

NEW D.R. CHURCH FOR PRETORIA

HANDSOME PIECE OF
ARCHITECTURE

LARGEST DOME IN
SOUTH AFRICA

The beauty of Pretoria has been enhanced by the erection of a handsome church in Sunnyside for the accommodation of the Dutch Reformed congregation in that suburb. The church, which was planned by Mr. G. Moerdyk, A.R.I.B.A., was consecrated yesterday.

A special service of leave-taking was conducted by the Rev. Dr. D. J. Keet yesterday morning at the old church in Esselen Street.

There was a large attendance in the afternoon when the new church was dedicated. The proceedings commenced in the open air, when the builder, Mr. F. Coenen, handed over the key to Dr. D. J. Keet, and the congregation sang the first two verses of the 100th Psalm. The door of the church was then unlocked and the congregation entered, continuing the Psalm to the accompaniment of the Police Band. A choir, under the direction of Mr. John Connell, gave a fine rendering of the Hallelujah chorus from Handel's "Messiah." The consecration address delivered by the Rev. Paul Nel, Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church, was followed by hymns and a prayer of consecration offered by the Rev. Dr. H. S. Bosman.

At the conclusion of the service the thanks of the congregation were extended to the architect and builder and to the building committee. The building committee consisted of Dr. D. J. Keet, General C. H. Muller and Messrs D. E. van Velden, L. T. Jacobsz, J. J. Muller, W. H. Hofmeyr, O. van Oostrum and J. P. Jooste, M.E.C.

In the evening a special service was conducted by the Rev. A. J. Louw, of Heidelberg.

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Renaissance and old Dutch architecture have been combined in the building of the church, which is designed on the Greek cross plan, with fine dome and campanile. Constructed of brick with stone facing, it is roofed with Roman tiles, and has plaster ceilings and handsome teak panelling within. It has a wood block floor, leaded lights and attractive wood carvings over the doors. The church cost £20,000 to complete, while the organ, which is to be installed in three months' time, will increase the expenditure by £2,000. The dome, which is a feature of the building, is 260 feet in diameter and is the largest in South Africa. The campanile, too, is of interest, for it houses the bell which was saved when the old church on Church Square was demolished shortly after the Anglo-Boer War.

The architect has so arranged the plan that from the pulpit every portion of the church is visible, the pews radiating from it. A gallery runs round the interior, with sections reserved for the choir and organ.

Provision has been made for an elders' consistory, and a room has been set aside where infants will await baptism.

The church forms a pleasing landmark in the suburb and can be seen from miles around.

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DEDICATORY SERVICE

The Pastor, Dr. D. J. Keet, the members of the kerkraad and congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church at Sunnyside, Pretoria, had the satisfaction yesterday afternoon of realising the completion of their stately and spacious new church. The church was dedicated yesterday in the presence of a very large congregation, many of whom had to stand throughout the service, a service which was one of extreme simplicity and reverence.

It was a full day for the happy congregation. At 10.30 the Pastor conducted the service in the hall which has done duty for so long, and this afternoon with praise and prayer the new building was consecrated.

Outside the closed door the key was handed over by the builder. Part of a metrical version of Psalm 100 was sung. Then the door having been opened the ministers, officers of the church, and others entered while the remainder of this joyous hymn was sung by choir and people assisted by the Police Orchestra under the baton of Mr. John Connell. A beautiful organ has yet to come, but there was little lacking in the musical part of the devotion. The rendering by the choir of the Hallelujah Chorus was excellent.

The Right Rev. Paul Nel, the re-elected Moderator, delivered the dedicatory address based upon the vision of Jacob when his name was changed to Israel and Jacob called the scene of his wrestling Peniel "for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved." The sermon was an eloquent and scholarly effort, in the course of which the preacher hoped that the experience of Jacob might be theirs in that hallowed house; that it might be to them a Bethel, a house of prayer. The preacher emphasised that whilst our Lord prayed in many places he did not neglect the solemnly set aside Place of Prayer. There must not be neglect of public worship. They went to church for the ministry of the word and for the Sacraments, and in prayer the soul took its flight to the mercy seat of God.

In these days they heard much about poor spirituality, about the lack of enthusiasm in the Christian career. They would never recover that zeal unless they became a praying people.

He hoped earnestly that from that pulpit there would never be preached

anything but the gospel of Jesus Christ the crucified.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION.

The prayer of dedication was offered by the Rev. M. J. du Preez. It was originally intended that this part of the service should be taken by Dr. Bosman but, unfortunately, owing to indisposition he was unable to take any public part in the service. His venerable figure, however, was prominent among the ministers.

Dr. Keel on behalf of the Kerkraad thanked the architect, Mr. Koordyk; the builder, Mr. J. Coenen, and the Building Committee for their services.

The pastor and congregation are to be congratulated upon the completion of their new temple. When they have reared the trees and palms and flowers which they propose to plant in the spacious grounds it will be a peaceful and beautiful spot. The interior of the church is restful and dignified. The acoustics are admirable. It is, in fact, a cheerful House of Prayer, well lighted and there is not a note of gloom.