Alyssa Lynne Bolles:

I was born in 1986 in Dayton, Ohio into a very loving military family. We moved around quite often through my childhood, until my dad retired in Northern Virginia when I was in middle school. Shortly after he retired, we used our last move with the military to relocate in Maryland, and my family has been there ever since. I grew up in a Christian home, surrounded by the love of Christ, and accepted Him as my Savior when I was in second grade. However, I don’t feel like I actually began to “own” my faith until later in life when God revealed to me the true cost of following Him; which all began in Africa. My journey to Africa started when I was in college and able to volunteer for AIDS awareness event on campus. There God opened my eyes to the children and people of Africa and it didn’t take long for Africa to capture my heart.

After I graduated from school, God opened the doors for me to participate in the FYM Program (First Year Missionary) offered by Adventures in Missions (AIM). The program began in South Africa, where I lived, worked, learned, and served for four months, and then moved to Swaziland for the remainder of the year. Here is where my “God Box” was blown wide open and I began to see more of what God can do and will do when we, as believers, call on His name. God began to stretch me and teach me more than I could ever have hoped to learn, and most of it through EXPEREINCEING Him. This chapter of my life is where I fell in love with God and His kingdom in Africa.

Shortly when I returned from this trip, God then sent me to Kenya for a few weeks with my church in MD. This trip I was able to put into practice a lot of the things God had been teaching me and serve with a renewed spirit. We worked at an orphanage and school, building relationships with the teachers, the children, and the staff that worked there. We also had the opportunity to do slum evangelism, teach in schools, attend local church services, and serve the street kids. This trip solidified my love for the people of Africa.

Then a year later, I decided to take a break from mission trips, but God intended for me to go to Zambia. God prepared the way and I was able to go with a church from VA to serve in Mukamba, at Mission of Love, with the members on my team. Little did I know that this trip would drastically change the next few years of my life… During the evenings I made a habit of sitting on the tractor late into the night, looking up at the stars and listening for a word from God. It wasn’t until my fourth or fifth time being out there that God finally spoke to me revealing that He wants me to come serve Him in Africa for an extended period of time. That was really all he gave me that night…not a location, not for how long, not for any certain people group, not with a task…just a “Come and Serve Me”.

So, as you can imagine I had a lot of praying and searching to do once I returned to the states. I decided that wherever God wanted to send me, I would go. I began researching different places, revisiting ministries I have already been a part of, asking around what other people thought and this process seemed to go on forever. Well forever was about four months…one night the Holy Spirit took hold of my thoughts and showed me how God had His hand directing the steps I have taken, since I was a believer, toward the trip in Zambia. It was like He graciously gave me a glimpse of “the master plan” and after that moment I knew it was clear I was to return to Zambia and serve alongside Jako, Amber, and the community in any way that I could. Well it worked out for me that Mission of Love decided to start a preschool program, which is what God had been training me for the past two years (crazy how that all “falls into place”.)

**The next step was to get out of the boat and start *walking by faith*…**

So here I am…taking each step trusting God will provide everything to make His name known through me!

**Random Fun Fact:** When I was in Swaziland, I was given my African name ***“Sindisiwe”***, which means

 “the saved one”, a name only God can give!!