

1. **Christ against Culture.** This view of the relationship between Christ and culture is negative. Christ stands in opposition to culture. Christians are called to follow Christ and reject the world. In extreme cases, this requires withdrawing from society as much as possible. This position is necessary but insufficient, and does not work adequately through the ways that the church itself is cultural and the ways that Jesus is the Lord of human history and the world's savior.
2. **The Christ of Culture.** In this model, Christ affirms and advances what is best in culture. Cultural Christians recognize that Jesus plays a prophetic role, but Jesus also desires the peace, unity, and moral advance of society. Christians who adhere to this model tend to minimize sin and doctrine, and adhere to the social gospel and inclusivity.
3. **Christ above Culture.** Niebuhr identifies Christ above culture as the dominant model in church history. It is founded on the understanding that God is the creator of the world, and even though the world is fallen and cursed, culture is still built on the good creation of God. Models #3-5 represent various ways of working out this theme. The current model aims at synthesis: it recognizes that culture is not completely bad, but neither is it completely good. The church should synthesize natural law, societal institutions, creation elements, and theology into a cohesive whole.
4. **Christ and Culture in Paradox.** Christ is above culture, as he is above every human being. In the first model, Christians look at Christ being against the culture of the world (and thus not against them), but in this model the emphasis is on the fact that God is transcendent and righteous in a way that places him infinitely above everyone, whether they are a believer or not. Both the world and the church fall short of God's glory. All human works are tainted, yet in the grace of God there is acceptance.
5. **Christ the Transformer of Culture.** Christ is above culture, but he is a redeemer and transformer. Individuals can be converted and transformed, and as a result whole cultures can be converted, too. When people are regenerated all of their works can be transformed. Thus the gospel can lead to the transformation of culture.

Criticism of Niebuhr:

- His five views of Christ and Culture cast too wide a net. They allow paradigms that are unfaithful to the Biblical witness.
- Christ and Culture must be flexible enough to fit and interact with a massive variety of contextual problems and situations.
- Christians deal with the Christ and Culture problem when their actions flow directly from a healthy and proportional acceptance of the key claims of Scripture.