

lives changing.

STUDENT MISSIONS
AT SOUTHERN

ISSUE

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2021-2022

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Building for God



INTERVIEW:

CAMRON ROCKWELL

Camron Rockwell served as a student missionary at Riverside Farm Institute in Zambia, Africa, during the 2019-2020 school year. He spent time building One-Day Churches.

Nathan Moravetz: What inspired you to serve as a student missionary (SM)?

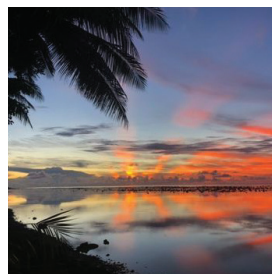
Camron Rockwell: I went on a mission trip during my senior year of high school to Kenya, where we started building a girls' dorm. I knew that I liked missions and I like traveling, so it had always been in the back of my mind, but I hadn't really given it any significant thought. Then, last year I was at a point in school where I was searching. I wasn't feeling committed to school; I felt like I needed a change of pace. Student missions came to my mind, so I had a meeting with the Student Missions director at the time. Right after that meeting, I knew. I still took a day to pray and fast, but I was excited.

NM: How did you decide to go to Zambia?

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FAITH. SURRENDER. JOURNEY. PURPOSE. JOY.

CR: I was willing to do pretty much anything at that point. I wanted some time off to just figure out my thoughts and potentially change majors. When I met with the Student Missions director, one of the first places he mentioned was Zambia. I had told him I like doing physical work; that's what I preferred to do. I told him that I'd be open to teaching, even though I had never done it before. I wanted to get different experiences. He mentioned a place in Zambia that needed guys to work, to build structures through One-Day Church with Maranatha Volunteers International.

NM: What was your job description, and what kinds of things did you do in Zambia?

CR: I went to Riverside Farm Institute, and I knew that I was going to help with building churches. It was very rewarding; you literally see the church go up in four hours. And anyone can learn it. We would typically build eight churches on a two-week trip. From Riverside, they send out Bible workers who spend time evangelizing in their territories, and then when they have enough people, they decide to build a church. Zambia has somewhere around 1.2 million Adventists in the country, so there's a big demand for churches.

NM: What was the most satisfying part about being in Zambia?

CR: The churches were probably the most satisfying part of my experience. We did other work on the campus, but the mission aspect of building each One-Day Church was the most rewarding part.

NM: What lessons did you learn from your experiences?

CR: For part of my experience, I had to learn how to be OK on my own. A group of SMs was there when I arrived, but they left in March because of the pandemic. There was a period from March to July where there weren't a lot of people for me to spend time with. I had to figure out how to fill the time. It actually turned out to be good, in a way, because I learned how to structure my days much better. I was able to have much more intentional devotional time, and I spent more time exercising.

NM: Do you see yourself doing other work like this overseas in the future?

CR: Definitely. Once you go, you realize that you really just need to be willing, and the rest just falls into place. When I went, I was open to doing whatever. I realize now that I could do whatever, and God would work it out. I definitely would like to do missions again in the future.



INTERVIEW:

STEVEN MANOUKIAN

Steven Manoukian took the role as director of the Student Missions department here at Southern Adventist University this year. In this interview, he shares a little about himself, his experience with missions, and his vision for the department.

Nathan Moravetz: How did you decide to come to Southern?

Steven Manoukian: I was pastoring in Ohio, and I was blessed with three churches. Joseph Khabbaz called me and asked me if I'd be interested in the Student Missions position because they were looking for somebody who had experience in missions. The call to do missions is something that I'm passionate about, so I accepted the call.

NM: What kind of mission work have you done over the years?

SM: I began planting churches in Amman, Jordan. I started an English-speaking church and was the associate pastor of the main church there. I also pastored two other churches in Zarka and Madaba. That was one of my first mission experiences. Then I worked in the Arabian Gulf region for a while. I've also lived in the Philippines, where I did my student missionary work through the 1,000 Missionary Movement. I've had some experience with pastoral and administrative work internationally.

NM: Could you tell us a little bit about your family?

SM: I have a beautiful and amazing wife, Jill. She is finishing up her PhD in rhetoric and composition at Ohio University. We've been married for 16 years, and we have two beautiful kids. I have a 14-year-old daughter who is attending Collegedale Academy and a 10-year-old son who is in 5th grade. The Lord has blessed me with an amazing family.

NM: Where do you see the department growing or changing?

SM: One of the things I'd like to see is to diversify the program here at Southern. Since 1967, we've been doing student missions where we send students as support for organizations. I'd like to look into the possibility of piloting a Waldensian student program, where we place students in international public universities to do frontline evangelism. Additionally, I hope we can have our graduates look into full-time missions in their professions.

MODERN-DAY MIRACLES

God Saved the Wheat!



Alicia (Wood), '05, and Craig Harding oversee Riverside Farm Institute and are pictured with their four children, left to right: Sienna (7), Wesley (9), Winston (3), and Shayla (11). Located in Zambia, Africa, the institute includes a school and training center for evangelism, a wheat, soy and banana farm, and a clinic. Many students from Southern have served here over the years in different capacities. Alicia tells this story of an incredible miracle they experienced.

Basically, I'd like to see our program combine work in the local community, short-term missions, long-term missions, and professional work out in the mission field for students after they graduate.

NM: What really excites you about working on our campus?

SM: One of the things I've realized is that I'm working with some amazing students who have a heart for God, the gospel message, and serving the Lord. And that makes it all worthwhile. One of the other things that I love about Southern is the support that we're getting in terms of missions from the faculty and staff. It's a very mission-minded university and it's super impressive to see that. I've never seen so many people support missions, and I'm excited to work here.

We are in dry season, and it hasn't rained in 7 months. This year's wheat harvest is already predicted to be the most bountiful, possibly record-breaking crop ever. With the potential to fund a huge portion of the mission budget here at Riverside, the 130 acres of golden grain are ripe for harvest. The combine has arrived to start.

It's Sabbath, and we are relaxing after a nice meal with friends. Craig gets a phone call from a friend up on the mountain, who reports that a bush fire is heading toward the wheat. He drag races out there while others gather and follow to beat the fire. When Craig arrives, the fire wall is 15 feet high and heading directly toward the fields. One ember landing over the crop would destroy everything.

Within minutes, it begins to rain. The clouds turn gloomy and heavy rains fall—despite it being the dry season with no moisture in the forecast. Taylor looks up the weather on her radar app, and it's not showing any rain in real time. Still, it rained hard enough to smother the fire. God put out the flames just in time!

Just then, Craig called back and said: "Pray that the rain stops! It's going to ruin the wheat for harvest tomorrow!" So we prayed. And the rain stopped in time for it to dry out enough by noon the next day so that the combine could begin production.

I love it when we tangibly see God's hand at work. Can I still trust Him and know He's good, even when I can't see Him?



Southern's SM team currently serving in Zambia for the 2021-2022 year: (back row) Avner Shryer, Josh Draget, Addison Garcia, and Kathleen Djami; (front row) Skyler Schiff, Maison Baldwin, Taylor Brossfield, and Ashley Blake.

Keep up with the Student Missions team!

Learn about our students' experiences by scanning this QR code for YouTube:



Pictured above (left to right) are some of Southern's students serving around the globe: Tré Smith (second from right) in Guam, waiting on a flight to the Republic of Palau; Evelin Velinova in Bolivia, South America; and Bailey Krall (centered in top) with students (bottom) in Bangladesh, Asia.

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