



## For God and Globe: Christian Internationalism in the United States between the Great War and the Cold War (The United States in the World)

By Michael G. Thompson

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### **For God and Globe: Christian Internationalism in the United States between the Great War and the Cold War (The United States in the World) By**

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*For God and Globe* recovers the history of an important yet largely forgotten intellectual movement in interwar America. Michael G. Thompson explores the way radical-left and ecumenical Protestant internationalists articulated new understandings of the ethics of international relations between the 1920s and the 1940s. Missionary leaders such as Sherwood Eddy and journalists such as Kirby Page, as well as realist theologians including Reinhold Niebuhr, developed new kinds of religious enterprises devoted to producing knowledge on international relations for public consumption. *For God and Globe* centers on the excavation of two such efforts—the leading left-wing Protestant interwar periodical, *The World Tomorrow*, and the landmark Oxford 1937 ecumenical world conference. Thompson charts the simultaneous peak and decline of the movement in John Foster Dulles's ambitious efforts to link Christian internationalism to the cause of international organization after World War II.

Concerned with far more than foreign policy, Christian internationalists developed critiques of racism, imperialism, and nationalism in world affairs. They rejected exceptionalist frameworks and eschewed the dominant "Christian nation" imaginary as a lens through which to view U.S. foreign relations. In the intellectual history of religion and American foreign relations, Protestantism most commonly appears as an ideological ancillary to expansionism and nationalism. *For God and Globe* challenges this account by recovering a movement that held Christian universalism to be a check against nationalism rather than a boon to it.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"Written with sophisticated grasp of happenings on multiple shores, from a purview that encompasses myriad intellectual trends and political sympathies, Michael G. Thompson's stellar book captures a fascinating juncture in time—the interwar period—when a cohort of illustrious thinkers articulated (and acted out) the virtues of internationalism, and rejected the trappings and egocentrism of the nation state for a new world order of inclusion and exchange. Considering our own discordant moment, when simplistic religious nationalisms predominate and notions of American exceptionalism still hold sway, Thompson's is both a refreshing and convicting tale, one that enriches our understanding of a dynamic past, when community building was earnestly grappled with on a universal scale, and sheds critical light on the limiting ambitions of our present."—Darren Dochuk, University of Notre Dame, author of *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*

"*For God and Globe* is a wonderfully fresh and vital work on Protestant internationalism, in all its political complexity, from the end of World War I to the end of World War II and the cusp of the Cold War. Michael G. Thompson reacquaints us with a lost world of religious internationalism that we really need to remember. Thompson's coverage of the major international ecumenical meetings in the 1920s and 1930s is superb and also truly important."—Douglas Rossinow, Metropolitan State University, author of *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America*

"*For God and Globe* establishes that liberal Protestant initiatives of the interwar decades were much more adamantly anti-imperialist and antiracist than previous scholars recognized. Michael G. Thompson also shows that these initiatives by American and British ecumenical leaders constituted a coherent and highly independent movement that owed little to Woodrow Wilson, and that was twisted in imperialist directions by John Foster Dulles. This book is a strikingly original, compellingly argued refutation of the widespread assumption that America's national and imperial designs have rested easily on a Protestant foundation from Puritan times to the present. Thompson reminds us that Protestantism's implications for America's role in the world have been vigorously contested."—David A. Hollinger, University of California, Berkeley, author of *After Cloven Tongues of Fire*

### About the Author

Michael G. Thompson is Research Associate and Adjunct Lecturer at the United States Studies Centre of the University of Sydney.

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