

by Pastor Scott

The quintet transported us from familiar soil to the new land. Months of preparation involving inoculations, expenditures, reading and training had ushered in this moment. Long lines buzzed with unfamiliar chatter as passports were checked and transition to a new culture began. The five travelers, one experienced and four rookies, tried their hand at mission work on foreign soil. Despite the training, the group would be dependent upon hosts to adjust to language barriers, climate and cultural difference.

The luggage retrieved and the passports flashed once again, the line led through a corridor into an open area filled with a sea of faces. Placards with names and invitations for taxi rides waved frantically in the crowd. The confusion gave way as a familiar name was spotted. The group happily followed the sign through the parted portion of the sea of faces and voices. The holder of the sign was the host missionary in whom they put their trust for the duration for the trip. At this point they simply trusted him to get them safely from the mob and into a more quiet location.

Luggage loaded and bodies seated, the group left the frenzy of the airport toward their new sleeping quarters. Half the group were assigned to a Peruvian taxi, the other half were to be escorted in the missionary's Ford Escort.

The take off and landing of the large plane was mild compared to the car trip through Lima. Cars, buses and taxis weaved in and out of traffic without use of turn signals, but with the generous blaring of horns. Futile attempts to warn the driver of impending

danger from other vehicles was soon abandoned. Attempts to determine the actual speed limit for business and residential streets or the proper meaning of the red octagon signs were also abandoned. It appeared that the only rules of the road were, “don’t get hit” and “speed bumps will slow down those drivers concerned about their springs.”

The destination for the evening turned out to be a great walled area with gate, spikes, barbed wire and shards of glass. This was not the home of paranoid people, rather the normal entrance for homes in that area of the city.

Soon the group was locked safely on the other side of the “compound” walls, willing prisoners anticipating sleep. In a few short hours they would start their first full day as a missionary team.