

General Report of the
III Iberoamerican Missions Congress
November 13 -17, 2006, Granada, Spain

Introduction

It is a joy for COMIBAM International to present this preliminary report of what took place at the III Iberoamerican Missions Congress. Two years ago, a process was begun that has been called “the COMIBAM III Process.” The goal of this process was to do a thorough evaluation of the Iberoamerican missions force with the goal of presenting proposals and making adjustments and changes in the missions movement. This process will continue for another two years in the areas of research and analysis of both senders and the receivers on the mission field. This will be developed during 2007 and 2008.

After enjoying times of communion and reflection, of analysis and criticism, moments of prayer and projection toward the future, we now have the task of consciously processing all of these feelings, emotions, thoughts and ideas so that can best serve the Iberoamerican missions movement, and put the results to serve the changes that will be generated as we look toward the unreached peoples of this world.

We want to state that this report does not try, in any way, to be an exhaustive and analytical report. We expect that the materials produced in the next year that will be more complete. We are hoping, with this report, to continue with the momentum that God has given us, and to have the initial information at hand in order to share it with others and continue to reflect on what has taken place. What you will find in this information is a simple evaluation that hopes to show a few of the themes that have come out of the Congress. We hope that the concepts and the final and objective conclusions will be processed in the coming year.

The Congress in Statistics:

Participants	1.958
Countries of Iberoamerica represented	25
Regions of COMIBAM represented	8

Description and numbers of participants

Pastor	410
Missions educator	104
Business people in missions	62
Leader of agency or sending structure	141
Leader of prayer movement	33
Leader or denomination/ director of missions	171
Leader of program of (Adopt-a-People, partnerships, member care)	65
Director of national missions movement	25
Invited missionaries (paid for by COMIBAM)	288
International observers	77
President of denomination or evangelical council	31
Staff	35

Volunteer	140
Other	378
<u>Other numbers of interest</u>	
Men	60.31 %
Women	39.69 %
Singles	20.78 %
Married	77.68 %
Widowed	1.53 %
Younger than 25 years old	2.33 %
Between 26 and 35 years old	14.59 %
Between 36 and 45 years old	27.77 %
Between 46 and 55 years old	25.95 %
55 years old older	13.00 %
Unknown or age not recorded	16.35 %

Preliminary report of Phase I of the research project Phase I – Field missionaries

The preliminary report was presented to all participants at the congress, and was called “Strengths and Weaknesses of the Iberoamerican Missions Movement.” It was led by the director of the Project, Dr. Levi Decarvalho, who first explained the proposed method and strategy for the project, which had as its goal to bring together elements to undertake necessary changes or adjustments of the missions task.

The challenge was presented with the question: “What will we do with all of this information?” The statistics represent precious lives placed in the service of the Lord and God has entrusted them in the hands of the Iberoamerican church. “What can and must we change and how are we going to do it?”

Also presented was a panorama of the profiles that were taken into account in the research process with the missionaries, including among others: mega spheres, theological group, years of service, gender, marital status, type of work (ministries), age, country of origin, country of service, sending structure, etc.

What follows are some of the themes that were touched on in the congress that show us a sampling of the preliminary results of the research and trends that are emerging in these areas:

1. Biblical and missiological training. Before leaving and after arriving on the field.

Specific courses:

 - In general, missiological studies are relegated to a secondary place, compared to Biblical-theological studies.
 - Studies in language learning, cultural anthropology, and practical courses only partially exist in the majority of cases.

“Recycling” courses (further studies after arriving on the field):

 - Less than ¼ of workers report having taken courses since arriving on the field.
2. Field specialists
 - It is unquestionable that workers need to receive help for problems on the field.
 - Because of this, we see the need to prepare specialists in distinct areas.

- More than half do not have any specialized help.
 - The number of specialists in training/preparation is very small in relation to the demand for this type of ministry.
3. Budget and the selection of field and ministry
- More than half of workers have the responsibility of raising their own support.
 - There are few churches that have committed to the total amount of necessary support for their missionaries.
 - There is little participation on the part of churches and agencies in the selection of field and ministries for their missionaries.

What does all this mean?

- a. A high percentage of missionaries that work in other cultural contexts have not been adequately prepared for cross-cultural ministry.
- b. Missiology or education in missions is still insufficient or nonexistent in many cases.
- c. The majority of missionaries do not receive the specialized help that they need to resolve problems in the field.
- d. The number of field specialists is insignificant in comparison with the needs of missionaries and is not growing as it should.
- e. The majority of missionaries have the responsibility for raising their own support, even though they are on the field the majority of the time.
- f. The participation of churches and missions agencies is still minimal when it comes to the selection of field and ministry for missionaries.

4. Financial arrangements -- details

- Half of the missionaries have no health plan on the field.
- More than half of the missionaries have no retirement plan, 18 percent hope to have one before they die.
- More than half of the missionaries have no prepared exit plan for possible emergencies on the field.

5. Adaptation to the field

- Of the missionaries who need to minister in a language different from their own, a high percentage still have communication problems.
- Many missionaries have difficulty in making friends with civil authorities.
- Culture shock can last longer than expected.

6. Gender, marital status and leadership

- The role of women in missions is a question that needs to be carefully discussed.
- At the same time, the role of singles requires serious consideration.
- Women and singles many times desire that their leaders understand their problems through their own experiences, and not only in theory.

7. Communication between leaders and those led

- A leader who doesn't communicate clearly and objectively cannot expect that his/her missionaries will be effective in their efforts.
- Regular communication with missionaries helps to reinforce the philosophy of teamwork.
- Strategic communication demands planning and dialogue in order to minimize doubts and prevent conflicts and frustrations.

8. Relationships between missionaries

- The "how" to resolve interpersonal conflicts is more important than detecting the conflict.
- In times of crisis, 1/3 of missionaries have difficulty in asking for help.

- A little more than half of missionaries report that they have learned to work together with fewer personal conflicts.

9. Singles

- Singles missionaries suffer principally with feelings of loneliness.
- In addition, they suffer from discrimination for being single, occasional depression and for being harried.
- Agencies prefer that their leaders be married.

10. Work and rest

- 1/3 of missionaries do not take vacation.
- Another third do not rest sufficiently.
- Women are those who suffer more from burn out.
- In reality, half of the missionaries are burned out.

11. Success and failure

- 1/3 of missionaries do not feel successful in their work.
- Those who have been on the field between two and five years are those that most suffer the feeling of failure.
- Even with that, 81 percent of missionaries are willing to stay on the field and do not think about returning home early to their home country.

With the themes of calling, training, sending, and field work, the following is a preliminary evaluation:

Calling

The majority of those interviewed feel a “calling” through a feeling that God placed in their hearts. Hence the church plays an important role in giving the congregation a missions vision from the Scriptures. On the other hand, there is a need to strengthen missionaries through ministry in their local churches as training for their field experience. At the same time, the majority of those interviewed have demonstrated concern that their churches, although they have learned much over the years, still need to work better with those who feel called to missions. For some of them, this reaction is still negative and needs to change so that they can direct these people in their preparation, sending and work in the field.

Single people are experiencing greater support in missions. A great number of the interviewed singles have reported that their churches supported their missions calling without any problem. The majority said that they felt secure in going to the field as singles; only a minority felt resentment in having gone as singles.

In general, singles selected their missionary field without concern for their marital status. A small percentage said they were not yet on the field when they felt the call to be single.

Training

It is evident that there is an imbalance in the time invested in Biblical-theological training and missiological training for missionaries. The great majority of missionaries invest three or four times more time in the first than in the latter. So for the people who are crossing frontiers, into distinct cultures, it is fundamental to consider the balance and relevance that we give to each part.

Training should include an awareness of the different cultures that the missionary will encounter on the field, although it doesn't have to be specific for the group with which he/she plans to work. The

curriculum in Bible schools and seminaries, in general, do not consider cross-cultural issues. It is urgent that we reconsider the minimum studies and the specifics that we want to provide to our missionaries. In this way, we can provide quality teaching, focused on the needs of the field.

Sending

The delicate balance between feeling called and the selection of field, type of work, sending agency, and personal and ministry budgets need to be reconsidered by all. If leadership exercises a more active role in these decisions, maybe the relation between worker-leader will be strengthened.

One needs to recognize and praise the spirit of sacrifice that thousands of men and women have made, having left for the field without a minimal financial backing, trusting that God World supply each of their needs. The majority do not have a health plan or an adequate retirement plan. Anticipation of emergencies should be a subject discussed in preparation for sending.

It is recommended that we reflect together about the minimum/basic requirements demanded by the field, contemplating different ministry contexts and the spiritual and ministerial formation that we desire to promote. There are many people that encounter things in the field for which they are not prepared.

The responsibility for raising necessary funds for work falls on the shoulders of the majority of the interviewed missionaries. We believe that a dialog between senders and those sent is critical for assisting this process and minimizing the conflicts that arise because of this tension.

In our missions conferences and congresses, we frequently speak about the unreached, but for the majority of those interviewed, the needs of these groups was not a significant factor in their selection of a field. It is urgent that we re-think our mobilization strategy for this.

Work on the field

The definition of strategies and objectives on the part of agency leaders/missions boards and good communication of these ideas is fundamental so that those on the field have clear in their minds what is expected of them. The weakness that we have detected in strategic communication between leaders and those being led has made it difficult to evaluate their effectiveness on the field. On the other hand, the so-called "member care" of the missionary is not separate from their evangelistic/missions activities. There is a need to unite the two things by people with recognized field experience that can help missionaries with specific ministry needs as well as spiritual needs.

Cooperation between co-workers is in part a reflection of the communication between leaders and those led. Those that have needs on the field, be they personal, family or ministry, surely will evidence relational problems in the future (either mid-term or long-term). Adding burnout to this, as in the case of the majority of missionaries, the picture becomes even more concerning.

We need to train more specialists to attend to the needs of missionaries. The investment that is being made in this is very minimal to attend to the growing demand for this type of member care.

Despite the fact that the majority of those interviewed lack the minimum financial resources to develop their ministries, they continue firm in their work. If there is something for which to praise our missionaries, it is the spirit of sacrifice for the work with which the Lord has entrusted them. The hand of the Lord is pushing them forward and His Spirit has used them to complete the work that He has given them. For this, as a movement, we are very proud.

In the field, many workers, singles as well as marrieds, experience feelings of loneliness. In terms of being accepted on the field, some of the singles said that they had no difficulty in being accepted by nationals, while others had some limitations on certain occasions. In addition, they report that the majority of their agencies prefer that their leaders be married.

Jesus took his disciples to a place apart, for a rest from their work. In the same way, our missionaries need to be taken away, to a separate place, from time to time, to renew their energy, receive counseling, take relevant courses for their ministries, and to renew relationships with brothers and sisters in the faith that have recognized their calling and invested in it, be it financially or in prayer. We must reconsider our manner of helping them on the field – not to spoil them, but to care for the treasure in jars of clay that the Lord has placed in our hands as a movement.

There are strengths in our movement that we must recognize, but there are also weaknesses that we must confront and resolve. May God give us humility and courage to recognize our strengths and change our weaknesses so that His name may be even more glorified among the nations.

Preliminary conclusions from the round table discussions

The morning round table discussions were times of discussion and growing closer together as a group. It was the place where the 287 invited missionaries had the opportunity to share their experiences, opinions and ideas with the leaders of the Iberoamerican missions movement, based on the themes proposed from the platform. These tables were made up of individuals from different countries, social contexts, theological positions, etc. This gave a richness to the discussions and the conclusions. Each day one of the themes studied in the COMIBAM III research process was addressed, as well as from the missionary presentations.

Following are some of the preliminary conclusions from each theme:

Spiritual discipline

1. Make the church aware of the need to economically support the missionary in all areas (monthly support, health, retirement). This will lighten the economic load and allow for a better spiritual relationship with God.
2. Supervision of the missionary in the field (accountability), in the area of work as well as family and spiritual life. The church should provide mentor friends for the missionaries with whom they can be held sincerely accountable.
3. Development of spiritual discipline as part of missionary formation before leaving for the field, as well as on the field.
4. The missionary has, at least, a basic Biblical-theological formation before leaving for the mission field.
5. The church has responsibility for the care of the missionary (husband, wife, children, single men and single women) with adequate programs for their spiritual growth.
6. Prayer and Bible study are a key piece in the development of the missionary in the spiritual area. For this reason, the church must commit itself to provide them with necessary and constant support so that they do not fall short in these areas when they feel the pressures of the field.
7. Allow the missionary to know what it means to have spiritual discipline in the midst of the cultural context in which he/she will develop his/her work. For this, the church should supply all that is necessary for healthy development in the area.

8. Character development through discipleship, working specifically with each member of the missionary family or with each single that leaves for the field.
9. Provide missionary clinics at least annually that help the church and the missionary to develop teamwork with professionals.
10. The missionary must have full trust to share with his/her pastor, mentor or counselor the spiritual needs that require immediate help. If the missionary does not keep the church informed, he/she cannot have good pastoral care.

Biblical and missiological training

1. That each Bible institute have missiological studies with a cross-cultural, short term experience. It doesn't matter if these trips are made first in one's own country, or outside of it.
2. Create an awareness in the church of the importance of Biblical-theological training, in order to facilitate good work on the mission field. The missionary must be trained before leaving for the field and while on the field.
3. That there be funds available in the church designated toward financing the training of the missionary.
4. That the missionary has, at least, learned a second language as a base for communication in the team. English could be a base language.
5. Emphasize Biblical and character formation for better spiritual development in the field.
6. Some of the recommended training areas: psychology, postmodernism, sociology and its practice on the field, history of missions, linguistics, world religions, conflict resolution.
7. That theological centers and seminaries validate/recognize the different courses that the missionary has taken. This will help reduce the costs of these programs.
8. Make available distance education programs with the supervision of the church and missions agency.
9. That mission agencies inform the church about their training programs and maintain more efficient alliances in order to provide for this area.
10. That those who teach classes in missiology be people who are trained and have field experience.

Approval and financing of studies

1. Cooperation and agreements with training centers in order to provide for the needs of the candidates.
2. Share the vision with the church through conferences or special meetings in order to speak to them about the importance of training missionaries before leaving for the field. This will greatly help the results of work done in the field.
3. That the church provide funds or incentives to people so that they support missionary studies.
4. Program extra activities that help and motivate the congregation, in order to make them aware of the importance of training and to provide the necessary finances.
5. To provide opportunities for participation by business people or Christian businesses in order to raise funds specifically for the area of training.
6. That the church work together with the missions committee in order to begin the constant work of collecting funds for studies.
7. Make agreements in advance with the missionary and the training center to look for the necessary facilities (scholarships, institutes, special courses, programs and projects) required, based on the needs of the missionary.

8. Make the church aware that the preparation process for missionaries is a long one, and for that reason, it is necessary that they understand that it will require patience and financial investment.
9. That the candidate agree with the leadership about his/her need to have spiritual training and cross-cultural training.

Budget and selection of field and ministry

1. Designate necessary funds for the support of the missionary in the field through strategies that involve the entire church through motivational programs. This budget must cover the basic necessities that include retirement, medical insurance, training, etc.
2. That research is done about actual costs on the field, before the departure of the missionary, and, in other cases, re-evaluate the actual budgets in order to find a balance.
3. That they maintain, at least once a year, a faith promise commitment from within the congregation. Make the whole church aware – at all levels (children, youth and adults).
4. That there is an agreement and harmony between church, mission agency and the missionary to determine the field.
5. Establish and evaluate the budgets that the missionary must work in the raising of funds. These budgets must be approved by the leadership of the local church. At the same time, the church, agency and missionary should work together on determining the budget.
6. Maintain a support committee within the church for the missionary that takes charge of the financial area while the missionary is on the field or in their homeland.
7. The mission agency should also have participation in the determination of the missionary budget.
8. That the church makes field visits, in order to have a report about the current needs of the missionary.

The Church and the field

1. The church must form missions leaders that have experience in doing missions.
2. Create a missions committee that knows the individual and lifestyle of the missionary and that is constantly promoting activities on the missionary's behalf.
3. Should have continual communication between the missionaries, the church, and the committee.
4. The church should make the missionary feel that they are with him/her in their work, not that they are only interested in their results.
5. The church should invest in the training of the worker before leaving for the mission field.
6. Elaborate a structured and systematic plan that consists of the formative, theoretic and practical before sending workers, also including the economic side.
7. Each missionary must work in partnership with their church in order to be approved by them.
8. The church should designate a pastoral mentor who visits the missionary annually in order to support him/her.
9. That the pastor keep in constant communication with the missionary, concerned for his spiritual life and not only the work.
10. That the church and the agency evaluate the work of the missionary according to fruit of the character of Christ in the life of the workers, more than numbers and things accomplished.
11. That when the missionary returns, they must have a reception committee so that the missionary feels at home.
12. When the missionary returns, the church should provide marital and family counseling, even if it doesn't seem necessary.

Field specialists

1. It is very important to utilize missionaries that have had a good cross-cultural experience (those that are back from the field), to give vision and formation in the church, and also to help in the area of counseling for other workers.
2. That the specialists can work at an interdenominational level and to be experienced in the field, not only in a professional specialty.
3. Take into account the life and testimony of the person that has been called to serve in a specialized area. That they have a pastor's heart, experience on the field, and understand administration.
4. Generate resources to prepare field specialists for the benefit of missionaries.
5. That agencies and churches fully cooperate in the formation and selection of the specialist.
6. Seek alliances with other churches and organizations that have had experience on the field in order to help those missionaries that are not supported by their own churches.
7. That the same church provides professional specialists that are available to help missionaries directly on the field.
8. That there are lines of communications between church-agency-missionary in order to know the specific needs that require specialists.

Gender, marital status, and leadership

1. Calling is not defined by gender or marital status. These cannot impede one from having a missions call.
2. Be conscious of the needs of single missionaries. Many of them need emotional help. Provide them with support and relationships with married mentors.
3. Specialists are needed to work in different areas with each couple or with singles, maintaining a balance with each.
4. That missionaries have participation in local leadership before leaving for the field, as this will provide them with more experience.
5. To make the missionary aware of the importance of teamwork, in all aspects of their leadership on the field.
6. The responsibility for the work on the field must be balanced, and fair for both sexes.
7. Leadership as a function of capacity and not of gender should be encouraged.
8. Encourage good relationships between marrieds and singles in the distinct teams on the field, taking advantages of opportunities to live in community.
9. Create a team of women within the field to be able to minister to and attend to others who are living cultural shock in closed countries.
10. The woman (married or single) continues to be the most affected in working on the field, by the lessened credibility of her ministry. Much of her work is only relegated to caring for the home, the family, or children.

Financial issues

1. If the missionary doesn't have a retirement plan, he or she automatically has no resources for after his/her retirement, and will be unable to start something new because he/she will have less energy than in his/her youth. For this reason, the church must be made aware of their need to provide benefits like health insurance, salary and retirement.
2. The church should have as a priority the following plans for the missionary: retirement fund, emergency funds, national and international health insurance, living expenses, etc.
3. Mobilize members of church missions committees to work together with mission agencies, in order to be more efficient in awareness and projection of the needs of field missionaries, so that the church can be anticipating, increasing the needed budget for these things.

4. Retirement homes could be created, that would also serve as training centers, in order to use the experience of retired workers together with new candidates.
5. The agency needs to be sure that there is an insurance that cover the missionary while in his home country as well as the country in which he serves, as well as generate an emergency fund, for when there are necessary departures from the field (to receive medical attention, in case of war or natural disasters – especially in high risk places).
6. The missionary from the beginning must make a budget specific for each aspect of the rubric: covering all of the risks and provide for a retirement fund, a supplementary pension, and insurance from his/her country.

Relationships among workers

1. An emphasis must be made in incorporating programs with practical and theoretic modules on interpersonal relationships, character, submission, leadership, etc.
2. The field director is responsible for conflict resolution. When the problems become major, the church and mission agency should intervene.
3. The agency should evaluate psychological or personality profiles of missionaries before they leave for the field. Also, the candidate should have practical experiences in a team, under the supervision of the church.
4. Develop informal talks before leaving and on the mission field about conflict resolution. These should be given by people with experience on the field.
5. Holding one another accountable, regardless of marital status, is important so that missionaries can clearly express their interpersonal conflicts.
6. The missionary anticipates, at least, the basics of the team culture to which he/she is going to belong. In other words, that he/she has a previous understanding of the different personalities, depending on the countries of origin of his/her teammates
7. The church and agencies are attentive to the communication with or know the members of the team to which their missionary will belong.
8. That missionaries have periodic meetings as a team, exclusively to talk about interpersonal relationships and not work.
9. That missionaries establish among themselves agreements for life and limits in community, depending on each family and/or single missionary. This will help them to better understand one another's behaviors and means of relating to one another.
10. That there be meetings of field workers in order to have times to share, and spiritual retreats to encourage for givenness and inner healing..

Communication between agency leaders and missionaries

1. Communication is the foundational element that will bring success to the relationships between mission agency leaders and missionaries. Technological advances will help this process, making it quicker and more efficient.
2. Because of confidentiality in missionary issues, it is necessary that the missionary, agency and church establish beforehand the channels of communication and the terminology they will use.
3. The pastor and leaders should plan for a field visit at least every two years, and a telephone call every three months. They should, at least, have a monthly communication between the missionary the leader. They should take advantage of computer programs and internet that allow them to speak with the missionary and for the missionary to communicate with the congregation.
4. Train missionaries in communication workshops like: how to use the Internet, how to write prayer letters, interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution. Communication must be continuous and two-way, including information about the work as well as personal issues.

Adaptation to the field

1. The church should make a psychological profile of the candidate, so that it knows his/her weaknesses, his/her personality, his/her testimony outside of the church, his/her character and ability to relate with others, his/her openness to accountability, as well as to evaluate the ability of the candidate to learn another language.
2. The church should make connections for the missionary with other churches or organizations that expose him/her to other cultures or in a close but different culture.
3. The church should train the missionary in workshops like: missiology, cross-cultural training (both theory and practice), and give them a base in Bible, and in social and personal skills – like how to resolve conflict, or how to minister to minority groups in a country when one doesn't speak the same language. Whenever possible, there should be a prior training in a place where there are people from the culture that the missionary desires to reach.
4. The candidate should work with the ministry team before leaving for the field. Also, it is important to train him/her in all that has to do with working on a team, living in community, sincere communication, etc. A program of discipleship and follow-up should be developed.
5. The missionary, before leaving should learn about the culture and determine what needs to be done about language learning in the place where he/she is going, because language is fundamental for ministry. If it is possible, consider, within one's budget, an extra fund that will finance language studies with a national person.
6. The candidate should spend a short-term experience with foreign families or with families of a different ethnic group within the country.
7. Training institutes should have linguistics and phonetics courses, in addition to teaching another language.
8. Once in the field, the missionary should, for at least two years, study culture and language, without getting involved in any type of ministry. The missionary should go with a heart that is sensitive to the culture, and not offend it, always and when it culture is not in conflict with Biblical standards.

Singles

1. The church and agency should define the roles that each will take in regard to care for singles, to identify their weaknesses before sending them in order to care for them in these areas, and to demonstrate that he/she is emotionally healthy and content with his/her singleness.
2. Singles should be sent to the field preferably where there is a couple, so that they are not alone. It is recommended that singles be sent to areas where there is already a work in process, so that they might have the backing of a team.
3. Reevaluate the rules that agencies impose on singles; they must be more flexible.
4. They should help singles to establish friendships with one or two people of the same sex in order to encourage spiritual covering through an established and organized plan. As is possible, they should work together in programs and projects.
5. The single missionary should receive training that allows him/her to analyze his/her personal reality and that helps him/her in the experience that he/she will live, as well as to understand the limitations that singleness might have, depending on the culture, for example, depression, healing, dating, teamwork, etc. Women should not be sent to live alone, but instead should be integrated into a family.
6. The church, through specific contacts and through the missions committee, should maintain communication with the family and friends of the missionary.
7. The church should be trained to understand the trials, loneliness, and challenges that singles confront in the field. They should also help those that marry while on the field.

Success and failure

1. The church and missionary should understand that success is found in obedience. The results belong to the Lord. The concept of success should be changed to understand that even being on the field at all is success.
2. The missionary should know the field in order to be able to plan and develop a well-defined written plan (that is, at the same time, flexible). To establish a system of evaluation of his/her work every six months in order to compare goals and results. To establish a program of incentives. He/she should have a plan that should be reviewed, analyzed and evaluated periodically.
3. There should be a means to evaluate the missionary spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and theologically. The person that evaluates should belong to member care and should understand the area in which the missionary is ministering.
4. The principal factor in the success of the missionary is his/her spiritual life. The church should encourage the missionary in this area, through someone that the church designates.
5. The evaluation should be something that takes place between missionary, church and agency, because each one will have its own concept of success. In order to help the process of evaluation, realistic goals, concrete objectives and projects that are based on the needs of the community should be proposed, and efforts should not be duplicated.
6. Some of the reasons for which missionaries experience failure are: false expectations, lack of preparation, and making errors in the establishment of goals and objectives.

Work and rest

1. The time for rest and vacation is a cultural problem in Latin America. The process needs to be revamped so that pastors, as well as missionaries, are taking vacation.
2. The concept of vacation should be clarified: it is not synonymous with doing nothing, but it is doing what one enjoys without feeling guilty. The missionary should have the freedom to ask for vacation and decide what to do with it. Time for rest should be respected.
3. The church should create an economic fund for vacations – for free time without commitments. A host family and a receiving family could be designated for when a missionary arrives for vacation. A schedule should be prepared that includes rest, physical care, health care, finances, evaluations, etc.
4. Vacation and ministerial visits should be separate; although in the same trip, a missionary could combine both things in an adequate manner, without pressure.

Preliminary conclusions from the different track groups

In the middle of the congress framework, and as part of the work strategy, nine “thematic consultations” (tracks) met in the afternoons. These represented not only the service structure of COMIBAM International as a movement (through its networks, programs and departments), but also inherent parts of the missionary process itself.

Once again, we reiterate that what is presented here are only summaries of the conclusions collected at each of the consultations, with the purpose of being able to reflect and evaluate them more in-depth. We limited the conclusions each day, but they demonstrate the trends that came out of the group discussions. The information, once processed and evaluated, will be made available to the Latin American missions movement through written, digital, audio visual and other materials.

Churches and pastors Track

One of the impressive things that came out of this track was the declaration that one of the pastors' groups represented made: *"We recognize, as pastors, our responsibility in the sending, funding, and maintaining the missionary, as a local church in cooperation with agencies or receiving institutions. We ask the Lord to forgive us for damaging our missionaries, or creating difficult situations, and we commit ourselves to change this situation."*

Some of the conclusions in different areas included:

1. The church and its governing structure must recognize missions as one of its primary purposes in functioning.
2. The work of the church in missions is growing, but it is still very denominationally-oriented. Pastors do not want to support missionary processes, but ones from their own churches.
3. Look for more interdenominational support to support missionaries in the field.
4. A missions vision is necessary in pastoral ministry in order to create and/or strengthen the unity of the body of Christ.
5. The communication between pastors and missionaries should be encouraged.
6. Pastors are very busy, and for that reason it is important to establish a missions committee that maintains the bond with missionaries, as well as providing supervision and communication with them.
7. Churches and agencies need to come to an agreement about how both will function in the area of missionary care.
8. It is the pastor's responsibility to pastor or to locate someone who will pastor their missionaries.
9. Work partnerships should be established in order to be more effective.
10. It is dangerous to send someone without having established a missionary policy that outlines expectations, training, sending, support, etc.
11. No missionary should leave for the field without the support of one or more churches, because of the importance of spiritual, financial, and pastoral support.
12. There is an ignorance on the part of churches about what missionary agencies are and the role they play, as well as how they can work together with the church in missions.
13. A distancing between churches and agencies has been noted, because of conflicts over control and authority.
14. Leaders of agencies and churches need to come together at a personal level, in order to share the roles and purposes of the institutions, with the goal of integration.
15. The church must be a protagonist in the raising up of missionary support and missions activity. They should create a team between church, missionary, and agency.
16. There is lack of balance in the training of missionaries between cognitive learning and practical. This should be integral and should start with the local church.

Training Track

1. Training cannot be bypassed. It should be an integral part of missionary preparation, and should be dedicated to the transformation of the candidate into an "approved worker." For this reason, there is a need to adequately and intentionally train candidates, so that they can leave for the field as a living message.
2. It is necessary to train women. Up till now, They have been considered a support, but it is necessary to train women on the same level as a men.
3. Each missionary should receive an orientation about his/her responsibility and role in the team prior to his/her departure for the field. Teams formed in community and that are trained in conflict resolution based in worship and prayer are those that work best.
4. Missionary training should be done in situations "under pressure."

5. It is important to emphasize areas of vulnerability, humility and character in the training process.
6. Since working in team and interpersonal relationships are some of the weak points of missions work, there should be evaluative methods put in place for knowing the missionary and their level of preparation, as well as their relationship with God and neighbor.
7. In missions training, we have to maintain the philosophical principal that orients towards working with the being, the knowing, and the abilities of the candidate.
8. Strongly value integral missions training (focused on the “be”-ing) before leaving for the field.
9. Insist that the missionary is in the integral training process for life, and attend to this need.
10. It is vital that bi-vocational training of missionaries is considered, in particular for restricted access fields.
11. It is important to highlight the value and importance of cooperative efforts on the field with missionaries from other agencies, cultures, churches, etc.

Sending Structures Track

1. The lack of financial resources and the absence of models can result in a loss of credibility for agencies or sending structures.
2. The church has developed a mistrust toward the agency or sending structure and vice-versa because they have not defined roles or lines of authority. This has many consequences for the work on the field and in the lives of missionaries. A union between agency and church to coordinate the sending of a missionary needs to be developed.
3. Look for more development and maturity of the missions vision through partnerships with other structures and meetings promoted by COMIBAM in the region or the continent.
4. To have clear and defined objectives in involving the church. For this purpose, it is important to communicate the vision well and present the church’s projects clearly.
5. To strengthen the relation between sending structures, the sent, and the senders forming a triangle of communication, communion and respect.
6. The Iberoamerican sending structures in past years has developed: field experience, connections and support networks with other entities and churches, specialization in areas of work, communication and an exclusive focus on missions sending that means that now they can offer their services with greater freedom to be effective in their work. They should capitalize on this experience.
7. There is a need to work better in areas like: the sending of funds to workers on the field, training of personnel to do administrative and accounting work, flexibility in the statutes that allow us to establish and strengthen partnerships with other institutions, constancy in volunteerism, strategies for raising funds, annual work plans, periodic evaluations, legal structures, etc.
8. The relationships and partnerships with other sending structures, be they Iberoamerican or international, are very necessary in the stage of work in where we find ourselves now. More trust and knowledge of the work of people involved in world evangelization should be generated.
9. Sending structures should actively participate in the member care of the missionary, maintaining a fluid communication with the church, and coming to a point of taking action together with the church and the missionary.
10. Accountability is a very relevant aspect in missions that has to be strengthened by sending structures, whether it be through committees with advisors, connections with churches or denominations, etc.

Women and missions Track

1. Pastoral care and member care for women on missions teams is necessary. It is important to intentionally develop pastoral care to women missionaries.

2. Training in counseling for interventions during times of crisis: Provide specific training for treatment of current cases, and recruitment of professionals in different areas for complete member care.
3. Women who are alone (single, widowed, divorced, or other cases) suffer discrimination and pressures more from the married couples on their team than from the field culture.
4. Married women: Spouses mutually support one another, the majority of the women obeyed their calling from their own convictions.
5. When there are crises, they need other women with whom to share their hearts; they will not do it with a male leader. Stress, burn out, and frustration can put a marriage at risk.
6. Children in high school and above: this is a very complex subject. Some women feel guilty when they have to send their children away to study in another country (college); separation is very painful. The majority choose a national school (for high school), which is more difficult when they are adolescents. These all provide financial challenges, that are greater than their income. Senders should calculate education in different stages of life into their budgets.
7. Adequate training for women and children in the missionary family: The majority of women, married or single, receive missions training, but their children do not receive any intentional training.
8. Promoting and mobilizing missions is a great opportunity for women to serve in the local church.
9. Development of prayer initiatives: There are materials available through COMIBAM that are being used, new opportunities for bringing together more people through women's networks. Sensitivity and commitment to fasting and prayer, making time available.
10. Many women in Iberoamerica with interests in cross-culture missions, in the missions field as well as in mobilization, sadly are not found speaking in congresses or events. They are found in administrative positions or serving. This is a challenge to the Iberoamerican leadership to trust in these women to hold executive roles.
11. The valuable support of women in the local church: Prayer meetings and fundraising, for the most part, are being done by women. Some have been promoted to directing missions departments or prayer programs. We need to equip and train many other women to help with world missions. Pastoral staff should be intentional in spiritually equipping women leaders.
12. Women have innate capacities given by God: they can be simultaneously practical and sensitive. These qualities are advantageous, when accompanying all of the preparation process for candidates, like: how to organize sending and the departure/farewell, continuity of care on the field, and covering strategic roles of logistics like faith promises, communications, prayer covering, and moral, emotional and spiritual support.

Missionary Member Care Track

1. The involvement of the whole church is key in the care of the missionary. The church should be informed about the specific needs of the missionary, and if it is possible, name a member care coordinator, all under the mentoring and supervision of the pastor.
2. A pastoral visit is desired by missionaries, but the majority have yet to receive one. These visits should be planned and included in the church budget. Think about short-term trips by members of the church that strengthen the presence of the church on the field. This also creates an increased communication between the missionary and the church.
3. We still do not have sufficient experience in planning the return of missionaries, be it anticipated or natural. We need to gather information about re-location, reentry into one's own culture, work, role in the church, etc.
4. It is urgent that there be an improvement in the communication between missionaries, agency and church. Functions need to be defined for each one of these (expectations and responsibilities) in order to create relationship and trust.

5. The church and the missionary should establish realistic expectations of each other so that frustrations and misunderstandings are not created in the midst of the task to be accomplished.
6. One of the most sensitive, but least addressed issues now is member care for the children of missionaries. The area of education for missionary kids is one of the greatest weaknesses in the Iberoamerican missions movement.
7. It is necessary to continue growing in the area of economic planning for missions. Field budgets should be made with the help of the agency, and take into account: re-location expenses, emergency plans, health plans and retirement, rest, marriage, promotion, housing, etc. These issues have not generally been considered in budgets.
8. Visa problems and issues related to legal residency, together with interpersonal problems continue to be the first on the list of obstacles to missions work.
9. Train missions candidates by sending them on short-term trips, and take advantage of other groups or organizations on the field to be able to help and focus on technical areas or areas of character development.
10. Continue working in the area of transparency in accountability on the part of the missionaries and also those that are collecting funds..
11. Missionaries need continuous training in fundamental biblical aspects with emphasis on Christian character as well as in defense of the Bible. They should also incorporate more courses on the field in the areas of cross-cultural training, language learning and technical areas.

Prayer track

In this track, they highlighted again the lack of commitment on the part of the church and of those involved in the missions process in terms of prayer as a fundamental part of the development of world evangelization. It is necessary to look for ways to remind all those involved in missions of the imperative need to lift up prayer as the basic tool for reaching the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth.

1. The importance of motivating pastors to implement missions intercession in their churches through current information from the field, short-term trips to the fields (if it is possible), and updates about God's work and the advance of the missions task.
2. The urgency of using networks to have current information about missionaries on the field. Prayer is nourished by the needs of missionaries and the realities of the mission fields. There are tools available through COMIBAM and other groups for getting more information.
3. Motivate prayer cell groups to include the unreached in their prayers. The number of people praying for missions can be increased through this model, already adopted by many churches in Iberoamerica. It is necessary to motivate the cell groups with informative bulletins, prayer letters, and news from the missionary on the field, with missions cards, maps, etc.
4. Better the communications between the church and the missionary and vice versa. The prayer leader should be informed by the pastor about the needs in missions. It is important that missionary send letters, prayer requests, challenges and the progress of his work in the field.
5. We have a critical need to train/equip intercessors. In this training, the following could be included: teaching and utilizing prayer walking, using the Operation World book, create an instruction manual for intercessors that would serve to orient them, explain the meaning of intercession, different methods of intercession, provides missionary materials, etc.
6. Encourage worship and prayer movements in each region among different churches and missionary groups trying to create a model that can be reproduced at a local church level.

7. Increase communication with the church on the continent by sharing the challenges with which they are faced: the lack of Bible translators in the language or dialect of certain peoples, the lack of missionaries, the lack of prayer and financial support for missionaries, etc.
8. We are fortunate to have a church in Latin America that is very devotional, and we must take advantage of this, to guide it towards intercession for missions.

Bible Translation Track

1. It was recognized that we have a great challenge as an Iberoamerican missions movement in this area, where we still are learning and understanding the complexity of this subject. There are various levels of understanding and practice on the continent in this area.
2. Mobilization in this area is one of the most important tasks in order to strengthen what already exists. Each movement should organize its own plans for training in the area of Bible translation promotion.
3. It is recommended that each country be developing new materials to promote the need for Bible translation, like videos and other written materials.
4. Prayer is a vital part of seeing advancement in the area of translation. An “all tongues” bulletin should be established, where prayer requests about Bible translation from each country are listed. An effort needs to be made to make sure that the bulletin gets into the hands of national and continental leaders.
5. One obstacle is the funding for projects. The goal is to see national Bible translation structures that channel and generate their own resources. Individuals and churches should be contacted about investing in promotion and in the establishment of translation projects.
6. A process of orientation for candidates and churches to advance in Bible translation should be addressed. An orientation manual for candidates, including a definition of a profile for translators or translation mobilizers and a list of opportunities for service.
7. Better the information given to the church of the basic concepts to get a better understanding of the task of Bible translation. Create materials.

Partnership Track

1. World evangelization will only be possible through partnerships between Christians, churches, agencies, etc. God always sends blessing in unity.
2. Forming partnerships requires humility and renouncing personal desires in order to look for common objectives; the concept of serving others is fundamental.
3. Partnership is a process, not an event, it is cooperation and teamwork. These are necessary in order to avoid loss of time and effort in trying to achieve something that already exists in other organizations. It should be done with those who are also seeking the same objective.
4. To see results in missions work, we should be connected and working together. Every activity can be done better with help or in cooperation, and thus we see the importance of creating partnerships. Alliances create a unifying bond and help a project to be more effective.
5. They are a process that is achieved when there is trust, friendship, common objectives, expectations for results, responsibility and commitment. Objectives that are larger than individual objectives can be accomplished, but they should be complementary to the needs of the common objective.
6. In the constitution of the partnership, there must be respect and unity of purposes. An alliance must be built on the base of transparency, good motives, always having in mind the extension of the Kingdom, with serious, long term contracts, accomplishing each one of the purposes and objectives established by the alliance; but the majority of alliances are destroyed and promises not kept.

7. Consider if the alliance will be effective for the desired results, because there are alliances where only one side benefits and not the other. For an effective partnership, there must be a priority placed on unity and rediscovering and applying the concept of “synergy,” uniting the resources of each member and understanding the resources that can be available to the rest.
8. We have learned that in order to maintain a humble balance in terms of the results of the work, we need to stop being selfish and risk someone else taking the credit for what we’ve done. The alliance needs to be capable of serving others and their motives must always be related to the mission.
9. It is necessary that facilitators are raised up to put together partnerships. The role of facilitating partnerships is important to emphasize in seminars, teaching church leadership.
10. It is urgent that national movements promote partnerships in:
 - Making sending structures possible, training, receiving of missionaries and care on the field, things that isolated entities are unable to do. For this reason, there is a need to call for consultations that make plans or detailed proposals, as much as possible, as “allies” to find how they can commit to one another and what things can be shared in order to concentrate on new responsibilities.
 - Missionary training, specialists and pastors with a goal of long term results and curriculum.
 - Training centers between churches in a city or region, agencies, Bible institutes and seminaries.
 - Among training centers, seminaries or Bible institutes from different countries, in order to train pastors and missionaries in other countries before leaving for the field.

National meetings

Each afternoon, after having processed information and shared perspectives throughout the day, each one of the national missions movements had a time to dialog and reflect in a more contextualized manner. Each country must understand the implications of what was presented from the field and the specific actions that they should undertake in order to better the missions process.

At the same time, many countries took advantage of the time together to be able to hold their administrative and strategic meetings, with the purpose of advancing the work that has already been done in the past years. We know that these work groups, which we call “national missions movements” have made a significant change in mobilization and the growth of the church in vision and missions activity.

We are thankful to God that at the III Iberoamerican Missions Congress, there was representation from the 24 countries that make up Iberoamerica from COMIBAM’s perspective, including hispanics living in North America, and Portuguese speaking peoples from Brazil and Portugal.

The established goal for these meetings was to create a synergy of reflection and self-evaluation in order to start a series of proposals for change in the missions process in each country. Many of the meetings were accompanied by discussions about subjects proposed in the morning sessions by the missionaries, trying to discover which adjustments need to be made in the stages of calling, training, sending, support, pastoral care, etc.

The richness of these dialogues was found in the diversity of representatives from each country that had been brought together from the churches, training centers, sending structures, prayer movements, etc. To have all of these key players in the missions movement seated together around the table,

making conclusions from what came from their own analysis, is what leaves us satisfied and sure that the necessary changes are going to be implemented at each one of the different levels that make up the missions process. In the books that will be written next year by COMIBAM International, we will find the challenges that each one of those responsible for the missions process took from Granada.

Report of the First Iberoamerican Missionary Retreat Sierra Nevada, November 11-13, 2006

Praise God!

This is one of the phrases that comes from our heart as we remember the marvelous time that God allowed us to have, along with 288 representatives of the Iberoamerican missionary force. It was an event that took place for the first time in history, and we hope that it will serve as a motivation to other organizations and entities to continue in the future. We also thank God for all of the proposed objectives that were completely met.

Among the 288 missionaries, 59 were couples and some of them brought their children. The total in attendance was 187 married missionaries and 101 singles.

The invited missionaries represented 22 Iberoamerican countries:

Nationality of the invited workers

Argentina	64	3.63 %
Bolivia	3	0.17 %
Brazil	50	2.84 %
Canada	1	0.06 %
Chile	8	0.45 %
Colombia	11	0.62 %
Costa Rica	12	0.68 %
Ecuador	5	0.28 %
El Salvador	19	1.08 %
Spain	9	0.51 %
USA	8	0.45 %
Guatemala	9	0.51 %
Honduras	4	0.23 %
Mexico	36	2.04 %

Nicaragua	6	0.34 %
Paraguay	3	0.17 %
Peru	4	0.23 %
Portugal	2	0.11 %
Puerto Rico	6	0.34 %
Dominican Republic	4	0.23 %
Uruguay	13	0.74 %
Venezuela	10	0.57 %

It was also impacting to see missionaries that are working in 62 countries around the world:

Albania	6	0.34 %
Germany	2	0.11 %
Angola	2	0.11 %
Saudi Arabia	1	0.06 %
Algeria	2	0.11 %
Argentina	11	0.62 %
Azerbaijan	2	0.11 %
Bangladesh	3	0.17 %
Bolivia	4	0.23 %
Brasil	4	0.23 %
Cameroon	1	0.06 %
Chad	1	0.06 %
Chile	6	0.34 %
China	2	0.11 %
Colombia	4	0.23 %
Costa de Marfil	1	0.06 %
Costa Rica	3	0.17 %
Ecuador	1	0.06 %
El Salvador	1	0.06 %
Spain	37	2.10 %
USA	2	0.11 %
Russian Federation	2	0.11 %
France	0	0.00 %
Guatemala	1	0.06 %
Guinea	1	0.06 %
Ecuatorial Guinea	5	0.28 %
Guinea-Bissau	1	0.06 %
Haiti	2	0.11 %

Honduras	3	0.17 %
India	22	1.25 %
Indonesia	2	0.11 %
Iraq	2	0.11 %
Israel	1	0.06 %
Italy	2	0.11 %
Japan	2	0.11 %
Jordan	2	0.11 %
Letonia	1	0.06 %
Malaysia	2	0.11 %
Mali	8	0.45 %
Morocco	27	1.53 %
Mauritania	1	0.06 %
Mexico	11	0.62 %
Mongolia	1	0.06 %
Mozambique	8	0.45 %
Nepal	2	0.11 %
Niger	1	0.06 %
Pakistan	3	0.17 %
Paraguay	8	0.45 %
Peru	8	0.45 %
Portugal	3	0.17 %
United Kingdom	5	0.28 %
Central African Republic	1	0.06 %
República de Polonia	1	0.06 %
Rumania	1	0.06 %
Sahara Occidental	3	0.17 %
Senegal	9	0.51 %
Sudáfrica	3	0.17 %
Tailandia	2	0.11 %
Túnez	2	0.11 %
Turquía	9	0.51 %
Uzbekistán	8	0.45 %
Venezuela	1	0.06 %

During the retreat, there were special times of worship and praise, led by the worship team from a church in Malaga and directed by Pamela Sider. During these times of worship, one could feel the living presence of our Creator, present with us, giving encouragement and spiritual strength to the missionaries there. We have received letters from some of the missionaries saying that it was a great blessing to be able to worship the Lord Jesús in their own language, some who have not been able to do so in quite a long time.

Sessions

Saturday 11

Conference I – Dr. Hebert Palomino

Strengthening the soul and spirit

A conference to encourage workers, that helped them to regroup and gain the strength needed, to see the Lord as their Sustainer.

Sunday 12

Conference II – Dr. Levi deCarvalho

How God can heal our hurts

In this conference, they emphasized the need to be close to God in order to carry the burdens of missions work.

Monday 13

Conference III – Lic. Jesús Londoño

Looking to the future with faith

This seminar took the point of view of faith, the perspective of all of those who are challenged to world evangelization. It was a word of encouragement to return to the mission field with faith in what God can do.

Informal sessions “Coffee chats”

These were special times to be able to share experiences or hear about the successes and struggles lived in the field by other missionaries. Those in charge of each theme were just facilitators, in order to avoid the tendency to turn these informal meetings into workshops or seminars.

The idea of “Coffee chats” was to have a relaxed, informal time in order to share in groups about specific themes that are, in reality, what field missionaries live on a daily basis. Each Chat was enriched by a deeper understanding of the theme, principally through the experiences and real-lives of each one of those that participated.

They were not conferences or workshops, but a brief presentation of the theme by a moderator or facilitator, where the theme was presented. The participants were then encouraged to initiate dialogues to help them understand their own realities.

- Challenges in the education of our children – *Karen Palomino*
- Our children’s needs – *Laura Eller*
- Spiritual warfare – *Dr. Levi DeCarvalho*
- Challenges for married life on the field – *Dr. Osmar Silva*
- Challenges of being single on the field – *Claudio Muzzi*
- Handling interpersonal conflicts – *Ricardo Escobar*
- Spiritual life (relationship with God) – *Ted Limpic*
- Managing crises and stress on the field – *Dr. Hebert Palomino*
- Feelings of loneliness and abandonment on the field - *Dra. Linda Silva*
- Realistic expectations about “fruit” on the field - *Andrés Prins*
- How to manage culture and language shock – *Mario Loss*
- Finishing the work and going home – *Abel Panotto*
- Returning for a sabbatical (furlough) - *Marcia Tostes*

In the afternoon, the time was used for various activities to serve and bless the missionaries. Among these included: make-up (cosmetology) sessions, gift-giving (brought by some national missions movements), table games, crafts, parent-child activities, etc.

A consultation service was offered for missionaries on home-schooling, which encouraged and gave hope to be able to resolve many of the needs in this area in the mission field. Medical services, computer repair, and counseling service were also offered to the missionaries.

The retreat also had a well-structure program for children and youth that had almost 40 participants. They took time to get to know one another and share experiences. The purpose of the retreat for youth and children was to build friendships with other missionary kids, and to share together. The emphasis of the retreat was on the experience that one has as a child of a third culture. One of the more impacting experiences was in watching a film together (Elf) that spoke about a person who lived in a distinct culture, but wanted to get to know his country of origin. It ended up that the main character didn't fully feel part of either culture. After watching the film, the kids spent time talking with their counselors and many, for the first time, identified themselves as Third Culture Children, a missionary kid, but an identity that they shared with other kids serving in other countries. This experience opened the doors for many other conversations that took place on the weekend and during the congress.

Results:

- There were close to 40 kids in the elementary and youth program at the retreat, who were well-informed about the ministry of their parents.
- There was much enthusiasm when they discovered that they (the kids) were an important part of the ministry of their parents.
- There was also much enthusiasm in discovering that if God has them in the place where they were, they could be light in their schools, and could be a great help to their parents in the work that they are doing in the field.
- There were 10 young people on the retreat that formed great bonds of friendship. Many opened up to one another, to the point of sharing their thoughts, problems, and what was going on in their lives. As leaders, and with the help of God and His Word, they were helped to heal wounds and see how God spoke directly through the Bible.
- It was discussed how children/youth can be a help to their parents, they talked about how they are not alone – that they are not the only ones that feel the way they do as Third Culture Kids, and it gave them opportunities to meet other young people from other places and see how they could mutually support one another in being better used by God.

Words of thanks from some of the missionaries

These are just a few of the many testimonies that were heard from missionaries in attendance at the retreat::

- “I want to tell you, with all my heart, that I was blessed, and I will do the best I can to be a blessing to others, whether it be in the field, in the church, etc. You are magnificent people, blessed with simplicity and a great love for God’s work among the lost. You did a great job! -- Elisa Díaz – Uruguay.
- “I am sure that all that has taken place here will have an incredible impact on eternity” -- Bruno Silva.
- “God has given me so much in these days, every detail has been refreshing. Thank you for all your work.”-- Viviana Holakowicz.
- “To say thanks is not sufficient to express my gratitude. Thank you for allowing the Lord to use your lives to be a blessing to others! I was greatly blessed through all of us as COMIBAM, and what you did for me, and for all of us who came from difficult places like Pakistan, Muslim

countries, and others. The time that we spent in Granada and Sierra Nevada was a marvelous time. My strength, my vision, and love were renewed to be able to continue with my work among the Afghan refugees in Iran. --Rocío Mesías.

- “The days in Sierra Nevada were precious. What a comfort, what strength, love and joy to be together with our brothers and sisters in the faith! What a privilege to share with other missionaries, what a blessing to know them, and to receive encouragement and to see examples of faith and strength in the Lord.” -- Silvia V. Vega