

MEXICO PRE-LAUNCH PLANNING REPORT

Report Written by Maria and Edwin Giron with approval from EFM's Mexico Field Study Group in Mid America

1. In a brief sentence for each of the five CAN GO criteria, what is the latest update concerning each:

- Champion/s: Erik Nilson-FSW, Ximena Maldonado-Coahuila Friends Church, Angelica De La Cruz-Coahuila Friends Church, Sergio Contreras Coahuila Friends Church, Karina Orozco-ITA Student.
 - EFC-MAYM
 - Mexico YM Central
 - Mexico YM North
 - Iglesias Evangelica Amigos Las Vegas
- Affirmation: We continue to see the great need for people to know the Gospel and come to know Jesus as their savior in every town that has been visited in Durango, Jalisco, Nayarit and San Luis Potosi. We are seeing consistent affirmation from Friends Church leaders and members in the U.S. and in Mexico.
- Need: In the entire country of Mexico the population is around 136 million people of which only less than 9% are Evangelical Christians.*In the center of Mexico exists a zone identified as the circle of silence, this zone includes 8 States: Jalisco, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Nayarit, Michoacan, Guanajuato, Queretaro, San Luis Potosi. In the Circle of Silence there are 115 towns with less than 1% of Evangelical Christians. This is the place with the fewest Christians in Latin America!
- Gifting,
 - Erik Nilsen- Has expressed interest in joining a team. He has teaching gifts.
 - The Friends Theological Institute in Mexico is currently training a group of interested people to go out and plant new churches for which EFM is providing scholarships.
- Opportunity/Openness.
 - A great example is the town of Juan Aldama where the Holy Spirit poured into a house and 7 people accepted Jesus as their savior.
 - There are many opportunities and ways to develop ministry in many of these explored places. There are good possibilities through opening businesses, community service, working with children, and marriage restoration ministry, among others

2. Compelling conviction to launch (to build just a short paragraph on top of the CAN GO summary). What is the compelling picture that is worth giving our lives or the lives of our sons and daughters to? How might these peoples or places look different because we paid the price to take holistic Good News? What words would sharpen our Help Wanted sign for this new field?

Due to the great need that we have already mentioned, more than 91% of the population are bounded to religion, traditions, idolatry, without hope, without knowing that the true salvation of Jesus exists, because He desires to give life and life in abundance. People need to know the Truth of the Gospel and become Disciples of Jesus, only in this way will there be transformation in communities, cities and throughout the country.

3. Strategy: What informal ideas make the most sense at this time for how this mission field will be launched and developed? How does this impact entry strategy?

- Business as Missions to create opportunities to reach out communities
- Social Service- Family Counseling, Counseling for addictions, Workshops for Social needs
- Education Leveling for Kids and Teenagers (in Math, Reading, writing)
- Perhaps we could apply DforD in certain communities

4. Visa: What are the visa requirements and what are our best options? What, if anything, does this mean for strategy or preparation?

- Foreign Missionaries could be assisted by the Mexico Yearly Meeting to work on legal status to obtain a minister's visa. (This is not a too complicated process)

5. Skill Sets: What are the skill sets that stand out as we look for missionary candidates for this field? How might people in your church hear the opportunity and call, including those who never imagined themselves as "missionaries." How might the call for workers help people discover that their life or work experiences, character and interests fit into the missionary team/s? Young adults? Mid-career? Retired? Long term? One to two years of service?

The most compelling needs and skill sets needed in this country are church planting, personal evangelism, one-on-one discipleship-making, leadership making, marriage counseling, experience in psychology, addictions therapy/treatment, and kids ministry.

People with the ability to establish conversations and relationships with new people. People with the ability to evangelize and disciple communities from scratch. People who are willing to live in very modest places or rustically in small towns. People who are willing to invest time and effort in local people. People with a focus and mentality of going to serve and present Christ to those who need a personal relationship with him. Preferably, people with influence in Spanish or a knowledge of the language or willing to immerse themselves in the culture and learn the language.

- Passionate people with experience and ability to work with children and adolescents to lead them into a relationship with Jesus.
- Households willing to go and live modest and moderate in small towns, who have the facility to share the gospel and love of Jesus with others. With experience using practical methods of personal evangelism.

- Mature Evangelical Christians with teaching and discipleship making skills.
- Households with experience in pastoral counseling and/or psychology. *Biblical marriage counseling is much needed.
- Candidates preferably, with at least some Spanish language influence/understanding.

6. Language Learning: First term missionary's objectives will focus on language and culture learning through immersion. What relationships and connections might be available for language helpers for language learning through immersion? Are there formal language school options that should be considered? How much will these options cost? How does this impact what city or neighborhood they start?

Every major city in every State of Mexico has language learning schools. But what is recommended is that they live close to local families making relationships with people and places where they have the opportunity for immersion, learning, and practice the language. Find a mentor right away after arrival to the field for greater effectiveness in learning the language. The cost may vary depending on the city, although we believe that learning Spanish in Mexico cannot be too expensive.

7. Location: Where will our missionaries live? What is the region, specific city, or neighborhood?

- So far 4 States have been explored with are Durango, San Luis Potosi, Jalisco, and Nayarit.
- Jalisco: we recommend Cocula-main city surrounded by many small towns
- Nayar: Tepic City, and Huichole Group Communities outside the city limits
- San Luis Potosi: Mexquitic is a head town surrounded by many small towns (some of these small towns did not even have a catholic temple)
- Durango: Durango City and the town Juan Aldama

8. Lifestyle: What will the missionary lifestyle look like for their first term of culture and language learning immersion? Will they have a car or use public transportation? Will they live on their own or with someone else?

In order to build trust among the local people we want to reach, it is advisable to live modestly with the lifestyle of the majority of people in that area. Mostly it will be in rural places, small towns, cities of lower-middle social level.

Both own car and/or public transportation is recommended, avoiding isolation and not having a relationship with the community. We understand that in the case of being a family with children, we believe that it is necessary to own car.

In the case of a family with children, it would be recommended to have their own house. If a single person or a couple without children, It is advisable to try to find a family that is willing to host for a short term for better immersion in the culture.

9. Spiritual Issues: What are the significant spiritual issues in the area? How does this impact missionary self-care and support in this particular environment (i.e. coping strategies)?

- Alcohol and drug abuse
- dysfunctional families
- In some places the practice of witchcraft.
- War between drug cartels
- We recommend that people who are going to be sent to Mexico learn and understand very well the concept of spiritual warfare.

10. Missionary Care: What needs considered for missionary care in the first term of language learning and culture bonding. What support is required? What pace and rhythms should be considered in this immersion context? Where will the missionary/s go for respite? Are there needs for on-site short- or long-term missionary support personnel? What support or camaraderie already exists in the area of service? What options are there for children's education (if applicable)?

- Weekly sabbatical time off
- It is recommended to have relationships with other ministers and ministries in the area as spiritual support.
- Attending the annual sessions of the Yearly Meetings of Mexico to meet and interact with the leaders and pastors of the Friends in Mexico, is highly recommended for spiritual support and learning and adaptation of the culture.
- For children's education we recommend that they attend public schools which are safe, although it would be even better if missionaries could search if there are options around their service area where could be already Christian ministries that offer education for children.

11. Teams: It is natural to ask “what if” we have one missionary household ready to deploy but we don't have others identified or ready. There are many ways to define teams and each context/scenario will impact the way EFM would have “peace of mind” short or long term in the process of launching and building/developing healthy thriving teams and mission strategy long term. Please identify what missionary or ex-pat personnel outside of EFM are working (or planning to work) in the area of this new field location who could serve as interim or long term “team” support to EFM worker/s. Briefly explain current status of relationship with these persons.

- Mexico Yearly Meetings (North and Central)
- Mexican Leaders/pastors of existing Friends Churches and new mission points in the same area or near the area where the EFM missionary will be serving. Remember that VM32 is a huge vision from Mexico Yearly Meeting and they are asking EFM to send U.S. missionaries to help.

12. Support Budget: What will the major field expenses be during the first term? Housing? Language helper and/or language classes? Transportation? Any insights concerning income levels and lifestyle in the area of service? What else?

- In Mexico the monthly budget being managed for new planters is approximately 15,000-20,000 which is approximately (1,200 dollars) depending on the city or town where the ministry is being established. This budget only covers housing, transportation, internet, and utilities. (Take into account that the majority of workers are bivocational). Does not include health insurance, owning a car, or ministry expenses.
- It is recommended that missionaries live modestly, adapting to the lifestyle of the majority of people who live in the area where they are going to serve. Avoiding, luxury, which could cause damage to building relationships, and damage to the ministry, and even close doors of opportunity.

13. Possible Missionaries: Who are possible missionary candidates for this field that we should be talking with and preparing? This includes people who don't have traditional "call" but are willing and able to serve within EFM's missionary qualifications and within context of type of service.

- Erik Nilsen
- Luke Macy
- Andrew Walters
- We believe there are others out there who may answer a call if asked.

14. Partnerships and relationships with other organizations, or collaborations with other regions/yearly meetings in the U.S.

- Collaborations: What other regions/yearly meetings in the U.S. have interest in participating with the field's sponsoring region/yearly meeting in the benchmarks for launching and supporting this new mission? Develop clarity for how the regions will work together at this point, and how the collaboration will be assessed and adjusted.
 - Friends Southwest Hispanic Ministries
 - Some English speaking churches in FSW have shown interest in supporting the future mission fields in Mexico and Ecuador