



## CPI Adopts Native Church Planter in Nayarit, Mexico

In January CPI began regular support of Jose de Jesus Gomez (they call him “Lenon”) and wife Merary for their church planting work in the state of Nayarit in west central Mexico. CPI works with about forty native missionaries in Mexico and Peru who reach out to needy and unreached communities. For years Lenon worked as a brick mason while planting two churches in his spare time. Now regular support enables Lenon to devote full-time to the churches – one of which is located in a town where there was much opposition and no established churches. Lenon and Merary are now taking God’s Word into homes and starting small groups. New people have been reached in both Atonalisco and Pantanal. They plan to also start a third church in the city of Tepic. Lenon and Merary’s goal is for the congregations to eventually take over full financial responsibility for the work.



*Above: “Lenon” & Merary,  
Jonatan & Valeria  
Below: at village of Atonalisco*



*Above: Atonalisco congregation*

*Below: Steven with Pastor Rigoberto Uribe in Mexicali*

## CPI Conducts Conference in Mexicali

(March 27-29) Steven and Christy Shepard ministered together in CPI’s “Power of the Gospel” conference at the Community Christian Center in Mexicali, Mexico. Steven and Christy served as missionaries in Mexicali from 1982-1986. While CPI has presented many in depth theological training conferences throughout Peru, this was the first time for a conference of this kind in Mexico. About sixty-five people attended the conference including pastors from other churches and about 100 books were distributed. CPI is committed to biblical training. We believe that God’s method for transforming lives is through the truths of His Word quickened to hearts by the Spirit. Conference attendee Magdalena said, “This seminar was a great blessing. It was expressed in a very clear and easy way to understand. I am very struck by the fact that we dwell in God’s presence without needing to perform any religious acts; and we don’t need to do anything to make God love us absolutely. Steven and Christy Shepard are a blessing because they show the Gospel with such conviction and simplicity that it imparts faith.”



**Still time to join CPI’s Mission Team serving in the Peruvian Amazon!**  
(June 27-July 7)

**Information:** churchplantinginternational@gmail.com

# Trusting God in Life's Storms

*Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" (Mark 4:39-40)*

In the Biblical account of Jesus calming the sea (Mark 4:35-41), there is a lesson for us about God's presence in the storms of our lives. It was Jesus' idea to cross the sea that evening; the sea had become so violent that the disciples were in imminent danger; and as the winds blew fiercely, and the waves crashed violently over the sides of the boat, Jesus remained asleep in the back. Several of the disciples were fishermen by trade, which meant that they were accustomed to violent storms. But something about this storm caused fear in the hearts of even some very experienced storm-handlers. In their panicked state, the disciples woke Jesus from His sleep, and were then awestruck as He rebuked the wind and quieted the sea. Turning to His disciples, Jesus asks two questions that were as relevant to the disciples that night as they are to us today: "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Jesus' questioning was not one of shame and rebuke. He was not condemning the disciples for fearing for their lives in the middle of the storm. It was an incredible teaching moment between a teacher and His students.

The heart of the matter was trust, and Jesus' use of "faith" in this context meant that the disciples had not yet placed their complete trust in Him. As the nearly-capsized boat from moments earlier now sat perfectly still on a glass-like sea, Jesus' questions are rhetorical, and the answers are resoundingly implicit: **Rhetorical question:** Why are you afraid? **Implicit answer:** I am the promised Messiah – the One you've been waiting for. That's who you have in the boat with you. I have **all power and authority** on earth and in Heaven – to cast out demons, heal the sick, forgive sins, raise the dead, drink the cup of wrath poured out by a Holy God onto a sinful world, and overcome death to make a way for eternal life for all those that believe. **Rhetorical question:** Do you still have no faith? **Implicit answer:** You have not yet placed 100 percent of your trust in me – in my complete and perfect power and authority. I'm still revealing to you who I really am, and I'll continue to do so all the way up through my death on the cross, my resurrection from the dead, my ascension into Heaven, my promise to never leave you or forsake you, and my impending return. Stay with Me, learn from Me, rest in Me, obey Me, follow Me...trust Me with all of your heart. I'm bigger than any storm that comes upon you suddenly in this life, and I will always be with you in your boat.

When God allows storms to come upon us, it doesn't mean that He is not good, nor does it mean that He's not in control. As a loving father, He is after the heart of His children, and He knows that we're reluctant to trust Him with all of it. When the seas of life are smooth, we lean on ourselves and our abilities to get through daily life. Subsequently, our trust in Him can become undernourished and underdeveloped. Our faith in Him can become like a muscle that is weakened from inadequate use. When He allows a storm to come upon us, our natural response is to be afraid. In those times our trust in God is challenged, and our faith in Him is tested. But our Savior is always with us; He is resting peacefully in our boats because He has all power and authority over the storms of our lives. In our darkest times, He is with us. He may rebuke the wind and calm the sea around us; or He may speak directly to the fear and uncertainty inside of us, saying, "Peace, be still." Whichever it is, we can trust Him completely in whatever comes upon us, and we can rest confidently that when our boats reach the shores of Heaven, the storms of this life will cease for all of eternity.



*Article by Preston Smith -- Preston is a graduate of Regent University with a masters of theology and has served in various missions and church ministries. Preston lives with his wife, Sarah, and their three children in Indian Land, South Carolina, where he works in advertising.*



## Prayer and Support Needs

**1. Steven Shepard's trip to Peru (May 21-July 8).** After spending ten days teaching in seminars and at a training center in Lima, Steven will proceed to the jungle city of Pucallpa for ministry with two indigenous tribes, the Shipibos and the Yoras. The Yora tribe has no churches and few if any believers. Wycliffe missionaries are assembling eight Yora men in Pucallpa for Steven and co-worker Cesar Soto to conduct a five day seminar about the true God and His Son. The trip concludes with a short-term mission team in Pucallpa (June 27-July 7). Please pray for our team and for God to anoint His Word in Lima, among the Shipibos, and that the seeds of the Gospel might take root among the Yoras.

**2. Exploratory trip to Uganda.** Please also pray for the Lord's guidance and provision as Steven and Jonathan Shepard plan a trip to Uganda for this November. Our purpose is to build relationships and learn about needs. We will also conduct a leadership training conference. Our long term goal is to partner with native church planters to reach unreached peoples and communities in east Africa. CPI will need to raise about \$5,500 to take this first step into what will be for us a new continent for the Gospel.

**3. Consider becoming a regular financial partner with CPI to reach our world with the Gospel of Christ.**

