

PLANES WITH PURPOSE

News from the Hammitt Family

April 2023

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?

Over the past couple of months, a lot of people have asked us where we are and what we are doing. We have tried to be clear about our plans, but our situation is understandably a bit confusing!

Normally, missionaries return to their home country every few years for a furlough or home assignment. We had not determined the exact timing for our home assignment because we were unsure about what Ian and Ella would decide to do after high school. You may remember that when we first moved to Bolivia, they were attending a Christian school in Cochabamba. But after six weeks, schools closed due to COVID, and our family was in quarantine for about 15 months. This necessitated a switch to online high school and had long-lasting effects socially and personally, and took away the primary means for Ian and Ella to learn and master Spanish. When they changed to online school they also lost the possibility of earning a Bolivian high school diploma, which in turn made it more complicated to attend college in Bolivia.

We share all of this to help you understand why we decided it was time to come back to the United States for a while. Here are a few of the frequently-asked questions that people ask us:

Are you leaving ITM? No, we are staying with International Tribal Ministries. If you support us financially, you don't need to make any changes to your giving.

How long will you be in the United States? Our plan is to be here two years, or until Ian and Ella graduate and are established in whatever is next for them.

What will you do while you are in the US? We are volunteering with an organization called Wings of Grace in Melbourne, Florida. Our support will continue to flow through ITM, but we are under the supervision of Wings of Grace Ministries for the next 18 months. Wings of Grace uses aviation as a means to mentor and disciple teenagers, and has chapters in Florida, Georgia, and the Bahamas. Serving with Wings of Grace as a pilot, mechanic, and instructor, Aaron will also gain aviation experience that will be valuable when we return to Bolivia.

Are you going back to Bolivia? We do plan to return to Bolivia. Before leaving, we got our permanent residency and Aaron earned his Bolivian private pilot license. But if we are honest, we don't know for sure. Time and again, we have made plans only to find them radically disrupted. We love the people in Bolivia and are excited about the ministry that is happening through ITM. But only God knows what will happen over the next two years in our family, in the ministry, and in the country and government of Bolivia. Please pray for wisdom as we seek the answer to this question!



This picture is your first clue that we are not currently in the landlocked country of Bolivia.



Before leaving Bolivia, we visited Toro Toro with our pastor and his family. We are grateful for the time we had with them, and for the opportunity to be out in nature away from the city.



One of our last evenings in Cochabamba, where some friends threw us a going-away party. We are thankful for the friends we have in Bolivia!



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We are thankful. . .

- ▶ for housing and transportation that was provided for us in Florida.
- ▶ that our permanent Bolivian residency came through.

Please pray with us. . .

- ▶ for Ian and Ella as they make important life decisions.
- ▶ for Aaron and Tara as we help to guide them through this time of transition.
- ▶ for a church to call home in Florida, and for relationships and community.
- ▶ for wisdom and clarity as we make decisions.



Being close to the beach is a definite perk of living in Florida—especially after living in a landlocked country!



Our baby turned 5 this month! Time really does seem to tick by faster as we get older.



I love how God makes each one of us unique, and how we see those differences in the personalities of our kids!

THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

In January, ITM held its annual conference in Bolivia. One of the focuses of our speaker, Rick Johnson, was Jesus' emphasis on discipleship. He started his ministry by calling disciples to himself, and then entrusted them with the charge to make disciples. I was reminded of the fact that wherever I am and whatever I do, this call to make disciples is something that does not change.

When I first visited Florida to learn about the ministry of Wings of Grace, I was unsure about whether it would be a good fit for us. After all, their focus seemed very different from the church planting and discipleship emphasis of ITM. But as we prayed about our next steps, the Lord really seemed to be opening a door for us to come here.

In the past couple weeks, two things helped to change my perspective. First, we participated in a weekend missions conference in Georgia, which touched on the topic of discipleship again. Second, I taught my first ground school class to the teens in the Wings of Grace program. As I interacted with the kids, I really started to see and appreciate the opportunity that we have to build into the young people that God has brought into the program. It's more than just a chance to teach them about aviation. Wherever the Lord places us—whether in Bolivia or in Melbourne, Florida—the Lord calls us to make disciples. That could be in Bolivia, or right here in the USA.

As I reflect on the privilege that I have to teach these teenagers, I can't help but think about my own children. I am challenged to look closely at how I lead my own family and disciple my own kids. Many children of pastors and missionaries have felt neglected by their fathers, who were too busy with "ministry" to invest in their own families. I don't want to be that father!

These past few months, we have made big decisions that affect each member of our family in different ways. Our decisions have also affected the ministry of ITM and our co-workers in Bolivia. We have been forced to really think and pray about what is most important. Although we don't believe our children should be the absolute center of our universe, their wellbeing does need to take priority over my work and our ministry outside our family.

Please pray for us as we desire to lead and disciple our own children well. Of course, this also requires that we ourselves are living and walking as true disciples of Jesus.

Secondly, please pray that we will make the most of the time we have here—however long that may be. Pray that we will have opportunities to build into the teenagers in the Wings of Grace program, for open eyes to see the ways that we can minister to and disciple others that the Lord brings into our lives, and that we will find a community to be a part of.

