

Renowned Christian Psychologist, AG Minister Richard Dobbins Dies

Richard Dobbins, 86, passed away at his home in Naples, Florida, on Tuesday. The well-known Christian psychologist and Assemblies of God minister had not been ill.

Dobbins—who was known as “Doc”—married his late wife, Delores, in 1943. The couple had three children. Following Delores’ death, Dobbins married Priscilla, his wife of 20 years.

He studied theology at Eastern Bible Institute (now Valley Forge Christian College) and Central Bible Institute (now Central Bible College). Dobbins was ordained by the Illinois District of the Assemblies of God in 1946.

He and his late wife founded the Evangel Temple in Akron, Ohio. After experiencing few resources to deal with mental health challenges the couple faced, Dobbins pursued bachelor’s and master’s degrees in psychology and a Ph.D. in guidance and counseling.

Dobbins founded Emerge Ministries in Akron in 1976, where he spent 30 years helping thousands of people. In 1994 he received a Doctorate of Humanities from Ashland Theological Seminary.

Dobbins retired as CEO of Emerge Ministries in 2003 and focused on writing. In the same year he founded Dr. Richard D. Dobbins Ministries, Inc., as a vehicle develop his materials. He also founded The Richard D. Dobbins Institute of Ministry, an online Christian counseling training program.

He has been published in more than 50 books, articles and other media. He was recognized in 2003 by the American

Association of Christian Counselors for his pioneer work in the Christian mental health field.

" 'Doc' partnered with my wife, Barb, and me in a journey of healing and restoration almost 25 years ago," says the Rev. Jack Strom. "It was much more than a moment ... he helped me develop an ongoing life attitude and action that still results in our experiencing marriage and family with joy and fulfillment."

There will be two opportunities for friends and family to honor Dobbins. A funeral service will be held at Victory Church in Lakeland, Florida, on Tuesday at 11 a.m., preceded by a visitation at 9 a.m. A memorial service will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 18, at Emerge Counseling Services in Akron. Both services will be conducted by Victory Church pastor Wayne Blackburn.

Gifts can be sent to the Dr. Richard D. Dobbins Memorial, a fund to help further the healing ministry of Emerge, at 900 Mull Avenue in Akron.