

## **MMAB Treasurer's Notes: The Rest of the Story Behind Some of the Numbers**

1. When donors ask us to use their gifts in support of a specific ministry initiative, Mission Mazahua has promised to use funds as designated, as much as possible. It looks like we have a big "cushion" at the moment; we don't! In fact, after a wonderful spring season, we are going to be hurting this summer unless God moves people to remember us as never before. Almost all of the amounts shown in the "Balance Forward" column are designated for some specific purpose, and are passing through in support of those purposes. The general daily operations of the Mission continue to operate on a shoestring. The staff spends inordinate amounts of time trying to juggle necessities, initiatives and income so as to get the most mileage out of each donation and so as to keep all ministries advancing. Sometimes there just isn't enough money there to succeed, and then something gets put on hold for a time, until resources arise that they can use.

2. The large income numbers for the spring season arise from large teams that went to serve at the Mission, from churches and Associations that have raised large sums in support of specific projects, and from the NACCC's new practice [which we welcome with overwhelming appreciation!] of routing donations received by their Missionary Society to Mission Mazahua through our accounts. Most of those are outside the boundaries of everyday operating expenses, so the projects are well supported while the people and systems required to advance the projects are in precarious financial straights.

3. Some specific numbers, and the stories behind them:

A. The \$11, 330 team donation deposited in May covers a team of 10 students from Berea College, KY, who will be at the Mission for 7 weeks this summer. They just arrived on Wednesday, June 7.

B. The \$3500 Village Improvements deposit for April came from the Kingston Congregational Church of Kingston, NH, as the most recent fruits of their "Water to the Villages" project.

C. The May Village Improvements support, over \$3600, was provided by the Massachusetts Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches. About \$2000 of it was tagged for the purchase of a powered cement mixer, the rest will provide for the building of cisterns in the villages. One person from the region provided the resources for a cistern single handedly!

D. Most of the steady scholarship support is coming from one individual. So far it has provided a "Rosetta Stone" English Language program for the Mission's school, to be used by staff as well as outside students. Most of it is being held against a pledge of support for Judith Tellez Gonzalez when she comes to Michigan to prepare for a teaching career. She is on fire to provide an educational leg up for her people in Mazahua country.

E. Designated funds have almost covered the stipend for Lisa and Norberto so far this year. That has meant that general fund money has been free for other uses.

F. The spike in Excelencias Mazahua product sales has been a blessing largely provided by North Shore Congregational Church of Fox Point, WI. They were provided with a huge consignment of craft items that they diligently promoted until all were sold.

G. The \$5000 of Disaster Aid came from the NACCC Missionary Society's "One Great Hour of Sharing" fund, and is earmarked for Dr. Ramiro and Elisa Marrero. These are long time friends of the Mission; Norberto has known Elisa since she was a teenager. The Mission has chosen to support their ministry with the recovery process initiated after Hurricane Stan devastated some of the southern villages in Chiapas State, near the Guatemala border. All of those resources, with no overhead reductions, will go to Ramiro as soon as he decides how he can best invest it for the benefit of "his" villagers and the Lord's Kingdom.

H. The only fund that is more or less static at the moment is the sun stove account. That project is active, however! They are hunting for effective suppliers for polycarbonate sheeting and aluminum sheet metal. At the same time, they are working to strengthen their promotional efforts among the villages. One of these days that whole account will suddenly wash through as the concerns being researched are resolved.

I. In early March a jitney-style 16 passenger bus, fitted for wheelchairs and for the use of people with physical challenges, was donated to the Mission. Loaded with smaller equipment and with program supplies, it was driven from the Gurnee Community Church, whose people donated and loaded it, to Laredo, Texas, where it has so far been unable to cross the border for the final leg of the trip to the Mission. Preparing the bus, towing and repairing it following breakdowns en route, and covering unexpected expenses generated by the breakdowns and the border problems, has so far cost something over \$2500. Some of that has been covered by gifts from individuals and churches involved, but most of it has been distributed among appropriate accounts according to the nature of the expense.

J. Lisa Cortes has been in Ohio since mid-January, working through the challenging process of providing significantly improved care for her mother. Expenses are much higher for living here, and the necessities of the task she has undertaken are adding to the financial burden. The result is that our missionary family is being severely pinched, since they are trying to live on the same stipend that has sustained them in Mexico for the last 10 years! We need to pray that the Lord will address each element of their circumstances in a creative way. If we discover that He is giving us the means to lighten their burden in any dimension, we need to jump in it!

Well, I could go on like this for a long time. Perhaps you are getting the general message that the numbers in the treasurer's report are not tedious abstractions! They are, each and every one of them, indicators of how God's grace is truly at work, touching the lives of people both here and in Mazahua country. There is much to be thankful for, let us rejoice together! There is much effort yet to be invested in accomplishing all that Jesus and His followers are looking to do in Mazahua country, in the lives of Mazahua men, women and young people. The numbers speak of victories and challenges, of spiritual fire and substantial needs. Let us step up and ask the Lord, "What do you want to do now---and where do You want us to take our places with the team you have prepared to get it done?"