Since our last newsletter of February 2020, we have hosted two volunteer in mission teams: Bethany United Methodist Church from Madison, Wisconsin and a Solar Oven Partners UMC team from South Dakota.

Within days of saying goodbye to the South Dakota team, we entered a shelter-at-home quarantine with a curfew that continues to the present day, currently day 161. The global pandemic has affected us all in life-changing ways. For our work here, especially with solar ovens, we have had to suspend solar oven distribution, which includes all work with volunteers from the USA.

Now all the information from the survey has been gathered and organized allowing us to interpret the findings. We have been meeting weekly for the last two months to evaluate our work with solar ovens distributed to about 25 rural communities throughout the country.

In the light of the 2019 solar oven survey, we are examining our organizational structure, our relationship with the Iglesia Evangelica Dominicana, and our theological base. We are prioritizing a deeper understanding of the communities we have reached. Our discussions have been passionate, exciting, and enlightening. We feel like we are co-creators with God in this important mission.

However, having paused our work with solar oven distribution, we have had ample time to focus on an evaluation of the last five years. In the last six months of 2019, our Dominican director, Rev. Erasme, accompanied another colleague, José-Rafael to do a major survey of the individuals who have received solar ovens since 2015. José-Rafael is a sociologist and has done this type of work professionally for the government.

We are ever grateful for your visits and partnership in distributing solar ovens in the Dominican Republic. For the full story of each team, along with photos, please visit our website:

www.granerfamily.org.
Dear friends,

North Dakota, our home state, is a humble agricultural land that has quietly produced food for the world in abundance. Our state is especially suited for growing hard red spring wheat which is high in protein and used to make bread. North Dakota has been called the breadbasket of the world. Has that made us famous and put us in the upper ranks of the other states? No. Our years of experience living outside of North Dakota have made it clear that our state is considered by most to be inferior. We have no big cities, no professional sports teams, no mountains, no trees, no famous attractions, and no people, well not very many. We are famous for our long and bitterly cold winters. Not a big asset.

North Dakota, in the opinion of outsiders, is a kind of windswept tundra of little importance, not a good place to live nor visit, more suited for buffalo than people. It is understandable that a good many of us North Dakotans have internalized our humble condition and consider ourselves to be inferior to others from the ‘important’ states. We have gotten the message.

When others dismiss us as inferior people they are likely to show little interest in getting to know us. (They will however pay attention to us when there is money to be made from our natural resources. But that is another story.) But for the most part those who consider themselves superior to us will find us of little value to them, not worth the effort to build a relationship.

So then, what is lost if we and our ‘superiors’ accept this false dichotomy and support this unjust manmade hierarchy? In Biblical language what is lost is the pearl of great price. What is lost is the truth of who we are. The world seeks to keep us in our place. God seeks to liberate us, that we may freely share our unique gifts with which we were born.

We are the salt of the earth
We are the prairie
We are the wind
We are the blizzard
We are people of the soil
We are the image and likeness of the God of the Great Plains
We are bread
We are good neighbors
We can see clearly for miles and miles
We are people of the four directions
We are wildlife
We are laughter
We are the North Star.

Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.