



## 71 ❖ Citizen of the heavenly kingdom

**T**he testimonies collected from his wife and loved ones agree that what dominated the thinking of Pastor Denis Mundela Tshibusu was seeking the kingdom of God. In a culture in which people prized their earthly nationality and tribal identities, he emphasized citizenship in the heavenly kingdom. He would always conclude by saying, “We should first seek the kingdom of God and his justice. All the rest will be given to us by him.”

This man of strong spiritual conviction was born in 1942 in rural territory. He had the good fortune to be educated in Protestant schools of good reputation. He spent about five years in the Mute-na primary school and completed pedagogical training in the same place. In that era, those coming out of pedagogical schools had a great advantage, and at the end of their studies many were immediately employed in primary teaching, which was well supported. For about ten years he carried out his beautiful profession with devotion and zeal.

Bit by bit, however, he felt within himself the birth of a pastoral vocation. He decided then to leave teaching to pursue a theological education. Unable to enroll in a theological seminary at the advanced level, he found his way to the Kalonda Bible Institute. During his four years of study he confirmed his vocation and was ordained in 1980.

With his wife, Victorine, he began a long pilgrimage in the Mennonite community, serving a number of congregations. A charitable,

tolerant, and peaceful man, he worked in perfect collaboration with other pastors, who sang praises of his exemplary behavior.

It is part of human nature, even among Christians, to want to dominate others. Many people serve others in order to gain the admiration of those around them. They may even congratulate themselves, in subtle pride, on being more spiritual than others. But Pastor Denis left behind a great lesson for his church. The most important message to remember, he said, is that even these ways of dominating others are contrary to the laws of the kingdom of God. Before God, social ambition is not subject even to the law of survival of the fittest. Rather, the strong must look out for the weak.

With difficult working conditions, many servants of God have been weakened in their ministry. Despite superhuman efforts to continue his work, he gave his soul back to the Lord on February 3, 2009. The church remembers him fondly.

Vincent Ndandula