



Planes with Purpose

An Update from the Hammitt Family

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Big Changes Coming in 2019!

Since 2014 we have been serving with MMS Aviation while Aaron gains the training and experience to be deployed internationally as a missionary pilot-mechanic. MMS has been training missionary *mechanics* since 1975, but Aaron is the first pilot to receive *flight training* through MMS's apprenticeship program. Now that the apprenticeship is complete, we will be transitioning to another mission organization this spring, and make our international move as early as this summer.

We are still in the midst of the application process, but our family is currently feeling led toward service with International Tribal Ministries. We recently returned from a vision trip to Cochabamba, Bolivia, where we spent a week with Tony and Joanna Murrin of ITM. There are many things that excite us about their ministry, including the focus on church planting and discipleship among unreached people, and the fact that most of the staff families are from Bolivia. Through Aaron's role as a pilot-mechanic, he would be supporting Bolivian nationals who are reaching their own people with the gospel, and supporting the local church. Tara and the rest of the family would also have opportunities to encourage the "front line" ITM missionaries, support short-term teams from Bolivia and the United States, and contribute in other ways to the work that God is doing through ITM in Bolivia.

To see additional photos and read more about our trip, please check out our blog at <http://blog.planeswithpurpose.com>! We will also continue to post updates as we know more in the coming weeks and months. Thanks for your prayers through this long process, and continuing to lift us up as we make these important decisions!

Three Weeks in Mexico

This past November, Aaron completed his apprenticeship with MMS Aviation. The final three weeks of his training were spent in Mexico, where he served as an intern at UIM Aviation's base in Tepic. The goal of the internship was to get some advanced training in the Cessna 206, and to experience the day-to-day life of a missionary pilot.

During the three weeks in Mexico, Aaron logged about 20 flight hours in UIM's Turbo 206. The first few flights were focused on training, giving him the chance to get comfortable with the airplane and with UIM's procedures. Once the training flights were complete, Aaron made several ministry flights with Clif and Dave, two of UIM's pilots in Tepic. For the majority of the flights, Aaron was flying in the left seat (the pilot's seat) under the supervision of Clif or Dave in the right seat. He had the opportunity to fly into several unimproved mountain airstrips of increasing difficulty, honing his short- and rough-field landing technique.

After so many years of preparation, Aaron really enjoyed the opportunity to fly ministry flights for the first time. The internship with UIM was a great experience and renewed his motivation to keep moving toward our goal of serving cross-culturally in missionary aviation.



We had the opportunity to visit San Lorenzo and meet several ITM missionaries serving there.



The Sierra Madre of Mexico provided a very different flying experience than the Piedmont of North Carolina!



Clif, one of the UIM pilots, unloads drinking water from the cargo pod. I flew multiple flights to this town that was devastated by Hurricane Willa.

Prayer Points

We give thanks for...

- ... a great trip to Bolivia.
- ... the completion of Aaron's apprenticeship with MMS Aviation.

Please join us in praying for...

- ... our application process with ITM, and that the Lord would continue to give wisdom to us and the ITM leadership.
- ... our upcoming transition to Bolivia, or wherever the Lord directs us.
- ... provision for the additional monthly and one-time financial needs that we will face over the next several months.

Kids' Corner



The first leg of our travel to Bolivia included a 14-hour car ride to Miami. Aliza did great in the car (and in the airplane)!



While in Cochabamba we visited one of the schools that Ian and Ella could attend. We know that the transition will be hard for them, but it's a blessing to have the option of a good school.



Being in Bolivia the week before Christmas, it was nice that the mission house was decorated for the holidays.

It's Not About the Airplanes

If you spend time in the missionary aviation community, it won't be long before you hear such phrases as, "It's not about the airplanes!" or "The airplane is just a tool for ministry." I believe that these statements are true, and most of the people who say such things are sincere. But when you spend day after day focused on the nuts and bolts (or rivets and cables?) of airplanes—maintaining them, flying them, or studying how to operate and repair them—it can be hard not to be "all about the airplanes."

The first time I met Tony from International Tribal Ministries, I was serving in Coshocton, Ohio as an apprentice with MMS Aviation. I don't remember why he was visiting or exactly what he shared that morning, but I do remember thinking, "This is a person who really loves the Lord and wants to please Him." From that day on, I have thought of Tony as someone that I might like to serve alongside some day. So as the end of my apprenticeship drew near, it only made sense that we would contact ITM about whether they were in need of additional staff to serve in their aviation ministry.

As it turns out, they have been praying for more people to join the work in Bolivia, so we also began praying about whether the Lord would have us serve alongside them. In December 2018, our family was finally able to make a visit to see the ministry first-hand.

ITM is a small organization, and although they have several ministry areas, their focus is building the Church, the Body of Christ, in a region of Bolivia where many people have not

heard the Good News. We like the fact that each facet of their ministry—radio, aviation, Bible training, and medical relief—centers around people coming to know Jesus and being disciplined as followers of Christ. This is really what we should be about as His ambassadors!

Ironically, I sometimes shy away from saying that. But why? Maybe it's because Jesus is an offense and a stumbling block to those who reject Him (see 1 Peter 2:8, 1 Corinthians 1:23). Even in Christian missions it is much easier to talk about clean water, medical care, and fighting human trafficking. Few people—even outside the Church—have a problem with those things. But acknowledging our own depravity or the Lordship of Jesus? That can be a good way to turn someone off quickly!

As Christ's Body we have the opportunity to show genuine compassion to the world around us, and we should certainly do that! But we can't neglect the *most* important thing because we're afraid of offending someone or being "unfriended" on Facebook by a person who doesn't care to be confronted by Jesus Christ.

As we interacted with the families who serve with ITM, we were impressed by their dedication to the Lord and their desire to see His name proclaimed among unreached people in Bolivia. We met national believers who had given up their comfortable lives in the city to go to unfamiliar and uncomfortable places so that others may know Jesus. It would be a pleasure to serve alongside them, and to join them in the work of making Christ known among the unreached of Bolivia!

We serve with

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