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The Word of Christ and the World of Culture: Sacred and Secular Through the Theology of Karl Barth

Paul Louis Metzger

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The theological revolution that Karl Barth inspired was by no means a dismissive reaction to modern culture but, rather, was a dynamic and carefully nuanced encounter with the concerns of his day. This excellent new work by Paul Lewis Metzger provides an exposition and extension of Barth's engagement of culture in view of his doctrine of the Word.
Metzger demonstrates that Barth endeavored to relate Christ to culture in inseparable terms while maintaining a distinction between them. Working from an intimate knowledge of all of Barth's writings, Metzger shows how Barth's doctrine of the Word provides a sound basis on which to build a theological model of culture that guards against the two extremes of either the divinization or the secularization of culture, while at the same time nurturing a healthy appreciation for the secular domain.
The first part of the book analyzes Barth's formative theological period, which is characterized by his engagement with culture and what is termed "Culture Protestantism." The second part of the book focuses on how Barth's answer -- a dialectical model of the Word -- enabled him to offer a constructive synthesis of Christ and culture. The final section of the book traces the way Barth was able to frame culture within his theological model and yet continue to champion the secular domain.
"The Word of Christ and the World of Culture is a superb volume that will benefit anyone studying Barth, modern theology, or the relation of Christianity and culture.

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