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NEW JERUSALEMS

Military Chaplains and the ideal of redemptive sacrifice in the Great War

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And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.
(Hebrews ix:22)

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God
(Revelation xx:10-11)

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ABSTRACT

In 1914 the language of sacrifice and redemption was everywhere. This thesis compares the responses of English Anglican and German Protestant military chaplains to the Great War (1914-1918). Instead of reconstructing their relationship with combatants, it reconstructs their mental worlds. Examining their diaries, sermons, letters, articles, and meditations, it traces their religious ideals of redemption through blood. It argues that chaplains on both sides of the front shared a moral language of redemptive sacrifice, articulating different permutations of the same idea. That moral language initially comprehended the war as an episode of salvation, correcting a crisis of modernity through sacred violence. War was interpreted as the culmination of the 'social question,' the climax of the churches' quest for community, social cohesion, the healing of class antagonism, the reclamation of the sacred. They proclaimed the war as a sacrament, a rite of purification that would purge modernity of its disorders, restore morality and renew piety. They commonly presumed a fallen, hedonistic and profane industrialised world, its social cohesion threatened by godless materialism, and its need for redemption. By blood the dead would purchase a cleansed, uplifed and redeemed society. Witnessing catastrophic bloodshed, the central moral problem for most chaplains was not high casualties alone. It was the threat that mass death would not morally and spiritually transform their societies. As the conflict escalated into attrition and stalemate, chaplains' increasingly doubted whether war could be intrinsically redemptive, redefining the ideal as a duty of civilians to repay their blood-debt to the dead and justify the sacrifices of their compatriots. Because chaplains were implicated in mass death by virtue of their office, the ideal of redemption through war became more an obligation than perception, an ideal that must be pursued lest the sacrifices of soldier-martyrs be cheapened. Divergences and nuanced differences emerged that distinguished Anglican and Protestant perceptions of the moral and spiritual impact of the war. Intraconfessional divergences emerged, in England over the relationship with French Catholic iconography and patri-passionism, in Germany over the meaning of defeat and the legitimacy of the new political order that replaced the Wilhelmine constitution. However, the common moral language of

redemptive sacrifice outweighs the confessional and national differences in their responses to mechanised slaughter.

INTRODUCTION

The Great War was flooded with high expectations. A religious vocabulary of suffering, sacrifice and redemption filled the prophecies of churches, who forecast that the war would heal and uplift their societies. To invest death with a transcendent meaning, the state churches of kindred belligerents, Britain and Germany, sent military chaplains to the frontlines to minister to combatants. Many of them interpreted the war to their nations. They preached the twin gospels of personal salvation through faith, and national salvation through war. Accompanied by such great hopes, that same war stands in collective memory as the 'seminal catastrophe of the twentieth century.'[1] Mechanised slaughter inflicted a harrowing scale of casualties, universal bereavement, and economic dislocation. Accentuating divisions, it unleashed political storms in postwar Europe, as the crucible of poverty, extremism and genocide. If the war is 'etched in the popular imagination as a futile and pointless conflict', that is partly because of the apparent falsehood of the hopes it shattered.[2] The Great War failed to live up to its name. Likewise, military chaplains persistently returned to the frustrated expectations of August, 1914.

When churches supported war in 1914, they were not just succumbing to a tidal wave of chauvinist emotion. They were driven by an ideal of a 'New Jerusalem' forged in war, an ideal with a religious prehistory. This thesis compares the military chaplains, on both sides of the front, who were formed in that tradition and who interpreted the bloodletting to soldier congregations and civilians. Instead of an institutional history of wartime chaplaincy, it charts the social history of the notion of redemptive sacrifice, as it was interpreted by chaplains, its chief religious torchbearers.[3] Depicting the muddy

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[1] G.F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order: Franco-Russian Relations, 1875-1890* (Princeton, 1979) p. 3.
[2] G. Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke, 2002) p. 225.
[3] For institutional histories, see J.G. Smyth, *In this sign conquer: the story of the army chaplains* (London, 1968) and A. Schübel, *300 Jahre Evangelische Soldatenseelsorge* (München, 1964).

killing fields and disfigured terrain as a giant Calvary, chaplains sanctified deaths and wounded bodies as sacramental offerings to the Kingdom of God on earth. On both sides of the front, chaplains preached men into lethal conflict in a nightmare of industrial slaughter. That role implicated them in the deaths of combatants, and bound them to uphold a faith that their war could be redemptive.

Chaplains were pastoral agents, national propagandists, and instruments of spiritual mobilisation. They brought a repertoire of biblical metaphor and sacramental ritual to sanctifying the struggle. Their duties were to stiffen morale, fortify the righteousness of their nations' cause, minister on behalf of their churches, and link the homeland with the frontline. They censored letters, buried the dead, corresponded with families of fallen or wounded men, preached to parades, dispensed sacraments, and handed out cigarettes. In Germany under the Hohenzollern monarchy, chaplains were chosen from the ranks of Pietism to sustain conformity and good evangelical moral discipline. Under subsequent rulers from Frederick the Great through to Kaiser Wilhelm II, the chaplaincy evolved both an ethos and theology oriented more to consecrating the incipient German nation-state. Of the almost 2000 Protestant pastors serving as chaplains in the war, Prussia boasted 1467 chaplains, Bavaria right of the Rhine provided 242 pastors and 37 left of the Rhine, Saxony 74 and Wuerttemberg 42. English armies had fielded chaplains since at least the 13th century. By the Armistice, 1985 chaplains had served from the Church of England. Germany's chaplains overwhelmingly came from Prussia and the German Evangelical Church that dominated north Germany. England's chaplaincy was far more pluriform in its intraconfessional and ecclesiastical traditions. Several commonalities justify the comparison of these two groups.[4] Both their confessions were established state churches aligned with their nations' cause. Both entered the war believing it would morally and spiritually uplift their national communities. Both had intensively engaged in the 'social question' which underpinned their war theologies. Outweighing their differences, the apocalyptic expectation that war would destroy and replace a corrupt civilisation was their common explanatory framework for the war experience.

This thesis argues that chaplains who interpreted the war to the public perceived the war through a common moral language of transformative war, a language that transcended boundaries between victor and vanquished. They presumed a fallen, hedonistic and profane industrialised world, its social cohesion threatened by godless materialism, needing regeneration through sacred violence. Greeted by German chaplains as a cleansing storm, by English chaplains as a war to end war, they gave different accents to the same idea: that sacrifice in war was righteous because it was redemptive. As well as defending their nations, by blood the dead and wounded would purchase a cleansed, uplifted and redeemed society, restored to duty, piety and service. Witnessing catastrophic bloodshed, the central moral problem for most chaplains was not high casualties alone. It was the threat that mass death would not morally and spiritually transform their societies. As the conflict escalated into attrition and stalemate, chaplains' responses divided over whether the war was a solution to the crisis of modernity or its product. Was the war exacerbating the malaise it was supposed to cure, rendering deaths worthless and futile?

Furthermore, the thesis argues that ex-chaplains redefined their ideas after the war. Because they conceived the war primarily as a manifestation of a deeper spiritual struggle in the West, victory and defeat rarely gave the last word to their anxieties. Chaplains from both confessions recast the notion of redemptive sacrifice, from something accomplished intrinsically by war into something future generations must achieve, sacralising society as a blood-debt to the dead. Their postwar commemorative rhetoric functioned not primarily as a language of consolation, but to inculcate unease and galvanise survivors to perfect the sacrifices of the dead. Churches comprehended the harrowing scale of killing and carnage through an 'economy of sacrifice,' a language of exchange in which the meaning and value of sacrifice depends upon its restitution.[5] For the chaplains implicated in their compatriots' deaths, this represented a dilemma, as the

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[4] This excludes the distinctive traditions of nonconformity and Protestantism in Britain and Germany's minority Free Churches.

[5] As formulated by E. Leed, *No Man's Land Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge, 1979) pp. 204-5.

disruption of this moral economy through society's bad faith would render them guilty men. Therefore, few chaplains wholly abandoned the idea of redemption through the memory of war.

Many differences between them were of temperature rather than substance. English Anglican and German Protestant traditions, as well as the immediate circumstances, lent different nuances to the concept of redemption through war. Intraconfessional divergences emerged. Patri-passionism, the impact of the war on the spiritual and moral constitution of the combatant, and in Germany the meaning of defeat and the legitimacy of the postwar political order were all disputed. Interconfessional divergences also opened up between Anglican and Protestant chaplains: over God's role in the origins of the war, the response to French Catholic iconography, and in the postwar period between German revanchist memories of the war and Anglican efforts to recast the war as the foundation of permanent peace. Throughout, they both anchored the meaning of the war in its perceived impact on the social order.

This thesis is structured to reflect these divergences and commonalities, dividing into three parts. Firstly, it reconstructs the evolving concept of redemptive sacrifice that shaped the way chaplains perceived the war at its inception. The second chapter explores the way chaplains perceived the moral and social impact of war on their own societies, through their observations of the two theatres of war, the frontline and the civilian homeland respectively. The final chapter examines how chaplains in the postwar world deployed memories of war that redefined redemption as a duty the living owed the dead.

Because chaplains' extant writings were directed to a home front audience, this thesis focuses primarily on how chaplains interpreted the war to the public. Even their field sermons, originally delivered at the front, are available only because they were printed and edited for domestic consumption. Private letters also interpreted the war, but usually cohered with their public writing and were often published for a wider audience. One group of Anglican chaplains are more marginal in the surviving evidence. Evangelical chaplains' ministry was devoted more exclusively to the harvest of souls, treating the war as an opportunity for proselytising the masses rather than portraying the

war as a sacred experience. Though they surface in disputes surrounding the administrative machinery of chaplaincy, they generally wrote and published less because their audience was narrower - not the reading public of the homeland but their flock of active servicemen. Consequently they produced less literature. They usually believed patri-passionism, the conflation of Christ's Passion with death in armed combat, was a heresy. They are included here as dissenters where the fragmentary evidence permits. The history of redemptive sacrifice is also their resistance to it.

Two interrelated themes dominate the established historiography surrounding religion and the Great War: nationalism, and secularisation. Scholarship stresses the external, nationalist trajectory of the churches' wartime stance. Churches proclaimed that their nations were chosen by God in a civilising mission to defeat the enemy, marrying their religion with their nationalism. As the war escalated, so did their bellicosity. By sanctifying their nations as "chosen" and their opponents as God's enemies, churches recast a just war into an apocalyptic holy war against a demonised foe. Chaplains are often analysed in this framework.[6] Still disputed is whether the bellicose utterances of Germany's Protestant pastors and its churches' virtual deification of the state was a unique response to war or whether it expressed a more pan-European phenomenon.[7] Against such works as Bruno Vogel's satire of German pastors and chaplains in his *Long Live War*,[8] Martin Schian's official church history was commissioned by the Prussian Church to counter accusations of nationalist chauvinism, praising chaplains' pastoral and

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[6] See A. Marrin, *The Last Crusade The Church of England in the First World War* (Durham, 1974); also A. Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London, 1978); A. Hoover, *God Germany and Britain in the Great War A study in clerical nationalism* (New York, 1989). For German war theology see K. Hammer, *Deutsche Kriegstheologie 1870-1918* (Frankfurt, 1971). H. Lehmann's forthcoming essay on German military chaplains focuses on their toxic hyper-nationalism of imperial society: *The Sword of the Lord: Military Chaplains from the Roman Empire to the Twenty-First Century* (forthcoming, 2003).

[7] J. Jenkins distinguishes the disparate features of German pastors' *Kriegstheologie* from common European nationalism: J. Jenkins, 'War Theology, 1914 and Germany's *Sonderweg*: Luther's Heirs and Patriotism', *The Journal of Religious History* 15:3 (June 1989) pp.292-310; in contrast, Hammer identifies their pronouncements with a common European nationalism: K. Hammer, *Deutsche Kriegstheologie 1870-1918* (Frankfurt, 1971).

[8] B. Vogel, *Es Lebe Der Krieg! Ein Brief* (Leipzig, 1925) pp. 32-36.

spiritual work.[9] Less attention has been devoted to chaplains' belief that war was an inner cleansing as well as outward aggression.[10]

Commentators have also interpreted the Great war as an agent of secularisation. For them the Great War is a seminal moment in the social-scientific measurement of religious decline, a project of enlightenment modernity. The established historiography of Anglican chaplains focuses on performance assessment, institutional failure and the relationships between chaplains and soldiers.[11] Where Prussian chaplains are accused of hypernationalism, Anglican chaplains are accused of cowardice and ineptitude, failing to make the traumatic experience intelligible, further alienating urban working classes from their churches. That verdict relies largely on distorting evidence, the eloquent and angry works of a minority of war veterans who became a literary elite. Anglican military chaplains in particular are maligned in a hostile tradition, most famously in the memoirs of Guy Chapman and Robert Graves, England's most famous veteran-critics.[12] Some historians have often upon these hostile sources as authoritative.[13] Graves charged that Anglican chaplains were despised for their reluctance to visit the front line compared to Roman Catholic chaplains obliged to minister last rites. Their portrayal as shirkers of combat is unsubstantiated. The percentage of Anglican chaplains killed in action was only approximately 1% fewer than the percentage of Roman Catholic chaplains, even though frontline visits beyond the advance dressing station by Anglican padres had been prohibited until 1916.[14] Literary veterans were refashioning their own wartime selves to

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[9] M. Schian, *Deutsche Evangelische Kirche im Weltkriege* (i) *Die Arbeit der evangelischen Kirche im Felde* (Mittler, 1921-5).

[10] For analysis of this theme amongst European intellectuals see R.S. Stromberg, *Redemption by War The Intellectuals and 1914* (Kansas, 1982).

[11] *Marrin,* above n6, primarily focuses on church failures through their bureaucratic undermining of chaplains' ministry. Institutional failure is also the concern of S. Mews, 'Religion and English Society in the First World War' (Unpublished Cambridge Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1973).

[12] R. Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London, 1929) (pp.157-9; 183-4, 195, 200); G. Chapman, *A Passionate Prodigality* (London, 1933) pp. 50-1, 117, 166-7. See also C.E. Montague *Disenchantment* (London, 1922) pp. 66-79.

[13] eg. J. Ellis, *Eye-Deep in Hell The Western Front 1914-1918* (London, 1976) p.156; A. Hastings, *A History of*
English Christianity 1920-1990 (London, 1991) p.47 accepts Graves' account as representative of opinion even while he believes that opinion unfair.

[14] 89 of the 1985 serving Church of England chaplains were killed in action or as a result of wounds, a percentage of 4.48%, compared to 36 of the 651 Roman Catholic chaplains (5.53%). Figures derived from

fit the archetype of the disillusioned veteran on the margins of society. Military chaplains of the establishment church were convenient symbols for their disillusionment from the war effort and self-conscious alienation from society. As the evidence is fragmentary, how the soldiers generally regarded chaplains is ultimately irrecoverable. Evaluating chaplains' "performance" is to presuppose what they should have achieved, in a complex role as propagandists of a military machine with a religious ministry. Criteria underpinning these verdicts have changed over time. Whereas Graves condemned their war-shyness, ineffective as agents of military morale, recent antimilitarist commentators question whether Christian priests could credibly participate at all.[15] Measuring chaplains' performance and spiritual impact remains empirically and methodologically problematic. Instead of assessing impact, the project of this thesis is to reconstruct chaplains' mental worlds.

Chaplains should also be located in a wider cultural history of the war. Historians conventionally depicted the war as a fundamental break with the past. Its shocking scale, demonic weapons and unprecedented destruction fathered a new and alien world. High art depicted a dehumanised, technological modernity, while literature and especially the war poets attacked the authority of the old order. Fussell's literary study, still lacking a German equivalent, stressed how the incommunicable agonies of war ignited a revolt from the lexicon of romantic 'Big Words' and the bourgeois order that had mythologised and sanitised war. The distance between the hopes invested in war and war's reality made acid irony the new language of war and modernity itself.[16] Another approach, championed by Winter, contests the "watershed" notion of the Great War as a cultural disjuncture. Popular responses to the Great War across Europe, such as war memorials and the resurgence of spiritualism, show that older languages, motifs and values survived

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J. G. Smyth, above n3, pp. 202-3; and T. Johnstone, J. Hagerty *The cross on the sword: Catholic chaplains in the forces* (London, 1996) pp. 315-316.

[15] Eg. In J. Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare* (London, 1999) p. 304.

[16] P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London, 1975) p.8:
"It was a hideous embarrassment to the prevailing Meliorist myth which had dominated the public consciousness for a century. It reversed the Idea of Progress."
Discontinuity is at the core also of S. Hynes' study of the evolving 'myth' of the war experience in *A War Imagined The First World War and English Culture* (London, 1990).

as ways of comprehending loss.[17] The war did not simply spawn modernity or wrench the present from the past. The 'high diction' of meaningful or glorious sacrifice fulfilled a healing function as communities sought solace in cultural traditions.

Chaplains have also been interpreted in this context, chiefly by Laurinda Stryker. She challenges the prevailing narrative of the war as an experience of cultural discontinuity. Stryker contends that chaplains exemplify the resilience of traditional culture in the Great War, because they overwhelmingly remained Christians. Despite their acknowledgement of the war's realities, she argues, their surviving Christianity exemplifies the continuity through war of cultural traditions.[18]

This thesis diverges from Stryker's model of religion as monolithic pillar of 'traditional culture.' Treatment of religion only as an outward manifestation of cultural stasis presupposes that religion itself is a fixed doctrinal and ritual system, permitting of no revision. Though Stryker rightly illustrates the durability of chaplains' basic faith, religion is historically something continually remade through time. As a widespread religious view of war, sacrifice through blood was an evolving concept revived in the nineteenth century. Chaplains formed different understandings of the sacred meaning of war and the relation of war to national redemption. Over time they reformulated the idea, from a confined event in wartime to a continuing civilian duty. Divine agency in the world, the equivalence of Christ's Passion with the combatant's death, and the legitimacy of soldiers' popular religiosity were all contested. Chaplains asserted or revived some motifs of Christian tradition against ideas that failed to render the ordeal meaningful. The war was a dialogue of different Christian traditions.

How far can we assume that chaplains' written interpretations of the war broadly reflected their genuine perceptions? The reliability of their spoken perceptions as generally reflective of their inner responses can be inferred from several factors. Their sincerity can also be inferred from the nature of their service as military chaplains, which

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[17] J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995).

[18] L.S. Stryker, 'Languages of Sacrifice and Suffering in England during the First World War' (Unpublished Cambridge Univ. Ph.D. Thesis, 1992) p. 16.

implicated them in the deaths of combatants. They literally preached men towards their deaths. This heavy burden of responsibility propelled them to justify their complicity. This gave them an interest in persuading others of the worth of wartime sacrifices. To articulate a moral meaning in the war was therefore to defend their legitimacy as spiritual agents of conflict. They attempted to vindicate themselves by exhorting civilians in their daily lives to ensure sacrifices were not in vain. To renounce the value of the war would be to cheapen sacrifices they were implicated in by virtue of their office. Self-interest was therefore bound up in their accounts of why their men's deaths were worthwhile, or why the living must remember and honour them. Their public interpretation was also their self-justification.

Why are military chaplains historically significant? They were bearers of the ideal of national redemption in the face of slaughter. Unlike the homeland clergy, they ministered to their flock at the frontlines. They embody the social history of the ideal, conceived by the divines of warring nations and spirited through the war experience. More than the homeland clergy, they were directly implicated in the deaths and maiming of their nations' manhood. Because they preached men into lethal combat, and gave divine sanction to protracted industrial war, they were responsible for abetting it. As a result, more than anyone else in their churches, mass death and the ideas that legitimised mass death became part of the fabric of their lives.

CHAPTER 1: UNHOLY CITIES
THE MEANING OF SACRIFICE AND THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY

Chaplains worked in extreme conditions. In his diary in June 1915, J.K. Best recorded

> All along trench stepping over dead bodies. Some shot clean thro' the heart or head looked like quite natural and peaceful except for yellow-green hue of skin. Most with looks of agony or horror on their faces – if faces were not blown away. Nearly all mangled in ghastley fashion. Outside trenches fields and open littered with dead & I fear some not dead – but sheer suicide to try to get them in…In parts one has to tread on corpses... It is most gruesome ghastley experience I can imagine Hell impossible? We have seen it.[19]

In a burial sermon, Willy Shack evoked 'the great God-messenger, the dark reaper, his scythe swinging, how in these days, he claims from our numbers. When will this terrible death take an end? When is there enough of sacrifice, the bitter losses?'[20] Dead bodies regularly cluttered their routines. 'I was up for communion at a fairly early hour and could hardly get to the altar for corpses' wrote M.A. Bere.[21] Burying officer friends and conducting mass burials, Paul Tillich in a private letter despaired that he was living through "the actual world destruction."[22]

How did that world of dismembered corpses and disfigured terrain shape their thinking? It is tempting to assume that the scale of death and mourning in the Great War was also the principle problem for the Churches, as chaplains' sheer proximity to the horrible slaughters of the western front challenged their belief in a benign deity, creating a crisis of faith.[23] Chaplains divined or questioned the meaning of war through a different compass, as their anatomy of crisis was more complex. To minister to the dying, the wounded and to communicate with the bereaved was obviously distressing. Existential questions naturally were asked. But these were recurrent problems for the churches. The

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[19] Imperial War Museum (henceforth abbreviated IWM) 81/17/1 (J.K. Best, Diary Entry 05/06/1915).
[20] W. Schack *Zehn Leichenfeiern im Felde*, (Göttingen, 1917), p. 10. (My translation).
[21] IWM, 66/96/1, (M.A. Bere, Letter 11/04/1917).
[22] Letter cited in 'Bericht über die Monate November und Dezember 1915,' P. Tillich, *Gesammelte Werke,* vol. 13 (Stuttgart, 1972) p.70.
[23] This is the account of D. Cannadine, 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain' in J. Whaley (ed.) *Mirrors of Mortality; Studies in the Social History of Death* (London, 1981) pp.187-252,

war did not introduce the problem of theodicy, a benign deity permitting suffering and injustice, though it magnified it. As one chaplain recalled, numerous men 'seemed to be angry with God – and I, as His representative, had to stand at the bar and be judged. It was not new to me, as, long before the War, one had met this fierce resentment against God in those who had been suddenly bereaved or who had suffered great misfortune.'[24]

Working in the eye of industrial warfare, both German and English chaplains participated in a tense proximity of tedium and death. Spasms of hideous violence punctuated lengthy banal periods. As well as the sheer scale of bloodshed, the trench system as a whole terrorised its inhabitants. This meant their impressions were not the stable abstractions of detached observers. Within their minds, conflicting perceptions of the war could compete. In Oswin Creighton's letters from Gallipoli and the Western Front he fluctuates wildly between taking refuge in otherworldly salvation, a thirst for a transcendent and heavenly Kingdom, and a search for an earthly redemptive meaning in the war. The rhythm of the frontline generated these tensions. The immediate aftermath of battle repeatedly repelled him from visions of earthly redemption. "It is all so utterly futile" he despaired while recovering from "a very terrible battle." "The future of the world and of England does not seem to matter very much."[25] Struggling to know "how to take this appalling loss of life", he envied "the people who are killed. And then there comes a long lull and one forgets, and hope revives and life gets quite sweet again – till the next attack."[26] Yet later in Alexandria, the leitmotif of his correspondence is the ultimate impact of war on the moral condition of modern society. Railing against evangelical teaching "rife in the army" exclusively focused on the "next world", Creighton insisted "the sole concern of religion is the bettering of this sordid world" and the war "is all so good for the world" bringing men "to a truer sense of values."[27]

On both sides, chaplains loaded war with great expectations. They continually returned to the theme of transformative promise of sacrifice. Willy Shlack imagined a

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pp. 218-219.

[24] IWM 96/38/1 (C.J. Horsley-Smith, Memoir p.17).

[25] O. Creighton *Letters of Oswin Creighton 1883-1918* (London, 1920) Letter, 14/06/1915, pp.129-130.

[26] Ibid. Letter, 09/08/1915, pp.136-7.

[27] Ibid. Letter, 13/04/1915, p.127.

rich return on the price of blood when he preached that war graves spoke "not only of death, offence, annihilation, but calls us in noble great language still onward, that is: sacrifice, devotion." Their deaths were not useless, but "a mission, a price, with the greatest purchase."[28] In a field sermon Hans Bodensieck prophecied that the "terrible evil of the war" would win "the recasting, that rejuvenation that forwards humanity."[29] Creighton's hopes were similarly elevated. Released from the immediate strain of battle, he longed for a resurrected social order:

> The gloomy articles in the Nation, for instance, which see nothing but the horror of Europe soaked in blood, and all the flower of youth cut off, say very little to me. The horror of war is the light it throws on all the evil, ignorance, materialism, bigotry, and sectional interests in human nature. The Cross is beautiful – the forces which lead up to it are damnable. It really does not in the least matter how many people are killed, who wins, whether we starve or anything else of a transitory nature, provided that in the process human nature is transformed in some way...[30]

This differentiated him from those who simply mourned the death toll. Exposure to the brutal realities of warfare, and its acknowledgement, did not necessarily negate Christian idealism. Often the graphic severity of what chaplains saw was a basis for the transcendent meanings they gave the war experience. Field hospital chaplains, for example, were under no illusions about the horrific nature of war wounds, yet precisely the severity of their sufferings lent soldiers' wounds or corpses even greater sacrificial value. Suffering on others' behalf was more ideal if that suffering was real and harrowing. From a field hospital, Heinrich Schäfer described the wounded victims lying in his hospital tent, "out of a hell against which the imagination of Dante pales", men staggering in from a frontline of "blood and corpses smell and poison breath, surrounded by the jumping, screeching howling death of the grenades and shells." Their comradeship amidst such nightmarish conditions revealed 'the deepest reason for German courage and German duty-consciousness, namely the piety of the German spirit."[31] It is thus necessary to look beyond the physical realities of the front to understand their mentalities.

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[28] Schack, above n20, p.11. (My Translation).
[29] H.Bodensieck, *Gotteskraft in schwerer Zeit – Zwölf Predigten aus Feld und Heimat* (Osnabrück, 1918) p. 16. (My translation).
[30] Creighton above n25, Letter, 23/04/1917, p.182.
[31] 'Vom Geist unseres Heerens Lazarettpfarrer Schäfer in Rastatt', *Monatschrift für Pastoraltheologie,*

Where did the concept of redemptive sacrifice originate? Bontrager places it later in the war, as priests rationalised that a just war was becoming prolonged and destructive because Britain was immoral and had to be chastised.[32] The notion of redemptive war, however, was not just an evasive rationalisation of slaughter. It predated the conflict, where churches confronted a world they believed already in crisis. Without succumbing to crude determinism, when chaplains reacted to heavy casualties, they structured their experience through Anglican and Protestant genealogies of cultural anxiety.

A God-sent chastisement, inflicted to cleanse society, has deep roots in Christian tradition. St. Augustine cast war as a divine instrument: 'For God's providence constantly uses war to correct and chasten the corrupt morals of mankind.'[33] In Britain, redemptive sacrifice was revived by a conjunction of developments in the nineteenth century. The rising respectability of soldiers within churches and religious literature converged with a growth of voluntary evangelistic work among troops, restoring a consensus that men of war could also be good Christians.[34] The moral language of a nation punished and corrected as divine judgment for national sins returned to prominence in the Crimean War (1853-1856). Sermons widely depicted the war demanding repentance, reflecting a resurgent influence of Calvinist Reformers with their emphasis on sin as a crime punished by the special providence of God. Two royal proclamations instituted national days of fasting and prayer, as priests saw it, 'to avert the lash of God's displeasure.'[35] The vices of drunkenness, neglect of public worship, fornication, the profanation of the Sabbath, generated a collective guilt that invited correction. The appetite of clerics for redemptive acts rose as they brooded on the consequences of prolonged peace and commercial growth. Only blood could purchase a pure peace. Poet Laureate Tennyson

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October 1916 – September 1917 pp.90-96. (My translation).

[32] S.T. Bontrager, 'The Imagined Crusade: The Church of England and the Mythology of Nationalism and Christianity during the Great War' *Church History* 71:4 (Dec. 2002) pp. 774-798, p.775.

[33] Augustine, *City of God*, 1,1. (trans. Henry Bettenson, London, 1984).

[34] As Anderson concludes, 'while on the one hand by the mid-1860's the army had been accepted by many different sections of the religious public as part of the church militant on earth, on the other, religious observances and pastoral care had been officially incorporated into military life in an unprecedentedly thoroughgoing way.' O. Anderson, 'The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain' *English Historical Review* 86, (1971), pp.46-72, p. 66.

[35] O. Anderson 'The Reactions of Church and Dissent towards the Crimean War' *Journal of Ecclesiastical*

praised the suicidal charge of the light cavalry, an honourable self-sacrifice without utilitarian benefit. His poem *Maud* loathes a peace 'full of wrongs and shames.' War would inspire individual and collective virtue, as 'many a darkness into the light shall leap / And shine in the sudden making of splendid names / And noble thought be freer under the sun, / And the heart of a people beat with one desire.'[36]

An ensemble of heroes, from the settlers killed in the Indian Mutiny of 1857 to the plight of General Gordon at Khartoum in 1885, were honoured as martyrs of a Christian imperial civilisation.[37] Chief proponent of Anglo-Catholic socialism and military chaplain Paul Bull of the Community of the Resurrection, founder of the Church Socialist League in 1907, represented the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) as both punishment and sacrificial atonement, 'God's stern judgment on our sins.' The lives of the fallen expiated the sinful passions of the nation, their sacrifices 'sealed by the precious Blood of Christ,' hallowing Africa by 'the blood of Gordon', the 'prayers of Livingstone' and death of 'many a martyred missionary.'[38] Anglican priests identified punitive purposes in national calamities. When the *Titanic* sank in April 1912 on its maiden voyage, the destruction of the 'symbol of a capitalist society of luxurious competition', was a reproach to a world, in Canon Newbolt's words, 'intoxicated with its progress' that had 'forgotten God.'[39] The disastrous expedition of Scott of the Antarctic was translated into a heroic idiom soon after the discovery of their frozen corpses in 1912. Having contributed little to polar science, eulogists recast its futility into an expression of 'heroism for heroism's sake', or as one sermon claimed, 'the glory of self-sacrifice, the blessing of failure.'[40]

It was in the context of creating a new nationhood that German Protestant traditions of redemptive sacrifice were hammered out. Pastors in their folk nationalism

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History no.16 (October 1965), pp. 209-220, p.217.

[36] Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Maud & Other Poems* (London, 1855) pp. 59-60.

[37] See eg. L. P. Stubbs, *Gordon Memorial "Mahanaim"* (London, 1885) p.26.

[38] P. Bull, *God and Our Soldiers* (London, 1904) pp.2, 267.

[39] Cited in O. Chadwick, *The Secularisation of the European Mind* (Cambridge, 1975) p. 262.

[40] Cited in G. Dyer, *The Missing of the Somme* (London, 1994) pp. 9-10.

identified imperial Germany with the Kingdom of God.[41] The spectacular triumphs against the French Anti-Christ Napoleon (1813-1815), national unification under Bismark, the Prussian triumph over France in (1870-1), and the coming of war under the Kaiser were all inspired by the 'biblical example of Old Testament covenant.'[42] The belief that God had guided the nation's ascent to the status of major European power vindicated the view of the polity as god-ordained and the national community, home of the Reformation, God's weapon in the history of human salvation. As "God's nation," Germany defended true Christian values and punished those nations which offended them. The fusion of religion and nationalism was consummated when the Kaiser's Court Chaplain described the polity as the 'Holy Protestant German Empire.'[43] As German power expanded in center of Europe in the Wilhelmine period, the pursuit of power politics was given a theological premise. Pastors also cast war as a form of penitence. Each conflict, they preached, was preceded by a period of moral stagnation, irreligion, and indulgence. Prussia's defeat at the hands of Napoleon I in 1806 was invoked as a warning against unpatriotic egoism and degeneracy, alien disorders originating outside the Fatherland, contaminating the body social and the body politic. Pastor Carl Schwarz declared that the 'world-historical' meaning of the Franco-Prussian war repelling 'that harmful, morally-destructive, degenerating influence of France, which up to now has exerted itself like an infectious disease among our compatriots.'[44] Defects within Germany were ascribed to foreign, unGerman forces. France externalised the inner demons Protestant pastors loathed. Its Papalist folly mirrored Germany's Roman Catholic menace, secular humanists represented intellectuals seduced by Enlightenment atheist egoism, and the revolutionary violence of the Paris Commune exemplified the dangers in Germany's own liberal reform movement. Though her enemies bore primary

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[41] For the fusion of German nationalism with theological doctrine in the nineteenth century see J. Moses, 'Justifying War as the Will of God: German Theology on the Eve of the First World War' *Colloquium* 31:1 (May, 1999) pp. 3-20; W. R. Hutchinson and H. Lehmann, *Many are Chosen Divine election and Western Nationalism* (Minneapolis, 1994); D. R. Borg, 'German National Protestantism as a Civil Religion' in Menachem Mor (ed.) *International Perspectives on Church and State* (Creighton, 1993) pp.255-267.

[42] H. Lehmann, ' 'God our old Ally' The Chosen People Theme in late Nineteenth century and early Twentieth Century German Nationalism', in Hutchinson and Lehmann, above n41, pp. 86-107, p.87.

[43] K.W. Dahm *Pfarrer und Politik* (Köln, 1965) p. 167.

[44] C. Schwarz, *Predigten aus der Gegenwart* (Leipzig, 1869-73) VI, pp.44-5, cited in A.J. Hoover, *The Gospel of Nationalism German Patriotic Preaching from Napoleon to Versailles* (Stuttgart, 1986) p.40.

responsibility for the wars, they were visited on Germany by the divine surgeon to cleanse the nation.

Redemptive war enjoyed a powerful intellectual pedigree. In Germany the neo-Hegelian and neo-Rankian traditions endorsed wars as divinely sanctioned means for realising the true mission and stature of a people. A power-state (*Machtstaat*) executed God's will for the world, in which *Weltgeschichte ist Weltgericht*, world history was the world's tribunal. Hegel also espoused the social and moral beneficence of war, for arresting individualism, effacing the narrow partisanship of bourgeois society and restoring communities to a greater whole. While he insisted a species needed altruism as well as resilience to survive, Darwin also identified the benign effects of short wars, as they summoned collective qualities of cohesion, selflessness and mutual aid, without culling too many good men. In Britain the fusion of these different elements into a nexus of ideas was consummated by Regius Professor of Divinity J.B. Mozley. Inspired by the Franco-Prussian war of 1871, in a celebrated sermon he married the emerging motif of Christian blood redemption, the providential interpretation of history as the unfolding of divine will, to the social Darwinist pseudo-science of struggle, survival and extinction. Providence consecrated war through its "sacred function" which made people suffer for each other.[45] Field Marshall Helmuth von Moltke, Prussian Chief of General Staff, architect of the military victory that inspired Mozley's theology and doyen of the Protestant military caste, claimed that war, 'part of God's ordering of the world', aroused man's most noble virtues, and was needed to avert 'a quagmire of materialism.'[46]

As well as an evolving ideology of redemptive sacrifice, the churches' war enthusiasm was underpinned by a Christian critique of industrial modernity and the longing for its solution. Before the war even erupted, churchmen commonly perceived a crisis in the modern world. If there was one institution that conditioned chaplains' wartime thinking, that shaped their mental reflexes, it was the city. The 'societies of

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[45] J.B. Mozley, "War" in *University Sermons* (New York, 1876) cited in A. Wilkinson, 'Changing English Attitudes to Death in the Two World Wars' in P. Jupp and G. Howarth (*eds*) *The Changing Face of Death* (Basingstoke, 1996) p. 154.

[46] Letter, 11 December 1880 to Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, cited in H. Pross (ed.), *Die Zerstörung der deutschen Politik: Dokumente 1871-1933* (Frankfurt, 1959), pp. 30-31. (My translation).

strangers' with their rapidly growing populations, factories and slums, displacing the preindustrial fabric of small communities, obsessed the churches. Anglicans and Protestants alike were alarmed by the apparent collapse of social cohesion. Cities were the vehicles for turbulence, disorder, squalor, temptation, exploitation and impiety. Capitalism substituted the impersonality of the marketplace for custom, ritual, and ceremony. The predatory cash nexus was inimical to the bonds of Christian fellowship, destroying ancient social structures. By generating class conflict, atomising individuals and magnifying godless materialism, industrialising societies estranged people from God. They perceived an industrial proletariat migrating from rural religious communities to a new dysfunctional urban-industrial milieu of large suburban slums that were spiritually impoverished and morally deadly. Clerics in both churches increasingly proclaimed the mission of modern Christianity to transform the degenerate metropolis into a citadel of the Christian commonwealth. Temple and like-minded clerics insisted that the church's mission was to restore fellowship to the fragmenting societies of the sprawling cities, lamenting the pervasive tribalism of urban existence. "Because of our Paganism, our home society is in ruins. It ought to be a splendid fabric, each part supporting all the others, but it actually is a mass of hostilities and rivalries, capital against labour and labour against capital, firm against firm, man against man."[47] The Christian Social Union's basic critique of industrial organisation and social order commanded a consensus among church leaders. The Christian Social Union shaped the thinking of Anglican divines and bishops, including William Temple, future Archbishop of Canterbury, whose social Christianity migrated from the 'old co-operative ideal' to 'systematic collectivist politics.'[48] Evangelical Protestant Bishops were replaced by 'a new generation of liberal evangelicals committed to ecumenism and a social application of the Gospel.'[49]

In Germany too, the quickening of industrialisation accentuated consciousness of a pastoral crisis, that the churches were beleaguered by a new urban environment which eclipsed rural home parishes with its concentration of proletarian labour and its modern wage economy. Protestant clergy regarded the escalating rate of unbaptised children, or

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[47] W. Temple *The Kingdom of God* (London, 1912) p. 78.
[48] E.R. Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770-1970* (Oxford, 1976) p. 228.
[49] A. Wilkinson, above n6, p.8.

marriages outside the churches, as indices of a moral collapse.[50] Industrial centres combined secular wealth with a new urban poor, seemingly beyond the reach of a ramshackle preindustrial parish system. But while the prewar social gospel in Britain was overwhelmingly progressive in clamouring for a remade social order, Germany's "evangelical-social" ethic was more divided. These divisions were compounded by Germany's pluralist structure, as separate territorial churches (*Landeskirche*) were each unique in their own doctrinal competence. A resilient conservative Protestantism endorsed a preindustrial and organic hierarchical order as the solution to a threatening modernity, reconciling members of the organism to their respective roles, preaching obedience to the poor and responsibility to the rich.[51] It venerated the monarchical, Bismarckian-Wilhelmine constitution as theologically unchallengeable.

Many British socialists were from dissenting chapels, or came from Irish labourer communities looking to Cardinal Manning to represent their radical claims, or followed the English socialist theologian Frederick Maurice. German social Christianity, however, developed largely in opposition to socialism. Germany did have a Christian Socialist gospel. However, Kaiser Wilhelm II himself had dismissed Christian Socialism as a nonsense and a contradiction. Machinations of court politics and the Kaiser's own oscillating opinion meant that the attitude of church authorities to the participation of clergy in social reform movements wavered. The Protestant Supreme Consistory followed the Kaiser with its 1895 decree denouncing clerical involvement in social movements.[52] Yet the competition for the hearts and minds of the masses increasingly engaged them in broader social questions. German Protestants not only faced socialist parties that were more powerful than in Britain, but that were more avowedly anti-clerical than Britain's future Labour Party ever was. The Social Democratic Party, released from Bismarck's anti-socialist legislation in 1890, pledged to secularise education and privatise religion, identifying the Protestant churches with hierarchy and privilege. 'Fatherlandless' vagabonds simultaneously replicated the evangelical missions of the

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[50] N. Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism 1700-1918* (Oxford, 1995) p.524.

[51] See W.R. Ward, *Theology, Sociology and Politics The German Protestant Social Conscience 1890-1933* (Bern, 1979) pp.11-14.

[52] Cited in E. Bramsted, 'The Position of the Protestant Church in Germany 1871-1933', *Journal of Religious History*, 2:4 (December 1963) pp. 314-334, 332-4.

church or the parish structure – Saxon Socialist travelling preachers (*Reiseprediger*) proselytised the masses like itinerant preachers, and socialist town organisations offered an alternative sub-culture of folk festivals, picnics and discussion meetings, modeled on Protestant lines.[53] Growing threats to Protestant authority and hegemony over social thought provoked a more active quest for evangelical-social Christianity, to prevent systemic challenges to the political order by arresting the defection of the working classes to subversive movements for social democracy and the 'rival example of Catholic social action.'[54] Winning back those who had depopulated towns and migrated to the industrial wastelands was the objective for the *Innere Mission*, founded in 1848. Its father, Johann Wichern, advocated religious revival, social regeneration and national unification as an indivisible triad. The destiny of the state and German piety were identified as mutually dependent, tying evangelical Protestants to a larger concern than individual salvation. Describing the manifesto of the SPD as 'a systematization of the sinful appetites of man', he hoped that Prussian leadership and unification would combat secularisation and the socialist movement.[55]

The liberal theology of Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) was profoundly influential. Ritschl's circles dominated the *Evangelische-Soziale Kongreß*, allying clergy with economic and social theorists, marrying Protestant ethics to empirical inquiry, or the *Verein Für Sozialwissenschaft*, the social science union. Ritschl reinforced the shift away from the Lutheran conception of a transcendent Kingdom of God separated from an intrinsically sinful earthly realm. In place of otherworldly spirituality, he elaborated earthly redemption as 'an ethical interpretation of Christianity by which God worked immanently through history and culture to liberate men from materialism in order to realise His moral kingdom on earth.'[56] While German socialist thought was secularising

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[53] Hope, above n50, p.528.

[54] In the words of Adolf Stoecker, anti-semitic court chaplain, head of the Berlin Inner Mission, and founder of the Christian Social Workers' Party. Cited in H. Liebersohn, 'Religion and Industrial Society: The Protestant Social Congress in Wilhelmine Germany' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 76: 6 (1986) p. 9.

[55] K.W. Dahm, 'German Protestantism and Politics 1918-1939' *Journal of Contemporary History* 3:1, (January 1968) pp. 29-49, p. 33.

[56] D.R. Borg, *The Old-Prussian Church and The Weimar Republic A Study in Political Adjustment 1917-1927* (Hanover, 1984) p.38.

Christian eschatology by proclaiming its this-wordly class struggle for a classless utopia, Protestant pastors increasingly located salvation in the unfolding of earthly history.[57]

Military chaplains in the war would observe, record and report their perceptions of the social and moral impact of war on society. In chaplains, therefore, a received ideal of transformative war converged with a pre-existing critique of industrial modernity and a clerical habit of social investigation, seeking salvation in the morally reborn community. That orientation predisposed them to Christian permutations of punishing and redemptive war. Because they lacked precise prescriptions for the realisation of the fellowship ideal in industrial societies, they were susceptible to hoping the war would be the vehicle of change. Churchmen were therefore predisposed to tie the meaning of the war to a foreboding desire for national penitence as well as the need for resolving the disorders of modernity.

The clergy embraced the war not only as a struggle for territory and treasure, but a clash of world-views. They paralleled HG Wells' liberal clarion cry, "We fight not to destroy a nation but a nest of evil ideas."[58] Veteran chaplain of the Boer war, Paul Bull, relentlessly insisted war was an ideological death-struggle, 'War is the conflict of two Wills, to decide which set of ideas shall prevail.'[59] This included exorcising a malignant spirit from the enemy, as stated by German theologian and chaplain Paul Althaus, 'for the victory of what is true and good among our enemies against the mean, ugly and deceitful.'[60] This was not just to exterminate the *Weltanschauung* of the enemy. War was a cosmic mission, a reckoning with the common degeneracy of the west, rather than a binary clash demanding the annihilation of armies of darkness. The transformation chaplains desired was more diffuse. The enemy was only the ultimate embodiment of universal disorders. By returning their societies to a spirit of self-sacrifice, piety, spirituality and social cohesion, war they believed would arrest the pathologies of

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[57] As L. Hölscher demonstrates, *Weltgericht oder Revolution Protestantische und sozialistische Zukunftsvorstellungen im deutschen Kaisserreich* (Stuttgart, 1989).
[58] H.G. Wells, 'The War of the Mind', in *The War That Will End War* (New York, 1914) pp. 97-8.
[59] P. Bull *Christianity and War: An Appeal to Conscientious Objectors* (London, 1918) p.20.
[60] Cited in Moses, above n41, p.17. See also R.P. Eriksen, *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus, Emmanuel Hirsch* (New Haven, 1985).

industrial modernity. The pietist *Christenboten* edition for soldiers evoked a two-pronged battle against sin and the enemy.[61]

When war erupted, the claim that God inflicted the war to redeem society was widespread in the sermons of Germany's Protestant clergy. Alongside the justice of Germany's cause, priests invoked the idea of an inner cleansing. Germany was the chosen nation, a righteous instrument of God's will and retribution. While punishing God's enemies on earth, the war as a unifying transcendent experience of nationhood was visited to correct Germany's fractured polity and moral stagnation, portraying the imminent clash as a cosmic event. "The hour of the rebirth of our peoples" was painted as "God's thunderstorm of…cleansing and life-awakening power", a "purifying fire" or an "invigorating flood," analogies with meteorological phenomena that depicted a purging through natural violence. The palingenetic ideal, the rebirth of the national community, cast war as a sacred blessing, a revelation of the worth of an elevated existence that would awaken "new life under the pain and death of this time".[62] Amongst Germany's educated Protestant middle classes, the *Bildungsbürgertum*, the notion of a holy war proliferated, marrying biblical motifs of divinely ordained cataclysms, Nordic *topoi* of 'world storms' and 'world fires' and nineteenth century German discourses proclaiming the sanctity of redemptive violence.[63] A joyous chapter in German nationhood, the struggle had delivered Germany from an incoherent and impersonal co-existence (*Gesellschaft*) to a people's community (*Gemeinschaft*).

Protestant pastors nationalised Ritschl's canonical concept of corporate redemption. Ecstatic *völkisch* preaching identified the vehicle of that immanent God as the renewed *Volk*. The divine covenant was a special compact between God and the *Volk*, the communion of saints the community of the *Volk*, the war the last days before an ethical apocalpyse, the victory of the *Volk* as divine judgment, foreshadowing the

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[61] Cited in J.E. Groh *Nineteenth Century German Protestantism The Church as Social Model* (Washington, 1982) p. 584.

[62] Cited in W. Pressel, *Die Kriegspredigt in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands 1914-1918* (Göttingen, 1967) pp. 150-152.

[63] K. Vondung, 'Geschichte als Weltgericht. Genesis und Degradation einer Symbolik' in K. Vondung (ed) *Kriegserlebnis. Der Erste Weltkrieg in der literarischen Gestaltung und symbolischen Deutung der*

triumphant German empire as the reign of the saints. The national community would be purged of internal forces that embodied alien globalist ideologies that corroded the German *Geist*, such as enlightenment liberalism and secular democracy. The Protestant Press Agency proclaimed on 5 August 1914 that '…in the storm of the people's war God, the old ally, with sacred storm sweeps out everything from Germany that is not holy, not noble, or that is ungodly and unGerman.'[64]

Kaiser Wilhelm II, King of Prussia and Germany, *summus episcopus* of Prussia's Evangelical Church, high priest of Germany's hegemonic Prussian state, proclaimed on the 1st August the idea of war-driven national redemption from his palace balcony.[65] 'In the battle now lying ahead of us, I see no more parties in my *Volk*. Among us there are only Germans, and if some of the parties in the course of past differences turned against me, I forgive them all. All that now matters is that we stand together like brothers, and then God will help the German sword to victory.'[66] Solidarity with the semi-authoritarian state, repudiating class conflict and partisan politics, was the purpose of war and the precondition of divine protection. The Kaiser in his personal cult was a figurehead of imperial ambition. It associated him with the promise of unity embodied in the mythical king Barbarossa, sleeping beneath the holy Kyffhäuser mountain in Thuringia, who would awaken and reinstate the Reich.[67] His royal proclamation on 4th August reveals that the war as part of a creation myth overshadowed a war to end all wars. In their sense of wounded innocence, Germany would prove worthy of an empire that had been denied them, a Germanic Kingdom that was also the Kingdom of God. 'The desire for conquest does not drive us, the inflexible will enlivens us to preserve the place, which God placed for us and all coming generations…I can see no more parties, I can only still see Germans!'[68] His address, with a distinctly anti-democratic twist, celebrated the restoration of fraternity and political unity, including confessional reconciliation. Inner

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Nationen (Göttingen, 1980) pp.62-84, p. 68.

[64] G. Besier *Die protestantischen Kirchen Europas im Ersten Weltkrieg Ein Quellen und Arbeitsbuch* (Göttingen, 1984) p.37.

[65] Each territorial prince was *summus episcopus* of their *Landeskirche*.

[66] 'Eine neue Rede des Kaisers' *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 358 (Morgen), p.1.

[67] E. Fehrenbach, 'Images of Kaiserdom: German attitudes to Kaiser Wilhelm II' in J. Röhl, N. Sombart (eds.) *Kaiser Wilhelm II New Interpretations* (Cambridge, 1982) pp.269-85, p.276.

[68] Cited in Besier, above n64, p. 11.

redemption and national healing was central in the official meaning imprinted upon the war. A theologian helped the Chancellor to draft it, Adolf von Harnack.[69] When socialists voted war credits in the *Reichstag*, it seemed to vindicate the hope that war would reverse *anomie*, the collapse of values and disintegration into factious antagonism.

English churches also cherished a mythical notion of the 'Spirit of 1914,' a civic truce rallying parties, classes and interests to the nation. Though English divines claimed German counterparts had defected from Christ to sub-Christian war gods, they cherished a war-driven healing of Britain's social and moral fabric, from the local parish level to Lambeth. George Edmundson's sermon in October 1914 saw God moving to divine judgment in the 'constant process of mingled correction and redemption.' Were not Britain's enemies 'instruments in the hands of God, whose mission it was to destroy, but by destruction to renovate, to extirpate what was corrupt and diseased that more healthy conditions of moral and spiritual life might be restored?'[70] The Archbishop of Canterbury anticipated redemption two days before Britain declared war on the 4th August. In a more sober sermon, he declared the gathering storm 'the work of the Devil, not of God's', but nevertheless if it embroiled the nation, it would be for Britain's own good. He recalled 'the poet's picture' from the Anglo-Boer war 'of the careless, self-indulgent, easy-going lad 'Whose gods were luxury and chance' gaining permanent strength from the enforced self-discipline of strenuous days.'[71]

Chaplains rejoiced. War had seemingly released the nation from the volatile Irish question, the clash of Labour and Capital and the battle over women's emancipation. War would also restore piety and humility to a profane, hedonistic and materialist age. William Geare invoked the biblical cycle of God bringing nations to penitence. 'The O.T. prophets tried to bring people to it by fear lest their country should be smashed up, and we in England need such a frightening in these days. Fear for our country ought to lead us

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[69] Hammer, above n6, p.374.
[70] G. Edmundson *Sermon preached at St. Saviour's Church* , October 4 (n.pl, 1914), pp. 2-3.
[71] Archbishop Randall Davidson, Sermon August 2 1914, "The Eve of a Great War" Westminster Abbey, *The Testing of a Nation*, (London, 1919) p. 12.

to repentance.'[72] As with Israel, God's covenant with Germany or Britain was not an affirmation of purity, but a continuous exaltation towards repentance. The memory of mobilisation itself signaled a momentous realignment of the nation's spirit. Of the departure of leave trains, chaplain L.L. Jeeves wrote home to his parishioners that 'The quiet order which prevailed, the complete sobriety and absence of the Bank Holiday nonsense, which might have been pardoned, made one proud to wear the uniform with such men. The sense of a real purpose in life and the stern call of duty, have produced effects…no subsequent peace will ever efface.'[73] Frank Barry depicted the war as the vehicle for a 'new sense of values', overcoming the clash of narrow partisan interests. The summer of 1914 gave myriad signs of 'moral rottenness', 'paralysing commercial wars, civil violence impending,' the Church 'irreligious' in its sectarian divisions, wealthy classes 'openly repudiated every social responsibility', people as a whole 'measuring life in terms of physical prosperity and the satisfaction of rather vacant pleasures.' By launching war, Germany had performed surgery that has 'partly cured us.' as 'we are beginning to be a different people. How best to serve the common good presents itself to the individual as the most urgent question. We have surrendered, in the first place, our individualistic way of thinking…We have seen the vision of our spiritual land of promise.'[74] A vocabulary of national healing appealed to lay and religious audiences alike. Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George declared in September 1914 that 'We have been too comfortable and too indulgent' and that 'the stern hand of Fate' scourged Britain to ' the high peaks we had forgotten, of Honour, Duty, Patriotism, and, clad in glittering white, the great pinnacle of Sacrifice, pointing like a rugged finger to Heaven.'[75]

Chaplains invoked the Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition, interpreting wars as an inner cleansing as well as a struggle against God's enemies. Military victory or regeneration were not assured. German chaplains cast the war as a trial, a struggle that would reward the most penitent nations with victory. Preaching on divine judgment from

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[72] W.D. Geare, *Letters of an Army Chaplain The Rev. William Duncan Geare* (London, 1918) Letter, 14/08/1916, p. 28.
[73] IWM 80/22/1, L.L. Jeeves, (*Letters to St. Mary's Whitechapel Parish Magazine*, undated).
[74] F.R. Barry, *Religion and the War* (London, 1915) pp. 29-30.
[75] Cited in F. Owen, *Tempestuous Journey: Lloyd George* (London, 1954) p.276.

Hebrews, German chaplain Professor Walther Buder declared the war 'neither good nor evil, but it is the great test of whether we are good or evil.'[76] Interpreted as a trial, the paradigm of *Kulturprotestantismus* also viewed the war as an apocalyptic event in which Germany, 'the hammer of God' and agent of divine revelation, would impose God's judgment on the world, identifying divine and the Kingdom of God with imperial German policy.[77] The German nation was executing the world-judgment in a war that was the 'tribunal of the world' (*Weltgericht*), redeeming the world through Germany's unique *Kultur*, of excellence and virtue, apex of European achievement and engine of Germany's world mission (*Sendung*). These were not irreconcilable - the chosen people must prove worthy of their special status in God's eyes, 'Cannot peoples be called to the highest and come yet not to the goal? Yes…For God's task to reach us, so must God's will be our will.'[78]

England also had its prophets. Geoffrey Gordon and Frederick Macnutt, future chaplains both, urged a backsliding generation to realise its manifold sins and seek atonement. The prophet Habakkuk was their exemplar, who knew 'the glorious destiny of the Jewish people', denouncing 'the infamies and atrocities of the Chaldaean armies', yet had 'a burning consciousness of the sins of his own nation.'[79] Macnutt preached that war was a double reproach, against Germany's amoral will to power and against his own ungodly society. The ordeal uplifted a 'vision of Righteousness' 'painted by the hand of God upon the red background of war' that would 'blast and consume the indifference to moral issues which for so long has been crushing and degrading her life.'[80] Germany's overt lust for earthly prizes subtly pervaded 'the whole fabric of our civilisation', underpinning 'the worship of power' against the 'pursuit of higher things', 'the ruthless competition which runs through our industrial system.'[81] And because both warring powers had deserted God, the ways of Providence were hard to forecast. Would God 'in

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[76] W. Buder, *Gute Ritterschaft Zwölf Feldpredigten 1914-1916* (Stuttgart, 1916) pp.16-17.
[77] As Vondung shows, 'Deutsche Apokalypse 1914' in K. Vondung (ed) *Das Wilhelminische Bildungsbürgertum* (München, 1976) pp. 156-7.
[78] D. F. Tahusen, *Werfet euer Vetrauen nicht Weg! Predigt am 6. August 1916* (Berlin, 1916) p. 9.
[79] G. Gordon, *An Interpreter of War: Habakkuk Addresses delivered in St. Margaret's Westminster* (London, 1916) p.25.
[80] F. Macnutt *The Reproach of War Addresses given in St. Saviour's Cathedral Southwark* (London, 1914), p. 75.

the fulfilment of his purposes, smite the sword from the tyrant's hand which has brandished it' or would 'He make it, as He has made other godless forces, the instrument of judgment wherewith to purge and purify us in the discipline of defeat?'[82] Whichever outcome, the conflict against German iniquity and universal decadence mean that war was vehicle for divine retribution, God's re-education of the world. Geoffrey Gordon also linked domestic sins and foreign wars. Failures of the 'national character' made war possible internationally, as foreign policy manifested the 'moral characteristics' of a people, the 'inner moral causes which work themselves out in external strength or weakness.'[83] Defunct foreign policy was spawned in 'England before the war,' from its 'most disquieting symptoms' of lawlessness, the 'growth of luxury among the rich', undisciplined trade unionists, unruly womens' movement, and unprincipled partisan politics.[84]

The first months of the war defined the sanctity of their causes and crystallised their respective war theologies. Germany's sweeping victories in Belgium, at Tannenburg and occupation of 15,000 square miles of France manifested their divine mission, reflecting God's pentecostal presence in their history. Chaplain Emil Ott greeted the victories as divine epiphany, 'We experience God in this war…The word of scripture has become a reality for us: You are the God who does wonders, you have demonstrated your power among the nations.'[85] English chaplains developed their defence of a small neutral nation from an imperial aggressor into a vocabulary of religious experience. Douglas Winnifrith equated the campaign in Belgium to 'to drive back the apostles of hate' with 'offering the God of love an act of worship.'[86] E.J. Kennedy believed that in liberating Belgium from a nation seduced by the unholy Trinity of 'Nietzsche, Treitschke, Bernhardi', reinforced the purchase of a sacred cause as Britain exhibited 'the righteousness that alone exalteth a nation.'[87] September 1914 brought rival manifestos of

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[81] Ibid. p. 52.
[82] Ibid. p. 25.
[83] Gordon, above n80, p.21.
[84] Gordon, above n80, pp.22-23.
[85] E. Ott, *Religion, Krieg und Vaterland* (München, 1915) p.3, cited in Hoover, above n44, p.48.
[86] D.P. Winnifrith, *The Church in the Fighting Line With General Smith-Dorrien at the Front* (London, 1915), pp.60-61.
[87] E.J. Kennedy, *With the Immortal Seventh Division* (London, 1916) pp.70-72.

German and British divines. Where German theologians portrayed their struggle as a defence of Christendom against Russian barbarism, the Anglicans responded that atrocities in Louvain exposed the savagery of the Teutonic invaders.[88] In preaching the defence of God's ethical world order clerics detected the hand of Providence. Their nations were appointed as agent of a divine mandate. Yet the quest for redemption transcended national borders, beyond the enemy as the incarnation of sin. It was biblically established that the powers God used as instruments, like Assyria, God could also drop and replace. The chosen nation was rarely imagined to be pure. Fears of unworthiness and of hubris were a counterpoint to their chosen status. By combating a degenerate enemy, nations struggled against inner corruption.

Because chaplains endorsed war as an ethically transformative event, there would be no automatic path from the magnitude of loss or the experience of the physical realities of the frontline to disillusionment. As the next chapter shows, it was doubts over the place of high casualties and suffering within an economy of sacrifice that led to disturbance. Perceptions of crisis, or moral problems of war, do not arise in a cultural vacuum. There is no normative, unilinear response of communities to wartime losses. The reception of mass death, while usually traumatic, occurs within a cultural and ideological context, and is never value-free. Though some kind of emotional response to loss is universal, the meanings attached to it are not. As Gat states, judgments given to the facts of war 'are fundamentally subjective, vary between people, societies, and cultures, and change over time.' Whether casualties are 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable' 'to any given society depends on cultural attitudes and historical circumstances.'[89] To deny war meaning (as a futile slaughter) is just as ideological as attaching meaning to it (as a purposeful sacrifice). Grief and disturbance are distinct, and grieving over high casualties does not necessarily provoke disturbance. Where grief is the emotional response to the *fact* of bereavement and loss, mourning the customs which delineate the correct behaviour for the bereaved, disturbance entails doubting the *moral meaning* of loss. Thus chaplains invested losses with a transcendent meaning beyond the fact that deaths had

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[88] *Oxford Pamphlets 1914-1915: To the Christian Scholars of Europe and America* (Oxford, 1914) p.15.
[89] A. Gat, *Fascist and Liberal Visions of War: Fuller, Liddle-Hart, Douhet, and other modernists* (Oxford, 1998) p. 136.

physically occurred. And as they pondered the impact of sacrifice on society, the most immediate measure of war's redemptive power was its effect on the combatant.

CHAPTER 2 FORECASTING REDEMPTION: Piety and Morality in the forces

Chaplains judged war's social and moral impact by investigating its perceived effects on combatants. 'It was granted me to see how our troops wrestled with the religion of their fathers and homeland, painfully, bitterly, obstinately often' wrote Emil Ott.[90] Chaplains inquired about the condition of the nation's manhood in war because it was a rare pastoral opportunity in a military missionfield, and because the effect of the war on the combatant went to the heart of the war's meaning. As E.C. Crosse reminisced, 'in the autumn of 1914 many people thought there was a real possibility of a great spiritual revival among the manhood of the nation' first manifesting itself 'on the field of battle.'[91] They bore witness to the war as a liminal event, the crossing of a threshold into a new kind of existence. As beholders, they watched of the combatants' initiation into the esoteric knowledge of the war zone outside civilian existence. Combining the ancient vocation of prophecy with modern social diagnosis, they interpreted the war's meaning primarily through its forecasted impact on the postwar world, assessing its impact upon the army, 'the nation in arms.'

War was an inner struggle against sin, against forces that menaced Christendom in every nation and each individual soul. Conflict with the enemy was the outward manifestation of a mortal and spiritual battle for the redemption of self and nation. A. Bitot depicted 'a fight which seems hard to soldiers and which they have no ambition to win. I am speaking of the spiritual fight against the foes which surround their souls' against the 'second enemy, or what is called by the Apostle 'the world.'[92] Edward Woods' pamphlet *Knights in Armour*, sketching the virtues of Christian Knighthood for combatants in 1916, recast the experience of combat in medieval idiom. In exhorting soldiers to emulate England's saintly warriors of yore, he claimed "A Soldier's first and last battle is with himself. The enemy outside owes much of his strength and success to his traitorous ally within the gates.' The enemy within the person also insinuated itself

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[90] E. Ott, *Die religiöse Lage an der Front* (Heidelberg, 1918) p.2.
[91] IWM 80/22/1 E.C. Crosse, (Unpublished Draft, 'The History of The Chaplains Department in the war 1914-1918'), p. 3.

into the nation, 'in any town or village, in any school or regiment, on any day, the Enemy is visibly, incessantly striving to work grievous hurt on our manhood and womanhood.' War inculcated the virtues of chivalry, gentleness and purity of spirit. Combatants were entering on a pilgrimage, striving for the ideal of penitence and self-mastery necessary to summon the Kingdom of God on earth.[93] He later dropped the rhetoric of chivalry, but maintained that the meaning of war rested on revering fallen combatants as exemplars of higher ideals, resisting inner moral corruption.

Chaplains incorporated their armies into a Christian martyrology. The most prolific image was of a community of saints in hell. Communing with the soldier-saints, war veterans were bearers of mystic knowledge, inducted into the mysteries of wartime fraternity and suffering. Jeeves cast the war as divine surgery of modernity's disorders. If the war was a quest for rediscovered community, it was the combatants who were bearers of this redemptive knowledge. 'Through the carnage of the battle, and the sickening sight of dismembered bodies through the monotonous discomfort of mud-filled trenches…our men shall learn such a lesson as shall never be forgotten whilst their children can remember to tell the tale of the part that father played in the Great War.'[94] Such passages demonstrate the way realist descriptions of the battlefield could accompany prophecies of redemption – the conditions' severity gave war its pedagogic value.

German chaplains characterised the invasion and occupation of enemy territories as pilgrimage in a hostile landscape.[95] Superintendent Leonhard described the fields of Papalist France as 'a godless foreign land.'[96] Germany's ancestral demonology of French degeneracy stretched back to the Napoleonic wars, where pastors cast France as an irreligious and blasphemous nation of hedonists. Paris was Sodom, capital of their corrupt national spirit (*Volksgeist*). In regimental folklore Prussian officers had left the "stinking

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[92] A. Bitot, *A Little Pocket-Book offered to British Soldiers* (London, 1914) pp. 47-48.
[93] E.S. Woods, *Knights in Armour* (London, 1916) pp. 8-10.
[94] IWM 80/22/1, L.L. Jeeves (*Letters to St. Mary's Whitechapel Parish Magazine*, undated).
[95] Ludwig Hoppe, described the 'martyr death for the Fatherland', L. Hoppe, *Feldpredigerfahrten an der Westfront Kriegserlebnisse aus großer Zeit* (Berlin, 1916) p.12, pp.42. (My translation).
[96] Superintendant Dr Leonhard, 'Das religiöse Leben der Feldsoldaten' *Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die evangelischen Landeskirchen Deutschlands 1917* 44 Jahrgang (1917) p. 18.

city" to return to their robust virtuous rural people.[97] Meditating on homesickness, field hospital chaplain Dr Anton Gulielminetti described the armies as the weeping exiles of Psalm 137, "Who would blame the needy and neediest that must sit at the "rivers of Babylon" and must eat the bread of the exile."[98] Homesickness was an emblem of penitence, evidence of the army's Christian *volk* idealism, a precondition for victory. The soldier's tears of "faith and love for the family and home" would be deposed as evidence before the "throne of the chief of warlords." Homesickness was holiness. While stationed "on alien soil," and separated from their sacred Fatherland, to miss homeland was to retain its values while executing the *Kulturkampf* by purging Germany of Gallic immoral infiltration. He repeats the Psalm's injunction not to forget Jerusalem, symbolic citadel of their native ideals. [99]

Interpreted didactically as a force for revelation, war could be perceived as disclosing a national character. War had torn away the superficial materialist distractions of secular ideologies and turned the nation back to its inner essence. One anonymous chaplain wrote 'As a previous result of the war effect… our armies have learnt – like our people – the eternal, divine goods again as indispensable,' and 'a world-wide sensitivity…for the eternal and divine…For the war – encountered through the paper walls many ungodly *Weltanshauungen* –breached the walls.' War represented 'a homecoming to God and of a Christian impression on our army as well as in our entire people.'[100] Emil Ott claimed 'There are ancestral things, that lie in the Germans' blood and also cannot die in this war: besides their duty-feeling, their manly courage and their faithfulness in the upmost need…[religion] belongs to things that cannot die within the German despite the deep shock.' War affirmed ancestral virtues. 'The German must remain, what his Germanic ancestors were: fully respectful of the great, if also ungrasped divinity that one ventured once only in that darkness of the Germanic forests and groves

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[97] Cited in A. Hoover, above n44, pp.129-30.
[98] A. Gulielminetti, *Heimweh und Heimkehr Ein Feldbrief an die heimwehkranken Kameraden* (München, 1916) p. 5. (My translation).
[99] Ibid. (My translation).
[100] 'Briefe eines Deutschen Feldpredigers' *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* 11 Jan. 1915, pp.828-831. (My translation).

to pray to and could in our "modern" time only in the darkness of battles rediscover.' [101] War stimulated an inner strength.[102] German identification with pre-Christian ancient tribes, a romantic primitivist expression, was similar to the ideal of some English chaplains, that war's dangers and its 'premodern' fellowship unlocked a national tradition of piety. Jeeves medievalised English martyr-soldiers in his parish magazine: 'when knights of old, with hand on sword and Cross on breast, thus prepared to face the Turk in that Holy Land…And today, in the moments when earthly life is unavailing, men are meekly steeling into a new life through that same Creed which has proved the regeneration of mankind.'[103]

Others gave opposite judgments. Many chaplains worried that the war accelerated materialist corruption. When communicating with their homelands, Chaplains enjoyed a latitude to puncture perceived mythologies of the war experience. Victor Kirchner asked "Is one not entitled however above all to observe that which is consistent with the unchurchly and with impiety, immortality and its innumerable cases?", prefacing his account of soldiers' burning religious texts and civilian indifference to worship.[104] Erich Seeburg portrayed trench existence as a brutalising process. Its dismantling of conventional societal restraints outweighed any restraint and discipline inculcated by military service. The absence of wives, manners, the loosening of limitations through a violent power struggle, preoccupation with mere personal survival obliterated consciousness of sin and ethical boundaries:

> Christian consciousness of transgression is absent. The perception of "radical evil" is not available…The war does not generally promote morality. It only causes today as much brutalisation as ever. One does certainly not undergo in

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[101] E. Ott, *Die religiöse Lage an der Front* (Heidelberg, 1918) p.2: Es gibt Dinge, die dem Deutschen von seinen Vorfahren her im Blute liegen und auch in diesem Kriege nicht sterben können: dazu gehören sein Pflichtgefühl, sein Mannesmut und seine Treue in der äußersten Not… Der Deutsche muß bleiben, was seine germanischen Vorfahren waren: voller Ehrfurcht vor der großen, wenn auch unbegriffenen Gottheit, die man einst nur im Dunkel der germanischen Wälder und Haine anzubeten wagte und in unserer "modernen" Zeit nur im Dunkel der Schlachten wiederfinden konnte. (My translation).

[102] Eg. H. Lehmann *Erinnerungen eines Feldpredigers* (Berlin, 1916), p.9: 'the frights and exertions of the war' bestowed 'internal strength for this power-demanding war time.' (My translation).

[103] IWM 80/22/1, L.L. Jeeves, (*Letters to St. Mary's Whitechapel Parish Magazine* August 1915).

[104] V. Kirchner, 'Religiös-sittliche Erneuerung durch den Weltkrieg? Zu dieser Frage zwei Beispiele' *Dienet Einander! Monatschrift für praktische Theologie und Religionsunterricht der Schule* 24, April 1916, pp. 237-8.

> moral respects the best experiences in the field…I need only recall the years-long reversal of all moral concepts, of the brutal prevailing of naked power, of the obliteration of my and your limits, of the egoism increased by the self-preservation drive, at the wifelessness and the rapid growth of the dirty joke…in the long run intellectual blunting and morally brutalising.[105]

As war loosened primitive appetites, such as officially sanctioned brothels, Georg Göens urged his chaplains to witness to the struggle against war's 'moral dangers.'[106] Chaplains were there to resist war's brutalisation and retain its redemptive purpose. For Bernard Keymer, the war was an ontological struggle for its own meaning, the chaplains' task not to describe its realities but to shape its nature by sustaining its ideals. Chaplains should assert the spiritual purposes of the war against materialist notions of the war as a defence of imperial commerce: 'It seems hard to believe that the brutal and horrible method of warfare can be the ideal method for securing so noble an end…[many are] convinced that material ends and aims are what really are inspiring and influencing the British empire in these days. But this is exactly where the idealistic view is of such vital importance. We could do no greater wrong to the thousands who have made and are making the 'great sacrifice.'[107] Studdert-Kennedy, rethinking his early nationalism, repudiated the assumption that a 'crushing victory' over Germany in itself would redeem society. Military victory was not the ultimate objective, as the war manifested on earth a cosmic struggle for 'a lasting civilisation which lives by the Spirit of Christ.' Unless the churches tempered the barbaric 'Spirit of the Bayonet' with a higher spiritual consciousness, as victors 'we shall lose the war'.[108] Kennedy's worry that war's potential to morally diminish its participants could undermine these ideals reflected a common tension in

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[105] E. Seeberg, *Religion im Feld* (Berlin, 1918), p. 70: '…die Eigentümlichkeit des christlichen Sündengedankens fehlt. Die Empfindung für das "radikal Böse" ist nicht vorhanden…Der Krieg fördert ja überhaupt die Moral nicht…Man macht sicher in moralischer Hinsicht im Feld nicht die besten Erfahrungen…Ich brauche nur an die jahrelange Umkehr aller moralischen Begriffe zu erinnern, an das brutale Vorherrschen der nackten Macht, an die Verwischung der Grenzen von Mein und Dein, an den durch den Selbsterhaltungstrieb gesteigerten Egoismus, an die Frauenlosigkeit und an das rapide Anwachsen der Zote…auf die Dauer geistig abstumpfend und sittlich verrohend.' (My translation).

[106] Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg 2341, 53 (Henceforth LKAN) (Militäroberpfarrer Dr. Göns, 'Konferenz evangelischer Feldgeistlicher in St. Quentin', 05/08/1915, p.7).

[107] B.W. Keymer, 'Fellowship in Industrial Life' in F.B. Macnutt (ed.), *The Church in the Furnace, Essays by Seventeen Temporary Church of England Chaplains on Active Service in France and Flanders* (London, 1917) pp.125-147, p.127.

[108] G.A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Rough talks by a padre* (London, 1918) p.33.

chaplains' experience: the paradox of sanctioning killing while resisting its degrading social effects.

Some chaplains regarded the trench community as an alternative moral universe to the city. The frontlines with collective suffering interlocked men into mutual dependence. By contrast, the dystopia of the modern city, chaotic and anonymous, fragmented communities and atomised individuals. The industrial and urban centres of a mechanised world were the real wasteland. C.J Horsley-Smith recalled the community of the front as an anti-materialist utopia, 'a world where money had lost its meaning, and where, therefore the love of money – which is 'the root of all evil' – did not exist, at any rate among the rank and file…A world without money? What magician or economist could have produced or imagined such a place.'[109] The virtues of military discipline appealed to German chaplain Hermann Kornacher, who claimed in his report that his men 'also have no opportunity for an immoral life alteration.'[110] By summoning an altruistic will to die, war became a superior condition to peace. Karl Diebert contrasted peacetime, and the choice saying of "live the life!", with a new consciousness, 'to witness a greater Germany – we sacrifice ourselves gladly.'[111] One anonymous Anglican chaplain depicted the army as a model of the national community made whole again. If the civilian community could emulate the qualities of military fellowship,

> God through this war will bring us into ways of harmonious co-operation not only National and (most important) Religious, but also Social and Commercial. The possibility of some such general co-operation is strikingly exemplified in Army life. Here we find selfish and financial considerations practically eliminated, and no one is driven to the wall by unsuccessful competition…All give their services instead of selling them and in cheery fellowship do their different parts of the work for the welfare of all.[112]

Life and Liberty, the Anglican reformist movement involving chaplains E.S. Woods and Dick Sheppard, testified that the war's collectivist ethos was exposing the bankruptcy of

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[109] IWM 96/38/1, C.J Horsley-Smith (Memoir, no page).
[110] LKAN 3209 ('Bericht über die Seelsorgetätig Div. Geistlicher der 9. Bay. Res. Hermann Kornacher' p.19. (My translation).
[111] K. Diebert, *Hie Schwert des Herrn und Gideons! Neue Folge der "Feldgrauen Predigten"* (Leipzig, 1916) pp. 95-6.
[112] *Can England's Church win England's Manhood? A study of the spiritual condition of English soldiers*

predatory competition. War's prime revelation was its discrediting of an anarchic prewar world: 'The war has taught everybody that the old methods of cut-throat competition are useless…It has become obvious that, not merely to wage war, but to make the most of the national resources for any purpose whatsoever, co-operation is essential. Artillery cannot win battles without infantry or infantry without artillery…we are learning to apply it to other problems.'[113]

Ecumenism or confessional reconciliation for chaplains of both belligerent nations was an important aspect of societal rebirth. It was a more torturous question for German Protestant chaplains from a nation with a sizeable Catholic community shaped by recent sectarian struggles. The relationship of German Protestant chaplains with Catholicism propelled them in two directions. Ecumenical aspirations were part of the hope that a new nation-state by uniting in common danger would accomplish national cultural and moral regeneration, transcending sectarian divisions. Germany's sectarian antagonisms had been accentuated by the *Kulturkampf*, and their chaplains placed particular emphasis on interpreting the closer co-operation with the Roman Catholic chaplains as a sign of national healing. The administrative strains of identifying and burying large numbers of dead necessitated collaboration.[114] At the same time, however much German chaplains applauded inter-confessional co-operation with their Roman Catholic counterparts, in the religious war mentality, Gallic Catholicism was demonised as one of the forces Protestant Germany was struggling against and purging from its national culture. Hence the efforts of German patriotic Catholics to differentiate themselves from French papists who needed correction, especially when their loyalties were suspected after Pope Benedict XV's 1917 'peace note'. Some pastors and chaplains depicted the Belgian campaigns in particular as re-enacting the Germany's *Kulturkampf*. The Kaiser's court preacher, Goens, also military chaplain of the Guards, on 13 September 1914 pronounced the war as a German Protestant Crusade.[115]

By an Army Chaplain (London, 1917) p.24.

[113] S.C. Carpenter, *Studies in Life and Liberty for the Church of England* (London, 1918) pp.7-8.

[114] Eg. It was noted at a 'Konferenz evangelischer Feldgeistlicher in St. Quentin', 05/08/1915, that at mass graves, it resulted in the collaboration of the Protestant and Catholic chaplains (LKAN 2341, 53).

[115] Cited in J. Horne, A. Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914 A History of Denial* (New Haven, 2001) p. 158.

As they communicated the war's meaning in different fora, tensions sometimes arose from their competing duties: to fortify combatants' morale and service the war machine as spiritual propagandists – the propagation of certainties - and to agonise over the quest for redemption with its ambiguities and uncertainties. It was more difficult to discuss the redemptive meaning of the war at the front. Pondered the moral meaning of the war, they were expected to uphold the enforced cheerfulness and unquestioning obedience of the army. The claims of spiritual prophecy and the military machine sometimes clashed in chaplains' ministry. Paul Tillich, concerned in his reports about the implications of the war for the state of the postwar community and the churches' peace work (*Friedensarbeit*)[116] was instructed to make his field sermons more patriotic.[117] One German chaplain gave sermons on the 'German man of the future, as well as the "spiritual struggle of the present."'[118] J.K. Best noted in his diary, 'The General comes in at the beginning of address. I am treading dangerous ground – peace talk is criminal + I had decided to talk about the spirit which makes permanent peace a possibility. Have to continuously modify my talk.'[119] Field Marshall Haig insisted that 'a good chaplain is as valuable as a good general', and instructed visiting chaplains that they were simply to 'Preach the objects of Great Britain' and 'cease quarrelling amongst themselves.'[120] Yet Tom Pym would deliver lectures on 'social conditions and misery produced by introduction of steam…factory life because we were unprepared shall be so after the war if we are not careful.'[121] E.C. Crosse contributed to 'After the War Papers' stressing the gravity of the postwar condition. The churches would need to emulate the courage of the British soldiers 'to face, and ultimately to win, a heathen and a Godless world.' England would need men prepared to renounce nationalist hatreds and create a just social order, recognising that inhabitants of other countries love their country no less than we do', 'who will work for better housing, better education, better industrial conditions, without

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[116] P.Tillich, 'Bericht über die Monate November und Dezember 1915 – 'Von Advent bis Neujahr', in P. Tillich, *Impressionen und Reflexionen Ein Lebensbild in Aufsätzen, Reden und Stellungnahmen Gesammelte Werke Band XIII* (Stuttgart, 1972) p.79.

[117] Ibid. p. 71.

[118] (LKAN 3209) 'Bericht über das Kriegsseelsorgejahr 1917' (Feldgeistlicher Niklas 4. Bay.inf.Div) p.8.

[119] IWM 81/17/1 J.K. Best (Diary Entry 20/10/1917).

[120] R. Blake (ed.) *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig 1914-1919 Being selections from the private diary and correspondence of Field-Marshal the Earl Haig of Bemersyde* (London, 1952) p. 143.

falling into the abyss of materialism.'[122] The proper message of chaplains' teaching was contested. An anonymous article urged fellow chaplains 'Don't preach patriotism. We can't do it without making ourselves looking ridiculous. The *Daily Mail* will do it far better. Preach that which sanctifies patriotism' which meant learning 'the folly of war', which had caused a 'Christless civilisation' to collapse 'ending logically at Armageddon'.[123]

German chaplains had a greater propensity than their Anglican counterparts to preach a quietist ethos, exhorting their audience to an unquestioning faith in the providential design driving the war. In 1914 chaplain Wilhelm Stählin drew on the ethic of deference in Romans, with its inscrutable deity, to instruct departing combatants. Was the war God's will? Though it was increasingly difficult to justify war as "the noblest and most chivalrous craft", the "warrior…needs not to think over the puzzle of this war, he can absolutely not allow it: he has a greater task, he has God's will to do."[124] As a former chaplain recalled the message, it was "hold on, hold out, and hold your tongue."[125] The orders of the Prussian chaplaincy commanded chaplains to 'stress the soldiers' duty, his oath, loyalty, and love of country, as well as emphasise the significance of authority, and obedience to it.'[126] Unquestioning deference to authority was a sign of a redeemed community. The theme proliferated more in German war sermons because of Germany's distinctive historical compact of throne and altar. The modified Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms posited two separate, interdependent realms, the spiritual and secular, insisting that the Christian was always subject to God-ordained ruling authorities. The Reformation depended upon the protection of territorial princes, a growing compact whereby "the church gained the princes' protection in return for obedience and

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[121] IWM 81/17/1 J.K. Best (Diary Entry 31/12/1917).
[122] IWM 80/22/1 E.C. Crosse, ('After the War Papers', pp.8-9).
[123] *Chaplains' Bulletin*, July and August (London, 1918), p.42.
[124] W. Stählin, *Der Krieg – Gottes Wille? Predigt von Dr Wilhelm Stählin 15 November 1914* (Nürnberg, 1914) pp.4, 7.
[125] Cited in D.L. Bergen, 'German Military Chaplains in World War II and the Dilemmas of Legitimacy' *Church History*, 70:2 (June 2001) p232, p.235.
[126] C. Werckshagen (ed) *Der Protestantismus am Ende des XIX Jahrhunderts in Wort and Bild*, 1901-1902 cited in J.E. Groh, *Nineteenth Century German Protestantism The Church as Social Model* (Washington, 1982) p. 595.

loyalty,"[127] later fortified by the nineteenth century Pietest revival. The Protestant church identified the Hohenzollern Prussian-German Empire and its divinely appointed monarch with God's will, and "inculcated a virtually quietist attitude among the faithful of the state."[128] While the Church of England was constitutionally a 'state church', it perceived itself in a more ambiguous role as the state's moral conscience, as the slavery debate signified.[129] This was only one stream of chaplains' war theology. Many other chaplains explicitly identified a specific deeper meaning in the war experience. The Protestant churches had extensively articulated an application of Christian scripture and doctrine to the social order, examining the implications of faith in its engagement with contemporary experience, hence the relation of war to modernity.

War's impact on piety in the forces was a central concern for chaplains. In reports, pamphlets and submissions to inquiries (such as the Church of England's *Army and Religion* inquiry), chaplains testified about the spiritual impact of war on combatants. Significant here are not the facts of religiosity but chaplains' social perception of facts. Because chaplains' testimonies brought conflicting subjective presuppositions to their reports, they differed over the effects of war on personal piety. Was praying enough, or could prayers themselves manifest a spiritually vacant attempt to bargain with God? How could one interpret the inarticulate silence of the Tommie, often reluctant to discuss religion? Would pious soldiers become alienated from institutional religion when demobilised? Was fatalism legitimate, or was it a heresy? Was war spiritually deadening? Or had war remystified the world, awakening in the ordinary soldier a vital impulse to the sacred? Their answers disclose more about the observers than the observed. Where some chaplains believed war had accelerated the materialist demystification of the masses, others believed that if only the churches reformed they could harvest the new spiritually ravenous ex-servicemen.

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[127] J. Jenkins, above n7, p. 297.

[128] J. Moses, "State, War, Revolution and the German Evangelical Church 1914-1918" *Journal of Religious History* 17:1 (June 1992), pp.47-59, p. 48.

[129] See M. B. Reckitt *Maurice to Temple: A Century of Social Movement in the Church of England* (London, 1947).

Religiosity, piety and morality are not objective social facts rather than value judgments arising from a formal institutional orthodoxy.[130] Even seemingly obvious indices of religion - outward religious practices – were interpreted diversely. Worship, singing, participation in ritual to some chaplains manifested a reanimated pseudo-pagan sense of the sacred, even a dormant Christian consciousness stirring to life. To others, that could be a more superficial effervescence produced in a climate of danger, reinforced by collective ritual facilitating discipline, not to be confused with deeper piety. One German chaplain in the winter of 1914/15 emphatically distinguished the two. Pleased as he was with the 'childish confidence in God', the 'joy in the religious service' and the stature of the chaplain amongst both troops and the officer corps, he believed much was lacking from the 'religious undertone in the army' and doubted whether it could float 'commandingly over the war music.' Surface piety could be read only a function of the pressures of war.[131] Conversely, where the danger was so great that worship required ingenuity and effort, padres made more ambitious claims. Alwin Backhaus declared his soldiers' makeshift subterranean chapels, 'dearest worship sites' built by soldiers, and their passionate singing as the Holy Spirit moving amongst the army. Idealised pious soldiers were exemplars for civilians. 'If this spirit filled us all, our people would be a right Christian people.' Inspiring them before battle against a 'grim ghastly enemy that has horribly indescribably wreaked havoc in our poor province of East Prussia', God was receiving the penitent army back like the father his prodigal son.[132] Some German chaplains, enlisted in official propagandist publications, blurred investigation and propaganda by circulating anecdotes demonstrating the innate piety of the German serviceman, even imputing a popular appetite for sermons.[133]

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[130] The irreligious army, a construct of secularisation theory, has been recently challenged. Recent studies indicate a more mixed spiritual map of soldiers' piety: R. Schweitzer, 'The Cross and the Trenches: Religious Faith and Doubt Among Some British Soldiers on the Western Front' *War and Society* 16:2 (October 1998) pp.33-59; A. Becker, *War and Faith The religious imagination in France* 1914-1930 (Oxford, 1998).

[131] 'Mitteilungen für die evangelischen Geistlichen der Armee und der Marine' 1915, cited in M. Schian, *Deutsche Evangelische Kirche im Weltkriege* (i) *Die Arbeit der evangelischen Kirche im Felde* (Berlin, 1921-5) p.105.

[132] A. Backhaus, 'Höhlenkirche', in L. Maier *Gottesoffenbarungen im Deutschen Kriege 1914/15 Zuegnisse aus den Feldpostbriefen unserer Soldaten und den Mitteilungen der Feldprediger, sowie Beispiele aus den Erlebnissen in der Heimat* (Stuttgart, 1915) p.96.

[133] Eg. 'Bericht eines Felddivisionspfarrer' cited in A. Neuberg, E. Stange, *Gottesbegnungen im Großen Kriege Feldpostbriefe, Aus Tagebüchern und Erfahrungen von Feldpredigern* (Dresden, 1915)

Similar divisions arose in English chaplains' perceptions. Some denounced what they saw as cheap piety. Shallow ideas of prayer as a charm-like protection from harm exposed a false popular faith of self-serving individualism, a mercenary religion born of a mercenary era. That many soldiers supposedly only prayed under attack, for their own physical safety, and quickly discarded their faith afterwards, was symptomatic of a heretical understanding of God as a mere tool for earthly prosperity. The perverse forms of popular piety and its cult of petitionary prayer they witnessed testified to the sinfulness of a materialist war in which the churches were implicated. Prayer was supposed to reaffirm commitment to God and meditate on repentance and salvation, to turn attention to spiritual welfare. Instead, the churches had allowed prayer itself to be contaminated by the spirit of materialism, valuing only personal safety and prosperity. Ponsonby attacked the modern heresy of a regal God dispensing favours: 'We have allowed religion to become a sort of emergency affair – a last resort…a drunken blasphemous soldier, a scoffer at religion, starts praying under heavy shell fire, and when the danger is past, he returns to his old ways…This emergency religion, which treats God as a sort of extra to be brought to bear when all else has failed, is simply magic, simply heathenism, a reversion to the dark ages.[134] Neville Talbot indicted the Churches for allowing popular theology to be enmeshed in self-serving materialism. In particular, faith in petitionary prayer was vulnerable to indiscriminate killing. Thus soldiers confront Talbot with an outmoded understanding of prayer that was mocked by arbitrary killing, of ''Bill who did pray' but yet had 'his head blown off.''[135]

Prayer itself for other chaplains was a straightforward manifestation of piety. Danger had brought men back to God. The 'mass of men' emerge 'realising that there are times when they cannot get on without God; they are not afraid of Him, they are not afraid of Him, they flee to Him with their simple cries for strength because their surroundings are so exacting…They cast all their care upon Him, for they know that He

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p.70.

[134] M.G.J. Ponsonby, *Visions and Vignettes of War* (London, 1917) pp. 35-37.

[135] N. Talbot *Thoughts on Religion at the Front* (London, 1917) p.14.

careth for them. They look to Him as their Protector.'[136] Acts of fraternity might be identified with a basic Christian impulse. Thus one chaplain anticipated a 'Great Spiritual Advance' after 'great moulding influences in the hands of God', if the church could catch them'[137] After repatriation, Dick Sheppard claimed 'Soldiers would sometimes come direct from a leave train at Charing Cross to St. Martin's for the afternoon service. Once a little party in tin hats with the mud of Flanders in evidence.'[138] Jeeves, relentlessly trumpeting ideals of redemption to his parish, insisted the war was reanimating spiritual impulses. 'Men have learned to pray, the old habit has come back … I believe all over the British Army in the field there has come an awakening.'[139]

Their writing was also driven by different purposes, sometimes difficult to disentangle. Chaplains were not always attempting objective reporting but ideological shaping of the public mind. Reports of religiosity to the churches assessed the spiritual state of the nation, but to civilians fortified their morale by idealising the soldier as exemplar. The ambiguous boundaries of folk religion and orthodoxy, 'superstition' and spirituality also complicated investigations of piety. Saying 'The British soldier has certainly got religion; I am not so sure… that he has got Christianity' rested on assumptions about what constituted legitimate piety.[140] Despite their differences over what constituted manifestations of legitimate piety, their testimonies illustrate the extent to which the war was interpreted as the vehicle of revelation and change, that its meaning depended on its impact on participants and the social order.

Redemptive sacrifice as a deed of human agents was theologically problematic, as committed evangelicals regarded patri-passionism as a heresy. By identifying and conflating soldiers' experiences with Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection it threatened the singularity of the Passion, the exclusive redemptive act. Evangelical ministry gave primacy to the salvation of individual souls and the dangers of individual vices, rather

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[136] Anon. Submission, Committee of Enquiry upon the Army and Religion, *The Army and Religion An Enquiry and its bearing upon the religious life of the nation* (London, 1919) pp.95-96.
[137] *Can England's Church win England's Manhood?* Above n13, pp.7-8.
[138] R.E. Roberts, *HRL Sheppard Life and Letters* (London, 1942) p. 101.
[139] IWM 80/22/1, L.L. Jeeves, (*Letters to St. Mary's Whitechapel Parish Magazine* ,undated).
[140] B. Mathews (ed.) *Christ: and the world at war* (London, 1917) p.42.

than corporate salvation of earthly communities. Four Anglican chaplains signed an interdenominational letter to Archbishop Davidson, claiming

> Sacrifice is not our Saving Grace, as we are no [sic] so carefully told, which belittles our Saviour's great Sacrifice when He gave Himself, not a dead but a living sacrifice for us. He laid down His life with all its moments and its days, and suffered then. While we out here walk blindly, taking advantage of the morality of the Country we are in, gambling, drinking, cursing unto death.[141]

Yet it was a popular heresy, widely accepted as a natural extension of the Passion. Anglican chaplains often welcomed the reshaping of God in the image of the suffering Tommie was itself a revelation of war, returning the cross to popular imagination. Communion with the ordeal of the Christian Passion brought the manhood of the nation into the body of Christ. Many treated the Passion and the soldiers' sacrifice as moral equivalents. 'The Old Testament many be said to begin with the faith of Abraham, as shown in his willingness to sacrifice his son; the New Testament centres round the Sacrifice of the Lord himself. We too were being placed on the altar of sacrifice.'[142] In James Clark's popular wartime picture *The Great Sacrifice*, a soldier dies serenely, felled by a discrete bullet hole in his temple, lying at the foot of a ghostly crucified Christ. It elides Tommie's death with the Crucifixion. For English chaplains, its appeal lay particularly in the sacred setting of allied France. The territory of horrendous conflict was consecrated by icons and sacred space. Wounded soldiers were sheltered in churches, and crucifixes improbably survived bombardment. William Geare noted the appeal of the cross to folk Christianity: 'He knows Christ died for him – the Crucifixes out here teach him that – how I wish we used them more in England.'[143] It was an intelligible way of communicating the war's transcendent meaning to them and the homeland. Especially as they were surrounded by Roman Catholic imagery of crucifixes and wayside crosses on roads. A public symbol in France in a way it was not in England, the cross and its kindred crucifix appealed as potent *foci* of worship. J.S. Brough reported that soldiers 'constantly on crucifixes standing among desolation and more than once one has heard to remark

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[141] Letter, Davidson Papers, Lambeth Palace.
[142] IWM 80/22/1 (E.C. Crosse, Unpublished Draft: 'The History of The Chaplains Department in the war 1914-1918') p.64.
[143] Geare, above n72, Letter 30/11/1916, p.53.

'They can't touch Him.' A picture of our Lord upon the Cross is eagerly welcomed, and thousands wear crucifixes they have bought. It was the experience of more than one Chaplain that nothing drew men more surely to voluntary services in or just behind the trenches than the knowledge that they would hear about the cross.'[144] While Roman Catholic iconography inspired, the embracing of icons came easier to Anglo-Catholics, less affected by Protestant iconophobia than their evangelical and lower-church counterparts. When the evangelical lowchurch Chaplain-General Taylor-Smith visited Harry Blackburne and several other chaplains, 'He loved our little Chapel, but I do not think he quite liked our Crucifix. I told him that we had learnt to understand and love the Crucifix out here.'[145]

Patri-passionism was also debated in German circles. It was resisted by the theologically conservative pietist *Hahn* Society: "A hero's death remains a hero's death" and should be honoured, "but it is not a deed of self-redemption from all burdens of conscience; redemption from all evil is and remains the merit of Jesus Christ."[146] Nevertheless, chaplain Hans Bodensieck tried to reconcile the sanctity of sacrifices without threatening the uniqueness of Christ's redemption. 'In the obedience to that god-willed law of sacrifice, also the comrades...your life lost, [will] not…bring around us one, eternal redemption' from the largest evils, of sin and guilt, - that is Christ's unique work -, probably however to redeem around us from the grey full danger of the peoples' downfall and towards the security of German *Kultur.*' Redemption 'somehow counts also for our fallen brothers' because 'they gave there the best what they had to give, joyfully: their life. And therefore they are a reflection of that holy consecration, that radiates over the cross of Golgatha, resting on its victim's death.'[147] Their imaginations were less stimulated by Catholic iconography. German padres believed they were stationed in the profane land of an ancestral enemy. It was their native fatherland, not the enemies' territory, that they sacralised. The encounter with crosses was also, for them, less of a novelty. Though crucifixes were a rarity in predominantly Protestant northern and eastern

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[144] J.S. Brough, 'Religion in the Army' *Church Quarterly Review* 86:171, (April 1918), p. 21.
[145] H. Blackburn, *This Also Happened on the Western Front; the padre's story* (London, 1932) p. 170.
[146] Cited in J. E. Groh, above n126, p.584.
[147] Bodensieck, above n29, p.17.

Germany, Lutheran Protestants were far less antagonised by religious iconography.[148] Their Protestant churches had co-existed in Germany with a far more populous Catholicism. Approximately 40 % of the German population were nominally Roman Catholic.

It was not just evangelical orthodoxy that led resistance to the seductive images of patri-passionism. Geoffrey Gordon objected to Clark's sanitised image of a ghostly Christ hovering over a dead soldier. War deaths for him were sacred not because they were self-sufficient or aesthetically beautiful, but because their sacrifices were talismans for the reordering society after the war. One soldiers' death, grotesque rather than romantic, underscored the falsehood Clark's idealised image of *The Great Sacrifice*: 'the man whom I saw die had a bullet wound in his temple, but there the likeness ceased. Here was no calm death, but a ghastly mess of blood and brain and mud, on his face and in the surrounding trench; and in the stark horror of the moment I could not see the Crucified at all.'[149] War was not itself regenerative, the 'material ugliness of war' making spiritual lives 'not awakened, but deadened.' Soldiers' sacrifices were not, like Christ's, sufficiently redemptive on their own. Sacredness at the front is found not in the fictional beauty of death in arms, but only in the worth of the community men die for. Civilians were also actors in their redemption and in justifying death, by sustaining the army's ideals and forging a worthy society "It is you at home who must help us to have constantly before our eyes the ideal side of war. You will do it best, not by blind hero worship, nor by thoughtless applause, but by raising your own standard of life and service, so that the England for which men have fought and died may be more worthy of their sacrifice."[150]

War's moral impact on combatants was sharply disputed in chaplains' literature. For some, army discipline, danger and collective mutual dependence was essentially uplifting and ennobling. For others, its primitive and nihilistic ethos of mere survival

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[148] As S. Goebel 'Medievalism and commemoration of the Great War in Britain and Germany 1914-1939' (Unpublished Cambridge Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2002) p. 338.
[149] T.W. Pym and G. Gordon, *Papers from Picardy* (London, 1917), p.175.
[150] Ibid. p.178.

diminished and brutalised the soul. Such conflicting perceptions of the war's effects on combatants revolved around contrary assumptions about the nature of military service: as a system of discipline and restraint or as a mechanism that loosened primitive instincts and appetites. They also reflected differing reactions to the place of war in modernity – as an acceleration or reversal of an anarchic and divided modern condition. These divisions were common amongst chaplains of both confessions. Leed identifies two rival conceptions of the relation between the social order and combatants during the Great War. For some the community was divided and anarchic for whom the veteran represented the man forged in 'natural solidarities' and therefore symbolising the resolution of those tensions. For others the community was a system of restraints which the veteran threatened, as man of violence, returning from an 'arena of instinctual liberation' outside its boundaries.[151] Believing their prewar societies were polarised and dysfunctional, chaplains divided or oscillated over the function of the frontline experience, as a place of fellowship or brutalisation. Chaplains also judged the moral and social impact of war on their civilian homelands.

Blood sacrifice was one element of national redemption, but chaplains also urged civilians to find a morally equivalent spirit of self-sacrifice in their lives. As chaplains doubted whether sacrifices in the arena of combat were sufficient to redeem their nations, the non-combatant was elevated to a role equal to the combatant. Chaplains on both sides reformulated the concept of redemption into something civilians must achieve, to justify the deaths of their compatriots. Only when civilians converted the suffering of 'Tommie' or 'Siegfried' into a higher code of living could national redemption be secured. Whether the spirit of martyr-soldiers would be sustained in the civilian sphere became the central question, as the home-front became the second theatre of national salvation.

The mythologising of the mobilisation period was reinforced as the war changed from a campaign of rapid movement into entrenched immobility. Chaplains harkened back to the first days of mobilisation as the ideal state of the nation, an occasion of unity galvanising the national community. In 1915 Christian Eisenberg reminded his Division

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[151] E. J. Leed, above n5, pp.195-6.

that the war should 'be a purification of our people', expunging 'bad juices from our people's body', waged not just for an honourable peace but for an 'upwards inner path for our people'. 'How lovely the unity which let all Party division be forgotten; how deep and solemn that seriousness, as the millions again show learned the living God; how great the sacrifice-willingness.'[152] Even if Germany's unification and war-enthusiasm in the 'Spirit of 1914' was more ideological construct than actual empirical event, it was central to Christian concepts of redemptive sacrifice.[153]

Was the war shattering the reign of Mammon, or tightening its grip? Many chaplains anticipated a post-war recession into hedonistic materialism. The breakdown of the war's moral economy increasingly pervaded chaplains' sermons and articles. That the living could waste the deaths of the fallen who would stand in judgment was a transnational theme. In a field sermon in 1915, Ernst Vits imagined the dead condemning future survivors for squandering their sacrifices through the pursuit of pleasure. If 'ever again either materialism, stupid Mammon-avarice, disdainful egoism, wretched riotous living wants to become powerful in German lands, then they will rise up as our judges and will say it to us: we did not bleed so that your contentment and your lusting should live.'[154] In the language of exchange, Neville Talbot warned his readers that British combatants 'were sharing in a travail which would bring new and better things to the birth. They have felt that they were paying the price for the future. As…each day passes, the public debt of the community to its defenders and to their folk mounts higher… the greater is the urgency that the better future, for which the price has been paid, may come to be. With the humility of indebtedness let good men and women see to it that…the agony shall not have been endured in vain.'[155]

Chaplains on leave also conducted a ministry to their homelands, exhorting civilians to a higher ethical existence. As the business of commemoration began during the war, they stressed the bond of obligation between living and dead. 'Should the

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[152] C. Eisenberg, *Zwölf Feld-Predigten* (Marburg, 1915) p.28. (My translation).
[153] See J. Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914 Militarism, myth and mobilisation in Germany* (Cambridge, 2000).
[154] E.Vits, *Deine Toten werden leben Den gefallenen Kameraden zum Gedächtnis, den kämpfenden zum Ansporn Feldpredigt gehalten am Totenfest 1915*, (Straßburg, 1915) p.9.
[155] N. Talbot, *Religion Behind the Front and After the War* (London, 1918) p.2.

immense sacrifice have been achieved in vain?' pleaded Hermann Bauke, preaching while on leave at the graves of Lüttich. 'Nevermore, comrades!' he insisted. Commemorating the dead would be worthless if it were only 'respectful feeling.' The graves of the fallen of Brandenburg were more than memorials. Their dead fellow citizens were witnesses to the conduct of the living, their graves admonitions to civilians' uncompleted duty. Their 'immense sacrifice' imposed duties that reached beyond the war. 'If we, God willing, will someday have peace', the 'new future of our people and fatherland should be built' to fulfill 'the serious admonition these graves shout at us.' Moral redemption of the community meant executing Germany's civilising mission to the world in both war and peace, galvanised by the martyrs who died 'for the great and good future.' In that way, rebirth through war was the apotheosis of the sacred meaning of history, that 'from death arises life, over the way of the cross towards the crown, from the deep difficult death affliction the awesome power of eternal life-glory.'[156] Chaplain David Railton tried to discern the signs of God's mind in the ruins of a ruined Cathedral alongside a surviving factory chimney, the asymmetry of spiritual decline and material progress, 'Wake up clergy, wake up laity! Love, work, pray and worship, and all will be well in time. May you never see such destruction.[157] A soulless commercial civilisation can be remade not through warfare in itself, but through a post-war living devotion to restore Christian fellowship.

Because the peace had been a *Pax Diabolica*, a sinful epoch, the armies were frequently portrayed bearing a substitionary punishment, expiating the sins of prewar society. The soldiers of the British empire, like the substitution atonement of Christ, atoned for the sins of a fallen civilisation, ensuring war could never again occur as martyrs for peace. As Herbert Bury claimed in 1916: 'Wounded by our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace upon them, by their stripes we are healed. They die that we may live…the wounded share the Passion of Him who in all our afflictions was Himself afflicted.' Instead of disguising the extent of the carnage at the frontline, Bury made it a virtue. 'You won't mind what you have suffered and lost,

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[156] H. Bauke *Im Deutschen Lüttich Vier Reden* (Berlin, 1916) pp.4-6.
[157] IWM 80/22/1, (David Railton, Diary entry 07/12/1916).

will you, lads, if you have helped…to deliver the world from the curse of war?."[158] German clergy gave a different definition to the same assurance that sacrifices would create a greater good. Their war was part of their creation myth, a grand chapter in the birth of a chosen people into a new nationhood that had begun with the wars of liberation. "Children of the light!" preached Friedrich Almer in a field sermon on Christmas Eve, 1915. "Germany's present should be Germany's future! God has let us become more and more a people" bestowing a peace "that the world cannot take."[159] Peace was identified more narrowly with the security of the German *Reich* against a world of conspirators.

To many chaplains, leisure communicated through newspapers broadcast the inequality of sacrifice. They presented a contrast between the ravages of war inflicted on combatants and the hedonism of civilian dinner-tables, race-tracks and bars. Discipline, self-restraint, self-denial were at the core of Christian visions of redemption, virtues that were supposed to be awoken in war. Yet instead of emulating the spirit of the soldier, the civilian sphere flaunts its self-indulgence. In turn this ruptured confidence that the suffering of combatants would uplift and cleanse national life. Chaplains' war experience moved between the sanctity of soldiers' suffering they witnessed, and the perceived unworthiness of the people they were defending. Neville Talbot lamented that pleasure-seeking in newspapers read at the front reflected 'the thinly veiled wantonness' and 'a mass of self-pleasing and luxurious talk cannot yet find an escape out of the prisoner house of Vanity Fair, though thousands bleed and die by their side.'[160] The perception that some benefited parasitically from others' suffering made wartime suffering seem more exploitative than sacred. High casualties alongside the persistence of superfluous pleasure at home outraged Bishop Gwynne, deputy Chaplain-General: 'In searching the papers afterwards for some mention of their heroism I saw that on the same day at the same time there was 'racing at Newmarket.' This seemed to me to be much worse than Nero fiddling when Rome was burning, and made me feel…that in this crisis the sacrifice is often unequally shared.' Though the war was the consequence of sin rather than

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[158] H. Bury, *Here and There in the War Area* (London, 1916) p.34.
[159] LKAN 2341, 53 (Friedrich Almer, 'Weihnachten an der Front' Ansprache am Heiligen Abend 1915).
[160] Talbot, above n135, p. 23.

divinely ordained, it nevertheless became a tribunal of the nation's penitence. As well as the 'military party in Germany,' he implicated the moral failures of the British people, because 'politically, spiritually, and socially we were on the down grade and drifting into chaos' suffering 'a lowering of ideals, and a …worshipping of riches, position, intellect…a vulgar display of wealth, which bred effeminacy, greed and dangerous dissatisfaction.' He proposed an official national referendum of corporate repentance. 'The manhood of our race, the best we breed, is being sacrificed for our national sins and weaknesses.' The failures of civilians were his theme, as 'fighting men in France are catching a new spirit, finding out the true value of things, and seeing visions of Christ and the meaning of His Cross, to a greater extent than people at home.' Civilians must match the combatant's spirit to realise the war's uplifting potential: civilian prayer could mean 'our race will come out of this trial purified and stronger by suffering.'[161]

After long service on a hospital ship, witnessing grotesque wounds and mangled corpses, an anonymous Anglican chaplain contrasted the army of saints with the ungrateful nation. In his final letter in 1917, he saw the possibilities of a new moral order arising out of the war. The fraternity of 'fellow-citizens of the Empire' had foreshadowed a transcending of social divisions, beginning 'the pulling down of the old and the uplifting of the new, a breaking down of barriers, a realisation of brotherhood, and a growing recognition of the 'real' things of life…a deepening sense of the spiritual.'[162] Yet he also anguished over the potential of society to ignore the costs born by the sacrificial victims who had guaranteed their liberty and prosperity. He anticipated the betrayal of their memory:

> Do you realise what the Empire's sons are doing for your sake – to preserve your rights and liberties, your honour and life? Do you realise their sufferings… Shall you ever either now or in the years to come forget it and be negligent of the needs of these broken wrecks of humanity? Shall you ever be willing to indulge in your luxuries again – your dinner parties and outings, your "purple and fine linen"? If you do, I for one shall cry "Shame, shame" upon you. I know the cost

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[161] Bishop L.H. Gwyne, Deputy Chaplain-General, *Challenge* August 11, 1916, pp.242-3 (reporting sermon preached in Westminster Abbey, July 30 1916).

[162] *Fifty Thousand Miles on a Hospital Ship By "The Padre" A Chaplains Experiences in the Great War* (London, 1917) pp. 283-4.

> of your freedom and the preciousness of the price that has been paid – the price of blood.[163]

Misogyny is evident. Chaplains betrayed a schizoid sexual politics towards women. As mothers and wives they were the custodians of nation's ethical condition after the war, their absence diminishing the common soldier.[164] Their influence would be decisive in receiving and reintegrating vulnerable veterans, translating wartime virtue into an equivalent peacetime citizenship. But as the ultimate non-combatant, women were also the most alien to the frontline experience, embodying as outsiders the potential betrayal of the combatant.

In both nations, these dilemmas intersected with a climate of growing tension between the two fronts. As warring governments permitted the enrichment of industrial and commercial magnates, 'profiteer' had already entered the vocabularies of both belligerent societies.[165] War as a struggle against materialism, or the idol of Mammon as Thomas Breit called it, could be undermined by sinister domestic interests, especially war profiteers. On the one hand, the war 'downgraded the value of money. Other powers rule today entirely.' Germans 'had to relearn' the lesson that 'world historical decisions are not determined through money', that national capability is measured by 'moral power' and 'national will'. Not for nothing did 'so much warm, blood flow', as 'we have learnt a greater fatherland need.' At the same time, others threaten to contaminate the purity of the war effort, and 'place their interests over the fatherland today', advocating war only to make 'war profit.'[166] Rarely explicit in identifying internal enemies, German chaplains' recourse to the archetypal 'profiteer' by then possibly encoded anti-semitism, especially as the leading orchestrator of raw materials, Walther Rathenau, was a polemical target as a Jew, and that the army had already conducted an internal census of Jews in 1916 to defame them as war-evaders.[167]

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[163] Ibid. p. 34.

[164] LKAN 3226: as observed Rudolf Zentgraf "Die Wirkung der Kriege auf unser Deutschen Familienleben."

[165] G. J. De Groot, *Blighty British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London, 1996) p.73; R. Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 1998) p.103.

[166] LKAN 3210a (Feldpredigten, Thomas Breit 1917, nd.)

[167] For antisemitism in the German army, see D. Bering, *The Stigma of Names Antisemitism in German Daily Life, 1812-1933* (trans: Neville Plaice, Cambridge, 1992) p.131.

Germany's churches were especially active in mobilising the material resources of the home front. They donated their own copper, brass and nickel objects, organ pipes from January 1917, and from March 1917 church bells to be melted down. They also plundered their own coffers, as church funds, bequests and donations were all collected to swell the war bonds. Chaplains gave spiritual expression to the state's growing dependency on the productivity of the civilian body. Making the 'religious-moral' case for the war-loan, Paul Piechowski called on Germans to sacrifice their wealth on the altar of the Fatherland, claiming Germany would win if it proved a purer, anti-materialist people than the mercenary English. Though God favoured the German cause, God would not assure victory if the folk did not answer the summons for self-renewal.[168] Though never morally equals, the *Heimatkämpfer*, home-fighters, were becoming equally important actors to servicemen.

English chaplains began a critique of militarist and narrowly patriotic values during the war, often rejecting military victory alone as an insufficient basis for securing peace. Bellicosity and sin were not the congenital defects of one nation, the militarism Anglican chaplains denounced was not usually designated as the Prussian state alone. Dedicated to the members of Oriel 'who laid down their lives for the making of a new world', Frank Barry proclaimed the crash of pre-war Victorian civilisation and its hopes of a 'commercial millennium', of material and industrial progress symbolised in its Great Exhibition. War was not about defending the old order, founded on the 'gospel of mere comfort', but building a new spiritually reawakened society. The process of redemption could not be completed through cleansing violence, but only through a reckoning by unworthy survivors with their brethren's deaths: 'Such a hope has been sealed and consecrated by the sacrifice of all our noblest. We cannot allow that their deaths shall have been in vain…But if this carnage is ever to recur, and the causes from which it issued are not eradicated, it seems that the price will indeed have been paid for nought.'[169] As victory became increasingly insufficient, redemption shifted to the shoulders of survivors.

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[168] P. Piechowski *Die sechste deutsche Kriegsanleihe in Religiössittlicher* (Berlin, 1917) pp.1-5.

From an early stage, German chaplains' writing betrayed similar ambivalences, between the sanctity of the spirit demonstrated at the front and the potential treachery in the pleasure-gardens of the civilian world. As a struggle against sin, the war was sometimes conceived also as a struggle between two fronts that were diverging as the war continued. Believing that war made men serious and god-fearing, it was civilians who posed the greatest threat. Chaplains often apprehended peacetime, with its loosening of wartime restraints and legacy of bitterness, as the greatest threat to the social and moral order. Only the frontline climate of emergency engendered a spirit of community and self-sacrifice. Chaplain Heinrich Ostertag, for example, praised the war's unifying impact, teaching 'our people with a blow to feel as a large German family', identifying in the 'structure of trench piety' the 'elements of community (*Gemeinschaft*)'. That 'spirit of comradeship', uniting civilians and soldiers into 'one body, one spirit, one hope' meant that 'war and Christianity are blood related.' Looking into the future, though, the peace contained the seeds of 'new wars', the populace of defeated nations with their 'internal shocks' becoming the 'enemies of the future'. Determined to maintain holy optimism, he couldn't believe that 'with the coming peace God's empire will simply dawn in our people.' Even after a redemptive war, traumatised societies could revert to the cycle of violence. Most German chaplains agonised less over the potential recurrence of war than the absence of people's 'self-renewal,' because their war was primarily about establishing a people and proving their worth. August Kortheuer asked 'If German men can not share themselves behind the front in the breeding of their willing fighting brothers in the trenches, if they cannot renounce the good life, may we then believe in a renewal of our people?'[170]

Civilian hedonism, so pervasive in chaplains' literature, was a caricature of the war experience on the home front. Most civilians were connected to the war effort rather than blissfully complacent, at the very least through wartime privations, restrictions and food shortages, the absence of friends and relatives of combatants, or in households

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[169] Barry, above n74, p.2.

[170] H. Ostertag, *Allgemeine Evanglische –Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* "Die Kirche im Feld II" 1915, p.999-1000. (My translation).

deprived of male breadwinners.[171] Though chaplains pastorally attended to the homefront through letters to bereaved families, they repeatedly chastised the non-combatant nation as a whole. Why were chaplains so susceptible to the one-dimensional image of decadent and unworthy civilians? This lay partly in the provisional nature of Christian sacrifice, in which the beneficiaries of atonement are redeemed only insofar as they keep the faith, with the obvious analogy in patri-passionism of combatants as actors and civilians as beneficiaries capable of squandering sacrifices. Classic civilian villains – war profiteers, the irresponsible rich, and especially in Germany anti-Christian secular ideologues - were representative of the sinful society combatants are sacrificially atoning for. It was also because chaplains were officers, infrequently granted leave, whose identities were partly bound up in ordinary soldiers, whom they gave a privileged moral stature as the most virtuous citizen of the wartime community.[172] At the same time, as agents of morale structurally reinforcing the war machine, their complicity in the sacrifice of the ordinary soldier meant that they were extremely sensitive to its potential waste.

It was also a strategy for mitigating guilt. Greater emphasis on civilian agency diffused responsibility to the homefront. But because they did not bear arms themselves, chaplains could never entirely identify themselves with combatants nor disown responsibility for their suffering. Julian Bikersteth, for example, cast soldiers as victims: 'The country is hoodwinked. Facts are distorted or totally misrepresented by the press. Everyone seems to be on the make. My nostrils are filled with the smell of blood. My eyes are glutted with the sight of bleeding bodies and shattered limbs, my heart wrung with the agony of wounded and dying men.'[173] Identifying partly with the victims, he also identifies himself with the nation of parasitic onlookers, war profiteers and newspaper magnates: 'When will this grim butchery of unfledged boys, German and English, end?

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[171] See J. Williams, *The Other Battleground The Home Fronts Britain, France and Germany 1914-1918* (Chicago, 1972) pp.28-31; R. Bessel, *Germany after the First World War* (Oxford, 1993) pp.10-11.

[172] For example, K. Diebert gave pride of place in divine judgment to those killed in the war: 'from each, that life for the fatherland gives, will also God's judgment acclaim: he inserted more into the God box of the war than that any others.' Diebert, above n111, p.96.

[173] Cited in J. Bikersteth (ed.), *The Bikersteth Diaries 1914-1918* (London, 1995) Letter, Dec.1917, p. 220.

For whose glory do *we* mangle the bodies of our splendid youth – God's or our own? Or that the Northcliffe Press can sing of another triumph?'[174]

Military victory itself was regarded as dangerous in its capacity to unleash hubris amongst the population. On both sides chaplains warned against blasphemous triumphalism in the future. Because chaplains conceived the war was also a spiritual struggle against the enemy within, future indulgent celebration could reverse the very essence of the war's meaning, as a lesson of humility, piety and gravitas. M.A. Bere suspected that victorious celebrations marked the point of decline, not salvation. A nation's military triumphs did not necessarily manifest its inner excellence. Bere envisaged Britains' post-war development mirroring Germany's own degeneration. Triumph heralds the decay of a power into hubristic pride. Bere's ministry to German prisoners of war as well as wounded British soldiers increased his suspicion of nationalist propaganda with its binary opposition of civilised and barbarous armies. The blasphemy of triumphalism troubled Bere in a Casualty Clearing Station at the Somme in 1916: 'We may win the war but I don't think we deserve to. The nation is gloriously pharisaical when England poses as the champion of honour and righteousness against the Kaiser…"The Devil's emissary."' The call to national repentance, 'our only hope', clashed with the self-righteous nationalism of 'our self-advertised superiority. We are certainly unfit to advertise a righteous cause.'[175] The coming of the Armistice was an ominous warning, a stage in the dialectical cycle of the corruption of nations: 'We have now to think of the duties which peace will bring us. If one looks back, the defeat of France in 1870 was the making of the French, and the victory of Germany was her undoing. England will have to keep her head and not be too much puffed up with victory; to think more of her own faults and less of the German's iniquities.'[176] Defeating Germany and exorcising the malignant Prussian spirit was only the first chapter in a greater drama of national salvation. This discourse of anxiety resonated in British Imperial History of the late nineteenth century, immortalised in Kipling's cautionary *Recessional* which marked Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 'drunk with sight of

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[174] Ibid. 30 August 1918, p.268 (my italics).
[175] IWM, 66/96/1, (M.A. Bere, Letter 07/12/1917, p. 134).
[176] Ibid, p. 214.

power, we loose Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe.'[177] Likewise, chaplains warned that Britain's imperial mission could be unravelled if triumphalist hubris eclipsed sober restraint and humility.[178]

The anti-triumphalist theme also struck a chord with German chaplains, even as Germany, more than Britain, was surrounded by enemies who bordered her territory and faced the prospect of the overthrow of the Wilhelmine state. German pastors had warned against slackening of moral fibre that had followed Germany's victories. The field sermon of one anonymous Saxon chaplain praised Germany's sweeping victories in the opening year of the war 'against a world of enemies,' rejoicing that 'we stand triumphant and firmly far inside the enemy countries.' Yet he cautioned that adversities were still possible, counselling his audience to 'be careful and more reserved' and 'to remain aware of our boundaries,' thanking God 'that he so visibly endows those [victories] and our entire people.' Beyond victory, in the 'future peacetime' they should 'seek his goodness, towards which we promote and strengthen in our people's life all that is good, noble, and pleasing to God's welfare', that people 'build up and want more and more to a righteous Gods-people of brothers in all blessing.'[179]

The only hope for redemption lay in the ethical reordering of post-war society. Victor Tanner, former public school chaplain of Weymouth College, came to the war immersed in the public school ethos of patriotic Christian idealism. In his diary meditation, victory is important for national honour but alone is not sufficient. The dead should inspire survivors to transform society: 'to build a new England on the principles of righteousness, justice and brotherhood.'[180] Even from a padre reared in the conventions of privileged schooling, the war was not simply a defence of one righteous nation, but cradle of 'a new England,' however nebulously defined. In September 1916 at the Somme, David Railton had hoped that post-war society would perpetuate the charity combatants exhibited. 'Why are people so less sacrificing in peacetime? If a

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[177] R. Kipling, 'Recessional', in M.M. Kaye (ed.) *The Complete Verse* (London, 1990) p.266.
[178] See D. Judd, "Diamonds are forever? Kipling's Imperialism" *History Today* 47:6 (June, 1997) pp.37-43.
[179] 'Feldgottesdientst' Sunday 5 September 1915 in *Sächsisches Kirchenblatt* 19 September, pp. 596-598. (My translation).
[180] Cited in M. Moynihan (ed.) *God on Our Side* (London, 1983) p.162, undated.

Colonel…can give up his tent in a storm for the soldiers, why can't a gentleman of like position give up many luxuries for some injured workman. I hope such great things from this war. I can almost see a new England…it will only be in the exact proportion in which we follow our Lord.'[181] The New Jerusalem could only be realised through civic service and piety.

One group of civilians particularly evoked disturbed and contradictory reactions: veterans. Though lauded as Christian martyr-soldiers, the return of soldiers to the civilian world, in which they crossed the threshold transformed, was a frightening transition. Apprehension of postwar chaos threatened perceptions of war as a struggle for a Christian civilisation. Many chaplains were especially disturbed by the impact of war on surviving combatants. If civilisation was a nexus of restraints, those could be destroyed by the demobilised soldier. Educated in violence, antagonistic to the uncomprehending civilian world, alienated from the rule of law and civil society, the warriors praised for their crusading idealism were also imagined as future menaces. In his diary on Christmas Eve, 1918, J.K. Best recorded his trepidation over their release from the western front: 'discipline becoming more stringent. We should be humane rather than tyrranous – study human nature. Much losing of names. Men not being demobilised in right spirit for peaceful reconstruction. What will happen, will they think all law order + officialism pernicious.'[182] The protracted process of demobilisation might also strain the nerves of survivors. M.A. Bere worried about the consequences of tense waiting for release onto the home front: 'I do hope that the restoration of the troops to civil life will soon begin. This kind of existence tries men's nerves in quite another way to war.'[183] This extended the fears of chaplains about the automaton effect of discipline on individuals and the dangerous release from it.[184] If the war was an inner struggle against corruption and sin, the brutalisation of soldiers could efface the peace and security that victory was supposed to deliver. Neville Talbot even worried about ex-servicemen who aspired to priesthood: 'Many would have suffered from mental and moral relaxation. In general cultivation…

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[181] IWM 80/22/1(D. Railton, letter September 1916, undated).
[182] IWM 81/17/1 (J.K. Best, Diary Entry 24/12/1918).
[183] IWM 66/96/1 (M.A. Bere, Letter 23/11/1918).
[184] The dangers of demobilisation were also stressed by J.S. Brough above n144, pp.23-25.

they will be almost barbarians.'[185] The early image of veterans as authoritative figures returning to educate homeland in higher knowledge and virtue competed with an image of returning predators.

For German chaplains, fear of demobilised veterans escalated with the disastrous defeat (*Zusammenbruch*) and the prospect of a chaotic demobilisation of millions of demoralised soldiers, especially after soldiers engaged in a 'covert military strike' to avoid combat in the last months. Rudolf Schlunck hoped in his diary of October 1918 that the restraints of piety would prevent 'the great misfortune' of defeat returning combatants 'not as an army to the homeland but rather as hordes, bringing misfortune over the homeland.' He prayed that the army preserve discipline, preserving God's command over the people and the nation.[186] There were no such ambiguities about the dead. One chaplain apportioned 'moral guilt' squarely on those who undermined 'the undefeated army', those 'who question our dead and their work, who destroy Germany', 'after its best in hundreds of thousands for their salvation fell.'[187] The rising emphasis on non-combatants and their suspect loyalties had reached its logical conclusion in the scapegoating of pacifists, socialists, shirkers, and Jews. Appeals for unity in the war-forged *Gemeinschaft* now yielded to finger pointing, against internal enemies who threatened the *Volk* in its struggle, anticipating the postwar myth of the *Dolchstoßlegende*.

Some English chaplains, perceiving that war diminished combatants and civilians, concluded that God had not ordained the war. The apparent absence in war of a redemptive purpose discredited the notion that God was its architect. They attributed the war to human sin and abusive free will, in which redemption was only possible by God overriding the war through human repentance. Tom Pym concluded that 'we *must* be disillusioned. There are far too many flamboyant assertions that war has turned men to God; such assumptions become blasphemous when they add that the Almighty stage-managed the war with this particular end in view. Our ground for hopefulness should be

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[185] N. Talbot, 'The Training of the Clergy' in F.B. Macnutt, above n107, pp.269-291, p. 286.
[186] R. Schlunk, *Ein Pfarrer im Kriege Kriegserlebnisse d. renitenten Pfarrers* (Kassel, 1931) p. 342.
[187] Cited in Schian above n9, p.232.

rather the opportunity which will remain after the war.'[188] Studdert-Kennedy preached deicide in a war against idolatory, claiming the war was an iconoclastic struggle against the very concept of a God ordaining suffering: 'God cannot be absolutely Almighty. It is the Almighty God we are fighting; He is the soul of Prussianism. I want to kill him…and tear Him from His throne…This war is no mere national struggle, it is a war between two utterly incompatible visions of God.'[189] Beginning as an exemplar of muscular and Christian nationalism, preaching after boxing, wrestling or combat training, he later renounced inflated nationalism. The war originated in universal 'scheming, lying and greed' and the 'sickly sentimentalism, the idiotic pomp and pageantry of militarism' responsible for the war. For these Anglicans, the only God that could endure the realities of the new frontier of suffering on the western front was the fellow-sufferer, a modernised crucifixion of Christ remade in the image of the soldier. Divine fellow suffering, God's kinship with the world, had to be mediated through the experience of the soldier: 'Not a few have come to regard what they have seen and suffered as incompatible with the reign of a loving Father. The chaplain who can portray the story of the Cross and Resurrection in terms of the soldier's own experience will find the soil crying for the seed.'[190] Julian Bikersteth denied the war redemptive power. War might enable heroism, but diminished humanity, and was found wanting in the moral balance: 'This War may bring out some of the good qualities in man, but the evil it does is incalculably greater. The whole thing is utterly devilish and the work of all the demons of hell. It will take generations to eradicate the work done to civilisation by it. I feel that our whole moral outlook is being systematically lowered…'[191] In varying degrees many doubted the deity set over and against the world, serene in *apatheia*, rewarding and punishing good and evil deeds, remote from the mechanism of human suffering, and inflicting wars. God was present, but as victim rather than patriarchal ruler. The war's redemptive power was modelled on Christian apprehension of sin transfigured into salvation.

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[188] Pym, above n150, pp.15-16.
[189] G.A. Studdert-Kennedy, *The Hardest Part* (London, 1919) pp. 40-41.
[190] Committee of Enquiry upon the Army and Religion, above n136, p.28.
[191] Cited in Bikersteth above n173, Letter, undated, September 1916, p.137.

Most German chaplains, in contrast, stubbornly affirmed the war's divine origins. They maintained that God had inflicted the war on Germany to purge the chosen people and test their worthiness for imperial destiny. Where they lamented the war's impact on the common soldier or on the national character, it was the failure of the *Volk* to prove to respond piously, self-sacrificially and faithfully to the tribunal of war. In the third year of the war, Paul Piechowski unrepentantly depicted a furious and punitive God, 'the eternal over us excites the storm flood of a war…God has played on the lyre of the war a powerful song.'[192] The script was already written by 1914, that failure and degeneration after war only manifested unworthiness. Ernst Vits, preaching in the Berlin Cathedral, depicted God looking down on judgment over the 'terrible criminal court', as the 'thunder of the world trial rolls,' foretelling that 'The great Lords' day hurries near…a day of misery and anxiety, darkness clouds and fog…Your blood is supposed to be spilt.'[193] These pronouncements reflected the transformation of the image of God at the nucleus of Protestant piety in nineteenth century Germany, from the *summum bonum* of the Enlightenment to the Lord of peoples and kingdoms, the great God of battles, the Avenger and Judge.[194] Paul Tillich's iconoclasm was unrepresentative of his colleagues, when he claimed that both devastation of the Battle of Champagne and Nietzsche inspired his rejection of the old God. As he 'moved among the wounded and dying as they were brought in - many of them my close friends, much of my German classical philosophy broke down that night – the belief that man could master cognitively the essence of his being…I well remember sitting in the woods in France reading Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, as many other German soldiers did, in a continuous state of exaltation…European nihilism carried Nietzsche's prophetic word that "God is dead." Well the traditional concept of God was dead.'[195]

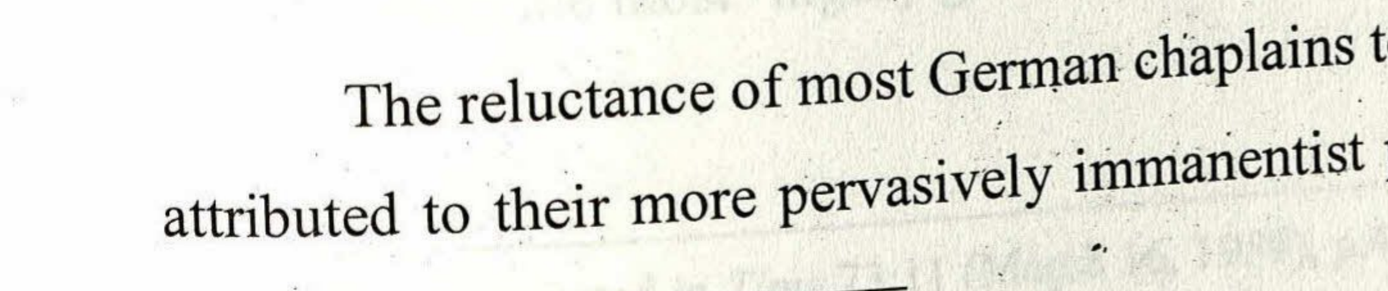
The reluctance of most German chaplains to deny God's designs in the war can be attributed to their more pervasively immanentist political-religious tradition, identifying

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[192] Piechowski above n168, pp.13-14.

[193] E. Vits *Den Sieg woll'n wir erlangen Predigt Sunday 28 Jan 1917 in Dom zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1917) p.4. (My translation).

[194] This is explored further in K. Scholder, 'Modern German History and Protestant Theology' in K. Scholder, *A Requiem for Hitler and Other New Perspectives on the German Church Struggle* (Philadelphia, 1989) pp. 35-60, p.51.



all historical development with divine will and divine revelation. Arming euphorically for war was a pentecostal event pregnant with the Holy Spirit. Gustav Freybe compared August 4, the day of German mobilisation, with the day of Pentecost. 'When the day for mobilisation had fully come, there were Germans gathered all together in unity…Then suddenly there occurred a rushing from heaven. Like a powerful wind it swept away all the party strife and fraternal bickering.'[196] Only history and its central theme, the struggle of the nation, could reveal God, who was more than an active agent in the historical process, but was almost inextricable from Being. They thought in a matrix which interlocked Ritschilian liberal theology, Hegelian dialectical philosophy, and Protestant nationalism, which saw the clash of nations as the inner logic of history.[197] If history itself was the vehicle for divine revelation, the political-religious adaptation of Hegel's unfolding and realisation of the immanent 'Absolute spirit' meant that God was continually present and revealed in the momentous events of German national history, in 1813, 1871, and 1914. German pastors pronounced that the war was a critical event in the 'history of salvation.'[198] German chaplains were therefore far less likely to deny the hand of God from the inception of the war in the diplomatic history leading to 1914 culminating in the July Crisis. In this respect, their mentality was more self-fulfilling in its logic. Even if the experience was diminishing its combatants, effecting the reverse of the *Gemeinschaft* ideal, all their observations derived from a historicist assumption that occurrences revealed the verdict of God's tribunal. Anglican chaplains often diverged from ethocentric pronouncements by some clergy that a divine mission had been prepared for nation, in their equivalent to Protestant sacred history (*Heilgeschichte*).[199] For German chaplains, even defeat rarely dislodged the Lord of History. Bavarian Protestant Emil Wolffhardt had preached on the Kaiser's birthday that the German people, though not elect were the most 'highly gifted' people with a 'special relationship' with God, like

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[195] P. Tillich as reported in *Time* 73:11 (March 16, 1959), p.47.
[196] Cited in Pressel, above n62, p.17. (My translation).
[197] Hammer, above n6, demonstrates the imprint of Hegelian historicism on German war theology, p.109.
[198] As K. Vondung argues, *Die Apokalypse in Deutschland* (München, 1988) p. 190. (My translation).
[199] For example, Bishop John Percival claimed the Allies were 'the preordained instruments to save the Christian civilisation of Europe from being overcome by a brutal and ruthless paganism.' *Modern Churchman* (May, 1915) pp.122-123.

Israel had to prove itself. Faith in the terrible struggle was God's demand.[200] The same understanding of the war as a trial of national penitence predisposed him to interpret either defeat as a judgment on Germany. Hence his acquiescence to defeat in November 1918: 'The struggle is over. The judgment is spoken. We bow to you, oh Lord of the World! We were great. You have broken us. Lord, you wish it! Lord, as it pleases you! ...no devil can steal you, dear God, from us!'[201]

[200] LKAN 3209 (Emil Wolffhardt 'Königsgeburtstags-Feier im Felde Predigt über Pred. Sal. 8,2 gehalten am 7.1.1917') pp.6-7.
[201] LKAN 3209 ('Bericht des Div. Geistl. Wolffhardt über seine Tätigkeit während des Feldzuges 1914-1918') p.47.

CHAPTER 3 BEYOND COMFORT: REMEMBERING THE GREAT WAR

Rising before the congregation of Malborough College chapel in May, 1919, E.C. Crosse delivered stern warnings to the assembled schoolboys. Though the war had been won, it 'remains for us to reap the fruits of victory.' The spoils of war were not primarily redrawn maps, dismembered territories, or 'money which can be squeezed out of a beaten enemy.' Instead, post-war reconstruction was about 'the moral regeneration of those who have survived the war. Is England going to forget, as she is apparently anxious to do, that over 600,000…of her very best have laid down their lives for her future?' He chastised an ungrateful nation that 'is fed up with the war or anything to do with it.' Only attention to the recent war, and the divine judgment against militarism implicit in the overthrow of 'the mighty from their seats,' could make peace and regeneration possible. The aspiration for a 'war to end all wars' presumed that an inner moral cleansing of the nation was a precondition to ending conflicts abroad. Commemoration meant reaffirming the nexus between social regeneration and global security. Crosse feared a hollow victory that would waste the sacrifices of the dead, epitomising the fears of returning Anglican chaplains.[202]

In Hamburg, ex-chaplain Johannes Wehrmann tried to salvage meaning from defeat. He distilled a romantic nationalist philosophy formed while preaching to his comrades on the western front and in the Ukraine. The root cause of defeat was not primarily military. Instead, it was a manifestation of a failure in the national character, a community at war that had imploded into disunity, sectional politics and mercantile greed. Wehrmann inverted Crosse's formula of the meaning of Germany's defeat. He too called his compatriots to repent, but for defeat rather than for militarism. The judgment of the war was not an indictment of Germany's imperial ambition, but of the collapse of solidarity. By relinquishing their obligation to find inner renewal and sustain their early wartime cohesion, Germany had forsaken its divine mission to enforce God's will, and been denied victory. He lamented the failure to live up to the promise of 1914. The

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[202] IWM 80/22/1 (E.C. Crosse 'A Sermon Preached in Malborough College Chapel on May 25th 1919',

homeland had disintegrated 'yet again into states and interests groups' while 'millions of us abroad' thought 'of money and were not at all concerned about the people and about the people's unity, that this national corruption was so great that we could not make the military cutting edge - that is our guilt, that we must confess before our God.' He also denounced Germany's enemies for their 'envy', which drove their concerted assault on the Fatherland, assigning them the war guilt. Above all, Wehrmann reaffirmed the unity of piety and nationalism. The Kingdom of God he identified with the *Reich*, Christian rebirth with the resurrection and renewal of the *Volk*. In an enduring struggle, repentance meant national reunification, salvation would come by rekindling 1914 solidarities.[203] Defeat and disintegration did not refute God's hand in the war, but proved the failure of Germans to answer their call to self-renewal. Only unity could secure God's intervening grace.

As these testimonies demonstrate, the end of hostilities did not end the search for national redemption. The cult of the dead emerged from popular responses and official orchestration as a liturgy in which civil and clerical leaders presided. Chaplains rededicated civilians to consecrate life in the memory of the dead. Chaplains invoked the memory of the dead to galvanise the living into a Christian citizenship. The dead were idealised as Christian citizen-soldiers, sometimes as Christian martyrs. In remembrance services, people were exhorted to translate the ideals embodied by the fallen into a civil code of living. Former chaplains played a significant role in defining the memory of the Great War. They were often called to preside over commemorative occasions, or in sermons, memoirs and written meditations to interpret the war experience. They addressed the personal dimension of commemoration, ministering to grieving individuals. Their ministry also had a civic dimension. By identifying why fellow citizens died, why their deaths should be honoured, and how public policy should reflect reverence for the dead, they averred the legitimacy of the cause and polity that millions had died or suffered to defend, partaking in an inherently political project.

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p.1).

[203] J. Wehrmann *Die Gemeinde, die Zukunft der Völker* (Königsberg, 1919) pp.36-38. (My translation).

For chaplains the war was about something more profound than its military outcome. Because they continued to believe their societies were not wholly redeemed, despite the colossal price paid in blood, peace did not terminate their anxieties. Peace opened a new phase in their interpretations of the war. Chaplains invoked the debt owed by the living to the fallen, to ensure that the sacrifices of the dead would be justified and completed. Over time, chaplains became increasingly doubtful that the civilian world was honouring that debt. To motivate them into a higher sense of civic duty, in their sermons and writing they summoned the dead as spirits bearing solemn demands, to arouse guilt and unease in survivors. Winter argues that the healing power of the language of loss lay in its sense of closure, its capacity to enable the bereaved to live with their losses, 'and perhaps to leave them behind.'[204] This chapter argues that chaplains were animated primarily by the opposite impulse. The language of agitation was their preference. As an extension of their frustrated hope that war would transform society, they saw their duty as keeping the war and its ghostly armies ever-present, to sting the consciences of the living. War memorials and remembrance services were more than occasions for mourning or consolation. Soothing the bereft and affirming their belonging to a grieving community was a ritual of consolation, yet reminding congregations of their unpaid debt to the dead was potentially discomforting. Mobilising the living meant arousing their consciences. If there was consolation to be had, it was not that the redemptive value of the war was assured, but that citizens through their agency and code of living could redeem the war.

The postwar period also opened up a sharp divergence between their war memories. In both castes of mind, society must be remodelled around a blood-debt to the dead. Because of their different religious and national contexts, precisely what it meant to honour the fallen became very different. Anglican chaplains believed the dead must be honoured by forging a repentant and egalitarian social order that would make war impossible. Germany's Protestant chaplains elaborated an ethos that was more ethnic and less pacific, calling for a remobilised *volk* that may again have to wage war for its salvation.

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[204] Winter above n17, p.5.

A growing body of historiography surrounds war commemoration. Interpretations have presented the communal public responses to collective trauma both as a form of healing and as a political discourse that reaffirmed the legitimacy of the nation-state. The two approaches are not irreconcilable. Shrines, monuments, and the rituals that structured their meaning provided a space in which individuals could grieve while the local and national community were reconstituted as causes worthy of sacrifice. Comforting the bereft meant validating the sacrifices of its servicemen, which in turn proclaimed the worthiness of the polity they served.

One approach emphasises therapy, comfort and consolation as the primary object of commemoration. Leading examples are Moriarty's analysis of Christian iconography in war memorials and Winter's study of such popular phenomena as spiritualism.[205] Other interpretations attend to the functional aspects of commemoration in relation to politics, depicting war commemoration as an inherently conservative process. Bushaway depicts war memorialisation in Britain as imparting a deferential ideal of citizenship and inhibiting criticism of the *status quo*, reinforced deference to the existing social order and its distribution of power and wealth, while buttressing social cohesion by marginalising dissent.[206] It was an instrument of false consciousness. Especially in the context of defeated nations, Mosse also portrays commemorative rituals as smothering criticism or challenges to the prevailing social order, a duplicitous discourse that was fertile for extremist revanchist politics, preparing the ground for fascism to appropriate the memory of the war.[207]

The post-war attitudes of chaplains do not easily fit either 'therapeutic' models of war commemoration, which stress healing and consolation, or interpretations that stress its exclusively conservative nature. Their objective was largely to redefine a spiritual and moral struggle to transform society that the armistice had left unfinished. Where mourning placed structure and meaning upon trauma to give sacrifices a secure and

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[205] C. Moriarty, 'Christian iconography and First World War Memorials' *Imperial War Museum Review* 6 (1992), pp.63-75, p.63.

[206] B. Bushaway, 'Name Upon Name: The Great War and Remembrance' in R. Porter, *Myths of the English* (London, 1992) pp.136-167.

[207] G. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford, 1990).

completed value, ex-chaplains emphasised that the worth of wartime sacrifices was contingent upon the post-war citizenship of the living. Only the conduct and standard of the postwar community could ultimately validate the severe suffering of the battlefield. This required inculcating unease as well as comfort.

The argument of this thesis is more similar to King's study of British war memorials and Connelly's localised examination of commemoration in London. King refutes the proposition that remembrance was an inherently conservative project in the British context.[208] Radical as well as conservatives legitimised their policies and ideologies by invoking the dead. And as Connelly demonstrates, the practice of public remembrance was not exclusively an elitist or official discourse but arose as much 'from below' through local organisations, parishes and veterans associations.[209] Also significant is Koselleck's study of French and German commemorations of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870/1. Koselleck shows the way victorious and defeated nations shaped memorials and rituals. Where the victorious Germans after 1871 celebrated unification and a completed struggle, revanchism and unsettled grievances gave the memorials of the vanquished French a more militant texture.[210] In the same way, the experience of victory and defeat furthered the divergence of military chaplains' responses, even as they shared a common commitment to transforming society by repaying the blood-debt to the dead.

Grief was almost universal in both nations after the war. High casualties afflicted both nations. Britain's casualties numbered 750,000 killed, 2,500,000 wounded, and affected most households. Pervasive also were expectations and demands placed on the body politic that the government translate the efforts of the war into reconstruction. Lloyd George's election phrase of 1918, 'homes fit for heroes,' was shorthand for the politics of transition from war to peace. This was partly the unrealised potential of the war's dramatic industrial and social transformations. The war and its voracious war economy

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[208] A. King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Ox
1998).
[209] M. Connelly *The Great War, Memory and Ritual Commemoration in the City and East London, 1916-1939* (Woodbridge, 2002).
[210] R. Koselleck and M. Jeismann, *Der politische Totenkult Kriegdenkmäler in der Moderne* (München,
1994) p.27.

had strengthened the state massively, erecting unprecedented machinery of collectivist control. Social welfare, housing policy, legislative intervention, the overthrow of *laissez-faire* and the paradox of improved public health in a war machine that linked hygiene with national defence - were all legacies that reformist Anglicans, their pre-eminent chaplains included, hoped could be turned to transforming the social order.[211] It was also the culmination of the idealist reading of the war, and the unfulfilled expectations of August 1914 as a crusade for a transformed society, a project that had not been concluded with the armistice. In the eyes of returning chaplains, the war's impact on governance had made these transformations possible, its sacrifices made it obligatory. Bishop Gwynne, the Deputy Chaplain-General, had proposed to Haig in March, 1918 that the objectives of the war be proclaimed on a card to soldiers: 'Better homes where the children could grow up healthy and strong; better education which gave a child full opportunity for developing the faculties implanted in him by God; a fair deal for labour, giving to the worker a full life; justice for women and a resolute stand against prostitution; a discipline which keeps a man at his best and maintains holy matrimony as the ideal of family life.'[212] As ex-chaplains mourned the ravages of war, disillusionment with the post-war settlement, the persistence with economic deprivation and the contamination of the body politic and the moral order of society was as much a part of their unease as the death toll. Growing discontent in Britain flowed from the failure to realise Lloyd George's 'land fit for heroes,' where post-war Britain was not replicating wartime communal solidarity.

'The blackest day in German History' was how former chaplain Ludwige Hoppe remembered the news of Germany's defeat in his memoirs. 'The horrific fate went its way into the deepest abyss, in dishonour and disgrace, in need and distress.' Hindenburg had kept the army in the field, 'unconquered, glory-rich, finest in the world – until it fell from the stab-in-the-back of the traitors.'[213] Written in 1939, it propagated the public memory of the war that had been subsumed and orchestrated by the Nazi regime. It corresponds well with returning chaplains' contemporary reactions in 1919. Johannes

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[211] See G.J. De Groot, above n165, pp. 322-333; J.M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (London, 1985) pp.1-5.

[212] Cited in H.C. Jackson, *Pastor on the Nile* (London, 1960) p. 160.

[213] L. Hoppe, *Kleine Bilder aus großer Zeit Frohe und ernste Erinnerungen* (Lichterfelde, 1939) pp.171-3. (My translation).

Reetz lamented in 1919 that 'Germany had a deep fall. 'The German empire of glory has collapsed. That is bitter…An abyss of moral depravity has become manifest.'[214]

The world of Germany's Protestant churches was turned upside down. Humiliating defeat, with one in six combatants dead, was compounded by the traumas of a punitive *Diktat* at Versailles and revolution. The Kaiser's abdication and flight, accompanied by the abdication of other princely houses, decapitated the churches by removing their royal patrons who were their church heads. Everything they had held sacred was in disarray. Prussia had boasted the lion's share of military chaplains, who had celebrated and identified closely with the Hohenzollern dynasty. The sacred relationship of Throne and Altar was severed, God-given authority usurped. Sole guilt, fastened on Germany by the Versailles treaty, inflamed a sense of wounded innocence. The reply to Versailles issued by General Superintendents of Old-Prussian Provinces in the *Manifesto of the Protestant Supreme Consistory (Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat)* lamented the injustices visited on Germany: 'We have lost the world war. We have been compelled to accept unheard of, most cruel armistice conditions from arrogant enemies. Kaiser and Reich, as they had become dear and precious to us in an unparalleled history, are gone. We have been spared no bitterness and no humiliation.' The declaration diagnosed 'inner discord', the culpable disunity of people, as the reason for defeat.[215] The matrix of the Weimar churches' war memory was set: war as a military struggle was primarily a trial of the nation's cohesion and capacity for self-renewal, and the wayward homelanders had invited defeat. But the blood of the fallen was still redemptive. On *Totensonntag*, the traditional day of remembrance on the last Sunday before Advent in November, priests were urged to bring mourners '…the faith that these holy sacrifices will contribute to the resurrection of our nation.'[216] With increasing urgency, chaplains would exhort survivors that national resurrection through the dead was an ideal that demanded pursuing.

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[214] A.D. Reetz, *Predigten aus der Zeit für die Zeit* (1919) Nr.2, 1.
[215] E. K. Bramsted, 'The position of the Protestant Church in Germany 1871-1933' *Journal of Religious History* Vol.3 No.1, June 1964, pp.65-66.
[216] Ibid.

Germany's churches feared for their very existence. Before the hyperinflation of 1922-3 battered them as a social organisation, the Protestant clergy accustomed to the historical patronage of princes feared the newly triumphant social democracy and its aspirations to a revolutionary secular state. Apprehensions were especially high under the rule of People's Commissars during the turbulent period before the elections for the Constituent National Assembly. For six weeks after the revolution, the Ministry for Spiritual and Educational affairs in Prussia fell under the dual leadership of the Majority Social Democrat Konrad Haenisch, a moderate who regarded religion as a private matter, and Adolf Hoffmann, the Independent Social Democrat, whose anticlerical hostility was overt. Hoffmann was appointed Prussian Minister of Education and Public Worship in November 1918.[217] He antagonised former chaplain Reinhard Mumm, a former Nationalist Reichstag deputy, now delegate to the Weimar National Assembly and defender of religious education. In a Philippic against Hoffmann in March, 1919, Mumm cried, 'He must know, what he did therewith to the Christian people. Adolf Hoffmann was capable of besmirching the honour of his mother before the gathered assembly building if it was serviceable to hatred against the Christian church.' Hoffmann's appointment was one of the 'indelible cultural humiliations of our fatherland.'[218] Their clash reinforced the mutual alienation of SPD and clergy. The assault on the churches' privileges and social status, especially state financial subsidies, confiscation of property, intervention in ecclesiastical affairs, the dismantling of religious education, were all dangers augmented by the feared repeat of Bolshevik persecution in Germany. These fears of a religionless democratic state had been especially sharpened since 1917, when Protestant leaders denounced social democrats, centrists and liberal reformers and their policies of negotiating peace, ending Prussia's hierarchical suffrage system and the secularisation of education.[219] Therefore they mostly associated reformist aspirations with the revolutionary subversion of the Fatherland. Secular humanists who promoted those policies were hostile to the divinely appointed monarchical order that was overthrown,

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[217] See J. Wright, *'Above Parties' The Political Attitudes of the German Protestant Church Leadership 1918-1933*, (London, 1974) pp.12-14.

[218] R. Mumm *Der Religionsunterricht und die Nationalversammlung Rede des Abgeordneten D. Reinhard Mumm in der Nationalversammlung am 11 März 1919*, (Berlin, 1919) p.4.

[219] D.R. Borg *The Old-Prussian Church and the Weimar Republic A Study in Political Adjustment, 1917-1927* (Hanover, 1984) pp.44-53.

favouring church disestablishment. These tendencies were reinforced by fears of a repeat of Bolshevik anticlerical persecution, especially because their Protestant tradition cherished the patronage and protection of secular rulers. To be Protestant was usually to be *Herzenmonarchisten* (monarchist at heart); to advocate social democracy was mostly regarded by the churches as antithetical to German Christianity.

The mission of Anglican ex-chaplains was social reconstruction, not the strengthening of nationalism. It is significant that many English padres who were the most prolific advocates of a 'New Jerusalem' war effort joined the Industrial Christian Fellowship, founded in 1919. Their leading spokesman was Studdert-Kennedy. Frank Barry, Tom Pym, Frederick Macnutt, David Railton, C.M. Chavasse and C.S. Woodward were also members.[220] The Fellowship popularised the principles of the 1920 Lambeth report, *The Church and Social Service* which called for 'a fundamental change in the spirit and working of our economic life.' Following the condemnation of the 'internecine conflict of capital and labour', it advocated 'the principle of co-operation in service for the common good in place of unrestricted competition for private or sectional advantage.'[221]

G.A. Studdert-Kennedy emerged their pre-eminent missioner from the trenches. Moved to alleviate poverty by his ministry at the working-class parish of St. Paul's, Worcester, and subsequently as an Army Chaplain, he preached that the grieving community must break the struggle of history, 'the tale of how the truth of Co-operation has fought the falsehood of strife and competition all down the ages.'[222] Studdert-Kennedy's diagnosis in 1919 continued his critique of the industrial modernity. The war, he believed, was its logical extension of cutthroat commercial competition, 'which is War with a borrowed cloak of Peace…the body that we wear to-day, wounded and bleeding, was born in a factory amid the roar of many wheels.' Building a 'new world' meant correcting the destructive forces of commercial competition that were so inimical to the

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[220] G. Studdert-Kennedy, *Dog-Collar Democracy The Industrial-Christian Fellowship 1919-1929* (London, 1974) p.54.
[221] E.R. Norman, above n48, p.245.
[222] G.A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Lies!* (London, 1919) p.21.

ideal of fellowship. Written in 1919, Studdert Kennedy's *Lies* emerged in a climate where apprehensions about the new social order were acute, 'every one is full of plans for Reconstruction.'[223] Kennedy rejected 'sloppy sentiment' that the war had 'purified, uplifted, sanctified and strengthened our national character.' He hoped war contained the seeds of its own elimination, be destroying the class struggle the 'real root of our national Misery,' then 'it may open our eyes to the Truth that all War is futile waste, and drive us to the task of national co-operation for good.' The surviving war generation should reorder society out of piety to the dead. 'In the name of our dead comrades, can we not kill that enemy now?…Has not the light of the last four years been enough? I have seen it in the ruined villages, in dead men's faces and their staring eyes; I have read it in the misery of that weird wasted land of wire and lonely graves beside the Somme.'[224] Seductive pleasures of peace signified an unredeemed social order, as did the persistence of inequalities in public life, signalled in the contrast of joblessness and victory festivities in the release from war. Kennedy projected these discontents into the minds of returning soldiers. His poem 'The Spirit', dedicated to 'all ex-servicemen left out in the cold', shows a veteran who fought with a higher moral compass than the peacetime community, wanting 'no celebrations / Nor no 'earty votes of thanks' but release from 'madness', 'scheming' and the 'lies', 'That end up in bloody murder / And the useless sacrifice.'[225] The 'useless sacrifice' could only be rendered valuable by realising the soldier's unfulfilled mission. To legitimise his judgment of the war, Kennedy reinvents the soldier from an actual participant in victory celebrations into a critical outsider. Only atonement by survivors for the common sins of belligerent nations could secure a lasting peace. 'The Peace Treaty, and the League of Nations which it sets up, are by themselves…about as much protection against war as a wall of tissue paper against a mad bull. Prussianism is not really peculiar to Prussia; it lives in Britain too, it lives in our own souls, and there it must be killed before we can make the world safe for democracy.'[226] His interpretation of national redemption radicalised with the persistence of inequalities, unemployment, slum living and the unalleviated misery of the working poor. Preaching at Covent Garden, he

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[223] Ibid. p. 29.
[224] Ibid. pp. 38-39.
[225] G.A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Peace Rhymes of a Padre* (London, 1920) pp.14-15.
[226] Studdert-Kennedy, above n222, p.120.

combined the apocalyptic motif with the language of secular political revolution. 'The Revolution is our modern name for the Kingdom of God…running like fire through the veins of India, it has run through Russia,' a Kingdom that must be built having seen 'Christ crucified in Flanders, driven, scourged and tortured through the field of war.'[227] Kennedy's became the most forceful Anglican philosophy that building the Kingdom of God meant shaking society to its foundations.

The dead were omnipresent in chaplains' preaching. By summoning the ghosts of fallen soldiers to articulate their own interpretations of the war, chaplains took part in a resurgent, popular mythology of reunion and contact with the dead. They did this to disturb as well as comfort. Their imagined legions of dead were no longer the serene and content figures embalmed in glory and reconciled to God. They become solemn judges, urging the mourning civilians not to betray their memory. 'Tubby' Clayton despaired at how quickly wartime self-sacrifice mutated into the self-gratification that the war was supposed to eliminate. After the war, Clayton worked with homeless war veterans amongst an public 'which has profited itself by their action and ceased to lament their loss,' fearing that the value of their deaths will be eroded. In his sermon published later in 1929, he fears the collective amnesia flowing from war-fatigue:

> As I look upon some heedless and self-pleasing lives today, I mind me of that terrible French story in which, a few years after the Crucifixion, Pilate has completely forgotten the incident of Jesus. When in the early months of 1920 I was sharing… some of the experiences of the homeless ex-Servicemen in London, I passed, one night as the theatre crowds were coming out, between a jewelled person and her car. There was a block ahead which halted me for a moment. Whereupon she put a hand upon my ragged trench-coat and said to me in great disdain: "Get out of my way, you're no use to us now." God forbid that anyone should imagine that incident to be typical, which truly it was not. I only quote it to reaffirm that impatience with the upshot of that great tragedy is an ill attitude.[228]

The perception rather than the factuality of this episode is revealing. Clayton turns the encounter with civilian indifference into an epiphany. It illustrates a change in emphasis from the battlefield as the site of redemption to civilian agency, and its power to fulfill or destroy the redemptive promise of the war. Only if sacrifice was remembered and

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[227] *The Challenge* Jan.21, 1921, p.834.
[228] T.B. Clayton, *Plain Tales from Flanders* (London, 1929), p.144.

emulated in rebuilding the social order could it remain meaningful. Summoning ghosts of fallen soldiers, they call from the 'Valley of Affliction' for a covenant with the dead with the living to render their sacrifice worthwhile through a living civic duty. Warning against replacing an age of sacrifice with an age of indulgence, 'our work must be accomplished by you, or fall and "fail forever."…These are things we ask of you, as you look back and see once more from the hills, where you now stand in the morning light, our bones in the valley behind you.'[229]

German ex-chaplains also summoned the dead, but their spirits did not urge civilians to sustain peace. In Germany, the experience of defeat and Revolution reawakened the Protestant political-religious tradition of war and suffering as a trial visited on a chosen people. Remembrance emphasised more the rescue of God's annointed Volk rather than mobilisation to build antimilitarist culture. The war had not primarily been fought to dissipate the potential for militarism. For the war's meaning and was not to make war impossible but to test the capacity of the *Volk* to unite, worship and believe, to demonstrate their worthiness of imperial destiny. Emil Ott summoned the dead in his tract on Christian people's renewal through war.[230] Ott exhorted the present and future generations to follow their martyred compatriots as exemplars. Imagining the fallen soldiers appealing to the living, they tell the 'Young sons and daughters of the German people' that the greatest lessons are not 'written in the books of your schools, than in our soul with fire and blood.' During the war, Ott had idolised the dead as neo-pagan earth men, resurrecting through battle the natural state of man and the ancient piety of their race, just as their ancestors venturing into the forests to worship. This he maintains: 'To the original, direct, untainted life are you returned, to the natural life and God recognition… in vain we did not fall. It was not also for great Germany, it was for "holy Germany". That out of the old world arose a new, an empire of the welfare of all sections and classes, an empire of love instead of the hate, an empire of humanity instead of slavery, an empire of the soul instead of things, an empire of faith instead of desolation. That we may consecrate you with the spirit, mildly transfigured by eternities, and seal you with the blood that once flowed for your salvation.' After the war, how to

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[229] Ibid, p.156.

sustain war's revelatory, purifying, uplifting vistas becomes his new theme. The task for Germans is to translate wartime spirit into a permanent ethos of citizenship. If the war was the genesis of national renewal, if individuals were 'reborn' in the experience of war, that only initiated a lifelong struggle, and the survivors must continue the 'soul' of the battle experience. War is no longer sufficient as a single redemptive episode. Ott's ghosts proclaim the bad faith of the non-combatants, who have not emulated their idealism, but are 'fallen away from homeland pride and honour-feeling, of brotherly help, sacrifice-sense, from sacred seriousness and from serious faith fallen away. Are you in the new affliction wildly disgusted - is it greater then than ours?'[231] Ott's ghostly dead continue to believe in the ideals for which they had enlisted, because they had died for them, while homelanders who had the luxury of abandoning them. This inverted the archetypal contrast between disillusioned fighters and idealistic civilians – Ott portrays the civilians as deserting the values that the community of the front still believes in Mourning the disintegration of survivor's values, Ott considers the impermanence of self-sacrificial idealism, which can only be preserved through self-sacrificial death. Above all, Ott's voices of the dead also arouse the consciences of survivors by demanding *anger* as a patriotic imperative.

German ex-chaplains also identified a national malaise, but in defeat blamed a treacherous and immoral homeland. Unlike their Anglican counterparts it was not the creation of a warless society that was the yardstick of redemption, but Germany's capacity to remobilise and reawaken a nationalist consciousness. Germany's inability to prosecute a war fully to victory itself indicated an unredeemed people, warranting a verdict of unworthiness before the divine tribunal. The faltibilities and errors of the German people, particularly on the home front, had undermined the war effort and squandered the chance of national renewal. The ultimate manifestation of the materialist disease was the degeneration of the faithful sailor into an unruly rebel in the wake of mutinies in Kiel and Wilhelmshaven which precipitated insurrections in towns, cities and ultimately the national capital, post-war society was collapsing into disorder and subversion Reetz saw this inner decay shown not in the mass death of the frontline but in

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230 F. Ott, *Christliche Volkserneuerung durch die Erfahrungen im Feld* (Stuttgart, 1920).

the black-market and its archetypal criminals. The war, he believed, was dysgenic, replacing the best with the worst elements of citizenry. Culling the most virtuous of the nation's manhood, it transferred power and influence to exploiters in the homeland. The causal sequence was clear: usury and materialist contagion germinated in the homeland and infiltrated the front line. 'As this was our ideal sense part of our people into the field was drawn out, our sunshine had gone and had come in the fog and semi-darkness was now the time of the sprouting for all quagmire plants, that needed to the growth of the semi-darkness. They eventually overgrew everything,' he continued, and 'spread it also into the front.' The virtuous generation of youths were spent and depleted, and 'German idealism and the German religiosity in these days is severed. Yes, we possessed in the people such an ideal layer; but that rests outside today in cool earth.'[232]

The ultimate manifestation of materialist decline was the mutineers and revolutionaries who took their place, convincing him that 'Germany has not yet reached the deepest point of its decline.' Current injustices sprouted from this centrifugal disintegration of values, as 'our home warrior and war profiteers still over the same wild dances and with splashy phrases wear away the German virtues of a people physically and morally incited in the war.'[233] Revolutionaries and profiteers were conflated into the same body of treachery brought about collapse of imperial Germany. In Germany, chaplains' condemnation of the state of society formed part of a moral panic that swept the country. The peculiar conjunction of conspicuous pleasure-seeking and a resurgence of political radicalism troubled legislatures and officials. The bonds of cohesion, order and decency had been frayed by inflation, malnutrition, poverty, black-market trading, and after demobilisation, crime and the spectre of venereal disease.[234] Chaplains stressed less the mechanics of transition, such as labour market adjustments and economic regulations, than the reconstitution of behavioural codes, patriarchal authority in social and family relationships, through faith in God, who had 'let us see the greatest time of our people' who would bring the enemy to justice. Hovering over his critique of postwar

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[231] Ibid, pp.3-5.
[232] A.D. Reetz, *Predigten aus der Zeit für die Zeit* (Stettin, 1919) Nr.2, p.4.
[233] Ibid. pp.4-6.
[234] See Bessel above n171, pp.220-254.

society was the finger of blame, as Protestant clergy actively propagated the 'stab-in-the-back' myth (*Dolchstoßlegende*).

After the anarchic period of the German Revolution, the secular republic was wracked by hyperinflation, paramilitary violence, and political polarisation. The German territorial churches united in 'Alliance of German Protestant Churches', issued triennial messages to the nation, and in 1924 deplored the prevailing spirit of materialistic egoism displayed by individuals and classes in industrial conflict. A gradual shift in the rhetoric of ex-chaplains occurred, moving away from their backward-looking preoccupation with disaster as divine punishment. As well as the wartime failure imputed to civilians, they increasingly idealised the 'spirit of 1914' as an established standard that could be recaptured; sermons contrasted the distance between the shame of the present and the great counterpoint, the summit of pious devotion and brotherhood reached in 1914. Retrospectively interpreted, the miracle of the "spirit of 1914" was not that it permanently achieved a moral transformation of the community, but to have shown it was possible. As they "coaxed Germans to recall the fabled moment of unity",[235] ex-chaplains began stressing the sacred past as a totem for the future renewal of the people. Stählin abandoned his former quietism and retrospectively identified in the August experience the rebirth of "a community of blood and history", wherein the *volk* "perceived, sang, acted, fought, led and died jointly." It was a "people's experience" of solidarity that "has rescued more men…throughout the disappointment of the war years and the worse experiences of the peace years."[236] Stählin elevated this to a theological doctrine with its emphasis more in ethnic nationalism, a dormant power, instead of the fallen Wilhelmine *Machtstaat*. Accordingly, the *Volk* must pursue its destiny, so that ambition becomes a duty to God. 'Every nation has received its special nature from God, and…the individual person…should help so that a nation fulfills its destiny on earth.'[237] The natural interplay of nations legitimated conflict as one divinely sanctioned means of progress.

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[235] P. Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (London, 1998) p.3.

[236] W. Stählin, 'Die völkische Bewegung und unsere Verantwortung' (1924) cited in W. Kindt, *Grundschriften Der Deutschen Jugendbewegung* (Düsseldorf, 1963) p.455.

[237] W. Tilgner 'Volk, Nation und Vaterland im protestantischen Denken zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus (ca. 1870-1933)' in H. Zilleßen (ed.) *Volk – Nation – Vaterland* (Gütersloh, 1970) pp.135-171, p.162.

Remembrance as martial preparedness resonated more strongly for German than English ex-chaplains. Dr. Franz Hagemeyer portrayed a calamitous defeat as the occasion for moral triumph. War was a chapter of suffering and sacrifice that left an immortal memory of communal struggle in popular consciousness. By forgetting that iconic "spirit of 1914" in German history, civilians could still betray the memory of the dead. Franz Hagemeyer invoked Moses' appeal to "not forget":

> Certainly of all the many terrible things that we have lived through since those August days 1914, we would like to hear most dearly nothing more. One would like these heaviest years of ones life and our people to be like an evil dream that alarmed us that one can shake off finally for oneself…The pain of the people, that it renounces itself of the memories of the Great Times of their history!…may the memory of the most mighty epoch of our German history never again turn pale, rather it must remain living from generation to generation! Three things must drive us to this: gratitude for our fallen, the obligations of the coming generations, and reverence for God, the driver of history.[238]

National redemption was a continuing task. The litany of war commemoration translated the heroic qualities of martyred soldiers into a code of civic values civilians could emulate. Civilians were urged to replicate the spirit of the dead by restoring cohesion and brotherhood to their collective life. Hagemeyer rhetorically summoned the fallen soldiers to do the talking. 'How urgent our people needs this self-consciousness of what our dead have to say to us!',

> You call us in the memory of the honourable day, when Germany in its hardest fateful hour, how a man and the son of all German tribes, Prussian and Bavarian, Saxon and Württemberger, and those belonging to all states and classes, Prince sons and farmers' sons, academics and fabric workers brought together for unity, through which our people in arms worked wonderful deeds, enabling them to stand firm for four years against a world of enemies. So different in their origins of culture and world view…they enthused commonly to struggle and to suffer, to

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[238] F. Hagemeyer *Das du nicht vergessest! Ein Errinerungsblatt zu ehrendem Gedächtnis an unsere Gefallenen* (Halle, 1925) p. 3: 'Gewiß möchten viele von all dem Furchtbaren, das wir seit jenen Augusttagen 1914 durchlebten, am liebsten gar nichts mehr hören. Diese schwersten Jahre ihres Lebens und unseres Volkes möchten ihnen vorkommenwie ein böser Traum, der uns quälte und ängestigte, den man froh ist, endlich von sich abschütteln zu können... Wehe dem Volk, das sich lossagt von den Erinnerungen an die großen Zeiten seiner Geschichte! ...Darum darf das Gedächtnis an die gewaltige Epoche unserer deutschen Geschichte nimmermehr erblassen, sondern muß lebendig bleiben von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht! Ein Dreisaches muß uns hierzu antreiben: die Dankbarkeit gegen unsere Gefallenen, die Verpflichtung gegenüber den kommenden Geschlechtern, und die Ehrfurcht vor Gott, dem Lenker der Geschichte.'

> triumph and to die for the security and the protection of their beloved homeland!...That blood, that they have spilt one another for the same holy German mother earth, should be the cement that through loose disunity, builds strong the stone of German houses on new strong cohesion, that defies the storm of time, locks together the people as brothers, allowing no need and danger![239]

Sacrifices remembered could bind together a fractious community. The ghostly soldiers rejoice in the miracle of unified struggle, miraculous because they had transcended regional divisions (implying interconfessional solidarity) to resist their encircling enemies. By reckoning with the dead, Germany's defeat could be transfigured into a spiritual rebirth. The return of the fallen to rejuvenate the *Volk* was a pervasive theme in the Republic. Official publications and Memorial Day, morality plays and ghost stories reworked with Christian resurrection and visitations of fallen soldiers. For chaplains, remobilising was the ultimate act of remembrance. The front cover of Hagemeyer's sermon-pamphlet makes the concrete ramifications explicit: 'Forget my people not the faithful dead! Forget not, what the enemy did to you! Forget not, what your God called for in your heart!' The community that is faithful to God and the memory of the dead must maintain righteous anger at the injustices it has suffered. For the defeated nation the graves of the fallen were the site of mobilisation in a national and partisan as well as a socio-political sense. It would be simplistic to assume that this kind of rhetoric was merely a strategy for comforting the speaker and congregation after a disastrous defeat. Had comfort been the only intention, chaplains would not have emphasised the continuing moral burdens on civilians to elevate their existence. Most English ex-chaplains tried to rededicate their congregations to ideals that would bestow peace. Contrary to these dominant ideals, one ex-chaplain stated that the best way to honour the dead was being ready to fight and die like the dead, thus inverting the formula by

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[239] Ibid, pp.5-6: 'Sie rufen uns in die Erinnerung die erhebenden Tage, da Deutschland in seiner schwersten Schicksalstunde aufstand wie ein Mann und die Söhne aller deutschen Stämme, Preußen und Bayern, Sachsen und Württemberger, und die Angehörigen aller Stände und klassen, Fürstensöhne und Bauernsöhne, Akademiker und Fabrikarbeiter sich zusammenschlossen zu der Einigkeit, durch die unser Volk in Waffen Wundertaten vollbrachte und 4 Jahre gegen eine Welt von Feinden in unerhörtem Heldenmut standhalten durfte. So verschieden sie auch alle sein mochten nach Stand und Herkunft, nach Bildung und Weltanschauung, sie kannten doch alle nur ein Ziel, das sie begeisterte, gemeinsam zu kämpfen und zu dulden, zu siegen und zu sterben für die Sicherheit und den Schutz der geliebten Heimat!...Das Blut, das sie miteinander vergossen haben für dieselbe heilige deutsche Muttererde, soll der Kitt sein, der die durch Uneinigkeit gelockerten Steine des deutschen Hauses aufs neue fest zusammensügt zu dem starken Bau, der den Stürmen der Zeit troßt, zusammenschließt zu dem Volk von Brüdern, in keiner Not sich lassend und Gefahr!'

defining remembrance as a platform for military *preparedness*. In a turgid regimental chronicle, J.O. Coop included a prologue by a British General. The story of the Division must be told to commemorate valour and 'as an inspiration for those who come after, and who, in their turn, may be called upon to play the game as it was played by those who went before them.'[240] Coop's chronicle implicitly endorses those sentiments by listing every minute movement, engagement and operation possible, identifying the war in a continuum of orthodox military traditions rather than a new and frightful form of conflict. Devoid of metaphysical interpretation, the record of the regiment is a sufficient exemplar for future generations. Yet the more militant English interpretations of commemoration could not be nourished by a sense of national humiliation, as could veteran German chaplain A. Büttel. Consecrating new church bells in a field service, he contrasted the ignominy of Germany's humiliation with the heights of national community reached in 1914. Recalling the 'great time', the 'disgrace and shame' of Versailles could not negate 'God the lord of history', nor Germany's greatness. He recited the mantra of August 1914, 'I know no more parties, only Germans', affirming 'we want to be a united people of brothers…sooner death, than to live in servitude.'[241] Expunging national shame was an incomplete labour.

Militant readings of commemoration were atypical of Anglican ex-chaplains. Fallen soldiers were usually cast as martyrs for a transformed social order that would eliminate war, rather than icons of a martial spirit to be imitated. More typical was the letter of a chaplain calling for de-militarisation of war commemoration in Birmingham's Hall of Memory. Ceremonial swords and other military regalia should be left out as they compromised peace, the central cause of the fallen.[242] The idea of a war fought between rival ideas as well as rival armed forces to kill the disorders that made war possible was too prevalent in their tradition of redemptive war. The doctrinaire pacifism of Dick Sheppard, briefly a chaplain and founder of the Peace Pledge Union, was not universal among returning Anglican padres, neither was his conviction that conscientious objectors

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[240] J.O. Coop *The Story of the 55th (West Lancashire) Division* (Liverpool, 1919), prologue.
[241] *Die Drei Glocken von Gottorp zu Schleswig, geweiht im Feldgottesdienst vor Gottorp Sonntag Cantate, den 10. Mai 1925* (Schleswig, 1925), pp.3-4.
[242] Letter, *Birmingham Post* 4 July 1925, cited in King, above n213, p.207.

were morally equivalent with the fallen. However, most padres would have applauded his conviction that the redemptive meaning of the war, and the best form of remembrance, was to erect a permanent peace through a wholesome community modelled on his own parish, St Martin-in-the Fields. He was less confident than on Armistice Night five years earlier in the finality of the peace. He therefore invoked the voices of the dead to define the nation's obligations as people contemplated Armistice Day. Instead of erecting monuments they would have said 'let our death be the end of war…If you must have a memorial do something that will enable our boys and girls to grow up with a fair chance of a decenter and more noble life…greater opportunities for learning the art of living' and 'clear an open space that they may play games and fill their minds with healthy things.'[243] His aspirations for the meaning of Armistice Day as a lesson in peace were typical of his colleagues.

Formally constituted in 1919, the Weimar Republic could not enlist real allegiance from the bulk of Germany's Protestant clergy. Through indices such as the high membership of the orthodox nationalist *Evangelischer Bund*, Dahm estimates that 80% of the clergy sympathised with anti-republican opinion.[244] In their eyes, it was imposed by traitors in an unjust settlement. That the tainted Weimar Republic would collapse was assumed, as prelude to resurrection of the *Volk*. Liberal or revolutionary interpretations of the war were marginal amongst Germany's former chaplains. Several former chaplains, however, formed part of a dissident and peripheral minority in the Protestant church as religious socialists. Paul Tillich retrospectively attributed his conversion to religious socialism to the first weeks of the war, when exposure to the class divisions of the nation revealed the stature of the church as 'an unquestioned ally of the ruling groups.'[245] Tillich sought to amalgamate social revolution with the Christian gospels, aspiring to unite Christian belief with aspirations of working class, with 'a line running forward' of socialist progress alongside with a 'line running upward' of religious salvation. The war might deliver Christianity's third great stride, ushering in 'a third period of Christianity beyond Catholicism and Protestantism,' as the 'meaning of the

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[243] H.R.L. Sheppard, 'The World Need', *St. Martin's Review*, November 1926, cited in H.R.L. Sheppard, *The Best of Dick Sheppard* (New York, 1951) pp.9-10.

[244] K.W. Dahm above n43, p.9.

'turning of the world' which the world war and the revolution have brought us?' he asked in 1919.[246] The war created a *kairos*, a critical moment pregnant with possibility. Paul Piechowski, once a nationalist advocate of war loans, became a pacifist "in the fire of the Flanders battle, in the infinite agony of the experiences at that time and of the discrepancy between war and Christianity."[247] As the war was generated by contrasts in "great capitalist economic interests", he celebrated the proletariat's rebellions in 1918, "struggled against the old class-state", and "it must, that was its right and its duty." War gives birth to class consciousness. German man witnessed the anachronistic contradiction of a Christian church and a power state enslaved to capitalist interests. Rejoicing in the rebellions of the German army, he claimed a new man arose in the trenches, committed not to sinful killing but to the peaceful creation of work.[248] Both believed the church should realign itself with the aspirations of the proletariat instead of being the handmaiden of the imperial state. For both Tillich and Piechowski, it was the encounter with class, as well as the trauma of conditions at the front, which altered their perceptions of the war. They were far more marginal and beleaguered than the English chaplains who were the impatient agitators of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, an organisation that enjoyed the support of bishops. Where the bonds of postwar social cohesion for Anglicans were social medicines underpinned by faith, for Germans the bonds were renewed nationalism.

Commemoration in Britain performed an integrative function, allowing for and often reconciling diverse readings of the war and subsuming them under a shared solidarity around the ideal aspirations of the dead. There was a greater tolerance over competing readings of the war, largely because the cause of a permanent peace held broad appeal. Former chaplains and secular humanists could agree that the ultimate repayment of sacrifice was to forge a culture that prevented another war. In a public meeting at Westminster Hall on Armistice Night, 1921, it was possible for Studdert-Kennedy and Canon H.R.L. Sheppard to differ over worthiness of the nations' losses.

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[245] P. Tillich, *On the boundary: an autobiographical sketch* (London, 1967) p.12.
[246] Cited in P. Tillich, *The Socialist Decision* (New York, 1977) (trans: F. Sherman) pp. vii.-viii.
[247] U. Peter: *Der Bund der religiösen Sozialisten in Berlin von 1919 bis 1933*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), p. 426. (My translation).
[248] P. Piechowski, *Die Kirchliche Lage der Gegenwart* (Berlin-Neukölln, 1922) p.1.

Kennedy asserted that the war had not been for honour, for freedom, for victory. 'Freedom from what? From the fear of militarism? And of war? They have not gained that, for never were we spending half so much as we are spending now in armaments.' He confessed his disillusionment. He had believed 'some good' might come out of it, 'but I cannot see anything…It has been an absolute, an utter, and complete disaster,' a realisation that obliged him to make an 'act of penitence and an open confession to God that I did not rise high enough.'[249] The nation must turn to reconciliation and brotherhood. Sheppard hoped that 'no mother who had lost a son or wife her husband would go home with the impression as he feared they might that those lives had been given in vain.'[250] In his thanksgiving to the Cenotaph, war had illuminated its own futility, thereby giving meaning to the sacrifices. 'It was your death that taught me how wicked force is. It was your death that has made me thirst and long for brotherhood and peace…It wanted that terrible welter of blood to teach me and others what the horror of war really can be. By your death you have taught us, as nothing else could have taught us, that the world must live in peace and brotherhood.'[251] Differing over whether the war had established a permanent peace, they were ultimately dedicated to the same ideal. Peace was an ocean that most Anglican war theologies flowed into.

In the German context, denying the war redemptive meaning as Kennedy had done would have been far more inflammatory, the peaceful co-existence of two different memories less likely. After pastor Günther Dehn denounced *völkisch* theology and called for a commitment of German Protestants to ecumenical peace he was blacklisted from a university teaching position.[252] When Reich President Friedrich Ebert announced in 1924 the objective of building a national memorial, it provoked an extended debate over its form and location. The beleaguered Weimar Republic had a crippling absence of social unity, unable to find a common public language or set of symbols projecting a basic consensus regarding the war's meaning.[253] Because Germans divided profoundly over the

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[249] *Guardian* November 18, 1921, p.834.
[250] *Morning Post* 12 Nov. 1921, 8. Cited in A. Gregory, *The Silence of Memory Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford, 1994), p. 34.
[251] *Guardian* November 18, 1921, p.834.
[252] Tilgner above n237, pp.168-169.
[253] W. G. Natter, *Literature at War, 1914-1940 Representing the "Time of Greatness" in Germany* (New

legitimacy of the Republic that the defeat had spawned, they were less tolerant of rival memories of the war. Germany's fractured and divisive climate pitted ex-chaplains against secular reformers, Nationalist Protestants against the marginal religious socialists.

Britain's Tomb of the Unknown Warrior also enshrined a padre's quest to reorder society in memory of the dead. David Railton's brainchild, it was interred in Westminster Abbey on Armistice Day 1920, to enable mourners to venerate a symbol of the missing dead. Draped in the Union Jack as an emblem which united spiritual and national allegiances, buried by King George V, its founder hoped it would do more than comfort the bereft, or anchor a modern war in the medieval past. Railton intended the monument to preserve memory of service and thus ensuring that their deaths helped to sacralise a hedonistic. profane and materialist society, despite their absent bodies. This would have resonated with chaplains, often unable at the front to give a conventional Christian burial. The Shrine was more than an icon of mourning, a place of prayer 'for all those who took part in the Great War, for all those who still suffer from its effects.' Railton urged visitors to pray 'also that you may be given wisdom and strength to help in building up the Kingdom of God upon earth. Then this Unknown Warrior's grave will become no mere 'emotional anchorage' but a shrine of the child of God, who is a representative of all who fell in the Great War, known or unknown, and a shrine of the ideal soldier of Christ.'[254] Beyond the catharsis of communal grief, the tomb was meant to incarnate its founders' ideal of a classless society. The unknown warrior embodied an equality in military death that should be replicated in the social order, for 'No one knows the Unknown Warrior's rank, his wealth, his education or his history. Class values become vanity here.'[255] To a priest who had ministered to the slums of Liverpool, this was no empty platitude. Intended to monumentalise his aspiration to a new social order, its ritualised creation was also a glittering royalist spectacle In a panoply of thick symbolism, the King scattered earth from France onto the coffin, replete with a Crusader's Sword, and the tomb was studded with inscriptions proclaiming the burial of an ordinary soldier amongst kings.

Haven, 1999) p.26

[254] D. Raillton, A. Twining, *What to Remember about Westminster Abbey* (London, 1931) p.93.

[255] *Our Empire* 7:8 (1931)

The Unknown Warrior combined Railton's own British nationalism with his conception of the war as an egalitarian Christian mission.

Preaching before that same tomb in 1923, Tom Pym warned that commemoration was 'little more than a sentimental indulgence unless we go back tonight determined to live in the spirit in which the fallen have died.' Pym continued his wartime *leitmotif* that failure to consecrate civilian existence would cheapen sacrifices. At the Memorial Service for Trinity Men on 2nd November 1919, he reflected on the 'fiery trail the memory of the dead brings across our lives', inferring that 'Citizenship demands of us the same qualities essentially as the comradeship of arms.'[256] The intervening years heightened his anxiety and the recession of society into destructive materialism dishonoured the dead and bereaved. The monument was 'more than a memorial.' To 'go on living our own lives simply for ourselves' would be 'disloyal.' He then recalled on oath he made to a dying soldier who 'asked me if I thought his pain was doing anyone any good or if when he was gone and thousands with him there would ever come a time when men would not have to die as he was dying, or suffer what he was suffering…I pledged him my own word…that those for whom he died would try to make the world a better place.'[257] Similarly, in 1917 Edward Woods had anticipated the threat of futility and articulated a duty not merely to commemorate but to transform society in an ecumenical, global sense as the most meaningful act of remembrance. Insisting public law must replace armed might as the arbiter of conflict, change must be driven by 'the thought of our debt to the dead…the one utterly intolerable thought is that these millions should have died in vain. Those myriads of graves on all the Fronts should…hold us steadfast to our highest idealism and the one true objective of a new world of brotherhood and good will.'[258] Like Pym, Woods attempted to project unease and discontent in his congregation, to translate his personal sense of guilt into collective consciousness. Preaching on Easter Sunday two years later, Woods meditated on a society that might fail to reconcile with God. He asserted that society's duty to the dead was not to realise the celestial paradise but 'Jerusalem on earth,' transforming an inhumane and atomised

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[256] D. Pym, *Tom Pym A Portrait* (Cambridge, 1952) pp.59-60.
[257] Ibid, pp. 72-3.
[258] E.S. Woods, 'The Great Adventure' in Macnutt, above n108, pp. 429-454, pp. 436-7.

materialism into a new corporate, pious and dutiful order. The engine driving these duties was mourning. Caught in a prison-house 'which is war's birthplace and home',

> We must find the way out, and in this generation too: what else did our men die for in these terrible years? God forgive us for the shortness of our memories. Again and again I have stood by the graves of our men in France, and as I stood there it came to me with a force that hurt, that we who survive are men and utterly committed to the task of breaking down the prison doors of an enslaved world…[259]

Victory over Germany becomes almost an irrelevance. Only the force of obligations to lost youth, worked out in 'industry and commerce, in all the complex web of social relationships' could break society out of the modern cycle of conflict and future war. Thus the message and vocabulary of war commemoration was often the antithesis of consolation: the living must be roused through discomfort. To ensure the recent war remained the last war, the war to end all wars, it remained necessary to attack the pathologies in industrial modernity, attributed by chaplains to war. The fallen soldier-martyrs were the totems for the assault on those war-breeding disorders. To classify that social criticism as 'conservative' is a gross oversimplification. Their desired Kingdom harnessed an imagined pre-industrial code of piety and community with an egalitarian, collectivist social order. They did not want to return to a feudal or preindustrial past, even though they yearned for its stability.

The language of agitation was adopted by chaplains along the spectrum of clerical opinion. A turbulent priest and former chaplain, John Groser, gave a more radical inflection to the war's memory. Most Anglicans interpreted the war as a parable for the futility of class struggle. Groser took up the class struggle. Only a headlong assault on the bastions of privilege and poverty could ensure the worth of war sacrifices. He became a spokesman for the Catholic Crusade, which pledged to 'break up the present world and make a new, in the power of the Outlaw of Galilee' and whose manifesto denounced economic deprivation as 'a monstrous betrayal of the promises and the hopes which had sustained so many through the years of war, and which alone seemed to make the sacrifices of the war meaningful.' The Banners of the movement dedicated the Crusade to

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[259] E.S. Woods, 'The Living Christ' *Challenge* April 9, 1920, p.363.

God and 'The Workers Commonwealth.' Groser espoused a spirituality of incarnation 'seriously worked out in a new social order is the only salvation,' symbolised when he allowed his Processions to bear both a Cross and a Red Flag. Groser's formation in a slum parish at Newcastle had undergirded his commitment to industrial and political rebellion, an obligation the war ministry sharpened.[260]

After the central themes of remembrance were established in the years after the armistice, the passage of time increased the unease of military chaplains. The sites of commemoration became places of dissatisfaction. For Frederick Macnutt, Armistice Day became more a guilty reckoning than a day of solemn reverence. It 'points its accusing finger at its multitude of cross-crowned graves' to warn that repentance to God was the only way 'out of the chaos through which the world is blindly stumbling.'[261] The perception of civilian indifference towards the sites of mourning frustrated German ex-chaplain and poet Fritz Philippi. During the war he had characterised the German army as 'the crucified humanity', assuring them that their sacrifices constantly re-enacted Christ's crucifixion, achieving the 'German redemption.'[262] A decade after he gave sacrifice a christological resonance, however, the redemption is incomplete, their holy Calvaries deprived of a dignity that their sacramental donation deserves:

Leaves, severed with noble decency from their maternal twig,
should not, without dignity,
have to seek their place of rest upon the asphalt.

On the occasion of the sublime act of their death
they dressed up as if for a feast day,
kneeling towards the altar of the earth/Earth, to receive, willing to display humility,
the sacrament of sacrificial death.

Whose fault is it that amidst the filth of the street,
beneath the rolling wheels and steps of men, the pious simplicity is desecrated,
until the broom scrapingly brushes the trash
into the mass grave of the gutter?[263]

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[260] K. Brill, *John Groser East London Priest* (Oxford, 1971) p.14.
[261] F.B. Macnutt *From Chaos to God* (London, 1929) pp.69-70.
[262] F. Philippi, *An der Front Feldpredigten* (Weisbaden, 1916) p.9.
[263] "Massengrab" (1928) in W. Knevels (ed.) *Fritz Philippi als religiöser Dichter* (Leipzig, 1929), p. 96.

Philippi depicts a disjuncture between the purity of sacrifice and the banality of the postwar world. Soldiers are described with references to nature, while the contempt towards their deaths is described with images from modern urban life. Their sacramental deaths are profaned and ignored, the irreverent city surroundings jarring with the pious spirit of their deaths. Chaplains could agonise over civilian indifference in everyday life, as well as cataclysmic upheaval.

By now, redemption through memory of the dead meant sharply different things to Anglican and German Protestant chaplains. For the Germans, it meant sustaining the Germanic virtues of piety, community and duty in allegiance to what the toppled monarchist imperial order, the 'Holy Protestant German Empire,' represented. This meant regrouping around nationalism as a sacred organising principle, in militant resistance to the atheistic and revolutionary materialism rampant in the November Revolution and the birth of the Weimar Republic. The Great War in this respect bore a continuity with the wars of the nineteenth century. Retributive justice against the enemy and self-correction were necessary parts of national redemption – a maligned people would rise again, as after 1806 against Napoleon, to reverse the chastising punishment of defeat and prove worthy of reclaiming their 'chosen people' status. Anglicans also exhorted civilians to embody the spirit of the fallen, but the struggle against materialism entailed reordering the entire basis of economic and social life to make war impossible. This was often defined as supplanting predatory individualist competition with a collectivist ethos founded on fellowship and the abolition of privilege, the redistribution of wealth and property. All chaplains revered the cult of the dead. But in their rejection of militarism and affinity with secular social reform movements, Anglican chaplains evolved an incarnational war theology precisely antithetical to the ethos of their Protestant counterparts.

Why these differences? Are the immediate circumstances of defeat and punishment by the Allied powers why German ex-chaplains under similar circumstances also have interpreted national redemption as remobilisation and revenge? Or were there particularities of German Protestantism that also formed their responses? Several caveats

should be made. In their debates over the Versailles settlement, English Anglicans had also demonstrated a capacity for recrimination. Vindictive calls for punishment were made by ordinary churchgoers in 1919, one calling for humiliation the symbols of German pride, the Brandenburg Gate and the Niederwald monument, should be smashed and cast into the Rhine,[264] while Bishop Moule had called for Germany to suffer 'retributory pains.'[265] And as Kossileck has shown in the context of the defeated French in 1871, all cultures in defeat, underpinned by their religious institutions, are capable of revanchism.

However, revanchist tendencies of German Protestant clergy also had more extensive roots in prewar political-religious thought. Redemptive war was defined not primarily as bringing permanent peace, but in defending *Kultur*, nationbuilding and coming to repentance as a chosen people. Eliminating war was subordinate to sacred struggle for *Reich*. Walther Buder had preached that through war 'Germany would be born into a new world stature.'[266] Rather than a 'war to end all wars', Germany's Great War would be remembered as part of an incomplete series of wars waged to empower a people, than the more differentiated Anglican war sermons. War would be the appointed means of establishing nation and extirpating foreign influences, especially when, unlike Britain, they had not fulfilled their imperial destiny or secured their nationhood in vulnerable heart of Europe.

Anglican clergy and chaplains could embrace social reform without compromising their political-religious allegiances. Having exacted reparations and the German admission of war-guilt, another war was not necessary to their moral regeneration. Whereas German chaplains came from a clergy that addressed the social question far more from opposition and competition with socialist movements. For them, the belief that the spirit of wartime sacrifice must be translated into the abolition of class or universal peace was far more politically subversive. Unlike in England, the Protestant Church's very existence seen to be threatened by the same political forces that were

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[264] Marrin, above n6, p.234.
[265] Wilkinson, above n6, p.264.
[266] W. Buder *In Gottes Heerdienst – Fünfzehn Feldpredigten 1917/18* (Stuttgart, 1918) p.20.

demanding liberal or socialist reform. When Dr Ostertag, a former chaplain, in 1921 called for 'holy intolerance of atheism, materialism and Bolshevism', he did not have in mind the redistribution of property or the dismantling of militarism, nor dialogue with the social democrats.[267] Unrepentant, the French occupation of the Ruhr and the exaction of crippling reparations, 'the brutality of the enemies' evoked defiant declarations that 'the German idea never would be demolished.'[268] Evangelical politics was alienated from extreme and moderate forms of social democracy and aligned with the conservative nationalists, the DNVP (German National People's Party) whose platform demanded the preservation of German Christianity. In the Protestant mindset, those who advocated social democracy and antimilitarist reform were often also regarded as republican interlopers, illegitimate usurpers of the consecrated monarchy.[269] To commemorate the war as a site of mobilisation and nationalist reawakening was to assert the illegitimacy of the republican experiment and sinful revolution. The identity and mission of nationalist Lutheran state church was intimately bound to the authoritarian, illiberal Prussian monarchy and its coalition of supporting interests in the upper bourgeoisie, nobility, and military. National renewal meant overcoming class antagonism through faith in Fatherland.

Comparing both groups of chaplains and their post-war writing demonstrates that commemoration does not encode one fixed, exclusive meaning. In the postwar period, they expounded rival eschatologies. One envisaged a permanent peace purchased by blood, the other a resurrected *Volk* reclaiming its divinely chosen status. But their mentalities also followed a similar pattern with respect to the changing relationship between sacrifice and non-combatants. Because the postwar period confirmed their fear that the worth of sacrifice was insecure, it had to be retrospectively justified through civilians' postwar conduct.

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[267] H. Ostertag, 'Charakter und Toleranz', *Jahrbuch für die evangelisch-lutherische Landeskirche Bayerns*, (Rothenburg, 1921-2), p. 51.

[268] H. Ostertag, 'Staats-Idealismus' *Jahrbuch für die evangelisch-lutherische Landeskirche Bayerns* (Rothenburg, 1925/26) p.80.

[269] Wright, above n217, p.12.

CONCLUSION

Any catastrophe, particularly of the Great War's magnitude, invites the dilemma of traditional theodicy. How could a benign God permit such human suffering, obscene in its scale? Grave though this conundrum was, it was not chaplains' novel or central challenge. The crisis chaplains articulated was not primarily a crisis of religious faith. It related instead to the order of the world, the rupturing of a moral economy, in which the bloody transaction of lives sacrificed for a transformed society was not repaid by a cleansed national life and elevated civic existence. Churches had entered the war expecting apocalypse as an image of salvation, raising a "New Earth" out of the ash and bone of a corrupt world. The eschatalogical Judeo-Christian theme of society brought to repentance through suffering was a grammar refashioned to an industrial age, lending an ancient transcendent meaning to a new and modern warfare. Chaplains began to doubt whether war was intrinsically redemptive, anticipating that warring societies in bad faith would neglect to repay their blood-debts to the dead. They then reformulated the idea. Redemption became a continuing civic duty on the living to resacralise society in the name of fallen soldiers. In the postwar period, their preaching was not primarily a language of consolation but of agitation, appropriating the memory of the dead, to galvanise civilians to justify their sacrifices through their conduct. This basic similarity should not be obscured by the different practical policies that Anglicans and German Protestants urged on their postwar congregations.

Redemption through war was not just a matter of perception. For chaplains complicit in mass death, it was an *imperative* to uphold the ideal. To disown the redemptive meaning of sacrifice was to cheapen that sacrifice. When Studdert-Kennedy couched his eventually nihilistic reading of the war in terms of public penance, he demonstrated how inextricably personal was their investment in the value of the sacrifices they had urged combatants and their families to make. In a different context, German chaplains were absorbed in recasting the soldier's martyrdom as a platform for future regeneration. Mourning the collapse of the 'Holy Protestant German Empire', their

insistence that a standard of national community had been achieved in 1914 signalled their own need to retrieve value from defeat. Because they were complicit in mass death which purported to herald a regenerated world, chaplains rarely abandoned the ideal, even if that defied their perceptions of the nature of the war. The fact of the war's occurrence, and the chaplains' complicity in that bloody transaction, generated its own need for retrospective justification. From disparate confessions and traditions, they sought personal and collective redemption in the memory of the men they had urged over the top. Emerging from a war expected to redeem people, chaplains thrust a duty on people to redeem a war.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

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