



One Rock Instead of Two Pillars

The Relevance of the Barmen Declaration When the Foundation Shakes

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Abstract

This lecture explores the enduring significance of the 1934 Barmen Declaration for the church today, particularly within the Hungarian Reformed tradition. Drawing on the theological legacy of Karl Barth, who engaged closely with Hungarian theologians throughout the 20th century, the presentation examines how the Barmen Declaration continues to offer vital guidance for the church in times of societal change and political realignment. Barth's theology, especially his emphasis on the church's freedom to follow the Word of God alone, provided a framework for navigating the challenges faced by the Hungarian Reformed community during periods of war, national loss, and shifting political systems.

The lecture considers how the Barmen Declaration serves not as a historical document only, but as a dynamic confession that reorients the church toward its biblical foundations. In particular, it underscores the importance of grounding the church's identity in Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture. This approach resists any tendency to anchor ecclesial life in cultural, ideological, or economic constructs, and instead calls the church to a continual process of renewal and reform.

Through theological reflection and historical parallels—such as the reform movement of King Josiah in the Old Testament—the lecture invites reflection on how the church can maintain faithfulness amid changing circumstances. The focus is not on critiquing any specific political stance, but on emphasizing the church's unique vocation: to bear witness to the gospel with clarity and courage, guided by the Word of God. Ultimately, the Barmen Declaration reminds us that the church must always listen to the call of Scripture and remain rooted in its confessional identity, thereby offering a hopeful and constructive vision for Christian communities seeking to live out their faith in today's complex world.