

The following material was presented in October 2019 in preparation for a church conference and was prepared by our then Missions Pastor, Tommy Fountain.

This information is given to provide historical context for the consideration of supplying funds for a church building in 2022.

#### Guatemala FAQ

1. Has there been a verbal, written or signed agreement with the Guatemalan Baptists regarding the purchase of the property?

E3 Volunteers has a contractual partnership and arrangement with the Guatemalan Baptists. They are the avenue through which we are dealing with the Guatemalan Baptist Convention. The president of the Convention and the leading pastor in the Mam area are the two guys working out the land deal. The leading pastor in the area, Juan Carrillo, is the pastor the largest church in the area in Tejutla, which has successfully planted multiple churches.

2. Who is selling this property and why was the property “suddenly dropped in our lap?”

A local landowner in Tacana is selling the property. We sent pastors from the Guatemalan Baptist Convention (GBC), the president of the GBC, and a Guatemalan E3 Volunteer Coordinator to search for land. What looked like a long process in the early stages became a quick process when this land, just a few football fields from the Elementary School we are working with was found.

3. What due diligence has been done?

This one will take a while. Staff and the Missions Committee met with and interviewed E3 Volunteers president Garry Eudy; did background work on Garry Eudy (the president of E3); had Garry meet with our Missions Committee and Staff; spent 2 scouting trips in the “Mam Triangle”; 2 trips with Pastor Rodolfo Mendez’s family in Tacana; a trip to Indiantown, FL to meet with 25 members of Primera Iglesia Bautista who are from Tacana and/or have contacts/family in Tacana; multiple follow up trips by Director of the Mam Baptist Association to meet with people in Tacana, including Pastor Rodolfo’s family; 2 meetings with the City Leaders of Tacana (1 small meeting with Mayor’s team and 1 large lunch meeting); a week spent with 3 different Guatemalan church planters, former GBC president, Garry Eudy, and E3 Guatemalan Coordinator in Tacana; meetings with local schools and school leaders in Tacana; and a meeting with the family of Pastor Rodolfo, who is starting a local bible study, which will eventually become our church in Tacana. I have also had conversations with Jeff Powell, who gave me the background story of First Baptist Villa Rica and their experience planting a church in Guatemala, using a similar strategy to us.

4. Has anyone from BH actually inspected the property?

We have seen pictures, videos, and are trusting the intel of Guatemalan Baptists on the ground. If a white American shows up to see the property, the price will double. We experienced this with the first piece of land we saw. Shortly after our trip this past year, one of the Pastors found a suitable piece of land and it went from \$60,000 to \$140,000 because they knew American money was attached to it.

5. Will such a small plot of land actually accommodate a growing church?

Yes. This piece of property (with just a one-story building) will hold up to 300 people on a Sunday morning. That would make it the largest Baptist church in the region.

6. Is the property actually suitable for the building of a church?

Yes. The premier church planter in that area, who is partnering with us, Juan Carrillo, has given us his word it will work. Also, on our site visits, we saw that parking, green space, etc. are not necessary for a church. Everyone takes took-took's, and walks, around the town.

7. Is there a commitment from BH to construct and outfit a church building and how much will it cost (approximately) and how will it be financed?

While there has been no official vote from the church, the Staff, Stewardship Committee, Missions Committee, Primera Iglesia Bautista de Indiantown, E3 Volunteers, and the Guatemalan Baptist Convention are in support of the strategy of planting a church in Tacana. Cost for construction will be about \$140,000 (on the high end). Stewardship and Missions Committee are working on strategies to help pay for the cost of the building. We have a year or two to make it happen. I would add that Primera Iglesia Bautista de Indiantown has already committed \$1500 to our endeavors in Guatemala and is voting on Saturday on what else they can give towards the land purchase.

8. What other priority needs for missions and ministries here in Athens could BH undertake if the money was available?

We are an Acts 1:8 and Great Commission church. Approximately 80% of our budget stays local. But, we also have to reach Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts. That's our command. And, it's in our DNA... i.e. Grenada, Mexico, Benin and many more.

9. Does this mean the Great Commissions Facilities Committee will need to look at ways our church building can be improved/updated will be put on the back burner until after 2021?

This will not slow down GCFC. Missions and ministry will not suffer from a Building Project. Dr. Mills also explained this on Wednesday, 8/14. The Staff, GCFC, and Stewardship Committee are committed to not doing anything from a building/facilities standpoint that hampers our ministry and missions' endeavors.

10. Has a site survey been done to see if there are any problems with this property. (Contamination of the soil, etc.) It is better to pay someone to do a site survey than to sink the money in undesirable property.

Guatemalan Baptist, who will own the land, are handling all these items. Also, in the words of Garry Eudy, in relation to his work with FBC Villa Rica and FBC Jonesboro, "I've worked with some of the finest and most successful businessmen, realty, and construction people in the State of Georgia in planting and building churches in Guatemala; and they quickly realized that we were in Guatemala and they'd never worked with Natives on the backside of a mountain, before."

11. While BH will not be the owner on paper, we will be the "sponsoring entity." If there is a disaster of some kind later down the road - such as a sinkhole, for instance - what legal liability will BH retain in such a case?

None, other than the normal liability for any of our trips.

12. Since this is such a small piece of property, won't that cause the church to be "land-locked" from the get-go limiting opportunities for social ministries, recreational activities, etc?

The city soccer stadium is just down the road, as are two schools, one of which has a huge outdoor basketball gymnasium. Also, the Guatemalan Baptist Convention and Guatemalan Mam Pastors are excited about this piece of land and have said the land is large enough for our vision and they are "shocked" they found a piece available and suitable so close to the school we're working with.

13. In my experience with church plants in the states, a congregation is established first, meeting in homes, storefronts, schools, etc. Then the congregation is integrally involved in selecting the site, designing the building, contributing to the costs, etc. Are we putting the cart before the horse by purchasing the land before there is even a small congregation established?

This seems to be very true if we were in the US, though I have recently found that there are State Conventions and Local Associations who are currently purchasing pieces of property for future church plants. This is also not true in Guatemala. We were told by the church planters and

Guatemalan Convention guys that we met with... “the most important two things you need are land for the church and a Pastor.” Part of this is the influence of the Catholic Church and the Catholic Church having a massive building in every town. The other part is the influence of independent missionary organizations who focus on “disciple making” and not church planting, i.e. the Timothy Initiative. They will start a Bible Study in a home and then leave it and it never becomes a church. The people there equate the land/building and the Pastor with a commitment to put a church in place. We have been told that as soon as possible after buying the piece of land, we need to get a sign up that says “Future Site of Iglesia Bautista de Refugio” so people will believe a church is coming. We are working on the Pastor part...Juan Carrillo has 2 young church planter that he is targeting. But we are working both angles. Pastor Rodolfo’s brother in law, Marco Tulio, has moved back to Tacana and is starting a Bible Study in his home, which will feed the new church start. There are new converts, including Pastor Rodolfo’s father in law, that need a church. Primera Iglesia Bautista de Indiantown has won some of their family and friends to Christ OVER THE PHONE and they are waiting in anticipation for this church to be planted.