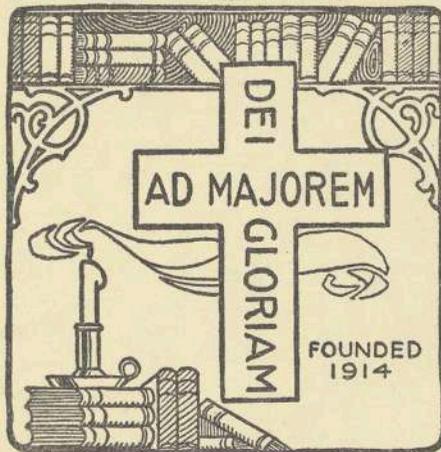


HISTORY OF THE TEACHINGS
ON PEACE AND WAR IN
THE METHODIST CHURCH



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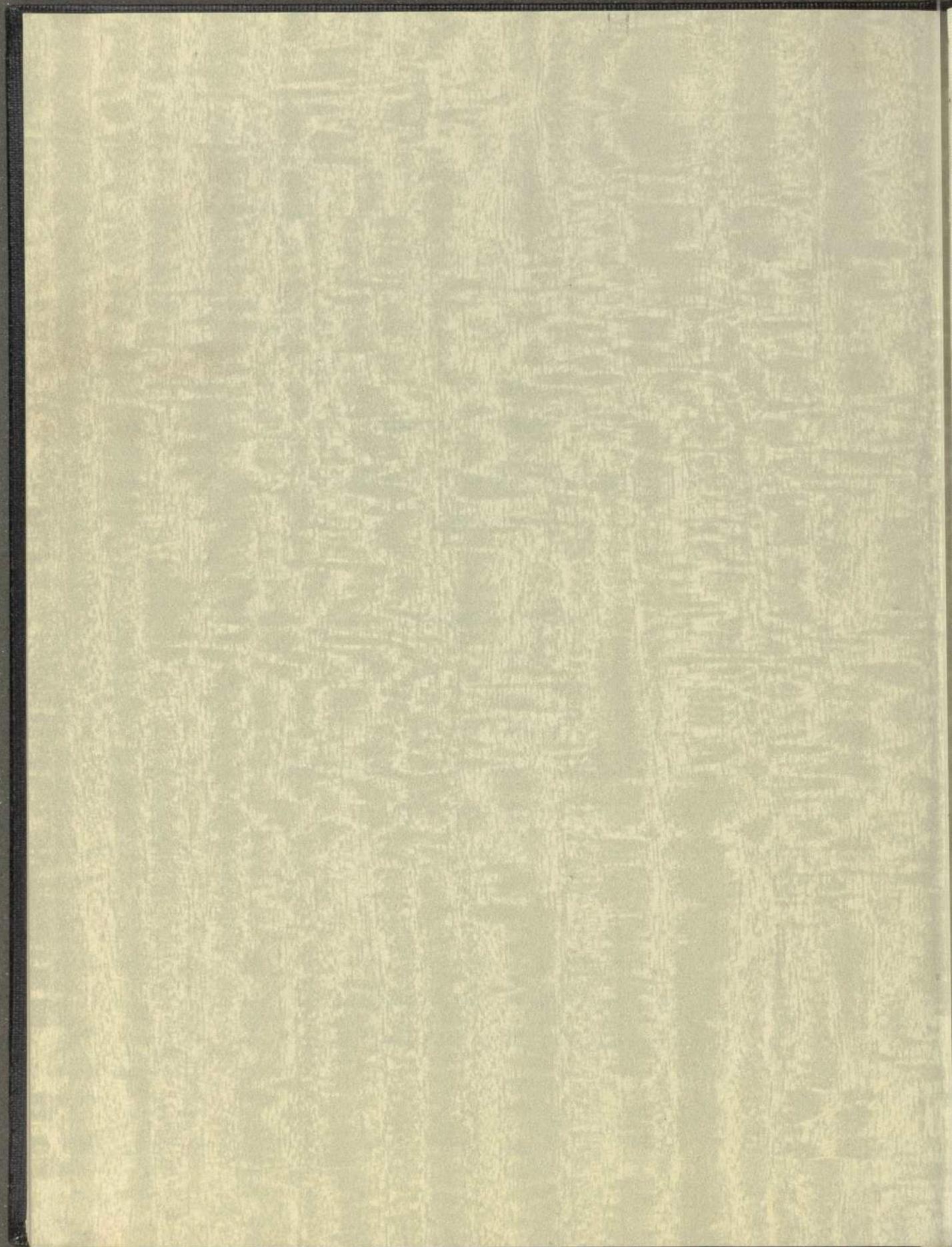


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A HISTORY OF THE TEACHINGS ON PEACE AND WAR
IN THE METHODIST CHURCH FROM JOHN WESLEY TO THE PRESENT

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of
The Candler School of Theology of Emory University
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
the Degree of
BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

by

W. Howard Coop

B. A. Eastern Kentucky State College, 1953

Emory University, Georgia

August, 1955

Written in the Department of Church History

Under the Direction of

Dean William R. Cannon

and

Professor James W. May

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The writer feels that this study would have been more rewarding had the subject been defined in the beginning to cover a particular period. By narrowing the subject a more definitive work could have been undertaken. However, the study has been rewarding and the writer feels that he has gained a perspective of the historic position of the Church regarding its teachings on peace and war and as a result has come to a deeper appreciation for the Methodist Church.

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PREFACE

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This study is by no means to be taken as a definitive survey of the history of peace and war in Methodism. A definitive survey of such a subject would entail volumes. Instead this study seeks to discover the historical development of the teachings of Methodism on peace and war without going into minute detail in each period. This has meant careful selection of material and discarding much material that otherwise would have been used had the subject for consideration been narrowed to one particular period. This points up one of the weaknesses of this study.

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except for background material, Wesley's own writings were considered. In the second chapter the attempt has been to use the Journals of the men concerned as much as possible; however, it was necessary to bring in secondary material to clarify and illustrate. After the Church was organized there were long periods when no official statements regarding peace and war were placed in the Discipline. While no official statements were issued actions spoke louder than any official statement that might have been issued. The Civil War is a case in point. Both branches of the Church were too busy with the war to make any official statements. Yet their activities in the Civil War speak loud as any statement they could have issued. In these periods one is at the mercies of secondary source material to find out what the actions were. For much of the material in these periods I am indebted to William Warren Sweet who has done a masterful job in defining the position of the Church in these periods.

The bibliography is limited to those works cited. A list of works consulted would entail pages. I have attempted to examine the Disciplines of both branches of episcopal Methodism and the Disciplines of the Methodist Church. Many of these contained material relevant to this thesis but many others did not. Other books have been consulted but have not been quoted. No attempt is made to place them in the bibliography.

Footnotes have been used throughout the study. Those from the Disciplines of the three Churches are indicated as follows: Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, date, paragraph. Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, date, paragraph. Discipline of the

Methodist Church, date, paragraph. Ibid. has been used when consecutive footnotes appear referring to the same issue of a Discipline but different paragraphs. Loc. cit. has been used to refer to the same Discipline and same paragraph as quoted above.

The purpose of this thesis is to trace the historical development of the teachings of the Methodist Church on peace and war. The paper will begin with the beginnings of Methodism in England and its founder, John Wesley, and follow it across the Atlantic to the shores of North America, and from there through each successive period of its development in America.

It is necessary to begin this study with John Wesley in order to see his influence on early American Methodism. To discover Wesley's attitude toward war and peace it is necessary to sift from his writings those passages relevant to this subject. These passages are found in his Journal, his letters, and his other literary work.

The first period of American Methodism to be studied in this paper centers around the Revolutionary War period. More specifically this chapter covers the period from 1766, the date of the beginnings of Methodism in America, to 1811, the date of the division of the church which produced the two major bodies of Methodism.

The primary source material for this chapter is the Journal of Francis Asbury, the Journal of Frederick Carstensen as preserved by Nathan Bangs, the Journal of Jesse Lee as preserved by Leroy Lee, and the conference Journals of the period. The secondary material of the

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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period comes from the historians and biographers.

Chapter four covers the period of the divided church, that is, from 1844 to 1938. The primary source material for this chapter comes from the Discipline adopted by each General Conference of the two churches. The secondary sources for this chapter are histories of the period.

The fifth chapter covers the period of the united church. It begins with the union of the three churches -- the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church -- and ends with the General Conference of 1952. The source material for the period is the Discipline adopted by the various General Conferences since unification. Any secondary material that throws light on this period will be used.

The final chapter of the thesis will set forth any conclusions arrived at as a result of the study.

The problem of discovering and setting forth the teachings of Methodism on peace and war will be dealt with by examining these source materials and sifting the relevant material from them and presenting it from the viewpoint of history using the secondary material to elaborate and clarify the findings. It is hoped that by using this method of presentation a clear picture of the historical development of the Methodist attitude toward peace and war will come to view.

CHAPTER II

JOHN WESLEY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD PEACE AND WAR

The first section of this study concerns the teachings of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. It is the aim of this chapter to sift from the writings of Wesley those passages that express his attitude toward peace and war and present them in a systematic fashion.

Wesley was a product of the eighteenth century, one of the most important centuries in English history. This was the century of Robert Walpole, one of the dominant figures in English politics. In politics the eighteenth century was a period of wholesale bribery and corruption. The common adage is that Walpole reduced bribery to an organized system. W. J. Townsend says that Walpole's character "was low and licentious in a shameful degree." He goes on to say that the Pelhams who followed Walpole "not only perpetuated the system, but descended to methods of corruption too low for Walpole."¹

The eighteenth century witnessed the rise of some of the great movements for democracy. This was the age of the American Revolution and the French Revolution. Voltaire and Rousseau were leading figures on the continent. They were preaching liberty, equality, and fraternity. Bready says, "The new doctrine of the Rights of Man was divorced from the duties of man. Passions, devoid of spiritual insight, were un-

¹ W. J. Townsend, *A New History of Methodism*. (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1909), p. 105.

leashed! The Reign of Terror ensued!"

Into this turbulent century came, from the rectory at Epworth, John Wesley to lead a spiritual revival in England which spread to America, culminating in the Methodist Church, a church outspoken in the field of social affairs.

As Wesley saw the conditions in the eighteenth century he began "emphasizing the spiritual springs of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."³ This preaching was not in vain. Bready says:

In an age of glittering shallowness, and of libertinism in high places, Wesley gradually made the masses of England sin-conscious, God-conscious and grace-conscious. He restored to them their souls. He opened their spiritual eyes and unstopped their spiritual ears. He mediated a Power which established sobriety, discipline and character, which inspired moral social aspiration, which brought healing and joy, and which caused humble men and women to realize that, through the grace and strength of God, all things were possible to them. He wrought it in the face of contumely and contempt. He wrought it without the firing of a gun or the shedding of a drop of blood. He wrought it by restoring to a renegade and decadent people its soul.⁴

McConnel states that there are two schools of thought regarding Wesley's social achievement. One is that Wesley was not interested in social results; on the other hand, some maintain that the broad human outcome of his work was his chief concern. Here the position is taken that Wesley began the Methodist Church on a basis of personal

² J. Wesley Bready, Wesley and Democracy, (Toronto: The Thorn Press, 1943), p. 14.

³ Ibid., p. 15.

⁴ Ibid., p. 15

⁵ Ernest Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, Translated by Olive Ryan, (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., and New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 100.

piety and his social teachings came as a by-product. This is the position taken by McConnell. He says, "Wesley was chiefly concerned with a personal, individualistic message and practices."⁵ Troeltsch also takes this position. He says, "The aim of Methodism was to win men and women to Christ, who would be genuine Christians...and who, as far as they could, were aspiring to perfection."⁶ This accounts for the Wesleyan tradition of assurance and the witness of the spirit and its emphasis on scriptural holiness. Therefore one can say that the Methodist Church began on a basis of personal piety and has become one of the most outspoken Christian churches in the field of social action.

Allowing the thesis that Wesley's emphasis was individualistic and that his social teachings were incidental, Wesley did have much to say about peace and war. Examining Wesley's Journal, his pamphlets, and his letters, one finds what Wesley said about peace and war. In studying the works of Wesley for his teachings and attitude toward war one must remember that he was concerned with other social issues such as slavery, education, and the living conditions of the people. Too, one must remember that war was not fought with twentieth century weapons and methods. Armies were small and in many instances composed only of foreign mercenaries as, for example, the Hessian mercenaries used by the British in the American Revolution. Yet Wesley did have something to say concerning peace and war and his position can be found in his writings.

⁵ Francis J. McConnell, John Wesley, (New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago: The Abingdon Press, 1940), p. 233.

⁶ Ernest Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, Translated by Olive Wyon, (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., and New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 722.

WAR IS AN EXPRESSION OF ORIGINAL SIN

One of the attitudes Wesley held toward war was that war was an expression of original sin. This attitude toward war is found in his work entitled The Doctrine of Original Sin. In this tract Wesley says that the existence of war is proof of original sin.

But there is a still greater and more undeniable proof, that the very foundations of all things, civil and religious, are utterly out of course, in the Christian as well as the Heathen world. There is still more horrid reproach to the Christian name, yea, to the name of man, to all reason and humanity. There is war in the world! War between Christians! I mean between those that bear the name of Christ, and profess to walk as he also walked. Now who can reconcile war, I will not say, to religion, but to any degree of reason or common sense?⁷

Wesley ended with a strong denunciation of war by saying, "If even a heathen were to give an account of an age wherein reason and virtue reigned, he would allow no war to have place therein."⁸

In another pamphlet, A Seasonable Address to the More Serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain, Respecting the Unhappy Contest Between Us and Our American Bretheren; with an Occasional Word Interspersed to Those of a Different Complexion, Wesley discussed the apparent cause of the war with the Colonies which was a "dispute relative to the mode of taxation."⁹ However

⁷ John Wesley, The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1, 2, 9.

⁸ Ibid., 1, 2, 9.

⁹ The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M., Vol. VI, (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1832), p. 323.

the real cause of the trouble, as Wesley saw it, was sin. Expressing this idea Wesley wrote:

Ye friends of the government also, draw near, and turn your eyes from those you suspect to be the only authors of the present evil; look in this glass, and see the ugly monster, universal sin, that subtle, unsuspected serpent that has inflamed our blood, and brought on the malignant fever of contention on our body.¹⁰

The solution to the present evil did not lay in working out an equitable system of taxation. Rather Wesley called on the "friends of the government" who loved peace and order to "follow the example of the Ninevites. Let us break off our sins by repentance."¹¹ As Wesley saw it the depravity of man and not a dispute over taxation was the cause of the trouble between the American Colonies and England.

WESLEY SUPPORTS WAR

There are instances in which Wesley seems to have gone in the opposite direction of his attitude that war is an expression of original sin and cannot be allowed to any degree. In these instances Wesley supported war in an active way. This attitude is expressed by Wesley in offering to raise soldiers for the king's army.

The entries in his Journal for March 24, and 25, 1756, tell of a preaching engagement at Canterbury. This service was attended by a number of soldiers. Following the service Wesley had dinner with a colonel. During the dinner the colonel told Wesley, "No men fight

¹⁰ Ibid., p.327.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 327.

like those who fear God; I had rather command five hundred such than any regiment in His Majesty's army." ¹² A footnote in the Journal suggests that the colonel referred to was Colonel Gallatin, who was, at the time, stationed at Canterbury.

A few days after this dinner engagement with the colonel Wesley wrote a letter to the Honorable James West offering to raise troops for home defense. Wesley and Whitefield had planned to raise five hundred soldiers but Whitefield had decided against the venture. In this letter Wesley stated his intentions of carrying out the plan on his own.

...I am constrained to make the following, independent of him: To raise, for His Majesty's service, at least two hundred volunteers, and to be ready, in case of invasion, to act for a year, if needed, at His Majesty's pleasure.

.
If this acceptable to His Majesty, then beg to have arms out of the Tower, giving the usual security for their return; and some of His Majesty's sergeants to instruct them in the military exercise.

I am hastening to Bristol, on account of the election; but if my return to London would be of any service, you may command...¹³

Wesley did go to Bristol and there he "found all in a flame." A footnote in the Journal to the entry of March 3, 1756, says, "And, indeed, the whole country. War with France; Ireland ripe (so many believe) for rebellion; the American colonies in danger; a Franco-Papal

¹² Nemiah Curnock, ed., The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A., Vol. IV, (London: Charles H. Kelley, 1909), p. 149.

¹³ "Letter to James West," quoted in E. C. Urwin, et. al., John Wesley---Christian Citizen, (London: Epworth Press, 1937), p. 67.

invasion threatened,---such were the conditions under which he intervened in two unlooked for ways." ¹⁴ Wesley intervened by giving advice concerning the election in Bristol and the offer to raise the two hundred volunteers for the King's service.

On another occasion Wesley offered to raise troops for the King's service. In 1779 England was in imminent danger and was threatened from all sides. The French had helped the Americans and there was fear that the hostilities might spread to the mainland of England. Likewise the Spanish were threatening to invade England. Tyerman says, "England throughout was in a panic." ¹⁵ In a letter to Samuel Bradburn Wesley pointed out the conditions.

It is the judgement of many, that, since the time of the Invincible Armada, Great Britain and Ireland were never in such danger from foreign enemies as they are at this day. Humanly speaking, we are not able to contend with them, either by sea or land. They are watching over us as a leopard his prey, just ready to spring upon us. They are mighty and rage horribly. ¹⁶

In spite of the crisis Wesley saw a bright side. He foresaw the possibility of good coming out of the crisis. This good was a renewed interest in religion on the part of the people. Wesley revealed this in another letter to Samuel Bradburn. On October 10, 1779, Wesley wrote Bradburn that "the Children of God have been greatly stirred up and have been more instant in prayer. And many men of the world have

¹⁴ Journal, Vol IV, p. 150-151.

¹⁵ Luke Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A., Vol. III, (New York: Harper, 1872), p. 286.

¹⁶ Quoted in Ibid., p. 287.

been greatly awakened, and continued to this day."¹⁷

In this crisis Wesley asserted his loyalty to the King and offered to help quell the forces that threatened England. This is inferred from a letter Wesley wrote to Joseph Benson on August 3, 1782.

In this letter to Benson Wesley wrote:

Two or three years ago, when the Kingdom was in imminent danger, I made an offer to the Government of raising some men. The Secretary of War, (by the King's order) wrote me word, "That it was not necessary; but if ever it should be necessary, His Majesty would let me know." I never renewed the offer, and never intended it.¹⁸

However it must be pointed out that Wesley was not unstable in his attitude toward war. These instances in which Wesley supported war blend into his major attitude toward war and take on new meaning when they are seen in the light of Wesley's attitude toward peace and order.

WESLEY SUPPORTS PEACE AND ORDER

In 1768 Wesley wrote a pamphlet in which he set forth what seems to be his basic attitude toward peace and war. In this pamphlet, Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs, he wrote "to give you my 'free thoughts on the present state of public affairs;' the causes and consequences of the present commotions."¹⁹ In this pamphlet he discussed the various things the people were blaming for the state of public affairs. The people were criticizing King George along with his

¹⁷ Quoted in Urwin, *op. cit.*, p. 88

¹⁸ The Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. John Wesley, Vol. III. (New York: Harper, 1828), p. 411.

¹⁹ The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M., Vol. VI., (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1832), p. 248.

ministers and parliament. The American Colonies were blaming the king for the measures imposed on them. In regard to the American Colonies Wesley wrote, "I do not defend the measures which have been taken with regard to America: I doubt whether any man can defend them, either on the foot of law, equity, or prudence."²⁰ Wesley dismissed these as imaginary causes of the commotion. The real trouble as he saw it was French gold.²¹

The thesis of this pamphlet is the support of peace and order and the king. He called for support of King George. He urged the American Colonies to support the king because he was not responsible for the measures imposed upon them. Wesley blamed George Grenville for these measures that were offensive to the Americans. He urged all men to support the King for three reasons: "The first is, he believes the Bible; the second is, he fears God; the third, he loves the queen."²² For Wesley support of the king is support of peace and order. To act in any other way is to sow seeds of rebellion.

Wesley then concluded that "it is possible this might restore peace, but one cannot affirm it would." He went on to give his reason why this might not bring peace. He said:

Perhaps God has a "controversy with the land," for the general neglect, nay, contempt, of all religion. Perhaps he hath said, "Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" and if this be the case, what can avail, unless his anger be turned away from us? Was there ever

²⁰ Ibid., p. 254.

²¹ Ibid., p. 255.

²² Ibid., p. 249.

a time in which there was a louder call for them that fear God to humble themselves before him? if haply general humiliation and repentance may prevent general destruction. ²³

Another pamphlet written by Wesley, Thoughts Upon Liberty, written in the early part of 1772, (It is dated February 24, 1772) called for the support of peace and order. The indications are that this pamphlet was written to gain support for King George.

Wesley began the pamphlet by saying, "All men in the world desire liberty; whoever breathes, breathes after this, and that by a kind of natural instinct antecedent to art or education." ²⁴ Wesley went on to make the assertion that "the love of liberty is then the glory of rational beings; and it is the glory of Britons in particular." ²⁵

From these statements Wesley proceeded to show just what liberties the people wanted and then the real liberties they possessed. The Americans desired a particular kind of liberty. Of this liberty the Americans desired Wesley wrote:

There are many nations in America, those particularly that border on Georgia and Carolina, wherein if one disapproves of what another says, or perhaps dislikes his looks, he scorns to affront him to his face, neither does he betray the least dissatisfaction. But as soon as opportunity serves, he steps from behind a tree and shoots him, and none calls him that does it to an account. No; this is the liberty he desires from his forefathers. ²⁶

²³ Ibid., p. 260.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 261.

²⁵ Loc. cit.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 262.

Wesley goes on to say that others desire the liberty of war. This liberty is exercised in Christian and pagan lands as well. He says that this liberty consists of borrowing the wives and daughters of the men that fall into their hands. He also lists a fourth liberty that has been exercised in Europe and even in England. This liberty is the liberty of bringing a monarch to account and even beheading him.

From these comments by Wesley it is clear that there was discontent and agitation for liberty when he wrote his Thoughts upon Liberty. The situation in America and Ireland was tense and even in England there was unrest among the people. Wesley came to the conclusion that it was not religious and civil liberties that the people wanted. These liberties they had. What then were the liberties they wanted? Wesley wrote:

Many want Indian liberty, the liberty of cutting throats, or of driving a brace of balls through the head of those ugly-looking fellows, whom they cannot abide the sight of. Many more want the old Highland liberty, the convenient liberty of war, of borrowing their neighbour's wives and daughters; and not a few, though they do not always avow it, the liberty of murdering their prince.²⁷

To Wesley, the supporter of peace and order, the popular cries for liberty were unfounded. Only the prejudiced man could be carried away and made to believe he did not have liberty. With this in mind Wesley wrote:

We enjoy at this day throughout these kingdoms such liberty, civil and religious, as no other kingdom or commonwealth in Europe, or in the world enjoys; and such as our ancestors never enjoyed from the Conquest to the Revolution. Let us be thankful for it to God and the King! Let us not, by our vile

²⁷ Ibid., p. 267.

unthankfulness, yea, our denial that we enjoy it all, provoke the King of kings to take it away.²⁸

This statement is a strong appeal for the support of the king and thus support of peace and order.

In this pamphlet Wesley did not take a stand for or against war but called upon those who were discontent and clamouring for liberties to support peace and order.

By 1775 the situation in America had grown serious. In this year Wesley had much to say concerning war. A number of letters and another pamphlet, A Calm Address to Our American Colonies, were written. These reveal Wesley's attitude toward the American Revolution.

On March 1, 1775, from London Wesley wrote a letter to Thomas Rankin in America. In this letter Wesley was hopeful that peace could be reestablished between England and the Colonies. This letter says:

There is now a probability that God will hear the prayer, and turn the counsels of Ahithopel into foolishness. It is not unlikely that peace will be reestablished between England and the Colonies. But certainly the present doubtful situation of affairs may be improved to the benefit of many. They may be strongly incited now "to break off their sins by repentance, if it may be a lengthening of their tranquility."²⁹

To this letter addressed to Thomas Rankin he added a few lines to all the preachers in America. He reminded the preachers that they were to be peace makers in this trouble that was becoming more serious each day. He admonished them to follow no party. Their duty was to all, those who were supporting the king and those who were supporting the

²⁸ Ibid., p. 269.

²⁹ Works, vol. VII, p. 8.

American cause. He also urged the preachers to be at peace with one another.

You were never in your lives in so critical a situation as you are at this time. It is your part to be peace-makers: to be loving and tender to all; but to addict yourselves to no party. In spite of all solicitations, of rough or smooth words, say not one word against one or the other side. Keep yourselves pure; do all you can to help and soften all; but beware how you adopt another's jar.

See that you act in full union with each other: This is of the utmost consequence. Not only let there be no bitterness or anger, but no shyness or coldness, between you. Mark all those that would set one of you against the other.³⁰

In a letter to James Dempster written May 19, 1775, Wesley reiterated his stand that the American preachers should oppose a party spirit in the struggle. In the letter to Dempster Wesley wrote:

That one point I earnestly recommended, both to brother Rankin, and you, and all our preachers, ---by prayer, by exhortation, and by every possible means, to oppose a party spirit. This has always, so far as it prevailed, been the bane of all true religion; more especially when a country was in such a situation as America is now. None but the God of Almighty love can extricate the poor people out of the snare. O what need have you to besiege his throne with all the power of prayer.³¹

Here is clear evidence that Wesley was trying to allay the troubled

³⁰ Ibid., p. 8. In this letter Charles Wesley enclosed a letter to the American preachers. He wrote:

As to public affairs, I wish you to be like minded with me. I am of neither side, and yet of both; on the side of New England, and of Old. Private Christians are excused, exempted, privileged, to take no part in civil troubles. We love all and pray for all, with a sincere and impartial love. Faults there may be on both sides; but such as neither you nor I can remedy; therefore, let us, and all our children, give ourselves unto prayer, and so stand still and see the salvation of God.

³¹ Ibid., p. 12.

condition and bring the Colonies around to support of King George. He wanted the preachers to remain on the side of peace and order.

By April 21, 1775, Wesley had lost hope that peace between England and the Colonies could be restored. In a letter to Thomas Rankin under this date Wesley expressed this fear. In this letter Wesley wrote:

I am afraid you will soon find a day of trial; the clouds are black over England and America. It is well if this summer passes over without some showers of blood. And if the storm once begins in America, it will soon spread to Great Britain. ³²

Again on May 19, 1775, Wesley wrote to Thomas Rankin regarding the strained conditions between England and America. Wesley pointed out the terrible effects of war on the people.

Never was there a time, when it was more necessary for all that fear God, both in England and in America, to stir up the gift of God that is in them and wrestle with God in mighty prayer. ...When a land is visited with famine, or plague, or earthquake, the people commonly see and acknowledge the hand of God. But wherever war breaks out, God is forgotten, if he be not set at open defiance. What a glorious work of God was at Cambuslang and Kilsythe, from 1740 to 1744! But the war that followed tore it all up by the roots, and left scarce any trace of it behind; insomuch that when I diligently inquired a few years after, I could not find one that retained the life of God. ³³

Wesley wrote Thomas Rankin again on June 13, 1775. The battle of Lexington had been fought April 19 of that year and Wesley was aware of the strained conditions and feared that all connections with the preachers in America would be broken.

³² Ibid., p. 9.

³³ Ibid., p. 10.

I am afraid our correspondence for the time to come will be more uncertain than ever; since the sword is drawn; and it will be well if they have not on both sides thrown away the scabbard. What will the end of these things be, either in Europe or America? It seems, huge confusion and distress, such as neither we nor our fathers had known! But it is enough, if all issues in glory to God, and peace and good will among men. ³⁴

In these words Wesley seems to imply that the confusion and distress may not be in vain but may issue in "glory to God" if it will bring peace, order, and support of the king.

The next few days were the eventful days for Wesley. On June 14, 1775, while on his way to Dublin, Wesley wrote his famous letter supporting the American cause in an effort to ease the strained situation between England and the Colonies and thereby reestablish peace and order in the Kingdom of Great Britain. This letter apparently was written and sent to Lord North, Premier, and to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary for the Colonies. George Smith says:

In it [the letter], with the most profound sagacity, Wesley showed that the course taken by the government was cruel and unwise, and would, if persevered in, certainly lead to the entire loss of the colonies, and otherwise expose the mother country to danger and disaster. ³⁵

In this letter Wesley clearly stated his view of war. He wrote: "...I am a High Churchman, the son of a High Churchman, bred from my childhood in the highest notions of passive obedience and non-resistance." ³⁶ However, Wesley, in order to support peace and order in the kingdom, sup-

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁵ George Smith, *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1857), p. 432.

³⁶ "Letter to Lord North and Lord Dartmouth," *Journal*, Vol. VIII, p. 325.

ported the American cause. "And yet in spite of my rooted prejudice I cannot avoid thinking than an oppressed people asked for nothing more than their legal rights; and that in the most modest and inoffensive manner which the nature of the thing would allow." 37

Wesley called for the war to cease. He said, "Is it common sense to use force toward the Americans?" Then he went on to point out reasons why force should not be used. Among the reasons Wesley cited one is that the Americans were fighting for a cause.

Those men think, one and all, be it right or wrong, that they are contending pro aris et focis, for their wives, children, and liberty! What advantage have they herein over men that fight for pay! None of them care a straw for the cause wherein they are engaged; most of them strongly disapproving of it. 38

Immediately following this letter supporting the American cause Wesley completely changed his attitude toward the whole American struggle. From the evidence it is clear that his change of mind was in the interest of promoting peace and order. This complete change of attitude toward the American cause is set forth in a tract, A Calm Address to Our American Colonies. This tract was an abridgment, almost to the point of plagiarism, of a pamphlet written by Samuel Johnson entitled, Taxation no Tyranny: An Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. Wesley began this tract by stating his change of attitude. He wrote, "I was of a different judgment on this head, till I read a tract, entitled, 'Taxation No Tyranny.' But as soon as I received more light myself, I judged it my duty to impart it to others." 39

37 Ibid., p. 325.

38 Ibid., p. 326.

39 "Calm Address," Works, Vol. VI, p. 293.

In this tract Wesley took the position that the English Parliament had the legitimate authority to tax the American Colonies, and that the resistance of the Americans was not a rebellion against tyranny but a rebellion against legitimate authority. Wesley said, "The grand question which is now debated...is this, Has the English Parliament a right to tax the American Colonies?"⁴⁰ Wesley answered this question by stating:

In order to determine this, let us consider the nature of our colonies. An English Colony is, a number of persons to whom the King grants a charter, permitting them to settle in some far country as a corporation, enjoying such powers as the charter grants, to be administered in such a manner as the charter prescribes. As a corporation subsisting by a grant from higher authority, to the control of that authority they still continue subject.

Considering this, nothing can be more plain, than that the supreme power in England has a legal right of laying any tax upon them for any end beneficial to the whole empire.⁴¹

Wesley wrote these words to show the colonies that England still had the legal right to tax them; therefore the colonies should continue to support the king and thereby promote peace and order in the kingdom.

The appearance of this pamphlet, says Tyerman, "produced an unparalleled sensation."⁴² mainly because of Wesley's sudden change of attitude. Tyerman goes on to say, "Wesley had a perfect right to change his opinions, which he says he did on reading Johnson's 'Taxation no Tyranny'; but when a public man like Wesley does that, he can hardly escape criticism of an unfriendly nature."⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 294.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 294.

³⁹—⁴² Tyerman, op. cit., p. 187.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 187.

The popularity of this pamphlet is shown by the widespread circulation it received. In another pamphlet, A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England, Wesley said, "I wrote a little tract entitled, "A Calm Address to Our American Colonies:" but the ports being just then shut by the Americans, I could not send it abroad as I designed. However, it was not lost; within a few months, fifty, or perhaps a hundred thousand copies, in newspapers and otherwise, were dispersed through Great Britain and Ireland." ⁴⁴

After the pamphlet created such a controversy Wesley wrote in his Journal his reasons for writing the Calm Address. The entry in Wesley's Journal states:

I made some additions to the Calm Address to Our American Colonies. Need anyone ask from what motive this was wrote [sic]? Let him look around: England is in a flame---a flame of malice and rage against the king, and almost all that are in authority under him. I labour to put out this flame. Ought not every true patriot to do the same? If hireling writers on either side judge of me by themselves, that I cannot help. ⁴⁵

This entry from Wesley's Journal gives a clear cut statement of his position. To him the paramount thing was peace and order and the support of the king. It was in the support of these that Wesley wrote his Calm Address. He was attempting to rid the country of disorder and to show the American Colonies that taxation was no tyranny. If Wesley had accomplished this he would have won support for the king.

A letter written to Thomas Rankin from London, dated October 20, 1775, gives further support to the thesis that Wesley's aim was to support

⁴⁴ Works, Vol. VI, p. 328.

⁴⁵ Journal, Vol. VI, p. 82-83.

peace and order. In this letter to Rankin Wesley wrote:

A paper was sent to me lately, occasioned by the troubles in America; but it would not do good. It is abundantly too tart; and nothing of that kind will be of service now. All parties are already too much sharpened against each other: we must pour water, not oil, into the flame.⁴⁶

In 1776 Wesley wrote another pamphlet, Some Observations on Liberty. This pamphlet was written in answer to a pamphlet, Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America, written by a Dr. Pierce.⁴⁷

In this pamphlet Wesley discussed the problem of liberty and came to the conclusion that "what they claim is not liberty; it is independency."⁴⁸

With regard to taxes he says that they "are so moderate, that neither they nor I have reason to complain."⁴⁹ Then Wesley ended the pamphlet with a plea for support of peace and order. He said, "Let all who are real lovers of their country use every lawful means to put out, or, at least, prevent the increase of, that flame which, otherwise, may consume our people and nation."⁵⁰

In 1777 Wesley wrote another pamphlet on the war issue. It was entitled: A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England. When Wesley wrote this pamphlet the war in America was still going on. Wesley had a burning desire for the British Empire to exist in peace and order with all of

⁴⁶ Works, Vol. VI, p. 12.

40→⁴⁷ Works, Vol. VI, p. 300.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 302.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 304.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 320.

the subjects supporting the king. When he wrote this pamphlet he was trying to contribute his efforts to this idea. He desired to calm the troubles between England and the American Colonies that peace and order might ensue. In stating his purpose for writing the pamphlet he said, "I wish to quench the remains of that evil fire."⁵¹

SUMMARY

From the evidence cited it is seen that Wesley did have much to say concerning war. From this evidence it can be said that Wesley viewed war as evil; however, his attitude toward war was such that in no sense of the word could he be called a pacifist. Wesley's view of war changed as the conditions changed. When conditions changed to such an extent that peace and order and the support of the king were threatened Wesley found justification for supporting war. He did support war in an active way by, on two occasions, offering to raise volunteers for the king's service. Yet he was not consistently on the side of war and did not hesitate to speak out against it. Wesley was a Tory and his paramount interest was to support the king by supporting peace and order. By taking this position Wesley could say that war was evil, and without any contradiction of his views whatsoever, could actively support war when conditions were such that incompatible or evil forces were threatening peace and order. Therefore it seems that the term, Christian non-pacifist, more nearly describes Wesley.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 328.

CHAPTER III

PACIFISM IN EARLY AMERICAN METHODISM

THE ATTITUDE TOWARD WAR AND PEACE IN AMERICAN METHODISM TO 1844

American Revolution. Throughout Methodism there were those who did not take an active part in the war. In this chapter there will be

At the beginning of the American Revolution Methodism was just beginning to get a toe hold on the American continent. Regardless of the date one accepts for the beginning of Methodism in America it could not have been more than ten years old at the advent of the American

Revolution.¹ Yet this young Methodism was suspected and persecuted because of its attitude toward war.

Because of its attitude toward the war Methodism was suspected of loyalty to the British government. This suspicion led to persecution. The attempt in this chapter is to examine the attitude of American Methodism toward war with a view of discovering whether the attitude toward

The thesis taken in this paper is that the American Methodists were loyal to their consciences rather than to any governmental or economic system. This loyalty to conscience expressed itself in a genuine pacifism. There were, however, many Methodists who supported the American Revolution in an active way.

¹ William Warren Sweet, Methodism in American History, Revised Edition, (New York and Nashville: the Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 51.

the earliest of these is the entry of March 13, 1778 which indicates that he is suspected of loyalty to the English Crown. On this day he wrote, "I am considered by some as an enemy of the country--every day

PACIFISM IN EARLY AMERICAN METHODISM

A number of Methodist leaders did not participate in the American Revolution. Throughout Methodism there were those who did not take an active part in the war. In this chapter these will be examined to see why they did not participate. If the leaders of Methodism were pacifists then it can be deduced that there was a contingent of pacifism in the ranks of Methodism.

PACIFISTIC LEADERS

During the Revolutionary War it is noted that a number of the leading Methodists did not participate in the war. Francis Asbury, Jesse Lee, and Freeborn Garrettson were among those leaders that did not participate.

FRANCIS ASBURY

Francis Asbury was one of the most outstanding leaders of Methodism in its formative years. Excerpts from the Journal of Asbury show that he was a pacifist and did not actively support the American Revolution for this reason. The excerpts invalidate the claim that he was loyal to the English Crown.

The evidences of Asbury's pacifism come from those entries in his Journal concerning the reaction of loyal Americans to him. One of the earliest of these is the entry of March 13, 1778 which indicates that he is suspected of loyalty to the English Crown. On this day he wrote, "I am considered by some as an enemy of the country---every day

liable to be seized by violence and abused."² This entry came just after it was evident that he would have to take the Oath of Allegiance in Maryland or leave the state.

On April 7, 1778 he wrote, "At night a report was spread which inclined me to think it would be most prudent for me to move the next day. Accordingly I set out after dinner, and lay in a swamp till about sunset; but was then kindly taken in by a friend. My soul was greatly humbled and blessed under these difficulties, and I thought myself like some of the old prophets, who were concealed in times of public distress."³ This treatment came because he was suspected of being loyal to the English.

The next entry explains his position and makes it evident that he was not loyal to the English government. After the episode in Maryland in which he refused to take an oath of allegiance which demanded that he pledge to take up arms, if called upon by the authorities to do so,⁴ he fled to Delaware where he found asylum in the home of Judge Thomas White, Judge of the Kent County Court of Common Pleas.⁵ Here Asbury stayed without having to take an oath of allegiance binding him to bear arms in defense of the state. In his Journal Asbury wrote:

² The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (New York: W. Bangs and T. Mason, 1821, Vol. I.), p. 205.

³ Asbury's Journal, Vol. I, p. 207.

⁴ Sweet, op. cit., p. 89.

⁵ Horace M. DuBoise, Francis Asbury: A Biographical Study, (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1916), p. 88-89.

⁷ Leroy W. Lee, The Life and Times of the Rev. James Lee, (Richmond, Va.: Published by John Murry, 1845), p. 87.

The reason for this retirement was as follows. From March 10, 1778, on conscientious principles I was a non-juror, and could not preach in the state of Maryland; and therefore withdrew to the Delaware state, where the clergy were not required to take the state-oath; though with a clear Conscience, I could have taken the oath of the Delaware State, had it been required; and would have done it, had it not been prevented by a tender fear of hurting the scrupulous consciences of others.⁶

The fact that Asbury did not take the loyalty oath was not because he was loyal to the English government but because he was loyal to his conscience. He could not take an oath to bear arms as the Maryland oath required but was perfectly willing to take an oath of allegiance to the state of Delaware when it did not require bearing arms. Thus it is evident from Asbury's own words that he was a pacifist and for this reason could not bear arms.

JESSE LEE

Jesse Lee of Virginia was another of the leaders of Methodism in its formative years. He, too, was a pacifist during the Revolutionary War. In writing of him Leroy M. Lee said, "In conscience he was opposed to fighting; yet he would not resist the civil government under which he lived."⁷

In the summer of 1780 the North Carolina militia was called out and Jesse Lee was among those called to fight for his adopted state. Leroy Lee, his biographer, has recorded his words:

I weighed the matter over and over again, but my mind was settled; as a Christian, and as a preacher of the gospel,

⁶ Asbury's Journal, Vol. I, p. 208.

⁷ Leroy M. Lee, The Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee, (Richmond, Va.: Published by John Early, 1848), p. 87.

I could not fight, I could not reconcile it to myself to bear arms, or to kill one of my fellow creatures; however, I determined to go, and to trust the Lord; and accordingly prepared for my journey.

With this attitude Lee set out for camp on Monday, July 17, 1780. An extract from his Journal as recorded by Leroy Lee in the biography of Jesse Lee states, "I felt my dependence upon God, and though I believed that great difficulties lay before me, yet I resigned myself into the hands of God, and felt assured he would protect and care for me." ⁹

Lee did not join the army until July 29, 1780. He recorded in his Journal, "On the evening of that day July 29 I came in sight of the camp, and was soon called on parade, and orders were given for all the soldiers to be furnished with guns. I then lifted up my heart to God, and besought him to take my case into his hands, and support me in the hour of trial." ¹⁰

A sergeant presented Lee with a gun but he refused to take it. A lieutenant then presented Lee the gun and again he refused to take it. The lieutenant conferred with the colonel and a gun was set down against Lee. Lee says, "I told him he had as well take it away, or it would fall. He then took me with him and delivered me to the guard." ¹¹ He was placed in prison and there he began to preach. Later the colonel came and had a talk with Lee. Of this visit Lee wrote in his Journal, "He came and took

⁸ Ibid., p. 88.

⁹ Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 89.

me out and talked with me on the subject of bearing arms. I told him I could not kill a man with a good conscience; but I was a friend to my country, and was willing to do anything I could, while I continued in the army, except fight. He asked me if I would be willing to drive their baggage-wagon? I told him I would, though I had never driven a wagon before." ¹²

Lee described his work in an entry in his Journal. He wrote that he "went among them where they lay in barns, at the point of death, and talked to them about their souls, and begged them to 'prepare to meet their God.' When convenient, I attended the funeral of those who died, and prayed at the grave." ¹³

Thus Lee, who could not bear arms or kill men with a clear conscience, was able to go about doing good among the wounded and dying soldiers. Lee was a pacifist. He was loyal to the American cause and did everything he could do with a clear conscience. His pacifism, like that of Asbury, came out of loyalty to his conscience and cannot, in any sense, be mistaken for loyalty to the English government.

FREEBORN GARRETTSON

Another of the strong and influential leaders of Methodism in its stormy beginning was Freeborn Garrettson of Maryland. Like Jesse Lee of Virginia, Garrettson was a pacifist and for conscientious reasons refused to take the oath of allegiance required by Maryland.

The first account of Garrettson's pacifism comes from the

¹² Ibid., p. 91.

¹³ Ibid., p. 95.

June 5, 1777 entry in his Journal. This entry says:

On the 5th of June I got into my circuit [Brunswick], and on Saturday the 7th, began my ministry among a lively people. I was attacked by an officer who wanted to know my mind respecting fighting. I told him God had taught me better than to use carnal weapons against the lives of human creatures. He intimated something about stopping me. I told him I was not afraid of man---that if he did not learn to fight with other weapons he would go to hell. ¹⁴

Shortly following the episode Garrettson was faced with the Virginia oath of allegiance. He refused to take the oath on grounds of conscientious principles. Concerning the oath he wrote in his Journal:

About this time the state oath began to be administered, and was universally complied with, both by preachers and laymen where I was; but I could by no means be subject to my rulers in this respect, as it touched my conscience toward God: So I was informed I must either leave the state, take the oath, or go to jail. I told those who came to tender the oath to me that I professed myself a friend to my country: that I would not do anything willingly or knowingly to the prejudice of it: that if they required it, I would give them good security of my friendly behavior during my stay in the state. 'But why,' said they, 'will you not take the oath?' 'I think,' said I, 'the oath is too binding on my conscience; moreover, I never swore an oath in my life: and ministers of the gospel have enough to do in their sphere. I want in all things to keep a conscience void of offence, to walk in the safest way, and to do all the good I can in bringing sinners to God. ¹⁵

Garrettson went on to explain his position by saying:

It might be asked, Why did you not comply with the law? From reading, my own reflection, and the teachings of the good Spirit, I was drawn quite away from a belief in the lawfulness of shedding human blood under the gospel dispensation. ...Again, I thought the test oath was worded

¹⁴ Nathan Bangs, The Life of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1839), p. 56.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 58.

in such a way as to bind one to take arms whenever called on, and I felt no disposition to use carnal weapons. ¹⁶

The position of Garrettsen brought him many hardships. Of these hardships he wrote: "The many trials I had on this occasion drove me nearer to God, and, as many thought that every sermon would be my last, more attended than otherwise would, and I found much freedom to preach the word, and good was done." ¹⁷

The clouds that hovered over Garrettsen when he began his ministry on the Brunswick circuit subsided and he was able to say, "The persecution from this quarter entirely subsided during my stay in the state. In this circuit I met with a number of inward and outward trials; but I bless God that he ever sent me into this part of the vineyard." ¹⁸

However the trials of Garrettsen because of his position were not completely past. A number of times he was accosted and threatened with imprisonment but was able to talk his way out by reminding his assailants of what had happened to others who tried to imprison or harm God's men.

On Saturday February 25, 1780 he was accosted, judged, and condemned for preaching. He wrote of this:

I ask him [the keeper of the peace who ordered him to jail] if he had never heard of an affair in Talbot County. Brother I. Hartley was committed to jail for the same crime, that of preaching the gospel. Soon after, the magistrate was taken sick unto death, and sent for the preacher out of confinement to pray for him. He made this confession: 'When I sent you

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

to jail,' said he, 'I was fighting against God, and now I am about to leave the world, pray for me.'¹⁹

When Garrettson had finished the story of Brother Hartley, he turned to the officer and said, "I beseech you to think seriously of what you have done, and prepare to meet God." His horse was prepared and a company of twelve started to jail with Garrettson. Garrettson wrote, "The night was very dark; and before we got a mile from the house, on a sudden there was a very uncommon flash of lightening, and in less than a minute all my foes were dispersed."²⁰

Like Asbury and Lee, Garrettson could not take the state test oath when it involved the bearing of arms. He was a pacifist and could not take up weapons against his fellow human beings. However his loyalty to conscientious principles did not prevent him from being loyal to his country. He was willing to give security for his behavior and professed himself "a friend to my country," when such loyalty did not interfere with his loyalty to conscientious principles.

PACIFISM IN THE RANKS

Since some of the outstanding leaders of Methodism were pacifists it is to be expected that a number of the rank and file of Methodism were pacifists also. From the evidence it is assumed that pacifism among Methodists was widespread.

On Saturday May 16, 1778, Asbury made an entry in his Journal which indicates that there was pacifism in the ranks of the Methodist

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 102.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

clergy. He wrote, "It may be observed that two of our preachers have been apprehended, rather than do violence to conscience."²¹

Both Asbury and Garrettson gave information that there was pacifism in the ranks of the Methodist clergy. Both referred to a Brother Hartley [first name not given] who was imprisoned for his preaching because he refused to take the test oath in Maryland. Of him Asbury says, "I went to see brother Hartley, under his confinement. Who was in jail for preaching. ...We thought his imprisonment was illegal, as he had taken the oath in the Delaware state."²² It must be remembered that the Delaware oath did not require the bearing of arms. Garrettson, in his Journal, said of Hartley, "The enemy of souls had stirred up a great persecution against the Methodists. Brother Hartley was taken by the rulers, and put in confinement."²³

Later in his Journal Carrettson recorded an incident that shows the general pacifistic tendency among the Methodists. Soon after he arrived on his circuit in Essex, Virginia, he wrote:

Two things were a great distress to my mind,---1, the spirit of fighting; and 2, that of slavery which ran among the people. I am resolved to be found in my duty, and keep back no part of the counsel of God. Day and night I could hear the roaring of the cannon, for I was not far from Yorktown during the siege and the surrender of Cornwallis. Many of our pious friends were absolutely against fighting, and some of them suffered much on that account, for they were compelled, or taken by force into the field though they would sooner have lost their own lives than take the life of any human creature.²⁴

²¹ Asbury's Journal, Vol. I, p. 212.

²² Ibid., p. 250.

²³ Bangs, op. cit., p. 63.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 121-122.

Wood agrees that pacifism was rather widespread. He says, "Many of the American preachers and members Methodist, from religious and Christian principles, were opposed to taking up arms." ²⁵ He supports this statement by quoting Bangs. Woods writes, "As it respects the preachers and people Bangs tells us that they 'were from principles averse to war, and such was the case in respect to most of the preachers and people denominated Methodists.'" ²⁶ He further supports his thesis by quoting a contemporary historian he does not name as saying, "Some of the Methodists were bound in their consciences not to fight, and no threatenings could compel them to bear arms or hire substitutes." ²⁷

The Journal of Garrettson gives evidence that Pacifism was within the ranks of Methodism. He observed that "most of those who had joined the societies, and especially the preachers, were from principles averse to war, which led them to refuse to bear arms in their country's defence." ²⁸

Thus it seems that the evidence shows that there was a contingent of pacifism in early American Methodism among the clergy and the laity.

SUSPICION AND PERSECUTION OF METHODISTS

The pacifistic tendencies in Methodism caused it to be suspected as loyal to the English Crown. In reality Methodism was loyal to

²⁵ E. M. Wood, Methodism and Centennial of American Independence, (New York: Nelson and Philips, 1876), p. 64.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁸ Bangs, op. cit., p. 64.

conscientious principles, yet they were willing to assert their loyalty to the American cause when it did not conflict with these principles.

From the Journal of Asbury comes evidence that the Methodists were held under suspicion. On Friday, March 13, 1778, he made the following entry in his Journal. "I was under some heaviness of mind. But it was no wonder---three thousand miles from home---my friends have left me---I am considered by some as an enemy of the country---every day liable to be seized by violence, and abused." ²⁹

At another time Garrettson wrote, "It was soon circulated through the country that the Methodists were enemies of the American cause: and were embodying themselves to meet the English army." ³⁰ At another time when Garrettson had preached at Colonel Viceroy's the county court charged him with toryism. ³¹

These evidences show that Methodists were suspected of being Tories. Along with the suspicion there was persecution. Leroy M. Lee says of the persecution, "New suspicions were awakened, and persecution stretched out its bloody hand to vex and punish 'certain of the church.'" He concluded by saying, "The weight of the persecution fell most heavily upon those who were employed in Delaware and Maryland." ³²

In describing the punishment Lee says, "Hartley and Garrettson were subjected, the one to imprisonment, and the other to severe personal

²⁹ Asbury's Journal, Vol. I, p. 205.

³⁰ Bangs, op. cit., p. 64.

³¹ Ibid., p. 101.

³² Lee, op. cit., p. 73.

maltreatment." ³³ In describing the persecution of Garrettson, Lee says, "He was beaten over the head with a stick, and finally thrown from his horse and nearly killed." ³⁴

Relating the extent of the persecution Lee says, "Others shared in the persecution. But the evils of this state of things fell chiefly upon the church. The shepherds were scattered and destroyed. The societies, deprived of their regular services, declined in number and piety." ³⁵

After the Conference in 1778 at Leesburg, Garrettson returned to the Peninsula and entered in his Journal, "The enemy of souls had stirred up a great persecution against the Methodists." ³⁶ At another place Garrettson made an entry in his Journal concerning the persecution of the Methodists. This time he wrote, "I was so wonderfully drawn out, and my spirit so taken up with divine things, that I almost thought myself in heaven; and many of the persecuted children of God seemed as if they would take wings and fly away." ³⁷

Two entries from Asbury's Journal show the treatment given to the Methodists. The first entry was recorded June 20, 1776. He wrote, "Went to Nathan Perig's and was fined five pounds for preaching the gospel." ³⁸

³³ Ibid., p. 73.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 73.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 75.

³⁶ Bangs, op. cit., p. 63.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 69.

³⁸ Asbury's Journal, p. 141.

The second entry recorded on July 31, 1779 says, "...the Methodists are struck at, but every charge is false."³⁹

Thus the evidence clearly points out that the early American Methodists were suspected of disloyalty and persecuted for their attitude toward war. The pacifism of the Methodists was mistaken for loyalty to the English government. This suspicion and persecution can be traced to two sources. Methodism was a missionary enterprise and it was "in connexion with Mr. Wesley."

A MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

Methodism was a missionary enterprise and it became a subject of suspicion when the war got underway. Being a missionary enterprise, a number of its ministers were foreigners and unfriendly to the American cause. Lee says:

It was an unfortunate circumstance for the infant church, then struggling into being, and beset on every hand with difficulties, that its chief ministers were Englishmen; all of them averse to the war, some of them decidedly hostile to the American cause, and many of them anxious to leave the country with whose struggle for freedom they felt no sympathy, and for whose success they could not pray without disloyalty. In this state of things, it is not surprising that the imprudence of one man should subject the whole to suspicion, and bring upon the Church of Christ, of which they were the authorized ministers, the reproach of infidelity to the country. Distrust, hostility, and persecution, were natural results of the general exasperation produced by the discovery of the anti-revolutionary affinities of the prominent and most influential ministers of Methodism.⁴⁰

Wood says that from the conference minutes it is estimated that about a third of the Methodist ministry at the outbreak of the war were

³⁹ Ibid., p. 245.

⁴⁰ Lee, op. cit., p. 72-73.

"missionaries sent to America by Wesley and the Wesleyan Conference."⁴¹
 Sweet says, "The complete list of Wesley's missionaries numbered eight: Broadman and Pilmoor, 1769; Asbury and Wright, 1771; Rankin and Shadford, 1772; Dempster and Rhodda, 1774; while Williams, King, Yearbry, and Glendenning came as volunteers, but with Wesley's consent."⁴² Of these missionaries only Asbury remained in America throughout the war. King died, after locating in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1775.⁴³ Sweet gives the following account of these missionaries:

Meanwhile the last of Wesley's missionaries had departed for England, leaving only Asbury of the English preachers. Thomas Rankin left Maryland in the fall of 1777 and spent the winter in Philadelphia, then in possession of the British, after the battles of Brandywine and Germantown. In the Spring he sailed for England. ...Martin Rhodda was the most partisan of Wesley's American missionaries, and was soon in trouble for distributing the king's proclamation in his Delaware circuit. He was forced to flee, and aided by slaves, made his way to the coast and took refuge on a British ship. The last of the missionaries to depart was George Shadford. Shadford and Asbury were close friends, and in the early part of 1778 they agreed to spend a day together in fasting and prayer to determine what should be their course. At the end of the day Asbury said, "My convictions are as clear and strong as ever that it is my duty to remain." Shadford said, "My work in America is done; I feel with as much certainty that it is my duty to return now as I felt it my duty to come hither four years ago." ...And so Shadford left America, leaving Asbury homesick and lonesome.⁴⁴

Bangs records that the English missionaries brought all of American Methodism under suspicion. He says:

⁴¹ Wood, op. cit., p. 44.

⁴² Sweet, op. cit., p. 65.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 58.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 91-92.

Mr. Rhodda ...thinking he was doing God service, was spreading on his circuit the king's proclamation, an acting in several respects unbecoming of the character of either a Christian or minister. He fled, however, to the bay, and employed a slave or slaves to take him to the British fleet, and thus, just escaped his life. ⁴⁵

On August 7, 1775, Asbury made an entry in his Journal concerning these English missionary preachers. He wrote, "I received a letter from Mr. T. R., in which he informed me that himself, Mr. R., and Mr. D. had consulted and deliberately concluded it would be best to return to England." ⁴⁶ In this same entry Asbury gave his own views of returning to England:

But I can by no means agree to leave such a field for fathering souls to Christ, as we have in America. It would be an eternal dishonor to the Methodists, that we should all leave three thousand souls, who desire to commit themselves to our care; neither is it the part of a good shepherd to leave his flock in a time of danger: therefore I am determined, by the grace of God not to leave them, let the consequence be what it may. ⁴⁷

The continued presence of Asbury in America caused suspicion since he was a missionary preacher and a native of an enemy country. When he went to the home of Judge White in Delaware, he went there because of the Maryland oath, which required bearing arms if called on to do so. Failure to take the oath caused the patriots to be suspicious of him. Being suspicious of Asbury they were suspicious of other Methodists who did not take the Maryland oath.

⁴⁵ Bangs, op. cit., p. 65.

⁴⁶ Asbury's Journal, Vol. 1, p. 118.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 118.

"IN CONNEXION WITH MR. WESLEY"

A second reason for the suspicion and persecution of Methodists when their pacifistic leanings were known was the fact that they were "in connexion with Mr. Wesley." Wesley had not failed to make his position known. His pamphlet, A Calm Address, was written to disperse the rebels and gain support for the king. This was known in America since it was directed at the Americans. Wood says, "During the period of the American Revolution there were few greater men in England than John Wesley. His writings were, for the most part, largely read by all classes, especially what he wrote upon the American question, the then great subject of national thought and disquisition." 48

Asbury felt that American Methodism was not benefited by Wesley's activity. In his Journal on March 19, 1776, he wrote:

I also received an affectionate letter from Mr. Wesley, and am truly sorry that the venerable man ever dipped into the politics of America. My desire is to live in love and peace with all men, to do them no harm, but all the good I can. However, it discovers Mr. Wesley's conscientious attachment to the government under which he lived. Had he been a subject of America, no doubt but he would have been as zealous an advocate of the American cause. But some inconsiderate persons have taken occasion to censure the Methodists in America, on account of Mr. Wesley's political sentiments. 49

Bangs, writing the life of Garrettsen, makes it even more explicit than does Asbury that the connection with Wesley caused the Americans to be brought under suspicion. Bangs says:

48 Wood, op. cit., p. 13.

49 Asbury's Journal, Vol. I, p. 132.

War knows no mercy; and the mere circumstance that the first Methodist preachers were from England, under the direction of Mr. Wesley, whose loyalty to his king and country led him to speak and write against the proceedings of the American provinces, was enough of itself to excite suspicion in the ruling party here against the preachers.⁵⁰

Being "in connexion with Mr. Wesley" did much to incite the attitude of the American patriots against the American pacifistic Methodists. Neither was the cause of the Methodists helped when it was known that "Mr. Asbury was Mr. Wesley's special representative."⁵¹ However, it must be recognized that after much suspicion and persecution the young country recognized the young Methodist Church for what it was. The patriots recognized that the Methodists were not political enemies. Instead they were motivated by religious principles. M'Clintock and Strong in an article on Asbury in their Cyclopaedia say:

Like many other religious people of those times, he [Asbury] was, from conscientious scruples, a non-juror, as were all the other Methodist preachers, and also many of the clergy of the Episcopal Church, who yet chose to remain in the country. As their character and motives were not understood, they were exposed to much suffering and persecution. ...The Authorities becoming convinced that there was no treason in the Methodist preachers, but that their scruples were of religious, not a political, nature, and they were merely intent upon preaching the Gospel of peace as humble evangelists, they were permitted to exercise their function unmolested.⁵²

⁵⁰ Bangs, op. cit., p. 46.

⁵¹ George Smith, op. cit., p. 55.

⁵² Quoted in Wood, op. cit., p. 42-43.

⁵³ N. K. Hunt, William McKendree: A Biographical Study, (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1916), p. 15.

METHODIST ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE REVOLUTION

The article of M'Clintock and Strong quoted above is not altogether correct when it says that "all other Methodist preachers" were averse to war from conscientious scruples. The truth is that while a large number of Methodists were pacifists some gave active support to the American Revolution.

There were Methodists in the American army. The main clerk for the outfit to which Jesse Lee was attached was a Methodist,⁵³ Ezekiel Cooper, the son of a Revolutionary officer, was one of the early Methodist preachers. Wood says, "It is fair to presume that Cooper, with his parentage and amid such associations, became a staunch patriot. And there is no indication to the contrary."⁵⁴

While the evidence concerning Cooper is not explicit it is known that William McKendree, who became the first native American bishop of the Methodist Church, was active in the Revolutionary War. Bishop Hoss says, "Before the war ended, McKendree joined the army. The exact date of his enlistment is in doubt; but the fact is beyond dispute that he rose to the rank of adjutant, and was present in that capacity when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown."⁵⁵ The fact that McKendree supported the war and had no pacifistic leanings or Tory record was to the advantage of Methodism in opening up new territory. This proved to be a decided advantage during a camp meeting in Illinois. In 1807, one year before he

⁵³ Lee, op. cit., p. 91.

⁵⁴ Wood, op. cit., p. 55.

⁵⁵ E. E. Hoss, William McKendree: A Biographical Study, (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1916), p. 15.

was elected to the episcopacy, a major led a group of rough necks to break up McKendree's meeting. Hoss says, "He announced from the pulpit that he and some of his companions had fought for their country and could not be intimidated or overawed by a show of violence." ⁵⁶

Native Methodists were loyal to the American cause. A few took up arms in support of the Revolution; but many others whose loyalty to conscience transcended loyalty to any political system were unable to take up arms in support of their government. Pacifism seems to have been the prevailing attitude of Methodists toward war in the Revolutionary period. However, it was pacifism on a personal voluntary basis, rising out of individual piety and a conscious effort to live a righteous life by the grace of God, rather than a doctrine worked out and presented by the church.

THE NEW CHURCH AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT 1783-1844

The Revolution was over in 1783 and a new government was set up. At the same time a new church was in the travail of birth. Throughout the war the Methodists had remained in connection with Wesley, but in 1784, at Lovely Lane Chapel, the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized.

After the war Wesley realized that American Methodism in an independent country should be independent of British Methodism. He was first to show Methodist loyalty to the new American government. In preparing the liturgy for American Methodism he included a prayer for the rulers of the United States. ⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

⁵⁷ Wood, op. cit., p. 57.

Likewise the Christmas Conference of 1784 asserted the loyalty of the new church to the new government. This conference adopted an Article of Religion entitled, "Of the Rulers of the United States of America,"⁵⁸ This article affirmed:

The Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the general Act of Confederation, and by the Constitutions of their respective States. And the said States ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Woods says, "This is believed to be the first ecclesiastical recognition of the new Republic."⁵⁹

Another instance reflecting the loyalty of the new Methodist Church toward the new government occurred on May 29, 1789. On this date Asbury, Coke, Dickens, and Morrell met President Washington, one month after he had been inaugurated, and presented to the president a message from the conference of 1789. This message said:

We the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, humbly beg leave, in the name of our Society, collectively, in these United States, to express to you the warm feelings of our hearts, and our sincere congratulations on your appointment to the presidency of these States. We are conscious, from proofs you have already given, that you are a friend of mankind, and under this established idea place as full confidence in your wisdom and integrity for the preservation of those civil and religious liberties which have been transmitted to us by the providence of God and the glorious Revolution as we believe ought to be reposed in man. We promise you our fervent prayers at the throne of grace.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58. *A Constitutional History of American Episcopal*

⁶⁰ Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

The Methodists were the first to present such an address to the president assuring him of their support.

By the time the war was over the new church was confronted with another problem that became increasingly important. By the Conference of 1784 the problem of slavery was beginning to assert itself.⁶¹ Until 1844, when the church divided, the problem of slavery was one of the pressing issues. The church became so preoccupied with this problem that it did not formulate any doctrine on war and peace.

Methodists to issue a statement on peace and war.

REVISED METHODISM AND THE CIVIL WAR

As the slave issue came to a climax in the antislavery movement of the 1840s the two branches of Episcopal Methodism called to the attention of their respective sides. Scott describes the position of the two branches thus:

The long contest between the two branches of Episcopal Methodism over the question of slavery prepared them to take a definite stand with their respective sides. In spite of the fact there were still many in the Methodist Episcopal Church at the opening of the question as to the attitude of the church toward war was settled, and a great majority of Methodists were ready to identify themselves with any political movement that might aid the holder of that institution. Some of the leaders, on the other hand, were unhesitatingly identified with their political leaders in the movement against slavery following the example of Abraham Lincoln.

⁶¹ John J. Tigert, A Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism, (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1894), p. 136.

CHAPTER IV

PEACE AND WAR IN DIVIDED METHODISM

After 1844 the two branches of Episcopal Methodism were involved in the entanglements resulting from separation. Slavery however, had become the major concern of the two Churches. Therefore they had little time to spend formulating a doctrine on peace and war, and since the nation was at peace there was no pressure on the General Conferences of Methodism to issue a statement on peace and war.

DIVIDED METHODISM AND THE CIVIL WAR

As the slave issue came to a climax in the outbreak of the Civil War the two branches of Episcopal Methodism rallied to the support of their respective sides. Sweet describes the position of the Churches thus:

The long contest between the two branches of Episcopal Methodism over the question of slavery prepared each of them to take a definite stand with their sections when the Civil War began. In spite of the fact there were still some slaveholders in the Methodist Episcopal Church at the opening of the war, the question as to the attitude of the church toward slavery was settled, and a great majority of Northern Methodists were ready to identify themselves with any political movement which might rid the nation of that institution. Southern Methodist leaders, on the other hand, were undoubtedly in full sympathy with their political leaders in the movement toward secession following the election of Abraham Lincoln.¹

¹ Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

The two churches identified themselves with the two political sides. The issues of war became as important as religion. Sweet cites a case in Kentucky that shows the fanaticism with which the Churches supported the war. He says:

...some of the ministers were fanatical in their loyalty. One preacher at Newport, across the river from Cincinnati, on a certain Sabbath morning in 1861 had his church decorated with flags and brass eagles; the hymns sung were "Star-Spangled Banner," the "Red, White and Blue," and "Hail, Columbia." In his prayer he prayed that the Union may be preserved, "even though blood may come out of the wine-press, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six-hundred furlongs." In his sermon he said: "I trust our troops will rally and wipe out the disgrace of Manassas, though it cost the life of every rebel under arms. Let Davis and Beauregard be captured, to meet the fate of Haman. Hang them upon Mason's and Dixon's line, that traitors of both sections may be warned. Let them hang until vultures shall eat their rotten flesh from their bones; let them hang until the crows shall build their filthy nests in their skeletons; let them hang until the rope rots, and let their dismembered bones fall so deep into the earth that God Almighty can't find them in day of resurrection."²

This type of fanaticism was not localized in Kentucky. It was the prevailing spirit in the Churches generally. Patriotism ran rampant.

Churches and Conferences alike took on the atmosphere of political rallies.

Again Sweet says:

More or less throughout the nation, North and South alike, patriotism crowded religion in all of the churches. In New England political sermons were commonly preached throughout the war, and, indeed, for twenty-five years previously abolition and slavery had been common pulpit themes. All the New England Conferences passed patriotic resolutions at their several sessions, while in the Boston Preacher's Meeting the theme for discussion was often one relating to the national crisis. At the session of the New York East Conference in 1863 it was voted to have the oath of allegiance administered to the whole body, and a judge of the United States District Court and a major

² Ibid., p. 281.

general of the army were called in to administer it, and were given "seats within the altar near the bishop."³

This fanatical patriotism was demonstrated in still another way. The Churches, in many instances, became recruiting stations for the army. Of this recruiting Sweet says:

Often ministers took an active part in encouraging enlistments, which was particularly true in rural districts. Sometimes recruiting took place in churches, the minister and recruiting officer standing behind the altar, while the preacher urged the young men to come forward and place their names upon the roll; and in not a few cases the first name on the list was the ministers. In some of the larger churches military companies were organized, made up largely of members of the congregation.⁴

Women's organizations entered into the fanatical patriotism.

Such organizations, says Sweet, were formed by the women of the churches, who "formed themselves into sewing societies, where soldier's underwear was made, socks knitted, and lint pulled for use in hospitals."⁵

Both Churches furnished many ministers as chaplains. In the Methodist Episcopal Church there were four Conferences that furnished twenty or more chaplains and five furnished fifteen or more.⁶ Sweet says:

Certain local preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church obtained ordination at the hands of an independent Congregational Church for the purpose of gaining chaplaincies, but such cases were few and when discovered were condemned by church bodies.⁷

³ Ibid., p. 283-284.

⁴ Ibid., p. 285.

⁵ Ibid., p. 285.

⁶ Ibid., p. 287.

⁷ Ibid., p. 286.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church two bishops were known for their patriotic activities. Bishop Matthew Simpson and Bishop Edward R. Ames gave much of their time to patriotic activities. Sweet describes the patriotic work of Ames by saying:

Bishop Ames during the war lived in the city of Indianapolis and was a friend of Indiana's war governor Oliver P. Morton. In 1862 Bishop Ames was appointed on a commission by the War Department to visit the Union prisoners in Richmond and elsewhere "to relieve their necessities and provide for their comfort at the expense of the United States." His appointment on this commission aroused some protest in the South and led an ex-minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church to write a letter to Jefferson Davis warning him against allowing "this astute politician, who in the garb of a Christian minister and with the specious plea of 'Humanity' upon his lips, would insinuate himself into the very heart of the government whose very foundation he would most gladly destroy."⁸

Sweet described the activities of Bishop Simpson in these words:

Bishop Simpson, through his gift of eloquent speech, was soon a nationally known figure. His lectures on patriotic themes were given throughout the North and always created a tremendous effect. Bishop Simpson was a close friend of Mr. Lincoln.⁹

Following the Civil War the Churches were too busy "with problems created because of changed conditions following upon the war,"¹⁰ to deal with the problem of war. Therefore no statements came from the General Conferences on the issue of peace and war.

⁸ Ibid., p. 294.

⁹ Ibid., p. 294.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 304.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 370.

¹² Ibid., p. 370.

MOVEMENTS FOR PEACE AROUND 1900

It was not until about the turn of the century that Methodism sufficiently recovered from the Civil War and its aftermath to begin formulating any definite attitude toward war. As the economic situation changed and there was no longer the pressing problems of reconstruction that faced the nation after the Civil War there came to be considerable agitation for international peace. This agitation produced the Hague Conference of 1899 and 1907 which undertook to insure peace by means of arbitration. This movement for international peace was accelerated by "The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace" which was established in 1910, with a grant of ten million dollars. ¹¹

During the early years of the present century the peace movement was prominent in the United States. Sweet describes the participation in this movement in these words:

In 1905 it was stated in the report of the National Department of Peace and Arbitration of the W. C. T. U. that more peace sermons had been preached that year than ever before. The W. C. T. U. was one of the active agencies promoting the movement, and in the above year its Peace Department published a course of study for Sunday schools and boys', girls' and women's clubs, entitled "World Peace," while part of its work was in keeping militaristic teaching out of the Sunday schools. In 1907 the first National World's Peace Congress was held, and a second conference met in Chicago two years later. In the year 1909 the American Peace Society doubled its membership, and throughout the country ministers were more outspoken on the question of peace than at any other time. ¹²

The Episcopal Address of the 1912 General Conference of the

¹¹ Ibid., p. 370.

¹² Ibid., p. 370

Methodist Episcopal Church sums up the Methodist attitude toward the peace movement that was so prominent in the early years of the twentieth century. The Episcopal Address for 1912 stated:

It is for mammon, not for righteousness, that thrones and parliaments are crowding the oceans with leviathans of battle, even while the people are praying for an end of war and pleading for international arbitration; for they have balanced the ledgers of the centuries and they have found that the honors and spoils of war have never been equitably divided. Save in the wars of the people for freedom, the thrones and the honors have gone to the few, and thorns and horrors to the many. In the awful arithmetic of war it takes a thousand homes to build one palace, ten thousand lives of brave men to lift a pedestal for one man to occupy in lonely grandeur. The people are also learning the secrets of financial diplomacy, and the day is not far away when monarchs and plutocrats must shed their own blood in their own battles, or settle their accounts at the Hague. Ink is cheaper than blood. Law is better than force, and patience is a wiser diplomat than threat and bluster. But still the strategists are busy. Not content with drenching the soil and reddening the sea with blood, they are planning batteries that shall rain destruction from the clouds on helpless cities, and death on peoples who have no quarrel with each other until baited to battle by a painted lure labeled patriotism.

Even while the churches are calling upon rulers to submit all international disputes to arbitration, our own republic answers with more doves of peace made of steel, breathing fire and winged with death. If some suspect that treaties are held up at the signal of capital interested in steel plate for making more such doves, it cannot be denied that popular government has been perverted to such dastardly uses. The people can and must assert their nobler love of country by demanding that no American battleship shall disgrace its colors in a war for trade, or in any war, until every peaceful resort has been thoroughly tried. The high courage of our President in declaring that all disagreements, involving questions of whatever sort, should be submitted to an international court, is worthy the acclamations of all peoples who have escaped the brutal spirit of barbaric ages. Let every Methodist pulpit ring out clearly and insistently for peace. ¹³

This statement shows that the Methodist Church saw the evils of war and had hopes that peace could be attained through arbitration. Thus Methodism had a part in the peace movement at the beginning of the century.

¹³ General Conference Journal, (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1912), pp. 216-217.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND AFTER

With the optimism that came with the peace movement still on the upsurge World War I broke in Europe. The church still believed in the cause of peace. Sweet says, "From 1914 until the entrance of the United States into the war, the church, through its ministers and press, supported the President's policy of maintaining neutrality."¹⁴

When America entered the war the church was ready to give support. The Christian churches saw the position of the allies as a holy cause while they viewed the opposing side as an unholy and greedy attempt to conquer the world. Sweet describes this support of the war by saying:

The declaration of war undoubtedly was a tragic disappointment to many Christian people, who had hoped against hope that war might be averted. But once declared no class of citizens were more active or self-sacrificing in the whole-hearted support of the war than were the members of the Christian churches, and soon the cause for which the nation fought was seen by them to be a holy and righteous one.¹⁵

Likewise the Methodist Church which, in 1912 had issued a strong statement in the Episcopal Address in support of peace, now asserted its support of the war. Again Sweet says:

With the United States' declaration of war against Germany the Methodist Episcopal Church sent word to the President of the United States that the church was ready to the full extent of her resources. A National War Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church was immediately formed...¹⁶

The War Council established by the Methodist Episcopal Church

¹⁴ Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 375-376.

ministered to the soldiers during the war. Sweet describes the activities of this council thus:

The activities of the War Council were divided into four divisions: visiting clergymen, activities near camps, war industry, and chaplains. The Methodist Episcopal Church was among the first to send ministers into the camps to look after the spiritual welfare of the soldiers....The Council supplemented the salaries of such ministers, and in some instances made possible the employment of an assistant minister to aid the activities. The work of the War Council in the centers where thousands of men and women were brought together in war industries was perhaps the greatest service rendered.¹⁷

A similar commission was established in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The War-Work Commission performed a work similar to that of the War Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church.¹⁸

Regarding the participation of Methodists in the war it can be said that whereas the peace movement had been strong now a wave of patriotism swept the church and Methodism wholeheartedly participated in the crusade to end wars. The war was viewed as a holy war, a war to end wars. In the interest of peace Methodism supported the war.

The surge of pacifism following the war found support in the Methodist Churches. Sweet says, "The older peace movement had been more or less passive; the newer movement was positive and aggressive."¹⁹ The influence of this pacifistic movement in the two branches of Episcopal Methodism can be seen in the statements the Churches placed in the Disciplines.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 376.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 377.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 412.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, seems to have been the least influenced by the pacifist movement. It was not until the General Conference of 1934 that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, made any official statements concerning war. In the Discipline of 1934 there are three sections dealing with war.

The first section dealing with war concerned the duties of a preacher who was in charge of a circuit, station or mission. One of his duties was "To preach at least once each year on world peace, the evils of war, and the evils attendant upon compulsory military training in schools and colleges." 20

In the same Discipline there was placed in "The Social Creed of the Churches" an article calling for the "Repudiation of war, drastic reduction of armaments, participation in international agencies for the peaceable settlement of all controversies; the building of a cooperative world order." 21

The General Conference of 1934 also adopted the following statement concerning the Church and war:

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, true to the principles of the New Testament, teaches respect for properly constituted civil authority. It holds that government rests upon the support of its conscientious citizenship, and that conscientious objectors to war in any or all of its manifestations are a natural outgrowth of the principle of good will and the Christian desire for universal peace; and that such objectors should not be oppressed by compulsory military service anywhere or at any time. We ask and claim exemption from all forms of military preparation or service for all conscientious objectors who may

20 The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1934, (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1934), Par. 169.

21 Ibid., Par. 593.

be members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In this they have the authority and support of their church. ²²

The 1939 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, retained all of the above statements in the Discipline of 1938.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was far more outspoken on peace and war than was the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. As early as 1924 the Methodist Episcopal Church issued an official statement concerning world peace. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1924 adopted the following resolution on world peace:

Millions of our fellow men have died heroically in "A war to end wars." What they undertook must be finished by methods of peace. War is not inevitable. It is the supreme enemy of mankind. Its futility is beyond question. Its continuance is the suicide of civilization. We are determined to outlaw the whole war system.

The patriotism of the Methodist Episcopal Church has never been challenged. Neither our motives nor our loyalty must be impugned when we insist on the fulfillment of pledges made to the dead and assert our Christian ideals for the living. Governments which ignore the Christian conscience of men in time of peace cannot justly claim the lives of men in time of war. Secret diplomacy and political partisanship must not draw men into the dilemma of deciding between support of country and loyalty to Christ.

The World is now open to a crusade for peace. Warweary nations everywhere are eagerly waiting. America should lead the way. The nation and the Church can do now what they may never, never, be able to do again.

We set ourselves to create the will to peace. We recommend that a prayer for peace be prepared and used at every communion service. Through its educational program, our Church must do its full share to mold the present youth of all races into a peace-loving generation. We shall launch an aggressive campaign to teach the nature, causes, and consequences of war. The glorification of war must end.

We set ourselves to create the conditions for peace. Selfish nationalism, economic imperialism, and militarism must cease. We demand the establishment of the principle that conscription

²² Ibid., Par. 594.

of wealth and labor must be the counterpart of any future conscription of human life. As great odium must be put upon the war profiteer as is put upon the slacker. The protection of special privileges secured by investors in foreign lands has too often imperiled the peace of nations. This source of danger must be prevented. The rights of the smallest nation must be held as sacred as those of the strongest. We hold the cause of peace dearer than party allegiance and we shall tolerate no dilatory or evasive attitudes on the part of those who represent us.

We set ourselves to create organization for peace. Grateful to our government for leadership in the movement toward reduction of armaments and the promotion of tribunals for international arbitration, we insist upon a still more decided and aggressive policy in these directions. We urge the President of the United States to summon another Conference of the Nations for the more drastic reduction of armaments. We likewise urge upon the Senate the immediate entrance of the United States into the Permanent Court of International Justice. The participation of the United States in a League of Nations will receive our active aid. We call upon all our people to support for public office men pledged to secure these ends. The ballot and other direct processes of democracy must now be employed in securing a warless world.

World Christianity is enlisted in the campaign for peace. We seek alliance with all the forces which make for the principles here advocated. We, therefore, propose that our Church now assume its full share of responsibility by appointing at this General Conference a commission of twenty-five members, composed of five Bishops, ten Ministers, and ten laymen authorized and instructed to invite the religious forces of the world to unite in a Conference to consider the best plans and methods for making the impact of a world-wide religious sentiment against the evils we deplore.

The principles of brotherhood are plainly challenged. The progress of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is clearly at stake. The issues are so momentous, the opportunity for leadership is so great, that we here and now call upon all people to avoid divisive and fruitless discussions and unite their energies in this great movement for a war-free world. To this sublime end we dedicate ourselves, and for its accomplishment we invoke the blessing of Almighty God. ²³

The 1928 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church added a section to "The Social Creed of the Churches" calling for

²³ The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1924, (New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago: The Methodist Book Concern, 1924), Par. 572.

...(a) The removal of every unjust barrier of trade, color, creed, and race, and the practice of equal justice for all nations. (b) The administration of the property and privileges within each country so that they will be of the greatest benefit, not only to that nation, but to all the world. (c) Discouragement of all propaganda tending to mislead people in their international relations or to create prejudice. (d) The replacement of selfish imperialism by such disinterested treatment of backward nations as to contribute the maximum to the welfare of each nation and of all the world. (e) The abolition of military armaments by all nations except for an internal police force. (f) That the Church of Christ as an institution shall be used for the prevention and abolition of war. (g) A permanent association of the nations for world peace and good will, the outlawry of war, and the settlement of all differences between nations by conferences, arbitration or an international court.²⁴

The General Conference of 1928 also adopted another resolution on world peace. This resolution said:

We rejoice in the efforts now being made by the United States and other governments to enter into compacts with other nations for the outlawry of war. We are convinced that war has become the supreme enemy of mankind. Its continuance is the suicide of civilization. We would utterly repudiate our professed faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, if we held that war is inevitable. War is not inevitable. Disputes between nations, like disputes between individuals, may be settled by judicial processes. We believe that war should be made a public crime under the law of nations.

We recognize the need of an army and navy sufficient to serve as a police power for the protection of life and property on land and sea. But, as a Christian body, we renounce war as an instrument of national policy, and set ourselves to create the will to peace. We must do our full share to mold the present youth of all races into a peace-loving generation. To this end we recommend that the Board of Bishops appoint a commission of Peace and World Fellowship, consisting of seven Ministers and eight Laymen, and that this commission be empowered to employ an Executive Secretary.

Preparation for war leads to war. We therefore urge the President of the United States to prepare for another Conference of Nations which will secure a more drastic reduction of armaments of every kind. We adhere to the principle that diplomacy should be used instead of military intervention in our re-

²⁴ Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1928, Par. 597.

lations with other nations. The rights of the weakest nations must be held as sacred as those of the strongest.

We call upon our members as citizens to exalt themselves to the utmost to secure the participation of their respective government in a World Court which shall have affirmative jurisdiction over all international disputes, and shall develop and administer international law upon the basic principle that war is a crime. We urge upon our members their duty as citizens to secure the participation of their respective governments in an Effective Association of Nations which shall undertake to remove the causes of war and to lead the world into the ways of peace. ...²⁵

The Commission called for in this resolution was established and Ralph W. Sockman, E. R. Tittle, W. J. King, G. B. Oxnam, D. J. Marsh, J. E. Martin, H. P. Sloan, Anson C. Fry, Ernest F. Smith, James A. James, W. F. Bigalow, Mrs. C. F. Vandewater, Mrs. M. D. Cameron, Manker Patten, and Henry J. Allen were placed on the Commission. ²⁶

The General Conference of 1932 left unchanged the section in "The Social Creed of the Churches." However, in the report of the Commission on World Peace adopted by the Conference there was praise for the statement of the 1928 Conference. Furthermore, this report went beyond that of 1928 and dealt at length with the justice of blaming Germany for World War I, war reparations, the Pact of Paris, the establishment of a Bureau for the promotion of peace education as a part of the Department of State, naturalizations laws, conscientious objectors, and the support of military training in educational institutions. This report adopted by the 1932 General Conference says:

And now in the name of Christ and in the interest of the prosperity and peace of the world we feel constrained to make

²⁵ Ibid., Par. 598.

²⁶ Ibid., Par. 592, Sec. 4.

the following pronouncements:

We believe that the time has come for the world to acknowledge the fact that the sole guilt of the German nation for the World War cannot in justice be maintained. We hope that religious and other bodies the world around will join with us in urging the League of Nations to seek a revision of this article.

We also believe that the time has come for the world to recognize the fact that further reparations based upon this article should not be demanded of the German people. We take the position that reparations and war debts are not in the same category, either in law or in morals, and insist that this difference in principle be recognized. We believe, however, that they are very closely related and that reduction or cancellation of reparations cannot be made without seriously affecting war debt payments to the United States. We further believe that what the United States might not be willing to do if the demand should be made on the basis of legal right it might be willing to consider in the interest of prosperity and peace of the world. We therefore urge the government of the United States inviting the co-operation of other governments which are involved to arrange for a new settlement of war debts based upon the present economic situation, and upon drastic reduction of armaments and military expenditures.

The governments of fifty-nine nations having by the Pact of Paris officially renounced war, should now abolish weapons designed primarily for aggressive purposes. The drastic reduction or total abolition of such weapons, namely, tanks and heavy mobile guns, airplanes, airplane carriers and gas, would greatly enhance the significance of the Peace Pact, allay deep suspicions and fears among nations less prepared to make war, prevent rivalry in armaments among all nations, and insure the success of the Disarmament Conference now meeting in Geneva.

We call upon the world to witness the fact that the signatories to the Versailles Treaty, in forcing the disarming of Germany, solemnly declared that they were doing it "in order to render possible initiation of a general limitation of armaments of all nations;" also the fact the United States, signatory to the Treaty of Berlin, in which is embodied the Preamble of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, made the same promise to Germany and the world, and in our judgement these nations are all morally and legally bound to a general reduction of armaments.

We commend the President of the United States and the Secretary of State for taking the position that our government will not recognize any situation, treaty, or agreement which may be brought about by violation of treaty agreements. We rejoice in the indorsement of this position given by the Council of the League of Nations. We believe that this position, which is in harmony with the Paris Pact and American traditions, and which, as Mr. Hoover has truly said, is "the strongest moral sanction ever proclaimed in the world," ushers in a new day in international diplomacy and brings new hope to mankind.

Believing that the Root Formula fully protects American interests, we now urge the government of the United States to ratify the World Court Protocols, and also to enter the League of Nations with such Senate Reservations as shall harmonize the Constitution of the League with the Paris Peace Pact.

We recommend the establishment of a Bureau in the Department of State whose duty it will be to promote education for peace.

We appeal for such modification of the present Immigration Act as will place Orientals on the same quota basis as now govern immigration from European Countries.

We desire to make our own the following position taken by the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America:

"In view of certain judicial decisions which raise fundamental questions as to the justice of our present naturalization laws, we desire to put on record the following convictions:

"We hold that our country is benefited by having as citizens those who unswervingly follow the dictates of their consciences, and that a policy of denial of naturalization to aliens of such character is contrary to the ideals of a nation into whose structure the principle of political and religious liberty has been built.

"If the present naturalization laws do, under their interpretation, require the exclusion from citizenship of applicants who put allegiance to God above every other consideration, we believe that the law should be amended.

"Furthermore, we believe it to be the duty of the churches to give moral support to those individuals who hold conscientious scruples against participation in military training or military service."

We petition the government of the United States to grant to members of the Methodist Episcopal Church who may be conscientious objectors to war the same exemption from military service as has long been granted to members of the Society of Friends and other similar religious organizations. Similarly, we petition all educational institutions which require military training to excuse from such training any student belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church who has conscientious scruples against it.

We earnestly petition the government of the United States to cease supporting all military training in civilian educational institutions. We urge Methodists in all parts of the world to make a like request of their respective governments, and further to plead for the abolition of compulsory military service in countries where it is now required. ²⁷

In the General Conference of 1936 the pacifist influence reached

²⁷ Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1932, Par. 562.

its height in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The report of the Commission on World Peace was unmistakably pacifistic and went far beyond the statement of 1932 condemning war. This report of 1936 says:

The threats of war in the world today are so grave that we feel called upon to restate our convictions on this subject. Therefore, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, and with the hope that his spirit may be evident in these words, we make the following declarations:

War as we know it is utterly destructive. It is the greatest social sin of modern times; a denial of the ideals of Christ; a violation of human personality; and a threat to civilization. Therefore, we declare that the Methodist Episcopal Church as an institution does not endorse, support or purpose to participate in war.

If civilization is to endure, non-violent methods of overthrowing evil must be found and demonstrated. We are convinced that intelligence and good will can find them. As Christians we shall earnestly seek to discover and recommend ways in harmony with the mind of Christ, by which mankind may deal effectively with evil, whether in the relations of nations or in the relations of economic or racial groups.²⁸

This statement proclaimed the position of the Church in regard to war. It went beyond the General Conference of 1932 in calling for the government to take responsibility for production of military munitions and commended the government in exposing the practices of munitions makers. The report said:

The exposure of the aims, methods, and practices of the munitions makers of the United States and of other nations is of great value in the development and understanding of causes of war. We commend the Committee of the United States Senate under whose direction this investigation was made and express it as our conviction that their findings are making a valuable contribution to the exposure of one of the primary causes of war. We urge the passage by the Congress of the United States of a neutrality bill designed to keep the United States from international entanglements incident upon the sale of materials of belligerent nations.

²⁸ Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1936, Par. 1464.

We recommend that the Federal government assume exclusive responsibility for the manufacture of munitions of all kinds. We further recommend prohibiting the sale of munitions of war to any individual, group, or nation. ²⁹

After World War I the Methodist Episcopal Church became very outspoken on the issue of war. It regarded war as evil and, in 1936, said that it could not participate in war. Thus it is evident that after the official pronouncements of the Church came to reflect a strong pacifist view.

This postwar pacifism, so evident in the Methodist bodies, says William Warren Sweet, stemmed from the social gospel. Sweet goes on to say:

This is indicated by the fact that the outstanding social gospel preachers, such as Ralph Sockman and Ernest Fremont Tittle and Harry Emerson Fosdick, were recognized leaders in the modern pacifism movement. As Lee [Umphrey Lee] in his book The Historic Church and Modern Pacifism points out, the type of pacifism with which the church has long been familiar rejected all forms of resistance, whereas the pacifism that gained such a large following among Methodists, as well as among the youth of other churches between the two World Wars urged nonresistance as its main strategy and exalted Gandhi and Tolstoy as its models. But nonresistance is a form of resistance intended to secure power and control, and would seem to have as little relation to the teaching of Jesus as any other form of resistance. ³⁰

In regard to peace and war in divided Methodism one can say that divided Methodism began by supporting, with fanatical patriotism, the Civil War, with each supporting on its respective side. Following the Civil War and the reconstruction that followed, divided Methodism entered into the peace movement that was prominent about the turn of the century.

²⁹ Loc. cit.

³⁰ Sweet, op. cit., p. 413.

When World War I came Methodism saw it as a holy crusade to end war and participated in it. Following the war both branches of Episcopal Methodism were influenced by pacifism, and all of the statements issued show the influence of the pacifist group. There now remains to be seen the position taken by united Methodism in regard to peace and war. It remains to examine the attitude of united Methodism toward peace and war. The problem, then, in this chapter is to discover the pronouncements of united Methodism on peace and war as set forth in the Discipline of the Uniting Conference of 1939 and the Discipline of each succeeding General Conference of the Methodist Church.

In examining the attitude toward peace and war in united Methodism there are three distinctive periods that ought to be dealt with. These periods are: the prewar period which involves the Uniting Conference and the General Conference of 1940, the war period which involves the General Conference of 1944, and the postwar period which involves the General Conferences of 1948 and 1952. In treating the period of united Methodism these three divisions logically become the sub-divisions of the chapter.

THE PREWAR PERIOD

The prewar period of united Methodism begins with the union of the three branches of Methodism at the Uniting Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1939. This period was short and was brought to a close by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor which occurred on December 7, 1941.

CHAPTER V

PEACE AND WAR IN UNITED METHODISM

Following Methodism through each of its major periods it now remains to examine the attitude of united Methodism toward peace and war. The problem, then, in this chapter is to discover the pronouncements of united Methodism on peace and war as set forth in the Discipline of the Uniting Conference of 1939 and the Discipline of each succeeding General Conference of the Methodist Church.

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THE PREWAR PERIOD

The prewar period of united Methodism begins with the union of the three branches of Methodism at the Uniting Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1939. This period was short and was brought to a close by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor which occurred on December 7, 1941.

¹ The Discipline and Directory of the Methodist Church, (New York and Nashville, 1939), par. 107.

² Ibid., par. 115.

During this prewar period statements expressing the Methodist attitude toward peace and war were issued only by the Uniting Conference of 1939 and the first General Conference of the Methodist Church which was held in 1940. The Uniting Conference of 1939 made a statement on war and peace which said:

Whereas, in the present extremely dangerous state of affairs existing among the nations of the world it is imperative that every possible influence looking toward the establishment of universal peace be exerted by the followers of the Prince of Peace; and,

Whereas, a reunited and powerful Church is just coming into existence whose voice in this grave situation ought to be unequivocal; and,

Whereas, there exists an honest difference of opinion in regard to the particular form which the conviction of that Church in this crucial issue ought to take; therefore, be it

Resolved, That The Methodist Church

1. Takes its stand undivided in its opposition to the spirit of war now raging through the world;
2. Pledges itself to exert every possible influence at its command to persuade belligerent peoples to find such ground of settlement of their difficulties as shall result in lasting peace between them;
3. Urges the President and the Congress of the United States to take every possible step to avoid the entanglement of our country in a world-wide conflagration of war which we are convinced would bring our civilization into ruins; and
4. Commits to our Board of Education the responsibility of laying the foundation of a system of Christian education which shall seek to eradicate the causes of war and train our children for Christian participation in the arts of peace.¹

After making this statement the Uniting Conference went on to set up plans whereby the Board of Education and the Commission on World Peace could "develop plans and curricula for the education of children, young people, and adults in the principles of peace and international co-operation."²

¹ The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church, (New York and Nashville, 1939), Par. 1697.

² Ibid., Par. 1152.

In 1939 the Uniting Conference included a statement concerning peace and war in the Social Creed. This statement of united Methodism says:

14. We recognize the need of an army and navy for police purposes. We stand for the repudiation of war and for the discovery and development of all reasonable methods to attain peace, for the reduction of armaments by all nations, participation in international agencies for the peaceable settlement of controversies, and for the building of a co-operative spirit among the nations. We insist that the agencies of the Church shall not be used in the preparation for war, but in the promulgation of peace. We believe that war is utterly destructive and is our greatest collective sin and a denial of the ideals of Christ. We stand upon this ground, that the Methodist Church as an institution cannot endorse war nor support or participate in it.

15. The Methodist Church, true to the principles of the New Testament, teaches respect for properly constituted civil authority. It holds that government rests upon the support of its conscientious citizenship, and that conscientious objectors to war in any or all of its manifestations are a natural outgrowth of the principle of good will and the Christian desire for universal peace; and holds that such objectors should not be oppressed by compulsory military service anywhere or at any time. We ask and claim exemption from all forms of military preparation or service for all conscientious objectors who may be members of The Methodist Church. However, we recognize the right of the individual to answer the call of his government in an emergency according to the dictates of his Christian conscience.³

Thus the Uniting Conference brought something new into the pronouncements of Methodism concerning peace and war. At the General Conference of Episcopal Methodism before unification the pacifistic pronouncements were presented without apology. At the uniting Conference the pacifistic influence was evident, but the Conference recognized another side to the issue. It recognized the legitimate right of those who held the other position to participate in war according to the dictates of their Christian consciences.

³ Ibid., Par. 1716.

In the first General Conference of The Methodist Church held in 1940 the statement included in the Social Creed remained unchanged. However, this General Conference did make a long statement concerning peace and war. In this statement the Conference said:

The Church of Christ, which transcends races, nations, and classes, has an all-important contribution to make to the abolition of war and the establishment of a just and lasting peace. The Methodist Church, whose representatives are in every part of the earth, must make its full contribution to this great end.⁴

From this statement the 1940 General Conference went on to urge all Methodists to:

1. Recognize the fact that absolute loyalty belongs to God. The Christian is bound to serve his own nation in all ways that are compatible with the Christian faith and the Christian way of life; but his supreme allegiance is due to God, whose love embraces all mankind. "It is the duty of the Churches to disentangle patriotism and religion and to teach fearlessly that state and nation belong to the sphere of relative, earthly values. God is absolute, and He alone has a claim to our unconditional loyalty."
2. Learn to regard themselves as members of the universal Body of Christ, which transcends all divisions of race, nation, and class. In time of war Christians the world around should seek by prayer and by correspondence to maintain their essential fellowship in Christ.
3. Be truly Christian in prayer, in preaching and teaching, and in conversation. For the propaganda of hatred there is no place in the Church. The Christian is bound to love even his enemies and to seek their good.
4. Repent of any desire or temper that is contrary to the mind of Christ. Desiring peace, men may not desire those things which belong to peace. On the contrary, they may desire wealth of an amount that cannot be had except at the sacrifice of the economic welfare of other peoples; they may covet the profits of sales of war-making materials to aggressor nations; or they may desire power that cannot be grasped except at the cost of widespread fear, distrust, and smoldering resentment. Few, if any, of us do not harbor some desire that is inimical to the peace of

⁴ Discipline of the Methodist Church, 1940, Par. 1716.

the world. Hence the all-essential first step to peace is the renunciation of desires and tempers that make for war.

5. Guard themselves against prejudice. All human beings are dear to God, the Father of mankind. Anti-Semitism is a deadly sin. The Christian should combat it wherever it appears. And he should insist upon just and considerate treatment for members of any religious, racial, or political minority. Christians in the United States should recognize the fact that this nation, if it deals justly with its own minorities, will be able to protest with increased power against the mistreatment of minorities in other parts of the world.

6. Bear the burdens of those less fortunate than themselves. Today, this responsibility heavily rests upon Churches in the United States. American Methodists are surely called upon to give sacrificially to relief work in China and other lands which are now suffering from war or from oppression. Also, American Methodists are called upon to emulate their Jewish brothers and sisters in providing for the relief and rehabilitation of refugees, without distinction of race or creed, and in urging the national government to adopt a more liberal policy with respect to the admission of refugees into this country. In particular, we recommend that District Conferences and, where possible, Local Churches make themselves responsible for the temporary care and for the eventual rehabilitation of at least one refugee.

7. Seek to create in themselves and in others a true understanding of the causes of war and of all that is involved in the making of peace.⁵

In these words the first General Conference of united Methodism called for a Christian attitude toward peace and war.

The statement of this first General Conference went on to say:

The Methodist Church, although making no attempt to bind the consciences of its individual members, will not officially endorse, support, or participate in war. We insist that the agencies of the Church shall not be used in preparation for war, but in the promulgation of peace. We insist that the buildings of the Church dedicated to the worship of God be used for that holy purpose, and not by any agency for the promotion of war.

We recognize the fact that there is now no common judgement among Christians as to what a Christian should do when his own nation becomes involved in war, however, that the Christian Church, in a world torn assunder by bitter conflicts, must not

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁷ ibid., p. 115.

permit itself to be divided over any matter as to which it is possible for Christians sincerely to differ.⁶

Thus Methodism in the prewar period seems to be less pacifistic than in the period just prior to unification. Nevertheless there is a strong pacifistic tendency exerting itself in The Methodist Church. In the prewar period Methodism set forth in the statements of the Uniting Conference and the first General Conference the idea that war is evil and the Church could not officially participate in it. The Church should give itself to the promotion of peace. The Church affirmed its support of conscientious objectors but did not seek to bind the consciences of its individual members, allowing for an honest difference of opinion regarding a Christian and his relation to war.

Of the prevalence of pacifism in the Church in this period Sweet says:

Numerous polls taken in all the Churches from September 1939, to December 7, 1941, reveal the fact that there were probably more Methodist pacifists than in any other of the so-called nonpacifistic churches.⁷

Thus it can be said that in the prewar period of united Methodism pacifism was prevalent but did not assert itself strongly enough to make Methodism officially pacifist in this period.

THE WAR PERIOD

On December 7, 1941, with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States was actively brought into the war. Thus began the

⁶ Loc. cit. pp. 415-416.

⁷ Sweet, op. cit., p. 415.

period that is here termed the war period in this consideration of the attitude toward peace and war in united Methodism. In this period the years 1942, 1943, 1944, and 1945 will be considered. Therefore, the concern here is with the pronouncements made by the General Conference of 1944, the only General Conference to meet during the war period.

It has already been shown that at the beginning of this period pacifism was prevalent in the Methodist Church. Of those who took the pacifist position in the prewar period Sweet has this to say:

Although the Methodist social gospel pacifists were undoubtedly sincere in maintaining their anti-interventionist position, the brutal Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, transformed many, if not a majority of them, into reluctant participants.⁸

In stating the position he thinks most Methodists took toward the war, Sweet says:

Most Methodists, both lay and clerical, agreed with Daniel Poling of the Philadelphia Baptist Temple when he refused to call the war holy, though he believed that the cause for which the Allies fought was holy.⁹

The Methodist Church, however, did not make an official statement in regard to peace and war in this period until the General Conference of 1944. This Conference affirmed:

As members of a church with world-wide relationships, we must remember that our deepest responsibility is to speak the truth. We must be willing to face the stern judgement of God upon evils in our own national life. By the same token we speak unequivocally regarding the attack upon civilization which has been made by the forces of aggression.

⁸ Sweet, *op. cit.*, pp. 415-416.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

In this country we are sending over a million young men from Methodist homes to participate in the conflict. God himself has a stake in the struggle, and he will uphold them as they fight forces destructive of the moral life of man. In Christ's name we ask for the blessing of God upon the men in the armed forces, and we pray for victory. We repudiate the theory that a state, even though imperfect in itself, must not fight against intolerable wrongs.

While we respect the individual conscience of those who believe that they cannot condone the use of force, and staunchly will defend them in this issue, we cannot accept their position as the defining position of the Christian Church. We are well within the Christian position when we assert the necessity of the use of military forces to resist an aggression which would overthrow every right which is held sacred by civilized men.¹⁰

After issuing this statement the Conference of 1944 went on to assert its support of conscientious objectors by approving "the taking, in such of our churches as desire to do so, of voluntary collections for support of conscientious objectors who are in the Civilian Public Service Camps."¹¹ Following this statement the Conference went on to issue another statement concerning conscientious objectors to war. This statement said:

The General Conference of The Methodist Church petitions the government of the United States to permit the conscientious objector to serve his country in the spirit of his beliefs and, furthermore, that he be given work of greater social significance than that in which the majority are now employed. We commend the federal government for permitting the use of conscientious objectors in state institutions, thereby relieving a critical labor shortage, and allowing their efforts to alleviate human suffering.¹²

The Conference went on from asserting its support of conscientious objectors and concern for their welfare to call upon Congress " to

¹⁰ Discipline of The Methodist Church, 1944, Par. 2016.

¹¹ Ibid., Par. 2017.

¹² Ibid., Par. 2018.

postpone action on legislation involving postwar conscription until after the war." 13

Thus the General Conference of 1944 in its statements indicated the presence of pacifism in the Church but did not permit the pacifists to define the position of the Church. These statements allow the use of military force to quell the intolerable wrongs which threaten the rights of civilized men. Yet at the same time the Conference was aware of the pacifists and was concerned about their welfare. The term Christian nonpacifist, then, seems more nearly to describe the position taken by the General Conference of 1944. Thus in the war period the pacifism that was much in evidence in the prewar period of united Methodism and the pre-unification period of divided Methodism gave way to a new position of Christian nonpacifism which recognized the evils of war and at the same time recognized the fact that military force was sometimes necessary to quell the forces of evil that threaten rights of civilized men.

A little more than a year after the General Conference of 1944 the war came to a close. This brought a new period of peace. This period is here termed the postwar period and is the last period to be considered in this study of the Methodist attitude toward peace and war.

THE POSTWAR PERIOD

After the war was over The Methodist Church set itself to the task of helping create a just and durable peace. The Methodist Church, since the war and even before the war ended, has worked closely with the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America in studying the

13 Ibid., Par. 2019.

14 Discipline of the Methodist Church, 1945, Par. 2001.

bases of a just and durable peace.

Hostilities had ceased almost three years before a General Conference of The Methodist Church met. It was not, then, until 1948 that the Church was able to make a statement on peace and war in this postwar period. This Conference in 1948 pointed out the evil of war and the fact that the Church must act as a healing and reconciling agent. This statement affirmed:

Because war is contrary to every tenet of love and reason for which Christianity stands, the Church must continue to declare its sinfulness and say with the Oxford Conference on Life and Work, "War involves compulsory enmity, diabolical outrage against human personality, and a wanton distortion of the truth. War is...a defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and him crucified." Moreover, recently developed forms of warfare make it necessary to add another note to this condemnation, for war as we now know it may destroy all civilized life upon this planet. It can decisively put an end to the exercise upon earth of those curative and creative forces which Christianity holds in its keeping. The Church must use its spiritual power to destroy war, or war will destroy the church and humanity. More clearly than before, we now see that our only earthly security is in obedience to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth!"

Since Christianity and war are utterly opposed, the Church as the body of Christ, the carrier of the gospel, the institution that bears Christ's name, must not become the agent of any government for its furtherance. The task of the Church is healing, reconciliation, the removal of prejudice and hate, the cementing of bonds of brotherhood, the exalting of God as the Father and Ruler of all mankind and Christ as the Savior of all. This task it cannot perform if it becomes a partisan in international conflict and destruction. "Christianity cannot be nationalistic; it must be universal in its outlook and appeal." ¹⁴

The Conference of 1948 recognized the right of the individual to choose for himself whether or not he would participate in war. Thus pacifism did not assert itself as the defined position of the Church. Rather

¹⁴ Discipline of The Methodist Church, 1948, Par. 2025.

the Conference said:

Regarding the duty of the individual Christian, opinions sincerely differ. Faced by the dilemma of participation in war, he must decide prayerfully before God what is to be his course of action in relation thereto. What the Christian citizen may not do is to obey men rather than God, or overlook the degree of compromise in our best acts, or gloss over the sinfulness of war. The Church must hold within its fellowship persons who sincerely differ at this point of critical decision, call all to repentance, mediate to all God's mercy, minister to all in Christ's name. The primary conditions of peace lie in the attitudes of men. Since the Church in a unique way holds in its keeping the moral and spiritual forces needed for a peaceful world, the Church has a unique and God-given responsibility. ¹⁵

Of the causes of war the Conference said:

Among the unholy aspects and fertile causes of war are: the claims of each state to absolute national sovereignty; the canceling of distinctions of right and wrong, as more and more barbarous forms of cruelty are held to be legitimate; selfrighteousness; the treating of persons as things; the narrowing of the bounds of compassion and justice; the condoning of human bondage; economic self-interest; the distortion of the truth by propaganda and deliberate falsehood; reliance on military force as the sole arbiter in conflict and instrument for the restraint of evil. ¹⁶

Of what the Christian gospel has to say regarding the causes of war the Conference had this to say:

No earthly state, but God alone, is ruler of the universe. To his righteous law nations as well as individuals are subject, and no claims of military necessity can make what is evil good. By him all men are judged and called to repentance. All persons were made in the image of God and, however sinful, are infinitely precious in his sight. All men are children of God and brothers one to another; before him no distinctions of nation, race, class, culture, or political alignment can stand. God wills all men to

¹⁵ Loc. cit.

¹⁶ Loc. cit.

be free to work out their destinies in a just society amid conditions favorable to the abundant life, and to share in the resources of the earth that he has provided for all. God condemns untruth and every violation of the integrity to which we are called in Christ. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. To us he has committed, not implements of destruction for the arrest of evil, but the word of reconciliation. 17

The Conference of 1948 went on record as condemning a preventive war.

We reaffirm the statement adopted by the Federal Council of Churches on April 26, 1948, in which it said: "Some have come to look upon a 'preventive war' as an acceptable means of settling the present international conflict. Such a state of mind we unqualifiedly condemn. The last war ended with the dropping of two bombs which alone killed over 100,000 persons and shattered the lives of many more. New war would plunge the world into utter misery. Whatever the military result, it would be an intensification of the misery which makes men willing to exchange freedom for dictatorship. 18

Thus from the evidence cited the General Conference of 1948, as did the Conference of 1944, took the position of Christian nonpacifism in an attempt to lay the foundation for a just and durable peace in the postwar period.

The General Conference of 1952 recognized the evil of war and the necessity of establishing a just and durable peace. This Conference said:

The world of our day is confronted by a crisis, profound in depth and global in scope. Although men have ever faced the problem of living together, today's crisis is the most acute in history. Man has developed weapons of mass destruction which, in the event of a third world war, might well re-

17 Loc. cit.

18 Loc. cit.

sult in the annihilation of man himself, and the obliteration of civilization as we now know it.

The Church cannot ignore nor evade this problem. Upon its solution rests our future. If that future is to fulfill the cherished prophecies of the Christian Church, there must be peace, permanent and eternal.¹⁹

The Conference of 1952 asserted essentially the same things as did the Conference of 1948 in regard to the conditions of peace, the causes of war, rejection of preventive war; but went beyond the Conference of 1948 and said, "Yet neither is peace inevitable, and its cost is patient, continuous effort at international co-operation. Our best political hope of peace lies in the United Nations."²⁰ Yet the Conference recognized the limitations of the United Nations and went on to say:

Peace can come only from God, expressed through all peoples. World peace is bigger than any single nation, single economic system, or single religion. The United Nations, if peace is to be achieved, must be developed into a world federation of nations. To ensure such investment of national sovereignty as will lay the foundations for permanent world co-operation and peace, we must first have a wider recognition and acceptance of God as sovereign over all nations. We call for revision of the United Nations charter in such manner as to enable that body to enact, interpret, and enforce world law against aggression and war.²¹

The Conference praised the General Assembly of the United Nations, which met in Paris just prior to the General Conference, for establishing a Disarmament Commission, objected to any system of universal military training, called upon Methodist Colleges to consider the position of The Methodist Church when contemplating installation of

¹⁹ Discipline of The Methodist Church, 1952, Par. 2026.

²⁰ Loc. cit.

²¹ Loc. cit.

R. O. T. C. units, and of the Soviet-United States relations said, "It is our conviction that the peoples of neither the Soviet Union nor the United States desire war. We call upon all of our people promptly to undertake to change the prevailing mood which is conducive to war."²²

The Conference also spoke out on colonial and dependent peoples, technical assistance and point four, and civil liberties.

Thus the General Conferences of the postwar period were concerned with the problem of laying the foundations for a just and durable peace. They rejected the theory of war but allowed the individual opportunity to follow the dictates of conscience in regard to participation in war. In this period Christian nonpacifism seems to be the prevailing attitude toward war while the Church sought peace through arbitration, disarmament, organization, and a better understanding between the peoples of the world. support war when such action supported peace and order. Evil forces that threatened the peace and order of the Kingdom sometimes had to be quelled by use of military force. In such occasions Wesley did not hesitate actively to support war. Wesley's attitude toward the American Revolution is a case in point. At first he supported the American cause in order to maintain peace and order in the Kingdom. However, Wesley changed his mind when he was convinced that the Americans were rebelling against the King. This was a direct threat to peace and order and therefore Wesley saw a legitimate right to use force to quell the rebellion and restore peace and order to the Kingdom.

By 1766 the movement Wesley began in England had spread to the American continent. The arrival of Methodism in America was such that

²² Loc. cit.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The attempt in this paper has been to show the position of Methodism in regard to peace and war from the time of John Wesley to the last General Conference of The Methodist Church held in 1952. In this study one notes a changing of attitude. This changing attitude was noted in Wesley and it was also noted in American Methodism. In spite of this changing attitude there seems to be an underlying principle that war is evil and peace is desirable and can be established.

In examining Wesley's attitude one finds that his basic attitude was that war is evil and the support of peace and order is paramount. By taking this position Wesley could volunteer to raise troops and actively support war when such action supported peace and order. Evil forces that threatened the peace and order of the kingdom sometimes had to be quelled by use of military force. On such occasions Wesley did not hesitate actively to support war. Wesley's attitude toward the American Revolution is a case in point. At first he supported the American cause in order to maintain peace and order in the kingdom. However, Wesley changed his mind when he was convinced that the Americans were rebelling against the king. This was a direct threat to peace and order and therefore Wesley saw a legitimate right to use force to quell the rebellion and restore peace and order to the kingdom.

By 1766 the movement Wesley began in England had spread to the American continent. The arrival of Methodism in America was at a time

that made it imperative that it establish some attitude toward peace and war while still in its infancy. While Methodism was seeking to assert itself in its new environment those to whom it ministered were seeking to establish a new nation independent of England. Thus immediately Methodism found itself in the midst of war. In this situation Methodism had to assert itself either for or against war. The English preachers were loyal to their native country and, with the exception of Asbury who went into hiding at the home of Judge White in Delaware and Dempster who became a Presbyterian, returned to their homeland. Asbury remained but, for conscientious reasons, could not participate in war, but otherwise supported the American cause. The native Methodist preachers, with few exceptions, were averse to war and had conscientious scruples against bearing arms. Therefore they did not participate in the war. However there were those among the Methodists who did not have scruples against taking up arms in defence of their country. Among these was William McKendree, who became the first native bishop. It is not hard to assume that the fact that McKendree had no Tory record or pacifist background was a factor in his election to the episcopacy. Thus in early American Methodism a voluntary, nonaggressive sort of pacifism was prevalent.

After the Revolutionary War was over and the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized other issues became more pressing and the young church did not formulate any doctrine on peace and war. The slavery issue became paramount and reached its climax in the division of the church and the outbreak of the Civil War. Methodism, divided by the question of slavery, was quick to see war as a just cause and each side participated vigorously. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, sided with the

Confederacy and the Methodist Episcopal Church sided with the Union. In this period politics triumphed over religion to a shameful degree. Many pulpits were occupied by ministers who gave passionate patriotic addresses and many churches were used as recruiting stations.

When the war was over the Churches were too busy with other pressing problems brought about by the war and reconstruction to formulate a doctrine on peace and war. Then, too, peace became the normal way. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the Churches began to act in regard to peace. It was at this time that the peace movement began and the Churches took an active part in the peace movement.

The work for peace that was centered around the peace movement at the beginning of the century was shattered by the outbreak of World War I. Both Methodist churches supported World War I because they looked upon it as a holy cause and participated in a great crusade to end war. It cannot be said that Methodism, in World War I, supported war per se, but it was supporting war that a lasting peace might be won.

After the war was over there was a feeling that the world had been made safe for democracy and that the war had ended all war. Thus a wave of pacifism swept the country and Methodism was caught in this wave of pacifism. The statements of the various General Conferences of Methodism reflect the impact pacifism made upon the Church. This pacifism was different from the first pacifism that Methodism knew. Unlike the first pacifism that was voluntary and non-aggressive, this pacifism that followed the first World War was aggressive. It sought to pass resolutions and to assert itself in the various Conferences of the Churches. This pacifism reached its peak in the General Conferences of Methodism

just prior to unification.

In 1939 the two branches of episcopal Methodism and the Methodist Protestant Church united to form The Methodist Church. In the first few years of united Methodism pacifism was still evident but the Church recognized the right of the individual to decide for himself the question of participating in war. However, in less than four years after unification America was plunged into war and many that had been pacifists became participants in the war. The General Conference of 1944 recognized the necessity of using force to protect the rights of civilized men. With this attitude the Church supported the war.

Following the war the two General Conferences, 1948 and 1952, asserted the evils of war. Recognizing the evils of war the two Conferences have attempted to lay the foundations of a just and durable peace. They have tried to lay the foundations of a just and durable peace through arbitration, disarmament, organization, and better understanding among the peoples of the world. These Conferences, recognizing the evils and horrors of war, have not attempted to assert pacifism as the definitive position of the Church. Rather a position of Christian nonpacifism has been taken. This position recognizes the evils and horrors of war yet recognizes that there are times when it is necessary to use military force to protect the rights of man.

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