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# WAR AND PEACE

*Michael Snape*

## *Introduction*

The twentieth century, the bloodiest century in world history, saw significant developments in the worldwide Anglican Communion that were closely connected to the impact and legacy of war. National consciousness was heightened in Australia and New Zealand, for example, by such events as the Gallipoli campaign and the capture of Vimy Ridge in the First World War, and by the decline of Great Britain's protective military power in the Second. Inevitably, in their Anglican churches this growing sense of national selfhood fuelled an increasing desire for autonomy from the Church of England. Although the Anglophone and imperial heritage of Anglicanism in the first half of the twentieth century meant that Anglicans very rarely found themselves fighting each other (something that cannot be said of Catholics, Lutherans, or Orthodox Christians) the totality and destructiveness of twentieth-century conflict complicated church-state relations and affected Anglican ethics, theology and liturgy. However, the impact of war upon Anglicans and Anglicanism was uneven across time and space. In scale and reach the World Wars dwarfed all other conflicts, and in Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand the human costs of the First World War exceeded those of any other twentieth-century conflict. Whereas the great majority of the world's Anglicans dutifully followed the British Empire into war in 1914 and 1939, the political independence that accompanied the transition of the British Empire to the Commonwealth, and the emergence of Anglicanism as a largely non-Anglo-Saxon, and non-Anglophone Communion meant that Anglicans were less evenly affected by the ordeal or the threat of war during the latter half of the twentieth century. These factors simply compounded

discrepancies that arose from geo-political realities. For example, during the Second World War Anglicans in North America, the Antipodes and sub-Saharan Africa were, unlike their co-religionists in Great Britain, Melanesia and much of Asia, largely insulated from the effects of aerial bombing and enemy invasion. Similarly, Great Britain, the historic cradle of Anglicanism, stood under the greatest threat of nuclear annihilation during the Cold War, just as it had been most vulnerable to aerial attack in both World Wars. However, and despite its lethal vulnerability in geostrategic terms, Britain was at least spared direct involvement in the Vietnam War, which proved deeply divisive in Australia and New Zealand, as well as in the United States. Similarly, in the 1950s and 1960s the expanding Anglican churches of East and West Africa were confronted with insurgency in Kenya and civil war in Nigeria which, in terms of their scale and brutality, had no equivalents in Great Britain, North America, or the Antipodes.

While this essay cannot hope to address every war, civil war, or insurgency in which Anglicans were involved in the course of the twentieth century, and especially its latter half, it can illustrate how profoundly the Anglican Communion could be affected by the experience of war. Grasping the complexity and significance of this subject is not helped by the fact that, with the growth of ecumenism, Anglican perspectives on war have often been subsumed by those of the wider ecumenical movement. This was the case at the 1924 Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship (COPEC), which declared that ‘all war is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ’, and in the matter of *The Church and the Atom* report of 1948, which was inspired by an earlier British Council of Churches’ report *The Era of Atomic Power*. Significantly, the British Council of Churches was itself a wartime creation, being inaugurated in a service at St. Paul’s Cathedral in 1942 with Archbishop William Temple as its first president. Nor has the situation been helped by the sparse and

very patchy treatment of this theme in Anglican historiography. Apart from the role of the Church of England in Great Britain, very little has been written about the impact of war on the global Anglican Communion and its many constituents. Even in the British case, attention has been largely focused on prominent churchmen (notably Randall Davidson, George Bell and William Temple) and little has been done to illustrate the threat or effects of war on broader Anglican life and religious practice. The picture is further skewed by the black legend that has grown up around the conduct of the Church of England during the First World War. Shrilly indicted by the National Secular Society and various fellow travellers in the 1930s, and hostage to Cold War historians anxious to furnish morality tales of belligerent bishops and compromised establishments in the nuclear era, the response of the Church of England to the bloodiest and most controversial of Britain's conflicts has been traditionally portrayed as naïve and reckless, and even as a major accelerant of the secularisation of British society. As Stephen Koss sweepingly averred in 1975, 'However much a commonplace, it is no exaggeration to say that war, when it came unexpectedly in August 1914, dealt a shattering blow to organised religion. The churches never recovered from the ordeal, either in terms of communicants or self-possession. Thereafter, men looked elsewhere, if anywhere, for their moral certainties.'<sup>1</sup> With the Church of England cast as the chief culprit, it has had to bear more than its fair share of retrospective, and often ill-informed, criticism and obloquy. However, it has to be remembered that the just war principles that informed the Church of England's approach to the First World War were - and remained - an integral part of the moral tradition of global Anglicanism, being enshrined in Article XXXVII of the Thirty-Nine Articles and guiding the Anglican Communion throughout the later ordeals of the Second World War and the Cold War. Confronting what he identified as a hopelessly skewed memory of the First World War, in his 1966 'Meditation' on the Church of England in the

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Koss, *Nonconformity in British Politics* (London, 1975), p. 125.

twentieth century, Canon Roger Lloyd rightly challenged the spurious charges of cravenness and incompetence laid at the door of the Anglican clergy thereafter. While this stand did little to stem the flow of such writing in the 1970s, in recent years comparative study of the British churches during the First World War shows that the Church of England was relatively critical and restrained in its approach to the conflict, while comparative consideration of the belligerent nations has led Adrian Gregory to the conclusion that ‘the moderating instincts’ held by ‘the vast majority of the Anglican ministry, up to and including the episcopate’ deserves far greater recognition.<sup>2</sup>

### *Anglicanism and pacifism*

Whether or not its role in the First World War was the cardinal sin of the Church of England in the twentieth century, industrialised slaughter and the advent of aerial bombing gave an enormous boost to pacifist sentiment within the Anglican Communion in the inter-war years. However, it is important to recognise that the dissentient voice and peace-making role was by no means absent in pre-war Anglicanism. Besides Christian socialists such as Charles Gore, then a canon of Westminster Abbey, Bishop John Percival of Hereford was stridently opposed to the South African War (‘a hideous blunder and crime’, as he described it in a letter to the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury)<sup>3</sup> and became a forthright critic of the British army’s use of concentration camps. Subsequently, and with the looming threat of war with Germany, the Church of England played a leading role in the Anglo-German friendship movement, the exchange visits and goodwill gestures of prominent British and German

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<sup>2</sup> Adrian Gregory, ‘Beliefs and Religion’ in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Volume III. Civil Society* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 432-33.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Blunden, ‘The Anglican Church during the War’ in Peter Warwick and S.B. Spies (eds), *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (London, 1980), p. 279.

churchmen finding a sponsor in the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson. Out of this irenic milieu the Church of England Peace League emerged in 1910, which counted Gore, now Bishop of Birmingham, and Percival among its members. However, fully-fledged *pacifism*, as opposed to *pacificism* (a position which, whilst opposed to violence in general, allows some force in order to preserve peace),<sup>4</sup> was still very much a rarity among Anglicans in the era of the First World War, and even Gore and Percival firmly endorsed Britain's stand in defence of Belgium and international treaty obligations, the former even branding conscientious objectors as 'among the most aggravating human beings with whom I ever have had to deal'.<sup>5</sup> From 1916, the mechanics of conscription in mainland Britain showed how few Anglicans were prepared to assume this unpopular stand; according to a contemporary estimate, Anglicans comprised only seven per cent of the nation's 16,500 or so conscientious objectors, a smaller percentage than that provided by the nation's tiny minority of avowed atheists. Significantly, Anglican pacifism caused greater controversy in the United States, where Bishop Paul Jones, president of the Church Socialist League, was effectively forced to resign from the diocese of Utah after pronouncing that war was 'repugnant to the whole spirit of the gospel', regardless of the issues involved.<sup>6</sup>

However, sustained by internationalist aspirations and by a growing, long-term reaction to the trauma of the First World War, an influential pacifist constituency developed within worldwide Anglicanism in the inter-war period. Moving well beyond the advocacy of peaceful arbitration favoured by its pre-war predecessors, the Lambeth Conference of 1930 declared that 'War as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the

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<sup>4</sup> This helpful distinction is Martin Ceadel's. See Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 1-8.

<sup>5</sup> Roger Lloyd, *The Church of England 1900-1965* (London, 1966), p. 224.

<sup>6</sup> Ray H. Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms* (Eugene, 1969), p. 200.

teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Four years later, Archbishop Lang convened an ecumenical conference on ‘The World’s Peace’ at Lambeth Palace, which concluded that ‘an awakened belief in God’ was the best means by which international peace could be preserved. With the tide running in their favour, in the early 1930s Anglican pacifists emerged as key figures in the growing peace movement in Great Britain. The distinguished liberal theologian Charles Raven became the chairman of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in 1932, while another clergyman, the charismatic radio star H.R.L. Sheppard, laid the foundations for a mass peace movement, the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), in 1934. Evidently, pacifist sentiment was rife in the Anglican Communion during the early 1930s, stronger than at any other time in its history. Emblematic of what Winston Churchill branded as the prevailing ‘unwarrantable mood of self-abasement’, in May 1935 King George V, Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England, declared to Lloyd George in what he described as ‘a most extraordinary outburst’ that ‘I *will* not have another war. I *will not*. The last war was none of my doing, & if there is another one & we are threatened with being brought into it, I will go to Trafalgar Square and wave a red flag myself sooner than allow this country to be brought in.’<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the unfolding foreign policies of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany caused some searching debate and, when a vote in the Church Assembly in February 1937 reaffirmed Anglican adherence to the just war tradition, it resulted in the formation of the uncompromisingly pacifist Anglican Peace Fellowship (APF). Although this inspired the creation of an Episcopal Peace Fellowship in the United States in November 1939, the Church of England’s preference prior to the outbreak of another European conflict had been for appeasement rather than war. Tormented by memories of the First World War, dreading the prospect of a second, and assailed with guilt over the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, the consensus among the Anglican hierarchy was in favour of the

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<sup>7</sup> A.J.P. Taylor (ed.), *Lloyd George. A Diary by Frances Stevenson* (London, 1971), p. 309.

Munich Agreement of September 1938. Consequently, and at the instigation of Cosmo Lang, Sunday 2 October 1938 was kept as a 'Day of national thanksgiving for deliverance from the danger of war' - complementing a national day of prayer held a fortnight earlier at the height of the Sudeten crisis. Significantly, and although an agnostic who had been raised a Unitarian, Britain's Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, sought to legitimise the Agreement, and appeal to Anglican sentiment, by claiming to have delivered 'peace in our time', the object of a twice-daily petition in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

However the early course of the Second World War again revealed the relative strength of pacifism and pacificism among British Anglicans. Within twelve months, and through a combination of Nazi barbarism and military catastrophe, a war in defence of Poland had been transformed into an existential struggle for Great Britain, the Empire, and even 'Christian Civilization' itself. In these circumstances, the moral appeal of pacifism almost collapsed. Although the APF in Great Britain published, lobbied, and supported conscientious objectors, who were still three times more numerous in the Second World War than in the First, its appeal also diminished, its predicament reflected in a dramatic decline in rates of conscientious objection and in the membership of the PPU. Even pacifist stalwarts wobbled, with Charles Raven, now regius professor of divinity and Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, offering prayers of thanksgiving in the college chapel for the much-needed British victory at El Alamein in 1942. Still, the years of the Second World War did witness one novelty - an openly and avowedly pacifist wartime bishop of the Church of England, with a platform in the House of Lords. However, the pacifism of Bishop Ernest Barnes of Birmingham was as distinctive as his own brand of modernist theology, being deeply coloured by eugenic concerns regarding the long-term effects of the war on Great Britain's best racial stock. Despite having an enduring ally in Bishop Barnes, Anglican

pacifists were not guaranteed a more sympathetic hearing in the Second World War than they had been in the First. When Lang was lobbied by the APF for a meeting during the crisis summer of 1940, William Temple advised him not to allow their encounter to be minuted lest it allow 'these tiresome people blow off their steam in our faces'.<sup>8</sup>

Although unable to exercise a strong and direct influence on the Anglican Communion (let alone Allied governments) during the Second World War, with the dawn of the nuclear age, and the advent of the Cold War, it was apparent that pacifism had nevertheless gained a permanent footing in the Anglican Communion. The breadth of Anglican opinion and experience was no more vividly illustrated in the 1960s than in the configuration of New Zealand's Wellington City Mission, its head being Walter Arnold, a leading pacifist of long standing, whose assistant, Keith Elliott, had been awarded the Victoria Cross for capturing 130 Germans in July 1942. As in the inter-war period, when memories of trench warfare and fear of aerial bombing had brought pacifists and pacifists together in a mass if disparate peace movement, the threat of nuclear Armageddon created a reinvigorated peace movement and pushed more Anglican clergy to the fore. Much as their dubious claims to chaplaincy experience in the First World War had enhanced the standing of H.R.L. Sheppard and Stuart Morris (a Barnes *protégé* and Sheppard's successor as chairman of the PPU), Canon John Collins, formerly an RAF chaplain attached to Bomber Command Headquarters during the Second World War, was an obvious choice to serve as the first chairman of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. However, if the use of the atom bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki quickly divided Anglican opinion as far afield as Great Britain and New Zealand, the Anglican Communion never arrived at a consensus over the

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<sup>8</sup> Arlie J. Hoover, *God, Britain, and Hitler in World War II: The View of the British Clergy* (Westport, 1999), p. 40.

moral legitimacy of nuclear weapons. For example, although Bishop George Bell of Chichester condemned the development of the hydrogen bomb in 1950, his strident opposition did not represent the greater part of the Church of England. Again, and despite the prominence of John Collins in CND, it was estimated in the late 1960s that only a third of the practising Christians who supported the organisation were actually Anglicans. Even the special working party behind *The Church and the Bomb* (1982), the product of a renewed period of tension in the nuclear arms race, the revival of CND, and ‘the most substantial Anglican consideration of nuclear weapons in the post-war period’,<sup>9</sup> failed to secure agreement over gradual, unilateral nuclear disarmament. Strongly opposed by Anglican multilateralists, even in diluted form its arguments failed to win the support of the General Synod when they were debated in February 1983.

Still, neither did the Church of England nor its sister churches in the Anglican Communion simply fall into step with sundry states and governments in questions relating to peace and war. If, by the 1980s, ‘the mantle of Dick Sheppard and John Collins’ had fallen on the shoulders of a Roman Catholic, Monsignor Bruce Kent,<sup>10</sup> there was no shortage of turbulent Anglican priests prepared to take up the cudgels on controversial points of foreign and military policy. In 1985, a future Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, then dean and chaplain of Clare College, Cambridge, was arrested during a CND demonstration at RAF Lakenheath. In 1956, Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher condemned the Suez fiasco in the House of Lords, branding the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt a deeply mistaken act of aggression and a violation of the United Nations Charter. Nine years later Fisher’s successor, Michael

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew Grimley, ‘The Church and the Bomb: Anglicans and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, c.1958-1984’ in Stephen G. Parker and Tom Lawson (eds), *God and War: The Church of England and Armed Conflict in the Twentieth Century* (Farnham, 2012), p. 160.

<sup>10</sup> Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990* (London, 1991), p. 601.

Ramsey, went the other way in urging military action to forestall Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence, and the white-minority regime it brought into being (one *Daily Mail* cartoon even portrayed the archbishop sporting a hand grenade in lieu of a pectoral cross). As the pre-eminent prelate of the Anglican Communion, Ramsey also felt compelled to pronounce on the Vietnam War, telling a Canadian audience in 1966 that the United States was fighting with the right motive, namely to stop 'communist aggression'. However, a year later, and at Little Rock, Arkansas, it was clear that Ramsey had reconsidered, now advising Americans of the apparent futility of the conflict in Indo-China. Still, the most celebrated – or notorious - sentiments uttered by a characteristically pacifist Archbishop of Canterbury were expressed by Robert Runcie in 1982 at the thanksgiving service for the victorious outcome of the Falklands War. Although Runcie held the conflict to be just – a point he acknowledged in his sermon - he stressed the imperative of Christian compassion in war and voiced concern for the bereaved in Argentina, ending the service with prayers for all casualties of the conflict. Conservative opinion was, predictably, outraged; 'the boss is livid' Denis Thatcher warned one MP,<sup>11</sup> while large sections of the Conservative press railed against a lily-livered church that was so plainly out of touch with the mood of the British public.

### *Anglicans and the military*

Of all the challenges issued by the Church of England to civil government in the twentieth century, few were as dramatic or as symbolic as Runcie's stand in St. Paul's Cathedral that July. Here, another highly decorated war veteran, and the primate of a strongly patriarchal church, seemed to rebuke Great Britain's only female prime minister, at the moment of her

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<sup>11</sup> Liza Filby, 'God and Mrs Thatcher: Religion and Politics in 1980s Britain' (Warwick PhD, 2010), p. 28.

greatest triumph, for her unwonted enthusiasm for war. Although his first-hand experience of the blazing tanks and corpse-strewn battlefields of North-West Europe in 1944-45 undoubtedly influenced Runcie's perspectives, as did his exposure to the unspeakable horrors of Belsen, of further significance was the fact that the archbishop's pre-ordination pedigree (sportsman, Oxford undergraduate, and Guards officer) advertised the historic links that obtained between Anglicanism and the military elites and institutions of the Anglophone world. In Great Britain's armed forces, the Church of England remained the dominant and most privileged of all churches and traditions. For example, the first non-Anglican Chaplain-General of the British army was not appointed until 1987, the first non-Anglican Chaplain of the Fleet until 1998, and the first non-Anglican Chaplain-in-Chief of the RAF had to wait until 2006. Of the four British clergymen to be awarded the Victoria Cross in the twentieth century (all in the First World War), all were Anglicans and one was a combatant officer. Driven primarily by the late-Victorian 'localisation' of the British army, the strength of the historic Anglican military tradition, heavily augmented by the experience of both World Wars, was reflected in the scores of regimental chapels that adorned the cathedrals and larger churches of England and Wales. Significantly, and as late as 1958, the year in which CND was launched with Collins at its head, it seemed entirely appropriate that the RAF should have a 'Central Church' of its own, the Westminster church of St. Clement Danes being renovated by the Air Council and reconsecrated for this purpose by the Bishop of London.

The close ties between Anglicanism and Britain's armed forces were not merely traditional or sentimental, however. Despite the notional parity of the Church of Scotland, and the general emancipation of Roman Catholics and Nonconformists in the course of the nineteenth century, the professional officers of the British army and Royal Navy remained overwhelmingly Anglican throughout the twentieth century. In part, this was a function of the

prominent role of the great public schools and the largely Anglican Anglo-Irish gentry in supplying what was deemed to be natural officer material. Significantly, when the Irish Guards were created in 1900, it was assumed that the regiment's rank and file would be Roman Catholic and its officers Church of Ireland. At the outbreak of the First World War, around 14 per cent of the army's colonels were sons of the Anglican clergy, and when Archbishop Randall Davidson toured the Western Front in May 1916 he could not fail to notice the large number of generals and staff officers who were related to senior Anglican clergymen. These included Bernard Law Montgomery, grandson of Frederic William Farrar and son of Henry Montgomery, former Bishop of Tasmania and organiser of the 1908 pan-Anglican Congress. If the army's reliance on the Anglo-Irish gentry declined over the century, in 1950, and as the American sociologist Morris Janowitz duly noted, the highest ranks of the British army were still dominated by officers recruited from the well-to-do families of rural southern England. If the religious implications of this situation were obvious, the Anglican ascendancy in the Royal Navy was still more pronounced and tenacious. Fortified by the cult of Nelson, a praying commander in his own right and the son of a Norfolk clergyman, the pervasive Anglicanism of the senior service was reflected in the fact that no Roman Catholic Mass was said in public on a Royal Navy vessel between 1688 and 1908, and it was not until November 1943 that an Order in Council gave parity to Roman Catholic, Free Church, or even Church of Scotland chaplains. In contrast, Prayer Book services were traditionally led by their commanders on smaller Royal Navy vessels, a scene vividly captured in Noel Coward's famous Second World War drama *In Which We Serve* (1942), the very title of which was taken from the Prayer Book's 'Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea', and from a prayer that was said on a daily basis in the Royal Navy. In such an institutional context, and with the devoutly Anglo-Catholic Admiral 'Jacky' Fisher the main

influence upon the Edwardian Royal Navy, it is hardly surprising that Mrs. Randall Davidson was invited to launch a new dreadnought on the river Thames in 1911.

It is ironic, however, that the institutional leverage enjoyed by Anglicanism was also pronounced in the armed forces of the United States. Despite the unconstitutionality of any religious test for public office, the notionally rigid separation of church and state, and the tiny proportion of Americans who were members of the Protestant Episcopal Church (less than 1.5 per cent in 1936), Episcopalianism dominated the regular officer corps of America's army and navy until well into the second half of the twentieth century. In part, this was a function of the close identification of the Protestant Episcopal Church with America's old stock, 'wasp' elite, a section of society that was ideally placed to send its sons to the service academies of West Point and Annapolis, to say nothing of the White House. However, there was also a temperamental affinity between the professional officer corps and the Protestant Episcopal Church, Episcopalianism representing a congenially ordered, hierarchical, genteel and quintessentially 'Anglo' variety of Protestantism. According to the most reliable estimates, 42 per cent of America's admirals and 40 per cent of its generals were Episcopalians in 1950, and in the years 1898-1950 the proportion of Episcopalian generals was in the order of 50 per cent. Among them were such towering figures as John Pershing, the commander of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in the First World War, and Douglas MacArthur, George S. Patton, and George C. Marshall in the Second. Significantly, it seems to have been accepted as axiomatic that an Episcopalian allegiance eased professional advancement in the US army, with the sociologist Morris Janowitz noting of America's Episcopalian generals that 'There is good evidence that a substantial minority

adopted the Episcopalian faith, rather than having been born into it.’<sup>12</sup> The privileges of the Protestant Episcopal Church were reflected in the fact that it was Charles Henry Brent, the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of the Philippines, who was chosen by Pershing to lead the chaplains of the AEF in 1918. A greater source of controversy, however, arose from the fact that between 1896 and 1959 *all* of West Point’s cadet chaplains – who, though civilians, presided at compulsory services every Sunday - were Episcopalians, a monopoly that was condemned as ‘calculated and unwarranted discrimination against other denominations’ on the part of the academy.<sup>13</sup> Not until the Vietnam War and its aftermath did this Episcopalian ascendancy unravel, as a combination of demographic factors and political tensions – especially over the Vietnam War and nuclear weapons in the Reagan era - conspired to break the traditional alliance between the Protestant Episcopal Church and America’s military leadership. If this breakdown was reflected in the emergence of conservative evangelicalism as the dominant force in American military religion by the end of the twentieth century, it also had a singular expression in the case of Albion W. Knight, a nuclear weapons expert and doyen of the New Christian Right. An Episcopalian priest for eighteen years of his military career, Knight campaigned vigorously against the perceived ‘pacifist and Marxist orientation of the leaders of the Episcopal Church’ before defecting to the United Episcopal Church in 1983.<sup>14</sup>

### *World war and the episcopate*

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<sup>12</sup> Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York, 1960), p. 98.

<sup>13</sup> Rodger R. R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace. The United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975* (Washington, 1977), pp. 50-51.

<sup>14</sup> Anne C. Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military 1942-1993* (Baton Rouge, 1996), p. 251.

In Great Britain, the reputation of the Church of England and its conduct during the two World Wars has tended to reflect crude but popular perceptions of the conflicts themselves, with the First World War billed as a costly, futile and intrinsically bad war, and the Second as some kind of redemptive national epic. Underpinning the former view has been the persistent misrepresentation of the wartime conduct and utterances of the Bishop of London, Arthur Foley Winnington Ingram, a trait that has much of its basis in the inter-war propaganda of the National Secular Society, and which has now been persuasively dismissed by Stuart Bell.<sup>15</sup> In actual fact, the role of the Church of England in the two conflicts was in no sense radically divergent. If pre-war conscription and planned manpower policies throughout the Second World War spared that generation of Anglican clergy the invidious part of clerical recruiting officers, the role of the Church as a critical friend of Britain's war effort remained constant. Although George Bell famously declared in 1939 that it was not the role of the Church to act as the 'spiritual auxiliary' of the state in wartime, this was a role that many British patriots would not have readily identified with the Church of England a generation earlier. Far from conniving at an unbridled war effort, Lang spent almost the whole of the First World War in the dog house for speaking respectfully of the young Kaiser Wilhelm II during a speech at York in November 1914. For his part, and irrespective of Germany's conduct, Davidson publicly opposed Britain's use of poisonous gas, the bombing of German civilians, and (along with Lang) the enlistment of clergymen for combatant service. In 1916, he even attempted to save the life of the convicted humanitarian-turned-traitor, Sir Roger Casement. The Anglican clergy were also conspicuous in supporting the rights of religious conscientious objectors – a deeply unpopular breed, despite their professed motivation - with twenty-six bishops and over 200 other clergymen calling for the release of imprisoned absolutists in November 1917 (and all this, it should be pointed out, as the British army was facing its

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<sup>15</sup> Stuart Bell, 'Malign or Maligned? Arthur Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, in the First World War', *Journal for the History of Modern Theology*, 20 (1), 2013, pp. 117-133.

ultimate ordeal at Passchendaele). Because prelates such as Gore, E.S. Talbot and Davidson were, from the outbreak of war, forthright in enunciating the sins of the nation, the Church of England's 1916 National Mission of Repentance and Hope, which took place as the battle of the Somme raged in northern France, seemed only to confirm the suspicions of the Church's many critics. The influential newsman Horatio Bottomley regarded the whole endeavour as an insulting impertinence and, in 1917, another pundit even railed against what he saw as the 'flabby-babby babble of the Boche-defending Bishops'.<sup>16</sup> Nor did this critical voice abate with the end of the war, with leading bishops of the Church of England disavowing the Treaty of Versailles and becoming 'ardent proponents of changes in the Versailles system' in the 1920s.<sup>17</sup> Prompted by moral concern and by the politics of international ecumenism, William Temple, then Archbishop of York, famously condemned the vengeful 'War Guilt' clause of the Treaty of Versailles in a sermon preached in Geneva in 1932, in which he invoked the spirit of the Gospel and called for its prompt deletion by the victorious powers.

Much of this familiar role was reprised between 1939 and 1945. Once again, and despite the growing unpopularity of their stand, Anglican bishops and archbishops rallied to the defence of pacifists and religious conscientious objectors. In 1944, and as Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple even wrote a sympathetic introduction to Stephen Hobhouse's essay *Christ and Our Enemies*, which had been published by the Fellowship of Reconciliation three years earlier. Once again, members of the Anglican hierarchy could seem uncomfortably reticent about trumpeting the inherent virtues of the nation and its cause; as Hensley Henson, the former Bishop of Durham, wrote in August 1939, 'The conventional

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<sup>16</sup> Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 742.

<sup>17</sup> Catherine Anne Cline, 'Ecumenism and Appeasement: The Bishops of the Church of England and the Treaty of Versailles', *Journal of Modern History*, 61 (4), 1989, pp. 683-303, at p. 683.

patriotic tub-thumping is out of the question. We have got past that phase.<sup>18</sup> Even Winnington Ingram, also in retirement, readily acknowledged that it was ‘easy to mistake patriotism for Christianity’.<sup>19</sup> Temple agreed, stating on the National Day of Prayer of 26 May 1940 that Britons should turn to prayer ‘as Christians who happened to be British’, and that the ultimate sin of their enemies was to ‘put their nationality first’.<sup>20</sup> To the consternation of colleagues such as Lang and Garbett, Temple was even reluctant to pray unreservedly for victory and, rather than claim that the war was being fought for Christianity, maintained in *Towards a Christian Order* (1942) that it was being fought in defence of a flawed ‘Christian civilization’ which had the potential for improvement. From this subtly detached position, Temple could enter public protests against aspects of wartime policy and strategy, notably the Allies’ neglect of European Jewry and Jewish refugees, and voice occasional misgivings about reprisals and the RAF’s area bombing of Germany. Nevertheless, it was Davidson’s former chaplain and biographer, George Bell, who proved the most strident and consistent critic of Britain’s prosecution of the war, championing the cause of German and Italian internees after Dunkirk, urging the possibility of a negotiated peace with Germany in his *Christianity and World Order* (1940), and, most famously, opposing the RAF’s strategy of area bombing from 1942. Significantly, and on this latter issue in particular, a range of opinion existed among Bell’s fellow bishops, with some – notably Mervyn Haigh of Coventry, and Kenneth Kirk of Oxford (who had both, unlike Bell, served as army chaplains in the First World War) – viewing the bombing of civilians as a valid military objective, especially given the kind of war being waged by Nazi Germany. More recently, and despite

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<sup>18</sup> Angus Calder, *The People’s War: Britain 1939-1945* (London, 1992), p. 487.

<sup>19</sup> John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945* (London, 1994), p. 250.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000* (London, 2002), p. 28.

his concern for the fate of European Jewry and the vaunted ‘clarity of his moral vision’,<sup>21</sup> Bell himself has come under criticism for failing to penetrate the real depths of Nazi anti-Semitism, and for advocating a ‘crusade of conversion’ in post-war Europe as a Christian, ‘monocultural’ bulwark against a recrudescence of National Socialism.<sup>22</sup>

### *Anglicans, anglophilia and war*

However much the wartime conduct of its bishops has been fought and raked over in succeeding decades, an important outcome of the two World Wars was to confirm the Church of England’s role as the undisputed *primus inter pares* of the principal Protestant churches in Great Britain. While the chronic decline of the English Free Churches served to increase the preponderance of Anglicans (however nominal) in British society, the moral and spiritual stature of the monarchy in wartime also helped to boost the standing of England’s established Church. Of the twenty-one national days of prayer held between 1899 and 1947, seventeen took place in time of war, and two more in connection with the Munich Crisis of 1938. All of these occurred at the instigation, or with the endorsement, of the sovereign, they depended on the guidance of the archbishop of Canterbury, and they relied upon the collaboration of the established churches of England and Scotland, the Free Churches, and even the Roman Catholics. If the religious and mainly Anglican tone of British national identity served as a ready source of consolation and support in wartime, then it also helped to define Britain against its enemies and even its erstwhile allies. Hastening the decline of disestablishmentarian sentiment in England, the ordeal of two World Wars enabled the

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<sup>21</sup> Tom Lawson, *The Church of England and the Holocaust: Christianity, Memory and Nazism* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> Tom Lawson, ‘The Anglican Understanding of Nazism 1933-1945: Placing the Church of England’s Response to the Holocaust in Context’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 14 (2), 2003, pp. 133-34.

Church of England to show that, although an established Church, it was not the same craven, erastian beast as the Prussian Church in the First World War, still less the Reich Church in the Second. If the depravities of Nazi neo-paganism helped to underline the positive desirability of a strong Christian underpinning to British national life, the debased secularism of France's Third Republic also helped to explain its collapse in 1940, and not only in the eyes of the Anglican press. Significantly, and especially in the Second World War, the moral standing of the Church of England was also recognised internationally. After his appointment as Archbishop of York in 1942, Cyril Garbett became 'an international ecclesiastical statesman',<sup>23</sup> helping by means of his wartime travels to validate the new religious freedom enjoyed in the Soviet Union and so help cement the precarious Grand Alliance of Great Britain, the USA and the USSR. If the patriarch of the Rumanian Orthodox Church appealed to Temple over the Allied bombing of the oilfields at Ploesti, much more significant was the place accorded to the Church of England in American wartime propaganda. Besides the iconic image of St. Paul's Cathedral still standing amidst the ravages of the blitz, the Oscar-winning film *Mrs. Miniver* (1942), perhaps the most Anglophile film in Hollywood history, also stressed the Christian character of Great Britain as embodied in the Church of England. Directed by William Wyler, a German-born Jew, the closing scene of the film was that of an indomitable English congregation gathered to worship in their bomb-damaged parish church, where, before launching into 'Onward Christian Soldiers', their vicar concluded his sermon with the words: 'This is the People's War. It is our war. We are the fighters. Fight it then. Fight it with all that is in us. And may God defend the right.'

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<sup>23</sup> Diane Kirby, 'The Archbishop of York and Anglo-American Relations During the Second World War and Early Cold War, 1942-1955', *Journal of Religious History*, 23 (3), 1999, p. 330.

If war helped to reinforce the links between the Church of England and British national identity, during the two World Wars Anglicans throughout the Dominions appear to have demonstrated an exceptionally strong commitment to the cause of the British Empire. The denominational ties that bound the Dominions' Anglicans so closely to the Mother Country were conspicuously strong in Australia, whose Anglicans remained part of the Church of England in Australia until 1981, when their church was officially renamed the Anglican Church of Australia (Canadian Anglicans, in contrast, took the equivalent step a quarter of a century earlier). Anglicanism in Australia was heavily Anglicised in its leadership, structures and ethos for much of the century, and these attachments assumed particular significance in wartime. Prior to the First World War, the celebration of Empire Day was championed in Australia by F.B. Boyce, an Anglican clergyman, and Anglicans of the Great War generation were – in contrast to their Roman Catholic compatriots – liable to place loyalty to Empire above loyalty to Australia. For example, in a telling Lenten address of 1915, English-born and Eton-educated St. Clair George Alfred Donaldson, Archbishop of Brisbane and a future bishop of Salisbury, fretted that the Australian was not sufficiently alive 'to the obligation which rests upon him as a member of an Imperial race'.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, many Anglican churchmen proved to be keen advocates of conscription, a deeply divisive issue in contemporary Australian politics, and a novel Christological theme to emerge in Anglican wartime rhetoric was that of Christ the supreme conscript. However, and as with Great Britain, it would be easy to overstate Australian bishops' support for the war. In the first (Australian) summer of the war, Bishop Reginald Stephen of Tasmania incurred some criticism for pointing to the sins of Great Britain, some of which (such as territorial aggrandisement at the expense of weaker nations) it shared with Germany. Australian Anglicans' attachment to the Empire was also reflected in enthusiastic responses to national

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<sup>24</sup> Michael McKernan, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918* (Sydney and Canberra, 1980), pp. 69-70.

days of prayer held in Great Britain. As Philip Williamson has shown, King George V called the whole Empire to prayer on the first Sunday of 1918 and again in July 1919 to mark the Treaty of Versailles; it was only during the Second World War that such wider summons became a matter of routine. Nevertheless, as early as January 1915 the Anglican bishops of Australia joined the churches in Great Britain in marking the first Sunday of the year as a day of prayer. Similarly, Anglican churchmen in Australia and in Canada rejoiced at the perceived success of the day of prayer held on 4 August 1918, the fourth anniversary of the outbreak of war, when King George V prayed with the House of Commons and thereby helped to ensure the success of the subsequent British offensive on the Western Front. While Australian voters twice rejected conscription during the First World War, Anglicans accounted for a disproportionate number of those who voluntarily served overseas in the Australian Imperial Force, a source of understandable grievance to their church in view of the fact that AIF chaplains were only appointed in proportion to their churches' share of the civilian population.

However, such willingness to fight and die on the other side of the world in the cause of the Empire was still more conspicuous among Canadian Anglicans. If Canada followed the example of Great Britain by introducing conscription in 1917, prior to the passage of its controversial Military Service Act over 46 per cent of those who had volunteered for the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) were Anglicans, a huge discrepancy in that Anglicans composed only 15 per cent of the Canadian population. Although Anglican representation in the CEF seems to have been bolstered by volunteers from the United States, Melissa Davidson has rightly emphasised the 'enormous impact' of this situation on the Church of England in Canada; with up to 16 per cent of *all* Canadian Anglicans in uniform by 1916, 'the emotional and economic hardships associated with men serving overseas were felt more

broadly amongst Anglican families' than among Canadians of any other denomination.<sup>25</sup> That a similar situation obtained in the Dominion between 1939 and 1945 is indicated by figures compiled by the first (and predictably Anglican) head of the Canadian army's Protestant Chaplain Services, Bishop G.A. Wells of Cariboo, in 1943. With Canada relying on a hybrid system of voluntary enlistment for overseas service and limited conscription for home defence, and Protestant chaplains appointed in the ratio of 1:1,000 of their co-religionists, Wells could report that 43 per cent of the army's Protestant chaplains were Anglicans, their numbers far exceeding those supplied by the United Church, then Canada's largest Protestant denomination. Among New Zealand's Maori population, which was exempt from conscription during the Second World War, the picture was much the same. The great majority of the men of the all-volunteer Maori Battalion of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force were Anglicans, and 'no other 2NZEF Unit was so served by a single denomination' in the course of the Second World War.<sup>26</sup> Five hundred West Indians volunteered to fly with the RAF in the Second World War and, in view of Empire-wide recruitment patterns, it is significant that among them was John Ebanks, a navigator with 571 Pathfinder Squadron who, in his own words, was 'the youngest licensed lay preacher in the Anglican Church of Jamaica'.<sup>27</sup>

American Episcopalians evinced similar symptoms of unusually strong Anglophile and pro-Allied sentiment in the two World Wars, especially in the long months of American

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<sup>25</sup> Melissa Davidson, 'The Anglican Church and the Great War' in Gordon L. Heath (ed.), *Canadian Churches and the First World War* (Eugene, 2014), p. 153.

<sup>26</sup> Geoffrey M. R. Haworth, *Marching As To War? The Anglican Church in New Zealand during World War II* (Christchurch, 2008), p. 59.

<sup>27</sup> Christopher Somerville, *Our War: How the British Commonwealth fought the Second World War* (London, 2005), p. 249.

neutrality which, on both occasions, preceded their country's entry into the war. If historic religious and cultural ties meant that the Anglophone churches of the Protestant 'mainline' were most disposed to the Allied cause between 1914 and 1917, Episcopalians yielded to none in their interventionism- despite the aberration of Bishop Jones. Amidst the disillusionment and recriminations that abounded in the United States in the inter-war years, the influential pacifist Ray H. Abrams drew up a damning charge sheet in 1933:

Among the denominations, the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country, since its founding, has been a thoroughly English organization, having many ties that bind it to the mother church in England. Its clergy are constantly passing back and forth between the two countries. It is generally appraised as a church of society, it maintains an air of aristocracy, and has within its ranks those who parade their titles and English connections... At the time of the war numerous wealthy bankers, like the Morgans, either belonged to this church or had Episcopalian associations. Hence, with a few notable exceptions, the Episcopalian clergy, steeped in English traditions and culture, and, in general, on the side of the vested interests, simply acted in accord with the conditioning and habit-patterns already well established. Moreover, the Episcopalians, more than any others, have been traditionally tied up with various military organizations and patriotic orders, either through chaplains or social affiliations.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the strength of pacifist, isolationist and anti-imperialist opinion in the United States before Pearl Harbor, prominent Episcopalians once again rallied to the cause of the Allies and of Great Britain, especially in the months between Dunkirk and Pearl Harbor. One notable voice was that of Frederick W. Beekman, dean of the Episcopalian pro-cathedral in Paris, who escaped to the United States after the fall of France where he went on to give '509

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<sup>28</sup> Abrams, p. 31.

speeches in the nation's churches, colleges, and Rotary clubs, pointing out the imminence of German victory if the United States didn't join the Allies'.<sup>29</sup> In 1941, Bishop William T. Manning of New York even provoked Episcopalian protests when he declared that 'Speaking as an American, as a Christian, and as a bishop of the Christian church, I say that it is our duty as a Nation to take full part in this struggle, to give our whole strength and power to bring this world calamity and world terror to an end, and to do this now while Great Britain still stands.'<sup>30</sup> Humanitarian aid also flowed from Episcopalian sources in the United States to Anglicans in Great Britain through organisations such as the British War Relief Society, and the Church Army benefitted from mobile tea vans that were used to support rescue workers, bombed-out civilians and even anti-aircraft batteries in war-torn Britain. However, all of this was eclipsed by the significance of American Lend-Lease aid for Great Britain, which was very much a product of having an interventionist Episcopalian incumbent in the White House in the form of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 'a frustrated clergyman at heart' according to one of his sons and the senior warden of St. James's Episcopal Church, Hyde Park, even while he served as president.

### *Anglicans and war in Asia and Africa*

Although attention was focused upon the plight of Anglicanism in the British Isles during the Second World War, Anglicanism in Asia and in the Pacific suffered far more in this era, being a victim of Japanese expansion even before Pearl Harbor and the floodtide of Japanese conquests that followed. Having survived the convulsions of the Boxer rebellion of 1899-1901, and the effects of its strong anti-missionary animus, Anglicanism grew steadily in

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<sup>29</sup> Ralph Luther Moellering, *Modern War and the American Churches* (New York, 1956), p. 60.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 266.

China during the first decades of the twentieth century. Recognised as a province of the Anglican Communion at the Lambeth Conference of 1930, seven years later, when Japan launched its all-out invasion of China, the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (the Holy Catholic Church of China) comprised twelve dioceses, one missionary district, and 120,000 baptised members and catechumens. However, the eight years of the Sino-Japanese War saw the destruction of much of its property, the dispersal of many of its congregations, and an overall loss of around 20 per cent of its members and catechumens. Mounting tensions between Japan and the Anglo-Americans also led to the ousting of the foreign-born bishops of the Nippon Sei Ko Kwai (the Holy Catholic Church of Japan, or SKK) in 1940-41, and its forced incorporation into a united Japanese Protestant church. With the Japanese conquest of Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, Burma and the Philippines, and the Japanese advance into Melanesia and New Guinea, the loss of these British and American possessions was accompanied by a further onslaught against European missionaries, who were generally regarded by the Japanese (not unreasonably, it must be said) as Anglo-American agents and therefore arrested, or worse. In the diocese of Singapore, Bishop Leonard Wilson was interned and tortured; in Burma, churches were desecrated as Christians were targeted by the Japanese and by Burmese nationalists, and in the Philippines heavy fighting and air raids destroyed much of the Episcopalian infrastructure, leading to a significant loss of pre-war members. In the Solomon Islands Christian missions were despoiled by the Japanese, and an American marine noted how, at one mission, Anglican hymnbooks were even used for toilet paper. In total, the Japanese invasion of the Solomon Islands and New Guinea resulted in the execution of nearly 250 missionaries and church workers, among them twelve Anglicans. Not surprisingly, and given the perceived cruelty and heathenism of the Japanese, for the Anglo-Americans the conflict in Asia and the Pacific could assume the character of a religious as well as a racial war, and the Anglican church of St. John's, Port Moresby, achieved symbolic

status as a religious and recreational centre for Australian and American personnel during the New Guinea campaign of 1942 to 1945. However, Allied victory over Japan in 1945 did not bring to an end the trials and tribulations of Anglicanism in Asia. As Christianity in Japan was largely an urban phenomenon, its churches had suffered heavily as a result of American bombing towards the end of the war, and by the summer of 1945 twenty-three out of twenty-eight former SKK churches in Tokyo had been completely destroyed. Furthermore, in China the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui had to suffer the further depredations of the Chinese Civil War, and then of Communist persecution. For the Anglican Church of Korea, the relatively minor constraints experienced under Japanese colonial rule were succeeded by Communist harassment in the north and by the ravages of a full-scale war in the Korean peninsula from 1950 to 1953, a war that saw the imprisonment of its bishop by the North Koreans and the ravaging of its infrastructure. In fact, and in a poignant reflection of the church's fortunes during the Korean War, when a regiment of the British army occupied the grounds of the episcopal palace in Seoul in March 1951, its soldiers salvaged and repaired a 1641 mother-of-pearl crucifix that had been recovered from the bishop's garden.

In South Africa, the twentieth century also dawned with the region at war and Anglicanism embattled. With the Church of the Province of South Africa very much identified with the cause of the British Empire in its humiliating, David-and-Goliath struggle with the small Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the South African War of 1899 to 1902 saw Anglican clergy displaced, Anglican work in the Transvaal practically suspended, and Anglican bishops take the field to assist British forces. Nevertheless, at the same time Anglicanism in South Africa also benefited from a military influx that brought tens of thousands of Anglicans from across the Empire to the seat of war, at least temporarily. Anglicanism in Africa was, however, broadly spared the infrastructural

ravages of the two World Wars. Once again, during these conflicts the newer churches of the Anglican Communion were closely identified with the imperial and Allied cause. During the First World War the CMS bishop of Khartoum, L.H. Gwynne, technically on furlough in England when the war broke out, served as the Anglican Deputy Chaplain-General on the Western Front from 1915 to 1918, steering the work of Anglican chaplains and being credited by General Sir Herbert Plumer (a good churchman, and arguably the best British general of the war) as doing more than anyone else to secure eventual victory. In terms of the logistics of war in sub-Saharan Africa, a great deal hinged on the ability of British missionaries to raise the legions of African porters required to sustain even small armies in the field. In this respect, the contribution of the UMCA bishop of Zanzibar, Frank Weston, proved to be invaluable. Also on leave in England when war broke out, Weston returned to East Africa and raised a corps of more than 2,500 carriers while holding a major's commission. However, the brutalities and iniquities that were visited on African labourers by their colonial masters were not lost on Weston, a Christian socialist, who entered a strong post-war protest in *The Serfs of Great Britain* (1920). In addition to Weston, other Anglican missionaries to sub-Saharan Africa also sought to safeguard the physical, moral and spiritual wellbeing of African labourers, among them Robert Keable, a UMCA missionary who went from Basutoland to France as a chaplain with the South African Labour Corps in 1917. Although Keable later left the priesthood, and earned notoriety for a racy novel about a delinquent chaplain, *Simon Called Peter* (1921), during the Second World War Anglicanism's missionary infrastructure again proved essential in mobilising indigenous support in Africa. As a Ugandan soldier put it in 1944, concepts of King or Empire had little purchase next to that of a 'beloved lady missionary' whose family was in danger of enslavement at home.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, by the 1940s the increasingly mechanized and technological nature of warfare placed

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<sup>31</sup> David Killingray and Martin Plaut, *Fighting for Britain: African Soldiers in the Second World War* (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 60.

an extra premium on recruiting the well-educated alumni of mission schools, men like Isaac Fadoyebo, an Anglican Yoruba who served as a medical orderly with the 81<sup>st</sup> (West African) Division in Burma. Similarly, among the many Anglicans who served in the King's African Rifles, which recruited across much of East Africa, was Silvanus Wani, a future Archbishop of Uganda, his regiment being described as 'an extended catechumenate' because of the vibrancy of Christianity in its ranks.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, the apparently secure position of Anglicanism in East Africa was profoundly shaken in the post-war years by the State of Emergency triggered by the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya, a conflict that claimed more than 13,000 lives between 1952 and 1960. Having made considerable progress among the Kikuyu, widely regarded as Kenya's most adaptable and advanced tribe, and having helped to nurture and educate anti-colonial sentiment, the largely Kikuyu Mau Mau – with their secret rites, oaths of initiation and insensate violence - were regarded by Anglican missionaries as a barbaric regression into Kenya's dark, pre-Christian past. Reflecting the position of the CMS as 'a quasi-established church' in colonial Kenya,<sup>33</sup> according to CMS sources the insurgency represented a cosmic struggle between good and evil, in which many of the Kikuyu victims of Mau Mau violence were easily cast as Christian martyrs. Significantly, CMS missionary clergy (along with pro-government witch doctors, rather ironically) made a prominent contribution to the psychological dimensions of the British counter-insurgency campaign, notably in the form of evangelistic and 'de-oathing' work among the thousands of Mau Mau prisoners held in government detention camps. In the very different setting of the shorter but much bloodier

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 112.

<sup>33</sup> John Casson, 'Missionaries, Mau Mau and the Christian Frontier' in Pieter N. Holtrop and Hugh McLeod (eds), *Missions and Missionaries* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 213.

Biafran War of 1967 to 1970, the Anglican Communion once again favoured the status quo. In this case, and despite the pro-Biafran sympathies of its Biafran-based archbishop, the West African Province of the Anglican Communion largely supported the post-colonial federal republic of Nigeria, the stance of one of Nigeria's largest Christian denominations being invaluable to the Nigerian government in confounding Biafran claims that the conflict was a religious war between Christians and Muslims.

### *War and church life*

Whether the horrors and destructiveness of war in the twentieth century were experienced at first hand or at a distance, the upheaval generated by such conflict was clear and could be far-reaching. In the two World Wars especially, the combined impact of mass enlistment (voluntary or otherwise), war work, the displacement of civilians, enemy bombing and shortages of all kinds inevitably had an effect on Anglican religious life and practice. In Australia, for example, petrol rationing during the Second World War had a major impact on the provision of services in rural areas, and three Australian dioceses (Kalgoorlie, Perth and Bendigo) lost more than 40 per cent of their clergy to the armed forces. Nevertheless, wartime disruption also brought opportunities. Church attendance was compulsory in Britain's armed forces during both World Wars, a situation that exposed millions of nominal adult Anglicans to Anglican worship and the Anglican clergy. The net effect of this experience is impossible to judge; if compulsory religion in its military trappings was widely resented, the celebrity of figures such as G.A. Studdert Kennedy, P.T.B. Clayton and even Dick Sheppard in the inter-war years illustrates that it was not necessarily an alienating experience. As to the home front, and according to preliminary research conducted by Clive Field, the early months of the First World War witnessed an initial surge in Anglican church

attendance in Great Britain, a surge that ebbed for eminently practical reasons, such as the departure of male churchgoers of military age, the rescheduling of services, the need for Sunday labour, and the persistent challenge of secular leisure pursuits. According to Field, in the long term this wartime disruption could prove habit-forming, and had a telling impact on Sunday school education in particular.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, in some respects it is clear that the war also helped to enlarge the appeal of Anglican public worship, as shown by the success of recurrent national days of prayer and in the evolution of the culture of Remembrance in the inter-war years, with its Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday services. According to Michael McKernan, the net impact of the First World War on Australian church attendance – Anglican included - was surprisingly slight in overall terms. Despite the departure of so many male churchgoers, and the increasingly strained mood of civilian church life, it was ‘remarkable that the churches at least held their own’.<sup>35</sup> During the Second World War these patterns seem to have recurred on the British home front, albeit against a backdrop of much greater disruption and destruction, and now with the added competition of religion on the radio. Although regular church attendance suffered once again, especially when Britain stood most beleaguered, this was offset by the continuing appeal of national days of prayer, by the prominence and popularity of religious broadcasting, and by a widespread desire to renew the Christian character of British society, especially through its education system. Once again, there was no indication of a wholesale lapse in public religious observance caused by a wave of protest atheism. In Australia, and despite understandable anguish at the onset of another war with Germany, the outbreak of the Second World War was marked by a fleeting surge in communicants, and a wartime stability seems to have obtained among Anglicans in New

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<sup>34</sup> Clive Field, ‘Keeping the Spiritual Home Fires Burning: Religious Belonging in Britain during the First World War’, *War and Society*, 33 (4), 2014, 244-68.

<sup>35</sup> McKernan, *Australian Churches at War*, p. 100.

Zealand, despite the fact that its armed forces suffered, in proportionate terms, more fatalities than those of any other part of the Empire.

To a significant degree, the essential resilience of Anglican faith and practice during the two World Wars reflected how well the Anglican Communion adjusted to the novel and acute pastoral challenges of total war. Quite apart from the scale and diversity of material and spiritual help for servicemen and women, channelled through a gamut of Anglican agents and agencies ranging from military chaplains to organisations such as the Church Army and the venerable SPCK, the Anglican Communion also rallied to the cause of civilian relief work. In January 1915, for instance, a single Toronto parish sent nearly 2,500 bags of flour to occupied Belgium. After the Munich Agreement the Czechs likewise became the objects of Anglican beneficence, although in this case partly to salve bad consciences. In the Second World War, and as Stephen Parker has shown in his study of Birmingham, the work of the Anglican clergy in the heavily bombed urban districts of Britain was aided by the fact that a large proportion of the Anglican clergy had been chaplains in the First World War, and so adapted tried and tested pastoral methods to the air raid shelters and civilians now under their care.<sup>36</sup> No less than in the armed forces, the trials and tribulations of war could throw church and people together to a degree that was unknown in peacetime, as in the case of the Leeds vicar who acted as a conductor on a municipal tram, and the Londoners who rallied to save St. Paul's cathedral from the flames of the London blitz. The Church Army also adjusted to new conditions in the Second World War, sending a hundred 'Evangelistic teams' to lead nightly services in London's larger air raid shelters. To a striking degree, the Second World War witnessed an elision of Anglican and British national identity, not only in the guise of

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<sup>36</sup> S. Parker, *Faith on the Home Front* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005).

William Temple – ‘the People’s Archbishop’ - but also in the pain and endurance represented by the contrasting fates of Coventry cathedral and St. Paul’s. This elision was captured by T.S. Eliot in his celebrated poem *Little Gidding* (1942), and was reflected in British wartime cinema, notably in *Went the Day Well?* (1942), a rousing portrayal of a failed German invasion attempt in which the vicar of Bramley End is gunned down while bravely sounding the tocsin, and a local collaborator is shot by his avenging daughter. This identification continued to be echoed in the popular mythology of the war in the post-war decades, perhaps most strikingly in the comedy series *Dad’s Army* (1968 to 1977), whose unlikely heroes stood sentinel on the English coast from the parish hall of Walmington-on-Sea.

The inherent disruptiveness of full-scale war also served to enlarge the scope for female ministry within the Anglican Communion, much as it enlarged that of Chinese and Indian clergy in the diocese of Singapore, for example, upon the internment of its European clergy by the Japanese in 1942. Although the preponderantly feminine character of Anglican congregations was an established fact by 1914, the war served to accentuate an existing reliance on female activism. In Canada, for example, Anglican Women’s Associations flourished during the First World War, with vast quantities of comforts amassed and distributed for the benefit of Canadian soldiers, often in collaboration with the Red Cross or the hyper-patriotic Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire. While the Mothers’ Union fortified home life across the Anglican Communion throughout two World Wars, women also proved to be a mainstay of Church Army work, probably to a greater extent in the Second World War than in the First. In February 1940, for example, the number of ‘Voluntary lady workers’ working in Church Army huts for the armed forces in Great Britain stood at 178, but had climbed to around 3,000 by the end of 1943. In terms of parish life, wartime conditions created more room for women on church committees and vestries, while the

exigencies of the Second World War also helped undermine ancient conventions as to women's apparel, with clothing shortages obliging the archbishops of Canterbury and York – at the request of the Board of Trade - to rule that it was no longer necessary for women to wear hats in church in deference to the injunctions of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. The First World War also threw up an Anglican martyr, or pseudo-martyr, in the form of Edith Cavell, the daughter of another Norfolk clergyman and Britain's premier war heroine, who was executed by the Germans in 1915 for aiding the escape of fugitive Allied soldiers from occupied Belgium. Nevertheless, the heightened prominence of women in wartime church life did not overcome ingrained reservations over women's ministry, reservations that had led the Lambeth Conference of 1930 to retreat from the view that deaconesses were in holy orders. Although a few Anglican women served as paid parish assistants during the Second World War, and were even engaged by the Royal Army Chaplains' Department to serve as chaplains' assistants in the British army, their ministry was still heavily circumscribed. In 1940, and despite the depletion of the ranks of the Church of England's lay readers, its bishops rejected a petition calling for the admission of women to that office, citing the overriding threat of German invasion. Even more telling, however, was the fate of Florence Lei Tim-Oi, a deaconess who was ordained in January 1944 by Bishop Ronald Hall of Hong Kong in order that Holy Communion could still be celebrated in the context of the Japanese occupation. Significantly, the defeat of Japan also brought about the end of this experiment, with pressure from across the Anglican Communion resulting in the revocation of her licence.

If, at least in the long term, the exigencies of war helped the cause of women's ministry in the Anglican Communion, the long-term impact on the faith and morals of its members is harder to assess. Although drink and gambling were not quite the shibboleths they were among the British Free Churches and their counterparts overseas, a mutually

reinforcing puritanism and providentialism meant that, for most Anglicans during the First World War, the need for purity could not be subtracted from the prosecution of a just and victorious war. It was, for example, a salient theme in the celebrated wartime preaching and poetry of Studdert Kennedy, while the British army's amoral connivance in licensed prostitution proved to be a source of great scandal and consternation for churchmen at home. In 1918, Randall Davidson played a leading role in persuading government to accept that continence and self-control were the best means of keeping venereal disease – that inevitable corollary of vice - firmly in check. Tellingly described by the archbishop as an issue 'which inflames people almost beyond any other',<sup>37</sup> the renewed conjunction of Mars and Venus between 1939 and 1945 was the cause of still greater moral concern. After the notable retreat from the stringent standards and restraints of Victorian morality that had characterised British society in the inter-war years, a longer war, more distant and protracted overseas postings, the greater mobilisation of women, and the influx of hundreds of thousands of foreign servicemen from 1940 to 1945 placed an even greater strain on traditional moral norms, causing a pandemic of venereal disease and unprecedented levels of divorce. The seriousness of the situation, and the importance of the Church of England's response to it, was reflected in Bishop Geoffrey Fisher's presidency of the Public Morality Council, which in his words sought to 'preserve those things that the public conscience feels ought to be preserved',<sup>38</sup> and in William Temple's outspoken opposition to the distribution of prophylactics to members of Britain's armed forces. Despite the conservative moral reaction that took hold in British society following the convulsions of the Second World War, the continued demands of national and imperial defence meant that churchmen could not afford to be complacent in the post-war world. Consequently, and as Archbishop of Canterbury, Fisher led a deputation of

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<sup>37</sup> Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London, 1978), p. 106.

<sup>38</sup> Andrea Harris, 'Preaching Morality: Sex, the Church and the Second World War' in Parker and Lawson (eds), pp. 95-96.

concerned parties to the War Office in 1947 in order to insist that ‘positive moral teaching’ should characterise the army’s approach to its new breed of National Servicemen.

Despite recurrent concerns over the deleterious impact of war on Christian norms, its effect was far more subtle than a widespread lapse into protest atheism, or a general slide into moral turpitude. Significantly, the greatest damage done to Anglicanism in Great Britain appears to have been inflicted by the prolonged disruption caused to peacetime patterns of public religious observance by unprecedented levels of wartime displacement and upheaval. Even before the First World War, the secular, leisured, ‘continental Sunday’ had been identified as an insidious threat to the British churches, and it appears that the disruption and distractions of the war years (to say nothing of mass, first-hand exposure to the continental Sunday itself) lessened the churchgoing impulse in the longer term. According to Clive Field, this phenomenon recurred in the Second World War and its aftermath, thus prolonging pre-war patterns of underlying decline.<sup>39</sup> However, and as the abiding appeal of successive national days of prayer illustrates, this is not to say that their religion did not play a major sustaining and even formative role for Anglicans embroiled in these – and other - twentieth-century conflicts. Despite the tenacity of a largely spurious First World War mythology of soldiers’ irreligion and irrelevant Anglican padres, pre-combat communion services often attracted levels of attendance that far exceeded civilian norms, an echo of a popular and deep-rooted perception of Holy Communion which held that the sacrament was only for the ultra-devout- or those on the brink of death. A generation later, and in a telling vignette, a British officer at Salerno in 1943 remembered lying all day under German fire: ‘I did not see how we could sustain a prolonged attack and just hoped that whatever fate awaited me would be

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<sup>39</sup> Clive D. Field, ‘*Puzzled People Revisited: Religious Believing and Belonging in Wartime Britain, 1939-45*’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 19 (4), 2008, 446-79.

quick. I always carried the Army Prayer Book, and I gained enormous comfort and solace from reading through the order of Matins and Evening Prayer, the familiar canticles, psalms and prayers'.<sup>40</sup> Just as dramatically, and amidst all the hardships and horrors of captivity in the Far East, from 1942 to 1945 temporary Anglican churches – built spontaneously by Commonwealth prisoners of war - littered Japanese prison camps, a further indication of the comfort that was to be gleaned from Anglicanism's appealing blend of faith and familiarity. One notable example was that of St. George's, Changi, in Singapore, a converted mosque replete with all the fixtures and fitting of a substantial parish church, in which Bishop Leonard Wilson ordained a deacon and confirmed 179 other prisoners in July 1942. Significantly, statistics suggest that a third of all British prisoners at Changi were Anglican communicants throughout their captivity. In addition to the case of Florence Lei Tim-Oi, successive conflicts produced crops of future clergy who went on to play a major role in the Anglican Communion. Besides Robert Runcie, these included figures such as Walter Baddeley, Bishop of Melanesia throughout the Second World War, who had served as a British battalion commander on the Western Front in the First World War, and Paul Moore, a future Bishop of New York, who traced his priestly vocation to a moment of revelation while serving as a US marine officer on Guadalcanal - part of Baddeley's diocese - in 1942.

The ordeal of war influenced Anglican thought and worship in many other respects. While shared adversity fuelled ecumenism on many different levels, the unprecedented mortality of the First World War led to major readjustments in Anglican theology and practice, most conspicuously in the rapid and general assimilation of prayers for the dead. The mortal trials and tribulations of war also encouraged a greater emphasis on sacramental

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<sup>40</sup> Max Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose: The World at War 1939-1945* (London, 2011), p. 452.

religion, and so placed a greater premium on the centrality of Holy Communion in public worship. Although the First World War also led to a widespread rejection of German theological influences, in Anglican as in other church quarters, arguably the most significant and lasting British contribution to twentieth-century Christian theology was made posthumously by G.A. Studdert Kennedy ('Woodbine Willie') in his theology of divine passibility, a theology he developed on the Western Front and which gained in currency and traction after the unsurpassed horrors of the next World War. In terms of pastoral methods, the perceived benefits of military chaplaincy helped to stimulate the rise of industrial chaplaincy in the Church of England after the Second World War. More ambitiously, the World Wars fostered earnest attempts by the Church of England and its luminaries to reconfigure post-war church and society. As a consequence of the First World War, and especially the work of the National Mission and its later committees of inquiry, the relationship between parliament and the Church of England was redefined by the Enabling Act of 1919, which created a partly elected Church Assembly and allowed the Church greater freedom in ordering its internal affairs. The First World War also fuelled a strong dynamic in favour of Prayer Book reform, but the cause of the Revised (or Alternative) Prayer Book came to grief in parliament in 1927, and failed once again the following year. If the work of the National Mission also fostered a new critique of industrial and social problems, and prompted the creation of the Industrial Christian Fellowship in 1919, a generation later, and with the cause of reform focused more on the secular than on the ecclesiastical realm, the Anglican conference on reconstruction held at Malvern College under the chairmanship of William Temple in 1941 helped to place the Church of England centre stage in planning the shape of post-war British society. This position was confirmed in 1942 by the publication of Temple's best-selling *Christianity and Social Order*, and by the mass meetings he presided over as the leftward-leaning 'People's Archbishop'. The prominence of Temple, and the

renewed sense of national and religious purpose that his popularity betrayed, clearly reflected what amounted to a wartime revival of cultural Christianity in Great Britain, a revival that the Church of England was able to turn to some advantage in the form of the 1944 Education Act. Sponsored by R.A. Butler, President of the Board of Education and a devout Anglican layman, this not only provided for mandatory religious instruction and acts of worship in British schools, but its funding arrangements also ensured the survival of around 2,000 Church of England schools at a time when the costs of its school system had become all but prohibitive.

If the blueprints of Great Britain's post-war welfare state plainly bore the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Canterbury, what has proved to be a more enduring legacy to British society was the Church of England's influence on the national cult of remembrance. Although there was controversy over the allegedly secular nature of Edwin Lutyens' design of the permanent cenotaph in Whitehall, its unveiling in November 1920 took place as part of the elaborate ceremonial surrounding the interment of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey - a project conceived by David Railton, a former Anglican army chaplain, and pursued by Herbert Edward Ryle, the Dean of Westminster. Over subsequent years, an Anglican ceremony came to mark the nation's annual act of remembrance at the cenotaph and, at the instigation of Dick Sheppard, then vicar of St. Martin-in-the Fields, from 1927 the British Legion's annual Festival of Remembrance, which included a religious service, displaced the boozy charity balls that had previously graced the Albert Hall to mark the anniversary of the Armistice. Aided by the emergence of Remembrance Sunday, rather than Armistice Day itself, as the focal point of Remembrance after 1923, a decade after the end of the First World War the Church of England had discovered a new and abiding role as the prime custodian of a national cult of Remembrance which remains largely unchanged to this day. Indeed, even the

six years of the Second World War, and the newly contrived Battle of Britain Sunday, failed to add substantially to what was in place by the end of the 1920s. However, remembrance was not simply ritualistic, for the complex human and religious experience of the First World War also gave rise to the Toc H movement, which was inaugurated in 1920 and spread across the British Empire in the interwar years. Born of the activities of Talbot House, the famous Anglican soldiers' home established in the Ypres Salient in 1915, and led by its charismatic incumbent, P.T.B. (or 'Tubby') Clayton, Toc H thrived for some years as a living memorial devoted to Christian service. The sacrifice of the war dead – often cast in the war years in the language of martyrdom - also served to energise efforts to improve social conditions and inter-class relations, being a major spur to the work of the Industrial Christian Fellowship and its mission to advance the Kingdom of God in post-war Britain.

### *Conclusion*

According to one historian of the British Empire, 'the Anglican Church', like the Post Office Savings Bank, 'was one of those British institutions spread across the globe by virtue of Empire and productively utilized in a time of war'.<sup>41</sup> This essay has shown that there is some truth in this somewhat mischievous remark. In the South African War, the First World War, and the Second World War, the Anglican Communion proved to be a reliable and conspicuous source of support for the imperial war effort, with Anglicans perhaps more susceptible than members of other Christian traditions to mobilise and fight on behalf of the Mother Country. This tendency was also strongly pronounced among American Episcopalians, in a sense the lost sheep of the Empire, with critically important results in the darkest months of the Second World War. If the end of empire and the growth of

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<sup>41</sup> Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London, 2006), p. 203.

Anglicanism in Africa and Asia in the latter half of the twentieth century underlined the perennial truth that the vicissitudes and vulnerabilities of war could never be shared equally by a global communion, it is nonetheless suggestive of the intrinsic strength of the Communion's historic just war tradition that pacifism did not become Anglicanism's default position in the course of history's bloodiest century, though many Anglicans took that stance as they engaged with the moral complexities of modern war, and wrestled with the implications of ever more lethal military technologies. Furthermore, such was the breadth of opinion within the Anglican Communion, a breadth that was largely based on the vitality and robustness of its just war traditions, that principled Anglican support for particular conflicts could easily co-exist with a strongly critical approach to war-making, a fact that tends to be understated in Anglican historiography. Moreover, war did much more to shape global Anglicanism in the twentieth century than merely provide an arresting focus for ethical debate. While it served to broaden the scope and nature of Anglican ministry, it also coloured Anglican theology, moulded Anglican liturgy, enlarged Anglican ecumenism, and formed Anglican leaders. If the impact of war on churchgoing and traditional morality could be doubled-edged, in Great Britain at least it served to deepen a diffused cultural attachment to the Church of England, one that was at its strongest during the supreme crisis of the Second World War but which can still be perceived in the Church's largely uncontested role in the nation's abiding cult of Remembrance. In short, and while the scourge of war brought grief and tragedy to the world throughout the twentieth century, its impact on global Anglicanism proved to be much more ambiguous in its impact and in its legacy.

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