

Commentary: Peru's dream of a World Cup: A lesson for missions

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YEKATERINBURG, Russia (BP) — Tears streamed down the cheeks of thousands of Peruvians who traveled to Russia only to see their World Cup dream end with an 0-1 loss to France at the Ekaterinburg Arena in Yekaterinburg.

Yet, what mattered—what Peruvians savored—is that after 36 years on the outside, their national soccer team contended as a World Cup team. No longer watching from the sidelines, they got in the game. Arriba Perú!

During the World Cup or the Olympics, the world seems more fair. Countries of disparate political, social and economic power play as equals.

Likewise in the body of Christ, Jesus calls people of all backgrounds to participate as equals, and He gives all members spiritual gifts and power, equipping everyone to take the Gospel to others. Rich, poor, Jews, Greeks, men, women—all.

Despite the biblical call of equitable participation, self-perception of the church in many nations does not line up. But things are changing, as missiologist Paul Borthwick wrote in “Western Christians in Global Mission”: “More and more countries are owning the vision to be part of the global Christian missionary enterprise. We hear it in the phrase that the church is going from every nation to every nation” (p. 37).

Yet it remains easy for the U.S. church to see itself—even subconsciously—as the mission force and the rest of the world as the

mission field. And why do so many believers in other nations seem to concur?

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