

January 2023

MISSIONS

Building Firm Foundations in PERU

Truth and Freedom
in the Korean Peninsula

Interview with
New Missionaries
in Special Areas





THINKING IT THROUGH

BY MICHAEL DUBBERLY

Relating to Others in a Christ-Honoring Way

Our personal defects are manifested in the process of relating to others. We desperately need God to change us from what we tend to be and do to what we can (and should) be and do, in His power. If Christ's likeness isn't evident in our attitudes, actions, and words, our spiritual talk is meaningless or hypocritical. In Luke 6:37–42, which we will consider here, Jesus teaches us about relating to others in a way that honors Him.

Verses 37–38: show love, forgiveness, and bigheartedness

Don't judge (Romans 3:24–25; 5:1). Only God is qualified to evaluate motives. A faultfinding attitude is inconsistent with the loving spirit that should characterize a Christian. If you pick a fight over almost anything, you'll be at odds with nearly everyone sooner or later.

Don't condemn (Romans 8:1). Are you guilty of something that is just as wrong as what you're upset with somebody else for? Or were you not tested as intensely as they were? If there's sin in your life, your first responsibility is to repent. If you're hard on others, you'll be treated harshly too and evaluated more severely.

Forgive others (Ephesians 4:32). God irrevocably forgives every sinner who trusts only in Jesus for salvation. An unwillingness to forgive those who sin against you can harm your companionship with God.

Be generous (Romans 12:13). You'll eventually lose what you hoard, but what you give away is still yours—God continues to use it to bless others (Proverbs 11:24).

Verse 39: be humble and lead by example

Realize that you're needy (Ephesians 5:15–17). You're not yet at the finish line, so be aware of your great need for holiness and call others to depend on God and His Word.

Recognize the great responsibility of leadership (Romans 2:17–23). Know where the potholes are and learn to dodge them. If your grasp of some area of God's Word or the Christian life is wrong, your blind spot may harm others too.

Remember you're not too strong to fall (1 Corinthians 10:12–13; 1 Peter 5:8). God strengthens those who depend on Him, not

on their own strength. Your fall would dishonor God and hurt those you love and are called to serve.

Verse 40: be diligent and teachable

Don't overestimate your importance (Romans 12:3). Life is not all about you; imitate Christ and form Christ-imitators, not personal clones.

Push yourself (2 Timothy 2:15). Train hard to become more like Jesus. You can't effectively teach what you're not living. Those you teach will seek to imitate you, so be holy and be real.

Imitate the best examples (Hebrews 12:2; 13:7). Love Jesus and invite others to know and follow Him. Evaluate your growth in Christlikeness and heed others' assessments of your defects.

Verses 41–42: identify and overcome your weaknesses

Don't focus on others' faults or you might minimize your own (Romans 2:1). Your greatest concern should be recognizing and dealing with your own sin.

Be aware of your own faults (Psalm 139:23–24). You can't help someone overcome a sin if you have the same struggle and brush over it.

Don't consider yourself better than anyone (1 Corinthians 1:26–31). Not having fallen the way another has doesn't mean you're any better. Rather, it underscores the fact that God's grace is sufficient.

Don't try to justify your faults (Romans 7:24–25). Your sin highlights your need for God's grace. If you minimize your sin, you're saying you don't need God to rescue you—you're good on your own.

Deal with your own problems (James 1:25). Recognize that you're insufficient for the task. Don't let your sin keep you isolated; living a transparent life is the best preparation for being useful to God and a help to other people.

Help others (Galatians 6:2). God wants us to support and serve one another, following Jesus's example (Mark 10:45).

Ensure that God controls your thoughts, words, and actions. There is a direct relationship between your advance in the Christian walk and your ability to be humble and serve others. ■

Michael Dubberly serves in Colombia.

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COVER PHOTO: Assembly building in Puerto Arturo, Peru—Pablo Cenepo-Torres





Mission Trip to **SOLTERITO, PERU**

Building Firm Foundations for the Work of the Gospel

BY PABLO CENEPO-TORRES

In September 2022, a team of believers—myself and seven others from Trujillo, Peru—committed nearly half of the month to a trip to Solterito, in the Peruvian jungles of the Amazon River basin. Our team of professionals, including a dentist, general practitioner, agricultural engineer, civil engineer, surveyor, school administrator, and lawyer had prepared well in advance for a multifaceted ministry: evangelistic messages and dramas, a children's ministry, Bible teaching and preaching, a medical clinic, and construction of a new church facility for the assembly in Solterito. We also collected supplies, including clothing, medicine, Bibles, and Christian literature, to share with the believers we would meet.

First, we made an important stop in the village of Puerto Arturo for the inauguration of their new church facility.

40 chickens and a baptism

Back in December 2020, believers in Puerto Arturo requested that we pray for a lot they owned. They were asking the Lord to help them build a solid facility for worshipping Him together. We prayed, and then, we began the work alongside them in July 2021.

On Saturday, September 17, 2022, shortly after we had completed the building, we returned to celebrate the dedication of this facility to the Lord. As my team and I enjoyed a great



dedication service, I couldn't stop thinking of the hardships we had gone through to dig the facility's foundation: The ground of solid clay had stuck to our shovels like sticky gum. And, then, when we thought we were making progress, water had begun to fill our trenches, causing the sides to collapse. All the work was well worth it, to now see believers safely praising and worshipping our great God.

Our team had developed the entire dedication program, so we preached, shared testimonies, sang, and even squeezed in an evangelistic drama.

The believers had planned a special meal to be held on Sunday before we left. At 2:00 a.m., the women started preparing 40 chickens. We could hear the whole thing from our tents as they put the chickens down—I had to plug my ears! But I would be more than happy to open my mouth and savor the meal a few hours later.



After my final message on Sunday morning, we descended to the waters of the Huallaga River for a baptism. In the jungle,



that time of year is called summer, meaning less rain, more intense heat, and equally as oppressive humidity. But the rivers are low, and the ground is dry—thank the Lord.

Years of partnership

We made one more stop: the Filadelfia assembly in Yurimaguas. We've periodically visited it over the years to preach and tackle repair needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when we stopped by to speak at the assembly, we discovered some of the classroom walls had collapsed because they had no foundation. We decided to help because the children had nowhere to continue their Sunday school classes. Now, the walls are up and standing on solid ground. We prayed with one of the elders and continued our journey.



Digging trenches, pulling teeth, and teaching kids

After a long journey, first by bus and then by boat, we made it to Solterito. The believers received, with deep gratitude, all the clothing we had selected for them. Clothing is a great gift for them since the jungle humidity ruins fabric quicker than drier climates. It had been more than two days since those of us on the team had enjoyed a shower, so the nearby river looked great.

After a sweet dunk, feeling clean and refreshed, we were eager to start our first evangelistic service for the community of about 300 families. The power was out, so some helped us by contributing their solar-powered reflectors. I had providentially purchased a rechargeable speaker that came in handy when I spoke on the “two doors, two ways, two destinies, and one Savior.”

For the entire week, we listened to each team member lead the morning Bible hour before heading to the kitchen for breakfast.



Our first breakfast was an authentic dish in this region: boiled plantains with salty, dried fish and a cup of hot lemon grass tea.

Our team had three daily responsibilities: construction, medical care, and kids' Bible classes.

Some worked with the local believers digging the trenches for the church's foundation—the hardest of the responsibilities, especially during a jungle summer.

On the medical team, Dr. Cesia and her sister Candace did a wonderful job caring for the sick. Beforehand, my wife, Sarah, and I had gathered medicine so Dr. Cesia could dispense it freely. I was assigned to work with Carlos, a dentist, mostly pulling teeth. We had intense days ahead of us. People from villages one hour away would walk to us for treatment.

The clinic was far more fascinating and less sweaty than the trenches. We heard about several mysterious illnesses, and our first patient to sit in our improvised dental chair was a wisdom-tooth case.



Some cases broke our hearts. One boy had been involved in a bad accident with a steel rod that resulted in a large laceration on his leg. Without medical help to stitch him, his wound had simply been bandaged. Now, he struggles with a sensitive scar.

At break time from school, children swarmed the clinic. We hope what they saw inspired them to study hard to become doctors or, better yet and more immediate, to take care of their teeth and bodies.



I was thankful pulling teeth wasn't especially grueling, so at the end of the clinic's day, I'd join an already worn-out bunch and do my share of the hardest job. Within a few days, the team had completed the trenches and had almost finished the rebar frames. Next, I needed to find a cement mixer, and we needed water to create concrete. And we would need to haul it from the river.

With the water containers ready and the concrete ready, we were also ready to begin pouring. Without rain, we got a lot done. We felt we could complete the walls in a week—a major feat.

After four days, we had laid the foundation, and the brick walls had begun to take shape. The building was starting to look beautiful, we thought.

In this area, stopping to eat lunch and rest between noon

and 3:00 p.m. is mandatory because the sun's intensity melts you to the core. Our sleeping quarters were a literal sauna, but at least we were indoors.



Roasted iguana and the blessings of hospitality

Our hosts, the eight families that make up the core of the little assembly in Solterito, worked tirelessly to feed us their best: wild game included a baby capybara and *anuje*—something like a large guinea pig—and fish freshly caught from the river included *doncella*, giant catfish with sweet, delicious meat. But the most exotic and daring meal was roasted jungle iguana. This lizard has a smoother body suit than the common, better-known iguanas with crested heads.



Every afternoon, our team member Candace ran the children's ministry station. For five days, about 40 children received



sound teaching on grace and sin. When things got too hot outside, they would come in and take over our sleeping quarters.

More and more people showed up every night for our

evangelistic ministry. Two of my team members were willing to preach the Word with me. Things were building for our final night of evangelism.

We had planned a special celebration with the children on our final full day in Solterito. Using a jar of teeth (which we had pulled during our visit) as an object lesson, I spoke about the salvation from sin available in the Lord Jesus.



But, then, heavy rain came, and we had to abandon the rest of our plans. Still, we led an informal ceremony to reward those who had worked hard. The children loved the teddy bears that a believer in Canada had sent for them.



We were eager for that last night of evangelism with the three communities that had welcomed our presence. Many showed interest in making a public rededication of their faith. Yet the

heavy rain continued well into the night. Still, some believers approached me to show their gratitude. I received two chickens, rice, and beans to take home.

WE WERE EAGER FOR THAT LAST NIGHT OF EVANGELISM WITH THE THREE COMMUNITIES.

Wrapping up our trip

And just like that, our week was up. We had been served with much love and generosity. The believers, out of the little they had, gave us their best. They "abandoned" their fields to work with us on the church facility, depending on the Lord to provide for their daily needs. Please pray for the believers in Solterito. It is the only gathering of believers in this community of 300 families. We left some Bibles and leadership materials.



Before leaving, and as the walls were coming along, we entrusted this site and the believers' work to the Lord. Our project leader guaranteed me that with two more workers, they could complete the walls, pour the columns, and then, build the roof. We left all the supplies we could, to facilitate the remaining work.

Our team did an incredible job the entire trip, putting their lives on hold for 10 days to serve with the believers in Solterito. As soon as we returned to the city, everyone was eager to communicate with their loved ones at home—and enjoy a hot shower!



Three days later, the believers told me they had completed the walls and columns. Then, they braced them before putting up the trusses and the tin roof. We are so pleased with how things turned out and how fast they happened. ■



Pablo and Sarah Cenepo-Torres are commended from Grace Bible Fellowship in Portland, Oregon.

WHEN THE Gospel IS LOST IN THE Pulpit

Educating and Equipping a Misreached Region

BY DR. PATRICK & SHERRY COLEMAN

From time to time, we have interesting conversations with people. A few years ago, I (Patrick) was chatting with a man named Joseph. I asked him if his parents had named him after Joseph in the Bible. He told me no but after a favorite uncle. As we talked further, he told me that he didn't know his name was written in the Bible. I explained that the Bible includes several men named Joseph, including a great story about how one Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and,

Religion is taught but the true story of a Savior who came to redeem mankind is often lost in the pulpit.

later, elevated to the second most powerful man in Egypt. He was astounded. He had never heard that story. I then asked him about his church background, and he told me that he was an elder in his church. (He named the church, and it has a good reputation doctrinally.) I asked him how he became an elder when he didn't know much about the Bible.

He replied, "I'm 60 years old, so I became an elder."

Another time, a man we'll call Mr. B. visited the Christian Resource Centre, where Sherry greeted him. Mr. B. was desperate: his elders had assigned him to speak that coming Sunday, and he didn't know anything about the Bible and needed "something to preach about." Sherry led him to her correspondence

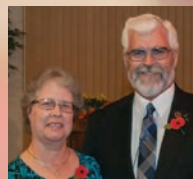
courses, explaining they were a good place to start. Then, she asked him why he was assigned to preach if he didn't know anything about the Bible.

He replied, "It was my turn."

We are surprised (and yet not) that people living so close to us in a country claiming to be Christian are ignorant of the Bible they carry to church but never open during the week. We have heard about the world's unreached areas, and we pray for our coworkers ministering in those places. Nevertheless, we find ourselves in a "misreached" part of the world, where religion is taught but the true story of a Savior who came to redeem mankind is often lost in the pulpit.

Our purpose and goal are quite clear: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19–20)

Thank you for the part you play in keeping us on the mission field, serving in one of the world's misreached areas. ■



Patrick and Sherry Coleman serve the Lord in Zambia and are commended from Bethany Bible Chapel in Toms River, New Jersey.

