

Sept 2015

***"Speak up for the people who have no voice, for the rights of all the down-and-outers. Speak out for justice! Stand up for the poor and destitute!"***  
**Proverbs 31:8-9 (MSG)**

### Greetings from Bolivia

We are privileged to serve in other areas of Latin America as well as Bolivia. In the past few months, we have had the opportunity to travel and be with different churches and community leaders in Bolivia, Cuba and El Salvador. This has helped in our understanding of these communities as well as to begin to understand some of the challenges facing our partners, and especially the opportunities we have to serve together. For us it has been striking to be in churches that differ so much in appearance, and whose members and communities reflect such diverse life experiences while sharing the common focus to be a witness of God's love. 3 church venues.



Church in El Salvador  
Cuba Seminary Chapel



Cuba home church



### Integral Mission- Theory & Practice

Whether in Cuba, Bolivia or El Salvador, or Canada we often talk about Integral Mission (IM) as if everyone understands James 2 and we all apply faith and works consistently across our church communities - not quite the case!

In Bolivia, for the past few months we have worked intentionally with our partner and a few churches to implement small, church-based projects which demonstrate Integral Mission in action. Our idea in supporting church-based initiatives is to encourage church members to reach out beyond their walls to the community. We are doing that by collaborating with all the arms of our partner, the Union of Baptist Churches of Bolivia (UBB), including the UBB central office, the Seminary, the Centre for Integral Mission and OBADES (the development arm of the UBB). Five projects in various areas of Bolivia are being followed closely, providing training in the essentials of IM and accompaniment for effective project management. The partial funding is largely to provide capital for start-up or enhancement of the project, and not operating funds. We insist that the initiatives are church supported and are sustainable on a long-term basis, without external funding.

In Sucre, two young women university students had a heart for vulnerable children in their community. They gather 30-40 kids every Thursday evening for activities that reinforce Christian values, help them with school work, provide encouragement, reinforce positive values and behaviours, and give them a snack. With increased support from the church (and a bit of funding from CBM) they will expand to 2 days per week and provide greater after-school support for children from vulnerable homes where both parents work often until late in the evening.

In the village of Opoqueri, most of the young people have moved to other countries or major centres to find employment, leaving older folks to fend for themselves. Retirement homes are not part of Bolivian society – families generally look after their parents and grandparents. In the absence of other options, in order to meet the needs for proper nutrition, support in the absence of family, housing, literacy, etc., the local church has mobilized to start a church-based centre in Opoqueri. Up to forty older folks gather every day for meals and snacks prepared by volunteers from the church. They can rest at the centre and support one another. The health centre across the road provides basic health services. The goal is to provide full-time

services for the most vulnerable people in the existing centre which includes a large meeting room / dining hall, accommodations and bathroom facilities. CBM funding will be used to finish and furnish the facility to allow some of the most vulnerable to live at the centre.



*Jaime Choque, Director of the Centre for Integral Mission and Melanie Oropeza, coordinator of the Church-based IM project meeting with the people of Opoqueri for a Timothy workshop.*

## Short Term Missions

We strongly believe that hosting STM's encourages and supports local national churches and ultimately the visiting Canadian church to see, touch and understand the Integral Mission work of the local church. In addition to 9 teams coming to Bolivia in 2016, we will have 6 teams travelling to Cuba to learn more about our partner's work and to support them. Please pray that this time will have impact both in Bolivia and Cuba as well as in the Canadian churches participating.

## Cuba

Cuba is a fascinating country with dynamic churches, many of them home churches with diverse challenges and strengths. Prior to the fall of the USSR, Christians were often persecuted and jailed and churches destroyed. Today, while it is difficult to build new church buildings, people are free to meet in home churches to learn more about faith and life in Christ. CBM has been working in Cuba since 2012 through a partnership with the Fraternity of Baptist Churches in Cuba (FIBAC), a group of Baptist churches working together who often have diverse theological positions, who serve diverse populations with some being "relatively" wealthy, urban and educated and others being poor, rural and lacking in education. Our work in

Cuba includes supporting pastoral training and church-based integral mission projects.

## Prayer Requests

- Our developing relationships with our partners in Bolivia, Cuba and our relationships in El Salvador.
- Our colleagues in Bolivia, especially as we work to develop a collaborative team to serve the people, churches, our partners and each other; David and Suzannah Nacho (theological education), Tim and Kallie Hutton (new global field staff working with projects and returning to Bolivia from support raising in Canada - mid October) and Patricia Nacho (STM).
- Our travel time, both in Canada (October) as well as to Cuba and El Salvador in November as we continue to support our CBM partners and programs.

We will be travelling to Canada for a personal trip to see our families in October. We have decided to do this once per year as long as we can manage that as we have aging parents, our two daughter's growing families and our son Ben, finishing university this year. Bruno's father continues to live well with terminal cancer and has been an inspiration as he embraces Jesus each day and continues to reach out to others.

***Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Colossians 3:15***

Bendiciones

Bruno [soucy.bruno@gmail.com](mailto:soucy.bruno@gmail.com)

Kathleen [soucy.kathleen@gmail.com](mailto:soucy.kathleen@gmail.com)

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