**Missions Trip to the Dominic Republic 2024** by Angela Busha

This past January, I went on my first mission trip, primarily single, with 11 others from the NY area. Pastor Wesley Reed was our leader, the only person I knew of Cornerstone Fellowship in Newark, NY. I met Pastor Wes years ago at the National Singles Labor Day Retreat in the NC Mountains. We became instant friends., both having a heart for ministry and prayer. Last fall, I learned that Pastor Wes and others were returning to the Dominican Republic to do missions. I decided to pray, asking God for clarity about joining Wes’s team. God granted my desire, making it a trip that has changed my life forever.

So, over the next few months, we had meetings where we spent time praying, gathering resources, and planning. Because it was all new to me, I listened a lot. I was a bit nervous, but I knew God had me. Then, the day came for our trip. And God would exceed my expectations.   
  
Upon arrival in Puta Canna, Dominican Republic, everything was so different from where I lived in Pennsylvania. From the aroma that hits you right when you depart the plane to the scenery, I was saddened to see so much poverty everywhere. My heart immediately started to break for these beautiful people.   
  
We quickly got our bags and headed to the bus for a two-hour drive to the MGM (Meet God in Missions) compound. As we drove past sugar cane fields, I continued to see more and more poverty mixed in with hundreds of mopeds and motorcycles, sometimes carrying an entire family. I could not believe my eyes when we passed a bus carrying toilets strapped down or two poles holding four five-gallon buckets. The Dominicans are very resourceful, utilizing what they have to make it work for their needs.

We finally arrived at MGM, and I looked forward to a shower and rest before our mission work the next day. Our days started with private devotions; then, we would come together corporately for worship and God’s word. We valued this time, waiting for God to give us direction while reflecting on the day's previous work. We had different opportunities each day, for example, on Vision Day, where I served. We examined and fit people for glasses. One older gentleman had never had glasses in his life, and the countenance on his face showed his joy when he saw clearly for the first time. UV rays are very bad in the Dominican Republic. If people did not need corrective lenses, sunglasses were offered to protect their eyes from the sun.

On Shoe Day, we distributed shoes. We also had the children's VBS day (Vacation Bible School). Lastly, we taught them how to share their faith in the sugarcane fields and construction. Everything we did was bathed in prayer, showing the locals that it had to start with God. We witness miracles among the locals. God united the people at the MGM in unity. People gave testimonies like never before.

We also traveled to other areas where MGM had built homes for prayer and evangelism. The children greeted us with songs. They were so friendly and loving. They kept telling us how much they loved Americans.

We heard so many amazing stories about how God worked in their lives. One particular man, Ramon, would ask us to pray for his wife, who had a bad heart. Healthcare in the Domonic Republic is non-existent. He shared how he started working in the sugarcane fields at age eight. A field worker only makes $8.50 daily. Because of the poverty of the Dominican Republic, most farming is still done without machinery. It’s harsh labor cutting sugar by hand with a machete.

We also met a young man named Angel, a father of 2 little girls with one on the way. Angel would capture my heart. He shared how he accepted Christ when he was young but had walked away due to life’s trials. However, he had turned his life around in the last few years and recommitted it to Jesus. He shared how he started spending time again in prayer, experiencing the love of God as he spoke to him prophetically. His testimony touched my heart. He mentioned his wife was down by the stream washing the clothes. We walked down to meet and talk to her. It felt like a moment out of a national geographic magazine. She was beating the clothes against a large rock to clean them. You could smell the laundry soap. Instantly, once again, they realized that this small stream served as their water to drink, a place to bathe and to wash their clothes and other things. It made me so grateful to live in a country with a toilet, a kitchen, a shower, a washing machine, and more. Angle yelled as we started to leave, “When you come back next year, you will see how I have changed even more for the Lord.” Hmm, I guess I’m coming back.

Our last day of ministry was to the sugarcane workers. Greeted with love and respect, the men listened to the gospel message preached by pastor Wes Reed through an interpreter. We were blessed to hear many of the workers already knew the Lord. We pray that our time with them encouraged them. Backpacks with work supplies and food were distributed to all workers and some townspeople.

I can’t communicate how my life has changed since my time in the Dominican Republic. I know God blessed them, but I think I was most blessed. Thank you, Lord, for reminding me of all I have and all you do for me.

A group of people standing in front of a building

Description automatically generated

A row of colorful statues

Description automatically generatedAn old person with an eye test device

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Two people standing in a dirt area

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Description automatically generatedA group of houses with clothes out in the sun

Description automatically generated A river with a dirt path and trees

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceA group of children sitting on a chair

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A train pulling a load of sugar cane

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A group of people standing on a road

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