

# Expanding the

*The newsletter of Wes and Maria Smith*



## **Prayer Needs and Praises**

- **The continued development of SEMCA (Seminary) and its new director**
- **All of the DR Vision ministries as the work continues to grow and expand including the girls home (Lifehouse), women's rescue ministry (MERCY), Christian School (Las Palmas), summer internship program (Missions Encounter), Visionland, and church (IBEM).**
- **Maria and I as I pastor Blue Creek Baptist church and the church itself that we may reach our community for Jesus Christ.**



October, 2019

## **Changes in Our Lives and Ministry**

### One Year Ago

As you may remember, a little over a year ago my father-in-law from my late wife, Peggy, passed away. Maria and I returned to the States for the funeral and then extended our stay to deal with the affairs of Peggy's Mom, Helen. Over the last few years Helen has developed dementia and cannot be left alone for long periods of time. Although she has dementia, she is in excellent physical health; unfortunately, there was really no one who could care for her. My boys all live up north and they have children, dogs, and are not able to care for her. I concluded that she would need to go to an assisted living facility since we had a ministry in the DR. However, after much prayer and upon the advice of our mission board, we decided to take our much needed furlough to report to churches and see what would happen with Helen over the next year.

### Our Confusion

So we began living in the house with Helen to care for her, and traveled periodically to our supporting churches to report on all that has been happening in the DR. When it was necessary to travel, we hired caregivers to stay with Helen during our time away. The more we cared for her the more we felt like we were doing what God wanted us to do. It has been our desire to follow the Lord and do "right." And we just felt like it was our responsibility to care for Helen and that this was "ministry" too.

However, we were very confused as to how God could lead us to the DR and then just 5 years later bring us home. I have seen so many missionaries go to the field and then make some excuse to return back to the States. I just did not want to be lumped in with this group. Besides all of that, I felt like the ministry in the DR needed my leadership and that things were just beginning to take off.

In the end, we found ourselves, once again, stepping out by faith and saying, "Lord, we don't understand, but we trust you. Please help us." As our furlough was approaching an end in December, we felt like we had no choice. We felt strongly that Helen was our responsibility, so we would have to resign from Daystar Baptist Missions and the work in the DR.



While living here in Jacksonville, NC, Maria and I began attending Blue Creek Baptist Church when we were not traveling. We got to know the people and enjoyed being a part of the ministry. Then in June the pastor resigned after 22 years of ministry there, and I began to fill the pulpit on occasion along with several others.

After a couple of months I was asked to serve as the interim pastor of the church. I was not sure that was what I wanted to do and the

Lord had to really work on my heart. After a number of weeks I agreed to do this. I felt that this was a temporary position and that I would do this as we finished up our furlough. The church was looking for a new pastor and then everything would be turned over to that pastor.

However, recently several things have changed. The church has begun to grow and a strong spirit of excitement and unity has filled the church. We realized just recently that my position as Interim Pastor may be longer than we originally anticipated.

With that in mind, I have submitted my immediate resignation to Daystar Baptist Missions which will become effective on Friday, October 18 at their quarterly board meeting.

### The Future

We are both very excited about the ministry at Blue Creek Baptist Church. I love being their pastor and Maria, as you can imagine, makes an excellent, loving pastor's wife. We have big plans for the upcoming months, and we are seeing the blessings of God upon us. So, I have seen once again, "Trust God, He knows what He is doing!"



Meanwhile, back in the DR things continue to move along. I am still working with the seminary and the Christian School there and am planning to continue serving on the board of directors for both ministries. I will continue to travel there periodically for leadership meetings. We love the work there and feel that it will continue to be a part of our hearts for years to come. Again, God's timing is amazing. This week a missionary friend who was in Venezuela will be visiting the work there. He has a love for educational work and we feel that he would provide the leadership needed for the seminary, the summer internship program and more.

Please continue to pray for the work in the DR as new leadership is developed. The ministries that we founded are continuing without us as they should. Pray for Maria and I as we provide pastoral leadership for Blue Creek Baptist Church. If you would like to know more about our present ministry you can visit our website at [bluecreekbaptist.com](http://bluecreekbaptist.com).

### Thank you

Maria and I would like to thank you for your prayers and support over these years. We could not have done this without you. We loved the DR and were blessed by God to serve there for about five years. Please be assured, the work is continuing. You have made a difference. We continue to trust the Savior and are excited about the privilege of pastoring the people of Blue Creek Baptist Church. We love you all and hope to see you in the near future in our travels.

