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PACIFISM IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST: 1866-1945

*Middle Tennessee State University*

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PACIFISM IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST: 1866-1945

Johnnie Andrew Collins

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PACIFISM IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST: 1866-1945

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## ABSTRACT

PACIFISM IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST: 1866-1945

by Johnnie Andrew Collins

This dissertation is a study of the influence of pacifism in the Churches of Christ from 1866 to 1945. The twentieth century Churches of Christ are the spiritual descendants of the indigenous American Restoration Movement of the nineteenth century. Many first generation leaders of the Churches of Christ were adamantly opposed both to war and political involvement. By 1945, a majority of leaders of this church accepted a "just war" position and the beliefs of conservative religious nationalism. The purpose of this study is to determine the common position of pacifism in the Churches of Christ.

The primary sources of data for this study are the religious periodicals of the Churches of Christ. The strict autonomy of each congregation of the Churches of Christ precludes any formal statement of belief for the membership as a whole. The position of the church's leadership on pacifism is revealed primarily through



published writings of individual leaders. In addition, other traditional avenues of research were used.

The findings of this research show that pacifism always exerted a slighter influence on the general membership of the Churches of Christ than on its leaders. Moreover, pacifist influence waned during the superpatriotism of World War I. During World War II, the acceptance of the "just war" position and freedom of choice for the individual ended any major pacifist influence. The growth of the Churches of Christ numerically and economically is another explanation of the moderation of the sectarian anti-government pacifist stand of the pioneer generation of leaders. Also, the influence of religious nationalism was a factor in the decline of separatist and pacifist beliefs.

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## PREFACE

Many southern conservative Disciples of Christ after the Civil War believed that a Christian must remain separate from worldly concerns such as government and war. However, in the twentieth century, this anti-government pacifism declined in influence until by 1945 only a small minority of what had become known as the Churches of Christ accepted this view. Historically, the Churches of Christ grew out of the early nineteenth century religious movement known as the Restoration Movement and were recognized as a separate religious body only in 1906. Since this division, the Churches of Christ grew into one of the largest non-Catholic churches in the United States. As the Churches of Christ grew, many of their former beliefs were replaced with beliefs of mainstream American Protestantism. Among these changes was the rejection of anti-government pacifism.

Some authors have touched on the issue of pacifism in the nineteenth century, but no significant study has been made of this issue in the twentieth century Churches of Christ. This study is significant because it reflects the maturing beliefs of the Churches of

Christ, and it analyzes the reaction of the Churches of Christ to their changing social and political environment. The threat of nuclear war makes the study of pacifism more relevant to present concerns.

This study has four objectives. First, it will examine the effects of political, economic, and social changes upon the Churches of Christ. How the belief in pacifism rose and waned in response to changing external conditions will be analyzed. Second, the changing ideas of the relation of the Christian to the state and war will be analyzed by studying the reaction of the Churches of Christ to the wars during the time period under study. Third, the problem of applying pacifist beliefs to specific political and social events will be examined. Fourth, the religious dimension of American life is often neglected in the study of American History. Therefore, application of the issues in this study will be made to basic American History surveys, specialized history courses, or to religious studies.

The major assumption of this study is the pacifism of many leaders of the Churches of Christ, though based on their theology, was partially due to their social and historical background. Subsequent social and historical developments led to a modification of pacifism. Leaders in the Churches of Christ held three positions on the

closely related issues of the relationship of the Christian to the government and to war. Political activists believed that a Christian could participate in any governmental function, including war. On the other extreme, anti-government pacifists rejected any role in government or in war. The Christian's duty was to pay taxes and live in quiet submission to the government as far as his conscience would allow. The majority position among the leaders of the church by 1945 was that the Christian could vote and hold political office, though some leaders continued to draw the line at combatant service. However, this study will show that the membership of the Churches of Christ by and large had always ignored the pacifism from the pulpit and the religious press.

This study is limited to the time period of 1866 to 1945. The year 1866 was chosen as a beginning point because the beliefs on many issues including anti-government pacifism among the southern conservative Disciples who became the Churches of Christ were formed by the end of the Civil War. The year 1945 was selected to close this study because the response of the Churches of Christ during World War II indicated that pacifism, particularly anti-government pacifism, had declined to a position with very little influence on the church leadership. After 1945 the Churches of Christ accepted the major



tenets of the religious nationalism that dominated American Protestantism. This study is limited to the historical influence and decline of pacifism among the Churches of Christ. No lengthy discussion of the specific arguments for or against pacifism is made. Neither does this study dwell at any length on the lives and contributions of notable figures. When appropriate, brief references will be given to specific contributions to the issue under study by individuals in the Churches of Christ.

The data for this study has come primarily from the religious journals of the Churches of Christ. Editors have always played an important role in revealing the current issues in the church. The two papers with a lasting influence are the Gospel Advocate and Firm Foundation. The Gospel Advocate, published in Nashville, Tennessee continuously since 1866, has recorded the events and issues that have affected the Churches of Christ in Tennessee and surrounding states. The Firm Foundation, published in Dallas, Texas, has performed a similar role in the west. A number of other journals of shorter duration were surveyed for the thinking within the church in specific periods of time. General religious histories that have proved invaluable are Earl West's three volume history of the Restoration Movement to 1918, The Search for the Ancient Order and David Harrell's two volume, .

A Social History of the Disciples of Christ. Other church histories, commentaries, biographies, scholarly journals, doctoral dissertations, and works on pacifism have also been consulted.

The issue of pacifism is difficult to resolve for the sincere Christian because there is no clear command in the New Testament on this question. By inference and interpretation of the teachings of the New Testament, a good argument can be made for all the positions that have been held on this issue. It is hoped that the issue can be more clearly understood as it is placed in its historical setting.

## Chapter 1

### THE ORIGINS OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST

#### The Restoration Movement

The Churches of Christ are the descendants of the early nineteenth century Restoration Movement. Attempts by various groups to restore primitive Christianity have been made for several centuries by attempting to recreate the first century patterns of doctrine and practice. The sole authority of the Scriptures and the elimination of human traditions and creeds were emphasized by these restorationists.<sup>1</sup>

The Restoration Movement of the 1800s began as a product of the ferment on the frontier and would become the largest indigenous American religious movement. Its leaders urged an acceptance of apostolic Christianity that attracted followers from every religious group with which they came in contact. They sought to eliminate all human traditions and creeds in the doctrine and

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<sup>1</sup>James DeForest Murch, Christians Only: A History of the Restoration Movement (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1962), p. 9.

practice of the church by going back to the simplicity of first century Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

Two early movements, one on the Atlantic Seaboard and the other in New England, are significant in that they began to look away from the sectarianism and religious traditions of their day toward the New Testament pattern. On the Atlantic coast in Virginia, followers of James O'Kelley and Rice Haggard withdrew from the Methodist Church in 1793 because of a dispute with their bishop, Francis Asbury, over the government of the denomination. In 1794 the "Republican Methodists," as they called themselves, decided to use the Bible alone as the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, although there was really little departure from Methodist theology. In 1801 this group changed its name to the "Christian Church." Later it merged with other similar groups from New England forming the Christian Connection with headquarters in Dayton, Ohio. Some of the congregations affiliated with this movement joined the Stone and Campbell movement while in the twentieth century those that remained

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<sup>2</sup>Earl Irvin West, The Search for the Ancient Order: A History of the Restoration Movement, 1849-1906, vol. 1, 1849-1865 (Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1964), p. xi.

with the Christian Connection merged with the Congregationalists.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, O'Kelley was forming his group, Elias Smith and Abner Jones, who preached in New England, were arriving at similar beliefs. Separating from the Baptists, these men established several congregations that advocated "wearing" only the name "Christian" and believing only the New Testament. Many of these congregations merged with the O'Kelley churches to form the Christian Connection.<sup>4</sup>

However, the largest 19th century movement to restore New Testament Christianity resulted from the work of Barton W. Stone and Thomas and Alexander Campbell. The Stone wing of the Restoration Movement was an outgrowth of religious changes on the frontier produced by the Great Revival of 1800. The need for a religious reformation was apparent at the end of the eighteenth century as the upheavals of the French-Indian War, the Revolutionary War, and the popularity of French skepticism had brought the American churches to a low point in their influence.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 9, 10, 17; Murch, Christians Only, p. 32-33; William Garrett West, Barton W. Stone: Early Advocate of Christian Unity (Nashville, Tennessee: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954), p. vii.

<sup>4</sup> Earl West, The Search for the Ancient Order, 1:11-17; Murch, Christians Only, p. 33.

The churches seemed powerless to counteract the irreligion, drunkenness, and immorality that characterized American society, especially on the frontier. Furthermore, the East-West tensions created by the westward movement of the frontier weakened the influence of the older Eastern churches. The churches that would flourish on the frontier--the Baptists, Methodists, and Disciples of Christ--were those that adapted their message to frontier needs and conditions.<sup>5</sup>

In 1800 a Great Revival, destined to last for several years, began on the frontier in Kentucky and rapidly spread to other areas.<sup>6</sup> The messages of the revivalists led Stone to the view that Christian unity was impossible on the basis of human creeds and traditions. Instead, Stone and those preachers like him pled for unity and the restoration of the church based upon the teachings of the New Testament as the standard for doctrine and practice. They emphasized the autonomy of the local congregation, the rejection of human creeds as tests of fellowship and orthodoxy, and the acceptance of only

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<sup>5</sup>Murch, Christians Only, pp. 18-19.

<sup>6</sup>Sidney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 432-435 describes the Revival of 1800 in detail.

the New Testament as the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice for Christians.<sup>7</sup>

Stone, a Presbyterian minister in Southern Kentucky, had accepted ordination reluctantly because of his great respect for the word of God and his doubts as to the validity of certain doctrines contained in the Presbyterian creed, the Westminster Confession of Faith. As the Great Revival swept through Bourbon County, Kentucky, he and other ministers began to preach the universality of the gospel and faith as a condition of salvation. Such preaching was opposed to the traditional Calvinist doctrines of predestination and election. In 1803 when the Kentucky Synod of the Presbyterian Church convicted Richard McNemar of heresy, he, Stone and three other Presbyterian ministers withdrew from the Synod and formed the independent Springfield Presbytery. Deciding that such an organization "savored of the party spirit," the five men dissolved the Presbytery in June, 1804, and issued the "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery" as an explanation of their action. This statement of principles has become a classical document of Christian unity and the Restoration Movement. The principal author of this document was Stone, and it

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<sup>7</sup>Enos E. Dowling, The Restoration Movement (Cincinnati Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1964), p. 3.

showed his sincerity and honesty in trying to rid religion of everything of human origin by taking the Bible as the only religious authority.<sup>8</sup>

This "New Light Christian Church" soon lost all of its original leaders except Stone and David Purviance when two returned to the Presbyterian Church and two converted to Shakerism. Stone persisted in evangelizing through the pulpit and in a religious journal he edited, The Christian Messenger. The number of adherents to his preaching grew steadily, and a number of followers spread the message over the frontier areas. Coming into contact with the Campbell reformers, Stoneites and Reformers found that they shared many beliefs, and after a series of meetings, almost all of the Stoneite congregations merged with Campbell's Reformers to form the Disciples of Christ or Christian Church. This merger began in 1832.<sup>9</sup>

The other movement to restore New Testament Christianity that resulted in the formation of the Disciples of Christ

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<sup>8</sup>Earl West, The Search for the Ancient Order, 1:22-25; see Charles Alexander Young, ed., Historical Documents Advocating Christian Unity (Chicago: The Christian Century Company, 1904), pp. 19-26 for the text of this document; see also William West, Barton W. Stone, p. viii for the significance of this document.

<sup>9</sup>Earl West, The Search for the Ancient Order, 1:30-33; William West, Barton W. Stone, p. viii.



was begun by Thomas Campbell but led by his son, Alexander Campbell. Thomas Campbell, a preacher and teacher in Ireland, originally belonged to the Anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterian Church. But, he gradually turned away from the creeds and doctrines of men toward dependence on the Bible alone. Immigrating to America in 1807 for his health, he presented himself to the Pennsylvania Synod of the Presbyterian Church and was assigned to the Chartiers Presbytery in Western Pennsylvania. Soon he ran into trouble with his Synod for preaching doctrines contrary to the Westminster Confession. On September 13, 1808, he formally separated from the Synod and began preaching in the homes of friends.<sup>10</sup>

In 1809 Campbell's followers formed the Christian Association of Washington. To explain the purposes and beliefs of this Association, Campbell wrote the "Declaration and Address," a document which pictured the detrimental effects of division in Christianity and called for Christian unity based upon principles found in the New Testament. This document, which became the foundation for the Campbell Reformation, has been called by Christian Church historians the "greatest

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<sup>10</sup>Earl West, The Search for the Ancient Order, 1:45-49.

document ever written in the advocacy of Christian union and the Magna Charta of the Restoration Movement."<sup>11</sup>

The ideas presented in the "Declaration and Address" were the guiding principles for Alexander Campbell as he built this movement into a major church.<sup>12</sup> Basic principles included the authority of the Holy Scriptures, the individual Christian's responsibility before God, the right of private judgment, the evils of division, and the belief that the way to unity and peace in the body of Christ was through conformity to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>13</sup>

When Alexander Campbell, the eldest son of Thomas Campbell, arrived with the rest of the family from Ireland in 1809, he readily agreed with the religious views of his father as presented in the "Declaration and Address." He soon became the leading spokesman for the Restoration Movement. This brilliant writer, scholar, theologian, debater, educator, and publisher popularized the principles of the restoration of New Testament Christianity through the pulpit, debates, his papers--the Christian Baptist

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<sup>11</sup>Young, Historical Documents, pp. 8-9; see pp. 71-209 for the text of this document.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>13</sup>Murch, Christians Only, p. 43.

and later the Millennial Harbinger, and Bethany College, established in 1841 to train preachers.<sup>14</sup>

In May, 1811, the Christian Association organized into the independent Brush Run Church which in 1813 joined the Redstone Baptist Association based upon their common emphasis on baptism. The fellowship with the Baptists lasted until about 1830 when strains developed over the teachings of Campbell and his followers. As the Reformers, as Campbell's followers were called, separated from the Baptists, many Baptist churches joined the movement. As noted previously, the Campbell Reformers and Stoneite Christians began to merge in 1832 to form the Disciples. They numbered approximately 20,000 when this merger occurred. As one of the fastest growing churches in America, the membership had reached well over 200,000 by 1860.<sup>15</sup>

#### Schisms in the Restoration Movement

Looking back, it is apparent that the sectional divisions of the Civil War era produced a turning point in the Restoration Movement. The attitudes toward slavery,

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<sup>14</sup>Earl West, The Search for the Ancient Order, 1:70-71; 75.

<sup>15</sup>William West, Barton W. Stone, p. viii; membership figures from David Edwin Harrell, "Disciples of Christ Pacifism in Nineteenth Century Tennessee," Tennessee Historical Quarterly 21 (September, 1962): 263.

pacifism, and sectionalism expressed by the Restoration leaders have had a permanent impact upon the movement that is clearly visible today.<sup>16</sup>

Although events of the 1850s had led to the decline and virtual collapse of the organized peace movement, the majority of the American people in 1860 were still looking to settle national differences short of war. Two fifths of the votes cast in the Presidential election, as many as the Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln received, were cast for moderate candidates seeking to preserve the union. Nevertheless the war madness gained control; and the frantic efforts at compromise after the election of Lincoln failed to stop the disintegration of the nation: "Somehow the cries of the prophets of peace could not compete with the crescendo of bellowing demagogues, galloping hoofs, and clattering caissons as the nation converged on Bull Run."<sup>17</sup>

In the religious community as early as the mid-1840s, the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists had

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<sup>16</sup>Royce Lynn Money, "Church-State Relations in the Churches of Christ Since 1945: A Study in Religion and Politics" (Ph.D. dissertation, Baylor University, 1975), p. 30.

<sup>17</sup>David Edwin Harrell, Jr., A Social History of the Disciples of Christ, vol. 1: Quest for a Christian America: The Disciples of Christ and American Society to 1866 (Nashville, Tennessee: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), pp. 144-145.

divided over the issue of slavery.<sup>18</sup> Both northern and southern religious leaders played key roles in the sectional disputes that led to war. Northern churchmen had created a large following for abolition of slavery while the Southern church leaders created a biblical fanaticism for preservation of the southern social order. The depth of feeling was such that "for violence of statement and ultimacy of appeal, the clergy and religious press seem to have led the multitude."<sup>19</sup>

On the surface, the Disciples of Christ appeared to escape any open division prior to the war. Because of the extreme congregationalism of the Disciples, there was very little for the slavery issue to divide except local congregations. The Stone and Campbell wings of the movement had begun to merge their traditions into a church only after 1832. Also, many Disciples who lived in the border states held moderate views on the slavery issue that lessened the impact of the sectional agitation. Although opposing slavery itself, Alexander Campbell and other leaders took a moderate stand on the issue by considering it a political and not a religious question.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ahlstrom, A Religious History pp. 659-665 describes these divisions.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 672-673.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 666; Money, "Church-State Relations," p. 33.

Division among the Disciples was a real threat during the Civil War. For as the Civil War tested the national unity, it also tested the unity of the Disciples of Christ. Because no ecclesiastical structure governed the Disciples, fragmentation of the movement into sectional groups was a real danger.<sup>21</sup> The Disciples' membership was fairly evenly distributed between the North and the South with many churches in border states where loyalties were divided.<sup>22</sup>

When the war came, the Disciples reacted in much the same way as other religious groups as "most young Disciples North and South carefully packed their Bibles into saddlebags and rode off to war." They shared with their kinsmen and neighbors North and South the hatreds, hardships and glory of the war and in the heat of battle took the lives of other Disciples.<sup>23</sup> This sectional reaction had exceptions in the border states as some of the preachers and members refused to participate

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<sup>21</sup>William T. Moore, "The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century: The Turbulent Era," The Christian Evangelist 37 (May 18, 1899): 616-617. Hereafter referred to as CE.

<sup>22</sup>Winfred E. Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, Disciples of Christ: A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), p. 330 state that there were 1,241 congregations in the North and 829 in the South in 1860.

<sup>23</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 152, 156.

in the war and in Middle Tennessee where a small group of pacifist preachers had a limited impact in persuading their members to avoid involvement in the worldly enterprise of war.<sup>24</sup>

As the war ended, differing views pointed to a developing sectional division between churches in the North, the border states, and the South. Northern preachers had condemned slavery, supported the Union cause during the war, and forced the passage of loyalty resolutions by the American Christian Missionary Society. They felt the Southerners had been wrong in rebelling and the Northern cause had been just. These pro-Union Northerners believed that fellowship could not be restored until the rebels repented of their wickedness.<sup>25</sup>

Southern Disciples strongly resented the loyalty resolutions of the American Christian Missionary Society. Furthermore, they thought that the Northern Disciples who supported the Union cause had defiled the purity of the church through their political involvement. The Southern Disciples believed that the only pure remnant of God's people was in the church of the South.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 169, 170.

In the border states, moderates had tried to maintain the unity of the church by avoiding involvement in the war. After the war, they sought to reconcile the Northern and Southern brethren by urging moderation and forgiveness and by downplaying controversial sectional issues.<sup>27</sup>

However, all three views were represented in all areas of the nation. The South had its politically active Disciples as the North had its pacifist Disciples with the moderates scattered throughout the brotherhood. The sectional differences brought to the surface by events of the war years led to a reorientation of church loyalties away from Restoration unity.<sup>28</sup>

Traditionally the view has been held that the Disciples were not divided by the war. Moses E. Lard stated in 1866 just after the end of the war that "yet not a rent in our ranks did the war produce."<sup>29</sup> Almost all historians of the movement have perpetuated this idea. David Edwin Harrell, Jr., the social historian of the movement, disagrees with this conclusion and argues that the Disciples came out of the war divided,

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 165, 174.

<sup>29</sup>Moses E. Lard, "Can We Divide?" Lard's Quarterly 3 (April, 1866): 336.



with Northern Disciples committed to a more denominational and socially active concept of the church while the Southern Disciples entered the post-war era committed more strongly than ever to an extreme sectarian view of the church.<sup>30</sup>

According to Harrell, this split that was formalized in 1906 began at the end of the Civil War. Theological differences were the immediate cause of the division into two churches, but Harrell downplays these issues as only the symptoms of deeper differences. The Disciples divided because of a complex interaction of conflicts between rural and urban interests, industrial and agricultural philosophies, and sectional bitterness. Harrell concludes that in Tennessee, a key state in the division, "these social realities had a good deal more to do with the course of religion in these years than did theology."<sup>31</sup>

Bill J. Humble, in his study of the Missionary Society controversy within the Disciples of Christ, attributes the division to three factors. First, two contradictory views arose of what were "essential" and

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<sup>30</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, pp. 172-173.

<sup>31</sup>David Edwin Harrell, "The Sectional Origins of the Churches of Christ," Journal of Southern History 30 (August, 1964): 262; "Disciples of Christ and Social Force in Tennessee, 1865-1900," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications 38 (1966): 30.

what were "incidental" practices. In Humble's view "expediency became the rock on which the unity of Christians was shattered." After the Civil War, the issues of the Missionary Society and instrumental music were hotly debated as to whether they were mere expedients or unscriptural innovations.<sup>32</sup>

Harrell on this difference of viewpoint states that from the first there had been conflicting emphases on "restoration of the ancient order of things" and "Christian Unity." The more denominationally oriented liberals emphasized the principle of Christian unity while the conservative element came to consider the legalistic restoration principle more important.<sup>33</sup>

Humble identifies the second divisive factor to be the sectional tension that developed as a result of the Civil War. The war so shattered the sense of brotherhood between northern and southern Christians "that they could never again be called 'one people' in any sense."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Bill J. Humble, "The Missionary Society Controversy in the Restoration Movement: 1823-1875" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1964), pp. 330-332.

<sup>33</sup>Harrell, "Sectional Origins," p. 262.

<sup>34</sup>Humble, "Missionary Society," pp. 334-336.

A third factor in the division was the differences between the northern and southern economic and social development and the conflict between the rural and urban elements that led to different points of view concerning the future of the church. The Disciples in the urban areas demanded a more progressive and dignified religion while the rural conservatives determined to remain true to the early restoration principles of the movement.<sup>35</sup> This conservative ecclesiastical view became mixed with the lost cause of the South and the southern sectional outlook. Conservatives saw a moral difference between the cities of the North and the farms of the South.<sup>36</sup> Harrell points out that in Tennessee, the key state in the development of the Church of Christ, the more liberal Disciples dominated the urban areas across the state while the rural areas, except for pro-Union East Tennessee, were dominated by the Conservatives.<sup>37</sup>

A key role in the growing division in the Disciples of Christ was played by the religious press of the Disciples.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 338.

<sup>36</sup>See David Edwin Harrell, Jr., "The Agrarian Myth and the Disciples of Christ in the Nineteenth Century," Agricultural History 41 (1967): 181-192 for an analysis of this dichotomy.

<sup>37</sup>Harrell, "Disciples of Christ and Social Force," pp. 34-36.

In the absence of an extra-congregational ecclesiastical structure, editors in the Restoration Movement traditionally held a great deal of power and authority. The intense individualism of the frontier led to suspicion of any formally structured authority. In the absence of any such authority congregations became dependent on strong leaders such as Barton W. Stone, Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott, the leading evangelist on the Western Reserve of Ohio.<sup>38</sup>

In the nineteenth century, personal contact and the printed word were the only means of becoming well known. Among the Disciples Alexander Campbell had risen from a position of relative obscurity to a position of leadership in the movement in large part as editor of the Christian Baptist. Following Campbell's example, religious periodicals among the Disciples multiplied and became a key means of spreading the restoration plea.<sup>39</sup>

After the Civil War, the clashing viewpoints of the Northern and Southern Disciples were more and more reflected in the periodicals. In 1866 the Gospel Advocate

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<sup>38</sup>James Brook Major, "The Role of Periodicals in the Development of the Disciples of Christ, 1850-1910" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1966), pp. ii, 1-6.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

was revived in Nashville, Tennessee, under the editorship of Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb, the two leading pacifist preachers during the war. It immediately became the leader of Southern protest against the actions of the Northern Disciples during the war. In the North and border states the desire grew among the pro-war element for a journal to replace the American Christian Review, edited by the pacifist Benjamin Franklin. In April, 1866, the Christian Standard began publication under the editorship of Isaac Errett, one of the most respected Disciples in the North. Financial backers included Ohio Representative and former Union general James A. Garfield and the wealthy Thomas W. Phillips of New Castle, Pennsylvania.<sup>40</sup>

The Advocate and Standard editors clashed over the differences that had developed out of the Civil War, the focus being on the Missionary Society, instrumental music, and other "innovations" such as expensive church buildings and "located" ministers. The liberals in the Church became known as "society men" or "Standard men" to mark them as backers of the views of the Christian Standard while the conservatives were called "antis"

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<sup>40</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 168; "Sectional Origins," p. 269.

or "Advocate Men" to mark them as opponents of the Missionary Society and supporters of the Southern views of the Gospel Advocate.<sup>41</sup>

The division of the Disciples was not an immediate event but a process that lasted from the Civil War years on into the twentieth century. Since no national body existed, division came over the years as the local autonomous congregations were influenced by their leaders to line up on one side or the other. This process peaked in the 1880s and 1890s but was not completed until well into the twentieth century.<sup>42</sup>

The 1906 United States Government Religious Census, published in 1910, gave the first official recognition of the fact that the Churches of Christ were a separate body from the Disciples of Christ.<sup>43</sup> S. N. D. North, the Director of the Census, wrote David Lipscomb in June, 1907, that, after examining the Gospel Advocate in gathering statistics for the report, the Census Bureau had been unable to determine whether it was to be identified with the Disciples of Christ or whether its views represented "a religious body called 'Church of Christ,' not identified

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<sup>41</sup>Harrell, "Sectional Origins," p. 262.

<sup>42</sup>Humble, "Missionary Society," p. 330.

<sup>43</sup>United States Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies: 1906, 2 pts. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1910), 2:241-243.

with the Disciples of Christ or any other Baptist body." North requested that if there were such a body, he needed information about its beliefs, organization, origin, and a list of churches that belonged to it.<sup>44</sup>

Lipscomb replied by describing the basic principles of the Restoration Movement as they were formulated in Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address." Lipscomb charged that these principles had been subverted with the adoption of the Missionary Society and instrumental music and, as a result, there existed "a people taking the word of God as their only and sufficient rule of faith, calling their churches 'churches of Christ' or 'churches of God'; distinct and separate in name, work, and rule of faith from all other bodies or peoples."<sup>45</sup> A few months later North arranged for J. W. Shepherd, one of the editors of the Gospel Advocate, to undertake a compilation of the Churches of Christ for inclusion in the census report.<sup>46</sup>

Though the statistics collected were incomplete, the report revealed the sectional nature of the split

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<sup>44</sup>"The 'Church of Christ' and the 'Disciples of Christ'," Gospel Advocate 49 (July 18, 1907): 2. Hereafter referred to as GA.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Humble, "Missionary Society," p. 328.

in the Restoration Movement. The Disciples were the larger body with 8,293 churches and 982,701 members while the Churches of Christ listed 2,649 churches and 159,658 members. Moreover 101,734 of the members of the Churches of Christ lived in the eleven former Confederate states with another 30,206 living in the border states of Kentucky, West Virginia, Missouri, and Oklahoma. The only Northern state to have a membership of over 5,000 was Indiana.<sup>47</sup>

Of the nearly one million Disciples of Christ, only 137,703 members lived in the eleven Southern states with the largest concentration being in Virginia and North Carolina. While the Churches of Christ had little strength outside of the South, they had been successful in capturing a large share of the churches in that region.<sup>48</sup>

To summarize, the Churches of Christ originated as a result of several cultural, political, and doctrinal factors in the late nineteenth century. They represented a conservative, Southern wing of the Restoration Movement that separated as the result of differences rooted in the Civil War. A recognizable split existed by 1906. The Church of Christ outlook on society and government was molded, in part, by their origins. Their Southern

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<sup>47</sup>Harrell, "Sectional Origins," p. 263.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 263-264.



heritage reflected their approval of, if not adherence to, the pacifist beliefs of many leaders of this wing of the Restoration Movement in the latter years of the nineteenth century.

Application: The Significance of Religious Studies

In many instances the study of American History fails to consider the religious dimension of our cultural heritage. Sidney E. Ahlstrom, the eminent American church historian, emphasizes the relevance of the study of the moral and spiritual development of the American people when he states:

The United States--its nature and its actions--presents one of the world's most difficult challenges to the understanding, and a comprehensive account of its religious history holds promise of bringing light where light is sorely needed.<sup>49</sup>

Religious groups, though separated from other groups and institutions by their unique goals and commitments, exist as human communities, and historians should take account of their influence upon society and society's influence upon them.<sup>50</sup> Because Christianity has been a major influence upon American religious history, what the churches have done must be considered in understanding

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<sup>49</sup>Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. xiii.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. xiv.

American cultural, social, economic, and moral development.<sup>51</sup>

The same factors that influenced political developments also influenced religious developments. In fact, Sweet suggests that "parallels between American political and religious history are both numerous and striking."<sup>52</sup> For example, the frontier influence on political developments had a parallel effect on religion. The churches were in continuous contact with frontier conditions and needs and were forced to adapt to the needs of the frontier in order to prosper. Revivalism had a particularly significant impact in the largely unchurched frontier areas.<sup>53</sup>

The growth of sectionalism and the division over slavery also had a parallel effect on religion as many denominations divided into sectional bodies that emphasized their own interests above national and interdenominational interest. Differences about doctrine, societal outlook, and church roles in society added to the political divisions. Sweet concludes that in the pre-Civil War period "the same set of influences produced similar results in church

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<sup>51</sup>William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1950), pp. 1, 6.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 3, 5.

and state while each has exercised a constant influence on the other."<sup>54</sup>

A worthwhile approach to a study of the influence of the frontier would be to illustrate the characteristics the frontiersmen possessed by noting the changes religions went through as they adapted to the needs of the frontier. The emphasis upon individualism, revivalism, and the distrust of established ecclesiastical hierarchies and doctrines would illustrate this point.

The Civil War era also produced a set of social tensions expressed through the churches. The reaction of the churches and the changes in doctrine and organization is one aspect of understanding this era.

This approach would be most relevant in an upper level course, though a general survey could make use of this approach for purposes of illustration and application of specific points. The use of this approach in a history of American religion, or the history of a specific church would be especially appropriate. However this information is applied, the historian or teacher should recognize the religious dimension as one key to better understanding the political, social, cultural, and economic developemnt of the United States.

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

## Chapter 2

### THE PACIFIST TRADITION OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST TO 1865

The pacifist tradition in the Disciples of Christ was not a result of the organized peace movement in the United States. The American Peace Society, a product of the merger of local and state peace societies after the War of 1812, was never able to create a major crusade for peace. Its influence was limited to the East where the War of 1812 and the Mexican War were unpopular, but it did not reach into the West and the South.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the Civil War, the organized churches were lukewarm toward the peace movement with only a minority of the clergy open advocates of peace.<sup>2</sup> Although Disciples leaders were not outspoken crusaders for peace prior to 1846, they were aware of and in sympathy with the views of the peace advocates. Both Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone reported the actions of peace reformers in their religious journals.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>See Merle Eugene Curti, The American Peace Crusade (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1929), pp. 48, 105, 217, 219 for the influence of the Peace Movement in American churches.

<sup>3</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, pp. 139-140.

The pacifism of the Disciples leaders originated from their personal convictions concerning the role of the Christian in the state and their adherence to the teachings of the New Testament, particularly the moral teachings of Jesus recorded in the four gospels.<sup>4</sup> The influence of left-wing Protestant thought on the leaders of the Restoration Movement was one basis for their pacifist outlook. Roland Bainton's analysis of the beliefs of the left-wing Protestants of the sixteenth century identifies several characteristics that were found in differing degrees as beliefs of the leaders of the Disciples. Among these beliefs were: (1) an ethical emphasis upon a "pure" church, (2) a belief in Christian primitivism which led to attempts to restore the primitive church on the basis of the Bible, (3) a heightened sense of eschatology that awaited a millenium of some kind, and (4) the belief in the radical separation of the church and state.<sup>5</sup>

A majority of the early leaders of the Restoration Movement were pacifists. At the age of nine Barton W. Stone had witnessed the demoralizing effects of the

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<sup>4</sup>Money, "Church-State Relations," p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>Roland H. Bainton, "The Left Wing of the Reformation," Journal of Religion 21 (April, 1941): 124-134.

Revolutionary War upon his community in western Pennsylvania. He remembered the immorality that characterized the military encampments near his home.<sup>6</sup> According to Murch, he became "a confirmed pacifist, hating the cause and effects of war in all its forms."<sup>7</sup> He denounced war, along with slavery, as two of the greatest evils of mankind.<sup>8</sup>

William Garrett West, the biographer of Stone, asserts that Stone was as radical in his view of the church and state as many left wing Protestant leaders. He opposed the participation of the individual Christian in any political involvement, including voting, because of the corrupt state of politics and politicians on the frontier. However, he did believe that governments should be obeyed because they were ordained of God. The Christian, according to Stone, was also obligated to pay his taxes.<sup>9</sup>

Alexander Campbell held similar, although more moderate, views on the relationship of the church and state. His views have had a long lasting influence

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<sup>6</sup>William West, Barton W. Stone, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Murch, Christians Only, p. 83.

<sup>8</sup>William West, Barton W. Stone, p. 223.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 211-213.

within the conservative wing of the Disciples of Christ that would become the Churches of Christ.<sup>10</sup> Harold Lunger stresses two influences that affected Campbell's views on the relationship of the church and state. One was the natural rights political philosophy of John Locke passed on through the ideas of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. The other was the left wing Protestant tradition passed through the Baptists under the leadership of Roger Williams.<sup>11</sup>

Campbell's view of the Christian's relationship to the state can be understood best against the background of the sixteenth century Reformation. He was a great admirer of the Reformation period and its ideas, calling it "one of the most splendid eras in the history of the world." The political legacy of the Reformers, according to Campbell, were the national privileges and civil liberties of the Americans. However, the spirit of the Reformation was quenched by the collision of political interests when Luther's teachings were converted into a new state religion.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Money, "Church-State Relations," p. 20.

<sup>11</sup>Harold Lunger, The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), p. 12; see also Alhstrom, A Religious History, p. 449.

<sup>12</sup>Alexander Campbell, The Christian System (Pittsburgh: Forrester and Campbell, 1835; reprint ed., Nashville, Tennessee: The Gospel Advocate Company, 1970) p. vii.

A radical separation should exist between church and state, according to Campbell. He believed that political issues had no place in the church because political judgments were in the realm of individual opinion, not doctrine.

Though Campbell avoided partisan politics, he was favorable to the Jacksonian Democrats in the 1820s. However, by 1830 disillusionment with the Democrats began to set in due to several factors. First, as a delegate to the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-1830, Campbell was distressed that the "vested political interests" of eastern planters had blocked the efforts of western delegates to liberalize the Virginia Constitution. The Easterners, led by former Presidents Madison and Monroe and other national figures, defeated Westerners on such issues as legislative apportionment, the ending of property qualifications for voting, and popular election of county courts. The convention only narrowly ratified the Constitution. The vote was also close in the statewide referendum. In the East-West split, only two counties west of the Alleghenies voted for the Constitution. Campbell spoke out against the Constitution, and his home county, Brooke, was unanimously opposed to the Constitution.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Lunger, Political Ethics, pp. 77-78, 87, 93, 98, 102-103, 130.



Campbell became further pessimistic about politics due to such events as the violation of the rights of the Cherokee Indians in Georgia, the "spoils system," Jackson's use of the veto, and the campaign practices of political candidates and their supporters.<sup>14</sup> Campbell also feared the rising influence of Roman Catholicism due to immigration of Catholics. He believed that Catholicism was a threat to American Protestantism and democratic institutions.<sup>15</sup>

Campbell believed that the greatest threat to the nation was the slavery issue. He rejected the program of abolitionists because they were acting outside the law. He appealed for support of the Fugitive Slave Law because it was the law of the land.<sup>16</sup>

His political views and admiration for Whig leaders such as Daniel Webster led him to support William Henry Harrison in the 1840 election. He was drawn to the Whigs by the friendships he made as the Disciples of Christ began to attract more prominent people. Also, he developed contacts with social, business and political leaders while raising money for Bethany College.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 131-133.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 137; see Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, pp. 214-221 for anti-Catholic sentiments among the Disciples of Christ.

<sup>16</sup> Lunger, Political Ethics, pp. 133, 62, 138.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 141-142, 147.

By the late 1840s, Campbell began to express a more positive attitude toward American Democracy. In 1847, he visited Ireland, England, and France. His appreciation for the United States grew as he observed the extremes of wealth and poverty of the European class system. The fears for the nation he felt due to the slavery issue and the threat of Roman Catholicism led him to praise the virtues of the "Anglo-Saxon Democracy" in the United States.<sup>18</sup>

His national reputation as a debater, theologian, educator, writer, and preacher led to an invitation to speak before a joint session of Congress in 1850 on "The Love of God."<sup>19</sup> That fall he led a prayer before the Indiana Constitutional Convention and in 1853 he addressed the Missouri Legislature. In 1857, President Buchanan and most of his cabinet came to hear him preach at the Baptist Church in Washington, D. C. The President honored him with a White House reception. Prominent members of the Disciples included Attorney-General Jeremiah Black and James A. Garfield. Also, Campbell was close

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 134, 136-137; "The Destiny of Our Country," Millennial Harbinger Fourth Series 2 (August, 1852): 452-453 hereafter referred to as MH.

<sup>19</sup>"An Excursion," MH Third Series 7 (July, 1850): 406.

friends with Robert E. Lee, Henry Clay and several other prominent political leaders.<sup>20</sup>

Campbell demonstrated the tension between the role of "Christian" and "citizen" in the application of his beliefs on the role of the Christian in the state. He believed that citizens had the freedom to choose their own form of government since God had not prescribed any one form of political governance. He seldom urged Christians to vote, though they should when it would help the community or prevent a greater evil from happening. In 1857 he wrote:

Therefore, as far as a vote for this measure or for that; for this person or for that, will, in his best judgment, result in the greater good, or in the lesser evil to the community, as a Christian man, he ought, as we think, to vote for that person, or for that measure.<sup>21</sup>

Campbell thought that the question of a Christian holding political office was ambiguous. However, his personal preference was based on his belief that politics were corrupting, and it was best for a Christian to devote himself instead to religious interests for "the true

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<sup>20</sup>Lunger, Political Ethics, p. 149.

<sup>21</sup>"Christian Politics" MH Fourth Series, 7 (March, 1857): 174.

politician rises by descending to cater for the lusts and passions of men."<sup>22</sup>

### The Response of the Disciples to the Mexican War

The reaction of the American churches to the Mexican War was dependent on the geographic distribution of their membership, on their views concerning slavery and Manifest Destiny, and on the amount of anti-Catholic sentiment present. The strongest opposition to the war came in the Northeast while "no church with its members concentrated in the Southwest or with a strong stake there opposed the war."<sup>23</sup>

The outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846 became the first real test of the pacifism of the Disciples and triggered the first major discussion of the war question in the Disciples' periodicals. Alexander Campbell had long opposed war. In the first issue of the Christian Baptist in 1823 he wrote:

And stranger still see, the Christian general,  
with his ten thousand soldiers, and his chaplain  
at his elbow, preaching as he says, the gospel of  
good will among men; and hear him exhort his generals  
and his Christian warriors to go forth with the

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<sup>22</sup>"Incidents on a Tour of the South No. 1," MH n.s., 3 (January, 1839): 8. See also Money, "Church-State Relations," pp. 25-27.

<sup>23</sup>Charles Summer Ellsworth, "The American Churches and the Mexican War," American Historical Review 45 (June, 1940): 318, 323, 326; see also Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 140.

Bible in one hand and the sword in the other, to fight the battles of God and their country; praying that the Lord would cause them to fight valiantly, and render their efforts successful in making as many widows and orphans as will afford sufficient opportunity for others to manifest the purity of their religion by taking care of them!!<sup>24</sup>

In 1846 Campbell wrote an article against war in general but refused specifically to condemn the Mexican War. After dismissing various justifications for war, he pointed out that the teachings of Jesus, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount, opposed war: "If he would not have any of them to render evil for evil, and if he pronounced the highest honor and blessing on the peace-makers, who can imagine that he could be a patron of war!"<sup>25</sup>

Campbell's most famous statement on this issue was before a meeting of the Wheeling Lyceum in Virginia in 1848 when he strongly declared his beliefs on the evils of war. Wars, he said, have always been fought for selfish motives and "not one for defense alone." To him "war is not now, nor was it ever, a process of justice . . . it is either a mere game of chance, or a violent outrage of the strong against the weak." Moreover, the men who fight wars do not make wars, thus

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<sup>24</sup>"The Christian Religion," Christian Baptist 1 (August 3, 1823): 8.

<sup>25</sup>"War No. 1," MH Third Series 3 (November, 1846): 638-639, 641.

those who are innocent as far as beginning the wars suffer the consequences. Wars, he concludes, result from men's lusts and evil passions and Christian precepts "positively inhibit war."<sup>26</sup>

Campbell's refusal to condemn the Mexican War specifically weakened the impact of these statements. Harrell attributes this refusal to condemn the war to Campbell's moderate views on slavery, his millennial confidence in the destiny of Protestant America, and his attempt to keep sectional issues out of the church.<sup>27</sup>

The various periodicals of the Disciples reflected the division of opinion on this question as they argued both for and against the war. Perhaps the most significant impact of the war was the two-year debate on the issue between two prominent Ohio preachers, George Pow and the pacifist Benjamin U. Watkins in the Gospel Proclamation. Practically every argument used for or against participation in war for the remainder of the nineteenth century was brought out in this debate.<sup>28</sup>

Tolbert Fanning, the influential Middle Tennessee preacher, opposed the Mexican War because it was against

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<sup>26</sup>"Address on War," MH Third Series 7 (July, 1848): 376-377, 383.

<sup>27</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 141n.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

the spirit of Christianity. He believed that war was "unsuited to civil governments and opposed in all its bearing, to the Christian religion."<sup>29</sup> During the war, he denied that Christians, nation, church or individuals had any "divine authority for engaging in war, offensive or defensive."<sup>30</sup>

The Mexican War period showed that the Disciples of Christ were divided on the issue of pacifism. Furthermore, the issue was not given major importance during the war and was not of lasting concern once the war was over. As the events leading to the Civil War occurred, the Disciples remained unsettled and unsure on the issue. However, almost all of their leaders were moderate pacifists due to the influence of Stone and Campbell. These preachers focused on their disdain for the affairs of the world, and their emphasis was upon New Testament primitivism. Opposed to them were those preachers just as ready to accept the war with Mexico as a means of fulfilling the millennial destiny of Protestant Anglo-Saxon America.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>"Gymnastic Exercises in College," Christian Review 2 (June, 1845): 127, quoted in West, Search for the Ancient Order, 1:334.

<sup>30</sup>Quoted by F. D. Srygley, "From the Papers," GA 37 (September 26, 1895): 609.

<sup>31</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 144.

### The Disciples of Christ and the Civil War

The Civil War tested the unity of the Disciples of Christ and determined the future direction of the church. In addition, it was a test for the conscience of the individual Disciple as to what role he would play in the war.<sup>32</sup> As the war approached, many Disciples continued to adhere to the pacifist stand of the leaders of the Disciples while others joined in the preparations for war. The Disciples' fellowship was divided into "theoretical pacifists, practical neutralists, and militant Northern and Southern war hawks." Which group was most influential cannot be determined, but while many of the preachers North and South were urging non-participation, thousands of Disciples in both sections were enlisting in the armies.<sup>33</sup>

For almost all of 1860, the religious journals of the Disciples remained silent on the conflict, but by 1861 editors were publishing appeals for moderation and urging unity above all else. In June, 1861, Alexander Campbell urged Christians to avoid the war for the Christian is "not permitted to redress his wrongs by taking vengeance upon the wrong-doer--he is to commit his cause to Him . . .

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>33</sup>Money, "Church-State Relations," p. 32.



to whom vengeance belongs." The dispute, Campbell said, was an honest difference of opinion concerning the rights and powers of governments over its citizens and the grievance should be settled without war. No true Christian, Campbell states, "shall be found in the ranks of so unholy a warfare" but rather should "be peaceable and gentle towards all men."<sup>34</sup>

Campbell in this same issue of the Millennial Harbinger gave a stinging rebuke to those who were advocating war:

Civilized America! civilized United States! Boasting of a humane and Christian paternity and fraternity, unsheathing your swords, discharging your cannon, boasting of your heathen brutality, gluttonously satiating your furious appetites for fraternal blood, caps the climax of all human inconsistencies inscribed on the blurred and moth eaten pages of time in all its records.<sup>35</sup>

In the Gospel Advocate, W. H. Goodloe lamented the fact that the Disciples of Christ were as deeply involved as others in the political excitement. This zeal, Goodloe wrote, if directed towards evangelization would convert the whole country in a few years. Instead, Christians were involved in talk of war demonstrating

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<sup>34</sup>"The Spirit of War," MH Fifth Series, 4 (June, 1861): 338-339.

<sup>35</sup>"Wars and Rumors of Wars," MH Fifth Series, 4 (June, 1861): 344.

that "Christians are more under the dominion of the prince of this world than the dominion of Christ."<sup>36</sup>

John W. McGarvey, the respected scholar and preacher, wrote in the American Christian Review in April, 1861, that he would not change his feelings toward his brethren whether he remained with the Union or went with the Confederacy. Furthermore, if war did come, he would make every effort to keep his fellow Disciples from joining the war, even though the civil and military leaders might consider this act treason. He closed the article with the statement of his belief: "But I would rather, ten thousand times, be killed for refusing to fight, than to fall in battle, or to come home victorious with the blood of my brethren on my hands."<sup>37</sup>

After fighting began, the most urgent appeal for non-participation came from McGarvey and thirteen other preachers from Missouri. They signed a circular urging all Christians to avoid the conflict because the war could not be justified from New Testament teaching. In addition, the circular said that participation would destroy the unity of the church and the religious character

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<sup>36</sup>"The Government of Caesar," GA 7 (February, 1861): 53-54.

<sup>37</sup>Quoted in Joseph Franklin and J. A. Headington The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin (St. Louis: John Burns Publisher, 1879), pp. 286-287.

of the participants. Christians instead of serving in the war should study "the things which make for peace, and those by which one may edify another."<sup>38</sup>

In the forefront of those who conscientiously objected to the war was Tolbert Fanning of Nashville, Tennessee, the founder of Franklin College and editor of the Gospel Advocate. He had consistently opposed war over the years, especially the involvement in the Mexican War. In the 1840s and 1850s he, more than any other man, trained the Disciples preachers that dominated the church in Tennessee and the Upper South for the next fifty years.<sup>39</sup>

On a speaking tour of the Deep South in late 1860, Fanning noted the war excitement throughout the region. In Jackson, Mississippi, the state legislature was debating secession; and Fanning found much excitement about the issue. Where large crowds had come to hear him on a tour some years earlier; now, because of the political turmoil, only small crowds attended. T. W. Caskey, a veteran gospel preacher, was described by Fanning as "cumbered by much serving in mystic temples and the political arena." In Montgomery, Alabama, he found similar excitement while in Georgia he found the minister

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<sup>38</sup>"Circular from Missouri," MH Fifth Series 4 (October, 1861): 583-584.

<sup>39</sup>Harrell, "Disciples of Christ Pacifism," pp. 266-267.

A. G. Thomas with "a feather in his hat and a glittering sword in his right hand." Fanning expressed doubt that Thomas would be able to hold the sword of Georgia in one hand and the sword of the spirit in the other.<sup>40</sup>

In February, 1861, Fanning appealed for Christians to pursue an enlightened and prudent line of policy in contrast to those unwise and cruel political leaders who had raised a storm they could not control. He condemned preachers in both the North and the South who were adding to the turmoil by advocating participation in the war. Fanning's purpose was "to labor to satisfy Christians that they are not to settle controversies by the sword."<sup>41</sup> He, like Alexander Campbell, attributed the war to "madness" and saw it as God's punishment. At one point he wrote: "we have been proud, extravagant, self-willed; Oh! we have offended our creator and kindest benefactor." He appealed for an end to the conflict by an application of Christian principles.<sup>42</sup>

In July, 1861, Fanning wrote that while all the other denominations were supporting the war, not all the Disciples were. He estimated that only one-fourth

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<sup>40</sup>"Tour Through Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Georgia," GA 7 (February, 1861): 37-39.

<sup>41</sup>"Duty of the Christian in Reference to the Political Crusade," GA 7 (February, 1861): 35-37.

<sup>42</sup>"Christian Advice," GA 7 (May, 1861): 138-139, 178.

of the Northern Disciples and one-third of the Southern Disciples supported the war. Fanning interpreted these figures to mean that two-thirds to three-fourths of the Disciples had not chosen sides in the conflict.<sup>43</sup>

Other editors were also speaking out against the war. In June, 1861, Fanning reprinted two articles in the Gospel Advocate from other religious papers which expressed thoughts and fears similar to his. One of these was Alexander Chatterton from Davenport, Iowa, the editor of the Evangelist. Chatterton wrote in May, 1861, of the "Perilous Times" when the "spirit of war would enter the churches and Christians would thirst for the blood of their countrymen."<sup>44</sup>

Reports also came from the North of political excitement hindering the cause of Christ. On a tour in the North, Alexander Campbell and Isaac Errett, the associate editor of the Millennial Harbinger, reported much turmoil. Later, during a fund-raising tour for Bethany College, Errett found little success because of the rising bitterness between the North and South.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>"Suitable Labor for Christians in these Perilous Times," GA 7 (July, 1861): 282. No statistics are available to verify the accuracy of Fanning's statement.

<sup>44</sup>"The Views and Exhortations of Christian Editors," GA 7 (June, 1861): 140.

<sup>45</sup>Earl West, Search for the Ancient Order 1: 322-323.

A moderate stand was taken by Jacob Creath, Jr., a pioneer preacher from Missouri, who urged Christians not to volunteer for service. If a Christian were called to serve, he--as an individual--should search his conscience as to whether he should serve. He appealed for Northern brethren to work for peace because "there must be some Christians in the North." He stated that the scriptures against murder would induce him to be killed rather than to go to war and kill another man.<sup>46</sup>

Benjamin Franklin of Indiana--a well known preacher and the editor of the influential American Christian Review--was a pacifist before the war began and maintained this position throughout the conflict. He stood squarely against Christians going to war:

"We will not take up arms against, fight and kill the brethren we have labored for twenty-five years to bring into the Kingdom of God . . . we will not kill or encourage others to kill, or fight the brethren."<sup>47</sup>

Franklin refused to allow the Review to become politically involved, though there was much pressure on him to do so. He excluded the topic of the war completely from the Review, even though the circulation of his

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<sup>46</sup>"Should Christians Go to War?" MH Fifth Series 4 (October, 1861): 590.

<sup>47</sup>Franklin and Headington, The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin, p. 287.

journal was cut in half, and there were threats against him because of his anti-war stand.<sup>48</sup>

However, not all Disciples took the pacifist position of non-participation in the war. B. W. Johnson of Illinois, a noted preacher, held the position that Christians had dual responsibilities, to God and to country. Though he personally deplored war, he believed that at times it was necessary to guarantee peace in an unjust world. Since Christians share such benefits from the government, there is a responsibility to help maintain it. To refuse to do so makes one an "incubus to his country." As a member of both the kingdom of Caesar and God, the Christian must fight for both of them.<sup>49</sup>

In both North and South other Disciples caught the war fever. Preachers left their pulpits to join the army while colleges were forced to close their doors because so many of their students enlisted. Both Alexander Campbell, Jr. and Barton W. Stone, Jr. joined the Confederate calvary. James A. Garfield, a former Disciples preacher and then president of Western Eclectic Institute of Hiram, Ohio, joined the Union Army, taking most of his

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 289; see also Ottis L. Castleberry, They Heard Him Gladly (n.p.; Old Paths Publishing Company, 1963), pp. 23-24.

<sup>49</sup> "Should Christians Go to War?" MH Fifth Series 4 (October, 1861): 586-587.

students with him. His regiment, the Forty-Second Ohio, was said to have been composed almost entirely of Disciples.

Disciples preachers served as chaplains for both sides. On the Union side noted chaplains included Dr. W. H. Hopson and Isaac Errett. T. W. Caskey and B. F. Hall were noted ministers who served as chaplains for the Confederacy.<sup>50</sup>

William T. Moore, the minister of the Christian Church at Frankfort, Kentucky, influenced members of the Kentucky Legislature to vote against secession through a sermon, "The Duty of Christians in the Present Crisis." Many members of the legislature were members of his church and just before the vote for secession, he preached this sermon, leading some undecided legislators to vote against secession. Later this is said to have saved Kentucky for the Union. His professed motive was not political but to avoid destroying the unity of the Disciples.<sup>51</sup>

Though some Northern Disciples such as Benjamin Franklin maintained their pacifist stand, the primary areas of pacifist sentiment were found in the Upper South states of Tennessee, West Virginia, Kentucky,

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<sup>50</sup> Murch, Christians Only, pp. 152-153; Herman A. Norton, Tennessee Christians (Nashville, Tennessee: Reed and Company, 1971), pp. 92-93.

<sup>51</sup> "The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century," p. 617.



and Missouri. Herman A. Norton, the historian of the Disciples in Tennessee, lists three initial responses to the war among Tennessee disciples.

First, there were those who actively supported and participated in the war. Several prominent Tennessee Disciples served as soldiers or chaplains in the Confederate army. Pierce Butler Anderson, a former faculty member of Franklin College, was killed early in the war.<sup>52</sup> T. B. Larimore, a future leader of the Disciples, fought at Shiloh.<sup>53</sup>

Barton W. Stone, Jr., Dr. Benjamin F. Hall, and Thomas W. Caskey were enthusiastic supporters of the Confederacy with Tennessee connections. Each of these men had at one time preached for the Disciples church in Memphis. Stone served as a Confederate line officer and won promotion to regimental commander.<sup>54</sup> Hall served as chaplain in Stone's regiment. He carried a rifle and expressed a desire to "bag as many [Yankees] as possible." He believed true religion could be found only in the Confederacy, and all Yankees were infidels.

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<sup>52</sup>James R. Wilburn, The Hazard of the Die: Tolbert Fanning and the Restoration Movement (Austin, Texas: Sweet Publishing Company, 1969), p. 212.

<sup>53</sup>Norton, Tennessee Christians, p. 95.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 92-93.

He once wished that all Yankees were gathered upon one vast platform with a magazine of gunpowder underneath so that he could "apply the match to hurl them all into eternity."<sup>55</sup> The chaplain, Thomas W. Caskey, known as the "fighting parson," also became involved in fighting during the war.<sup>56</sup>

In 1865, T. S. Linsley, from Jackson County, Tennessee, reported the war had caused many Disciples to become unfaithful. The only congregation meeting regularly in Jackson County was Philomath where Linsley attended. He wrote that a majority of the ministers in that county had been caught up in the war and political strife. They had taught Christians to participate, but many of them had repented of this and were withdrawing from the conflict.<sup>57</sup>

Second, a majority of Disciples attempted to operate as usual, ignoring the political and military situation. Phillip S. Fall, though a pacifist, worked quietly through the war to build up his church in Nashville. The church

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<sup>55</sup>William Baxter, Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove; or Scenes and Incidents of the War in Arkansas (Cincinnati: Poe and Hitchcock, 1864), pp. 114-116, quoted in Norton, Tennessee Christians, pp. 93-94.

<sup>56</sup>Norton, Tennessee Christians, p. 94.

<sup>57</sup>"Good News From Our Correspondents," MH 36 (February, 1865): 96.

had a steady growth during the war years. Fall was the only prominent Nashville minister not forced to take a loyalty oath to the Union during the period of military rule.<sup>58</sup>

Jesse L. Sewell, an evangelist from Southern Middle Tennessee, reported in 1866 that he had avoided involvement in the war and had preached his regular appointments without harm or hindrance. During the war years he had baptized about 280 persons.<sup>59</sup> In early 1866, R. B. Trimble wrote from Spring Hill that the congregations in Maury County were "prosperous and healthy."<sup>60</sup>

A. E. Myers wrote to the Millennial Harbinger from McMinnville, Tennessee that the Disciples in that area had suffered frequent interruptions during the war. A few congregations had met weekly while those that had been disrupted were worshipping again, though some not regularly.<sup>61</sup>

In 1864, J. F. Brown wrote from West Tennessee that most of the brethren were united and avoiding political

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<sup>58</sup>Norton, Tennessee Christians, p. 99; David Lipscomb, "Our Laborers in Tennessee," GA 8 (February 6, 1866): 85.

<sup>59</sup>"Correspondence," GA 8 (July 3, 1866): 424.

<sup>60</sup>"Correspondence," GA 8 (February 13, 1866): 108.

<sup>61</sup>"Good Word From Our Correspondents," MH 38 (March, 1867): 150.

strife by submitting to the rule of Federal authorities. West Tennessee Disciples seemed to have handled problems of the war years reasonably well. Many who had supported the war initially had gone back to their normal routine.<sup>62</sup> Norton states that the percentage of churches that closed during the war years was no greater than in peacetime. Complacency more than war was the cause of the failure of churches to continue.<sup>63</sup>

A third position was that of an aggressive pacifism by a few congregations, led by the preachers Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb.<sup>64</sup>

Early in the war, this pacifist element declared that Christians should be exempt from military duty, and they worked to keep conscientious objectors out of either army. A document asking for an exemption from military service was drawn up at Beech Grove in Williamson County, Tennessee, in November, 1862, by representatives from 10 to 15 congregations. This petition

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<sup>62</sup>"Good Word From Our Correspondents," MH, 5th Series, 7 (April, 1864): 187-188.

<sup>63</sup>Norton, Tennessee Christians, p. 101.

<sup>64</sup>Norton, Tennessee Christians, pp. 95-96, 98, 101-103; Harrell, "Disciples of Christ Pacifism," pp. 267-268.

was sent to Confederate President Davis through a Confederate officer.<sup>65</sup> When Nashville was occupied by Federal troops in April, 1862, the petition, after appropriate changes, was sent to President Lincoln and the Federal authorities in Nashville.<sup>66</sup>

Another crisis faced the pacifist Disciples when Andrew Johnson became military governor. First, he enforced the requirement for a loyalty oath from Tennesseans. Tolbert Fanning was arrested for refusing to take the required oath of allegiance to the federal government. Although he was not imprisoned, he had his property confiscated and his buildings burned. Second, in the spring of 1863, Governor Johnson began enforcing the Draft Act of 1863 in Tennessee. These petitions, with an additional appeal to Johnson, were taken to Nashville. David Lipscomb, R. B. Trimble, and E. G. Sewell, ministers from Middle Tennessee, were chosen as delegates to approach Governor Johnson to seek an exemption for Disciples who objected to military service. Johnson hesitated at first to allow any exemptions, but when he was shown

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<sup>65</sup>Norton, Tennessee Christians, p. 104; for the text of the letter see Allen C. Isbell, War and Conscience (Abilene, Texas: Biblical Research Press, 1966), pp. 200-201.

<sup>66</sup>Isbell, War and Conscience, p. 202.

constitutional grounds that allowed such an exemption, he directed that the conscription order not be enforced on conscientious objectors. These petitions are credited with gaining the release of pacifist Disciples from both armies and preventing their draft by Federal officials.<sup>67</sup>

As the war continued, the various congregations began to feel its effects. Some divided while others became discouraged and ceased to meet. Generally, membership dwindled because so many men were taken into the armies, and the war excitement took the minds of the people from religion. There were distractions and interruptions from soldiers of both armies, and always citizens feared the marauding bands of men that wandered the countryside.<sup>68</sup>

The greatest impact of the war years upon the Disciples resulted from the actions of the American Christian Missionary Society. Formed in 1849 to coordinate mission work, the Society was the only national organization among the Disciples. However, on the eve of the war radical abolitionists had defected and organized the

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<sup>67</sup>Earl West, The Life and Times of David Lipscomb (Henderson, Tennessee: Religious Book Service, 1954), pp. 78-79; David Lipscomb, "The Church and World Powers, No. 11," GA 8 (July 3, 1866): 418-419; "The Church and World Powers, No. 12," GA 8 (July 24, 1866): 467; E. G. Sewell, "Reminiscences of the Civil War Again," GA 49 (July 18, 1907): 456.

<sup>68</sup>Sewell, "Reminiscences," p. 456.

Christian Missionary Society. This defection and a lack of support from many influential church leaders was a threat to the effectiveness of the older organization.<sup>69</sup>

Because of the war, only delegates from the North and border states were present at the October, 1861, meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio. Among the delegates were several officers of the Union Army, including Colonel James A. Garfield in full uniform. Pressure was exerted on the delegates from Northern sympathizers, the members of the abolitionist Christian Missionary Society, and the secular newspapers. They made a concerted effort to convince the Disciples to get in step with the other Northern denominations who were strongly supporting the Union war effort.<sup>70</sup>

On the last day of the convention an Ohio delegate entered the following resolution:

Resolved that we deeply sympathize with the loyal and patriotic in our country, in the present efforts to sustain the government of the United States, and we feel it our duty as Christians to ask our brethren to do all in their power to sustain the proper and constitutional authorities of the Union.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, pp. 156-157.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 157-158.

<sup>71</sup>Isbell, War and Conscience, p. 205.

David S. Burnet objected to the resolution because it was a political resolution not connected to the stated purpose of the Society, to preach the gospel. Though the presiding officer, Isaac Errett, overruled Burnet, the appeal of Errett's ruling was sustained by the delegates. Errett then called a recess for a mass meeting; Burnet was called to the chair; and after a debate, the delegates passed the resolution as "individuals," not as delegates of the Society. The resolution did not counter all the pressure brought to bear on the Society. The resolution was too mild to appease the Unionists, the abolitionist Christian Missionary Society did not disband, and the secular press continued to attack the loyalty of the Society.<sup>72</sup> None of the factions of the church was satisfied with the resolutions: the neutral Disciples thought the resolutions were politically motivated and extra-legal, while the Northern Radicals believed the resolution had not gone far enough. Benjamin Franklin led a neutralist attack against the resolution in the American Christian Review, calling the meeting a farce.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Money, "Church-State Relations," pp. 206-207; Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, pp. 158-159; Isbell, War and Conscience, pp. 207-208.

<sup>73</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian American, p. 160.



The Southern response to this resolution was resentment, suspicion, and distrust toward the "useless, senseless and politically motivated resolutions."<sup>74</sup> Tolbert Fanning was angry and heartbroken for the participants "approving most heartily the wholesale murder" of their own brethren, and in enforcing political opinion with the sword. The delegates to the meeting could be considered "monsters in intention, if not in deed."<sup>75</sup> There was hardly a member of the church in Tennessee, according to Norton, who did not share Fanning's sentiment, while many thought his response was rather tame.<sup>76</sup>

Through 1862 moderate Disciples kept the issue out of the national meetings; but in October, 1863 the Society, meeting again in Cincinnati, reconsidered the issue. Three strongly worded resolutions were presented. After a heated debate, the second resolution passed with several negative votes. It stated:

Resolved, that we tender our sympathies to our brave and noble soldiers in the field who are defending us from the attempts of armed traitors to overthrow our government, and also to those bereaved and rendered desolate by the ravages of war.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Norton, Tennessee Christians, p. 105.

<sup>75</sup>"Ministers of Peace in the World's Conflicts," GA 7 (November, 1861): 347-348.

<sup>76</sup>Norton, Tennessee Christians, p. 105.

<sup>77</sup>Isbell, War and Conscience, p. 209; Norton, Tennessee Christians, p. 107; Murch, Christians Only, p. 154.

The passage of this resolution meant that moderates on the war issue had been outvoted and that control of the Society was in the hands of Northern sympathizers and their supporters in the border states.

Reaction to the pro-war resolution was swift and angry. Benjamin Franklin wrote: "We do not feel as full of hope for the Society as we have done on some former occasions." He predicted that the Society had almost certainly ruined its future usefulness in the South and border areas.<sup>78</sup> John W. McGarvey, of Lexington, Kentucky, made a harsh attack upon the Society. By its action, it had estranged a large segment of the brotherhood, and it would be a "source of untold trouble" if it continued to exist. He concluded: "I have judged the American Christian Missionary Society, and have decided for myself, that it should now cease to exist."<sup>79</sup> Although he opposed the resolution, Moses E. Lard, the pacifist editor of Lard's Quarterly, was more moderate in his view. He believed that the Society should be

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<sup>78</sup>"The General Missionary Meeting," American Christian Review 6 (November 10, 1863): 178, quoted in Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 164.

<sup>79</sup>"Missionary Society," American Christian Quarterly Review 2 (1863): 342-345, quoted in Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 164.

given one more chance to prove itself worthy of brotherhood trust.<sup>80</sup>

In the pacifist stronghold of Tennessee, the reaction was strong. David Lipscomb stated that a number of Disciples joined the Confederate army as a result of the resolution. Also he believed that Northern Disciples were encouraged to enter the Federal Army.<sup>81</sup> Norton states that "Had there been an organized structure that would have allowed for North and South division of the Christian Church, it would certainly have been implemented at this point." Even calmer heads began to recognize the power of an extracongregational missionary society and its potential for abuse for political purposes.<sup>82</sup>

The war ended with the two pro-Union resolutions vivid and fresh in the minds of those who had held to the pacifist tradition. Only a minority of the Disciples had chosen to maintain the pacifism of the early leaders, severely testing both the pacifist teachings and the unity of the church.

Pressures on the Northern Disciples were great as the more radical pro-war sympathizers and the secular

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<sup>80</sup>Humble, "Missionary Society," p. 214.

<sup>81</sup>"I Did Wrong," GA 8 (March 13, 1866): 171.

<sup>82</sup>Norton, Tennessee Christians, pp. 107-108.

press pushed the only visible national organization of the Disciples to take a pro-war stand like the other churches. Pressures were equally great on the Southern Disciples who, if they opposed the war, were called traitors and disloyal to the Southern cause. Further, when the Union armies occupied large areas of the South, those Disciples who were pacifists were then accused of disloyalty to the Union. The example of many Disciples in the war made it very difficult to choose not to serve. The spirit of the times and the appeal of the Southern "Cause" led a majority of the Southern Disciples to reject pacifism.

The actions of the Disciples during the war, both North and South, made it nearly impossible for the church in these regions to reunite on the same basis as before the war. The failure of pacifism in both the North and the South had dire consequences for the future unity of the church.

#### Application: The Divisive Effects of the Civil War

The Civil War was a traumatic experience for the American people in general, but especially for certain groups. The divisions of families, churches, and the nation were heart-rending actions that left scars remaining to the present. Historians traditionally have dealt

with the effect of the war upon social, economic, and political developments but have often neglected the effects on the ordinary citizen as he reacted to the events around him.

A relevant study for students of the Civil War era is how a particular church, the Disciples of Christ, reacted to the national crisis. Such a study shows: (1) the role of the Disciples of Christ and their leaders in the war years, (2) how loyalty to the cause of one's region overrode the sense of brotherhood and unity of the church; (3) the effects of the war upon those who dissented from the general spirit of the times and how this dissent was dealt with, both officially and unofficially; (4) how unwise political actions by a religious organization, the American Christian Missionary Society, had far reaching political and religious results, and (5) how a society and its values affect the value systems of religious groups.

For an American History Survey, such a study would provide information to illustrate the role political and cultural characteristics play in the religions of the people. Also several topics for further research would be presented for students in upper level courses.

Any student on any level would arrive at a better understanding of the divisive effects of the war down to the local community.

For a course in religious history, an analysis of the influence of social, cultural, economic, and political factors upon religious development would be very useful. The issues presented by this study provide ample material for students to research further and gain a deeper insight into understanding the total culture of this period.

## Chapter 3

### PACIFISM IN THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST (1866-1890)

#### The Southern Disciples in 1866

The Civil War left the South with a shattered dream of political independence, an impoverished people amid a wrecked economy, and a society torn apart by defeat. The physical, political, and emotional scars of war would not heal for many years. The war and its aftermath determined the future direction of the South economically, politically, and religiously. Disciples of Christ were affected by these events in the same way as other Southern religious groups. The Civil War was a turning point because conditions in the South affected the attitude of the southern Disciples toward northern Disciples. Northern and southern Disciples moved apart in their interpretation of the principles of the Restoration Movement.

Suffering and the threat of starvation hung over the areas of the South where the war had been fought. Farms had been stripped of work animals, rail fences had been torn down and used as firewood, either crops were destroyed or the fields could not be planted, or

farmers had no money to buy seed if their land were usable. Meeting the needs of those who were suffering was a major problem in the South.

Military defeat, though hard to accept, quickly became a reality. Soon the "Lost Cause" of the Confederacy assumed a religious dimension that dominated southern religion for decades. Southern Protestants regarded themselves as God's "chosen people" and their churches had to be the purest anywhere. The Protestant clergy assumed an unchallenged position of influence over all aspects of southern life. A southern "puritanism" was expressed through the passage of blue laws, laws restricting gambling, saloons, the theater, and prize fights. The 1880s brought a burst of prohibition activity. However, the classic northern Social Gospel issues such as rights of labor, the poor, and blacks were neglected.<sup>1</sup>

Religion had been disrupted during the early war years, but by 1865 a renewed interest in religious matters was developing. This revival was attributed to defeat and the loss of earthly possessions.<sup>2</sup> Revivalistic fervor

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Reagan Wilson, Baptized by Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), pp. 7-8; C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South: 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), pp. 169-171.

<sup>2</sup>David Lipscomb, "The South as a Field of Religious Labor," GA 8 (January 30, 1866): 65; E. G. Sewell, "Reminiscences," p. 424.



was expressed through camp meetings and numerous conversions to the evangelical churches. In general, southern religion remained orthodox in doctrine and evangelical in its outreach.<sup>3</sup>

The sectional division between northern and southern Protestant churches continued in the post-war years. Attempts by northern churches during Reconstruction to force reunion on the southern churches were bitterly resisted. The attitude of the southern church leaders, caught up in the "Lost Cause," made the southern churches centers of resistance to the northern culture.<sup>4</sup>

Southern Disciples of Christ shared the tension toward their northern brethren. Their conservative views also became entangled with the "Lost Cause" and southern animosity toward the North. Southern Disciples preachers expressed their views by contrasting the alleged higher moral order of the South with the supposed lax moral standards of the North. Also such actions as the introduction of the organ in Disciples churches were regarded by conservatives as "carpetbagger" innovations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 716; Woodward, Origins, p. 170; Wilson, Baptized by Blood, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Robert T. Handy, A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 66-69.

<sup>5</sup>Harrell, "Disciples of Christ and Social Force," pp. 36-37; Earl West, "The Crisis of the Restoration Movement: 1865-1910," Lectures Delivered at the University Christian Center, Oxford, Mississippi, March 1-2, 1974, pp. 51-54.

One expression of the southern attitude among the Disciples was the upsurge in pacifism. The only center of Disciples pacifism to survive the Civil War was located among the conservatives of the Upper South. Pacifist sentiment was scattered throughout other areas. Pacifist Disciples included Carroll Kendrick of Texas, B. F. Manire of Mississippi, John T. Walsh in North Carolina, Justus M. Barnes of Alabama, and William Baxter in Arkansas. Some northern preachers remained pacifist through the war.<sup>6</sup> The war issue was a serious subject to many of the pacifists because they had suffered indignities during the war and were eager to reprimand those who had participated in the war.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, northern Disciples who had taken an active part in the war, believing it to be a righteous cause, felt no remorse or guilt. Many were still angry toward the southern rebels. Also they became irritated at the self-righteousness of the southern pacifists. Northern Disciples were unimpressed by this new emphasis on pacifism and accounted for most of it as sympathy for the lost cause of the Confederacy.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 151-152.

<sup>7</sup>David Lipscomb, "I Did Wrong," GA 8 (March 13, 1866): 170-171.

<sup>8</sup>Harrell, "Disciples of Christ and Social Force," p. 87; Isaac Errett, "Religion and Politics," Christian Standard 1 (October 20, 1866): 228 hereafter referred to as CS.

According to David Harrell, David Lipscomb's ideas became influential because of the post-war southern attitude toward pacifism. The development of a southern identity was caused, at least partly, by the belief that fighting the Civil War had been wrong. Some southerners believed that the war had been a mistake and defeat was God's punishment for the sins of slavery. Also, it was God's way of showing his people that they must stand apart from worldly affairs. The "theology of separation from the world found ready listeners in the post war South" as Disciples advocated a Biblical literalism that defended the "Lost Cause" and opposed war as well as political and social activism.<sup>9</sup>

From their beginning, Disciples were divided on the issue of the Christian's relationship to political activity and war. Three views existed on this question prior to the Civil War. An extremely conservative and sectarian element believed that Christians could not participate in civil government, either as voters, candidates for office, or as soldiers. Benjamin U. Watkins, James J.

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<sup>9</sup>David Edwin Harrell, "From Consent to Dissent: The Emergence of the Churches of Christ in America," Restoration Quarterly 19 (2nd Quarter, 1976): 102; David Lipscomb, "God Uses the Evil as Well as the Good," GA 22 (September 30, 1880): 634.

Trott and Barton W. Stone were among the preachers who held this position.<sup>10</sup>

On the other extreme were those who believed that the Christian had fundamental obligations to the government. The Christian should encourage the use of Christian principles to solve the problems of the nation. If control of government were left in the hands of non-Christians, there was a danger that liberties might be lost. The slavery debate and the Civil War forced many Disciples into this position.<sup>11</sup>

A majority of Disciples prior to the Civil War had moderate views on this issue. They limited the involvement of the church itself in social or political agitation. They had an aversion to "party politics" but believed that the individual Christian should work to improve society.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of the war, these three views remained. The separatist position, exemplified by David Lipscomb, limited the connection with civil government. A Christian could not engage in war or political activity, and Christian teachers could not teach of war or politics. The Christian

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<sup>10</sup>Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, pp. 54-55.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

was to pay his taxes and live in quiet, cheerful submission to his government as long as God's law was not violated.<sup>13</sup>

The other extreme was represented by the Christian Standard, published in Cincinnati, Ohio. Isaac Errett, the editor of the Christian Standard, placed office holding and voting in the realm of opinion. He believed that non-participation in government would surrender control of the political system to the unbelieving. A Christian should accept the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship and act politically under a sense of responsibility to Christ. Religion should embrace the entire life; and Christian principles should be applied to all business, social, and political relations.<sup>14</sup>

A. R. Benton, the president of Northwestern Christian College at Indianapolis, Indiana, wrote a series of articles in the Christian Standard in 1866, justifying full participation by Christians in all political action, including war. He argued that any right and responsibility of citizenship applied equally to the Christian and non-Christian. When war became necessary for a government to preserve its life, a Christian could serve as a soldier for his government. A Christian was a subject of Caesar

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<sup>13</sup>David Lipscomb, "An Explanation," GA 8 (July 3, 1866): 427-428.

<sup>14</sup>"Religion and Politics," CS I (September 29, 1866): 204; (October 6, 1866): 212; (October 20, 1866): 228.

as well as God for government was ordained of God. Government was God's means of punishing nations for national crimes and advancing civilization by destroying moral abuses.<sup>15</sup>

The moderate view, losing ground in the North to the activist view of Errett, was represented by Benjamin Franklin, editor of the American Christian Review. He believed that it was legitimate for a Christian to vote and hold office as an individual. But politics were to be kept out of the church and pulpit completely. Christian teachers were not to instruct Christians how to vote on any issue or how to conduct a political office.<sup>16</sup>

#### The Views of David Lipscomb

The leading spokesman for the separatist-pacifist view was David Lipscomb,<sup>17</sup> editor of the Gospel Advocate,

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<sup>15</sup>"Should Christians Go to War?" CS I (August 18, 1866): 153; (August 25, 1866): 161; (October 6, 1866): 209.

<sup>16</sup>Lipscomb, "An Explanation," p. 428; Franklin and Headington, Benjamin Franklin, pp. 288, 291, 292; J. A. Headington and Joseph Franklin, editors, A Book of Gems: or Choice Selections from the Writings of Benjamin Franklin (Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1960), pp. 160-165.

<sup>17</sup>Lipscomb was a student under Tolbert Fanning at Franklin College in Nashville, Tennessee. He came to agree with Fanning on many key issues, especially against war and for nonparticipation in civil governments. Lipscomb was a successful farmer, preacher and educator. He founded the Nashville Bible College, the forerunner of David Lipscomb College. His greatest influence was exerted through the Gospel Advocate which he edited for over fifty years.

based in Nashville, Tennessee. This journal resumed publication in 1866 and soon became the voice for the conservative beliefs of the southern Disciples. Lipscomb filled a unique and important role among the Disciples of Christ. In his fifty years as editor of the Gospel Advocate, he consolidated a large portion of the southern Disciples around his views on many issues.<sup>18</sup> Robert E. Hooper, a biographer of Lipscomb, credits much of the conservative thought of the twentieth century Churches of Christ to Lipscomb.<sup>19</sup>

Prior to the Civil War, Lipscomb had been optimistic about the American democratic system. He regarded the religion of the Americans as the force that shaped social and political action. Christianity had molded the development of American democracy. During the 1850s, Lipscomb was a Southern Whig. He admired the reform efforts of the Whigs and the leadership of such men as Daniel Webster.<sup>20</sup> However, he viewed with alarm the political divisions of the late 1850s. The strife between the North and South involving even professed Christians

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<sup>18</sup>West, David Lipscomb, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup>Robert E. Hooper, "The Political and Educational Ideas of David Lipscomb," (Ph. D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1965), p. 15.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, pp. 17, 19-21.

destroyed his optimism for the American political system, and he became pessimistic about man's ability to determine his own destiny through the political process.<sup>21</sup>

In the November, 1861, issue of the Gospel Advocate, just before it was forced to suspend operations, Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, and W. A. Rogers published an open letter to the southern Disciples. The letter appealed for faithfulness to God in spite of the war. The war was blamed on a failure of political leaders to respect the authority of God and churchmen who had "prostituted" themselves by supporting the agitation. The solution to the strife was to acknowledge the authority of God and "induce others to acknowledge His right to rule over them."<sup>22</sup>

Lipscomb's pacifist teaching and actions had a significant impact on the Middle Tennessee Disciples during the war years, leading to charges of disloyalty from both sides. He was also active in petitioning both Confederate and Federal authorities for exemption from military service for pacifist Disciples.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Robert E. Hooper, Crying in the Wilderness: A Biography of David Lipscomb (Nashville, Tennessee: David Lipscomb College, 1979), p. 76.

<sup>22</sup>"To the Disciples Scattered Throughout the Confederate States of America," GA 7 (November, 1861): 344-345.

<sup>23</sup>Robert E. Hooper, A Call to Remember (Nashville: The Gospel Advocate Company, 1977), pp. 46-47.



The Civil War served as a catalyst for Lipscomb's rethinking his ideas of the relation of the Christian to civil government. By the early days of the war, he had concluded that a Christian should sever all relations with political action of any kind.<sup>24</sup> Beginning in 1866, Lipscomb presented in depth his views on the relationship of the Christian to civil government. He believed that the issue of war and political involvement were interrelated. In the post-war years, he considered one of the greatest needs to be teaching the people the sinfulness of war and the proper relationship the Christian should have with the civil government.<sup>25</sup>

Lipscomb's views were influenced by the Anabaptist beliefs on the Christian and the state, passed through pioneer Disciples leaders like Barton W. Stone, Alexander Campbell, and especially Tolbert Fanning. Also, Lipscomb admired the writings of Menno Simons, the founder of the Mennonite church.<sup>26</sup> The Mennonites adhered to the following items of doctrine: only baptized adults were accepted as members; a Mennonite could not accept a

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<sup>24</sup>Hooper, "Political and Educational Ideas," pp. 37-38.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>26</sup>Hooper, Crying in the Wilderness, p. 111; see Bainton, "Left Wing of the Reformation," pp. 124-134; and Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 231.

government office, and a government official must resign before he would be accepted as a member; Mennonites opposed war or any use of force; they forbade the taking of oaths or confirming by an oath; and they opposed capital punishment. Lipscomb agreed with these points except he believed the state had the right of capital punishment. He felt that the Mennonites and similar groups were close to Christ's ideal of separation from the world.<sup>27</sup>

Tolbert Fanning, Lipscomb's teacher at Franklin College, in Nashville, Tennessee, believed in total separation of the Christian and state. Fanning had opposed any involvement in politics and had been a strong pacifist throughout his career. Fanning influenced Lipscomb as his teacher, a fellow minister and as co-editor of the Gospel Advocate from 1866 to 1867. Lipscomb's views coincided with Fanning's, though Lipscomb was more intense and actively taught them through the Gospel Advocate.<sup>28</sup>

Lipscomb's views were based on his belief that God had a special purpose in human history. Adam's fall

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<sup>27</sup>Hooper, "Political and Educational Ideas," p. 70; "Politics and Christianity," GA 15 (April 10, 1873): 340.

<sup>28</sup>Hooper, Crying in the Wilderness, p. 110; Harrell, Quest for a Christian America, p. 202.

from God had set in motion God's plan for the salvation of man and all subsequent history was an unfolding of this plan. Lipscomb believed that each major religious reform effort brought men closer to God and that eventually perfection could be reached when all men submitted to God's will. Perfection could not be achieved through worldly institutions; therefore, Christians must separate themselves from the world.<sup>29</sup> Lipscomb regarded God as the only rightful ruler and law-maker for man, and a failure to acknowledge God's authority was the cause of all evil. The remedy for evil was to learn and do God's will, trusting in Him to work out historical events as He saw fit. Since religion instructs man on every duty and relationship in life, "even in political affairs man should do only what God commanded him."<sup>30</sup>

Lipscomb taught that the Christian had several reasons for withdrawing from all political affairs. First, all civil governments originated from the Devil and were in rebellion against God. Nimrod established the first human government from which all subsequent governments have descended.<sup>31</sup> From the beginning the

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<sup>29</sup>Hooper, Crying in the Wilderness, pp. 111-112.

<sup>30</sup>David Lipscomb, Civil Government: Its Origin, Mission and Destiny (Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Pub. Co., 1889), p. iii; "All Authority is from God," GA 8 (January 1, 1866): 7.

<sup>31</sup>Genesis 10:8-10.

purpose of civil government was to "oppose, counteract, and displace the government of God on earth." Human government introduced into the world an organized form of rebellion, strife, and confusion among men.<sup>32</sup>

Second, a Christian must separate himself from civil governments because they were led by a spirit opposite that of God's people. Civil governments used the "substance, the time, and service of its subjects to enrich . . . to promote the grandeur and glory of the rulers." Alliances with civil governments drew men away from the government of God's rule. A Christian could not uphold his principles and preserve his Christian character while serving a civil government.<sup>33</sup>

Third, civil governments occupied themselves with war. He believed that, from the beginning, the chief occupation of government had been war. Lipscomb stated that "nine-tenths of the taxes paid by the human family have gone to preparing for, carrying on, or paying the expenses of war." Man's efforts to rule himself

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<sup>32</sup>"The Church of Christ and World Powers, No. 1," GA 8 (January 1, 1866): 30; Civil Government, pp. 7-10.

<sup>33</sup>"The Church of Christ and World Powers, No. 10," GA 8 (April 24, 1866): 257; Civil Government, pp. 18, 23, 39.

rather than to submit to the authority of God had caused all wars throughout human history.<sup>34</sup>

Fourth, when members of the church associated themselves with the world powers, the church lost its vitality. Lipscomb believed that the greatest weakness of the church in his day was the union of Christians with the kingdoms of the world. This cooperation destroyed the distinction of the church from the world. All the persecutions the church had faced had not weakened or corrupted the church as much as alliances with civil governments.<sup>35</sup>

Fifth, God had always intended for His people to be separate from the world around them. God had always had His own family. First, it was the heads of families, then the nation of Israel, and finally the church. The church included people from every nation and created from them a universal brotherhood of those who lived under God's authority. The "small stone" of Daniel 2 was Christianity and it would "break into pieces and destroy all earthly kingdoms, fill the whole

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<sup>34</sup>"The Church of Christ and World Powers, No. 3," GA 8 (February 13, 1866): 102; Civil Government, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup>"The Church of Christ and World Powers, No. 7," GA 8 (March 13, 1866): 165; Civil Government, p. 88.

earth, and stand forever."<sup>36</sup> Under the Jewish dispensation, the clearest principle of God was His people's "total, entire, and perpetual separation from all associations, alliances, and affiliations with those choosing to govern themselves, rather than let God govern them." Lipscomb said this example taught Christians to be a separate and distinct people.<sup>37</sup>

A sixth reason for Lipscomb's belief in separation from world affairs was the "higher calling" of the Christian. God used human governments as His agent in punishing evildoers. They performed those tasks which the church by its nature and purpose was not fitted to do. The individual Christian could not do what the church as a whole was forbidden to do.<sup>38</sup>

The belief that Christ's kingdom is "not of this world" and his followers are not to fight with physical weapons, made war abhorrent to the Christian. Lipscomb recalled the Civil War as a time when "strife, war, bloodshed, destruction, and desolation swept over our

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<sup>36</sup> "The Church of Christ and World Powers, No. 5," GA 8 (February 27, 1866): 131; Civil Government, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> "The Church of Christ and World Powers, No. 3," GA 8 (February 13, 1866): 105; "The Church of Christ and World Powers, No. 4," GA 8 (February 20, 1866): 116.

<sup>38</sup> "Responses to Brother Kendrick," GA 9 (August 8, 1867): 623, 625.

land, and the spectacle was presented of disciples of the Prince of Peace, with murderous weapons seeking the lives of their fellowmen."<sup>39</sup>

Seventh, God instructed the Christian fully through His Word how to conduct himself in any relationship of life, religious or secular, which it was lawful for him to enter. Yet nowhere in the Bible could Lipscomb find "one word or hint" as to how a Christian should conduct himself for voting or holding office. Therefore, the Christian lacked Biblical authority to support in any way any civil government.<sup>40</sup>

Lipscomb distinguished between a citizen and subject. A subject to a government was in passive submission and was required only to pay his taxes and live a quiet and peaceful life. The citizen exercised all the privileges and responsibilities of a full participation in political affairs. A citizen was obligated to carry out all the functions of the government, including fighting for the government. It was inconsistent to vote and hold political office and yet claim to be anti-political and anti-war. Lipscomb said: "if you are going to

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<sup>39</sup>"The Church of Christ and World Powers, No. 6,"  
GA 8 (March 6, 1866): 147; Civil Government, pp. iii-iv.

<sup>40</sup>"The Church of Christ and World Powers, No. 13,"  
GA 8 (November 13, 1866): 723.

share the honors and emoluments of the governments,  
be men and bear its burdens. There is no half-way ground."<sup>41</sup>

Lipscomb's view of the relationship of the Christian to civil government ruled out any military service by a Christian. To Lipscomb, the defeat of the South in the Civil War was providential. Through the defeat, God had proved that Southerners could not have a political nation. The defeat should be regarded as a divine call to find work and honor in a "higher, holier, heavenly nationality."<sup>42</sup>

Historians have found it difficult to measure the influence of David Lipscomb's views. He exerted a considerable influence on students at the Nashville Bible College. His views were given wide exposure through the Gospel Advocate in Tennessee, Texas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Georgia, and Alabama. Correspondence from Northern states to the Gospel Advocate indicates that he was read there also. The publication of his views in the book Civil Government widened his audience considerably.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>"Questions to the Editor," GA 10 (January 14, 1869): 29-30; Civil Government, p. iv.

<sup>42</sup>"Does God Take Part in the Conflicts of the Kingdoms of the World?," GA 8 (January 1, 1866): 24; see Martin E. Marty, Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America (New York: The Dial Press, 1970), p. 135 for this view of the Confederate defeat among other Southern churchmen.

<sup>43</sup>Money, "Church and State Relations," p. 40.



Although a majority of the southern conservatives did not accept Lipscomb's belief in total non-involvement, many did believe that the church should remain silent on politics and social reform. The majority of the Disciples continued to vote, a few held office, and many would serve in future wars. A few leaders of the Churches of Christ prior to 1945 strongly reflected Lipscomb's pacifism and reluctance to participate in political action. But within the Churches of Christ there was toleration for those with differing viewpoints and this issue was never made a test of fellowship.<sup>44</sup>

#### Other Pacifist Views in the South

Most major writers for the Gospel Advocate were pacifists. E. G. Sewell,<sup>45</sup> co-editor of the Gospel Advocate from 1870 to 1912, appealed to the higher law under Christ which elevated the war of God's servants from a physical to a spiritual plane. He believed that the religion of Christ was one of peace, and the Christian

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<sup>44</sup>West, David Lipscomb, pp. 110-111; Money, "Church and State Relations," pp. 40, 44; Hooper, Crying in the Wilderness, p. 120.

<sup>45</sup>E. G. Sewell was born in upper Middle Tennessee and was a graduate of Franklin College. Three brothers of Sewell were also noted preachers. After 1870, he exerted strong influence among the Churches of Christ as co-editor, with David Lipscomb, of the Gospel Advocate.

warfare was not against the lives of men but against their sins.<sup>46</sup>

In 1907 Sewell reminisced about the sufferings of the Civil War years and concluded that the war was a chastisement upon the people that benefited no one. Any war was bad enough, but the dividing of the families and neighbors made the Civil War much worse. He wrote: "what a pity that all will not become followers of the Prince of Peace and sing the angelic son[g] 'Peace on earth, good will toward men' and 'hang the trumpet [sic] in the hall and study war no more'."<sup>47</sup>

Tolbert Fanning,<sup>48</sup> before his retirement in 1867 from the Gospel Advocate, wrote in opposition to Christian involvement with politics and war. He believed there were two classes of people, those of the world and those separate from the world. Those in the world are to be God's "sword" to punish evildoers but the Christian cannot perform such works for the worldly rulers.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>"Flesh and Blood Warfare No More," GA 31 (March 27, 1899): 199.

<sup>47</sup>"Reminiscences," p. 424.

<sup>48</sup>Tolbert Fanning was the most influential Disciples preacher in the Upper South from the 1830s to his death in 1874. He edited the Christian Review from 1844 to 1848. He founded the Gospel Advocate in 1855. He was also a noted educator, founding Franklin College in 1845.

<sup>49</sup>"Difficulties in Reference to War and Capital Punishment," GA 8 (September, 1866): 598-599.

A few months later Fanning wrote of the remarkable fact that the bloodiest wars were always conducted in the name of God. He remarked that "even . . . amongst the people who claim to take the Bible as their only creed, we find not a few with the blood of the brethren still dripping from their fingers . . ." Fanning believed that the Christian's duty to government was to submit by "living quiet and peaceable lives in all goodness and honesty" and to not become entangled with civil governments.<sup>50</sup>

John T. Poe<sup>51</sup> of Texas, for many years the editor of the "Texas Department" in the Gospel Advocate, contrasted the law of retaliation of the law of Moses with the teachings of Christ. Christ taught his followers to overcome evil by doing good to the enemy and by praying for those who mistreated them. Poe concluded that "clearly a Christian has no right to go to war, either on his own account, or on account of others."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>"Defence of the Government," GA 9 (March 14, 1867): 215-216.

<sup>51</sup>John T. Poe, though a Confederate veteran, took the conservative position with Lipscomb on several issues including the Christian and war. He was one of the best known conservative preachers in Texas for about fifty years. He died in 1917.

<sup>52</sup>"An Eye for an Eye," GA 20 (October 24, 1878): 665.

### Other Pacifist Views

Even though the main influence of pacifism was in Middle Tennessee, some Disciples from the border states retained their pacifist views through the war. However, they did not represent the mainstream of the Disciples.

Moses E. Lard<sup>53</sup> of Kentucky, editor of Lard's Quarterly, believed that Christ under no circumstances permitted his followers to go to war. Lard attributed the cause of war to men's lusts. War violated God's will for peace and was opposed to the Christian principles of love and good will toward all men. A Christian could not go to war innocently for the very act of going into battle announced an intent to kill. Lard believed that if the government ordered a Christian to go to war, he should refuse, and "if the state arrest him, let it be so, if the state even shoot him, be it so; never let him go to war!"<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Moses E. Lard was born in Middle Tennessee but in his late teens moved to Missouri. He was orphaned at seventeen and educated himself. After converting to the Disciples, he graduated from Bethany College. He preached in Missouri for a number of years prior to the Civil War. He moved to Kentucky during the Civil War and edited Lard's Quarterly from 1863 to 1868. The paper was not successful financially but contained some of the best thought among the Disciples.

<sup>54</sup> "Should Christians Go to War?" Lard's Quarterly 3 (April, 1866): 26-43.

G. W. Able,<sup>55</sup> also in Lard's Quarterly, responded to those who approved of Christian participation in war: "Oh! how strange that any Christian man should require an argument to convince him that he should have no participation in war." The only war for a Christian was the war against "the world, the flesh, the Devil, and the powers of darkness." He believed that physical force was wholly incompatible with Christian character and the design of the gospel. He asked: "How would the military titles of General Peter, Colonel John, Major James, Captain Philip, and Lieutenant Stephen have accorded with the work in which these holy men were engaged?"<sup>56</sup>

Another pacifist voice was J. W. McGarvey,<sup>57</sup> President of the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky. He believed that military service was incompatible with Christian service. He believed that when the Roman centurion, Cornelius, was converted, he either "resigned or made

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<sup>55</sup>G. W. Able was a pioneer Disciples preacher in Virginia and an elder in the church at Snowville. Not much is known of his life and work.

<sup>56</sup>"War," Lard's Quarterly 4 (April, 1867): 139-143.

<sup>57</sup>J. W. McGarvey was the best known scholar among the Disciples. He was a graduate of Bethany College and preached for a number of years in Missouri. He signed the Missouri Manifesto against the Civil War. During the war he moved to Lexington, Kentucky. He served as president of the College of the Bible, a Disciples seminary, at Lexington.

shipwreck of his faith." He believed that Cornelius resigned for

"if Jesus and his apostles had been, for more than 30 years previous to the publication of Acts, teaching that Christians should not take the sword, it was not at all necessary for Luke to say that Peter so instructed Cornelius."<sup>58</sup>

McGarvey had written much in opposition to the war in 1860 and 1861. In 1895 he was still thoroughly convinced that the teachings of the New Testament were violated when a Christian went to war.<sup>59</sup>

Jacob Creath<sup>60</sup> of Missouri approved of the pacifist stand of the Gospel Advocate. He urged that the topic of war be discussed as much or more than any other issue. He believed that teaching against war was hindered in a time of war by a fear that such discussion would lead to charges of disloyalty. Likewise, in times of peace many refused to discuss the topic because the peace of society would be disturbed. To Creath war was a combination of all other crimes and miseries suffered

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<sup>58</sup> A Commentary on Acts of the Apostles, 6th ed. (Nashville, Tennessee: B. C. Goodpasture, 1961), p. 141.

<sup>59</sup> F. D. Srygley, "From the Papers," GA 37 (September 26, 1895): 609.

<sup>60</sup> Jacob Creath, Jr., nicknamed the "Iron Duke," was one of the most colorful Disciples preachers. A former Baptist, he was widely known in Missouri and the Upper South. Creath was concerned about the many changes he saw taking place in the Restoration Movement. He agreed with David Lipscomb's conservative position on the issues that were dividing the movement. He died in 1884 at Palmyra, Missouri.

by mankind. It was a " . . . suspension of the laws of God and man, of the Bible, of the constitution of countries, of justice, of humanity, or morality, and of every virtue."<sup>61</sup>

S. T. Meng,<sup>62</sup> a southern sympathizer from Missouri, praised the stand pacifists had taken during the war. He approved of Lipscomb's position of total non-participation in civil government and said that this position "fully understood, and fully carried out, is the only hope for the church and for a lost and ruined world."<sup>63</sup>

Ira C. Mitchell<sup>64</sup> of Iowa held views very similar to Lipscomb. He regarded human wickedness as the cause of war. He believed that war violated the law of love, the prime motive for all human conduct. For the first three centuries, Christians separated themselves from service to civil governments and began military service

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<sup>61</sup>"War and Peace," GA 8 (August 14, 1866): 522; (October 9, 1866): 649-650.

<sup>62</sup>S. T. Meng was converted by Jacob Creath, Jr. He was a physician and preacher. He was a regular contributor to the Apostolic Times and Gospel Advocate. He agreed with Lipscomb's view of the Christian and civil government. He died in 1880.

<sup>63</sup>"The Church and World Powers," GA 11 (January 28, 1869): 77.

<sup>64</sup>Ira C. Mitchell was originally from Pennsylvania. He gave up a law practice to become an evangelist. He preached across the Midwest, the South and in Canada. He died in 1897 in Ohio.

only when the church became corrupted by wealth, power, and alliance with the political state.<sup>65</sup> Mitchell wrote that as a member of the kingdom of God, a Christian must be separate from any kingdom of the world. When a Christian voted or held political office, he was forced into the position of defending his government.<sup>66</sup>

B. K. Smith<sup>67</sup> of Indiana responded to A. R. Benton's pro-war series in the Christian Standard. Smith argued that a Christian was limited in his actions and did not have the right to do what anyone could do. The Christian had a higher calling and fought with spiritual, not physical weapons. Smith pointed out that mixing politics with religion corrupted both for a man could not devote himself to both at the same time. The only safe way for Christians was to "pay our bills [to human governments] as the wayfarer pays his bill at the inn,

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<sup>65</sup>The pacifism of early Christians for the first three centuries of Christianity is a common belief of Christian pacifists. However, there is evidence that Christians served in the military during these centuries. See Roland H. Bainton, Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp. 66-69.

<sup>66</sup>"An Essay on the Relation Sustained by Christians to Civil Governments," GA 8 (August 7, 1866): 497-500; (August 14, 1866): 515.

<sup>67</sup>Not much is known of B. K. Smith's life and work. He was a pioneer preacher in Indiana. He died in 1875.



so he may sojourn for a time, but never attempt to run the concern."<sup>68</sup>

### Conclusion

Doing God's will was the first priority for David Lipscomb and those who held similar views. They interpreted Christian duty in light of their basic beliefs about the nature of Christianity and the world. Their ideas were shaped by a belief in a literal interpretation of the Bible, and by political events that had caused a deep pessimism about the progress of American society through the application of Christian principles. They emphasized: the spiritual nature of the church and its mission; the corrupt and wicked nature of human governments; the irreconcilable conflict between citizenship in the civil kingdom and God's kingdom; and the futility of efforts to reform mankind outside of the church.

After the Civil War, these ideas appealed to many southerners because of their ill feeling toward the North aroused by their sufferings and defeat in the war. Many Southern Disciples accepted the idea of limited involvement in world affairs. In the North isolated voices called for the Christian to rise above the world and not participate in unholy warfare or political action.

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<sup>68</sup>"A. R. Benton Reviewed," CS 2 (January 12, 1867): 9; (January 19, 1867): 17; (January 26, 1867): 25; (February 2, 1867): 33; (March 2, 1867): 65; and CS 3 (July 4, 1868): 267.

The test of pacifism and the related issue of non-involvement in political events would come in 1898 and again in 1917 with the Spanish-American War and World War I. Members of the Churches of Christ, as the Southern conservative Disciples became known, would have to answer if non-involvement is where the Christian's duty really lies. Or do Christians really hold citizenship in both the kingdom of Caesar and of God with responsibilities to each?

Application: The Lost Cause and Southern Religion

Religion as one thread of a people's culture plays a vital role in their thought and actions. The Protestant churches had been instrumental in creating a climate for secession and war through their divisions over the issue of slavery. During the war, Southern churches became the most effective morale-building agencies for the Confederate cause.<sup>69</sup>

The defeat of the Confederacy shattered the dream of a separate southern nation. But the dream of a cohesive southern people with a distinctive cultural identity remained. At the heart of this dream was religion. The religious/political attitude known as the "Lost Cause" looked back to the early nineteenth century to

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<sup>69</sup>Wilson, Baptized in Blood, pp. 3-4.

find the basis for a religious-moral identity as a "chosen people." This attitude caused the southern Protestant churches to remain orthodox in theology and evangelical in their outreach while the northern churches were becoming more diverse in their doctrine and practice.<sup>70</sup>

The "Lost Cause" religion projected an image of a people whose morality, religion, and virtue were regarded as superior to the northern culture. The political life of the South became closely allied with its religion. Religious leaders preached a preservation of the status quo of society, ignoring serious social issues such as the rights of labor, the poor, and blacks. However, the state was expected to regulate moral behavior by law.<sup>71</sup>

The separation of the Churches of Christ from the mainstream of the Disciples of Christ can be explained, at least in part, by this conflict between the northern and southern value systems. Though David Lipscomb disapproved of political involvement of religion, he did represent a southern point of view and his ideas were similar to those of other southern church leaders.

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-3.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-9.

David Harrell recognizes this desire for a separate cultural identity for the southern conservative Disciples when he states: "slavery and the Civil War pushed northern and southern Disciples in different directions." The northern Disciples adopted a broader interpretation of the Bible that allowed a greater degree of social and political activism. Many southern Disciples maintained a literal interpretation of the Bible that defended slavery, opposed war, and opposed political and social activism.<sup>72</sup>

The views of society and religion of the conservative Disciples as they separated into the Churches of Christ represented a resistance of southern Disciples to northern values. The Church of Christ leaders such as David Lipscomb spoke for the southern disinherited, the poor, defeated, agricultural society of the late nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup> A moral gulf was perceived between the North and the South. Southern religion in general regarded the northern society with its urbanization, industrialization, immigration, and changing moral standards as morally suspect.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Harrell, "From Consent to Dissent . . ." p. 103. Compare Harrell's statements with Wilson, Baptized in Blood, pp. 7-9.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>74</sup>David Edwin Harrell, "Sin and Sectionalism: A Case Study in the Nineteenth Century South," Mississippi Quarterly 19 (Fall, 1966): 158-159.

This topic would be most applicable in the classroom to a course in nineteenth century Southern History or late nineteenth century U. S. History. The ideas in this chapter could be used in an American History Survey to illustrate: (1) the effects of the defeat of the Confederacy, (2) the reaction of poor, middle class Southerners to the defeat, and (3) the antagonistic attitude that continued after the war toward the North. Also, an understanding of the different emphases in the Northern and Southern churches would be important in an History of American Religion.

## Chapter 4

### PACIFISM UNDER PRESSURE (1866-1900)

#### The Religious Situation (1866-1900)

Consistently through the years, American Protestantism has been influenced by changes in religious thought and social developments. Post-Civil War Protestantism sought to influence American life at every level through its evangelistic efforts. Often the churches found themselves adopting the values of an increasingly secularized society, thus becoming a part of the value systems they were trying to change.<sup>1</sup>

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., characterized the late nineteenth century as a "critical period" in American religion, beset with many "pitfalls and perils." Darwinism and higher criticism raised questions about the validity of the Bible and the basic beliefs of Christianity. Urbanization and industrialization created social problems that challenged the ministry of the urban churches. Tensions developed with the working class as they felt unwelcome in the fancy church buildings with elaborate

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<sup>1</sup>Robert T. Handy, "Church and Cultures: Give and Take," in Protestantism, ed. Hugh T. Kerr (Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1979), pp. 88-89.

furnishings and dignified choirs. The clergy, dependent for support of their churches' programs upon the well-to-do, ignored or condoned many social problems. As had been the case from the colonial era, mainstream Protestant churches adapted themselves to the values of their membership in order to survive.<sup>2</sup>

Churches exhibited the same energy as American society in the late nineteenth century. Evangelical churches experienced a steady increase in membership and developed elaborate structures and agencies to carry out their programs. Many of these programs emphasized social causes, education, and mission work. Robert Handy states that the strength of Protestant churches was dissipated by changing theological views, secularization, and disillusionment of its members. In the face of a segmented, pluralistic society, churches limited their ministry to given racial or nationalistic groups. Protestant churches, instead of transcending cultural, racial, and class barriers, became supportive of the beliefs of their particular clientele.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., "A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900," in Religion in American History, eds., John M. Mulder and John F. Wilson, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978), pp. 302-303, 307.

<sup>3</sup>Handy, "Church and Culture," pp. 91-93.

Rural, conservative Protestants resisted the modern trends in religious thought and social activism. Small town and southern Protestants based their religion on the evangelical, revivalistic Protestantism of the early nineteenth century. Conservatives moved to the right, narrowing and hardening their beliefs and religious traditions.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1890s, the Disciples of Christ were fragmented by conflicting views of the Restoration ideal due to sectional and class differences. The "Disciples of Christ" denomination was being organized by those religious leaders who restated Restoration principles in terms of modern religious thought. The Progressive Disciples were influenced by higher criticism of the Bible, Darwinism, the social gospel, and a desire for unity within Protestantism.<sup>5</sup>

The passing of the pioneer generation of Disciples leaders left leadership of the movement in the hands of men divided by sectional differences and differing views of Restoration principles. Northern Disciples leaders adopted an outlook that led to the development of denominational institutions and thought that was in the mainstream of American Protestantism. By 1900

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>5</sup>West, The Crisis of the Restoration Movement, p. 1.



Disciples' thought was articulated by preachers who ranged from reactionary conservatives to sophisticated spokesmen in the mainstream of American religion.<sup>6</sup>

Isaac Errett exemplified the progressive thinking of the Northern Disciples. He called for a more professional ministry to rise above the simplicity of frontier church life by adopting more progressive ideas and practices. He said that churches had outgrown their frontier origin by becoming "larger and more elegant . . . carpeted, cushioned, heated by a furnace, lighted by gas or oil in chandeliers, and windows of stained glass." He believed that preaching should not be "controversial, severe, and denunciatory," but should be more refined to meet "the necessities of the times."<sup>7</sup>

#### Pacifist Reaction to Political Events

During these critical years of religious change, the Churches of Christ tried to maintain their conservative views against the more progressive Disciples of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>David Edwin Harrell, A Social History of the Disciples of Christ, Vol. 2: The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ (Atlanta, Georgia: Publishing Systems Inc., 1973), pp. 3, 5-6.

<sup>7</sup>"Progression Once More," CS 9 (February 28, 1878): 68.

<sup>8</sup>By the 1880s the name, "Churches of Christ" was being used more exclusively by the Southern Conservative Disciples while the name "Disciples of Christ" or "Christian Church" was being adopted by the progressive wing of the Restoration Movement.

Pacifism and separation from political activism were closely related in the thinking of David Lipscomb, though his views were held by a minority of the members of the Churches of Christ. His leadership was based on his stand against the innovations by the progressive Disciples while his views on pacifism and political activism were tolerated. But pacifism was a matter of faith to a sizable number of leaders in the Churches of Christ. The two major papers in the Churches of Christ, the Gospel Advocate and Firm Foundation, reflected Lipscomb's pacifism.

In the late nineteenth century, the Gospel Advocate issued a steady stream of anti-political and anti-war articles. These articles included extensive scriptural defenses of pacifism, condemned the "war spirit" of the veterans movement, and in general defended the left-wing position of the paper against any political involvement. David Lipscomb led the protest as the United States moved from one international crisis to another in the 1890s.<sup>9</sup>

#### The Peace Movement

The American Peace Society was revived after the War. Many northern leaders who had participated in

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<sup>9</sup>Harrell, "Disciples of Christ Pacifism," p. 273.

it earlier, and even some who had supported the Civil War joined the new movement. Pacifist Disciples did not support these efforts for peace. Lipscomb regarded these actions as hypocritical. He believed the Advocate of Peace, the American Peace Society publication, provided a "sandy" basis for peace because its leaders were "some of the bitterest war men in the land." He rejected any organized peace effort outside the kingdom of Christ as useless and doomed to failure.<sup>10</sup>

In 1870, Isaac Errett in the Christian Standard and Henry Ward Beecher, a well known New York Congregational minister, in the Christian Union, published articles against the Franco-Prussian War. Lipscomb commended the sentiments of the articles and expressed happiness at the improving spirit for peace in the United States. He pointed out that only a few years earlier both editors had thought the Civil War was a "proper thing." He explained their earlier actions as the result of passions of the Civil War era when "their blood was hot--their passions foaming with wrath. Their calmer, dispassionate judgment when others, not their own brethren, are in strife, we heartily commend."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>"Put Up Thy Sword," GA 12 (January 27, 1870): 74.

<sup>11</sup>"What is War?" GA 12 (September 29, 1870): 892-893; see also Isaac Errett, "The Franco-Prussian War," CS 5 (July 30, 1870): 244.

Great hope was placed in arbitration as a means to settle peacefully international differences. The settlement of the Alabama claims, the Northwestern boundary between the United States and Canada, and the Venezuelan border dispute by arbitration received praise from the religious press. Peace advocates made plans for an international supreme court to arbitrate between nations.<sup>12</sup>

In general, the editors of Disciples journals were sympathetic to the efforts for peace. Disciples supported, by resolution, the work of the London Peace Society and peaceful settlement of international crises were praised.<sup>13</sup> The hope for an international court reached its peak in 1899 at the Hague Peace Conference. Disarmament was seen as the answer to both the costs of the arms race and the barbarity of war. Many Disciples believed that the hand of God was with the efforts to create machinery for peaceful settlement of disputes. War would soon be outdated because its immoral nature had been recognized by national statesmen. The "blessed day of peace" was believed to be near at hand because

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<sup>12</sup>Harrell, Social Sources, p. 247; James H. Garrison, "Shall We Have Peace or War?" CE 24 (August 11, 1887): 466.

<sup>13</sup>Harrell, Social Sources, pp. 247-248.

of faith in God's Word and the intelligence of the common people.<sup>14</sup>

Lipscomb, on the other hand, dismissed such faith and optimism in arbitration as futile. In his opinion, war would continue as long as mankind remained unconverted to God's way. War would end only when mankind accepted the teaching of Christ and the New Testament that war was wrong.<sup>15</sup>

#### The Election of 1880

A major challenge to the views of David Lipscomb was the election of 1880. From the beginning, the Disciples movement had been divided over the issues of voting and holding political office. Several Disciples achieved prominence as political figures even prior to the Civil War. After the war, many more Disciples became candidates for political offices, especially in the North.

An editorial in the American Christian Review of January, 1880, noted that nine Congressmen were Disciples and "more were on their way." The editorial took the position that if the United States were to be ruled by religious people, it should be Disciples rather than

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<sup>14</sup>William Higbee, "The End of Wars," CS 35 (July 1, 1899): 814; Isaac Errett, "The Time is at Hand," CS 35 (June 10, 1899): 722-723; Isaac Errett, "History's Highest Heroism," CS 35 (May 27, 1899): 659.

<sup>15</sup>"From the Papers," GA 37 (October 10, 1896): 141.

the "despotic . . . Roman Catholic Church or the Methodist Episcopal Church."<sup>16</sup>

The increasing political involvement of Disciples concerned David Lipscomb. He warned Christians against serving in the "kingdoms of the evil one." The Christian was out of place in politics because both the Democratic and Republican parties were controlled by their worse elements.<sup>17</sup>

On June 8, 1880, the Republican Party nominated Congressman James A. Garfield of Ohio for President. Garfield was a well known leader of the Republicans in Congress and a former Disciples of Christ preacher. His nomination received much attention both from Disciples who were politically active and from those who were against political involvement. One result was the resignation of Joseph Franklin of Indiana from the editorial staff of the Gospel Advocate. Joseph Franklin was the son of Benjamin Franklin, the pioneer gospel preacher and founder of the American Christian Review. Franklin resigned because of differences with Lipscomb over the Christian and politics. Also, he announced that he had become a candidate for public office. Lipscomb accepted the resignation with regret for he had never

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<sup>16</sup>J. F. Rowe, "Editorial Jottings," American Christian Review 23 (January 16, 1880): 4. Hereafter referred to as ACR.

<sup>17</sup>"Words of Caution," GA 22 (June 24, 1880): 405.

made this issue a test of fellowship. He invited Franklin to write a defense of his position in the Gospel Advocate. Lipscomb admitted that a majority of the readers of the Gospel Advocate agreed with Franklin's position "in practice if not in faith."<sup>18</sup>

Garfield's nomination presented a dilemma for politically active southern Disciples. The primary argument for political activism was the need for a positive Christian influence in the political process. But Garfield was a Republican, and the Solid South was Democratic. Furthermore, Garfield was a Union General who had been a part of the Union forces that invaded Tennessee. Lipscomb was quick to point out their dilemma. He wrote:

"Every Disciple of Christ in the land who believes religion or religious character is needed in the political world, or that it can be carried there without a forfeiture of religious character is under solemn obligation to vote for Garfield."<sup>19</sup>

Lipscomb believed that Garfield's character was such that if it were right to vote, he would vote for him. Furthermore, as a Disciple, Garfield had the responsibility to place fellow Disciples in all the government jobs he would fill. Lipscomb warned: "Don't let your mouth begin to water now with expectation of office. General Garfield will never act in Christian principle should

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<sup>18</sup>"Withdrawal," GA 22 (September 16, 1880): 597.

<sup>19</sup>"Christians and Politics," GA 22 (July 15, 1880): 453.

he be elected." Lipscomb hoped by these statements to point out the inconsistency of a Christian participating in politics.<sup>20</sup>

Lipscomb accused those who used the argument of the need for Christian influence of not really believing it, but using it as an excuse for doing what they wanted to do. For those Southern Disciples who called for a "good, pious, religious ruler" Lipscomb asked: "Are you going to vote for him or will you take up an ungodly Democrat, if they should nominate such an one?"<sup>21</sup>

Southern Disciples reacted quickly to Lipscomb's statements. They charged that Lipscomb's reference to Garfield's character was an endorsement of his candidacy. D. S. Burnett of Texas disagreed with Lipscomb's assessment of Garfield's character and charged that "Brother Lipscomb has got it pretty bad, for a man who never takes any part in politics."<sup>22</sup> John H. Cain, from Hallville, Texas wrote: "Brother Lipscomb: I am very old and feeble and do not wish to be insulted by your black Republican politics. You will please discontinue my paper."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 453-460.

<sup>21</sup>"Politics and Religion," GA 22 (August 5, 1880): 504; "Words of Caution," p. 405.

<sup>22</sup>"Religion and Politics," GA 22 (September 9, 1880): 581.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.



Lipscomb denied that he was endorsing Garfield but stated that he was trying to show the inconsistency of Disciples who participated in politics. Lipscomb charged that those who did not vote for Garfield thought more of their politics than Garfield's religion. John H. Cain had so "imbibed the bitterness of partisan politics that it would hurt him terribly to believe a truth favorable to his brother Garfield." Those Christians who were spreading the unproven charges of political corruption about Garfield were corrupted by the influence of politics. They resented anyone trying to defend his character. Such people were among those that "love and make a lie," and at the last day they would be found with the "wicked, the corrupt, the lost."<sup>24</sup> Lipscomb reflected that "the majority of the professed Christians of the South would vote for the Devil, in preference to the Lord Jesus Christ, were he the Republican candidate."<sup>25</sup>

Lipscomb complained that the political excitement hindered the preaching of the gospel. He observed that many lessened their religious work during the campaign because "the church itself, in its membership, is carried away in politics . . . the members lose their faith

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>"Politics and Religion Again," GA 32 (September 30, 1880): 630.

and zeal, and do nothing." This problem could be avoided if Christians would realize they could not serve two masters at the same time.<sup>26</sup>

Lipscomb expressed concern about the example Garfield's candidacy was having on other Disciples. He noted several prominent Disciples preachers were candidates for office or active in politics. Lipscomb stated that by their training and experience preachers were qualified for political office, and brethren who voted were obligated to vote for them. But he was concerned with what would become of the churches if the preachers became politicians. He concluded that "the evil one has learned the weak point of these Campbellite preachers."<sup>27</sup>

After Garfield's election, Lipscomb expressed concern about his actions as President. Lipscomb demonstrated the left-wing, Anabaptist influence upon him by his fear that Garfield's "religious nature would likely tinge his temper with fanaticism, and he would be an implacable ruler to those who opposed him." Lipscomb believed the political strife would be made worse by the religious issue. The church had already been hurt by Garfield's election: "no event so disastrous to the

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<sup>26</sup>"The Way to Avoid It," GA 22 (July 8, 1880): 443.

<sup>27</sup>"Teachers and Politics," GA (August 26, 1880): 553; "Teachers and Politics--Again," GA 22 (September 2, 1880): 565.

cause of Christian religion has happened in this country . . . as the election of Garfield to the Presidency."<sup>28</sup>

Lipscomb's concerns about the election of Garfield were echoed by other Disciples. S. T. Meng, of Missouri, was "heartsick" that the Disciples were dividing their "loyalty, time, attention, and money" between their religion and work for political parties. Meng believed that no Christian could be a member of any political party without being corrupted by politics. He described Disciples as "drunk with politics" and unable to hear God like they could when they were "sober."<sup>29</sup>

E. G. Sewell, co-editor of the Gospel Advocate, urged Christians to work for Christ's cause and let the "friends of the world" attend to politics. He believed that Christians must avoid political involvement because it was "impossible for Christians to go to these political excitements and at the same time prove faithful to the Lord and His cause."<sup>30</sup>

R. E. Allen, from Valdosta, Georgia, believed that the accusations of corruption against Garfield were hurting the church. Allen would not vote for

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<sup>28</sup>"The Election," GA 22 (December 2, 1880): 776.

<sup>29</sup>"Christianity v. Politics," GA 22 (July 1, 1880): 424; "Shall Christians Engage in Politics?" GA 22 (September 2, 1880): 567.

<sup>30</sup>"Political Excitement," GA 22 (June 10, 1880): 376.

Garfield because God did not approve of voting for an ungodly Christian any more than he did an ungodly Democrat. Allen believed that God did not want his people "voting at all, or participating in political wrangles, or seeking political honors and political office."<sup>31</sup>

Many Disciples disagreed with the stand the Gospel Advocate took against political involvement. J. F. Rowe, editor of the American Christian Review, and Lipscomb engaged in written debate on the topic "May a Christian Vote and Hold Office?" from October, 1880 until January, 1881 in their journals. Rowe advocated political involvement because of the need for Christian influence. He believed that God had instituted government for the well-being of mankind. Each person had a dual responsibility, to God and to "Caesar." Protestant Christians must vote and hold office to keep the Roman Catholic Church out of power. Rowe regarded Catholicism as "anti-Bible, anti-Christ, and hostile to every Republican form of government." Christian men were supposed to control temporal affairs through the "sanctified ballot."<sup>32</sup>

Isaac Errett was a close personal friend and supporter of Garfield. He expressed the deepest confidence in

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<sup>31</sup>"Christians and Politics," GA 22 (July 15, 1880): 453.

<sup>32</sup>"May Christians Vote and Hold Office? No. 1," ACR 23 (October 5, 1880): 316; "May Christians Vote and Hold Office? No. 2," ACR 23 (October 12, 1880): 324.

Garfield's character and ability. He regarded Garfield as an "honest man, a Christian gentleman of high ability."<sup>33</sup> Errett supported Garfield personally but kept silent on political issues in the Christian Standard.

The assassination of Garfield in July, 1881, by Charles Guiteau, a disappointed office seeker, sent shock waves through the Disciples. In Garfield's obituary, Errett wrote: "The whole land--nay, the whole civilized world--mourns the untimely death of one of the purest and noblest of the public men of the present age." This great "Christian patriot and statesman" was struck down just as his life was "fullest of promise."<sup>34</sup>

The assassination of Garfield ended the debate on the Christian and politics. Southern Disciples were chided for their hypocrisy by Justus M. Barnes. They had smeared his character and refused to vote for him during the election, but now they mourned his passing very deeply.<sup>35</sup>

Lipscomb disagreed with those who saw the hand of Providence in Garfield's election. Rather he asked if Providence were not present in "striking down" Garfield because he took up the "sword by becoming the head of

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<sup>33</sup>"James A. Garfield," CS 15 (June 19, 1880): 196.

<sup>34</sup>"Death of a President," CS 16 (September 24, 1881): 308.

<sup>35</sup>"Off to Atlanta," GA 24 (September 21, 1882): 595.

the institution that is founded upon, and lives by the sword." Lipscomb saw in Garfield's case a warning to those who seek the power and rewards of a kingdom on earth as opposed to service to God.<sup>36</sup>

### Pacifism in Militant Times

The 1880s and 1890s were characterized by a strong emphasis in the United States upon military affairs and several international crises. Several issues connected with this militancy were addressed in the Gospel Advocate. Justus M. Barnes in 1882 expressed grave concerns about the cost of armaments. He noted how strange it was for a "nation with a Bible in one hand . . . [to] carry a rifle in the other." Money spent on arms would be better used to educate, feed, and clothe children around the world.<sup>37</sup>

During the 1880s-1890s pacifists were very outspoken on the martial spirit of the time. Civil War veterans organizations were numerous and their parades, decorations, encampments and other activities were popular. Lipscomb objected to such events because he could see no benefit to the living or dead from such performances. He expressed sorrow for those who died on both sides of the Civil War.

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<sup>36</sup>"Both Sides," GA 23 (August 4, 1881): 483; "Was God's Hand in It?" GA 23 (September 29, 1881): 612.

<sup>37</sup>"True Blues," GA 24 (March 2, 1882): 131.

However, he believed that "it often required more courage to stand against the popular current and refuse to enter the conflict, than it did to fight for the war."<sup>38</sup>

Lipscomb called the encampments immoral, crime-ridden, pro-war, and demoralizing to the young people. He disliked the "old soldier craze" sweeping the country. Veterans organizations promoted immorality, dominated politics, and were "looting the public treasury" for pensions and benefits. Their activities promoted the "evil spirit and . . . principles of war" among the people.<sup>39</sup>

A heated controversy occurred in 1895 when F. D. Srygley, an associate editor of the Gospel Advocate, criticized a rousing oration at the Frank Cheatham Confederate Veterans encampment by C. Lin Cave, a Disciples minister from Nashville. A Confederate veteran himself, Cave praised Confederate soldiers as gallant, patriotic, glorious, and heaven bound. He stated that "under like conditions" he would "be at it again." Thomas Claiborne, the president of the veterans group, responded in the Nashville Banner to Srygley's criticism. Claiborne called Srygley a "measly pharisee" who could not be mentioned with "that

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<sup>38</sup>"Passing Events," GA 25 (May 30, 1882): 338.

<sup>39</sup>"From the Papers," GA 37 (August 22, 1895): 529;  
"From the Papers," GA 37 (August 29, 1875): 545-546.

glorious band of God's servants who followed for four years the Confederate camps . . . doing good for the Master's sake."<sup>40</sup>

Srygley defended the anti-war stand of the Gospel Advocate in the same issue of the Banner.<sup>41</sup> The article was later reprinted in the Gospel Advocate. In it, Srygley quoted the anti-war views of a number of leaders of the Restoration Movement. Among those he quoted were Tolbert Fanning, Alexander Campbell, Dr. T. W. Brents, Barton W. Stone, and J. W. McGarvey. Srygley pointed out that, according to the membership lists, only a small percentage of Tennessee Disciples were members of veterans organizations. Even though 500 Disciples in Tennessee were Confederate veterans, 75 Disciples were members across the state while in Nashville only 9 Disciples were in these organizations. Srygley states that 3,000 Disciples were in Nashville while there were more than 50,000 across the state.<sup>42</sup>

Lipscomb blamed preachers for much of the militant atmosphere of the 1890s. He believed that it was just

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<sup>40</sup>"Censorious Srygley," Nashville Banner, 31 August 1895, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup>"Mr. Srygley's Reply," Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid; "From the Papers," GA 37 (September 26, 1895): 609-610.



as wrong for preachers to eulogize soldiers by orations and encourage a war spirit in times of peace as it was to kill in time of war. The danger of war between Christian nations would remain as long as religious leaders encouraged and supported military celebrations.<sup>43</sup>

The public school system came under criticism because it glorified war through textbooks and other reading materials. Lipscomb believed that the public education system taught children to "drink the war spirit." The evil nature of war must be taught in times of peace because the emotionally charged atmosphere during a war made it impossible to rationally discuss the topic.<sup>44</sup>

In 1896, a long standing boundary dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela developed into an international crisis when the United States tried to force Great Britain to arbitrate the issue. The stern note from United States Secretary of State Olney brought a reply from Great Britain that appeared to not recognize the Monroe Doctrine. At the height of the crisis, war between

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<sup>43</sup>"From the Papers," GA 37 (August 29, 1895): 545; "From the Papers," GA 37 (December 26, 1895): 817.

<sup>44</sup>"Education in War," GA 38 (February 20, 1896): 119.

the United States and England seemed probable. However, cooler heads prevailed and the dispute was settled by arbitration.<sup>45</sup>

Lipscomb praised the majority of the preachers in the United States who had opposed war with England. At the height of the crisis when war seemed likely, Lipscomb called upon disciples of Christ to "determine . . . to take no part in the bloody business."<sup>46</sup> He criticized the religious papers which called for the defense of the Monroe Doctrine under the guise of "Christian Patriotism." He noted that patriotism was also on England's side. He asked: "Should the Christian patriots of America kill the Christians of England because they are patriotic too?" If war came, political leaders as well as the military must share the moral responsibility.<sup>47</sup>

### The Spanish-American War

The severest test of nineteenth century pacifism came in 1898. A war with England had been avoided two years earlier, and an era of improved relations between the United States and England began. They were tied

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<sup>45</sup>See Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, 8th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968), pp. 436-437 for an account of this crisis.

<sup>46</sup>"From the Papers," GA 38 (January 9, 1896): 17.

<sup>47</sup>"The Monroe Doctrine," GA 38 (January 16, 1896): 17.

together by their common Anglo-Saxon origins and Protestant religion. No such ties existed with Roman Catholic Spain.<sup>48</sup>

The religious press of the Disciples became heavily involved in the jingoism toward Spain over Cuba. As early as 1895, editorials began to appear in the Disciples press critical of Spain and her policies in Cuba. As the crisis built, those who wanted war called for intervention to relieve the sufferings of the Cubans. The "righteous" cause of the Cubans was supported by the Disciples papers. They became as bellicose as the secular press in demanding war.<sup>49</sup> Three arguments were made for war: humanitarian, racial, and religious. The appeal to humanitarianism stated that Cuba must be freed from the cruel, oppressive rule of Spain. Racial feeling, national honor and patriotism demanded that Anglo-Saxon America right the wrongs in Spanish and African Cuba. Religiously, the war was regarded as a confrontation between Protestantism and Catholicism.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Harrell, Social Sources, p. 248.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 249-256; James H. Garrison, "Influence of the Present War on the Nation's Future," CE 35 (May 27, 1898): 322; James H. Garrison, "For What Purpose?" CE 35 (May 12, 1898): 290.

J. M. Van Horn believed that Spain's great wickedness was to be punished by God using the United States. Chastisement for Spain was due because she had "planted more crosses in more lands, beneath the skies, and butchered more people than any other nation on earth." It was the "fair and just duty" of Christians who enjoyed the protection and liberty under the United States government to support that government in the war.<sup>51</sup>

Isaac Errett considered July 4, 1898, as the most glorious fourth in many decades. North and South were united in war against Spain and sectionalism was over. Victories over the Spanish demonstrated the leadership of Protestants in the spiritual conquest of the earth for the kingdom of Christ.<sup>52</sup>

James H. Garrison, in the Christian Evangelist, regarded the war as a boost for democracy against the hereditary rights of kings. He also saw the war as a struggle between "barbaric" Catholicism and "civilized" Protestantism. American victories proved that God was on the side of the Protestant United States.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>"Should a Christian Go to War?" CS 34 (June 4, 1898): 723.

<sup>52</sup>"O Glorious Fourth," CS 34 (July 18, 1898): 928.

<sup>53</sup>"The War with Spain," CE 35 (April 28, 1898): 258; "The Irresistible Conflict," CE 35 (June 30, 1898): 402.

Daniel Sommer, editor of the Octographic Review of Indiana, was a Northern leader in the conservative Churches of Christ. However, he was not a pacifist, and his views represented many in the Churches of Christ. He believed the war with Spain was a just war. Spain had brought the war upon herself by her cruelty to "Moor, Indian, Jew and Hollander." He believed that the "depraved and superstitious" Spain was the "tool of the papacy and sworn enemy of liberty and justice."<sup>54</sup> However, Sommer expressed concern for the work of the church in the emotion-charged atmosphere of the war. Christians were urged not to "backslide" from their religious duties. They must not forget the real battle was against the "bitter and cruel master" that Spain was serving.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, the Gospel Advocate and Firm Foundation stood against involvement in the war. A. J. McCarty of Texas feared that Christians who became involved in the war were "fighting against God." The time was past when God authorized "flesh and blood" warfare.

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<sup>54</sup>"Addenda," Octographic Review 41 (May 24, 1898): 4. Hereafter referred to as OR.

<sup>55</sup>"Items of Interest," OR 41 (July 26, 1898): 1.

Any war was "antagonistic to the whole spirit and tenor of the principles of the religion of Christ."<sup>56</sup>

J. D. Tant, a prominent Texas preacher, believed the war had set the work of the church back five years. The war atmosphere in Texas had led to fewer calls to preach and the cancellation of many of his evangelistic revivals for the summer of 1898. Tant moved to Oklahoma to preach because the "war craze was not as great as in Texas." Tant believed all who endorsed or fought in the war were murderers. In very colorful language, he took his stand against war: "I would as soon risk my chance of heaven to die drunk in a bawdy house as to die on the battle field, with murder in my heart, trying to kill my fellowman."<sup>57</sup>

As the crisis intensified, David Lipscomb found it "strange" that professed Christians were involved in the calls for war. He believed the militant spirit among Christians resulted from their participation in the political strife of human governments. A Christian could not have a warlike spirit because "the war spirit . . . is contrary to the whole spirit of the religion

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<sup>56</sup>"Shall Christians Go to War?" Firm Foundation 14 (April 5, 1898): 105. Hereafter referred to as FF.

<sup>57</sup>"War--Its Effect Upon the Church," GA 50 (July 14, 1898): 443; see also Fanning Yater Tant, J. D. Tant--Texas Preacher (Lufkin, Texas: The Gospel Guardian Company, 1958), pp. 201-202.

of Christ."<sup>58</sup> When war began, Lipscomb reprinted the petition written in 1862 by Middle Tennessee Disciples asking for an exemption from military service in the Civil War. He believed this petition stated the true position of the Christian toward war, and it should be followed at all times.<sup>59</sup>

Though a pacifist, Lipscomb joined in the spirit of nationalism of the time. He believed the hand of God was in the defeat of Spain. He believed that as a nation, Spain had been "weighed in the balances and found wanting." Nevertheless, even if God were using the United States to punish Spain, Lipscomb believed true Christians could not participate. A Christian's duty lay in preaching the "gospel of peace and love."<sup>60</sup>

In addition to Lipscomb, others spoke out in the Gospel Advocate against the war. E. L. Ham urged Christians to "quit talking about the war, and go to talking and working for Jesus; read less about the war and more about the savior."<sup>61</sup> J. T. Showalter challenged those brethren who had been voting and holding office to "show their faith by their works." Those who participated

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<sup>58</sup>"War--Its Spirit," GA 50 (April 28, 1898): 269.

<sup>59</sup>"War and Christianity," GA 50 (May 19, 1898): 317.

<sup>60</sup>"The War and Its Lessons," GA 50 (August 11, 1898): 508.

<sup>61</sup>"War," GA 50 (July 14, 1898): 452.

in politics but refused to fight proved the inconsistency of their position, and should say nothing about the war.<sup>62</sup>

W. N. Moore, of Tullahoma, Tennessee, emphasized the futility of the war. After the goals of the war were reached through "blood and havoc," the only achievement would be a "few empty and perishing honors." Moore called upon Christians to work for a more civilized means to settle national differences.<sup>63</sup>

E. G. Sewell believed that God, rather than man, must be obeyed with regard to the war. He believed that it was very difficult for a Christian involved in politics to refuse to fight or support the war. Christians would find it easier to avoid war if they would separate themselves from political affairs. Sewell believed the only way war would end was through men developing the spirit of Christ and living by this spirit.<sup>64</sup>

T. R. Burnett of Texas, a contributing editor to the Gospel Advocate, emphasized the immorality of the war. He believed the moral issue of the war with Spain had been ignored, and the United States did not have a moral right to fight Spain just because she had

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<sup>62</sup>"War," GA 50 (April 28, 1898): 274.

<sup>63</sup>"Warfare," GA 50 (June 16, 1898): 382.

<sup>64</sup>"The Spirit of War is Not the Spirit of Christ," GA 50 (July 14, 1898): 444.



the power and wealth to fight. This moral issue must be considered before any patriot advised anyone to go into combat.<sup>65</sup> Burnett describes very succinctly the war spirit in Texas. He reported in June, 1898, that "Texas is now raising a great amount of cotton and corn and cattle and colonels." Texas had been asked to furnish 4,000 volunteers for the war but Burnett surmised that Texas could furnish at least that many "colonels." Commenting on the Beer Tax passed by Congress to help pay for the war, Burnett said:

Congress has decided to tax beer \$2 per barrell to raise money to fight Spain. Now if Congress will tax Spain in order to raise revenue to fight beer, the thing will be evenly adjusted. Beer is a worse enemy to America than Spain can possibly be.<sup>66</sup>

### Imperialism

The military conquest of Spanish possessions led to a discussion of the disposition of these territories after the war. The end of the war found the United States in possession of large territories with millions of people assumed by most Americans to be ignorant and unable to govern themselves. It was believed that lawlessness and anarchy would result if they were freed. There was also a danger that the European nations, especially

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<sup>65</sup>"Burnett's Budget," GA 50 (May 19, 1898): 315.

<sup>66</sup>"Burnett's Budget," GA 50 (June 2, 1898): 347.

Germany, would take control of the freed territories. To protect the liberty of the inhabitants, many Americans believed they must retain control of these territories.<sup>67</sup>

Among the Disciples, Isaac Errett argued that the United States had the moral responsibility to assume its proper role among the world powers. Political adjustments must be made so that the United States could assume its proper role, not as a "child" among the nations but as a world power. Errett believed it would be a "national sin and dishonor" not to accept responsibility for these oppressed people. The United States must unselfishly accept this trust for "the unselfish nations are the living nations, and must inherit and divide between them the entire earth."<sup>68</sup>

Errett and others thought that the acquisition of overseas territory presented an opportunity to preach the gospel to the "ignorant and superstitious people." Consequently, the "cause of true religion" required that the United States hold the territories wrested from Spain.<sup>69</sup> James Garrison believed the United States

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<sup>67</sup>Bailey, A Diplomatic History, pp. 471-473.

<sup>68</sup>"Settling National Problems," CS 34 (July 30, 1898): 992.

<sup>69</sup>Errett, "The Nation's Responsibility," CS 34 (July 16, 1898): 928.

had a mission to lift up the degraded and oppressed people of the earth. Their victory over Spain was a reminder of this responsibility.<sup>70</sup>

The rebellion of the Filipinos against American rule led to a debate over United States foreign policy toward the Philippines. The fighting in the Philippines also had a sobering effect on some jingoistic Disciples editors. Isaac Errett complained of the glorification of the "grim visage of war" having a harmful effect upon the youth of America. While the Cuban cause was just, the "dogs of war" were still abroad. He complained of a spirit of intolerance for those who tried to discuss the United States policy toward the Philippines. He stated that they were denounced by the secular press and much of the religious press as traitors. Errett called for an open discussion on Philippine policy.<sup>71</sup>

Church of Christ pacifists also expressed their views of imperialism. Since the United States had possession, David Lipscomb believed Cuba must be ruled by the United States until order and government could be restored. The United States was prepared for this role by her

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<sup>70</sup>"Influence of the Present War on the Nation's Future," p. 322.

<sup>71</sup>"The Peace conference," CS 35 (May 6, 1899): 563.

unique spirit of "kindness, mercy and helpfulness" to the weaker nations. This spirit resulted from the influence of the Bible that "excited a higher sense of morality, virtue, and honor" in the United States.<sup>72</sup>

There was division among leading churchmen on the political issue of how to deal with the Philippines. F. D. Srygley stated that several preachers supported political involvement there as a means of christianizing the Philippines. On the other hand, political opponents to involvement were using pacifist arguments to support their position. Srygley pointed out the inconsistency of Christians who supported the Filipino War: "The spirit and teaching of Christianity make slow progress with political preachers and Christians against the doctrine of political platform."<sup>73</sup>

J. C. McQuiddy, publisher of the Gospel Advocate, was critical of United States policy toward the dependent territories. Instead of Christianity, exports of alcoholic beverages were increasing to Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. He also criticized the use of military force in these possessions. He believed: "too many professed Christians act as though there was more civilizing

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<sup>72</sup>"The War and Its Lessons," p. 508.

<sup>73</sup>"War--A Political Issue," GA 51 (November 9, 1899): 705.

influence and power in a Gatling gun than in the religion of Jesus Christ." The only way to be a blessing instead of a curse to these people was to civilize them by converting them to Christianity.<sup>74</sup>

### Conclusion

Pacifist ideals were out of step with the militant spirit of America in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The pressures of politics, war, and expansion brought northern Disciples into the mainstream of American Protestantism. Though they considered themselves to be pacifists when they supported the peace movement and arbitration, they really were not. They became caught up in Anglo-Saxon racism, Manifest Destiny, and anti-Catholicism like the other mainstream Protestant churches. They joined wholeheartedly into political activity and imperialism under the guise of using Christian influence and opportunities to do mission work.

The Church of Christ pacifist protest of political strife, militarism, and war represented a minority view, even within the conservative wing of the Restoration Movement. The century ended with their voice still vital and vocal. But their views were influenced by

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<sup>74</sup> "Civilizing Our Dependencies," GA 51 (October 26, 1899): 675.

the pressures of the age. Their beliefs were becoming more out of step with the times and many in their own brotherhood. Even pacifist Disciples accepted the idea that the United States had a mission to civilize and convert backward peoples.

The Restoration Movement was maturing, but it was also divided. In 1906, recognition of the already separate existence of the Churches of Christ would be formally given by the United States Bureau of the Census. Doctrinal issues played a major role in this split, but sectional and philosophical differences were just as important. One major difference between the leaders of the Churches of Christ and the Disciples of Christ was their views on the Christian's relationship to the world around him. Southern Churches of Christ leaders had a limited view that defined narrowly what relationship they could have with the world and its institutions. It will be seen how this narrow, sectarian view would fare when faced with the crises of the twentieth century.

#### Application: Religion and Society

Protestantism played a vital and active role in the life of Americans in the nineteenth century. As the society fragmented due to sectional, economic, class, and cultural factors, so did Protestantism. Protestant groups

acquired the characteristics of the portion of society they served.<sup>75</sup>

A case study of the adaptation of the value system of the membership of a group by its church can be made of the Disciples of Christ. Disciples in the urban areas adapted their beliefs and practices to the values of their membership. Southern, rural Disciples developed a separate set of beliefs and practices in agreement with the values of the people they served.

This approach would be applicable in an upper level course in: the cultural history of the nineteenth century; a general history of American Religion; or a history of the Disciples of Christ or the Churches of Christ.

Certain topics discussed in this chapter would be applicable to an introductory survey of American history. Some of these topics are the following: the attitude of the religious press toward national and international events such as the Spanish-American War; the religious motive for imperialism; Protestant churches and Anglo-Saxon racism; or the influence of religious leaders on public policy. The Disciples' views expressed through their papers illustrate the religious motive for imperialism.

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<sup>75</sup>Handy, "Church and Culture," pp. 90, 91, 95.

## Chapter 5

### THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST AND WORLD WAR I

#### The Religious Situation (1900-1914)

The major trends in thought and action in the American Protestant churches of the 1890s continued into the first two decades of the 1900s. Liberalism and the Social Gospel flourished in the northern urban churches. The socially active churches were concerned about many of the same issues as Progressivism. Among these concerns were the effects of industrialization, urbanization, the influx of new immigrant groups, and prohibition. The churches developed many new agencies to carry out their social programs. On the other hand, Northern religious thought found few adherents in the South as the rural, small town southern churches retained the social patterns, doctrines, and practices of the 1800s.

The Protestant churches remained divided as they moved into the new century. Northern churches particularly were divided by the growing fundamentalist controversy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ahlstrom, A Religious History, pp. 728, 880.



After the 1890s, Americans became more internationally minded. The increased consciousness of the world around them revived the peace movement. Religious leaders supported the search for ways of assuring peace for future generations. Between 1900 and 1910 the peace movement doubled its membership. Industrialists such as Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford gave financial support to the movement. The American religious community was optimistic about the prospects for peace. Peace advocates believed no nation could afford to fight a major war because of the cost of modern weapons. Many envisioned the coming years as a glorious age of peace when justice would be established by political processes, not war.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Coming of World War I

This optimistic viewpoint on war and peace was not based on a realistic view of the European situation. Commercial and military rivalry between the major European powers led to the creation of a system of military alliances and a costly arms race. Minor clashes occurred between the European powers as they competed for control of various regions for commercial wealth. Several problem areas existed around the world. The unstable Balkan region was the source of the spark that set the rival

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<sup>2</sup>Sweet, The Story of Religion, pp. 391, 398-399.

alliance systems into motion. The assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, in June, 1914, led to World War I by August, 1914.

President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the neutrality of the United States in the conflict. But neutrality proved elusive because of commercial ties with the Allies, pro-Allied sympathy among Americans, and the effects of Allied propaganda efforts against Germany. As the war continued, many Americans felt the United States should help the Allies. German submarine warfare against United States shipping was a key cause of a declaration of war against Germany by the United States on April 6, 1917.

The war quickly became a crusade for the United States. The total resources of the nation were mobilized to fight the conflict. A strong, well organized propaganda campaign was conducted to win the support of every part of society for the war effort. Churches, the press, schools, and all other institutions either willingly, or under pressure, supported the war. Any dissent to the crusade by any person or group was suppressed by public pressure or governmental action at some level.

Most of the American churches wholeheartedly joined the crusade. Ray Abrams documented extensively this alliance of patriotism and religion. The churches were convinced of the necessity of the war, the righteousness of the cause, and evil nature of the enemy. The propaganda program, appealing to "the prejudices, dreams, fears, sentiments, illusions, and hopes of the people" created a solidarity of opinion that became a crusade.<sup>3</sup> The churches "warmed the zeal of patriotism with the fires of religion." Those who expressed doubts or fears about the crusade were pressured by the patriotic majority in every way possible. Newspapers praised those considered loyal while branding those who dissented as traitors.<sup>4</sup>

A key point of conflict between dissenters to the war and the government was conscription. The Selective Service Act of 1917 established universal military service. Local civilian boards were given the authority to register and call into service eligible men. The act allowed exemption from combat only for members of the historic peace churches such as the Mennonites and Quakers. Even those eligible for exemptions had to serve in non-combatant

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<sup>3</sup>Preachers Present Arms (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1969), pp. xv, xvi.

<sup>4</sup>Cushing Strout, The New Heavens and New Earth: Political Religion in America (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974), p. 249.

branches of military service. The local boards determined the validity of all claims for conscientious objector status. President Wilson, by executive order, broadened the eligibility requirements for exemptions to include individual religious principles. On March 20, 1918, he included non-religious objectors among those eligible to claim non-combatant status.<sup>5</sup>

Except for a few ministers, mostly Unitarians, there were few dissenters from the major religious groups. There was no tolerance for dissent to the war in the major churches. Those ministers who opposed the war were driven from their pulpits and some were arrested and jailed. The pacifist dissent was most prevalent in the smaller, poorer churches such as the Mennonites, Quakers, and Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>6</sup>

Conscientious objectors who refused non-combatant service presented the most difficult problem for the military authorities. The treatment of the "absolutists" was a black mark upon the army. Many were cruelly punished, some even died of mistreatment, and all were pressured

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<sup>5</sup>John O. Sullivan and Alan M. Meckler, The Draft and Its Enemies: A Documentary History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), pp. 105-106.

<sup>6</sup>Strout, New Heavens, p. 249; H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, Opponents of War: 1917-1918 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 114-117.

to give up their convictions. Many were court-martialed and given unusually severe sentences.<sup>7</sup>

Local draft boards granted exemptions to 56,830 registrants. Of these, 20,873 were inducted into the army. Non-religious objectors were usually not granted exemptions because the boards doubted their sincerity. Many in the camps claimed exemptions but did not have certificates from their draft boards.<sup>8</sup>

Only 3,989 inductees refused to accept any kind of military duty.<sup>9</sup> A commission composed of Major Walter Kellogg, of the Judge-Advocates Office, Judge Julian W. Mack, and Dean Harlan F. Stone of Columbia University Law School was created to examine these cases.<sup>10</sup> Eventually, 1,300 of these men accepted some form of non-combatant service. Another 1,200 accepted farm and industrial furloughs with pay in excess of \$30 per month donated to the Red Cross. Ninety-nine went to the Friends Reconstruction Unit. Court-martials were held for 504 men who

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<sup>7</sup>Peterson, Opponents of War, pp. 126-130.

<sup>8</sup>Sullivan, The Draft, p. 106; Abrams, Preachers Present Arms, p. 134.

<sup>9</sup>This number does not include those who were tried in civil courts for refusal to register or take a medical examination, those in this group who were never brought to court, or draft dodgers. Abrams, Preachers Present Arms, p. 134.

<sup>10</sup>Sullivan, The Draft, p. 106.

refused all efforts at compromise. Of this number, about 360 were religious objectors with about half being Mennonites. Of the 504 men, 450 were sent to prison.<sup>11</sup> The remainder of the men who had refused any service were still in the camps when the armistice was signed.<sup>12</sup>

### The Churches of Christ and the Coming of the War

Between 1906 and 1916 the Churches of Christ doubled their membership, making them one of the fastest growing American religious groups. The strength of the church was in the states of Tennessee, Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. For the most part congregations were rural and worshipped in modest frame buildings, if they owned a building. Many met in rented or borrowed facilities. There were not many "located" ministers, but most ministers preached on Sunday and held evangelistic meetings in the summer while they farmed, taught school, operated a business or worked at some other type of job.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Only one of those court-martialed was acquitted. Original sentences had been severe, including 17 death sentences, 142 life terms, and many lengthy prison terms. Reviewing authorities disapproved 53 sentences and mitigated 185. All 17 death sentences were reversed. See Norman Thomas, Is Conscience a Crime? (New York: Garland Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), p. 178.

<sup>12</sup>Abrams, Preachers Present Arms, p. 135; Peterson, Opponents to the War, p. 131.

<sup>13</sup>Humble, The Restoration Movement, p. 70. "Located" ministers were salaried, full-time men whose only occupation was preaching for a local church.

David Lipscomb exerted strong influence upon the leadership of the church through the Gospel Advocate. A large number of prominent leaders agreed with Lipscomb's views on civil government and war. Earl West attributes much of the vitality of the church to this single-minded commitment to the kingdom of God to the exclusion of any involvement in any earthly kingdoms.<sup>14</sup> Most members of the church limited their participation in politics, though they were divided in their views on war and civil government.<sup>15</sup>

There were three positions in the church on these issues. One group believed nothing prohibited full participation in government and war. These continued a tradition that had always existed among the membership of the church since early in the Restoration Movement. On the other extreme, the anti-government pacifists continued to oppose both war and political participation in the tradition of David Lipscomb's teaching. A moderate position which gained strength during World War I supported the government including non-combatant service but still drew the line at combatant service. Pressures during the war forced the Gospel Advocate to this position.

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<sup>14</sup> Earl Irvin West, The Search for the Ancient Order: A History of the Restoration Movement, 1800-1918, vol. 3, 1900-1918 (Indianapolis, Indiana: Religious Book Service, 1979), p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Harrell, Social Sources, p. 28.

World War I proved to be a critical test of David Lipscomb's beliefs opposing political involvement and war. During the war years pacifist leaders of the Churches of Christ were concerned about three issues. First, the press of the Churches of Christ expressed a desire for peace, not just for the United States, but for the world. Second, efforts were made to obtain exemption from military service for those young men who were opposed to war. Third, church leaders searched for avenues of patriotic service in which members of the church could conscientiously participate while satisfying the demands of public opinion and the government.

#### Advocates for Peace

In 1914, the danger of a general European war concerned the Disciples. F. L. Rowe, the editor of the Christian Leader of Indianapolis, Indiana, asked Christians to pray that war could be avoided. He believed that a general European war would be "something terrible to think of."<sup>16</sup>

When the war began in Europe the Church of Christ papers expressed a feeling of gloom and sadness. Journal editors encouraged their readers to work for peace so

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<sup>16</sup>"European War," Christian Leader 28 (August 4, 1914): 9, hereafter referred to as CL.



that the United States could be the proper example for the European powers. Christians were told to pray for the rulers of Europe so that the war might end, and Europeans could again live "quiet, peaceable and godly" lives. The terrible effects of the war were noted. The war was blamed for untold suffering, economic dislocation, moral degeneration, and disruption of all religious work. Hatred produced by the war was causing many to "glory in the destruction of their fellow beings" in violation of God's will.<sup>17</sup>

The influence of David Lipscomb's beliefs can be seen in the writings of opponents of war. John E. Dunn, a Nashville evangelist, urged all Christians to make a careful study of the relationship of the Christian to government and war. Dunn stated that neither he nor his four brothers voted, and he intended to "put forth my best efforts to teach my children never to vote or in any way participate in human governments." Dunn tied voting to war because he believed that anyone who voted for a representative who declared war shared in the responsibility for the war.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>J. C. McQuiddy, "Spirit of the Press," GA 56 (August 13, 1914): 869; (August 20, 1914): 893; (September 17, 1914): 985; (November 12, 1914): 1189.

<sup>18</sup>"The Christian's Relationship to War, Politics, and Human Governments," GA 57 (January 21, 1915): 50-51. See also John T. Poe, "The War in Europe," FF 33 (March 14, 1916): 2. Poe makes basically the same argument as Dunn against political involvement.

As the war grew more intense, pacifists in the Churches of Christ persisted in their hope the United States could avoid war. In May, 1915, the sinking of the British passenger liner, the Lusitania, by a German submarine, with heavy loss of American lives, inflamed American passions against Germany. J. C. McQuiddy, the managing editor of the Gospel Advocate, asked Christians to refrain from inflammatory speeches and discourage talk of war. As deplorable as the sinking of the Lusitania was, McQuiddy did not believe the incident was worth the cost of life that entry into the war would mean. He requested prayers that "President Wilson have the wisdom to maintain the national honor and dignity without the sacrifice of human life."<sup>19</sup>

A. B. Lipscomb, the nephew of David Lipscomb, was one of the managing editors of the Gospel Advocate during this time. He believed the only sure way to peace was the conversion of men to Christianity. To Lipscomb, events since 1900 pointed out the futility of seeking peace outside the kingdom of God. In spite of peace prophets who, since 1900, had proclaimed an unprecedented era of peace, two bloody Balkan wars had been fought and World War I was in progress. And now former peace advocates in the United States were beginning

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<sup>19</sup>"Our President," GA 57 (May 20, 1915): 490.

to advocate war. A. B. Lipscomb believed the only basis for peace was the word of God.<sup>20</sup>

With Europe running "red with blood" and bankruptcy threatening the warring nations, leaders of the Churches of Christ stepped up their anti-war teaching. Christians were encouraged not to become hardened to the horrors of the war, but to continue to pray that God would overrule the spirit of war for the good of the people.<sup>21</sup>

Supporters of the preparedness movement were criticized by the pacifists. Christians were urged to avoid involvement in the patriotic activities designed to promote a "war spirit." J. C. McQuiddy encouraged Churches of Christ to not participate in such activities as singing the national anthem in the Sunday worship on July 4 as some religious leaders had suggested. National affairs and religion must not be confused in this way.<sup>22</sup> Pacifists inquired if Christ was with those who were marching in parades with banners flying, "their hearts ablaze

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<sup>20</sup>"Word and Work," GA 57 (July 8, 1915): 665-666.

<sup>21</sup>C. H. P. Showalter, "Editorial," FF 33 (February 29, 1916): 2; G. C. Crockatt, "The World's Being Shaken," CL 30 (January 11, 1916): 3.

<sup>22</sup>J. C. McQuiddy, "Spirit of the Press," GA 57 (July 15, 1915): 701.

with patriotism and military fire . . . whooping up war and militarism."<sup>23</sup>

In March 1917, A. B. Lipscomb spoke out against the inconsistent position of war advocates. He noted their demand for heroic sacrifices to fight Germany as though fighting was the only way to settle differences between Germany and the United States. Yet, he believed they were unwilling to sacrifice a little bit of "national pride" or to ignore a "slight insult" at the hands of Germany. Many peace advocates had prayed for peace until diplomatic relations were broken, but then they became supporters of war. Lipscomb believed true Christians were opposed to war. No national crisis would cause Christians to "begin to wound and kill that which for ages they sought to save."<sup>24</sup>

In the months before the declaration of war, pacifists continued to hope the United States could avoid war. President Wilson was praised for his continued neutral policy. F. L. Rowe, in the Christian Leader, declared that President Wilson would not let the United States

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<sup>23</sup>A. M. George, "The Preparedness Craze," FF 33 (October 17, 1916): 8; S. R. Cassius, "Preparedness," CL 30 (February 1, 1916): 6.

<sup>24</sup>"Why I Am a Pacifist," GA 59 (March 8, 1917): 225; "Some Letters on the War Subject," GA 59 (March 22, 1917): 281.

become involved in the war because "he does not want the responsibility of bloodshed upon his shoulders."<sup>25</sup>

### The Churches of Christ in World War I

When war came, in April, 1917, members of the Churches of Christ were unsure of what part they could take in it. Their problem was to maintain loyalty to their conscience while remaining loyal to their government. Their solution to this problem made World War I a watershed in the history of the Churches of Christ.

Three factors influenced the reaction of the Churches of Christ to the war. First, David Lipscomb was no longer active because of advancing years and ill health. He died in November, 1917, just a few months after the war began. The new leadership of the Gospel Advocate was still influenced by his traditional stance against political involvement and war. The loss of Lipscomb, however, was critical because he was the ablest defender of his views. His successors, J. C. McQuiddy and A. B. Lipscomb, faced almost insurmountable pressures as they tried to maintain his views in the midst of war hysteria.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>"Germany and America," CL 30 (May 9, 1916): 1.

<sup>26</sup>Earl Irvin West, "World War I and the Decline of David Lipscomb's Civil Government," (Unpublished manuscript in Harding Graduate School of Religion Library, 1976): 2.

Second, secularism was making serious inroads on religion nationwide. Americans had become increasingly concerned with social welfare, economic prosperity, and military security. Traditional southern religious values were deemphasized as there was more and more accommodation to the world. This process peaked in the 1920s.<sup>27</sup>

Third, the separatist-pacifist views of Lipscomb were overwhelmed by the unprecedented superpatriotism of World War I. In general, members of the Churches of Christ, cooperated in the war effort, many entered the military service, others performed religious work in the military camps, and others took government jobs in the expanding government bureaucracy.<sup>28</sup>

Church of Christ journals continued to publish pacifist articles after the United States entered the war. In August, 1917, the Gospel Advocate reprinted Moses E. Lard's article "Should Christians Go to War?" This article had been published in Lard's Quarterly in 1866 and was the strongest statement by a restoration leader against war.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.; Marty, Righteous Empire, p. 224.

<sup>28</sup> West, "World War I and the Decline of Civil Government," pp. 2-3.

<sup>29</sup> "Should Christians Go to War?" GA 59 (August 9, 1917): 763-764; (August 16, 1917): 786-788.

Serious tension developed within the membership over the war issue because not all members of the Churches of Christ opposed the war. Many believed the war was justified and individual Christians were obligated to support the government even in battle. Daniel Sommer, the editor of the Apostolic Times and a leader of the church in Indiana, gave his unqualified support to the war effort. The United States had a right to be involved because the German government was an agent of Satan and the Kaiser was "an international outlaw." Sommer believed the war was a struggle between Satan and Christianity. Because God forbids murder, Sommer believed that he also "commands that someone kill the murderer."<sup>30</sup>

The justification of the war as a "righteous war" against evil was used by several members of the church. War was regarded as the ultimate form of discipline, used by God when reason, love, and persuasion failed. For society to maintain itself, the wrongdoer must be punished. To take away the right of war would tie the hands of society in any other kind of discipline. A Christian could go to war if it was for justice, liberty,

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<sup>30</sup>Matthew C. Morrison, Like a Lion: Daniel Sommer's Seventy Years of Preaching (Murfreesboro, Tennessee: DeHoff Publications, 1975), pp. 120-121.

and right. He could not go for personal vengeance, but as a means of disciplinary action to secure future rights.<sup>31</sup>

Some members of the church regarded the war as a war for the defense of the ideals of the United States and the very basis of western civilization. U. G. Wilkinson from Oklahoma stated that if the institutions for which Americans' ancestors died were to be preserved and transmitted to future generations, "we must fight or submit." President Wilson was praised for raising "the banner once more against ancient tyranny."<sup>32</sup>

#### The Conscientious Objectors

The First World War, as had the Civil War, became a trial for those members of the Churches of Christ who were pacifists. E. A. Elam expressed the conflict for Christians who were torn between loyalty to their country and their conscience when he asked: "What must we do?" Christians must not become a part of lawless mobs and resist the draft law or any other law as some

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<sup>31</sup>Fred Sommer, "Should Christians Go to War?" CL 31 (April 3, 1917): 2-3.

<sup>32</sup>"Should We Go to War?" FF 34 (May 22, 1917): 3; also W. M. W. "A Necessary War Measure," CL 31 (May 1, 1917): 2-3; H. and P. "Religion for these War Times," CL 31 (April 24, 1917): 7.



were doing.<sup>33</sup> As early as January, 1916, leaders of the church were expressing concern about the possibility of military service.<sup>34</sup> As the crisis deepened, the military conscription and exemption from it were much discussed topics. Christians who wanted exemptions were advised to send petitions to their Congressional representatives who would then route the petitions to the proper authorities.<sup>35</sup> Advertisements for David Lipscomb's Civil Government appeared in the Gospel Advocate. The ad stated the situation for Christians was identical to the Civil War period. The petitions asking for exemption from military service during the Civil War could easily be adapted for the church's present needs.<sup>36</sup>

The declaration of war by Congress on April 6, 1917, made the issue of exemption even more pressing. A. B. Lipscomb was optimistic that genuine conscientious objectors would receive exemptions from the government. However, he advised his readers to not ask for exemptions

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<sup>33</sup>E. A. Elam, "What Must We Do?" GA 59 (August 16, 1917): 791-793.

<sup>34</sup>John Straiton, "The Great Effect of War Upon the Church," GA 58 (January 6, 1916): 8.

<sup>35</sup>J. C. McQuiddy, "In the Event of Conscription," GA 59 (March 22, 1917): 282.

<sup>36</sup>See "How to Prepare Petitions Against Carnal Warfare," GA 59 (April 5, 1917): 334; Flavil Hall, "Field Notes and Helpful Hints," CL 30 (May 8, 1917): 6. Hall also published a sample petition to be used by conscientious objectors to ask for exemptions.

until a conscription act was passed. If it became necessary, petitions could be quickly prepared, circulated, and presented to the authorities.<sup>37</sup>

Various efforts were made to obtain exemptions for members of the Churches of Christ. A minister from Killen, Texas began to compile a list of all church members so that an application for exemption could be made.<sup>38</sup> A few congregations sent petitions, patterned after those during the Civil War, to the government. A delegate from the congregation in Moody, Texas went to Washington, D. C., to present a petition to their Congressman, Tom T. Connally, asking for exemption for all members of their congregation.<sup>39</sup> The church at Beaumont, Texas sent a petition to Secretary of War Newton Baker.<sup>40</sup> In a letter to J. C. McQuiddy in 1920, Edwin Davis, the former chairman of the Middle Tennessee District Selective Service Board, stated that on two occasions he had forwarded appeals written by McQuiddy for exemption for all members of the Churches of Christ

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<sup>37</sup>"Exempt from Conscription," GA 59 (April 19, 1917): 377.

<sup>38</sup>W. T. Carter, "Can a Christian Go to War?" FF 34 (April 24, 1917): 1.

<sup>39</sup>A. B. Lipscomb, "An Appeal for Exemption," GA 59 (June 28, 1917): 618.

<sup>40</sup>J. C. Estes, "The Master's Vineyard," GA 59 (May 31, 1917): 540.

to General E. H. Crowder, the Provost General. Both appeals were rejected.<sup>41</sup> H. Leo Boles, president of David Lipscomb College, and his faculty in late 1917 sent a protest of the war to President Wilson.<sup>42</sup>

The passage of the Selective Service Act on May 18, 1917, did little to clarify the status of members of the Churches of Christ. General Crowder replied to the petition of the church at Moody, Texas through the office of Tennessee Senator Kenneth McKellar. Crowder stated that members of the Churches of Christ would have to ask for exemptions from their local draft boards as provided for in the Selective Service Act.<sup>43</sup> On July 5, 1917, A. B. Lipscomb announced that a number of brethren had prepared a folder with a tentative statement and petition to be presented to local draft boards.<sup>44</sup>

Young men were encouraged to register on June 5, 1917, and then to request exemptions from the local boards. It was hoped that President Wilson would clarify

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<sup>41</sup>Davis to McQuiddy, 2 September, 1920 in F. W. Smith, "As a Matter of Simple Justice," GA 62 (September 23, 1920): 931.

<sup>42</sup>William S. Banowsky, Mirror of a Movement (Dallas: Christian Publishing Company, 1965), p. 412.

<sup>43</sup>A. B. Lipscomb, "An Appeal for Exemption," p. 618.

<sup>44</sup>"Folder Relative to Exemption," GA 59 (July 5, 1917): 648.

the eligibility standards for exemption.<sup>45</sup> The status of members of the Churches of Christ was unclear due to the vagueness of the exemption clause in the Selective Service Act. The clause provided exemptions for those who "were members of well recognized religious sects in which the creed prohibits participation in war." There were three problems with Churches of Christ with this provision. First, the Churches of Christ were strictly congregational in their government. Therefore, there was no central leadership to speak for the membership as a whole. Second, Churches of Christ had no formal, written creed to state the beliefs of the church on this issue. Third, the membership of the church was divided on the issue so there was no united stand for exemption.<sup>46</sup>

In February, 1918, a committee of prominent members of the Churches of Christ went to Washington, D. C., to meet with General Crowder to clarify the status of the church. The committee was made up of Dr. J. S. Ward, a prominent Nashville physician, J. N. Armstrong, president of Cordell Christian College, and J. W. Shepherd,

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<sup>45</sup>A. B. Lipscomb and J. C. McQuiddy, "What Action Should Christians Take," GA 59 (May 17, 1917): 473-474; A. B. Lipscomb, "The Government's Provision for Exemption," GA 59 (May 31, 1917): 525.

<sup>46</sup>J. W. Shepherd, "Are Members of Churches of Christ Exempt from Military Service?" CL 32 (March 5, 1918): 9.

an associate editor of the Christian Leader. The committee presented a plea for exemption based on the teachings of the Bible and pioneer preachers of the church. General Crowder assured them that Church of Christ preachers could be exempt as ministers if they produced affidavits from the congregation where they preached.<sup>47</sup> The absence of a written creed was no barrier to requesting exempt status because President Wilson had extended the eligibility for exemption from combat to include "creeds or principles" against killing. However, General Crowder told the committee that there would be no exemption from non-combatant service. All draftees would have to serve in some capacity, and there could be no appeal of the placement.<sup>48</sup>

Members of any group who publicly claimed conscientious objector status during World War I were forced to exhibit tremendous courage because of the superpatriotism of the time. Such men were called "shirkers," "slackers," "yellow-bellies," and "cowards." There were mob actions and personal attacks on conscientious objectors and their families.<sup>49</sup> A. B. Lipscomb challenged sincere

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<sup>47</sup>The status of preachers was unclear because Churches of Christ did not formally ordain ministers nor were most of them "located" but worked at other jobs in addition to preaching.

<sup>48</sup>Shepherd, "Are Members of Churches Exempt?" p. 9.

<sup>49</sup>Peterson, Opponents of War, pp. 123-124.

Christians to dare be called a "coward for Jesus' sake" by standing for their principles in face of the criticism and name calling.<sup>50</sup>

The patriotic spirit of the war affected the attitude within the Churches of Christ. Many members questioned the sincerity of conscientious objectors from the church. There was suspicion of the motives of those "recently" converted to pacifism. Those who were claiming objector status should have had well-known views against war for a long time. One member of the church wrote: "I should not have formed that opinion when the United States was drawn into the war and expect it to count for much."<sup>51</sup>

J. C. McQuiddy questioned the motives of those who voted and held political office but claimed objector status when war was declared. Those who had part in running the government were logically bound to support the war. McQuiddy believed these political activists must resign their offices and withdraw completely from political affairs to prove their sincerity. Those who undeservedly claimed conscientious objector status only

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<sup>50</sup>"Being a 'Coward' for Jesus' Sake," GA 59 (May 3, 1917): 425.

<sup>51</sup>A. W. Young, "Opposition to War," FF (May 29, 1917): 3.

made it more difficult for the genuine objector to secure exemption from combat.<sup>52</sup>

McQuiddy, however, counseled members of Churches of Christ not to oppose government policy but to show their patriotism in every way possible without violating their convictions.<sup>53</sup> Others warned members of the church of the consequences of participation in any anti-war movement against the government. Young men were urged not to claim exemptions in order to avoid their responsibility. If they could not conscientiously engage in combat, they should accept an alternative form of service. Some in the Churches of Christ believed those "slackers" who refused any form of military service were "unrighteous before God and disloyal to their government."<sup>54</sup>

Early in the war the government put into operation a massive campaign to control every aspect of the national life for the war effort. The full power of the government was behind efforts to suppress those who criticized or lacked enthusiasm for the war. Arrest of dissenters,

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<sup>52</sup>"Conscientious Objectors," GA 59 (July 26, 1917): 720.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>F. F. Cochran, "Military Duties," FF 34 (August 7, 1917): 2-3; G. H. P. Showalter, "The Relation of Christians to War," FF 35 (June 11, 1918): 2; G. H. P. Showalter, "Editorial," FF 35 (June 18, 1918): 2.

suppression of newspapers, and public pressure were brought against any anti-war sentiment.<sup>55</sup>

In the summer of 1917, Lee Douglas, United States Attorney, Middle Tennessee District, received complaints about an article in the Gospel Advocate. It was suspected of being seditious because it was allegedly encouraging young men not to register for the draft. J. C. McQuiddy, managing editor and publisher of the journal, was summoned to Douglas' office, told that such articles were not approved by the government, and threatened with arrest if such publications did not stop. McQuiddy defended his stand against war in general, and assured Douglas that he had not intended to antagonize the government. After the war, Douglas stated that no further complaints had been received against McQuiddy or the Gospel Advocate. On the other hand, McQuiddy had intervened with Douglas on behalf of Church of Christ preachers who were being investigated for disloyalty.<sup>56</sup>

Pressure from the government, a desire to cooperate in the war effort, and the division in the church over

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<sup>55</sup> see Peterson, Opponents of War, pp. 93-100.

<sup>56</sup> Douglas to McQuiddy, 26 August, 1920 in Smith, "As a Matter of Simple Justice," p. 931. This letter was written by Douglas in 1920 to explain McQuiddy's position during the war. Critics of McQuiddy had charged that he had been pro-war and had left the pacifist position of David Lipscomb.



the war question led to a change in editorial policy of the Gospel Advocate. By mid-August, 1917, the journal dropped pacifist articles and any discussion of the Christian and civil government from its columns. In the August 16 issue, McQuiddy explained the change: "Instead of writing further articles on the war let us go forward and in every possible way help the government to feed the hungry and starving." McQuiddy stated the Gospel Advocate would be helpful to the government in every way.<sup>57</sup>

M. C. Kurfees, associate editor of the Gospel Advocate, agreed with the wisdom of this policy. He believed that a discussion of the Christian and civil government and the war issue would widen the division in the church. Also, it would add to the problems of the government by creating friction between the Churches of Christ and the government.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>"Conscience and Conscription," GA 59 (August 16, 1917): 790. It is uncertain how much influence the Douglas interview had on McQuiddy's change of policy. As early as February, 1916, McQuiddy had urged, as a good work, aid for the hungry or wounded soldiers in Europe. Also McQuiddy later accused his critics of ceasing anti-war talk under government pressure. Probably a combination of factors led to the change of policy. See "Query Department," GA 58 (February 3, 1916): 114; "The Christian's Relation to Carnal Warfare," GA 62 (April 15, 1920): 691.

<sup>58</sup>"Some Queries on Brother Dunn's Work," GA 60 (February 7, 1918): 126-127.

Other leaders of the Churches of Christ criticized the Gospel Advocate's change in editorial policy. According to these critics the conscientious objector in the church was being abandoned. J. W. Shepherd and J. N. Armstrong, former writers for the Gospel Advocate, shifted to the Christian Leader where the policy was sympathetic to the pacifist. Shepherd, who became an associate editor, believed the Gospel Advocate's support of the work in the camps through the YMCA was the same as support for missionary societies. He wrote, "It is possible that the columns of the Gospel Advocate are now to be used to forward the interests of outside organizations that it has always contended are wrong and contrary to the will of God."<sup>59</sup>

After the war was over, McQuiddy explained that he believed the wisest and most prudent course for the journal was the one taken. Strong anti-war preaching would have served no good purpose. It was a time to stand by the soldiers and do all possible to help them.<sup>60</sup>

Another victim of war hysteria was Cordell Christian College at Cordell, Oklahoma. President J. N. Armstrong,

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<sup>59</sup>"The Gospel Advocate and the YMCA," CL 32 (February 5, 1918): 9 in Earl West, Search for the Ancient Order, 3: 378.

<sup>60</sup>"The Christian's Relation to Carnal Warfare," p. 191.

most of the faculty, many of the students, and all but one member of its board of trustees were pacifists. J. N. Armstrong had accepted the anti-government pacifism of David Lipscomb before the war. They did not advocate pacifism as a national policy, but they believed that a Christian was not obligated to the government to violate their conscience by killing in war.<sup>61</sup>

L. C. Sears, the biographer of Armstrong, states the Cordell Selective Service Board was so patriotic that men physically unfit for military service were inducted and had to be turned back at the camps. The Selective Service Board and local defense council became upset at the pacifist position of those at Cordell Christian. Most students who were drafted accepted non-combatant service, but at least one, Ben Randolph, refused even non-combatant status.<sup>62</sup>

The college community supported the war effort in various ways which did not violate their principles. Both students and faculty bought Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps, raised money for the Red Cross, performed

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<sup>61</sup>L. C. Sears, For Freedom: The Biography of John Nelson Armstrong (Austin, Texas: Sweet Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 153-154; M. Norvell Young, A History of Colleges Established and Controlled by Members of the Churches of Christ (Kansas City, Missouri: Old Paths Book Club, 1948), p. 125.

<sup>62</sup>Sears, For Freedom, pp. 155-156.

volunteer work on farms, and supported the government's conservative program. By July, 1918, thirty-eight students and teachers had entered military service, eighteen as volunteers. J. D. Armstrong, the president's nephew, was among the volunteers.<sup>63</sup>

War hysteria in the town caused an intense resentment against the college. Members of the local Church of Christ, who had opposed Armstrong in the past, turned against the school. The local defense council ordered the reorganization of the school to conform to all "military policies and requirements" so that it would fully support the war effort. No formal charges of disloyalty were brought against anyone at the school. Nevertheless, the defense council ordered the school not to open until a new board, president, and faculty was installed that would back the government completely.<sup>64</sup>

W. D. Hockaday, president of the board of Trustees and D. R. Dial, secretary of the board of Trustees, asked for an informal hearing before the defense council.

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 156. It is unclear if these entered into combatant or non-combatant service. At least J. D. Armstrong went to the army as a combatant.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 156-157; M. N. Young, History of Colleges, p. 125. Peterson, Opponents of War, pp. 19, 151 describes extralegal actions of other defense councils in suppressing dissent to the war.

However, no concessions were made to the college. An appeal was made to the State Council of Defense for protection from the local council. Oklahoma Supreme Court Judge Thomas J. Owens was sent to investigate. He found no disloyalty and in a public statement exonerated the school of any unpatriotic actions. But he felt it unwise under the circumstances for the school to continue. Armstrong and the faculty resigned and the trustees closed the school. Armstrong believed the school was a "martyr for the convictions of the faculty and the board."<sup>65</sup>

Other victims of the war were the conscientious objectors. Most members of the Churches of Christ accepted military service without any problem. A number requested, and obtained non-combatant status. However, a few men from the Churches of Christ were "absolutists" who refused any service. J. N. Armstrong mentions "twelve or more" members of the church who received 20-year sentences in 1917.<sup>66</sup>

Ben Randolph, along with the nephew of W. D. Hockaday from Granite, Oklahoma, was sent to Leavenworth Penitentiary

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<sup>65</sup> Sears, For Freedom, p. 157.

<sup>66</sup> J. N. Armsrong, "J. C. McQuiddy's Course and F. W. Smith's complaint," GA 62 (December 9, 1920): 1191.

for refusing military service. There they were pressured to change their convictions. When they refused, they were placed before a firing squad, but were not shot. They spent the duration of the war working on the prison farm. After the war they were released and paid salaries for the time of their imprisonment. Randolph died shortly after the war.<sup>67</sup>

The exact number of Church of Christ members who were "absolutists" is unknown. Indications are that a number of young men refused to serve in any capacity. In a survey of 12 army camps, 1,060 conscientious objectors were identified. The sixth largest religious group represented was the Churches of Christ with 31 objectors.<sup>68</sup> Of 360 religious objectors courtmartialed for refusing any alternate service, 17 were members of the Churches of Christ.<sup>69</sup> That even this number refused any service is significant when compared with the mainstream Protestant churches' total support for the war. The influence of pacifism was still present among the Churches of Christ.

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<sup>67</sup> Sears, For Freedom, pp. 158-159; the practice of harassment to force objectors to renounce their pacifism is documented in Peterson, Opponents of War, pp. 126-129.

<sup>68</sup> Walter Guest Kellogg, The Conscientious Objector (New York: Garland Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), pp. 128-129.

<sup>69</sup> Abrams, Preachers Present Arms, p. 135.

War Time Service of the Churches of Christ

Most members of the Churches of Christ accepted some part in the war effort. Most young men who objected personally to killing accommodated their consciences by non-combatant service. Available evidence suggests that a number of soldiers were members of the church. Appeals were sent out from churches near army bases for home congregations or families to send them the names of soldiers who were members of the Church of Christ.<sup>70</sup> J. H. Lawson, a minister who worked at Camp Bowie near San Antonio, Texas reported "three or four hundred" members in the Thirty-Sixth Division.<sup>71</sup> Other workers reported members of the Churches of Christ in their camps.<sup>72</sup>

Some facts are known about certain individuals who served in the war. Matt H. Chism, son of J. W. Chism, a minister from Hillsboro, Texas, was killed in action on November 1, 1918. Matt Chism's attitude was typical of those who served in combatant roles.

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<sup>70</sup>W. D. Bills, "Soldiers in San Antonio," FF 34 (October 9, 1917): 1.

<sup>71</sup>"Brother Lawson for Overseas," GA 60 (September 12, 1918): 870; "Our Soldier Boys," GA 60 (December 12, 1918): 1098.

<sup>72</sup>Price Billingsly, "A Letter from Brother Dunn," FF 35 (February 5, 1918): 3.

His father wrote: "When he registered for service in the army, he offered no excuse, believing, as he did, that God had ordained the governments of this world to overrule evildoers, and as a faithful citizen gave his life on the altar, a sacrifice to the cause of right against brutal might."<sup>73</sup>

Jimmy McCaleb, son of missionary J. M. McCaleb, volunteered instead of being drafted. His branch of service was the Signal Corps. The elder McCaleb wrote of his concern: "My constant prayer for Jimmy is that he may never take the life of his fellowman, that his life may not be taken, and by this experience he may come to see that it is hard to be a soldier in carnal warfare and at the same time be a soldier of the cross."<sup>74</sup>

William Brewer, younger brother of the noted preachers G. C. and Charles R. Brewer, was refused non-combatant service by his local draft board. He was forced into Officers Training School. While in camp he became ill and died while waiting for orders for France.<sup>75</sup>

Military service was but one contribution to the war effort by Churches of Christ. In February, 1916,

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<sup>73</sup>"Obituaries," GA 60 (December 12, 1918): 1196.

<sup>74</sup>"A Father's Feeling For His Son," GA 59 (October 25, 1917): 1034.

<sup>75</sup>G. C. and Charles R. Brewer, "A Tribute to Our Brother, William Calvin Brewer," GA 60 (December 19, 1918): 1204-1205.



J. C. McQuiddy advocated that Christians help relieve the suffering of soldiers on the European battlefields.<sup>76</sup> The entry of the United States into the war opened up new opportunities for service. A. B. Lipscomb believed a Christian could "do consistently for humanity in this crisis what he might do consistently in time of peace." Young men could enter non-combatant service to render "humanitarian service." On the homefront, Christians could raise bigger crops, produce more goods, and join in efforts at conservation.<sup>77</sup>

Conservation of resources was a key program during the war years. Church of Christ leaders supported this program enthusiastically. In April, 1917, J. C. McQuiddy, along with over thirty other religious editors, was called to Washington by Herbert Hoover, the Director of the Food Administration, for a conference on food conservation. McQuiddy recommended that his readers not be "slackers" and support this program.<sup>78</sup>

Members of the Churches of Christ worked extensively among the soldiers in the training camps. W. D. Bills,

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<sup>76</sup>"Query Department," GA 58 (February 3, 1916): 114.

<sup>77</sup>"How Christians Can Help the Country," GA 59 (April 26, 1917): 201 and "How to Stand By Our President," GA 59 (April 26, 1917): 201.

<sup>78</sup>J. C. McQuiddy, "Food Administration," GA 59 (August 9, 1917): 768-769.

minister at San Antonio, appealed for names of members of the church assigned to Camp Travis, and he announced plans to distribute literature in the camp. He also asked for someone to come work among the men in the camp.<sup>79</sup> Texas churches made plans to build a chapel for soldiers at either San Antonio or Fort Worth. The editor of the Firm Foundation endorsed this as "a good work, and one that should be carried out immediately." Under the direction of J. H. Lawson, funds were raised and a chapel completed for soldiers at Camp Bowie near Fort Worth in April, 1918.<sup>80</sup>

John E. Dunn, a Nashville evangelist, obtained a position with the YMCA through the War Work Council. He was assigned to Camp Sevier, Greenville, South Carolina. Churches in Nashville and Cookeville supported this work. He reported "in his public speaking and in private social contact, he had an unlimited field to work in." Dunn felt his work in the camp was necessary and very important.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>W. D. Bills, "A Worker for Camp Travis," FF 35 (February 12, 1918): 2.

<sup>80</sup>G. H. P. Showalter, "Editorial," FF 34 (November 6, 1917): 2; (December 18, 1917): 2; and FF 35 (April 9, 1918): 2.

<sup>81</sup>Price Billingsly, "Brother Dunn Enters a New Field," GA 60 (January 3, 1918): 3-4.

The three major papers of the Churches of Christ endorsed the work in camps.<sup>82</sup> J. C. McQuiddy addressed the issue of how one could oppose war but still render service to the soldiers. While the Gospel Advocate discouraged war, it was not "disposed to disfellowship the young man who feels that it is his duty to take up arms to oppose . . . tyranny . . . and defend the religious freedom that he so dearly loves."<sup>83</sup>

Other means of supporting the war effort included purchasing Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps, and working for the Red Cross. The congregations at Antioch, Kentucky and Bethlehem, in Wilson County, Tennessee, each endowed a hospital bed in France for a year. Other churches were encouraged to follow their example.<sup>84</sup>

Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas, supported the war effort through a "Student's Army Training Corps." During the war other colleges connected with the Churches of Christ suffered loss of students and financial difficulties,

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<sup>82</sup>See W. W. Freeman, "Christians and the War," CL 32 (January 1, 1918): 1; G. H. P. Showalter, "Editorial," FF 35 (February 12, 1918): 2; J. C. McQuiddy, "The Need For Religious Workers in the Camps," GA 60 (February 7, 1918): 125.

<sup>83</sup>McQuiddy, "The Need for Religious Workers," p. 125.

<sup>84</sup>E. A. Elam, "The Bethlehem Church, Wilson County, Tennessee, Endows a Hospital Bed in France," GA 60 (September 12, 1918): 876.

or, in the case of Cordell College, were forced to close. Abilene enjoyed phenomenal growth during 1918-1919. Young men, subject to the draft, who met basic academic requirements, could enter Abilene Christian, receive military training with pay, and continue their education. In the fall of 1918, enrollment was up by 50% over the prior year. When the program was discontinued in January, 1919, most of the boys remained at the school. The city of Abilene presented the college a gift of \$5,000 in appreciation for its work.<sup>85</sup>

Thorp Springs Christian College, Thorp Springs, Texas, also received approval for this program. However, no program was instituted, probably due to a failure to enroll the necessary one hundred students in order to receive funding.<sup>86</sup>

### Conclusion

At the beginning of World War I, the Churches of Christ was a growing religious group, based primarily in the upper South. Its doctrines were characteristic

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<sup>85</sup>M. N. Young, A History of Colleges, p. 181; J. P. Sewell, "Students in Training to Get Thirty Dollars a Month," GA 60 (September 5, 1918): 861; J. P. Sewell, "Special From Abilene Christian College," GA 60 (October 3, 1918): 953; (October 17, 1918): 999.

<sup>86</sup>W. F. Ledlow, "Student Army Training Corps at Thorp Springs Christian College," FF 35 (September 24, 1918): 5.

of those held by post-Civil War, poor southern whites. World War I was a transition period in the history of this church for the war experience caused the church to moderate many of its pre-war beliefs.

Since 1866, the Gospel Advocate had dealt extensively with the themes of pacifism and the Christian's relation to civil government. The suspension of the discussion of these issues from the Gospel Advocate during the war and the encouragement for Christians to participate in government-sponsored programs created tension in the church. Criticism of the Gospel Advocate's stand continued into the 1920s. The war time conditions made the views of David Lipscomb impossible to carry out as the paper was forced to adapt itself to the patriotic demands of society and the government. This accommodation was the beginning of a new direction in the church with regard to these issues.<sup>87</sup>

The war accelerated industrial growth and the expansion of the government bureaucracy. This helped produce the materialism that characterized the 1920s. Materialism and secular thinking made inroads into the Church of Christ during the 1920s. David Lipscomb's belief in the Providence of God was replaced by dependence

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<sup>87</sup> Earl West, Search for the Ancient Order 3: 387.

upon secular thought patterns. The period between the two world wars has been described as the "most melancholy period of the church's experience."<sup>88</sup>

The church emerged from the war with a different attitude on social involvement. Service in the military, religious work in the training camps, support for government programs, fund raising for the Red Cross, and other wartime activities caused many leaders of the church to look beyond their local congregations for fields of service. Urban congregations in particular expanded their social involvement with their communities.

The changes that occurred in the thinking of leaders of the Churches of Christ during World War I were small. As time passed, however, these developed into major importance in the church as it grew and adapted itself to the 20th century. Concerning these changes, Earl West states: "A new modern, industrialized, and affluent nation was beginning, and the church, however unconscious it was doing so, was changing to meet the needs of a new age."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 387-388.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 388.

Application: Dissent and the Government

While war is traumatic for any people, World War I was of such magnitude and demanded such total commitment of peoples on both sides that it had a great impact upon American society. The United States entered the war, not for material or territorial gain, but as a crusade for democratic ideals. A crusade demands total support from the society involved. A nation in a crusade must believe its cause is just and righteous while the enemy's is evil and unrighteous. The people must be convinced of the justice of the cause. During World War I a propaganda campaign operated, designed to win support of all elements of America to the cause.

A difficult problem with a crusade is how to deal with those who do not agree with the goals of the crusade or believe in the righteousness of the cause. In a free society, there is the right to dissent from the course of the majority. When does the national cause take precedent over the freedom of the people to disagree? Democratic government is control over its citizens with their consent. When and what avenues can citizens use to withdraw their consent from a particular policy of the government?

In a survey course in American History, dissent is an important topic of discussion. The experience

of the pacifists in the Churches of Christ would demonstrate to the students how dissent was suppressed during World War I. Related topics would be: a comparison of religious dissent and political dissent; the concept of total war; and the role of churches in molding public opinion.

The events of this chapter would apply in a course in American Religious History. Topics to be discussed would include: the individual versus majority opinion; the impact of war upon individual churches; and the role of the churches in supporting the war effort.

A course in Twentieth Century America could incorporate the ideas presented in this chapter through the topics: a case study of the draft and its enforcement; a comparison of dissent to World War I and Vietnam; and the impact of war upon civilian life.



## Chapter 6

### PACIFISM IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST (1919-1945)

#### The Religious Situation (1919-1941)

Many religious leaders had anticipated a great religious revival after World War I but this never materialized. William Warren Sweet gives as a reason for this that "no war has ever helped the cause of vital religion." The atmosphere of hate during a war had always produced a period of disillusionment and slump in religious interest, and World War I was no exception. Many church leaders recognized the contradiction between war and Christianity, and repented of their support for the war effort. Many vowed never again to bless war, and a number of ministers turned to a pacifist position totally.<sup>1</sup>

War weariness and disillusionment led to the revival of the peace movement which conducted a vigorous campaign in response to the arms buildup and militarism of the 1920s and 1930s. American pacifists accepted the revisionist views of the origins of World War I by such historians as Harry Elmer Barnes and Sidney Fay. Many pacifist

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<sup>1</sup>Sweet, The Story of Religion, pp. 404-405.

leaders urged the adoption of non-resistance as a tactic for achieving peace. The disillusionment among religious leaders was demonstrated by two surveys of denominational clergymen conducted in 1931 and 1934 by Kirby Page, editor of the World Tomorrow. Both polls had approximately 20,000 responses and over half the respondents expressed anti-war beliefs. They believed the church should refuse to sanction war, and they personally would not sanction or participate in war even as military chaplains. These polls indicate considerable pacifism among the clergy of this country.<sup>2</sup>

The rise of powerful dictatorships and their aggressions in the 1930s presented a dilemma for the pacifists. After war began in Europe, Protestant churches split between the isolationists and interventionists.<sup>3</sup> The social gospel oriented pacifists were vocal in their protest and joined with other isolationist groups such as the America First Committee. During the debate over the possible entry of the United States into the war, many pacifists renounced their pacifism in favor of a just war position. Pearl Harbor transformed what was left

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 405, 428-429; Curti, Peace or War, p. 268; Charles Chatfield, For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America, 1914-1941 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 127-128.

<sup>3</sup>Sweet, The Story of Religion, pp. 430-431.

of the pacifists of the social gospel type into reluctant participants. Despite the necessity of the war, churches were divided over the issue during the war years. American religious leaders did not turn World War II into a religious crusade as they had in World War I. The war was regarded as "a grim business that had to be done."<sup>4</sup>

After Pearl Harbor, American churches cooperated fully with the government. They furnished 8,000 chaplains, raised money and volunteers for war service agencies, distributed Bibles and devotional literature, and performed many other services for the soldiers. In return, the government maintained a uniformed chaplains corps, built over 600 interfaith chapels in training camps and on military posts, and provided many lesser services.<sup>5</sup>

A major difference between World War I and World War II was the status of conscientious objectors. The Burke-Wadsworth Act of 1940 provided objector status to, not only members of the historic peace churches, but all conscientious objectors. If the objector's claim was recognized by the local board, he could choose either non-combatant duty or "work of national importance

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<sup>4</sup>W. Edward Orser, "World War II and the Pacifist Controversy in the Major Protestant Churches," American Studies 14 (Fall, 1973): 5-9, 20.

<sup>5</sup>Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 949.

under civilian direction." The law provided for an appeals procedure of a local board's decision.<sup>6</sup>

The historic peace churches, the Brethren, the Friends, and Jehovah's Witnesses agreed to conduct civilian public service camps for their members to provide alternative service. The government required that these camps accept members of other churches who objected to non-combatant duty. During the war, over 12,000 conscientious objectors performed alternative service through these camps. Yet, 6,000 objectors, two-thirds of which were Jehovah's Witnesses, refused public service and were court-martialed by the military.<sup>7</sup>

#### The Churches of Christ: Post World War I

During World War I, the war question had created serious tensions within the leadership of the Churches of Christ. Many pacifists criticized the editorial policy of the Gospel Advocate for supporting the war effort and religious work in the military camps. J. N. Armstrong, editor of the Gospel Herald, published at Harper, Kansas, criticized J. C. McQuiddy's change of policy and accused him of abandoning the pacifist position of the Gospel Advocate under government pressure.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Sullivan, The Draft and Its Enemies, p. 181.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>8</sup>J. N. Armstrong, "J. C. McQuiddy's Course and F. W. Smith's Complaint," pp. 1190-1191.

McQuiddy, editor of the Gospel Advocate defended this position as the most prudent and wisest course under the circumstances of the war.<sup>9</sup>

After World War I, critics of the support for the government among the Churches of Christ objected to the work which had been done among the soldiers in military camps. John E. Dunn, a camp worker through the Y.M.C.A., was criticized for allegedly supporting war. An anonymous critic called for Dunn and others who had supported him to come out squarely and admit they had done wrong.<sup>10</sup> Dunn responded that he had been misrepresented by untrue statements. He had a clear conscience for he had not advocated a war position but hated war. He considered his work in the camps the "greatest service I ever rendered unto God." He had saved the soldiers from vice and immorality that they "might be fit to be the husbands of your girls and the fathers of your grandchildren."<sup>11</sup>

There was concern in the church about conscientious objectors who remained imprisoned. E. A. Elam requested that a distinction be made between the Christian objectors

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<sup>9</sup>"The Christian's Relation to Carnal Warfare," pp. 691-692.

<sup>10</sup>Observer (pseud.), "Preachers and Preaching, No. 3," GA 62 (May 6, 1920): 442-443.

<sup>11</sup>"Preachers and Preaching, No. 3. By an Observer," GA 62 (June 10, 1920): 567.

and "radicals" who would undermine the government. Elam believed the conscientious objectors were peace-loving and law-abiding citizens and should be released.<sup>12</sup> J. C. McQuiddy recommended that the church get all the facts about the conscientious objectors from the government and then try to help them.<sup>13</sup> When Warren G. Harding became president, he released all the conscientious objectors still in prison, ending this issue.

#### The Churches of Christ and the League of Nations

Many leaders of the Churches of Christ expressed concern about world peace, though they were not active in the peace movement. G. H. P. Showalter, the editor of the Firm Foundation, felt that peace must be achieved because of the enormous costs of modern armaments. He hoped that these costs would make war prohibitive for "fifty or a hundred years at least."<sup>14</sup> Many members of the Church of Christ were optimistic about the success of the proposed League of Nations. It was hoped the

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<sup>12</sup>"Forgotten Conscientious Objectors," GA 61 (December 4, 1919): 1198.

<sup>13</sup>"Conscientious Objectors," GA 62 (January 1, 1920): 11.

<sup>14</sup>"To War or Not to War," FF 36 (January 28, 1919): 1; also A. B. Lipscomb, "May We Look for Abolition of War?" GA 62 (April 1, 1920): 313-314.

organization would be successful and end war "if not forever, at least for a long time."<sup>15</sup>

J. C. McQuiddy believed the time was ripe for pacifists to bring about peace. All Christians had the responsibility to pray and work for peace. They should support the League of Nations and do everything they could to encourage peace among all the nations of the earth.<sup>16</sup>

However, not all members of the Church of Christ agreed with support for the League of Nations. The Gospel Advocate was criticized by Lee Jackson for discussing political questions. He believed opponents of the League should be given equal time if the supporters of the League could speak for it. Jackson believed support for the League was based on sentimentalism and unsubstantiated claims. It was feared the United States would have to furnish soldiers to fight for it. It was "full of evil for our own liberties" and preachers could not afford to support it.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>M. C. Kurfees, "The Return of Peace with the Religious Outlook at the Dawn of 1919," GA 61 (January 2, 1919): 10.

<sup>16</sup>"The Peace League," GA 61 (March 27, 1919): 297-298.

<sup>17</sup>Lee Jackson, "Brother Kurfees and the League of Nations," GA 61 (October 9, 1919): 987.

The War Question: 1920s-1930s

Pacifism remained influential among leaders of the Churches of Christ in the interwar years. However, there were indications that an increasing number of influential preachers and writers had begun to question the traditional position on this issue. In 1926, 450 preachers responded to a survey question, "Do you believe that a Christian can scripturally take human life in war?" Only twenty-four responded yes.<sup>18</sup> The militarism of the post-war years was a major topic of concern. The Gospel Advocate opposed universal compulsory training in 1920 because it would develop a nation of warriors.<sup>19</sup>

On the other side of the war question, Daniel Sommer of Indiana gave his fullest exposition against pacifism in a debate with the pacifist J. N. Cowan. Sommer justified a Christian serving in war because "Christians have a scriptural right to serve their country in any carnal warfare that they regard as just." Sommer believed pacifism was based on a "sickly sentimentalism" and conscientious objectors were insincere.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Humble, The Story of the Restoration, p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> J. C. McQuiddy, "Current Thought," GA 63 (February 3, 1921): 109; E. A. Elam, "For the League of Nations," GA 62 (February 26, 1920): 204.

<sup>20</sup> J. N. Cowan and Daniel Sommer, Debate Between J. N. Cowan and Daniel Sommer, Sullivan, Indiana, November 9 to 14, 1926 (Indianapolis: n.p., n.d.), pp. 7, 10; Morrison, Like a Lion, p. 129.



By the 1930s, a sharper division in the Churches of Christ over the war question began to develop. In April, 1934, the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches adopted an eight point program for world peace. One part of this program requested churches to send anti-war petitions to the government. Pacifists members had already been urging the Churches of Christ to do this.<sup>21</sup>

In late 1933, the Church of Christ at Valdosta, Georgia, adopted anti-war resolutions and requested exemption from military service for faithful members who were opposed to war. Numerous letters of commendation from several states were sent to A. B. Lipscomb, a nephew of David Lipscomb and the minister of the Valdosta church. Across the country other congregations adopted similar resolutions.<sup>22</sup>

The president and faculty of Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee, issued a statement opposing combatant service. N. B. Hardeman, president of the college, reported that this position had been taught since the

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<sup>21</sup>W. S. Long, "Should Christians Bear Arms?" GA 75 (December 8, 1933): 1166.

<sup>22</sup>G. H. P. Showalter, "Editorial," FF 51 (May 1, 1934): 4; Lindsey Allen, "Opposed to War," GA 77 (January 10, 1953): 44.

founding of the college. The statement did express respect for the right of the individual to decide what he could conscientiously do.<sup>23</sup>

J. W. Shepherd restated David Lipscomb's position on the Christian and civil government. Shepherd believed it was impossible for a Christian to engage in carnal warfare and at the same time render faithful service to the Lord. He believed the work of the church was being hindered by the members' involvement with human governments and militarism.<sup>24</sup>

H. Leo Boles, a contributing editor of the Gospel Advocate, became the major spokesman for pacifism after the death of David Lipscomb. In 1923, Boles published, in book form, a series of pacifist articles he had written during World War I. His thesis was the example of Christ and the principles of Christianity as revealed in the New Testament taught against Christian participation in warfare. Those who affirmed that a Christian could engage in war were challenged to give the "book, chapter, and verse."<sup>25</sup> Boles defined war as "science sanctioned

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<sup>23</sup>N. B. Hardeman, "Shall Christians Go to War?" FF 51 (May 1, 1934): 2.

<sup>24</sup>"Should Christians Engage in Carnal Warfare?" FF 51 (June 5, 1934): 1, 3.

<sup>25</sup>The New Testament Teaching on War (Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1963), p. 4.

by civilization for the destruction of property and life." War was "a relic of barbarism. It is the spirit of the devil under the sanction of modern civilization."<sup>26</sup>

Concern was expressed by pacifists over the growing militarism of the 1930s. They believed that preparation for war usually led to war because soldiers trained to fight tend to get restless and want war. The 1930s seemed to be a time when "war was in the air."<sup>27</sup>

#### Non-pacifists in the Churches of Christ

Through the 1930s, opinion on the war question was divided in the Churches of Christ. Many members and leaders of the church were not pacifists and even the pacifists realized it was unlikely that all Churches of Christ would go on record against war. G. C. Brewer concluded that many honest hearts just did not know what to do if they were drafted.<sup>28</sup>

Some regarded the passing of anti-war resolutions by churches as the formation of a church creed. In 1936, John T. Hinds, editor of the Gospel Advocate,

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<sup>26</sup>"War Contrary to Teaching of Christ," GA 76 (April 5, 1934): 323; "Christian Non-Resistance," GA 78 (June 25, 1936): 602.

<sup>27</sup>P. D. Wilmeth, "A Square Look at War, No. 4," GA 75 (July 20, 1933): 683; F. B. Srygley, "The Christian Attitude Toward War," GA 75 (December 28, 1933): 1236.

<sup>28</sup>John T. Hinds, "Editorial," GA 78 (July 23, 1936): 700; G. C. Brewer, "Christians and War," GA 76 (May 3, 1934): 420.

cautioned against making the issue a test of fellowship. The matter was personal or congregational and each person or congregation should have the liberty to do what they thought best.<sup>29</sup>

R. L. Whiteside, a staff writer of the Gospel Advocate, believed the Bible gave no direct teaching on the issue. He advocated self-defense for the individual and the nation. He could see no way for the Churches of Christ to unite on the question short of the formation of a formal creed.<sup>30</sup> W. W. Otey, a minister from Harlingen, Texas, questioned the authority of the editors of papers or even elders to speak for the entire membership of a church. He feared that the war issue, if pressed, would divide the Churches of Christ into pro-war and anti-war congregations.<sup>31</sup>

The response to G. H. P. Showalter's offer in 1935 to open the columns of the Firm Foundation for a discussion of the war issue demonstrated the divided opinion within the Churches of Christ. A number of well-known leaders wrote extensively on both sides of the question for several months. No new arguments were

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<sup>29</sup>"Christians and Warfare," GA 78 (March 26, 1936): 301.

<sup>30</sup>"Queries and Answers," GA 78 (June 18, 1936): 585.

<sup>31</sup>"Questions about Petitions Against War," FF 52 (October 22, 1935): 1.

made on either side, but the number of members who spoke against the pacifist position was significant. The most important non-pacifists were Glenn E. Green, W. W. Otey, and L. R. Wilson.

### The Coming of World War II

The Churches of Christ faced the deteriorating international situation with divided opinions on their duty to the government. Pacifists were faced with the problem of loyalty to their principles and loyalty to the government. This problem was of great concern in the papers of the brotherhood. A preponderance of articles in the Gospel Advocate, Christian Leader, and Firm Foundation were pacifist in viewpoint though the latter two journals printed non-pacifist articles. A new journal, the Twentieth Century Christian, which began publication in 1938 in Nashville, Tennessee, reflected the pacifist position through the war years.

The pre-war thinking on the war issue among the mainstream leaders of the Churches of Christ was reflected through the annual Abilene Christian College Bible Lectureship. F. B. Shepherd, during the 1940 lectureship, reflected David Lipscomb's influence as he lectured on the relation of the church to the world. He believed a Christian was forbidden to take vengeance upon his or God's enemies

and could not "consistently, or legally, have part in any active or positive way as an agent of that which God characterizes his sword." Therefore, a Christian could not engage in either offensive or defensive war.<sup>32</sup>

In 1941, R. B. Sweet reflected a growing feeling in the brotherhood when he advocated the right of a Christian to join the armed forces. Referring to the division in the brotherhood, Sweet advised each Christian to follow the dictates of his own conscience. But he believed the soldier served the same function as a police officer or service on a jury.<sup>33</sup>

### The Churches of Christ in World War II

During World War II, the Churches of Christ performed many of the same services as other churches. Some ministers served as military chaplains; churches distributed Bibles and other religious literature to soldiers in training camps and overseas; members of the church purchased war bonds and war stamps, worked in war industries, and supported the work of such organizations as the Red Cross. Many members served both combatant and non-combatant duty in the military, and many died in the fighting.

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<sup>32</sup>"The Kingdom, Its Relationship to Other Kingdoms," Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures: 1940 (Austin Texas: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1940), pp. 177, 186.

<sup>33</sup>Banowsky, The Mirror of a Movement, pp. 413-414.

Only about 200 members of the church refused even non-combatant duty, and these performed public service during the war.<sup>34</sup>

Pacifists were forced to reexamine their beliefs when Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the war. By the end of the war, the mainstream leadership of the church had taken a "just war" position while allowing individual freedom to choose non-combatant service.<sup>35</sup> The nature of World War II affected the thinking of Christians toward the war. This war has been called the "last war America can be proud of." By some, it has been considered the purest example of a "just war" in which the United States had engaged. The Axis powers were guilty of aggression, had violated international agreements, and committed "crimes against humanity" during the war. The United Nations had fought according to accepted codes of good faith and humanity, and had "rehabilitated" the German and Japanese people after the war. Most importantly, the United States had been forced into the war by the unprovoked Japanese attack

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<sup>34</sup>W. W. Otey, "Keep the Record Straight," FF 64 (August 12, 1947): 7.

<sup>35</sup>See T. B. Wilkinson, "The Christians and Carnal Warfare," Bible Banner 6 (March, 1944): 14-15. Hereafter referred to as BB.

on Pearl Harbor.<sup>36</sup> This latter fact was particularly significant in causing many pacifists to support the war effort.

World War II effectively brought the leadership of the church in line with the majority view of its members. Prior to the war, the major papers and influential leaders had been pacifist. During the war a number of pacifists changed their position and pre-war activists became militant in advocating patriotic duties of Christians. The Firm Foundation and Gospel Advocate maintained a moderate position, advocating non-combatant duty while not condemning those who chose combatant service. G. H. P. Showalter, the editor of the Firm Foundation, had been opposed to war as late as September, 1941. After Pearl Harbor, he supported the non-combatant position, as he had in 1918. Though he was opposed to the absolutist conscientious objector, he published appeals for their financial support in public service camps.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Richard V. Pierard, "World War II," from Ronald A. Wells, editor, The Wars of America: Christian Views (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 147-148. Revisionist historians and critics of obliteration bombing of civilian centers would not fully agree with this assessment. Isbell, War and Conscience, pp. 93-96.

<sup>37</sup>"Editorial," FF 58 (September 8, 1941): 4; "Editorial," FF 59 (April 14, 1942): 4.



When B. C. Goodpasture became editor of the Gospel Advocate in March, 1939, he inherited a staff divided on the war issue. R. L. Whiteside, W. E. Brightwell, and C. R. Nichol were activists while H. Leo Boles was a pacifist. During the war, Goodpasture refused to allow the paper to become a battleground over the issue. He personally commented very little on the issue because he believed the paper could not resolve the question. He feared the church might divide over the issue. He allowed the Christian attitude toward the war to be discussed, but is credited with keeping the issue from dividing the church.<sup>38</sup>

The voice of the militant pro-war activist was the Bible Banner, a journal published by Foy E. Wallace, Jr. and his brother, Cled Wallace, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Foy Wallace was a former editor of the Gospel Advocate and a well-known preacher and debater. Prior to the war, he had taken a pacifist position. In 1936, he had deplored the fact that some brethren were writing articles encouraging Christians to participate in carnal warfare. Those who advocated participation in war had arrived at their conclusions by "deduction

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<sup>38</sup> J. E. Choate, The Anchor That Holds: A Biography of Benton Cordell Goodpasture (Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1971), pp. 128, 135, 146.

and patriotic effusions" rather than New Testament teaching. He had believed "no man can produce the Scripture that gives a Christian the right to war, much less to make it a wartime duty."<sup>39</sup>

In March, 1942, Foy Wallace reversed his position by advocating the right for a Christian to participate in war. He now believed "the employment of physical force in its proper sphere, and in the manner prescribed by God's authority is good and necessary." He equated capital punishment of an individual criminal with punishment of an aggressor nation in a defensive war.<sup>40</sup> The civil government was dependent upon its military power to defend itself. He believed it was a "weak theory" that assumed Christians were so separated from society that they would accept the defense of the government while refusing to defend themselves or the government.<sup>41</sup>

Cled Wallace, the co-editor of the Bible Banner, agreed with his brother's position. He regarded pacifist reasoning that made those who punished criminals murderers

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<sup>39</sup>"War Clouds," Gospel Guardian 2 (March-April 1936): 5 reprinted in BB 5 (February, 1943): 114-115.

<sup>40</sup>"The Christian and the Government," BB 4 (March, 1942): 6-7. Many activists used Old Testament passages justifying war as an argument for participation in war. Pacifists argued that the higher law of the New Testament, and the spiritual rather than political nature of the church negated any argument from the Old Testament.

<sup>41</sup>"The Government--Civil and Military," BB 4 (July, 1942): 2-4.

as "screwy," and he could not accept such "twisted" reasoning if it made all members of the armed forces criminals for defending the nation in a defensive war.<sup>42</sup>

There was widespread support for the Bible Banner's position across the Churches of Christ. Members from several states endorsed Wallace's view. Wallace reported a great demand for reprints of his articles on the Christian and government. Demand became so great that pro-war articles published in March, 1942 were reprinted in the September, 1942 issue. The Bible Banner apparently doubled its circulation after the change of position on the war issue.<sup>43</sup> P. W. Stonestreet, an elder of the Ridgedale Church in Chattanooga, regarded the change in position of Wallace as the "beginning of a new epoch . . . in which a comprehensive, tenable, and practical dual citizenship for the Christian is realized."<sup>44</sup>

David Lipscomb's Civil Government was attacked by W. E. Brightwell, O. C. Lambert, Cled Wallace and Foy Wallace as subversive, speculative, heretical, unprovable, impractical, and damaging to the church's image.

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<sup>42</sup>"The Christian and the Government," BB 4 (June, 1942): 1.

<sup>43</sup>"The Christian and the Government," BB 4 (July, 1942): 7; "The Bible Banner and the Government," BB 4 (September, 1942): 1; "Anent the Christian and Government," BB 5 (August, 1942): 7.

<sup>44</sup>"A Dual Citizenship," BB 5 (August, 1942): 9.

The book was accused of containing the seeds of the teachings of Charles Russell and Judge Rutherford, the founders of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Lambert even suggested that Civil Government be called in and burned.<sup>45</sup>

Pro-war activists accused those who taught the pacifist position of agitating the issue in the church and of being insensitive to those in the church who had family members in the military.<sup>46</sup> Pacifists were accused of being inconsistent and confused about what they really believed. Foy Wallace charged that "some cry one thing, some another." He believed the only consistent pacifist was one who rejected any connection with the government or war effort. However, most who objected to military service voted, purchased bonds, or approved of work in war industries. Wallace believed there was no halfway ground; David Lipscomb's views had to be accepted all the way or not at all.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>W. E. Brightwell, "For the Vindication of the Cause," BB 4 (July, 1942): 5-6; O. C. Lambert, "The Lipscomb Book," BB 6 (October, 1943): 3 and "The David Lipscomb Book," BB 7 (September, 1944): 8-9; Foy E. Wallace, Jr., "The Lipscomb Theory of Civil Government," BB 6 (October, 1943): 3, 5-6.

<sup>46</sup>Cled E. Wallace, "Rare Wisdom on Warm Topics," BB 5 (August, 1942): 1.

<sup>47</sup>"The Bible Banner and the Government," p. 1; "Who Has Departed from the Faith?" BB 5 (October, 1942): 3.

### The Churches of Christ and Conscientious Objectors

A key point of conflict between pacifists and war advocates occurred over support for absolutist conscientious objectors from the Churches of Christ. Prior to Pearl Harbor, the proper attitude toward conscientious objectors had been a concern in the church.<sup>48</sup> The division of the members of the church over the war issue complicated the difficulties faced by young men who could not conscientiously serve in the military. G. C. Brewer believed the men should serve in a non-combatant service because they aided the enemy and became a burden for the country if they refused any service at all. If a Christian man were drafted, he should insist upon non-combatant service from the first and should appeal the local board's classification if they refused his request. Brewer believed it might become necessary for some to go to jail for refusing combatant service.<sup>49</sup>

In late 1941, H. Leo Boles complained that local boards were too ignorant and prejudiced to properly deal with the conscientious objector. He also criticized those who were insincerely claiming conscientious objector status. Boles believed not enough people were guiding

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<sup>48</sup> B. C. Goodpasture, "The Conscientious Objector: A Recurring Problem," GA 82 (June 27, 1940): 604.

<sup>49</sup> "Christians and War," GA 82 (July 4, 1940): 626, 628.

their actions by the teaching of Jesus because such a small number of young men were requesting conscientious objector status.<sup>50</sup> Others who advocated members of the church seek conscientious objector status included J. N. Armstrong of Harding College and M. Norvel Young of Pepperdine College.<sup>51</sup>

Leslie G. Thomas, an evangelist from Dickson, Tennessee, announced in July, 1941 that he had been asked to identify conscientious objectors in the Churches of Christ for the newly organized National Service Board for Religious Objectors. This board was created by the peace churches to look after the interests of their members sent to civilian public service camps.<sup>52</sup>

In early 1942, Murrey W. Wilson, from Waldo, Arkansas, reported ten members of the Church of Christ in a public service camp at Magnolia, Arkansas. Only one had any financial support and the other nine needed financial assistance. An appeal was made to the Churches of Christ to help these men. B. C. Goodpasture, H. Leo Boles,

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<sup>50</sup>"Conscientious Objectors," GA 83 (October 16, 1941): 989.

<sup>51</sup>J. N. Armstrong, "The Conscientious Objector," GA 82 (July 25, 1940): 702; M. Norvel Young, "Advice to the Christian Objector," Twentieth Century Christian 3 (November, 1940): 16.

<sup>52</sup>"To Conscientious Objectors," GA 83 (July 3, 1941): 640.

and G. H. P. Showalter all endorsed this project and urged the churches to respect the consciences of the objectors.<sup>53</sup>

In early 1943, E. LeRoy Dakin, the field secretary for the National Service Board for Religious Objectors, appealed to the Churches of Christ to help the peace churches with the financial burden of supporting the conscientious objectors in the camps because the government was not paying any of the expenses for the civilian public service workers. The Firm Foundation, the Gospel Advocate, and the Christian Leader again appealed for the churches to help.<sup>54</sup>

James Lovell, a minister in Los Angeles, California, helped form a five member committee to oversee the support of members of the Churches of Christ in public service camps. Arrangements were made for I. B. Bradley, from Dickson, Tennessee, to collect and forward funds to

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<sup>53</sup>"Concerning Conscientious Objectors," GA 84 (February 5, 1942): 124; "Concerning Conscientious Objectors to Combatant Service," FF 59 (October 27, 1942): 4; "Help Christians in Camps," GA 84 (March 12, 1942): 245; "Church of Christ Men in Civilian Public Service Camps," FF 60 (April 27, 1943): 12.

<sup>54</sup>F. L. Rowe, "Important Statement," CL 52 (March 2, 1943): 5 "Immediate Action Necessary," Ibid.; "More About the Support of the Conscientious Objector," GA 85 (June 17, 1943): 538.

the camps. Lovell reported a generous reponse to the initial fundraising efforts of the committee.<sup>55</sup>

About 200 members of the Churches of Christ performed public service through these camps. The influence of David Lipscomb's teaching can be seen by the home states of these objectors. The largest concentration of members of the Churches of Christ were in the Texas and Arkansas camps. A partial listing of those from the Churches of Christ in camps in March, 1943, show out of a total of 73 men, 22 were from Texas and 14 from Tennessee.<sup>56</sup>

Many in the Churches of Christ were intolerant and critical of the absolutist conscientious objectors. Critics believed that only those with a proven record of opposition to war should request objector status, and then they should accept non-combatant status. Those who refused non-combatant status were "giving aid to Hitler" as members of a "fifth column."<sup>57</sup> John T. Lewis, a pacifist spokesman, believed if one voted or served

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<sup>55</sup>"Service Committee for Conscientious Objectors," CL 52 (May 25, 1943): 6; "Service Committee for Conscientious Objectors," GA 85 (June 3, 1943): 506.

<sup>56</sup>B. C. Goodpasture, "Church of Christ Boys in Civilian Camps," GA 85 (May 6, 1943): 412; F. L. Rowe, "Immediate Action Necessary," CL 52 (March 2, 1943): 5.

<sup>57</sup>Hugo McCord, "What Should a Christian Do in Wartime?" FF 59 (May 12, 1942): 3; J. H. McBroom, "Fear God and Honor the King," FF 58 (March 25, 1941): 1-2.



in a political office, he could not consistently request objector status.<sup>58</sup>

The strongest criticism of conscientious objectors was made through the Bible Banner. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. refused to endorse any aid for men in public service camps. He believed that if a young man's beliefs were so "impractical" that he was forced into a "concentration camp," the church was under no obligation to support him. The church could not be proud of such individuals, and it was a serious mistake to make heroes out of these men with a "dwarfed conscience" while making murderers out of those "noble sons in army camps who bravely gave their all in the defense of not only the freedom of the nation, but the very virtue of our mothers, wives, and sisters . . . ."<sup>59</sup>

Cled Wallace professed little respect for one who would go to another church's "hideaway" and expect the brethren to support him while better educated consciences were fighting for their country. He believed it was confusing for the church to be asked to support "able-bodied young men with sick consciences" who could find no way to support their country. He considered it a

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<sup>58</sup>"Who Is a Consistent Conscientious Objector," BB 4 (January, 1942): 9.

<sup>59</sup>"The Christian and the Government," p. 8.

compliment to the church that so few had taken the objector position. Wallace considered the appeal for help for those in the public service camps "pitiful drivel," worthy only of ridicule. Unpatriotic Christians should support the "magnolia freaks of conscience-ridden delusion."<sup>60</sup>

W. W. Otey, a well-known evangelist from Belle Plains, Kansas, joined in the criticism of the absolutists. He considered those "one-hundred boys" resting in a nice quiet camp to be the "worst of slackers, taking all, giving nothing." He maintained the real martyrs were those young men fighting and dying for their country. Otey considered the whole issue "disgusting, humiliating, shameful, and at variance with every principle of justice, righteousness, and the dignity of true manhood."<sup>61</sup>

The columns of the Bible Banner were used not only to attack objectors but pacifist writings. Cled Wallace characterized pacifist material as "idiotic drivel and unpatriotic rot . . . written by long-faced crackpots." When he accused the Abilene Christian College Press of publishing pacifist material, President Don H. Morris objected. A business in Abilene, called the

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<sup>60</sup>"The Diabolical and Apostate Bible [sic] [Banner] Reader," BB 5 (August, 1942): 16; "Who is Doing the Agitating?" BB 5 (November, 1942): 1-2.

<sup>61</sup>"Who are the Martyrs?" FF 60 (December 14, 1943): 3.

"ACC Bookstore," was responsible for the material but it was not connected with the college. Morris pointed out the patriotic support Abilene Christian was giving the war effort, including 800 former students and faculty in the military of whom twelve had died in the war.<sup>62</sup>

#### Opposition to the Bible Banner Position

A number of men in the Churches of Christ objected to the methods and teaching of the Bible Banner. The controversy became so heated that moderate leaders began to fear the church might have an open division on the issue. L. L. Brigance, a faculty member of Freed-Hardeman College, believed a division was developing. He urged those "agitating" the issue to let each individual decide for himself what position he should take. The issue should not be made a test of fellowship unless pro-war advocates could prove God would condemn those who didn't fight. While there had never been unanimity in the church on the issue, most teachers and preachers in the church had traditionally been pacifists.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>"The Big Pres of a Little College," BB 7 (June, 1944): 3; "More for the Record," BB 7 (September, 1944): 2.

<sup>63</sup>"Attitude of the Church Toward War," GA 85 (March 25, 1943): 269; "Reply to the Wallace Brothers," GA 85 (August 5, 1943): 688.

B. C. Goodpasture, in response to attacks on the Gospel Advocate's position for supporting conscientious objectors, pointed out the contradictory position of Foy Wallace in 1936 and 1942. In 1936 and 1941, Wallace had written against physical violence on the part of Christians. Therefore, he was as responsible as anyone for encouraging young men to object to military service. Goodpasture found it strange that the conscientious objectors should be called fanatics by those who had "agitated" pacifism as recently as 1936.<sup>64</sup> H. Leo Boles challenged Foy Wallace to a debate on the war issue, but Wallace found the proposition unacceptable and refused to debate until the pacifists were united on what they believed. Goodpasture called this reasoning a "dodge" and a lame excuse not to debate.<sup>65</sup>

Goodpasture's strongest response to the editorial position of the Bible Banner came in a lengthy editorial in May, 1943. He pointed out that Foy Wallace had changed his position on war only after Pearl Harbor had made the war popular. Wallace was inconsistent because he held one view in time of peace and another in time of war.

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<sup>64</sup>"Support for the C. O.," GA 85 (February 4, 1943): 100.

<sup>65</sup>"The Brother 'Has Something'," GA 85 (February 18, 1943): 148.

Goodpasture dismissed Wallace's positions because "if he is given sufficient time, he may change, 'answer' them, and apologize for them!"<sup>66</sup>

The strongest attack on the Bible Banner position was by a former staff member of the paper, John T. Lewis, who wrote for the Sound Doctrine, a journal published by Rex Turner and Leonard Johnson in Montgomery, Alabama.<sup>67</sup> Lewis wrote responses to the positions and arguments of the various contributors to the Bible Banner. His strongest defense was made of David Lipscomb's Civil Government when it was attacked by O. C. Lambert and Foy Wallace. He believed the attack upon Lipscomb's teachings was "the most uncalled for, unkind, unjust, unchristian, and ungodly attack upon the life's work and teaching of David Lipscomb that ever disgraced the pages of a religious journal."<sup>68</sup> The written exchange between the two papers continued through 1944.

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<sup>66</sup>"Support for the Conscientious Objectors," GA 85 (May 13, 1943): 436-437, 440.

<sup>67</sup>John T. Lewis collated the Bible Banner articles and his responses into a book, The Christian and the Government (Birmingham, Alabama: published by author, 1945).

<sup>68</sup>"The Christian and Government," Sound Doctrine 3 (December 25, 1943): 2; Sound Doctrine 4 (January 25, 1944): 2-3, 6.

The Gospel Broadcast, published in Dallas, Texas by Eugene S. Smith, also objected to the Bible Banner position. Smith criticized the Banner's characterization of objectors and its pro-war stand.<sup>69</sup> John O. Dowd, an associate editor of the Gospel Broadcast, accused the pro-war advocates of having put the Gospel and Christ aside "to exploit the brethren in interests of war." He expressed "shock" at the change in position of Foy Wallace who had been "so faithful to God's word in the absence of war clouds, and so utterly mad in the thundering peals of war."<sup>70</sup>

A prolific writer for the pacifist position was James D. Bales, a noted preacher and later a member of the Bible faculty at Harding College. Bales objected to the idea of a "dual" relationship of the Christian and citizen. He did not believe what one did as a citizen could be separated from what one did as a Christian. A Christian engages in every activity as a "whole person who has but one mind and one heart." The Christian could

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<sup>69</sup>"The Conscientious Objector," Gospel Broadcast 3 (March 11, 1943): 148.

<sup>70</sup>War's First Casualty," Gospel Broadcast 3 (March 18, 1943): 169.

not shift his responsibility for his actions to the government.<sup>71</sup>

### Conclusion

The influence of David Lipscomb's beliefs of separation from the civil government and pacifism was losing influence among the leaders of the Churches of Christ between World War I and World War II. During the 1930s a growing number believed that his beliefs did not provide relevant guidance in the world of aggressive dictatorships. The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor complicated the situation for the pacifists as the United States was forced into a defensive war for survival. Most members of the Churches of Christ accepted the necessity of the war and patriotically supported the war. However, extremists on both sides of the issue fiercely debated the issue with the Bible Banner for the activist position and the Sound Doctrine and Gospel Broadcast for the pacifist viewpoint.

In the post-war era, the Churches of Christ faced the threat of atheistic communism and opposition to missionary work from the Catholic Church in Italy and the government in Poland. Would Lipscomb's views be

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<sup>71</sup>"Various Relationships," Gospel Broadcast 3 (March 11, 1943): 142; "Did Cornelius Leave the Army?" Twentieth Century Christian 5 (January, 1943): 13-14.

rejected completely as an irreleveant response to these threats?

### Application to Teaching

When and how may a state legitimately engage in a war? What constitutes a "just war?" The just war theory was developed by Christians as a moderate position between absolute pacifism and unrestrained force. Is this doctrine valid in light of nuclear warfare? Are a whole new set of rules for war necessary?<sup>72</sup>

A discussion of this topic would be appropriate for a Twentieth Century United States History, or a modern Church History. Topics in this chapter relevant to a survey of American History could be: the response of the churches to World War II compared to World War I; the more liberal treatment of conscientious objectors in World War II; and the crusade of World War I compared with support for World War II. A history of the Churches of Christ could incorporate: the maturing of the church as an acculturated sect; the role of the religious press in shaping and reflecting opinion in the church; and the expanding involvement in world affairs of the Churches of Christ.

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<sup>72</sup>Isbell, War and Conscience, p. 76, 77.



## CONCLUSION

### Summary of Findings

The majority of the pioneer leaders of the Restoration Movement were pacifists. The two founders of the movement, Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell, based their pacifistic beliefs on the moral teachings of the New Testament, and particularly Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Leaders of the movement were influenced by the beliefs of Anabaptists who distrusted government, believed in the radical separation of the church and state, and opposed war. Anti-government and pacifist views have been influential in varying degrees in the Churches of Christ throughout their history. However, a gulf existed between the leadership and members of the movement for most members voted, many held political office, and many went to war as early as the Mexican and Civil Wars.

The debate over the war issue within the Disciples journals during the Mexican War was not divisive, but it set the tone for future debates and stated the basic arguments that were used by both sides for many years. The Civil War produced a more serious division as northern Disciples supported the Union war effort even passing

pro-war resolutions in the 1861 and 1863 annual meetings of the American Christian Missionary Society. Southern Disciples also supported the Confederacy in the war. One exception was a small group of upper South conservatives, led by Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb, who maintained the traditional pacifism and anti-governmental separatism. Through his writing, the influence of David Lipscomb was especially important in the years after the Civil War.

The tensions during the Civil War accelerated the growing division between progressive and conservative Disciples of Christ. The Disciples of Christ divided in the late nineteenth century over the doctrinal issues of support for the missionary society and instrumental music in worship. However, the division was deeper than these issues for it reflected divergent interpretations of the meaning of the Restoration Movement, and social and cultural differences between the two wings of the movement. Political separatism and pacifism were beliefs of many leaders of the conservative Disciples that became known as the Churches of Christ. For over fifty years, David Lipscomb, through his paper, the Gospel Advocate, was the chief spokesman for the beliefs of the Churches of Christ.

Beliefs in pacifism and political separatism were tested by the chauvinism of the Spanish-American War and especially during the World War I crusade. David Lipscomb's death removed his powerful voice for these views. The next generation of editors of the Gospel Advocate, pressured by the superpatriotism of the time, modified the paper's position on these issues. J. C. McQuiddy, the paper's publisher, supported the government's war effort and approved of religious workers serving among the soldiers in camps. The other major religious paper among the Churches of Christ, the Firm Foundation, took a position similar to the Gospel Advocate. Some anti-government pacifists who had been writing for the Gospel Advocate protested this change in editorial policy by withdrawing to other papers.

By the end of World War I, three positions on government and pacifism had evolved. First, many leaders and a majority of members continued to practice full participation in war and in politics. This group became more vocal during the 1930s and World War II. Second, moderates through the Gospel Advocate and Firm Foundation adopted the position of not condemning combatant service but recommending non-combatant service. This group also supported the government's war effort and approved of religious work among the soldiers. Third, the

anti-government pacifists led by J. N. Armstrong and J. W. Shepherd continued to oppose war and political involvement of any kind.

The final definition of these positions occurred during World War II. Moderates supported the war effort and accepted non-combatant service as a suitable alternative for conscientious objectors. They did not approve of absolutist conscientious objectors, but did respect their conscience. The moderates urged financial support for absolutist conscientious objectors in civilian public service camps. The anti-government pacifists and pro-war political activists engaged in an intense debate during the war. The chief spokesman for the pacifist view was John T. Lewis while Foy E. Wallace, Jr. spoke for the pro-war group. Both pacifists and pro-war activists had considerable support from the Churches of Christ, but the moderate position seems to be the position of the mainstream Churches of Christ. Thus, the "just war" position was accepted by the majority, though not without some uneasiness.

#### The Decline of Pacifism in the Churches of Christ

The World War II debate continued after the war. A leading proponent of the pacifist view was James D. Bales, a professor of Christian Doctrine at Harding

College, Searcy, Arkansas. Bales insisted that those who believed a Christian could go to war had to produce the scripture that authorized a Christian killing in self-defense or a defensive war. Furthermore, he argued that a Christian could not act as either a soldier or law officer for the government because killing under any conditions was incompatible with Christian love. Love was a deterrent to taking life because it was a denial of Christ to sacrifice the life of an enemy instead of returning good for evil.<sup>1</sup> In 1946, just after the end of World War II, Bales debated P. W. Stonestreet on the topic of the "Christian and Carnal Warfare." No new arguments were advanced by either side in this debate.<sup>2</sup>

In 1962, at the Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures, Bales reversed his position on war. He offered no new arguments for his change but appears to have accepted the arguments of pro-war activists. He concluded that there were many positions in government a Christian could hold where "questions would not be raised as to whether it is right or wrong for the Christian to act

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<sup>1</sup>James D. Bales, The Christian Conscientious Objector (Berkeley, California: By the Author, n.d.), p. 20, 101.

<sup>2</sup>James D. Bales and P. W. Stonestreet, The Christian and Carnal Warfare (n.p.: By the Authors, 1947), passim.

as an agent to enforce law and order." Bales believed voting was not wrong and neither was preferring one government over another. He concluded that it was not wrong for a Christian to appeal to the government and support the vengeance function of government.<sup>3</sup>

Bales believed his pacifism had been in error because he had regarded love for enemies as unlimited. He now believed that love for self or family took precedence over love for the enemy. The situation could arise when one could not "show mercy to the innocent without dispensing some justice to the evildoer." It was impossible not to support in some way the vengeance function of the government. The purpose of civil government is to redress evil man does to man. Bales asked: "How can it be wrong for the Christian to call on the civil government to do the very thing that God says it is to do, and which Christians teach that it is to do?"<sup>4</sup>

The defection of Bales from the pacifist ranks removed an articulate spokesman for that view. No one of his stature has taken a pacifist stand in recent years. The Churches of Christ have found themselves

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<sup>3</sup>"The Christian's Relation to Civil Government," in Abilene Christian College Annual Bible Lectures: 1962 (Abilene, Texas: Abilene Christian College Student's Exchange, 1962), p. 444, 447-448, 465.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 459-463.

occupied with other concerns. A survey of major Church of Christ journals indicates that pacifism has not been a concern since World War II. During the Korean War, only three articles were published with a pacifist emphasis. One article was a reprint of a World War II pacifist article while two others offered advice for obtaining ministerial exemptions from military service.<sup>5</sup> During the Vietnam War, neither the Gospel Advocate nor the Firm Foundation published anti-war articles.

The journal Mission began publication in 1967 during the Vietnam War. This journal represented the thought of the more educated and progressive element in the Churches of Christ. Jerry Hudson, an associate professor of History at Pepperdine College, rejected both pacifism and "barbarism." He believed the Vietnam War was not a just war because it failed to meet the proper criteria for a just war. He urged the Churches of Christ to call for a reevaluation of the role of the United States in the war.<sup>6</sup> Leon Tester, writing in the same issue, stated that the Churches of Christ

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<sup>5</sup>Yater Tant, "Thou Shalt Not Kill," Ga 92 (February 23, 1950): 114; "How to Fill Out Form 150 for Conscientious Objectors," GA 93 (January 23, 1951): 50-51; "Ministerial Exemptions," GA 93 (March 15, 1951): 162.

<sup>6</sup>"A Christian View of the Vietnam War," Mission 1 (December, 1967): 19-20.

tolerated the conscientious objector and each member of the church had the right and freedom to choose which position he would take on war.<sup>7</sup> Allen Isbell urged tolerance of all religious objectors, even if one disagreed with them. He noted that pacifists were making a contribution during the war through substitute work.<sup>8</sup>

A strain of pacifism remains in the Churches of Christ.<sup>9</sup> However, it is a minority view, and the issue is not discussed in the major journals or on Bible Lectureship programs of the Christian colleges which have been the major means of disseminating church doctrine. The issue of pacifism has been left to the personal beliefs of each individual in the Church.

#### A Sociological Approach

Church historians and sociologists have identified patterns of change in churches as they mature. An examination of these patterns in the Churches of Christ is one explanation of the decline of pacifism among the leaders of the

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<sup>7</sup>"How Churches Treat Conscientious Objectors," Mission 1 (December, 1967): 23.

<sup>8</sup>"The Case of the Christian Pacifist," Mission 1 (December, 1967): 6.

<sup>9</sup>See Lee Rogers, God and Government (Tuscumbia, Alabama: Rogers Publications, 1971); T. N. Thrasher, Thrasher-Green Debate (Decatur, Alabama: Gospel Defender, 1973); Christianity and Carnal Warfare (Muskogee, Oklahoma: Preaching Associates, 1969).



Churches of Christ. The stages of development in religious bodies are the cult, sect, institutionalized sect, church, and denomination.<sup>10</sup> According to the church historian H. Richard Neibuhr, characteristics of the sect stage include a membership drawn from the poor and segregation from the community. Sects appeal to the individualism of converts, emphasize ethical purity, demand a religious experience, believe in the priesthood of members, and regard the sacraments as symbols of fellowship. As a group representing a minority, at times the sect refuses to participate in government or war.<sup>11</sup>

The Churches of Christ as they developed a separate identity in the post-war south manifested many characteristics of the sect. The attitudes and beliefs of southern conservative Disciples such as David Lipscomb reflect a sect-type orientation to society. The Churches of Christ were poor, taught the priesthood of all believers, were separated from their society, and taught non-participation in government or war. Churches of Christ sought to impose strict standards of conduct on their members

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<sup>10</sup>Harold W. Pfautz, "The Sociology of Secularization: Religious Groups," American Journal of Sociology 61 (September, 1955): 123.

<sup>11</sup>H. Richard Neibuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 17-19.

by opposing divorce, dancing, gambling, tobacco, and alcohol.

Neibuhr believed prevailing cultural and political conditions determine the doctrinal opinions of religious groups.<sup>12</sup> The more urban and progressive Disciples, especially in the North, had accepted a more active political role in government even prior to the Civil War. During the war, the northern Disciples along with the other Protestant churches supported the Union. However, the upper south conservatives retained the pacifism and anti-government bias of the early leaders of the movement. After the war, the alienation and disillusionment in the defeated south provided the background for their turning from worldly affairs such as war and politics to other-worldly concerns.

A sect's sociological character is modified with a new generation that does not share the convictions of the pioneer generation.<sup>13</sup> As the progressive wing of the Disciples increased in wealth, social status, and involvement with community life, they moved into the latter stages of development as a church.<sup>14</sup> The Disciples of Christ (Christian Church) denomination

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>14</sup>Pfautz, "Sociology of Secularization," p. 127.

has developed from one faction of the nineteenth century Disciples of Christ movement.

The Churches of Christ began their movement past the sect stage in World War I. The pioneer leaders of the church, David Lipscomb and Tolbert Fanning, had passed on, leaving the leadership to a new generation of men. The church began to spread outside the south and into urban areas. The editors of the Gospel Advocate moderated the radical anti-government, anti-war position of the journal in the face of wartime patriotism.

The intense debate during World War II reflected growing pains as the Churches of Christ were searching for their proper position toward government and war. The rejection of total pacifism and political separatism by the mainstream leadership of the church indicated that many Churches of Christ were making the transition to an institutionalized sect.<sup>15</sup>

Characteristics of the institutional sect include an expanding membership and a more national or international outlook. Formal groupings to perform specific functions develop within the membership and a semi-professional

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<sup>15</sup>Harrell, "The Disciples of Christ and Social Force in Tennessee," p. 47n. Harrell believes there are indications that at least a part of the Churches of Christ will make the transition to the mainstream of American denominationalism.

leadership emerges. As this more complex structure develops schisms occur when reactionary members withdraw to form a new sect. Though basic conflicts with the larger society remain, they are on a structural and institutional level and are more ceremonial than real. As the economic status of members rise, an increasing accommodation to society leads to a "mild morality or respectability." Other-world concerns are exchanged for activist interest in the here and now.<sup>16</sup>

After 1945, Churches of Christ grew numerically into one of the top ten non-Catholic religious bodies in America. Congregations were established in all 50 states and in 65 foreign countries.<sup>17</sup> Economically, the membership of the Churches of Christ reached the middle and upper-middle class status. In this process, mainstream Protestant beliefs about the duties of citizens and attitude toward war were accepted by the majority of the leaders and members of the Churches of Christ.

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<sup>16</sup>Neibuhr, Social Sources, p. 56; Liston Pope, Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), pp. 117-124; Pfautz, "Sociology of Secularization," p. 126.

<sup>17</sup>Frank S. Mead, Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 6th ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), pp. 106-107.

Churches of Christ and Religious Nationalism

Another explanation for the decline of the influence of pacifism in the Churches of Christ is the development of a strong religious nationalism since World War II. Anti-Catholic and anti-Communist crusades in the Churches of Christ led them to accept conservative political ideologies. Religion in general after World War II experienced a rising nationalism, fed by the Cold War tensions. Since World War II, Christianity in the United States has increasingly identified itself with Americanism and the American way of life. To speak out against national actions or policies is to speak against God for God has blessed America above all other nations. This development was reflected in the Churches of Christ by the growth of religious nationalism.<sup>18</sup>

Royce Money, in his study of church-state relations in the Churches of Christ since 1945, identified varying degrees of religious nationalism within the church. The rise in social and economic standing of the Churches of Christ since 1945 ended the sectarian orientation of the church. The church adopted the conservative economic and political beliefs of middle-class America, along with support for God, family, and patriotism.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Money, "Church-State Relations," pp. 3-4, 182.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 183-184.

Pacifism was one of the sectarian beliefs abandoned as this transition was made. However, the intensity of debate during World War II indicates that at least one segment of the Churches of Christ did not give up this point without a struggle. The remnant of the pacifists at present have not accepted this transition. On the other hand, the pro-war activism during World War II was extended into the Cold War era to the national goals and policies of the United States. Many in the Churches of Christ remain strong religious nationalists.<sup>20</sup>

Pacifism is no longer an issue in the Churches of Christ. The union of conservative political ideology and religious values has muted any protest to a Christian's involvement in politics or war. A danger exists that one distinctive characteristic of the early Restoration Movement will be lost in this union. The anti-government and pacifist positions were never widely accepted by the membership of the Churches of Christ but their rejection have made the Churches of Christ only one among many on these issues.

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<sup>20</sup>See Perry C. Cotham, Politics, Americanism and Christianity (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976). This book expresses the religious nationalist position in the Churches of Christ.

Application to Teaching: Summary

Several themes developed in this study of pacifism in the Churches of Christ have relevant classroom application. Recognition of the interplay between religion and culture is essential in fully understanding the social, economic, and political heritage of the United States. The give and take between culture and religion is demonstrated in this study by: the development of the Restoration Movement from the frontier environment; the divisions of the movement because of the Civil War and social and cultural differences; and subsequent developments in each wing in response to the social environment and historical events in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Pacifism in the Churches of Christ lost influence due in part to the influence of their environment. The more nineteenth century Disciples of Christ became aculturated to their society, the less impact pacifist thought had on them. Likewise, the leadership of the Churches of Christ in the twentieth century abandoned pacifism as they became more respectable members of both the religious and secular community.

Another important question raised by this study is the source of a church's value system. Does a church impose its value system on the membership or are a church's values altered to agree with the values of its membership?

Was the abandonment of pacifism in the Churches of Christ merely an adaptation by the leadership to the practice of the membership? This concept could be applied to the development or changes in value systems of any organization.

A theme not developed in this study but of significance for a study of modern United States history is the development of a strong religious nationalism in American churches since 1945. This issue is especially relevant in light of the current debate about the role of conservative Protestants in politics. The negative impact on pacifism of religious nationalism has been a significant development in the Churches of Christ.

Additional topics that can be applied in American History surveys, specialized history courses, or in courses in religious history include: dissent to war; support of war by American Churches; the role of the religious press in forming public opinion; and the concept of a "just war" and its applicability in the nuclear age. All of these topics can be studied, using the developments in the nineteenth century Disciples of Christ and the twentieth century Churches of Christ as examples, illustrations, or case histories.



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