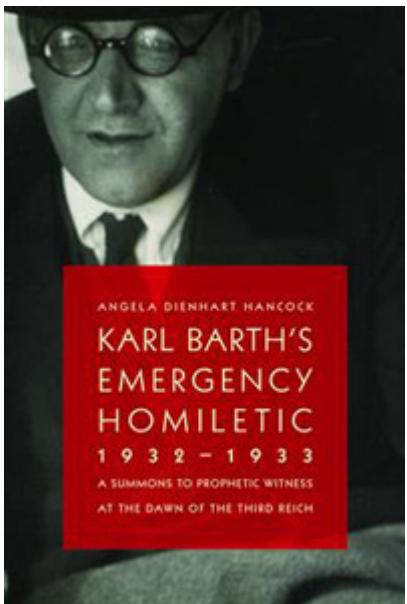


Book Reviews: Karl Barth's Emergency Homiletic

December 5, 2014

[***Karl Barth's Emergency Homiletic, 1932-1933: A Summons to Prophetic Witness at the Dawn of the Third Reich***](#) ***A Summons to Prophetic Witness at the Dawn of the Third Reich*** by Angela Dienhart Hancock (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.)



In 1932-1933, Karl Barth, the most influential theologian of the 20th century, felt a compelling need to add a course on preaching to his teaching load at the University of Bonn. As the Nazism of Adolph Hitler was emerging around him, Barth knew the students at Bonn would have to liberate their preaching from the political propaganda expected in the German churches and courageously preach the living word of God from the biblical text.

Across two semesters, winter and summer, 110 and 150 students respectively gathered for 24 lectures on preaching. No extant manuscripts or original lecture notes of Barth survive, but Angela Dienhart Hancock, assistant professor of homiletics and worship at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, has reassembled Barth's content from student notes and on-site research in Germany and Switzerland. "This book is a work of recovery, the excavation of something lost to the theological imagination brought back out into the light," Hancock states.

She dispels the belief Barth was too detached from the common preacher

to provide practical advice on preaching. This work far exceeds previous attempts to summarize Barth's lectures—1963 Preaching of the Gospel and 1991 Homiletics—with clarity, interest and practicality. Although tedious for the layman, it is an outstanding refresher for preaching ministers, teachers of homiletics and anyone interested in the history of preaching.

Like Barth in 1932-1933, we live in a time of persecution, much political unrest and much ecclesiastical unrest in the American pulpit. This is a work worth reading.

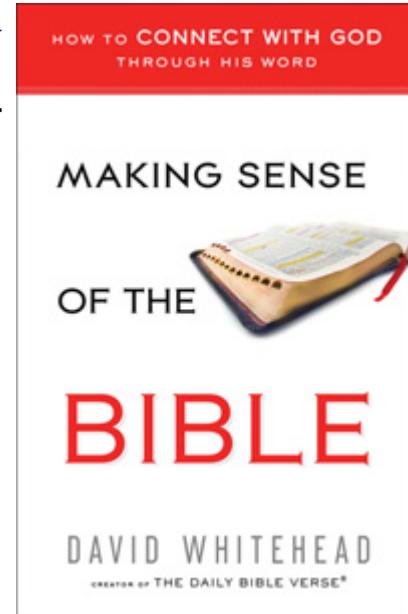
Mark Bumpus, pastor

First Baptist Church

Graham

***Making Sense of the Bible: How to Connect with God through His Word* by David Whitehead (Bethany House)**

David Whitehead, founder of [The Daily Bible Verse](http://www.dailybibleverse.com) website, and lead pastor of Grace, a congregation in Manhattan, wrote this brief "user's manual" for reading the Bible. He wrote *Making Sense of the Bible: How to Connect With God Through His Word* in response to a question he often is asked: "How can I understand the Bible?"



Whitehead begins by explaining the reasoning behind various translations. Then he portrays key players of the Old Testament—Abraham, Moses and

David. Chapter by chapter, he illuminates the poetry and prophetic literature, the epistles and the Gospels, ending with a lovely finale that examines who Jesus is.

Perhaps the most intriguing chapter is “The Heart of the Reader.” In it, he explores a rarely discussed subject—the condition of the heart in relationship to understanding the Bible. As he so aptly puts it: “If our heart is cold and hard toward God, we can read Scripture all day and not get much from it. If our heart has a desire to know God, then just one verse can come alive to us and satisfy our soul.”

This book is a treasure for anyone who has a genuine desire to understand the Bible better.

Mary Pat Johns

Victoria