

WOODROW WILSON: THE PRESBYTERIAN MESSIAH
A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES WHICH SHAPED THE FOREIGN POLICY
OF THOMAS WOODROW WILSON
TWENTY-EIGHTH PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES

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Introduction

This paper will attempt to outline the religious influences that shaped the principles which governed the foreign policy of President Woodrow Wilson. These principles were firmly embedded in the socio-religious thought of the twenty-eighth president of the United States.

This empirical inquiry will also seek to reveal something of the character of Woodrow Wilson.

Woodrow Wilson made the following remarks concerning President Abraham Lincoln: "Mr. Lincoln can only be known by a close and prolonged scrutiny of his life before he became president. The years of his presidency were not years to form, but rather years to test character."¹ This historical examination of the foreign policy principles of Thomas Woodrow Wilson will too begin with a treatment of some of the early influences that formed the ideals and principles of the twenty-eighth president of the United States. These principles must be seen in the context of the calvinist tradition which was a significant part of the life of President Wilson.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born in Staunton, Virginia on December 28, 1856. Thomas Woodrow Wilson was the third child and the first son of the Reverend Doctor Joseph Ruggles Wilson and Jessie Woodrow Wilson. The future president was from Scotch-Irish lineage.² Each of his parents were from families steeped in the Presbyterian faith. His mother, Jessie Woodrow, was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister in Carlisle, England.³ His uncle, James Woodrow, was famous as a modern-minded Presbyterian minister. His grandfather, Thomas, was widely known as a scholarly man of God.⁴

Edwin A. Aldernam, in a memorial to Woodrow Wilson dated December 15, 1924, said:

The world owes a great debt to Joseph R. Wilson; for the son studied under many masters, non-influenced him so strongly has his father who bred in him impatience of dullness and diffuse thinking, a precise sense of world values.....⁵

A strong religious foundation is what Woodrow Wilson received from both his parents; it can be said that Woodrow Wilson was born and reared in the heart of the Presbyterian Church. The youth undoubtedly heard prayers and the Scriptures each day of his life before his father.⁶ His school sessions were opened and closed with prayers and scripture reading.⁷ In this strong religious environment, the heritage of Presbyterianism was transmitted to Woodrow Wilson.⁸ The Princeton University professor Arthur S. Link writes in the volume Woodrow Wilson Revolution, War and Peace that: "the foundations of Wilson's political thinking were the beliefs and ethical values that he inherited from the Christian tradition in general and from Presbyterianism in particular."⁹

The Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson left the Presbyterian pulpit in Staunton, Virginia to become the minister of The First Presbyterian Church of Augusta, Georgia in 1857; it is in this locality that young Tommy Wilson spent most of his early formative years.¹⁰

The childhood of the future statesman provided those basic elements that would fashion his political career. In the home, Woodrow Wilson received a solid education on the subjects of the Old Testament as well as Church politics.¹¹ As mentioned above, Joseph R. Wilson taught his son many of the principles and values that he cherished. William C. Bullitt writes that "Wilson's father was the greatest figure of his youth-perhaps his whole life."¹² A statement by Professor Winthrop M. Daniels reads:

I have never seen filial affection and regard equal to that of Mr. Wilson for his father. It is hard to say whether genuine admiration for the father's ability or unbounded affection for the man himself was the stronger ingredient in the dominant passion."¹³

The large impact of the preaching and teaching of Woodrow Wilson's father left a great spiritual crater upon his son. These teachings of his father stayed with him for the remainder of his life. Never did he doubt the lessons of Presbyterianism. Due comprehensively to his intense religious formation, the young man, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, began to conceive the notion that an intelligent reality outside of himself had chosen him for a great work.¹⁴ Not once did he ever question his faith; at the age of sixteen and a half, 'he exhibited evidence of a grace begun in his heart' and was given membership in the First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, Georgia on July 5, 1873.¹⁵

This brief examination of Woodrow Wilson's early formation has revealed the evidence that his early thought played a very significant part in the shaping of his forthcoming diplomatic activities.¹⁶ The future president believed religiously that he would one day face the verdict of history.¹⁷

The fall of 1875 found Thomas Woodrow Wilson enrolled at Princeton University. As a student, he had difficulty with mathematics and Greek; he was resolved, however, to prepare himself for leadership-to be the leader that God expected him to be.¹⁸

This section would be incomplete without addressing the psychological influence of his religious background. According to the psychologists Davids and Tugg, our attitudes are learned

by observation of our parents. Each day, we see our parents and their actions - we see their attitudes. It is natural for our parents to reward us for imitating them as models.¹⁹ This psychological information seems to apply to youthful Woodrow Wilson. Throughout his life he prayed on his knees morning, noon and night. Like his father, everyday he read the Bible. He believed absolutely in the immortality of the soul and the efficacy of prayer.²⁰ The minister was a leader in the Presbyterian middle class of which the Wilson family was a member. The minister was viewed as the chosen one of God; he would be the interpreter of God on Earth. The Presbyterian minister was everything which Woodrow Wilson dreamed to be but was not.²¹ It was customary for Wilson to view life from a responsible position and with his substantial upper middle class ideology. The great admiration Woodrow Wilson had for his father, the profound sense of mission he held, these factors leave little doubt that his formative years would influence him later on in life.

The subject of the next section will attempt to put forward the evidence (to some, not empirical evidence) that Christian humanism continued to shape his values. It is during his college years that he develops his lifelong scholastic enterprise in the discipline of Political Science. These years will solidify his vision for America and his prophetic place in that vision.

This section spans the thirty-seven years that Woodrow Wilson lived preparing himself academically and spiritually for the solemn responsibility he would be called to on March 4, 1913.

As historians, we have the advantage of the past perfect in making such a statement; Woodrow Wilson, in 1875, did not know specifically what awaited him but we do know, as this section seeks to demonstrate, that he believed he was called to serve in some great public apostolate.

As stated previously, Woodrow Wilson began his post secondary education at Princeton University in 1875. Wilson's education included several institutions of higher learning; these institutions had direct or indirect affiliation with the Presbyterian Church. Wilson took courses in the following schools: Davidson College in North Carolina, the University of Virginia and John Hopkins University.²² During these laborious days in the halls of academia, he developed his particular methodology of getting things done. It was in the midst of his studies that he fostered an enthusiasm for man and he saw himself as their servant.²³

Woodrow Wilson developed an interest for the disciplines of Political Science and History while in college. A vital key in understanding Woodrow Wilson can be found in his philosophy of political leadership. He examined with a critical eye, the life of the social organism. Some students of American political history postulate that Woodrow Wilson's thoughts on the system of the American government were influenced by his close study of British political theorists.

An empirical investigation of the data does affirm the assertion that President Wilson's conceptions on political science, and the American governmental structure in particular, were

augmented by the thoughts of men like Edmund Burke, Walter Bagehot, William E. Gladstone and John Bright.²⁴ From his study of Burke, Woodrow Wilson gained a view of the world as ordered by God and "moved by the tides of the spirit".²⁵ Wilson also assembled his conceptions of democratic self-government from a political ideology advanced by Walter Bagehot in the book entitled English Constitution. Wilson wrote in 1884 that "Bagehot had inspired his whole study of government, particularly by his practical descriptions of government conceived as a living reality functioning in ways only partly accounted for in such documents as the Federalist."²⁶

Another major personage in Woodrow Wilson's life, a man whom he respected as a statesman and as a Christian, was William E. Gladstone. William Gladstone was a leading member of the British parliament during the latter portion of the 19th century. In Woodrow Wilson's eyes, Gladstone was the perfect example of a Christian statesman. In Wilson's mind, Gladstone was the apogee of the wedding of the calvinist tradition and the modern republican statesman. In the April, 1880 issue of the University of Virginia Magazine, Wilson wrote the following in an article entitled "Mr. Gladstone: A Character Sketch":

His life has been one continuous advance, not towards power only-fools may be powerful; knaves sometimes rule by the knack of their knavery-but truth also the while... his convictions have steadily grown towards truth, as the flower grows towards the sun; his character has developed and gathered strength.

Later in the article, Wilson continues by saying: "He entered public life with no experience but in poetical feeling and in

abstract thought, and with no opinions but those of stubborn conservatism in which he had, from his early youth, been schooled by his father."²⁷ In the chapter entitled personal recollections of Woodrow Wilson, contained in the book The Philosophy And Policies of Woodrow Wilson, Raymond Fosdick remarks: "With the exception of Gladstone, probably no other man in supreme power in the life of any nation was so profoundly imbrued by the Christian faith".²⁸ Woodrow Wilson once said of Gladstone that: he illustrated the advance of English public opinion to higher planes of principle and freer, more rational methods of policy.²⁹

Woodrow Wilson agreed with John Bright who postulated that: "political responsibility lies wheresoever truth directs us."³⁰ Woodrow Wilson saw political science as a means to reaching the truth. This truth, for Wilson, rested primarily with the will of God.

Wilson's political ideology held that the growth of freedom in the world was "inevitable". In the American system of government he saw the effectiveness of teachings on Christianity and the power of righteousness and "the impulses and aspirations of man".³¹

Even in the sphere of Political Science, which some believe only is subject to critique by students of that field, principles demand uncompromising devotion. "Principles", as they were viewed by Woodrow Wilson.

The young scholar published his doctoral dissertation, "Congressional Government: an Analysis of the Federal Legislative System," in 1885. This work expressed Wilson's concern

that the legislative branch of the federal government was debilitating to the executive branch.

In the same year that he received the Doctorate of Philosophy Degree in the discipline of History and Political Science, Woodrow Wilson married the daughter of a Presbyterian minister, Ellen Louis Axion.³² Mrs. Wilson was truly a great supporter of and advisor to her husband; an extensive inquiry could be made into their courtship and marriage. Often, Woodrow Wilson told her of his unquenchable thirst for service. She was a loving wife who admired her husband and shared his prophetic vision for America. The remainder of this section of the paper will address Woodrow Wilson's thoughts on the subjects of prayer, the Church and those things which, in Woodrow Wilson's view, constituted a man fashioning his life to its preordained task. These three areas all stem from his profound Presbyterian heritage. From these concepts we will have a character sketch of Wilson the man - a man who would be called to the presidency of the United States. We, in other words, are looking forward to his test of character.

In a religious address dated October 3, 1882, Woodrow Wilson made the following remarks about the Presbyterian Church: "This Church (Presbyterian) has witnessed many changes - the rise of a nation, the birth and death of political parties - it has seen everything change except the search for God."³³ The Church is the bedrock of society; all social and political structures are predicated on the high principles of the Church.

In another speech of Woodrow Wilson, the president writes:

We know that life without something like the standard of the Church is a mere quicksand in which we walk, not only with faltering and stumbling footsteps, but with a sinking sense that we have nothing under our feet.³⁴

That without the presence of the Christian community, for Wilson, there could not exist a social-political community, each is contingent on the other. In the same address, President Woodrow Wilson makes the following remarks: "We ought to bless our Churches. We ought to think of them as the instrumentalities by which these miracles are wrought, these miracles of regeneration."³⁵ The Church is seen as the community of the faithful who have given witness to the Good News of Jesus the Christ. These Christian principles are vital to the whole of society. Being a historian, Woodrow Wilson was very much familiar with the impact that Christianity had made on western civilization. In an article entitled "When A Man Comes To Himself" Woodrow Wilson comments on Christianity: "Christianity has liberated the world, not as a system of ethics, not as philosophy of altruism, but by its revelation of the power of pure and unselfish love."³⁶

All men need to have a code of right and devotion in order to be truly human. Wilson states that Christianity plays a large role in what it means to be a man.

Every thoughtful man born with a conscience must know a code of right and piety to which he ought to conform; but without the native of Christianity, without love, he may be the purist altruist and yet as sad and unsatisfied as Marcus Aurelius.³⁷

The best way a man can know ultimate of satisfaction is by a close adherence to the principles of Christianity; this proposition can be augmented by this statement from Woodrow Wilson:

Christianity gave us in the fullness of time, the perfect image of right living, the secret of social and individual well-living; for the two are not separable, and the man who receives and verifies that secret in his own living has discovered not only the best and only way to serve the world, but also the one happy way to satisfy himself.³⁸

For Wilson, each individual had a specific mission in life - a mission only known to almighty God. America too had a divine mission - a mission to lead the way and to show the world what a great Christian democracy was like. These thoughts were grounded in Woodrow Wilson. Many of his views were founded upon the teachings of sacred scripture. We now turn our attention to the Bible to see how the Scriptures were inspirational to him. Wilson believed that:

In the Bible a saving faith in Christ is represented as ornament and help to the businessman; an unfailing aid to the soldier, who is fighting a just cause; the true dignity and motive for the lawyer, causing him to uphold truth and justice, and always to strive to deal out the law with an equal hand; and above all, as the first requisite for a statesman, upon whom rests so heavy a responsibility, both to God and man.³⁹

The Bible is more than a book but an instrument of God's word. The truths contained within its covers are authentic truths - truths that should guide nations and the leaders of nations.

The example of consecrated men is better than all the books and precepts that the world contains, except perhaps this book I am touching (The Bible) which seems something more than a book. It seems to contain

something more than words and printed pages, because everything in it is as concrete, the men it speaks of are so real, and the truths it utters are so compelling. Read in this air, they are familiar, but they are not redeeming words unless they vibrate beyond the walls of the churches and walk the streets and are seen in the households and are translated into the public life of the community.⁴⁰

In a religious essay dated August 25, 1876, Woodrow Wilson said the following concerning the Holy Scriptures:

At no time can any nation be prosperous whose laws are not founded upon these eternal principles of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, of civil and religious liberty. Above all, in these pages may be found the most perfect rule of life the mind can conceive.⁴¹

Hence, Woodrow Wilson was a deeply religious man; the numerous quotations given here attest to just how deeply a man of God he was. Our final quotation, for this section, addressed the issue of prayer.

I do not see how anyone can sustain himself in any enterprise in life without prayer. It is the only spring at which he can renew his spirit and purify his motive. God is the source of strength to every man and only by prayer can he keep himself close to the father of his spirit.⁴²

We have examined some of the evidence that pertained to Woodrow Wilson's profound commitment to an omnipotent God. We have seen his views regarding the Church, Christianity, the Scriptures and finally, prayer. As a whole, they constitute a picture of Woodrow Wilson, the man. His great faith was essential to his life and they will continue to influence him as President of the United States.

All that has been said thus far has been a preface to Wilson's public apostolate. In an address to some of his fellow students and neighbors on the night of his election to the

highest office in the land, November 5, 1912, Woodrow Wilson made the following remarks:

I have no feeling of triumph tonight, but a feeling of solemn responsibility. I plead with you again to look constantly forward. I summon you for the rest of your lives to support the men who like myself want to carry the nation forward to its highest destiny and greatness.⁴³

He asked all those who had supported him while he was president of Princeton University and as Governor of New Jersey to once again stand with him as he embarked upon the greatest challenge of his life - a challenge to bring the government back to the hands of the people and to propagate the morals and ideals of America to the global community. This latter challenge has been termed by Arthur S. Link "missionary diplomacy." In a book entitled Woodrow Wilson And The Progressive Era (Harpers, 1934) Arthur S. Link uses this term to describe Wilson's Latin American policy. The term, according to Link "is not used in the technical sense", but a foreign policy "motivated by a desire to help other nations."⁴⁴

From my study of Wilsonian principles of foreign policy, I disagree with professor Link. I will employ the term, missionary diplomacy, in the technical sense. My reason in taking such a position is that the evidence suggests that the foundation of Wilson's political thinking was derived from his religious and ethical values which he received from the Christian tradition and from Presbyterian theology.⁴⁵

That which was at the core of Woodrow Wilson - that which was the source of his morality was his deep religious faith.

Woodrow Wilson's faith was shaped and defined by the Calvinist emphasis, that God governs the universe through moral law, and that man and nations are moral agents accountable to God and transgress that law at the peril of divine judgment.⁴⁶ The principles which characterize Wilsonian diplomatic policy are derivative of doctrinal and theological themes embedded in Calvinism. Specifically, these theological themes are a result of the reformed movement in Protestantism. John T. McNeil in the book The History And Character of Calvinism concludes that: "Calvinist have favored and fought for representative government and rejected the various forms of absolutisms."⁴⁷ According to McNeil, the majority of Calvinist have traditionally associated with their faith in the sovereignty of God a feeling for the cause of human liberty, public justice and a strong preference for representative and responsible government.⁴⁸

President Woodrow Wilson is probably the most famous inheritor of the Calvinist tradition whom has made a significant contribution to American political history.

God, in Woodrow Wilson's view, was in charge of history and used people and nations in the unfolding of his divine plan in accordance with his purpose; this makes Woodrow Wilson a predestinarian.⁴⁹ Here I echo the words of another scholar in regards to Woodrow Wilson:

Wilson's great contribution, to history, that while hatred and passions threatened to wreck western civilization, he held high the traditions of humanity and the ideal of justice, and by so doing he helped to salvage them for a future generation.⁵⁰

The conclusion of the previous section centered on the statement that before Woodrow Wilson came to the nation's highest office, the essential elements of thought which governed his foreign policy were determined. In some situations, specific policies had been formulated before he took the presidential oath. At this point, we can say that three elements shaped and augmented Wilsonian foreign policy morality, this he inherited from Presbyterianism, his conception of progress and his socio-religious philosophy.⁵¹ From his vantage point, all nations needed to conform to moral laws. It was his conviction that the modern era was to be constituted and defined on the above mentioned (aforementioned) Christian themes.

The execution of Wilsonian foreign policy was anchored firmly on a consistent body of principles and assumptions. These principles flow from Wilson's thoughts regarding cosmology, ethics, the nature and the objectives of government, and the prophetic role of America in the development of humanity.⁵²

The major principles and assumptions of Wilsonian foreign policy stated in brief are: the principle that all people were capable of self-government, the principle that America had a special mission in the world because, as a people, we were unique, the democratic form of government was the most human and the most Christian, and the principle of the subordination of material interest.

What Woodrow Wilson meant by idealism was the subordination of "material interest" to the superior ethical standards and the reward of moral and spiritual aims.⁵³ A nation should keep its

promises and advance the cause of justice. In Wilson's mind, this principle should bring to a halt exploitation among the nations as well as within them. William Diamond, an economic historian, writes: "for Woodrow Wilson, foreign policy needed to be defined on a principle of moral laws and human rights rather than material interest."⁵⁴ Wilson's principle of idealism was the driving force of his thought in the area of foreign affairs. This principle was timely for at this period of world history, imperialism was at its zenith.

Another important principle in the exercise of Wilsonian foreign policy was his belief in American democracy as the most human and Christian form of government.⁵⁵ In a speech delivered on April 2, 1917, the president sounded this theme for his administration:

We are at the beginning of an age in which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct and of responsibility for wrong shall be observed among the individual citizens of civilized states...we are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind."⁵⁶

Closely associated with this principle was Wilson's belief that all people were capable of self-government. Woodrow Wilson was led to this conclusion from his belief that inherent in all people and nations was the capacity for growth.

There were some serious flaws in Wilson's foreign policy structured exclusively on principles. An example of how general principles can have adverse effects in foreign policy can be seen in the issue of American participation in a far eastern consortium known as the Six - Power Consortium and in the occupation of Veracruz, Mexico by American marines in 1914.

Soon after Wilson settled into the White House, he faced the problem of America's neighbor to the South, Mexico. Applying his assumption that American democracy was a model for the whole world; there was no question in his mind that Mexicans were capable of being trained in the habits of democracy.⁵⁷ On September 2, 1916, President Wilson made the following remarks regarding Mexico:

While Europe was at war on our own continent, one of our own neighbors, was shaken by revolution. In that matter too, principle was plain and it was imperative that we should live up to it if we were to deserve the trust of any real partisan of the right as free men see it. We have professed to believe, and we do believe, that the people of small and weak states have the right to expect to be dealt with exactly as people of big and powerful states would be. We have acted upon that principle in dealing with the people of Mexico.⁵⁸

Like many of the other smaller nations of the world, Wilson addressed the people of Mexico with the belief that they could be fitted for self-government. Wilson had an authentic concern about Mexico - a concern not predicated on dollar diplomacy.

In these circumstances the people and the government of the United States cannot stand indifferently by and so nothing to serve their neighbor...The United States does not wish to see utter ruin come upon Mexico. It is the solemn duty of friends to lend any aid they properly can, to any instrumentality which promises to be effective in bringing about a settlement which will embody the real objects of the revolution-constitutional government and the rights of the people.⁵⁹

According to some historians, the April 24th, 1919, invasion of Veracruz was a misguided decision of Woodrow Wilson predicated upon simplistic ideals and not on rational and reflective evaluation. The objective of Wilson was to show Mexico the goodness of democratic self-government. The president's objective could only

be realized by the Veracruz invasion and the defeat of Mexico's president Huerta.

Another example of the adverse effects of Wilsonian foreign policy, predicated exclusively on religious principles, can be seen in the issue of the Six - Power Consortium. The consortium was organized in 1911 to provide capital to the government of China.

Wilson developed the idea, from sound evidence, that Europeans and the Japanese were "scheming" to subvert China's sovereignty and gain control over their domestic affairs of a budding democracy.⁶⁰

Wilson reasoned that the American government was the great moral force in the world, this idealism led him to ponder upon what the United States should do in this situation. Imperialism was an attack against democracy and therefore morally wrong, he decided to withdraw the United States from the consortium and offer aid to the Chinese in another manner - a manner which was in accord with morality.⁶¹ This reason was, in itself, logical

but the result of this "moral decision" was not in the best interest of the Chinese. Arthur Link informs his readers that:

...The Chinese situation in 1913, domestic and external, could not be encompassed by a few moralizations that ignored the unpleasant realities...

From Link's research, he makes the following conclusion:

"...Chinese sovereignty was well nigh a fiction, that there was no Chinese democracy and China really needed the capital."⁶² The American withdrawal resulted in the collapse of the consortium, the western powers failed to give the much needed capital to the weakened Chinese government. These series of events came about precisely at the time when the Japanese inaugurated their drive to control their continental neighbor.⁶³

In summary, we can say that all of Woodrow Wilson's principles and assumptions which governed his foreign policy extended from his thoughts regarding the nature of man and his socio-religious philosophy. Those fundamental principles of self-government, democracy as the most Christian form of government, the belief that America had a unique mission to the world and his principle of idealism - the subordination of material interest would stay with him throughout his two terms as America's chief diplomatist. It was these principles which guided him in the period of American neutrality; they guided him during the duration of the "war to end all wars" and it was these principles which helped foster the famous fourteen points which included the League of Nations.

For Woodrow Wilson, his greatest test of character did not take place between himself and the Germans, nor the negotiations

in France which led to the signing of the Versailles Treaty; Woodrow Wilson's greatest battle occurred within the United States with the Congress. The battle for the League of Nations was much more than a fight over a treaty but for Thomas Woodrow Wilson, it was a holy war!

The fight for the League of Nations was more a test of character for Woodrow Wilson than America's entrance into the war. America's entrance into the war can be seen associated to America's sense of mission. World War I, from the vantage point of America's chief executive, was the final great struggle for international moral righteousness - this was a righteous battle for the Lord.⁶⁴

In the great domestic struggle for the League, Wilson's beliefs were put to the supreme test. The League was not, for him, an item of political or social advancement, rather the League was that great organization which, by divine providence, Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born to bring to human history. The argument can be made that his whole life was in preparation for this solemn task. The Versailles Treaty, especially the League of Nations, was Wilson's great verdict of history.

It was the League which would promise life and peace among nations instead of aggression. Wilson believed so deeply in the League of Nations and his providential mandate that he would not accept any changes to the covenant, especially Article X. The Congressional forces which were in opposition to the League, the irreconcilables, he felt were working against God. It was his final and greatest task as leader of a blessed nation to bring

this organization into existence. In the event that the League would not be ratified he once told an audience:

Why, my fellow citizens, nothing brings a lump into my throat quicker on this journey I am taking than to see the thronging children that are everywhere the first, just out of childish curiosity and glee, no doubt, to crowd up to the train when it stops, because, I know that if by any chance we should not win this great fight for the League of Nations it would be their death warrant. They belong to the generation which would have to fight the final war, and in that final war there would not be merely seven and a half million men slain. The very existence of civilization would be in the balance.⁶⁵

The League of Nations was the last of his fourteen points for peace which he offered to the Germans towards the end of the war. On January 8, 1918, the president delivered his famous Fourteen Points address to a joint session of the Congress of the United States. In this address, President Wilson said that we were fighting for open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, breaking of economic barriers, the reduction of armaments, fair adjustment of territorial claims, and finally an association of nations to guarantee peace.⁶⁶ The future of humanity, Wilson believed, rested upon the ratifications of the League of Nations. "Dare we reject it and break the heart of the world?" Wilson implored. The League was not a treaty constituted by the actions of men but by the divine plan of God. This tenacious conviction is shown by the following remarks of the president:

The stage is set, the destiny disclosed. It has come about by no plan of our conceiving, but by the hand of God who led up into this way. We cannot turn back. We can only go forward, with lifted eyes and freshened spirit, to follow the vision. It was of this that we dreamed at our birth. America shall in truth show the way. The light streams upon the path ahead, and nowhere else.⁶⁷

The League of Nations was a moral issue - an issue which he was convinced was in the best interest of America and for all humanity.

He vowed to fight the opposition in the Congress. "I am going to debate this issue with these gentlemen in their respective states whenever they come up for re-election if I have breath enough in my body to carry on the fight...And I will get their political scalps when the truth is known to the people."⁶⁸

Wilson made the tragic decision to take the League of Nations fight to the American public. He made this issue a matter of public referendum. Wilson was not worried, for him there was a moral issue involved and the American people would make the Congress hold to their high moral principles.⁶⁹

Against the advice of his personal doctor, Doctor Grayson, he embarked upon an extensive campaign tour - a campaign for the League of Nations. The president during this tour suffered from physical exhaustion and headaches. After a speech he made in Cheyenne, the president said to his wife (Woodrow Wilson's second wife, Edith Bolling Wilson, his first wife having died) I have caught the imagination of the people...They are eager to hear what the League stands for; and I should fail in my duty if I disappointed them.⁷⁰ Obviously, the president, during that direct appeal to the electorate, spoke with passion and conviction. President Wilson also spoke with a voice of prophecy:

I can predict with absolute certainty that within another generation there will be another World War if the nations of the world do not concert the method by which to prevent it.⁷¹

On the night of September 25, 1919, Woodrow Wilson suffered a physical collapse, the doctor's diagnosis was Arteriosclerosis and Thrombosis. For some time after his attack, the president was physically incapacitated. Testimony from many scholars affirm that Mrs. Wilson probably acted as a regent to her husband at this time.

On March 19, 1920, the League of Nations Treaty was voted down in the Senate of the United States Congress. Soon after being informed the news of the treaty defeat the president told those with him in the White House that he was going to bed. On the morning of March 21, 1920, the president called for his doctor; the president asked Doctor Grayson to read from St. Paul's Second letter to the Corinthians:

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.

The president then turned to his doctor and said, "Doctor, if I were not a Christian, I think I should go mad, but my faith in God holds me to the belief that he is in some way working out His own plans through human perversities and mistakes."⁷²

Some historians believe that with the death of the League of Nations on March 19, 1920, the death warrant for the twenty-eighth president of the United States was signed. Wilson made an attempt to gain the democratic nomination in 1920 but was unsuccessful; the remainder of his presidency was both empty and sorrowful. Many of his closest advisers were no longer welcomed at the White House. On March 4, 1921, Warren G. Harding, a republican, became the twenty-ninth president of the United States.

Woodrow Wilson was a broken man. He retired to a house on S Street in Washington D.C. It was the purpose of this seminar paper to outline the foreign policy principles of Woodrow Wilson and to address how these principles reflected Wilson, the man. I believe this paper has adequately answered the question.

Principles and ideals were the great driving force in Thomas Woodrow Wilson's life. The Reverend Joseph R. Wilson would be proud of his first son. A few days before his death Wilson addressed an assembly of well-wishers that had gathered outside his home on S Street. In this final address, we see how important principles were for Woodrow Wilson. We also hear the last cry of the Presbyterian messiah:

I am not one of those who have the least anxiety about the triumph of the principles I have stood for, I have seen fools resist providence before, and I have seen their destruction, as will come upon these again, utter destruction and contempt. That we shall prevail is as sure as that God reigns.⁷³

Woodrow Wilson predicated his life and his presidency upon Christian principles and morals. He is but one of a long line of presidents since George Washington who articulated a political religion.⁷⁴

Conclusion

The Wilsonian principles of foreign affairs were as follows:

1. All nations were capable of establishing a democratic self-government.
2. Democracy was the most Christian form of government.
3. The United States had a missionary apostolate to the world community.
4. Idealism, the subordination of material interest for higher moral-ethical interest must guide the actions of nations.

These four principles were the progeny of the Calvinistic theological themes which Wilson inherited from Presbyterianism. We have examined some of the religious and political influences which shaped and determined the actions of the chief executive of the United States from 1912 to 1921. These religious influences were the preempt force in his life. He believed that he was called to a great prophetic mission; this mission was directed from the White House and was the work of America's chief defender of the Constitution.

FOOTNOTES

1. Harley Notter. The Origins Of the Foreign Policy of Woodrow Wilson (Russel and Russell, Inc., 1965), p. 3.
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