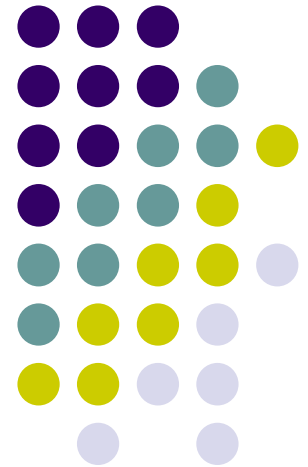


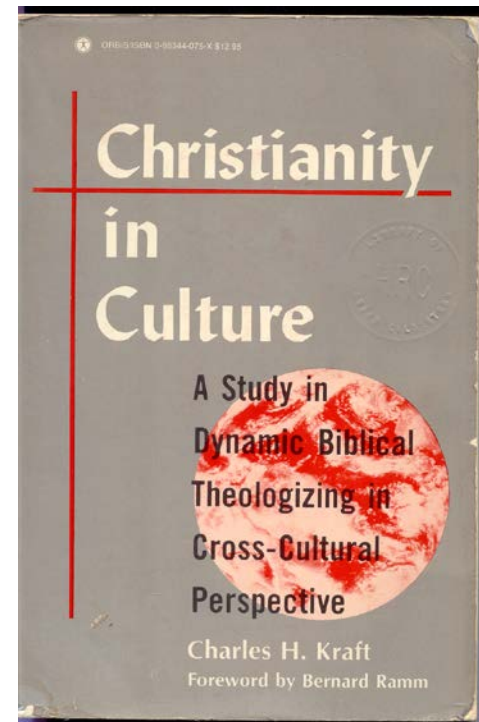
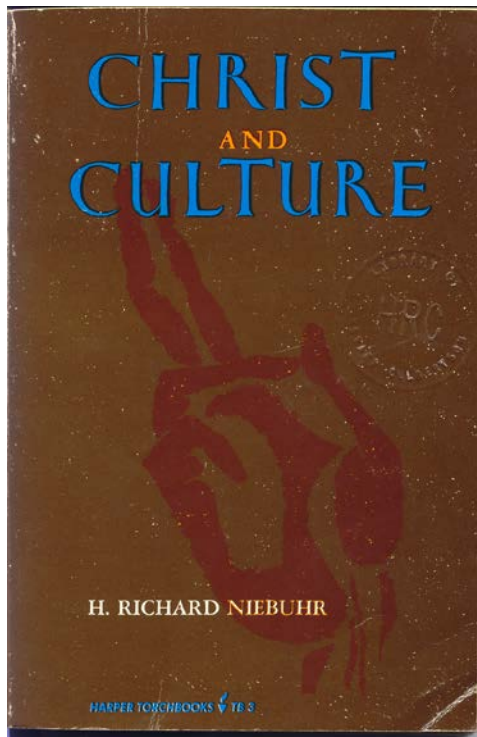
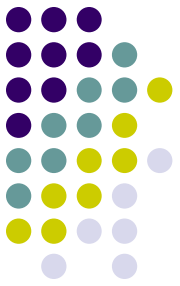
# Religion and culture: How religious people often view the larger culture

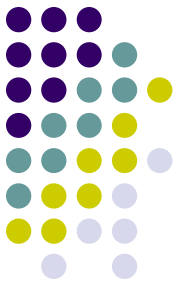
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Cultural Anthropology  
Southern Nazarene University



# Two books





# Richard Niebuhr

- Pastor in Evangelical and Reformed Church (St. Louis)
- Yale seminary professor when he published “Christ and Culture” (1951)

# Niebuhr's classic positions

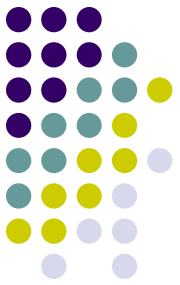


- Christ against culture
  - Following Christ means rejecting any loyalty to culture
  - Disengagement from the world because of the world's rebellion against God
  - A “holy huddle” of Christians who do not dialog with anyone else

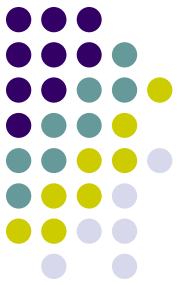
# Niebuhr's classic positions



- Christ of culture
  - Christianity and culture become fused regardless of their differences
  - Affirming both Christ and culture and denying any necessary opposition between the two.



- Christ above culture
  - An attempt at a synthesis of the two
  - The issues of culture find an answer in Christian revelation
  - The church perceives that her role is fundamental if there is to be any cultural achievement



- Christ and culture in paradox
  - A tension between the church and the world around it, even as they interpenetrate one another
  - Each Christian is a subject of two realms--two "kingdoms," but one king, Christ.



- Christ the transformer of culture
  - the kind of Puritan ethic which sees the whole of life as in some sense requiring to be converted to Christ





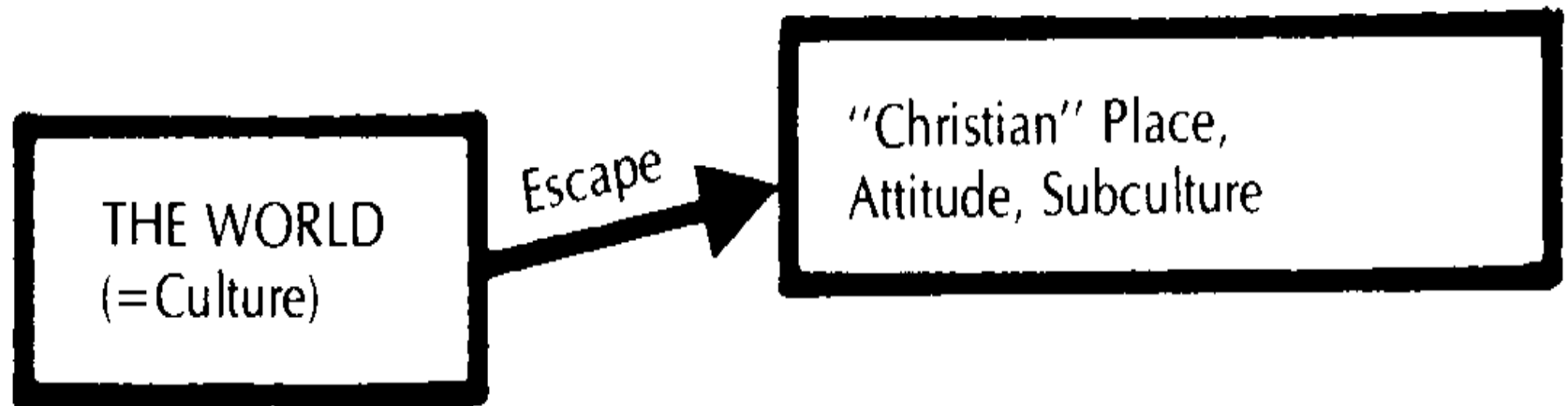
# Charles Kraft

- Missionary anthropologist
- “Christianity in Culture,” 30 years after Niebuhr
- Sees 3 groupings of positions
  - God against culture
  - God in culture
  - God above culture



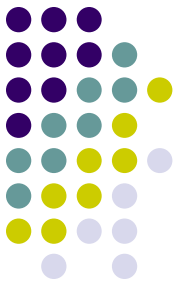
# Charles Kraft's listing

- God against culture
  - Commitment to God is a decision to oppose culture
  - Assumes all of culture is evil
    - Speaking in tongues





- 2 God-in-culture positions
  - God or Christ is merely culture hero (position of many anthropologists)
  - God is contained within, or at least endorses, one particular culture (Example: Hebrews)



- 5 God-above-culture positions
  - God is above culture and unconcerned about human beings
    - Deism, African religions
    - Ignore God while holding tightly to some of Jesus' teachings
  - Christians follow requirements of both Christ and culture, but each in its own place (Thomas Aquinas)



- 5 God-above-culture positions
  - Dualism in which Christian is like an amphibian
  - Conversionist (Augustine, Calvin)
    - Culture is corrupted but usable and even redeemable
  - Christ above-but-through-culture

[Summary web page](#)

This PowerPoint presentation is available along with related materials and other PowerPoint presentations at <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ppt.htm>

