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Dear Friends and family,

There on a lighted throne carried in the Roman Catholic procession sat “The Lord of Miracles” a plaster figure of Jesus being honored by the masses. The people and their faces were hard; no one seemed joyful as they passed by murmuring prayers. Matthew 15:8-9 came to mind. It is the passage where Jesus spoke from Isaiah concerning the Pharisees, <sup>8</sup>“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. <sup>9</sup>They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

Later I was speaking with an elder from McLean Presbyterian Church in Virginia, who had visited a church building here where Mary took the center place and Jesus was off to the side. We were angry at such heresy, but then again, how much differently do we treat our Lord in our lives and hearts? Do we simply honor Him with our lips, or do we burn with passion for him?

One day I found myself sitting in a small forest of eucalyptus trees with a group of thirteen boys. These are young guys who are part of our second great wave of mentees and who are Caleb’s (my youngest brother) very close friends. They had asked me to mentor them, and there I sat with my good friend Ruben Solier as we told them about the differences between a simple profession and association with Christianity and the price of actually following Christ and seeking holiness in our daily lives. J.C. Ryle’s book *Holiness* explains that “True holiness...is something of ‘the image of Christ,’ which can be seen and observed by others in our private life,



and habits, and character and doings. (Rom. 8:29)” These young teenagers hung on the words that the Lord spoke through Ruben and me. Later on, almost every one of them confessed that they wanted to be rid of their religiosity and give up everything to follow the Lord single-mindedly. That day was the beginning of our weekly Friday afternoon meetings. Since then, they have been bringing more friends and have been sharing the gospel with others. I have really enjoyed being able to speak from my heart to these kids. It is beautiful to

see them look down because they are feeling convicted and then later show joy as they become determined to strive for holiness. Please pray for this group, who call themselves the “Mancha.” They are humble, yet gifted and committed young men that the Lord is using to build our church. Please also pray for me and for Ruben as we are given this chance to answer their need for discipleship.

Someday this physical church building that we’ve been working toward for a few years will be finished and our brothers and sisters from over all Peru will be sitting in its pews hearing the most beautiful words they’ve ever heard. They probably won’t know how much sweat and blood it cost to put up these walls. They won’t know how many thousands of shovels-full of dirt were thrown or how many aching hands contributed toward the hard work of constructing this building. Our prayer, however, is that multitudes *will know* our Lord and Savior, and that through the use of this church, many might come to know about His blood, His work and His hands that did an even greater work on our behalf.

These were the thoughts and words spoken last night after almost close to eight hours of back-bending work on our new church building. We moved piles and piles of dirt from deep trenches in the ground and then onto the high cargo truck. After shoveling and digging the ground for a few hours, our arms were giving out. I remember picking up a shovel full of dirt and rocks and not being able to lift it! Wilmar and Omar laughed because they too had experienced the same thing and were resting nearby. After we had gone through almost half of the pile, we were all near our last strand of strength when Caleb and I both shocked each other by yelling out at the same time, “We’re doing this for the Lord guys!”. From that moment on, nobody really cared about how much it hurt to continue. In fact, our arms didn’t really even hurt that much anymore. The Lord is faithful, and gives strength to the weak. What a joy it was to work beside my brother Caleb and my other brothers in the Lord who wanted this church to be built just as badly as I do.

Well, the truth is, the real church here in Huanta (not the building) is growing steadily. Since I arrived here this summer in May, I have seen and participated in the building up the Church of Christ. Upon my return I find a strong remnant of the faithful who have passed through a series of tests and have been refined. We have lost a few on the path, among the rocks and to the thorns, but have gained hundreds from the seed that “fell” on good soil (Matthew 13).

This is also the last summer break I will have from Covenant College. I finish my Biblical Studies degree in May, and then Lord willing, I will be able to begin working more closely with Mission to the World in the pursuit of full-time missions in Huanta, Peru. As that time comes closer every day, I have been encouraged to continue to be immersed in the work here in order to build strong relationships – especially with the church in its beginning stage. It is for that reason that I have returned to Huanta this summer, and I am in need. As I shadow my father and learn from his ways, I realize the amount of work that remains unseen by so many. I also begin to get a taste for what it means to be a pastor – aside from preaching. The reality jars my previous perceptions and makes me smile because I sense a little bit of the immensity of the work which will *never* be possible to do on my own. The Lord is entirely faithful in prospering His purposes! However, he does it through our prayers, and we are in the need of prayer! I have also found that I need to raise enough support to cover all the expenses of ministry for my three months here this summer and then also for the Spring Break trip when I bring down a team that I will be leading. Altogether I will need to raise \$3,600. This is not an amount I take for granted. There is no doubt that it is through your support and prayers that I am able to work here and do what I love to do the most! I am greatly indebted to your investment in my life and service on this mission field. Thank you for your support!

Please pray for my relationship with Caleb. We are currently working through his textbooks in order to get him caught up with his schooling. Also pray for me as I have had and will have many opportunities to preach in the services here in our church. It is a tremendous blessing to be able to prepare and give these messages, and I covet your prayers for every one of them. Thank you so much for taking time to pray for the work that the Lord is doing here.

In His Service,

Nathaniel Gutierrez

P.S. –A few weeks ago I traveled many hours high UP into the mountains with my parents and some friends to visit the work being done by one of our orphans and mentees – Ruben Pino. Ruben has been working above the timberline and the Lord is bringing many to himself through his ministry. It was great to encourage him and the believers there. He is working on discipling and building up leaders in these communities. Below is the photo of his group.

Below: Top photo – Is one developing group of believers that has started construction on their first church building. Bottom photo – Caleb, Ruben and I took the “Mancha” on an outing to some waterfalls for some fellowship time.



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