

THIS IS OUR OVERLIFE

Unrest in Ukraine
ushers in a new season
of spiritual openness.



Are You Ready to GO?
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throughout this issue.



**"WE'LL TAKE
THE BABY."**



**A PATH
DIVERTED**



**SHE WORE BLUE
PAJAMAS**



**MORE THAN MEDICAL
REALITY ON THE STREET
CHRIST'S COLLEGE GRAD MAKES
A DIFFERENCE IN TAIWAN
BUSINESS AS BLESSING**

THIS IS OUR MAIDAN

The riot police, dressed in black bullet-proof vests, hard hats, and gas masks, gripped their batons and steel shields,

poised to descend on protesters at the slightest misstep. Independence Square, which the world came to know as “Maidan,” in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, brimmed with the tension of power struggle and the anger of unmet demands. Into this chaos walked the young women of Big City Church. For weeks they had served during the Maidan uprising. They’d swept the ice and snow clean of the remnants of 24-hour protests and served protesters food and tea. When they weren’t laboring physically, they labored in prayer, kneeling in the prayer tent established by Protestant churches.

This was February 19, a frightful night when the protesters’ cause seemed doomed, the riot police destined to attack, and the corrupt government ready to triumph. Yet these same young women walked boldly into Independence Square. Instead of seeking sanctuary from the violence, they served by standing with the protesters, hoping that the appearance of young Ukrainian women would influence the riot police to hold their fire.

Instability sparks spiritual openness

Within two days Maidan was quiet, fires doused. The Ukrainian president fled the country, the Constitution was restored, and renewed hope buoyed the people of Ukraine. But the need for Christians to stand with their countrymen in the midst of turmoil and uncertainty remains.

Throughout the country, the 12 churches in the denomination MTW helped plant are pointing Ukrainians to the One who can answer their spiritual questions following the events in Maidan. “People are asking, ‘How did this happen?’” said Ivan Bepolav, pastor of Presbyterian Church of the Holy Trinity in Kyiv and MTW national partner. “Six months ago, it was unthinkable that people with arms would walk our streets. People don’t know how life became so unpredictable, so unstable . . . how their lives that were solid just crumbled down that easily.”

Members of Bepolav’s church have lost jobs and savings due to uncertainty in the economy. Some have lost property with the Russian annexation of Crimea. “But this drives people to the Lord,” Bepolav said.

Max Tikhonov, pastor of Big City Church in Kyiv and MTW national partner, said the level of spiritual openness is reminiscent of the days after the fall of the Iron Curtain. “We feel really free to share the gospel. People around us are really open to that.” He is a part of a council of Protestant churches that holds a prayer service in Maidan each Sunday. “People throw out a lot of questions. We pray for Ukraine, for peace, for unity. It is a great atmosphere of spiritual openness.”



University students march on their way to Kyiv court to protest against illegal arrests of protesters.

Are Our Missionaries Safe?

We are. In the two cities with MTW presence that have experienced violence, Kyiv and more recently Odessa, the unrest was localized and contained. The separatist activity seems to be confined to the eastern part of Ukraine, a safe distance from any of our teams.



Jon Eide

We are closely watching the situation and following the embassy’s recommendations for our safety. We realize that we, along with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters, are watching an unstable situation unfold before our eyes, and are committed to staying and supporting the Church as long as we are able.

– Jon Eide,
MTW Ukraine country director

Pro-democracy demonstrations in Kyiv (this photo and below)



Max Tikhonov



Unrest in Ukraine ushers in a new season of spiritual openness.

BY: SUSAN FIKSE

9/11, continued

“This is our 9/11,” said Jon Eide, MTW Ukraine country director. “The churches are filled. People are seeking truth. It’s an exciting time to be a missionary here.”



Many gathered to pray daily during the Kyiv protests.



Learn more about ministry opportunities in Ukraine! Email us at go@mtw.org or visit www.mtw.org/go.

Speaking out for truth and justice

Part of that spiritual seeking is a desire to restore truth and justice in a culture characterized by unthinkable corruption. When the ousted president’s storied residence was finally unveiled to Ukraine’s citizens, the absurd excess revealed the plunder politicians acquired at the expense of the people. While the president enjoyed his opulent home replete with golf course and private zoo, working Ukrainians survived on a few hundred dollars a month.

“People want to live in a country that values honesty,” explained Eide. “This is where the Church comes in. The Church needs now to talk about two things until they are blue in the face: justice and truth. Both of which are the core of the protesters’ demands and the core of the gospel.”

An uncertain future, a certain God

Right now, the forecast for the days to come is uncertain. With the Russian seizure of Crimea and threats of violence in eastern Ukraine, Tikhonov said, “It is not really over yet. I am talking more now about the unity of the people, unity in the Church. The Bible gives answers for unity in the Church whatever situation we’re in. I want to show that no matter what is happening, we are still with God. He is with us no matter what.” This is a message he preaches foremost to himself, as he could be called for service at any time by the Ukrainian military. He said, “I try to prepare people for the worst and hope for the best.”

Ukrainian believers—alongside the courageous young women of Big City Church—continue to stand with their countrymen, proclaiming the message of truth and justice, seeking a peaceful resolution to this political conflict. “The days to come may be difficult, even sorrowful,” Eide said, “but worth it because there are open doors for the gospel to go forth, and we believe that these will be days of great eternal significance.”

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FROM THE COORDINATOR



Dr. Paul Kooistra

Show Me Your Faith!

One weekend a few months ago I was accused of being an anti-nomian. The very next day I was accused of being a legalist. You might think I’d feel good about that since being in the middle of this controversy would feel like safe ground. However, I don’t believe that the truth lies in the middle.

James says, “Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:18, ESV). Some have said that James comes close to slipping into a works-righteousness gospel. This of course is not true. James is inspired by the same Holy Spirit who inspired Paul when he wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8, ESV). We are saved only by grace, and this grace is appropriated only by faith and not by any acts of merit we perform. It is the perfect work of Christ that makes me clean in God’s sight (Rom. 10:8).

What is James’ message, then, when he says, “I will show you my faith by my works”? We miss the point when we think that faith is a matter of the mind alone. It is a matter of the heart (Rom. 10:10). The heart is the premier biblical designation for the center of the human personality—where our physical, emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and aesthetic aspects come together. *Therefore, the reality of our faith is expressed not only in what we say, but also in how we feel, what we do, how we think, and of course, how we worship.* This truth is anchored in the fact that redemption is the mighty work of God to reverse the awful effects of the Fall. True faith will impact all aspects of our heart and being. Jesus said, “Let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16, ESV). Paul tells Titus that there are some who declare faith but they deny Christ by their works (Titus 1:16).

We should ask ourselves what kind of faith our actions illustrate. What would those closest to us say? What would you ask the Holy Spirit to help you change in order to exhibit a deeper faith in Christ? Examine your heart, your thoughts, your feelings, and yes, your actions. How can this help grow your faith?

Paul D Kooistra



Mark Daniel examines a patient.



David Daniel prays with a patient.

PLANTING CHURCHES IN CUSCO, PERU, WITH THE AID OF A STETHOSCOPE

More than Medical

Recognizing the danger of his mother's Jehovah's Witness religion, Cesar doubted whether faith in Christ offered him anything different. A medical student in Cusco, Peru, Cesar visited a Bible study mostly to be with his girlfriend, and for the free food.

BY: SUSAN FIKSE

But even after the two broke up, Cesar continued to attend, and started studying the book of John with Nathan Wilson, a member of the MTW team composed of health care professionals.



Dental students working at La Fuente clinic

During a break from school, Cesar served in the La Fuente clinic alongside Wilson. Wilson remembers the first time Cesar saw how the gospel could make a difference

in the life of a patient. A young girl came into the clinic with headaches, but Wilson thought her primary problems were emotional and spiritual. Wilson and Cesar prayed with the girl and talked with her at length. Afterwards Cesar said, "That felt so good! I feel like we cared for that girl all the way. We offered that girl something she really needed."

Coming to Christ through the back door

As Cesar and other health care students see that

Christ has something to offer their patients, the hope is they will be more open to His work in their own lives. That's the vision of the MTW medical team in Cusco, said David Daniel, the team's leader. The team arrived in 2011 to work alongside the church-planting team already in Cusco. Daniel and his team are planting seeds now that they believe will affect the future of Peru. "Future health care professionals can be the future leaders of Cusco ... we see real potential to change culture," said Daniel.

Health care students are eager to join mentoring groups. Once relationships develop, many non-believing students join Bible studies. "This 'back door' is helping them become better people and better doctors," explains Daniel. "But if they stick around, they hear that the fullness of what that means is following Christ."

Transplanting a unique ministry model

The unique nature of the Cusco team enables the missionaries to stay unified in this difficult context. Five families who already knew each other well and served together with Medical Campus Outreach (MCO) in Augusta, Ga., agreed to take their relationships and ministry into another culture. Partnership with MTW enabled these medical professionals to replicate the MCO model in a foreign context.

"We're not perfect, but we've committed together in gospel movement," Daniel said. Through these imperfect vessels, God shows Peruvian health care students and professionals His care for people's physical and spiritual needs. Cesar and his fellow students recognize that the doctors at La Fuente operate differently. The interest of students gives the team great hope: "Many students will come to know Christ and they will plug into the local church. We hope to fill up the church with new converts," Daniel said. [▶](#)



We need health care professionals in Peru!
Are you a dentist or family practitioner interested in serving in Cusco? Email go@mtw.org to learn more.

"We'll take the baby."

One family's choice shifts the perception of adoption in Peru

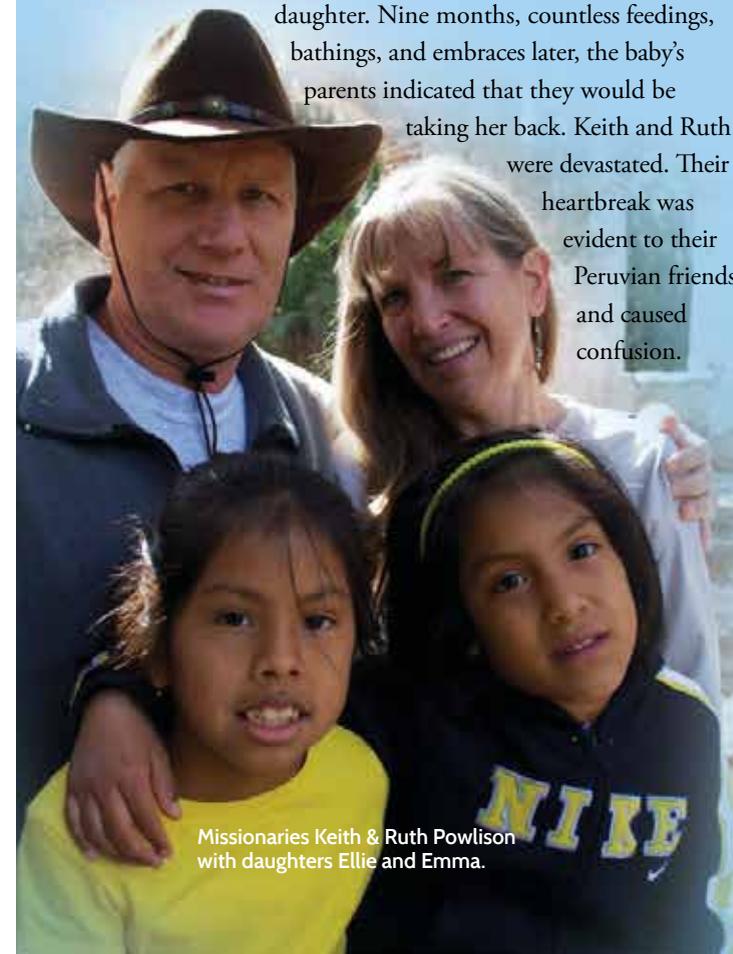
After years of ministry outside the urban sprawl of Cusco, Peru, MTW missionary Ruth Powlison was leading a women's group and overheard conversation about an unwanted pregnancy. It became clear that this baby would have no second chances.

To the Quechua culture, adoption is understood as the acquisition of either a burden or an asset. Why would you bring an extra mouth into your home unless it could be useful? Why would you rob your own children?

So Ruth leapt to say, "We'll take the baby."

The other women in the group laughed. They could not believe she was serious, but she insisted. She went home that day to her husband Keith and said, "Well, we're adopting a baby."

The time came and the Powlisons brought Ellie home as a daughter. Nine months, countless feedings, bathings, and embraces later, the baby's parents indicated that they would be taking her back. Keith and Ruth were devastated. Their heartbreak was evident to their Peruvian friends and caused confusion.



Missionaries Keith & Ruth Powlison with daughters Ellie and Emma.

One such friend said, "Why do you weep over someone else's baby?"

"Why do you weep over someone else's baby?"



Formerly an orphan at the Josephine House, Beltran now lives with his adoptive family.

BY: AMY ROBINSON

The Powlisons pressed on, struggling to understand what had happened, and to their great joy, the confusion ended with Ellie remaining at home with them.

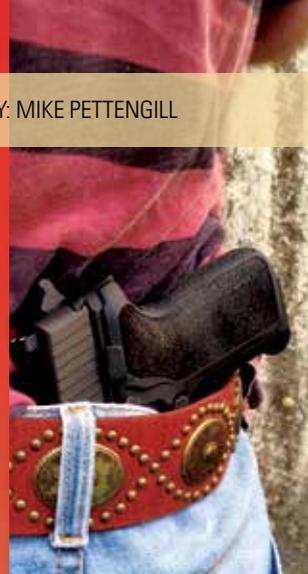
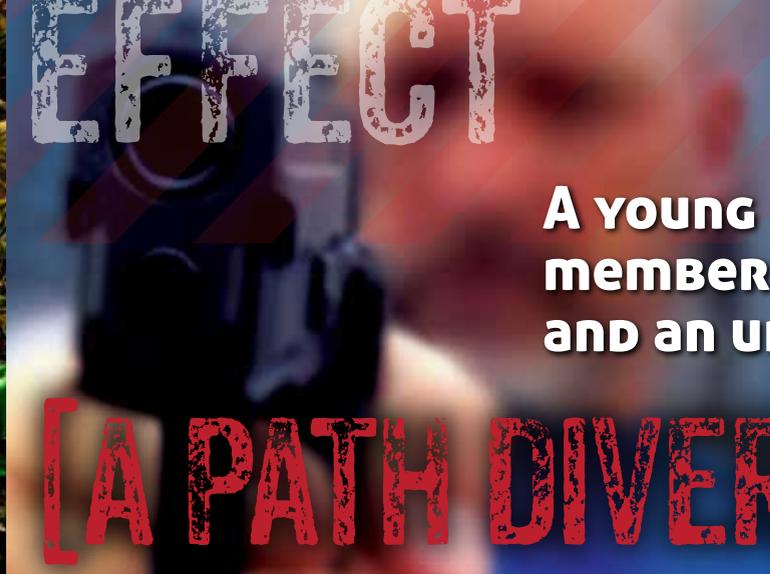
Years passed and a second baby was adopted. The full meaning of the girls' adoptions became clear to the community, but slowly. Nationals saw the two dark-haired, dark-eyed children with their American parents and assumed that they were servants for the household. But when they came closer, they heard the girls speaking English. They learned that the children were treated as real family.

In addition to the Powlisons' adoptions, five other couples who have served with MTW in Peru have adopted children of their own. As a growing need became evident, Ruth helped found an orphanage called the Josephine House. There, more than 35 children have been rescued from situations of abuse, neglect, and life-threatening harm.

Recently, national believers who work alongside the team have also begun to adopt children, raising them as sons and daughters. Yolanda, who is adopting a son, told us, "We know that God cares for the orphans in a special way, so the Josephine House is obeying God's commands when we care for these little ones."

The Powlisons did not go to Cusco to start an orphanage or with a mind to adopt as a testimony to the gospel. God started decades ago with a seed of longing in their hearts to adopt a child. He guided them to a peculiar place on the map through practical and ordinary means, and they obeyed. Through a long-awaited yearning, through faithful obedience and prayer, through the ministry of true religion to orphans in their distress, God moved. [▶](#)

To learn more about the Josephine House visit www.josephinehouse.org.



BY: MIKE PETTENGILL

[REALITY ON THE STREET]

[A PATH DIVERTED]

Umberto

It isn't fair.

the cracks in the ceiling. It isn't fair that an 11-year-old gets to decide whether he wants to go to school or not, or that K and E's father just left the family high and dry. It isn't fair that K's sister got pregnant and left her mom with her baby, so now Mom has her own baby and her daughter's baby, both the same age. It isn't fair that M is being severely abused at home or that C would prefer begging on the streets to coming to our project. And we tell them all, "Think about your future." But why should boys that age think about their future? They're supposed to be thinking about video games and soccer.

It just isn't fair.

Our boys face danger and violence. Every day.

This week we learned that one of our boys had been beaten up. We've heard various versions of the story. All include a knife and the threat that this boy will be killed. Some versions involve our very own boys smoking marijuana and possibly other drugs.

After we found out about this, I sobbed. Right there in the car. You know, those gut-wrenching sobs that make you shake when you try to breathe in? Yeah, that kind.

BY: KATE DEFUNIAK

I cried for our boys. I cried over the bruises and swelling that surround this precious boy's eyes. I cried over the reality that is their lives. So many of them are desperately trying to blaze their way into a better future, but the elements that surround them on a daily

basis get the best of them. We tell them to stay away from bad influences. We tell them about Jesus, His love for them, and how much He longs for them to know Him intimately. But there are some who just can't resist the influences that drag them down.

As I cried over our boys, I felt the urgency stronger than ever for a permanent home for them. If only we could scoop that child up and take him to a place where he is safe. But we can't. We don't have that place. Yet. But we're actively looking for property to build a permanent facility.

Three boys enjoy a meal at the drop-in center.



Three boys enjoy a meal at the drop-in center.

We tell them about Jesus But there are some who can't resist the influences that drag them down.



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Now the boys can at least come to our drop-in center where they are fed, hear the gospel, and spend their time in a clean space with lots of toys and games. But what they go home to. Oh, what they go home to.

Kate deFuniak serves on the MTW team in La Ceiba, Honduras. Help make a permanent boys' home a reality. Visit donations.mtw.org and select project #92414.



ast summer a new gang moved into the small community of Armenia Bonito in La Ceiba, Honduras. In their first few weeks here the number of murders increased. The community was frightened. Families began keeping their kids inside and avoiding the streets.

Jesús, the pastor of our new church plant, and I wanted to open a dialogue with the gang and went looking for their leader. Word got out and this spooked the gang. Two gang members approached our truck with guns pointed at us. They flung the doors open, dragged us out of the truck, and shoved us to the ground. They kicked us repeatedly and put their guns to our heads. "Why are you here? What do you want?" they screamed.

"What do you want?"

With hands raised we replied in a calm tone, "Relax, we are not here to bother you. We only want to introduce ourselves and talk to you." Standing up I said, "This is Pastor Jesús. He is the pastor of the new church, and I'm Mike, the missionary who owns the new medical clinic."

Calming down a bit the gang members put away their guns and lit up a few joints. "We're sorry we hurt you," they said, "but we're here to protect this community and we didn't know why you were looking for us."

I asked, "Can we buy you guys some Cokes and sit down and talk?" Within minutes we were surrounded by a dozen, Coke-drinking gang members. During a 30-minute talk I refused to pay a "protection" fee, but offered free medical care to any of the guys at our clinic. Everyone was content and we parted ways.

Leaving the gang to follow Christ

A week later Umberto, one of the gang's members, approached Jesús wanting to talk. Jesús and I talked with him several times about Christianity and gave him a Bible. By God's grace, Umberto became a Christian. But he was scared. He wasn't sure if the gang would let him leave. Jesús and I agreed to meet with the gang with Umberto and ask if he could leave the gang because he was now a Christian. We brought Bibles and gave one to each member of the gang. After Umberto announced

They kicked us repeatedly and put guns to our heads.

[photo reenacted]

he was a Christian, Jesús asked the gang leader if Umberto could leave the gang. The leader looked at all the members and said, "If any of you want to leave the gang because you want to follow God, you have my permission."

In the months that followed, two more gang members have become believers and left the gang. Please pray for Umberto, the two other boys, and the rest of the gang.

Mike Pettengill serves as MTW's La Ceiba team leader. Read more of Brady's story on Mike's blog www.pettengillmissionaries.org.

[UPDATE!]

Just as we were ready to go to press, Mike called to tell us the gang's leader, Brady, just gave his life to Christ. Brady has been walking through town and lifting up his shirt to show people he doesn't have a gun in his belt. Brady tells people, "I don't have a gun, but I have a weapon." And then he shows off his "weapon"—the study Bible Mike gave him.



Christ's College Graduate Makes a Difference in Taiwan

Making a difference—it's part of Christ's College's DNA. It's a story repeated again and again through

BY: RAMONA WHITE

CC alumni around the world.

For '79 graduate Bai Guang-sheng the story began with the Bunan aborigines on the banks of the Luming River in southeast Taiwan.



Mr. and Mrs. Bai (front) with CC administrators Dr. Peng, Mr. Chu, and CC president and missionary Dr. Quentin Nantz.

As a young man, Bai longed to help his people. But he was a self-described "nobody." Crippled since childhood by polio, he sought to become a school teacher. After eight weeks in college, Bai was dismissed. "Why is a handicapped person allowed this training?" the dean asked. Society shows little sympathy for those who are different, he learned. Heartbroken, he returned home.

Other disappointments followed—rejection for a government job he had pursued for three years being the most difficult. "That hurt my heart even more," Bai said. "Don't make me study again," he told his mother. "I would rather stay here and be a farmer with my father."

Touched by kindness

Then the young Bunan tribesman learned of MTW's Christ's College, a Christian liberal arts school in Taipei. "I gave my heart to the Lord. I wanted to study at Christ's College," he said. Despite his fears of failure, Bai completed his entrance exam and

entered Christ's College in the fall of '75. "People loved me and accepted me," Bai said. "Their attitudes were warm to me. They touched my heart."

The freshman met the revered educator Dr. James Graham, son of Presbyterian missionaries in China, brilliant linguist, and college founder. The two could have not been more different, except for their love of people. Dr. Graham, then in his late 70s, began to disciple the young Bunan student until Bai's graduation in 1979.



Aboriginal dancers perform at Bai's farm.

Back home with a vision

After seminary, seeing the desperation of the uneducated and unemployed of his village, many who were alcoholics, Bai knew he must return home. He prayed, "Lord, send me as a pastor to the Bunan tribe." He would also teach them to work. "You have to take

action," Bai said. More importantly he would teach them God's Word and shepherd His people.

Three years later in his native village, Bai—who was himself marginalized in his attempts to study and make a living—established the Bunan Cultural and Educational Foundation, an organization and farm employing almost 100 workers. His vision was being realized. Today visitors from all parts of the island come to learn about the culture of indigenous people as they tour the organic farm.

For almost 30 years, Pastor Bai has shown his people how to support themselves. He has provided education for many. He has shown them how to live. Pastor Bai, Christ's College alumnus, is making a difference. [▶](#)

Ramona White is an MTW second-career intern serving with Christ's College in Taiwan.

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Business as Blessing in Uganda

David Thomas describes himself as "an engineer and business manager kind of guy."

A director of manufacturing for Beltservice Corporation and an elder from Kirk of the Hills PCA in St. Louis, Thomas joined MTW's Business As Mission (BAM) director John Tubbesing on a trip to Kampala, Uganda, last year to put his business acumen into practice in an international setting.

Uganda's economy has far too few Christian businesspeople, while the Muslim and Indian influence in business is growing significantly. That is one reason MTW is helping entrepreneurs who are emerging from a small business incubator run by a

At its core, Business As Mission helps people provide for themselves, but the ultimate vision is for them to use their businesses for kingdom purposes.

Ugandan named Moses Engwau. "Much of the business climate here in Uganda is corrupt," explained Carolyn Phillips, MTW Uganda missionary. "Many times whatever you order, you expect it to be late and poorly done. Moses has a vision and a dream to see the business climate transformed because the gospel transforms."

Thomas' task while in Kampala was to coach these aspiring entrepreneurs and help Tubbesing and other MTW leadership assess the center as a potential BAM venture. Thomas had the opportunity to speak to participants in the 14-week biblically-based business program, which covers everything from cash flow and marketing strategies to how to use one's business to edify the kingdom.

Business with a greater purpose

Thomas met Michael, a recent graduate of the program who started a soap company that hires people from the slums. He also met Jalia and Daniel who began a jewelry company that

employs single mothers and boys who would otherwise be street children. Jalia and Daniel lead Bible studies with their employees and several former Muslims have come to Christ as a result.



Thomas (right) stands with Michael (left) and a co-worker in the manufacturing room of Michael's soap business.

"At its core, Business As Mission helps people provide for themselves, but the ultimate vision is for them to use their businesses for kingdom purposes," Thomas said.

BY: ZOE ERLER

"[The trip] cemented in my mind that whether you are digging ditches or a leader in a business, it is part of God's work and you can do it in a manner that blesses the world, your employer, your employees, and your co-workers."

As a result of Thomas' trip, MTW Uganda decided to become the financial backer for the business center. The hope is that businesspeople from PCA churches in the U.S. will consider taking week-long trips to come alongside the Ugandan instructors at the business center and serve as teachers, mentors, and business coaches.

"The exciting thing about this is that it's Uganda run," Phillips said. "[But Americans] can bring in an outside perspective with business expertise. This is a developing economy. Coming from a developed economy, we can really help." [▶](#)

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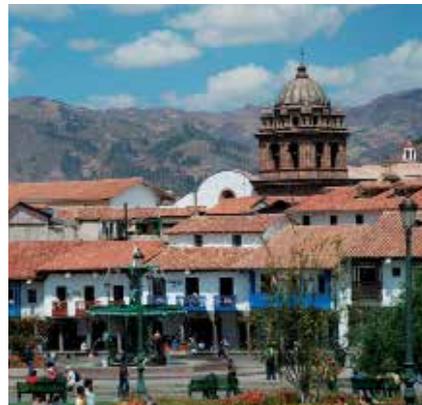
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Spotlight on Latin America

The church in Latin America is growing, transforming hearts and communities with the gospel. MTW is busy building partnerships with existing churches, training nationals to plant churches, and welcoming missionaries to serve these efforts. Read about MTW's work in three particular regions of Latin America.

Peru

Three families recently completed language studies and an apprenticeship program in Bogotá, Colombia, and have moved to Arequipa, Peru, to begin a new initiative. This new team will take this first year to get to know the people and the culture of the city, build relationships, and pray for discernment in casting a long-term vision for ministry.



As MTW's ministry in Peru expands, a new Peru Council has formed with leadership representatives from the Arequipa and Cusco teams. Please pray for the Arequipa team as they begin to build the foundation for the work in Arequipa and for the new Peru Council as they work together to coordinate gospel efforts in Peru. See pages 6-7 of this issue of *Network* for more on MTW's work in Cusco.

Panama

A missionary couple formerly serving in Belize has begun a new initiative in Panama, a key country in the region. God has brought together a core group of seven believers who have begun meeting and learning the Westminster Confession, the Larger and Shorter Cat-



echisms, and every tenet of the Reformed faith. Three men from this group have already expressed interest in becoming leaders in the church. They are meeting once a week to go through material in preparation for being examined, elected, and ordained as elders/deacons.

This core group recently began offering English classes as an outreach. The response has been encouraging, opening doors to minister to university students and young professionals, as well as Colombians and Venezuelans who have relocated to Panama to better their job possibilities. Please pray for this English ministry, that God would use it to open doors for sharing the gospel.

Costa Rica

ICRICEN (Iglesia Cristiana Centroamericana), our partner church in San Jose, Costa Rica, continues to grow, and now includes four congregations. The MTW team, in partnership with local leadership, is offering



gospel-centered leadership trainings, conferences, regular preaching on the gospel of grace, and teaching through mentoring groups. Grace and Truth Theological Seminary has also begun offering courses, with 12 students currently in attendance.

The ICRICEN church plants recently participated in a Transformational Development seminar in which they learned how to better serve the community using their gifts and strengths, rather than focusing on what their community lacks. As a result, one of the churches in the poor fishing village of Costa de Pajaros has decided to start serving breakfast to children before school, many of whom are accustomed to going to school hungry.

Please pray for the continued growth and development of these congregations, the transformation of the surrounding communities, and the training of local leadership through Grace and Truth Seminary.

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THIS IS OUR 9/11

Unrest in Ukraine ushers in a new season of spiritual openness.



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MORE THAN MEDICAL REALITY ON THE STREET
CHRIST'S COLLEGE GRAD MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN TAIWAN
BUSINESS AS BLESSING