

Boyd A. Blumer
Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters
DAKOTA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
May 8, 2016

Boyd A. Blumer has spent his life in service to churches, the United Methodist Conference, and more importantly, to individuals.

A North Dakota native, Boyd earned his undergraduate degree at Westmar College in Le Mars, Iowa, and went to seminary at Evangelical Theological Seminary in Naperville, Ill., earning bachelor's and master's degrees. In 1980, he earned his Doctor of Divinity degree at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Boyd's career as a pastor spanned 33 years, more than eight churches and 10 communities, beginning in 1956 in Goodrich and Chaseley, N.D. While there, he established a program to bring governmental and university resources to young, beginning farmers. Throughout his career, he was involved in his communities: he led a community development project raising funds to furnish a clinic and secure a medical doctor for the county; he led a master plan study of the four camp sites and program of the S.D. Conference of the United Methodist Church; he united two congregations into one, two years before the national union which created the United Methodist Church; and he expanded the use of a community food pantry.

Following his service as a pastor, Boyd was called to serve as a United Methodist Conference Superintendent in the North District and then in the Central District for six years. In 1995, Boyd became the director of the Tree of Life Ministry in Mission, S.D., reviving this resource which provides food, clothing, emergency home repairs, cross-cultural education and Christian ministry on the Rosebud Indian Reservation.

At the age of 66, after more than 40 years in ministry, Boyd came to Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell. He has been busier in his retirement than many people are in their careers. Since 1997, he has served DWU in many capacities – as interim campus pastor, carpenter, custodian and adjunct professor. For nearly 20 years, he has taught two of three courses each semester: "Death, Dying and the Afterlife," "The Life and Teachings of Jesus" and "The Life and Letters of Paul." One student described him as "the best thing that can happen to a course on the Bible."

Whether from the pulpit, the front of a classroom or over a cup of coffee, Boyd is an expert storyteller. In fact, he wrote and published "Parables of a Country Preacher" in 1980. He continues to be a sought-after preacher in the region, and he is called upon to write special prayers and litanies for important events in the life of DWU.

Boyd and his wife of more than 60 years, Evelyn, are parents to four adult children, and they have nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Boyd, you have served the United Methodist Church, your profession, your communities and Dakota Wesleyan University. Your selfless service to God and humanity is the essence of what it means to be a Christian. You are a role model to all of us at Dakota Wesleyan University. In recognition of your life and work, it is our great privilege to present you with the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.