

# Here am I, Send Me

*The Role and Affect of the Missionary Wife in Latin America*

by

Tim Flunker

Senior Church History

Professor John Brenner

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How do they do it?

Mother, wife, missionary's wife at that, tireless worker in the field, host to occasional committee visits, able to write letters every now and then not only to children but also to special friends who remember them in prayer, seemingly full of vim and vigor and enjoys long plane trips with small children. OK, the last statement may be a little expansion of the truth, but those other statements are definitely remarks that I have heard concerning wives of missionaries. It is true amazement seeing the wife with her husband as he travels the country giving debutations. The wife, composed, as three (or more) toe-heads (her children) run around full of energy, for they have been sitting in a vehicle all day, could cause amazement to grow in the hearts of American citizens.

Growing up in a foreign missionary's family, I saw consistent qualities and characteristics that exemplified the basic and supporting relationship between a missionary and his wife and thus also his family. In order to make the paper personal, I sought out the advice and counsel of missionary wives themselves. As they read this paper, I hope that they will not only see a little of themselves in the paper, but also a little of what they can be due to the gifts and position that the Lord has given them. Since I grew up in the Latin America division of WELS foreign missions, I concentrated my sources to the wives in the field.

This paper is not meant to be an exhaustive source of wives tales from Latin America. To do that I would be guilty of backyard gossiping. This is neither a manual, for what works for one family may not work for another family. Beside that, the paper could end up very dry and boring. What this paper ends up being then is a compilation of thoughts from the Latin American missionaries' wives to show how they are very much alike and very much different to their American counterparts and friends, interjected with personal feelings and

observations as to how a missionary wife works in the field.

In order to make the paper logical and efficient by means, I will cover the life of a missionary wife from the time of acceptance of the call to the eventual feeling comfortable in the field. Every time you see portions of the text in italics, those are direct quotations from the women in the field. They are intended for the reader to look into the mind of the women and see what they are thinking.

From the veteran to the rookie, the younger to the older, the questions are all the same. Why am I here? What am I going to do? In fact, those feeling that some perceive as doubt can be found anywhere, not necessarily only in a mission field. The wife of a factory worker may find herself asking the same questions as the amount of money between paychecks dwindles. Should I work or stay home with the children? The feelings of doubt, however, are natural feelings of trying to find a comfortable place within the marriage.

One of the biggest adjustments for a wife in a mission field to make is to accept the fact of living away from friends and family, not seeing them for long periods of time. One wife mentioned the fact that as she said good-bye to her family in the USA, she did so realizing that she may never see her grandfather again. That came to pass, as the Lord called him away to his heavenly home.

One factor that is often overlooked as a wife prepares to move with her family is the acceptance of the relatives to the particular move. Many a time the initial sensation felt by the wife's parents is pride. *"Look at my daughter, ready to move anywhere with her husband to serve the Lord."* But as the departure date looms near, the feeling may change to one of fear for her safety, or perhaps even slight resentment by the parents that the Lord is taking their daughter so far away. Maybe they have always had good communication by phone with her, and yet now they will have to get used to hearing her voice only 4-6 times a year on the phone. Perhaps they will have to be satisfied with letters and second hand information that comes to them through the Northwestern Lutheran or the monthly Come to the WELS video

tapes. This outlook on their relationship can worsen if the daughter spends more than what they deem to be the necessary allotted time in the mission field. The outlook can even be strained if perhaps the furloughs are spent to their own liking, that is, the majority of time spent in their own backyard or with their own parish. Parents may come to the realization, through time and God's grace, that their daughter is truly happy where she is, even to the point of calling that place home, rather than the house where she grew up, her parents house.

The road to that point in time is difficult at this time for the wife especially, ~~for~~ as they prepare for the trip abroad for the first time, it is <sup>she</sup> ~~her~~ who more than likely will have to face the parents, while it is the husband's task to take care of the travel arrangements, the visas, the necessary papers and other important legal documentation. Husbands in a time like that shouldn't forget about what feelings the wife is going through, and <sup>should</sup> ~~be~~ quick to offer your time on the phone, explaining why it is that the Lord has chosen the family to take up this call.

Thoughts then turn to the moving and settling in the mission field. There is the realization that the field could be primitive and the same foods stuff and other creature comforts that had become necessities while living in the American culture could not be there. Sometimes people learn the easy way what is different in the new country: Their new neighbors come over and introduce themselves and offer to help. More often than not the family has to learn from experience. Maybe only three loads of laundry can be washed a day, or else the house will have no water for the rest of the day. Maybe only certain electrical appliances can be plugged in certain outlets, or else the house's one fuse will blow after the sun sets. Perhaps the same type of food could not be eaten. Perhaps the bathroom features could be difficult to get used to. Perhaps that lack of central heating on a cold (45 degrees Fahrenheit inside and out of the house) comes as an unpleasant surprise.

One wife began her life as a missionary's wife at the same time as she began her life as his wife. She had been teaching in a Lutheran Elementary School. She was married, and two weeks later she was on her way to Mexico to study the language of Spanish. Talk about

uprooting!

What could possibly take the most patience by a wife is the preparation in order to leave the USA and travel to the foreign field. Possessions have to be sold, items packed and repackaged and the guesswork of what had to be taken and what had to be left is not an exact science. Selling household pets, getting rid of winter clothing, packing <sup>for</sup> two different destinations (one to the place of language study and the other the field, should the two be different) is never easy to cope with.

The lack of solid information given to the wives before they left is a sore spot with the majority of the wives, probably for the simple reason that decisions that have to be made are done so without a clue as to how they have to be made. Oftentimes some information is given, but most of them agreed that the information given was never enough to make smart decisions. What they all wish they had if they had to do it over again from scratch would be proper orientation as to culture, climate and expected housing arrangements. But, as one wife mentions, this lack of orientation was a hidden key in making her become more dependent upon the Lord in all things.

*That was more positive than negative. It was part of the Lord's training to lean entirely on Him.*

Traveling as a missionary's wife takes patience. More than once have travel plans not gone as planned in the lives of missionaries coming into a new land. Canceled flights, delays due to fog, rerouted flights and flights with small children could seem to add years to the life of a missionary's wife. But all the wives responded to have taken the tumults in style. And why not? To agree to travel to a foreign country displays the willingness to accept whatever happens on that trip and other trips. One can not expect that traveling abroad be the same as traveling within the USA. Often the flights can be more pleasurable, but the arrival in a new airport, where the main language is one that is not known, can be slightly harrowing. Imagine

yourself walking with tired little children up a corridor that you think, at least that is what you deduced from the signs, will take you to your next flight or to the luggage carousel, where you must wait for what remains of your luggage.

In one wife's case, the unpredictable in foreign traveling turned into the humorous. After arriving in Mexico, with only the name of the hotel in Monterey to go on, she and her husband and the five children and 19 pieces of luggage had to fit into a rented Ford Pinto. (By the way, Ford Pintos are even smaller in Mexico!) Finally accomplishing that small miracle, they started out towards the hotel. Along the way, they saw a speed limit sign that said 50. Looking down at the speedometer, it read 100. The husband suddenly slowed down hoping that he had not be caught, thinking that he had been traveling at 100 MPH. Looking again, the 100 was kilometers per hour, which converts to 62 MPH, still exceeding the speed limit. They have never traveled that fast again in Mexico!

Across the board, this attitude was most expressed by the wives: Trust that whatever happens is for your good, for invariably this trust is taught and learned over and over again.

The arrival on the field itself can be climatic. However, the love of fellow workers often makes that move easy to bear. Many times the fellow co-workers work hard to prepare the house that the new workers will live in. Often the whole field shows up at the airport to greet the new workers and makes them feel at home. For a veteran in the mission field, this preparing for the arrival of a new missionary family had her encountering one of those days that will be remembered for a long time.

*On the same day that the new mission family was arriving, everything went wrong. My husband cut his foot. He went in the morning to the hospital and in the afternoon we went to welcome them. While driving from home the hot casserole flew out of the back of the Land Cruiser.*

Sometimes it is necessary to live with someone else while their house is prepared. The new surroundings and language may seem more than can be borne by any mortal human

being. The new family may find themselves with greater problems to overcome if they don't consider this their home as the others do. Longing for the USA right after arriving in the new mission field can be detrimental for the family, and wives are often the ones that do the explaining to the children. For this reason frustration can creep in. There is a way to avoid the greater amount of pain. Let me explain.

Make the residence that you live in your home. Don't always look back to see how you would have done it within the confines of the USA border, but rather look ahead and determine that you are going to make this your home. Keep up the contact with "home", the USA, but make more and more of your neighbors your friends. Many wives say that their closest friends are the other missionary wives. The reason why is simple: here is a person who has gone through all this before. This is important in order to see how someone who has made the same move that you are making can see some problems that may lie ahead and can give advice, warning and encouragement to you. More than once the wives wished for more companionship with the other missionary wives, but sometimes time and expenses rule out such frequent companionship and fellowship.

*A fond memory of mine is the family retreat we had at some villas on the beach. It was a wonderful weekend spent studying God's Word - focusing on the family. Many commented on how fantastic it would be to have Christian neighbors - or even for all of us to live together in the same area. We recognize, however, that the Lord put us where we are to "let our light shine."*

This does not isolate the wife, however. Besides the other missionary wives as friends, many wives mention the one native lady who first gave her some kind of personal encouragement or handy tip as another good friend. One wife mentions the amount of help that one good friend gave her.

*One lady took me downtown to show me which stores carried various craft items. When they learned that we eat a lot of fruit, they brought us various tropical fruits now and then to taste and even gave us a variety of small trees.*

That probably summarizes the sentiment of the wives concerning the members of the church in the field that they are serving. More than one wife mentions the love and sincerity that the members of the church showed them as they moved in and still are showing them today. Several wives came idealistically prepared to be received with open arms. They were. Perhaps the number of members wasn't so great when the new families got there, but they are still souls that belong to the Savior.

Making a move across country can be easy if the territory that you move into reminds you of your old residence. But when you move across the seas to a new country and a new culture, the surroundings may not be as familiar as you would wish them to be. A family moving into a new house in a new land with new neighbors that don't speak the same as you do finds itself no longer with the upper hand. Not being able to be in control leaves you feeling helpless and wondering what to do next. As the husband delves into the work of the mission, the house becomes either the castle with the drawbridge down, or the castle with the drawbridge up and the moat filled with crocodiles. Days become long and you could become lonesome for the home where you used to live. That is how new families could feel, and often do feel. How can you get over that feeling?

Expectations on the mission field run high as the family settles into their house and the husband begins to involve himself with his work. After those first few Sundays when the new family can barely follow along with the liturgy, and not understand the sermon, soon come Sundays when a little is communicated and the new family is congratulated by the natives for attempting the new language. It is then when the expectations that were formalized in the USA could easily differ with what the eyes are transferring to the brain.



Many times the expectations of the field are exaggerated. Many wives felt that they were moving into a thriving congregation and that their husband was called to help the congregation branch out, only to see that there were few who attended, and that their husbands really had to work hard at maintain the ones that were present in church. Many times the conditions of the mission itself can be humorous.

*My husband worked in a barrio high up the mountain which he often had to reach by bus. There was a great deal of crime and insecurity in the barrio. My husband who is well over 6ft 2in tall and "big" was embarrassed that one of his members, a tiny little elderly lady, Doña Nino, always insisted in accompanying him to the bus stop to protect him from thugs.*

Often the climate is much different than what was anticipated. In Puerto Rico, the humidity is such a burden to put up with after coming from an upper Midwest state. I can remember landing in Puerto Rico in 1974. The temperature was 96 degrees Fahrenheit and it was raining hard. How is that for head<sup>†</sup> and humidity! All this came after sitting for three hours on a cool air-conditioned airplane. One wife was surprised by the amount of ants in and out of the house. Others are concerned about the amount of insect wildlife. One wife commented about the different types of food stuff in the stores.

*Within a couple of months of our arrival, I bought "popcorn" at the grocery store. A few days later my husband wanted to make a snack and decided to make popcorn. All the kernels burned - not a one popped. I had bought another type of corn kernel used to make a Brazilian dessert.*

Others expressed unexpected difficulty with the language acquisition and the laid-back approach of the Latin Americans. One wife expressed it this way:

*We were given the impression that life would be somewhat primitive but we found most things to be more modern than we thought. One of the most frustrating experiences we had was watching as we (mission corp) tried to force a German Lutheran style of worship onto a people that doesn't think or act at all like what we expect Lutherans would. Our hope was to take the message of God's Word and put it into a worship style that fit the culture of the people.*

As the wives settle into a routine in the new country, the small nuances of the new land become the welcome lifestyle of a well lived-in home. This truth is nowhere more evident than <sup>n</sup>surrounding a furlough event. To have to prepare for your absence for 2-3 months in advance is overwhelming enough, <sup>n</sup>now just think what it is like to physically displace your family for that same period of time into a land that could be quite different from the one that you have become used to. Remember, much can change after leaving a place for 2-3 years. The USA may not be the same place that you remember it to be. The customs themselves may be different. The lifestyle may be slightly more accelerated. It may contain some culture shock for you and your family. As all this is happening to your family, the relation in the USA cannot perceive your perception of a changed land. They only wonder what has happened to you as you have lived abroad for those years.

Frustration can even accumulate <sup>when</sup> <sup>n</sup>action by their husbands doesn't yield the results that the mission board expects or writes in their reports. Wives are protective of their husbands. They don't wish to see him unsuccessful in the eyes of his peers. *It would be nice if we had a closer relationship of encouragement with our stateside policy makers. But that is really difficult because there is such a gulf between the cultures, and only those who have lived long enough on both sides of the gulf can understand.* This could cause problems when the plans of the Lord don't match the plans of men. For many years the mission may not seem to be growing in congregation numbers, but the wives need to remember that it is the Lord's hand who blesses, not the actions of men.

Comparisons cannot be made between congregations in the USA and congregations in

the mission field, especially by those who are too close to make the comparison. The ability to live within the parameters of the field and concentrate on that congregation's particular needs is of dire importance for missionary wives.

This one characteristic is an overwhelming constant in missionary wives. It is true that this characteristic of living within the parameters of the field and concentrating on a single congregation is a gift that most if not all pastor's wives should have, but on a mission field the concentration on the family and thus the wife is intensified. The worst-scenario situation would be for a wife to misspeak herself in a situation where she would be unable to withdraw her statement, either true or false. The need for remembering that she and her family are guests in the host country is imperative. The need for her to remember that she is a servant of the Most High God is utmost in her mind. As that spirit of servitude grows in her mind and life and in the minds and lives of her family, no matter what happens in the field, she will know that all is a blessing from the Lord, the Lord who gives all.

An adjustment that new families have to make is the security of their children. I am not speaking of physical security first of all, but I am speaking primarily about emotional security. When I went to Mexico with my parents in 1974, the first thing out of my mouth was "I am ready to go home." I am sure that other children have gone through these situations also. One wife put as her priority in the field "to help her children adjust in the local school." More than one parent has home schooled their children, so that they would have not only the good education but also the proper spiritual growth. This need of good spiritual growth has led the families of the mission fields to send their children to the USA to attend secondary educational institutions.

Many wives entering into a foreign field are asked to prepare for the worse. *You may hardly see your husband all day. Food will not be the same, and neither will the means of obtaining that food be the same. Your relatives will miss you and constantly remind you that they miss you. They may not fully understand how you can live so*

*far away from them. Your own support role may not be clearly defined. Will I fit in with the other missionary wives? Will I cope with certain stress, or will I crack under pressure? Will my children grow up as I hope they will, or will they also feel strained by separation from relatives? How will I best support my husband? What will I do to avoid monotonous moments in my life? What will I do to relax? What will I do to calm my family in times of turmoil?*

Granted, these questions and concerns can come upon anyone living anywhere, but they are heightened when one leaves familiar surroundings and finds oneself in the midst of totally new and unfamiliar surroundings, such as one on a mission field.

There are two different types of families that move to a foreign field. There are those who come with no children, and there are those who arrive with several children already members of the family. Those families who have children may have a tougher time adjusting to the new environment. On the other hand, they may find that having the family already established they have a support group built right in to the adjusting process. Those families without children may find a bit of loneliness settling in their lives. The wives in particular may feel the most lonely. But, as most wives will tell you, if you have a house full of kids, you can never really feel that lonely, just a tad insane.

It became clearly obvious to me, apart from the foreknowledge that I had from living in a mission family, that the wives all put their families first in their lives. And why not? The majority of wives didn't work full time apart from the house, so they have energies to devote to the house and to the mission itself. (More on that later) All were concerned with the spiritual growth of their children, so many wives spend time reading Bible History stories and memory lessons to their children. Many mothers actively encourage the speaking of English in the house so that their children do not forget the language of the USA, should they have to go to the USA for schooling or later in life after a call has been accepted. Many wives prepared their children to travel to the USA for schooling by having them do their own

laundry, handle money and become more and more independent. One wife described the preparing of her children in this way:

*The most important preparation is to get them anchored in their Savior, then they know who they are, why they are here, Who is their Best Friend and Helper, and how they want to live out of love for their Savior. After that comes giving them responsibility, lots of love and discipline (which are all together).*

Included in the family life is the relationship between a husband and wife. In the foreign field this relationship shows itself very clearly, for often the mission family is surrounded by families that are not as secure as their own. This, I believe, is in great contrast to pastoral families living in the USA. Often in mission fields the family becomes tighter and more secure, primarily because the situations of dependence dictate it. There may not be little league games, the high school sports and other events that families in the USA can enjoy as a family, but that takes away from family time alone. I ask a simple question. How many families in the USA eat three meals together, the whole family? More often that not, greatly so influenced by outside schedules, not bad in themselves. However, in a mission field the family remains close together because the situations dictate that this closeness is possible. The wives in the mission field have said many times that they really appreciate this closeness that their family has developed. In fact, the closeness has developed to such a point, that even if some of the children have been gone for a time, as to school, when they return it is as if they had never left at all.

A peculiarity which the parents may need to use during the first months and year of a families stay in a foreign field is children's ability of rapid pickup of the language to interpret what has been said. I can remember a trip back from a Sunday service with a van-load of Puerto Ricans that we were dropping off at their respective houses. In the back of the van was a member who was notorious for speaking very fast. This particular Sunday he didn't wish to

be dropped off at home, but wanted us to take him into town to the supermarket. This request was not new. We had often done this for other members. But as my father and my brother and I heard the request, we could not for the life of us understand what he was saying.

Finally, after he repeated the request five or six times, my brother understood what was being said. He correctly translated it for my father and we dropped him off at the supermarket.

This difference in language ability can be a source of concern for certain families who feel that the children should be seen and not heard, to use an archaic expression. Many times parents could be upstaged by the young ones who know what is happening fully while the parents don't. This could cause conflicts. Veteran mission families and especially the wives will answer simply. Don't worry. Act as you would if you were not in a mission field. But don't let their security fool you. They were once rookies in the field. The best way to use this situation is to accept it and use the child's gifts to the best of their ability. Allow the child to grow in the new country as a member of that country. It will be what he calls home anyway, so let it be home for him. This does not mean that families will suddenly become two separate factions (children vs. parents), but it does mean that families will have to adjust to the new country together. Many wives commented about the closeness that developed as the families adjusted to the new country together.

Family life in a foreign field could be difficult, and it may not get any easier as the years pass by. As the wife of a missionary learns the language better, she may become more involved with the life of the church. Then she no longer has one concern, but two: her family and her extended family. And just like in the USA, the wife can get plenty involved.

Many wives mentioned that as they grew to know the parishioners that their husbands served, they saw a disparity of talents. Often the parishioners didn't have the skills to play a musical instrument in church. They were asked to teach Sunday School and VBS, but had never done that before. It could easily fall upon the wives to do the bulk of the work, but many wives recognized that the need for the parishioners to become trained and involved far

outweighed any dire need to be the active leader. When I posed the question WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST GIFT TO THE MISSION FIELD? many wives listed good gifts: musical talents, writing SS materials and VBS materials, taking care of some financial and secretarial work. They all listed the need for these to get done in the field, and the advantage they had in having done this type of work before. Many of them also listed the wish to teach or the fact that teaching was already going on. But the most common answer to that question came from the overwhelming majority of the wives, and the answer should not surprise anyone: *Raising our children, taking care of our home, trying to be an example of a Christian wife and mother.* One wife said:

*I feel that it is extremely important that a missionary and his family live the lifestyle of the people whom they are serving. If they see we live a much better life than they do, lot of times it makes it difficult for them to see that we are their true friends and that we care about their spiritual well-being. If we make ourselves a part of their lives by socializing with them outside of a strictly religious setting, they will see that we are concerned about all aspects of their lives. If we isolate ourselves from them except for religious settings, they may question our true motives.*

More often than not the reasoning behind this answer was simply a realization of the position that God has given to not only these wives but also their families. One wife put it this way: *I feel my greatest gift was being able to be an example of a Christian woman, wife and mother. At a time when my husband had a call to the USA one of our native pastor's wives came to talk to me. She said, "You have taught us God's Word, now we need you to show us how to put our Christian faith into our lives."*

Above all, the wives agreed that a good deal of their time is spent to help their husband's emotional and physical health. Many wives described this important role in different ways, but the following quote best summarizes the "support" role of the missionary wife.

*Most afternoons after dinner my husband takes a short nap. Since he is usually very tired and could easily sleep several hours, I always wake him at the time he asks me to. I guess that summarizes what I would like to be doing in the mission: helping my husband in every way possible so that he can <sup>use</sup> his gifts to the fullest. Holding up the prophet's hands can mean so many little things, from keeping the house clean to going along to baptism dinners. It all means "supporting" my husband so he can do as much as he can for others.*

The willingness to serve in about any capacity in the mission field characterizes almost all mission wives. They see a need that is not filled, and they work themselves into a position to be useful in accomplishing a goal that the need sees. This is not a usurpation of authority, but rather a willingness to serve in whatever capacity they can. More often than not the wives feel the most comfortable working out of the home in capacities that resemble their stateside counterparts. But as they become more comfortable in their new home they become more bold in their public faith.

This sacrificing attitude displayed in missionaries rubs off on the wives, for when they were asked about their favorite mission story, the majority had a story to answer the question as to why their husbands and <sup>they</sup> ~~them~~ were there. The following are a series of quotes which shows how divergent the roles are that the wives play in the field. Notice especially the emphasis on individuals.

*The first years we were here John and I attended a birthday party for a neighbor of one of our members. The parents of this member were at the party and John started visiting with the mother. She was a practicing Jehovah Witness and wanted to know more about what we believed. After John finished telling her, she said that she wasn't interested. Two months ago she was confirmed in our church. After several years of witnessing to her about Jesus and reading her Bible with her son, she came to the knowledge of the truth. Her confirmation is a strong testimony to the power of the*



*Holy Spirit working through "The Word."*

*In April 1991 the decision was made that our family would move to a new mission city. The city had once been considered as a possible site but no one had ever worked there. As we discussed mission strategy possibilities we were concerned about what approach we should use to reach those very first contacts. Even as we toiled and discussed God was laying the groundwork. We rented a home in the central part of the city. This home would also serve as the worship center. We hoped our location would draw people from all parts of the city but little did we know that our first contact was right outside our door. As the moving crew unloaded the truck he stood and watched near by. Pedro was our block watchman. The second day after our arrival Pedro knocked on our door and asked what we were all about. After much discussion he wanted to study with us and become a member. Today Pedro and his nine family members make up the core of this new congregation. After less than six months in this new city God had already brought his church together and we had made no effort to find them; they had found us. The Lord always sends us where we must go and never leaves our side.*

*We had been in the mission for 17 years, and were preparing to leave the mission in June of 1986. May 1st, 1986 my father called me to tell me that God had suddenly taken my mother home to Heaven. This was completely unexpected by us. Now, God was expecting us to show this Hope in Jesus and our salvation in action. Everything that we had been teaching and preaching to our Christian friends about our joy in eternal life with Jesus now was being put on the line. God was telling me, "Me, now you have to live and show the joy you have been teaching." Our Christian friends came to us with comfort from God's Word - this Word we had taught them. Our unchristian friends told us they were unable to understand us in the face of this*

sadness. We were then able to express our hope of a reunion in heaven. It was a time of deep sadness for me, and yet deep joy to be given this unique opportunity to live what we feel in our hearts and had been striving to teach. In a way, God was giving us the final chapter in our book of "Mission Work in the Field."

I have always been impressed by the strong faith and dedication of the core members of our congregation. These people are constantly letting their faith shine among their families, friends, neighbors and co-workers. In a society filled with corruption, violence and double standards, these precious souls are the reason that we are working to spread the Gospel message. As we work together, slowly the Holy Spirit is changing hearts. Praise the Lord!

I have three young daughters, and we are expecting our 4th in March. So maybe you could say we want to show people we believe children are a blessing not a burden. But reality is reality - three kids keep me close to home - calling the wash machine repairman, reading stories, cleaning up a leaky pipe, praising our 2 year old for going potty. Not glamorous jobs but necessary and rewarding in their own way. It's hard to beat Emily's hugs, kisses, and smiles as she hears my praise. Sure I write letters to school kids and church groups and try to help keep my husband organized. But for now the bulk of my time goes to family affairs. I only hope I can be a good example.

We just started a children's choir in Humacao. When we are finished practicing, the children leave singing the songs that we worked on. They sing the Lord's praises all the way home. It's so important to reach out to the children and teach them of their Savior.

*I guess the best story I could share would be of my first children's Bible Class that we had at a member's home. We had just been on the field for six months so I was very nervous about teaching in Spanish. I was amazed when 70 children showed up for that class. They ranged in age from two to sixteen years old. We all piled into a room about 10' by 12'. They sat on the floor and they stood by the wall. God truly blessed all of us that night - even my Spanish flowed better than expected. Many of those children still attend that Bible Class now being taught by lay workers of the church.*

Above all, missionaries and their families travel to foreign fields because there are people that haven't yet heard the Gospel of the good news of the life and death of Jesus Christ for them. It is for individuals who do not know that their Savior has died and risen for them that missionary wives leave the USA to follow their husbands to lands far away. It is for individuals that wives are important parts in the life of a foreign mission. It is for people.

*People like little Gladys, the "witch" who only needed love; Josefina and her warmth and love; Doña Luti being confirmed all alone, without any family there; Myrta and her devotion to the Lord; Zaraida and her faith conquering all odds; Doña Luiza and her warm heart, Doña Irma reaching out to others; Cuca trying to get a chapel built, etc., etc.*

## ADDENDUM #1

Following are the questions that I sent to the missionary wives in preparation for this paper.

- 1) How many years in the mission field?
- 2) If not currently in mission field, from when to when?
- 3) Place of Lord's service prior to call to mission field?
- 4) What was your best experience in your move to the mission field?
- 5) What was your worst experience in your move to the mission field?
- 6) What did you expect the mission to be like?
- 7) How many people were there to serve in the mission field?
- 8) What is your husband's area of expertise?
- 9) How do you offer to help him in this area?
- 10) What is your greatest gift to the mission? Why?
- 11) What would you like to change about the mission? You can list more than one change
- 12) Who is your closest friend beside your husband? Why is that person your closest friend?
- 13) Anything else that you would wish to see done in the mission field where you were serving?
- 14) Any particular good story that best shows your role and affect in the mission?
- 15) What is your favorite thing to do as a hobby?
- 16) Why do you find that relaxing enough to call in a hobby?
- 17) Do you have children? If so, how many? With ages, please
- 18) How are they educated? Are any in the USA attending secondary schools? How did you prepare them to leave their home and travel to the USA? How did you cope with their absence?
- 19) How long did it take to learn the native language?
- 20) What method or schooling did you use to learn the language?
- 21) Favorite stories about the mission and its work.

## ADDENDUM #2

The reason why the quotes were not notated was not because the participants in the poll wished anonymity. I felt, as I was writing the paper, that the flow of the paper would feel better if the quotes were seen more of an aside, a thought from the mind of the wife that crystallized the subject at hand. Besides, the sheets were not always signed, and if I gave credit to those who signed and not to those who didn't sign their name, there would still be several quotes without notation. I still have the original questionnaire sheets

Furthermore, it with enormous thanks and heartfelt appreciation that I make known the people who answered my poll and contributed greatly to the paper and thus to my outlook of how important these people are on the mission field.

Mrs. Roxanne Martens	Miami, FL
Mrs. Beth Flunker	Dourados, MS Brasil
Mrs. Charlie Gumm	Porto Alegre, MG Brasil
Mrs. Bruce Margraff	Porto Alegre, MG Brasil
Mrs. Richard Starr	Monroe, MI
Mrs. Ken Cherney	Porto Alegre, MG Brasil
Mrs. Ernst Zimdars	Monterrey, Mexico
Mrs. John Strackbein	San Juan, PR
Mrs. Karen Baerbock	Guayama, PR
Mrs. Lorna Satorius	Trujillo Alto, PR
Mrs. Debby Freese	Columbus, PR
Mrs. Phillip Strackbein	Medellin, Colombia
Mrs. Barbara Johne	Abak Akwa, Nigeria
Mrs. Larry Schlomer	Abak Akwa, Nigeria