

## Dr. Karel Deddens (1924-2005)

The Lord has called to Himself Dr. Karel Deddens at the age of 80. His health had been in decline for the last number of years and in the early afternoon of February 10 his task on earth was ended. He went to be with his Saviour. Although living in Holland most of his life, he and his family spent six very important years of their lives in Canada when he could serve the churches as Professor of Diaconiology and Ecclesiology from 1984-1990. It is for this reason that we wish to remember his work with gratitude in this "In Memoriam."

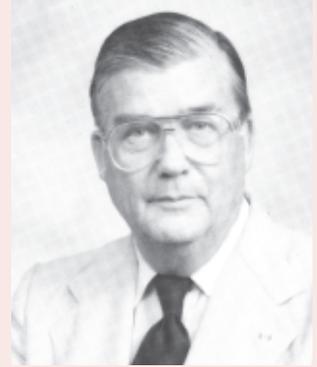
### Some highlights of his life

Dr. Deddens was born on August 29, 1924 in Rijswijk, a place beside The Hague in The Netherlands. His father, the later Professor P. Deddens, was minister there at the time. After getting his secondary education in Groningen at the Willem Lodewijk Gymnasium, Dr. K. Deddens studied theology in Kampen under professors S. Greijdanus, K. Schilder, B. Holwerda, C. Veenhof, and his father. He was ordained into the ministry of the Word on October 28, 1951 in Hoek in the extreme south of The Netherlands known as Zuid Vlaanderen (Southern Flanders). This was also the place where he spent his last years after returning from Canada.

Dr. Deddens' ministry could be characterized as one that was full of variety and it showed that he did not mind a challenge or two. From Hoek, Dr. Deddens went on to serve congregations in Leerdam and Amersfoort-Centrum. In 1965 he accepted the call for missionary work in Curaçao. After preparatory mission studies in Oegstgeest, he departed for the Caribbean and served on the island of Curaçao for five years. In 1970 he accepted the call to serve the sending church at Rijnsburg and in 1974 he departed for Groningen-Zuid. While he was a minister in Groningen, he finished his graduate studies in Kampen under Dr. C. Trimp and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Theology. His dissertation was entitled *Annus Liturgicus? (Liturgical Year?)*. It dealt with the development of the liturgical calendar in which the episcopate of Cyril of Jerusalem (313-387) played a central role.

It was while he was in Groningen-Zuid that the call came from Canada to teach at the Theological College. It would have been tempting for many a minister at his age of 60, with four children still at home and with two who would remain in Holland, to dismiss such an appointment out of hand. But Dr. Deddens accepted the challenge joyfully with the full support of his wife. He considered it the crown on his work as minister.<sup>1</sup> After his retirement in

The Netherlands, he and Mrs. Deddens frequently made the trip to British Columbia's Fraser Valley to visit their two married children there.



### Professor in Hamilton

On May 6, 1984 Dr. J. Faber installed Dr. Deddens as minister of the church at Hamilton with as text for the sermon: "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David as preached in my gospel" (2 Tim 2:8). Dr. Deddens' inaugural sermon dealt with 2 Corinthians 2:14-17, where the apostle Paul speaks in glowing terms of the preaching of the gospel and compares its progress to one of those impressive victory parades put on by a conquering Roman commander. The note of joy evident in that sermon was the melody by which Dr. Deddens ordered his professorial life.

When Dr. Deddens was installed as Professor of Diaconiology and Ecclesiology on September 7, 1984 he spoke on a liturgical topic: "The Function of the Reader and the Reading of the Holy Scriptures in Public Worship." He concluded that it is desirable that the reading of Scripture in church be done by someone who is not the preacher. It does not have to be an office bearer and a variety of readers would be a good thing. The Holy Scripture after all belongs to the entire congregation and not just the minister of the church.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Deddens did his work with great enthusiasm and joy, and he never hesitated to take on additional responsibilities. He was a very quick worker and thrived in the challenge of meeting deadlines. He was a prolific writer and with his typewriter hammered out books and articles, one after the other. His interests were many and varied. He was interested in music and liturgy, ecumenicity and missions, catechetics and homiletics, history and church order. He wrote on all these areas. With so many varied and diverse interests, which covered his teaching responsibilities as well, it was interesting to see what he would do for his final lecture at the College.

The day for that final lecture came on Friday, May 4, 1990. In this lecture he sought to combine all his fields of interest. He did so by speaking on Nicetas (c. 335-414 AD), bishop of Remesiana in the Balkans, under a title characterizing Nicetas as missionary, liturge, and catechist. A highlight of this lecture was the background Dr. Deddens was able to give to Hymn 2 of our *Book of Praise*, the Te Deum. He showed that it was probably authored by

Nicetas, one reason being the similarity between this hymn and Nicetas' doctrinal writings. The beauty of the structure of this hymn was also shown. The lecture concluded with the audience singing the entire hymn, with Dr. Deddens behind the organ.<sup>3</sup>

### **In conclusion**

When we reflect on the contribution that Dr. Deddens made at the Theological College we do so with great gratitude to the Lord. He provided us with the man for the hour. With Dr. Deddens' wide pastoral and missionary experience, along with his academic interests in the right fields, he was able to meet the challenge that this vacancy offered. His work still speaks in the considerable number of publications he has left behind.

When he preached his inaugural sermon at the beginning of his Hamilton period, he ended the sermon by stressing how necessary it is that all those who exert themselves in the ministerial work of the Lord place

themselves with their labours in the hands of God. For who is equal to the task (2 Cor 2:16)? It is God who will complete the work of his servants. For God gives the promise: "My grace is sufficient for you." It is in that realization that our brother lived and died. May the Lord comfort Mrs. Deddens and the entire family with that knowledge and may they also continue to experience the grace of God as he leads them on with his fatherly hand.

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<sup>1</sup> See the interview with Dr. K. Deddens in *Clarion* 39, (1990), p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> This speech can be found in *Clarion* 33, (1984), p. 391-396, 416-419.

<sup>3</sup> A report by Dr. J. De Jong of this speech is found in *Clarion* 39, (1990), p. 257-258.

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