

Ed Bartlett

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Words before Mike and others scattered Ed Bartlett's ashes into the San Francisco Bay.

Sandy reminded us yesterday of how Jesus boiled faith down to its essence, two requirements: “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31).

Like Sandy and Nicole and Laurie so eloquently said, even a quick glance at Ed Bartlett’s life revealed an abundance of these things: his feasting, love of life, loyalty and fidelity to Ann, prosperity, generosity, humility, honesty, transparency, and a deep sense of responsibility to help others thrive.

I also got a glimpse into Ed’s internal, daily, explicit relationship with Jesus once when he thought I was questioning his faith. He responded with indignation, “Of course I love Jesus.” All these things and more I believe he could experience because God created Ed in his own image. Imago Dei (Latin). Just like God created each of us. Franciscan friar Richard Rohr said it this way: *If we are created in the image and likeness of God, then whatever good, true, or beautiful things we can say about humanity or creation we can also say of God exponentially. God is the beauty of creation and humanity multiplied to the infinite power.*

I believe that there’s a direct relationship between the impulse we have to thrive on earth and a Reality outside of ourselves, Heaven. That Heaven exists now in ways that we only get whispers, glimpses, whiffs, hints of. So to end, I want to share part of a Spoken Word poem that Jesus suggested I write, imagining one aspect of waking up in the Actual Reality that our lives on earth are only pointers to.

Soul, I think that when you first get to heaven you’ll recognize all the people you’ve known who are there. You’ll be amazed at the beauty, complexity, and depth of each one. Their gifts and pleasures you experienced on the Old Earth will wisp away into distant memory because of the Real Him/Her. A person’s slapstick humor will leave you rolling hysterically on the ground, a tongue-in-cheek comment will fill your entire body with a slanted pleasure, a

play on words will spiral into an exploration of connections/meanings/allusions/metaphors that could take an eternity to plumb.

Someone's unorthodox intellect will suck you in like a whirlpool—confused, then startled, then amazed. You'll experience all of the warmth and joy and gifts of your friends and family without the tarnish of pretending, anxiety about acceptance, ego-boosting motives. Every encounter will surpass the most enjoyable, pleasant, surprising “This is what life should be” moments of your Old Earthly life. No barriers. No worries. No wiles.

God will have no trouble reconstructing Ed's ashes into his new body, one that will carry him into love, growth, and adventure forever.

For more poems like these, see www.brianatplay.com/first-moments-in-heaven.