

Cuba Current

JUNE, 2010

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Pastor Jesús Visits North East District

By George Reed

Pastor Jesús Barrios and his wife Irelis ("Ee-REY'-Lees) visited our District for a week as part of a three week trip to Florida. Jesús is pastor at the Methodist church in Santa Cruz del Norte (a neighboring town to la Sierra, location of our sister church). His sister church in Jacksonville is Swaim Memorial UMC. Though it was a hastily arranged trip, a number of our District Methodists reached out on short notice and arranged a fabulous week of activities. (And thanks to Warren Green in Satellite Beach for making it happen).

Our first stop on Monday (February 22) was at Swaim where we met with the pastor (Dr. Laurence Coles), his wife Elizabeth, and several church members. We were welcomed warmly, and despite the failure of our interpreter to show up, had a wonderful

conversation about the growth of the Cuba church in general and Jesús' church in particular. Dr. Coles also presented Pastor Jesús with a generous offering from Swaim.

Tuesday night took us to Middleburg UMC for a beautiful service arranged on very little notice by Pastor Roger Moore and his wife Ellen. The evening opened with "Amazing Grace" accompanied by guitar and included prayers for "Methodists United in Prayer," and questions from the congregation. It was a timely visit in that Middleburg is in the process of arranging a visit for the pastor at their own sister church in Mayorkín, Enoel Gutiérrez. Pastor Roger and Ellen hosted a small reception after the service where we enjoyed sandwiches and soft
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Fall Cuba Caravan in the Works

North East District Coordinators Pete and Betty Perez will be leading a caravan to Havana November 13-29 (tentatively). The group of six consists of travelers whose original trip was canceled a couple of

years ago. Our group will be traveling with the South East and Gulf Central Districts.

Betty will be conducting training classes beginning next month.

Please keep this group in your prayers.

BIBLE VERSE:

- *So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time. Galatians 6:9 (NLT)*

Pastor Jesús *(continued from Page 1)*

drinks (and Ellen was able to carry on conversations in Spanish with Jesús and Ireli!).

Wednesday evening brought a visit with the youth at our own church, Ponte Vedra UMC. Kelly Minter and Scott Tinsley gathered the youth together while Jesús sang "How Great Thou Art" (in Spanish) while Danny Booth accompanied on piano. His voice was beautiful and stopped everyone in their tracks as it rang out without the benefit of a microphone. The YCAM kids returned the favor by performing a song, then joined Jesús and Ireli for a discussion about the Cuba Methodist church. They asked great questions and shared a prayer together. It was a night to be remembered by all in attendance.

Jesús and I returned to PVUMC Thursday morning for men's small group Bible study. Despite my weak skills as an interpreter, we enjoyed the hour. That evening, we met Dr. Coles and Elizabeth at Havana Jax for Cuban food. Thanks also to District Coordinator Pedro Perez who provided excellent interpreter skills (via phone!) as Jesús provided more detailed information to Dr. Coles on the needs of his church.

Friday evening began with fishing in the IntraCoastal Waterway, but it

wasn't meant to be. The pastor told me in Spanish that "not even the mosquitoes are biting" (though we did get to see some dolphin swim by). Pedro and Betty Perez joined us at the house to prepare a feast of Cuba food. Consider this: Three ladies, two languages, one kitchen, and no recipes! But the resulting dishes were out of this world. We enjoyed a wonderful evening of Christian fellowship.

"...try to get your pastors here. These visits are truly blessings to all involved."

Saturday morning, the pastor and his wife left Jacksonville on a flight to Miami.

The pastor was preaching at two services in Miami on Sunday and were returning to Havana on Monday.

The week drove home the significance of Cuba pastor visits to the U.S. It defines what we are trying to do with *Methodists United in Prayer*. I encourage each of you to try to get your pastors here. These visits are truly blessings to all involved.

Quick Notes

- Thanks to Macclenny for stepping up in a big way for Tumbadero! Your generosity will be a blessing to the church.
- Join our Facebook group for up-to-date news. www.Facebook.com. Search: *Methodists United in Prayer North East District*
- Thanks to Swaim for helping arrange Pastor Jesús' upcoming visit on short notice.
- Welcome to Terry Palomino, new *MUIP* coordinator at Southside. And thanks for your heart felt response to Pastor Guillermo's email.
- Send your Cuba news and pictures to us for "Cuba Current!"
- Link to Mission Sunday presentations at Ponte Vedra UMC where Loree and George Reed discuss their sister church relationship with la Sierra: http://www.py-umc.org/resources/messages/2010_05_16.mp3

Greetings from Cuba

We have received email greetings and well wishes in recent months from:

Pastor Damian Pacheco, la Sierra (Damian and Samira are expecting a new baby any day now).

Pastor Rafael Atarés, el Guatao (recently completed Theological Studies).

Pastor René Domínguez, San Antonio del Rio Blanco (traveling in September to visit Trinity/Palatka).

Pastor Onay Lopez, coordinator for

MUIP Cuba Travel (carried back a number of letters and packages to Cuba following his U.S. visit)

Pastor Guillermo Piloto, San Antonio de las Vegas (new pastor).

Pastor Jesús Barrios, Santa Cruz del Norte (visiting Swaim in December).

Please ask God to bless these pastors and churches and all of our brothers and sisters in Cuba.



Pastor Rafael and Naomi

Cuba Pastors to Visit

We have been actively working to arrange visits to Florida for a number of Cuba sister church pastors. This is an important part of our mission work, strengthening bonds between our churches. It is our goal to have all North East District churches arrange visits for their pastors.

Upcoming visits include:

Pastor René Domínguez, San Antonio del Rio Blanco. Sister church: Trinity/Palatka. Wife: Sonia. Two sons. September trip.



Pastor René Domínguez

Pastor Enoel Gutiérrez, Mayorkín. Sister

church: Middleburg. Wife: Junix. Two kids. August trip.

Pastor Jesús Barrios, Santa Cruz del Norte.

Sister church: *Pastor Enoel Gutiérrez* Swaim.

Wife: Irellis. Two kids. December trip.

Pastor Damian Pacheco, la Sierra. Sister church: Ponte Vedra. Wife: Samira (expecting). January trip.

A special thanks to our Christian brother **Robert Pinera**, Group Area Coordinator for South East, for all of his tireless work on pastor visits.



Pastor Damian and Samira

Let us know if you would like to have pastors from Cuba visit your church while they are in the U.S., or if you would like information on how to arrange your own pastor visit.

Cuba Task Force Met in April

MUIP Task Force members from the Florida Conference met at the Leesburg Youth Camp April 9 and 10, 2010, to make plans and discuss challenges and opportunities for our mission. Pastor Onay, who coordinates our Cuba

travel, attended the meeting. Onay brought news from Bishop Pereira that three caravans to Cuba had been approved for the fall. As noted elsewhere, the North East District will send six travelers

"...three caravans to Cuba approved for the fall."

to Havana in November.

Special thanks to Pastor Onay who delivered a number of envelopes from North East District churches when he returned to Cuba. He even delivered a baby stroller to Pastor Damian at la Sierra!

Cuba Celebration in Middleburg

Middleburg UMC held a wonderful evening of Cuban food and music June 13, 2010, to raise money for Pastor Enoel and Junix's visit later this summer. Former and current District Coordinators Linda Zelenka and George Reed told stories from their visits to sister churches in Cuba.

Thanks and blessings to Pastor Roger and Pastora Ellen Moore who retired earlier this month. They served MUIP with dedication and passion. We will miss them. Phil Jacobs will be coordinating Cuba

mission efforts at Middleburg in the future (assisted by Craig Van Gundy and new pastor, Rev. Brian Simpson). Welcome aboard!



Middleburg Pastor Roger and Ellen Moore. Thanks for all you did for MUIP and Pastors Enoel and Jesús. Enjoy your retirement!

Methodists United in Prayer

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<http://www.Facebook.com> Search Groups:
"Methodists United in Prayer North East District" and
"United in Prayer—Cuba & Florida Methodists"

<http://www.methodistsunitedinprayer.org/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/larednetwork/>

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Cuba Current is published for Methodists in the North East Florida District involved with or interested in "**Methodists United in Prayer.**" "Methodists United in Prayer" facilitates prayer, love, exchange, and mutual support between the Cuba Conference and the Florida Conference. We hope to increase the relationship between sister churches in the two conferences and focus on these priorities:

- **To pray** for one another and develop a common study of Scriptures.
- **To engage** in the interchange of peoples at Cuba and Florida Conferences.
- **To respond** to the priorities of the Methodist Church in Cuba.
- **To build** relationships between the Florida Conference and the Methodist Church in Cuba for mutual support and encouragement.
- **To enable** the training of pastors and lay people for the equipping of Cuban disciples.
- **To mutually share** the history, current events, culture, and spirituality of both Conferences.

Sister Churches



Havana District	NE Florida District
Bauta	Oak Crest
Capdevilla	Glynlea Grace Harmony Chapel Spring Glen
Central	Avondale
La Europa	Keystone
Guanabacoa	Mandarin
El Guatao	Highlands Garden City New Life Community Wesley Fellowship
Jaimanitas	Murray Hill
Loma de Cañita	1st UMC Starke
Marianao	CrossRoad
El Mariel	St. Paul
Mayorkin	Middleburg
Playas de Santa Fe	Orange Park
Punta Brava	Isle of Faith
San Antonio de los Baños	Lake Shore
San Antonio de Rio Blanco	Trinity (Palatka)
Santa Cruz del Norte	Swaim Memorial
Santiago de las Vegas	Southside
La Sierra	Ponte Vedra
Tumbadero/Callazo	Macclenny
Martin Pérez	River of Life
Vedado / University	Lakewood
Artemisa	Community (Lake Como)
The Retirement Home	1st UMC