

Greetings from Cochabamba, Bolivia! As most of you are aware, I've made the move to Bolivia and am settling into life here. Thanks to all of you who have been praying for a smooth transition from Albania – Canada – Bolivia! Your prayers were heard. My time back in Canada in the fall couldn't have gone better. I was able to make the move to Bolivia rested and raring to go. It was a blessing to be home with family and friends – especially at Christmas. I was also able to begin initial Spanish learning which helped keep me focus and begin my preparation.

Updates

I've now been here for just over a month. The actual flight over went unbelievably well – Praise God! I was then met at the airport by Pat, June, and Emigdio from the team. I cannot express how that felt and how much I am enjoying being a part of a team. What a difference! The day after I arrived, I went with Pat (Janke) to a national youth conference where Terry was doing some teaching. I was asked to give a short testimony to help the youth get to know me. It was a great time! Their passion for God is a lesson for all of us. I am so excited to be a part of the work here with them.



A look at many of the youth at the conference from the stage – they had fun cheering for the pic ☺

Language - I'm now immersed in language learning – lessons everyday plus study. I walk to the classes so I use that time for getting to know the neighbourhoods by exploring various routes. I have two teachers – Toni and

Blanca – who are incredible teachers with years of experience. Toni focuses on the grammar, expressions, etc. while Blanca's forte is being a drill sergeant ☺ She is helping my speaking to be natural and instinctive. They work very well together. Although it's been less than a month since I began lessons, I'm encouraged with my progress. Again, God is good! I'll also be starting to meet with a few girls who are either youth or youth leaders who are interested in helping with my Spanish as well as working on their English. Not only will that be a big help, it's a great way to build relationships and learn about the youth work and needs all at the same time.

Team Meetings - At the end of January, both Terry Smith and Gordon King from CBM's head office joined us in La Paz for team meetings. We were also joined by Carin and Duane Guthrie who are new field staff and will be joining the Bolivia team end of April. It was an encouraging time for all of us as we focused on priorities and vision for the work here in Bolivia. I also deeply enjoyed meeting the Guthries. They are going to be an incredible addition to the team as they focus on social issues in El Alto and various projects around the country.

We then met with the leadership team (the Directiva) of the Bolivian Baptist Union (BBU) regarding the renewal of the partnership. Good discussion and fellowship occurred and we left feeling encouraged and excited about our work together.



CBM and the BBU Directiva meetings in La Paz

The Referendum – One last piece of news: the National Referendum was held end of January and the result is that there will be many changes to the constitution in various areas including religion, education, marriage and family, education, and the justice system. The country remains quite divided even with the “yes” vote.

What's Coming Up

I am in complete learning mode for the next year or so: everything from language to culture to the youth ministry throughout Bolivia. As the upcoming weeks and months unfold, I'll be meeting with various youth and leaders and attending events and meetings to help get to know people and learn of the issues to better understand what my priorities should be. Being a part of training leaders and seeing an increase in help to the areas of Bolivia that are being missed will certainly be part of the focus. The youth here (which is considered to be ages 18-30) makes up at least 60% of the population. As well, the youth I've met and from what I've heard and experienced are on fire for God. The potential they have to deeply impact the Church and thereby the country is incredible. I cannot say how both excited and overwhelmed I am to have the opportunity to be a part of this ministry.



Saturday market in my neighbourhood

Praise and Prayer Items

- Praise for a wonderful time home in Canada (thank you for your prayers!).
- Praise for a smooth arrival and safety while travelling.
- Praise for a good beginning to my language learning.
- Many thanks to both the Bolivia team as well as the CBM home office team for their help and support in my transition and settling-in time.
- Praise for being part of a team!
- Praise for the successful and helpful team meetings in Bolivia and the relationship between CBM and the BBU.

- Please pray that my Spanish continues to improve and that I do not experience many times of discouragement. I need my brain to work!!! Also, please pray that as I begin to meet with the girls who will be helping me with my Spanish, deep relationships will be the result.
- Pray that I feel at home in my neighbourhood and learn my way around Cochabamba.
- Pray for Pat and Terry Janke (other team members) as they begin their teaching at the seminary in the area of Spiritual Formation, etc.
- Please pray as well for the Guthries as they prepare to move their family (they have two children) to Cochabamba in April.
- Please pray for the government as they implement the changes to the constitution.
- Please pray as well for us as a team: that we will be a support for one another and continuously seeking God and His Will in our various areas of ministry.

Financial Considerations

Many of you are already supporting me both financially and through prayer for which I am so encouraged and thankful. If you know of anyone who would be interested in what's happening or would like to support my ministry, please forward this ministry update to them.

CBM continues to make it easier for you to partner with those on the field. You can contact Eileen Moore-Crispin from CBM at (905) 821-3533 or email her at eileenm@cbmin.org for more information and/or to make a donation.

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