

Biblical interpretations show strife—professor



Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka

Richard Niebuhr

By Patti Gallagher

Our interpretation of the Bible is limited only by our imagination, according to a theology professor at Harvard Divinity School.

Richard Niebuhr said we interpret scripture according to our own life experiences. That interpretative technique was also employed by writers of the Bible, he said, accounting for the inclusion of combat words.

Niebuhr spoke to about 50 people Monday at the Sheldon Art Gallery. His speech, entitled "The Stife of Interpreting: The Moral Burden of Imagination," was part of the Atkinson theological lecture series.

The imagination of the biblical writers was largely influenced by war and violence, Niebuhr said. Thus phrases such as the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and strength in the Lord have projected a war-like image of early Chistianity onto modern readers, he said.

Strife and conflict continues to be an influence in our lives, he said, and affect our theological interpretations. "Strife is a part of our social and political life as it is a part of our collective religious life," he said.

Strife in modern society that has swayed our interpretations of life and in turn of theology include the Depression of the 1930s, the world-wide war of 1940s, the Cold War of the 1950s, the social upheavels of the Vietnam War of the 1960s and 70s, and today our involvement in Latin America.

"Our common life today is one of strife," Niebuhr said.

Niebuhr defined the word interpretation as a "go-between," and the last part of it has historically meant price. An interpreter then is one who negotiates the price of something that is to be exchanged.

The price is what is lost in the exchange from literal to imaginative interpretation, he said.

Niebuhr said lay readers as well as theologians interpret obscure passages in the Bible by moving to an adjacent one. The move is not always accurate, he said.

The professor of divinity also said we use analogies to interpret the Bible, to give it living meaning. The analogy approach was used by Christ in the New Testament, he said, in parables very familiar to his audience.

By using the familiar, he said, we can gain new interpretations.

Niebuhr said interpretation is a moral issue because our images mandate our thoughts and actions. Those thoughts and actions affect those we live with.

"We order our lives according to the moral decisions we make through imaginations," he said.

Niebuhr ended his speech warning the audience not to constrict their minds with narrow interpretations.

"We pray give us our daily bread. We need also to pray give us generous eyes and imaginations with which to see."

Stealing from autos occurs over weekend

Several thefts from autos were reported to UNL Police during the weekend.

The outside mirror of a Sidney Public School bus was taken while the bus was parked in the bus zone on the north side of the Bob Devaney Sports Center, police said. The mirror was worth \$250, police reported.

Stereo equipment worth \$460 was stolen from a car parked in the area 2 lot at 19th and Q streets, police said. Police said the theft took place sometime between Wednesday and Saturday. Stolen was an 8-track radio-stereo system, speakers, and an equalizer amplifier from the car, police said.

A battery was taken from a car in the area 3 lot east of Sandoz Hall Sunday. The battery, worth \$85, was recovered near the car, police said. Investigator Bob Fey said police have a suspect.

Also a battery was stolen from a car parked in area 3 on New Hampshire Street sometime between Saturday and Sunday, police said. The battery was worth \$45, police said.

St. Pat's Day Dance
TONIGHT
9 p.m. - Midnight
 with
BLACKBERRY WINTER
East Union Great Plains Room
\$2.00 Students
\$2.50 Non-Students

UPC
 East
Dances & Cornstock Committee

marvelous
MAX

the
 money
 machine!

GIVE HIM YOUR CARD AND HE GIVES BACK GREEN!

Max is a marvel. He's a banking whiz
 He's super! He's fantastic! And what turns him on is plastic!
 He works all night. And he works all day.
 He's the bionic banker. Workin' for Gateway.
 He's Marvelous Max, the Money Machine!

GATEWAY
CAMPUS BANK

Gateway Bank & Trust, Gateway Shopping Center
 61st and "O" Street

Gateway Campus Bank, Nebraska Union
 14th and "R" Street

Richman Goldman
 4600 Vine Street

Osco Drug, Edgewood Center
 56th and Highway 2

Centrum Plaza, Lincoln Center
 1111 "O" Street

Osco Drug, East Park Plaza
 66th and "O" Street