

April 16, 2008

Estimating the number of fundamental churches in Peru is actually very difficult. There are two main reasons why it is so difficult. The first is that it's not always easy to determine the difference between a church and a work. Hundreds of villages have a group of believers that meet regularly but are not necessarily an organized local church. The second reason is that there are many churches and works up and down the rivers of the jungle and all throughout the mountain villages, a lot of those being in very inaccessible places. My understanding is that when the great missions' movement began in the last century many of the missionaries (and not exclusively Americans) evangelized much of the jungle and mountain areas. Also, Peruvians from these rural areas would come to the coast, receive the gospel, return to their villages, and would win numbers of family and friends to the Lord.

In other words, the initial wave of church planting in Peru has taken place. That doesn't mean we don't need more churches in Peru. What it does mean is that now we have a very different concern to deal with; that of training pastors and leaders for these churches. Most of the pastors/leaders are not pastorally trained. Most have never been to a Bible college or institute, and will not be able to go. They live from one day to the next, knowing their family won't eat if they don't work. The possibility of them going somewhere for a few years to receive training is not feasible.



What Segundo Rodriguez and I want to do is to organize training centers for these men. The basic format we plan to use is the following: we can provide a one-week modular class three times a year. We will go (or send other teachers) and teach all day for six days. We have available a 10 volume curriculum that works well for teaching these men the basics of Bible understanding, doctrine, hermeneutics, spiritual growth, etc.

Tuesday of last week, Segundo and I flew to Iquitos and then drove two hours to the city of Nauta. Our goal was to pursue contacts there for the purpose of establishing a training center in Nauta or somewhere nearby. We talked with two of the pastors from two of the four Baptist churches in Nauta. We met with a group of believers in one of the villages we visited and met with the pastor in another village. We left very content with our initial contacts. We need to take a longer trip sometime later this year and make more contacts as well as pursue the details of where and when we will begin the modular classes. Our goal is to see this type of training center established in various points throughout the jungle and mountain regions in Peru.

On Friday night, I begin preaching an evangelistic campaign for a church here in Lima. Pray that there will be unsaved folks in attendance and that God will use the preaching of the gospel to save souls!

In Christ,  
Tim Chapman