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The Loss and Recovery of Truth: Selected Writings of Gerhart Niemeyer

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That the United States is currently in the midst of a serious crisis, even an ideological civil war, which is part of the general and prolonged crisis of Western civilization is obvious to any thoughtful observer. One of the most perceptive observers of the development of this crisis was Gerhart Niemeyer. As a fugitive from Nazi Germany, a devout Christian, and a political theorist who had mastered the philosophical tradition and the Communist worldview, he was particularly well equipped to discern the ways in which the various modern ideologies insidiously erode the substance of truth and order in contemporary society and to seek remedies in the return to the ontological and spiritual roots of order in the Western tradition.

The writings collected in this volume, many of which were previously unpublished, are chosen from Gerhart Niemeyer's essays, conference talks, and letters. The first part, intended to introduce the reader to Niemeyer on a more personal level, includes an unpublished essay describing his experiences in Nazi Germany and in the America that he encountered on his arrival in 1937. Several letters and other short works provide a sense of his character and his deeply Christian view of human life, both of which were essential to his grasp of truth.

The second part, "The Loss of Truth," consists of thirty-seven essays that focus on the destructive effects of ideologies and other manifestations of disorder in the modern world. Several essays provide a sampling of his expert analysis of Communism and the ideological world-view of the American Left, while others discuss the spiritually stifling effects of the modern bureaucratic state and the ideological disorders that have crept into contemporary culture and the understanding of Christianity. Many of these essays are taken from Niemeyer's National Review column "Days and Works."

The character of Niemeyer's search for "The Recovery of Truth" appears in the subdivision of the thirty-four essays of the third part under the topics of political theory, education, Conservatism, and Christian faith. Although these essays also consider the loss of truth, they are concerned primarily with the quest for its recovery through faith, divine grace, and a clear-eyed understanding of reality. This section begins with his 1950 work "A Reappraisal of the Doctrine of Free Speech" in which he lucidly analyzes the pitfalls of free speech in an ideological age. Among the other essays included here are works that attest to Niemeyer's concern for a spiritual renewal in education and his profound respect and admiration for Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Edmund Burke, Russell Kirk, and, perhaps above all, St. Augustine.

The book includes a bibliography of Niemeyer's previously published books, pamphlets, essays, and reviews.

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