



*An Explorer's Guide to Karl Barth*

Available December 2016

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978-0-8308-5137-9

## Get to Know Karl Barth

Want to begin reading Karl Barth but don't know where to start? In *An Explorer's Guide to Karl Barth*, David Guretzki offers an introductory guidebook to the life and writings of the most significant theologian of the twentieth century.

Because Barth can be intimidating for first-time readers, Guretzki, who has been reading and teaching Barth for decades, guides readers past initial roadblocks by providing numerous hints and notes for how best to explore the writings of the Swiss theologian. Rather than focusing too heavily on Barth's biography or a specific aspect of his thought, this handbook gives an essential, but short, introduction to his biography, early sources, and *Church Dogmatics*, with the ultimate goal of encouraging people to read Barth in the primary sources.

In the book you'll find fun facts about Barth, FAQs, and a guide to Barth's early writings and his *Church Dogmatics*, along with recommendations for further reading at the end of each chapter. Part one focuses on providing enough information about Barth to allow readers to profitably engage his writings. Part two focuses on Barth's magnum opus, *Church Dogmatics*.

### Part 1: Getting to Know Karl Barth

1. Why Karl Barth?
2. Karl Barth: Who Was He?
3. Frequently Asked Questions About Karl Barth
4. Glossary of Concepts and People
5. A Theological Pilgrimage: A Ten-Stop Pre-CD Tour of Barth's Theology

### Part 2: Exploring the *Church Dogmatics*

6. A Primer on Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*
7. A User's Guide to the *Church Dogmatics*
8. A Guided Tour of the *Church Dogmatics*
9. For Further Exploration

Intended as a reference work, this book is a handy manual for studying Barth, whether you're a first-time reader or a seasoned student.



David Guretzki, author of *An Explorer's Guide to Karl Barth*  
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## Reference Book for New Readers of Barth

*David Guretzki (PhD, McGill University) is professor of theology, church, and public life at Briercrest College and Seminary in Caronport, Saskatchewan, Canada. He has written and studied Karl Barth as a focus of his written scholarly work for almost fifteen years. He is also a coauthor of Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms.*

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### Who is this book written for?

**David Guretzki:** Newcomers to Karl Barth can find his cartload of books immensely intimidating. I envision this book as giving a sufficient introduction to Barth for those who are wondering whether he is worth exploring, and for those who are beginning to explore him in academic contexts and need to become quickly familiarized with him through a good balance of primary and secondary reading.

### Why is an “explorer’s guide” the best way to introduce Barth to new readers of his work?

**Guretzki:** Most introductions on Barth are either too short, focus too much on biography, or focus too extensively on his deep themes. Too often introductions also fail to keep pedagogical purposes clearly in mind. I am seeking to introduce Barth as a teacher who believes strongly in the need to read primary sources for oneself. Rather than trying to provide a comprehensive summary of his biography or even of his thought, my method was to give just enough information and then to recommend short passages such that the reader could launch into her or his own reading. I envision it as being somewhat of a hybrid between a reference work (where readers can look up and read only what is necessary) and a true introduction.

### In addition to being a unique blend of introduction and reference work, what are some other special features that make this book stand out?

**Guretzki:** I believe that the format and genre of this book are more attuned to the pedagogical matters of how one naturally becomes acquainted with the thought and theology of a seminal thinker like Karl Barth. I also believe that the glossary section may contain the most extensive specialized definitions provided in the literature for specific concepts unique to Barth (dialectic, analogy, history, etc.). It tries to find a balance between looking up a word such as “dialectic” in a general or theological dictionary and reading a full work or article on the concept.

Also, the chapter on the pre-*Church Dogmatics* literary tour is a unique way of introducing students to a thinker’s work in a developmental/chronological fashion prior to launching into the author’s magnum opus. I’m not sure I’ve seen anything quite like it. Finally, the reading plans for getting into the *Church Dogmatics* are unique in the literature and will address the differing needs of readers.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW CONTACT THE INTERVARSITY PRESS PUBLICITY TEAM:

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