

J. Kenneth Grider, a Pastor of Pastors

Our first pastorate after graduation from NTS in 1959 was in Monroe, Wisconsin, a beautiful “Swiss village”, and home of the Swiss Colony cheese factory. It was also home for at least one church that, at that time, still conducted Sunday services in German. As I became acquainted with other pastors in town I discovered that I was not adequately prepared to discuss European existentialism, and its seminal impact on American Christian thinking. Since I was fresh out of seminary my multi-denominational pastoral colleagues expected me to bring current substance to our conversations. I turned to Dr. Grider, my major professor and theological mentor at NTS. With typical concern for “his boys” in ministry, Ken mailed to me, on loan from the NTS library, some very helpful material by or about Kierkegaard, Heidegger and other representative existentialists. Sometime later he followed up with a telephone call to offer further assistance. I will never forget how connected his actions helped me to feel.

Ken kept in touch with us as the years unfolded. In later years I became his, and Virginia’s, pastor at Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene. It was there that Alice Jean and I saw something of the depth of their concern for the poor and disenfranchised. Ken Grider had a heart for ministry, and for his students as they went forth to minister.

A. Gordon Wetmore
December 10, 2006