

# Walking Through an Open Door

Introducing Devin and New Opportunities in West Africa



From a small farm in Pennsylvania, Devin prays for a chance to return to West Africa and make it his home in 2021. In a recent conversation, Devin shared how unlikely this vocation would have seemed when he was a boy. “As a child, I had a reputation with babysitters for being an exceptionally picky eater, and I chose Latin as my foreign language requirement in high school because we did not have to speak it.”

Remarkably, God took hold of young, picky Devin and transformed his heart and mind. In 2010, after a variety of life experiences and education, God led him into a short-term assignment working as a mechanical engineer in West Africa. To his surprise, he adjusted to his temporary home better than he had anticipated. “I found the culture fun, the food good, and one day I realized I was translating a French church service for someone else!”

After this initial short-term assignment, Devin deliberated over whether to continue to work in West Africa or return to life in the United States. After a long discernment process, he concluded that “all the prayers and pro/con lists distilled into the thought that there are more people willing to live as an engineer for the Kingdom in the United States than there are in West Africa—and on top of that, I really enjoyed it.” Like many workers at Rosedale International (RI), Devin found that this is often how God works. As individuals and families follow his voice into international work, God provides the sustaining enjoyment of the culture and people.

When asked about any fears he has as he looks toward his upcoming assignment, Devin responded, “It is easy to fall into the trap of focusing on whether I am competent enough, or spiritual enough, or etc. enough.” Fortunately, Devin’s competencies—or lack thereof—have never been his primary motivation, nor what holds him back. He is driven by the fact that “we are all called to live missional lives.” Furthermore, Isaiah 43—a favorite scripture of Devin’s—gives him and all followers of Jesus a powerful image of a God who made us, commands us not to fear because he has saved us, summons us by name, promises to be with us, and protects us!

Devin is also driven by the immense need for Jesus-witnesses among the Muslims of West Africa. He plans to work among a people group that is 4 million strong and of which only 0.6 percent are followers of Christ.

While RI has in the past sent short-term REACH teams to West Africa, we have recently explored possibilities for longer-term work there, and in partnership with Buffalo Mennonite Church, we are very excited to send Devin to West Africa in 2021. Jerry, Associate Director of Global Missions, went on an exploratory trip to West Africa with other RI

“There is an open door for RI in West Africa... Devin is the first guy to walk through the door.”

staff this past year. He says that besides the immense need, there is also a greater openness to receiving workers there; they are “not nearly as resistant to the gospel” as some other Muslim countries where we send workers. RI has connections to three countries in the region – all with large Muslim populations ranging from 43 to 95 percent, and all viable locations for long-term workers.

Might there be more churches and individuals in CMC who are willing to partner with RI and step through an open door into West African mission work? As we’ve seen with Devin and all of our workers on the field and preparing to go, God is ready to transcend all imagined and real weaknesses and use broken people for his glory in the world!

Please pray for Devin and his community as they strive to raise the necessary funds for him to go in the first months of 2021. And pray for more churches and individuals to partner with RI, courageously entering West Africa where the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few (Luke 10:2).

# A Year-End Letter

from the President, Joe Showalter

“If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need him now.”

These words from an old gospel song are ringing in my ears as I sit down to write to you. It seems like the sickness and sin of this world are more evident today than any other time in our lives. The world is suffering. Those that are the poorest are often the ones being hit the hardest by the pandemic. Even a wealthy, self-sufficient nation like ours has met a problem we haven't yet been able to solve. We're deeply broken, and our political polarization loudly declares that brokenness. It's not hard to be pessimistic.

## But Jesus...

This fall I have had the privilege of walking through Luke and Acts with the participants in RI's REACH program here at the RIC. Together, we've had a front row seat as Jesus shakes his world. Jesus at twelve years old stuns the academics with his knowledge. He chooses both an Antifa member and a white supremacist to be his disciples (okay, it's really a zealot who works to overthrow Rome and a tax collector who collaborates with Rome). He defends a "sinful" woman who washes his feet with her tears (unthinkable for a holy man of God). He calls out an unclean woman who touched his garment, signaling that his blood will make her clean rather than the other way around.

Jesus feeds a multitude with seven small morsels of food, and has piles of leftovers. He speaks, and the storm ceases.

He tells stories that leave the common people smiling and the powerful people furious. He resolutely yet joyfully makes his way toward his crucifixion in Jerusalem.

## Jesus.

Jesus is shaking his world again today. If we ever needed Jesus, we definitely need him now. If we thought it was hard to send workers before, it's only gotten harder. If we thought visa issues were complicated before the pandemic, they're far more complicated now. If our workers took risks before, they're living with much more risk today.

This awful moment in history is also a wonderful moment because Jesus is on the move! We're full of joy over new believers baptized in South Asia, Southeast Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. We're excited to learn of a movement to Jesus among the peoples of the Amazon River. And we're seeing and hearing Jesus stories here in North America, too.

This is not a time to shrink back! We're preparing to send new workers to North Africa and West Africa as soon as doors open. We plan to stay nimble and flexible enough to respond to the needs of the world, even if some of our methods need to change. We invite you to consider sharing in this joy-filled endeavor with a year-end gift to Rosedale International.

**give or learn more** at [rosedaleinternational.org](https://rosedaleinternational.org)

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