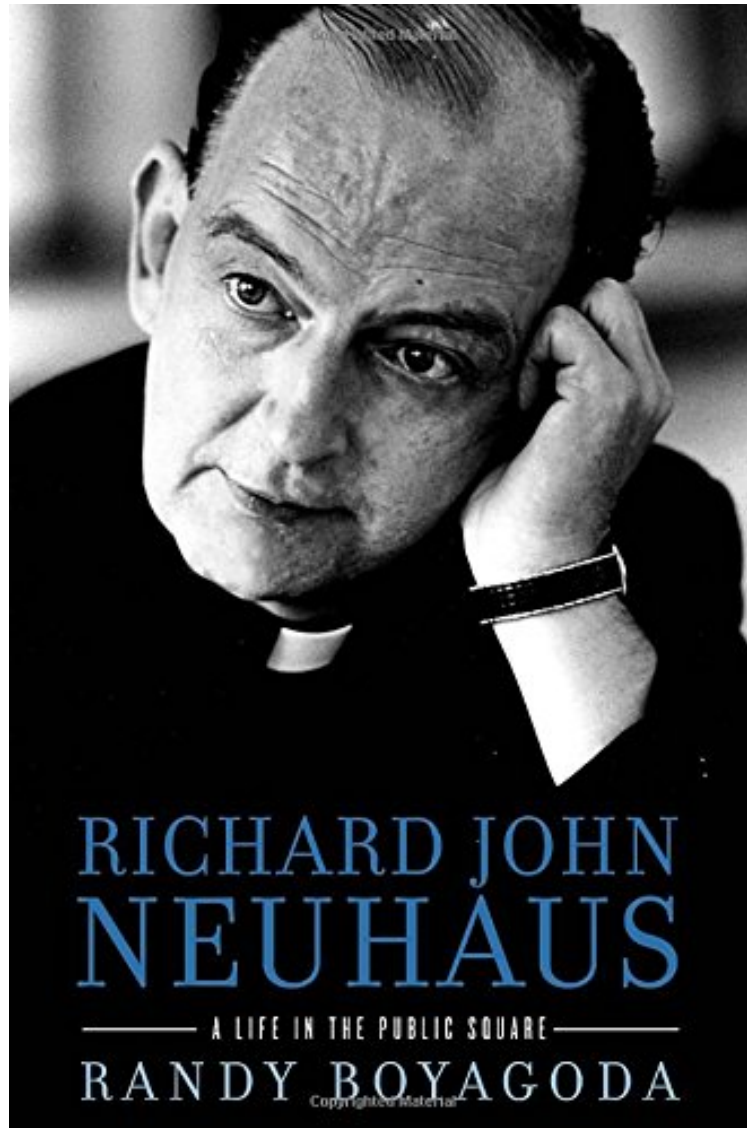


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Richard John Neuhaus: A Life in the Public Square

Randy Boyagoda

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Randy Boyagoda : Richard John Neuhaus: A Life in the Public Square before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Richard John Neuhaus: A Life in the Public Square:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Will a real writer please save Neuhaus from Boyagoda?By Clara RoseSnide. The author continuously wishes to demonstrate that he has Neuhaus' number. If you knew nothing of Neuhaus before reading this book, you would be justifiably repulsed by this portrait of raw ego. Boyagoda seizes every chance to raise the arched brow and suggest less than appealing motives. One example. Neuhaus did not preside over his father's funeral. Boyagoda lists all manner of possible angry motives. We have a Benedictine monk in our

family and I remember him talking about how difficult it is to preside over a family member's funeral. He said his own mother's Mass only because she had wrung a promise from him before she died. Could Neuhaus have had a similar reason for assuming the role of pall-bearer? Perish the thought. Raising the prospect would not contribute to bolster Boyagoda's position of moral superiority. This is one instance, but the practice is habitual in this book. But worst of all, Boyagoda manages to make Neuhaus' incredibly interesting life boring, boring, boring. I must admit I made it only halfway through this piece of wretched writing. My hat's off to those who could stomach more. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very good, but without a lot of new insight. By Adam Baker This book is well written and fairly engaging. (There is some disjointed narration, which got a bit old, but was not overly distracting.) The only reason I give the book three stars is that it doesn't really grapple with the two questions with which most people would come to a Neuhaus biography: 1) Why did he switch from liberal to conservative? 2) Why did he switch from Lutheran to Catholic? There is almost nothing in the book about these important changes. I don't blame the author. He clearly talked to the right people. The interview material seems only to provide amusing anecdotes, though. They don't have anything to do with the substantial development of Neuhaus's thought. I would guess that since Neuhaus was such a master at self-presentation, it might not be possible to write a satisfying bibliography. But in that case, reading through old copies of *First Things* might be the easier way to go. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. This is an excellent biography. I wondered. By LI This is an excellent biography. I wondered, before reading it, how such a controversial figure would be treated, especially by an author who is previously known as a novelist. But I was not disappointed. Boyagoda uses his novelistic skills to great effect, drawing wonderful scenes of all the phases of the life of Neuhaus. Although quoting generously from his many writings, the biography never has the sense of a dull scholarly project; rather, Richard John Neuhaus appears on the page with all his gifts and flaws, his penchant for self-promotion as well as his deeply lived religious vocation. The book is engaging on many levels and to readers of different political and religious loyalties. Neuhaus's shift from left to right politically, his conversion from Lutheranism to Rome, his engagement with key figures in politics, journalism, and religion, provide a unique vantage point for understanding the dynamics of American political and religious culture. The author has made excellent use of the archives of Neuhaus's papers, as well as extensive interviews with family, friends, co-workers, and critics. Even though I have been reading Neuhaus for almost thirty years, I gained many fresh insights on the man and his work from this biography.

A brilliant biography of one of the intellectual mavericks of 20th Century Catholicism. Richard John Neuhaus (1936-2009) was one of the most influential figures in American public life from the Civil Rights era to the War on Terror. His writing, activism, and connections to people of power in religion, politics, and culture secured a place for himself and his ideas at the center of recent American history. William F. Buckley, Jr. and John Kenneth Galbraith are comparable -- willing controversialists and prodigious writers adept at cultivating or castigating the powerful, while advancing lively arguments for the virtues and vices of the ongoing American experiment. But unlike Buckley and Galbraith, who have always been identified with singular political positions on the right and left, respectively, Neuhaus' life and ideas placed him at the vanguard of events and debates across the political and cultural spectrum. For instance, alongside Abraham Heschel and Daniel Berrigan, Neuhaus co-founded Clergy Concerned About Vietnam, in 1965. Forty years later, Neuhaus was the subject of a *New York Review of Books* article by Garry Wills, which cast him as a Rasputin of the far right, exerting dangerous influence in both the Vatican and the Bush White House. This book looks to examine Neuhaus's multi-faceted life and reveal to the public what made him tick and why.

"Deeply researched, lucidly written." *New York Times* "In *Richard John Neuhaus: A Life in the Public Square*, Randy Boyagoda captures his subject's deep sense of vocation and the complexity of his personality, offering a comprehensive biography and, along the way, a thoughtful introduction to some of the 'culture wars' of the past several decades." *Wall Street Journal* "[A] stellar biography." *Publishers Weekly* "Boyagoda dispassionately describes this fascinating and active life, and he manages to blend skills as a folksy storyteller, researcher and unbiased historian, providing a biography that is balanced, interesting and relevant. A useful, provocative spotlight on one of the leading lights of the 20th century." *Kirkus* "[A] page-turner." *National* "Boyagoda's biography is an invaluable account of the political and ecclesiastical controversies in which Neuhaus played a central, influential and controversial role." *America Magazine* "A wonderful biography." Raymond Arroyo, *New York Times* bestselling author and host, *EWTN's The World Over* "Boyagoda persuasively argues that Neuhaus was a charismatic leader and original thinker whose contributions to American culture and politics make him someone worth knowing about." *American Conservative* "Boyagoda's luminously intelligent study of the man makes clear that Richard John Neuhaus however one regards his politics deserved his place in a long line of memorable American preacher-politicians." *National Post* "Neuhaus was a hugely influential figure, and Boyagoda tells his story with novelistic empathy and narrative panache." *The Globe and Mail* "Boyagoda found the Neuhaus I knew, complete with all the man's winsome qualities and not a few of his contradictions. Not surprisingly, he also revealed facets of the man I could never guess." Russell E. Saltzman, *Aleteia* "And up until now, no one has offered a more credible, careful, and colorful biography of this

convert to Catholicism. " Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York, author of True Freedom"Thorough, vivid, and keenly understanding of the interplay of personality, faith, and cultural context, Boyagoda's biography of Neuhaus does justice to this man of faith." Carl A. Anderson, Supreme Knight, Knights of Columbus"Until his death in 2009, Father Richard John Neuhaus was a powerhouse in American public life and a monument in American Catholic history...Randy Boyagoda, an extraordinary author best known for his work in fiction, knew that someone had to tell Fr. Neuhaus story and that it deserved to be told well." CatholicVote.orgAbout the AuthorRANDY BOYAGODA is a professor of American Studies at Ryerson University in Toronto. His latest novel, Beggar's Feast, was selected as a New York Times Book Editor's Choice, nominated for the 2013 IMPAC Dublin Literary Prize, and has been published to critical acclaim around the world. His debut novel, Governor of the Northern Province, was nominated for the 2006 ScotiaBank Giller Prize. He has written for a variety of publications, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, First Things, The Paris , and Harper's. He lives in Toronto with his wife and four daughters.