



George Hunsinger Recipient of 2010 Karl Barth Prize from Union of Evangelical Churches in Germany

Princeton, NJ, June 18, 2010—George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary’s Hazel Thompson McCord Professor of Systematic Theology and a scholar on the work of Karl Barth, has been chosen as the recipient of the 2010 Karl Barth Prize by the jury of the Union of Evangelical Churches in the Evangelical Church in Germany. Barth is widely recognized as the most important theologian of the twentieth century.



According to the jury statement, Hunsinger is being “honored for his interpretation of Karl Barth’s theology and the political testimony that resulted from it as well as his achievements as a teacher of theology.” He “has dedicated decades of his theological work to the interpretation of Karl Barth’s theology in the American context.” By awarding him the Karl Barth Prize, the Union of Evangelical Churches honors Hunsinger as a “theological teacher in the full sense of the word,” and thanks him for his “ecclesial teaching in the sense of a truly generous orthodoxy, and a world-oriented interpretation and practice of [Barth’s] *Church Dogmatics*.”

The prize also recognizes that Hunsinger’s theological achievements are linked to his critical view of the present and to

his political engagement. It cites his decades of effective defense of human rights and his warnings against the resolution of political conflicts through military means. In 2006 he initiated the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. What then began as an appeal by 150 Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other people of conscience in Princeton became one of the most important NGOs in Washington DC.

Commenting on the honor to one of the Seminary’s distinguished faculty members, Princeton Seminary President Iain Torrance said, “The granting of the Karl Barth Prize for 2010 is a much welcomed recognition of George Hunsinger after his nearly four decades of teaching and scholarship. The citation refers to Dr. Hunsinger’s interpretation of Karl Barth in the American context. It explicitly commends his unflinching political activity, inspired by Karl Barth, against any attempt to legitimate torture, his innovative contributions to ecumenical rapprochement, and his faithful teaching of the Bible week by week in his congregation. We all take pleasure in this merited recognition of a remarkable scholar.”

Hunsinger served as director of the Seminary’s Center for Barth Studies from 1997 to 2001. He has broad interests in the history and theology of the Reformed tradition and in “generous orthodoxy” as a way beyond the modern liberal/conservative impasse in theology and church. An ordained Presbyterian minister, he was a major contributor to the new Presbyterian catechism. His 1991 publication, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (Oxford University Press), has become standard literature in

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the United States. During his tenure as director of the Barth Center, Hunsinger published a collection of studies on various political, theological, and ecumenical aspects of Karl Barth's theology (*Disruptive Grace: Studies in Theology of Karl Barth*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001). In 2004 he published *For the Sake of the World: Karl Barth and the Future of Ecclesial History* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company). He also leads a Karl Barth Reading Group for Princeton Seminary students every year.

Hunsinger earned his B.D. from Harvard University Divinity School and his M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. from Yale University. He joins previous prize recipients Eberhard Jüngel, Hans Küng, John W. de Gruchy, Johannes Rau, Bruce McCormack, and others. The prize will be conferred in Germany sometime in 2011.

Princeton Theological Seminary was founded in 1812 as the first seminary established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. It is the largest Presbyterian seminary in the country, with more than 600 students in six graduate degree programs.