

PLANES WITH PURPOSE

News from the Hammitt Family

October 2021

**“The mind of man plans his way,
but the Lord directs his steps.”**

I’m starting to think that this passage from Proverbs 16:9 should be our family’s theme verse! In June, we decided to return to the United States for what was going to be a *short* time of refreshing as a family. COVID case counts were rising again in Bolivia, and new restrictions were being implemented. Our short-term mission teams from the U.S. had cancelled their trips, so it seemed like a perfect time to come back to the States to see family and friends, visit ministry partners, and enjoy some relative freedom from COVID-related restrictions.

The first few weeks of our visit went as planned. We spent time in Florida with Tara’s family, then visited friends and ministry partners in North Carolina, and finally ended up in Ohio. We were able to visit most of our supporting churches and enjoy time with Aaron’s family. It was also refreshing for our teenagers to spend time with friends around their age—something they hadn’t done in more than 15 months due to COVID-related restrictions in Bolivia.

As we approached the date of our return to Bolivia (September 2), we received some unwelcome news: Ella tested positive for COVID-19. She recovered quickly, but her PCR test—taken two days before our departure—came back positive, meaning we could not travel. We scrambled to reschedule our tickets for mid-September.

Then came another bit of disappointing news: our airplane in Bolivia had suffered a hard landing, followed by a nose gear collapse in a remote jungle airstrip. It was significantly damaged and could not be repaired on the field. Instead, it was disassembled, then moved by river, and finally transported by truck to Cochabamba for repair.

A third surprise came about 10 days later, just before our new departure date. Ian started developing symptoms, and soon the whole family tested positive for COVID-19. We were forced to cancel our flights to Bolivia yet again. This time, we were at risk of losing our Bolivian visas, incurring \$5000 in expenses, and losing two years of credit toward permanent residency. But we thank the Lord that the airline waived our change fees, and that we received a waiver from the Bolivian immigration authority so that we may keep our visas.

We are not sure what the Lord is teaching us in all this, but continue to walk by faith in Him—even as our plans seem to change week-by-week! We plan to return to Bolivia in early December, and appreciate your prayers as we continue to work out all of those details.



I took advantage of our extra time in the United States to go to Georgia and help prepare our second airplane for export to Bolivia.



Unfortunately, our plane in Bolivia is now out of service. The nose gear collapsed upon landing in the remote village of Asunta. The plane could not be flown, so it had to be disassembled and taken out piece-by-piece.



The wings and fuselage were transported in large canoes, and later by truck to our hangar in Cochabamba.



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We are thankful:

- ✧ for time with family, friends, and supporting churches.
- ✧ that everyone in our family has recovered from COVID.
- ✧ for several new Bolivian missionaries who have recently joined ITM.
- ✧ for another fruitful Bible School session in San Lorenzo, which will finish in November.

Please pray with us:

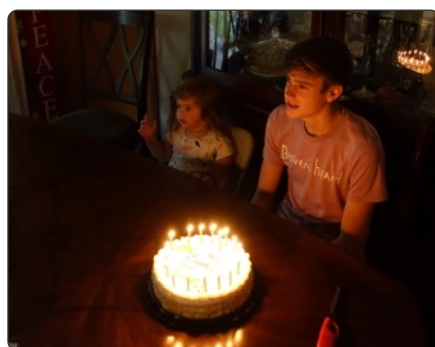
- ✧ as we finalize our plans to return to Bolivia.
- ✧ for the repairs of our airplane in Cochabamba.
- ✧ for completion of the airplane in Georgia, and getting it exported to Bolivia.



We are thankful for friends who are storing our kayaks for us! It was a blessing to use them while in Ohio.



The extra time we had in the USA was an unexpected blessing, and we tried to make the most of it.



We celebrated Ian's 17th birthday in August. Where has the time gone?



Someone loved swimming in Grandma's pool!

Airplane Rebuild Almost Complete!

Nearly every ministry area within ITM depends on the aviation program. The medical ministry, church planting work, radio station, and Bible school all rely on the airplane for the safe and efficient transportation of people and supplies. So when our Cessna 206 had a landing accident in Bolivia, and was taken offline for extensive repair, it made a big impact on the ministry. This was one of the reasons we had been trusting the Lord for a second airplane—so that we were not dependent on a single aircraft.

As we shared in our last newsletter, ITM purchased a second Cessna 206, but it is still in Georgia being refurbished. Now that the airplane in Bolivia is down, there is a new urgency to get it finished and exported. So when we found out that we were unable to go home in September, ITM's director asked us to help finish the plane in Georgia before returning to Bolivia.



In September and October, Aaron traveled twice to Georgia to help complete this project. There has been a lot of work involved, especially since the airplane served many years in Indonesia, then was disassembled and returned to the U.S. in a shipping container. We had to reassemble the airplane, inspecting and replacing many components along the way. Another challenge was sorting and organizing 40 years of maintenance records and modifications, ensuring that everything is in order.

First, the airplane will have to pass a routine annual inspection. Then the FAA will need to inspect the airplane before giving us a new airworthiness certificate, as well as giving us permission to export it to Bolivia.

We are getting close, but please pray for the timely completion of this project, so the airplane can be flown to Bolivia to support the ministries of ITM.

Kids' Corner

