

May 1, 2009

From Dave Thomas, PC(USA) Regional Liaison for México

Summary of “on-the-ground” reports from PC(USA) mission personnel serving in México:

From Randy DuVall, PC(USA) Short Term Mission Volunteer serving in Chiapas

- We heard that 3 cases of flu were confirmed in Tuxtla Gutierrez (3 hours from Ocosingo).
- While we are being bombarded by e-mail about this situation, there does not seem to be any panic in the air.
- A few people in the centro this morning were wearing masks. No one at the Presbyterian Church that I attended yesterday was wearing a mask. Everyone greeted one another in a most intimate way. Since this was my first service at this church I cannot say whether this was usual and customary but it certainly seemed to be so.

From Rev. Don and Dr. Martha Wehmeyer, PC(USA) Mission Co-Workers serving near Mérida, state of Yucatán

- Yucatán is so far clear of the virus. There is a possible case among some French tourists who were in México City and now in Valladolid but that whole group of 20 was quarantined.
- Buses from México City are being met with doctors to look over all the passengers. This is a precaution I have never seen before here.

From Susie Frerichs, PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker serving in the Presbytery of Las Huastecas, state of San Luis Potosí

- Doing fine, no one sick in the immediate area. All public activities cancelled.
- There has been one death in Tamazunchale, an hour from me.
- In a culture used to shaking hands, the concept of not doing so is very foreign and hard to do.
- Pray that we can respond to this situation in a balanced way. The media seems somewhat exaggerated. Above all, pray as we learn to trust God in these challenging times. He is the author and keeper of our lives and in Him we will trust. Thank you for your prayers.

From Rev. Bill Soldwisch, PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker serving with Pueblos Hermanos, the San Diego/Tijuana site of Presbyterian Border Ministry

- Tijuana TV news has no reported cases of human flu nor many people wearing face masks.
- People are crossing back and forth across border as usual.

From Rev. Mark Adams, PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker serving with Frontera de Cristo, the Douglas/Agua Prieta site of Presbyterian Border Ministry

- My children's school was cancelled for the next week. Following up with one of my friends at the Mexican consulate in Douglas, the Mexican government has cancelled all school classes until May 6-- according to my friend at the consulate, "there is nothing to be worried about," and it is in his opinion an overreaction.
- We had an appointment for Anna's 5-year check up -- the doctor also thinks that the government is being very cautious and unless there is information that he has not heard he would not change normal healthy practices.

From Rev. David Dierksen, PC(USA) Long-Term Mission Volunteer serving with Puentes de Cristo, the Hidalgo/Reynosa site of Presbyterian Border Ministry

- In Hidalgo, TX, the schools are still open and there have been no reported cases.
- In Reynosa there are six reported cases and two in Rio Bravo.
- I was informed that our Las Muchachas program is closed until the 4th.
- The only reported cases that are close to us in Hidalgo are the two in Rio Grande City in Starr County. Just for simplicity of living, I'm going to try and stay in the Hidalgo office; crossing the border takes longer than ever now.

From Rev. Amy Robinson, PC(USA) Long-Term Mission Volunteer serving with Pasos de Fe, the El Paso/Cd. Juárez site of Presbyterian Border Ministry

- I've arranged housing on the US side in case they seal off the borders while I'm in the States, and made sure that I had enough groceries to shelter in place.
- There have still been no confirmed cases in Juárez that I've heard of.
- In general, all is well here.

From Chris McReynolds, PC(USA) Long-Term Mission Volunteer serving with Proyecto Amistad, the Laredo/Nuevo Laredo site of Presbyterian Border Ministry

- Things seem to be going well here. Regular precautions are being taken.
- I'm busy with a group this week but am checking email/news to keep up to date.
- We cancelled a Children's Day activity for area kids and provided masks.
- I am not aware of any cases reported in the Nuevo Laredo area but there are cases 3 hours south and in Texas.

From Dave and Susan Thomas, PC(USA) Mission Co-Workers serving with the General Assembly of the National Presbyterian Church of México, living in Cuernavaca, state of Morelos

- Four reported cases of the human flu virus in Morelos; two already cured, two being treated; no deaths
- Most factory workers using face masks on the job, and many masks seen in commercial centers.
- Being only 60 miles from México City, Cuernavaca has become a refuge for hundreds of thousands of people from the nation's capital, trying to avoid exposure to the virus
- Most of the tourist attractions in Morelos are closed: water parks, discos and night clubs, language schools, movie theaters, some hotels and restaurants.