

**Special
Announcement**

ABOUT US

Nate & Nikki Bonham are long-term missionaries serving with Mission to the World (www.mtw.org). They have been serving in Latin America since 2012 and are currently based out of Arequipa, Peru with their three sons.

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THE BONHAM LINE

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Dear friends,

We are excited to announce an upcoming transition for our family. In order to have more time to explain, we will cut to the chase. **Our family will be leaving Arequipa, Peru and relocating to Medellin, Colombia.** We are sure that raises many questions so we will try to answer a few of those... and please bear with us despite the length of this letter.

Why are you relocating to Medellin, Colombia? That's a great question. I'm glad you asked. The possibility of a relocation has been on the table for about 6 months. There are several factors that went into our final decision:

- 1. South America Responsibilities** – In December we shared that I (Nate) was named as the MTW Regional Director of South America. We have 60+ missionaries in 6 countries. This means that I will have a heavier travel schedule visiting and serving my MTW colleagues in addition to our ongoing local ministry. Arequipa is simply not a strategic place to be based from as travel is quite limited and expensive. In fact, recently two airlines suspended service in Arequipa. This has cut flight availability, and the remaining airlines have skyrocketed their prices. On top of this, all international itineraries from Arequipa are much longer because we do not have an international airport here. We have realized that it would make more sense long-term for us to be located in a more internationally-accessible city. Medellin meets these needs.
- 2. Seminary Biblico Reformado** - SBR has grown in ways we did not fathom just a year ago. In the 12 months of our existence, we have touched the lives of almost 200 students in 4 countries. We have active extensions in Peru, Venezuela, Spain, and online. SBR has become more international than we expected, and Arequipa is actually our smallest campus. Therefore, we believe a more strategic hub for the seminary would serve the Kingdom well. Medellin is a larger and more strategic city for this purpose. Furthermore, we also have the opportunity to partner with other ministries in Medellin and provide practical training and internships—something we have not been able to get off the ground in Arequipa.
- 3. Church Planting** – In a sense, our church work in Arequipa has been that of revitalization and reform rather than traditional church planting. Almost immediately, we were thrust into a small revitalization work at La Roca, which had already been a mission congregation for 11 years when we

arrived. In the years since, we have also slowly begun working with other local congregations in revitalization. The Seminary opened up these doors. Because such great relationships have been formed with local church leaders through the Seminary, we feel it would not be healthy at this point to start a church planting work that may be seen as competition or potentially “steal sheep” from these revitalizing congregations. We want to support these leaders, not pull their leaders away from their congregations. We love theological education, but we also want to be engaged in local church planting. That is where our hearts are. Medellin provides a new field for us to plant churches in an area deemed to be strategic by fellow MTW missionaries and our national partners in Colombia.

4. **Family Needs** - As many of you may know, one of our sons has various learning and developmental special needs. As he has gotten older, we have had various evaluations and assessments performed. It has become clear that his needs will require various types of therapies and medical oversight as he continues to grow. These resources are simply not available in Arequipa, but they are in Medellin. We know the mission field requires various sacrifices, but we don't want to neglect care that is accessible to our children on the field. Colombia, in general, and Medellin, specifically, not only has some of the top medical care of South America but is also making significant strides in the field of special education. This is both a great resource for our children and also an area of ministry opportunity.

These are the main reasons we have decided to make this transition, though we could fill pages explaining all of the little ways that the Lord has orchestrated this plan. After much prayer and countless hours of conversations with dear brothers and sisters, the Lord has been faithful to make this next chapter clear for us.

What is your timeline for this transition? Our tentative plan is to remain in Arequipa until the end of October 2019. At that point, we will go back to the United States for a 6-month Home Ministry Assignment (HMA), during which we will be visiting churches and supporters to update them on the ministry. It also is a time where we seek new churches and supporters to compensate for our monthly deficit as a result of growing ministry expenses. Then, **in late April of 2020, we will move to Medellin, Colombia** to continue the growing ministry of the seminary, as well as start a new ministry in a new field.

Are you going alone? No, we are blessed to have two families going with us. One family is MTW missionaries John & Lorena McCall and their children. As we have mentioned in previous newsletters, they are currently raising support to join us on the field. They will be involved in university ministry and outdoor ministry. Once they finish raising support, they will attend language school and then join us in Medellin. The other family is Rodny Chirinos and his wife, Sara. Rodny is Venezuelan and Sara is Colombian. They have been



working with us at the Seminary since its inception. They have been an invaluable part of our ministry, and we are thrilled they will be going with us. On top of this, Sara is from Medellin and will be closer to family.

What will you do in Arequipa until you leave? Our desire and conviction is to finish well in Arequipa. This means we will continue with all of our ministry commitments.

1. The classes at Seminario Bíblico Reformado continue, and we hope to have our first graduating class later in the year. (See next question for more details regarding the seminary.)
2. We have partnered with a few congregations in the Arequipa area who have sought our help and support as they reform their churches and start new ministries. We are regularly invited to preach and teach in these local congregations. One of those churches, as we have shared in our newsletters, has left the "prosperity gospel" movement and is desiring to become an evangelical and Reformed church. We are helping them adopt a confession of faith, implement church membership, and conform to a biblical model of church government.
3. We are working with a local Christian school who has confessed that they have never truly been a Christian school, and they are seeking our help to become Christian not only in name but in methodology and vision as well. We have been meeting with their directors, and we are currently leading weekly lectures and workshops with their staff and teachers to help them make this exciting change for their future.
4. We will continue hosting and teaching the women's Bible study and equipping women in how to study the Bible and lead their own Bible studies.

Needless to say, on top of this ministry involvement, we also want to end well relationally with our brothers and sisters here in Arequipa. We realize that these next few months will fly by, but they are invaluable to us as we say goodbye and leave the ministries in a healthy place.

What will happen with the Seminary when you leave? We have already begun conversations with a local church and local leaders to leave an SBR extension here in Arequipa. Although we will "take SBR with us" as

we transition to having a new "hub" campus in Colombia, we are excited to leave behind an extension of the seminary that will continue without us being physically present in Arequipa. We will be working closely with these leaders to help them transition into roles as the new directors of the Arequipa extension. This, after all, is always the goal in missions... to see local leadership carry a ministry. We will continue teaching and working with the students and leaders here in Arequipa via distance as we do





with our other extensions, and we will continue our vision to establish other extensions through the Spanish-speaking world; we will just be doing it from Medellin instead of Arequipa.

Why are you leaving Arequipa when ministry is going so well? We are very excited to see what the Lord is doing here in Arequipa--from the growth of the Seminary, to serving several local churches, to growing Bible studies, to helping a local Christian school. We believe it is best for a missionary to transition when things are going well and in a healthy place. Although it is hard to say goodbye, leaving during a time in which there is a lot of momentum and motivation among local leadership sets these ministries up for long-term success. We believe now is the best time to make that transition. We will certainly not board a plane saying that Arequipa has been fully reached with the gospel and that there is no longer room for missionary work. Rather, we are saying that this season of ministry provides a natural time of transition where we can leave these ministries in a solid place with continuing potential for growth. In other words, it is not the end of missionary work in Arequipa, but it is the end of our family's chapter of ministry in Arequipa.

Is anything else changing? Although we are starting a new ministry in a new field for MTW, we are still dependent upon the prayers and financial support from our ministry partners. Please pray for us as we make this transition. There is a lot of thought and planning that goes into an international move. Not only are we moving our family, but we are also moving Rodny & Sara and the primary SBR campus as well. Please pray for all of these logistics and for our own hearts in the process. As our ministry and its expenses continue to grow, we also continue to have a monthly donation deficit. With this deficit and the move, we are in need of regular monthly giving and one-time gifts. If you, someone you know, or your church might be interested in partnering with us, we would love to talk to you and to them.

Finally, we want to thank all of you who have come alongside of us during our almost 7 years on the foreign mission field. We would not be here without your prayers, financial support, and words of encouragement. Thank you for sending us so that we might be able to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the nations.

Your fellow servants in Christ,

Nate, Nikki and the boys

FINANCIAL GOAL UPDATE

To sustain our current international ministry and local ministry, we need to raise \$1,600 per month. Please consider making a monthly pledge towards our goal. Pledges may be made at: Give.TheBonhamLine.org.

After pledging, email us and let us know so we can update our update!

