

Mission Trips

When I was little, I had this idea in my head that the whole world was fixable. I thought that if enough of people cared and worked together, everything could be peaceful and happy. Whenever I open the newspaper or turn on the news nowadays, I am quickly reminded at how naïve those thoughts were many years ago. Saving the world just doesn't seem possible. And yet, people working together can make an amazing difference. I grew up in a church that seemed to always be sending people on mission trips. Every few months, a new group of people would leave to help fix some part of the country or the world and returned with this contented look in their eyes.

My parents wanted to embark on some mission trips as a family, so they waited until my brother and I were in our pre-teens. We spent 4 weeks helping families in Africa rebuild their houses from the rebels who had destroyed them. I remember feeling so sad for all of those people. I remember how grateful they were. Though we could barely understand them, smiles and body language is universal. I came home from that mission trip finally knowing why there was a contented look in those peoples' eyes. I was content. I was a lot more appreciative of my own life and my family. I guess mission trips have a tendency to do that to people.

Everyone that I've ever known or talked to about how their mission trips were have all agreed that in some way, it has changed their lives forever. Perhaps it made them more aware of all that they have to be grateful for. Maybe they finally realized that the images that they see on television and in magazines really do exist. Whatever the reason is, they bring something home with them. A part of them has grown up and their hearts have softened. Most importantly, they all recommend that everyone who is able and willing, should have the opportunity to join some mission trips and experience the emotions for themselves.

Since 9/11, the world has changed drastically. It isn't as easy to travel abroad anymore. Mission trips to other countries are a much greater risk than they once were. There is a much greater chance of encountering some type of violence on your mission trip. Violence has taken over much of the world. People embarking on mission trips are being provided with lots of information and safety tips before they are even allowed to embark on their journey.

If you're interested in seeing for yourself just how much you can change a part of the world and learn about life and your own being in the process, check with some local churches for upcoming mission trips. There are also national organizations that will organize mission trips as well. If you don't know what you want to do on a mission trip or where you want to go, talk to a few people

who have been on several. Before you know it, you'll know exactly where you want to go and what you want to do. You'll quickly learn that just because the entire world cannot be fixed doesn't mean that you can't change a small part of it.