

# DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

## Chapter 1 : christ and culture | Download eBook PDF/EPUB

*The transformationist theology of Helmut Richard Niebuhr: an examination and interpretation of Niebuhr's theology in light of the role and significance of his model, Christ the transformer of culture.*

More than half a century ago, in 1939, H. Richard Niebuhr gave a series of lectures at the University of Chicago. These lectures formed the basis for a subsequent book, *Christ and Culture*, published in 1941. The book quickly became a classic textbook which has been, and continues to be, used in countless college and seminary courses. The fiftieth anniversary of this old classic, which was commemorated by the release of a new edition, brought a new level of intensity to the debates and criticisms that have been generated by the book. In the wake of Nazism and fascism, the horrors of the holocaust and World War II, the new threat of international communism, and the specter of new forms of warfare brought about by the use of the atomic bomb, many leaders were caught up in a debate over how best to build a civilization free from prejudice, intolerance, and totalitarianism. After acknowledging that there has never been a singular answer among Christians to the problem, he sketches his five-type taxonomy to demonstrate that understanding and evaluating the relationships of Christianity to culture is much more complex and variegated than many cultural despisers of Christianity have supposed. With each type, Niebuhr includes a short catalogue of strengths and weaknesses. Christians using this model consider the world outside of the church to be hopelessly corrupted by sin. Niebuhr considers the impulse to separate from culture to be a necessary, but ultimately inadequate, position. Jesus is seen as the embodiment of the greatest human aspirations, as the ultimate hero of human culture, as representing the very best which culture can give. In short, the very best of human achievement is Christ, and therefore there is little or no difference between loyalty to Christ and the best a particular culture has to offer. According to Niebuhr, examples of this type include early Gnostics, Abelard, eighteenth-century rationalists such as John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and Thomas Jefferson, and liberal theologians such as Albrecht Ritschl. Christ is Lord of both this world and of the other—the two cannot be entirely separated. The complexity of Christ as both human and divine is analogous to the complexity within culture, a realm of the holy and the sinful. Christ enters culture from above with gifts that human aspiration has not envisioned and which human effort cannot attain unless he relates humans to a supernatural society and a new value-center. Examples named by Niebuhr include early apologists such as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and the medieval theologian, Thomas Aquinas. Niebuhr identifies proponents as dualists for the way they recognize the reality of both law and grace, wrath and mercy, revelation and reason, time and eternity. Despite the ongoing reality of sin and corruption within culture, Christians simultaneously operate within both realities recognizing that life will be filled with inevitable contradictions. The most prominent example of this type is the leader of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther. Culture is perceived critically as perverted good, but not as inherently evil. Conversion makes it possible for human beings and culture to move from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness. Niebuhr claims Augustine, John Calvin, and F. Maurice as examples of this type. But ideas of the book are not for these reasons beyond criticism. The fifth type appropriates the positive values of the previous four and attempts to correct some of their shortcomings; it is not coincidental that the last type is the only one not subjected to extensive critique. The primary actors in his taxonomy are individual Christians; the church is simply seen as a collection of individual Christians who are active in culture. By culture, Niebuhr means the total process of human activity and the total result of such activity to which now the name culture, now the name civilization, is applied in common speech.

# DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

## Chapter 2 : The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy by H. Richard Niebuhr

*The transformationist theology of Helmut Richard Niebuhr [microform]: an examination and interpretation of Niebuhr's theology in light of the role and significance of his model, Christ the.*

Ottati teaches at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. He is the author of *Reforming Protestantism: This article appeared in The Christian Century, April 2, , pp. Copyright by The Christian Century Foundation; used by permission. Current articles and subscription information can be found at www. A radically monotheistic faith resists devotion to lesser gods and critiques our loyalties to values that are less than universal. Theology, History, and Culture: Major Unpublished Writings, by H. Edited by William Stacy Johnson. Foreword by Richard R. Niebuhr Yale University Press, pp. Wherever one turns in H. It does not revolutionize our estimate of his theology, but rather offers a chance to ponder the coherence of his thought and the significance of his legacy. Niebuhr found his theological voice during the s as he came to believe that the Social Gospel, with its focus on human striving, was insufficiently centered on God. In an essay included here, "The Kingdom of God and Eschatology in the Social Gospel and in Barthianism," he credits Karl Barth with recovering the priority of divine action in history. Elsewhere, Niebuhr claims that God is "the structure in things," the "creative will" that orders our interactions with others. He also notes that people are creatures of faith and that faith is a relation to an object. Human life is oriented by passionate apprehensions of centers of meaning and value and, whether we realize it or not, we always interact with the creative will and activity of God. The church has been infiltrated by these social faiths. Its emancipation from cultural bondage therefore waits upon a true apprehension of God, as well as a genuine faith in God capable of criticizing and reconstructing our practical lives. In *The Meaning of Revelation* Niebuhr regarded the fiduciary character of human life, this seed of religion, with deliberate ambivalence. God discloses Godself in and through the story of Israel and Jesus Christ. As this story becomes our own, and as we grapple in our lives with this true object of devotion, our identities and practical stances are criticized and reconstructed. The disclosure of God transforms our narrow faiths, challenging our preconceptions of divine unity, power and goodness. Whereas we ordinarily seek the transcendent to ratify our cherished beliefs, the God of Jesus Christ is opposed to the idols we make of self, nation, race or economic production. Therefore "revelation is the beginning of a revolution in our power thinking and our power politics. This is why the encounter with God in Christ creates a new beginning for our practical reasoning. Niebuhr examined World War II as an event interpreted by different communities in the light of different interests, but which should also be interpreted in terms of the faithful working of God. Specifically, he claimed that God was acting in the war to judge and thereby correct our wrong actions. The war is like a crucifixion the suffering of the innocent calls us to repent of having elevated our own cherished values into idols, protected our own isolated causes and goods at the expense of others, and deployed our powers in the service of our partial interests and devotions. In *Christ and Culture* Niebuhr explored how faith in the God who comes to us in Jesus Christ relates to the many values, activities and aims recommended by our cultures. How shall we regard loyalty to the nation, to education or to the arts in light of loyalty to Jesus Christ and his cause? Niebuhr outlined five ways that Christians typically resolve this perennial question, but his analysis was not neutral. He preferred a "transformationist" position that was in accord with his earlier reflections about faith, ethics and revelation: Much of what this means was spelled out in *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* In the West, Niebuhr wrote, human faiths have taken three forms. Polytheism is committed to different causes in different contexts; persons and things are valued for their contributions to diverse ends. A third form of faith, radical monotheism, emerged in Israel and in Jesus Christ. This faith apprehends that God the creator, the power of being, is also the redeemer or the center of value. Therefore the community of moral concern is no longer a closed society or limited group but the entire community of being. Relations among God and all creatures are seen to be matters of covenantal responsibility. Radical faith conflicts with the other forms. In politics, for example, henotheists judge people in light of loyalties to a*

particular nation or race. Polytheists estimate persons by their unequal contributions to knowledge, economic production or the arts. But radical monotheists insist on equality because all people are equally related to the one universal center of value. From this perspective, it seems clear that whenever politics capitulates to lesser devotions, justifications for gross manipulations, injustice and oppression follow close behind. Again, radical monotheists also protest whenever loyalty to God is displaced by devotion to holy communities and their artifacts. In *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry*, Niebuhr contended that, in the name of radical faith, Christians need to oppose narrower ecclesiocentric, bibliocentric and even christocentric loyalties. As Niebuhr observed in a manuscript posthumously published as *Faith on Earth: An Inquiry into the Structure of Human Faith*, "questions about faith arise in every area of life. Faith enters the picture because different faiths support different visions of the total interaction, the context in which we respond. For example, where a nationalistic commitment predominates, we envision ourselves in the midst of interactions with the nation and other loyalists to its cause. Radical faith supports a radical discernment: This total interaction or context for our responses might easily be understood as one of constant threat, inevitable decline, decay and death. Very often, in fact, we see ourselves as perishing and surrounded by foes. But in Jesus Christ, says Niebuhr, we are enabled to reinterpret our situation as part of the universal history of a divine activity that destroys only to re-establish and renew. The story of crucifixion and resurrection, judgment and redemption, furnishes the horizon for an ethic of confident responsibility rather than defensive, self-maintenance and survival. The "Theology" section includes three Cole Lectures delivered at Vanderbilt in 1954—essays which are as important as anything he wrote for understanding his approach to the discipline. The first lecture calls for a balance between liberal critiques of received tradition and neo-orthodox recoveries, as well as a balance between the pragmatic tendency to locate the truth of theology in its consequences and the objectivist insistence that theology simply conveys knowledge of God. In the "History" section we find Niebuhr affirming that the study of history is the necessary accompaniment of theological inquiry, and that for the Christian, history centers on the rule of God. Nonetheless, says Niebuhr, the task of theology is not only to expose our social system as a betrayal of God, but also to make a transition from God the enemy to God the companion and savior. In the writings on "Culture" we find Niebuhr stating his familiar convictions that faith in God entails the rejection of all ecclesiastical, political and economic absolutes, and that the idea of original sin supports the balancing and limitation of all powers. The volume closes with three sermons. With this in mind, we may briefly consider how his legacy has survived in three prominent strands of contemporary theology. One strand is represented by Gordon D. Kaufman. Like Niebuhr, Kaufman emphasizes that Western religions have ordered human life largely in terms of a radically monotheistic framework. Like Niebuhr, he underscores the distinction between God and idols. He believes that the self-sacrificial image of Jesus Christ is a vivid emblem of a humane orientation in life, and he claims that the chief responsibility of theology is to deal seriously and critically with the question of God. But for Kaufman the symbol or concept "God" is principally defined by its role in enabling us to imaginatively bind together our world into a meaningful whole in the face of mystery. The name "God" means the ultimate point of reference in terms of which we picture everything else. It does not refer to an experienced object or encountered reality so much as it serves to focus our consciousness, devotion and work by means of a vision that turns us toward genuine responsibility and human fulfillment. The object of theological inquiry is constantly in danger of being reduced to the "name" God and the way it functions to orient human life. And for Kaufman, the criteria for assessing theological ideas are therefore almost entirely pragmatic. By contrast, Niebuhr maintained that faith apprehends the actuality of our existence in, with and before God—that theological ideas not only order human life, but also refer to experienced realities. And here, I think, we come to a question that challenges the viability of a theology conceived as imaginative construction: Granted that religious symbols and frameworks function to orient people in the world, could they do so if we believed that this were their only meaning? Another prominent strand of theology is represented by theologians of the Yale school who are influenced by the works of Hans W. Frei and George Lindbeck. Their focus is not on imaginative construction but on what they call the "realistic narratives" in scripture that render characters and

circumstances in mutual interaction. Somewhat like novels, the story or stories of scripture depict characters and personalities, such as "God" and "Christ. They also look to the story of Jesus Christ for the pattern in light of which to understand divine activity. The danger in narrative theology is, again, that the object of theology will be drastically reduced—this time to an interpretive framework centered on the narratively rendered character "God" and the way it functions to order our lives and our visions of the world. There are ways to resist the reduction of Christian belief to a narrativist scriptural pragmatism. One might endeavor to show how the narratively rendered portrait of God both responds to and illumines actual encounters in the world. Or one might try to indicate how the biblical portrait of God and the interpretive framework that it anchors can reinterpret situations and realities that are also interpreted by other, particular frameworks. And the second requires an effort in apologetics, an attempt to achieve broader intelligibility, that is not generally a focus of the narrative school. Most important for our purposes, Gustafson argues that the classic symbols of God as Creator, Sustainer, Judge and Redeemer both express and interpret patterns of our experience in the world. He indicates how we encounter God as the Other in and through the many others in our experiences. For example, he suggests that we encounter God as Creator in and through our experiences of given limits and possibilities, and that we apprehend God as Redeemer in and through experiences of release from conditions of fatedness as well as reconciling forgiveness. He also shows how theology can intelligibly redescribe and reinterpret situations and realities that are described and interpreted from other perspectives as well. How, in the midst of our typically anthropocentric devotions, does God become our primary object of concern? For Niebuhr, this is the problem of the transformation of our ordinary human faiths, and he addresses it by pointing to the pattern of Jesus Christ in our history. To be sure, Gustafson also notes that Jesus incarnates theocentric piety. But his comments are sparse, and one wonders whether his theocentrism owes more to an originating christological pattern than he sometimes acknowledges. Today we confront challenges different from the ones that Niebuhr faced: But at least one question remains as basic and elemental for us as it was for Niebuhr: Is the object of our theological inquiry the actuality of life in, with and before the living God, or have we pushed this primary reality aside?

# DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

## Chapter 3 : Christ And Culture Torchbooks | Download PDF EPUB eBook

*Helmut Richard Niebuhr (September 3, - July 5, ) is considered one of the most important Christian theological ethicists in 20th century America, most known for his book Christ and Culture and his posthumously published book The Responsible Self.*

Domestic[ edit ] During the s, Niebuhr was a prominent leader of the militant faction of the Socialist Party of America , although he disliked die-hard Marxists. He described their beliefs as a religion and a thin one at that. However, he opposed the Vietnam War. Niebuhr began to distance himself from the pacifism of his more liberal colleagues and became a staunch advocate for the war. Niebuhr soon left the Fellowship of Reconciliation , a peace-oriented group of theologians and ministers, and became one of their harshest critics. This departure from his peers evolved into a movement known as Christian realism. Niebuhr is widely considered to have been its primary advocate. As a writer popular in both the secular and the religious arena and a professor at the Union Theological Seminary, he was very influential both in the United States and abroad. He renounced his socialist connections and beliefs and resigned from the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation. He based his arguments on the Protestant beliefs that sin is part of the world, that justice must take precedence over love, and that pacifism is a symbolic portrayal of absolute love but cannot prevent sin. Morrison and his followers strongly supported the movement to outlaw war that began after World War I and the Kellogg-Briand Pact of The pact was severely challenged by the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in With his publication of Moral Man and Immoral Society , Niebuhr broke ranks with The Christian Century and supported interventionism and power politics. He supported the reelection of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in and published his own magazine, Christianity and Crisis. Traditionally, the idea of the frailty of man led to the demand for obedience to ordained authority. But Niebuhr rejected that ancient conservative argument. Ordained authority, he showed, is all the more subject to the temptations of self-interest, self-deception and self-righteousness. Power must be balanced by power. He persuaded me and many of my contemporaries that original sin provides a far stronger foundation for freedom and self-government than illusions about human perfectibility. His warnings against utopianism, messianism and perfectionism strike a chord today We cannot play the role of God to history, and we must strive as best we can to attain decency, clarity and proximate justice in an ambiguous world. But very few of those whom I have called "atheists for Niebuhr" follow this inverted logic to its conclusion: We may admire them for drawing the line somewhere, but certainly not for their consistency. Unlike most clergymen in politics, Dr. Niebuhr is a pragmatist. They let their hearts run away with their heads. For example, he has always been the leading liberal opponent of pacifism. In that period before we got into the war when pacifism was popular, he held out against it steadfastly. He is also an opponent of Marxism. Stealing atomic secrets is an unprecedented crime. During the s, Niebuhr spoke out against the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in Detroit, which had recruited many members threatened by the rapid social changes. The Klan proposed positions that were anti-black, anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic. Niebuhr attributed the injustices of society to human pride and self-love and believed that this innate propensity for evil could not be controlled by humanity. Like Edmund Burke , Niebuhr endorsed natural evolution over imposed change and emphasized experience over theory. Though vehemently opposed to racial inequality, Niebuhr adopted a conservative position on segregation. He warned against imposing changes that could result in violence. The violence that followed peaceful demonstrations in the s forced Niebuhr to reverse his position against imposed equality; witnessing the problems of the Northern ghettos later caused him to doubt that equality was attainable. It was exacerbated by the revival of the Ku Klux Klan , which recruited many members in Detroit. Niebuhr defended pluralism by attacking the Klan. This sermon urged people to vote against mayoral candidate Charles Bowles , who was being openly endorsed by the Klan. The Catholic incumbent, John W. Smith , won by a narrow 30, votes. Niebuhr preached against the Klan and helped to influence its decline in political power in Detroit. I do not deny that all religions are periodically corrupted by

## DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

bigotry. Let us repent of our own We are admonished in Scripture to judge men by their fruits, not by their roots; and their fruits are their character, their deeds and accomplishments. I hope there will be a massive demonstration of all the citizens with conscience in favor of the elemental human rights of voting and freedom of assembly" Niebuhr, March 19, King has the right and a duty, as both a religious and a civil rights leader, to express his concern in these days about such a major human problem as the Vietnam War. His solution to anti-Semitism was a combination of a Jewish homeland, greater tolerance, and assimilation in other countries. As early as , he advocated the expulsion of Arabs from Palestine and their resettlement in other Arab countries. His position may have related to his religious conviction that life on earth is imperfect, and his concern about German anti-Semitism. Niebuhr questioned whether a humane, "ironical" interpretation of American history was credible on its own merits, or only in the context of a Christian view of history. American idealism, he believed, comes in two forms: He said the non-interventionists, without mentioning Harry Emerson Fosdick by name, seek to preserve the purity of their souls, either by denouncing military actions or by demanding that every action taken be unequivocally virtuous. They exaggerate the sins committed by their own country, excuse the malevolence of its enemies and, as later polemicists have put it, inevitably blame America first. Niebuhr argued this approach was a pious way to refuse to face real problems. Serenity Prayer Niebuhr claimed he wrote the short Serenity Prayer. God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, And the wisdom to know the difference.

# DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

## Chapter 4 : Reinhold Niebuhr - Wikipedia

*The younger brother of the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, Helmut was educated at Elmhurst (Ill.) College, Eden Theological Seminary (St. Louis, Mo.), Washington University, Yale Divinity School, and Yale University, where he was one of the first students to receive a Ph.D. in religion ().*

For our session this afternoon, you may be wondering: Dionne and David Brooks, for three or four years, have been saying we must do a session on Reinhold Niebuhr. We used to say we think you all should know about Niebuhr. And Obama went on for 25 minutes about his admiration for Reinhold Niebuhr. And then David did a column on Niebuhr and then we got an excuse to do Niebuhr. But we thought you wanted to know about him anyway. Bill has, if you look at his bio, written some very important books. One is called *The Masterless: Self and Society in Modern America*, which was the winner of a best-book award – the Merle Curti Award in intellectual history – in Remind me, Bill, who was Merle Curti? He was a great intellectual historian. From the University of Wisconsin. Dionne is going to read to us from about five different books by Niebuhr that he has stacked over here. How do you like that? I have a thriller on my list. Twenty, you gave me. Bill, we look forward. This is really quite a change. But I hope not. Do you have a song about that – suicide? So I think you will see some linkages. Niebuhr is a theologian. The occasion for this – the hook – is this discussion between David Brooks and then-Senator Obama, which was in , actually. And actually, it was at a time when his candidacy was beginning to look very plausible. So that may or may not have any significance. Jimmy Carter notably did, and both before and after his election. And I think Niebuhr would have been, probably, no exception. I have a feeling you all would want to, and between E. There is a core to Niebuhr that seems to me carries through some three decades of concentrated work. You may not know much about him. But Niebuhr had an unusually long and productive career. He turned out many books, many articles; wrote journalistically; wrote highly, densely scholarly works. His importance in his time tells you something about his time. It was a time when theologians were important people. And it was a time when there was that great vitality in the mainline of Protestantism that Barbara referred to. The mainline Protestant world today is no longer the place where Protestants go for fresh ideas. The issues that he struggled with are quintessentially related to problems of advanced modernity, and science is one of them. Niebuhr upholds the idea of progress and remorselessly critiques it at the same time. But the interesting thing is what – to me anyway, as someone of conservative disposition – is what he leaves out, and that is preserving the things that need to be preserved. But it shows how thoroughgoing a progressive he was. It could be a first. Actually, a lot of his persuasiveness derives from the fact that this view is more complicated and adequate than its secular equivalents. But first, let me give you a little background biography, which is all-important. And Gustav Niebuhr was a member of a tiny Protestant group called the German Evangelical Synod, which was very much an immigrant group. He really grew up in a German-speaking enclave, which was actually rather common in that part of the Midwest – Missouri and Illinois in late 19th- or early 20th-century farm communities. By the way, an interesting side point: Jeremiah Wright belongs to. Reinhold inherited from his father this sense of pastoral vocation and a keen interest in social and political affairs. It arose out of a crisis within, particularly, Protestantism – although Catholicism had its own version of this – in response to industrialization and urbanization. In the Protestant case, particularly salient were the challenges to biblical authority rising out of these things, but more so out of Darwinism – Darwin and Darwinism. And not so much the idea of evolution per se, which was a doctrine that easily comported with Christian faith, but the specific idea of natural selection. It was the randomness of the process of natural selection that was viewed as particularly threatening. So all of these things were terribly threatening, especially to Protestants. Because the whole basis of the Protestant Reformation, to oversimplify grandly, was to see the authority of the Bible as overriding – as superseding – the authority of the historical institutional church. So that tremendous weight is placed on the authority of that text, and if its authority falls into question, then the entire foundation of Protestantism is threatened. So the social gospel was

## DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

one way of responding to this problem. Social gospelers were modernists. They had dismissed the notion that the Bible should be read authoritatively in the way that, say, fundamentalists – the fundamentalist movement was just getting going at this time – read the Bible, or even the historical creeds. But the social gospelers insisted that what they thought of as the heart of the Christian Gospel was very much valid and alive and worth preserving. It could be preserved by dispensing with these supernatural problematic elements and instead socializing the Gospel, i. They saw very little sense of antagonism between science and reform. And in the general optimism of the period, there were seen to be very few limits on what could be achieved. By the way, one of the ways American sociology differed dramatically from, say, German sociology is that from the very beginning it had an astonishingly religious content to it. Albion Small, who was the chairman of the department of sociology at the University of Chicago, the founder of the first sociology journal in the United States, the president of the American Sociological Association, and so on and so forth, wrote the following: And I think that certainly one of the things that one could speculate on is the degree to which Obama has been influenced by the social gospel, as I think his pastor Jeremiah Wright very clearly was. There is a lot of evidence that he has been. So definitely, echoes of the social gospel were there. So Niebuhr initially bought into this. He bought into the social gospel movement. It fit with his upbringing. It fit with his reformist inclinations. He became uneasy with the progressive movement. Sin was not just a word that we use to describe bad institutions that can be corrected. Sin, he thought, was something much deeper, an intrinsic part of the human condition, something that social reform was powerless to do much, if anything, about. And – I just had to throw this in for E. What was arguably his most important book came out in , with the revealing title *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. And the latter – the morality of groups – that morality was generally inferior to the morality of individuals. This was, he thought, a fixed condition, a fixed dynamic of human life. Individuals could, once in a while, in rare instances, transcend their self-interest for the sake of a larger good. But groups of individuals, especially groups like nations, never could. So in fact, groups made individuals worse rather than better because the work of collectives was invariably governed by a logic of self-interest. He thought sin was a better explanation. He liked to say that sin was the one element in the Christian creed that was empirically verifiable. And he also took aim – and I think this is more radical than people appreciate – he took aim at the very concept of socialization, which for the progressives was so central. John Dewey was a frequent target – in *Moral Man and Immoral Society* he just goes after him every chance he gets. Niebuhr thought almost the opposite was true. As I said before, men have little enough goodness in themselves and socialization makes them worse because the reason for being, for all social groups, is to pursue the shared self-interest of the members. So that self-interest is triumphant. He dismissed as sentimentality the progressive hope that the wages of individual sin could be overcome by intelligent reform and that there we could transform into a loving fellowship of like-minded comrades holding hands beside the campfire. Instead, the pursuit of good ends in the arenas of national and international politics had to take full account of the un-loveliness of human nature, and the un-loveliness of power. The implications for Christians who wanted to do good in the world were fairly stark in his view. They had to be willing to get their hands dirty – very dirty, for existing social relations were held together by coercion and only counter-coercion could change them. Then when they are able to successfully challenge and coerce a new peace, they impose another set of romantic and moral interpretations of the facts. His conclusion was that the exercise of power was always morally dangerous, but also always morally necessary. You had to act in the world. But in none of this is there a release from the moral requirements of Christianity. This rather stark view extends very much to the nation-state. And this was a response on his part to the social gospel, to the progressive movement and to a rather long strain in American ideas – progressive ideas – about solidarity. But to Niebuhr it was.

# DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

## Chapter 5 : Content Pages of the Encyclopedia of Religion and Social Science

*Helmut Richard Niebuhr (September 3, July 5, ) was one of the most important Christian theological-ethicists in 20th century America, most known for his book Christ and Culture and his posthumously published book The Responsible Self.*

His exposure, as a pastor in Detroit, to the problems of American industrialism led him to join the Socialist Party for a time. A former pacifist, he actively persuaded Christians to support the war against Hitler and after World War II had considerable influence in the U. His most-prominent theological work was *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, which was planned as a synthesis of the theology of the Reformation with the insights of the Renaissance. At an early age Reinhold Niebuhr decided to emulate his father and become a minister. Louis, Missouri, and completed his theological education at Yale University, receiving a bachelor of divinity degree and a master of arts. He was ordained to the ministry of the Evangelical Synod in Pastor and theologian Niebuhr served as pastor of Bethel Evangelical Church in Detroit from to His earliest writings exhibit the religious liberalism and social idealism that pervaded the theological atmosphere of the time. But his experience in Detroit—and especially his exposure to the American automobile industry before labour was protected by unions and by social legislation—caused him to become a radical critic of capitalism and an advocate of socialism. Niebuhr left the pastoral ministry in to teach at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where he served as professor of applied Christianity from and was a great intellectual and personal force until his retirement in In his *Moral Man and Immoral Society* he stressed the egoism and the pride and hypocrisy of nations and classes. Also, he was himself a hopeful political activist and emphasized the good that could be achieved if pretensions were overcome. Though he did much to encourage the revival of the theology of the Reformation, with its emphasis on sin and grace—so-called Neo-orthodoxy—his salient theological work, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 2 vol. His distance from the strongly Christocentric forms of Protestant Neo-orthodoxy can be seen in his unusual attitude toward the Jewish community. He was perhaps the first Christian theologian with ecumenical influence who developed a view of the relations between Christianity and Judaism that made it inappropriate for Christians to seek to convert Jews to their faith. Political activist His early political activities were influenced by his socialist convictions he was a founder of the Fellowship of Socialist Christians, and he ran for office several times on the Socialist ticket. In the s he broke with the Socialist Party over its pacifist or noninterventionist attitude in foreign policy, and in the s he became a left-wing, anti-Communist Democrat. He was a founder and for a time chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action and he was vice chairman of the Liberal Party in the state of New York. In the s he was much influenced by Marxist theory, but he rejected Marxist absolutism and both the tactics of Communists in the United States and Stalinism in the Soviet Union. He did much to persuade Christians influenced by pacifism to support the war against Hitler. He himself had been a pacifist as a result of his revulsion against World War I, but during the s he became the strongest theological opponent of any form of pacifism that claimed to have universally applicable nonviolent solutions of political problems. Identifying himself with the resistance to Hitler within Germany, he opposed a vindictive peace after World War II, and he had considerable influence with the policy planners in the U. His political activity ended during the early stage of the Cold War, but his later thought showed his capacity to transcend the outlook of that period. His book *The Irony of American History*, while justifying American anti-Communist policies, gave much attention to criticism of American messianism and the American tendency to engage in self-righteous crusades. He always attacked American claims to special virtue. Early he favoured the recognition by the United States of Communist China, and he was an early opponent of American participation in the Vietnam War. He regarded as an error attempts to impose U. A *Comparison of Christian and Modern Views of History*, a theological orientation; *The Self and the Dramas of History*, probably his profoundest philosophical work; and *The Structure of Nations and Empires*, his chief systematic discussion of international relations. Love and

## DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

Justice, ed. *A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defence*, a brief but comprehensive discussion of social ethics. Niebuhr was an editor of *The World Tomorrow*, a religious pacifist and socialist journal; *Christianity and Crisis*, a biweekly with wide-ranging social and religious concerns; and a quarterly, now discontinued, first named *Radical Religion* and later *Christianity and Society*. He married Ursula M. His wife was herself a teacher of religion at Barnard College in New York City, and they worked closely together. Many contemporary Christians trace their conviction that Christianity makes sense to the influence of his preaching. He was not a specialized scholar in any field, including theology, but his broad learning and his original and incisive thought made him the subject of many theses and other scholarly writings, and he exercised a seminal influence on scholarship and thought in a variety of fields.

# DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

## Chapter 6 : H. Richard Niebuhr - Wikipedia

*THEOLOGY OF H. RICHARD NIEBUHR* 55 ( )10 and *The Advancement of Theological Education* ( ) 11 resulted from the study. A related book, *The Ministry in Historical Perspective*<sup>2</sup> was edited by Niebuhr and Williams.

Helmut Richard Niebuhr The Protestant theologian Helmut Richard Niebuhr was one of the most original and perceptive American theologians of the 20th century. Richard Niebuhr was born in Wright City, Mo. Three of the Niebuhr children were to distinguish themselves in theology. Niebuhr graduated from Elmhurst College and Eden Theological Seminary and received his master of arts degree from Washington University. In 1917 Niebuhr was ordained to the ministry of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and served as pastor of a church in St. Louis. He taught at Eden Seminary from 1919 to 1921. He married Florence Marie Mittendorff in 1920. In 1921 Niebuhr matriculated at Yale University, receiving his bachelor of divinity degree from Yale Divinity School in 1922 and his doctorate the following year. He returned to Elmhurst College to serve as its president until 1924 and then went to Eden Seminary, where he taught until 1926. Niebuhr accepted a post as associate professor of Christian ethics at Yale Divinity School in 1926, where he spent the rest of his career. In 1930 he was promoted to the rank of professor, and in 1932 he became Sterling professor of theology and Christian ethics. His *The Kingdom of God in America* is a study of the central role played in American Protestant history by the biblical idea of the kingdom of God and how that idea underwent fundamental shifts of emphasis between 17th-century Puritanism and 20th-century Protestantism. In *The Meaning of Revelation* Niebuhr sought to articulate the Christian understanding of revelation—"the self-disclosure of God to man in Christ"—in the light of the relativity of human knowledge disclosed by modern investigation, especially in the social sciences. His next book, *Christ and Culture*, distinguished five basic ways of understanding the relationship between the lordship of Christ and human culture which have been used in the history of Christian thought: Christ against culture, the Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox, and Christ the transformer of culture. In 1934 Niebuhr directed a survey of theological education in the United States and Canada. The book is the fullest statement of his approach to Christian ethics, centering on the notion of Christian responsibility as the "fitting response" to other human beings and society arising out of a biblically grounded interpretation of what God is bringing about in the world of men. During his distinguished career Niebuhr was awarded many honorary degrees. He participated in ecumenical work, contributing to major study documents drawn up for World Council of Churches assemblies. He was an architect of the United Church of Christ, formed in 1937 by a merger of the Congregational Christian and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches, and helped draft its Statement of Faith. He died on July 5, 1952, in Greenfield, Mass. Further Reading Niebuhr has not been given the widespread and comprehensive attention he deserves as a leading American theologian. There are two full-length books on him: *The Theology of H. Niebuhr*, *The Promise of H.*

# DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

## Chapter 7 : christ and culture niebuhr ebook | Download eBook pdf, epub, tuebl, mobi

*The Protestant theologian Helmut Richard Niebuhr () was one of the most original and perceptive American theologians of the 20th century. On Sept. 3, , H. Richard Niebuhr was born in Wright City, Mo., the youngest of five children of a German immigrant Protestant minister, Gustav.*

His family moved to Lincoln, Illinois in 1880, and his Ph.D. He started his working career as a reporter in Lincoln, Illinois in 1900. He was ordained a minister in the Evangelical Synod in 1902, and served with that body in St. Louis, Missouri, through 1908. While living in St. Louis, he was the President of Elmhurst College. He taught at Yale from 1910 to 1920, specializing in theology and Christian ethics. Teachings[ edit ] Niebuhr was concerned throughout his life with the absolute sovereignty of God and the issue of historical relativism. He considered Karl Barth and Ernst Troeltsch to be his main influences. He accepted from Barth and neo-orthodoxy the absolute transcendence of God. He believed that God is above history, that he makes commands upon human beings, and that all history is under the control of this God. In this regard, Niebuhr held something of a middle ground between the dogmatic, confessional theology of Karl Barth and the philosophically oriented neo-liberalism of Paul Tillich. Niebuhr was also concerned with historical relativism. While God may be absolute and transcendent, human beings are not. Humans are a part of the flux and movement of the world. Because of this, how God is apprehended is never permanent. God is always understood differently by people at different times in history and in different social locations. His thought in some respects anticipated latter-day liberal Protestant concerns about pluralism and tolerance. However, in *The Kingdom of God in America*, he also criticized the liberal social gospel, describing its message as, "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross. In this capacity, his biggest concern was how human beings relate to God, to each other, to their communities, and to the world. His greatest ethical treatise is *The Responsible Self*, published shortly after his death. It was intended to be the seed of a much larger book on ethics. His sudden death prevented his writing this work. In *The Responsible Self*, Niebuhr dealt with human beings as responding agents. Human beings are always "in response" to some influence, whether another human being, a community, the natural order or history, or, above all, God. *Christ and Culture*[ edit ] His most famous work is *Christ and Culture*. In the book, Niebuhr gives a history of how Christianity has responded to culture. He outlines five prevalent viewpoints: For the exclusive Christian, history is the story of a rising church or Christian culture and a dying pagan civilization. For the synthesist, history is a period of preparation under law, reason, gospel, and church for an ultimate communion of the soul with God. *Christ and Culture in Paradox*. For the dualist, history is the time of struggle between faith and unbelief, a period between the giving of the promise of life and its fulfillment. Conversionists live somewhat less "between the times" and somewhat more in the divine "now" than do the followers listed above. Eternity, to the conversionist, focuses less on the action of God before time or life with God after time, and more on the presence of God in time. Hence the conversionist is more concerned with the divine possibility of a present renewal than with conservation of what has been given in creation or preparing for what will be given in a final redemption.

## Chapter 8 : Reinhold Niebuhr | American theologian | calendrierdelascience.com

*Helmut Richard Niebuhr was born in Wright City, Missouri and brought up in a German American Family. His father, Gustav Niebuhr, was a minister in the Evangelical Synod of North America. His older brother, Reinhold Niebuhr, became a leading Neo-orthodox and Realist ethicist and theologian.*

## Chapter 9 : Helmut Richard Niebuhr | American theologian | calendrierdelascience.com

## DOWNLOAD PDF THE TRANSFORMATIONIST THEOLOGY OF HELMUT RICHARD NIEBUHR

*This reissue of a twentieth-century classic by H. Richard Niebuhr emphasizes an understanding of God's revelation that takes seriously both the Bible itself and modern ideas about the nature of history.*