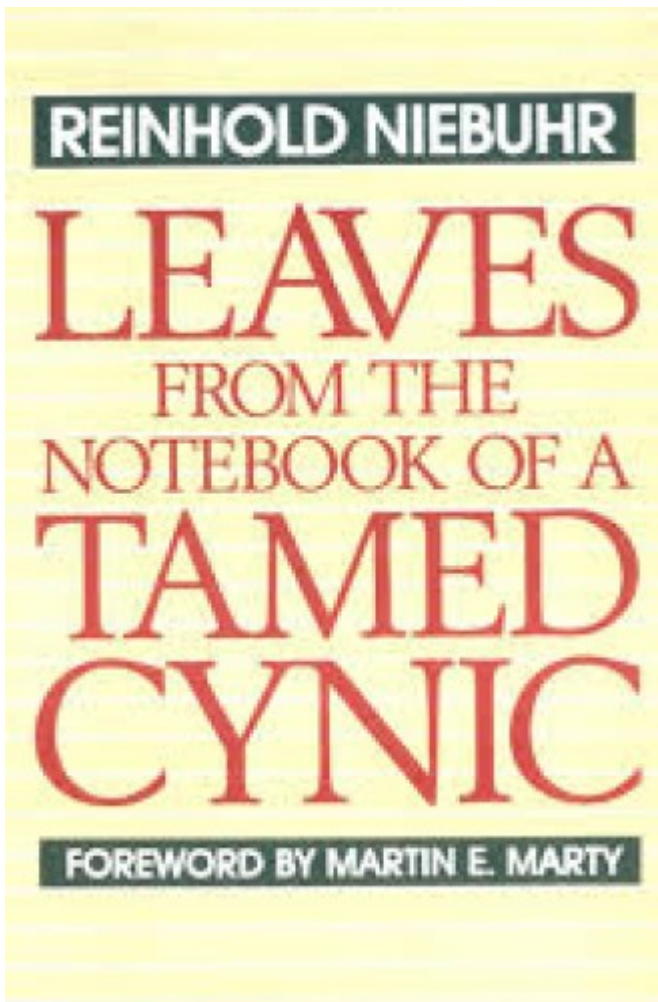


*Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic*, by Reinhold Niebuhr

selected by [Martin B. Copenhaver](#) in the [April 30, 2014](#) issue

## In Review



### **Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic**

by Reinhold Niebuhr  
Westminster John Knox

*"If you had to choose one book to help a person embarking on pastoral ministry, what would it be?" We posed that question to some pastors and professors. Here are their choices. —Ed.*

Reinhold Niebuhr was 23 years old when he began this journal of his experience as the pastor of a blue-collar church in Detroit. Pastors will be reassured to read how even the great Niebuhr struggles with the pastoral role. He admits that before making a pastoral call, he usually walks past a house two or three times before summoning the courage to go in. He despairs that after preaching a dozen sermons in his new church he has exhausted everything he learned in seminary. He confesses the awkwardness of preaching a sermon on giving to the church when his own salary is at stake.

We often hear about how much pastoral ministry has changed, but this book is a reminder that the opposite also is true—in the almost 100 years since Niebuhr wrote this book, so much about pastoral ministry has remained the same.

Read [all reflections](#).