



**Mexican Medical Ministries
2009 Annual Report**



From the President

2009 was one of the most interesting and challenging years for Mexican Medical Ministries to date. Prior to this year, we had felt the decline in the number of volunteers due to concerns over possible drug-related violence in Mexico's border towns. Also, though we, like other Americans, felt proud to see so many respond generously to the need for overseas disaster relief and the rebuilding of New Orleans, we did experience a level of hardship because so many resources have been redistributed to meet the urgent needs. It seems strange to me (as I suppose it has to many) that the world is experiencing so many natural disasters one right after another.

And then it hit Baja, Mexico! Spring went along fine until an outbreak of swine flu emerged in Mexico City. At the time of the outbreak, we had teams returning from the state of Chiapas via Mexico City and we weren't sure if they would be able to pass into the United States. In response to the flu crisis, Mexican Medical rallied and produced a truckload of disease prevention kits (contents included hand sanitizer, a mask, hand soap, a Gospel of John, a children's coloring booklet with 12 basic health lessons, and an information sheet that includes a "recipe" for homemade hand sanitizer). We worked with a local church in Tijuana to assemble them, and, after a prayer, we sent half the kits to Mexico City to be distributed by local churches there. The rest were spread among ministries in Baja.



Later in the year, just as things seemed to calm down, a "chubasco" wind (or hurricane-like storm) ripped through southern Baja. Our missionaries put out an appeal and teams from the states went down to put roofs back on churches. All this was happening while America's economy was taking a significant dip.

What I will recall most about 2009 was the heart of our volunteers. We know that to come and serve was truly a sacrificial gift to Our Lord Jesus. Many came with very little notice and people were willing to give financially, as well. It is truly humbling to see the generosity of folks who are themselves struggling to stay ahead.

The other most significant thing we observed was the fruit of many long years of service in Mexico. The Mexican church began as never before to give with equally huge hearts. We would plan events not knowing if enough volunteers would sign up and then be tearfully blessed as numbers of our Mexican brothers and sisters showed up, ready to serve. In 2009, time and time again, it was the national church ministering to their neighbors and filling in the gaps.

It reminds me of the early church in Acts chapter two, where all were gathered in Christ's name and gave as God had blessed each one. The best memory of 2009 was the bond of partnership and true sharing of the call that God has placed on our lives. As the year ended and 2010 became a reality, we have been continuing to enjoy the blessings of this deepened fellowship in service to our Lord.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve".

Pastor Steve Crews,
President

Construction

Hurricane Relief Team

As Christians, we believe that God is the Alpha and Omega, has control over life and death, and yet is intimately interested in our daily activities. So why, why, why are we always so surprised when we see Him clearly at work in a situation, such as when He calls individuals to come together as a team and use their individual talents, skills and willingness to collectively perform a task in His will?

When volunteers come to serve for a week, they plan, prepare and expect to dedicate the week to serving the Lord by serving others. They have heard a call, felt led to respond, and come to fulfill that commitment. Our role as a missionary organization is to provide opportunities to serve and help facilitate that process.

God called 20 men to respond to the needs of the La Roca Rehabilitation Center, which was damaged by Hurricane Jimena. Team members came from Temecula, CA; San Vicente, BC, Mexico; San Quintín, BC, Mexico; Loreto, BCS, Mexico; Cabo San Lucas, BCS, Mexico and Santa Rosalía, BCS, Mexico--over 1000 miles apart. Men with just the right experience responded to God's call and brought just the right equipment to complete the job without even knowing ahead of time exactly what the task would entail.

One of the projects at the rehab center in Santa Rosalía involved rolled roofing; when MexMed missionary Don Karsgaard needed a leader for that project, the Lord

provided Pastor Victor, who is an experienced rolled roofer. Pastor Victor serves at La Esperanza's church and Bible school. His family of four

recently was able to move out of their tiny dorm room and into their own home, nearly completed after a lot of hard work by him and volunteer teams. Pastor Victor, wanting to show his appreciation for the support he had received from volunteer teams when working on his family's home, eagerly responded to the opportunity to help with the hurricane relief effort.

During the week at the rehab center, the group was able to repair the roof on the dormitory building, re-roof the kitchen and dining room, replace the roof on the office building, rebuild a 1000-square-foot area used for teaching and church services, and install porches for shade on the dormitory and dining hall. Praise the Lord for how He brought together a great team, equipped and ready to serve.



One caravan team leader writes:

All the scare stories in the newspapers leading up to our trip and the concerns of loving friends and relatives translated into extra prayer and excitement. Our church body prayed and supported us, and we had an excellent trip, both in terms of life transformation for those who went and for the impact we were able to have down in Mexico. As for safety issues, we saw an elevated police presence in a few places and a bit more

Caravan Teams

Tested Faith Proves True

military than usual on the drive down, but no concerns, and we had no instances of feeling threatened in any way.

At La Esperanza, we had the privilege of working alongside the excellent team of missionaries and Bible school students. We had a kids' class for 150-200 children for three days at one of the larger migrant camps. In spite of a few children that were behaving disruptively, there were so many kids that listened actively as the gospel message and health lessons were shared. Our team also had the opportunity to go out two nights with Christian movies to show at local camps, as well as attend some church services with our Mexican brothers and sisters. We also put on a health fair at a local church plant one evening. The outreach served 140 people, of whom 90 were new contacts for the small church! Praise the Lord!

The impact of the poverty and the spiritual need made all of us dig deeply in self-evaluation of our own lives. One family on our team was on the verge of breaking up, but they were restored and healed. One team member who had backslidden

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for several years prior to coming to Mexico was restored not only to fellowship, but to spiritual encouragement to others.

The young children on our team got to be involved in vital connection across language lines and over the poverty barriers. One of them got to help in the dental office and two young people gained experience playing the guitar to prepare for future ministry. Steve Davis, the site missionary, challenged us over several days to the essential commitment of spending thirty minutes a day with God to fuel a real walk with Christ. The week's intense focus on Christ and His passion for the lost left us incredibly grateful and changed.

Many missions organizations that sponsor short-term trips are being deeply impacted because of the many churches that are canceling in fear. Churches are not being built, outreaches are being cancelled, and the organizations are struggling with fewer resources on many levels. We are thankful for the courage and support of our church family back home, and grateful to God for the all the week's blessings that we would have missed out on if we had been controlled by fear rather than faith.



Medical Outreaches

Santa Rosalía State Prison



Some recent Loreto Weekender teams have had the opportunity to minister to the 152 men housed at the medium-security prison near Santa Rosalía, Baja California

Sur. Missionary Don Karsgaard reports, "There had been a little apprehension on the part of some of the team members, but that was quickly dispelled. Everything was well-organized, with extra guards on duty, some working overtime just for us. We were able to walk freely through the prison and be friendly with prisoners and guards alike."

The teams set up in the administrative offices of the prison, making one a dental office, another a doctor's office, and a third the eyeglasses office. In the hall, volunteers measured everyone's height, weight, blood sugar, and blood pressure. They also had a table set up with several kinds of tracts, New Testaments, Bibles and Gospels of John.

During their time there, Don had opportunities to talk with the director, assistant director, commandant, and some guards and share about the team's vision and motives. "We desire the same as you do here: that these men's activities be changed, that they stop doing 'bad things,' and become better people in society."

"But," he added, "we can teach them and discipline them all we want, and they will not change; our minds are influenced by our hearts, and only God can change hearts. That change starts when we believe in Jesus Christ. We are here to show them that we and God care for them, by giving them medical services, dental care and glasses." He went on to explain that this tangible demonstration of Christ's love can help open doors to share the Gospel with the men, pray with them, provide them with Bibles and other resources, and help connect them with other believers within the prison.

There are already about 30 men who have come to Christ while incarcerated, and they meet for Bible study and prayer daily, in addition to participating in church services several times a week in the prison's small church building available for use by Christians and Catholics. The health fair teams have been invited to return every six months, so we plan to minister there again, expecting even greater things! Praise the Lord that the doors are open, seeds are being planted, and people are being saved. Please pray for the men at the facility, as well as for the Christians in Santa Rosalía who go to the prison each week to witness to the men there, encourage them, and hold Bible studies and church services.

Outreach

Children's Christmas Event

Pastor Rafael Ventura, Jr. writes:

“Mágica Navidad is a non-profit event that aims to give Christmas presents and a smile to low-income children from the San Quintín Valley. Unlike

past Mágica Navidad events, which were secular, this year, for the first time, we could share the message of salvation with the 560 children and adults who attended. It was very special to see children and adults praying the sinner's prayer to accept Christ into their hearts and coming to understand the true meaning of Christmas. This year the event known as “Magical Christmas” was able to be truly supernatural, because Christ came into people's lives. We could see the changes on people's faces as mothers and fathers that had nothing to give their children for Christmas came to realize that, with Christ in their homes, they had everything! They understood that the best presents we can give are forgiveness, love, unity, time with our family, and, most of all, Christ.

It brought tears to my eyes to hear parents tell me, “It's true. That's what our families needed to hear, especially in times like these.” “Thank you so much for the message.” “Thank you for opening our eyes.” Many parents had felt a lot of sadness and uncertainty because of the lack of work, along with other economic issues. We give God the glory, because He touched their hearts in the areas that they most needed it.

When people had received their presents (flu-prevention kits and handmade winter hats, plus toys for the children), they came up to us and thanked us for the message. I almost cried, realizing that the message had really taken root in people's hearts, because while usually everyone's main concern is the material things being given out, this time people were thanking us for the message.



Participating in this event also helped us get to know the municipal delegate—we're friends now, and he's seen us work to help and serve our community, not because we

were expecting anything in return, but rather because we desired to share about the better life that Christ offers. The delegate has asked us to pray for him and also if we could help out at different community events since then.



In January, there was a horrible bus accident in La Rumorosa (on the highway between Tecate and Mexicali) and 14 people from San Quintín lost their lives. Various government agencies organized a large funeral for the victims and the delegate called us to ask for our help in comforting the families affected by this tragedy. Thanks to God, we were able to be of help to the families, as well as to the delegate in his role. We shared God's Word with people, prayed for them, and helped them, providing hats, gloves, food, coffee for the memorial service, and other things.

Donated items that were left after the Christmas outreach were divided and given to several communities, and our church received a generous share, which helped us as we began our new kids' program, “The Super Dreamers' Club.” Every other Saturday, we are gathering the children from our community and teaching them about Biblical, moral, ethical, and civic themes, using skits, activities, games, and lessons. At the end, we also provide a meal. The donated items left from the Mágica Navidad event gave us a good start, and some students at our site's Bible school have also been selling cakes to fund this ministry.

We would like to thank each person who supported the Christmas outreach, whether through coming to help out, praying, or donating toys, funds, pencils, candy, hats, gloves, flu-prevention kits, and other items. The Lord has blessed many through your generosity!”

Seeing God's Hand Change Lives



Dr. César Tamez writes:

“Glory to God! Our October trip to Palenque, Chiapas (in the southeast corner of Mexico) was a new chapter of victory for the Kingdom of God. The Lord sent seven of us, each with our own role (with some multiple assignments, as with any mission trip). We were

all reminded of God's mercies that he gives us each day and we saw his hand at work in many ways. Traveling to Chiapas is always a colorful adventure. We attended a local church service our first morning there, and it was great to be among the people. We felt very included and the service was beautiful, especially hearing songs in the Ch'ol language in the middle of the silence of the jungle, with no traffic noise in the background.

Our president, Steve Crews, was invited to share the Word of God and he did it in Spanish. What a pleasant surprise to hear our brother preaching in our language. After church, they took us to their kitchen, (simple and with a dirt floor, but very clean) to share a delicious meal with us: chicken soup, red rice, and fresh hot handmade corn tortillas.

In the afternoon, we got the operating room ready and did a couple of minor surgeries. As always, brother Diego and his family prepared a dinner to welcome us-- great carne asada (grilled beef steak), rice, black beans, guacamole and other delicacies from their Chiapan kitchen. It was also a time of sharing as we remembered good times from the past 25 years of serving our Lord together.

From Monday to Thursday, it was, as always, a marathon of surgeries, one after another: hysterectomies, gall bladder removals, hernias, ovarian cysts and more. During the 26 operations, we really sensed the powerful hand of God working in everything and everyone.

The patients are always appreciative--in pain, but appreciative. We were exhausted but very happy

and thankful to the Almighty, who works miracles. There were difficult cases that sometimes caused us to tremble, but praying and believing in God, we were able to do it, and it was done well for His glory and honor.

One patient came to see us for a hysterectomy. The doctors in the state of Chiapas had told her there was nothing they could do. In the Name that is above all names, we operated on her and removed her uterus and tumors. Afterwards, her husband said, “I did not believe in God. But I have seen His power and love in freeing my beloved wife from this terrible disease. Now, I believe. What must I do now?”

The local doctor, J. Gilberto González, shared the gospel message with him and he ended up giving his life to Jesus. The next day, the patient also gave her life to our Lord, Savior, and Healer, Jesus Christ.

Serving God alongside brothers and sister in the faith enriches our capacity for faith and service. Together, let us give glory to the only One who deserves it for eternity. Thank you for supporting us in prayer, believing together with us, and giving your help in everything. May God bless you abundantly!”



GOD BLESSED 2009 IN THIS WAY

Volunteers

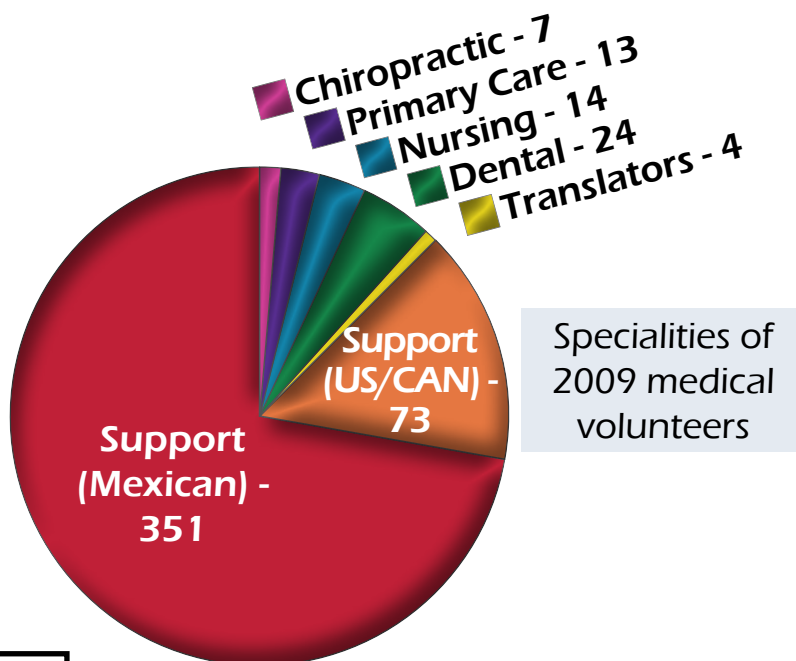
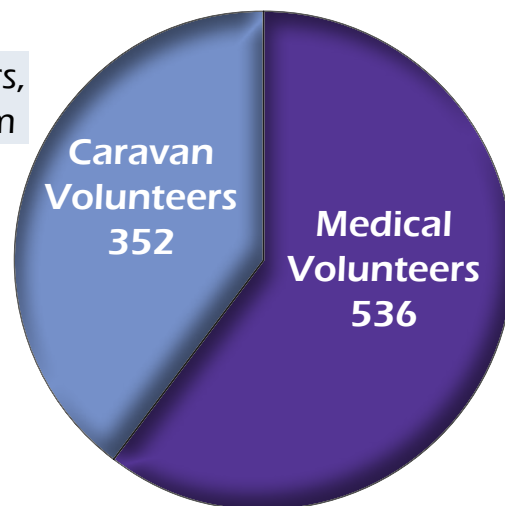
Mexican Medical was blessed by many people that sacrificed in so many ways to touch people spiritual and physically in Mexico.

A total of 888 individuals participated in caravan or medical teams with MexMed in 2009 (in addition to the over 400 volunteers who visited the Gabriel House during the year).

The short-term (caravan) teams that signed up to serve represented 12 states and 3 provinces, as well as approximately 10 different denominations.

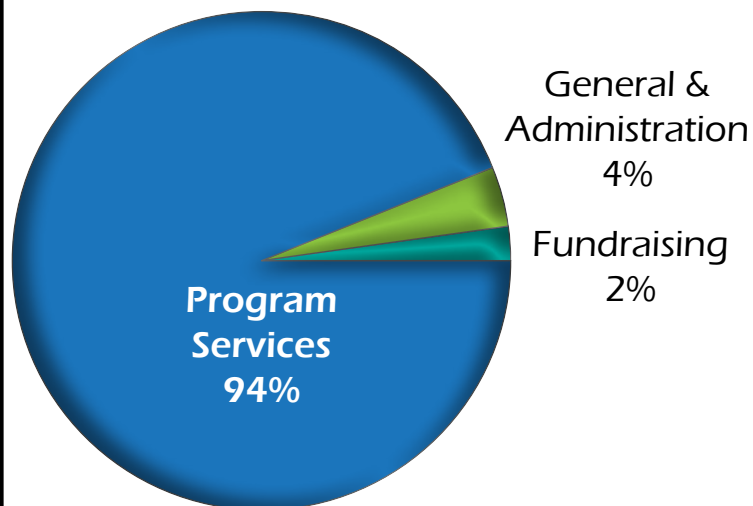
We praise God for the 630+ people who made decisions for Jesus Christ at our medical team events this year, as well as for the countless others who came to the Lord through our other ministries.

2009 volunteers, by type of team

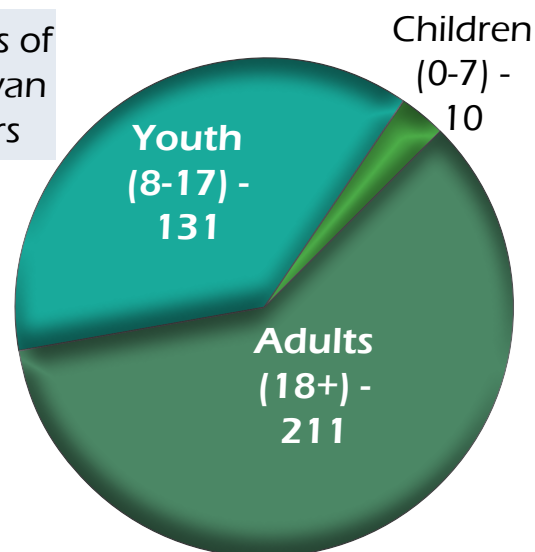


Specialities of 2009 medical volunteers

Expenditures




Age groups of 2009 caravan volunteers



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Bringing healing and hope to the people of Mexico.

