

ADDITIONS, INTEGRATIONS, CORRECTIONS AND SUPPLEMENTS TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ARNOLD JOSEPH TOYNBEE*

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Addition to Part I,
Works by Arnold J. Toynbee

1949

Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *The Role of Christianity in International Affairs*, in Arnold J. Toynbee, Charles H. Malik, Charles W. Ranson, W.A. Visser 't Hooft, John Foster Dulles, *Christian Responsibility in World Affairs – A Symposium under the Auspices of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs*, New York, C.C.I.A., April 1949, pp. 5-6.

* *A Bibliography of Arnold J. Toynbee*, compiled by S. Fiona Morton, with a Foreword by Veronica M. Toynbee, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980.

NOTE TO THE TEXT

The text reproduced below (with some slight alterations of punctuation) was an abstract of the first of five addresses given by prominent members of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs to a meeting of the Commission held in New York on April 29, 1949.

According to the *Introduction* (signed by Kenneth G. Grubb and O. Frederick Nolde, respectively the Chairman and the Director of the C.C.I.A.), «In the spring of 1949, a combination of circumstances brought to the New York area¹, from various parts of the world, Christian leaders who hold membership on the International Affairs Commission. Their statements, made at an informal dinner on April 29, stressed the important part which Christians must play as the world seeks effective solution of its disturbing problems. In response to numerous requests these statements are now made available to a wider circle of readers»².

The topics of the other four addresses were *The Spiritual Implication of the Human Rights Covenant* (Charles H. Malik), *Christian Missions and World Order* (Charles W. Ranson), *An Ecumenical Approach to the Soviet-Western Tensions* (W.A. Visser 't Hooft), *The Churches and the United Nations* (John Foster Dulles).

The 21-pages booklet can be consulted in its entirety at <https://archive.org/details/christianrespons00comm/page/4/mode/2up>

¹ In the spring of 1949 Toynbee was staying at the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton.

² P. 4. The C.C.I.A. «was initially established in August of 1946, under the joint sponsorship of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Its constitution as a permanent agency was formally authorized by the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, August 22-September 4, 1948, and by the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Oegstgeest, September 7-10, 1948». The chief goal of the C.C.I.A. was «to serve the constituency of the parent bodies as a "source of stimulus and knowledge in their approach to international problems, as a medium of common counsel and action, and as their organ in formulating the Christian mind on world issues and in bringing that mind effectively to bear upon such issues" » (*ibid.*). The passage in inverted commas is drawn from the preamble to the *Charter* of the Commission (*Statement to the Churches. Adopted by the Cambridge Conference*, in «The Living Church. A Weekly Record of the News, the Work, and the Thought of the Episcopal Church», CXIII, September 1st, 1946, p. 28).

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIANITY IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS*

by Arnold J. Toynbee

Dr. Toynbee, internationally famous historian and author of the Study of History, is the Director of Studies for the Royal Institute of International Affairs and Research Professor in International History at the University of London. He was at the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey in the spring of 1949. Born in London in 1889, Dr. Toynbee graduated from Balliol College, Oxford, and did war service with the British Foreign office in both world wars.

Christianity has, of course, a role in all human affairs, because Christianity is concerned with the relation of human souls to God, and all human affairs are part of God's creation and God's kingdom.

Today we are specially concerned with the role of Christianity in international affairs, because politics in general, and international affairs in particular, are one of the slum areas of human life, in which human beings have been much less successful than in, for example, family affairs or technological affairs.

The present world-wide network of international relations is an expansion of the international relations of the Western European countries during the last four hundred years.

This modern secular system of international affairs arose out of the breakdown of the medieval attempt, in Western Christendom, to organize international affairs under the leadership of the Western Christian Church.

While it is true that the medieval Western Church failed mainly through its own fault, it is also true that the repudiation of the authority of religion in international relations is the main reason why international affairs have gone wrong. States, classes and ideologies have become objects of an idolatrous religious worship; hence the increasing violence of international conflicts.

The role of Christianity in international affairs should be to help Western man to recover his sense of the relative values of things. In so far as man re-transfers his worship back to God from the state or class or ideology to which he pays allegiance, he will find himself able,

* *An Abstract of Dr. Toynbee's Address.*

incidentally, to make a better job of politics—both domestic and international—than he has managed to make of them in modern times. Politics cannot be managed successfully unless they are subordinated to religion. There are alternative ways of making religion paramount, and we can profit from our medieval predecessors' experience by trying to avoid their mistakes.

Believing, as we do, that religion matters more than politics, let us turn our question around and ask ourselves: "What is the role of international affairs in the life of Christianity?"

Within the last four hundred years, the Western European network of international relations has spread from one tiny corner of the world over the whole face of the planet. This political and economic unification of the world has provided a world-wide field of action for Christianity – and also (I personally would add) for the other living higher religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam.

If, with the help of religion, mankind now succeeds in getting international relations under control, I believe that economics and politics will cease to be the absorbing interests of mankind, and that religion will become man's paramount interest again, as in the past.