

## Presentation of the Damien-Dutton Award to Dr. Frans Hemerijckx At Closing Ceremony, 21 September 1968

The Chairman, Dr. R. G. Cochrane, asked Mr. Howard E. Crouch, founder of the Damien-Dutton Society, to present the Damien-Dutton Award to Dr. Hemerijckx.

**Mr. Howard E. Crouch.** The Damien-Dutton Society is grateful to Dr. Browne and the International Committee for affording us the opportunity of presenting our annual Damien-Dutton Award as part of the International Congress proceedings. Two members of our Board of Governors are also present here today, D. Oliver W. Hasselblad, President of American Leprosy Missions, Inc., and Mr. Donald V. Wilson, President of the Leonard Wood Memorial.

The Damien-Dutton Award was established in 1953 to honor an individual or an organization that has made a significant contribution toward the conquest of leprosy. This contribution may be in the form of medical care, scientific research, medical education, public education, rehabilitation, social service or philanthropy.

The first recipient of the Damien-Award was the late Stanley Stein of Carville. The distinguished list of recipients since then includes two who are present with us today: Dr. Robert G. Cochrane of England, and Mrs. Eunice Weaver of Brazil.

Previous recipients have included Dr. H. W. Wade, Dr. K. Mitsuda, Sister Hilary Ross, Perry Burgess, Sister Marie Suzanne, and others. Today we add another distinguished name to the roster of those so honored. May I read the inscription on the Award?

The Award is in the form of a sculptured head, of Father Damien and Joseph Dutton, his fellow worker at Molokai. It states: "Damien-Dutton Award: for God and Country." The inscription reads:

"The 1968 Damien-Dutton Award is presented to Dr. Frans Hemerijckx of Belgium, for his compassion and love of those who have leprosy, and for his outstanding contribution towards the conquest of leprosy.

Saturday, September 21  
International Leprosy Congress,  
London, England"

It is my honor, Dr. Hemerijckx, to present this Award to you.

**Reply by Dr. Frans Hemerijckx.** Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, if you do not mind, I shall speak in French.<sup>1</sup> I am both happy and proud, and I very deeply appreciate this tribute in the form of the Damien-Dutton Award for this year. I should like in particular to thank the President of this august Society, and also the Members of the Executive Board. I would also thank all my friends engaged in work on leprosy who have paid tribute to me today. I feel a little confused, among so many workers who, without any doubt, have worked with such enthusiasm in the field of leprosy—quite as much, I am sure, as I have.

In accepting this honor, I wrote to your President to say that of course it was because I wanted to be with all those who have cooperated directly in teamwork. I would like to associate them all with this; one of them in fact spoke to you yesterday about a group of 11,000 cured leprosy patients.

<sup>1</sup> English translation. Unfortunately space does not permit publication of Dr. Hemerijckx's reply in all four of the official languages of the Congress. The English translation is used as the most readily adapted for the format and practice of THE JOURNAL.

I should also like to include in the tribute paid to me all those who are in the front line of the fight against leprosy. There are many of them—medical men, workers, missionaries—many thousands of them among the nonmedical staffs engaged in this work, and I should like to pay public tribute to them, a solemn tribute, because without them there would be no fight against leprosy. They are the pivot on which all turns.

I count on you, as scientific leprologists and people engaged in research, to provide me with weapons, to forge new weapons for us, and to make all necessary preparations for us in the fight, for us to use in the front line of the fight against leprosy. For once we shall be using these weapons, not to make war, but to cure, to relieve those patients who have been the worst treated throughout the history of the world and the most neglected.

The Congress will not make any recommendations, but our dear Secretary-General might perhaps excuse me if I take advantage of my place here today, a rather privileged place, to call upon you all, urgently, solemnly and with force, to make an

appeal to all the nations and to all the governments throughout the world to treat leprosy just as they would any other disease, and those suffering from it as they would any other patient, whether in the medical field, the field of scientific research or the field of social aid, in short those suffering from the disease in every case without any discrimination, and I would urge that they do everything in their power to work for joy, and the relief of suffering, for cure of leprosy, justice and subsistence for all. We must not forget that we have a heavy debt to repay to the leprosy patient. The history of leprosy has not been a glorious chapter for humanity. We would have the world repay its debt to them and strive for total, universal peace.

Eighty years have passed since the death of Father Damien. The image of his heroic death lives on in our memory, in our thoughts; today, from this democratic platform, in this College of Science and Technology, let us begin again a new crusade, a crusade of enthusiasm, for peace, happiness, *joie de vivre* and a cure for our unhappy brothers and friends, the leprosy patients.