

## **Sir Garfield Todd: Supporter of Black African Rights in Zimbabwe and his Reasonable Christian Rhetoric**

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Imprisoned by Ian Smith for his outspoken criticism of racist policies in the 1960s and 1970s, the first missionary to rise to Prime Minister of his country (Southern Rhodesia in the 1950s), missionary to Africa starting in 1934, knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1986 for his lifelong support for African rights, freedom, and democracy, and awarded a papal medal by Pope Paul VI, Sir Garfield Todd (1908-2002) led a remarkable and significant life.

Previous scholarship on Todd, while noting his Christian background, have incorrectly attributed his support for human rights to British political liberalism.<sup>1</sup> Todd, a native of New Zealand, came from a politically conservative family and never lived in Britain. Mungazi mistakenly claims Todd embraced the “Asquith-Lloyd George [liberal] philosophy”(175). While Weiss rightly notes Todd “represented the true values of that western Christian civilisation, which racist whites mistakenly thought they defended” (217), she does not explore how his religious heritage played a key role in his rhetoric and understanding of human rights. Todd, while considered liberal, drew from his Christian perspective especially from his life-long tradition: the New Zealand Churches of Christ. Historically connected to the American Stone-Campbell tradition (Disciples of Christ, conservative Christian Churches and a cappella Churches of Christ), the New Zealand Churches of Christ were an ecumenically minded group interested in reasonable

Christianity and in educating people. Todd, in his entire career, tried to build coalitions with like-minded people, and appeal to the best interests of others (even of his enemies), believing that reason could win over prejudiced and skeptical racist whites and build a multi-racial society. Furthermore Todd's rhetoric and oratory was firmly grounded in his Christian stance that was nurtured in his "Campbellite" heritage in the New Zealand Churches of Christ. If it were not for his particular religious heritage and its distinctive theology, style, and ways of thinking Todd would never have been the speaker he was or made his mark in history.

Cutting across and enabling his entire public career and support for human rights was his outstanding skill at oratory. Both friends and foes of Sir Garfield Todd testify to his public speaking ability. Historian Miles Hudson observed that Todd "was a brilliant speaker in public (one of the comparatively few orators in recent Rhodesian history)..." (32). Chester Woodhall, a British missionary to Africa, speaking of Todd's preaching in the 1970s, offered that Todd "was an electrifying speaker and really made the pages of the Bible come alive as he preached on the oneness of all people—black, brown, and white—in Jesus Christ. In segregationist Rhodesia this was a revolutionary message"(Fraternal, 133). Todd's fellow liberal politician and friend Hardwicke Holderness described Todd's political campaign oratory while Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia:

He had a commanding platform presence—tall, clean-cut, powerful build; shock of dark hair—and a command of the English language and delivery which no doubt owed a lot to his training as a preacher but, adapted to dealing with the whole range of national affairs ... [his demeanor] seemed

to be sufficiently down to earth and appropriate for politics; and heckling and hostile questions usually provided fuel for the best part of the performance—highly intelligent, instantaneous and humorous. It was a delight to listen to (Holderness, 134).

The Sunday Mail, a local Rhodesian paper commented on the 1946 Legislative Assembly, “Of the new speakers, Mr. R.S.G. Todd takes the palm. He has a sure, broad, well-informed humanitarian outlook and his way of address is attractive”(qtd. in “Our Work,” Oct., 1946, 8). Emory Ross, a Disciples of Christ preacher and missionary to Congo and a life-long friend of Albert Schweitzer, said in 1954: “I have known Mr. Todd for 15 years. He has great ability. He has a fine mind and a cultured heart ... and [I] would say without any hesitation that he is a really great preacher (Bader, 13).”

### **I. The Preacher and missionary**

Reginald Stephen Garfield Todd was born 13 July 1908 in Waikiwi, New Zealand to Thomas and Edith Todd. His father, an elder in the Invercargill Church of Christ was a second-generation member of the Stone-Campbell tradition (Weiss, 5). Garfield Todd’s grandparents, Cameronian Presbyterians and Scottish immigrants to New Zealand decided to convert to the Churches of Christ “after much deep thought and prayer” soon after arriving in Dunedin in 1865 (Todd, Christian, 8; “Todd,” 12). Todd’s parents were so devoted to the Churches of Christ that they named their son Garfield after James A. Garfield, the assassinated President of the U.S., who at that time was the most prominent political leader who had been a member of the Campbellian religious heritage (Todd, E-mail, 16 February 2001).<sup>2</sup> Todd as a son of a devout elder went to church, Sunday

school, and various activities designed for developing faith in children. He read and learned, as all good children in Churches of Christ, the content of the Bible. Further he gave his first public speeches at the Invercargill church and Sunday school where his grandfather served as the superintendent for 25 years (A Short History: 13).<sup>3</sup>

Alexander Campbell, Irish born (1788), Scottish educated son of Presbyterian minister Thomas Campbell was a key founder of the religious tradition that spawned the Disciples of Christ, independent Christian Churches and the Churches of Christ, the British Churches of Christ and the New Zealand Churches of Christ. After immigrating to America, Campbell and his father left the Presbyterians in 1809 seeking to unite all Christians on a simple basis of being Christians only by rejecting all creeds and following the Bible alone. Campbell, educated at Glasgow University during the Scottish enlightenment and directly influenced by Scottish Common Sense philosophy, approached the Bible with a Baconian scientific, empirical, rational lens, stating, “the inductive style of inquiring and reasoning is to be carried out in reading the teaching Bible facts and documents, as in the analysis and synthesis of physical nature”(Campbell, “School”: 172). Christianity consisted of historical facts that needed to be studied the same way that a scientist studied the empirical facts of physical reality. Campbell stated in Christian System:

All revealed religion is based upon facts. Testimony has respect to facts only; and that testimony may be credible, it must be confirmed. These points are of so much importance as to deserve some illustration, and much consideration. By *facts* we always mean something said or done.

The works of God and the words of God, or the things done or spoken by

God, are those facts which are laid down and exhibited in the Bible as the foundation of all faith, hope, love, piety, and humanity. All true and useful knowledge is an acquaintance with facts; and all true science is acquired from the observation and comparison of facts (96).

Just as any scientist removed all personal prejudices to reach certain irrefutable conclusions about the physical world, all persons who studied scripture with this method would supposedly reach the same conclusions about Christianity. The lost ecclesiastical forms and practices of the primitive church could be restored through a rational scientific investigation of the pages of the New Testament. Unity of all Christians was possible through a rational process of restoration. This rational and empirical approach to Christianity had a profound impact on Campbell's rhetoric and speaking (Casey, 2001). In addition the entire tradition was very optimistic and pragmatic believing not only that all of Christendom could be united but that Christianity would encourage all kinds of reforms in making the world better. The tradition produced many reformers (women and men) in all kinds of social movements (Casey, 2004).

Todd was clearly a child of his religious heritage. In his sermon Christian Unity he stated in Campbellian terms:

In Christianity we don't have a set of abstract truths, or arguable philosophy. What we do have is a set of historical facts, a record of happenings which can be examined and checked, which must be accepted or rejected. A person lived and that person was Jesus Christ. He lived a life, a record of which we have. He died and was raised from the dead. This is something very different from speculative theologies which are the

explanations of these facts in the thought forms of a particular age. Here we have a body of facts which are of major importance and which are binding upon all Christians (14).

When Garfield Todd's grandparents converted, the Churches of Christ were small having been established in New Zealand at Nelson in 1844. The tradition slowly spread across the entire country and grew to 11,197 members (including families) by 1936 (Haddon, 707-8). Starting in 1921 all the congregations associated in a national conference and in 1927, Glen Leith Theological College was established in Dunedin with Todd entering the first class (O'Grady, 5).

In many ways Todd's Christian philosophy emanated from his experience at Glen Leith and tutelage under A.L Haddon, the principal of Glen Leith. Todd recalled in 1962:

A.L Haddon taught me that life is a unity given whole from the hand of God and not to be divided into sacred and secular. Preaching, teaching, healing, governing, farming, building, but in all things serving: this I learned in theory at Glen Leith and practise as best I can in Africa (5).

Glen Leith and Haddon reinforced the rational dimensions of the Churches of Christ. Haddon's biographer said Haddon had a "precise, logical and step-by-step approach to any subject he dealt with" as a preacher (Savage, 52). The content of the Bible and its rational interpretation was stressed in the curricula of Glen Leith.

Todd at Glen Leith, in addition to the usual course in biblical and theological content, had courses in that stressed public speaking: two courses in Homiletics and one course in elocution. In addition the college had two courses that accented the rational dimension present in the Churches of Christ: deductive logic and inductive logic.

Haddon reports that one of William Stanley Jevons's books on logic was a standard text for the logic courses (Savage, 43).<sup>4</sup> E.P. Aderman taught the homiletics courses until he left as a New Zealand MP for the conservative National Party in 1938. S. H. Osborn taught elocution for one hour a week giving "effective instruction in voice production" (Associated, [1932], 6) while Todd was a student (Associated,[1930], 8; Associated, [1931], 9).

Training in Homiletics and elocution in America, Britain and New Zealand was dominated by the Scottish/British empirical tradition or Scottish Common Sense philosophy—the same philosophical outlook that profoundly influenced the Churches of Christ and Alexander Campbell in Britain and America. Elocutionary theory grounded its approach to delivery in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century views of science. Elocutionists thought they could scientifically and atomistically categorize delivery down into single specific gestures and voice modulations that would fit specific speaking moments. While Todd does not remember the specific content of his elocution training, there is a continuity of elocutionary thought that stretched from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Todd's teacher taught at Otago University and the university library carries a copy of the leading elocution text used at that time in New Zealand: John Rigg, Elocution and Public Speaking (lessons in). Rigg by 1921 had taught elocution and been in politics (including the New Zealand Legislative Council) for 30 years (Rigg, ii).

Rigg's book, in addition to the outdated ideas on delivery, has some interesting aspects that illumine Todd's public speaking. Consistent with the Baconian orientation of the Churches of Christ Rigg advised, "Words are the means by which we present our arguments to an audience, but the arguments themselves, to be sound, must be based on

facts”(149). Rigg further emphasized the rational role for speaking in parliamentary debate especially by “back benchers” who wanted to have influence; “it is the accomplished debater who occupies the stage, moves in the limelight, and, by his sound knowledge and logical reasoning, influences the decisions of the assembly”(156). He further advised:

An efficient debater must have a thorough knowledge of the subject in debate; his mind must be stored with facts which he can use to support his arguments; he must be able to speak on some occasions without previous preparation of his subject; he must never make mistakes as to facts and figures; and his reasoning must be expressed in a logical manner (156-7).

Todd’s political speeches in parliament had all these qualities about them—a thorough preparation, mastery of facts and figures and incisive and precise reasoning. Rigg also said the debater in parliament “must always be prepared to receive the severest criticism from his opponents and reply to it”(157). Todd clearly relished the give and take and sometimes rude style of the Southern Rhodesia parliament. Rigg further emphasized reasoning logically in debate, “It consists in the ability of a person to put facts together and draw from them a sound conclusion, and, like the gift of common-sense, it is most uncommon”(158). With the emphasis of the Churches of Christ on reason and mastery of the “supernatural facts” of Scripture, it is no surprise that Todd received rhetorical training at Glen Leith that emphasized reason and command of facts, and that he exhibited good arguing skills in his speaking, and saw its importance for education.

Even though F.L Hadfield, one of the early missionaries from the New Zealand Churches of Christ, had been a member of the first Southern Rhodesian parliament

starting in 1924(Gann and Gelfand, 67) at first Todd had no political ambitions when he arrived in Southern Rhodesia. Todd's initial years were spent totally immersed in African society running the Dadaya mission of the New Zealand Churches of Christ and in almost complete isolation from whites. Most of the other Kiwi missionaries had to leave because of the growing world-wide depression, leaving Todd and his family alone to construct their own attitudes towards Africans. For 13 years the Todd's had minimal contact with white Rhodesians. Colonial Southern Rhodesia was dominated by British and South Africa immigrants who believed in white supremacy and who little or no contact with the African population. While Todd's early views were very paternalistic towards the Africans, his ideas were far ahead of the typical prejudiced white Rhodesian. All along Todd believed that Africans as a whole were as capable as whites if given educational opportunity and training.

Todd brought his reasonable approach to Africa. In addition to introducing new methods of agriculture, educating students, and teaching various trades, Todd established a Christian Endeavor youth group that had his African students learning how to debate and speak in public indicating his belief that Africans were a rational and reasonable people who could accomplish anything if properly trained (Weiss, 28). Isolated from racist British whites, Todd with his Christian and Kiwi sensibilities saw Africans as individuals with self-worth, the ability to be educated, and the potential to become leaders on the world stage.

## II. The Politician

Todd eventually shifted to politics to attempt to bring to fruition his beliefs about African potential. Three events propelled Todd toward the political arena. World War II and the horrific ideals of Nazism put racism on the center stage. In 1944 Todd wrote friends,

The colour bar is an evil here as the race conscious theory of Hitler is in Europe. Africans are not in concentration camps, they are not often flogged or murdered, they are just trodden down. People mistake the tragedies of undernourishment, disease and the colour bar in general for the marks of a race which is sub-human, instead of realising things for what they are (qtd. in Weiss, 44-5).

Also in 1944 Todd decided to enroll at the medical school of the University of Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, South Africa to improve his medical skills that were badly needed on the mission. At the very first day of school, Todd attended a debate over a proposed strike by the medical students. Fearing his opportunity for training would evaporate; Todd spoke out against the strike. Impressed by his speaking ability a group of Jewish medical students approached Todd to help save the position of a black lab assistant that white South African students wanted removed. Todd helped and the assistant was kept. His fellow medical students proceeded to elect Todd as their class representative in student government for the academic year.

In 1945 after the year at Wits, Todd plunged into Rhodesian politics for the first time. Following communal African practice Chief Shumba and his people had lived on an

area of land known as the Ghoko block for generations. However, the colonial government without the knowledge or permission of the Africans declared the area white owned land and sold it to European farmers. The Africans were given less than a year to move to a new location 100 miles away.

Some of the African children at Ghoko attended school at Dadaya—a distance of 60 miles away. In 1942 one of these students established a Church of Christ at Ghoko. After many baptisms in 1943 and 1944, Todd went and occasionally preached for the church. Todd unsuccessfully lobbied the government for the Africans arguing that they should be able stay on their land. Besides meeting with all the principle white parties and local government officials, Todd wrote a letter of protest to Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins and his Minister of Native Affairs dated 15 April 1945. The government upheld its ruling that the land was European (Todd, “Our Work” Apr., 1945, 8; Todd, Letter).

Later Todd clashed with Huggins over some comments the Prime Minister made about New Zealand during a local political meeting in 1946. The United Party under Huggins controlled the Rhodesian parliament but they did not hold the seat in Todd’s district. Recognizing Todd’s ability, Huggins approached Todd about running for the seat. Todd reported to the New Zealand Churches of Christ that a “strong delegation of local residents gave a pressing invitation which was backed up by a letter from the Prime Minister and a member of the Cabinet.” Todd said that his supporters felt “I would be able to give a major contribution to the solving of the greatest problem before this country, which is the relationship between African and European” (Todd, June 1946, 8). Todd thought he would lose the election because his views on race were too radical and the opposition party held the seat. However, he concluded, “I have had the privilege of

stating the case for the African people ... and that is a contribution which has been worth while”(Todd, June 1946, 8). To his surprise Todd won with 330 votes to 195 for second place and 190 for third. He reported to New Zealand that his main campaign speech “was published extensively” and he believed “that in such ways we have the opportunity of working for better relationships between black and white, and that our truest interest is to work for the progress of the country as a whole in the name of Christ”(Todd, July 1946, 7). The Rhodesia Herald editorialized that Todd’s campaign speeches had the “most balanced survey” on the question of race relations with his idea that “the carefully guided advancement of the native was as much in European as in native interests” and cited the conclusion of Todd’s campaign speech:

On the question of native affairs, there will always be great differences of opinion. Almost everyone here has a feeling that he or she has some fairly sound ideas on what should be done. Let us respect each other’s opinions on how things should be done, but let us be as united as possible in our determination to face the situation honestly, to be just in our judgments, to seek the true welfare of this land in which we are finding life very pleasant, and putting aside any master-race theories, for the abolition of which so many people of ours have died; let us strive for the good of all (8).

Todd’s speaking ability, polished through many years of preaching, made him perfectly suited for the rough and tumble British style of debate found in the Rhodesian parliament. As Weiss stated, “Garfield had everything needed to make him a public person: good presence, good voice, good sense, and good ideas”(43). Reflecting

Churches of Christ rationality and penchant for facts, Weiss reported that in the parliament “Todd spoke often and to the point” especially about “subjects on which he was an expert: education, health and native policy”(54). He was seen “as a forthright speaker who greatly contributed to the quality of debate”(52). Weiss said that Todd was “good-humoured, witty, and quick at repartee” and so he “became popular with MPs and the media”(52). Once after a speech while Prime Minister another MP commented, “Mr. Speaker, in following the hon. Prime Minister, I would like to congratulate him on one of the best speeches I have heard him make”(Southern Rhodesia, 25 July 1957, 376). Friends and foes often noted his oratory as “impressive” and when he left parliament a newspaper remarked, “there goes the phrasemaker”(Weiss, 52).

In 1953 when the Central African Federation was created consisting of Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Huggins became Prime Minister of the Federation. Most of the Southern Rhodesian leaders decided to take Federation position and Todd partially because of his speaking ability was the backbencher selected as Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia (Weiss, 71). The next year, taking the lead by effective speaking in the national campaign Todd and his party took 26 out of 30 seats in the February elections (Weiss, 72).

Both as MP and Prime Minister Todd pressed his agendas for expanded African rights in education and voting rights. Todd recognized early that civil war would be inevitable unless whites gave Africans a voice in their own political affairs. He hoped for a multi-racial society that would allow for opportunities for all individuals regardless of their racial background. In many speeches Todd made it clear that his Christian views informed his political views. In 1955 in a sermon delivered to the Park Avenue Christian

Church in New York City the New York Times reported that Todd argued that “the Christian spirit ... must be instilled in the [African] people so they can surmount their problems.” Christianity was the key to “both spiritual and physical happiness for Africa’s masses”(Africa’s Hope, A12). Todd grounded in his Churches of Christ heritage believed that Christianity provided practical wisdom for political problems. For example while in parliament Todd argued “that one or two commonsense ideas” would help whites “understand the natives to a greater extent if we were to realise that we should do unto others as we would like others to do to us unto us”(Southern Rhodesia, 18 October 1949, 2685-6).

Todd placed much of his emphasis on education saying, “there is also no quarrel between religion and education.... Christianity is an historical religion. There is a great deal concerned with it which can be taught. Religion and education go hand in hand” (Southern Rhodesia, 11 July 1946, 1280). Christian instruction had a positive impact on the curriculum because

there is much about it which is common to all churches; there is much about it which has the approval of the scholarship of all the churches. In religious education you bring together literature, history and geography, and it is a useful subject in a school...(Southern Rhodesia, 11 July 1946, 1280).

Besides factual content Todd also believed Christianity had a role in the character formation and relationships between teachers and students, “in a community such as a school, the Christian virtues can be developed by the relationships which exist between

child and child, between teacher and child, and these relationships should show Christian grace”(Southern Rhodesia, 11 July 1946, 1280).

Despite his considerable skills, Todd’s Christian perspective on race and politics was out-of-step with white Rhodesians. Sundkler and Steed state: “This was a time of an emerging African nationalism, stimulated not least by the co-operation of the White prime minister, ex-missionary Garfield Todd, but rejected by the powerful White establishment...”(800). After a modest compromise franchise bill was passed that allowed some educated Africans voting rights to the consternation of many racist whites, with rising tensions between Southern Rhodesia and the Federation, and white anger over secret meetings Todd had with black nationalist leaders, Todd’s cabinet and other party members decided that it was time for Todd to go. At the party congress where the leadership issue was decided Todd gave one of his best speeches. Julian Greenfield, a Todd detractor, reported, “Todd made a brilliant speech in reply...”(Weiss, 115). A reporter of a paper opposed to Todd observed that Todd “moved from point to point with superb skill, answering his accusers in detail”(Weiss, 115). Todd “was on his feet for over an hour and was at his best, defending himself on every point with punch and humour. It was punctuated with laughter and acclaimed by endless applause (Weiss, 115).” One of Todd’s opponents even congratulated him for the speech but still voted against him! The speech was so effective that even in defeat and against party rules and practice the taped speech was never transcribed or circulated, with the tapes disappearing. Ian Smith recalled a comment with one of Todd’s cabinet members at a break during the congress, “In the final analysis, if we have to choose between Todd and a donkey, then

it's the donkey!"(Smith, 35). This was not to be the last time that Todd was to be silenced through devious means.

After he was forced out as Prime Minister, Todd organized his own political party and ran a slate of candidates in the June 1958 election. Todd and his party "tried to reason with the electorate, appeal to its intelligence and conscience and when confronted with ignorance and prejudice, engage in ... an exercise in adult education"(Hancock, 74-5). Todd's reasonable approach to politics, in the face of white fears, failed. He lost his seat in parliament and his party failed to gain a single seat.

For approximately 12 years Todd worked within the political system using the speaking opportunities and forms available for persons holding power within the system. While having some success in adapting to his audience as the classical forms of rhetoric appropriately call for mainstream politicians to use, suddenly Todd found himself out of power and these forms were not the necessarily effective for persons operating outside standard power structures. Todd's speaking and his views on human rights underwent a transformation.

### **III. The Prophet**

"Truths must be supported and vindicated for their own sakes ... Truth is Truth, right is right, duty is duty and the end is God's not mine" Garfield Todd (qtd. in Weiss, 216).

Chris Laidlaw former ambassador of New Zealand to Zimbabwe called Todd the conscience of Zimbabwe (Todd, "Interview"). While not technically a prophet Todd's rhetoric after 1958 fits into what James Darsey has identified as a prophetic tradition or

prophetic form that can be found in the political realm. Darsey states, “The most accessible evidence of the prophet’s radicalism is his opposition to the regnant power structure”(20). After Todd’s sacking the new Prime Minister Edgar Whitehead continued in many ways the same liberal policies however Todd believed “the time for liberalism was over”(Todd, “Interview). Todd’s Christianity and the political situation of Africa and propelled him to a radical prophetic position in support of African enfranchisement. By March 1959 Todd publicly demanded the “massive and immediate removal of the colour bar”(Weiss, 131).

Such statements galvanized the hopes and support of Africans so when Todd came to deliver a speech on 16 March 1958 at Athaneum Hall in a white area of Salisbury 7,000 Africans came to hear him speak. Todd quickly arranged with the police to allow all the people to hear him in three successive hour-long sessions where he repeated his speech. Todd criticized the Federation as “a great bus which is taking us all to a happy place and higher standard of living but many people believe the bus is labeled ‘For Europeans Only’” (Weiss, 132). With whites firmly in control of the electorate, Todd’s prophetic speech ended his political career so on 2 September 1960 Todd retired from politics recognizing that he had failed “to persuade the White community to revise its attitudes”(Hancock, 85-6).

The prophetic voice is found in its fullest, Darsey argues, when there is “a time of crisis” or “a sense of overwhelming threat ... a threat to the self-definition of a people”(23). Southern Rhodesia and later Zimbabwe with little exception have been in this state of crisis since Todd was removed as Prime Minister. The crisis over race propelled Todd to give speeches for African rights and make visits with leaders all over

the world to lobby for the same cause. For example, on three critical occasions in 1962, 1964 and 1977 he spoke before the United Nations Committee on Decolonization.

The United Nations General Assembly passed a declaration on 14 December 1960 urging the implementation of independence of colonial peoples and countries. On 27 November 1961 the General Assembly established a 17 member Special committee (later expanded to 24) known as the Committee on Decolonization (United Nations, Yearbook, 57). Southern Rhodesia was the first place the Committee of 17 investigated. Prime Minister Whitehead introduced increasingly draconian and reactionary measures to maintain white control and the first instances of violent political protest and death in the colony since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century resulted. Whites, under Whitehead's leadership and over the protests of African national groups, implemented a new Constitution that eroded Britain's control of Rhodesia, placed more power in the hands of the whites and gave Africans merely symbolic rather than real political power.

Joshua Nkomo and other African leaders decided to take their case to the new UN committee and they invited Todd to help them. Todd's biographer calls Todd's speech "one of his finest hours." Nkomo recalled, "On this particular occasion his oratory was devastating. Facts against the 1961 Constitution flowed in fast sequence from his fingertips ... he spoke like one possessed and he got a most thunderous ovation from all the delegates except of course that of Britain"(qtd. in Weiss, 150). Todd recalled that this speech "was probably the most important political speech of my career"(Todd, E-mail, 23 Jan. 2001). The Committee of 17 and later the General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to urge Britain to suspend the new Constitution and extend to all the people of Southern Rhodesia full political rights (United Nations, Yearbook, 419-23). The speech was

delivered at the UN Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 21 March 1962, at 11:30 a.m. and on Thursday, 22 March 1962 at 10 a.m.(United Nations. Verbatim).

The reaction was similar to the 1964 speech as Time magazine reported:

The Committee of 24, the UN body which deals with colonial problems, has heard many an eloquent speech dedicated to the proposition that black men, rather than white men, should have the ruling voice in African nations. But seldom has the committee listened to this argument so intently as it did last week when a visitor from Africa roundly proclaimed that the Europeans of his country had “clung to power too long.” What stirred the committee was the fact that the speaker—R.S. Garfield Todd—was both a white man and a former Prime Minister of segregationist Southern Rhodesia (47).

In 1964 Todd was correctly worried that the new racist government of Ian Smith would declare independence without Britain’s approval and plunge Southern Rhodesia into civil war. Todd prophetically warned, according to Time: “It’s either Britain or bloodshed”(48). As with the 1962 UN speech, Time reported that the “Committee of 24” voted overwhelmingly (19 to 0 with three abstentions) to support Todd’s proposal “to give majority rule to Southern Rhodesian Africans and to restrain the white extremists”(48).<sup>5</sup>

Todd’s prophetic rhetoric can also be traced back to his rationality and epistemology that was fundamentally grounded in the New Zealand Churches of Christ. Darsey points to the Whigs of the American Revolution as exemplars of the prophetic tradition in America with their focus on “prophecy as sacred truth.” Thomas Jefferson,

the Whigs and all the American colonists all shared a common epistemology that justified their beliefs in revolution:

The terms used by the colonists to justify their beliefs reflect the philosophical vocabulary of the British Empiricists and the Scottish Common Sense School. Whether the philosophers talked in terms of “self-evidence,” “moral sense,” or “common sense,” they were talking of truths for which no reasons can be given, truths that are axiomatic (51).

Darsey says, “Whigs and Old Testament prophets had in common that they knew an absolute truth and to paraphrase William James, that they knew that they knew; it was by all appearance self-evident”(57). Self-evidence flowed from Todd’s Christian and democratic beliefs, and epistemology. He stated in Washington, D.C. in 1960, “the Bible teaches us we are all sons of God and therefore brothers” (“Garfield Todd,” 4). He often quoted Jefferson’s words from the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that amongst these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (Todd, “After”).

Further, Todd believed, the overwhelming black majority population made African enfranchisement self-evident.

Darsey notes that prophetic self-evidence is radical because of “its engagement with society at its root”(20). Prophets judge moral wrongs and in the process often alienate themselves from their audience. Todd not only was outspoken against white rule in his speeches in Britain, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand the United Nations, he

courageously did so in Zimbabwe. As Darsey states, “in a world where political and religious leaders fail to offer clear direction ... prophetic rhetoric posits a clear dramatic opposition of protagonist and antagonist. It clarifies moral identities and structures desires for denouement”(75). For example, in 1967 at a protest meeting of property owners in Sinoia, Todd spoke out against a Smith government bill designed to prevent Indians and people of “mixed blood” from moving into white neighborhoods. In 1967 the New York Times reported that Todd warned that Rhodesia’s “doom would be sealed if it chose apartheid, a separation of races based on the South Africa pattern”(Rhodesia Warns, 13).

Todd’s prophetic stance remained firmly grounded in his Christian outlook. He continued to press for Christians and the church to remain outspoken against injustice. In 1963 he said, “The Church must never evade her responsibility to choose the right, to protest not only against the violence but also against the use of repressive laws backed by force.” He argued that church needed to support African nationalism: “The nationalist cause is not in itself anti-Christian; in fact in so far as it presses for freedom of the individual, for social justice for all, without distinction of race, its principles are Christian.” The overall mission for the Church in political action in Africa was “to achieve an atonement between black and white”(Todd, “Can”).

The fear of Todd’s prophetic eloquence prompted Ian Smith and the white minority government to silence Todd on two different occasions. In 1965 as he planned to declare independence from Britain Smith arrested Todd. On 20 October 1965 minutes away from flying to England to deliver a speech at Edinburgh University, the police came and a detective took Todd back to Hokonui ranch and restricted him to there for a year.

This created a public relations nightmare for Smith as it gave Todd world-wide celebrity. (Fellows, Oct. 19, 1; Fellows, Oct. 21, 4; Weiss, 161-2).

18 January 1972 Todd was arrested again. In 1971 Sir Alec Douglas Home, the British Foreign Secretary negotiated an agreement with Ian Smith that Todd and most Africans considered a sellout to the racist whites. Britain sent Lord Pearce and the Pearce Commission to investigate the feelings of the Rhodesian people toward the proposed agreement. Todd and his daughter Judith spoke out in several public meetings against the agreement. After 36 days in prison Todd was restricted to his ranch. No one was allowed to communicate with him from the outside or directly quote him and Todd was barred from writing (even letters!) or speaking. After 4½ years, Todd was finally released from detention on 2 June 1976 (Weiss, 175-89). This detention also thrust Todd onto the world stage making him more in demand as a speaker after he was released. During his detention and before Todd openly supported African rebels against Smith's government at peril to his own life. Despite living in the midst of heated battles, amazingly Todd did not lose a single animal on his ranch during the entire civil war and the Dadaya mission remained open while most other missions were closed.

After Robert Mugabe's government came to power, Todd remained outspoken when freedom and civil rights are threatened. From 1980 to 1985 Todd was a senator for Zimbabwe but he resigned as his differences with Mugabe grew. In 1989, at age 81 in one of last public addresses Todd spoke to a large group of Zimbabwean businessmen and leaders at the Hilton Hotel in Harare and warned that freedom could disappear even under black rule (Hokonui). In his retirement Todd remained a critic of Mugabe's oppression of both black and white Zimbabweans (Weiss, 220).

Ironically in 2002 just days after having he and his wife Grace were called white heroes of Zimbabwe and had three schools renamed after them, the Mugabe government fearing Todd's symbolic power stripped the 93 year-old of his citizenship denying him the right to vote in the March election (Rollman, A10; Flanagan,32; Simmons, A3). Instead of silencing him, Todd protested a last time against the growing chaos and evil present in his country: "I am horrified by the destruction of our economy, the starving of our people, the undermining of our Constitution, the torture and humiliation of our nation by ZANU (PF)." He added, "Just as we stood with courage against the racism of the past, so today, we must stand with courage against the terror of the present. Come what may I will, next March, be going to the polling station to claim my right as a very senior citizen to cast my ballot for good against evil"(Rollman, A10).<sup>6</sup> Like most prophets as Darsey notes (114) even in the face of all the problems, Todd remained fundamentally optimistic as protested against Mugabe: "I would love to see a new constitution, for law and order to be restored and for the people to have enough food on their tables. Zimbabwe will get back on its feet, I am certain, but regret it won't be in my lifetime"(Flanagan, 32).

For nearly 70 years Garfield Todd played an important role in Zimbabwean society. His Christian commitments and reasonable approach to religion and politics fashioned his hopes for African advancement in a multi-racial society. He believed that Christianity would elevate the African to leadership on the world platform and educate whites out of their racial prejudice. While Todd was initially paternalistic toward Africans his reasonableness eventually helped him to realize that all blacks had the right to franchise and self-determination and that they should demand it. At peril to his own

life and status Todd took up a prophetic role to goad white leaders in Africa, Britain, and across the world to help Zimbabwe to achieve its independence. When most retire from public life Todd, recognizing his status, continued with the prophetic role when the Mugabe government began limiting the rights of all Zimbabweans.

Clearly one of the most significant figures of Africa in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Todd's life, rhetoric and support for African rights still speak to the present as Zimbabwe and Africa face a daunting but important future on the world stage.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For current scholarship on Todd see Weiss; Mungazi; Hancock; West; Chanaiwa; and Hokonui. I am preparing a volume that will include Todd's best sermons and speeches along with a rhetorical analysis of Todd's speaking. The book will be published by Baylor University Press and will be one of the inaugural volumes in Baylor's new religion and rhetoric series.

<sup>2</sup> On James A. Garfield's religious background see Ringenberg.

<sup>3</sup> This rare pamphlet can be found at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

<sup>4</sup> The logic text was either Elementary Lessons in Logic: Deductive and Inductive.1882 or The Principles of Science: A Treatise on Logic and Scientific Method.1920.

<sup>5</sup> The 1964 UN speech can be found in United Nations, United Nations.

<sup>6</sup> In a further irony Noyse Dube the polling agent in Bulawayo who kept Todd from voting was a former student and headmaster at Dadaya Mission. Todd had married Dube's parents. See "Sir Garfield."

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