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Week 40: *Christmas Shoes and Smiles*

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Mission special: Last week

In the studio

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison and Tammy Trent is with me. We are very excited because we're doing Christmas early here at *Life Today*. We've got a very good reason for it. Tammy, are you a big Christmas person?

TAMMY: I am! I love Christmas. If I could keep my tree up for another month past February 14th I would do it.

RANDY: You and my wife both! Christmas is an exciting time. It can be hard for people like me to get into the Christmas spirit early. But we've got a really good reason to do that. Because you know here at *LIFE Outreach International*, we minister to our viewers. We love you guys. And you guys turn around and support the ministry around the world that we do in places where they don't have food or they don't have clean drinking water or young people are being trafficked. So we love your support.

And as we've traveled to these places, we have seen other needs, some that we can fulfill, some that we still would like to do more. But one thing that we've seen that we've been able to do over the last several years, probably a decade now, it's been a while right, we have been able to give over two and a half million children a new pair of shoes. And for most of them, it is the first time they've ever had shoes. And then over the years, we've seen them pass them on and on. So I don't even know how many children we've reached with the shoes outreach, Tammy. But this is just such a fun thing to do at Christmas.

TAMMY: It is! And the kids love it so much. I mean I know what it is like when I get a gift and I'm not always the best at receiving but I love giving a gift. Because I love the response. And so when we're there with the children and they're lining up and I'm looking around trying to find the right pair of shoes that will fit their feet and put it on and it is a perfect fit, to see the joy when they go off running, I'm like yes, yes! I love this part of our ministry.

RANDY: They dance sometimes. Have you noticed that? It's like when I was a kid and I got new shoes I wanted to run fast.

[Laughter]

A lot of these kids want to dance.

Well, you can help make a lot of children dance this year. And then there is even more that we do with the smiles part of this outreach. But what we're hoping is that you'll take just a few minutes to watch with us as we take you into some places where Christmas has been very special in the past and where this Christmas needs to be very special if you will join us and be a part of our *Christmas Shoes and Smiles* outreach. Watch this.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: From your family to our family, your generosity has empowered *LIFE*'s mission efforts around the world—and the look on these children's faces makes the impact obvious. It's in the smile of Mateo as he receives a bowl of food made possible by your giving or of Gabriella as she quenches her thirst from a clean water well that you helped drill. You could even say you make it your business to give children smiles.

Well, this Christmas we'd like to give a smile to someone who might not easily be able to smile otherwise. You see, all over the world there are children who have trouble smiling because they were born with a cleft lip or palate. But a simple surgery by loving doctors can radically transform the appearance of children like these and greatly improve their quality of life.

But they won't be the only ones smiling this Christmas because with your help we also want to give a brand-new pair of shoes to children who have never had them.

TAMMY: You can see all of the little ones, honestly, the smiles on their faces, it's so exciting to be a part of it. You can look around at all of the children in this village and most of them are without shoes. They can lose their very lives because of an infection that they could get on their feet.

ANNOUNCER: Help make this Christmas special for a child like this. Help us provide Christmas shoes and smiles.

End of clip

In the studio

TAMMY: Oh, my goodness! I completely remember holding that little baby in my hands while he was eating one of our shoes.

[Laughter]

I loved it so much. I love being with these kids so much. And I love being a part of something that brings them joy. These little kids live in such hardship. They live with so much less than so many of us live with. And to be able to go in there in the name of Jesus and bring them a gift that I know will bring them joy and fun and watch them play, watch them run, watch them dance, watch them eat a shoe—whatever it is that brings them joy. I couldn't thank you enough for being a part of that with us.

It doesn't take very much to put a shoe or a pair of shoes on these children. Randy, it is totally doable. It is so fun. And we can all get involved and do something today!

RANDY: There is something that everyone can do. And you know this year our goal, this Christmas is 150,000 pairs of shoes, which means 150,000 children will get a new pair of shoes, many for the first time. That's only going to be possible with you guys responding and responding today.

Your gift of \$36 will put shoes on the feet of ten children this Christmas. To me that's awesome. And that's easily doable, and potentially, lifesaving but definitely, life-changing and definitely, just makes it a good Christmas. A gift of \$72 will put shoes on the feet of 20 children. Many of you can do that. A gift of \$180 will bless 50 children with a new pair of shoes this Christmas.

And so I look at that and I think, man, we can all do something. That is the secret of the success of all the outreaches of *LIFE*, and that is everybody does something. You don't have to be able to take care of the whole problem. We come together as the body of Christ and we share the love of Christ with people through different things.

And this Christmas, it's shoes, as well as smiles. Now the smiles part of the outreach is a big thing because you're talking about cleft palate and cleft lip and that can be very damaging to a child. It can make it hard for them to eat, and sometimes to breathe. So this is a much more serious thing. So as we give these shoes out, which is such a huge blessing, we're also looking to bless children with the ability to smile. And the average cost of that is \$500 for one cleft palate or cleft lip surgery, and one corrective surgery. A gift of \$1,000 today would actually take care of two of those.

And Tammy, that's a lifesaving thing in many cases but that's a beautiful thing.

TAMMY: It is a beautiful thing. There isn't much I can do with \$500 that I feel would be lasting in my life right now. But to give \$500 to do corrective surgery on a little one's life, that would change everything for them for the rest of their lives. Look, I would ask you please consider this, to make a phone call to us today or go online. If God has put you in a position to bless others today, right now, then please would you go online, would you make that call to us and let's do something to go to that is life-impacting, life-changing, that is bigger than ourselves. Do that

today. Let's do it together. Let's change the lives of one child at a time.

On the mission field

>> Everyone around us was shocked because it was the first time we ever saw such a condition. Her lip was open. It was like ripped when she was born.

>> So cleft lip and palate affects about one in 800 to one in 1,000 babies. So when a child is born with a cleft palate and it is not repaired then they can have lifelong problems.

When babies are breastfed, they must create suction and when they have a cleft palate, they can't create the seal that enables them to create suction.

So when Sylvia came to us, the first stage in treating her was to correct her malnutrition. And so for several weeks, we worked on improving her nutritional status with supplements and with our nutritional syrup. And once it was safe to do surgery and she was at adequate weight, then we took her to theater where I performed the first stage of her reconstruction, which is cleft lip repair.

So it is amazing how over the course of a one-hour surgery you transform a child's face, but you transform how they eat and transform how they'll interact with the world in the future. And how quickly they're transformed, and then back to their usual self, able to smile, have good pain control, able to eat adequately, and maintain their hydration. So by the next morning, Sylvia was doing well enough that she was able to be prepared for discharge.

>> I'm really happy and grateful for what has been done. And I just wanted to say thank you to everyone that's sponsored Sylvia's surgery.

>> So I'm really grateful for the opportunity to do these surgeries and impact the lives that are given by *LIFE Outreach International*. Without their support of these surgeries, Sylvia wouldn't have the future that we were able to give her.

In the studio

RANDY: That support comes from you, the viewer. We can't do it on our own. The doctors can't all do it on their own. We rely on you to step up and say I want to give a corrective surgery today. Here's a gift of \$500. I want to do two, here's a gift of \$1,000. Maybe you can do more than that.

I ask you to just take one second and take a look at some of the children whose lives have been changed. When you see their faces, you see what you can do, what others have done. And today, we're saying we want to do more. The need is there, and you and I are the answer. All the people in this line that goes all the way to that child in need, people on the field, the doctors, us here at *LIFE Outreach*, you the viewer, it takes that whole chain to make an impact.

And Tammy, when someone calls or they go online and make that gift, they start a process that ends in a smile.

TAMMY: Yes! I know. You know, Randy, when I watch these pieces and I see these precious children that are born with this cleft lip or cleft palate, actually it's hard for me to watch sometimes. Some are so severe that I just think bless their hearts! And I hate it for them. I actually hate it. I look and I think, oh, life seems so unfair sometimes, especially when it happens to a child that can't do anything about it.

That is one of the biggest reasons I love our ministry so much because we're always looking for a need and we're always looking for a way to help make life better for somebody. And this is one of those things. These little children can't do anything about this. It is affecting their lives right now. If it is not fixed or corrected, it will affect their lives forever.

We have doctors in place that know exactly what to do, know exactly how to fix this so that together we can all give these children a better life and a great future and set them up for success.

I don't know if you have \$500 to do that today but I know that you and a few of your friends,

maybe a few of your friends in Bible study or maybe a few of the kids in your youth group can get together, make it a project, make it a goal to do something to raise this money to help these children find a better life. That would be my challenge to you today. Because I think also when we do things together and then we see the results of it and we see what God has done, that he's provided, that he's made a way, there's something exciting that happens in your spirit where you go, gosh! Look at what God did because we stepped up because we showed up because we did something together. We were able to change the life of a little one at this very moment.

So we've got it all in place, we know the need is out there. We know the children are out there and all we need are the funds. So I'm going to ask you today if you pray about it, if you maybe think about getting together with a group of people in your church, make it a goal. And then I'm going to ask you to make a phone call to us, go online, whichever is easier, and make the best gift you possibly could give. That would be my challenge to you today.

RANDY: You know, Tammy, if it was someone in my family, a child, a grandchild with this condition, it would be no question about whether it's getting fixed. But for these people in these areas, these poverty-stricken areas, it is a question. And here's the beautiful thing, you can be the answer. So as Tammy suggested, let's do it. Go online, go to the phone, and make the best gift you can. We can change a life this Christmas.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Poverty is a killer, and because of it, children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we often take for granted, like a simple pair of shoes. Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections and diseases that could lead to crippling consequences—and even death.

By responding today, you will help secure and make ready 150,000 pairs of Christmas shoes to

be shipped and delivered to children around the world just in time for the holidays. Your gift of \$36 will help provide ten pairs of shoes. A gift of \$72 will help provide 20 pairs. And a gift of \$180 will help provide 50 pairs of Christmas shoes for children in need.

As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request the beautifully crafted, green crystal shoes ornament, a treasure to display at each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request this keepsake boxed set featuring three of *LIFE*'s crystal Christmas shoe ornaments.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective cleft lip or palate surgeries. With this gift, you may request the beautiful bronze sculpture, "Consider the Birds."

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

On the mission field

Janice: Is he saying something?

Open Captions

>> He says, "It's paining."

JANICE: Oh my gosh. I'm in a village in Angola and I came upon this child. This little boy is Augusto, and this breaks my heart. His little feet are in some of the worst shape I've ever seen and there were many in this village with horrible conditions on their feet. But this little guy is just scratching. They itch so bad. They're completely infected. He said there is insects that have gotten into his feet. I'd be surprised if he doesn't lose his toe. And then the disease comes in through their feet and just goes throughout their body. It can actually kill them; all from going barefoot in conditions that we're in right here.

I know Shoes and Smiles is a campaign that we get really excited about and it's fun. But this is why it is fun -- because it saves lives. You would think just a pair of shoes is not lifesaving but in areas like this, in conditions like this, it is; and we can change it for Augusto. We can help him. We're going to clean these up and get him a pair of shoes and help him.

Please, do what you can. Help bring shoes to little children like Augusto all over the world. You can be a part of something big and something even fun. But this is the reason we do it. Please!

End of clip

In the studio

TAMMY: This is the reason why we do it. He is the reason why we do it, and so many other children. Goodness, I feel like I have been privileged in so many areas of my life to make a difference in the lives of so many others. And this to me seems small but it's so big and so enormous! And it is so doable to get involved in such a part of our ministry as giving away *Shoes and Smiles*.

I recently was in Central America and it was such a great trip for me. First of all, it's filled with so much fun because the kids are having the time of their lives, Randy, because they're getting a gift. They love it. I'm getting a gift. It doesn't matter.

I remember sitting there with all of these children and I had all the shoes around me and these children were ready to size up their feet with a new pair of shoes. And I remember sitting there and I'd take a pair of shoes and I'd put them on their feet. And I'd look at the little one and say, "Is that good?" And they, nope. And I'm like, oop, they're too big.

So I'd find another pair and I'd come back and I'd put it on and say, "Is that it?" They're like nope, it's too small.

I said, "Listen, I love this little girl. She has a heart after my own heart. It's got to be a perfect

fit." So I turned around and got another pair. We put it on and she said yes. She looked at me and said, "Si. Si." And I said, "Si? Si." And then she got up and she just ran away.

I was like oh, my goodness! God, thank you! What I felt, Randy at that moment was thank you, God, that you have made a way for me to be here and to help these kids and to give them fun. Like a joyful day, something exciting, something fun!

And then we would travel from the children into maybe their homes. I remember praying with a woman in Central America. I was thinking even at that moment that God has made a way, he is even using this to get to this mama who just wanted prayer. She just wanted prayer for her children and provision. I'm just so grateful that God sets up appointments and moments in our lives to be a blessing to other people.

We get to go on the front line, not everybody can. But the truth is that you're there with me. When I'm there putting the shoes on the feet of these children, I honestly, and I'm not even making this up, I'm thinking of you often and thanking you, whether you know it or not. Like thank you, thank you, thank you for the way that you have given through the years to so many outreaches that we do here at *LIFE*. Thank you so much for sending me forth, for sending Randy forth, and for sending all of us forth so that we can make a difference in the lives of these children and these families. I'm so grateful for it.

RANDY: Absolutely. And Tammy, we're going to do it again because I know that people will respond. We have 150,000 children that we want to give a new pair of shoes this Christmas, and we can only do it with your support. We want to turn their mourning into dancing. We hear their cries. We want to say to them as we do at Christmas, God is with you—Emmanuel, God is with us.

Will you help us say that not just to the children but Tammy, as you pointed out, to the parents? Because they go why are you giving our kids these shoes? We say we come in the name of the Lord and it is the ultimate Christmas message, and the ultimate Christmas gift. So will you be a part of it? Such a joy, but such a needed thing in the world.

Go to the phone or go online and make the best gift you can. If you can give ten pairs of shoes for ten children, make that \$36 gift. If you can give that corrective surgery to a child, make that \$500 gift. Some of you can go way beyond that. And you know, you know what you can do. Well, let's all do something. We can all do something and we can make this Christmas very special for some children. Do it now.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Poverty is a killer, and because of it, children needlessly suffer, not only from a lack of food and clean water but also from a lack of things we often take for granted, like a simple pair of shoes. Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a new pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor in light of all their needs, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of life-threatening infections and diseases that could lead to crippling consequences—and even death.

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End of video

On the mission field

TAMMY: It is no secret that some of the most compassionate people in the world watch *Life Today*. Those hearts of compassion, well, they can be found behind our television cameras too. One of them is David Skelton, or Dave as I like to call him. Dave has traveled with me and the rest of the mission team to some of the most challenging places on earth. But that's not why I want you to hear from him today.

DAVID: My name is David Skelton, I'm one of the missions' producers here at *LIFE Outreach International*. I came on board back in 2005. This job was an answer to prayer. Being able to travel with *LIFE*, to say it opens your eyes is kind of an understatement. James and Betty in Central America was my first trip for *Shoes*. All the kids that we've seen there had no shoes, and this is probably their first pair.

Fourteen years ago, I started the House of Courage. And I started training in martial arts back in '91, '92. I was really more concentrated on trying to create a Christian martial arts system.

In our school, we use the verse Proverbs 15:1, "A harsh word stirs up anger, a kind word promotes peace." Having a Karate studio and all these other fundraisers, and of course, I'm thinking, I work at *LIFE Outreach*. What would fit with Karate? We kick with our feet. Let's do a fundraiser for shoes.

Raising money for the kick-a-thon is simple. We're going to do kicks on the bag. You have five minutes to do as many kicks as you can. People just go around to whomever and get a pledge of, I'll pledge you a nickel, I'll pledge you a dime per kick. For some of them it was a little bit of a struggle for them because they were smaller kids.

It was fun having John Yeatts our mission's director, and us be able to present a check to him for \$3,000 for all the money that we raised through this kick-a-thon. I want these kids to see exactly who they are helping. That's what it's about.

TAMMY: Hello, House of Courage students! Listen, I'm Tammy Trent and I'd heard about your amazing fundraiser. I am so proud of you! And I wanted to show you what that looks like right now when we come to these places and put these shoes on their tiny little feet.

Look at that! We're so grateful for all that you've done. It matters and I just wanted you to see it. Thank you so much! Well done!

In the studio

RANDY: Wow! Tammy, what a great idea. I mean, seriously, to do something not just to raise funds but to do a group project, get everybody in the spirit of giving. That's very cool.

TAMMY: Yes. I love when I don't have to carry the load by myself. I love doing stuff with my friends. And I love doing things together because I think there's excitement when we come together and we see God move. And He does!

RANDY: And you know what? We're going to have to wrap it up because Christmas is coming fast. But we've got to get everything in place. We've got to make Christmas very special one for these children. We need your support and this is the last day we're going to be talking about this. So if you want to do something, maybe for a future project, you can always call the number on the screen or contact us on our website. We've got ongoing programs to get groups involved with the different outreaches. But if you want to be a part of this year's Christmas Shoes and Smiles, we need to hear from you today. So go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can. And Tammy, it's going to be a good one!

TAMMY: It is going to be a good one because we're doing something about it. Oh, my goodness. Don't sit back. Don't wait. Don't let somebody else do it. You do it today. Let's do it together and let's make it a great Christmas!