

Celebration of the Life of Curtis Parkerson
March 7, 2010

Curtis grew up in a funeral home. He told me again recently that he wanted to have this Service on a Sunday because "Sundays get a good draw." He is loving this "good draw."

People keep asking me how I am personally doing. I keep telling folks that I am doing fine. My workload has dropped to half since Curtis went to Heaven.

His lifelong friend called H.E. told me, "Curtis called you his best friend. And I bet you he told you that I was his best friend." Everyone was a best friend in Curtis' world.

He loved talking on the phone. Before we ever met, one of the earliest conversations I had with him was in March of 2003 when we had a phone appointment. I was living in Europe. He lived here. 8 hours apart. We had to synchronize the call. I called at the agreed upon time. He answered his phone and then asked me to "hold." I could hear strange noises in the background. Sounded like coins going into a coke machine or something. Car engine. More coins. Sound of rushing water. It was on my dime from Europe. Then he got back on the phone and said he was at a car wash when I called and he did not want to lose his quarters so he was going ahead to have his car washed while we talked on the phone...if the cell phone connection worked. He was amazed that the cell phone worked in the car wash. I was amazed by the entire conversation.

He loved music. He was so proud of his brother Dan and all of his relatives who were singers. "We have music in our genes" he would tell me daily over the past 6 years.

He loved Mona, Jim, Vicki, and Hardin so much. For the entire 60 years he and Mona had, he was a dedicated father and good provider. Fidelity is a rare commodity.

He loved to argue with guys and hug girls. He and I would argue to the point where our wives would leave the room. He would tell me, "I have never had a preacher talk to me like you do." I would tell him I never had a parishioner as stubborn as he was.

He was a Church man. He tithed 10 % of his income (which he threatened to quit paying every argument), he was in church every Sunday, and he served in churches throughout his life. I often wondered how parents could raise a boy to so love and to be so faithful to the church for his entire life. He would select the day for Visitor Sunday -- always scheduled the contest for days when his family was in town and dragged to church.

He would sell some item, brag to me about how much he made, I would tell him he owed 10% of his profits to the church, and he would say, "Nope. I already tithed on the purchase end. I am not going to be double-taxed on my tithes!" So funny.

His Mona suggested we have our church baptisms in the River by their house. We have had over 40 baptisms and over 100 Baptism Renewals in that River over the past 5 years.

Curtis always commented to me of how much he enjoyed watching baptisms and seeing girls in bikinis float by in the river at the same time.

In the hospital near the end, he was wearing out his cell phone. As long as he was talking he was fine. One of his granddaughters said at his Burial this week that she had never seen Curtis so quiet nor had she ever seen him with his mouth shut. We all nodded.

Curtis and Mona started a tradition two years ago of inviting Christ the Redeemer Church members to join them during one Friday evening of Lent at St. John's Catholic Church at 5:30 pm here in town for a Lenten Fish Dinner (catfish...this is Texas!). Cost is \$5.

The way it started was that Curtis told me about this \$5 dinner and I simply announced, much to his surprise, that Curtis would pay for everyone's dinner. It worked well for us. 15 of us showed up two years ago for free dinners. \$75. Curtis grumbled the entire time, counting every person, paying for our Fish Dinner but making sure WE paid for our own desserts.

I privately then paid for his Tuesday morning breakfast (\$5 a morning) for the next 15 weeks, often paying him in dimes and pennies that he had to count out on his table, just to hear him moan. He never told anyone I paid him back in full.

The last time Pam saw Mona standing was at the Friday night St. John's dinner here in town last March, the Friday prior to Mona going into the hospital. It is a fond memory of Mona. Pam asked me this past Friday "Are we eating at St. John's tonight?"

When a group of people in this town selected him to head up a search committee to seek a new pastor, I came to San Marcos and interviewed with Curtis and his church. He impressed me with his large leather briefcase. I would ask him a question and he would open at that briefcase in front of my nose, obviously to flaunt the briefcase. He would look for papers but rarely find them. I just found out Thursday from Dale at PrimeWay Credit Union that Curtis stole that briefcase from the Credit Union just for my interview. He interviewed me with an empty, stolen briefcase.

Tricked by a briefcase. Tricked at the empty tomb. We all got tricked at the Tomb. And nothing else would ever be the same. Tricked for the good in our lives. God works that way. Fox like.

Thursday, at the Burial up in Terrell, Curtis was laid to rest by his Mona. It felt right. While we were standing there at the grave which is alongside the road there in Terrell, we looked up and saw a sign that read, "Lenten Fish Fry at St. John's Catholic Church." There in Terrell.

I told Curtis' brother Guy that he can now pay for our Lenten Fish dinners for our church members. He wrote: *however, my grief must have overcome me since I cannot remember*

agreeing to assume my dear brother's commitment regarding the fish dinners. I am a lot like Curtis in that the joking ceases in matters concerning money. I respectfully suggest that delinquent pledges, tithes, and careless commitments made by Curtis be graciously forgiven by his brethren. The spirit of Curtis obviously lives on!

Today Valerie is with us. She is the night manager at a restaurant here in town. She served and gave Curtis his Last Dessert - free - the night before his surgery. You never how much your kind acts to others mean in the overall scheme of things in life. She made him laugh with her kindness.

God is with us. God has welcomed Curtis into his Eternal Home. The questions are now flowing out of the mouth of Curtis. God's workload just increased. Curtis is with his Mona. He is with his Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen.

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