

INTRODUCTION Karl Barth in the Context of Competing Interpretations

KARL BARTH LIVED INTENSELY. AS A COROLLARY, HIS THEOLOGY CANNOT be adequately understood without reference to his life of social commitment. His thought-form is contextual and dynamic, sometimes repulsive. He was keen and open to modification, clarification, and correction in his theological trajectory. Barth, moreover, was not averse to self-critique and turnabout in his theological pilgrimage. Although there are many followers and movements of Barthianism, he remained hesitant and even averse to identifying himself with any form of “ism.” In Barth’s words we hear: “God is not identical with any ideology, and is not to be confused with such. Hence, conversion to Him is not to be confused with any human decision for rearmament or disarmament in orientation to any ideology” (CD IV/4:140). Understanding Barth this way implies an ongoing resistance to any real attempt at a systematization of his theology although, paradoxically, he is the systematic theologian of *Church Dogmatics*.

Barth’s expressive style of writing and his point of departure along the lines of “beginning anew at the beginning” aroused many different interpretations and called for variegated dialogues with him. For Barth, “in theological study, continuation always means ‘beginning once again at the beginning.’”¹ In this light, for Barth, doing theology means that it must be established through nothing but audacity. His break with established theology invoked such a spirit of audacity. Although different in intention from Franz Overbeck, Barth cited him approvingly for his theological direction. “It was over forty years ago that I read this remark

1. Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, 164–65. Cf. CD I/2, § 64.2. “The Dogmatic Method.”

by Franz Overbeck, ‘theology can no longer be established through anything but audacity.’ I paid attention to it. The liberal theologians will have to pay attention to it as well.”²

In his commentary *The Epistle to the Romans* (8:24) Barth states: “If Christianity be not altogether thoroughgoing eschatology, there remains in it no relationship whatever with Christ” (R II:314). Barth’s dialectical theology is basically and definitely oriented toward eschatology. Needless to say, Barth’s dialectical-organic theology in the 1919 edition of *Romans I*, in fact, assumes an eschatological character and horizon. “Trust in God cannot be separated from eschatology.” “Solving the riddle of the world cannot be separated from eschatology” (R I:241, 246). The theology of *Ursprung* associated with the immediacy of God in *Romans I* and the theology of *Krisis* in *Romans II* can be understood first of all in light of God’s eschatology, God’s in-breaking reality into the world. Here, Barth cross-examines his theological development and exercises a self-criticism, especially in relation to his theological subject matter. When we read Barth from a political perspective, an expectation associated with eschatological longing constitutes his *hurrying* involvement in the political world, but at the same time we see him as a *waiting* theologian, remaining sober and down-to-earth, free from any political fanaticism.

The Grounding Break in Karl Barth

As far as Barth interpretation is concerned, it was Hans Urs von Balthasar who noticed two decisive turning points in the development. The first is the conversion from theological liberalism to Christian radicalism during the First World War, the expression of which we find in Barth’s two *Römerbriefe*. The second liberation comes through his reading of Anselm of Canterbury’s proof for the existence of God (1931) rather than in the brochure *Nein!* (1934) against Emil Brunner as is commonly assumed.³ Balthasar’s insistence on the second turn, from dialectic to analogy, gained prominence as the catalyst for advancing successive research on the theological unfolding of Barth’s thought.

T. F. Torrance, by contrast, marks three developmental stages in Barth’s thought as he moved from the new starting point via dialectical

2. Jüngel, *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy*, 54.

3. Balthasar, *Theology of Karl Barth*, 79–80.

thinking to dogmatic thinking. These stages are as follows: (a) In the new starting point of dialectical thinking there occurred a break with liberal theology during the year 1914, a break that reached its climax with the first edition of *Romans* in 1919; (b) the second principal stage began in the 1920s, when the thorough revision of his first *Romans* commentary came out, and the first volume of Barth's projected *Dogmatics* exhibited the influence of Kierkegaard in a dialectical and realistic fashion; (c) the third stage came through Barth's study of St. Anselm when Barth made the really decisive transition from *Christian Dogmatics* (*Christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf* [1927]) to the *Church Dogmatics* (*Kirchliche Dogmatik* [1932]).

Barth's *Christian Dogmatics* met opposition and resistance from his critics. In the Germany of the 1920s, phenomenological, psychological, numinous, and existentialist interpretations of Christian faith were in fashion. Barth realized that he was not able to escape the remnants of existential philosophy in his *Christian Dogmatics*. Eventually, through his study of St. Anselm in the summer of 1930, Barth was able to emancipate himself from a preunderstanding of human existence by purging the language of Kierkegaard from his discourse and by stepping over the eggshells of philosophical systematics.⁴ As a result, Barth eventually referred to his *Christian Dogmatics* as a false start (*CD* III/4:xii).

Like Balthasar, Torrance interpreted the turn from dialectical theology to analogy as a radical paradigm shift, marking a new theological development. According to Bruce McCormack, this reigning paradigm—as represented by Balthasar and Torrance—has been influential especially on English-speaking Barth scholarship. Following this paradigm, Hans Frei takes Barth's study of Anselm as representing a revolution in Barth's thought.⁵

In contrast to this standpoint, Eberhard Jüngel, in dealing with the development of Barth's theology, argues for one decisive break in Barth's theological development, that is, Barth's break with theological liberalism during the year 1914. In Jüngel's words we read: "This expression [a theology of the Word of God] is . . . better suited than the alternative 'dialectical theology' to describe the continuity in the path which Barth followed after the break with the theology of his teachers—though it was,

4. Torrance, *Karl Barth: Early Theology, 1910–1931*, 134. Cf. Barth, *How I Changed My Mind*, 42–44.

5. Frei, "Doctrine of Revelation," 194. Cf. McCormack, *Critically Realistic*, 4.

to be sure, a winding path with several turns.”⁶ According to Jüngel, the theology of the Word of God can be portrayed as a *terminus a quo* (as a starting point) and a *terminus ad quem* (as an aim or terminal point in time), which can be perceived in a shift from Barth’s dialectical thinking to his dogmatic theology. Jüngel quotes Barth’s own remark about “the inner dialectic of the subject matter [*Sache*]” in the preface to the second edition of *Romans*. With the phrase “the inner dialectic of the subject matter,” Barth intended to express the idea that not only speech about the *Sache* but also the *Sache* itself should be conceived of as being dialectical.

However, Barth’s turn to dogmatic theology expresses a change in his thought that reveals a turn from the assertive dialectic to a dialectical style of assertion. This dialectical style of assertion undialectically affirms the Word of God. For Jüngel, Barth’s turn to an undialectical Word of God becomes possible only by way of “a completely different reorientation of the previous thought-movement.”⁷ For this reorientation, Barth improves himself through his study of Anselm of Canterbury, whose influence can be already seen in *Christian Dogmatics* (*Die christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf* [1927].) However, Barth’s revision of *Christian Dogmatics* did not reach its goal by simply eliminating a basis, a support, or even a mere justification by means of existential philosophy (*CD* I/1:ix). With his move to the undialectical Word of God, Barth began to develop his doctrine of the *analogia fidei*. Therefore, in dealing with Barth’s turn to Anselm, Jüngel insists that Barth’s theology of analogy increasingly exhibited a hermeneutical circle and established the confessional and narrative character of his dogmatic argumentation. In this regard, analogy becomes the formal foundation and structure of Barth’s dogmatic assertions.

Given this fact, Jüngel expresses his agreement with Balthasar and Torrance’s high regard for Barth’s study of Anselm. Likewise Frei contrasts analogy as “an analytical, technical category” with dialectic as “anti-liberal use of the category and procedure.” According to Frei, dialectic in Barth’s later development became an important subordinate device and formal category in the service of analogy. Analogy redescribes “conceptually and by means of a series of fluid juxtaposition (of figures, images, events, persons, points of view) the teleological, temporal flow of the divine-human

6. Jüngel, “Von der Dialektik zur Analogie,” in Jüngel, *Barth-Studien*, 128.

7. Jüngel, “Die theologische Anfänge: Beobachtungen,” in *ibid.*, 47.

relation, of which the New Testament depiction of Jesus Christ gives at once the foundation and the aim.”⁸

However, unlike Jüngel, Spieckermann has discovered a form of analogy in an earlier phase of dialectical theology (*Romans II*) that would serve as a basis for the *analogia fidei* in Barth’s later stage. In her view, the analogy of the cross that can be found in *Romans II* is the original form of the *analogia fidei*.⁹ Close to Spieckermann, Michael Beintker finds evidence of analogical thought in Barth’s early writings of 1919 and the 1920s. Barth’s reflection on a form of analogy can be traced back to his Tambach lecture (1919). As Beintker says, “the *Denkform* of the *analogia relationis sive proportionalitatis*, which sets forth a correspondence between the God-human relation and the human-human relation, forms a constant in Barth’s work from the time of the Tambach lecture onward.”¹⁰

Drawing upon Spieckermann and Beintker’s studies, Bruce McCormack makes a contribution to understand the theology of Karl Barth in a critical, realistic, and dialectical fashion. For him, talk about a radical turn or shift from dialectics to analogy is out of the question. On the basis of *Realdialektik*, a dialectic in objectively real relations, in *Romans II*, and by viewing the *analogia fidei* as grounded in the dialectic of veiling and unveiling in revelation, McCormack asserts the thesis that “in truth, the *Realdialektik* of veiling and unveiling is the motor which drives Barth’s doctrine of analogy and makes it possible.”¹¹ As far as Barth remains a dialectical theologian in his *Church Dogmatics*, *Christliche Dogmatik* deserves, for McCormack, a special focus in continuity with *Church Dogmatics* (1932) rather than to be regarded as a false start.

However, concerning the coexistence of dialectics and analogy in Barth’s thought,¹² it was Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt who, before Spieckermann and Beintker, first perceived and attested to Barth’s reflection on a relationship between dialectics and analogy in Barth’s earliest

8. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, 160.

9. See Spieckermann, *Gotteserkenntnis: Ein Beitrag zur Grundfrage der neuen Theologie Karl Barths*.

10. Beintker, *Dialektik in der ‘dialektischen Theologie’ Karl Barths*, 261–62. Cf. McCormack, *Critically Realistic*, 10.

11. McCormack, *Critically Realistic*, 18.

12. We also take note of the coexistence of dialectic and analogy in Eberhard Mechels’s writing in 1974; cf. Mechels, *Analogie bei Erich Przywara und Karl Barth*.

lecture, “Faith in a Personal God” (“Der Glaube an den persönlichen Gott” [1914]). A material development of analogy comes from the *Ursprung* onwards. At a minimum, Barth’s concept of analogy stands materially as well as temporally before the conceptualization of dialectics in *Romans II*. Marquardt argues that analogy and dialectic for Barth can be seen as simultaneously grounded in his thought of *Ursprung*. This formulation is the basis for the *Ursprung* of analogy in 1914. This coexistence comes to the surface in Barth’s Tambach lecture in such a way that his reflection on analogy is not merely of scholastic character but of a social-critical and inclusive dimension from the start.¹³ In this regard, Marquardt takes Balthasar’s model of Barth’s turn from dialectic to analogy to be untenable. According to Marquardt, analogy and dialectic for Barth can be grounded co-originally in his thought of *Ursprung*.¹⁴

When it comes to a radical turning point in Barth’s thought, it seems that a significant paradigm change occurred from 1915 to 1916. In his important article “The Humanity of God” (Die Menschlichkeit Gottes), Barth gives an indication of his meeting with Christoph Blumhardt (April 1915): “Was it—this has played a decisive role for me personally—precisely the failure of the ethics of the modern theology of the time, with the outbreak of the First World War, which caused us to grow puzzled also about its exegesis, its treatment of history, and its dogmatics? Or was it, in a positive sense, the message of Blumhardt concerning the Kingdom of God which, remarkably enough, was only then becoming timely?”¹⁵

In a letter from April 1947, Barth mentioned his background and his subsequent turning away from it. Here he makes reference to his former position as a middle place between Kant and the young Schleiermacher. From autumn 1908 to autumn 1909, Barth was an assistant editor to Martin Rade at the *Christliche Welt*. After that he came into the church and developed his theological thought not as a half-minded adherent but as a thorough adherent of the school of Marburg. However, seven years later (also in 1916!), Barth made a new discovery, and his relationship with theological liberalism finally came to an end.

Barth’s entrance to the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (SPS) on January 26, 1915, his meeting with Blumhardt in that same month,

13. Cf. Marquardt, *Christ in der Gesellschaft*.

14. Marquardt, *Theologie und Sozialismus*, 208–9.

15. Barth, *Humanity of God*, 40–41.

and finally the beginning of the commentary on Romans (1916) mark Barth's break with liberalism between 1915 and 1916. Regarding Barth's correction of his previous position (from his Safenwil period), he deals with mostly in *Romans II*, but not very much in *Romans I*.

Barth's discovery of Reformation theology in 1921 in Göttingen does not revoke his discoveries as expressed in *Romans I* during his Safenwil period but only deepens and radicalizes them. Barth's personal report of 1916 indicates his understanding of *Romans I* as his initial break with his liberal background. Barth stood in the tradition of Blumhardt's message of the kingdom of God and remained faithful to it. Even toward the end of his life, in his *Ethics* fragment *The Christian Life* (*Das Christliche Leben* [1959–1961]), Barth makes a fundamental affirmation of Blumhardt's message, which was also his position in *Romans I*.¹⁶

Therefore we cannot ignore the relevance of *Romans I* for Barth's subsequent works, especially for *Romans II* and his dogmatic work. In his *Church Dogmatics* he tries to overcome the limitation of the *Romans II* eschatology in terms of *Romans I*.¹⁷ It is important to point out that Barth himself, in an interview, denied any break between the theology of *Romans* and *Church Dogmatics*, saying that "there are people who say there was a break in my theology between the *Römerbriefe* and now. For me, there was never a break there! In the *Römerbrief* I drew back the bow, took aim at a definite target, and let the arrow fly and the subject-matter which was there in question changed in the process—and afterwards, appeared quite differently."¹⁸

Barth's eschatological Christology or christological eschatology in *Romans I* has been overlooked and marginalized. As a matter of fact, Barth takes the event of resurrection to be a perfected future of world-consummation (R I:60, 122), or as a present reality of the in-breaking of the coming world-salvation. In this light, the cross is understood as the event of reconciliation with the world and as a fundamental transformation of the relation between God and humans. Therefore, Barth develops an *eschatologia crucis* in terms of an *eschatologia resurrectionis*. This

16. Barth, *Christian Life*.

17. Cf. CD I/2:50; II/1. § 31. 3; CD IV/3.2 § 71. 4. 6.

18. See "Brechen und Bauen: Diskussion mit Prof. Karl Barth am 5 August 1947." In Barth *"Der Götze wackelt,"* 112. Cf. McCormack, *Critically Realistic*, 452.

eschatological concept of cross and resurrection provides a basis for a universal/inclusive dimension of eschatological Christology in Barth.¹⁹

Karl Barth and Political Radicalism

As for Barth's social-critical dimension of hermeneutics in the second commentary on Romans, we need to note a fundamental remark: "the historical critics, it seems to me, need to be more critical!" (R II:x). This was Barth's response to his critics' charge that he was a "declared enemy of historical criticism." Barth's response reveals that his approach to hermeneutics constituted a breakthrough to a new relationship to theology, its subject matter, and political relevance. Barth's critics of *Romans I* accused him of eliminating history from his interpretation of Romans. They argued that in place of historical-critical exegesis Barth had applied biblicism and pneumatic exegesis. In the foreword, Barth states that Paul "addressed his contemporaries as a child of his age." But more importantly, "he speaks as a prophet and apostle of the Kingdom of God to people of every age" (R I:v).

According to Barth, Paul's vocation as a prophet and apostle of the kingdom of God to the contemporaries of every age is more far important than Paul's message in the past as a child of his time. Barth's concern about his own time leads him to consider the doctrine of inspiration more important than the historical-critical method for the task of understanding. Barth's hermeneutic in both *Romans* commentaries is to see through the historical to the spirit of the Bible. However, his intent was not to become pneumatic or a declared enemy of historical criticism by rejection of it (R II:xiii). Rather, Barth appears as a social-critical theologian beyond the historical critics. Therefore, we can conclude that Barth does not reject the rightful place of the historical-critical method in biblical investigation.²⁰

Barth charged his contemporaries with giving up the task of a serious, respectful understanding and explanation of Paul's Romans for his time, out of respect for history over and against tradition. Historical critics approached the biblical texts on the basis of Ernst Troeltsch's triadic

19. Klappert, *Versöhnung und Befreiung*, 330.

20. Barth's letter to Thurneysen on January 1, 1916. In *B-Th I*, 119–22, 121. See also Smart, *Revolutionary Theology*, 36.

formulation: (a) the principle of criticism, (b) the principle of analogy, and (c) the principle of correlation. Under the presupposition that God is God, Barth does not reject this triadic principle; rather he radicalizes it in light of the theological subject matter. For Barth, to see through the historical to the spirit of the Bible is not merely to focus on Paul himself, but it is a task of understanding God as theological *Sache*. The spirit of this *Sache* inspires; thus God speaks to us even in the midst of our socio-political upheaval. The kingdom of God as theological subject matter is the in-breaking reality of God into our time. To see through our time to God's in-breaking reality is a more critical and radical approach than the historical-critical method.

When it comes to hermeneutics in Barth's exegesis, Jüngel focuses on an existential relationship between the text and its interpreter. In so doing, he tends to compare Barth to Heidegger. When Barth, for instance, radicalized the oblique intention toward *intentio recta* of theological *Sache*, Jüngel saw a new direct intention, namely a new naïveté that emerges from the energy of self-reflection.²¹ Unlike Jüngel's reading of Barth's hermeneutics of simultaneity in a Heideggerian fashion, Marquardt attempts to see Barth's notion "more critically than historical critics" in light of political-social and historical consciousness.²²

According to Marquardt, a social and political problem is supposed to be the criterion for the meaning of historical criticism in view of Barth's principle of understanding. The primacy of reality can be seen as the key concept in his hermeneutics. Recognizing the primacy of the text's reality before the exegetical method of historical criticism, Barth radicalized the historical-critical method by placing it second to the Bible's addressing sociohistorical and political concerns. This view is, for Barth, an exegetical discipline—in other words, a result of radical critical reflection rather than a postcritical *second naïveté* in the sense of Heidegger or Jüngel.

Obviously Barth does not replace the hermeneutical circle through his *Sachkritik*. Rather he makes this hermeneutical circle the criterion of all historical critique. In radicalizing the historical-critical method, Barth calls into question "text in texts," "the word in words," "the subject matter in the matters of subject," namely the depth of the text, which is the objectivity of the historical critics. Given this fact, Barth's dialectical

21. Jüngel, "Die theologischen Anfänge: Beobachtungen," in Jüngel, *Barth-Studien*, 98.

22. Marquardt, "Exegese und Dogmatik in Karl Barths Theologie," 381–406.

thinking of God's eschatology is explicitly of hermeneutical and social-practical character and horizon.²³

According to Marquardt, Barth's theology cannot be understood apart from its life-setting in his socialist activity.²⁴ In the Barth files there is a yet-undeciphered report on Kropotkin and Leninism. The real origin of Barth's theology is, argues Marquardt, "his theological existence in *Safenwil*," which means "socialist praxis."²⁵ Marquardt's contribution severely challenges the general neo-orthodox or conservative portrait of Barth.

In dealing with a consequence of Barth's concept of the politics of God for the society, Ulrich Dannemann makes a theological justification of Barth's understanding of society, social structure, and its concrete political forms for his investigation. According to Dannemann, Marquardt's interpretation enables us to see and reconstruct—more clearly and precisely than in existing Barth scholarship—the history of the theological existence of Karl Barth from its genesis, its continuity, and its discontinuity from his early theology of socialism to his dogmatic-theological discourse of Jesus Christ.²⁶ Apart from Marquardt, Dannemann pursues the connection between theological knowledge and political praxis in Barth primarily through a systematic structure-analysis of Barth's two *Romans* commentaries and his doctrine of reconciliation in *Church Dogmatics*.

In an introduction to the debate about Karl Barth in Germany, George Hunsinger (in a North American context) tries to actualize political radicalism in the theology of Karl Barth. Hunsinger's thesis is that "theology must not be politicized, nor politics theologized. Theology can make its contribution to politics only by remaining theology."²⁷ In agreement with the basic orientation of Marquardt, Hunsinger tries to clarify and correct what remains obscure and misleading in Marquardt's interpretation. Albeit with a critical reservation against Marquardt, Hunsinger does assent that "the socialist perspective which Marquardt opens up may well be one of his most lasting achievements."²⁸

23. Ibid., 396–97.

24. Marquardt, *Theologie und Sozialismus*, 291; cf. Gorringer, *Karl Barth: Against Hegemony*, 16.

25. Hunsinger, *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, 58.

26. Dannemann, *Theologie und Politik*, 19–20.

27. Hunsinger, *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, 181.

28. Ibid., 191.

According to Hunsinger, the contributions of Marquardt and Freilie not only in starting with Barth's earliest writings, but also in paying considerable attention to the first edition of *Romans* (1919), which has been widely neglected. Barth's concept of God (*alles in allem real verändernde Tatsache dass Gott ist* ²⁹), which is also Marquardt's key concept of Barth's political hermeneutics, is to be understood on the basis of a practical socialist experience, thereby maintaining an intrinsic connection with society and politics. In viewing Barth's political praxis as an analogy or parable of God's kingdom, Hunsinger characterizes a relationship between theology and politics in Barth's mature theology as follows: "formally analogical, materially socialist, and existentially actualist."³⁰

Drawing upon Marquardt, Peter Winzeler, and Sabine Plonz, Timothy Gorringer attempts to construct a contextual reading of Barth for the sake of an "affirmation of a remarkable unity in his theological output from 1916 to 1968."³¹ In accepting Marquardt's basic thesis—that Barth's methodology is his theological social biography—Gorringer makes a genetic reading of the inextricability of theology and politics in Barth's thought. Barth's own advice to students in his lectures on nineteenth-century Protestant theology—that they "make a synchronous chart for every single year of the period" "for the sake of a mass of connections"—serves as inspiration for Gorringer to engage in a contextual, genetic, and historical-material reading of Barth. For Barth, the "historian should take history seriously as a force outside himself, which had it in its power to contradict him and which spoke to him with authority."³²

Barth's first *Romans* commentary was written in a highly contextual sense, evident in his dialectical unity between theological *Sachkritik* and political awareness. This unity both illumines and determines Barth's eschatology. However, many scholars tend to abandon Barth's earlier position after his move from Safenwil to Göttingen. In contrast to Marquardt's religious-socialist reading of Barth is the statement of Klaus Scholder, for instance, that "with the turn to biblical theology Barth effectively gave up political engagement. The political world in the narrower sense, the world of political ideas and decisions, no longer formed any fundamen-

29. "The fact that not only sheds new light on, but materially changes, all things and everything in all things is the fact that God is" (CD II/1:258).

30. Hunsinger, *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, 225.

31. Gorringer, *Karl Barth: Against Hegemony*, 13.

32. Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 58.

tal part of his theological thinking.”³³ And in protest against Marquardt, Gerhard Sauter says that Barth had no political theology in any plausible sense of the term.³⁴

Jüngel, in his study on Barth, also takes issue with other interpretations of Barth on two fronts. He challenges the liberal-fascistic interpretation of Barth in the school of Munich, and the religious-socialist interpretation of Barth in the school of West Berlin. Jüngel first calls into question works of Falk Wagner and Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, stating,

I marvel at the ‘reconstruction of the construction’ of Barth’s theology, which in Germany comes primarily from Munich. They see through Barth’s theology and pronounce it to be simply a genuine product of the spirit of its time, even though it was directed against that spirit. In this connection I should also like to expose, as an offense against good taste, the thesis that Barth’s theology has a fascist structure. Surely theology can stand as a critic of its time only insofar as it is a child of its time. But in light of the work of Karl Barth this should not even be an issue.³⁵

With this criticism Jüngel has in mind the thesis of Wagner, who argues that “the content and structure of Barth’s theology is relevant to not only socialism but also fascism and the making of fascist theory.”³⁶

Jüngel’s judgment of the Munich school—the thesis of the fascistic structure in Barth’s thought as an offense against good taste—is also relevant to Pannenberg’s approach to Barth. For instance, when Pannenberg regards the absoluteness of Jesus in Barth’s theology as “necessarily totalitarian” in the sense of theological forcing to conformity, he is appropriately associated with Wagner.³⁷ On the other hand, Jüngel also takes issue with the religious-socialist interpretation of Barth by Helmut Gollwitzer and Marquardt in West Berlin: “I truly envy the imagination of the socialist interpretation of Barth (which in Germany comes primarily from West Berlin) and its practical-sounding yet preposterous theorems. In this connection I should like to continue to make a distinction between the artifice of word association and the strenuous task of interpretation

33. Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 45.

34. Sauter, “Soziologische oder Politische Barth-Interpretation?” 176–77.

35. Jüngel, *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy*, 14.

36. Wagner, “Theologische Gleichschaltung: Zur Christologie bei Barth,” 41; cf. Jüngel, *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy*, 139.

37. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* 2:477–78.

and, in case of doubt, to prefer historical and logical argumentation to any sort of undisciplined explanation.”³⁸ Regarding both interpretations as abstraction in which Barth’s dogmatic line of argument can be eclipsed, Jüngel applies Barth’s own warning “*Latet periculum in generalibus*” (Danger lurks in generalities) to such interpretations.³⁹

Jüngel’s entire essay on “Barth’s Theological Beginnings” is, by and large, a rejoinder to Marquardt’s profound but controversial book *Theologie und Sozialismus: Das Beispiel Karl Barths* (1974). Marquardt’s fundamental thesis is that Barth’s theology can be understood by way of the correlative interaction between theology and democratic socialistic praxis. In Marquardt’s view, Barth’s concept of God should be interpreted by way of his social experiences. By contrast, Jüngel’s fundamental thesis is that the political is surely a predicate of theology, not the other way around. This remark is essentially correct. His insistence that Barth thoroughly depoliticized the concept of revolution in *Romans II* is directed against Marquardt’s position. However, Marquardt’s intent is not to make theology a mere predicate of the political, as Jüngel suspects.

Barth, in his letter to Eberhard Bethge (in May 1967) concerning his Dietrich Bonhoeffer biography, articulated his concern and direction for the political praxis that he had silently or only incidentally mentioned to that point: “ethics—co-humanity—servant church—discipleship—socialism—peace movement—and, hand in hand with all that, politics.”⁴⁰ In this line Gollwitzer, in his article “Reich Gottes und Sozialismus bei Karl Barth” (1972), portrayed Barth’s way as starting from a religious-socialist identification between the kingdom of God and socialism toward a distinction between the revolution of God’s kingdom as *analogans* and the democratic-socialistic option as *analogatum*.

Although Jüngel is critical of Gollwitzer and Marquardt, he poses an important question regarding one of the tasks of future research. He raises the question of “the extent to which Barth’s contemporary experiences (“praxis”) helped to shape his knowledge. A reciprocal relationship between knowledge and praxis can be clearly seen in the striking reversals which punctuated his theological development.”⁴¹

38. Jüngel, *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy*, 14.

39. Ibid.

40. Barth, *Briefe 1916–1968*, 404.

41. Jüngel, *Karl Barth-Studien*, 27.

Dialectical Theology and Neo-Orthodox Theology

Bruce McCormack's reading of Barth reveals a reciprocal relationship between theological knowledge and life-praxis in Barth. His treatment of Barth's early period is evaluated highly, and it is unlikely to be superseded for many years in English-speaking countries. McCormack's term, "Karl Barth's critically realistic dialectical theology," plays a decisive role in convincingly interpreting and analyzing the mutual relationship between Barth's contemporary experiences (praxis) and his theological way of knowledge. However, McCormack's "critically realistic dialectical theology" takes issue with the religious-socialist interpretation of Gollwitzer and Marquardt in terms of historical accounts and materials.⁴² In addition, McCormack's book challenges a neo-orthodox reading of Barth. McCormack notes that neo-orthodox readings of Barth in the Anglo-American world were propelled and reinforced in the 1950s above all by Balthasar's thesis on Barth's second groundbreaking turn from dialectics (in his commentaries on Romans) to analogy (in his book on Anselm).⁴³

However, on closer examination of the social and political situation in which Barth's theology emerged, we must not direct our attention from the fact that his theology was always bound to situational and political spheres. Barth's theology is always time-bound and up-to date rather than timeless and nonpolitical. When we look at the genesis and development of Barth's theology during his pastoral work in Safenwil, his dialectical theology was expressed and articulated in a highly contextual way with respect to World War I, religious socialism, the October Revolution in Russia, and the general strike in Switzerland. In addition, Barth's theology of analogy, which can first be seen explicitly in his Tambach lecture and then in *Romans II*, demonstrate the political relevance of God, society, and human beings from the start.

In view of Barth's dogmatic turn, we do not need to marginalize his keen interest in his cultural situation. The connection between the

42. McCormack, *Critically Realistic*, 80, 88, 173, 175, 177, 184, 194.

43. Cf. Heron, *Century of Protestant Theology*. The term *neo-orthodox*, in a pejorative sense, connotes a theology of resorting to a one-sided emphasis on biblical revelation and dogmatic reaffirmation of Christian confessions and dogmas. As a twentieth-century theological movement, neo-orthodox theology is understood as a radical break with the heritage of nineteenth-century liberalism. Karl Barth is counted as one of the most important representatives of the neo-orthodox movement.

theological awareness of *Sache* and the political consciousness of the time is well articulated in the preface of *Church Dogmatics* with respect to German liberation. His dogmatic theology cannot be properly understood apart from its social and critical consciousness. His dogmatic theology includes a social and historical perspective by “beginning always at the beginning” rather than repristinating church doctrines.⁴⁴

Karl Barth and *Theologia Naturalis*

In speaking of a neo-orthodox interpretation of Barth, we need to mention Karl Barth’s critique of *theologia naturalis*. An attempt to relate Barth to *theologia naturalis* or *analogia entis* would be complicated, even a conundrum. It was Barth himself who was strongly resistant to such metaphysical discourse for the sake of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Jesus Christ. However, in the process of breaking new ground in Barth’s development, Balthasar perceived that an old doctrine of *extra-Cavinisticum* provides a basis for Barth to preserve and integrate natural theology in his christological inclusivism.

In scrutinizing Barth’s Amsterdam lecture on “Church and Culture” (1926), Balthasar affirmed that Barth agreed with Thomas Aquinas’s dictum that grace perfects nature rather than destroys it.⁴⁵ Balthasar was convinced that “if he [Barth] maintained this position unswervingly, the break with Emil Brunner might have been forestalled, and his debate with Catholicism might have taken a different turn.”⁴⁶ In Barth’s study of St. Anselm, Balthasar notices that “there seems to be room for the analogy of being after all.”⁴⁷ Of course, Barth eliminates and replaces *analogia entis* through *analogia fidei*, in that all knowledge of God comes only through the revelation of God. God is known only through God. The analogy of faith clearly indicates that Jesus Christ is at the center of God’s self-revela-

44. According to Barth, a dogmatic theology that understands itself as *theologia viatorum* must necessarily be the reflection of the church and the task of the church that engages itself concretely in its time and always for a particular time (CD I/1:281). Christian thinking and discourse must lead to its own responsibility for the present time. Thus, Barth is perplexed when both Ragaz and Tillich look upon their work as dynamic while regarding his as static for no reason (CD I/1:74–75).

45. Balthasar, *Theology of Karl Barth*, 82.

46. Ibid., 82–83.

47. Ibid., 148.

tion. Nonetheless, Balthasar argued that “there must be a periphery to this center.”⁴⁸ Although *assumptio carnis* (assumption of human flesh) is not identical with the order of creation (in orientation toward the incarnation), “it possesses images, analogies, and dispositions that truly are presuppositions for the Incarnation.”⁴⁹

Barth’s critique of *theologia naturalis* can also be witnessed in his debate with Emil Brunner. Barth’s *Nein!* to Brunner was not merely theologically, but politically, motivated in face of the so-called German Christian support for Nazism. The danger of natural theology lay in domesticating and naturalizing the knowledge of God in the self-revelation of Jesus Christ. In the face of Hitler’s rise to power, an attempt was made to domesticate and absorb Christianity into the German nature and culture. The so-called *Deutsche Christen* (German Christians) collaborated and advocated reconciliation with Nazi ideology. In addition, Roman Catholic theologians misapplied St. Thomas Aquinas’s dictum (that grace perfects nature rather than destroys it) to provide theological grounds for the concordat between the Vatican and Hitler. In other words, these theologians asserted that grace does not destroy German nature (blood and soil), but perfects and fulfills it. As a result, the essence of the Christian gospel is at stake in Barth’s confrontation with the natural and ideological theology of the *Deutsche Christen*. This is why Barth responded to Brunner’s mediating pamphlet *Nature and Grace* with an angry and radical “No!”

However, regarding christological inclusivism in Barth’s theology, Torrance says that according to Barth, “natural theology (*theologia naturalis*) is included and brought into clear light within the theology of revelation (*theologia revelata*), for in the reality of divine grace there is included the truth of the divine creation.” In this sense, “grace does not destroy but completes it.”⁵⁰

According to Marquardt, Barth’s acceptance of *extra Calvinisticum*⁵¹ provides a universal-inclusive basis for his Christology of *anhypostasis* and *enhyposstasis*. This doctrine becomes, for Barth, not only an indication of the remaining majesty of divine Word even in his state of incar-

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Torrance, *Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian*, 147.

51. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.13.4.

nation, but also—in Barth’s typical supplementary way—a witness for the divine actuality as well as for the divine universality of the Word.⁵² Marquardt assumes that Barth might revoke his previous radical rejection of *theologia naturalis* through his doctrine of reconciliation (cf. “The Light of Life,” CD IV/3.1 §69.2). As evidence for this, Marquardt introduces Barth’s own testimony in his interview with *Brüdergemeinde* in 1961: “Later I retrieved the *theologia naturalis* via christology again. Today my critique would be: One must say *theologia naturalis* only differently, i.e., just christologically.”⁵³

Given this fact, Marquardt’s basic thesis is that “the christological establishment of natural theology is identical with the transformation of structure of its inherited form.”⁵⁴ What is here to be considered is not a renewal of *theologia naturalis* in affirmation of *logos spermatikos*, but a social and material transformation of its traditional form from a standpoint of a particular-inclusive Christology. Thus Marquardt takes a step further in insisting that within the universal-christological framework of Barth, the content and impulse of *theologia naturalis* is reappropriated, deepened, and transformed socially and materially through *theologia revelationis*. Christ’s divinity is to a theology of revelation what his humanity is to the content of *theologia naturalis* because in Jesus Christ the *humanum* of all humans is posited and exalted as such to the unity with God (CD IV/2:49). There is no natural realm existing independent of christological effectiveness. This is Marquardt’s approach to a material and social transformation of *theologia naturalis* in its inherited and traditional sense from a standpoint of the collectivity of the human species.⁵⁵

To avoid a misunderstanding of a relation of Barth to natural theology in his doctrine of lights, Pangritz introduces an interpretation by Hans-Joachim Kraus: “The so-called ‘doctrine of lights’ represents the positive pole of the negation of natural theology. . . . Barth presents a

52. Marquardt, *Theologie und Sozialismus*, 260. Furthermore, Otto Weber states that the *logos asarkos* can in truth be only a pure boundary concept for Barth. See Weber, *Grundlagen der Dogmatik II*, 143.

53. Quoted in Marquardt, *Theologie und Sozialismus*, 263.

54. Ibid., 264. “Judaism is for Barth a witness to the kernel of truth of the natural theology within the revelation of grace.” Marquardt, *Entdeckung des Judentums*, 316.

55. Of the typology of Adam and Christ in Romans chapter 5, Barth emphatically says, “Jesus Christ is the secret and the truth of sinful and mortal humankind and also the secret and the truth of *human nature* as such” (Barth, *Christ and Adam*, 50).

christologically founded counterproposal to the theory of religion that is based in the doctrine of the *logos spermatikos* and was developed within the domain of natural theology.”⁵⁶

However, Herman Diem disagrees with Marquardt’s thesis that Barth never totally rejected natural theology but denied it on political grounds.⁵⁷ Strangely enough, Diem argues that Barth—even on the basis of the *extra Calvinisticum*—“rejected all attempts at a ‘mediating’ or natural theology.”⁵⁸ Thus, Diem attacks Marquardt’s attempt at imputing the possibility of a natural theology from the perspective of the history of human species. Marquardt’s attempt would lead to a conceptual confusion in Barth’s Christology.

In a similar vein as Diem, McCormack rejects the possibility of natural theology in Barth. According to McCormack, Barth knew that in Reformed Christianity the Bible is indispensable as the rule of faith and life, but God could speak elsewhere in nature and history. McCormack argues that this has nothing to do with an affirmation of natural theology because revelation in the Bible or in nature and history is actualized by means of the source of revelation.⁵⁹

Barth’s confrontation with Przywara concerning the *analogia entis* in Münster did not misrepresent or misinterpret Przywara’s concept of *analogia entis* as some scholars insist.⁶⁰ As McCormack says, “Barth had not finally been satisfied that Przywara’s talk of ‘*von Gott her*’ had been sufficient to remove his *anlogia entis* from the sphere of Thomas’s realistic reflections. His understanding of the *anlogia entis* would not undergo any significant modification from this point on.”⁶¹ However, Balthasar is convinced of a radical christological orientation in Przywara. Beyond the

56. Kraus, *Theologische Religionskritik*, 50. Cf. Pangritz, *Karl Barth in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 137.

57. Diem, “Karl Barth as Socialist,” 135.

58. According to Diem, Marquardt’s thesis of “expanding and completing the christological anhypostasis through an anthropological enhypostasis” “undercut the Christian *sacramentum* and destroyed it or made it superfluous” (ibid., 131).

59. McCormack, *Critically Realistic*, 306. Barth understands the Reformed rule of *finitum non est capax infiniti* as a way of “rejecting any view which would seek to quantify revelation, making God partly hidden and partly revealed in case of all traditional natural theologies” (ibid., 352).

60. Cf. Balthasar, *Theology of Karl Barth*, 147–50, 227–37. See also Jüngel, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt*, 385–91.

61. McCormack, *Critically Realistic*, 391.

Thomist-Scotist opposition, Przywara developed his concept of *analogia entis* through a radical christocentric framework.⁶²

In dealing with Barth's radical rejection of any form of natural theology and the *analogia entis* in both neo-Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, Han Küng cites the famous foreword to the first volume of *Church Dogmatics*: "I regard the *analogia entis* as the invention of Antichrist and think that because of it one cannot become Catholic. Whereupon I at the same time allow myself to regard all other reasons for not becoming Catholic, as short-sighted and lacking in seriousness" (CD I/1:x).

Barth's radical rejection of Brunner's idea of a point of contact for divine revelation was also relevant to Vatican I. According to Barth, Vatican I introduced a cleavage in the idea of one God, which led to a twofold sense of God: a natural and a supernatural God. Instead of the analogy of being, Barth introduced an analogy of faith. However, for Küng, Barth's concept of *analogia fidei* "includes the analogy of being."⁶³ Moreover, when it comes to the lights, words, and truths of the created world in the doctrine of reconciliation, Küng accused Barth of not publicly admitting his retraction of his former position against natural theology and analogy of being.⁶⁴ The following statement convinces Küng of Barth's own correction of his former protest against the natural theology. "Dangerous modern expressions like the 'revelation of creation' or 'primal revelation' might be given a clear and unequivocal sense in this respect" (CD IV/3.1:140).

Moltmann goes a step further, regarding natural theology as the goal of Christian theology rather than regarding natural theology merely as the presupposition for Christian theology. Hans-Joachim Iwand becomes a mentor for Moltmann's eschatological understanding of natural theology: "Natural revelation is not that from which we come; it is the light

62. Przywara, *Was ist Gott*, 75. Cf. Balthasar, *Theology of Karl Barth*, 249. Balthasar cites the words of Przywara: "The way to God and the image of God is only a shadowy hint of something which is brightly revealed by Christ alone. . . . By his own decision, God is revealed to us nowhere else but in Christ. All the flourishes that present God to the creature are flashed out and explained in Christ. They are features of the one and only real God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is no other God beside him, and any other general features of God are merely the foreglow or afterglow of Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

63. Küng, *Does God Exist?* 517.

64. *Ibid.*, 527.

towards which we move. The *lumen naturae* is the reflection of the *lumen gloriae*. . . . The theme of true religion is the eschatological goal of theology.”⁶⁵ At issue for Moltmann is to see that “natural theology is only as yet an advance radiance of the eschatological theology of glory.”⁶⁶ Therefore, natural theology can be seen as the advance radiance and promise of the kingdom of glory, not as “a forecourt of revealed theology,” but “as a fore-shining of revealed theology’s eschatological horizon.”⁶⁷ When natural theology is understood as a *theologia viae* concerning the sighing of creation (Romans 8), Moltmann renews natural theology in light of *theologia publica*, which is in turn sensitive to and responsible for the political arena, natural scientific findings, and the life of the earth.

According to Barth, the world is in need of parables and capable of being a parable for the kingdom of God. Under the real promise of God’s future, this world becomes transparent to God’s invisible presence and potentially a parable in reflection of God’s in-breaking reality. In asking whether it might not be that Jer 31:34 is in the process of fulfillment, Barth answers with his public and universal theology.⁶⁸

Karl Barth and Israel

It would be difficult, in fact, to understand Barth without reference to his reflection on Israel. The synagogue and church are called to listen anew to the divine Word and to a completely new decision of responsibility.⁶⁹ When it comes to Barth’s doctrine of Israel, Klappert illustrates and illuminates various models. First, he looks at negative models: (a) the model of substitution (or replacement), and (b) the model of integration. This

65. Iwand, *Glauben und Wissen*, 290–91. Cf., Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 70.

66. *Ibid.*, 76.

67. *Ibid.*, 72.

68. “It is indeed unfortunate that the question of the truth of talk about God should be handled as a question apart by a special faculty. . . . Philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, or pedagogy, whether individually or in conjunction, all working within the sphere of the church, might well take up the task of measuring the church’s talk about God by its being as the Church, thus making a special theology superfluous. . . . All sciences might ultimately be theology. . . . The separate existence of theology signifies an emergency measure on which the Church has had to resolve in view of the actual refusal of the other science in this respect” (*CD I/1:5,7*).

69. Klappert, *Israel und die Kirche*, 11.

model can be called the viewpoint of religious indifference in that it is a way that denies the dependence of Christianity on Judaism or on the election of Israel. In other words, Christianity has no more or less to do with Judaism than with Buddhism or communism.⁷⁰ Some elements in Barth's doctrine of Israel are sharply charged with supporting this direction. When it comes to the history and life of Israel, Barth argues that the history of Israel is the history of expectation of their crucified Messiah. According to Barth, the church is the aim and ground of election for the people of Israel. From this comes the view that Israel, as such, is a vessel of dishonor. While Israel is the witness to divine judgment, the church is the witness to honor and divine mercy (*CD II/2:259–61*).

(c) According to the model of typology, Israel is a type of the church and of the salvation that is ultimately represented by the church. It refers to the model of “fore-portrayal pointing to a superior counterpart.”⁷¹ Israel and its institutions—their whole history—serve only as figurative types of the church that finally brings God's salvation. Israel's history and institutions are regarded as types of the church and its salvation. This model can be called the viewpoint of inheritance in a way that interprets the history of Israel as the prehistory of Christianity, in that Judaism is perceived as an anachronism. (d) In the model of illustration, Israel is understood as an exemplary negative foil of human existence, whereas the church is the stage that overcomes it. This model can be called the viewpoint of necessary contrast in a sense that understands Christianity in basic contradiction to Judaism and views Jewish existence only as a foil. If the Israelite is symbolized in the figure of the Pharisee, so the Christian is symbolized in the figure of the Good Samaritan.

(e) The model of subsumption speaks about the destruction of the special election and covenant of Israel on the one hand and the subsumation of Israel's special status under generality valid for all on the other hand. According to Käsemann, in contrast to Bultmann's existential-anthropological understanding, Paul's teaching on justification is to be understood in a cosmic framework (on the basis of Rom 1:28–3:20; 5:12–13; 8:18ff). At stake in Paul's teaching on justification is primarily God's reign over the world and concrete individuals.⁷² In Käsemann's framework of

70. Lapidé and Moltmann, *Israel und Kirche*, 16–17.

71. Klappert, *Israel und die Kirche*, 18.

72. Käsemann, “Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans,” 75.

justification, Israel is subsumed and classified under the universality of justification of the ungodly as its consequence.⁷³

In a turn to positive models, several ideas emerge. (a) We first mention the model of complementarity: Israel and the church are understood as people of God who supplement and complement each other in competition, coexistence and pro-existence. This model is practiced for the purpose of dialogue between Jews and Christians, between synagogue and church. In it, Israel and the church can be seen as partners in solidarity and as the coexisting community sharing an eschatological-messianic horizon of hope. (b) In the model of representation, the relation of the church to Israel is understood as that of deputyship. In this understanding the Gentiles enter provisionally in place of Israel, who does not recognize the Messiah. The Israel-remnant is the placeholder for the whole of Israel, and the Gentiles as the latecomers represent placeholders for the synagogue's majority among which the Gentile provisionally participates in Israel's election.⁷⁴

(c) In the christological-eschatological-dependence or participation model, the church is dependent upon the election of Israel, which is proved in Jesus Christ, and the promised fulfillment of this election toward Israel, not only in the past, but also in the future. What is at stake is not the context of a universal eschatology of creation but a particular and universal eschatology of Israel (Mark 13:10, 26–27; Acts 1:16ff; Rom 11:25–26; Eph 2:11–12). The christological-participation model provides a basis for the Gentiles to participate in the history of God's election of Israel.

In dealing with the various models of the relation of the church to Israel, Klappert categorizes Barth's doctrine of Israel as a tension between a christological-eschatological-participation model and an ecclesiological-integration model. Because of this unresolved tension in Barth's thought, Barth expresses his doubt about Jewish-Christian dialogue, while at the same time calling for ecumenical dialogue and rejecting a Christian mission to the Jews (*CD IV/3.2:877*). Although Klappert is aware of Barth's decisive rejection of Christian anti-Semitism, he understands this rejection as a tension, conflict, and impasse in Barth's doctrine of Israel.

73. Against Käsemann's anti-Jewish implication in his understanding of justification, see Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*.

74. Marquardt, *Entdeckung des Judentums*, 253. According to Marquardt, Barth retains the significance of biblical idea of the Israel-remnant and its idea of representation.

When it comes to Karl Barth's treatment of Israel in his doctrine of election (*CD II/2*), it was formed between the winter semester of 1939–1940 and the winter semester of 1941–1942. This doctrine of election was comprised at roughly the same time as the Wannsee conference on January 20, 1942, during which time the Final Solution of systematic execution of the Jews was organized and planned. It is unlikely that Barth knew of any details of genocidal activity when he was engaged in his reflection on Israel in *CD II/2*. Although Barth has a positive approach to the Jews—because of some elements of his integration model—he argues that the Jewish form of the community has a different function from the church. Compared with the service of the church for the witness to God's mercy, the distinctive witness of Israel is to the judgment of God and thus to the frailty and death of the passing man.

What Themes will be Organized, Investigated, and Actualized in this Monograph?

Given the debates about political radicalism, *theologia naturalis*, and Israel in Barth's theology, in this monograph I am interested in tracing and analyzing the particular and inclusive dimension of Barth's theology of God's Word in action and how this dimension effects the development of his dialectical theology via analogical theology; I am interested, further, in his dogmatic theology. For this task I will deal with Barth's reflection of God's Word in action with respect to political ethics, Israel, and recognition of religious others.

Barth's concept of God's Word in action for the world was shaped and influenced considerably by his practical-socialist experience and thus is inseparable from society, culture, and politics. However, Barth's profound elaboration of theological *Sache* is not reducible merely to an anthropological experiential-expressive quarter. As Schellong cautions about Marquardt's interpretation, a reading of Barth through his social biography should not fall into reductionism.⁷⁵

Therefore, my concern in this monograph is to show a relation between Barth's theological thinking about current issues in his time (such

75. Schellong notices a certain narrowness in Marquardt's presentation, a tendency toward "the restriction to the biographical." However, "this sociological, political, yet non-reductionist approach is what gives Marquardt's book its significance" ("On Reading Karl Barth from the Left," 150, 142).

as political radicalism, Israel, natural theology, and religious others) by examining and analyzing the development of Barth's theology biographically and contextually from his earliest writings on toward his dogmatic theology. Here it is of special importance to scrutinize and reflect on what basic theological factors of God's Word in action interact with Barth's political engagement taking issue with a social, political, and cultural agenda. The relevance of theology to social questions or, in other words, a connection between theology and political involvement, would be formulated and conceptualized in various contextual stages with respect to Barth's attitude of "beginning always at the beginning."

His continual correcting and deepening of God's action of theological *Sache* corresponded with his experience of contemporary social questions. Authentic theology does not fall from the sky or rise from below without reference to what enables, stimulates, and sharpens human experience from below. This is characteristic of the antibourgeois, irregular character of Barth's mode of thought. I agree that Barth would come to a radical understanding of God through his socialist praxis, but socialist praxis should also be reformulated critically in accordance with his radical concept of God's Word in action for the world. As Gollwitzer says rightly about Barth's theology, "his spirit cannot be reduced to a simple or a single formula."⁷⁶

In fact, Barth did not want to be venerated by his followers but to be understood in a genuine sense. This book finds itself, therefore, as a contextual-hermeneutical and historical-genetic reading of Barth especially in light of God's Word in action for the world. To say the least, Barth's theology can be seen as world-affirming in terms of a dialectical and analogical relation in speaking of the mystery of God and the grace of God in Jesus Christ for the world. The former dimension of God's mystery is related to Barth's eschatological proviso while the latter dimension of God's grace actualizes God's radical concern for the world in light of reconciliation in Jesus Christ with the world. This refers to his metaphor of *Theanthropologie*, which I would like to call *cantus firmus* in the polyphonies of Barth's thought-form and motif. This characterizes Barth's theology of God's Word in action in terms of *Keine Weltlosigkeit Gottes*: "The theology which I tried to fashion out of scripture was never a private affair, foreign to the world and humanity. Its object is: God for the world,

76. Gollwitzer, "Kingdom of God and Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth," 100.

God for human beings, heaven for the earth. It followed that my whole theology always had a strong political component, explicit or implicit . . . this interest in politics accompanies me to the present day.”⁷⁷

In the first chapter I will focus on an organic connection of theology to social-political consciousness in Barth’s train of thought. Here I will attempt to construe his early writings in Safenwil in light of Barth’s intellectual background and his theological development in his social life-setting. Barth’s understanding of God’s action as the in-breaking reality of God’s future will be seen and discussed in relation to his political direction.

Chapter 2 will shed light on the genesis of and social context producing the first edition of Barth’s commentary on Romans. In the analysis of *Romans I*, special attention is given to Barth’s eschatology in regard to its social and political significance. In *Romans I* we explore how Barth shaped and developed his controversial relation to religious socialism (Leonhard Ragaz), and, furthermore, his confrontation with Leninism will bring to the light a lasting relationship between Barth and Blumhardt’s movement in terms of christological eschatology. At this juncture there will be an outline of theology and social questions in Germany, especially a comparison between Friedrich Naumann and Blumhardt.

Chapter 3 will examine Barth’s Tambach lecture of 1919. His Tambach lecture shows the unique way and orientation of Barth’s development, especially as this development concerns a relation between dialectical theology and parable theology. In fact, it is not a mere middle part, mediating as an intermezzo *Romans I* to *Romans II*. This lecture rather provides an initial and profound insight of Barth in his approach to Blumhardt’s message of the kingdom of God in light of parable teaching. Furthermore, it needs to be discussed in relation to his Amsterdam lecture (1926), in which Barth’s genuine quest for a relationship between God’s kingdom and natural theology resurfaces.

In chapter 4, I will discuss Barth’s theology of *Krisis* in *Romans II* from a social and political perspective. It is alleged that Barth turned away from social questions and human praxis unilaterally by focusing on God as *wholly other*. However, his *Romans II* cannot be properly understood without reference to *Romans I*. Therefore, in this chapter his time-ternity dialectics will be examined and discussed in social and political

77. Barth, *Letzte Zeugnisse*, 21.

perspective, and I will bring to the fore Barth's confrontation with the postwar situation in Russia.

In chapter 5, I will shed light on Barth's theological development between his time in Germany, namely, in his teaching positions in Göttingen, Münster, and Bonn. An analysis will be given of Barth's developments in political ethics, the Word of God, and dialectical theology. Then I will discuss Barth's confrontation with Erik Peterson. In Münster, Barth's encounter and debate with Roman Catholicism (especially Przywara) regarding the *analogia entis* and the *anlogia fidei* occurred. This problem will be examined in relation to Barth's seminal study of St Anselm. In this context, it is significant to discuss Barth's understanding of Feuerbach.

In chapter 6, I will deal with Barth's political stance towards National Socialism in Germany and his confrontation with Brunner regarding *theologia revelatus* and *theologia naturalis*. I will further discuss the unresolved problem of the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei* in Barth's theological structure more broadly, in view of a relation between covenant and creation. In speaking of the *analogia relationis* as a central motif in Barth's theology of analogy, I will evaluate the *analogia relationis* with regard to natural theology, especially in the context of Barth's doctrine of lights.

In chapter 7, there will be a discussion of Martin Luther and Barth regarding Christology in regard to *anhypostasis* and *enhyposstasis*. I will explicate the extent to which Barth integrates and expands Luther's theses—"Jesus was born a Jew" and Jesus Christ as "the mirror of the fatherly heart of God"—into his inclusive understanding of *anhypostasis* and *enhyposstasis* Christology. At this point I attend to Barth's Christology, admiring its mediating position between the Lutheran *est* and the Reformed *however*. In it, a Lutheran dimension is not excluded, but included, in Barthian thought.

In chapter 8, I will deal with Barth's doctrine of election in the *Church Dogmatics*. In scrutinizing Barth's doctrine of Israel, I will compare Barth's positive assertions of Israel to his critics' analyses. In a discussion of Barth's theology of Israel and reconciliation, it is important to evaluate Barth's legacy after the Shoah in a positive way. In chapter 9, there will be a study of Barth's analysis of alienation and reification. Thus the liberative dimension of Barth's theology will be scrutinized. Attention will be given to Barth's view of democracy and socialism. In conclusion, I will discuss Barth's unfinished project about the mystery of God and

religious pluralism. The ecumenical and global relevance of Barth will be brought to the fore in a discussion of his ecumenical legacy, the theocentric direction of his theology, and his contribution toward a Christian perspective on religious pluralism. At this juncture my focus is given to Barth's world-affirming theology in relation to religious pluralism from the perspective of Pure Land Buddhism in reference to Takizawa and Asian minjung theology.

SAMPLE