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ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS BY BARTH

Anselm	*Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum: Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of His Theological Scheme*, trans. Ian Robertson (London: SCM, 1960)
CD	*Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. W. Bromiley, 4 vols. in 12 parts (I/1–IV/4) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956–75)
Gottes Gnadenwahl	*Gottes Gnadenwahl* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1936), translation mine (unpublished)
KD	*Die kirchliche Dogmatik*. 4 vols. in 12 parts (I/1–IV/4) (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1980)
Romans II	*The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn Hoskyns (1922; London: Oxford University Press, 1933)

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WHY BARTH MATTERS TODAY

"Quite properly men speak of Karl Barth as the most influential theologian of our time. We must therefore seek to understand him."
—Cornelius Van Til, 1962[1]

Barth's Undiminished Influence on Protestant Theology

Karl Barth (1886–1968) was undoubtedly the most influential theologian of his generation. A native of Basel, Switzerland, he rose to fame across German academia with his ballyhooed commentary on Romans in 1919. The reputation that accompanied the work earned him, *inter alia*, a professorship at the prestigious Georg August University of Göttingen in 1921, but this was only the beginning of his illustrious career. By the mid-1920s, his name was known across Europe, and by the 1930s, leading intellectuals in Asia, including the famed founders of the Kyoto

1. Cornelius Van Til, *Christianity and Barthianism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962), 1.

School of Philosophy, began to interact with his works. His visit to America in 1962 was of such cultural significance that his portrait was featured on the front cover of the April 20 issue of *Time* magazine that year.

In the early 1990s, however, as Professor Carl Trueman recounts, it seemed to many Anglophone evangelicals that "Barth had probably had his day."[2] Professor Trueman paints a vivid picture of a certain evangelical impression at the time: "The Barthian bomb had detonated in the playground of the theologians, but now the noise and dust had died down and the children had returned to playing their traditional games."[3]

In broader academic theology beyond evangelicalism, it seemed to many onlookers in the 1990s that Barth's influence had finally been eclipsed by theologians of a later generation, most notably Jürgen Moltmann (born 1926) and Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928–2014). In fact, Moltmann and Pannenberg were both heavily influenced by Barth, which means that the three biggest names in twentieth-century Protestant theology were Barth and two Germans influenced by him.

One popular misperception, which obscured Barth's influence, has been that the theological approach of which these theologians are representative "marked a return to precisely the questions of history that Barth had dismissed as theologically wrong-headed."[4] Part and parcel of this misperception is the popular misunderstanding that "the historicity of the resurrection," among other historical truth-claims of the Bible, is deemed "irrelevant" in Barth's theology.[5]

There has indeed been a tendency among both followers

2. Carl Trueman, "Foreword," in *Engaging with Barth: Contemporary Evangelical Critiques*, ed. David Gibson and Daniel Strange (Nottingham: Apollos, 2008), 14.

3. Trueman, "Foreword," 14.

4. Trueman, "Foreword," 14.

5. Trueman, "Foreword," 14.

and opponents of Barth to interpret him along ahistorical lines. This tendency, more often than not, is based on an interpretive framework that portrays the development of his theology as the unfolding of the eternity-time dialectic of his early thought. As Barth worked out this dialectic—so purport such ahistorical readings—the vertical dimension (the self-disclosure of the transcendent God from above) of his thought gradually outgrew the horizontal (God's eschatological immanence proleptically present in history). Such readings, like certain "historicized" interpretations, often fail to recognize the substantive discontinuities between the allegedly (neo-)Kantian and/or Kierkegaardian origins of Barth's early theology and the later stages of his intellectual development.

This is basically the case with Pannenberg's reading of Barth as an ahistorical or anti-historical thinker. As Pannenberg sees it, the ahistorical nature of the Trinitarian form of Barth's theology in the *Church Dogmatics* was developed on the basis of the same eternity-time dialectic—a largely Kierkegaardian one, in Pannenberg's view—set forth in *Romans* II.[6] The same tendency to understand the later Barth in the light of his early dialectic undergirds Van Til's ahistorical reading as well: "One must look back to the *Christian Dogmatics* of 1927 and even to the commentary on Romans . . . in order to trace the development of

6. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 3:536–37. Pannenberg recognizes that in Barth's *Church Dogmatics* (henceforth *CD*), the eschatological focus of his early theology fades into the background. As Pannenberg sees it, however, the "eschatological mood" of the early Barth was only "taken up into a Christological orientation to the unity between God and us in Jesus Christ" in *CD* (*Systematic Theology*, 3:537). Barth's early view of the "dialectical turning of judgment into grace," according to Pannenberg, is retained in the later Barth. Pannenberg offers concentrated and extensive treatment of Barth's intellectual biography against the background of modern German Protestant theology in *Problemsgeschichte der neueren evangelischen Theologie in Deutschland: Von Schleiermacher bis zu Barth und Tillich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).

Barth's thinking. But in the *Church Dogmatics* we have the ripe fruition of a long lifetime of arduous reflection and research."[7]

As we shall see in chapter 2, this intellectual-biographical view of Barth is fundamentally misguided and academically outdated. Van Til, together with the publishing of G. C. Berkouwer's *Triumph of Grace* in 1956, has made ahistorical interpretations of Barth popular among Anglophone evangelicals.[8] As a result of such misinterpretations, any resurgence of interest in the questions of history that Barth had allegedly dismissed would be perceived as a sign of the obsolescence of his theology. The fact is, however, that Moltmann and Pannenberg were both significantly informed by Barth despite their criticisms of him.

To understand Moltmann's and Pannenberg's critical reliance on Barth, we must begin with a little philosophical-historical background. The characteristically modern interest in history that Moltmann and Pannenberg exhibit first arose in the generation of post-Kantian idealists like Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854), and G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831).[9] The strong process-historical tendencies in Moltmann and Pannenberg are admittedly indebted primarily to Hegel. According to Hegel, history is the dialectical process by which spirit actualizes itself and becomes God at the consummation of history. It is through Hegelian-historicist lenses that the characteristically modern questions of history become

7. Van Til, *Christianity and Barthianism*, 2.

8. See Gerrit Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. Harry Boer (London: Paternoster, 1956). Berkouwer thinks that Barth only pays lip service to "the open situation" of the futurity of God's act in the mature, Christocentric phase of his doctrine of election (p. 296). This misreading is still influential among evangelicals today. See, for example, Oliver Crisp, "Karl Barth and Jonathan Edwards on Reprobation (and Hell)," in *Engaging with Barth*, 319. This ahistorical reading of Barth has led many to the conclusion that Barth is an incipient universalist, a myth that we will debunk in chapter 2.

9. See Karl Ameriks, *Kant and the Historical Turn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

important in Moltmann and Pannenberg. (Historicism, simply put, is a label for philosophical views that see history as purposeful activity.)

What sets Moltmann and Pannenberg apart from Hegel—as well as the process ontologies of Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) and Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000), for that matter—is primarily their explicit reliance on Barth's understanding of history as an *ad extra* vehicle through which God is said to be self-determined in one way or another (God qua God, in the cases of Moltmann and Pannenberg; God-for-us without ceasing to be God-in-and-for-himself, in Barth's case), rather than a process in which God and world occurrences are essentially merged into one another. Moltmann and Pannenberg are indeed opposed to Barth's insistence on divine immutability in their contention that God's act is identical to his being, but they also emphasize the ontological distinction between the history of creation and the development of God's being. For Moltmann and Pannenberg, God acts on the basis of creaturely history to determine his own essence as God.

Moltmann's express insistence on God's "qualitative transcendence" beyond creation—as opposed to a merely "quantitative transcendence"—is what both Moltmann and Pannenberg inherited from Barth.[10] Without this Barthian dimension to their theological infrastructure, Moltmann and Pannenberg would only represent a return to the historicism of nineteenth-century panentheism (the view that the universe is contained within the being of God) or pantheism (the immediate identification of God with nature), and there would have been nothing characteristically twentieth-century about them.

Pannenberg, in particular, is known for having adopted what

10. Jürgen Moltmann, *Der lebendige Gott und die Fülle des Lebens: Auch ein Beitrag zur gegenwärtigen Atheismusdebatte* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2014), 27, 42.

he understands to be Barth's notion of the ontological determination of nature and history "from above" (*von oben*), which Pannenberg calls the "vertical" dimension of historical revelation.[11] That Pannenberg's theology is significantly informed by his (mis)reading of Barth is hardly surprising, given the fact that Pannenberg once left Germany to study with Barth in Basel, Switzerland. Pannenberg's *Systematic Theology* is, of course, known for its severe criticisms of what he sees as Barth's dismissal of the relevance of nature and history to theology, but Pannenberg's "reconstruction of Christian eschatology" is also admittedly indebted to the early Barth's "focusing of primitive Christian expectation of the kingdom of God on the reality of God himself, whose immanence for us and the world means judgment as well as salvation."[12]

Moltmann's criticism of Barth, like Pannenberg's, has often been misunderstood as a simple abandonment of the Barthian paradigm. I cannot put it better than my friend Hong Liang, Professor Moltmann's ultimate *Doktorsohn* ("doctoral son") and a Barth scholar well-regarded in Germanic and Sinophone academia: "The most misleading" way of "understanding the mode of relationship between Moltmann and Barth" is "to see Moltmann as a 'post-Barthian' theologian," if "the simple 'post-'" is taken to signify an "abolition" of the "intellectual continuity between the two."[13] True enough, it has been reported that Moltmann occasionally describes himself colloquially as "post-Barthian," but the way this term is often applied to him is highly problematic. Hong explains:

11. Pannenberg developed this view early on in his career. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, ed., *Revelation as History* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

12. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3:537.

13. Hong Liang [洪亮], *Six Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth and Jürgen Moltmann* [巴特與莫特曼神學管窺] (Hong Kong: VW Link [德慧文化], 2020), 141. Translation mine here and henceforth.

> This [the post-Barthian label] is correct only in a chronological sense. . . . This understanding [of a post-Barthian Moltmann] downplays at once the intellectual force of the influence of Barth's theology down to our day, as well as Moltmann's own insights and creativity. . . . In many respects, Moltmann has inherited some of the basic characteristics of Barth's theology. In terms of traditional affiliation, they are both representatives of twentieth-century covenant theology: they both appeal to . . . some covenant-theological framework to break free of historical positivism in their respective views of history. In terms of their critical relationships to nineteenth-century theology, they are completely united in their approaches, in that they both treat the act of God in history—rather than humanity's religious self-consciousness—as the starting-point of theology. . . . In terms of formal theological method, they both appeal to one doctrinal locus to regulate all other loci: for Barth it is Christology, and for Moltmann, eschatology.[14]

Hong reports that "Moltmann often says he had two intellectual 'fathers'—Bonhoeffer and Barth."[15] It is true that Bonhoeffer, whom Moltmann never met, inspired him to pursue the theology of a suffering God and provided him with an understanding of nature that moved away from Barth's antagonism towards natural theology. It is also true that Moltmann's discovery of left-Hegelianism lent him some intellectual tools needed for his eschatological reconstruction of Protestant theology.

We must acknowledge, however, that Moltmann was in many ways building on Barth in this attempt. Barth's doctrine of election, among other aspects of his theology, remains admittedly

14. Hong, *Six Studies*, 141.
15. Hong, *Six Studies*, 140.

one of the most important sources of inspiration for Moltmann. This is evinced by Professor Daniel Migliore's dedication of his edited volume on Barth to Professor Moltmann, which begins with a chapter on Barth's doctrine of predestination by Moltmann.[16]

In the United States, Robert Jenson (1930–2017) developed a theological approach that echoes Moltmann and Pannenberg. Jenson's indebtedness to Barth is much better acknowledged than in the cases of Moltmann and Pannenberg. It is explicitly stated in Jenson's celebrated early work, *God after God: The God of the Past and the God of the Future, Seen in the Work of Karl Barth* (1969).[17] Unlike Pannenberg and Moltmann, who criticize Barth for having driven too great a wedge between time and eternity, Jenson claims Barth as an ally by reading into Barth a Christocentric ontology in which God's eternity is fully historicized and rendered identical with events in time. That Jenson has been appreciated as an influential voice, misleading as it might be, on Barth's thought is demonstrated partly by the fact that Colin Gunton (1941–2003), one of Britain's foremost Barthian theologians, wrote his doctoral thesis on Barth and Hartshorne under Jenson's supervision at Oxford.

Contrary to popular perception, then, the rise of the historical-eschatological approach to theology, represented by Moltmann, Pannenberg, and Jenson, did not mark the obsolescence of Barth's theology at all. It was, rather, a revisionist reconstruction of the theological edifice that Barth had built. Even one entire generation thereafter, theologians who assumed this approach continued to be inspired by and wrestle with Barth. The widely influential *The Creative Suffering of God* (1988), by the British theologian Paul Fiddes (born 1947), is a

16. Daniel Migliore, ed., *Reading the Gospels with Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).

17. Robert Jenson, *God after God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010).

classic example.[18] Barth has remained one of the most important sources of inspiration, and has continued to present some of the most significant challenges to be overcome, in contemporary Protestant theology.

Barth's Influence across the Theological Spectrum

The influence of Barth's thought is detectable across the theological spectrum. Receptions of Barth, of course, vary from one theological circle to another. One brand of theology positively indebted to Barth—and even explicitly Barthian in some individual cases—is postliberalism, a label derived from George Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*.[19] Leading representatives of postliberal theology include Hans Frei (1922–88), George Lindbeck (1923–2018), Stanley Hauerwas (born 1940), George Hunsinger (born 1945), and William Placher (1948–2008), among others.[20] Because of postliberalism's affinities with classical Protestantism, evangelical theologians like Gabriel Fackre have suggested it as an alternative for evangelicals dissatisfied with the kind of propositional revelation espoused by the likes of Carl Henry and Robert Reymond, which significantly downplays the traditional notion of God's archetype-ectype revelation through redemptive history as an indirect and mediated revelation of God's essence. (Professor Michael Horton has made a similar observation—see chapter 3).

Also known as "narrative theology" because of its accentuation of the narrative aspect of the Christian faith, postliberalism

18. Paul Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

19. George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1984).

20. See George Hunsinger, "Postliberal Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42–57.

adopts a basically Barthian view of revelation as the grand history of God and humankind in Jesus Christ, narrated in Scripture and attested to by the historic and ongoing proclamations of the church. (We will discuss Barth's formulation of the Word of God revealed, written, and proclaimed in chapter 2.) The relationship of the propositional truth-claims of Christian dogmatics to this grand narrative is likened to the relationship between grammar and language. Human language has a logical structure, and grammar is our attempt to articulate this structure. It is the rationality of language in its everyday actuality that gives rise to grammar, not the other way around. Similarly, Christian dogmatics is regulated by the history of God and humanity in Christ, as narrated by the biblical witness. While we should strive to make our dogmatic truth-claims as consistent as possible, the finite human mind is never capable of fully systematizing this grand narrative in propositional terms. It is important to note that the largely Barthian formulations of the relations between church dogmas, biblical narratives, and the stories of ecclesial witnesses vary from one postliberal theologian to another.

George Hunsinger, recipient of the prestigious Karl Barth Prize (2010), draws on Barth's insights with what might be called a "traditionalist" interpretation (see chapter 2)—one that best exemplifies close and charitable readings of the text by assuming its basic coherence and literal perspicuity. Where Barth's theology does not sufficiently honor the teachings of Scripture, Professor Hunsinger would often prefer to follow, say, Luther or Calvin.[21] His political radicalism and endorsement of democratic socialism may not appeal to mainline evangelicals, but some important aspects of his political involvement, such as the National Religious Campaign Against Torture that he founded in 2006,

21. For example, George Hunsinger, "A Tale of Two Simultaneities: Justification and Sanctification in Calvin and Barth," in *Conversing with Barth*, ed. John McDowell and Mike Higton (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 86.

set good examples for evangelicals committed to the doctrine of natural rights as one grounded in and integral to the Christian doctrine of creation. Those familiar with Professor Hunsinger's writings would easily recognize that these political activities arise out of his engagement with Barth. His commitment to ecclesial orthodoxy—especially the dogmatic boundaries delimited at "Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon"—in his biblical expositions and his high view of traditional Protestant doctrines have drawn him close to evangelical students and colleagues.[22] His express affinities with views endorsed by Professor Richard Gaffin and familiarity with historic Reformed doctrine have been warmly acknowledged by Professor Michael Horton.[23]

Hans Frei, Professor Hunsinger's doctoral supervisor at Yale University, also drew on Barth in explicit ways. Barth's break with liberal theology against the background of the First World War and his subsequent theological defiance of the Third Reich were especially significant to Frei, not least because of Frei's identity as a Jewish refugee from Germany. Frei's doctoral dissertation at Yale on the early Barth's doctrine of revelation, in which he made a distinction between the "dialectical" and "analogical" phases of Barth's theology, was a product, not only of intellectual inquiry, but also of personal struggles in the Christian faith.[24] Frei's interpretation of Barth as a theologian who largely stood in line with ecclesial orthodoxy remains influential in Anglo-American scholarship to this day.

Lindbeck's theological hermeneutics are also significantly informed by Barth's treatment of the textuality of the Christian

22. See George Hunsinger, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2020), xvii–xviii.

23. See George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 338–60, cited by Michael Horton, "A Stony Jar: The Legacy of Karl Barth for Evangelical Theology," in *Engaging with Barth*, 378.

24. Hans Frei, "The Doctrine of Revelation in the Thought of Karl Barth, 1909–1922" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1956), 194.

tradition.[25] He introduced to narrative theology Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1889–1951) notion of "grammar" as the internal logic that underlies a system of thought. Of course, Lindbeck consciously avoided the reduction of Christian theology to a language game. The Catholic theologian David Tracy aptly describes "Lindbeck's substantive theological position" as "a methodologically sophisticated version of Barthian confessionalism. The hands may be the hands of Wittgenstein and Geertz but the voice is the voice of Karl Barth."[26]

Of course, not all postliberals apply Barth's theology in traditionalist or confessionalist ways. Hauerwas's project can be seen as reconstructionistic and revisionistic, both in its relation to Barth and to ecclesial dogmas. If Barth's political theology is essentially soteriological (that is, Christological), then Hauerwas's soteriology is essentially political. Hauerwas builds on Barth's motif of Christ's ontological triumph over evil to reconstruct a new political soteriology. Salvation is defined by Hauerwas as "God's work to restore all creation to the Lordship of Christ."[27] Salvation as such is "about the defeat of powers that presume to rule outside God's providential care."[28] The church triumphs over the powers represented by Rome by reenacting through martyrdom the accomplished reality of Christ's victory on the cross.[29] In Hauerwas, then, the Barthian distinction without separation between biblical witness and ecclesial witness is much more blurred than in Hunsinger's version of postliberal theology, and the regulating function of church dogmas is much weaker.

25. See George Lindbeck, "Barth and Textuality," *Theology Today* 43 (1986): 361–76.

26. David Tracy, "Lindbeck's New Program for Theology: A Reflection," *The Thomist* 49 (1985): 465, cited by Howland Sanks, "David Tracy's Theological Project: An Overview and Some Implications," *Theological Studies* 54 (1993): 725.

27. Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom?* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 37.

28. Hauerwas, *After Christendom?*, 37.

29. Hauerwas, *After Christendom?*, 38.

Another brand of twentieth-century theology that interacted closely with Barth is *nouvelle théologie*, a Catholic theological movement that directly contributed to the development of narrative theology. The first generation of theologians associated with this movement included Henri de Lubac (1896–1991), Yves Congar (1904–95), Karl Rahner (1904–84), Jean Daniélou (1905–74), Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–88), Henri Bouillard (1908–81), and others. Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI, born 1927) and Hans Küng (born 1928) pertain to the second generation. Much as postliberals were antagonistic towards what they deemed to be dogmatic over-systematization, *nouvelle* theologians reacted against the neo-scholasticism that dominated Catholic theology in the aftermath of the First Vatican Council (1869–70).[30]

The Trinitarian shape of Rahner's theology, developed against the background of nineteenth-century German philosophy, is so strikingly similar to Barth's, that comparisons have often been made between the two.[31] The Catholic Barth scholar Paul Molnar points out that many modern theologians, including Moltmann, Pannenberg, and Eberhard Jüngel (born 1934), have come under the influences of both Barth and Rahner. Rahner identifies the immanent Trinity with the economic, but Professor Molnar rightly stresses that Barth draws a clear distinction between God's immutably triune essence and his Trinitarian acts *ad extra*.[32]

30. For more information on the developments leading to and following after the First Vatican Council, see my "Church," in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought*, ed. Joel Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, and Johannes Zachhuber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 621–24.

31. For instance, Bruce Marshall, *Christology in Conflict: The Identity of a Saviour in Rahner and Barth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987). See James Buckley, "Barth and Rahner," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. George Hunsinger and Keith Johnson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), 607–17.

32. See Paul Molnar, "The Function of the Immanent Trinity in Karl Barth: Implications for Today," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 42 (1989): 367–99.

Ratzinger first became familiar with Barth's thought upon reading Küng's doctoral thesis on Barth's doctrine of justification in the late 1950s. In 1967, Ratzinger visited Basel, where he met Barth in person. During the Basel visit, Ratzinger attended Barth's colloquium on the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei verbum*) from the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), a council in which the influence of *nouvelle théologie* was strongly felt. According to the report of Eberhard Busch (born 1937), hailed by some as the "prince of Barth studies," who served as Barth's academic assistant at the time, the exchange between Barth and Ratzinger demonstrated both mutual respect and some fundamental disagreements.[33]

Among the Teutonic *nouvelle* theologians, the two who interacted most closely with Barth were his Swiss compatriots, Balthasar and Küng. Küng, recipient of the 1992 Karl Barth Prize, wrote his doctoral thesis on Barth's doctrine of justification, with an interpretation approved by Barth himself.[34] It should be noted, however, that Barth was often generous in giving approvals, but the interpretations of which he approved were not always entirely correct.[35]

Many have referred to Barth and Balthasar as the "two stars of Basel," though the latter was actually not a native Basler. Balthasar's *The Theology of Karl Barth* (1951) set the first dominant intellectual-biographical paradigm of Barth studies, one that lasted for decades and was strengthened in Anglo-American scholarship by Frei and T. F. Torrance (1913–2007), only to be challenged by German-speaking scholars in the 1980s; it

33. See Eberhard Busch, *Meine Zeit mit Karl Barth* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 229–35.

34. Hans Küng, *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981).

35. This is partly suggested in Trevor Hart, "Barth and Küng on Justification: 'Imaginary Differences'?" *Irish Theological Quarterly* 59 (1993): 94–113.

was superseded by the paradigm proposed by Professor Bruce McCormack, another Barth Prize recipient, in 1995.[36] More will be said about the different paradigms of Barth studies and the continuing importance of some of Balthasar's insights in chapter 2. Suffice it now to note that apart from being a constructive theologian in his own right, Balthasar was also a lifelong Barth scholar, who drew critically on Barth's theology. In his appraisal of Barth's take on the analogy of faith, Balthasar makes a quintessentially Catholic assertion against Barth, that "the spontaneity of human knowing belongs to its very nature, which has not been destroyed by sin."[37] In many ways, then, Barth was a mirror in which Balthasar sought to better understand his own Catholic identity.[38]

Bouillard's work on Barth is less known in the Anglophone world than Balthasar's and Küng's. Upon his visit to America in 1962, however, Barth told the journalists from *Time* magazine that "the best critical work on his works . . . has been done by such Catholic thinkers as French Jesuit Henri Bouillard and Father Hans Urs von Balthasar of Basel."[39] After being discharged from the Jesuit school of Fourvière in 1950 for his associations with *nouvelle théologie*, Bouillard launched a large-scale research project on Barth, resulting in a second dissertation, which was defended in the presence of the Swiss theologian himself. The dissertation was published in two volumes in 1957, marking a significant event in Francophone Barth studies and the Catholic reception of Barth.[40]

36. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. Edward Oakes (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992).

37. Balthasar, *Theology of Karl Barth*, 160.

38. For Balthasar's agreements and disagreements with Barth on the problem of analogy, see Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 131–34.

39. Karl Barth, "Witness to an Ancient Truth," *Time* 89, no. 16 (April 20, 1962): 59.

40. Henri Bouillard, *Karl Barth*, 2 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1957).

Barth's influence on Catholic theology has in fact continued into our own day. Professor Molnar's name has been mentioned above. David Tracy (born 1939) is another instance, yet of a very different nature. His attempt at a modern Catholic treatment of the problem of analogy shows that this is a subject in which Barth is a figure that no one after him can bypass.[41] In his application of the notion of analogical imagination, Tracy identifies three paradigms of Christian responses to contemporary situations, one of which is that of "proclamation," represented by Barth.[42] Tracy does not adopt any Barthian paradigm, nor does he try to refute it or overcome its challenges. Rather, his project is one that brings a plurality of theological paradigms into conversation. In this sense, Tracy may be seen as having incorporated Barthian thinking into his own program as a conversation partner.

In contrast to Barth's more positive reception in Catholicism, he is often regarded negatively in the Eastern Orthodox communion, not least because of his harsh criticisms of the Orthodox notion of *theosis* (deification). Orthodox scholars tend to see Barth as an obstacle to be overcome in ecumenical dialogues between Protestantism and Orthodoxy.[43] If the Orthodox scholar Paul Gavrilyuk is right that Barth is misguided in "making *theosis* guilty by association" with theological views showing traits of "ebionite Christology," then there may yet be something in what Barth positively states that is worth the consideration of Orthodox theologians.[44] This explains why Professor Hunsinger would recommend Gavrilyuk's writings to his students, and why Gavrilyuk later came to endorse Professor Hunsinger's work on

41. See David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

42. See Sanks, "David Tracy's Theological Project," 717.

43. Paul Gavrilyuk, "The Retrieval of Deification: How a Once-Despised Archaism Became an Ecumenical Desideratum," *Modern Theology* 25 (2009): 647–59.

44. Gavrilyuk, "Retrieval of Deification," 648.

Barth.[45] In fact, Barth has often been chosen as a representative of twentieth-century Protestant theology in ecumenical dialogues with recent Orthodox theologians such as John Zizioulas (born 1931).[46]

The Reception of Barth around the World

The foregoing discussions on Barth's influence across the theological spectrum alluded to the geographical scale of his impact. Aside from the Teutonic names already mentioned, Michael Beintker, Wolf Krötke, Christoph Schwöbel, Ingrid Spieckermann, Günter Thomas, Christiane Tietz, Michael Weinrich, Michael Welker, and a host of other prominent theologians in the German-speaking world have relied on Barth, wrestled with him, and/or propagated his thought in one way or another. The same may be said of an array of luminaries in British theology from past to present: Nigel Biggar, Paul Fiddes, David Ford, Colin Gunton, Trevor Hart, T. F. Torrance, Graham Ward, John Webster, and Rowan Williams, among others. In North America: James Buckley, Hans Frei, Stanley Hauerwas, George Hunsinger, Robert Jenson, George Lindbeck, Bruce Marshall, Bruce McCormack, Daniel Migliore, William Placher, Katherine Sonderegger, Kathryn Tanner, Ronald Thiemann, Miroslav Volf (an American-based Croatian), John Howard Yoder, and many others.

Barth's name was known across Reformed Hungary and Transylvania by the 1930s, and his 1936 trip to those places was a major event among the seminaries and churches there. In the Netherlands, Barthian theologians like Theodoor L. Haitjema

45. George Hunsinger, *Reading Barth with Charity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015).

46. For instance, Paul Collins, *Trinitarian Theology, West and East: Karl Barth, the Cappadocian Fathers, and John Zizioulas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

(1888–1972) began to emerge as a considerable force in academia and the churches in the 1920s. Hendrikus Berkhof (1914–95) incorporated the insights of Schleiermacher and offered a highly secularized and admittedly heterodox reconstruction of Barthian theology a generation later. Barth was in fact reputed to be a possible friend of conservative Dutch Calvinism in the early 1920s. In 1926, however, the Barthians began to attack neo-Calvinism, and by the 1930s, "the Barthians" had become "the most serious opponents of neo-Calvinism."[47] The relationship between the Barthians and Dutch Calvinists worsened when Barth himself entered the fight in 1951, attacking the latter as "men of stupid, cold and stony hearts to whom we need not listen."[48] After reading Berkouwer's *Triumph of Grace*, however, Barth issued an apology for "the fierce attack which [he] made on Dutch neo-Calvinists *in globo*," and commended Berkouwer's serious work on his theology despite critical interpretations therein that Barth deemed incorrect.[49] At the time, Barth was still appalled by the "fundamentalists" among Dutch and Dutch-American neo-Calvinists, famously calling them "butchers and cannibals."[50] When he finally met Cornelius Van Til in person during his 1962 visit to America, he took the initiative to shake hands with Van Til. This was later followed up with a personal letter that Van Til wrote to Barth with good will, which Van Til undersigned by jokingly referring to himself as "*ein Menschfresser* [a cannibal]."[51] In fact, the course of events in the Netherlands

47. George Harinck, "How Can an Elephant Understand a Whale and Vice Versa?," in *Karl Barth and American Evangelicalism*, ed. Bruce McCormack and Clifford Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 19, 28.

48. *CD* III/4, xiii.

49. *CD* IV/2, xii.

50. *CD* IV/2, xii.

51. Cornelius Van Til letter to Karl Barth, December 21, 1965, Van Til Papers, Montgomery Library, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, cited by Harinck, "Elephant," 41.

significantly shaped the reception of Barth, not only in America, but also, and to a larger extent, in South Africa.[52]

In Latin American liberation theology, of which the Peruvian Catholic theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez (born 1928) is among the best-known founders, Barthianism is often taken to represent an imperialistic bondage from which theology must be liberated. In *A Theology of Liberation* (1971), for example, Gutiérrez relies on Moltmann to criticize what he sees as Barth's eschatological affirmation of eternity and negation of history.[53] Meanwhile, however, Gutiérrez also credits Barth—with a somewhat deconstructionist reading—for having laid the foundations for "Christian anthropocentrism," which lies at the heart of liberation theology.[54]

Liberation theologians in the United States have also engaged with Barth in significant ways. His socialist leanings and his personal support for Martin Luther King Jr. during his visit to America have led some Black liberation theologians to claim him as a theological ally of James Cone (1938–2018). That Barth continues to inspire and challenge liberation theology in the United States and beyond is evident in Rubén Rosario Rodríguez's *Dogmatics after Babel* (2018), a work that seeks to break through the purported impasse between the theologies of revelation and of culture, represented respectively by Barth and Paul Tillich (1886–1965).[55]

Barth's influence in East Asia is perhaps not as well known to Anglophone readers, with the exception of Korea. Compared to academics from other Asian countries, Korean scholars tend

52. John De Gruchy, "Reflections on 'Doing Theology' in South Africa after Sixty Years in Conversation with Barth," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 5 (2019): 11–28.

53. Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 2012), 93.

54. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 6.

55. Rubén Rosario Rodríguez, *Dogmatics after Babel: Beyond Theologies of Word and Culture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018).

to be more active in Anglophone academia. Meehyung Chung, the first woman to be awarded the Karl Barth Prize (2006), is among the most celebrated Barth scholars in Asia. Well published in English, German, and Korean, Chung is an important voice in the areas of feminist theology and political theology in the West, as well as in her native Korea. The name Sung Wook Chung, a native Korean evangelical Barth scholar who is well known and well published in the English-speaking world, may perhaps be more familiar to evangelical readers. There has indeed been a long-standing tradition of Barth scholarship and constructive Barthian theology in Korea.[56] Korean is one of the few languages into which the *Church Dogmatics* has been translated in its entirety.

Academic theology in Sinophone Christianity has not enjoyed the same level of success as that in Korean Christianity, due to various historical, cultural, sociopolitical, and theological factors. The twentieth century saw two generations of blossoming Chinese revivalists whose influence, as far as the number of converts is concerned, easily matched that of Billy Graham or Charles Finney. Few Chinese theologians of the early twentieth century, however, left behind legacies that continue to inspire later generations. Many historians of Sinophone Christianity have commented that Tzu-ch'en Chao (趙紫宸, 1888–1979) was probably the only one worthy of this description.

Originally trained in sociology at Vanderbilt University, Chao's early theology was an attempt at the indigenization of Christianity by combining Confucianism with a kind of moral theology reminiscent of Ritschlian liberalism. The Second World War forced Chao to rethink this liberalism. It was in the theologies of Barth and Paul Tillich (1886–1965) that Chao found

56. See Young-Gwan Kim, *Karl Barth's Reception in Korea* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

the core materials for the transformation of his theology. Chao's *Barth's Religious Thought* (1939) represents one of the earliest Asian attempts at interpreting Barth.[57]

Under the overall pietistic and separatist mood that dominated mainline Chinese Christianity up to the 1970s (i.e., the Jerusalem-Athens type of separation), however, pursuits of academic theology were highly discouraged among believers. This meant that Chao's work on Barth would be met with overall neglect or even belligerent disapproval in Chinese Christianity for decades.

The acceptance of academic theology among mainline Chinese churches in the 1970s was partly a result of the endeavors of a group of Chinese church leaders who attended Westminster Theological Seminary in the 1960s, most notably the late Jonathan Chao (趙天恩, 1938–2004). Their efforts contributed to the founding in 1975 of the China Graduate School of Theology (CGST) in Hong Kong. A generation of elite students from CGST and other seminaries in Hong Kong were then encouraged to study abroad for higher degrees in theology. The United Kingdom was unsurprisingly the favorite destination because of colonial connections at the time.

Three of Hong Kong's foremost theologians are representative of that generation: Carver Yu (余達心, born 1949), Milton Wan (溫偉耀, born 1952), and the late Arnold Yeung (楊牧谷, 1945–2002). Together, they reflect Barth's influence on Sinophone theology, directly or indirectly, through British academia in the 1980s. Yu's 1981 doctoral dissertation at Oxford is indirectly informed by Barth, as it relies heavily on the theological method of Barth's venerated Scottish pupil, T. F. Torrance.[58]

57. Tzu-ch'en Chao [趙紫宸], *Barth's Religious Thought* [巴德的宗教思想] (Shanghai: Youth Association Press [青年協會書局], 1939).

58. See Carver Yu, "The Contrast of Two Ontological Models as a Clue to Indigenous Theology" (D.Phil. diss., University of Oxford, 1981).

Wan earned his doctorate from Oxford in 1984 with a thesis comparing the theological anthropologies of Barth and Tillich.[59]

Unlike Wan and Yu, Yeung was never closely connected to the CGST circle, and yet he was clearly an academic theologian characteristic of that generation in Hong Kong. He studied with none other than T. F. Torrance at Edinburgh before proceeding to Cambridge for a doctorate, which he earned in 1981. Yeung's *Theology of Reconciliation and Church Renewal*, to my mind, remains the most philosophically sophisticated work of constructive theology in the Chinese language to date.[60] This is an opus that builds on Barth's doctrine of reconciliation in the *Church Dogmatics*, with a theological method derived from T. F. Torrance, to address indigenous issues in Hong Kong and broader Chinese culture.

In mainland China, academic theology began to emerge in the 1980s as an initiative related to the Open and Reform program. Chinese scholars were initially concerned with the role of Christianity in the economic and social success of Western democracies. This eventually grew into an interest in Christianity itself in its theological, historical, ecclesiastical, ecumenical, philosophical, (inter-)cultural, social, and interreligious dimensions. In the late 1980s, the so-called Sino-Christian theological movement (漢語神學運動) began to take shape, with the intention of establishing an interdisciplinary model of Christian studies situated in a distinctively Sinophone context. The intellectual forerunners of this movement were mostly scholars from mainland China, most notably Liu Xiaofeng (刘小枫, born 1956) and He Guanghu (何光沪, born 1950).

The theological dimension of the Sino-Christian theological movement in its earliest stages was dominated by Liu, who later

59. Milton Wan, "Authentic Humanity in the Theology of Paul Tillich and Karl Barth" (D.Phil. diss., University of Oxford, 1984).

60. See Arnold Yeung [楊牧谷], *Theology of Reconciliation and Church Renewal* [復和神學與教會更新] (Hong Kong: Seed Press [種籽出版], 1987).

dissociated himself from the movement. Liu studied in Barth's hometown, Basel, and earned his doctorate in Christian theology from the University in 1993, with a dissertation on the German philosopher Max Scheler (1874–1928). The early Liu drew on a number of sources, but his theological paradigm was basically Barthian. Under his influence, Sino-Christian theology took on a strongly Barthian tone in the early stages of its development, with T. F. Torrance as one of the most frequently mentioned figures in attempts to define Sino-Christian Theology.[61] Liu's later abandonment of Barthianism and Sino-Christian theology in favor of a Nietzschean approach to Chinese culture represents a significant challenge to certain Sino-Christian theologians today.[62]

Sino-Christian theology today has become a broad umbrella covering a wide variety of academic projects, ranging from the study of the Nestorian mission to China in the late fifth century to the study of the phenomenology of Jean-Luc Marion. The movement encompasses proponents of a wide range of doctrinal convictions—Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, liberal, neo-orthodox, postliberal, evangelical, neo-Calvinist, etc. Still, Barth is among the most frequently discussed theologians in Sino-Christian publications, along with Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The 2019 volume of the *Yearbook of Chinese Theology*, a special edition that focuses on Barth and Sino-Christian theology, attests to the scale of his influence on Sinophone theology in recent decades.[63]

One strain of linguistically Sinophone theology that developed relatively independently of Chinese Christianity was

61. See Guanghu He [何光滬] and Daniel Yeung [楊熙楠], eds., *Sino-Christian Theology Reader* [漢語神學讀本], 2 vols. (Hong Kong: Logos and Pneuma [道風], 2009).

62. See Thomas Qu, "After Nietzsche: How Could We Do Sino-Christian Theology Today?," *Logos and Pneuma* 50 (2019): 155–82.

63. See Thomas Qu and Paulos Huang, eds., *Yearbook of Chinese Theology 2019* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

Formosan Presbyterianism. In the 1960s, two theologians rose to international prominence from my native Taiwan. Choan-Seng Song (宋泉盛, born 1929), a leading representative of contemporary Asian theology, earned his Ph.D. at Union Theological Seminary with a dissertation on Barth and Tillich (1964).[64] Song interacted closely with liberation theology and saw the impasse between the theologies represented by Barth and Tillich as one to be overcome from a new starting point in the liberation of indigenous cultures from (post-)colonial influence. Cambridge-trained pastor and theologian Shoki Coe (黃彰輝, 1914–88), Song's close friend and colleague in the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, espoused a more traditional theology that had won the approval of the likes of T. F. Torrance. So deeply informed by Barth was Coe's thought that Song famously dubbed it a "theology in Babylonian bondage" awaiting liberating indigenization.

This strain of traditionalist Barthian influence has proved pastorally relevant in Taiwanese Presbyterianism up to our day. The works of contemporary Taiwanese Presbyterian theologian Hong-Hsin Lin (林鴻信, born 1955), who earned the first of his two doctorates from Tübingen under Moltmann's supervision, reached out to a broader Chinese readership beyond Taiwanese Presbyterianism in the 1990s, and is one of the most sought-after speakers among Mandarin churches worldwide today. As a non-Barthian evangelical, Lin draws on Barth's insights in significant ways. With his two-volume *Systematic Theology* (2017) spanning nearly two thousand pages, he has been recognized as one of the most authoritative voices for Protestantism in Sinophone academia.[65]

64. Choan-Seng Song, "The Relation of Divine Revelation and Man's Religion in the Theologies of Karl Barth and Paul Tillich" (Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1964).

65. See Hong-Hsin Lin [林鴻信], *Systematic Theology* [系統神學], 2 vols. (Taipei: Campus [校園], 2017).

The introductions of Barth's theology to Japan and mainland China were almost concurrent. Unlike what happened in China, however, Barth's theology quickly took root in Japan and burgeoned without a break. By the 1950s, he had gained such a following in Japan that he felt obliged to openly address Japanese Christians to remind them not to follow him, but to follow Christ. His message was occasioned by the celebration of his seventieth birthday in 1956. In February that year, Barth received a letter from the editors of *Gospel and World* (福音と世界), the most influential and widely read periodical among the "twenty million Christians in Japan" at the time, informing him that they were "planning a special edition with various articles on Barth and his theology in the May 1956 issue for his seventieth birthday."[66]

Barth wrote in reply to his "dear Japanese friends":

> Make as little exhibition of my name as possible! Because there is only *one* interesting name, while the elevation of all other names can only lead to false commitments and stir up bland jealousy and impenitence among others. Do not take from me a single sentence untested either, but rather measure each of them by the only true Word of God, which is the judge and supreme teacher of us all![67]

Barth's fame in Japan was partly owed to Yoshio Inoue (井上良雄, 1907–2003), one of the aforementioned editors of *Gospel and World*. Inoue was himself a leading Japanese constructive theologian—there is even a small academic field dedicated to the study of his thought.[68] He translated the fourth volume of the

66. Barth, *Offene Briefe 1945–1968*, in *Gesamtausgabe* V.15 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1984), 370. Translation mine here and henceforth.

67. Barth, *Offene Briefe 1945–1968*, 375.

68. See Eiichi Amemiya [雨宮栄一], Keiji Ogawa [小川圭治], and Heita Mori [森平太], eds., *Yoshio Inoue Studies* [井上良雄研究] (Tokyo: Protestant Press [新

Church Dogmatics in 1959–88.[69] The other three volumes were translated by Masayoshi Yoshinaga (吉永 正義, born 1925).[70] In 1986, the Karl Barth Society of Japan was founded under the leadership of one of Inuoue's followers, Keiji Ogawa (小川 圭治, 1927–2012).

Partly due to the efforts of Inoue and his colleagues and pupils, including Yoshinaga, Ogawa, Eiichi Amemiya (雨宮 栄一, 1927–2019), Hiroshi Murakami (村上 伸, born 1930), and others, the study of Barth in Japan has been more advanced than in Anglophone scholarship in certain areas, most notably political theology. Well before Barth's *Evangelium und Gesetz* ("Gospel and Law," 1935), *Rechtfertigung und Recht* ("Justification and Justice," 1938), and *Christengemeinde und Bürgergemeinde* ("The Christian Community and the Civil Community," 1946) became available in English in 1960, Inoue had recognized their significance for Barth's political theology.[71] Inoue translated *Evangelium und Gesetz* into Japanese in 1952, followed in 1954 by the translation of the two other pieces with Kazuo Hasumi (蓮見和男, born 1925).[72]

Barth's political theology and the political implications of his theological method have been profoundly influential and polarizing in Japanese theology and philosophy. This has to do with

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教出版社], 2006).

69. Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (*Church Dogmatics*) [和解論（教会教義学）], trans. Yoshio Inoue (Tokyo: Protestant Press, 1959–88).

70. Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (*Church Dogmatics*) [神の言葉（教会教義学）], trans. Masayoshi Yoshinaga (Tokyo: Protestant Press, 1975–77); *The Doctrine of God* (*Church Dogmatics*) [神論（教会教義学）], trans. Masayoshi Yoshinaga (Tokyo: Protestant Press, 1978–83); *The Doctrine of Creation* (*Church Dogmatics*) [創造論（教会教義学）], trans. Masayoshi Yoshinaga (Tokyo: Protestant Press, 1980–85).

71. Karl Barth, *Community, State, and Church: Three Essays*, trans. A. M. Hall and G. Ronald Howe (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960).

72. Karl Barth, *Gospel and Law* [福音と律法], trans. Yoshio Inoue (Tokyo: Protestant Press, 1952); Karl Barth, *Church and State* [教会と国家], ed. and trans. Yoshio Inoue and Kazuo Hasumi (Tokyo: Protestant Press, 1954).

the political situation in Japan during and after the Second World War. Both left-wing liberals and right-wing militarists tried to find support in his writings. Inoue undoubtedly stood in line with the spirit of the Confessing Church in Germany. In 1935, he was accused of having violated the Peace Preservation Laws, enacted in Imperial Japan for the suppression of left-wing resistance, though no charges were pressed in the end.

If Inoue exemplifies the Barthian spirit of resistance, then the famed Kyoto School of Philosophy, which actively supported Japan's militarist regime during the war, would be an example of the opposite. That Kitaro Nishida (西田 幾多朗, 1870–1945), founder of the school, was intellectually indebted to Barth in his construction of the concept of God has long been a well-acknowledged fact among German-speaking scholars, but it was not until around 2010 that Anglophone scholars began to explore Nishida's appropriation of Barth's theology.[73] Hajime Tanabe (田辺 元, 1885–1962), Nishida's pupil and cofounder of the Kyoto School, also drew critically on Barth's dialectical method for the construction of his early philosophy of the "logic of species" (種の論理).[74] The wartime Kyoto School appealed eclectically to Barth's insights to support an ideology of which he would never have approved.

Towards the end of the war, Tanabe became critical of Japanese militarism and nationalism. He developed a philosophy of guilt and repentance, and coined the term "metanoetics" (懺悔道) to describe this philosophy. Tanabe's postwar philosophy drew on a number of sources, including Christianity, Buddhism, and Kantianism. Barth was one of Tanabe's significant dialogue

73. Curtis Rigsby, "Nishida on God, Barth and Christianity," *Asian Philosophy* 19 (2009): 119–57.

74. Chin-Ping Liao [廖欽彬], "Tanabe Hajime's Religious Philosophy [田邊元的宗教哲學]," *NCCU Philosophical Journal* [國立政治大學哲學學報] 32 (2014): 57–91.

partners during this period. Tanabe, like Kitamori, was critical of what he saw as a lack of focus on history in Barth's theology, but often pointed to Barth's thought and life for inspiration to illuminate the "path of repentance," or "metanoesis."[75]

Katsumi Takizawa (滝沢 克己, 1909–84), a leading Japanese philosopher and theologian of Inoue's generation, was directly influenced by both Nishida and Barth. He began his academic career as a philosophy student. His early essay on the development of Nishida's philosophy won the approval of the master himself, and with Nishida's personal recommendation, Takizawa traveled to Germany for advanced studies in 1933, where he eventually became a student of Barth at the University of Bonn. Takizawa wrote an outstanding student essay under Barth's guidance, which was subsequently published in the prominent *Evangelische Theologie* in 1935.[76] The famed "Immanuel Philosophy" that Takizawa later developed was critically indebted to both Barth and Nishida.

Kazoh Kitamori (北森 嘉蔵, 1916–98), yet another Kyoto-trained thinker, is one of the Japanese theologians best known in the West. Rooted in the Lutheran tradition, he studied under Tanabe in the Literature Department at Kyoto University, where he received a Ph.D. in Literature in 1962. Kitamori developed a *theologia doloris* made famous in the West partly by Moltmann's reliance thereupon in the celebrated *The Crucified God* (1972). Like *The Crucified God*, the 1975 Spanish translation of Kitamori's *Theology of the Pain of God* (神の痛みの神学, first published in Japanese in 1946) has provided a source of inspiration for Latino theology.[77]

75. Yu-Kwan Ng [吳汝鈞], *Phenomenology of Pure Vitality: Second Volume* [純粹力動現象學：續篇] (Taipei: Commercial Press [台灣商務], 2008), 244–46.

76. Katsumi Takizawa, "Über die Möglichkeit des Glaubens," *Evangelische Theologie* 2 (1935): 376–402.

77. Leopoldo Sánchez, "What Does Japan Have to Do with Either Latin America

The thrust of Kitamori's *theologia doloris* is that "the cross is in no sense an external act of God, but an act within himself."[78] Pain—a concept that Kitamori develops in the context of Japanese Bushido—is essential to God's being as the living God. The pain that God suffers is not an abstract essence in his eternal substantiality, but rather his concrete act in temporal history. Any theology that denies the pain of God as such is, on Kitamori's view, guilty of docetism.[79]

Kitamori is known for his sporadic and yet harsh attacks on Barth in *Theology of the Pain of God*. These criticisms are densely focused as one self-contained piece in Kitamori's own foreword to the 1972 German translation of the work. The foreword begins with a dismissal of the ecumenism espoused by the Barthian theologian Keiji Ogawa as one that sets forth an "abstract universality" rather than a "concrete universality."[80] Kitamori then proceeds to criticize Barth's notion of "the First Commandment as a theological axiom," set forth in the 1930s, which he deems legalistic.[81] Echoing Luther's *theologia crucis*, Kitamori contends that the cross is the only axiom for Christian theology, apart from which all theologizing inevitably leads to abstractions.

What readers of Kitamori often miss is his critically positive appraisal of Barth in the fifth edition of *Theology of the Pain of God*, the edition translated into English, German, and Spanish. Kitamori credits Barth for having become "aware of his own abstraction" and attempting to replace it with "concrete truth"

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or U.S. Hispanics? Reading Kazoh Kitamori's 'Theology of the Pain of God' from a Latino Perspective," *Missio Apostolica* 12 (2004): 36–47.

78. Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 45.

79. Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God*, 35.

80. Kazoh Kitamori, *Theologie des Schmerzes Gottes*, trans. Tsuneaki Kato and Paul Schneiss (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 9. Translation mine here and henceforth.

81. Kitamori, *Theologie des Schmerzes Gottes*, 10.

in *The Humanity of God* (1956), and for making Christology not only the content of, but also the prolegomenon to, theology.[82] As Kitamori sees it, however, Barth failed to follow through with this intention. Kitamori's criticisms of Barth in the fifth edition of *Theology of the Pain of God*, then, are in some sense aimed at completing the Christological project that Barth had initiated, though the Kyoto theologian was of course not nearly as intellectually indebted to Barth as Moltmann was.

Barth's reception in China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan might be little known to Anglophone readers for various reasons. This serves to remind us that in our assessment of the depth and extent of a thinker's influence, it is important to look beyond our own cultural and linguistic confines. As Anglophone evangelicals, we should be especially careful about the Anglo-American tendency to overlook the rest of the world, coupled with a certain isolationist ethos within evangelicalism that we have been trying to overcome since the inception of the neo-evangelical movement. In a word, Barth is in fact much more significant than most Anglophone evangelicals used to imagine in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Barth and Evangelical Theology Today

After about a decade of overall indifference, Anglo-American evangelical engagements with Barth and Barthianism(s) began to intensify in the 2000s, as the 2019 *Blackwell Companion to Karl Barth* indicates. The list of contributors reveals the presence of evangelical scholars in contemporary Barth studies: David Gibson, Ryan Glomsrud, Nathan Hieb, Matt Jenson, and myself, to name but the ones carrying clear-cut evangelical identities. My friend JinHyok Kim is a Korean evangelical with Barthian

82. Kitamori, *Theologie des Schmerzes Gottes*, 12, 21.

leanings. Keith L. Johnson (not to be confused with Keith E. Johnson), co-editor of the *Companion* and leading American Barth scholar today, has also been associated with traditionally evangelical institutions; he is Professor of Theology at Wheaton College and an InterVarsity Press author. One evangelical expert on Barth not included in the *Companion* is Sung Wook Chung, whose 2006 edited volume on Barth and evangelical theology continues to provide a good glimpse of the diverse receptions of Barth in contemporary evangelical theology.[83]

In addition to evangelicals involved in the secondary literature on Barth, there have also been those who have tried to incorporate his insights into constructive evangelical theology. As an alumnus of Regent College, I think immediately of Professor Ross Hastings and Professor Archie Spencer.

G. W. Bromiley (1915–2009), lead translator and coeditor of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* in English, is perhaps the best-known example of an evangelical attempting to incorporate Barth's theology. Bromiley himself held to a normative evangelical view of biblical inspiration.[84] He finds Barth's formulation of the humanity of Scripture illuminating and argues that "it is not really necessary to insist on errors in the Bible," as Barth does, "to maintain its true humanity."[85] Bromiley attempted to eclectically and critically appropriate Barth's insights without compromising what was in his day the basic evangelical consensus on biblical revelation.

Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, by contrast, departed from the normative evangelical understanding of the verbal inspiration of Scripture, and located themselves at some midway point between what they considered to be Barthian "neo-orthodoxy"

83. Sung Wook Chung, ed., *Karl Barth and Evangelical Theology: Convergences and Divergences* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006).

84. See Geoffrey Bromiley, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Inspiration," *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 87 (1955): 66–80.

85. Bromiley, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Inspiration," 80.

and conservative evangelicalism.[86] The Rogers-McKim reinterpretation of the history of Protestant doctrine remains influential in some evangelical circles today.

Kurt Anders Richardson's *Reading Karl Barth* suggests ways in which Barth can provide new directions for North American theology, evangelicalism included. Unlike Bromiley, Professor Richardson does not try to reconcile Barth's doctrine of the Word of God with evangelical or Roman Catholic norms on biblical infallibility.[87] Rather, he moves beyond the battle on biblical authority and finds in Barth's notion of union with Christ a point of convergence between Barthianism and evangelicalism, suggesting that Barth's pneumatological formulation of the *unio* and the presence of Christ be taken seriously in evangelical theology as a starting point in its theological method.[88]

Kevin Diller has suggested that Barth and Alvin Plantinga, a leading contemporary American philosopher and the famed proponent of "Reformed epistemology," in fact provide a unified response to the epistemological challenges characteristic of the modern era.[89] Especially noteworthy is Diller's observation on how the two thinkers approach natural theology in similar ways.[90] Instead of rejecting natural theology wholesale, Barth and Plantinga only deny its status as *praeambula fidei*. They both treat the doctrine of faith as properly basic and proceed from the starting point of the properly basic truths of faith to interpret sensible

86. See Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979).

87. Kurt Anders Richardson, *Reading Karl Barth: New Directions for North American Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 105–6.

88. Kurt Anders Richardson, "*Christus Praesens*: Barth's Radically Realist Christology and Its Necessity for Theological Method," in *Barth and Evangelical Theology*, 136–48. Also see Richardson, *Reading Karl Barth*, 83–87.

89. Kevin Diller, *Theology's Epistemological Dilemma: How Karl Barth and Alvin Plantinga Provide a Unified Response* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014).

90. Diller, *Theology's Epistemological Dilemma*, 179–96.

reality. This agreement between Barth and Plantinga is in fact reflective of some significant similarities between Barth and the modern Dutch Reformed tradition, which we shall see in the next two chapters.

John Bolt, a famed proponent of neo-Calvinism and the editor of Herman Bavinck's four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics* in English, draws critically on Barth in the spirit of Reformed eclecticism.[91] Chung's brief comment that Bolt attempts to "integrate Barth's theology into evangelical theological construction" can be misleading.[92] Bolt tries only to integrate elements of Barth's theology selectively. He comments that "even for a theologian as problematic as Barth, there are for evangelicals useful insights and some salutary lessons to be learned from exploring Barth's eschatology."[93] Bolt is right in his description of Barth's Christocentric ontology as one in which creation is rendered ontologically dependent on redemption.[94] Bolt's criticism that this ontology blurs "the Creator/creation distinction," however, is in my view misguided (see chapter 2).[95]

Despite this interpretational difference, I am in agreement with Bolt's eclectic approach to Barth. If Calvin could gain positive insights from Osiander, and if Edwards was allowed to adopt elements of John Locke's philosophy, then why should evangelicals reject Barth altogether?

In any case, Barth is not a theologian whom evangelical theologians today can simply bypass. Professor Trueman was certainly right when he wrote in 2008 that "positive reception of Barth by evangelicals continues apace," and that "interacting

91. See John Bolt, "Exploring Barth's Eschatology: A Salutary Exercise for Evangelicals," in *Barth and Evangelical Theology*, 209–35.

92. Sung Wook Chung, "Foreword," in *Barth and Evangelical Theology*, xx.

93. Bolt, "Exploring Barth's Eschatology," 211.

94. Bolt, "Exploring Barth's Eschatology," 216–17.

95. Bolt, "Exploring Barth's Eschatology," 217.

with Barth as a great mind wrestling with serious issues is surely of tremendous help."[96] Regarding the characteristically modern problems that Barth struggled with, I am in cordial agreement with Professor Trueman that "Bavinck . . . offers a more helpful resource" for evangelicals.[97] Professor Hunsinger, too, suggests that "the views of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck" can lead to "fruitful evangelical dialogue" with Barthians and postliberals.[98] I will add the name of Geerhardus Vos to this list—with some sense of urgency.

In chapter 3, I resort specifically to Bavinck and Vos, along with the historic Reformed theology on which they relied, in my engagement with Barth from an evangelical and confessionally Reformed perspective. As we resort to Bavinck and Vos, we should also be reminded of their Reformed eclecticism. The eclectic spirit of neo-Calvinism—also discernable in older Reformed theologians from Calvin to Jonathan Edwards—means that we should not take Barth to be "helpful," as Professor Trueman has insinuated, primarily or even only at those points where we disagree with him, where we are "forced to wrestle most passionately" in such a way that our "own thought is clarified and strengthened."[99] Just as Bavinck draws positively from Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, and even Feuerbach, and as Edwards critically adopts aspects of Lockean philosophy, there is much that we can positively learn from Barth, much more so than from the philosophers with whom both Barth and Bavinck wrestled.[100] To achieve a critically and selectively fruitful engage-

96. Trueman, "Foreword," 15.

97. Trueman, "Foreword," 15. See Cory Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern: Herman Bavinck's Use of Friedrich Schleiermacher* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

98. Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, 340.

99. Trueman, "Foreword," 15.

100. See Cory Brock and Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, "Herman Bavinck's Reformed Eclecticism: On Catholicity, Consciousness, and Theological Epistemology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70 (2017): 310–32.

ment with Barth, however, we must first establish a fair interpretation of his writings that honors his texts and pays heed to his intellectual-biographical and intellectual-historical context, and examine certain evangelical myths about him, a task we now take on in chapter 2.