



Llama in the Bolivian Highlands
(13,000 ft above sea level)

Our First Christmas in Bolivia!

Although it is getting close to Christmas, it is a little hard for us to get into the Christmas spirit here in Bolivia. As I am writing this, it is 26° C and just starting to rain here in Cochabamba. December is the beginning of the summer rainy season here, although so far it is still sunny and warm most of the time. I have to confess I don't miss the snow and the cold of Canada too much! We are enjoying the chance to get to know our Bolivian friends and their country. This past Sunday, a presidential election was held, and it was fascinating to see the process unfold here in Bolivia.

Two weeks ago, Diane and I finished our 12 week intensive Spanish course at the Maryknoll Language Institute. Although we still have a long way to go, we were pleased with the progress we made at the school, and are functioning reasonably

well now in Spanish. We have already had the chance to practice our Spanish at a few public speaking opportunities: at the school, at our church and at the Baptist seminary graduation service where Jim was the guest speaker. In the new year, we plan to continue our language studies on a part time basis while we begin working more intentionally with our partner churches here in Bolivia.

Mapping out our future

This past week, Brian Malcolm from the CBM head office has been here, holding meetings with our partner church and CBM field staff, discussing the future of the work here, and more specifically how the Canadian field staff will be involved in the ministry and development programs here in Bolivia. Diane will be working closely with the Baptist church's community development department and their NGO, "OBADES", encouraging more local churches to be actively engaged in meeting both the spiritual and physical needs of their communities. Practically speaking, that will involve developing and monitoring new development programs, travelling to various communities where there are projects running, and giving workshops on integral mission.

Jim will be working with the leaders of the Bolivian Baptist Union as they develop a new strategic plan for the next five years, teaching on mission and discipleship, travelling and speaking at different churches and communities, and finding more focused opportunities for short-term mission teams from Canada to be able to participate in the life and ministry of the churches here in Bolivia. We are excited about the possibilities that are here!

Presenting Team Bolivia

One of the blessings of being team leader is getting to work with a great team of colleagues here. Let me introduce you briefly to them:

- **Rebecca Alward** has been in Cochabamba for almost a year, and is currently studying Spanish in preparation for work in youth ministry, with a focus on developing emerging young leaders here in Bolivia.
- **June Castellon** serves as a nurse at Carachipampa Christian School (where our son Pedro goes to school) Her husband, **Pablo** is a pastor with our partner church organization, the Bolivian Baptist Union. Their daughter **Eliana**, and her husband **Craig** are teaching for a year at Carachipampa school
- **Duane and Carin Guthrie** arrived in Bolivia in May 2009, along with their children **Caleb** and **Paige**. After spending this first year in language training, they will be moving to La Paz where they will be involved in lay leadership development, overseeing micro-enterprise programs, and equipping local churches in integral mission

- **Ivan Gutierrez** facilitates the Short Term Ministry trips to Bolivia, orienting Canadian visitors and guiding them in ministry and cross-cultural experiences while they are here. He is married to **Cristina**, and has a son, **Paulo**.
- **Emigdio Veizaga** serves as CBM administrator for Bolivia, and also helps host the STM teams. He also pastors a Baptist church in Cochabamba and sits on the BBU council. He is married to **Gladys**.
- **Brian and Norma Whittle**, and their children **Matthew and Sarah** are serving a one year term in Bolivia, assisting in the children's program at the Casa de la Amistad, and teaching English as a second language to some of the Bolivian church staff



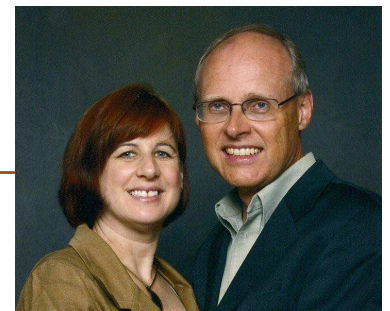
CBM Team Bolivia with staff members of the Bolivian Baptist Union

We feel honoured to be part of such a great team of dedicated servants. (You can find out more information about our team on the CBM website at www.cbmin.org)

As we come to the close of this year, we want to once again thank all of the individuals and churches who are faithfully partnering with us. We wouldn't be able to be here without your continuing prayers and financial support. We hope you all have a great Christmas and a blessed new year!

¡Feliz Navidad!

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