



Total Health / Dominican Republic (DR) Board Meeting Report - February 2016

Total Health Board Meeting

The Board met at Dago's new church in the DR. Great to catch up with everyone face-to-face. Many all-volunteer charity boards cannot get together regularly in person, so it is a real blessing to be together. This group of people is seriously committed to giving back!



All Clinics Official!

After 10 years, ALL of our clinics are fully licensed and recognized by the local countries. La Ceiba, the first clinic, was the last to be recognized. So we are fully engaged with the local health system in all 3 sites (Honduras, Nicaragua & El Salvador).

Soyapango, El Salvador

We have two organizations looking to co-sponsor the \$35K annual expense to run a clinic (Doctor, Nurse, Meds - to see 5k-10k patients). Be in prayer for the last details to align for both groups so we can get Dr. Valencia started this summer.



Other Potential Areas

It didn't take Merphran long to find the poorest of the poor in the DR. Here a home is being built in a leper colony. His old home is in the background. The lepers live in a cemetery; concrete grave markers are scattered throughout the colony! I wish all of you could see the way everyone lights up when they see Merphran coming. This house is being built for Felipe who describes himself as an outcast among outcasts.

Severiana (below) is blind and lives in the leper colony across the path from Felipe. Her roof had 2" holes in it, so Merphran arranged for a team replace her roof including the rafters. It is amazing to watch her cook and move around without her sight. Everything is kept so neat and orderly - even her dirt floor. Severiana's yard was freshly raked even!



On another front, she recently bought a used mattress, but had a bit of an issue. She nonchalantly mentioned to Merphran that at night rats come out of the mattress and crawl over her. She then showed him the hole they come out of. He got her a new mattress right away!



La Libertad Update

Great news from La Libertad, El Salvador; they were able to secure land in the Neutral Zone on which to build a new church and children's center - remember last year they were in Barrio 18 territory, so children could not cross from MS13 territory to participate in our educational / nutritional program.

Zika Concerns

- 1) While we do not know everything there is to know about this virus, we do know quite a bit about virus' like this.
- 2) Zika is coming to the US and beyond, nothing can really stop it now since a vaccine is not available.
- 3) Walter, a board member from Nicaragua had it not long ago, and the symptoms are as described.
- 4) Still no one who is pregnant or is planning to be pregnant in the following 12 months, should travel to countries currently affected by the virus (such as El Salvador)
 - a. Where we go in El Salvador is NOT high in mosquito infestation anyway, but even one bite could be enough.
 - b. Everyone on this year's trip will be encouraged to stay covered with appropriate repellent.

Other Health Issues

- Gaby (Merphran's wife) is still dealing with the effects of thyroid cancer. Keep her in your prayers for strength. She has to be off of her meds for 6 weeks in prep for another scan.
- Sandra (Merphran's mom) and Merphran recently suffered from severe cases of Chikungunya - a debilitating mosquito-borne illness that attacks the joints and causes excruciating pain. It has taken them 6 months to recover from the effects (still some days are not good). Keep them in your prayers as they strengthen.

August Mission Trip - Time to start

Since we are planning to open the clinic in Soyapango, and need to continue our investigation into a future clinic in La Libertad, we will be taking a medical team down the 2nd week in August to work alongside Dr. Valencia and Dr. Inri in El Salvador. Please prayerfully consider financially supporting this team.

Teaser for next report:

A Refugee Story you won't want to miss.

Please help to fund this work:

P.S. Gifts to support mission trips sponsored by Blacksburg Ablaze Church ("Ablaze") are tax deductible.

*Checks must be made out to **Blacksburg Ablaze**, and sent to **613 Leisure Lane, Blacksburg, VA 24060**. You may list Mission Trip or my name in the check memo. Should the mission trip become over-funded, Ablaze will use the excess funds to help the people of Central America. In the unlikely event that the mission trip is changed or canceled, or I personally am unable to go, Ablaze will still use the collected funds to help the people of Central America.*

All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.
Galatians 2:10 (Peter to Paul)

"Heal the sick who are there and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is near to you.'
Luke 10:9 (Jesus sends the 72)