

# Medical Missions

## Universal Attraction with a Universal Solution

by Michael Vetter, *Sowing by Grace* Editor

Wherever GDM Missions travels with free clinics, the crowds often form early in the morning, and by opening time individuals and families waiting to see a dentist or doctor can number in the hundreds!

The attraction of someone who can relieve human suffering is a universal phenomenon depicted in the Gospels and seen today in African villages, Pacific atolls, and South American huts. Is the attraction universal because it is free, gives some small temporary relief, offers hope of a full cure, or is a combination of all the above?

Numerous times in the Gospel of Mark we read about large crowds attracted to Jesus when they heard that He healed the sick. We read of: “great multitudes” (sometimes in the thousands) seeking His healing touch; “much people followed Him, and thronged Him” in their eagerness to be healed; “they pressed upon Him, for to touch Him.” “Whithersoever He entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets,” hoping He would end their physical suffering. Sadly, as helpful as those cures were, they stopped only the ravages of sickness on their physical bodies. Jesus knew this, but also offered the multitudes “living water” to satisfy their souls. A promised cure for their sicknesses was the universal physical attraction to draw them to the universal spiritual solution.

Our methodology at GDM Missions in dental/ medical evangelism is to use the abilities of skilled, willing servants to attract people to hear the saving message of God’s grace. Understanding mankind’s common desire for health and wellness, we use medicine as an attraction to create an opportunity to present an eternal, spiritual solution in the Gospel. The universal attraction of medicine has powerful benefits in evangelism:

- Physical relief through medicine crosses all language and cultural barriers – Skilled professionals can minister care to anyone and tangibly demonstrate the compassion of Christ. Doors are opened to medical clinics even in countries hostile to the Gospel.
- Dental and medical care has an impact across all age groups – Infants, children, teenagers, men and women are all helped. Medical care for infants and mothers has an especially profound impact on families.
- Field clinic care is very cost-effective – A few dental and medical professionals, with minimal equipment and supplies, can effectively treat large numbers of patients in a

single day. Hundreds in a village or remote island can be reached for a fraction of the cost a comparable clinic would cost in the U.S.

- Minimal health care is always appreciated – Blood pressure screening, teeth exams, or a packet of ibuprofen may seem of limited value to us, but they are received gratefully by those who have very little and never experience compassionate health care.
- Everyone benefits, especially from dental care – Constant tooth pain resulting from a lifetime of poor hygiene can be relieved in a dental clinic using minimal equipment and medicine. Simple check-ups and preventive oral hygiene lessons (with free toothbrushes) have long-term benefits.

Our teams are motivated to travel anywhere in the world, giving their time and sometimes enduring personal hardship and difficulties to help missionaries evangelize and start local churches. We appreciate that the universal attraction of health care can be used by God as a prelude to the message of the Gospel that will last forever.