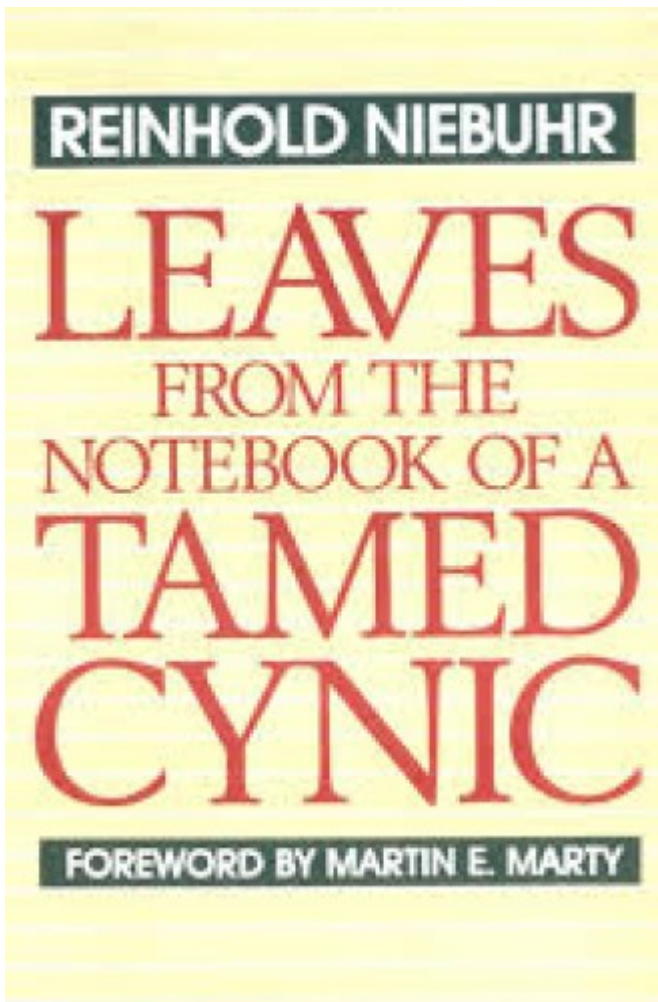


Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic, by Reinhold Niebuhr

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](#).