



## **Cold War Foreign Policy and the Dulles Brothers: Christ and Culture in Conflict**

Richard Niebuhr's conceptualization of five views on Christ-and-culture is one serviceable way to help students think about the church and the world. One of those views is called "Christ and culture in conflict." This view perceives God's two kingdoms as essentially at war with each other, perpetually in conflict until the close of the age and Christ's second coming. (For further reading see the [About](#) page and [The Lutheran Tradition](#) page on this web site.)

Examples of this conflict view include some of the radical reformers during Reformation, the way the news typically presents the science-and-religion issues, and, more benignly, the Amish. See such Biblical texts as 2 Cor 6:14-18, 1 John 2:15-17.

Stephen Kinzer's book, [\*The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War\*](#) (Times Books, 2013) says the Dulles brothers shaped America's standoff with the Soviet Union, led the U.S. into war in Vietnam, and helped topple governments they thought unfriendly to American interests in Guatemala, Iran, the Congo and Indonesia. Kinzer says the Dulles' actions "helped set off some of the world's most profound long-term crises."

The link below takes you to a 35 minute Fresh Air interview with Kinzer. Eight minutes into the interview, Kinzer discusses the religious background of the Dulles brothers which he characterizes as a form of Calvinism that polarizes the two kingdoms as good and evil.

[Meet The Brothers Who Shaped U.S. Policy, Inside and Out](#) Fresh Air, Oct. 18, 2013

Kinzer does not disparage religious traditions, but he links the religious views of the Dulles brothers to their policy decisions and finds that link troublesome. Depending on how extensively you may use this two kingdom example, consider reading the book and several reviews.

Some topics and questions might include:

1. An overview of the five Christ-and-culture views with attention to the conflict view and its contrast to the Lutheran two kingdoms view.
2. A discussion of the ways that religious perspectives have shaped American history and policy.
3. Two Biblical texts frequently cited in discussions about nation states include 2 Chron. 7:14 and Jer. 18:5-10. A hermeneutics issue: are the Scriptures largely directed at the nations and geo-political policy; or are the Scriptures chiefly directed at ancient Israel as God's nation of priests (Ex 19) and the promise of the Messiah; or should we understand the Bible and the nations in yet some other way?
4. Examine other possible examples of ways in which religious views have influenced policy makers including perhaps Lincoln and the Civil War and George W. Bush and the war on terrorism.
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