

PREVIEW OF PICTORIAL HISTORY

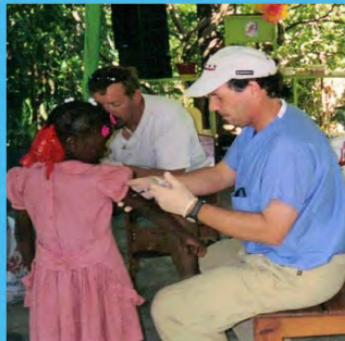


MEDICAL MISSIONARIES



*Celebrating 20 Years
Of Service To The
Poorest Of The Poor*

**A Pictorial History of
Medical Missionaries**



Medical Missionaries

The Early Years



Medical Missionaries began with the vision of its founder, Dr. Gilbert Irwin, an internist from Manassas, Virginia, who had always looked for ways to help the less fortunate.

As a young physician, Dr. Irwin collected donated medicines and medical supplies and sent them to Navajo Indian reservations, and to missionaries serving in Thailand and the Philippines. He delivered school supplies and hygiene supplies to St. Joseph Indian School in South Dakota. He donated produce from his farm to an inner-city organization serving the poor in Washington, DC.

In 1997, Dr. Irwin was asked by the pastor of a church in the Dominican Republic to assess the health of the residents of the town of Banica, located on the border with Haiti. Most of the people in that region had never seen a doctor, particularly those living in remote mountainous areas around Banica. Infant and maternal mortality were high in the area as well as malnutrition.



Dr. Irwin recruited volunteers, and led a team of doctors and nurses who traveled to Banica, and from there into remote mountainous villages that were reachable only on mule and by foot.

This was the start of Medical Missionaries and its long-term commitment to helping improve the quality of healthcare on both sides of the Haiti-Dominican Republic border.



In the USA & Worldwide

Medical Missionaries also responded to requests for help in the USA and worldwide.

We started to work with partner groups to send 40-foot sea containers of medical supplies, household supplies, and equipment to help build healthcare infrastructure in very poor areas of the world, particularly Africa. Medical Missionaries volunteers secure supplies, sort and store them, prepare them for shipment, and load the sea containers on the day of their departure.

Closer to home, we have given items such as clothing, health supplies and medical equipment to those in need locally in Virginia and Washington, DC. We have also provided disaster relief supplies in the USA.

To date, through 2016, we have sent 165 sea containers of health equipment and supplies worldwide to those in need, supported 30 local health groups, made over 300 trips to Appalachia, and American Indian reservations in Oklahoma and South Dakota with clothes and household items, and sent disaster relief for victims of hurricanes, floods and tornadoes in the USA.



St. Joseph Clinic

At its opening in 2007, St. Joseph Clinic became the only permanent medical facility serving Thomassique and its six major outlying villages, a total population estimated to be 125,000 or more.

Previously, villagers had no access to medical care locally, or would need to travel, often by foot, about 20 miles to reach a Clinic in nearby towns.

The Clinic is available five days a week for general consults and 24/7 for emergency and maternity care. In its first full year of operation, the Clinic treated more than 15,000 patients, and assisted in about 300 births. Since then, those numbers have continued to grow each year.

The Clinic building includes several consultation rooms, two surgical rooms, an emergency room, a reception area, a separate maternity and pediatric suite, a laboratory, a pharmacy, and an archive room for Clinic records. The waiting room is an outdoor facility with a roof overhead.



Visiting Teams & Volunteers

Over the years, what began as an annual trip of a medical team has grown into numerous teams and volunteers sharing their expertise at St. Joseph Clinic every year.

This includes medical, surgical, and dental teams who not only treat patients but also teach the Haitian staff new techniques, and have also introduced medical students to the experience of providing medical care in a developing country. Additionally, to keep the Clinic operating, it takes an army of volunteers who share their skills in electricity and solar power, plumbing, woodworking, and construction.

Global Health Fellows

Our Global Health Fellowship Program offers field-based educational opportunities to pre-med and public health students who serve for one year at St. Joseph Clinic. Fellows organize and coordinate projects at the Clinic, work with community leaders, and facilitate logistics for visiting teams.



20 Years of Service

The impact of these efforts over the years can be seen in the lasting results of many of the programs that have been introduced in our efforts to improve healthcare:

- ~ Approximately 25,000 patients treated every year
- ~ The Clinic assists with 350 to 500 births per year, with another 1400 births per year facilitated in the outlying villages by birth attendants trained at the Clinic
- ~ About 9,000 households (over 50,000 people) have water purification systems
- ~ Thousands of life-saving vaccinations have been provided
- ~ Bon Sel (fortified salt) is on its way to eradicating lymphatic filariasis in future generations
- ~ Remote villages are getting healthcare close to their homes, and Community Committees are assuming responsibilities for healthcare in their villages



Over these first 20 years, our mission began to become clear, even as the vision of that mission expanded. What had started as an annual trip to bring improved healthcare to a small corner of the Dominican Republic had expanded to include helping the local poor, helping other organizations build healthcare infrastructure in Third World countries, providing professional education on infectious diseases to medical professionals who were preparing to serve in Third World countries, and helping to build a healthcare facility for the poor in Haiti's Central Plateau.

