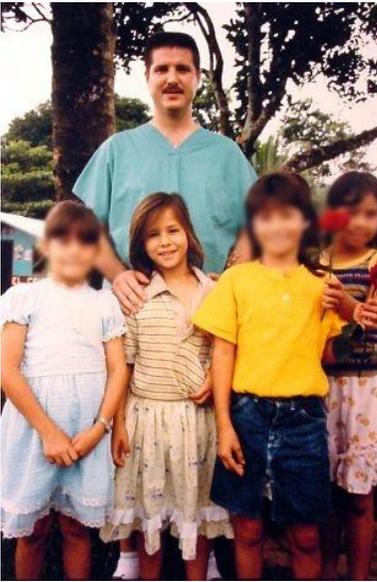


# How God changed my heart on the mission field.

By Dale C. Crow



In 1988 I went on my first mission trip. A pastor friend of mine came to our church and showed some slides of kids in Costa Rica and told of the need and the Joy of the mission field. This was a dental trip, and we were to help the dentists. The team members had to hold flashlights for the dentists as they did their work. I was sent out to entertain the kids so the dentists could work. I played with what seemed to be hundreds of kids. I was also filming video.

I was filming the team members helping a dentist fill a whole in a young girl's front tooth. I had not seen much of this girl before. After the dentist finished her tooth he showed her the finished product and the smile she gave was the biggest one I had ever see someone give. Her whole face changed. All of her friends wanted to get a look.

The next day the same little 8-year-old girl was back and wanted to say thank you to the dentist. She was a different girl! I found out her name was Shirleny and I asked her how her mother liked her new tooth, and her face went back to the shy, sad little girl I had seen before. I asked her what was wrong. The little girl would not say. Her friend spoke up and said that she did not have a mother or father. She was an orphan.

This broke my heart. I with one question stopped her joy. I gave her extra attention trying to make up for the gaff. An old lady showed up calling her home. Shirleny pulled at me and asked me to walk them home. I found out that the old lady was her grandmother. We arrived at a two-room shack with a tin roof. The house was made with 2x6 boards but they did not meet. If you walked up to the house, you could peep in. They had a room with a hot plate with running water. The other room had two beds in it and it had dirt floors. I said my good byes and went back to our hotel.

This is the hotel that we were complaining about. Just because we had to take a shower out of a faucet kneeling down and the toilet did not have a seat on it. After seeing where Shirleny lived all that stuff did not matter anymore. That night I woke up a 2am crying. I was crying like I had never cried before! This was the first time that my heart had ever grieved for someone other than myself.

You see I was a very self-centered person. I was as selfish as you could get. That night God touched my heart and changed me. From that night on I was never the same. We had two more days in the town and on the last day I gave my pillow, sheets and towels to Shirleny. I gave most of the rest of my stuff away to others.

Before we loaded on the bus I gave Shirleny \$5. She looked at the money and then took me by the hand and pulled me to the little store across the street. She took the \$5 and bought me a coke with it. I had so much and she had nothing and she was giving to me. At this point I was the child, and she was the adult. I was in awe.

I saw God in Costa Rica in the face of a little 8-year-old orphan girl. My wife and I still go back to see her today. She now has two wonderful kids (that call me grandfather) and a fine husband. God used Shirleny to warm my heart. I now see I would of never been able to adopt the two girls we now have if it was not for that night God touched and warmed my heart.



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