

# WITNESS

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## Mexico

By: Dave De Zwaan

On February 9, 2019, Elijah Stuive and I flew to San Diego and drove to Uruapan Baja, Mexico. We arrived around 5:00 pm and the director of the orphanage took us out for tacos at a little restaurant nearby.

On Sunday, we lived streamed the Cornerstone church service. We also toured the orphanage property and the director's new house and new building that is a 4-stall shop for welding, wood-working, and auto mechanics. A Baja racing team also has a stall for their race cars. The upper level will be used for music and art classes. We also took a drive around the area.

Our task for the week, since we were such a small group, was to prep three different job sites. A large group of about forty from Trinity URC Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada would come the week to work on the projects. We picked up and delivered lumber, siding, and roofing material to a family for a 13'x15' bedroom addition that would nearly double the size of their current house. We went to Home Depot and purchased and delivered drywall, cabinets, and lumber to a church where they would finish off the upstairs two-bedroom apartment. We did build a railing on the upper porch area of the church. The other project was a new house for a young couple whose kids were currently staying at the orphanage with hopes the family would be reunited upon the completion of the house. We also built a 4'x4'x8' stand on the side of a house for a water tank. This project was for Sonya, a girl who grew up at the orphanage and now is married and has

a two-year-old boy. They currently get their water from a 55-gallon drum in the front yard. This platform will allow them to get a tank that will be filled by the water truck and then gravity fed into the house. Such a small project for us, but a huge convenience for them.

On Wednesday evening, we heard that all the schools were canceled for Thursday because of rain that was coming. It did rain all night, and Thursday morning the decision was made by the director that we should leave and go back to the states before the roads flooded and became impassable. So with that, I called my brother who lives in Ripon, CA, and he said he was going to Yosemite on Friday, and we could tag along. So we drove to Ripon on Thursday and went to Yosemite on Friday. By Saturday noon, we arrived back in San Diego and flew home.

The following Saturday, I received a text from the Lethbridge group with pictures of all the completed projects. We would like to thank the congregation for all your prayers and RMS (and Rob Brinks) for organizing and facilitating this trip. To God be the Glory.

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# A Questionnaire with Darrell Graham, Founder of Mission Network International

## **1. How many years have you worked with RMS teams in Mexico?**

MNI has worked with RMS for 8 years.

## **2. What impact has RMS had on local communities and/or congregations in Ejido-Uruapan?**

RMS teams have helped strengthen our local community by helping in many projects such as elementary and middle school construction along with community playground upgrades as well as projects at a local church here in Uruapan. VBS programs that RMS teams have held have without a doubt changed lives for eternity. RMS teams have had a huge part in the construction of several buildings here on site at Mt. of Olives Children's Village. We can truthfully say that RMS teams have helped change the landscape as well as lives in a big way here in Uruapan.

## **3. How has RMS contributed to the spread of the gospel in Mexico?**

Teams from RMS have been spreading out from our mission center here to strengthen more than just our local area. Using our mission lodge facility, RMS teams have been impacting churches and communities from Ensenada south to San Quintin.

## **4. Has the language barrier made it difficult to work with the staff at Mount of Olives?**

We have not had a language barrier problem here at Mt. of Olives, as some of our staff speak some English and some on RMS teams speak some Spanish.

## **5. How would you describe your experience working with RMS versus other organizations?**

RMS teams are some of the hardest working teams we host. I need to make sure we have a lot of work ready as each team burns through their given projects. They not only work hard, but they live their faith. Often times in the mission field, it's not what you say, it's how you live your life that is the best sermon of all. RMS teams are wonderful examples of truly living the gospel each day.

## **6. How can RMS help your ministry in the future? How can RMS continue to help us in the future?**

To continue doing what they have been doing with their hard work and faithful witness.

## **7. Is there any advice you would give to people who are considering cross-cultural service/ministry?**

To those who are considering a mission trip in the future I would say hold on to your hat, enjoy the ride and all the blessings that the Lord will pour out upon you. A mission trip WILL change your life! God may use this trip for you to become a part time or full time missionary. Don't wait any longer if HE is calling you.

# Dominican Republic

By: Bethany Dorin

This being my first mission trip, I was maybe a little apprehensive of the unknown but definitely more excited than anything else. We were going to help build a much-needed home for a pastor and would be doing it with other Christians from around the United States. That, in and of itself, was enough to make me excited, but the blessings and experiences that came from this trip to the Dominican Republic proved to be multi-faceted. We were not only able to enjoy the music, the food, and just the overall culture of this country, but we were also able to serve with, minister to, worship alongside, and show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ in a different part of the world.

Although I enjoyed every single aspect of this trip, my top three favorites were the worship on Sunday, working on the minister's home each day, and spending time with Pastor Pierre's (our host) family.



Team Photo

The worship on Sunday was very different from how I normally worship back in the States. The biggest difference that stood out was how openly joyful they were. It was neat to see their expressions of gladness as they worshiped the Lord, even down to how they sang each hymn. They truly made a joyful noise to the Lord, and it was marvelous! At the end of the service, everyone hugs or shakes hands and enjoys fellowship. There is just so much Christian love exhibited in

their churches and culture.

Each day we worked most of the day building a home for a minister and his family! We built columns, cut tons of wood and rebar, hammered, and pulled countless nails, poured so much cement, and more! Little boys, young girls, and older men from the town would come and help us, sharing their knowledge and their tools to help build this home! Everyone down there is so giving. They love to share, even when they might have very little themselves. They are extremely hospitable in the truest sense of the word.



Ted Van Essendelft and Troy Slager working on the pastor's house

Pastor Pierre's family was sweet, inviting, and such a blessing. Sometimes in the evenings, they would join us, and we would visit or play games and just spend time with them. Even with a slight language barrier, it was some of the best times! Christians that are strangers are just family you haven't met yet, and our hosts were no exception.

I took away from this trip an acute sense of God's blessings, a desire to be even more open with my love for those around me, an increased view of God's work of salvation, a desire to serve even more in my own state, and a love for the Dominican Republic . . . a beautiful country full of many dear people who are making a difference for the Kingdom of God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.



Owen Lucero drawing and spending time with boys from the town

# Naples

By: Reese Alsum

This spring break, I was given the privilege to go on a mission trip through RMS with five other students from Zion. We traveled down to Naples, FL, where we visited Rev. Hausler's congregation at Christ the King OPC. While we were there, we were blessed to serve the community in a variety of ways. We spent a few days washing windows for many of the residents in Rev. Hausler's neighborhood. Washing Windows doesn't sound like much, but in a community where few know the Lord, it's a great way to witness and tell people about Christ. We also had the opportunity to be a blessing to the staff and residents at "Justin's Place," a safe house for men who have struggled with drug addiction, by planting trees around the grounds. Justin's place was one of the coolest places I have ever seen, and it was amazing to see so many Christian men in one place.



Reese Alsum planting a tree at Justin's Place



Team Photo

We also served at a thrift store called St. Matthews place, but it's far more than just a thrift store. St. Matthew's house is almost entirely run by people who completed the Justin's place or Jill's place (the Justin's place program for women) programs. We were also given some free time as well, in which we were able to spend some time at the beach, playing games, going to stores, or just staying up until 3 am just talking. It was an incredible experience being able to serve the community, as well as to worship with other believers in a new place. I am very thankful that I was given the opportunity to serve on this mission trip, and I would love to do it again someday.

# Cape Coral

By: Barb De Jong

On March 30 5 URC members from across the country headed to Cape Coral to serve the Lord at the Trinity Reformed Church. Luke Visser from WA, Marge Oolman, Barb & Caleb DeJong from Iowa and Rob Brinks from Michigan made up the team. We were joined by some of Trinity's members.

We worshipped with the congregation on Sunday and were treated to a fellowship dinner afterward. Ron & Lorrie Lotterman hosted the men, and Bonnie Brittain hosted the ladies. They were great hosts and treated us to many special experiences and great food while we were down there. At noon each work day, a few of the ladies of the church fed us. After our noon meal, we had a Bible study using a book called "Reaching the Lost: Evangelism."



Marge Oolman, Caleb DeJong, and Barb DeJong painting

While we were there, we cleaned windows and prepared for painting several rooms in their ministry center/parsonage (which included 4 of us spending half a day trying to get border off a wall!). Then we painted every room but 2; half of them got second coats. Originally the team was going to lay tile, but they received enough donations that they could hire it done so we worked around those men for the first 3 days.

We were gratified to learn that a URC minister on sabbatical was going to use the house already the night we finished.

The men cleaned & repaired gutters, repaired in the bathroom, replaced doorstops, took down some kitchen cabinets, cleaned out the garage, killed wasps. At the church, the men made a dutch door for the nursery, painted some exterior doors & posts, did some plumbing repairs & installed a new mailbox.



Team Photo

On Wednesday night, we rode up to Naples to the OPC to participate in their mid-week Bible study. We joined a group of high school students from the Zion Christian School in western Michigan that were serving that church for that week. We studied a booklet written by their minister there, Rev. Eric Hausler, called "Making Your Home a Place of Ministry."

The Trinity congregation expressed much gratitude for the work done there and the chance to connect with other URC members. (They are about 850 miles from the next closest URC and feel somewhat isolated). We, as team members felt blessed to serve them and to make new friendships. In fact, we all talked about going again.

We truly felt God's blessing on our work and fellowship and encourage others to prayerfully consider joining an RMS team in the future.

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# Puerto Rico

David Karkista

Reflecting on the trip to Puerto Rico, it is hard to summarize the experience in only a few sentences. That said, I think the most moving part of it was something I learned from listening to and observing the people we were seeing. From

the moment we arrived at our hosts' home, I was struck by the real, natural hospitality that they practiced. As we interacted with other people from the local OPC church, I heard this warm, welcoming attitude to be a common theme. Truly, the love of

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**"Truly, the love of Christ that they practiced made the words they spoke about Him all the more meaningful."**

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Christ that they practiced made the words they spoke about Him all the more meaningful. This convicted and inspired me to be more intentional about loving others

through the simple act of hospitality. I could think of countless other things I learned during our time in Puerto Rico. Mostly, I am so thankful for the opportunity to build lasting memories while serving and learning from the people there.



Nico, Isabella, David Karkista & Isabella Scott play in a park and play with Pastor Lopez's children.

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## **UPCOMING TRIPS**

**HAITI** DATES TO BE DETERMINED

**LARES, PERU** DECEMBER 3-11, 2019

**SABANA GRANDE DE BOYA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** JANUARY 7-15, 2020

VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CONTACT US IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GOING ON ANY OF THESE TRIPS

# Clay Shoot Fundraiser

RMS held its first annual Sporting Clays Fundraiser on June 8, 2019! We had a great turnout and a beautiful warm sunny morning. All of our teams rotated through the twelve shooting stations, enjoyed a meal together, and bid on silent auction items. Prizes were given to the best male shooter and female shooter as well as prizes for those who needed a little more practice! Thank you to everyone that either sponsored this event or attended it! Also, a big thank you to all our volunteers for helping make this event a success!!! What a blessing! Look for information about next year's Sporting Clays event after the new year!

**We hope to see you next year!**



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