



Bolivia Short-Term Mission 2018

Newsletter #4

30 August, 2018



Activity Log

Day 8 (27 August 2018)

Our official “rest day”

1420 Departed for Porvenir visiting the former church of Jose and April attended in Bolivia

1530 Stopped by River Tahuamanu (a side stream of Amazon River)

1650 Visited Mega Proyecto Children Ministry by LIBOPEN (affiliated with CEF in Bolivia)

2000 Dinner with José and April at Cobija

2230 Debriefing and prayers

Day 9 (28 August 2018)

1030 Renovation works in orphanage

1505 Departed for prison

1610 Meeting in prison

1930 Back to orphanage

2100 Debriefing and prayers

Day 10 (29 August 2018)

0830 Breakfast

0935 Orphanage renovation works

1845 Dinner

2025 Discipleship meeting

2300 Debriefing and prayers

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Highlights

by **Mikaella** on August 28

August 27: today was our rest day. After such a busy yet adventurous week from traveling to all sorts of places and working hard with the orphanage, some rest was much needed. After lunch, Jose took us, along with Janessa and Timothy, to Puerto Tahuamanu, a river that connects to the Amazon river! So basically we can all say that we swam in the Amazon! It was a very hot day, so swimming in the cool waters was very refreshing. The beach was also completely empty, so we had the whole beach to ourselves!

Later on we got to watch some Brazilian CEF workers teach some young children at a local church. It was great to see the kids so enthusiastic in participating by singing/dancing along to the songs and eagerly answering the questions about the story of Adam and Eve being told. I pray that these children will continue to come to know Jesus and spiritually grow in Him.

Finally, after walking around the vibrant streets of Cobija, the last on our agenda of the day was to celebrate Ivan's birthday !! We thanked God that April was fully recovered so everyone got together and ate at a family owned pizza restaurant called "3 Fronteras". (meaning the "3 borders" because it was located near where Peru, Brazil and Bolivia connects). They made authentic, freshly stone-oven baked pizza that was truly so delicious. We ended the night dining, singing happy birthday and following the Bolivian tradition of smashing his face onto the cake!



August 28: the main highlight of the day was the prison visit. This was quite the experience. At first, I pictured it to be like what was shown in the movies...Scary, dirty and filled with dangerous people. However, it was a blessing to know it wasn't exactly the case. Though they are prisoners, there are some who have repented and have come to the lord, including the pastor that was an inmate himself for 9 years! The church was built by those christians in the prison by using their own money they have earned. It was surprising to hear that instead of using what little money they have on material things, people have gathered together to build a church to praise and worship God. Once we started the service, about 3-5 prisoners joined us. Fortunately, there was a microphone and speakers that was being used and can be heard by the outside. So despite there being little people actually joining us in the church, God knows and have blessed the hearts of those who were still

listening from the outside. Eventually, more and more people came in and joined the service. In particular, one mother who visited her son in the prison decided to come in with her son as well. The mother was very touched by the message given by Richard on God's mercy and love. She prayed for her son to ask for forgiveness and follow Christ. So we continue to ask for your prayers as well in hopes of her son to genuinely put his trust and have faith in God so he can grow and improve himself as a child of God. Ultimately, the prison visit was a very eye opening experience. I thank God that we were able to minister and share some testimonies to them. I pray that those prisoners will come to realize that though they may be physically bounded in prison, they will be spiritually free and have everlasting life with God in heaven.

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We've Got Companies

by **Edwin** on August 30

It is now 11 days into the mission trip, and it seems to me that the team has been showing enormous capacity to adapt to the seemingly harsh environment.

We have virtually no more complaint about cold showers, no more screaming when the truck goes over bumpy ramps, and as far as I know, no more mishandling of toilet paper in the toilet (it should be placed in the bin after used).

Of course, the environment is harsh only to us foreigners. It is perfectly fine for the locals.

Bugs and insects are still a challenge to most of us. I have been one of the least 'assaulted' victims. Other team members are less fortunate. Indeed, their willingness to put up with the bugs touches my hearts. Sisters are generally more scared by them. I am impressed by their showing of tremendous courage while facing alien species, in different shapes and colours, crawling or flying, some in XXL sizes.

One of the touching moments to me was when we were performing the Bible drama in the State Home last week. At one point, we the Israelites were supposed to play sick lying down on the ground (I myself was exempted due to the role I played). As soon as the team members hit the deck, they realized that they had 'companies'. There were bugs all over the place. They were invisible but you could feel them biting you. Rather than jumping up immediately, the team members were determined to keep the drama going. They stayed put in their positions until the time they were supposed to get up.

During the entire trip, I am seeing team members stretching their own limits physically, mentally, and spiritually. The Lord gives us the strength and power to adapt and to overcome things that we could not have imagined we could overcome before. Praise the Lord!



Love Stories in Bolivia

by **Ivan** on August 30

Couple's Love:

By spending more time with April and Jose, we truly believe they are perfectly matched by our Lord. April is very efficient, cheerful and enthusiastic. Jose is very calm, gentle and strong. Not only the characters are perfectly matched to cover their strengths and weaknesses between this couple. We also found out that April's dad's kidney was transplanted from Jose a while ago. I can see the sacrificial love between this couple in the Lord, and this surely reminds me our

Lord's greatest Love toward us. "Behold, you are fair, my Love! The Beloved!..."

Brothers and sisters' Love:

Comparing to the local Bolivians home, our orphanage is a very luxury home. We have clean water tap, hot/ cold shower stalls, flush toilets, fridge, ceiling fans, kitchen cabinets and nice ceramic tile floor etc. However, 11 STM members who are living under the same roof, may still be a challenge. We all have different characters. We all have some little things that wish to hold on without changing. If I could pick all team members on my own, I may not pick this combination of people. A STM member shared she felt like each member was hand-picked by our Lord on the very first night we lived in the orphanage. In fact, it is very true! What we think was good may not be what God wanted us to learn. We all need to be more considerate to each other and understand everyone may grow up in different backgrounds and standards. In fact, we are all just a sinner who was saved by grace. "Love is patience, Love is kind, Love is not jealous..."

Mother's Love

One of our STM member, we called her "Mom" because she was the one who organize the meals and chores for us. She make sure our kitchen was nicely organised and clean. One day we swam on the river in the Amazon. There were lots of mosquitoes there because of the river. After we were having fun, "Mom" just stood still, stretch out her arms to hold up the towels, just to cover up the girls to change. Just a few minutes, her arms probably had over 100 of mosquito bites. We teased "Mom" who sacrificed herself for the girls just like our Lord. "For my flesh is good indeed, and my blood is drink indeed..."

God's Love

People may think Bolivia is such a poor country. There may be no beauty come out of it at all. In here, I saw the beautiful sunrise and

sunset. The most starry sky that I have ever seen before. Although the hot sun in the daytime can be intolerable, the sincerity and smile of the people in the village can be very heart melting. In such hot equator regions, the underground water design from our Lord is truly a sign of His wisdom and love. How can a person survive without water? God designed to have infinite supply of water just under people's house. What more caring than our wonderful Lord who created the heavens and the earth? "God so love the world..."



Experience and Sharing

by **Richard** on August 30

¡Felicidades! Ivan - Aug 27 is Ivan's birthday and it's also our official "rest day" in the new schedule (Good News Club has been moved to Thursday). Since we are in Bolivia, we decided to follow the tradition here for birthday boy - throwing him into the river! After that, we have the chance to see the Mega Proyecto Children Ministry by LIBOPEN (affiliated with CEF in Bolivia). This is the annual child evangelism ministry in Bolivia, and coincidentally they are in the Pando department in these 2 weeks. We met the missionaries and children ministry workers there and saw their energy and enthusiasm in teaching the children the words of God; I truly thank the Lord for He's good and wonderful in placing His servants to evangelize the people in different parts of the world for His glory.

Praise the Lord!! - Our original thought of "prison visit" was just a "tour" visit. When April picked us up for the visit, she suddenly asked who would share the testimony and who would preach the message. Even though it's unexpected, I felt the urge to share my testimony and God's words in the prison. Thanks God that 2 other brothers are also compelled to share their life testimonies. Praise the Lord! We see God's grace in the whole prison visit from the beginning to the end: knowing the pastor of the "prison church"; hymns leading by a brother who's a former inmate; the Christian inmates serving in the Lord; the other inmates joining the meeting etc.. After the meeting, out of our expectation, two inmates came out to believe in Jesus Christ! Glory to

the Lord! We all give thanks to God for we see the power of the Gospel. The mother of one of the two inmates would like to invite all of us to her home for dinner in the weekend. We would love to go, but we will be busy on both Saturday and Sunday. Jose and April will visit the mother and follow up with the two inmates.



Saved by Grace! - After another day of hard working in the orphanage, we had the discipleship class in the evening at the porch of a sister's home. Not only our testimony and devotional sharing, the local brothers and sisters had also shared theirs as well: Ruben had expelled by his dad for his faith; Lorgio gave up his profitable alcohol business for the Lord; Giovana left her strong Catholicism and took up the opposition from her family to follow Jesus; and a 9-year old Marco shared how he decided to follow Jesus from the Good News Club and

wants to serve the Lord one day. What a beautiful pictures of life changes in the Lord!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” II Corinthians 5:17

Prayer Requests

1. Thanksgiving:

- Unexpected testimony sharing and preaching opportunities in the prison. Two inmates came to believe in Jesus Christ after the meeting and Jose prayed with them for their decisions.
- STM members' sicknesses are getting better with medications (i.e. allergic reaction from 60+ mosquitos bites, stomach upset, headaches, heat stroke and fatigue).

2. The true faith in the two inmates' lives and the follow up works by Jose and April

3. The complete recovery from our injuries and sicknesses

4. Good News Club and soccer ministry in the community (Aug 30) with drama and testimony sharing by Bonnie, Christie and Mikaella.

5. Chinese workers camp visit on Saturday (Sep 1)

6. Safety and wisdom in completing the renovation works in the orphanage.

