

# WITNESS

A Publication of Reformed Mission Services

Vol. 2 Iss. 1

In January, Dr. Neal Hegeman and Rev. Calvin Tuininga traveled to Haiti with Director Rob Brinks. One of the goals of this trip was to explore the possibility of future RMS service trips to this area.



Due to the recent hurricane, several church buildings in Jeremie had suffered significant damage. The group was scheduled to visit these churches on Saturday afternoon, but the Lord had other plans!

On Thursday afternoon, a newly elected senator of the Haitian government, Guy Phillippe, was arrested and extradited to the US on drug trafficking charges. His supporters began protesting in the city of Jeremie, attacking police stations, hotels, and harassing foreigners. On Saturday morning there were rumors that they were going to take over the local airport. The U.N. issued an evacuation of all non-Haitians from Jeremie and the surrounding regions as the protestors were deemed a viable threat.

The group's missionary contact, Dony St. Germaine, made some phone calls to his contacts in Port Au Prince (PAP) and arranged for them to evacuate to PAP. They arrived safely at the hotel shortly after dark and began to send messages to Karen Bultje, a missionary in PAP. She agreed to pick the group up for worship the next morning in a small mountain village church.

They greatly enjoyed a time of worship (in Creole) with the brothers and sisters of the Legliz Kreyen Reforme' (Christian Reformed Church) in Bongar. The congregation met for worship in a large tent-like structure (see photo right). Despite their small numbers, the worshippers nearly shook the walls of the structure with their heartfelt praise, singing at the top of their lungs, as the pastor led them in the liturgical dialogue.



Worshipping in that church "building" made the group wonder if other structures like that could be set up for the people in the Jeremie region. By using a cost-effective structure like the one in Bongar, the people of Jeremie would have a place to worship out of the weather while they constructed a more permanent building.

That afternoon, Karen gave the group a tour of the city and the hospital. Many of the children were malnourished, and one little girl had infectious sores on her head and bottom. Karen hosts medical clinics to try and help out where she can, but her main concern is the Christian school in PAP which has 136 students from grades 1-9.

God providentially worked on this trip, even through the political unrest of a country, to bring the group to a better understanding of the ways that RMS can assist brothers and sisters in Christ in Haiti. Many are trying to make a difference in peoples' lives there both physically and spiritually, but there is still a great need. It is the prayer of RMS that God would give us the wisdom and ability to assist those who are doing this work in this country, and that through their work and ours, God would continue to spread the gospel.

*"...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

*Acts 1:8b*

# PERU

## A Brief History

2010

Dr. Neal Hegeman invited RMS to go to Cusco, Peru to assist the Riveras, a family highly involved in Miami International Seminary (MINTS), by building a home for them as a flash flood and subsequent mudslide that occurred in January of that year had damaged their home to the point where it was "condemned" by the government officials. RMS sent a team that summer, and they completed the first floor of the home.

2011

RMS sent a second team to Cusco to add a second floor the Rivera home. This floor would be used as a MINTS study center. While they were there, the team discussed other work opportunities in the area with Dr. Hegeman. The church next door to the Rivera home had also suffered damage in the flash flood the year before and needed to be rebuilt, so RMS planned to send another team to Cusco in 2012 to begin work on the new church building.

2012

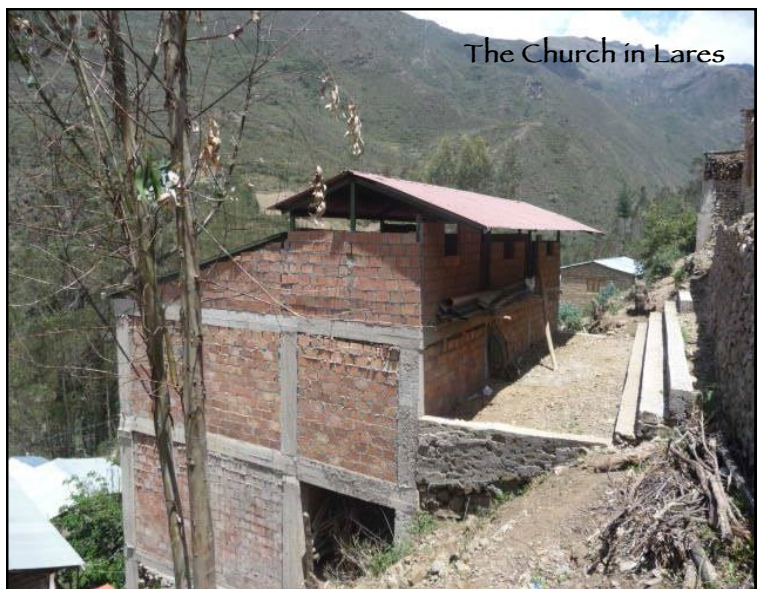
An RMS team arrived in November to lay the foundation for the church. They had to excavate trenches that were nine feet deep. Once that was finished, they assisted the local people in pouring the concrete columns for the structure.

2013

In the fall, the RMS team travelled once again to work on the second floor of the church building. Members of the congregation had completed the first floor and poured the floor for the next story. The team would focus on pouring the columns on the second floor to prepare for pouring the third floor. The church building would be five stories high when it was complete. The RMS team also visited a church plant in Lares, Peru which consisted of about forty members and had outgrown the home in which they had been meeting. The team discussed the feasibility of constructing a church building in their remote village.

2015

In May, RMS sent a team to Lares to lay block for the walls of the building for the church plant. When they arrived, they found that the piece of land the congregation had secured for the church building would need a retaining wall/footing to be constructed before any walls could be built. The team ended up tying re-bar cages, mixing concrete, and digging footings for the columns/retaining wall. RMS sent a second team in November to begin laying block and pouring the floor for the sanctuary. They also began forming and pouring the columns for the next story of the structure.



# 2016

The church in Cusco has been taking out small loans for construction materials. They work together as a congregation to complete small projects and pay off the loans before doing more work. In November, Steve Poll, Dr. Hegeman, and Rob Brinks arrived in Peru for a final construction trip. Steve and Rob worked with members of the congregation, plastering the walls of the second floor of the church located in the San Antonio district of Cusco to give the congregation a boost in completing the classrooms for the children.



## A Word from the Director

"Although we have completed much of the work that we set out to do in Cusco, I feel that RMS should not necessarily abandon the relationships that we have built there. We should instead refocus our efforts and increase our Word-based ministry in the area. We would do this by promoting and working with MINTS, the Rivera family, the local churches (San Antonio and Lares), and the other missionaries there. As RMS's work has done so far, our continued presence will continue building them up and assisting them to bring the gospel to all areas. I pray that the relationship that began in 2010 will continue for many years to come."

- Rob



## An Interview with Carla Silvia Valcarcel Rivera

**Q:** What impact did RMS have on local communities and congregations in Cusco and Lares?

**A:** The work carried out by the different RMS teams in Cusco and Lares was very impressive. The brothers of the RMS building teams are a great example of working and obedience to the Word of God. They not only have faith in God but also work in building, praying, gathering, being empathetic and merciful.

The first team came to help us with the construction of our house. We could not believe that people from such a distant country came to help us without knowing us. They later helped us with the construction of the church in San Antonio and in Lares as well. All this time has been very special for us, because it allowed us to experience the love and mercy of God for us in our own flesh; otherwise this work would not have been possible.

The impact on the national believers was the strengthening of our faith and motivation to serve others. Since we can not give back or do something for our brothers who helped us, we help other brothers. For neighbors and bystanders, it seemed strange to see that nationals and foreigners work together and with good spirit. Many came to see and pry to find out what was happening which was an opportunity to share our faith. Other churches, were surprised by the work done and wish if possible to experience the construction of their churches.



# TASC

TEENS ACTIVELY SERVING CHRIST

**A ONE WEEK CHRISTIAN SERVICE TRIP FOR  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS & COLLEGE FRESHMAN**

## **SUMMER 2017 TASC SITES**

**Burlington WA - June 17-24**

*Burlington United Reformed Church*

**Pantego, NC June 24 - July 1**

*Covenant United Reformed Church*

**Wyoming, MI June 24 - July 1**

*Bethany United Reformed Church*

**Dutton, MI July 8 - 15**

*Dutton United Reformed Church*

**New Hampton, NY July 29 - August 5**

*Hudson Valley United Reformed Church*

If you are interested in hosting a TASC in 2018, please contact us!

### Contact Information

RMS Office  
P.O. BOX 582  
Hudsonville, MI 49426-0582

Director Rob Brinks: [rob@rms.org](mailto:rob@rms.org)

Visit our website at [rms.org](http://rms.org).

