

To: **Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley**
From: **TE Nate Bonham (MTW)**
Date: **May 26, 2021**
Subject: **Out-of-Bounds Annual Report (2020-2021)**

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

As another year rolls around, I have the privilege of sharing how the Lord is at work outside the bounds of the Presbytery of the MS Valley. In my last Annual Report, I shared that we were on Home Ministry Assignment based out of Madison, MS. You might remember that our time in the US was extended because the Colombian borders had closed due to the Covid pandemic. Unfortunately, we were only able to complete about half of the US church visits we intended because all our partnering churches went virtual. But in the Lord's provision and grace, we finally arrived in Colombia in December of 2020. We live and minister in a city called Rionegro which is rapidly growing and is basically a suburb of Medellín. Rionegro has several charismatic churches (i.e. prosperity gospel), but there isn't a Reformed, let alone Presbyterian, witness.

Planting. After arriving in Rionegro, we hit the ground running meeting neighbors and trying to make contacts throughout the city. In late March of this year, after 4 months in-country, we had several families who were interested in planting a church. We had our first core group meeting on March 27. The following week, because of a 3rd wave of Covid, Colombia instituted more quarantines. After meeting just once in person, our core group had to switch to virtual meetings. Planting a church in ideal conditions is hard enough, but trying to plant a church virtually was daunting! I'm happy to report that all the core group members stuck with it, and we were able to start meeting in person again just a few weeks ago. We meet each Saturday evening and are in the process of studying our identity as a Reformed and Presbyterian Evangelical church. We soon hope to begin an evangelistic Bible study to begin reaching into the community as we plan for our first worship service much later in the year. *Please pray for Iglesia Reformada El Redentor.*

Watering. While we are planting a church in Rionegro, I also help another Presbyterian church plant on Sundays about an hour away. This church plant is about 4 years old and is pastored by a former Reformed Baptist minister. I have had the joy to teach, preach and administer the sacraments regularly. I have also been accepted as a fraternal member of our local Presbytery. *Please pray for Iglesia Gracia y Verdad and the Presbiterio Andino.*

Growing. As ministers of the gospel, we know that we only plant and water, but it is God who brings the growth. There is certainly much gospel growth to celebrate, but there are many challenges that we should bring before the throne in prayer. Serving as MTW's Regional Director of South America, I am privileged to see both sides. Our MTW colleagues and national brothers and sisters have done an amazing job through the pandemic crisis. The Lord has brought much fruit from this. However, even with this fruit, we are witnessing a net loss of MTW missionaries year after year in the western hemisphere. Over the years I have been saddened to hear fellow elders and churches in the US voice that Latin America has already been reached, so why would we invest our missions' resources, both people and money, in those areas? This posture could only be maintained if we believe the prosperity gospel or a syncretistic Christianity is "good enough" for our Latino brothers and sisters. I understand there are trends and bandwagons in mission strategies, but we must not think that the work is complete in Latin America. *I plead that you would pray for more laborers for the harvest of Latin America and that you would partner with those laborers.*

Training. As we church plant, we also maintain the priority of training men for the ministry. I partner with a local Bible college and provide internships for their students. These students work alongside of our team as we plan, prepare, evangelize, preach, teach, and disciple. This experience is used to both equip

them and help in the process of discerning whether the Lord may be leading them to vocational ministry. *Please pray for the students of Escuela Bíblica Nueva Providencia.*

Grieving. As some of you know, my wife's sister, Lacey Madden, entered the presence of the Lord on April 20th after a four-year battle with brain cancer. Lacey spoke at several churches, women's ministries and other events testifying to the grace of God amid her battle. She leaves behind four young children and her husband, Brad. Thank you for those who have been praying for her family and for ours during these four years and for reaching out to us during this difficult time of grief and being far from our family.

Partnering. Again, we give thanks to God for the churches of the PMV that continue to partner with us: Madison Heights, Highlands, FPC Louisville, Pear Orchard, Providence, Pearl, and Trinity PCA. If your church would like to partner with us, I would love to talk to you. You can find more information and sign up for our regular newsletters at: www.TheBonhamLine.org

Laboring Out-of-Bounds. Brothers and Fathers, again I thank you for the privilege of laboring out of bounds with Mission to the World as we complete our 9th year with MTW in September. This November also marks my 10th year of ordained ministry with the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley. I would ask for your favor in allowing me to continue laboring out-of-bounds for another year. I hope this report gives you a glimpse into what the Lord is doing and might direct you as to how to pray.

Bendiciones,
TE Nate Bonham
nbonham@gmail.com
601-691-1001