

Bentleys' Update – Jan '25

Dear Friends,

We trust God has given to each of you a wonderful Christmas time of remembering all that the Father has done for us in sending His son Jesus to be Emmanuel, our Savior and the risen Lord. As we embark on this New Year, may God's grace and goodness guide us each step of the year.



One of the highlights of our past couple of months in Cochabamba was an incredible Christmas play that the children of Fundación Emanuel, the outreach to children at risk in Cochabamba, put on in a local church. We wish you could have been there with us. Fundación Emanuel had the kids' mothers involved in getting together and making costumes for their children. They did a superb job with outfitting the kids as the various characters of the Christmas story, and the kids worked very hard and long to present the play and Christmas carols.

Not all that transpired in our time in Bolivia, this time, was as great as the play. Late one Sunday afternoon, as darkness fell, Lucinda and I headed out of the apartment we were staying at for a walk. Across the street a gang of men were loading furniture onto a truck. "That's strange for a Sunday evening" we thought. Then it dawned on us that they were loading the furniture from what is a property of SIM mission (where we lived over the past years several times). Long story short, we had someone call the police and I whipped out my cell phone to take pictures of the men, their truck, even the *license plate* of the truck, etc – from 30 feet away. The men noticed they were being observed and "departed henceforth". They only managed to get about half of the furniture, as we had interrupted them in the midst of their thievery. End of story, as in, the police came, we gave them the pictures, and... no one has heard from the police since.

Lucinda and I returned from Bolivia just a few days before Christmas. Goretty Jora, the Director of Fundación Emanuel, traveled with us to Miami and on to our place in NC. She traveled over the past weekend to share in the church in Kittery, Maine where our son, James, is youth and young adult pastor. We picked her up from her return flight and then took her back to a different airport the following day for flights to CA where she'll be sharing more about the outreach to children and visiting friends. We'll pick her up from the airport on Saturday, and she'll spend another nine days with us before heading back to Bolivia. Please pray for Goretty in this challenging time. Let me explain further -

Christmas morning, here in NC, Goretty received a WhatsApp call from Bolivia. In her absence, a gang broke into her house – cut the electrical wires to disable the alarm, broke down the door, and cleaned out her house. And I mean cleaned out her house. Same story as above, but they weren't interrupted. They got everything. You can imagine how difficult that is in any circumstance. Goretty is trying to deal with it via WhatsApp – someone to repair the entrance and door, someone to stay in the house, etc. Please pray for Goretty in what is an emotional and logistically difficult time, dealing with the robbery at the same time that she directs the multiple facets of the children's ministry (start of new school year, taking on additional children in the program, beginning construction on the new property that will house the expanding ministry, sharing the Good News with the kids and parents to impact what is a very needy context, etc).

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Please pray also for a strategic meeting I will be holding next week as the Regional Leader of the Americas Region in Pioneers. Due to the continued growth of teams in outreach in both North and South America, along with the Region's Area Leaders and International leadership of Pioneers we need to examine how to expand leadership capacity to embrace the growth and best provide leadership for the 45+ teams/260+ people in outreach. The present global context of exponential migration is leading to increasing opportunities and openness to engage more unreached people groups and places in both continents. Pray that God enables us to embrace the needs in more fields that are white unto the harvest.

In Christ's love,

Paul & Lucinda

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Herod and his soldiers



Watching your flocks by night
sometimes requires eyeglasses