



Serving. Training.  
Energizing Partnerships.

## BOLIVIA

### Partnership

The story of Canadian Baptists in one of Latin America's most fascinating and isolated countries began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1898, Archibald Reekie arrived in Bolivia and became the first long-term missionary in that country. This relationship has had a lasting impact on Bolivia's national life. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Canadian missionaries played a key role in persuading Bolivian congressmen to change the Constitution in favour of freedom of religion. Later, in faithfulness to the gospel of abundant life that they preached, our missionaries freed the peasants who worked on the farm the mission had inherited and gave them the title to the land. This action served as a model for Bolivia's agrarian reform.

Bolivian Baptists have shown deep appreciation for more than a century of partnership. They have been able to take the best of the Canadian experience into their midst while creating uniquely Bolivian churches. They have a remarkable love for Scripture and a vision for addressing the needs of the community. Mutuality defines our partnership. STEP churches will financially contribute to the holistic ministry of the Bolivian Baptist Union



(UBB is its Spanish acronym) in the areas of leadership development, outreach and community development. The UBB will bless Canadian Baptists by teaching and mentoring us about leadership development, evangelism and ministry among the poor through hosting STEP volunteers.

### Our Partner

The UBB is made up of more than 250 established churches, and a similar number of church plants are in process. In the words of one of the national leaders, "Bolivian Baptist churches move forward even with the limited economic resources of their members. This is particularly true in the country side."

The vision of the UBB is to grow healthy churches with a commitment to holistic mission – seeking to become channels for the transformation of individuals and communities. Our partners strive to do so in spite of the challenging context of poverty, corruption and inequality.

Ministry in Bolivia is challenging. Churches represent compassion, support and hope for so many. Well trained pastors are desperately needed to disciple the growing church in Bolivia.

The UBB's ministry in Bolivia includes social concerns such as sustainable community development, education and health care. It has been particularly effective in reaching out to places where the government has been unable to provide medical care.

### Your contribution at work

True partnership requires mutuality. CBM honours the ministry priorities of our partners, and they in turn value ours. Therefore, the financial contribution of STEP partners will be allocated according to these priorities.

### Leadership Development

**The Bolivian Baptist Seminary** in Cochabamba trains future leaders for a variety of ministries in Bolivia. There are more than 200 students enrolled in the various programs offered, including in their extension campus in La Paz.

**UBB Extension Programs (SETA)** take theological education to remote areas for those who cannot move to Cochabamba to study. Over 200 lay leaders are now being prepared to serve God in rural and urban contexts.

### Mission Outreach

Bolivian Baptist churches, including the smallest ones, have a passion for evangelism and church planting. Aymara women have gone beyond their country's



As former missionary Don Fraser said, "now it is the Bolivian's turn to teach and encourage those who live in a post-Christian Canada! They will bring us back to a spirit of evangelism, a passion for social action, a

pristine faith that believes that God can do anything – if we let Him, and if we let them!" New generations of Canadians are gladly catching on to this vision.

borders to support the growth of the church in Peru. There is great potential for new initiatives inside and outside Bolivia.

### Community Development

The Sharing Way and the UBB have three programs: **PADEFAR** is a diverse social ministry helping rural families get out of the cycle of poverty. It supplies starter animals to farmers and offers training in new farming techniques and improved methods for raising livestock. It also provides small business loans to those who have marketable skills.

**Casa de la Amistad:** In Bolivia, when a parent goes to jail (often for defaulting on loans) and no one is available to care for their children, they must live with the parent in the jail. The prisoners also have to provide all of their own food and other necessities of life. Casa de la Amistad takes children out of the prison each day and delivers a holistic ministry program – nutritious meals, games, medical and dental check-ups as well as spiritual guidance. Older children receive after-school tutoring and learn skills such as carpentry, baking and sewing.

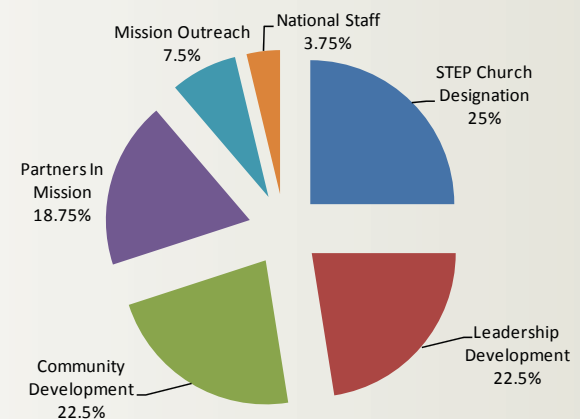
**Project Jireh:** There are an estimated 800,000 children under the age of 18 who are working to help their families survive. This program offers working children in Cochabamba a balanced lunch, medical attention and help with school work. The ministry extends to the children's families living in the slums on the outskirts of the city.

### Partners in Mission

Our Field Staff are helping to develop and mentor young leaders in Bolivia. They teach at the Bolivian Baptist Seminary in Cochabamba.

### Bolivian CBM Staff

They play a key role in coordinating opportunities for meaningful interaction between Canadians and Bolivians.



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