



INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS BÍBLICOS INTERNACIONALES

EN LINEA • ON LINE

JULY NEWSLETTER 2023

Welcome to our July 2023 Newsletter, here are some of our latest developments. I want to focus mainly on Cuba for this newsletter since Luis just made his bi-annual trip July 1-15th. I have A LOT to share from his trip plus other developments in and around Cuba.

MONTHLY CLASS OUTSIDE OF CLASSES Outside of regular classes, I have personally committed to teaching a monthly class on different topics that aren't part of the regular curriculum. We had our first class last Wednesday night on the topic of maturing your Christian walk and relationship with God and Jesus. Being on a Wednesday night, I was counting on about half attendance because of conflicts with work, church etc. We did have several regular students, but when the Cubans signed on, I was blown away.

As you know, we are working primarily with 3 churches in east Cuba. When the Cubans started logging on, I was not only teaching to our regular students, but I was looking at 3 church buildings full of people. I really have no idea how many were in attendance. That doesn't matter. The Bible was taught, people heard the word, and God was glorified.

LUIS'S TRIP Luis returned from Cuba on July 15th. Although the trip was hard, many great things were done and many new plans were put into action. Instead of giving a play by play of the entire trip, I want to hit the highlights of what was accomplished.

BENEVOLENCE **James 2:15-16 Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, ¹⁶ and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well" — but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?**

The economic situation in Cuba is struggling more so than in the past. There are shortages of food, medicine and basic necessities. Plus, many things that we take for granted here, such as ibuprofen or Tylenol are unheard of there. As you know, the First Street Church of Christ has graciously offered to handle our donations within the United States, but we are double blessed. Each time that Luis goes, their benevolence committee gives EBI money for basic medicine, such as ibuprofen, allergy medications, band aids, etc. Between the church and Luis's personal donation to the effort, more than 70 lbs. of medication were taken to Cuba and given to the churches to distribute as needed.

Also, Luis took some seeds for medicinal plants and 2 ram pumps for the churches to use. They are going to start growing local medicinal plants to help the community and even local doctors to help treat patients. So, through Luis' efforts, EBI is not only attending to their spiritual needs, we are striving to help with much needed physical needs as well.



Luis in action

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CLASSROOM AND OTHER MATERIALS This trip, Luis also took a laptop, tablet, new cellphone and 2 more projectors to continue setting up the church buildings as classrooms and community centers. These things are either unavailable or cost prohibitive locally. Obviously, Luis has been very successful in the way he has helped them manage their tools and technology. You have read in past newsletters of the success we have experienced in setting up the church buildings as “Community Centers” and other things, but just look at my surprise when last Wednesday I found out I was preaching to 3 church buildings full of people!!!!

THE TEAM As you know, we have been building a team of preachers and teachers that revolves around the EBI program. Being that Luis is a Cuban citizen (as well as U.S. Citizen), and with his 20+ years in the mission field, he has been invaluable in setting up and organizing the local team in Cuba. I want to introduce some of our team members.



Luis – He is one of our main teachers here at EBI and oversees the work in Cuba. He worked as a missionary in Cuba for 20+ years. I am sure by now you are familiar with him and his works.

Rolando – Rolando is a Gospel Preacher and he is the Lead Preacher on our team. He is not only preaching, teaching and baptizing, he is also working on training both younger preachers and “up and coming” preachers for service to the Lord.

Erlich – Erlich is one of our local team members and “up and coming” preachers. He is our technology guru. As a matter of fact, through his work, I think we are the first, if not only group that actually has 2-way video feed between Cuba and the rest of the world!!!

Yamirelis – Yamirelis is our EBI manager/secretary. EBI is not a church, but we are an institute and we need reliable staff. She is HIGHLY educated and is fairly highly ranked in the Ministry of Education. She is our “boots on the ground” and keeps everything organized and running smooth. She talks to either Luis or me each day, so we have a constant line of communication between EBI and the Cuban work. If you remember, Phoebe was Paul’s “right hand” in the church of Cenchrea, near Corinth (Romans 16). As far as everything I have read, Yamirelis seems to be following in her footsteps.



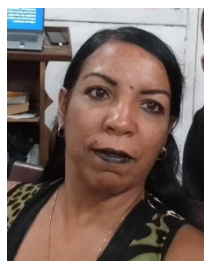
Luis



Rolando



Erlich



Yamirelis

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MEETING WITH THE STUDENTS – Luis took a full day and met with our students and local church members. He wanted to meet with them “one on one” without interruption so he rented a restaurant and invited everyone to lunch. They spent several hours fellowshiping and listening to Luis speaking and teaching about how to study, what to study and how to get the most out of the EBI program.

It was a huge success. For some of our students, it was the first time that they ever had the opportunity to eat in a restaurant.

On Sunday, Luis preached in Palmas Soriano. He was supposed to preach for ½ hour but he ended up preaching for nearly 2 hours and they still weren’t ready for him to stop.

WHERE ARE THEY GOING – Luis met with the team members and preachers. They are highly motivated. Their next goal is to appoint sound Elders and Deacons in the churches where we are working. When that happens, they will be the first churches in Cuba to ever have Elders and Deacons. This is a HUGE step in the maturing of the local churches and a significant accomplishment of the EBI team.

Next on their list is to start a preacher training school. I am not sure when this will happen, but I do know that it is on their minds and on their hearts and we are moving towards that goal. Rolando has offered to be the main teacher and the entire team is excited to see this become a reality in the future. Please keep this and all of their efforts in your prayers.

NEW BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST!

It wouldn’t be a good newsletter if I didn’t introduce you to our new brothers and sisters. Our students baptized 12 more people in June. I believe that brings this year’s total up to 71 baptisms this year as of June 30th.



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WHERE WE WANT TO GO

Right now, we are supporting 7 full-time preachers. Our goal is to finish out a 10 preacher team with 3 more preachers. We also want to assist Rolando, Erlich and Yamirelis create a formal preacher training program in Cuba. It takes just \$125/month for each full-time preacher. Below is how you can help.

How You Can Help Estudios Bíblicos Internacionales & Cuba Predica/Preach Cuba

First: Remember, we are a privately funded program. Here is how you can help:

The First Street Church of Christ has graciously agreed to handle our donations in the U.S.

TO GIVE, simply go to www.givelify.com, search First Street Church of Christ, enter the amount and then choose either “EBI - Estudios Bíblicos Internacionales” or “Cuban Preacher Program” or you can mail a check to:

First Street Church of Christ, 201 W 1st Street, Lampasas, TX 76550 – be sure and put “EBI - Estudios Bíblicos Internacionales” or “Cuban Preacher Program” in the memo.

Secondly: You can help with Prayers, Prayers, Prayers!!!

Please keep this program in your prayers and pray that God can effectively use our students, teachers and everyone involved to carry the Good News throughout Latin America and the world.

May God bless each and every one of you for your support of this program,
Rocky Castleberry

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