



The Blackburns

Mike and Leslie

Hello from the Blackburns,



November/December 2025

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us John 1:14

We arrived back in Bolivia on November 17th after our short trip to Virginia. We enjoyed a very relaxing Thanksgiving here with the Murray family, then spent the following few days preparing to be on our own as they returned to North Carolina for a few months. Christmas for us was unlike any that either of us has experienced before. We know our frame of reference is directly related to expectations. Every element of a season works together to bring back and helps make new memories. The weather/temperature, smells and sounds were all different this year.

Throughout December we were preparing for January's Vacation Bible School sessions with 5 different ministries/locations. As each church looks forward to their 3-day outreach, this will be the first VBS for each of the two new children's clubs – the one we have been working with since August and the other that was started by one of the church plants just a few weeks ago. We are excited to see what impact this special event will have within each ministry, especially on the kids' clubs. It will be a busy month with the first VBS on January 2nd with Iglesia Bautista Araigua in Ivitipora, 2.5 hours south of the city.

With the help of Change the World Relief Organization, we participated in a special Christmas celebration time with the children and moms in the Valparaíso neighborhood. There were the usual activities plus a full meal served and a gift for each child. Obviously, attendance was higher than normal that day but just this last Saturday there were nearly 30 children who came for the normal weekly session. Praise the Lord for the faithful ones who continue to attend. A mom whom I had not seen before came for the Christmas meal and she came back last week! Every week they are hearing of a faithful God who loves them.

Right before Christmas, Bolivia's new president implemented several historic changes to the economic structure of the country. The most impactful one at the moment is the removal of all fuel subsidies. We filled up immediately upon hearing the news hoping to get the old price. The next day, after siphoning some from our tank, we filled up again and paid nearly double per liter. Anticipating the snowball effect, we did some grocery shopping in an effort to avoid other price increases. This administration's decisions have understandably made citizens very upset. The resulting outrage has been more obvious in other parts of the country than here in Santa Cruz. The most visible issue here was with the public bus lines – drivers took advantage of the situation and tried to double their rate. Compromises had to be made on both sides to halt a 4-day strike and get some of the buses back on the road.

The inflation of 2025 and the additional rise to come will put many Bolivians in extreme financial distress. While it is painful, hopefully it will be relatively short-lived and ultimately mean Bolivia will begin reentry into international commerce while sustaining itself in a more productive autonomous way.

We want you to know that we count on your prayers each and every day. Please continue to pray for us as we enter 2026 and approach our 1-year anniversary of being in Bolivia. All to His Glory!

Sincerely,

Mike & Leslie Blackburn

Serving With Church-Planters in Bolivia

Visit "Blackburns to Bolivia"
Facebook group for
photos/detailed updates

"...with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;" Philippians 1:27