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"What I Learned" about Pastor Paul Eickmann

Church History
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INTRODUCTION

After interviewing so many people through phone calls and letters for background on Pastor Eickmann, and after reading all that he's done over these many years, and after talking with him at length in an interview, and after remembering what he was like in class and how we learned our Hebrew, well, it's very difficult to write a brief paper on what I have learned about the man. I'm not sure that, in that sense, I can really do justice to the assignment. Perhaps the best way to go about writing this paper on what I learned about Pastor Eickmann is to cover the basic topics covered in the interview itself.

THE EARLY YEARS

Pastor Eickmann was a man of many interests and talents. Many of those gifts and abilities we, as students, never saw because we only saw him as our Hebrew professor. The truth is that Pastor Eickmann is a true scholar in many different areas. He knows languages extremely well, but he's also very knowledgeable in liturgics, literature, and the arts. He credits that to his liberal arts education. He always saw himself as one who would teach English, never as one to teach a foreign language. Therefore, he studied accordingly.

The synod has always said that they want well-rounded men entering the ministry. Pastor Eickmann certainly was that. Not only was he scholarly, but also athletic. He was active in football and tennis, ~~that I know of,~~ ^{and} but he also did some coaching during his early years in the ministry in softball and volleyball. He showed his interest in just about all of the sports that were at Northwestern College. Granted, just because he was interested in sports didn't mean that he was automatically a well-rounded individual, but the point is that he was willing to learn and expand what he knew for the sake of his people in his congregation, and also to make himself a better person.

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

If ever a person had a "dream call," Pastor Eickmann's was to teach at Northwestern College. His father and grandfather had both taught there, and Watertown was obviously the place where he'd spent his childhood. It was almost like coming home to help in the family business. He made his home there for the next 29 years and enjoyed every minute of it. Even though he'd received two calls to teach at the Seminary, he felt that he could better serve at the college. He so enjoyed his ministry there.

The students came and the students went. Pastor Eickmann told me that the main difference between the students now and the students when he first got to the college is that now the young men feel the need to work more to support a lifestyle that our society has become accustomed to. Whether that's for the better remains to be seen, but a student's study time easily suffers.

Perhaps the thing that struck me the most with Pastor Eickmann's relationship with the college was his deep love for the students who attended there. I always knew that he was a good advisor who cared for the students, but in reality, he tried to show his love for the students in everything he did. He would thoroughly prepare for his classes every single day, always searching for the best way to communicate and teach his students. He would actively seek out students and counsel them about the ministry and about their life in general. He would provide encouragement and support by coming to student activities. He would be the voice in defense of students, frequently, in faculty meetings. He didn't look at the student just as someone to whom he was supposed to teach Hebrew, but rather a child of God who was preparing for the holy ministry. He would do whatever he felt was necessary for the good of the student. It was a Christ-like love.

THE MINISTRY

The only thing that rivaled Pastor Eickmann's love for Northwestern College was his love for the ministry in general. He worked tirelessly to prepare future pastors for their work. He wanted his students to know their material so that they really knew what the Bible said, not just what the faculty told them.

AMALGAMATION

It's no secret that Pastor Eickmann was against the move to New Ulm, but I learned that he's not bitter about it, as some would want to believe. The interview brought out some legitimate concerns, and some obvious disappointments. I learned that, even amidst such heartache and disappointment, Pastor Eickmann remained a gentleman.

CONCLUSION

As I said before, I can't do justice to the assignment. It seems that every time a person talks to Pastor Eickmann, he cannot help but learn something. That is the nature of the man. He was a ^fPastor and a ^fProfessor who deeply cared about his parishioners and his students. We thank God for him--and continue to pray for others like him.