

Robert D. Kysar (July 6, 1934-October 31, 2013)

One of the leading Johannine scholars in America, Robert Dean Kysar passed away on October 31, 2013. He was 79 years of age, and following his retirement from the Candler School of Theology as the Bandy Professor of Preaching and New Testament (Emeritus), he and his wife Myrna spent the intervening years in Flowery Branch, Georgia. Bob was known for his command of the ever-growing field of Johannine literature, assessing trends and developments in biblical studies fittingly while also making biblical texts and their interpretations accessible to preachers and lay audiences.

As a tall, cheerful colleague at national and international meetings, Bob Kysar was known for his quick wit and for offering penetrating insights with a twinkle and a smile. He was friendly to all, and he was always happy to assist with emerging projects and developments. An encourager to emerging scholars, Bob Kysar also held seasoned scholars accountable to the biblical text and its apparent meanings, doing so with warmth and grace.

Author and co-author of over twenty books on the New Testament and some fifty published essays, Kysar's impact on the world of biblical studies surged in the mid-1970s with the publication of *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel: An Examination of Contemporary Scholarship* (Fortress 1975), covering effectively the range of international Johannine scholarship and *John, the Maverick Gospel* (Fortress 1973), which underwent two further editions in 1993 and 2007. Combined with his magisterial 90-page treatment of Johannine scholarship in the *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (2.25.3, 1985), updated in his *Voyages with John* (Baylor University Press, 2005), Robert Kysar earned a place as perhaps the leading analyst of Johannine secondary literature in the English-speaking world over the last four decades.

Kysar's *John, the Maverick Gospel* was written for lay persons in a church setting, and yet because of its sensitivity to the larger set of issues and their implications for common readers of the text, this book became one of the leading introductory texts in undergraduate and graduate courses on John as well. In this and other writings, Bob showed us that complex ideas can be articulated clearly and in plain language, making otherwise technical arguments accessible to thoughtful readers in America and beyond. Perhaps his most popular texts for preachers include his *John's Story of Jesus* and *Preaching John* (Fortress 1984 and 2002); his commentaries on the Gospel and Epistles of John were published in the Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament in 1986. Kysar also introduced postmodern biblical analysis to his audiences and addressed a number of relevant social concerns as a thoughtful biblical interpreter.

Born in Lincoln, Nebraska on July 6, 1934, Bob Kysar graduated with honors from Albertson College in Caldwell, Idaho in 1956. He received a Bachelor of Divinity degree with distinction from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and earned his Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 1967. He conducted post-doctoral research at Yale University in 1973-1974 and served as a Visiting Scholar at Wesley House in Cambridge University in England in 1997. In addition to his distinguished service at Emory, Bob taught at Hamline University in St. Paul, MN, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA.

Bob was an ordained Minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and he served several churches, including the United Methodist Church in New Haven, CT. He and his wife Myrna served as co-pastors at Christ United Lutheran Church in Gordon, PA and Upper Dublin Lutheran Church in Ambler,

PA. He is survived by his wife, Myrna, and several children and grandchildren. He will be sorely missed, but his work will continue to be valued and appreciated.

Paul N. Anderson