Bonham Family Update – December 2016 *See below for pictures.* 

**CHALLENGES**. It is tempting, as missionaries, to want to paint a beautiful picture of the work that we are doing. It is tempting to want to paint our story in such a way where it looks like we are always seeing progress—the church growing, daily conversions, orphans and widows being cared for, etc. The reality is that the work isn't always pretty. It is often the case of "two steps forward and one step back" (or vice versa). Real life on the field looks like the daily grind of twists and turns.

This month, we simply want to ask for your prayers. The past couple of weeks have been some of our most challenging yet. Truthfully, there has been much heartbreak and discouragement. I wish we could go into details about these things, but we simply cannot... for the protection of those involved, including children. Please lift us up before the Lord as you are able. Pray that our hearts would not be discouraged and calloused. Pray for contentment and joy. We are asking you to pray for us because that is all that we can do for many of these situations happening around us. We can no longer do anything but pray. We pray for God's justice and mercy to be done.

Even in the midst of these things, the Lord has been faithful to sustain our marriage, our family, and our team. The Lord has certainly been teaching us to live on the "daily bread" that he provides and to rest in Him. How easy it would be to try to trust in our own strength and ability? How easy it would be to doubt? But the Lord is good; always! The Lord has given us grace exactly when it was needed—through His word, through the encouragement of a friend, through an unexplainable peace in our hearts. Pray for us—not just prayers of supplication, but of thanksgiving.

**CHURCH PLANTERS**. Even in the midst of heartache, the Lord is shining light. Just a little while ago, I (Nate) was able to go to Lima and serve as an evaluator in a church planter evaluation. It was hosted by "City to City Latin America" (which is affiliated with City to City out of Redeemer Church in New York) and the Church Planting Center (CPI) out of Monterrey, Mexico. It was a blessing to get to know 10 couples who desire to go out and plant churches. There were 9 Peruvian couples and 1 Chilean couple. Pray with us that the Lord would use these couples to bring Him glory and plant churches where the gospel has not taken root.

**LEADERSHIP RETREAT**. Last month, I was also able to attend a retreat for MTW leaders in South America. It was very nostalgic for me as the meeting took place right outside of Bogotá, Colombia (where we had spent the first year or so on the field). I had not been back in almost three years, and it was a blessing to actually be able to speak Spanish. The retreat was very refreshing. We were able to meet and to pray, to talk about vision and ideas, to be encouraged and challenged. Not to mention that we squeezed in a few games of horseshoes and Tejo (If you don't know what Tejo is, you must google it. Hint: it involves explosions).

**FAMILY LIFE**. On the home front, the boys are doing really well in homeschool. Of course, it is all accomplished through the lens of Star Wars. Nikki has been amazing in her ability to have the boys ahead in homeschool, keep the house in order, and minister to many of the women and children in the church. I'm not quite sure how she does it all so I just don't ask any questions. We also had the blessings of having my (Nate's) mom and brother in town for Thanksgiving. It was a much needed breath of fresh air during a

challenging time. It was my brother's first time here, so it was a joy to introduce him to Arequipa. It was also a blessing for me because the Lord always uses those occasions to remind me of my love for this city.

LA ROCA. The Lord has been faithful to sustain us as our teammates are on Home Ministry Assignment in the United States (see their family update). That said, we are ready for them to get back at the end of January. We miss them greatly! We are also in a process of really examining the future of La Roca (our church). In January, we will have been pastoring this church for two years. Please pray that the Lord would give us discernment as we plot a vision and course. As always, pray for Peruvian leadership. We are longing to transition to a Peruvian pastor for the church.

THANK YOU. Dear friends, let me close with saying how absolutely grateful we are for your partnership in the gospel. We are continually amazed that people would sacrifice their hard-earned money to support such weak and unworthy missionaries. We trust your confidence is not in us, but rather in what the Lord is doing. Thank you so much for believing that the Lord can use us. It is even hard for us to believe that at times. If you are reading this and would like to support us financially, you can visit our website (www.crosscollaboration.org), MTW's website (www.mtw.org), call us (601-691-1001) or email us (nate@crosscollaboration.org). Thank you for your prayer, financial support, and encouragement. We want to see Jesus high and exalted in Arequipa! He is worthy of it.

Your grateful missionaries in Peru, Nate, Nikki and the three little storm troopers

PS. Please forgive us for not sending out a newsletter last month. On top of everything going on, my computer decided it had enough and quit on me—hence the less "fancy" newsletter this month.



Church Planter Evaluation – Lima, Peru



Friday Night Youth Group @ La Roca



View during the South American Leadership Retreat – Bogotá, Colombia



Just hanging out on a big Lego.



Teaching the value of hard work. Yes, that's a push cylinder mower.



Hard at work saving a galaxy far, far away.