

Summer Peru Mission Trip
(May 23-June 5)

To God be the Glory!
(A Dios Sea La Gloria)

Team Members: Jeff Guleserian, Jeff Holmes, Jacob Glover, Dodie Glover, Danny Boyles, Carol Harvick, Bethany Lawson, Trent Guleserian, Katherine Holmes, Ashton Morris, and Stephanie Boss

Peruvian Team Members: Richar, Claudia, and Pedro

Crew of the Nenita: Juanito, the captain; Raphael, the first mate; and Miriam, the cook

May 23-24

Jeff G. and Jeff H. began their journey two days before the rest of the team. They went ahead of us to secure Bibles and ministry materials and to make final preparations for the trip.

Thursday, May 25

After weeks of prayer and preparation, the time is finally here for us to begin our journey. Off we go!

Most of the team assembled at Wedgwood Baptist Church around 3:15 p.m. We found the ministry supplies that we were to take to Peru and packed them into our bags and then loaded them into the church van to proceed to the airport. Mike Holton led our prayer for protection and blessing for this trip. We then said goodbye to our families and boarded the bus for Mike to drive us to DFW airport. We safely arrived at 4:30 p.m. We checked our bags and found Jake and Dodie waiting for us by our gate. Our flight was only delayed 15 minutes, so we departed at 7:00 p.m.

We arrived safely at the Miami airport and immediately boarded our plane for Lima. Thank you, Father, for Your protection and perfect timing. Upon our arrival in Lima, Orlando was waiting to take us to the mission house to rest and await our flight to Iquitos. We were able to rest, eat breakfast, and walk a little around Lima before Orlando returned to take us back to the airport. It was a much needed respite after a semi-sleepless overnight flight. Thank you, Father, for all of Your gifts!

Friday, May 26

We are now en route to Iquitos, where we will then travel by boat to various ministry locations along the Amazon River and its tributaries to bring the Light of the Gospel to those who are without Christ.

Praise the Lord from whom all blessings flow! We had a fantastic flight from Lima to Iquitos. As Carol put it, she “worshipped for two hours.” The grand, glorious creations of our Creator God are overwhelming. Praise be to Him. The flight over the Andes Mountains was astounding—such beauty to behold! When our plane landed, Jeff and Jeff were waiting for us at the airport. Then the adventure really began! The drive to our hotel from the airport was surreal...so many sights, smells, and sounds.

We checked into our hotel around 6 p.m. and then went to celebrate Jeff H. and Danny’s birthdays at a local pizzeria.

Saturday, May 27

At 6 a.m. Jeff, Jeff, Carol, Stephanie, and Miriam (the cook for the Nenita) went to the market to do some shopping for supplies and food to take on the boat. What an eye-opener! The fresh (and I do mean fresh!) meat, the decorative displays of spices, and the beautiful fruit stands were a sight to see. We traveled via mototaxi to and from the market. What a chaotic frenzy—a mass of mototaxis, yet they are all somehow on the same flowing, frenzied frequency. Praise God for safety in the traffic!

We finally departed on the Nenita at 10 a.m. and prepared the tarps and mosquito netting while going downriver. We saw many small villages and solitary huts as we traveled down the Amazon toward our destination. I praise you, Father, for the work that You have for us to do, for going before us to prepare the way, and for enabling us to be your servants. Help us to glorify You in all we do!

We arrived in Pebas at 9:30 p.m., after traveling all day. We settled down for a time of devotions in which the theme was God being our Shield and Protector. We all felt a great need to be spiritually alert and on guard because many people were burdened with a sense that we would encounter strong darkness on this particular trip. We cried out to God to be our Strength and Shield.

Sunday May 28

What a glorious day to worship and praise God on the Amazon! The team took a tour of Pebas, said hello to old friends, and secured hostel arrangements for Jake, Dodie and Danny. Bethany, Ashton, Katherine

and Trent spent time playing and singing with some of the children. Pedro joined the group and we headed down river toward San Francisco where we picked up Raul, a Peruvian Christian and his son, Nelson, and his daughter, Noelia.

We then began our way toward the Cochaquinas River to the village with no name where the previous spring team felt the “curtain of darkness.” The team had all felt a deep sense to be spiritually prepared as we started our travel to this area of spiritual darkness and bondage. A little prior to 4pm on Sunday evening, the team gathered on the front of the boat to beseech the throne of God for His light to penetrate the darkness. We prayed and sang songs of praise for about an hour, hand and hand with our Peruvian brothers and sisters in Christ as our boat slowly maneuvered up the Cochaquinas River. It was a marvelous time of worship and praise and seeking the face of God. We were filled with hope and expectation of victory as we arrived at the place with no name. Raul went ashore to ask permission to come into the home and it was granted. The entire team climbed the muddy embankment to the grass-roofed hut. We were all helped up a steep five rung ladder into a large front room with boarded planks for our floor. Upon entering the room, we saw about 20 people ranging in age from toddlers to the elderly. As we were entering and beginning to sit in a circle on the floor, we could feel some fear in a few of the people. Jeff G. told them why we were there and then Jake G. greeted them and told them of the love of Christ who died for them to set them free of their sin. Richar boldly proclaimed the word of God and the offer of salvation was extended. The room was darkened with only two lit candles, but the light of God’s love began to fill the place. When Richar asked, ‘who will receive Christ?’ An old man lying in a hammock responded in faith, by raising his hand immediately and saying, “Yo quiero Jesus”. Others began to follow and 9 people received the gift of God’s glorious salvation that evening in a darkened solitary hut in the Amazon jungle. It was truly the hand of God. We left them with Bibles and tracts and encouraged them to follow Christ daily. We sang “Jesucristo Mi Salvador” and Carol said, “It felt like heaven.” We also prayed for two very sick ladies, and entrusted them to God. Praise be to our Father in Heaven—He alone is God. All power flows from Him. A Dios sea la Gloria!

We traveled back up the Cochaquinas (about 2 hours) to the Amazon and on to San Francisco to return Raul and his family. Prior to our arrival, we prayed over and commissioned Jake, Dodie, Danny and Pedro since that part of the team would be dropped off at San Francisco to minister in villages in that area. We stayed the night on the boat and said goodbye to them in the morning. The rest of the team departed San Francisco @ 6:30 or 7 am and began our trek back upriver toward Santa Lucia and Pevas. Father, fill us with Your spirit. Please give us wisdom,

discernment, words and awareness to hear Your voice clearly and to obey. Father, be our help and our Stay. In Jesus' name.

We just returned to Pebas to try to make calls home, after our visit to Santa Lucia, where we visited with the curaca, Albertano, and other old friends. Katherine, Ashton, and Trent went fishing while about 17 locals came by to watch and play. We continued to travel until just after dark and then we docked at the village of Huanta for the night.

Tuesday May 30th

We began our day @ 5am traveling on the Amazon against the current, moving at 3 mph, with a light rain falling. As we continued on our long venture toward the Napo River, the rain began to increase and continued in a heavy, steady flow all morning and into the afternoon. In mid afternoon we docked at Oran to buy bread and make calls home. We stopped at a little muddy embankment to have some "muddy adventure" time—it was quite a mess!! As we returned to the boat, in the sky were two huge magnificent rainbows—a sign of the promise of God. Praise God from whom all blessing flow!

We continued on our way and made it to the mouth of the Napo River just as dusk was descending. It was a beautiful spectacle as we approached our evening destination to a full glorious sunset. Praise God! Finally, it was too dangerously dark to travel so the captain and first mate picked a good spot to pull over for the night.

Wednesday May 31st

I knew today was going to be a great, glorious day when the first words I heard as I awoke were Carol saying..."Grande! Grande! Grande!" to some villagers as we passed by. We are on our way up the Napo to begin ministering the Gospel to the lost souls of the Amazon Basin. We so feel God's protection and the prayers of His people. Praise be to Him for His faithfulness and His love, His strength and His all-encompassing power! We pray for His Spirit to fall on these people and call out those who are His—to give them a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone.

Arrived @ Mangua at 10 am. At Mangua we visited with some of the villagers and secured a peki peki for our trip to Centroamerica. Bethany, Ashton, Trent, Katherine, and Claudia sang songs with the children and told them the message of the songs. They spent time playing bubbles and soccer and interacting with them.

Our team went aboard the peki peki and took an interesting, beautiful ride up a small river because the walk was too muddy. It was a majestic

experience—the slight rain rustling through the high trees, the meandering river, the fun fellowship. When we arrived, we had a small walk to the village. There we met with about 25 villagers—some of them children. Richar preached to them and then Jeff G. followed with exhorting them to read their Bibles daily and have a growing relationship with Christ. We gave them New Testaments and discipleship materials and prayed with them. On our peki peki ride back to the Nenita, it down poured on us the whole way. We all enjoyed the adventure of the trip—it was a fantastic moment—showers of blessing from above shared with our brothers and sisters in Christ. (We also were able to bring a man from the village with us who had injured his fingers with a machete a week ago! Yikes! Jeff was able to clean and bandage his wounds.) God's grace is so good. Rain on! Thank you, Father, for raining down Your goodness to us. Amen.

After supper we had devotions and a time of worship to pray for God's intervention and aid. Carol shared her dad's sermon from Acts 28 in which Rome was Paul's destination. She discussed the four anchors: 1) Asking for the presence of God—calling on his name 2) Faith 3) Sense of destiny (Rome) 4) Prayer. It was a precious time of being in the presence of the Lord. We docked at the village of Llachapa on the Napo River for the night.

Thursday June 1st

Left Llachapa at 8 am or so—after the heavy fog lifted. We are currently headed toward a military post on the Napo River where we are seeking permission to go further up the river. Our papers are only for the Amazon and not the Napo. We are praying for God's favor and blessing so that we can get to our "Rome"—the villages on the Rio Mazan. Father, guide our steps—we want to do Your will... Help us to stay filled up with You and then poured out in Your service. Let Your word go forth and Your light shine brightly as it goes to these peoples along the river in our path. Call out those who are Yours.

Arrived at Mazan @ 1:20 pm. Richar, Jeff G., and the captain walked into town with our papers to get permission to enter. We decided to risk detainment or a fine because we felt the Lord wanted us on the Rio Mazan. So we decided to risk it and pray for the Lord's favor. Richar and Jeff felt very strongly and in agreement that the Lord wanted us to go to this river. Praise God! He is so faithful! Jeff G., Richar, and the Captain (Juanito) returned in less than an hour with an "all clear". We praise Him that He has literally opened the door for new areas for evangelization on the Mazan River. We had to give a list of names of the people who were on board to a Coast Guard representative who came onto the boat to check it out. He was very jovial and amiable. As we

were leaving the port of Mazan, a huge rainbow covered the city—what a display of the promise of God! We praise you Father—You are faithful!

In 20 to 30 minutes we arrived at the city of Santa Cruz, our first stop on the Mazan River. We had an open welcome with smiles and interaction. Richar preached with power and 8 people (teens and adults) were saved. The kids enjoyed singing and playing with bubbles. Carol and Jeff G. lead in songs and had a great time with the kids. Bibles were distributed to those who received Christ. We prayed for a young boy and three babies who were sick with fever. We departed and headed further up the Mazan River. We docked at Primero de Enero for the night and were going to minister there, but the men were all leaving at 4 am to go to another village, but they were anxious to meet with us. They wanted us to come back today at 4pm, but time would not permit. They hope to see us when we return in November.

Friday June 2nd

We continued up river to the next village—the village of Libertad. Jeff and Richar (and then Trent and Katherine) went ashore. The men of the village were away, but the women of the village visited with us and showed us their church. It was a welcoming and inviting visit. At Libertad we turned the boat around and headed back down the Mazan River toward Mazan to get gas for the boat. In Mazan we took a quick tour of the town and bought a few items—including a monkey (mono) for Claudia and Richar. The kids really enjoyed it and named it Abu. Interestingly enough, we also able to take the leader of the Mangua community with us aboard as he “happened” to be waiting there at the dock for the evening lancha. This was a great connection to be able to build a relationship with him and his community. He offered to pay us which of course was denied since it was our gift and pleasure to allow him to join us! Praise our God!

We are now heading downriver back to Mangua for a time of worship with its villagers. It took us nearly two days to get to Mazan since the boat is slow going and we can't travel at night. Lord-willing, our travel time will be cut in half since we are now traveling with the current. We happily anticipate our time to gather and worship with the peoples of Mangua. We praise you, Father, for calling out those who are Yours all over this nation. Please let Your light continue to shine brightly in this place for generations to come.

At 12:30pm we arrived at a village en route to Mangua, docked, ate lunch, and then went by peki peki through a small river into a beautiful lake to a village by the name of Urco Mirano. Jeff G. and Richar asked if we could come ashore. They beckoned to us on the boat to come and

bring the ministry materials. What joy we had when we found a pastor and many Christians living there. We thought that this was going to be an uncharted area. When we arrived, we asked to speak to the governor of the community. We were given directions to his house, and when we ascended to the plaza and started talking to the man, he told us that they already had a Christian community. We were shown to a pastor who we asked if there had been any evangelicals through there. He said that there had not been any for a long time. Only one had come through. He had lived with them for 20+ years until 2003. His name was Paul Powlison, a Christian, linguist, anthropologist, and a student of Indian mythologies. He is the one responsible for translating the Old Testament and New Testament into Yagua. He was the first to bring the gospel to the Yagua. We had a marvelous time singing and fellowshiping with the Christians there—lots and lots of children! Balloons and candy abounded! It was a joyous celebratory visit with our brothers and sisters in Christ, singing and praising the Lord together. We prayed for a lady that had severe pain/bladder and kidney infection that they had been fasting for until 1pm that day.

We finally arrived at Mangua at 5:30 pm—we were to be there at 2 or 3pm, but travel took longer than expected. Jeff G. and Richar met with the leadership and gave them Bibles and discipleship materials. Bethany, Trent, Ashton, and Katherine played “pato pato gallina” (duck duck chicken) with the kids and prayed with them. We said our farewells and we assured them of our return in November. They seemed anxious and ready for us to return.

We’re off again—to try to make it to the mouth of the Napo before nightfall. Praise you, Father, for a beautiful day seeing Your people in Peru. We had a wonderful, blessed time of worship as we sang God’s praises and shared how we had each seen Him working during our time here. Glory to God!

Our captain had to spot a good location for us to dock for the night—didn’t make it out of the Napo—too dangerous to travel at night (shallow water, etc.)

Saturday June 3rd

Left this morning at 5:30 am—took us 20 minutes to reach the Amazon. We are now steadily traveling upstream toward Iquitos. We are going against the current, so our rate of speed averages about 6 miles per hour. We hope to make it to Iquitos by mid-afternoon and look forward to reuniting with our other team members and hearing their stories of what God did while they were ministering among the people.

Arrived in Iquitos around 3 p.m., unloaded the boat, and returned to the Hotel Ambassador. We were happy to see that Jake, Dodie, and Danny had returned safely. They had quite an adventure where they stayed in Pebas and on their return trip. Praise God for their safety and His mercy upon them. They saw seventeen people come to know the Lord. A large part of their ministry was focused on discipleship and encouraging parents to teach their children to follow Christ.

We visited the market and a poverty-stricken area called Belen. That evening we had a final, farewell dinner with the entire team and celebrated God's victories of the week.

Sunday, June 4th

At 5 am, we left for the Iquitos airport to catch our flight to Lima. While in Lima, we spent time at the Pacific Ocean, went shopping at the Indian market, and went out to eat before heading back to the airport. Also we spent a little time at the mission house where we met another REAP team that was heading out to the mountains of Peru for 10 weeks of ministering and living among the people. It was such an incredible experience to hear of their commitment and excitement about sharing the Gospel to the lost people of Peru. It was thrilling to see young people that were sold out and fearlessly taking the Gospel of Christ to the nations. It is awesome knowing that we are part of a greater endeavor that is aggressively taking the Good News to lost people all over Northern Peru. Thank you, Father, for allowing us to be a part of Your work.

Monday, June 5th

We're back! Praise God for safe travel and happy reunions with our families.

On our trip, we saw the Lord work in many ways. We felt His presence, protection, and power. He allowed us to make contact with new villages, develop strategies, and increase exploration efforts. We proclaimed the Word of Life and many responded in faith. We saw Him at work in Peru. All glory to God on High! A Dios Sea La Gloria!