Barth in Conversation

Volume 2, 1963

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Foreword to the German Edition

The year 1963 was for Karl Barth yet another happy year. He had enjoyed finishing his teaching activity at the University of Basel in the previous year at the age of 76, and, up to this point, the illnesses that would overshadow him in the following years had not yet shown themselves. He had also not yet organized the weekly Saturday "colloquia"—as he deliberately called them—which would shortly be introduced at the University of Basel. He filled the special freedom that he experienced during this year 1963 by conducting "conversations" with different groups and individuals, partly in Basel, partly elsewhere. Three texts originate from the time of his trip to Denmark in April, and five texts from his encounters during multiple trips to Paris. In this volume of *Conversations*, just as in the other two, the procedure of arranging the material has been as follows: The foreign-language versions have been moved to an appendix;* in the main part, they are presented in German translation.

Regarding the method of communication being applied here, a method that was cultivated by Barth particularly during his more advanced years, some things have already been explained in the forewords to the volumes of conversations from the years 1959–1962 (Karl Barth GA, Section IV, vol. 25, Zurich: TVZ, 1995),[1] and 1964–1968 (Karl Barth GA, Section IV, vol. 28, Zurich: TVZ, 1997).[2] In one of the conversations printed in the present volume, when it suddenly came to a harsh confrontation between "modern" and "evangelical" (*evangelikaler*) theology and the conversation was on the verge of breaking down, Barth said: "As long as we still can speak with each other, we must speak with each other, don't we?"[3] One can understand this sentence as a plea concerning this confrontation, which was subsequently becoming even more serious. One may also understand the sentence, independently of the immediate context in which it came about, as a motto for this volume as a whole and as an indication of the way communication is being conducted here.

I illustrate this with words uttered by Barth at the beginning of his conversation with the Church Brotherhood in Württemberg: "It will not be acceptable for me to spend the entire day doing the talking. I would rather speak *with* you, and I would like to listen to you as well. We should not proceed in such

* The appendix is not included in the English publication.

1. Now published in ET, *Barth in Conversation*, vol. 1, *1959–1962*, ed. Eberhard Busch, Karlfried Froehlich, Darrell L. Guder, and David C. Chao (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017).

2. *Barth in Conversation*, vol. 3, *1964–1968*, ed. Eberhard Busch, Darrell L. Guder, Matthias Gockel, and David C. Chao (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, forthcoming).

3. See page 202 below.

a way that you listen and I speak, but rather we want to have a conversation. I will often ask, 'What do you have to say about this?' Or, 'What do you really think?'"[4] This also means that no text penned in advance is being read out, but instead of that there is a two-way communication flow with action and reaction, question and answer. The resulting disadvantage that statements are at times provisional and sentences are incomplete may justify that a few subtle corrections in square brackets are inserted. In any case, the disadvantage is counterbalanced by the liveliness of the dialogue, still noticeable even in the printed text, and by the participants' preoccupation with the truth, which concerned all of them.

Some of the conversations were recorded; some, especially if they are interviews, are available in print as a newspaper article; some have been preserved as transcripts. As far as it can be determined from the entries in Barth's calendar, he conducted more such conversations than are gathered in this volume. Even after some serious research no documentation could be found for some of them. The pieces concerned should at least be named at this point:

January 21	Conversation with Zurich students on "church and state," in the Bruderholz Restaurant in Basel
January 29	Questions and Answers at a meeting of the Christian Education volunteers of the Bruderholz Protestant Reformed Church in the Bruderholz Chapel
February 4	Conversation with Pastor Walter Lüthi's study group in Bern
May 13	Questions and Answers at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Paris
June 8	Interview with Mr. Erwal of the *Paris Express* at Barth's home in Basel
June 10	Conversation with Protestant and Catholic students at the *Bursa* (student cafeteria) in Basel

A particular editorial problem for this volume needs to be mentioned separately. Of the two-day conversation that Barth had with French pastors and theologians after Barth's last lecture course [*Evangelical Theology: An Introduction* (New York/Chicago/San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963)], only a recording of the first day of the meeting has been found. Is it possible that no recording was made on the second day? Also, no transcript has turned up either. The hope to finally make a discovery in this case is one of the reasons why the conversations of 1963 are only published now, despite the fact that the edition of this volume had already been essentially completed at the same time as the other volumes: 1959–1962 and 1964–1968. Now, after this hope has remained unfulfilled, the volume will have to go out to its readers with this gap. May the readership be able to compensate the lack all the more with the joy over the preserved pieces.

The delay in the publication of the present texts has meant that the work on their editing was done at different times. Therefore I now have to express my

4. In chap. 12, §1.

thanks doubly. In the 1990s, at the Göttingen Barth Research Center, Tilman Kingreen, Wilfried Schutt, and especially Christoph Dahling-Sander contributed in collaboration with Dr. Hinrich Stoevesandt at the Barth Archive in Basel. In the revision of the volume this year, Barbara Schenck and Bartolt Haase participated in Göttingen and Dr. Théo Schneider in Geneva, as well as the current director of the Barth Archive in Basel, Dr. Hans-Anton Drewes, who carefully coordinated and completed the actual printing of the volume. Especially these people have each helped in their own way and with their expertise in a meaningful and noteworthy way, so that this next volume of *Barth in Conversation* can now be published. Wholehearted thanks may be given to them for their knowledgeable and constructive commitment. May the book find an interested readership who allows itself to be taken into the conversations begun here!

Eberhard Busch
Göttingen
Autumn 2004

Translators' Foreword

The three volumes of Barth's "Conversations" in the German Gesamtausgabe (Collected Works) provide an unusual and enriching encounter with the person and thinking of Karl Barth. These edited collections of diverse encounters with Barth were the work of Professor Dr. Eberhard Busch, already well known as Barth's biographer. They were one of the outcomes of years of work at the University of Göttingen, where Busch was Professor of Reformed Theology (the chair that Barth inaugurated in 1921). With the assistance of his students, he painstakingly assembled, edited, and annotated these accounts. The result is a highly readable experience of Barth in retirement. He was sought by a great diversity of groups and individuals and often joined them at the restaurant Bruderholz, not far from his home in the Basel neighborhood of that name. In these discussions, we see how Barth's vast theological project actually works, how it translates into concrete contexts, and how it remains a living, dynamic process, with profoundly important trajectories for the thought and practice of the Christian church.

The translation of *Gespräche* for *Barth in Conversation* is a project of the Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. From the Center's inception in the mid-1990s, under the leadership of then Director of the Princeton Seminary Library, Dr. Stephen Crocco, the faculty affiliated with the Center had discussed the challenges of expanding the English translations of Barth's works. Linked to the daunting challenge of such expansion of the English Barth library was the issue of reliable translations. Without in any way diluting our gratitude for the English edition of the *Church Dogmatics*, there were growing concerns about some aspects of that massive project. It was becoming clear that challenging issues were to be confronted with regard to terminology, consistency, accuracy, and stylistic appropriateness. More and more scholars found themselves revising citations from the English edition in order to make points that were congruent with the German text. To foster a higher standard of translation and to encourage expanded translation efforts, the Center for Barth Studies decided to invite a small group of Barth scholars interested in translation issues to meet and work on texts together. The first group gathered in June of 2007, immediately after the annual Barth Studies Conference on campus.

The experience of working together on translation issues proved to be stimulating and rewarding. This small group of avid Barth readers had a solid interest in meeting annually to explore ways to improve the general quality of Barth translation as well as to do actual translation projects as a group. To carry out the first objective, the group began to develop a "glossary" for Barth

translations, in which we noted, among other things, our agreement on how certain distinctive terms in Barth's vocabulary might be translated. The group was mentored by Karlfried Froehlich, emeritus Professor of Church History at Princeton, who is not only a native German speaker but also studied under Barth in Basel. His role has been to interpret the nuances and often complex allusions of the German text so that a resulting English rendition reliably captures the syntax, content, and mood of the German original.

At its first gathering, the group experimented with the translation of Barth's "conversations" in the first of three volumes in the Collected Works with that title: *Gespräche*. The advantage of this volume was that the various documents or chapters could be assigned to different translators. The annual meeting in June was then used as an opportunity for each translator to present challenges and questions that emerged from the actual task of translating texts. For discussion in the meeting, each participant prepared a segment of a current assignment. The sessions proved to be extraordinarily productive, not only in terms of the quality of each translated "conversation," but also as a training process focused on the improvement of translation skills. In 2013 a doctoral student at Princeton, David Chao, joined the project as its program manager. He brought with him expertise as an academic theologian and great skill with the computer technology needed to carry out the project. He also had several years of experience in academic publishing as an acquisitions editor. Chao has organized the project, set up systems for tracking the process of translating and editing each segment, and brought the project to a place where publication has become a real possibility. He has facilitated the formulation of policies and practices for "fellows" of the Center for Barth Studies, working out procedures for submission of assigned texts and their editing process. Also beginning in 2013, Kait Dugan, Curator of the Center for Barth Studies, has been instrumental in developing the fellows program through providing institutional support and funding.

The production of this volume has thus gone through several steps: Initial translation by a fellow, review of representative excerpts from the translated text at the annual meeting, critical review of all translations by Professor Froehlich as a multilingual native German speaker, with attention to the faithfulness and accuracy in rendering the German into English, and final editing by Professor Darrell Guder as a bilingual native English speaker with attention to the quality of the English language version. During the editorial process of this second volume, Dr. Matthias Gockel joined the team as our second native German-speaking editor. He succeeds Professor Froehlich to ensure that the text faithfully renders the German original.

The texts reproduce conversations, not carefully drafted and formulated lectures. The speech is idiomatic and not literary. There are sentence fragments and interjections as a normal part of conversations. In some instances, the German editors have reconstructed the text from cursory notes prepared for a conversation or taken down in the course of a conversation. Square brackets are used by the German editors to indicate such editorial emendations. In most cases we have integrated these clarifications into the translation but have continued the use of square brackets to indicate material that the translator has added to enhance understandability. The annotations of the German original have all been translated, making this volume a valuable resource for study of

a great range of themes in Barth's theological project. There are several conversations or presentations that took place originally in English or French. In the German edition, these were translated into German and then annotated. In this volume, the original English text is provided, the French is translated into English, and the footnotes have been incorporated. The English originals were also conversational and not carefully written-out lecture texts. Thus at times the English is quite idiomatic and evidences the typical problems of spoken English. Citations from the *Church Dogmatics* (*CD*) are given first in the English edition, followed by the reference (*KD*) to the German original, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*. Where possible, English editions of cited German resources are provided in the footnotes.

Our appreciation for the work done by the original German editors, Professor Busch and his students, has grown as we have engaged these documents. They have created a wealth of scholarship that is a great enrichment of the Barth legacy. It is the hope of the fellows of the Center for Barth Studies that the availability of this resource in English will enhance the serious engagement of Karl Barth's theological legacy, building on the excellent work of our German colleagues.

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May 2018

1. Interview with Alexander J. Seiler
November 28, 1962/January 23, 1963

In a series of "Interviews with Swiss Critics" under the general theme "Die Schweiz als Ärgernis [Switzerland as a Disgrace]," a Swiss illustrated magazine published an interview with Karl Barth which had been conducted by Dr. Alexander J. Seiler on November 28, 1962. It was published under the title "Uns fehlt das Bewußtsein der eigenen Relativität [We Lack the Consciousness of Our Own Relativity]," in Die Woche, *No. 4 (Olten/Zurich, January 23, 1963), 16–17.*

Seiler: Professor Barth, the choice of your successor for the chair of Dogmatics at the University of Basel unleashed a heated controversy by the end of last year.[1] Your student, Helmut Gollwitzer, Professor at the Free University, Berlin,[2] who was unanimously suggested as your successor by the Basel faculty, was denounced in a newspaper campaign as a communist sympathizer and declared "intolerable for Switzerland" because he is an opponent of the nuclear arms buildup, he promotes contact with the Christian Churches in Eastern Europe, and has expressed the opinion that Western European Christianity is in no way everywhere and in every respect reaching its best form.[3] Although one could easily see from Gollwitzer's writings that he repudiates communist doctrine, the attacks on him were successful: he was not selected. You yourself kept your silence at that time although the campaign against Gollwitzer was also aimed at you indirectly and sometimes directly. Soon thereafter you accepted an invitation to travel to the United States, where you were received with greatest honor and where your visit found considerable resonance not only in theological circles but also with the broader public.[4] From your impressions gained

1. See *Barth's Life*, 450. The following daily newspapers were among those that wrote against Gollwitzer's appointment at that time: *Basler Nachrichten* (June 24–25, 1961; July 8–9, 1961; Jan. 27–28, 1962; Feb. 14, 1962); *Die Weltwoche* (June 16, 1961); *Badener Tagblatt* (June 7, 1961); *Appenzeller Zeitung* (July 1, 1961); *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (July 7, 1961).

2. Helmut Gollwitzer (1908–93) studied with Barth in Bonn in 1930–31, was his doctoral student in 1932, and received his doctoral degree under Barth in Basel in 1937. His dissertation was published under the title *Coena Domini: Die altlutherische Abendmahlslehre in ihrer Auseinandersetzung mit dem Calvinismus dargestellt an der lutherischen Frühorthodoxie* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1937; new ed., 1988) [The Lord's Supper: The old Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper in its controversy with Calvinism, with a focus on the period of Early Lutheran Orthodoxy]. Gollwitzer was Professor of Protestant Systematic Theology at the University of Bonn and Professor of Protestant Theology at the Free University of Berlin.

3. See G. Orth, *Helmut Gollwitzer: Zur Solidarität befreit* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1995), 71–91.

4. Barth, accompanied by his sons Markus and Christoph, traveled to the United States from Apr. 7 until May 26, 1962. See *Br. 1961–1968*, 43, for his itinerary. For Barth's report of the trip, see K. Barth, "Remembrances of America," *Christian Century* 80, no. 1 (1963): 7–9; also in: K. Barth, "Foreword [= Preface] to the American Edition," *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, trans. G. Foley (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), v–vii.

on this trip, how would you compare the Christian character of America with that of Switzerland, which enjoys regarding itself as an especially or at any rate distinctly Christian country?

Barth: Yes, after the unhappy experiences that you have described, I was very glad to leave Switzerland behind me for several weeks. I won't say more about the Gollwitzer affair, but this much must be said: the decision over my succession turned out to be extremely disappointing. Gollwitzer would have been a prize for Basel and for Switzerland.

As to Christian America and Christian Switzerland, what I especially noticed was that in America the community is still a reality. There, people do not go just to hear the sermon and then back home as we do. They do not go just to be with the pastor, but with each other. They "come together" to worship. Even in the large cities where I stayed, Chicago, Washington, Richmond, churchgoers know each other, greet each other, speak with each other. Going to church is not just a private experience but something social, a "social gathering," as the Americans call it. That may also have its dangers. But basically it is good and gratifying; the gospel binds people together.

On the other hand, I found that generally the preaching is better in our churches, at any rate more profound. American Protestantism is still strongly marked by the somewhat shallow [elevation of] reason by the Enlightenment.

Seiler: I often have the impression that the strongest side of our Christianity really is the preaching. By that I don't mean that deep dimension of the Christian faith which is and must remain a matter of the individual, but the public area, the everyday life of our society. You yourself have once spoken in conversation of "Christianity meaning infant baptism, confirmation, marriage, funeral, perhaps also the Federal Day of Prayer in Switzerland,"[5] which is so widespread among us. That runs alongside real life as a separate and nonobligatory area. Social, economic, and cultural life remain largely unaffected by it. How does this work in America?

Barth: My impression is that the more social orientation of American Christianity gives it also greater practical importance in public life. Although there is no established church and in spite of the huge number of larger and smaller free churches, which is confusing for us, these churches generally have more influence on the secular reality than our state churches do. Perhaps it is just because as free churches they are dependent on themselves and their members. This influence may sometimes be problematic and may promote a certain tendency toward self-righteousness. But in general, the vitality of church life is impressive, not least where conversations occur between churches and with other confessions. In Chicago I spent a very stimulating and pleasant evening with Catholic clergy: Jesuits, Dominicans, secular priests.[6] Whiskey was served, and we conversed without any inhibition. I have never experienced that in Basel. Likewise in Chicago I was invited to a public roundtable discussion with a Jesuit, a Jewish rabbi, a liberal Protestant, an orthodox Protestant, and a layperson.[7] The event took place on five evenings during one week in

5. See *Conversation* 1:64.
6. This gathering took place on Apr. 15, 1962.
7. See *Conversation* 1:161–91.

the huge Rockefeller Memorial Chapel,[8] and every evening we had between two and three thousand people in attendance. Just think of something like this happening at the Grosse Musiksaal [Great Concert Hall] in Basel! There too, the discussion went on in complete openness. Conflicting views, which of course emerged quite naturally, were neither glossed over nor overplayed but were passionately and objectively fought out. It was an example of our oft-repeated remark, "Well, one has to just talk to each other."[9]

Seiler: As the Gollwitzer case shows, in Switzerland we have thoroughly forgotten how to "just talk to each other," especially in political and certainly in foreign policy matters. Those theologians and pastors who out of their Christian conviction spoke out for the initiative to ban nuclear weapons last March[10] had and still have to suffer even today being denounced as "gravediggers of the West"[11] and with similar slanders. How have we come to this drying up of a genuine public discussion, this unchristian lack of political liberality? How has it also come about that our Christian churches on the whole shy away from taking a clear and unambiguous position on such burning life issues as nuclear armament unless they are forced thereto? How is it so much so that such a convinced Christian as the Catholic historian Friedrich Heer could say that the actions of the churches today for the most part carry "the stamp of reaction"?[12]

Barth: Yes, how did it happen that I was able to have a more open and uninhibited political discussion with a group of members of Kennedy's inner circle[13] than would be possible here even with certain theological colleagues? That I found no one in America who would have comprehended the Gollwitzer case or Zurich's prohibition of Oistrach's performance?[14] That Swiss Protestantism only took a position on nuclear armament under the pressure of an oncoming plebiscite?[15] Perhaps one has to go back to the situation of the German church

8. The podium discussion took place on two evenings while Barth gave five lectures devoted to the first five chapters of his book *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*; see n. 4 above. [Trans.: *Conversation* 1:161–91.]

9. A Swiss expression.

10. On Apr. 1, 1962, the Swiss had voted on an initiative that called for inserting into the Swiss constitution a ban on the production, importation, transit, storage, and use of nuclear weapons. The initiative, which was clearly defeated, was supported by Barth along with others. See Barth's remarks, "Atomwaffenverbot in der Verfassung? Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zur Volksabstimmung am 1. April," in *Zürcher Woche* 14, no. 12 (Mar. 23, 1962): 3; see *O.Br. 1945–1968*, 507–8.

11. Support for this judgment is found, e.g., in the article by J. Zwick, "Atomwaffenkrieg der Theologen," in *Die Weltwoche* 26, no. 1306 (Nov. 21, 1958): 13: "Some enjoy playing the role of the prophet of doom and appear not unwilling to open the floodgates to an east wind so that it will singe the hated 'bourgeois landscape' in which they themselves thrive quite comfortably. In suicidal frivolousness, which they mistake for the courage of faith, they rack themselves up into an antediluvian mood with the confidence that following the destruction of the rotten Western civilization the rainbow can shine all the more brightly."

12. See Fr. Heer, *Offener Humanismus* (Bern: Scherz, 1962), 375: Even the political offensives of the churches are "essentially defensive," "campaigns to reconquer lost territories . . . and institutions, eyes rigidly fixed on the past. . . . One doesn't dare to walk truly new paths; action remains reaction."

13. John F. Kennedy (1917–63), American President in 1961–63. The conversation with some of his advisors (Ted Sorensen and others) took place on May 7, 1962.

14. In May of 1961 Swiss immigration officials refused the request for a concert to be played by the Russian violinist David Oistrach, in Zurich. This decision, approved by the Zurich city council, led to fierce debates in the cantonal council at its sessions on June 19, July 3 and 10, and Sept. 4 and 11. See Minutes of the Meeting of the Cantonal Council 1961 (State Archives of the Canton of Zurich), 1612–13, 1670–71, 1688–94, 1715–18, 1722–29.

15. See n. 10 above. On May 26, 1963, another national vote was held on the Social Democratic Party's initiative calling for restricting the exclusive right to decide on nuclear armament to the electorate

under National Socialism. At that time, a regeneration took place through the Confessing Church, a reawakening of a confessing Christianity. The political restoration in the postwar years was paralleled by an ecclesiastical restoration that led to a mutual alliance. The situation in Switzerland was similar, with the difference that our church only very partially took a position of intellectual opposition even during the war.[16] After the war, even more clearly, there was no longer an intellectual task. But the church is always sick when it is without a task.

Seiler: With a view to the Nazi period, it often appears to me that the position of today's Swiss citizen on foreign policy contains an exorcistic element. It is as though during those years we had gotten used to having the devil maybe not on the wall but right at our border. Today we transfer this position to the world's split into East and West, and we don't consider that the inkpot has become an atomic bomb and thus a boomerang that comes back to strike us.

Barth: Particularly since today the devil is rather far away. What our real feelings are would only become clear if the Russians stood at Lake Constance. Would there be a red Pilet-Golaz then?[17] But concerning exorcism, shortly after the Hungarian uprising[18] a very dear colleague of mine[19] preached a sermon in the Basel Cathedral on Matthew 8:28–34, the demons being driven out of the demoniac and into the swine. He did very well and hinted that one day the demons would be driven out of the Kremlin as well. After the sermon, I told him that there was one thing he had forgotten: the swine into which the demons threw themselves. In such cases, they often are we ourselves.[20] What I mean to say is this: one should be wary of driving out demons from others, demons from whom we ourselves are not free or, at least, against whom we are not immune.

That is especially relevant for a people of born pedagogues as we Swiss happen to be. It is natural for us to stand at the podium to lecture, to teach lessons to all others. Evidence of this right now is our very unchristian arrogance toward the Italians and other foreign workers who are just good enough to keep our economic competitiveness going by their hard labor. It can also be

(an obligatory referendum) (see below, chap. 12, n. 59). For the position taken by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, see below, chap. 12, n. 53.

16. See H. Kocher, *Rationierte Menschlichkeit: Schweizerischer Protestantismus im Spannungsfeld von Flüchtlingsnot und öffentlicher Flüchtlingspolitik der Schweiz 1933–1948* (Zurich: Chronos Verlag, 1996), esp. 393–444.

17. Marcel Pilet-Golaz (1889–1958), a member of the Swiss Parliament in 1928–44, advocated a policy of consideration and even conformity vis-à-vis his country's neighbor, Germany. See J. Kimche, *General Guisans Zweifrontenkrieg: Die Schweiz zwischen 1939 und 1945* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1962), 85, 97, 103–7, 110–13.

18. The uprising began on Oct. 23, 1956.

19. Barth's friend Eduard Thurneysen (1888–1974) became the pastor of the Basel Münster [Cathedral] in 1927 and also taught as Professor of Practical Theology beginning in 1929.

20. Barth noted to Thurneysen on a scrap of paper: "Plan for a sermon on the second part of the story: 1. On the contentment with which the two thousand swine grazed on their land, and on the three minutes of misery and revulsion (during a general stoppage of the midday traffic on the Basel streets put into effect as a manifestation of protest) in which they watched from a distance the evil activity of the demoniacs. 2. How the Lord was more concerned with the demoniac than with the two thousand swine and how he therefore thrust the demons out of the former into the latter. 3. On the behavior that now gripped the demonized two thousand swine and how it had to lead to their plunging into the sea and drowning." From the editor's transcript of the original note, which Barth showed him in 1967.

seen in our turtle-like politics, which consists of rejecting all contacts with the East. While world politics since Kennedy's inauguration has seen a slow but clear reduction of the tensions and improvement of the relations between West and East, we behave in a more Western manner than the West and speak about abandoning our neutrality.[21] If we keep that up we will one day stand there as Europe's *Dorftrottel* [village idiots].[22] It could have been Switzerland's mission after 1945 to stand *au dessus de la mêlée*[23] and form a bridge between West and East.[24] A true Christian mission! But we Swiss lack the Mozartian touch, the calm serenity needed in a world that is torn and divided. We lack the ability to see ourselves in our own relativity. It is from this ability that true peace arises. So what remains in many respects is only the retreat into silence[25] and the hope that in this silence there are still powers at work that are based on a healthy common sense and true Christian values.

21. Major General E. Uhlmann no doubt represented the official thesis of the Federal Government in Bern when he declared, "nuclear weapons would only be acquired under strict preservation of our neutrality," as reported by *Schweizerischer Evangelischer Pressedienst*, issue 45, Nov. 12, 1958; reprinted in *JK* 20 (1959): 51. After this thesis was challenged from many quarters as illusionary, the Swiss military conceded that it would create a problem for Swiss neutrality, even though at first it continued to advocate Swiss nuclear armament. On the one hand, one argued, it was an "essential goal" of the American nuclear monopoly to "prevent the emergence of nuclear armament in other nations"; on the other hand, it might be advisable "to include nuclear weaponry in the Swiss national defense as part of an alliance," given the fact that in case of a future war Switzerland would not be threatened in isolation. Thus W. Mark, "Atomwaffen für die Schweizer Armee: Können oder Wollen? [Nuclear weapons for the Swiss Army: Can or want?]," in *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitschrift* 129 (1963): 445–50, here 446.

22. At that time this formulation elicited a critical echo in Switzerland. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in its midday edition of Feb. 1, 1964 (no. 398) published a letter to the editor from a reader, signed F. W. and titled, "*Dorftrottel Europas* [Village idiots of Europe]?" It stated that now one was finally gaining clarity on "who is working into the hands of the Communists and therefore also belongs to the fifth column in the West." Furthermore, the question was posed whether every reader of the *Woche* could recognize "which Trojan horse the scholarly professor is riding and how deliberately and with what finesse the *Swiss determination to resist* is being undermined by his crowd of followers." See also A. Fisch, "Dorftrottel Europas?," in *Basler Nachrichten* 119, no. 63 (Feb. 11, 1963): 1.

23. Above the fray.

24. See Barth's lecture of February 1949 in the city church of Thun and in Bern Cathedral, *Die Kirche zwischen Ost und West* (Zollikon-Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1949). On the vehement debate occasioned by that lecture, see *O.Br 1945–1968*, 214–73.

25. Here Barth echoes the formulation of J. von Müller, *Geschichte Schweizerischer Eidgenossenschaft* [History of the Swiss Federation], ed. E. A. Hofmann (Kilchberg-Zurich: Volk & Schriftum, 1942), 187, on the behavior of the early Swiss after the Oath of the Rütli (Nov. 8, 1307?): "Then each one went into his hut, kept silent, and wintered the animals."

2. Interview with *Time* (I)
December 10, 1962/May 31, 1963

On December 10, 1962, Barth was interviewed in his Basel home by journalists of the American magazine Time*. The interview was not published in full but in the form of an article on Barth citing parts of the interview. It appeared under the title "Barth in Retirement," in* Time: The Weekly News Magazine *(Atlantic Edition, Amsterdam), vol. 82, no. 22 (May 31, 1963): 35–36. In addition, the answer to the question of the relationship between "theologians and journalism" was published under the title "Karl Barth on Theologians and Journalists," in* Homiletica en biblica, *The Hague, vol. 22 (1963): 178; and again under the same title in* Kerk en theologie, *The Hague, vol. 32 (1981): 234–35.*

The greatest living Protestant theologian retired from his professorship at the University of Basel last year, presumably with nothing to do but listen to Mozart records and finish the thirteenth volume of his masterwork, *Church Dogmatics*. But at the age of 77, Karl Barth (*Time* cover, Apr. 20, 1962) has found himself so busy that he wonders if he will ever finish the book at all. Two evenings a week he holds trilingual "colloquia" with divinity students in the nearby Bruderholz Restaurant. He keeps up a worldwide correspondence, dutifully reads theses mailed in by budding theologians for his approval, and receives a constant stream of visitors, ranging from old pastoral friends to a delegation of Swiss prohibitionists. "I told them," says Barth, sipping vermouth, "that it is a good thing they exist, but theirs is not the main problem in the world."[1]

Barth seems to be resigned to the fact that there may be no additions to the *Dogmatics*. "Let people read my first twelve volumes," he says, in dry awareness that they are heavy going. He has "written more than any other contemporary theologian" and fears overdoing it: "I definitely don't wish to be another Adenauer."[2] He is in good health, still full of sly wit and provocative opinions. A sampling of the latest Barthian views:

On Roman Catholics: Barth believes that, thanks to Pope John XXIII, "we are witnessing a complete reinterpretation of Roman Catholic dogma.[3] The thoughts expounded by Hans Küng[4] and other modern theologians in

1. Interview with Swiss Blue Cross Agents on Nov. 26, 1962, at the Hotel Blaukreuz in Basel, printed in *Gespräche, 1959–1962*, 417–18; *Conversation* 1:286–87. It was 14 days ahead of this interview.

2. Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967) was elected Federal Chancellor for the fourth time in autumn 1961, when he was almost 86 years old.

3. Beginning on Oct. 11, 1962, the Second Vatican Council convened by John XXIII (pope since 1958) was in session; its last session ended on Dec. 8, 1965.

4. Hans Küng (born 1928) was a Swiss Roman Catholic theologian, *peritus* (theological expert) at Vatican II (1963–65), and, in Tübingen, Professor of Fundamental Theology and Dogmatics (1963–80),

Germany, Holland, France, and elsewhere are no longer views of a small spearhead minority, but form the very groundswell of Catholic renovation." It would be "terrible if the Pope died now,"[5] but the trend of Catholic thinking "looks to me irreversible." Barth scoffs at the widespread Protestant view that Rome is at last catching up with the Reformation churches and says, "It might well be that we Protestants are the ones who will have to do the catching up."

On Communism: Thanks to Pope John's new opening toward the East,[6] Roman Catholicism "may succeed in reaching a sensible accord with Communist countries before Protestants do." Unchanged are Barth's often-argued views that "the subtle forms of materialist atheism in the West are a much graver threat to Christianity than the overtly trumpeted atheism of the Communists. I don't take this Communist atheism too dramatically. At least we know where we stand with them."

On theology and journalism: Barth recalls that forty years ago he advised young theologians, "Take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible!"[7] Newspapers, he says, are so important that "I always pray for the sick, the poor, journalists, authorities of the state and the church, in that order.[8] Journalists form public opinion. They hold terribly important positions. Nevertheless, a theologian should never be formed by the world around him, either East or West. He should make it his vocation to show both East and West that they can live without a clash. Where the peace of God is proclaimed, there peace on earth [cf. Luke 2:14] is implicit. Have we forgotten the Christmas message?"

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then for Ecumenical Theology (1980–95). He codetermined the course of reform before the council through his books: *Rechtfertigung: Die Lehre Karl Barths und eine katholische Besinnung; Mit einem Geleitbrief von Karl Barth*, 4th ed., Sammlung Horizonte 2 (1957; Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1964); and *Konzil und Wiedervereinigung: Erneuerung als Ruf in die Einheit*, 7th ed. (1960; Wien: Herder, 1964). On the Roman Catholic renewal movement before the Second Vatican Council in general, cf. M. Schoof, *Der Durchbruch der neuen katholischen Theologie: Ursprünge-Wege-Strukturen* (Wien: Herder, 1969).

5. He died immediately after the publication of the interview on June 3, 1963, at the age of 82 years.

6. As a document of this opening, the social encyclical of John XXIII was widely felt, dated May 15, 1961: *Mater et Magistra* (*AAS* 53:401ff.), with its call for social renewal, for the "reorganization of social life in truth, justice, and love" (§§212–57); German: *Die Sozialenzyklika Papst Johannes XXIII: Mater et Magistra*, ed. E. Welty, OP, 2nd ed., Herder-Bücherei 110 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1961), 189–209. The opening then began its publicly visible expression through the private audience of Alexei Adjubei and his wife, Rada, daughter of the then Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, on Mar. 7, 1963, with John XXIII.

7. Cf. K. Barth, *Römerbrief* (1922), 413 (ET, 411): "Reading all kinds of profane secular literature, especially the newspaper, is urgently recommended for the understanding of the Epistle to the Romans. For thinking is, if it is real, thinking of life and therefore and in it thinking of God." Also 425 (ET, 423): "in the face of the daily newspaper—the Romans . . ."

8. Cf. K. Barth, *Gebete* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963), 15, 18, 24, 28, 34, et passim. Barth wrote the preface to the prayer book during the time of this interview.

3. Conversation with Students of the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey
January 19, 1963

The Graduate School at the Ecumenical Institute Chateau de Bossey near Céligny organizes annual study courses for advanced theological students from various churches across continents. In the 1960s, the course participants maintained a conversation with K. Barth by driving to Basel each January, thus on January 8, 1960; January 21, 1961; January 20, 1962; January 19, 1963; January 18, 1964 (see Gespräche, 1964–1968, *3–5); and most recently on January 23, 1967 (326–50). In 1965 and 1966 Barth could not receive the group for health reasons. Following communications from Professor Dr. H. H. Wolf on June 22, 1965, to the editor, there are no records in Bossey of the conversations carried out so far. On the other hand, in the Karl Barth Archive in Basel some of these interviews contain the students' questions to Barth and his notes to answer the questions. The following text refers to the conversation on January 19, 1963, in the Bruderholz Basel restaurant and reproduces the questions presented there, together with Barth's handwritten comments.*

Question 1: In what way do you conceive of the Gospel and the Law as constitutive elements of the one Word?

Barth: The one Word: covenant—in J[esus] C[hrist] fulfilled from the *human side*, in *our* place—asks us to be *with* him, asks for our *obedience*, is as our Savior also our master.

Question 2: Christ was sacrificed on the cross for us. . . .

Barth: . . . "sacrificed": gave himself away in order to take upon him our sin and perdition.

Question 3: In what way does the believer continue this sacrifice in the worship of the church and in daily life?

Barth: [Continue this sacrifice?] only? "continue" [. . .] respond [. . .] *response:* analogy, picture, mirror [. . .] by *service as witnesses* for the benefit of the neighbor and the world.

Question 4: What is meant by Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist?

Barth: "Real Presence" *also!* in the Eucharist[.] Two or three . . . "Eucharist": thanksgiving—receiving our daily bread from him and sharing it with the brethren.

Question 5: How is a union between the "catholic" churches and the "evangelical" churches possible? . . .

Barth: Both becoming *more* cath[olic] and *more* evang[elical].

Question 6: Is the acceptance of ecclesiastical authority (expressed in the episcopal ministry) inevitable for such a visible union?

Barth: *Is* [. . .] *inevitable* [. . .]? Certainly not! [marginal note on the whole question] Compromise[?]!

Question 7: In view of your critical attitude toward "natural theology,"[1] what do you have to say concerning world cultures and modern living faiths?

Barth: [a serpentine line along the question][2]

Question 8: What is the role of reconciliation for the church with regard to an expanding East-West conflict?

Barth: The *church* (1) is interested not in ideas, principles, systems . . . , but in *man* as God's fellow; (2) proclaims freedom in *responsibility* [. . .], responsibility in *freedom*; (3) believes and proclaims the coming kingdom as the ultimate *deed* of God[,] knows about [?] the *preliminary* and *limited* character of all human enterprises. . . .

What is needed: a *reformation* of the church.

1. See *KD* II/1:92–141, 194–200; *CD* II/1:93–128, 172–79.

2. The serpentine line probably points to the inadequacy of the question in the face of Barth's theological approaches "to the cultural formations of the world"; cf. his essay "Die Kirche und die Kultur," in *ZZ* 4 (1926): 363–84, reprinted in K. Barth, *Vorträge und kleinere Arbeiten, 1925–1930*, ed. H. Schmidt (Zurich: TVZ, 1994), 6–40; and above all *KD* IV/3:126–53 (*CD* 113–35) where Barth, in his interpretation of the first thesis of the Barmen Theological Declaration of May 31, 1934, explains profane "lights" as free manifestations of Jesus Christ.

4. Interview with the Dutch Christian Broadcasting Association
March 1963

In the Kirchenbote für das reformierte Volk des Aargau *(vol. 73 [March 1963]: 25), a report is provided of this interview in a column titled "Church and World." It was apparently adapted from the Swiss Evangelical Press Service EPD [Evangelischer Pressedienst Schweiz], but the text cannot be found any longer in its archives. Moreover, the editor could not locate a copy of this interview in Dutch. The following reproduces the report of the church newspaper.*

Professor Karl Barth expressed himself optimistically about the current course of the [Second] Vatican Council[1] in an interview with the Dutch Christian Broadcasting Association. Barth said that clear indications are apparent that the Roman Catholic Church is not at all as totalitarian as people often had previously considered it to be.

According to Barth, it is "very gratifying and hopeful" that the "progressive forces" in the council Assembly had strongly created space for themselves. The emergence even of Spanish bishops with modern perspectives was also amazing.[2] If this progressive wing, which would include above all the French, Dutch, Austrian, and German bishops, should succeed in gaining the upper hand with its ideas in the coming fall, during the continuation of the council[3] against the conservative elements under the leadership of Cardinal Ottaviani,[4] then the project of Christian unity would be given a substantive foundation for the first time.

1. The first session of the Second Vatican Council had taken place from Oct. 11, 1962, to Dec. 8, 1962. There had only been discussions during the meetings up to that point, but they had focused on the drafts of the upcoming resolutions "On Revelation" and "On the Church," which sounded promising to Barth.

2. See, e.g., the report "Spanien: Die Laien vor dem Konzil [Spain: The laity before the council]," *Herder-Korrespondenz* 16, issue 9 (1961–62): 394–95.

3. The second session of the council lasted from September 29, 1963, to December 4, 1963.

4. Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani (1890–1979) was President of the Theological Preparation Committee before the council and was Pro-Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith from 1966 to 1968.

5. Interview by the *Kristeligt Dagblad* *April 18, 1963*

On April 19, 1963, Barth was awarded the Sonning Prize for Contributions to European Culture at the grand auditorium of the University of Copenhagen. The prize was established by the realtor Carl Sonning, and recipients of the prize before Barth include, among others, Albert Schweitzer, Bertrand Russell, Niels Bohr, Alvar Aalto, Igor Stravinsky.[1] *After his arrival in Copenhagen, Barth was interviewed by a representative (abbreviated as "ravn.") of the* Kristeligt Dagblad, *published there. The text appeared in the April 19, 1963, issue of the paper under the title "Ikke min skyld, at der er barthianere [It is not my fault that there are Barthians]." Continuing the quote in the title, the introduction to the interview text says: "I am definitely not guilty," said Karl Barth yesterday upon his arrival. He thinks that many would be angry if he were to continue writing his* Dogmatics. *A current conversation with the great theologian: nice and friendly, with a smile. That is Karl Barth, the theologian, who has caused big waves in the theological debate during the greater part of the twentieth century. That is how he arrived in Copenhagen yesterday, where he will be awarded the Sonning Prize today. Short, at times very short, were the answers during a conversation that the* Kristeligt Dagblad *conducted with him after his arrival at the Hotel d'Angleterre. But the eyes were smiling, and a lively laughter made its way again and again past the crucial pipe which, nota bene, was never lit during the interview. Karl Barth is in Copenhagen for the third time.*[2] *The last time before this trip was in 1939. His then-famous name has not paled over the years. Today just as then, people prick up their ears when Karl Barth writes or speaks. The German translation from the Danish was done by Edel Schmid-Larsen.*

1. For details about this trip, see Max Zellweger-Barth, *Mein Schwiegervater: Erinnerungen an Karl Barth* (Zurich: TVZ, 1981), 25–38.

2. Barth was in Denmark for the first time in 1933; in Copenhagen on Mar. 10 and in Aarhus on Mar. 12, he gave the lecture "Das erste Gebot als theologisches Axiom," ZZ 11 (1933): 297–314; ET, "The First Commandment as an Axiom in Theology," in *The Way of Theology in Karl Barth: Essays and Comment*, ed. Martin Rumscheidt (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986), 63–78. The second time Barth was in Denmark was in late March 1939, when he spoke on 1 Peter and the doctrine of baptism during a theological conference in Nyborg-Strand. Before and after the conference in Nyborg on Mar. 26–27 and Mar. 31–Apr. 1, Barth was in Copenhagen.

1. On That Topic, the Best Has Already Been Written

Dagblad: A year ago you retired from your professorship chair in Basel.[3] What can we expect from you now?

Barth: The best that has been said on that topic, an American theologian said about me last year: "He has every right to be tired and to look for peace and quiet."[4] I do not promise anything.

Dagblad: Your *Dogmatics* is not finished?

Barth: Already 10,000 pages are published. Therefore one should not ask whether there will be more. There are different reasons why perhaps nothing more might be published. Many could be angry with me because in that case I would at least need to write on baptism.[5]

Dagblad: Angry?

Barth: For a variety of reasons. I only mention here my concerns about pedobaptism.[6] I want to state, however, that I am neither a *Wiedertäufer* [Anabaptist] nor a Baptist.

Dagblad: You are not a lover of the *Volkskirche* [established church] either, are you?

Barth: I don't want to fight against the *Volkskirche*. The question whether one has a *Volkskirche* or a free church is not important. The decisive issue is whether the church of Christ is in this *Volkskirche* or [in this] free church.

2. In Agreement with the Pope

Dagblad: You were an irreconcilable opponent of Nazism. Your relationship to Communism is more differentiated, is it not?

Barth: I am an opponent of the Cold War. I do not believe that we can reach a neutral relationship between Christianity and Communism, but certainly [a relaxed one] between people in the East and in the West. I am pleased that on this point I find myself in complete agreement with Pope John XXIII, in the views he expressed via the encyclical on peace, which has just been published.[7] Perhaps this agreement surprises me just as much as it surprises me that no

3. Barth had resigned from his teaching post in the summer semester 1961 but had returned to it as a stand-in once more in the winter semester 1961–62 since a successor had not yet been called.

4. A quote by an American theologian to that effect could not be found. Is there perhaps a misunderstanding in the author's reporting of the remark by Barth? Or has Barth himself in retrospect ascribed to an American theologian the quote by a German theologian that he had read in a letter addressed to Charlotte von Kirschbaum during his trip to America: "I should now technically have the right to be simply tired." Letter from Barth to Christoph Barth, July 19, 1962, KBA 9262.135; the quoted letter, dated July 18, 1962, had come from Günter Schwenzel, Darmstadt.

5. Barth had already presented his teaching on baptism for the *Church Dogmatics* during the winter semester 1959–60; thus it was already available in manuscript form, but it was given to the printers only in 1967 as *CD* IV/4, *(Fragment) The Christian Life*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1981).

6. Already in 1939, Barth had caused a stir in Denmark with his teaching on baptism; cf. *Barth's Life*, 291–92.

7. The encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, published one week before this interview on Maundy Thursday, Apr. 11, 1963, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals.index.html#encyclicals. In §§113–15 the pope calls for "equilibrium founded on mutual trust" in contrast to an "equilibrium of fear."

similar admonition has as yet been heard from the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

Dagblad: But from the Peace Congress in Prague?

Barth: Many of these people, among them Professor Hromádka,[8] are my friends. But they themselves differentiate in their peace effort perhaps too strongly between East and West: they are captivated by the Cold War and influenced by the Eastern ideology. But the gospel has never been ideology.

Dagblad: It is not only the peace question that has caused a stir about the Catholic Church very recently. The play *The Deputy*[9] has caused quite a lot of excitement?

Barth: I have read it. It is not a piece of art, but it is a true and an honest account. Pope Pius XII[10] did not care for the Jews, but the Ecumenical Council in Geneva did not do so either.[11]

3. Absolutely Not Guilty

Dagblad: Here in Denmark, a whole school of thought is named after you.

Barth (with a big smile): I am not guilty, absolutely not guilty. For I have never been a Barthian.

Dagblad: The theologians who were most strongly influenced by you around 1920 later on followed Bultmann to a certain degree.

Barth: Forty years ago, Bultmann and I were quite close to each other; we were different, but not that much. Later on, each probably went [his way] in his own direction. [Then] 1933 marked the end of this epoch. I had to break with the German Church.[12] That was something decisive.

Dagblad: The ecumenical problem is as alive as ever. Do you believe that the Vatican Council[13] will be important for us as well?

Barth: The most important aspect about this council is not the fact that it is being gathered but what goes on behind the scenes. I was surprised by the differences that became apparent in Rome during the first session. Today there is movement in the Catholic Church, maybe more than in the Protestant churches.

Dagblad: The Catholics have been engaged a great deal with your work.

8. In his autobiography Josef L. Hromádka (1889–1969) writes about the Prague Christian Peace Conference, of which he was a cofounder: *Mein Leben zwischen Ost und West* (Zurich: TVZ, 1971), 128–34. Barth expressed his questions to Hromádka as well as to this conference in letters to him, e.g., Barth, *Br. 1961–1968*, 113–16, 149–53; cf. 552–55, Hromádka's letter to Barth.

9. A historical drama by Rolf Hochhuth, *The Deputy*, trans. C. Winston and R. Winston (New York: Grove Press, 2006). See below, chap. 13.

10. The original here erroneously says "Pius I."

11. A more differentiated account of the then position of the (at that point only provisionally formed) Ecumenical Council concerning the Jewish question is given by W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *Die Welt war meine Gemeinde: Autobiographie* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1972), 200–209, the chapter titled "The extermination of the European Jews." See also A. Freudenberg, ed., *Rettet sie doch! Franzosen und die Genfer Oekumene im Dienste der Verfolgten des Dritten Reiches* (Zurich: EVZ, 1969).

12. In this form, the sentence is hardly authentic, all the more so because it has no basis in the preceding material. More likely it needs to be read thus: "I had to break with *a number of theologians and other figures* of the German Church."

13. See above, n. 1, chap. 4 (p. 10).

Barth: The best books about me have been written by Catholics.[14] And they have read me, probably more eagerly than the Protestants.

4. But Luther

Dagblad: The relationship to the younger churches and to the developing countries has made the ecumenical problem more pressing for many European churches, has it not?

Barth: My son is a professor of theology in Jakarta, Indonesia.[15] He reports how the Indonesian theologians—[just] as theologians, for example, in Africa—want to create an independent theology. They have every right to do that. But that might be more difficult than they believe. The results are a big problem. But here too a possible movement in the Catholic Church can be of use. If the relationship between Catholics and other confessions in old Christendom improves, so that they do not work directly against each other, then walls are torn down, walls that prove to be difficulties for the younger churches standing outside of our old traditions.

But the various European churches are often strongly trapped in traditions, not least the Lutherans. The Methodists took their departure from Wesley, but few Methodists today are [still] Wesleyans. The Presbyterians today are also no [longer] Calvinists. But Luther! He still is someone very special for all Lutherans.

5. Opponent of Nuclear Weapons

Dagblad: Previously you have spoken up against nuclear weapons?[16]

Barth: In Switzerland I am known as an opponent of nuclear weapons; one might say [I am] a participant in the movement.

Dagblad: Did you participate in the Easter March?[17]

14. To be mentioned here are first and foremost the following: J. Hamer, *Karl Barth* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1962); Han Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, trans. E. T. Oates (San Francisco: Communio Books, Ignatius Press, 1992); A. Ebneter, *Der Mensch in der Theologie Karl Barths* (Zurich: Verlag Orientierung, 1952); H. Volk, "Die Christologie bei Karl Barth und Emil Brunner," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1954), 3:531–611; H. Fries, *Bultmann-Barth and Catholic Theology*, trans. L. Swidler (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1967); B. Gherardini, *La parola di Dio nella teologia di Karl Barth* (Rome: Editrice Studium, 1955); H. Küng, *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964); H. Bouillard, *Karl Barth*, 3 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1957); B. A. Willems, *Karl Barth: An Ecumenical Approach to His Theology* (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press, 1965).

15. Christoph Barth (1917–86), in 1947 theological teacher for Old Testament in Bandjermasin (Indonesia), in 1953–65 in Jakarta.

16. For more detail on this, see *Barth's Life*, 430–42; furthermore *O. Br. 1945–1968*, 392–93, 398–99, 440–44, 455–58.

17. The Easter March movement arose from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which, for the first time between Good Friday and Easter Sunday 1959, undertook a protest march from the Nuclear Research Center Aldermaston to London. In Germany, a similar protest march took place for the first time in 1960, then in 1962 with the declared goal of a "campaign for disarmament."

Barth: No, that I did not do. But it seems to me that people have not learned anything from Hiroshima.[18] People have not changed. Young people might have changed, but all the older ones who have their roots in the nineteenth century, they do not understand what kind of destructive possibilities modern warfare carries in itself. They are unable to make the change.

18. Dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945.

6. Interview by Ole Blegel
April 19, 1963

During his stay in Copenhagen (see Conversation 5), Karl Barth gave an interview to the Swede Ole Blegel, which appeared in the Swiss tabloid Blick *on April 20, 1963, 3, under the heading "Professor Barth: A White Elephant. 63,000 francs with the Sonning Prize for the Basel theologian—visibly moved." The short interview that was expanded into an article is reduced here to the pure interview passages. In the commentary on the award ceremony, it says, for example: "Remarkable about the Sonning Prize is that the award money is generated by the returns from buildings with scandalous living conditions, [apartments] for which poor people must pay horrendously high rents." Barth, for his part, called the* Blick *report a "very poor article"; see* Br. 1961–1968, *142.*

Blick: [Is this your first time in Denmark?]

Barth: I have been to Denmark before, but many years ago.[1] While I do not have a close relationship to the country, I am nonetheless delighted that I have been awarded the Sonning Prize. What I will do with the money? Maybe I'll buy myself a white elephant or a Rolls-Royce.[2]

Blick: In Denmark, there are many so-called Barthians, who confess themselves to be followers of the famous *Dogmatics* of the theologian.

Barth: Well, I don't feel related with these people.

Blick: [How long will you stay in Denmark?]

Barth: I am staying in Copenhagen until Sunday and will return to Basel thereafter. Tomorrow, Saturday, I am giving a lecture to Danish students.[3]

1. See above, chap. 5, notes 1–2.

2. According to Barth's letter to his son Christoph, dated June 18, 1963 (KBA 9263.107), he gave away the larger part of the prize, valued at 110,000 kroner—"Even Zacchaeus did not do any more than that"—to the Basel Mission, the Basel City Mission, the relief organization of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland (HEKS), and the fund for poor relief of the town of Mülligen (Aargau), where the Barth family originally came from. The smaller part he used to pay off the debt on his house.

3. During the award ceremony on Friday, Apr. 19, at which Prof. Niels Hansen Søe gave the *laudatio* for Barth, Barth delivered the address *Dank und Reverenz*, published in *EvTh* 23 (1963): 337–42. The following day Barth held a question-and-answer session with students. See chap. 7, next.

7. Questions and Answers in Copenhagen
April 20, 1963

During Karl Barth's trip to Copenhagen in 1963 (see Conversation 5), he had also scheduled a "question-and-answer session with 300 students" on the afternoon of April 20, 1963 (according to the note in his calendar). The Kristeligt Dagblad *reported on this event on Monday, April 22, 1963, under the headline "En a-krig kan aldrig forsvares: En charmerende Karl Barth i studenternes krydsild [A Nuclear War Can Never Be Countenanced: A Charming Karl Barth in the Crossfire of Students]." The newspaper article's introduction said, "In the Great Hall of the University of Copenhagen, which was packed to the brim, Karl Barth had a meeting with students before his departure on Saturday. The event was arranged by the Danish Christian Student Movement. The president, Pastor S. C. Kemp, welcomed Barth, followed by Barth responding to the students' questions in a lively and charming manner." The article closes: "Then Karl Barth left the room with a big smile and energetic waving, followed by loud applause. The students had met one of the most fascinating personalities of this century." In its main part, the article presents a brief account of the conversation. This account is printed below word-for-word, leaving out the section headings. The translation from Danish into German was done by Edel Schmid-Larsen.*

Flemming Skov asked whether theological terms could be translated into a nontheological language.

Barth: There is no purely theological language, but all theology must find its expression in a nontheological language; and because language changes over time, it can also become necessary to change the theological terminology. By the way, I do not see the core issue in all those discussions to be about language.[1] What is essential is the question of the right *subject matter*.

Anne Paludan wanted to know whether knowledge of God is possible outside of the Christian revelation.

Barth: On the soccer field, the ball is God. Or the speed is God. At the stock exchange, God's name is Mammon. In many areas, therefore, one recognizes a god outside of Christ. However, the question is What do we mean when we talk about "knowledge of God"? If we mean the God whom Jesus revealed, then he cannot be recognized outside of this revelation. Revelation then also grants the belief that the [earthly] life is created by the God of the Bible. God

1. For the shift of the theological discussion to the topic of the "new hermeneutics," see E. Fuchs, *Hermeneutik* (Bad Cannstatt: R. Müllerschön, 1954); G. Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, trans. R. G. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961); G. Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, trans. J. W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), esp. 305–32, "The Word of God and Hermeneutics."

can [therefore] well be found in nature, but only by the one who has been gifted with the right eye for it.

Ruth Dinesen asked about the conditions for a cooperation with the Catholics.

Barth: The only condition is that *both* sides clearly and firmly try [to come] to the center, that is, to the Word that they have heard: the revelation through Jesus. We should not look at all the things that, in our opinion, are wrong with the Catholics and demand self-confidently that they turn "Protestant," just as they should not demand that we embrace Catholicism. We should try ourselves to understand revelation in a better way. We certainly need something of the attitude of the current pope.[2] [We, too,] need signposts that could show us our mistakes: our reliance on tradition, nature, reason, and so forth, . . . a renewed focus on revelation, not more power for the bishops; that is what we need.

Anne Paludan asked whether it is possible to formulate a Christian ethic.

Barth: At different points in history there will always be new situations about which ethics cannot make pronouncements in advance. By the way, a Christian ethic does not have the right to say, "Do this! Don't do that!" It can only say, "*Consider* this or that question in the light of the whole Bible; in other words, learn from the Bible—not the solution, but the way in which a solution would be conceivable." The Christian ethos consists in obedience to the Word that has been heard; this ethos is life as it is being lived out; it can never be captured by ethics, which is a mere science about life.

Secretary Ole Andreason wanted to know the conditions under which the baptism of children would be a responsible choice.

Barth: If baptism of children refers to infant baptism, it is not a responsible choice under any circumstances. On the other hand, I myself did once agree to baptize a nine-year-old Jewish boy who had understood during the reading of the Bible at school that Jesus is the Messiah.[3] Here, the baptism was in accord with the New Testament, where it is the result of the desire to be a Christian and where people are baptized because they say they desire it. Baptism is a confession. Besides, why should we baptize infants? They are in God's hands anyway.

Jørgen Dohn wanted to hear which position the Christian should take in the conflict between East and West.

Barth: I am with one foot in both camps, without therefore being neutral. For, when I am in the West, I am in the East, and when I am in the East, I am in the West; the reason is that I am for the people both in the East and in the West. I want to say with the words of the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the peacemakers," "for they shall possess the earth,"[4] both East and West. The Cold War is the great sin of our times, and the despicable propaganda with atomic bombs [in hand], both from the East and from the West, really must stop.

Asger Sorensen asked: Can a nuclear war be justified under certain circumstances?

Barth: No! Under no circumstances! Here, all talk of a "just war" must stop.[5] It does not make sense to use atomic bombs if one destroys that which one

2. Pope John XXIII (1881–1963), in office since 1958, convened the Second Vatican Council to meet in 1962.

3. Barth officiated at this baptism in Göttingen on June 21, 1925, see *Conversation* 1:133n52.

4. Here Barth combines vv. 9 and 5 in Matt. 5.

5. Cf. *CD* III/4:460–64; and below, chap. 12, §4, "The Problem of Just War."

possesses in the process. That is probably the only point on which I am in agreement with my honored predecessor as a recipient of the Sonning Prize, Bertrand Russell,[6] who is a self-declared atheist, while I would like to be a Christian. Thus, if you do not want to listen to me, listen to him, and if you do not want to listen to him, listen to me.

Svend Aage Nielsen posed a question about "Barthianism" and its future.

Barth concluded by throwing this "ghost" out of the world once and for all.

Barth: I have never demanded that someone should parrot me. It is not about me, but about the truth, the truth in love. "Barthianism" does not interest me.

After this, Barth received a present of which, in contrast to the Sonning Prize, he did not know anything in advance. S. C. Kemp recalled that, for Native Americans, the pipe is a means to control the powers of nature; Kemp handed Barth a pipe with the words "Now you can use this one in order to irritate the demons!"

6. Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge, dismissed in 1916 for his energetic pacifism, imprisoned in 1918, again in 1944 at Cambridge, later was outspoken against nuclear warfare. See B. Russell, *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare* (London: Routledge, 1959).