

***Barth Society will meet in San Francisco November 18-19, 2011***

Our meeting in San Francisco in conjunction with the AAR will feature our usual Friday afternoon session from 4:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. and a Saturday morning session from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. Please note that the times are incorrectly listed both in the AAR booklet and online, except for the Saturday morning session which is correctly listed online. The presenters for the Friday afternoon session will be Matthew Puffer, University of Virginia, whose lecture is entitled: “*Revisiting Karl Barth’s Ethics of War*” and Jessica DeCou, University of Chicago, whose lecture is entitled: “*‘Serious Questions’ about ‘True Words’ in Culture: Against Dogmatics IV/3 as the Source for Barth’s Theology of Culture*”. This session is listed as MP 18-393 in the AAR program and will be held in CC-2011 (Moscone Center West). George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary will preside. The Saturday morning session will be held in CC-3005 (Moscone Center West) and is listed in the AAR program as MP 19-191. This session, which will be co-sponsored with the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship, will feature a *Panel Discussion* of Paul D. Molnar’s book, *Thomas F. Torrance: Theologian of the Trinity* (Ashgate, 2009). The panelists will be: Gary Deddo, InterVarsity Press, Ivor Davidson, University of St. Andrews and Alan J. Torrance, University of St. Andrews. Paul D. Molnar, St. John’s University, Queens, New York will respond. George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary will preside.

**The Board will meet for breakfast on Sunday morning November 20**

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*The Sixth Annual Barth Conference* was held at Princeton Theological Seminary June 19-22, 2011. This Conference was entitled: “*Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: An Unofficial Protestant-Catholic Dialogue*” and was co-sponsored by *The Center for Barth Studies* at *Princeton Theological Seminary* and the *Thomistic Institute* at *The Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception* at *The Dominican House of Studies*, Washington D. C., and in cooperation with the *Karl Barth Society of North America*.

We are grateful to Nathaniel A. Maddox of Princeton Theological Seminary for kindly providing the following summary of the conference for our readers:

Attracting over 100 attendees, including Catholic and Protestant scholars, ministers, students, and laypersons, the 2011 Karl Barth Conference commenced Sunday evening June 19th with a banquet in Princeton Theological Seminary’s MacKay Center. Bruce L. McCormack (Princeton Seminary) and Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P. (Dominican House of Studies) opened the proceedings with remarks on the state of the churches and Protestant-Catholic ecumenical dialogue in America today. Both McCormack and White noted that the Protestant churches are in a period of transition, with the Catholic Church in America experiencing a steady influx of once-professing Protestants. Accordingly, ecumenical dialogue is also at a pivotal point of transition. Many enduring Protestants wish to express

their sustained dissent with greater theological forthrightness. Likewise, many Catholics discern fundamental doctrinal differences peeking through the gloss of previous ecumenical bargains. It is with acknowledgment of substantial doctrinal divergences and willingness to discuss them candidly that ecumenical dialogue can best perform its service and move the churches toward future rapprochement. The present unofficial dialogue between Thomist Catholics and Barthian Protestants, both speakers suggested, is meant to be an expression of this form of ecumenical dialogue.

The plenary sessions followed a theological loci approach, beginning with lectures on the divine nature and concluding with a session on divine and human

action. Monday morning saw the first lectures on “divine being.” **Robert Jenson**, the former Senior Scholar for Research at **The Center of Theological Inquiry**, gave the first lecture. Jenson first reflected on the strange and innovative terms Barth uses to describe the being of God in the *Church Dogmatics*—terms like “act,” “event,” and “decision.” While Barth did use the traditional terms of substance metaphysics, he often left them behind at critical moments. A most telling instance of this, Jenson believes, is found in the interplay between Barth’s doctrine of Revelation and doctrine of God. Generally, Western theology has held that there is an essence of God to be known; finite and sinful creatures, however, are incapable of knowing God’s essence. Barth took exception to this principle, and his rationale can be reduced to the simple tautology, “God is God.” The tautology expands into Barth’s doctrine of the Trinity as the revelation of God, in which the oneness and perfections of God are revealed. In this way, Jenson suggests, Barth did justice to the particular objectivity of God as “first-person person,” who is never dependent upon creatures for fullness. Furthermore, Barth could press through the tradition and respect the free capability of God who, as decision and act, gives Godself to be known by creatures really, essentially, and ever anew. In closing, Jenson touched Barth’s later Christology and its implications for God’s being. Desiring not to impede on other lectures, he concluded with an enigmatic yet undoubtedly calculated statement, “God is never God except as and insofar as in the Son he is Jesus Christ.”

**Fr. Richard Schenk, O.P.**, recently elected President of the **Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt** in **Bavaria, Germany**— and formerly Professor at the **Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology** at **Berkeley**, offered the second lecture on “divine being” titled, “**Theology, Metaphysics, and Discipleship.**” The meticulously reasoned paper bore an epigraph from Martin Luther’s *Heidelberg Disputation*: “Therefore in Christ Crucified is true theology and true knowledge of God.” As an implicit challenge to Protestants and Catholics alike, Schenk attempted to uncover within the writings of Thomas Aquinas “a theodicy-capable theology of the cross.” Dividing his lecture into two operative components, Schenk first gave a diagnosis of deteriorating modern ecumenical movements. Ecumenical participants have often hollowed out their own identities as well as the identities of their dialogue partners by seeking a third way or a “new language”—a language that supposedly carries with it a fresh orientation accessible to all. Conversely, by attempting conciliation through uniformity, ecumenical participants have often “parasitically digested” the insights of their dialogue partners, resulting in the implicit commodification of theology and tradition. Alternatively, Schenk pointed in the direction of ecumenical rapprochement through a kind ecclesial and theological ressourcement.

In the second part of the paper, Schenk turned to Thomas’ doctrine of God with the intention of locating a theology of the cross therein. Tracing in the interpretive path of Gerhard Ebeling through Thomas’ theology, Schenk reflected on Thomas’ admittance of the inadequacies of philosophy. He perceives this to be a demonstration of the dire need of Sacred Doctrine in the life of faith. When considered along with human finitude and sin, even Thomas’ controversial “five ways” for ascertaining the existence of God expose the dependence of creatures on the gracious revelation of God. Schenk concluded his lectures with a reflection on Thomas’ rejection of determinism. He also suggested that a “theodicy-capable theology of the cross” need not require a passible Deity and advised modern Protestants to keep from turning the impassibility question into a theological watchword.

**Fr. Guy Mansini, O.S.B.**, Minister and Professor of Systematic Theology at **St. Meinrad Archabbey** in **Indiana** opened the second plenary session on “Trinity.” Mansini’s lecture honed in on the nature of obedience and humility in the Christian life, the life of Christ, and Thomas’ Trinitarian theology. Beginning with a critical appraisal of contemporary theological movements, Mansini asked, “Is it true that the suffering and obedience and humility of the incarnate Son manifest his divine identity because they constitute it?” In answer to this question, Mansini drew from his own Christian tradition as a Benedictine monk by exploring the significance of humility and obedience as well as the prerequisite conditions that occasion them. Through a precise account of the degrees of humility in the Benedictine Rule, Mansini showed that Christian humility and obedience follow the Christological constellation set forth in Scripture, particularly as the incarnate Son lives in obedience to the will of the Father. Closely following the sixth ecumenical council, Mansini explained that the conformity of the Christian’s will in obedience to the will of Christ actually presupposes the existence of two wills in Christ, corresponding to his two natures. Here Mansini gave an exposition of the inner dynamics of Thomas’ Trinitarian theology and Christology as well as the Scriptures that guided Thomas’ theological contribution. If one speaks of the eternal obedience and humility of the Son of God as constituting the nature of God, Mansini resolved, then there is the danger of positing multiple wills in the Godhead. To introduce obedience and humility into the Godhead is to walk a near invisible tight rope with the correlative dangers of Tritheism and Arianism on either side. In conclusion, he also expressed the benefits of a traditional Christology and emphasized the Christian life lived in assiduous accordance with the obedience of the incarnate Son.

**Bruce McCormack**, the Charles Hodge Professor of Systematic Theology at **Princeton Theological**

**Seminary**, presented the second lecture on “Trinity” titled, “**Processions and Missions: A Point of Convergence between Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth.**” McCormack argued that while there is at least one truly fundamental difference between Thomas and Barth—namely, theological epistemology—what they do have in common is quite stunning and unexpected. He drew upon a pre-publication draft of Matthew Levering’s article, “Christ, the Trinity, and Predestination: McCormack and Aquinas” from the just published *Trinity and Election in Contemporary Theology*, edited by Michael Dempsey and advanced the notion that, for Thomas, “The missions are contained within the processions.” McCormack unfolded this thesis with a circumspect survey of Thomas’ Trinitarian theology. According to Thomas, God’s being is pure act such that God eternally wills the creature (missions) in willing God’s own goodness (processions). Moreover, differentiating God’s will and act for the sake of securing divine freedom and priority over creation would be the real compromise of the sovereignty of God. Turning then to Barth’s Trinitarian theology, McCormack indicated that Thomas’ take on the relation of the missions to the processions largely corresponds to Barth’s when viewed through his later doctrine of election and Christology. Only within this great convergence do the two theologians diverge on issues like the communication of idioms and the role of metaphysics in theology. Polishing off the lecture, McCormack spoke briefly about the decade long “grace and being” debate. He believes the only problem warranting further address is the relation of God’s freedom and decision in election. With Thomas and against his critics, McCormack asserted that aseity and the decision for creation are entirely coincident in God and must not be disassociated.

**Keith Johnson**, Assistant Professor of Theology at **Wheaton College in Illinois** and author of the celebrated book *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis*, kicked off the first Tuesday lecture on “Christology.” Titled, “**In Him, through Him, and for Him,**” Johnson’s lecture offered a revised genealogy of Barth’s theological development. Taking the best from previous historical studies, Johnson claimed that Barth’s dogmatic cycles from Göttingen and Münster are indicative of a unique stage in Barth’s development. During this stage running from 1924-29, Barth wrestled in a unique way with the question of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. Barth believed knowledge of God to be Christologically mediated at this time. However, the particular history of Jesus Christ did not form the basis of his descriptive doctrinal construction. Furthermore, Johnson asserted, Barth presupposed an innate capacity in all humans for God’s self-revelation—a perspective he would rigorously reject later following his interactions with the Augustinian Thomist Erich Przywara. Throughout the whole of his genealogy, Johnson highlighted the expressly Protestant

concerns underlying the major material transitions in Barth’s theology, particularly the Protestant doctrine of justification in relation to his emerging Christology. In the course of the analysis and especially in his conclusion, Johnson made mention of the vital role played by Protestant-Catholic dialogue in Barth’s maturation. Moreover, the mature Barth would likely have shared many of the criticisms Catholics have often leveled at his earlier theology. Finally, Johnson enumerated the benefits that can be derived from reading all of the previous genealogical studies together, viz. that of von Balthasar and McCormack.

Tuesday’s second lecture on “Christology” was given by Professor **Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P.** of **Dominican House Studies**. In keeping with the lecture’s title, “**The Crucified Lord: Thomistic Reflections on the Communication of Idioms and the Theology of the Cross,**” White judiciously scrutinized the relationship of the divine and human natures of the incarnate Word with special attention to the Christological mediation of grace in Thomas’ theology. He also attempted to unearth the genius and benefits of a more traditional Christology and to forewarn Protestants of the various exigencies of contemporary Christological currents. Beginning with the Christology in *CD IV/1-2*, White traced the Protestant heritage of the communication of idioms and situated Barth within it. In accordance with many Barth scholars, White sees a communication of the human attributes of Jesus to the divine nature in accordance with the eternal will of God. This form of kenosis culminates in a divine suffering of finite and sinful things to the utmost extent in the crucifixion and death of Christ. Critiquing Barth, White supposed that human suffering and death communicated to the eternal Son must also be communicated to the Father in order to maintain the unity of the Godhead. This, however, introduces a number of complications with few foreseeable resolutions. White then explained the various elements of Thomas’ Christology, giving principle attention to the crucifixion and the benefits of grace given through Christ’s flesh. In the crucifixion, the Son knows both the Father and human existence; his suffering is primarily engendered from his awareness of human sin and its consequences. What is more, with the grace of forgiveness Christ reigns as Lord, even as he hangs crucified. White closed with a challenge to some Barthians and other modern Protestants who advocate the passibility of God. He called for a fuller examination of the philosophical environs occasioning Barth’s Christology. He also expressed concern that Protestants were turning this matter into a church dividing issue, perhaps even bypassing the tentative nature of Barth’s Christological project and the sustained history of dogma at odds with it.

**Joseph Wawrykow**, Associate Professor of Theology at the **University of Notre Dame in Indiana** and an expert

in Thomistic anthropology, spoke Tuesday afternoon on the subject of “grace and justification.” In keeping with the pattern set by earlier speakers, Wawrykow gave an analysis of the convergences and divergences between Barth and Thomas. He addressed many of the overwrought caricatures of Thomas’ understanding of grace. Thomas’ differentiation of grace was never meant to suggest that the human could employ grace apart from the abiding presence of God. When Thomas speaks of cooperative grace, operative grace and the active presence of the Spirit are presupposed, if not explicitly stated. Furthermore, on the matter of justification, Wawrykow took great care to show both the declarative and transformative aspects of the doctrine, neither of which functions independently of the other. Wawrykow also touched on merit. Merit is first grounded in grace as a benefit peculiar to the Christian life oriented to God’s glory. Following his fine-tuned interpretation of Thomas, Wawrykow, took up Barth’s challenge to the Roman Catholic view of grace in general and his challenge to the Catholic Dogmatician Bernhard Bartmann in particular (*CD IV/1*: 84-8) noting that Barth’s material criticisms, while possibly relevant for Bartmann, do not necessarily apply to Thomas. Along with that, many of Barth’s criticisms apply to formal rather than material matters, at least with regard to Thomas. Wawrykow brought his lecture to an end with an explanation of the form of Thomas’ *Summa* and its tacit yet innate Christological coherence.

**Amy Marga**, Assistant Professor of Theology at **Luther Seminary** in **St. Paul, Minnesota** and translator of a new edition of Karl Barth’s *The Word of God and Theology*, gave the second lecture on “grace and justification.” Titled “**The History of Jesus Christ as the History of Grace**,” Marga’s lecture focused primarily on the architectonic of Barth’s doctrine of Reconciliation in *CD IV/1* and the location of the doctrine of justification in Barth’s broader theology. What really separates Barth’s doctrine of justification from that of Thomas, Marga believes, is the relation of the justified sinner to God in the life of salvation. She also stressed that, while the doctrine of justification might have been a prime point of debate between Barth and his Catholic correspondents, it never became a controlling doctrine in his theology. Barth underscored the objective reality of salvation in the history of Jesus Christ and our subjective correspondence to that completed reality. While Barth is often criticized for failing to give adequate attention to fullness of the Christian life, Marga submitted that this is not necessarily the case. Barth does balk at notions of progressive sanctification, yet the hiddenness of the Christian life in Jesus Christ brings with it the ever present decision of living in correspondence with election. In the second leg of her lecture, Marga also considered Barth’s polemical denunciation of Bartmann and the Catholic graces. She essentially agreed with

Wawrykow’s perspective. She also listed many commonalities between Barth and Thomas, even positing that Barth’s doctrine of justification is not necessarily in material opposition to Thomas’ articulation of infused grace. An outstanding difference, however, is the relationship of the believer to the reality of their justification and the shape that reconciliation takes in the Christian life.

Wednesday morning began with the final plenary session on “divine and human action.” **Holly Taylor Coolman**, Assistant Professor of Theology and Director of Graduate Studies at **Providence College** in **Rhode Island**, delivered a thought-provoking and timely lecture titled “**St. Thomas Aquinas on Divine and Human Action: An *Analogia Legis***.” Focusing almost entirely on Thomas’ treatise on the natural law in the second part of the *Summa*, Coolman contended that the natural law for Thomas is Christologically grounded as it stands in analogy to God’s eternal law. Though Thomas stops short of claiming that the eternal law is another name for God, he does claim that it is a “ratio” or “sovereign type” existing within God. Going further, assuming the doctrine of appropriations, Thomas conceives of Christ himself as the eternal law; all other forms of law stand in relation to Christ. When a natural law does not conform to Christ, echoing Augustine, it is said to be “no law at all.” Thus, Coolman posited, the relation between eternal and human law is “an *analogia legis* that is also an *analgia Christi*.” Here Coolman harkened back to Keith Johnson’s lecture, commenting on the further work to be done in Barth and Thomas studies on the relation between the analogies of creation and redemption. She also mentioned some of the substantial differences that separate Barth and Aquinas on this point. She questioned whether Barth’s theology adequately and consistently deals with matters of social relations and human law in the *polis*. A further point of contention concerns the teleological relation of divine and human law in Barth and Thomas. Thomas allows that some may experience the eternal law through the human law, albeit imperfectly and perhaps unwittingly, without experiencing the eternal law in the life of faith. She pressed Barth on this point as well. Coolman closed with thoughts on the relationship between Christology and pneumatology in Barth and Thomas, particularly as they pertain to divine command.

The second lecture on “divine and human action” was also the final of the conference. **John Bowlin**, Associate Professor of Reformed Theology and Public Life at **Princeton Theological Seminary**, gave a lecture titled “**Barth and Aquinas on Election, Relationship, and Requirement**,” which treated the place of obligation and expectation in the theology of Karl Barth. Both Barth and Thomas, Bowlin demonstrated, want to stress the expectations of God and the obligations of the Christian life, while at once punctuating the free conformity of the

Christian to such obligations. Dwelling largely on the ethics of *CD II/2* and the Christology of *CD IV/1*, Bowlin showed how Barth's theology of the Christian life is really a theology of friendship. The Christian is called to live into her election, that is, to fulfill her obligation as a friend of God and quite simply "be a friend." Of course, Barth's explanation of this reality is rather complex; he is sure to mark the actualistic nature of our friendship with God and participation in election. Furthermore, Bowlin showed that large swaths of Barth's philosophical and ethical patrimony—from Kant to Hegel to Nietzsche—are quietly intimated in his ethics of election. Bringing his lecture to a head, Bowlin challenged Barthians to think more critically about Barth's theology of divine and human action. By working out a thoroughly modern account of the traditional theological virtues, Barthians might take the ethical challenges of the critical turn seriously.

After Bowlin's lecture, the sixth annual Karl Barth Conference formally adjourned with a question and answer session. The session addressed questions and concerns raised in group break-out sessions and evening armchair conversations. Concerns about the number of wills in the Godhead were addressed, and the singularity of God's will was affirmed by both Protestant and Catholic presenters. Questions about the relationship between philosophy and theology comprised the bulk of the conversation. There were disagreements about the possibility of a perennial philosophy and Barth's use of and indebtedness to modern philosophy.

Along with the plenary sessions, morning prayers were held on Monday. They were led by recent **Princeton Seminary** graduate **Angela Hancock**. The Dominican fathers led Vespers on Tuesday evening. Special thanks are due to **The Aquinas Institute at Princeton University** for hosting morning Mass Monday through Wednesday. On the whole, attendees considered the conference a success. Lectures and group discussions largely reflected the goals of the conference as well as the respective interests of the presenters.

**The conference lectures will be published in a single volume in due course, and the topic of the 2012 Seventh Annual Karl Barth Conference is also in the works.**

## **Book Review**

**Commanding Grace: Studies in Karl Barth's Ethics.** Edited by **DANIEL L. MIGLIORE**. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010. Pp. x + 255. \$30.00 Paperback.

"Commanding Grace" brings together nine articles originally presented at the third annual Karl Barth Conference on "Karl Barth and Theological Ethics" (PTS

2008), along with four subsequently written responses. Among the contributors are several powerhouses of theology, religious ethics, and Barth Studies as well as some newer voices in the field. The essays in this collection are arranged in pairs, fostering thoughtful debate on a range of complex issues, including the structure and telos of Barth's ethics, the relevance of his political thought for theological reflection on the economy, modern warfare, etc., and the consequences of his doctrines of creation and reconciliation for political ethics and the reform of criminal justice systems. Daniel Migliore's "Commanding Grace" serves as an introduction to the volume, outlining a constellation of questions surrounding Barth's ethics, while simultaneously providing a brief but helpful review of the literature and an overview of the central dogmatic concepts at play. In assessing the contemporary significance of Barth's theological ethics, Migliore urges scholars to consider its covenantal context, its relating of grace and command, its particular understanding of human freedom and responsibility, and its value for Christian reflection on matters of public policy. All of the essays in this volume wrestle with these questions in their own way, and the following paragraphs hope to provide a flavor of each debate.

Nearly two decades after his acclaimed *The Hastening That Waits*, Nigel Biggar revisits Barth's ethics, commending its trinitarian structure, spiritual focus, and constructive tension between humility and endeavor, waiting and hastening. However, he parts ways with Barth on three central points: 1) Barth's framing of moral epistemology in terms of hearing God's military command, which would seem to render human reason and agency inert; 2) his problematic distinction between theological and practical ethics; and 3) his exclusion of nontheological sources. In dialogue with Grisez, Biggar contends that Barth's excessive emphasis on the "vertical" dimension of the human good overwhelms secular elements such as knowledge and aesthetic appreciation. What Barth needs, then, is a more prominent and thoroughgoing consideration of human flourishing that judiciously incorporates nontheological data (e.g., human experience, moral philosophy, etc.), as well as a more robust exegetical account of the moral significance of Christ. In his response, Eric Gregory appreciates that the direction Biggar takes will make some Barthians uneasy. For example, under the influence of the Finnis-Grisez school, Biggar employs natural law categories that would ultimately veer toward an autonomous moral law "unqualified by evangelical proclamation" (56). Can such a humanistic moral theory, he asks, really remain Christian? As an alternative, he turns to fellow-contributor John Bowlin, who understands natural law not as a normative theory of action but, in Gregory's words, as "a description of agency and character that centrally involves the virtuous employment of practical reason through hearing the

gracious command of God" (57). Encouraging Barthians "to read Barth with a 'revisionist' Aquinas in mind," Gregory cites Bowlin's reading of Aquinas as one that might appeal to those who wish to avoid theories that exhibit an overconfidence in human capacities. In spite of his reservations about Biggar's approach, Gregory believes that together Biggar and Bowlin represent "a promising moment for the development of 'Barthian Thomism' in both Anglican and Reformed circles" (59).

Putting Barth in critical conversation with Catholic just war theory, William Werpehowski examines Barth's remarks on the ugliness of war, the responsibility of the Christian community to prevent war, and the responsibility of the state to preserve human freedom and dignity even if this requires preparing for and waging war in order to defend its political sovereignty, its citizens, or its weaker neighbors. He suggests that Barth's "practical pacifism" anticipates later developments in Catholic just war theory and that we should heed his reminders that such theories can quickly evolve into lordless ideology that "distracts us from war as mass killing and from a necessary witness to peace" (81). In light of Barth's cautious deliberations on modern warfare, Werpehowski recommends, first, that Catholic communities encourage vocations of nonviolent service and condemn the glorification of martial heroism and "us v. them" sensibilities. Second, educational institutions need to clearly communicate how it is that just war theory can be aimed primarily at preventing war even as it allows for war as a measure of last resort. John Bowlin continues the conversation, affirming Werpehowski's observation that Barth's account of war and peace is imprecise and incomplete. He wonders, for example, whether the exceptional case permitting war is an exception to the NT presumption against all acts of killing or to the OT prohibition specifically against murder. In other words, is there a presumption against killing in war or a prohibition against unjust killing only? Bowlin argues that the inconsistencies and insufficiencies in Barth's discussion of war are due to "his resistance to absolute prohibitions and his contempt for flat-footed casuistry" and recommends setting aside Barth's "Kantian driven fears" in favor of his "Hegelian-inspired instincts," treating specific cases in order to tease out the principles that inform Christian obedience and reflecting on instances of "obedient witness to the God who at times commands war and yet always prohibits murder" (94f.).

Turning to Barth's theology of the state, David Haddorff pursues Barth's assertion that the gospel points us toward democracy as a form of government that "is not in the middle between anarchy and tyranny, but is above both." He sees in Barth's political thought an alternative to both the "dominant" traditions (which tend to undervalue the church as an agent for social change) and the "emergent" traditions (which tend to undervalue the secular) through

his "dialectical movement toward distinctiveness within relatedness and participation without assimilation" (99). Though Barth holds that proclaiming the gospel requires a confrontation between church and world, he relativizes the distinction between these human spheres by placing both in stark contrast to the kingdom of God. Still, he affirms Christ's freedom to raise up "parables" of that kingdom both within and outside the church, stressing, as always, the primacy of divine agency. Moreover, when Barth urges Christians to swim against the stream, he recognizes that "we are swimming in 'mutual togetherness and responsibility' with the civil community" (120). The revolt against disorder, to which the Christian community is called, must be carried out in solidarity with all humankind, granting it what Barth calls a kingdom-likeness. Under this alternative framework, Haddorff concludes, "the church can remind the civil community what it means to be a true democracy, and the civil community in its democratic form can remind both church and world, by its indirect witness, what it means to be a community of free persons within God's covenant of grace" (120f.). In response, Todd Cioffi turns to passages on divine mercy in CD II/1-2 in an effort to better understand the development of Barth's political thought. By overlooking these intervening texts, Haddorff does not properly emphasize Barth's relating of politics to divine justification. Highlighting this relationship, however, reveals "not only that the preferred form of government is democracy, but what kind of democracy is needed" (133). Barth is not advocating democracy in general, but a specifically democratic socialism that must include a redistribution of economic power if it hopes to reflect God's concern for the poor and bear witness to divine grace.

Of course, for Barth, this solidarity and mutual responsibility extends also to those in prison, and Timothy Gorringer explores Barth's views on criminal justice in light of his doctrine of atonement, advancing a restorative view of punishment that has as its goal the reintegration of criminal offenders into the community. He holds that Barth understands prison chaplaincy as "quite simply a matter of letting prisoners know that in Christ God has reconciled, justified, and sanctified them" (139). While acknowledging vicarious punishment as a prominent theme in Barth's atonement doctrine, Gorringer draws several points from CD IV/1 in favor of this restorative model. That Christ is "the Judge judged in our place" means that we are free from the burden of judging one another and free to love our enemies, inspiring a criminal justice system free from self-righteousness and undermining the belief that "some offenders are simply irredeemable" (151). Moreover, the validity and efficacy of Christ's reconciling work disallows conceptions of punishment as expiation. In light of Barth's 1960 conversation with German prison chaplains, such insights can bring about a view of punishment as a restorative process that breaks the cycle

of violence and undercuts the “everyone is a victim” model by restoring a sense of personal responsibility. Katherine Sonderegger takes issue with some of Gorringer’s exegetical moves and with his construal of restorative punishment, noting formal similarities between his arguments for a community-centered view of justice and recent arguments for suspending the constitutional rights of “enemy combatants.” She also questions his interpretation of Barth’s doctrine of atonement, pointing out that Barth depicts the death of Christ as a “transaction” in which “we sinners are now extinguished, annihilated, dead,” thereby realizing “our judgment, the verdict against us, and white-hot purifying fire of God’s No against sin” (172). However, she does not believe that this doctrine of vicarious atonement promotes retribution or the abuse of criminal offenders. Taking Barth himself as an example, Sonderegger argues that the atoning work of Christ “gives rise to a Christian humanism; a solidarity in sin, but even more in grace,” at the cross of the one who “alone stands there, the tortured criminal” (174f.).

Kathryn Tanner considers Barth’s critique of competitive economies, noting his uncharacteristically non-christological approach to the problem. Though he names capitalism among the lordless powers, Barth’s account offers little in the way of specific rebukes, and in neither CD III/4 nor the later CL is there anything specifically christological to be found in his condemnation of capitalism or his call for revolt against these lordless powers. Rather, he seems simply to collapse the work of the reconciler into that of the creator. He therefore fails to answer the question: “Were capitalism in particular to fall under the Lordship of Christ, what would happen to it?” (183). Tanner argues that capitalism can be criticized on specifically christological grounds and suggests a third way that transcends both capitalism and socialism. This “economy of grace” is a non-competitive economy grounded in the example of the God who took on our humanity without taking our humanity from us, and who gave us the good of the divine life while retaining God’s own divinity in full. Not only is this economy non-competitive (and therefore not capitalist), but it moves beyond cooperation for mutual profit as well (and therefore beyond socialism). From this Christological perspective, we need not understand goods as “individually appropriable in any way that might mean the exclusion of others from what one enjoys oneself,” but rather, informed by God’s gracious dealings with us, we recognize that “we all benefit from the very same thing at the very same time” (197). Responding to Tanner’s proposals, Christopher R.J. Holmes returns to a persistent obstacle in applying Barth’s ethics, namely, his aversion to prescribing specific programs of action for Christian response to the command of God. Holmes claims that Barth sees God’s rule “as possessing inherent practical significance and therefore does not need to be further specified by a series of principles or programs”

(199). It is the work of Christ that overcomes the inhumanity of the lordless powers. The possibility of a genuinely human economic system therefore rests entirely on God’s “act of normalizing human existence,” through which the economy achieves relative validity (as a finite truth that obtains between creatures) by recognizing its proper limit (not confusing itself with eternal truth). But specifying what this normalization would look like is something Barth shies away from because this “would obviate the need for the most decisive action of all, the calling upon God” (209) and would be “inattentive to how the rule of God continually brings itself to bear each day anew on human existence” (211).

Leading off the final pair of essays, Paul Nimmo examines the ontological foundations and telos of Barth’s ethics through his conception of the analogia relationis between the eternal relationship of Father and Son in the Immanent Trinity, their historical relationship in the Economic Trinity, and the relationship of divine and human. In relation to Christ, the Christian is called to freedom, love, and obedience – a truer rendering of imitatio Christi. By conforming to this pattern, “her human self-determination by grace corresponds to her divine determination” (238), meaning that there is a correspondence of being and action through which “she becomes also under the law what she already is through the gospel” (233). The telos of the Christian life, therefore, is a “double glorification” in which the Christian glorifies God in the exercise of his/her freedom and obedience, while God glorifies the Christian by allowing the divine gloria to dwell within. In reply, Jesse Cuoenhoven is troubled by treatments of freedom that fail to adequately define the term and to clarify the relationship of divine and human freedoms. He asks whether Barth might in fact mean something very different by divine “freedom” than what he means by human “freedom,” in which case there would “be significant ways in which Barth’s theology implies that divine and human freedom are not properly considered analogous at all” (239). In his own effort to define these two freedoms, Cuoenhoven argues for a compatibilist reading of Barth’s writings on divine freedom. For Barth, Christian freedom is not a free choice between the alternatives of obedience and sin, but is rather a freedom from sin and for obedience. An incompatibilist reading would therefore seem to ascribe to God a kind of freedom that Barth deems non-Christian. Divine perfection is exhibited in God’s being as the One who loves in freedom, and Cuoenhoven observes that Barth never explicitly describes God as choosing this perfect being over other possible alternatives. Indeed, it makes little sense to speak of God as having alternatives to such perfection. A compatibilist reading would hold, instead, “that when Barth speaks of God deciding or willing to be loving he has in mind something quite similar to what he has in mind when he writes that ‘Freedom is the joy

whereby man acknowledges and confesses this divine election by willing, deciding, and determining himself to be the echo and mirror of the divine act” (253), thus permitting a more authentic analogy between divine and human freedom.

Wherever the reader falls on the issues tackled in this dense volume, s/he is certain to find these selections challenging and insightful, treating some of Barth’s most fascinating (and often perplexing) works. A welcome contribution to scholarship on Barth’s ethics, this authoritative collection will hopefully spark a surge of interest in Barth’s theological deliberations on other weighty matters such as suicide, scientific and technological advancement, and the moral status of non-human animals. All in all, *Commanding Grace* will prove an indispensable volume (even despite its lacking an index).

**Jessica N. DeCou**

**University of Chicago, Chicago, IL**

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The *Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship* will meet on Friday afternoon, November 18<sup>th</sup> in San Francisco from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. in the **Marriott Marquis (MM) Pacific H.** This is listed in the **AAR Program Book** as **MP18-200**. A brief business meeting will be followed immediately by the main program. The Fellowship’s guest speaker this year will be **Paul D. Molnar**, Professor of Systematic Theology in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at St. John’s University, Queens, New York. The title of his presentation will be “*Thomas F. Torrance and the Problem of Universalism*”. As noted above the *Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship* is jointly sponsoring the Saturday morning book session with the *Karl Barth Society of North America* on November 19 from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. which will consider Paul Molnar’s *Thomas F. Torrance: Theologian of the Trinity*.

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### Book Announcements

Robert B. Price, *Letters of the Divine Word: The Perfections of God in Karl Barth’s Church Dogmatics*, T & T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology, edited by John Webster, Ian A. McFarland and Ivor Davidson, Volume 9 (London/New York: T & T Clark/Continuum, 2011).

*Karl Barth and American Evangelicalism*, edited by Bruce L. McCormack & Clifford B. Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011).

*Karl Barth The Word of God and Theology*, translated by Amy Marga, (London/New York: T & T Clark/Continuum, 2011).

### A Message from the President

Dear Colleagues,

It is time for me to make my annual fundraising appeal. At last we are back to one November session, now that the SBL and the AAR annual meetings are no longer split apart. I hope we can now take steps to consolidate and improve the governance structures of the KBSNA. If any of you have suggestions, please let me know.

Meanwhile, our mailing expenses for the Newsletter have gone up. That is not only because of the postal service, but also because we no longer receive the same subsidy as we did from the university that has helped us with our mailings. We also have other expenses related to maintaining our program.

It has come to my attention that only ten percent of those who receive this Newsletter have ever paid their dues. Let me mention that I myself, as President of the KBSNA, have paid all the expenses related to securing the rooms and audio equipment for our meetings through the AAR/SBL out of my own pocket. This has come to about \$200.00 a year. I am glad to do this for the sake of the KBSNA, in whose work I believe very much. But I feel that I am in a position to ask those of you who have not paid your dues please to do so.

At the same time I am, as always, very grateful to those of you who have done so.

George Hunsinger

### ANNUAL BARTH SOCIETY DUES

Everyone interested in joining the *Karl Barth Society of North America* is invited to become a member by sending your name, address (including email address) and annual dues of \$20.00 (\$10.00 for students) to:

Professor Paul D. Molnar  
Editor, KBSNA Newsletter  
Department of Theology  
and Religious Studies  
St. John Hall  
St. John’s University  
8000 Utopia Parkway  
Queens, New York 11439  
Email: [molnarp@stjohns.edu](mailto:molnarp@stjohns.edu)

Checks drawn on a U.S. bank should be made payable to the **Karl Barth Society of North America**  
*Your annual dues enable the KBSNA to help underwrite the annual Karl Barth Conference and to attract key-note speakers for that conference and for our fall meeting. The KBSNA thanks all who have paid their dues for this year.*