

FAREWELL TO KENNETH A. STRAND, 1927-1997

Kenneth A. Strand was born Sept. 18, 1927, in Tacoma, Washington, and died Dec. 9, 1997, in St. Joseph, Michigan, after a short illness. He served as associate editor, editor, and editor emeritus of *AUSS* from 1967 to 1997.

The autumn 1995 issue of *AUSS* honored Strand's retirement with an editorial tribute, a biographical sketch, and a bibliography of his publication through 1994. The following remarks are adapted from one of several tributes given at Strand's memorial service Dec. 13, 1997.

I was privileged for the past three years to share an office with Dr. Kenneth Strand. I became a member of the seminary faculty July 1, 1994, the day after Kenneth Strand's retirement date. Despite retirement, he continued to teach and carry substantial committee responsibilities, and needed an on-campus place to work. So he cleared one bookcase and one filing cabinet and we shared the office. Occasionally we were both in at the same time and one of us would find another place to work for an hour or two.

It was a benefit to me as a younger teacher to have the opportunity to associate with Dr. Strand. Once or twice I shared with him a situation and said, "What would you do in such a case?" More often we would just chat about current goings-on and very rarely I would draw him out to reminisce about his 38 years of experience as a teacher at the seminary.

I would like to pay tribute to some of the foundation principles of Dr. Strand's life. His life was a pursuit of excellence that always had room for thoughtfulness of others, generous service, and a fundamental loyalty to people (both students and colleagues), to the Seminary and the University, to the church, and to God.

Loyalty is not much talked about nowadays because true loyalty often comes in conflict with what our society holds as "higher" principles: personal independence, and individualism that amount to a basic commitment to self above all others. So we set our priorities and too often turn a deaf ear to any needs that don't contribute to our personal advancement.

One definition of loyalty is "faithfulness to commitments or obligations." Dr. Strand was loyal to students: he considered the office of teacher as an obligation to serve his students and he was faithful to that obligation. As a teacher he was never satisfied with past performance. No matter how many times he had taught a course, he still felt the need to do significant new preparation each time, in order to make it all that it could be. He seemingly always had time for students whether to answer a question, listen to a problem, or labor through the night in careful, detailed critique of a dissertation.

Dr. Strand's loyalty to colleagues made him quick to affirm and reluctant to criticize them. He always saw the good in other people and sought to place the best possible construction on their actions. His loyalty to the seminary took precedence over his personal plans. When Dr. Gerhard Hasel died, just

a month after Dr. Strand's retirement, the seminary asked Dr. Strand to stay on as acting chair of the Ph.D. committee of which he had been the long-time secretary under Hasel's leadership. Weary, with a substantial list of personal plans he had been waiting to do in retirement—long-time friends to visit in various places, some writing projects long postponed—Strand stayed on for a year and a half through the transition period.

During this time he grieved deeply for Dr. Hasel. While they were both strong-minded men and had not always agreed, they had forged strong bonds in the years of working together, and picking up where Dr. Hasel had left off kept Dr. Strand continually reminded of the loss of a great friend.

Some days he wondered how long he could carry on and he worried about friends at a distance whom he wanted to visit. He hoped they would live long enough for him to go see them. But by early 1996 Randy Younker had taken over the chairmanship of the Ph.D. Committee, and Dr. Strand could really begin his retirement.

For several months we saw him less frequently because he was traveling and working at home. By fall 1996, I could see a difference in him. No longer so burdened with urgency, he was still prone to all-night work sessions, but whereas the previous year he was even declining to do book reviews (which he loved to do), by fall 1996 he had completed a major article for *AUSS* and several book reviews. I sensed that the backlog was cleared away, he had done many of the things he had wanted to do, and was no longer so stressed. God was good to preserve his life long enough for him to realize some of those dreams.

Dr. Strand was always loyal to the church. A creative, innovative thinker, with a vast store of knowledge, he was a specialist in many areas. But he used his intellect and his knowledge not to stir up controversy, but to build up the church.

Undergirding all the rest was Dr. Strand's loyalty to God. There was a seriousness, a sense of reverence, in all his classes and scholarship. He seldom joked, though he was always pleasant and could see the humor in many an everyday situation in academe. I have wondered what his life might have been like minus the tragic auto accident in the 1960s, that marked his life ever afterward with permanent pain and compounding medical problems. Dr. Neils-Erik Andreason, president of Andrews University, has called Strand a "gentle giant." Given his enormous intellect and ability, perhaps his 30-year bout with pain was one of the factors that kept him gentle, humble, approachable, and in touch with humanity.

James White, one of the founders of the college that became Andrews University, had a motto: "Better wear out than rust out," and he worked longer hours than anyone around him. Dr. Strand lived by the same credo. And while we might wish he had lived longer, few of us will surpass the quantity and quality of his loyal service.