

To: **Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley**
From: **TE Nate Bonham (MTW)**
Date: **June 29, 2015**
Subject: **Out-of-Bounds Annual Report (2014-2015)**

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

It is with great joy that I send you my greetings in the name of Jesus Christ from Arequipa, Perú. This year I have had the privilege, once again, of seeing the Lord at work in this bustling Peruvian city. There is much exciting news to report.

Iglesia La Roca (The Rock Church). In January of this year, I was asked, along with my MTW colleague and friend, Nathaniel Gutierrez, to pastor a small congregation in Arequipa. In a city of over 1 million people, this tiny congregation of about 12 was the only Reformed and Presbyterian congregation. This congregation began meeting almost twelve years ago under the direction of a ruling elder from Northern Peru. After meeting with him for several months, it was clear that he should resign himself from the church for many reasons. Then, the congregation asked us to lead the church for a season until we could train and disciple a man to pastor this church.

Since January, we have seen much fruit. Over the past decade, this congregation has struggled to see an attendance of more than 10-12 each week. Over the past couple of months, our weekly attendance has averaged approximately 40-45 people. This has been amazing growth in this very tough city known as the “Second Vatican” because of its strong Roman Catholic roots. We have seen the Lord bring this growth in two ways. First, the Lord is drawing back those who have left the church in the past for various reasons. They have expressed their desire to re-connect with the church. The second way is through new converts. The Lord is changing the lives of the people here in Arequipa.

Preaching & Teaching. Although it has been a challenge in Spanish, I preach and teach on a weekly basis. Over the past 6 months, we have preached through the book of Colossians and we are currently working our way through the gospel of John. For the first time in the history of the congregation, we have started a Sunday School hour. We are currently studying the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Sacraments. I have been administering the Lord’s Supper on a monthly basis. We celebrate this sacrament on the first Sunday of each month. After a year and a half of being in Arequipa, Peru, we celebrated our first baptisms. In May, we baptized two new adult believers and one covenant child. It was such an encouragement to our team to see this fruit. That same Sunday, two young adults professed their faith in Christ and became communing members of the church.

IEPRP – The Denomination. The Reformed and Presbyterian Evangelical Church in Peru (IEPRP) has had some recent changes. First, a few months ago, a new Presbytery was formed. This Presbytery is based out of Cusco, Peru. Our mission church also became a part of this Presbytery on the day it was formed. Previously, our congregation had been drifting without any formal affiliation to the denomination. This will be a huge blessing as it will make us “Presbyterian” and it allows us to work with fellow MTW colleagues in Cusco. Another important bit of news is that the denomination recently voted to cut ties with the PCUSA. They had previously had a formal partnership with the PCUSA that seems to have been fading in the past several years, but this vote of their General Assembly will make it official. Perhaps this may open the door to a new partnership with the PCA. Please pray for that.

Laboring Out-of-Bounds. Brothers and Fathers, thank you for the privilege of laboring out of bounds with Mission to the World this past year. I also am very grateful for your prayers and financial support as a Presbytery and for those individual churches that have partnered alongside of us. The Lord is answering those prayers and using those funds to draw people to Himself in Arequipa. For this coming year, I humbly ask for your permission to continue laboring out-of-bounds as an MTW missionary. Please know that the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley will continue to be in my prayers. Thank you again for your partnership in gospel ministry.

Grace and Peace,
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