

EULOGY FOR DONALD G. HUNT

Delivered by Victor Knowles, July 8, 2005, at the funeral of Donald G. Hunt
Christ's Church at River Road, Ottumwa, Iowa

How does one adequately eulogize one who has accomplished so much for God and meant so much to so many people across the land and around the world?

Through connection with my father, Brother Hunt had been in our home several times when I was growing up – at Clay Center, Nebraska, Whiting, Iowa, and Hamburg, Iowa. When we lived in Boise, Idaho, I remember his visit because he got down on his knees and played marbles with me. And he beat me! Anyone who will play marbles with a kid has made a friend for life! And that he was! Of course, I also remember him from our visits to Centerville every August for the big (*hot* – weather-wise and otherwise!) preaching rally. I recall standing at his literature table and looking at some of the booklets. One had a blue cover and pictured a man in a boat, going over the falls on his back to his destruction. It was Brother Hunt's booklet, *Backsliding*. I've been afraid to backslide ever since! Another had a red cover. It was Brother McMorrow's book *From the Dance Floor to Hell!* I tell you, never in my high school days did my foot slide out onto a dance floor!

In August 1964 I enrolled at Midwestern. Brother Hunt selected me to be in his prayer group that met early each school day morning. I have all of his chapel sermons for those four years in my notebooks. The classes I remember most that he taught were Advanced Life of Christ, Advanced Homiletics, Old Testament Prophets, Church History, Restoration History and Journalism. Brother Hunt helped launch my own writing career by publishing many of my early writings in the *Voice of Evangelism*.

Since my graduation from MSE in 1968 we carried on a regular correspondence right up to last week. He was scheduled to do a video interview with me on July 5 at Good News Productions, International in Joplin, set up by the new FAITH LEGACY project created by his son and namesake Don, and David Schwartzkopf. We had talked several times on the phone about the interview. On July 1 I emailed him five pages of questions I planned to ask him (and also Margaret), so they could be familiar with them before the cameras started rolling. He had also planned to give me a draft of his latest proposed book for me to look over before he published it. Preaching, plans, projects, right up to the end!

What kind of a man was Brother Hunt? I jotted down these brief descriptions the day after he died.

He was a son of the soil – an obedient son – an early riser – a diligent student – an ardent personal worker – a flaming evangelist – a noted author – a respected educator – a loving husband – a devoted dad – a doting grandfather and great-grandfather – a faithful friend – a happy camper – a nature lover – a devout man – a considerate correspondent – a

consecrated Christian – a dedicated disciple – a separated saint – a compassionate visitor – a tireless worker – a mentor to many, on and on the list could go.

He had an honest heart – a tender conscience – a wonderful wit (remember how his eyebrows arched when he was telling something humorous?) – and ever and always, a Christ-like character.

He was a fair-minded – hard-working – clean-living – peace-loving – project-oriented – time-conscious – fully-surrendered – old-fashioned Christian.

He was detailed in his research – careful in his selection of words – unsparing in his denunciation of sin – thoughtful in his remembrance of others – sympathetic to the sick and suffering – patient in his own afflictions (which, thankfully and remarkably, were few) – principled in business – conservative in his values – liberal in his giving – moderate in all things – and most important of all, “faithful until death.”

He was last in line at a church potluck – last to leave the church building or campgrounds – even loathe to leave any gathering devoted to spiritual matters. But he was first to volunteer – first to put his hand to the plough for a project – first to donate to a worthy cause – first to preach the Word and defend the Faith.

Speaking of preaching, I believe the last time I heard him preach was on June 9, 2002. Evelyn and I were in Ottumwa to see her mother and we attended the Finley Avenue church where he was preaching that morning. I always took notes when I listened to him preach. His sermon was “Agree Together To Do Right But Not Evil” based on the account of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. His premise was if people can agree together to do evil they can also agree together to do what is right. He told of a calling episode where he was trying to get a man to agree to do right, that is, become a Christian. He was getting nowhere. Suddenly he said to the man, “Let’s go rob a bank!” Startled, the man said, “No!” Brother Hunt pressed him. “Why not?” The man answered, “Because it’s wrong!” Brother Hunt replied, “Well, I’m trying to get you to agree to do right. You won’t agree with me to do something evil so why don’t you agree with me to do something right and become a Christian?” Vintage Donald G. Hunt!

To me there are two scriptures that perfectly describe the life of Donald G. Hunt. The first is Romans 12:11, “Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” The other is 1 Corinthians 15:58, “...steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

There are several phrases from the hymns of the church he loved that also appropriately describe the life of Brother Hunt. One is “True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful, and loyal, King of our lives, by Thy grace we will be; under the standard, exalted and royal, strong in Thy strength, we will battle for Thee.” Another is “Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord, by the power of grace divine; let my soul look up with a steadfast hope, and my will be lost in Thine.” And then “Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a purpose true, dare to make it known.”

When I learned of Brother Hunt's death, I called Seth Wilson, his dean from college days. Brother Wilson told me, "He was as pure in his devotion to God – all the time – as anyone I have ever known. I respected him for his diligence, Bible memorization and teaching so well." Breathes there a soul among us who could not say "Amen" to that?

Apart from my own father, no man on earth has influenced my life for Christ more than Donald G. Hunt. I know that I am not alone in feeling this way.

Let us let him have the final words in this eulogy. First, from his autobiography:

"Knowing it is given to no one to live on here forever, I continue to cherish Paul's great statement in Philippians 1:21: 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' What wonderful provision God has made for us while we live and when we die! 'Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's' (Romans 14:8). I have so lived, labored, believed and hoped so that I might be greeted with Christ's wonderful words, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord' (Matthew 25:21).

Finally, from the closing pages of *Taking a Stand*, a book co-authored by William E. Paul and myself in 1996 in which we asked him if he had any closing words. Brother Hunt replied,

"...I pray that when the time comes for me to lay down my tools and armor in death, the church locally and abroad will be better because I, along with others, have lived and served in sincerity and truth."

Family and friends, let us pick up his tools and armor and go forth – to live, to love, and to labor 'til the Master comes!