

# More Than “Hello”

COSTA RICA | September 7



Harlin

**H**arlin recognized Flor as they passed on the street. As a former police officer, Harlin knew that Flor was willing to sell anything for money to buy drugs and alcohol.

Flor also recognized Harlin. The two women lived only a block apart in a town in Costa Rica. They had exchanged greetings over the years, but never anything more.

On this day, Harlin felt a desire to say more than a simple “hello.”

“How are you?” she asked. “How’s your life?”

“Everything is bad,” Flor replied, glumly. Harlin looked closely at the woman.

“Do you have anything to eat?” she asked. Flor lowered her head and began to cry.

Harlin was walking to the store, and she decided to buy food for Flor.

On the way back home after the store, she stopped at Flor’s house and left a bag of rice, a bag of beans, and two pieces of chicken.

The next day, Harlin saw her church pastor outside a bank.

“I have a little food here,” the pastor said, motioning to a bag filled with rice, beans, oil, flour, and other items. “Do you know someone who needs it?”

“Yes,” Harlin said. “I have a neighbor who has nothing to eat.”

“Take this, and give it to her,” he said.

Harlin invited the pastor to go with her.

“Come with me, and you will see where she lives,” she said.

The two went to Flor’s house and gave her the food.

Flor was very grateful.

As they spoke, Harlin asked if she would like to study the Bible. Flor indicated that she would.

The next day, Harlin arrived for the Bible study with a man and three women from her church. Flor’s house was too dilapidated to meet inside, so they sat in her small front yard.

After that, the group met once a week to sing and study the Bible. Flor liked to sing, and she especially liked a song with the words, “Give me a new heart.”

Flor’s heart began to change. She stopped insulting and hitting family members and



neighbors who upset her. Her profanity-filled speech grew pure.

Two months into the Bible studies, Costa Rica's rainy season began, and the group could no longer meet in Flor's yard without getting wet.

Flor missed the weekly gatherings, and she sought out the company of church members at the Seventh-day Adventist church on Sabbath.

No one invited her to the church. She came on her own.

Two more months passed, and the church pastor asked Flor if she would like to give her heart to Jesus in baptism.

She liked the question. "Yes," she said. "No one has ever asked me if I wanted to be baptized."

A short time later, Flor sank under the waters of repentance.

Flor had a well-known reputation in town. Everyone knew her life. Townspeople had seen how it was changing, and they were amazed to see her joyfully walking home after her baptism. Person after person stopped to hug and congratulate her.

Flor was so happy! She hadn't received a hug in years.

Several months after her baptism, Flor remains a faithful Seventh-day Adventist in Costa Rica.

"I give God thanks for my new life," she said. "I'm grateful for everything that the church members do for me."

Harlin credits the Holy Spirit for the transformation in Flor's life.

She also believes that it was the Holy Spirit who prompted her to say more than "hello" on the day that Flor had no food.

"God is great," Harlin said. "There is nothing so difficult that He cannot do." 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Costa Rica and missional challenges there. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a center of influence that will share the love of Jesus with children who are at risk

## Story Tips

- Show Costa Rica on the map.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Harlin: [bit.ly/Harlin-IAD](https://bit.ly/Harlin-IAD).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, "To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples," and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives." The Thirteenth Sabbath project to open a center of influence for at-risk children in Costa Rica seeks to fulfill Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults," and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- Costa Rica's first Adventist congregations mainly formed along the Caribbean coast, and many small congregations grew near train stops along the railroad.
- In 1928, the Costa Rica-Nicaragua Mission was established with four churches and 152 members.

of being ensnared in a life of drugs and alcohol. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on September 28.

By Andrew McChesney