

STUDIES IN RELIGION RESEARCH SEMINAR



Keeping Them Honest: Reinhold Niebuhr's Argument in Support of Democracy

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) was one of the most influential theologians of the 20th century. He was a passionate advocate for both social and political activism. At one point in his career, Niebuhr engaged in a major study of Marxism. However, he later became disillusioned with the way it was enacted—especially in Russia. He came to endorse democracy, but not uncritically and unreservedly.

This paper explores the way in which Niebuhr's thought on socio-political systems developed and his capacity to be both an advocate for the principles of democracy and, at the same time, an ardent critic of the manner in which those principles were enacted.

Presenter: Rev. Dr David Pitman

Date: Friday 4 September

Time: 2pm

Venue: Room E319
Forgan Smith Building (1)



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“Converting Worlds” or “Carrying Bricks”: A Wesleyan Perspective on the Ministry of the Mundane

Many popular Protestant evangelical publications and presentations define “successful ministry” in terms of dramatic numerical growth, large building projects, and rapid mission expansion. John Wesley’s theological and pastoral framework evidences a strong concern for everyday service in the community, even if that appeared to others to be rather unspectacular; in the words of a letter he wrote, a matter of “carrying bricks” than “converting worlds.”

Wesley’s conviction that he would not preach where he could not plant a Society is clear evidence of his belief that effective ministry was a matter of faithfulness in the mundane activities of life in community. The paper examines a number of reasons for Wesley’s position, as well as offering some implications of this for the daily life of the church in Australia today.

Presenter: A/Professor
David McEwan

Date: Friday 4 September

Time: 3pm

Venue: Room E319
Forgan Smith Building (1)



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