

Eulogy for Dorothy Christensen
By Bruce Christensen

Dorothy Julia Christensen was born October 20, 1906 in Lansing, Michigan, the first child of Ray and Irene Kocher. Two years later a sister, Marion, was added to the family. Her mother was a seeker after truth and was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1918 with her two daughters.

Dorothy attended Adelpian Academy, graduating as the valedictorian of her class of 1923. These words from her valedictory address show a serious dedication to a life of service to God and man that stayed with her throughout her life.

"Tonight we stand on the threshold of life, hesitatingly....Our future rests with God, but to us it is an uncharted sea....To live, to love, and then to part, seems the cycle of man's lot."

The next year she attended Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) where she met Otto Christensen. He was studying for the ministry and was holding meetings in New Troy as part of his classwork. She was invited to help and they found a mutual friendship. For the next year she worked as a Bible Worker for the Michigan Conference while he entered into the ministry in Minnesota. They kept up their friendship by correspondence and on a visit in December, she was asked to be his wife. On June 30, 1925 they were married and she became a pastor's wife as he ministered to various churches in Minnesota.

In December of 1930, in response to a call to serve as missionaries to China and in particular to the Mongolian people, they left the shores of their homeland for this new challenge. There she was a faithful support to her husband in his work. Together they learned the Mongolian and Chinese languages and cultures. She helped in proofreading a handwritten copy of the Mongolian Old Testament made by a Mongolian girl as no printed copies were available. This Old Testament is now in the Heritage Room collection at the White Memorial Library of Andrews University. Dorothy also provided for the education of her family by homeschooling them and working with a Pentecostal missionary neighbor's wife in establishing, and teaching in, an elementary school for English speaking children in the area.

In 1940 she and the two children returned to the United States because of threats of war. Upon Otto's return in 1941 they again returned to the work of pastoring churches in Michigan. Over the next several years, as Otto was working towards a Doctors Degree, she worked faithfully to provide supplementary income by working as a Licensed Practical Nurse. About this time they were invited into the educational work starting at Andrews University where Dorothy continued her education and got her Bachelors Degree and began teaching in the Home Economics Department.

Upon receiving a call to teach at Southern Missionary College (now Southern University), she attended the University of Tennessee and earned her Master of Science Degree in Food and Nutrition. While at Southern she established and administered the Home Economics Department.

Upon their retirement she continued to be active, consulting as a Registered Dietitian and conducting workshops. She also taught at Oakwood College, where she established and administered a Home Economics Department, at Andrews University and at the Inca Union College in Peru.

She loved to travel and in her travels she would help the institutions along the way with consultations, training sessions and workshops. Shortly after the death of her husband in 1979, she volunteered for service in Australia and Africa. She taught at Avondale college for a year then on her way to Africa she became ill and had to return home. This was a great disappointment to her.

Her last days were spent with her son in Berrien Springs where she continued to be of service by grading Bible study lessons for the prison ministries group. As life became more complex for her because of the onset of Alzheimers disease, she had to give up these activities and enter Jordans Nursing Home where she received wonderful care. It was sad to see her abilities deteriorate and finally come to an end, which thankfully was peaceful.

She lived a long and fulfilling life that affected many lives for the kingdom of God. She is remembered as a loving mother and grandmother, and as a dedicated Christian woman of courage, strength and commitment.

She was a member of the American Dietetic Association, the Seventh-day Adventist Dietetic Association, the Omicron Nu Home Economics Honor Society and the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

She is survived by a son, Bruce of Berrien Springs, Michigan; a daughter, Ilene Caster of Yucaipa, California; eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren; and a sister, Marion Shadel of Oak Harbor, Washington.