

lives changing.

STUDENT MISSIONS
AT SOUTHERN

We've Been Busy

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Soul-Healed on Cement

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For the author's protection, her name and location has been removed from the story.



Budhon waits in a hospital, hours away from the school.

As I sat on the cement veranda steps I looked up at the boy sharing for evening worship. With his Bible open and a strength in his voice, he asked, "What would it profit a man if he gained the whole world and lost his soul?" This was not the same boy I had known just a week earlier, and his question was filled with extra meaning.

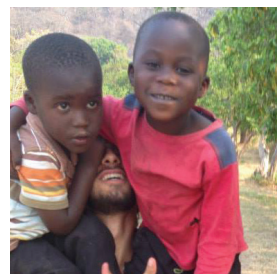
Budhon had recently returned to our school after a few months away with an illness. Hoping he was better, he returned to our jungle school. However, one morning shortly after his return, he came to me with a weak and incoherent voice. He complained of a constant pain in his chest, feeling feverish, and mentioned coughing up some blood.

As a brand-new nurse with limited resources, at a school several hours of difficult roads away from the nearest hospital, I searched my brain for a cause. Nothing about Budhon's sickness seemed to add up. For the next few days I took care of him the best I could with water and a little medicine, but he grew continually weaker. He wouldn't leave his bed and would hardly eat or drink. There was something very wrong, but what? Prayer was all I had.

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FACEBOOK
INSTAGRAM



FAITH. SURRENDER. JOURNEY. PURPOSE. JOY.

ALUMNI PERSPECTIVE:

Dave Ferguson,

HEAD PASTOR OF COLLEGE DALE CHURCH OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS



A little boy from Pohnpei hangs on a boat mooring. This photograph was taken by Neil Santos, '16, a returned Student Missionary.

I went to the Marshall Islands, which was a K-12 school. An English School. 95% of the students were non-Adventist, maybe non-Christian. Other schools were English schools, but our school was the only school that had English speakers teaching the language.

The vast majority of those attending church were non-Adventist. Most of the attendants were students who were interested in hanging out with their teacher. Every one of us teachers, there were about 22-25 of us Student Missionaries, a large group of them from Southern. We were just surrounded by children and high school students in church.

My decision to be a student missionary was made late in the game -- during finals week. The way this went down for me was... I was going through some stuff. I would call that semester as the height of my "vege-rebellion." When I describe that rebellion many people today would think, "that's rebellion?!" But you rebel from the inside out. So I knew what it was: stuff like not going to church, and sneaking into movies... just a bunch of stuff that was a slide. And part of it was that I was pushing against a sense of a call to ministry, just trying to drown it out. I wasn't doing great in classes. I was taking a class from Dr. Jack Blanco at the time. And I didn't think really anybody knew my name. No teachers, professors, I didn't get that vibe from

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Mid-Lesson Prayers

Michaela Davis, serving in Kosrae

I was standing at the board looking at the book to see what the next step was on the math problem, and as I looked up, I saw two of my students: eyes closed, hands folded, praying. I wasn't sure whether to continue on teaching or wait until they were done. They eventually said, "Amen," and I continued on with the lesson.

In my heart, I was overjoyed. My eyes were filling with tears as they looked up at me. My students have experienced so many of my own mid-lesson prayers, when I'll stop and close my eyes and say a prayer, silently or out loud, in the middle of teaching a lesson. These prayers usually happen when students are laying on the floor or blatantly ignoring the lesson, and I'm on the brink of giving up or raising my voice. I'm not a fan of either of those options, so although I feel defeated, I've learned to pause. I take a deep breath and say a prayer, which calms me to the point where I don't want to give up, and I don't feel the need to yell. Sometimes God even puts an idea in my head that can grab their attention.



But to see my students praying in class too? Wow. They had a burst of frustration and instead of either complaining about wanting to do something else or not understanding the lesson or yell at their classmates to listen, they decided to pray.

Some days I feel I'm making no impact. I feel I'm not reaching these children, my students. And it's tough being here feeling like no difference is being made. But seeing my girls pray today reminded me that it's the little things, like small prayers throughout the day. And if that's the thing they remember when it's time for me to go back to America, I'll be thanking God they learned at their age the importance of little prayers.

So may this be a reminder to all of us, little prayers, even if they're two words, are heard by God. No matter how defeated we feel or we've exhausted all the options, it's never too late (or early) to say a little prayer, even if it's mid-lesson. God is always listening. 🙏

FEBRUARY 6

The Student Missions Office hosted a Valentine’s Day Packing Party! Previous SMs filled envelopes with socks, microfiber cooling towels, and Valentine’s chocolate.

**WHAT
HAVE
WE
BEEN
UP TO?
HINT:
A LOT**

FEBRUARY 23

Our first ever Secret Vespers happened this year! This vespers honors those who worship in hiding. Students walked through a candlelit hallway to reach the sanctuary, where the evening’s worship was all acoustic.

FEBRUARY 24

The Sabbath following Secret Vespers, the SM Office hosted a potluck for all returned SMs, including those who returned to Southern for second semester. Students got to share food from their region and taste dishes from all over the world.

MARCH 13

Our training class kicked off the first week after spring break. We can’t wait to see how God will use the new Missionaries!

APRIL 13-14

All SMs – returned or outgoing, at SAU or graduated – were welcomed to go to go on a campout at Gee Creek Campground in Delano, Tenn.

APRIL 19-22

On April 19-22, our outgoing Student Missionaries spent four days together on an exit retreat, receiving training for their year of service.



1 Returned SMs stuff packages full during a packing party.
2 Outgoing SMs face challenges together in team-building initiatives.

ALUMNI PERSPECTIVE:

Dave Ferguson *continued from page one*

anybody. I did though, always speak up and discuss in class; I was taking a kind of Life and Teachings of Jesus type of class. I grew up in a Pastor's family, went through Adventist education, so I knew what I needed to know to get a good grade in that class without studying.

Test week, I'm walking down the hall, and I hear my name called from a doorway. And I looked in, and it's Dr. Jack Blanco: "Dave!" I had no idea he knew my name. I went in, said hi, and

"Pull Quote."

he shared some things about his observations of me that really kind of stabbed a team into the turmoil in my heart over a call to ministry. And at some point in that conversation, I think I blurted out something like, "You know, if I could do it all over again, I think I'd take some time, maybe go and be a student missionary or something like that, and really do something for other people and sort through this confusion."

And he said, "well why don't you?" But to me it was sort of a done thing. Two weeks earlier they'd had this big dedication for all the student missionaries. I was thinking, "I'm going home in two days, hoping to beat my parents to the mailbox before they can see my report card. But Dr. Blanco said, "If you want to try, I can help you." Everything, fascinatingly, from about the point he called my name, shifted, and just kept shifting, so that in about 24 hours, I had a call to the Marshall Islands, I was through the process, and had a big cleansing conversation with my parents, money was being raised... I mean... Crazy. All of that to say: I was the last one on the team that no one quite had the time for. I had time as the business and computer programming double major, I've always been highly athletic and involved in athletics, and I was considering shifting to theology, so my role was teaching all of Boys' Phys Ed, 11th grade general business course, 12th grade accounting course, and a 9th grade Bible course. Later I also taught 6th grade Math and Bible.

I went to Southern for one year, as a freshman, before I went out. I had just turned 19 when I made the decision. There were a lot of things that predicted that it wasn't going to happen this way... But it was pivotal and really life-changing for me. Something happens when you have stepped up to say I'm willing to be responsible for these things and now everybody calls you, 19-year-old Dave, Mr. Ferguson. And you want to live up to that. It's a microwave of maturation. You're away from home, you're a minority. My student missions year facilitated the thinking that led me to switch my major to theology. There's something about

spending a year giving yourself sacrificially to others. Am I called to pastoral ministry?

I didn't teach Jack. He was maybe in first grade or maybe not even in school yet. But after school all of the neighborhood kids would come around the apartments. And Jack was this cute little kid and I would go sit out on a log facing home. The spray from the ocean would reach our apartment and get through our windows at high tide. And sitting on the log I would be right there. The moon would be somehow larger than normal and the sky and just water. But I knew if I just dropped off here and started floating in that direction, I would eventually hit Hawaii, a few thousand miles away, and I just thought, "that's home." And little Jack would just come sit beside me on the log. He knew no English and I knew next to no Marshallese. Over time we'd learn a little bit more, but the basic level of communication was just presence. That's it. Jack. He'd call me Mr. Pudigin. That's how he'd pronounce my name. Mr. Pudigin. He would sit and just snuggle into my arm. And Jack would just come to the door to

If you have stories from your Southern student missionary experience, we'd love to hear them! Email your story to studentmissions@southern.edu

impact THAILAND

Thailand is located in Southeast Asia. It is three times the size of Florida, and has a tropical climate. The capital, Bangkok, is home to 9.27 million people. Thailand is 94.6% Buddhist.



Jessica Kovach worked with ADRA Thailand as a mentor for girls rescued out of abuse and trafficking. She recently completed her service.



Jasmin Duany is a language and Bible teacher at Thailand Language School in Ubon. She enjoys the kids, and the feeling is mutual.



Danielle Willer worked in Thailand with Adventist Frontier Missions last year and decided to extend her service another year in a creative access location.

Budhon waits in the hospital, only to be told that nothing is wrong.

Soul-Healed on Cement continued from page one

When a last-minute opportunity came for us to get transportation to the main road, we decided to make the six-hour trip to an international hospital. Budhon and I spent several days in and out of the hospital for multiple tests. To my disappointment, I could plainly see the doctor did not have a good explanation for us either: tests and x-rays all came back normal. She simply gave a general diagnosis and a variety of prescriptions. We headed back to the school.

Over the next week, Budhon only seemed to get worse. His chest bothered him constantly. By this point, everyone was very concerned and I had absolutely no idea what else to do. Finally, he opened up about something that put all the pieces together.

He hesitantly explained that he was being harassed. Often at night, he felt a dark being come in and press on his chest until he could hardly breathe. He was so scared that he wasn't sleeping well. We understood now that this was more than just an illness.

That night was stormy and felt extra dark. Several teachers and I spent a long time praying together. Later that night I woke up from a terrible dream about him. I woke up my roommate and together we prayed again. All during the next day we fasted and prayed. The principal, a few elders, and several teachers gathered to pray over and anoint him.

Budhon's eyes were wide as he sat in the circle of elders and teachers. As we read some Bible verses and began to pray, he got an intense pain in his head that he could hardly stand. As we knelt and the elders put their hands on him to anoint him, he began to moan and struggle, his breath fast and heavy. He said he needed to go to the restroom. After opening the door to come out however, his face was pained and something threw

him down on the cement floor in front of me. I didn't know what to do. Should I reach out and touch him, should I not? I just prayed.

Someone grabbed a towel to put under his head as he thrashed around and cried out that he was losing his mind. We continued to earnestly pray. He calmed down a little and someone told him to pray too. As he tried to pray there on the cement, and cried out for Jesus to help him, a tear fell from my own eyes. I wanted to cry. I hated watching Satan work his darkness like this, so blatant and evil.

Since that night, a dramatic change has taken place. The rest of that day and the week since then, much prayer has continued to flow on his behalf. He is now walking, talking, eating, and smiling. He told me that he has had no pain in his chest since that day. He is a different person now. Despite the ugly strength of Satan, there is far more power in the Name of Jesus.

As I sat on the cement, listening to Budhon share with the other 



Budhon shares his testimony with his classmates.

behind lives changing



In August 2017, God impressed our team to reevaluate the Student Missions vision. Previously, our aim has been “choose to serve.” However, we realized it was time for an aim that focused more on *why* we do what we do. After much prayer, discussion, and revision, we came up with our new aim: Lives Changing.

It is our hope that every student called to Student Missions experiences a specific journey, which is outlined below. However, we also believe that every Christian can experience a path like this one, no matter how old they are or where on this earth they may be. We invite you to reflect on how God has led your life. Which part of this journey are you on?

faith

that we may devote ourselves entirely to Christ

surrender

that we may build trust in the limitless Savior

journey

that we may experience the adventure of following Jesus

purpose

that we may live out God's calling

joy

that we may live more abundantly as we share Life with others

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