

## FEELING GOD'S NUDGES

Life is a series of moments, each with equal stake in the progression of life yet some being more pivotal than others. For Michael Wallace, a middler student from Cleveland, Ohio, his life has been full of these moments of God's nudges.

It began with an invite from a friend to attend a Southern Baptist church just before ninth grade, a church in which Michael was involved until he graduated from high school. Upon starting at Baldwin-Wallace College he decided to pursue a music education degree. In his junior year Michael participated in a study abroad program, in which he and 600 other students traveled by ship to 10 countries, literally circumnavigating the world.



It was during this trip that he experienced pivotal moments visiting underground churches. One was in Vietnam, where he climbed on the back of a motorbike that took him to the address of one such church that he learned about while reading the *Voice of the Martyrs* magazine. He quickly discovered that no one spoke English, but the worshippers provided a small keyboard and Michael played music and prayed with them. The other pivotal experience was in Turkey, where he was invited to come to a service at a house church. As soon as he walked through the door, a woman who was a music missionary from the States introduced herself, learned that he also was a musician, and asked him if he would be willing to sing in that service. So, he joyfully accepted the invitation and sang, even though he had been away from the church throughout many of his college years.

"The fact that I was still being drawn to these experiences, still being drawn to the Church no matter where I was, shows me that God was pulling at me no matter how far away I was," he says.

After returning home from his study abroad experience and craving something else, he dropped the education part of his major and added a Spanish major. Within a few months he began a music ministry position at an American Baptist church. He first viewed the position as a job, but the Lord worked on him and over the next few years Michael began to see the position as a call. He first heard that call more clearly while attending a worship leading conference in Pittsburgh. Within a few months, he starting looking for seminaries and within the year returned to the city where he had most distinctly heard the call for the first time.

"I could feel the Lord saying 'You have the talent, you have the experience, now let me pull you deeper.'"

Michael followed that pull toward seminary and ministry, being open to what God wants of him. He currently serves as the Seminary's chapel musician and accompanies the hymns and brings together small ensembles as needed. After graduation, Michael hopes to be ordained in the American Baptist Church and work wherever God calls him, maybe even doing some Bible translation down the road.

"I'm excited to see where the Lord takes me."

Wherever Michael's path of discernment leads, he will continue to use his gifts and talents in music to bridge the Word and the world.

Written April 2013

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