

WITNESS

WINTER 2021
VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1

The latest news and updates from Reformed Mission Services



Summer Training in Missions

One may ask, "Is the Lord calling me to the field of Mission?" "If so, how can I know for sure?" "Is there a way that I can experience the foreign mission field first-hand?" "Is there some way I can learn more about how missionaries work and live?" "How can I have a better understanding of the mission field?"

The Summer Training in Mission (STM) program answers these and other questions you may have. The seven-week program trains young men and women in cultural awareness, language training, Bible teaching, and discipleship in a classroom setting. The education received will come from seasoned missionaries, pastors, and other key instructors. Once completed, participants will put their newly acquired learning into practice in the field. Two by two, they will travel to their Field Training Assignments (FTA), where they will work side by side with Missionaries and Pastors.

Those who complete the program will have a greater understanding of their part in fulfilling the Great Commission of 'making disciples' both at home and abroad! While we do not have specific dates for this coming summer at this time, RMS is working on them and the precise details of this program. We will be posting this information soon in your churches and on our website rms.org. If you are interested or have questions about this program, feel free to contact Rob at rob@rms.org.

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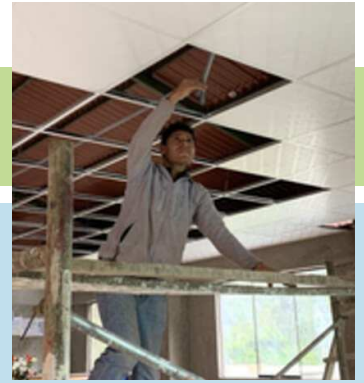
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From the
Chairman's
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2020 Projects in Review

LARES: Finishing touches to the church building in Lares were completed when RMS installed a suspended ceiling and floor tiles.



HUACAHUASI: Elders from this village asked for help with the construction of their church building. RMS and our Canadian Partner, URMA, agreed to assist them in raising funds for the first phase of this project, \$12,000.00 (USD)



We are pleased to report that as of January 9, 2021, the first phase is complete. 130 men, women, and children from Cusco and the surrounding villages assembled to pour the concrete floor of the sanctuary. This allows the lower floor to be used temporarily for services (until the sanctuary is completed), Sunday School classes, fellowship, and a kitchen for cooking. RMS plans to continue to raise funds for the next phases of this project, which includes the roof of the sanctuary and the final finishes. The estimated funds needed for these phases are approx. \$16,000.00 (USD).

CUSCO: The San Antonio church building is getting some long-awaited improvements to its facility. The congregation has already been meeting there for years, however, the floors and fixtures were never completed, nor were the classrooms on the second floor. The classrooms need flooring, doors, and windows. These finishes were delayed, due in part for their love of the brothers and sisters in Lares and HuacaHuasi. Their desire was for these brethren to have their own church buildings to worship God and so put their own needs on hold. With these projects now completed or underway, the time has come for them to finish their building.

COSTA RICA: Since our trip here in February, a lot has changed at the Tepeyac School. They were, essentially, shut down in March and are still suffering the effects of the pandemic even now. The shutdown has caused an economic strain and a financial burden for parents to send their children to school. RMS will continue to assist these families through work teams and promoting their needs to our member churches. If you would like to help financially, contact Al Rumph at albert.rumph@gmail.com for more information.



HAITI: We sent a team here in March. At this time, money was raised and a new generator was purchased because their old generator was unable to be repaired. This new generator was installed in May. The HAFF compound and school are now able to run at full capacity. RMS planned to return to Haiti in November; unfortunately, the trip needed to be canceled. HAFF and the Institute continued their work in the Central Plateau as resources allowed. With a lack of funds due to the pandemic, meals were cut back, and other vital ministry activities were put on hold. RMS is beginning to make plans to return in late October/early November of this year.

If you are interested in becoming an RMS Board Member, please contact Rob Brinks at 616.466.8214 or rob@rms.org





TASC

TEENS ACTIVELY SERVING CHRIST

**A ONE WEEK CHRISTIAN SERVICE TRIP FOR
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS & COLLEGE FRESHMEN - AGES 14-19**

SUMMER 2021 TASC SITES

June 12 - 19 Mexico

Bethany United Reformed Church

June 19 - 26 Menno, SD

Zion Reformed Church

July 24 - 31 Kalamazoo, MI

Covenant United Reformed Church

July 31- August 7 Dutton, MI

Dutton United Reformed Church

July 31- August 7 Pompton Plains, NJ

Pompton Plains Reformed Bible Church

July 31- August 7 Chino, CA

First United Reformed Church

Group Registration opens February 1

Individual Registration opens March 1

Student participation requires one adult sponsor for every five students.

REGISTER AT [RMS.ORG](https://rms.org)

TASC Contact: Rob Brinks 616.466.8214 rob@rms.org



"Short term mission programs were an important part of the preparation of Sandy and myself for international missions. We attended two summers with Summer Training Session offered by Reformed Bible College (now Kuyper College). We also went on an internship for 10 weeks in Mexico City while I was at Calvin Theological Seminary. During our twelve missionary years in the Dominican Republic, we hosted more than 35 groups, including missionary interns. Short-term trips are important for purposes of exposure to different cultures, to learn to respect and cooperate with national churches and their leaders and members, to seek to avoid missionary errors, learn to study mission history, and to sharpen one's language skills. I still have contact and work with national pastors (Samuel May in Mexico), fellow missionaries (i.e. Bill and Aletha Green, Eric and Carla Pennings), and churches (National Presbyterian Church in Mexico) that I was introduced to more than 40 years ago during my short term mission trips to Mexico. By all means, go on as many short-term mission trips as possible and learn to be a global Christian. To be Reformed means to be obedient to the Great Commission in a gospel-centered and biblical way. It also means to be informed about the place where God is calling you to serve or support."

Neal and Sandy Hegeman - MInTS



The year was 1977. My girlfriend, Aletha, and I were in our sophomore year of college. Aletha would become my wife 3 years later. We both signed up for the Summer Training Session (STS) under the direction of Dick and Thea Van Halsema. A great experience in every way - adventure, cross-cultural living, mission experience, and more. Aletha was musically prepared, so she served at a music camp in Mexico. I must have looked like I needed a bit more rigor, and was sent three days by bus all the way to the remote countryside of Nicaragua. We both ended up in missions (we've been married for 41 years!), and we've often looked back to the STS experience as a major step in God's call. But we were not alone. Many of those who ended up on the mission field had benefited from STS, and those who didn't serve directly in missions certainly received a great experience. Times have changed and the world has moved on. We can't resurrect Dick and Thea VanHalsema. The vision they had, however, for on-field training of possible candidates for the mission field was an excellent one, and certainly worthy of imitation. Our service in Costa Rica has proven that the URC has many gifted and committed people, especially young people, who are not afraid to travel and welcome service in other cultures. We have been blessed in the Christian school ministry, our printing ministry, as well as in the diaconal ministry of "Educación Plus" by many who have come to serve for a time. Some have stayed for several years, and some have stayed permanently! My wife and I strongly support a



cross-cultural experience in missions and are willing to lend a hand if needed. The need is urgent. Western countries are rejecting our Christian foundations and our societies are sinking into disastrous chaos. Christ's call to disciple the nations is as crucial today as it ever has been. We believe God is raising up a generation of missionaries from our churches; we must not hold them back!

Rev. Bill & Aletha Green - Costa Rica



May 18, 1955
October 21, 2020

BOARD MEMBER UPDATE

It is with sadness that we mourn the passing of our board member Herb Thalen. During his life, Herb spent his days in property management, real estate, and painting. His true joy, however, was found in his faith and his family. His weekends were often spent teaching his sons how to repair things around the house and on vehicles. Herb was always humming, whistling, or singing one of his favorite hymns. Herb's love for the Lord was evident in his life, and he instilled that same love into his children and grandchildren.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."
Psalm 19:14

MIDLAND UPDATE

The Moots family was granted an occupancy permit and began to move in some of their earthy belongings, some salvaged, some donated, and some purchased. After seven months of being displaced, Saturday, December 12 was move-in day!



The rain and blustery conditions awaiting them may have dampened the body, but it did not dampen the Christ Covenant OPC volunteers' enthusiasm! There were many people lending a hand and rejoicing on this day that Glenn, Michelle, and Rebekah were finally able to return home.

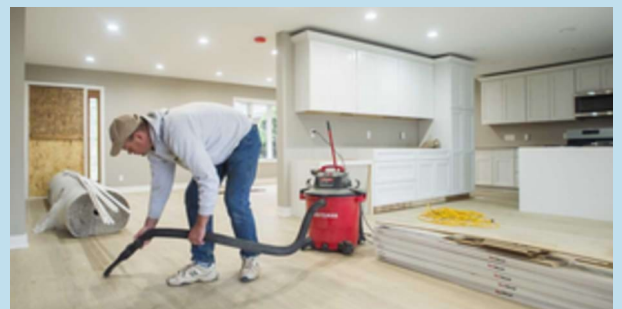


Glenn shares with us, "We are so grateful to be at this point and to persevere with you to the end. We are at this milestone because of you and others who take to heart what the Lord tells us in 1 John 3:17, 'But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?'

You hearkened to the message of vocation in Romans 12, 'For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.' Thank you for sharing your gifts with us."

While their homecoming is bittersweet because many sentimental items and work-related needs are gone – Glenn and Michelle want everyone to know how grateful they are to all the volunteers and the financial gifts that made their homecoming possible. And they are thankful that in God's providence they even had a home to return to. Many will never be able to go home again after that tragic day.

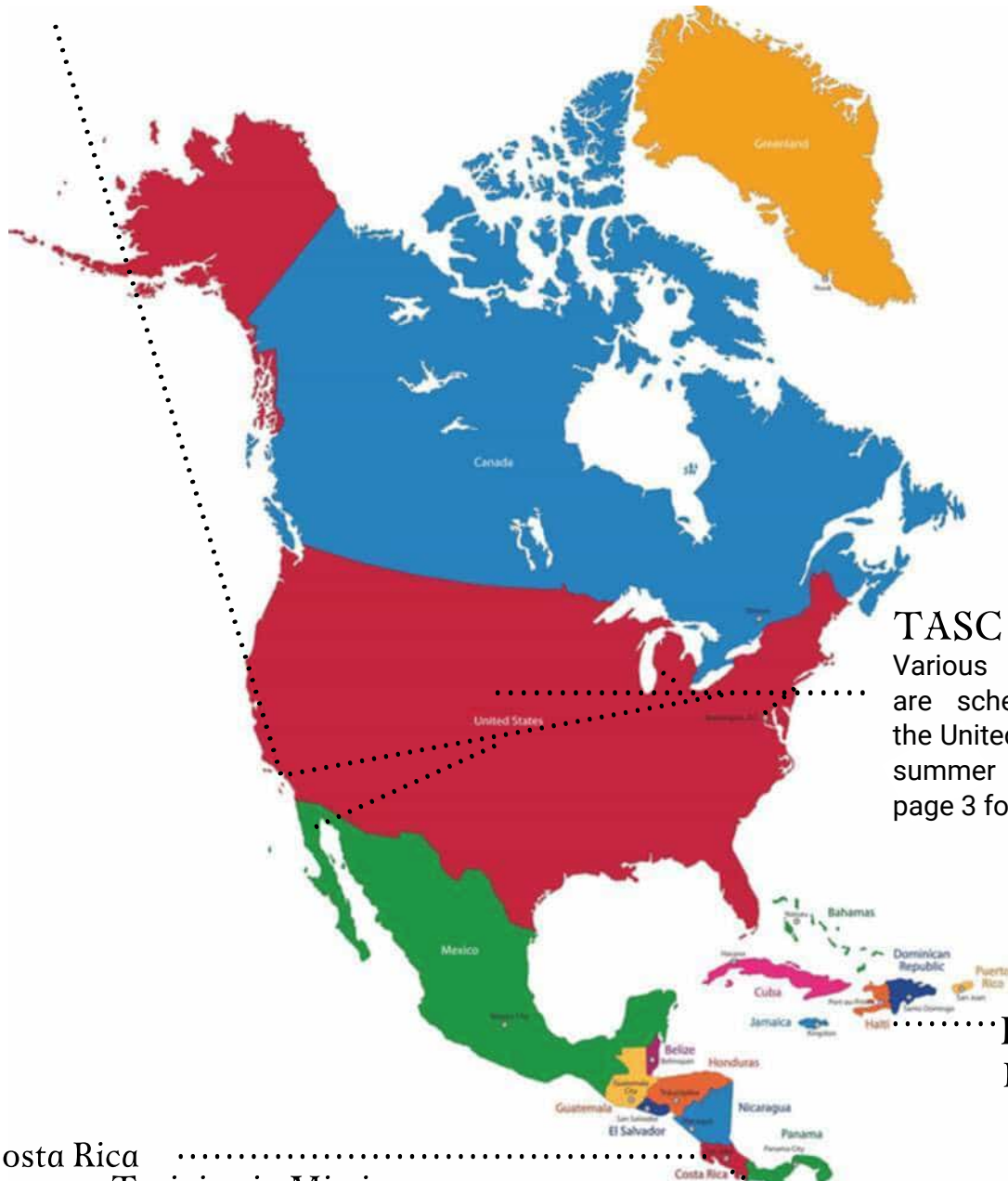
We here at RMS are thankful to have been a part of this rebuilding effort and seeing the outpouring of love, time, and talents given to these brothers and sisters of the congregation of Christ Covenant OPC in Midland, MI. Because of this, the Moots and their neighbors across the lake, the Kennedys, were able to return to their homes.



"What a blessed partnership!" David Nakhla, OPC Disaster Response

UPCOMING TRIPS

S.E.E.D.
California June 5-19, 2021



TASC Events

Various TASC events are scheduled around the United States for the summer of 2021. See page 3 for more details.

Haiti
Fall 2021

Costa Rica Summer Training in Missions

A 7-week cross-cultural orientation and training program set to begin in June 2021.

Costa Rica
March 2-9, 2021
Interested in joining us?
Contact Rob at rob@rms.org.

"...and you will be my witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
Acts 1:8b

Greetings,

The year of our Lord 2020 has lurched to its close. Descriptors can be elusive that adequately define this most difficult of years. Yet, as with all other years, whether they may seem to us good, bad, or indifferent, 2020 has been another year when our Lord has ruled in sovereign power and through his divine providence. 2020 presented RMS, as it has to all of you, with significant challenges, blessings, and accomplishments. For this, we are grateful to the God of all grace and mercy.

In one of the last short term mission trips that RMS was able to make before foreign travel was curtailed, a group of adults from Iowa, California, Vermont and Michigan traveled to San Jose, Costa Rica. They completed several projects at the elementary and high school campuses of C.E.C.R.E. (Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado – Christian Reformed Education Center) in that city. Their work included painting, roofing, the rehangings of several pairs of heavy iron sliding glass doors, pouring concrete, and plumbing. This group was able to complete several projects in their entirety and other parts of their work laid the foundation for others. A team from one of RMS's member churches went to Costa Rica immediately afterward, completed the painting of the elementary school, and did several large welding projects at the high school.

RMS took delivery in June of our 6-stall shower trailer that was built to order for us by Ameri-Can Engineering in Argos, Indiana. Upon delivery, the trailer was transported from the construction facility directly to Midland, Michigan, where it was placed into service for crews working there in flood clean-up activities. The shower trailer joins two fully stocked tool trailers in RMS's vehicle inventory. It will make a significant contribution to the capacity and variety of disaster relief resources that RMS will be able to mobilize going forward.

As the reach and scope of the COVID-19 virus developed through the spring and summer, it became necessary to cancel all TASC and other short term mission trips that had been planned for 2020. These activities were canceled with great sorrow and in full recognition of the significant effort that had gone into planning and preparing for them.

The efforts made towards carrying out our 2020 program of TASCs and mission trips, however, have not been wasted. Lord willing RMS will conduct six TASCs, two SEED events, and a program called Summer Training in Missions (STM) in 2021. The latter will be offered in conjunction with the United Reformed Church Missions Committee. (An article fully describing that event appears elsewhere in this month's Witness.)



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We conducted our annual face-to-face Board of Directors meeting in October. This year the face-to-face meeting was held at our corporate offices in Jenison, Michigan. About half of the Board was able to attend in person and the remainder participated by Zoom. We were richly blessed, despite the numerous setbacks occasioned by the COVID-19 virus, to have made our 2019-20 budget almost to the dollar. At the 2020 face-to-face meeting, the Board set the budget for 2020-21, elected several new board members, and moved forward on the process of conducting a job search for a replacement Programs Coordinator.

We were pleased and grateful also to welcome as member churches seven new Canadian churches through the auspices of URMA, our Canadian-American joint venture as well as several new member churches in the United States.

RMS thanks you for your prayers and financial support throughout this rough year now coming to a close. We will continue in 2021 in faith and out of gratitude to our risen Savior Jesus Christ to offer the best we are able in missionary services, youth, and adult trips, and work projects, as well as disaster relief as needed.

Sincerely,



Douglas L. Field
Chairman of the Board of Directors

RMS now accepts VENMO donations!

What is Venmo?

Venmo lets you send money to anyone who has a Venmo account. The app makes it easy to send money directly from your bank account or credit/debit card to RMS.



Why use Venmo?

By donating money to RMS directly from your bank account, no or limited transaction fees are charged to the organization for receiving the funds. This is different from other avenues of electronic funds transfer such as PayPal, Stripe, etc. So, your total donation goes directly to RMS!

Where do I send my donation?

RMS can be found in the Venmo app by searching for Reformed Mission Services. Look for the RMS logo in the corner.



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