

FINDING YOUR CALLING

Have you ever wondered why God placed you on this earth? What is His calling on your life? Everyone ponders these questions at one point or another, in hopes of finding the right intersection of their passions, talents, and God's unique purpose for their life.

The following four stories depict individuals who took the focus off of themselves—and in the process heard God's calling.

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10)

Jonathan Brassington

By Marjorie Etienne



Jonathan Brassington had been teaching as a missionary in the Marshall Islands for two weeks when he began to notice something different about his students.

The cuts and bruises on his 8- to 12-year-old students at Ebeye Seventh-day Adventist school must have come from more than rough playing. One girl's face particularly caught his attention. "She had a big gash, right below her eye, and in fact, I think not only was it below her eye, but a part of her eye, because a part of her eye was red as well," he said. When he asked her what happened, she didn't respond. She was just ashamed," Brassington said.

The reality that adults were abusing the children shocked Brassington. The experience of that summer of 2009 caused the Andrews University student to change his major from Communication to Elementary Education. As Brassington continued teaching as a missionary for three months, he realized the girl was one of many in abusive homes. Discussing the issue with the school's principal brought a disappointing truth to light: "There wasn't really a solution," he said.

As Brassington formed relationships with his students, he became more and more concerned. "All it takes is one hit too many, or one hit too hard and they're gone, they're dead," Brassington said.

One student, under the guardianship of an abusive stepfather, faced brutal abuse. Even so, she showed Brassington and her fellow class-

mates, a living example of God's love by loving the person who hurt her the most. "One thing that she told me was, 'Jesus Christ died for him too,'" Brassington said. Brassington couldn't help but love her as a father loves a daughter. But days before his teaching term ended, the child died from an abusive encounter.

It was after experiencing the loss of his student that Brassington realized his passion: connecting with youth.

"I love the genuineness of children and youth," said Brassington. "That joy that they have, flows into my life, makes me joyful, makes me glad to be living."

Before switching majors, Brassington's intention was to work in a media ministry but he now felt compelled to work in the classroom and directly impact lives for Christ.

"I want to be part of a major program that Jesus Christ has set for schools," he said. "Having teachers that love Him—teach children. 'Being able to reunite with all those kids, to see all those kids in heaven. With not only me—but with Jesus—for eternity; that is my ultimate dream.' ■

Photo by Le'von Kotanko