

# George W. Truett in World War I



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***George W. Truett is one of the most prominent voices ever to have served in the Southern Baptist Convention. Further, he was a renowned member of the Baptist World Alliance. Most Baptists across the globe knew of Truett and his First Baptist Church of Dallas. When the Second World War broke out, Truett played a pivotal role in shepherding his congregation and arguing for U.S. intervention in Europe.***

What made Truett unique was that he experienced the First World War himself. He was part of a select group of chaplains who served his nation and the Allied cause. Truett firmly believed that democracy correlated to religious freedom. In fact, he taught that it was worth dying for.

An examination of Truett's sermons makes it evident that the war shaped much of his later ministry, including his position on World War II. He frequently mentioned his service in Europe. Moreover, he contrasted his experiences in WWI to those of WWII. A plethora of information remains on Truett and his theological teachings, but this article will focus on Truett and his service in WWI. Of importance is the fact that Truett justified U.S. intervention to promote liberty, a concept he connected to Christianity.

Chaplains have played a role in U.S. military engagements from the Revolutionary War to its most recent conflicts. World War I was

no different. At the calling of General John J. Pershing and President Woodrow Wilson, Christian leaders such as Truett served alongside their countrymen in the greatest conflict the world had yet seen.

### **The War and George W. Truett**

The Great War, often referred to as the “war to end all wars,” lasted from 1914 to 1918. Shockingly, the Central Powers, led by Germany, faced three of the “greatest powers in the history of the world: Britain, France, and Russia.”<sup>1</sup> Historian Williamson A. Murray remarks on the war: “The failure of diplomacy in July 1914 brought on the great conflict feared by some and welcomed by many.”<sup>2</sup> The U.S. stayed true to its isolationist reputation, refusing to enter the war until 1917. The addition of U.S. troops arguably pushed the Allied forces to victory, as many believed Germany was destined to win the war in 1918.

Over “70 million men served in the Great War,” and by its end the casualties were enormous; sadly, “9 million men died in service, most in their teens or younger twenties.”<sup>3</sup> The population in Europe changed dramatically as women outnumbered men on a scale never seen before. Some of the largest death tolls came from France, where 1.3 million died; in England, 700,000 died, and of course, in Germany, 2 million were killed.<sup>4</sup> To put in context the disturbing number of casualties, “almost half of Australia’s eligible men volunteered for service.”<sup>5</sup> One-third of them were severely injured, and “one-sixth of them died in combat.”<sup>6</sup> The war to end all wars shed blood unlike any other conflict seen before and left countless souls longing for hope and answers. Moreover, “the educated elites and philosophers” of the time remained baffled at how a civilized Europe could produce such turmoil. Philosophical questions remained, most earnestly, “The Problem of Evil.”

Truett, educated at Baylor University, accepted the “call to preach” at the First Baptist Church of Dallas in 1897. By that time, he had previously served as a “student pastor and financial fundraiser.”<sup>7</sup> Credited with taking Baylor out of financial debt, he was an intellect with an impressive mind. Furthermore, he became well-known among prominent Southern Baptists and frequented state and national conventions. He was known to be “academically developed, financially responsible, well-read, and maintained a great capacity for work.”<sup>8</sup> Upon graduation, he was one of

the commencement speakers and admittedly recorded that he “thought he would live and die in the Waco area.”<sup>9</sup> Yet Truett was about to start a journey that created one of the most well-established churches in the history of America. Truett became one of the leading Baptist theologians in the world and grew his Baptist church to record numbers. However, his military service in the prime of his preaching years shaped him more than he most likely ever thought it would, as he saw the face of evil head-on in a manner most preachers never would.

### **The Call**

According to the late Truett biographer Powhatan James, “Truett was one of the most outspoken ministers in the nation regarding his support for the war overseas.”<sup>10</sup> He was known for his love of democracy and his “Baptist love of freedom.”<sup>11</sup> In the summer of 1917, Truett began preaching to “National Guard mobilization camps.”<sup>12</sup> This was in addition to his regular duties as the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, where had been serving for twenty years.<sup>13</sup> The First Baptist Church staunchly supported the war efforts, opening up their church to military registration.

In the spring of 1918, Truett, selected by President Woodrow Wilson, was one of twenty ministers offered an opportunity to travel overseas and preach to military men serving in Europe.<sup>14</sup> Truett pondered the offer, eventually accepting the invitation. Preaching to his congregation, he shared:

My decision is reached—and it is that I should go for some months, to the armies at the front, to seek to the utmost of my strength to enhearten them as soldiers for all humanity. God help me—I can do nothing else but go, and go with my whole heart.<sup>15</sup>

The fifty-year-old Truett committed to an overseas mission. Truett “took out an \$800 loan to finance his journey.”<sup>16</sup> When his church discovered this, they “provided \$1,000 for his expenses.”<sup>17</sup> While he would not be engaged in active combat, the dangers of war remained. One must also ponder the difficulties of agreeing to such service at fifty years old in 1918. Church Historian Leon McBeth explained his responsibilities:

Actually, Truett was not a chaplain in the modern sense of being formally inducted into the Army. The American armed forces at that time had no formal chaplaincy division. The American clergymen appointed by the President of the United States, and who wore the American uniform, were sponsored by the YMCA.<sup>18</sup>

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was not new to warfare. Once the United States entered the war in Europe, two organizations were immediately activated, the American Red Cross and the YMCA. The YMCA had a stellar reputation for its service to men in battle. With permission from President Wilson, the organization deployed camps and sites throughout the nation, seeking to reach men mobilized for combat. Additionally, the YMCA organized the overseas missions where chaplains deployed.<sup>19</sup>

With Truett departing for Europe in 1918, the Southern Baptist Convention and local Texas publications such as the *Dallas Morning News* assured the public they would provide regular updates on his service. During the SBC annual convention, Truett noted that the Christian body needed “to support the President of the United States, to respect the democracy of the nation, and serve the American men heading into conflict.”<sup>20</sup> Most importantly, he declared:

We must do our best—nothing short of our best—to see that our youth, the finest flower of the young manhood of our land, going forth to new perils and privations, in strange lands, and amid many temptations, have offered to them all the comforts and hopes of the religion of Jesus Christ.<sup>21</sup>

Christian leaders such as Truett knew souls longed for hope with the nation at war. If they had one duty, it was evident—to share the gospel of Jesus Christ to all ears who would hear. Likewise, he encouraged his fellow Christians to “support the war efforts by purchasing war bonds.”<sup>22</sup> Church historian Leon McBeth, in his biography of the *First Baptist Church of Dallas*, noted, “Although Truett personally abhorred the necessity of war, he came to believe that the advance of Christianity in the world depended on winning the war against Germany.”<sup>23</sup> This notion was nothing new, as Americans long connected freedom of religion to democracy. From the influence of the Great Awakening on the American

Revolution to the Christian character of both the Union and Confederates during the Civil War, Americans historically believed ultimate liberty came from freedom of religion found in Jesus Christ. What society knew in 1918 was that totalitarianism was at odds with freedom. Truett urged his congregation to support “democracy over autocracy.”<sup>24</sup>

Truett believed he had a Christian duty to accept the call to serve overseas. Notably, he was a believer who strongly believed in the sovereignty of God. Truett held firm to the belief that God’s will was for him to make the journey to further the gospel mission to those in need. He had the support of his congregation, city, and denomination. The journey made an everlasting impact on Truett and many of those whom he reached.

### His Service

Arriving in England in August 1918, Truett immediately went to service. The journey was difficult; nevertheless, he found himself visiting and ministering to both “Canadian and American servicemen.” In one letter to his wife, he shared how he “consoled one nineteen-year-old boy” and how the young man “clung firmly” to him.<sup>25</sup> In another instance, he wrote:

Tonight I spoke in a hospital—Canadian—that has some American boys. The chapel, holding perhaps 1,000, was packed, and oh, they did give me such a welcome, some with only one hand, some with one foot, and some with one eye, etc. Never, never can I get away from the impressions of such a visit. I saw them unloading a train-load of new arrivals of wounded. The sight of it all is seared into my brain, I think, forever.<sup>26</sup>

Upon arrival in Europe, the pastor immediately experienced the horrors of war. In a letter originally published by the *Dallas Morning News*, Truett alluded to the “bravery of the Allied servicemen,” and remarked, “It is impossible for me to convey to you my emotions as I see them unloaded from the hospital trains, just from this front. This sight I have witnessed again and again.”<sup>27</sup> He added, “I thus observed recently women and little children tenderly put flowers in their (soldiers) hands or on their cots. The sufferers lifted the flowers to their lips, or if they could not

do that, they smiled from their pale and often bandaged faces."<sup>28</sup> Truett was experiencing sights he had never seen before, the brutalities of war undoubtedly impacted him. As a Christian, Truett knew the reality of darkness, and he viewed the ramifications of war as nothing less than evil on earth. Nevertheless, the imagery one experiences in warfare unequivocally alters the mind and soul. In such circumstances, Christians often find that the blood of Christ and the teachings of the gospel provide answers to the horrors of war.

Truett's military service focused on the opportunity and urgent task of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. He believed there was no better weapon or protection to take into battle than faith found in Christ. In one encounter, *The Houston Post* shared a story where soldiers chose a Bible message (sermon) over screen entertainment:

Dr. George W. Truett was in a great throng of 15,000 soldiers in a building equipped for moving pictures and other forms of entertainment. At the suggestion of a soldier, a vote was taken on the matter and three out of that host of men voted for the moving picture show that day, but the thousands of men asked for a gospel message and responded to its invitation.<sup>29</sup>

Truett's invitation declared:

There are many blessings we fail to receive because we do not comply with the terms and many duties we neglect and do not perform only because we do not realize the opportunity. Lift up your gales, open the doors of your hearts make free a way for the king of glory to come in. The blessings of God will flow through your own hearts to others, and through Jesus Christ a place in the glory of the Father is in reservation for you.<sup>30</sup>

His popularity crossed the sea from Dallas to Europe. Soldiers did not just seek his compassionate counseling, but they seemed to earnestly listen to his gospel message. Truett's spiritual guidance apparently impacted many soldiers' lives. In a letter to his father, the church leader shared he was in "Ireland in October 1918 getting ready to cross the channel to France."<sup>31</sup> Living among the soldiers headed to France, he noted, "One day I preached to some 15,000, and hundreds that day gave their decision for the upward way."<sup>32</sup> Further, he shared:

Have already seen and spoken to tens of thousands of the fine men. Everywhere the most cordial welcome has been accorded to me, both by soldiers and civilians. And while I am hurriedly going here and there seeing soldiers, the sights and scenes daily observed are of surpassing interest. There could not be a dull moment in such a situation as I am daily meeting. In a few days I must cross the Channel to France.<sup>33</sup>

Truett concluded his letter by sending his prayers to Dallas, that "God may guide and keep them safe and well, and that He may enable me in this great journey overseas to do His will wholly and continually."<sup>34</sup>

In a letter to his wife, Truett shared an encounter he had with a British doctor:

I talked to one great British doctor, who was for ten months a prisoner in the Hun country, and though his sufferings and provocations and the cruelties he suffered were awful, yet he laughed heartily about how he used to lie helpless and cuss and pray alternately, and how he would sometimes turn loose and roar with laughter. He lost a leg, but he said he would make out all right with his wooden leg. When we parted, he said, "I am having a jolly good time all the time, just to be back home and to be able to help others." That is the spirit I find everywhere.<sup>35</sup>

Truett remained encouraged by the morale of the Allied forces. Furthermore, ministering to the wounded troops and experiencing the horrors of war from the hospital visits only prepared him more for his ultimate journey to France. With every trip to minister with wounded soldiers or visits to troops mobilized for combat, a common occurrence ensued: the Allied forces appeared united and eager for ultimate victory.

Most people expected the war to end soon due to the large organized Allied armies consistently being shipped to France with continuous reinforcements. This came true shortly after Truett arrived in Europe. Nevertheless, he experienced a close encounter with death himself. Leon McBeth notes, "Perhaps the closest call to danger that Truett experienced overseas was on his return from Ireland to England. The steamer on which he had a passage, and on which his luggage was already placed, sailed before Truett could come aboard. It was sunk by a German submarine, and Truett's luggage still rests beneath the sea."<sup>36</sup>

This killed some “520 persons, including women, children, and several Americans.”<sup>37</sup> Truett later remarked that he interpreted this as another act of God demonstrating His sovereignty and will that the late preacher must continue in his work and preach the gospel of Christ.

The pastor did make the trip just a few days later and lived up to his reputation of being a man of Christian character. McBeth added, “Whenever Truett met an American soldier long enough to talk, he always wrote to that boy’s parents to report on his welfare.”<sup>38</sup> One such letter came to Mrs. J. W. Nix and read, “I recently talked with your son Claude and am happy to tell you that he is well and is getting on fine in every way.”<sup>39</sup> A similar letter was transcribed to the parents of an officer in the Army:

It gave me keen pleasure I assure you, to see and be with your son Lt. Y.J. Mulkey, and to know first hand of his splendid and praiseworthy record. I counted it a privilege to give him all the cheer and strength that I could, even as I shall count it a privilege to pray that God may graciously guide and bless him always.<sup>40</sup>

During his military tour, Truett met with thousands of soldiers and sailors, an experience he never forgot. Throughout his time in Europe, Truett often traveled around England, France, and, when the war ended, to Germany. He spent months visiting the sick, ministering to the soldiers, and meeting high-ranking officials such as General Pershing. Of Pershing, he noted:

His men both respect and love him. It is not at all surprising when one comes into close contact with him. He is a very genuine man, and like every true Gentleman, he is nobly considerate of all those who are about him. He is a delightful conversationalist.<sup>41</sup>

One particular message Pershing made to the troops stood out to Truett:

Hardship will be your lot, but trust in God will be your comfort. Temptation will befall you, but the teachings of our Saviour will give you strength. Let your valor as a soldier and your conduct as a man be an inspiration to your comrades and an honor to your country.<sup>42</sup>



Truett was in Paris by November, when the war ended.<sup>43</sup> In France, he had the opportunity to practice his French, which he had been studying on the long trip from New York to England. Truett shared the gospel of Christ with soldiers and civilians at every opportunity. While in France, Truett was asked to stay an additional “three months and to minister to the American service members in occupied Germany.”<sup>44</sup> Ultimately, he longed for home and agreed to extend his “service another month.”<sup>45</sup>

It was not only in Europe and Texas that Truett’s teachings reached homes. In November, New York State Headquarters shared the following message from Truett on the Allied victory:

Our multitude of sailors and soldiers overseas constitutes an incomparable challenge to patriotic and religious forces in America. These men now face the gravest test of victory—demobilization and readjustment—and urgently require the wisest and worthiest spiritual guidance. Less than our best is unworthy of our men, of our country, of our opportunity and of our God, who has saved civilization. The hour is here when America should dedicate her utmost for making a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.<sup>46</sup>

Truett concluded his service in Germany, living with “a German family where the housewife placed fresh flowers in his room daily and baked cakes as was the custom for a guest.”<sup>47</sup> He continued his work among the American troops stationed in Germany, about which one soldier remarked, “We like these Germans more than any other people we’ve met on this side of the big pond.”<sup>48</sup> Powhatan James wrote, “It appeared that Germans were doing everything in their power to make a good impression on the Army of Occupation and thereby counteract some of the propaganda of war days which had portrayed them as a very heartless people.”<sup>49</sup> Departing from Germany, Truett planned to make his final visits to France before returning home.

### **The End of Service and Reflection**

Having spent Christmas Day in Germany, Truett was ready to return home to Dallas. He served out his agreed servitude of six-to-seven months and made his last dinner party with “French civil and military leaders, none who were Baptist.”<sup>50</sup> Led by his convictions, he declared the following:

Gentlemen, we Baptists believe in the competency of the individual in all matters pertaining to the soul. We hold neither priest nor ecclesiastical hierarchy, nor state, nor magistrate, nor any other human agency has the right to dictate to the individual soul in matters spiritual. We conceive religion as being a personal, individual, voluntary and spiritual relationship between a man and his Creator and Saviour. In our scheme of things there is no room whatsoever for coercion, or the use of physical force, in the realm of religion. For example, Gentleman, I am a Baptist and would rejoice to see men everywhere voluntarily accept the tenets of my faith, because I sincerely believe those tenets to be in harmony with the revealed truths of God; but if by the pressure of the weight of my little finger I could physically coerce every person in the world to become a Baptist, I tell you frankly and truthfully, I would withhold that pressure, even of the weight of my little finger. Religion must be free. The soul must have absolute liberty to believe or not to believe, to worship or not to worship, to say, "Yes" or "No" to God, even as that soul, and that soul alone, shall dictate. Every true Baptist in the world—and there are millions of them—would take the same stand that I take on this matter, because they believe, and I believe, this to be a clear teaching of the New Testament as to religious freedom.<sup>51</sup>

This speech summed up Truett's beliefs on the war. His belief in freedom for all correlated to his Baptist message, which he earnestly defended and thought produced religious freedom of salvation in Jesus Christ. The leaders of the free world long taught that totalitarianism leads to the persecution of Christians. This rang true to him from the ancient history of the Roman Empire to today's communist and authoritarian governments. Once he returned home to Dallas, Truett remarked on this very concept:

For once, autocracy and democracy met on a world scale. The law of the jungle dared to crawl out of its lair and say to the world, "I will trample Right and set up the law of the tiger, Might." But I'm thankful that I had the satisfaction of preaching Jesus Christ across the Rhine.<sup>52</sup>

We owe a great debt of gratitude to England. Long before the United States entered the war, her gigantic fleet was watching over our nation, for the man is not informed who does not now know that Germany had its dagger aimed at the United States at that very time. It was England who guarded the seas of the world before we got in.<sup>53</sup>

In Truett's mind, righteousness prevailed. That is not to say genuine believers of Christ did not exist in Germany or other Central Power nations. Even Truett knew that they did. Nonetheless, the mass destruction experienced in Europe was completely contrary to the teachings of Christian theology. Truett earnestly believed it was God's will and that united Allied forces act as needed to confront darkness head-on.

Truett affirmed that a government with religious freedom allowed for genuine Christianity. Truett knew this, as did leaders soon following him, such as Billy Graham and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer was killed for standing against the Nazi agenda during World War II, while Graham preached that "communism was the political ideology of the devil."<sup>54</sup>

Many Christians in the twentieth century understood Christianity to be a key agent of liberty and a bulwark against tyranny. They often identified the danger posed by authoritarian governments and of dictators who often opposed Christianity. Southern Baptist Pastor Eugene C. Routh was another such mid-century voice. In his book *The Word Overcoming the World* he warned Christians from the (then) autocratic Japanese Empire: "So long as the sun warms the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan; and let all know that if the King of Spain, or the Christians' God, or the great God of all violate this command, he shall pay for it with his head."<sup>55</sup>

The Great War understandably led to many biblical and theological questions. Many were disheartened that an apparently civilized Europe lay in destruction. How could humanity destroy their neighbors' homes, towns, and lives? Truett strongly supported America's involvement in the First World War because he believed the Western freedom that his countrymen had fought to provide over a century before was in jeopardy, and that the chaos that had ensued in Europe was the result of a society moving away from biblical standards of morality. Reflecting on his position towards American entrance into the war years later, Truett preached:

If you and I were out here in the street and saw some bullying, braggart, boastful man trampling a helpless little woman or a helpless little child, and you and I should fold our hands and say, "I

don't believe in war, I don't believe in interfering in other people's business," and let the child be slaughtered and the woman destroyed, manhood has left us, that's all. We have to have regard.<sup>56</sup>

The pastor urged American involvement in Europe and explained the nation had a duty to provide freedom to those who did not maintain it. In fact, he believed "America would never be the same following the Great War, and that the U.S. according to God's will was foreordained to be the educational center of the globe."<sup>57</sup> Conceivably, the freedom and singularity on which the U.S. prided itself since the nation's birth were to be the standard for all nations of the earth. Were the ideas of democracy and freedom worth fighting for? The causation and aftermath of World War I changed the future of the globe, and nations gradually became aware of the freedom Americans proudly maintained.

Truett abhorred war and the destruction of so many lives. However, he believed in the sovereignty of God and that God's will would take place. According to him, that meant the nation of the United States assisting those involved in the European crisis. In one post-war community meeting, Truett explained several things are worth dying for, including "Sanctity of womanhood, Righteousness, Defense of helpless childhood and Honor and freedom of the United States."<sup>58</sup> He strongly argued that God was with the Allied cause, stating, "God had a Son in the World War. He fought with the Allies. He went over the top into No Man's Land and stood beside the American in the darkest moment of the mammoth struggle!"<sup>59</sup> He shared, "The story of the youth who pointed to the evening star in the sky and declared that God's got a son in the Army, was nothing less than truth. Ask some of the boys who went through it, if Jesus Christ was not with them."<sup>60</sup> Reflecting further on his experience in France, Truett stated:

Men were never so ready to listen to the call of the highest. I have seen men stand ten deep around the huts in France, in the pouring rain, for an hour while the preacher tried to tell the simple story of redeeming grace. Then when we asked these men, among them the keenest fellows from our colleges, what they would like to sing, they would answer: "Abide with Me," or "In the Cross of Christ I Glory." I would have braved the perils of the sea and land for certain single days allowed me in Europe. The testimony of dying men gives me

a new understanding of Christ. The old truths of sins and salvation and eternal destiny are not modified by war. The deep realities stand out more clearly than ever. There is only one name given under heaven whereby men must be saved.<sup>61</sup>

He reflected on the attitude of the servicemen:

When I spoke to the boys, I'd often ask them when the war would end. They couldn't tell me. But they could tell and with one accord did tell me how it would end—never until the United States flag was waving in victory.<sup>62</sup>

Undoubtedly the war impacted Truett. He experienced things many people had never seen, let alone a fifty-year-old pastor. In all, he spent around seven months in Europe. Psychologically and spiritually, he was tested. The *Fort Worth Record-Telegram* noted the war's impact on him: "Dr. Truett's work took him up and down the lines, and he was in the thick of several big battles. The more he saw the soldiers, the more they were enhanced in his opinion."<sup>63</sup>

Preaching a sermon years after the war, Truett reflected on what he saw in France, "The most inspiring sight that I saw was the sight of young men turning to libraries throughout Europe and having books in their bunks where they slept. Which books they read from day to day and night. Great vital books of history and various problems of life."<sup>64</sup> Throughout his ministry, Truett had a special place in his heart for the youth of America. Assuredly, he knew they were the future of his nation. Philosophically, he taught one must have a purpose in life, and war often provided the avenue to learn of one's place on earth. He preached:

If one has no ambition, life will not mean much. The desire to somebody to rise to achieve that desire is to the last degree praiseworthy. Every person should have before him, a distinct plan in life. And everyone before him should have standards, standards that beckon you, that inspire; and he should seek to conform his life to the highest demands of these proper standards set before every one of them. Yeah all of us.

Truett answered the origins of such standards:

Jesus comes and tells us the chief standard is the standard of unselfish service. You're in the world, not to carry your own point, not to have your own way so much, not to clothe yourself and surround yourself with reinforcements that pamper yourself your selfishness, you're in the world to make your every power go as far as possible for the betterment of the world. Who so ever would be the cheapest one among you shall be the servant of all.<sup>65</sup>

Truett vehemently believed the standards of life came from Christ alone. The Bible taught that there would be many wars to come, but that only through the Lord could peace be found. One can only imagine the frustration for Truett and other Christians when they saw yet another World War bring bloodshed once again during the second global conflict. However, Truett's message of hope and peace, of following the Lord and His ways, never changed nor ceased. It resonated with many within the Southern Baptist Convention, which articulated the straightforward mantra: *Christ or Chaos*. Truett retained the standard to serve God with all your heart and soul, placing your desires and wants aside for the betterment of society and for the salvation of souls in Christ.

### Conclusion

When approached by President Wilson to serve in Europe as a volunteer chaplain, Truett took his time to ponder and pray about such a commitment and its ramifications. Deep down, the people of the First Baptist Church of Dallas probably knew their pastor would accept such a call. Leaders like Wilson and General Pershing were confident that the Christian faith would provide hope, peace, and answers to a world in turmoil. George Truett helped spread these things, along with the Christian gospel, during his service as a pastor and his mission to Europe during World War I. He experienced the horrors of war, yet reflected on the love and hope of Christ. Truett preached to thousands of souls in seven months. Some of the people he reached ended up dying of their wounds or meeting death in a later battle. However, Truett and other selfless Christian leaders provided comfort and hope to countless soldiers awaiting an unknown destiny.

President Wilson and General Pershing urged Truett to partake in the mission to provide hope to scared, confused, and grieving service

members. What the leaders may not have expected was the impact of the mission on Truett. His entire Christian worldview and everything he had taught decades before allowed him to see the face of evil, about which he often preached, through the casualties and destruction of the Great War. Nevertheless, his beliefs and message never wavered. His understanding and faith grew, and he returned to the pastorate even more committed to spreading the message of salvation. Today, we continue to praise the service of Truett, military chaplains, and those who serve that enable freedom of religion, which for Truett and like-minded Christians brings forth the possibility of faith in Christ.

### Notes

- 1 Williamson A. Murray, *The Cambridge History of Warfare* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 278.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Murray, *The Cambridge History of Warfare*, 311.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Powhatan W. James, *A Biography: George Truett* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1939), 78.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Powhatan W. James, *A Biography: George Truett* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1939), 131.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Keith E. Durso, *Thy Will Be Done* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2009), 132.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid., 137.
- 15 Leon McBeth, *The First Baptist Church of Dallas* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1968), 159.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid., 160.
- 19 Frederick Harris, *Serving with Fighting Men: An Account of the Work of the American Young Men's Christian Associations in the World War* (New York: Association Press, 1922), 38.
- 20 George Truett, "Report of Committee on World Crisis," *Annual SBC 1918*, May 15–20, 1918, 75, [http://media2.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/annuals/SBC\\_Annual\\_1918.pdf](http://media2.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/annuals/SBC_Annual_1918.pdf) (accessed September 26, 2022).
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- 22 McBeth, *The First Baptist Church of Dallas*, 158.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Durso, *Thy Will Be Done*, 145.
- 26 James, *A Biography: George Truett*, 134.

27 George W. Truett, "Dallas Pastor Walking Among Wounded Men in English Hospitals," *The Dallas Morning News* October 1, 1918, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/legacy/58581354/?terms=george%20truett&match=1> (accessed September 26, 2022).

28 Ibid.

29 Rev. W. B. Cunningham, "Calvary Baptist Church," *The Houston Post*, November 4, 1918, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/legacy/87603628/?terms=george%20truett%20war%20ymca&match=1> (accessed September 26, 2022).

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31 Ibid.

32 George W. Truett, "George Truett in Ireland," *The Whitewright Sun*, November 8, 1918, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/legacy/87603628/?terms=george%20truett%20war%20ymca&match=1> (accessed September 26, 2022).

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 George W. Truett, "Dallas Pastor Walking Among Wounded Men in English Hospitals," *The Dallas Morning News*, October 1, 1918, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/legacy/58581354/?terms=george%20truett&match=1> (accessed September 26, 2022).

36 McBeth, *The First Baptist Church of Dallas*, 161.

37 Durso, *Thy Will Be Done*, 148.

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