

What Shall I Be When I Grow Up?

by Doug von Kriegelstein



As a student at Union Springs Academy, I wondered what I wanted to be when I grew up. Then at Southern Missionary College (now Southern Adventist University) I still wondered what I wanted to do when I grew up. After college graduation in 1975, I went to Alaska to find life and what I wanted to be when I grew up.

Instead, I found death.

One fateful day a seventeen-year-old on a dirt bike drifted into my lane and we impacted head on. To this day I still struggle with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from the accident.

Alaska lost its charm, and I moved to California in 1979 to find what I wanted to be when I grew up. I graduated two years later with a Masters in Public Health from Loma Linda. However, I was still looking for what I wanted to I grew up. I was extremely introverted and I didn't want to teach in schools or hold a public health position with a county, state, or federal agency.

My time at Loma Linda was challenging. I paid my way through school quarter-by-quarter doing fireplace and wood stove installs and roofs. I came to classes straight from work, soot still in my hair and arms and hands black with tar stains. The classroom was filled with students in neat, clean, professional clothes and my teachers would publicly tell the class (but really me) how important it was to dress like "our profession." Every day I would sit on the back row right next to the fire exit doors so I could quickly escape without looking at or talking to anyone. I would run to my Pinto Station Wagon and drive right back to work, heart aching in embarrassment.

One day, a fellow student, Harry, caught me right after the teacher's remarks about dress and said to me, "Doug, don't worry about this dress thing. We all here wish we knew all the practical things you know about building and being handy. Some day God is going to pull all these practical things you know and your Masters in Public Health together for His glory." His kind words nearly brought me to tears and encouraged me to continue.

I continued doing fireplace work for 45 more years still wondering what I wanted to do when I grew up. I told God I was willing to be called into His harvest, to be flung wherever He wanted me to go. But I hardly felt ready.

That changed in late 2025. God called me to go to Koboko, Uganda to call for revival and train the people in discipleship principles. My flight was only thirteen hours away when I found out that I would not

be able to get a visa at Entebbe Airport upon my arrival. In fact, it was impossible to get a visa to Uganda in less than three days. I, still being an introvert, was elated! The weight of responsibility was off; I did not have to step out of my comfort zone or go to Uganda!

But three sisters in Uganda did not give up in prayer. They sought God all night, pleading for His working. And He answered! God got me a visa within six hours, a process impossible to complete in under three days.

I hardly felt ready to go. As I boarded, I kept thinking this going to Uganda all might be a dream and I would wake up and find myself home in California! But my flight landed, I connected with my friends in Uganda, and the first meeting came. I said to God, “This is really real. You said in Psalm 81:10, ‘Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.’ I’m ready for You to do that for me now!”

I opened my mouth, and He truly did fill it. He filled my mouth with amazing words, and my whole world changed. I had finally found what I wanted to I grew up. I want to be a laborer in His harvest, to be flung wherever He calls. I have just turned 73. After all these years wondering, at last I know this is my calling and I rejoice in it.

Since his first trip to Uganda, Doug von Kriegelstein has started a ministry called HEART FOR AFRICA. You can read more stories on his blog at [this link](#).

World Church Prayer Requests

APRIL 2026

- **Nigeria - Praise Report:** Praise GOD for answered prayers. The Abuja Medical Missionary Lifestyle Initiative has been trying for two years to be legally registered in the country of Nigeria. The certificate of registration has been granted. Our God is really in the business of answering prayers.
- **United Kingdom:** Pray for the Croydon SDA Church as they seek revival. Pray that the Lord will fill them with His Spirit so they can continue going forward in sharing the Gospel with their community.
- **United States:** Pray for those working with Lighthouse as they seek to deliver God's Word to those in elderly care facilities. Pray that God will send large print Bibles to share with those in the care homes.
- **Fiji:** Pray for the Union, Mission, and local church leaders as they prepare for Fiji4Christ, a coordinated evangelistic campaign set for summer 2026. Pray that the leaders will be drawn together in humility and prayer as they seek to lead by example.
- **Canada:** Pray for the new church being planted in the Iqaluit community. They are starting a Pathfinder club to reach out to the community children who have never heard anything about Christ. Pray that the church members will remain dedicated to their mission and that God will provide strength and guidance. Pray also that the Holy Spirit will go ahead to prepare the hearts of those in the community for His love and truth.
- **Nigeria:** Pray for the upcoming Africa for Christ Media Evangelism that will be anchored by Hope Channel International. The uplink center for the campaign is at the indoor Sports Centre of the University of Lagos, Nigeria. Pray for the speaker and the interpreters, favorable weather, and an abundant harvest of souls.
- **Zimbabwe:** Pray for G and N Mission, a group of Seventh-day Adventist schools totaling 1000 students. Pray that the students, parents, and staff will see Jesus and grow in Christ through the education provided in this ministry. Pray also for funds to build an auditorium large enough to accommodate all the students and staff.