

## PROFESSOR HANCOCK EXPLORES THE IMPLICATIONS OF BARTH'S WORK ON THEOLOGY AND POLITICS

Over the past year and a half, the Rev. Dr. Angela Dienhart Hancock has been a part of an international research group hosted by the Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany. The group, composed of scholars from Germany, Taiwan, China, and the United States, is exploring the implications of Karl Barth's work for the relationship between theology and politics in Western and Asian contexts.

Assistant professor of homiletics and worship at Pittsburgh seminary and accomplished Barth scholar, Angela's contribution to the project examines Barth's practice as a theologian and teacher in the strident political context of Germany in the early 1930s. "I believe that Barth's theology and practice can serve as valuable resources for contemporary Christian communities—especially those that today are tempted either to take up the absolutist rhetoric that dominates public discourse about politics in American society, or withdraw from the discussion altogether," she comments.



In her work, Angela argues for "theo-political deliberation" as a vital Christian practice. She explores some of the cultural dynamics that make it difficult for Americans to talk about politics with non-like-minded others. And she offers concrete suggestions for how Christian communities might begin cultivating what Barth called a "critical yet compressive generosity" in relation to others as they deeply wrestle with public and political issues.

Active not only as a scholar-professor in the field of homiletics but also as a gifted preacher who puts into practice her extensive study of Barth and his context, Angela spoke at the annual Festival of Homiletics in Minneapolis in June. Entering its 24th year, the week-long conference brings together a wide variety of outstanding preachers and professors of homiletics to inspire the pastors in attendance—about 2,000 of them!—to think deeply and creatively about preaching, worship, and contemporary culture. At the 2014 conference, Angela lectured on the phenomenon of imaginative resistance and preached on a difficult parable in Matthew 25—the parable of the "generous wedding guest," as she puts it—to illustrate her talk.

To read the results of Angela's study as a member of the international research group, stay tuned—a volume containing the contributions of all the scholars in the research group will be published in 2016.

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