

A Tribute to Dr. Robert F. Hull, Jr.*

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Robert Hull emerged from the deep valleys of the coalfields of southern West Virginia to stand at the pinnacle of his profession in biblical scholarship. Bob arrived at Milligan College as its first National Merit Scholar and graduated in 1965 with an A.B. in Bible and History and with his dear and devoted wife, Loretta. He entered Emmanuel School of Religion with its first class of students, graduating with his M.Div. in 1971. Bob earned his PhD from Princeton Seminary, studying under Dr. Bruce Metzger and beginning a lifelong fascination with the textual criticism of the New Testament. While pursuing his graduate studies, he served local churches in Kentucky and Maryland. Returning to Emmanuel in 1977, Bob began a career spanning thirty-three years as Professor of New Testament and Greek, years marked by faithful service to the academy and the church. During his long career at Emmanuel, Bob also served two fruitful terms as the Dean of the Seminary. He retired from full-time teaching in 2010.

During his remarkable career at Emmanuel (now Emmanuel Christian Seminary at Milligan College), Professor Hull served as teacher, mentor, and pastor to generations of students. His instruction was marked by thorough scholarship, insightful application to life and ministry, ready wit, and his ubiquitous bowties. Besides teaching the full range of New Testament courses and all levels of Greek, he developed a widely appreciated and influential course on *Men and Women in Christ*. Bob served as preacher, teacher, and friend in numerous congregations, most notably as a long-time leader at Grandview Christian Church.

To the broader world, Bob was the consummate scholar, exploring the biblical text and the biblical context with insight and sensitivity. He lectured at conferences such as the Society of Biblical Literature on a variety of topics. He published articles in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, the *Stone-Campbell Journal*, and the *Christian Standard*. He spoke clearly and compellingly to those in the classroom, in the pulpit, and in the pew. He contributed essays to a number of festschrifts and other edited volumes. In 2010 the Society of Biblical Literature published his *The Story of the New Testament Text: Movers, Materials, Motives, Methods, and Models*, a

*In a surprise, Dr. Hull was presented with the first ever SCJ Lifetime Achievement Award at the 20th SCJ Anniversary Celebration and Awards Dinner held April 7 during the 2017 Conference. This tribute is intended as a follow-up and recognition of that award.

scholarly but accessible survey of his life's work in textual criticism. Due in large part to his irenic spirit, Bob was called on to lead discussions among members of the Stone-Campbell movement as they sought common ground on sometimes contentious issues.

Bob's success in the halls of academia has never prevented him from being an involved father with his three delightful children and numerous grandchildren. He has always been as comfortable hiking on the Appalachian Trail or fly-fishing in his favorite mountain streams as standing at a lectern or pulpit. I have always viewed Bob as my model for biblical scholarship, for classroom pedagogy, for the application of biblical study to the life of the church, and for a life well lived. I have often thought that the true mark of Bob's greatness is how many eulogies for great servants of the church he has been asked to deliver over the decades, including those of my own mother-in-law and father-in-law. He knows people deeply and warmly and talks about their lives thoughtfully, truthfully, and beautifully. And although Bob left the coalfields, they never left him, as he shared stories and songs with students and church-folk alike, engaging them, entertaining them, and enlightening them. We have always seen the best of ourselves reflected in Robert Hull, and we still do. **SCJ**