



FIRST QUARTER REPORT 2009

Your generous response to our end of year appeal was a great boost for *Bands Ministries*. The economic situation in the U.S. seems gloomy, but your willingness to partner with us is very encouraging. You will see from this report that we have had a very busy and successful first quarter of 2009.

I N D O N E S I A

We combined a trip to Indonesia with a trip to the Philippines. We went to Indonesia to arrange with our workers and government officials to do 400 more cataract surgeries in 2009. *Caris Foundation* and *Bands* have worked together for several years in sponsoring this ministry, and have been able to complete over 1,600 surgeries.

While on the island of Nias, we evaluated the children's feeding program as well as the growth of the congregations on the island. We were very encouraged with what we saw in church growth, but we once again were made to realize the numbers of children who are neglected. *Caris* and *Bands* purchased a home that will be operated by Dennis Cady and his very efficient team of workers. Renovations are underway and the first children will be accepted for care within 90 days.

We also negotiated with *T.E.A.R.S.* and the government with regards to sponsoring more eye surgeries. In a *Letter of Understanding*, it was agreed that the government would sponsor 200 surgeries and *Bands* and *Caris* would sponsor 200. However, we have completed 150 of our proposed number, and already the workers on Nias are finding that the scheduled June surgeries have not been funded by the government. I know it is hard to

work with the government and I also know that it is not the fault of the people who need help. I am appealing to you to help us do the 200 surgeries that the government said they would do, but probably won't. We can give sight to a blind eye for \$125.00.

P H I L I P P I N E S

In 1994, Dr. Sam Cariaga graduated from medical college. His parents offered him a vacation trip in honor of his hard work and great accomplishments. Instead, Dr. Sam chose to go to Siargao Island to conduct a medical mission among the very poor on this island. Fourteen years later he returned with a group of volunteers for another campaign.

Siargao Island is located in the northeastern part of southern Philippines. Depending on the weather, it takes 2 to 4 hours in a small boat to make the trip from Mindanao. For several days before the mission the weather was bad, but cleared the day before the team sailed. During the mission the weather was good and the team treated 4,317 patients in Dapa, General Luna, Pilar, San Isidro and Sta. Monica. This number includes the 101 surgeries that were completed during the week.

The weather became a factor the day after the mission was completed. Ten members of our team left for Manila and Cebu. They sent text messages to those left on Siargao Island that there was panic on the ferry and some people were threatening to jump over board because they were sure the ferry was going to turn over. Not all of the passengers had life jackets. There were 20 foot waves and the panic lasted for over an hour. Finally the ferry reached Suriagao City.

The remainder of the team left the following morning. The



We sponsored eye surgeries in Batak Land, Indonesia.

Between March 4-8, 2009, we completed 99 eyes.



Dr. Sam and team treated 4,317 patients on Siargao Island.



Despite an adventurous journey, the thankful Filipino team were all smiles.

I enjoyed having my oldest granddaughter with me in Guatemala.



Dr. Mark Phelan, Abilene, Texas, was one of the ophthalmologists doing eye surgeries during our mission to Guatemala.

3 o'clock ferry left about 5 a.m., with more passengers than life jackets. They encountered heavy seas and most of the passengers were vomiting. The ferry rolled violently and one time people were thrown to one side of the ship. The crew shouted for all who could to climb to the other side. They did, and the ferry righted its self. After more than an hour of heavy seas, the oldest counselor on this mission, started singing a hymn. Gigie Carranza, a veteran of medical mission trips, remembers what happened next.

"I sang along with them... Those sitting beside me settled down. They realized we were singing 'church' songs. I was near tears as I recalled that night, from the book of Acts, when Paul and Silas were also singing from their prison cell in Philippi... praising God amidst the direst situation possible."

Finally, after more than four hours (which seemed much longer) the team all arrived at their destination safely. However, this was not the end of the journey for most of the team. Due to the weather, there were no flights in or out of Butuan, so about 40 workers were stranded there for another four days.

GUATEMALA

Each year, *BandS* partners with *Health Talents International* in doing eye surgeries at *Ezell Clinic* in Guatemala. This year was especially enjoyable as I accompanied my oldest granddaughter to the *Ezell Clinic*. I say I accompanied Jordan because it was her idea that we should work together one more time before she graduates from university.

We were there at the same time that a large number of students from *Harding University* and from *University of Georgia*

were working. Each time I do a trip with college age men and women, I am impressed with their deep spirituality. I feel confident about the future of the church.

Ophthalmologists completed 52 eye surgeries during the week. Jordan and I worked in one mobile dental clinic in one village and in a public school for three days.

COMING SOON

It takes extra preparation when you are going to conduct a surgical mission in a place where you have never been. Such is the situation for our June trip to Malindi, Kenya. We plan to work out of two hospitals. Our goal is to do 150 surgeries. We will have to air freight some equipment and supplies for this mission. We do not have all of our team assembled and if you know one or two general surgeons who would be willing to sacrifice their time and talents in a worthy cause, please contact me. We also need more OR nurses and recovery room nurses for this trip.

While we are in Kenya, some of our family will go to Kamula for the official opening of the *John Connor Brown Training Center*.

Our China trip with *China Agape* will be August 1-15. *Caris* will sponsor at least 150 cleft lip/palate surgeries. Ron Brown is organizing this trip.

While we are in China, several family members will be going to Naning for the official opening of the *John Connor Brown Christian Care Center*. Your kind and generous offerings in Connor's memory have been used to build these two centers.

Please continue to remember this ministry in word and deed.



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