

Dr. Ken and Ruth VanKirk

A good description of our ministry is that we open up areas that are closed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, using medicine to serve the people, gaining trust and relationships, sharing Christ. Simultaneously, we trust God to raise up a team of church planters to teach God's Word with more depth so that a mature indigenous church is birthed.

History and Ministry:

Ken and Ruth VanKirk have worked in Northern Mexico with tribal peoples the past 32 years in medical missions – first as a paramedic in the late 80's. A church was birthed in the first village we lived in, still led by indigenous Believers. Due to pressure from the Mexican government, conflict of licensing between US and Mexico, Ken attended medical school in Chihuahua City 1995-2001. During that time, families from the village we had worked in came to live with us on the property we rented in the city. Some were there to receive Christian discipleship. Others were there due to medical problems. Ruth is a musician and an artist, so she taught music and art at a school for missionary kids where their children attended school.

After Mexican medical school, in 2002, Ken was sent to a very remote Indian village by the Mexican health department to serve a year of social service as a requirement to get his medical license. This was the very village that God had laid on our hearts to serve in the future and bring the gospel to the people. After his year of social service, the community invited us to set up a special clinic to work with malnutrition and tuberculosis and other medical needs.

After ten years, new team members, language learning, some more fluently than others, people began to believe on the Lord. Today, young Believers are reaching out and teaching their people in their own language. The team encourages and disciples them. Baptisms are happening. Small pockets of other believers are springing up in the rugged terrain that is the Sierra Madre mountain range. The clinic continues to be the reason our team continues serving in this village where outsiders are not welcome to stay long-term and is almost 100% managed by Mexican Christian medical professionals. Ken makes trips to provide help and oversight.

Ken has provided medical help in another remote area where some short-term groups have made regular trips in an attempt to open up the village to receive the Gospel. At this time, trips to this village are not as frequent due to dangerous cartel activity.

In 2016, we moved our home base from Chihuahua over to the State of Sonora, Mexico, in order to be close to Ken's parents who are aging and have health issues. They live in a retirement community 5 hours south of the border. Ruth cares for them while Ken makes trips to the village medical clinics. In making the move to Sonora we were introduced to the medical needs of yet another indigenous tribe that is very closed to the gospel and outsiders. Over the past couple of years, Ken has held medical clinics within this village. God has opened up some miraculous relationships and opportunities.

Ken is also a missionary pilot and mechanic, and is currently building up a Cessna 182 with components that will make it safer for the bush flying he will be doing. We hope to have this project finished by June of this year. He works on it as he comes and goes through Tucson. At this time, travel between Sonora and Chihuahua takes 3-4 days minimally, but the plane will allow us to make the trip in 2-3 hours.

Last of all, we are doing more training and mentoring of “deacon” missionaries – specifically Latin American medical professionals. Our first official training will be this fall in Sonora, Mexico. Ken has spent a good part of this past fall developing the curriculum and gathering materials. The need is great for support missionaries to come alongside full-time church planters so that those teaching God’s Word will not be torn away to attend to medical or other “emergencies” that happen within the tribe.

Prayer Requests:

- Please pray that God would raise up church planting missionaries to work alongside the medical workers in the tribe in Northern Sonora. Pray that these people will be more open to the message of Jesus Christ’s salvation and not tied to their old ways which are rigidly practiced with much ceremony and regularity.
- Please pray for Ken as he prepares for this training course in fall of 2019 – for students, mentors and instructors for the different modules with topics such as our walk in Christ, missions, Bible training, and living in Christian community, etc.
- Please pray for courage for the young Indian believers who are criticized for going against their culture.

How To Support Us:

- If the Lord leads you to support us, please give your donation to “Calvary Chapel” and make a note for “Support for the VanKirks.” 100% of your donation will come to us.

How To Contact Us:

- Email address: vankirk.ruth.ken@gmail.com



Map of locations where they work



Believers meeting together in their house



Carlos Baptism



Esperanza with Ruth



Dr. Ana and Ken



Getting reading for medical transport



Ken teaching Canadian Bible college missions class in Sonora, Mexico



Ruth is momma to all



Praying with Carlos



Tribal people in Sonora, Mexico
Ken's patients

Ken taking care of a boy



Luciano's family
praying



Clinic work
in
Chihuahua
village

