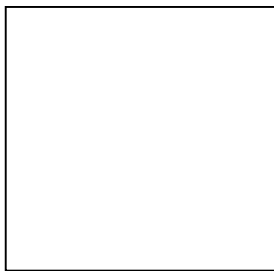


Memories of

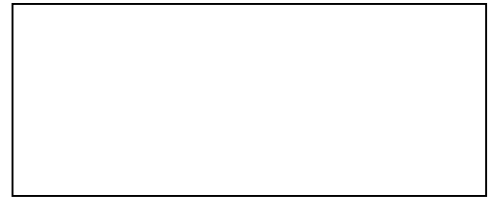
Steve Rehn

by

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SIL International
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Steve & Pat in African costume - 2005



Kenya Literacy Course staff:
Steve, Pat, Cathy, Tanya, Elke

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR STEVE'S EMBODIMENT OF CHRISTIAN MANHOOD

I first met Steve in 2004 when he joined the staff of the M.A.-level Literacy Course held in Kenya for literacy leaders from five African nations. It was a pioneer venture to take place over the space of three years, and, as the Director, the risks inherent in so many educational and cross-cultural challenges lay heavy on my shoulders. I had worked with the other staff members before, but Steve was an unknown who had volunteered to accompany the Cameroonian delegation and help mentor them in view of possible language barriers.

As it happened, visas were delayed, and the Cameroonians were unable to arrive in time. From Cameroon Steve e-mailed an SOS--if I could provide him the course material, he would teach the first week's lessons. And he did, with excellence. The Cameroonians arrived a week late but on par with their peers.

That was "our" Steve. From the moment he arrived, he was in the middle of the action--whether setting up the classroom, teaching through a skit, modeling a strategy, or guiding group discussions. Time after time, when I was overwhelmed, he noticed and came alongside picking up an extra task--another class to teach, an errand to run, checks on sick students, helping compile grades... Nothing was too much trouble, and whatever he promised, he delivered.

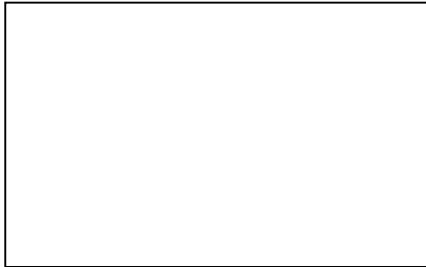
He accomplished it all with an inimitable zest, glorying in the new experiences, delighting in companionship with participants, excitedly planning fun nights, ripping off to town on his bicycle to pick up supplies, a treat or aspirin... howling with laughter at dining table tales... winning a place in all our hearts.

Steve was also a consummate athlete. He would run three to seven miles before breakfast and return exhilarated. He hiked, back packed, and cycled at every opportunity. He played soccer and volley ball with might and main, and--win or lose--emerged smiling through thick layers of dust and sweat. In the process he had set a sterling example of good sportsmanship.

Steve demonstrated fidelity. He always spoke of his wife with love and admiration, and, though so friendly to all, guarded careful boundaries.

And Steve was unusually tender. He whole-heartedly loved those around him and found ways to encourage, like the single sun flower for each staff member painstakingly brought by bicycle over the rocky road, and the hand-written notes of thanks penned at the end of courses. He was passionate about his Saviour, delving deeply into God's Word, leading us in chapels and Sunday services, worshipping with exuberant singing in African style, serving communion with flatbread and kool-aid, exhorting us to surrender all to Jesus and to affirm each other.

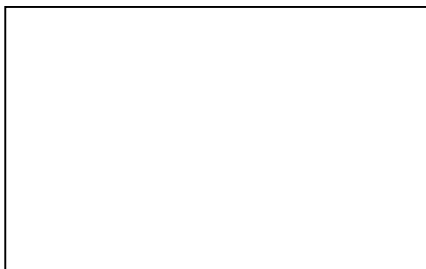
No measure can quantify the depth of Steve's impact on our mostly-male course participants. The genuine faith of this masculine man lived out in practical, joy-filled ways set an example that will affect lives forever. Though we feel deeply bereft and the field of Literacy has suffered a devastating loss, we are profoundly grateful for the gift of his presence among us. Thank you, Mr. & Mrs. Rehn, for rearing such a son. Thank you, Nicki, for loaning him to us. We pray for your consolation in these hard days. Most of all, ***thank you, Lord, for demonstrating through Steve how a real Christian lives.*** May we all follow his lead and leave as much good behind.



Ever ready to help, Steve sets up the video projector for class



Steve and Elijah demonstrate a linguistic consultation



Steve and Elke show how writing systems are established



Participating in a small group discussion