

Appendix B

Tributes to Dad

A Daughter's Tribute To Her Father

By Anne Vande Vliert

Dad's life has molded and shaped me in so many ways that it is hard to say what is in my heart in a few words. But there are three areas that I want to briefly share with you.

First, his prayers. I won't hear him pray anymore. His prayers were reverent, strong, sincere and yes, sometimes long! I was the daughter that timed his congregational prayers to the minute and second then told him about it when he got home. But he still loved me. Yet his God and Father became real and close when he prayed and became my God and Father. I also knew Mom and Dad prayed for us each day and if I had a special need they were but a phone call away. I felt stronger and protected by his prayers. And I loved him for that.

Second, his respect for the authority of the Scriptures. When Dad opened his Bible to read or study I knew that was the final Word. He had told us that when it comes to scriptural teachings "compromise leads to failure". He lived and taught this through his writings. And I loved him for that.

Third and last, his devotion and love for Mom. I often watched and saw little looks, gestures and touches that were between them. He openly praised and appreciated her. Whether it was vacuuming or peeling potatoes he would help her. They were a team, side by side in the home, on the farm and in the ministry. Dad loved, protected and served Mom. And I loved him for that.

A Tribute From 'Little John'

By John Moerman Jnr.

Last January 31, 1998, I gave my testimony to a group of men known as Promise Keepers. I gave Dad a copy of that testimony. Why? Because in my testimony I describe one of the fundamentals of being a Promise Keeper - the role of a mentor in a man's life.

You see, when I read the chapter in the Promise Keeper's book on the role of a mentor, I realized that my dad was my mentor! It hit me like a ton of bricks. My father has been my mentor and I had never realized it, until recently. I wanted dad to know the important role he played in my life. Specifically:

- ◆ Dad showed hard work and honest work;
- ◆ Dad had flexibility: he worked with his hands, he worked with words and ideas, and he worked with people;
- ◆ Dad had wisdom and warmth and counsel for people;
- ◆ Dad was a man who didn't just talk the talk but who also walked the walk. A man of integrity;
- ◆ Dad protected mom. Dad cherished his wife;
- ◆ Dad was responsible. Dad emphasized responsibility in every area of life. Dad believed this was a God-given responsibility;
- ◆ Dad was disciplined in his spiritual walk. Dad emphasized prayer and personal devotions;
- ◆ Dad faced challenges head on. With God's strength, he persevered;
- ◆ Dad displayed humility. He gave all the credit to God our Maker and Jesus our Savior.
- ◆ Dad was proud of his family.

And my dad was proud of me! Dad said last week at the 50th anniversary (in Edmonton on March 22, 1998): "People would always say that I was big John (Sr.) and he was little John (Jr.);" Then Dad would say: "Well, now he (Jr.) is the big John and I (Sr.) am the Little John." Dad said this to me and to others standing with us three or four times. I had heard this repeated to numerous people over the years. I would smile and nod graciously and accept my father's praise.

But now today, I have to tell you that my father was incorrect in his statement. He wasn't wrong very often. But Dad, ***you are the Big John; you are the big man . . . and have always been that for me.*** Dad, you have been my example and mentor.

And what an example! How will I ever be able to match up to what you have been? With God's help and strength, I will. For my Father's sake? A bit. But more for the sake of my Father in Heaven (God.)

Psalm 62:5-8 says "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation: he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge." I can hear dad saying this to me, right now.

Recently, some of the oldest manuscripts found by archeologists contain the passage from Numbers 6:24-26. It was exactly as you and I find it in our Bibles today. It shows me how accurate and reliable the scriptures are. Over the years as they were passed down, nothing was changed, revised or missed. Here it is:

The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, "This is how you are to bless the Israelites, say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace."

Dad, this is our Lord's Blessing to you today. Good-bye.

Your Son,

John

One Son's Tribute To His Father

By Jim Moerman

With each birthday card, anniversary card or Father's Day card, my appreciation for Dad has steadily grown. And now that Dad is no longer here, my appreciation for him has skyrocketed.

In God's economy, my Dad was a great man. His three-quarter century life was loaded with ripened, golden delicious fruit. I was watching him closely at the 50th anniversary celebration last week and I saw a man so full of peace, gentleness and contentment. There was a River of Thanksgiving running through him that only got deeper and deeper – thankful for each new morning, thankful for each family member from oldest son to newest baby, thankful for the mercy and grace of God the Father, the Redeemer, the Holy Spirit.

Besides the Spirit's fruit of a fully matured character, he finished well with the fruit of a Golden Marriage, the fruit of fifty respectful God-fearing offspring, the fruit of an effective ministry in three provinces.

My Dad was given a modest number of talents by the Lord, but he traded well with what he had, and last Saturday afternoon he settled his accounts and presented the Master with a remarkable profit and increase. "Well done, good and faithful servant."

God was pleased with my Dad's life and demonstrated His pleasure in the circumstances of his death:

- ◆ He called my Dad *after* his 50th anniversary, not before;
- ◆ He called my Dad before any form of physical or mental demise;
- ◆ He called my Dad while he was enjoying one of his favorite places ("The Land"), doing one of his favorite things (working outdoors) and anticipating a meal with the wife of his youth, my Mom;
- ◆ He called my Dad *first*. Dad never saw the death of his wife or even one of his offspring;
- ◆ He called my Dad when he was thoroughly and completely ready – memoirs finished, funeral arrangements made, anniversary celebrated.

I am grieving because I have lost my father, my example and my friend. I also grieve because I have lost one of my main intercessors, one of my best encouragers and my favorite teacher. Almost every important thing I have learned about ministry and spiritual things, I learned from my Dad.

I am genuinely thankful to God for taking Dad now, the way He did. And I also grieve because Dad, I love you.

A Nephew's Tribute

By Jack Moerman (Blenheim, Ontario)

I am thankful to the Lord for making it possible for Nellie, Katie and I to be able to participate in the celebration of your 50th Anniversary. It certainly was a privilege to be there. The event that happened less than a week later just confirms that it was God's will that we were to visit when we did. Listen to the still small voice and you will not be disappointed.

Being just a wee tyke when I immigrated, I was coerced by Hank Van Atte (a friend and fellow immigrant of Mom and Dads) that the reason I was going to Canada was to "Oom Jan peste". (Editor: translated, "to be a nuisance to Uncle John.") I don't think I lived up to that but I do know that Oom Jan has had an impact on my life and on the rest of my family.

I was amazed when we had dinner together, your family and ours, that at devotion time at the end of dinner, Oom Jan would correct our pronunciation of biblical words and names when he didn't even see them. My thinking then was "boy this guy knows a lot about the Bible". Growing older, this thinking did not change. Certainly, the verse that comes to mind when I think about him is Hebrews 10:23 "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." His letter writing, faxes etc. show his unwavering stand on current issues Satan is trying to use to weaken the Church. Diligent to the end. Deuteronomy 11:19, Ephesians 6:4 comes to mind when I see all your children serving the Lord in various capacities. One thing we can take to heaven - and that is our children.

Values that were taught to Oom Jan and my dad when they were young did not depart from them when they immigrated. They held fast to them and were not successfully pressured by society to let them go. When we see how Holland has gone we can be grateful to the Lord for guiding us to Canada. Thanks for taking us in and guiding us those first few months we were in Canada at the Nauta's farm. You must have always liked a house full!

The Lord has His reasons for taking Oom Jan so suddenly. These reasons will become clear as we move on in life. The Israelites were also surprised when they were divinely turned towards the Red Sea and the Egyptians behind them. They did not know what God had planned but God was glorified through it. If everything in life was easy, we would soon become lazy in studying His Word and God would not be prominent in our minds. The empty feeling that I have - and most certainly you have - may subside but will not go

away. We have the assurance that “We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us”. A comforting thought, and also that we will meet again.

A Nephew's Tribute
By John Moerman

Dear Tante Corrie:

I would have loved to have had the freedom to spend more time with you and your family... I had so much more I wanted to say. Perhaps it is better to put some of it to paper anyway...

The news of Uncle John's passing immediately struck within me the desire to be there with the family. However, before immediately following through on that desire, I found myself deeply wondering WHY it was I wished to go.

For some reason, there was some unrest there that I needed to have resolved. In pondering this through, I believe there were at least two reasons why I was compelled to come... and I'd like to share those with you.

The first is probably obvious. The heart is a master of emotion and desires, and there is no other place my heart wanted to be but with family who were experiencing the depths of human sorrow. Your whole family is much closer to us than the physical miles might demonstrate, and so it was only natural to want to be WITH you!! Although we will not feel the intensity of the physical loss as you have and will, there is, none the less, an empty feeling within. Somehow, the knowledge that I could call him anytime and talk about things, whether it was of the Reformed Church in Canada, or Canadian social issues, or personal spiritual concerns, brought a sense of security. He could always be relied upon to indicate whether something was worth fighting for or not. That security is gone, and it leaves an emptiness that my heart wanted to fill just by being with you all. However, as important and real and valid as those feelings were to me, my soul was not satisfied. There was more reason to go. I knew, of course, that to give tribute to someone, it is much better to do so while living.

I understood full well that he was gone to be with the Lord, and my being at the funeral could not change that fact one iota!! The question burning in my mind was: "Why do I want to be in the presence of someone who, essentially, is no longer here?" The Lord finally gave to me a passage out of Corinthians... I Cor. 15: 35-44. (incidentally, can you believe it, that was the EXACT passage Murray requested I read at the graveside. No other passage could have been more meaningful for me at that moment!!!)

Anyway, through meditating on that passage, I became deeply aware of the fact of the dignity that God has ascribed to the human body. Amazingly, I find that fact ignored at

many funerals today. We rightly rejoice in the “homegoing” of our beloved; we rejoice much in the life lived; we reflect much on the memories that have suddenly become so precious; but we forget to pay proper tribute and respect to the created physical body.

You see, I am a farmer... and a farmer sows and harvests. But a farmer does not reap exactly what he has sown. No, what he sows actually has to die in order for there to be a harvest!! So, from I Cor 15:37 we read: When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed...” and vs. 42... “So it will be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable; it is raised imperishable...” It suddenly dawned upon me, I desired to be at a unique kind of “sowing”!!!

God has placed enough dignity upon the “frail”, “perishable”, “dishonoured”, “natural” body, that He uses it as seed for the harvest the RESURRECTION!!!

Indeed, we find many references in Scripture where the dead body is dignified by the ceremonies surrounding its burial. We think of the entourage and ceremony surrounding the funeral procession of Jacob from Egypt to Canaan; the thirty days mourning for Moses; even the desire of the four women to anoint the body of our Lord at the tomb. The physical body is a “dishonoured” thing ONLY in comparison to what it will be at the resurrection!! I really came to see the funeral as a “sowing”, and I deeply wanted to be involved in that. Thank you so much for allowing me, not only the privilege of attendance, but also the honour of sharing in scripture reading!! ...and in I Cor. 15:35-44 in particular!!

The trip home, by the way, was uneventful and restful. It seems I have been gone for a week... as this past week must seem like a month to you. There has been so much squeezed into such a short time. I marvel continually in the outpouring of God’s grace as I witness your strength and resolve to carry on as you know Uncle John would want you to. We will continue to pray for you in that regard, and that the necessary adjustments will be made with minimal discomfort!!

With Christian and family love,

John Moerman
(Ridgetown, Ontario)