

"Being in the way, the Lord led me."



Above: Dr. Theron Stallings with some of his "local patients."



Right: Dustin Stallings witnessing to some of the Jamaican children.

How does God lead one to go on a short-term mission trip? As I look at the above verse from Genesis 24:27, I realize that the process God uses to send us is just as important if not more so than the actual trip.

I had resisted going for years and had many legitimate excuses. "I've got to keep the practice going...I have a large family to support...It is hard to take time off...etc." Last year at the CCA convention in Vail, my wife and I drove three hours to attend the last day and a half, and there I heard three messages that God used to impact my life and send me on my first mission trip.

Dr. Charles JangDhari related a conversation his daughter had with a Jamaican orphan and how the boy of 16 wondered why it had taken so long for God to send someone to see him when he had prayed for years for it to happen. Then Dr. Alan Zelm told how his dentist had finally decided to go on a short-term mission trip with him, but the man's doctor had informed him he was physically unable to go. Dr. Zelm then said, "God wants you to tithe more than the first fruits of your income, He wants the first fruits of your life." On Sunday, Dr. Brian Scharf, the CCA Chaplain, gave a message from the Parable of the Talents that I had never considered. He told how God rewarded the two risk takers but took the talent of the one who played it safe. Was I willing to be that risk taker and trust God to take care of my family and practice?

I talked to Dr. Scharf and told him to put me

down for the team he was leading to Jamaica. Once that happened, the details began to fall into place. I had always wanted to take a son with me on such a trip, and, when presented with the idea, my 17 year-old son, Dustin, was very open to the idea. We opened our account with the CCA and bought plane tickets. Dr. Scharf communicated the details to us to help prepare for the trip. Something I had not expected began to happen; God's Word began to come alive to me. Every morning in devotions, various verses stood out to me that had relevance to the upcoming trip and the people to whom we would be ministering.

The big week finally arrived. It is an incredible feeling and experience to step off the plane into a country where I am a foreigner. I can't say enough about the preparations of the CCA and Dr. Scharf, which made the transition a good one. I also finally got to meet our bus driver, Dudley Graham, whom I, through serving on the Home Office board, have heard much about. Dudley has assisted the CCA for the 20 years the association has gone to Jamaica. The villa we stayed in and the food prepared there was

outstanding. God assembled a great team, and we bonded together quickly. And then the work began. It was humbling to see how grateful the Jamaican people were for whatever we had to give them - adjustments, small gifts, Bibles, etc. I especially enjoyed going to church, realizing that people all over the world were worshipping that day - not just Christians in the USA. I guess I knew that, but now I had experienced it. I had a

Jamaican MD at Hillview Baptist Church tell me how the team last year "saved his life." He related how his neck had hurt so badly he could not do his work as an OB/GYN and that with one adjustment and with the

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Jamaica Team 1: Esther Andrews, Rachel Andrews, Dr. Ida Page, Janet Kloster, Dr. Steve Kloster, Dr. Theron Stallings, Dustin Stallings, Joel Claps, Dr. Daniel Claps and team leader, Dr. Brian Scharf.

I being in the way...concluded,

exercises given, he had now had one of his best years.

That week in Jamaica will never be duplicated. Again, the team bonding was amazing. As we shared our lives and devotions each morning together, the emotions ran high. I truthfully do not remember a week where I cried or laughed more. I felt alive inside again. The Jamaican people are a beautiful people with a history of slavery and working to overcome it, and we were a part of that. My son said he could tell when a sinner's prayer was really heart-felt, and he was a great asset to the team. The children of Jamaica took to him. I know I am a different person for having gone on this trip, and, as I look back, I can see how God used it to work in my life and to touch the lives of those to whom we were able to minister. If God is talking to you about going, I encourage you to "*take the risk,*" and allow Him to lead you as He did Abraham's servant while looking for a wife for Isaac.

Dr. Theron Stallings has been a member since 1982. He practices in Fort Collins, CO, and currently serves on the Home Office Committee for the CCA.
