Preface

The present study is an expanded version of my dissertation. The oral defense occurred in January 2014 at Princeton Theological Seminary. I must begin by acknowledging my gratitude to my advisor, Bruce L. McCormack, who, over lunch in April 2008, proposed that I write on Rudolf Bultmann. I could not have asked for a more supportive Doktorvater. I also wish to thank the other two members of my dissertation committee, James F. Kay and Darrell L. Guder, for their guidance during my research and their assistance in the revision of the manuscript.

I am indebted to Kate Skrebutenas, the reference librarian at Princeton Seminary, for assisting me in my research. I am additionally appreciative of the Special Collections staff at the Princeton Seminary library, especially those who oversee the Center for Barth Studies, superbly curated at the time I was in Princeton by Clifford Anderson.

In the summer of 2012 I left Princeton for another community in Downers Grove, Illinois, where I joined the editorial team at InterVarsity Press. The bulk of this dissertation was written after I joined IVP, and that is a credit to the support I have received from my coworkers.
I am grateful to the Bultmann heirs for permission to publish an English translation of “Der christliche Sinn von Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung: Skizze des am 11. Juni 1925 vor der 50. Versammlung evangelischer Religionslehrer an den höheren Lehranstalten der Rheinprovinz gehaltenen Vortrages.”¹ I am also grateful to Mohr Siebeck for permission to publish English translations of two essays by Bultmann: “Leitsätze von Univ.-Prof. D. Bultmann (Marburg)”² and “Über den Begriff ‘Mythos’.”³ The latter essay long remained unpublished as part of the Bultmann Nachlass; it deserves a wide audience, and I am glad it now has the chance to be read by many more people. Additionally, my thanks to the Journal of Theological Interpretation—in particular to its publisher, Jim Eisenbraun, and its editor, Joel Green—for permission to use material previously published in an article with that journal.⁴

Several people deserve special thanks. Christophe Chalamet was an external reader of my dissertation and provided immensely helpful feedback; he also kindly sent me an early article by Bultmann. John Flett gave me valuable comments on two chapters and introduced me to the field of intercultural theology. Nathaniel Maddox assisted my research after I left Princeton and served as my liaison with the PhD Studies Office at Princeton Seminary. Alexander Massmann assisted

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I am deeply thankful for two friends in particular: Travis McMaken and Chris TerryNelson. There is hardly a page that has not been worked out in conversation with them. I owe them both profound debts of gratitude for their honesty, humor, and wise counsel.

This book is dedicated to my parents, Jon and Harriet Congdon, and especially to my wife, Amy, whose forbearance, generosity, and succor have been the buttress of my life and work.