

A HOUSE DIVIDED:  
RELIGION AND THE AMERICAN IMPERIAL DEBATE, 1890-1902

By:

Michael D. Hamer

B.A., South Dakota State University, 1999  
B.S., South Dakota State University, 1999

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History  
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

2016

Approved by:

Major Professor  
Dr. Robert L. Linder

## **Abstract**

American society has been heavily influenced by religion, since before the United States existed as a nation. It has provided a sense of providential guidance and protection that has shaped or influenced internal politics and foreign policy alike. How were attitudes toward expansion and imperialism affected by religion throughout American history? Was the resultant ideology consistent? If not, what changed to cause a shift? The purpose of this thesis is to explore those questions.

Using a wide breadth of material including primary and secondary sources, this thesis demonstrates that society was heavily influenced by religious rhetoric, whether spoken from the pulpit or in print. It further demonstrates how political leaders and religious leaders utilized rhetoric of divine causation and justification in addition to more tangible factors such as economics or security for expansionist thought. Significantly, concepts of racism were justified or reviled in religious terms. Ironically, opposing views on these topics both chose to use religion as their weapon to prove their points. Culminating at the time of the Spanish-American War of 1898, and the follow-on Philippine-American War, the imperial debate was heavily influenced by religion and was a milestone in transforming American national policy and thought.

## Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 Religious Origins of American Imperialist/Anti-Imperialist Ideology .....	15
Colonial Infancy: Nationalism in Colonial America .....	17
Revolutionary Adolescence .....	21
Continental Expansion: Manifest Destiny Fulfilled .....	26
The Civil War and Reconstruction .....	28
Chapter 2 The Driving Force: Racial Considerations.....	31
Racist Thought: Colonial and Early American.....	35
Racism in Practice: Continental Expansion.....	37
The Floridas and the Louisiana Purchase .....	37
Texas and the Mexican War .....	38
The Civil War .....	40
Reconstruction Era.....	41
President Abraham Lincoln’s Assassination .....	41
Dreams of racial equality and radical reconstruction .....	42
Equality Subordinated to Racial Reunion.....	44
Social Darwinism.....	46
Chapter 3 My Brother’s Keeper: Ideology as National Policy .....	50
Chapter 4 Road to the Championship: McKinley and Bryan .....	67
William McKinley .....	68
William Jennings Bryan.....	74
Chapter 5 Expansion and The 1900 Presidential Election.....	84
Conclusion .....	99
Bibliography .....	105
Primary Sources .....	105
Secondary Sources.....	107
Journal Articles.....	115

## Introduction

The latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed a transformation of American foreign relations. The events involved in this change culminated in the last decade of the century with the American imperial debate. The United States became an imperial nation within five short years (1898-1903) with the conquests of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, and in a less bellicose way, Panama. Thus, America became a major player in world politics for the first time. The sinking of the U.S. battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898, was the catalyst for American involvement in Cuba's War for Independence (1895-1898) from Imperial Spain. But the supposedly altruistic efforts to assist Cuba radically shifted when Commodore George Dewey soundly defeated the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay in the distant Philippines on May 1, 1898. The question of what to do with the spoils of war, especially the Philippines, proved baffling. It was a question that demanded the attention of Americans of all walks of life and had profound implications regardless of the decision. For nearly four years, the question of an American Empire divided nearly all facets of society. What inspired the move toward imperialism? Why was it opposed by a small, yet influential group of politicians, academics, clergy and business leaders?

Opponents of expansion argued against such endeavors as anathema to the spirit of the Jeffersonian ideals espoused in the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the spirit of Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Gettysburg Address. In the latter, Lincoln viewed the American Civil War (1861-1865) as a test whether a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal . . . can long endure."<sup>1</sup> President Lincoln's war was a

---

<sup>1</sup> Abraham Lincoln, "Address at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania," in *Selected Speeches and Writings: Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Vintage, 1992), 405.

conflict not only to preserve the union, but also to restore the young country as a shining example of a “city on a hill” for the world to emulate.<sup>2</sup> Proponents of expansion found rationale in varied arguments including: commercial interest, military necessity, a sense of manly duty to lesser peoples, and a sense of Christian mission, to name a few. Imperialist ideological thought is evident in the words of President Woodrow Wilson’s “War Message” to a joint session of Congress calling for a declaration of war against Germany. Wilson summoned the country to arms to serve in a war to make the world “safe for democracy.”<sup>3</sup> This shift from a passive example to an aggressive advocate for democracy to the world is the heart of the imperial debate of the 1890s and early 1900s. The debate did not occur in a vacuum. It was not only argued at the top levels of government and industry, but permeated all aspects of American society. While the argument has been explored from many perspectives, including commercial interest, strategic military necessity, and a fascinating analysis of gender as causation, none get to the core issue of the debate.<sup>4</sup> The undergirding force that drove both sides of the debate—as this essay will argue—was religion.

Historian Andrew Preston identified three reasons religion is an important factor in foreign policy. Though his study was broad in scope, covering colonial settlement and including the present presidential administration, his analysis is particularly applicable to the American

---

<sup>2</sup> This Biblical phrase has become a mainstay in American national rhetoric. Its use in this vein is attributed to Puritan John Winthrop in his sermon “A Model of Christian Charity.” See Francis J. Bremer, *John Winthrop: America’s Forgotten Founding Father* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 174.

<sup>3</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “For Declaration of War against Germany: Address Delivered at a Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress,” in *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson: War and Peace*, vol. 1, ed. Ray Stannard Baker and William Edward Dodd (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927), 14.

<sup>4</sup> For commercial interest perspective see Charles S. Campbell, *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865-1900* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976). The gender perspective is presented by Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting For American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

imperial debate. First, religion was important on a personal level. How people believed in their hearts about matters of faith directly affected their respective positions on political matters. Certainly this was true of William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan as they debated both sides of the imperial issue in the election of 1900.

Secondly, religion mattered to the masses. Therefore, the elected official could not afford to ignore their sentiment. Again, both McKinley and Bryan were masters of the art of discerning the will of the public. The former withheld making—or at least announcing—a decision regarding acquisition of the Philippines until public sentiment seemed strongly in favor. The latter, “the Commoner” owed his success and fame to his ability to identify with his constituents.

Finally, religion mattered because of the concept of “free security”. For much of America’s history, foreign policy did not have to worry about external threats. Protected by two oceans and bordered by relatively weak neighbors, Preston explains that American policy could afford to be based upon values and ideals instead of matters of survival and security.<sup>5</sup> The altruistic rationale for supporting the Cuban insurrection against Spain is an obvious example of such a concept. However, justification for continued use of force against Filipino resistance to American rule also claimed higher ideals as their underlying basis. After all, it was the white man’s burden to Christianize and uplift them in spite of themselves. Even in the recent past, American foreign policy is still presented with similar idealistic rhetoric. While acknowledging the presence of other influences, this paper will show the importance of religious influence as America became a world power in the 1890s and first decade of the twentieth-century. Events of this time set the example, and provided lessons for future similar US endeavors.

---

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 6.

The timeframe under consideration in this paper was not only transformative in terms of foreign policy but also religion as well. It was a time, historian Andrew Preston notes, when religion “became more pluralistic, complicated and more diffuse.”<sup>6</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, during his 1831 tour of the United States noted, “There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains greater influence over the souls of men than in America.” He had not changed his mind four years later when he concluded in *Democracy In America* that, [in America] Christianity therefore reigns without obstacles, on the admission of all.” Sixty years later, historian, jurist and future British Ambassador to the United States James Bryce retraced the steps of de Tocqueville and observed churches seemed to pop up everywhere in America and “possibly half of the native population go to church at least once every Sunday. While yet another visitor, Francis Grund, assessed that “The religious habits of Americans form not only the basis of their private and public morals but have become . . . interwoven with . . . the very essence of their government.”<sup>7</sup> Religion mattered to people, including the governing elites. Yet these governing elites could not afford to ignore the sentiments of the general populace in a democracy. Thanks in large part to the tumultuous events of the Jacksonian period (1824-1840) in America, as historian Daniel Feller concludes, “citizens believed in their ability to mold and direct their own destiny and that of the world.”<sup>8</sup> The will of the people mattered. This paper will show the primacy of religion in shaping American thought, culminating with its key role in directing the shift in American foreign policy through a detailed study of its role in the imperial debate of 1890-1902.

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 4-9.

<sup>7</sup> Grant Wacker, *Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 10.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Feller, *The Jacksonian Promise: America, 1815-1840* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995) xiii.

Three major themes were key to the debate and reflect the nature of the greater American society. First, there was the development and role of civil religion in the public consciousness, political leaders and notably the church leaders of the many denominations as an ever-present force that shaped opinion on both sides of the argument. The notion of a civil religion in America did not originate with the Spanish-American War. It had been a part of American society before the American Revolution. The term gained modern notoriety in the American lexicon with the publication of sociologist Robert Bellah's 1967 *Daedalus* article "Civil Religion in America." The article produced a firestorm of debate centered on definition, description and the history of the topic within primarily the American context. Though the concept has been applied to other countries in different ways, those discussions will not be considered as part of this argument. But its ideology underwent a fundamental transformation between the end of the American Civil War in 1865 and America's entry in the First World War in 1917. The Spanish-American War was at the heart of this change. Bellah's essay explores his belief that "there actually exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from the churches an elaborate and well-institutionalized civil religion in America. . . .with its own seriousness and integrity [that] requires the same care in understanding that any other religion does."<sup>9</sup> Yet he avoids any precise definition. Historians Robert D. Linder and Richard V. Pierard define civil religion as "the use of consensus religious sentiments, concepts and symbols by the state—either directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously—for its own political purposes." They also note in clarification to Bellah, "it involves mixing traditional religion with national life until it is impossible to distinguish between the two, and usually leads to a blurring of religion and patriotism and of religious values with

---

<sup>9</sup> Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in *Religion in America*, William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah eds., (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), 3.



national values.”<sup>10</sup> The following chapters explore how this blending occurred and to what extent this was true of politicians and statesmen during the imperial-surge years in the United States. However, the process of merging civil and traditional religion was not exclusively a top-down process. The role and influence from the bottom up is crucial to understanding the events being considered.

A second theme evident throughout this essay is rhetoric. Advocates on both sides of the debate waged a war of words, primarily through newspapers, periodicals, journals, and from election platforms and pulpits. As an academic discipline, rhetoric is the study of the effective use of language. The final decade of the nineteenth century in many ways is the apex of rhetoric as a discipline. The key advocates discussed in this study depended on rhetoric to win their case. By definition, then, the effective use of language meant influencing the thoughts and actions of the audience. The American Public was the audience, to such advocates as presidents William McKinley (1897-1901) and Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909), three time presidential hopeful William Jennings Bryan (1896, 1900, 1908), anti-imperialists Carl Schurz, Moorfield Story and ex-presidents Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893) and Grover Cleveland (1885-1889, 1893-1897). Rhetoric not only shapes political beliefs and influences all of American culture, but also helps define community and civic life. Such was the case at the close of the nineteenth century in America. A young Bryan understood the value of rhetoric and often met with friends in the family barn, with his father’s blessing, to conduct mock “Senate sessions” to practice oratorical skills.<sup>11</sup> While the practitioners of rhetoric mentioned above are most often associated with the

---

<sup>10</sup> Robert D. Linder and Richard V. Pierard, *Twilight of the Saints: Biblical Christianity and Civil Religion in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 21.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Wilson, *The Commoner: William Jennings Bryan* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company Inc. 1970), 22.

American imperial debate, the foundational rhetoric that captured and shaped the ideologies of politicians and, indeed, defined the issues at a cultural level came from the voices and pens of the men behind the pulpit. A key argument of this paper is that the clergy and leadership of the various religious denominations were a powerful force in America for the creation and control of public opinion. Additionally, political leaders adopted religious rhetoric as a tool to influence the voting public. The following chapters will detail this frequently misunderstood and often overlooked aspect of American foreign policy development and practice.

Finally, underlying the development of civil religion in America, and in some ways supported by it, racism heavily influenced ideological development foreign policy as well. The two worked side by side, if not hand in hand. Most of the time they justified each other but occasionally, as during the imperial debate, they both opposed and supported each other. Rhetoric was a powerful tool that sustained the growth of civil religion and racism in America from before the birth of the country to the present day.

The first chapter addresses the role of religion in the formation of ideological positions. To fully understand the unique relationship between religion and political ideology in America, its historical development during four preceding phases—Colonial, Revolutionary, Continental expansion, and the Civil War and Reconstruction—must be addressed. These four periods serve as the foundation on which opposing edifices of the imperial debate rested. The diverging views were hotly debated during the period of continental expansion. Ideas of “manifest destiny,” cultural, and racial superiority were by no means in a state of consensus as the young United States expanded through acquisition of Florida, the long struggle to acquire Texas, attempts to acquire Canada, the Oregon Territory and California acquisition and certainly during the Mexican American War. Expansionist thought and debate entered a period of dormancy as the

nation endured the tumultuous Civil War and Reconstruction years, yet these events contributed significantly to the expansionist thought of American society. More specifically, Reconstruction and its aftermath mightily contributed to thoughts and deeds of prominent policy makers and religious leaders of the critical closing years of the nineteenth century.

Chapter two details the least appealing aspect of America's entry into the ranks of empire. Though sometimes vexing to modern students of the nineteenth-century, understanding racism is crucial to deciphering the American Imperial puzzle. Many volumes have been written on the subject including: University of Colorado historian Eric T. L. Love's *Race Over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* and Appalachian State University Professor Michael Krenn's *The Color of Empire*. Both are excellent in their treatment of the effects of race on foreign relations but neither seeks to explain how religion interacted with and, indeed, strengthened racism in the minds of policy-makers and religious leaders. The interactive and driving power of racism in religious and political thought leading up to and during the imperial debate must be understood before a detailed analysis of the final decisive battle of American imperialism can begin. Chapter two addresses this issue.

Although racism was, and still remains a significant contributing factor to the overriding mood and attitudes of the larger society, the driving force behind this dilemma was religion. Therefore, the rhetoric and leadership of the various religious institutions will be examined. Chapter three will analyze the divided theological thought as it pertains to the topic of this paper from a Protestant perspective. However, within the Protestant community there was great interest in the issues and events surrounding the Spanish-American War and the subsequent imperial debate. Tellingly, the opinions espoused varied widely. Primarily through sermons and publication by the Protestant leadership, this chapter seeks to understand the theological basis of

the different views and to what extent these views influenced society and the nations key policy makers. It explores a fundamental shift in ideology and its subsequent impact on foreign policy.

Specific events of the final decade and the chosen champions of the opposing ideologies are analyzed in Chapter four. The two leaders of the debate were: President William McKinley, at first a reluctant then forceful advocate for Empire, and William Jennings Bryan, the compromise choice to champion the anti-Imperialist message in its critical hour. Understanding these two men is important to understanding the positions of their respective camps, and indeed the nation. McKinley symbolizes the emerging industrialized, urbanized, commercial and increasingly secularized America. Bryan, repeatedly cast as the defender of lost causes, fought to retain the old America that he and his beloved rural communities so cherished. Bryan's path to champion of the anti-imperialist cause is a complicated, often contradictory one that in many ways mirrors that of the society and organization he represented. Both men were deeply religious, purporting to worship the same God, yet found themselves championing polar opposite positions on U.S. imperialism.

With the previous chapters understood, a complete assessment of the 1900 presidential campaign—the apex of the imperial debate—can be accomplished. Significantly, foreign policy—especially the imperial question—was the focus of the election. Both candidates acknowledged its importance in their respective nomination acceptance speeches and both spoke of the issue in the context of religion. President McKinley spoke of American authority over the Philippines as “our duty” and considered it the “high purpose of this nation” to civilize and Christianize the Filipinos.<sup>12</sup> Bryan, in his acceptance speech opposing imperialism, asserted that

---

<sup>12</sup> McKinley, “Acceptance Speech by President William McKinley, Canton, Ohio, July 12, 1900.” *History of American Presidential Elections*, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., ed. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1972) 1940-1941.

it was against the “laws of the State, the laws of society and the laws of God.” Alluding to the notion of an American imperial republic he noted, “The wages of sin is death.”<sup>13</sup>

### Methodology

There is no shortage of scholarly interest in the Spanish-American War, Philippine-American War or the imperial debate. Though few have undertaken a study of these events with a religious focus, they have addressed certain aspects of the topic as it supports other assertions. Additionally, general studies of the events have proven a gold mine of speeches and quotes from the key actors. Whenever possible the writings, speeches and sermons of the primary actors are used in the analysis of this paper. For some sources, this proved to be a rather easy task as material is prolific. Bryan, for example, left copious official writings, though his personal correspondence is scarce. McKinley left very little in written form, therefore, much of his position is gleaned from observers who recorded what they heard or must be taken from official recorded speeches or congressional records. Because the focus of this paper is the role of religion, publications, speeches and sermons of the many involved American churches and clergy are of particular interest. In a few instances, collected writings or memoirs are available and are an invaluable source material. But the bulk of the debate and opinion of church leaders took place in religious periodicals and by way of sermons. The task of compiling this material is greatly simplified by William Archibald Karraker’s 1940 dissertation “The American Churches and the Spanish-American War.”<sup>14</sup> While Karraker’s study does much to illuminate the sentiment of the clergy, it remains the task of this paper to show it as a driving force in foreign policy development. Historian and pastor, Matthew McCullough relied heavily on Karraker’s

---

<sup>13</sup> William Jennings Bryan, “Imperialism: Acceptance Speech by William Jennings Bryan, Indianapolis, Indiana, August 18, 1900.” *William Jennings Bryan: Selections*, 66. Bryan is quoting Romans 6:23.

<sup>14</sup> William Archibald Karraker, “The American Churches and the Spanish-American War.” PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1940.

work while writing his PhD dissertation, “My Brother’s Keeper: Civil Religion, Messianic Interventionism, and the Spanish-American War” However, McCullough expanded his sources beyond the primarily east coast sources of Karraker. Both are used for my own work. It should also be noted that McCullough’s work was recently published in book form under the title *The Cross of War: Christian Nationalism and U.S. Expansion in the Spanish-American War.*” Because the bulk of my research occurred prior to its publication, all references to his work are to the dissertation version.

Before theological and ideological aspects can be explored it is important to have a foundation of the basic facts surrounding the conflict that served as the announcement of America’s entry on the world imperial stage.

#### The Spanish-American War in Brief

The Spanish-American War, pitting the United States against Spain, was fought in and around the Spanish colonial holdings in the Caribbean and the Pacific from April through August of 1898. The Treaty of Paris, formally ended the conflict in December.

Spain’s hold on its colonial empire had been slipping for centuries when the latest in a series of revolts broke out in Cuba in 1895. Initially both major political parties in the United States encouraged a negotiated settlement to the conflict. President Grover Cleveland’s diplomatic efforts for peace on the island proved fruitless. The 1896 election brought Republican William McKinley to office and the new president staked out a different course by demanding that negotiations between Spain and the revolutionaries in Cuba had to result in an agreement that was acceptable to the Cubans. This new caveat essentially put McKinley in league with the Cubans because they would not accept any peace agreement that did not provide for their

independence. Nonetheless, the McKinley administration and both political parties continued to press for a negotiated solution into 1898.

The sinking of the USS *Maine* in Havana harbor was the single most important event that spurred the U.S. into the conflict. The battleship had been sent to Havana ostensibly to protect American citizens living in Cuba. On February 15, 1898, the ship exploded while docked in the harbor, killing 226 on board. Spain was immediately assumed to have used a mine or a torpedo to destroy the ship. The sensationalistic “yellow journalists” who had been stoking anti-Spanish sentiment for some time reinforced these assumptions in the United States. With the benefit of hindsight it seems highly unlikely that Spain was responsible for the explosion. It is much more probable that the tragedy was an accident resulting from the *Maine* gunpowder being stored too close to a source of heat, or possibly the explosion was caused by a faulty boiler. A less credible theory suggests that it was actually Cuban revolutionaries who destroyed the ship on the assumption that Spain would be blamed and the U.S. would enter the war.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, American public opinion, Congress and the media were all clamoring for war. But as historian Lewis Gould notes, McKinley “delayed as long as he could to find a way out of the crisis. . . . Contrary to the historic canards about his performance, McKinley had worked hard for peace until war became inevitable.”<sup>16</sup>

War was officially declared on April 25, shortly after McKinley requested authority to send troops to Cuba. This after Spain refused to accept the conditions of a previous resolution that deemed Cuba “free and independent,” demanded Spain’s withdrawal, allowed the president

---

<sup>15</sup> David F. Trask, *The War With Spain in 1898* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1981), 35.

<sup>16</sup> Lewis L. Gould, *Grand Old Party* (New York: Random House, 2003), 129.

to use military force to assist Cuba, and stated that the U.S. had no territorial interests with regard to Cuba.<sup>17</sup>

For the United States, the war itself was short and sweet, leading John Hay, the American Ambassador to England, to famously declare it “a splendid little war.” The first significant battle occurred not in the Caribbean but halfway around the world in the Pacific, which proved to be one of the Spanish-American War’s three major theaters. McKinley dispatched Commodore George Dewey and his fleet to the Philippines, another Spanish colonial holding. As will be discussed later, most scholars suggest the war was taken to the Pacific as a means to pressure Spain on all fronts and to quickly conclude the war. Dewey arrived in the Philippines and engaged the Spanish Fleet on May 1. The Battle of Manila Bay was over within hours and was complemented by Filipino nationalists battling the Spaniards on the island’s interior. Dewey then blockaded Manila’s port and waited for ground troops. Four months later soldiers arrived and the brief Battle of Manila ensued, and the Spanish forces on the islands quickly surrendered.

The second major theater of the war was on and around Cuba. After establishing a naval base at Guantanamo Bay and putting ground forces on the island, Theodore Roosevelt led his Rough Riders to their famous victory in the Battle of San Juan Hill. Two days later, on July 3, the American Navy quickly dispatched the Spanish naval force near Santiago as it attempted to flee Cuba. The United States had full control of the island within a month. The third theater was Puerto Rico. After shelling San Juan from the sea, soldiers went ashore on July 25 and took control of the island without difficulty.

---

<sup>17</sup> Charles S. Campbell, *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865-1900* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976), 277.



With the end of fighting in August, President McKinley went a peace commission to Paris, France, to negotiate a settlement with the Madrid delegation. As Gould writes, the quick victory “enhanced McKinley’s prestige and identified the Republicans with another military triumph.”<sup>18</sup> The Treaty of Paris was signed in December 1898 and ratified by the U.S. Senate the following February. The United States received most of Spain’s colonies including the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island, and Puerto Rico. Cuba was declared independent. Filipinos expected the same gesture from the United States but the Treaty of Paris did not grant them their wish. The events that followed were truly transformational for the United States and had profound effects across the globe.

---

<sup>18</sup> Gould, *Grand Old Party*, 129.

## Chapter 1

### Religious Origins of American Imperialist/Anti-Imperialist Ideology

Arguments on both sides of the imperial debate largely drew their ideology from a long, rich religious history predating the colonies and continuing through the Revolution and Civil War. The ideology shaped and was shaped by these events and was at a crossroads in the 1890s. The choice of imperialist or non-imperial path was both a factor of this ideology and a major shaping instrument for future American ideology.

Before any religious factors can be understood, key terms need to be defined. Nationalism and Imperialism are nebulous terms that conjure different meanings in different settings whether chronologically divided or geographically. Benedict Anderson observes in *Imagined Communities* that “nations, nationality, nationalism—all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyze.”<sup>19</sup> In the case of America, the two terms are best understood as two sides of the same coin. Historian William Weeks argues for such a perspective and believes the terms are “self-justifying and mutually reinforcing aspects of what is sometimes termed Americanism.”<sup>20</sup>

The American colonists first perceived the advantage of uniting the colonies as early as the 1750's. Based on the idea of collective security, this willingness to pool resources against a common foe became the beginnings of American Nationalism. Commerce became the driving factor of foreign relations but was seen by many as merely a tool toward a greater objective of securing republican liberty. James Madison argued the theory of commerce as a means of security on the world stage in Federalist number 10. Thomas Jefferson also favored expansion of

---

<sup>19</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Books, 2006), 3.

<sup>20</sup> William Weeks, “American Nationalism, American Imperialism: An Interpretation of United States Political Economy, 1789-1861” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 14, no. 4, (Winter, 1994), 486.

trade as a counter to the corrupting nature of urban, industrial society. Jefferson believed “expansion of American trade would have a missionary impact on the rest of the world.” Of course the Deist Jefferson was not preaching to save souls to any particular religion—unless that religion was republicanism. Historians Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson remind us that “Jefferson did not envision the world becoming part of the United States but rather like the United States—that is to say, republican. Jefferson’s fear was that republicanism could not be safe anywhere until it existed everywhere.”<sup>21</sup> Jeffersonian thought proved particularly resilient and contributed heavily to the thoughts of William Jennings Bryan.

Many authors who discuss American civil religion mention holy secular observances, especially Memorial Day and funerals of national leaders. Conrad Cherry observes in *God’s New Israel* that such observances are a means of unifying people beyond the limits of their separate religious differences.<sup>22</sup> Both often present those honored as martyrs to the divine American responsibility as guardian and preserver of freedom. Often the words, while clearly addressing a notion of God and His divine power, lack specificity to any one faith or denomination. Robert Bellah points out that John Kennedy’s inaugural address began and ended with references to God and God’s relations with the American republic, but Kennedy did not specifically mention Jesus Christ or his Roman Catholic faith. The audience was wider than just Kennedy’s denomination and the unifying force of religious language was employed to meet the unifying need of the larger audience. While it is possible that such references to an Almighty God could be just an effort to secure votes from a religious populace, Bellah disagrees stating, “What people say on solemn occasions need not be taken at face value, but it is often indicative of deep-seated values

---

<sup>21</sup> Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 162.

<sup>22</sup> Conrad Cherry, *Gods New Israel: Religious interpretations of American Destiny* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3.

and commitments that are not made explicit in the course of everyday life.”<sup>23</sup> Many political leaders—and significantly, the people at large—agreed with president Kennedy who believed Americans should “go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.”<sup>24</sup> American Destiny was to carry out God’s will on earth.

The defining characteristics of the American Destiny mythology evolved over the course of time and adapted to pivotal events. Certain elements reflected in Kennedy’s speeches were evident in the earliest colonial experiences but differences are seen upon close analysis. This chapter provides an explanation of American Destiny’s mythological development as it applies to American expansionist thought.

#### Colonial Infancy: Nationalism in Colonial America

An essential part of a person’s mental health is a good sense of individual identity and purpose. Who am I? Why am I here? These are questions pondered at some point in a person’s development. Developmental psychologist Erik Erikson stressed the importance of identity in the social development of children. Erikson believed the fifth stage in his theory of psychosocial development, Identity vs. Confusion, determined whether or not an individual would have the ability to live by society’s standards and expectations. The same is true of nations. The colonists in the New World, brought with them from the Old World, a sense of God’s divine guidance and direction—a divine destiny. It is important to note that the idea of providential thinking was not an American invention but it did prove particularly durable and influential in the new world. Two versions of this belief shared a parallel, and often conflicting existence.

---

<sup>23</sup> Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus*, Winter 1967, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Cherry, 9.

The first version envisions the nation as a “city on a hill”, a guiding beacon that would redeem the world through its positive example and influence. Puritan John Winthrop’s 1630 sermon “A Model of Christian Charity,” given while still aboard the ship *Arbella*, warned the future Massachusetts Bay colonists that their new community would be a “city upon a hill”, watched by the world. Based upon the words of Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:14-16, Winthrop set before the settlers high standards of behavior and service to God to serve as an example for the rest of the world to see and emulate.<sup>25</sup>

Of course a prerequisite for emulation is worthiness. Many early colonists viewed the new settlements as an opportunity to achieve in the New World what they had not been able to at home. One such advocate was William Penn who viewed the undertaking as a “holy experiment” meant to be an “example to nations”. Likewise, the hand of God, observed Jesuit Father Andrew White, guided the settlement of Maryland, and the “first and most important design” of the colony was “sowing the seeds of religion and piety.” Once these seeds matured, they believed a wayward England would see the superiority of their methods and adopt them as their own.

The Jamestown colonists brought with them a tradition of preaching based on the English Church’s *Book of Common Prayer* with the influence of Puritanism that stressed a simple style of worship. Preachers most likely followed a sermon formula derived from *The Arte of Prophesying* by William Perkins. A leading English Puritan, Perkins laid out a plan to develop a sermon. It stressed reading the text directly from scripture, most likely from the Geneva Bible (1560). Key points of doctrine from this scripture were explained followed by an example of application that fit the situation or topic chosen. The manner of speech was simple and plain.

---

<sup>25</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.” Matthew 5: 14-16, NKJV.

Unfortunately, the settlement was a commercial failure and failed to inspire continued investment interest much less emulation. Other colonial attempts were more successful.<sup>26</sup>

On the fringe of Puritanism, the Separatists—so called because they would not declare allegiance to the Church of England—condemned the remnants of popery still seen in English Christianity. King James I needed to counter the extremes of the Separatists and find a way to shore up religious support for national unity and his divine rights to the throne. James turned to Lancelot Andrews. A gifted scholar, linguist and preacher, Andrews was known for a sermon style rich in play on language and wit. James tasked him and a group of scholars to rewrite the scriptures. In 1611 they finished the Authorized Version of the Old and New Testaments. Where the Geneva Bible had used the word *tyrant*, the King James Bible substituted *king* and *ruler*. There was also a five-fold increase in the use of the word nation to convey the concepts of tribe, peoples or groups. The two versions of scripture each found support from the two sides of the English Civil War.<sup>27</sup>

Puritan victory under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell meant the Geneva version would hold sway in England for another ten years. Ironically, it also meant the Authorized Version found its way to the new world, carried by escaping royalists or Cavaliers. Puritan victory in England ended the first “great migration” and started a second wave rich in “high church” Anglican culture and a stratified social order complete with a plantation system that stayed in place for generations.<sup>28</sup> On American soil the different English cultures managed to avoid

---

<sup>26</sup> Larry Witham. *A City On A Hill: How Sermons Changed the Course of American History* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 10-11.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 12-14.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 15.

settling their differences through violence. Instead they focused on a theological idea they held in common, the idea of covenant.

As espoused by John Winthrop, America as a City on a Hill was based on the Puritan belief that they had entered into a covenant with God to be the example to the world. John Cotton championed the theological aspects of the covenant idea. Preaching in the plain style of a devout Puritan, Cotton gave hundreds of sermons explaining the “tripartite Covenant”. The first and foundational concept was that of Calvinist doctrine of election. Only a select few were chosen by God to receive His grace. These few, obviously chosen to govern, formed the center from which two other covenants emanated. Because church membership was restricted to the elect, the institution gained great power and influence. This “church covenant” in-turn held sway over the “social covenant”. All members of society, whether elect or not, were obligated to follow the rules of God. If society sinned, punishment fell on all. For those members not among the elect such teaching brought grief and terror.

An alternative theology was offered by one of Cotton’s contemporaries Thomas Hooker. Though they traveled to America aboard the same ship and were both evading Anglican authorities, they differed significantly in the theology of election. While Cotton believed grace was given completely at God’s discretion, Hooker believed in “preparation.” The sinner’s heart could be prepared, made more contrite and humble. Then God could more effectively work in transforming a life. Such was the theme of his sermons. He always returned to the theme of “the soul’s preparation for Christ.” Hooker’s theology allowed a more open church membership mentality. Hearts being prepared for Christ required encouragement and mentorship. This inclusive attitude translated to Hooker’s political views as well.

In a 1638 election-day sermon, Hooker argued against small representative government by the elect. Instead he preached that, “the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God’s own allowance. The foundation of authority is laid in the free consent of the people.”<sup>29</sup> Support for Hooker’s views was made evident a few months later when the fledgling Connecticut Colony ratified the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, a document John Fiske called “the first written constitution known to history that created a government. It marked the beginnings of American democracy, of which Thomas Hooker deserves more than any other man to be called the father.”<sup>30</sup> Hooker’s public sermon was not the first time a preacher spoke out other than from behind a pulpit and it certainly was not the last.

Increasingly, preachers gave lectures and spoke at public events on weekdays. In addition to the seven thousand Sunday sermons a churchgoer listened to in a lifetime, they would stop work to attend orations on fast, humiliation and thanksgiving days. Public sermons were often printed and outnumbered almanacs, newspapers, and political pamphlets by four to one. New England was the most literate society in the world. The public sermon—soon to enter the arena of politics and war—shaped American public oratory.<sup>31</sup>

### Revolutionary Adolescence

The revolutionary period in American history spans 1774-1789. It is during this time that a unique American Nationalism was formed. A nation may be defined as a group of people held together by common ties such as race, language, religion, customs, traditions, and history. In the

---

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Hooker, Lecture delivered at the First Church, Hartford, Connecticut, on May 31, 1638, quoted in George Leon Walker, *Thomas Hooker: Preacher, Founder, Democrat* (New York: Dodd Mead Press, 1891), 125.

<sup>30</sup> John Fiske, *Beginnings of New England, or the Puritan Theocracy in its Relation to Civil and Religious Liberty* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, the Riverside Press, 1889), 127-28.

<sup>31</sup> Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3-6, 13-15.



case of American nationalism, religion again played a leading role. This period served as a weaning of sorts from British providential thought. Historian Edward Humphrey asserts that the Declaration of Independence did not, as president Abraham Lincoln said four score and seven years later, and as so commonly supposed, “bring forth on this Continent a new nation.” Its intended purpose, an apt reflection of the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, its author, was not creation but destruction.<sup>32</sup> Once the shackles of the British were cast off, a clean canvas was available to create whatever form of governing institution the colonists desired. Within this context the “city on a hill” ideology became what Clinton Rossiter termed “The American Mission.” Finally, an independent America became a model republic, “the finest expression of American nationalism:

It assumes that God, at the proper stage in the march of history, called forth certain hardy souls from the old and privilege-ridden nations; that He carried these precious few to a new world and presented them and their descendants with an environment ideally suited to the development of a free society; and that in bestowing His grace He also bestowed a peculiar responsibility for the success of popular institutions. Were the Americans to fail in their experiment in self-government, they would fail not only themselves, but all men wanting and deserving to be free.<sup>33</sup>

Nationalism in the United States differed from its European cousin in one important way. Separation of church and state profoundly affected the nature of both religion and nation. In the young United States the nation was above the state. The state, conceived as a tool of government to serve the sovereign populace, was subject to changes at the direction of the people as they deemed necessary. This model contrasts sharply with the Teutonic conception of the state as supreme ruling a subject people. Humphrey believes this unique conception of American nationalism is responsible for a national character that is independent of the state. Because the

---

<sup>32</sup> Edward Frank Humphrey, *Nationalism and Religion in America, 1774-1789* (Boston, MA: Chipman Law Publishing Company, 1924).

<sup>33</sup> Clinton Rossiter, “The American Mission,” *The American Scholar*, 20 (1950-51), 19-20.

state did not control the church or the religious practices of the people, “the pulpit was the most powerful single force in America for the creation and control of public opinion.”<sup>34</sup> The pulpit in this era should be understood in its broadest sense, politicians and statesmen held sway over the sentiments of the public as well as the clergy and used religious rhetoric as effectively as the clergy. As Humphrey notes, “Nobody in America approached George Washington in the early control of public opinion.” In his farewell address to the people of the United States, Washington warned of the danger that accompanies neglect of religion as a force of morality and effective government. Washington said: “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable support. For in vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness. . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion.”<sup>35</sup>

The role of religion on the formation of a unique form of American nationalism was perhaps the most critical of the pillars of this critical period. A national spirit was essential for the unity needed to sustain a revolutionary independence movement and to build a nation once the struggle was successfully concluded. Though other factors played important roles, commercial interests being one strong example, religion, and its almost universal control of public opinion, was the foundation upon which other interests were built. By the time of the American Revolution, patriots were arguing that God had given America a special role in history and that independence had been providentially determined. Patriots continued to argue that God had chosen the fledgling country to spearhead social and political reform across the world. Victory only strengthened this claim.

---

<sup>34</sup> Humphrey, 4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 5.

The idea of a new promised land in America that began in the colonial period gained credence as independence gained acceptance among the colonists. They began to see a new errand in the wilderness. The old colonial destiny became a new national destiny. The Protestant clergy were pivotal to this transformation.

Support for the Revolution was far from guaranteed. Public opinion grew as a result of intense rhetoric from behind the pulpit. As Conrad Cherry states, “More colonists were prepared for armed resistance by the clergy’s Sunday election sermons and weekly lectures than by the books and pamphlets of a Locke or a Paine.”<sup>36</sup> Particularly powerful was the Puritan idea that stressed loyalty to God rather than king and the resulting idea that governments were instruments of man that were subject to adjustment or replacement as necessary.

The Puritan style of preaching with its emphasis on piety gave way to the “Jeremiad” form that became the chosen conveyance of messages from the pulpit. America, in addition to striving to become a shining example of purity to the world, was forced to explain the lack of divine blessing and influence on their chosen nation. The basic formula of the Jeremiad consisted of a stern reminder of the piety of the Puritan colonists followed by detailed enumeration of current sins and their consequences that endangered the divine mission God had given them. If any encouragement could be derived from this gloomy formula, it was that defeats and disappointments were not seen as signs of divine desertion but as loving correction by God to his chosen people. For two generations the role of religion in American lives underwent a radical metamorphosis. The implications for political considerations were world changing.

---

<sup>36</sup> Cherry, 61.

The Constitutional Convention was full of rhetoric of a religious nature in support of the idea of a mixed form of government that resembled a Presbyterian or Calvinist form. John Witherspoon, Presbyterian clergyman, previous signer of the Declaration of Independence and delegate to the convention representing New Jersey, deftly connected the fallen nature of man with the appropriate form of government.

Pure democracy cannot subsist long, nor be carried far into the departments of state—it is very subject to caprice and the madness of popular rage. . . . Hence it appears, that every good form of government must be complex, so that the one principle may check the other. It is of consequence to have as much virtue among the particular member of a community as possible; but it is folly to expect that a state should be up-balanced, that when every one draws to his own interest or inclination, there may be an overpoise upon the whole.<sup>37</sup>

While the Founders put in place the framework of the constitution, the Jeremiad continued as the rhetorical device of choice from the pulpit. While victory was celebrated and God praised, sermons reminded the young nation that God had granted victory despite their unworthiness. Victory came because the cause was just not because the victors were superior. The jeremiad continued to influenced national identity through the periods of expansion and the informed the identities of both sides during the tortuous Civil War. After 1776, a new nation inherited the idea of divine destiny along with a new sense of national patriotism. While religion played a central role in the culture of the time, many of the founders were not particularly religious. As historian Andrew Preston indicates, the key founders—Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, John Adams and George Washington—were not devout Christians. Washington was the most religious of them, and even he “almost never spoke of Christ, had little interest in even the most rudimentary aspects of theology, and rarely attended

---

<sup>37</sup> John Witherspoon, “Lectures on Moral Philosophy”, quoted in Cherry, 64.

church.”<sup>38</sup> These men were far from antagonistic of religion however and understood the importance of religion and its role in support of equality and liberty. They freely quoted scripture and used Biblical ideas to support their political goals. Preston claims that the secret to their success was “their recognition that faith and modernity were two sides to the same American coin, complimentary rather than contradictory.” To these men religious and political liberty were synonymous terms.<sup>39</sup> But most importantly, they understood that neither could exist fully if under the control of the other.

The American Revolution solidified the idea of America as a new promised land. God’s chosen people had a national destiny, which He ordained, and directed. However, His role in the nation did not include any sanction from the new government or an official function from within it. The dis-establishment of church and state was one of the few things the founders agreed upon. Religious liberty, if it were to flourish, had to be available to all faiths. Catholics, Jews and Anglicans “had a rightful place in the new nation, so long as they did not coerce others into practicing their religion.”<sup>40</sup> Lack of state control over religion allowed it to flourish and spread—in its multitude of forms—as rapidly as the country itself. As the nation grew, however, the chosen people motif that formed the catalyst of American civil religion, transformed into a chosen nation theme that influenced society and leaders in a different direction.

#### Continental Expansion: Manifest Destiny Fulfilled

Of all the events in American expansion, none looms larger than the Louisiana Purchase. Its acquisition doubled the size of the United States through peaceful means. Despite the non-

---

<sup>38</sup> Preston, 88.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 97.

hostile nature of the purchase, support for the effort was anything but universal. Supporters most often espoused economic or security reasons, while objections usually centered on the impact on American industry or moral reasons.

When Thomas Jefferson authorized the fifteen million dollar deal he did so primarily out of security concerns. Initially Jefferson's goal was merely to secure the port of New Orleans for American use, but Napoleon surprisingly offered the entire territory for a mere \$15 million or 3 cents an acre. The ensuing debate over the acquisition was anything but universal. Those in favor often cited economic factors. Commercial interests were at least as important as the security interests. Yet beneath these practical arguments lay a deeper, religion based attitude in support of expansion. Jefferson believed the new republic would serve as "the world's best hope. A just and solid republican government maintained here will be a standing monument and example for the aim and imitation of the people of other countries."<sup>41</sup> The nation itself, not its citizens, were now the model held up for praise and emulation. As Cherry points out, the massive natural resources found in the newly acquired lands and the subsequent mastery of it proved that God had chosen a nation because of its special character. Or as H. Richard Niebuhr explained, "The old idea of American Christians as a chosen people who had been called to a special task was turned into the notion of a chosen nation especially favored. . . .As the nineteenth century went on, the note of divine favoritism was increasingly sounded."<sup>42</sup> A new sense of pride in country took root and grew with each new acquisition or conquest.

The addition of the Louisiana territories, while impressive in sheer size, did not wholly meet the desires of President Jefferson. He and other economic minded-expansionists viewed the

---

<sup>41</sup> Cherry, 65.

<sup>42</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1959), 179. Quoted in Cherry, 113.

Spanish held Floridas as a potential threat to the shipping and trading hub in New Orleans. Spain had long been seen as a weak and ineffective overseer of East and West Florida. At first glance, their acquisition seemed like an easy task, and hopes were high that they could be gained just as bloodlessly as Louisiana. The advantages were obvious to most but some could not justify the claim constitutionally and viewed acquisition attempts as immoral. Far from being manifestly destined, the Floridas were hotly debated in newspapers and from the pulpit.

Proponents simultaneously painted the Spanish as inept and the U.S. as a solicited protector. As early as 1785, the *New Bedford Marine Journal* printed excerpts from a letter claiming first hand evidence of negative conditions under Spanish rule. The author, a “Gentlemen in the State of Georgia,” stated that “the inhabitants of East Florida in general, and a large majority of those of West Florida, are disposed to revolt,” and were eager for any American forces made available to the area. Equally powerful statements regarding the Spanish troops echoed the inhabitant’s discontent. Their condition was said to be “starving” with desertions occurring regularly.

### The Civil War and Reconstruction

Another ideological milestone of American chosen nation mythology and development of American civil religion occurred during the Civil War. The sectional divisions within the borders of the United States were in some ways destroyed by the refining fire of the Civil War, yet in other ways new divisions were constructed. The war added the notion of supreme sacrifice to the chosen nation ideology. The massive casualties generated by the struggle were seen as a massive sacrifice on a national altar. Historian Harry Stout notes that, “The Civil War taught Americans that they really were a Union, and it absolutely required a baptism of blood to unveil

transcendent dimensions of that union”.<sup>43</sup> The sermons of the day spoke increasingly of casualties as “martyrs”, yet they were not said to die for their Christian faith but for their country. While both sides of the conflict used the same rhetoric, in fact they supported separate national ideologies.

In the case of the defeated South, chosen nation and martyrdom rhetoric evolved into “Lost Cause” mythology. Reconciling traditional white southern society with a defeated Confederate States through a long literary and intellectual movement took the remainder of the nineteenth century to accomplish and meant the re-subjugation of an entire race. What Stout calls the moral failure of the war and historian David Blight marks as the central “tragedy” of the Civil War was that the civil religion would not include those whom so many died to free. The lost cause myth contributed to the belief of American superiority that pervaded the rhetoric of the late nineteenth-century. David Blight explains that,

From Lost Cause voices a reunited America arose pure, guiltless, and assured that the deep conflicts in its past had been imposed upon it by otherworldly forces. The side that lost was especially assured that its cause was true and good. One of the ideas the reconciliationist lost Cause instilled deeply into the national culture is that even when Americans lose, they win. Such was the message, the indomitable spirit, that Margaret Mitchell infused into her character Scarlett O’Hara in *Gone With the Wind* (1936), and such, perhaps, is the basis of the enduring legend of Robert E. Lee—through noble character, he won by losing.<sup>44</sup>

For the victors, the war was also not fought in vain. It obviously settled the issue of slavery, but it also settled the issue of secession. As one united country, “America was uniquely situated to assume a sacred identity as a chosen nation;” having completed its “crimson baptism

---

<sup>43</sup> Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York: Penguin Books 2007), xxi.

<sup>44</sup> David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 283-284.



of nationalism,” the form of civil religion in America was complete.<sup>45</sup> North and South both adopted a new “moral calculus” as a result of the war that proved horrific to indigenous people during the expansion to the west. Concepts of total war developed by President Lincoln and his generals proved very effective against Native Americans as well. As we shall see in the next chapter, racism was not eliminated with the abolition of slavery. Racism, when combined with a new-found Manifest Destiny, produced some of the darkest episodes in American history. Religious rhetoric again was used to shore up these two pillars of expansionist ideology.

---

<sup>45</sup> Stout, *Upon the Altar*, 459.

## Chapter 2

### The Driving Force: Racial Considerations

Published in the February 1899 issue of *McClure's Magazine*, English author Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden," coincided with the beginning stages of U.S. imperialism. The Philippine-American War had just begun. The Treaty of Paris, ratified by the Senate, placed Puerto Rico, Guam, Cuba and the Philippines under American control. English Imperialists saw the poem as a good synopsis of the expansionist point of view. The first stanza alludes to important aspects of the racial argument:

Take up the White Man's burden, Send forth the best ye breed  
Go bind your sons to exile To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness, On fluttered folk and wild--  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples, Half Devil and half-child.<sup>46</sup>

Implicit in this stanza are two distinct assumptions. First, is the obligation of the 'white man' to 'serve the needs' of a newly captive people. Second, these people are a lesser race, 'Half Devil and half-child.' By the end of the Spanish-American War, according to Historian Thomas R. Gossett, "the idea of race superiority had deeply penetrated nearly every field of American thought and life."<sup>47</sup> However the idea of racial superiority predates both Charles Darwin and Kipling. An understanding of white supremacist thought and its origins sheds light on both the motives of imperialists and anti-imperialist beliefs. Racial superiority in American thought is supported by two pillars: religious "chosen people" theology and Anglo-Saxonism, supported by Darwinian pseudo-science. Chapter 1 dealt with the former. This chapter outlines the latter.

---

<sup>46</sup> Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands," *McClure's Magazine*, February, 1899.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: the History of an Idea in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 311.

Thoughts on race and expansion have been connected even before the founding of the United States. However the Spanish-American War (April-August 1898) marks a shift in thinking toward expansion. For much of U.S. history the presence of people of different color and culture mattered little in terms of policy making. Continental expansion from the Louisiana Purchase, to the Mexican War and the closing of the frontier in 1890 was pursued with vigor. That is not to say there was not opposition, and the differences of opinion warrant analysis to serve as a basis of comparison during the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars.

Racism was not a new phenomenon in the years surrounding the Spanish-American War. Both sides of the imperial argument provide ample evidence that racism was commonplace in late nineteenth-century society. Interestingly, both sides vigorously used remarkably similar rhetoric and drew on the same source material to support diametrically opposed positions. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, opposing advocates agreed that non-white, non-English speaking, non-Protestant, non-Americans were innately inferior people. This chapter explores the origins and development of these racial ideas in American thought and their impact on imperial policy.

Efforts to understand different races have interested scientists, theologians and politicians for centuries. Explanations and theories were transported to the Americas by English settlers and have been part of the American experiment ever since. The concepts of Anglo-Saxonism and white supremacy, grew and strengthened as the expansion efforts of the early and mid-1800s forced contact with people of different color. The “red” Native-Americans, “brown” Mexicans, and “black” slaves and freedmen all were the subject of intense interest, sometimes with compassion, but mostly with contempt and hatred. Because contact with people of different color

elicited varied responses, the effects on national and international policy were the subject of great debate.

In 1684, Francois Bernier, a French doctor, divided humanity into four distinct categories. He made no distinctions in terms of quality and made no attempt to rank order his findings. The Swedish scientist Carl Linnaeus finished that milestone task. In doing so he found Africans to be “childlike and lazy,” Asians “greedy and lacking powers of concentration,” Native-Americans possessed “hair-trigger tempers and could be incredibly stubborn” but Europeans were “civilized, gentle, terribly inventive and curious; they were governed not by emotion but by laws.”<sup>48</sup> Linnaeus’s theories were supported and expanded by other scientists such as Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. A French scientist and naturalist, he published the massive thirty-six volume *Histoire Naturelle* (1749-1788). He believed differences in races could be attributed to environmental differences. Therefore “degenerate” races could be improved by transplanting them to more favorable climates. The reverse inference is that certain climates would result in the degradation of the superior, European race. By the 1700s, theories for racial differences were widely accepted. Yet to this point few were willing to pursue theories that were not theologically supported. If there were, indeed, different races, then God must have deemed it so. If all men descended from one man—monogenesis—then the differences must be God ordained. The Tower of Babel theory explained that God dispersed people to different regions as punishment for their sins. Less hospitable climates were the homes of those guilty of greater sins. Racial differences became a convenient justification for “somewhat less than Christian attitudes and actions” when European explorers became European conquerors

---

<sup>48</sup> Michael Krenn, *The Color of Empire: Race and American Foreign Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006) 5.

beginning in the 1500s through the 1700s.<sup>49</sup> Just as inferior races were explained through science and theory, the ascendancy of the supposedly superior race required explanation.

The Angles and Saxons were Germanic tribes that invaded what is now England in the fifth century after Roman rule there collapsed. They dominated the island until the Norman conquest of 1066. This presence of Anglo-Saxons on the island was a blessing that resulted in the creation of the English nation and includes notable achievements such as the establishment of regional government of shires and hundreds, the re-establishment of Christianity, a surge in literature and language and the establishment of charters and law. University of Manchester Professor of History, Nicholas Higham and Lecturer Martin Ryan in *The Anglo-Saxon World* note that much credit was given to the Germanic tribes for the establishment of Parliament, Common Law, trial by jury and they are described as particularly committed to liberty and popular representation.<sup>50</sup> From a perspective of religion, Michael Krenn notes the 1500s as the beginning of the modern conception of Anglo-Saxon superiority. He believes that when Henry VIII broke with the Church of Rome (1534) and established the Church of England, his supporters billed it as a return to the pure English church of the Anglo-Saxon period that saved England from the “polluted and oppressive” Roman Catholic Church. Ironically, the same argument was leveled against the English government during the 1642-1651 English Civil War. The philosopher Thomas Hobbs argued that the Norman invasions had destroyed Anglo-Saxon government. He later outlined a form of government, influenced by the Anglo-Saxon ideal, in his 1651 *Leviathan*, which established the social contract theory and subsequently influenced later

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Nicholas J. Higham, and Martin J. Ryan. *The Anglo-Saxon World*. (London: Yale University Press, 2013), 7. Many of these notions were later disproved, though not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Higham and Ryan, 16. Shire and hundreds are divisions of geographic areas for administrative purposes, with a shire being the higher of the two.

Western political philosophy.<sup>51</sup> Individuals who were most influenced lived in the English colonies in North America, where the Anglo-Saxon ideal flourished.

### Racist Thought: Colonial and Early American

Even before the founding of the United States, there was a conviction that great nations should be racially and culturally homogeneous. Benjamin Franklin's "Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind and the Peopling of Countries" is often cited as the representative expression of the pre-revolutionary colonial British opinion. Writing in 1751, Franklin notes with some chagrin that "the number of purely white people in the world is proportionately small." Noting that Saxons and the English "make the principle Body of White People on the Face of the Earth," Franklin reveals a desire to maintain a homogeneous society "so making this side of our Globe reflect a brighter Light . . . in the Sight of Superior Beings." Finally he rhetorically asks, "Why should we darken its people? Why increase the sons of Africa, by Planting them in America, where we have so fair an Opportunity, by excluding all Blacks and Tawneys, of increasing the lovely White and Red?"<sup>52</sup>

Perhaps the most enthusiastic supporter of Anglo-Saxonism in the North American Colonies was Thomas Jefferson. The future president viewed the eighth century Anglo-Saxon system of law and governance as "the wisest and most perfect ever yet devised by the wit of man" and considered it a perfect example for emulation and precedent for the American experiment. As testament to Jefferson's high regard of the example, Higham and Ryan also note that Jefferson's suggested design for the Great Seal of the United States depicted Moses and the Israelites following the pillar of flame on one side and a depiction of legendary Anglo-Saxon

---

<sup>51</sup> Krenn, 8.

<sup>52</sup> The full text of Franklin's pamphlet is available from multiple sources but is often quoted out of context of the larger subject of population control. The entire document as first printed is available in Krenn, Appendix 1: 109-110. Upper case wording is in the source document.

leaders Hengest and Horsa on the other.<sup>53</sup> Gradually, both in Britain and America, the emphasis on Anglo-Saxon governance and law gave way to racial superiority. Professor Krenn argues that the Colonists and early Americans, more than the British, were forced to put racial theories to the test. Face to face contact with Native Americans, let alone imported black slaves, “hardened racial views in ways that no scholarly treatise could possibly achieve.” He notes that even an enlightened Benjamin Franklin concluded that Native Americans were “barbarous tribes of savages that delight in war and take pride in murder.”<sup>54</sup> Popular opinion of blacks was even lower.

Being of the darkest color, blacks were considered the antithesis of the Anglo-Saxon whites. Black was traditionally the color of evil and terror. The thought of including blacks in the equality espoused in the Declaration of Independence, while apparent to a few Americans, was never seriously considered. At the time of its writing, this attitude was held by many notables including its primary author, Thomas Jefferson. Intellectually, Jefferson did not approve of slavery, but as a slave owner he did not believe blacks were equal to whites. Historian Thomas Gossett explores Jefferson’s complicated stand on slavery and racial equality in *Race: The History of an Idea in America*. Jefferson detailed his reasoning for the inferiority of blacks in his 1786 *Notes on Virginia*. He argues that the Negro is ugly, lacking those “fine mixtures of red and white,” that allow “expression of every passion.” Additionally, he notes that Negroes have a “strong and disagreeable odor.” But Jefferson reserves his harshest criticism to areas of creativity and intellect, claiming they were incapable of poetry and complicated music. Jefferson modified his position slightly twenty years later, but not enough to feel compelled to free his own slaves.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Higham and Ryan, 14.

<sup>54</sup> Krenn, 9, 11.

<sup>55</sup> Gossett, 42-43, 52.

While Jefferson's mind may have been open to other thoughts on the matter of racial equality, many anthropologists went to great lengths to "prove" scientifically the inferiority of blacks.

A strong support for compassion toward non-whites stemmed from the idea of monogenesis, the view that all humans descended from one man created by God. Dr. Samuel George Morton did much to remove that support in the 1830s and 1840s. Morton gathered a collection of nearly 1,000 human skulls and began investigating them. Based on the assumption that cranial volume determined intelligence, he measured the skulls using buckshot as a filling agent and determined that indeed Anglo-Saxons were superior. Morton published his findings in his *Crania Americana* (1839) and *Crania Egyptica* (1844). Morton's chief claim, which differentiated him from previous anthropologists, was that differences in race were not environmentally caused but were evidence of multiple creations—polygenesis. Not only were non-whites a different race but a different species. In the minds of many, this was license to remove by any means, no matter how brutal, people of color that possessed desired lands. It was a convenient rationalization to justify their expansionist greed. A survey of American continental expansion illustrates the point.

#### Racism in Practice: Continental Expansion

##### *The Floridas and the Louisiana Purchase*

Opponents of the acquisition of West Florida found support from Representative John Randolph. Though his larger argument was in regard to what he viewed as the ill-advised Louisiana Purchase, Randolph viewed the debate over West Florida in a particularly racial light. His broader argument analyzed the geographic limits to democratic institutions. He feared that "we have already far exceeded the limit which visionary speculatists have supposed capable of free government . . . instead of acquiring we ought to divest ourselves of territory." He offered



Greece and Switzerland as better examples of government due to their limited size. He argued that a smaller republic allowed for a better-informed citizenry, making compromise much more obtainable. A larger expanse of land dispersed the citizenry and inhibited development of common ground and compromise. Instead, he suggested a more suitable use of newly acquired lands as a refuge for “that brave and injured race of men,” Native Americans. Randolph’s sentiments were largely representative of many Americans’ attitudes toward Indians. Coexistence was unthinkable, but annihilation was morally untenable. Relocation to the swamps of Florida offered an appealing political solution.<sup>56</sup> This racial perspective from anti-expansionists would change little in subsequent efforts. However, reservations about annihilation diminished in later efforts.

#### *Texas and the Mexican War*

General Sam Houston, just weeks before the battle of the Alamo, gave a rousing speech to his fellow Texans that reflects the racial beliefs and rhetoric of 1830’s Texas. Urging his men to never give up, he intoned,

...let us then, comrades, sever that link that binds us to that rusty chain of the Mexican Confederation; let us break off the live slab from the dying cactus that it may not dry up with the remainder; let us plant it anew that it may spring luxuriantly out of the fruitful savannah. Nor will the vigor of the descendants of the sturdy north ever mix with the phlegm of the indolent Mexicans, no matter how long we may live among them. Two different tribes on the same hunting ground will never get along together. The tomahawk will ever fly and the scalping knife will never rest until the last of either one tribe or the other is either destroyed or is a slave. And I ask, comrades, will we ever bend our necks as slaves, ever quietly watch the destruction of our property and the annihilation of our guaranteed rights? NO!! Never! Too well I know my people. The last drop of our blood would flow before we would bow under the yoke of these half-Indians.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> *Farmer’s Repository*, February 8, 1811.

<sup>57</sup> Krenn, 116.

Sentiments had not changed by the start of the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). This war is important for many reasons. For the first time the United States fought against another republic and over the objections of many Americans. The war also gave birth to the first national anti-war movement in the United States and introduced a freshman congressman named Abraham Lincoln to the national stage.

National honor was also at stake. Even those who did not believe President James Polk's claims that the Mexicans started the war did support the war to preserve the national image. The *Sangamo Journal*, an anti-war newspaper, warned that "the eyes of European nations will be upon us. . . .If we dictate terms to Mexico within her own dominions;—we shall be respected;—if not every petty power in the world will spit upon us." Mexico's qualification as a petty nation was not questioned, clearly they were thought of as a racially inferior people. The democratic *Illinois State Register* provides the representative sentiment that Mexicans were "but little removed above the negro" or as E. H. Merriman, who refused the call to service in the war, put it, there would be "nothing to whip but a parcel of blackened half-breeds armed with bows and arrows."<sup>58</sup>

Prosecution of the war was particularly barbarous. The Battle of Monterrey, early in the war, set the tone and made headlines for the cruelty involved. The *Charleston Mercury*, covering the atrocities at Monterrey described it as anything but an isolated incident, reporting, "As at Matamoros, murder, robbery, and rape were committed in the broad light of day, and as if desirous to signalize themselves at Monterrey by some new act of atrocity, they burned many of the thatched huts of the poor peasants." The story concludes grimly, "It is thought that one

---

<sup>58</sup> "Let it Be Well Done," *Sangamo Journal*, Jun. 4, 1846; *Illinois State Register*, Dec. 27, 1844; E. H. Merryman to John Hardin, Springfield, May 22, 1846, quoted in Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2012), 115.

hundred of the inhabitants were murdered in cold blood, and one was shot dead at noon-day in the main street of the city.”<sup>59</sup>

Newspapers figured large in the images of the war. Artist Richard Caton Woodville’s most popular and famous painting titled “War News from Mexico” celebrates the development and impact of mass media while subtly bringing attention to those on the margins of society. The scene depicts eleven figures gathered to hear the latest reading from the penny press on the situation in Mexico. There was intense interest in the war and the newspaper played a large role in spreading news from the conflict. The Mexican-American War was the first to use embedded journalists who provided daily glimpses into the intimate experiences of the combatants. Many individuals on the home front followed the war with intense interest and opinion. None followed it more closely than the slaves (two of whom are depicted in Woodville’s painting intently listening) and slave owners in the South, who understood the implications of the war’s outcome on westward expansion and the “peculiar institution.”<sup>60</sup>

### *The Civil War*

In the 1850s, difficulties over the slave question were moving to a critical boiling point in the United States. However, these differences did not mean that northern and southern states were diametrically opposed concerning their views on blacks and the superior position of whites in America. While it is true that northern states gradually freed their slaves, they did not all grant them political, legal and social rights. The U.S. Supreme Court in *Dred Scott v. John A. F. Sanford* (1857) weighed in against rights for free blacks. Chief Justice Roger Taney declared that

---

<sup>59</sup>Greenberg, 132.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 125.

blacks were in no way citizens of the United States.<sup>61</sup> Both northern and southern whites still believed in America as an example to the world. The U.S. was still a chosen nation, blessed by God and ordained to be a beacon to the world. Americans simply disagreed as to which model of “whiteness,” northern or southern, was the correct model. From 1861 to 1865 both sides vied for supremacy to settle the matter and tore the nation, and each other apart. By war’s end, the “White Republic” was completely destroyed. Northern whites were coming to terms with a rising black political force with many acknowledging the heroic contributions of blacks during the war. Pressure for full rights for blacks was at an all time high. Southern whites on the other hand were out of the nation, totally defeated and reviled by the North. Cries for retribution against the South and punishment for their sins were commonplace. The chance for true racial justice and reform had never been greater.

### *Reconstruction Era*

The Reconstruction period in post Civil-War America was a golden opportunity for lasting racial justice and reform. Unfortunately, the dream of equality that many fought and died to achieve, would go unrealized, and a retrenchment of white dominance became reality. How such an open door to change became inaccessible deserves analysis.

### *President Abraham Lincoln’s Assassination*

Professor Edward J. Blum asserts that immediately after the close of the American Civil War, Northern desire for racial equality and integration was at its zenith. The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, while devastating to many—especially freed blacks—also gave him martyr status. There was a small group of clergy and lay leaders who portrayed Lincoln as a “forgiving martyr.” They thought the South should be forgiven for their sins and reconciled to

---

<sup>61</sup> Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 4.

the Union in full brotherhood. Others, less willing to forget the grievances of the South, demanded harsh punishment. The confused and grieving citizenry turned to their spiritual counselors for answers. Northern abolitionists called for retribution on an unrepentant South. Southern blacks wondered who would shepherd them to equality in a legal sense, observing that confusion and indecision reigned in the White House and Congress.

The prominent black orator Fredrick Douglass did not understand the death of Lincoln but he concluded that God had allowed the traumatic events to occur to remind the North that it would be unwise to forgive Confederates too quickly. Forgiveness could only be offered if given to a repentant South. Douglass preached, “Let us not be in a hurry to clasp to our bosom that spirit which gave birth to [John Wilkes] Booth.”<sup>62</sup> He believed the North had achieved solidarity in its desire to enforce racial equality. As many sought answers from the pulpit, the desire to incorporate blacks equally into society waned, and the desire to reunite whites from the North and the South supplanted early efforts to grant equality. Like Douglass, many northern ministers supported a policy of equality and preached vigorously to bring it to pass. The “white republic” suffered grave damage during the Civil War and with the death of Lincoln. Many white northerners and blacks in the South sought to capitalize on the opportunities such a fracture presented.

#### *Dreams of racial equality and radical reconstruction*

By 1889, Northerners had contributed more than twenty million dollars to the cause of reconstructing the South. In addition, they contributed thousands of books, articles of clothing and materials. More importantly, missionaries by the thousands converged on the South, ready to

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 22.

provide the education necessary to ensure equality for the freed blacks. They lived with blacks and did all they could to bring all needed aid. Northern novelist Albion Tourgee viewed the efforts and surmised that “there has been no grander thing in our history than when the civilization of the North, in their very hour of victory, threw aside the cartridge-box, and appealed at once to the contribution-box to heal the ravages of war.” He believed, “It was the noblest spectacle that Christian civilization has ever witnessed.”<sup>63</sup> While many contributions and efforts were of pure humanitarian intent, many who visited the south, especially those who did not stay for an extended time, increasingly found their image of the South transformed.

Revealing a chauvinism of which, they themselves perhaps were not aware, many Northerners who ventured south viewed freed blacks as lazy and unfit for U. S. citizenship. Jacob Yoder, a teacher in a Freedman’s Bureau school, noted that the freed people “must learn a great many things before they are what this country wants them to be. They are not reliable enough. They lack independence and energy.”<sup>64</sup> However, those who spent extended time in the South—particularly in integrated church services—did not hold such views. A missionary in Mississippi concluded that “perhaps God was as well pleased with that lowly group in the humble cabin, as with many a gilded throng in splendid cathedrals.”<sup>65</sup> While God may have been pleased, many whites were not.

The idea of culturally integrating white and black peoples produced fear and disgust among southern whites. This feeling was shared among many northern whites as well. Reactions in the South toward missionaries varied. They ranged from simple avoidance and shunning to

---

<sup>63</sup> Albion Tourgee, *Bricks Without Straw* (1880; reprint, Ridgewood, N.J.: Gregg Press, 1967), 133. Cited in: Blum, 50.

<sup>64</sup> Blum, 61.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

overt terrorism by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Terrified white missionaries and even more terrified blacks realized that equality would only come at a high price. When reports of violence reached the North, sectional division only intensified. Sarah Chase, a missionary in 1866 noted, “I can more easily conceive of the Lions and the Lamb lying down together than of a union of the North and the South.”<sup>66</sup> Yet, Chase’s vision proved short sighted. There were those in the North who believed in reunification of whites in the South with the Union. Astonishingly, as professor Blum has demonstrated, it was largely Protestant leadership in the North that led the efforts to reduce sectional division and reforge a white republic.

#### *Equality Subordinated to Racial Reunion*

On the political front, president Andrew Johnson pressed hard for national unity. But some of the strongest appeals came from Henry Ward Beecher. The son of evangelist Lyman Beecher and brother of Harriett Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, was the most popular preacher in the North. Beecher used his Brooklyn pulpit with great effect to promote national healing and unification. Conversely, he did not advocate for civil equality for freed-people. Because of the nature of his message, he was also popular in the South. Many black civil rights activists such as Fredrick Douglass, could not understand the views of the former abolitionist Beecher. Like her brother, Harriet Beecher also changed her opinions and began advocating for reconciliation with the South and ceased advocating for equality. After living in Florida for some time, she described one man as “black as night itself; . . . he might have been taken for a big baboon,—the missing link of Darwin.”<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 103.

While the children of Lyman Beecher were among the most known individuals on the side of unification, there were other movements that were not specific to personal opinion. Both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches witnessed strong movements to reunite with their southern contingents, which had split prior to the war. In 1870, Methodist Bishop Edmund Janes stated, “I do believe the prayer of Christ will be heard, and that the time will come when His people will be one. Anything to hasten that end should be done.”<sup>68</sup> Politicians likewise used Biblical rhetoric to advance the cause of unification. Horace Greely, famous abolitionist and editor of the New York Tribune, challenged Ulysses Grant for the presidency in 1872. During the campaign he was billed as the “Christian candidate” and used David and Goliath comparisons with the incumbent and used the Biblical notion of “beating swords into plowshares” to preach forgiveness and an end to sectional division. Yet in Blum’s assessment, the greatest advocate for unity and forgiveness toward the South was an evangelist named Dwight Lyman Moody.

Moody believed his message and calling was above the politics involved in fighting for racial equality and sectional unification. His quest to unify people was on a spiritual level in a spirit of Christian forgiveness. Unfortunately, his messages had profound effects in the political and temporal realms of the 1870s and 1880s. After some objections to an integrated congregation at one of his meetings in the South, Moody allowed barricades to separate blacks from whites in the audience. They remained a fixture of his meetings into the mid 1890’s when he notably insisted they come down. By then, however, his popularity had waned and the damage had been done. Blum notes that his powerful revivals were critical in the unification of whites in the north and the South and also provided religious justification for the abandonment of radical

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 104.



reconstruction.<sup>69</sup> His sympathetic stance at revivals in the South and his willingness to pray for fallen Confederates also contributed to the Lost Cause Myth. The myth portrayed the Southern cause during the Civil War as noble, and the Confederacy's leaders as chivalrous. It allowed Southerners to accept re-admittance into the Union without repenting for the sins of slavery. In 1878, disastrous events assisted the final reforging of the white republic.

In that year, a yellow fever outbreak devastated the South, and medical facilities and aid societies were quickly overwhelmed and depleted. The South had no choice but to ask for help from the North. The response was overwhelmingly positive—at least for southern whites. Unlike the initial efforts to aid the South following the war, aid and workers were primarily for whites only. Blacks, seeing that aid from white northerners was out of reach, naturally turned to blacks in the North, thus reinforcing the divide between black and white in the post-Civil-War nation.

### *Social Darwinism*

White supremacist beliefs gained intellectual support from the works of Charles Darwin. The principles of natural selection and “the survival of the fittest,” detailed in Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859) and expanded in his *The Descent of Man* (1871), were easily adapted to societies and influenced many thinkers in the late nineteenth century. His ideas, and those of others, were adapted into what is today called Social Darwinism. Social Darwinism served as a logical explanation of the amazing material advancement of the United States as a product of the unique mentality and vitality of white Americans and as the inevitable result of competition among the world’s races.

Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher, biologist and sociologist, had published ideas on evolution before Darwin but eventually came to agree with Darwin’s explanation of natural

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 123.

selection and eventually coined the phrase “survival of the fittest.” Spencer’s major influence however, was his application of evolutionary theory to human society. Societal evolution, Spencer believed, could only occur if governments did not interfere. He opposed government aid to the poor and thought the poor should be eliminated, stating, “The whole effort of nature is to get rid of such, to clear the world of them, and make room for better.” Spencer believed “survival of the fittest” applied to the mental as well as the physical realm.<sup>70</sup>

Yale professor William Graham Sumner, who held the first professorship of sociology, was perhaps the strongest advocate for Social Darwinism. As historian Richard Hofstadter explains, Sumner combined the Puritan/Protestant work ethic, classical Malthusian economics and evolutionary thinking into a powerful, concise sociology.<sup>71</sup> Sumner believed the progress of civilization depended on the process of natural selection just as in the Darwinian model. That meant unrestricted competition without interference from governments. Hofstadter relays an exchange between professor Sumner and a student that brilliantly highlights this principle.

“Professor, don’t you believe in any government aid to industries?”

“No! it’s root, hog or die.”

“Yes, but hasn’t the hog got a right to root?”

“There are no rights. The world owes nobody a living.”

“You believe then, Professor, in only one system, the contract-competitive system?”

“That’s the only sound economic system. All others are fallacies.”

“Well, suppose some professor of political economy came along and took your job away from you. Wouldn’t you be sore?”

“Any other professor is welcome to try. If he gets my job, it is my fault. My business is to teach the subject so well that no one can take the job away from me.”<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Richard Hofstadter. *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), 41.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

Sumner did not believe in a natural right to equality or liberty. He believed the pursuit of happiness was merely a euphemism for the struggle for survival. Yet he did have praise for Jeffersonian democracy because of its emphasis on limited government. His Darwinism was passive in nature and did not include the use of force in overcoming inferior people. Sumner joined another admirer of Thomas Jefferson—presidential hopeful William Jennings Bryan—in the anti-imperialist camp in the late 1890's.

Another contributor to the aggregate imperial thinking of the latter nineteenth century was John Fiske. A gifted philosopher, historian and lawyer, Fiske masterfully lectured and authored volumes on evolution, Anglo-Saxonism and religion. Fiske did not believe that science and religion were incompatible. In his popular lectures on American political ideas, he espoused a belief that the superior Anglo-Saxon, through superior fertility of the English-speaking race would dominate and overpower weaker races and eventually make up four-fifths of the world population. He considered this “natural” overtaking of other races the ultimate, eventual proof that man had finally passed out of barbarism into true Christianity.<sup>73</sup>

The notion of racial superiority did not rely on Darwin for its existence. Anglo-Saxon and white superiority existed long before Darwin's voyage on the HMS *Beagle*. Yet, the support of Darwin provided a scientific legitimacy that fueled an overwhelming irrefutability to the arguments espoused by Spencer, Sumner, Fisk and eventually William McKinley, William Jennings Bryan and Theodore Roosevelt. Thus the racial foundation for the imperial debates of the last decade of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century was set.

The religious origins and racial foundations of imperial thought, as the previous two chapters have explored, were pervasive in American thought. But how did these notions

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 177.

influence and eventually become national policy? Again religion and rhetoric were key to shaping the nations foreign outlook and, therefore, its policy. These questions are the subject of the next chapter.

### Chapter 3

#### **My Brother's Keeper: Ideology as National Policy**

The end of the nineteenth century marked a turning point in the chosen nation ideology as perceived in the United States. Thus far, the dominant notion driving official policy and the understanding of the public had been the notion that God honored and blessed a nation that embraced liberty and placed it on a pedestal for the world to admire and emulate. This strain of chosen nation ideology is still part of the national character and can be seen in isolationist tendencies and calls to focus on internal problems rather than those external.

The second conception of an American national purpose, as defined by Conrad Cherry, is as “a chosen people with an obligation to actively win others to American principles and to safeguard those principles around the world.”<sup>74</sup> While this concept has been represented from the earliest forms of American ideology, as discussed in chapter one, its ascendancy to the dominant force in foreign policy takes place within the context of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars. This chapter discusses the transformation within the mindset of political leaders and the national consciousness. The primary voices guiding this process however, are not only politicians but also clergy and editors of religious press. It is from this perspective that this chapter will focus its narrative.

The new sense of purpose embraced during this period took shape in three phases. The first explained why America *should* pursue the supposedly altruistic task of assisting a weak and oppressed neighbor. The second, explained why America *could* interfere in the affairs of another nation without incurring the guilt of self-interest that plagued real European powers. Finally, rhetoric phrased in divine providentialism explained why America *would* inevitably succeed.

---

<sup>74</sup> Cherry, 20.

The final quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a dramatic increase in American interest in events outside their lands. For Christians the primary catalyst was a dramatic increase of missionary work. William Hutchison estimates, “By 1900 the sixteen American missionary societies of the 1860s had swelled to about ninety,” marking what he calls the “heyday” of a movement “involving tens of thousands of Americans abroad and millions at home.”<sup>75</sup> Of course these missionaries witnessed and protested the abuses they encountered. A particularly troublesome example was the response to the mass killing of Armenians in the mid 1890’s. Because they were members of a Christian minority in the Islamic Ottoman Empire, the slaughter of roughly 300,000 in 1894-1896 brought immediate sympathies from American Christian leaders and editors. There were also calls for military intervention by American forces from some, including the influential Josiah Strong.<sup>76</sup>

When similar rumors surfaced concerning Cuba, a similar outcry was voiced in protest. Because of its proximity to the U. S. and its strategic importance as a potential naval base protecting the Gulf of Mexico, the island held special interest to Americans dating back before the American Civil War. But humanitarian concerns trumped military and business concerns when war broke out between Cuban insurgents and the Spanish ruling government.

Tensions and violence between the two were not new phenomena; resistance and protest against the Spanish crown were almost a permanent fixtures on the island for roughly thirty years prior to the latter 1890s. Indeed, the seeds of future humanitarian arguments by Christian voices in America began with the Ten Years War of 1868-1878. Though the Cuban insurgents ultimately failed to gain independence, they succeeded in gaining greater scrutiny of Spanish

---

<sup>75</sup> William Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 91, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Arman Kirakossian, ed., *The Armenian Massacres 1894-1896: U.S. Media Testimony* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 23-25.

actions and their effects on the inhabitants by an increasingly aware American public. Renewed efforts for freedom and the brutal Spanish response in 1895 changed what had been a trickle of American interest in Cuban affairs to a raging river of outrage.

The man who became the focus of American ire was Spanish General Valeriano Weyler. His tactics of “reconcentration,” aimed at quelling rural civilian assistance to the insurgents, forced hundreds of thousands into tightly controlled urban centers. While the success of his tactics on the insurgents was marginal, the effects on the displaced civilians were clear. John Offner concluded “by 1897 the concentration camps had become death camps, with tens of thousands dying and thousands more living under the threat.”<sup>77</sup>

These actions were almost universally condemned by Christian periodicals. The insurgents, however, were favorably compared to the American founding generation. But these sympathies initially did not translate to intervention. Where American involvement was advocated, it was for a peaceful arbitration process instead of direct military involvement.<sup>78</sup>

In fact, the central focus of Christian interest remained the troubles within American society. The year 1897 was pivotal for American society in many respects. Waves of immigrants swelled the population, causing logistical problems that strained the economy and sparked racial fears of diluting society with undesirables. Demographically the population was increasingly urban and less agricultural, and clashes between business and labor marked a new economic realignment.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> John Offner, *An Unwanted War: The Diplomacy of the United States and Spain over Cuba, 1895-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 13.

<sup>78</sup> See Karraker, 22-29.

<sup>79</sup> For a detailed description of these issues see Robert Wiebe, *The Search For Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

The most prominent proponent for peace immediately following the sinking of the Maine was none other than the president himself. William McKinley was lauded as a hero in the religious press for his sense of restraint. He appointed a committee to investigate the incident and firmly believed a peaceful solution would be reached.<sup>80</sup> Reverend Hugh Johnston, the president's pastor, fully supported the president's restraint while acknowledging the desire for vengeance. He urged others to emulate the president. He noted that "restlessness without God clamors for blood, blood, blood—the regime of savagery and barbarism—as the ultimatum of the Maine disaster," but "in the interest of humanity, civilization, and Christianity, we can afford to wait until we know the truth and the whole truth." Even if the investigative committee found Spain guilty he believed the U.S. would "be better served by a calm self control in calling another nation to strict account than by a frantic and unreasoning rush into the unspeakable horrors of war." He concluded, "Our duty as citizens, as patriots, as Christians, is to stand by the President, who stands at the helm of the ship of State, cool-headed, clear of eye, strong handed, and warm-hearted; to stand by our Government rather than by any intemperate speech or action to stir up the worst passions of our people."<sup>81</sup>

The Presbyterian Charles Parkhurst, agreed with Johnston and also supported the president's restraint. However, he went on to condemn the "yellow press" of New York. Parkhurst had previously gained fame by his investigative work in the New York underworld and his testimony against Tammany Hall. When the Spanish oppression in Cuba was being debated, Parkhurst also agreed with the president. In a sermon titled "The State of the Country," he noted that the president's "quiet strength" was exactly what was needed in the country's time of stress.

---

<sup>80</sup> Offner, 127.

<sup>81</sup> Hugh Johnston, Sermon delivered 27 Feb 1898. Quoted in: Matthew McCullough, *My Brother's Keeper: Civil Religion, Messianic Interventionism, and the Spanish-American War of 1898.* PhD Dissertation, (Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 2011) 9.



He lambasted the press, one unnamed journal in particular, as a thoroughly undermining element in the state of the country. Parkhurst understood well the opinion swaying influence the press held over the people. He stated,

It is the journalistic nutriment of hundreds of thousands through this city and on up through New England, hundreds of thousands of inconsiderate ones who are not necessarily without conscience, but who are childishly fascinated by its flamboyancy and who become in time so debilitated, intellectually and morally debilitated, by its stimulating piquancy as to come in time really to love a lie well seasoned, better than the truth. And that is boring into the brain and into the moral marrow if the vast population that morning by morning gloats over its pungent mendacities. For the past fourteen days it has been lying—lying deliberately, systematically, laboriously!<sup>82</sup>

The religious press worked overwhelmingly as a counter-balance to the inflammatory yellow press. When a naval court of inquiry was established to formally investigate the sinking, the religious press almost unanimously called for patience and suspended judgment until the facts were published. The findings of the inquiry first cleared the crew of any responsibility or fault then concluded: “the ship was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused the partial explosion of two or more of her forward magazines.” The report also noted that, “no evidence has been obtainable fixing responsibility for the destruction of the Maine upon any person or persons.” The religious press and the president agreed that the report was final. The president’s remarks to Congress remained non-accusatory as well. He commented, “The destruction of the Maine, by whatever exterior cause, is a patent and impressive proof of a state of things in Cuba that is intolerable.”<sup>83</sup>

While the official report was not enough to produce a clarion call for war, there was a dramatic reversal of the mood of the people, the religious press, and the president, less than a

---

<sup>82</sup> Charles Parkhurst, “The State of the Country,” the Presbyterian *Evangelist*, 10 March 1898, 11-12.

<sup>83</sup> William Karraker, “The American Churches and the Spanish-American War” (unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1940) 43.

months later. Just how this shift occurred remains subject to debate, but there is no doubt that a speech delivered to Congress by Senator Redfield Proctor of Vermont was a galvanizing moment. On 17 March, after a fact finding trip to Cuba, Proctor delivered what appeared to historian Gerard Linderman, an ordinary speech. But there were two aspects of the speech that multiplied its impact. First, Proctor was seen as openly skeptical of the descriptions of the concentration camps as given in the popular press. Secondly, his manner of delivery was one of deliberate calm, void of any trace of dramatics. In this way he was seen as the antithesis of the “yellow” journalists of the day.<sup>84</sup> The religious press agreed.

Lyman Abbott, Congregationalist preacher and successor of Henry Ward Beecher at the Plymouth Church in Brooklyn and editor of the *The Outlook*, noted years later,

The Spanish-American War has been attributed to the destruction of the *Maine*, . . . In fact, that destruction took place February 15, and the war was not declared until April 24, more than two months later. The real occasion of the war was the report of Senator Proctor, of Vermont, . . . it aroused in the country a storm of humanitarian indignation which proved irresistible.<sup>85</sup>

The speech seemed even stronger than the president’s influence. William Karraker summarized the observations of Washington Gladden, the noted Congregationalist pastor and Social Gospel leader, who observed that, “McKinley did his best to restrain the “rampant jingoism” in Congress and “but for the report of Mr. Proctor. . . .he might have succeeded.”<sup>86</sup>

Proctor’s speech is the pivotal moment because it changed the focus of rhetoric surrounding possible war with Spain in Cuba. Calls for war in the popular press before his report were focused on revenge. “Remember the Maine,” was a rallying cry condemned by the religious

---

<sup>84</sup> Gerard Linderman, *Mirror of War: American Society and the Spanish-American War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974) 37-59.

<sup>85</sup> Lyman Abbott, *Reminiscences* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915) 436. Quoted in Karraker, 44.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

press and a motto even the president could not support. However, after Proctor's report the focus became one of humanitarian necessity. In his report, he particularly detailed the reconcentration camps and their inhabitants, "about 400,000 were driven into the towns by Weyler's army,. . . These wretched people in many cases saw their homes burned before their eyes; now they live—those who still live at all—in palm-leaf huts, under abominable sanitary conditions, herded together." Most damningly he notes that, "The little children suffer the most, and are dying daily. It is believed that over half of these 400,000 people have already perished."<sup>87</sup>

President McKinley finally sent a message to Congress requesting authority to intervene in Cuba. He gave four justifications for American intervention the first of which stated,

In the cause of humanity and to put an end to the barbarities, bloodshed, starvation, and horrible miseries now existing there, and which the parties to the conflict are either unable or unwilling to stop or mitigate. It is no answer to say this is all in another country, belonging to another nation, and it is therefore none of our business. It is specially our duty, for it is right at our door.

Congress issued its joint resolution on April 20 stating first and foremost that, "the people of the island of Cuba are and of right ought to be free and independent." The second resolution identified the U.S. duty to demand Spain's relinquishment of authority over Cuba and that it remove its troops from the island. The third resolution gave the president power to enforce the resolution through force. Notably, the fourth and final resolution asserted that the U.S. "disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people."

Humanitarian intervention in response to Cuban suffering, as stated by ministers, and editors of the religious press became part of a new national identity. There was great support for

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 45.

the war from the pulpit and press. Both venues cast the new mission of the nation in Biblical terms. Two models were used to justify the altruistic motives behind intervention in Cuba. Drawing on the ever-present belief in Biblical Israel as the prototype of the American republic, the clergy drew heavily on the call to love one's neighbor as one's self, captured in the parable of the Good Samaritan and, ultimately, as Christ's sacrificial death for humanity.

America was cast in the role of the "Samaritan"—a neighbor under no obligation to offer aid, who does so at its own expense for the cause of one who cannot help themselves. The New York Independent published an article addressing the situation titled "The Christianity of It." Printed just days after the declaration of war, its primary question was whether or not the war was Christian. The editor, after acknowledging that the war was not defensive and therefore inherently just, concludes the war is a just war noting, "the compelling reason is one and single. It is not revenge; it is not greed; it is compassion." As proof that such a reason qualifies a nation for just warfare, he offers the question "Is it Christian to look on when a ruffian is committing murder? . . . The right of self-defense is Christian, but the duty of defending and rescuing others in danger of wrong is as much more Christian as it is less selfish." Finally, he concludes:

We have here the very highest justification for war that can be conceived, a war that rises to the sacredness of a crusade. That we have gone into war for such a purpose, have been willing to suffer and let our people die for it, is evidence that we have not lost the Christian heart—that we feel for our neighbor's wrongs; in short, that we love our neighbor as ourselves. A selfish people would have said that they would not give the life of one Yankee for all the *reconcentrados* of Cuba. We could not say that; our people are a Christian people.<sup>88</sup>

The various denominations echoed the support. Methodist minister Matthew Parkhurst, argued that "this war shifted America's position from its past "'none of our business' position of

---

<sup>88</sup> "The Christianity of It," New York *Independent*, 28 April 1898, p.12.

the priests and Levites into that of the good Samaritan.”<sup>89</sup> Likewise, Episcopal minister William Rainsford thoroughly explained the theme in a sermon based on Luke chapter 10. Titled “*Our Duty to Civilization, or Who Is My Neighbor?*” Rainsford’s message was two-fold. First he adamantly condemned any notions of vengeance for the Maine disaster as well as any desire for conquest as justification for war. His primary message however, was in praise of the Christian solidarity in support of the national humanitarian policy. For him, this was the only important factor of the situation in Cuba. The Biblical story of the Good Samaritan included characters that perfectly represented, in Rainsford’s mind, the various actors in the Cuban question. The priests and Levites who ignored the plight of the injured victim represented those who opposed the war and the countries in Europe who had idly stood by as Turkey massacred its Armenian population. The wounded man, of course represented the poor, oppressed Cubans and the United States, of course was cast in the role of the Good Samaritan who gave willingly of its own resources with no regard for its own interests.<sup>90</sup>

A more powerful model was the image of America as a type of sacrificial Christ. As McCullough has illustrated, the sacrificial image during war was not new, “death in battle as a kind of martyrdom, or a sacrifice on the nation’s altar, was part and parcel to every war.”<sup>91</sup> This was especially the case in the American Civil-War; so much so that it served as the title of Henry Stout’s *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the American Civil War*. However, the actions and sacrifices in the Spanish-American war were profoundly different because they were

---

<sup>89</sup> Matthew Parkhurst, cited in Kenneth MacKenzie, *The robe and the Sword: The Methodist Church and the Rise of American Imperialism* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1961), 72.

<sup>90</sup> William Rainsford, *Our Duty to Civilization, or Who is My Neighbor?* 6-14. This sermon was preached 1 May, 1898 and later published in pamphlet form. Discussion referenced from Matthew McCullough, “*My Brother’s Keeper: Civil Religion, Messianic Interventionism, and the Spanish-American War of 1898.*” PhD Dissertation, (Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 2011) 32.

<sup>91</sup> McCullough, 33.

selflessly offered on behalf of another.<sup>92</sup> The death of Christ motif was heavily reinforced through the clergy and religious press. Presbyterian minister Henry Van Dyke gave the most thorough treatment of the analogy. As pastor of Brick Presbyterian Church, his opinion had a great impact on the national stage. Given as a communion sermon, it was intended to prepare congregants to reflect on the significance of Christ's death and apply that to their lives in the present crisis. Van Dyke called war the "heaviest cross that a nation is ever called to bear," and he urged his congregants to bear it with the spirit of Christ as He went to the cross. He explained that Christ's sacrificial spirit had two components: submission to God's will and devotion to the service of humankind. He explained to his followers that it was necessary to "accept their bitter cup because it is inevitable and to endure their sacrifice because it is for the sake of others." Van Dyke noted that such actions were not only a change of national policy but also a change in national character. He urged Americans to accept it "in a deep solemnity of submission to God." He also believed that in defending and saving the Cuban rebels, Americans would be imitating Christ. His sermons detailed the evils of the Spanish Empire and the treatment of the Cubans, calling them the most obstinate barbarians who existed outside of Turkey. Van Dyke's conclusion acknowledged that war was a heavy burden, but "if we bear it in submission to God, in the spirit of Christ, and for the sake of humanity, it will be a ransom for many and a sign of peace unto far-off generations."<sup>93</sup>

As McCullough correctly concludes, this rhetoric marked a new stage of American civil religion. No longer was the republic just a shining city on a hill, it was now a nation of action. To truly be a Christian nation required America to act "as Christ did, sacrificially on behalf of the

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 38. The comparison of Spain and Turkey as barbarian states refers to the Armenian massacres of 1894-1896. Under the rule of the Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the Ottoman Turkish Empire massacred Christian Armenians. Estimates of the total number killed range between 100,000 and 300,000.

weak.” To Thomas Dixon, pastor of New York’s Peoples Church, this change in policy and thinking meant that a new nation was born. He stated that, “for the first time in modern history, a great nation has accepted the Spirit of Jesus Christ as the motive power of life.” He continued, “this nation has taken up its cross in Cuba. It has begun a holy war, with nothing to gain, and millions of dollars and priceless blood to lose.” Dixon was representative of many clergy of his time. He believed that the actions of the United States toward Cuba represented the “sublimest incarnation of Christianity of this century.”<sup>94</sup>

As the war progressed over the next few months, unfolding events were the subject of great debate. Though most viewed the new role of America on the net international stage as providential, there were a few dissenting voices. One important issue discussed was the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the conflict. The next few paragraphs will explore this aspect of the conflict.

Many sermons in the first stages of the war spoke of God’s providential hand guarding and protecting American forces. However, they also vilified the Spanish foe, prompting questions of Catholicism’s role in Spain’s evil character. For most of colonial America and United States history, its population was predominantly Protestant. By the start of Spanish-American war however, Roman Catholics made up a sixth of the population United States. Initially, many questioned Catholic loyalty within the United States. Yet they represented a large voting bloc and so, could not be ignored.

Anti-Spanish sermons and editorials, at the start of the war, were not the first to cast Spain in a negative light. Americans in the nineteenth century tended to categorize countries and characterize their people in general terms. Gerald Linderman and his brilliant study *The Mirror*

---

<sup>94</sup> Thomas Dixon, “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” *Dixon’s Sermons: A Monthly Magazine* (June 1898): 4-6. Quoted in McCullough, 40.

*of War* notes that the image of Spain in American consciousness had long been presented in extremely base terms. He identifies the single most important source of these images as the grammar school reader. Citing Ruth Miller Elson's study of textbooks in American schools in the nineteenth century, Lindermann notes the belief that specific personality traits are inherent in all members of distinct designated national groups. The isolated nature of American society compounded with a brief educational period for children meant images presented were lasting images.

A study conducted by Mrs. Ruth Miller Elson discovered that textbooks presented only a few countries that merited unequivocal characterization. While images of the Swiss, Scots and Germans were almost entirely positive, "schoolbooks found almost nothing to praise in the Spanish."<sup>95</sup> Following the war, *Harper's Pictorial History of the War with Spain* continued the disparaging, anti-Spanish theme of the schoolbooks. Its authors noted that Spanish character possessed an "inner core of cruelty." Their historical evidence included the Inquisition, Spanish conquistadors burning West Indian caciques, setting loose their dogs to tear apart hapless Indians, garroting of the Inca Atahualpa, and the betrayal of Montezuma. "Even the Spanish guerrilla war waged against Napoleon's soldiers, an episode that Americans might have applauded as the resistance of the brave people determined to protect its independence against a foreign tyrant, became instead, another object lesson in Spanish perfidy." The authors went on to note, "The French who fell into the hands of the Spaniards during the peninsular war were invariably murdered."<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American School-books of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln, NE, 1964) 103, quoted in Gerald Linderman, *The Mirror of War: American Society and the Spanish-American War* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1974) 121.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*,



When the early stages of the war—especially Admiral Dewey’s stunning victory over the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay—proved the ineptness of the Spanish military, Americans perceived a divine disfavor of the once mighty Empire, and God’s protective, guiding hand on the ascending, Christian, American nation. Charles Goodell of the Hanson Place Methodist Church, in a sermon delivered on 8 May, 1898, presented the comparison many deemed obvious. He saw Dewey’s victory as a sign of hope that a “better day is dawning” and “barbarism has no place in the light of the twentieth century.” In the mind of Goodell and many of his peers, “The thunderous shock of Dewey’s cannon blew the rack and thumb-screw and the whole paraphernalia of medieval persecution off the face of the earth forever.” He concluded, “that without dispute the flag that presses closest after the crimson cross is the Stars and Stripes.” His colleague, James King of the Union Methodist Episcopal Church, delivered a similar sermon. However, King chose a setting fully decorated with American colors and delivered his message under the auspices of his role as chaplain to the Empire State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. The setting gave particular impact to his forceful characterization of American life as uniquely Christian. Speaking perfectly the language of American messianic civil religion, he stated, “By historic origin and precedent, by principles of legislative action, by the character of our fundamental institutions, by judicial decisions and by the genius of our civilization. . .we are a Christian nation.”<sup>97</sup> For Goodell, King and many clergy, politicians, and Americans of every walk of life, the war with Spain was nothing short of the age-old battle between the forces of heaven and hell. America, they believed had been divinely chosen to go forth into the reaches of the world as God’s righteous instrument of justice. Only one flaw remained in the new image of American civil religion.

---

<sup>97</sup> McCullough, 53.

While there was almost universal acceptance of the evil characterization of Spain, and equal acceptance of the divine providence of America on the world stage, the role of Catholicism in the demise of the Spanish Empire and its future role in God's chosen nation was not clear. In terms of American civil religion and foreign policy, the latter is by far the more important question. In the opening stages of the Spanish-American War, anti-Catholicism among American Protestants emerged from its long dormant state. The fear of Romanism has its roots in the colonial era. Historian Nathan Hatch traces its origins to the Anglo-French wars of the mid-eighteenth century. English colonists found themselves surrounded by French Catholics on the north and west and the Spanish to the south and west. They considered themselves "warriors locked in combat with forces of a Popish Antichrist, whose ambitions were equal to tyranny and oppression."<sup>98</sup> Such sentiments were reawakened one hundred and fifty years later with the outbreak of the Spanish-American war. Just a few years before the outbreak of the war Congregationalist Josiah Strong published his book *Our Country*, in which he identified "Romanism" and immigration as the great threats to the stability of American civilization. The opening rounds of the war only intensified these sentiments. McCullough cites many religious and secular journals that vividly portray the pervasiveness of the feeling among Protestants. Arkansas minister J.C. Williams is representative. As McCullough explains, Williams viewed the present war with Spain as the conclusion of 300 years of fighting between Protestant and Catholic powers. Citing examples of England's clash with the Spanish Armada, Europe's thirty-years-war, the Glorious Revolution in seventeenth-century England, and the defeat of Napoleon's France at Waterloo. Williams claimed the Protestants were victorious in every case. The only conclusion that seemed possible to Williams was that God had judged against Catholic

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 59. See also Nathan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 1-50.

Spain. In an editorial in the *Christian Observer* dated 10 August 1898, the conflict in Cuba was compared with the prophet Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal. The editor argued that Spain's idolatrous prayers to the Virgin Mary were pitted against America's prayers to the God of the Protestants and would have the same results as Elijah's battle of old.<sup>99</sup>

Such attacks were not confined to the religious press. The sensationalist presses of William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer joined the fray. Both editors believed, "A brief glorious war with Spain would not only give the impetus to expansion, but it would also accomplish the twin aims of freeing Cuba and destroying the Spanish Empire." They fanned the flames with exaggerated reports of Spanish atrocities in Cuba. The American Protective Association used these reports to continue its attacks on the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>100</sup>

American Catholics found themselves having to respond delicately. Like the Protestant press, Catholic journals were hesitant to call for war after the sinking of the *Maine*. Also, the two most influential American Catholics, James Cardinal Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore, and Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, both urged patience. In the case of Ireland, his advice was directly to his friend president William McKinley. He told the president, "in my opinion nothing has yet come to light that would in my judgment call for a rupture between the United States and Spain."<sup>101</sup> Ireland was objective in his analysis and he almost simultaneously voiced his loyalty to America. During a press interview he stated, "no true American Catholic will think of espousing the cause of Spain against that of this country because the former is a Catholic country." Many Catholic leaders personally voiced similar opinions. Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan,

---

<sup>99</sup> J.C. Williams, "Catholic Reverses in War," *Christian Observer*, 20 July 1898, p. 9 and editorial titled "God's Hand or Baal's," *Christian Observer*, 10 August, 1898. Both cited in McCullough, 65.

<sup>100</sup> Frank T. Reuter, *Catholic Influence on American Colonial Policies: 1898-1904* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 4

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

of Philadelphia stated, “The Catholic church in America is patriotic. All over the country we are asking God’s blessing upon the American cause.” Finally, the archbishops of America formally declared their loyalty to the country. In a letter signed by all, the archbishops declared,

Whatever may have been the individual opinions of Americans prior to the declaration of war, there can be no two opinions as to the duty of every loyal citizen. . . . We, the members of the Catholic Church are true Americans, and as such are loyal to our country and our flag and obedient to the highest decree in the supreme authority of the nation.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to the statements of the American Catholic leadership, numerous accounts of heroism by Catholics were documented and publicized. The United States government was offered the buildings of the convent of Mary Immaculate at Key West, for use as hospitals, many priests volunteered to be chaplains, and many more Catholics volunteered for services in the Armed Forces. The San Francisco monitor boasted that Catholics comprised 75% of the California First Volunteers. Additionally it was reported that 190 of the crew killed aboard the *Maine* were Catholics.<sup>103</sup>

Though many Protestants were skeptical of Catholic loyalty to America and its cause in Cuba, there was consensus concerning the new American National character. American Catholics and Protestants agreed with, and embraced America’s active messianic mission to the world. As the war came to an end in Cuba however, the question of how to dispose of former Spanish territories exacerbated the tenuous peace between the denominations, and threatened to divide society as well. The expansionist, or imperial debate was a pivotal foreign policy discussion with profound implications for America and the world.

---

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 12.

The war with Spain officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898. Expansionist policy continued despite Filipino resistance for almost two years unabated. However, not all Americans were satisfied with the new foreign policy path and the election of 1900 would be the chosen battleground to decide the issue. Both sides chose their champions. As this chapter has demonstrated, religion mattered in the eyes of the public and indeed helped shape the image they had of their nation. Religion was crucial on a personal level to the leaders of the time as well. The next chapter provides the necessary background on the two men who would champion the imperial debate.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Road to the Championship: McKinley and Bryan**

As with any contest or debate, the opposing sides always have a leader. Sometimes that leader volunteers for the job and sometimes the job is thrust upon him, but a group or team does not advance far without someone acting as spokesman and providing direction and leadership. Understanding the two men who were in the arena for the imperial debate is essential. Their perspectives are discussed below.

William McKinley's devout Methodist beliefs are explored here along with aspects of his military and political career that formed his "overall faith". His faith, as this chapter will demonstrate, was a mix of a heart-felt, sincere devotion to his God and his view of the role God had for him and the country. His is the story of how the United States, and its sacred and sacramental civil religion transformed into an instrument of national interest. The death of president Lincoln, as discussed in the last chapter, provided the martyr that the sacrificial overtones that affected a young Major William McKinley during and after the Civil War. McKinley was also heavily exposed to the events of Reconstruction and the "Re-forging of the White Republic" that eventually emerged. His ability to listen to the sentiment of the people yet maintain a clear independent vision, produced an "active-positive" style of leadership based on sound, firm morality. Its origins and development will be explored.

Yet McKinley was not the only national leader that was in touch with the people. Young William Jennings Bryan, known as "the Commoner" for his apparent ability to identify with and champion the causes of the people, would rise to oppose McKinley in two presidential elections and lead the voice of dissent against imperialist policy. Both men claimed the same God, yet Bryan's religion produced very different interpretations of national purpose. His views

and opinions, while they did not always match the constituency he represented, were representative of a strong, vocal, yet minority view. This chapter will build a foundation that shows that McKinley and Bryan can serve as types in a study of the opposing national public opinions that became the primary issue in the great imperial debate of 1900. The primary ingredient in this foundation is the religion of these two men, particularly as it related to national image and purpose. In many ways their views reflect the civil-religious views of the country.

### *William McKinley*

The future president was born, Scotch-Irish, in Niles, Ohio in 1843. His father, William McKinley Sr., worked a blast furnace producing pig iron to support his family. William Jr. was the seventh of nine children. Ohio was rapidly becoming a center of manufacturing. Consequently its iron production was second only to that of Pennsylvania. The elder McKinley had given up an education to earn a living when he was just sixteen years old; a fate he did not want for his children. Seeking better opportunities for his children, they moved to Poland near Youngstown Ohio. While young William was attending high school there, two important, life shaping events took place: he discovered and nourished his gift of oratory, and he devoted his life to Jesus Christ in the Methodist Church.

Young William was a serious and diligent student, though not a brilliant one. He benefited from the encouragement, if not the tutoring assistance, of his parents in his academic endeavors. His mother, Nancy Allen McKinley, was adamant that her children receive a better education than she had stating, “I put my children in school just as early as they could go alone to the teacher, and kept them at it. I did not allow them to stay away.”<sup>104</sup> William’s work ethic was evident early in his academic career. Childhood friends noted that “He was always studying,

---

<sup>104</sup> Howard Wayne Morgan, *William McKinley and His America*, (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2003), 6.

studying, studying all the time,” and “It was seldom that his head was not in a book.” But more than reading formed the whole of his education. He was a keen observer of people and events. Combined with a strict knowledge of facts, his understanding of people produced an impression that he reached his conclusions by intuition.<sup>105</sup> However, he never took for granted that he had all the facts and earnestly sought new information. He was an avid reader throughout his life. Biographer Lewis Gould notes, “His evenings were spent ... often reading late into the night. Novels, works of history, and endless reports were his reading materials. McKinley was far more bookish and better informed than his reputation...indicates.”<sup>106</sup>

The school in Poland was also home to the Everett Literary and Debating Society. Its namesake, Edward Everett, was a famed politician, pastor and orator from Massachusetts who is best remembered as the featured speaker at the dedication ceremony of the Gettysburg National Cemetery. He spoke for two hours just before president Abraham Lincoln delivered his famous, two-minute address. McKinley was a leading member and used much of his spare time preparing for debates in its library. While there, he found time to enjoy the works of Longfellow, Whittier, and Byron.<sup>107</sup> Yet his mind valued the practical over theoretical, with Morgan concluding that he had a mind that was “retentive rather than creative.” McKinley’s own words support this conclusion. Speaking to schoolchildren later in life he said, “Avoid the dangerous tendency of the times toward superficial knowledge. . . . Exact knowledge is the requirement of the hour.” Believing that education served a higher purpose, he continued, “You are all here to do

---

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 7,8.

<sup>106</sup> Lewis L. Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1980), 242.

<sup>107</sup> Morgan, 9.



something, to work out a destiny. To discover the forces of nature and make them serve man's uses and God's purposes."<sup>108</sup>

By the mid 1840s, Methodism was the largest denomination in the United States. It claimed almost twelve thousand itinerant preachers and over a million members. However, it split in 1844 over the question of slavery. The Methodist-Episcopal Church in the north, and in Ohio in particular, was strongly anti-slavery. Nancy McKinley, a very active Methodist, took her son William to prayer meetings and encouraged his spiritual education. At the age of ten, after a series of camp meetings, William professed his belief in Jesus and was accepted as a probationary member. He was granted full membership in 1859 at the age of sixteen.<sup>109</sup> True to his serious and studious nature, his first minister, Aaron Morton said he "was not what you would call a 'shouting Methodist,' but rather one who was careful of his acts and words. . . ." To "Mother" McKinley, "the church was the center of existence." She had a deep desire that her son William would use his diligence and aptitude to pursue a career in ministry. She would later lament that he had "only become president when he could have had a useful and brilliant career in the church."<sup>110</sup> That fall, McKinley entered Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania. To his dismay, his time in college was curtailed by illness. After only one semester, he returned home. Before he left, in an uncharacteristic, angry response to a fellow student's support for Jefferson Davis as the next president, he "turned sharply upon him with a retort that before that came to pass Osborne [a childhood friend] and himself would fight the Southerner on his native soil."<sup>111</sup> Soon McKinley was true to his word.

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>109</sup> Kevin Phillips, *William McKinley* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003) 16.

<sup>110</sup> Morgan, 9.

<sup>111</sup> William H. Armstrong, *Major McKinley: William McKinley and the Civil War* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2000) 5.

Much passion surrounded the events of the summer of 1861. Many men joined the Union army spurred by such emotion. McKinley, while he felt these emotions, did not allow them to rule his thinking. He and his friend Will Osborne approached the decision to enlist, as Osborne recalled, “in cold blood, and not through the enthusiasm of the moment...it was done as McKinley has done the most things of his life, as the logical offspring of careful conclusion.” McKinley agreed, years later saying, “I came to a deliberate conclusion, and have never been sorry for it.”<sup>112</sup> The young men became privates in the Twenty-third Regiment of the Ohio Division.

The war years proved beneficial to McKinley in many ways. Through his diligence, attention to detail, and no small amount of courage, he progressed through the ranks, eventually becoming a Major on the staff of Major General Samuel S. Carroll. He also gained the attention of his regiment commander, Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes and General Phillip Sheridan.

His beloved Ohio division was known as the “the psalm-singers of the Western Reserve” held a special place in McKinley’s heart for the rest of his life. He always preferred to be addressed as “Major McKinley” rather than any other title he had earned. The journalist Murat Halstead noted that the experience of “the camp was to him a university. . . .When the combat closed, Major McKinley was an officer and a gentleman, who had built in his diversified education wiser than he knew, and taken a degree beyond any the colleges could confer.” McKinley had the opportunity to rub shoulders with “the men who managed the greatest crisis of the nineteenth-century America.”<sup>113</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>113</sup> Phillips, 24.

After deciding not to make a career of the Army after the war, McKinley settled in Canton, Ohio and became a lawyer. He often defended and spoke out for unpopular causes such as workers rights and advocated for the rights of African Americans to vote. He was elected as the Stark County prosecutor in 1869 and to the U.S. Congress in 1876. McKinley's career as a politician was off to a promising start. His family life did not have the same fortune.

Shortly after arriving in Canton, he married Ida Saxton, the daughter of a wealthy banker. The death of two daughters and Ida's mother between the years 1873 and 1876 changed the future president and left Ida with a nervous illness for the rest of her life. Political scientist, John S. Latham reassessed James Barber's theory of Presidential character as related to predicting success. The theory analyzes two areas or "phenomena", to use Barber's word: activity and attitude. A subject could either be active or passive and positive or negative, respectively. The great or near great presidents, Latham and Barber agree were all "active/positive" personalities. Latham's opinion differs with Barber regarding McKinley's active/passive nature. After a complete analysis of McKinley's life, with special emphasis on his political career, Latham's evidence of McKinley's active character is overwhelming.<sup>114</sup> McKinley's positive attitude has never been debated. His lifelong Christian faith, long devotion to an invalid wife, and the winning personality noted by so many contemporaries are ample proof.

The young McKinley served as president of the local YMCA and did not favor his denomination over others. All were welcome to share in song and prayer. His biographer Margaret Leech summarized his genuine faith, and its application well, noting,

His devout Methodism did not lead him to concern himself with dogma or denominational differences. The loving kindness of God was McKinley's

---

<sup>114</sup> John Latham, "President McKinley's Active-Positive Character: A Comparative Revision with Barber's Typology," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (Fall, 1982). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27547863> (accessed July 15, 2013).

religion, and the source of his inner serenity. . . . He made many friends among Canton's Large Roman Catholic population of German and Irish extraction. In a day of sharp sectarianism, McKinley was devoid of bigotry possessing as a grace of his nature the tolerance that is unconscious of its own virtue.<sup>115</sup>

McKinley's evangelical faith remained with him for the rest of his life, he never waived from it, though it was shaped by several trials.

McKinley's personal charm was that of a small town Midwesterner. He was partial to popular hymns, sentimental poetry and had an unwavering commitment to the people. Even opponents admired his devotion to his wife. As Governor of Ohio, he would wave to her window at three o'clock in the afternoon every day. While his behavior seemed unpolished and simple to some, it gave him the greatest personal popularity of any president since Lincoln<sup>116</sup>

John Hay commented that "The President was one of the sweetest and quietest natures I have ever known among public men." McKinley's kindness was not reserved for family and cabinet members but extended to the general public as well. White House journalists were often treated to casual unannounced visits and brief chats with the president. The astute McKinley noted those who may be missing and inquired about their health"<sup>117</sup> Even at the moment his assassin, Leon Czolgosz, was attacking, his thoughts were benevolent. Seeing the crowd swarming his attacker, the president said to his secretary, George Cortelyou, "Don't hurt him," adding that he believed he was "some poor misguided fellow." His next thoughts were of his wife, again advising Cortelyou, "be careful how you tell her—oh be careful."<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> Margaret Leech, *In the Days of McKinley* ( New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959) 12.

<sup>116</sup> Phillips, 15-16.

<sup>117</sup> Scott Miller, *The President and the Assassin: McKinley, Terror, and Empire at the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2011) 7.

<sup>118</sup> Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley*, 251.

William McKinley was a president who believed that God had ordained America for a special purpose; he was a patriot and did not doubt that his God directed his actions and those of his country. Above all, he was a devout Christian. To the twenty-fifth president there was no difference between his duties as a Christian and those as an American. How the interaction of the two roles affected the course of events in the imperial debates will be addressed in a later chapter. A man just as devout in his Christian faith, and also a man of the people championed the opposing view in the debate.

*William Jennings Bryan*

In the post-Civil War era, the small country town represented the epitome of Jeffersonian ideals. Viewed as the setting of yeoman simplicity that Jefferson so fervently supported, it was a “font of goodness and the conservator of moral values.”<sup>119</sup> It did not remain so but there were some who refused to relinquish the myth of the small town agrarian virtue.

“Don’t inquire about how the fight is going to go—make it go right if you can. If you fail, you lay the foundation for future victory. The right wins in the end—don’t be afraid to wait.”<sup>120</sup> These words of advice to James “Champ” Clark on the eve of the 1912 Democratic National Convention, epitomize the political life of William Jennings Bryan. The two term congressman and three time candidate for President of the United States championed many causes: federal income tax, popular election of U. S. Senators, prohibition, woman suffrage, independence for the Philippines, railroad reform, and currency reform. Though he was the dominant figure of his

---

<sup>119</sup> Paul W. Glad, *McKinley, Bryan and the People* (Chicago: Harper Collins Publishers, Elephant Paperback edition, 1991), 13

<sup>120</sup> William Jennings Bryan and Mary Bryan, *The Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1925), 163.

Party for thirty years, few of the causes Bryan championed were successful at the time, but most came to pass through his successors.

The life of William Jennings Bryan still holds interest to historians for his many contributions to American culture, politics, foreign affairs or moral debates in education. Unfortunately, Bryan is often depicted as an idealistic, shallow, uncertain pacifist who cowardly resigned his position as Secretary of State when the situation got tough. Many of the studies on Bryan mention his devout Christian faith and love of peace, and indeed it was the core of his life and public duties. Many biographers, including Merle Curtis' *Bryan and World Peace* and Willard Smiths' *The Social and Religious Thought of William Jennings Bryan* labeled him a pacifist while others, notably Paolo Coletta's *William Jennings Bryan II: Progressive Politician and Moral Statesman* and most recently, Michael Kazin's *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan*, choose anti-imperialist. Kendrick Clements titled his 1982 Bryan biography *William Jennings Bryan: Missionary Isolationist*. All of them acknowledge the centrality of his Christian beliefs to his actions and character.

Of his childhood days Bryan reflects, "I only know that I was blessed with as happy an environment as a child could hope for or ask."<sup>121</sup> His father Silas Bryan, served two terms in the Illinois Senate, and served as a judge in the state circuit court. Silas Bryan, a devout Baptist, was known for making political speeches and "exhorting his fellowmen to apply the eternal principles of Christian morality to the urgent and complex issues of the day." The 'praying judge' applied the same principles to his judicial rulings and never doubted the finality of his decisions. When told the State Supreme court had recently overturned six of his decisions, he

---

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 16.

didn't hesitate to say, "The Supreme Court is wrong."<sup>122</sup> He was just as devout as a father as he was as a judge. The home was completely infused with Biblical teaching and practices. Both parents practiced what they preached. However, it was not a stoic existence for the young Bryan. His father was appreciative of music, poetry and even allowed a group of local boys, his son included, to hide in his barn to avoid detection by other fathers while they held mock 'Senate sessions' to practice their oratory skills.<sup>123</sup> His mother, Mariah was an equally devout Methodist. The decision of which church to attend, Baptist or Methodist, was simplified by attending both on Sundays. Young Bryan further simplified the solution—at least as far as he was concerned—by joining a new Presbyterian church founded by a traveling revivalist. Although the Bible was the main source of lessons, Mariah supplemented their children's' education with McGuffey's *Reader*, Webster's *Speller*, Nolan's *Arithmetic*, and James' *Geography*.<sup>124</sup> The efforts of the elder Bryans produced a remarkable young man. Mary Webster, a neighbor who often helped take care of the Bryan children, said, "He never argued or refused to do what was required of him, he was always truthful and obedient."<sup>125</sup> Although he was easily capable of winning schoolyard fights, he always walked away, not because he was afraid but because it went against his deep Christian principles.<sup>126</sup> By the time Bryan was nineteen, he was beginning to theorize his pacifist principles to a worldly stage.

---

<sup>122</sup> Louis Koenig, *Bryan: A Political Biography of William Jennings Bryan* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), 22-23.

<sup>123</sup> Charles Wilson, *The Commoner: William Jennings Bryan* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company Inc. 1970), 22.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>125</sup> Koenig., 23.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 22.

The sound of armour, glittering steel and the gory field of battle have no claims for me! ... Tom, do you know that the time is swiftly passing by when armies rule? The dawn of the better day is at hand. Right is beginning to rule in the place of might. I rejoice that in a few years it will not be necessary to shoot a man to convince him that you are right and to blot out a nation to prove to them that their principles are false.<sup>127</sup>

The ideas of Bryan's youth, he soon discovered, while idealistic, were not realistic. His views of the world were tempered by experience, and his views of conflict proved adaptable.

Bryan's formal education began at Illinois College, where he majored in Classical Studies and graduated valedictorian. Then he finished law school at Union College of Law in Chicago. After some faltering starts in smaller towns, Bryan's law practice took off in Lincoln Nebraska. He became known as a friend of the common man. His young bride, Mary Baird was a gifted lawyer in her own right. She remained his closest advisor for the rest of his life.

Bryan's political career began with two terms as congressman of Nebraska's First District. After losing a Senatorial bid he took a position as editor-in-chief of the Omaha World-Herald and lectured extensively. Bryan was thirty-six when he made his first bid for the White House in 1896. Though the issues were economic and bitterly fought, the campaign was, "an unusually pious campaign." Religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom noted that, "As in no other election, both candidates virtually personified American Protestantism." Historian Andrew Preston agrees, stressing that Bryan and McKinley were "both evangelicals, and both fluent in the language of Protestant benevolence, represented perhaps the most religious presidential campaign ever."<sup>128</sup> Bryan lost his first bid for the presidency and soon found himself volunteering his services to his former opponent.

---

<sup>127</sup> William Jennings Bryan to Thomas Marshall, December 8, 1879, Bryan *Memoirs*, 383.

<sup>128</sup> Preston, 215.



Bryan's belief in democracy, and the responsibility of the United States to encourage it across the world, was grounded in his genuine desire to serve mankind. Bryan soon had an opportunity to serve in an unexpected way. Reports of mass death and disease in Spanish prison camps in Cuba and the outrage over the loss of the battleship *Maine*, and 260 U.S. sailors, spurred strong public and congressional pressure for President William McKinley to act. Upon McKinley's request, Congress declared war with Spain. They also unanimously passed the Teller amendment, promising to never acquire Cuba.<sup>129</sup> The Philippines and Puerto Rico, the other Spanish colonies in question, were not included in the wording of the amendment. When the Spanish-American war began, Bryan did not hesitate to support it. His was not a cause of Imperialism but a humanitarian one. In accordance with the Monroe Doctrine, and his own sense of Christian brotherhood, he believed America was obligated to resist the Spanish and liberate Cuba from their oppression. Even before volunteering for a commission as Colonel of the Third Nebraska Regiment, United States Volunteers, he was vocal of his strong support of the Cuban cause.

Humanity demands that we should act. . . . War is a terrible thing and cannot be defended except as a means to an end, and yet it is sometimes the only means by which a necessary end can be secured. The state punishes its own citizens by imprisonment and even death when counsel and persuasion fail; war is the final arbiter between nations when reason and diplomacy are of no avail.<sup>130</sup>

At this crucial time of Bryan's life he was certainly not a pacifist. But neither was he eager to be a "man in the arena" like Theodore Roosevelt, seeking glory, fame and political

---

<sup>129</sup> Michael Kazin, *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 86.

<sup>130</sup> Merle Curti, *Bryan and World Peace* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969) 117.

clout.<sup>131</sup> His idea of a soldier was not the trained killer, but rather the sacrificial servant willing to give his life for God, country and fellow man who like Christ, “yielded up for the welfare of his fellows life’s most precious blood.”<sup>132</sup> He believed he knew the costs of war and thought the cause was worth the price.

War is harsh; it is attended by hardship and suffering; it means a vast expenditure of men and money. We may well pray for the coming day, promised in Holy Writ, when the swords shall be beaten into plowshares and the spears into pruning hooks; but universal peace cannot come until Justice is enthroned throughout the world. . . . Until right has triumphed in every land and love reigns supreme in every heart, government must, as a last resort, appeal to force.<sup>133</sup>

Bryan was ready to lead his Nebraskans into battle in the name of justice for humanity. However, he was never called to do so. Spain sued for peace shortly after his regiment arrived in Jacksonville, Florida and they never set foot on foreign soil. But Bryan saw a bigger battle brewing within the United States.

During his five-month career as a soldier, he perceived a growing approval of imperialism, or expansionism, as it was sometimes termed. To Bryan, imperialism was antithetical to Christianity and it was gaining in popularity, not only among the public but alarmingly, in the Democratic Party itself. He “resigned his position in the army in order to oppose it.”<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> “The Man in the Arena” is a phrase from an often-quoted Theodore Roosevelt speech “Citizenship In A Republic” delivered at the Sorbonne, in Paris, France on 23 April, 1910. Though Roosevelt’s description of an ideal warrior are not applicable to Bryan’s desires for military service, the description is appropriate in a social and moral light.

<sup>132</sup> Curti, 119.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>134</sup> Bryan *Memoirs*, 120.

Shortly after leaving the army, in an interview given in Savannah, Bryan publicly declared his intention to make a stand against Imperialism. He could not reconcile a democratic country possessing any colony, stating, “our nation must give up any intention of entering upon a colonial policy, such as is now pursued by European countries, or it must abandon the doctrine that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . . To borrow a Bible quotation, ‘A house divided against itself cannot stand’ . . . this nation cannot endure half republic and half colony—half free and half vassal.”<sup>135</sup> Bryan’s rhetoric was clearly anti-imperialist and he had many supporters who were understandably shocked when he supported the ratification of the treaty ending the war with Spain thus making the United States a colonial power.

His decision against blocking the treaty was one of political expediency. He believed it better to allow the treaty to pass and put the decision of Filipino independence in the hands of the American people rather than leave it to the questionable process of diplomacy with Spain. Just as the Teller Amendment ensured America would not claim Cuba as a colony, Bryan sought a similarly solution for the Philippines. The Bacon Resolution proposed “That the United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise permanent sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said islands, and assert their determination, when a stable and independent government shall have been erected therein, . . . thereupon leave the government and control of the islands to their people.”<sup>136</sup> The resolution failed to pass by a single vote. His fight against imperialism was much longer than he imagined it would be.

---

<sup>135</sup> William Jennings Bryan, et al. *Republic or Empire? The Philippine Question* (Chicago: The Independence Company, 1899), 13-14.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

Bryan was well equipped for the struggle. His deep, long-standing Christian belief and study manifested themselves in the majority of his speeches on the subject. Some of his opponents in the debate believed Imperialism to be an expedient to the Christianizing of the inhabitants. To Bryan that was a preposterous notion. He vehemently condemned the argument saying, "If true Christianity consists in carrying out in our daily lives the teachings of Christ, who will say that we are commanded to civilize with dynamite and proselyte with the sword? Imperialism finds no warrant in the Bible. The command "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," has no Gatling gun attachment."<sup>137</sup>

His "Second Battle" against Imperialism was not only in defense of a Christian sense of justice but a defense of the Jeffersonian democratic principles he loved.<sup>138</sup> Pro-imperialist opponents pointed to Thomas Jefferson's expansion of the United States as precedence for Imperialism. Bryan took exception to this claim and elaborated two key differences. First, there was a distinction between expansion, "which secures contiguous territory for future settlement, and expansion which secures us alien races for future subjugation." The second distinction was between expansion in the western hemisphere and expansion that potentially involved the United States in European quarrels.<sup>139</sup> In his first distinction, Bryan seems oblivious to the presence of Native Americans on the land that was considered as room to expand in Jefferson's time. These distinctions are crucial to understanding Bryans' apparent inconsistency in matters of U. S. foreign policy during the upcoming imperial debate and election campaign of 1900 and while he

---

<sup>137</sup> William Bryan, "Christianity against Imperialism", *Heart to Heart Appeals* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1917), 32.

<sup>138</sup> Bryans' "First Battle" was the bimetallist debate that he championed in the 1896 Presidential campaign. He edited a collection of speeches and articles for a book of the same name. He did the same for his "Second Battle" against Imperialism.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

was Secretary of State for President Woodrow Wilson. Bryan was a believer in the Monroe Doctrine—although not its Roosevelt Corollary. His support of the Cubans was with expulsion of the Spanish as a prime objective. His later efforts in Nicaragua and the rest of the Caribbean were also partially to prevent European encroachment in the region.

It is important to remember that Bryan was very much a product of his time. As historian Willard Smith has noted. Bryan believed there were different races of men and that they were not on equal footing. He believed “every race was capable of self-government,” but did not believe two unequal races could share the burden of governing.<sup>140</sup> He did not share the opinions of some that other races were evil by nature and unworthy of aid in a secular sense or salvation from a Christian perspective. However, his Jeffersonian ideals certainly did not apply equally to all mankind.

Though he turned from war on Christian moral reasoning, he knew secular data could support his argument as well. But even secular elements had a basis in Christian ethics. He believed at the heart of imperialism was a base and greedy motive. He lambasted the financial basis of Imperialism at a Nebraska Traveling Men’s Club banquet in Lincoln, in December 1898. “Imperialism finds its inspiration in dollars, not in duty. It is not our duty to burden our people with increased taxes in order to give a few speculators an opportunity for exploitation.”<sup>141</sup> Anti-Imperialism became the primary plank of his second attempt at the Presidency in 1900. However, both Christian and secular arguments proved to no avail when Bryan again lost. With

---

<sup>140</sup> Willard Smith. “William Jennings Bryan and Racism.” *The Journal of Negro History*, 54, no 2 (Apr., 1969): 138.

<sup>141</sup> Curti, 120.

William McKinley in the White House, soon to be succeeded by the more hawkish Theodore Roosevelt, Filipino independence was delayed until 1946.<sup>142</sup>

Bryan served the America he loved for thirty years and his ideology evolved much as the attitudes and opinions of Americans in general shifted. However, the core Christian ideology of his youth, so ingrained by his parents and his Midwestern, rural roots, never wavered. Like McKinley however, Bryan did not separate his zeal for Christianity and his enthusiasm for his country. To both men, service to their country and their country's leadership role in the world were God ordained. They differed on what that role should look like, especially to those on foreign shores. For Bryan, exposure to the evils of war in 1898 and the resulting American experiment in Imperialism were not just unconscionable to his Christian brotherly love ethics, but endangered the democracy he dearly loved and wanted the world to embrace. While his alternative solutions seemed simple and naïve, they were principle centered and offered without guile. The free security the United States had thus far enjoyed fostered the formation of both men's ideology. Bryan was an idealist who longed for a simpler Jeffersonian America. He feared that America's city on a hill image would be blemished by imperial efforts. McKinley warmed to the idea of actively spreading Christianity and republicanism to the world. Neither man was unaware of the rapid changes encroaching upon their ideal world. When they perceived these changes as threatening, they did not refuse the fight. That fight, is analyzed in the next chapter.

---

<sup>142</sup> Bryan *Memoirs*, 465-466.

## Chapter 5

### Expansion and The 1900 Presidential Election

Even before the 1895 revolution in Cuba began there were those in America who coveted the island for various reasons. In fact, many US presidents including: John Quincy Adams, James Monroe, James Polk and Franklin Pierce, eyed Cuba. After the Civil War, Reconstruction effectively distracted expansionist efforts. By the 1880's however, the nation had healed enough to begin looking outward again. As early as 1893 expansionist interest in general, and in Cuba in particular, was quite strong. Anti-expansionists were alarmed enough to editorialize their opposition. Carl Schurz, a former Civil War general, Senator from Missouri, Secretary of the Interior, and prolific editor, felt alarm at the notion of annexing Cuba. He believed such a move by the US would set a precedent that would be difficult to overcome. He believed such an acquisition would lead to others until "we shall hardly find a stopping place north of the Gulf of Darien; and we shall have an abundance of reasons, one as good as another, for not stopping even there."<sup>143</sup> Just as there were those in favor of imperialism, there were those who opposed such a policy. The decisive confrontation of the opposing ideas happened in the presidential election of 1900.

Though the Spanish-American War had been over for more than two years, by the 1900 election, the impact of the war was still being felt. The major issue in the presidential campaign—a direct result of the war—that again pitted William McKinley against William Jennings Bryan, was ostensibly imperialism. However, it is important to remember that the question before voters was not *if* a policy of expansion should be pursued; that was already an

---

<sup>143</sup> E. Berkeley Tompkins, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 70.

established fact. The election was a referendum to see if the people would support or repeal the policy in the case of the Philippines.

As this paper has already made clear, America has been expansionist from its inception. In fact it had a history of overseas expansion prior to the Spanish-American war. Secretary of State William Seward, turned his eye toward expansion immediately after the Civil War concluded. Historians Irwin and Debi Unger characterized Seward as a “sincere believer in American manifest destiny.” He also believed in the inherent superiority of Americans. Writing to the American minister to France he declared, the “advance of civilization in this hemisphere seem to us. . .likely to be secured when the other American states assimilate to our own.”<sup>144</sup> Noting a need for refueling bases or coaling stations for the navy more than twenty years before the publication of Alfred Thayer Mahan’s *Influence of Sea Power on History: 1660-1783*, he secured possession of Midway Island in the Pacific and attempted to purchase the Virgin Islands in the Caribbean. He also purchased the Alaska territory from Russia in 1867.<sup>145</sup> Subsequent U.S. diplomats and elected officials also saw advantages in gaining possession of lands beyond the shores. The most important acquisition prior to the war of 1898 was the Hawaiian Islands. The islands had a long history of interaction with Americans dating back to at least the 1820s when missionaries arrived to convert the natives. Near the end of president Benjamin Harrison’s term, the American residents of Hawaii, mostly rich sugar plantation owners, staged a coup d’ etat and petitioned the state department for annexation to the United States. The new president, Grover Cleveland, however, did not like the tactics used to secure the islands and blocked the move. It was postponed until the Republicans regained control of the White House. President McKinley

---

<sup>144</sup> Debi Unger and Irwin Unger, *The Vulnerable Years: The United States, 1896-1917* (Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press, 1977), 36.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 37.



signed the Newland's Resolution, officially annexing the islands and designating them a U.S. territory. The Hawaiian Organic Act established a formal government in February 1900.

Once McKinley and the Republicans were in Washington D. C., acquisition of foreign lands was different on two counts. First, the U.S. engaged in warfare against a European power that resulted in territorial gain. Though an unintended consequence of the war, it was a deviation of traditional policy nonetheless. Secondly, the acquisition of the Philippines differed because it was not a relatively empty contiguous territory destined to become a territory and it was not critical for direct national defense. Ideological differences concerning the Philippine acquisition were described in the previous chapter. This change in expansionist policy weighed heavily in the 1900 presidential election.

Another major development for the election was the decision to place Theodore Roosevelt on the Republican ticket as Vice-President to fill the vacancy left after Garret Hobart died in office. He would become the Republican star spokesman while president McKinley honored the tradition set by George Washington that incumbents not campaign on their own behalf. Instead, the president went on a speaking tour the year prior to the election year.

McKinley's purpose in undertaking his speaking tour was to assess the public sentiment concerning the expansion while gently guiding them to see the wisdom of the course of actions already underway. As of yet he had not decided whether or not annexation was a viable option. While speaking to the public, the president usually framed his comments in religious terms that spoke directly to the values and ideals. After emphasizing that the war had begun in a purely altruistic and sacrificial manner, he rhetorically asked a gathering in Chicago, "My countrymen, the currents of destiny flow through the hearts of the people. Who will check them, who will divert them, who will stop them?" Answering he finished, "the movements of men, planned and

designed by the Master of men will never be interrupted by the American people.”<sup>146</sup> In Omaha, McKinley directly linked present and future actions concerning the Philippines to liberal Protestant pre-millennial history which stated people and nations must “partner with God in order to help achieve the kingdom of God.” To that end he stated:

The faith of a Christian nation recognizes the hand of Almighty God in the ordeal through which we have passed. Divine favor seemed manifest everywhere. In fighting for humanity’s sake we have been signally blessed. . . . Right action follows right purposes. We may not at all times be able to divine the future, the way may not always seem clear, but if our aims are high and unselfish, somehow and in some way the right end will be reached. The genius of the nation, its freedom, its wisdom, its humanity, its courage, its justice, favored by Divine Providence, will make it equal to every task and the master of every emergency.<sup>147</sup>

Even more powerfully he told a crowd in St. Louis, “We must gather the just fruits of victory. We must pursue duty step by step. We must follow the light as God has given us to see the light. . . .” The president’s rhetoric not only reinforced the sense of destiny and duty Americans already had, it also may have been intended to ease the burden of trying to understand the events that God was apparently directing. After reiterating the noble purposes of the war with Spain, he told a crowd in Chicago, “Duty determines destiny. . . . Almighty God has His plans and methods for human progress, and not infrequently they are shrouded for the time being in impenetrable mystery.”<sup>148</sup>

In July of 1900, from his front porch in Canton, Ohio, the incumbent president accepted his party’s nomination and officially declared imperialism the most important issue. More than half of his acceptance speech addressed the topic. Though he also discussed economic issues, he

---

<sup>146</sup> Paul T. McCartney, *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898, and the Rise of American Imperialism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006). 214.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 215-216.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 217.

did so very briefly. McKinley confidently told his listeners of the God ordained path the nation would pursue after the successful completion of the election:

A just war has been waged for humanity and with it have come new problems and responsibilities. . . .The Philippines are ours and American authority must be supreme throughout the archipelago. There will be amnesty broad and liberal but no abatement of our rights, no abandonment of our duty. There must be no scuttle policy. We will fulfill in the Philippines the obligations imposed by the triumphs of our arms and by the treaty of peace; by international law; by the nation's sense of honor, and more than all by the rights, interests and conditions of the Philippine peoples themselves. No outside interference blocks the way to peace and a stable government. The obstructionists are here, not elsewhere. They may postpone but they cannot defeat the realization of the government, in which the inhabitants shall have the largest participation for which they are capable. . . .There will be no turning aside, no wavering, no retreat. No blow has been struck except for liberty and humanity and none will be. We will perform without fear every national and international obligation. The Republican party . . .broke the shackles of 4,000,000 slaves and made them free, and to the party of Lincoln has come another supreme opportunity which it has bravely met in the liberation of 10,000,000 of the human family from the yoke of imperialism.<sup>149</sup>

After the speech, McKinley continued to receive influential members of congress and public figures in his Canton home and at the White House but the baton of active campaigning he passed to his eager, young running mate.

Anti-imperialists viewed the upcoming election of 1900 as their best chance to quickly reverse the expansionist policy the McKinley administration had undertaken. Key leaders of the movement understood that their best chance of victory would be with a single-issue campaign. Only if public focus was riveted on the evils of Imperialism could they hope to sway those who supported the policy and energize those who mildly opposed expansion. Erving Winslow, the Anti-Imperialist League's Secretary, stated early in the year, "It is already sufficiently obvious to many of us that whatever leader with a single heart opposes imperialism at home and abroad . . . will be the next President of the United States." Considering the dogged determination with

---

<sup>149</sup> William McKinley, "Acceptance Speech by President William McKinley, Canton, Ohio, July 12, 1900," *History of American Presidential Elections*, vol 3, ed., Schlesinger (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1940-1.

which William Jennings Bryan had attacked other issues, William A. Croffut, a founder of the Washington Anti-Imperialist League, was compelled to pen a letter urging Bryan to focus his energies if nominated at the Democratic convention.

Imperialism is certainly to be the great issue next summer. If there were no other issue than that I believe you would be elected, and I beg you to think profoundly before encumbering the platform with anything else. If you will leave in abeyance the definite demand for free silver, I don't believe anything can beat you. If that demand is explicitly reiterated, you cannot carry Massachusetts, Connecticut or New York. You will be fifty electoral votes short and our country will be cursed with a continuation of this monstrous and wicked policy. Let us be politic this time, especially in questions where assertion has been had and where your position cannot be doubtful.<sup>150</sup>

Unanimously, Bryan's anti-imperialist colleagues urged him to take a more definite stand. Moorfield Story, President of the anti-imperialist league wrote to Bryan saying, "I think that the only issue in this campaign is the issue of imperialism."<sup>151</sup> Bryan did not heed their advice.

The Democrats nominated Bryan and quickly made imperialism their primary campaign issue but, much to the chagrin, of ardent anti-imperialists not the sole issue. He adamantly insisted that the "silver coinage" issue from his previous campaign be included. However, Anti-imperialism gained primacy in the Democratic Platform because it was the "burning issue . . . growing out of the Spanish war, involves the very existence of the Republic, and the destruction of our free institutions. We regard it as the primary issue of the campaign." The Democratic Platform went on to detail the party's position:

We condemn and denounce the Philippine policy of the present administration. It has involved the Republic in an unnecessary war, sacrificed the lives of many of our noblest sons, and placed the United States, previously known and applauded throughout the world as the champion of freedom, in the false and un-American position of crushing with military force the efforts of our former allies to achieve liberty and self-government. . . . We oppose militarism. It means conquest abroad

---

<sup>150</sup> Croffut to Bryan, Sept. 9, 1899, Croffut Papers. Quoted in Tompkins, 215.

<sup>151</sup> I. Dementyev, *USA: Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists* (Moscow, USSR: Progress Publishers, 1979), 229-230.

and intimidation and oppression at home. It means the strong arm, which has ever been fatal to free institutions. It is what millions of our citizens have fled from Europe. It will impose upon our peace loving people a large standing army and unnecessary burden of taxation, and will be a constant menace to their liberties. . . This republic has no place for a vast military establishment, a sure runner to compulsory military service and conscription. . . For the first time in our history, and coeval with the Philippine conquest, has there been a wholesale departure from our time honored and approved system of volunteer organization. We denounce it as un-American, un-democratic, and un-republican, and as a subversion of the ancient and fixed principles of a free people.<sup>152</sup>

The platform and Bryan's acceptance speech laid out Democratic plans to end the war in the Philippines immediately, grant the islands independence, and to provide protection from other potential invaders. Even more than McKinley's, Bryan's acceptance speech was dedicated to these and other issues revolving around the outcome of the Spanish-American War.<sup>153</sup>

Though both parties made imperialism the focus of the campaign, the Democrats staked out a position in stark contrast to that of the McKinley administration. While McKinley advocated imperialism in the name of humanity, duty and destiny, Bryan and the Democrats based their opposition to imperial policy as antithetical to republican virtue and Jeffersonian values.

Bryan, as always, saw the issue as a black and white moral issue. Therefore, no compromise was possible. Even before his nomination, as early as June of 1898 Bryan was cautioning against the temptation of conquest resulting from the war for Cuba. In a speech given at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha, Nebraska, Bryan clearly outlined the differences in the party's positions. Like the clergy and religious press, he framed his argument in Biblical context stating, "War is harsh. . . . We may well pray for the coming of the day, promised in Holy Writ, when the swords shall be beaten into plowshares and the spears into pruning hooks." But in

---

<sup>152</sup> "Democratic Platform," Schlesinger. *History of American Presidential Elections, Volume III: 1900-1936*

<sup>153</sup> William Jennings Bryan, "Acceptance Speech of William Jennings Bryan", Ibid.

justifying his, and most of the country's support for the Spanish-American war noted, "but universal peace cannot come until Justice is enthroned throughout the world. Jehovah deals with nations as He deals with men, and for both decrees that the wages of sin is death." Bryan believed going to war with Spain over Cuba was no sin in the eyes of God and he believed history would remember the actions of America well if it could avoid the temptation of conquest.<sup>154</sup>

Bryan volunteered to serve in the Cuban campaigns but he, and the Nebraska regiment he led, never saw combat. They sat out the war in Florida suffering from the heat and disease. Bryan resigned his commission in December of 1898 fearing that the war he supported for humanitarian reasons had turned to purposes of imperialism. Upon arriving in Savannah, Georgia he told the press, "I can be more useful to my country as a civilian than as a soldier." The questions surrounding what to do with the Philippines was foremost on his mind and he stated, "In my judgment, our nation is in greater danger just now than Cuba." To Bryan, no less than the founding principles of the Republic were at stake. He advised, "Our nation must give up any intention of entering upon a colonial policy, such as is now pursued by European countries, or it must abandon the doctrine that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."<sup>155</sup> Just as there were ideological aspect of the debate, predictably, there were racial arguments on both sides.

Pro-expansionists leading proponent, Theodore Roosevelt argued forcefully that the inhabitants of the newly acquired empire were incapable of self-government, and the United

---

<sup>154</sup> William Jennings Bryan, "First Speech on Imperialism" delivered June 14, 1898 to the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, Omaha, Nebraska. Reprinted in, *Bryan on Imperialism*, (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970) 4.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 5. "The Savannah Interview" December 13, 1898.

States had a divine duty to govern them to prevent “savage anarchy.” He described the population of the Philippines as “half-caste and native Christians, warlike Moslems, and wild pagans. Many of their people are utterly unfit for self-government, and show no signs of becoming fit.” He further argued that if the US failed to rule the Philippines, then “some stronger and more manful race” would.<sup>156</sup> His friend and Senator declared that God “had prepared the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a great purpose...he has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America.”<sup>157</sup>

Many church leaders agreed. Many viewed the military conquest of the Philippines as merely the first step toward true liberation of the Filipinos. A resolution passed at the Chicago Congregational Ministers’ Meeting stated, “In our opinion the churches of our country are ready for a forward movement in the occupation of these new fields and will cheerfully respond to an appeal to furnish the additional means for the work which so unexpectedly and unmistakably has been given them to do.” Likewise, the reverend J.B. Barton of Boston proclaimed, “The church must take up the work where the government lays it down. Our Government can do no more than say to Spain, ‘you shall not continue to oppress’; the church’s opportunity opens at the point where the hand of oppression is stayed.” The Methodist minister Dr. A. B. Leonard agreed stating, “The Christian Church must follow the army, and occupy the territory conquered by the war power of the nation.”<sup>158</sup>

Those opposing imperialism also used racism as justification of their argument. Journalist, former Secretary of the Interior and former advisor to President Lincoln, Carl Schurz

---

<sup>156</sup> Allen Merriam, “Racism in the Expansionist Controversy of 1898-1900,” *Phylon* 39, no 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr., 1978): 372.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. 374.

<sup>158</sup> Karraker, 242-3.

cited the same opinions of the “barbarous” inhabitants of the Philippines noted by the pro-expansionists. However, he believed democracy would be placed at risk not only because such acquisitions were contrary to the principles of the Constitution but he feared the implications of the inhabitants of the Philippines participation in the US government. He argued that statehood would imbalance the Senate, Congress and the Electoral College and lead to the “moral ruin of the Anglo-Saxon republic” and “demoralization and corruption beyond what this country has ever seen.”<sup>159</sup>

During the campaign Bryan and the Anti-Imperialist League tried to inform the public about the brutality and atrocities committed during the war but the well-financed Republicans more than matched their pamphlets and speeches. In an age before television and the internet, most of the public was ignorant of the true nature of the conflict. The public in general was easily distracted and the issues were confused.

McKinley effectively linked Democrats, and Bryan specifically, to the decision to go to war and to ratify the peace agreement that left the Philippines in American hands. Bryan had indeed supported both thus making his position seem unclear and, at worst, insincere and hypocritical. As Walter LaFeber argues, “Bryan helped confuse the imperialism debate himself when he supported the Paris Peace Treaty, and more militant Monroe Doctrine, and expansion into ‘desirable territory’, as the platform defined the term.”<sup>160</sup>

The Republicans also achieved a major foreign policy success during the Democratic convention. McKinley and Secretary of State Hay asked European and Asian countries to preserve Chinese borders and maintain open trade. This Open Door policy was meant to prevent

---

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. 376.

<sup>160</sup> Walter LaFeber quoted in, Robert Saldin, *War, the American State, and Politics Since 1898* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 60.



the division of China and maintain equal trading rights for all western countries. Surprisingly it met with little resistance. Walter LaFeber explained the importance of this development in terms of the 1900 campaign:

This foreign policy success affected domestic American politics directly. Democrats and Republicans alike were determined to keep China whole. Bryan had even suggested as one plank in the Democratic platform: “While we believe it is the duty of the government to protect the lives, the property and the commercial interests of its citizens in China, yet we protest against the use of present disturbances in China as a pretext for the seizing of territory or as an excuse for joining with European nations in the dismemberment of that ancient empire.” McKinley and Hay had fulfilled Bryan’s plank to the letter.<sup>161</sup>

Historian Robert Saldin rightly claims that the most effective tactic the Republicans used was to blur the differences between the two candidates. Like Bryan, McKinley claimed the moral high ground, claiming the insurgent Filipinos fired the first shots of the conflict. Long time ally and Senator Mark Hanna and Roosevelt successfully linked the acquisition of the Philippines to “legitimate business concerns and the interests of working Americans” and directly connected the democratic platform to “continued bloodshed in the Philippines because it offered the insurgents hope.”<sup>162</sup> More and more speeches by Bryan fell flat with the public and he dropped the topic on the campaign trail and switched to fighting against the trusts and finally settling on the “silver coinage” issue. Bryan thought he knew his audience, and throughout the campaign he probed for subjects they held dear to their hearts. In the long run large segments of the public struggled to identify, much less understand the central issue of the democratic election platform. Newspapers were overwhelmed with letters asking what the main issue of the election campaign was, and journalists portrayed the election as a game in which the players were trying to find the main issue.

---

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 61

Thus, in the 1900 election, foreign affairs were pivotal but in a rather unusual manner. Both parties immediately identified imperialism as the “paramount issue.” However, with much behind the scene action, McKinley was able to take preventative steps to negate his vulnerability on the issue. LaFeber concludes: “Overall, however, foreign affairs were important . . . in the sense that McKinley (with Hay’s help) neutralized it, removed it from the debate, and presented himself as the consistent, conservative protector of America’s traditional interests in the Pacific and Latin American areas.”<sup>163</sup> Without a clear topic to focus on and get worried about, voters were easily shifted their attention to other topics that were less troublesome or closer to home.

Several events, tragedies and forms of entertainment served to distract the American public from the issue of Imperialism happening on the other side of the globe. Domestic political and economic issues hit much closer to home in the lives of most. The weather was cause for alarm in several part of the country at different times.

In January a Nor’easter shut down the harbors in Boston. On the west coast, heavy rains cause mud slides that wreak havoc on railway lines. In February the orange crop in Florida was threatened when a record cold snap saw temperatures dip to sixteen degrees. And Galveston Texas was devastated by a hurricane that killed between six and eight thousand residents.

Divisions between business and labor came to a head across the country. In June the US Senate heatedly debated an anti-trust bill and strikes were staged by iron-workers in Cincinnati, tanners and sheet-metal workers in Kansas City, boiler makers in Akron and blacksmiths in Croton Landing, New York. However, politically the most important was the coal-miners strikes in Pennsylvania. After achieving success in the soft-coal miners strikes in the Midwest in 1897, the United Mine Workers of America attempted similar tactics in the east. Though the union

---

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

achieved wage increases for the workers, the owners refused to recognize the UMWA as the workers representative. In a deal largely brokered by McKinley ally Mark Hannah just two months before the election. The union declared victory and ended the strike.<sup>164</sup> In solving the labor dispute, the republican administration successfully diverted criticism of the domestic economic policy and increased public confidence in the president's fiscal plans. The public saw him as the man who led them out of the panic of 1893. Times were relatively good and the mood of the country was optimistic.

Since its founding, one of the mantras of the United States was progress. The 1890s, more than any decade previous, were representative of the change and advancement Americans held dear. For the first time, people could travel long distances quickly and in relative comfort. Technological advancement was revolutionary. In 1900 Henry Ford introduced the first Detroit made automobile. X-rays were discovered in 1895. Inventor Thomas Edison experimented with the idea and produced a working portable x-ray device. The phonograph and motion pictures changed the way people were entertained, and the electric light was seen as miraculous. People saw the potential for the future in all of these advancements and were excited. They naturally wanted to acquire these for themselves and focused their interest and energy on things that they could directly control. The Philippines, after all were on the other side of the world and they trusted their elected officials to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with God's divine direction for His chosen nation. The Democrats, Bryan and the anti-imperialists were easily defeated with McKinley winning 292 electoral votes to Bryans 155.

In the aftermath of the election, though not successful, perhaps the anti-imperialists efforts were not for nothing. As Tompkins notes, "their efforts were very valuable in helping to

---

<sup>164</sup> Robert J. Cornell, *The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1957), 45.

keep the country from proceeding further along this thorny route than otherwise would have been the case.” He notes that bitter experience was also a hard teacher and the US has not since gone down the direct imperial path.<sup>165</sup> When President Theodore Roosevelt acquired the Panama Canal zone, it was only the immediate area needed for the canal and the protection of it. There were no efforts to take the entire country of Panama. To be sure the methods of gaining the canal zone was frowned upon by the anti-imperialists but there were no efforts to rule over indigenous people in the area.

The general public was also becoming aware of the implications of imperial responsibility and they became increasingly unsettled by it. Famous author Mark Twain, who was a member of several anti-imperialist organizations, wrote a scathing, sarcastic essay titled “To the Person Sitting in the Darkness” mocking the imperialists.

There have been lies, yes, but they were told in a good cause. We have been treacherous, but that was only in order that real good might come out of apparent evil. True, we have crushed a deceived and confiding people; we have turned against the weak and the friendless who trusted us; we have stamped out a just and intelligent and well-ordered republic; we have stabbed an ally in the back and slapped the face of a guest; we have bought a shadow from an enemy that hadn't it to sell; we have robbed a trusting friend of his land and his liberty; we have invited our clean young men to shoulder a discredited musket and do bandits' work under a flag which bandits have been accustomed to fear, not to follow; we have debouched America's honor and blacked her face before the world; but each detail was for the best.<sup>166</sup>

The American people listened to Mark Twain as well as their clergy. the Reverend Robert E. Bisbee reiterated to a now more attentive American audience, “The cost, the hardships, the slaughter, the unspeakable personal crimes . . . I do not dwell upon; for great as they are, they

---

<sup>165</sup> Tompkins, 236-7.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 243.

are of slight importance compared with the destruction of our ideals and the suppression of the spirit of independence among millions of people.”<sup>167</sup>

By 1907, Historian Eric Love notes that even President Theodore Roosevelt was ready to alter his position on imperialism. When trouble was brewing in Haiti and the Dominican Republic over unpaid debts to Germany, a real threat of foreign invasion existed. An aid suggested that annexing both island countries could easily solve the whole matter. Roosevelt replied that he was no more interested in annexing Hispaniola “than a gorged boa constrictor would be to swallow a porcupine wrong-end-to.”<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>168</sup> Eric T. L. Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 197.

## **Conclusion**

How a nation conducts its foreign policy is the sum of many different influences, interests and pressures. Economic influences of course played a role in the American imperial experiment. The search for new markets to support the industrial output of its factories was at the forefront of many politicians' agenda. For many military men, this necessitated physical expansion to protect those markets and to provide coaling stations for the naval vessels designated to protect the acquired lands. Of course these interest in favor of expansion, and their advocates, had equally as ardent opponents.

As we have seen, a diverse group of activists and many segments of American society adamantly fought to prevent the acquisition of the Philippines. Men such as former president Grover Cleveland, steel tycoon, Andrew Carnegie, author, Mark Twain, and, of course, the reluctant presidential hopeful William Jennings Bryan, were the poster children of the anti-imperialist cause. However, they were the face of a minority segment of society—common citizens—that opposed imperialism. While opinions on either side of the imperial debate were polar opposites, they had one thing in common; they both used, as this paper has shown, religious rhetoric to rally support for their respective positions. Religion formed the basis of the ideology of the chosen leaders as well as the public at large. The voice of the people was relayed to the governing elites through religious rhetoric as well. Newspapers, editorials, sermons, and letters were the medium the policy makers listened to for an accurate gauge of the public sentiment. Likewise, these same avenues voiced the policy-makers agendas to the people. While enjoying the free security two oceans provided, Americans on both sides of the debate formed idealistic conceptions of how God was directing His chosen nation. Though that free security is still there, its contribution may be lessening, but not drastically.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, president Bush, speaking at the National Cathedral in Washington, declared, “But our responsibility to history is clear: To answer these attacks and rid the world of evil.” He believed in America as God’s chosen nation and he was confident of the nation’s ability to heed God’s call to action. To be sure his audience, and the nation understood, he concluded, “As we have been assured, neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, can separate us from God’s love. May He bless the souls of the departed. May He comfort our own, and may He always guide our country. God bless America.”<sup>169</sup> The president was not only expressing his own beliefs but shaping the national mood as well.

While the use of religious rhetoric has a history in American policy making that is four centuries old, its use does not imply a consistency of national mood. The ‘mind’ or ‘spirit of the age’ varied greatly with time. The timeframe book-ended by the Civil War and the election of 1900 saw a great transformation of the American mind. In just a short 35 years, Americans witnessed great advances in technology, drastic changes in economics with the establishment of labor unions and trusts and significantly, the closing of the frontier. However, the government and foreign policy had not advanced. Historian Henry Adams summarized the time by saying, “The whole financial system was in chaos. . . . The whole government from top to bottom was rotten with the senility of what was antiquated and the instability of what was improvised.” In his opinion, the whole period “was poor in purpose and barren in results.” Mr. Adams was just as disappointed with the closing of the west. Reporting in 1894 he noted, “Compared with the Rockies of 1871, the sense of wilderness had vanished.”<sup>170</sup> Describing the same period thirty

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 604.

<sup>170</sup> Walter Millis, *The Martial Spirit*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931, quoted in A.E. Campbell ed. *Expansion and Imperialism*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), 14-15.

years later, historian Walter Millis, noted that there were those that responded differently. “The frontier had dissolved suddenly into the past, and we looked up to find nothing before our eyes save saltwater and the nations of the earth which lay beyond it.”<sup>171</sup> However instead of looking with regret upon the closing of the west, a new generation saw potential and inspiration. The old guard was being replaced by a more youthful, more energetic group of entrepreneurs, politicians and statesmen.

These young leaders found themselves at a turning point in American history at the dawn of the twentieth-century. Historian Richard Hofstadter points out that this generation, like so many before it, believed the hand of God was firmly directing the affairs of the nation. However, within the confines of the North American continent, there was no longer opportunity for the new generation to experience the “great adventures” previous Anglo-Saxon generations had enjoyed. The Indian wars were won, the land was settled and the issues of slavery were settled through the efforts of the Civil War. This new generation must prove themselves upon foreign shores. But again, the rhetoric was of Duty and Destiny. Journalist Walter Hines Page summed up the times and the implication of the imperial decision saying, “A change in our national policy may change our very character, and we are now playing with the great forces that may shape the future of the world—almost before we know it.” Already knowing the answer he rhetorically asked, “Shall we be content with peaceful industry, or does there yet lurk in us the adventurous spirit of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers? And have we come to a time when, no more great enterprises awaiting us at home, we shall be tempted to seek them abroad?”<sup>172</sup> Led by Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge and other young lions, the new generation embraced

---

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>172</sup> Walter Hines Page, quoted in, Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1965), 181.



the new national destiny with confidence. They embraced a Christian nationalism that made them God's divine instruments. They saw America in the role of messianic intervention. God's chosen people and God's chosen nation would uplift and save the world. However, as professor Albert Weinberg points out, the definition of destiny changed in a subtle yet important way in the 1890s. Previous expansion was undertaken because Americans willed to do so and God would overcome any opposition. The new meaning implied that the Americans could not resist taking the action. They did not choose to expand, they had to expand to stay within God's will. It was a duty they could not ignore. As president McKinley said, "duty determines destiny."<sup>173</sup> Though the horrors that were the Philippine-American war tempered this belief somewhat, traces of it remain a part of American civil religion and Christian nationalism today.

The rhetoric of presidents McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt could still be heard prior to World War I from Woodrow Wilson, prior to World War II from Franklin Roosevelt and prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan from both George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush. Why does this idea exhibit such persistence within the American politics? The answer, I believe is two-fold: first, it is an effective means to rationalize foreign intervention whether that intervention is military, commercial or missionary. Secondly, many Americans genuinely believe God has His hand on their country and is really in control of their collective destiny. In either case the message has to be repeated often to either gain public support for a desired goal or to keep the nation within God's Divine will. This is no simple task as the public is easily distracted.

As described in the last chapter, the presidential election of 1900 was supposedly about imperialism. However, many other events and concerns vied for the attention of citizens and elected officials alike. The Pennsylvania coal miner strikes in 1899 and 1900, a hurricane that hit

---

<sup>173</sup> Albert Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*, 254, paraphrased in Hofstadter, *Paranoid Style*, 177.

Galveston, Texas, and fascination with new technologies such as motion pictures were quite effective distractions. The same is true in the present day. Events in the Middle East are overshadowed by violent, racially driven protests in Ferguson, Missouri, whether or not Senator Hillary Clinton sent classified e-mail over an unclassified network, or the latest antics of teenage pop stars. Why has such a short attention span been evident for so long in American politics? While the focus of this paper has been expansionist policy, the answer to this question applies to other aspects as well.

Preston's analysis of why religion was important to American politics is still true today. Religion is still important to individuals and the masses—though in an increasingly pluralistic society—and America still enjoys a degree of “free security”. The minds of Americans however, are easily diverted from serious policy matters because they have put their faith in the civil religion of America to handle them. America as God's chosen nation, being directed by His divine hand either cannot fail or it is being punished if it is unsuccessful. Such a belief relieves the individual—or a nation—of responsibility. Rather than assuming the protection of being in God's divine will, a nation is much better off seeking to understand and follow His will. As a Christian, I agree with president John Adams who told the Massachusetts Militia in 1798 that, “. . . we have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”<sup>174</sup> Religion is the basis of morality. That foundation should be in a religion, but that religion cannot

---

<sup>174</sup> Charles Francis Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States: With a Life of the Author, Vol IX*, (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1854), 229.

be imbedded within the system of government. The foundation of good governance cannot be a civil religion unless it is attended to by a moral, well informed people.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

Bryan, William J. *Heart To Heart Appeals*, New York: Fleming Revell Company, 1917.  
Reprinted by Forgotten Books, 2012.

\_\_\_\_\_. *In his Image* Teddington, Middlesex, England, The Echo Library Press, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Prince of Peace*, New York: Fleming Revell Company, 1909. Reprinted by Forgotten Books, 2012.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Selections*, Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1967.

Bryan, William J., Bryan, Mary B. *Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan*, Chicago: The John C. Winston Company, 1925.

Bryan, William J. et al. *Republic or Empire? The Philippine Question*, Chicago: The Independence Company, 1899.

Cherny, Robert W., ed. "Dan Bride's Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan." *Nebraska History* 66 (1985): 257-271.

Graff, Henry F. ed., *American Imperialism and the Philippine Insurrection: Testimony Taken From Hearings on Affairs in the Philippine Islands Before the Senate Committee on the Philippines—1902*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969.

Kipling, Rudyard. "The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands," *McClure's Magazine*, Feb, 1899.

Lincoln, Abraham. "Address at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania," in *Selected Speeches and Writings: Abraham Lincoln*, Edited by Don E. Fehrenbacher. New York: Vintage, 1992.

Link, Arthur S., ed. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Vol. 22-28*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Address at a Memorial to William Jennings Bryan," May 3, 1934, Accessed November 14, 2012, from:  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14861>.

Smith, Seymoure. "Personal Recollections of William Jennings Bryan," Nebraska State Historical Society: MS #464 Box 1, Folder 5.4.F1.

Wilson, Woodrow. "Address of President Wilson to the U.S. Senate 22 January 1917," Accessed 28 Sep 2012, from: <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/peacewithoutvictory.htm>.

Winslow, Erving. "The Anti-Imperialist League Apologia Pro Vita Sua." Published: 1908,  
Accessed May 15, 2013, from: <http://www.archive.org/details/antiimperialistl01wins>.

## Secondary Sources

- Adams, Charles Francis. *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States: With a Life of the Author, Vol IX*, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1854.
- Ambrosius, Lloyd E. *Wilsonian Statecraft: Theory and Practice of Liberal Internationalism During World War I*, Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1991.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origen and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso Books, 2006.
- Armstrong, William H. *Major McKinley: William McKinley and the Civil War*, Kent OH: Dent State University Press, 2000.
- Armstrong, William M. *E. L. Godkin: A Biography*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *E. L. Godkin and American Foreign Policy, 1865-1900*, New York: Bookman Associates, 1957.
- Beisner, Robert L. *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900*, Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968.
- Bellah, Robert N. and McLoughlin, William G. eds. *Religion in America*, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968.
- Blight, David W. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Blum, Edward J. *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005.
- Bonnell, John, S., *Presidential Profiles: Religion in the Life of American Presidents*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971.
- Bremer, Francis J., *John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Campbell, A. E. ed., *Expansion and Imperialism*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970.
- Campbell, Charles S. *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations, 1865-1900*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1976.

- Cherry, Conrad I. *Gods New Israel: Religious interpretations of American Destiny*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Clements, Kendrick A. *William Jennings Bryan: Missionary Isolationist*, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1982.
- Coletta, Paolo E. *William Jennings Bryan Vol. I: Political Evangelist, 1860-1908*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.
- . *William Jennings Bryan Vol. II: Progressive Politician and Moral Statesman, 1909-1915*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969.
- Cornell, Robert J. *The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902*, Washington DC: Catholic University Press, 1957.
- Curti, Merle E. *Bryan and World Peace*, New York: Octagon Books, 1969.
- Dawley, Alan. *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Dementyev, I. *USA: Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists*, Moscow, USSR: Progress Publishers, 1979.
- Dewey, George. *Autobiography of George Dewey, Admiral of the Navy*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913.
- Dobson, John M. *America's Ascent: The United States Becomes a Great Power, 1880-1914*, Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1978.
- Ellis, John Tracy. *The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons: Archbishop of Baltimore, 1834-1921*, Milwaukee, WI: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1952.
- Feller, Daniel. *The Jacksonian Promise: America, 1815-1840*, Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Fisk, John. *Beginnings of new England, or he Puritan Theocracy in its Relation to Civil and Religious Liberty*, Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, 1889.
- Fuller, Edmund and David E. Green. *God in the White House: The Faith of American Presidents*, New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1968.
- Gaustad, Edwin and Leigh Schmidt. *The Religious History of America: The Heart of the American Story from Colonial Times to Today*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.

- Gianakos, Perry E., and Albert Karson. *American Diplomacy and the Sense of Destiny: Volume I, the Initial Thrust, 1885-1900*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1966.
- Glad, Paul. *The Trumpet Soundeth: William Jennings Bryan and His Democracy, 1896-1912*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960.
- Gossett, Thomas F. *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Gould, Lewis L. *The Spanish-American War and President McKinley*, Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Grand Old Party*, New York: Random House, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Presidency of William McKinley*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1980.
- Greenberg, Amy S. *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico*, New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2012.
- Grenville, John A. S. and George Berkley Young. *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy: Studies in Foreign Policy, 1873-1917*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966.
- Griffin, David R. et al., eds. *The American Empire and the Commonwealth of God: A Political, Economic, Religious Statement*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Guyatt, Nicholas. *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607-1876*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Hatch, Nathan O. *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Democratization of American Christianity*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Hendrickson, David and Tucker, Robert. *Empire of Liberty: the Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Hietala, Thomas R. *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Higham, Nicholas J. and Ryan, Martin J. *The Anglo-Saxon World*, London: Yale University Press, 2013.



- Hofstadter, Richard. *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1965.
- Hoganson, Kristin L. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American War*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Hutchison, William, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Humphrey, Edward Frank, *Nationalism and Religion in America, 1774-1789*, Boston, MA: Chipman Law Publishing Company, 1924.
- Hunt, Michael H. *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Jones, Gregg. *Honor in the Dust: Theodore Roosevelt, War in the Philippines, and the Rise and Fall of America's Imperial Dream*, New York: New American Library, 2012.
- Kauffman, Bill. *Ain't My America: The Long, Noble History of Antiwar Conservatism and Middle American Anti-Imperialism*, New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2008.
- Kazin, Michael. *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.
- Kirakossian, Arman, ed. *The Armenian Massacres 1894-1896: U.S. Media Testimony*, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004.
- Koenig, Louis. *Bryan: A Political Biography of William Jennings Bryan*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971.
- Krenn, Michael L., *The Color of Empire: Race and American Foreign Relations*, Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006.
- Leary, William M. Jr. and Arthur S. Link. *The Diplomacy of World Power: The United States, 1889-1920*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Leech, Margaret, *In the Days of McKinley*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.
- Leinwand, Gerald. *William Jennings Bryan: An Uncertain Trumpet*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007.

- Linder, Robert D. and Richard V. Pierard. *Twilight of the Saints: Biblical Christianity and Civil Religion in America*, Dover Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978.
- Linder, Robert D. and Richard V. Pierard. *Civil Religion and the Presidency*, Grand Rapids, MI., Academie Books, 1988.
- Linderman, Gerald. *The Mirror of War: American Society and the Spanish-American War*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 1974.
- Link, William A. and Susannah J. Link., eds. *The Gilded Age and Progressive Era: A Documentary Reader*, Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing Limited, (Wiley-Blackwell), 2012.
- Longley, Clifford. *Chosen People: The Big Idea That Shapes England and America*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2002.
- Love, Eric T. L. *Race Over Empire: Racism and Imperialism, 1865-1900*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- MacKenzie, Kenneth. *The Robe and the Sword: The Methodist Church and the Rise of American Imperialism*, Washington DC: Public Affairs Press, 1961.
- May, Ernest R. *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power*, Chicago: Imprint Publications Inc., 1961.
- McFarland, Philip, *Mark Twain and the Colonel: Samuel L. Clemens, Theodore Roosevelt, and the Arrival of a New Century*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012.
- McCartney, Paul T. *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898, and the Rise of American Imperialism*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006.
- McMath, Robert C. *American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.
- Mead, Walter Russell. *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001.
- Miller, Scott. *The President and the Assassin: McKinley, Terror, and Empire at the Dawn of the American Century*, New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2011.
- Morgan, H. Wayne, *William McKinley and His America*, Kent, OH: Kent State University, 2003.
- Moynihan, James H. *The Life of Archbishop John Ireland*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1953.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Irony of American History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013.
- Noll, Mark A., *The History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the Present*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Offner, John. *An Unwanted War: The Diplomacy of the United States and Spain over Cuba, 1895-1898*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Paolino, Ernest N., *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1973.
- Paterson, Thomas G. and Stephen G. Rabe., eds. *Imperial Surge: The United States Abroad, the 1890's-Early 1900's*, Lexington, MA, 1992.
- Perez, Louis A. Jr., *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Phillips, Kevin. *William McKinley*, New York: Time Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2003.
- Philipson, David, *My Life as an American Jew: An Autobiography*, Cincinnati, OH: John G. Kidd and Son Inc., 1941.
- Preston, Andrew. *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.
- Rana, Aziz. *The Two Faces of American Freedom*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Reuter, Frank T. *Catholic Influences on American Colonial Policies, 1898-1904*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967.
- Roosevelt, Theodore. *Colonial Policies of the United States*, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1937.
- Saldin, Robert. *War, the American State, and Politics Since 1898*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Schirmer, Daniel B. *Republic or Empire: American Resistance to the Philippine War*, Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1972.

- Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr., ed. *History of American Presidential Elections*, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1972.
- Schoonover, Thomas. *Uncle Sam's War of 1898 and the Origins of Globalization*, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2005.
- Seymour, Richard. *American Insurgents: A Brief History of American Anti-Imperialism*, Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012.
- Sibley, David J. *A War of Frontier and Empire: The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2007.
- Smith, Willard H. *The Social and Religious Thought of William Jennings Bryan*, Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1975.
- Stout, Harry S. *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War*, New York: Viking Penguin.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Taliaferro, John. *All the Great Prizes: The Life of John Hay, from Lincoln to Roosevelt*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013.
- Tompkins, E. Berkley. *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970.
- Tourgee, Alvion. *Bricks Without Straw*, (1880 reprint), Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg Press, 1967.
- Trask, David F. *The War With Spain in 1898*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1981.
- Unger, Debi and Unger, Irwin. *The Vulnerable Years: The United States, 1896-1917*, Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press, 1977.
- Wacker, Grant. *Religion in Nineteenth Century America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Walker, George Leon. *Thomas Hooker: Preacher, Founder, Democrat*, New York: Dodd Mead Press, 1891.
- Welch, Richard E. Jr. *Imperialists Versus Anti-Imperialists: The Debate Over Expansionism in the 1890's*, Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Response to Imperialism: The United States and the Philippine-American War, 1899-1902*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

- Wells, Ronald A., ed., *The Wars of America: Christian Views*, Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1991.
- Wiebe, Robert. *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.
- Wilkerson, Marcus M. *Public Opinion and the Spanish-American War: A Study in War Propaganda*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1932.
- Wilson, Charles. *The Commoner: William Jennings Bryan*, Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1970.
- Witham, Larry. *A City On A Hill: How Sermons Changed the Course of American History*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008.
- Yoder, John Howard. *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, Koontz, Theodore J. and Alexix-Baker, Andy, eds., Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009.
- Zwick, Jim. *Confronting Imperialism: Essays on Mark Twain and the Anti-Imperialist League*, West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Publishing, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. *Mark Twain's Weapons of Satire: Anti-Imperialist Writings of the Philippine-American War*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992.

## Journal Articles

- Adler, Selig. "Bryan and Wilson Caribbean Penetration", *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 20, no. 2 (May, 1940). 198-226.
- Barnes, James. "Myths of the Bryan Campaign." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 34, no. 3 (December., 1947). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1898096> (accessed July 7, 2013).
- Baron, Harold. "Anti-Imperialism and the Democrats." *Science & Society* 21, no. 3 (Summer, 1957). <http://www.jstor.org/stable.40400511> (accessed July 7, 2013).
- Blee, Lisa. "Completing Lewis and Clark's Westward March: Exhibiting a History of Empire at the 1905 Portland World's Fair." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 106, no. 2 (Summer, 2005). (accessed February 22, 2013).
- Carnegie, Andrew. "Americanism versus Imperialism." *The North American Review* 168, no. 506 (January., 1899). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25119121> (accessed July 12, 2013).
- Curran, Robert. "Prelude to "Americanism": The New York Academia and Clerical Radicalism in the Late Nineteenth Century." *Church History* 47, no. 1 (March., 1978). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3164614> (accessed July 12, 2013).
- Dunch, Ryan. "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity." *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (October., 2002). <http://www.jstor.org/stable3590688> (accessed July 12, 2013).
- Farrar, F. W. "Imperialism and Christianity." *The North American Review* 171, no. 526 (September., 1900). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25105052> (accessed July 13, 2013).
- Field, James A. "American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book." *The American Historical Review* 83, no. 3 (June., 1978). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1861842> (accessed July 12, 2013).
- Gates, John M. "Philippine Guerrillas, American Anti-Imperialists, and the Election of 1900." *Pacific Historical Review* 46, no. 1 (February., 1977). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3637402> (accessed July 7, 2013).
- Gould, Lewis L. "Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and the Emergence of the Modern Presidency: An Introductory Essay." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (Winter, 1989). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40574563> (accessed August 16, 2013).
- Grosvenor, Charles H. "A Republican View of the Campaign." *The North American Review* 171, no. 524 (July., 1900). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25105025> (accessed June 22, 2013).

- Harrington, Fred H. "The Anti-Imperialist Movement in the United States, 1898-1900." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 22, no. 2 (September., 1935). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1898467> (accessed June 7, 2013).
- . "Literary Aspects of American Anti-Imperialism 1898-1902." *The New England Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (December., 1937). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/359930> (accessed July 13, 2013).
- Hawkins, Hunt. "Mark Twain's Anti-Imperialism." *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910* 25, no. 2 (Winter, 1993). <http://www.hstor.org/stable/27746527> (accessed April 3, 2013).
- Huntington, Samuel P. "American Ideals versus American Institutions." *Political Science Quarterly* 97 no. 1 (Spring, 1982). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2149312> (accessed July 12, 2013).
- Karraker, William Archibald. "The American Churches and the Spanish-American War." PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1940.
- Lasch, Christopher. "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man." *The Journal of Southern History* 24, no. 3 (Aug., 1958). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2954987> (accessed June 7, 2013).
- Latham, John S. "President McKinley's Active-Positive Character: A Comparative Revision with Barber's Typology." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (Fall, 1982). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27547863> (accessed July 15, 2013).
- Margulies, Herbert. "Robert M. La Follette as Presidential Aspirant: The First Campaign, 1908." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 80, no. 4 (Summer, 1997). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4636705> (accessed June 7, 2013).
- Maxwell, Robert S. "La Follette and the Election of 1900: A Half-Century Reappraisal." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 35, no. 1 (Autumn, 1951). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4632333> (accessed June 7, 2013).
- McCullough, Matthew. "My Brother's Keeper: Civil Religion, Messianic Interventionism, and the Spanish-American War of 1898." PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 2011.
- McMahon, Robert. "Cultures of Empire." *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (December., 2001). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2700390> (accessed February 22, 2013).
- Mead, Sidney E. "American Protestantism Since the Civil War. I. Denominationalism to Americanism." *The Journal of Religion* 36, no. 1 (January., 1956). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1200745> (accessed July 12, 2013).

- Merriam, Allen H. "Racism in the Expansionist Controversy of 1898-1900." *Phylon* 39, no 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr., 1978). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/274902> (accessed October 8, 2013).
- Parkhurst, Charles. "The State of the Country." *The Presbyterian Evangelist*, 10 March 1898.
- Quinn, Michael D. "The Mormon Church and the Spanish-American War: An End to Selective Pacifism." *Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 3 (August., 1974).  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3638261> (accessed August 1, 2013).
- Rossiter, Clinton. "The American Mission." *The American Scholar* 20, 1950-51.
- Saldin, Robert P. "American State Building in the Post-9/11 and Iraq Era." *Political Science and Politics* 41, no. 1 (January., 2008). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20452149> (accessed June 14, 2013).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "World War I and the System of 1896." *The Journal of Politics* 72, no. 3 (July 2010). doi: 10.1017/S0022381610000198, ISSN: 0022-3816 (accessed July 15, 2013).
- Schirmer, Daniel B. "On the Anti-Imperialist Movement: A Rejoinder." *Science & Society* 38, no. 1 (Spring, 1974). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40401761> (accessed June 7, 2013).
- Smith, Willard H. "William Jennings Bryan and Racism." *The Journal of Negro History* 54, no 2 (April 1969). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2716689> (accessed November 11, 2012).
- Stevenson, Adlai E., et.al. "Bryan or McKinley? The Present Duty of American Citizens." *The North American Review* 171, no. 527 (October., 1900).  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25105065> (accessed June 22, 2013).
- Todd, Jesse T. Jr. "Battling Satan in the City: Charles Henry Parkhurst and Municipal Redemption in Gilded Age New York." *American Presbyterians* 71, no. 4 (Winter, 1993). <http://www.hstor.org/stable/23332713> (accessed August 1, 2013).
- Tomkins, E. Berkeley. "Scylla and Charybdis: The Anti-Imperialist Dilemma in the Election of 1900." *Pacific Historical Review* 36, no. 2 (May 1967).  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3636719> (accessed June 7, 2013).
- Weeks, William. "American Nationalism, American Imperialism: An Interpretation of United States Political Economy, 1789-1861." *Journal of the Early Republic*, 14, no. 4, (Winter, 1994), 486.
- Whittaker, William G. "Samuel Gompers, Anti-Imperialist." *Pacific Historical Review* 38, no. 4 (November, 1969). (accessed August 1, 2013).