**July 23, 2015 – Burial Service for John Haggar**

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Burial services are funny things. Not funny, haha, but funny, strange. As one of the characters in the movie, The Big Chill, puts it, “They throw a great party for you on the one day they knowyou can't come.” It’s really wonderful to see so many of John and Gladys’ family members here, but of course sad for the reason.

Sadly I didn’t know John very well personally, although I felt like I did because of talking with Glady about him. And who would know him better, having spent nearly three-quarters of their lives together. From Glady I knew that John knew how to laugh at himself, especially when she beat him at backgammon. From her I knew that he had a God-given gift for fixing things, sometimes in an unorthodox manner, but always successfully. Although, I’m given to understand that anyone coming after him to repair the same appliance or whatever, might have found it hard to figure out exactly what John had done to it to get it going.

From Glady I learned that one of their favorite forms of entertainment was arguing with each other, since they didn’t agree on anything, but also that they never stayed mad. Five minutes after a heated debate, you would never know there had even been raised voices. And from her I learned that they were meant to take care of each other, which they did for sixty-six years. And that’s a pretty good run!

The times I did visit with John were always very entertaining. I remember Michael and I going over to their house on Thanksgiving, right after we moved here, and being introduced to the wonders of both WD-40 and homemade peppermint schnapps, of which John took a shot (or two) every day as preventive medicine. The schnapps, that is, not the WD-40. He insisted that we have some in our coffee, and I have to admit it was delicious!

I remember visiting him in the hospital after a particularly bad bout with his illness. As anyone who knew him at all knows, he hated the hospital. He was in the ICU on this day, but he was insisting that he would go home that afternoon. When a nurse came in, he told her so in no uncertain terms. She just smiled tolerantly and took his vitals. Knowing how sick he had been, I had expected to find someone pretty weak and out of it, but even flat on his back, you could feel the force of his personality, which didn’t allow any room for feeling sorry for himself.

John didn’t come to church much (and by much, I mean not at all), but that didn’t mean he didn’t have faith. In one of the Prayers of the People in our Book of Common Prayer we say the following words:

*For all who have died in the communion of your Church, and those whose faith is known to you alone, that, with all the saints, they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal, we pray to you, O Lord.*

John’s faith was known to Gladys and his family and perhaps to those who knew him well. But it was also certainly known to God. And God loves John Hagger and, I truly believe, holds him in his arms today, even as we celebrate his life and mourn his passing.

Because as sure as John knew that WD-40 and peppermint schnapps were good for what ailed you, inside or out, I know that what we heard today from St. Paul’s letter to the Romans is true:

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

And we can take comfort in that knowledge, and hopefully find peace in God’s love for John and for us, today and always. Rest in peace, John, in that place where there IS no pain or grief. And although heaven might not be in need of WD-40 or your tinkering skills, I’m pretty sure there will always room for peppermint schnapps!

Amen.