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In Memoriam
† Harold H. Zietlow †
1926–2011

A willingness to think outside the box for ways to bring the gospel of Christ to souls while at the same time feeling truly comfortable inside the box of the established theology of Scripture—that should describe every confessional Lutheran. Unfortunately, it does not. Thinking outside the box to innovate in his field while also conforming to the exacting standards of academia—that may be an ideal for a man of letters. Certainly not all achieve that ideal.

Harold H. Zietlow, who went to be with his Lord on September 11, 2011, was a Lutheran pastor and colleague professor who was fully committed to the confessional position of his church, held a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, and was gifted by God with an ability to think outside the box, particularly in his desire to reach the lost with the saving message of Jesus.

Dr. Zietlow's academic resumé begins at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, where he earned a B.A. in philosophy in 1947 and, far more importantly, met his bride of sixty-one years, Miriam Miller, with whom he rejoiced over the gift of five children and twelve grandchildren. He went on to earn degrees from Ohio State University (M.A. 1949), Evangelical Lutheran Theological (now Trinity) Seminary (M.Div. 1951), and the Ph.D. in theology from Chicago in 1961. His confessional commitment moved him to serve the old American Lutheran Church, including Trinity Seminary, until 1978, when he joined the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He continued to teach and preach at CTS until 1998. His zeal for the lost was evident throughout his ministry to congregations in Gilman,

Illinois, and Lancaster, Stoutsville, Tarlton, and Dutch Hollow, Ohio, and especially in numerous mission starts in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

His students and fellow professors at Concordia Theological Seminary remember him most fondly for that pastoral and missionary zeal—and the creativity that went with it. He was eager to invite students along on his weekend trips to the latest new church plant, to show future pastors “the ropes” for outreach, including some ideas they might not have seen tried by many others. Students had opportunities, too, to work with him in media ministry long before that was all the rage, assisting him in evangelism movies, television and radio programs, and mission videos. When celluloid was the medium, Harold produced movies; when it came time for videotape, he was ready.

We thank God that by his grace Harold was ready for so much more—to live with Christ!—just as through the word, and creative thinking motivated by the word, he strove to see that others were as well.

Carl C. Fickenscher II