

# 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.
- Safety for us as we are doing so much traveling.



July, 2019

## Furlough Meetings and DR Trip

Maria and I continue to do a great deal of traveling as we visit with our supporters. In just a few days we will travel up through Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Tennessee, and finish back in North Carolina. It has been a great blessing to report on all that God has done in the DR over the last five years. Please continue to pray for us as we drive from church to church and state to state.

In late May, Maria and I returned to the DR for a number of important issues. It was such a blessing to see our friends, both American and Dominican, and be involved in the work there once again. We were there for a little over two weeks, and we hit the ground running.

### Las Palmas

Las Palmas is our bilingual Christian School in San Pedro. This year the school celebrated its 10th year of ministry to the community. Over these 10 years the school has grown from 38 students to 470 students. I serve as President of the Board of Directors of Las Palmas and so on the day after our arrival, we held a very important meeting. The board voted to begin two construction projects. The first project is the completion of a concrete pad for an open-air gymnasium. This sounds like a small project, but due to the needs, project design, and site preparations, the project was still going to run around \$30,000. In addition, the board approved a very needed academic 2nd floor to the HS building. Both of these projects are now in progress and should be completed by the middle of August in time for school to begin.



It was such a blessing to hear of the 37 students who came to know the Savior over this past year, the spiritual growth taking place in the hearts of our students, and the impact the school is having on families and the community.

An additional blessing for me personally was to be the speaker for the annual commencement service. The graduating seniors were students that I had taught, and I was so blessed to be able to encourage them to move ahead in God's plan for their lives. This was just Las Palmas second graduating class.



### SEMCA (Seminary)

I met with Pastor Gary as well as with one of our seminary graduates about the needs of the seminary. We were able to coordinate several important issues. Enrollment in the seminary has expanded this

summer and we are so grateful for the new students that the Lord has sent. The schedule for the fall is set, and we have a major publicity campaign planned for the month of August in preparation for fall classes.

### Short-term Mission Team (North Point Baptist)

One of the biggest activities for us was the coordination and operation of a short-term mission trip for one of our supporting churches in the Atlanta area. Pastor Lee Wimberly brought over twenty people from North Point Baptist Church. This is the third time that a group from North Point has come to serve with us in the DR.

Things really started out badly. The team brought two dentists with them to hold dental clinics in various areas to assist us in caring for the needs of our students, staff, and community. However, upon arrival, customs confiscated all of the dental supplies (enough for 400 people) and their examination instruments. Maria and I were able to visit our dentist there and get new instruments for them but the supplies were gone. That, however, did not hamper the team or injure their spirits. They worked in the classrooms of Las Palmas teaching lessons and working with various activities. **They even had one student that came to know the Lord through one of the presentations and discussions with the team.** They also worked at the Lifehouse girl's home. While the men worked in the hot sun on a project planting trees around the house, the ladies took the girls to buy clothes and shoes that they needed. It was truly a great day. Additional activities included tours of the ministry, cultural activities, and participation in the services at two different churches.

One of my favorite things happened on the last day of the missions trip when two of the team members (the two dentists) were married by Pastor Wimberly at our main church in the DR. Donna and Greg decided that they wanted to begin their married life together while serving on the mission field. So the morning they left, a beautiful wedding ceremony and reception was held. What a great way to finish a missions trip!! I have never



seen anything like it before, but it was just an incredible blessing.