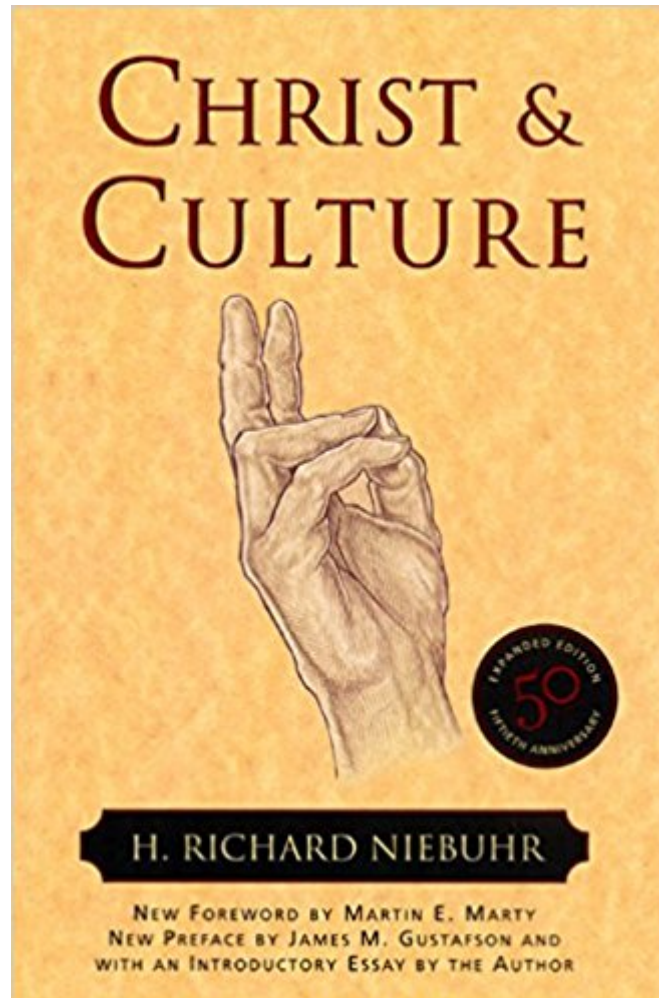




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Christ And Culture (Torchbooks)



Synopsis

This 50th-anniversary edition, with a new foreword by the distinguished historian Martin E. Marty, who regards this book as one of the most vital books of our time, as well as an introduction by the author never before included in the book, and a new preface by James Gustafson, the premier Christian ethicist who is considered Niebuhr's contemporary successor, poses the challenge of being true to Christ in a materialistic age to an entirely new generation of Christian readers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

H. Richard Niebuhr writes as a Christian, but this work has meaning beyond the scope of the Christian faith. Here, he analyzes how the sacred can relate to the profane, the spiritual to the mundane. After defining "Christ" (Mediator, involving double movement, from God toward man & from men toward God) and "Culture" (the artificial, secondary environment that man imposes on the natural), he dedicates a chapter to each of the five ways he sees the sacred & profane relating. The first of these, "Christ against Culture," focuses on the opposition of the sacred to the profane. He examines the *ekklesia*, or "calling out" inherent in the sacred (that which is set apart, beyond the horizon). He critiques this approach by showing how ultimately it leads to an otherworldly Christianity which can have minimal, if any impact on the world. Opposed to this is "The Christ of Culture." From this viewpoint, the sacred is discovered in culture. That which is most Christlike in culture is celebrated, the spiritual teachings which bring man into community, which find meaning in the "ordinary" take precedence. The danger of this approach, is that belief will merge with society,

and the sacred will be, eventually, completely lost. Adherents to the "Christ above Culture" motif compartmentalize the sacred and the profane. Christ is for church and bed-time prayers, culture is the realm of business. At best, spiritually informed morals guide behavior in culture. By compartmentalizing the sacred as separate from the profane, this approach de-vitalizes the profane and disempowers the sacred. The "Christ in Paradox with Culture" approach sees man as sinful and grounded in culture.

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