

June 1, 1916

Rev. J.F.Davis,

Station Julia D.F.,
Mexico City Mexico.

Dear Brother Davis:-

I am in receipt of both your letters of May 26th.

I am greatly pleased with the encouraging news you give about the way the Gospel is taking hold of the people. I rejoice in what the Lord is working out. I pray that the day may soon come when the field may be wide open to your endeavors.

I will have the Board act upon the question of your moving your printing office to El Paso at its next meeting, which will be about the 14th of this month, and will let you know the result.

My sympathies are with you in the fact that Mrs. Davis must undergo an operation. I pray most earnestly that she may be restored.

May the blessing of God rest upon you.

Cordially yours,

Casa Bautista de Publicaciones.

DIRECCIÓN PROVISIONAL:

2ª CALLE DE BOLIVIA, NÚM. 1½.

Sta. Julia, D. F., Méx.

Santa Julia, D.F., Mexico. June 6th, 1916

Dr. T. B. Ray:--

Your kind letter of May 24th received several days ago. Was glad to hear from you.

I trust that the sixty day campaign will be a great success. May the Lord's blessings be upon the efforts of the brethren in this great work.

Mr. Brewer and I have hit upon a plan that probably will commend itself to you, for the combined work in the Publication House. It calls for the establishment of the plant in the U.S.--either in El Paso or New Orleans. The reasons will all be forwarded in a few days. It will thus be possible to go right ahead as soon as you want to in the working out of the plan of cooperation. We are just about together on everything.

I hope this may be done.

My wife was operated on in our Baptist Hospital in Puebla last Wednesday. She is getting along fine and wants to come home this week, though I rather think she will have to wait a few days longer.

I think we will get out of here toward the middle or last of July, and will take a few weeks vacation. If you decide to work out the plan we have agreed upon, will be ready to go ahead next year, and even before if necessary.

I have first the work of our publications in Spanish.

Fraternally yours,

J. E. Davis

- TENTATIVE STATEMENT. -

México City, June 7th.

1916.

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In view of the proposed cooperative relations between the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Home Mission Society, in establishing a publishing house to supply Spanish literature for all the fields in which the several Baptist Boards are engaged in Missionary work, a conference was held in Mexico City on June 5th., Rev. J.E.Davis representing the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and Rev. Geo.H.Brewer representing the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

At this conference the whole question of a joint publishing house was carefully considered and it was decided to submit for the consideration of the respective Boards the following considerations and recommendations:

I.- The present location of the publishing house of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention at León, State of Guanajuato, México, is unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

1) The turmoil in México which has been going on with more or less intensity for five years is not ended, nor is it likely to end for years to come.

Under these circumstances it is exceedingly difficult to get literature out of the country with any regularity and at times when Railway communication is entirely suspended, it is next to impossible to supply even the Sunday Schools of our Spanish speaking churches with their literature.

During the past five years eighty per cent of the rolling stock on all the Railway lines, has been destroyed, the country is impoverished, the nation bankrupt and there is no likelihood of any improvement until stable conditions are established throughout the republic.

2) There is very little paper available in the country. It is not now possible to bring any into the country from the United States or other foreign countries and the small amount which is available is sold at prohibitive prices, making the operation of the publishing house at León impracticable.

3) At the present time throughout the republic of México and in all Latin America, there is more urgent call and need for Christian literature than ever before in the history of our work and with the publishing house at León or elsewhere in this republic it will not be possible to even partially meet this need.

II.- In view of the above situation the question of location for this proposed plant was considered and the cities of El Paso, Tex., and New Orleans, La. were discussed as advantageous points for the establishment of the proposed joint publishing plant.

In discussing El Paso there are strong reasons, both for and against El Paso as the proper place.

The reasons in its favor seem to be as follows:

1) It is close to our Mexico field, Mexican labor would be available, a Post Office Box could be maintained on the Mexican side of the international line; it would be a central location for the SW. region of the United States where it is estimated over one million Mexicans are now residing; it is estimated that there are two millions Mexicans within a radius of five ^{miles} miles.

On the other hand there are some strong objections to El Paso.

For instance:

1) Throughout the republic of Mexico there is pronounced prejudice against any paper, or literature or influence which emanates from the Texas border.

2) It is not far ^{enough} removed from the Mexican embroglio to liberate us from the embarrassment which is likely to come through the international questions involving more or less friction.

3) The cost of paper and supplies in El Paso would be high, as it is in a district where the high cost of living is notorious.

The other place considered is New Orleans, and the following advantages were discussed:

1) It would be a good distributing point.

New Orleans is the center of the entire Spanish speaking fields including Cuba, Porto Rico, South America, Central America, Mexico and the Southwest. It is a sea port.

Paper and supplies of all kinds are to be obtained at the lowest market prices.

2) It is far enough from Mexico, so that if our publishing house were established there, it would not be a disturbing factor in the plans of non Baptist churches to unite in a publishing house to be established in Mexico city.

3) There are steamship lines plying between New Orleans and Mexico at frequent intervals; also between New Orleans and Central America, Cuba, Porto Rico and South American points. Steamers leave twice each week from New Orleans to Panama, carrying mail for the west coast of South America where a considerable demand for our Baptist literature has lately developed.

4) New Orleans is far enough removed from any one of the fields so that no one would say that our publishing house was a local affair and under the dominating influence of any one of the Latin American peoples.

In view of the above considerations the consensus of opinion seems to be in favor of New Orleans as the best place for the proposed joint publishing house.

III-It was further decided to make the following recommendations:

1) In view of the fact that four great Baptist Boards are now interested in Spanish work, viz.: the Foreign Mission

Board of the Southern Baptist Convention with its work in Mexico and South America; the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention with its work in Cuba, Texas and New Mexico; the American Baptist Home Mission Society with its work in Mexico, Central America, Arizona, California, Cuba, Porto Rico; the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society with its work in Spain and the Philippine Islands, and in view of the further extension of the work of these respective Boards among Spanish speaking peoples, it is recommended:

1) That these Boards unite in this proposed publishing house, and that a plant representing an investment of not less than fifty thousand dollars, be established where all classes of Spanish literature under Baptist auspices be published and widely distributed among the Spanish speaking nations, representing a total population of over one hundred millions.

2) That these Boards unite in the ^{appointment} of two chief officers of this joint publishing house, as follows:

An American Business Manager who shall have charge of all the business connected with the house, oversight and management of the Mechanical Department, employment of labor, making of contracts, making and receiving payments and the business correspondence connected with the institution.

The appointment of an American Editorial Secretary who shall have oversight of the literary part of the work, such as translation of such books as the Board of Directors may recommend from time to time; publishing of a weekly newspaper for our Baptist constituency, compiling of tracts and such other literature as may be required for the work of propaganda and the extension of evangelical influence throughout the Spanish speaking world.

3) It is recommended that this joint publishing plant be made the center for all Spanish literature for the use of Baptist Sunday Schools and general work of propaganda, including Mexico, Central America, South America, the United States, Cuba, Porto Rico, Spain and the Philippine Islands.

4) If the four Boards, as above recommended can work out suitable articles of cooperation, it is recommended that three be selected from each Board to constitute a Board of Directors consisting of twelve.

If only two Boards enter the cooperative agreement, then it is recommended that the Board of Directors be composed of six members, three from each, and five to constitute a quorum.

File
----- J. E. Davis

Casa Bautista de Publicaciones.

DIRECCIÓN PROVISIONAL:

2ª CALLE DE BOLIVIA, NÚM. 1½.

Sta. Julia, D. F., Méx.

Santa Julia, D.F., Mexico. June 9th, 1916

Dr. T. B. Ray,
Richmond, Va.

Dear Brother Ray:--

Yours of the 1st came today.

I wrote you a day or so ago stating that Mr. Brewer and I had about agreed on a plan. I write now to say that I hope you will not defer considering the former plan that I wrote you, and which you will have the Board consider at its next meeting. The plan we are about to agree on involves the same move, though Mr. Brewer seems to think that perhaps New Orleans would be a better place. I am not at all in favor of New Orleans though we agreed to submit the advantages of both places and let you brethren settle that matter.

I am decidedly in favor of El Paso, and I have so told him. But the same principle is involved in both the suggestions. So I hope you will advise me soon whether you think it advisable to move the office to El Paso at ^aleast while the Boards are getting together on some definite plan.

I was to see Mr. Brewer yesterday afternoon, but was hindered, and so this morning I went only to find that he was not in his office. If he should come here to see me this afternoon I will get the draft of the plan off to you tonight or tomorrow. But if he does not, then we may be delayed some days, as he is going to be out of the City for several days.

Have a letter from the Neals. They are well.

Mrs. Davis is getting along fine so she writes me.
For which I am very thankful to the Lord.

If only we can get somewhere with our plant where we can work, I shall be happy again. And I feel that you will

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make this possible before long, especially as Mr. Brewer and I are agreed on the plan that appeals to us as being a solution of the great problem.

Here work is going to cost as much as in the States after this great upheaval, and that was the principal reason why we favored the plant in this country. Paper is costing more, and the mail service is so bad that we often get letters a month old from places relatively near us. Then too, ~~if~~ we are just as near Mexico City when in El Paso, as we are to El Paso with the plant here. Besides that, El Paso is a center of some two million Mexicans, I feel safe in saying. That is within a reasonable radius, there are that many.

The only argument in favor of N. Orleans that I can see is that Mr. Brewer thinks their Board has a property there, but it does not appear in any of the lists of their Board, and so I imagine he is mistaken.

The situation is anything but good here. The money is worthless, and the merchants refuse to sell, and in fact if we had not bought up flour and other things in advance, we probably would have a good chance of going hungry, like many of these people are today.

No, I want to get out. I feel it is time. All that is left for me to do before going is to get the last Expositor printed and then I want to go. Probably will send the family on ahead, and then I will go by León and see that everything is left in proper shape there, till such time as we can get our plant shipped, if it ^{is} decided to ship it.

May the Lord lead us all.

It is His will that we want done.

Fraternally yours,

J. E. Davis

June 20, 1916

Rev. J.E.Davis,

Station Julia D. B.,

Mexico City, Mexico.

Dear Brother Davis:-

I am in receipt of yours of June ninth with reference to the Publishing House. We, of course, cannot take any action about the Publishing House until the plan which you and Brother Brewer work out is submitted. I can see good reasons why we might have the Publishing House in either one of the cities to which you refer, but we will not pass upon this matter until we hear more definitely from you.

My opinion is that you should come home just as soon as you possibly can. I believe that Brother Neal and his wife should also come home. If they have not already done so, I suggest that you communicate with them and advise them to this end.

I am hoping very earnestly that there may not be any conflict between the two countries. Certainly such a thing will be an awful calamity, but in any event I think it will be best for all of you to come home for awhile, at least.

Cordially yours,

R/W