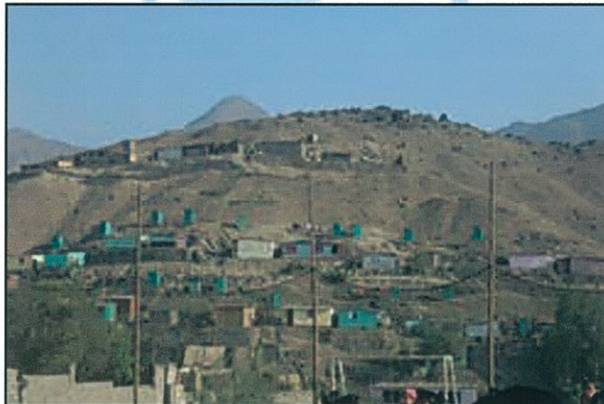


Operation San Andres: A Christian Ministry to Peru

Dr. Luis Campos tells of the work with which he is involved in Collique.

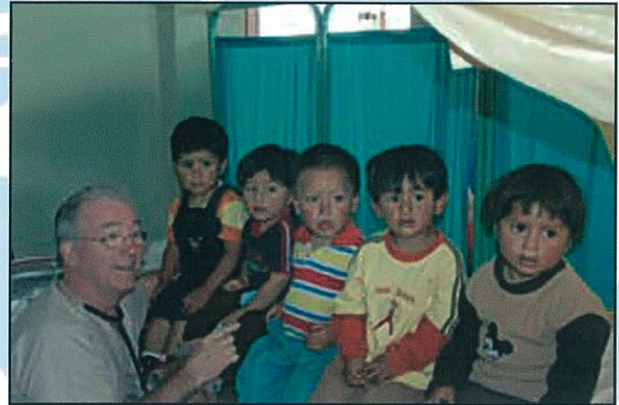
Operation San Andres was begun by my wife Ruth and myself in 2003 as a Christian ministry to impoverished people living in Collique, a shantytown on the outskirts of Lima, Peru. However, the history of this adventure really began many years ago in my homeland of Peru. When I was a boy, my father met with Miss Christina MacKay and Mr James Mackintosh, and my older brother and I were accepted as pupils at Colegio San Andres in Lima. At the time we did not recognize God's providence in the fact that places in the appropriate grades had recently become available during these times when it was very difficult to find good schools. My life in the new school was exciting from the beginning. We had many "gringo" teachers, a new kind of school uniform, a "house" system for sports, and English classes. I have especially vivid memories of daily morning assemblies in which Mr Mackintosh, wearing his impressive, formal academic robe, gave talks that left a profound influence in so many of the students.



The shantytown of Collique

The first time I became aware of the *Barriadas* (shantytowns) of Lima was when I was a member of *Adelante Juventud*, a student group started by Mr Sam Will. There were two *barriadas* that we visited during my last year in high school, "El Pedregal" and "Comas". We were all emotionally impacted by the desperate living conditions in these slums, which were located next to the city dump. Quite a lot of physical labour was required to create a flat area where we could hold meetings for the children. Some churches still exist today in the area where we did this work.

During this same period I was struggling with my decision to follow Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. As we confronted the conditions of people from the *Barriadas*, I became convinced of two things. First, I realized that their economic needs paled in comparison to their spiritual need; and second, that we are commanded to love the poor, dispossessed and defenceless as an expression of our love for Christ. With some help from Miss Joanna Miller, an ex-missionary to Colegio San Andres, I wrote an article (in English) about the shantytowns for *Leader*, our school magazine. Unbeknownst to me at the



Volunteer Richard with some of the local children

time, the embryonic beginnings of OSA were included in this article when I wrote the words 'Give them Hope! Hope in Him who is the Maker of the Universe but "had no place to lay his head". He knows all about poverty.'

During these school years in Peru, I always wanted to become a doctor, and because of my increasing knowledge of Scotland, I aspired to study at Edinburgh Medical School. This dream became a reality after spending seven years in Scotland. I became a member of Buccleuch and Greyfriars congregation in Edinburgh, where I met Ruth (née Gilmour) and where Mr James W Fraser married us in 1968. We have been blessed with four children and five grandchildren.

After moving to the USA, I began my cardiology practice in Houston, Texas. Since then, Ruth and I have been involved in medical missions in Houston and Mexico for more than 25 years. Then, in the year 2000, while visiting Pedro Arana in Lima, we learned about a church in Houston wanting to start medical mission trips to Peru, so we assisted with their organization and joined them for a couple of trips to Peru. In 2003 Ruth and I decided to organize a mission trip of our own and enlisted a team of 16 people including doctors, nurses, dentists, and lay support people. During that trip we visited Collique, which has the poorest population we had seen up to that time. We are members of South Main Baptist Church in Houston, and with the support of our church friends, the decision was made to continue working with the residents of Collique with the hope of making a long-term, holistic impact on that community. This is how Operación San Andrés (OSA) started. The name was chosen in honor of the Apostle Andrew, who is seen in Scriptures as introducing people to our Lord. Additionally, St Andrew is the patron saint of my beloved Scotland and the name of the school where I came to know the Lord. We realized that our resources were extremely limited, and we prayed that just as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes of the youth who was introduced to Jesus by Andrew, so our resources might be used to satisfy some of the needs of the people from Collique.

To be continued next month ...