

A Eulogy for Tom Bost
July 10, 2006
Russ Dean, Park Road Baptist Church

Tom Bost was a “home body.” At least, that’s what his father, Bobby, says. He didn’t care about getting out and going. As a child, Tom wanted to be at home. Even as a youth, when the kids at church were taking trips, Tom wasn’t interested. And when his parents dropped him off for his first year at NC State, Tom later admitted if he’d have had a car of his own... he would have followed them home! He lasted a year, but the next fall, he was back in Charlotte where he could finish his college years at UNCC – close to home!

Some kids are always on the go. Some youth just can’t settle down. Some adults seem to like the road and the world better than the comforts of their own sofa – and that’s fine. But that wasn’t for Tommy, as his mother affectionately calls him. Tom Bost was a home body. And it served him well. According to both of his parents, Tom “never caused any problems – except for a few speeding tickets!” Bobby and Agnes, let me tell you, if you raised a son to adulthood and the worst trouble you can recall him getting into is a few speeding tickets, then I say to you, “Well done. Well done, good and faithful servants!”

Agnes told me that her son was “always was a lovable person, but not very expressive about that.” I wasn’t surprised to hear that! Tom was kind and thoughtful, but in a quiet way. He was a good neighbor, always available when someone needed a helping hand. Tom often made up for his lack of words by sending cards. Agnes says he never missed an occasion, and always penned a few kind words of appreciation in his

carefully selected cards, expressing what his parents meant to him, in writing, in a way he was not able to do with words.

Tom Bost had a dry wit. The family knew to expect this as they sat together. He didn't speak a lot, but when he did, it was often to say something that brought laughter to the room. He loved the Three Stooges, and had a number of DVD's of their old sketches. One of my favorite memories of Tom, because it is so characteristic of Tom, is seeing him at the door of the sanctuary, standing there as one of our ushers – sporting his favorite Three Stooges necktie. I loved it, because that was Tom.

As a child, Tom loved the electric trains that his dad bought for him. And he loved to take his toys apart. Sometimes he hardly had them out of the box before he had torn them apart, just to see how they worked. He was good with his hands and could build and fix most anything. Something in Tom's mind made him curious about things, how they went together, how they worked, and this mechanical fascination finally found its home in a love of old cars. There was always one in the Bost's car port in Mint Hill that Tom was tinkering with. He had broken several cars down completely, along with his dad's tractor, and put them back together. This was his "cup of dish" as Bobby puts it, and he was passing this love on to Karl and Wesley. Karl used the word "mechanic" when I asked what single word best described Tom. There was the old "Cuda" in the yard that they were rebuilding together. Karl, you'll have to finish restoring this one for yourself. It will make your dad proud.

Karl, after hearing about your father, I can't think of anything that would make him any happier, for what the family told me yesterday was that Tom's life was centered in two very different loves: his cars and his boys. Karen reflected, poignantly, that she

never remembered Tom being as happy as he was on each of the two days he stood in the hospital delivery room holding a brand new son. Wesley and Karl: your father loved you. You were his very best accomplishments, his greatest joy. Remember that. Even if, as your grandmother has told me, he didn't always know how to say it, your father loved you, and was committed to you. The very best of who Tom Bost was, he has passed along to you, so make him proud. Remember the good times you had together. Wesley, don't forget all of those boxing matches you had together – even if he usually won. And each year as you carve the pumpkin at Halloween, make it funny, like he always did. Karl, when you see 4th of July fireworks each year, remember the sparkle he had in his eye when he held you in that hospital room, and saw himself in your own eyes. You two young men are his living legacy. You are the life Tom will keep living among us.

Though Tom was also quiet about his faith, he was raised in the church, and never strayed far from it. You can tell a man's real commitments not so much by what he says as what he does, and even through some difficult family times, Tom was never far from church with his boys. He didn't just send them. He came with them, and I appreciate that example very much. The preacher of Ecclesiastes says, "*Better is a handful with quiet than two handfuls with toil and a chasing after the wind*" (4.6), and the prophet Isaiah tells us, "*In quietness and in trust shall be your strength*" (30.15). Tom Bost was a man of few words, but I believe there was a quiet trust there that spoke of a confident and abiding faith. Because of that, we have gathered here, not only to give thankful remembrance for his life, but to give praise to his God.

In times of death, a family is not always perfectly honest about someone, and you can certainly understand that. But yesterday as those who knew Tom best to shared a little of him with me, his father offered these words: “Tom was a bit, well, peculiar, to be honest.” I smiled and glanced around the room as Bobby continued: “You know the Bost family can be a bit contrary – and his mamma had a little to do with how he was, too!” Bobby, I love your honest about your son, because the truth is, each of us is “a little bit peculiar, to be honest.” There is no such thing as “normal” when it comes to human life and personality. Some of God’s children are musical and some are mechanical; some are talkative and good with words and some send cards for every occasion; some are serious and stern, some are fashionable dressers, concerned with what everyone else thinks of their image and some wear Three Stooges neckties and often make people laugh; some people send their kids to church, or don’t care if they go or not and some care enough, even if they don’t talk much about it, to come with them; some of God’s children are travelers, explorers, fascinated with the world beyond and some, well, some are just home bodies. It was the way God made him. And for this, we ought to celebrate.

Christian faith is, I believe, a faith for every day living, for the here and now, a living hope that God’s kingdom may in fact come, *on earth, as it is in heaven*. But Christian faith also gives us hope on these days, hope that when all the life we can know has ceased, there is more life yet to be. Hope that when that place we have loved to call home no longer matters, another home awaits.

For Tom Bost, and for a new home, thanks be to God!

*Just think of stepping on shore and finding it heaven
of touching a hand, and finding it God’s
of breathing new air, and finding it celestial
of waking up in glory, and finding you’re home!*

