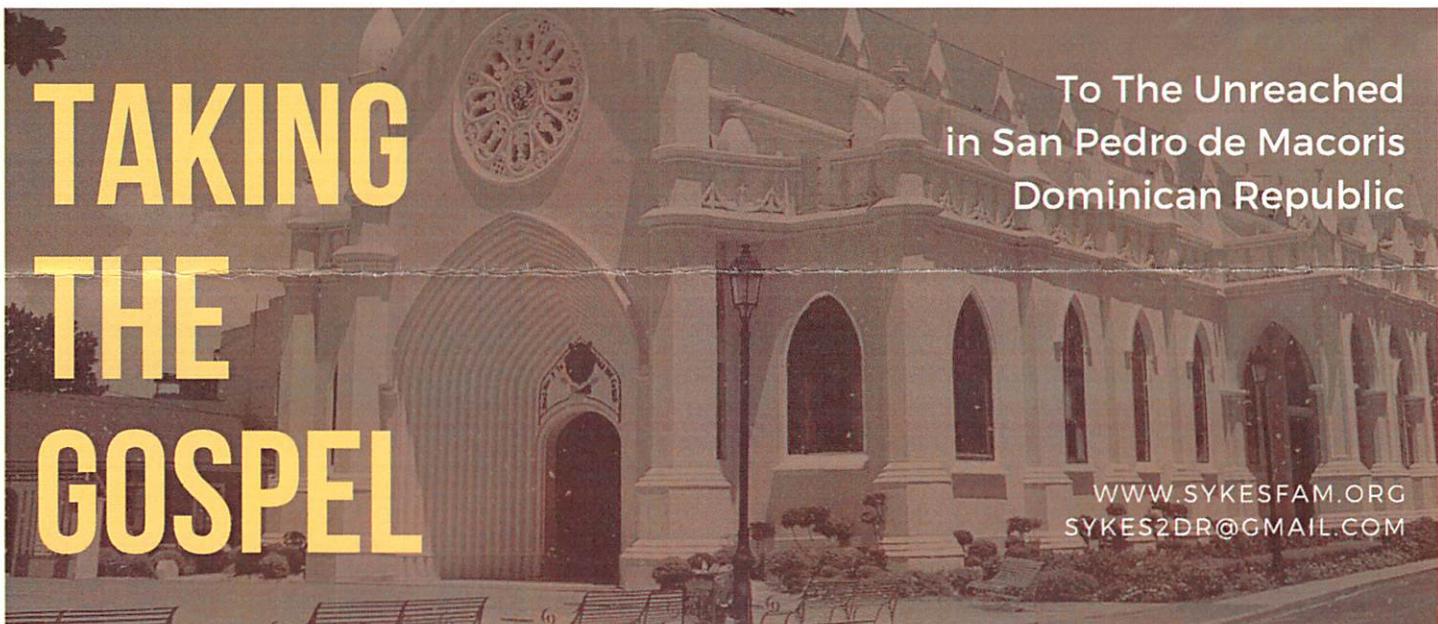


THE SYKES MISSIONARY TIMES

Missionaries to the Dominican Republic



FIRST QUARTER UPDATE!

BITTERSWEET GOODBYES

Greetings from the beautiful Dominican Republic! It's not often that we have a rainy day, but today is one of few much needed rainy day. This first quarter has passed too quickly. In the past 90 days our family dynamic has changed drastically. Our two oldest boys, Sam and Luke, have ventured out into adult life and flown the nest. We are extremely proud of both of our boys, but there is definitely an emptiness in our home. It's funny how when you are part of a big family that you become accustomed to the noises of family life and then when they are gone the silence is deafening.

Our oldest, Samuel, left in early January. His departure was a whirlwind that matched his personality perfectly. Last summer we had the opportunity to visit a supporting church in Pennsylvania. While there our family became close friends with a man named Remoun and his family. Remoun is an entrepreneur and began talking to Sam. Long story short, Sam went back to Pennsylvania in late December 2024, began making his final plans, and launched from our home in the first part of January. Sam has both a wonderful job and a great spiritual support structure. He calls just about every day and I get to catch up on what he is doing and how his small group and men's Bible study went. While we miss him immensely, we are so proud of him and we are so thankful to God for His protection and provision. My prayer life increased exponentially when Sam went to Pennsylvania in the middle of the winter with snow and ice, especially having never driven much at all in the Dominican Republic.

"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

1 THESSALONIANS 5:24

We count it a privilege to be able to serve the people of the Dominican Republic. We are amazed by God's transforming power and love being a part of expanding His Kingdom!



Luke, our middle son, studied at Word of Life for several months here in the Dominican. I was very encouraged and challenged to see him make his faith his own. We had many cordial spiritual discussions and debates up until he left a couple of weeks ago. It was enjoyable to see him be intentional about his faith often inviting his friends to go out to eat with him so he could talk to them about Jesus. Luke will be joining the Marine Corps. His ship out date is sometime in August. He has been in prep for the physical demands by running every day as well as practicing for his ASVAB. We are excited for what the future holds for Luke. We are also proud that he has already been bold about his faith with his recruiter. Our spiritual advice to our children has always been that it's not important if they have official ministry titles. The most important thing is that they make disciples. It is a blessing to see them active in their faith.

EXCITING NEWS

One huge answer to prayer has been a young lady named Maria. Maria began attending our university small group a few months ago. Maria is an extremely intelligent young lady who has studied philosophy at a deep level. She reads philosophical literature that is far beyond her age level. She is well versed in what she has studied. I have lent her a couple of books and she devours them in a couple of days. Maria considered herself an atheist or even possibly an agnostic. The problem was that any time we talked about Jesus in our small group she would always want to approach the subject from a philosophical standpoint. Thankfully, Maria is patient and she can be challenged without being offended. Maria sent me tons of questions via text and I would spend hours and hours answering them with lots of scripture knowing that God's Word would not return void. This process continued for several weeks. Interestingly enough, not only was she attending our small group, but she was faithful to church as well. One Sunday as I was leaving, she told me to watch my phone in the afternoon for a text message. That afternoon, I received a text that said, "I cannot live without Jesus." Maria surrendered her life to Jesus, and what an incredible transformation has taken place. My wife, Sarah, has been walking with her through discipleship and it is amazing to see the spiritual transformation taking place right before our eyes. Pray for Maria as she grows. Also pray for her good friend, Natasha. Natasha is in the same spiritual battle that Maria was in. Recently at the end of one of our meetings I approached Natasha about her spiritual condition and she said "I know I need to give my life to Jesus, but I'm just too selfish!" While those words are scary to hear, they are also encouraging because they are empirical evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in her life. Natasha needs Jesus. Please pray with us that she surrenders her life to Jesus soon.

San Pedro is nicknamed "the city of the Holy Spirit." There is a strong Pentecostal and charismatic influence, along with 7th Day Adventists and cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormonism.

All of these religions, coupled with traditional Catholicism, have left people confused and still spiritually lost. Many have been part of multiple religions and churches with this in common — either trying to "earn" salvation or trying to "maintain" salvation by their works. It's in this darkness that there is a great opportunity to shine the light of the gospel - the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ

- Missionary Gary Hale

PRAYER REQUESTS...

- Please pray that we can raise additional support as soon as possible
- Pray for a new believers we are discipling...it is wonderful to see them growing!
- Pray for the new chapel ministry as it continues to grow!

FAMILY LIFE

Overall, our family is doing well. We have been given wise advice from great friends regarding the investment in our youngest two, who are still at home. Jude and Ellie are doing well and busy with both school and ministry. Ellie is part of the youth group music team, and Jude is part of the church music team. We cherish this time to be able to invest in them at a deeper level. Seeing them mature physically, emotionally, and spiritually is a blessing and encouragement.

IMPORTANT UPDATE!!!

We will be switching our prayer letter to another service called Epistle. Epistle was made by missionaries for missionaries. It will cost about a third of what we are currently paying for the electronic version of our prayer letter. There is one caveat! **YOU MUST SUBSCRIBE!!!** In order to receive our email updates. **Epistle will not allow us to import a list into their software, the subscription must be by the end user.** Please be sure to click the link and subscribe to receive our updates. Thank you for your faithfulness and understanding. We will be sending out a few more reminders before we officially launch communication through Epistle. Thanks for understanding!!!!

PRAYER LETTER SUBSCRIPTION LINK

If you receive our update via email, there will be a clickable link for you to subscribe!

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THANK YOU!!!!!!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL PRAYER AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT!!!!