

*Sun, Sea, Sand ...  
and Spiritual Need*



*The WEC España Guide to  
Cross Cultural Mission*

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## Introduction

What do think of when you hear the word “Spain”? Maybe it’s the ever popular quartet of Sun, Sea, Sand and Sangria. Or maybe bullfighting and flamenco. Perhaps more recently it’s EU bailouts, anti-austerity demonstrations and riots in Madrid and Barcelona. All of these are part of the truth about Spain but if you’re reading this you’re probably interested in a different side to the story. Dozens of books and millions of words will tell you about the history, culture, landscape, politics and economy of this remarkable country, however few will mention the incredible spiritual need of a nation that once claimed almost the entire population as baptized Catholics but banned the Bible in Spanish, burned protestants as heretics and still has thousands of towns with no evangelical presence whatsoever. Spain is a wonderful country with a rich and diverse history and friendly, welcoming people but now finds itself without any coherent system of moral authority, a crumbling economy, mass emigration of under 25s and an epidemic of begging in the streets. At the same time many families will spend hundred of euros on Christmas lottery tickets and pray that *La Virgin* or one of the saints will come to their help in times of crisis such as this. Spain, as the posters say, is different.

The aim of this guide is to provide some basic information and insight into the spiritual state of Spain, its needs and opportunities and practical information for those who may be considering full time mission with the Spanish field of WEC International<sup>1</sup>. It is designed for readers who feel God may be calling them to think about the needs of Spain or are simply curious about why mission takes place in an western society which has had access to a Christian world view for at least for 600 years. It is not intended as a comprehensive cultural guide (there are many of these available) nor a spiritual road map for finding your own calling (that’s a matter for prayer and reflection) however it does aim to provide information and perspective that might help you on your way. All we can promise is that it will not be a boring journey!

This document is therefore intended for those who are either just curious or are actively considering a move into missions and feel God may be bringing the needs of Spain to their attention. It aims to cover the overall cultural context and some key aspects of the spiritual state of the nation as well as the strategy and priorities of WEC España.

Then, following on from this, the WEC España New Workers Orientation Guide is a separate document aimed at those who have either made a decision to come or are actually preparing for the move and is more practical in terms of preparations you can make and what to expect when you get here.

Finally, please feel free to contact the authors at [informationplus@compuserve.com](mailto:informationplus@compuserve.com) with comments and questions.

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<sup>1</sup> WEC as originally constituted used to stand for “Worldwide Evangelization Crusade”. The acronym now stands for “Worldwide Evangelisation for Christ”

## Why Spain?

Before we even begin to talk about the culture and challenges of Spain it seems reasonable to ask why WEC is working here at all. WEC International's vision statement is *Reaching, Planting, Mobilising* and our focus is "*Reaching the Unreached - planting where there is no church*". So why are we working a country with a such a long Christian heritage albeit expressed through the Roman Catholic Church? Whatever you may think about the issues separating Catholic and Evangelicals viewpoints, the simple fact at present is that only around a quarter of Spaniards remain practicing Catholics and such practice as remains is increasingly the minority faith of older, more conservative and wealthier classes. Even among those who still consider themselves active Catholics, that may mean something very different from what evangelicals would recognised as a living relationship with the risen Christ as personal Lord and Saviour.

So in terms of an evangelical view of salvation, scripture and the church, Spain falls well below the figure that makes it an "unreached people group". In fact, according to Operation World<sup>2</sup>, Spain has only 0.4% evangelical believers, a figure which may in fact be falling as many Latin American believers return home in search of work. This compares with much higher percentages throughout South and Central America, most of sub-Saharan Africa, China and many other countries we think of as more traditional mission fields. So although the Mediterranean basin was were where the gospel first flourished as Paul preached in modern Turkey, Greece and Italy (and may even have come to Spain), the European countries are now among the least evangelized in the world. To discover why and examine what has made Spain so resistant to a biblical Gospel, we need to take a quick look at some key events in Spanish history.

### A Quick Look Back

In 711 AD the Visigoth rulers of Spain were involved in a civil war and thought it was a good idea to invite some Moorish mercenaries from North Africa over to help. This turned out to be an extremely bad idea as the Moors came, saw, conquered and stayed on for around 600 years eventually controlling all but the very far north of the peninsula. The kingdom of Al Andalus (from which we get the modern province of Andalucia) saw a flourishing of the arts and sciences and a relative harmony of the Islamic, Christian and Jewish inhabitants with everyone more or less free to worship as they wanted. Then in 1469, Isabella I of Castile married Ferdinand II of Aragon and created a new kingdom powerful enough to fight back against the Moors in the name of a unified Christian Spain. After almost 30 years of warfare the last Moorish rulers were eventually pushed out of Granada in 1492 producing the first united Kingdom of Spain in history.

With Ferdinand and Isabella now in charge everything changed including the existing system of relative toleration. Both Jews and the remaining Muslims were no longer permitted to worship freely as the new policy adopted by "their most Catholic majesties" was one state, one power and one unifying religion. Following royal decrees in 1492 and 1501 all other faith groups were first required to convert or leave and

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<sup>2</sup> Operation World: fourth edition, Jason Mandryck (ed.), WEC International, London 2010 p ??

then simply expelled anyway leaving their property to the crown. But even those who converted and remained were still under suspicion. Had they really embraced the one true faith or was it all a sham just to hold onto their possessions while maintaining heretical practices and beliefs? What was needed was some sort of ecclesiastical court with investigators, prosecutors, hearings and penalties to enforce compliance. This was what we now know as the Spanish Inquisition supported by the monarchs and approved by the Vatican. It has been estimated that over the next 300 years around 150,000 individuals were tried and between 3,000 and 5,000 executed normally by burning, subsequent to frequent use of torture and public humiliation. The Inquisition was only formally wound up in 1834.

Then in the 16<sup>th</sup> century a new threat arose to the monolithic faith of Catholic Spain. When Martin Luther nailed his list of 95 complaints to the door of the Castle Church of Wittenburg in 1517 he unleashing a monumental change in politics and religion throughout Europe. His initial aim was not to break with Rome but rather bring reform however Catholic power would have none of it and so instead of bringing a reformation of Catholicism, he soon found himself leading a protesting or “Protestant” alternative. This had implications throughout Europe as heads of state, religious establishments and common people chose sides. But not in Spain. With the office of the Inquisition still strong and trying heretics of other sorts, it only took a slight adjustment to deal with anyone sympathetic to the new protestant heresy. So the significant number who did express an interest did not survive for long. In the light of this, Spanish society has never had a genuine choice in relation of expressions of Christian faith and it was as if the Reformation simply hadn’t happened here. Yet again, Spain was different.

So, the first important key to understanding the modern spiritual condition of Spain is that there has never been a time when Spanish society as a whole had any significant exposure to a reformed view of scripture, personal salvation or faith. As Spanish society passed through many changes over the next 400 years, one thing that never really changed was the central place and power of orthodox traditional Roman Catholicism with only brief and rare periods of religious freedom. Of course missionary efforts were mounted from outside during these years however always

against a backdrop of opposition and persecution. One example is described in George Borrow’s *The Bible in Spain* (1843), an account of attempts by the British and Foreign Bible Society to distribute the Bible in vernacular Spanish. While many ordinary people welcomed the chance to read God’s word in their own language for the first time, bishops, archbishops and priests was unanimous. The word of God can only be correctly interpreted by God’s duly appointed representative on earth



The grand Mezquita or mosque of Cordoba typifies Moorish arts and architecture

- the Holy Catholic Church. Borrow's Bibles were prohibited, confiscated and burned.

Now fast forward to the second republic of 1931-39. Prior to modern democracy there have only been a few periods of genuine religious freedom in Spain and this was one of them. Unfortunately it was also a time of enormous political and social instability. Nature abhorring a vacuum something had to happen and that something was General Francisco Franco. Franco led a military revolt against the young republic and after crushing all opposition in the bloody Spanish Civil War (1936-39) went on to rule as absolute dictator for the next 40 years. Perhaps having learned a lesson from the success of Ferdinand and Isabella, he also took the view that a unified country needed not only a single political party and leader but also a single religious identity. So once again Roman Catholicism became the enforced national religion and all others had to tolerate restrictions and discrimination. In 1953 a concordat was signed with the Vatican which granted legitimacy to the dictatorship and a host of privileges to the Church including exemption from taxation, subsidies for new buildings and censorship of materials the church considered offensive. In contrast protestants were marginalized and persecuted in a variety of ways including pastors being forced into exile, non-Catholic Bibles confiscated, non-Catholic weddings declared null and void (with obvious consequences for subsequent children), restrictions on employment and state benefits, prohibition of any public signs indicating non-Catholic places of worship, overt evangelism prohibited, general harassment and even a ban on protestant burials in official town cemeteries. Not surprisingly the beleaguered protestant community still only numbered around 30,000 by 1968.

Times were changing however, even for Franco and in 1967 a law of religious freedom was enacted partly under pressure from overseas. This new opening attracted mission workers to preach the good news.



Holy Week processions are a very visible part of Spanish Catholic practice

Among these were WEC workers who first established WEC España in the late 1960s. Then in 1975 Franco died ushering in real change in the form of reinstatement of the monarchy, a new constitution and the overdue arrival of democracy. Spain was at last joining the club of modern democratic states which also resulted in the granting of freedom of religious belief and practice. Since then both the numbers and level of organization of Spanish evangelicals has continued to improve while the power and prestige of the Spanish Catholic Church has been in gradual decline.

## Spirituality Spanish Style

So what can we say about the current state of spirituality in Spain? Firstly, Spain is constitutionally a secular state granting freedom of religion to all citizens. This means that religious and cultural diversity exists as never before. So alongside Roman Catholicism there is also a growing Muslim minority and the presence of cults such as Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses as well as evangelicals. Secondly, the fact is that although Roman Catholicism has been the dominant religious influence in Spain over 600 years, it is now in deep decline. In 2008 only 17% of Spaniards were attending mass on a regular basis<sup>3</sup> and in 2010 only around 25% of the population even considered themselves practicing Catholics at all<sup>4</sup>. Catholicism still retains a significant presence of course and still tends to be the norm from which people deviate rather than any other. So the Catholic Church still receives substantial state support, and there is still a question on tax returns giving Spaniards the option of having a proportion of their taxes given either to the Catholic Church or NGOs but no choice to support any other religious denomination.

At the same time many Spaniards are deeply cynical about Catholicism. The Catholic Church is seen by many as highly conservative, corrupt, controlling, devious and wealthy at the expense of the poor compared to which the significant social services provided by the Church tend to have a lower profile in the public mind. To this extent the decline in membership and attendance is not simply a matter of increasing secularism but



Franco inspects his victorious Falangist troops after the successful conclusion of hostilities

a definite choice to reject what is seen as outdated influence in Spanish life. So when we hear talk of Spain as a deeply Catholic country, in reality this is no longer strictly true. While many devout and dutiful Catholics still exist alongside those preserving only folk or cultural elements,

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Spain)

<sup>4</sup> "La proporción de los españoles que se declaran católicos (practicantes o no) ha bajado de 80,2% a finales de 2007 a 78,3% en la actualidad. Ha disminuido mucho la proporción de católicos practicantes de 30,0% a 26,2%..." "The proportion of Spaniards who declare themselves to be Catholic (practicing or not) has fallen from 80.2% at the end of 2007 to 78.3% now. The proportion of practicing Catholics has fallen from 30% to 26.2% ..." From a public opinion survey reported by *Protestante Digital* at <http://www.protestantedigital.com/new/nowleernoticia.php?r=310&n=15571> (21/01/10)

in both cases their numbers and influence are undoubtedly in decline.

Given this background however we also need to be aware that Spaniards still typically have a significantly different viewpoint from Evangelicals in relation to salvation and faith. For Spaniards from a Catholic background (whether personal believers or not), salvation principally means being in good standing with God's appointed representative in the world, i.e. the Catholic church, and fulfilling its various rituals and requirements. This includes baptism of infants, first communion of young people, regular confession, attendance at mass and a lifestyle generally compatible with the church's dogmas and precepts. In reality however for many families nowadays baptism is a ritual more for the benefit of grandparents than based on any personal beliefs, first communion is an occasion for expensive presents and a big family celebration and attendance at mass may be largely limited to Easter and Christmas. Likewise, lifestyle may bear very little relationship to the teachings of the church. Examples of this includes the almost total disregard for the Church's teaching on contraception (the Spanish birthrate is among the lowest in Europe at 1.38 and falling<sup>5</sup>), and the hostile reaction of many to the Pope's visit as part of World Youth Day in November 2010. Families are now also under much greater pressure in that divorce which was simply not available before 1981 is now among the highest in the European Union.

In fact, the average Spaniard's relationship with God has been likened to the citizen's relationship with the government in a society famous for its complicated and arcane bureaucracy. In essence, God (like the government) is distant, unknowable, unsympathetic and likely to make very harsh demands. Therefore the trick is to work through an intermediary who understands what is required and can do the complicated negotiation of your behalf. So in the same way as Spaniards will often hire a *gestor* (professional consultant or advisor) to deal with government bureaucracy on their behalf, the Church (with the help of the Virgin and the Saints) fulfills a similar role in spiritual matters. Hence, God has revealed what he requires principally to and through the Church (which Spaniards typically assume means the Roman Catholic Church) and the responsibility of the individual is essentially to do as the church advises rather than trouble about a more personal commitment.

What then of evangelicals? As we've already said, Spain really has no historical context for understanding an evangelical point of view. Many Spaniards are genuinely surprised to learn that Evangelicals typically baptise believers rather than infants, do not require leaders to be celibate, do not recognize the authority of the Pope and do not practice rites of confession, absolution or penance. On the other hand we do read and apply the Bible and see our principal relationship as being directly with God rather than any organizational church. So for many Spaniards, their impression of evangelicals may be a mixture of what they have picked up from overseas (particularly the USA), some residual prejudice from the historical views of the Catholic Church and whatever they may have gleaned from the most visible denominations in Spain.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.economist.com/node/21557774>

According to *Operation World*, the largest single evangelical denomination by far in Spain is the Filidelfia or gypsy church, being bigger than the next three put together. While this is the result of an amazing move of the Holy Spirit within gypsy communities since the mid 1950s (and one of the few genuine church planting movements in Europe) gypsy people live on the other side of a significant cultural divide from ordinary Spaniards. In practical terms this makes it unlikely that a non-gypsy Spaniard would either come into social contact with a gypsy believer or be able to hear and accept the gospel from them. Within the more mainstream denominations and groupings, while the influx of Latin American believers has been a tremendous resource and encouragement for many small, struggling Spanish churches, this too represents something of a cultural challenge. Latin American social class, worship style and teaching often do not immediately feel comfortable for Spaniards who do not yet have a personal faith and so, ironically, while this has been the greatest source of growth for the evangelical church, yet again, it has had very little outside impact. Of course the gospel should be made as widely available as possible to every nationality however if it is *only* attractive to gypsies, immigrants and other outsiders then mainstream Spaniards will remain the unreached people group that they are at present.

Summing up then, we could say that Spaniards have a generally uninformed view of evangelicals however whatever they think they know is probably more negative than positive. On the other hand, evangelicals from outside Spain have the advantage of not coming with the baggage associated with the Spanish evangelical movement so instead of being simply odd and probably part of some weird cult, outsiders may be seen as somewhat intriguing, even exotic and a point of interest more than prejudice.

## Church Planting in Spain



Demonstrators clash with World Youth Day visitors in Madrid's Puerta del Sol

So how does WEC respond to this situation? WEC España field bylaws state that "WEC España's primary focus is church-planting." This is because we believe that the church is God's primary pattern for communicating the gospel, discipling believers and ministering to the needs of the community. Personal evangelism and individual discipleship are crucial but should be seen as part of a process that

goes on to gather individuals into worshipping, learning, supportive communities. Currently a number of Spanish congregations owe their origins to WEC presence over the years, in particular the Betel churches which have grown from work among people with alcohol and drug related problems<sup>6</sup>. Besides this, the WEC

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<sup>6</sup> Betel is technically what WEC calls a "Transnational Field" rather than part of WEC España since it now works in more than 60 countries. Further details at <http://www.betelinternational.org/>

team is currently working in Madrid, the Basque region, Granada, Asturias, Caceres, Almaria and Galicia often with a church planting emphasis.<sup>7</sup> Of course other mission agencies, national denominations and church families are also engaged in church planting and where possible we believe in partnering with the national church.

So how do you plant a church in Spain, what sort of people plant churches and what strategies and skills are required? Firstly, we believe that the church is built by the Lord of the Church not by mission workers in WEC or any other agency (Matt 16:18). The foundations of both individual faith and the life of the gathered community ultimately depend not on human strategy or wisdom but on the presence of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 1:18-31). From a human point of view the challenge and skills mix needed to plant a church in postmodern Europe might seem beyond us however we believe that God plans to build his kingdom in Spain and that we have the privilege and opportunity to participate.

We also believe however that the Lord works through individuals and we must actively use whatever gifts, insights and abilities we have to the maximum extent to get the best results (Matt 25:14-30). In this way we believe in being *both* faithful *and* fruitful and using the best intelligence, effort and information we have to get the best result. For example, it is clear from scripture that the best known church planter of all time, the apostle Paul, as well as being Spirit led and guided (Acts 16:9) also put a huge amount of thought and energy into how he went about establishing and nurturing the churches he had responsibility for (1 Cor 3:6-15). Sometimes this may mean that, like the disciples in John 21:1-14, we will have to throw our nets out on the other side of the boat if we find that methods that we are currently using are not producing the catch of fish we had hoped for. In terms of the Spanish situation in particular, we need to be aware of the distinctives of Spanish society, what sorts of approaches are likely to be more appropriate and even some things we have done in the past but now seem to be less effective. So what do we know that might help form a church planting strategy?

The first point to make is that whatever baggage Spaniards may have from their Catholic past and whatever cynicism they may have about organized religion in general, they are still modern (or postmodern) citizens experiencing exactly the same personal and family problems as in any other comparable society. Their condition as human beings made in God's image but for the most part far from a personal relationship with their creator brings with it inevitable consequences. At the time of writing (2013) Spaniards are subject to enormous economic stress in terms of coping with unemployment or fears of job losses. Divorce, domestic violence, poverty, unplayable bills, the threat of eviction, behavioral problems among children and young people, many kinds of addiction, mid life crisis, relationship and sexual problems, inadequate incomes in old age and general dissatisfaction with religion, politics and 21<sup>st</sup> century life in general are all just as real in Spanish society as anywhere else - in some cases more so. So the bottom line is that Spaniards need Christ and neither their disaffection with traditional religion nor ignorance and prejudice with respect to evangelical

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<sup>7</sup> Not all WEC España workers are focused exclusively on church planting as our approach encourages field members to develop the ministries God is leading them into. However, it would also be fair to say that there has been an increasing emphasis in recent years on getting back to our roots and putting more emphasis on focused intentional church planting initiatives.

faith make them immune to the sorts of problems for which only Christ is the answer. That being the case, we remain optimistic about the future of Christian faith in Spain. There are many obstacles but the need has never been greater and we also believe there are currently opportunities as never before.

Secondly, as regards effective means of presenting the good news, these are probably as varied as the individuals who need to hear. What may have an impact on one person may be entirely different from what can impact others and we need to be both open to the leading of the Spirit and sensitive to the needs of individuals as well as aware of the culture as a whole. One example of the need to change approach is very evident in the history of Betel which began life as a part of the WEC España field. The WEC workers who were used by God to found the ministry that became Betel originally aimed to focus particularly on university students, an approach which had been fruitful in Mexico. However in Spain, no-one wanted to hear the message, and the only people the team could make any meaningful contact with were drugs addicts and alcoholics. Eventually, it became clear that this was the group the Lord was directing them towards and which in due course became responsive out of their deep personal needs. And so was born what is now an international ministry which has spread far beyond Spain where it began. So, with that in mind, we want to be open to be led by the Spirit to any and all approaches that can have an impact while at the same time being intelligent and thoughtful about the particular nature of Spanish society at the present time.

WEC International's broad approach is defined as *reaching, planting, mobilizing* and it goes without saying that prior to planting churches we need to do what we can to "reach" individuals within any people group. So we believe an important key to church planting in Spain is relationship. In a postmodern world truth claims such as we have in respect of the gospel are often judged not in terms of the evidence for or against the truth of the message but, at least initially, in terms of the integrity and acceptability of the messenger. So before we can present the key claims of Christ and what we understand as God's plan of redemption we normally have to win a hearing by virtue of who and what we are. In some ways this is no different in Spain from anywhere else and depends on a strong desire to be used by the Lord and on a human level basic characteristics of having an outgoing relational personality, natural friendliness, a genuine interest in other people, open-minded attitudes and a willingness to take the initiative in building friendships. On the other hand, missional workers who are not Spanish natives are working across cultural divides and this brings both particular hurdles and in some cases unexpected advantages. So, firstly, church planting in Spain needs mature believers who know, love, trust and obey their Lord but who also love and are interested in other people. As well as having a thorough grounding in the essentials of the faith and experience and skill in presenting the core of the message in the power of the Holy Spirit, church planters need to be people friendly and willing to be intentional and focused in making relationships.

Secondly however, we also need to have specific strategies and approaches both to make and develop our relationships. Like people arriving at a party, we see ourselves as guests in the country so it makes sense to bring some sort of gift or blessing with us. So we look for cultural connections to help in the process of bridge building which allows us to offer something valuable thus demonstrating our interest and contribution. What this might be depends very much on the individual concerned however among our team we have members

involved in counseling, youth and children's work, English chat groups, sports, social service, dance, playing with local musicians, craft classes for children and young people, clothing distribution and a variety of other activities. In this way we aim to share something we have and offer that as a way of building trust and friendship. In our experience this often leads to deeper conversations as people are curious about why we have left our own countries to live in Spain and what our personal plans are which in turn allows us to talk about faith, God's leading and what motivates us at a fundamental level.

Although the range of connections may be as wide as interests and skills within the team, the particular circumstances of Spain also mean that at the present time one is both particularly needed and something we are in a good position to offer. In Paul's day the international *lingua franca* was Greek and because of the



Iglesia Betel, Madrid, one of the largest evangelical congregations in Spain

dominance of Greek learning and the extent of the Roman Empire, Christians could effectively communicate from North Africa to the British Isles and the Iberian Peninsula to the Middle East all in the same language. Right now English holds that place in commerce and culture and can be seen as a particularly useful approach. American TV, Hollywood movies, computer games, business communications, the global IT industry, even billboards and advertising in Spain - all are in English. Personally, many Spaniards are desperate to learn English for career advancement and personal interest and any international company working in Spain has to enable its employees to communicate in English although few are able to attain satisfactory levels.

WEC International, while having members from around 50 different countries, operates internationally in English and anyone applying to join WEC needs to have a sufficient level of competence in English. So earlier in the history of WEC it may have been basic healthcare and education that was most needed and we could offer - now it's English, and over the past few years we have seen team members building substantial personal friendships with Spanish people initially through the medium of English. For one couple a simple poster offering free English chat put up in the community room of their group of tower blocks led to dozens of inquiries and a number of close friendships and has even contributed to the commencement of an Alpha course. Naturally, as WEC workers share who and what they are, this leads to sharing at a deeper spiritual level given an attitude of generosity in sharing English without any payment. From these small beginnings there can be the hope of building cell groups and, in God's will and purpose, effective, Spanish led, indigenous churches.



Cafe style church at VidApasionada, a new church plant in Madrid

So, while Spain's deep economic problems and much greater openness to other world views does point us in the direction of offering something needed in the society and taking advantage of this increased openness, we must also continue to bear in mind the needs of those for whom a much more direct engagement may be appropriate. So we remain open to street evangelism, open air work, literature distribution of any other opportunities that might open up.<sup>8</sup> Finally however it is not a method that opens

hearts to respond to the Gospel but the Holy Spirit. So we want to be led by the Spirit with love for the people while praying and expecting that those in need will respond to us and to the message because they see our love and interest not because of our training in evangelistic methods.

## Working with WEC

So Spaniards need Christ but have little cultural background to understand or accept the Gospel and, as things stand, little opportunity to even hear it. Planting churches is a biblical pattern and imperative and WEC España's key objective. We aim to go about this by using whatever cultural bridges and connections seem appropriate to build relationships, share the good news, lead people into personal commitment and disciple them into growing churches. If you've read thus far it's likely that this general picture is of some interest to you which in turn may mean you are beginning to sense God's call to work in Spain or at least are curious about the possibilities.

So what are the practicalities of working with WEC in Spain?

## Gifts and Calling

The first fundamental is that it is God who is calling you to this work and given you a love for the people. If that is the case then he will also give you the gifts, experience and resources needed. While the need may be great, this in itself is not a personal call and anyone coming to Spain simply as a response to the millions who do not know Christ here is likely to find themselves running out of motivation when things get tough. This is something everyone discovers in a different way but we recommend ongoing discussion with your pastor and mature Christian friends as you test out what God may be saying to you about Spain. It is also important to say that not everyone will be emotionally or psychologically suited to what a missional lifestyle

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<sup>8</sup> The work of Ontheredbox (also known as Kilometro Zero) in open air preaching in Puerto del Sol in the heart of Madrid though not connected with WEC is a good example of direct, effective evangelism. Further details at <http://www.ontheredbox.com/>

means. This also needs to be carefully thought through and considered in relation to your personality, responsibilities and stage of life.

The next question is to consider your personality, gifts and life experience and ask if these match both the general task and the specific way WEC works. Besides the need to work in a highly relational way as a key to making connections leading to planting churches, WEC España also believes in working together in teams. So on both counts we are looking for relational team players rather than rugged individualists. It is well established that teams work best with a variety of gifts and personality types



A Madrid Metro poster advertises bilingual education

however everyone on any team needs to be committed to team working and able to positively interact in a team setting. From a human point of view we could make a long list of characteristics that would seem important in the work like being creative, resilient, adventurous, thoughtful, studious, innovative, hard working, practical, resourceful, willing to learn and a good communicator and some other things besides ... however, on the other hand, if God is calling you to work in Spain then we look to him to provide all the skills, strengths and resources needed.

Besides personal characteristics, we might think about life experience both within and outside of explicitly spiritual contexts. God uses many events and influences to make us into what he wants us to be and we sometimes find the strangest most unconnected events and experiences give us exactly what the situation requires. In general terms however we are particularly looking for people with significant life experience both in home culture ministry and in career, employment or training outside of missions to bring a range of gifts and experience to the task however again the key issue is God's call to work in Spain rather than an ideal CV. In simple terms, the more you have done and the wider your life experience, the more likely it will be that some of that will prove relevant and worthwhile in a missional setting. Conversely, anything difficult and challenging in a home cultures tends to be even more so in a cross cultural setting, so if you have little or no experience or track record of effectiveness in ministry or general life goals in your home setting, this will not magically change in a missional setting and will probably become much harder. While every case will be carefully considered on its own merits, there is great benefit for new workers themselves and for the team when new arrivals bring a significant depth of employment and general life experience. Specific skills such as English teaching, IT, youth work or music are particularly useful and welcome.

## **Applying and Training**

Prior to acceptance, WEC International normally requires applicants to have either one or two years dedicated, relevant training often in a Bible College, Missions Training College or Theological College.<sup>9</sup> WEC has a number of its own colleges worldwide and it may make sense for candidates to consider these if they do not already have another relevant qualification. Then, having completed an application form (available after an initial contact through any of our web sites or by phone) and being in contact with Candidate Directors in the appropriate Sending Base<sup>10</sup>, all applicants complete what is called a *Candidate Orientation* (CO) course which will typically last around 10-12 weeks. COs have an internationally agreed core content but do vary from country to country depending between each WEC sending bases. All COs however cover WEC's history, core values, structure and church planting approach as well as much more detailed and specific information. Finally, having filled in an application form, provided references, in some cases completed a psychological assessment and successfully completing CO, candidates can be accepted as members of WEC International.

Normally (though not always) candidates have some idea of where they would like to serve and will have been in touch with leadership of the field they are interested in. Once accepted by the Spain field, candidates spend two years as "New Workers" getting to know the team and the country and beginning to reach out to Spanish friends while mainly concentrating on language and culture acquisition with the support of the New Workers Co-ordinator and Field Leadership. Once this phase is successfully completed New Workers become Full Status Workers and are welcomed as such by the field as a whole.

## **Finance**

Historically WEC is part of what is called the "Faith missions movement". While the first wave of modern missions tended to be denominationally based and clustered around coastal settlements, in due course there grew a desire to reach beyond the colonial enclaves, and go "inland". Pioneers of the inland movement include Hudson Taylor and C.T. Studd - founder of WEC. Without denominational support or the possibility of paid employment but convinced that God was leading and directing, the question of how these new ventures could be supported arose. The answer to this was the so called "faith principle" that if God was leading and directing then he would supply the means. Both as individuals and an organization we still maintain this principle and make no public appeal for funds which means no fundraising, no begging letters and no asking for cash in our publicity or sharing in home churches. However, if asked, we are open about our finances and answer questions as they arise. In practical terms this means that those that know us best and are accompanying us on the missional journey often feel led by God to support the work in practical ways. So WEC workers worldwide are supported in prayer, practically and financially by family, friends, home churches and individual supporters. Additionally, within the Spanish field, we are open minded and flexible in relation to

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<sup>9</sup> Length of training required will be decided in terms of your overall life experience and prior qualifications and experience

<sup>10</sup> WEC International functions through "sending bases" being the countries normally seen as sources of recruitment and mobilisation and "fields" being the territories and people groups to whom members are sent

paid employment believing that not only can it be God's way of meeting our financial needs but also a positively appropriate and relevant way of relating to the culture and making friends and connections.

The implications of all of this are obvious. If you are considering becoming part of the WEC España field (or working with WEC anywhere else in the world), then you will also have to consider the financial implications of this for you, your spouse, your children, any other dependents in the light of your financial responsibilities. As a rough guide the WEC España field currently recommends a budget of at least €2,000 per month to cover accommodation and basic living costs for a couple with correspondingly more for the needs of children.



Eastwest College in New Zealand, one of WEC's network of training colleges

## **Language and Culture**

In order to effectively communicate with anyone it's normally essential for both parties to be speaking the same language and share many of the same cultural assumptions. When we are dealing with fundamental spiritual matters this is probably even more crucial. So in coming to Spain you will of course be aiming towards relative fluency in Spanish and a good understanding of the Spanish culture. Part 2 of this guide goes into more detail in relation to cultural norms such as dress codes, meal times, greetings etc however suffice it to say here that yet again "Spain is Different". On the subject of language, it is sometimes claimed that Spanish is the easiest language for English native speakers to learn, however whether or not that is true, you should not underestimate the difficulty, frustration, feelings of failure and even downright despair that language learning can involve. As a WEC España New Worker, language learning will be among your highest priorities during your two year orientation phase and time, money and energy must be set aside for it. As a very rough guide, compared to English, Spanish pronunciation is more straightforward and grammar more complicated. Anything you can do in advance to begin the language learning process will be helpful and of course those with either native speaker status or advanced study in Spanish have a distinct advantage.

Now, if none of the above has yet put you off but rather challenged you bearing in mind that the God who calls also equips and you go forward in his strength not your own, then continue to Part 2 for more detailed information on the specifics of Spanish culture and the details of what being a WEC España field member means.

## Reading List

### General Guides Books

There are probably dozens of guide books to Spain - this is only a selection. Much of the material will be repeated in various different forms.

*Dorling Kindersley Eyewitness Travel Guide: Spain* Nick Inman et. Al. Dorling Kindersley 2011

A personal favourite from the dozens of guide books available. Well produced with great colour photos

*Lonely Planet Tourist Guide: Spain.* Lonely Planet, Ham, Butler and Kaminski 2013

Also a good general introduction

*Ghosts of Spain: Travels Through a Country's Hidden Past* Giles Tremlett Faber & Faber Latest Edition 2012

Thought by many to be the best general introduction to modern Spain - latest edition has a new chapter

*Madrid: A Cultural and Literary Companion* Elizabeth Nash Interlink Books 2001

Specific to the capital but a fascinating read particularly on La movida madrileña (The Madrid Movement), a bit like the 60s in London but 20 years later

*Homage to Barcelona* Colm Tóibín Picador 2002

As above for Barcelona

*¡Guerra!* Jason Webster Black Swan 2006

Not so much a history of the civil war as one's man's journey around modern Spain trying to make sense of it

### Homage to Catalonia - Orwell

*Driving over Lemons: An Optimist in Andalucia* Chris Stewart Sort of Books 2009

A perennial favourite about an Englishman trying to build a new life in the Spanish countryside

*Snowball Oranges* Peter Kerr Summersdale; 2010

Similar about a Scotsman in Mallorca

*Motoring in Spain* Brian J Deller Brian J Deller Publishing Revised Edition 2005

Does what it says on the tin

For those with enough Spanish the following are recommendeds

*Los españoles* Amando de Miguel Ediciones Temas de Hoy, S.A. 1995

*España con otros ojos* José María Carrascal Espasa Calpe 1993

## Background to missions in general and the spiritual context of Europe

*Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* David Bosch Orbis Books 1991

Classic text on the history and development of modern missions

*The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Unbelief in the Modern World* Alistair McGrath Rider 2004

Good overview of postmodernism in Europe and how we came to be this way

## The Spiritual State of Spain

*Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation* Jason Mandryk WEC / Biblica 7th Edition 2010

Great for anywhere in the world but see the Spain chapter for best estimates of the current situation

*The Missionary in Spain: Adaption or Integration* Pablo & Catalina Wickham Alianza Evangélica Española 1995

Dated now but poses the interesting question of whether you intend to integrate or merely adapt

*España Evangélica Ayer y Hoy* José M. Martínez Editorial Andamio 2002

Only available in Spanish and a more academic look at the history of the evangelical movement in Spain

*Protestants in Modern Spain: The Struggle for Religious Pluralism* Dale G Vought Wm Carey Library 1973

Research for a Masters degree. Written when there only 30,000 evangelicals in all of Spain. May now be hard to find

## Denominational histories and memoirs

While now descriptive of an era that no longer exists, these are still very worthwhile accounts of early mission in Spain

*The Bible in Spain: or the Journey, Adventures, and Imprisonment of an Englishman in an Attempt to Circulate the Scriptures in the Peninsula* George Borrow Echo Library 2006 (first published 1843)

The classic account of a Bible colporteur travelling in Spain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century before evangelicals or protestants in general had made any significant impact. (Kindle edition is a free download)

*Historia Del Movimiento Pentecostal en España* Paulo Branco Privately Published 1993

*Why Spain?* E. Stuart Brown Spanish Gospel Mission Undated

*El Evangelio en España: el comienzo de la predicación pública en España* George Lawrence Centro Evangélico de Formación bíblica de Madrid 2011

*Generations: British Brethern Mission to Spain, 1834 - 1990* Tim Grass Thornhill Media 2011

*Escenas de la vida misionera en España* Ernesto H. Trenchard Centro Evangélico de Formación bíblica de Madrid 2011

## Fiction

*Recuerdos de Antaño: Los mártires españoles de la Reforma del Siglo XVI y la Inquisición* Emilio Martínez Consejo Evangélico de Castilla y León 2009

A fictionalised account drawing on historical sources covering the times of the reformation and its suppression by the Spanish Inquisition

## **Video**

The art of Spain

Andrew Graham-Dixon's wonderful three part insight into the art of Spain looking at Islamic, medieval religious and modern movements. Available on DVD from Amazon at <http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Art-Spain-Andrew-Graham-Dixon/dp/B003XU7J1C>

Uwe Hutter's History of Spain Talk

Fascinating overview of Spanish history with an emphasis on Spain in scripture given to WEC New Workers in June 2012 available on WEC's intranet