

## Epilogue:

Up to this point this was all written when we were living in Mayerthorpe. Since then I have printed three discs from Dad's word processor with my memoirs plus other writings from Dad. Six pages were missing of the last part of my writing so I will continue as best as I can remember.

All during our stay in Surrey we were with six around the table until Jim and Babette married on June 28, 1986. Jim had met Babette some years ago when she spoke at a youth group in New Life Church. I have always enjoyed these times when our children were dreaming of "building their nest" and preparing for their wedding day. Now Dad has gone to his Eternal Home, I am even more thrilled that Dad and Murray officiated at their wedding as well as at our other children. It was a beautiful Service with eyes brimming with tears when Jim sang to his Bride.

On that day my Mother had a severe stroke and on her request we all prayed that she would be called Home soon. Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> we celebrated her Home going Service even though I could not be present there. Dad and I rejoiced for what she has meant to us in all those years. Her three visits and her faithful letter writing were precious to both of us. She was a great example to all.

After all our guests were gone and the time was there to think of our moving to Edmonton again. We went through a difficult time to come to a conclusion. This "call" had come as a total surprise to us. Somehow we both thought that we would move from Surrey to our place of retirement. Dad did not like the climate in B.C. too much and would rather live in Alberta.

Several times Dad said that I coughed less in B.C. I think it was more on his mind than I was aware of. But it all has worked for the good, since our Doctor sent us to Mayerthorpe for my health two years later. It shows me that God has His plan for our lives. Dad was eager to conclude his ministry in Edmonton and I gladly agreed with his decision.

I must admit that it felt like climbing a mountain. All the farewells was not the easiest and this time we had to leave Andy behind (he just had started

his own electrical business). Secondly, we found it very hard to uproot Stacy and Russell after eight years. Jim was happily married and we gladly left him in Babette's care, no problem there! The third factor was my health. Dad was aware of it but I do not know if he mentioned this to any of the children. My strength had been slowly diminishing and it seemed a big job to me; to do all the sorting, packing and cleaning. Of course every thing got done but at a slower pace and God was in control as always!

I am still amazed how He took care of every situation. Jim was chosen by Grace Community church to be their next Pastor. We were so happy about that. John took the time to move us to Edmonton; we found it very pleasant to have our son doing this job! John needed all his packing skills to leave nothing behind. The truck was overly full. Aug. 26, 1986 we arrived safely in the same home where we had lived before from Jan. 1966 - Aug. 1970.

It did not take very long to settle in with the four of us and I went along with Dad to visit most of the families. Stacy did most of the housework for me. She was a great help these two years in Edmonton.

In spite of taking more rest my strength did not return. July 19, 1987 Dad brought me to the Hospital in the middle of the night. I had woken up with a painful stiff arm which was caused by very high blood pressure. Dad stayed with me for a couple of hours and then went home to get ready for the Sunday morning Service. I stayed in for 12 days of observation. On Tuesday he left with our oldest grandson, David, for Louisiana to attend a World Conference of Churches. I had a hard time talking Dad into still going but I found it so sad that David would miss his trip with Opa. Just when we were making the decision our Doctor stepped in my room and he assured Dad that I had to stay in the hospital until they returned. I was glad that they could go.

July 31<sup>st</sup> (the day of Edmonton's terrible tornado) I came home again. We were told that they could not do anything for my heart or lungs. They did give me a diet for too high sugar and cholesterol. We decided to go to a Naturopath who gave me many different vitamins and also a strict diet of fruits, vegetables, fish, chicken and grains. It took months before some improvement came but we were so thankful that at least I was holding my own. I have no words for Dad's care and encouragement and also for all the

help Stacy was that year. I know that our whole family was standing with us; with their prayers as well as in this difficult time. We received so many blessings. God was with us from moment to moment and He still is and always will be.

April, 1988 brought Dad and I to Mayerthorpe with most of our furniture. This time we were blessed with our son Jack to move us. For four days we lived on the farm and three weekend days Dad worked back in the Church until a new Pastor was found in July, 1988. This was ideal for both of us. In the Edmonton parsonage, we added two easy chairs to our kitchen area and our bedroom were still complete. Dad could finish his work at Emmanuel and could get a fore taste of retirement and I could fill my lungs with fresh air. Our Doctor was very strong on that; to use some of his own words: "If I could, I would chase you to your farm; She needs it desperately."

Ten years we were privileged to live on the farm together. Words cannot tell what this has meant to both of us. We treasured every day and often said to each other that it was such a joy to be together all day long. I always went with Dad in the field, whether it was for fencing, hauling trees or poles or planting and digging potatoes. It was the same at home. Dad did the heavy work in the gardens and the vacuuming and washing windows etc.

In spite of all the good and helpful advice, my heart did not recover as we had hoped for. It still was racing at times and skipping beats too many times. This made us look more and more at chelation treatments, especially so, after we heard from Rick Timmer. He was healed through it and no open heart surgery was needed anymore. In Aug. 1997 we went to Dr. Sereda for the assessment. All tests were taken so that they knew which vitamins I needed to compliment the EDNA chemicals which were used. All the tests were good, so we could start as soon as we were able.

The last ten days of September, Dad went to Holland with John and Jeanne for a Van Leeuwen reunion. When he came home Dad said, Mom, I don't want to go to Holland anymore without you; "This is the last time." These last words he has said several times this last year and now it sounds almost prophetic.

Soon there after we left for our fall trip to B.C. We had a wonderful week with the families of Murray and Andy. In 1993, on the second of October,

Andy married Terri Arens. They had met in April of that year it was love at first sight! We all rejoiced at their wedding and received Terri with open arms (as we did all the life partners of our children). On our way back we drove through a bad snowstorm from Blue River to Valmont. I still can hear Dad say, "Mom we have to go earlier next year, I don't want to run into snowstorms anymore if I can help it." One week later we went to a Classis meeting in Calgary and visited with Rebekah and Greg, which we enjoyed very much. We stayed over night and had a wonderful time of sharing.

Soon after that trip Dad announced that we were to start my chelation treatments. This he said in response to what I had said; that I was longing for the long winter to be cozy together with Dad on the farm! So we went every Wednesday and Friday to south Edmonton. We left at 6:30 am and came home at 3:00 pm until March 27, except during Christmas, New Year and the month of March, we went once a week.

Feb.25, 1948 was the day that we went to the Town Hall to get our marriage license so that was the beginning of our official 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. We wrote in a special card to each other; What this celebration of our Golden Anniversary meant to us. I had written my part first. This card was a total surprise to Dad and I asked him to respond. After I read his part I had to write again. It almost sounds like a game but it was a moving experience to us; A gift of God, very precious. We also worked on a display of pictures to show at our receptions in Mayerthorpe and Edmonton. My health had much improved during the treatments, especially my heart. Dad was so happy and we were so thankful that God blessed these treatments so that we could enjoy all the festivities together. You should have seen Dad's face when I told him that my heart had not been so regular for years. He was so full of joy. I still don't know why I brought up the subject of death several times while we were celebrating. Now I see that it was all in God's plan in preparation of Dads Home going. We also talked about the 50 years which had passed so fast and about the future. We decided that we would stay on the farm as long as our health would permit. That was Dad's wish and I gladly agreed. There was so much more we talked about; our trips together to Holland in '58,'73,'81 and '94 that were events I can hardly bring under words. You have to feel the homesickness of leaving yourself. I have never learned the art of saying "good bye" to my loved ones out there. Dad was never homesick except for me and the family when he went without me !

The trips to Ontario we made together by car stood out too as well. In 1962 we went with the whole family to Uncle Andrew and Tante Nel and later together to celebrate Andrew's 70<sup>th</sup> & 75<sup>th</sup> birthdays. In the fall of 1995 we went together with Murray to Ontario. This was very special for us to drive together and be at Murray's friends in South Dakota and at Jim's installation as Executive Secretary of the Reformed Church and also to see Jim and Babette and family in their new home and surroundings in Paris. It was a wonderful trip and the beautiful fall colors on our way home was just one feast! We had planned to make that trip "once more" as Dad put it in the spring of 1998 but that was not to be.

Dad always loved to call children and grandchildren. You might have noticed that I did not phone that often; He took great pleasure in phoning family. I could hear his love for all of us also in his daily prayers for our whole family. The ten years of our retirement we often called, a feast. It was a crown on all the work he had done over the years.

"The land" was a gift of God. I remember the many days that we were in the field to fence in our quarter. It was a big job for Dad but he loved it. We seldom stayed longer in the field than three or four hours. I have many pleasant memories of our gardening as well; the beauty of nature, the quiet peaceful surroundings and the fresh air. I also remember the long walks in the field and during the winter months on the snow paths as we put ribbons on the trees so as not to get lost in our bush. We made several trails in different colors-north, east and west. And then coming home to our warm woodstove was the end of our walk. Yes, in the month of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary we talked about all these blessings we had received and were receiving daily. In that spirit of gratitude we celebrated our Golden feast. Just as Jim said at the celebration of Dad's Home going, we have lived our lives together with joy to the last minute.

God has been our comfort and strength as we cried together over Dads sudden departure and prepared for the Services and all the decisions which were to be made. The "joy of the Lord was our strength" indeed as I received that word in the early morning hours of the day of the Funeral; so that we could even sing at Dad's grave and at the Memorial Service. God is not only our Healer but also our Provider. I have received so much love and help from all the children with the selling of the farm and all that

needed to be done before I could move to B.C. The trip to Ontario with Anne (and back with Murk) and the days we spent together on the farm plus all the visits in our children's homes helped me. Now I see it as an endless stream of blessings which became a foundation to build my new life on.

I received a home at Murray and Carol's home with all the love and care which enabled me, by the grace of God, to adjust more and more to my new way of life. I feel completely at "home" now even though the longing for the past is still there. But that has become part of my life and is there to stay. I enjoy gardening here again in the fresh air and I love the flower garden and even the chickens have become my friends. Beside all this, I love to see the children growing up; Andy and Terri's Katie and John included, whom I see often now. I also hear and see much more about Murray's work first hand in Outreach Canada. I feel so richly blessed by the love and prayers from all our children and grandchildren and all the contacts I have with them by phone. It keeps me busy to find out their joys and difficulties and to pray for them and others. My joy and longing is that we follow what Dad taught and showed us in his life, which was a life of prayer guided by God's Word. He had a great love for the "the Kingdom work" in his support and in his writing and the truth that "Jesus is the Way, the Truth and (Eternal) Life."

I never dreamed that I would write my life story. When the children asked Dad to write his, I agreed and thought that it was a must. None of them could have remembered his stories in detail. After Dad had worked for months on his family tree, he began to write about his youth and asked me (as he always did when the morning was over) to read his writing. It was then that the thought came to me to write about my own youth as well. To read his made me start, that is all it takes. You might think, as I did, that there is lots of time to write and do other things which you would like to do. But if you step out of "full time service", whatever that has been, other events fills your calendar if God blesses you with health and strength. You might ask the question what this writing has done for me; was it difficult or was it fun? To me it was a fulfillment. It feels like I have added something to my own life; by walking through the years and writing down the experiences which make up life. For me it took much longer than I thought for the simple reason that you do not know what comes to mind next. I have come to the conclusion that our mind is the most intricate and miraculous computer. Your whole life is stored in it without you knowing it to the full.

When you sit down and start thinking about your youth or other parts of your life it is like opening a tap and the water keeps on running. It is hard to turn it off at times. You also have to be sure that you have the facts right. Several times I have asked my oldest sister about different things. You might think that it does not matter when you are a bit out but the fact is that you have to give a true and honest account (picture) of your life to those you love most. That is your goal.

I found it very emotional at times to relive the years of the war with all its fears and uncertainties. Also, especially our immigration; leaving our families behind plus everything that was dear to us was almost more than I could handle at times. Yet I never had any regret that I chose to go with my dear husband to a strange land. It became home to us even though we felt like Abraham when we left Holland. But just as he was sure that it was God's leading so were we and with that assurance, plus knowing that He would never leave nor forsake us, we were able to say goodbye to all and everything of the past. It was a time of learning to depend on God alone from moment to moment. I have always admired Dad's courage and determination in what ever he undertook. The first five years was a big adjustment for both of us. The next five years of study Dad's perseverance stood out and much hard work. I was so proud of him when he graduated from Western Theological Seminary even though I expressed it only with one single rose! We received much love from all the Churches we served. Dad's firm hand of leadership stood out. He was asked several times to go to other congregations "to make peace." I have been in many such meetings and was always impressed with his smile and even a joke which broke the tension. He loved to visit with Pastors and their Boards, to give his God-given counsel and encouragement. It was a highlight for him to do this during our retirement years as well as being involved in Classis. He has lived his life to the full. He loved us all so much and was content and thankful for all the Lord has blessed us with in difficult times as well. And I can say by the grace of God that my "cup has been running over" and still is. May we always give God the Glory which is due to Him.

"Be still, and know that I am God.  
I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth!  
The Lord of hosts is with us;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge."  
Psalms 46:10 & 11