

PLANES WITH PURPOSE

News from the Hammitt Family

April 2020

Trusting God's Plan

As we reflect on our time in Bolivia, it is sometimes easy to wonder what we are doing here. We first arrived in Bolivia last August, but had to return to the States in November due to political and social unrest. In January we came back to Bolivia and began the process of getting settled in for the second time in less than six months. After a few weeks, we were finally getting into a routine. Ian and Ella had begun classes at Carachipampa Christian School and were starting to make friends. Aaron and Tara were taking Spanish classes, and Aaron had made enough progress that he could begin flying in April. Our ministry team in Cochabamba was beginning to have regular team meetings, and we were getting settled into a Spanish-speaking church and starting to feel more connected there. We bought a car, and were excited about getting out and experiencing more of Bolivia.

Then the coronavirus hit.

Suddenly, at the end of March, we found ourselves isolated in our home, with most of our new social connections severed. Here in Bolivia, adults from 18–65 years of age may only leave the house one morning per week to pick up supplies; our kids can't leave the house at all. Except with special permission, vehicles are prohibited on the street, so supplies must be carried on foot or by bicycle. For now, the quarantine is planned through April 30, but it will likely be extended.

As you may imagine, this has had a major impact on our lives and on ITM's ministry. Aaron and Tara continue to take Spanish classes via Skype, and Ian and Ella have been receiving homework online. This has proven to be a big challenge, as many of you can relate to. Honestly, dealing with all of this has been a strain on our family relationships at times. It's been difficult to stay focused and motivated, and to know when to push hard and when to back off and give grace to ourselves and our children.

As far as the ministry goes, some discipleship has continued in the villages, but all flights have stopped and our missionaries in the jungle are very isolated. Just as we are studying Spanish, other ITM missionaries are learning indigenous languages in order to better minister to the people in the remote communities of Bolivia.

Though it's hard to understand why the Lord brought us here at this time, we trust that He is using this experience to work in us, and to prepare us for more fruitful ministry when the quarantine is lifted!



Before the quarantine our town of Tiquipaya was hit hard by heavy rain and flooding, affecting many families.



Fortunately the markets have remained stocked throughout the quarantine. We can't always get exactly what we want, but we are staying well-supplied.



Ian and Ella are off to catch the bus on their first day of school! Of course all school is done at home these days.



International Tribal Ministries
201 E. 16th Avenue
Cordele, GA 31015
<http://www.goITM.org>

Contact us or learn more about our ministry:
www.planeswithpurpose.com
mail@planeswithpurpose.com
"Planes With Purpose" on Facebook

We are thankful for:

- ✧ the Spanish-speaking church where we are beginning to make connections.
- ✧ the Lord's provision of a vehicle for our family.
- ✧ progress in Spanish language learning.

Please pray with us for:

- ✧ the continuing process of obtaining the rest of our visas, ID cards, pilot certificates, etc. We also have one passport tied up in immigration until the offices open up again.
- ✧ the country of Bolivia, and our city in particular, as we make our way through the coronavirus pandemic.



This is what social life looks like for a quarantined teenage boy.



Someone can't wait until she can leave the house again!



We celebrated Aliza's second birthday in April. She didn't seem to mind celebrating at home!



We are grateful that Tara thought to bring birthday presents with us from the States!

Growth through Quarantine

Like many people around the world, we have been quarantined since mid-March in response to the threat of COVID-19. During this time of isolation, many people have been sharing through social media how they have taken advantage of the quarantine: to spend more time with their kids, to learn something new, to develop positive habits, to spend more time with the Lord, etc.

For us, it doesn't feel like life has slowed at all. In fact, it seemed to get more hectic after we were put into isolation. It suddenly became difficult to find "alone time"; cooking and cleaning responsibilities doubled; and the stress of figuring out new school routines and expectations seemed to tear at the fabric of our family relationships. The situation has improved somewhat as we have adjusted to this new lifestyle, but it has been a struggle for our family. We were already dealing with the normal stresses of moving to a new culture, adjusting to a new school, finding a church, and creating new social connections—then all of this extra stress was piled on top.

The Lord has certainly been growing us through this experience, but not always in ways that have been

enjoyable. The extra stress has brought to the forefront some issues that had been lurking under the surface. Speaking for myself (Aaron), I have been forced more than once to confront my sin, as I've become easily frustrated and angry with the kids at various times. These words of Paul from Romans 7:21b–25 have resonated with me and also give me hope:

Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

I am so thankful for the grace of God, who does not leave us hopeless in our sinful state. He reaches out to rescue us, then works in our hearts, changing us to be more like Jesus. He takes our burdens, gives us rest, and produces fruit in us as we trust and abide in Him. Thank you, Lord, for your limitless grace, expressed through Christ Jesus!

