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A Childhood Dream

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Jesica Cheever felt God's calling as a child and followed his leading to Cambodia.

A childhood dream

When Jesica Cheever, junior elementary education major, decided to go on a mission trip during the summer of 2013, she never imagined that the process of getting to another country would prove as beneficial to her faith as the trip itself.

Cheever has dreamed of being a missionary since she was a child. During spring semester, the campus chaplain introduced Cheever to HeSaidGo.org where she could view mission trips for which she qualified. She was a match for over 50 trips.

"I tried to get the paperwork finished by the deadline," she recalls, "but I finally gave up because I couldn't get all the necessary signatures over spring break and the website was now only pulling up four locations, none for which I qualified."

Frustrated that things didn't seem to be working out, Cheever decided to work as a summer tour guide at the Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek, Mich.

"During my second week there, a gentleman on my tour asked me if I had ever wanted to be a student missionary," Cheever recalls. "I shared about my recent failed attempt and he asked if I would be interested in going to Cambodia."

Cheever realized she would be willing to go anywhere at that point, if God called her there. The gentleman wrote an email address on the back of a business card and told her to email Tim Scott to get things started.

When Cheever emailed Scott, she found she had been given the wrong address. With renewed determination, she relentlessly Googled "Scott" and "Cambodia Adventist Mission" and finally found his email address on the same website she'd used before. The listing was for a music teacher.

With the paperwork in motion, Cheever began wondering where money for the trip would come from. Her grandfather offered to help pay off her student loans — the amount he offered was enough to pay off her loans and buy a ticket to Cambodia as well!

"I applied for my passport on June 26, which gave me just under four weeks before student missionary orientation began," she says.

Then she received an email from the Southern-Asia Pacific Division of the General Conference, asking her to be at orientation sooner. Cheever found herself at yet another roadblock.

"I did not want to leave without saying goodbye to my parents, my passport had not arrived and I hadn't gotten my vaccinations yet," she recalls.

Cheever didn't have the extra funds required for an expedited passport, so she prayed and left it in God's hands. Although passports typically take four to six weeks, Cheever received hers after only ten business days. She knew it was another sign from God.

"My flight was scheduled for July 16," recalls Cheever. "My parents were able to change their plans to come visit me the weekend before... and I was able to get my vaccinations the day before I left."

"I know without a doubt what God's plans were for me from the beginning," she says. "I know he wanted me in Cambodia. I hope my story will encourage anyone who, like I did, feels frustrated, overwhelmed and completely inadequate. To them I say, wait for God and do what he asks. You won't regret it."

For information on supporting the student missions program at Andrews University, or for information on how you can serve, email sm@andrews.edu or call 269-471-3211.

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