

**Explanatory Statement of the Jury regarding the decision to confer the 2010 Karl Barth Award
of the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK) in the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)
to Professor Dr. George Hunsinger, Princeton, USA**

With George Hunsinger's work we honor 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.

George Hunsinger has dedicated decades of his theological work to the interpretation of Karl Barth's theology in the American context. His introduction, published in 1991 "How to read Karl Barth: the shape of his theology" (German translation 2009) has become standard literature in the US. As the director of the Center for Barth Studies in Princeton, from its foundation in 1997 until 2001, he produced a collection of studies on various political, theological and ecumenical aspects of Karl Barth's theology ("Disruptive Grace", 2000). In his illuminative explanation of the approach and logic of Barth's thoughts Hunsinger reveals their relevance for present day issues. He proves to be not only a sophisticated interpreter but also a challenging partner in the theological and political debates of our times. Hunsinger reminds us with Karl Barth that: "The event of Jesus Christ is not only a past fact of history, but also an event that is happening in the present here and now, as well as an event that in its historical completeness and full contemporaneity is also truly future." For Hunsinger, to learn from and with Karl Barth also means to be free from "Barthianism" and to engage in new ways, for example in ecumenical dialogue.

George Hunsinger's theological achievements are linked to his critical view of the present and to his political engagement. For decades he has been active and most effective in the defense of Human Rights. He has always warned against the resolution of political conflicts through military means. In 2006 he initiated the National Religious Campaign against Torture (NRCAT). What then began as an appeal by 150 Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other people of conscience in Princeton became one of the most important NGO's in Washington DC. Hunsinger refutes all attempts to legitimate torture as self defense in the context of the "War against terror". His argument is that "torture is the ticking bomb!". To accept torture would itself be the explosive that destroys democracy.

By awarding him the Karl Barth Award the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK) also wants to honor George Hunsinger's merits as a theological teacher in the full sense of the word. As an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church George Hunsinger not only taught the Bible in his congregation but he was also involved in creating the "Presbyterian Study Catechism" of 1998. This Catechism combines the explanation of the traditional elements of the Christian faith with comments on their social and political implications. Hunsinger thus overcomes the false alternative between "traditional faith" and "progressive politics" and thereby becomes a bridge builder between liberal and conservative Christians. He teaches that "the chief criterion of social witness is conformity to the enacted patterns of the divine compassion as revealed and embodied in Jesus Christ".

The UEK thanks and honors George Hunsinger for his exemplary theological thinking, for his political testimony and his ecclesial teaching in the sense of a truly "generous orthodoxy", a world-oriented interpretation and practice of Church Dogmatics.

Bischof Dr. Hans-Jürgen Abromeit, Greifswald

Director Dr. Hans-Anton Drewes, Basel

Professor Dr. Christiane Tietz, Mainz

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