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3rd Place Essay: Serving God on the Mission Field

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Abbie Allen
Reed Leadership Essay

By the end of elementary school, I knew two things about my life. I wanted to be a nurse, and God wanted me to be a missionary. It would take me a while to understand that God, being a good God, could take the desires of my heart and use them to serve Him on the mission field. He has taken a scared, confused little girl and has evolved her in someone joyfully looking forward to the plans He has for her. While I do not know the mission field to which He is calling me, I desire to be open and obedient to whatever it may be. Yet, as I imagine my future medical ministry, I find myself putting limitations on the abilities that I have, afraid of skills not yet developed and of relationships not yet begun.

If I knew I could not fail as a leader and if I had God's blessing, I would become a foreign missionary, living life with another people group. Back during my sophomore year of high school, I wrote a poem, and in a few of the stanzas, I outlined a vision of being a nurse in an African clinic. Parts of that dream still ring true today, as I visualize myself reaching out to the incredible people in an African village or using the Spanish-speaking abilities the Lord has given me to live with the beautiful people in an area of South America. The staff of the clinic would need medical personnel like a doctor and a nurse, but I would also pray for a minister to partner with us in the spreading of the gospel and in discipleship. I would plead for the clinic to grow and develop and for the Lord's continued blessing. I would intercede for the patients in prayer, that they may be physically healed and would come to know the saving grace of Jesus.

Yet, I stand back and think of the implications of this endeavor, and I shake my head. There are just too many things that could potentially cause the operation to fail. The possible lack of resources, support, or skills is a looming intimidation. Would I, with the partnership and support of a spouse, a praying body of believers, and maybe even the backing of the Nazarene denomination, be able to manage this undertaking with excellence? Would it be effective? If it did not change the lives of thousands, would I be joyful that it changed the lives of few?

In that same poem from four years ago, I concluded by comparing my life to a ship. I have the map, but God is the sailor, and, quite frankly, I don't know which island we're heading toward. Yet, "...on that island, I will take residence, and search for the treasure for which my life was created." Whether or not a small clinic is exactly what the Lord has for me, I pray for God-sourced strength to follow wherever His plans direct.