

EL CHAIRO BOLIVIANO

The Bolivian Stew



NORTH CAROLINA SYNOD ASSEMBLY
LENOIR-RHYNE UNIVERSITY, HICKORY, NC

PASTOR JUSTIN & KARI ELLER

Justin and I began our home assignment at the North Carolina Synod Assembly with a "mission moment" addressed to everyone.

HEY! REMEMBER US?

It's been quite a while since I published the last newsletter and I bet many of you are wondering, "What happened?" To begin to answer that question, we didn't forget you and yes, we are still working in Bolivia! April and May were full of visits, meetings, special events, the national IELB assembly, teaching and of course, preparing for home assignment. I honestly think that we didn't sit down very much and then we came to visit some of you! June and July were our home assignment months and we spent the time traveling all around the U.S. meeting everyone and decided the best way to stay in contact was to publish pictures as we went from one congregation to the next on the website. Before home assignment, I can honestly say that I felt I knew a lot more about other countries than my own, but now I have great pictures to share with my English students from all over the U.S. and can even say I have seen "Big sky country!" After two months of traveling, Justin and I spent two weeks with family on vacation in August and then headed back to Bolivia to begin the next two years of our journey. It is now September and we are fully adjusted, settled back into our routine and working on clarifying our job description for the next two years with the IELB. Time has flown and seems to just keep flying for us, but the time has definitely come to share what we've done with you! Blessings to you all, you are still very much remembered and loved! *Kari*

SEPTEMBER 12, 2011

Monthly Events

April and May



- IELB National Assembly
- English Penpal Party
- Sunday School Professors' Meetings
- IELB Directive Council Meeting
- ISEAT Meeting with the Rector
- Maundy Thursday Celebration
- Skype Conferences
 - Teaching Church History I and English I
 - Finishing Lutheran module meetings
 - ISEAT Academic Community Presentation
- Lutheran Students' Meeting
- Visit from Raquel Rodríguez and David Wunsch
- Capacitation Workshop for CEBIPAS Professors
- Preparing for Home Assignment 2011



IELB National Assembly- Choquenaira, Viacha District, Bolivia



Every four years, the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church has its national assembly with elections for its Directive Council. This year, Maija Kuoppala from Finland, Patricia Cuyatti from Switzerland, David Wunsch from Argentina and Marianne Wagner from Germany also came in for the event to make sure that the election was fair and good order was followed. Each ballot during the voting

for the Directive Council was verified by five different people before the vote was counted. A new representational vote also passed which stated that the Directive Council of the IELB was to be representative of the districts. In other words, the Directive Council could not be only people from the District of La Paz, but needed to people from the ten different districts. This

representational vote did make voting more complicated because each district could only have one person in office and therefore, they had to decide which candidate they wanted most in office and in what position. However, as you see below, there is representation from six different districts in the new Directive Council and it will be interesting to see the results of this vote over the next two years.

President:

Pastor Emilio Aslla Flores, District- La Paz

Vice President:

Pastor Emilio Mendoza, District- Viacha

Secretary of Development:

Antonio Rivamontán, District- Cochabamba

Secretary of Education:

Pastor Simón Callari, District- Lago

Secretary of Mission:

Pastor Dionicio Calle, District- Caranavi

Treasurer:

Oscar Camargo, District- Sorata

Presenting the New Directive Council of the IELB



OTHER APRIL AND MAY ACTIVITIES

English Club Penpal Party

To celebrate receiving letters back from our penpals in Franklin, NC, the students and I had a small party (rice krispies included!) to read the letters and talk about similarities and differences in the U.S. and Bolivia.



A Special Visit

On May 16, 2011, Raquel Rodríguez, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Desk Coordinator for the Global Mission Unit of the ELCA visited the IELB and ISEAT along with David Wunsch, ELCA LAC Regional Representative.



Is this a "mug shot?"

No! It's a picture of one of the Sunday School Professors from the District of La Paz posing for her first library card to the seminary. Having a library card will allow her access to thousands of books at ISEAT that she can use to do research and prepare lessons. The card also permits her to use the Internet on the computers in the library and to make photocopies at a discounted price.



English I Skype Conversation

As a culminating activity, students from my ISEAT English I class spoke with Kelly and Erin Zalinsky from Salisbury, NC. We would all like to say a big thank you to them for their time!

ISEAT Academic Community Life Presentation on Communication

Communication is not just sending emails and having access to Skype; it is being a part of a network of people. Professors from ISEAT during our presentation had to draw their job (it's a lot harder to do than you'd think!) and explain what they do within ISEAT and external agencies.

Maundy Thursday Celebration

Pastor Erlini Tola-Medina and Pastor Maritza Castañeta celebrate Holy Communion, a remembrance of the night when Jesus washed the disciples' feet and broke bread with them during the last supper.



Capacitation Workshop for CEBIPAS Professors

CEBIPAS is an outreach program of ISEAT in collaboration with the IELB that brings the professors to the students in rural areas. Justin and I had a chance to work with the professors and other interested individuals in the areas of pedagogy and lutheran identity. The professors will be using Justin's new module, "Towards Our Bolivian Lutheran Identity: Doctrine and Theology."



HOME ASSIGNMENT 2011

There are WAY too many pictures from our travels in June and July to share with you in a newsletter. Below is just a sampling of the many congregations and places we visited. Please see the Home Assignment 2011 link on the webpage for more pictures and video!



Monthly Events

June and July

Our home assignment journey went a little something like this:

- Salisbury, NC to
- Franklin, NC to
- Hickory, NC to
- Raleigh, NC to
- York, PA to
- Meriden, CT to
- Washington, D.C. to
- Hickory, NC to
- Salisbury, NC to
- Libby, MT to
- Great Falls, MT to
- Billings, MT to
- Grand Forks, ND to
- Chicago, IL to
- Kenosha, WI to
- Dallas, NC to
- Kings Mountain, NC to
- Salisbury, NC

8,000+ Miles Driven

16+ visits in 9 Sundays

Thank you to everyone who helped to make our home assignment possible and wonderful! You are the best!

ACTIVITIES

17th Anniversary of ISEAT Celebration

This year ISEAT celebrated its 17th anniversary with a worship service, lunch and special presentation. Justin read the Gospel and we both met Roberto Zwetsch, an intensive course professor on mission and compassion.



ISEAT Academic Community Life Meeting

Once a month, ISEAT staff gathers together to discuss relevant topics to the life of the community. This month, the topic of discussion was gender and we took a small field trip to “Mujeres Creando” or “Women Creating” an organization located in the same neighborhood as the seminary. There we watched two video clips and discussed afterwards the rights and expectations of women in Bolivian society and according to religion.



“To think is extremely feminine.”
This phrase was spray painted on the wall inside “Women Creating.”



Feminine Hermeneutic Workshop

After attending a week-long workshop by Elizabeth Schussler-Firoenza on “Decolonizing Ourselves” in May in Cochabamba, César Antezana and Bea Jurado replicated the workshop for those who were interested but not able to attend. Justin and I had the honor to be a part of this workshop and to participate in many discussions on gender, social class and the Bible.



Our workshop facilitators, César Antezana and Bea Jurado

Qhatu Libro

This year marked the second year of the Qhatu Libro or Book Fair in ISEAT. Students and organizations came together to sell used and new books at a discounted price making religious books more accessible for all.



Monthly Events

August and September

- 17th Anniversary of ISEAT Celebration
- IELB and ISEAT Presentation of our Travels
- Feminine Hermeneutic Workshop
- Teaching English II and Worship and Liturgy and Greek I
- ISEAT Academic Community Life Meeting
- District Presidents’ Meeting
- Qhatu Libro
- Skype Conferences

Did you know...

that in addition to working with the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church Justin and I have new projects from the ELCA?

My project is called “Capacitating God’s People.” I will be working with global and local teams of Christian Educators in Latin America and the Caribbean in capacitation to promote the publication of contextualized resources and to create a network where resources can be shared.

Justin’s project is called “Lutheran Identity in Context” and he will be exploring alternatives for theological education throughout Latin America and the Caribbean using technology.

District Presidents' Meeting

Important Information

When the district presidents come into the central office of the IELB it's a big deal. Many of them often have to travel for four to twelve hours by bus to meet. They have meetings once every three months where they talk about events happening in their congregations and issues concerning their districts. They also come for training and fellowship. Pastor President Emilio Aslla asked Justin and I to be in charge of their training this quarter for the two themes of "What does it mean to be Church?" and "Stewardship."

"What does it mean to be Church?"

Justin facilitated this theme on day 1 by looking at answers to this question on three different levels: level 1- What

does the Bible say about Church in 1 Corinthians 1: 1-10 as a whole group, level 2- What does it mean to you to be Church? individually and level 3- What does the Augsburg Confession say it means to be Church? in small groups. He ended the day with a inner circle/ outer circle discussion about topics affecting the IELB today.

"Stewardship"

For the theme of stewardship on day 2, I started with the definition "the good administration of your own or others goods." We then looked to several verses in the Bible to define in more detail the word stewardship and decided that at the heart of it all was the word caring. Next, we defined the words utilizing, caring for and taking advantage of and talked about which of the three the IELB does more of in its

congregations, districts and on a national level. I wanted the brothers (and one sister) to leave with a practical view of stewardship, so together, we created in two hours a "new congregation" with only the people we had in the room keeping in mind good stewardship. We took into account things like: the pastor's salary, a rotating schedule for those leading worship, giving space to the youth to participate in worship, ways to share responsibilities like cleaning, providing financial support not only for the church, but also on a district and national level, how to report tithes and offerings, saving money for the future, ways to train members, etc. While our "new congregation" was only one model, it brought to light many questions and challenged everyone to think about new ways of being Church.



BECOMING A CHOLITA BOLIVIANA- A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Step 1- Put on slip and belt



Step 2- Put on three more slips



Step 3- Put on skirt



Step 4- Put on shirt



Step 5- Put on hat and hold borrowed baby



Step 6- Take off hat because you remember that you forgot your earrings and that your hair needs to be braided



Step 7- Pose for picture



Step 8- Learn how to dance the morenada and smile with a very good friend



We took videos too!

Please take a look at the video clip on the **Our Videos** page of the website of the dressing process as described by Lutheran sisters from Bolivia and the clip of how to carry a child in an aguayo!

While on home assignment, I realized that many of you were interested in the different layers of clothing that the women wear. I decided that this would make a great article for the newsletter and asked very good friends of mine to help me show in pictures the dressing process. Not every woman who lives in Bolivia wears a skirt (called a pollera in Bolivia), but many of the women in the IELB do. The women who don't, choose not to for many reasons. To begin with, it is a lot cheaper to be a woman "of the pants" than "of the skirt." Skirts are expensive some costing as much as \$200.00 U.S. a piece and that doesn't include the shirt or sweater, shawl, hat, shoes or jewelry. Other reasons are personal and vary a lot from one woman to another. Learning how to dress like a Bolivian cholita was definitely a learning experience for me. I never understood how women who wear the skirt weren't cold living here in La Paz and not wearing socks or hose, but with everything on, I definitely wasn't cold and was very comfortable. I loved all the beautiful colors and had a great time with my friend. I personally would not dress as a cholita because it's not my own culture, but I am a big fan and admire women that do!



[HTTP://KARIELLER.WEEBLY.COM](http://karieller.weebly.com)

Putting the newsletter together this time was quite a treat. I found that I kept looking back at pictures remembering all of the fun times we had on home assignment and after our return to Bolivia. I look forward to seeing what the next few months for us will bring and can't wait to hear what you all have been up to as well. It is a blessing to be in ministry with you.

God's peace, Kari

Excerpt taken
from Justin's Blog

The first class I taught here in 2010 was Church History 1: from the founding of the Christian Church to the dawn of the Reformation. Yes, that meant that I had to cover 15 centuries in 12 weeks...if you think it is impossible, it's not, just hurried. I first taught as I had been taught, which seems only natural. I lectured and they listened...for that was the way I had learned. However, I quickly realized that when students are bored out of their mind, they are less apt to learn... go figure. Also they didn't read the assigned readings nor turn in homeworks, papers, essays and what they did turn in was often plagiarized. So I asked them what was going on.

**"We are all
Co-learners!"**

To read the full blog, please visit the Justin's Blog link on my website.

They told me I was giving entirely too much work for them to realistically do in their free time. Ah, I remembered uttering those words to my friends in seminary...why was it that each semester we started classes we were already 300 pages behind in our readings?

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