Dirk Hendricus Diepeveen



DECEMBER 22, 2023

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March 17, 1928 –December 22, 2023

Born in 1928 in Loosduinen, the Netherlands, Dirk Diepeveen was the oldest of four children. As it did for many of his generation, the war turned his life upside down. At the age of 16, in the winter of 1945, Dirk was imprisoned by the Nazis in Amersfoort prison camp, where he experienced starvation and horrible violence. But he testified that this was also the time that trust in God kept him alive. As he was being transported from Amersfoort to a certain death, he was allowed to escape and return to his home. But the war never left him and became increasingly oppressive in his last decades.

And then, right after the war there was an opposite pull on his life. He fell in love with Nel Spaans, who would shortly become his wife. Their courtship was constricted by postwar realities: no housing, little money. And yet he still managed to do the kind of thing for which he was loved: one of his gestures of love in these early postwar years was spending much of his weekly wages to buy Nel several rare but slightly overripe bananas.

Faced with these limitations, and wanting to put the war behind them, he and Nel took the plunge and left both their families behind to emigrate to Canada with

their two young children, Bill, and Nelly. Two more children, Elisabeth, and Len were born in the years soon after immigrating.

In Canada, Dirk began work as an electrician, working in the freezing cold in Hinton, Alberta. After some time spent as a draftsman at the local Celanese plant, he began work for the Government of Alberta, and ended as Director of Program Development for the Government of Alberta apprenticeship program. It wasn't the title that impressed him—he was most proud of his interactions with people, arriving at practical solutions, and establishing viable apprenticeship programs on indigenous reserves. That sense of serving people also shaped his work with youth as an elder in the Christian Reformed Church.

Dirk loved the peacefulness of fishing, of working in his greenhouse, of playing his harmonica. Often whistling, he always had a cheery word, and a little—often painful—joke for everyone he passed. At lunch he invariably requested half a cup of coffee—the bottom half. His whistling and his jokes were not just pleasurable but purposeful, done to brighten people's days.

Over the course of his life Dirk was determined not to make the war the defining thing about him. He wanted to make it redemptive, and so in later life he started to write and speak about his experiences, and God's grace in helping him through them. It was moving to watch him struggle through that.

Dirk was the beloved grandpa of 11 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren. He is survived by his wife of 72 years, Nel, and his children Bill (Winnie) Diepeveen, Nelly (Rolf) Schipfel, Elisabeth (John) Bron, and Len (Susan) Diepeveen. Our hearts ache without him, but we know that the war is finally behind him, and he is at rest at last, with God.

The service for Dirk will be live streamed by following the link below
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0ANaf8qfrE

In lieu of flowers, donations may be given in memory of Dirk Diepeveen to Cascade Christian Counselling: https://www.cascadechristiancounselling.com/donations/

Messages of Condolence

We are so sorry for your lose, but heaven's gain! Cor's mom passed away a year ago at 102 and while we miss her, her life well lived while on this earth was a testament for the many family members. Your dad also lived a life that is to be celebrated! He had a very personal relationship with the Lord and we were blessed to have known him. We pray that his love for the Lord will be passed from generation to generation. We wish you the peace of God as you go through life with this new normal.

— Cor and Agnes Van Den Boogaard
