



CBM
embracing a broken world
through word & deed

MINISTRY UPDATE

The Soucys in Latin America

December 2016

"The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through him..." John 1:9,10

Jireh Project

Anniversary celebrations are an important part of preparing for "summer vacation" and the Christmas season. At Jireh, a church based ministry to working children and their families, children received books for their new library. Colleagues Tim and Kallie Hutton spearheaded this initiative as they work alongside our partners. As a librarian, Tim is committed to supporting a reading culture especially among children, much to the delight the families attending the year end party!



Reflections on the Canadian Church

From early September until early November we were privileged to travel to some 20+ churches in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. We thank the many people who hosted us along the way and who received us warmly.

We began our first week in the CBM office attending a staff day with Rich Birch www.unseminary.com who shared his understanding of church growth (or decline), effective ministry practices and success stories of churches which have changed to reach this generation.

We saw many of those examples in our subsequent travels. We are excited to see churches who are **moving outside their walls**, interacting with people outside their church family. We saw older congregations who chose to sell their building in order to free up resources to engage their community. We saw food banks, weekly dinners for needy people, programming for kids who would not get wholesome play and education otherwise, job skills training, substance abuse counselling and support, and sometimes the church building just being a warm place to hang out, talk, drink coffee and relate.

We often speak about men and women having a God-shaped hole that only God can fill. We believe that God also created us with a relationship-shaped hole that only relationships with others can fill.

Bolivia Happenings

Back in Bolivia, we are in the last days before **summer vacation**. During the first week of December each year Baptist pastors from all over the country gather (this year at the Seminary in Cochabamba) to take part in a week of continuing education. The theme for this year's program has been **Strengthening the Family** with daily sessions on family topics and evenings set aside to focus on evangelism based on relationship and friendship, and how to be Godly church leaders. Our UBB partner pastors are challenged to have healthy relationships as they balance the demands of caring for the church, their families and themselves (not unlike pastors anywhere). As pastors and church leaders desire to invest in a personal evangelism based in meaningful relationships, the speakers and sharing time has given much needed space for each participant to reflect and consider new possibilities.

We are thankful to be continually learning from our Bolivian friends and our colleagues both in Bolivia and Canada as we work through life and faith.

Water Crisis

We know things are difficult when Bolivia makes the CBC news! Lack of rain is causing grief in many parts of the country and long-term relief is not evident, even with the recent start of rains. We happen to live in a house with a water tank, and have the means to purchase water as we need it. As often happens, those on the margins do not have tanks and purchasing water is a hardship.

Traditional Bolivian religion includes a reverence for and worship of “mother Earth”. However, there are many examples of a lack of reverence for the earth given the manner in which water and soils are managed, natural resources exploited and wastes disposed of.

Bolivia is facing the worst drought in many year. No doubt some of the issues are related to global warming and factors outside of the control of Bolivians. What an opportunity for the Bolivian Church to step up and speak up for creation care and stewardship of God’s creation! We hope to have more conversations on that topic in the coming year and help raise awareness and knowledge of our responsibilities as Christian to take a leadership role in using the resources entrusted to us.

Prayer Requests, Thankfulness and Gratitude

- For wisdom in working in culturally appropriate ways, with individuals, partner staff, church members and leaders in addressing care of creation issues
- For wisdom and good health as we continue to travel and develop deeper relationships with our partners in Bolivia, El Salvador, Cuba and new areas of Latin America
- For family in Canada – parents, children and grandchildren

Thank you for being with us through your prayers, your presence and your commitment to financially support us. Through you, we have been encouraged and comforted by God's love.

As you enter the Christmas season, may you experience the Joy found only in God’s presence.

You make known to me the path of life, you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Psalms 16:11

Bendiciones

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