

**The CHRISTIAN  
ALTERNATIVE  
TO WORLD CHAOS**

# The Christian Alternative to World Chaos

*by*

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*To my wife and children—  
my best critics*

## PREFACE

THE outbreak of another war in Europe has given tragic emphasis to the questions raised in this book. The peoples of the world passionately desire peace. The intimately interwoven fabric of modern civilized life across the world demands peace. And yet, as though by an inexorable fate, nations bend all their energies to prepare for war and ultimately whole peoples become locked in a titanic struggle. This takes place in the face of greatly increased efforts for peace. In fact, it would almost seem that the rate of war preparation is in direct ratio to the increase in sentiment for peace. How is this to be understood? Is there no way out? Is humanity condemned forever to this form of insanity? Or have we a right to hope for a more kindly day? We console ourselves by saying that Christianity has not failed but that we have failed. This is, of course, true but the fact remains that Christian teachings through two thousand years have failed to eliminate war and supplant chaos with order on a world scale. As

Christians we cannot escape this fact and we cannot avoid the problem which it presents, viz., is there a Christian alternative to this world chaos with its ever recurring wars?

The problem is at once one of new ideas and of new political organization. Ideas without organization are disembodied spirits and of little use in a practical world. On the other hand, organizations with false ideas behind them or without the backing of adequate ideas are either destructive of human values or ineffective. The Christian task is therefore threefold. It is to examine existing ideas in the light of our Christian faith; to help create new ideas in order to bring about a changed moral climate across the world; and also to seek to discover what changes are demanded in political organizations in order to give effect to the Christian world view. It is from this viewpoint that I have discussed the questions raised in this book. I have attempted an analysis of the problem and have discussed the reasons for the apparent failure of most of our peace efforts. I have offered suggestions for a solution which I hope may stimulate the thinking and planning of others for it is not too much to say that the fate of civilization itself hangs on some solution of the problem which is here discussed.

I am greatly indebted to the friends named below who have been good enough to read this book, either in manuscript or in galley proof, and whose criticisms and suggestions have been most helpful: Roswell P. Barnes, Mrs. Sanford E. Cobb, Franklin D. Cogswell, William Bancroft Hill, Leslie B. Moss, F. M. Potter, Esther B. Strong and A. L. Warnshuis.

LUMAN J. SHAFER.

*Summit, New Jersey,  
November 21, 1939.*

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## I

### WHY NOT PEACE?

ONCE more men are marching. The last war was a war to end war but war is again upon us. Have the last twenty-five years taught us nothing? During these years the world has progressively become a physical neighborhood but it is today, even more than twenty-five years ago, a spiritual enemyhood. The world is a physical neighborhood but a spiritual enemyhood; it is a world where the same scientific genius that conquers time and distance also rapidly develops more and more deadly ways of killing these neighbors whom it has brought together. To add to these truly incredible contradictions, at the same time that these developments have taken place there has been a steady and rapid growth in peace sentiment and in organized efforts for peace. People as individuals in the various nations of the world have progressively come to realize as never before the horror and the comparative uselessness of war. They crave peace and organize strenuously for it, but these same people as nations proceed relentlessly

and with the utmost of scientific thoroughness to arm for war. This situation presents a major problem of modern times—a problem which must be solved and solved quickly.

It is not too much to say that upon the solution of the problem of war and peace the whole of modern civilization depends. It is apparent to everyone that complicated organized life across the world cannot survive these continued wars. But what is not generally realised is that an understanding of this fact, no matter how universal, will do little to avert the catastrophe unless fearless attempts are made, in the light of all available data, to analyze this problem and definite, specific steps are taken in the direction of a Christian solution. People crave peace; statesmen responsible for the policies of governments quite sincerely desire peace; but, nevertheless, as if by inexorable fate, people and statesmen alike are driven by the present world situation to engage in staggering preparations for war, and sooner or later they find themselves launched into the brutal reality of war itself. This is the problem of peace which is faced by the modern world.

Is there some distinctive contribution which Christian conviction has to make in this critical situation? Christians believe that the world is

not in the hands of an inexorable fate, but is under the governance of a loving God. We cannot believe that this *impassé* of our modern world, which seems to be moving like a drama to its inevitable, tragic end, is in harmony with God's purpose of love and good will. What, then, has our Christian faith to say in this emergency? Is there any special significance in the fact that, parallel with this modern process which has made the world into an interdependent neighborhood, and also a vast enemyhood, the world-wide Christian fellowship has been developing? This fellowship cuts across national lines and has resulted in the growth of a Christian community "whose bounds are coextensive with the habitable (inhabited)<sup>1</sup> world." Is there any significance for the problem of peace in the fact that a conference, made up of representatives of sixty different national groups, some of them nations actually at war, met in December 1938, at Madras, India, on the common platform of faith in Christ? Has Christianity in this form of world unity "come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" If we believe that this may be the case how, specifi-

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<sup>1</sup> We have learned from Dr. John Mackay, the Chairman of the Commission at Oxford, from whose report this phrase is taken, that the word "habitable" should have been "inhabited."

cally, shall it be made to contribute to a solution of the problem of peace? If an adequate answer to these questions can be found hope will be possible in the midst of this critical situation.

Developments which have taken place in the means of transportation and in important news facilities, together with the growth of a highly interdependent industrial system with its attendant business organization and foreign investment, have revolutionized the world in which we live. It is difficult even yet to realize how rapidly and how completely distance and time have been conquered. The strange, slow world, so recently left behind, was brought back in our imagination at the time of the opening of the New York World's Fair when Denys Wortman, impersonating George Washington, repeated the first President's journey by stage coach from Mt. Vernon to New York for his first inaugural. The fastest stage coach, one hundred and fifty years ago, took eighteen days to go from Boston to Savannah, Georgia. In one day one could barely get beyond the bounds of Massachusetts. Not only was travel painfully slow but it was also laborious and limited to a few people. Two stage-coaches could take all the passengers to leave Boston in a given day. Travel by water was also slow and even more uncertain than travel

by land. The sail or the oar had been the sole method of propulsion for ocean and river craft for centuries. People travelled little and places fifty miles away were unbelievably remote. Each community was self-contained. Even in the most advanced countries most families raised their own food, wove cloth and made their own clothing, and built their own homes. What a different world we live in today! We can scarcely realize that the revolution in transportation which has given us our closely knit modern life began, as time is reckoned in the life of the human race, only yesterday. The beginning of the vast network of railroads which crosses the land areas of the earth dates from 1825,<sup>2</sup> only a little over a century ago. The first Atlantic crossing by a steamship was made from Rotterdam to the West Indies in 1827 and the journey took 30 days.<sup>3</sup> The celebration this year (1939) of the one hundredth anniversary of the Cunard Steamship Company emphasizes the fact that all the amazing refinements of steam boat travel have taken place within one brief century.

But while the basic changes brought about by the development of the railroad and steamship

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<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

took place in a single century, the more drastic revolution produced by the airplane has occurred within the last twenty-five years. We are now in the midst of this development. Almost every day the newspaper brings its report of radical advances in this type of travel. It was only in July of this year that the first round trip airplane crossing of the North Atlantic with paid passengers was made. Twelve passengers and a crew of eleven were carried and the crossing from Horta was made in eighteen hours. One passenger, who was on the first eastward flight of the Atlantic Clipper, continued on around the world making the journey by commercial air lines in sixteen days at a cost of only two thousand, five hundred dollars. On August 2, 1939, the United States Army Air Corps, with fifteen hundred planes in the air, celebrated only the thirtieth anniversary of the Army's purchase of the first airplane. The first plane weighed eight hundred pounds, carried a twenty-five horse-power engine, and went about forty-seven miles an hour. The new Boeings in use today weigh thirty tons, develop four thousand horse-power, and have speeds well over three hundred miles an hour. Each year records new advances.

How swift has been this development in trans-

portation is illustrated by the following table: <sup>4</sup>

*Fastest Passenger*

<i>Traffic</i>	<i>1910</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>1937</i>
Berlin-London		24 hrs.	5 hrs.
Berlin-New York	8/10 days	5 days	5 days
Berlin-Buenos Aires		18 days	3 days (post)
Berlin-Sydney		6 weeks	9 days

In the two years since this table was prepared the time between the United States and Europe has been still further cut to about twenty-four hours. While the time span of the thirteen colonies was from fifteen to twenty days, today one can cross the whole of the United States in less than one day, go to any part of South America in two days and in ten days encircle the globe.

Someone has figured out mathematically that in terms of the length of time required to travel any given distance, either on land or sea, today as compared with fifty years ago, the earth has shrunk from the size of a football to the size of an English walnut.<sup>5</sup> This shrinking process with every advance of science is still going on.

A development which is still more revolu-

<sup>4</sup> Von der Gablentz, O. H., *The Universal Church and the World of Nations*, Chicago: Willett, Clarke & Co., page 69. Quoted by permission.

<sup>5</sup> Randall, John Herman, *A World Community*, Frederick A. Stokes Company, pages 21 and 22. Used by permission.



tionary in its effect upon human life is that which has taken place in the transmission of news. In the days of the stage-coach news and men travelled at the same speed. Weeks elapsed before an event taking place at one extremity of the American Colonies could be known at the other. News from other countries of the world was infrequent and out-of-date. The battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812 was fought after the peace treaty had been signed in Europe. Today the transmission of news is so complete that an event taking place at one point on the earth's surface is known almost immediately everywhere else in the world. The radio has brought about such a further revolution that the actual progress of an event can be followed in the homes of all the world. During the week-end preceding the declaration of war in Europe the families of the world in their own homes, separated by thousands of miles of sea and land, followed with the utmost tenseness the progress of events. The world crises of to-day are not learned about after the event: they are participated in as the event is taking place.

It is no longer possible under these circumstances for a nation to proceed with its policies in isolation. Its operations are an open book for all men to read. Every action must be taken