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Shank Update - January 2026

1 message

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"Dios-idades" - God's Hand

In some circles, people like to use the term "Dios-idades" ("God-incidences"), instead of coincidences, to describe what God is doing around us. We are privileged to serve and join in on what God is doing!

In these past couple of weeks, we are seeing God's hand in a couple of clear ways. One day, we were out at a food court with friends from our missional community from our church, and ran into a young guy (Andrés) that Mike used to meet with semi-regularly. Andrés had not been walking with the Lord for over a year, but in the past couple of weeks, Mike has been meeting with him a couple of times a week to exercise, talk, and pray together as he returns to following Jesus!

"La Travesía" - Journey Groups

Another "God-incidence" that we are reflecting on is seeing how God puts pieces together, and has been answering our prayers about so many things, in

HIS timing and in HIS way. Last Saturday, we got the chance to help coordinate an all-day "Spark" workshop for Life-on-Life Discipleship [Journey Groups](#), working together with our friends from [La Paz Project](#) (Greg & Faith Hurst from SIM, as well as Osvaldo & Alejandra from their church in La Paz). There were 7 churches from Santa Cruz represented (across denominations) who are interested in implementing Journey Groups together. Journey Groups are a tool that God is using to help Christians live out the Gospel, apply it to our own hearts in daily living, and make disciples who will make disciples. We are planning to implement Journey Groups at our church this year, and Mike is seeking to support the pastors and churches who are hoping to start Journey Groups as well.

More Gospel Friendships

The pastors Mike has been meeting with on Fridays have been so encouraged by meeting together and working to apply the Gospel in our own context and ministry, that we have invited others to start up another cross-denominational pastors' group. Mike is facilitating this group, initially, but the hope is that these types of spaces for pastors to walk together and sharpen one another would grow and bear fruit in our city. Please pray for Ruddy, Daniel, Franklin, Eliud, and Agustín, that they would grow in friendship in Christ and that Lord would sustain them and bear fruit in their lives, families, and ministries.

What's Happening with Amparo?

In a [previous newsletter](#), Marina shared about her involvement with Amparo. Unfortunately, the girls in the Amparo House have been passing the chicken pox around to one another, and their social interaction has been pretty limited for a couple of weeks. Please pray for them as they emerge from their chicken pox quarantine, and gear up to start school again in February (they are on summer break). Please also pray for God to provide more English teachers for the girls as Marina will be pausing her English teaching in a few weeks as we get close to our baby boy's arrival.



Greg and Osvaldo sharing at the "Spark" Workshop for Journey Groups Discipleship Kickoff



Mike encouraging some pastors and churches to participate in Journey Groups



Meeting with pastors and leaders to cast vision for starting new group walking together in Gospel Friendships



Visiting another church for their Christmas Eve Service, together with some friends from our church!



Marina's latest prenatal visit with Dr. Marilyn!

OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

Please praise and pray with us!

- **Praise God for His faithfulness, provision, and grace.**
- **Praise for what God is doing in continuing to open doors for Gospel friendships across denominations.**
- **Pray for God to use these Gospel friendships for greater collaboration and Gospel transformation in Bolivia, and for God to raise up more workers!**
- **Pray for churches in Santa Cruz and La Paz who are looking to start Journey Groups this year, that the Lord would use this as a tool to make disciple-makers and raise up servant leaders.**
- **Pray for Mike as he travels Jan 28th-31st to [Torre Fuerte](#) in Chochis to speak at a Camp for Indigenous Youth Leaders ([FRALIC Juvenil](#)). Please pray that God would work in hearts to renew these young leaders and workers!**
- **Pray for the [Amparo](#) girls as they finish up vacation and start school - that they would know Christ and be rooted in Him, and for more English teaching support**

as Marina will step back for a time when the baby is born.

- *Pray for Andrés and other men and women we are walking with, that they would grow up into maturity in Christ!*
- *Pray Colossians 2:2-4 for us - that we would be thankful, steadfast in prayer, have open doors to share the Gospel, and share boldly by the Holy Spirit.*
- *Pray for us as a family, for health, the birth (Marina is due at the end of March), homeschooling, and the upcoming transition to having 3 kids!*

In Christ,

The Shanks

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*To give online to partner with us as a family, please click the **red box** below.*

*If you would like to give online to partner with the Gospel Ecosystem Movement as a project, please click the **black box** below.*

*You may also make a check payable to South America Mission and write our account number "Account #10548" (for support for us as a family) or "Account #77474 Gospel Ecosystem Bolivia" in the memo line and mail it to SAM's US office:
1021 Maxwell Mill Rd, Suite B, Fort Mill, SC 29708.*

Thank you for your prayer, encouragement, and partnership with us in the Gospel!

Click to Join Shank Support Team

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How To Contact Us

To contact us, please email or message us on WhatsApp. We would love to talk to you personally about what God is doing in Bolivia and how you can get involved!

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South America Mission

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