



Four Phase Mission in Peru

Yora, Mission Team, Matses & Lima

By Steven Shepard

(May 26-July 15) My seven-week trip to Peru had four phases. The first was a two-week workshop with the Yora tribe – an unreached people who live deep in the Amazon Rainforest. Thirteen representatives of the Yora were flown by small plane from their community to the jungle city of Pucallpa. They were eager to learn about Christ and listened intently for hours each day as my co-worker Cesar Soto and I taught from both Old and New Testaments. This was the longest of three conferences held to date with the Yora. Some were hearing the Gospel for the first time. Now they would like to have a church in their village. Three men were appointed to be facilitators. Their job is to organize the meetings in their village to read Scripture passages, pray, and sing in their language. Pray that God will establish a people for Himself from among the Yora. And pray for the linguistic team – that they will make good progress in translating the Scriptures into their language.

The second phase of my trip was to help with CPI’s mission team which arrived to Pucallpa on June 18th. The fifteen-member team, led by Jonathan Shepard, poured a foundation for a church, poured a floor for a second church, and conducted three medical clinics, an eye glass clinic, and five children’s programs. When it was over, one team member who was on her second trip said, “There’s something about these people that I’ll never be able to explain with words.... Coming back to the states is never easy, but I am learning to allow God to use my experiences in Peru to touch lives around me and encourage others in Christ’s love.”

For the third phase, I went by small plane along with Cesar Soto, my son Samuel, and daughter-in-law Caitlin, into the Amazon to stay for a week in a Matses village. Approximately 60 Matses pastors and Christian leaders came from 20 communities for a training conference – some from as far away as two days by boat. We taught on the biblical Gospel of salvation through Christ alone, by grace alone, and through faith alone, using several stories and parables found in the Old and New Testaments. CPI has been involved in equipping Matses Christian leaders since 1999. The greatest need now is to defend the Gospel from false teachings which have crept in from the outside. Many pastors are still standing strong and God’s work among the Matses continues to grow, including in Brazilian communities which had been resistant. In fact, 10 Matses from five Brazilian communities attended the conference, including a man from a village which has no church.

The fourth phase of my mission was in Lima. Sam and Caitlin taught at two meetings. Then, my co-worker, Otoniel Pardo and I taught the second course in the newly-launched Bible Institute, “Word of Grace” to about 30 students. This class was on the doctrine of salvation and included a text book. It is such a blessing to teach people who are so hungry for God’s Word!



Above: With Cesar Soto (bottom left), Wycliffe missionaries, and the Yora

Below: Matses Conference



Motivation for Missions

Article by Steven Shepard

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” (Matthew 28:19) This is the Great Commission simply stated. What hinders its completion is not a lack of resources, strategies, or potential laborers, but a lack of motivation in God’s people. What will motivate God’s people to carry out this task? There are two motivating factors. The first is seeing the need, and the second is obedience to Christ.

Biblical missions pre-supposes certain eternal realities – namely that each person is an eternal soul that will either live forever in heaven with the Lord or in hell separated from God. Each person is actually born separated from God with a sinful nature that is under God’s judgment. Though human nature recoils at this truth, this is what the Bible reveals. However, God has mercifully provided a

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Motivation for Missions (Continued)

solution, even though He was in no obligation to do so. God became a man and died on the cross in order to suffer the judgment we deserved. By believing in Jesus we are reconciled to God, will not come into judgment, and will live forever with the Lord in perfect happiness. (*Ephesians 2:1-3; John 5:24*)

The Church is to proclaim this good news about Christ to all the nations. The word used in the New Testament for nation means “ethnic group” or people group of which there are about 16,500 on the earth. Of these groups about 6,700 are still unreached with the Gospel. (joshuaproject.net) These unreached groups have no viable churches which are capable of reaching their own people group for Christ. Unreached people groups include over three billion people. There are hundreds of thousands of villages, towns, and cities that have no churches. And there are very few Christian workers who work in these unevangelized areas. By contrast, the U.S. overflows with churches, Bibles, seminaries, vacation bible schools, Christian conferences, building programs, and Christian workers. In fact, of the funds given worldwide, about 99 percent is spent for ministry in places that are already evangelized.

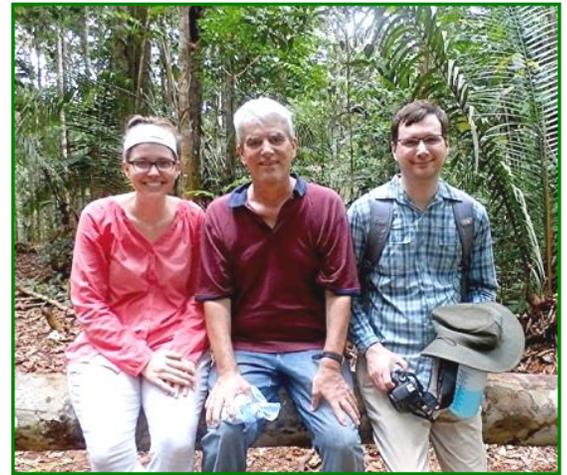
(aboutmissions.org) By far most of this is spent right in the U.S., which has less than five percent of the world’s population.

While the need is very great, this still should not be our primary motivation for missions, but rather obedience. Because Jesus is our sovereign Lord and Master, the fact that He gave us a commission should be reason enough to obey. We are motivated to obey because of our love for Jesus. “We love Him because He first loved us.” (*1 John 4:19*) When we are convinced of the love that Jesus has for us, this motivates us to obey, to pray, to go, and to help send others to take His Gospel where it is needed most. (*Luke 6:46; John 14:21-23; 2 Cor 5:15*)

Seeing the needs should indeed fill us with a sense of urgency for the Great Commission. Yet when we are motivated primarily by a sense of need, instead of obedience out of love, our tendency is to place an undue importance on **our own work and role**. Making disciples and planting churches is **His work**. God is the One who calls people to Himself, changes their hearts, and saves them for eternity. We are only His instruments and His fellow workers in the harvest. (*1 Corinthians 3:5-9*) This is a great privilege: to be involved in work that will bear fruit for eternity. And God has promised that as we go, His power and presence will go with us. Then when the last soul has come and bowed before His Majesty, Jesus will return and will receive all the glory! (*Matthew 28:20b; Acts 1:68; Matt 24:14*)



*Above: Most of our mission team members in Lima
Below: Steven, Sam and Caitlin Shepard in the jungles*



Proposed CPI Mission Center

CPI has come to an agreement to purchase a property for our Mission Center in the Amazon. This is a different property than we first intended, but better suited for our needs.

It includes two houses and a small office building which was previously used by Wycliffe missionaries for the final phase of Bible translation in the Peruvian Amazon. We still need to raise about \$25,000 to reach the amount needed for the purchase price of \$100,000. (Closing costs and start-up costs will be an additional \$5,000-\$10,000.)



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