

Pat has asked me to say a few words about my friend Stuart. Most of what I will say could be said by any of you, because Stuart has been a friend to so many of us.

In 1961 some musicologists toured the remote villages of Wales. In one village they asked an old farmer how he managed to live so long in such harsh conditions. This is what he answered:

"The singing. There was so much singing then, and this was my pleasure too. We all sang: the boys in the fields, the chapels were full of singing, always singing. Here I lie. I have had pleasure enough. I have had singing."

When I first met Stuart he was singing. As one of our children put it, Stuart was the "big man with the loud voice". I liked that about Stuart. He wasn't afraid to sing. We sang together for the last seven years and I could always count on him to know when it was time to sing. There was nothing tentative about the way Stuart sang - he gave it everything he had from the first note to the last. And, if we got lost and sang the wrong thing, Stuart was the one who would say, "Kraig, could we take it again? We sound like a couple of donkeys with their tails in a knot" or some equally colorful metaphor. He had a wide and versatile range, as low as Bill, and almost as high as Ronnie. He made friends singing, here at Cane Creek, in the Community Chorus in Chapel Hill, with the Durham Samovars.

From what I saw of Stuart, from what I think most of us saw of Stuart, he lived a lot like he sang. He was not tentative: I think he holds the record for motions seconded in the least amount of time. When he made mistakes, he made them with flair. You knew when he was happy, and when he was annoyed, and when he was sad. Stuart knew how to "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Maybe it was because he was so up-front that I found it easy to talk to him about almost anything. He would listen, and probably have a few comments, and then he would extend grace. These are just a tiny few of the reasons that I love my friend.

I also liked Stuart. That may sound funny, having said that I love Stuart, to add that I liked him. But its true. We had a lot of common interests, and had I known him longer I am sure we would have found others. We both like mysteries and have traded our favorite authors back and forth for years. He could talk technology, or philosophy, or politics, or medicine, and we would have great discussions, usually without resolving anything except that we both had

strong opinions, but it was fun. And Stuart usually had a good joke to tell me, most often a music joke. He usually prefaced advice with, "Now I'm just a dumb ole Georgia boy, but..". I would love to be around when someone actually believed that.

Of all the things we shared, the most important is loving Jesus together. I got to know that side of Stuart when we were having our Saturday morning prayer meetings some years ago. Most men, myself included, grow up not talking much about Jesus. Its all right to get excited about the ACC tournament, but a little embarrassing to come right out and say, "Jesus is my Lord". Or, "I love you, my friend". With Stuart, I was able to say both. We did a lot of praying together over the years, much of it, I think, for people who were on hand to welcome Stuart home last Wednesday, people who are now waiting with Stuart to welcome us home. Stuart and I talked about that last Friday. That's something to look forward to.

In the meantime, my friend Stuart will be singing.

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