

Fond memories of my friend Glen...

I first met Glen Kehrein in the summer of 1975. He and Lonni were already well on their way to establishing Circle Urban Ministry, which has become a remarkable example of Christian Community Development. I was just getting ready to move to the Westside of Chicago to teach and coach at Farragut High School. I remember the conversation well. Immediately for the first time I sensed that Glen knew my heart and understood what I was saying. I wanted to move into the African American community but everyone I had talked to said it was a bad idea; not Glen. He and Lonni were already living in the African American community of Austin. Glen encouraged me that day to listen to God and follow my heart. That was the beginning of over 35 years of lessons learned from Glen. Circle has always been about five years ahead of us at Lawndale. We learned many lessons from Glen and Circle when opening Lawndale Christian Health Center and Lawndale Christian Development Corporation. Glen served on the Advisory Board of Lawndale Community Church from 1983-1990.

It was during these critical years that we started our health center, housing work, development corporation and educational ministries. His insightful guidance saved us from many of the pitfalls that often occur in new ministries.

What a blessing to be tutored by Glen. Our personal connection has also been very deep. We were in a support group together in the mid 80's that met monthly for 4 years. It was there that I began to see the depth of Glen's faith and commitment to justice, racial reconciliation and the disenfranchised people of our world. Our hearts have been woven together in ministry and the struggles of living out our faith in the inner city and raising our families. For several years Glen and Raleigh Washington had breakfast with Carey Casey and me to deal openly and honestly with the race issues facing Christians living in America. Glen was always cutting edge when it came to race and continued to break new ground consistently.

I remember one lunch with Glen especially. Anne and I had felt we needed to move out of Lawndale for 2-3 years. This was one of the hardest decisions that I had ever made.

It was during that lunch that Glen cried with me and understood my heart and our decision. He counseled me and supported us fully through the difficult days.

Of course Glen was a part of the early discussions of CCDA. He helped found CCDA and was very significant in shaping our early direction. He has been a faithful board member since we began. Our second conference was hosted by Glen and his wonderful staff.

Last Friday, Anne and I were blessed to get to visit Glen at his home in Austin. We had a special time with Lonni and Tara. We watched as Tara demonstrated her love for her dad: being sure his every need was handled so carefully. We also visited and prayed with Lonni as she was grieving her life long marriage to her best friend and lover! While with Glen, we sat quietly contemplating his special place in our lives. We read scripture, prayed and shared our love with each other. I called John Perkins and held the phone to Glen's ear. I heard Glen simply say "Thank you John" as John shared his love and admiration for Glen.

I told Glen " I love you and will see you soon" and he simply replied "I love you."

Glen's fingerprints are all over Lawndale, CCDA and me personally! I will miss his thoughtful critiques, his robust laugh, his listening ear and his understanding heart. Thank you Lord for Glen Kehrein, my brother.

-Wayne Gordon