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H. Richard Niebuhr essays4492477

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 14, 2025.

Description is written in: English.

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Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

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New York, NY 10027

Telephone: (212) 851-5606

burke@library.columbia.edu

URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke.html>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	Niebuhr, H. Richard (Helmut Richard), 1894-1962
Title:	H. Richard Niebuhr essays
ID:	4492477
Date [inclusive]:	circa 1925 -- 1950
Physical Description:	0.25 linear feet 0.25 linear feet; 1 box
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	H. Richard Niebuhr was president of Elmhurst College, 1924-1927; Sterling Professor of Theology and Christian Ethics, 1954-1962 at Yale University (faculty since 1931); and was known for conglomerating neoorthodoxy, realism, and Christian existentialism. The collection contains 13 typescript essays thematically divided into four sections: Deity of God; Human bondage; Divine action and human response; and Catholic vision.

Preferred Citation

Item description, UTS1: H. Richard Niebuhr Papers, circa 1925-1950, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Biographical / Historical

Helmut Richard Niebuhr, the younger brother of Reinhold Niebuhr, was born in Wright City, MO on September 3, 1894 to German immigrants Gustav and Lydia. After graduating from Elmhurst College (1912) and Eden Theological Seminary (1915), Niebuhr spent a year reporting for a newspaper in Lincoln, IL and another two years serving as an Evangelical and Reformed pastor in St. Louis, MO before earning his Master of Arts degree from Washington University (1917). Niebuhr subsequently returned to Eden for a three-year teaching appointment as an instructor in the fields of theology and ethics. He then earned his

Bachelor of Divinity degree at Yale Univeristy in 1923, followed by a Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1924. In 1924, Niebuhr accepted his alma mater's presidency; he served as Elmhurst College's chief administrator from 1924 through 1927. Four years into his second tenure on Eden's faculty, Niebuhr was awarded Yale University's Sterling Research Fellowship to study in Germany at the Universities of Berlin and Marburg. In 1938, he was promoted at Yale to the rank of full professor and in 1954 became Yale's Sterling Professor of Theology and Christian Ethics.

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Biographical / Historical

Although Niebuhr was not perceived to be as polemical a figure as Reinhold, the younger Niebuhr was nevertheless outspoken in his own right as he articulated a neo-orthodox vision of ethical Realism. In conversation with the ideas of Kierkegaard, Troelsch and Barth, Niebuhr historicized the Christian faith and favored reinterpreting the tradition in the light of present-day experience. Niebuhr continued to believe in the enduring relevance of creedal and biblical Christianity, while himself professing a critical form of orthodoxy. As a Christian ethicist Niebuhr did not shy away from expressing his confessional leanings, although he strived to avoid apologetics. His particular brand of existentialism revolved around correcting accepted orthodoxies without ever proposing how one would venture to replace them. In 1951 Niebuhr published *Christ and Culture*, a response to secular culturist critiques of Christianity, and in his 1960 work on *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture*, Niebuhr asserted that, unlike polytheism and henotheism, monotheism is the locus of a unique value system that equalizes relations between humanity and God. Niebuhr passed away from a heart attack in Greenfield, MA on July 5, 1962, survived by wife Florence Marie Mittendorff (1895-1989), whom he married in 1920, and their two children, daughter Cynthia and son Richard.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains 13 typescript essays thematically divided into four sections: Deity of God; Human bondage; Divine action and human response; and Catholic vision.

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Arrangement

This collection is organized in one series arranged thematically.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2021-02-23

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Access

The following boxes are located offsite: Box 1. Please note that requests for use of boxes held in offsite storage must be made three business days in advance.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The exact provenance of this collection is unknown.

Processing Information

Material was cataloged by Lynn A. Grove on 1988-07-13. Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. The finding aid was created by Maksim Astashinskio in 2012,

updated by Brigette C. Kamsler in 2015 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2021.

Conditions Governing Use

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Niebuhr, H. Richard (Helmut Richard), 1894-1962. Papers, 1919-1962. Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School Repository, Cambridge, MA.

Related Materials

Theological Discussion Group Papers, 1934-1961, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Theologians
- College teachers
- Niebuhr, H. Richard (Helmut Richard), 1894-1962 -- : Archives

Burke Library record group:

Union Theological Seminary Archives: UTS 1, papers of faculty and students

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Collection Inventory

H. Richard Niebuhr essays, circa 1925 -- 1950

Physical Description: 0.25 linear feet 0.25 linear feet; 1 box

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged thematically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains 13 typescript essays thematically divided into four sections: Deity of God; Human bondage; Divine action and human response; and Catholic vision.

Title/Description	Instances	
Annotated cover and essay list, circa 1950	box 1	folder 1
"The Deity of God" essays, 1937 -- 1946	box 1	folder 2
Scope and Contents		
Includes Value Theory and Theology (1937), Nature and Existence of God (1943), Utilitarian Christianity (1946).		
"Human Bondage" essays, circa 1935 -- 1948	box 1	folder 3
Scope and Contents		
Includes Man the Sinner (1935), Disorder in the Church of God (circa 1948), Towards the Independence of the Church (circa 1935), Towards a New Other-Worldliness (1944).		
"Div[ine] Action and Human Response" essays, circa 1942 -- 1950	box 1	folder 4
Scope and Contents		
Includes Ego-Alter Dialectic and the Conscience (circa 1945), Responsibility of the Church for Society (circa 1946), Evangelical and Protestant Ethics (circa 1950), War as the Judgment of God (circa 1942).		
"Catholic Vision" essays, 1925 -- 1948	box 1	folder 5

Scope and Contents

Includes Gift of Catholic Vision (1948), Doctrine of Trinity and Unity of the Church (1925).

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