

A Tribute to Steve Hill

After many years of a courageous battle with cancer, **Steve Hill** has gone to be with the Lord.

Who can find words to describe his life and the impact he had on millions of lives? Who can describe his burning passion for the lost and his unflinching zeal for the Lord?

Steve and I were sovereignly connected through our friendship with **Leonard Ravenhill**, the saintly intercessor and broken-hearted author of *Why Revival Tarries*.

It was through Bro. Len that we got to know each other in the years before the **Brownsville Revival**, and it was a Ravenhill quote that became famous through Steve at Brownsville: "The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized during the lifetime of the opportunity."

That quote also described Steve's life as a believer. He was running his race with intensity and focus—not sitting on the sidelines or strolling along—and he was running so as to win.

I will never forget the years we had together in Brownsville, **praying** for people every night until we were ready to drop, looking into his reddened eyes (either from weeping or from lack of sleep or both) and hearing him urge sinners to come running to the altar in repentance.

Twice every year, Brownsville would hold a pastors' conference, and the crowds would be even larger, as 1,500 leaders attended the meetings that week.

I always looked forward to them, since it gave us the ability to minister to men and women who in turn could minister to thousands of others. And it was a wonderful time for Pastor Kilpatrick to pour into his fellow pastors.

But Steve found those weeks difficult, since, as much as he

loved those pastors and their spouses, he wanted to reach the lost and backslidden. That was what moved him day and night.

During the pastors' conference one year, he was looking through the window of the office where we met before the service, and he noticed two young people walking toward the doors of the main building, and by outward appearance, they appeared to be quite unsaved.

A few seconds later, he noticed them walking away from the building, which had long since been filled to capacity. (In those days, the crowds would begin to get on line at 6 a.m., waiting for the doors to open at 6 p.m. The service then started at 7 p.m. and went past midnight, four days a week. But with so many leaders in town, even less people made it into the main building and instead went to one of the overflow facilities.)

Well, these young people weren't willing to go to an overflow room, and when Steve saw them leaving, he called one of the ushers and said, "Go run down the street and get those two young people and put them in the front row. And take two pastors from the front row and put them in one of the overflow rooms."

At the end of the service, those two lost sinners were on their knees at the altar, getting right with God.

That was my friend **Steve Hill**, an evangelist to the core of his being.

I remember another service when Steve planned to preach from Luke 13, the parable of the fig tree owner who was about to chop the tree down because it had not born any fruit and its allotted time was running out. To illustrate his message, Steve was carrying an ax on his shoulder.

As we talked before the service in a side office—with Steve carrying that ax as we talked—we both became so overcome by

the reality of the message (this could be the last night before judgment for some people there!) that we broke down crying.

Needless to say, many more tears were shed at the altar that night as men, women and children fled to the mercy seat as Steve pleaded with them to stop playing games with sin and to give their lives to Jesus.

That was a snapshot of Steve's life, part of a panorama of images representing many years of sold-out ministry for Steve and his devoted wife, Jeri, both of whom served as missionaries in Argentina before Brownsville and who continued to minister throughout America and around the world until his body could not hold up any longer.

Even as he battled cancer, Steve began to reach out through the Internet to the Muslim world—he became consumed with a vision to reach them—and he was thrilled to receive the emails from former Muslims, newly saved through this gospel outreach. He also launched the Prodigals Only website, and he was staggered by the glorious reports he received.

Steve was also a tremendous encourager, often calling just to speak words of appreciation and love, preferring to boast in the Lord and lift others up than to boast about his own exploits.

He was also a lot of fun—he could laugh as well as he could cry—and if there was a new place to see or a new experience to be had, he was ready to go do it and see it. Steve Hill was a man who really lived.

But he is gone now—it's hard to write while crying, but I'm trying—and as I told him one of the last times we talked, we still don't have anyone to replace him, someone with his heritage and intensity and burden and faith, imperfect like the rest of us, but a true general in God's army, without a doubt.

And as I think of the enormity of this loss for Jeri and the kids, I can't help but think that Steve, along with his precious family, would like nothing more than for everyone who came to faith through his ministry, everyone who came back to the Lord through his ministry, everyone who was touched and changed and delivered and transformed through his ministry to make a fresh new dedication to love Jesus with total devotion and to go for lost souls.

May Steve Hill now be like a seed planted in the ground that dies, only to bring forth much lasting fruit. And may there be a supernatural multiplication of Spirit-anointed, Jesus-centered, revival-carrying, sin-hating evangelists raised up in his name and sent out to America and the nations.

Enjoy your reward, dear brother.

I miss you deeply already, but I'm thrilled that you are now in the presence of the One you loved so much, finally seeing Him face to face.

We'll continue the fight in your honor down here.

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