

PLANES WITH PURPOSE

News from the Hammitt Family

January 2020

Bolivia: Take Two!

So much has happened since our last newsletter that it's hard to know where to begin or what to share. When we sent our last quarterly letter in October, the presidential elections were about to take place in Bolivia. We expected that there would be some protesting and disruption of normalcy here in Cochabamba, but few people anticipated how bad things would get.

To make a long story short, initially-peaceful protests broke out amid allegations of electoral fraud, but violent confrontations eventually began to take place. Cochabamba was one of the two cities in Bolivia where the violence was most prevalent. The situation escalated to the point where we had to be careful about leaving the house, and it was becoming more difficult to get basic necessities for our family. Although foreigners were not being targeted specifically, the leadership of ITM believed it would be best if our family returned to the United States until the situation stabilized.

So, with just a few hours notice, we found ourselves on motorcycles (the only mode of transportation that would get us around the numerous roadblocks) headed to the airport. We carried one backpack each, along with two small carry-ons for our family. It's too bad we didn't get a photo, because that must have been quite a sight!

Only 24 hours after receiving the phone call from our director, we found ourselves back in Miami, rented a car, and drove to spend a few weeks with family in Florida. We certainly did not expect to be back in the United States only two months after arriving in Bolivia, but it was a blessing to see friends and family in Florida, Ohio, and North Carolina, and to be there for the holidays. We don't know why the Lord saw fit to have us leave so soon after arriving, but we trust that He had a purpose—even if we don't see it clearly right now.

On January 7 we were on another airplane headed back to Bolivia. It felt surprisingly normal to be back in our home in Cochabamba! Since arriving, we have been quite busy getting the kids ready for school (the first day is February 3), diving back into Spanish study, and picking up with the process of obtaining our visas. We appreciate your prayers as we continue to get settled and more integrated into life and ministry here in Bolivia. Lord-willing, Aaron will be able to begin flying in a few months, and as our Spanish improves we will be more connected in our community and in ministry. Thank you so much for your love, encouragement, and generosity!



We are back in Cochabamba! In the background are some of the trees that were burned during the protests.



It's nice to be able to get around the city, now that it is free of blockades! This picture was taken prior to our return to the United States.



We got to enjoy the beach a few times while visiting family in Florida!



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We are thankful for:

- ✧ the Lord's financial provision for our return to Bolivia.
- ✧ all of the family, friends, and churches who supported us during a difficult time.
- ✧ my toolbox and aircraft tools arriving safely in Bolivia.
- ✧ Aaron and Tara having obtained 3-year visas. Aaron also has his Bolivian ID card.

Please pray with us for:

- ✧ a reliable vehicle for our family at an affordable price.
- ✧ the continuing process of obtaining the rest of our visas, ID cards, pilot certificates, etc.
- ✧ language acquisition.



It was an unexpected blessing to spend Christmas with family.



Who knew that Santa Claus was also a diver?



Ian has attended a few baseball practices in Cochabamba. We are praying about whether to continue.



Whenever we are in Florida we try to visit this spot, which was a favorite of Tara's dad.

ITM's First Bible Training of 2020

As we write this letter, ITM's first Bible Institute of 2020 is taking place in the town of San Lorenzo! 180 men, women, and children from seven communities came by boat or airplane to be taught the Word of God in their own language. The main teaching is in Spanish, and ITM missionaries lead follow-up sessions in three additional languages: Yuracare, Chimane, and Trinitario. This is important, because many people in that region speak limited Spanish and have few opportunities to be taught in their native tongues.



In addition to those attending the Bible School, several volunteers traveled from Betel church in La Paz to support this week of training. One of the things we appreciate about ITM is that most of the teaching is done by Bolivians, with expats in a supporting role.

We are excited about how God is working in these remote communities, and can't wait to see the fruit that is produced as His Word is sown among the people of this region!

We are working hard studying Spanish, getting established in Cochabamba, and getting the kids in school. We are still working on long-term visas, driver's licenses, pilot certificates, and buying a vehicle. Those things sometimes feel like distractions from what we really want to be doing, but we know that it's all part of the process! Remembering why the Lord brought us here—and seeing the exciting ways that the Lord is using ITM—helps to keep us motivated to press on in our Spanish studies and through the everyday details of life. We look forward with anticipation to what He has in store for us!

