

2025 Mexico Report by Jim Stumbo

In 2004 Pastor Tomas Bencomo of the Mexican C&MA church came to the Rocky Mountain District and made a plea for a “highway of short term missions between the RMD and the Mexico C&MA”. The District responded with an exploratory trip a few months later and 20 years of short term trips have followed.

The focus then, and now, has been to support the Mexican Alliance outreach to the Indian tribes of the Sierra Madres. The most well-known of those tribes is the Tarahumara Indians of the Copper Canyon, but there are now @12 tribes that Tomas is working with, all with their own ethnic cultures, languages, and need for Jesus. Tomas continues to provide food, education, and work opportunities to show Christ’s love with the goal of planting churches among the tribes.

It is happening! Over the past few years a tremendous revival is moving through the Tarahumara tribe with thousands of Indians embracing Christ. There are now 8 congregations, some with 200-300 people attending. Recent contributions were sent to start the foundation for a large congregation that meets on the mountain-side.

This story should bless you. One Sunday a man stood up in one of the Tarahumara church services and announced, “I’m the last one; all the other men in this village have given their hearts to Jesus and today I’m giving mine to Him.” We had visited this village in one of our early trips and most of the men we saw that day were drunk and unresponsive to our visit. Pastor Sandra said that these men are now her elders!

In early March, 14 of us went on a 10 day trip to Rio Chico, MX. We completed our 3 year project of expanding the chapel used for family and youth camps. This involved cement work (always!), electrical updating, sheetrocking, taping/mud work, installing 5 windows (which fit perfectly after some grinding and sledgehammer work), and reinforcing the beams so that posts could be removed. Oh, and 20 gallons of primer! It is now a beautiful and very inviting 50’ X 90’ chapel that can seat around 300 people. We held a praise and prayer dedication time at the completion of the project and it was exciting to envision the people who will make life changing decisions there in the years to come.

We hosted the annual Pastor/workers retreat in Pena Blanca. Every year it grows a little and this time there were about 40 participants. I gave messages relating to ministry and cousin Terry Stumbo taught lessons relating to Biblical counseling. Their times of prayer are so inspirational with many tears and pleas to God for his blessing.

I gave my first “preaching class”. We are challenging Monse and his family to consider stepping up in ministry, so they agreed to attend a class on how to prepare a sermon. Monse chose to work on a message from the life of Elijah when he passed the mantle of leadership on to Elisha whom God already had called to take his place. Appropriate, right! This will be more of an emphasis in the future.

It was different, and sad, to not have Tomas on the trip. He is recovering well from a surgery, but contracted a virus with sores all through his mouth and throat. We prayed for him and by the end of the week he was able to meet with us on our return to El Paso.

It’s encouraging to see the leadership emerging within the District who will continue our ministry into the next generation. Pastor Vince Vannett, Chris Romanjenko, and Emily from El Paso are a few who have that blend of passion and skill.

We need more groups! Pastor Tomas wants so much to have our help with building churches in the Copper Canyon. We need to at least help them with supplies, if not manpower. The church in Pena Blanca needs a new roof and possible expansion. Both of these are costly and time consuming projects. These are being considered for our August 2025 and March 2026 trips.

The Rio Chico complex is functioning well under the oversight of Juan Diego. He is doing a good job farming our 2 locations. Lucio helps him and his wife Abbey operates the greenhouse. We had very good crops this past year, with tons of corn, and a huge crop of apples, our first! The farm above Rio Chico is still not safe for a caretaker to live there as the cartels continue their violent competition for control of the mountain areas.

Five young ladies cared for our cooking. They have given a year to Tomas of internship and do, literally, whatever they are asked to do with joyful service! Two of them were capable translators; that helps so much! During our devotional times, two of the young ladies shared their dramatic stories of how God rescued them from their Indian tribes, so damaged by alcohol and controlled by fear.

Thank you to all who have shown such interest in this endeavor over many years. Heaven will reveal the dramatic results! Please, continue to support us; the Amigo Fund which supports the pastors and workers continues to be a great blessing. Tomas always tells us that the development of the various facilities could not happen without our support. The 20 year old “highway” is doing well!