



Lamour Sandlin

Missionary to the Dominican Republic



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Greetings from the Dominican Republic!

We have reached the holiday season which means there is always something going on! I appreciate everyone who checked on me during Hurricane Melissa. Fortunately, it was only a tropical storm when it hit us so the damage was minimal. We did, however, have multiple days off from school due to heavy rain. That extra rest was a blessing, and I am thankful for it.

We recently finished the first quarter of the school year at Las Palmas. I was able to meet with the parents of several of my students and I walked away from each meeting with a slightly heavy heart. The thing about the Dominican Republic is that it is a very religious country. Some might even call it legalistic. Many believe God's grace is only granted to those who can work hard enough to "earn" it. Others associate anything religious with a long list of do's and don'ts that they will never be able to follow so why should they even try? As I met with parents and listened to their concerns, I was saddened to hear that they believed their child's issues were due in part to a lack of faith on their part. Maybe if they were better God wouldn't be punishing their kids. I watched their shoulders sag with undue shame and the hopelessness that flashed in their eyes.

A friend of mine recently asked me, "What is your higher calling: missionary or teacher?" This question rushed to my mind as I met with these parents. My ministry is not simply to teach English to a bunch of little niños. It is to share the truth of the gospel with them. To show them that God's grace and love does not change when they fall short of perfection. It is to minister to the hearts of their parents who have entrusted me with their kids. I am a missionary first and teacher second.

Speaking of kids, our youth group is thriving! On any given Friday night, we can have anywhere from eighty to a hundred kids. These kids are searching for truth. Many are even asking to be discipled without us having to seek them out. We have several who have gone from timid new believers to bold leaders in their friend groups, and it has been a joy to watch. However, with such great things inevitably comes great opposition from the enemy. We have faced some major battles in the last few weeks. Most of the time I return home from youth group absolutely exhausted because it feels as though I have been in a battle for hours. Sometimes when I read of the compassion Paul had for the people he was ministering to, I can relate. When he talks about being willing to endure hard things so they can have a chance to understand the mystery of the gospel, I get it. My circumstances cannot be compared to Paul's. But I understand his desire for them to know Christ like he does so they can have the same kind of hope and peace that he experienced.

As we approach the holiday season, my calendar is already full. I ask that you be in prayer for the spiritual emphasis week that is coming up at Las Palmas. Pray for open hearts as the gospel is shared with our students. I also ask that you pray for protection for our youth group from the things that are coming against us. And please pray for our missionaries at DR Vision. There are many who are sick, many who are facing difficult situations with family in the States, and many who are simply discouraged. We know God is greater. But that discouragement can certainly be loud at times. Thank you for your continued partnership with these ministries! May God continue to bless you!

Yours in Christ,  
Lamour Sandlin

