

ACADEMY FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
SAM Region

Luis Alberto Meza reported for the SAM Region.

In the first place we would like to express our appreciation for everyone that was part of the organization of this conference.

Last January in South America we had an interesting experience. For the first time all of our institutions in South America got together in Argentina with three purposes in mind. The first one was to get to know each other and get to know our needs and our realities and see what common needs we share. And then determine what things we can do to help each other with these needs. After our conversation, we discovered there are many things we shared that we were struggling with individually or by ourselves and that we can provide projects in which we can work together and help us out collectively. It was a very valuable experience. We are very hopeful that this conference will help us to continue our conversation and projects together. We have the same challenges, we have the same needs, and we can find ways to collaborate together and make our efforts more effective.

Our presentation today we are going to divide into three parts. Needs that we see in all our institutions in South America. Second part is some suggestions on how we can meet those needs. Third part is a delivery system how we can meet those needs.

There is an advantage or being last and a disadvantage. I want to invite you to stand, turn around where you are and sit down again so you can wake up. Stretch whatever you like.

The first thing we are going to see is the needs and possibilities we saw. Many have already spoken about the needs of preparing didactic or teaching materials. We want to emphasize the preparation of modules that could be in the hands of all our professors whether they are teaching in the residential or extension program.

The second need we have is to train education administrators. We have found that many of us that are directing institutions are not equipped to do that kind of ministry. We have found out that the same thing happens in our secular world. At least in Latin America or South America the administration of education is a new field a new career. I believe that it is very urgent that we enable and equip those that are involved in educational administration.

It is impossible in today's world that one library anywhere have all of the books that we would need. Today it is possible and we do need a web or network of library materials that would be available to us. We need to translate educational materials. There are many good books that have not been translated and our publishing house might not have them in mind to be translated. Maybe we need to find other ways so we can get those books published and into the hands of our students.

With the great growth of our church worldwide we need to also help our brothers and sisters in bi-vocational training. Many of our pastors because of the financial reality and rapid growth of the church are bi-vocational and we need to help them out in that area.

We could work on professors that will work for a short brief time taking advantage of some that have already retired but are still good professors.

With the philosophy that our best resources are not books our buildings or our things that we have but our people, we need to invest in professors. We need to have scholarships so our professors can continue their higher education whether it is in same country in some of our universities or outside of our countries.

A good way of continuing to make our levels higher in education is having regional or local conferences of this kind. It is a good time of inspiration, challenging each other and also sharing resources.

We need to develop our faculty in different studies. We need to have our faculty more specialized. They can be teaching in different areas theology, history, practice, pastoral different types of areas.

We need to develop a system so that we can have contextualized writers that can write materials from the same country the same part of the world.

We also want our institutions, our seminaries, to continue developing institutionally so they can go up in the level of education and what they have to offer.

For all of this to be possible we need an organizational structure. We have thought of at least two type of organizational structure. The first is the regional structure. We have talked about in our committee about a regional educational committee. The members are all the rectors of all our seminaries in South America. Along side of this we have a regional education committee, which is composed of four educators who would be a type of council for our regional coordinator. In this level we will work together in what ever need is brought before us.

We also need an international structure in which we are recommending that there be a representative from each region.

As far as our delivery system, this regional committee can help each one of our institutions and extension program to develop a system and analyze their needs. Then this committee can prioritize the needs of the regional education in South America. If there is a project that needs to be approved they will go about doing it and present it to our regional director. Our regional education coordinator will present the project to the international committee. If there are resources international committee can channel these resources in the manner they see fit.

Some last suggestions. We talked a little bit about what the “global academy” means to each of us. We came to a conclusion that we need to define more specifically what we mean by “global academy” and it’s objectives.

Let me just share a personal word which is my privilege because I have the microphone in my hand. I don’t think we need really a change in name. And the form is not the important thing. For me we need a change that is deeper. A change in attitude. How we approach each other. To see and analyze the various situations in which we are in. to see the problems we have to seek the solutions to each of them, and how together we can work with education around the world, we can change the name, and maybe a lot will not change, we can find different ways of achieving what we want, but if we change our attitudes and put aside a little bit our titles and our personal and perhaps even our institutional agenda and work together we can do a lot for the kingdom of God. And that is the direction that our last words are headed for. We need cooperation between local

professors and invited professors from other parts of the world. We need to utilize the global resources we have in the same terms or conditions. We also need in the process of sharing interchanging professors to develop our leaders locally the leaders we work with every day.

Let me finish with a same illustration. My roommate lend me a book. It is written by a Catholic priest. He was professor for many years at Harvard, Yale and Notre Dame. But at a certain stage of his life he decided to leave his educational ministry in those types of universities and he decided to join a group of people who had a ministry with people who were mentally handicapped. When he arrived there to help them, he realized that his experience at Harvard did not help him a lot because those people were not interested or aware of any of that. He realized that the children he was going to minister to were not interested in all the books he had written. There were other criteria they had to receive help. When he understood that and he forgot all those things, he was able to help those children. He had to change his attitude.

Again, I want to appreciate in the name of our SAM Region, Dr. Lambert, Dr. Truesdale, and all of the committee who helped and put this together. Let me paraphrase Armstrong's words Maybe it's just a small step for education but we hope to continue taking larger steps in the future. May God bless you.