

PLANES WITH PURPOSE

News from the Hammitt Family

January 2021

Thank you for praying

Greetings from Bolivia! In our last newsletter we asked for prayer concerning COVID-related restrictions and their effect on our family, the Bolivian elections, and Aaron's pilot certificate. Thank you for praying! We'd like to share a brief update on those topics.

It's a new year, but it still feels strangely like 2020. It would have been great if the situation in Bolivia had instantly transformed on New Year's Day, but unfortunately not much has changed here. We have been under some form of COVID-related restrictions for more than ten months, and with cases increasing again there is no end in sight. Although we have adjusted somewhat to the "new normal," and the limitations are less strict than before, the restrictions have taken their toll. Like many of you, we are still starved for fellowship and corporate worship. Our teenagers haven't interacted in-person with anyone their age since March 2020, and we still have to practice distancing and wear masks any time we go out of the house. Thankfully we *can* get out of the house, and Aaron's parents came to spend a few weeks with us, which helped us feel less isolated.

As far as the Bolivian presidential election, we are thankful that it was mostly peaceful. Many people were disappointed with the outcome, as the MAS party (the party of former-president Evo Morales) is back in power. This is not the change that many were hoping for, but at least there was a peaceful transition from the interim government, and there should be some stability for a while.

In November and December, Aaron passed the two exams required to have his FAA pilot certificate recognized in Bolivia: first a written knowledge test (in Spanish), and then a practical flight test. That was quite an intimidating process, but praise the Lord they both went smoothly. At the end of January, he finally received his license to begin flying in Bolivia! We are excited that Aaron has finally begun conducting ministry flights with ITM!

Unfortunately, the convalidation of his FAA certificate is only valid for six months, plus one six-month renewal. We are currently praying and looking at the options for him to obtain a permanent Bolivian pilot certificate in the most cost-effective way possible.

We are excited about all that the Lord is doing here and the new doors He is opening for ministry in Bolivia, but it's also easy to become discouraged at times. Please pray for us as we continue to persevere and trust the Lord through the challenges that still lie ahead.



We removed the main landing gears from our Cessna 206 to replace a cracked casting. We are thankful for the experience Aaron gained at MMS Aviation to prepare him for this type of maintenance!



In January, Aaron's pilot certificate was finally convalidated by the Bolivian aviation authority. He made his first solo ministry flight this month, delivering supplies for a ministry trip on the Secure River.



Our ITM missionaries taught the children in Oromomo while the Bolivian school system was shut down.



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We are thankful:

- ✧ that Aaron's pilot certificate has been convalidated in Bolivia, and that he has been checked out to fly into several airstrips for ITM.
- ✧ for a peaceful presidential election and transfer of power in Bolivia.
- ✧ that Aaron's parents were able to come spend the holidays with us in Cochabamba.

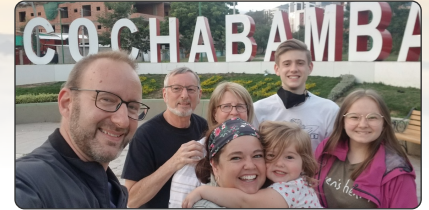
Please pray with us:

- ✧ that the Lord would provide a clear path for Aaron to get a permanent Bolivian pilot certificate.
- ✧ for Ian and Ella to adjust well as they begin a new online high school program.



Here are a few of our latest family photos. We recently visited Cristo de la Concordia and drove out to Corani Lake (our first trip outside the city).

Kids' Corner



2020: A year wasted?

It would be easy to focus on the many negative aspects of the past year and to write it off as wasted time. We've gone eleven months without corporate worship, ITM was unable to host ministry teams, our language study was hindered, and our kids had to endure nearly a year of isolation from their peers. Sadly, several people we know lost loved ones to COVID-19. It's easy to wonder if anything good came of 2020.

Despite the struggles, we recognize some of the ways that the Lord has used this year for good. For one, Tara and Aliza were blessed by having Ian and Ella at home. That led us to re-examine our priorities and make some changes for the upcoming school year. We are trusting that the Lord used the unexpected challenges of 2020 to guide us to an educational option that will be a better fit for our family.

In terms of ministry, there were several opportunities that came about in 2020, which would not have happened in a year without COVID-19:

- * A team of ITM missionaries spent several weeks in Oromomo teaching children who were

left without educational options when the Bolivian school system shut down. Besides teaching core academic subjects, the team also taught the Bible. Many of these families would not have come to the church in Oromomo.

- * A medical team from ITM traveled to the south of Bolivia to minister to a community that has been historically closed to the outside world and to the gospel. This trip opened a path to future partnership with a Bolivian missionary who has been working alone in this area.
- * Aaron had time to help in the financial and administrative areas of the ministry. As ITM grows, we have made some changes that will enable our missionaries and leadership to focus more on the core ministry, and Aaron has spent some time helping to implement those changes.

These are just a few of many ways that God continued to work through ITM's ministry in 2020. We are thankful that He can redeem what might otherwise be considered as time wasted, and use it for good!

