



RCA Global Mission

2021 Year in Review



Andrew and Amy Fields - Colombia

At the Biblical Seminary of Colombia, our main goal as an institution is to provide high-quality theological formation for men and women who serve the church and society with the Good News of the gospel. Our main goal in 2021 was to return to in-person classes after the disruptions related to COVID. While continuing as a professor and head of the field education program, Andrew took on a new role as the Dean of the Seminary, tasked with coordinating the academic programs of the school.

Blessings of 2021

As we look back over the past year, we are amazed at God's care for our seminary community. With the exceptions of April and May, we were able to have students on campus with relatively few infections. In addition, because of increased interest in our online program, we did not see a significant impact on enrollment despite COVID.

One way the RCA helped be a blessing this past year was by providing financial support to feed our on-campus students. In years past, they have had a shared kitchen to prepare their meals, but COVID forced us to close down that option. Through generous giving by RCA churches and other global partners, the Seminary was able to open a cafeteria where meals could be prepared and consumed with minimal risk of exposure to COVID. We are grateful for this blessing that permitted more students to be on campus with a lesser risk of infection.



The other exciting outcome of the past year was the accreditation by the Colombian government that lets us open a new Master's program in Biblical Interpretation. After many years of work towards this goal, we had two visits from government accreditors this year which culminated in the approval of the program in late November.

Challenges of 2021

As with many educational institutions, we are seeing increased interest in our online programs, an interest that seemed to accelerate with the pandemic. This has meant bringing on more faculty for teaching online classes and a constant evaluation of how to best teach and care for our online students.

One of the other challenges over the past year was social upheaval in Colombia. Though this is not new in Colombia, the stress of the pandemic, as well as simmering economic and social inequality, led to protests and riots earlier in the year. What does this mean for the Seminary? As an institution that has as part of its mission "the formation...of men and women committed to God, the church and society," these events and pressures are a

strong call to make sure the education we offer is contextually relevant. It is both the challenge and call to “read the times” and help form students in a Kingdom vision for the renewal of the world.

How did this impact our family? First, our daughter Irene had to return to online school for a couple of months this year. Also, uncertainty around COVID and vaccination urged us to make an unplanned trip to the U.S. in June for vaccinations. However, in all of it, we saw God working to keep our family healthy and give us a little break in the middle of the Colombian school year.

Hopes for 2022

We have three major goals for this year:

First, we as a seminary are excited to roll out the Master’s degree in Biblical Interpretation program. We hope this new degree program will be a blessing to the church in Latin America by training people who can interpret scripture in its original languages and contexts and, through that interpretation, bring Kingdom transformation to their communities. Offering a degree at this level allows us to provide formation for the men and women who will be the scholars, professors, and ministry leaders who are teaching others, multiplying quality biblical interpreters in Colombia and Latin America.

Second, Andrew will be part of a team tasked with leading a revision of the Seminary’s curriculum this year. Together, we hope to update the Seminary’s courses and academic structure to reflect the best of biblical and theological scholarship, the evolving needs of Colombian churches and society, and new approaches to theological education—especially online education. In practice, this will mean a lot of meetings and writing of documents, but we hope the end product is a plan for the formation of our students that is faithful to our mission, based on Scripture, and responsive to the needs in our communities.

Third, we are working on plans to come to the U.S. for a longer visit to reconnect with our supporters. We have been working in Colombia for almost six years and have not had a real “home assignment” visit to the U.S. Both the Seminary schedule and Irene’s schooling make it difficult for us to do a 4-6 month visit to the U.S. like many missionaries, so we are hoping to visit for about two months in the middle of this year to visit supporting congregations and renew our relationships with them. There are a lot of moving pieces involved in this visit, but we want to make it a priority for our ministry and family this year.

How We Can Pray

With his new role as Dean in addition to his other roles, Andrew is juggling several different responsibilities. All of that at a time when we are still addressing the challenges of educating in the time of COVID and launching a new program. So, our main prayer need at this moment is that Andrew would have wisdom in these roles, that he might know when to set appropriate limits and find moments of refreshment.

Amy is hoping that this year she might reengage more intentionally in ministry here. In the last two years, her time and efforts were concentrated at home, both with the birth of our son, Amos, and dealing with isolations from COVID. We pray that she would be able to dip her toes back into ministry with confidence and patience and that we would find the right options for helping care for Amos.

Finally, we pray for economic provision for the Seminary. Because of COVID, difficulties in the Colombian economy, and compliance with government regulations, the Seminary heads into 2022 praying for God’s abundant provision to continue with our ministry. We have already seen signs of hope when we received word in December



of funds from RCA churches to support scholarships for our students—more on that in our upcoming monthly emails. So we pray that God would renew our hope in his provision, even as we work hard to be good stewards of the resources we have and rejoice in the generosity of God’s people around the globe.

Additional Needs

Over the past two years, we have had several churches in our support network cease their financial support of our ministry due to church closures or reductions in their global missions budget. This year we are hoping to get back to a healthy support level and so we are looking to raise an additional \$6,000 in annual support. We are so grateful for the congregations and individuals who have joined with us to provide quality theological education for the Colombian church, and we pray that God would provide those additional funds we need to be at 100% of our budget by the end of 2022. If you’re interested in increasing your support or know someone who might be interested, please contact us at afields@rca.org or give at www.rca.org/fields.



Thank You

As we mentioned above, one way the RCA helped be a blessing this past year was in providing financial support to feed our on-campus students.

Also, the news of scholarship funds that will benefit our students in 2022 is a significant impact on our ministry, and this year we hope to bring you stories of those whose lives have been touched by that generosity. We are very grateful!