

Lester DeKoster  
A Toast to Dick Rhem  
June 27, 2004

I fondly believe that if at some magic moment in the past few years my youngest grand-daughters, presently aged five and seven, could have fashioned life to their hearts' desires, they would magically have reduced an 'Uncle' Dick Rhem they in fact never met to the size of cuddly teddy bear - (imagine...all those whiskers once going to waste decorating his face)... and hugging him warmly, by turns, on their laps... Ahii, how joyous for us all! And Dick at his happiest in making them happy. One of the open secrets of his success here at Christ Community Church.

Richard Rhem is more than a successful preacher. He is himself a sermon. One he's preached in countless ways to countless parishioners, cloaking himself in felicitous speech to warm, encourage, enhearten and inspire by way of being who he is. Thus a lot of well-worn and valuable clichés have found invigoration in his ministry:

- he IS a man for all seasons, how well you know it;
- he IS a bridge over troubled waters, as many of you can testify;
- he IS ever to hand in times of need, and no less in times of joy and exuberance;
- he knows the tear, and he knows the lifted glass;
- he exudes warmth to conquer the chill of stress, discouragement and disappointment;
- he compensates what I think are, say, peculiarities in doctrine by reminding us that what we *are* always speaks so loudly that none can hear very well what we say, and thus life finds meaning and blessing. The stalwart fellow just over there in the shadows, applauding that sentiment could be, I think, John Calvin of Geneva.

Like the Duncan Littlefair Dick so effectively eulogized a few weeks ago, he gathered about him in you and many like you, a congregation gifted to realize in behavior the goals the Church across the centuries has been given being to seek and achieve. How well he has promoted that here, and you have supported him in the doing!

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Dr. Lester R. DeKoster was director of the library at Calvin College & Seminary, and professor of speech, editor of the Banner, publisher of the Christian Liberty Press, and author of 12 books about John Calvin and Calvinism. He loved to debate and lunched with Dick Rhem and friends every Tuesday until shortly before he died in 2009 at 93. See “There was a table down at Duba’s”.