



A Shared Mercy: Karl Barth on Forgiveness and the Church (New Explorations in Theology)

Jon Coutts

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Christians regularly ask God to "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," but tend to focus on the first half and ignore the second. Something is missing if Christians think of mission only in terms of proclamation or social justice and discipleship only in terms of personal growth and renewal?leaving the relational implications of the gospel almost to chance. It is vital both to spiritual life and mission to think of the church as both invitation and witness to a particularly merciful social dynamic in the world. As a work of constructive practical theology and a critical commentary on the ecclesiology of Karl Barth's unfinished *Church Dogmatics*, *A Shared Mercy* explains the place and meaning of interpersonal forgiveness and embeds it within an account of Christ's ongoing ministry of reconciliation. A theologian well-practiced in church ministry, Jon Coutts aims to understand what it means to forgive and reconcile in the context of the Christ-confessing community. In the process he appropriates an area of Barth's theology that has yet to be fully explored for its practical ramifications and that promises to be of interest to both seasoned scholars and newcomers to Barth alike. The result is a re-envisioning of the church in terms of a mercy that is crucially and definitively shared.

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