

**Let's Go Deeper...**  
**Wednesday, April 26, 2017**  
**David Shirey**

I did something on Sunday I've never done before. I invited someone to a funeral. Two people, in fact. I perceived it as an evangelical gesture, an altar call, an opportunity to extend an invitation to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

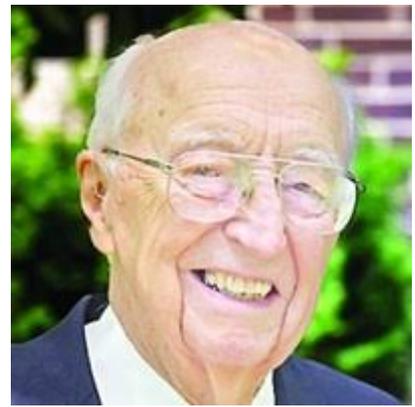


photo - John Lynner Peterson

Let me explain.

Jennie and I had out-of-town guests on Sunday and Monday evening. We've known St. Louisans Darrell and Marty Hughes for over thirty years. Darrell was on the Search Committee of Compton Heights Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1985 when they called me to my first full-time pastorate. Our newborn daughters, Betsy (Shirey) and Sarah (Hughes), were born within a few weeks of each other in 1989 and were dedicated together on my last Sunday at Compton. We've remained close throughout the years.

Darrell and Marty made a Kentucky swing on their "Recently Retired" Tour, arriving in Lexington in time for the 11 a.m. service on Sunday. We went out for lunch, then I took them to our place, got them oriented, and excused myself to prepare for Wayne Bell's 4:30 p.m. Memorial Service.

As I sat in my study and reviewed the Order of Worship, savoring in advance the music the choir would be singing and the congregational hymns, anticipating what Dan Moseley, Elizabeth King, and Brenda Bell would say about such a great soul, and imagining a throng of people filling our sanctuary and thanking God for breathing the breath of life and the breath of eternal life into Dr. Bell, I was overcome with a sense of joyous expectation for what I sensed would be Easter, Part II.

I decided I owed it to my friends to invite them to come. So, as I was retying my tie for the third worship service of the day, I walked downstairs and said, "I really think you ought to come to this service. I know you didn't know Wayne Bell, but you two love worship. I can assure you you'll be immersed in the height, depth, breadth, and width of the Good News this afternoon. Come join us.

And so it was that I became an evangelist... for a Memorial Service. And Darrell and Marty thanked me many times over for inviting them.

In these days following Wayne's service, yet carried along by the spirit of those hours, I have many thank yous to extend to:

- All of you who provided food and drink for the reception (*Hot hors d'oeuvres for 500, please.*) including 300 ham biscuits, 300 chicken salad croissants, 150 roast beef sandwiches, 15+ bags of meatballs, trays of smoked salmon, cheeses, and

fruit, fresh veggies galore, 20 dozen devilled eggs, 18 dozen small pecan tarts, 18 dozen lemon bars, 18 dozen brownies, and 16 gallons of punch.

- All the kitchen crew, including men from the Men's Breakfast (Wayne never missed a Men's Breakfast over the two years of our meeting) who helped clean up, wash up, and take down.
- Elizabeth King for weaving together the elements of the service-- words spoken, sung, and prayed by numerous voices-- into a brilliant tapestry of thanksgiving
- Mollie Sawyer and our hospitality, janitorial, and grounds crew for handling a wedding, musical recitals, two worship services, a Small Group Sign Up festival, a Memorial Service, and a reception in a 36-hour period.
- Our own Chartorn Renfro and his compatriots from Milward's for their professionalism seasoned with dignity and gracious warmth.
- Lois Kash, Shelly Ferguson, Mary Blanton Cotton and company for being Central's Hospitality Team whenever we have a funeral.
- Our inimitable choir, soloists Katherine Olson and Jon Elliott, and directors Michael Rintamaa and Dee Walker for the glorious proclamation of Rutter's *Requiem*, Hal Hopson's *A Prayer for Our Time*, and *The Hallelujah Chorus*.
- My wife Jennie who had a hand in everything from chicken salad and phone call recruitment to soap suds and silver polish.

I'll never forget Wayne Bell, nor will I ever forget the service of worship we were blessed to be a part of Sunday as we framed the 97+ years of his remarkable life and his and Virginia's 74+ year partnership in the gospel in an hour of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord and our God.

Tuesday at Noon, Jennie and I bid our friends goodbye as they headed off for the next stop on their Kentucky tour. We did some enjoyable things while they were with us. We hiked around McConnell Springs where Lexington was founded. In a nod to the horses, we toured Hallway Feeds and then went out to Old Friends to get an up close and personal look at retired Triple Crown champions. We ate out and then capped Monday's Holocaust Remembrance Day by watching a powerful documentary at the Kentucky Theater about Aristides de Sousa Mendes, a Portuguese consul whose moral courage and heroism saved 30,000 Jews and others from the German occupation of France. But the best thing we did together was to go to the worship service that was Wayne Bell's Memorial.

*And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" (Rev. 14:13)*