

# The Future of Healthcare? Medical Ministry International CEO Sam Smith Shares Stories of Growing Volunteer-Based Global Healthcare Organization in New Book

***MMI Offers Advanced Healthcare Services to Impoverished Patients in 23 Countries, Through Volunteers, Donations, and a Payment System Designed to Prevent “Welfare Mentality”***

## What is it?

*When Love Heals* shares the stories of twelve patients around the world who have received care from Medical Ministry International’s volunteer medical staff—including Berriso in Ethiopia in need of cataract surgery and 3-year-old Ronald in Peru, diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Many of MMI’s patients undergo treatment for ailments that would be easily treated in the United States, but are debilitating in remote areas where little to no medical care is available—or affordable for the 1.4 billion people in developing countries who live on less than \$1.25 a day. Their stories are compiled by Sam Smith, the CEO of MMI, an established executive in brand, marketing, and international leadership.

## Who is it for?

- Medical personnel looking to use their skills and expertise to help in other countries. MMI is always in need of the following volunteers:
  - Physician, Physician Assistant, Dentist, Dental Assistant, Dental Hygienist, Dental Student, Project Director, General Helper, Interpreter, Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, Nursing Student, Optometry, Ophthalmologist, Pharmacist, LPN, OB/GYN, Plastic Surgeon, Resident, RN, Surgeon, Physical Therapy, Physical Therapy Student, Clergy, CRNA Student, CRNS, Anesthesiologist, Tech & Assistant
- Non-medical personnel roles such as teachers, engineers, carpenters, plumbers, etc. are also needed as volunteers.
- Resident physicians and students looking to expand their experience and acquire a new perspective on real-world medicine
- People that are seeking a powerful way to share their blessings with the less fortunate
- Anyone seeking to travel with a purpose



by Samuel T. Smith  
With Mary Hutchinson

## BOOK DETAILS

Medical Ministry International

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## Who is MMI?

What started as an idea by two missionaries in the Dominican Republic in 1968 has since grown into **Medical Ministry International (MMI)**, a global ministry that utilizes volunteers to provide healthcare services in over 23 countries and impact the lives of over half a million patients each year.

MMI operates in Africa, the Caribbean, Central America, Eurasia, Mexico, and South America, providing **seventy percent of all healthcare for the Amazon region**. They focus on:

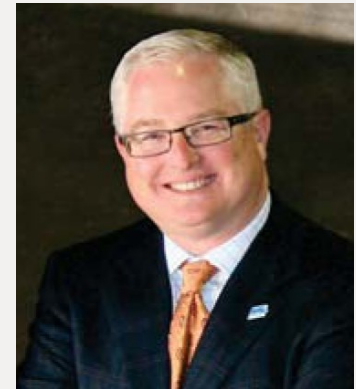
- **Health centers:** Strengthening and supporting local health centers
- **Project teams:** Facilitating short-term mission teams to support in-country efforts
- **Residency training:** Providing training and fellowships for medical professionals and administrative staff in the countries they serve

MMI has staff on the ground in every country they serve—over 90% are volunteers that raise a portion of their own support to serve for as little as one week or, for some, many years. The in-country staff assesses the needs of that region and requests what type of medical staff they need on a project. When the project team arrives, they hit the ground running, helping as many patients as they can in the one or two weeks that they're there.

- Over **2,000 medical and non-medical volunteers** from the United States and Canada embark on a medical mission trip each year, fundraising or paying their own way.
- **In 2012, MMI provided \$82 million worth of services to more than 543,000 people throughout the world**, in remote places where basic medical supplies like an antibiotic cream or a tetanus shot are virtually unheard of.

MMI's volunteer medical staff has performed procedures ranging from a simple cataract surgery in Ethiopia to the removal of a 46-pound stomach tumor from a woman in the Philippines. These procedures are paid for with a bag of oranges, a watch, or a nickel—whatever the patient can pay, since most earn an average monthly income of \$30. MMI has discovered that by charging something, patients are more likely to "follow doctor's orders." MMI projects focus on a variety of interventions:

- Auditory Care
- Vision Care
- Primary & Preventative Care
- Dental Care
- Orthopedics & Physical Therapy
- Surgical Care
- Water, Sanitation & Agriculture



Sam is available for interviews.

MMI began over 40 years ago, when missionaries Sheila and John Shannon journeyed to the Dominican Republic to meet the healthcare needs of people struggling to survive. The Shannons began inviting other North Americans to join their effort and the idea expanded to other areas in the region, then across continents, and now to over 23 countries in the world: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Cameroon, Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Madagascar, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda, and Zambia.

In 2013, MMI began overseeing the operation of Clinica Leticia located in Leticia, Colombia. This clinic is strategically located to serve an estimated population of over 300,000 people in the Amazon Region with patients from three countries, Peru, Brazil, and Colombia. MMI has over 90 projects scheduled for 2014.

MMI is committed to ensuring that 85% of every donation is utilized for their programs. They support their in-country staff members through MMI's International Office based outside of Dallas, in Allen, Texas. MMI also has a Canadian office in Stoney Creek, Ontario.

## Who wrote it?

An internationally recognized speaker, Sam Smith is the CEO of Medical Ministry International. In *When Love Heals*, he shares a powerful message of how each of us has been called into service for others. Sam felt this call after years in the business world as an established executive in brand, marketing, and international leadership. He invested his talents in international ministry and achieved record results for serving the poor, fundraising, and securing volunteer support as the CEO at Mercy Ships.

Since 2007, Sam has focused on "Optimizing Ministry"—optimizing our gifts to make the biggest impact possible on those we seek to serve—an idea that has become an essential element in the DNA of the Medical Ministry International Team serving in over 23 countries. Sam has been approached to speak on the subject of "Optimizing Ministry" by international relief and development organizations, and foreign governments, among others.

Sam currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the Richard and Lucille DeWitt School of Nursing Advisory Board, and a Director on the Nelson Rusche School of Business Advisory Board at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. Sam and his wife, Jill, have a daughter and son, Sheridan and Jensen. They live in Bullard, Texas.

## How is it different?

MMI offers services to women, men, girls, and boys regardless of religious affiliations, ethnic backgrounds, or ability to pay. However, unlike some other ministries that provide medical assistance throughout the world, they do not provide free services. MMI accepts whatever a patient can offer, even if it is a nickel or a chicken. Their staff has discovered that the perceived value in this exchange often results in a higher percentage of patients following the medical staff's post-op recommendations. Because the patient paid for something, they are able to preserve their dignity, which is an empowering catalyst.

Also, MMI looks at the big picture of healthcare in each country they work in. By supporting and strengthening local systems and providing training, they focus on having a long-term impact on the communities.

They train local staff to do follow-up with patients and help with continued care, as well as to assess and document project impact to ensure that the desired goals of the program, the community and the Ministry are being met. Their staff educates patients on nutrition, medications and self-care to "help the poor help themselves."

They also work with local communities, governments, foundations, and other nonprofits to increase the development of medical care in the countries they work in. MMI has been declared a premium 4 Star Charity by Charity Navigator and honored as a Top Non-Profit by GreatNonProfits.org.

## Why is it relevant?

There are 1.4 billion people in developing countries who live on less than \$1.25 a day. As Americans argue over the functionality of a healthcare website and rising costs of medical care, a man in Ethiopia awaits a \$500 cataract surgery he can't afford, and the parents of a month-old infant are making a four-hour journey down the Amazon river to receive emergency medical attention for their baby. MMI provides health care services to over half a million patients like these each year.

## News tie-ins and core messages:

- **Affordable Care Act:** For physicians and others disillusioned with the current state of healthcare in the U.S., where can they help?
- **Welfare:** MMI doesn't support welfare mentality, which is why they charge the poor—whether it's a nickel or a chicken. This makes a big difference in whether a patient will follow the doctor's orders or not—by charging whatever the patient can pay, MMI sees a 99% success rate on following protocol. They "help the poor help themselves."
- **Medicine:** Around 2,000 medical staff, including physicians, optometrists, and gynecologists, such as Nicole Williams, CEO of Chicago Gynecology Institute, volunteer with MMI each year to perform life-changing medical services and ministry.
- **Disaster relief:** Rebuilding a country's medical infrastructure after a war or disaster (example: MMI's work in Haiti).
- **Realities of medical care:** What if you had to travel in Ghana or the Amazon region. What if you had to travel down river several days to seek medical attention?
- **Church vs. State:** If people are unable to get the care they need from government healthcare, how can the church step in? What role should the church play in the future of healthcare and medicine?
- **Volunteerism:** Volunteers from the United States and Canada devoting their time and skills to doing good in other countries. MMI's medical staff and non-medical administrative staff give of their personal time, pay their own travel expenses and leave their comfort zones, sometimes putting their own lives on the line to save the lives of others.
- **Travel:** Poverty in Paradise: Why your next trip to a foreign country should include MMI in your plans

## The facts and costs:

- MMI operates in 23 countries, with 25 permanent medical centers, all in remote areas
- In 2012, MMI provided \$82 million worth of services to more than 543,000 people throughout the world
- Where MMI has the most impact:
  - ◊ Mexico & Central America: 226,693 people served
  - ◊ Caribbean: 197,356 people served
  - ◊ South America: 75,256 people served
  - ◊ Africa: 52,562 people served
  - ◊ Eurasia: 20,747 people served
- 47 emergency room patients are treated each day at MMI Clinica Leticia in Colombia
- The average income of MMI's patients is \$30 a month
- For every \$1 donated, MMI provides \$8 in patient medical care
- \$1,150 is the average monthly support required for one full-time MMI staff
- \$2,000 is the average out-of-pocket cost for a volunteer for one week
- \$500 gives sight to the blind
- \$7,775 is the cost of a complex MMI surgery
- \$15,000 is the cost of a year-long residency training for a local doctor to improve surgical skills
- Last year, 10,340 parasite medications and 75,174 life-saving prescription medications were dispensed
- In 2012, 36,042 patients requested and received personal integrated health counseling

*Media Contact* : Ashley Laurretta | 512-487-7062 | Ashley@prbythebook.com  @Ashley\_Laurretta

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