

Joel, Mayra and Joel Fernando

Dear Friends,

We greet you from Mexico, the lands of Moctezuma! Thank you for your partnership with us in our ministry in Mexico. Below there is a brief summary of all that has happened in the last six months.

Church Plant – Iglesia San Pablo

The Iglesia San Pablo (yes, we have a name!) has now a more regular attendance with an average of 20 people, and numbers up to 30 some weeks. Last August we moved from our garage to an open space and since then we moved again and are now renting a place for four hours every Sunday. It's a partially covered patio area, very suitable for our needs. We also meet for Bible studies on Tuesdays in different coffee shops nearby. It has been a joy to see what the Lord is doing in the lives of those who come to the church. Please pray as we make disciples of Jesus in Mexico.

It would be very easy to plant an independent church, but we feel that this would not give the church the accountability and stability it needs. So six years ago we started to connect with the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA), which is a group of churches faithful to Scripture, trying to grow in every possible aspect. That connection continues and we have introduced them to the 18 local Pastors and leaders we are working in partnership with here in Puebla. They are all from independent churches with a charismatic/Pentecostal background, working together, learning together, praying together, and studying Theology and the Bible, all with the view to eventually becoming a Synod in Puebla.



New Church Venue



Confirmation Day



Joel's Ordination

Another exciting news is that on the 16th of November 2022 during the annual Synod of the region, we gathered in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico and Joel was ordained as an ACNA Priest which has been a great blessing.

In January 2023 we welcome the Bishop of our Diocese, Steven Tighe and some American from the North of Mexico for a confirmation service. It was a very intense 9 days but very rewarding as well. From our local church planting and from the group of Pastors and their wives mentioned above, a total of 50 people were confirmed within the Anglican church, it was such a feast. We were also able to meet some important Mexicans who work in the local government with the view to introduce ourselves and see possible areas where Latin Link and also the Anglican movement which is springing here in Puebla could be of help and assistance for the benefit of the wider community in the State of Puebla which is home to six million people. We are thankful to the Lord for these developments.

Vanguardia Institute:

While Joel is focusing his teaching skills and time on the church plant, and the group of Pastors mentioned above, Mayra has continued to lecture with the Vanguardia Institute, connected to a local church called Comunidad Cristiana a la Mesa. Mayra taught seven different courses this academic year from Old Testament, New Testament and How to study the Bible. As the academic year comes to an end on June, Mayra is thankful for the opportunity to use her teaching skills and knowledge to bless the students.

STEP Team:

After nine years in Mexico, at the end of March we received our first Latin Link Step. The team of six young adults (aged 18 and 19) will be with us until the end of May when they move on to a project in Costa Rica. They are working with the local churches and a couple of local schools and have been a great blessing to us as a family as well as to those they are working with. Their faith and care for God's mission is admirable, and we will miss them deeply when they leave.

GAFCON:

In April, Joel travelled to the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Kigali, Rwanda. The conference was intense, with many amazing things happening and good fellowship with others. But there was also a sense of sadness due to the nature of some of the talks, and the history of Rwanda itself. Joel returned happy and with a renewed vision, although shattered after more than 30 hours of travelling!

Due to the demands of the last two years, we have stopped providing formal pastoral or marriage counselling for the moment. We are doing referrals to other Pastors or professional Christian counsellors as needed.

Visiting the UK

We really hope to be in the UK from July to September this year but have been confronted with flight costs that are much, much higher than previous years. We're humbly asking you to pray that we can raise the funds to visit this year, and if you feel able to assist in this (either with finances or accommodation) we would be very grateful indeed.

Time in the UK would give us a much-needed break from ministry life here in Mexico, and the chance to visit our supporters, churches, and friends to say thank you and share more about our work. We also need to renew our contracts with Latin Link and spend time assessing our ministries and seeking guidance for the next few years.

Finances

Another reason for visiting the UK this year is the need to raise some financial support. Due to significant changes in the lives of some of our individual supporters and churches, we have lost an important amount of our monthly income. This not only impacts our ability to travel to the UK, but also day to day life in Mexico where costs have risen dramatically in the last few years.

We understand that life is tougher now than five years' ago, and that finances are tight around the world, but if you feel that God is calling you to continue, or even increase your support for us via Latin Link, please do let us know.

To donate, please visit <https://www.latinlink.org.uk/support/gonzalez> - thank you!

Family News

As you know, Mayra's mum, Alba, had been living with us since 2020 and during this time she experienced a significant deterioration due to her medical condition to the point where she had to be cared for 24/7. Sadly, and quite unexpectedly, Alba passed away from a heart attack on 31st October 2022. We are comforted by the fact that we know Alba is with the Lord and free from earthly pain.

Joel Fernando went back to presential school in January 2022, although masks were still required, and many other restrictions were in place until the end of the academic year. JF got his vaccinations for Covid between May and September 2022, which was a great relief.

This February, Joel and Mayra had a respiratory infection combined with a strong allergic reaction due to the ash that the nearby volcano has been throwing into the air since January. It looks like a very fine and black sand, and we are all constantly breathing it. Please pray for our full recovery.

Thank you very much for your partnership in prayer and financial support. Your partnership is what enables us to do the work God has called us to do in Mexico.

May the Lord bless you.

Joel, Mayra and Joel Fernando (Cheetara and Pantro - pets)



Mayra and Alba



Celebrating our wedding anniversary



Christmas Party with our church family

Please pray!

- For our financial situation and for funds to enable us to travel to the UK this summer.
- Both JF and Mayra need to renew their British passports either before or during that trip – please pray for quick and smooth processing.
- For Joel and Mayra's health.
- For the Step Team as they come to the end of their time in Puebla.
- Give thanks for the growth of Iglesias San Pablo, and that it continues to grow.

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Latin Link Britain and Ireland

Latin Link works in partnership with churches to send and receive individuals, families, and teams, to and from Latin American communities to share the love of God.

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