

Two views on Neuhaus

Dennis Coday | Jun. 11, 2009 NCR Today

The NCR Book Club offering this week is [Michael Baxter's review](#) [1] of Fr. Richard John Neuhaus' last book, *American Babylon: Notes of a Christian in Exile*, which Baxter says "is about being Christian in the United States."

Baxter writes: "While readily admitting that the American experiment has weaknesses, [Neuhaus] is clearly not ready to hand over its title as the last best hope of the West."

For another look at the Neuhaus book, check out [a review by George Weigel](#) [2], Neuhaus' longtime friend and intellectual companion. Weigel writes:

For [Neuhaus] was a radically converted Christian disciple who believed with the author of the Letter to the Hebrews that "here we have no lasting city," because everything about this city, about life here and now, is directed toward "the city which is to come" [Hebrews 13.14].

Now, as Richard often pointed out, it was precisely that loyalty to "the city which is to come" that makes serious Christians good citizens of a democracy -- or at least good citizens of a democracy that does not divinize itself. By reminding democratic citizens that democratic citizenship is penultimate -- for our ultimate citizenship is in the City of the Living God -- Christians can give politics its due while helping keep politics in its place.

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[1] <http://ncronline.org/node/13506>

[2] http://www.eppc.org/publications/pubID.3839/pub_detail.asp