

KENNETH A. STRAND: EDITOR, AUTHOR, PASTOR,
TEACHER, ADMINISTRATOR, AND FRIEND

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ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDIES has been indebted to many people over its thirty-three-year history, but no one has made a greater impact upon the journal than Dr. Kenneth A. Strand. Ken became an associate editor of *AUSS* under Siegfried Horn in 1967. Then in 1974 he became the sole editor of the journal for 14 years. Those years were followed by six years of coeditorship with George R. Knight (1988-1991) and Nancy J. Vyhmeister (1991-1994).

Ken's years of leadership of *AUSS* not only witnessed a consistently high quality of editing, but also saw several significant changes in the journal. Foremost among those changes were the publication of three issues per year rather than two and the modernizing of the cover design. For over a quarter of a century Ken dedicated a great part of his time to *AUSS*. One result is the respect in which the publication is held in scholarly circles.

Kenneth Strand was born into a Norwegian-speaking home in Tacoma, Washington, on September 18, 1927. At an early age he made a decision that would be primary in shaping the rest of his life. That decision—made in 1945, against the wishes of his father—was to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Ken's baptism meant several things. For one, it brought continued study into the theological implications of his new faith. Ken had been studying the Bible for two years before his baptism and had cleared up many questions on troublesome points (i.e., the 2300 days of Daniel 8, the nature of the millennium, and the ministry of Ellen White). But baptism was just the beginning of study for the young convert. The rest of his life would be spent in careful study of Scripture and topics related to the Bible. A prodigious reader who could get by on little sleep, Ken used his spare time to study. That stimulated a habit that became lifelong. While in his early years he claims he needed only four or five hours of sleep, in his adult years he often got by on less as his enthusiasm for study carried him from one field to another.

A second life-changing event that resulted from Ken's baptism was a change of professional goals. Until 1945 he had set his heart set on an

engineering career, but after his baptism, Ken's only goal was to become a Seventh-day Adventist minister.

His new professional goal determined a different type of educational institution from what he had anticipated. He opted for a Christian college even though some of his undergraduate work was taken at the University of Minnesota. After attending Walla Walla College in Washington state, Ken finally settled in at Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) in southwest Michigan.

At Emmanuel Missionary College, Ken developed an extracurricular skill that would further shape his future. He became editor of *The Student Movement*. He graduated from EMC in 1952 with a major in religion and minors in history and biology.

After graduation Ken was employed by the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He served as a pastor to congregations in Battle Creek, Monroe, Ann Arbor, and Kalamazoo from 1952 to 1959 and was ordained to the ministry in 1956. A man with a pastor's heart, Ken claims that he left a part of himself at each location. His pastoral concern would later show up in his teaching years as he routinely visited students in their dormitory rooms and apartments. Beyond that, he has spent countless hours in his office, at all hours of the day and night, working closely with students struggling with research projects.

As a pastor in the Michigan Conference, Ken had the rare fortune of working under an administrator who took the initiative in encouraging him to take up Ph.D. studies at the University of Michigan. George E. Hutches was a firm believer in an educated ministry. Thus he not only arranged for Ken's study program with the Michigan Conference administrative committee, but he also placed Ken in churches that were near the Ann Arbor university. Hutches was delighted that Ken accepted his offer. He later pointed out that as conference president, he had opened the way for graduate study for at least eight promising young men; Ken was the only one to accept the challenge.

Ken completed a master's degree in history at the University of Michigan in 1955 and a Ph.D. in the same department in 1958. His M.A. research dealt with the Council of Trent and his doctoral studies included work in the ancient Near East, Roman history, the Renaissance, and the Reformation. His doctoral dissertation dealt with the Low-German edition of the partial New Testament published by the Rostock Brethren of the Common Life. That translation is of particular interest because Martin Luther condemned it without having seen it. Had Luther seen it, Strand points out, he would have seen that a great deal of the text (and even some of the notes) was his own work.

Ken's career as an author would be profoundly affected by his doctoral dissertation. Ken was not only shaped by his research but also by some of his teachers. Among the most influential were Albert Hyma, a foremost authority on the Brethren of the Common Life and Ken's dissertation director, and George E. Mendenhall and George Cameron, established authorities in ancient Near East studies and the Mediterranean world. On the undergraduate level Ken had been shaped by his relationship to Edwin R. Thiele, an internationally recognized authority on the chronology of the Hebrew monarchy.

In 1959 Ken, with reluctance because of his sense of allegiance to the Michigan Conference but with the approval of Hutches, accepted a position teaching religion at Emmanuel Missionary College. The college at that time was just beginning to prepare for the transfer of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and the Graduate School of Potomac University to the Michigan campus as the denomination sought to establish a more adequate university with both undergraduate and graduate divisions. As a result, Emmanuel Missionary College was in desperate need of scholars holding doctoral degrees.

The move to Berrien Springs in 1959 was a key element in Ken's career. He would remain at the developing university until his retirement in 1994. Early in his thirty-five year tenure on the Andrews University faculty Ken taught in both the undergraduate and graduate divisions, but from the early 1960s onward his teaching time was devoted entirely to the graduate schools of the university. While his primary appointment was in the Department of Church History of the Theological Seminary, Ken also taught courses in the Seminary departments of New Testament, Old Testament, Theology and Christian Philosophy.

Beyond his editorial and teaching duties at Andrews, Ken held several administrative positions. They have included chairing the Church History Department and directing the M.A. program in religion. In addition, for many years Ken served as secretary of the Ph.D./Th.D. program in the Seminary, held key appointments in the Graduate school, and served as the Seminary advisor to the doctoral programs in the School of Education. In this school, his influence was especially strong in the area of Religious Education. Ken's input has also been felt in the many university committees on which he actively served for many years.

Besides his editorial, teaching, and administrative posts in his thirty-five years at Andrews, Ken has also somehow found time to write. He has authored some twenty-three books and edited another five. He has also published well over one hundred scholarly articles, book chapters, and reviews. His articles and reviews may be found in such journals as *New Testament Studies*, *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, *Journal of Biblical*

Literature, Andrews University Seminary Studies, American Historical Review, Catholic Historical Review, Erasmus Yearbook, Renaissance News, and Renaissance Quarterly.

Not only has the quantity of Ken's academic output been prodigious, but its breadth has been equally impressive. Not one to take the easy road, Ken has established himself as an authority in many fields.

As might be expected, a primary field for Ken has been the area of Reformation studies. Twelve of the books he authored deal with early German Bibles. Collectively, these volumes provide a valued resource regarding the pre-Luther and Reformation periods. Several of the books reproduce pictures and woodcuts selected to show the artists' conceptions of religious themes of the period. Ken is one of very few scholars who have specialized in this field. Ken edited and authored another seven volumes on Reformation topics. One of those was a *Festschrift* in honor of Albert Hyma.

Another field of interest in Ken's publishing career is the book of Revelation. Three of his books and many of his articles are in this area. He is especially noted for his groundbreaking contributions to knowledge of the literary structure of Revelation.

Ken also authored a volume on the ancient Near East and three more on the Sabbath/Sunday controversy in the early church. Perhaps his most important scholarly contribution in the area of the history of the Sabbath was the editing of *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (1982). Meticulously researched by nineteen scholars under Ken's direction, this volume is the most comprehensive and scholarly history of the Sabbath ever published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In addition to his "official" duties as editor, scholar, pastor, author, teacher, and administrator, Ken is best known to many of us as a friend. He has a heart that has reached out to his colleagues and students in genuine compassion and caring. Like his Master, Ken has left a mark on our lives that has inspired us with faith, hope, confidence, and courage. His ministry of reconciliation has borne its own special fruit.

The work of Dr. Kenneth A. Strand at Andrews University between 1959 and 1994 has left a lasting impact not only on the people he came in contact with, Andrews University, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but also on the larger world of religious scholarship. He did not labor in vain.

What is Ken doing in retirement? Much the same as before. He still teaches courses in church history and the theology of the book of Revelation as an Andrews University Professor Emeritus of Church History. And he is still researching and writing and "pastoring" in his own quiet way. And as the journal's first editor-emeritus, Ken still has an active interest in AUSS.