

When I think of Murray

Bea, when I think of Murray, your beloved husband, and family members, your father, grandfather, your friend, one of my heroes, I think of a walking encyclopedia. Murray truly amazed, intrigued, and fascinated me with how much he knew about what was going on in the world, in South America, in Africa, Ethiopia--in particular, its history, the growth of the church, the conflicts and joys, the pastors, fellow missionaries, government officials, etc.. He kept our Tuesday morning men's fellowship time—with Phil, Will, and Bill, and a few of us who didn't rhyme--up to date on you, his family, and we prayed for you as you each faced the things life threw at you, and us, whether farmers, missionaries, students or whatever. We shared with him, Bea, as he became your eyes and you became his ears. Murray was aware of those around him and what the joys and needs were, and he would articulate simply and clearly what those things were, so that we could pray.

Yes, I will remember a walking encyclopedia, a very practical but detailed encyclopedia. On my second to last visit with him in the hospital, though he was quite uncomfortable, he launched into a real explanation of what was happening in his beloved Ethiopia. He wasn't thinking of himself, but of others and in a most articulate way. Then he ran out of steam, we prayed short prayers, and I left, again challenged to be as involved as I could be in what goes on around me.

Bea, the note that Murray carried with him, which George Foxall passed on to me is the epitaph a young Benjamin Franklin wished to have engraved on his gravestone when he passed away, is so special. The epitaph did not make it, is not on his gravestone, but it is a well-known and a quoted piece anyway.

Franklin wrote it in 1728...62 years later he died:

"The body of B. Franklin, printer, like the cover of an old book, its contents worn out, and stript of its lettering and gilding, lies here. Yet the work shall not be lost; for it will as he believed appear once more, in a new & more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by the Author."

And so, as we gather here this morning, we do so to lay away another old book cover till its restoration time. We lay away the cover of a many faceted, God-centered life story, knowing that it is just that, we are laying away just the cover. We commit the body, the cover of the story, to a resting place here among others who, with him, are now continuing their stories around the throne of their God and Saviour, waiting for their promised new covers. "...we shall all be changed, recovered, restored, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality", so Paul tells us in Corinthians. So dear family and friends, we lay Murray's cover here with the promise that there will be a brand-new incorruptible body awaiting him and us on that great restoration day.

Shall we pray...Our great God and Saviour, Author of our lives and our salvation, Keeper of our souls, we give you praise and glory due You. You are now hiding Murray in your glory till he, and those of us who believe, receive our new coverings. Till then, bless this dear family with Your Comfort, the presence of Your Holy Spirit. Fold Bea in your tender loving kindness in the next days as memories pleasant come, bringing a new loneliness to her pathway. Be with each family member, as in the odd moments they remember parts of the story and miss Dad, Grampa, Brother, and Friend. Thank you for the exceeding precious promise of a coming day when in Your loving presence we are united again, never to taste the sorrow of this moment again. Thank You for being Murray's vision and may we grow in our love and gratitude to You as He did. Amen.

If you have flowers to lay on the casket...

Dust to dust and ashes to ashes till that great 'recovering' day!