

The mission of South American Call is changing. Not in its overall purpose, but in its place of operation, its methods of operation and its complexity. When this ministry first started, it was very simple. We would raise money to build a church and then get people to go with us and help build it. Many mission groups still follow this basic plan and it is a very productive plan in many ways.

Then God began showing us things to add to the trips: Bible Schools for the children, crusades in the cities, medical and dental services, the Soup Kitchen where children are fed along with receiving Christian teaching, and many large kid's crusades. Next year (2009) we will be adding another soup kitchen in Santa, Peru, with about 30 children. We bought land in Huaraz, Peru, and built a parsonage for the territorial supervisor and a large multi-purpose building that would house an auditorium for conferences and a local congregation. We spent about \$170,000.00 on this particular project. We have had crusades ranging from as many as 11,000 down to just a few hundred.

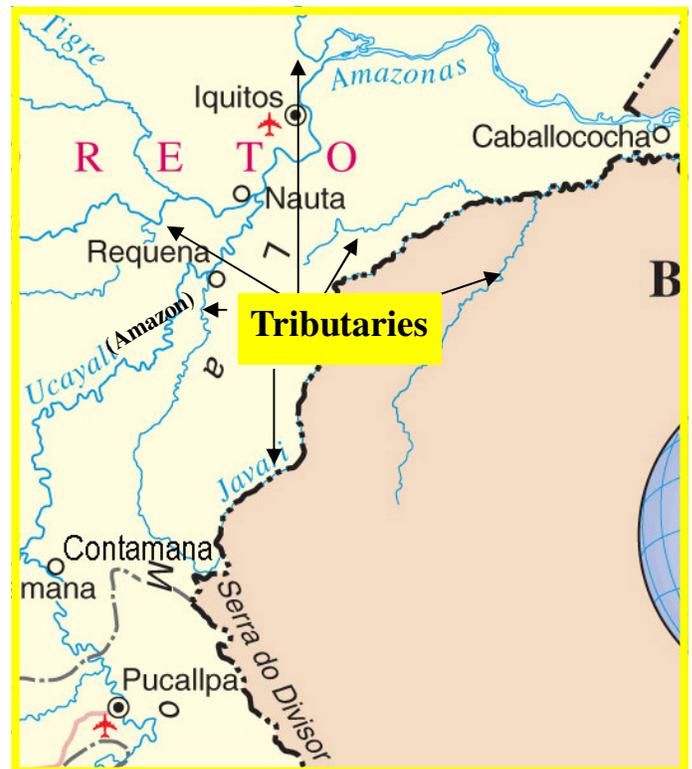
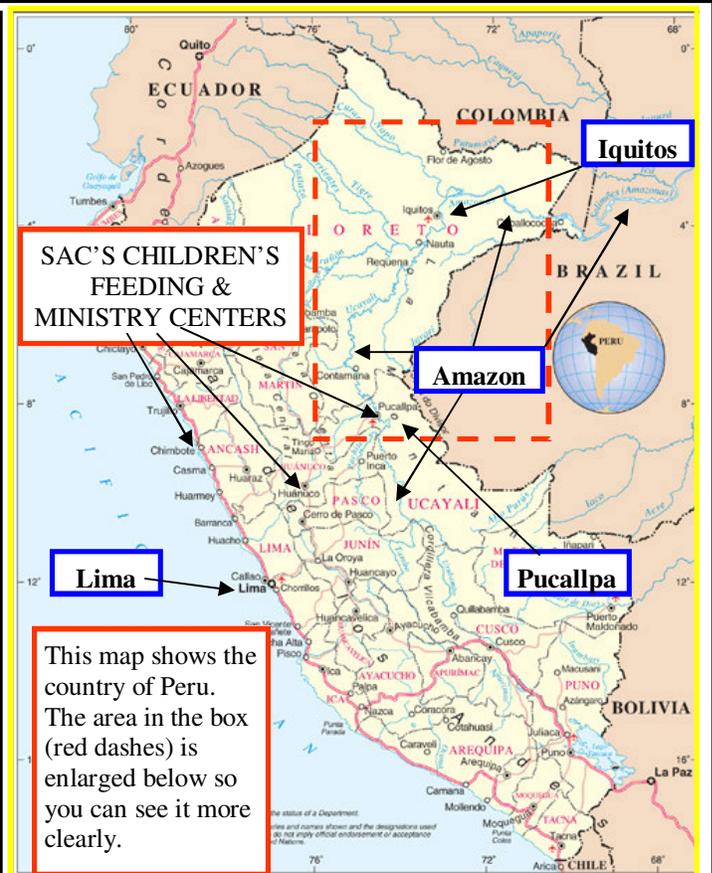
But all of this is changing now. We are on the Amazon River. In Huaraz, Peru, we worked at 10,000 feet altitude. It was cold and rained much of the time. It rains on the Amazon a lot, but it is never cold. It is extremely hot and the altitude is near sea level. This has been a dramatic change in many ways.

We anticipate that the crowds may not be as large out in the jungle. But there are over 35,000 villages that have no church and thousands who have never heard the name of Jesus according to Wycliffe Bible translators. We are desperately trying to set a system in place that will send the gospel message to every village in the jungle.

There are many difficulties to overcome here. I will name a few. 1. The difficulty in dealing with the laws of the country. Some of the laws are made for the purpose of stopping evangelicals. 2. The logistics of the area. There are no roads. There are thousands of square miles of land that have no roads at all. The only road is the river. 3. Equipment such as boats are expensive to buy and maintain. 4. Doing business is extremely difficult. Their methods are very illogical. In fact, one of the reasons for their poor condition is the illogical way they do business. Things that would take minutes in the USA may take months there. This is no exaggeration.

I could go on and on, but I think you have the idea. We are having to learn and adapt to a very different way of doing ministry. Here the boat is everything. Really fruitful ministry simply can't be done without a boat; not just any boat, but a houseboat... A FLOATING HOTEL.

Many missionaries use planes and that is one way to do it. Airplanes definitely have a place in this ministry. However, that is very expensive and does not lend itself to



the type of work I need to do there. I believe I have a way that is more cost effective for this particular area in Peru.

I am speaking of a houseboat, of course; a

floating hotel. For sometime now we have owned a boat in Brazil. However it has proven near impossible to bring it into Peru. After spending a lot of money trying to bring the boat into Peru, I have decided to sell it and buy a boat in Peru. The boat we purchase in Peru will be safe and comfortable, just not as efficient. This boat, of course, will be named MISS SOPHIE. At this time I believe I have a very good prospect for selling the boat.

Nevertheless, despite all the problems we have had acquiring a boat, the ministry is moving forward. We are doing the ministry with a chartered boat, EL ARCA (The Ark) out of Iquitos. EL ARCA is fully self contained, air-conditioned and capable of staying on-site for weeks at a time, if necessary. This boat has no on board water system, but it is our hope that the boat we finally acquire will have one. We have freezers to keep food safe to eat for weeks or months, if necessary.

We have another boat that we are using now out of Pucallpa (see map). I believe God is now moving us into this area. It is my vision to work all of the Amazon in Peru all the way from Pucallpa to Brazil.

Teams of missionaries board our chartered boat, El Arca, in Iquitos or Evangelista in Pucallpa (see map), and travel either up river or down river to villages directly on the Amazon or on a tributary. The map only shows a very small number of tributaries, but there are many more. EVERY TRIBUTARY HAS VILLAGES! We are going into a group of villages in a given area and do whatever we can to lay the groundwork for evangelization. We are drilling water wells and in the future we may install water filtration devices. We do Bible Schools for the children and/or the adults, as well as dental, chiropractic and other medical work, such as giving eye glasses to the people. We do as many of the above activities as possible. We are doing whatever it takes to become acquainted with the people and gain their confidence so that we may present the gospel message. Sometimes they are not ready for the gospel message when the first team goes in. But subsequent teams will build on the efforts of the last team until they are ready to receive Christ. Remember... "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." 1Co 3:6 When the body of Christ begins to form in the village then we will bring our saw mill in and build the church.

At some point, either shortly before or soon after the building of the church, one or more of the people in that village, and possibly all the leadership of the body, will be brought out to a School of Christ International where they will spend several weeks learning the basic doctrine of Scripture. This is a proven system and has been used to plant thousands of churches all over the world. It is a series of 46 DVD's in their language that will be played on a TV by a class leader. The school will

last 4-6 weeks in which time they will be taught not only the Scriptures, but to pray and to fast. This school is very intense and some do not make it. Only those who are serious about their relationship with God make it through this rigorous course.

The planting process is well underway and the body of Christ has begun to form. We have a district overseer visiting these villages on a monthly basis. This is where a small personal size hovercraft comes into play. The overseer will be able to visit the churches in a reasonable amount of time. This will be a ministry in and of itself. I will need much prayer as we begin to lay this part of the ministry in place. The hovercraft is still under construction and we anticipate the completion in the next few months. Visiting and teaching is very necessary. Hear the words of the Apostle Paul..... "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20:28-30

An electronic solar powered Bible is being placed in each congregation which will read the Bible to them in their language. We are now expanding our area of ministry to include the river to the north of Pucallpa. In fact, beginning in October of '08 our trips will go out of Pucallpa for some time. This will allow us to begin to work toward the other areas we have already ministered in. It is my hope that we will be able to plant churches the entire length of the Amazon in Peru and network them together. With teaching and training and much prayer, I believe these people will become missionaries themselves and go into places away from the river that we cannot get to.

As I write this Mike and Sheila Eaton are joining our team in Pucallpa. They will be a wonderful asset to this ministry. They both speak Spanish and feel the call to work with us in Peru. I believe their help will be very valuable.

Joe Mercer

joemercer@bellsouth.net

Home 423-728-5425

Cell 423-309-5217

For further information see... www.southamericancall.org