

# Expanding the

*The newsletter of Wes and Maria Smith*



## Prayer Needs and Praises

- The continued development of SEMCA
- The building needs of Las Palmas.
- Several of our seminary graduates as they work to plant a church in the sugar cane village of Esperanza.
- Las Palmas is searching for teachers for the fall. No Spanish needed. Teachers are needed for Science, English, and Elementary.
- Preparation of the new property for use in various ministries
- Carlos Rijo as he begins his new career as Assoc. Pastor.



February, 2019

## **Furlough Meetings in Full Swing**

As I mentioned in our last newsletter, Maria and I are now in the States for our first furlough and have been doing a great bit of traveling as we report to our various churches on all that **God** has done in the DR during the last 5 years. As Maria and I have spoken in services and missions conferences, we have made every effort to clarify that “we” have done nothing, but “He” has done marvelous things.

I had forgotten what it was like to travel around and share with churches the work of the Lord. As I began to prepare new slides, videos, etc to share with churches all that God has done, I became overwhelmed by the blessings. I realized that I had taken so much of these blessings for granted. As I began to design a way to share all of this, I was having difficulty narrowing it all down into just a 30-35 minute presentation.

In January and February we did all of our traveling in Georgia and North Carolina. We will continue to visit a large bulk of our churches in the GA and NC areas throughout the spring before heading north to Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Tennessee this summer. I am still in the process of scheduling meetings and will continue to contact pastors of our partnering churches. We are available for missions conferences and special meetings through the fall of 2019. Please feel free to call my cell phone anytime to speak with me about possible visits. (910-546-9683)

## **DR Vision Update**

While Maria and I are here in the States, the many DR Vision ministries continue.

### Las Palmas Projects

Remember back in December that I told you about our need to prepare an open air gymnasium for the Las Palmas sports program. The cost for the entire structure was \$65,000 with the first phase costing \$30,000. Maria and I ran a 5K to help raise support for the completion of this first phase. Through your help, we raised about \$4,500 and the school raised all of the funds necessary for the construction of Phase I this summer. This is a tremendous accomplishment. The school will immediately begin saving for the second phase of this project which will give the school a great facility for basketball, volleyball, and indoor soccer not to mention PE classes.

Thank you again to all those who assisted in making this needed facility a reality.

There is so much still happening at Las Palmas. The school must also enter a construction project this summer for additional classroom spaces and offices as the school approaches 500 students. There are a number of significant obstacles with the government and the office of the environment that must be addressed in order to construct this building. Leadership has been

working on these many background issues for over a year in preparation for this needed construction. In addition, there are still a number of financial needs regarding this construction which will be in the neighborhood of \$70,000. Please keep this as a matter of prayer. In addition, the school is still looking for American teachers for the fall of 2019. No Spanish knowledge required.

### SEMCA News

SEMCA classes began again in January with the second rotation. The curriculum at SEMCA is very thorough and takes about 2½ years to complete it. Classes are rotated over a three year cycle so that students can enter the program at anytime and just continue through the cycle.

Our second full cycle of classes began again in January. Also, one of our teachers, Sean Ryan, received his Doctor of Ministry degree from Southern in December. Congratulations to Dr. Sean who is now teaching a class on “Pastoral Epistles” on Friday nights in SEMCA.

Finally, it gives me great pleasure to announce to you that Carlos Rijo, one of our August Seminary graduates, was ordained to the ministry and became the Associate Pastor of our main church in San Pedro.



### New Building Purchased

In early February the church was able to purchase the property directly behind the church. As you can see from the photo to the right, this property is 1½ times the present property of the church.

This property used to be a private school which closed about 4-5 years ago. The building has been abandoned ever since.

This property has classrooms, offices, a basketball court, storage building, a snack shop, and a covered eating area. It will take a lot of work to fix it up and prepare it for use, but the potential is tremendous.



It will be used for the church youth ministry, the ladies’ rescue ministry, and **hopefully will be the new home for SEMCA** in the near future.

**What an incredible opportunities this new building will provide!**