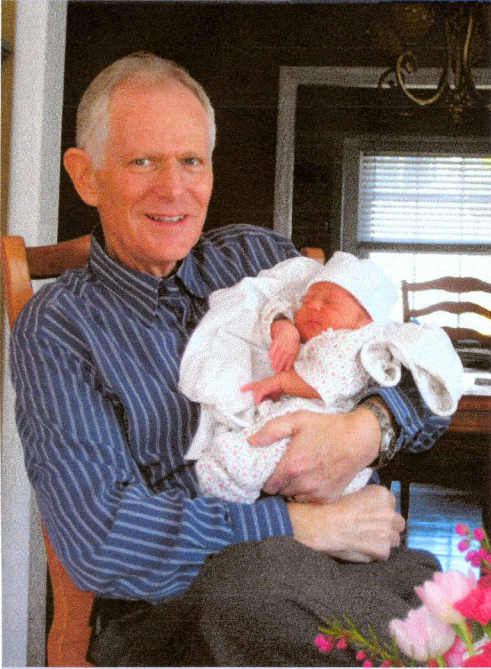


Tribute for Dr. Bob Petroelje

1948 — 2010



Bob and his Granddaughter, Naomi

In the late fall of 2005 I met Bob through the auspices of a mutual friend. The point of contact came because of Bob's pursuit of a degree in Bioethics at Trinity International University. I had served for 20 years on the ethics committee of Spectrum Health and theological ethics is my teaching field in the seminary. Subsequent discussions brought my evaluation of his program and in particular the paucity in their curriculum of any course in theological ethics. As a consequence of that discussion Bob signed up and took an independent study on Christian Ethics that he could transfer into his program at Trinity. From January through April of 2006 we met weekly for two and a half hours to discuss his reading and enrich its content from my teaching of the subject for over 30 years.

It became obvious immediately that God had brought a special man and a special friend into my life. His insatiable desire to learn and to serve Christ in this new aspect of his career was manifest in all of our meetings during this time. Friendship grew to love in a short time.

Over the next five years we met many times in the afternoon for coffee and continued discussions of bioethics. My lasting memories of those times include the infamous pad that would have three pages of questions organized in a precise logical order. After multiple cups of coffee a line would get drawn on the page with the promise we would address the other questions next time. Bob had developed leg pain that defied diagnosis and remedy that he accepted from the hand of the Lord. His intent was to pursue a second career in bioethics. To that end he was on the ethics committee at Spectrum Health and was teaching part-time at Grand Valley State University and the Grand Rapids campus of the Michigan State Medical School. I always marveled at his ability to accept this physical limitation even though it meant leaving his first love of serving Grand Rapids for 32 years as a board certified Otolaryngologist. He would often tell me that like Paul, he found God's grace sufficient for this continuing malady. Bob called me from the hospital with the unexpected and devastating news of inoperable and untreatable cancer. Our meetings over the next months took on a much different ethos for now it was ministering to my dying friend. The time was very brief from diagnosis to death so our meetings were packed with the significant content of Scripture. He told his wife and I what he wanted at his funeral and wanted full assurance that the focus would be on Christ and not on him. He died well. His faith was unwavering and his anticipation of seeing his Savior very strong.

Now that Bob has stepped into the throne room of heaven and seen his Savior and his God, I am sure he is overwhelmed again by the grace of God. To Laurie his wife, the love of his life and his companion for 40 years, we extend our Christian sympathy. To Elizabeth and Mark, his children, we say; ***Honor your father and your mother*** and thus build the spiritual heritage they invested in you and invest it in turn in your children. With you, we look forward to that morning when the ***dead in Christ shall rise first and we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall be caught up with them in the clouds and meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Amen, even so come Lord Jesus!***

The Peace of Christ to You!