



February 2019

Greetings from Guatemala!

We arrived on Jan. 8 and a few weeks later we found a place to call home in San Lucas, located between Guatemala City and Antigua, the historic colonial capital and UNESCO world heritage site. After one week in our new home, we left to be with our colleagues and partners in Bolivia as they begin a new work and school year after their “summer” vacation (Dec / Jan)

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. Hebrews 6:10

Guatemala

Participating in a seminar led by Noel Castellanos (former CEO of CCDA - Christian Community Development Association) and our partners ENLACE. Noel Castellanos author of *Where the Cross Meets the Street - What happens to the neighbourhood when Christ is at the center* shared a holistic approach to viewing the good news of the kingdom and our responsibility as Christians to be engaged in the most vulnerable neighborhoods in our nation. For us it provided the opportunity to be with a group of church pastors and leaders and get a sense of what church looks like in the urban context of Guatemala City as well as the more rural outlying communities: the opportunities and challenges for the church to be engaged outside its walls.



With Noel Castellanos

Looking forward - focus of work in Guatemala and El Salvador.

First impressions of Guatemala - there are a plethora of mission groups, as well as many Canadian churches connected to various organizations working in Central America, a reminder to us that God uses those who step out of the parking lot and that the diverse gifts that each one of us has been given, will be used by Him. Guatemala has some 45K churches, almost ½ of the population of 16 million people identifying themselves as Christ-followers yet communities face very high levels of poverty, corruption, violence and lack of opportunity for people to live well. As we focus on our mission of **healing a broken world through word and deed**, we look forward to supporting the witness of the local church to be salt and light. Pray that we would connect with churches, leaders and communities in both Guatemala and El Salvador, that we can encourage and support one another through partnership and prayer.



Our friends and church coaches, “the Byrons” ENLACE partner staff in Guatemala, Byron Ramirez & Byron Velasquez

Bolivia

We have just returned from a full week with our colleagues in Bolivia. It was a time for us to reconnect after several months of absence.

Tim and Kallie Hutton took us to the Casa de la Amistad where we met new Bolivian church volunteers now working with the dedicated staff. **Tim and Kallie Hutton** have been tireless supporters of this and all ministries of our church partner, UBB/OBADES.

Bill and Janice Dyck have been working to support a pastor mentoring program that was identified as a significant need by our partner churches but lacked someone to bring it to fruition. Bill has been a catalyst

and today has many key leaders supporting this much needed movement.

Patty Nacho continues to be the face of our Bolivian church family as she cares for SENT teams of Canadian visitors, providing them with unique and deep experiences within Bolivia.

We also visited our own Bolivian church family (Muyurina) and friends. We left feeling encouraged by colleagues who are using their gifts, being stretched and blessed as they do so.

Cuba

Our partner FIBAC, just completed their 30th anniversary celebrations and general assembly. Terry Smith was able to participate as well as members of First Baptist Lethbridge who support FIBAC by attending their general assemblies, providing administrative, musical and physical care through their SENT teams. Pray for this small, yet dynamic fraternity of Baptist churches as we partner together in God's mission in Cuba.

Dominican Republic

The Baptist churches of the DR (IBAREDO) is a small group of churches, dedicated to impacting their community with the gospel and love of Christ. We have started small projects with them as we get to know each other and find ways to help them meet needs in their organization and communities. This year that includes a pastor mentoring effort similar to what Bill is leading in Bolivia and small initiatives working with vulnerable children in a few communities. We will have our first CBM organized SENT team in March, and are hopeful that this can develop into a popular destination for Canadian church teams.

Prayer Requests, Thankfulness and Gratitude

March 23 - April 1 Cuba. *Groups of Hope: Walking with God through difficult times* by Faith Holwyn - Training of Trainers. Pray for the trainers, Judith Mercer, Brenda Halk and Kathleen and for the Cuban church leaders participating that they will be blessed with a sense of renewed hope within themselves and a longing to share that hope with others.

June 1-7 CBM Latin America Team retreat in Guatemala and El Salvador. This gathering will bring together CBM staff from Bolivia (Huttons, Dycks, Patty Nacho), from Costa Rica (David and Suzannah Nacho

and family) and from CBM's Mississauga office (Adrian Gardner, Sharlene Craig). Pray that this will be a time of relationship building, sharing what we have been learning and are excited about, and especially that each one would be encouraged and built up in the work they have been called to do.

We are currently hunting for a reliable vehicle (within our budget ;-)) with which we can safely travel to various areas of Guatemala and El Salvador. Uber works well but long term is not a good option.



Fellow missionaries, Noah and Abby Nehls have been awesome friends coaching us on how to get things done here, as well as giving us their car for the first 3 weeks!

We have felt your prayers as we settle into life in Guatemala, finding safe and well located housing, new friends, dynamic local leaders and a church to be a part of. Thank you for your faithful support and prayers especially in these past months. We thank God we are a part of such a faithful community.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Colossians 3:12

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