

Dominican Republic Open Team

LOCATION: SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

PROJECT DATES: FEBRUARY 12 - 23, 2015

PROJECT PARTICIPATION: \$825

Flight to Santo Domingo is not included in the participation fee

Information Packet



MARANATHA IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Maranatha's history with the Dominican Republic stretches back over three decades. The first contact with the country was made when Maranatha volunteers helped to construct churches and homes that were destroyed when a devastating hurricane hit the island in 1979.

Then in 1992, Maranatha embarked on an ambitious project to build 25 churches in Santo Domingo. Called Santo Domingo '92, more than 1,200 volunteers flew to the Dominican Republic in a period of three months to build. It was a watershed moment, and it changed how Maranatha operated as an organization. Santo Domingo '92 was also a significant moment in the Dominican Republic's Adventist history as the project resulted in a membership surge. The churches sprouted daughter congregations, and then those groups needed church buildings too.

Maranatha returned in 2002 for another effort, building 50 churches. Once again, construction generated another growth in membership. Today the Adventist Church in the Dominican Republic has requested Maranatha's help in providing more places of worship for new congregations.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Volunteers on this project will be building a church for two congregations in the city of Santo Domingo. The group will put up One-Day Church frames and complete the walls with cinderblock.

The Estancia Nueva congregation started meeting in January 2012 when 25 members branched off from another Adventist group. They meet in a rented building and have been unable to secure a building of their own. The members are very active in the community, offering Bible studies to the community, and the congregation has been steadily growing as a result.

The Luz de Villa Carmen congregation also started in a manner similar to the Estancia Nueva church. In 2001, 15 members branched off from a nearby congregation. They started holding Bible studies and evangelistic meetings and grew from 15 to more than 35 members. The head elder told us that a new church in the community would benefit the local people who are eager to know of God's love.

In addition to the two construction projects, volunteers will also have the opportunity to participate in several community outreach programs,

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Thursday, February 12
Arrival in Santo Domingo

Friday, February 13
Orientation and first work day

Saturday, February 14
Worship with the local congregation

**Sunday, February 15 -
Friday, February 20**
Work days with midweek excursion

Saturday, February 21
Worship with the local congregation

Sunday, February 22
Excursion in Santo Domingo

Monday, February 23
Departure from Santo Domingo

including children's ministry programs, food distribution to poor neighborhoods, and possibly medical clinics, depending on leadership availability.

Accommodations

Volunteers will stay at a well-maintained retreat center called Villa Vacacional Roselis. Each of the dorm rooms sleeps two to four people and is furnished with bunk beds with thick mattresses. Bed linens are provided. Each room has a private bathroom, but volunteers will need to bring their own towels and washcloths. The Maranatha group will have access to the many amenities at the camp, including a pool, air conditioning, and a beautiful chapel for evening worships. The camp also has a basic kitchen that the group will use to cook meals during the project. The area around the camp has been known to play very loud music that can sometimes continue late into the night, especially on weekends. Please come prepared for this and bring earplugs, if desired.



Excursions

The Dominican Republic is known for white sand beaches and beautiful Caribbean weather. At the end of the project, the group will take a two-hour bus trip to Bayahibe then take a boat out to an island called Isla Saona, the largest island in Dominican waters. The beaches on the island are quintessential Caribbean beaches complete with white sand, warm water, and palm trees. If the season is right, there will also be an opportunity to see a marine turtle sanctuary.

During the project, the group will also go on local excursions located closer to the retreat center. Volunteers will visit the colonial district where people can take a colonial tour at their own cost or shop for souvenirs. There is also a local landmark known as Los Tres Ojos, or The Three Eyes. This open-air limestone cave is a series of three lakes fed by underground rivers. It is currently one of the most visited attractions in the country.

Leadership

George Carpenter | Project Coordinator

George and his wife Debbie reside in Madison, Tennessee, where George works at Madison Academy. He has worked in school administration for over two decades, and throughout the years he has led several international and domestic short-term mission trips for youth and young adults. George has always loved traveling and enjoys it even more when he can combine traveling with service. He will be joining the team as the overall project coordinator. (Grab photo from Panama OT 2014)

Jon Harvey | Construction Coordinator

Jon first joined Maranatha in 1993 with a group from Indiana Academy. He has served in the U.S. Navy as a SeeBee construction team member, and now he applies this knowledge on Maranatha projects as construction coordinator. Each year he goes on mission trips to meet new people, experience the joy of fellowship, and spread the Gospel through construction.

Expenses

The participation fee of \$825 covers housing for 11 nights, three vegetarian meals a day, ground transportation to and from the airport and project site, excursions, secondary accident insurance, a Maranatha t-shirt, and luggage tags.

Maranatha must receive all funds and forms by **January 19, 2015**. Wait for confirmation of acceptance on the project before purchasing your airfare.

If you are fundraising or receiving donations, please either have them sent directly to you or work with your local church treasurer to collect funds and issue tax-deductible receipts, since it is difficult for Maranatha to track individual small checks. If your church will not work with you, please wait until you have collected the full amount of your participation fee before submitting your it to Maranatha.

Estimate of Additional Costs

- Flight to Santo Domingo \$700-\$1,000
- Passport \$130 new or \$110 for renewal
- Tourist Card \$10 (paid upon arrival in Santo Domingo)

ABOUT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic is a beautiful tropical country, located on the island of Hispaniola. The landscape boasts sandy, white beaches and lush green mountains that make it the second most popular destination in the Caribbean after Puerto Rico. Visitors flock to the island to indulge in fancy resorts and year-round golf courses.

Yet a look beyond the tourist attractions reveals a nation with a rich history that is not so picturesque. The Dominican Republic lies on the eastern part of an island that it shares with Haiti. Originally, the entire land mass was inhabited by the indigenous tribe of Taínos. The Spanish colonized it in the late 1400s, making it the first permanent European settlement in the Americas. The island, called Hispaniola, suffered centuries of a tug-of-war between the French and Spanish. In 1804, the Spanish ceded the western third of the island to the French, and that portion of the island became Haiti. The remaining land became the Dominican Republic, which gained independence in 1844.

Since then, the Dominican Republic has had a turbulent history with ownership returning to Spain only to have a war to regain independence. The country also fell into the hands of a dictator from 1930-1961. Today, the Dominican Republic is a democracy, working toward maintaining a stable and healthy country. Tourism fuels its economy, and it has the second largest economy in Central America and the Caribbean. However, in the rural areas of the country, poverty continues to be a problem, particularly near the Dominican-Haitian border.

Given its history with colonization, the country's culture is a blend of several influences. Spanish architecture is evident in areas of Santo Domingo, particularly in its cathedrals and cobblestone streets. Merengue, the national music and dance, is ubiquitous in the Dominican Republic, and it originated from slaves who worked in the sugar beet fields, their feet connected to each other by chains. Baseball, an American export, is an obsession for people of all ages and children can be seen playing games wherever there is space.

TRAVEL

Volunteers will purchase their own plane tickets to the capital city of Santo Domingo (see below). Please wait for confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your ticket to ensure there is still space on the project. Once in the Dominican Republic, volunteers will travel together by bus to the project location.

Plane Tickets

Please wait until confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your airfare.

Arrival | Please plan to arrive in Santo Domingo (airport code SDQ) on Thursday, February 12.

Departure | Please plan to depart from Santo Domingo (SDQ) on Monday, February 23.

Travel Resources

Azumano Travel: 800-454-4099 or by email with Erle at edpenha@azumano.com

Butler Travel: 503-879-5005 or by email with Ellen at ellen@butlertravel.com or Nathanael at nathan@butlertravel.com

Kayak: www.kayak.com

When contacting the Azumano or Butler travel agencies, be sure to mention Maranatha for the best fares.



FACTS AND FIGURES

Capital: Santo Domingo

Population: 10,088,598

Language: Spanish

Climate: Tropical maritime. Little seasonal temperature variation

Religion: 95% Roman Catholic

Currency: Dominican Peso (approximately 41 pesos to \$1 USD)

Entry Requirements

All passports must be valid for at least six months from the dates of intended travel (June 30, 2015). If you do not have a passport, U.S. citizens can apply at any U.S. post office or online at <http://travel.state.gov>. Canadian citizens can apply online at www.passport.gc.ca. It can take up to two months to complete the entire process, so plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to receive your passport.

In addition to a passport, visitors must purchase a tourist card upon arrival in the country. There will be stations at the airport to make this purchase. The fee is \$10 and must be paid in U.S. currency. Please bring new, unmarked bills to make this transaction. This tourist card will act as your visa for up to 60 days in the country.

Citizens of other countries, please consult the Dominican embassy or consulate in your home country for entrance requirements.

STAYING HEALTHY

Maranatha requires that every volunteer have a current **tetanus** vaccine (within the last ten years). The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommend vaccines for hepatitis A and B, typhoid, and an anti-malarial medication.

There is a widespread risk of malaria for the entire island; however, it is not common in Santo Domingo. Mosquitos are prevalent throughout the island, and even though the locals say that they don't carry malaria, Maranatha recommends that you speak with a medical professional about options regarding malaria prevention. Mosquitos are also known for carrying the Caribbean disease, Chikungunya, so we recommend that you take personal precautions such as wearing long pants and using insect repellent to avoid being bitten.

Another potential risk is cholera, a bacterial disease that is spread primarily through the ingestion of contaminated food and water. All food prepared by the Maranatha group will be prepared in a safe manner, and purified water will be provided.

Some vaccines you may already have and some you may deem unnecessary for this trip. Because Maranatha is not a medical organization, we recommend that you schedule a consultation with a travel clinic doctor to talk about the medical risks in the Dominican Republic and the ways to minimize them.

HOW TO REGISTER

To register, please complete the online registration and pay the full participation fee or an initial deposit of at least half the total participation fee. You can make this payment by credit card online, over the phone, or with a check made out to Maranatha Volunteers International and sent to the address below. If for any reason you need to cancel your participation, Maranatha will do their best to refund your deposit up until one month before travel. After that point, \$150 is non-refundable, and the remainder will depend on the reservations and project arrangements already made.

Register online at Maranatha.org or over the phone.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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