**In Memory of Dr. Steve Smith**

# March 11, 1962–March 13, 2019

After decades of faithful service furthering the gospel across the world, Dr. Steve Smith, 57, died on March 13, 2019 after battling liver cancer which may have been caused by a parasite he contracted while on the mission field.

He and his wife Laura served with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptists for 18 years and spent a great deal of that time in Asia. He began work with the IMB in East Asia, successfully fostering a Church Planting Movement. He also served as a supervisor and consultant for Church Planting Movements across the region.

A prolific writer, Steve developed a number of publications for training and use among organizations advancing the gospel through movements. Along with colleague Ying Kai and his wife Grace, he wrote *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution*, a training guide in the biblical principles behind Church Planting Movements. T4T is short for

“Training for Trainers” and is used around the world for purposes of leadership

development, evangelism, discipleship and church planting. He also authored the *No Place Left* saga of two novels; *Hastening* and *Rebirth*. His most recently published book is *Spirit Walk, The Extraordinary Power of Acts for Ordinary People*, available on Amazon. Steve also wrote a regular column entitled *Kingdom Kernels* for *Mission Frontiers* magazine (www.missionfrontiers.org).

Upon his retirement from IMB, Steve served as the vice president of multiplication for East-West Ministries (www.eastwest.org), as a co-leader of the 24:14 Coalition (www.2414now.net) and with Beyond as a global movement catalyst (www.beyond.org).

Steve was born in California at Hamilton Air Force Base and grew up in Lafayette, Louisiana. He felt called to full-time Christian ministry shortly after high school and completed his undergraduate degree at Baylor University in Waco, Texas and his Master of Divinity at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He also received his master’s and doctorate of theology degrees at the University of South Africa.

While still in school, he served as a pastor at Vaughan Baptist Church in Vaughan, Texas, and taught Sunday school at the Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth while he was attending the university and seminary. After finishing seminary, he and his wife Laura planted and he pastored the North University Park Church in inner city Los Angeles for 10 years.

Smith is survived by his wife and three grown sons: Cris, David, Josh and wife, Caroline, and twin grandsons.

His memorial service was held March 16, 2019 at WoodsEdge Community Church in Spring, Texas.

**Honoring Our Friend and**

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| BY **STAN PARKS** | website: **beyond.org**email: **stan@beyond.org** |
| **Stan Parks**, Ph.D. is a trainer and coach for a wide variety of CPMs around the world. He currently co-leads a global 2414 Coalition to start Church Planting Movement engagements in every unreached people group and place by 2025 (2414now. net). As part of the Ethne leadership team he is helping various Ephesus teams seeking to start cascading CPMs in large UPG clusters. He is the VP of Global Strategies with Beyond. | |

**Brother, Steve Smith**

The things we loved about Steve Smith were reflections of Jesus in him. Our family had the privilege of becoming close friends with the Smith family when we all lived in Singapore and were part of a house church and lived life together. Our son, Seth, wrote this about Steve: “Through Steve I learned that Jesus’ truth was synonymous with His love. As I saw an unworldly, unnatural, amazing love pour out of Steve’s mouth and actions, I eventually saw the truth it stemmed from…. the truth of Galatians 2:20 hit me and I saw Steve, but more importantly I saw Christ living in him.”

Steve made the commitment in high school to surrender himself completely to God. He sought to live out the truth in Galatians 2:20 that, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (NIV)

The last thing Steve would want is for us to idolize him. He was very aware of his own failures and shortcomings. He knew that his worth came not from his accomplishments as a missionary, a trainer, or a writer, but from being adopted as a son of our heavenly Father.

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As his son Cris said at the memorial service, Steve was the same at home as he was in public. He loved his family and friends well and he loved to serve them. He also loved God’s Word and often shared insights from the Scriptures that helped us better understand how God’s Word applied in different situations and at different times in our lives.

I also am touched by memories of seeing up close: the beautiful love between Steve and Laura; the amazing ways he mentored and loved his sons, Cris, Josh and David; his deep love for his daughter-in-law Caroline; and the great joy God gave him through his grandsons, Jim and Jack.

Steve also loved well the lost and unreached people of the world – those without access to the Good News of Jesus who had changed his own life. He and Laura gave their best to bring the gospel to those they met in college and seminary and those they served in Los Angeles. When God led them from LA to the nations, Steve read the book of Acts over and over again. He asked God to do the same thing among the unreached people group they served in Asia. When Steve agonized over persecution of the evangelists and believers, God reassured him that this was their sacrifice for Him. Bringing the gospel and helping others bring the gospel to these remote communities was a time of great joy for their family.

After a book of Acts movement broke out among this people group, Steve transitioned to training, coaching and writing. He longed to help the global body give our best to see *every* unreached people group have an Acts-like encounter with God.

In 2010, Steve helped draw together 38 Church Planting Movement (CPM) Catalysts who were seeing God start amazing movements. For the first time we realized that perhaps movements could be more than just occasional phenomena. They could become a widespread reality around the world!

In 2017, Steve helped convene meetings of key CPM advocates: field catalysts, mission agency leaders, intercessors, and church leaders. As God spoke to these groups and others around the world, the 24:14 Vision was born.

Matthew 24:14 tells us that:

This good news of the King’s reign will be heralded throughout the whole world as a testimony to all peoples, and then the end will come. (Steve’s translation).

The 24:14 family consists of people all over the world who believe that Kingdom Movements are the best way God has given us to fulfill the Great Commission. The best way to make disciples of every people group (*ethn*ē) is with His presence and authority. (Matt. 28:19)

Steve’s great desire was to see the Great Commission fulfilled. He longed to see Matthew 24:14 happen in our generation.

If you want to honor Steve but more importantly honor Jesus, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, then Steve has handed the baton to *you*. Steve would invite you to join many of his brothers and sisters around the world to make the **24:14 COMMITMENT** by doing four things:

1. Commit to fully reaching the **UNREACHED** peoples and places of the earth
2. Reach them through **CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT** strategies
3. Engage them with **URGENT SACRIFICE** by 2025
4. COLLABORATE with others in the 24:14 movement to do this together.

We rejoice that Steve is now with God, whom he loved with such a great love. We pray for his family and we grieve for ourselves as we miss him. But we look forward to the day we are reunited as part of our Father’s heavenly family. We want to hasten the day of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:12) that results in a new heaven and a new earth – when people from every tribe, tongue, nation and language join in worshipping God. (Rev. 7:9-12)

Following is a letter Steve Smith from one life he impacted.

Dear Steve,

We have never met face-to-face, but your life and your work have impacted me more than you could ever know.

About six years ago, I read T4T and it absolutely wrecked my life. I’ve been living in India for about 11 years and had no concept of multiplication or movements until reading your book with Bro. Ying. Since then, we have been running after movements as much as we can. Although it’s not quite at the level of some others in the same amount of time, we’ve seen 2,566 new house churches started in five years. Praise God!

Since reading *T4T*, I read the *No Place Left* series as well. I cannot tell you how much that impacted the vision for my life and ministry. Shortly after, I joined up with NPL and 24:14 and have been running hard after *No Place Left* ever since.

After reading your wife’s most recent update, I felt led by the Spirit to write you an email.

I know how much your heart bleeds for 24:14 — to see the return of Christ and to see the task completed. And you will, brother. You will. And it will be even more glorious from where you will be sitting.

I wanted to let you know that you have done an amazing job running with the torch of *No Place Left*. You’ve done such an amazing job that countless thousands have been lit ablaze by the torch that you carried. There are thousands across the globe that now carry the fire that you have in your heart. And that fire will not stop. This WILL be the generation that completes the task. What started with your flame, will continue to spread from heart to heart, from village to village, and from nation to nation. On behalf of all of the other NPLers out there, I just want you to know that we’ve got this. We’re continuing the race. We’re spreading the flame. And we won’t stop until the job is done. You can count on us.

Save us a spot near the throne. It’s going to be crowded up there because of your work. We want a good spot! :-)

We love you brother and are eternally grateful for all you’ve done.

Rest easy, my friend. Your work will continue… Until We Meet on the Other Side,

Josh