

Bolivia

SIM is involved in church planting and discipleship, leadership training, education and youth ministry in Bolivia.

Bolivia is one of the countries in South America least influenced by Protestant Christianity. As the Bolivian Indian Mission (BIM), SIM first entered Bolivia in 1907 through the vision of New Zealander George Allan. Today SIM partners with a large and vibrant church in Bolivia called the Unión Cristiana Evangélica.

Bolivia is the landlocked 'heart' of South America whose windswept Altiplano highlands and steamy eastern lowlands are home to one of South America's most indigenous cultures. More than half the population still practices traditional Inca and Aymara religion which is often mingled with Catholicism.

Current SIM Ministry

SIM, through its merger with Andes Evangelical Mission (AEM), is an acknowledged pioneer in evangelical missions in Bolivia. This nation has long been dominated by colonially-imposed traditional religion on top of pervasive spiritism — a syncretism that keeps the people in spiritual darkness. The countryside is dotted with shrines to spirits to whom sacrifices are still regularly made.



It was the vision of the 'vast Andes regions ringing with praises to the Lord' that drew the founders of AEM to Bolivia, and specifically to the millions of [Quechuas](#) who live in the highlands. Praise God, this vision is beginning to be realised. Over 15% of the population of Bolivia are now identified as evangelical, and in some urban areas it is closer to 20%. The Unión Cristiana Evangélica (UCE), which relates to SIM, is growing.

The great challenge that this rapid growth has created is an acute need for trained and committed leaders to guide the church. SIM has set the task of 'Developing Great Leaders' as its primary focus in Bolivia. Radio Mosoj Chaski is evangelising and discipling the furthest reaches of the Quechua people spread across the Andes. Much more, however, needs to be done. Creative means are needed for developing trained leaders across the broad spectrum of the Bolivian church.



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A new and growing vision in SIM and the UCE is for missionaries from Bolivia to be sent out to neighbouring countries and outside the South American continent. Strategies for mission mobilisation and training are currently being pursued. (Already one UCE family has been sent to Africa and another to India.)

Unreached People

The upper classes, the Quechua, and the 100,000 students in nine universities need God's word of hope to counter existential philosophies.

History of Christianity

Roman Catholic work began in 1537 among two tribal groups in what is now Bolivia. Franciscans and Jesuits were active with 17 missions and 31 'reductions' (small villages developed by the Catholic Church where the faithful were brought and trained in skills and the Catholic religion). In 1667, the Jesuit order was expelled.

Protestant missions didn't appear in Bolivia until 1895 — much later than most Latin American countries — when a Brethren Assemblies missionary arrived. Canadian Baptists and Methodists soon followed, and in 1907, the Seventh Day Adventists arrived and today constitute one of the largest non-Catholic groups in the country.

SIM History in Bolivia: In 1907 George Allan, founder of the Bolivian Indian Mission (BIM), began work among the Quechuas. With the help of a Bolivian national, he translated the New Testament Scriptures (1923) and began several Bible schools. In 1950, BIM formed its national churches into a denomination — the Evangelical Christian Union (Union Cristiana Evangelica, UCE). In 1959 the churches begun by the Evangelical Union of South America (EUSA) in Bolivia joined the UCE, becoming the second largest Protestant group in Bolivia.

The Bolivian Indian Mission became known in 1965 as the Andes Evangelical Mission (AEM), which merged in 1982 with SIM International. It retains the name MAE (Mision Andina Evangelical) in Bolivia. Through its merger with Andes Evangelical Mission (AEM), SIM is an acknowledged pioneer in evangelical missions in Bolivia.

Not until the 1960s was there a large movement toward Protestant missions. This change corresponds closely with the socio-political revolution that took place as the Indian population began to be granted greater freedom and to become enfranchised as landowners rather than serfs. Their newfound status provided freedom to make decisions which most had never previously experienced.

Pray for the workers to reap in this field of great harvest. Receptivity is good in urban fringe areas where new arrivals to the city have settled. Areas where agricultural colonisation was strong have also shown great potential for church growth. Professionals are responsive to home Bible study groups. Marxist sentiment is very strong and affects church growth positively, primarily by creating conditions of instability and unrest, causing people to consider a new source of personal security.

The State Church

The Catholic Church enjoys less political influence than it once did. However, it remains the largest and most influential church in Bolivia and is recognised as the national church.

Please pray for

- the millions of Quechua now within reach of the gospel through radio, that they might have their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit to become true followers of Jesus.
- development of godly leaders equipped to nurture the growing churches.
- revival, both in the mission and the church, and a strategic relationship between SIM and the UCE resulting in greater effectiveness.
- Bolivian missionaries being called to serve cross-culturally.
- that Bolivia would continue to be open to the Gospel message and that the church would be strong in her witness; that Bolivia's constitution would not prohibit religious education in schools.
- God's blessing on Carachipampa Christian School, which not only provides education for missionary children but also serves as an outreach to many non-Christian Bolivian families.

Opportunities

[Kdg. and Elementary Teachers for Carachipampa Christian School](#)

[Computer Teacher \(Grades 1-12\)](#)

[All Bolivia Opportunities](#)

Projects

[El Alfarero, Santa Cruz](#)

[Mosoj Chaski Radio - Programming and Booklets](#)

Stories

[From Niger To Bolivia](#)

[The race to Potosí](#)

[All Bolivia Stories](#)