



FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL, DEL RIO TX

A MINISTRY OF **PASSION** AND **COMPASSION**

A MINISTRY OF **VISION**

A MINISTRY WITH GOD'S **MISSION** IN THE FOREFRONT

VISITING GROUP

INFORMATION, PREPARATION, AND FORM PACKAGE

March 2013

Welcome To Faith Mission – How to Contact Us

We are excited about your initial plans to come and be a part of the ministry at Faith Mission. We welcome your visit, as you have chosen to be an active participant in what God is not only doing in Mexico, but we are excited about what God will do for each one of you during your stay.

We have prepared this packet for your group's arrival. It is our desire that this packet of information will help your group prepare for all facets of service and ministry before you come to Faith Mission.

It has been our experience after many years that when your group can truly prepare themselves as God would lead you, that it leads to an expectation of faith that God will do great and awesome things. We trust in our Lord that you will not be disappointed.

Please feel free to contact us in regard to any of the information and material found in this packet. You may contact us at any of the places listed below. Again, we want to truly thank you for your desire and interest to be a part of fulfilling the great command "to go into all the world and preach the gospel." That our preaching is not just in word, but in deed and in truth.

Faith Mission International
PO Box 1189
Del Rio TX 78841-1189
(830) 775 -6629
E-mail us at: ser4ever@netzero.com
Visit our website at: www.faithmissionintl.org

Faith Mission International: (830) 775-6629
Allen's Cell (830) 734-2420
Mailing Address: Po Box 1189 Del Rio TX 78841
Administrators: Pat and Sandra Schmeling
Pat's Cell#: (830) 734-2105

History of Faith Mission International

In 1957 Charlene and Allen Ehlers met and married in Japan. Charlene was a missionary with her parents; Allen was in the Air Force. They returned to the USA and completed his Air Force commitment. Afterwards, they moved to Seattle while going to Bible School. They also had their own business and started a family with their son, Timothy Ray.

At that time Allen had an opportunity to visit Mexico and Trinidad with the Bible School Dean. He thought, at the time, that this was just a one-time chance to see the mission field there. Returning to Seattle, however, Allen found he could not get Mexico out of his heart. After much prayer and struggling we felt that the Lord wanted us to sell our business and our home and head towards Mexico by faith to see what God would do. Charlene was six months pregnant with Robert who was born in Laredo, TX and passed away just shortly afterwards.

Shortly afterwards we went into Mexico for about six months. Not knowing the language was difficult so we came out to study three years of college Spanish in nine months. We then returned to a primitive Mexican village near Cd. Victoria where the people didn't even use money. We lived in a one-room house without electricity, water or bathroom. During this time of living here we met and won a local young man to the Lord named Julian Moreno who to this very day (40 years later) is a pastor in this same area.

Timothy and Allen both almost died of typhoid fever, Allen contracted hepatitis and amoebic dysentery. Because of all that happened we returned to the States very discouraged. While on our way to Nogales, Arizona, making one more attempt at missionary work we had four flat tires right out of Del Rio, TX. Limping into Del Rio to fix the tires (2 of which were under warranty), being told that it would only take a few days, having the new tire delivery delayed daily, a wise pastor said to us, "Maybe God is trying to say something to you so park your little trailer in my trailer park, fast and pray, and see what God says."

This we did and during this time, we were invited to Cd. Acuna, Mexico by another missionary. One of the nights we were in Cd. Acuna a broken-hearted mother brought her little son to us saying, "My son is dying; pray for him," which we did, with all our hearts having lost a son of our own. We did not know at the time that the baby only needed a little bit of food; he was dying of starvation. That night the baby went on to Jesus. Our hearts were broken; we had been too late. God spoke at that time to Allen, "No child or anyone should die of starvation." We were to reach out to these people to meet the needs of the whole man.

Thus Faith Mission was started in November of 1963. Our heart's desire and purpose was to touch these people with the Gospel and to make a real difference in their lives spiritually and physically so that Robert's and this other Mexican baby's death would not have been in vain. For all of these years we know that many elderly, widows, handicapped, and children have been kept healthy and alive today because we have been here as Jesus' hands extended. Out of this has come many areas of ministry

which you can see elsewhere on this website. It has been and is a great journey that we are on for the Lord.

The Ministry Team and Staff

Allen & Charlene Ehlers – Directors of Faith Mission : Allen and Charlene have dedicated almost their entire lives to the work of the ministry for the last 42 years to the people of Mexico, specifically to the city of Acuna Mexico. Allen and Charlene have not only been involved in mission work to Mexico, but have traveled extensively to many churches throughout the United States. Their travels have allowed them to bring a message of direction to many church leaders and their people. As well, they have traveled to many other countries to bring the word of the Lord. Allen and Charlene bring a prophetic word that speaks into the lives of others, and brings about a restoration of lives and ministries back towards the Lord.

Patrick and Sandra Schmeling – Administrator: Patrick brings a variety of ministerial experience, as well as a background of 17 years in the banking business. Patrick's ministerial background includes 15 years as a youth and Associate Pastor, along with various outreach ministries. Patrick and Sandra serve and minister in Acuña MX in various roles and capacities.

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING FAITH MISSION

We know that there are more and more choices for church youth and church groups to go and spend their valuable time, money, and resources on. So we appreciate the sacrifice, and the desire of your group in making a choice to come to the mission field, and give of yourselves in a unique and exciting way. So again, thank you.

The following Packet will assist you in becoming familiar with our ministry and service, along with providing a great resource for those leading and bringing a short term mission group.

Leader(s), please take the time to read fully and completely this packet that has been put together to assist you in your preparation. We believe you will find it very valuable and helpful in making the most of your trip!

Thank You!

ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY?

Like with all things, the best place to start is at the beginning. Whether you have made visits in the past, or this is your first time, we will attempt to cover all areas that we believe will benefit you and your group.

A. Why did you and your group choose Faith Mission?

We believe that this is the best place to start. Your decision to come to Faith Mission will in truth be a big factor in determining your experience while you are here, and most importantly, what you will leave with. Faith Mission has purposed and desired to serve the groups that come here in a personal way. We are not a church bible camp, we are not a Christian vacation get away, nor do we desire to be a place of last resort to come to. Our desire and expectation is that as your group comes here, that you are prepared to experience short term missions in a personal, one on one way. We want to challenge your personal walk with Jesus Christ to go beyond what it is today. We desire that God would put within you a vision for missions and that you will take that vision back with you and apply it in whatever way God would direct you along with your leadership. We want you to continue to be a part of Faith Mission International for many years to come.

Missions have begun to be placed more and more on the backburner of many churches. While we may be a little biased on this view, the facts are that the American churches as a whole have begun to place their focus in other areas. We have no desire to make any judgments of this. What we would like to say is that missions are at the very heart of the gospel. At Faith Mission, we have believed for over 50 years that God has placed us here to win the lost, make disciples, raise up local Mexican leaders and pastors, and to feed and clothe the poor. God has been faithful to see us through after all these years, and we look forward to even greater things for the glory of God in Mexico. You will be a part of that work!!

Begin Meeting Faithfully With Your Group

We believe that it is crucial that you begin meeting with your group as soon as possible, and that you meet faithfully to plan for your trip. There are many things to consider and prepare for. Your preparation (while can never be perfect) will allow you and your group to give greater focus and energy to the purpose by which God is bringing you here.

While we realize the time frame of when your group has decided to come and actually arrive will differ, it is important to keep the "vision" alive with your group. Depending on the time frame before you come, meeting faithfully is the key. As the time draws near, you will want to increase the frequency of your meetings.

A. FINANCES

One of the biggest hurdles to get over for some groups is coming up with sufficient funds for the trip. We would like to help you by providing a list of things to be considered for each trip that we hope will help you know as close as possible the cost of a trip to Faith Mission. It will be up to each group to determine the best method and way to raise the funds needed. All amounts related to Faith Mission are the suggested offering for each person and/or group.

1. The offering amount for each person, for each nights stay is **\$40.00**. This amount covers your stay in air conditioned dorms with bunk beds and covers three meals a day.
2. Any additional offering that your group or church can provide would be an added blessing for our ministry.
3. Please remember the following items for additional offerings to be considered:
 - a. Interpreters. While Faith Mission cannot make any commitments to any group to provide interpreters, if one is utilized that has been provided by Faith Mission, we would ask that you consider some kind of offering for them.
 - b. Each person in your group will want to consider how much money they want to spend if your group will have a time set aside for an afternoon of shopping in Acuna.
 - c. The cost of going back and forth each trip is approx. (as of 03/2013) \$5.00 per car/van. It is \$3.00 to go into Mexico and approx. \$2.00 to return to the U.S. These prices can fluctuate some, especially on the Mexican side of the bridge, but not much.

B. TRAVEL

Besides planning your method of travel from your homes/churches to Faith Mission, a lot of consideration will need to be made regarding your means of transportation back and forth from Faith Mission Del Rio and Acuna each day. Typically, most groups utilize twelve passenger vans, whether personal vans, from the church, or being rented. Since each vehicle rate is different, it would be best for you to contact the providers directly concerning your specific situation:

1. Arreola Insurance – (830) 775-3252 or visit their website at arreolainsurance@stx.rr.com
2. Sanborn Insurance – (888) 215-6324

VERY IMPORTANT!! – We cannot make any guarantees for you to be able to travel into Mexico with your group if you bring anything larger than a 15 passenger van. Almost always, vehicles larger than 15 passenger vans are not allowed to cross into Mexico on the Mexican side of the bridge.

C. MINISTRY PREPERATION!

Without question, this is the most important aspect of your trip. While all the other areas need attention, and should be fully addressed, if this one area is neglected, no matter how well planned your trip may be, it well may fall well short of the groups expectations.

We believe God is sending you here with a purpose. A purpose for your personal lives, your church or group, and of course, for the Mexican people you will be ministering to. It is for this reason, that we hope and pray that your trip down here will be viewed as ministry, and not as a time filler for youth. You as a leader(s) will play a major role in setting the spiritual tone for trip. We hear from many leaders that they want the trip to be “fun” for their kids. Well, we are all for that, however, our perspective is that true joy, true “fun” is found in giving oneself to being servants to others. So, we want to help you with some ideas in how your group can come prepared to minister for the days that you will be here. These suggestions and ideas are by no means a complete list, nor are they meant to limit you. We pray that as your group comes together in its meeting, the majority of time will be used to discuss, pray about, and prepare for actual ministry each day you are here. So, let’s begin.

1. **Drama’s** – Dramas are a powerful tool to evangelize and minister to the Mexican people. We see some of the biggest responses as a result of dramas. We would like to provide you with some things to think about if you are choosing dramas as one of your tools of ministry.
 - a. It is important that the dramas being presented in Mexico do not have a theme or portray a lot of violence or outward violence.
 - b. A lot of dramas we see are really geared towards American youth. It would help to re-configure your dramas to adapt more to the Mexican culture and way of living and thinking.
 - c. We would ask that you if you are going to prepare dramas. To really attempt to focus on evangelism. Don’t hesitate preparing and having many dramas. While we are not opposed to having dramas’ in the churches, and or directed for church people, we desire to have your ministry here focused mainly on evangelism. As well, this will encourage the local pastors to really utilize your ministry in a more effective manner.
 - d. Before you come, let us know the purpose and content of your dramas. In other words, if for the lost, are they geared mainly towards children, street youth, drug addicts, family situations, etc...? Again, this will help us to know the best place or areas to take you and have you minister. .
 - e. If you are going to have music with your dramas, you will need to bring your own cassette or CD player. You may want to have batteries as a backup and battery operated sound system if doing street ministry outside of the churches.

- f. Keep in mind that any props, costumes, etc... would be best kept simple. Keep in mind, it will be extremely hot on most, if not all the days you will be ministering in Mexico.
- g. We will say this repeatedly. For the majority of days you are here, you will be going over to Mexico twice a day for several hours. You will need to be aware of this, and it would be of great help to your group to plan on this. If you do not come prepared to minister in various ways, your visits will become difficult, as we do not desire your time in Mexico to be filled with just sitting in church services with little opportunity to minister. Again, we do not discourage ministry within the churches or services, but we ask that your main ministry focus on evangelism to those outside the church. Thanks.

2. Music – Music is another powerful tool of ministry. Usually, music is ministered in the churches as praise and worship, and/or utilized in dramas. Again, we offer some ideas and things to think about if you are preparing music as a ministry.

- a. As stated before, if you are using a cassette or CD, we strongly suggest you bring your own player to use. As well, it is not a bad idea to have batteries in the event of no outlets available, which will definitely be the case in any ministry outside of the churches.
- b. While English songs are great, and God is the God of all languages, if your group can come prepared with as many Spanish songs as possible, what a blessing that would be. You can check out many websites to obtain Spanish praise, worship, or music for dramas. As well, your local Christian bookstore may be able to help. As broad as the Hispanic community is, there very well may be a Hispanic church in your city or area. Contact the local pastor/minister to see if they could be of assistance. While we realize it takes extra effort and work, the fruit of those efforts will not be lost. As a reminder, if the music you are using is not Hispanic, we discourage extreme music (ie: heavy rock/rap, etc...). This is not the music of their culture, even among the vast majority of their youth.
- c. We also would suggest that you really pray about how to incorporate additional ministry in the midst of the praise and worship you bring. Do not feel limited to just singing a few songs. If you are a group that feels strongly that your time of music ministry is to usher in God's presence, that then you desire to minister in prayer to see God manifest His glory, presence and power, then prepare accordingly. Be sure to let your interpreters know when going to minister so this can be explained to the pastor, so they can give time and opportunity for such ministry.

- 3. Puppets / Clowns** – This is another way in which to bring the word of the gospel to others. Of course, this area of ministry really ministers and reaches the kids, but don't be fooled, the adults enjoy it just as much. These can be utilized in the streets and for Vacation Bible School (VBS) outreaches. Let me take the time to say that if your group has a full compliment of ministry, and your desire is to possibly stay in a specific area with a church or pastor, we do not want to limit you in such. There are times where the seed needs to be faithfully sown into one area on a consistent basis to really begin to see the fruit, so that is something to pray about and be in communication with us before you come.
- a. Tailor the puppet and clown ministry to the ages as much as possible.
 - b. Decide what is the ministry focus....Evangelize?
 - c. Discuss the various means and ways that puppets and clowns can be used to minister out in the streets or in churches.
 - d. How can communication be made in this ministry, if those participating cannot speak Spanish?
 - e. Is our outreach to children, youth, adults, or a combination of these?
 - f. Again, keep I mind the heat when working on clothing and face paint and the like.
 - g. Puppet Stage, is one needed? There is one at Faith Mission available, but is somewhat large and bulky.
- 4. Bible Tracts, Testimonies, and Invitations** – This is still a method by which the gospel can be spread. There are maybe a few things to discuss and consider that will help maximize any ministry done in this area.
- a. Any handout material should be in Spanish
 - b. They should be simple, to the point.
 - c. Personal testimonies written out in Spanish and then handed out can be very powerful. It takes some time and effort, but well worth it.
 - d. If you would like a contact for some witnessing material prepared for American groups into Spanish speaking countries, you can contact "Seein Vases". You can visit their website at www.seeinvases.com You may also call them at 913-299-8415. These materials are very thorough and complete.
 - e. You should be able to visit a number of websites to check out any materials as far as tracts to hand out. Again, it is our suggestion that you utilize tracts written specifically with the Mexican culture and people in mind. Remember that the average Mexican has a fifth grade education and reading ability.
 - f. Invitations can be made by the Administrator of Faith Mission for any specific outreaches you may have planned. We will tailor the invitation for the specific outreach and area you are going to. These can be handed out in the streets and door to door, inviting

people to any special outreach meetings you will be a part of, so be sure to let us know ahead of time.

- 5. Vacation Bible School** – As young people and children are the largest part of the Mexican population, we want any efforts that can be made to really provide a substantive ministry to children and young people. If you visit enough churches in Mexico, you will see that they are somewhat the neglected ones, as many cannot see the importance of reaching out to the children and young people. So, this is a great opportunity. While we recognize there is a joy and blessing in just mingling with the kids, handing out candy, cookies and milk; we want to emphasize that there is a tremendous need to bring them the gospel in a way that they can hear and understand, and then most importantly, apply in their home and daily lives after everyone leaves.
 - a. You can prepare a VBS separately for children and youth.
 - b. You can incorporate just about any aspect of ministry tools, materials, and methods in this ministry outreach.
 - c. In this type of ministry, you will want to really pray about staying in a specific location for a period of time to really have a long term affect, and also allows those coming to invite their friends and family.
 - d. Know what direction and focus you want to have for the time you will be doing this. We don't want to sound repetitive, but ask you pray about winning the lost be a main focus, and then the basic principals of a life in Christ for children and young people, keeping in mind their culture, lifestyle, and needs.
 - e. Build an excitement and expectation to each day. Create the hunger and desire for those who have come to return, as well as bring others. Maybe have invitations that the kids can handout to their friends and family.
 - f. If you are interested in checking out some Hispanic materials, try the following website: www.mensajedevida.com

- 6. House to House** – While being in Acuna, you will probably have an opportunity to visit some homes as a form of ministry. It is not only a time to get a first hand look at the typical house and living conditions of the people of Acuna and ranches, but it is also an opportunity to really bring a personal ministry to a home/family.
 - a. Be prepared as a group to minister in the homes, don't just be observers.
 - b. Be prepared to pray, to minister the Word, to share, to fellowship....whatever God's Spirit would lead you into.
 - c. Don't feel the need to rush in and out of homes. It's not the number of homes, but rather the quality of ministry you will be able to provide.

- d. Allow your group to split up as much as possible with what interpreters you have and touch what homes and families God brings you to.
- e. Speaking of interpreters, are you lacking? We can tell you from the experience of groups being here, that it is not at all unusual to find someone in the streets of Acuna that can speak English and Spanish, and if asked, would be willing to interpret for you. We would only ask that you pray and consider an offering for them when finished.
- f. Don't limit God or yourselves. Bring God's presence into the homes in whatever way; music, word, deed, action, prayer.
- g. Sometimes, even just offering to clean up inside or around the home can be a blessing, but you will want to ask if that is ok with the family whose home you are visitors of.

7. Street Ministry / Evangelism –This could be one of the most exciting opportunities while here at Faith Mission. Why, because in one way, you never know what to expect from God, so that's what makes it exciting. The limits to what and how God could use you are in the hands of your group. One could literally incorporate the entire ministry opportunities mentioned above. So we encourage you as a group to be in prayer and ask for God's guidance when street ministry is made available.

- a. Focus – Evangelize, win the lost!! Preach the gospel of Jesus Christ that others would come to a saving knowledge and experience with Jesus Christ. Too often the temptation is to just have another “church like service” in the streets. Let God show you His way to bring the living word of salvation to the people of Mexico in the very streets in which they live.
- b. Help prepare your group so that each person knows their place and role in ministry. Nothing is too small before the Lord.
- c. Again, don't be in a hurry. One could spend their entire morning/afternoon or evening visit on a single meeting in a particular street. And/or, follow up can and could be needed if you see a great response. We would not desire to have these people left hanging. We will work with the local pastors to work alongside with you so that proper discipleship and ministry to new converts is given.

8. Miscellaneous – Ah yes, the good ole miscellaneous. Well, all this means is that the list above are just some of the ways that your group can come prepared to minister. We have no desire to limit God or your group. All that we ask is that no matter what your group desires or believes is God's direction for ministry; that you communicate with us what you have prepared. We will do all that we can to find an open door for your group to minister the life and presence of God.

- 9. Spiritual Preparation** – We would be amiss if we did not stress the importance of this aspect of ministry. No matter how laid out our plans are, no matter how much we have practiced and rehearsed, if we have neglected this one area, we will miss the boat on the real purposes in coming and ministering to the people.
- a. The absolute need for saturation of prayer for and in all things. Our prayer is that the Spirit of God will place His burden for the people in your group, and that He will anoint you with His grace and strength to pray from the depths of your heart, and that your cry's and tears will be heard and seen in heaven.
 - b. Encourage and build up each and every individual to have expectation.
 - c. Prepare each person that they can be used of God IF they will only allow Him to use them.
 - d. Prepare them as a ministry team, not just individuals coming on a trip to spend time seeing how poor everyone is in Mexico.
 - e. We recognize that the heart of the group is found in the leaders, and the time they are willing to put into the group for the visit. We pray that God will place a strength of joy, a vision that burns, and a passion for service that will be placed within your group as you come. Don't limit God!!

D. CLOTHING

- a. We get several questions on what type of clothing is appropriate. While we do not want to lay any laws down, we are asking and urging each group to please keep in mind the culture and customs of Mexico. Paul said that whatever he needed to do that some might be saved he would do (I Cor. 9: 19-23).
 - i. Dress modestly
 - ii. You do not need to bring suits or ties.
 - iii. We ask that no revealing clothes be worn.
 - iv. Shorts? They can be worn, but when being a part of a church service, you may want to consider jeans or dress / skirt, but we do not make it mandatory.
- b. You will always want to be aware of the heat here, which can be very extreme at times. Along with clothing, others will want to consider bringing some type of headwear for shade. They may also want to bring some sunglasses to help with the glare and brightness of the sun if you are here during the summer months (March to September).
- c. Shoes/tennis shoes should be considered for a fair amount of walking and standing.
- d. In addition, if you are here during the summer months, simple things as the color of your clothes can make a big difference, as well as the type of material.
- e. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

E. LANGUAGE

- a. Bottom line is, either you know the language sufficient enough to communicate or you do not. However, you do not want to allow language or lack thereof to be the deciding factor in coming. As stated above, without question God can move apart from this, but it will really be of benefit if you are able to bring interpreters sufficient for your group size or how you plan to break up into groups to minister.
- b. Faith Mission cannot make any guarantees of being able to supply any group with interpreters.
- c. If an interpreter is able to be provided, the suggested offering is \$10.00 / day, and we ask that it be given in cash to the Faith Mission leadership. We will be sure all of it goes to the interpreter. We need to keep records of the giving.
- d. Here are a few suggestions that may help you with this:
 - i. Check your community for a Hispanic speaking church, and inquire if there are any people who would like to be part of the trip and interpret.
 - ii. Maybe the local schools or colleges can offer people in their Spanish classes as interpreters.
 - iii. If you are unable to find any, we still want you to come. We can always believe God with you that someone will be available for you and your group. As we stated, some groups just believed God would supply when they went to Acuna, they asked around in the place where they were going to minister, and they have always found someone.
 - iv. Just learning a few phrases, scriptures or being able to read a testimony in Spanish to the people is a tremendous blessing. Again, the site (www.seeinvases.com) I mentioned has great materials that could really be a blessing to your group if they want to put some time into it.

F. FOOD & WATER - If you are here during the summer months, your group definitely wants to make proper preparation on how much water/fluids are needed to stay properly hydrated.

- a. Water can be brought with you or purchased here in Del Rio as you arrive. If you wait to purchase the water in Del Rio, you will not need to take up valuable luggage space in your vehicles.
- b. Snack Food can be placed in the dorm areas, but we ask that it be kept to a bare minimum. It's best to not to have food lying around the dorms, as it invites all kind of little creatures to visit.
- c. The refrigerators at Faith Mission can only be used for the food we store to prepare your meals. The only exception we make is if a person needs to have medicine stored.

- d. It is important that each group provides coolers sufficient to store their water in while going back and forth to Mexico, as well as for any other needs. We do have an ice machine here you can utilize, but has to be used within reason, depending on how many groups are here with you at the same time.
- e. We will be feeding you three meals a day while you are here at Faith Mission:
 - i. Breakfast – Consists of breakfast cereal, bananas, apples, and some donuts.
 - ii. Lunch – Sandwich meat, cheese, bread, cookies, chips, apples, and some condiments are supplied in a cooler for you to take over to Mexico. On Fridays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, all groups would eat the lunch meal prepared for the Mexican people after the services.
 - iii. Dinner / Supper – A very complete and well balanced meal is provided at this time.

G. FAITH MISSION EXPECTATIONS

- A. Expectations – What are your expectations from God? What are you believing God to do in your life, and to do through you for others?
- B. We would like to mention a few things with you regarding your stay here:
 1. Please observe the NO cologne NO scented products, NO perfume as this will cause the Ehlers to become very ill.
 2. Make sure to keep plenty of bottled water on hand. Don't underestimate the sun and heat!! Drink water each day, all day. Drink some Gatorade and eat some bananas.
 3. Do not give out names, addresses or phone numbers to nationals.
 4. Churches/leaders should not be approaching you for money or things.
 5. Have a BLESSED and SUPERNATURAL time at Faith Mission.

H. Knowing the People and Culture – We realize that not everyone needs to be a student of Mexico, its history, its people and culture. However, it would be of great benefit to have a basic understanding of the people you are going to minister to. In the epistles, you become aware of how Paul utilized, at times, the knowledge of who he was ministering to (the people and culture), and to approach them in such a way as for the gospel to be heard. And in truth, is not this what we really see with the parables that Jesus used, along with all the pictorial truths He utilized in His preaching and teaching?

- a. You may want to see if a local Hispanic Pastor or someone from one of their churches can come and share with your group about the people and culture, providing some valuable insight.
- b. You should be able to find some resources on the Internet.

- c. While the word of God and message of the gospel is unchangeable, people are unique and different. The key is allowing the Spirit of God to lead and guide you into a culture, a people, a society very different than the one you know.
- d. Being an American simply gives you a door of opportunity to be heard and to minister. It's to be understood that this opportunity should always be used with humility and respect for the people we are ministering to.

I. What to do with your Free Time – While at Faith Mission, your group will have down time – free time during your visit. It will be up to your group leaders as to how that time is utilized. However, if we could make a few suggestions to consider.

- a. Typically there is a time set aside for shopping in Acuna in the tourist area just adjacent to the bridge.
- b. Utilize some of the free time to meet and pray as a group about needs revealed, ministry to come - what God is saying and doing.
- c. Take some time to practice and/or prepare for that days ministry as needed.
- d. There is a park within a few minutes of the mission for any outdoor activities
- e. You may want to visit Lake Amistad (very large and popular bass fishing lake in the U.S.)

J. What do we need to Bring? – Many groups ask of there are any items to bring along as handouts when they are ministering. Below find a list of suggestions, but by no means is it to limit what your group can decide. If you have questions at all, please call us.

- a. Some groups bring candy. It should be hard candy and wrapped individually.
- b. You may bring care packages. A shoebox works good. Place toiletry items and the sort into the box, have them marked for boys and girls and the age so when you hand them out, they get to the right person they were intended for.
- c. You can bring any kind of school type materials to be handed out.
- d. You can utilize the milk and cookie ministry out in the streets, but you may want to purchase the milk and cookies in Del Rio.

K. Typical Day at Faith Mission – When reading this, realize this would be a “typical” day, and what has been a typical schedule for the past several years. You will be sleeping in the dorms located on the mission grounds. These dorms are air conditioned, have showers and sleeping accommodations.

- 1) 6:30 a.m. – Time to arise and shine
- 2) 7:15 a.m. – Quiet time in common area. Read the Word, your devotion or look to god in prayer.
- 3) 7:30 a.m. – Time to prepare our hearts with worship, led by one of the groups.
- 4) 7:45 – Pastor Allen (or other Faith Mission staff) will share an encouraging and challenging word to the groups.
- 5) 8:30 a.m. – Breakfast time
- 6) 9:45 a.m. – Depart for Mexico in your vehicles (If your group has chosen to go over for ministry that day)
- 7) 12:00 p.m. – Lunch in Mexico (brought with you from the mission in your coolers).
- 8) Afternoon (normally around 3:00 P.M.) - Return to mission for rest and relaxation at your own discretion.
- 9) 4:45 p.m. Supper at the mission.
- 10) 5:30 p.m. – Load up and leave for Mexico (If your group has chosen to go over for ministry that evening).
- 11) 9:30 p.m. – Return back to Mission (Time can vary each evening, but plan on returning no later than 10:0 P.M.).
- 12) 10:30 p.m. - Lights out in the common area.
- 13) 11:00 p.m. - Lights Out!! in the sleeping areas.

- L. Contacting Us – Communication** - It is very crucial to keep in communication with you and your group. Be sure at the time of receiving this packet, you keep us in the loop on any changes that have occurred. It would be of great help to us if you did the following:
- a. Just before leaving, call us and confirm your departure, your planned arrival, and to reconfirm the number in your group, with a break up of how many girls, and how many men.
 - b. IF for any reason you decide to cancel, please be sure to call and notify us of your cancellation as soon as you know. This will help us not to order the food ahead of time planned for your group. Thank You.
 - c. Please call us just a couple of hours before arriving (830-775-6629) so we know you are close to arrival so we can be ready for you.
 - d. It is imperative on any days that you plan on taking your group out to eat, and you will not be needing us to prepare supper for you, to let us know at least one full day (more is better) in advance, as we purchase the food in advance.
 - e. It is very important to us before you leave that we meet with the leadership. We desire, want, and need your feedback, positive or negative. Do not be afraid to be honest with us on how things went on your ministry trip here at the mission.
 - f. Please be flexible with us. We do our best to make all the arrangements for opportunities for your ministering, but at times, changes are needed. Thank You.

- M. Now is the Time to Live as a Missionary** – We believe that when you consider all things that evolve around your trip and visit here, it can place quite a demand on a group of people., especially when the time schedules, the commitment, the giving, and the ministering is out of the norm. One way you can help your group to prepare is to challenge them to begin living NOW as a missionary before they come. How can they do that?
- a. Begin by adjusting their wake up time to what it will be here during the stay, as well as their go to bed time.
 - b. Take time for devotion, study, prayer in the times mentioned here.
 - c. Take some time to read and learn about the Hispanic people and culture. Work on some simple phrases to speak in Spanish. Get together with some Hispanic friends from school, churches, or in your community.
 - d. Have people in the group be assigned certain tasks or responsibilities in helping the group prepare for the trip and for ministry.
 - e. Have each person write a small essay on why they want to participate in a trip like this, what are their expectations.
 - f.

N. Allow God to Prepare You. Expect God to Use YOU! - After 50 years of ministry, and ministry to groups, it can be easy for things to fall into a rut, and at times, to allow things to slip into “automatic pilot.” when it comes to ministry. We want to keep the vision, mission, and passion of Faith Mission alive. You, your group, and the churches associated with your group have a major impact and play an integral part of the ministry of Faith Mission. It is for this very reason that we want to help you as much as we can to prepare your group for a supernatural and life changing experience. We do not believe that this occurs by just going through the motions, or by simply showing “up at the door” so to speak.

We trust that you as a leader(s) take the lead by example, and set forth the expectation of the individuals in your group for the trip. We have seen time and time again, that to the degree the leader(s) is committed in any aspect of the trip, so goes the group, whether that be for good or not so good.

REFERENCE SHEET FOR VISITORS

Allergic Warning – Due to some of the Faith Mission staff being allergic to scented products, we do not allow any scented hygiene products, colognes, or perfumes. **Do not** use any of these products.

1. Due to electrical limits, we ask that electrical hair dryers, curling irons or other like devices **not** be used while visiting. This will ensure that there will not be a blowout of the air conditioning system.

Bedding – We ask that each person bring their own towels and bedding. The bedding may consist of a sheet, light blanket with a pillow case. As well, you may bring a bed role (sleeping bag) to place on top of the bedding mattress. **It is important to bring your own bedding.** You may want to consider

Name Tags - It would be of great help if each group would prepare and bring their own name tags for their length of stay. We want to know who you are, as well as the Mexican people. Please, no art work or designs, just name tags with your first name is all that is needed.

Food – Three meals a day will be provided by the mission. All of our food and water is purchased in the United States.

Facility/Capacity - There is an on sight church, office, warehouse (bodega), and dorms for men and women. The total capacity of the dorms and additional sleeping quarters runs approximately 85 people. There are no separate rooms for couples.

Financial Responsibility of Visitor's - In order to be placed on the schedule, the Mission must receive both your confirmation letter and your \$100.00 (non-refundable) deposit. In your confirmation letter, we ask that you provide your home, work, and/or cell phone numbers. This way we are able to keep in contact with you. We suggest a daily offering of \$40.00 per person per day. Upon arrival the remainder of the balance is due.

As the \$40.00 does not cover all expenses, we trust that the sponsoring church will supply and offering providing for other expenses*

*****REMINDER*****Please bring your own spending money for bridge fares, shopping and offerings.

Health Insurance - Faith Mission International does not provide insurance, so remember to bring your own.

Miscellaneous:

1. Plans to visit? We suggest that you make plans well in advance, as we are usually booked several months in advance, or even more. **Check the calendar on the website (www.faithmissionintl.org).**
2. Interpreters!! It will be your responsibility to bring and provide your own interpreter (s) as the staff at Faith Mission simply is unable to provide sufficient assistance in this area.
3. Passports are not necessary unless someone in your group is not an American citizen. If this is the case, be sure the visa is a multiple, so they can go in and out of Mexico. **As of December 31, 2007, ALL individuals crossing the border will be required to have a valid and up to date passport. It will be important that for any of you planning on trips to Faith Mission to have your passports BEFORE this date. You will need to contact your local Post Office in regards to obtaining a passport.**
4. Due to current situations, you cannot carry across the border or have in your possession any firearms or bullets of any kind. There is a thirty year sentence given in the Mexican prisons to those breaking this law. This includes bullet key chains or anything even resembling a firearm. Also, do not purchase any of these kind of items while in Mexico.

LEADERS: Thank you! for taking on the responsibility of watching over, directing, and serving the needs of your group. We would ask a few things to keep in mind and expected from your group:

1. We ask that there be one adult leader for every 12 young people. Leaders must sleep in the dorms with their groups. We would encourage when your group comes, that someone in a place of leadership/authority (ie: pastor, elder, ministry leader) attend with the group.
2. Leaders, we believe it is very important as a leader that you be sure to participate with your group in any of the planned activities such as prayer, times of praise and worship, etc... Your example before and with your group will be a powerful testimony and impact. We ask that the leaders do not run errands during the time of group devotions and teaching.
3. We would ask about 2 hours prior to your arrival, that you contact the staff in order that all preparations can be made ahead of time for you.
4. All things left in the dorm after leaving will be donated to the Mexican people, so it is vital prior to leaving that your entire group ensures that they have all things they brought with them and/or purchased during their stay.
5. As a leader, we rely on each of you greatly to watch over your group to ensure a "spirit of unity" in all that is going on at Faith Mission, as well as interaction with other groups that may be visiting at the same time. Encourage all of your group to participate as much as possible with the Mexican people. This will turn out to be a great blessing for each person!
6. We would like all of the leaders to emphasize with their groups that their time at Faith Mission is not to be likened unto a youth Bible camp, or retreat, or to be approached with a vacation mentality. As a mission station, our emphasis each and every day is to give of our entire selves to the needs of others, which will create times of sacrifice, inconvenience, and times of having to overcome various obstacles within and without. We would ask that your groups be prepared as such, and we will guarantee that they will have the time of their lives in which their experience will last a lifetime.

Checklist for Visit to Faith Mission International

- A. Establish meeting with all participants.
- B. Prepare Visitor's Packet for participants.
- C. Prepare release form for participants.
- D. Go over visitor's packet during meeting(s).
- E. Take down any questions, issues or concerns not addressed in visitor's packet that need to be addressed with the Faith Mission Staff.
- F. Establish method by which funds will be created and collected.
- G. Plan method of transportation to Faith Mission, and in/out of Mexico.
- H. Address what ministry will be given (drama's, singing, puppets, etc...).
- I. Have each person establish the need for all items to be taken on the trip.
- I. Determine the need for additional meetings as needed/necessary.
- J. Get to Mission - Establish direction, priorities, and requirements of Faith Mission.
- K. Contact Faith Mission with complete information on group
- K. Upon leaving Mission, do the following: **Check Out List**
 - 1. Strip beds and put sheets in laundry room.
 - 2. Vacuum the sleeping areas and dining area thoroughly.
 - 3. Clean up bathroom/shower area.
 - 4. Turn in name tag's if provided by Faith Mission.
 - 5. Please fill out our Guest Book before you leave.