

WHOM SHALL I SEND?



PREPARING YOUR HEART, SOUL, MIND AND
STRENGTH TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF PERU.



PREPARED BY THE MISSIONARIES ON THE FIELD IN PERU
WHO ARE WORKING WITH THE MISSION SOCIETY.

© 2009
HUANCAYO, PERU

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Training Guide, Session 1.....	4
Week Uno: Going with a purpose	6
A few facts about Peruvian Foods.....	25
Training Guide, Session 2.....	26
Week Dos: Preparing the heart and soul.....	28
A few facts about History and Geographhy.....	49
Training Guide, Session 3.....	50
Week Tres: We are the body	52
A few facts about flora and fauna	75
Training Guide, Session 4.....	76
Week Cuatro: Cultural Service	78
A few facts about this and that in Perú	103
Training Guide, Session 5.....	104
Week Cinco: Looking back to look forward	106
A very brief suggested reading list	118

Population / People of Perú:

The total population of Peru is _____, which is comparable to the population of the State of _____.

What is the percentage of Amerindian people plus Mestizo people in Perú?
_____ The percentage of White people? _____

Languages of Perú:

How many languages are spoken in Perú? _____

What are the primary languages of Perú? _____, _____,
_____, and many native Amazonian languages.

Education / Literacy in Perú:

What ages attend school? _____

What is the cost of attending a government school? _____

Private schools cost around \$100+ USA per month in tuition, plus \$100 more for registration fees and \$150+ in school supplies (not counting textbooks).

The literacy rate in Perú is reported to be _____.

HOWEVER...

Income in Perú:

Average monthly income of North Americans = _____

Average monthly income of Peruvians = _____



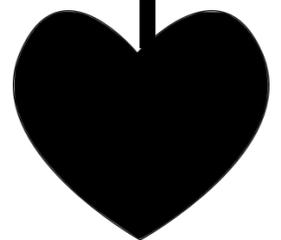
week one

Going with a purpose

The clock is ticking, and before you know it, you will be on a plane on the way to Perú. Are you ready for the adventure? Do you know why you are going?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER THIS WEEK

1. Why do I want to be a missionary?
2. What gifts and skills am I planning on bringing with me?
3. What is the most important thing I need to be sure to bring?
4. Am I really sure I want to do this?





DÍA UNO:

WHAT AM I BRINGING?

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

-- 1 Corinthians 13.1-3 (NIV)

The first time the term “mission” was used was probably in 1598 when the Jesuits started sending members over the water as “soldiers of Christ” to “convert the heathens”. It comes from the Latin *misorinem* and means simply the “act of sending.” Work of that sort had already been going on for centuries. Paul, for example, was on a mission to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the world. Even before that, Jonah was sent to Nineveh with a warning from God to the people to change their ways or to face the consequences. There were also the prophets and judges and others who have been sent on a journey much greater than themselves and much greater than they could even imagine. As missionaries in the twenty-first century, we are doing nothing new. Instead we are simply joining a long line of men, women and children who have over the centuries been the hands and feet of Jesus Christ to a world without hope and peace. In the process, the body of Jesus Christ has grown from a handful to over two billion in the world today who profess a friendship with the son of God.

When I stop and think about what God has done using normal people, it floors me. Through the years, the people of God called by God have really not been anyone special. Often, they have been overlooked by those around them.

Take King David, for example. When Samuel came to anoint him as king, no one even thought of calling him from the fields where he was watching the sheep. His older brothers had the looks of a king. David, though athletic and handsome, was just a boy. He could protect the flock from lions and bears, but lead a country? No way. Regardless of what the people thought, though, God had chosen him.

And then there's Mary Magdalene. She was not really the kind of person to bring home to meet your family. She sold her body to make money. In polite society we would say she was a prostitute, but in other situations we'd use another term: she was a hooker. Why bother with the coarser term? Because what she did wasn't pretty, so we don't need to sugar coat it to make it more acceptable. Mary was despised by society—people crossed the street when they saw her coming and they talked about her behind her back. But in God's eyes she had a permit and a purpose. God called her, and after the resurrection, Mary Magdalene was the first missionary sent out to tell the Good News that death had been defeated.

Don't get me wrong now. God doesn't always call the least likely. Sometimes those who we think would be perfect for the job are called as well. Another Mary was like that. She was the kind of girl who studied hard and learned her lessons. She talked to God in prayer and she had a tender heart. I imagine she was the kind of person who would stop on her way to the market to jump rope with the kids just because she knew it would make them smile. I imagine she was the kind of person who cried when she saw injustice and who stood up for the rights of those who suffer. She was a good person and God called her to carry (literally) the Good News in her womb.



WHAT KIND OF PERSON ARE YOU TO BE A MISSIONARY? ARE YOU THE MOST LIKELY OR WILL PEOPLE SCOFF WHEN THEY HEAR OF YOUR PLANS?



Regardless of the type of person we are there is one thing we need to have if we are going to be missionaries: we need to be full of love. It is a special kind of love, too. It's not the love we have with that special someone in our lives (or we hope to come into our lives). It's not even the love we have for our

friends that make us want to spend time with them. This kind of love is called agape in Greek and means a love with no strings.

As missionaries we have a very important job to do. We have to share the love—the *agape* love of God with a hurting world. That’s going to be hard at times. Sometimes we’re going to be hot and tired and the people we came to serve are going to be ungrateful, but we still have to love them. Sometimes we are going to want to scream because we see people doing things that make absolutely no sense to us, but we’ve still got to love them. Being a missionary isn’t the same thing as taking a vacation. On a vacation we relax and enjoy the ride as others love on us. As a missionary we go to love on them...regardless.

In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, he talks about this kind of missionary service. In the thirteenth chapter, he writes of what we can offer and what we *need* to offer.



I THINK YOU MIGHT GUESS WHERE I’M HEADED HERE, BUT BEAR WITH ME, PLEASE. WHAT ARE FIVE SKILLS YOU CAN OFFER THE PEOPLE YOU ARE GOING TO SERVE?



1.
.....
2.
.....
3.
.....
4.
.....
5.
.....

Now write them in the blanks below.

IF I, BUT
HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM ONLY A RESOUNDING GONG OR CLANGING CYMBAL. IF I
HAVE THE GIFT OF AND
CAN, BUT
HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM NOTHING. IF I,
BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, I GAIN NOTHING. (1 CORINTHIANS 13.1-3, MY VERSION)



DÍA DOS:

WHAT IS LOVE?

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

-- 1 Corinthians 13.4-7 (NIV)

Okay, so I get it, as missionaries we've got to learn to love the people around us. Paul wasn't the only one to tell us this. Jesus did too. In Matthew 22:34-40, we read the story of a man asking Jesus which of the commandments was the most important. Jesus started out by saying something they'd already guessed: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind." They'd guessed this because it was something they already did. But then Jesus went on, quoting another part of their law (Lev. 19:18) saying, "Love your neighbor as yourself. Everything we've ever been taught, hangs on these two commandments."

As missionaries (and as simply followers of Christ) we need to keep both of these commandments in balance. The greatest commandment is that with all of who we are as individual people, we need to serve God. We need to take time to get to know him through daily Bible Study and prayer so we know who he is personally. Listening to the Sunday Sermon isn't enough to do this. It often helps, but the pastor or speaker is just sharing what he or she gained through his or her own personal study. We don't need to selfishly squeeze in on their

relationship with God. What we need is to have our own friendship with the creator of the world who loves us so much as to crave a friendship with us as well. This is the start of understanding the love of God.

To truly and more fully understand it, we need to put it into practice. We need to obey the second commandment and start loving our neighbor as ourselves. In the biblical sense, a neighbor isn't just the people who live next door. Our neighbors include everyone else who lives on the face of the earth. All of them. No exceptions. Notice Jesus didn't say to love your neighbor except those you don't like or those you don't agree with. Loving our neighbor means trying to see them with the eyes of Jesus. It doesn't, however, mean accepting everything they do. There's a lot of things others do that are out and out wrong. For example, it is wrong when one person hurts another person, and this type of action cannot be tolerated. Nevertheless, we've still got the commandment to love them. Through this commandment, we need to do all we can to share the love of God with them so that their lives may change by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I don't say this lightly and I hope it's not taken lightly either. We are in Perú and the history (even the recent history) of the country is not one of light and roses. In the 1980's and even 1990's large parts of the country were terrorized by groups doing horrible things to every day citizens. Some of the members of these groups are still organized in cells throughout the area. Peru is one of the top cocaine producers in the world. The fact of the matter is that there is a good chance we may meet terrorists seeking to have a tooth pulled or narco-traffickers whose children are participating in kid's club activities. As followers of Christ we still need to love them. Sometimes this is a love that breaks our hearts.

Let me be honest, that is the extreme end of the spectrum. At the opposite end are those who come and are almost annoying in the profound gratitude they have for us and for what we are doing. They might be so happy they bring yucca or potatoes from their fields—symbols of months of manual labor—for simply bandaging a wound. The love we have for them needs to be the same as for those who are harder to love.

Then there are those in the middle; those who don't necessarily catch our attention except when they do something that seems odd or strange or

downright annoying. They don't mean to be that way. It's just how they are. As a missionary there are cultural things we just don't get. For example, many Peruvians will not pick their teeth in public, but they have no qualms about picking their noses while walking down the street. If a bathroom is not available, the nearest wall or tree (even in the middle of town or along a busy road) will suffice. Most mothers, it seems, have no problem pulling up their shirt to expose their breasts if their baby is hungry. As North Americans, we might not understand why the people here do certain things and we might be appalled by what we see. Regardless of our gut reactions, one thing needs to override all other things in order to guide our physical actions: the love of God given freely with no strings attached.

Paul describes this love in 1 Corinthians 13.4-7: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

As a missionary, you are asked to make the agape-no-strings-attached love of God a priority. Are you prepared to do that?



THIS IS A SURVEY TO SEE WHERE YOU ARE PERSONALLY WITH SHARING THE LOVE OF GOD. INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT BY WRITING EITHER AN "A" OR A "D" ON THE LINE.



- In any given situation, I am a kind person who is patient with others.
- I talk a lot about my accomplishments.
- I think I am better than others.
- As long as the right things happen, I don't care what others think of me.
- I like to have things just-so, a certain way.
- It is hard for me to forgive those who've hurt me.
- I think it's great when people get what's coming to them.
- I look out for number one.
- When things get tough, I look for a way out.
- I think I know what is best in a given situation.



DÍA TRES:

WHAT DO I LOVE?

Love never fails, but where there are prophecies, they will cease, where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophecy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

-- 1 Corinthians 13.8-10 (NIV)

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he continues his discussion of love by returning briefly to the theme with which he started: gifts and graces and abilities. We all have them. We all have something to offer the kingdom of God and those who reside there. In the first day of this week, you were asked to list five things that you can offer the people of Peru as you prepare to visit here. Let's take a minute to revisit those. We'd said that even with those gifts, if they weren't offered in love, they were worthless. But God gave you those gifts for a reason and so instead of putting them on a shelf to gather dust, we need to be conscious of sharing them wrapped in the love of God. With this in mind, if you believe you can share them in love, let's put some weight on them.

 LIST THOSE FIVE GIFTS AND ABILITIES AGAIN, BUT THIS TIME, LIST THEM IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE TO YOU. (IN OTHER WORDS, IF YOU COULD ONLY  DO ONE THING IN PERU, WHAT WOULD IT BE? LIST THAT ONE FIRST AND SO ON.)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Why do you think those things are so important? Is it because you are a doctor or a teacher or that you love kids? Let's not fool ourselves, there are doctors and teachers just as good as you who already live in Perú, and there are people there who love the kids as much as you do, too. Just because we who live in a first world country deign to go to a third world country doesn't make us or our gifts any more special or more important than those to whom we came to serve. God gave us gifts and abilities and talents and they make us who we are. It is not the gifts themselves that make us special, unique individuals. It is, instead, the giver of these gifts. Through and with the love of God , we have been called out of an ordinary life to go and share our lives with others. Notice I didn't say "share our gifts." That was on purpose.

Being a missionary might mean one thing to us. It might mean going and pulling teeth or giving medicine or teaching or working with kids. It might mean going and doing something. But the honest truth of the matter is that it also just might mean going and simply being there. God's plans aren't always the same as our plans.

On some of the trips into the Amazon Jungle, the last leg of the journey is ten hours in the back of a truck. That's ten hours if everything goes according to plan. Over time, missionaries learn the only plan we can count on is that everything will not go as planned. The trips are unpredictable. Sometimes in a choice between driving into a pothole or driving over the edge of a small cliff, the cliff seems a better option. Sometimes the river rises too fast and we can't cross over. Sometimes the electricity goes out and we have to figure out a different way to do things.

We never know, and the thing of which we need to be the most aware is the fact that no matter what, the love of God is the most important item on our agenda. It isn't an option.

I overheard someone telling our son that the best thing and the worst thing about being a Christian is the same thing: As a follower of Christ, we don't live for ourselves. We live to serve others. That's why we have those talents. That's why we have the certificates and titles. That's why we have been called by God to serve the people of Perú. But what do we do if to serve them means setting our gifts aside? What do I do if everything that identifies me at home as

a responsible and productive citizen is not needed by God on this mission trip? If I really believe the word of God, it should not matter to me.

Okay, so the axle on the truck breaks for the third time on the road into the jungle. So what? Can God use me as we wait to share the love of Christ? You bet!

So what if the customs officials at the airport confiscate the supplies we were bringing in to “make a difference in the lives of these poor people”? Can I still be used to share the love of God? Yes, and maybe even more so now.

As missionaries we need to expect the unexpected. God allows it to happen, so that we can get out of the way to let God happen in our lives and in the lives of those around us. The trip after all, is not in our hands, it is in God’s.



A good prayer for us to remember at these times is the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition:



I AM NO LONGER MY OWN, BUT YOURS.
PUT ME TO WORK DOING WHAT YOU WANT WITH WHOM YOU WANT.
LET ME DO SOMETHING; LET ME SUFFER.
LET ME WORK FOR YOU OR BE SET ASIDE FOR YOU.
LET ME BE RAISED HIGH FOR YOU OR BROUGHT LOW FOR YOU.
LET ME BE FULL, LET ME BE EMPTY.
LET ME HAVE ALL THINGS, OR LET ME HAVE NOTHING.
WITH ALL MY HEART,
I FREELY GIVE ALL OF ME TO BE USED OR THROWN OUT, WHATEVER YOU WISH.
AND NOW, GLORIOUS AND BLESSED GOD,
FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT,
YOU ARE MINE AND I AM YOURS.
AND MAY THIS PROMISE I’VE MADE ON EARTH BE ACCEPTED IN HEAVEN.
AMEN

There are some powerful ideas in those words. If we really accept them, we will let whatever happens on the trip be in God’s control. We’ll let God use us as God wants to. We might get frustrated. We might get tired, but through it all, we’ll keep the hope, peace and joy in our hearts because whatever we do, we will share the love of God.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13.8-10, “Love never fails, but where there are prophecies, they will cease, where there are tongues, they will be stilled;

where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophecy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.”

The truth of the matter is that whatever we do on this mission trip, it is only temporary. The walls we paint will fade. The stomachs we cure of parasites will become infected soon enough. We will become “those North Americans who came to help us” in the minds of those we meet. The things we do are important, but the most important thing we do, is love.

It’s that simple.

It’s that hard.



TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO REFLECT ON WHAT IT WOULD MEAN TO YOU IF YOU GO ALL THE WAY TO PERU AND DON’T END UP DOING ANY OF THE THINGS YOU HAD PLANNED TO DO.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



DÍA CUATRO:

IDOL CHATTER

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

-- 1 Corinthians 13.11-12 (NIV)

A Peruvian missionary (that is a Peruvian national who is a missionary in his own country) once shared a message with a traveling mission team about idols. He said that it is a big problem here. A lot of people have idols. The problem is increased, though, when people from the United States coming down to help out bring their own idols with them.

The Bible speaks a lot about idolatry and how we as followers of Jesus Christ are not to have any. Over the centuries this command has been interpreted in various ways. For example, Jesus' himself said that we are not to love money for this love of our own bank account is the root of all evil. Others have said we are supposed to love our spouse and our children, but not at the expense of our relationship with God. Cross that line and they become our idols. Sometimes our cars or houses or boats or hobbies or jobs or whatever else becomes an idol for us. One of the dangers we face as missionaries is the simple truth that our home culture and our way of life becomes an idol for us. When that happens, we might as well just pack our bags and go back home where everybody "does things right" and "knows what's important."



WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE? WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BE COMFORTABLE? JOT DOWN A LIST OF THINGS IN THE MARGIN.



Mary (not her real name) had a tremendous heart, and she wanted to share the gifts God had given her with those “poor people who live in the jungle.” She’d never been to the jungle before, but she figured she could cope well. Spiders? Not a problem. Her son had had a tarantula living in his bedroom for a while. Snakes? No problemo, either. She’d killed enough of them in her garden to not be scared of them anymore. She was a person in control of her life, she loved God, and she wanted to do what she could to help out. She was a doctor, after all. She had the education and the years of experience. *She* had what *they* needed.

As the time for the journey south to the jungle drew closer, she got to thinking, though. Maybe *she* had what *they* needed, but she wasn’t so sure that *they* had what she needed. She was a professional and in order to do the job right, she had to have the right tools. That in mind, she packed her bags, being sure to put in a few bags of her favorite chocolate chip cookies (she needed them to wind down at the end of a long day), an electric fan (the jungle does get hot), and three cans of air freshener (“As much as I love those people,” she told her husband, “they’re gonna’ stink if they live in a hot jungle”). Bags packed, she was ready to go.

In the jungle, she did not have a very good time. On the second day she came back to her room to find the ants had discovered the cookies.

On the third day, as she barked at her helpers (how could she help it? She had not been able to relax the night before without her cookies), the power went out.

“Dang, it’s hot today,” she said to her translator. “I need my fan, and it’s electric. Tell those people waiting outside that we’ll have to reschedule.”

“We can’t do that,” the translator said. “Some of them walked two days to get here. It wouldn’t be fair to them.”

Although she protested, Mary persisted (that is, after all, a good quality in a Christian). Sweating through the day (and as it turned out, the next two as well), she met with patient after patient. She didn’t smile as much as she had the first day, though. “How could I,” she said later, “when it’s so blasted hot. A person needs a fan to be happy.” She hadn’t noticed all the thankful smiles from her patients as they left after seeing her.

Things went from bad to worse when on the fourth day the cans of air freshener ran out. (Actually only two cans ran out. The third one just disappeared.)

On the fifth day, Mary didn't just not smile. She pouted. She scowled. She was miserable. "How can anyone live in this god-forsaken land," she yelled as the last straw was placed on the camel's back (the evening meal arrived 43 minutes later than it said on the schedule...she'd timed it herself). Mary was never so happy to return back home where everything was normal.

If anyone had asked her, she would say she was a good Christian. The truth is that she would have been telling the truth. She *was* a good Christian. She loved the Lord and she loved her neighbor. She'd come to Perú to help some of them. She'd wanted to serve them. She'd wanted the trip to be a wonderful experience, but instead in her opinion, it had been a disaster.

Since the team had returned back to the states, she'd thought a lot about what went wrong, but she never quite figured it out. She never realized her idols had let her down. If she were honest with herself, she would have realized that the cookies, the fan, and the cans of air freshener were more important to her than sharing the love of God.

The apostle Paul tells us in his first letter to the church in Corinth, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (1 Corinthians 13.11-12 NIV).

As missionaries, we need to keep a few things in balance. We need to love the Lord our God and we need to love our neighbor. That's one of the things. We also need to be both adults and children. Mary was an outward adult with a childish heart. She wanted her idols that made her feel comfortable, and if she couldn't have them she felt justified in her tantrums. What she needed instead of her childish attitude was to be an adult about the situation, open to be flexible with the changes around her. At the same time she needed to have a child-like heart that was able to laugh in the face of her stinky, sweaty room. And then when she finally got back home, she needed to be child enough as well to savor the chocolate chips cookies like never before.



DÍA CINCO:

THE GREATEST OF THESE...

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love.

-- 1 Corinthians 13.13 (NIV)



WOULD YOU SAY YOU ARE A PERSON OF FAITH? WHY OR WHY NOT? LIST SOME OF OUR THOUGHTS IN THE MARGIN BEFORE WE CONTINUE.



The author of the book of Hebrews wrote, “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11.1 NIV). The chapter continues with an honor roll of men and women whom we can look to as models for our own faith. I need that list. As followers of Jesus Christ, we probably should all study this chapter every once in a while because the idea of *faith* is central to what we believe.

Historically it has been important as well. A number of leaders of the Protestant Reformation swing the pendulum from you’ve-got-to-work-your-way-into-God’s-good-graces all the way over to the opposite side of you-can’t-do-anything-to-deserve-God’s-grace-so-you-just-have-to-have-faith. Today it seems as though the popular opinion of many the church leaders is more in the center of the two. Regardless, the idea of having faith is very important. Okay, good. So I’ve got to have it. That’s good to know. My only question is then: what exactly is *it*? What is *faith*?

When I was in college I was struggling with this question, so I went to one of my pastors at the time. I wanted to know how my faith measured up to those around me, and if I actually had any at all. She told me I was asking the right questions, perhaps, but that I should approach it differently. She then shared

her definition of faith, using the letters of the word to guide her. “Faith,” she said, “means simply *Forsaking All, I Trust Him.*”

At the time, that really helped me. It helped me because it helped to refocus my questions. I could now ask myself if there were things in my life that I was willing to give up for God, and if there were things I was holding on to too tightly to trust God with them. As my faith grew (and as our faith grows), we discover it getting easier and easier to trust God will all of our lives. That’s what makes it faith.

 IN HEBREWS 11, THE AUTHOR STARTS A LOT OF SENTENCES BY SAYING,  “BY FAITH SO-AND-SO DID SUCH-AND-SUCH. IN THE STATEMENTS BELOW, WRITE YOUR NAME IN THE FIRST BLANK. THEN IN THE SECOND SPACE, WRITE SOMETHING YOU HAVE DONE BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE IN (HAVE FAITH IN) JESUS CHRIST.

BY FAITH

BY FAITH

BY FAITH

 NOW ASK YOURSELF IF YOU ARE A PERSON OF HOPE? WHY OR WHY NOT?  JOT A FEW IDEAS IN THE MARGIN BEFORE WE CONTINUE.

As Ezekiel spoke and wrote the words recorded in the book that bears his name, the people of Judah were not being faithful to the commands and desires of God. Because of this, God punished them so that they would come back to being the people they had been created to be. In the midst of punishment, it is often hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. That is where the people of Israel were, and so they were indeed a people without hope. As a people without hope it is easy to give up on God, and that’s what some in Judah did.

The good news is that God didn’t give up on them. In the middle of their hopelessness, Ezekiel wrote of a vision he’d had: “The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones... and as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone...” (Ezekiel 37.1, 7 NIV). This was a good vision for the people of Judah to hear, because they must have been feeling dried out and dead like those bones. It must have

been good to hear that God was still with them and was there to offer them hope.

There was a time not very long ago when the people of Peru felt a dead, dry hopelessness, as well. During the 1980s and early 1990s a Maoist terrorist group called The Shining Path (El Sendero Luminoso) terrorized the people of the sierra (the mountains). Eventually the government saw the problem and stepped in to help. Unfortunately, they were often just as bad, and so the people didn't know who they could trust. People were being dragged out of churches and shot, their bodies left to rot because family members knew if they did anything to recover the bodies, they could be pointed out as sympathizers with one side or another. If that happened, they themselves could become the next victims. Tongues were cut out. Property was stolen. Things got worse. It's hard to have hope in a situation like this. It's hard to believe there will ever be an end. It's hard, even, to believe that God cares. It seemed as though God had packed up and left the mountains.

What's amazing, though, is that the grace of God continued in the lives of a remnant here. Even in the face of persecution, men and women and children still made the effort to meet for fellowship and to strengthen one another in the faith. God hadn't given up on them. Eventually the darkness of The Shining Path era gave way to the dawning of a new day. The dry bones began to see life again.

Today, although it is still difficult to gain the trust of those terrorized only a few short years ago, and although it might be hard to find anyone over the age of twenty or so who does not have a terrifying recollection of the time, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow. At times this hope is so strong, it seems as though it can be tangibly felt.

So from where does this hope come? The words in Hebrews that we quoted earlier links hope and faith together: "faith is being sure of what we hope for..." And then the Psalmist tells us to "put your hope in God" (Psalm 42.5 NIV).



THINKING ABOUT THE UPCOMING TRIP, WHERE DO YOU PLACE YOUR HOPE?
IN THE HANDS OF THE TEAM LEADER? WITH THE MISSIONARIES ALREADY
LIVING HERE? IN THE PERUVIAN PEOPLE? IN THE PEOPLE PAYING FOR THE
TRIP? IN GOD?



The apostle Paul tells us that although hope and faith are good and useful, they are not the most important thing for those of us who follow Jesus Christ. He writes: “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13.13 NIV). We’ve just spent the past week looking at the love that a Christian Missionary needs to have in order to be effective. This is important to remember. It is *vital* for us to remember. As missionaries our primary purpose is not to prove our great faith to either ourselves, our church back in the states, or even to the people of the Perú. Our purpose isn’t to bring hope, either. Hope is already here. It needs to be strengthened, sure, but it’s here. What, then, is our goal, our purpose, our reason for forsaking all and trusting God as we travel to another land? It’s simple. All we need to do is love our neighbors as we love ourselves. That’s our challenge. May we be blessed in it.



SOME FRIENDS OF OURS ARE FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES IN RUSSIA. IN ONE OF THEIR NEWSLETTERS THEY WROTE ABOUT THE QUESTIONS OF FAITH WITH WHICH THEY HAD BEEN WRESTLING. IT WAS A GOOD LIST FOR US TO



PONDER AND CONSIDER. THEIR QUESTIONS WERE USED AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE. READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS AND MARK HOW STRONGLY YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THEM.

ON THIS MISSION TRIP...	DISAGREE	AGREE
...I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SOMEHOW JUSTIFY MY OWN EXISTENCE.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
...I WANT TO FEEL LIKE I AM IMPORTANT.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
...I BELIEVE I HAVE SOMETHING THAT <u>THEY</u> NEED.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
...I WANT TO PROVE TO MY CHURCH BACK HOME THAT I LOVE GOD.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
...I WANT TO PROVE TO MY CHURCH BACK HOME THAT GOD LOVES ME.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
...I WANT TO BE AN EMPTY VESSEL TO BE FILLED AND USED BY GOD.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
...I WANT TO LEARN HOW TO BETTER LOVE MY NEIGHBOR AS MYSELF.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
...I WANT TO FIGURE OUT WHAT REALLY IS IMPORTANT.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	



A few facts about: Peruvian foods

- 🐾 Quinoa is a Peruvian high protein cereal with 25 varieties.
- 🐾 Olluco is a Peruvian tuber with over 30 varieties.
- 🐾 The potato is originally from Perú and they produce over 3000 varieties.
- 🐾 The Tomato is originally from Perú, and it is a close relative of the Potato.
- 🐾 The corn from Perú is a variety with the biggest kernels in the world amongst 32 others produced. Corn is originally from the Americas, including Perú.
- 🐾 The Avocado is originally from Perú and they produce the softest variety.
- 🐾 Peruvian food has 468 different registered typical dishes .
- 🐾 The finest cottons in the world, Pima and Tanguis are Peruvian.
- 🐾 The weeping willow is originally from Perú and it produces the base for aspirin.
- 🐾 Tara is a Peruvian tree from which tannin is produced for the production of dyes.
- 🐾 Yacon, a tuber similar to the yucca (cassava, manioc), is originally from Perú and is the base for insulin.
- 🐾 Maca, a Peruvian root, known as Huanarpo Macha is what VIAGRA is made from; it has been in use in Perú for hundreds of years.