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**Abstract****An Examination of Reinhold Niebuhr's Anthropology:  
Explicating the Theological Facets of Making History****IKARASHI Narumi**

This article focuses on Reinhold Niebuhr's theological anthropology in relation to the making of history. Critics assert his anthropology is too pessimistic to properly evaluate man's potential to work positively in making history, claiming Niebuhr's theology is based on defeatism. However, this essay demonstrates such criticism is invalid if his anthropology is analyzed correctly.

In the first section, I overview Niebuhr's anthropology and conclude that his theology cannot at all be categorized as either pessimism or defeatism.

In part two, I consider in more detail the theological facets of Niebuhr's anthropological perspective of the making of history from three points in particular, namely, (1) The Remnant of the Imago Dei in Man, (2) The Concept of *Justitia Originalis*, and (3) Responsibility in Life.

(1) The Remnant of the Imago Dei in Man—Niebuhr does not adhere to the notion of the total depravity of human nature. He certainly emphasizes the sin that permeates human activity, but, almost to the same degree, he also underscores the positivity found in the freedom of the human spirit in spite of deep-rooted sin. Niebuhr supports this claim by quoting the writings of John Calvin.

(2) The Concept of *Justitia Originalis*—Niebuhr believes that Original Justice is another way of saying the “law of love” and that it remains in human sensibility. It differs from Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative, however, because the law of love supersedes the sense of the imperative, as the former is spontaneously generated by a free will.

(3) Responsibility in Life—Niebuhr insists on there being a difference between sin and guilt. Sin is universal to all mankind, but there are quantitative differences in guilt between humans individually. These differences are predicated upon each one's use of freedom, so Niebuhr asserts that people have a responsibility to use their freedom for higher purposes.

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