



THE CHURCH PLANTER

A newsletter of Church Planting International

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Word of Grace Students Plant Churches in the Peruvian Amazon

By Steven Shepard

Marcial Vasquez, Adolfo Canayo, and Adan Bautista have completed all 12 courses at CPI's Word of Grace Bible Institute in Pucallpa, Peru. They now are planting churches in unchurched Shipibo villages up and down the Ucayali River, taking the powerful message of the Gospel of Christ to many of their countrymen that have never heard. Adolfo and his wife Elena went to live in Puerto Nuevo (150 miles upriver). After a church was established, Adolfo and the congregation began to plant another church in the nearby community of Dos de Mayo.

Marcial is currently helping to plant four churches. In the village of Santa Marta, Marcial helps another Word of Grace student, Adan, who travels to the village weekly. Marcial and Adan have seen this church grow from nothing to about 60 members in just a few months. Since our students have built solid relationships over the years, they are able to work together to preach the Gospel and plant churches. CPI's part is to provide biblical and ministerial training, travel expenses to the villages, and some building materials for the new church buildings.

Matses Seminary Launched in Peru

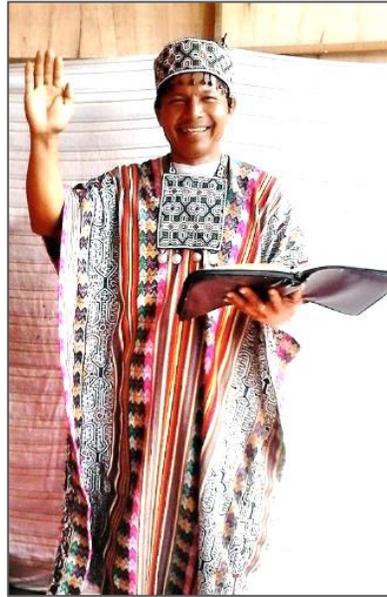
By Casey Kidd



Casey Kidd has been a jungle missionary since 2013, and in 2020, Casey and his wife Giuly joined CPI. They have a ministry of leadership training and church planting among Amazon tribes, with a special focus upon the Matses, a remote tribe in the Peruvian Amazon.

My wife, Giuly, and I have been helping to disciple Matses believers for several years. Though there are churches in most of their villages, few of their pastors have any formal theological training. This isn't from a lack of desire. They are well aware of this need, and often tell us how they want training, but don't have the money or adequate Spanish to study in the city. So, one of our biggest ministry goals has been to create a Bible institute in one of their villages to train their church leaders. That is finally a reality.

We inaugurated the seminary in May, 2021, with 24 students from 18 villages. On the first day, student after student told us how excited they were to have this opportunity. They never thought it would be possible to have access to Biblical training in their villages. One man even said that he hadn't been that happy since his son was born!



Left: Word of Grace Bible student and CPI church planting partner, Adolfo, dressed in traditional Shipibo attire



Right: Marcial with wife Doria on one of their recent church planting missions to a community along the river

Below: Matses seminary class. The Matses received their New Testament in 1994. In 1999, CPI began training conferences with Matses pastors twice a year. Casey and Giuly continue the work.



The main topic of this first course was a survey of the Old Testament. They only have the New in their language and only a handful knew anything about the Old. By the end, they realized the Gospel didn't begin in Matthew, but was part of God's plan from the beginning. They were excited to return to their villages to teach the Good News of Jesus all the way through the Old Testament.

We'll have two more courses this year, and they will graduate after three years. The plan is for the graduates to become the future teachers, and the seminary to become 100% Matses-led. Our hope is that the Lord will use this to equip church leaders for many generations to come.



Over the years CPI has helped with materials for at least 10 Shipibo church buildings. Often church members in communities raise up a structure out of native materials, and CPI provides gasoline for a chainsaw, nails and roofing. In churches nearer the city, construction is of bricks, so it is more costly. At far left is Marcial, at right Casey Kidd, on a recent trip to the village of Contamana (about 150 miles downriver).



CPI continues to send emergency assistance to Uganda, Peru and Myanmar to buy food and medicine. Because of strict lockdowns, there are food shortages. Pastor Isaac of Uganda says, *“We are in a total lockdown. It is terribly affecting our people. Almost everything is at a standstill. Our people are starving of hunger. Some can hardly get a meal a day.”*

In Memory of Pastor Michael Dakitali

who went to be with Jesus on June 13, 2021. Michael was a beloved friend, co-worker, servant of the Lord, and the first to welcome us to Uganda. We thank God for his life, and will greatly miss him. Michael is survived by his wife Grace and two daughters, Faith and Patience.



Board of Directors of “Misión CPI” in Peru from left: Marcial Vazquez (vice-president), Tom Hopkins, Cesar Soto (president), Isabel Soto (secretary), Steven Shepard, Christy Shepard and Otoniel Pardo of Lima. Misión CPI is an indigenous Peruvian mission based in Pucallpa, Peru.

Walking Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death Without Fear – by Christy Shepard

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me;” Psalm 23:4a



God exhorts us repeatedly not to worry or be afraid of evil. In fact, those mastered by fear cannot enter His Kingdom. The spirit of fear does not come from Him. Yet many of us struggle with fear every day of our lives because this world, despite its beauty, is scary. It’s full of evil and death. Our existence and that of our loved ones is very fragile, able to be extinguished in a moment.

Psalm 23 gives us the mindset of the fearless. They know God is with them. As they walk, His power and wisdom comfort them. It is God who enables them to face their enemies and be victorious. He gives them abundant strength to keep walking with Him through the darkness (v.5). They are certain that goodness and mercy will follow them all the days of their lives AND they will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (v.6).

Psalm 37:3 says, “Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.” We are to participate in this world, relate to those around us, and enjoy the blessings God has given us. At the same time, our priority must be embracing truth. Faith grows when we study God’s Word and meditate on it continually. Faith grows when we communicate with God in prayer, telling Him our thoughts and needs. Faith grows as we Christians strive together to better understand the nature of God and His Gospel.

We overcome one step at a time, one day at a time. Our peace rests on knowing that God is with us on this journey and that He is in control. Our victory over fear also is attained just one day at a time. Jesus tells us to be encouraged. He has already overcome the world.

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