

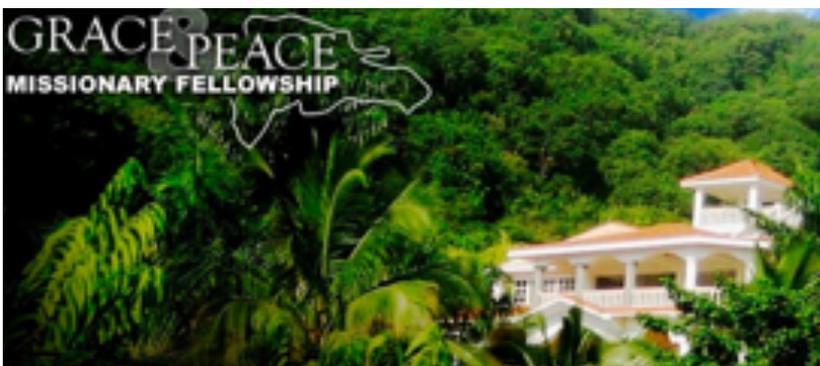
Grace and Peace Missionary Fellowship January, February, March 2019

*Evangelism Program
Prison Ministry
Hospital Ministry
Church Planting
Widow Program
Children's Bible Program
Love United
Medical Missions*

Bill and I returned to the Dominican Republic right after our banquet in early February to begin our 20th year here. With no teams scheduled to visit until June, we had the opportunity to spend additional quality time with our leaders, visiting widows, evangelizing in the hospital and prison. As Bill and I visited our supporting churches this past winter, his message really hit home with me. I'm pretty happy doing the administrative side of the ministry and caring for our 98 widows, but I felt like 2019 was going to be an even bigger year in evangelism for Grace and Peace and I wanted a bigger role in that. Bill's message prompted a new hunger in me to spread the Gospel. Don't get me wrong, we are spreading the Gospel daily, but I felt like I, personally, had to go into the different parts of the ministry that I generally leave to Bill. So, off to the hospital we went. As soon as we walked into the women's ward, we saw visitors sitting on the floor or on the corner of the bed of their loved ones, and we decided G&P had to help. That day as Keila and I ministered, 3 ladies accepted the Lord. The best part of this story is that as we were preparing to leave the house to head to the hospital, I grabbed a few audio Bibles for the widows we wanted to stop by and

visit. When the 3 ladies at the hospital accepted Christ, we asked them if they could read. Two of them could but one could not. So, we gave her the audio Bible and she was elated. A few days later, we went back with chairs for the women's ward. As we placed the chairs in the first room, a woman looked at me and said, "Oh, my goodness. How did you know we needed these?" I simply smiled and told her, "The Lord knew." Then we began to minister. Keila is the opener. She's so good! She was taught by the best, Bill. Then once she finished, I felt a very strong sense to talk to the ladies about clothing. In the DR, when you accept Christ, you are then expected to dress ultra, ultra conservatively. Hair up in a bun, crisp white blouse, only a dress or skirt, no dying your hair, no make-up, no jewelry. Basically, legalism on steroids. This is also the No. 1 reason so many women we evangelize will not accept Christ. Because of the expectation the church has put on new converts, they are generally very turned off when it comes to taking that step to accept the Lord. That day, I looked around the room and noticed all but 3 of them were wearing dresses or a skirt, hair up, no jewelry, no make up, etc.

I prayed for the Lord to give me the right words to get the message across that clothing is not of great concern to our Lord. I do believe we, as women, should be modest. I asked them to raise their hand if they knew the Lord as their savior. You guessed it, all those "dressed" for Jesus raised their hands. The 3 in pants did not raise their hands. I asked each of them if they had heard the Gospel before. Yes, they had. Then what was holding them back from making a commitment? No answer. I knew the answer. Back to the clothing issue I go. I asked them if they could attend church and accept Jesus in the clothing they had on, would they? They all said, "Yes." Finally Keila and I needed to move onto the next room and we asked them if they would like to pray with us and ask the Lord into their heart. They said yes! When we went to pray, the youngest of the three seemed apprehensive. I told her this was a very serious commitment and she should not pray this prayer unless she is serious about it. Reverse psychology. We all want what we can't have and I was making it a little hard for her to pray with us. She prayed. We told them we would call them over the next few weeks so we could visit



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with them. We got super busy with the widows and two weeks later went to see 2 of the 3. We found a church that allowed pants for 1 of them and set up a ride so she could start going to this church. The other lady's mother was very sick and she was attending to her and couldn't leave her alone. We will continue to follow up with her over the next month. Finally, after we got our widows all squared away, we headed over to see the young lady I felt was apprehensive in accepting Christ. I even told Keila, "I wonder how this visit is going to go?" Wow, was I ever shocked. When we arrived at her house, we found out her grandmother was a widow but was still very sick, even though she had been released from the hospital. There were so many visitors sitting right there with us who were concerned about this widow. Perfect audience. Keila opened and then I followed up. We HAD to talk about the clothing because once again, the legalism came up. The son of the widow said, "I used to walk with the Lord but when I went through a rough patch, I was shunned by the church. I did no harm to anyone but myself. I wasn't walking right and they didn't want anything to do with me." We spent quite a bit of time there, but in the end, his sister accepted the Lord and he recommitted his life. We talked about churches and decided on a great church that allowed women to wear pants. etc. What a day! Trust me when I say this, it had

nothing to do with me. I simply decided I needed to do more in spreading the Gospel, knew where to go and the Lord took over from there. I encourage you, if you feel apprehensive in sharing the Gospel at work or even to your family, just start the conversation. The Lord will take it from there.



Young Girl We Went to follow up on



Keila Praying with her Aunt to accept Christ and her Uncle to rededicate his life.



Carmen Cuevas Matos is one of our newest widows. We went to visit her as soon as Bill and I returned to the DR to welcome her into the program. We walked into her house and immediately saw everything she owned, including the house, was falling apart. By nature, she is happy and fun to talk to. You can see the countenance of the Lord all over her. Once each widow is in the program, we like to assess their needs. Some don't need much more than food and medicine, while others like her need everything. From our fundraising this winter we were able to raise money to help widows like her, so we built her a new casita, which is basically a 2-room little bungalow-type home. She was so blessed that when we went to see her after the new house was done, she wouldn't let go when we hugged her. Thank you supporters for giving Bill and I the means to meet these types of needs.

