How Should Christians Interact with Culture?
H. Richard Niebuhr’s Christ and Culture

The year 2021 marks 70 years since the publication of H. Richard Niebuhr’s famous book Christ and Culture. Niebuhr identified five ways in which the church relates to culture, which have shaped virtually all subsequent discussion about the subject. In recent years, more and more Christian thinkers have been reflecting on this, providing thoughtful critiques of Niebuhr’s model and building on it to suggest more helpful ways of thinking about cultural engagement. This workshop will reflect on some of the most helpful of these approaches to see what we can learn about the most effective ways for us to engage culture today.

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# Niebuhr’s Christ and culture: setting the agenda

## Type I: Christ against culture

## Type II: The Christ of culture

## Type III: Christ above culture

## Type IV: Christ and culture in paradox

## Type V: Christ the transformer of culture

## Summary

# Critiques of Christ and culture

## Poor handling of Scripture

## Inadequate views of Christ, culture, and the church

## Problematic assumptions

## Examples do not fit the types well

# Alternative frameworks for relating to culture

## Josh Chatraw and Karen Swallow Prior

### Three important narratives for engaging culture

### Engaging culture virtuously

## Tim Keller

### Countercultural model

### Two kingdoms model

### Relevance model

### Transformation model

### Blending the insights from various models

# Resources:

Carson, D.A. *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2008).

Carter, Craig A. *Rethinking Christ and Culture : A Post-Christendom Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006).

Chatraw, Josh, and Swallow Prior, Karen. *Cultural Engagement : A Crash Course in Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019).

Keller, Timothy. *Loving the City : Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016).

Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture* Expanded 50th anniversary ed., (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2001).

Stackhouse, John G. *Making the Best of It : Following Christ in the Real World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Stassen, Glen H., Yeager, Diane M., and Yoder, John Howard. *Authentic Transformation : A New Vision of Christ and Culture* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

Watkins, Tony. Videos and articles on cultural engagement, including a series on *Christ and Culture*. < tonywatkins.uk/culturalengagement >