The prophetic function of religious journalism

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Thesis

THE PROPHETIC FUNCTION OF RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM

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PART I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETIC FUNCTION OF RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM
CHAPTER I

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

What is the foremost challenge facing religious journalism today? It is in an attempt to answer this question that the following pages have been written. They do not, however, present an answer which is universally accepted. On the contrary, they take exception to the generally accepted answer.

Does not one hear it said that the main task of the modern religious journalist is to borrow the techniques of the secular press? Certainly this was the conclusion reached by the seminar in Religious Journalism held at Boston University School of Public Relations in the spring of 1949. The religious journalist, so this group agreed, should try to bring his product as close as possible to the most successful newsstand publication.

Substantial confirmation of this conclusion was offered by the analysis and evaluation of sixteen leading religious journals of America by Dr. Roland E. Wolseley, Associate Professor of Journalism at Syracuse University. In a speech before the Associated Church Press in New York City on April 17, 1947, Professor Wolseley itemized the ways in which religious journals were failing at this point.1

Most of them, he found, did not break up expanses of type with subheads or other devices for that purpose. More than half were deficient in the way they edited pictures. Ten did not shorten their

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1 Roland E. Wolseley, "Zeal Is Not Enough," p. 5.
paragraphs sufficiently. Others should have worded their article headlines and picture captions more strikingly, used more or larger headings or reduced the oversized ones, and enlarged their body type or line spacing.

Professor Wolseley discovered also that eleven of the sixteen publications were missing a bet with their covers, and that a large number were printing flabby, flat, full and uninteresting-looking pages. He recommended use of a cut here or there, of bold-face paragraphs occasionally, of a box inset at certain points -- anything to take the curse off such deadly, interest-destroying pages. Another weak area in the matter of make-up was the lack of page balance and contrast. Too many pages were found to be either top-heavy or lopsided, giving an unpleasant effect.

Such criticisms as these of Professor Wolseley's could be multiplied. Moreover, they are deserved. It cannot be denied that most religious journals badly need to be improved in format. It should even be added that they need greater simplicity of expression. Techniques are important, to be sure.

Yet can it be maintained that these are the most vital points at which religious journals need to strive for improvement? Do they not face a far more significant challenge -- one which concerns not form but content?

It is the contention of this study that religious journalism has a vastly higher calling than that of selling itself to the public by its use of the most up-to-date techniques. The central task facing religious journalism today -- a task so urgent and compelling as to make others
seem trivial in comparison -- will be designated here as its prophetic function. The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to interpret the prophetic function of religious journalism, to demonstrate its validity and significance, and finally to illustrate it by reference to a specific religious journal, The Christian Century.

Is it important that such a study be undertaken? Let the person who questions this look across the map of the world today and count the trouble spots. Or, perhaps easier, let him seek out the few cases where there is no conflict, open or suppressed. Let him pick up a newspaper and read of the clashes between nations, the strife among domestic groups, the struggles of minorities to achieve a justice denied them. Let him consider the desperate need for a world and national leadership which can chart a course, point a direction, provide dependable guidance for such a day. And then let him decide whether there is not need for a voice which will speak out in the name of a "right," an "ought," a "justice" which does not waver with the demands of expediency but remains a fixed point of anchorage.

In an age when problems at home and abroad appear beyond the power of statesmen to solve, there is desperate need for a voice which is prophetic in the truest sense of the word. This would seem sufficient justification for making a study of the prophetic function of religious journalism -- what it is, whether it can be substantiated, and how it is illustrated by a religious journal of today.
CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

An entire thesis cannot be telescoped into one chapter on "definition of terms." Thus, other terms which are to be introduced later will be defined as they appear. To bring them into this chapter would only cause confusion. It is enough for the present to deal with the two main terms which already have been used: "prophetic function" and "religious journalism."

Prophetic Function

The term "prophetic function" is almost certain to be misinterpreted, for in the minds of a great many people prophecy is synonymous with foretelling. The average person visualizes a prophet as an individual who can look far into the future and report what will take place in years to come. This impression must be corrected at once.

The essence of prophecy is not foretelling, but rather the declaration of religious truth. The prophet, according to Webster, is "one who speaks for another, especially for God or a god; an inspired revealer, interpreter, or spokesman." And, as Virgilius Ferm explains, "The predictive element in prophecy is incidental, not primary; it extends the margin of the moral and religious present into a future which is its immediate consequence, and is morally conditioned."¹


Prophecy, then, is not primarily predictive? But, if not, what does characterize it? In order to clarify the meaning of the word "prophetic," it may prove helpful to turn to the Old Testament prophets themselves: that succession of men who lived in the period beginning in the eighth century and ending in the latter half of the sixth century B.C. Taken in chronological order, they were: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Second Isaiah. Why is it that these men have been labeled prophets? What was the characteristic content of their message?

The primary emphasis of the Hebrew prophets was on the reality of moral law. Since its meaning will be dealt with at length in Chapter V, it is enough at this time to suggest that moral law is a body of objectively valid principles governing the relationships of persons. With the development of the special sciences, the term "law" has come into wide use as a statement of the uniformities of sequence observable in natural events. Just so, moral law refers to the uniformities of sequence in human relationships. True, it may be defied, just as a man may defy the physical law of gravitation by jumping from a twenty-story building; but neither variety of law can be defied with impunity. While individuals and nations may refuse to act in accordance with the precepts of moral law, the results will inevitably be for the worse.

The prophets of the Old Testament were complete realists about the inexorable working of moral law. They understood that everything was tested by the plumb line of righteousness, or, as they conceived it, by God's moral demands. And whether it stood that test, not its outward appearance, would decide the ultimate fate of an institution, a social
order, or a nation.

Because they judged in terms of moral and spiritual standards, the prophets were stern critics of the life of their times. Not that they talked about abstract moral law, but they pointed to the highest and best for men; they judged the social order by its human consequences. According to their judgments, forms of society and government would prosper or perish as they embodied justice and right, sustained personal dignity, and fostered true community among men. The prophets' message was first and foremost a moral one, stressing the human values — those having to do with the sacredness of personality as such, and with all contacts between persons.

It is not to be wondered at that this brought them into quarrels with the social and economic order of their day. For the social order of Israel did not sustain human and social values; on the contrary, it destroyed them. The prophets condemned with a fierce passion the evils they saw about them: oppression, violence, greed, debauchery, theft, dishonesty, callous inhumanity, lust for power, faithlessness to trust. And their words sounded dangerously subversive to the civil and religious authorities, for the prophets' denunciations threatened the prerogatives of those who held power — ecclesiastical, political and economic.

3 Francis J. McConnell, The Prophetic Ministry, p. 16.
4 R. B. Y. Scott, The Relevance of the Prophets, p. 179.
5 Ibid., p. 227.
6 Ibid., p. 167.
7 Ibid., p. 99.
is not surprising, therefore, to hear that Amos was banished, or that Jeremiah was imprisoned, accused of treachery, and threatened with death. The prophetic task is never a popular one.

Not only did the prophets criticize the social and economic order, but they challenged the policy of their government toward other nations. Militarism and political intrigue were the order of the day. The leaders of Israel were confident that by means of foreign alliances and revolts against Assyria and Babylonia they would be able to improve the nation's conditions. But, to the prophets, a government founded on might without regard to right was the height of folly. They knew that no nation lives unto itself. It is part of a larger whole, toward which it may take one of two attitudes: selfish exploitation for its own purposes, or unselfish service. The latter was the prophetic idea. In this idea that the nation should be the servant of other peoples it is implied that humanity as a whole is a greater good than any single nation. No nation is an end in itself! In other words, the prophets would have nothing to do with nationalistic patriotism. Real patriotism was to them international -- a patriotism seeking the total welfare of foreign peoples as well as one's own. The prophets were not unpatriotic, as they have so often been accused of being, but their patriotism consisted in fidelity to their country as it ought to be.

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Were the prophets any more popular with the religious authorities of their day? Far from it! The religion of Israel had become largely external and formal, a mere matter of rites and ceremonies. Men bent only on their own advantage were putting up a convenient screen of worship between their consciences and their lives. Punctilious performance of so-called religious duties had become consistent with the most shameless disregard of the claims of one's fellow men. Onto this scene strode the prophets, insisting that God was the God of righteousness and had nothing to do with ritual. Not rites, but justice, kindness, faithfulness, honesty and purity alone were sacred. God was genuinely worshipped in one way alone, claimed the prophets: when his justice was made to well up as waters and his righteousness as a mighty stream. The only valid worship was that which manifested itself in social justice. Thus a new understanding of religion and its all-embracing ethical requirements was established because of the prophets' mission. As Francis McConnell has expressed it, "It was the lot and function of the prophets to make religion moral.

It must not be thought, however, that the prophets had a set of blueprints for the ideal social system. They were not social reformers

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12 Knudson, op. cit., p. 104.
14 Knudson, op. cit., p. 118.
15 Edith Hamilton, Spokesmen for God, p. 77.
16 Scott, op. cit., p. 16.
17 McConnell, loc. cit.
18 Hyatt, op. cit., p. 75.
in detail; they did not pretend to be economists or political scientists. Instead, they furnished the controlling and eternal principles by which both individual and society were to be judged. When conditions contradicted these principles, the prophets forced the contradiction upon the thinking of their people. Persistently, they held the moral factors before men's minds and refused to let them be ignored or forgotten.

This, then, was the function of the Hebrew prophet: he believed in the world as the seat of moral law, and insisted that forms of society and government would prosper or perish as they were or were not in accordance with this law. And such has been the essence of the prophetic function to this day. As Francis McConnell has expressed it,

If the prophet does not hold moral factors constantly before us, nobody else is likely to, not because everybody else is indifferent, but because most men do not see what is going on. . . . The more delicate the social organism, the more we need the strenuous, even raucous voice that tells us not to lose sight of the dependence of such an organism for its existence upon moral factors.19

One further quotation should help to make clear the meaning of the "prophetic function" with which this thesis deals. Charles Williams has written,

The prophetic message for this day of reconstruction is a persistent and clear proclamation of those fundamental and spiritual principles which have so commonly been forgotten and neglected in the materialistic absorptions of our modern civilization, but upon which alone any order of life, individual, industrial, social, national or international, can endure the tests of the constantly recurring judgments of experience and history.20

Religious Journalism

The second term requiring immediate definition is "religious journalism." The use made of it in this thesis is not the broadest possible; in fact, it is a comparatively narrow one. In its broadest application, the term would cover all journalistic writing produced under religious auspices or on religious subjects. Yet it is the contention of this study that much writing included in such a classification shows little promise of discharging the distinctly prophetic function.

A news story in a newspaper, for instance, is confined to the reporting of facts; it cannot by its very nature apply the standards of moral law to the events of national or international life. The prophetic journalist requires more freedom than that afforded the ordinary newspaper reporter. Then, too, while a prophetic voice occasionally may be heard in a newspaper editorial, an editor usually is so influenced by the necessity of conforming to his publisher's viewpoint and by his industrial environment -- his "daily contact with the rich people of his community" -- that he is not apt to speak out with prophetic boldness. Therefore, since unrestricted freedom to speak out is one of the prerequisites for discharging the prophetic function, secular newspapers will be eliminated from this study at the start, in spite of the fact that they do contain religious news. Also, by the same process of reasoning, secular magazines will be ruled out.

But what of the field which is thought of as exclusively religious journalism -- the publications of religious organizations or those with

21 Quincy Howe, The News and How to Understand It, p. 103.
a distinctly religious orientation? Are all of these to be included in this study? No, even here limits must be drawn.

There are many religious journals which show no tendency nor desire to be prophetic. By the very nature of their purpose, they are thus excluded. Take, for instance, the religious journal representing an ultra-conservative, fundamentalist viewpoint. Consider its exclusive concern with "soul-saving," its insistence on a literal interpretation of the Bible, its preaching of hellfire and damnation, its antagonism to scientific truth, and above all its lack of interest in religion's social implications. How can such religious journalism, which confines religion to an individual's emotionalized relationship to God or Christ, provide room for the application of moral law to national and international questions? Obviously, it is not even interested in doing so.

Take as a sample of this variety of religious journalism an eight-page publication which describes itself as follows: "An Independent Christian Weekly, Standing for the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, His Blood Atonement, Salvation by Faith, New Testament Soul Winning and the Premillennial Return of Christ." The entire eight pages of this issue chosen at random contained not a single reference to any community, national or world issue. Evangelism, salvation by faith, conversions and rededications were the sole subject matter. And, lest such a journal be waved aside as altogether inconsequential, let it be noted that at the end of 1949 its circulation

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approached 75,000.\textsuperscript{23}

In distinct contrast to that variety of religious journalism is the type with which this thesis is concerned. For, if it is to have any possibility of being prophetic, a religious journal must be liberal. It must be liberal in the sense of being forever open to new truth, in whatever field of knowledge. It must realize that whatever is vital and essential about its faith has nothing to fear from the scrutiny of science; thus it need not be on the defensive in this respect, as are so many conservative brands of religion. It must be forever ready to re-examine its own religious convictions, to weed out the time-bound from the timeless. It must recognize that God makes himself known not only in one religious tradition, nor in one world religion alone. In short, it must be concerned not with defending dogmas but with discovering truth, wherever it is to be found.

Such a journal will demonstrate religion's breadth, in contrast to the narrowness of religion as it is interpreted in a fundamentalist religious journal. It will emphasize the relevance of religion not only to the individual's inner life but to the entire structure of society. Far from confining its attention to issues which have a direct connection with organized religion, it will reach out to apply its standards to those national and international issues with which leaders and statesmen are grappling. It will seek the implications of moral and religious truth for every area of life, from the smallest community-area of the family to the largest community-area of the world. Such must be the

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 5.
scope of the religious journal which would discharge the prophetic function. A publication whose range is less broad is eliminated at the start from consideration in this study.

However, there is still another distinction to be made among religious journals. The prophetic religious journal must be independent as well as liberal. In other words, it must not be the official organ of any religious body. Such a relationship would fetter it and restrict its utterances. Almost every religious organization tends to amass its own vested interests till these act as encumbrances to its discharge of the prophetic function. The prophetic religious journal must not be weighed down with any such impediments. To work for the exclusive promotion of any denomination is no part of prophetic religious journalism.

Ideally, therefore, this journal should be undenominational, although there are journals -- Zions Herald, for instance -- which call themselves "independent" while still maintaining a denominational label. If no restrictions are placed upon them by their denominations, such journals also have the possibility of being prophetic. But it is essential that they be in no sense the mouthpiece for any one religious body. They must overleap all sectarian boundaries. The editor of such a religious journal must be accountable to no organization, but only to his best moral and spiritual insight. He must be free to speak the truth as he sees it, without having to soften his statements for fear of offending a superior or a governing organization.

Though it may draw upon this thesis the accusation of being narrow and sectarian, let it be pointed out that at present there
appears little prospect of a Catholic journal's meeting this require-
ment of independence. Paul Blanshard has testified,

There is only one lay Catholic magazine of any consequence in
the country, The Commonweal, and it is neither fearless nor inde­
pendent when some basic doctrine of the Church is challenged. All
the other widely known magazines are edited and managed by priests.
The diocesan weeklies are little more than house organs for the
hierarchy, carefully censored and filled with slanted news sent out
from the humming Washington headquarters of the National Catholic
Welfare Conference.24

This is not intended to cast any aspersion on Catholics as indi-
viduals, but only to point out the highly organized censorship system of
the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, a system which makes
impossible the freedom necessary for a prophetic religious journal.

It can be seen by this time that the term "religious journalism"
is used in this thesis in a strictly qualified sense. First, treatment
of religious subjects in secular publications was ruled out. Next, it
was stressed that the prophetic religious journal would of necessity be
liberal theologically. Furthermore, religious journalism dealing solely
with institutionalized religion was excluded. And, finally, it was
pointed out that the prophetic religious journal must be independent as
well as liberal, and that Catholic journals were thus well-nigh excluded
because of the highly organized system of censorship of their Church.

It is to be hoped that this narrowing of the field has clarified
the use which this study makes of the term "religious journalism." Cer­
tainly, it would be purposeless to urge the prophetic function upon
religious journals which are constitutionally unequal to the task.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THESIS

Part One has been devoted to an introduction to the prophetic function of religious journalism. Part Two interprets this prophetic function in greater detail, as well as attempting to prove its validity. Part Three presents specific illustrations of the discharge of the prophetic function by a modern religious journal, The Christian Century.

The various chapters included in Part Two appear to cover a wide range of subjects. One who glances over the table of contents may wonder why a chapter on ethical relativism and another on moral law belong in a thesis on religious journalism. Nevertheless, the laying of such groundwork was considered necessary.

The current prevalence of ethical relativism must be dealt with in order to show the widespread denial of universal moral principles. Then, lest ethical relativism be defended as a sound view, its lack of philosophical soundness and the results of carrying it to its logical conclusion need to be pointed out.

But not only is it necessary to refute the claims of ethical relativism. Since the basis for any prophetic utterance is moral law, the validity of moral law must be demonstrated. Thus Chapter Five attempts to interpret more clearly the meaning of the term "moral law" and to confirm its reality.

Once that foundation has been laid, attention is centered once more upon journalism. Chapter Six undertakes to establish the fact that ethical relativism is reflected in modern publications. This situation
is set forth both as a background against which the prophetic religious journal may stand forth more clearly, and also as an indication of the great need for a journalism of objective moral standards.

In Chapter Seven the prophetic function of religious journalism is interpreted at some length. What is the over-all task of the prophetic religious journal, it is asked; and what are the various facets of this task?

Chapter Eight makes the transition to Part Three by means of an introduction to The Christian Century, the magazine which provides illustrations for the remainder of the thesis.

The purpose of Part Three is to give concrete examples of the discharge of the prophetic function by a modern religious journal. Five aspects of the prophetic task are illustrated by the five chapters.

Chapter Nine points out the persistence with which The Christian Century has upheld the principle that a nation is morally responsible to the entire world community. Again and again it has insisted that the United States (and every other nation, for that matter) must so reorient its national will to the rest of the world that its policies shall be determined not only by its apparent national interest, but also by the effect of those policies upon the welfare of other peoples.

Chapter Ten shows The Christian Century carrying out the prophetic task of applying moral judgment impartially to all nations. The two nations chosen for purposes of illustration are the United States and the Soviet Union.

Chapter Eleven demonstrates the concern of The Christian Century
for human values, its refusal to subordinate these to military considerations or to allow them to be submerged beneath indifference. The specific subject dealt with is the widespread starvation which plagued so much of the world during the 1940's.

Chapter Twelve shows this prophetic journal crying out against fundamental injustice -- in this case, the evacuation of Japanese-Americans from the West Coast during World War II.

Chapter Thirteen presents still another facet of the prophetic task: insistence that a moral universe guarantees the instability of wrong solutions. The "wrong solution" treated here is imperialism, the doom of which The Christian Century has proclaimed tirelessly.

Lastly, the conclusions of the entire study are presented.
PART II

INTERPRETATION AND VALIDATION OF THE PROPHETIC FUNCTION
OF RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM
If the Old Testament prophets were to pay a visit to the world today, they would find their belief in the reality and inexorable working of moral law anything but universally held. For, along with relativity in physics, many persons have embraced relativity in ethics.

The doctrine of ethical relativism has proved most convenient for justifying certain actions. Take, for instance, the case of the Allied blockade which was maintained during World War II. This blockade was causing the starvation of many innocent people in the occupied countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands and Norway. Was the blockade justified? Yes, said the ethical relativists, it is right to maintain this blockade because the blockade will aid our side in winning the war. And anything that helps our side win the war is right and justifiable. Yet if these same persons had themselves been living in the occupied countries, they would have labeled the blockade as wrong, for it would have been endangering their lives. In other words, ethical relativists denied that there was any universal principle of right and wrong which could be applied to the blockade. All value judgments regarding it were, in their eyes, merely relative.

For ethical relativism, or ethical relativity, is the view that morality is subjective and that there are no objectively real moral standards. According to this view, ethical judgments are relative to the circumstances, to the time and place of their appearance, and to the human mind. What is right in one country and one period may be wrong
in another. There are simply no universal principles of right and wrong which hold true for all people and at all times. The only standards which exists are people's subjective feelings about morality. Thus, if one person claims that a given act is right and someone else claims that it is wrong, there is no way of proving one or the other of these conflicting claims to be in error.

In time of peace as in time of war, ethical relativists deny the existence of objective moral standards. How should their nation determine its course of action? It should act entirely in furtherance of its own interests, regardless of how this may affect weaker nations. (Why not, since there are no universal principles of right and wrong by which the nation's leaders should be guided?) How decide which is in the right, if the nation enters a quarrel with another nation? The ethical relativist's own nation is always right, of course, and the other nation entirely in the wrong. What means should a nation use to reach a desired end? The expedient means, of course. Since there are no objectively real moral standards, let's not worry about the means used, just so long as the desired end is reached!

The fruits of this doctrine are to be seen in the fact that Americans live today in a power culture, the essential notion of which has been defined as "the effort to organize human life independent of moral inhibitions."¹ Professor Nicholas John Spykman writes, in America's Strategy in World Politics,

The statesman who conducts foreign policy can concern himself with the values of justice, fairness and tolerance only to the

extent that they contribute to or do not interfere with the power
objective. They can be used instrumentally as moral justification
for the power quest, but they must be discarded the moment their
application brings weakness. The search for power is not made for
the achievement of moral values; moral values are used to facili-
tate the attainment of power.2

Moral values are thus made a means to the end of power! As Lin
Yutang says, in commenting on this quotation, nine out of ten readers
would think that it was taken from Mein Kampf.3 This simply demon-
strates how closely the power culture in America resembles that which
was seen under the Nazi rule in Germany. So far, the United States has
not come quite so near to carrying it to its logical conclusion.

For where, after all, does this doctrine of ethical relativism
lead? It may for a time make its adherents feel comfortably superior,
as they loftily assert that matters pertaining to right and wrong are
nothing but individual judgments. But does the doctrine really stand up
under scrutiny?

One need not look far into the future to see what kind of an
outcome it will have if widely enough embraced and acted upon. If there
are no moral absolutes, on what basis can a totalitarian state be con-
victed of wrong when it teaches its people that whatever serves the pur-
poses of the state is right and good? What is to prevent international
life from basing itself more and more on pure power without morality?
And where can this lead except to destruction, as the interests of
powerful nations, each seeking its own end, come into conflict? In view

2 Nicholas John Spykman, America's Strategy in World Politics,
p. 18.

3 Lin Yutang, Between Tears and Laughter, p. 153.
of the terrible new weapons being devised today, it is all too easy to foresee the inevitable result of this trend.

Nor is ethical relativism philosophically sound. For all its air of superiority, it is full of logical flaws. In the first place, it is inconsistent in that it claims that there are no universal principles of morality and at the same time insists that everyone should accept relativism as true. If relativism is true for everyone, it is by virtue of that fact a universal principle, true for all people and at all times. Thus the implications of the theory contradict the theory itself. It is self-contradictory and for that reason cannot be true. If, on the other hand, the relativist should claim that his doctrine was not true for everyone, he would be admitting the possibility of its opposite’s being true. Whichever way his position is interpreted, it is filled with inconsistencies.4

When relativism is applied to fields other than ethics, its inconsistencies are so obvious that people are less apt to be deceived by it. In the field of mathematics, for instance, the proposition that two plus two equals four would be considered true for some persons but false for others. The multiplication table could be regarded as true in America but false in England. Mathematics is a meaningful and significant branch of knowledge only when we accept the idea that what is true for anyone in mathematics is true for everyone. All of us agree that mathematical truths are not relative to particular individuals, nor do we believe that they vary from country to country.

4 Charles H. Patterson, Moral Standards, p. 42.
Thorough-going ethical relativism makes meaningless any notion of moral growth or progress, or of moral judgment. If the moral state of a saint is no better than that of a criminal, why attempt to reform the criminal? Why stress the importance of fair play in teaching a game to a group of small boys, if no one can know whether fair play is superior to foul? Why praise one country for continuing payments on its war debts while condemning another for tearing up a treaty? Why be loyal to one's friends, faithful to one's wife, or true to one's ideals? Such is the chaos into which one is led when he embraces ethical relativism.

Certainly there is no hope for a solution to the current world-wide problems unless another answer than ethical relativism can be found. It affords no guidance, points no direction for men in their efforts to build toward lasting peace. It provides no standards by which men may judge what kind of peace terms should be agreed upon, what the treatment of minority groups should be, whether empires should be maintained, and so forth. It is not only philosophically unsound, but it is freighted with danger for the whole world when applied to international relations.

Where is solid ground onto which men may climb from such a morass? The answer to this question is near at hand. As far away as he has wandered, man may still come back from his fling with relativism to the moral law of whose reality the Hebrew prophets were so certain. It is the contention of this thesis that here is the answer which can provide the guidance, point the direction which is so desperately needed today.
CHAPTER V

THE MEANING AND VALIDITY OF MORAL LAW

Now that ethical relativism has been demonstrated to be untenable, the present chapter will interpret and defend the opposite view: that there are universal moral principles which are discoverable in human experience and inexorable in their working.

The view expressed in these pages is that moral law is exactly as real as physical law. Nor is this an idea concocted by theologians alone and deserving to be sneered at by the secular world. True, the religious consciousness does see moral law as grounded in the nature or will of God, yet the thinker who approaches the question in other than theistic terms can feel as certain of the reality of moral law as can the theist. Witness W. T. Stace and his book, The Concept of Morals.

It should be emphasized from the beginning that, to use Dr. Edgar Brightman's words, "The moral laws are valid because they are a reasoned account of the nature and implications of human experience, not because they are commanded by an eternal lawgiver or communicated on a Mount Sinai."¹ W. G. Everett stresses the same truth when he writes, "The attempt to discover moral laws elsewhere than in human experience must always prove futile."²

These laws, therefore, have been commanded by great teachers and prophets because they are true statements of the way life works; they are not true because they have been commanded. When Jesus urged men to

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¹ Edgar S. Brightman, Moral Laws, p. 268.
² W. G. Everett, Moral Values, p. 314.
love their neighbors as themselves, he was simply lifting up before their eyes the laws of human relationships. He knew perfectly well that if one didn't love his neighbor he wouldn't be able to get along with his neighbor. And the seriousness of that alternative is being impressed upon the world today, as men find themselves on a fast-shrinking globe, with ever more devastating instruments of destruction in their own and "neighbor" nations' hands.

This is the first point, then, that needs to be stressed. Moral law is not something mysteriously revealed or commanded from on high, but rather is discoverable in the nature of things -- in human nature.

As Ralph Sockman writes,

Just as natural laws are discovered by studying the phenomena of nature, so moral laws are discovered by studying the actions and reactions of human nature. . . . The test of every moral principle is its adaptation to the actual needs of life as seen over a period sufficiently long to sift the transient from the permanent. When moral law is recognized as the formulated result of studying actualities, it begins to take on the authoritative standing accorded by the modern mind to natural laws. 3

A similar emphasis is made by W. G. Everett, who writes,

The laws of chemistry are an expression of the nature of the various elements as they display themselves in action and interaction. . . . In a similar way all valid moral laws are derived from human nature, and are a statement of its highest development. 4

Now, if it is true that moral laws are natural laws, it follows that one cannot escape the consequences of flouting them. While it is possible to evade an arbitrary law and escape its sanctions, this is not true of natural law, either physical or moral. The moral order of the

3 Ralph Sockman, Morals of Tomorrow, p. 229.

4 Everett, op. cit., p. 313.
universe must be taken account of just as truly as the physical order.

As Ernest Fremont Tittle expresses it,

"Certain attitudes and acts have certain consequences, regardless of our human beliefs, desires, and expectations. . . . Hate, greed, selfishness, bestiality work havoc. They did so yesterday. They do so today. They will do so tomorrow and evermore. Even though at the start they appear to promise pleasure, in the end always they produce pain. . . . In order to live well we are obliged to take account of the laws which operate in this realm of personal life and social relationships. We are free to obey them; we are not free to disregard them with impunity."

History has shown that moral law operates in international life as inexorably as in individual life. Harold H. Titus writes, of World War II,

"The world is still a moral order and meaningful. The crisis is due to no accident or temporary storm; it is a natural growth from the seeds of destruction which the nations have been sowing. Men cannot play fast and loose with moral laws and not reap the whirlwind. As Maude Royden is quoted as saying, 'If this war had not occurred, I would have found it hard to believe in God.'"

Henry Hitt Crane paints even more vividly the factors which inevitably brought upon men the sufferings of this war when he writes,

"Behold, how the nations of the earth have sinned! . . . All of us have studied with meticulous care the various, vicious devices of so-called 'justifiable' selfishness, put them into protracted practice, and insisted they were indispensable to survival. We have glorified greed, excused exploitation, ignored all sorts of injustice to others or indulged in it ourselves, sought to sanctify our systems of ruthless competition, and in ways too sickeningly numerous to mention we have completely fulfilled those various conditions which in a universe geared to law must inevitably bring forth awful results."

Moral law, then, is built into the structure of life in such a

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way that its working is inescapable. The person who lives by selfishness cannot escape the inner dissatisfaction and the deterioration of personality which this brings about. Many an individual who is convinced of the validity of moral law has found the most unshakable evidence for it in his own experience. Living has so borne out this truth for him that he cannot doubt it. James Thompson Bixby suggests this when he writes,

As our knowledge of man and Nature grows wider and wider, we find the great principles of right interwoven with the texture of our own personality, and we find that web to be an inseparable part of the great web of human society. We see that the great principles of ethics are things that neither fashion nor custom nor statute-book can make or unmake, but that they are ingrained in the nature of human existence, -- of life itself. They are eternal conditions of our continuance as social beings, and therefore they have a claim on our obedience from which we cannot run away.

It is only fair, however, to consider an objection which ethical relativists are fond of raising. They make much of the fact that there is not yet universal agreement on what constitutes moral law. "Since people disagree on it, there can be no such thing," is their attitude.

But do people make this objection in the case of the laws of hygiene, or of physics, or of chemistry? Of course not. They realize in all these fields that, while the actual laws remain the same, human discovery of them comes about slowly, gradually, bit by bit. There are laws of physics which man knew nothing of a hundred years ago; there will undoubtedly be others in the future of which man knows nothing now. But no one denies because of this that there are valid laws by which to go. Neither is there cause for dismay, then, in the fact that there is

8 James Thompson Bixby, The Crisis in Morals, p. 305.
as yet no universal agreement on an inflexible code of moral laws.

The ethical relativists base some of their objections to a universal morality on sociological research among backward peoples. These studies of the natural history of morals, especially those of Professor Westermarck and his collaborators, are widely supposed to show that there is no agreement in moral judgments. Actually, though, these researches do not show utter confusion in moral ideas among backward peoples, but substantial agreement in spite of some striking differences, and the possibility of authentic development roughly parallel to scientific development from magic to modern science. As Elton Trueblood points out,

It is not surprising that men, especially ignorant and savage men, should have all kinds of absurd ideas about the supernatural or moral order, since they have all kinds of absurd ideas about the natural order, and no person supposes that this means that the natural order is nonexistent.  

It cannot be denied that numerous ethical codes have come down from the past. Yet it is also true that emerging from diversity are certain great principles which tend toward universality. Today, certain elements in the moral ideal, such as truthfulness, justice, and fair play, are gaining assent from all advanced peoples. What a historical survey of morality really shows is not a chaos but an evolution -- an evolution toward the discovery of laws which are true to the nature of man.

James Thompson Bixby is another who refers to the process of evolution by which our instincts of right and wrong have unfolded into distinct ethical perceptions and laws. "The recognition of the long

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9 D. Elton Trueblood, The Logic of Belief, p. 166.

10 Sockman, loc. cit.
process of development by which our moral nature has been unfolded," he writes, "does not damage its testimony or show its authority to be illusive." 11

An exceptionally able defense of a universal morality is offered by W. T. Stace in his book, The Concept of Morals. Here too is to be found the emphasis upon morality's gradual development or evolution. Stace makes the distinction at once between a moral law which is believed and accepted by all men and a moral law which is applicable to all men in the sense that, even if they do not accept it, they ought to do so. It is not necessary to show that all men know what this obligation is, he says, but only that what really is right is the same for all men.

Morality, according to Stace, is essentially altruism. Thus he looks amid differing moral systems for some recognition of this general law. And he finds that in any set of so-called moral ideas, the essence of the morality in question consists in the idea of altruism, that is, the idea of being fair, kind, just, considerate to one's neighbor, or treating him as one would oneself like to be treated.

Both the idea of fairness and the idea of who is one's neighbor show great development as one progresses from a savage tribe to a modern community. For the savage, "my neighbor" means only his fellow tribesman, and he feels no moral obligations to the inhabitant of the next village. Also, it may appear "fair" to put to death an inferior for a slight affront. Yet this idea or feeling of fairness, when fully developed, becomes the principle of justice or altruism which asserts that the

11 Bixby, op. cit., p. 302.
desires and needs and happiness of every man are intrinsically of equal value one with another. Thus, Stace concludes that the essential idea of morality is the same everywhere, though at varying stages of development. The only condition upon which men can live together is that they shall have regard to the needs, desires, and feelings of each other.  

But is this, it may be asked, the closest one can come to a statement of what really is meant by moral law? Can't it be defined more clearly than as a vague type of altruism which ranges all the way from a savage's concept of fairness to our own? Yes, undoubtedly it can. But it is difficult to find any set table of moral laws which satisfies one's search. Therefore, this thesis makes no attempt to present such a table. One's mind must always be open to the possibility of further development in the understanding of moral law.

To gain a bit clearer picture, however, of how moral law may be understood and applied, one may profitably turn to Dr. Paul Hutchinson, editor of the religious journal with which Part Three of this thesis deals. For himself, he says, he has found most satisfaction in trying to work out the application of moral law in terms of building the sense of community among men. All the evidence available — anthropological and biological as well as sociological and theological — indicates that men were created to live in communities. Thus he believes that moral law may be best understood and applied by testing one's acts, attitudes, and intentions according to their effects on the building of an eventual world community in which all shall live as brothers. He writes,

When it comes to the actual problem of application, I begin with myself, for there is nowhere else to begin. And I see that if I do not commit myself to loyalty to my best insights, my noblest aspirations, I finally become unfit to live with myself, and so am worthless as a member of any wider community. . . . But from that start I move outward. I must be loyal to others; otherwise I am a hypocrite and a double-dealer, and no community of hypocrites and double-dealers can hold together long. More than that, I must have an active concern for the welfare of others, otherwise in my drive to get ahead I will try to destroy them, and they, in order to protect themselves, will try to destroy me, and so again our community will be broken to bits. If I possess power or position or wealth or any other advantage, I must hold this at the service of others; it is a notable fact that this sense of the obligation of power is to be found in every culture from the moment man begins to form societies. And finally, I must have an active desire to see justice done, the balances held even, the principles of the Golden Rule put into practice; for without this sense of a principle of justice operating among men, community cannot survive. The application of the moral law . . . thus just about reduces in practice to this -- that which serves to build community I will judge to be in accord with that law, and what serves to disrupt community I will judge to be in contravention of it.13

Paul Hutchinson believes that this fits about as much as is known of the working of moral law in all societies and among all men at all times, and that it supplies a comprehensible method of application for today. Thus simplified in its presentation, the moral law can be easily grasped in its essentials and held by people in the mass.14

However, he realizes that cautions and limitations must be kept in mind. He explains that the rule which the moral law provides is not quite the simple, clear-cut, open-and-shut, easily grasped imperative that it is sometimes presented as being.

The applications and interpretations of the moral law are not automatic. Always they are subject to the environmental limitations

14 Ibid., p. 174.
of the interpreter. The law may be immutable, but its expounders are not.\(^{15}\)

Paul Hutchinson is honest enough also to raise the question, "Can men and nations keep that law?" And he answers, "No, not if what you mean is perfect justice. ... We have to acknowledge our inability to attain perfection in the application of the moral law."\(^{16}\) But what we can hope for, he points out, is action by the individual and even by the state, in the direction of the ends which the moral law has in view. "We can at least labor to secure a much more serious effort to approximate the requirements of the moral law in social as well as in individual action than has hitherto been known."\(^{17}\)

This interpretation of moral law in terms of building the sense of community is a creative note on which to end an exposition and defense of it. Moral law cannot be outlined in black and white, cannot be set down with absolute finality. Yet it is nonetheless real and binding. A sensitive person knows in his deepest heart that men and nations should follow the way of concern for the welfare of all rather than self-centeredness, creative good will rather than hatred, mercy rather than vengeance, justice rather than exploitation, truth rather than falsehood, concern for human values before concern for material things — in other words, as Paul Hutchinson so well says, whatever makes for community rather than what disrupts it.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 162.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 172.

\(^{17}\) Loc. cit.
Like it or not, man lives in a universe in which these are the rules of the game. Again and again he attempts to make up his own rules, but the game is not to be played on any such basis. He tries to ignore the rules, to explain them away; but he finds that no other rules will work. For these rules, which this chapter has been describing as moral law, are written into the very structure of the universe in which man lives.
CHAPTER VI

A RELATIVISTIC PRESS IN A RELATIVISTIC AGE

Now that an attempt has been made to prove that ethical relativism is untenable and that universal principles of morality are valid, this subject-matter must be related to the field of journalism. It is the purpose of the present chapter to demonstrate that ethical relativism is clearly reflected in modern journalism. This situation will both provide a backdrop against which the prophetic function of religious journalism may stand out more strikingly, and indicate the crying need for a journalism of moral standards.

It is only to be expected that a relativistic age should reflect itself in a relativistic press. Accordingly, the lack of objectively real moral standards and goals is as evident in journalism as in the other areas of modern life. All too seldom does a newspaper or news magazine halt in its spinning out of the web of events to indicate the moral significance of this or that issue. Too few are the prophetic notes sounded in the secular press of today. Here, if anywhere, the confusion, vacillation and expediency which relativism engenders come to full flower.

What, then, are the factors which determine the selection and interpretation of news in the American press? A few may be suggested here.

Even the selection of news, to say nothing of its interpretation, is made with little regard for the true significance of events.
When a journalist says that a certain event is news, he does not mean that it is important in itself. Often it is, but about as often it is not. The journalist means by news something that has happened within the last few hours which will attract the interest of the customers. The criteria of interest are recency or firstness, proximity, combat, human interest, and novelty. Such criteria limit accuracy and significance.¹

Since its aim is to attract the maximum audience, the press emphasizes the sensational rather than the significant. Many activities of the utmost social significance are ignored altogether -- crowded out by stories of night-club murders, quarrels among public officials, and movie star romances or divorces. H. A. Overstreet points out that, on the day when untouchability was outlawed in India, a prominent morning newspaper featured on its first page in spread-eagle headlines and with columns of detail a murder several days old in the news. On the same first page, the outlawing of untouchability was presented as a small box item about two inches square.²

It would be cause for gratitude if the press were willing even to give an accurate picture of current events. Instead, distortion is the rule. For one thing, news is twisted into a shape that will conform to the publisher's own point of view. As Robert Lasch, editorial writer on the Chicago Sun-Times, points out,

The subtle intellectual climate established by an ownership that may have the same outlook as the ownership of steel mills, department stores or anything else, affects the way news is handled. No directive need ever come down to slant the news against Russia, yet a newspaper staff will unconsciously and almost automatically play up the anti-Russian news simply because publishers as a class, in common with other capitalists, entertain such a profound suspicion of communism.³

¹ Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press, p. 54.
The press finds distortion of news useful not only to please the publisher but to gain the greatest number of readers. A news account must be written to catch headlines. Reports of the San Francisco Conference provided an excellent illustration of this type of distortion:

On many days during the weeks the Conference was in session there was nothing to report. But the reporters had to send in their stories. Somehow there had to be news. . . . Because drama and tension were demanded by the editorial desks back home, drama and tension were manufactured at San Francisco. Hence calm was turned into the calm-before-the-storm. Silence became the silence-of-impending-conflict. The passage of time became a portentous period of delay. So completely was the task of manufacturing suspense performed that, when after some weeks an acceptable charter was signed, the effect on newspaper readers was one of incredible surprise.4

Perhaps the most harmful form of distortion practiced by the modern press is its playing up and even manufacturing of conflict. Far from building a sense of community among men, the press seems determined to destroy what sense of community now exists. Wherever possible, it creates an impression of conflict, even where there are humanly constructive and communitarian aspects which might just as truthfully be emphasized. How much of the cold war, for instance, is a distorted reporting of an actual situation? Of course it makes exciting headlines, sells newspapers and magazines; but at the same time it is forcing the world closer and closer to destruction.

The nine Nieman Fellows who wrote Your Newspaper make the following charge:

4 Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press, p. 56.
It seems undeniable that the U. S. press bears a major share of responsibility for the climate of ignorance and hate which darkens our relations with Soviet Russia. For more than a generation most of our newspapers have sung a song of hostility towards almost everything Russian.  

The New York Times, so the Nieman Fellows assert, is clearly anti-Russian. And it is not one of the worst newspapers in this regard, but one of the best.  

The American press also works against development of a sense of world community by its excessive nationalism. Its attitude is not only, "Our country, right or wrong," but, "We must look out for the interests of the United States, while what happens to other nations really isn't of great importance." According to the press, this country is not only beyond criticism, but her interests are more vital than those of the rest of the world put together. Has the secular press ever tried the experience of looking at America through the eyes of people in another country? Good gracious, no! What it is concerned about is how things look to Americans -- not how they look to any other people. Americans are thus led to think in terms of the welfare of their own spot on the globe, without regard for the effects their nation's actions have on the welfare of others. American newspapers and magazines have not yet grown up to the realization that this is an interdependent world, where the welfare of one nation is indissolubly intertwined with that of every other.  

Here, then, are a few of the factors which dictate the daily diet of news and the slant to be given it. Readers are treated to the

5 Leon Svirsky, Editor, Your Newspaper, p. 91.
6 Ibid., p. 88.
sensational rather than the significant, conflict rather than the constructive, the publisher's upper-class bias rather than objectivity, a nationalistic attitude rather than a global viewpoint. Does not this indicate the tremendous need for the kind of journalism which has been labeled prophetic — a journalism which interprets current happenings not in terms of any special interest but in terms of their moral implications, a journalism which tests institutions and issues by standards which are objective and valid?

Not that this thesis wishes to guard this function as one for religious journalism exclusively. Far from it! If there can be prophetic journalism in the secular field as well, so much the better. But it is clear that the editor of a secular newspaper or magazine is less free to write in the prophetic tradition. Always the figure of the publisher looms above him. The truly prophetic religious journal, on the other hand, is free to exercise this function without limitation.

Not only has the religious journal greater freedom in this regard but a greater responsibility. By the very fact of its professing to be "religious," it is expressing its obligation to further God's purposes as best it can. And surely his purpose for the world is that men of all nations should live together as a family. Yet how are they to learn to live together in this way unless they learn and obey the rules of the game?

How better, then, can a religious journal help to further God's purposes than by pointing out to men whether or not their actions and their nation's actions are in accordance with moral law? What better
service can it perform than to keep before men the goals toward which they should be striving, individually and collectively? In this day when men search in vain for a sense of direction, for the paths in which individuals and nations should be traveling, the religious journal has its task mapped out for it!

Of course it is to be desired that secular journalism too become prophetic. Yet religious journalism seems to be called to this task with a peculiar urgency. Its highest responsibility is to create community. And to do this, it must teach men how to build in accordance with the dictates of moral law.
CHAPTER VII

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPHETIC RELIGIOUS JOURNAL

This chapter will describe in greater detail the prophetic function of religious journalism. The need for the prophetic religious journal has already been stressed. What, then, will be its characteristics? By what marks shall prophetic religious journalism be known? And into what more specific tasks does its over-all task break down? The present chapter will attempt to answer such questions.

The over-all task, it should be said, though at the risk of some repetition, is to interpret current issues in the prophetic tradition. And what does this mean? It means keeping the reader aware of those objectively true moral principles on which alone any order of life must be based if it is to endure the tests of experience and history. It means interpreting and pronouncing judgment upon current issues in the light of these principles. As surely as did Amos, the prophetic religious journal must look out over the scene of national and international life and apply to events a plumb line of righteousness. There is the test of this peace treaty, that decision of Congress, this action against a minority group. When seen in the light of moral law, are these things to be approved or are they to be condemned? Are they right or are they wrong? The pronouncing of such clear-cut moral judgment is a basic function of the prophetic religious journal.

Here is a task calling for the keenest insight an editor possesses. His task is not to entertain his readers, not to cater to special interests, not to spin out scholarly and impressive words.
Rather, it is to help people see as clearly as possible the implications of moral law for the life of their times.

Not that the term "moral law" must always be mentioned in so many words. But the term or its like must be referred to often enough for the reader to realize that it is the measuring stick, the plumb line, by which the shifting events of every day are being judged. The reader must understand that this is where the editor starts from, that this is how he orients himself when he looks out over the national and world scene.

That, in general terms, is the prophetic function of the religious journal. But lest it still sound too vague, an attempt will be made to break it down further. Here are a few of the more specific tasks to which such a journal should devote itself.

Reference has already been made to Paul Hutchinson's working out of the application of moral law in terms of building the sense of community among men. According to this, a religious journal helps people carry out the demands of moral law as it instills in them the attitudes which make for world community. And is there not widespread agreement today, even among persons who never give a thought to the concept of moral law, that the world's greatest need is for the attitudes making for world community?

Man lives today in a world whose interdependence is increasingly evident, yet mentally and emotionally he has not been prepared for it. His new means of transportation and communication have cut down the size of his world more rapidly than he has been able to build up the
neighborly attitudes which are demanded. So he clings to his outmoded ideas of unrestricted national sovereignty, of looking out for his own country and not concerning himself with the rest of the world, when all the true facts fly in the face of such attitudes and rapid technological advance makes them ever more dangerous. As John H. Randall expresses it,

The supreme task of the twentieth century is to take . . . this one physical neighborhood into which the new means of communication have brought us, and this one economic community which industrialism has created, -- and transform it into a genuine world community, in which there shall be awakened the common consciousness broad enough to include the whole world, and the community spirit that shall reach out to all mankind. Unless we have the intelligence, the will, and the spirit to achieve this great end, the future holds out little hope for humanity. ¹

A truly prophetic religious journal realizes that the current extreme nationalism is only a stage which man must outgrow as quickly as possible. Nationalism has not always been; and it need not, must not, always be. Man's concept of the nation as the community deserving his loyalty must be transcended by his concept of the world as that community. Robert MacIver has well expressed the transition that needs to take place:

The sociologist can no more retain the primitive though still predominant attitude of men towards their respective nations than the scientist could retain the primitive idea of the universe. Men found the earth to be the whole meaning of the universe just as men still find their country to be the whole meaning of community. These theories are very comfortable and come very easy to our egoisms. But when men comprehended the truth about the earth, all the broken fragments of their physical knowledge were pieced together as parts of a hitherto undreamed-of harmony of science. In like manner when men realise that their own country is but a part of the meaning of community, all the broken social interests of to-day will be revealed as co-ordinated within the universitas humani. And men will despise the lesser if more comfortable thoughts of our age,

¹ John Herman Randall, A World Community, p. xvi.
as we despise the ignorance of the Pre-Copernicans.2

Here, then, is a job made to order for the prophetic religious journal. It must strive to build up a world-wide sense of interdependence, fellowship, and mutual obligation. It must help its readers to stretch their loyalties, until they belong more to the world than to any nation. In every way, it must try to give them a world outlook, make them world citizens. Or, in the colder terms of moral law, it should persuade them that the welfare of their nation must be subordinated to the general welfare. After all, as Daniel Fleming points out,3 this principle that the good of the whole takes precedence over the good of the part is accepted in smaller groups. Citizens of the United States feel a moral responsibility to aid through general federal taxes the more backward parts of their country. But they still are reluctant to act on the principle that the good of the world is to be chosen rather than an exclusive gain for their nation, when these two interests come into conflict.

Here, then, is the foremost of the specific tasks of prophetic religious journalism: to instill in its readers a sense of obligation to the entire community of nations, and to insist that a nation's failure to act in terms of this obligation will result in tragic consequences for all.

Another of the most important things a prophetic religious journal should do is to provide for men what William Ernest Hocking has


called "a moral anchor outside their own national life." It must keep them mindful that moral law applies to all men and nations -- not to all except themselves and their nation. It must help them to be as ready to praise or blame one country as another, when there is just cause, instead of tending to blame others and consider their own always in the right.

For here is one of the worst faults of contemporary American journalism: this tendency to paint this country white and a country which disagrees with it black. "Right" is twisted till it means "what Americans do" and "what Americans want"; while "wrong" is made to apply to the opposing country's actions and intentions. On this basis, world problems will never be solved. Only as standards of right and wrong are applied impartially and objectively will problems be worked out. The prophetic religious journal must apply the same standards to its own nation as to others, and be as ready to point out its nation's shortcomings as those of others. It must help its readers to see themselves as people in other countries see them, instead of seeing only their whitewashed picture of themselves.

Such a journal must be ready, for instance, to point out contradictions and inconsistencies between its own nation's professions and actions. In other words, it must serve as a national conscience. Is it objected that this is unpatriotic? No, this is a higher type of patriotism: a loyalty to one's country not as it is but as it ought to

be. If the United States professes a firm belief in democracy, freedom and equality, but denies these by various practices, this contradiction in the nation's life should be pointed out. Never must the prophetic religious journal be afraid to lay its finger on a sore spot in the nation's life and say, "Thou ailest here."

The prophetic religious journal must also be a champion of human rights, an upholder of the infinite worth and dignity of human personality. "What," it must ask, "is the effect of this institution, that act of Congress, this national policy, on human personality? You say that this or that act is a military necessity. But is that the primary issue? No! You must look at the question first in terms of human values." Such a journal must fight resolutely against the evils of prejudice and discrimination. For the prophetic religious journal upholds not only the infinite value of the human person, but of every human person, whatever his race, creed, nation, or economic level.

Closely related to this concern for human values is the prophetic religious journal's concern for justice. Wherever it is conscious of injustice -- whether to an individual, a group, or a whole people -- it will raise its voice in protest. Of course it realizes that absolute justice cannot be attained, yet it knows that it can be approximated much more closely than it is in the world today. It knows too that justice is basic to the moral order of this universe. No structure can long endure which is built on other foundations. An institution, a social order, or a Congressional act which flouts the requisites of justice is doomed; and the prophetic religious journal must make this clear.
An emphasis which such a journal should make continually is that the working of moral law is inexorable. One does not get figs from thistles. Eventually, a man or a nation reaps what he has sown. History teaches these lessons plainly, yet people are forever forgetting them. Today, for instance, there is need for stressing what Toynbee calls "the suicidalness of militarism." He testifies:

Militarism . . . has been by far the commonest cause of the breakdowns of civilizations during the last four or five millennia which have witnessed the score or so of breakdowns that are on record up to the present date.

It is the responsibility of the prophetic religious journal to say plainly that militarism is not the way to peace. Peace has never been arrived at by preparation for war. Militarism carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

To make such an emphasis and keep making it, in an age and a country which is preparing itself for war with abandon, requires both courage and perseverance. The prophetic religious journal must hammer away ceaselessly at those things which are in direct violation of moral law, even though it knows full well that men prefer not to listen. For such a journal exists not to tell men what they want to hear, but what they ought to hear. It should never try to sugar-coat its utterances, but should present matters in their true light, however unpleasant.

Some readers will complain that such a religious journal is negative and hypercritical. Yet it never is negative simply for the sake of being negative. It is only condemning those things which are in

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6 Ibid., p. 190.
direct violation of moral law: racial discrimination, economic injustice, vengeful peace terms, imperialism, militarism, and the like. Unquestionably, some who consider themselves pillars of the church will be startled at hearing that religion has something to say about the economic order, and that perhaps there are aspects of our economic system which are not in accord with moral law. But that is what a prophetic religious journal exists for: to point out such startling truths whenever they need to be pointed out. Churchmen have been cushioned too long from some of the less comfortable implications of their faith; it is high time they were waked up to them. There must therefore be a genuine fearlessness and forthrightness on the part of the prophetic religious journal. It must never decide for popularity as over against prophecy.

Here, then, have been suggested some of the main characteristics of the prophetic religious journal. These are the tasks it must perform, if it is to deserve to be called prophetic.

In conclusion, a paragraph will be quoted to underscore the distinctive element in this type of journalism. Interestingly enough, these words were written about a man who does not pretend to be a religious journalist. Nevertheless, they describe a type of journalism which unquestionably deserves to be called prophetic. Here is Paul Hutchinson writing in a review of William Henry Chamberlin's *The Confessions of an Individualist*:

I believe, however, that the distinctive element in Chamberlin's journalism has been his faith in moral values, his insistence on their supremacy, and his practice of judging the events he was to chronicle by objective moral tests. It was this, for example, which
made him sure of the inner rottenness of the Stalin regime years before the signing of the pact with Hitler or the attack on Finland. He had gone to Moscow, where he served for twelve years, as an admirer of the soviet revolution. Yet when he saw the savage brutality involved in the liquidation of the kulaks and other repressive methods of the Stalin dictatorship, he reached his condemnatory judgment swiftly, because he was sure that ignoble means could not produce noble ends. No talk about the necessity of breaking eggs in making an omelet fooled him. He believed in a moral order which not even Stalin could defy with impunity.7

This, after all, is the foremost characteristic of the prophetic religious journalist: his belief in a moral order which cannot be defied with impunity. All that he writes flows from this fundamental conviction.

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CHAPTER VIII

INTRODUCTION TO "THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY"

Part Three of this thesis will be devoted to concrete illustrations. Now that the prophetic function of religious journalism has been described, illustrations of it will be drawn from a religious journal which is outstanding in this regard.

The Christian Century, an undenominational weekly, is widely recognized as one of today's leading Protestant journals. Many persons would name it as the country's, or even the world's, foremost religious journal. It has a circulation of 36,758\(^1\), including subscribers in numerous foreign countries.

Today its editor is Dr. Paul Hutchinson, author of books including From Victory to Peace, The New Leviathan, What and Why in China, Storm over Asia, The United States of Europe, and The Ordeal of Western Religion.

It should be pointed out that a change in editorship took place in June, 1947, when Dr. Hutchinson, who for many years had been Managing Editor of The Christian Century, succeeded Charles Clayton Morrison as editor. Naturally enough, the viewpoints of these two men are not identical. In fact, if it fell within the purpose of this thesis to do so, it would be possible to point out distinct differences of emphasis which characterized their editorial reigns. But since this would involve a rather lengthy excursion away from the main highway of the thesis, it

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has not been undertaken. Instead, in spite of the change in editorship, the ten-year period of the 1940's, from which all illustrations are drawn, is treated here as a unit rather than as two parts.

What sort of a journal is this, it may be asked, and how is it to be dealt with here?

The usual make-up of an issue is as follows: from eight to ten editorial paragraphs of approximately 300 words each, two long editorials of 1500-2000 words, three contributed articles, a number of book reviews, and religious news items from correspondents throughout the Christian world. This study will deal with editorial content only, even though many of the articles often pertain to the same or similar issues as the editorials.

All of the illustrations to be presented in Part Three have been drawn from the 1940's. One reason for choosing this ten-year period is that it has been a time of testing for any religious journal. The temptation to let one's editorial viewpoint be swayed by the intense national interests aroused in wartime must have been great. And during the last few years of the 1940's, when the world has been splitting into two armed camps, the temptation to take a partisan viewpoint rather than a prophetic one must have been tremendous.

Does this study claim, it may be asked, that The Christian Century is an unblemished example of prophetic religious journalism? No, it does not. For instance, this student was highly critical of the journal's attitude toward American participation in World War II, once this country had entered the war, and considered that on this particular
issue The Christian Century had thrown the prophetic function to the winds. But no prophet, it must be remembered, is infallible. He can only be true to his highest insight. So the position held is that, while this religious journal has failed occasionally to live up to the standards of prophetic religious journalism, it still lives up to them more courageously and consistently than almost any other journal.

Its editor, Paul Hutchinson, makes no secret of the fact that moral law is his criterion for judging the fast-changing events of every day. In several books and countless editorials he makes this plain. And one comes away from reading the past ten years of Christian Century editorials with this emphasis ringing in one's ears: Only that which is in accord with moral law will endure and flourish; whatever runs counter to it carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

In the following and final section of this thesis, then, will be presented a number of points on which The Christian Century has expressed itself clearly and emphatically -- expressed itself because the dictates of moral law required that a prophetic voice speak out. Would that more voices were speaking in the same tradition and with the same urgency!

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2 From Victory to Peace, The New Leviathan
PART III

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PROPHETIC FUNCTION OF RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM
CHAPTER IX

A NATION IS MORALLY RESPONSIBLE TO THE WORLD

The foremost task before a religious journal which would discharge the prophetic function, it was pointed out in Chapter Seven, is to build up a world-wide sense of interdependence, fellowship and mutual obligation. Such a journal must help its readers to stretch their loyalties until they belong more to the world than to any single nation. It must persuade them to subordinate the welfare of their nation to the welfare of the entire world community.

Is this mere idealism, a high-sounding goal with no realistic basis in fact? Far from it! The fact that nations are blinded to their interdependence makes it no less of a reality. They are bound up together, deny it as they will. Thus, in insisting that a nation should so act as to promote the best interests of all nations, the prophetic religious journal is not dealing in flimsy idealistic wishes, but is laying down a law dictated by sternest reality. The nation which insists on living to itself perishes, just as the individual who tries to live a completely self-centered life ends up in an institution. The world is a whole, its parts are interdependent; and the nation which defies this truth does so to its own loss as well as to the loss of the world.

To this task -- that of proclaiming the world's interdependence and the obligation of a nation to act for the good of all nations -- The Christian Century has devoted itself faithfully. The present chapter is offered as evidence of that fact.
One of the most forthright statements of this philosophy appeared in an editorial of December 9, 1942, concerning the appointment by President Roosevelt of Herbert H. Lehman as director of foreign relief rehabilitation. Governor Lehman was not only to lead in short-term relief efforts but to organize a long-range program for the economic rehabilitation and stabilization of other nations.

The editorial pointed out that millions of persons in Europe and Asia were short of food, millions of others starving. Moreover, the need would continue till well after the war. Therefore, a program to meet these needs must stretch far into the future and call for a readjustment of the whole international economic order. The general relief program envisioned by the President, The Christian Century warned, might easily be wrecked by the American people. First, they might revolt against the sacrifices it imposed on them. Second, they might fall victim to outworn shibboleths of protective trade and turn against a program which they feared might build up competitor nations.

Striking out against this danger, The Christian Century demanded to know whether any sacrifice could be too great to make for lasting peace. If Americans were ready to sacrifice sons and their comfort for a military victory, should they not be ready to sacrifice only their comfort for a little longer in order to win a genuine and lasting peace? Or would they once more, because of their greed to return to a standard of living shared by no one else, throw away all their hopes for the future? This prophetic voice then went on to say:

As for the fear of raising up competitors in other nations, the lessons of the past twenty years of darkness will have been utterly
lost if we do not see that in the family of nations we are all members one of another, and that as one prospers all prosper, while the ruin or poverty of one ultimately works to the damage of all. Reduced to its simplest terms, the program which President Roosevelt has appointed Governor Lehman to administer is no more than recognition that, in this interdependent world, all the nations go up or down together, and that it is worth such sacrifices as may for a time be exacted of the American people to insure that they go up.1

Probably the most comprehensive statement of this philosophy of interdependence was made in an editorial of August 9, 1944, titled, "The Ethical Nub of U. S. Postwar Policy." World peace, asserted this editorial, was going to cost America something. Peace would have to be paid for, and the United States would have to pay more for it than any other country. Its favored position in the world of nations made this inescapable. Every nation must achieve a new world orientation of its domestic life and national attitude, and the more powerful and resourceful nations must lead the way. What, then, was the price of peace?

Let the answer be in terms of our own country, though it is the same for all countries. The United States must so reorient its national will to the rest of the world that its domestic policies shall be determined not alone by its apparent national interest but also by the effect of its policies upon the welfare of other peoples. . . . Until we are ready to pay that price, all our peace talk is just that -- talk. It deceives nobody but ourselves.2

Here, said the editorial, was the ethical nub of the whole postwar problem. World peace would be impossible without sacrifices, and the time had come for some voice boldly and honestly to say so. Sacrifice, however, The Christian Century went on to explain, did not mean

Note: All footnotes throughout the remainder of this thesis refer to The Christian Century. Volume, page number and date will be indicated in each case.

1 59:1523, December 9, 1942.
2 61:918, August 9, 1944.
the effacement of self-interest. It meant the expansion of the self by the inclusion of the interests of other selves in the orbit of one's own self-interest. To say, therefore, that world peace required national self-sacrifice did not mean the effacement or the jeopardizing of the selfhood of any nation. Rather, it pointed the way by which the worth and dignity and prosperity of all nations might be enriched by the welfare of each, and each by the welfare of all.

It was high time, continued the editorial, that this radical moral truth be proclaimed to the nations, and to none more forcefully than this one. The United States, in its long geographical isolation, with vast resources lying close at hand within its own borders, had developed an egocentric economy and a consciousness of national self-sufficiency which the realities of the modern world would no longer sustain.

We now live in a world whose interdependence stands revealed as its most characteristic feature. We cannot carry over into this interdependent world the economic and political policies and attitudes whose unethical character was long concealed by our illusory isolation. The United States now belongs to the world -- politically, economically and culturally -- and its responsibility in this relationship calls for a new sensitivity to the ethical character of its policies.3

What this involved in terms of practical policies, said The Christian Century, was not the main point at present. The main point was to establish the principle of moral responsibility in the consciousness of a nation which had formed the habit of going its own way regardless of other peoples.

This kind of an exhortation, reminded The Christian Century,

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3 Loc. cit.
could be reinforced with the stern threat that, unless sacrifices were made, the very goods which the nation cherished and strove to keep by its egocentric self-sufficiency would be destroyed by another war.

The picture which the modern world presents clearly exhibits the moral necessity of national sacrifices. No nation can any longer live to itself. Its security cannot be maintained by its own might. Its prosperity can no longer be supported merely by cultivating and processing its resources. Its system of exploiting backward lands for raw materials for its industries is playing out, because these lands are themselves on the way to industrialization. Its tariff walls, which have always been a defiance of the moral law, are now obsolete economically. Only a free exchange of goods in an interdependent world can avoid the economic tensions which in our selfish nationalism inevitably produce war.

In a word, the modern world is presenting itself to the conscience of every nation in a shape which makes the principle of sacrifice so plainly necessary that it almost loses its ethical quality of duty and becomes utilitarian! It is no longer fantastic idealism to appeal to a nation to make sacrifices. It had better -- or else.

Of course these sacrifices would curtail the sovereignty of the United States! But was not sovereignty curtailed by war? Of course peace would be costly! But was it not worth the price, compared to the monstrous price of war? Here, stated once more, was the requirement if another war were to be averted:

A consciousness of world citizenship must be created in the heart of America's common man, complementary to his consciousness of national citizenship. The springs of sacrifice must be opened up in the consciences of the people and the national will given a new direction away from narrow conceptions of self-interest to the welfare of humanity.

The Christian Century draws upon the past as well as the present in order to emphasize this fact that a nation ignores the welfare of

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4 61:919, August 9, 1944.

5 Loc. cit.
other nations to its own sorrow as well as theirs. An editorial of March 21, 1945, pointed out:

No social or political injustice in any part of the world can be without its potential dangers to every other part.... Not many, even of the wisest statesmen, could see that Japan's aggression in Manchuria, or Italy's in Ethiopia, or Germany's in Austria and Czechoslovakia had any sinister significance for their own countries. Yet the common moral judgment of mankind declared that they were wrong. Wise after the event, we now know that an unselfish concern for justice would have paid off in substantial benefits to the nations not directly involved. But because they could not foresee a benefit to themselves, they did not act.

The responsibility of this nation to act for the good of the whole world community was stressed perhaps most strongly in various Christian Century editorials on the need for food overseas during and following World War II. For instance, an editorial of April 10, 1946, urged:

For the sake of the half-billion in Europe and Asia threatened with starvation, the United States should restore food rationing.... Nothing less should satisfy the conscience of a land whose barns and grain elevators are filled to bursting while most of the rest of the world is scourged by the worst famine since the Middle Ages.

This editorial went on to remind Americans of what was happening in Europe and Asia: that food supplies in the British and American zones of Germany were now within a couple of hundred calories of the rations in the terrible Belsen concentration camp, that conditions in France and Italy were far worse than after the First World War, that India was entering what was likely to be the worst famine in its history, that in great sections of China the population was already living on grass and clay. Then, after stressing the picture which the rest of the

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7 63:454, April 10, 1946.
world had of the United States as a land of fabulous wealth and plenty, the editorial proclaimed:

America stands today at the bar of judgment. Our leaders have convinced our people that they must accept the global responsibilities that fall upon the strongest nation in the world. But they think only in political terms. They forget that the responsibilities that go with power apply also and with even greater force to economic power. This too must be held in trust and used for the benefit of mankind. The United States revealed during the war that our capacity for production is fully equal to that of all the rest of the world combined. For the last five years we used that power for destruction. Now we are inescapably involved in a world crisis which requires us to use our unequalled power to save life.

The Christian Century is constantly alert to point out the effects of American policy and actions on the well-being of other nations. How many magazines and newspapers, in December, 1946, were worrying about the effects of an American coal strike on the people of Europe? Not many, it is safe to assume. But The Christian Century was doing exactly that. "In their concern over the effect of the coal strike on this nation's economy," it stated, "most Americans forget that large numbers of people in Europe may suffer much more seriously than ourselves as a consequence of this industrial dispute." Curtailment of shipping on American railroads, it pointed out, reduced food exports. Furthermore, Europe needed 1,000,000 tons of American coal a month to revive her industries. British reconstruction was affected by reduction of steel production here. So dependent was western Europe on the steady functioning of the American economy that there could be no doubt that the crisis, if prolonged, would gravely retard recovery. The editorial concluded:

8 63:455, April 10, 1946.
9 63:1491, December 11, 1946.
What we do not realize is that we hold our great power as a trust for humanity. If we are incapable of managing our own economy so that it functions dependably, the rest of the world will be compelled to do what it can to insulate itself from the devastating effects of American instability.\textsuperscript{10}

When Great Britain devaluated the pound sterling, in September, 1949, \textit{The Christian Century} commented that this action temporarily averted mass unemployment, widespread bankruptcies, cruel reductions in wages, and an already Spartan standard of living. But all that had been gained was a little opportunity to deal with the situation that had created the latest crisis. Britain must now further reduce costs of production and sell her goods abroad, chiefly in the dollar area. Said the editorial, pointedly,

That means here. If our government yields to the pressure that is certain to be exerted for higher tariffs, it can overnight cancel out the gains made by devaluation of the pound. Our people must yet awaken to a larger degree of responsibility for the economic welfare of the free world.\textsuperscript{11}

As these various illustrations have suggested, \textit{The Christian Century} is persistently at work in an effort to build up that sense of world-wide interdependence and mutual obligation which is required today more than ever before. Certainly it is doing its part, as a prophetic religious journal, to create a genuine world community.

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{11} 66:1123, September 28, 1949.
CHAPTER X

MORAL LAW APPLIES TO ALL NATIONS

One of the most important assignments before a prophetic religious journal is to provide a moral anchor outside national life. Too often, modern journalism criticizes the actions and policies of other nations while whitewashing those of its own. The prophetic religious journal, however, must keep men mindful that moral law applies to their own nation just as truly as to others. It must be as quick to point out its own nation's shortcomings as it is those of other nations. It must help readers to see their country through the eyes of other peoples. It must point up contradictions between its nation's professions and actions, thus serving as a sort of national conscience.

That The Christian Century takes this assignment very seriously will be demonstrated by this chapter.

How much journalism today can be credited with any objectivity on the subject of the Soviet Union? Very little indeed. On the contrary, there is a tendency for publications to decry everything Russian and to keep public antipathy toward Russia at white heat. Against such a background, this chapter will hold up illustrations which show The Christian Century applying moral standards impartially to both the Soviet Union and the United States. Here is one journal which neither paints Russia all black and the United States all white, nor the reverse. It gives each nation credit where credit is due, and blame where blame is due.
No member of the Un-American Activities Committee could accuse The Christian Century of trying to glorify Russia, or even of overlooking her faults. At no time has this journal been willing to condone a blameworthy action on the part of the Soviet Union. For instance, an editorial of January 26, 1944, commented on the impending Russian annexations in Finland, the Baltic states and Bessarabia as follows:

"The Russian 'solution' of the problem of Eastern Europe, as the dullest eye can see, makes a mockery of the Atlantic Charter."

Again, after the failure of the conference of foreign ministers at Paris, in May, 1946, The Christian Century blamed Russia for blocking the writing of the peace treaties. It pictured Mr. Molotov as going home smiling, knowing that every added day of delay in arriving at a European settlement meant progress toward the attainment of Russia's aims on the continent of Europe.

Russia, with her armies overrunning east Germany, Austria, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria, and planted on the borders of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey, has only to sit tight, dig in, watch internal chaos mount - and let nature take its course.

But, on the other hand, The Christian Century has been as ready to criticize the United States when the situation demanded it. When in March, 1946, the battleship U.S.S. Missouri was assigned to carry the body of a Turkish ambassador back to Turkey for burial, The Christian Century warned that the eastern Mediterranean was no place for an Anglo-American naval demonstration (the Missouri was to be joined at Gibraltar by a squadron of the British navy) in the present state of strained

1 61:100, January 26, 1944.
2 63:678, May 29, 1946.
relations with Russia.

The fact that we choose this time and this place for shaking our naval fist under Russia's nose is evidence that we have no faith in the United Nations Organization which we helped to launch. . . . That such a demonstration can take place at a time when the Security Council of the UNO is about to hold another meeting strongly suggests that we are committed to a policy of diplomatic double-dealing -- praising the UNO with our lips and following the worst practices of power politics in our actions -- which can only lead to war. Add to this the highly publicized atomic bomb demonstration in the Pacific and you find all the answers that are needed to explain the growing mistrust of American intentions not only in Russia but also in the rest of the world. It is time to call a halt to such sword-rattling.  

There have been occasions also when Russia alone was receiving blame which should have been shared by other nations. In such instances The Christian Century has been alert to point a finger at the other culprits as well as at Russia. When it protested against the continued enslavement by the Allies of over 4,000,000 prisoners of war more than a year after the end of the conflict, it said:

This international outrage is being committed by Great Britain, Canada, Norway, Belgium and France, as well as by Russia. It is being committed with the connivance and help of the United States government, which turned over to several of the countries named hundreds of thousands of prisoners after telling the helpless victims that they were being sent home to Germany. It is being committed in open violation of the Geneva Convention concerning the treatment and repatriation of prisoners of war, in which our national honor was pledged. It is being committed in cynical disregard of the laws of morality and in contempt for future consequences to international peace.

As significant as any of its editorial comment on Russian-American relations has been The Christian Century's advice as to what American foreign policy should be, in the light of Soviet policy. As

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3 65:388, March 27, 1946.
4 65:933, July 31, 1946.
the Moscow conference of 1947 approached, *The Christian Century* urged that the United States replace its negative foreign policy with a positive one. This positive policy should be a democratic offensive, aiming to establish self-government throughout the world in ten years. To do this, the United States should recall world diplomacy to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, to which 47 countries had subscribed during the war and whose basic principles were incorporated in the Charter of the United Nations Organization. This kind of an offensive, the journal pointed out, would do more to deflate the nationalistic expansion of the Soviet Union than anything else. It would give the lie to Russian propaganda that only Russia was anti-imperialist, only Russia favored self-determination, only Russia was democratic, only Russia sought economic justice and opportunity for the little peoples of the world.5

Here, indeed, *The Christian Century* was proposing a type of foreign policy which would be in accord with moral law, since it would mean extending the area of freedom and social justice.

An editorial of May 7, 1947, reflected on the fact that the Allies' alliance had fallen apart. The "one world" of the United Nations was fast becoming the "two worlds" of the victor powers and their satellites. Fear existed on both sides. What, then, lay ahead? *The Christian Century* saw two camps taking form within the United States. One rested on the belief that "only force would hold Russia in check." In the second camp were Americans who believed that these two countries

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5 64:200, February 12, 1947.
could live in the same world without trying to destroy each other. In this second camp The Christian Century ranged itself.

It was well aware of the difficulties: the Russian threat to individual liberty, the grim fate in store for any people drawn or forced into the Soviet orbit, the fact that the Kremlin thought it to its advantage to see non-Communist states in as continuous internal trouble as possible. Nevertheless, the journal had a definite opinion as to what the policy of the United States should be. Again it put forth the essentials of the constructive, affirmative democratic offensive: the bettering of living conditions in all democratic countries; the abandonment of American imperialism; the patient, generous, step-by-step measures necessary to convince others that the United States wanted to advance freedom everywhere. 6

This journal knew well the lessons of history. It realized that military force would never be able to stop the spread of Communism. This could be done only by demonstrating that democracy provided more security, more opportunity, more liberty and more satisfaction than Communism.

In spite of worsening relations between the two countries, The Christian Century's impartiality of judgment has been evidenced again and again. When Americans condemned Russia for its veto of the proposal for a U. N. frontier commission to watch the borders of Greece, The Christian Century admitted that Russia had now used the veto eleven times in scarcely more than a year. But it also reminded readers that

6 64:583, May 7, 1947.
they were wrong in assuming, as was commonly done, that Russia was responsible for the existence of the veto power in the operation of the Security Council and that the United States had opposed and still opposed such a power. Instead, the United States had been as insistent on the veto provision in the U. N. Charter as Russia. Thus, if the veto was now strangling the U. N., part of the responsibility belonged to the United States.7

The Christian Century not only excoriated Mr. Vishinsky for his "cynical and baseless charge of warmongering against Mr. Dulles,"8 but within the same month pointed out that James F. Byrnes' book, Speaking Frankly, justified the Soviet press, from its point of view, in screaming "warmonger." Said The Christian Century, "If Mr. Vishinsky has failed to send Mr. Byrnes a note of thanks for proving the charges he has been making in the U. N. Assembly, he has been singularly lacking in gratitude."9 Two weeks later, the journal expressed its hearty approval when the small nations of the General Assembly began to "tell off" both the United States and Russia. It saw this fact as providing real hope for saving the U. N. and the peace.10

The Christian Century has tried also to help Americans see themselves as they and their nation must appear to Russian eyes. In doing so, it has been free to admit that the views of the Russian people were distorted by Kremlin propaganda and that much of that propaganda lied.

7 64:963, August 13, 1947.
8 64:1163, October 1, 1947.
9 64:1296, October 29, 1947.
10 64:1358, November 12, 1947.
But it pointed out that the propaganda could hardly have been so effective if there were not an element of truth in it. How did America look, then, when viewed through Russian eyes? For one thing, reminded *The Christian Century*, the American navy was dominating the Mediterranean and the American army controlling Greece, so that a large part of western Russia was within range of this country's bombers. The United States was busily setting up other bases in the Arctic, the Atlantic and the Pacific which Russians considered a menace to their cities. Why should the United States persist in this program, the Russians might well ask, unless it were getting ready to attack them?

If Russia had controlled the seas and had ringed the United States with bases as near as Cuba, Trinidad and Newfoundland; if Russia had masked the Panama Canal as effectively as we have masked the Dardanelles, would we say that there was nothing more that Russia could do for peace? Russia, as Ralph Barton Perry points out, 'has not leaped across the seas to Canada, Mexico or the West Indies.' From the Russian point of view, and from that of a lot of other countries, 'if we identify our boundaries with China and the Dardanelles, it looks as though we had wandered far from home,' or gone in for imperialism in a big way.11

Nor was the situation too different in the case of atomic energy. Americans were taking refuge in the fact that their representatives had worked out a generally accepted plan for control which the Russians had turned down.

But have we done all we could? How do the Russians look at it? Russia insists that the first step in atomic control must be to outlaw the atomic bomb and other weapons of mass destruction, after which a treaty may be drawn up looking toward peaceful development. Why not accept her proposal as a means of breaking the deadlock? Why not offer to outlaw atomic warfare in exchange for her agreement to permit full inspection of all atomic installations? And why go on piling up atomic bombs and boasting of their increasing destructiveness if we never mean to use them? . . .

This is the most important issue relating to disarmament. At the cost of nothing more than our present stockpile of atomic bombs we could enlist the moral forces of the world on our side.... We refuse to consider any modifications of the Baruch plan, because we say we cannot trust the Russians -- who have no atom bombs. Why should they trust us -- who have? From the Russian point of view, we are still far short of having done all we could and would do if, concerning atomic issues, we placed the interests of peace above those of power.\textsuperscript{12}

When Yugoslavia's election to a seat on the Security Council in 1949 was being generally hailed as a victory for the United States, \textit{The Christian Century} pointed out another aspect of the situation. Now that the United States had pushed the election through and Mr. Vishinsky had been given another black eye in the Assembly, it asked, what had actually been gained? So long as Russia held a permanent seat and the veto provisions of the U. N. Charter remained in force, the council could do whatever Russia said and not a whit more. Thus it made no difference who filled the nonpermanent seats. So this country's victory had only added to Russia's anger, confirmed the Russians in their belief that America intended to use the U. N. as a weapon against them, and given them a chance to accuse the United States of having broken an informal agreement regarding the filling of council seats. \textit{The Christian Century} wanted to know:

What is gained by this sort of jabbing at Russia? Is our purpose at the U. N. to see that Mr. Vishinsky and his fellow delegates are kept in an ugly mood? Let it be noted that in this instance Great Britain refused to go along with our campaign to elect Yugoslavia. That's worth thinking about. When issues of lasting moment are at stake in our dealings with the Soviet Union, then by all means the United States should take a firm stand. But opposing the Russians simply for the sake of opposing them casts doubt on the dimensions of the minds responsible for American policy.

\textsuperscript{12} Loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{13} 66:1283, November 2, 1949.
As most journalism continues to whip up American feeling against Russia and to insist that the only outcome of the situation can be open conflict, it is heartening to find The Christian Century still devoting itself to the prophetic task of applying moral standards impartially. Both nations, it knows, have defied moral law in their relationships with each other and with other nations. But the answer to the situation, tense as it is, is not to be found in war. That would constitute an even greater rebellion against the moral order of the universe. If the United States opposes Russia's attempts to extend its rule, says The Christian Century, then let the United States work to spread the area of freedom, justice, and well-being among all peoples everywhere. The moral forces of the universe are ranged on the side of this kind of an endeavor.
CHAPTER XI

HUMAN VALUES HAVE PRIORITY

In time of war the winning of military victory comes to take precedence over every other consideration, in most men's minds. The maintenance of a blockade assumes more importance than the welfare of persons whom that blockade is starving. There occurs thus a hardening of heart, a waning of moral insight, and a lowered estimate of the worth of human life. Against these tendencies the prophetic religious journal must fight relentlessly, for it is pledged to insist upon the priority of human values.

The present chapter shows how persistently The Christian Century kept the fact of starvation and near-starvation in other parts of the world before the conscience of America during the 1940's. On no other theme did it speak more emphatically or repeatedly. And, with every word on the subject of food needs overseas, it was insisting that human values had priority. It was planting itself firmly on the side of human need as over against military strategy, national and individual selfishness, policies of revenge, and simple inertia or moral paralysis -- all of which, at some time or other during these ten years -- stood in the way of feeding the starving.

Throughout the first years of the 1940's, The Christian Century concentrated its efforts on an attempt to have food ships allowed through the blockade. In August, 1940, it was quoting Herbert Hoover's prediction that 18,000,000 persons would die of starvation in Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland during the coming winter unless food
supplies were sent from the United States and other neutral nations. It went on to urge support of the program which Mr. Hoover had now proposed for keeping alive civilians in the occupied areas during the winter. No charity was to be involved, as the governments of the countries threatened with famine had both ships and the money with which to buy food. The proposal also called for an agreement with the German government that no part of the American food and materials would be taken by the Germans. (Mr. Hoover himself had testified to the good faith with which a similar agreement was observed during the First World War). Thus the only problem was to get the food through the blockade. 1

The Christian Century threw its wholehearted support behind the Hoover proposals. In editorials long and short it urged their adoption and answered the arguments raised against them. 2 It insisted: "The starvation of 18,000,000 non-belligerent men, women and children of Europe, innocent victims of a war in which they are not involved, is an incomparable atrocity." 3

When, in December, 1940, the British government flatly turned down the Hoover proposals, saying that food could not be let through the blockade on any terms until the Germans had withdrawn from all the territories they had occupied since the outbreak of the war, The Christian Century did not slacken its attempt to get food to the

1 57:1021, August 21, 1940.
2 57:1267, October 16, 1940; 57:1406-8, November 13, 1940; 57:1467, November 27, 1940; 57:1499, December 4, 1940; 57:1543-4, December 11, 1940.
3 57:1543, December 11, 1940.
starving Europeans. It proceeded to point out to the American public other channels by means of which they might aid the victims of war in Europe. Describing the relief work which the American Friends Service Committee was at that very time carrying on, it urged:

The Friends . . . should have the prompt and generous assistance of every American who has not allowed his compassion to be dried up by political controversy in the face of importunate and unparalleled need.4

Three weeks later, The Christian Century was quoting the head of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in an effort to demonstrate that food designated for relief actually did reach those for whom it was intended, instead of being confiscated by the Germans, as was the general fear. Again the journal urged that readers give funds to such private relief agencies as this one and the American Friends Service Committee.5

During the following weeks, The Christian Century called for a restudy of the blockade policy;6 cited an appeal from Norway that children be fed;7 reminded readers of the tragic effects, especially upon children, of the blockade of World War I;8 restated the details of the Hoover plan, answering the various arguments raised against it;9

4 58:44, January 8, 1941.
5 58:139, January 29, 1941.
6 58:211-12, February 12, 1941.
7 58:246, February 19, 1941.
8 Loc. cit.
9 58:281-2, February 26, 1941.
pointed out that the Belgian ration was already down to 960 calories—less than half that necessary to maintain life;\textsuperscript{10} observed that the two shiploads of flour which the British government was allowing America to send to France represented only a drop in the bucket;\textsuperscript{11} and commented that Mr. Churchill's promise to set up a great pool of food for European relief at the end of the war was a far from adequate answer to immediate starvation.\textsuperscript{12}

By December, 1941, the United States itself had entered the war. Did this cause The Christian Century to forget the food needs overseas? By no means. An editorial of February 11, 1942, accused:

While this condition [the suffering brought on by lack of food in Europe] prevails our own nation and Canada have the largest wheat surplus in their history and wonder where they can store their next crop. As our responsibility increases, now that we are a belligerent, our sensitivity seems to decline. The Hoover committee has suspended its public activities to avoid embarrassing the government\textsuperscript{13} and since Pearl Harbor few if any voices have been lifted among the American churches in compassion for Europe's starving.

In April, The Christian Century was striking a prophetic note in an editorial titled, "Feed at Least the Little Children":

The moral degredation of starving your friends as a means of harming your enemy is not an easy thing with which to live. Rationalize it as we will, it simply is not humanly possible to reflect on what is happening to the children of the small democracies of Europe without spiritual misery. . . . If this policy is continued, the result to the world will be an incalculable moral and spiritual loss.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} 58:363, March 19, 1941.
\textsuperscript{11} 58:445, April 2, 1941.
\textsuperscript{12} 58:1228, October 8, 1941
\textsuperscript{13} 59:172, February 11, 1942.
\textsuperscript{14} 59:549, April 29, 1942.
August heard *The Christian Century* repeating that mass starvation in the small European democracies was as unnecessary as it was hideously wrong. To prove how unnecessary it was, the journal referred to the recent departure from Montreal for Greece of three ships laden with 15,000 tons of grain and fifty tons of medical supplies. This shipment, so it was being announced by the Greek War Relief Association in New York, was to be the first of monthly grain consignments to Greece. Distribution was to be handled by the International Red Cross, and safe conduct through the disputed waters of the Atlantic and Mediterranean had been granted by all the belligerent countries. The editorial comment was as follows:

The *Christian Century*, which has from the first insisted that the policy of starving your friends to bring harm to your enemies is indefensible morality and demonic politics, is delighted to see this rift of mercy in the curtain of cruelty which enshrouds the little nations of Europe. What is to prevent this rift from widening until ships carrying food and medicine will regularly reach the other starving peoples of democratic Europe? If food can be distributed in Greece without giving military advantage to the Axis, it can also be made available in the other countries.\(^\text{15}\)

The appointment of Herbert H. Lehman in December, 1942, as director of foreign relief rehabilitation was welcomed by *The Christian Century*. Looking ahead at the long-range program of postwar relief envisaged by the President, the journal urged the American people to accept the sacrifices which the program might impose on them.\(^\text{16}\)

January, 1943, found *The Christian Century* pointing out that even the state department had acknowledged that relief supplies sent to

\(^{15}\) 59:971, August 12, 1942.

\(^{16}\) 59:1523, December 9, 1942.
Greece had not been disturbed. This experiment proved that relief could be sent to the hungry without benefiting the enemy. The journal gladly acclaimed the news that the National Committee on Food for the Small Democracies had reopened its efforts to extend the program now in use in Greece to Belgium, Holland, Norway, Poland and other occupied countries. The success of the partial relaxation of the blockade policy, insisted this editorial, should open the door to its complete revision.17

In March The Christian Century warned that the state of famine or near-famine which had existed for more than two years in some parts of Europe had now deepened and widened to the point where the annihilation of a considerable proportion of the people of Belgium and other occupied countries was threatened. It urged readers to make clear at once to their representatives in Washington their concern that the procedure which was successfully being followed in Greece should be extended to the other starving peoples of Europe. The issue, it said, was quick relief or extermination.18 Later that month, it reminded readers again that the starvation deadline was approaching.19

So, throughout the war years, The Christian Century proved itself a persistent gadfly on the blockade question. Although its pleas were not effective in changing the policy, the journal acted as a genuine national conscience, holding up this issue so that none might ignore it.

When the European war came to an end at last, and the blockade

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17 60:4, January 6, 1943.
19 60:349, March 24, 1943.
question with it, The Christian Century scarcely paused in its efforts to get food relief to Europe. In an editorial of May 23, 1945, it was citing the desperate conditions in various European countries and asserting, "We Must Feed Europe!" It asked:

Is mass starvation to follow liberation in Europe? The answer depends upon the United States. If vast numbers are not to starve, the government in Washington must act quickly to define and put into effect a rehabilitation policy commensurate with the unprecedented needs of a continent in chaos. It cannot act unless those who make up the Christian community in this nation realize America's responsibility and demand that it be met. 20

Before many months, the tragic results of the Potsdam decisions were making themselves evident, and The Christian Century turned its attention to these. In November, 1945, it informed readers that as a result of the Potsdam policy millions of Germans were starving. What was happening to babies, their mothers and the aged, it said, was not retributive justice but murder. In the face of such a situation, churches should act as the conscience of the nation.

That conscience must now speak to President Truman. It must thunder through the quiet corridors of the department of state. It must demand that the United States government order the release of the 200,000 tons of army rations which were sent to Europe for the use of soldiers who have now returned. It must demand that the ban which prevents all relief agencies, including the churches, from sending food or other material relief into Germany, be immediately lifted. 21

In addition, urged The Christian Century, the churches should use their own facilities with far greater intelligence and devotion than they had yet displayed. Every church should be collecting its own share of supplies to send to the Church World Service Warehouse.

A week later, in an editorial titled, "Potsdam Must Go!" The Christian Century enlarged on the appalling consequences of the Potsdam policy not only in Germany but in Poland, Austria and other countries. The Viennese ration, for instance, was now down to 760 calories a day.

Yet at the same time that the Potsdam policy is thus sentencing millions of Europeans to hunger, misery and death, we are told of the extraordinary care being taken to provide protection and transportation to this country for more than two hundred German paintings which we are 'rescuing' from German art galleries! The shipment of these paintings to America, by special train and special boat, while children drop with starvation, is a perfect reflection of the inversion of moral values underlying the Potsdam policy. 22

Here indeed was the authentic voice of a prophetic religious journal! Human values, it insisted, came first!

By March, 1946, the United States government at last officially recognized the world-wide famine conditions and began to urge Americans to conserve food. The Christian Century soon went a step further. For the sake of the half-billion in Europe and Asia threatened with starvation, it said, the United States should restore rationing. "Nothing less should satisfy the conscience of a land whose barns and grain elevators are filled to bursting while most of the rest of the world is scourged by the worst famine since the Middle Ages." 23

In an editorial of April 17, The Christian Century welcomed the launching of CARE and explained how persons wishing to send relief could use this agency's services. 24 A week later it informed readers that government efforts to fill America's overseas commitments of food were

22 62:1344, December 5, 1945.
23 63:454, April 10, 1946.
24 63:465, April 17, 1946.
falling dangerously short, and again suggested rationing as the answer.\textsuperscript{25}

The following week, in referring to President Truman's and former President Hoover's pleas that food be saved for overseas relief, it urged the churches to arouse among their people the necessary sense of individual responsibility.\textsuperscript{26}

On July 31 The Christian Century pointed out that UNRRA was scheduled to wind up its work at the end of the calendar year, but that the famine situation was still acute. What, it wanted to know, would be done to carry on the processes of international aid when UNRRA disbanded?\textsuperscript{27} In subsequent editorials it continued to express this concern\textsuperscript{28}

November, 1947, found The Christian Century still trying to make clear to readers the actual human situation in most of Europe and Asia. Think of the rations of 1500 calories in the British and American zones of Germany, it said, and then turn the picture around and look at the United States.

Look at that full-page picture on page 33 or the November 10 issue of Life and see the mounds and mounds of food which represent the increased eating being done by an average American family of four in comparison with what we ate before the war!\textsuperscript{29}

This was the contrast which America presented to the rest of the world. And as long as it continued, American Christians must face this question: How comfortable, how well fed, how fashionably clothed could a Christian be in a world of such deprivation and not continuously

\textsuperscript{25} 65:516, April 24, 1946.
\textsuperscript{26} 65:550, May 1, 1946.
\textsuperscript{27} 65:931, July 31, 1946.
\textsuperscript{28} 65:979, August 14, 1946; 65:1005-6, August 21, 1946; 65:1204-5, October 9, 1946; 65:1557, December 25, 1946.
\textsuperscript{29} 64:1446, November 26, 1947.
share with those in need?

Even at the very close of the 1940's, with the food situation relatively improved, The Christian Century was still expressing its concern for the world's food needs. In an editorial of November 23, 1949, it urged quick adoption of the new Morgenthau plan for giving surplus American food to people in need in other countries. The United States had on its hands at the time 190,600,000 bushels of wheat, 75 million bushels of corn, 63 million pounds of dried eggs, 87 million pounds of butter, 204 million pounds of dried milk, 16 million pounds of cheese and 48 million pounds of rice. At the same time, 1949 crops were beginning to roll in, and the Commodity Credit Corporation was feverishly trying to build warehouses or acquire storage space in which to put the vast surpluses which the farm price support law required the government to buy. By the end of June the government had paid more than $76 million in storage charges, and storage costs were accumulating at the rate of $237,000 a day. Henry Morgenthau had proposed in the New York Times that this glut of food be given to those who needed it most, especially in the Far and Middle East. The Christian Century expressed its strong agreement, and said it hoped that the President, the secretary of agriculture and the Congress would promptly develop such a program.30

This chapter has shown The Christian Century discharging the prophetic function of religious journalism by keeping before Americans the grave need for food overseas. A relatively small proportion of the journal's statements on the subject have been referred to here, for it

devoted fully one hundred and fifty editorials to this theme during the 1940's. Undoubtedly, some of its readers wearied of the emphasis, yet *The Christian Century* persisted. It knew, after all, that its responsibility was not to cater to their tastes but to discharge the prophetic function.
CHAPTER XII

INJUSTICE IS CONTRARY TO MORAL LAW

It was pointed out in Chapter Seven that the prophetic religious journal is always motivated by a deep concern for justice. Whenever it is conscious of injustice -- whether to an individual or a group -- it raises its voice in protest. Justice, it realizes, is one of the fundamental requirements of moral law.

This chapter shows The Christian Century speaking out against a grave miscarriage of justice: the evacuation of Japanese-Americans from the West Coast in the spring and summer of 1942.

If anyone can name another magazine which protested as loudly and persistently against the evacuation policy, he will be doing well. Certainly The Christian Century was far more vocal than most publications, the majority of which simply accepted the fact of the evacuation because that was the government's policy. But The Christian Century refused to view it as either right or necessary. It saw the situation as "unconstitutional, a betrayal of American traditions, militarism out of legal control and race prejudice run wild."¹

This evacuation of 110,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry, more than half of them American citizens, was an act without precedent in American history: the first time the United States government had ever condemned a large group of people to barbed-wire enclosures. Here was the first event in which danger to the nation's welfare was determined

¹ 65:467, May 19, 1948.
by group characteristics rather than individual guilt. No charges were ever filed against these persons or guilt attested to them. The only test was ancestry. Here was a fundamental betrayal of human rights and elemental justice, and The Christian Century recognized it as such from the first. On March 18, 1942, it stated:

With public passion in full cry and the army command placing 'military necessity' above any humanitarian considerations, the west coast of the United States is about to witness a mass expulsion of Japanese residents which may convert a difficult minority problem into an incurable social cancer. Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt has ordered the evacuation of all Japanese aliens and of all American citizens of Japanese descent from an area roughly one hundred miles wide running the length of the coast.2

The reason given for this action, The Christian Century explained, was fear of sabotage. Maps had revealed that Japanese lived near airports, power houses and other strategic points. The simple explanation that the Japanese had had vegetable gardens on level lands near cities and along streams before airports were thought of apparently had occurred to nobody.

April 29 found The Christian Century predicting that when the war was over Americans might discover that in the early months of the conflict democracy had received its most staggering blows in their own country and not at Pearl Harbor or Bataan. The evacuation of Japanese-Americans, it explained, had deprived numbers of the citizens of this democracy of their constitutionally guaranteed equality before the law.

As this is being written, more than one hundred thousand persons are being moved from their homes in the Pacific coast states to concentration camps in the interior. More than one-half of this number

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2 59:340, March 18, 1942.
are American citizens. They were born in this country and have never lived in any other. ... Until recently there was never any question that they were entitled to the exercise of the full rights of citizenship under the Constitution. In its fifth and its fourteenth amendments, that Constitution provides that 'no person may be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.'

Now, without resort to established legal procedures and without a proclamation of martial law which would suspend those processes, these citizens are being deprived of liberty and are suffering the loss of property. ... On the sole ground of their racial origin they have been deprived of the protection of their constitutional guarantees which have been set up as the inalienable safeguard of every citizen.  

The Christian Century went on to ask how far this sort of thing might be expected to go. What assurance was there that other citizens might not on the same or some other basis have their rights suspended or canceled tomorrow? What happened to democracy when whole blocks of the population might summarily be thrown into segregated classes of citizenship? Eventually the very claim that this was a democracy might be reduced to a mockery. This must not happen, urged the journal. The suggestion recently made by the American Civil Liberties Union should be followed at once. This would entail the immediate establishment of hearing boards, both in the concentration camps and in the prescribed zones, to give each individual citizen an opportunity to establish his right to liberty.  

On June 10 The Christian Century stated that, if there were any passion for justice and fair play in the country, the publication of the Tolan report on the treatment of American citizens of Japanese descent

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3 59:551, April 29, 1942.
4 59:553, April 29, 1942.
should produce a national demand for an immediate reconsideration of the policy so far pursued. Here, in the report titled, "Findings and Recommendations on Evacuation of Enemy Aliens and Others from Prohibited Military Zones," was the whole story of the expulsion of the Japanese from their homes and businesses on the Pacific coast, "told with such attention to detail that all the elements are seen which have been at work to produce a mockery of justice."5 The editorial went on to insist that this whole policy of resort to concentration camps was headed in the wrong direction.

It is headed toward arbitrary arrests, toward the supplanting of civil authority, toward the destruction of constitutional rights, toward the derogation of the courts and toward the establishment of racial discrimination as a principle of American government. It is moving in the same direction Germany moved when it followed Hitler into the infamy of his policy of racial persecution. If the American sense of justice is not dead, it will demand that the direction of this policy be changed.6

Again in this editorial The Christian Century urged that hearing boards be set up to pass on each individual case on its merits. Every person whose loyalty was established by such an impartial hearing should then be returned at once to his home. Especially, said the journal, the churches should bestir themselves to make it plain to the nation that this method the government was pursuing in dealing with its Japanese citizens was not democratic, not in accord with American traditions, not just, not humane, not right.

Within the next few months The Christian Century reminded readers frequently of the plight of the evacuees. It denounced the second army

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5 59:750, June 10, 1942.
6 59:751, June 10, 1942.
order which extended the zone from which American citizens of Japanese ancestry were barred; implied that the plans calling for compulsory labor on the part of employable evacuees would make peons of them; urged that college students in the internment camps be released and allowed to resume their education in the fall; asked why the government, which had now removed all wartime restrictions from alien Italians, did not deal with loyal Japanese on the same terms; and warned of the increasing unfriendliness of the public attitude of the west coast toward the eventual return of the nisei.

The issue of The Christian Century for May 5, 1943, carried a denunciation of Lieutenant General John De Witt, who had ordered the evacuation of the more than 100,000 Japanese-Americans from their homes on the west coast. At the time, he had offered "military necessity" as the reason. Since then, however, it had become clear that factors other than military necessity had been at work. A movement to return some American citizens of Japanese ancestry to the west coast where they were badly needed in food production and distribution was being discussed by the House naval affairs subcommittee in San Francisco when General De Witt came before that body to oppose the proposal. "A Jap's a Jap," he stated. "It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen or not. . . . I don't want any of them. We got them out. They

7 59:877, July 15, 1942
8 59:973, August 12, 1942.
9 59:1044, September 2, 1942.
10 59:1309, October 28, 1942.
11 60:253, March 3, 1943.
were a dangerous element." The General went on to say that he was opposing by every possible means the idea that Japanese-Americans should return to their former homes. "Why," demanded The Christian Century, "should a man who can talk in this fashion be trusted with the absolute power over the constitutional rights of American citizens with which President Roosevelt's executive order invested him?" 12

Finally, on July 15, 1943, it was announced that the government had decided to concentrate in one camp the Japanese and Japanese-American evacuees whose loyalty was suspect and to encourage all others to take up work where their capabilities might be put to good use. Then the camps, with their barren acres and barbed wire fences, would be closed as rapidly as possible. "We are glad that the government has changed its mind," The Christian Century commented, and added, "We still believe that it might just as well have adopted this policy when the Japanese-Americans were first rounded up in the early assembly centers, as we then advocated. . . . But better late than never!" 13

Glad as The Christian Century was to have the way opened for Japanese-Americans to leave the relocation centers, it was alert also to another side of the picture. In an editorial of January 3, 1945, it pointed out that making it possible for them to leave still did not discharge the moral obligation owed by the nation to the Japanese-Americans still in the camps. For the most part, it explained, the 70,000 persons still in the camps were old or were members of families

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12 60:532, May 5, 1943.
13 60:860, July 28, 1943.
who had been made excessively timid by experiences through which they had passed. To them the camps represented safety, and they hesitated to leave them to venture out into an America which they had found none too friendly. The Christian Century warned:

It is time, therefore, for the nation to be on its guard lest an attempt be made to take advantage of the Supreme Court's ruling by thrusting these frightened people out of the camps. No matter what the cost, the nation must continue to provide this shelter and safety as long as the war lasts. And after the war it must see either that the internees are returned to their former homes or that provision as nearly equivalent as possible is made for them. These helpless people have already suffered injustice. Let there be nothing more in their treatment which the nation will regret in years to come.14

In the same issue The Christian Century was to be found discharging its prophetic function in an editorial titled, "Racism in the Constitution." It condemned as dangerous the decision handed down by the majority of the Supreme Court on December 18 in the case of Fred T. Korematsu. Korematsu, a citizen of California, had challenged the constitutionality of the 1942 military order which compelled all Japanese-Americans, both alien and non-alien, to leave their homes in three western states and submit to internment in relocation centers. By upholding the army order, so The Christian Century held, the Supreme Court had now written the legalization of racism into the Constitution.15

In spite of that decision, however, the evacuation policy is coming to be more and more widely recognized for what it really was -- the worst single violation of the civil rights of American citizens in history. Recognition of this was plainly evident in a decision on

August 26, 1949, by the United States court of appeals for the ninth district, which ruled that the renunciation of American citizenship by three petitioners who were incarcerated in a camp at Tule Lake, California, was invalid. In so doing, the court brought thousands of such acts into question, and also raised doubt concerning the deportation by the federal government of several thousand persons who had renounced their citizenship under similar circumstances.

The Christian Century commented that this court's words should be studied by every American. In the course of its ruling the court reviewed the government's reasons for uprooting the Japanese-Americans and pronounced them wrong. It recalled the unnecessary hardships and cruelty inflicted on the evacuees, who were given only five days to dispose of their possessions and report for incarceration; the effect of prolonged imprisonment behind barbed wire on their minds; the living conditions, which, the court found, were worse than in federal penitentiaries; and, worst of all, the effect on the minds of the prisoners of "General De Witt's doctrine of enemy racism inherited by blood strain." In time, the court pointed out, these factors produced a state of mind among the prisoners at Tule Lake which rendered them incapable of thinking clearly or acting freely. Little wonder that about a third of the prisoners renounced their citizenship! Gangs of ruffians also instituted a reign of terror to force renunciation, while stories from outside the camp aided their design. In the face of such evidence, the court decided that these renunciations of citizenship

were null and void. Rejoicing in this fact, The Christian Century went on to urge:

The desire to do justice should also move Congress to provide indemnification to all who lost their possessions and businesses because of the expulsion orders of General De Witt. And it should not stop until the stain of racist dogma is removed from all our laws governing immigration and citizenship.17

This case of the evacuation of Japanese-Americans from the West Coast not only shows a religious journal discharging its prophetic function. It shows too that the viewpoint of The Christian Century, at first so contradictory to the prevailing view, is at last being widely recognized as right. Not always does popular opinion swing into line with moral law so quickly.

CHAPTER XIII

MORAL LAW GUARANTEES THE INSTABILITY OF WRONG SOLUTIONS.

A prophetic religious journal emphasizes the fact that moral law guarantees the instability of wrong solutions. It knows that if a nation attempts to solve a problem by means not in accord with moral law, nothing can prevent the situation from eventual eruption, no matter how long it may take for the smoldering to break through the surface. Only a solution which is right, which is in agreement with moral law, can endure. Yet, in spite of this, men and nations persist in making wrong choices. Thus a prophetic voice is needed to remind them that they are attempting the impossible when they try to apply a formula which defies moral law.

Again and again The Christian Century has proved itself this kind of a prophetic voice. It is the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to show it speaking out against such a "wrong solution": imperialism.

Recognizing imperialism as one of the foremost issues of this age, The Christian Century has done its best to convince readers that it is directly contrary to moral law and thus doomed from the beginning. Imperialism has only been able to persist as long as it has because of the superior technical knowledge of certain nations, and now that such knowledge is becoming widespread it is losing the only prop that kept it in place till now. The Christian Century, therefore, has fought tirelessly against all efforts to bolster this dying evil, and has urged instead the speediest possible progress toward independence for all peoples everywhere.
To read Christian Century editorials on imperialism during the 1940's is to hear this journal insisting, "Can't you see? Imperialism is coming to the end of its rope! Always condemned in the light of moral law, it now is being rejected by history itself." An editorial of February 25, 1942, was significantly titled, "The End of an Era."

It pointed out:

Something more than a city and a naval base fell at Singapore. A whole way of life in a vast portion of the earth, a whole period in history passed away when the Japanese received the surrender of the British general who had commanded 'the Gibraltar of the Far East.' The capture of Singapore by an Asiatic army marked the end of an era. It was the era of white imperialism, of Kipling's 'white man's burden,' of the calm assumption in the capitals of the West and in the port cities of the East that the world is divided between ruling peoples and subject populations which make up the 'lesser breeds without the law.' In one historic hour, when the white flag went up over Singapore, that whole world died. It will never be resurrected.

The editorial proceeded to reflect on that era which had passed. It had, after all -- this period of white empire in the East -- been very brief, -- less than 300 years.

Time enough to extract a few great fortunes, to build a few dazzling trading outposts, to strut for a brief space with a pride of power which even the proconsuls of imperial Rome never surpassed, while teeming populations were held in ignorance, in poverty, in virtual serfdom. During those brief years the social pretensions of the little colonies of white governors, political and economic, soared until the proud peoples of the Orient were forced to accept exclusion from clubs and parks and to come into the white man's presence by an inferior entrance.

So there came the sullen growth of resentment, and finally of resistance: the fury of China's Boxer rebellion, the growth of the National Congress in India, the demand of the Filipinos for independence.

1 59:238, February 25, 1942.
2 Loc. cit.
And all the time Japan was becoming more and more militarized. By 1894 she was challenging China; by 1904, Russia; by 1915, Germany; by 1941, Great Britain and the United States. Japan would undoubtedly be crushed in this conflict, predicted The Christian Century. But she had proved, for all Asia to see, that a bombing plane in Asiatic hands, or a submarine or a tank or a 150-mm. field gun, was just as deadly as in the hands of the lordly Westerner. And, in spite of her probable defeat, if any attempt should be made to reestablish the white empires, the next revolt would be gigantic. It would be the revolt of all Asia.3

When The Christian Century found a statesman who recognized that the imperialist era had come to an end and that the remains of it must be done away with as speedily as possible, it hailed him with enthusiasm. Such a man was Wendell Willkie. When he returned to the United States in October, 1942, after a trip around the world, he made a speech which The Christian Century acclaimed as a battle cry for freedom -- the freedom of all men everywhere. In it he urged the writing of a Pacific Charter; he said Americans must put themselves on record for the orderly but scheduled abolition of the colonial system. True, the liquidation of imperialism could not be accomplished overnight. But all peoples should have some date to work toward, and the guarantee that that date would be kept. He declared that the hundreds of millions of people in eastern Europe and Asia were no longer willing to be Eastern slaves for Western profits. America must help them to become free from foreign domination, free for economic, social and spiritual growth.4

3 59:239, February 25, 1942.
4 59:1344, November 4, 1942.
Let the American people rally to this new moral leadership, urged *The Christian Century*. Such words should not be allowed to echo away into silence.

Only a few weeks later came Winston Churchill's famous speech stating that he had not become the king's first minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British empire. Here was a statesman as doggedly committed to imperialism as Wendell Willkie was committed to the ideal of freedom and self-determination. Here, said *The Christian Century*, was a cloud cast over the prospects for a just and lasting peace. How much reliance could subject peoples place in the promises of freedom made in the Atlantic Charter to all the world when they heard that growl of Mr. Churchill's: "We mean to hold our own"?5

The issue was as sharply drawn as that. Here were two leaders of Allied countries: one who had heard the death-knell of imperialism and was urging his people toward a new world order which would have stability; the other who was digging in his heels in an attempt to hang onto an institution whose instability was guaranteed by the moral forces of the universe. Holding them both before its readers, *The Christian Century* in true prophetic form made clear the choice.

Always *The Christian Century* was alert lest its own nation slip into the imperialist role. By 1943 it was warning the American people against what it called the new isolationism, and explaining that this was the isolation of a new imperialism. It defined this as a belief that the United States could guarantee itself against becoming involved

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5 59:1449, November 25, 1942.
in other people's wars only by building its armed forces to unchallengeable strength and taking over the rule of the world.

Secretary Knox plays directly into the hands of those who are promoting this kind of isolationism when he calls for immediate deals to provide the American navy with island bases scattered all over the Pacific. So does Senator Tydings when he calls for permanent acquisition of the British and French islands in the Atlantic. . . . So does Mr. Ely Culbertson when, in his plan for a postwar federation, he provides for American suzerainty of regions as distant as Malaya. So does Mr. Luce with his 'American century.'6

An editorial of January 12, 1944, was given over to further warnings against American imperialism. Agitation for a postwar Pacific empire under the American flag had been growing rapidly, The Christian Century pointed out. Of course, it was neither presented as such nor recognized as such by the majority of the American people.

But when Secretary Knox talks about securing bases throughout the Pacific which will enable this nation's navy to dominate that ocean for a hundred years, what he means is an American Pacific empire. If any other nation were to attempt it, we Americans would call it by its true name in a minute. . . . And a billion men of color, living on its islands and along its western shores, would be expected to accept such an imperialism without resentment!7

Such an attempt to impose an American imperialism on Asia would make the new world order nothing more than a period of preparation for an East versus West war, warned the editorial.

Two years later The Christian Century was asserting that the people of the United States were caught in a trap -- the trap of imperialism. America was becoming involved in every sort of imperialist intrigue in every part of the world. Sometimes the involvement had to do with oil concessions, sometimes with the supplying of arms and ships

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6 60:320, March 17, 1943.
7 61:40, January 12, 1944.
to a European power for putting down an uprising in a colony, sometimes with the maintenance of a permanent American military mission in a foreign country. Of course, explained The Christian Century, the justification given for such actions was that the United States was becoming involved in all these international complications for the sake of its security. Oil spelled security, air and naval bases spelled security, the restoration of colonial rule spelled security now that the United States had become a Ruling Power.

But the argument that this sort of imperialist adventure makes the United States more secure is an infamous lie. . . . Our only security now is the confidence we can create among other peoples that America is at work to promote world justice. Our imperialist involvements destroy that confidence everywhere.8

Why, asked The Christian Century, should the people of the United States permit their government to lead them deeper into this trap at the very time when the repulsive nature of imperialism was becoming so clear? Did not the involvements already laid bare, and the prospects of more to come, show that it was high time for the common people to call a halt on those who were trying to fashion a globe-circling American imperialism? And the way to get out of the trap was to let American delegates to the first session of the United Nations Organization start immediately to transform the weak provisions of the UNO charter into an international trusteeship system that should take in every dependent area in the world, and should give every people that had been a pawn of empire either immediate independence or an international administration pledged to lead to independence as soon as certain definite requirements in development could be met.

8 63:8, January 2, 1946.
At the time of the San Francisco Conference, The Christian Century highlighted the issue of imperialism by quoting General Carlos P. Romulo, representative of the Philippine Commonwealth at San Francisco. General Romulo had asked where America would be today if those men of 1776 had issued a declaration of self-government instead of a declaration of independence. There was a world of difference, he said. A people might have so-called self-government but still be part and parcel of another government against their will.

His words, The Christian Century pointed out, not only expressed the determination of the Filipino people to attain full nationhood but had a far wider meaning, one which the San Francisco Conference would be well advised to heed. He was framing here the deep convictions of that half of the people of the world who live in Asia.

They want and are determined to get nothing less than national independence. San Francisco needed to hear their demand, for no system of world security will be worth the paper it is written on unless it provides a method by which independence can be reached by peaceful processes. Striking the word 'independence' out of the charter will not root it out of the minds of a billion Asians. They are going to get independence -- nothing less -- before this century has run its course. In siding with the colonial powers to soft-pedal independence as the ultimate goal, the United States has turned against its own past, as General Romulo's citation of the Founding Fathers suggested. Even more important, we have set our national destiny against the irresistible forces of the future.9

Repeatedly the journal made this emphasis. Imperialism could not and would not be maintained.

If the European imperialist powers persist in their intention to restore the colonial system in southeastern Asia and the adjacent islands as it was before the war, the outlook is for trouble -- persistent, growing, world-tormenting trouble. . . . The only thing that can head it off, short of immediate grants of independence, is

to place these regions under an honest trusteeship administration set up by the United Nations Organization, with the avowed purpose of hastening the day of full liberty, and with what Wendell Willkie called 'firm time-tables' to govern progress toward that goal.10

If the European colonial powers were not ready to grant that, this editorial concluded, then they must be prepared for the ugly business of holding these hundred million people in subjection through bloodshed.

As the powers continued to struggle to maintain their empires, The Christian Century continued to condemn them. In an editorial of November 21, 1945, it painted a vivid picture of what was taking place in Java. Here an imperial power, Britain, which had no right to be in Java, was using Indian mercenaries and American lend-lease equipment to mow down a native population whose offense had been a demand for freedom. The purpose was to force the Indonesians back under an alien rule that the alien imperialism, Holland, was itself not strong enough to restore. A "democratic" United States was thus helping to refasten the shackles of imperialism on a major portion of the southwest Pacific. The United States had tried to escape its share of responsibility by asking that the American insignia be painted off the weapons which were killing the Javanese. Meanwhile, the British prime minister talked about his nation's "moral responsibility" to the Dutch. "And what," asked The Christian Century, about British Labor's moral responsibility to the Indonesian hope of liberty?11

When, in July, 1947, it was announced in the House of Commons

10 62:1152, October 10, 1945.
that Britain was about to launch a $400,000,000 program for the development of African resources, The Christian Century wanted to know, "Is socialist imperialism morally better, economically sounder or politically more stable than capitalist empire?" It answered its own question in the negative. The colonial development corporation, being set up to operate on commercial principles, was specifically encouraged to make private profits to the extent of its capacity. Doubtless, the British people would insist that conditions of work in the African possessions should not degenerate into the brutalities which characterized Britain's exploitation of India. But the principal purpose behind the new development, emphasized The Christian Century, was to serve the British people and British industry, not the people and the industries of Africa.

That purpose will serve to hold Africa in colonial servitude. Africans may therefore be expected to suffer the new state of affairs only as long as they are compelled to do so. Unless the new program is reversed and the interests and welfare of the people whose work makes it possible are placed first, the new socialist imperialism will wreck itself on the same rocks of moral principle which shattered capitalist empire.12

There is the emphasis which threads its way through the 1940 issues of The Christian Century: imperialism is wrecking itself on the rocks of moral principle. It was and is a "wrong solution" to the economic problem, and in a moral universe its instability is guaranteed.

12 64:844, July 9, 1947.
CONCLUSION

To summarize this thesis briefly: it contends that the central task facing religious journalism today is the discharge of what is termed its prophetic function. And this, as has been stated, means holding before men those objective moral principles on which any order of life must be based if it is to endure the tests of experience and history. It means interpreting and judging current issues in the light of these principles. It means pointing the direction in which national and international affairs should be moving, as indicated by these principles. It means insisting that no progress can be lasting and genuine so long as it defies the moral order of the universe.

This study asserts that such religious journalism is desperately needed in the world today. Most current journalism is no more than a reflection of the relativism and expediency which characterize this age. Only a truly prophetic voice can point the way out of the chaos into which relativistic ethics have led. And, with the constant increase in military preparation and the invention of ever more destructive weapons, time is growing short. Prophetic religious journalism was never more urgently needed than at the present moment.

Thus it has seemed worthwhile to make a study of the prophetic function of religious journalism, in order to demonstrate that it is valid, that it is required, and that it is exemplified by certain religious journals of today.

One word of explanation should be added. It may be objected that there is too little emphasis on the distinctly religious in this
thesis which supposedly deals with "religious" journalism. There is much talk of the moral order of the universe, but little mention of God. This is quite true, and conceivably it weakens the thesis in the eyes of those who would have preferred more traditionally religious terminology.

Yet the choice was made deliberately. It was made partly in order that the argument of the thesis might stand up in the eyes of all, not the eyes of the religiously-minded alone. No one was to be allowed to throw out these contentions by scoffing that moral law was nothing but a lot of theistic superstition and could therefore be ignored by those with no interest in this realm.

Since moral law is not something mysteriously commanded from on high, but rather is discoverable in human experience, it is as applicable to the humanist as to the theist. It provides a common ground on which the two can meet. The theist, then, may go on to conceive of God as sustaining the moral order of the universe -- as, indeed, this student does. Yet the danger of appearing to give any special privilege to revelation, and the desire to stress human experience as the basis for what is known of moral law have made it seem wise to avoid the use of much strictly theological terminology.

But, no matter what terms have been used to describe it, it is the contention of this study that moral law exists, and that men and nations must at last learn to order their lives in accordance with it. Religious journalism can be of great help to them in this learning process if it will increasingly discharge its prophetic function. This,
and not the copying of secular journalism's techniques, is the foremost challenge it faces today.
A. BOOKS


B: PERIODICAL ARTICLES


C. RELIGIOUS JOURNALS

The Sword of the Lord, Vol. XII, No. 5, February 3, 1950.

D. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS