

U.S. MAPS

A few months ago, a young pastor in Texas wrote to us, saying, "We were so discouraged, but when we had reached the end of our strength, God showed up!" Desperately needing a new facility, the problem was how to build a new building with limited funds and limited income. That is when U.S. MAPS RV Volunteers came into the picture. The plans were drawn and the work began. From the ground up, these dedicated volunteers invested their time, energy, skills, and resources into providing this community with a place to worship.

With more than eighty construction projects underway, U.S. MAPS continues to serve the Assemblies of God in a unique and positive way. Scores of opportunities exist for people from all walks of life to utilize the skills, talents and abilities God has given them to bless and build the kingdom of God. Volunteers work at local churches, Teen Challenge centers, district camp facilities, Assemblies of God children's homes, Assemblies of God colleges and universities, and various other ministries. Without the help of volunteers, many of these projects would not be possible.

A small Assemblies of God church in Allendale, South Carolina, was in a terrible state of disrepair. Water would run in the building at floor level, the tin roof leaked profusely, and the mold and rotted wood rendered it unhealthy. In spite of these things, Pastor Willie Elmore was determined to reach out to those in need. It was apparent that Allendale would need a bigger and better facility.

Pastor Elmore said from the beginning he did not want to make mortgage payments so he would have funds to minister to the needs of his community. Thanks to the generosity of the General Council, U.S. MAPS and RV-ers, the South Carolina district, churches, and individuals from around the nation, all debts are paid. Today, the church is finished and is thriving.

These are not isolated stories. U.S. MAPS and the RV Volunteers are routinely part of successes just like those I have described. In the last two years over 220,000 hours of volunteer labor have been documented and more than 100 projects have been brought to completion. The monetary savings to our fellowship is in the millions of dollars.

U.S. MAPS has also provided help in times of crisis. Working in conjunction with the Assemblies of God Disaster Relief Office, U.S. MAPS has responded to churches that have been damaged or destroyed by natural disasters.

In September 2008, Hurricane Ike came ashore on the Texas Gulf Coast, leaving a trail of devastation and damage. In the path of that storm was the Rock Community Outreach Center in Port Arthur, Texas, where Phillip Baugh is pastor. RV Volunteers and church teams moved in and began the cleanup and restoration. A beautiful new kitchen was built and all new commercial equipment was installed. They are now reaching out to their community, providing hot meals for the homeless and hungry.

U.S. MAPS has more than 1,420 RV Volunteers. They come from a wide variety of professional and vocational backgrounds and are using their skills and talents to further the Kingdom of God. In addition, we have eight (8) couples serving as Regional U.S. Missionary Representatives and are instrumental in the coordination of projects and the recruitment of volunteers. U.S. MAPS also has 69 Missionary Associates who serve U.S. missionaries in various capacities across the nation.

An article that appeared in the Brush, Colorado News-Tribune (one of our project locations) read:

Building Churches – Changing Lives® is the goal of these giving volunteers from around the country. Retirement doesn't have to mean a rocking chair; it can also mean a ministry involving reaching out to others, traveling, using the skills you have acquired during a lifetime and becoming a family with the MAPS organization. For you and others like you, MAPS is the answer.

As vast as this ministry is, we still need more volunteers. We believe our best days are ahead of us. Building churches is what we do, changed lives is the product.