"How are things going down there?" is a question I frequently hear from persons interested in the work here in the Sierra Madre of Mexico. In light of the frequent news reports of violence in Mexico, this question usually expresses a concern about the security situation, and not just a desire to know what is happening with the mission work. So before I report on all the “happenings” with the work here, I will give you a summary of our perspective of the violence.

Mexico is a country that has yet to resolve its security issues. The drug cartels wage war with each other and with the government to control the lucrative drug trade which brings in forty billion dollars every year into Mexico from the U.S. For comparison, the budget for the entire Mexican military is four billion dollars a year. It is obvious that the cartels have the funds to maintain their private armies and to outgun the Mexican military. _We have personally witnessed these mercenary forces battling each other here in the Sierra Madre where, unfortunately, much of the drugs are grown._ Since Mexican president Calderon declared war on the cartels in 2006, there have been over 28,000 deaths. 90% of those killed have been involved with the drug trade, 5% have been Mexican soldiers and officials, and the remaining 5% have been “civilians” caught in the crossfire.

So those of us that live and work here hope and pray that we don’t become part of that 5%. A person with a firm that specializes in executive security recently told us, “Your passion for your work seems to exceed your common sense.” Perhaps that is true, but I have always felt that the safest place in the world is the center of God’s will; and all of us here believe that God wants us to continue the work in Mexico.
**Now for the Good News...** things are booming here in the Sierra. The hospital continues to work around the clock to provide medical services, as well as an effective witness for the cause of Christ. This month we will welcome Jacob and Raquel Sotelo who are joining us from southern Mexico to direct our Community Health Evangelism program. We have high hopes that under Jacob’s leadership the next few years will see great progress in the work in many villages.

**Welcoming New Arrivals**

*General surgeon Bruce Daugherty* will arrive next month to help me in expanding the surgical program here in Hospital Misión Tarahumara. We have already started construction on his new home on the hospital campus. *Joe and Patty LaFave* – who led the construction team that built the hospital 11 years ago – are finishing up their new home here in hope of spending more time living and working with the Tarahumara. Lots of construction going on...and the government even paved the road leading to the hospital!

**Planning for the Children in Chikué**

The new school in Chikué is an unqualified success after its first year, and we are starting another school this month in another village. We started with six kids in Chikué and now we have forty with more arriving all the time. Many of the kids have to sleep on the floor of the classroom since their homes are too far to make the trip on foot every day. We are finishing up a dining room for the kids, and we would like to start building an “albuergue” (dormitory) once we have the funds to feed, clothe and care for the sixty kids that will appear once an albuergue is finished. It’s hard to overstate the positive impact that these albuerques have had in other locations of the Sierra. The kids get to live with a Christian witness for five days a week, and get food, clothing, medical care and an education. This is an effective means to reach the next generation of Tarahumara for Christ.

**But Jesus said,**

*“Let the children come to me.*

*Don’t stop them!*
Laying Groundwork in El Cuervo

We are still finishing up the new clinic/mission base in the remote village of El Cuervo in preparation for missionaries Rodolfo and Elizabeth Rivera’s move there. El Cuervo is a highly traditional village (and one of my favorite places to work). Rodolfo and Elizabeth have worked for 15 years among these people part time and are now preparing to move into the community.

Increasing Well-drilling Capability

The well drilling program recently acquired a generous donation allowing us to purchase a “down-the-hole hammer” which is basically an air operated jack hammer drill bit that will allow us to drill wells quicker and more efficiently in the hard rock of the Sierra, providing more villages with clean water.

Improving Air Ambulance Service

The aviation program is presently rebuilding the Piper SuperCub. We are also trying to sell our larger airplane to acquire the funds to purchase a used Cessna 185 which should serve our needs better. As I write this, it is midnight and I am sitting in front of the hospital radio getting reports from our driver who just drove a Jeep seven hours to reach a village with a sick baby. Now he must begin the grueling drive with the child back to the hospital. This is a trip that can be made in minutes in an aircraft.

Expanding Midwifery & Agriculture

We have two families – the Bornmans and the Dhoritys that are presently raising their support in order to join us. Many persons may be unaware that none of our American missionaries receive a salary (including myself); everyone must arrange for their own financial support.

Andrew and Iris Bornman (and their five children) hope to join us soon working in the Community Health Evangelism program. Andrew is an expert in farming (and can fix almost anything). Andrew is also honing up his well drilling skills in order to help with the water program.

Jean and Mark Dhority are also planning on joining us next year. Jean is a midwife and will be helping with our native midwife training program, while Mark plans on helping out wherever he’s needed with his mechanical and construction talents.

Celebrating the Work

We will be celebrating the tenth anniversary of the opening of Hospital Misión Tarahumara this October. It is hard to believe that ten years have passed; so much has happened, and so much continues to happen.

“Mission work is work” is one of my favorite sayings. We shouldn’t make the mistake of equating work and activity with the advancement of the Kingdom of God, but I do know that the Kingdom won’t be advanced without hard work and effort.

I am truly looking forward to this upcoming year. I promise to keep you updated. Thanks for all your support and prayers. This work truly could not exist without you.

-Mike Berkeley

Sympathy is no substitute for action.
~ David Livingstone
Ways You Can Take Part

**PRAY...**

For continued guidance, safety and provision.  
For the Tarahumaras to experience the love of Christ.  
For incoming workers - Sotelos, Dr. Daugherty, Bornmans, Dhoritys, Riveras  
For our doctors and nurses as they treat ailments daily, and deal with crises that arise.  
For Lupita, as she begins a new year as the teacher of the school in Chikué, and for the 40+ children whose lives she will touch.

**SHARE...**

*What you know* about MMM and the Tarahumaras’ need for the Gospel with a friend or pastor.  

*Encouragement* for a specific missionary by sending an e-mail to info@mexicomedical.org. We will send it on to them for you.  

*Financial Resources* that will be put immediately to use on the ground! Your gift would make an impact on:  

~ The children around Chikué by making an Albergue (dormitory) possible.  
~ Malnourished children by expanding the Hospital facility to improve their care.  
~ Critically ill villagers by ensuring there is a bush plane that is able to reach them.  
~ Remote villages by sending a CHE team to help them.  
~ Individuals needing life-changing surgery.

Visit us on the Web...

www.mexicomedical.org ~ it has been updated with new staff on the team page, and previous newsletters  

Mexico Medical Missions is on Facebook ~ invite others to visit also!