

INTRODUCTION

It is a great privilege to present to the Latino Nazarene people the documents that are the result of the First Ibero-American Nazarene Theological Conference that took place in San José, Costa Rica on October 18-19, 2004.

Lay persons, pastors, district superintendents, educators, academic deans, directors of theological institutions and field directors, representing 21 Ibero-American countries, met on the campus of the Nazarene Seminary of the Americas—SENDAS, to celebrate our heritage, reflect on our history and our current reality, and to project ourselves in the future under the powerful direction of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of our encounter was a unanimous spirit, fervent worship, fraternal fellowship, the reaffirmation of our faith and a commitment to serve with better excellence the Kingdom of God. Dr. Jerry Lambert, Commissioner of the International Board of Education and Robert L. Woodruff, Educational Coordinator of World Mission totally supported the conference. An international foundation (that requested to remain anonymous) donated the funds for the airline tickets of the participants. The Regional Directors of the MAC, SAM and CAR, Dr. Christian Sarmiento, Dr. John Smee, and Dr. Bruno Radi were present at this unprecedented event of our church as were the Regional Coordinators for Theological Education and Field Directors. Dr. Jesse Middendorf, General Superintendent, and Dr. Louie Bustle, World Mission Director, brought inspiring messages during the worship services. Many, many thanks to all of these brothers in Christ.

To every participant, our special appreciation for your valuable contribution in each small group and main session. Although it was called a conference, it was in reality a true theological dialogue. Thank you also to those who presented papers, the reactors and compilers of each one of the themes, for your great effort and profound reflection. A very special feeling of greeting to the Cuban Nazarenes who were not able to be with us—we missed you.

To every one of the planning and logistical coordinators during the event (mostly SENDAS personnel), as well as the resident students and the Costa Rican Nazarenes who collaborated in one way or another, may the Lord repay you abundantly. To all those who in one way or another made this event a reality, thank you!

What is written in the book is not a finished product, much less. We believe that it can—and we hope that it will—serve as a starting point for new and even richer reflections in our local churches and institutions. While we pray and prepare for our second encounter, we thank the Lord for having allowed us to be part of this historical Nazarene Theological Conference in Ibero-America.

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General Coordinator

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