

Cuba Current

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2009

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Task Force Secretary Renee Kincaid Reports on her October Cuba trip

Renee submitted this report shortly after her arrival in the U.S.

Friday night, October 30, our caravan team arrived back in Miami around 9:30pm. One team member, Terri Seffner, stayed another week in Cuba to visit her second sister church. She and Dan (in Tampa) are still not feeling well- please keep them in your prayers.

The trip was so blessed! At the Miami airport they didn't even ask us for our Treasury licenses. We had over 700 pounds of luggage but only paid about \$300 for all the overweight plus \$10 per bag. We passed time waiting for plane's departure singing and dancing with Oni, our airlines rep (it was Hispanic month celebration at the airport and there were latin bands/trios/singers all over) "God turned our worrying into dancing".

Santiago airport has been completely remodeled. Visas were waiting and given to all but mine. As a Cuban and the leader of the group, an officer asked that I reply to some questions- always the same. Went through two more questioning and then through to Customs. (Our Cuban brothers/sisters go through worse questioning when they arrive here). Angels were at Cus-

toms to get us through the luggage/meds checkpoint and we didn't have to pay anything.

About 1 1/2 hours from arrival we went out to greet the "cheering crowd" of pastors who had been praying intensely for us all the time outside. Pastor Pedro, Raidel, Norges, Argelis, Joel and others greeted us with hugs, kisses and Hallelujahs. A great air-conditioned church bus waited to take us to the San Juan Church. There we had dinner and started giving out all the correspondence, meds, etc..... So much to talk about, so little time.

Pastor Joel took Cristina to Jamaica/Guantanamo. The rest of us left Santiago about 10 pm and picked up Pastor Armando at Palmas Altas and Rodolfo, translator and arrived in Niquero at 4 am.

The Marriage Workshop started at the Niquero Church at 10 am. The rest of the blessings we received from our Good God will come later when I get some time to write it all up.

Summarizing: we took about 150 pounds of medicines and hygiene products. Six of us visited sixteen Methodist churches in the S.



Maestra and Santiago districts and Cristina visited two, plus many missions in the fields. There are now Seminary classes for new pastors in all districts and they were going on in Bayamo and Santiago during our trip. This was interesting!

LOVE DARE Marriage Workshops - overall we took five DVDs and fourteen books (we need ways to send them more books as they were all very eager to read it)- In Santiago they had already gotten the movie *somehow* (they are incredibly resourceful!). All the pastors shared that they loved it and will continue to work with the book and their congregations. They will also do something special on LOVE DARE for Valentines Day- 2010.

Niquero Methodist Church/ S. Maestra - wonderful!- over 100 persons (only married persons) congregated with 11 pastor couples in attendance, watched the movie and our presentation and had dinner. Handouts

BIBLE VERSE:

- *For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Col. 1:9*

were given to all and we heard afterwards that the ones that had attended were sharing this with others in the congregation.

San Juan Methodist Church- Santiago- GREAT! There were about 35 persons - 5 pastor couples in attendance, watched the movie and our presentation and had dinner. Pastor Raidel and the Wesley members were not able to attend because they were expecting the arrival of Bishop Pereira. At the San Juan church there was a lot of interaction among the attendees and the presenters.

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Isle of Faith raises funds for Punta Brava floor

Isle of faith has good news to share! They are able to contribute a significant amount towards the \$1,800 needed by Pastor Antonio for Punta Brava's floor. They have approximately \$1,000 now and hope to raise more during the Advent season.

IOF supports Punta Brava through their generosity, prayer, special correspondence relationships, and service.

Blessings to Michael Oakes for his good work on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Cuba.

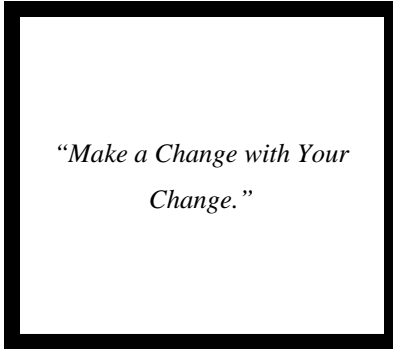


Pastor Antonio and Gina at Isle of Faith

Ponte Vedra UMC launches "Change for Cuba"

Beginning in the New Year, all loose coins placed in the Sunday collection plate at PVUMC will go to our Cuba sister church mission ministry.

"Change for Cuba" is an opportunity for us to clean out our pockets and pocketbooks weekly and put those pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters to great use in God's kingdom. (Remember that the average monthly wage in Cuba is \$15).



Our La Sierra small group will count the change and use it for food, medicine,

supplies, travel and other support for our brothers and sisters at La

Sierra Methodist Church in Cuba. A trip to deliver needed items is in the works for February.



Renee's Trip (Continued from page 1)

Pastor Pedro was a great MC, encouraging all to share.

Our conclusion was that the new caravan purpose for our travel to Cuba -to attend a *District Event*- may have been meant for evil but God turned it into good. In our ministry of encouragement to our faithful Cuban brothers and sisters we became more and more sensitive and receptive of their perseverance and commitment to spread the Word of God, regardless of the situation or circumstances. We were again humbled

and filled with joy in having been there and bringing back more than we took.

Blessings,

Renee



Petition under way for freedom to travel to Cuba

Today, Americans are free to travel anywhere in the world except Cuba.

Sign the Petition (<http://www.opencuba.org/>):

to end the 50-year ban on travel to Cuba.”

In April, President Obama took a bold step by making it easier for Cuban Americans to visit their families in Cuba. Opinion polls show that the overwhelming majority of Americans believes that all U.S. citizens should have the freedom to travel to Cuba. We agree.

To President Barack Obama, Vice President Biden and Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives:

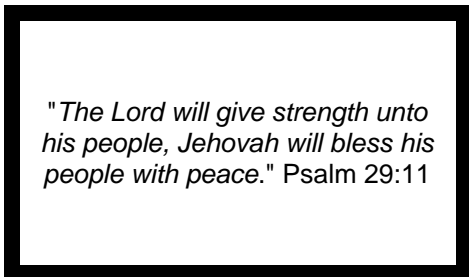


The opportunity to end the 50-year travel ban now hangs in the balance. We must seize this moment and speak with a powerful, united voice. Join us in urging U.S. leaders to give all Americans the freedom to travel to Cuba.

“Now is the time to give all Americans the freedom to travel to Cuba, and allow U.S. travel companies to help get them there. We call on you

Pastor Reinier injured in car accident

Our brother in Las Tunas, Pastor Reinier, his wife Salome, and a church member were recently injured in a car accident. The pastor and his wife are recovering from their bumps and bruises, but the 21 year old church member sustained



serious injuries and had to undergo surgery. Only a miracle of God saved his life. He is still in the hospital at last report, but doing well. Pray for full re-

coveries and for concerns about legal repercussions from the authorities.

Garden City UMC raises funds for El Guatao

Garden City’s *Mission of the Month* last month was their Cuba sister church (El Guatao). They share their sister church with Highlands, New Life, and Wesley Fellowship, with Highlands pastor Joe Allinder serving as the leader of the group.

Blessings to John Brueggemann and the members of Garden City UMC!



As always, getting the funds into Cuba will prove to be a challenge. But we hope to have a group in Havana in February who may be able to help out.

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.cubafloridacovenant.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
Capdevila	Glynlea Grace Harmony Chapel Spring Glen
Central	Avondale
La Europa	Keystone
Guanabacoa	Mandarin
El Guatao	Highlands Garden City New Life Community
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	Maccleenny
Martin Pérez	River of Life
Vedado / University	Lakewood
Artemisa	Community (Lake Como)
The Retirement Home	1st UMC