

## PROFESSOR ANGELA HANCOCK EXAMINES KARL BARTH'S THEOLOGY FOR TODAY

As any professor knows, the common misconception that “sabbatical” means “vacation” couldn’t be farther from the truth! As evidence, witness just one of the many scholarly projects the Rev. Dr. Angela Dienhart Hancock has worked toward during her current sabbatical: This month she takes center podium as one of four featured lecturers at the annual Karl Barth conference in the Netherlands.

“The theme for this year’s conference is ‘Irregular Theology—and the Sermon: Karl Barth’s Homiletical Method,’” notes Angela, who serves as associate professor of homiletics and worship at PTS. Already with one published book on Barth’s preaching—*Karl Barth’s Emergency Homiletic 1932-1933: A Summons to Prophetic Witness at the Dawn of the Third Reich* (Eerdmans, 2013)—Angela is an obvious choice to serve in one of the conference’s featured-speaker roles. And she’ll draw on and expand her research on the German Protestant church in the 1920s and 1930s in the paper she presents there.



“My lecture compares and contrasts Barth’s ‘emergency’ homiletic of 1932/33 with that of another ‘Word of God’ theologian from the period, University of Tübingen professor and popular preacher Karl Fezer,” she explains. “In spite of their shared conviction that preaching somehow bears witness to ‘the Word of God,’ the two scholars had very different reactions to the rise of National Socialism: Barth resisted it; Fezer embraced it. So in my paper I explore the theological reasons for this divergence, what we can learn from the contrast between Barth and Fezer, and the implications for faithful preaching in politically polarized contexts today.”

As a featured speaker, Angela stands in expert scholarly company at the “Karl-Barth-Tagung.” Her presentation follows that of Michael Beintker (emeritus professor of systematic theology, University of Münster), who will speak about Barth’s theological works of 1930-1933 in their context. After Angela’s talk, Rinse H. Reeling Brouwer (Miskotte/Breukelman Chair for Theological Hermeneutics of the Bible, Protestant Theological University, Amsterdam) will explore the publications of “a Dutch kindred spirit of Barth’s”—K. H. Miskotte. Finally, Ciska Stark (assistant professor of liturgy and homiletics, Protestant Theological University, Amsterdam) will focus on what Barth’s homiletical method can bring to the present day.

“Political and social crises are not limited to Karl Barth’s time and context,” Angela observes. “And his conviction that the wide horizon of God’s gracious way with humanity, as witnessed by the prophets and apostles, can call the ‘spirit of the times’ into question making his theology a vital resource for preachers today.”

If you would like to learn more about Barth’s approach to biblical interpretation, Angela will be teaching an online continuing education course titled “**Reading the Bible with Karl Barth**” from May 1-26.

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