

SOME THINGS ARE CHANGING – Report: Summer, 2017

Dear Friends,

Thank you again for your prayers and monthly support. For the past 13 years we have organized and conducted evangelical Health Fairs throughout the towns and villages of Baja Sur, Mexico – we've been in a different area and church almost every month. These have been a tremendous benefit both physically and spiritually to almost 20,000 people over these years - first training evangelical church members on how to share their faith effectively, and then having them invite their friends, relatives, neighbors and people they work with to our Health Fairs where everyone is shown the love of Jesus and given a Gospel of John and the message of salvation.



However a few months ago we started to feel the need to discontinue these Health Fairs, because the work associated was becoming more than we should handle, due to the fact that we are now both 70 years old. But this decision was not easy for us because this ministry is such a wonderful and fruitful ministry. Then something happened that made our decision easier. For the past 7 years we have also been taking our Health Fairs into the State Prison in Santa Rosalía – going there once or twice each year. In January this year we were asked to come to La Paz, the State Capital of Baja Sur, to meet with the Director and the Captain of the larger State Prison there. This is where they had to bring in the 'riot squad' a couple of years ago, to settle down what could've been a real disaster in that prison. The new Director, knowing a little of our work in Santa Rosalía, began his meeting by stating, *"We know our methods are not working"* (to control and re-train the inmates; and change them so that when they leave the prison they'd become beneficial contributors to society), *"so we would like you"* (Don and Lorraine) *"to bring your volunteers into our Prison here in La Paz, to institute the changes we believe you are able to help us with..."* This was both, a bit humbling to think that God was leading us into such a task. But at the same time it was music to our ears, to hear these government officials admitting and requesting such help, and that we should be given such an opportunity – when we know how many others have had a hard time getting into this Prison to share the Gospel there.

So on March 30 through April 1 this year, we organized a Team of 23 volunteers – consisting of 19 Mexican volunteers (4 doctors, 4 dentists, and 11 general helpers), and 2 Canadians; plus ourselves... During our 3 days in the La Paz Prison over 50 people repented of their ways and accepted Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior. It was an unprecedented blessing in this Prison, which currently holding about 700 men and 55 women – (4 women having with them children under 2 years of age). At the conclusion of our 3rd day, Don spoke to a group of about 200 inmates – standing with guards on the opposite side of a chain link fence. Don explained in a very loud voice, *"You have been lied to – The universe and everything in it did not come into being as the evolutionists say! The evidence is overwhelming proving that God did create it all! And just as we..., when we make something – if it does not work correctly we will either fix it or throw it away – so God is doing the same with us. He has created all of us according to His purposes and because we have all done many things wrong, God has made a way to fix things. And we've been given a choice: to accept God's 'fix-it' plan, or be thrown away. That's right God will fix you, (if you want Him to); or at the end of your life, He will throw you away!"*

Without explaining more about God's plan of salvation further Don simply said, *"It's all written down for us in this book"* (pointing to a Bible). *"If you'd like a copy so you can read all about it for yourself, just ask us for one when you come to get the gift bags we have for you today."* Don went on to explain, *"In these bags there is: toothpaste, a tooth brush, soap and a wash cloth. They were put together by people in the US who love God, and who love you – just as we do. And that is why we are all here today, to show you that even though you are here in this Prison, you are still loved by God, by us and by our friends here in Mexico, the US, and Canada."*

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Don then asked the men to form a line to receive these gift bags, and to receive a New Testament or Bible – if they asked for one. But they continued crowding together and pushing up against the fence, not wanting to form an orderly line. So the guards, (not wanting to go inside with the inmates), tried to get them to form a line, but again without success... (It was obvious that there was a lack of respect here – both on the part of the inmates and of the guards...) So Don asked the guard at the gate to unlock it and let him go inside with the men – and reluctantly he did. Don then spoke personally with many of inmates as he helped them form the orderly line he had requested – telling them that we love them and have sufficient items for all of them – and the men became friendly and lined up without an incident. As Don returned through the gate, some of the guards looked a little stunned at what he'd done – because, although they might not admit it, they feared some of the inmates.

So the desired changes are beginning to happen: more than 250 inmates requested and received Bibles, or New Testaments; over 100 Gospels of John were also given out; over 50 inmates received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the guards have been left wondering how it was that Don was able to get the men in an orderly line – we know it was only by God's power...

So pray that more of the guards and staff in this Prison will start their searching for what we have in Christ. They have seen something of the evidence of the power of God when Don went into where the inmates were and how the inmates became friendly towards him; and that's a start... As we have found over and over again, people are much more interested in receiving the message of salvation, after they have in some way seen the love of God in action.

Pray for us and for others who go with us into this prison at various times over the coming months, that more evidence of the love of Jesus will be seen in us by the guards, staff and inmates – and that as a result they will all want what we have in Christ. Please pray also for those who are Christians already in these Prisons, as they meet together for Bible study and prayer – that they too will have a positive impact on their fellow inmates.

At first it was a difficult decision to stop taking our Health Fairs to the churches, but now we will focus more on the Prisons in La Paz and Santa Rosalía. It's like giving up the 'good' for something 'better' – taking our Health Fairs to the churches has been very 'good', but now seeing the need and opportunities in these Prisons and also how responsive the inmates were, we believe we might be moving on to something 'better'.

Thank you again for your prayerful support for us in this Prison ministry as well as in the other ministries we are involved in – the English Church we pastor (November through April); the microfinancing program we have for impoverished women; the children's feeding program we support; our Bible distribution program (providing study Bibles, and other items...); and the other ways we support all the Pastors here in Loreto.

Lastly to answer the question many people ask: "No we're not retiring; just re-focusing a little in 2017."

Don & Lorraine Karsgaard

Serving the Lord in and around Loreto, Baja California Sur, Mexico

www.PS-Ministries.com

www.MexicanMedical.com

P.S. – We're planning a '**50 Anniversary Year Celebration**' here in Loreto – October 26-29, 2017. We would like to give you an Invitation to join us for a wonderful time of various activities and celebrations. It'll be a time of inspiration as well as a time to learn about our ministries and to experience much of what Loreto has to offer, so if you are able to come, please go to our website soon to make your reservations: www.Donald-G-Karsgaard.com