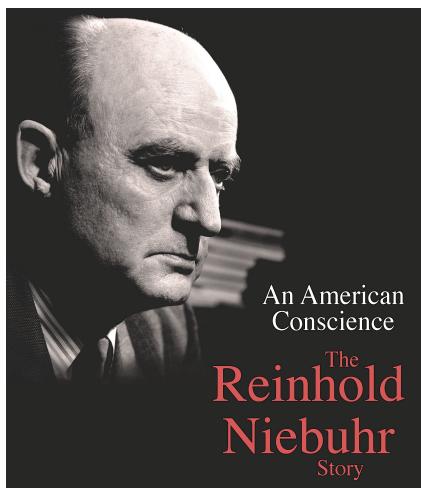




An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story
Premieres on WORLD Channel
Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017

New Documentary by Award-Winning Filmmaker Martin Doblmeier Explores the Life and Continued Impact of the Influential Public Theologian



(Alexandria, VA) — Although he may be best remembered today as the author of the famed “Serenity Prayer,” Reinhold Niebuhr — an outspoken American-born pastor, writer, and political activist — remains one of the most influential public theologians of our time. Presidents from Barack Obama to Jimmy Carter have credited his impact on their thinking, as well as John McCain, countless historians, theologians, political thinkers, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who cited Niebuhr in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” Rich in archival material, the documentary features interviews with former President Jimmy Carter, Cornel West, Andrew Young, David Brooks, and a host of internationally recognized historians and theologians.

An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story is directed, written and narrated by Martin Doblmeier, the creator of dozens of provocative, award-winning films on faith including *Chaplains* and *Bonhoeffer*. The film premieres on public television’s WORLD Channel on Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017, 9:00 PM ET/6:00 PM PT.

Reinhold Niebuhr’s career spanned some of the most tumultuous decades in American history, from World War I through Vietnam, from the Great Depression through the Civil Rights Movement. An early pacifist and socialist, he was closely monitored by J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI throughout his life, but would later serve as a consultant to the State Department during the Cold War.

Niebuhr rose from a small Midwest church pulpit to become the nation’s moral voice — an American conscience — during some of the most defining moments in recent history. His books, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932), *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1941–43) and *The Irony of American History* (1952), continue to influence theological and political thinking. An American original, his unique insights into human nature and its relationship to political movements and social justice propelled him to speak openly, and often critically, to an America consumed by moral certainty. For Niebuhr the priority was always justice, his guiding principle was hope in a redeemer God, and his weapon

was an extraordinary gift for clarity of thought that made him a leading voice of conscience for his time.

An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story is produced by Journey Films, Inc., and is a presentation of Maryland Public Television. Major funding provided by the Lilly Endowment. Additional funding provided by the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

About the Participants, in Alphabetical Order

Andrew J. Bacevich is Professor Emeritus of International Relations and History at Boston University.

David Brooks is an author, cultural critic and commentator. A *New York Times* columnist, he appears regularly on *PBS NewsHour*, NPR's *All Things Considered*, and NBC's *Meet the Press*.

Jimmy Carter is the 39th President of the United States and founder of the Carter Center. Following his presidency, Carter established himself as one of the world's premiere humanitarians. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

Gary Dorrien is the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and Professor of Religion at Columbia University.

Andrew Finstuen is the dean of the Honors College at Boise State, Associate Professor in the Department of History, and a producer of *An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story*.

K. Healan Gaston is a lecturer on American Religious History at Harvard Divinity School and served as a consultant on *An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story*.

Stanley Hauerwas is the Gilbert T. Rowe Professor Emeritus of Divinity and Law at Duke University Divinity School.

Susannah Heschel is the Eli Black Professor and chair of the Jewish Studies Program at Dartmouth College.

William Hudnut III was mayor of Indianapolis from 1976 to 1992. He earned a Master's Degree in Theology from the Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Robin Lovin is the William H. Scheide Senior Fellow at the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey, and Cary Maguire University Professor of Ethics Emeritus at Southern Methodist University.

Fr. Mark S. Massa, S.J. has taught at Fordham University, served as Dean of Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry, and currently directs the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College.

Elisabeth Sifton is the daughter of Reinhold and Ursula Niebuhr, author of *The Serenity Prayer: Faith and Politics in Times of Peace and War* and editor of the Library of America's *Reinhold Niebuhr: Major Works on Religion and Politics*.

Ronald H. Stone is the John Witherspoon Professor Emeritus of Christian Ethics at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and author of *Faith and Politics: Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich at Union Seminary in New York*.

Cornel West is Professor of Philosophy and Christian Practice at Union Theological Seminary and Professor Emeritus at Princeton University. He has also taught at Yale, Harvard, and the University of Paris. His many books include *Race Matters* (Beacon Press, 2001) and *Democracy Matters* (2004).

Andrew Young is a former congressman, mayor of Atlanta, and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient.

About the Filmmaker

Martin Doblmeier (Writer/Director) is the founder and president of Journey Films in Alexandria, Virginia, an independent television and film production company that produces award-winning films that explore religion, spirituality, history and social issues. Doblmeier's work has appeared on most major television networks including PBS, ABC, NBC and The History Channel and others, have won countless awards, and screened at festivals, universities and symposia in the U.S. and abroad. Doblmeier holds a degree in Religious Studies, a Master's Degree in Broadcast Journalism and two honorary doctorates.

Doblmeier's films include the recent *Chaplains* (2015), which profiled chaplains from different faith traditions who work in both traditional and unexpected settings; *The ADVENTISTS Trilogy* (2014), a collection of three films that explore the faith and life of Seventh-day Adventists; *Washington National Cathedral: A New Century, A New Calling*, about America's "national house of prayer;" *The Power Of Forgiveness*, a documentary that explores how the various faith traditions and health sciences are convening around the topic of forgiveness; *Albert Schweitzer: Called To Africa*, a docudrama on the Nobel Laureate; and *Bonhoeffer*, about the German theologian and Nazi resister who joined the plots to kill Adolf Hitler that played theatrically and was broadcast on PBS.

About Journey Films

Founded in 1983 by Martin Doblmeier, Journey Films is a television and film production company specializing in religion, faith and spirituality. Journey has produced more than 30 documentary films that have aired on PBS, ABC, NBC, the BBC and on broadcast outlets around the world. Journey's films have been translated into more than a dozen languages. The early films introduced the American audience to the faith communities of Taize and L'Arche. Biographical documentaries followed with profiles on Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago, the celebrated German theologian and Nazi resister Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the architect of the Catholic Church's Vatican II – Cardinal Suenens.

The Power of Forgiveness won many top awards and inspired a companion book. A profile of the Washington National Cathedral won a regional Emmy and *The ADVENTISTS* films became a popular series on PBS stations and a best-selling DVD on Amazon. In all, Journey's films have won six Gabriel Awards for the nation's best film on a topic of religion, three awards at the US International Film and Television Festival, the Sun Valley Film Festival and many others. More information is available at <https://journeyfilms.com/>

About MPT

Launched in 1969 and headquartered in Owings Mills, MD, Maryland Public Television is a nonprofit, state-licensed public television network and member of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). MPT's six transmitters cover Maryland plus portions of contiguous states and the District of Columbia. Frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards, MPT creates local, regional, and national television shows. Beyond broadcast, MPT's commitment to professional educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through year-round instructional events and the super-website Thinkport, which garners in excess of 14 million page views annually. MPT's community engagement connects viewers with local resources on significant health, education, and public interest topics through year-round outreach events, viewer forums, program screenings, and phone bank call-in opportunities.

About WORLD Channel

WORLD Channel delivers the best of public television's nonfiction, news and documentary programming. The channel features original content by and about diverse communities to U.S. audiences through local public television stations and streaming online at worldchannel.org. Last year alone, WORLD reached 35.8 million unique viewers 18+ (55% adults 18-49) and it over-indexes in key diversity demographics. Online, WORLD Channel expands on broadcast topics and fuels dialogue across social media, providing opportunities for broad and diverse audience interaction. For its exploration of the human spirit, WORLD Channel won the 2016 Christopher Award in the TV/cable category for the episode IF YOU BUILD IT, a part of its America ReFramed series.

WORLD is programmed by WGBH/Boston, in partnership with American Public Television and WNET/New York, and in association with PBS and National Educational Telecommunications Association. Funding for the WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Ford Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Kendeda Fund. For more information about The WORLD Channel, visit www.worldchannel.org

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Downloadable images available here: [Journey Films Pressroom](#)