



the CHALLENGE

MOVING EARTH TO SHARE HEAVEN JUNE 2025

A Real-Life Lesson
from an Ant:
Corrected Vision

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with God**

FOR A BOLIVIAN AIRSTRIP

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FIAintl.org



A REAL-LIFE LESSON FROM AN ANT:

Corrected Vision



“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

— 1 Peter 5:7 (KJV)

A MESSAGE FROM TIM JOHNSTON, FIA DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Your faithfulness in prayer and generosity in giving are important reasons why Friends in Action impacts the lives of hundreds of thousands of indigenous people and missionaries each year. Some donors may think their contributions wane in comparison to what missionaries sacrifice. Yet, it is important to remember that God has a role for each of us to play in this Great Commission work. Our ministry would not be effective without your passion for giving and praying.

After reading this true-life story of a lady from Princeton, Minnesota, you might even say, our vision for outreach becomes “blurry” without your partnership!

In her book *Keep a Quiet Heart*, Elisabeth Elliot* tells a true story about a young woman named Brenda Foltz, who was rock climbing for the very first time.

As Brenda climbed halfway up a huge granite cliff, her safety rope suddenly flicked across her face and knocked out one of her contact lenses. Now, hundreds of feet off the ground, Brenda couldn’t see clearly.

She looked all around the ledge, hoping the lens had fallen nearby, but she couldn’t find it. Feeling scared and frustrated, she prayed—asking God to

help her stay calm and to somehow find her contact lens.

Brenda made it safely to the top of the cliff, but the lens still hadn’t turned up, even after a friend checked her eye and clothes.

As she stood there, trying to appreciate the blurry view, a Bible verse came to her mind: “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth...” (2 Chronicles 16:9, KJV). She recognized that God knew the precise location of her contact lens.

Later, as Brenda and her group were walking back down the trail, they passed another group of climbers who were just starting up. A young woman shouted, “Hey you guys—did anyone lose a contact?”

Brenda was shocked, and rushed over. The woman pointed to an ant crawling across a rock, carrying the contact lens on its back!

When Brenda told her father what had happened, he was amazed. He was a cartoonist, and drew a picture of the ant carrying the lens with the words: “Lord, I don’t understand why You want me to drag this thing down! What use is it anyway? I don’t even know what it is, and I certainly can’t eat it and it’s so BIG and HEAVY. Oh well, if you say so, Lord, I’ll try...”

The lesson from the ant might be that when you feel a special burden to pray or to give to an FIA project or mission need, you might not even fully understand the enormous answer to prayer that God is using you to accomplish! You may only be able to guess or glimpse at the amazing purpose and the immense life-change your giving can bring. But when you give out of obedience and a desire to please God, God is ready to take that act of sacrifice and multiply it for eternal purposes!

You’re Making an Impact

Sometimes we might feel like Brenda and wonder if God hears or moves to answer our prayers. Sometimes things seem blurred, and our hearts are out of focus to see what God is doing. In our doubt or discouragement, we must remember that God wastes nothing in His economy. He is always at work building His Kingdom and rejoices in using us—in big and small ways. We have the immense privilege of joining in the process through this Great Commission work.

Remember the story of the little ant and never underestimate your importance to God’s work and FIA’s efforts. We are so grateful for you and how each of you carries an important role in these frontline Gospel efforts! ■

*Citation: Elliot, E. (1995) *Keep A Quiet Heart*. Vine Books.

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"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

— John 4:35 (KJV)



Our Journey with God FOR A BOLIVIAN AIRSTRIP

DARREN COOK, FIA ASSOCIATE, CANADA

In the summer of last year, Friends in Action completed a survey trip to Bolivia to investigate a potential project in partnership with South American Mission (SAM), which seeks to multiply churches and transform communities through God's Word across Latin America. The vision is to develop a jungle airstrip in a remote part of the Bolivian jungle. This would open the region to church planting and discipleship among the local river people and the unengaged Araona tribal people. This story reflects the journey, the hurdles we faced, and the partnerships driving the mission forward.

The Journey

Like many international trips, ours was not without complications. While traveling from Houston to Panama, we faced an unexpected delay caused by Hurricane Beryl. This caused us to miss our flight from Panama to

Bolivia, leading us to reroute through Lima, Peru, and finally to Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Upon arrival in Santa Cruz, we learned our luggage had been lost during the journey. Having only five available days to complete the survey and needing two full days to travel domestically, both in and out of the project area, created some immediate logistical challenges. We would have to proceed without any of our luggage and the essential survey supplies we had packed. Despite these setbacks, the Lord provided. We purchased some supplies locally, and other missionaries supplied the rest to equip the small team for the five days they would be in the bush. Variable weather created additional uncertainty, and once again the Lord's hand was at work — the clouds cleared, and SAM Aviation's 206 aircraft became our mode of transport for the first leg of the journey (a 4-hour flight to the north of the country). This flight was

followed by 10 hours in a pickup and 15 hours on a river boat to get to the project site.

Living and Working in Campo Central

Campo Central, the focal community for the SAM/FIA airstrip project, is known for its isolation. The environment is incredibly diverse, with the river and dense jungle creating both challenges and beauty in equal measure. The conditions in the area required careful preparation. This time of the year, the nights were often cold, especially near the river, which made warm clothing essential. We also came prepared with mosquito nets, offering protection against the prevalent insects in the region. Our 11-person team, including me and Matt Durkee (FIA's Executive Director), SAM missionaries Dave Smith and Daniel Netzlaff, and Bolivian Pastors Saul and David (and David's family). The eleven of us eventually



Local worker carrying supplies



Air strip, cleared partially by locals

arrived at the small community, ready to spend 36 hours looking things over and mapping out the runway location.

The Airstrip Project

The most significant focus of the trip was mapping and planning the Campo Central airstrip. Once built, this will dramatically improve access to the community and region and allow for more efficient transportation of people and support materials. The design of the airstrip requires careful consideration of local geography and weather conditions, as well as compliance with Bolivia's aviation regulations. To date, the airstrip project has made significant progress. As of November of last year, we submitted all the necessary paperwork and documents for the airport registration, marking a crucial step in the approval process. Another key piece of good news is that the runway is located within Campo Central's jurisdiction, which means there are no land ownership issues or clearance concerns. This simplifies the process and eliminates some of the challenges we might have faced in securing the appropriate permissions for construction. We are currently awaiting final approval from the local authorities to confirm the project and will then begin raising the funds for the equipment needed for construction.

Infrastructure Needs

At the airstrip project site, we had the opportunity to assess the area set aside for the airstrip and determine the additional work needed to allow the development of the airstrip, as well as how to support the men and women who would be sent to work alongside the local Bolivian people.

Encouragingly, the local community has already taken significant initiative by clearing a large portion of the proposed runway. Their efforts demonstrate strong local support and ownership of the project. However, the current strip still needs to be widened and lengthened to meet aviation requirements, and many very large trees remain on the site that will need to be removed—no small task given the terrain and the size of the necessary equipment.

Alongside the runway development, one of the key components of the project will be the construction of a guest house. This guest house will serve as a vital space for work teams, providing a “comfortable” environment where they can acclimate to the local culture and prepare meals that support their dietary needs. This space will help reduce culture shock and allow volunteers to stay focused and energized.

In addition, we need to construct a hangar to store aircraft and equipment safely. The development of the runway itself will involve significant logistics, including transporting a tractor, excavator, and dozer into the area by barge. Managing the delivery and operation of this heavy machinery in such a remote region presents a challenge, but it's a necessary step to ensure that the runway is properly leveled, cleared, and built to last.

Collaborative Efforts and Fundraising

Fundraising will play a critical role in moving the project forward, and we are grateful for the continued support of our community. While SAM's organization is preparing to assist with some of the financial

needs and provide logistical support, once we receive the final green light, Friends in Action will be taking on the project management responsibilities, as well as bringing in the workers to serve alongside the Bolivian people to get the job done. This collaboration ensures that each organization contributes according to its strengths, and together, we hope to bring this vital infrastructure project to fruition.

Looking Forward

The progress made so far in Campo Central is a testament to the calling that our Lord has placed on His people to reach the world with the gospel. It is a great joy to have Jesus work through us to this end. We are grateful for the partnerships that have come together to make this mission move forward. From overcoming travel challenges to collaborating with local authorities, that first survey experience was a reminder of God's love, and a bit of bearing the cross, for the sake of His great calling.

As we await final permission for the airstrip's construction, we are confident that this project will have an impact on the community in Campo Central, improving the community's access to essential services (medical, educational, and others). We are equally confident of the eternal impact, as increased access through Campo Central will throw open doors of opportunity for SAM international workers to share the gospel. The mission is before us—we look forward to continuing our work with the local community, local authorities, and our partners at SAM, moving Earth to Share Heaven. ■

God is Moving Hearts in Nicaragua!

TIM JOHNSTON, DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

“I’m so glad to see you here,” said Luis as I worked with a team of volunteers pouring concrete for a multipurpose center. He repeated himself to ensure I knew how pleased he was to see me again. Then he followed me to the tool shed.

“I have been waiting for you to come. I’m happy you are here,” Luis continued. “I thank God. He used you to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to us, Rama people.”

FIA’s work in Nicaragua with the Rama indigenous people continues to develop, with more people attending the Bible teaching, and experiencing life changes. The Christian leaders start a chronological teaching class each year with approximately 8-12 people in attendance. The amazing part is that all the people attending are not born again, but they are searching for the truth and the love of God.

Luis was there to help the team, but he also wanted to apologize for leaving the Bible study group. “My pride was wrong, and I’m sorry I left. I have wanted to talk to you but felt it best to talk face to face. My wife and I rejoined the group in November, and we are very encouraged to hear the good teaching the missionary is giving us.”

Unfortunately, the Rama Cay were suffering from infighting, causing dissension among the small group of believers. I had been praying that the Lord would bring unity among the villagers.

I assured Luis that I was happy to hear he wanted to return because I had been praying that God would reunite the believers. I clarified that I was not offended by his leaving but was sad to see the believers divided.

However, God is working in the hearts of the people; several of the believers who left are now returning. When they come back, they do so with genuine hearts and publicly ask the entire group for forgiveness. It’s amazing to see their hearts moved to walk in fellowship with each other and with God.

Maria also came to me with a big smile! She exclaimed, “Tim, I’m so happy because my family is united. My husband, daughters, and granddaughter are all coming to the teaching. It’s wonderful we can love and help each other!”

In partnership with missionaries on the ground, four more homes are under construction this year, and people are eagerly moving into them as they near completion. In addition, the multipurpose building we were working on will serve as a gathering place for the villagers attending the weekly Bible training sessions. We praise the Lord for spiritual growth, as approximately 45 villagers come each week!

So, amid the building of houses and the construction of a multipurpose building to help the community, God is using the teaching of His Word to move the hearts of the Rama people!

Thank you for praying, giving, and going to help FIA reach the hidden people groups of the world. ■

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

– Colossians 3:13 (KJV)



BIBLICAL TRAINING

FIA collaborates with a ministry in Panama to teach and train indigenous people in the Word of God and practical ways to witness and share Christ with their people. At least 25 Rama believers have received this training, teaching them to make their lives count for eternity.

The teaching prepares them for greater service with the Rama believers and their local community. This past year, two single people attended, and the positive experience caused them to grow in their walk with the Lord.



MEXICO

Water of Life CLEANSING US

DEAN BLOCK, FIA ASSOCIATE, CANADA

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

— John 4:13-14 (KJV)

We understand that Jesus was not talking about H₂O in this verse, but about the truth of the gospel that Jesus Christ was revealing and fulfilling. Therefore, drilling water wells is part of our ministry work with the Mexico Medical Mission and its various partners in the Sierra Madre mountains, providing opportunities for people to be taught about Jesus, the Living Water.

The Mission has worked in the Sierra Madre for the last 25 years, loving the Tarahumara Indians in any way they can. The hospital is the hub of their work, and they use clinics, both on site and in remote villages, to love the local people and share the gospel of Christ.

Friends at Work

For the past two years, FIA has been working with the staff at the Mission to rejuvenate their well drilling work. Their equipment had sat dormant for several years due to a lack of personnel

to operate it. However, with the help of FIA, the well drilling work has started again, and to date, we have drilled six wells in the ministry area - one at the hospital, three for village churches, one at a Bible training center, and one for a children's school. We also are training a local staff member to operate the rig. These wells provide reliable, clean drinking water for each facility, allowing the Mission to share excess water with its neighbors.

Since our work in this region is relatively new, it is yet to be seen how these wells will impact the communities in the long term. One thing we do know is that God can and does use practical demonstrations of love, like clean water, to draw people to His saving grace.

The Drilling Continues

I was part of the most recent FIA team to continue the well drilling work at the Mission. Our plan for the trip was to drill one new well and install an electric pump, replace a hand pump in a different village, and repair hospital vehicles as needed. The village we planned to drill in had no well, so we had no reference point for the water's depth. The desired location of the well was between the pastor's house and the church, to be accessible for both to use. By God's grace, the well

was relatively easy to drill as water was plentiful. We only needed to go down to 120 feet!

During the rest of our time there, we were able to replace the clutch in a pickup truck for an international worker, assist another US organization install a shade structure in front of the hospital for those waiting for the clinic, and pour the new cement for the hand pump, that was then later installed by our national partners after we left. All were huge blessings for our national partners and the community!

God Building His Church

During those 12 short days, God blessed our hands in various ways. He gave us good teamwork relations and complementary skill sets. He blessed us with safety on the long winding roads and equipment that worked great. One of the biggest blessings of the trip was the meals we enjoyed with Pastor Ray and his family, who are new to the village where we drilled.

I look forward to seeing what God will continue to do in this village and the region. Many churches have been planted in the past few years, and it is clear that God is continuing to draw the Tarahumara people to Himself. ■



Celebrating Community, Mission & Faith

NICOLE MILLER, FIA EVENT COORDINATOR

On Saturday, May 3rd, Friends in Action International hosted its 4th Annual Community Fun Day and Mission Expo, a family-friendly event designed to connect the community with the heart of FIA's mission and ministry.

The Community Fun Day is more than just a fun day—it's an opportunity for attendees to engage with local and global missions, hear the gospel, and experience firsthand the work FIA is doing around the world.

Our primary goal is to build connections—between the community and FIA, between mission-minded organizations, and ultimately, between individuals and Christ.

This year's event was a joyful success, drawing approximately 150 adults and 125 children throughout the day. The event grounds were filled with excitement as families enjoyed various activities, including a bounce house, candy cannon, barrel train ride, face painting, corn bin, mini-excavators, games, construction equipment, and even an excavator obstacle course.

Special highlights included the WJTL Kids Cookie Break, which brought energetic music, fun, cookies, and the popular Forgotten Friend Reptile Show. Delicious food and drinks were enjoyed from Peter's Chicken BBQ and the Hitch Coffee Truck, adding to the cheerful atmosphere.

In addition to the fun, the Mission Expo provided meaningful mission engagement opportunities. Children could create gospel bead bracelets with the help of Unto Ministries. At the same time, attendees visited several partner organizations, including Milandila Community Missions, Crossworld, Align Life Ministries, Operation Christmas Child, Ethnos 360, and TFC Global. These connections fostered valuable conversations and opened doors to deeper involvement in mission work.

It was a day filled with fun, learning, gospel-sharing, and, most importantly, God's presence. Many attendees shared how they were encouraged and inspired by what they experienced. As a staff, we are excited to gather and reflect on the many "God-stories" that came out of the day—stories of divine appointments, seeds planted, and hearts stirred toward mission.

We praise God for His favor over the event, the beautiful turnout, and the way He used every detail, from the activities to the conversations, to glorify His name. The 2025 Community Fun Day was a true celebration of community, mission, and faith, and we look forward to seeing how the connections made will continue to grow in the months ahead. ■

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

—Matthew 5:16 (KJV)



ANNUAL AWARENESS BANQUETS

3 DATES & 3 LOCATIONS

SATURDAY, OCT. 18
5:30 PM

Crestwicke Baptist Church
400 Speedvale Ave East
Guelph, ON N1E 1N9

THURSDAY, OCT. 23
6:00 PM

Community Bible Church
331 Anderson Ferry Rd
Marietta, PA 17547

FRIDAY, OCT. 24
6:00 PM

Lebanon Valley Bible Church
1482 Horseshoe Pike
Lebanon, PA 17042



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RSVP ONLINE FOR PA**

Engaging the Unreached, Bridging the Gap for Eternity

2025 TRIP OPPORTUNITIES

A short-term trip can be an adventure of a lifetime! On a trip with FIA, you'll see the work of God on the mission field, be a blessing to another culture, and discover how your skills can help further the Gospel. Use your trade skills to help make Christ known by volunteering on one (or more) of FIA's upcoming trips.

DOMESTIC

MISSOURI | November

- Interior remodel/renovation work, interior remodels of residential dwellings at ETHNOS 360 mission training center in Camdenton, MO.
- Need general laborers, interior finishing, plumbing, and electrical workers.

INTERNATIONAL

WELL DRILLING

MEXICO | November

- Drilling community wells and mechanical services to support vehicle and equipment maintenance programs for a remote mission hospital.

CONSTRUCTION

NICARAGUA | November

- General construction (assisting the general construction and development of the Rama community).
- Need plumbers, builders, and general laborers.

VANUATU | July, September

- Services workshop construction (steel frame, truss & roof).
- Need welders, fabrication, and general laborers.

MECHANICS

WEST AFRICA | August

- Diesel engine/equipment service and repair, and trailer fabrication.
- Need heavy equipment mechanics and fabricators/welders.

MEXICO | November

- Hospital vehicle and equipment/generator servicing.
- Need general laborers, equipment service and automotive service specialists.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

VANUATU | August

- Rural Water Supply Project.
- Village-level community assessments and rainwater harvesting project; design and project development.

Seeking Project Managers



FIA receives requests from partner missions to engage in both short-term and ongoing project management services to support construction and expansion projects.

We are looking for experienced managers willing to serve anywhere from two weeks to 12 months (single deployment or multiple deployments) based on the needs of the projects.

For more information, contact Andy Bachert, U.S. Chief Operating Officer, at andybachert@fiintl.org

Seeking Full-Time International Workers



Is the Lord leading you to jump all-in to serve alongside our mission partners as a full-time international worker? Our team is growing, and we are ready to welcome you!

For more information and to start the conversation:

Canadians, email FIA-CAN@fiintl.org
Americans, email FIA-USA@fiintl.org

Open postings include Well Drilling (West Africa), Builder (Papua New Guinea & Vanuatu), Mechanic (West Africa & Papua New Guinea), Sustainable Income Project Developer (Bolivia), Farm Manager (Vanuatu)



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ABOUT TRIPS:**

FIIntl.org/get-involved