

Colonial Legacy Webinar 1, September 10, 2020, Fred Muir

“Faith of Our Fathers: Imperial Justifications or ‘And Light of Science In Their Eyes’”

Imperialism as “a way of seeing the world from a position of power and acting accordingly. It’s only conceivable in a context of unequal relationships. (Anna Su, *Exporting Freedom: Religious Liberty and American power*, p. 5)

- Charles W. Eliot -
“Finally, this twentieth-century religion is not only to be in harmony with the great secular movement of modern society—democracy, individualism, social idealism, the zeal for education, the spirit of research, the modern tendency to welcome the new, the fresh powers of preventive medicine, and the recent advances in business and industrial ethics—but also in essential agreement with the direct, personal teachings of Jesus, as they are reported in the Gospels. The revelation he gave to mankind thus becomes more wonderful than ever.” (“The Religion of the Future,” July 22, 1909, p. 62-63, a lecture delivered at the close of the eleventh session of the Harvard Summer School of Theology)
<https://archive.org/details/religionoffuture00eliouoft/page/n9/mode/2up>
- “Faith of Our Fathers” history - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith_of_Our_Fathers_\(hymn\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith_of_Our_Fathers_(hymn))
Appeared in the AUA Hymnal in 1914. Appeared in the 1937 joint U/U hymnal with third verse: “Faith of our fathers, faith and prayer / Have kept our country brave and free, / And through the truth that comes from God, / Her children have true liberty.” Chorus: “Faith of our fathers, holy faith, / We will be true to thee till death.” (#546) Listen to the hymn:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxuLFgajZ04&list=RDuxuLFgajZ04&index=1>
- Rev. Prof. Francis Peabody Greenwood -
“... once more, a new and sudden responsibility is laid upon a nation to convey to people at the ends of the earth the blessings of a Christian civilization; and many are rash enough to say in the name of religion, ‘Let us first subdue this people to carry to them the teaching of Jesus.’ The teaching of Jesus, however, is not something that waits until the social questions of aggression and war are answered. It must be communicated through the process of civilization, not after that process, or before it. It is impossible for the same nation to present itself to a heathen world, first as rapacious, commercialized, and lustful for glory, and later as an ambassador of the mercy and grace of Christ. We have seen in the making of money that it is the getting of wealth with clean hands, and not the free spending of ill-gotten wealth, which marks the Christian man of business. The same thing may be said of empire-making. It is the moral quality of the conquest itself, and not that which may happen after the conquest, which represents the Christian energy of the conquering nation; and it is the motives which prompt and direct the original approach to a heathen civilization which are likely either to bring heathen to Christ or to repel them from him.” (*Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, 1900, p. 355.)
- Robert S. Heaney -
“... common in colonizer narratives was the idea that they were involved in civilizing backward peoples.... Depicting the [insert a colonized people] as superstitious, uncivilized, backward, and technologically underdeveloped reinforced a belief that [insert a colonizing nation] was a beacon and agent of progress. Beliefs in the transformative power of human reason, the inexorable move toward progress, and at the conviction that technology and science would liberate were, thus, not only *drivers* of colonialism, but *effects* of colonialism.” (*Post-Colonial Theology: Finding God and Each Other Amidst the Hate*, p. 38)
- “These Things Shall Be” history - https://hymnary.org/text/these_things_shall_be_a_loftier_race
Included in 1914 AUA hymnal. In 1993 *Singing the Living Tradition*, #138. Verse 1: “These things shall be: a loftier race/ than e’er the world hath known shall rise,/ with flame of freedom in their souls,/ and light of science in their eyes.” Listen to the hymn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JoSzRXQY0c>