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Engineering Graduate Pursues Life of Mission

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Engineering graduate pursues life of mission

Michael Hess is a quiet, unassuming young man who listens (and thinks) before he speaks. He graduated from Andrews University with a degree in mechanical engineering in May 2016 and, before beginning his graduate studies, decided to spend a year as a student missionary through Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM). When asked what inspired this decision, he shrugs.

“Ever since I was little, I’ve had an interest in missions,” he says. “I grew up reading the AFM magazine and stories by Eric B. Hare.” Here he chuckles, knowing he’s not the only Adventist young person to have childhood memories of this nature. “Always in the back of my mind was the idea that this was something I’d do someday.”

While studying at Andrews, Hess heard stories from friends who had gone abroad as student missionaries and came back with adjusted world views and fires within. It encouraged Hess to hear not only the storybook accounts, but the real-life experiences of people he knew who had gone through the trials that come with mission work and come out stronger on the other side — both physically and spiritually.

Hess found he enjoyed being a part of various groups and ministries, both on- and off-campus. In addition to his Honors Program leadership and serving as treasurer for a spiritual club called Revive, Hess also regularly played piano and helped in the youth program at a local church.

As a member of the J.N. Andrews Honors Program at the university,



Michael Hess, a 2016 engineering graduate from Andrews University, enjoyed being involved in extracurricular activities on- and off-campus. He played piano for a local church as well as on-campus events such as the Honors Agape Feast, pictured here.

Hess established Scholars in Prayer, a program based on another student’s suggestion that they pray each day for a different honors student.

“A lot of what I experienced at Andrews reinforced the way I was raised,” he says. “I was able to find people who had similar values and interests, and we supported and prayed for each other, studied together and worshipped together.”

Once he graduated, he realized he was ready to jump into an even bigger service project — tentmaking.

Tentmaking is a term that refers to using one’s professional training and experience to support oneself in the mission field. It’s especially helpful when individuals feel called into a location where missionaries are not allowed; they can enter the country as a professional and support themselves as they live out the gospel message.

Hess found an open position through Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM) as a math teacher and signed

on to spend a year in Palawan, in the Philippines. At the time of this publication, Hess has been on-location for a little over a month.

Although he doesn’t yet know where God will lead him with his tentmaking, Hess is determined to use his mechanical engineering skills as a tentmaking profession.

“We’ve been given a message of the truth and hope in Jesus,” says Hess, “and there are people who haven’t had the chance to hear that. Someone needs to tell them, so why not me?”

Becky St. Clair is media communications manager at Andrews University.



Michael Hess (back row, center) developed friendships during his time at Andrews that will last a lifetime.