Maci and I recently had the immense privilege of visiting the Holy Land. It was truly a life changing experience with many memorable moments. To walk where Jesus walked and to pray where he prayed had a powerful effect on our souls and we are still contemplating the effect that this pilgrimage has had on both of us. One of the most touching events was our visit to St. Anne’s Church in Jerusalem which is known for its excellent acoustics – so much so that tour groups make it a point to visit the church just to sing since everyone sounds good when singing at St. Anne’s. Our group was singing “Amazing Grace” inside the church when a group from mainland China came in and set down in the pews opposite us. The leader of the group was a young Chinese woman who promptly got her group singing “Amazing Grace” along with us – in Mandarin. And once we had finished “Amazing Grace”, she led both groups in a beautiful rendition of “How Great Thou Art” sung enthusiastically by each group in its own language. Afterwards we had the opportunity of speaking with this Chinese gal who told us in broken English, “We are the persecuted church and we covet your prayers.”

I couldn’t help but think that this must be what heaven will be like. There is a popular contemporary Christian song called “The Concert of the Age” that compares heaven to a huge rock concert run by angels – except it is the audience that is doing the singing in praise of Jesus who is on the stage. Revelation 7:9 describes “all tribes and peoples and languages” gathered around the throne of Jesus – and I am sure that they will be singing. So much of missions and evangelism is focused on the number of people that come to Christ, but God seems to be just as concerned with the number of tribes and people groups that are represented around the Throne. Our God emphatically wants a diversity of worshippers. Here at Mexico Medical Missions we are primarily concerned with the Tarahumara tribe; and despite the difficulty of the work, we know that God desires that Tarahumaras be present around the Throne singing in their own language along with members of the other ten thousand tribal groups in the world.

I look forward to seeing that in Heaven someday, but for a short time in Jerusalem Maci and I were content to sing as members of the English tribe alongside members of the Mandarin tribe.

Thanks for all your support and prayers,

-Dr Mike
Dr. Mike wrote this article last summer

Sometimes, when my chores are done, I like to just walk through the hospital and see what is occurring. It is Saturday afternoon and our surgeries are done. Praise God that all the patients did well. We have a dozen patients in the hospital at present. Let me introduce them to you.

In the men’s ward Bed #1 is Jose who was brought to us from a remote community after being found comatose in his home where he lives alone. He is only in his 50’s and we were sure he was going to die from what appeared to be a massive stroke. But with good medical and nursing care he has improved every day and we are hopeful that he will recover well enough to return home in a couple of weeks.

Next is Eusebio who is a 75 y/o man who came in last week at the point of death with terrible pneumonia. Dr. Chuck drained 2 quarts of pus from his chest and he began to breathe easier. Now he is active and spritely and anxious to get back home, and we are having a difficult time convincing him to stay and finish his course of antibiotics.

Next is Isidro, a 69 year old Tarahumara gentleman on whom Dr. Chuck operated yesterday for his hernia. He should be heading home in a couple of days. Fortunately, we don’t have to deal with insurance companies hounding us to discharge patients soon after surgery. The Tarahumara diet is poor and their surroundings are dirty. When I practiced in the US, we tried to get patients out of the hospital ASAP since there was nothing particularly therapeutic about the hospital environment. But here at Hospital Misión Tarahumara clean sheets and good food are a definite help for a recovering surgery patient.

Next is Reyes who is an elderly man with malnutrition and dehydration. Unfortunately, elder abuse is not uncommon among the Tarahumara. Food supplies are running low after the disastrous harvest last fall, and the very young and the very old are the ones who suffer the most. It is hard to imagine that the Tarahumara culture rations food in hard times such that children and the elderly get less, but that is what we see here in the Sierra Madre. Praise God that the rains have come and it appears that the corn and bean crops are doing well, and we expect an adequate harvest this fall.

And last in the men’s ward is Cirilo, a 54 year old man with a serious tuberculosis infection of his cervical spine. He is in a lot of pain and has virtually no motion of his neck. He just got back from Chihuahua where we sent him for a MRI to show the extent of the infection. His antibiotic treatment for TB will go on for at least a year, but fortunately his prospects for recovery are good.

In the woman’s ward we find Aurelia, a 30 year old mother of three who has tuberculosis of her lower spine of such severity that she is completely paralyzed below the waist. We started her treatment several months ago, but when she went home the local docs neglected to give her adequate antibiotics, so she is back in the hospital in order to receive adequate treatment. Tuberculosis is endemic in our area. Studies show that our TB problem is as bad as the worst part of Africa. It is curable, but the treatment is long and arduous. Unfortunately, often neither the patient nor the government doctors in our area show much interest in carrying the treatment through to the end.

Next to Aurelia is Dolores, a sweet 34 year old Tarahumara woman who is barely four and a half feet tall. She has been crippled her entire life since having a knee infection in infancy. For years she has limped on a painful, stiff knee which was horribly arthritic. She has the common Tarahumara fear of outsiders but finally came to the hospital for treatment. Yesterday we operated on the knee. She won’t regain the mo-
Last November, Dr. Mike was awarded the Humanitarian of the Year award by the Dr. Simi Foundation in Mexico City. This award is given every year to “that person who has made Mexico a better country.” Three years ago the Dr. Simi Foundation named Mexico Medical Missions as the most effective charitable organization in Mexico. This October Dr. Mike will be traveling to Juárez to receive the “Social Entrepreneur of the Year” award from FECHAC which is the charitable outreach of the manufacturing community of Chihuahua. Dr. Mike was also recently named a fellow of Encore.org, an organization that recognizes significant achievement by individuals during a second career. Mexico Medical Missions is being recognized both in the U.S. and Mexico for its achievements caring for the indigenous peoples of the Sierra Madre!

A few nights ago, a routine delivery turned into a nightmare. A 15 year old Tarahumara girl in the final stages of an otherwise normal labor suddenly started to gush blood. She had a “placenta abrupta” where the placenta comes loose from the uterus before the baby is delivered—a usually fatal condition. Our midwives quickly grabbed the birth forceps and delivered the baby promptly, and then dealt with the massive hemorrhage of the mother. By the grace of God (and the skill of our midwives) both mother and child survived.

Michelle Hopkins and Lizzie Meglich staff our birthing center and provide safe and compassionate obstetrical care for Tarahumara women. Tarahumara women traditionally deliver alone in the forest, but Michelle’s and Lizzie’s growing reputation for excellent care is drawing more women to our birth center.

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In June we had another week-long eye surgery outreach. Doctors David and Tina Doka came down from El Paso to perform eye surgery. Hundreds of patients arrived from all over the Sierra Madre to receive eye care. Dr. Doka performed 26 cataract and strabismus surgeries and many completely blind patients had their vision restored. It was a long and arduous week with Dr. Mike working the outpatient clinic and Dr. Chuck helping Dr. Tina as the instrument technician, but when it was over we all thanked God for his provision. Many thanks to the people at Alcon for their donation of tens of thousands of dollars worth of eye medical supplies which made the outreach possible. Doctors David and Tina will be back this October for another week of eye surgery.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29: 11-13

“The missionary heart: Care more than some think is wise. Risk more than some think is safe. Dream more than some think is practical.” - Karen Watson—Baptist missionary martyred in Iraq

Some time ago, Maci called up a company specializing in kidnapping insurance for executives. She was told that the company did not sell insurance to people working in Mexico and that, since she worked in Mexico, “her passion obviously exceeded her common sense.” In a nutshell that insurance company representative expressed the motivation of all of us that work at Mexico Medical Missions. We have a passion to build the Kingdom of God among the Tarahumara people despite the dangers and difficulties.

Thanks for helping us in this work! - Dr. Mike Berkeley

New Web Page
www.mexicommedical.org.

We are excited about Mexico Medical Missions' new web page. It has been redesigned to help keep you up to date with all the happenings in the Sierra. Many thanks to Nic Tignor and his crew at Fields of Talent in Chihuahua City. Having Nic close by will help us keep the web page updated regularly.