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Theodore F. K. Laetsch—Henry W. Reimann

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As the old year passed into the new, the Lord of the Church called two men associated with Concordia Seminary to their heavenly home. The one was 85-year-old Theodore F. K. Laetsch, a member of the faculty from 1927 until his retirement in 1948. He died in Sheboygan, Wis., on Dec. 29. The other was 37-year-old Henry W. Reimann, who departed this life after a brief severe illness on Jan. 6. Prof. Reimann had been a member of the seminary faculty since 1955.

Dr. Laetsch was known particularly for his work in pastoral theology and in the Old Testament as well as for the important positions of leadership which he filled in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. His studies led to the publication of commentaries on Jeremiah and the Minor Prophets. He edited two volumes of *The Abiding Word*, an anthology of doctrinal essays published to mark the hundredth anniversary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He also served on the editorial staff of this journal for several years. One of his sons, Willis, followed him into the ministry and is teaching at Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebr.

Prof. Reimann's area of teaching was systematic theology. At the time of his death he was completing his work toward a doctor's degree, specializing in the writings of Matthias Flacius. He had written a chapter for *The Symposium on Seventeenth-Century Lutheranism*, several journal articles, and a devotional work for teenagers which is to be published posthumously.

Dr. Laetsch's passing serves as a reminder of a period in the history of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod which was drawing to a close even as he retired from the faculty. He knew and loved a church body which was still largely isolated by the language barrier from the mainstream of religious life in the United States. His courses in pastoral theology seemed to assume that the typical congregation which his students would serve was well-disciplined and solidly loyal to Lutheran traditions. The essays which he collected and edited in *The Abiding Word* represented the quintessence of the legacy of Francis Pieper. He was, in a sense, a last representative of a great tradition of theologians of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Prof. Reimann sought to emphasize that Lutheran pastors constantly needed to return to and to recommit themselves to the Lutheran confessions as an authoritative interpretation of Scriptures and a guide in solving contemporary issues. In the final analysis they were to be regarded as normative, rather than the interpretations of later theologians. When he arose to speak at faculty meetings his colleagues knew that he would gently remind them to keep the confessional teaching on Law and Gospel at the center of their discussion. He demonstrated and sought to instill a deep love for the *Una Sancta* as the confessional writings and Martin Luther defined it, without thereby lessening his loyalty to his own denomination. This concern also led to a sympathetic interest in the liturgical movement.

Prof. Reimann is survived by his wife Margaret (Alt) and six children. His summons to his eternal home at an early age, we know, was in accord with the will of our heavenly Father, who thus reminds us that His will, while often beyond our understanding, is always good and gracious.

The memory of both men, the octogenarian and the man just reaching the prime of his powers, will be held in deep affection by all who knew them.

The contents of this volume may well serve as a tribute to them, for they were deeply interested in the doctrine of the church, both in its metaphysical and in its practical aspects. The article on Luther's thought on the church was written by

F. E. Mayer, a man whom Prof. Reimann revered as a teacher and whose insights he sought to perpetuate according to his own understanding. The balanced and scholarly article by Dr. Bruce Metzger would have delighted both men since it clears away so much of the confusion which has come to be associated with the New Testament teaching on the church. Prof. Frederick Pralle's article on communion practices would likewise have been of great interest to them, for it is an attempt to apply the doctrine of the *Una Sancta* to a specific pastoral problem, that of communion services outside the framework of normal congregational life.

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