and loyalty, and we are ready to fight for home and native land."[505] National Baptist proclamations of support for the nation even went beyond the church newspapers. The *Nashville Globe*, that city's major secular African American periodical, published by National Baptist members, stated its editors were "loyal to the United States" and would "carry the banner of Jesus to every corner of the country."[506]

National Baptist patriotism also abounded in their convention meetings. This was perhaps most clearly demonstrated in a 1917 convention, where a resolution of support for the American war effort was passed.[507] In 1918, National Baptist leaders reported happily, "In the great appeal of our government for man power, many of our boys are now in the trenches."[508] For those at home, the church leadership declared there was a stern call to duty, and gave

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[503] *National Baptist Union-Review*, May 18, 1918, 5.

[504] J.P. Robinson, "The Colored Man and His Part in War," *National Baptist Union-Review*, April 21, 1917, 5.

[505] "We Go to War," *National Baptist Union-Review*, May 19, 1917, 8.

[506] *Nashville Globe*, May 25, 1917.

[507] Bobby L. Lovett, *A Black Man's Dream: The First 100 Years: Richard Henry Boyd and the National Baptist Publishing Board* (Jacksonville, FL: Mega Corporation, 1993), 158.

[508] *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 77.

instructions to pray for the nation and its government. They also noted it was their responsibility to make sure there were no slackers among their churches.[509]

Not all of the shows of patriotism were through the printed word, and many National Baptists demonstrated with actions their support for the nation's war effort. In Nashville there was a great show of support of the war through parades and speeches, and even patriotic demonstrations on the campus of Roger Williams University, the National Baptists' principal southern college.[510] National Baptist colleges housed draft-aged men and served as a public image of the denomination, so it is not surprising these institutions were the locations for many of the pro-war actions after April 1917. Some of these efforts related to preparing young men for the fight overseas. After the declaration of war, National Baptists transformed the Boy Cadets, a church program for youth, into a more militaristic organization. The convention even published the *Cadets Manual on Drill and Tactics* to aid in the training. By the end of the war, several black Baptist colleges had cadet training corps on their campuses, and this continued into the postwar years.[511]

This abrupt shift in the church's stance on the war might seem surprising. Firstly, in publications and annual meetings there was general disapproval of the war before the United States became involved. Secondly, this was a nation calling its citizens to do their duty and enlist to fight for freedom overseas, despite the fact that it had not defended the rights of many of

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[509] *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 77-78.

[510] Ruth Marie Powell, *Ventures in Education with Black Baptists in Tennessee* (New York: Carlton Press, 1979), 63.

[511] Bobby L. Lovett, *How It Came to Be: The Boyd Family's Contribution to African American Religious Publishing from the 19th to the 21st Century* (Lavergne, TN: Lightning Source Press, 2007), 63-64.

its own citizens at home. However, a number of important factors explain the absence of major National Baptist opposition to American intervention and the presence of overwhelming support for the war effort, both with words and with actions.

First, the National Baptist Convention had internal problems that distracted them from war-related events. The long-desired unification of black Baptists into one denomination did not last long into the twentieth century. After only two decades of existence, the NBC split into two separate denominations in 1915. The issue that became the catalyst for this division was the autonomy of the National Baptist Publishing Board (NBPB). This board had its origins in 1897, shortly after the NBC first formed. For years R.H. Boyd (1843-1922), editor of the NBPB, resisted efforts to submit the board to convention control. Ultimately, when the issue caused a controversy at the 1915 annual convention, the NBPB parted company with the NBC, and took a number of congregations and members loyal to Boyd. After some legal proceedings, the splinter group was awarded control of the NBPB, and organized as the National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated (NBCU). The majority that remained under the old leadership officially incorporated their convention, to make sure no further issue over church board independence would arise, and henceforth used the name National Baptist Convention, Incorporated (NBCI).[512]

Attempts to reunite the two denominations consumed a significant amount of black Baptists' energy during the several years after the split. Throughout the first years of the divided

[512] Lovett, *How It Came to Be*, 53-58. Since the NBC split during the war, and the resulting two conventions did not drastically change from each other by the end of the war, this chapter will focus on National Baptists in general. When referring to the National Baptist Convention prior to 1915, the abbreviation NBC will be used. When referring to a specific successor denomination after 1915, the abbreviation for that denomination will be used. After the war ended, the NBCI changed their name to the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., and the NBCU renamed itself to the National Baptist Convention of America, but this chapter will use the wartime names for each.

church, publications ranging from periodicals to general assembly minutes, and from both conventions, were full of accounts of National Baptist efforts to soothe the tempers of disagreeing leaders on each side of the split and bring the church together again. In a curious choice of words, the attempts were usually classified as the "peace movement" in these printed materials. In one such instance, during the 1916 meeting of the NBCI, President E.C. Morris stated, "Our Blessed Master has said 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.' I most cheerfully and unreservedly apply this to all who have sought to bring about peace with those who have brought war in the ranks of the Baptists."[513] At the same time, little mention was made of any other peace movement, either to prevent the United States from entering the war, or to bring the war to an end after American intervention. In addition, the frequency with which National Baptists mentioned the war in their publications dropped after 1915, though any mention of the war after that point continued to be some type of condemnation. Instead, periodicals, convention minutes, and other published sources overwhelmingly discussed the issue of the NBPB and the denominational split, typically strongly supporting their side of the split and condemning the stubborn and misguided actions of those on the other side of the issue.[514]

Several attempts at reunification were tried, some with the mediation of the SBC.[515] In the end, none of these attempts at denominational peace resulted in rejoining the split church, and ultimately both conventions would enter the postwar years with as separate entities.

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[513] *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention*, 36.

[514] *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention*; *Minutes of the National Baptist Convention (Unincorporated) and the Seventeenth Annual Session of the Woman's Convention Auxiliary, Held with the Baptist Churches of Atlanta, Ga., September 5-11, 1917* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1917).

[515] *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 26.

Considering the controversy of the NBPB and the resulting denominational split the year after the war began, it is unsurprising that that these more pressing and more personal matters were on the minds of National Baptist leaders and members, and issues related to the war were often present in a much smaller way, as illustrated by the enormous disparity in the space each topic held in denominational publications during the 1915-1918 years. It was not until near the end of the war, when reunification seemed unlikely, that the war became more frequently mentioned in National Baptist publications.

Also affecting National Baptist views of the war was their commitment to foreign missions. Although they had plenty of pressing issues at home, since the NBC had been founded as a denomination with an eye to foreign and domestic missions, it was impossible for National Baptists to function without looking outward as well. Liberia was the particular focus of much of the NBC missionary efforts, and had been for black Baptists in general for much of the nineteenth century, though the church also had sent missionaries to South Africa and elsewhere on the continent.[516] Article II of the NBC constitution highlighted the historical importance of missions clearly: "The particular business and object of this Convention shall be to promote a growth and propagation of religion, morality and intelligence among the races of mankind, by engaging in missionary work in the United States of America and upon the Continent of Africa."[517] National Baptists were committed to maintaining their dedication to missions, despite the war raging around the globe. The Foreign Mission Board, heading the church's evangelizing efforts, even planned what they termed the "first foreign missionary conference of

[516] Sandy D. Martin, *Black Baptists and African Missions: The Origins of a Movement, 1880-1915* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1989), 4, 199.

[517] *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention*, 7.

any magnitude ever held in this country" in February 1915.[518] E.C. Morris, president of the NBCI, believed the war was a golden opportunity because it would "open up vast fields of opportunity to all the Christian forces of the world," since he believed many countries previously closed their doors to Christianity would "soon swing them wide open, and the heralds of the Cross will enter with the truth of Jesus Christ."[519]

Since National Baptists were facing a world war that involved imperial powers, the conflict directly affected areas they were trying to reach with the Gospel. As already seen, many National Baptists viewed the war as a type of punishment for those European colonizing powers. Some focused particularly on how Europeans had purposefully hindered missionary efforts. Referencing an 1892 treaty between the United States and several European nations concerning Africa, the *Mission Herald* declared, "We want the terms of the treaty to which Great Britain was a signatory recognized and enforced. This treaty guaranteed freedom from hindrance or restriction to missionary work in Africa… Yet Great Britain systematically discriminates against colored missionaries." However, later in the article, the writers also mentioned, "It may be more than a mere coincidence that while Great Britain was driving out missionaries because they were colored; the ship bearing white missionaries, was struck by a mine and sunk with a loss of several lives."[520]

There were also some predictions that the present war was a sign of the apocalypse. E.C. Morris, commenting during the annual convention on the state of the world, asked, "Is it that the man of Galilee is now upon His white horse, and is now lifting up the valleys and pulling down

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[518] *35th Annual Report, Foreign Mission Board, National Baptist Convention*, 102.

[519] *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 28.

[520] "Is It a Judgment of Providence?" *Mission Herald*, September 1917, 2.

the high places and making smoothe [sic] the path so that His gospel may run and have free course?" and then shifted to missions to state, "A movement has already been started among the Christian forces in this country to carry the REAL Gospel of Jesus Christ to these people."[521] This theme of connecting the end of times to the need for increased missionary efforts was seen in local meetings as well. The executive board of the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Tennessee did not see much cause for optimism, declaring, "If all of the nations of the earth should become democracies, or if all should gather together in one great democracy, it would not save our present civilization." They saw the war as the agent of destruction, and averred, "Heaven would have swords beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks," and concluded, "The preaching of the Cross only can give us these results, hence the need of missionary activity."[522]

Whether based on the tradition of missionary efforts, the exigencies of a world hit by a worldwide conflict, or the belief in the approach of civilization's end, National Baptist leaders heavily advocated expanding the church's emphasis on missions. In many cases, they connected their devotion to missions to their sense of patriotism and service to the nation. Henry Boyd, son of NBPB editor R.H. Boyd, declared in the *Nashville Globe*, "We are loyal to the Stars and Stripes, and we mean to stand by the Constitution and the Flag, and at the same time carry the banner of King Emmanuel to every dark corner of this great country."[523] A.L. Bartlette, president of the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Tennessee, believed the decision to pursue missions paralleled serving the nation. Summarizing the issue, he explained,

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[521] *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention*, 41.

[522] *Minutes of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Tennessee*, 15.

[523] *Nashville Globe*, May 25, 1917.

"The call of Christ is not silenced by the call of country. There is no conflict between duty to Christ and duty to country. Christ's call is to world conquest. He commands his gospel to be preached to all the ends of the earth.[524]

A third reason for the lack of strong opposition to the war, as well as the many displays of patriotism during the early months of American involvement, was National Baptists' relationship with the white Americans. Living in the Jim Crow South, National Baptists were aware of the dangers of running afoul of white southerners. Soon after the American declaration of war, National Baptists faced a potentially disastrous situation in race relations. There were reports of a German conspiracy based in Mexico that would try to turn African Americans against their own country. These unfounded rumors indicated that Germany was trying to bring the fight to the United States, which could stymie the nation's attempts to help the Allies in Europe by forcing the government to focus on domestic threats. Many white southerners became suspicious of any sign ostensibly showing black disloyalty, such as demands for equal rights or a stop to lynchings, believing there to be a real danger from vengeful African Americans angry at centuries of mistreatment.[525] No doubt partially in response to these concerns, black periodicals were filled with pronouncement of patriotism, often written in ways that would calm fears over such rumors. For example, J.P. Robinson, a National Baptist minister, wrote in a black newspaper, "This is [the Negro's] country. He has never been a foe to America but has always done his part for this great government. Under adverse circumstances he has always stood for

[524] *Minutes of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Tennessee, Held with the Canaan Baptist Church, Covington, Tenn., October 24 to 28, 1917* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, n.d.), 12.

[525] David Alsobrook, "A Call to Arms for African Americans during the Age of Jim Crow: Black Alabamians' Response to the U.S. Declaration of War in 1917," in *The Great War in the Heart of Dixie: Alabama during World War I*, ed. Martin T. Olliff (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 82.

America."[526] White fears about the supposed German plot died down soon after the rumors began, no doubt in part a result of the overt signs of patriotism from National Baptists and other black churches.

Government agencies, particularly the Bureau of Investigation of the Justice Department and the Military Intelligence Branch of the General Staff, also took the rumors seriously, looking for indications of pro-German or antiwar sentiments in black newspapers, and continuing their investigation long after popular fears had evaporated. The Bureau of Investigation even sought volunteers among the American Protective League, a semi-independent auxiliary of the Justice Department that historian Mark Ellis describes as "prone to an overzealous '100% Americanism' which trampled on the civil liberties of aliens, union members, and 'slackers.'"[527] Although the parallel investigation lasted through the war, neither agency found evidence of any actual German plot, either directed at the black population or individual African Americans. However, the presence of these investigations was an important tool for suppressing calls for peace or even mere expressions of doubt about the war effort.[528]

The incident of the German conspiracy rumors illustrates the two major directions from which white suspicion and persecution of National Baptists and other black southerners originated: the general population and the government. Federal scrutiny was especially troublesome to National Baptists, who wanted to stay in the good graces of the government. Many saw the federal government as a possible source of salvation from the horrors of Jim Crow and other problems. At different times before and throughout the war, the church called upon

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[526] Robinson, "The Colored Man and His Part in War," 5.

[527] Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, xvii.

[528] Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, xv-xx, 228-231.

government officials for aid. In the instance already mentioned where British interference had hampered National Baptist missionary efforts in South Africa, the church sent representatives to Washington to ask for enforcement of the Africa treaty.[529] Much was also made in National Baptist publications of the problems with Jim Crow. R.H. Boyd even published a handbook for understanding laws concerning rail travel so National Baptists would know their rights, as well as the laws. He instructed readers who encounter instances of illegal discrimination to "complain to the Interstate Commerce Commission or to the United States Courts" if an interstate passenger, or to "the state commission or the state or county courts" if a state passenger.[530] Ultimately, National Baptists based their view of government on the belief that "civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed."[531]

However, the government was often far away and unable or unwilling to help National Baptists. This left the church to try to find allies among their neighbors. The principal alliance National Baptists tried to maintain was with their brothers and sisters across the color line, the Southern Baptist Convention. Throughout the two decades of their existence, the NBC tried to maintain good working relationships with SBC leaders and members, and the NBCI and NBCU continued this tradition after 1915. President E.C. Morris called the SBC "the strongest and most influential Christian organization in the South," and numerous others also held the church in high

[529] "Is It a Judgment of Providence?" 2.

[530] R.H. Boyd, *The Separate or "Jim Crow" Car Laws, or Legislative Enactments of Fourteen Southern States* (Nashville, TN, National Baptist Publishing Board, 1909), 6.

[531] R.H. Boyd, "What Baptists Believe and Practice," in *Once a Methodist; Now a Baptist. Why?* (Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1905), 131.

regard.[532] National Baptists maintained particularly strong links with the SBC in missions, which dated back to collaboration from before the creation of the NBC. Morris believed this working together could only help National Baptists. He argued, "To have the leading white men of the South who are allied with the Baptist denomination, in co-operation with the Negro Baptists of the United States in Missionary work…awakens an interest among the many thousand of white Christians in the South in the future well-being of the Negroes."[533] National Baptists also benefited in more immediate ways from their cooperation with the SBC. Some followed the Booker T. Washington model of collaboration with white neighbors: using the dual resources of the black community and white assistance to succeed at different ventures. For example, as R.H. Boyd developed and improved the NBPB he acquired both equipment and funds from SBC supporters, though carefully keeping his operation separate and independent.[534]

Like many denominations in the Great War, the SBC viewed the war as a crusade and supported the American involvement in it. Describing the SBC view of the war, historian George Kelsey writes, "The war was just in that its aim was to redress wrong done; and it was holy in that it was being fought for God, Christian principles, and the establishment of a new order. It was at bottom a war between Christianity and Anti-Christ."[535] Bill Sumners, another SBC scholar, notes the support for the war was a shift for the SBC as well, which had previously

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[532] *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention*, 38.

[533] *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention*, 39.

[534] Paul Harvey, "'The Holy Spirit Come to Us and Forbid the Negro Taking a Second Place': Richard H. Boyd and Black Religious Activism in Nashville, Tennessee," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 55 (Fall 1996): 190-195.

[535] George D. Kelsey, *Social Ethics among Southern Baptists, 1917-1969* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1973), 106.

favored isolationism until American intervention spurred them to see the war as "centered on protecting the world against the spirit of despotism and militarism."[536]

Considering the SBC stance, National Baptists would not have had much hope in maintaining good rapport with their white counterparts if black Baptist presses had openly condemned the nation's war efforts and the motives behind them. Throughout the war, any actions that would have offended the SBC and put their relationship in danger met sound criticism. During the negotiations to rejoin the split denomination, some National Baptists were critical of the SBC and their motives in helping to reverse the split. E.C. Morris downplayed any critique, stating, "It is to be regretted that any unfavorable criticism should be made concerning the action of our white Baptist brethren, but such has been the case, but I am glad to say that these criticisms did not come from the loyal members of the National Baptist Convention."[537] No speakers at the convention meetings were critical of the SBC, and it is unlikely that the leadership would have risked losing SBC support by allowing any troublemakers access to the other denominational publications and periodicals.

A fourth motivation for the transition from opposition to the war in Europe to support for the American war effort was to build a case for better treatment of African Americans. Many believed if National Baptists were to fight overseas and support the war at home, their efforts would earn them the respect of their white neighbors. Their hope was that after the war, the nation would consider the patriotic exploits of black soldiers, realize African Americans were not treated fairly, and bring about legal and social changes. The *Union-Review* summed up the sentiments present in other National Baptist publications: "When our boys yonder in the trenches

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[536] Sumners, "Swords into Plowshares," 80.

[537] *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 29.

have given their lives to help make the world safe for democracy, then we are going to insist that democracy be made safe for us."[538]

This hope dated back to the Spanish-American War, the first war to occur after the founding of the NBC. During the midst of that war, the *National Baptist Magazine* had argued, "The black man [should] be given proper recognition in this Spanish and American war…. His record for patriotism is unsurpassed; his qualities as a fighter have passed into history alongside of the highest and best types of military heroism."[539] Many leaders looked back to wars before the founding of the NBC for evidence of black patriotism. Some reached back as far as the eighteenth century, arguing the service of African Americans in the Revolutionary War was a reason for the rise of abolitionism in the North.[540] Others pointed to black service during the Civil War as a reason to trust African American patriotism and loyalty. Defending African Americans' long tradition of loyalty, E.C. Morris declared, "There are no truer patriots than those found in the Negro race…[as] fully exemplified during the Civil War, for while their masters were at the front fighting to tighten the chains of slavery on their limbs, they lived up to the charge committed to them, and if there was a single instant where they betrayed their masters, it has not yet been reported."[541]

The Great War gave National Baptists hope because it pitted the United States and its allies against Germany, which at this point in the war was widely viewed in the United States as

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[538] "The Claims of Patriotism," *National Baptist Union-Review*, July 27, 1918, 7.

[539] "The Negro and the Spanish-American War," *National Baptist Magazine*, June 1898, 100.

[540] Wilson Fallin, Jr. "Alabama's Black Baptist Leaders, the Progressive Era, and World War I," in *The Great War in the Heart of Dixie: Alabama during World War I*, ed. Martin T. Olliff (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 72.

[541] *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention*, 41.

an autocratic country. This fact encouraged National Baptists, since they hoped the contrast in the forms of government of these nations would spur Americans to right the wrongs taking place in their own country.[542] In addition, some believed the nature of this particular war would invariably lead to change, since the war was "intended to teach all people that God made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the earth, and that no part of the human race should scorn or aim to disrespect any other part of His children, for all are heirs to the same ills, afflictions and hardships."[543]

One of the fears plaguing most National Baptists was possibility of mob violence, an extremely real danger as indicated by the large number of lynchings occurring every year during the 1910s. President Wilson had used the rhetoric of making the world "safe for democracy," and National Baptists wanted the South to be equally safe for democracy and free of mob violence.[544] Throughout the war, church periodicals and other publications pointed to unjust treatment at the hands of white mobs, often bringing up the irony of the world being safe for democracy. The editors of the *Union-Review* republished an article from the *Amsterdam News*, an African American periodical based in New York City, which viewed lynchings as "Hunnish work" and argued, "Every time a Southern mob lynches a colored man the cause of the Kaiser is thereby advanced and that of America and her allies correspondingly injured."[545]

The desire to bring a halt to lynchings and other forms of mob violence connected to National Baptists' broader pursuit of civil rights. At the very beginning of the NBC, there were

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[542] Lovett, *The African-American History of Nashville, Tennessee*, 99.

[543] *Minutes of the National Baptist Convention (Unincorporated)*, 121.

[544] "Making a Safe Democracy," *National Baptist Union-Review*, July 13, 1918, 8.

[545] "How Crackers Aid the Kaiser," *National Baptist Union-Review*, May 18, 1918, 18.

elements of black nationalism and separatism, indicating National Baptists' awareness of the social problems around them and focus on solutions to those problems.[546] However, although civil rights were part of the picture for the NBC and its members, they had to balance their desires with the climate around them. National Baptist leaders realized they needed to work with the SBC and other white southerners, so activism for civil rights was moderate during this period. Many leaders also saw that they would need the support of the federal government if any progress were to be made in the area of civil rights, which was likely another reason why the National Baptist leadership did not organize or encourage a more radical type of activism.[547] For example, members' and leaders' disapproval of segregation was constantly present in church publications, but more active and aggressive opposition, such as organized protests, died out around 1900.[548] The desire for federal support would have also been a reason to support the nation's war for democracy, despite the irony of the democracy being withheld to some back home.[549] Just as support of the war could help further the cause of black progress, opposition to the war could be a threat to the progress African Americans had already achieved in their quest for civil rights. It would not be until the 1950s that the NBC officially declared full citizenship for African Americans and the end of discrimination as goals for the nation.[550]

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[546] Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 188.

[547] Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists*, 253.

[548] Wilson Fallin, Jr., *Uplifting the People: Three Centuries of Black Baptists in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007), 118.

[549] Lovett, *How It Came to Be*, 64.

[550] Owen D. Pelt and Ralph Lee Smith, *The Story of the National Baptists* (New York: Vintage Press, 1960), 108, 180.

Although National Baptist leaders did not want to worsen their situation by alienating potential supporters in the government or their own communities, pushes for civil rights did continue during the war. Some were quite vocal about how white Christians and national leaders had mistreated African Americans and failed in their responsibilities.[551] Two examples of National Baptist leaders who used their position to discuss civil rights were R.H. Boyd and Sutton Griggs. Boyd was a leader in the NBC, and later the NBCU, principally because of his control over the church's publishing board. Church historian Bobby Lovett argues Boyd was not only an important convention leader, but also a major civil rights activist in the early twentieth century. Previous to the war, Boyd had been integral in founding the Nashville chapter of the National Negro Business League in 1902, the One Cent Savings Bank and Trust Company in 1903, the National Negro Doll Company in 1905, and Nashville's black newspaper, the *Nashville Globe*, in 1906. Later, he was involved in the campaign for land and home ownership among black farmers, which in many areas of Tennessee fell below 30%. Boyd also joined other leaders in supporting the reestablishment of a black YMCA in Nashville in 1917, since African Americans had been barred from using the city's white YMCA.[552]

A second example of a National Baptist leader focused on civil rights, this time from the NBCI, is Sutton Griggs (1872-1933). Historian Lester Lamon argues Griggs, the minister of Tabernacle Baptist Church of Memphis and one of the original seven directors appointed at the incorporation of the NBCI, saw a need for a more aggressive style of leadership to stand up for black civil and political rights. A skilled novelist, Griggs published several books that attacked violence against African Americans in the South. As he increasingly saw a lack of change in

[551] Harvey, *Redeeming the South*, 191.

[552] Lovett, *How It Came to Be*, 77-80.

white attitudes and black political progress, he switched gears and argued African Americans should focus on improvement within their communities. Over the 1910s, Griggs pushed for avenues of black self-help, aiding in the creation of welfare leagues and social reconstruction groups.[553]

Although illustrating how African American activists approached civil rights and social issues in the 1900s and 1910s, the cases of Boyd and Griggs, however, were not typical of many church members. Most National Baptists in the mid-1910s seemed to respond in silence publicly to the injustices of the Jim Crow South, though perhaps more vocally within the confines of church meetings and conventions. They focused on hard work and self-improvement and tried to not make themselves into targets for white southern ire.[554] The belief that the war would likely lead to changes in the nation's social structure and ultimately improve their lives was thus heavily connected to their approach to civil rights. By working hard, in this case fighting overseas and demonstrating their patriotism, National Baptists would be able to bring about some measure of self-improvement, in the sense that their actions would lead the federal government and even their white neighbors to view African Americans differently and gladly reward them for their service.

However, despite the apparent moderate approach of most National Baptists, the war years were a time of increased racial violence. Beginning in May 1917, a mere month after the U.S. declaration of war, violence against African Americans rapidly increased, both in terms of lynchings and destruction of black property, possibly connected to the rumors of the German conspiracy to enlist the aid of African Americans. This situation was made worse by the

[553] Lester C. Lamon, *Black Tennesseans, 1900-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 12-14.

[554] Lamon, *Black Tennesseans*, 18.

activities of white law officers, who enforced vagrancy laws to harass black citizens and fill labor shortages.[555] Although this sudden onslaught of attacks diminished, racial violence continued throughout the war years. The *Union-Review* made a point to periodically publicize cases of white on black violence, especially those committed by white soldiers, which demonstrates the level of violence that continued during the war. These articles did not even mention all instances of such violence, since the editors typically only published cases where the white perpetrator was caught and punished for the offense.[556] In addition to the loss of life and property, the violence showcased a disparity in how black and white church leaders viewed racial tensions. National Baptist leaders saw racial violence as a national issue, while SBC leaders viewed it as a "Negro problem."[557]

For the majority of National Baptist organizations, whether conventions, boards, or presses, the war was an opportunity to demonstrate the patriotism of African Americans. This shift from strong opposition to all aspects of the war to support for the nation's involvement in the conflict was a result of a combination of factors, including distractions from the denominational split, the desire to advance foreign missions, attempts to maintain good relations with the government and white southerners, and the hope for an improvement in civil rights. However, not every mention of the war effort after 1917 was positive. The major holdouts were the two Woman's Conventions. The original Woman's Convention was an auxiliary to the NBC, and met each year in the same city and during the same days as the NBC. After the National

[555] Lamon, *Black Tennesseans*, 234-235.

[556] "White Soldier Hanged: Assaulted Colored Girl," *National Baptist Union-Review*, August 24, 1918, 6.

[557] Harvey, *Redeeming the South*, 230.

Baptists broke into two conventions, the Woman's Convention also split. Each of the successor organizations kept the same name and same status with the convention they followed.

Women constituted two-thirds of the National Baptist membership, though had a much smaller presence in church government. The Woman's Conventions were the primary way women organized and held leadership positions within the black Baptist church. The definitive work on National Baptist women during this period is Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's *Righteous Discontent*. Higginbotham argues African American women were involved in the public reach of the black Baptist church, transforming it into a major self-help institution. During the early twentieth century, National Baptist women embraced social elements of progressivism, as well as certain forms of protest, like petitions and boycotts. Within the safety of the Woman's Convention meetings, these women were free to discuss of interest and even critique governmental shortcomings they observed.[558]

This setup provided an avenue for National Baptist women to address the war and interact with the developments taking place on the home front. Prior to April 1917, the Woman's Conventions had been opposed the war, like most other National Baptists.[559] After the American declaration of war, the Woman's Conventions' leaders pledged their loyalty to the nation and organized women in their wartime duties at home. This involved everything from promoting home gardens to alleviate food shortages, to encouraging prayer for the quick end to the war. The Woman's Convention of the NBCI even formed a Committee on Juvenile War

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[558] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 1, 7, 187, 225.

[559] *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 162; *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention, Held with the Baptist Churches of Chicago, Ill., September 8-12, 1915* (Philadelphia: Lisle-Carey Print Shop, n.d.), 197; *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention*, 184; *Journal of the Thirty-Sixth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention (Unincorporated)*, 199.

Work during the 1918 meeting.[560] The general opposition to war remained, but as the women of the NBCU stated, "We wish no peace with dishonor, or with future danger to the American flag, or to the world at large, but this does not take from us our privilege or duty to pray and strive for a lasting peace."[561]

However, although they offered their support of the nation's war effort, it was not without reservations. Some focused on President Wilson's message of making the world safe for democracy and praised his goals, but also noticed the hypocrisies inherent in this rhetoric. Pointing to how "mob law, riots and massacre have intimidate [sic] thousands of law abiding American citizens," E.W. Moore of the Woman's Convention of the NBCU stated, "We protest against such outrages and inhuman acts, and appeal to the president of this nation…and to the heads of the various state governments for protection against the inhuman, ungodly and undemocratic methods of procedure and outrageous acts against humanity."[562] Nannie Helen Burroughs, corresponding secretary of the Woman's Convention of the NBCI, highlighted the problems inherent in the president's goals, arguing the campaign against prejudice in the United States must not be abandoned to focus on fighting autocracy abroad, and critiquing his attention solely to democracy spreading overseas at the expense of democracy at home. In addition, Burroughs took issue with the federal government's handling of the Jim Crow laws, since it had taken control over the railroads due to wartime necessities, but had done nothing to remove state laws about segregated travel.[563]

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[560] *Minutes of the National Baptist Convention (Unincorporated)*, 21, 73; *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention*, 190-193.

[561] *Minutes of the National Baptist Convention (Unincorporated)*, 73.

[562] *Minutes of the National Baptist Convention (Unincorporated)*, 73-74.

[563] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 225.

Although not opposed to the nation's war efforts, the activities of the Woman's Conventions proved more radical than those of the male-dominated National Baptist boards. Burroughs's opinions earned her the scrutiny of the Department of War, which monitored her mail and activities during the war, but otherwise she received little hindrance.[564] Leaders of NBCI and NBCU no doubt felt some of the same hypocrisies and issues with the government's actions, but refrained from stating them so directly. This is likely due to the higher risk of having their church presses shut down if federal agents believed there was an infringement of the Sedition Act, which outlawed criticism of the government and its war effort during wartime. The Woman's Conventions, by contrast, were not the ruling organizations of their respective denominations, and did not have presses that could be shut down. In addition, the previously discussed factors contributing to the shift in National Baptist opinions of the war were ones that would have a greater effect on the governing convention, and less impact on auxiliary boards that had less involvement in the running and organizing of the denomination.

Despite the hesitancy of the Woman's Convention, the National Baptists supported the war. In the conflict between their identities as African Americans and as Baptists, their racial identity won. They drew more upon their experience as black southerners than as southern Baptists, and the reasons why they supported the war demonstrate this stronger identification. Even as they struggled to maintain good relationships with SBC members, perhaps their strongest action demonstrating Baptist identity, the underlying reason was their need for white allies in the Jim Crow South. When the fighting in Europe came to a halt at the end of 1918, there was a general feeling of hope in the National Baptist conventions as members looked to changes in the social landscape of the nation in the postwar years.

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[564] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 12.

Conclusion

The war in Europe ceased on November 11, 1918. In the months and years following, churches across the South began to reevaluate their wartime experiences and decide how to proceed in the case of future wars. For the denominations that had moved furthest from historic views of peace or pacifism, this was not as difficult a process. However, for those with more recent peace or antiwar policies and more numerous supporters of those positions, this was a more complicated task. The postwar era of peace would soon be broken with another tragedy, forcing churches to reconsider their wartime actions. The Second World War erupted in Europe a mere twenty years after the Great War peace treaties were signed, and southern denominations considered similar questions about their beliefs as they had in the previous war. In general, the trends present in and illuminated by the Great War were true of the Second World War as well. However, since the earlier war had exposed the changes already occurring, and accelerated the shift away from peace doctrines, not many of those earlier views remained twenty years later.

Due to their distance from antiwar views and emphasis on social and political concerns, the National Baptist Convention did not focus on peace issues after the Great War. Many in the denomination left the war hopeful about the future and particularly interested about social issues. The *Mission Herald* optimistically proclaimed, "The world will never be the same again to this genereation [sic] as it was before the war broke out, but the coming year will doubtless be the best we have known."[565] However, to a certain extent, the conventions realized obtaining

[565] "The New Year," *Mission Herald*, January 1919, 3.

recognition of their rights and the eradication of race prejudice would be difficult challenges. In the NBCI annual meeting of 1919, President E.C. Morris maintained a neutral attitude about the postwar years, declaring, "It remains to be seen how far-reaching the results of that great war will be, in regulating the inequalities which exist in our own and other countries."[566]

Ultimately, however, National Baptists did not experience the betterment of social position they had hoped would come from their wartime record. The end of the Great War returned the nation to business as usual in terms of race relations. At the 1916 meeting of the NBCI, E.C. Morris had illustrated the level of African American loyalty with a story of slaves loyally aiding slave-owners fighting to maintain the bonds of slavery.[567] Mirroring that anecdote, the National Baptists during the Great War had given the nation their sons to fight overseas and their support in all areas of the home front, but in the end found they had helped an ungrateful nation uninterested in extending freedom hard-won on the battlefields of Europe.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, although similar to the NBC in its overwhelming support of the war effort, did consider peace issues after the end of hostilities, once again shifting from their previous course. The American declaration of war had jolted the fairly pro-peace sentiment of the pre-intervention years to a more aggressive anti-German and pro-intervention stance. Now with the end of the war, many southern Methodists reevaluated their wartime record and some sought new goals. Some, like the WMC, built off their wartime conduct. The council maintained its more pro-peace approach, and even became more organized

[566] *Journal of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention, Held with the Baptist Churches, Newark, N.J., September 10-15, 1919* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, 1919), 29.

[567] *Thirty-Sixth Session Journal of the National Baptist Convention*, 41.

in their campaigns for international peace.[568] With the war over, other southern Methodists abandoned the militant spirit of the wartime years and joined the WMC in their pursuit of peace.

When Congress debated the Treaty of Versailles, which included creating the League of Nations, the MECS threw its support behind the treaty, hoping the League would secure peace for future generations.[569] Others looked forward to the reduction in military forces in the postwar years. One minister, Worth Tippy, predicted a Christian society, aided by the forces of democracy, where war and armaments would be brought under control and ultimately outlawed.[570] Paul Kern, a professor at Southern Methodist University, believed war would be impossible in the postwar world. He argued, "The World War has completed the destruction of racial barriers and impresses forever upon us that no nation or people is independent of its neighbors."[571] These hopes were dashed when the world once again erupted in war in 1939.

The Church of God had a different experience in the postwar decades, continuing its shift away from its early outsider status and history with pacifism. Historian Mickey Crews describes this process as transforming the church "from alienated sect to a denomination comfortable with its American environment."[572] The church began to abandon some of its most radical beliefs and practices, such as snake handling, and progressively morphed into a more mainstream denomination. One important element of this transition was the general rise of church membership into the middle class, where they "shed their lower-class prejudices and adopted

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[568] McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South*, 78-79.

[569] Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt, *The Methodist Experience in America*, 361-362.

[570] Tippy and Kern, *A Methodist Church and Its Work*, 74.

[571] Tippy and Kern, *A Methodist Church and Its Work*, 108.

[572] Crews, *The Church of God*, xiii.

middle-class values and social mores."[573] Another part of this process involved the removal of A.J. Tomlinson from the office of general overseer in 1923, officially due to financial mismanagement. However, unofficially, the other ruling elders considered Tomlinson's leadership to be an autocratic style of church governance, which motivated them to dismiss the general overseer. Following the twenty years of Tomlinson leadership, the church transitioned to a more stable approach. The position of general overseer remained, but the elders on the newly formed Council of Twelve took over much of the supervision of church affairs in the vacuum left by Tomlinson.[574]

This transition in leadership affected the church's position on war. The official church policy of opposing members going to war stayed in the General Assembly minutes for a total of four years. In the minutes of the Sixteenth General Assembly of 1921, it disappeared in typical COG fashion, without any recorded discussion.[575] In 1928, again with no mention of debate, the teaching reappeared in altered form as, "Against members going to war in combatant service."[576] With this new phrasing, the teaching remained unchanged until the Fortieth General Assembly in September 1945, one month after the end of the Second World War, when upon the recommendation of the Council of Twelve, the General Assembly voted to alter the statement once more. The new wording read, "The Church of God believes that nations can and should settle their differences without going to war; however, in the event of war, if a member engages

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[573] Crews, *The Church of God*, 139.

[574] Crews, *The Church of God*, 125-172.

[575] *Minutes of the Sixteenth Annual Assembly of the Church of God*, 72.

[576] *Minutes of the Twenty-Third Annual Assembly of the Churches of God, Held at the Church of God Auditorium, Cleveland, Tennessee, October 22-28, 1928* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, n.d.), 52.

in combatant service, it will not affect his status with the Church. In case a member is called into military service who has conscientious objection to combatant service, the Church will support him in his constitutional rights."[577] This phrasing of the teaching has remained unchanged to the present. In less than thirty years, from 1917 to 1945, the church had made a full transition from mandated denomination-wide pacifism to leaving the issue of military service to the individual consciences of church members. Following this transformation was the development of the church's chaplaincy program, largely a product of the second half of the 1960s. By that time, the church had embraced military service as a reality for many members, and thus took steps to guarantee continued spiritual guidance to those men and women in the military as they served their country overseas.[578]

A similar result occurred in the Churches of Christ, which had also largely left the denomination's traditional ties to pacifism. Of the two journals most closely connected to the peace heritage of David Lipscomb, the *Gospel Advocate* no longer actively advocated conscientious objection by the end of the war, and *Word and Work* had limited its emphasis on the subject. Members and ministers were also more active in society than before the war, when the anti-political stance was stronger. Since many had either fought in the war, worked with the YMCA or Red Cross, participated in government rationing and fundraising programs, and taken part in other activities supporting the war, congregations were now more involved in their communities. This increased interaction with society continued into the next decade. In particular, the materialism that enveloped society in the 1920s also infiltrated the Churches of

[577] *Minutes of the 40th Annual Assembly of the Church of God, Held at the Bible Training School and College Auditorium, Sevierville, Tennessee, September 2, 3, 1945* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, n.d.), 159.

[578] Richard Y. Bershon. *With the Cross of Jesus: A History of Church of God Chaplaincy and Ministry to the Military* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1991).

Christ, adding to their increasing interaction with the larger culture. With the church integrated into society, it was easier and more common for members to mirror the views and opinions prevalent throughout the nation.[579]

However, unlike in some of the other denominations, the debate over pacifism was not over in the COC. Although their numbers had dwindled, some segments of the church held to their pacifist views after the armistice. Since the government no longer had to support a war effort, pacifists were also more at liberty to express their views about conscientious objection and abstaining from war. In 1923, H. Leo Boles published a collection of writings on Biblical pacifism titled *The New Testament Teaching on War*, a book that would have been dangerous to advertise during the war years with the heightened surveillance of the Bureau of Investigation. Explaining the war fever among COC congregations, Boles wrote in his book, "They had never been taught what attitude a Christian should take toward war…. Preachers and elders were ignorant, it seemed, of the Bible teaching on this subject…. The shepherds of the flocks were confused and could give no aid to the helpless young men who turned to them for instruction."[580]

Even as COC pacifists tried to maintain their views, they felt the impact of outside influences, mirroring the church's general transition into the mainstream of society. Immediately following the war, many in the nation embraced an attitude of internationalism, calling for some measure of security against future world wars. Some COC members supported this ideal, and advocated joining the League of Nations and signing the Washington Naval Treaty as means of preventing another war.[581] However, as the Great Depression raged in the 1930s, the nation

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[579] Collins, "Pacifism in the Churches of Christ," 163-164.

[580] H. Leo Boles, *The New Testament Teaching on War* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1923), 1.

[581] Elrod, "The Churches of Christ and the 'War Question,'" 12.

began to adopt isolationism again, and the Churches of Christ mirrored this change by reviving some of the traditional pacifist views. This era of popularity for pacifism would be brief, as the beginning of the Second World War would shift the church back to its original trajectory away from pacifism.[582]

Some elements within the COC resisted the pull toward the mainstream of society. As the twentieth century progressed, three sub-divisions of the church developed. The mainline congregations were the most eager to incorporate themselves into their communities and embrace a more middle class lifestyle. As part of their new position in society, these congregations began to adopt practices of other major denominations. The two most controversial were the creation of Sunday school classes and the use of individual cups in communion. One sub-division, the "nonclass" congregations, rejected Sunday school as originating from man rather than God, and another, the "one-cup" congregations, advocated using only one cup when observing the Lord's Supper, as mentioned in the Bible. These two minority groups tried to keep to a more primitivist approach, and this stance allowed them to maintain pacifist views longer than the mainline congregations. However, as the nation entered war again in 1941, even these groups found it hard to uphold their objection to warfare. Ultimately, the nonclass congregations would drift closer to the mainline churches, while the one-cup brethren, the most primitivist, were able to sustain their pacifism into the next war. Thus at the end of the Second World War, pacifism still existed in the Churches of Christ, but

[582] Michael W. Casey, "Warriors against War: The Pacifists of the Churches of Christ in World War II," *Discipliniana* 59 (Summer 1999): 161.

was the position of an even smaller minority than during the Great War era, and never again returned to its nineteenth-century heights.[583]

The North Carolina Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, as the most connected to a tradition of pacifism, had the best opportunity to maintain aspects of its pacifist doctrine in the postwar era. Although many North Carolina Quakers had fought in the war, there were many members who were still interested in peace issues. Following the events of the Paris Peace Conference, the NCYM Peace and Arbitration Committee declared its support for the League of Nations and stated a petition had been sent to Congress to encourage ratification of the treaty. Committee chairman Franklin Davis also reported work done in high schools, particularly in the form of addresses on peace and material for students debating universal military training. This latter issue was particularly important to some North Carolina Quakers, and Davis advertised in the *Friends Messenger* how concerned Friends might obtain a pamphlet published by the PAFA on the reasons against military training in schools.[584]

Another topic frequently discussed was the war work of Quakers in Europe, which did not end with the armistice. The AFSC kept its presence in France during the interwar years, and soon expanded its reconstruction efforts into other war-torn countries. Although the organization had achieved many of its goals, the issue of accommodating Quaker pacifism in wartime was not completely solved. When the United States entered the Second World War, Quakers once again were faced the problem of finding alternative service to combat. In 1941, Friends, along with

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[583] Michael W. Casey, "Churches of Christ and World War II Civilian Public Service: A Pacifist Remnant," in *Proclaim Peace: Christian Pacifism from Unexpected Quarters*, ed. Theron F. Schlabach and Richard T. Hughes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 99-100; Casey, "From Religious Outsiders to Insiders," 463-466.

[584] *Minutes of the Two Hundred and Twenty-Second Annual Session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 75; J. Franklin Davis, "Military Training in Schools," *Friends Messenger*, February 1919, 1.

members from other peace churches, helped institute Civilian Public Service. Whereas the AFSC was primarily focused on reconstruction work in former war zones, Civilian Public Service was a way for conscientious objectors to serve their country while not participating in activities that had any connection to war. Typical projects included agrarian or environmental work within the United States. Ultimately, however, only a small number of Quakers by the Second World War had any problems with enlisting in the military for combatant or noncombatant service. Out of those who did enlist, the majority chose to fight, a trend also present in the other wars of the twentieth century.[585]

The diminished attention to peace issues during the postwar era reinforces the degree to which the opposition to war had decreased in southern denominations. Since these churches did not have as solid a pro-peace foundation at the beginning of the Great War as they had in previous times, less antiwar sentiment survived into the decades after the war. This weakened state of traditional views on peace was due to the transition away from what could be considered outsider or primitivist doctrines and practices, a shift that began in the nineteenth century. The desire or push to draw closer to the religious mainstream caused opposition to war to fall further from the conversations of these denominations. As the pressures of the wartime era hit southern churches, many of the last vestiges of these earlier views faded away. When the Second World War began, little witness for peace remained in the South.

[585] Isaac Sharpless, "Reconstruction Work in France," *Friends Messenger*, February 1919, 1; White, "Quakers, Conscientious Objectors, the Friends Civilian Public Service Corps, and World War Two," 7-18; Hamm, et al., "The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century," 45.

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Paul Bentley Kern Papers, Duke University
Claude Kitchin Papers, University of North Carolina
Creasy K. Proctor Papers, Duke University

Minutes

Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Tennessee
COG, General Assembly
MECS, Annual Conference
MECS, Holston Conference
MECS, Memphis Conference
MECS, North Carolina Conference Woman's Missionary Council
MECS, Woman's Missionary Council
NBC Foreign Mission Board
NBC and Woman's Convention
NBC, Incorporated, and Woman's Convention
NBC, Unincorporated and Woman's Convention
North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends
North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative)

Periodicals

Campus
Christian Advocate (Nashville)
Church of God Evangel
Daily Christian Advocate (Atlanta)
Epworth Era
Evening Light and Church of God Evangel
Friends Messenger
Gospel Advocate
Guilford Collegian
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Methodist Review Quarterly
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