The pregnant girl was only fourteen when she came to the emergency room seizing uncontrollably from toxemia of pregnancy. Had she had medical care during her pregnancy, this condition could have been detected and treated. But now, her life and the life of her baby were severely threatened. It had taken her parents four hours of travel through the mountains to get her to the hospital and now, in the emergency room, her seizures could not be controlled. With each seizure, her baby’s heart rate dropped, risking neurological damage should he even survive. Was there time to transfer her to a bigger hospital with specialized care or would they die en route? Transfer or emergency Caesarian section? C-section or transfer? And to make matters worse, while seizing at home, she had aspirated stomach contents and couldn’t breathe adequately without our assistance. C-section it had to be or the baby would never survive. . . . The operation was undertaken. The baby was out and alive. . . . Intense medical resuscitation for hours and the baby responded, strengthening to the point of life, crying and moving. The mother weakened, requiring increasing ventilation, and finally succumbed to death. What of the orphaned baby? A physician and his Tara wife offer to adopt. The Tara grandparents agree for the baby’s good. The baby is named Joshua meaning God saves. The pastor’s wife is able to breast feed the baby alongside her young son, and life begins in the shadow of another young maternal death in the Sierras.

The maternal death rate in the Tarahumara population is one of the highest in the Western hemisphere. Such a deplorable situation results from a combination of lack of prenatal care, maternal malnutrition, and, as in this case, teenage children pregnant as a result of immoral behavior at traditional drinking parties. Mexico Medical Missions is making efforts through missionary midwives in the training of Tara midwives, while the hospital is presently embarking on construction of a modern birthing center. But such efforts compete with the longstanding practice of taking advantage of young girls deep within the mountains of the Copper Canyons. . . . In this case, one child was delivered from such a future by his adoption into a Christian family at the mission, while one young life was lost before she could know the good news of Jesus Christ. However, as Isaiah 55:9 makes clear “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts,” so out of the senseless death of a young Tara girl comes the blessing of a young Tara boy who will be raised to know Jesus. In him at least, the cycle of pagan male abuse of young Tara girls will be broken. Your prayers will be greatly appreciated as we work in the ways available to us to stem the tide of maternal mortality.

~ written by volunteer Dr. Bruce Daugherty

Life in the Shadows
Stewardship Update

You enable the work to continue in the Sierra Tarahumara! We desire to be faithful stewards before you and before the Lord, and to provide you with the information you need as you consider where to invest what God entrusts to you.

This graph is an excerpt from our 2010 annual report, which is available online at www.mexicomedical.org/newsletters.php or at your request via regular mail or e-mail. Please contact our office using the information below, or e-mail vicky@mexicomedical.org.

2010 Distribution of Funds

Missionary Support 25%
Program Operations 70%
Administration & Fundraising 5%

Partner with us to serve Tarahumara Families in 2011!

Used the enclosed response slip to join us in loving the People of the Copper Canyon, and mail it in the envelope provided. You will make a difference in someone’s life!