

God's care for ONE

BY DAN HITCHCOCK AND ROD HOOVER AS TOLD TO KIRK NOONAN

In line was a woman in her late 60s. Blinded by cataracts for more than 15 years, she stood patiently, hopeful that a new pair of glasses would enable her to see.

Does God care so much that He would use a variety of events, thousands of dollars and numerous people to answer one person's prayer?

According to Dan Hitchcock and Rod Hoover, members of First Assembly of God in Bolivar, Missouri, the answer can be found in a HealthCare Ministries missions trip they and several members from their church took to Honduras. Following is the account of Hitchcock and Hoover's trip as told to Associate Editor Kirk Noonan.

In a village outside San Pedro Sula, our team began setting up a clinic to conduct basic health exams and distribute eyeglasses. Word spread quickly through the village that a medical team was in the area. It was only 7 a.m., but a long line already stretched down the road.

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tiently, hopeful that a new pair of glasses would enable her to see.

Setbacks and delays

A few days earlier our team was waiting at a gate at Tulsa International Airport. Though we were glad to finally be on our way to Honduras, I (Dan Hitchcock) was still wondering and asking God why the team had faced so many challenges that easily could have derailed the trip.

Only weeks before departure, a team member had tried to ease our travel schedule by changing our departure airport from St. Louis to one closer to Bolivar. By the time I learned of the change, the previously booked tickets had been sold and new ones — each costing \$200 more — purchased.

As a cabinetmaker, I am detail-oriented. I like to keep things in order, especially when people's time and money are at stake. When I heard about the ticket

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Rod Hoover grew up in a missionary family in Brazil and now serves with medical teams on missions trips.

Rod Hoover and Dan Hitchcock (right) sharing their story with Kirk Noonan.



we weren't sure if even surgery would help.

We made arrangements to take her over to the doctors who were doing eye surgeries. Along the way she told us she had been praying that God would restore her sight.

The surgery was performed. Hoover explained that each cataract had to be taken out as one big piece — the old-fashioned way — rather than in small pieces because they were so large. “They were worse than any cataracts found in the United States because Americans wouldn't let the disease progress that far,” he told us later.

After surgery the woman was sent home with gauzed-covered eyes. The next day she returned. As doctors pulled the coverings from her eyes, she cried, “I can see! I can see!”

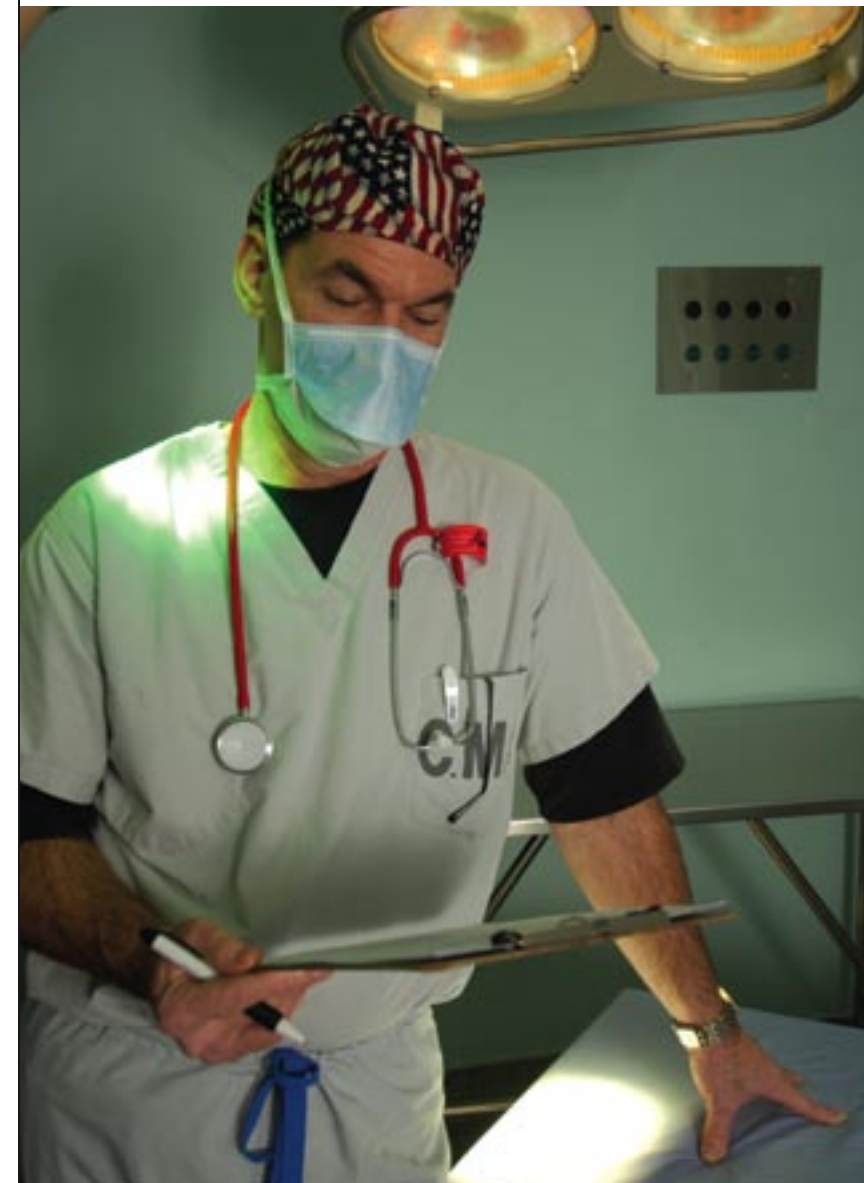
As we thanked God for restoring the woman's sight, it dawned on us that God had orchestrated our delay in Missouri just so Hoover would meet up with the eye surgeons.

His orchestration, not ours

I tell people now that the miracle of this story is the timing of God. He changed our plans so that a woman could see again. It's amazing how God weaves situations, challenges, talents and perfect timing for His good plans.

Rod Hoover, who grew up as an Assemblies of God missionary kid in Brazil, summed up the entire trip simply but eloquently: “Everything worked out perfectly for a lot of people — but especially for one woman.” **tpe**

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change I was angry and found it hard to promote my “Be flexible, it's a missions trip” motto. Though Tulsa is closer to Bolivar than St. Louis, I decided to cancel the new tickets because of the higher cost.

To assuage me, the travel agent scoured airlines looking for a comparable fare. When she found tickets that might work, she pitched her proposal in a “good news, bad news” scenario. The new tickets were \$50 cheaper than the original tickets, she told me, but the flight dates were one week later than the team originally planned.

At that time it seemed as if things were spinning out of control. I kept asking God, “Why is this happening when we are trying to do what You want us to do?”

I was about to find out.

At our gate in Tulsa, Rod Hoover, an anesthesiologist, met a group of doctors traveling to Honduras to perform eye surgeries. Lacking an anesthesiologist, they asked Hoover if he would work with them. Hoover ex-

plained that he was with a medical team already and had duties of his own. Even so, the meeting would prove providential.

An answered prayer

After a day in San Pedro Sula, a city of nearly 1 million residents, our team went to dinner at a restaurant. As we were being seated, the doctors Hoover met in Tulsa greeted us from a nearby table. We were surprised to see them.

A conversation ensued, and once again the doctors asked Hoover to help them. He agreed to give them one day of his services. In return, the doctors offered to treat anyone with cataracts who came through our clinic.

On the morning the blind woman finally made it into the clinic, she was ecstatic when she learned there were still eyeglasses to be given away. But once our team saw her cataracts, we knew glasses would do her no good. Her cataracts were so large and discolored,