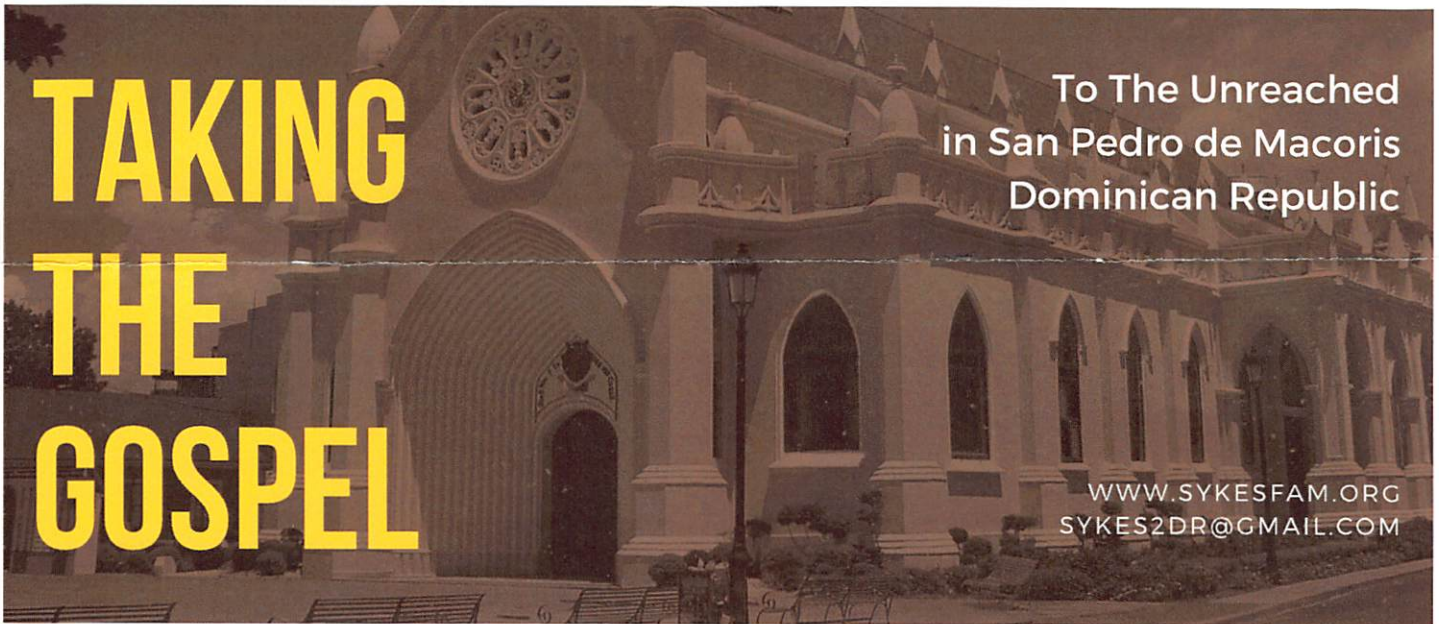


THE SYKES MISSIONARY TIMES

Missionaries to the Dominican Republic



SECOND QUARTER UPDATE!

Summer is in full swing here, and the heat is definitely making itself known. We always joke that our favorite time of year is from November to March—that brief window when the temperatures give us a little break. But even in the sweltering months, God is at work, and we're grateful for the opportunities He continues to give us.

It's hard to believe we've already moved into the third quarter of the year. The second quarter flew by, and as always, there's a lot to share.

FAMILY UPDATE

Our family is doing well. Both of our older boys have stepped into new seasons of life, and we're so proud of them. Sam, our oldest, is now living in Pennsylvania. God has blessed him with a great job, a solid church, and a fantastic boss. Thanks to technology, we get to talk with him regularly, which helps the distance feel a little smaller.

Back in April, Luke also left the nest. He's been staying with my mom in Ringgold, Georgia, and in just a few short weeks, he'll be heading off to the Marines. It's surreal to think he'll be standing on those yellow footprints, stepping into a whole new chapter. We're incredibly proud of his decision and are praying for him as he begins what will likely be a five-year journey of service.

"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!



Jude and Ellie are currently spending time in the States with Nana, Papa, and Aunt Christi. They've been there a couple of weeks already, and it's been a sweet time for both the kids and their grandparents (and aunt!). You'd think with all four kids out of the house, Sarah and I would have a lot of downtime—but honestly, we've been busier than ever.

Sarah continues to pour into discipleship relationships, especially on Thursdays, while I've been teaching a Thursday night Bible study for a group of young baseball players. I also meet weekly with a young man named Nicolas. Some of you may remember his name—he gave his life to Christ a couple of years ago, and we began discipleship at that time. Due to scheduling conflicts, we had to pause for a while, but his schedule has recently opened up, and we've picked up where we left off. It's been encouraging to see his hunger for the Word again.

Discipleship & Small Group

Our small group is growing and shifting. Lara, who has been part of our group since the beginning, is preparing to head to the U.S. for university this August. Darierys has been home for the summer, and it's been a joy having her back in the mix. Angel and Miguel are both doing well and growing in their faith. In fact, we've reached a point in our discipleship journey where I've started handing off responsibilities to them. They've begun leading some of our discussions and are doing a great job.

We've also welcomed a new believer, Maria, into the group. She gave her life to Christ a few months ago—actually, while my mom was visiting. Now that Mom is visiting again, she is amazed at the spiritual growth she sees in Maria. It's been a real encouragement.

Maria has also become a close friend to Natasha, another girl in our group who hasn't yet surrendered her life to Christ. Natasha is very honest about her spiritual struggle—she knows she needs Jesus, but she's not there yet. We continue to pray for her and gently encourage her, while also being clear that this is a decision only she can make. That said, she's seen a dramatic change in Maria's life, and it's left an undeniable impression. Please pray with us that she will come to know Christ 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 Maria who is a new believer, and for Natasha who needs to surrender her life to Jesus
- Pray for the outreach to the baseball players!

THURSDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

Every Thursday night, I lead a Bible study for a group of young men who aspire to sign professional baseball contracts. Most won't reach that goal, but the discipline and hope they carry make them incredibly receptive to truth.

We've been working our way through the Gospel of John a few verses at a time. Not long ago, one of the guys asked me, "How do I know if I'm growing?" That question opened the door to something new—I've started writing and printing out weekly devotionals for the group. Each Thursday, I hand out a new seven-day devotional to help them dig into Scripture throughout the week.

We've also started using baseball cards as a way to encourage engagement and participation. You'd be surprised how motivating those little cards can be!

Please pray for a new project I'm working on. I've started writing a fictional story about a young baseball player who uses the game as a backdrop to teach biblical truth. I hope that it becomes a tool that helps more young players understand who God is and how much He loves them.

Looking Back, Moving Forward

Though our time in Venezuela feels like a lifetime ago, the recent departure of our older boys has stirred up a lot of memories from that season—especially for them. It's reminded us just how much God did during those years. Many people encouraged us back then to write those stories down, and we have finally done so.

I've compiled our experiences into a book, now available on Amazon in both Kindle and paperback formats. The book is titled "[Where Grief Meets Grace](#)." This isn't a sales pitch—just a heads-up in case you or someone you know would be encouraged by our journey. The book is a reflection on God's faithfulness through years of hardship and provision.

We also ask you to pray for a dear friend's father, Enderson. Enderson is Enmi's dad. We disciple Enmi and her husband in Venezuela. Enderson has cancer and is not doing well. He has made a profession of faith.

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THANK YOU!!!!!!

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