



Blessed to Serve in Peru!

Matses Conference – Mission Team – Lima Conference

By Jonathan Shepard--Jonathan has just completed his Bachelors of Nursing at Bowling Green State University, and lives in South Carolina where he will be seeking work as a nurse and continuing his missionary service with CPI.

I was blessed this summer with the great honor of serving our Lord Jesus Christ in the furthering of His Great Commission in Peru. God is doing a great work in the lives of the Peruvian people, and I feel greatly humbled and thankful to have been a part of it. During this short month, I participated in a pastors' conference with the Matses, a short-term team of 23 people, and a Bible conference in Lima.

In the jungle city of Iquitos we made preparations for the first conference. My father, Cesar Soto (a CPI missionary to the Yaminahuas), two Matses guides, and I traveled to the remote Amazon military base of Angamos, and from there, we traveled over ten hours by boat to the very remote Matses village of Puerto Alegre. The people received us with a great hunger for the Gospel. We shared Biblical truths for three days in extremely hot conditions, but the people were so excited about the teachings that they insisted on taking minimal breaks and worshiped God for hours after we had retired for the night. The teaching on marriage was revisited and the first two church weddings were performed in the Matses language. Teachings on biblical faith and Christ's victory over Satan were also discussed. In addition, a catechism, declaration of faith, and wedding vows in their own language were distributed to the people. The Matses church is continuing to mature and flourish. Peruvian Matses have established churches among the Matses in Brazil, and they in turn are taking the Gospel to other unreached villages.

My father, Cesar, and I then returned by boat in the pouring rain to Angamos where we flew two hours by Cessna plane to the jungle city of Pucallpa. We were joined by 21 others from three different states and a variety of churches. We experienced a great unity of purpose as we co-labored to further the saving Gospel of Jesus. We lived amongst the Shipibo people in the village of Nueva Era. Together, we ministered in three Shipibo Indian villages and one Yaminahua village. By the grace of God we conducted six children's ministries (with over 600 children), four medical clinics (treating over 300 people), and three eyeglass clinics (serving over 200 people). We also served by constructing benches, installing windows, performing electrical work, providing food to the needy, and preaching the Gospel in churches and outreaches. It was exciting to see God doing a work in both the hearts of the Peruvian people and our team.

After the team departed, my father and I taught God's Word in Lima at a three day conference entitled "The Power of the Gospel." I was blessed with the opportunity to preach two of the nine topics covered. There were about 80 people in attendance and about 250 books were distributed. The people in Lima received the Word with joy. It had been two years since I was last in Peru. God used my time there to edify my spirit and motivate me to seek further after Him through His word. We ask for continued prayer that God would equip us and continue to advance His Kingdom amongst the Peruvian people.



Above, Steven and Jonathan Shepard meet with Matses pastor Lorenzo, who greatly wanted to host this conference, and invited Steven last November to come to his village.



At the conferences the seed of God's Word is planted and quality books on foundational truths are left behind. These books have been read and re-read and have transformed the lives of many.

The Essence of the Gospel

Salvation by Faith Alone – By Steven Shepard

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:28

Five of our nine topics at “The Power of the Gospel” conference in Lima, Peru, concerned the five “solae” of the Reformation. “Faith Alone” is of particular importance because it is the one “sola” that deals with the response that God requires of us if we are to be saved.

The essence of the Gospel is that we can be saved from the righteous judgment of God, which our sins deserve, through “faith alone” in Jesus Christ. Faith is the only way that sinful human beings can be justified before an infinitely pure and holy God. To be justified means to be declared righteous and not guilty by God. But we are inherently fallen and sinful creatures. Never in a million years could we ever achieve through our own works the perfect righteousness that God requires. The Good News of the Gospel is that God provides this perfect standing as a free gift. God can offer this gift to us because Christ’s suffering on the cross was sufficient to satisfy the justice our sins deserved. Absolutely nothing needs to be or can be added to Jesus’ finished work. Believing in Christ and what He has done is all that is required. To try to add anything else to “faith alone” in Christ, is to place our hope and confidence in something beyond Christ’s sacrifice – Christ plus our good works, Christ plus our devotional life, Christ plus the church, Christ plus the sacraments. Biblical faith means trusting Christ plus nothing. Everyone who trusts Christ has and will always have perfect justification, complete forgiveness, and eternal life. Yet this does not mean that we “just believe” but not do good works. If we truly believe, we cannot help but do good works. In fact the only works pleasing to God are those that proceed from faith in Christ alone. This is because only through faith in Christ are we completely cleansed, declared not guilty, and made free; and it is only then that we will love Him from our hearts. If works are done with a motive of trying to gain or maintain God’s favor, these works will not please God. On the other hand, good works done from a heart of genuine love for God are the inevitable manifestations of saving faith and will bear fruit for eternity. **Verses on “Faith Alone”:** Rom 1:16-17; Rom 3:20-38; Rom 4:1-25; Rom 5:1; Gal 2:16; Gal 5:1-4; Heb 11:6; 1 John 5:12-13; Acts 10:43; Acts 13:39; Acts 16:30-31; John 3:16-17, 36; John 5:24; John 6:29,40,47; Luke 23:42-43; 2 Cor 5:17; James 2:14-20; 1 John 3:9-10; Titus 2:11-12



The Matses missionary team takes the Gospel to unreached villages.



ABOVE: Josue Ramirez and wife Bani at the dedication of baby Esteban. Josue is a new missionary with CPI to the Shipibos, and currently works in Santa Clara, one of the villages where our team went to minister.

BELOW: Kerri Stern attends to a Yaminahua woman at a medical clinic in Nueva Union.



In Memory of Harriet Fields

Wycliffe missionary, Harriet Fields, went to be with Jesus on April 30th, 2013. In 1969, after waiting in the Peruvian jungles off and on for six years with her partner, Hattie Kneeland, Harriet made the initial contact with the Matses tribe. Harriet and Hattie then went to live amongst the Matses and translated into their language the New Testament which was completed in 1993. In 1999 Steven Shepard, Logan Sparling, and Tom Hopkins began to work with Harriet and the Matses pastors,

conducting conferences, providing counseling, and supporting the Matses in their missionary efforts. Harriet possessed uncommon missionary wisdom, perseverance, and spiritual strength. It was a great honor to serve alongside her all these years.



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