

March 12, 2010

Tonight the Team Departs

After weeks of planning and preparation, the team will depart from WBC at 4:00 pm today. First flight tonight leaves at 7pm from DFW headed for Houston. After that, things will get a little more difficult. We have an overnight flight into Bogota, Columbia, an early morning flight into Lima, and an evening flight to Iquitos. If things go according to the flight schedules, we'll arrive in Iquitos 25 hours after we left WBC.

Pray for smooth transitions between flights, no issues with customs, and favor with LAN Peru airlines in Iquitos. They may charge us an extra fee in Lima...

March 14, 2010

Well, sometimes things just don't go as planned. Jeremy was delayed getting to the church so we left at 4:30 pm. That was OK because we accounted for some extra time. On the way to DFW, I bet we saw at least 3 wrecks. But that was OK because we accounted for some extra time. At the airport, we had to do some major shuffling of the luggage because of weight and size restrictions. Even had to leave one bag behind. But that is OK because we accounted for some extra time. Turns out Continental had overbooked our flight and Cody didn't have a seat. Not OK, couldn't account for that one. Thankfully, the airline bribed a nice man to give up his seat and we proceeded to Houston. No real issues at Houston that I can remember, but everything is kind of a blur right now.

Landed in Bogota, Columbia at 4 something in the morning. Lots of uncertainty revolved around this because we had to go through customs, immigration, etc. in order to change to another airline. To our surprise, this turned out to be a piece of cake. The people in Columbia were so nice and our short 3 hour stay was uneventful. Lima brought new uncertainty because we were going to be charged extra for the tickets since we aren't Peruvians and Cody's last name was incorrect on his ticket. Before we get to that part of the story, we met with Brian and Jen Pennington. Oops, just remember the glitch from Bogota. They wouldn't allow our bag full of bug foggers to be put on the airplane. I guess the US baggage people are lax because we had already flown on two flights with them. Anyway, as my head droops while typing this, the final result was we were charged an extra \$178 per ticket but Cody was able to board. A side note, we enjoyed our last American food thanks to Pappa John's pizza in the airport!

In Iquitos we were met by Jake and Richar. We made a quick trip to "Glover Inn" where we'll be staying all week and then to Leo's church. It was a festive night of worship and games with the youth of Leo's church.

Now, we are trying to all get showered and bedded down for the night. We worship at 7am at Leo's church. As I listen to the heavy rainfall on the roof and hear traditional Peruvian music being blared somewhere, I was sentimental. It's good to be back in Peru with our brothers and sisters here. God is good.

March 15, 2010

The team has recovered from the fatigue of traveling. Sunday was refreshing. We worshipped at Monte de Dios with Pastor Leopoldo. The brothers and sisters are so welcoming. In the evening, we started the "conferencia" on evangelism. Everybody on the team performed some of the service. We are still trying to discern if the stomp teaching is working or not, but although the attendees didn't catch on quickly to the routine, they did have fun trying.

Today, Jake and the Peruvian brothers are shopping for painting supplies. Tomorrow, we will begin painting the classrooms that were started on last year's spring break trip. The building is very nice and should provide years of service to the churches here.

Carol led our devotion this morning and shared about joy. Could you think of someone better to teach about joy? As my father used to say, "If a man tells you how to grow corn, look in his corn crib?". It's pretty unanimous that Carol's joy "crib" has long ago busted at the seams.

We were delighted that Dodie was able to participate in our devotion time. It's clear that part of our purpose on this trip is to minister to the Glover's. What a joy it is to stay with them in their house.

Our accommodations are wonderful. The ladies have their own room with beds. The guys are roughing it on the floor in the living room which happens to be air conditioned unlike the ladies room. We are still trying to adjust the air conditioning because we are getting cold at night.

For all those in the states who wonder how beautiful Hannah and Abigail are in person, we report that they are extremely beautiful. We are all taking turns holding Abigail. It's adorable to see Hannah riding in a moto-taxi as if she were in the back of a mini-van in Texas. Hay no problema!

The "plan" is to do some street evangelism this evening and more discipleship teaching tonight. Pray that we are clearly communicating and that our relationships will strengthen.

Gloria a Dios!

March 16, 2010

Our schedule has turned out to be something like the following in the evening. We go door-to-door in the neighborhood near the church we are working and invite the residents to the "conferencia" with "expositores internacionales". Robert/Stacie, Art/Guy, Jose/Sony, and Justin/Elisa, I bet you didn't know you had "expositores internacionales" in your family! To increase the interest, we marched through the streets with a banner that announced the conferencia with the expositores.

Our street work resulted in about 25 children and 15 adults coming to the evening

conference. We taught them the meaning of the wordless book and how to make their own wordless book with construction paper. We learned that glue sticks don't work very well in high humidity, but that didn't seem to dampen their enthusiasm. We had good old Elmer's glue that worked just fine.

Maybe tomorrow, we'll add pictures to the blog. We have a cool video of two Peruvian boys talking the group through each page of the wordless book. Construction paper – \$2.50/packet, Glue – \$1/stick, seeing children teaching the truths of God – PRICELESS!

Hasta Manana!

March 17, 2010

“Teach them to do **ALL** the things I have told you.” Matt 28:20

A clear message to the team on this trip is obedience. It is easy to say that just coming on the trip is obedience so we can check that one off our list for the year. However, our obedience is not marked in our acts, but in our heart. It is not what we do, but how we do it. It is readily apparent that this team desires to obey by the enthusiasm they exude and the willingness to do whatever we ask of them.

The morning of Tuesday (3/16) found us “painting” the classrooms in the building that we started working on last year. Painting is a loose term because they thin the paint to a watery consistency. It was more like simply staining the concrete walls and ceilings. The team worked hard and we completed the first coat for all 3 classrooms. The plan is to finish painting on Wednesday.

In the afternoon, we went door-to-door near the church of Pastor Alandino. We split into groups of Peruvians and Americans. We were simply inviting them to visit Alandino's church. Two of the groups were able to witness and 8 people made decisions for Christ!

In the evening, we had movie night. A local American missionary allowed us to borrow his equipment and we showed “Narnia” at Pastor Leo's church. There were over 200 people there to see a very good movie, but more importantly, Pastor Richar spoke after the movie about the symbolism of Aslan's sacrifice. He also invited them back for a Friday night celebration.

We pray that as a team we continue to fully obey God's leading because that will allow us as a group to be unified in His purposes. We have much to be thankful for on this trip. Here are the highlights:

- God speaking through us that has led and will lead to people coming to Christ.
- Growing relationships with the Peruvians.
- Physical health. Other than some soreness from soccer, everyone is healthy.

Please pray for our team in the following manner:

- For physical and mental stamina as the week continues. The Glover's hospitality is wonderful, but being away from home this long can wear on most people.
- Guidance on what to teach tonight. (Note, our initial plan has been altered multiple times. We may be on plan "E" or "F" by now. Merging American vs Peruvian is no small task...)
- Clear direction on what to do in the Friday night service.
- Continued health for the team.
- Insights on future work with the Peruvians.

March 18, 2010

There is starting to at least be some similarities between our days as far as our activities, but in no way are the days monotonous or boring. On Wednesday, we painted the classrooms with the colored paint. The outside walls are light blue to represent the color of the sky. The interior walls are light gold to indicate the color of heaven. In the afternoon, we assisted Pastor Joakim visit the houses surrounding his church. The gospel was shared and people invited to attend his church. He has been serving in his area for 2 years. His church is built on stilts in an area that seems prone to flood. It is near the Rio Nanay. We had to walk on some interesting "walkways" that led from the road to the houses. Obviously, some of these structures weren't rated for Gringo's but we had no problems.

The evening service continued with teaching about evangelism and discipleship at Monte de Dios. The power bracelets were demonstrated. The attendees were broken into groups where they made the bracelets and practiced sharing the Gospel with them. There were approximately 50 people in attendance. It is difficult to describe God's presence during these services. On the surface, there doesn't seem to be anything out of the ordinary going on. However, knowing that we have had to alter our "plan" so many times and adjust to the circumstances, it is obvious that the smoothness of the events is only due to God's guidance. Ketrarly captured this thought well last night when she expressed surprise that everything seemed to go well despite so little preparation and no practice runs.

The team is doing well physically. We are increasing our relationships with the brothers and sisters here. Our existing relationships are growing and we are making new friends.

Today, we should finish painting the church and then head "down town" for some ice cream. We have to celebrate Miss Lindsay's 17th birthday. Not sure what will happen this evening, but not concerned. "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Pray for team unity as the closeness of always being together, sharing one bathroom and living out of suitcases starts to wear on us. Pray that our focus remains on our calling here. Pray that the seeds we have planted continue to grow and a great harvest will result.

Please keep praying so that the trip will be pleasing to God. May He receive all the glory and honor.

March 20, 2010

Our final day in Iquitos was a mixture of tourism and celebration. We took the team on the Amazon to a "zoo" where they held monkeys, sloths and even a mountain boa. On the way back, we went to an area where pink dolphins live. We were able to see them as they came up for air.

In the afternoon, we assisted Pastor Manual's church do some door-to-door canvassing. One young man made a decision for Christ! We pray that God will continue to work among these faithful churches as they minister in some pretty impoverished areas.

The evening service consisted of a celebration of the week's activities. We all praised God for the work that was done this week and for the dear friends that we have in Iquitos. They presented us with gifts and sang "Friends are Friends Forever" in Spanish. We enjoyed a nice meal together and bade all our friends farewell.

We are mostly packed and preparing for an early wake-up call. Our flight is at 7 am, so we leave at 5:30 am for the airport. The team is definitely tired and weary, but the thought of going home should give us that extra boost to push the tough travel schedule.

Thanks for your prayers. God blessed us immensely this week and much kingdom work was accomplished.

To God be All the Glory!

March 22, 2010

Our travel home went very smoothly. No problems with customs, connecting flights or lost baggage. We spent Saturday being tourists in Lima. This included going to the mall, shopping in the Indian Market, and resting at the IMB guest house. We had a nice team dinner at Chili's before returning to the airport for our 11:45 pm flight. The most interesting thing about the return home was to find Dallas blanketed in snow. From the plane, you'd have thought we were flying into Chicago. The 30-something temperatures were quite a change from the tropical temperatures we'd enjoyed the past week. A special thanks to Mr. Art DeForde for driving the church shuttle to take us to the airport and to bring us home. We made it back in time to catch part of the sermon and sing with our church family in Texas.

Thank you to everyone who prayed and supported us on this trip. Much kingdom work was accomplished and we are humbled to have been a part of it.