

THE CAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FREEDOM: CANADIAN PROTESTANT
CHURCHES AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939–1945

by

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A dissertation submitted to
the Faculty of McMaster Divinity College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Christian Theology)

McMaster Divinity College
Hamilton, Ontario
2022

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(Christian Theology)

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TITLE: The Cause of Righteousness and Freedom: Canadian
Protestant Churches and the Second World War, 1939–
1945.

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SUPERVISOR: Dr. Gordon L. Heath

NUMBER OF PAGES: ix + 303

ABSTRACT

“The Cause of Righteousness and Freedom: Canadian Protestant Churches and the Second World War, 1939–1945”

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Canadian Protestants interpreted the Second World War as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. This dissertation argues that the churches’s view of the war was rooted in a web of interwoven assumptions that shaped their worldview. These assumptions included a presupposition of Christendom, the Canadian churches’s responsibility for nation-building, the doctrine of divine providence, British imperial sentiment, and the principles of Christian internationalism. The Protestant churches also viewed themselves as the custodians of Christian civilization, and they believed Nazism threatened the survival of that civilization.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While every academic project is authored by an individual, it is also true that every academic project is the product of a larger community in which the scholar has been formed. Formally, I have been a glad and proud beneficiary of the tutelage of my supervisor, Dr. Gordon Heath. Gord, it has been a pleasure and a blessing to journey alongside you on the road of scholarship. All the best elements in my academic work I learned from you. I must also thank my secondary supervisor, Dr. Steve Studebaker, from whom I learned the important lesson of academic charity. I have striven to practice such charity in this dissertation.

Where would I be without my family? I must also thank my parents, Marc and Jo-Anne Rudy for always encouraging me to pursue my interests and providing a loving and supporting home in which my singular love for history could develop unhindered. I must also thank my grandparents, Ruth and Leo Adams and Bill and Reta Rudy, who I often saw as living pieces of history, for fostering my love of history. Grandma Ruth gets special thanks for supporting my graduate school career with timely care packages that always included my favourite home-baked cookies. I am also grateful for my sister, Jess Rudy, and brother, Ben Rudy, who both tolerated my obsession with history and unknowingly encouraged it. My loving wife, Kiersten, has my undying gratitude and love. Historians can be difficult people to live with, as they tend to hoard books and are frequently befuddled by the present's rude interruption of their contemplation of the

past. Through the inevitable discouragement and disillusionment that accompanies projects like this one, Kiersten has supported me and encouraged me.

I also want to express my gratitude to my beloved church family, Lift Church. While writing this dissertation was one of the hardest things I have ever done, a task not aided by the global pandemic that began in early in 2020, our church family has supported me not merely in my scholarship but in my walk as a disciple of Jesus. Similarly, I want to thank my dear friends, Jeff Becker, Nico Willemsen, Dan Lupo, and Matt Rowley, for pleasant diversions, excellent conversations, and persistent friendship.

Finally, I want to express my profound gratitude to our Good Lord and His beautiful creation. I am especially thankful for the peace and quiet of Your creation, and the gift of fishing and gardening that refresh me on a level so deep it could only be called spiritual. Scholarship requires long periods inside, and I was regularly refreshed by walks outside where I could revel in the beauty of the Lord's handiwork and hear His still small voice in the midst of the sounds of nature. Ultimately, this work is for Your Kingdom and my hope is that it edifies Your Church.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, Bill Rudy, who, after marrying my grandmother Reta, joined the Canadian Army in 1942 and served for the duration. My love for history was birthed in your home.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCOQ	Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec
BUWC	Baptist Union of Western Canada
CCC	Canadian Council of Churches
CTF	Canadian Temperance Federation
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Canada
UCC	United Church of Canada
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union
UN	United Nations

INTRODUCTION

“That grim, dread thing casts its awful shadow, not merely across the Empire, but the whole world again”; so did the *Canadian Baptist* describe the beginning of the Second World War.¹ More than just declaring how Central Canadian Baptists felt about the outbreak of war in Europe, this statement reflects the general sentiment among the mainline Canadian Protestant denominations: Church of England in Canada, United Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the three English-speaking Baptist Conventions: Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, the United Baptists of the Maritime Provinces, and the Baptist Union of Western Canada. Each of these denominations met the outbreak of the Second World War with subdued statements, often tinged with sadness or resignation. Nonetheless, they viewed the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. They voiced their support with pledges of loyalty to the king and Canada’s government. What these denominations lacked in theological unity they made up for with ethnic, cultural, and linguistic unity. They were not only largely of British origin, but they were all English-speaking, all Protestant, and occupied a common realm of influence in English-speaking Canada. They shared numerous beliefs and assumptions that gave them a common worldview from which they understood the church’s role in Canada, the British Empire, and the world, especially in times of war.

¹ “War Again!” *Canadian Baptist*, 7 September 1939, 3.

In 1940 a statement circulated that exemplified Canadian Protestants's common outlook. The statement was signed by prominent leaders of the mainline denominations: Stuart C. Parker, Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada; Derwyn T. Owen, Primate of the Church of England in Canada; J. A. Johnston, President of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec; and John W. Woodside, Moderator of the United Church of Canada. It urged all Christian people in Canada "with whom our voice has influence" to hold fast to their confidence in God and the armour of faith "to face courageously the struggle before our Empire and its Allies."² The statement went on to clarify how Canadian Protestants saw the war and why they supported it: "We believe that our cause is the cause of Christian civilization, and that Divine Power and guidance will be given to us to win victory for it."³ The statement called upon all Christians to "give themselves to this sacred cause" sparing no sacrifice, even up to life itself, with the goal to "secure for us and our children the precious things won for us by the sacrifices of our fathers."⁴

As this joint statement suggests, the Second World War was depicted in the Protestant press as a war fought in defence of Christian civilization. This civilization being Christian meant that Canadian Protestants viewed the war as a conflict with major religious dimensions. Obviously, the idea of a religious war is not without precedent in Christian history, but the Second World War was not merely a repeat of the crusades, though similar language was at times used to describe it. In Canada's own history, justifications of war often had religious overtones.

² "The Call of the Hour," *Presbyterian Record*, July 1940, 195.

³ "The Call of the Hour," *Presbyterian Record*, July 1940, 195.

⁴ "The Call of the Hour," *Presbyterian Record*, July 1940, 195.

In his study of Canadian Protestants and the War of 1812, James Robertson has noted how providential protection was a major theme in how Canadian Protestants viewed the war. Evangelical missionary agencies such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the London Missionary Society were seen as evidence that God had chosen Britain to spread Christianity and civilization around the world.⁵ Similarly, Britain's defeat of Napoleon in 1814 was interpreted as proof of God's favour.⁶ The war was not viewed as a crusade, but it was clearly interpreted with religious meaning.

Eighty-five years later the British Empire was at war in South Africa. The empire had experienced tremendous growth over the century and imperial sentiment was at its high-water mark. In his study of the Canadian Protestant response to the South African War, Gordon Heath has shown that, while the war was not viewed solely as a religious conflict, there was a dimension to Protestant interpretations that construed the war in religious terms. Some of that was due to the use of military metaphors, which, as Carman Miller has pointed out, was a pervasive theme in hymns and other literature of the time.⁷ Heath describes how military metaphors were at times used to describe the work of the church, namely missions, and how parallels were drawn between service to Queen Victoria and to the Kingdom of God.⁸ Similarly, the Queen's soldiers were at times portrayed as "Christian soldiers fighting for a higher cause than merely temporal gain; they were fighting for right and for God."⁹ This language foreshadowed the rhetoric that would become common in the First World War.

⁵ Robertson, "Expel the Faithless Foe," 192.

⁶ For a discussion on these themes see Robertson, "Expel the Faithless Foe."

⁷ Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 10.

⁸ Heath, *Silver Lining*, 124.

⁹ Heath, *Silver Lining*, 124.

In the First World War, rhetoric reflecting the view of the war as a religious conflict was taken to a new level. In her study of Canadian churches in the First World War, Melissa Davidson has noted that the war was linked with religion by some, but they were not a majority.¹⁰ It was, however, more frequently linked with imperial sentiment, which had religious overtones of its own. Through this vein, the First World War was often seen as being fought for political liberty, a “struggle between liberalism and despotism.”¹¹ The comments of one Canadian cleric, J. D. Llwyd, reflect how Britain as a champion and guardian of political freedom in the form of liberal democracy was seen as a justification for the righteousness of the war. What weighed in the balance, he stated, was “All that a thousand years of English Struggle has won for the world . . .; each man’s personal freedom; self-government; popular rights; the sacredness of personality itself. No war has had a more righteous basis.”¹² Llwyd’s comments were eerily prescient for how the Second World War would be viewed.

While the intent of this dissertation is not to compare Canadian Protestant interpretations of the First World War to their interpretation of the Second World War, the evidence marshalled in what follows suggests important continuities. These continuities are evident in Canadian Protestant assumptions, such as a presupposition of Christendom, the British Empire, nation-building, and the justice of the cause which, ultimately, produced rhetoric, and an ensuing interpretation of the war that was very similar. Indeed, if taken out of context, the rhetoric expressing the Canadian Protestant interpretation of the First World War and the Second World War, respectively, could

¹⁰ Davidson, *For King, God, and Country*, 91.

¹¹ As quoted in Davidson, “For King, God and Country,” 92.

¹² Quoted in Davidson, “For God, King, and Country,” 92–93.

sometimes be confused for a description of the same conflict. The similarities will be noted throughout the dissertation.

What the Canadian Protestant views of the War of 1812, the South African War, and the First World War held in common was an assumption that Canada was a Christian nation in the context of the British Empire, and therefore a stakeholder, if a relatively young one, in Europe's Christian civilization. They also exhibited a view of empire that imbued Britain and its colonies with not only divine favour but divine mission, to spread the gospel and civilization to all nations. A major component of this was, of course, political freedom realized in the form of democracy. The ideals and principles that underlay Christian civilization were, by and large, coterminous with the ideals and principles of empire, at least in the view of many Canadian Protestants. The conclusion at hand is that any views of these wars as religious conflicts, or having religious dimensions, appears to have come through both their assumption of Christian civilization and a discourse of empire.

The churches viewed themselves as the custodians of Christian civilization and the nation. After all, the very principles and values on which Christian civilization stood came through the churches and the history of Christendom. If it was a war to defend Christian civilization this meant that the major values and beliefs of Christian civilization were at stake. What were these? One was the work of the church itself. The Canadian Protestant churches saw their collective tasks as building Canada into a Christian nation, and spreading the gospel to all. In his study of the spread of Christianity through time, Andrew F. Walls points out that a critical phase in Christianity's development was the development of the idea of a Christian nation, which

tended to conceptualize a parallel between the Christian nation and Israel. “Once the nation and the church are coterminous in scope,” he wrote, “the experiences of the nation can be interpreted in terms of the history of Israel.”¹³ Heath confirms this when he notes that the British Empire was often equated with the Old Testament nation of Israel.¹⁴ This extended quite naturally to Canada, as part of the empire. Thus, the churches’s desire to make the nation holy was not an alien notion. The Canadian Protestant efforts to combat the evil liquor trade and protect the sanctity of the Lord’s Day during war time are examples of this. Similarly, the belief that God’s divine providence would aid the Allies was justified by this view of the Christian nation, which was reflected in Canadian Protestants’s spirituality in wartime.

Walls goes on to note that evangelicalism itself assumes Christendom, because it began as a protest against “a Christian society that is not Christian enough.”¹⁵ The assumption of a Christian nation was fundamental to early evangelical reform work. William Wilberforce, for example, sought through legislation “to bring the nation in reality to what it is already in principle,” and so worked to abolish the slave trade, a matter of national righteousness, and also worked for social righteousness by opposing duelling and supporting the Society for the Suppression of Vice.¹⁶ When combined with a relatively young society such as Canada in which Christianity predominated, the churches clearly saw their responsibility to build Canada into “the Lord’s Dominion.” This impulse has been widely acknowledged by historians of Canadian Christianity as being one of the primary factors in the development of Canada. Accordingly, when John

¹³ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 20.

¹⁴ Heath, *Silver Lining*, 124.

¹⁵ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 81.

¹⁶ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 82.

Webster Grant argued that Canadian Protestants held a presupposition of Christendom, which was “a conviction that in the main the institutions and values of Western society rested on a Christian foundation,” it is understood that this was deeply intertwined with their identities and history as Protestants, and as a result, Nazism threatened, they believed, their identity and their work; it threatened the existence of Christianity as they knew it.¹⁷ Therefore, Canadian Protestants’s view of the war to defend Christian civilization had profound religious overtones, because they believed Christian civilization was a Christian entity.

A secularization thesis has developed within Canadian religious historiography. While the findings of this study are relevant to the question of secularization, the discussion “has unfortunately degenerated into a polarized and acrimonious battle that has obscured more than it has revealed.”¹⁸ In the most general sense the theory holds that secularization is a process in which the state becomes less religious in character as a society undergoes modernization.¹⁹ Regrettably, the discussion as it relates to the history of Christianity in Canada, has struggled to settle on an agreed upon definition. Some scholars, such as David Marshall and Ramsay Cook have argued that the forces of secularization in Canada have been both internal and external to religion, and see the

¹⁷ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 213.

¹⁸ Opp, “Revivals and Religion,” 184.

¹⁹ Stuart Macdonald (“Religion and Secularization in Canada,” 27–42) has pointed out that both the term secularization and the secularization theory or thesis are riddled with ambiguity and flawed assumptions. He notes the common argument generally used to define the thesis: a process in which a society becomes inevitably less religious and more secular in tandem with becoming more modern, industrial, and urban (29). He further points out that the theory is typically assumed to be both descriptive and predictive, as well as more or less universal and cross-cultural. Other problems with the theory include its assumption of some sort of golden age of religiosity, and the inherent difficulties in assessing religiosity in a given society.

process starting at some point in the nineteenth century.²⁰ In response to modern challenges of an intellectual and cultural nature, some denominations sought to accommodate these changes. Marshall and Cook suggest a causal connection between the churches's attempt at integration in this way and the churches's apparent decline. Offering a different perspective, Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau have argued that the churches's social reform work of the early twentieth century provided the necessary "infrastructure of knowledge" for the organization of the modern social welfare state in the 1930s and beyond.²¹ Therefore, they are at odds with Marshall and Cook's view that secularization began in the late-nineteenth century. While the whole discussion about secularization is important, and this study's relevance to it will be noted in the conclusion, a detailed treatment of the discussion is beyond the scope of this study.

What is relevant however, is to take note of the fact, regardless of disputes over secularization, of a ubiquitous Christian influence in media and popular culture in Britain, and by a moderate extension, Canada. Callum Brown has described it as "a unifying Christian environment which commandeered the vehicles of public discourse, penetrating home and office, school and hospital, street and pub, parliament and town hall."²² In a similar vein, Michael Snape has studied the religious experiences of British soldiers in the World Wars, and argued that there existed in Britain a "diffusive Christianity."²³ He defined diffusive Christianity as a prevalent, if hard to pin down, form of belief that was "an ethically based and non-dogmatic form of Christianity."²⁴

²⁰ See Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*; Ramsey, Cook, *The Regenerators*; Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*.

²¹ Christie and Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 198.

²² Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, 57, as quoted in Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, 3.

²³ Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, 22.

²⁴ Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, 22.

Quoting Brown, Snape further defines his meaning, saying “‘what made Britain Christian,’ was not levels of churchgoing but ‘the way in which Christianity infused public culture and was adopted by individuals, whether churchgoers or not, in forming their own identities.’”²⁵ Both Snape and Brown demonstrate that for the vast majority of Britons, soldiers or civilians, Christianity was the basis of their moral and spiritual universe. As a society that was largely British in character this was also true for Canadians. The churches, of course, were partially responsible for this cultural Christianity, and indeed, considered themselves to be the guardians of it. As a result, they were critical institutions in the nation’s self-understanding, at the national, regional, and individual levels. Thus, Nazism’s assault on the Christian empire of Britain was an assault on Christian civilization, of which the churches were the principal stakeholders.

It is worth noting Paul Fussell’s study of how the Second World War was understood by those who experienced it. He correctly notes that a dualism rapidly developed with its own logic in which an enemy as totally evil as the Nazis required that the Allies be totally good.²⁶ He suggested that in pursuing the “uncomplicated High Purpose” of winning the war, “a profound chasm had to be opened between good and evil, and those two terms were wonderfully available to make high-minded sense of the war.”²⁷ Indeed, he noted that “given the wartime requirements of elevated morality, it was not hard (for Americans at least) to understand the war as virtually a religious operation.”²⁸ Fussell goes on to point out that this dualism in which the Allies were

²⁵ Snape, *God and the British Soldier*, 22.

²⁶ Fussell’s work has been highly influential in helping later generations understand the impact of the World Wars. However, he has received criticism for a number of flaws, not the least of which is his scorn for conventional historians’s work on the world wars. For an exposition of the major flaws in Fussell’s work, see Prior, Robin, and Wilson “Debate: Paul Fussell at War.”

²⁷ Fussell, *Understanding and Behaviour*, 165.

²⁸ Fussell, *Understanding and Behaviour*, 165.

construed as the Good, created an atmosphere of vague goodness that made it difficult to “register precise ideas or emotion.”²⁹ In this vague atmosphere the terms “freedom” and “free” became buzzwords that were highly imprecise and even tended toward non-meaning. He claims, however, that freedom became the *leitmotif* of this wartime dualism between good and evil. Of course, Fussell’s work focuses on the experiences of the troops and the literature of the time in America and Britain. He largely ignores Christianity, and the role the churches may have played in how the war was interpreted. Interestingly, Canadian Protestants’s view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization created a similar dualism of good versus evil, and freedom was a topic that filled the pages of the Protestant press during the war years, though the concept of freedom they delineated was not nearly so vague as in Fussell’s sources. When the joint statement, quoted above, from the leaders of Canadian Protestantism urged Canadians to sacrifice in order to “secure for us and our children the precious things won for us by the sacrifices of our fathers,” freedom and democracy, and their necessary precursor (in their view), Christianity, was their meaning.

It is crucial to understand the place of the Protestant churches in Canadian society, for it differs greatly from their place in twenty-first-century Canada. According to the *Census of Canada 1941* 45.8 percent of Canadians were part of either the Church of England, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, or one of the three regional Baptist conventions.³⁰ Not only did these churches predominate in

²⁹ Fussell, *Understanding and Behaviour*, 174.

³⁰ *Census of Canada 1941*, 290. It should be noted that 43.4 percent were Roman Catholic. As is no doubt clear, Canadian Roman Catholics are beyond the scope of this study. Thomas Faulkner has provided the only in-depth study of Canadian Catholics during the Second World War (albeit in a comparison to Canadian Protestants) and argued that they used similar language to Protestants in describing the conflict as a war for Christian civilization, but their ideas about the nature of that civilization differed drastically from Protestants. See Faulkner, “Christian Civilization.” Most of the

English-speaking Canada, but due to their history as nation-builders and the highly religious culture that had developed over the course of the nineteenth century, the churches held significant moral and social influence. People looked to the churches for guidance in understanding the world around them, especially how to view that world as a Christian. Thus, as Melissa Davidson has stated about the churches in the First World War, “the churches were among the important public institutions which tried to provide a framework through which individuals could understand not only the issues at stake, but also what it meant to be at war.”³¹ While Canada’s culture underwent changes in the 1920s and 1930s, in the Second World War, the churches continued to see themselves as national institutions responsible for guiding and shaping the nation.

The mainline Protestant denominations in Canada justified the war as a just, even a sacred, cause, and supported the war in word and deed. They supported the war effort, and soldiers, by sending chaplains to the armed forces. They published official declarations of loyalty to the Dominion government, to His Majesty George VI, and to the cause. They also allowed their newspapers to carry advertisements that encouraged Canadians to buy war bonds. Perhaps most interesting of all were their explanations and interpretations of the war. Canada was a profoundly religious nation, and it was natural for Canadians to look to the churches for guidance in making sense of the second catastrophe of world war in a generation. While the pulpit played a key role in this work,

literature on Canadian Catholics and war focuses on Roman Catholic military chaplains, for a comprehensive bibliography of these see, Heath “Canadian Churches and War.” Mark McGowan initiated serious study of English-speaking Catholics, and their responses to both the South African War and the First World War. See, McGowan “Between King, Kaiser, and Canada”; McGowan, “Sharing the Burden of Empire”; McGowan, “The Degreening of the Irish”; McGowan, *The Imperial Irish*. Melissa Davidson also includes Roman Catholics in her dissertation on Canadian Churches and the First World War. See, Davidson, “For God, King, and Country.”

³¹ Davidson, “For King, God, and Country,” 82.

the most influential medium was through the denominational press. Through their newspapers Canadian Protestants encouraged Canadians to pray, explained the meaning of the war, argued for social reform, pastored their people, and prepared for postwar peace. Before proceeding, however, it is important to understand the historical context that led Canadian Protestants to view the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization.

Canadian historian Michael Gavreau noted a link between evangelicalism and nation-building in the early nineteenth century. He argued that in a frontier culture lacking virtue and values, evangelicalism provided the values for early Canadian culture as it was formed.³² Focusing more specifically on early Canadian Methodists, who composed a significant percentage of Canada's population in the early nineteenth century, Neil Semple has similarly argued that Methodists emphasized moral purity in a pioneer society in which immorality reigned.³³ However, at the same time, Methodists assigned great value to personal conversion and regeneration, and as a result expected one another to help improve national life. Semple notes "the cultural and moral requirements of Methodism demanded the reformation of individuals in the corrupt world. Only by this process could the nation and the world truly progress."³⁴

The result of what Gavreau and Semple suggest was the formation of a Protestant culture in English-speaking Canada, especially the region that would later be known as Ontario. William Westfall has observed that this Protestant culture "came to have a profound influence over public opinion."³⁵ Thus, a foundation was laid from

³² Gavreau, "Protestantism Transformed," 50.

³³ Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, 56.

³⁴ Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, 66.

³⁵ Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 9.

which the mainline Protestant denominations could undertake nation-building with great success. However, as Phyllis Airhart has pointed out, the churches were initially apathetic to the cause of Confederation, and not until it had been achieved, did they become aware of the possibilities and responsibilities of the churches in the young nation. Indeed, Airhart claims that the Protestant churches took it upon themselves to supply the nascent Dominion with an identity, namely, Canada as the “Lord’s Dominion.” She goes on to argue that a vision of Canada as the Lord’s Dominion supplied the churches with “an ideological and theological framework for a wide variety of voluntary organizations—temperance societies, the Lord’s Day Alliance, missionary societies, to name only a few.”³⁶ Observing the same phenomena, Robert Wright has suggested that “the major Protestant denominations—Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist—had been among the ‘corporate institutions that had shaped the nation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.’”³⁷ While the separation of church and state had been a feature of Canadian life since the mid-nineteenth century, the Protestants churches effectively amounted to an unofficial establishment by the turn of the twentieth century.³⁸ Though quick to ensure the separation of church and state when the churches’s freedoms were threatened, Canadian Protestants understood their churches to be national institutions that “saw the state as in some way under the judgement of the values of the church.”³⁹ They also felt a responsibility to guide the

³⁶ Airhart, “Ordering a New Nation,” 101.

³⁷ Wright, “Canadian Protestant Tradition,” 139.

³⁸ In Canada, separation of Church and State was primarily manifested in the official disestablishment of the Church of England in Canada. The key event in this regard was the secularization of the Clergy Reserves. See Moir, *The Church in the British Era*, for a description of that event. While it is true that Canada’s head of state is the monarch of Britain who is simultaneously the head of the Church of England, no church was officially established in Canada by the middle of the nineteenth century.

³⁹ Macdonald, “For Empire and God,” 148.

state, and hold it accountable, especially in matters of social reform. However, the churches were often frustrated in this arena. As Thomas Sinclair Faulkner has pointed out there was a long-standing pattern in Canadian history “in which political leaders assumed that Canadian society was Christian, but did not concede to the church leaders the right to have the final say as to what that implied for civil legislation.”⁴⁰

Nonetheless, by the turn of the twentieth century the Canadian Protestant outlook was characterized by great optimism. This optimism was reflected in Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier’s declaration that “the twentieth century will be the century of Canada.”⁴¹

Two key assumptions, identified by John Webster Grant, underlay the Canadian Protestant commitment to nation-building. These were a presupposition of Christendom, and a presupposition of progress. Regarding the former he pointed out that one thing nearly all Canadian Protestants, held in common “was a conviction that in the main the institutions and values of Western society rested on a Christian foundation. They believed in the existence of an entity that over the centuries had come to be known as ‘Christendom’ and assumed that Canada was destined to become a part of it.”⁴² With respect to the presupposition of progress, Webster noted that “implicit in the church’s program of missionary expansion and social involvement over the greater part of a century had been the assumption that the world, if not perfectible, is at least amenable to almost indefinite improvement.”⁴³ Thus, as a young country populated by people of European origin, Canadian Protestants’s goal, as Webster has also noted, “was to make Christian principles the foundation of Canadian life. They conceived of this aim chiefly

⁴⁰ Faulkner, “Christian Civilization,” 229.

⁴¹ Quoted in Heath, *Silver Lining*, 51.

⁴² Grant, *Canadian Era*, 213.

⁴³ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 153.

in moral rather than political terms.”⁴⁴ These presuppositions provided the ideological and theological framework for Canadian Protestant social activism as well as their responses to wars.

It is worth considering what role eschatology may have played in Canadian Protestant social engagement. There are some scholars who claim that the majority of Canadian evangelical Protestants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century held a postmillennial viewpoint.⁴⁵ This view believed in gradual human progress and the gradual Christianization of society. This certainly makes sense of the nation-building impulse in Canada that saw the establishment of His Dominion as coterminous with, or at least a necessary precondition for, the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth. For postmillennialists, the concept of Christendom represented the Christian nations of Europe and the North Atlantic, especially the English-speaking ones, and their responsibility and work was to not only extend the domains of Christendom, which would extend the domains of the Kingdom, but also work to improve or Christianize society.⁴⁶ In the words of David Bebbington, “most evangelicals of the nineteenth century professed postmillennialism” which prompted “evangelicals toward greater social commitment” well into the twentieth century.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 79.

⁴⁵ For example, see Bebbington, *Baptists*, 121–38; Dochuk, “Redeeming the Time,” 10–20.

⁴⁶ It should be noted that the generalization of Canadian Protestants being mostly postmillennialists does not account for the views of a significant minority of premillennialists. Darren Dochuk (Dochuk, “Redeeming the Time, 14”) has argued that there was a powerful network composed of both clergy and laity, most of whom were affluent and powerful professionals, who held a premillennial stance—he calls them conservative evangelicals—and were interested in moral reform, but that contemporary historiography has depicted the members of this informal network as a fringe group. Unlike postmillennialists, this group saw Christendom and society as being in decline and sought to save as many souls as possible before time ran out. They rejected the notion that human or social progress could be equated with, or precipitate, the realization of God’s Kingdom.

⁴⁷ Bebbington, *Baptists*, 125–26.

Canadian Protestant moral and social reform efforts proceeded from their presupposition of Christendom, nation-building, and both pre- and postmillennial eschatologies. It was also, as David Bebbington has suggested, in response to wickedness in national life. Anything that might be a barrier to the gospel, anything that might be a substitute for the gospel, and anything that might be an infringement on the gospel code of living was met with evangelical attacks.⁴⁸ Or, as the United Church of Canada's Report on Church, Nation and World Order put it, "by its very nature it [the church] seeks the liberation of man from every evil."⁴⁹ These beliefs were built upon both the assumption of a Christian nation and, that regenerated individuals would lead to a regenerated society. As a Christian culture developed and spread, so did the churches's influence over public opinion.

Out of this heritage of nation-building and social reform arose a new development around the turn of the twentieth century, the Social Gospel movement.⁵⁰ While the Social Gospel stood on the premise that Christianity was a social religion with implications for "the quality of human relations on this earth," it was also a reaction to certain social trends.⁵¹ Industrialization, labour conditions, urbanization, immigration, capitalistic injustices, and even individualism were among some of the foremost social trends that the Social Gospel sought to address.⁵² The Social Gospel reacted against the individualism that underlay evangelicalism and, according to Brian Clarke, enlarged

⁴⁸ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 133.

⁴⁹ "Report of the Commission on the Church, Nation and World Order," 11.

⁵⁰ The Social Gospel was likely not a Canadian development. The term itself was coined by American Baptist pastor Walter Rauschenbusch in his writings on the social applications of Christianity. While it is likely the influence of the Social Gospel movement in the U.S. prompted the development of the same in Canada, there is also the possibility that the growing concern about how Christianity could or should address social injustices was conducive to this movement taking root quickly.

⁵¹ Allen, *Social Passion*, 4.

⁵² Grant, *Canadian Era*, 109.

upon the idea of individual regeneration, applying it more broadly to social institutions. The movement did not reject the necessity of individual regeneration, but believed that “social institutions must also be redeemed in order to create an environment in which the individual could be healed and renewed.”⁵³ Robert Choquette suggests that Social Gospellers sought to extend the meaning of sin and justice to be primarily centered in society, and, as a result, saw social justice as a means of sanctification rather than a result of it.⁵⁴ Interestingly, the Social Gospel movement continued to support older, traditional, social reform work, such as temperance or Sunday Observance, but this work was viewed in light of the Social Gospel’s emphasis on the social structures of sin and a heightened sensitivity to economic injustices.⁵⁵ John Webster Grant pointed out that the Social Gospel largely complemented the missional work already occurring in Canada, including temperance and Sunday observance, but also Canadianism (attempts to implant ideals of Canadian citizenship in immigrants), and typical outreach to people on the margins.⁵⁶ Canadian Protestants had, prior to the development of the Social Gospel, ample common ground on which to cooperate in moral and social reform campaigns. With the arrival of the Social Gospel and its huge popularity, this common ground expanded. Grant believed that the consensus that developed in Canadian Protestantism was predicated largely on social reform work, aided in no small measure by the apparent relevance and success of the Social Gospel.⁵⁷ This consensus provided a basis, he claims, for the success of the church union movement. Following the First

⁵³ Clarke, “English-Speaking Canada,” 324.

⁵⁴ Choquette, *Canada’s Religion*, 333.

⁵⁵ Clarke, “English-Speaking Canada,” 325.

⁵⁶ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 96.

⁵⁷ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 105.

World War, however, disillusionment was widespread, and though the United Church came into being in 1925, the so-called consensus fractured and the Social Gospel as a recognizable movement died out in the late 1920s.⁵⁸ Robert Wright has described the travails of social Christianity in the interwar period poignantly, stating “By the early twenties the apparent meaninglessness and the sheer carnage of the war had cast a long shadow over the ethos of enlightened progress that had animated liberal Protestantism and the Social Gospel. The conflict had not, as the most optimistic Social Gospellers had hoped, ushered in the millennium; rather, it seemed to have derailed the once compelling notion that human history was nothing less than the progressive revelation of the Kingdom of God on earth.”⁵⁹

Other trends also contributed to the crumbling of the Social Gospel and the apparent social consensus of Canadian Protestants. One of these was the increasing radicalism of some Social Gospellers, most of whom were clergy, while the laity proved to be barren ground for the seeds of the Social Gospel. As socialism spread as a response to capitalism’s perceived injustices, the Social Gospel, which reacted to the same, came to be associated with socialism, a political philosophy that was poorly received in the largely middle-class mainline denominations.⁶⁰

The life of J. S. Woodsworth exemplifies the Social Gospel experience.

Woodsworth became a Methodist minister early in the twentieth century. He grew

⁵⁸ Allen (*Social Passion*) claims that the Social Gospel waned after 1928. While Allen links the Social Gospel with the development of social democracy in Canada, Christie and Gauvreau (*A Full-Orbed Christianity*) claim that Protestant social reform provided the basis for the establishment of Canada’s welfare state. These, then, would be the most notable legacies of the Social Gospel. The internationalist movement of the interwar years mixed with and obscured the Social Gospel. The latter was nebulous and difficult to define at the best of times, so the question of its end and its legacy, is inherently complicated. This would be an excellent subject for further study.

⁵⁹ Wright, “Canadian Protestant Tradition,” 145.

⁶⁰ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 121.

increasingly activist on Social Gospel themes, publishing two books on key social issues in Canada and did not hesitate to denounce or critique fellow clergy or the government.⁶¹ By the end of the First World War, Woodsworth's disillusionment led him to leave Methodism, and as an active socialist he was a key founder of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) political party and became an MP.⁶²

While scholars are by no means united regarding the decline of the Social Gospel as a movement in the interwar period, its legacy endured. As Richard Allen has pointed out, the Social Gospel was the medium by which the many social programmes that would characterize the Canadian welfare state were first disseminated "into the main channels of Canadian social attitudes."⁶³ An enduring interest in social issues and social justice persisted among the mainline Protestant churches well into the twenty-first century, and while it cannot be asserted that this was due solely to the Social Gospel, the evangelical heritage of social engagement to improve the nation (albeit on Christian terms) was certainly fortified by the Social Gospel. In addition, the Social Gospel contributed a great deal to the interwar internationalism that would come to shape Canadian Protestant thought on the new world order that should follow an Allied victory.⁶⁴

The shared presuppositions of Christendom and progress, pre- and post-millennial eschatology, and a broadly shared interest in social reform provided a basis

⁶¹ Choquette, *Canada's Religions*, 334.

⁶² Choquette, *Canada's Religions*, 335. Woodsworth was the only party leader in the House of Commons to dissent from supporting Canada's declaration of war in September 1939 (he was one of four total dissenting votes). He was quick to point out, in his speech, that he spoke only for himself, not his party. This is described in Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 14. For a transcript of Woodsworth's speech, see Granatstein and Neary, *The Good Fight*, 25–27.

⁶³ Allen, *Social Passion*, 352.

⁶⁴ This is considered in Chapter 6.

for a unity that extended beyond nation-building. While each of the mainline Protestant denominations had significant differences in doctrine and polity, the possibilities and responsibilities of forming the “Lord’s Dominion” in Canada blunted the sharper edges of theological disagreement as time went on, and provided a common goal. The *Census of Canada 1941* indicates that slightly less than half of Canada’s population maintained membership in one of four Protestant denominations. In 1941, Anglicans composed 15.2 percent, Baptists 4.2 percent, Presbyterians 7.2 percent, and United Church of Canada 19.2 percent, for a total of 45.8 percent of the population.⁶⁵

Another factor that provided a further sense of unity was a shared ethnicity and cultural connection to Britain. This is perhaps most apparent in the Census takers’s quaint division of Canadians into only two categories: British born and Foreign born.⁶⁶ Despite an influx of immigration into Canada between 1901–1911 that doubled the Foreign born percentage from 5.2 to 10.4, as well as a simultaneous though short-lived drop in immigration from the British Isles, the *Census of Canada 1941* indicated that between 1871 and 1941 the percentage of Canadians who were classified as “British born” only decreased slightly: 97.4 percent in 1871 to 91.2 percent in 1941. However, British born remained the single largest group of Canadians between 1871 and 1941.

⁶⁵ *Census of Canada 1941*, 290. This total was actually down from 1921, when Canadian Protestants composed 50.2 percent of the population. In 1921, Canadian Protestants outnumbered Canadian Catholics by a significant margin; by 1941 however, Canadian Protestants outnumbered Canadian Catholics by only a slight margin, not due so much to Catholic growth, but to an apparent decline in the number of Protestants. The Catholic percentage of the Canadian population in 1921 was 38.7 percent, and in 1941, 43.4 percent.

⁶⁶ *Census of Canada 1941*, 164. The British born category was further divided into three sub-categories: those born in Canada, those born in the British Isles, and those born in British possessions (e.g., New Zealand). The percentages of British born sub-categories in 1871 were as follows: Canada (83.3), British Isles (13.8), British possessions (0.3). In 1941: Canada (82.5), British Isles (8.3), and British possessions (0.4).

In light of these figures, it would seem that English-speaking Canada was ethnically monolithic, with most English-speaking Canadians being British-born, or of British origin (that is, born in Canada but descended from British immigrants, or born in a British realm) and one of four Protestant denominations.⁶⁷ The result was an illusion of cultural and ethnic homogeneity, which may have fuelled the vision of Canada as the “Lord’s Dominion,” as being a Dominion of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants, most of whom had descended from, or were themselves, immigrants from the British Isles. This had a profound influence on their notions of Canadian identity, and, by extension, the churches’s role in shaping the nation.

When historians of Christian history in Canada talk about a consensus forming in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among Canadian Protestants, they refer chiefly to a shared belief in the necessity of shaping Canada into the “Lord’s Dominion,” as well as a general comity on the tenets of Protestant Christianity. But the Canadian Protestant consensus was also deeply rooted in a shared ethnicity, language, and cultural connection with Britain. When paired with the conviction that Canada needed to be built up into a more Christian nation, the Canadian mainline Protestant denominations were something of a cultural juggernaut, counter-balanced only by the similar force of Roman Catholicism in French Canada. As such, when Phyllis Airhart and Robert Wright, respectively, refer to a dissolution or deterioration of a Protestant consensus, they neglect these underlying factors. Theological differences, such as liberalism and fundamentalism, may have appeared to separate Canadian Protestants, and indeed they did, but their common experience, origins, presuppositions, and desire

⁶⁷ There were other English-speaking Protestant denominations, of course, such as Quakers and Congregationalists. But this study focuses on the four largest denominations.

for a Christian Canada persisted throughout the first half of the twentieth century, even if they did not all agree on what exactly would characterize Christian Canada. As a result, during the Second World War, there was a high degree of unity among Canadian Protestants with respect to their support to the war effort, their ideas about the role of the church in wartime Canada, and their commitment to social action.

Despite minor disagreements and differences of polity and doctrinal emphasis between the Protestant denominations, even the collision of theological liberalism and fundamentalism did little to damage the nation-building impulse, nor the presuppositions and commonalities that underlay it. It is possible that the high degree of pluralism involved in being a Protestant (Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregationalist, Quaker) of British origin (English, Irish, Scottish, or Welsh) facilitated putting aside differences for a common goal. Regardless, there were certain areas of social engagement to which Canadian Protestants had long been committed, and for which war heightened the stakes. The most prominent of these was temperance, followed by protecting the sanctity of the Lord's Day (Sunday). In addition to these traditional emphases by Canadian Protestants, there was also a major concern for the health of the family unit—seen as the fundamental social unit, the need for religious education both within and without the public school system, and concerns about racial prejudice. While temperance and the Lord's Day were social issues relating to the morality of the nation during war time, the health of the family, religious education, and racial prejudice were issues that were typically connected with preserving Christian civilization and preparing for the postwar world.

What is sometimes forgotten in generalizations about Canadian Protestant responses to the Second World War is the fact that, though Canadians had experienced total war before, the Second World War was still perceived and experienced as an international crisis with far-reaching implications for the survival of Christian civilization. The Nazi's opposition to Christianity and democracy were not the only threats to Christian civilization, however, because the war also became a national crisis. The war became an occasion of moral peril for the status of Canada as the "Lord's Dominion." Paul Fussell, who lived through the war, has described some of the ways in which the Second World War was worse than the First. He notes that being truly global, the Second War killed more civilian men, women, and children than soldiers, sailors, and airmen: a tragedy beyond the tragic casualty counts of the First World War.⁶⁸ He points out that, in hindsight, the madness of the Second World War reinforces just how near to Victorian social and ethical norms the First World War really was. He writes, "unthinkable then [in the First World War] would have been the Second War's unsundering [sic] Japanese, its suicides and *kamikazes*, its public hanging of innocent hostages, its calm, efficient gassing of Jews and Slavs and homosexuals, its unbelievable conclusion in atomic radiation."⁶⁹

In addition to these horrific events and how they corroded the West's collective imagination, Canada also experienced significant social instability and turmoil during the Depression prior the war, as well as from circumstances arising directly from the war. There was great economic growth, a boon from the Depression days, but this meant

⁶⁸ Fussell, *Understanding and Behaviour*, 131.

⁶⁹ Fussell, *Understanding and Behaviour*, 131.

massive industrialization as well as a huge increase in taxation. The war effort affected almost every area of Canadian's lives. Keshen describes it well:

In markets they searched out items labelled with victory tags testifying to their more plentiful supply and diligently used those ingredients for 'patriotic dishes' printed in newspapers or magazines. They learned tricks such as mixing rationed butter with gelatin and milk to make it last longer. To save gasoline and tires, they walked rather than drove to work, and to preserve coal they dressed warmly instead of stoking up the furnace. They embraced such initiatives as opportunities to demonstrate their patriotism and their solidarity with those battling to defeat fascism and save democracy.⁷⁰

Despite these widespread patriotic efforts on the home front, as Keshen has also noted, a black market developed, and there was alarm over what was perceived as the unmitigated proliferation of immorality. Divorce numbers increased, as did concerns over hasty wartime marriages, infidelity, wartime illegitimacy, tensions in communities between civilians and servicemen, excessive gambling, increases in prostitution, the spread of venereal diseases in the armed forces, and, of course, the spike in drinking indicated by vastly increased alcohol sales throughout the war.

The Canadian Protestant heritage of nation-building, together with the high numbers of Protestants in English-speaking Canada meant that in the first half of the twentieth century, the Protestant churches were national, public institutions with significant influence. As such, they believed they had a responsibility to speak out on issues relating to the character and conduct of a Christian nation. Their sense of responsibility in this regard was heightened as the very essence of their civilization was threatened by Nazism from without, and from growing immorality within. As a result, the war was viewed as a religious conflict in defence of the Christian civilization, both

⁷⁰ Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 94.

on the home front as morality and Canada's Christian status were imperilled, and on the Western front (and later in other theatres of war), as Nazism threatened to destroy Christian civilization and all that it held dear.

Methodology and Sources

This thesis is primarily concerned with Canadian print culture in the early twentieth century, particularly the part of that culture dominated by religious periodicals. As such, it is important to give consideration to some of the theoretical underpinnings of the approach taken in this study. The following discussion considers newspapers as sources, demonstrates why they are valuable to the historian, and then argues that for historians concerned with Canadian Protestant history, they are of significant value. It also demonstrates that denominational periodicals provide an excellent glimpse of the Canadian Protestant worldview during time of war and in this way are unique. The section also comments briefly on some characteristics of each newspaper under analysis herein.

Over the course of the nineteenth century newspapers became the primary forum for public opinion. Newspapers's role in shaping public opinion has been widely studied and documented. Few historians have considered the work of Canadian communications theorist Marshall McLuhan who famously stated "the medium is the message."⁷¹ McLuhan posited that media, and technology, are essentially extensions of ourselves. For example, the wheels of a vehicle are an extension of our legs, and a hammer is an extension of our arm.⁷² Thus, the medium is the message means "that the personal and

⁷¹ See McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 3–80.

⁷² Federman, "Medium is the Message?" §7.

social consequences of any medium—that is, of any extension of ourselves—result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology.”⁷³ This means, for example, that the invention of the newspaper and its subsequent normalization—in the sense that it became a sort of cultural institution in western democracies—brought with it consequences rooted in its very nature as a communicative device that was in close relationship with its readers. The American Revolution, for example, may have turned out differently, or not happened at all, if not for newspapers.

Newspapers are composed, fundamentally, of words put together to interpret reality. Language, then, is the principal tool of newspapers. For McLuhan, “the medium of language extends our thoughts from within our mind out to others.”⁷⁴ In this way, the newspaper is a forum for human opinions and thoughts. A forum built with ink and paper, produced by editors and reporters, and bought and read by those with the time, money, and interest to read. Therefore, in the nature of the newspaper as a medium, there is a basic relationship between the writers and the readers. For reporters and editors to maintain a viable living, their newspaper must resonate with their audience. Readers, on the other hand, rely on newspapers to provide them with news and an interpretation of the news. For the basic relationship between newspaper and reader to work effectively, there must be a set of shared assumptions between them regarding the nature of human existence, politics, religion, and social norms.⁷⁵ There must be a degree of shared worldview between them.

⁷³ Federman, “Medium is the Message?” §1.

⁷⁴ Federman, “Medium is the Message?” §7.

⁷⁵ A corollary issue to this relationship is the fact that newspapers almost always have a fee. The role of money in the newspaper-reader relationship calls for further exploration, especially as it pertains to

Jerry Knudson, who does not acknowledge McLuhan but seems to recognize this fundamental relationship between newspapers and readers, suggests that newspapers must strike a responsive chord with the public or they would become economically unsustainable. The objection could be made that *news* is manufactured or packaged by reporters and editors to conform to the views of their public. While this is possible, newspapers would still act as a gauge of public opinion, a fact that Knudson also notes. Glenn Wilkinson in his study of British newspaper advertising in the Boer War states that “images in newspapers had to conform to the perception . . . that readers already held . . . this makes newspapers a form of two-way communication.”⁷⁶ This means that readers are not like clay waiting to be moulded by what they read in a newspaper, but, rather, exist in a sort of symbiosis with the newspaper, each reflecting the other.

Another important aspect of newspapers is Keith Sinclair’s argument that newspapers tend to foster a sense of community and can promote national sentiment.⁷⁷ Indeed, Benedict Anderson has claimed that the development, and presumably maintenance, of nationalism is intrinsically linked to vernacular print.⁷⁸ Thus, the existence of a trans-Atlantic triangle of English-speaking societies (Britain, Canada, and the United States) which included a massive network of newspapers, denominational and secular alike, and constituted an intricate network of communication that linked not only British colonies,⁷⁹ but the English-speaking democracies of the world, would seem

bias and newspaper ownership. Knudson notes that newspaper ownership is important to consider because “they are often wealthy and often have a political axe to grind” (Knudson, “Late to the Feast,” §20). These matters, though important, are beyond the scope of this project.

⁷⁶ Wilkinson, “To the Front,” 204.

⁷⁷ Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart*, 138.

⁷⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 67–82.

⁷⁹ Potter, “Communication and Integration,” 191.

to suggest that “imperialism”⁸⁰ or “imperial affection” in the case of Britain was merely another type of nationalism.⁸¹ In any case, vernacular print played a crucial role in shaping this imagined (and yet quite real) trans-Atlantic English world.

Knudson notes that many historians have eschewed newspapers as historical sources because of a common view that they are incomplete and not objective as sources of factual information.⁸² Peter Hennessy in a similar vein warns of the pitfalls of editorial bias in obscuring so-called objective historical knowledge.⁸³ He states, “the value of any report or piece of commentary has to be judged in light of a paper’s editorial predilections as well as the writer’s own biases. The fairmindedness which ought to characterize the historian’s work cannot be assumed to govern that of journalists.”⁸⁴ Similarly, social historian Roberto Franzosi devotes an entire article to spelling out the issues of using newspapers as a data source, especially as it relates to editorial bias.⁸⁵ These worries, however, are partly based in a false assumption. They assume, first of all, that knowledge of a historical event can exist apart from human involvement, and second, they seem to separate the reporter, editor, and the newspaper, from historical events. As numerous historians have shown, newspapers are very much part of the historical process, playing an active role in events and how they unfold.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Brian Stanley (*The Bible and the Flag*, 33–54) hints at the nebulous nature of this term when he notes that imperialism as a word has undergone at least twelve distinct changes since the 1840s, and more recently has multiple definitions. He concludes that there has been no historically consistent understanding of what imperialism refers to and that most current usages of the term that bear negative connotations are simplistic and are derived from a tendentious but academically discredited historical theory.

⁸¹ Bridge and Fedorowich, *The British World*, 6.

⁸² Knudson, “Late to the Feast,” §1–2.

⁸³ Hennessy, “The Press,” 20.

⁸⁴ Hennessy, “The Press,” 20.

⁸⁵ Franzosi, “Press as a Source,” 6–7.

⁸⁶ See Knudson, *Roots of Revolution*; Quince, *Resistance*; and Bailyn et al., eds., *The Press & the American Revolution*.

Furthermore, the scholars who have criticized the use of newspapers as historical sources ignore, or at least appear unaware of, the unique relationship between a newspaper and its readership and what that can reveal about the ideas and identities of the people involved.

The newspapers under analysis in this project differ from many in that they are religious periodicals produced by denominations. These were typically weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly rather than daily, included national and international news, but also focused on denominational news. This unique newspaper format, as Frank Mott notes in his history of American journalism, became common around 1820, and grew to be a considerable force in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in Canada as well as the United States.⁸⁷ In fact, Heath has argued that in Canada the denominational press wielded great influence over public opinion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁸⁸ The discussion above, complements Heath's argument by suggesting that the sentiments found in the various denominational newspapers acted as a gauge of public opinion, in so far as Protestants comprised a majority of English-speaking Canadians around the turn of the twentieth century. Thus, the influence of the denominational press was in direct proportion to the influence of the readers over the newspapers they read; and in this way, one observes the two-way relationship noted by Wilkinson and Knudson.

Another important facet of this relationship for religious newspapers is the link between denominational newspapers and denominational identity. Candy Brown has

⁸⁷ For works specifically on Canadian newspapers see Fetherling, *The Rise of the Canadian Newspaper*; Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada*; Sutherland, *The Monthly Epic*; Fleming and Lamonde, *History of the Book in Canada*, vols. 1 and 2.

⁸⁸ Heath, "Forming Sound Public Opinion," 109–59.

discussed the prescriptive power of religious newspapers; they informed the readers about who they were. She argues that Baptist publications were to “remind church members ‘why they are Baptists,’” and that for a denomination that was inherently decentralized, periodicals were crucial for building a sense of Baptist community and identity.⁸⁹ One of the early editors of the *Canadian Baptist* in the mid-nineteenth century, Dr. R. A. Fyfe noted that “the growth of a denomination depends very greatly upon the paper, a fact that every thoughtful and enlightened Baptist well knows . . . religious denominations flourish very much in proportion to the extent of the circulation of their paper.”⁹⁰ The president of the Convention, Rev. W. J. McKay, addressed Baptists in a commemoration of the *Canadian Baptist*’s fiftieth anniversary. He argued that the *Canadian Baptist* had been the primary agency in the overcoming of Central Canadian Baptist division and a major force in its growth.⁹¹

While Candy Brown was concerned primarily with Baptists, the denominational paper was equally important for other denominations’s identity. The first issue of *The United Church Observer* noted that the paper would foster loyalty. The paper, the editor hoped “will become a forum for discussions, both by letters and contributed articles, of issues which are vital to the Church.”⁹² The editor also alluded to the fundamental relationship the newspaper shared with its readership: “*The United Church Observer* belongs to the people and only as the people make use of its pages in a constructive and imaginative manner *can it do its proper work*.”⁹³

⁸⁹ Brown, *The Word*, 146.

⁹⁰ Quoted in “Canada’s Centennial and the *Canadian Baptist*,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 July 1967, 3.

⁹¹ “Canada’s Centennial and the *Canadian Baptist*,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 July 1967, 3.

⁹² “The New Paper,” *United Church Observer*, 1 March 1939, 4.

⁹³ “The New Paper,” *United Church Observer*, 1 March 1939, 4. Emphasis added.

Denominational newspapers played a constructive role in shaping and maintaining denominational identity as the official organ of the denomination and a forum for discussion of key issues facing the churches. In this forum, the churches offered explanations and interpretations of their context, such as, for example, the Second World War. Historians like Wilkinson, Knudson, and Heath have demonstrated the value of studying the denominational press in wartime as a way of discovering the churches's interpretation of wars in relation to their view of themselves and their relationship to society.

Each of the mainline Protestant churches had a national or official paper. Even while it might also have regional papers, there was one paper that was the official organ of the denomination. Canadian Baptists were not nationally organized but existed in three regional bodies, each with its own newspaper. This project will focus on the newspaper that was the official organ of each denomination. To a lesser extent official denominational statements and decisions as found in yearbooks, notes of General Assembly, and the like, will also be brought into the discussion, primarily to provide context for the denominational news in the periodicals.

This method has precedent in the work done by James Robertson on the War of 1812, Gordon Heath on the Boer War, Melissa Davidson on the First World War, Mark McGowan on Irish Catholics in the First World War, and Julia Rady-Shaw and Gayle Thrift on the early Cold War.⁹⁴ Each of these scholars has studied Canadian churches in war time by analyzing their newspapers, at times supplementing denominational

⁹⁴ The first three works in this list were mentioned previously. For the latter three see: McGowan, *The Imperial Irish*; Rady-Shaw, "Ministering to an Unsettled World"; Thrift, "The Bible, Anti-Communism, and the A-Bomb."

periodicals with other sources, but the primary focus has been the church newspapers. This dissertation fills out this historiographical trajectory by contributing a study of Canadian Protestant newspapers in the Second World War, following in their methodological footsteps.

Characteristics of Canadian Protestant Newspapers

The denominational newspaper was a unique medium. As noted by Gordon Heath, it spanned genres, including, but not limited to, current news, denominational news, sermons, editorials, political and social commentary, Sunday school lessons, youth columns, poetry, and prayers. It should be noted, however, that for the time period under consideration, not all denominational newspapers were made equal. That is to say, not every Protestant newspaper examined in this study functioned in the same way.

Based on the available numbers the most widely circulated denominational newspaper appeared to be the *United Church Observer*. It was a thirty-two-page national bi-monthly newspaper that was broad in scope. It included international news relating to politics, society, and the churches, editorials in which the editor would comment and critique the goings-on in both church and nation, thematic prayers, biblical commentary and lessons, a children's column, a women's column, war news, news from the mission fields, news from the presbyteries, news from the United Church's various Boards and departments, greetings and news from other denominations, book reviews, sermons, and, of course, advertisements. Altogether, the *United Church Observer* issues from 1939–1945 constitute just over 4600 pages of newsprint.

The other denominational newspapers functioned in much the same manner as the *Observer*. The *Canadian Churchman* was the Church of England in Canada's national newspaper, and consisted of the same range of genres as the *Observer*. The *Presbyterian Record* was the newspaper for the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Three Baptist newspapers are examined in this study: The *Canadian Baptist* for the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec; the *Maritime Baptist* for the United Baptists of the Maritime Provinces; and the *Western Baptist* for the Baptist Union of Western Canada. Obviously, these were not national papers, but these were the three largest Baptist denominations, and they saw each other as kin. Taken together, these three Baptist papers constitute a national Baptist voice.

Some of these papers's unique characteristics can be briefly put forward here. The Baptist newspapers focused more on the themes of religious liberty and freedom than the others, largely because they saw religious liberty as being a critical component of their identity as a denomination. They also exhibited equally strong American and British influences; based on the number and origin of foreign papers and documents they reprinted or quoted at length. The *Canadian Churchman* and the *Presbyterian Record* demonstrated the strongest British influence, which is not surprising given their origins as state churches in England and Scotland, respectively. However, each of these also had American co-religionists whose influence can be seen throughout their pages. The archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. William Temple (as well as when he was archbishop of York) received a great deal of attention in the pages of the *Churchman*. Meanwhile, references to loyalty and the King stood out in the *Record*. The *United Church Observer* tended to share many of these characteristics, especially because one of its strengths was

international news, whether it be church related or political. Where it differed was its clear interest in ecumenism. News of church union or unity from other countries was always to be found in the pages of the *Observer* more than other papers.

Another important source included in this study, further reflecting both the important role of print media and the influence of the churches, is *Canadian Churches and the War*. This was a monthly bulletin begun in 1943 produced under the auspices of the Wartime Information Board.⁹⁵ It provided information about the wartime activities of the Canadian Protestant churches, and, as its final issue noted with the clarity of hindsight, “as a medium through which the spiritual issues of the war might be given prominence.”⁹⁶ It was produced with the full cooperation of the mainline Protestants, and indeed, the very first issue, circulated in July 1943, included statements on the front page from the Moderator of the United Church, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, the Primate of the Church of England in Canada, and the General Secretary-Treasurer of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. This is an important monthly periodical that brings insight into Canadian Protestant unity, and unity of thought during the war. While it was not produced by a church press, in content, character, and purpose, it functioned as part of the Canadian Protestant press.

The one denominational paper that differed significantly from the aforementioned papers was the *Presbyterian Record*. The aftermath of Union in 1925 saw the continuing Presbyterians in search of an identity.⁹⁷ Even fifteen to twenty years

⁹⁵ The Wartime Information Board oversaw the production of two religious information bulletins. For Canadian Protestants there was *Canadian Churches and the War*, and for Canadian Catholics there was *Nouvelles Catholiques*. Interestingly, it appears there was no bulletin for French-speaking Protestants nor English-speaking Catholics.

⁹⁶ “The Challenge of Peace and Victory,” *Canadian Churches and the War*, September 1945, 1.

⁹⁷ Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 231.

later, this continued to affect the character of their newspaper. As it turns out, some Presbyterians themselves took issue with the editorial policy of the *Record*. An analysis of the *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* for the years 1939–1945 indicates that, though the *Record* was dearly loved by many Presbyterians, the editorial policy of the paper was considered by some to be unsatisfactory; and circulation was down.⁹⁸

The research process for this study revealed that the *Record* was much different in scope than the other papers examined in this study. Thus, the *Record* is included in discussions where possible, but because so much of its focus was internally oriented, there are many discussions in which it cannot be consulted. For example, when all the other papers included coverage of various news events, the *Record* was highly inconsistent in its coverage of news events. However, the Acts and Proceedings (A&P)

⁹⁸ The Presbytery of Sarnia intimated its dissatisfaction with the denominational paper by transmitting an overture to the General Assembly of 1940. The Overture stated “Whereas, the *Record* in its present form and under its present editorial policy, seems to be no longer serving our constituency as a Church paper, and is losing ground in both circulation and influence, and Whereas, there is no adequate or up-to-date periodical serving the Church in the circulating of timely news, or the free expression of opinion, Therefore, we hereby overture the Venerable the General Assembly to appoint a special committee to explore ways and means of establishing and maintaining a Church paper that will more adequately represent our Church and serve its constituency.” (Overture No. 8 Re: *Presbyterian Record*, A&P of the PCC 1940, 140–41). The Report of the *Record* Committee for General Assembly in 1942, however, declared its satisfaction with the paper: “Throughout the Year the *Record* we believe has served efficiently in the discharge of its function as the Church’s publication from the standpoint of missionary information, news of the churches, and articles of an educational and devotional character.”⁹⁸ The *Record* did accomplish these things, but this scope was, as is no doubt clear, much smaller than the denominational papers discussed above. It seemed that not all at General Assembly that year agreed with the Report of the *Record* Committee as a special committee on the *Presbyterian Record* was appointed in 1943.

Over the next few years the fate of the *Record* made its way through the machinery of the Presbyterian bureaucracy, perhaps more than once. In 1945 yet another request from the *Record* Committee, likely aided by the onset of illness experienced by Dr. Rochester, the long-time editor, the decision was made to authorize the *Record* Committee to “to make such changes in the *Record* format and arrangement of material . . . as may seem wise,” and to “study the whole matter of a larger and/or a new Church paper, or papers, and submit a detailed statement with recommendations to the next General Assembly . . .” However, whatever changes may have been made to the *Record* took place after the Second World War and are therefore beyond the scope of this study.

of the Presbyterian Church in Canada at each General Assembly during the war years provides a window into Presbyterians's outlook and experience. Because the A&P supplement the *Record* it will be used in this study. In other denominational newspapers, the resolutions and statements and other news from their yearly conventions or conferences or synods were printed and discussed. This did not happen to the same extent in the *Record* so it is appropriate to refer to the Acts and Proceedings. It is important to note that for the other denominations, there remained a great deal recorded in their annual or regular yearbooks that was not included in the denominational press. Only what the editor(s) believed most relevant or important was reprinted in the newspapers.

The legitimacy of a study of the denominational press might be questioned if other sources must be used. What contemporary readers might not realize is that the yearbooks provide helpful context for the denominational press, especially, but not only, in the case of the *Record*. In addition, the Acts and Proceedings, and similar documents recording the minutia of the yearly meetings in which business was conducted, were also recorded, printed, and published thereby making it public. Even if read only by clergy and laity of a given denomination, that denomination was national in scope, effectively making it a public document. This is not to mention the fact that such annual events were often covered by journalists for local papers. After all, a national denomination meeting in your town to conduct its yearly business was, in 1940s Canada, still a big deal. So, while this study is concerned primarily with the denominational press, it remains a study of Canadian Protestants and their outlook, and as such, uses other denominational material to supplement the press.

A few words on circulation numbers are necessary. First, it should be noted that the circulation numbers of some of the newspapers used in this study appear to have not been recorded. Thus, the circulation numbers for the *Canadian Churchman*, the *Canadian Baptist*, the *Maritime Baptist*, and the *Western Baptist* have been unavailable. During the war the circulation of the *Record* peaked at 23,208.⁹⁹ Meanwhile, the *Observer* had a circulation of 34,336 in 1942.¹⁰⁰ It is important to realize that circulation numbers for religious periodicals do not provide the whole picture. Though their circulation numbers were lower than in the past, it cannot be assumed that one point on the circulation numbers represents one reader. That is, it was not a one-to-one ratio of readership. Often an entire congregation would subscribe and the periodical would be shared and/or read by several people. Another practice was families subscribing, meaning at least two adults could and likely would read an issue, and that's not accounting for friends and other family members who may borrow or read it too. Many of the sermons or other pieces of writing hailing from within the churches were circulated elsewhere. For example, a sermon printed in the *Canadian Baptist* also would have been heard by the congregation. Or, another example, a radio broadcast printed in the *Canadian Churchman* surely was heard by many who did not read that particular paper. The denominational press was representative of the themes found within, and representative of the literary genres found within it.

⁹⁹ "Report of the Record Committee," A&P of the PCC 1945, 98.

¹⁰⁰ "The Board of Publication," Record of Proceedings of the UCC, 1942, 411. It is interesting to note that the circulation of the *New Outlook* (the predecessor of the *Observer*) in 1936 was 13,776. In 1938 it had dropped to 12,139. In the spring of 1939, the paper was remodelled as the *United Church Observer*. If circulation is any indication, it would seem the *Observer* was a better paper because by 1940 the circulation had more than doubled at 31,732. See the Reports of the Board of Publication in the Record of Proceedings for the years, 1936, 1938, 1940, and 1942. By May 1944 circulation had reached 43,090 (noted in "The Observer," *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1944, 4).

As key institutions in a Christian society, the churches held themselves responsible for guiding the nation in the maintenance and preservation of Christian civilization. The reasons behind this lay in the historical development of Canadian Protestantism, an understanding of which helps the historian make sense of what is found in the Protestant press. The following consideration of the relevant scholarship and the methodology taken in this study, indicate this dissertation's contribution to the field.

As far as scholarship on the politics, strategy, weaponry, and battles of the Second World War, there is a multitude of studies.¹⁰¹ However, religion, and, more specifically Christianity, is an elusive topic among the pages of these many books. Fortunately, the subject of churches and the war has not been entirely ignored. Gerald Sittser's *A Cautious Patriotism* investigates the American Protestant churches's response to the war. He argues that the churches practiced a cautious patriotism that was rooted in the belief that the church was a global fellowship, that international peace was possible, and that America had a divine destiny but only as long as the church had spiritual vitality and was morally good. This view allowed them to marshal their resources in support of the Allies's war effort while maintaining biblical fidelity and spiritual integrity. Sittser also emphasizes that religion was essential to winning the war because many American Christians believed that religion and patriotism were partners

¹⁰¹ There is a body of literature that agrees that Canada went to war because Britain went to war, but this view overlooks entirely the category of religion. The views of Canadian Protestants, not to mention their strength in numbers, is not acknowledged. See Granatstein, *Canada's War*; Bothwell and Hillmer, eds., *The In-Between Time*; Hillmer, *On Guard For Thee*. For an example of those who argue that Canada went to war solely for imperial solidarity and in aid of the mother country, see Thompson and Seager, *Canada 1922–1939: Decades of Discord*. Terry Copp has provided a revisionist account of reasons Canada went to war that challenges the view held by Granatstein et al, and actually includes a brief but important acknowledgement of English-speaking Protestant views of the war and world events leading up to it. See, Copp, "Ontario 1939." See also, Hayes et al., *Canada and the Second World War*.

in a divine purpose. The concept of a Christian civilization, and America's key place within it, was a major factor in their interpretation and response to the war. Sittser's study reveals that American Protestant interpretations of the Second World War were substantially similar to Canadian Protestants's interpretation of the war.

Churches and Religion in the Second World War by Jan Bank and Lieve Gevers provides a comprehensive analysis of the churches of Europe in the years leading up to and during the war. Frankly, this book is without parallel, due to its extremely detailed study of the Christian churches in Europe during the Nazi era. It covers both Catholic and Protestant developments during the war, but its scope does not extend to any English-speaking countries.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of scholarship devoted to the Canadian mainline Protestant response to the Second World War.¹⁰² Considering the fact that the Second World War is widely considered a major watershed in the history of western societies, the lack of research into the churches's response to it is a source of consternation. Some of the historical surveys of Canadian church history devote a page or two to the war, but, as surveys tend to, they lack sufficient detail and make generalizations, and are therefore unable to provide a solid basis of scholarship for understanding the Protestant churches

¹⁰² However, a respectable corpus of literature on Canadian churches and war more broadly has come into existence in the last few decades. For nineteenth-century wars see Robertson, "Band of Brothers"; Robertson, "A Very Present Help"; Heath, "Ontario Baptists and the War of 1812"; and Heath, "Maritime Baptists and the War of 1812." For studies of Canadian churches and war with a special focus on British imperial sentiment see Heath, *A War with a Silver Lining*; Heath, *The British Nation is our Nation*, and just about every other publication from Gordon Heath. For a study of continuities in Protestant responses to war see Rudy, "Central Baptist Responses to War, 1899–1945." For the First World War see Haykin and Clary, "O God of Battles"; MacDonald, "For Empire and God"; Marshall, "Khaki has become a sacred colour"; Marshall, "Methodism Embattled"; Davidson, "The Anglican Church and the Great War." There are also many studies of both Protestant and Catholic chaplaincy in the First World War, but too many to list here. For a complete record of all scholarship on Canadian Churches and War see Heath's extensive annotated bibliography "Canadian Churches and War."

in the Second World War. However, they do provide a rough outline of the Protestant response through generalizations that may, or may not, be corroborated by deeper research.

In his survey of Canadian church history, *The Church in the Canadian Era*, John Webster Grant describes Canadian church history since 1867. He notes that most of those who had embraced pacifism in the aftermath of the First World War denounced their position soon after the Second World War began. Grant also compares the conflict to the First World War showing that the churches's response lacked the patriotic zeal of the previous conflict but was instead marked by a sober determination to complete a nasty but necessary task. As noted above, the evidence herein suggests that there were important continuities between Protestant responses to both World Wars, which Grant does not mention. He goes on to discuss the conflict and controversy that arose in the United Church when a significant group of pacifists declared their position in the belief of their freedom of conscience, but popular lay and clerical opposition to pacifism either drove them from the pulpit or forced them to keep a tight leash on their tongues. Other than brief descriptions of these matters, Grant briefly points out that the neo-orthodox writings of Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr became widely read during the war, and that social activism remained an area of strength for the church, especially as thoughts about the post-war world were directed toward discussion of a world-wide Christian moral order that was crucial to the prevention of another war.

In *A Concise History of the Christianity in Canada* Brian Clarke notes that Canadian Protestants watched the rise of fascism with apprehension and were alarmed by the Nazification of Germany. They were aware, but ambivalent, about the plight of

the Jews in Germany, eventually backing a campaign to admit Jewish refugees into the country in early 1939. It seemed their greater concern was the threat that fascism posed to Christianity.

In *Canada's Religions*, a historical survey of Christianity in Canada, Robert Choquette devotes very little time to the Second World War despite the fact that it seems to figure prominently in his broader narrative of Christianity in Canada. In his chapter on what he calls "Social Christianity," he states that in the period between Confederation and the Second World War Canada's English-speaking Protestants shared a "profound religio-cultural conviction . . . that the Dominion of Canada was destined by God to become the Dominion of the Lord, a task which it was their duty to implement."¹⁰³ In his view, the Second World War marked an end to an important era of social Christianity in Canada. Why the war marked the end of this remains unexplained. Choquette also believes that the Second World War was a watershed between the traditional Canadian, Western, Christian world and a world marked by vast migration, television, consumerism, and the possibility of nuclear destruction. His conviction is that a process of secularization, the origins of which he does not clarify, became abundantly clear after the war, and he sees the war as a sort of milestone marking clear social and cultural differences before and after the conflict. Given the important place the war has in his larger narrative of Christianity in Canada, it is truly unfortunate he does not discuss the war's relationship with evangelical social reform or secularization in Canada.

¹⁰³ Choquette, *Canada's Religions*, 336.

Outside of the genre of surveys of Canadian church history and textbooks, a limited number of studies exist that concentrate solely on a particular denomination. In an edited volume on the history of the United Church of Canada there is a chapter written by Ian McKay Manson that focuses exclusively on the United Church during the Second World War.¹⁰⁴ Manson begins by pointing out that the UCC's response to the Second World War was different from the general Protestant response to the First World War because of a shift in theological emphasis that had occurred in Western Protestantism in the quarter-century following the Great War. This was due largely to the work of the neo-orthodox theologians such as Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Reinhold Niebuhr. However, this shift did not preclude the fact that most United Church members were of Anglo-Saxon ancestry and felt a responsibility to defend Britain and defeat Hitler. Despite a controversy involving pacifist ministers in the UCC and the very quick reversal in pacifism's popularity, the United Church declared its loyalty to His Majesty the King and supported the war with over a hundred chaplains. The Church also saw itself as the conscience of the nation during this time, taking up issues like temperance, family strain caused by the war, and defending the rights of conscientious objectors. The Church's support of cultural minorities, Manson notes, remained ambivalent. The other key element of the United Church's response to the war was that from the outset it indicated an active interest in laying the groundwork for a lasting peace once the war had ended. This was predicated on the notion of Christendom or Christian civilization, and Christian principles figured very largely in their peace schemes.

¹⁰⁴ Schweitzer, *The UCC: A History*, 57.

In her book *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, Phyllis Airhart devotes a chapter to the 1940s. She argues that the war and the postwar world destabilized the United Church. The UCC's vision of a Christian Canada, predicated upon Anglo-Saxon ideals of the British Empire and Christian civilization did not correspond to the reality of the post-war world, which witnessed the crumbling of the British Empire.¹⁰⁵ The common faith on which the United Church had set its goal of uniting the church in Canada could no longer be assumed, she suggests. Unfortunately, Airhart's concern is a broader narrative that provides the basis for her argument about the United Church's identity and especially the changes to its identity that became clear in the 1960s, and as a result, cannot give the UCC's wartime experience sufficient study. Airhart also constructs her depiction of the United Church primarily from correspondence and sources from the Church's various boards and committees. The official organ of the United Church, the *United Church Observer*, is referred to only occasionally and as a result Airhart's account is really an account of the UCC's leadership and its internal boards, committees, and departments.

John Moir's history of Canadian Presbyterians, *Enduring Witness*, includes a brief account of the Presbyterian view of the war. They, like the United Church, supported the war through supplying chaplains to the armed forces. Moir notes a disproportionately high number of Presbyterians serving in the armed forces, likely a result of their strong sense of the justice of the cause and their affection for the British Empire and Christian civilization. The war negatively affected Presbyterian missions in Asia, and there were some internal tensions over Presbyterian membership in the

¹⁰⁵ It should be noted it did not fully correspond to the pre-war world either. Canada was never ethnically nor religiously homogenous, despite appearances to the contrary.

Canadian Council of Churches in 1944, as well as a temporary reorganization of Presbyterian seminary education. He also notes that Presbyterian membership declined slightly during the war, but other than these aspects of the war experience, little is said.

The most recent history of Canadian Anglicans, *Anglicans in Canada* by Alan Hayes briefly describes the Anglican response to the First World War, but the Second World War is not discussed. This may be due to the topical organization of his book, but there is no clear reason for leaving out Anglican responses to the Second World War. John Stackhouse Jr.'s history of twentieth-century Canadian evangelicalism similarly skips the Second World War in its account of Canadian evangelicalism in the twentieth century. It is unclear how a history focused on the twentieth century can ignore the Second World War.

There is one unpublished work that offers a deeper level of research on Canadian Protestants in the Second World War. "Christian Civilization" by Thomas Sinclair Faulkner is the sole doctoral dissertation that studies Canadian Christians and the war effort during the Second World War. He compares the different visions of Christian civilization promoted by Protestants, on the one hand, and Catholics on the other, and how these visions affected their respective involvement in the war effort as well as pre-existing tensions between Catholics and Protestants. He demonstrates that though Canadian Catholics and Protestants alike used the same language to describe the war, as a war to defend Christian civilization, their respective visions of Christian civilization differed. There is, of course, a measure of overlap between this project and Faulkner's dissertation. Indeed, his work and this study are often in agreement regarding the Canadian Protestant view of the war. However, this research focuses on the mainline

Protestant denominations and their newspapers, whereas Faulkner's scope is much wider. Perhaps it was his project's ambitious scope that prevented him from covering the entire war. His study covers only 1939–1942, and as a result misses a crucial element of the Canadian Protestant response to the war, namely the discussions of the need for a new social order to ensure a lasting peace, ideally on the principles of Christianity. It was in 1943 that the stream of peace and postwar reconstruction talk in the Protestant press overflowed its banks. For the remainder of the war, it was the most prominent subject in the denominational press. In addition, this project is more concerned with exploring a common Canadian Protestant outlook, or worldview, which gave shape to their wartime ideas and actions. Faulkner properly notes that individualism was a major part of the Protestant outlook on the war, and claims that individualism was itself rooted in Protestantism. This is a valuable insight but it does not adequately explain the nature of the Canadian Protestant understanding of the war on its own. Faulkner also studies certain aspects of the Protestant response that are secondary in this project, such as the establishment of denominational war service committees.¹⁰⁶ Actions such as these are one way to measure support for the war, but this study is concerned primarily with Canadian Protestant rhetoric and the assumptions and beliefs underlying it.

There has been some scholarship on the mainline Protestant chaplaincy ministry during the Second World War. This small body of literature is largely outside the scope of this project, except for two key articles. Sending chaplains into the armed forces was

¹⁰⁶ Faulkner also devotes a great deal of time to describing and comparing Canadian Christian ideas and responses to those in England and Europe, and he focuses on the mutual influence between Canadian church leaders and Canadian political leaders.

an important way in which the churches supported the war effort. Several of the existing works are memoirs or biographies¹⁰⁷ which provide an understanding of what it was like for a chaplain on the front. However, Peter Dueck's study of Hon. Captain Waldo Smith emphasizes the place of the chaplain in the larger context of Canadian Protestantism and its historical development in the twentieth century.¹⁰⁸ Dueck argues that Smith's view of the war as a struggle to uphold Christian morality and civilization was based largely on a worldview that conflated the religious and nationalist dimensions of life. He claims that Smith's nationalistic reasons for joining the chaplaincy in the first place were actually expressions of a spiritual worldview. His conclusion comports with the general view of the war indicated in the denominational press. In a similar study of Anglican chaplains looking at reasons behind enlisting as a chaplain, Tom Hamilton concludes that Anglican priests enlisted as chaplains for both nationalistic and spiritual reasons; this reflects the broader Canadian Protestant view of the war as a matter of both patriotism and spirituality (and morality).¹⁰⁹

Beyond the study of the mainline Protestant denominations there is actually a significant body of research on Canadian churches and the Second World War. As Gordon Heath has noted, there are fifty-seven publications on Canadian Christianity and the Second World War.¹¹⁰ Twenty-six of these study the Canadian Mennonite

¹⁰⁷ See Fallis, *A Padre's Pilgrimage*; Rowland, *The Padre*; Smith, *What Time the Tempest*; Wilmot, *Through the Hitler Line*; Brodsky, *God's Dodger*. For a dated introductory history of military chaplaincy in Canada see, Ruggle, "Canadian Chaplains"; for a more detailed, but still dated account see Edward Aitken's thesis "Background and Development the RCACC."

¹⁰⁸ See Dueck, "The Sword of the Lord."

¹⁰⁹ Hamilton, "Spiritual and Patriotic Duty"; Hamilton, "The Delicate Equilibrium"; and Hamilton, "Padres Under Fire."

¹¹⁰ Heath, "Canadian Churches and War," 62.

experience, which is beyond the scope of the current study.¹¹¹ Pacifism, on the other hand, cannot be ignored. Whether it was the type practiced by Mennonites, the pacifism practiced by minority religious groups, or the type of pacifism that became widespread among the mainline Protestant denominations between the World Wars, pacifism was not a popular viewpoint in Canada during the war.¹¹² Heath has explored in several articles the pacifism that found wide adherence among the mainline Protestant denominations in the interwar period, which establish the context of the churches's response to the Second World.¹¹³ He shows that with the exception of a vocal minority

¹¹¹ The historiography of Canadian Mennonites in the Second World War is largely in agreement that the war clarified a diversity of perspectives and a lack of unity among Canadian Mennonites. See, Freisen, *When Canada Called*; Neufeld, *Mennonites at War*. There has also been some attention given to the Mennonite experience of Alternative Service, see Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada in WWII*; Klassen, ed., *Alternative Service for Peace*; Unger, "A Struggle With Conscience." Another area of interest is the Mennonite experience of being Conscientious Objectors. See Janzen and Greaser, *Sam Martin Went to Prison*; Klippenstein, ed., *That There Be Peace*; Reimer, *Experiences of the Mennonites*; Bergen, "Teaching Certificate is Lost"; Bergen "The World War and Education"; Bechtel, "A Premillennialist Pacifism"; Dueck, "Making a Case"; Fransen, "Mennonites and Conscientious Objection"; Janzen, "Canadian Mennonites and their Government"; Epp, "An Analysis of Germanism." On the subject of Mennonites enlisting in the armed forces during the Second World War see Regher, "Lost Sons"; Dirks, "War Without, Struggle Within"; Reddig, "Manitoba Mennonites." On Canadian Mennonite women and the war see, Marr, "Peace Church Families"; Roth, "Experiences Canadian Mennonite Women."

¹¹² In "Conscientious Objectors" Thomas Socknat notes that historically pacifist groups maintained, for the most part, their pacifist convictions throughout the war, while pacifism in the mainline denominations faded. For studies of pacifism among younger and smaller denominations see Althouse, "Canadian Pentecostal Pacifism"; Ambrose, "On the Edge of War"; Jacobs, "Pacifism in Churches of Christ"; Prime, "Pacifism in *The Gospel Herald*, 1936–1940"; Penton, "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Second World War"; Tarasoff, "Doukhobors in World War II." See McCutcheon et al., *The Christian and War* for a manifesto of sorts that exemplifies the anti-war sentiment that arose among the Protestant clergy in the interwar period. This book was published by a group of Protestant ministers in Montreal and it includes many arguments against war (the social cost, war as unchristian, the economic cost, etc.). The disproportionate focus given to Christian expressions of pacifism in the World Wars and the interwar period, in contrast to the dearth of scholarship on the mainline churches in the Second World War reveals the character of the historiography.

¹¹³ See Heath, "We are Through with War"; Heath, "The Rise and Fall"; Heath, "Canadian Presbyterians and the Rejection of Pacifism." David Rothwell has also provided a detailed study of the "Witness Against the War" manifesto signed by sixty-eight United Church ministers in October 1939. He discusses both the document's origins and the controversy that arose over its publication in *The United Church Observer*. See, Rothwell, "United Church Pacifism, October 1939." There is also a dated but insightful article from N. K. Clifford on the criticism levelled against the United Church of Canada by Charles Clayton Morrison in the early years of the Second World War. Morrison was concerned about the UCC's relationship with the state. The denomination appeared to be supporting the war effort through cooperative work with the state in selling war bonds to help the church's finances. Some people supported

in the United Church of Canada, most other Protestants abandoned pacifism when the war began.

Limited research has been conducted on the subject of Canadian Protestant responses to the treatment of Jews in Germany before and during the war. Haim Genizi in *The Holocaust, Israel, and the Canadian Protestant Churches* has studied the general Protestant reaction to the Holocaust. He focuses mostly on the United Church, but nevertheless argues that deep rooted anti-Semitism in the churches led to a subdued critique of the Nazi's treatment of the Jews. The claim made by Irving Abella and Harold Troper in *None Is Too Many*, that the churches were silent with respect to the Nazi's treatment of the Jews has been addressed by Alan Davies and F. Nefsky in *How Silent Were the Churches? Canadian Protestantism and the Jewish Plight during the Nazi Era*. They claim that the churches were not entirely silent on the matter, but there was no unified, organized outcry from them.¹¹⁴ The current study briefly addresses the Canadian Protestant view of the plight of the Jews, emphasising how it related to their broader worldview.

These publications are the sum of the scholarship related to this project.¹¹⁵ Of course, the scholars mentioned above cannot be held at fault for not including a more

Morrison's criticism, while others criticized Morrison. See, Clifford, "Charles Clayton Morrison and the UCC."

¹¹⁴ Davies and Nefsky have also produced smaller studies on individual Canadian Protestant denominations. See, Davies and Nefsky, "The Church of England"; Davies and Nefsky "The United Church"; Nefsky, "The Cry that Silence Heaves." A further relevant study by Kyle Jantzen and Jonathan Durance ("Our Jewish Brethren: Christian Responses to *Kristallnacht* in Canadian Mass Media") argues that although anti-Semitism was endemic to Canadian society and politics in the 1930s, there were many Canadians who spoke out forcefully against Nazi atrocities. Their motivations ranged from liberal notions of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of mankind, to the belief in the essential link between Christianity and Western civilization, to what they call a conservative theological concern for the Jews as a covenant people of God.

Other scholarship situates chaplains in the broader context of Canadian Protestantism in the first half of the twentieth century. See Dueck, "The Sword of the Lord"; Hamilton, "The Delicate Equilibrium"; Hamilton, "Spiritual and Patriotic Duty"; Hamilton, "Padres Under Fire."

detailed account of the mainline Protestants in the Second World War. There are, as Gordon Heath has noted, no monographs on the Protestant churches on either of the World Wars.¹¹⁶ Thus, the lack of scholarship is perpetuated by historical surveys that see the war as a key milestone in Canadian history but are unable to provide an adequate description or interpretation since there are hardly any publications on the subject. The question remains, how did the Canadian mainline Protestants respond to the Second World War? From this initial research question flows important others: how did they understand the war? Were there common themes in their understanding of the war? Were there common responses between the four mainline denominations? Why did they respond the way they did to the war? These are the questions that the historiography of Canadian churches and warfare have not adequately addressed, and form the gap in scholarship for which my dissertation will lay the groundwork.

This survey of the relevant literature suggests a few areas that are lacking in the historiography of Canadian Protestants and the Second World War. First, the scholarship has seemed to gravitate toward one of two poles; a denominational focus on the one side, and brief, free-standing generalizations on the other. Faulkner's dissertation is the only exception, but has limitations of its own as noted above. A study of the four mainline Protestant denominational newspapers during the War, as undertaken here, can bridge the gap between these two approaches. Second, though there are a few articles on interwar pacifism, beyond that subject none of the scholarship gives serious consideration to the interwar period. An understanding of the interwar period is crucial to making sense of the Protestant response to the Second World War,

¹¹⁶ Heath, "Canadian Churches," 67.

and will inform this study's analysis of the denominational press. Third, none of the current scholarship shows that the Canadian Protestant response to the Second World War was deeply rooted in Canadian Protestant history and the precedents that had been established in the First World War, and the South African War before that. This study argues that the Canadian Protestant response to the Second World War only makes sense in the context of the broader history of Canadian Protestantism.

As mentioned above, Canadian Protestants understood the war as a struggle to defend and preserve Christian civilization. This view imbued the war with significant religious meaning, to the point that it was not uncommon to hear descriptions of the war as a holy war or a crusade. While the exact religious meaning of the war surely meant different things to different people, even within the same denomination, the mainline Protestants shared a common outlook, worldview, or *mentalite* that coloured their view of the conflict with religious meaning. At the foundation of this outlook was the Canadian Protestant presupposition of Christendom, or Christian civilization, of which Canada was surely a part. Laid upon this foundation were key assumptions about the church's role in shepherding the nation (what scholars have called nation-building), the justice of the cause, Canada's place in the British Empire and the empire's place in God's greater designs for humankind, God's intervention in human affairs, democracy as a Christian system of governance, and discussions of a new world order based on Christianity that would ensure a lasting peace after the war. This dissertation demonstrates that the churches's response to the Second World War was similar but also significantly different to their response to the First World War. Perhaps most importantly, it brings into focus what Canadian Protestants thought about the war and

how they responded to it. And, finally, it provides a broader sampling of Protestant views of the war than is possible in a study that is purely denominational in scope, while providing a detailed and nuanced analysis of the Protestant views upon which future generalizations in historical surveys and textbooks can base themselves.

Layout of the Study

Chapter 1 studies theological reflection on the related concepts of Christianity, democracy, freedom, and interpretations of history in the denominational press. It demonstrates that the confluence of these in Protestant theological reflection confirmed the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. Canadian Protestants saw democracy as being the product of Christianity. That is to say, their understanding of Christian democracy was based on biblical interpretation and a highly selective interpretation of history that characterized the Christian past as a long, slow struggle for freedom. The Second World War was, they hoped, the climactic conflict in the struggle for freedom. Most significantly, the denominational press exhibited a widespread belief in the Christian character of democracy. The perspective that Nazism was the antithesis of Christian democracy, thereby spiritualized the war. This chapter demonstrates much of the theological and ideological infrastructure upon which the Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization was built.

Chapter 2 examines a foundational assumption of the Canadian Protestant worldview, namely the assumption of empire. The chapter demonstrates how Canada's past and present connections to the British Empire contributed to the belief that the war was a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. The British Empire, it was

widely believed in the Protestant press, embodied the ideals and values of Christian civilization. The Christian civilization that was at stake in the war was not only Christian and democratic. It was also British. Therefore, the empire, of which Canada was proudly a part, was the final bastion in Europe keeping the Nazi's at bay. As this analysis shows, the Royal Tour of Canada by George VI and Queen Elizabeth in the spring of 1939 precipitated a major revival of Canadian fervour for the empire and the Crown, and Canadian expressions of loyalty in the denominational press persisted throughout the war. Britain was, Canadian Protestants believed, a Christian empire and was the highest form of Christian civilization. In this way, British imperial sentiment shaped Canadian Protestants's view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization.

Chapter 3 argues that the view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization was further buttressed by the rhetoric of the churches's wartime spirituality which, was itself predicated on a particular understanding of divine providence. Prayer and calls for Days of Prayer, the belief that God was on the side of the Allies, the war as a divine judgement for the sins of civilization and the international order, and the myth of Remembrance, each of these framed the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization.

Chapter 4 demonstrates how the churches's nation-building paradigm shaped their view of the war in response to the perception that the war threatened to undo their accomplishments in building a Christian Canada. That was illustrated by Protestant commentary on prominent wartime social issues such as temperance, Sunday Observance, religious education, the importance of the family unit, the treatment of

Japanese-Canadians, refugees and racial prejudice. The chapter demonstrates how this impulse intersected with support for the war, even in the midst of social change and instability brought on by the war. It demonstrates that Canadian Protestant social reform efforts continued, often leveraging the war effort to bolster their social reform discourse. Importantly, this chapter also demonstrates the churches did not blindly support the war effort, but reserved for themselves the right to criticize the government, or anyone for that matter, whose words or deeds did not conform to the standards they believed should characterize Christian civilization. Ultimately, the view of the war as a religious conflict framed the Protestant discourse on temperance, Sunday Observance, education, racial prejudice and the treatment of refugees, and the treatment of Japanese-Canadians.

Chapter 5 acknowledges the small but significant exception to the Canadian Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. Though a pacifist movement had flourished during the interwar years, by the autumn of 1939 it had disappeared from the denominational press, with the notable exception of the *United Church Observer*. The United Church, it seems, housed a significant and vocal group of pacifists. This chapter, while considering how the other denominations dealt with pacifists in their ranks, focuses primarily on the United Church and the fascinating discussion that occurred therein over whether the UCC's response to the war should be one of support and loyalty, or one that was characterized chiefly by pacifism. The discussion indicates there was a degree of diversity among pacifists in terms of their rationale for pacifism. Some held the presupposition of Christian civilization and democracy, while others rejected it. Nonetheless, pacifists evinced the same concern as the non-pacifist majority in shaping Canadian society on the basis of Christian morality.

Likewise, they agreed that the churches must carry on their work of guiding the nation by preaching the gospel and maintaining its witness. One reason pacifism was a contentious subject was because it fragmented the United Church's witness, compromising its ability to guide the nation and prepare for postwar peace. Preserving the church's unity in the midst of a controversy that threatened to destroy unity was the position of a small minority caught between the vocal pacifists and anti-pacifists. The rhetoric of internationalism and that of the radical social critique were the true legacy of pacifism as these shaped the discussions of the churches's role in establishing a postwar peace. And it must be remembered that the pacifist voices of dissent, though important for understanding the complexity of how the war was viewed, ultimately, were a minority, and one that disappeared from the pages of the Protestant press relatively quickly in the early months of 1940.

Finally, Chapter 6 examines Protestant discourses of postwar peace. Beginning midway through the war, more and more space was given to discussion of the post-war world, what it should look like, how that should be achieved, and the churches's role in that. The analysis in this chapter reveals that not only were Protestant conceptions of the postwar peace informed by the Christian internationalism of the interwar period, but also the idea that victory in a religious conflict fought to defend Christian civilization entailed the establishment of a new world order based on Christian principles and ideals, essentially a Christian civilization without the defects and flaws that had, it was believed, resulted in two world wars. The Protestant press indicates that the Christian civilization they were fighting for included the visions for a new world order. The war was in defence of Christian civilization *and* its potential. This chapter also argues that

the churches's concern for the postwar peace and their conviction that the church should play a major role in its establishment, were merely another expression of nation-building. The internationalism of the interwar period, though it died in 1939, continued to shape Canadian Protestant commentary on peace and the new world order, as its rhetoric was fused to the nation-building impulse to form a powerful discourse on the churches's place in the postwar world. Thus, the churches supported the UN, which they believed was a Christian institution much like civilization, democracy and the empire were. Similarly, they evinced an active interest in the role of education and ecumenism in the postwar world, and emphasized the need to reintegrate returning veterans if the new world order was to be realized.

CHAPTER 1: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM

“A vital Christianity and a genuine Democracy are inseparable.”¹

On 3 September 1939 Britain declared war on Germany. During the largely symbolic period between that day and Canada’s declaration of war on 10 September 1939, many Canadian Protestants assumed Canada was, or would soon be, at war. In fact, recruitment centers throughout the country were overwhelmed to the point that some found it necessary to be open twenty-four hours a day, and this was before Canada had even declared war on Germany.² In the Anglican, Baptist, and Presbyterian newspapers there was a clear sense of grief that war should once again afflict the world, but also an acceptance of the war being a just cause. The *United Church Observer* was out of step with the other papers in that it lacked the kind of statements justifying the war that were seen elsewhere. A letter to the editor sent in from four young ministers only weeks before the war began put the issue clearly: “Our General Council has gone on record as abhorring war, but in the eventuality of war, what stand will the Church actually take?”³ The other mainline denominations, by contrast, were clear and prompt in their response to the war.

The *Canadian Churchman* issue of 7 September 1939 printed a sermon by Rev. H. R. Hunt, originally preached 3 September, that noted “This is a tragic day, a day of

¹ “Baptist Democracy in a World of Dictators,” *Canadian Baptist*, 13 April 1939, 5.

² Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, Soldiers*, 12.

³ “The Young Ministers Speak,” *United Church Observer*, 15 August 1939, 19.

lamentation and mourning and woe. On this day the words of Job ring insistently in our ears: ‘The thing which we have greatly feared is come upon us, and that of which we have been afraid has come.’”⁴ Hunt went on to admit that each Christian must decide for themselves how they will respond to the war. He claimed to be a man of peace and described the task of the Church in time of war to include turning people to repentance, keeping hatred for the enemy from taking root, to continue teaching of international goodwill and love for all people, and “to call for unceasing prayer” not necessarily for an Allied victory but “that justice may prevail, and that God’s will may be done.”⁵ Hunt notified his listeners that days of suffering lay ahead, especially for those Christians who held “to their convictions of international peace, brotherhood, and goodwill,” but encouraged them that they could make “some contribution towards a lasting peace, a peace built upon the will of God and the methods of God.”⁶ An editorial the following week (14 September) described the general feeling of Canadian Anglicans, and indeed, many Canadian Protestants when the editor wrote “all our hearts are in the war, most unwillingly—everyone. It was not our seeking. Our leaders strove to his utmost, and far beyond what some thought wise, to prevent it . . . A principle of life was abroad which made life a nightmare for the rest of us. This principle must be put down.”⁷

The *Canadian Baptist* also dreaded that war had once again come. “That grim dread thing casts its awful shadow, not merely across the Empire, but the whole world again,”⁸ noted one editorial, while a statement from the president of the BCOQ stated

⁴ “The Price of Peace,” *Canadian Churchman*, 7 September 1939, n.p.

⁵ “The Price of Peace,” *Canadian Churchman*, 7 September 1939, n. p.

⁶ “The Price of Peace,” *Canadian Churchman*, 7 September 1939, n. p.

⁷ “Let Us Do All We Can,” *Canadian Churchman*, 14 September 1939, 502.

⁸ “War Again!” *Canadian Baptist*, 31 August–7 September 1939, 3.

simply “War has come. For the second time in the space of a generation the leaders of Germany have hurled Europe into the abyss of misery and bloody strife.”⁹ Noting the justice of the cause, the aforementioned editorial supposed “Gangsters cannot be reasoned out of their insanities; force is the only law they know. The lives and liberties of nations everywhere were threatened by the ruthless racketeer of the Rhine. So it is War.”¹⁰ The statement from J. A. Johnston, president of the BCOQ, asked Baptists to pray for God’s mercy and “that this hydra-headed monster of war may be driven back into the darkness from which it has emerged, that peace and freedom may again come to the earth and that the kingdoms of this freedom may again come to the earth and that the kingdoms of this world may soon become the Kingdom of our God and his Christ.”¹¹

It is noteworthy that the Executive Committee of the BCOQ went so far as to adopt a resolution of support for the war effort and wired it to the Prime Minister, W. L. Mackenzie King. It praised Britain’s efforts to avoid war until the eleventh hour, noted the horror of war, declared it a just cause for “the preservation of liberty and in resistance to ruthless oppression,” and assured the government “of the most prayerful and practical support consistent with our Christian faith and our love of liberty and democracy.”¹²

The *Maritime Baptist*, though it did not include an official resolution from the Convention, did print an editorial deploring the war and stating the justice of the cause. The editorial suggested that the war was forced upon Britain and went on to claim that “the democracies were most desirous to sit around a conference table in peace and let

⁹ “War,” *Canadian Baptist*, 31 August–7 September 1939, 3.

¹⁰ “War Again!” *Canadian Baptist*, 31 August–7 September 1939, 3.

¹¹ “War,” *Canadian Baptist*, 31 August–7 September 1939, 3.

¹² “The War and Baptists,” *Canadian Baptist*, 14 September–21 September 1939, 3.

reason determine the issue. But when Nazi Germany determined to attack Poland by brute force, ordered negotiations were impossible.”¹³ The editor went on to admit that no one could know what the future held “but in this case, as in every other, faith in God and in the justice of our cause is the most powerful ally we can have, nationally and individually. But equally important is that those who take part in upholding and defending a righteous cause shall themselves be worthy of the cause they espouse.”¹⁴ The editor went so far as declare that “it is not a question of enlisting God on our side, as Abraham Lincoln once said; it is the assurance that we are on His side.”¹⁵

The *Presbyterian Record* also described the war as a just cause. In an extensive editorial the editor likened the war to the Great War and placed blame at Germany’s feet:

As in 1914 so now Great Britain and France stand together to stay the progress and thwart the ambitions of a formidable and ruthless aggressor, Hitler, Germany’s Dictator. In thus characterizing him we point definitely to the cause of the war, and the conclusion cannot be escaped that upon him rests the sole responsibility in that regard . . . It was quite apparent that the lust for world conquest completely dominated him and his rule of repression in Germany is a true prophecy of what would happen to the world should the nations come under his sway.¹⁶

The editor went on to quote numerous government leaders who claimed in various statements the belief that “we are fighting a war for justice, for honor, and for liberty.”¹⁷ The lengthy editorial also included a statement from Rev. Dr. Stuart C. Parker, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, sent to the prime minister assuring “His Majesty’s government in our Dominion of its sympathy

¹³ “War Forced Upon Us,” *Maritime Baptist*, 13 September 1939, 4.

¹⁴ “War Forced Upon Us,” *Maritime Baptist*, 13 September 1939, 4.

¹⁵ “War Forced Upon Us,” *Maritime Baptist*, 13 September 1939, 4.

¹⁶ “War,” *Presbyterian Record*, October 1939, 291.

¹⁷ “War,” *Presbyterian Record*, October 1939, 291.

and loyalty. We pray for the Parliament and ministers, that God may enable you to lead the people in the way of righteousness, whether it be rough or easy. You have a nation not afraid of enduring hardness.”¹⁸

The following month the *Presbyterian Record* stated the church’s position even more explicitly: “We re-affirm our loyalty to our earthly King and recognizing, as His Majesty himself said, that the conflict is against a principle which, if it were to prevail, no civilized order could exist in the world, we confidently affirm that the paths of Christian and patriotic duty lie together.”¹⁹ Another article from the same issue quoted the statement of one Senator Duff, who was speaking at the Presbyterian Synod of the Maritimes. He said “every Christian, whether living in Canada or the British Isles, should be opposed to the forces in Europe which have brought on this war . . . This madman of Europe must be subdued . . . Stand by the Canadian Government in its declaration of war upon this enemy of Christianity and civilization.”²⁰ The Synod adopted a resolution that declared “This Synod is of the clear mind that the provocation of this conflict has been a crime against humanity and recognizes that the forces arrayed against us threaten the existence of Christianity and civilization throughout the world.”²¹ The same issue of the *Record* also included an article discussing a just peace, making that newspaper, and *Canadian Churchman*, the only two that brought up peace in the same issues as their statements concerning the justice of the cause.

In his work on Canadian churches in the Second World War Thomas Sinclair Faulkner compares the contrasting visions of Christian civilization held by Canadian

¹⁸ “War,” *Presbyterian Record*, October 1939, 291.

¹⁹ “The Church’s Greater Task,” *Presbyterian Record*, November 1939, 324.

²⁰ “The Church and War,” *Presbyterian Record*, November 1939, 324.

²¹ “The Church and War,” *Presbyterian Record*, November 1939, 324.

Protestants and Canadian Catholics, respectively. Regarding the former, Faulkner correctly noted that Canadian Protestants “were increasingly insistent that democracy was a necessary characteristic of Christian civilization.”²² Democracy and Christian civilization, which will be referred to here as Christian democracy, was one of the most prominent themes in the Protestant press during the Second World War. Its prominence was not merely a strong reaction to the war. Discussions of the relationship between Christianity and democracy preceded the war, and persisted throughout it. This chapter explores the commentary in the Canadian Protestant press on the subject of Christian democracy and freedom. Numerous important points become clear throughout the analysis. One, Christian civilization and Christian democracy were coterminous ideas in the denominational press. Two, Christian democracy and civilization implied freedom in the strongest terms, and as a result, the war was viewed as a fight to preserve freedom, both religious and civic. Third, the denominational press indicated a widespread belief in the inextricable connection between Christianity and democracy. Fourth, this connection was interpreted from the New Testament as well as the more general doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Fifth, the Canadian Protestant interpretation of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization was fortified by an interpretation of history that characterized the past as a long, drawn-out struggle in which freedom gradually advanced. This aligned with the more general view of history that emphasized indefinite human progress. Sixth, and finally, the emphasis on the Christian origins of Canadian and British democracy

²² Faulkner, “Christian Civilization,” 128.

implied a concern for the building up of Christian citizens, viewed as a special responsibility of the church.

Freedom in the Protestant Press

The plight of democracy in Europe had been growing more and more apparent since the early 1930s as the Weimar Republic in Germany became a wreckage from which Hitler would raise the spectre of Nazi rule. As if that were not enough, Italy became a Fascist state in 1922 and invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935, the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, and Soviet Russia had been in Stalin's iron grasp since 1924. Totalitarianism was the common denominator in all of these events, so Canadian Protestants's discussion of democracy prior to the war is no surprise.

As the unpleasant prospect of war loomed in 1939, the challenge to Christianity mounted by Nazism and Fascism became apparent. One writer in the *Canadian Churchman* claimed that these forces "offered an essential threat to Christianity."²³ Once the war had begun, however, many accepted the fact that "we are fighting for freedom."²⁴ There was a common belief evident in the Protestant press that democratic freedoms had their ultimate source in the New Testament. This concern was perhaps best captured in a six-part series, written by the archbishop of York and reprinted in the *Canadian Churchman*. He explained two philosophical concepts of freedom that had arisen in the modern world, posited respectively by Kant and Rousseau. The latter, he claimed, seemed to dominate contemporary democracies, but he contrasted those views

²³ "Christianity, Communism and Fascism," *Canadian Churchman*, 2 February 1939, 68.

²⁴ "God and Our Times," *Canadian Churchman*, 4 September 1941, 1. For a similarly blunt statement, see "This War is a Fight for Human Freedom," *Canadian Churchman*, 8 March 1945, 147.

with a Christian view of freedom: “But there is another and quite different root of Freedom. This is found, not in what man is in himself, but in the fact that man is a child of God for whom Christ died. In himself he has no claims to liberty or to anything else. But in his relationship to God, he has a status which is independent of any earthly society and has a higher dignity than any state can confer.”²⁵ Two consequences to this he noted. One was that each person “must recognize that every other human being has the same liberty which I have,” and secondly that “I cannot consistently exercise my liberty except in obedience to God. As he is the Father of all men, whose love embraces His children, this means that I can never exercise my freedom selfishly without denying my right to it.”²⁶

These two facts about Christian freedom were echoed in a sermon printed in the *Canadian Churchman*. Preaching in Toronto, the Rev. C. K. Sansbury suggested a twofold definition of freedom: “It may be thought of as deliverance *from* something and also as liberty *for* something.”²⁷ There was, Sansbury believed, a tension between the two. This was because liberty could easily devolve into license that would allow selfishness to sow chaos. But it was precisely here, he claimed “that the Christian Gospel has something of vital importance to say.”²⁸ He noted two truths in regard to freedom. The first was “the freedom which we rightly cherish is our right only in virtue of the fact that we are beings made in the image of God,” and therefore, “freedom, when rightly understood, is thus not the right to selfish living, but the opportunity to fulfil our

²⁵ “The Freedom for Which We Fight,” *Canadian Churchman*, 27 November 1941, 676.

²⁶ “The Freedom for Which We Fight,” *Canadian Churchman*, 27 November 1941, 676.

²⁷ “What Do We Mean by Freedom,” *Canadian Churchman*, 30 October 1941, 1. Emphasis original.

²⁸ “What Do We Mean by Freedom,” *Canadian Churchman*, 30 October 1941, 1.

responsibilities to God and neighbours.”²⁹ The second was that a person needs inward freedom before social or political freedom can be rightly used. He stated “it is the power of Christ, crucified, risen, living, that gives victory, that overcomes evil, that enables a man or woman to attain that inner freedom without which outward freedom in politics or society inevitably decays.”³⁰

It was on the basis of this unique freedom and responsibility at the core of a healthy democracy that many Protestants declared their belief that democracy could only function on the basis of Christianity. As an article in the *Canadian Baptist* declared “Democracy is the ideal, but it is a difficult one. It may even be a dangerous one, as liberty is dangerous if it degenerates into license—a dangerous ideal unless it is fused with a religious conviction and faith that will inspire and guide and purify and preserve it.”³¹ Another article in the *Canadian Baptist* addressed the question “will democracy survive?” In facing the issues of the war, he noted, “we need to remind ourselves that democracy is much more than a form of government . . . The foundations of democracy are essentially Christian. In fact, democracy is Christianity applied to government.”³² Similarly, the *Maritime Baptist* quoted the president of the Baptist World Alliance who stated “The perfect democracy demands a Christianized society.”³³ A writer in the *Canadian Churchman* stated that “Democracy will work only as the Christian ideals of love, forbearance and respect for every [sic] man’s rights animate the nation, the whole world. Any Democracy that is less than Christian is as hopeless for lasting peace and

²⁹ “What Do We Mean by Freedom,” *Canadian Churchman*, 30 October 1941, 1.

³⁰ “What Do We Mean by Freedom,” *Canadian Churchman*, 30 October 1941, 1.

³¹ “This Freedom,” *Canadian Baptist*, 31 August–7 September 1939, 6.

³² “Will Democracy Survive?” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1943, 3.

³³ “Christianized Society,” *Maritime Baptist*, 27 September 1939, 4.

happiness as Totalitarianism.”³⁴ Another article in the *Maritime Baptist* stated “Wherever democracy breaks down, it does so precisely because of the disregard of the Christian principle.”³⁵ In the Canadian Protestant press, the dominant view was that democracy and Christianity were inextricably intertwined.

It should be noted that, while contemporary readers might think of Protestant conceptions of Christian democracy in general and even inclusive terms, when the Protestant press spoke of Christian democracy, it meant Protestant democracy. Despite interdenominational cooperation and the ecumenical movement, Canadian Protestants were firm on the fact that they were not Roman Catholic. Indeed, freedom and Protestantism were corollary concepts in the Canadian Protestant worldview, while Roman Catholicism was associated with authoritarianism and a lack of freedom. This will be further discussed in the next chapter, but it is important to understand that

³⁴ “The Signs of the Times,” *Canadian Churchman*, 12 March 1942, 166.

³⁵ “Religion and Democracy,” *Maritime Baptist*, 10 April 1940, 4. For similar examples see “Wherein Lies Freedom,” *Canadian Churchman*, 26 November 1942, 1; “Freedom, Justice, and Truth,” *Canadian Churchman*, 5 February 1942, 84; “This Issues at Stake,” *Canadian Churchman*, 9 May 1940, 1; “Faith in Freedom,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 October 1942, 2; “Will Democracy Survive,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1943, 3; “The Church and the Freedoms,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 November 1943, 5; “We Seek Liberty,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 June 1945, 2; “Liberty and Authority,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 October 1945, 3; “A Selfish Civilization,” *Maritime Baptist*, 27 September 1939, 4; “The Bulwark of Democracy,” *Maritime Baptist*, 22 November 1939, 4; “Christ and Human Liberty,” *Maritime Baptist*, 23 April 1941, 2; “Democracy at the Crossroads,” *Maritime Baptist*, 4 December 1941, 4; “The Democracies are Now Facing the Facts,” *Maritime Baptist*, 15 January 1941, 1; “The Battle for Freedom,” *Maritime Baptist*, 10 June 1942, 1; “The Fight for a Free World,” *Maritime Baptist*, 15 July 1942, 1; “Relation of the Churches to Democracy and Freedom,” *Maritime Baptist*, 3 March 1943, 1; “Moderator’s Message,” *Presbyterian Record*, August 1940, 229; “A Different Tone,” *Presbyterian Record*, October 1940, 291; “Educating for Democracy,” *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1940, 4; “Go Ye and Teach All Nations,” *United Church Observer*, 1 February 1940, 17; “Eternal Vigilance,” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1940, 4; “The Challenge to the Church,” *United Church Observer*, 1 June 1940, 4; “Christianity and Democracy,” *United Church Observer*, 15 August 1940, 4; “Unfraternal Unequality [sic],” *United Church Observer*, 1 July 1942, 12; “Democracy and Religion,” *United Church Observer*, 15 July 1942, 15; “Democracy: A Defence and Criticism,” *Western Baptist*, November 1939, 16; “Moderator’s Address,” *Western Baptist*, September 1942, 6; “Guarding Our Way of Life,” *Western Baptist*, February 1943, 3; “Tomorrow’s Task,” *Western Baptist*, June 1945, 6; “The Strength of Democracy,” *Canadian Churches and War*, August 1943, 6; “The Devil is Hatred,” *Canadian Churches and War*, August 1943, 7; “Religion Versus Dictatorship,” *Canadian Churches and War*, September 1943, 6.

Christian democracy was a Protestant conception and bore Protestant, and only Protestant, connotations.

Freedom and the Doctrine of Man³⁶

One of the major beliefs at stake in these conceptions of Christian democracy and Christian freedom was what was referred to in the Protestant press as the doctrine of man. This doctrine was predicated on “our belief in the Fatherhood of God and all that this implies” namely that the human person belongs to God, not the State. In the *Canadian Churchman*, Canon Walter Judd noted the widespread belief that the war was very much in defence of the Christian doctrine of man and doctrine of God: “The whole life of men as the children of God is at stake: nay, more, the whole doctrine of God the eternal, omnipotent, loving, the God of all men and of all nations, the God of the living and of the dead, the God of this world and of the spiritual universe, is being challenged.”³⁷ A statement in the *Canadian Churchman* issued from the Archbishops of Canterbury, York, and Wales, the Scottish Episcopal Church, and all the Diocesan bishops of England, Wales, and Scotland, stated that “we are fighting for freedom and for the dignity of man.”³⁸

A writer in the *Canadian Baptist* indicated why the doctrine of man was a critical element of the concept of freedom at stake in the war: “those [Nazis] who today are blasting at the foundations of Christian order in our world believe that race or nation

³⁶ Canadian Protestants, as most people at the time, used the word “man” to refer to mankind, or humanity. Therefore, in discussing the brotherhood of man or the Doctrine of Man, they were not referring to the male half of the species, but to all humanity.

³⁷ “Lift Up Thy Voice,” *Canadian Churchman*, 8 May 1941, 291.

³⁸ “God and Our Times,” *Canadian Churchman*, 4 September 1941, 483.

is the final reality, the ultimate supreme value in life . . .”³⁹ He explained that they rejected the fact of a universal God, and secondly, they rejected the worth of the human person: “Indeed, one of the reasons for their denial of God the author of liberty, is their concern to be rid of the notion that man his creature has anything essentially divine or spiritually worthful [sic] in his nature.”⁴⁰ A writer in the *Maritime Baptist* went so far as to argue that “Democracy is man-made, though we believe it to be God-ordained . . . Theoretically, it may be said, democracy is Christianity in its political significance. The cardinal principles of democracy are corollaries of the Christian doctrine of Man.”⁴¹

The dignity of the human person implied freedom as well as kinship or brotherhood with other persons. This was frequently referred to in the Protestant press as “the Brotherhood of Man,” a concept that had found wide reception in the Social Gospel movement in Canada. Rev. Hunt wrote in the *Canadian Churchman* claiming that the Church possessed the “seeds of victory,” and that the Church’s task was to safeguard these throughout the war. He wrote:

Another precious seed which we are safeguarding in this war is our belief in the Brotherhood of Man and all that this implies. From Jesus, our Saviour, we have learned that each person is infinitely precious in God’s sight, and that, as Christians, we are called to regard all people everywhere as potential brothers in Christ. It is our conviction that each person is to be considered an end in himself, and not as a means to an end. But this principle is rejected by our enemies, who place no value upon personality as such, and, in the name of the State, use or abuse people according as their policy determines.⁴²

While Rev. Hunt was quick to note what he perceived to be the real threat of Nazism, there were also acknowledgements that even the enemy were the children of God. One

³⁹ “The Nazi Faith and the Christian,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 October 1942, 1.

⁴⁰ “The Nazi Faith and the Christian,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 October 1942, 1.

⁴¹ “Democracy at the Crossroads,” *Maritime Baptist*, 4 December 1941, 4.

⁴² “The Seed of Victory,” *Canadian Churchman*, 6 June 1940, 355.

article, in a discussion that elucidated the nature of Christian freedom and the truth it contains, noted that the truth about humankind is that humans are brothers and sisters to one another, including Nazis. He wrote that “even our enemies are brothers entangled in evil: Christ died for Hitler as he died for us . . . Freedom implies the brotherhood of mankind . . . so Freedom for us means freedom to help mankind, to regard all men as brethren.”⁴³

In a radio address that was printed in the *Canadian Baptist*, Rev. Dr. H. H. Bingham, a leader in the BCOQ, undertook an exposition of the Christian doctrine of Man as a core issue of the war. Similar to other voices on the subject, the dignity of the human person was the fundamental principle of Christian democracy:

One of the great principles fundamental to democracy which flashes out from the cross of Christ, is the sacredness of human life and the dignity of personality. Man to Christ was never lost in the mass. Our Lord always stood out for the worth of the individual soul . . . Under the ideologies of Europe today the individual is lost in the life of the state. Men must obey dictators or die. The common man has no sovereign will; no independence of thought; no liberty of speech; no freedom of soul. The great principle of the sacredness of human personality is not allowed to assert itself. How different the Christian faith . . . We are again struggling that this way of life might survive. It must survive.⁴⁴

At the core of Christian democratic freedom was the belief that Nazism threatened to destroy the doctrine of man, the brotherhood or kinship of humankind, and the Fatherhood of God. All of these were seen to not only be protected by democratic freedoms but to be a source of those same freedoms.

⁴³ “The Golden Thread of Freedom,” *Canadian Churchman*, 11 July 1940, n.p.

⁴⁴ “The Cross and Democracy,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1941, 1.

Freedom, Christian Democracy, and Appeals to History

Another key component of the Canadian Protestant outlook on the war was how they construed the war as a struggle to preserve freedom within a long narrative of struggles for freedom that dated back to the early church. Carl Berger claimed in his study of Canadian imperialism that a defining characteristic of imperialist sentiment in Canada was a conception of history as an ever-expanding advance of liberty and self-government.⁴⁵ A recurring tendency in the denominational press's discussions of Christianity, freedom, and democracy, was to make the argument, overtly or covertly, that the freedom which characterized democracy and was rooted in Christianity was the product of an historical process of progress. Highly selective interpretations, which generally focused on British history, were frequently put forward to demonstrate that freedom was part of Canadian Protestants's heritage. Freedom was conceived in terms of spiritual freedom offered by Christ. This type of freedom allowed the person forgiveness of their sins and the ability to overcome them, and was seen as logically prior to any kind of political freedom, religious freedom, economic freedom, social freedom, and all the attendant civil liberties those implied. That being said, it was still common for those secondary freedoms, which characterized democracy, to be seen as being rooted in Christianity.

In a sermon printed in the *Maritime Baptist* that outlined three kinds of liberty, the preacher claimed that "the second kind of liberty [after spiritual liberty] that Christ brings to the human race is political freedom."⁴⁶ This sermon characterized human history as a narrative of progress, that is to say, a narrative of the progression of human

⁴⁵ Berger, *Sense of Power*, 109.

⁴⁶ "Christ and Human Liberty," *Maritime Baptist*, 23 April 1941, 2.

freedom. This narrative began with Christ and his disciples. The key historical moments in the story of the spread of Christian freedom cited by the preacher were the *Magna Carta*, the struggle of English Dissenters in the seventeenth century, and the example of Rhode Island as the first political entity to allow freedom of worship. He stated that “the story of the struggle for political freedom in the New World is one of such stirring heroism and lofty inspiration that we never tire of hearing it. We have gone a long way in making the life of this great Democracy of the west an expression of the Christian conception of a good society.”⁴⁷ Obviously the author was American, but Canadian Protestants tended to view Canada, Britain, and the United States as being the champions of democracy. So, in this instance, what was true for one was true for all.

Other appeals to history in the Protestant press were less detailed but characterized freedom as being rooted in Christianity, as being a crucial component in the construction of western civilization, and as being under attack by Hitler and the Nazis. For example, in a radio broadcast printed in the *Canadian Baptist*, Rev. Dr. F. L. Orchard of Toronto assessed the war situation facing the Allies:

A civilization wrought from the thought and labour, the faith and sacrifice of nineteen hundred years has been brutally assailed and its very survival threatened . . . if we do our part, God’s cause will not fail. The parched earth will be again refreshed, the walls of freedom will be refilled, and the rivers of peace and human happiness will flow again through the lands.⁴⁸

Another appeal to history, this one written by the editor of the *Canadian Baptist*, began in the feudal era, noting the lack of freedom in the Middle Ages, as well as during the colonial period. Indeed, he claimed that England sought to duplicate itself in Canada

⁴⁷ “Christ and Human Liberty,” *Maritime Baptist*, 23 April 1941, 2. The author was American and was referring to the U.S.A, but statements like this were very common and were used to refer to both British and American democracy more generally.

⁴⁸ “A Call to Faith and Prayer,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 September 1941, 11.

after its distasteful experiences with democracy in the American rebellion and the French Revolution. He then went through the struggles between church and state in early-nineteenth-century Canada, emphasizing of course, the important role of Baptists as champions of disestablishment and religious freedom, noting “the lovers of freedom won ultimately.”⁴⁹ The editor presents this story of freedom in England and then Canada as a gradual struggle and then describes it by quoting the Roman soldier speaking to St. Paul: “with a great price obtained I this freedom.”⁵⁰ He concluded the editorial by noting that it was the freedom enjoyed by modern Canadians, attained at a high price, “that is in peril today. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and Japan would re-establish the slavery—physical, mental, and spiritual—of the middle ages.”⁵¹

It is worth noting that the subject of democratic freedom lay very close to Baptist hearts. Indeed, it was an important element of their identity, which explains why it was such a major topic of discussion for them. One article claimed that democratic freedom had its origins in Baptist churches: “Democracy sprang from the Christian religion as that was interpreted and proclaimed by your spiritual fathers and ours . . . The men who provided the ideas and the inspiration for our modern democratic states sprang first out of our little churches . . . Do not forget, in these days when it is being abused by many, that our fathers fought for freedom.”⁵² The notion that freedom, though rooted in Christianity, was something that had been achieved through great struggle and at a great cost, informed even the work of Watson Kirkconnell, a renowned scholar and Baptist lay leader. He wrote a two-part article for the *Canadian Baptist* which included a

⁴⁹ “With a Great Price,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1941, 3.

⁵⁰ “With a Great Price,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1941, 3.

⁵¹ “With a Great Price,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1941, 3.

⁵² “This Freedom,” *Canadian Baptist*, 31 August–7 September 1939, 6.

lengthy history of Christian freedom. It characterized freedom in terms of a narrative of gradual progress. He remarked:

The principle of civil and religious liberty is, however, still far from safe and accepted today. As a matter of fact, it is darkly threatened from many directions. A heavy price was paid for it in past ages, and now a further price may have to be paid. Shall not we Baptists, to whom the principle of liberty is absolutely central, face the issue with full knowledge and unwavering fortitude? The threat today does not come from the more authoritarian churches but from political movements of astounding amplitude and power, in which a deification of the state is motivated by Communism or by Fascist Nationalism. Both of these movements are ruthless in the pursuit of their aims, and both crush the individual without compunction. Should either prevail throughout the modern world, a new Dark Age of the human spirit may well be ushered in. Faced by two such Apollyons in his path, the champion of Christian liberty has a stern fight before him.⁵³

While the Baptists were the most vocal in interpreting history in this way, they were not alone in appealing to history. And, while Baptists saw freedom as a critical element of their religious identity, others saw freedom as the rightful inheritance of the race of Anglo-Saxon peoples. Canon Walter Judd, writing in the *Canadian Churchman*, described the Church of England in Canada as “this branch of Christ’s Church, therefore, this daughter of the ancient Church of Britain and Celt and of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, who throughout her long history has been the champion of national freedom and personal liberty, this Church struggled for parliamentary customs now inherited by peoples of all languages in our country.”⁵⁴ Another sermon, preached by Rev. C. K. Sansbury, argued that the element of freedom that entailed deliverance from oppression and tyranny slowly spread over the course of British history from *Magna Carta*, through the wreck of the Spanish Armada, to Britain’s resistance to Napoleon. He said “Our Anglo-Saxon race has undertaken them [struggles for liberty], because it

⁵³ “The Price of Christian Liberty,” *Canadian Baptist*, 3–10 August 1939, 5.

⁵⁴ “Lift Up Thy Voice,” *Canadian Churchman*, 8 May 1941, 291.

has believed that without such freedom true community is impossible, the individual reduced to the level of a slave. Only in a free society of free men, we believe, is life worth living.”⁵⁵ Regardless of denominational affiliation Canadian Protestants viewed their churches as having a special relationship with the spread of freedom in the world, through history. There seemed to be general agreement with the notion that “the course of our British history is marked throughout by that struggle for liberty.”⁵⁶

The importance of this historical interpretation that informed the Protestant interpretation of the war is that it comported with a more widely held notion characteristic of modernity in which history and even present events were interpreted through a narrative of progress. The idea was that humanity would and could continue to improve, morally, socially, politically, and technologically. The fact that most of the historical interpretations in the Protestant press characterized the history of Christian freedom and democracy in terms of a gradual progression suggests that either the narrative of progress informed their thinking at nearly the subconscious level, or they were aware of the notion of progress and embraced it. In either case, the Protestant press couldn’t help but see the war as a very important moment in the story of human progress and in particular the story of the spread of Christian democratic freedom.

The discourse of freedom in the Protestant press was also reinforced by secular leaders’s expositions of freedom. President Franklin Roosevelt, in particular, figured prominently on this point in the Protestant press. An editorial described one of Roosevelt’s addresses to Congress in which he outlined four principles of freedom. These included equality of opportunity for youth and for others, the preservation of civil

⁵⁵ “What Do We Mean by Freedom?” *Canadian Churchman*, 30 October 1941, 611.

⁵⁶ “What Do We Mean by Freedom?” *Canadian Churchman*, 30 October 1941, 611.

liberties, the ending of special privileges for the few, and security for those who need it.

The editor then drew a connection between these principles and Christianity, writing

these four principles which president Roosevelt enunciates as the bases of a healthy and strong democracy are all separate aspects of human personality which is a fundamental tenet of our Christian faith. The Church's part in the movement to secure these is to generate and cultivate the spirit out of which they shall emerge. By the exercise of its prophetic message, by insistent and persistent efforts to secure a generation of men and women committed to the religion of Jesus Christ, and by developing the spirit of brotherhood and love within society, will it lay the foundations for a permanent and effective democracy.⁵⁷

As this comment suggests, Christian democracy and its implicit freedoms, would factor significantly in the discussions of post-war peace, as would Roosevelt's "four freedoms." This was further confirmed at the Atlantic Conference in which Roosevelt and Churchill agreed upon an eight-point policy that was inspired by the four freedoms. An article in the *Western Baptist*, however, counselled caution and vigilance. Support for democracy and freedoms among secular leaders notwithstanding, freedom must not be taken for granted and it was "therefore imperative that lovers of true freedom be vigilant and active."⁵⁸

Christian Freedom in Action

The discussions of Christianity, democracy, and freedom cumulatively presented a pleasant portrayal of human dignity and freedom and Christ's freeing salvation. But all that talk was for naught if the churches did not allow these beliefs to inform their behavior. The conclusions they drew about Christian and democratic freedom implied tasks for their churches in Canada. One of these, mentioned briefly above, was

⁵⁷ "President Roosevelt's Address," *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1941, 4.

⁵⁸ "Religious Liberty," *Western Baptist*, October 1941, 9–10.

essentially educational: forming a strong sense and lifestyle of Christian citizenship. Another task was to ensure that democracy, imperfect as it existed in Canada (which despite their idealistic discussions, almost everyone recognized that Canadian and British democracy fell short of the ideal) maintained its integrity. There were serious concerns that the government would be forced to compromise or do away with the democratic freedoms held so dear, in order to win the war. In response to this the Protestant churches took on the task of protecting the civil liberties of Canadians and protecting democracy on the home front.

The *United Church Observer* took up this mantle with gusto, at least with respect to the apparent curtailment of civil liberties entailed by the Defence of Canada Regulations. An article in the *Observer* summarized the Defence regulations and noted some of the problematic clauses therein. But the overall thrust of the regulations, in the view of the *Observer*, did not bode well for the protection and maintenance of Canadians's civil liberties. "As the regulations now stand the situation is, that a series of severe restrictions have been placed on civil liberty by Order in Council and without the regulations ever having been debated in Parliament."⁵⁹ Other groups noting their concerns over the Defence regulations were noted or quoted in the same issue. For example, the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order passed a resolution stating:

We view with concern recent measures taken which deprive free citizens of Canada of the traditional privileges of free speech, discussion and assembly while they are sending the youth of Canada to Europe to fight in defence of these same issues. Therefore we heartily endorse the pronouncement of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service of The United Church of Canada as follows: 'While this board recognizes the necessity of accepting in time of war certain restrictions upon those civil liberties which citizens of a democracy ordinarily enjoy, it warns against the danger that such restrictions be extended far beyond the necessities of the situation. The Board, therefore, draws attention to the need

⁵⁹ "Defence of Canada Regulations," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1940, 16.

for utmost vigilance to assure that there be no further curtailment of civil liberty than is really required, and no unnecessary suspension of democratic method and procedure.⁶⁰

A resolution adopted by the Ontario section of the Canadian Bar Association was also printed in the *Observer*. It stated “No totalitarian State has ever been established by conquest from without, but always by subservience within . . . Insidious encroachments on the simple fundamental rights of the individual have long been proceeding in this country and province, to an extent not realized or understood.”⁶¹ The *Observer* also noted a group of Toronto citizens who had signed a letter sent to the leaders of all four federal parties urging them to revise the Defence of Canada regulations. Among those who signed it was Sir Robert Falconer, former president of the University of Toronto, and an active advocate of the church union movement that produced the United Church of Canada.

Perhaps the most important statement indicating the Protestant churches’s belief that they must safeguard Canadians’s civil liberties came in the form of an official statement from the Christian Social Council of Canada. The members of this Council included Baptists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, the United Church of Canada, Society of Friends, Salvation Army, YMCA, and the YWCA. The Council reflected the widespread support of all the most influential Protestant denominations and inter-denominational organizations. The statement addressed a number of important subjects that the war had brought into focus, foremost among them, of course, being civil liberties. Through the Council’s statement Canadian Protestants expressed their conviction that “we are fighting to establish a world in which the honest dissenter need

⁶⁰ “Fellowship Favours Freedom of Speech,” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1940, 16.

⁶¹ “Defence of Canada Regulations,” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1940, 16.

not be liquidated, the policy of the nation will be determined by free discussion, the consciences of men will be free, the idolatry of the totalitarian state will be overthrown.”⁶² They also pointed out that “no nation can defy the rights of conscience without impairing its national fibre.”⁶³

The most important aspect of this statement was its characterization of Canadians’s freedom in terms of a narrative of progress, despite that freedom’s apparent jeopardy. The statement opened and closed with appeals to history. These appeals to history understood the modern democratic freedoms to be the result of recurring struggles for liberty going back to the Middle Ages. Furthermore, they believed that as this freedom gained ground, the church was increasingly its guardian. The statement opened with a detailed mini-history:

We are mindful that we have inherited this tradition from those who lived dangerously in the past, from Cardinal Stephen Langton and the nobles who wrested Magna Charta [sic] from King John, from Cromwell’s Ironsides who, singing ‘The Lord of Hosts is with us,’ overthrew the soldiers of Charles I, and assured the control of the monarchy by Parliament. It was religious idealism that contributed to the winning of British liberty, and in recent years it has become increasingly clear that a vital Christian Church is the most potent palladium of human freedom against the ruthless claims of the totalitarian state.⁶⁴

The conclusion stated the Council’s desire to rededicate itself to training up Christians in proper Christian citizenship and “remembering with undying gratitude those who, in generations past, purchased for us this freedom at a great price, and who in the endless march of man have handed us the flaming torch.”⁶⁵ They saw themselves as heirs to a great British tradition of Christian democratic freedom, and had specific ideas about

⁶² “Statement of Civil Liberties,” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1940, 17.

⁶³ “Statement of Civil Liberties,” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1940, 17.

⁶⁴ “Statement of Civil Liberties,” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1940, 17.

⁶⁵ “Statement of Civil Liberties,” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1940, 17.

what this implied for their work among their own flocks. The British connection, as well as the churches's view of their role in Canada, are dealt with in other chapters, but their mention here indicates the extent to which the ideas that framed the Canadian Protestant outlook on the war overlapped.

The churches had definite thoughts on Christian citizenship that were brought to the fore in a war defending Christian democracy. J. Morton Freeman, Secretary of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order wrote in the *Observer* about the duties of citizenship. He noted that citizenship involved obligations which in turn implied rewards. He wrote that "for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, the Christian citizen of today must relate his duties to ends, and those ends must include some definite and not too remote social objectives in keeping with the Spirit of the Gospel."⁶⁶ Aside from revealing one way the Social Gospel was still influencing Canadian Protestant conceptions of the church in society, Freeman argued that the duties of Christian citizens entailed defeating the Axis powers, as well as sacrifice. His list of duties included sacrificial action according to ability and conscience, determined action to guard Canada's heritage of democracy on the home front, and finally "dedication of oneself to the cause of a more Christian society."⁶⁷ In addition to these duties he also exhorted his

⁶⁶ "The Duties of the Citizen," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1942, 11.

⁶⁷ "The Duties of the Citizen," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1942, 11. For other discussions and definitions of Christian citizenship, see: "The Citizen's Duty to the State," *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1941, 11; "Message of Anglican Bishops in Britain," *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1941, 2; "Winning the Peace," *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1940, 11; "The Schools and Citizenship," *United Church Observer*, 15 December 1941, 16; "A Chat with the Editor: Religious Education," *Canadian Churchman*, 10 October 1940, 562; "My Duty to My Church," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 January 1941, 5; "British Christian Citizenship in the Time of War," *Maritime Baptist*, 25 October 1939, 5; "Prizes to be Guarded," *Maritime Baptist*, 27 March 1940, 1; "Canada is for Canadians," *Maritime Baptist*, 11 March 1942, 14; "The Relativity of Rights," *Maritime Baptist*, 30 April 1941, 4; "The Task of the Democratic Citizen," *Maritime Baptist*, 26 November 1941, 1; "Some Responsibilities of Christian Citizens," *Maritime Baptist*, 24 June 1942, 3; "Christian Citizenship and the Constitution," *Western Baptist*, December 1940, 4.

readers to don a posture of willingness to sacrifice special privileges, to serve the community, to accept what economic regulations may be necessary, to cultivate a social outlook of generous concern for the welfare of others regardless of their race, nationality, sex, religion or other characteristics, to combat anti-social attitudes and practices (which included racial antagonism, exploitation, shirking of responsibility, corruption and waste), a willingness to assume the personal obligation of participating in the political, social and economic affairs of the community, and finally, a willingness to protect the security of the nation from external violence and join other nations in federation for collective security.⁶⁸

In a similar vein, Frank Haskins of the BUWC's Social Service Committee, wrote that "Christians have a duty as citizens of their country to watch and encourage progress in the redrafting of our basic laws, in national unity and improved social well-being is to be secured."⁶⁹ He also noted the responsibility citizenship placed upon the churches: "Christian citizenship puts upon the members of our churches the obligation of seeking to establish the principles of righteousness and equity in the laws of our land."⁷⁰ Rev. J. E. Harris of Calgary wrote of a similar view of Christian duty, suggesting that Christians had the duty of strengthening all life by "reaching beyond the non-Christian influence in the nation."⁷¹ He went on to state "Thus, to strengthen Christian elements in British life, the Christian citizen will use his franchise conscientiously and continuously, with an eye to the highest welfare of the commonwealth. He will interest himself intelligently and unselfishly in public matters.

⁶⁸ "The Duties of the Citizen," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1942, 11.

⁶⁹ "Christian Citizenship and the Constitution," *Western Baptist*, December 1940, 4.

⁷⁰ "Christian Citizenship and the Constitution," *Western Baptist*, December 1940, 4.

⁷¹ "My Duty to My Church," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 January 1941, 5.

As ability and opportunity permit, and God guides, he will participate in public life, if he be strong enough to withstand its spiritual and moral perils.”⁷²

Discussions of Christian citizenship admitted that neither Canada nor the empire were fully Christian, despite the fact that their highest ideals were Christian ideals. Rev. Harris wrote that “Every Britisher should be a Christian, if for none other than patriotic reasons. . . for, though we are far from being fully Christian as an empire, yet our best qualities are certainly of Christian rootage.”⁷³ Sir Robert Falconer exemplified a minority dissenting voice when he wrote, in the *Observer*, that “the assumption that our democratic states are Christian cannot withstand scrutiny.”⁷⁴ Notions of Christian citizenship, of course, implied the respective roles of Church and State. Falconer argued that “the Christian Church by its very nature is the guardian of human personality, of individual liberty for a man to follow his conscience, and of equity in all human relations,” and then outlined his view of the Church’s responsibilities.⁷⁵ He wrote that the Church, first, “holds forth the faith in the Christian God as revealed by Jesus Christ as Father, Redeemer, and Judge of all mankind”; second, “it proclaims the presence and coming in power of His Kingdom among all nations;” third, “it maintains the duty of working for the realization of the brotherhood of mankind, and the creation of such conditions of welfare everywhere that peace will be made secure and war abolished”; fourth, “it assures for believers the promise of immortality in the completed Kingdom of God.”⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Dr. Mutchmor was quoted in the *Observer* as stating that “It is the

⁷² “My Duty to My Church,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 January 1941, 5.

⁷³ “My Duty to My Church,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 January 1941, 5.

⁷⁴ “Church and State,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1940, 11.

⁷⁵ “Church and State,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1940, 11.

⁷⁶ “Church and State,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1940, 11.

duty of the Church to produce disciplined men and women who will master the complex problems of building true democracy, men and women inspired by a certainty of faith, and dedicated to God.”⁷⁷ As Rev. J. E. Harris concluded a sermon: “Therefore if the democracies are to stand fast for liberty their citizens must hold fast to Jesus Christ.”⁷⁸

Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, the Canadian Protestant belief that Christian civilization, and therefore democracy, were rooted in Christianity shaped their interpretation of the war as a religious conflict. The discussion nuanced the idea of the war as a religious conflict by examining Protestant commentary on the nature of freedom and its relationship to democracy and Christian civilization. Similarly, the doctrinal beliefs in the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God added another shade to the view of the war as a religious conflict. An underlying presupposition of Christendom and a belief in historical progress ultimately being the progressive expansion of freedom (and Christianity) further contoured the view of the war as a religious conflict. And, of course, true Christian democracy entailed a strong sense of Christian citizenship and guardianship of Canada’s liberties during time of war, lest in the fight to preserve democratic freedom, democratic freedom itself should be sacrificed.

⁷⁷ “A Lead in Faith and Morals for Today and Tomorrow,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1940, 16.

⁷⁸ “Guarding Our Way of Life,” *Western Baptist*, February 1943, 3.

CHAPTER 2: EMPIRE

“This then is our pledge—God, the Empire and the Empire’s Cause.”¹

In 1901 a visitor from Britain described Toronto as “the most ultra-British city on earth . . . Englishmen suffering from a laxity in loyalty should hasten to Toronto, where they can be so impregnated with patriotism that they will want to wear shirt fronts made of the Union Jack.”² Imperial pride and loyalty to Britain and its monarch had a long history in Canada. Indeed, John S. Moir has argued that an enduring sense of loyalty has prevailed among Canadians from the eighteenth century up to the 1950s. Canadian loyalism held an outlook that emphasized things Canadian in the larger British context. This perspective was “based on a confidently assumed superiority of British institutions, and an unquestioning belief in the God-given mission—or responsibility—of the British people to share the blessings of the Almighty, with all other peoples.”³ There is a difference between a loyal subject and a passionate imperialist, and both could be found in Canada, as well as strident anti-imperialists, but almost all English-speaking Canadians accepted the British Empire as their own, and, for most, they were both British and Canadian.⁴ As Philip Buckner has pointed out, Canadians “realized they were British with a difference. In some respects, they thought of themselves as better

¹ “Spirit of the Empire,” *Canadian Churchman*, 9 September 1943, 1.

² Thompson, “Third British Empire,” 88.

³ Moir, “Loyalism,” 73.

⁴ Brennan, “The Other Battle,” 252.

Britons, living in a land that offered greater economic potential, that avoided the rigid class distinctions of the mother country, and that produced healthier and stronger men and women.”⁵ Canadian identity was deeply intertwined with the British Empire.

Canada’s place in the British Empire influenced the Canadian Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. More than just a political entity that stretched across the globe, the empire was an ideological and cultural entity, one in which Canada had long been entwined. The Christian civilization that was at stake in the war, was not merely Christian and democratic. It was British. After a consideration of the historiography and the interwar period, this chapter shows how the royal visit of 1939 played a special role in stoking the fires of Canadian loyalty at a crucial time. It also argues that the King and Queen were seen by Canadian Protestants as embodiments of the ideals of empire. Similarly, commentary in the denominational press indicates that the empire itself was viewed as the embodiment of the ideals of Christian civilization. This view, of course, implied certain notions about race, and characterized freedom and democracy as vital gifts that the empire had to share with the world. Thus, in the Canadian Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of (British) Christian civilization, their place in the British Empire, and the empire itself, were inextricably tied to their understanding of civilization.

⁵ Buckner, “Canada and the Empire,” 8. Interestingly, Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*) has pointed out a discrepancy between imperialism and developing nationalisms in that those, in this instance, in a settler colony, though bearing a strong sense of nationalism, were, by virtue of a similarly strong nationalism in the motherland (i.e., Britain) not allowed to “join pilgrimages that would allow them to administer” English (Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 110). Thus, for example, the office of Governor-General remained closed to Canadians until the second half of the twentieth century. However, a notable exception to this situation would seem to be the New Brunswick-born Bonar Law who was Prime Minister of Great Britain in the early 1920s; this would seem to suggest that this particular phase of incompatibility between nationalism and imperialism had changed by the time of the Second World War.

In his study on imperialism and Canadian nationalism, Carl Berger claimed that imperialism, as a form of Canadian nationalism, developed in the decades following Confederation, primarily in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces. He noted that this imperialism was motivated in part by a desire to emphasize Canada's coming of age over against its subordinate colonial status. Three recurring themes he notes in his study are especially relevant, namely, the conception of history as the expansion of liberty and self-government, social criticism and reform, and the sense of religious mission.

Regarding the conception of history as the expansion of liberty and self-government, Berger argued that the history of the Dominion of Canada was seen as “a story of material progress and the steady advance of liberty and self-government,” the conclusion of which was the acquisition of full national rights and freedom within an imperial federation.⁶ The selective accounts of history noted in Chapter 1 make it abundantly clear that many Canadian Protestants held such a view of history. Similarly, social criticism and reform, figured prominently in Canadian Protestant history. Berger claimed that there was a direct connection between the Social Gospel and imperialism, namely the belief that “without a purified and healthy social order within, the imperializing nation would not only lack the strength for the exercise of power but it would also project its own evils into those lands over which it held sway.”⁷ While Berger seems to conflate the Social Gospel with the older evangelical tradition of moral and social reform, his point still stands. For Canadian Protestants, social reform and criticism had long held the goal of the “Christianization of the social order,” even if this rhetoric was the contribution of the Social Gospel.

⁶ Berger, *Sense of Power*, 109.

⁷ Berger, *Sense of Power*, 186.

Finally, the view of the empire “as a vehicle and embodiment of a progressive civilization which was designated by Providence to spread its culture, religion, and political institutions across the face of the earth,” was commonplace among English-speaking Canadians.⁸ This is discussed in the next chapter. However, Berger also showed that this idea of the mission of empire was based on a particular view of race. This view held a sense of responsibility in guiding the “races” unfit for self-rule, into a maturity wherein they could rule themselves, and it conceived of Anglo-Saxons as having a genius for self-government and therefore specially equipped to lead the world in that task.⁹ This conception of race was evident in the denominational press in the Second World War.

Berger claimed that the form of Canadian imperialism he studied, was destroyed by the First World War. John Herd Thompson has suggested that Berger’s claim on this matter does not stand up to scrutiny.¹⁰ He cites studies by Patrick H. Brennan, and Jonathan F. Vance, respectively, to illustrate this. Brennan studied the postwar attitudes of officers who served in the Canadian Corps in the First World War and found that they continued to hold an intense loyalty to the empire, believed in the inherent British character of Canada and saw the future of Canada and Britain as being dependent on a strong imperial link.¹¹ Jonathan Vance, meanwhile, demonstrated in his study that the aimlessness and despair that followed the Great War in Britain and America was not the war’s legacy in Canada. Rather there was a sense of certainty and promise that the war had been just, and that the war had been a just cause fought to defend Christianity and

⁸ Berger, *Sense of Power*, 217.

⁹ Berger, *Sense of Power*, 227.

¹⁰ Thompson, “Canada and the Third British Empire,” 96.

¹¹ Brennan, “The Other Battle,” 251.

civilization.¹² In addition to these studies, there is also the fact that three themes of imperialism identified by Berger can be found in one form or another in the Canadian Protestant press during the Second World War. Together, these suggest that Berger's assessment about the death of Canadian imperialism was not wholly sound. But, the cultural mood and the events of the interwar years lend themselves to the perception that imperial sentiment, and pride in Canada's connection with Britain, were, if not dead, then dying. The context of the interwar period is crucial to understanding Canadian imperial sentiment during the Second World War.

Canadian's imperial sentiment in the 1920s and 1930s is perhaps best described, John Thompson claims, as paradoxical. This time period saw Canadian affection for the Crown reach an all-time high even while a new concept of Canada as a "mosaic of ethno-cultural groups" became predominant.¹³ Thompson points out, however, that this mosaic was still understood within an ongoing discourse of Britishness because it was constructed on a new emphasis on the British Empire as multicultural "composed of diverse peoples with multiple loyalties and identities."¹⁴ Even if British symbols and concepts remained foremost in Canadian identities, it was in the political realm where imperial sentiment began to appear to contradict the predominant attitudes of imperial affection.

The interwar period was a time of cultural turmoil. The disillusionment that accompanied the aftermath of the "war to end all wars" appeared to sour imperial sentiment in Canada. This seems to have been borne out by certain actions of the

¹² Vance, *Death So Noble*, 266–67.

¹³ Thompson, *Canada and the Third British Empire*, 101.

¹⁴ Thompson, *Canada and the Third British Empire*, 101.

Dominion Government. In the 1920s, French Canadians and the organized farmers both rejected active membership in the empire, citing especially their dislike of a common imperial foreign policy.¹⁵ They feared such a policy might lead Canada into another costly European war. Mackenzie King shrewdly included a “Canadian Autonomy” resolution in the Liberal platform in order to gain votes among farmers and French-Canadians alike.¹⁶ While it is true that some Canadians were not in favour of things like a common imperial foreign policy, and other such policies, it should not be assumed that they strongly disliked Britain. Indeed, the opposite was true. As John Herd Thompson has noted, “despite the appeal of anti-imperialism in French Canada, the imperial connection could not be ignored. Over half the population was of British descent, more than a million born in the British Isles, and most of these people had a profound attachment to the empire and its symbols.”¹⁷ Meanwhile, following in Laurier’s footsteps, Mackenzie King maintained a passive resistance to British councils.¹⁸

At the Imperial Conference of 1923 King asserted Canada’s independence, but was quick to allay British concern, promising that Canada would, of course, support Britain “‘if a great and clear call of duty comes,’ as it had in 1914.”¹⁹ Canada’s independence increased on Mackenzie King’s watch. Canada’s participation in the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which renounced war as a means to settling international disputes, was a symbol of increased independence. Mackenzie King signed on behalf of Canada, alongside the U.S.A., France, and Great Britain.²⁰ While the young Dominion

¹⁵ Thompson, *Decades of Discord*, 38.

¹⁶ Thompson, *Decades of Discord*, 39.

¹⁷ Thompson, *Decades of Discord*, 40.

¹⁸ Thompson, *Decades of Discord*, 40.

¹⁹ Thompson, *Decades of Discord*, 47.

²⁰ Thompson, *Decades of Discord*, 53.

government forcefully took the reins of its own foreign policy from Britain's hands, to the casual observer it appeared that a weakening of the imperial connection was occurring.

Over the course of numerous Imperial Conferences in the 1920s Canada's prime ministers championed a new definition of the Dominion that would ultimately result in the constitutional transformation of the empire. Sir Robert Borden's Resolution IX defined the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth who had the right to a voice in foreign policy.²¹ This culminated in the Statute of Westminster in 1931, which essentially confirmed this definition, though, ironically, it also had the simultaneous effect of tying Canada closer to the Crown as the source of its autonomy. This dependence on the Crown occurred simultaneously with a broader sense of affection for the monarch that reached its pinnacle in the interwar years.²²

The Royal Visit

Following the First World War, as Barbara Messamore has noted, not only was there increased media attention on the royal family but there seemed to be a more general interest and even a sense of affection directed toward them. The events of the 1930s indicate that there remained a strong attachment to Britain's monarchy, as Canadians celebrated George V's Silver Jubilee, and the next year mourned his death. They followed closely Edward VIII's brief reign, which, when it spiraled into controversy and then abdication, found little sympathy in the Canadian press. Once Edward's feelings for Wallis Simpson were known to the press, the view of Edward, and indeed the monarchy,

²¹ Thompson, "Canada and the Third British Empire," 98.

²² Thompson, "Canada and the Third British Empire," 102.

dimmed considerably. The Governor-General's wife, Lady Tweedsmuir, writing to her husband who was in London during these events, noted that "in some ways Canada minds more than anyone."²³

One of the elements of Edward's reign, and one that was likely the source of much of the bad press he received, was that Edward's celebrity status, compounded with his apparently poor choice for a wife, seemed to shatter completely the idea of the monarch as a symbol of moral virtue and family-centeredness begun by Queen Victoria and Albert. Messamore suggests that once George VI assumed the throne, the press emphasized "his moral virtues and family-centeredness," bringing a return to the monarchy of credibility and moral authority.²⁴ Perhaps, in an era where it had little political power, the monarchy's strength was as a moral authority. Regardless, Edward's brief time on the throne, claims Messamore, "dealt a damaging blow to the image of the Crown, one that Edward's successor would have to work to overcome."²⁵ George VI did this, and quite effectively, though it is unclear whether that was largely rooted in his character and values, or if he actively worked to salvage the image of the crown. One thing that is clear is that the Canadian Royal Tour of 1939 was one measure that did much to reassure the subjects of the empire that the monarchy was not only stable, but remained a symbol of moral virtue and unity, and that Edward's reign was an aberration and nothing more. The Canadian Protestant press emphasized George's moral virtues and even argued that he embodied the highest ideals of the empire and the Christian faith in grandiose language.

²³ Messamore, "George VI's 1939 Royal Tour," 132.

²⁴ Messamore, "George VI's 1939 Royal Tour," 133.

²⁵ Messamore, "George VI's 1939 Royal Tour," 133.

The Royal Tour of Canada by Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1939 was an historic occasion. Mary Vipond has stated that, “the royal tour occurred at an important moment in the history of the English-speaking peoples of the North Atlantic. It came upon the heels of the abdication of George’s older brother, Edward VIII, in a period when Canada’s role within the empire/commonwealth was evolving to full nationhood, and amidst rising dread about the possibility of war with Germany and apprehension about the willingness of the United States to participate in another European war.”²⁶ It was the first time the reigning monarch of the empire had visited Canada, and it was the first time British royalty visited every single province in the country, as well as the independent dominion of Newfoundland. The King and Queen also briefly visited the United States, the first time a British monarch had set foot in that country. Surely this was an occasion of great historic importance. However, the royal visit played another important role. It reignited the sentiments of loyalty and empire among the mainline Protestant denominations mere months before the most profound conflict of the twentieth century erupted in Europe.

“‘God Save the King’ echoes and re-echoes across our broad land” declared an editorial in the May 18, 1939 issue of the *Canadian Churchman*.²⁷ As if the editor had been given a prophetic insight into the future he went on to declare that “this visit will have a profound effect on the loyalty of our whole nation.”²⁸ *The United Church Observer* stated a similar sentiment in a description of the royal visit that noted “I feel that this visit of our King and Queen will cement not only the ties of Empire and the *bon*

²⁶ Vipond, “Mass Media in Canadian History,” 150.

²⁷ “The Royal Visit,” *Canadian Churchman*, 18 May 1939, 310.

²⁸ “The Royal Visit,” *Canadian Churchman*, 18 May 1939, 310.

entente between the two dominant races on this North American continent, but will immeasurably strengthen the aims and ideals of democracy throughout the world.”²⁹ The editor of the *Presbyterian Record* claimed that even though the King and Queen were enthroned and crowned two years ago in Westminster Abbey “now however, there has been in Canada a second crowning, a second enthronement and coronation, but this time in the hearts of their Canadian subjects.”³⁰ The *Canadian Baptist* noted a similar sentiment, “the visit of Their Majesties has discovered in us new deeps of response . . . enthusiasm, patriotism and loyalty have been revealed as normal response[s] in the experience of most of us.”³¹

The interest in the empire’s monarch during the Royal Visit of 1939 was not *ex nihilo*. In the four years leading up to 1939 there had been a lot of royal activity. King George V’s Silver Jubilee, marking the 25th year of his reign, involved diverse celebrations all over the empire. A year later, in 1936, King George V died and was succeeded by his son Edward VIII. Edward soon abdicated amid controversy and the throne reverted to his brother, George VI. A Silver Jubilee, a royal funeral, a royal abdication, and the coronation of a new king all took place in the space of two years. The *Presbyterian Record* carried a lengthy article about the coronation of George VI and Elizabeth and described it as “the Empire’s witness to the ascendancy of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords over all earthly potentates.”³² It went on to argue that “religion is indeed at the heart of the Empire, and as long as in truth this shall be so we

²⁹ “The Royal Visit,” *United Church Observer*, 15 June 1939, 30.

³⁰ “Our King and Queen,” *Presbyterian Record*, July 1939, 219.

³¹ “Our Kingly King,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 June 1939, 2.

³² “Religion and the Coronation,” *Presbyterian Record*, May 1937, 131.

may reckon upon that assurance, ‘Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.’”³³ The Royal Visit of 1939 and its impact on Canadian Protestant loyalty and imperial pride can be understood in light of a larger context in which the British Empire was seen as bearing religious meaning and having an important role in the world.

The Moderator spoke to this in his official greeting to the King and Queen. He stated that “our people are naturally proud of their British connection. Our life has been greatly enriched by British institutions. We appreciate and enjoy our British institutions, which we have resolved to maintain.”³⁴ The British connection, and Canada’s place in the empire were not far below the surface in much of the praise and greetings offered to Their Majesties. An article in *The Observer* argued that the King was “necessary to an Empire like ours, which is bound together by no laws, threats or preferences, but by a common reverence for a common idea, that ideal embodied in one person. Our King is regarded as the epitome of our national integrity.”³⁵ An editorial claimed that “the forthcoming visit of their Majesties, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, has stirred the hearts of our people in a strange and moving fashion which reveals the deep loyalty of Canadians to the Motherland.”³⁶ The editorial went on to explain that the deep loyalty and connection to the empire was of a spiritual nature and baffled explanation, “though incapable of logical explanation, it is, none the less, the strongest force in the world in binding in a great family an Empire of self-governing peoples.”³⁷ The King and Queen the editor argued were the visible and personal embodiment of that idea but were also

³³ “Religion and the Coronation,” *Presbyterian Record*, May 1937, 131.

³⁴ “To Their Most Gracious Majesties,” *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1939, 4.

³⁵ “God Save the King,” *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1939, 2.

³⁶ “The Royal Visit,” *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1939, 2.

³⁷ “The Royal Visit,” *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1939, 2.

“the symbol of the invisible ideal to which we members of the British empire give allegiance.”³⁸

The Royal visit was not only linked with the visible and invisible ideals of the empire, but also that key institution so threatened by Nazism, democracy. In *The Canadian Churchman*, an extract from an address from the archbishop of Toronto prophesied that “this visit will strengthen the great standard institutions which have been subjected to so much criticism. We are determined to build anew the walls of religious freedom—that true democracy for which our Empire exists.”³⁹ The Christian basis of British democracy and the corollary work of nation-building was expounded by the archbishop when he said that “we take up with renewed faith and hope the great and dangerous task of disciplined freedom. As a people let us go on with the task our fathers left us, of building in Canada a united, free, and disciplined people, pledged to loyal service under the one flag, and in allegiance to the Throne of Britain.”⁴⁰ Months after the King and Queen had come and gone and the international situation had become strained near to bursting into war, the *Presbyterian Record* issued a statement from the General Assembly that stated their “clear conviction that the Supreme Ruler has raised you [King George VI] up for such a time as this.”⁴¹ The King’s call for an empire wide day of prayer the following year would further confirm these sentiments.

³⁸ “The Royal Visit,” *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1939, 2.

³⁹ “Looking Back, We Press Forward,” *Canadian Churchman*, 1 June 1939, n.p.

⁴⁰ “Looking Back, We Press Forward,” *Canadian Churchman*, 1 June 1939, n.p.

⁴¹ “His Majesty the King,” *Presbyterian Record*, August 1939, 234.

Loyalty and Affection for Britain

An important aspect of Canadian Protestants's affection for the crown and overall appreciation for the connection with Britain was their regular expressions of loyalty. Often these expressions occurred at the official level in the form of a resolution passed by the denomination's governing body or meeting. They also occurred on an ad hoc basis in the Protestant press. For example, in a sermon preached in Toronto Rev. H. F. Woodcock began by stating "We are assembled here to bear witness (1) to our faith in God, and (2) to our loyalty and allegiance to the King and the Empire, and (3) to reaffirm our steadfast and unchanging pledge that whatever sacrifices are involved, the war must be won."⁴² Another article, poignantly titled "This England" concluded with similar sentiments of loyalty: "This England! Respected, revered, beloved by her sons and daughters throughout the world! We in Canada plight you our loyalty, our love, our life in this day of calamity. Dear Mother Land, wherein our forefathers lived and sleep, God bless you!"⁴³ Passionate rhetoric often accompanied these *ad hoc* sentiments of loyalty, and though they all seemed to be implicitly linked to the war, some were more explicit. For example, Dr. E. E. Daley discussed in the *Maritime Baptist* how the throne was the strongest bond of all, tying together the far-flung empire. After declaring that "in every land where the British sceptre waves the rustle of royal robes arouses the spirit of loyalty," Daley stated that today the Empire is magnificent because "She stands as the defender of a Christian civilization."⁴⁴

⁴² "Spirit of the Empire," *Canadian Churchman*, 9 September 1943, n.p.

⁴³ "This England," *Canadian Churchman*, 19 September 1940, 515.

⁴⁴ "The British Empire," *Maritime Baptist*, 6 December 1939, 1.

The official statements were many and bore a common resemblance. While most expressed loyalty to the King, some included loyalty to the empire. One such resolution, produced at the 1942 BCOQ Convention held in Hamilton, Ontario admitted that no one hated war as Baptists did, but they knew “that the Empire did not seek this struggle, that it fights for no extra land and that only direct necessity forced it to take up the sword again.”⁴⁵ So was Britain’s place in the war as defender, not aggressor, praised. The resolution went on to state that “the issue is sharply defined—Dictator versus Democracy, Christ’s principles versus Pit principles, Righteousness against Evil.”⁴⁶ On this basis the Convention resolved:

- (1) That we once again affirm our loyalty to our Empire, our leaders and our Allies, our assurance of the righteousness of our Nation’s cause and our confidence in the valour of those magnificent lads who on land and sea and in the air are steadfastly yielding to our Empire’s need the utmost in human service and devotion; and
- (2) That we further declare our unwavering faith in the justice of Almighty God and urge upon our people and all others who believe His word to humble themselves and entreat Him in earnest, purposeful and steadfast prayer for the success of our cause and the establishment of a righteous and lasting peace.⁴⁷

As this example suggests, affirmations of loyalty were often adjacent to justifications of the cause. Expressions of loyalty were an important way that the churches regularly recommitted themselves to their King and empire, but also the war effort. A resolution adopted by the Presbyterian General Assembly bound the two tightly together when it stated: “We re-affirm our loyalty to our earthly King, and recognizing, as His Majesty himself said, that the conflict is against a principle which, if it were to prevail, no

⁴⁵ “The Empire Resolution,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1942, 3.

⁴⁶ “The Empire Resolution,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1942, 3.

⁴⁷ “The Empire Resolution,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1942, 3.

civilized order could exist in the world, we confidently affirm that the paths of Christian and patriotic duty lie together.”⁴⁸

Putting aside explicit expressions of loyalty, the Canadian Protestant press also provided a medium through which the importance of Britain to Canadians was clearly, if not consciously, emphasized. Even if Canadian Protestants were, or were not, ardent imperialists, they had very strong cultural connections to Britain. In 1941 over 90 percent of Canadians were classified as “British born.”⁴⁹ While this number would have included anyone born in a British realm, it still meant that most English-speaking Canadians were, in one way or another, of British origin.⁵⁰ That they had a special place in their hearts for Britain is explicit in, for example, the countless references in the Protestant press to the “Motherland” or the “Old Land,” and occasionally the “home land.” The denominational press was replete with tributes to England, stories about how the English valiantly endured the Blitz, and as seen above, praise for the Anglo-Saxon qualities that contributed so much to the empire. In an editorial entitled “Salute to Britain,” the editor of the *Canadian Baptist* pointed out that St. George’s Day, for the patron saint of England, was nearing, and wrote “It is a happy suggestion of Canadians that at that time the Dominion might pause to offer prayer and thanksgiving for the heroic men and women of the Isles.”⁵¹ Similarly, another article recorded the events of a recent day of prayer: “On Sept. 8 last, the entire Anglo-Saxon race—Britain and

⁴⁸ “The Church’s Greater Task,” *Presbyterian Record*, November 1939, 324.

⁴⁹ *Census of Canada 1941*, 164.

⁵⁰ Thus, the French-speaking populace of Quebec would have been counted as British-born since it was in a British realm.

⁵¹ “Salute to Britain,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 April 1941, 3.

America—were united in prayer to God for victory with righteousness . . . The British cause is righteous—there was never one more so.”⁵²

Imperial sentiment and loyalty were at times expressed in poems printed in the denominational press. For example, a poem printed in the *Presbyterian Record* was as follows:

The King
Not what I think nor yet what may be said
Makes our King worthy of a people's trust;
But, rather his true wealth of heart and head,
High thoughts that can't be levell'd with the dust

True manhood is his badge of honour here,
Wisdom that makes him victor in all strife,
Courage that conquers every form of fear,
And love that adds contentment to his life.

His home is blest, his chiefest treasure there
A wife, two children pleasing to behold;
A glowing faith that triumphs over care,
And joys unpurchaseable here with gold.

He is a man who bears an honor'd name
Who reigns by right o'er all his Empire parts;
To him and his we give sincere acclaim
And the unstinted homage of our hearts.

Long may he reign and find where'er he goes,
True worth, kind friends, expressions of good will;
His subjects loyal in the face of foes,
And valiant in defence of Empire still.⁵³

Another poem, far more plaintive, communicated in the way only poetry can, the reasons why lives had to be sacrificed to preserve Britain, and by extension Christian civilization:

What will you give me, England,
That I may beat the foe?

⁵² “Praying for the Empire,” *Canadian Baptist*, 14 September 1940, 3.

⁵³ “Our King,” *Presbyterian Record*, January 1940, 5.

A host of ships, a host of place,
 A host of guns, I know;
 The might of dauntless marching men,
 Of women at their posts,
 The wealth of mighty empire?
 These are no idle boasts.
 All these you give me, England,
 That I may reach the goal,
 But, God, how meagre are these gifts
 Without a valiant soul

What will you give me, England,
 That nations may be free?
 A sea of blood, a sea of tears,
 War's wrath and misery;
 The cries of stricken, weeping wives,
 Of children at their knee,
 The pillaged peaceful homesteads
 From whence our people flee?
 All this you give me, England,
 War's grim and bloody toll,
 O God! Give me the strength to bear,
 O God! Inspire my soul.

What will you give me, England,
 When victory is mine?
 The right to live, the right to love,
 The liberty divine;
 The joy of countless human souls,
 The downtrodden and the slave,
 Man's joy at his deliverance,
 From tyranny's foul grave?
 All these you give me, England,
 Land of the brave and free,
 O God! How much the nations owe,
 Dear Motherland, to thee!⁵⁴

War poems such as these were not without precedent, and they provide a unique glimpse into the principles on which the Canadian Protestant worldview was based.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ "Poem of the War," *Presbyterian Record*, November 1940, 345.

⁵⁵ Poetry of this kind was evident in the Protestant press in both the South African War (see Heath, "Passion for Empire," 127–47) and the First World War (for a Baptist example see Rudy "Continuities in Central Canadian Baptist Responses to War, 1899–1945," 21–25).

Furthermore, these poems creatively articulated the war as being fought to defend Christian Britain and all of the freedoms and liberties that implied.

The British Spirit: Empire as Exemplar of Christian Virtues

The crisis of another world war left many in the British Empire wondering about the merits of empire and the basis of its unity, not to mention its future. In the Canadian Protestant press there was detailed commentary on the nature of the empire. The ugly Nazi threat had sparked an urge to reiterate what exactly Britain and Canada were fighting to preserve. Following the Royal Tour of Canada 1939, there was a strong sense of loyalty in the Canadian Protestant press, and in the country at large. If the King and Queen embodied the empire in microcosm, the empire itself was a paradigm of certain British ideals which were in fact, in the view of Canadian Protestants, Christian ideals. Thus, one of the ways the war was justified and then interpreted was as a threat to the great empire and everything it represented.

A sermon preached by the Bishop of Liverpool, printed in the *Churchman*, explained why he loved his country (England). He was quick to point out that it was not because of Britain's history, for "that history is not wholly lovable. Our record is by no means clear. There is much in it that, to say the least, we can't be proud of."⁵⁶ The bishop went on to note how the war had prompted a reawakening of the British spirit: "it has been suggested that the British spirit, torpid as it often is, has become magnificent once more in the present struggle as the champion of individual liberty . . . it will yet be found that the rock of human sanity stands in the sea where it always stood, in sinful,

⁵⁶ "The British Character," *Canadian Churchman*, 12 September 1940, 504.

repentant, but yet faithful Albion.”⁵⁷ The bishop next described the characteristics of “the British spirit.” He wrote,

The British spirit. By that I mean the British character at its best. I want to suggest to you that we love our land, not merely because its aspect is fair, and its history great, but chiefly because it breeds men who are strong for the right and honest to acknowledge where they have themselves been wrong; who hate cruelty, who are straight and frank in their dealings; who want to be tolerant and fair (is there another country where all we mean by sportsmanship is even understood?); who are quick to sympathize with the oppressed and eager to go to their rescue (it has been said and I think truly, that Britons never fight so well as when they are persuaded that they are fighting for somebody else); who, when the fight is over, are ready to be reconciled. It is acknowledged by observers from outside that we have the gift of converting enemies into potential friends.⁵⁸

Another writer described the empire as “freedom loving, generously minded to her individual members and religiously minded.”⁵⁹ He claimed the empire had “learned to extend freedom to her colonies and to develop their latent possibilities of self-government making them respected partners in her greatness and progress, and gradually embracing them in that great commonwealth of free nations known as the British Empire.”⁶⁰ “In human history was there ever such a conception as this, or ever such an accomplishment?” he asked proudly.⁶¹

A sermon preached by Rev. Canon Woodcock, Rector of Christchurch in Deer Park, Toronto further outlined the ideals of the empire when he claimed that

if you believe in God, as He is revealed in the written and incarnate word, as He discloses Himself in nature and history, then it follows that as citizens of the British Empire, you will be proud and loyal—because with all its imperfections its stands for justice, good government, and for individual and personal freedom. It has traditionally stood for the protection of the smaller peoples, and fair play among the Nations. And our faith in God, involves the duty of giving ourselves

⁵⁷ “The British Character,” *Canadian Churchman*, 12 September 1940, 504.

⁵⁸ “The British Character,” *Canadian Churchman*, 12 September 1940, 504.

⁵⁹ “This England,” *Canadian Churchman*, 12 September 1940, 515.

⁶⁰ “This England,” *Canadian Churchman*, 12 September 1940, 515.

⁶¹ “This England,” *Canadian Churchman*, 12 September 1940, 515.

unreservedly to total war against the enemies of every high principle for which He stands. This then is our pledge—God, the Empire and the Empire’s Cause.⁶²

As these examples indicate, the benevolence of the empire was an appealing idea when contrasted against the stark evil of Nazi Germany, and this was in part because the empire, to many of its citizens, represented Christian civilization. But it was also due to the belief that “the British Spirit,” and the Christian qualities that the empire embodied were given by God. The Bishop of Liverpool admitted that the British character was not yet fully formed, but that “its maker is God who gave it. Whatsoever is true and gracious and attractive in our character is His gift to us in this country. Our spirit at its best is His spirit. Through us it has wrought great work for His world.”⁶³

A writer for the *Canadian Baptist* emphasized that Britain was unique in that many of its leaders had been devout followers of Christ. After changing its attitude towards its colonies following the American Rebellion, he noted, “since that day, however, the Empire has acted on the Christian principle that colonies were for the development of more free people and for more human liberties.”⁶⁴ He went on to cite the story of South Africa to illustrate the success of this policy, noting how, though at war with Britain from 1899–1902, South Africa “stood like a Gibraltar with the mother nation” during the Great War.⁶⁵ In the current war, he noted, “races of every colour, creed, and habits, owing allegiance to the Empire, are hurrying their troops and pouring out their wealth to ensure the success of the nation that once conquered their own people. Why? There is only one reason—Britain has ruled, not with a rod of iron, but

⁶² “Spirit of the Empire,” *Canadian Churchman*, 9 September 1943, n.p.

⁶³ “The British Character,” *Canadian Churchman*, 12 September 1940, 504.

⁶⁴ “The Principles of the Master,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1940, 3.

⁶⁵ “The Principles of the Master,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1940, 3.

with a certain degree of Christian principles.”⁶⁶ Building on this, one article described how Britain had been busy defending democracy during the last three hundred and fifty years, and proceeded to expound a highly selective history of this defence, beginning with the attack of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Next the author considered Britain’s defeat of Napoleon, then the Kaiser in the Great War, and now again in the Second World War, “for the Saving of Human Liberty.”⁶⁷ Alluding to Britain’s divine mission to spread the benefits of its empire, the article also noted that Britain had been fighting all this time to “save democracy for the world.”⁶⁸ These sentiments exemplified one way British democracy and freedom were fused together in Canadian Protestant depictions of the empire as the embodiment of Christian civilization.

In a similar vein, a writer in the *Maritime Baptist* sang the praises of the empire and noted specifically values that made it great. These included, democracy, freedom, which implied “deeply embedded justice and noble social ideals,” and the empire’s unity. In the current war, the writer declared,

She [Britain] stands as the defender of a Christian Civilization. To ignore the challenge of the hour is to deteriorate, to blacken the pages of history and to become a shameful thing. God has not called this great Commonwealth of Nations to such a course. We must cherish the Empire, so that we may hand down its treasures intact to succeeding generations, its freedom without a blemish, its principles unimpaired, its privileges untarnished. So shall the people of this hour win a place in the temple of the ages, where are forever embalmed the memories of such as have deserved well of their country and their race.⁶⁹

Perhaps the most striking statement about the British character, and its relationship to Canadians, came from Rev. J. E. Harris, a Baptist minister from Calgary. In a sermon

⁶⁶ “The Principles of the Master,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1940, 3.

⁶⁷ “Britain Busy Saving Democracy Last 350 Years,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 July 1940, 2.

⁶⁸ “Britain Busy Saving Democracy Last 350 Years,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 July 1940, 2.

⁶⁹ “The British Empire,” *Maritime Baptist*, 6 December 1939, 1.

about Christian citizenship and the resulting duties, Harris stated “the best things in our British tradition and our Empire’s life are the things that grow out of Christian elements in our past and present. British law and justice, British love of fair-play, British tolerance and liberty, and the strong humanitarian and philanthropic strains in our national life—these all are products of the Christian faith of Christian Britishers.”⁷⁰

Empire, Race, and Anti-Catholic Sentiment

The above discussions about the British character bring up the matter of race. Contemporary readers tend to see the 1940s as a highly racist time period and believe that imperialists held tightly to notions of racial and cultural superiority. However, as indicated above, one did not have to be an ardent imperialist to value Canada’s place in the British Empire. One thing that is certain is that Canada in the 1930s and 1940s seemed to be ambivalent about race. On the one hand, the subject didn’t seem to come up too often. Even during the war when the subject likely reached its peak, it was not as prominent a topic as Christian democracy or the evils of the liquor trade, to mention only two examples. On the other hand, strong feelings about race often came from deeply held assumptions about the superiority of Anglo-Saxons and like many deeply held assumptions, were often uncritically held and as a result did not receive a great deal of discussion in the press. At the same time however, undertakings such as the *Canadian Census 1941*, indicated in its discussion of ethnic populations in Canada that race mattered a great deal to Canadians.

⁷⁰ “My Duty to My Church,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 January 1941, 5.

When it came to the treatment of Japanese Canadians and the Jews in Europe, Canadian Protestants were quick to condemn racial prejudice, even if they did not necessarily do everything in their power to protect its victims. One of the strange things about the war was that, because it was interpreted as an attack on Christian civilization, and more specifically on the British (and by extension Canadian) embodiments of that, there was a sense in which the war took on racial connotations: The *British* against the Nazis. While demonization of the enemy occurred in the Protestant press, the racial connotations tended to focus on Britishness and Anglo-Saxons rather than Germans, or Japanese, or Italians. The British, or Anglo-Saxons, were defending democracy and freedom, which, it was not unusual to believe, had been their innovation. Even American support in the war was easily accommodated by this since it was an English-speaking nation and a former English colony. In any case, Canadian Protestants simultaneously condemned racial prejudice while also reinforcing the notion of Anglo-Saxon superiority.

This concept of racial superiority was often imbued with religious ideas. For many English-speakers, it was the Anglo-Saxon embrace of Protestantism that had helped make their empire great. Religious overtones were prominent in imperial themes. That being said, while Christianity had made the Anglo-Saxons great, they believed, some saw the greatness as being rooted in ethnicity that was only later made greater by Christianity. For example, an article entitled “This England,” printed in an autumnal 1940 edition of the *Canadian Churchman* claimed that the seeds of greatness existed among the Anglo-Saxons before Christianity became predominant in England. The unnamed author wrote:

Look back and see what has made her what she is. Fifteen hundred years ago the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes came to Britain; the chief asset that they brought to the islands of their conquest was themselves—their potentialities of heart, mind, and will. From the very start they were lovers of freedom. Their struggles among themselves and with other peoples were the growing pains of a great people in their infancy—a great people who idealized an ever increasing conviction of the true nature and worth of freedom. Their insular position gave them opportunity to develop their love of liberty, largely independent of foreign interference . . . Conquered by the Normans, another kindred race, they gradually assimilated all that Norman culture had to give them the two peoples became identified, contending against common foes, while they progressed together in the development of spiritual liberty. This innate love of liberty made these people great and their growing greatness of the spirit extended itself gradually to all classes of their people.⁷¹

Paula Hastings has argued that constructions of Canadian British identity in the late-nineteenth century were rooted in ethnicity, as Anglo-phone Canadians asserted their English identity in reaction to French Canadian culture. In this way the Anglo-Saxon race was promoted as the superior race. Indeed, in the late nineteenth century, Hastings noted, “many Protestant Canadians of British descent firmly believed that the survival of Canada would require a singularity of race, religion, and language among its peoples, and they sought to strengthen Canada’s British identity.”⁷² In light of Hastings’s argument, the preference given to British immigrants in Canada makes sense, since the goal was a racially homogenous society. It also sheds light on why the Census takers divided Canadians into two groups: British-born and Foreign born. However, Hastings’s argument on this point forgets that while race was a prominent factor in shaping Canadian identities, be they British or French, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Christendom’s fusion of religion with culture yet persisted. This meant that

⁷¹ “This England!” *Canadian Churchman*, 19 September 1940, 517.

⁷² Hastings, “Our Glorious Anglo-Saxon Race,” 92.

Britishness was articulated not purely on the basis of race, but also religion.⁷³ To be British was to be Protestant. Likewise with the French. Especially in French Canada, to be French was to be Catholic, and little about that would change at the macro-level until after the Second World War. It is true there were exceptions to these generalized identities, perhaps the most notable being English-speaking Catholics and French-speaking Protestants, but these were often left out in such generalized identifications of Britishness. In mid-twentieth-century Canadian Protestantism, religion and race were deeply intertwined and could not easily be separated into discrete elements.

Deep in its genes Protestantism was a reaction against Roman Catholicism. Kevin Anderson contends that in the first half of the twentieth century anti-Catholicism was a “cultural and intellectual measuring stick” in the formulation of English Canadian national identity.⁷⁴ Indeed, Anderson claims that anti-Catholicism was central to mainstream discourses of intellectuals, politicians, civic organizations, and even the Inter-Church Committee on Protestant-Roman Catholic relations and other Protestant church federations.⁷⁵ Linda Colley, similarly, has argued that in times of crisis Protestantism remained central to conceptions of British identity, since it invested the nation, and the empire, with divine purpose and destiny.⁷⁶

The Protestant press included commentary on Roman Catholicism, though it was not a prominent subject. Most comments on Roman Catholicism were critical and

⁷³ Bramadat and Seljak contend that any perceived separation between ethnic and religious identity is, in fact, artificial. See their discussion on the difficulty of extracting religion from ethnicity in Canada (Bramadat and Seljak, *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, 18–21).

⁷⁴ Anderson, “Anti-Catholicism,” 2.

⁷⁵ Anderson, “Anti-Catholicism,” 2. See Miller, “Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada,” for a treatment of anti-Catholic sentiment in the nineteenth century. The scholarship has mostly ignored anti-Catholicism among French Protestants. For a treatment of this subject, see Lougheed, “Anti-Catholicism among French Canadian Protestants.”

⁷⁶ Colley, *Britons*, 29–31.

negative. A 1944 editorial in the *Western Baptist* called the Pope's call to prayer for Catholics on 8 December 1943 "untimely," and rejected calls by some that the Pope be a mediator between the Axis powers and the United Nations.⁷⁷ The editor wrote, "the record of the Vatican during the war and before has not been one to give any thinking person confidence in anything Rome might suggest. What can a great totalitarian institution, interested in nothing so much as a return to the status quo, offer to a world fighting for freedom and the dawn of a new day?"⁷⁸ Meanwhile an article in the *Canadian Baptist* emphasized that popes are unknown in Baptist churches because "the membership is a spiritual democracy: there is no place in the organization for the dictator."⁷⁹

Baptists more than other Canadian Protestants were the most overt in their anti-Catholic statements. Indeed, it comes as no surprise that the most outspoken, vitriolic anti-Catholic voice, and creator of the Canadian Protestant League, was the fundamentalist Baptist, T. T. Shields.⁸⁰ However, he had broken away from mainline Baptists in the late 1920s and in no way represented their thought. While prominent BCOQ leaders initially supported the Canadian Protestant League, they found despite their sympathy that they had to abstain from membership.⁸¹

⁷⁷ "1944—What?" *Western Baptist*, January 1944, 8.

⁷⁸ "1944—What?" *Western Baptist*, January 1944, 8.

⁷⁹ "No Popes in Baptist Churches," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 February 1942, 4.

⁸⁰ The founding of the Canadian Protestant League was a reaction to a controversy that had broken out in September 1941. The Dominion Government initiated a Week of National Reconsecration, in an attempt to build morale. To begin the week a joint Protestant-Catholic worship service was planned to be held on Parliament Hill on Sunday, 14 September 1940. Due to a series of errors, the planned service did not occur, rather a Catholic mass was held before the Peace Tower. Canadian Protestants were outraged. For a detailed account of these events and the League's founding see Reilly, "Baptists and Organized Opposition." For a treatment of T. T. Shields's anti-Catholicism, see Smale, "'The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness' or Verbal Bigotry," 5–27.

⁸¹ These leaders included Rev. Dr. H. H. Bingham, General Secretary of the BCOQ; Rev. Dr. W. E. Hodgson, President of the BCOQ; and Rev. Dr. J. B. McLaurin, General Secretary of the Canadian Baptist Foreign Missions Board. Other prominent Protestant leaders supporting the League included Rev.

Baptists were especially quick to give voice to the fact that Roman Catholicism was at odds with democracy. For example, one article described how a court of bishops meeting in Quebec had recently decided to allow greater freedom to their communicants by allowing them to vote for candidates of certain political parties which had previously been banned. The writer pointed out that “the fact that the bishops have increased the political liberties of their people is an admission that they interfere with them. There are millions of Catholics in Canada and many thousands of Catholic voters. By their own admission the bishops, to a large extent, control that vote.”⁸² In a war that was cast as a conflict defending Christian democracy, it is not hard to see how this was problematic for some Canadian Protestants. As the same writer went on to clarify, “Democracy can only function properly when the citizen is allowed to exercise his franchise according to the dictates of his own conscience, guided by his own best judgement.”⁸³ As these statements suggest, when it came to English-Canadian Protestant constructions of identity, ethnicity was not the only component of Britishness at play. Indeed, it was in the context of Britishness as Protestant wherein democracy was invested not only with Christian meaning, but specifically Protestant meaning. Thus, in a national crisis that threatened British democracy, Roman Catholicism was a factor both domestic and abroad that further confirmed the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. And, of course, anti-Catholicism was a significant factor exacerbating

A. J. Wilson, editor of the *United Church Observer*; Rev. J. H. Barnes, Rector of St. Peter’s Anglican Church; Rev. T. Christie Innes, pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church, among others.

⁸² “Catholic Bishops and the Franchise,” *Western Baptist*, November 1943, 14.

⁸³ “Catholic Bishops and the Franchise,” *Western Baptist*, November 1943, 14. Who exactly Kirkconnell considered Anglo-Saxon is unclear because the Census indicated that the majority of Canadians were “British born.” The likely explanation is that he grouped French Canadians together with non-British immigrant groups as non-Anglo-Saxons.

English-French relations in Canada, not merely in wartime but throughout Canada's history.

Anti-Catholicism was also widespread among Protestants in the U.S.A., though it lacked the tensions that in Canada tied it to English-French relations. A controversy erupted when President Roosevelt appointed Myron Taylor as his personal representative to Vatican City. Surprisingly, the Canadian Protestant press echoed, on a much smaller scale, many American Protestants, in their condemnation of the President's decision, largely due to their belief in the separation of church and state and an underlying anti-Catholicism.⁸⁴

And yet, English-French relations were inherently fraught with anti-Catholic concerns about French Catholics outnumbering English Protestants. An article written by Baptist scholar Watson Kirkconnell, described what he called the "Twilight of Canadian Protestantism."⁸⁵ Kirkconnell deplored the fact that Anglo-Saxons were no longer the majority in Canada, and emphasized that they had a birth rate "so low as to forecast their ultimate eclipse in our national life."⁸⁶ Partially to blame for this, he believed, was "the secularization of our life and the multiplication of 'good things' of an industrial civilization."⁸⁷ This had undermined the "Anglo-Saxon family." He pointed out that "the future trend is towards pronounced Catholic predominance," noting that all

⁸⁴ See Sittser, *A Cautious Patriotism*, 107–9, 111, for a treatment of American Protestant anti-Catholicism and their reaction to Taylor's appointment. For Canadian Protestant reactions, see "Church and State in Serious Conflict," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 March 1940, 3; "Claims President Roosevelt Made Serious Political Blunder When He Sent Minister to the Vatican," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 April 1940, 4; "On the Other Foot," *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1940, 4.

⁸⁵ Two other articles written by Baptists addressed similar fears. See, "Why Only a Militant Protestants Can Keep Canada British," *The Gospel Witness*, 12 March 1942; "Protestantism Dying?," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1944, 3.

⁸⁶ "The Twilight of Canadian Protestantism," *Western Baptist*, December 1942, 5.

⁸⁷ "The Twilight of Canadian Protestantism," *Western Baptist*, December 1942, 5.

the European Protestant groups in Canada had low birth rates.⁸⁸ Kirkconnell contrasted the decline of Anglo-Saxons with “the dynamic community of the Church of Rome, whose ancient wisdom openly and constantly stresses the importance of the family and whose careful education of the young renders its members virtually impregnable against the appeal of other creeds.”⁸⁹ He hoped that Anglo-Saxons would learn to halt their own extinction by revising their attitude towards the family, but also, somewhat paradoxically, condemning racial prejudice: “Hatred begets hatred; intolerance and injustice on our part must have their inevitable reaction. It is vital that men of goodwill of all origins—British, French, and European—should strive to build for the future on foundations of sympathy and mutual understanding.”⁹⁰

Despite the deep, underlying anti-Catholicism in constructions of Canadian Protestant identity, there were more conciliatory voices in the Protestant press. A United Church minister from Quebec responded to a pamphlet announcing the formation of the Canadian Protestant League. He wrote that, having lived all his life in Quebec, “he has never been aware of the Satanic characteristics of the Roman Catholic Church that people outside seem to see so clearly.”⁹¹ Other writers emphasized moments of unity between Canadian Protestants and Roman Catholics, even if they were fleeting. One example was the joint delegation of Protestants and Catholics to the Federal Cabinet to request restrictions on the liquor trade.⁹² Another was joint statements from British church leaders that included not only Anglicans and Presbyterians but also Roman

⁸⁸ “The Twilight of Canadian Protestantism,” *Western Baptist*, December 1942, 5.

⁸⁹ “The Twilight of Canadian Protestantism,” *Western Baptist*, December 1942, 5.

⁹⁰ “The Twilight of Canadian Protestantism,” *Western Baptist*, December 1942, 5.

⁹¹ “The Canadian Protestant League,” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1942, 15.

⁹² For example, see “Sincerity,” *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1941, 4.

Catholics.⁹³ Yet another writer emphasized a moment of unity in sacrifice as he wrote of Canadian troops who died at Dieppe: “Protestants and Catholics together, men born in other lands, men who had rallied to fight to the death rather than accept slavery. Free men they were and die they would before that liberty was to be surrendered to any Dictator.”⁹⁴

Returning to Hasting’s argument, it should be noted that she fails to account for the pluralism that already existed in discourses of Britishness. Canadians in the first half of the twentieth century tended to hold a Britannic nationalism which exceeded Canada’s boundaries and applied to a larger Britannic or pan-Anglo-Saxon nation.⁹⁵ Phillip Buckner has pointed out that racial definitions are inherently arbitrary, since they lack any scientific basis, and that the words used to describe race are themselves slippery terms, perhaps the most notable being “ethnicity.”⁹⁶ This was surely true for Canadian Protestants, who appeared to be able to shift back and forth between the identities of Canadian and British while also emphasizing other national identities.⁹⁷ This was due, in part to the fact that all English-speaking Canadians were immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. It was also a result of the plurality already inherent in the concept of Britishness. It was easy to accept the idea that one could be both British and something else, since to be British included the possibility of being Scottish, Welsh, Irish, or English.⁹⁸ Thus, Hastings’s argument is itself based on an imprecise notion of

⁹³ “God and our Times,” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1941, 2.

⁹⁴ Dieppe...And After,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 September 1942, 4.

⁹⁵ Cole, “The Problem of Nationalism,” 162–4, 174, 178–9, as quoted in Thompson, “Canada and the Third British Empire,” 88.

⁹⁶ Buckner, “Canada and the British Empire,” 2.

⁹⁷ Thompson, “Canada and the Third British Empire,” 88.

⁹⁸ Buckner, “Canada and the British Empire,” 6.

ethnicity that fails to account for the flexibility and plurality inherent in concepts of Britishness.

Regardless of the plurality of Britishness, race, particularly the belief in the superiority of Anglo-Saxons, was tied to civilization. One writer noted that British civilization was unique because, while the great civilizations of Greece, Rome, China, and Japan were only for the favored few “The Anglo-Saxon peoples were the first to seek to devise a civilization for the common man.”⁹⁹ The writer, Geoffrey W. Stafford, then argued that the abolition of slavery, the improved position of women, the ultimate abandonment of war, and the rise of internationalism, were all achievements of “the Anglo Saxon Race.” While the abolition of slavery was not entirely due to Anglo Saxons, he believed they were among “the most powerful factors in the movement.”¹⁰⁰ Regarding the position of women he stated “It is not too much to say that woman owes her present position directly to the influence of Jesus Christ, and to His ethic, largely as it has been translated into practice by the Anglo-Saxon peoples where the position of women is higher than anywhere else in the world.”¹⁰¹ The League of Nations, he claimed “was a specifically Anglo-Saxon creation,” and went on to argue for an internationalism after the war that, if successful, “we shall feel at the end of life that we have done something towards the bringing of the Kingdom of God on earth.”¹⁰² Stafford saw the major achievements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as being achieved by Anglo-Saxons.

⁹⁹ “Some Achievements of the Anglo Saxon Race,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1944, 13.

¹⁰⁰ “Some Achievements of the Anglo Saxon Race,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1944, 13.

¹⁰¹ “Some Achievements of the Anglo Saxon Race,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1944, 13.

¹⁰² “Some Achievements of the Anglo Saxon Race,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1944, 13.

Despite the foregoing discussion, the notion of Anglo-Saxon superiority was not as rigid as it may have seemed. Race remained important, and one redeeming aspect of British identity, whether that was construed in terms of plurality of Britishness, or as a “mosaic of ethno-cultural groups” is that by the Second World War it had come to encompass far more than Anglo-Saxons. Many in India thought of themselves as part of the British Empire, just as French Canadians were part of the British Empire. Similarly, other racial groups could declare their loyalty to the empire. For example, a group of Canadian Hungarian Presbyterians and Lutherans declared soon after the war began: “Although we are children of Hungarian parentage . . . we hold an undivided and unaffected love for the land of our adoption, Canada. While lamenting war with all its horrors we appreciate the serious situation that threatens *our* Empire, and hereby affirm our loyalty, and pledge our prayers, our labor and our sacrifice to the Empire.”¹⁰³ Similarly, John Thompson notes that in the late 1930s, there were many newspaper accounts of Union Jacks and declarations of loyalty to Britain at Polish, Czech, and Ukrainian celebrations in Canada.¹⁰⁴ While Canadian notions of British imperialism fell far short of later standards of inclusivity and racial equality, there was in the matrix of British imperial sentiment room for non-British races to take advantage of what were usually described as the freedoms and gifts of the empire, and even improve their standing. In time, their non-British heritage would become less important.

It would seem that deeply held notions about Anglo-Saxon superiority co-existed with appeals to the New Testament clarifying and confirming the Christian belief in racial equality. This may have been the sort of contradiction worldviews are known to

¹⁰³ “The Church and War,” *Presbyterian Record*, November 1939, 324–25. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁴ Thompson, “Canada and the Third British Empire,” 102.

accommodate, or it may have been that a sense of paternalism latent in their conceptualization of the Anglo-Saxon race and their place in the British Empire guided their thinking on the subject of race. That being said, Canadian Protestants' declarations affirming the equality of all races and decrying racial prejudice were a voice of dissent against the idea of Anglo-Saxon Protestant superiority, even if they at times failed to support their rhetoric with concrete action.

The inconsistency of Canadian Protestant thinking when it came to matters of race was further exemplified in their response to the plight of the Jews in Europe.¹⁰⁵ This inconsistency is reflected in the historiography. Haim Genizi has argued that a deep-rooted anti-Semitism in the churches produced a subdued critique of the Nazi's treatment of the Jews.¹⁰⁶ In *None Is Too Many*, Irving Abella and Harold Troper claimed that the churches were silent with respect to the Nazi's treatment of the Jews, but this was challenged by Alan Davies and F. Nefsky, who argued that Canadian Protestants were not entirely silent on the matter, though, they lacked a unified, organized outcry.¹⁰⁷ These scholars are largely correct in their assessment: the plight of the Jews was not a prominent subject in the Protestant press, though it was certainly present. There were calls to "support the Government in the efforts they are now making, with other Allied powers and the neutrals, to help the Jews now in danger and to provide succour for their refugees."¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, the same article concluded that "Victory is the only sure road

¹⁰⁵ It is worth noting that the *Census of Canada 1941* record the Jewish population in Canada as being 1.5 percent of the country's total population, 170,241 persons; it seems they were mostly concentrated in Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba.

¹⁰⁶ Genizi, *The Holocaust and Canadian Protestant Churches*.

¹⁰⁷ Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many*; Davies and Nefsky, "The Church of England and the Jewish Plight"; Davies and Nefsky, "The United Church and the Jewish Plight"; Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches?* For an account of the travails of Canadian Jews, see Tulchinsky *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*.

¹⁰⁸ "The Persecution of the Jews," *Canadian Churchman*, 15 April 1943, 230.

to their [the Jews's] deliverance. The war becomes increasingly a crusade not only to preserve freedom and justice but also to overthrow and shatter cruelty and tyranny in their most savage and hateful forms.”¹⁰⁹ Others condemned anti-Semitism more generally and suggested that Christians and Jews should stand together in the current conflict.¹¹⁰ In addition, there was some discussion of working to have confiscated Jewish property returned to its rightful owners in France, and even the formation of the Canadian Christian Council on Palestine, which advocated the “removal of barriers keeping the refugee Jewish people of Europe from entering Palestine, and to counter discrimination against the Jewish people,” and, incidentally, argued that anti-Semitism was “un-Christian and undemocratic.”¹¹¹

Another important consideration related to both race and Canadian Protestant conceptions of British identity was how Germans were viewed. After people of British origin, Germans made up the next largest ethnic population in Canada. According the 1941 Census, they made up 4 percent of the Canadian population. As Phillip Buckner has pointed out, the discrimination against German-Canadians that led to deep divisions during the First World War, was not repeated during the Second World War.¹¹² By 1939, most Germans in Canada had already been there for several generations and “most had little sense of being German,” and bore little sympathy towards National Socialism.¹¹³ There is no evidence in the Protestant press to suggest that Canadian Protestants bore any race-based resentment toward Canadian Germans. Nor did they

¹⁰⁹ “The Persecution of the Jews,” *Canadian Churchman*, 15 April 1943, 230.

¹¹⁰ “The Marks of Anti-Semitism,” *United Church Observer*, 15 March 1941, 10.

¹¹¹ “Men and Affairs: Restoring Jewish Property in France,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 December 1944, 4; “Supporting Jewish Claims,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1944, 3.

¹¹² Buckner, “Canada and the End of Empire,” 109.

¹¹³ Buckner, “Canada and the End of Empire,” 109–10. Buckner notes that of over 400,000 German Canadians, about 800 were interned.

seem to bear any toward Germans as a whole, though separating Nazis from Germans in Canadian Protestant rhetoric was difficult. The denominational press evinced some sympathy for the German Church, especially the efforts of Martin Niemoller whose resistance to Nazi control of the German churches they praised.¹¹⁴ But Canadian Protestants did allow their sense of British superiority, however uncritically, to inform their depictions of Nazis and Nazism, and even more rarely, would resort to emphasizing a perceived German predisposition toward violence and war that were believed to have motivated Germany in the First World War. For example, one article pointed out there were no pleasant or acceptable alternatives to British rule, only “the Teutonic barbarism of Nazi Germany . . . the refined sadism of Imperial Japan. . . the neo-Roman slavery and sensualism of Fascist Italy . . . the crushing Slavic steam-roller of Soviet Russia.”¹¹⁵ At other times, Germans were referred to as gangsters, a gangster race, godless, heretics, and pagans.¹¹⁶ It would seem that these referred primarily to Nazis, but then again, such general phrases as “a gangster race” seemed to be broadly encompassing. Some depictions of the enemy revolved around their ideology and decline into immorality and irreligion: “Germany has become a highly immoral and

¹¹⁴ Niemoller was charged with treason and imprisoned. At his trial the judges could find no evidence of treason in his utterances and acquitted him. Immediately following this Hitler had him arrested and he was put in a concentration camp. He survived the war and lived until 1984. Niemoller was the most prominent German Christian in the Protestant press, though it should be noted that Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Schneider, Helmut Gollwitzer, Gerhard Ebeling, and Rudolf Bultmann were other Germans who also resisted the Nazi’s encroachment of Christianity in one way or another. On Niemoller in the Protestant press, see “Niemoller’s Followers Oppose Co-Operation with ‘German Christians,’” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 2; “Fall Presbyteries Discuss Church and War,” *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1939, 3; “Christianity and the Totalitarian State,” *Maritime Baptist*, 13 September 1939, 14; “The Man They Could Not Muzzle,” *Canadian Baptist*, 13 April 1939, 5; “The Christian Challenge to the Nazi Creed,” *Canadian Churchman*, 8 August 1940, 453; “Christianity in Germany, A Speech by Dr. Hildebrand at Norwich,” *Canadian Churchman*, 13 June 1940, 375; “Is Hitler Anti-Christ?” *Presbyterian Record*, September 1940, 264–66.

¹¹⁵ “A City Under Siege,” *Presbyterian Record*, November 1940, n.p.

¹¹⁶ “War Again!” *Canadian Baptist*, 31 August–7 September 1939, 1.

Paganistic nation, and Hitler has cast the Bible overboard. Hitler is the state God.”¹¹⁷

While other depictions harkened back to the First World War’s reference to Germans as “Huns.”¹¹⁸ Advertisements for war bonds throughout the Protestant press referred to Nazi soldiers as “bandits of the Crooked Cross.”¹¹⁹ This fit neatly in with depictions of the Allies as “being soldiers of the cross which unites us with our fellow believers in the great fight under Christ’s banner against all forces of paganism and irreligion in the life around us.”¹²⁰ Conceptions of Canadian and British soldiers as the “good soldiers,” or “Christ’s soldiers,” Heath has noted, dated back to the Crimean War.¹²¹ Underlying all of these caricatures, was the framework of Christian democracy that, Canadian Protestants believed, was the antithesis of Nazism.

Hitler was labelled as the anti-Christ by some, while one writer argued that “the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche has seeped down into the heart and mind of the German people, and it has become incarnate in Adolf Hitler . . . The power behind Hitler is the power of the Devil’s revolt against God.”¹²² Most talk of the Nazis, and Hitler, however, focused on their threat to freedom and Christian civilization. This was neatly summarized by one writer on the first anniversary of the outbreak of the war: “Now joined by Mussolini’s Italy, the Nazis are determined to make an end of freedom, and honor, the sanctity of family life and the practice of true religion, establishing in their place enforced labour, regimentation, and the ‘goose-step,’ together with duplicity,

¹¹⁷ “The Urgent Necessity of Teaching Christianity in Our Schools,” *Canadian Churchman*, 4 June 1942.

¹¹⁸ “Dieppe...And After,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 September 1942, 4.

¹¹⁹ “The Bandits of the Crooked Cross,” *Canadian Churchman*, 23 October 1941, 603; “The Bandits of the Crooked Cross,” *Maritime Baptist*, 1 November 1941, 21.

¹²⁰ “The Church—Its Nature and Function,” *Canadian Baptist*, 9 March 1939, 4.

¹²¹ Heath, “South African War,” 27.

¹²² “The Powers Behind Hitler,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 October 1940, 3; “War’s Miracles of Past Assurance of Divine Help Against New Anti-Christ,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 June 1940, 5.

treachery, and the fanatical worship of a state symbolized by a monster—calculating, cruel, heartless, and wholly mad. *But Britain and the Empire stand between this monster and the civilization he would ruin.*”¹²³ Despite this heated rhetoric, the churches also called for prayer for their enemies and “urged the people to avoid a spirit of hatred and to rededicate themselves to Christian principles and prayer.”¹²⁴

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the British Empire was well past its zenith, it continued to form a major element of the Canadian Protestant outlook, especially regarding the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. Just as Canadian Protestants viewed the nation and democracy as distinctly Christian institutions, so too did they view the British Empire, faults and all, as a Christian institution. In the same way they saw the empire as distinctly Protestant, largely due to an intrinsic anti-Catholicism which co-existed uneasily with the British ideal of tolerance. Furthermore, Canadian Protestants saw the monarchy and the empire as embodiments of Christian ideals. Thus, the war was justified as a threat to the empire and the Christian ideals it embodied. In addition, the assumption of empire that was so enmeshed in the Canadian Protestant worldview shaped their ideas about race. As the denominational press indicated, their thinking on race was inconsistent, especially when it came to the plight of the Jews and Japanese Canadians. Notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority informed Canadian Protestant demonizations of the enemy just as much as the dualism proceeding from their

¹²³ “First Anniversary of the War,” *Western Baptist*, September 1940, 2. Emphasis added.

¹²⁴ “Oxford Presbytery Urges Prohibition of Liquor Traffic,” *United Church Observer*, 1 January 1940, 27.

theological reflection on Christian democracy, which designated the empire the antithesis of Nazism's new order.

CHAPTER 3: WARTIME SPIRITUALITY IN THE DENOMINATIONAL PRESS

“It is therefore right that once again the nation should turn to God as its strength and stay in this time of trouble and once again commit its great cause to Him.”¹

One of the unique features of the denominational press was that it was a medium for expressions of piety and belief that responded to God and the events of the war. Prayers, hymns, scripture passages, sermons, exhortations, reflections, and remembrance of the dead were all forms of spirituality found in the denominational press. These expressions of piety and belief were a response to God as well as a response to the calamitous events of the war. Predicated on the doctrine of God’s providence, these expressions of spirituality helped Canadian Protestants make sense of the national and international crisis precipitated by the war. As a result, the conceptualization of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization was to be found even in wartime spirituality, further bolstering that particular view of the war. As noted earlier, the churches were national institutions with great influence, and they guided Canadians on issues of morality and social reform. But they also guided Canadians pastorally, guiding their peoples’s spirituality; their responses to God in the midst of a civilization-threatening war.

Prayer was chief among the spiritual responses to the war. Not only were prayers printed in the denominational press, but many sermons, editorials, and articles explained the need for prayer and exhorted Canadian Protestants to redouble their efforts at prayer.

¹ “Day of National Prayer,” *Canadian Churchman*, 5 September 1940, 482.

Another major idea in the press and closely related to prayer was the belief in divine providence, which in turn implied God's sovereignty. There were numerous discussions of this subject. Divine providence became intertwined with prayer as prayers were offered that asked for God to aid the Allies, for a speedy victory, and for a lasting peace. Moreover, events interpreted as miracles, such as the Battle of Dunkirk, appeared to prove that God was on the side of the Allies. The fact that Dunkirk occurred the week after a National Day of Prayer was called by King George VI was not lost on Canadian Protestants. Finally, perhaps the most unique expression of war-time spirituality was Remembrance Day. November eleventh became something akin to a church holiday. In the context of Remembrance Day sermons, editorials, and articles, Christian sacrifice was a preeminent theme. Christian sacrifice and Christian civilization were tied together so that the sacrifices of soldiers were interpreted in terms very close to martyrdom.

This chapter demonstrates that even at the more fundamental level of spirituality (expressions of piety and belief in response to God and surrounding events) the war was construed in religious terms. Underlying this was the doctrine of divine providence and the related question of whether the war was a judgement of God on a sinful civilization. Even when discussing providence and judgement Canadian Protestants framed the war as a religious conflict in defence of civilization. In addition, this chapter considers the piety of Remembrance Day reflections and rhetoric that further buttressed the idea that the war was a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization.

Calls to Prayer

One way the churches responded to the war was through prayer. In the Protestant press, prayers and calls to prayer were common. The prayers printed in the denominational press, in combination with the discussions surrounding national or empire-wide days of prayer (and their results), and articles and editorials that supplemented Remembrance Day services functioned on several levels. The first was pastoral. The churches sought to guide their flocks. But they also sought to guide the nation, which reflected the churches's role as national institutions of public religion. In this capacity the church press played a special role in interpreting the war for Canadians. Explanations of God's sovereignty, divine providence, the war as God's Judgement, the justice of the cause, the war as a crusade or holy war, and selective appeals to history provided the main ingredients in the interpretation of the war offered in the Protestant press. Occasionally prayers alluded to or appealed to those things, but often they were given devoted space for discussion in the denominational press. Nevertheless, prayer was a major way through which Protestants could support the Allied war effort.

The earliest call for a national day of prayer was actually issued by Canada's Governor-General, Lord Tweedsmuir. He issued a proclamation for a Day of Prayer and Intercession in late September 1939. This important event, the first of its kind in Canada during the Second World War, was eclipsed by later calls for prayer by His Majesty George VI, whose first call for a national day of prayer was issued in the spring of 1940. That day of prayer set an important precedent because the ensuing events at Dunkirk were understood as a miraculous act of God in response to England's prayers. Not only did this apparent miracle serve as both a proof and a justification for days of prayer, but

it was also the first in a series of calls for prayer that were initiated, not by clergy, but leaders of government. The King issued calls for prayer numerous times over the course of the war, but so did Canada's governor-general, Lord Tweedsmuir, Britain's minister of foreign affairs (and ambassador to the U.S.A) Lord Halifax, and Canada's own Prime Minister, W. L. Mackenzie King. These men's calls for prayer are highly suggestive for assessing the place of Christianity in both British and Canadian society, not to mention the fact that they would not have called for days of prayer if they did not believe in their efficacy, or at least, their efficacy in rousing public support for the war effort. After all, the First World War had appeared to prove the efficacy of prayer on the home front.

Lord Tweedsmuir's Call for Prayer

Under a bold headline in the *Canadian Baptist*, entitled "Baptists and the War" a column noted the Governor General's proclamation of a Day of Prayer and Intercession. In it, Lord Tweedsmuir implied a strong belief in divine providence, the justice of the cause, Canada's place in the British Empire, and the hope for a lasting peace. The article quoted the proclamation, in part, which read:

Believing it to be fitting that our people of Canada should be enabled to make a public and solemn avowal of duty to Almighty God . . . we do hereby appoint Sunday, the eighth day of October to be throughout our Dominion of Canada a day of humble prayer and intercession to Almighty God on behalf of the cause undertaken by Canada, by the United Kingdom and other Dominions of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and by allied and associated and all those who are offering their lives for our cause and for a speedy and favourable peace that shall be founded on understanding and not hatred, to the end that peace may endure.

And we do hereby invite all our loving subjects throughout Canada to set apart this appointed day as a day of humble prayer and intercession.²

² "Governor General's Proclamation," *Canadian Baptist*, 28 September–5 October 1939, 5.

The article went on to quote president of the BCOQ, J. A. Johnston who noted with gratitude and approval the Governor General's proclamation. Appealing to God's providence Johnston urged Baptists in Ontario and Quebec to set that day aside for prayer and expressed his hope that in great numbers Baptists on that day might "with chastened and believing hearts, we may wait upon God, imploring his mercy and bespeaking his intervention that the days of slaughter may be shortened and that the cause of freedom, righteousness and peace may speedily prevail."³

Lord Tweedsmuir's call to prayer was echoed by Canada's Prime Minister, W. L. Mackenzie King. The call was described in the *Maritime Baptist* as "a day of special prayer to Almighty God on behalf of the cause undertaken by this country, the Empire and allied powers, for all those offering their lives in the cause of freedom and also for a speedy and favourable peace, founded on understanding and justice."⁴ It emphasized the themes of divine providence, the empire, the justice of the cause, the hope for peace, and the sacrifice of those offering their lives for the cause of freedom. The editor went on to gently critique the idea of asking for divine help for the Allies. He stated that "the truest prayer is not that which endeavours to enlist the Almighty as an ally, but that which reaches out to Him for knowledge . . . with the earnest desire of doing His will at any cost."⁵ He exhorted the churches to keep the "altar fires of prayer and worship burning brightly," and expressed hope that the churches would emerge from war "cleansed from every unholy concomitant."⁶ Cleansing or purification was associated with the notion of

³ "Governor General's Proclamation," *Canadian Baptist*, 28 September–5 October 1939, 5.

⁴ "A Day of Humble Prayer," *Maritime Baptist*, 4 October 1939, 4.

⁵ "A Day of Humble Prayer," *Maritime Baptist*, 4 October 1939, 4.

⁶ "A Day of Humble Prayer," *Maritime Baptist*, 4 October 1939, 4.

the war as God's judgement as well as the need for repentance at a national level if prayer was to be effective.

Prayers were printed in the denominational newspapers which asked for God's aid in the war effort. For example, in the *Presbyterian Record*, a prayer asked for God's help: "we pray thee, thine Almighty arm to strengthen and protect the forces of our King and of our Allies in every peril of sea, and land, and air; shelter them in the day of battle, and in time of peace keep them safe from all evil; endue them ever with loyalty and courage . . ." ⁷ Another prayer in the *Record*, from November 1940, asked that God would be a defence to Britain against the enemy. ⁸

There were also many prayers asking God specifically for an Allied victory and which interpreted the war as a spiritual conflict. For example, the *Record* exhorted readers to prayer even more explicitly and earnestly with respect to the war, and claimed that the war "is a spiritual struggle and only the dauntless by the help of God shall prevail," thus emphasizing the need for the churches to promote prayer and thereby reinforce morale on the home front. ⁹

The National Anthem (*God Save the King*) was also considered to be a prayer that should be used in war time. "Almost all Baptist churches are singing the National Anthem now as part of their service," noted the *Canadian Baptist*. ¹⁰ The *Record* appealed to Paul's exhortation to Timothy to offer prayers for kings and all those in

⁷ "War Equipment," *Presbyterian Record*, June 1940, 163. This prayer was taken from a Presbyterian book of prayer, which is to say, it was not written specifically for the Second World War.

⁸ "Prayer for the Empire," *Presbyterian Record*, November 1940, 346. For other examples of prayer for the Empire see "The Empire and Prayer," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1940, 3; "Praying for the Empire," *Canadian Baptist*, 14 September 1940, 3; "Prayer for Nations and their Rulers," *Maritime Baptist*, 24 January 1940, 4.

⁹ "Prayer for Victory," *Presbyterian Record*, November 1940, 323.

¹⁰ "Prayer for the Nation," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 July 1942, 3.

authority to support a plea for the national anthem. The writer characterized *God Save the King* as a theme song for the world which was “a prayer in song,” and “should be much in common use both because of this [St. Paul’s] counsel of prayer for kings and because there is in this day of anxiety a strong urge on the part of everyone to prayer.”¹¹ The writer concluded that “this familiar theme song stands for patriotism and loyalty throughout the Empire upon which the sun never sets.”¹² In the *United Church Observer*, Neil M. Leckie noted, with approval, the use of the national anthem in a weekly evening service “in a town of Ontario.” Interestingly, he also expressed approval that the second stanza of *God Save the King*, “in which a stout desire is expressed for the scattering of the enemies, the confusing of their politics, and the frustrating of their knavish tricks,” had been re-introduced in this weekly service.¹³

One of the pivotal moments for war-time prayer and the belief in its efficacy was what happened at Dunkirk. The events at Dunkirk were interpreted as an answer to prayer and as proof that God was on the side of the Allies. In an article describing the powerful effects of two days of national prayer, a writer for the *Canadian Churchman* argued that the events of Dunkirk were a new light in the darkness and stated his belief that these events were important enough that they would take their place alongside the destruction of the Spanish Armada off the coast of England in the sixteenth century. He wrote:

the first day of prayer has a remarkable effect. ‘As long as the world lasts, it will be remembered that the week which began with the nation on its knees, ended with the nation lifted up, its spirit fortified, its faith strengthened and every man’s heart beating high. Out of the depths had come a new hope for the world, out of the darkness a new light. It was an answer to prayer that held the world

¹¹ “A Plea for the National Anthem,” *Presbyterian Record*, August 1940, 228.

¹² “A Plea for the National Anthem,” *Presbyterian Record*, August 1940, 228.

¹³ “A Supplication for Victory,” *United Church Observer*, 14 September 1940, 14.

spell-bound.’ A senior officer of many campaigns, compared Dunkirk with Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. In both events it was the totally unexpected behaviour of nature which thwarted the enemy. There was darkness for the Israelites. There was the great storm of Tuesday May 28th, which enabled our forces to reach Dunkirk and there was the miracle of the great calm in the English Channel which enabled frail craft by the hundred to help evacuate the men. The incident will take its place beside the shattering of the Armada by the storm. Prayer is the great force in life and every department of life.¹⁴

In an editorial in the same issue, the editor emphasized God’s sovereignty, stating his belief that “God has been the strength and stay of God’s people all down the ages . . . Again and again, it has been proved in our history. The Armada, Napoleon, Dunkirk, proved God very near and therefore we did not fear.”¹⁵ A sermon preached by the Bishop of Saskatchewan, the Right Rev. H. D. Martin, printed in the *Churchman*, also emphasized how the events at Dunkirk proved the need for national days of prayer. He stated “We have been called to Special Days of Prayer, and we have every reason to believe that God heard our prayers and answered them. The First Great Empire Day of Prayer called by His Gracious Majesty King George VI was followed immediately by the successful evacuation of the B. E. F. from Dunkirk—and to me this was far more than a mere coincidence.”¹⁶

The apparent miracle at Dunkirk served as a sort of memorial throughout the war that God was on the side of the Allies and, barring that, was a source of inspiration. A writer in the *Canadian Baptist* reflected in 1941 that “the chief thing for me in 1940 was the retreat from Dunkirk. In all my life, aside from some personal situations, nothing

¹⁴ “Prayer and its Effect,” *Canadian Churchman*, 19 September 1940, 514.

¹⁵ “Hope and Strength,” *Canadian Churchman*, 19 September 1940, 514. For a similar example, see “This England,” *Canadian Churchman*, 19 September 1940, 515.

¹⁶ “The Church’s Opportunity: A Sermon,” *Canadian Churchman*, 26 September 1940, 531. The B. E. F. stands for the British Expeditionary Force. It is also interesting to note that later in the sermon Bishop Martin mentions that “Mr. Churchill referred to it [Dunkirk] as a miracle.” This is merely another example of secular leaders using Christian language in their discourse of war.

else has so impressed me. As long as I live it will be a time set apart . . . There are no words for it. It was a miracle, just that. Before a miracle one is silent.”¹⁷ In the substance of an address given at a Baptist Brotherhood breakfast in Toronto, printed in the *Canadian Baptist*, Mr. S. J. Moore argued that the war miracles of the past, most notably Dunkirk, were proof of divine aid for the Allies. He stated “above all these advantages, and most important, is the conviction that the miracles which have already aided us, give us the assurance of Divine aid.”¹⁸ The *Maritime Baptist* echoed a similar sentiment in an article explaining the nature of divine providence. The writer pointed out that “there are unmistakeable evidences all about us of the Providential presence of God. We have but to think of the evacuations of Dunkirk, made possible by an overshadowing fog as protecting as ‘the pillar of cloud’ of which the Scriptures speak.”¹⁹

Empire-wide calls for prayer from the King, and other government leaders, were issued throughout the war. Many of these were accompanied by justifications of the cause and sometimes claims of holy war, while others appealed to God’s providence. In a statement that described King George VI’s request for a national day of prayer, printed in the *Canadian Churchman*, the archbishop of Canterbury wrote that “it is therefore right that once again the nation should turn to God as its strength and stay in this time of trouble and once again commit its great cause to Him.”²⁰ The same article included a letter sent from the archbishop of Toronto similarly commending the King’s call for a day of prayer to Anglicans. He exhorted his people to “join in this solemn act of prayer

¹⁷ “Dunkirk Never Fadeless When 1940 Recalled,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 April 1941, 1.

¹⁸ “War’s Miracles of Past Assurance of Divine Help Against New Anti-Christ,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 June 1941, 4.

¹⁹ “The Hand of Providence,” *Maritime Baptist*, 18 March 1942, 4.

²⁰ “Day of National Prayer,” *Canadian Churchman*, 5 September 1940, 482.

to God” because “the beloved Motherland is fighting for her life and for the liberty of the world. In this dreadful struggle we are proud to know that Canada and the other Overseas Dominions are sharing.”²¹

Peace was another reason for prayer. In the *United Church Observer*, the call for a National Day of Prayer on 8 September, 1940 was described as an opportunity for the empire to unite in prayer for peace. An article stated “His Majesty King George VI has proclaimed a Day of Prayer . . . Marking a year of conflict, it is fitting that the British Empire should unite in prayer for the return of peace to this war-torn world, and strength and courage to face the future.”²²

Lord Halifax, a leading British statesman who was well-regarded in Canada, often exhorted British subjects to prayer. He frequently described the war in crusading language. For example, an editorial in the *Canadian Baptist* included an excerpt from one of Halifax’s statements, in which he exhorted everyone to prayer, stating “This, then, is the spirit in which we must march together in this crusade for Christianity. We and our great dominions overseas stand, and shall continue to stand, foursquare against the forces of evil. We shall go forward, seeing clearly both the splendour and the perils of the task, but strengthened by the faith, through which by God’s help, we try to do His service, we shall prevail.”²³ This statement confirms Thomas Faulkner’s claim that political leaders appeared to take the initiative in defining the war as a religious conflict

²¹ “Day of National Prayer,” *Canadian Churchman*, 5 September 1940, 482. The article also included a brief and rather dull statement from Canada’s Prime Minister which noted “His Majesty’s Government in Canada believes that Canadians generally will desire to associate themselves with the people of the United Kingdom in this observance,” and went on to request the clergy of Canada to make the necessary arrangements to observe Sunday September 8, 1940 as a national day of prayer and intercession for the war.

²² “Day of Prayer, Sunday, September 8,” *United Church Observer*, 1 September 1940, 13.

²³ “The Church’s Opportunity: A Sermon,” *Canadian Churchman*, 26 September 1940, n.p.

through their use of crusading rhetoric and descriptions of the enemy as “the forces of evil.”²⁴ The Canadian Protestant press seemed to indicate implicit agreement with these views and descriptions in their decision to print and publish these statements. Thus, the view of the war as a religious conflict, propounded by government leaders, was given further influence and reach by the denominational press. The fact that some of the views of the war were couched in discussions of prayer and calls for prayer, further strengthened the view of the war as a religious conflict.

Government leaders such as King George VI, Churchill, Mackenzie King, Canada’s Governor-General, and statesmen like Lord Halifax, promoted a view of the war as an essentially religious conflict in which Christian civilization was at stake. Church leaders in Canada did little to indicate they disagreed with this view, but they did take a more active role in pointing out to Canadians that such efforts of prayer, together with other work of the Church, entailed the need for repentance. This was seen as necessary on both an individual and national level. The archbishop of Canterbury, whose statements figured prominently in the *Canadian Churchman*, exhorted readers to honest prayer. He wrote “honesty requires penitence—for our manifold sins and shortcomings as a people and as individual men and women, for our neglect of God and the needs and claims of our fellow men, for our failure to be a Christian nation in fact as well as in phrase.”²⁵ Writing for the *Maritime Baptist* H. L. Goudge argued that Christians must oppose evil wherever “accepted by men or states” but before Canadian Christians could be “either fearless or defiant, we must deal with the evil in ourselves.”²⁶

²⁴ Faulkner, “Christian Civilization,” 75.

²⁵ “A Message to the Nation,” *Canadian Churchman*, 8 August 1940, 453.

²⁶ “Sternness Towards Evil,” *Maritime Baptist*, 27 September 1939, 5.

Rev. A. H. Whitman, President of the Maritime Convention argued that prayer was “the mightiest weapon known” and asked “have we as Maritime Baptists found this best method and used it for combatting the brutal and rapacious foe of our Christian civilization?”²⁷ In the *Record* Clara Bernhardt wrote that “Prayer is the hand that moves the hand of God.”²⁸ Whitman, though, claimed that “we have trusted too much in ourselves: in our national leaders, our munitions, warships and airplanes, our large and splendidly equipped armies, but, I fear that we have forgotten and failed to use our greatest ally—God.”²⁹ The key condition, for prayer to work effectively as a mighty weapon, Whitman argued, was repentance. He stated “but prayer to be efficacious must be accompanied by personal and national repentance, ‘if my people shall turn from their wicked ways, I will hear their prayer.’”³⁰

The *Canadian Baptist* printed an excerpt from the British denominational paper, *The Baptist Times*, which gently critiqued the calls for prayer, worrying that the huge outcry for prayer was rooted in emotionalism rather than solid conviction. The article justified the cause and implied the need for repentance in Canada when it stated

We want God on our side, as we are on the side of ‘right.’ Yes! We are unquestionably on the side of right in this particular war, and so far we can claim the support of the moral order. But has our manner of life hitherto been aligned with the eternal right? And can we avoid the natural consequences of our former infidelities? . . . The hands of no nation are entirely clean.³¹

Even in the final year of the war, repentance was considered important. The New Year’s message of the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, printed in the

²⁷ “Have We Really Tried Prayer?” *Maritime Baptist*, 19 June 1940, 15.

²⁸ “Prayer and the War,” *Presbyterian Record*, April 1943, 120.

²⁹ “Have We Really Tried Prayer?” *Maritime Baptist*, 19 June 1940, 15.

³⁰ “Have We Really Tried Prayer?” *Maritime Baptist*, 19 June 1940, 15.

³¹ “Prayer...in War Days,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1940, 2.

Record emphasized the need for repentance and humility before a lasting peace could be realized. He said,

‘Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.’ Here we have an injunction and a promise from God’s Holy Word. Both injunction and promise have been tested and proven true times without number. Again and again during the present war, our earthly King has called us to humility and prayer. On every occasion when our people sincerely responded to the King’s appeal, there was clear evidence of God’s hand at work. The Eternal King is constantly calling us to repentance and prayer. Only when the nations of the earth respond to the call of God, can we hope for abiding peace upon the earth.³²

God’s Providence

The calls to prayer and the contents of the prayers themselves indicated a major underlying belief in divine providence. This section will begin by defining the doctrine of providence and then explore how it was expounded in the Protestant press. It confirms that the doctrine of God’s sovereignty figured largely in this, as did both biblical and historical examples of God’s hand at work. Often appeals to history were presented in a way that depicted Britain as a special bearer of divine blessing.

The primary understanding of divine providence evident in the Protestant press during the Second World War was fundamentally shaped by the evangelical missionary boom of the nineteenth century. Indeed, that century has been referred to as the “great century” of missions, but as Brian Stanley has noted, before 1880, the number of Protestant foreign missionaries was quite limited.³³ This is noteworthy because, if the evangelical zeal for missions did not begin to hit full swing until the 1880s, this meant

³² “The Moderator’s New Year’s Message,” *Presbyterian Record*, January 1945, 2.

³³ Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, 83. The “Great Century” was coined by Kenneth Scott Latourette, see Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 1, 7.

that it coincided with the swelling nation-building impulse among the churches in Canada, and, that the churches's leadership during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s had come of age during the hay day of global missions. Thus, it is no surprise that the notion of divine providence was evident in the Protestant press during the war in a form quite similar to that which was prominent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Brian Stanley has suggested that the understanding of divine providence characteristic of the nineteenth-century evangelical worldview, married the biblical revelation of God as the sovereign Lord of history to the Newtonian concept of God as the supreme governor of the universe, "so that human history was regarded as an ordered process, moving according to fixed rules of operation towards the fulfillment of the purposes of the divine architect."³⁴ Furthermore, Stanley claims, evangelicals pushed beyond the eighteenth-century view of God's working in history as being essentially moral, arguing that God's primary purpose in history was to forward his plan of salvation rather than reinforcing virtue.³⁵ "All the operations of divine providence were directed to the supreme end that the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Human history was the story of the divine preoccupation with the furtherance of the gospel of salvation. God directed all human affairs with this end in view."³⁶ Similarly, Andrew Porter has noted how a framework of divine providence informed evangelical discussions about the relationship between Christian missions and civilization, and even more importantly, the British Empire.³⁷ Stewart Brown has likewise pointed out that

³⁴ Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, 68.

³⁵ Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, 69.

³⁶ Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, 69.

³⁷ Porter, *Religion versus Empire*, 94. Porter also demonstrates that divine providence was fundamentally intertwined with Protestant missions and mission societies even as early as the eighteenth century (see Chapters 1 & 2 of *Religion versus Empire*).

most Britons in the nineteenth century believed that Britain and its empire “were God’s instruments for the great work of spreading His gospel throughout the world,” and that Britons were a peculiar people chosen by God as the ancient Hebrew people had been.³⁸ Brown also suggests that a strong sense of providence declined after the First World War.³⁹ Nonetheless, in the Protestant press divine providence underlay the Canadian Protestant’s nation-building work and their goal of establishing the Lord’s Dominion in Canada.

Canada was part of the British Empire, an important part, in the eyes of many Canadians. For Canadian Protestants, a view of divine providence also implied a special place for the British Empire. Even before what has sometimes been called the “surge of imperialism” in the late nineteenth century, and certainly after it, many Canadians “had looked upon the Empire as the vehicle and embodiment of a progressive civilization which was designated by Providence to spread its culture, religion, and political institutions across the face of the earth.”⁴⁰ This idea worked in tandem with the nation-building impulse. Terrence Murphy has noted, if somewhat cynically, that in Canada “militant evangelicalism was sustained by a profound belief in providence. In working for the conversion of sinners and the transformation of social life, fervent evangelicals believed that they were actively co-operating in God’s plan for the world. . . Their goal was to build a truly Christian society, one in which evil would be vanquished and spiritual values would triumph.”⁴¹

³⁸ Brown, *Providence and Empire*, 3.

³⁹ Brown, *Providence and Empire*, 454.

⁴⁰ Berger, *Sense of Power*, 217.

⁴¹ Murphy, *A Concise History*, 175.

One of the connecting pieces between divine providence and the view in the Protestant press that the war was not merely a just cause but a righteous one, and therefore a religious conflict, was what John Webster Grant has identified as the pre-supposition of Christendom. This was the belief that the institutions and values of Western society were predicated upon a Christian foundation.⁴² Though not noted by Grant, one of the key implications of the pre-supposition of Christendom was the concept of a Christian nation. Christendom, as an abstract entity, assumed the existence of many Christian nations. Andrew F. Walls claims that this idea of Christian nations is ultimately rooted in the circumstances under which the peoples of Northern Europe came into the Christian faith, “not as individuals, families, or groups, but as whole societies complete with their functioning political and social systems integrated around their ruler.”⁴³ Obviously Canada had a different history, but Grant pointed out that “Canada had not always been part of Christendom but represented a new province added to it or in the process of being added to it.”⁴⁴ However, as Walls contends, evangelical Christianity, which was a major influence among Canadian Protestants, assumed Christendom, noting that mainstream evangelicalism in the period when the missionary movement was born accepted the idea of a Christian nation.⁴⁵ Indeed, the Christian nation was the basis for William Wilberforce’s ideas about moral and social improvement of the nation, which were, in turn, the tap roots of Canadian Protestant nation-building.⁴⁶ For Canadian Protestants nation-building presupposed a society that

⁴² Grant, *Canadian Era*, 213.

⁴³ Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 81–82.

⁴⁴ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 214.

⁴⁵ Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 82.

⁴⁶ See Wilberforce, *Practical View*.

was largely Christian, even if only nominally, and sought to improve it. Stewart Brown claims that Britain experienced growing diversity in religion in the latter years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, which appeared to correlate with an overall decline of religion in the life of the state. There were, too, those who questioned the idea of a “Christian nation,” especially following liberal legislation that had effectively done away with the semi-confessional state.⁴⁷ In Canada this trend was less pronounced. The possibility that the state was less religious than previously was obscured by the tendency of government leaders and politicians to take the initiative in defining the religious issues of the war, as Mackenzie King did when he designated 8 October 1940 as a National Day of Prayer.⁴⁸ However, the Protestant press indicated a strong belief and commitment to shaping Canada into a Christian nation before, during, and after, the war.

The idea of Canada being a Christian nation figured largely in conceptions of divine providence, as well as God’s sovereignty, because it involved the view that Canada, and other Christian nations, had a corporate identity before God, much as Israel had in the Old Testament. This helps to explain the emphasis in the press on the need for repentance and penitence and its linkage with national days of prayer (not to mention the results of such prayer). The notion of a corporate identity further explains why the national and empire-wide days of prayer were often initiated by secular leaders, rather than clergy, though their rhetoric was Christian language and clearly rooted in the same presuppositions about Christian nationhood.

⁴⁷ Brown, *Providence and Empire*, 455.

⁴⁸ Faulkner, “Christian Civilization,” 75.

Divine providence, then, was intertwined with notions of human progress, the global expansion of Christianity, the British Empire, and Canada's destiny as a Christian society. In addition, explications or appeals to divine providence, and God's sovereignty, were always in the context of either a call to prayer, or a pastoral effort to guide congregants often in the form of a sermon or an editorial in the denominational newspaper. The following analysis demonstrates this, as well as the fact that the war was interpreted through the Canadian Protestant belief in divine providence.

Divine providence was defined by a writer in the *Maritime Baptist* in March 1942 as "the agency of God by which He makes the events of the physical and the moral universe fulfil the purpose for which He created it. We recognize the hand of Providence in many ways, as when calamity is strangely averted by means we cannot explain and when the evil acts of men and nations are directed to ends unforeseen and unintended by those who planned them."⁴⁹ The discourse of divine providence in the Protestant press fit into this definition.

An editorial in the *Canadian Churchman* reflected on Psalm 93 and reminded readers that God was King: "We need to remind ourselves of this truth in these days of war. It will lift up our hearts and give us courage. To believe that God reigns, is to believe in the strength and supremacy of righteousness. Paganism, brute force, cruelty, cannot win if God be King."⁵⁰ The editor proceeded to remind his readers that God was at work in human affairs. Despite its complexity, His hand was evident in history: "We only have to look back at the freeing of the slaves, at the Spanish Armada, at the Napoleonic thrust and the Great War, when we were the unworthy and humble

⁴⁹ "The Hand of Providence," *Maritime Baptist*, 18 March 1942, 4.

⁵⁰ "The Lord is King," *Canadian Churchman*, 10 October 1940, 562.

instruments of God's purpose. Now a more deadly thrust than all has come and once more we hold forth the principles of God's kingdom."⁵¹

An editorial in the *Canadian Baptist*, connected God's providence with the British Empire. The editor wrote: "More than once Queen Victoria declared that the foundation of the Empire was the Word of God. In this present war repeatedly His Majesty has spoken of the dependence of that nation on God. This is not the cry of one who is in an emergency and who will forget as soon as the crisis is over, but rather, the persistent acknowledgement of the need of Divine favor and guidance in national as well as in individual lives."⁵² He went on to praise Britain, claiming that "it is true, doubtless, that no nation yet has been a true at all times follower of the Master, but Britishers can say with much truth that they have tried and they are trying now to make the principles of the Master of men the foundation of Empire, national, international, and international living. And in that fact lies much of the hope of final victory."⁵³ This talk of the empire and Britishers, for most Canadian Protestants, applied to Canada.

In July 1942 the *Canadian Baptist* printed an editorial that described a resolution recently passed at the BCOQ assembly in Hamilton that year, called the Empire Resolution. The editor noted that the resolution was in response to the war, an issue that "is sharply defined—Dictators versus Democracy, Christ's principles versus Pit principles, Righteousness against Evil."⁵⁴ Then he quoted the resolution itself which proclaimed God's sovereignty and providence: "we further declare our unwavering faith in the justice of Almighty God and urge upon our people and all others who believe His

⁵¹ "The Lord is King," *Canadian Churchman*, 10 October 1940, 562.

⁵² "The Principles of the Master," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1940, 5.

⁵³ "The Principles of the Master," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1940, 5.

⁵⁴ "The Empire Resolution," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1942, 3.

word to humble themselves and entreat Him in earnest, purposeful and steadfast prayer for the success of our cause and the establishment of a righteous and lasting peace.”⁵⁵

This resolution encapsulated both the belief that God was on the side of the Allies, and the need for Canadian Protestants to pray and repent in order that God might grant victory. Notably, this resolution also implied that the cause was righteous and linked the cause and prayer with the establishment of a Christian peace after the war.

An article in the *Maritime Baptist* discussed God’s sovereignty. The writer stated that “In a very real sense, the war is a holy war. If I correctly interpret the ideals of democracy and those of the dictatorships, the conflict is between peoples who, on the whole, live by moral standards based upon belief and faith in God, and governments which deny God and are bent upon imposing godless standards upon the rest of the world.”⁵⁶ He continued, pointing out God’s universality and that “He is the God of human liberty, the God under whom alone democracy can survive, without whose spirit moving in the hearts of men such as freedom as man has achieved is doomed to perish.”⁵⁷ For this writer the war and the survival of democracy were closely linked with God’s actions in human affairs.

Again, in the *Maritime Baptist*, an editorial quoted Dr. Henley Henson on the subject of the Christian and war, exhorting readers to prayer and stating his belief that “in this crusade for justice, liberty, and the reign of law in the intercourse of nations, we may dare to invoke the blessing of the Almighty, Whose [sic] service is perfect freedom, and Whose [sic] will is man’s duty.”⁵⁸ Yet another article in the *Maritime Baptist*, taking

⁵⁵ “The Empire Resolution,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1942, 3.

⁵⁶ “God’s Universality,” *Maritime Baptist*, 1 November 1939, 3.

⁵⁷ “God’s Universality,” *Maritime Baptist*, 1 November 1939, 3.

⁵⁸ “A Matter for Prayer,” *Maritime Baptist*, 15 November 1939, 4.

a more pastoral approach, suggested several points of action for Christians who felt helpless to do anything in the face of such a ghastly war. His very first point advised his readers that “we can base all thought and action on faith in God and on the certain ultimate triumph of His good purposes,” and stated his conviction that God would work some ultimate good out of this war.⁵⁹

In November 1939, the *Presbyterian Record* printed an article describing the resolutions passed by the Maritime Synod. First it stated their conviction that “the provocation of this conflict has been a crime against humanity and recognizes that the forces arrayed against us threaten the existence of Christianity and Christian civilization throughout the world,” and went on to urge all Presbyterians to pray and worship, to endure, sacrifice and serve “until God in His good Providence grants us final victory.”⁶⁰ Another article from the *Record* tied God’s providence with Christian action in the war, as it pertained to ministry to the Canadian forces. It stated:

Primacy should therefore be accorded to the spiritual over the physical in fitting our forces for the unprecedented fury of the attack now launched against them. It is truly a life and death struggle in which freedom, both civil and religious, is at stake and vast numbers of people are concerned. Let us all then in this crisis ‘seek the Lord and his face evermore’ in public and private. It is still true that the ‘effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,’ and ‘more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.’ Let us be definite and importunate in prayer.⁶¹

Later in the summer of 1940 the *Record* printed a sermon from the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, William Barclay. He expressed his hope that all Christians in Canada would heed the recent call for a day of prayer, and yet he trusted that “our people, in view of present grave happenings, would not need a special call but

⁵⁹ “What Can Christians Do,” *Maritime Baptist*, 10 January 1940, 9.

⁶⁰ “The Church and War,” *Presbyterian Record*, November 1939, 324.

⁶¹ “War Equipment,” *Presbyterian Record*, June 1940, 163.

in Church and home alike, and in the privacy of their own hearts, would earnestly supplicate God's help for the cause of freedom and civilization."⁶² In November 1940 an article in the *Record* exhorted readers to prayer even more explicitly and earnestly with respect to the war. The writer stated that the war "is a spiritual struggle and only the dauntless by the help of God shall prevail."⁶³

In the autumn of 1941, the *Presbyterian Record* noted a call from Canada's government for a week of Reconsecration. It quoted at length the statement from the government, which emphasized that the war, now in its third year, was a determined effort between the leaders of democracy and the evil of Nazi tyranny. However, the *Record* went on to suggest the need of reconsecration under divine providence: "and know ye further that we do also hereby ordain and declare this week as one of reconsecration of our lives and principles which under Divine Providence have been our stay and help in the past, to the end that torment may be lifted from men's hearts and peace and safety come for all nations and peoples."⁶⁴

In the summer of 1944, an article in the *Record* claimed that a new appreciation of God's providence was evident among the Christians of Europe, after all earthly supports were taken away by the Nazis. He wrote, "God revealed himself in the dark places, and, empowered by Him, our fellow-Christians in Europe have, many of them, been strong to do exploits. Spiritual resistance has, in Norway and Denmark, Holland and France, been heroic in the extreme."⁶⁵ The writer then emphasized the key belief of divine providence, namely that God is at work in human affairs: "The God who made

⁶² "Moderator's Message," *Presbyterian Record*, August 1940, 229.

⁶³ "Prayer for Victory," *Presbyterian Record*, November 1940, 323.

⁶⁴ "Reconsecration Week," *Presbyterian Record*, October 1941, 291.

⁶⁵ "Invasion—or Liberation," *Presbyterian Record*, August 1944, 239.

Himself known to men in history, in Jesus Christ, still acts in the events of history. It may be that He is seeking to use our nations in a quite unusual way.”⁶⁶

The War as God’s Judgement

One of the corollaries of the belief in divine providence and God’s sovereignty was the conviction that God exercised judgement on the peoples of the earth throughout history. Many Canadian Protestants were asking whether the war was a judgement from God. Numerous writers in the Protestant press defined the war as a judgement of God.

Those who sought to explain the nature of God’s judgement emphasized human freewill and that God’s judgements typically manifested themselves in the natural course of consequences for actions taken. In an article in the *Canadian Baptist* one writer argued just this, claiming that the war was God’s judgement in the sense that God’s design of the universe and his endowment of humankind with freedom to choose between good and evil: “It is in this sense, surely, that we should wish to envisage the judgements of God; not as capricious or arbitrary, but as the natural consequences of human choices; and God’s part in the matter is not to avenge His majesty, but simply to emphasize for the benefits of fools the character of the world they live in.”⁶⁷ In the *Maritime Baptist*, one writer quoted Professor R. Corkey, claiming that war was a judgement in the sense that it was a consequence of the imperfect international system: “If it [the war] is the judgement of God, and I personally believe that it is, it is His judgement upon that evil, unstable, anarchic state of affairs that spawned the world this

⁶⁶ “Invasion—or Liberation,” *Presbyterian Record*, August 1944, 239.

⁶⁷ “Is the War God’s Judgement on World?” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 September 1941, 11.

brood of sorrows.”⁶⁸ A writer for the *United Church Observer* argued that “we are in the throes of a world revolution brought about not by the will of Hitler and the Fascists, nor by the Communists, but by the judgement of a God of love and righteousness.”⁶⁹

Another article in the *Observer* meditated on the Second Horseman from the sixth chapter of the book of Revelation. He noted that “this horseman has been let loose and is at work,” and that “in other words, the Spirit of God compels us to admit a Divine judgement in the present war.”⁷⁰ He went on to point out that judgement was because humankind had, in modern arrogance, turned away from God. He stated that “According to the Scripture it is impossible that a nation—whether it be the chosen nation or not matters not—disregard the just laws of God without incurring His judgement. Voluntarily, the modern world has turned away from the living God; deliberately it has desired to follow its own desires, its own wisdom.”⁷¹

The churches were not naïve about how humanity had disregarded the laws of God. In a sermon printed in a 1941 edition of the *Canadian Churchman*, Rev. Provost Cosgrave pointed out the “very cheerful view of human prospects” that had taken hold throughout the western world. Speaking of the beginning of the twentieth century he described with such accuracy the humanist view of progress that it is worth quoting in full:

It seemed to us that a new and wonderful age was dawning in which man would conquer most of the evils which had hitherto oppressed him. We were confident that science and the applications of science would smooth the road of life for multitudes of men and introduce an era of prosperity. We believed that universal education, then a comparatively new thing, would destroy all superstitions and prejudices and end the cruelties which resulted from them. The vast

⁶⁸ “War as the Judgement of God,” *Maritime Baptist*, 22 October 1941, 15.

⁶⁹ “We Must Listen to the Voice of God,” *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1940, 11.

⁷⁰ “The Second Horseman,” *United Church Observer*, 1 March 1940, 9.

⁷¹ “The Second Horseman,” *United Church Observer*, 1 March 1940, 9.

improvements in the means of communication and transportation seemed destined to draw men of all races closer to one another in sympathy and understanding. Disputes of all kinds would be settled by consultation and arbitration and war on any large scale become impossible. We realized that poverty was very largely the result of ignorance and social injustice and we supposed that it would disappear with the spread of education and the application of economic science. We had no doubt at all that the democratic way of life would be adopted everywhere and in the political realm decisions would be reached by ballots instead of bullets.

Our general assumption at that time was that man was essentially good and reasonable . . . It was only faulty political and economic organization which prevented him from realizing an almost ideal state of society. Now this assumption was false. We were putting our trust in man and making flesh our arm. Our faith was a faith in human virtue and man's capacity to create and develop his institutions to the point of perfection. Man in the light of his own ideals and by the power of his own resources was to build a civilization which was to be free from all those evils by which all previous civilizations had destroyed themselves.⁷²

In a sermon printed in the *Canadian Churchman*, just over a year later, Canon Theodore Wedel similarly assessed the events that had resulted in God's judgement. He described the optimism that had taken hold both before and after the Great War, and how a secularized Christianity had come to characterize a civilization. He pointed out how the Great War made safe the world for democracy, established democracy in Germany, and how the League of Nations promised a Utopian world order. Did not this progress together with the huge advances of science and technology point "toward an obvious conquest of evil and poverty and pain?"⁷³ Indeed, "everyone, from king to pauper, believed in progress."⁷⁴ As a result, the ideals of Christianity, no longer tied down to "traditional religion," he pointed out, "were marching unopposed toward a Kingdom of God on earth . . . The Church itself was caught in the net of secular optimism."⁷⁵

⁷² "Faith in God and His Goodness," *Canadian Churchman*, 15 May 1941, 307.

⁷³ "Judgement and Grace," *Canadian Churchman*, 18 June 1942, 387.

⁷⁴ "Judgement and Grace," *Canadian Churchman*, 18 June 1942, 387.

⁷⁵ "Judgement and Grace," *Canadian Churchman*, 18 June 1942, 387.

Wedel claimed that Christianity became a religion of ethical ideals, based on the Sermon on the Mount, but that now “the days have come when the Lord has sent a famine in the land—a famine of hearing again the word of the Lord. For the religion of ethical challenge has run into difficulties. Judgment is upon it.”⁷⁶ In Wedel’s view Christian ideals had become the idols of a civilization, and the war was the consequence of that. As was stated in the *United Church Observer*, “God’s judgements are abroad in the earth; and in facing whatever may be before us we must not forget the necessity of penitence for what, both as a nation and as individuals, we have done or left undone.”⁷⁷

Interpretations of the War through Remembrance

Perhaps the most overt form of wartime spirituality centered on Remembrance Day. Editorials, sermons, and articles on the occasion of Remembrance Day were another way in which the Canadian Protestant press offered an interpretation of the war. While an examination of actual Remembrance Day services is beyond the scope of this study, the relevant discourse in the Protestant press provides insight into the ideas underlying Remembrance Day. These writings constituted, like those considered above, a spirituality in print. It was in remembrance where the conception of the war as a spiritual battle and the nobility of sacrifice was perhaps most explicit.

It is impossible to make sense of Canadian Protestant interpretations of the war through Remembrance without understanding how they remembered the First World

⁷⁶ “Judgement and Grace,” *Canadian Churchman*, 18 June 1942, 387.

⁷⁷ “Church of Scotland Issues Pastoral Letter on War,” *United Church Observer*, 1 February 1940, 2. The *Observer* also printed a statement from the British Baptist Union that stated “the judgements of God are abroad in the earth,” see “British Baptist Union Issues Statement on World Situation,” *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1940, 3.

War. Jonathan Vance posited the idea of “myth” to explain how Canadians came to view the First World War. He used Roland Barthes definition of myth: “Myth does not deny things, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact . . . it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essence . . . things appear to mean something by themselves.”⁷⁸ Vance claims that Barthes definition makes sense of Canada’s myth of the First World War, which became a discourse “that communicated the past in a pure, unambiguous, and simple fashion.”⁷⁹ While Vance explains that the interwar years saw the development of a revisionist account of the First World War in the universities and among Canadian Protestants, this occurred in tandem with the Social Gospel’s radical social critique and the internationalist peace movement. However, evidence in the Protestant press from the Second World War indicates that this revisionist account either had utterly disintegrated, or had no effect upon, the myth of Remembrance. Vance argues that the myth of the First World War emphasized both the war as a just war and parallels between the soldier’s sacrifice and Christ’s sacrifice. Thus, the First World War was remembered as a just war in which “civilization had been preserved by the victory over imperial Germany,” while others tended to see it more as a “defence of humanity and civilization.”⁸⁰ The supreme sacrifice given by so many Canadian soldiers was easily justified in defence of these eternal principles. This interpretation of the First World War

⁷⁸ Vance, *Death So Noble*, 8.

⁷⁹ Vance, *Death So Noble*, 8.

⁸⁰ Vance, *Death So Noble*, 20, 27.

served to confirm Canadian Protestant interpretations of the Second World War as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization.

Faulkner has suggested that one of the themes that developed in Protestant discourse in 1940 was the notion that the soldier was engaged personally “in a task with a positive religious dimension.”⁸¹ In fact, this is a conservative description. One of the most important elements of Protestant reflections on Remembrance Day was how they sacralized those who offered their lives as soldiers, in both the First World War and the Second World War. The sacrifices of soldiers, past and present, were imbued with a sacred character. This sacred nature was extended to apply to the freedom and liberty for which the war was being waged. In short, sacrifice was tied to the cause of freedom and the preservation of Christian civilization, for both the First and Second World Wars.

On the occasion of the first Remembrance Day during the Second World War, an editorial in the *Maritime Baptist* described the yearly holiday as a time to pause “in the midst of our work and pleasure to pay silent tribute to the memory of our honoured and beloved dead,” and pointed out that it was a ritual “calculated to add to the moral strength, dignity, and unity of the Canadian nation.”⁸² In the editor’s view continuing to observe Remembrance Day was a way to resist the Nazis: “It is heartening to know that though war rages in Europe, we do not allow ourselves to suffer defeat at the hands of German war lords by ceasing to pause as is our custom in hallowed silence to pay tribute to the heroism and sacrifice of fallen friends and comrades. It has been suggested that in this year’s observance of the day emphasis might well be laid upon democracy.”⁸³

⁸¹ Faulkner, “Christian Civilization,” 70.

⁸² “Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 25 October 1939, 4.

⁸³ “Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 25 October 1939, 4.

In a sermon preached on Remembrance Sunday, 1941, and broadcast over the CBY, Rev. Fred Nicholson exhorted his listeners not to forget “the sacrifice of those whose lives were the price of the liberty and freedom we now enjoy.”⁸⁴ In his view the purpose of Remembrance Day was to “remember their sacrifice. *Keep this day holy.*”⁸⁵ Throughout his sermon Nicholson went so far as to liken the soldiers who fought in the Great War, and those serving in the current war, to the biblical image of a great cloud of witnesses. He described “a great multitude which no man could number, from every corner of the Empire who, having made the supreme sacrifice, having ‘put off their earthly tabernacle,’ speak to us and say ‘keep these things always in remembrance.’”⁸⁶ While Nicholson alluded to the idea of a cloud of witnesses, an editorial in the *Maritime Baptist* was forthright: “On Remembrance Day there passes in review before almost every Canadian community a valiant host, a cloud of witnesses, who a quarter century ago laid down their lives for a high ideal—a world of brotherhood and peace. To see this cloud of witnesses without seeing the vision which inspired them is to look upon them in defective light. They can be truly appraised only in the light of the ideals by which they were motivated.”⁸⁷ This statement and others like it exemplified a view in which soldiers’s deaths were sacralized on the basis of the cause of peace. Moreover, it offered an interpretation of the Second World War as part of a trajectory of wars in which death was the supreme sacrifice given for the high ideals of Christian civilization: freedom, liberty, and peace.

⁸⁴ “Always in Remembrance,” *Canadian Churchman*, 20 November 1941, n.p.

⁸⁵ “Always in Remembrance,” *Canadian Churchman*, 20 November 1941, n.p. Emphasis added.

⁸⁶ “Always in Remembrance,” *Canadian Churchman*, 20 November 1941, n.p.

⁸⁷ “Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 8 November 1939, 4.

Each church kept an “Honour Roll,” which recorded the names of men from that congregation who served in the Armed forces during war. In the *Canadian Baptist*, an editorial noted that for Remembrance Day “every Church in Canada will turn to its Honour Roll on Sunday, November 12th, and will affectionately and reverently remember the men who laid down their lives in the last war. Their sacrifices we can never forget.”⁸⁸ The sacrifice of the soldiers was used to inspire the people to be sacrificial in their support of the war effort, be that something as mundane as adhering to the blackout, or ministering to the troops as a chaplain. As the editor wrote, “If the men who made the supreme sacrifice could speak to us who are living they would say: ‘You can best remember us by sacrificially ministering to the men and women who are so heroically serving you in this war.’”⁸⁹ The editorial even went so far as to tie the themes of sacrifice to God’s providence, stating:

God has blessed the allied arms with outstanding victories during the past year, but these victories have called for untold sacrifice. Can we not, therefore, make a special point of showing our gratitude on Remembrance Sunday, as we think of those who served us and died for us in the last war, but giving a substantial amount to enable the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, through its War Services Committee to faithfully and effectively serve the boys who are giving so freely of their lives, that ultimate victory may be obtained.⁹⁰

Sacrifice was honoured by God’s providence and was used as an example to inspire Baptists to support more fully their denomination’s ministry to the troops. Later that same month Dr. Bingham, a prominent Baptist layman in Central Canada encouraged Baptists to give money on Remembrance Sunday. He noted that “on that date we shall have in sacred remembrance the boys who fell in the last war. If they could speak to us

⁸⁸ “Remembrance Sunday, Nov. 12,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1944, 2.

⁸⁹ “Remembrance Sunday, Nov. 12,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1944, 2.

⁹⁰ “Remembrance Sunday, Nov. 12,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1944, 2.

they would say, ‘serve sacrificially the men who are now fighting for you in this war.’”⁹¹ Giving money to support the work of the church was a timeworn tangible form of spirituality.

The *Canadian Baptist* also included an article that described the proceedings of McMaster’s Autumn convocation which included the unveiling of a Service Roll. The Chancellor’s statement on this solemn occasion emphasized sacrifice, but is so instructional in how the war was viewed that it is worth quoting in full:

It is a reverent custom among men, when moved by the achievements and sacrifices of their fellows, to raise memorials, that their names fail not of remembrance and that their deeds be known to the generations following. And though at this time all free men are engaged in a common struggle and are brought to a common suffering, there falls to each association among them the duty to be mindful above all of the service of its particular members. For this cause we of the company and brotherhood of McMaster University, here met in solemn assembly, do now call to mind all who have gone forth from us to do battle, and especially those of them whose warfare is accomplished. In token of which remembrance, we unveil before ourselves and before all men a visible record of their names, to stand until a fuller and more worthy memorial shall be raised, as evidence of their high calling willingly accepted, and of their sacrifice willingly offered to the very end. May this act by its simplicity move us each to a greater austerity of life, by its naming of King and Country inspire to a nobler patriotism, and by its honouring of self-sacrifice in others give us resolution that we live not hereafter for personal advancement. My brethren, here is the bead-roll of our worthies, and here the canon of our martyrs. On behalf of this university and all its members, therefore, I now unveil this Service Roll to the sight of all men, giving glory to God for all whose valour it records, and acknowledging our common gratitude to all whose names are written or shall be written thereon. And this I do in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.⁹²

In the sermons, articles and editorials that used Remembrance Day as a lens to interpret war, an opportunity was found to describe the nature of the cause which Canada had

⁹¹ “Remembrance Day Offering,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 November 1944, 8.

⁹² McMaster Autumn Convocation and Unveiling of Service Roll,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 December 1944, 10. A bead-roll was a list of people to be prayed for.

joined. The editor of the *Maritime Baptist* quoted Lord Tweedsmuir stating “the cause in which we fight is far more momentous and more sacred than in any of our old campaigns. In them we fought for security or for the defence of territory, or for the balance of power in Europe; today we are fighting for those spiritual values which alone make life worth living . . . The time has come when to save our Christian civilization we must be prepared to lay down our lives for its preservation.”⁹³ The statement went on to describe the young men enlisted in the armed forces as “first and foremost defenders of the faith,” and described their sacrifice as being for “the preservation not only of national and personal freedom begotten of persecutions, martyrdoms and centuries of struggle. It is the preservation not alone of personal freedom, but of freedom also of the mind and of the soul.”⁹⁴

One writer reflected on a recent experience in which he saw new recruits being shipped off to war. He connected their service with the cause of freedom, saying “our Canadian sons, now as twenty-five years ago, the men of every creed, every party, with the blood of many races in the veins, all united in one great crusade for freedom.”⁹⁵ He then connected freedom, won in the last war and being fought for in the current war, with the health of the nation. He claimed that the folly of the interwar years was “that men abused the freedom won for them at so great a price . . . as a result of that abuse of freedom, we still have elements in our national life for which if men die it is sacrifice worse than wasted.”⁹⁶ He asked if the men he had seen shipping off were going out to die so that Canadians might have a freedom to exploit the powerless, that the “hideous

⁹³ “Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 8 November 1939, 4.

⁹⁴ “Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 8 November 1939, 4.

⁹⁵ “I Saw Them Riding By,” *Maritime Baptist*, 11 November 1942, 1.

⁹⁶ “I Saw Them Riding By,” *Maritime Baptist*, 11 November 1942, 1.

forces of intemperance may find protection behind government legislation, that half a hundred other ills may flourish without hindrance?”⁹⁷ He answered no, “a thousand times ‘No.’”⁹⁸ He exhorted Canadians, as they remembered the sacrifice of soldiers past and present to “pledge themselves that the sacrifice of those who ride away to die in this war shall kindle such fires of holy and pure desire that we shall not cease from strife until we have builded [sic] Jerusalem in this green and pleasant land.”⁹⁹ In this manner sacrifice and remembrance interpreted the war as a sacred cause and as a catalyst for nation-building.

In a similar vein, the Rev. R. A. Sinclair, in his Remembrance Day sermon, saw the war as a judgement for the abuse of freedom after the profound sacrifices of the First World War. But Sinclair saw Remembrance Day as a crucial moment to strengthen the church and the nation: “In this intense hour of our history, Remembrance Day cannot be a dreamy drifting into the past. In our hearts there must be abiding reverent gratitude for those who died on our behalf, but even more, if we would keep faith with them, there must be an awakening to those realities about us, a recognition of where we are weak and ready to die, a strengthening of those things that remain.”¹⁰⁰ He concluded by voicing his hope that “may this Day of Remembrance initiate an era of consecrated life and triumph for the Church of Christ.”¹⁰¹

Most Remembrance Day reflections interpreted the war in relation to the First World War. The fact of the Second World War, for many, suggested that the First World

⁹⁷ “I Saw Them Riding By,” *Maritime Baptist*, 11 November 1942, 1.

⁹⁸ “I Saw Them Riding By,” *Maritime Baptist*, 11 November 1942, 1.

⁹⁹ “I Saw Them Riding By,” *Maritime Baptist*, 11 November 1942, 1.

¹⁰⁰ “The Quiet Hour: Remember and Repent,” *Presbyterian Record*, October 1941, 312.

¹⁰¹ “The Quiet Hour: Remember and Repent,” *Presbyterian Record*, October 1941, 312.

War had been a complete and utter failure, if they had not already come to that conclusion during the interwar period. However, the Great War stood as a monument to sacrifice for the ideals of Christian civilization. As Rev. F. S. Crossman wrote, “to us the war was not a campaign of aggression but a crusade for peace . . . Those were years of courageously-borne hardship; when women prayed and worked, and men went out to die—for an ideal.”¹⁰² Crossman admitted doubt, though, that “there will be, on the surface at least, a feeling that those who fought and died in the 1914–1918 war died in vain.”¹⁰³ However, “no noble sacrifice is ever wasted,” Crossman argued, “the final test of a sacrificial conflict is not in what it gains so much as in what it prevents. No war will ever secure the future . . . Those who died in 1914–1918 did not die in vain because they prevented world domination by the militarists of their day. Today is a new day and a new challenge.”¹⁰⁴ In conclusion, Crossman proclaimed their sacrifice as worthy, declaring “May posterity say of the dead of other years, as we gather about their tombs on Remembrance Day, ‘Well done! We may have failed to make an ideal world, but you died to prevent the dissipation of the world’s freedom as you knew it.’”¹⁰⁵

These examples imply, to varying degrees, that the understanding of wartime sacrifice that was memorialized and sacralized in Remembrance Day observance carried with it a version of martyrdom and a sort of sainthood. In language that likened cenotaphs and war monuments to shrines and pilgrimages, an editorial in the *Maritime Baptist*, noted that in the coming days many Canadians “will make thoughtful pilgrimages to cenotaphs and monuments where the names of their heroic dead are

¹⁰² “Moments that Matter: Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 22 November 1939, 3.

¹⁰³ “Moments that Matter: Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 22 November 1939, 3.

¹⁰⁴ “Moments that Matter: Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 22 November 1939, 3.

¹⁰⁵ “Moments that Matter: Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 22 November 1939, 3.

enshrined and will live again those dark hours of a century ago, when those whose memory they forever honour, surrendered their lives that the things we prize most in our civilization might survive.”¹⁰⁶

The theme of sacrifice was also connected with the price of freedom, and the sacrifice of Christ. One preacher claimed that those in war were now

made to realize by the memory and inspiration of Remembrance Day that their task for the future of human liberty is a sacred bequest from the immediate past. We must carry the torch which fell from their hands and be assured that liberty is no cheaper today than it used to be. No price ceiling has ever been fixed for freedom lower than that of Calvary. It is in the spirit of those whom Remembrance Day calls to mind, with God’s help, we must carry on.¹⁰⁷

Even in the throes of victory there was remembrance. In a message the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada directed Presbyterians that their “rejoicings must necessarily be sobered by the remembrance of the frightful sacrifices sustained by so many whose loved ones have laid down their lives in the sacred cause for freedom.”¹⁰⁸ However, it was tied also with thanksgiving and a new world order, when in the next sentence the Moderator stated “Let this Thanksgiving be also a consecration to the building of a better world wherein wars and rumours of wars shall be no more, and *justice and righteousness, liberty and brotherhood shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.*”¹⁰⁹

Canadian Protestant Remembrance built upon the myth of the First World War to make sense of the Second World War. The churches saw the war as a defence of

¹⁰⁶ “Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 6 November 1940, 4.

¹⁰⁷ “Faith of Remembrance Day,” *Maritime Baptist*, 5 November 1941, 4.

¹⁰⁸ “The Moderator’s Message: Thanksgiving for Victory,” *Presbyterian Record*, September 1945, n. p.

¹⁰⁹ “The Moderator’s Message: Thanksgiving for Victory,” *Presbyterian Record*, September 1945, n. p. Emphasis original.

Christian civilization and the Christian ideals it embodied. The supreme sacrifice given by so many soldiers was justified in defence of justice, righteousness, and liberty. These spiritual ideals of Christian civilization, threatened by Nazism, were what made the war a religious conflict in Canadian Protestant eyes.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the denominational press was a major platform for the articulation of public spiritual expressions. Calls to prayer, and prayers themselves, whether initiated by church leaders or government leaders, shared the rhetoric of Christian civilization. Underlying this rhetoric was the belief in divine providence and that God was on the side of the Allies, defenders of Christian civilization. Accordingly, the churches believed in the efficacy of prayer and days of prayer; further confirmed by events such as Dunkirk. The question of the war being God's judgement, similarly, assumed God's providence and further reinforced the view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. Finally, Remembrance Day became a public interpretation of the past built on the understanding of the First World War. The spiritual dimensions of the First World War were prominent and there was an emphasis on the value of sacrifice for Christian civilization, and by implication, freedom. The Second World War was similarly interpreted as another struggle for freedom and a situation in which the virtue of sacrifice was pursued, or exhibited, by countless of Canada's youth who enlisted.

CHAPTER 4: NATION-BUILDING AND THE WAR

“No, never did the nation need the church more than now and it is our great war-time duty to see to it that our nation, under God, comes in the end to a spiritual, as well as a military, triumph . . .”¹

As Canadian Protestant statements of loyalty following the declaration of war in early September 1939 demonstrated, the majority of the Protestant press was forthright about the causes of the war, the justice of the cause, and voiced their support and loyalty.

There were strong implications that the war was a conflict with major religious dimensions. Thomas Faulkner has suggested that Canadian Protestant conviction about the cause being in defence of Christian civilization was confirmed by their campaigns to reform Canadian society according to the standards of a truly Christian civilization.² Out of their identity as national institutions and nation-builders the churches felt they had a responsibility to guide Canadians in making sense of the calamity of another world war.

In December 1940, Frank Haskins of the Baptist Union of Western Canada stated in the *Western Baptist* that “the great ideals of Christianity can guide men as they make laws for the governing nations.”³ He stated his belief that Christian citizens were obligated “to establish the principles of righteousness and equity in the laws of our land,” with the goal being “to assist in building a better Canada.”⁴ Many Canadian Protestants would have agreed with this. Even if they did not voice agreement, the

¹ “The Line of Advance,” *Western Baptist*, May 1941, 5.

² Faulkner, “Christian Civilization,” 77.

³ “Christian Citizenship and the Constitution,” *Western Baptist*, December 1940, 4.

⁴ “Christian Citizenship and the Constitution,” *Western Baptist*, December 1940, 4.

churches's social reform work during the war, and before it, indicated strong support for building Canada into a more Christian nation. Of course, in a war to defend Christian civilization, the meaning of nation-building work, which the churches had been carrying on for decades, was given elevated importance. For one thing, maintaining the Christian character of Canada was crucial if the war was to be won, for victory would be hollow if it were not so. For another, the war provided an occasion for the improvement and even purification of Christian civilization and prompted gleaming visions of an ultimate postwar peace. A fanciful contingency perhaps, but one that followed from the logic implicit in the view of the war as a religious conflict.

Central to the Canadian Protestant interpretation of the war as a religious conflict, and the subsequent activities this belief entailed, was the churches's perceived self-identity as builders of a Christian Canada. Nation-building was a critical element of Canadian Protestant's self-understanding, and their response to the Second World War only makes sense in light of this history. The themes that filled the Protestant press during the war years, such as the evils of the "liquor traffic," gambling, observing the Lord's Day, the family as a fundamental social unit, and racial prejudice, among others, were all framed in terms of a righteous war being fought for the preservation, even the renewal, of Christian civilization, which entailed a more fully Christian Canada. It should come as no surprise, then, that the denominational press commented on many social issues that came up during the war, perhaps most notably the evils of the liquor trade, but also the treatment of Japanese Canadians, and even such measures as the gasoline ration and the rehabilitation of soldiers and chaplains. Of the hundreds of articles in the denominational press from the war years that demonstrated the Protestant

belief that the churches had a crucial role to play in fortifying and building up the nation's moral and spiritual fronts, the most dominant concerns were the liquor traffic, the Lord's Day, religious education, the family unit, and racial prejudice.

Temperance

The temperance movement had been a major hub of evangelical Protestant support since the mid-nineteenth century. Though beginning relatively small in the 1820s, the movement grew over the course of the century, and by the early twentieth century temperance had become the major social reform campaign supported by most Canadian Protestants. During the First World War temperance supporters persuaded the Canadian populace and, more importantly, the reigning politicians, that "the liquor traffic" was impeding the war effort. Their sentiments were succinctly expressed in Lloyd George's famous statement during the First World War that "We are fighting Germany, Austria, and drink, and so far as I can see the greatest of these three deadly foes is drink."⁵ The churches supported a strong and successful prohibition movement. One by one Canadian provinces passed prohibition legislation in the name of the war effort.⁶ Canadian Protestants saw this as a major victory and a critical milestone on the road to shaping the nation into the Lord's Dominion. However, Canadian Protestantism did not get through

⁵ Quoted in "Editorial Comment," *Canadian Baptist*, 8 April 1915, 1.

⁶ The facts surrounding prohibition in Canada during the First World War tend to be unclear or conflated with Prohibition in the U.S.A. It should first be noted that prohibition already existed in some parts of Canada. The Canada Temperance Act (also known as the Scott Act) provided the basis for prohibition by local option in the late nineteenth century. For more on the early history of prohibition in Canada see Dostie and Dupre, "The People's Will." For an account of prohibition in the Great War and its gradual repeal in the 1920s, see Boyce, "Prohibition in Canada." It is worth noting, however, that by 1927 nearly every province had legislated government control and sale of alcohol and discarded total prohibition. Little scholarship exists on alcohol and prohibition in Canada. An excellent introduction to the subject is Warsh, *Drink in Canada: Historical Essays*.

the fires of the First World War unscathed. Profound disillusionment plagued Canadian society in the years following the war, as well as the collective grief and pain of having lost so many of the next generation's finest. Tim Cook claims that the temperance supporters's outrage over the opening of wet canteens for Canadian troops in England, as well as their overall campaign, drove a wedge between civilians on the home front and soldiers in the trenches.⁷ Widespread disillusionment in Canadian society, from both veterans and others, was frequently directed toward organized religion. The churches's apparent complicity in jingoistic support of the war and even aiding recruiting efforts (not to mention the eschatological rhetoric they used to describe the war) compromised their true purpose, and many Canadians never saw the churches in the same light again. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that over the course of the 1920s province by province, Prohibition legislation was repealed.

Despite the apparent moral regression of Prohibition's repeal and the challenging years of the Great Depression, temperance remained a major aspect of the Canadian Protestant social agenda.⁸ By 1940 Canadian Protestants had begun lobbying the Dominion government to restrict the liquor trade for the sake of the war effort. At this point it is worth noting that, while the denominational press was vocal in its support of temperance and there was significant overlap between denominational leadership and the leadership and membership of temperance societies, the majority of the on-the-

⁷ Cook, "Wet Canteens," 311. Similarly, Wilson ("Booze, Temperance, and Soldiers," 1–37) argues that in the context of Holy War rhetoric that was used to describe the Great War (by some) the citizen soldier was transformed into the embodiment of Christ in a fight against evil. "As the mirror for the nation, he reflected the moral character and aspirations of purity," (1) and so soldiers stationed in Calgary and other Canadian cities received a great deal of public scrutiny, especially regarding their use of alcohol. Thus, the temperance movement's calls for prohibition and the breakdown between soldiers in the public eye and the ideal soldier alienated troops and even affected recruitment efforts.

⁸ For example, the BCOQ passed a resolution regarding temperance or the liquor traffic every year between 1925–1970.

ground work was undertaken by the temperance societies, such as the Canadian Temperance Federation, or the WCTU.

Canadian Protestant arguments in favour of restricting the liquor traffic fell into several categories. The most relevant, and the most prominent, was an argument that tied restricting the liquor traffic to the war effort. Canadian Protestants were not above using the war as leverage to achieve their goal. However, they supported the war effort and genuinely believed that the liquor trade had a deleterious effect on it. Part of their nation-building work, they believed, was guiding the nation on moral and social matters, and guarding its morality when it was threatened. Another argument contended that the liquor traffic was a public menace that itself threatened Canada's progress toward becoming the Lord's Dominion. Both of these tied abstinence to patriotism. This kind of argument was not without precedent, as Adam Coombs has shown that temperance supporters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries advocated democracy that would promote the well-being of communities while also preserving and enhancing the liberty of the individual, through the outlawing of alcoholic beverages.⁹ Yet another argument characterized temperance as being motivated by protecting the family, and in particular the youth, from the evils of the drink.

It is important to consider the Canadian Protestant interest in temperance. The churches's work and hope in this area of social reform was not merely a manifestation of their desire to shape Canada into a Christian nation. It was, in fact, also a manifestation of their support for the war, as the following arguments which link

⁹ Coombs, "Liberty and Community," 23. For further treatment of the temperance movement in the late nineteenth century, see Coombs, "The Temperance Movement and Freedom in Canada, 1872–1898," 1–56.

prohibition and restrictions to the liquor traffic, indicate. In a war to defend Christian civilization, the single most socially corrosive feature of Canadian life—the liquor traffic—took on a sinister quality as public enemy number one. After all, Christian civilization had to be maintained at home if victory was to have a positive meaning. In the Protestant press the liquor trade was depicted as a fifth column, and as a result, it was an enemy to be combatted. The extent and continued growth of the liquor trade during the war was, to Protestants, a stinging indictment of their failure to realize a more Christian Canada and they did not hesitate to critique the government for its apparent inability or unwillingness to enact what Canadian Protestants believed to be necessary changes to the defence of Christian civilization.

There was a remarkable solidarity among Canadian Christians when it came to opposing the liquor trade and promoting temperance. Historically, this cause was largely the province of interdenominational groups like the Christian Women's Temperance Union, but the Methodists (and later the United Church of Canada), Baptists, Presbyterians, and occasionally, evangelical Anglicans, were also major supporters. The denominational press, of course, was a major platform for their support of the temperance cause.

During the summer of 1940 an unprecedented event occurred. An interdenominational delegation met with a Federal Cabinet committee to urge the Dominion government to restrict the liquor trade. The interdenominational nature of the delegation was not unique in itself, except for the fact that it included delegates representing the Roman Catholic Church. Catholics and Protestants in Canada were usually at odds, so this was a significant moment. The editor of the *United Church*

Observer gave it due credit: “For the first time in the history of this country, the major religious bodies are united in their determination to secure drastic restrictions in the sale of alcoholic liquor for beverage purposes.”¹⁰

The most prominent arguments launched by Canadian Protestants against the liquor trade linked abstinence and temperance with supporting the war effort. In December 1939 the Oxford Presbytery of the United Church of Canada adopted a resolution stating: “In view of the demands for conservation of all our resources in wartime, and profiting from experience of the Great War, this Presbytery urges upon the Federal Government the immediate prohibition of the manufacture and sale of beverage alcohol.”¹¹ A copy of the resolution was forwarded to the Dominion Government.

Conservation of resources was not the only reason noted for requiring the restriction of the drink trade, though it was a common one throughout the war, especially once the war was well under way and restrictions were imposed on nearly every consumer commodity except liquor. As was noted in the *Canadian Baptist* “it is strange, too, that with all the new regulations and restrictions to the public since war came, there is no limitation placed on the long hours of liquor sales or any further restrictions to the trade.”¹² Another reason was the war itself, particularly the war construed as a struggle between Christian democracy and totalitarianism. In this dualistic conflict Canadian Protestants believed that the moral and spiritual health of the nation was of the utmost importance, and, of course, was the special responsibility of the churches. The challenges of Nazism and social issues such as the liquor traffic had to be

¹⁰ “A New United Front” *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1940, 4.

¹¹ “Oxford Presbytery Urges Prohibition of Liquor Traffic” *United Church Observer*, 1 January 1940, 27.

¹² “Beer and Jungle Juice,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 October 1940, 1.

met by “the custodians of the Christian way of life,” that is, the Protestant churches, which, incidentally, saw both Nazism and social issues as needing to be met by a “united front,” thus strengthening the call of the ecumenical movement.¹³ Indeed, one article noted the churches needed to meet the threat “to all our spiritual and cultural possessions, [with] nothing less than the united efforts of all Church groups.”¹⁴ The Protestant press indicated without a doubt that Canadian Protestants saw social issues, among which the liquor traffic figured prominently, as a moral and spiritual dimension of a war that was already interpreted in religious terms. In a resolution adopted by the Halton Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, it was noted that “in this time of gravity and unsettlement there is a special danger of lowering our moral standards and of lessening our sense of spiritual values . . . Inasmuch as war conditions undoubtedly call for the most rigid and stringent economy and efficiency, we would again urge the Dominion Government to enact War-Time Prohibition.”¹⁵

Other pieces of writing in the denominational press used rhetoric (common in some groups) that was far less civil than that in the official resolutions and documents. This rhetoric suggested not only Protestants’s commitment and earnest belief that the liquor trade was evil, but also the lengths to which they would go to use their public platforms to demonize the drink. An article in the *Western Baptist*, for example, stated “In these days of revolting degrees of intemperance and of insidious propaganda by liquor interests it becomes increasingly imperative that the Christian Church apply itself with fresh diligence to the task of furnishing its people (especially its youth) with that

¹³ “Anglicans Join World Council,” *United Church Observer*, 15 July 1940, 4.

¹⁴ “Anglicans Join World Council,” *United Church Observer*, 15 July 1940, 4.

¹⁵ Halton Presbytery Urges War-Time Prohibition,” *United Church Observer*, 1 June 1940, 11.

instruction in the truth of the matter which will arm them effectively against the lurking temptations which the liquor traffic arranges on every hand.”¹⁶ In the wake of a controversy in Vancouver in which a daily paper castigated the Vancouver Presbytery of the United Church of Canada for a recent resolution passed, Rev. A. E. Cooke replied to the newspaper’s criticism of their resolution, charging that “‘the wet column’ in this province and the whole Dominion is a deadly menace to the welfare of the nation and a gigantic handicap to its efficiency in this great emergency [the war] . . . The liquor trade is the bitter, implacable enemy of Christ and His Kingdom.”¹⁷

At times restricting the liquor trade was tied with freedom and loyalty. In November 1940 the Halton Presbytery of the United Church of Canada passed a resolution that stated “realizing the great need of the financial support for the war effort that our Empire be not overwhelmed and our liberties destroyed, we as a Presbytery, heartily approve the action of the Inter-Church Committee which waited on members of the Dominion Cabinet to request the elimination of the sale of alcoholic beverages as a war-measure.”¹⁸ Meanwhile an article in the *Canadian Baptist* appealed to loyalty, stating “Canada owes it to her loyalty at this time to permit nothing to interfere with her war activities. Time lost in shops by drink or in training camps is a blow at the Empire.”¹⁹

A statement from Dr. H. R. Grant, Secretary of the Nova Scotia Service Club, printed in the *Canadian Baptist* and the *Maritime Baptist* conveyed the Canadian

¹⁶ “Temperance,” *Western Baptist*, February 1940, 12.

¹⁷ “Resisting the ‘Wet’ Column,” *Western Baptist*, May 1941, 4. The rhetoric of “the wet column” was a play on words that likened the liquor interests to a fifth column, which was understood to be a group within a country who are sympathetic to or working for that country’s enemies.

¹⁸ “Close Beverage Rooms Urges Halton Presbytery” *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1940, 24.

¹⁹ “Liquor War-Time Regulations” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 December 1940, 3.

Protestant view of the relationship between the war and the liquor traffic. He wrote, “we respectfully affirm that the time has more than come for our leaders to declare against the diabolicism [sic] of the liquor traffic of this Dominion,” and decried the fact that millions of dollars diverted from the war effort into the liquor trade “at a time when appeal after appeal has been made to the people of Canada, by our leaders, to be prepared to sacrifice time and money and life’s blood in defence of the Empire.”²⁰ He concluded by pointing out the irony of the situation: “It is inconsistent for Canadian leaders to say that we are at war in defence of Christianity, and to set apart days of prayer for victory in our struggle against the forces of unrighteousness, and at the same time carry on under the protection of law a traffic that tramples underfoot the principles of Christianity.”²¹ Canadian Protestants had strong feelings about the liquor traffic, as Dr. Grant’s statement indicated. It hinted at possible government collusion with the liquor trade and was clear that the trade was contradictory to the cause and thereby threatened the war effort. But the liquor traffic also failed to align with the Christian character of Canada and had no place in the Canadian Protestant vision of Canada as the Lord’s Dominion, nor, indeed, in the new world order that, they hoped, would follow an Allied victory.

It comes as no surprise then, that the Canadian Temperance Federation invited the churches of Canada in January 1941 to join in a three-month long campaign of voluntary abstinence. Appealing to the best in Canadian citizens, the *Canadian Baptist* spoke for most Canadian Protestants when it stated their belief that “multitudes of our

²⁰ “The War and Drink,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 January, 1941, 2; “The War and Drink,” *Maritime Baptist*, 11 December 1940, 15.

²¹ “The War and Drink,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 January, 1941, 2; “The War and Drink,” *Maritime Baptist*, 11 December 1940, 15.

citizens will be glad to put themselves on record for their own sakes or their fellows. Others will have the matter so impressed on their minds that they will feel that to enlarge drinking at this time is to stab Canada in the back and weaken her strength in the time of war.”²² And so the Canadian Temperance Federation promoted throughout Canada a “Wartime Voluntary Total Abstinence Campaign.”²³ In encouraging commitments to total abstinence Canadian Protestants believed that they would not only aid the war effort but also “strengthen the fibre of the nation.”²⁴

As time passed, Protestant calls for restricting the liquor traffic persisted, nay, multiplied, while the Dominion Government appeared to do nothing. An editorial in the *United Church Observer* admitted that “the Church is deeply concerned with the moral and spiritual welfare of its members,” and as a result “the time has come when the Church people must speak plainly to the Dominion Government.”²⁵ Noting that the Government had failed to respond to the inter-denominational delegation to Cabinet in July 1940, the problem remained that “beverage rooms in the towns and cities crowded nightly with young men and women, the daily budget of crimes of violence, accidents, and stories of broken homes, in many of which our soldiers are involved, are tragic evidence of the blighting ravages of intoxicating liquors.”²⁶ The editorial sarcastically referred to the liquor trade as Canada’s sole protected industry, and went on to criticize the government for a paltry three cent tax per pound of malt syrup and a ten-cent tax on twelve bottles of beer. The editor contrasted this with recent taxes in the United States of

²² “Drink Bill of Canada May be Half Billion Dollars with Nation Under Arms,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 January 1941, 12.

²³ “The Temperance Campaign,” *Western Baptist*, February 1941, 11.

²⁴ “The Temperance Campaign,” *Western Baptist*, February 1941, 11.

²⁵ “Liquor—Canada’s Protected Industry,” *United Church Observer*, 1 June 1941, 4.

²⁶ “Liquor—Canada’s Protected Industry,” *United Church Observer*, 1 June 1941, 4.

\$1.00 per gallon of spirits, \$1.00 additional tax per barrel on malt liquors and an increase of 16 percent on wines, and in Britain the government's reduction of brewing sugar supplies by 40 percent, brewing cereals by 10 percent and distilleries's supplies by 33 percent. The ten-cent tax on twelve bottles of beer by the Dominion government was, it was strongly implied, a feeble and embarrassing attempt at appeasing temperance supporters. And nor were they appeased.

The requests outlined by the delegation to the Federal Cabinet back in the summer of 1940 remained the goal for Canadian Protestants and all who supported the cause of temperance. They requested that the sale of alcoholic beverages in taverns, beer-rooms and similar establishments be discontinued and restricted to Government owned Liquor stores.²⁷ They further requested that the sale of alcohol at Government liquor stores be confined to the hours between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. and that all liquor advertising be forbidden except in the liquor stores.²⁸ Finally, they requested that the Department of Defence close all wet canteens in military establishments.²⁹

In November 1941 another delegation representing the Canadian Temperance Federation again presented to Federal Cabinet ministers a four-point program for restricting the sale of liquor in Canada. The four points remained identical to the requests presented by the first delegation and included additional suggestions for the amendment of the Canada Temperance Act, under which cities and counties could vote themselves dry.³⁰ The delegation seems to have included several of the same representatives as the 1940 delegation: Rev. A. J. Irwin, Secretary of the Canadian

²⁷ "A New United Front," *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1940, 4.

²⁸ "A New United Front," *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1940, 4.

²⁹ "A New United Front," *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1940, 4.

³⁰ "The Liquor Traffic and the War Effort," *Western Baptist*, November 1941, 7.

Temperance Federation; Canon Phillipe Casgrain representing His Eminence Cardinal Villeneuve; Canon W. W. Judd representing the Church of England; Very Rev. Dr. Peter Bryce representing the Moderator of the United Church of Canada; Mrs. W. R. Lang representing the National Council of Women and the National Board of the WCTU; Rev. W. C. Smalley, General Secretary of the Baptist Churches of Western Canada; Rev. H. S. Grant, Secretary of the Nova Scotia Social Service Council; Rev. J. R. Mutchmor of Toronto; Rev. C. W. DeMille, General Secretary of the Ontario Temperance Federation. These were all prominent and influential Christian leaders. However, it is worth noting that the Canadian Temperance Federation, on its own, represented the following bodies operating throughout Canada: The Baptist Churches in Canada, the Social Service Department of the Church of England of Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Sons of Temperance, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Salvation Army, the Prince Edward Island Temperance Federation, the Nova Scotia Social Service Council, the New Brunswick Christian Temperance League, the Quebec Temperance League, the Ontario Temperance Federation, the Manitoba Temperance Alliance, the Saskatchewan Temperance League, the Associated Temperance Forces of Alberta, and the British Columbia Temperance League.³¹ In addition to this large cross-section of Canadians, the Roman Catholic Church had thrown its support behind now two delegations to the Dominion government. One article claimed that altogether this "would comprise about four-fifths of the total population of the country."³²

³¹ "A New United Front," *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1940, 4. The same delegation was also noted in "War Time Beer Trade," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1941, 4; and, "Sincerity," *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1941, 4.

³² "A New United Front," *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1940, 4.

And yet, the Dominion Government appeared to take no action to restrict the liquor traffic. In January 1942 an article in the *Canadian Baptist* declared that “Canada’s war effort is too serious a thing to be interrupted by liquor: this war has to be won if freedom is to continue in the earth. The citizens are sacrificing, saving and serving well—everywhere, with the exception of the trade in drink. That goes on practically without interference—in fact the sale of liquor is greater now than it was at the beginning of this struggle.”³³ In February 1942 the *United Church Observer* recorded Premier Hepburn of Ontario as saying “This (Ontario) Government is not going to be stampeded by the efforts of rabid prohibitionists—there is not going to be any change in liquor control legislation. . . there is not going to be war-time prohibition promoted by hysteria.”³⁴ The editorial criticized Hepburn for what was apparently a common political ploy of pinning a label to those with whom they disagree and then attacking that label. In this case the label was “rabid prohibitionists.” Furthermore, the editor also criticized Hepburn for seeming to forget the nature of democracy, noting that “if the people want the liquor laws changed, they will be changed; either that or the government which refuses to bow to the will of the people will be changed. That is the glory of democracy.”³⁵

As if Hepburn’s comments were not enough bad news, the *United Church Observer* recorded the Dominion Government’s long-awaited response to the Canadian Temperance Federation’s requests for war time restrictions of the liquor trade. Given by the Hon. J. T. Thorson of the Department of National War services, “the answer is ‘No.’” He offered two reasons for this answer. First, he claimed that the liquor traffic

³³ “Fooling the Drys,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 January 1942, 4.

³⁴ “Hysterical,” *United Church Observer*, 1 February 1942, 4.

³⁵ “Hysterical,” *United Church Observer*, 1 February 1942, 4.

was technically under the jurisdiction of the provinces and therefore the Federal government could do little on the matter. Second, he claimed that “no adequate case had been made to show that there was such urgency as would warrant the Dominion Government taking any action under the War Measures Act.”³⁶ The editor went on to critique the Government for this. He noted that “by bill board [sic], poster, and letter the nation is urged to save rags, bones, and fats; but when it comes to alcoholic beverages which constitute by far the most extravagant, most damaging, the most serious waste of life and food in the nation, the Government refuses the request of the Churches.”³⁷ Acknowledging that the Government had received, ignored, and then denied the two delegations sent by the churches, he asked “how can the Government expect its plea to conserve resources to be taken seriously? How can the Government expect the Churches to urge their members to save bones, fat and money when the Government itself refuses to co-operate with the Churches in their desire to save the manhood and womanhood of our country?”³⁸

The Dominion Government’s refusal on this matter was “dictated entirely by what was considered at the moment to be political strategy in relation to the four by-elections that were then impending,” according to the report of the BUWC’s Social Service Committee.³⁹ The *Western Baptist* appealed to its readers: “seldom has there been a more urgent call for active and wise political strategy on the part of the Christian Church. A great awakening of our church members on this subject is needed.”⁴⁰

³⁶ “Alcohol and Canadian Life,” *Western Baptist*, November 1942, 4, 6.

³⁷ “The Government Says ‘No,’” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1942, 4.

³⁸ “The Government Says ‘No,’” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1942, 4.

³⁹ “Alcohol and Canadian Life,” *Western Baptist*, November 1942, 4, 6. See also *The Baptist Union of Western Canada Yearbook 1941–1942*, Social Service Committee, 72.

⁴⁰ “Alcohol and Canadian Life,” *Western Baptist*, November 1942, 4, 6.

Fortunately for Canadian Protestants small pieces of good news soon followed. The *United Church Observer* described a recent controversy in Nova Scotia in which a local United Church used its influence to have the beer license of the local drinking room cancelled. A reporter for Toronto's *Globe and Mail* heard of it and wrote a harsh opinion piece in response. The editor of the *United Church Observer* rebuked the reporter for not getting the facts straight. He concluded his editorial by stating "Time and time again, we have protested against the way in which the Dominion Government flouts representatives of the Churches on the liquor question. We are happy to see that the provincial Government of Nova Scotia has had the good sense to listen to the Churches and the courage to act in the interests of decency and morality."⁴¹

Other bits of good news made their way into the denominational press. Public opinion in Manitoba, for example, appeared to be headed in the direction of liquor control.⁴² In November 1942 the government of Manitoba decided to reduce the hours of sale from eleven hours a day to eight in beer rooms and government stores.⁴³ Not long after that Manitoba's Department of Education appointed a Director of Temperance Education, an appointment commended by the Presbytery of Winnipeg and the *United Church Observer* among others. The *Observer* also congratulated the progress of temperance in Saskatchewan, the government of which had also put into place restrictions on the liquor trade.⁴⁴ By the end of November 1942 only Alberta and Ontario had done nothing to restrict the liquor trade.⁴⁵ Midway through December 1942

⁴¹ "The Ajax Club," *United Church Observer*, 15 March 1942, 4.

⁴² "Manitoba Opinion Veering Towards Liquor Control," *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1942, 3.

⁴³ "Manitoba Appoints Minister of Temperance Education," *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1942, 3.

⁴⁴ "Saskatchewan Curbs Liquor Sale," *United Church Observer*, 1 September 1942, 3.

⁴⁵ "Saskatchewan Curbs Liquor Sale," *United Church Observer*, 1 September 1942, 3.

the *Canadian Baptist* noted that Ontario's Chief Liquor Commissioner had announced that liquor would be rationed.⁴⁶ Customers in Ontario could now purchase a maximum of one bottle of spirituous liquor per day. This was viewed as an empty gesture, as the *Canadian Baptist* declared "if the bottle per day limit is the best Ontario can do, we have little reason to be proud of the administration of a law which is supposed to enforce sane temperance on the people."⁴⁷

Much to the delight of temperance supporters, at the end of 1942 Prime Minister Mackenzie King gave a speech in which he proposed the curtailment of alcoholic beverages for the duration of the war. Politically shrewd as ever, King no doubt caught wind of the changing tides of public opinion on the subject as most provinces began to implement some form of restriction on the liquor trade. The *Western Baptist* noted happily that King's proposals "vindicate the claims of the temperance forces that the liquor traffic is a menace to the war effort."⁴⁸ On 16 December 1942, Mackenzie King announced that the liquor trade would be curtailed, as follows:

1. Reduction of the amount of beverage alcohol released from bond during the year beginning November 1, 1942, from the previous 12 months, by the following percentages: beer, 10 per cent; wine, 20 per cent; spirits, 30 per cent.
2. Prohibition of all liquor advertising for the duration of the war, after a six weeks adjustment period.
3. Reduction in the alcoholic content of all distilled spirits to not greater than 30 per cent under proof, effective as soon as stocks now packaged and ready for sale are exhausted.
4. Prohibition against fortification of wine with distilled spirits.
5. A request to Provincial Governments to shorten hours of sale to at most eight hours per day.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ "The Temperance World," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 December 1942, 12.

⁴⁷ "The Temperance World," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 December 1942, 12.

⁴⁸ "Canada and the Liquor Traffic" *Western Baptist*, January 1943, 10.

⁴⁹ "The New Liquor Legislation," *United Church Observer*, 1 January 1943, 4.

While Canadian Protestants were pleased with this development, in part because it suggested the Government was not yet immune to their influence, and in part because it demonstrated the validity of their argument that the liquor trade was a threat to the war effort, they only saw these regulations as initial steps in the right direction. The goal of prohibition remained, but it was never attained.⁵⁰

As the moral and spiritual guardians of Canada, Canadian Protestants view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization, was not limited to the external threat of Nazism. Rather, Canada's participation in the war and the ensuing mobilization of Canadian troops, in addition to the all too recent memories, and consequences, of the economic depredation of the 1930s, resulted in social instability and turmoil. A symptom of this upheaval was the alarming increasing in alcohol sales. To Canadian Protestant eyes, a growing liquor trade would utterly damage Canadian society, having a deleterious effect on their work to improve the moral and spiritual conditions of the country when Christian civilization was in crisis. Put simply, in order to defend Christian civilization, there had to be a Christian civilization to defend. Thus, the role of the church in a war seen as a religious conflict to defend Christian civilization, was to continue in their role as nation-builders. To preserve the good and prune the bad of the existing civilization and to work for Canada's moral and spiritual improvement so that when, God helping them, the Allies attained victory, the churches could work to ensure the establishment of a just and enduring peace.

⁵⁰ On the contrary, a highly effective public relations campaign by Ontario Brewers culminated in a report after the war stating that "the prohibition objective has, by and large, been abandoned." See, Bellamy, "To Ensure the Continued Life of the Industry," for a detailed account of that campaign and its repercussions.

At the heart of the Canadian Protestant support for temperance was their particular view of the family. They viewed the family as the fundamental social unit. It was the location of spiritual and moral teaching and learning, as well as the beginning of learning about responsibility, and citizenship. In the summer of 1941, a resolution was passed by the Canadian Baptist Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Societies which stated "That we re-affirm our opposition to the traffic in Beverage Alcohol and implore all our people as a personal duty, a family and a patriotic duty to support the Canada-wide effort to curtail the liquor traffic."⁵¹ An editorial in the *Canadian Baptist* regretted that Ontario's Liquor Control Board had only reduced hours of sale by one hour. He noted this move would not satisfy the "great army of citizens" who wanted a sober nation for the grim job of waging war and, "for the best interests of the family and the individual."⁵² The protection of the family was among the churches's foremost tasks because they saw it as the fundamental social unit. They believed if they could strengthen families, they could thereby strengthen the Christian character of Canada, both to bolster the war effort and in preparation for the postwar peace. The importance of the family was a thread that ran through all of the churches's denunciations of immorality and their reform work, ranging from temperance and observing the Lord's Day to condemning gambling and salacious literature. It followed naturally from their view of family that children and youth be protected and educated. One of the most important structures of Canadian life at the time that contributed greatly to family health, it was believed, was the Lord's Day.

⁵¹ "Women Would Curtail Canada's Liquor Trade," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 July 1941, 9.

⁵² "Fooling the Drys," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 January 1942, 4.

Protecting the Lord's Day

The observance of Sunday as the Lord's Day, enshrined in Canadian law, was one of the bastions of Christian civilization in Canada. Though the sabbatarian movement had begun in the nineteenth century among small and often temporary groups, the movement organized in the 1890s in response to the appearance of street cars on Sundays.⁵³ The movement organized rapidly and formed a powerful national lobby, eventually persuaded the government to legislate, resulting in the Lord's Day Act which became law in 1907. Though it was initially successful Paul Laverdure has shown that enforcement of the Lord's Day Act gradually declined over the course of the twentieth century.⁵⁴ Protestants's unheeded calls for protecting Sunday during the Second World War appear to confirm Laverdure's claim. The demands of total war threatened to destroy this pillar of Christian Canada, and as such, Canadian Protestants worked to ensure its protection. Their conviction was that the war could only be successfully waged and won, if Canada's spiritual health was, at least preserved, and ideally, improved. The argument that restricting the liquor traffic would aid the war effort was very similar to the arguments launched to protect the sanctity of the Lord's Day, that is, Sunday. George G. Webber, of the Lord's Day Alliance, noted in a statement printed in the *Maritime Baptist*, that

wartime adds to the steady strain on mind and spirit, making more necessary still a day of quiet and spiritual fellowship to give poise and perspective to life. Human efficiency requires that we hold intact the essential privileges of the weekly day of rest . . . Canada can serve the interests of humanity best in the

⁵³ Meen, "The Battle for the Sabbath," 89.

⁵⁴ Laverdure, *Sunday in Canada*.

matter of war supplies by continuing to recognize respite from such activities on the one day of the week.⁵⁵

Another statement from Webber was printed in several Protestant newspapers in which he further elaborated this argument. First, he noted that the experience of the First World War had proven that a day of rest was necessary for maximum human efficiency. Next he pointed out that, if a day of rest is necessary under normal conditions, then “under the added strain of wartime it will be found even more essential that this one day of the week be retained for its refreshing and invigorating possibilities.”⁵⁶ Most importantly, however, there was the need for moral and spiritual enrichment because “war days add to the steady strain upon the mind and spirit.”⁵⁷ And of course, there was the need to defend the Lord’s Day from commercial exploitation. All of these things the Lord’s Day Alliance pledged itself to champion, in order to make its contribution to human need “in the life of the individual, the home, the Christian church and the Kingdom of God.”⁵⁸ The home, a reference to the family, was threatened by corruption of the Lord’s Day, which was deemed essential to a healthy Christian family, a spiritually sound Canada, and, therefore, the home front. As the BUWC resolved in 1943, “Whereas Sunday Observance in Canada has been maintained at a wholesome level through the years; and Whereas such observance is essential to the propagation of the Christian faith and the

⁵⁵ “The Need of Sabbath Rest” *Maritime Baptist*, 22 November 1939, 8.

⁵⁶ “Sunday in War Time,” *Presbyterian Record*, December 1939, 360; “Sunday in War Time,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 November 1939, 15–16; “Sunday in War Time,” *Maritime Baptist*, 6 October 1939, 8.

⁵⁷ “Sunday in War Time,” *Presbyterian Record*, December 1939, 360.

⁵⁸ “Sunday in War Time,” *Presbyterian Record*, December 1939, 360.

spiritual, moral and physical health of our people . . . be it resolved that we express our confidence in the Lord's Day Alliance."⁵⁹

The war effort itself, though, brought problems that affected the protection of Sunday. The major problem seemed to be keeping the troops entertained on Sundays. The Social Service column in the *Western Baptist* noted that the Red Cross had begun offering moving picture shows on Sundays, there were Vaudeville performances at theatres on Sundays for soldiers and their friends, and even a ten-pin bowling tournament to raise funds for sporting equipment for soldiers, also held on Sundays. Franks Haskins, the author of the column, noted how easy it was to lose vigilance and allow "vice breeding establishments and law flouting agencies [to] flourish under guise of patriotic motives" in war time and deplored how difficult it was to protest against these things for fear of being misunderstood as anti-patriotic.⁶⁰ As was noted in the *Canadian Baptist*, "to protest is to incur the risk of being called unpatriotic but surely the Lord is entitled to undisputed recognition on one day of the seven."⁶¹ Haskins, however, reaffirmed the belief that "it is the business of the church to speak out in peace and in war against all undesirable social practices, whatever be the cost."⁶²

Late in 1940 a controversy erupted in response to the Ontario Attorney-General's announcement that the Ontario Government would soon be introducing legislation to permit the running of excursion trains on Sunday. The alleged reasons for this legislation were "to attract American tourists from border cities, and improve the

⁵⁹ "Resolution," *Western Baptist*, September 1943, 3.

⁶⁰ "Social Service in Wartime," *Western Baptist*, March 1940, 8.

⁶¹ "War and Sunday," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 December 1941, 4.

⁶² "Social Service in Wartime," *Western Baptist*, March 1940, 8.

rate of exchange.”⁶³ Canadian Protestants responded to this with consternation: trains already operated on Sundays, so what game was the government playing? George G. Webber pointed out that most of the American border cities were too far from Ontario’s northern ski regions to realistically make a one-day excursion. It was further noted in the *Observer* that not only would such a change have absolutely no effect on the rate of exchange but, the number of American tourists who could spare the time for skiing in the areas north of Toronto was very small indeed, and hardly worth the effort. He believed that the government was using this legislation as a foil. He wrote, “the only explanation that makes sense is that the government is intending to use the above act as a ‘cover’ under which amendments may be slipped in providing for Sunday movies, Sunday baseball, possibly Sunday hockey; in a word, for the commercialization of Sunday.”⁶⁴

Like Haskins, other Protestant leaders did not hesitate to speak out in response to the Ontario government’s apparent attempts to undermine the Sunday laws. A group of high-ranking clergy, including the primate of the Church of England in Canada, the president of the BCOQ, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Commissioner of the Salvation Army, the Moderator of the United Church in Canada, and the Roman Catholic archbishop of Toronto, sent a resolution to Ontario’s Legislative Assembly. It stated: “While our soldiers, our sailors, and our airmen offer their lives to stem this tide of tyrannous barbarism abroad, we realize the need also to

⁶³ “Is Ski Project First Move Toward Sunday Movies and Hockey?” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1941. See also “Not Necessary,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1940, 4; “Renfrew Presbytery Protests Ski Trains,” *United Church Observer*, 15 March 1941, 15; “P.E.I. Presbytery Protest Sunday Ski Trains,” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1942, 19.

⁶⁴ “Is Ski Project First Move Toward Sunday Movies and Hockey?” *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1941, 8.

safeguard the freedom of our Christian institutions in Canada. Legislation which seeks to commercialize the Lord's Day attacks our Christian civilization from within while its foes are attacking it from without."⁶⁵

George Webber reminded Canadian Protestants in the midst of this controversy that "the Lord's Day is needed not only as a weekly day of rest, but also for its opportunities of worship, and its emphasis upon the spiritual values of life. We must safeguard these privileges and promote these rightful exercises. Christian citizens owe it to themselves, their homes, to their communities, and to the nation to help hold our Canadian Sunday free from commercial exploitation by the mercenary and secularizing interests of the present day."⁶⁶ An article in the *Presbyterian Record* agreed with this sentiment, stating "the preservation of our Christian Sabbath calls for sustained vigilance and effort, especially in war time."⁶⁷ The Anglican Toronto Diocesan Council for Social Service protested the proposed legislation not only because it could set off a cascade of commercial encroachment of the Lord's Day, but also because of the war: "At the present crisis of the world's history, when the issues at stake are, as is widely recognized, of a moral and spiritual character, we feel that it is of the utmost importance to safeguard those traditions and institutions of our race which make for the building of character, and for the recognition and worship of God."⁶⁸ It is unclear whether this clerical pressure was enough to sway members of the Legislative Assembly but the Attorney-General's Ski Train legislation did not rally enough support to pass into law.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ "Resolutions 1941," as quoted in Laverdure, *Sunday in Canada*, 157.

⁶⁶ "Citizens Warned Against Mercenary and Secularizing Interests of Today," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1941, 8.

⁶⁷ "Our Rest and Holy Day," *Presbyterian Record*, 1 June 1941, 164.

⁶⁸ "Anglicans Protest Ski Trains," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1941, 8.

⁶⁹ Laverdure, *Sunday in Canada*, 158.

The Canadian Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict, reflected in this statement as being a war of “moral and spiritual character” meant that protecting the sanctity of Sunday was just as crucial for the war effort as defending Canada’s physical borders. The struggle for temperance and the Lord’s Day was built on a common belief that there were movements within Canada that threatened the nation’s Christian character. Maintaining Canada’s Christian character was crucial in a war that was being fought in defence of Christian civilization. George G. Webber’s comments from January 1943 exemplify this: “While we are engaged in a world struggle for the overthrow of Nazi and Fascist tyranny, we must guard against the relaxation of our Sunday standards at home. We are engaged in a conflict for freedom to develop a Christian democracy, and our Sundays provide needed opportunities for emphasis upon vital spiritual realities. As Christian citizens, therefore, we have responsibilities in our respective communities to help maintain due respect for our laws in these perilous war days.”⁷⁰ It would seem that despite the Canadian Protestant support for the Lord’s Day Alliance and its valiant effort to protect the sanctity of Sunday, challenges were still being mounted against it. In the *Western Baptist* it was noted that “perhaps never before has the Spirit of the Lord’s Day been more challenged.”⁷¹

Similar to the Canadian Protestants’s struggle against the liquor traffic, their struggle to preserve Sunday as a day of rest achieved limited success. Minor victories, often localized, were apparent, though the failure of the ski train legislation was a notable exception to the localized examples. Ultimately, however, Sunday became a

⁷⁰ “Wartime Sunday Entertainment: The Lord’s Day Alliance,” *Presbyterian Record*, January 1943, 4. Webber’s statement was also printed in “On Guard,” *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1942, 4.

⁷¹ “The Lord’s Day,” *Western Baptist*, April 1942, 7.

casualty of the war effort. By an order-in-council, the Federal government allowed government sanctioned work to continue on Sundays, and discouraged prosecutions of infractions of the Lord's Day by declaring that such prosecutions would require the signed approval of a provincial Attorney-General within sixty days of the infraction.⁷²

The Second World War brought to the forefront the churches's self-imposed task of nation-building. The urgency and importance of restricting the liquor traffic and protecting the Lord's Day from commercial exploitation and "secular interests" took on a new level of urgency in a conflict that was viewed as a fight to defend and preserve Christian civilization. Another area that was central to Canadian Protestants's outlook and provides great insight into not only their view of the churches's role in Canada but also their support for the war were the closely related social institutions of the family home and education.

Family and Education

Canadian Protestants viewed the family as the fundamental social unit, the basic building block with which a truly Christian civilization could be built. It was a foundational thread in both their attack on the liquor trade and on the encroachments on Sunday Observance. The family, most often referred to as the 'home' in the denominational press, was at the center of the churches's social and moral reform work.

⁷² Laverdure, *Sunday in Canada*, 159.

This emphasis was largely due to a lingering Victorian influence in Canadian society that would last, as John Webster Grant noted, until the 1960s.⁷³

The liquor traffic, commercial exploitation of Sunday, the presence of gambling and salacious literature, among other things, were all social evils that affected the home. In a troubled home, children were not properly taught, producing youth who were unready to engage well with not only the churches but the world around them. In a war where Christian civilization was at stake, inculcating youth with a strong sense of Christian citizenship was crucial to the churches's goal of building a Christian Canada, especially in the much-hypothesized post-war peace. As such, the home, children, youth, and education together provided a major locus for the churches's work.

It is important to note that there was a perceived sense of moral decline underlying Canadian Protestants's focus on education, as well as their social reform work more generally. They were well past the high-water mark; the Lord's Day Act of 1907, and Prohibition in most provinces beginning in the First World War. The 1920s and 1930s had been a time of change, and though the Lord's Day remained legally protected from commercial exploitation, more and more people, and businesses, ignored such laws. The sheer growth of the liquor trade, documented in the denominational press during the Second World War, was an alarming indicator to Protestants of moral decline. Furthermore, the increase in drinking, they were certain, would bring further moral decline in both the near and distant future. Another sign Canadian Protestants interpreted as moral decline was what appeared to be a sharp increase in juvenile delinquency throughout Canada, which not only signified that individual families had

⁷³ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 185.

deteriorated on a massive scale, but also that the family as a social unit was in jeopardy. The Baptist Union of Western Canada adopted a resolution in 1943 acknowledging the situation: “Whereas there is an alarming increase in juvenile delinquency throughout the Dominion; and a general deterioration of moral standards among the people,” due, they believed, to the prevalence of salacious literature, they requested the Dominion government to ban the publication and sale of indecent literature.⁷⁴ Frank Haskins, of the BUWC Social Service Committee pointed out the uncomfortable fact that Canada, proportionally, had four times the number of juvenile convicts than England. He also blamed this problem on alcohol, lust, gambling, social insecurity, poverty, semi-starvation, overcrowding, heredity, and unethical business practices. This is one reason why Canadian Protestants fought the liquor traffic with such resolve: because it was corrosive to the home, and the home had to be maintained if the war was to be won. The other method, both remedial and preventative, to stop the spread of such social problems, was through education.

The denominational press reveals two major areas of education that needed addressing if strong Christian citizens were going to be built up and the Christian character of Canada improved upon, thereby increasing the odds of victory and assuring a strong church presence in the postwar world to guide the nations toward a just and enduring peace. One of these was overtly Christian education, manifested in Sunday schools, training programs, church youth programs, bible schools, and seminaries. The other was the public school system, which was largely in response to low attendance numbers at Sunday schools. These problems were linked for Canadian Protestants, fused

⁷⁴ “Resolutions,” *Western Baptist*, September 1943, 3.

together by the war for Christian civilization, but both were seen as necessary in the context of perceived moral decline and the failure of the past generation of church leaders to educate well.

Religious Education in the Public Schools

Andrew G. Blair has said, “anyone who is familiar with the history of education will be aware of how highly controversial religious education has always been, everywhere.”⁷⁵ Of course he is referring to religious education in state-funded schools. This has been true in Canada as it has elsewhere. The British North America Act, 1867, made it clear that education fell under the jurisdiction of the provinces and as a result, there was no uniformity across the country concerning religious education in the public schools.⁷⁶ It seemed that while some provinces had no religious instruction in the public schools, as in B.C., in others such as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, it was not allowed for in the law but often happened by “gentleman’s agreement,” while in other provinces religious education was permitted but not always practiced.⁷⁷ During the Second World War, however, there was a strong trend toward introducing regular, if not compulsory, religious education in the public schools. This was confirmed in Ontario when Premier George Drew announced in his throne speech in February 1944 that his conservative government would introduce religious education in all Ontario’s public schools.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Blair, “The Policy and Practice,” 15.

⁷⁶ As distinct from state-funded separate schools which existed in some provinces, such as Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, and Saskatchewan, but not in others, such as B.C.

⁷⁷ Blair, “The Policy and Practice,” 12, 17.

⁷⁸ Michel, “Building a Christian Democracy,” 87.

George Drew shared with Canadian Protestants the firm belief that “the fate of Canada and of our Empire depends on the education of our youth . . . Let us teach them that our system of democracy is simply Christian civilization interpreted in terms of practical government.”⁷⁹ He went on to declare that “while our young men are fighting to preserve democracy by force of arms on the field of battle we should be fighting to preserve Christian civilization at home by teaching in our homes, our churches, and our schools a militant faith in British democracy.”⁸⁰

As Drew’s comments indicate, a strong link was drawn between good education, democracy, and ultimately, the fate of Canada and the British Empire in the war. As the churches already knew, education was the best opportunity available for shaping the future by producing strong, well-educated, Christian citizens. Out of this belief Drew had his government legislate compulsory religious education in the elementary schools in 1944–1945.

Gidney and Millar, in their study of religious education in Ontario’s public schools, have suggested that Drew’s new regulations for the public schools were a response to a perception of moral decline in a time of national crisis and the desire to augment religious teaching in the schools which had hitherto been on a voluntary basis outside of official school hours.⁸¹ Their suggestion is insightful and is confirmed by the commentary in the Canadian Protestant press. Protestant commentary, not just on the primary matters of home life and education of children, but also on the church’s role in society and their ongoing reform campaigns were tinged with a sense of moral decline.

⁷⁹ Michel, “Building a Christian Democracy,” 87.

⁸⁰ Drew said this in a speech to the Hamilton Kiwanis Club over two years before becoming Premier. As quoted in Michel, “Building a Christian Democracy,” 91.

⁸¹ Gidney and Millar, “The Christian Recessional in Ontario’s Public Schools,” 280.

The churches's vision of a Christian Canada seemed increasingly distant. Compounding this sense of decline was the death of democracy in numerous European states and the rise of a ruthless totalitarianism, in the birthplace of Protestantism no less. From this came a heightened sense, of the need for religious education in order to build strong Christian citizens that could bring to fruition Canada's development as a Christian nation, which was bolstered by the rhetoric already in use that described the war as being fought for Christian civilization.

The headmistress of Mount Allison School for Girls, Constance Young, noted the moral decline in Canada and how education had failed, when she stated "it is safe to assert that all over Canada the religious education of the young is pathetically inadequate."⁸² Similarly, the editor of the *Observer* deplored the divorce of education and religion, and blamed an international breakdown in morality on that separation.⁸³ Headmistress Young, though, reminded readers that education had a crucial role to play in Canada. She pointed out that education's major responsibility was "to turn our present confused and self-seeking competitive society into a co-operative society wherein individuals may find freedom and security."⁸⁴ "Social perceptions and interests and virtues must be developed in a social medium," she emphasized, and drawing a link between democracy and education, wrote "for example, the teaching of democracy in schools, will be of negligible value as long as our schools provide no experience of democratic living."⁸⁵

⁸² "Religious Education for Tomorrow," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1941, 8.

⁸³ "Religion and Education," *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1941, 4.

⁸⁴ "Religious Education for Tomorrow," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1941, 8.

⁸⁵ "Religious Education for Tomorrow," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1941, 8.

The importance of educating youth was even acknowledged by Hitler, one writer noted, pointing out that Hitler had been quick to indoctrinate the youth in Germany.⁸⁶ Both the moral decline and the key role of youth for the future, in the context of a war to preserve Christian civilization, spurred the growing desire among Canadian Protestants to change the dire education situation.

The denominational press reveals the growing pressure for religious education in the public schools. The Presbytery of Peterboro [sic] sought the assistance of all ministers and ministerial associations in an attempt to get religious instruction in the public schools of their region.⁸⁷ Magnus Fleet, writing for the *Observer* noted that British Columbia's Minister of Education had proposed a course in bible study to be added to the high school curriculum.⁸⁸ Another article in the *Observer* happily observed that "a remarkable and widespread interest in religion in the schools is now manifest," and joyfully wrote that the Manitoba School Trustees Association had recently, unanimously, passed a resolution recommending religious exercises in the public schools of Manitoba.⁸⁹ The events of the war, he noted, had "shown the danger of a paganized social order and many of our public schools from which all semblance of religion had been banished have now religious exercises of some kind."⁹⁰

The trend in the denominational press arguing for the establishment of religious education in public schools only continued to grow. As Rev. T. B. McDormand wrote in the *Western Baptist*, "almost simultaneously Christian forces in every province of the

⁸⁶ "Out of This Furnace This Metal," *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1941, 11.

⁸⁷ "Peterboro Presbytery Wants Religious Instruction in Schools," *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1940, 19.

⁸⁸ "The Bible in B.C. Schools," *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1941, 9.

⁸⁹ "Religion in the Manitoba Schools," *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1941, 3.

⁹⁰ "Religion in the Manitoba Schools," *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1941, 3.

Dominion are giving attention to the matter of introducing Religious education, under Christian leadership, in the public or high schools, or both.”⁹¹ This was in response to moral decline. He wrote, “the prevailing secularism of our day, the alarming lack of moral and religious restraint among people of all ages (don’t blame youth for this!), and the widespread vagueness as to the spiritual aims for which this war is being waged—all point to the inadequacy of the agencies of religious education in the past generation.”⁹² Quoting the *Times* McDormand also noted a widespread realization that “more than before it has become clear that the healthy life of a nation must be based on spiritual principles.”⁹³

The churches’s desire for improved and expanded religious education was neither radical nor at odds with the prevailing cultural mood. As noted above, George Drew, even before he was Premier of Ontario, saw religious education as being crucial to a well-functioning democracy which was, it was widely believed, based on Christian principles. This was even the official stance, laid out in the revised Programme of Studies for Grades I to VI of the Public and Separate Schools of Ontario (1941). A letter to the editor in the *Observer* quoted three key sentences from the revised Programme: “The schools of Ontario exist for the purpose of preparing children to live in a democratic society which bases its way of life upon the Christian ideal”; “The school must lead the child to choose and accept as his own those ideals of conduct and endeavour which a Christian and democratic society approves”; “The wise teacher will be anxious, in the various departments of school activity, to bring home to the children,

⁹¹ “Religious Education in Day Schools,” *Western Baptist*, January 1942, 6.

⁹² “Religious Education in Day Schools,” *Western Baptist*, January 1942, 6.

⁹³ “Religious Education in Day Schools,” *Western Baptist*, January 1942, 6.

as far as their capacity allows, the fundamental truths of Christianity and their bearing on human life and thought.”⁹⁴

Writing from Owen Sound, Judge Jean W. Morley claimed that the goal of an enduring peace depended upon a Christian relationship between nations, as well as a spiritual victory. He pointed out that Hitler had discarded the trappings of Christianity in Germany and essentially become the god of the state. And “therefore,” Morley argued, “the teaching of Christianity has now become a matter of national importance in Canada, and cannot be left simply to the home and the church, as it has been in the past.”⁹⁵ One of the reasons Morley cited for his interest in this “supreme moral and national issue” was that he found “90 percent of the criminals whom I am unfortunately called upon to sentence, have had no home life . . . no home training,” and as a result “we are absolutely unprepared for this war in a spiritual sense.”⁹⁶ He believed this was precisely where the state could, and should, intervene. In his view, the war had a major spiritual dimension. Judge Morley concluded with a stark description of the situation: “National Socialism is today seeking to destroy the British people, and their Christian faith, but by God’s help, it will fail if we do our part in the teaching of the Christian faith to our young people.”⁹⁷ Similarly, Evelyn McDonald, Convenor of the Committee on Teaching Democratic Citizenship, argued that the attitude that politics is the concern of neither the Church nor the school was no longer valid and was, in fact, dangerous. She wrote that “all teachers have some opportunities by precept and practice to inculcate

⁹⁴ “Religion in the Schools,” *United Church Observer*, 1 February 1942, 22.

⁹⁵ “The Urgent Necessity of Teaching Christianity in our Schools,” *Canadian Churchman*, 4 June 1942, 358.

⁹⁶ “The Urgent Necessity of Teaching Christianity in our Schools,” *Canadian Churchman*, 4 June 1942, 358.

⁹⁷ “The Urgent Necessity of Teaching Christianity in our Schools,” *Canadian Churchman*, 4 June 1942, 359.

the basic principles of our British tradition and to show how they apply in the lives of individual citizens. But it is not their job alone. They should feel themselves strengthened in it by the knowledge that these things are also being stressed in the home, the church, and the press.”⁹⁸

Christian Education

Canadian Protestants held a strong belief in the importance of education, not only for forming Christian citizens, but for making better Christians of their people. This is why they decided to embrace a movement that had begun in the U.S. only a couple years previously, which was called the United Christian Education Advance. From the start this was an ecumenical venture. The editor of the *Observer* described why he thought Canadian churches should commit to the movement: “times of great moment to humanity have ever produced unusual religious movements to meet emergent needs. Hopefully we hail the Christian Education Advance as one of these vital expressions of the religious life of our time to help provide Protestant Christianity’s answer to our time and its challenge.”⁹⁹

The centrality of the family, or the home, in Canadian Protestant thinking regarding social reform, was largely due to a lingering Victorianism in Canada. As John Webster Grant has noted, the passing of Victorian Canada occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, well after the conclusion of the Second World War.¹⁰⁰ It comes as no surprise, then, that during a national crisis such as total war, an emphasis on the family and the

⁹⁸ “The Schools and Citizenship,” *United Church Observer*, 15 December 1941, 16.

⁹⁹ “Christian Education Advance,” *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1942, 16.

¹⁰⁰ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 185.

home was a common response. The *Maritime Baptist* quoted Queen Elizabeth's recent radio broadcast, "it is, after all, for our homes and for their security that we are fighting, and we must see to it that, despite all the difficulty of these days, our homes do not lose those very qualities which make them the background as well as the joy of our lives."¹⁰¹ A writer in the *Western Baptist* highlighted a common Canadian Protestant belief when he wrote "the home must be regarded as the basic spiritual institution of the nation, and the Church through its ministers and laymen must make a more concerted and intelligent effort to give help and leadership to the homes of Canada in this movement toward religious home life in the best sense of the term."¹⁰²

While a concern for Christian civilization and democracy had been an obvious underlying assumption in the Canadian Protestant support for religious education in the public schools, their support for the Christian Education Advance also emphasized democracy, and the post-war world. Naturally, education looked forward. One writer asked "Is anyone discussing the problem of education in the post war world?"¹⁰³ He believed current education was inadequate, and without "a radical change in education we may expect another and probably bigger and bloodier World War in about another twenty-five years."¹⁰⁴ He then explained the special role of education in securing the future: "democracy lays heavy burdens upon its people. Democracy demands above all things, intelligence; the beginning of intelligence is education; and education is not a thing which can be acquired easily. If we are to get and keep this new world of which

¹⁰¹ "Something More Than Patriotism," *Maritime Baptist*, 17 January 1940, 1.

¹⁰² "Flashes from B.C. 'Advance' Conferences," *Western Baptist*, June 1942, 11.

¹⁰³ "The Christian Education Advance—the Teacher," *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1942, 17.

¹⁰⁴ "The Christian Education Advance—the Teacher," *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1942, 17.

we hear we must be mentally well-nourished and mentally tough . . . shall we begin building the new world now?”¹⁰⁵ In a similar vein, another writer declared that “if we are to hope for a new world order, we must begin with youth.”¹⁰⁶ Deploing the decline in Sunday school enrollment in North America the writer stated, “there is little use of our country spending both blood and treasure in defending our Christian faith and freedom abroad if we allow it to perish at home. We claim to be fighting for democracy but democracy is something more than a system of government and the foundations of real democracy are moral and spiritual.”¹⁰⁷

This is why the churches believed that Christian education was so important to the war effort. They believed democracy was ultimately founded on the moral and spiritual ideals of Christianity. After the launch of the Christian Education Advance a writer described it as “renewed activity in all phases of religious education for young and old among forty Protestant denominations, as an aid to saving democracy and to establishing a just and lasting peace.”¹⁰⁸ A resolution from the Baptist Union of Western Canada, adopted in the autumn of 1942, similarly recognized the war as a crisis for education and stated the Union’s collective belief that “we should do our utmost to extend the work of Christian education.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ “The Christian Education Advance—the Teacher,” *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1942, 17.

¹⁰⁶ “The Christin Education Advance Movement,” *United Church Observer*, 1 February 1942, 16.

¹⁰⁷ “The Christian Education Advance Movement,” *United Church Observer*, 1 February 1942, 16.

¹⁰⁸ “Launch Christian Education Advance,” *United Church Observer*, 1 March 1942, 1.

¹⁰⁹ “Resolutions,” *Western Baptist*, October 1942, 3.

Commentary on Racial Prejudice and Refugees

It has to be admitted at the outset that the Canadian Protestant press, just like its constituents and fellow secular papers, was not free from racial prejudice. As commentary on Japanese Canadians suggested, while the churches sought to help them in their difficulties, and argued that they were just as much Canadian citizens as a British-born person, their focus on helping in the camps rather than publicly voicing opposition to the Dominion Government's policy indicated a racial prejudice. The discourse in the denominational press indicated that a level of racial prejudice existed alongside clear exhortations against racial prejudice. It would seem racial prejudice was a blind spot for most Canadian Protestants.

An article in the *Observer* from July 1940 addressed the question "What shall we Do About Refugees?" The article noted that child refugees were coming to Canada but acknowledged that "the greatest interest of Canadians was in the movement of the British people, most children, to Canada," and proceeded to emphasize the fact that the "vast majority" of refugees coming to Canada "will be of British birth."¹¹⁰ In January 1945, Rev. A. Gibson wrote in the *Maritime Baptist* about the upcoming issue of postwar immigration. While arguing that Canada had the space and the Christian responsibility to take in many refugees, he yet noted that "as Protestants it is desired to receive people from Britain and the United States," and went on to note that the Roman Catholic church "will work hard to get immigrants of her own faith" with a view to gaining "a controlling majority in this country."¹¹¹ These statements indicated a

¹¹⁰ "What Shall We Do About Refugees?" *United Church Observer*, 15 July 1940, 1.

¹¹¹ "Canada and Postwar Immigration," *Maritime Baptist*, 17 January 1945, 10.

preference for British-born persons to populate Canada and implied a belief in the superiority or uniqueness of the “Anglo-Saxon race.”

An article in the *Observer* written by Mrs. Marguerite Wyke, an African American university-educated teacher who had migrated to Toronto, sought to show readers that Canada was not free from racial prejudice. She argued that the racial discrimination that was commonplace in Canada and the United States compromised democracy. She wrote, “Let us face facts squarely and admit that Democracy is being defeated on the Home Front. In both the United States and Canada racial discrimination continued unabated. Let us admit that by our example at home we have so far failed to inspire the majority of coloured peoples everywhere and convince them that, regardless of race or colour, we do want freedom and security for all.”¹¹² Marguerite went on to help her readers realize that the choice confronting them was “not between the status quo and the barbarities of Naziism, but rather it is between the extension of our Democracy everywhere and its utter destruction everywhere. We must extend Democracy now to all our minority groups in order that human life in the future may have meaning and promise.”¹¹³ Alice Chown, also writing for the *Observer*, similarly noted that the Canadian public “has been careless of the disadvantages that have been laid upon” minority racial groups.¹¹⁴ It is clear, then, by Wyke and Chown’s articles, as well as the preference for British-born immigrants seen in the articles above, that racial prejudices existed in Canada and in the Canadian Protestant churches. However, the commentary in the denominational press also indicated an awareness of racial prejudice,

¹¹² “On Democracy and Race Prejudice,” *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1942, 11.

¹¹³ “On Democracy and Race Prejudice,” *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1942, 11.

¹¹⁴ “Dangers of Racial Prejudice,” *United Church Observer*, 1 April 1942, 5.

condemned it, and contended that Canada must accept refugees. To deny them passage into Canada would further erode democracy and would be a step backwards in preserving, and rebuilding, Christian civilization.

An article in the *Canadian Baptist* was forthright about how some Canadians felt about non-English immigrants. “That some non-English families are not desirable neighbours is admitted,” he wrote “but it is equally true that not all English-speaking are of angelic type. There are fine and undesirable people in every race, color, and creed.”¹¹⁵ But, he admitted sadly, “That this race feeling exists in the Dominion there can be no dispute . . . Ask the pastor of any colored congregation in the Dominion of labour for his people. Even in war needs there are firms that ‘need no men’ when a black brother arrives at the employment wicket . . . A city street buzzed with comment because a Yugo-Slav had purchased a home on it.”¹¹⁶ He further admitted that “in this ostracism of other races and colors the church has not always been without fault,” and asked how a racial minority could accept a religion that “teaches brotherliness in its place of worship on Sunday but which is anything but brotherly on Monday.”¹¹⁷

A resolution passed by the Baptist Union of Western Canada and printed in the *Western Baptist* admitted that there was a danger “that racial prejudice is to become the plaything of politicians” but then stated:

Whereas ‘God hath made of one blood all nations of men...’ thus establishing a world brotherhood and a universal fatherhood; and
Whereas there are those in Canada today who by word and action deny this Christian concept and promote racial antagonism and discrimination;
Therefore be it resolved that we affirm our willingness to practice and promote by every means in our power true Christian brotherhood with regard to all men.
And—

¹¹⁵ “Stranger Within Our Gates,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 December 1941, 4.

¹¹⁶ “Stranger Within Our Gates,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 December 1941, 4.

¹¹⁷ “Stranger Within Our Gates,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 December 1941, 4.

Be it Further Resolved that we urge upon the government of Canada the pursuit of wise, just and humanitarian policies in the treatment of all racial minorities resident in Canada; and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Prime Minister of Canada and the premiers of the four Western provinces, by our general secretary.¹¹⁸

While Canadians clearly had racial prejudice, the churches were quick to voice support for refugees during the war. In fact, there was a steady stream of refugees flowing out of Europe before the war even began. As an editorial noted in the spring of 1939 “the conscience of Christian people all over the world has been deeply disturbed by the plight of the refugees from central European countries.”¹¹⁹ In a March 1939 issue of the *Observer* one article stated the belief that the church had a special role to play in welcoming and caring for refugees. The writer argued that “The Christian Church, if it is to survive, must lead the way. It must prove to the world that the love of Christ in men’s hearts is something so powerful that it leads them to heights of self-sacrifice undreamed of by those who are not Christian. If a Christian is not made different from other men by his Christianity, why be one? And if it does make him different, let us witness by our works as well as our words that this is so.”¹²⁰ Another article in the March 1939 issue of the *Observer* surveyed the wider Canadian press to show that “an earnest plea is being made that Canada shall not fall behind other democracies in her contribution to the ‘world’s good cause,’” namely, welcoming refugees to Canada’s shores.¹²¹

This attitude would persist during the war. The *Western Baptist* printed a B.B.C. address given by Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, who tackled the thorny problem of what to do about refugees from enemy nations, a problem that became very relevant to

¹¹⁸ “Resolutions,” *Western Baptist*, September 1945, 6.

¹¹⁹ “The Church and Refugees,” *United Church Observer*, 1 March 1939, 4.

¹²⁰ “The Church and Refugees,” *United Church Observer*, 1 March 1939, 28.

¹²¹ “Canadian Press Urges Action for Refugees,” *United Church Observer*, 1 March 1939, 5.

Canada as it was forced to grapple with the population of Japanese Canadians in the wake of the Pearl Harbour attack. Viscount Cecil wrote that “if, while upholding justice in some ways, we at the same time were to allow helpless and innocent individuals to suffer because we continued to treat them as if they were guilty of disloyalty and treachery, we should find it hard to convince the world of our general sincerity.”¹²² The Viscount concluded his address by stating that,

A refugee, whether he comes in peace or war, is a stranger seeking shelter in our land. He is a human being—one of God’s children—and, as such, entitled to justice and kindness just like other human beings. True, if the refugee constitutes a danger to our fellow countrymen politically or even economically, it is right that the state should take whatever precautions may be needed to protect its subjects. With that reservation, foreigners have morally the same rights as natives, and it is on that footing that their treatment must be considered, not only by the state, but by every one of us.¹²³

Three years later Watson Kirkconnell wrote of a petition being circulated by the Canadian National Committee on Refugees that entreated the Dominion Government to offer sanctuary “to refugees from political or religious persecution without regard to race, creed, or financial condition.”¹²⁴ He pointed out that “if the world ever needed to heed Christ’s stern words on behalf of those who are ‘hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison’ surely now is the hour.”¹²⁵

¹²² “Refugees,” *Western Baptist*, December 1941, 5.

¹²³ “Refugees,” *Western Baptist*, December 1941, 5.

¹²⁴ “Canada and the Refugee Problem,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 January 1944, 2. The same article was printed in the *Western Baptist*, see “Canada and the Refugee Problem,” *Western Baptist*, February 1944, 5.

¹²⁵ “Canada and the Refugee Problem,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 January 1944, 2.

Commentary on Canadian-Japanese Resettlement

The plight of Japanese-Canadians during the war provides a telling case study of Canadian Protestant racial prejudice. Following the attack on Pearl Harbour the United States government decided to relocate the substantial population of Japanese living in California. The Dominion government felt it prudent to do likewise. The historical literature suggests that this decision was rooted in a deep-seated racial prejudice.

Alexandra Marcinkowski has argued that Canadian Members of Parliament used the Pearl Harbor attack “as an opportunity to enforce a dominant ‘us versus them’ narrative, in conjunction with fear-based security threats, in order to justify the Japanese internment.”¹²⁶ She claims that national and local newspapers reproduced and reinforced this narrative. In a similar vein Patricia Roy has argued that Canadian Anglicans in British Columbia, where the majority of Japanese Canadians lived, struggled with a long-standing ambiguity towards the Japanese. This was especially reflected, she claims, in the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster’s statements that implied sympathy with the predicament of the Japanese but also satisfaction at their removal from the coast.¹²⁷ William Katerberg has correctly noted that this ambiguity exemplified by Anglicans but found amongst the other mainline Protestants was rooted in Anglo-Saxonism and Canadianization concerns. He admits that in the 1920s and 1930s “despite the generally moderate tones of mainline Canadian Protestantism, Anglo-Saxon ideology and assumptions ran through much of the literature in church periodicals.”¹²⁸ This brought together the related concepts of race, people, and nation, which became the

¹²⁶ Marcinkowski, “Discourse, Difference, and Dehumanization,” 107.

¹²⁷ Roy, “An Ambiguous Relationship,” 106.

¹²⁸ Katerberg, “Protecting Christian Liberty,” 10.

focus of Canadianization: acculturation and assimilation.¹²⁹ The combination of Canadianization thought with Anglo-Saxonism often took on religious implications, such as the notion of Anglo-Saxons being God's chosen people and the identification of Anglo-Canadians's British heritage with Christianity and democracy. The result was that immigrants were expected to assimilate Canadian political ideals, morals, religion, and the English language.¹³⁰

The population of Japanese in Canada was approximately 23,000 and was located primarily in British Columbia. Of that total number 7,000 were Japanese born, 2,100 were naturalized British subjects, and about 12,000 were Canadian citizens by birth.¹³¹ The denominational press, notably, while extending sympathy to the Japanese, did not appear to oppose the Dominion Government's actions. In fact, of the denominational newspapers the highly-charged subject was only given press coverage in the *United Church Observer* and the *Canadian Churchman*. Nonetheless, the commentary in these papers indicates the conviction that the churches's responsibility was to help the Japanese in any way possible, whilst simultaneously supporting the government's actions and gently and subtly critiquing it.

Canadian-Japanese were evacuated inland as far east as southern Ontario. Most of them were separated from their families and were expected to labour during their time inland. The editor of the *Observer* actually visited some of the camps the Japanese were evacuated to, and described the conditions there. He noted that they were very clean and orderly and that the food was excellent. The dinner menu for the day he was there

¹²⁹ Katerberg, "Protecting Christian Liberty," 11.

¹³⁰ Katerberg, "Protecting Christian Liberty," 14.

¹³¹ "The Japanese in Canada," *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1942, 4.

included “swiss steak, peas and carrots, new potatoes, pickled beets, lettuce, custard and fresh raspberries, raisin pie, butter tarts, tea, coffee and milk,” though the residents had to pay seventy-five cents per day for room and board, while medical care was covered by the Government.¹³² They did primarily agricultural labour for which they were paid; the wage changed depending on the type of work.

The editor of the *Observer* stated “on the whole no one is disposed to find fault with the way in which the Government has handled the removal of the Japanese, once the policy of evacuation was settled.”¹³³ In April 1942 the same editor stated, “we are not challenging the action of the Government in moving the Japanese from the coast. That is deemed a military necessity.”¹³⁴ However, he noted the role of the church as he saw it when he wrote, “but we are pleading for the right of the Church to continue its ministry of healing and comfort and for the co-operation of the Government and the military authorities in the humanitarian efforts of the Church.”¹³⁵ The *Canadian Churchman* indicated the belief that “Christian sympathy and understanding [for the Japanese difficulties] should be uppermost.”¹³⁶ However, the same article quoted a recent resolution passed by the Christian Social Council of Canada that expressed that Council’s appreciation for the “attitude taken by the Canadian Government and by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in maintaining traditional fairness in the face of war time necessities of the situation and of adverse public opinion,” and urged the

¹³² “The Japanese in Ontario,” *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1942, 4.

¹³³ “Problems of the Canadian-Japanese,” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1942, 7.

¹³⁴ “The Japanese in Canada,” *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1942, 4.

¹³⁵ “The Japanese in Canada,” *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1942, 4.

¹³⁶ “Japanese and Christians in Canada,” *Canadian Churchman*, 16 April 1942, 244.

Government and people of Canada that “the treatment of the Japanese in our midst continue to be governed by Christian consideration.”¹³⁷

The Government appeared to have taken care of the Japanese’s physical needs, “the mental and spiritual condition, however, is one to which more consideration must be given, and that is the particular concern of the Church.”¹³⁸ The editor went on to explain that the evacuation entailed the separation of men from their families. While such a separation may not be a significant grievance to many Canadians who tended to be more individualist, he pointed out that authority and morale centered in the home, in the family. When that relationship was broken the individuals were demoralized: “they are at a loss to know what to do. A really serious moral and mental disturbance is thus created. No matter how congenial their work and their surroundings, no matter how generous their pay, they still feel not only homesick and lonesome but are at loose ends because the ties which bound them to the social life have been severed.”¹³⁹ The editor’s compassionate insight in this explanation was cancelled by his next words, “The Government in a difficult situation has done fairly by the Canadian Japanese,” though he did believe “it is a mistake to continue this separation one day longer than is absolutely necessary.”¹⁴⁰

The denominational press also indicated a concern to avoid the proliferation of racial prejudice, which they also viewed as being part of the churches’s responsibility. The British Columbia Conference Executive of the United Church of Canada wrote Prime Minister Mackenzie King urging that “our people be warned against the dangers

¹³⁷ “Japanese and Christians in Canada,” *Canadian Churchman*, 16 April 1942, 244.

¹³⁸ “The Japanese in Ontario,” *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1942, 4.

¹³⁹ “The Japanese in Ontario,” *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1942, 4.

¹⁴⁰ “The Japanese in Ontario,” *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1942, 4.

of race prejudice, of ugly Hitlerian methods which vent upon the really innocent and unprotected the animosities aroused against a distant enemy.”¹⁴¹ Canon Judd, writing in the *Churchman* encouraged Anglicans, and indeed all Canadians to be sympathetic and understanding. He also exhorted his readers to broaden their concept of what it meant to be a Canadian citizen. He wrote, “There are among these Japanese many Canadian citizens. Besides a few of their elders all of the whole new generation are Canadians. Our Anglo-Saxon understanding of this term ‘Canadian’ must be enlarged. These young Japanese are Canadians just as much as fourth or fifth generation Britishers.”¹⁴²

On the whole, the commentary in the denominational press regarding the forced evacuation and inland internment of Canadian Japanese reveals a contradiction in Canadian Protestant discourse. While believing the churches’s role was to shape Canada into a Christian nation in matters of social reform, and this included the condemnation of racial prejudice, it seems Canadian Protestant support for the war blinded them to the racial prejudice and violations of freedom inherent in the Dominion Government’s policy toward Japanese Canadians. Instead of declaring their opposition or condemnation for this policy, the churches sought to offer tangible help to the Japanese Canadians in the midst of their difficulties. The profound silence on the subject in the Baptist and Presbyterian newspapers reinforces the apparent contradiction the plight of Japanese Canadians presented to the Canadian Protestant view of the Church’s role in society.

¹⁴¹ “The Japanese in Canada,” *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1942, 4.

¹⁴² “Japanese and Christians in Canada,” *Canadian Churchman*, 16 April 1942, 244.

Conclusion

Canadian Protestants believed that Canada's status, and potential, as a Christian nation, hung in the balance during the Second World War. The Protestant churches used one of their most effective tools, the denominational press, to influence public opinion and effect change on key social issues. They fought against the liquor traffic with as much zeal as if the brewers and distillers had been led by Hitler himself. They argued that the protection of the Lord's Day was crucial to the war effort. They promoted religious education in the public school system as an essential measure to the war effort, and importantly, the post-war peace. Running through all these social issues was the common thread of the family, which Canadian Protestants viewed as the fundamental social unit. In a sense the war was a crisis threatening the family on the home front, and these social issues coalesced as enemies of the social order as Protestants conceived of it, and how the order had been thought of historically. In this sense the social changes and turmoil of the war were, on the home front especially, very much a challenge to the established order of Christian civilization.

On top of these social issues was the plight of minority ethnic groups. Japanese-Canadians bore the brunt of Canadian social prejudice during the war, as they were forcibly relocated out of British Columbia further inland. Meanwhile other ethnic minorities experienced discrimination and Canada's government was reticent to receive refugees. In the denominational press Canadian Protestants defended these groups, albeit with significant blind spots. To do otherwise would be to compromise their witness and ignore, they believed, their task as the moral and spiritual guides of Canada. Thus, their

nation-building paradigm informed their response to the war, seeing the war as a spiritual struggle for the Christian status and potential of Canada.

CHAPTER 5: DISSENT AND PACIFISM IN THE CANADIAN PROTESTANT PRESS

“We believe armed warfare to be contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ.”¹

One of the interesting phenomena of what has come to be called the interwar period (1919–1939) was the rise of a popular peace movement that had deep associations with pacifism. Both Thomas Socknat and Gordon Heath have recognized the peace movement among Canadian Protestants appeared to have two factions. One adhered to what Heath labels absolute pacifism: a refusal to approve the use of force no matter the situation. The second, and by far the larger group, Heath labels internationalist pacifists, who were highly optimistic about the League of Nations and an internationalist movement to enact disarmament policies and outlaw war, but, who were willing to approve of war as a last resort.² A high degree of overlap existed between these two groups, but in the 1930s international developments impelled nearly all internationalist pacifists in the Canadian Protestant churches to abandon that position and, after September 1939, support the war as a just cause. The absolute pacifist minority continued in their convictions but worked to protect conscientious objectors and civil rights. So far, this study has focused on the general Canadian Protestant discourse of the

¹ “War not UnChristian,” *United Church Observer*, 1 April 1939, 19.

² Heath, “The Peace Movement among Presbyterians and the United Church,” 2. As Stuart Macdonald (“For Empire and God,” 135) has noted, this definition, initially posited by Socknat (*Witness Against War*), seems too broad: internationalist pacifists clearly held a just war position. It seems both Socknat and Heath define pacifism this way to accommodate the fact that pacifism was in vogue during those years and the desire for peace was such that even those who held a just war position (perhaps due to ignorance about this position) called themselves pacifists.

war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization, as seen in the denominational press. This chapter concentrates on the primary exception to the general view of the war, the dissenting voice of pacifism in the United Church. As noted earlier, J. S. Woodsworth, leader of the CCF party and former Methodist minister, was a committed pacifist and one of only four dissenting votes in Parliament on whether Canada should declare war on Germany. He was not alone in his opposition to the war. The Protestant press indicates that most pacifists who retained their convictions held their silence after war was declared in September 1939, with the notable exception of a vocal minority of pacifists in the United Church who opposed the war.

This chapter focuses on pacifism in the Canadian Protestant press. While the Canadian Protestant press largely interpreted the war as a defence of Christian civilization, not all saw the war this way and therefore responded differently. The following analysis and discussion demonstrate several important facts. First, Canadian Protestants's interwar interest in peace did not disappear as mainline pacifism was rapidly eclipsed by the war. On the contrary, the common belief in the press was that one of the church's primary tasks in war time was to begin preparations for a post-war world that established a lasting peace. It was deeply intertwined with the view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. Second, internationalist rhetoric continued to be widespread in the pacifist discussions of 1939. This rhetoric, as well as the radical social critique typical of absolute pacifism, shaped the visions of post-war peace in the Protestant press throughout the war. Ironically, the discourse that framed the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization relied heavily on internationalist rhetoric from the interwar peace movement. Third, pacifist discourse

in the Protestant press was rooted in the nation-building impulse that had provided the impetus for Canadian Protestants's social reform work since the late-nineteenth century. This impulse was itself rooted in the larger narratives of modernity, namely, a belief in human perfectability, inevitable and indefinite human progress, and an optimism in human reason and ability to eradicate the world's problems. In the same way, pacifist discourse was also highly influenced by the ideas of the Social Gospel, a movement that was similarly rooted in the nation-building impulse, if a rather more radical expression of it. Fourth, though it was primarily pacifists that critiqued the identification of the church with democracy or Britain, pacifists yet showed a definite preference for democracy and some tied pacifism to preserving democracy. Therefore, Protestant pacifists constituted the primary dissenting position from the view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. However, they were motivated by the same presuppositions of Christendom, progress, and nation-building. Indeed, they sought a just and enduring peace as much as their non-pacifist compatriots, but believed war was not the best way to achieve it.

Origins of Pacifism in the Canadian Protestant Churches

In his history of pacifism in Canada between 1900–1945, Thomas Socknat claims that the pacifism that became widespread among the mainline Protestants during the interwar period was rooted in a “North American liberal reform movement.”³ He distinguishes between this expression of pacifism and that found among groups such as Mennonites, Hutterites, and Quakers. The liberal reform movement, occurring initially in the late

³ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 20.

nineteenth century, was very much concerned about social reform, of which peace was merely one cause among many. Socknat claims that the liberal reform movement was an umbrella under which the Social Gospel movement occurred. In Canada, Socknat contends, the peace movement became deeply intertwined with the Social Gospel, and then later, socialism. As such, though the peace movement was shattered by the First World War, in the early 1920s the peace movement was refashioned, merging the social activism of peace advocates with the social criticism of the Social Gospel.⁴ Notably, he suggests that the Great War forced the most committed pacifists to adopt a radical social critique “of the social and economic roots of war” and in so doing jettisoned their liberal reformism “for some variant of the socialist creed.”⁵

The 1920s was a turbulent decade. Disillusionment was widespread after the war.⁶ Optimism was growing over the possibilities of the newly-founded League of Nations. What was true of the wider world was reflected in Canada. Urbanization and industrialization continued to be challenging trends facing Canadians. Labour relations were fraught with volatility, and exploded several times in strikes.⁷ Theological liberalism, or modernism, collided with the retrenched forces of fundamentalism; the Baptists experienced the worst of this. The long process of church union which produced the United Church of Canada in 1925 had taken a severe toll on one-third of Canadian Presbyterians who opted out of union, and almost overnight their position in the Canadian religious landscape was irrevocably transformed.

⁴ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 10.

⁵ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 58–59.

⁶ Compounding this were several recessions (see, Herd, *Decades of Discord*, 76) and an unprecedented spirit of rebelliousness among youth (see, Wright, “Canadian Protestant Tradition,” 145).

⁷ For a treatment of the strikes and the churches’s response to them see Allen, *Social Passion*, 81–103, 159–74.

The Social Gospel's radical social critique matured in the midst of complex social problems in the 1920s and 1930s. Both absolute and internationalist pacifists were highly optimistic about the League of Nations, international policies of disarmament, an international court of arbitration, and hoped to outlaw war by these means.⁸ But, the movement's popularity was, as Heath suggests, likely due to the fact that interwar pacifism was a diverse movement with wide appeal, "with (absolute) pacifists sharing the euphoria of outlawing war with (international) pacifists."⁹ No doubt the same wide appeal obscured the deep division between absolute and internationalist pacifists, making them difficult to distinguish from one another. This division being the unbridgeable chasm between an absolute refusal to countenance war (absolute pacifists) and the acceptance of war as the last resort after every other course of action had failed (internationalist pacifists).¹⁰

Gordon Heath claims that in the 1930s pacifism had a reforming influence on the just war tradition. There were, "hesitations and concerns over the use of force, and the return of Great War rhetoric of hatred, [these] reflect the influence pacifism had on taming the militaristic spirit of the just war tradition."¹¹ This was conducive, Heath points out, to "a return to an Augustinian view of just war that waged war out of love for neighbours rather than hatred of foes."¹² Calls in September 1939 to wage a hatred free war, Heath claims, together with statements of human solidarity and brotherhood were "a powerful demonstration of how interwar pacifism helped to reform the just war

⁸ Heath, "The Peace Movement among Presbyterians and the United Church," 2.

⁹ Heath, "The Peace Movement among Presbyterians and the United Church," 3.

¹⁰ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 125.

¹¹ Heath, "Canadian Anglicans," 20.

¹² Heath, "Canadian Anglicans," 20.

tradition.”¹³ Similarly, the interwar internationalism and its radical social critique furnished the churches with rhetoric and ideas to describe their visions of the postwar peace. It is crucial to view the pacifist discourse in the United Church, in this context. It should be noted that the United Church was divided: a majority of UCC members and adherents supported the war as other Canadian Protestants did and a vocal minority did not. These two positions, Heath has argued, were exemplified, by George C. Pidgeon and Robert Edis Fairbairn, respectively.¹⁴

The nation-building impulse that had motivated the majority of the churches’s work over the previous five decades was at play through the turbulence of the 1920s and continued to be the framework in which absolute and internationalist pacifists formulated their arguments. Socknat acknowledges this, noting that Christian pacifists were characterized by a deep desire to shape Canadians’s social attitudes.¹⁵ This was true for the other mainline Protestants in Canada as well, because their goal to shape Canada into the Lord’s Dominion persisted.

The realities of the 1930s, which included the Great Depression, the crumbling of the Weimar Republic and Hitler’s rise to power in Germany, the rise of Italian fascism and aggression in Africa, the confrontation of fascism and communism in the Spanish Civil War, Japan’s imperialist invasion of China, and the failure of the League of Nations to adequately address these, challenged the idealism of the peace movement. These events hinted strongly at world war by the late 1930s. Most internationalist

¹³ Heath, “Canadian Anglicans,” 23.

¹⁴ Heath, “Irreconcilable Differences,” 30.

¹⁵ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 296. Heath also acknowledged this when he pointed out that the *Canadian Churchman*, continued to act in its traditional capacity during the war as “a nation-building press, seeking to shape political views and inspire Christian engagement with the world” (Heath, “Canadian Anglicans and Postwar Pacifism,” 23).

pacifists shed their pacifism and condoned the use of force in a quickly deteriorating international situation. By the time Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, pacifism was nearly invisible in the mainline Protestant churches with the notable exception of the United Church, which had provided fertile ground for absolute pacifism, together with a radical social critique, to take root.

Pacifist Discourse in the *United Church Observer*, January to September 1939

The beginning of the Second World War was no surprise. The 1930s had seen international relations increasingly fraught with war. Between January and 3 September 1939, the day Britain declared war on Germany, there was ongoing discussion in the Canadian Protestant press about the worsening international situation, its repercussions, and the possibility of war. One prominent theme both before and after the war began was democratic freedom and its relationship to Christianity. Canadian Protestants were well aware of the unsavoury nature of Nazism and Fascism, and had already begun emphasizing the key feature of their civilization which Nazism lacked, freedom. The ideas about democratic freedom seen in the Canadian Protestant press shaped the view of the war as a just cause, if not a righteous cause.

Pacifism was tied to the view of the war as a just cause. While there was some mention of pacifism to be found throughout the Protestant press, most of the discussion on pacifism took place within the United Church of Canada. The pages of its national periodical *The United Church Observer* provided a forum for the public discussion of the relationship between the Christian and war, pacifism, and the view that the UCC leadership had failed to provide a strong sense of the church's position on the matter.

The pacifist discourse in the *Observer* after the declaration of war, can only be understood in the context of the larger pacifist discourse that had developed over the course of 1939.

The UCC had become a haven for Social Gospellers of every kind, socialists, radical critics of society, and absolute pacifists. The church's leadership seemed to be highly influenced by the ideas common to these groups, though it could also have been a reflection of the peace movement's popularity in the interwar period. The UCC's leadership passed multiple statements in the 1930s renouncing war.¹⁶ Absolute pacifists looked to these as authoritative statements when the leadership failed to provide guidance about the war in the autumn of 1939. However, many others took issue with these statements. The following analysis of pacifist discourse in the *United Church Observer* in 1939 indicates some of the issues at stake.

The melding of Christian pacifism with a radical social critique was apparent from the very start, although the radical social critique appeared to have influenced even some non-pacifists. In a letter to the editor, one A. J. Belton of Saskatoon argued that the profit motive should be removed from war by allowing only governments to manufacture munitions. However, Belton also pointed out to readers of the *Observer*

¹⁶ Stebner, "The 1930s," 52. In 1932 the UCC "adopted an international peace and disarmament report and declared 'its unchanging conviction that war is contrary to the mind of Christ.'" In 1936 the UCC reiterated its "determined opposition to war." The UCC also adopted statements that repudiated war in 1934 and 1938. Airhart (*A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 127) has noted that the statement repudiating war produced at the UCC's 1938 General Council actually allowed for another legitimate Christian position on war. While it stated the widespread belief that war was contrary to the mind of Christ and to Christian principles, it also included a rationale for the use of force: "in the present unredeemed state of the world the state has the duty under God to use force when law and order are threatened or to vindicate an essential principle, i.e., to defend victims of wanton aggression or secure freedom for the oppressed" (127). The problem that arose in the UCC, discussed below, is that both pacifists and supporters of the war viewed the statements from General Council 1938 as authoritative; the fact that they appeared to be mutually exclusive never came up.

that “the use of force is the only way humankind has discovered to restrain lawlessness,” and for this reason he held the belief that pacifists were inconsistent in their thinking.¹⁷ They refused war but approved of police force. He declared that he was in favour of every measure taken to secure peace, except refusing to use war. As for absolute pacifism he stated: “I note that in the last six months the stern logic of events has caused some ministers to either say nothing about their extreme Pacifism, or to abjure it. This is also true of Pacifists elsewhere . . . Have we not a right to expect our Church to strengthen the hands of our statesmen in their effort to defend and preserve the things that are essential to the continuance of our Christian civilization?”¹⁸ While Belton’s letter read like he was responding to a list of current or recent events, his letter is an illustrative example of pacifism in the United Church. First, his identification of the “profit motive” in war reflected the influence of social radical thought that Socknat argues became part and parcel of interwar pacifism. However, Belton rejected pacifism, though he implied that he may have held to pacifism at one time; the events of the previous six months confirmed the impossibility of such a position. His internationalism was revealed when he concluded his letter by stating “we should restore the efficiency of the League of Nations, and back up its efforts to avoid war, and to right international wrongs.”¹⁹

The following month the *Observer* published a letter to the editor that sparked a minor controversy. It was entitled “War not UnChristian.” This letter, written by William Iverach of Manitoba, challenged the General Council’s statement that “we

¹⁷ “Take Profits out of War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 March 1939, 29.

¹⁸ “Take Profits out of War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 March 1939, 29.

¹⁹ “Take Profits out of War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 March 1939, 29.

believe armed warfare to be contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ.”²⁰ Where, Iverach wondered, did the board get its biblical authority for such a position? He argued that an isolated case such as Jesus’s reproof of Peter should not “be taken as applicable to all times and circumstances.”²¹ Iverach went on to point out that “our Protestant church was born in blood, was bathed in it for over two hundred years” and as such how could anyone “dare say that these men should not have taken the sword as a means of defending the liberties of mankind.”²² While Belton’s letter indicated that he held a great deal of common ground with pacifists, Iverach’s letter was ambiguous whether he found any elements of pacifism amenable, though he did imply that the use of force was a necessary aspect of not only human existence, but defending the liberty of humankind.

In the 15 May edition, several letters appeared responding to Iverach as well as Belton. Robert Johnson of Toronto argued that Iverach had mutilated Scripture to support his position that war was not unchristian, by ripping it out of context.²³ The other letter, from C. W. Mowers of Saskatoon, responding to Belton, claimed that Belton was representative of a generation of ministers that saw pacifists as idealists. He argued that Belton et al.’s “realism” was actually worldliness, and he implied strongly that Belton’s generation was to blame for the church’s complicity in the last war and its failure to solve the world’s social and economic problems. Mowers also responded to Iverach’s claim that the pacifist position outlined in the General Council’s statement in 1938 lacked biblical authority. Mowers stated “as a pacifist motivated largely by Christian principles I am not worried about a Biblical authority for my faith. I am

²⁰ As quoted in “War not UnChristian,” *United Church Observer*, 1 April 1939, 19.

²¹ “War not UnChristian,” *United Church Observer*, 1 April 1939, 19.

²² “War not UnChristian,” *United Church Observer*, 1 April 1939, 19.

²³ “War is UnChristian,” *United Church Observer*, 15 May 1939, 21.

merely persuaded that war means wilfully-engendered hate and killing. These are contrary to the spirit of Jesus as I know it. That is all there is to it.”²⁴

Unfortunately for Iverach, his letter to the editor drew the ire of R. Edis Fairbairn, a prominent figure among the absolute pacifists in the United Church, who wrote harshly against Iverach’s position. He believed that Iverach’s view was the position of the average man in the Church, and suggested such people were out of touch with current events. He wrote,

Dear Sir, Your [sic] correspondent Mr. William Iverach, has rendered a service to the whole Church in expressing bluntly and forcibly the average man’s reaction to the Church’s repudiation of war. He is not in the least to be blamed for being completely out of touch with recent developments in Christian thinking on this subject. For the most part the pulpit has refrained from acquainting the pew with the convictions that have been born out of travail of spirit as men have grappled with the problem of war.²⁵

Next, Fairbairn addressed Iverach’s question about the biblical authority of the General Council’s statement. He argued that the biblical authority for pacifism was not found in any single statement of Jesus, and then appealed to the Oxford Pronouncement. He stated:

The biblical authority for this repudiation of war lies not in any isolated saying of Jesus. At the same time the way Mr. Iverach dismisses those sayings of Jesus he does not like, and distorts the point of those he does, with a complacent, ‘I do not think’ this or that, is, I suggest, hardly good enough for any adult professing to do a job of serious thinking. The conscience of Christendom has found expression in the collective judgement of the Oxford Conference, in the statement that ‘war is a particular demonstration of the power of sin in the world, and a defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. No justification of war must be allowed to conceal or minimize this fact.’²⁶

²⁴ “Contrary to Master’s Spirit,” *United Church Observer*, 15 May 1939, 21.

²⁵ “The Oxford Pronouncement,” *United Church Observer*, 15 May 1939, 21.

²⁶ “The Oxford Pronouncement,” *United Church Observer*, 15 May 1939, 21.

It is possible Fairbairn overstated the representative nature of the Oxford Pronouncement, and conveniently left out the fact that the Conference had recognized two legitimate Christian positions on war of which pacifism was only one, but for him and other absolute pacifists, it was a key statement of the pacifist position. Unfortunately, Fairbairn's harsh tongue probably limited the effectiveness of his defence of pacifism.

Another letter to the editor argued that Iverach's position was logically inconsistent, something to which Fairbairn had also alluded. The writer, Grant Micklejohn, stated that "a protest loses much weight when its author employs the very method he denounces."²⁷ However, the rest of his letter prevented any easy classification of whether he held to a pacifist position or not: "About one thing there seems little reason to doubt. Although I *may* wish to crush a national menace with all vengeance, the way of the historical *Jesus* is at least this—love overcoming evil. Whether we uphold military defence or reject it as a means to peace, the Prince of Peace requires of His followers that their choice or choices be motivated by a love that is free of malice and vengeance."²⁸ Micklejohn, taking something of a centrist position emphasised the love that Christians should exhibit, not only toward their enemies, but toward each other, whether pacifist or not. His implication of the need for unity among the Christian fellowship would become a theme in the *Observer* in the midst of another controversy in the autumn of 1939.

Another letter was concerned with the church's task in the context of the looming possibility of war. He noted the sincerity of pacifists and non-pacifists alike and

²⁷ "Protest Loses Weight," *United Church Observer*, 15 May 1939, 21.

²⁸ "Protest Loses Weight," *United Church Observer*, 15 May 1939, 21. Emphasis original.

suggested that the church must work to allow individual Christians to follow their consciences:

It becomes necessary for the Church as now constituted to give direction to all within its ranks, both to those who are conscientious objectors and to those who believe it is their duty to go to war when the nation calls. So far as the individual is concerned, he must be true to his own conscience; his conscience must be his guide. The responsibility for his attitude is his own. The Church must be prepared to support him in that attitude, conscientiously taken.²⁹

Similar to Micklejohn's letter, this writer, in arguing for the place of following one's conscience assumed the need for an underlying unity in congregation and the broader denomination.

An editorial from 15 May took issue with small pledge cards that had recently been in circulation. Apparently, the cards had printed on them an affirmation of belief in God and a declaration of allegiance to King and country. The editor of the *Observer* objected to this. He argued that "we as Christian people, have to be on our guard against identifying God with our own particular brand of patriotism . . . Surely we can prove our allegiance to Him without linking that belief with a national aim and conviction. Our allegiance to God is one thing—our allegiance to King and Country is another. Nothing but spiritual harm and intellectual confusion can come from linking them together even for patriotic purposes."³⁰ As he warned of identifying Christianity with patriotism, the editor was in sparse company in making such a warning.

The spring 1939 editions of the *Observer* also included a glimpse into how Canadian youth viewed the possibility of war. Two letters to the editor from student groups at Victoria college, one from women students and one from men students,

²⁹ "The Church and War," *United Church Observer*, 15 June 1939, 4.

³⁰ "God and Country," *United Church Observer*, 15 May 1939, 4.

outlined their views. In the women students's letter a Christian view of peace was defined not as a period of relative quiet between wars but as "the elimination of war, the reconciliation of nations, and the extension of liberty to all races and classes. We are convinced that there is no such thing as a 'war to end war.' Inevitably the attitude of the victor becomes one of retaliation, not redemption."³¹ As for achieving peace, they stated their belief that "we recognize that peace demands sacrifice; it requires adjustments of the present economic and social order which will involve suffering; and it demands a progressive programme of reconciliation and reconstruction which requires the uttermost of courage and faith."³² These women students went so far as to list some practical ways which the Canadian churches could work for peace. They wrote:

We believe that the Churches in Canada should take a stand for peace by sending a letter to the Dominion Government:

1. Condemning war in no uncertain terms (as in the Oxford Conference Report).
2. Condemning the self-righteous attitude of the democratic countries, and calling them to repentance; for they are willing to make the sacrifice of millions of lives to 'stop Hitler,' but are unwilling to sacrifice their own economic interests or prestige to bring to an end the conditions which produce dictators and Fascist states.
3. Urging, at all cost, the holding of a Peace conference, where the minority groups may meet with the greater powers to determine a fairer distribution of the economic resources of the world among the nations.
4. Calling upon Canada to express her faith in a Court of Arbitration, a League of Nations, rather than a balance of power, as the way to achieve 'peace.'³³

This letter to the editor was unique in that it focused on the role of the church in a very practical manner. The signatories also noted their belief that "pacifists can make a positive contribution during war, and that the Church should be concerned to see that

³¹ "The Church and War," *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1939, 21.

³² "The Church and War," *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1939, 21.

³³ "The Church and War," *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1939, 21.

they are enabled to do so. Groups of pacifists should be active *now* in refugee relief work and in studying the present crisis with a view to its peaceful solution.”³⁴

The letter representing the views of male students at Victoria College was less detailed in outlining practical solutions. What it lacked in pragmatism it made up for in being forthright. They stated “We believe that war is evil, and incompatible with Christian ethics. In the conflict between loyalties to the State and to Christ we believe that loyalty to Christ should transcend every other loyalty. Because of this, it is our conviction that the Christian Church, to whom the work of Christ is entrusted, must oppose the State where it attempts to dominate Christian conscience.”³⁵ For these men there was only one path forward: “peace on earth can be achieved by one method. Absolute renunciation of war by individuals, by the Church, and by the State . . . Therefore, we are convinced that it is the duty of the Church to lead in a stand for pacifism.”³⁶ The letter was signed by twenty men.

These two letters to the editor provide an interesting contrast sample of Victoria College students. While it is difficult to say to what extent they represented the broader student body at the College, they were certainly vocal. It is also interesting that the letter from the women students was less blunt, more practical, and included more internationalist rhetoric. The male students on the other hand boldly stated their position and their belief that absolute pacifism was the only way to achieve peace. As far as the broader population of students in Canada, an article in the *Observer* for May 1, summarized the results of a poll conducted at the University of New Brunswick. The

³⁴ “The Church and War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1939, 21.

³⁵ “Victoria College Students Speak on War, *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1939, 21.

³⁶ “Victoria College Students Speak on War, *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1939, 21.

writer noted that the poll indicated that “pacifist sentiment among Maritime youth is rare.”³⁷ Overall the results of the poll suggested that the students at the University of New Brunswick held an attitude that approved of war in the current circumstances. The writer, interestingly, was most concerned with the question posed by the poll: “If England became involved in war, should Canada enter the war?” Although he thought this question was poorly framed and assumed that England would only be involved in a righteous war, he found the fact that seventy-seven youth answered yes to the question disquieting.³⁸

For the sake of perspective, it is worth noting that the same poll was conducted at several post-secondary institutions across Canada. The editor of *The Silhouette*, McMaster University’s student newspaper, summarized the results of the poll conducted at McMaster. Just over fifty-two percent answered “yes” to the question “are you in favour of military action to check the expansion of the totalitarian states?”³⁹ To the question “if England becomes involved in a war should Canada enter the war, 64.7 percent answered “yes.”⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that the editor’s discussion of the poll’s results focused on the percentages which were opposed to Canada’s involvement in a war, while failing to mention that 64 percent of McMaster students surveyed, and 70 percent of the students surveyed in Eastern Canada answered “yes” to the question “if England becomes involved in a war, should Canada enter the war?”⁴¹ Youthful views

³⁷ “New Brunswick Youth Not Pacifist,” *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1939, 15.

³⁸ “New Brunswick Youth Not Pacifist,” *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1939, 15.

³⁹ “War Questionnaire Results,” *The Silhouette*, 31 March 1939, 3.

⁴⁰ “War Questionnaire Results,” *The Silhouette*, 31 March 1939, 3.

⁴¹ Rudy, “Protagonist of Justice,” 25–26. “Eastern Canada” here refers to Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic provinces.

expressed in the *Observer*, then, did not seem to align with the majority position held by most Canadian youth.

A letter to the editor, from George Clough of Virden, Manitoba, objected strongly to both pacifism and the *Observer's* alleged over-emphasis on it. Clough wrote "When I opened up the May 15th issue I was disgusted by its editorials. Pacifism is a poor substitute for Christianity."⁴² Clough then addressed the editor's claim that only spiritual harm will result from linking together allegiance to God with allegiance to King and country. He wrote "That is strange teaching, sir, to be offered to members of any Christian Church, for every Christian should know that these two loyalties *must* be linked together. A patriotism that is not closely linked with allegiance to God is the type of patriotism that would make it possible for a German to worship God on Sunday and to support Mr. Hitler's policies through the week. That is the type of patriotism that leads to aggression."⁴³ Finally, Clough divested his objection to pacifism, and the *Observer's* coverage of it: "Pacifism always ends logically in disloyalty . . . It seems we have a group of Church leaders who worship peace as blindly as some men worship war. One after another our Church papers have been made organs for pacifist propaganda. Whoever is responsible for *The United Church Observer* might well take warning by their failure, for the vast majority of our church members will continue to regard loyalty to King and country as second only to loyalty to God."⁴⁴

⁴² "Objects to Editorial," *United Church Observer*, 15 June 1939, 21.

⁴³ "Objects to Editorial," *United Church Observer*, 15 June 1939, 21.

⁴⁴ "Objects to Editorial," *United Church Observer*, 15 June 1939, 21.

Meanwhile, the discussion sparked by William Iverach's letter to the editor continued. William Kennedy of Saskatoon wrote to the editor in defence of Iverach. He wrote,

suppose war is unchristian, does it necessarily follow that it is unchristian for the individual to join up in a fight, say, for liberty, or, to repel invasion? It seems to me this is the question uppermost in Mr. Iverach's mind, but entirely ignored by his critics. If it is unchristian to fight for liberty, what of those who have been so lauded by the Church for their part in that historic struggle? Again, if it is unchristian to fight for liberty, it must be unchristian to fight for a standard of living, which we must surely do, in these competitive days, for is not competition the soil out of which wars grow?⁴⁵

As the summer of 1939 progressed, the debate over pacifism continued in much the same way as it had been proceeding since the spring. Two articles in particular, though, are noteworthy.⁴⁶ One was written by a United Church missionary in Japan-occupied China. He claimed to be a pacifist of a kind, but criticized the overly submissive version of pacifism that seemed to be at large in the UCC. He wrote:

Now I feel that a negative pacifism based on submission gives everything over to the militarist nations, which will even imprison people for praying for peace. Then we will lose freedom and justice, as well as peace. I do not see Christ as you do, a submissive saviour who advocates only submission to injustice. He could not be silent. He challenged the evil forces of His day with all His power . . . but nowhere did he recommend only suffering submission to wrong . . . If we had enough people who would not buy or sell or have any dealings with invaders, in spite of prison and death, pacifism might save freedom and achieve peace, but a negative pacifism will lose even the freedom to preach the truth and also will not achieve peace.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ "Competition Source of Wars," *United Church Observer*, 15 June 1939, 30.

⁴⁶ For examples from the summer of 1939, see: "Pacifism," *United Church Observer*, 1 July 1939, 2; "Toronto Pacifists Plan Conference," *United Church Observer*, 15 July 1939, 11; "A Reply to Mr. Murray," *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1939, 21; "The Young Ministers Speak," *United Church Observer*, 15 August 1939, 19; "Another View of War," *United Church Observer*, 15 August 1939, 19; "The Christian Attitude Towards War," *United Church Observer*, 15 August 1939, 19; "Our Attitude Towards War," *United Church Observer*, 15 August 1939, 19.

⁴⁷ "What Price Peace? A Letter to a Pacifist Who Advocates the Submission of China to Japan," *United Church Observer*, 1 August 1939, 21.

This letter was a voice of dissent against what appeared to be the dominant mode of pacifism in the UCC. Importantly, however, this writer also emphasized the role of freedom in achieving peace and deplored losing freedom and justice.

The second warned against identifying the Kingdom of God with a form of government. He wrote “Christian men must watch lest we be tempted to identify the cause of God with even such a desired form of government as democracy.”⁴⁸ But he went on to ask the crucial question “But what will happen to democracy, what will happen to us, if we do not defend ourselves?”⁴⁹ He answered with another question: “A hundred thoughts come to mind. Do we defend, or may we not destroy this democracy by the very act of fighting for it?”⁵⁰ He concluded with the claim that if democracy was of God, God would defend it. It wasn’t until after Canada joined the war, however, that the link between pacifism and democracy became more prominent.

“The thing which we greatly feared is come upon us, and that of which we have been afraid has come”: War Declared

On 3 September 1939 Britain declared war on Germany. At this point the ongoing discussion in the *United Church Observer* was forced to reckon with the reality that their nation was, or would soon be, at war. The *Observer* became the forum in which readers debated the superiority, or the inferiority, of pacifism. An ambivalence toward the war became apparent in the *Observer* which was intensified by church leaders’s seeming lack of a clear statement of support for, or against, the war.

⁴⁸ “Pacifism,” *United Church Observer*, 1 July 1939, 2.

⁴⁹ “Pacifism,” *United Church Observer*, 1 July 1939, 2.

⁵⁰ “Pacifism,” *United Church Observer*, 1 July 1939, 2.

An editorial printed the week after Canada declared war, addressed the new situation of war. The editor noted that many in the UCC were in search of “guidance and some sense of direction,” and reminded his readers that “The United Church of Canada, not once but several times, has made clear its position through its supreme court, the General Council. In September 1938, during the Munich crisis, the General Council reaffirmed its position that ‘war is contrary to the mind of Christ.’”⁵¹ However, the editor noted that he could not presume to speak for the church, neither the leadership nor the laity, but he did admit that some might support the war. The way he stated this fact made it sound like that was a minority position: “There may be those who for conscience’ sake support war. They must be prepared to take all the risks which that position involves just as their brothers take risks when they take up arms.”⁵² But, he reminded his readers that “when in the mind of the Christian there is a conflict of loyalties, loyalty to God in Christ must take precedence.”⁵³

The 15 September edition of the *Observer*, the first to be printed since Canada joined the war, was full to bursting with articles and letters to the editor all trying to articulate the proper relationship between Christianity and the war. The lack of clear guidance from UCC leadership was exemplified in the frequently asked question in many of these articles and letters “what should the church do about war?” Albert Beldon, in one article, declared his belief that in light of the “appalling indiscriminate destructiveness of modern weapons and the new oneness of the world today, I do not believe it possible for a modern Christian denomination to endorse another world war

⁵¹ “The Church in a State of War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 4.

⁵² “The Church in a State of War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 4.

⁵³ “The Church in a State of War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 4.

with a good conscience, especially in the lurid light of the failure of the last one to defend the ideals for which churchmen engaged in it.”⁵⁴ Like numerous other pacifists in the United Church, Beldon saw the anti-war statements from the Oxford Conference as authoritative: “At Oxford in 1938 the non-Roman Churches in ecumenical council recognized for the first time in history pacifism as a legitimate Christian position. This is a great step forward. It is no longer ‘heresy’ for a Protestant to refuse the act of war.”⁵⁵ He implored “official Christianity” to declare the church’s universal ban on war, and he was optimistic that this was possible.⁵⁶

In another article W. E. L. Smith sought to answer the question “when should the Christian fight?” He held the fairly common belief that war was not a way to peace, and yet “it seems to me,” he said, “that there are evils worse than the obliteration of a number of lives and there can be a suffering and callousness of peace more intolerable than those of war.”⁵⁷ For example, “the degradation of life under a Nazi regime with all that that means in secret police, spying, distorted education, the daily spectacle of brutality toward the weak—to surrender to that cannot be Christian. Or to stand by as a nation and let bullying governments, step by step, master the weak nations; I cannot reconcile that with our Lord’s forthright championing of the weak.”⁵⁸ He concluded that “to fight to avenge an insult is not Christian and one lives to regret it. But to fight to stop some wrong may be necessary.”⁵⁹

⁵⁴ “The Church and War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 19.

⁵⁵ “The Church and War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 19.

⁵⁶ “The Church and War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 19.

⁵⁷ “When Should the Christian Fight?” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 5.

⁵⁸ “When Should the Christian Fight?” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 5.

⁵⁹ “When Should the Christian Fight?” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 5.

One writer worried about the place of pacifism in the United Church. “Three years from now shall I express myself as I have today? . . . If I write three years from now as I do today will *The United Church Observer* publish it.”⁶⁰ He also stated his intention to cling to his pacifist creed “but I shall hold my silence. Nothing would be gained by preaching pacifism with my country at war.”⁶¹ Meanwhile another article, in response to a plea from a veteran of the Great War that the church keep out of any future war, argued that the church cannot and should not stay out of the war. He wrote “in this our day when primitive passions are again on the march, any movement strong enough to counter the war instinct must be widespread, intellectually sound and inspired by a stronger passion than even a desire for revenge, national honour, race domination or economic advantage. Can the Church inspire such a passion? I believe that it can.”⁶² This writer valued the role of the church. In his view the church was “the most potent for creating and educating an effective public opinion on moral issues.”⁶³

The role of the church was a key element for those arguing for and against pacifism. A well-known self-proclaimed pacifist, J. Lavell Smith, wrote a whole article on the role of the church in exercising a pacifist ministry, a welcome practical suggestion in the midst of arguments. The key role of the church was outlined in ten points, claiming that the church should be a place where:

1. The sovereignty of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, is proclaimed over all aspects of human life.
2. God’s eternal and undiscouraged-able purpose of good for mankind is set forth, a purpose which is able to make even the wrath of men praise him.

⁶⁰ “What is the Future of Pacifism?” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 18.

⁶¹ “What is the Future of Pacifism?” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 18.

⁶² “The Next War: Can the Church Keep Out of It?” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 18.

⁶³ “The Next War: Can the Church Keep Out of It?” *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 18.

3. Worshippers acknowledge in penitence their past sins of individual and collective acquisitiveness so that God becomes able to work in men's contrite hearts again.
4. Prayer is offered for the increase of truth and justice and for the cessation of organized human slaughter.
5. The spirit of goodwill is kept alive and love for one's 'enemies' enjoined.
6. The right of the Christian to follow his own conscience is maintained.
7. Men and women who cannot contemplate the taking of human life, find a fellowship through which they may give life to others.
8. Deep sacrifice is encouraged on behalf of our fellow men in other lands, so that ties which unite men in a community of nations may be strengthened.
9. Anxious and troubled hearts find healing and bereaved ones are assured that 'life and death His mercy underlies.'
10. The message of the Cross is proclaimed, a love that meets violence with gentleness and overcomes hatred with forgiveness, a love which, because it is self-giving, becomes redemptive.⁶⁴

While Smith viewed these points as a pacifist ministry, there was really very little in these points that was specifically pacifist which a non-pacifist could not agree with.

Smith, and others in subsequent issues of the *Observer*, took it upon themselves to describe a proper response, even if it claimed to be pacifist, since the UCC's leadership did not appear to be fulfilling that task.

In the midst of all this commentary on the relationship between Christianity and war, there was a brief description of a meeting of the Sub-Executive of the Church, as well as the Board of Evangelism and Social Service "to consider the requirements placed upon the Church in the midst of the national crisis."⁶⁵ The brief article relayed that the Moderator had been directed to issue a pastoral letter to ministers for guidance, and a temporary committee was set up to "make provision for an effective organization for the selection of chaplains to carry on spiritual ministrations at home and overseas when appointed by the Government."⁶⁶ In comparison to the statements justifying the

⁶⁴ "What Constitutes a Pacifist Ministry?" *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 18.

⁶⁵ "Sub-Executive Faces War Issue," *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 5.

⁶⁶ "Sub-Executive Faces War Issue," *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 5.

war in the wider Protestant press, this description of the Sub-Executive, left much to be desired for those within and without the pacifist camp.

In the same edition a letter to the editor criticized the church leadership's approach. He wrote, "In regard to the individual Christian's attitude toward war, the people are asking the Church, 'What should we do?; and the Church, because even its leaders are divided, replies only, 'The choice is yours; follow your conscience.'" ⁶⁷ He argued that the conscience was an uncertain guide because it had "been methodically subjected . . . to state education through the schools, the press, and the platform, their consciences are as much the voice of the state as the voice of God."⁶⁸ He went on to address claims that Jesus had nowhere decried war. To that he replied that "Jesus did not lay down laws for this and that condition; He set up, rather, eternal principles of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."⁶⁹

The letter sent to all UCC pastors from the Moderator was summarized in the 1 October, 1939 edition of the *Observer*. While the editor thought highly of the statement, it did not appear to provide the clear guidance and sense of direction many desired. The Moderator emphasized two foundational beliefs that he felt should guide the Christian response to the war: the belief in a God who cannot be identified with any one group or set of circumstances, and the belief in the Church as a world-wide beloved community devoted to that God and that must not allow bitterness or hate to prevail in their hearts.⁷⁰ His message to his flock was to preserve the unity of fellowship within the Church. There was not much comment on the statement.

⁶⁷ "If War—What Should We Do?" *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 27.

⁶⁸ "If War—What Should We Do?" *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 27.

⁶⁹ "If War—What Should We Do?" *United Church Observer*, 15 September 1939, 27.

⁷⁰ "A Moderator Speaks" *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1939, 4.

Other than the Moderator's letter, the 1 October edition of the *Observer* continued to include articles and letters from those who appreciated the sincerity of pacifists but concluded, as Roman Collar did, that they "like the majority, must face the fact that it is the Cross or the swastika, freedom or chains, life or death, preservation or destruction of the things for which they have sincerely prayed."⁷¹ Others reiterated their stand as a pacifist as one student, who had signed a pacifist statement printed in the *Observer* in the spring, wrote "Now that war has actually broken out, I want to reaffirm my stand . . . that I can have no part, as a combatant, in this war."⁷² Meanwhile some, like A. J. Belton, wrote to the editor to declare publicly his objection "to the editorial page of our Church paper being used to propagate Pacifism."⁷³ And, there was the lone voice of a widowed mother who had lost children in the last war, who wrote "I am a pacifist now, and I say it is a dastardly crime to future generations to take away the healthy and fit and send them to war, leaving behind the diseased and unfit."⁷⁴ But she acknowledged the leadership's lack of guidance too, when she wrote "what will the Church do about it? Where are the women of the Church? Can they not raise their voices and save our fit young men for a better and purer purpose than to act as targets for guns? As a mother my cry to God is to enlighten our minds to what is truth and righteousness and justice in this year 1939."⁷⁵

While the leaders of the Church seemed reticent to provide clear direction on how their constituents should respond to the war the 15 October edition of the *Observer*

⁷¹ "As I See it," *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1939, 14.

⁷² "Can A Christian Fight? *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1939, 19.

⁷³ "Objects to Pacifist Views," *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1939, 19.

⁷⁴ "A Mother Writes," *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1939, 21.

⁷⁵ "A Mother Writes," *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1939, 21.

contained two sharply contrasting views. One came from the Oshawa Presbytery and the other from a group of pacifists. The statement from the Oshawa Presbytery reflected the fact that soon after the war began all the presbyteries in the UCC met and endorsed the Executive of the General Council's expression of loyalty to the Government of Canada. The General Council's proclamation of loyalty though, did not include any clear statement regarding the justice of the cause.⁷⁶ Rothwell notes that "No Presbytery refused to do so [to endorse General Council's expression of loyalty], and at their meetings the pacifists were made quite aware of their minority status as they remained defiantly seated while those around them rose in favour of endorsing the Church's policy."⁷⁷ The Oshawa Presbytery passed a resolution stating its view of the war as a just cause, casting it as a defence of a democracy based on Christianity: "We deplore war; and while we recognize the sincerity of the pacifist, yet we must insist that Christian principles, upon which our democracy is based, must be upheld today, even at the risk of life itself."⁷⁸ The pacifist statement was entitled "A Witness Against the War," and it has been suggested that it indicated either a lack, or a loss of, spiritual authority by the church over those who signed it.⁷⁹

The pacifist manifesto that was "A Witness Against the War" began by appealing to the authority of the UCC's several statements during the 1930s that renounced war: "Our Church has officially recognized the legitimacy of the anti-war conviction as one which may sincerely and conscientiously be held by Christians, and as

⁷⁶ Rothwell, "United Church Pacifism," 37.

⁷⁷ Rothwell, "United Church Pacifism," 37.

⁷⁸ "Oshawa Presbytery Discusses Church and War," *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1939, 19.

⁷⁹ Rothwell, "United Church Pacifism," 37.

we know there is a considerable number of ministers and others who have come to this considered position.”⁸⁰ Regretting that they were “unable to approve of this war” and noting the sincerity of those who felt duty bound to participate in it, they nevertheless implied that pacifists held to a purer form of Christianity: “we know that we represent a body of conviction characteristic of the earliest Christian Church, and of many reform movements through the centuries, and strongly held by many groups in the Churches today.”⁸¹ The statement, quoted here in full, went on to further explain their position:

We take our stand upon the declaration of our own General Council in 1938, that ‘war is contrary to the mind of Christ,’ and ‘we positively reject war, because war rejects love, defies the will of Christ, and denies the worth of man.’ The council endorsed the statement of the Oxford Conference of 1937 (the nearest thing to a pronouncement of universal Christendom that has ever been made) which, starting from the recognition that war is sin, agreed that the judgement of individual Christians may lead some to refuse all participation, while others may feel that they must participate when they think a given war to be ‘just,’ or when the state orders them so to do. In brief, some will say, ‘Yes, war is sin; therefore...’; while others will say, ‘Yes, war is sin; but...’ While freely admitting the right of our brethren to choose differently, we confess that the following considerations appear to us to have decisive weight.

The will and Kingdom of God must take precedence over the national convenience or policy.

The nature of modern war is such that it is and must be incompatible with the Christian spirit and aims.

Beyond the immediate and apparent causes of war we have to take account of the historical causes, and when we find that no nation is black or white, but all share in responsibility for creating the situation which makes war inevitable.

Apart from religious scruples, and apart even from the specific teachings of Jesus, we agree with men like Baldwin and Chamberlain, who have said in effect that war is futile because it is incapable of achieving any worthy solution of international disputes, and can only bring general destruction.

We remember that the Churches lost heavily in spiritual authority because of their general surrender to the war spirit in 1914–1918. We think it ought to be placed on record now, in view of the further loss of spiritual authority probable if the Church sanction this present war, that at least some representatives of the Christian Churches disapproved and uttered their protest.

⁸⁰ “A Witness Against the War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1939, 21.

⁸¹ “A Witness Against the War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1939, 21.

It is generally agreed and confessed that Christendom has through the centuries sadly and seriously fallen short in faithfulness of Christ and its own original faith as in its acceptance of war.

We affirm that we are not seeking escape from the burden or sacrifice, and we profess our readiness to implement our citizen loyalty in some form of service equally as taxing, difficult and dangerous as military service, providing it does not contribute directly to the war effort.⁸²

The “Witness Against the War” sparked a controversy that was not confined to the United Church of Canada. The Attorney-General of Ontario received a copy of the manifesto, and at least three of Toronto’s daily newspapers responded to it with gusto.⁸³ Overall the opinion of the secular newspapers was that pacifists such as those who signed the “Witness” only served to help Hitler.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the document’s attempt to persuade like-minded people to forward their signatures to Fairbairn was skewed in the secular press to appear as a persuasion to adopt a pacifist stand.⁸⁵ Editorials abounded asking that the United Church denounce the manifesto and its signatories and disavow the position they advocated.⁸⁶ Meanwhile the Attorney-General’s office undertook an investigation of whether the “Witness Against the War” had contravened parts of the Defence of Canada Regulations as laid out in section 39A. The Attorney-General went so far as to seek the advice of the Federal Minister of Justice. While the Minister did not reply, his deputy did, saying that he doubted very much that the “Witness” would prejudice recruitment efforts for His Majesty’s forces.⁸⁷ Ultimately, in a small meeting with UCC leadership and their legal counsel, the Attorney-General

⁸² “A Witness Against the War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1939, 21.

⁸³ Heath, “Irreconcilable Differences,” 30.

⁸⁴ Rothwell, “United Church Pacifism,” 48.

⁸⁵ Rothwell, “United Church Pacifism,” 48.

⁸⁶ Rothwell, “United Church Pacifism,” 49.

⁸⁷ Rothwell, “United Church Pacifism,” 51.

revealed his decision to not take any further action against those who signed the “Witness,” hoping that they would instead be tried in a Church court or tribunal.⁸⁸

The United Church did not bring the signatories before a church court. Indeed, the Attorney-General would surely have been disappointed by what happened. Some of the signatories lost their pulpits, ousted by their congregations infuriated by their pacifist position, or perhaps a perceived lack of wisdom in the timing and expression of the “Witness.” Others did not lose their pulpit. The “Witness” had sparked a sufficient firestorm of controversy to rouse the Sub-Executive to some form of action. At its meeting on 25 October, it emphasized tolerance in the interest of unity. Rothwell suggested that what had perhaps been perceived as indecision and a lack of guidance from the leadership was actually a strategy designed to remind individual Christians that they can and should follow their conscience on this ethical matter, but regardless of their position, strive to maintain unity and fellowship. The Moderator’s letter sent to all UCC ministers and summarized in the *Observer* had sought to drive home the point that the unity of the congregation, and the broader denomination, was of utmost importance and as Christians nobody could afford to let hatred and bitterness take root against, not only enemies, but those who did not share the same position on the war as oneself. The Sub-Executive had been behind this letter and in their interest in protecting the fellowship figured largely in their response to the “Witness.”

The Sub-Executive stated its collective belief that the writers and signatories of the “Witness” had “gone far beyond the limits of what is wise and proper in time of war,” and emphasized the fact that the “Witness” had spoken in an unofficial capacity

⁸⁸ Rothwell, “United Church Pacifism,” 51.

and was at odds with the views of the church as a whole.⁸⁹ The loyalty of the UCC was evinced, the Sub-Executive argued, by the resolutions of the Presbyteries soon after Canada joined the war, which the Oshawa Presbytery's resolution quoted above exemplified. In addition, the UCC had declared its loyalty by its prompt organization of the War Services Committee as well as beginning preparations for chaplaincy to the armed forces.⁹⁰ That being said, the Sub-Executive did not outright repudiate the "Witness." While the leadership of the UCC may not have made clear statements about the war as a just cause like the other denominations had, they believed they had demonstrated the Church's loyalty not in speech so much as in action.

The pages of the *Observer*, however, continued to provide a forum for diverse opinions on the "Witness," pacifism, and the Sub-Executive's claims of loyalty. Some letters to the editor in this edition continued to argue in favour of a pacifist position, though making no mention of the "Witness." One letter claimed that Jesus's words to Peter to put up his sword because those who live by the sword will die by the sword were "sufficient proof that none of His sayings can be misconstrued to show He would have His followers participate in warfare."⁹¹ Another letter to the editor, similarly, favoured pacifism arguing that "Our loyalty to God and Christ's teaching comes first. Our country being a Christian democracy must realize that. Therefore, if our Church leaders notice the people being led astray, it is their duty to recall them to a sense of God's love for all nations, and the spirit of brotherly love and understanding amongst all men."⁹²

⁸⁹ Rothwell, "United Church Pacifism," 52.

⁹⁰ Rothwell, "United Church Pacifism," 52.

⁹¹ "The Christian's Relations on War," *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1939, 16.

⁹² "Our First Loyalty is to God," *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 16.

Others wrote in to register their opposition to pacifism. Most of those who voiced their objection to pacifism were at pains to point out that they were not warmongers or lovers of war. One of the problems for non-pacifists that the “Witness” had brought forward was the implication that non-pacifists loved war. F. Bushfield wrote in, asking, “why is it, sir, that a small minority group of our ministers assume the attitude that they are the only people who are against war?”⁹³ He went on to point out the irony that the pacifists who produced the “Witness” were by their actions not creating peace in their church: “These well-meaning brethren instead of creating peace are doing just the opposite. Why can they not agree to disagree as the Oxford Conference did and admit that the great majority of their brethren are as conscientious and as much against war as they are.”⁹⁴ Bushfield concluded by requesting his fellow UCC folks to “agree to disagree, resolve to love, unite to serve,” and clarified that he himself was “a veteran of two wars, and would go again, not because I love war, I hate it, but for the good I could do.”⁹⁵ Another letter to the editor opposing pacifism stated that, though the writer had friends among those who had signed the “Witness,” the pacifist position seemed illogical to him, and just as importantly expressed his view that the “Witness Against the War” “can do nothing but harm at the present moment . . . Whether we like it or not, Britain is at war. We can help or we can hinder.”⁹⁶

One letter to the editor focused on the dilemma facing the United Church. The writer enquired of the church’s leadership what the church was going to do about the war and what would they do about “The Witness Against the War”? He declared that

⁹³ “Would Again Go to War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 16.

⁹⁴ “Would Again Go to War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 16.

⁹⁵ “Would Again Go to War,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 16.

⁹⁶ “The Pacifist Position Illogical,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 16.

“the time has come for action. The General Council of 1938 should be called to special session. The dilemma must be faced. It must tell the Government it cannot support the participation of Canada in the war or it must repudiate the resolution of 1938.”⁹⁷ In a similar vein, another letter to the editor was critical of both the “Witness” and the Sub-Executive’s response to it. The letter suggested there must be many in the United Church who are “ashamed of the official action of the Church with respect to it [A Witness Against the War].”⁹⁸ The letter’s author, R. B. Y. Scott claimed that “the whole tenor of the official statement suggests that the Church’s reputation for loyalty to the military enterprise of the State is a more important consideration than that of loyalty to religious conviction.”⁹⁹ He had hoped that the Church would have made it clear that “the position these men take is based, to say the least, on a permissible reading of the New Testament. They are not disloyal to their country when they declare that the action of the state leaves them no choice, but to obey God rather than man.”¹⁰⁰

It is worth noting that between the polarization of those favouring pacifism and those opposed to it, there was an, admittedly small, third position. It had been reflected in the concern of the Moderator and Sub-Executive to preserve unity in the fellowship of the Church, and also by biblical exhortations to maintain unity, but it was nonetheless an important voice to recall in the aftermath of the “Witness Against the War” controversy. One letter sent in to the editor noted that the signatories of the “Witness” were “being assailed on every hand as being unpatriotic, disloyal, and held up to considerable ridicule. Already ministers and laymen have made strong statements against their

⁹⁷ “What Are We Going to Do About It?” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 16.

⁹⁸ “Critical of Official Action,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 17.

⁹⁹ “Critical of Official Action,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 17.

¹⁰⁰ “Critical of Official Action,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 17.

brethren in pulpit and on platform.”¹⁰¹ It seemed the very thing the Moderator’s letter had hoped to avoid was already taking place. But this writer went on to plead for unity in the fellowship of believers: “Whether we approve or disapprove of the stand of our brethren, in the name of the Fellowship and in His name, under whose spirit we are made one, cannot we honour our brethren for their sincere and courageous stand . . .”¹⁰²

In the same edition the editor also added his voice to the theme of preserving unity in an editorial. He noted that there had been a tidal wave of letters reacting to “A Witness Against the War” and while the *Observer* sought to preserve the freedom of expression it was meant to foster, he stated his position that little more could be said on the subject and “for this reason we consider it wise to close the debate in ‘The Witness Against War.’ We do not propose to publish further letters on this specific subject.”¹⁰³ He noted that the General Council of the United Church had recognized two legitimate positions could be conscientiously taken by Christian people on the matter of war and peace, both of which were clearly attested to in the letters sent in to the *Observer*.¹⁰⁴ He concluded, however, by pleading for the preservation of unity:

But difference of opinion, conscientiously taken, should not interfere with out intimate relationship as members of the Church nor should there be any lack of courtesy towards those who differ from us. If unity and harmony cannot be maintained within the Christian fellowship, what hope is there for a harmonious solution to all the vexed and perplexing problems in the world as a whole. Surely the Church must express in its own life those qualities of tolerance, kindness and justice which we believe are essential to the permanent settlement of all national and international disputes.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ “All Ye Are Brethren,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 16.

¹⁰² “All Ye Are Brethren,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 16.

¹⁰³ “A Plea for Tolerance,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 4.

¹⁰⁴ “A Plea for Tolerance,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 4.

¹⁰⁵ “A Plea for Tolerance,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1939, 4.

The editor of the *Observer*, among others, recognized the fact that the witness of the church would fail if the peace sought after by both pacifists and non-pacifists alike could not be maintained within the church; there was no hope for a post-war peace that would last.

1940 and Beyond

By January of 1940 the flood of articles and letters to the editor started by the “Witness” had become so overwhelming that the editor was forced to end the discussion. There continued some discussion of the relationship between Christianity and the war, but as the war progressed it shifted to focus on the work of establishing a new world order that would ensure a lasting peace. R. Edis Fairbairn continued to champion the cause of absolute pacifism but though he surely had like-minded supporters, his was something of a lone voice.¹⁰⁶ It seems most pacifists moved on from trying to state their cause to working on ensuring the liberties of Conscientious Objectors and alternative service for them, as well as refugee relief and, of course, planning the best way to achieve the postwar peace.

If the leaders of the United Church had been reticent to vocalize their support for the war and even more hesitant to characterize it as a struggle in defence of Christian civilization, a statement from the Moderator in July 1940 suggested that hesitancy had disappeared. His statement confirmed for the minority of pacifists in the UCC’s ranks

¹⁰⁶ Fairbairn seems to have been the definition of conviction and integrity, for he never wavered from his position on absolute pacifism. After the war he published a book entitled *Apostate Christendom*, the title of which indicates his thoughts on the relationship between Christianity and war.

that they were truly at odds with the majority of members of their church. Rev.

Woodside, the Moderator, in his Dominion Day Message stated:

The world is divided into two groups. There are those who believe in the Christian God and those who do not. There are those attempting to preserve the treasures of our Christian civilization and those attempting to destroy them. Make no mistake, if the evil forces now threatening us have their way you will witness a 'black out' of all that we hold dear as Christians. *Truly we stand at Armageddon, and we battle for the Lord.* Yet this is not an hour of fear but of great confidence. Our cause, we are sure, is just and right . . .¹⁰⁷

In the Protestant press outside of the United Church pacifism became something of a dirty word. The *Canadian Churchman* quoted an American bishop who explained at length why he did not hold to pacifism. He concluded that "it is both my longing for peace and my concern for religion which have caused me to join with others in the Fight for Freedom programme which urges our country to take its full part in the war to defeat Hitlerism before that menace destroys our civilization."¹⁰⁸ Another article in the *Churchman*, by Canon Plumptre, provided a brief history of Christianity's relationship with war, but claimed that pacifism would be deeply challenged by the current war and would make up an increasingly small minority in the future.¹⁰⁹

The Baptist press became the most vocally anti-pacifist. A writer for the *Maritime Baptist* aimed to show the fallacy of the absolute pacifist position, arguing that the notion "that all force is wrong and its employment in any circumstances is to be deplored."¹¹⁰ That sort of non-resistance, he believed, would mean chaos or worse. Another article, written by Dr. George E. Levy of New Brunswick, explained why he

¹⁰⁷ "Now's the Day and Now's the Hour," *United Church Observer*, 1 July 1940, 1. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁸ "Thoughts on Armistice Day," *Canadian Churchman*, 13 November 1941, 646.

¹⁰⁹ "Christianity and War," *Canadian Churchman*, 19 August 1943, 452.

¹¹⁰ "The Place of Force in the Christian Economy," *Maritime Baptist*, 27 September 1939, 5.

had abandoned his pacifism. The Second World War had forced him to re-examine his convictions, he said. The idealism that took pacifism to such lofty heights between the wars, he realized was actually blind sentimentalism. Though war was a terrible scourge, so were Nazism, Fascism, and Communism, “which affect life in exactly the same manner.”¹¹¹ He concluded: “Perhaps I shall call myself a pacifist again someday, but mine will be a different kind of pacifism from what I embraced in the past. Today my duty is clear. It is first to help preserve the values of life whose very existence is at stake. Tomorrow I shall be ready and willing to work as hard in the building of a better order of which men have dreamed so long and for which they have sacrificed so much.”¹¹² There was little else about pacifism in the *Maritime Baptist*, though it did seem to have an interest in discussing the situation facing Conscientious Objectors in Britain. The editor wrote approvingly of the conscience clause included in Britain’s Military Service Act, and claimed that “we have gained morally more than can ever be calculated by safeguarding the sacred rights of conscience and by avoiding the bitterness and indignation which grew out of the unwise handling of C. O.’s in the last war.”¹¹³

The *Canadian Baptist* was the most outspoken opponent to pacifism. The influential president of the Baptist World Alliance, Dr. John Rushbrooke, was a major inspiration against pacifism in the central Baptist newspaper. An article written by a man who had accompanied Rushbrooke on some of his recent North American travels described him thus: “There is nothing of the pacifist about Dr. Rushbrooke. His is a militant religion, and does not hesitate to express disagreement with those teachers of

¹¹¹ “I Was a Pacifist,” *Maritime Baptist*, 25 June 1941, 1.

¹¹² “I Was a Pacifist,” *Maritime Baptist*, 25 June 1941, 1.

¹¹³ “Conscientious Objectors,” *Maritime Baptist*, 10 July 1940, 4.

religion who hold that war is inconsistent with Christianity.”¹¹⁴ He then quoted Rushbrooke as saying “pacifism is a dying cause in a world of reality.”¹¹⁵ Another article quoted Rushbrooke’s assessment of pacifism in the reality of war: “There is much talk about the horrors of war as a ground for keeping out of it—the argument apparently being that when aggressive violence takes sufficiently hideous forms, it must be allowed to have its own way. There is a sentimentalizing of the idea of love, which sets it in antithesis to force and often involves practical indifference to justice.”¹¹⁶

The title of another article put the matter somewhat dramatically: “Life by Battle or Death by Hun Slavery—Pacifist Choice.” The author briefly described the development of pacifism after the Great War but noted that “the present conflict has wrought a great change in sentiment on both sides of the Atlantic. War, as an instrument of aggression, is hated even more than ever before. But war as a resistance against wrong has assumed the heroic role.”¹¹⁷ He claimed that Germany’s “emphatic denial of God and all that concerns Him,” is what “have changed the pacifist into a fighting unit again.”¹¹⁸ He concluded by stating “the Pacifist had to fight—or die! He [the author] chose to die, if necessary, battling, but battling for a slave-free world.”¹¹⁹ A similar article claimed that Britain, and her Dominions, had already tried to turn to Germany the

¹¹⁴ “British Certain to Win War,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1940, 10.

¹¹⁵ “British Certain to Win War,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1940, 10.

¹¹⁶ “After Seeing America,” *Canadian Baptist*, 14 September 1940, 12.

¹¹⁷ “Life by Battle or Death by Hun Slavery—Pacifist Choice,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 March 1941, 12.

¹¹⁸ “Life by Battle or Death by Hun Slavery—Pacifist Choice,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 March 1941, 12.

¹¹⁹ “Life by Battle or Death by Hun Slavery—Pacifist Choice,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 March 1941, 12.

other cheek, but its efforts had been in vain. Thus, the writer stated bluntly, “the day of Pacifism is over,” and “our cause is equitable. The victory is ours.”¹²⁰

The *Presbyterian Record* made no comment on pacifism once the war had begun. As Gordon Heath has shown, pacifism in Presbyterian ranks largely disappeared in the late 1930s.¹²¹ It did, however, briefly emphasize the importance of protecting the liberties of conscientious objectors, noting “The Church in times of war as well as in peace should sustain her conscientious objectors within the full fellowship of the Church . . . Conscientious objectors must be under no advantage or disadvantage in their standing within the Church.”¹²² Similarly, a letter to the editor in the *Observer* argued that the church needed to protect conscientious objectors because they would find protection nowhere else.¹²³ And another commended the Dominion government’s recent amendments to the national war service regulations. Previous to the amendments, only those belonging to a religious faith that explicitly forbade the bearing of arms could claim conscientious objection. The changes allowed for anyone who was a church member to claim exemption on conscientious grounds, providing they supplied a certificate from a minister of their denomination. The editor wrote that “no objection can be taken to this,” because “those who object to war on conscientious grounds must be willing to take risks for conscience [sic] sake as well as their brothers who bear arms.”¹²⁴

¹²⁰ “Pacifism is Over,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1942, 4.

¹²¹ See Heath, “Canadian Presbyterians, 1919–1939.”

¹²² “Conscientious Objectors,” *Presbyterian Record*, May 1941, 135.

¹²³ “The Church and Conscientious Objectors,” September 1, 1940, 11.

¹²⁴ “Conscientious Objectors,” *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1941, 4.

Unfortunately, despite pleas for the protection of conscientious objectors, especially within the churches, they were not always treated well. A letter to the editor in the *Observer* from one young pacifist serving time in an Alternative Service camp, Allen Reesor, castigated the United Church leadership for abandoning the pacifism they had proclaimed in the 1930s. He reminded his readers that “nearly all the United Church men are in the Alternative Service camps as a direct result of [United] Church training and teaching ‘that war is incompatible with the mind of Christ and never again will we sanction or support another.’”¹²⁵ This was, he noted, what he and others of his generation had been taught since their childhood, until 1939, “when war was declared and our weak-kneed clergy showed its true colours (with some noble exceptions) and proceeded to bless the holy and just cause and to ridicule and condemn those of us who refused to join the army.”¹²⁶ He described his, and his likeminded compatriots’s confusion at this turn of events and when they “took up the matter” with their respective ministers, they were told, if not in word than in effect, “to forget all the pacifism they ever taught us and to put on the uniform and fight for the preservation of Christian democracy.”¹²⁷ He went on to write how him and other C.O.’s had expected sympathy from their denomination, which they did not receive. Nor did their former local church connections keep faith with them: “we were immediately forgotten by ministers and people alike, just as certainly as if we had dropped over the edge of the world.”¹²⁸

¹²⁵ “The Church and the Conscientious Objector,” *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1943, 15.

¹²⁶ “The Church and the Conscientious Objector,” *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1943, 15.

¹²⁷ “The Church and the Conscientious Objector,” *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1943, 15.

¹²⁸ “The Church and the Conscientious Objector,” *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1943, 15.

Indeed, the letters, the boxes of clothing, food, and films that were sent to soldiers were not sent to Reesor's Alternative Camp. While there were monthly visits to the camp from ministers of many denominations, only once in ten months did a United Church minister visit (at his own expense).¹²⁹ While it is difficult to ascertain if Reesor's Alternative Service experience was common all over the nation, his letter was a sad indictment of the UCC, who proclaimed the protection of Conscientious Objectors in word, but in quickly forgetting those who dissented from the righteous cause, failed to support and protect them in deed.

A similar inconsistency in the churches's high discourse about civil and religious liberties was their discourse surrounding Jehovah's Witnesses.¹³⁰ While not much was said about them, what little there was, was negative. The Federal Government banned them as an organization, and no one in the Protestant press came to their defence; quite the opposite in fact. A letter to the editor in the *Observer* bluntly stated "Any sympathy for 'Jehovah's Witnesses' as the victims of religious persecution must spring from ignorance of the nature and activities of this organization."¹³¹ Meanwhile Roman Collar, a United Church minister with a regular column in the *Observer* decried Jehovah's Witnesses, claimed that the ban against them had been inevitable and pointed out that the ban was not for their so-called theology but rather because "the organization is

¹²⁹ "The Church and the Conscientious Objector," *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1943, 15.

¹³⁰ See, Penton "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Second World War" for an account of their treatment by the Canadian government and both Protestants and Catholics. For a more general work, see Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada*.

¹³¹ "On Jehovah's Witnesses," *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1940, 18.

subversive in character.”¹³² Roman Collar went so far as to label them “Religious Fifth Columnists.”¹³³

More surprising than the Canadian Protestant condemnation of Jehovah’s Witnesses was the fact that conscription, a highly controversial subject in the press, barely made an appearance in the Protestant press. Tension over conscription led to a national plebiscite but not a crisis of comparable magnitude as that in the First World War. The Protestant press acknowledged that voices calling for conscription were multiplying. The *Observer* noted a growing demand for conscription in Western Canada late in 1941.¹³⁴ Around the same time an editorial in the *Observer* discussed the conscription issue. It cited a book written by Stephen Leacock in 1920 entitled *The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice*, arguing that if every citizen owed it to society to fight for it when necessary, the society then owed it to every citizen the opportunity of a livelihood.¹³⁵ The editor admitted that “this economic or social principle has not as yet been fully accepted by democracy,” and concluded that unless these economic and social implications of conscription were accepted and acted upon solidarity on the conscription issue would be impossible.¹³⁶ The plebiscite occurred on 27 April 1942 and asked the question “Are you in favour of releasing the Government for any obligations arising out of any past commitments restricting the methods of raising men for military service?”¹³⁷ The results were predictable, with all the provinces except Quebec voting to release the government from its pledges against conscription.

¹³² “As I See It: Jehovah’s Witness Banned,” *United Church Observer*, 15 August 1940, 14.

¹³³ “As I See It: Jehovah’s Witness Banned,” *United Church Observer*, 15 August 1940, 14.

¹³⁴ “Growing Demand for Conscription in West,” *United Church Observer*, 15 November 1941, 7.

¹³⁵ “The Conscription Issue,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1941, 4.

¹³⁶ “The Conscription Issue,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1941, 4.

¹³⁷ Granatstein, *Canada’s War*, 225.

Conclusion

The Canadian Protestant experience of pacifism shifted from a place of widespread support and popularity in the 1920s, began to lose ground in the 1930s, and by the autumn of 1939 had almost entirely disappeared, with the notable exception of an enclave of committed absolute pacifists holding out in the United Church. This group constituted the major voice of dissent against the general Canadian Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. This chapter has analyzed a representative sample of the articles, editorials, and letters to the editor in the Protestant press that were a key part of the discussions in which Canadian Protestants, in the United Church at least, sought to reconcile their beliefs with the realities facing them. Despite dissenting from the common view of the war, the pacifist discourse in the *Observer* was diverse, exhibiting a variety of views even among pacifists. Some exhibited a commitment to nation-building, the presupposition of Christian civilization, complete with Christian democracy which, formed the underlying layer of assumptions that informed their discussions. Others, such as Fairbairn, rejected these assumptions. The primary concern, of both pacifists and non-pacifists alike, it seemed, was that the churches continue in their work of guiding the nation, and by extension the international order insofar as they could prepare for postwar peace, by preaching the Gospel and maintaining its witness. The reason pacifism was such a contentious subject was because it fragmented the church's witness, thereby compromising its ability to guide the nation and prepare for postwar peace. This meant that unity had to be maintained within the fellowship of the church. Work had to begin immediately to prepare for

reconstruction and a postwar peace that would endure. The Gospel, then, had to be preached, and lived out, as it was in sending chaplains to the armed forces and working to preserve the liberties of conscientious objectors. Though some pacifists had rejected the idea of Christian civilization, most of them, influenced as they were by the Social Gospel and internationalism, sought to reshape Canadian society on the basis of Christian morality. While the war threatened the churches's witness, it also challenged their desire to establish a Christian nation. The rhetoric of internationalism and that of the radical social critique were the true legacy of pacifism as these shaped the discussions of the churches's role in establishing a postwar peace. And it must be remembered that the pacifist voices of dissent, though important for understanding the complexity of how the war was viewed, ultimately, were a minority. The heated discussion in the *Observer* over the proper relationship between the Christian and war, would not be allowed to persist beyond 1939.

CHAPTER 6: VISIONS OF THE POSTWAR WORLD

“The foundation for building this new world is our task, our duty and our privilege.”¹

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the Canadian Protestant response to the Second World War, as seen in the denominational press, was their vision-casting for a new world order after the war. Thomas Sinclair Faulkner’s dissertation on contrasting visions of Christian civilization between Canadian Catholics and Protestants was a notable contribution to the study of Canadian churches and the Second World War, but, unfortunately, his study was confined to the years 1939–1942.² This latter year, 1943, was exactly when the stream of peace and postwar reconstruction talk in the Protestant press flooded its banks. It became the most prominent subject across the denominational press. Ultimately, the discussions of peace were nothing new, having been commonplace during the interwar years, but they were in keeping with a trajectory of internationalist thought that dated back to before the Great War.

Robert Wright has suggested that the years separating the First World War from the Second World War were a time in which the Protestant evangelical consensus that had so motivated the English-speaking churches since Confederation, deteriorated. In large part Wright was referring to the traditional authority and influence held by the mainline Protestant churches, and a general, if vague, theological amity across denominational lines. And yet, Wright implies that there were still grounds for a degree

¹ “The New World,” *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1941, 12.

² Faulkner, “Christian Civilization.”

of concord. For example, he noted that after the First World War many of the mainline churches called for a new social order and even a new economic order.³

Internationalism, he pointed out, was widely popular in the English-speaking world after the First World War. It produced the League of Nations, which Canadian Protestants were, generally, quick to embrace, but more importantly the internationalist movement was built upon ideas of international brotherhood and peace that were highly amenable to Christian ideals.⁴

This was a widespread movement, as Thomas Socknat has noted in the interwar years there was “mounting public support for international cooperation, disarmament, and a neutral foreign policy as well as for radical solutions to the social and economic injustices that bred violence and war.”⁵ If not a replacement for the so-called deterioration of the old consensus that had characterized English-speaking Protestants, each of the mainline Protestant denominations was caught up in the current of a peace movement, to varying degrees, during the interwar years.

Internationalism, and in many cases pacifism, in the 1920s and 1930s were at least in part, motivated by a rational approach to peace and a highly optimistic view of human ability.⁶ This was epitomized in the creation of the League of Nations. The movement for disarmament, a major component of interwar internationalism, was punctuated, in succession, by the Locarno Treaty and the Kellogg Peace Treaty. Optimism ran high. Gordon Heath has pointed out that in the interwar years Canadian Protestants shared a common belief in the role of the church in making peace possible,

³ Wright, “Canadian Protestant Tradition,” 144.

⁴ Wright, “Canadian Protestant Tradition,” 155.

⁵ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 291.

⁶ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 94.

especially including foreign missions and the Christianization of the international order, and that there was a major trend in church discourse towards a global vision, “inspired by notions of international brotherhood and organizations that transcended nationalist tribalism.”⁷ When it came to discussing postwar peace and reconstruction during the Second World War, a belief in the unique role of the church in making peace possible persisted in the Protestant press.

In Canadian Protestant circles, internationalism and pacifism in the 1920s and 1930s was rooted in the influence and legacy of the Social Gospel. The concept of the brotherhood of man, for example, had been central to the Social Gospel, as were the concepts of justice and peace.⁸ In an era of growing globalism and industry, the churches saw an opportunity and a responsibility “to foster global brotherhood, peace, and justice.”⁹ At the same time, as Wright has also noted, the development of Christian internationalism was rooted in the failure of the First World War to inaugurate an era of peace and stability. The movement was similarly rooted in the assumption that democracy was both biblical in origin and crucial to avoiding future war. As W. P. Hill wrote in his exposé of internationalism in 1921, “we can come nearer the principles of Jesus through democracy than by any other principles of government.”¹⁰ In the Second World War the discourse of peace and reconstruction was framed by this interpretation of the First World War.

⁷ Heath, “The Rise and Fall,” 6–9; Heath, “Canadian Presbyterians and the Rejection of Pacifism,” 5. See also, Heath, “Canadian Anglicans and the Appeal of Postwar Pacifism,” and Heath, “We Are Through with War: The Rise and Fall of Pacifism among Canadian Baptists between the Two World Wars.”

⁸ Heath, “We Are Through with War,” 46; Allen, *The Social Passion*, 33, and Chapters 5, 10, and 14.

⁹ Wright, *A World Mission*, 10.

¹⁰ Hill, “The Principles of Christian Internationalism,” 67.

This chapter demonstrates that in the Canadian Protestant press, the discourse of internationalism was the interwar period's chief legacy in the Second World War, as its ideas continued to shape visions of postwar peace and reconstruction, especially its critique of the existing social and economic orders. Reflecting the broader English-speaking world, the churches promoted statements that elucidated principles of social and economic reform; believed it was necessary to establish a peace based on the Christian concepts of justice, peace, truth, and brotherhood of man; and supported the development of the United Nations as a crucial step in "world organization" that would facilitate the establishment of the peaceful world order they desired. All of these flowed from Canadian Protestants's belief that the church had a special role and responsibility to play in making possible an international peace that would endure.

The Canadian Protestant commitment to nation-building was easily extended to apply to what was often referred to as the international order. This had already been carried out for over a century in the form of missions, and the churches's position as influence-wielding national institutions in Canada, led them to believe that they had a responsibility to guide governments and statesmen in the establishment of a just and enduring postwar peace. As custodians of a Christian civilization in crisis, the churches believed that civilization needed refining and saw the fresh start of a postwar world (following an Allied victory of course) as the best opportunity to establish a new world order that was ultimately founded on Christianity. Only then could there be a just and enduring peace. The logic inherent in the view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization concluded with the notion that an Allied victory in a righteous cause must produce a renewed or ready to be renewed Christian civilization.

The visions of the Christian civilization on which a just and enduring peace would be established, if the churches were faithful and successful in their work, were inextricably tied to the view of the war as a religious conflict, which was, after all, in defence of Christian civilization. Just as Canadian Protestants's spiritual discourse, theological reflection, and notions of British-Canadian national identity shaped their view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of civilization, the discourse surrounding the postwar peace hinged on the notion that Christianity alone could provide the foundation needed for a renewed civilization which could in turn provide for a new world order in which peace and justice would allow humanity to flourish. It was the very things they believed they were fighting for, the institutions that defined them and that they had invested with Christian meaning and purpose, democracy, the nation, the British Empire, that would define the new world order.

It should come as no surprise that readers and writers and editors of the denominational press had a biblical hope to which they held. In seeing the war as an opportunity to refashion Christian civilization the content of their vision was inspired by biblical visions of peace and the new creation, just as surely as some of the finer details were inspired by the Social Gospel and Christian internationalism. The belief that the church had a unique and crucial role to play in establishing the peace and reconstruction was widespread in the denominational press. For, who else could lead the reconstruction of Christian civilization?

In 1942 the Rev. Dr. W. W. Judd laid out what he believed to be the basis of a new world order in a sermon printed in the *Canadian Churchman*. In his view the hope expressed in talks of economic and social reforms was “essentially a religious dream

and a religious problem.”¹¹ For Judd, “the earliest dreamers of a New World were religious men.”¹² He noted,

the prophets of Israel preached a social hope aflame with religion. ‘Let justice run down as water and righteousness as a mighty stream,’ said Amos and Isaiah, ‘...the nations...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares...neither shall they learn war anymore.’ Our Lord talked of ‘the Kingdom’ and ‘His Righteousness’ and told us to pray ‘may Thy will be done, may Thy Kingdom come in earth as it is in heaven.’ Here we have Saint Peter talking of the expectation of ‘a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,’ and St. John tells us of ‘the New Jerusalem, the holy city coming down from God out of heaven.’¹³

From Judd’s perspective a new world order had been the promise of God in the scriptures, and was distinctly Christian. Moving on, Judd claimed that the future depended on the religious forces of the world, and emphasized prominent themes of interwar internationalism, namely, justice, the brotherhood of man, and reconciliation: “We, the inheritors of the Judeo-Christian tradition, know that peace can rest only upon justice. We know of brotherhood, of a God of all men—nay, of a Saviour for all men—of love spelled out in active justice—of reconciliation one to another,—of sin in ourselves, forgiveness and a new start—of a kingdom of righteousness by grace, on earth.”¹⁴ Judd’s voice was merely one of many in the denominational press expressing the belief that the church had a unique role in establishing a lasting peace, namely, in proclaiming the Christian principles of freedom, justice, and truth and holding society to high spiritual and moral standards.¹⁵ These ideas were not, of course, original to Judd, or

¹¹ “The New World and the Church’s Role,” *Canadian Churchman*, 29 January 1942, 67.

¹² “The New World and the Church’s Role,” *Canadian Churchman*, 29 January 1942, 67.

¹³ “The New World and the Church’s Role,” *Canadian Churchman*, 29 January 1942, 67.

¹⁴ “The New World and the Church’s Role,” *Canadian Churchman*, 29 January 1942, 67.

¹⁵ For other examples see: “Christianity and the New Order,” *Canadian Churchman*, 7 May 1942, 291; “Fellowship—A Feature of the New World Order,” *Canadian Churchman*, 21 January 1943, 36; “World Peace—Through Christian Leadership!” *Canadian Churchman*, 8 July 1943, 404; “On—Toward a Christian World!” *Canadian Churchman*, 17 June 1943, n.p; “Christianity—The World’s Hope!” *Canadian Churchman*, 11 November 1943, 636; “The New Order,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 October 1940, 12; “The Church as an Agency of Reform,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 December 1942, 4; “The Church and

to any Canadian Protestant. Rather these were common currency in the English-speaking world. There was remarkable agreement in the Protestant press in the statements of principles for an enduring postwar peace as well as the characteristics of a new world order based on Christian principles.

One reason for this was Canada's relationship with Britain and the U.S.A., as part of an Atlantic triangle.¹⁶ This geometric metaphor describes a network of strong links between Britain, Canada, and the U.S.A., as three countries with a shared or very similar language, democracy, culture, economy, and religious composition. Within this triangle was a smaller triangle of Protestant networks. Of particular interest was the place of the written word in the triangle. There was a major exchange of literature along the axes of the triangle. Canada, as junior member, was in a position wherein it experienced strong influences from both Britain and the U.S.A. John Webster Grant has

the Changing Order," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 December 1942, 7; "Rebuilding the World," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 February 1943, 3; "The Churches' Responsibility Regarding World Order," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1943, 3; "The Preface to Reconstruction," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 June 1943, 1; "A Peace Righteous and Durable," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1943, 1; "Toward a Christian Social Order," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November, 1943, 4; "Peace Based on Justice," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1943, 4; "Brotherhood—A Force in the Post War Era," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1945, 2; "Application of Christian Principles," *Maritime Baptist*, 4 February 1942, 4; "Statement of Guiding Principles of a Just and Durable Peace," *Maritime Baptist*, 20 May 1942, 1; "The Present World Situation: Constructive Next Steps," *Maritime Baptist*, 27 January 1943, 1; "Church and Post-War Reconstruction," *Maritime Baptist*, 14 July 1943, 15; "Our Hope of a New World," *Maritime Baptist*, 1 September 1943, 2; "The Spiritual Basis for Reconstruction," *Maritime Baptist*, 13 October 1943, 1; "Shall We Have a Better World After the War," *Maritime Baptist*, 10 November 1943, 14; "General Council and a New Social Order," *United Church Observer*, 1 September 1940, 16; "The Church Should Lead—In a New World," *United Church Observer*, 1 September 1940, 17; "The Four Great Tasks of the Church," *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1940, 1; "Christianity is the Hope of Europe," *United Church Observer*, 1 January 1941, 2; "In Reconciliation is Only Hope—Church Must Lead," *United Church Observer*, 1 January 1941, 16; "The Churches Hold the Key to World Peace," *United Church Observer*, 1 January 1941, 17; "The Church and the Future," *United Church Observer*, 1 February 1941, 4; "Only Christianity Can Save the World," *United Church Observer*, 15 April 1941, 11; "The Church and World Order," *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1941, 2; "The Church and the New Order," *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1941, 11; "The New World," *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1941, 12; "A Christian New Order," *United Church Observer*, 15 December, 1941, 11; "Christians Must Guide the Post-War World," *United Church Observer*, 1 April 1942, 5.

¹⁶ Pestana, *Protestant Empire*, 197.

gone so far as to claim that the history of Christianity in Canada has generally been characterized by a tension between American and European influences.¹⁷ Though a tension is difficult to ascertain in the wartime denominational press, American and British influences were both highly visible. As such, the Canadian Protestant press generally included a significant share of written pieces from notable figures and organizations in Britain and the U.S.A. These reflected both the historical tension in Canadian history between American and British influences, as well as the fact the postwar discourse was a phenomenon of the broader English-speaking world.

A joint statement issued by the religious leaders of Great Britain, including the Archbishops of York and Canterbury, the Cardinal Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church in England, and the Moderator of the Free Church Council, showed its influence in the denominational press. The statement argued for five standards of international life. These included the abolition of extreme inequality in wealth and possessions; equal opportunity of education for every child regardless of race or class; the protection and preservation of the family as a social unit; the restoration of a sense of divine vocation “to man’s daily work”; and, finally, a renewed understanding of the earth’s resources as God’s gifts to humankind, for the present and the future. The composers of the document then expressed their confidence that the principles which we have enumerated would be accepted by rulers and statesmen throughout the British Commonwealth of

¹⁷ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 207–11. Grant argues that Canadian church history has been characterized by a tension between the past and the future. He sees British and European influences, and attachments, as representing the past, and American influence and attachments as representing the future in this dichotomy.

Nations and would be regarded as the true basis on which a lasting peace could be established.¹⁸

Rev. Dr. W. W. Judd inspired by this same list, paraphrased them in his sermon. He contended for the following standards: fellowship of all the children of men that can only be realized when resources of the world are made accessible on a fairer basis; the right and opportunity to self-development for every person without regard for class, colour, or race; the protection of the weak and helpless; the essential dignity of labour; and the idea that the resources of the earth are for the good of all mankind, therefore there is no such thing as absolute ownership.¹⁹ It is clear that Judd's version was inspired by the joint statement issuing from Britain. This is not surprising considering the strong British influence that was evident in the *Canadian Churchman*, as part of the Church of England. It is worth noting, however, that the joint statement was also printed in the *United Church Observer*, about one year before Judd included it in his sermon.²⁰ The joint statement did not appear to have a name but it was clearly an important document. As late as two years after its conception, the *Canadian Churchman* recorded Lord Halifax, the British ambassador to the United States, mentioning the statement at the occasion of his receiving an honorary doctorate from McGill University. He noted that it enumerated "principles on which a lasting peace could be established."²¹ This was an influential document that played a role in shaping the visions of the new world order in the Protestant press.

¹⁸ As quoted in "Christianity and the New Order," *Canadian Churchman*, 7 May 1942, 291. This was also reproduced in the *Maritime Baptist*: "Application of Christian Principles," *Maritime Baptist*, 4 February 1942, 4.

¹⁹ "The New World Order and the Church's Role," *Canadian Churchman*, 29 January 1942, 67.

²⁰ See "Churches and War Aims," *United Church Observer*, 1 January 1941, 4.

²¹ "On—Towards a Christian World!" *Canadian Churchman*, 17 June 1943, n.p.

American influences of the same character were also visible in the Protestant press. For example, the *Canadian Churchman* printed a two-part statement of principles on social reconstruction issued by the Protestant Episcopal Church at its 1943 General Convention. While it is too long to quote in full, it emphasized key doctrines that had come up before in the denominational press during the war, such as the doctrine of God's sovereignty, the sacredness of human personality, and the brotherhood of man. It pointed out that "the bitter experience of the past quarter of a century has underscored the basic principle of the unity, and mutual responsibility, of all mankind in God," and in light of that declared its aim to "seek *a more unified world*, possessing a world framework within which the Nations may find security and freedom, and within which in peace the Nations set themselves to co-operate for production and distribution."²² The second part of the statement of principles, printed in the following issue of the *Churchman*, included a section on economics, and here bore similarities to the British statement above. Interestingly, the statement quoted an economic diagnosis presented at the Oxford Conference of 1937, before declaring its own principles:

(1) The economic order exists to serve God by increasing the welfare of all men; (2) The human being is primary, and his right to find through work the opportunity for a full personal and cultural life and economic security for himself and his family is the initial charge on our economy . . . (3) In the development of the individual the right to work is basic . . . (4) In the development of the individual there must be given to him the opportunity to find in his daily work a Christian vocation.²³

²² "Social Reconstruction: A Statement of Principles," *Canadian Churchman*, 23 March 1944, 182. Emphasis original.

²³ "Social Reconstruction: A Statement of Principles," *Canadian Churchman*, 30 March 1944, 301. For similar statements of principles see, all from American sources but printed in the Canadian Protestant press, see "The Churches Responsibility Regarding World Order," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1943, 3; "A Peace Righteous and Durable," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1943, 1; "A Changing World: Six Pillars of Peace Program of Federal Council of Churches," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1943, 5; "Social Reconstruction: A Statement of Principles," *Canadian Churchman*, 23 March 1944, 182; "Social Reconstruction: A Statement of Principles," *Canadian Churchman*, 30 March 1944, 301;

These examples suggest that British and American influences figured quite prominently in the visions of post war peace in the Protestant press. But these influences were not new. Canada had been part of the Atlantic triangle long before Confederation and it was entirely normal for Canada to be influenced by both American and British voices. These voices, however, were not the only source of inspiration for the social and economic aspects of their vision of the new world order.

Another major inspiration for these visions of the new world order was the Social Gospel and the peace movement that developed in the wake of the First World War. Thomas Socknat has demonstrated that the interwar peace movement, in which pacifism figured writ large, became linked with social radicalism, not only in Canada but in the U.S.A and Britain as well.²⁴ Within the loose boundaries of the peace movement there were a great many people who had a new awareness of the social and economic roots of war, whom Socknat calls liberal internationalists, and there were also what he calls socially radical pacifists who demanded both peace and radical social change.²⁵ John Webster Grant noted that in the 1920s socialism was a growing force in Canada, in response to capitalistic injustices, and became associated with the more radical Social Gospellers.²⁶ Indeed, Richard Allen has also pointed out that one of the

“Statement of Guiding Principles of a Just and Durable Peace,” *Maritime Baptist*, 20 May 1942, 1; “The Six Pillars of Peace,” *Maritime Baptist*, 2 February 1944, 1.

²⁴ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 5.

²⁵ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 8.

²⁶ Grant, *Canadian Era*, 121. It is worth noting that Christie and Gauvreau (*A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 15–17) have shown that early in the twentieth century there was a Christian socialism that was distinct from political socialism. When Canadian Protestant clergy used the term socialism, they were referring to social cooperation on the basis of Christian principles, in contrast to political socialism which they saw believed was purely materialist, classist, deterministic, and frequently atheist. Protestant clergy in the early twentieth century saw Marxist socialism and economic determinism as dangerous ideological competitors to Christianity. Thus, when the Rev. William Keal claimed more “Christian Socialism” was needed in the churches “he meant that a greater interest in social questions based upon the principles of

effects of the First World War on the Social Gospel had been that most adherents to the movement underwent a leftward political shift, while a smaller group gravitated toward “the more radical centres of Canadian society in labour and socialist groups.”²⁷ The statements from Britain and the U.S.A, quoted above, indicate a socialist leaning in their belief in the need to establish a more equitable economic system. Of course, an equitable economic system was also a key tenet of the Social Gospel, and economic justice was itself a biblical theme. Regardless of the source of this particular belief, the Christian internationalist movement of the interwar period was varied in its complexion, and many of its supporters embraced a critique of the current economic and social order.

Within the larger discourse of the churches’s role in establishing a new world order was the sense that Christianity itself was critical to the refashioning of civilization. As previous chapters have indicated, the concept of Christian civilization was a presupposition that shaped Canadian Protestant interpretations of the war. They acknowledged that Christian civilization had not been perfect and that the war was an opportunity to prune the bad and graft in the good. As an unnamed observer of European events was quoted as saying in the *Canadian Baptist*, “Our civilization is Christian, but cannot continue so unless animated by a revival of Christian faith.”²⁸ Indeed, the foundations of Christian civilization, they believed, had become false because social injustice had been allowed to spread. Clement Attlee, leader of the British Labour Party and future prime minister of Britain, was quoted in the denominational press saying, “We say you must base that ordered peace on social justice, and recognize how much

Christianity had to be developed among the people in order to combat the ‘excesses of Bolshevism’” (Christie and Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 16).

²⁷ Allen, *The Social Passion*, 61.

²⁸ “Rebuilding the World,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 February 1943, 3.

the world degenerated after the last war just because there were false foundations. We want to build this world into a world of liberty, of giving the individual in every nation the opportunity of realizing to the full his or her personality.”²⁹ The goal was to rebuild a new Christian civilization on which a new world order could stand, using what could be salvaged from the old and letting the rest burn in the fires of war. The common conviction in the denominational press was that such a civilization could only be built on the basis of Christianity, and only by the churches. The Rector of St. Chad’s in Toronto, Rev. F. J. Nicholson, wrote that “man needs a religious faith to inspire and guide him in the formation of a social structure so far, indeed, as he is responsible for it.”³⁰ The editor of the *Canadian Baptist* discussed what would be involved in building what he called “the new palace of peace.” He, too, saw Christianity as the only basis on which to establish a new world order. He admitted that political leadership played an important role in establishing peace, but that even political leaders knew that their role was not enough because “peace calls for a disarmament of the mind and of the hostile forces of the spirit.”³¹ “There is,” he wrote, “no power on earth that can quench the burning hatreds now aflame; no power can change these national animosities into reconciliations, except the reconciling power of the Cross of Christ . . . May God give power and vision to His Church, in this a fresh beginning of her mighty task, for unless the Lord rebuild the world, through His people, ‘they labour in vain who build it.’”³²

Discussions of the churches’s role in working toward peace by rebuilding Christian civilization could be found in the denominational press even early in the war.

²⁹ “Peace Based on Justice,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 November 1943, 4.

³⁰ “Christianity and the New Order,” *Canadian Churchman*, 7 May 1942, 291.

³¹ “Rebuilding the World” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 February 1943, 3.

³² “Rebuilding the World” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 February 1943, 3.

In the autumn of 1940, an article in the *United Church Observer* exhorted its readers that “we must begin now to prepare for a new and better world when this holocaust is over . . . we must begin now to create an atmosphere favourable to peace with justice to all concerned, a permanent peace based upon the law of Christ, the strong bearing the burdens of the weak.”³³ Two months before this article was published a brief comment from a commissioner of the General Council for 1940 was included in the *Observer*. It concluded with their statement, “Let us as a Church pledge ourselves that a fairer, and therefore more permanent civilization will emerge.”³⁴

Mere weeks after the war had been won in Europe, the Primate of Canada, Archbishop Owen, gave an address at Toronto Synod. His speech summed up the Canadian Protestant ideas about the cost of peace and the role of the Church in establishing it. He said,

The day of peace is at hand. It, too, is a day of supreme effort. We must be ready to pay the cost of peace. ‘Peace has its victories.’ Yes, but peace has its price, its toils, its sacrifices, no less than war. That has so often been forgotten. Woe to us if we forget that now. We have a stern task ahead of us now. The defeat of Japan, the feeding of Europe, the restoration of that which has been torn asunder. But, also, the building of new things. These have to be built into the old. It is so much more than the restoring of the old. We can never really go back to the old things, though we need much of the strong building material of the old things which have stood the test of years. We must go forward. It is the building of the new City of Peace in the world that is before us now . . . you and I are responsible in helping to build that City. We have to unite to do it. We have to fight against the divisive influences always at work . . . We have to be unselfish, self-sacrificing, and believing. You and I have to live and work towards the better day and the better world. My brothers of the Church, let us unitedly, untiringly, and in faith, go forward to the Victory of Peace.³⁵

³³ “The Four Great Tasks of the Church,” *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1940, 1.

³⁴ “General Council and a New Social Order,” *United Church Observer*, 1 September 1940, 16.

³⁵ “A Christian Canada and World Peace,” *Canadian Churchman*, 24 May 1945, 323.

However, generally the churches did not hold themselves responsible for producing a blueprint or a detailed design of the new order. Instead, they saw themselves as providing the moral and spiritual standards on which a Christian civilization must be built. This was, perhaps, best exemplified in the Commission on Church, Nation and World Order produced by the United Church of Canada in 1944. Although it tended to stray into blueprint territory with sections entitled “A Christian Charter for Society,” and “The Religious Principles of Social Order,” it was really laying out a Christian view of these things. Interestingly, in providing the rationale for the eighty-three-page document, the introduction tied the church’s role in establishing a new world order on Christian principles with the view of the war as in defence of Christian civilization. It explained that “since any civilization is in large measure the product of its prevailing religious inheritance, and since the war in which we are engaged has often been described as a war in defence of our Christian civilization, it is incumbent upon the Church to restate the basic principles of a truly Christian civilization. Thus, it can best offer guidance to the nation and to the world.”³⁶ Though the document was comprehensive in scope, it certainly constituted a series of standards rooted in Christianity by which the new world order could be measured. But Canadian Protestants hoped that the new order would actually be constructed on these principles.

The signing of the Atlantic Charter and the subsequent development of the United Nations was heralded as a crucial step in world organization. The churches believed that the United Nations was built on Christian principles and would prove

³⁶ “Report of the Commission on the Church, Nation and World Order,” 6.

crucial to establishing a new world order. Most importantly, they believed that it would facilitate their own unique role in establishing peace.

Acknowledging the sense of globalism, a writer for the *Maritime Baptist* pointed out to readers that “The good gifts of God have placed in our hands an apparatus of a global civilization. All problems are world problems, whether they affect health or food or industry or education.”³⁷ Dr. James S. Thomson, president of the University of Saskatchewan gave the convocation address at McMaster University in 1943, and in his speech, recorded in the *Canadian Baptist*, exhorted his readers to understand that “the time . . . [had] come for men everywhere to recognize that civilization is ultimately one and indivisible, and that especially today by the technical development of inter-communication and commerce, the world is built for mutual aid and partnership.”³⁸ Writing after the war had drawn to a close, in October 1945, a commentator in the *Canadian Baptist* notified readers that “it is the beginning of a new age, a new world,” and that “we know now that this new world is one world. The concept of isolation, though some still may mouth it, is as extinct as a dinosaur.”³⁹

This nascent sense of globalism was a major reason why some clamoured for “world organization.” The goals of collective security and economic opportunity were paramount for those issuing statements of guiding principles for the new world, but there was widespread agreement that this could only happen through a world organization that had included an international police force, so that another world war could be avoided. In a statement outlining the principles for social reconstruction, which

³⁷ “The Spiritual Basis of Reconstruction,” *Maritime Baptist*, 13 October 1943.

³⁸ “The Preface to Reconstruction,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 June 1943, 1.

³⁹ “A New World,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 October 1945, 10.

was quoted above, a later clause included the proposal that “The coming Peace must provide *an over-all arrangement* for international collaboration in dealing with those common world problems which are capable of no purely national or regional solution.”⁴⁰

The Rev. Dr. Judd pointed out that the rhetoric of a new world or a new social order, among other things, implied world organization for peace, and went on to argue that “the Church’s supreme duty is to supply the dynamic for world organization.”⁴¹ In the Protestant press the general consensus was that the church needed to work toward and support work toward a world organization, which would, it was assumed, be based upon Christian principles, would be conducive to the spreading of the Kingdom of God, and would prevent a future world war. Indeed, it is in the discourse of postwar peace that one sees the logical conclusion of the view of the war as being in defence of Christian civilization, namely “a new order based on social and economic justice.”⁴² Thus, it is no surprise to see widespread support for the United Nations, and especially the conference at San Francisco in 1945 that, it was believed, would determine whether the Allies truly won the war or not. For Canadian Protestants a true victory entailed the establishment of a lasting peace; failing that, an Allied victory was an empty victory.

The concept of world organization was not new. Indeed, these discussions were building on the precedent set in the wake of the First World War by the establishment of

⁴⁰ “Social Reconstruction: A Statement of Principles,” *Canadian Churchman*, 23 March 1944, 182. Emphasis original.

⁴¹ “The New World and the Church’s Role,” *Canadian Churchman*, 29 January 1942, 67. For other examples of articles emphasizing world organization, see: “Christianity and the New Order,” *Canadian Churchman* 7 May 1942, 291; “World Federation as Basis for Enduring Peace,” *Canadian Churchman*, 18 November 1943, 655; “A Changing World: Six Pillars of Peace,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1943, 5; “God’s Universality,” *Maritime Baptist*, 1 November 1939, 3; “A World League to Enforce Peace,” *Maritime Baptist*, 24 March 1943, 1.

⁴² “Bull-Headedness Causes Strikes,” *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1940, 3.

the League of Nations. During the Second World War, however, those who had held to this optimism had to reckon with the apparent failure of the League of Nations to perform its function. There is barely any evidence in the denominational press of rejection of the League, but many commentators were forthright about its failure, and expressed hope about the Atlantic Charter and subsequent development of the United Nations.

The First World War, its failure to usher in peace, and the subsequent failure of the Treaty of Versailles, and the League of Nations, was a major point of reference for Canadian Protestant interpretations of the Second World War and their hopes for the post-war peace. The goal for an enduring post-war peace was irrevocably tied to the failure of the Treaty of Versailles. As one commentator wrote in 1941, “the Versailles Treaty was the best one up to that time, but it was not good enough.”⁴³ In a similar vein, it was commonly accepted that the League of Nations had also failed to make good on its potential. As a writer in 1945 pointed out, “The League of Nations failed us when the testing time came.”⁴⁴ Meanwhile the *Maritime Baptist* noted that the current war’s origins were to be found in some of the League of Nations’ member states’ failure to live up to the covenant when Japan invaded Manchuria and Italy invaded Ethiopia.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, other writers pointed out that the League had not been an utter failure, but had accomplished significant good, even while helpless to stop aggression in certain parts of the world. For example, an article in the *Canadian Churchman* covered in detail

⁴³ “Christ’s Peace,” *Canadian Churchman*, 26 June 1941, 402.

⁴⁴ “The War Will Be Won or Lost at San Francisco,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 April 1945, 12.

⁴⁵ “A World League to Enforce Peace,” *Maritime Baptist*, 24 March 1943, 1. In an article in the *Presbyterian Record* (“New Lamps for Old,” *Presbyterian Record*, April 1945, 99) Senator Cairine Wilson noted that Churchill voiced a similar sentiment: “Only last September our great Winston Churchill said that the Second World War could have been prevented if the member nations enrolled in the League had fulfilled faithfully the pledges they had given.”

the work the League had undertaken, such as its work with refugees, and praised its good work.⁴⁶ An article in the *Presbyterian Record*, similarly, drew attention to the health work accomplished under the leadership of Dr. Best, “the health work of the League has been magnificent,” as well as the League’s active labor branch the International Labor Organization: “economic research into all problems affecting world business and industry has been carefully charted.”⁴⁷

The optimism surrounding the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations was in the same spirit as the Christian internationalism of the 1920s that held such high hopes for a warless world. The Protestant press shared in the belief that a new international order could only work on the basis of Christian principles. One writer, in assessing the future of the League of Nations in 1941, emphasized that stress should be laid upon the principle of self-sacrifice, because “only as the nations are prepared to sacrifice a substantial part of their sovereignty for the common weal of mankind can there be progress. In other words, no change in set up, however necessary, can replace the spirit which will make the League of Nations vital.”⁴⁸ A great deal of support was offered to the United Nations by the those who had supported the League of Nations. A report from the executive committee of the League of Nations Society in Canada noted that the necessary ideas and changes for a new world order were implied and expressed in “‘the common programme of purposes and principles’ embodied in the joint Declaration of August 14th, 1941, known as the Atlantic Charter.”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ “The Future of the League of Nations,” *Canadian Churchman*, 6 November 1941, 631.

⁴⁷ “The League of Nations,” *Presbyterian Record*, April 1945, 99.

⁴⁸ “The Future of the League of Nations,” *Canadian Churchman*, 6 November 1941, 631.

⁴⁹ “League of Nations in Canada,” *Canadian Churchman*, 19 March 1942, 183.

Some writing in the denominational press were given to praising the United Nations, which, was not tied only with the post-war peace but the cause of war itself. One writer, in describing the United Nations, wrote, “never was there a human title so inspiring or embracing so great a multitude . . . we are united by a great ideal—to strike down tyranny and that will take the whole effort of every one of us and to replace it with love, or in other words to set up the kingdom of God, where all will have sufficient before anyone has a surplus.”⁵⁰ Another article, describing the position of the League of Nations Society in Canada, expressed the belief that “victory in the present war must mean the permanent re-establishment of the principles of collective security on a secure and practicable basis.”⁵¹ To achieve this, the report suggested, there would need to be a covenant and commonwealth of nations as universal as possible “to express and safeguard the unity and freedom for which we fight,” and it must also have binding power to halt aggression and disallow neutrality.⁵² There was very little negative commentary on the United Nations in the Protestant press. This was likely due to the perception that the United Nations and the Atlantic Charter before it, were based on the principles of Christianity, or at least Christian civilization.

One article in the *Canadian Baptist* quoted an eyewitness at the birth of the Atlantic Charter, on board a ship in the North Atlantic, who described a worship service that took place on the *Prince of Wales* in which both British and American forces participated, as well as Churchill and Roosevelt. The eyewitness claimed the Charter was birthed in a Christian spirit based on the following: “one of the prayers in which the

⁵⁰ “The United Nations,” *Canadian Churchman*, 19 March 1942, 178.

⁵¹ “League of Nations in Canada,” *Canadian Churchman*, 19 March 1942, 183.

⁵² “League of Nations in Canada,” *Canadian Churchman*, 19 March 1942, 183.

worshippers took part concluded with the words: ‘Stabbing our hearts, O God, in the day of battle and strengthen our resolve, that we fight not in enmity and oppression be done away and the peoples of the world be set free from fear to serve one another as children of our Father who is above all and through all, our God for ever and ever. Amen.’ Such was the Christian spirit in which the Atlantic Charter came to birth.”⁵³

On the occasion of the third anniversary of the signing of the Atlantic Charter the *Maritime Baptist* quoted the text of the charter at length. It is worth considering the content of the Charter, particularly because it bore similarities in character to some of the more detailed visions of the new world order that were found in the Canadian Protestant press throughout the war:

The President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

First, Their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

Second, They desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

Third, They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;

Fourth, They will endeavour, with due respect for existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

Fifth, They desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security;

Sixth, After the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and war;

Seventh, Such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

⁵³ “Men and Affairs: Birth of the Atlantic Charter,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1943, 2.

Eighth, They believed that all the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea, or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.⁵⁴

What arose out of the ruins of the League of Nations was the United Nations. The United Nations was birthed out of the Atlantic Charter, when twenty-six nations subscribed to the Charter on 2 January 1942 in Washington; these nations “bound themselves to ‘certain common principles in the national policy of their respective countries on which they based their hopes for a better future for the world.’”⁵⁵

While the United Nations was celebrated throughout the Protestant press, there was only limited coverage of the San Francisco Conference in 1945. An article in the *Canadian Baptist* which focused on the Conference deplored the “seeming lack of public interest,” and that “I am afraid our citizens do not realize that it is at this San Francisco Conference, where we must win the war and the Peace, for if we do not win the Peace, we lose the war.”⁵⁶ This writer argued that the winning of the peace must be done not by the armed forces of the United Nations, but by the civilians of the United Nations: “Winning the Peace is up to us and if war comes again and millions more die, we will be responsible, so we ordinary people must be sure Peace is won this time.”⁵⁷ He advocated that Christians in North America make the Conference the greatest event in history since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by organizing “the collective

⁵⁴ “Third Anniversary of Atlantic Charter,” *Maritime Baptist*, 9 August 1944, 3.

⁵⁵ “League of Nations in Canada,” *Canadian Churchman*, 19 March 1942, 183.

⁵⁶ “The War Will Be Won or Lost at San Francisco,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 April 1945, 12.

⁵⁷ “The War Will Be Won or Lost at San Francisco,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 April 1945, 12.

might of the Churches” and praying “to Almighty God for Divine guidance and blessing on the setting up of this greatest Conference and the selection of its delegates.”⁵⁸ He then tied this effort with the sacrifice of soldiers, in both the First and Second World Wars, when he wrote “On behalf of ten million dead in the last war and the estimated fifty million dead in this war—and especially on behalf of your own friends and dear ones who made the supreme sacrifice in either war—please personally take the torch they threw you and pray daily for success at San Francisco . . . Frequently read, please, John McCrae’s ‘In Flander’s Fields’ and accept your torch.”⁵⁹

Another writer exemplified the view that the creation of the United Nations was an important moment in the world’s progress away from national sovereignties towards universalism. He wrote that “some Christian leaders agree with this position in the faith that universalism is the ideal toward which we are encouraged to look by the Christian idea of the Kingdom of God . . . we are still far from the day when the Christian religion will be universally accepted.”⁶⁰ He moved on to express his belief that the UN charter was an effective means to provide peace and security throughout the world: “from the weaknesses of the League of Nations the world has learned some lessons that will help us to make more effective the United Nations Charter as a means of providing peace and security. By the acceptance of it the nations will be ‘staking a good claim on the future.’”⁶¹

A writer in the *Maritime Baptist* described the goal of the conference at San Francisco to be “to find an agreement upon a charter for world organization through

⁵⁸ “The War Will Be Won or Lost at San Francisco,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 April 1945, 12.

⁵⁹ “The War Will Be Won or Lost at San Francisco,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 April 1945, 12.

⁶⁰ “United Nations Charter,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1945, 3.

⁶¹ “United Nations Charter,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 July 1945, 3.

which the nations may unite to do what is necessary to keep the peace and to achieve justice.”⁶² The same writer claimed that the Christian churches had “played a leading role” in shifting public opinion in the United States to be more positively disposed to world organization (in the form of the United Nations) than twenty-five years previous when the United States, after playing a decisive role in organizing the League of Nations, proved unable to muster the democratic support necessary to join that body. Another writer for the *Maritime Baptist* also emphasized the role of the church in building public opinion and also took pains to point out that statements and ideas proposed at one Cleveland Church Conference were a clear influence in the proposal for a commission on human rights, even to the extent of using the same phrasing at points: “the Economic and Social Council should set up commissions in the fields of ...promotion of human rights.”⁶³ The article’s subtitle epitomized the optimism and pride over this fact: “Influence of Church Felt in Conference Activities.” The writer also exemplified the widespread belief that Christian missions could play a key role in co-operating with the United Nations’s work: “the hopes and fears of hundreds of millions of darker skinned peoples, the majority with no voice in this Conference, converge on the issue [of Trusteeship]. With the world-wide mission and outreach of the Christian Church, the church leaders at the Conference are watching for every way open to be of help.”⁶⁴

As noted earlier, Canadian Protestants were convinced that education was crucial to the formation of strong Christian citizens, which in turn, would not only help shore up

⁶² “Eyes of the World on United Nations Conference,” *Maritime Baptist*, 9 May 1945, 8.

⁶³ “Echoes from San Francisco,” *Maritime Baptist*, 23 May 1945, 1.

⁶⁴ “Echoes from San Francisco,” *Maritime Baptist*, 23 May 1945, 1.

an embattled Christian civilization, but would play a crucial role in building the new social order for the postwar world. Canadian Protestants tended to envision the post-war peace as a situation in which the international relations of the world would be quite malleable and open to re-ordering. And the churches had a role to play in preparing for this peace that, it was hoped, would be so rich and full that war would become a thing of the past. The churches's vision had implications for their work at home and abroad. At home, education was seen as a major means of preparing for and working toward a better society after the war, as was the rehabilitation and reintegration of returning soldiers. Abroad, missions took pride of place. Ecumenism could help in both spheres.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ The ecumenical movement in Canada appeared to stall after the birth of the United Church of Canada in 1925. Interdenominational cooperation continued to exist in the sphere of social reform, as it had for many years, but other than this ecumenism lay dormant in Canadian life. During the Second World War, however, the ecumenical movement was given new life. The churches thought that the nascent World Council of Churches would play an important role in establishing the new world order. See, "World Council of Churches," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 September 1944, 4; "World Council of Churches," *Maritime Baptist*, 5 February 1941, 3; "Anglicans Join World Council" *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1940, 4; "Secretly Join World Council," *United Church Observer*, 15 October 1941, 2; "World Council of Churches Studies War-Time Preaching," *United Church Observer*, 15 June 1942, 2.

In the latter years of the war Canadian Baptists achieved a new level of national unity and cooperation when they established the Canadian Baptist Federation. See, "Canadian Baptist Federation," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 November 1944, 3; "Canadian Baptist Federation: Its Vision and Values," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 January 1945, 1; "Canadian Baptist Federation," 1 January 1, 1945, 4; "Baptist Federation of Canada," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 December 1945, 2; "The Baptist Federation of Canada" *Maritime Baptist*, 6 December 1944, 3; "My Hopes for the Canadian Baptist Federation," *Maritime Baptist*, 13 December 1944, 3; "The Canadian Baptist Federation," *Maritime Baptist*, 5 July 1944, 4; "The All Canada Baptist Federation," *Maritime Baptist*, 13 September 1944, 4; "It Came to Pass—A Baptist Federation," *Maritime Baptist*, 11 April 1945, 1; "The Calgary Convention," *Western Baptist*, July-August, 1944, 10; "The Canadian Baptist Federation," *Western Baptist*, October 1944, 11; "The Canadian Baptist Federation," *Western Baptist*, November 1944, 8; "The Baptist Federation of Canada," *Western Baptist*, January 1945, 7; "The Baptist Federation of Canada," *Western Baptist*, January 1945, 9; "The Baptist Federation of Canada," *Western Baptist*, February 1945, 3.

At the same time Canadian Protestant unity reached a new level when the Canadian Council of Churches was born in 1944. Goodwin ("Canadian Council of Churches") argues that the CCC was created with a vision that was rooted in an assumption of the dominance of Canada's Protestant churches, essentially a British colonial vision, and saw national churches as the "key to sustaining and developing the Christian ethos of the nation" (147). See, "Canadian Council of Churches is Now Proposed," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 June 1944, 5; "Ontario and Quebec Convention: The Canadian Council of Churches," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 July 1944, 5; "Canadian Council," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1944, 3; "Canadian Council of Churches," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 October 1944, 2; "Canadian Council of Churches," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 November 1944, 3; "Baptists in Canadian Council of Churches," 15 November 1945, 2; "The Canadian Council of Churches," *Western Baptist*, July-August 1944, 11; "Resolutions," *Western Baptist*, September 1944, 4; "The Canadian Council of Churches," *Western Baptist*, September 1944, 9; "The

Education

Canadian Protestants's emphasis on education was discussed in a previous chapter but it is worth noting here, briefly, for its connection with postwar planning. While the statements in the Protestant press outlining the goals or standards of the post-war peace included education, the discourse in the denominational press tended to emphasize the belief that education was crucial to establishing a new world order based on Christian ideals. As in other areas of the churches's response to the war the importance of education fit neatly into both their nation-building (easily extended to apply to the international order) and their view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. Writing in the *Observer* G. R. Musk stated that "if there is to be a new world order, we must look to our boys and girls to carry it through. This means that God must become a reality in every child's life."⁶⁶ Education was conceived of as the best means to achieve this goal. The fact that the new world order would entail healthy democracy was assumed by one writer when he stated "Democracy demands above all things, intelligence; the beginning of intelligence is education; and education is not a thing which can be acquired easily. If we are to get and keep this new world of which we hear we must be mentally well-nourished and mentally tough . . . Now is the time for us to attend to the spiritual nourishment of growing boys and girls on whom the burden of carrying forward the new world order must inevitably rest."⁶⁷ The churches must help

Canadian Council of Churches," *Western Baptist*, October 1944, 9; "Canadian Council of Churches," *Western Baptist*, November 1944, 3.

⁶⁶ "Educating for Peace," *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1940, 18.

⁶⁷ "The Christian Education Advance—and the Teacher," *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1942, 17.

the young see, he wrote, that “Christianity [was] the solution of the world’s problems, the basis of the new world order.”⁶⁸ The importance of education for post-war reconstruction was emphasized in official statements, such as those quoted above, from both British and American church leaders, that outlined the standards that should characterize the new world order. As a joint statement from British church leaders noted, the post-war peace should afford equal opportunities of education for “every child regardless of race or class.”⁶⁹

The Place of Missions in the New Order

Missions, both foreign and domestic, were central to the Canadian churches’s ministry. Since the last third of the nineteenth century Canadian Protestants had made major expenditures of money, resources, and men and women to the cause of foreign missions. In 1941, Kenneth Latourette published his history of missions in which he called the nineteenth century “the great century of Protestant missions.”⁷⁰ However, Brian Stanley has pointed out that the total number of Protestant foreign missionaries in 1899 was 17,254, while in 1973 there were 56,623.⁷¹ This leads him to suggest that “in terms of global aggregates of missionary numbers, both Protestant and Catholic, the ‘great century’ has been the twentieth, not the nineteenth.”⁷² This numerical growth in foreign

⁶⁸ “The Christian Education Advance—and the Teacher,” *United Church Observer*, 15 January 1942, 17.

⁶⁹ “Churches and War Aims,” *United Church Observer*, 1 January 1941, 4.

⁷⁰ Latourette, *The Great Century*, 1.

⁷¹ Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, 83–84.

⁷² Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, 84.

missionaries confirmed that the Canadian Protestant churches had an enduring, and vested interest in foreign missions, and the war confronted them with challenges.

Noting the implicit relationship between missions and imperialism, Gordon Heath has argued that Canadian Protestant churches supported the South African War because they believed that if the Boers won the war Christian mission work would suffer but if the British won, Christian missions would benefit.⁷³ Melissa Davidson has pointed out in her dissertation on Canadian churches in the First World War that Canadian Protestant support for and involvement in foreign missions, and international Christian organizations, before the war had contributed to a nascent sense of the world as a global community.⁷⁴ As noted above, this expanded during the First World War. While it is generally agreed upon that the years immediately following the Great War saw widespread disillusionment with organized religion, Robert Wright's study of Christian internationalism in the interwar period demonstrates there was a rekindling of foreign missions during that time. He noted that the resurgence of pacifism and its conflation with internationalism brought with it a renewed interest in foreign missions as a means of maintaining "the harmony of the nations."⁷⁵ Just as the visions of a new world order in the Canadian Protestant press were in keeping with the trajectory of Christian internationalism, so too was their belief that missions was indispensable to establishing an enduring post-war peace.

The denominational press contained two major themes when it came missions. One was how the war affected foreign missions. A truly global war would, of course,

⁷³ Heath, *Silver Lining*, 119.

⁷⁴ Davidson, "For, God, King and Country," 134; Wright, *A World Mission*, 8–10.

⁷⁵ Wright, "Canadian Protestant Tradition," 156.

disrupt the normal patterns of foreign missionary practice. The second major theme was the importance of foreign missions for establishing a strong post-war peace and a new international order.

An article printed in multiple denominational newspapers bore the sensational headline “War Threatens Disaster in Foreign Missions.” It described how European missionaries were now cut off from their home agencies in continental Europe and from their financial support.⁷⁶ Home missions was similarly jeopardized by the war, though not because of a loss of financial support. The editor of the *Canadian Baptist* deplored the situation facing ministers of small churches. Typically, they were already overworked, and depended heavily on volunteers, many of whom were leaving to enlist in the armed forces: “each enlistment leaves a distinct gap in the home ranks.”⁷⁷ Or, they were employed in factories which operated seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, meaning that congregations were further thinned on Sundays.⁷⁸

Foreign missionaries faced more than merely financial lack, especially once the Pacific theater of war opened. But the world over, new risks now had to be considered before missionaries shipped out to their distant stations. Travelling by ship in both the Atlantic and Pacific was now a more dangerous venture. There were also fears about being “bottled up” in a distant country, especially in Asia, due to hostile forces invading or occupying the land.⁷⁹ Another article, written by a missionary, noted that their

⁷⁶ “War Threatens Disaster in Foreign Missions,” *Canadian Baptist*, 14 September 1940, 10; “The War Threatens Disaster in Foreign Missions,” *United Church Observer*, 14 September 1940, 6; The same article under a different name: “The Plight of Protestant Missions,” *Maritime Baptist*, 3 July 1940, 3; “The Crisis in the Foreign Mission Field,” *Western Baptist*, October 1940, 5.

⁷⁷ “War and Home Missions,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 May 1941, 3.

⁷⁸ “War and Home Missions,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 May 1941, 3.

⁷⁹ “Foreign Missions in a World at War,” *United Church Observer*, 1 September 1940, 18.

missionary work in Rangoon was disrupted by a Japanese air-raid.⁸⁰ Meanwhile paper shortages threatened to discontinue a forty-three-year old vernacular mission paper, produced by Baptists in India, as well as the Bible Society's distribution of Bibles, while others expressed worries over the mail being delayed by up to four months.⁸¹ There were, however, occasional items of good news, as J. H. Arnup wrote in the *Observer*, celebrating how mission work continued successfully in India and "the power of Christianity to transcend national and racial barriers" in Japan, prior to December 1941.⁸²

Even if good news regarding foreign missions was in short supply, there was optimism, and conviction, about the crucial role of missions for the post-war world. As early as 1 October 1939, a writer for the *Observer* quoted the late Lord Bryce, former ambassador to the United States, believing his words were still valid: "The one sure hope of a permanent foundation for world peace lies in the extension throughout the world of the principles of the Christian gospel."⁸³ A statement from J. B. McLaurin, Secretary of the Baptist Foreign Mission Board was printed in all three Baptist newspapers. In it he observed the common question of the time "if the enemy overwhelms the free democracies, where will our missions, our freedom of worship, our whole Christianity be?" and argued in answer that no one recognized more clearly "the terrible effects of totalitarian victory," nor felt more keenly "the pressure of present events."⁸⁴ For this reason, he claimed, it was "essential to the world-cause of truth and

⁸⁰ "When War Comes to Mission Fields," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 August 1942, 5.

⁸¹ "The War and the King's Business," *Western Baptist*, October 1943, 6.

⁸² "Foreign Missions in a World at War," *United Church Observer*, 1 September 1940, 18.

⁸³ "The Christian Mission in a World at War," *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1939, 7.

⁸⁴ "Missions in War-Time," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 June 1940, 3.

justice and decency that our missionary efforts should not be allowed to falter. There is no use winning the war on the material front if we lose it on the spiritual [front].”⁸⁵

While some observers believed that “a victory for Hitler or Mussolini would certainly mean the complete obliteration of any Protestant witness in the world,”⁸⁶ others held the conviction that “the foreign missionary enterprise is inescapably essential to the new world for which we pray. . . the hope for the future of the world rests in the hands of the men and women who keep faith with Jesus.”⁸⁷ Still others connected foreign missions with the cause of the democracies. One editorial claimed that “success in the world-wide missionary movement is fundamental to the cause for which the democracies are fighting in the present war,” not the least of which was self-preservation.⁸⁸

The Rehabilitation of Veterans

As the prospect of victory became more and more certain the prospects of the returning servicemen and women took on a new importance. The Federal Government had actually been preparing for Demobilization and the reintegration of veterans since September 1939, and, in the words of one Baptist writer “the church must indeed ‘gird up its loins’ if it is not to lag behind the State in the acceptance of its particular responsibilities.”⁸⁹ This applied to both returning troops and returning chaplains.⁹⁰ The

⁸⁵ “Missions in War-Time,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 June 1940, 3.

⁸⁶ “The War and Missions,” *Maritime Baptist*, 4 September 1940, 9.

⁸⁷ “Foreign Missions Essential in Tomorrow’s World,” *Maritime Baptist*, 22 July 1942, 9.

⁸⁸ “No Truce in Foreign Missions,” *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1941, 4.

⁸⁹ “Reorganizing the Church for Rehabilitation of Veterans,” *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1945, 8.

⁹⁰ See, “Rehabilitating Padres,” *Canadian Churchman*, 16 November 1944, 647; “Rehabilitating Our Returning Chaplains,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 January 1945, 4; “Rehabilitation Planned for Baptist Chaplains,” *Canadian Baptist*, 1 July 1945, 8.

postwar peace and the new world order that would characterize it, both in Canada and internationally, hinged significantly on the successful reintegration of Canada's veterans. One responsibility the churches recognized was that of "helping the veterans in their restoration to the active fellowship of the church."⁹¹ Other responsibilities included meeting demobilized soldiers at train stations as they returned home, visiting veterans in the hospital and in their homes, and providing intelligent advice regarding the Federal Government's extensive Rehabilitation plans.

The General Synod of the Church of England in Canada of 1943 sought to appoint a Commission on Reconstruction. One of the primary problems it would face would be the "welcoming and weaving into our community life the men and women of His Majesty's forces."⁹² The importance of rehabilitation and reintegration to the postwar peace was such that the BUWC passed a resolution in September 1945 asking for God's guidance in "the great task of reconstruction and rehabilitation which lies ahead."⁹³ Though the governing bodies of each denomination evinced interest in the rehabilitation of veterans, the denominational press coverage of the subject was largely limited to the Baptist newspapers.⁹⁴

⁹¹ "Reorganizing the Church for Rehabilitation of Veterans," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1945, 8.

⁹² "Commission on Reconstruction," *Journal of Proceedings of the Fifteenth Session, 1943*, 374.

⁹³ "Resolutions," *Western Baptist*, September 1945, 6.

⁹⁴ See, "Churches and Rehabilitation," *Canadian Baptist*, 1 May 1944, 8; "Veteran Rehabilitation," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 August 1944, 10; "Rehabilitation of Fighting Men into the Christian Church," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 September 1944, 8; "Some Suggestions for Rehabilitation," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 October 1944, 8; "Rehabilitation: A Symposium," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 November 1944, 8; "Church's Place in the Rehabilitation Program," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 December 1944, 8; "Rehabilitation: A Symposium," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 December 1944, 8; "Rehabilitation of Our Fighting Men," 1 February 1945, 8; "Reorganizing the Church for Rehabilitation of Veterans," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 February 1945, 8; "Rehabilitation—Some Practical Suggestions," *Canadian Baptist*, 15 May 1945, 8; "Suggestions for Rehabilitation Committees," *Western Baptist*, June 1944, 3.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that though Canadian Protestants viewed the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization, their concern for peace, inherited from the interwar peace movement, persisted. Furthermore, the desire for peace was shaped by the prevailing view of the war as in defence of Christian civilization. Most Protestants would admit that Christian civilization had been far from perfect. Indeed, it was not unusual to view the war as a judgement from God on not only their civilization but the corrupt international order too. As the Commission on Church, Nation and World Order stated, “the crisis through which we are passing *is a judgement of God upon all nations*. It is not alone a national crisis; it is international.”⁹⁵ Thus, the war was an opportunity to reform Christian civilization. As the custodians of Christian civilization, the churches believed they had a critical role in guiding this work. For this reason, they published visions of what the postwar world could look like. They published standards by which to measure the new order. They put great hope in the United Nations and arbitration to avoid a future calamitous world war. They held a conviction that foreign missions would play a crucial role in establishing the new world order based on Christian principles. Just as they saw education and the ecumenical movement as aiding the new order. Similarly, the postwar world would falter rapidly if the returning veterans were not effectively reintegrated into Canadian society, and so they made plans for attaining this goal.

⁹⁵ “Report of the Commission on Church, Nation and World Order,” 11. Emphasis added.

CONCLUSION

In Canadian Protestant discourse the Second World War was interpreted as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization. Such a view went beyond seeing it as a just war, though, of course, it was in their eyes. Rather, the war was construed in religious rhetoric, constructing a conception of the war with spiritual dimensions, and therefore a religious conflict.

This particular view of the war was predicated on a presupposition of Christendom and the belief that Canada was a Christian nation (if not in fact than in potential). A close identification had developed in the early twentieth century between British (and American) style democracy and Christianity. As a result, when the war began, there was significant reflection in the Protestant press on the relationship between Christianity and democracy. The most prominent idea arising from this was that democracy was Christian and only functioned correctly on the basis of Christianity. There was a tendency to contrast Christian democracy with authoritarian Nazism and emphasize the freedoms of democracy, which, were seen as springing from Christianity. Furthermore, history was conceived of as an ever-expanding advance of liberty and self-government in which the war was a critical moment.

In light of this discourse, the churches took it upon themselves to emphasize the importance of preserving liberties on the home front in a state of total war. They also emphasized the need to inculcate Canadians, particularly youth, with a well-articulated understanding of Christian citizenship. The churches viewed themselves as the

guardians of Christian civilization in Canada, and therefore did what they believed was necessary to preserve and protect civilization.

Christian democracy and the progressive history of freedom were ultimately British ideas. Similar views were common in Britain, and Canada, as a member of the British Empire was no stranger to them. In fact, there was a strong cultural connection between Canada and Britain so that affection for, and the influence of, the latter was a major force in Canadian cultural mediation. The majority of English-speaking Canadians were of British origin, and most were proud of their place in the British Empire.

The King and Queen held a special place in Canadians hearts. This was confirmed by the fanfare and outpouring of popular affection during the Royal Tour of Canada in 1939. Canadian Protestants saw George VI and Elizabeth as the very embodiment of the highest ideals of the empire. Following a similar logic, they viewed the empire as an exemplar of Christian values. It is crucial to note that, just as Canadian Protestants regarded democracy as a Christian institution, so too did they understand the empire as a distinctly Christian institution. Though, in this case, as in so many others, Christian should be read as Protestants. The British Empire was, in their eyes, the epitome of Protestant values and democracy and freedom, indeed, the highest expression of Christian civilization on earth; as such, it was the antithesis of Nazism and had to be preserved at all costs.

The Protestant press was an important medium for piety, including prayers, hymns, poems, devotional reflections, sermons, and remembrance of the dead. The depth of Canadian Protestants's conviction that the war was a religious conflict in

defence of Christian civilization is revealed by evidence of this interpretation of the war within these expressions of piety. The doctrine of God's providence figured largely in Canadian Protestant attempts to make sense of the national and international crisis of the war. The discourse indicated that God was at work in the conflict, that he was likely on the side of the Allies, and that the war could even be a divine judgement. Similarly, Remembrance Day reflections built on a myth of the First World War that emphasized, often in biblical language, the sacrifice of soldiers for freedom. Indeed, Christian sacrifice and Christian civilization were tied so closely together that the sacrifice of the soldier was interpreted in terms very near to martyrdom. This in itself suggested the importance of preserving Christian civilization in Canadian Protestant discourse.

As nation-builders Canadian Protestants had long been involved in social reform with the goal to shape the nation into the "Lord's Dominion." The war precipitated social turmoil and instability in Canada. Rapid industrialization for the war machine helped alleviate the effects of the Depression, but its speed also affected the social fabric. Tradition gender roles expanded and changed. Alcohol sales spiked and Sunday observance as the Lord's Day appeared to be in stark decline. Gambling, salacious literature, venereal disease, and juvenile delinquency all became prominent social problems.

The war was in defence of Christian civilization, and as custodians of that civilization, the churches felt a responsibility to ensure the survival, and if possible, the improvement of the social order on the home front. Nation-building took on an elevated importance in this context. The major social issues on the home front, in Protestant discourse, were the liquor traffic, the Lord's Day, religious education, and racial

prejudice. A common thread running through these issues was the Protestant belief that the family was the fundamental social unit and that special attention had to be paid to this social institution if Christian civilization was to be maintained, or improved. In Canadian Protestant eyes, those social issues were enemies to the social order and a serious threat to Christian civilization.

In a war that was to defend Christian civilization, the prospect of victory brought with it the responsibility of doing what was necessary to avoid another world war. The influence of interwar internationalism meant that Canadian Protestants took on this responsibility quite naturally. At the same time, dreaming of the potential of the postwar world was an expression of their nation-building, as it applied to Canada, but was easily extended, occasionally, to apply to the international order.

The churches exhibited a high degree of unity in their visions of the postwar world. The new world order they hoped for seemed to be characterized in similar terms throughout the Protestant press. Christian Internationalism's chief legacy in wartime was the social and economic critique of the existing order that could be found throughout the Protestant press. Similarly, the churches seemed unanimous in their support for both the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations. This was in part because they believed both these institutions to be, much like democracy and the empire, distinctly Christian. However, they also supported the UN because they believed it would play a critical role in establishing a new world order on the basis of Christian principles. The churches had high hopes for the World Council of Churches in this work, as they did the work of foreign missions. They may have overestimated the

importance of the roles played by these, respectively, but they supported the UN's vision of collective security nonetheless.

While Canadian Protestants viewed the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization, they were not anti-peace. On the contrary, the hope of peace was present from September 1939 onward. If anything, the visions of a new world order were a manifestation of the Canadian Protestant hope for peace. Simultaneously, these hopes were also the logical conclusion of a war for Christian civilization. In such a view of the war, victory was inevitably tied to the reformation and subsequent flourishing of a Christian civilization. One wonders if, in their vision-casting for a new order, the place of the British Empire in the Canadian Protestant outlook was subordinated to the United Nations.

The voice of pacifism in the *United Church Observer* was disproportionately loud when one considers that as a group, pacifists were a minority in the United Church. And while they differed from their coreligionists on their support for the war, they held in common with them the assumption that the churches were nation-building institutions. One of the observations that this dissertation has made is that the Canadian Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization was shaped to a high degree by the churches's commitment to, and heritage of, nation-building. This was manifested not only in the social reform work to combat moral decline on the home front, but also in the influence of Christian internationalism from the interwar peace movement that sought to establish a Christian social order both at home and abroad.

One of the less pleasant observations made clear by this study is that the web of assumptions that shaped the churches's view of the war contained certain blind spots. One of these was the contradiction of the churches arguing that democracy and freedom were rooted in Christianity, while they failed to effectively ensure and protect the freedoms of Conscientious Objectors and religious minorities such as Jehovah's Witnesses. A similar manifestation of this contradiction was the United Church's abandonment of pacifists. While the UCC leadership paid lip service to the idea that each Christian should follow their conscience regarding the relationship between the Christian and war, they failed to follow through on their interwar repudiation of war, and did nothing (and possibly could do nothing) for those pacifist ministers who, having made their position clear, were ejected from the pulpits by their congregation.

Another observation is the contradiction inherent in the churches's condemnation of racial prejudice while failing to truly back up their high-minded idealism with action. Thus, Japanese-Canadians were forcibly relocated from the B.C. coast while the churches expressed sympathy and satisfaction with the government's implementation of a difficult policy. Similarly, they condemned anti-Semitism but were incapable of influencing public opinion to push the Dominion government to allow Jewish refugees into Canada. One would hope that seeing this deep contradiction in the churches of the past might prompt contemporary churches to serious introspection on the subject of race relations.

Perhaps the most intriguing element of the Canadian Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization are the relatively alien concepts, to contemporary readers at least, of Christian civilization and the churches's

nation-building work. Both of these concepts assume a culture that is largely Christian in character and content, a ship that has sailed away from Western waters. One of the more positive aspects of the churches's view in this regard was that, despite their faults, they held a rich conception of Christian citizenship. Many Canadian Christians in the twenty-first century lack a robust understanding of what it means to be a democratic citizen, let alone how their faith should inform and affect that citizenship.

Many contemporary readers would consider the Canadian Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization to be highly problematic. However, it is important to realize that it is unfair to judge them according to twenty-first-century preferences and cultural dogma just as it is unfair to judge them solely on the benefit of hindsight. Canadian Protestants from the first half of the twentieth century would surely judge the churches of the twenty-first-century for failing to hold the state, and the wider culture, accountable for their injustices. In fact, they might assess the contemporary churches's social justice efforts as weak. Regardless, the churches responded to the Second World War as best as they knew how. Lacking the presuppositions of Christian civilization and the commitment to building a Christian nation it is very difficult for contemporary Christians to appreciate the Canadian Protestant view of the war as a religious conflict. But it is important not to dismiss this as wartime hysteria or hyperbole. As this dissertation has demonstrated, this particular interpretation of the war was the result of a historical tapestry of interwoven assumptions, beliefs, and experiences. The view of the war as a religious conflict in defence of Christian civilization was entirely a product of their time. It also, significantly, marked the beginning of the end of that era. Those who lived to see the

1960s and later decades of the twentieth century could not avoid the conclusion that the Christian civilization that they had fought for in the Second World War was dying or already dead. And its death had not been at the hands of Nazism.

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