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The Doctrine of Humanity in the Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr

Kenneth Morris Hamilton

Jane Barter Moulaison, editor

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Reinhold Niebuhr was a twentieth-century American theologian who was known for his commentary on public affairs. One of his most influential ideas was the relating of his Christian faith to realism rather than idealism in foreign affairs. His perspective influenced many liberals and is enjoying a resurgence today; most recently Barack Obama has acknowledged Niebuhr's importance to his own thinking.

In this book, Kenneth Hamilton makes a claim that no other work on Niebuhr has made—that Niebuhr's chief and abiding preoccupation throughout his long career was the nature of humankind. Hamilton engages in a close reading of Niebuhr's entire oeuvre through this lens. He argues that this preoccupation remained consistent throughout Niebuhr's writings, and that through his doctrine of humankind one gets a full sense of Niebuhr the theologian. Hamilton exposes not only the internal consistency of Niebuhr's project but also its aporia. Although Niebuhr's influence perhaps peaked in the mid-twentieth century, enthusiasm for his approach to religion and politics has never waned from the North American public theology, and this work remains relevant today.

Although Hamilton wrote this thesis in the mid-1960s it is published here for the first time. Jane Barter Moulaison, in her editorial gloss and introduction, demonstrates the abiding significance of Hamilton's work to the study of Niebuhr by bringing it into conversation with subsequent writings on Niebuhr, particularly as he is re-appropriated by twenty-first-century American theology.

Kenneth Morris Hamilton arrived in Canada from England in 1951 and served as a minister in Elmsdale, Nova Scotia, for seven years. In 1958 he joined the teaching staff of United College (later the University of Winnipeg) in the Faculty of Theology, where his career spanned three decades. Kenneth Hamilton was the author of over thirty published books and numerous essays on philosophy, theology, ethics, and literature.

Jane Barter Moulaison is an associate professor of theology and church history at the University of Winnipeg and a priest in the Diocese of Rupert's Land. She is the author of *Lord, Giver of Life* (WLU Press, 2006) and *Thinking Christ: Christology and Critics* (2012).

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