

# Dominican Republic Mission Trip - August 5 - 12, 2003

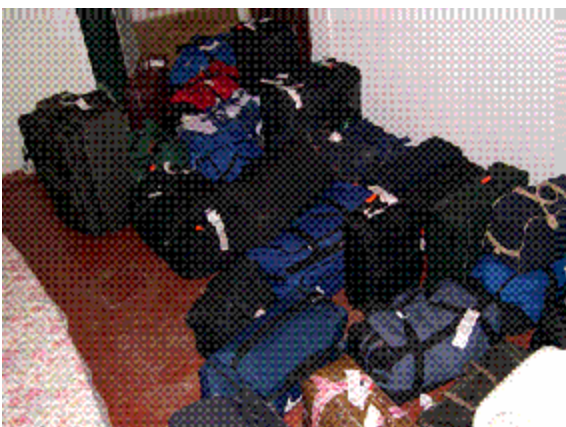
## Tuesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>

We were up at 2:45 am to get to church by 3:30. After a group prayer, Vern Williams drove us to the airport in the shuttle bus. We were able to check in pretty quickly because of our red shirts. When we all had our tickets, we went to the gate to wait for our flight, which was delayed about 35 minutes.



When we arrived in Miami, we took a shuttle bus to get a rental van. The one that had been reserved for us, was not ready, and we had to wait at least a half hour. Then, we were finally off to the Bayside for lunch. After lunch, we decided to drive to the beach. Once we found a parking space, some went to the beach and others sat under the trees near the sidewalk, while others played frisbee.

Then, we headed back to the van and back to the rental place. When we got there, it had just started to rain. We hopped on the next shuttle and went back to the airport to find that our flight had been delayed because of the rain. After switching gates twice, we finally were able to board the plane. We left about 7:00 p.m. (*an hour and a half late*), and got to Santiago around 8:35. By the time we got all our luggage, it was after 9:00.



Alberto, Christian and Ramone were waiting for us outside the airport. We loaded up the old brown van with our luggage, and piled into the newer red one. Then we headed for McDonald's to eat and use the bathroom before we drove to Monte Cristi.

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It was almost 1:00 a.m. when we arrived. Alberto's shop stood finished, in the area where Manny had cleared when I was there in January. Anyelis was at the door to meet us, and I finally got to meet Melvis. After introductions, we situated the girls downstairs and the guys upstairs, and went to bed, with our mosquito nets over our mattresses.

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## Wednesday, August 6<sup>th</sup>



The electricity went out sometime during the night, which stopped the ceiling fan. By 6:30 a.m., the sun was shining bright, so I got up. Anyelis and Melvis were already up. After a shower, I was ready to go. Jonathan has really grown since I last saw him. Abigail looks about

the same.

Evelyn came over to help with breakfast. We ate boiled plantain and cereal, then, around 9:30 a.m. we all headed for the ball field, where we spent the morning removing old tree limb fence posts. When we had removed them all, we dug holes along the back property line and put the ones we had just removed into those holes. There were already some posts up, but they were too far apart, and did nothing to stop the goats from jumping over the barbed wire between them. Hopefully, with another row of barbed wire strung tightly, and not as much space between the poles, the goats would be discouraged.

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We were able to finish most of it before we went back to the house for a late lunch. I got a bit over heated on my walk to the bano (*about 1/4 mile away*), so Alberto had me go back to

the house early with him, since he had to bring food out to the local workers who were helping. The rest of the crew came about a 1/2 hour later.

Lunch consisted of beans and rice with beef. It was very good! Then, we all headed for the beach. We went to the beach with the dark looking sand. I spent most of my time looking for shells, while everyone else went swimming. The water was very refreshing!

When we got back to the house, everyone got cleaned up, with many taking a community shower in the back. They just hung the hose over the close line or a tree limb.

For supper, we made our own sandwiches with combinations of ham, cheese, peanut butter, or jelly. After supper Andy led devotions, then we viewed the picture disks that had been taken so far. Evelin popped popcorn for a snack, then most of us went to bed early. The electricity was off again, so it was very hot and muggy, which made it difficult to get to sleep.

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Thursday, August 7<sup>th</sup>



Sometime during the night, the fans came back on, and by morning, I was very comfortable, and didn't want to get up. Neither did the rest of the girls. Our 7:00 a.m. breakfast was eaten at 7:30 instead. The guys had waited for us. We ate fried salami and boiled yucca, along with bread, butter and fruit.

After breakfast, I stayed at the house to help out in the kitchen, and Bob and Michael stayed to cut pipe for fence posts, while the rest of the crew went out to the work site. After the dishes were all cleaned, I washed and hung out all our red shirts for the return trip home, and strung up some of the clothesline that had been brought. By then, Anyelis and Evelin were working on lunch. We had rice with gondules (*green pigeon peas*) and goat meat (*or sheep*) for lunch. The goat meat was alright, but not something I



would purposely fix, however many in our group really liked it.

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After lunch, we all went back to the ball field, where the crew had been setting pipe posts and anchoring them with cement. The cement was mixed on site, and taken by wheelbarrow to the holes. While the younger men dug the holes with picks, the others helped to mix and haul cement. The best job, was the water person, they got to fill buckets of water, then, kink the hose to stop the flow, till more was needed. At about 4 p.m., we headed back to the house to clean up for supper. There was fried chicken, potato salad and fried plantain. Evelin and Anyelis are

very good cooks. I was disappointed though, that they had not cooked the chicken feet. I wanted everyone to see it. Alberto said they had frozen them to cook at another time.

At 6:55, we all grabbed a chair and headed around the corner to a Home Bible Fellowship, Dominican Style.

Evelin lead the worship service with her tambourine, and Alberto introduced Isaias, who gave a message in Spanish. He did have Jay read the text for his message in English, so though we didn't understand what he was saying, we knew what he was talking about. As it got dark, the mosquitos came out in full force, and we spent a good deal of energy swatting them.



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The study lasted about an hour, then we all returned to the house. Evelin and Anyelis set out the leftovers, then we all spent the evening enjoying each others company. Christian had brought a young man in the house to talk with him. Melvis sat outside with Kayleen and the girls, and they helped her learn a few English words. Some of the

guys went to the garage to play pool, and Alberto took me to the mercado with him to buy bread and lemonade mix. At about 10:30, the power went out, so everyone headed for bed. It was difficult to get to sleep without the fan running. There was also not much of a breeze.

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### Friday, August 8<sup>th</sup>



Sometime during the night the electricity came on, making it much more comfortable to sleep and much more difficult to get up, but everyone made it to breakfast by 7 a.m. We ate fresh fruit: pineapple, cantaloupe, and watermelon, and had bread, butter, jelly and cereal to go with it.

The crew went back to the ball field to set more posts, while I stayed to help Anyelis and Evelin. I strung more clothes line and help with the laundry. The power was out again, so the generator had to be run to power the washer. The water pressure is so unpredictable, they have had to go back to filling the washer with the garden hose to wash and rinse the clothes.

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For lunch, there was white rice and a chicken /vegetable soup to go with it. There was yucca, plantain, a kind of squash and corn in the soup, and it was very tasty. There were not many leftovers.

After lunch, we all went back to the ball field. They had really gotten a lot done! All the posts on the road side of the property were set in place and anchored. By the time we left for the day, there were another dozen or so posts set.

My job was to find and carry rocks over to the holes to help fill them. The cement would form around them, and it wouldn't take as much of it to fill the holes.



After returning to the house, we headed for the beach at El Morro. It was beautiful, with red sand, but the waves were really huge! I was worn out after



being in the water for only 5 minutes. We hadn't been there quite an hour, when Christy got caught in an undertow that was pulling her out and over close to a rocky shore line. Clint tore out from the opposite end of the beach and swam out to her. It took some time, but he was able to help her in. We were all a bit shook, and she was very weak from fighting the water. We renamed the beach - The Christy Beach.

Shortly thereafter, we left and went back to the house for tacos, Dominican style. I was asked to make the tortillas, which I had never done before, but Lynette's Betty Crocker Cookbook was still in the cabinet.

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The laundry had run the tenaques completely empty, so there was no water for showers. Alberto called and had a huge water tank brought over, so we filled buckets and trash baskets and put them into the bathrooms for hand showers and toilet flushing.

We had a near disaster from someone putting toilet paper in the toilet, but because there was no water, they had not been able to flush it. We had to fish it out. Yuck! But there would have been bigger problems if we hadn't.

At around 9, we went for ice cream. We were supposed to stop at the market, but it closed just as we drove up. When we got back, Anyelis started the dishes and I stayed up to help while everyone else went to bed. It was 11:30 before we finished and were able to go to bed ourselves.

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### Saturday, August 9<sup>th</sup>

I got up about 6:15 and got dressed, then went in to start making pancakes for the group. I made a batch that was 6 times the regular size, and had just enough for everyone. There was also scrambled eggs to go with them.



clearing a new road to the cistern.

The team headed for the ballfield again, and I stayed behind to wait for Evelin, so we could go to the market to get the ingredients for the Lasagna. She finally arrived around 10:30, but it was too late to go then, so I figured we would go after lunch. When the team came back, they told me they had finished setting all the posts, and started



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For lunch, there was rice with ham chunks and vegetables in it. There was also a pasta salad and a macaroni salad that tasted similar to tuna casserole.

Someone commented that everyday, the meals tasted even better than the day before.

After lunch everyone went to the beach, so Lasagna got postponed for a day. The beach we went to Alberto called the "little beach". It was very muddy and rocky, and there were lots of patches of kelp. Some of the crew went snorkeling. There was a fisherman there, gutting his fish. He had also caught two large lobsters and 2 small ones. The



snorkelers brought in a total of 6 starfish, 2 live conchs and some other shells.

One of the star fish had 6 points on it, and there was a crab, too. Some of the group discovered a beautiful white sandy beach to the right of the shore line, but you had to get there through the water, because of the cliffs at the waters edge on that side. We planned to return to the newly discovered beach the next day, if possible.

When we got back to the house, we had hot dogs and macaroni and cheese for supper. Then, we had a devotion in the chapel. After the devotion, we headed to a hardware store for snorkels and masks, but there was only one mask to be found. They did have hair bands and beads, though, so the girls bought some of them. Anyelis had told them she would braid their hair for them.

When we got back to the house, everyone sat around talking till they went to bed. Oh yes, Clint removed the live conch from Christy's shell, which was really beginning to stink up the place. Many were all still up, when I went to sleep.

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Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup>

I got up at 5:45 a.m. to go the beach with Alberto to look for shells, but it was still dark out. Michael came down at 6:05. Then, around 6:30, Alberto came down as it was just beginning to get light. I woke up Amie, and we got in the van to go. Then others started straggling out. We ended up having 8 team members go. We went to the beach we had gone to the first day. Shortly after we arrived at the beach, a man pulled away on a motor cycle, with a sack full of large shells. We all combed the beach, and came home with quite a few, but not many big ones.



When we got back, they were waiting breakfast on us. I had to change clothes because mine were wet from reaching into the water to get shells. After breakfast, Christian showed up with a bus load of

children, then at 9:30 Sunday School began. There were 55 children, there.

After Sunday School, Christian loaded the van again to take the children home, and Kayleen and I went along, so we could stop by the market. When we got back, I got the Lasagna ready to cook.

We ate lunch around 2 p.m., then headed for the ocean. Alberto had talked with a friend of his who had a boat. We picked up the friend and his boat motor and stopped near where his boat was anchored. After unloading the vans, we went out onto a gazebo dock.

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While we waited for him to get the boat started, a man from the shore patrol or security or something, had us write all our names down, in case there was an accident. He wanted all our names and a guestimate of how long we would be gone. Once the man got the boat pulled up to the gazebo, we all climbed down the ladder and got in the boat and headed for the island, where we had been told that there was an area that was great for snorkeling and another that was great for swimming. Along the way, we all got soaked from the rough waves breaking over the boat.

The island was long and narrow, and was easy to cross to the ocean side. In the middle of it, were some salt flats, where they had pumped water in to let it evaporate in order to harvest the salt. Eventually, we all ended up on the ocean side, where some went snorkeling and I went exploring.

I found the remains of a large sea turtle, but there was nothing left but the rim of his shell, and it was very fragile. We also found what must have been the center of the breast plate. It was neat. I found the beach to be rocky, so I just sat on a rock and let the waves splash over me. Most of them were strong enough to knock me off the rock!

We all headed back across the island to the boat at a little after 5:00. The trip back in the boat was not near as wet, because we were traveling the same direction as most of the waves. Alberto told us that this was his first time in a boat like this, and that he had only done it, because some of our group had asked about it, and he didn't feel comfortable have the group go without him.

When we arrived back at the house, the lasagna was almost done. Evelin had made a salad and fixed fried plantain. We all got cleaned up, for supper. Right before we ate supper, Ramone and his wife Maritza, and their children showed up. Ramone had left on Thursday, I think to go to Santo Domingo, where he lives.



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The church service started late, and was held on the basketball court. Benches had been set up for the service. After the worship service, led by Evelin, the children went to the chapel for their Bible lesson. I counted 102 people there all together, including us. About 40 - 45 of these were adults. This is a big increase from the 33 or so that were attending in January. The service lasted about an hour and a half with Isaias preaching.

After church, many people hung around for fellowship. The team played with the kids, and when almost everyone had gone, I came in to help Anyelis with the dishes. It was midnight before we got to bed.

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### Monday, August 11<sup>th</sup>



We got to sleep an extra half hour. Breakfast was at 7:30, and then we loaded up all the chain-link fencing we could get into the old brown van and headed for the ball field. We were ready to start attaching it to the fence posts. When we unrolled the fencing, it was a big mess. Many of the links

were uneven or bent, and some were longer than others. It took a good portion of our time to straighten everything out. We ended up making sure the top of the fencing was straight, though the bottom was not in many places.

I guess there are eventually going to be blocks at the bottom anyway. Everyone worked very hard straightening the fence and stretching it into place. We got to the next to the last pole, when we ran out of fence. Alberto jumped into the van and went home to get a scrap that he had left over from the basketball court. With that piece, we were able to complete the fence to the corner, and we even wrapped some of it around the corner and attached it to the tree limb posts. It was really neat to get to see it completed!

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While we were finishing up the last piece, Isaias got a phone call. His sister and her husband had been killed in a car accident in Mexico, along with some others on their way home from church. We had a prayer of dedication for the ballfield and the fence, and we also prayed for Isaias' family.



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When we arrived back at the house, some of the team went snorkeling at the “little beach”, while others went to “Christy’s Beach”. I stayed at the house to make the sloppy joes for supper., and Evelin baked cakes. Everyone got back from the beaches about 5:30, then got cleaned up.



Alberto took Isaias and I to the cemetery where Lynette’s body is. The family vault is above ground, with the place that contains Lynette’s body sealed and finished with a nice engraved plaque. The spaces reserved for he and the children are blocked in, too. He told us that if he had not blocked them in, someone would come along and use them. He said that it does no good to bring flowers, because of the goats eat them. On the way out, we even saw a few pigs running around.

When we got back to the house, Tim was trying to make arrangements with American Airlines to switch Isaias’ flight arrangements so that he could fly from Miami to San Antonio.

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Evelin had planned a party for us, with some of the neighbors, and by then, many of them had gathered. We ended up having a big party on the basketball court. We sang songs, and played a balloon popping game, where one person had to sit on a balloon to pop it, then do what the message inside said to do. When the game was over, Evelin went around popping balloons that contained confetti.



Before we were finished, Alberto spoke in Spanish and Isaias translated in English. Everyone else got a chance to speak, too. Then, after taking some pictures, the local people went home and we came in for a meal of sloppy joes, chips and cake. The cake was really good! We took our meal out to the ball court where we gathered in a circle and discussed our trip. Then, we went inside to view more pictures on the TV. After that, we all headed for bed.

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### Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup>

I got up at 5:15 a.m. to finish getting everything packed away. We all set our luggage by the front door for Alberto to load into the van. The mosquitos were out in full force, as it was just getting light outside. After a breakfast of bread and hot cocoa, Dominican Style, we said our good-byes and loaded into the red van. It was really hard to say good-bye to Jonathan. He even gave me a hug, which he is just now learning to do. It surprised us all! Abigail was not up yet, when we left.

We headed for Santiago, but a few blocks down the street, Alberto had to turn around and go back. He had forgotten to put the spare tire back in the van after loading the luggage. He had been having trouble with losing air in one of the tires. We then stopped at a gas station, where he put air in three of the tires before we got back on the road.

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Then, we drove straight to the market in Santiago, where we shopped for about an hour and a half. Then we walked up the street to McDonalds for a bite to eat and then stopped at the post office across the street for those who wanted to mail some post cards. After that we loaded back into the vans, which Christian had been watching for us for the whole time. On the way to the airport, we stopped at a Super Mercado to get some vanilla.

It took quite awhile to get through the baggage check at the airport, but once we got inside, we rolled right on through

and got on the plane. The red shirts really help when it comes to getting through the airport. Michael had lost one of his papers, though, so he had to stop by immigration for a few minutes. We arrived in Miami early, but it took a really long time to get through customs. Once through, though, we walked Isaias to his flight, then we split up to go get some food. All but 3 of us ended up at the Pizza Hut on Concourse E. Then, we went back to our gate to wait for our home bound plane.

Once we got on the plane, the captain told us there was a problem that was being checked out. We sat on the plane for around 2 hours, before they decided that they could not fix the problem, so we unloaded and waited for another plane. We were each given a voucher for \$20 to use to eat in the airport, but we had just eaten before we boarded the plane, and they had been feeding us pretzels. On top of that, all the restaurants on the Concourse were closed, and the ones in the main airport would have taken too long, so the vouchers were really useless.





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At 10:15 p.m., we all gathered at another gate to board the other plane. We got into the air sometime after 11. Just about everyone went to sleep on the ride home, and we got to Nashville just before midnight our time. Woody and Wendy met us at the airport. We got our luggage and headed out the door to see Vern there with the shuttle bus! Oh was it a sight for sore eyes! Amy had to go back in to file a claim, because one of her suitcases didn't show up, then she and Chris went home with their parents. The rest of us got on the shuttle and headed back to church.

Right when we got to church, the clouds burst forth with torrents of rain. Clint couldn't find his spare key, so our luggage got soaked, but he eventually found it and we drove home, where Kassie had drawn a hot bath for me and made me a cup of tea.

I really enjoyed the trip. I got to know the other members of our team much better, and they are more like family to me now. It was so good to see Alberto again, and Abigail and Jonathan, too. God has really blessed the church in Monte Cristi, and I thank Him for the opportunity to serve Him and the church there. It is amazing to me how close you can bond with people during such a short time - even when you don't speak the same language. My heart is filled with love for my Dominican family, and I will continue to keep Alberto, Abigail and Jonathan in my prayers, as well as Christian and Evelin, Christian Manuel and Emely, and Anyelis and Melvis.