

# lives changing.

STUDENT MISSIONS  
AT SOUTHERN

## Alumnus Perspective

Pastor Reginald Horton shares memories from his time in Korea.  
page 2

## Celebrate Tradition

Learn about holiday traditions around the globe from our returned missionaries.  
page 3



## The Gift of Giving

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by Michel Irumva, 2019-2020 student missionary in Mexico

My life has been a series of miracles and instances when God opened doors I had never considered opening because of my doubts. As a junior pre-med student, I had multiple excuses not to go out and serve, "I don't have the time," "medical school applications are right around the corner," "I need to study for the MCAT," "I cannot afford the trip," "I will do it when I get my MD," and so forth. However, much like before, God had plans of his own. The scholarship I received to cover the expenses for my mission year was an answer to both my immediate prayer and to prayers I had prayed long before.

My time as a missionary was truly a life-changing experience. I left home thinking that I was going to give away my time and service, but I ended up receiving more than I felt I had given. I learned for myself of the God I was told about and saw why my parents chose to dedicate their whole lives to missions. I learned patience when dealing with my children, and of love in its purest form when they would come into class yelling, "Teacher! I got 100!" I watched members of an isolated community in the mountains open up their homes to strangers just so they could hear of the love of God. I experienced the pure joy of the people who would make the journey to those mountain communities, sometimes having to go on foot because of the terrain.

*continued on page two*



Michel Irumva (center) poses with his soccer team one last time before leaving.

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FAITH. SURRENDER. JOURNEY. PURPOSE. JOY.

# The Gift of Giving

*continued from page one*

I gave my all during my mission year. I may have delayed my education, but I gained so much more in memories and blessings. I was able to give my time and energy only because donors were able to give first. That truly is the gift of giving. The blessing was not in what I received, but in the generosity of others who helped me to be able to give.



Michel enforces his “no-phone” policy by filling a student’s phone with selfies.



Michel says he had “the greatest coworkers” in the Language Department at Montemorelos University.



Michel with his advanced English class.

If you have stories from your Southern student missionary experience, we’d love to hear them!  
Email your story to [studentmissions@southern.edu](mailto:studentmissions@southern.edu).

## STUDENT MISSIONARY ALUMNUS REGINALD HORTON



*Reginald Horton is the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists collegiate pastor and an adjunct professor for the School of Religion at Southern. While attending Southern as students, he and his wife, LaShawn served as missionaries in Korea for two years.*

My time in Korea as a missionary was one of the best times of my life. My wife, whom I met at Southern, and I had recently gotten married. We were married only for three weeks before stepping onto Korean soil. We were newlyweds enjoying life together. The Korean community embraced us, but one of my challenges was adjusting my American culture to the Korean culture.

In America, men are not known for showing affection to other gentlemen in public or anywhere. After finishing our orientation the day we arrived in Incheon, Korea, the pastor/principal walked with us to our new apartment, which was a block from the language institute. As we stepped out from the double doors of the building, the pastor grabbed my hand and my wife’s hand and proceeded to head toward our apartment. As an adult, I never expected to be walking down a major public street holding another man’s hand. I didn’t obey my Americanized instinct to pull my hand from his hand and continued to walk. I assumed this was what men do in their culture — they walk together holding hands. I was correct, and as I continued to walk the streets of Incheon, I witnessed men showing affection to other men by holding hands and walking together. This shook my world for a second, but it didn’t detour me, and I adjusted to the culture.

I loved my time in Korea so much that I convinced my wife to sign on for another year. The extension came as a result of how loved we felt by our students and our love for the Korean language and cuisine. It has been almost three decades since we left Korea, but every time I enter a Korean establishment, I exercise my limited range of the Korean language by engaging the clerk in a short, broken dialog. When I get to eat at an authentic Korean restaurant in the United States, I take advantage of the opportunity to indulge in my favorites: bibimbap, dolsot bibimbap, kimbap, vegetable fried rice, Korean pancakes, and all of the sides. I enjoy the food so much that I prepare some of the delicious cuisine at home several times a year. God truly blessed us; I enjoyed the people, I enjoyed my time there, and I loved the mission.

# TRADITIONS

Holidays can be an unfamiliar time for a missionary. It's easy to miss traditions and family from home, but global holiday traditions make for some unforgettable experiences. See how some of our student missionaries celebrated the holidays, both near and far.



## VICTORIA SOTO, POLAND

"Christmas is a really big deal, and they transform the entire city center into a Christmas market. They put up a huge Christmas tree, decorate with lights down all the streets, put up a bunch of carnival games and rides for kids, and erect a big tent where local cooks and artists sell their wares."

## NATALIE ROUSE, ZIMBABWE

"For Christmas, we had a big potluck with everyone and then afterward we created a huge slip-and-slide since Christmas happened to be the hottest day of the year!"



## HEIDI OXENTENKO, KOSRAE

"We joined in the island-wide Christmas march, singing traditional songs and wearing Kosraean dresses to match the church family we marched with."

## CALEIGH TSUCHIYA, PALAU

"We bought and wrapped gifts for each other, but most of them turned out to be gag gifts including a rotting banana, some shirts and socks that already belonged to the recipient, and some random dentures that we had in the dental clinic. We also took a trip with our Palauan family to visit the capital which was decked out with lights!"



## the great commission

### BY THE NUMBERS

The Gospel of Matthew writes that only after the whole world has been reached with the gospel will the end come. The following statistics put our progress into perspective.

NUMBER OF IPHONES WORLDWIDE<sup>1</sup>

1.5 BILLION

NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTHLY FACEBOOK USERS<sup>2</sup>

2.7 BILLION

CHIPOTLE CUSTOMERS SERVED WORLDWIDE IN THE PAST 5 YEARS<sup>3</sup>

3 BILLION

NUMBER OF UNREACHED PEOPLE WORLDWIDE<sup>4</sup>

3.2 BILLION

BE THE

1 in 4

THAT MAKES  
A DIFFERENCE

Admittedly, there is much work to be done. But statistics can be equally applied to show just how close we are:

If **one out of every four** of the 800 million Protestant Christians<sup>5</sup> in the world witnessed to just one person per year and the cycle of witnessing continued, it would take eight years to reach all of the unreached and less than 12 years for the entire world to learn or re-learn about their Savior.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Based on total sales in "Apple iPhone sales by year 2007-2018." <sup>2</sup>Data obtained from statista.com. <sup>3</sup>Based on calculations involving average annual restaurant sales, average meal price of \$10, and number of restaurants worldwide. <sup>4</sup>Unreached criteria obtained from joshuaproject.net. <sup>5</sup>"How many Christians are in the world today?" learnreligions.com. <sup>6</sup>Assuming that the "reached" are added to the Christian population and accounting for population growth, worldometer.info.

# Leaving a Legacy



Joyce (Goggans) Ford, '53, and her family moved to Collegedale and lived on campus just so she could attend Southern Missionary College. After completing her education, Joyce stayed in the area for about 15 years before moving to California.

Though far away, Joyce never forgot her love for her school, and she decided to join Southern's Legacy Society by including a bequest in her will for Student Missions. Joyce not only planned for the future, but also continued to make annual gifts to Student Missions until she passed away.



Continuing the legacy of giving was important to Joyce, and her planned gift enabled the initiation of Southern's Student Missions Operating Endowment Fund. Others have since joined her by adding additional funds to the endowment, which encourages and enables more students to participate and share the gospel of Jesus Christ across the globe.

*"Endowment funds, quite literally, make an eternal difference for Student Missions and the people we serve. Because of these funds, we are able to better care for our student missionaries and send students who otherwise may not be able to go."*

*-Christian Bunch, Student Missions director*

You, too, can leave a legacy that provides life-changing opportunities for students as they serve others. Contact Southern's Planned Giving office at 423.236.2832 for more information.

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Student Missions

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