

## **William & Lily Silverthorn, missionaries to Perú**

### **¡Hola! ¡Saludos desde Perú!**

My wife Lily and I are missionaries in Peru. Recent discussion with others as to how we 'came to this' had me wanting to put something down on paper. If you asked me 15-20 years ago if this were what we envisioned for retirement, I would have definitely said no. So, here it goes.



*William & Lily Silverthorn USA family - 1996*

**Background:** We were both raised "religious" but never really knowing the Lord. Both of us with different stories of finding God, becoming born again believers, with a true 'relationship' with Him.

We were very active in teaching bible studies, at church as well as in home fellowships over the years. I was an active Promise Keepers Ambassador promoting men's fellowship at many local churches of different denominations.

**San Diego:** We live in San Diego since **2004**. We attend 'Branch Church' (an extension of Calvary) when we are in the USA. At this church, I was very involved in the men's fellowship and weekly bible study teaching in a cellular home site, as well as 5 years in a senior's home outreach program.



In **2007**, there was a very devastating **earthquake** in Ica Peru, which is where my wife was from. The earthquake was 8.0 and was centered offshore of Pisco, the very town where my wife Lily was born more than 50 years prior. We took a trip down in 2008.



*2007 Earthquake - Ica, Peru*

It did not take long, after seeing how devastating this earthquake had affected the area, before God gave us a clear vision that we were called to do something for these people.

We both retired in 2009, we both started traveling to Peru annually to see what we could do. Also in 2009, we founded **Latin American Missions Association (LAMA)** in the USA as a non-profit to gain attention to this need, with a



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broader initial desire to reach out beyond our immediate focus of Ica Peru.

Although we took many trips to Peru to get to know my wife's extended family and culture before **2007**, our travels down to this beautiful country greatly increased after the devastating 8.0 earthquake of that year.



2010 El Carmen donated property

Starting in **2008**, we were making annual trips, and by **2012** were making two trips a year.

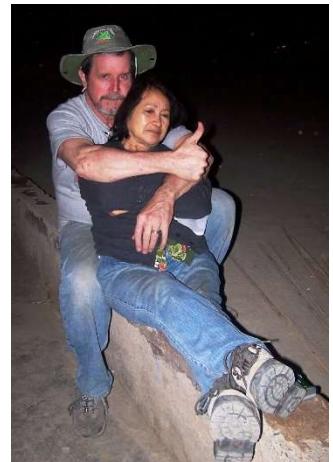
In **2012**, we had a wonderful confirmation from the Lord. We finished the clearing of a strategically located property that was donated to us a few years earlier which was about 8x150 meters in dimension (skinny & long). We had blue prints drawn up for a multi-story building that was edge to edge of the property in width and about 80 meters long.

**A blessing from above** - While we were trying out different contractors to partner with, we ran into a repetitive hurdle with each of them due to a very badly "earthquake-damaged" adobe wall, 10-foot-high by 2 foot wide. No contractor wanted to dig footers next to it out of safety concerns.

After taking a visiting missionary back to Lima for a return trip home, we returned to the mission to interview yet one more contractor.

Our neighbor who owned the damaged wall came over and made an interesting proposal. He and his four siblings owned the property, and he stated that he wanted to give us his portion and two of his siblings wanted to sell us theirs, giving us 60% of the neighboring lot and it's 150-meter length. In measuring that 60% it turned out to be about 3 meters longer than the blue prints we had done, but gave us ownership of the wall and now the ability to build a much more useable (not so narrow) building.

**Thank you Lord.** We were very elated about our building plans for the following year.



**Inspiration** - In early **2013**, we visited Ensenada, Baja Norte, Mexico, to get some idea of how a mission house was operated, staffed, etc. It was from this exposure that we were wanting to develop a similar structure in Peru that would hopefully serve as a destination for missionaries, visiting evangelists, staff, all hopefully wanting to help the villagers like we did. Much to learn, but this was a driving force in our efforts to build.

**Construction:** Returning to Peru, we broke ground in early **2013** in the building of a mission that we had prepared blue prints for, having now expanded the plans 50%. By the end of 2013, October, we had completed the first floor (about 2000 square feet) of a planned 3 floor structure, and succeeded in planting a church and youth program at the site.

Since we were still commuting back and forth to California, staying only up to 5 months total

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each year in Peru, we were working with a church in Ica who had assigned two different for the two functions (church and youth) they were to run. For the next two years, they would continue to drive the weekly events at the mission we opened and we continued working on completing construction.

Throughout **2014** and **2015**, we continued to build the upper two floors, which would give us additional classrooms, meeting facilities and lodging for visiting groups or missionaries.

Throughout the **2015** school year, the mission had the church services and a new youth program from **AWANA** (OANSA in Spanish).

This program was well received by the youth.



We completed the primary building in late 2015, welcoming a **missionary family, from Mexico** to run the property. At this junction, we moved our relationship forward quite a bit with the local people in that now we were 'living among them' and not just visiting on weekends from Ica or the USA.

The missionary family worked with the Ica church team that continued to come up on weekends to minister. Quickly the church service was taken over by the resident missionary family, being able to move it to Sunday, and after a year (late **2016**); they also took over the youth service.

In early **2016**, we made the decision to put a sign up on the mission with the simple name of

**"La Misión"**. We wanted to sound as non-denominational as possible, and at the same



2016 - Adding signage to the Mission

time show our being available for more than just the immediate village of El Carmen. In 2016 we also initiated a project with **resident home building (homes of hope)**,



2016 - Maria, Luciana & Jose home construction project

utilizing internet fund raising and some family support. One of the needs of these villages, caused by the 2007 earthquake (as well as just family needs) is to come to assistance for construction. We first helped a single mom with two children who had no bathroom and a kitchen made of straw that was in bad condition. We took on the project with Maria (the mom) committing some funds toward the labor. We have so many of these projects; we are very much looking for the right partnership, missionary awareness, to do more as we go forward in the future. Along with evangelism,

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this is a primary purpose for us being where we are. We are striving to put the right program around doing a couple of these houses per year, at a minimum.

Throughout, the resident missionaries (expanded by one adult) ran the mission, the youth program, Sunday services, and all local cellular bible studies in homes. They did a fantastic outreach during the early 2017 floods as well. They did an excellent job, building relationships with the local people, far better than we could do from having weekend only services held by visiting people from Ica.

Also during 2017, we developed a relationship with **Youth with A Mission** (YWAM, a.k.a. JuCUM in Peru). Our mission had also established a new location a short cab ride from the mission, with the invitation of the local mayor, in the village of San Juan Bautista (same name as the district). This was a big step up for our small staff. We had our first **Samaritans Purse** program, reaching out to 160 children in three locations. Our mission did an excellent job with this challenge, as well as a fantastic 'Festival of Lights' campaign in October (Halloween alternative). Sadly, in late 2017, our missionaries informed us that they were not returning from their Christmas trip home to Mexico.



*Sosimo, Yannirett y Daniel Barriga*

In 2018 we returned to the mission and transitioned recruiting a new missionary family, the **Barriga's, from Venezuela**. While they were in transition, we also were going through a relationship building with **YWAM** who we spent much discovery work with in 2017.

With YWAM, we found that we were very much (from a mission standpoint) in harmony with their non-denominational leanings, working along-side multiple churches, and focus of bringing young and older missionaries to assist in areas of need. (Construction, evangelism, youth, teens, bible teaching, etc.).



*2018 Samaritans Purse gathering at la Mision*

With 2018, we had our second full year with **Samaritans Purse**, this time working with 200 children at four locations.

This was quite a challenge to pull off with the staffing issues and training we were going through ourselves.

In 2019, while doing our third year with Samaritan's Purse, we surprised YWAM by also holding our first Discipleship Training School (DTS). A class in 2020 is being planned.

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We don't know where this YWAM relationship will go totally, but we are elated to now be the

- 2<sup>nd</sup> YWAM Perú location owning property,
- the 7<sup>th</sup> YWAM in Peru as of July 2018,
- the 4<sup>th</sup> YWAM teaching base as of 2019.
- 1 of 2 Bilingual YWAM teaching bases

Only God knows where we are going in the coming years and we will follow His guidance. What we do know is that God has put us here and has us focused on the immediate



surrounding people. Our heart is to help them, mostly spiritually to come to know Jesus and to help themselves develop missionary hearts to help their fellow neighbors.

In light of much of their daily challenges, we have a long list of ways that we, with the help of others, can show the heart of Jesus to them. And THAT is why we are here.

“The harvest is plentiful, the workers are few.”



[www.LAMAmistry.org](http://LAMAmistry.org)

[www.LAMAmistry.org/YWAM](http://LAMAmistry.org/YWAM)

[www.tinyurl.com/LAMAnews](http://tinyurl.com/LAMAnews)

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*JUCUM/YWAM Ica, Perú*