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December 1, 2018

TWIMC,

Will and Sandy McRaney, along with several others, made our transition to NOBTS and our eventual home a huge blessing. Karen and I couldn't have asked for better assistance in finding all the right people to relocate our family to the NOLA area. Our new-found friends hosted us and made helpful suggestions. When we bought a home not far from several others living off campus, the resulting commuter "carpool" produced some profound friendships: Will and Sandy certainly helped shape that.

My first, and lasting, impression of Will is this, he loved people. Will possessed a magnetic personality; he always attracted people. Partially, this derived from his height; mostly though it flowed from his easy going personality. Having been a college athlete, Will knew when to be intense and when to relax. As such, his students reveled in his provocative lessons on evangelism during the turbulent times of post-modern academia. Will was always on the cutting edge of curriculum development for his discipline. He published one of his books during those early years of carpool. Often, with our mixed bag of disciplines, we haggled over ideas during our daily trek (about two hours combined). Such proximity fosters community, and our little group had that in abundance.

My second impression of Will centers on his passion for biblical justice: he used his voice for others. He was a forceful advocate. Though some focused upon the traditional church, Will sought to include everyone else. His personal life personified his pastoral passion--Will used his love of sports to evangelize our community. In fact, he got involved with sports teams, serving as a chaplain (before that was the norm). He used his talents to train neighborhood children, as well as assist local high-school coaches. Because of this, Will was always looking for a way to make Christ known to the non-religious. He enjoyed using his gifts and talents to open doors that others had little or no access to. Likewise, Will and Sandy enjoyed helping people. I quipped to my wife, not long after moving, that Will was kind of person "who would give you the shirt off his back." For all the positive indicated here, Will's passion for justice occasionally got him into conflicts with those "less innovative." For me, Will was a great friend (and still is). Perhaps to others, he was an acquired taste. In my opinion, Will lived his life to make a kingdom impact; and, Will didn't mind helping anyone--so long as the need was real.

Will McRaney behaved himself as a godly man during all the years that we carpooled together. He was consistent in his walk--on the job and off. Will invested himself in striving to create thinking evangelists, and he shared his faith with the community, as well. So, if I had to select the best words to capture the essence of Will McRaney (based upon those five years of carpool and work events), I believe these accurately reflect him: loving, faithful, innovative. and focused.

Though I'm unsure of the context of how this document will be utilized, this one thing I am sure of--Will McRaney is the "real-deal" of a man of God who desires to see the lost saved and the saved sanctified. He's a family man. Reflectively, I suppose that Will is more like a missionary who sees doing things differently as a necessity imposed by cultural context. My life and ministry is certainly blessed and better because of our relationship from those years ago.

With Grace and Peace in Christ,

Archie W. England

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