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**IDENTIFYING THE CLASSICAL *THEOLOGIA CRUCIS*
AND IN THIS LIGHT
KARL BARTH'S MODERN THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS**

**PRESENTED BY
ROSALENE CLARE BRADBURY**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT AND HISTORY**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is presented in two parts. It first identifies the shape and content of an ancient system of Christian thought predicated on the theology of the cross of Jesus Christ, and proposes the marks typifying its theologians. Over against the ensuing hermeneutic it next finds the project of twentieth century Swiss theologian Karl Barth to exhibit many of the defining characteristics of this system, and Barth himself to be fairly deemed a modern theologian of the cross. He crucially recovers, reshapes and reasserts the classical *theologia crucis* as a modern theological instrument, one answering enlightened theology's self-glorifying accommodation to modernity with the living Word of the cross.

The crucicentric system itself is found to comprise two major theological dimensions, epistemological and soteriological. Each of these comprises dialectically corresponding aspects connected with false and true creaturely glory. The cruciform *Word* (or *theology*) speaking through this system likewise moves in two directions. It declares negatively that any attempt by the creature to circumvent the cross so as to know about God directly, or to condition God's electing decision, is necessarily the attempt to know and act as God alone may know and act – an attempt therefore on the glory of God. It declares positively that in the crucified Christ God formally discloses the knowledge of God, and determines the creature for God. This knowledge and election are appropriated to the creature as, drawn into the cruciform environment, its attempt to glorify itself is negated and Christ's exalted humanity received in exchange. Thence it is lifted to participate in *Christ's* mind and in *his* glory, a process guided by the Holy Spirit and completed eschatologically.

The database for this research includes selected primary materials in the Apostle Paul, Athanasius, a group of medieval mystical theologians, the reformer Martin Luther – particularly here his Heidelberg Disputation, and Karl Barth. It also pays attention to the recent secondary literature peripherally or more concertedly connecting itself to the theology of the cross, of whatever period. In this literature numerous suggestions for the content of the theology of the cross exist, a major methodological task in the current research being to bring these together systematically.

To the extent that the inner structure of the system carrying the cruciform Word has not previously been made explicit, and Barth's crucicentric status not finally determined, in moving towards these achievements this dissertation breaks fresh ground. In the process a new test by which to decide the crucicentric status of any theological project is developed, and a further and crucicentric way of reading Barth proposed.

This dissertation is presented in memory of my mother who encouraged it.

Leah Ruby Newman, 9 July 1918 – 12 January 2007

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar through tracts unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Not the labour of my hand,
Can fulfil Thy law's demand;
Could my love no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save and Thou alone.

– Augustus Toplady (1740-1778)

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Dogmatics summons the listening Church to address itself anew to the task of teaching the Word of God in the revelation attested in Scripture. It can do this only as it accepts . . . and is therefore claimed by the Word of God[.]
– Karl Barth¹

With profound gratitude for Barth who accepted that claim and continues to teach.

With deep respect I wish to acknowledge the wisdom of my teachers, those I have met personally and those I have not. In particular I thank my supervisor Rev. Dr. Martin Sutherland of Carey Baptist College, Auckland. My appreciation and thanks go also to my examiners.

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May the solely glorious God of the Bible, of the Reformation, and of Karl Barth, bless you all.

Rosalene Bradbury

January 2008

¹ Barth, Karl, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. Bromiley, G. W. and Torrance, T. F., 4 vol.s in 13 part vol.s. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936-1969), I/2, p.844.

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