

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



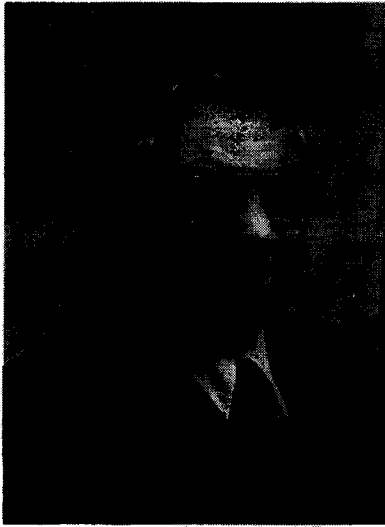
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†Raymond F. Surburg† (1909-2001)

The Rev. Dr. Raymond F. Surburg, professor emeritus of exegetical theology (Old Testament) at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, died Saturday, May 19, 2001 in Bloomington, Indiana. Dr. Surburg served the seminary full-time from 1960 until his retirement in 1979. He continued to teach at the seminary until 1993 when health concerns forced him from the classroom.

Raymond Frederick Surburg was born in Chicago, Illinois on July 3, 1909 to Frederick and Hulda (née Messerschmidt). He married Lillian Werbeck on July 3, 1933 (she passed away on November 22, 1998), and the couple was blessed with one son, Paul Raymond (born 1937).

Dr. Surburg pursued his academic studies in a vigorous manner. After graduating from Concordia High School in Milwaukee, he began studies at Concordia College in Milwaukee, receiving his diploma in 1929 with special emphasis on religion and languages. He immediately entered Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, from which he graduated in 1933. From 1933 to 1935 he attended Columbia University, New York and completed the A. M. degree in Aramaic and Syriac. From 1939 to 1942 he studied at American Theological Seminary, Wilmington, Delaware, which awarded him the Th. D. with a major in ancient church history and comparative religions, and a minor in biblical interpretation. In 1946 he received the Master of Religious Education (M. R. E.) from the Biblical Seminary of New York City. Dr. Surburg earned the Ph. D. from Fordham University in New York City in 1950. His thesis was titled, "An Evaluation of the Educational Philosophy of Hermann Harrell Horne."

In addition to his academic work, Dr. Surburg served the church faithfully. He was ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry on February 23, 1936, after having received a call to Trinity Lutheran Church, Clifton, New Jersey. He served this congregation from 1936 to 1941. He later served Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, New York as pastor from 1941 to 1954. From 1950 to 1953 he directed the Brooklyn Bible Institute. In 1954, Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska

called him as assistant professor of religion, and in 1956 raised his rank to associate professor. From 1956 to 1960 he served as chairman of the Department of Religion and Social Sciences at Seward. In 1960 Dr. Surburg received a call to serve as assistant professor of biblical interpretation at Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois. He advanced to the rank of associate professor in 1962 and professor in 1966. Dr. Surburg chaired the Department of Exegetical Theology at the seminary from 1968-1978.

Dr. Surburg was an especially prolific author and his bibliography shows the diverse interests of a scholar. He published a number of books, including *Readings in the Lutheran Philosophy of Education*, with L. G. Bickel (Lutheran Education Association, 1958), *Darwin, Evolution, and Creation*, edited by Paul Zimmerman (Concordia, 1959), *How Dependable is the Bible* (Holman-Lippencott, 1972), and *An Introduction to the Intertestamental Period* (Concordia, 1975). His numerous articles have appeared in many journals, including *Concordia Theological Monthly*, *The Springfielder*, *Lutheran Education*, *Advance*, *Christian News*, *The American Lutheran*, *Affirm*, *Bible Science Newsletter*, and *Concordia Theological Quarterly*. He was Book Review Editor of *The Springfielder* from 1965-1976 and of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* from 1977-1979. Characteristic of his writing in these and other periodicals was his deep concern for the centrality of the word of God for all theology. Dr. Surburg will always be remembered for his staunch faithfulness to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions during the LCMS crisis of the 1960s and 70s.

Dr. Surburg's dynamic and inquisitive mind will be missed at the seminary. He remained active in the life of the community as long as he possibly could. With his death the seminary loses a long-time friend and the church loses a faithful servant. Dr. Surburg himself: "There is an old Lutheran saying that we would quote in conclusion. In German it says: 'Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr Vergehet nun und nimmer mehr.' God's Word and Luther's teaching will not depart now or forevermore. Luther's teaching was based foursquare on the Bible, of which our fathers said: 'Verbum Dei manet in aeternum.' The Word of God remains into eternity. Let us hold and defend God's Word as taught by Martin Luther!" ("The Confessional Lutheran vs. the Modern Critical Lutheran Stance on the Nature of the Bible and Its Interpretation," address given at Columbus, Ohio, October 30, 1976; published in *Ohio Concerns* 1 [November and December 1976]).