

Epitaph on Mrs. M. Higgins, of Weston*William Cowper (1731–1800)*

Laurels may flourish round the conqueror's tomb,
 But happiest they who win the world to come:
 Believers have a silent field to fight,
 And their exploits are veiled from human sight.
 They in some nook, where little known they dwell,
 Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell;
 Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,
 And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ*In the Nick of Time***Two Faithful Servants***Jon Pratt*

On October 23, 2021, I was privileged to attend the funerals of two people I greatly respected, Laurie Westerling and George Cable. Both were native Minnesotans. Both lived a long time—Laurie was 80 and George 92. Both were saved during their teens. Both were married to their spouses for a long time—Laurie to Dick for 58 years and George to Romelle for 69 years. Both had two children. Both were friends of Central Seminary. Both died from complications due to Covid. And both were faithful servants of God who persevered in the faith right to the end of their earthly lives.

Psalm 116:15 reminds us that the death of the Lord's saints is precious in His sight. Based on my personal observations as well as the corporate testimony of others who knew them, I am quite sure they heard "Well done, good and faithful servant" as they departed this life and entered the next. And though we are saddened by the loss of these dear saints, we are comforted by knowing that both are currently enjoying abundant joy in the presence of the Savior they adored (2 Cor 5:8).

In God's wise providence Laurie spent her life as a stay-at-home wife and mother; George spent his life as a pastor and church planter. And by God's grace both fulfilled their vocations as trustworthy stewards of the gifts and calling God gave them. So what did faithfulness to their gifts and calling look like? Please allow me to give my observations of these two lives lived well for the glory of God.

I first got to know Laurie 37 years ago when she hosted my girlfriend Elaine (who is now my wife) and I after a double date with Laurie's daughter Nancy and her boyfriend to a wonderful meal at her home (the enchiladas were fantastic!). Nancy and Elaine had already been friends since high school; they were in each other's weddings; and their friendship continues to this day. I have also experienced Laurie's kind service through her interaction with Central Seminary. Laurie lived only a few blocks from the seminary and she frequently volunteered her time on our campus, helping with direct mailings (as recently as two weeks before she died) and seminary events such as the annual golf tournament (as recently as two months before she died). After Dick passed away in 2018, she generously donated thousands of his stamps (Dick was an avid philatelist) to the seminary.



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From these two vantage points—the husband of her daughter’s friend and the dean of the seminary where she volunteered—I observed what a faithful servant does. In Laurie’s life I saw Proverbs 31:10–31; 1 Tim 5:9–10; and Titus 2:3–5 displayed in living color. I know that Dick trusted her entirely as she did “him good, and not harm, all the days of her life” (Prov 31:11). She served her daughters well as they both testified at the funeral (Prov 31:21, 28). She “looked well to the ways of her household,” and certainly taught her daughters to do the same (Prov 31:27; Titus 2:5). She ministered in her local church in many ministries including choir and women’s Bible study groups (she once invited me to join her group to talk about missions’ trips in which I had participated). She also served several years as a discussion leader for Bible Study Fellowship. If Fourth Baptist Church had had a roll for widows over 60 (like that of the Ephesian church where Timothy ministered – 1 Timothy 5:9–10), Laurie would have met the qualifications with ease: 1) faithful to her husband; 2) had a reputation for good works; 3) brought up her daughters; 4) showed hospitality; 5) cared for the afflicted; and 6) devoted herself to every good work. I thank the Lord for granting me the opportunity to observe His work of grace in the life of a faithful wife, mother, friend, and church member like Laurie Westerling.

I first met George Cable in the summer of 1983 at Camp Chetek where George was the Bible teacher for the week of family camp, teaching on “The Challenge of Christian Maturity.” I had just finished my freshman year of college and was dating a girl from his church (whom I would later marry). Even at the young age of 19, I was enthralled by George’s clear and biblical teaching.

Two years later I joined Chisago Lakes Baptist Church, a congregation George shepherded for 21 years. The next summer George provided premarital counseling for Elaine and me, and he officiated at our wedding. I also served as his Assistant Pastor for 5 years after my graduation from seminary. Spending 21 years at one church is certainly a sign of faithfulness in pastoral ministry (1 Cor 4:2), but this was only *one-third* of the years he served as a pastor! Prior to his time at Chisago Lakes, George served as a pastor and church-planter in 14 different Wisconsin churches over a period of 25 years (1951–1976). And even after stepping down from the pastorate at Chisago because he needed heart surgery at age 68, he could not tolerate the notion of retirement. So he served for another 13 years as pastor of Sunrise Bible Church, situated in a village near North Branch, MN. You can do the math: he served in pastoral ministry for over 59 years!

George was loved and appreciated for his straightforward expositional preaching. During his Minnesota years he was a regular speaker at Central chapel, even bringing the commencement address in 2011. I always enjoyed discussing George’s sermons with other hearers, and, after learning of their appreciation for the encouraging and challenging words they had just received, I would (knowingly) remark, “Not bad for someone who never

went to seminary, huh?” The dumfounded looks on their faces were telling. Indeed, George Cable had only attended Bible college (Northwestern College in Minneapolis and his diploma was signed by then-president Billy Graham). But he made the most of his education, and he was one of those rare, self-taught individuals who learned how to preach, plant churches, and feed spiritual truth to people seemingly on his own. To be sure, he had mentors and friends from whom he sought counsel, and with their help and God’s blessing George excelled and thrived in the noble vocation of pastor-teacher.

Time would fail me to tell of George’s love and care for his wife, Romelle, and his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Furthermore, he modeled well the qualifications of an elder as described in 1 Tim 3:2–7 and Titus 1:6–9; no one could serve as many churches for as many years as George did without these qualities woven into the fabric of his life. Finally, George knew how to have fun, whether fishing, watching baseball, or serving the Republican party of MN (though politics were certainly more than “fun” for him).

What an honor to have known and observed the lives of Laurie Westerling and George Cable. I praise the Lord who gave them eternal life and who enabled their faithfulness to Him.



This essay is by Jon Pratt, Vice President of Academics and Professor of New Testament at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.
