

Ardell & Gordon Graner
March, 2017



Dear Friends,

Where is the Kingdom of God to be found? Maybe on board an old ragged minibus known as a *gua-gua* in the Dominican Republic. Public transportation is relatively cheap and relied on by those who cannot afford their own car or taxi



The *gua-guas* are not known for comfort (groups of twenty must fit in a space already too small for ten) or safety (the sliding side door is never closed) or convenience (crawling over fellow passengers is awkward but necessary and acceptable). But in spite of all the hassle and discomfort there is something special about travel by *gua-gua*.

Recently, Ardell, our friend Maggie, and I boarded a *gua-gua* for a ride back to our hostal in Samaná.

The hour and a half trip was slow with many stops and by the time we reached our stop we felt like part of a temporary family. There was a young mother and her darling little 2 year old girl with us. The little sweetie seemed bothered that anyone would have the nerve to take the seat in front of her. She would make faces, poke the offending passenger, and cry with frustration.

Then a man got on board holding a IV bag connected to a young woman who was obviously ill. She was apparently being transferred from a clinic to a hospital. The IV tube had blood in it which meant it wasn't working properly. Another woman setting beside them bent the tube and squeezed it to get the flow going in the right direction. The man seemed to welcome any help and any suggestions including a chorus of women scolding him to hold the IV bag up higher. The ill young woman had to move from one seat to another as new passengers came aboard. This was her ambulance but it had to be shared. Adjustments were made by all to accommodate all, kindness was all around.

Some crawled into the *gua-gua* with warm greetings asking God to bless us. Others with bright faces that seemed to say, 'thank you for making room for me' or 'it is nice that we could travel together.' That is the spirit on board the *gua-gua*, at least it was on that day. When we arrived at our destination we waved goodbye as if we were parting with friends.



***Thy Kingdom Come,
Gordy & Louisa (Ardell)***



The Advance

Advancing hope in Christ's name

Thank you

To the three VIM teams that we recently hosted:

December 2016: a Solar Oven Partners team from South Dakota

January 2017: a construction/solar oven/VBS team from South Reno UMC, Nevada

February 2017: a construction/sewing/VBS team from Dakotas-Minnesota and Florida



On behalf of the IED we are very grateful to you for coming to share your lives with the people of this country. The UMVIM experience is like a pot-luck dinner, you never know what you're going to get but you know it will always be great. Thank you for bringing that special dish that only you can share.

For more details:

www.granerfamily.org

Time for a visit to the homeland: Ardell and I plan to do a round of church visitations in September-October-November 2017. This will be a two part visitation. This year we hope to visit as many churches as possible in the Dakotas-Minnesota Conference. Then in 2019 we will visit all our covenant churches outside of our home conference. There will be a number of churches within our home conference also that will be on the schedule for 2019. We are looking forward to seeing all of you and sharing our stories of God's mission in the Dominican Republic.

In the meantime you can stay informed of this mission by visiting our website: www.granerfamily.org

**Ardell's Advance Special #: 10836Z
Gordon's Advance Special #: 10835Z**

Email addresses:

Ardell's: agraner@umcmission.org

Gordon's: ggraner@umcmission.org

website: www.granerfamily.org

Solar Oven Ministry

Another milestone has been reached in the appointment of Rev. Erasme Figaro as the National Director of the Solar Oven Mission in the Dominican Republic.

Rev. Erasme is a young pastor with the Dominican Evangelical Church and now will work half time with Solar Oven Partners. He has worked with this ministry from the beginning and has the skills and leadership qualities to guide the project in a Dominican context.

Gordon and Ardell will continue to work side by side with Erasme to create a firm foundation.



Visiting Covenant Churches

Christian Education

I feel so content and so challenged to be supporting the IED church in the area of Christian Education.



We have just published a seven lesson set of curriculum for Lent and Easter and are in the middle of revising a four month set of lessons for Extension Bible School, publishing a set of 24 lessons for Sunday School, writing Vacation Bible School lessons, preparing camp curriculum and beginning a pilot project with young girls between the ages of 10-15 years old.

Please pray for all of us involved in these ministries with children, young people and adults.