

## **Sustaining the Faithful and Proclaiming the Gospel in a Time of Crisis: The Voice of Popular Evangelical Periodicals During World War Two**

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The general trajectory of the Protestant evangelical movement in the first half of the twentieth century has been, by most historical accounts, a journey from homogeneity to fragmentation and diversity. This has been the evangelical story on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>1</sup> Challenged on multiple fronts by adversaries such as higher criticism, rival eschatological theories, the social gospel movement, and Darwinian evolution, the broad evangelical consensus of the late-nineteenth century had splintered into a variety of separatist and accommodating camps by the early 1920s. But by the outbreak of World War Two there were signs that significant segments of this fractured movement were once again forging a kind of recognizable, if tenuous, evangelical unity.<sup>2</sup> How the war itself influenced this process is difficult to assess. The extant literature on the history of evangelicals mostly tends to treat World War Two as a convenient dividing point or marker from which to trace larger trends and activities in the movement. Other than giving attention to the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1943, little mention is made of other activities in which evangelicals were engaged during the actual war years. The tacit assumption in such an approach is that little of consequence was happening during the war itself. Evangelicals were in a holding pattern while their young men went off to fight the Axis powers, and it was only after V-J Day that any activity of consequence began.

The purpose of this essay is to address this oversight and challenge the above assumption. But rather than studying the actions of key leaders,

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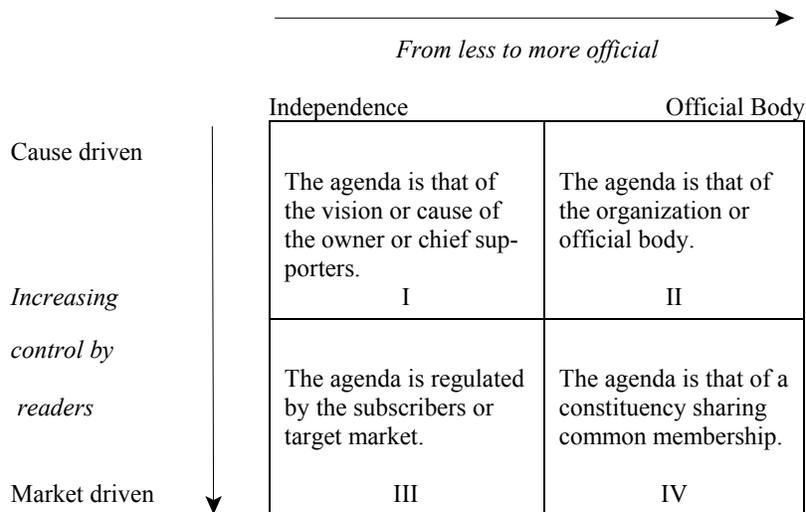
such as Harold Ockenga or Carl McIntire, this study will focus on a limited selection of popular periodicals produced by evangelical publishers in Britain, Canada and the United States. There are at least two reasons for taking this approach. First, historians such as Mark Noll and George Rawlyk have convincingly argued that evangelicalism's strength invariably flowed from its populist roots. Second, as someone whose livelihood depended on understanding the power and role of the media, former American President John F. Kennedy once observed that magazines are "the interior dialogue of a society."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, to understand what evangelicals were up to during the war years it seems only fitting to examine the concerns and activities about which they were writing in their popular periodicals during this period. In view of the assertion noted above about the emergence of an identifiable evangelical unity, two key questions must be asked when examining this popular literature: 1) is there evidence of such unity in this literature, and 2) if so, what are its defining contours?

Publications from the last century have not been widely explored by historians and as a result little statistical data exists when it comes to ascertaining the precise number of periodicals published by evangelical organizations, or obtaining accurate subscription lists.<sup>4</sup> The sample of periodicals used in this study was determined by immediate, local availability. Fortunately the library holdings of Prairie Bible College, the school at which I teach, included the back issues of six periodicals from World War Two.

While these six magazines are not a scientific sample, it can be argued that they represent a cross-section of popular voices. There are two reasons for making such a claim: first, they represent the geographic span of the trans-Atlantic, English-speaking evangelical community, with two publications each from Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. It could be argued that even within Canada, for example, the selection of *Evangelical Christian*, which was published out of Toronto, and *Prairie Pastor*, put out by Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, represent regional voices within this country.<sup>5</sup> The two American periodicals used in this study, *Sunday School Times* and *Moody Monthly*, came out of Philadelphia and Chicago respectively. Both British publications, *The Dawn*, and *World Dominion in the World Today* (known simply as *World Dominion*), were based in London, but they also represented distinct currents in the evangelical stream. Reflecting the ecclesial orientation of its editor, E.M. Panton, *The Dawn* drew heavily on the

voices of non-conformist evangelicals; *World Dominion* tended to favour articles written by evangelical Anglicans.<sup>6</sup>

Second, all six publications were produced by para-church organizations, whose appeal and circulation crossed denominational boundaries. As George Marsden, Joel Carpenter and John Stackhouse have argued, the activist evangelical impulse in the twentieth century has been expressed most visibly in its para-church organizations, such as faith mission societies and Bible colleges, rather than by denominational church organs.<sup>7</sup> Many evangelicals supported both denominational and para-church based ministries refusing to see the issue as an either/or choice. Applying these observations specifically to magazines it can be argued that evangelicals likely subscribed to both denominational and trans-denominational (i.e., para-church) publications, and that the latter in fact represented a kind of loose evangelical ecumenicity.<sup>8</sup> Steven Board's analysis of evangelical periodicals bears this out. Using the four-quadrant matrix replicated below, Board categorizes magazines on a two-dimensional continuum: the horizontal axis measuring the degree of editorial independence by private individuals versus greater official institutional control, and the vertical axis measuring the publication's agenda as cause-



driven versus market-driven. Board's fourth quadrant contains consumer magazines, which reflect the highest measure of accountability to their

readership, through both the direct economic measures of advertising and subscription revenues, and the indirect measure of voluntary donors such as school alumni.<sup>9</sup> Given these criteria, all six publications examined in this study fit into this quadrant. Board points out that magazines in this category, whether secular or religious, provide the best read-out of public opinion for the larger constituency of their chosen market.<sup>10</sup> As such even this limited sample of six periodicals will provide a helpful initial snapshot of the evangelical community's response to the crisis of the war.

When asking the first question, "do these periodicals reveal a discernable unity among trans-Atlantic evangelicals during this time?" the answer is a definite, but qualified, "yes." This unity manifested itself primarily in two ways: first, in a congruence of themes and format, and second, in their shared sources and networks affiliations.

#### ***Congruence of Themes and Format***

Four of the six publications are very similar in their overall layout. *Moody Monthly*, *Evangelical Christian*, *Prairie Pastor*, and *The Dawn*, led off each edition with a compendium of short articles or editorial notes on a variety of international and domestic political or social issues intended to give their readers a sense of the spiritual pulse of the world. L.E. Maxwell, who in addition to being the principal of Prairie Bible Institute was also co-editor of the *Prairie Pastor*, chose the title "The World of Today—In the Light of the Word," for this regular feature, while his Canadian counter-part J.H. Hunter, editor of the *Evangelical Christian*, began each issue with "The March of Events."<sup>11</sup> South of the border the *Moody Monthly* opened with the less flamboyant title, "Editorial Notes . . ." while across the ocean *The Dawn*'s editor, D.M. Panton, settled on the more ominous title, "The Outlook of the Hour," for his opening global assessment.

The two remaining periodicals offered slight variations. *Sunday School Times* stood slightly apart from the other five periodicals in that it was issued weekly rather than a monthly, and was formatted like a broadsheet rather than a journal. It also had a more didactic focus as part of its overall mission. Most of its content functioned as a theological resource and pedagogical aid to Sunday school teachers; however, once a month it also included a similar feature on global events tucked further back in the issue simply titled, "A Survey of Religious Life." *World Dominion*, the other British publication, was unique in two ways. It was,

first, more scholarly in its orientation than the other periodicals. Most of its articles were written by authors who held graduate degrees, and it included three university professors among its consulting editors, one being historian Kenneth Scott Latourette. Second, its focus was exclusively on international affairs of both a political and religious nature. Its regular survey of global events was placed at the back of each edition, and rather presumptuously titled, “The World Today—And Tomorrow.”<sup>12</sup> Qualitatively *World Dominion* also showed its uniqueness by the way it interpreted and assessed these events. More often than not its authors sought to explain the events they described not in reference to the immanent return of Christ, but with the assumption that the complicated and messy state of international relations would continue for quite some time, and therefore Christians needed to take the long view by actively engaging and transforming their world instead of separating from it. By contrast, when the other five periodicals reported on a particular political or military event they either interpreted it through apocalyptic lenses, or pressed it into service by using it to illustrate a spiritual lesson, similar to an anecdote in a sermon.

These peculiarities aside, the range of the articles and regular features in these magazines encompassed the following common agenda: making sense of current events in light of biblical wisdom, offering expositional instruction on passages of scripture, telling inspirational stories of personal conversion and/or divine provision, and informing readers of ongoing global missionary endeavour.<sup>13</sup> Such an agenda indicated that these publications’ respective readers shared a general set of interests and values when seeking information about what was happening in their world.

### ***Shared Sources and Network Affiliations***

The sense of a unified evangelical voice is more strongly evident when one examines the sources these periodicals used for their information. Editors of the above magazines frequently reprinted each other’s articles. Without exception such citations expressed favourable agreement with the editorial line taken by the borrowed publication. For example, *The Dawn* used material from the *Moody Monthly*, *Evangelical Christian* and *Sunday School Times*, while *Moody Monthly*’s editors used material from *Evangelical Christian* as well as other evangelical publications, such as the *Gospel Herald*.<sup>14</sup> The most prolific borrower from other periodicals

was *Prairie Pastor*. Maxwell, and his co-editor Dorothy Ruth Miller, included material from all five other publications during the war years, *The Dawn* and the *Sunday School Times* being the most frequently cited.<sup>15</sup>

This editorial coherence was also evident through loose but important network affiliations, especially among the North American publications. *Sunday School Times*, gave a favourable review to a book written by J.H. Hunter, editor of *Evangelical Christian*.<sup>16</sup> *Sunday School Times*' editor, Philip Howard, had his daughter Elizabeth (who later became famous in evangelical circles as missionary widow and author Elizabeth Eliot) attend L.E. Maxwell's Prairie Bible Institute. Moody Press published Maxwell's first book, *Born Crucified*.<sup>17</sup> *The Dawn*, *Evangelical Christian* and *Sunday School Times* were all ardent supporters of the Keswick holiness conferences held on both sides of the Atlantic, and reported faithfully on the work of the same overseas missionary organizations, perhaps most frequently to the work of the China Inland Mission. These specific network connections were woven into a larger network fabric of shared references to the same pool of itinerant Bible teachers, revival and deeper life conferences, Christian edification literature and missionary endeavor.<sup>18</sup> The fluidity of these informal networks gives support to the work of Ian Rennie and others who have explored the transnational and trans-Atlantic character of evangelicalism, which had its roots as far back as the eighteenth-century travels of George Whitefield.<sup>19</sup>

From careful and detailed reading of all six periodicals it is clear that certain theological differences existed. However, the manner in which the editors cited and complimented each other shows a fairly unified and coherent voice. Clearly their periodicals were not to be platforms from which to argue about their differences. In modernists, Fascists, Communists, Darwinists, anti-prohibitionists, and, worst of all, theological liberals, there were enough enemies outside the evangelical camp to deter these editors from engaging in the kind of internecine attacks that had become a hallmark of the early fundamentalists.

Such intentional coherence during the early 1940s also suggests that these efforts were important in laying the groundwork for the formal institutional expressions of evangelical unity that were to emerge shortly after the war. While the National Association of Evangelicals came into existence during the war years, in relatively short succession the Evangelical Press Association was created in 1949, followed a year later by the founding of the Christian Booksellers Association.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Defining Contours of Evangelical Unity***

If evangelicals were speaking with a coherent and informally unified public voice, what issues and opinions were they rallying around? From this limited sampling of magazines there are six identifiable issues on which the editorial lines reflect varying degrees of concurrence. On two issues the concurrence could be described as soft, yet recognizable. These had to do with specifically with war itself. All six publications ran numerous articles offering a Christian response to the Allied war effort. A second related set of articles dealt with the issue of understanding the war in light of biblical prophecy.<sup>21</sup> On another three issues the editors shared a stronger consensus: the importance of evangelizing the Jews and rallying to the cause of a Jewish homeland in the face of Nazi atrocities; the concern for moral decline in the homeland precipitated by the crisis of the War; and finally a shared belief that the reading and distribution of the Bible was the key to moral rehabilitation.

But beyond these matters, the one issue that received most frequent treatment and reflected the strongest consensus was the ongoing importance of overseas missionary outreach and evangelism. All six periodicals dedicated space in each issue to report on the work of missionaries around the globe. The picture that emerges challenges the tacit assumption of historians that evangelicals went into a maintenance pattern during the war years. In spite of the devastation and disruption brought on by the war, the reports from overseas and domestic missionary agencies indicate that their people were aggressively pressing forward with the tasks of evangelism, Bible translation, and humanitarian aid in all regions of the globe.

### ***God, War and Prophecy***

On the issues of softer consensus, all six periodicals offered a virtually identical response to the question, “why has God allowed this war?” War had come because of God’s judgment on apostate nations, and not just those countries ruled by totalitarian leaders, but especially to western democracies. In his article, “God and this Warring World,” editor of the Canadian *Evangelical Christian*, J.H. Hunter thundered:

Our own nation, and the British Commonwealth of Nations has departed far from the laws of God. What are we to think of the orgies of gambling and drunkenness that have left such a stain on our

national life . . . What of the desecration of the Lord's Day by multitudes of people and its commercialization of selfish interests and evil men. What of the empty churches and the crowded movies; the wickedness of past years in high places in England . . . Could God be indifferent to these things? We should not marvel that judgment has fallen--we marvel that it was so long delayed.<sup>22</sup>

In the same vein both *Sunday School Times* and *Moody Monthly* opined that war had come to the United States because it was "a God-forgetting nation" whose "national sins . . . for many years have been crying out to high Heaven for punishment . . ."<sup>23</sup> Similar declarations were made by British evangelicals; D.M. Panton likened his country's spiritual decline to that of the nation of Israel during the life of the prophet Habakkuk.<sup>24</sup>

While these writers cited parallels between their own times and God's judgment on Israel's apostasy in the Old Testament books, their assertions were also tempered by an awareness that God's purposes were much more complex than such limited reductionism. Both L.E. Maxwell and J.H. Hunter used the prophet Isaiah's words as a caution that "God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts are not our thoughts."<sup>25</sup>

If evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic were agreed on the diagnosis of the situation, there were varying opinions of how Christians should respond to war and plan for its aftermath. All agreed on the necessity for repentance, prayer and revival through personal conversion, but not all were agreed on whether Christians should actively support the war itself. American publications were strongest in their support of the war effort, with Canadians close behind, but the British magazine, *The Dawn*, was strongly pacifist, and ran several articles warning believers not to confuse nationalist aims with those of the divine kingdom.<sup>26</sup> It is uncertain how widely such a position was endorsed among evangelicals at the time, but the fact that *The Dawn* was read on both sides of the ocean, and was financed by both subscription levies and voluntary donations indicates that enough evangelicals tolerated or endorsed its editorial position to keep the magazine afloat.

In spite of this varied outlook, all six periodicals expressed a degree of consensus on a second theme: understanding the war in light of biblical prophecy. The leading voice on this theme was *The Dawn*. Throughout the war its editor stressed the importance of the prophetic task for Christians in times of crisis, and frequently invoked the language of the Old Testament prophets to interpret wartime events.<sup>27</sup> Inevitably though, evangelicals looked to the apocalyptic passages of the New Testament

writers to explain their situation. *The Dawn*, along with its North American counterparts speculated about Hitler's identity as the anti-christ, especially as his genocidal program for the Jews became more apparent.<sup>28</sup> However, it was the detonation of the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki that really stoked the fires of eschatological rhetoric. The dramatic purging of heaven and earth described in 2 Peter took on a sudden literalism, unimaginable prior to 6 August 1945. Writing in *Moody Monthly*, Rev. Donald J. Holbrook declared:

In the passage from II Peter [verses 3,7, 10, 12] the final destruction of the earth is described as the breaking up of the elements with a glaring heat and with a great roaring noise. When we remember that the chemistry books tell us that an atom is the smallest part of an element, we see that the atomic bomb is an exact picture of what God will do to this present earth and the present heaven at the great day of judgment.<sup>29</sup>

Alongside this new understanding of apocalyptic global destruction was the pessimism toward plans for the post-war world. L.E. Maxwell lamented both the spiritual and political naiveté of the documents produced by the Dumbarton Oaks Security Conference and the San Francisco Conference for World Peace. The editors of *Evangelical Christian* took a similar view of the Yalta Conference.<sup>30</sup> In the midst of this gloom evangelicals were able to find hope, but for the most part, that hope lay outside of history, not within it. There was a strong sense that they were living in the sunset years of history.

### ***Issues of Stronger Consensus—Jews, Moral Decline and Bible Reading***

Flowing out of their common understanding of the war as both a divine judgment on complacent and formerly “Christian” nations, and as a decisive step toward the close of history, evangelical periodicals rallied around a second set of three concerns. They were keenly interested in the fate of the Jewish people, they spoke out on the moral and spiritual decline in their respective homelands, and took hope in the widespread distribution of Bibles, understanding this as a sign of spiritual hunger for truth and meaning in the midst of chaos and destruction.

The plight of the Jews in Europe was an important matter for evangelicals for at least two reasons. Tied to their strong apocalyptic, pre-millennial understanding of the war was the role played by the Jewish

people in the fulfillment of prophecy. The reconstitution of the Jews as a visible nation with a homeland in Palestine was seen as an important signal that Christ's return could not be far off. *Evangelical Christian* kept the closest watch on Jewish national aspirations and reported its findings in a regular feature entitled "The Sign of the Fig Tree." This column called readers' attention to the Nazi genocidal program, and became sharply critical of British and Canadian foreign policy decisions that ignored the plight of the Jewish people.<sup>31</sup> However, across the wider spectrum of evangelical commentary on the Jews, the primary concern was their conversion.

Wartime displacement and systematic extermination of European Jews led evangelicals to believe that Jewish populations in North America and Britain were especially receptive to the message of the Christian gospel as never before. Their only hope lay not in separation or assimilation, but in "redemption, regeneration, reconciliation through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of David, the Saviour of a lost world, the King of Israel."<sup>32</sup> Additional articles used conversion testimonials of Jewish converts to inspire fellow believers to take up or continue their evangelistic outreach efforts among God's chosen people.<sup>33</sup>

A second dominant theme was the lament over moral decline in the homeland. In 1943 *World Dominion* ran an article entitled "The Seamy Side of Life" in which a counselling professional testified that he had documented 12,000 cases of mental distress and moral perplexity among participants in a national survey.<sup>34</sup> By the end of the war the same magazine ran an article by the Rt. Rev. Lord Bishop of Rochester who commented on the sad state of affairs in England. Citing a recent Report on the Commission on Evangelism released by the Church of England, he stated that ninety percent of the country's population owed no allegiance to any Christian communion, that people's ethical standards were no longer based on Christian principles or biblical teaching, and that there was a strong drift in public attitudes toward naturalism.<sup>35</sup>

In Canada and the United States the indicators of spiritual and moral decline were somewhat different, but the conclusions the same. Lacking the tradition of an established church which their British counterparts frequently used to measure the spiritual pulse of the nation, North American evangelicals charted the rise of social vices to argue for increasing moral waywardness. Citing a stories that appeared in several editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*, *Prairie Pastor* lamented that in the past year America's great war production had not been in armaments, but in

saloons, theatres, night clubs and brothels. These wartime “factories” did not turn men and materiel to effectively take on the country’s enemies, but instead produced rape, robbery, juvenile vagrancy, prostitution and drunkenness.<sup>36</sup> According to the *Moody Monthly* this nation-wide wallowing in the cesspool of moral vice was obvious: “In case any of our readers are not yet convinced America needs a moral bath...How desperate is America’s condition! Unless we have a revival we might well expect the judgment of God.”<sup>37</sup> Concurring with his Christian brothers at *Moody Monthly*, *Prairie Pastor* editor L.E. Maxwell responded in typical evangelical fashion: “Let these staggering conditions drive us afresh to our Bibles and to our knees and out into the highways to win the lost.”<sup>38</sup>

If the Bible was a source of comfort and hope for evangelicals during these troubled times, their periodicals suggested that many others were also turning to the Christian scriptures. In 1943 *World Dominion* reported that since the outbreak of the war 1,750,000 copies of the Bible had been distributed to military personnel alone.<sup>39</sup> On the other side of the Atlantic, *Sunday School Times* reported that according to a recent national survey Americans were reading the Bible in greater numbers and with greater regularity than ever before.<sup>40</sup> Both *Moody Monthly* rallied the faithful to distribute the Scriptures to more people in order to spread the Gospel. “What is needed today is more earnest endeavour to enlist men and women in the reading of the Bible, rather than in a few defending it . . . The Bible will be its own best witness . . . it can speak for itself.”<sup>41</sup> This same understanding was echoed in *Prairie Pastor*, which claimed “Life is not in the sower, but the seed . . . In scattering divine literature we liberate thistledown, laden with precious seed, which, blown by the winds of the Spirit, floats over the world.”<sup>42</sup> These periodicals went on to report that evangelicals were heeding these injunctions with great zeal and effectiveness.

Bible distribution in the countries of Europe affected by the war provided a source of hope that in the midst of such great conflagration God was at work to bring souls into his kingdom: however, evangelicals were at their most hopeful when they announced the successes of Bible translation by overseas missionaries. By 1945, *Evangelical Christian* and *Moody Monthly* both announced that the Bible had effectively circled and permeated all regions of the globe.<sup>43</sup> Complementing reports of broad global success were numerous regional stories of Bible translators establishing new beachheads, whether in China, Liberia, Ceylon, or even among Yiddish Jews in America, the Bible was being read by greater

numbers of people in more languages than ever before. As a result evangelical readers could rejoice along with John Fosai of the Solomon Islands, who laughed for joy “because it sound[ed] so good to hear God’s Word in [his] own language.”<sup>44</sup>

For every joyful silver lining evangelicals could also find numerous dark clouds of sober concern. While acknowledging the progress of Bible translation, D.M. Panton of *The Dawn* drew his readers’ attention to the great task yet remaining: “We are far from finished: so long as 170,000,000 people, speaking 1,000 different languages, have not a single syllable of the word of God; so long as four-fifths of those for whom the Word has been translated do not possess copy it . . .”<sup>45</sup> These statistics were daunting, but the challenge to spread the gospel to “every tribe and tongue” was clearly one to which evangelicals rose. If there was one issue on which evangelicals showed the strongest consensus during the war years, it was the importance of overseas missionary outreach.

#### ***The Issue of Strongest Agreement – Supporting Overseas Missions***

Prairie’s L.E. Maxwell epitomized the spirit of other evangelical editors when he noted that the crisis of war represented a great opportunity for people to hear the Christian gospel.

Christians everywhere should pray that while the Lord tarries he will keep the doors open to the gospel. In many heathen lands the hearts of people are open to the gospel as never before and missionaries who are enabled to remain on the field are seeing rich fruitage as a result of their ministry . . . No danger should slacken in zeal for the spread of the Gospel. On the contrary we must speed up every effort to win souls.<sup>46</sup>

Evidence that evangelicals were responding positively to Maxwell’s exhortation was supplied by other periodicals. Of the six periodicals, the one that featured the most consistent and detailed reporting on missions was the Toronto-based *Evangelical Christian*. This was hardly surprising since its founder, R.V. Bingham, was also the founder of the Sudan Interior Mission. Both *Sunday School Times* and the British *World Dominion* were close behind, running regular surveys on foreign and home missions. Even if the remaining three magazines did not have dedicated sections surveying missionary work, the frequency of testimonial accounts

by missionaries, which graced their pages, left no doubt that this particular theme was important to their editors and readers alike.<sup>47</sup>

Much of the reporting on missions had an inspirational tone. Article titles often drew on the triumphalistic military rhetoric assuring readers that God's truth was indeed marching on. *Evangelical Christian* ran headlines such as "Missionaries are Heroes" and "Missionaries Do Not Run Away," while *Moody Monthly* trumpeted "Medicine for the Glory of God" when reporting on hospital work in Cameroon.<sup>48</sup> Evangelicals saw World War Two not only as an actual physical war, but also as a metaphor for a global spiritual war, in which the prize was not more *lebensraum*, but the eternal souls of men and women. So when *Prairie Pastor* ran a semi-regular feature entitled "Notes From the Front," the news was not about the movements of enlisted men and the grand strategy of Allied generals, but about the activities of Prairie Bible Institute alumni overseas, such as Henrietta Watson in Bombay and Maybeth Judd Grey.<sup>49</sup> This larger spiritual understanding of the war was best summarized by F.J. Miles in *Sunday School Times* when he stated: "We all face a war conditioned by *time*: Christians are challenged to carry on warfare characterized by *eternal* issues! Our troops have gone into *some* foreign lands. Christian soldiers are sent by their Commander-in-Chief 'into all the world' [italics his].<sup>50</sup> All six periodicals supplied ample proof that evangelical missionaries were faithfully responding to this spiritual call to arms, and establishing active and fruitful theatres of operations in all parts of the globe. Those who did not serve directly as overseas missionaries were active in their support from home. Both *The Dawn* and *Evangelical Christian* reported that in the face of rationing and general privations of wartime giving to missions had actually increased during the war years.<sup>51</sup>

Missions reporting could tend toward the propagandistic, but evangelicals were not one dimensional in their reporting; it was not all celebratory. Setbacks, shortages, persecutions, and even failures found their way into these magazines. Articles in *The Dawn* and *World Dominion* were sometimes critical in its analysis of missionary methods, all the while championing the cause of overseas outreach.<sup>52</sup> Columnists highlighted areas of need so that their readers would be able to pray more intelligently for God's intervention and aid. This was particularly evident in the case of China and Japan. The internment of many missionaries to China by occupying Japanese forces was reported regularly and at length by both *Evangelical Christian* and *Sunday School Times*. But even with setbacks such as this, evangelicals still wrote about the steady growth in

numbers of converts in China.<sup>53</sup> A similar scenario occurred in Ethiopia, where the Italian invasion of the 1930s led to missionary expulsion; yet by 1944 members of the Sudan Interior Mission reported vast growth in the number of indigenous churches.<sup>54</sup>

Encouraging as numerical increase in human and financial resources may have been, of even greater inspiration were personal stories of missionaries who testified to God's specific provision, be it a harrowing escape, a miraculous cure from disease, or a dramatic conversion. Both *Sunday School Times* and *Prairie Pastor* provided a detailed account of missionary survivors who had been aboard a ship named the *ZamZam*, enroute from Baltimore to an African port when it was shelled and sunk by a German naval vessel. *Evangelical Christian* inspired its readers with the story of Russell Abel, who related incidents of miracle cures among the tribal people of New Guinea (the miracle cure for infection was a new untested drug called penicillin), while *Sunday School Times* joyfully recounted the conversion of an Italian Roman Catholic priest.<sup>55</sup>

One of the most moving accounts of divine protection appeared in *Prairie Pastor* late in 1945. The article "Delivered From Internment" recounted the story of a young Canadian boy named Philip Paulson. The child of missionary parents to northern China, Philip was somehow separated from his parents at the outset of the war. While they managed to make their way out of the country, Philip was interned by the Japanese along with other missionaries near Shantung. In August 1945, the camp was liberated by the allies, and after a separation of just over five years, eleven year-old Philip was finally re-united with his family.<sup>56</sup>

As the war drew to a close in 1945, evangelical editors shifted from testimonial articles to ones of exhortation and opportunity. *Evangelical Christian* noted with enthusiasm that one thousand servicemen were intending to become either missionaries or ministers once demobilized.<sup>57</sup> In the same issue evangelicals read about American industrialist Robert G. LeTourneau's plans to use his \$13,000,000 Foundation to fund the development of a missionary fleet of planes and pilots to fly missionaries into remote areas of the globe with the gospel.<sup>58</sup>

Concurrent with the above, readers were also made aware of the immensity of the missionary task that still remained. In *Prairie Pastor* Maxwell confronted his readers with these words: "Heaven must weep over sleeping saints who sail the surface of these heaving seas oblivious of humanity's *deep* and hidden need. We seem utterly too callous to care, much less descend to deliver those who are swallowed up in the depths of

darkness and woe.”<sup>59</sup> Historian Joel Carpenter notes that the early post-war years saw a tremendous upsurge in conservative Protestant missions.<sup>60</sup> In examining the periodical literature of the time it becomes clear that this numerical rise was not haphazard or accidental. Evangelicals were not in a holding pattern during the war years. Rather, through their periodicals, they carried on their own interior dialogue, and thus found a discernable, albeit loosely knit unity that allowed them to speak with a common voice on the vexing theological and social issues of the day, and most prominently, helped them mobilize the faithful to the task of outreach and evangelism.

### Endnotes

1. See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 181-228; Robert A. Wright, “The Canadian Protestant Tradition, 1914-1945,” in *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990*, ed. George A. Rawlyk (Burlington: Welch Publishing Co., 1990), 139-197; Mark Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 136-160; D.G. Hart, *That Old-Time Religion in Modern America: Evangelical Protestantism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 66-67; George Marsden *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 184-195; and Joel A. Carpenter *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 33-56.
2. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again* 141-186. For a condensed version of this account see Joel A. Carpenter, “From Fundamentalism to the New Evangelical Coalition,” in *Evangelicalism in Modern America*, ed. George Marsden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 3-16. For developments in Britain and Canada see Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 249-270; and Wright, “The Canadian Protestant Tradition,” 164-165.
3. Stephen Board, “Moving the World with Magazines: A Survey of Evangelical Periodicals,” in *American Evangelicals and the Mass Media*, ed. Quentin J. Schultze (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1990), 119.
4. As Richard N. Ostling notes formal record keeping of these periodicals improved in 1949 with the founding of the Evangelical Press Association (see Richard N. Ostling, “Evangelical Publishing and Broadcasting” in *Evangelicalism in Modern America* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 48-49). From the citation in Board’s essay, it is apparent that he encountered similar obstacles in his own research on evangelical publications (see Board, “Moving the

World with Magazines,” 139, n. 3; 140, n. 22; and 141, n. 30). It is clear that significant challenges remain when it comes to recovering the historical data. Many of these magazines have ceased publication, or their sponsoring institutions, as in the case of Prairie Bible Institute, did not archive subscription lists or other circulation records from these early years.

5. What is lacking from the American side is a west-coast publication, such as *King's Business*, put out by Biola College. It would be interesting to see if evangelical periodicals from west coast, both in the United States and Canada, reflected views on the war particular to that region. Did these publications concern themselves more with the war against Japan than with events in the European theatre, and did they broach issues such as the internment of ethnic Japanese Americans and Canadians?
6. These generalizations can only be taken so far. Here again, subscription lists would be valuable in confirming or challenging this non-conformist/establishment delineation. David Bebbington has traced the regional demographics of both groups of evangelicals for the mid-nineteenth century, noting that non-conformist evangelicals were more numerous in northwest England and Wales, while the Church of England's evangelicals were more populous in the southeast (see Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 109-111).
7. George Marsden, “The Evangelical Denomination,” in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, xi-xv; John Stackhouse Jr. *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 7-17; and Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 28-31. Bruce Guenther has challenged the hegemony of the para-church thesis, arguing that it ignores the significant activist roles played by a variety of evangelical denominations such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Mennonite Brethren. Guenther's challenge rightly calls for a more nuanced portrayal of the relationship between church and para-church in the evangelical story (“Training for Service: The Bible School Movement in Western Canada, 1909-1960” [Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, 2001]).
8. This portrayal of mid-twentieth century American evangelicals is made by Carpenter. He notes particularly the crucial role played by para-church organizations for evangelicals who wished to remain in denominations that tolerated liberal voices, but were sympathetic to the fundamentalist call for separation (see Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 53-56).
9. Board, “Moving the World with Magazines,” 120-123.
10. Board, “Moving the World with Magazines,” 126-129. Board uses *Moody Monthly* as a representative case study for periodicals in this category, realizing that its loyalty to advertisers and wider readers carefully balanced

with loyalty to the educational agenda of its parent organization, Moody Bible Institute.

11. Maxwell only began this feature in 1943, but continued it well after the war. For sample issues of both see *Prairie Pastor* (hereafter *PP*) 16 (November 1943), and *Evangelical Christian* (hereafter *EC*) 39 (March 1943).
12. For a sample of each see *Moody Monthly* (hereafter *MM*) 43 (September 1942); *Sunday School Times* (hereafter *SST*) 85 (4 July 1943); *The Dawn* 19 (January-February 1942); and *World Dominion* (*WD*) 22 (January-February 1944).
13. A wider periodical sampling would no doubt serve to reinforce this common agenda. Periodicals such as *Alliance Weekly*, *Gospel Herald*, *Christian Herald*, *Christian Digest*, and *Christian Life* tended to offer similar kinds of articles and regular features.
14. Examples of these re-printings can be found in *The Dawn* 20 (March 1943): 119-121, 124-130; and 21(December 1942): 517; *MM* 43 (July 1942): 654, and 43 (September 1942): 5-6, 13.
15. For examples see *PP* 13 (June 1941):40; 14 (April-May 1941):8; and 14 (August 1942): 1. Maxwell used material from *The Dawn* over ten times in issues from the war years.
16. *SST* 84 (24 January 1942): 79.
17. L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1945).
18. J.H. Hunter was an ardent promoter of the Canadian Keswick conference centre located just north of Toronto in the Muskoka Lakes district. He was also a supporter of the World Christian Fundamentals organization. *EC*'s founder and Hunter's predecessor as editor was R.V. Bingham, who began the Canadian Keswick conferences in 1924. Bingham's life and Christian ministry illustrate the connection and even overlap of agencies such as overseas missions, conference centres, and print media, which made up the evangelical para-church network.
19. See Ian Rennie, "Fundamentalism and the Varieties of North Atlantic Evangelicalism," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, eds. Mark A. Noll et. al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 333-350. Susan O'Brian, Harry S. Stout, Michael Gauvreau explore variations of trans-national evangelicalism in their chapters in this volume.
20. Ostling, "Evangelical Publishing," 47-48.

21. Editorial positions on the Christian response to the allied war effort were the most varied. While the Canadian and American publications favoured a range of qualified support for military action, the British periodicals were more varied. *World Dominion's* writers acknowledged the necessity of military resistance against the Axis powers, but they were careful to point out the dangers of an allying Christian causes with state foreign policy. See "The Secret of a New World Order," *WD* 20 (April-May 1942): 91-93. *The Dawn* took a position further away from the other five in advocating a kind of pragmatic pacifist position, see "The Outlook of the Hour," *The Dawn* 18 (December 1941): 388; and "The Christian and War," *The Dawn* 22 (January 1945): 856.
22. "God and this Warring World," *EC* 38 (January 1942): 29.
23. "Why Pearl Harbor" *MM* 44 (May 1943): 510; and "The Pearl Harbor Disaster," *SST* 84 (18 April 1942): 307.
24. "Why Does God Not Stop the War," *The Dawn* 17 (October 1940): 295-299.
25. "Topsy-Turvydom" *PP* 18 (August 1945): 186; and "God and this Warring World," *EC* 38 (January 1942): 5.
26. For examples, see "The Church and the Nations" *The Dawn* 19 (June 1942):217-221; "The Church and the State" *The Dawn* 19 (February 1941): 515-18; and "The Church and War" *The Dawn* 22 (January 1944): 467-468.
27. "Denouncing Prophecy," *The Dawn*, 20 (June 1943): 230-234; and "The Wrath of God," *The Dawn* 18 (October 1941): 295-299.
28. For examples of such biblical interpretation, see "To-Day's Forecast of the Great Tribulation," *The Dawn* 18 (July 1941): 177-179; "Hitler Will Fail," *MM* 44 (July 1943): 618-619; "The New Order," *EC* 39 (March 1943): 107; and "Can Hitler Win the War?" *SST* 84 (29 August 1942): 679-681.
29. "What About the Atomic Bomb?" *MM* 46 (November 1945): 124. The other periodicals echoed a similar understanding. See "Prophetic Aspects of the Atomic Bomb," *SST* 87 (1 September 1945): 666; "The Purpose of Prophecy," *The Dawn* 22 (December 1945): 2090-2093; and "Hamburg Holocaust," *PP* 16 (November 1943): 78-79.
30. "Big Five," *PP* 17 (December 1944): 230 and "San Francisco," *PP* 18 (September-October 1945): 219; and "The Yalta Conference," *EC* 41 (April 1945): 163.
31. For a good sample column see "The Sign of the Fig Tree," *EC* 38 (July 1942): 280. *Evangelical Christian* was especially critical of the British White Paper of 1942, which seemed to undermine the Balfour Declaration of 1917 by

limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine.

32. "The Hated Jew," *SST* 83 (1 November 1941): 876. "The Modern Jew and Jesus Christ," *WD* 20 (January-February 1942): 33. Both of these articles were written by converted Jews, thus giving both credibility to their analysis of the collective spiritual pulse of the Jewish community, and inspiration for fellow believers to take on the task of evangelism to the Jews.
33. For examples, see "The Conversion of a Rabbi," *The Dawn* 19 (March 1942): 81-82; "The Sign of the Fig Tree," *EC* 39 (April 1943): 116; and "Prophets of Doom," *WD* 23 (May-June 1945): 142-144.
34. "The Seamy Side of Life," *WD* 21 (May-June 1943): 154-156.
35. "Towards the Conversion of England," *WD* 23 (September-October 1945): 266-270. This same report was also discussed in *The Dawn* 22 (November 1945): 2053.
36. "Sin," *PP* 17 (February 1944): 29.
37. "What's Wrong?" *MM* 44 (March 1943): 395.
38. "Sin," *PP* 17 (February 1944): 29.
39. "War and the Bible," *WD* 21 (January-February 1943): 56.
40. "Increased Bible Reading," *SST* 86 (22 January 1944): 49.
41. "What the Bible Needs," *MM* 44 (September 1942): 14-15.
42. "Thistledown," *PP* 14 (June 1941): 5.
43. For the advance of the Bible among POWs, see "The Bible Among Russian Prisoners," *MM* 43 (August 1942): 705-706; "Nazis Studying the Bible," *SST* 87 (17 November 1945): 901; and "The Challenge of the Aftermath," *WD* 23 (May-June 1945): 162-164. For articles on the progress of global distribution of Bibles see "The Bible Circles the Globe," *SST* 87 (20 January 1945): 46; and "The Bible Circles the Globe," *EC* 41 (April 1945): 200.
44. "Scriptures in the Solomons," *EC* 41 (April 1945): 200.
45. "Scripture," *The Dawn* 22 (September 1945): 1092.
46. "Not has Passed," *PP* 14 (July 1941): 6. See also "The Last Hour of Foreign Missions," *The Dawn* 19 (January - February 1942): 17-20.
47. The school-based publications, *Moody Monthly* and *Prairie Pastor*, regularly reported on the missionary work of their own graduates, but the three other periodicals had regular departments that broadly surveyed missionary activity

by evangelical trans-denominational faith-mission agencies and denominational mission boards.

48. "Miss Rev of the World," *EC* 38 (November 1942): 455; and "Missionary Department," *MM* 43 (September 1942): 24..
49. "Notes From the Front," *PP* 15 (October 1942): 11-12.
50. "Global Warfare and the Gospel," *SST* 86 (19 August 1944): 581.
51. "Missions," *The Dawn* 19 (May 1942): 149; and "Mission Contributions in War Time," *EC* 40 (February 1944): 85. *Prairie Pastor* also noted that times of war had historically led to increased missionary activism, especially in the founding of Bible and Tract societies (see *PP* 13 [June 1940]: 3).
52. For examples see "A Romantic Story," *WD* 23 (May-June 1945): 148-152; and "The Call to the Mission Field," *The Dawn* 22 (August 1945): 1070-1072.
53. "The Foreign Missionary Crisis in the Far East," *SST* 84 (12 July 1941): 563-564; and "China," *EC* 39 (March 1943): 128.
54. "Outlook," *The Dawn* 21 (January 1944): 453.
55. "How God Delivered Us From the Sinking of the ZamZam," *SST* 83 (9 August 1941): 661-662; and "The Sinking of the ZamZam," *PP* 15 (December 1942): 3-10. "Miracles in Papua," *EC* 42 (January 1946): 39; and "How an Italian Priest Came to Christ," *SST* 83 (29 November 1941): 996.
56. "Delivered From Internment," *PP* 18 (December 1945): 305-06.
57. "Service Men Want to Be Ministers," *EC* 41 (November 1945): 579.
58. "Wings for Missionaries," *EC* 42 (January 1946): 43.
59. "The Great Deeps," *PP* 18 (February 1945): 43.
60. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 181-186.