



INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS BÍBLICOS INTERNACIONALES

EN LINEA • ON LINE

JUNE-JULY NEWSLETTER 2022

Welcome to our June-July Newsletter, Luis Pedraza just returned from a phenomenal trip to Cuba that exceeded our expectations. I am going to share his report with you as our newsletter but first let me summarize and share upcoming news.

First, please keep our program in your prayers the next few weeks. Not only do we have meetings with several mission groups in August, we have been invited to present our program at Predicador 2022, a national conference for all Spanish speaking congregations in the United States. This gives us the opportunity to present our program and our capabilities across the U.S. This is an incredible opportunity.

Second, please take the time to read Luis's report to follow. It is apparent that God used Luis on his trip to Cuba. Just a quick summary, congregations were united and classes were established. Contacts were made and our Cuban enrollment is going to more than quadruple. Luis and our program is setting up a team with people who used to be in an HIV camp to help in the ministering to many of the patients locked away from society and forgotten. We now have a school administrator that is dedicated to be our full time "boots on the ground" in Cuba and be our liaison between our program here and the different congregations throughout Cuba.

I don't want to waste any of your time reading my ramblings, so here is Luis's report.

Cuban Mission Report

Luis Pedraza

July 1 to July 18

I left Omaha, Nebraska on July 1st and arrived in Santa Clara, Cuba at 9:00pm that night.

The next day I rented a Kia Picanto and traveled to Las Tunas, which is over 200 miles away.

I first started working with congregations in this area many years ago and we actually got up to 21 congregations in this part of Cuba. I wanted to begin reconnecting with them. The congregations got involved with the National Junta which turns the church into an adulterated version of the church since the Junta decides who is a church, who can preach and is under strict control of the government. I contacted several of them, but their



U.S. & Whatsapp [+1] 512-734-4074 Costa Rica 506-8327-0538

www.EBlenlinea.com YouTube: Estudios Bíblicos Abiertos

San Jose, Costa Rica Email: ebi@ebienlinea.com



INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS BÍBLICOS INTERNACIONALES

EN LINEA • ON LINE

interest was in receiving money and assistance instead of the growing the church, so I decided to move onto my next destination.

The next day I went to Holguin City and met up with my brother and friend Oliberto Aguilera and his wife, Mima. Oliberto has diabetes so I gave him one of the diabetes kits that I brought for the trip. Oliberto is being supported by Central Sparta Church of Christ and is considering our proposal.

From Holguin I tried to drive to San German, but the road was in such a bad shape, that I wasn't able to make it to San German in the Kia. I didn't want to take a chance on damaging the Kia and jeopardizing my trip to Palma Soriano and Dos Palmas, where we already have active students.

I changed my direction and arrived at Bayamo. Again, the members were too tied in with the National Junta, so wanting to maintain a low profile, I went onto Palma Soriano.

I last worked with this congregation back in 2007. We had a wonderful graduation and 4 of them graduated with me from preaching school. Because of my past relationship with them, they were immediately not only interested, but also very excited about my proposal and the work we are trying to do. I spent significant time with them and many of the members want to become involved in the program.

We began to share dreams and ideas, so next trip I will bring them a virtual classroom. The "virtual classroom" is the small projectors that we took to other congregations that plug into a cell phone and can be used to broadcast our classes to several people at once. It will work as a class for our classes and the rest of the time it will be used as an entertainment center for Christian Education, showing Bible movies, especially cartoons and movies for the children which will allow them to have more time to have fellowship and will be a great teaching tool for the families.

The next day I moved on to Dos Palmas, where we also have students. The drive was only 7 km (a little over 4 miles) but the trip took over 2 hours to get there.

They were all expecting me with such joyous hearts. We immediately started sharing our dreams and ideas together.

All of these congregations in this area have been "drifting" by themselves, not infiltrated by the National Junta. We have 4 congregations in this area and all four are connected by our EBI program. I have been in regular contact with them since they started studying with us and they were so warm and happy to see me, I was treated as if I were an angel sent to them from God. I am still feeling overwhelmed by the response I received from the brothers and sisters there.

U.S. & Whatsapp [+1] 512-734-4074 Costa Rica 506-8327-0538

www.EBIenlinea.com YouTube: Estudios Bíblicos Abiertos

San Jose, Costa Rica Email: ebi@ebienlinea.com



INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS BÍBLICOS INTERNACIONALES

EN LINEA • ON LINE

They are the group that I brought the “virtual classroom” for (phone projector, adapters, etc.) along with movies on a USB flash drive so that they can use it not only for classes, but also as a television, as a teaching tool and for fellowship. They were overwhelmed when they saw how it all worked.

We also bought two cell phones from the U.S. and cables to help connect all of our classes, which will help others connect and continue to expand our enrollment and participation. Before the projectors, several people would “huddle” around a couple of cell phones but now we can project our classes where the whole room can see our teachers, powerpoints, etc. and everyone can now participate.

I encouraged them to have a cup of coffee together almost twice a week, which will increase their love for each other, and will help everyone to stay better connected and it is a good excuse just to fellowship with each other.

While there, I bought 2 fans, curtains and 20 chairs to help facilitate our classes.

Also I wanted to meet with all of the leaders of all of the 6 congregations in the area, so I bought a 120 lb. pig, paid some of the bus fare for some of the leaders and we had a festival bigger than the one when the pope came to Cuba for the first time. The festival paid off 100 fold.

The conditions in Cuba are below poverty level, but despite this, the churches are following our classes and recommendations. They are working so well together even to the point that everyone is giving 20 pesos for a mission work to help kids with special needs. They are doing phenomenal job of bringing these kids together celebrating a life of Hope.

Faith In Action.

They have already come so far, not only in capturing my heart, but in advancing the Kingdom.

It is remarkable, one of these preachers out of complete frustration and despair had become alcoholic. With our counseling, classes, being surrounded by his physical and church family, he is recovering his life. For now, I have access to his family and they report to me that he is doing well and faithful again.

He is also sick with diabetes and I gave him one of our diabetic devices and some medication.

Also, I bought for them some beautiful clothing especially for kids and women.

As you probably know, we took them plenty of the basic, but necessary medications they were asking for and I included some reading glasses, and also sunglasses. The Cuban women are overwhelmed and appreciative of a simple pair of sunglasses due to the long distances that they have to walk under a very

U.S. & Whatsapp [+1] 512-734-4074 Costa Rica 506-8327-0538

www.EBlenlinea.com YouTube: Estudios Bíblicos Abiertos

San Jose, Costa Rica Email: ebi@ebienlinea.com



INSTITUTO DE
ESTUDIOS BÍBLICOS
INTERNACIONALES
EN LINEA • ON LINE

hot sun, with no other options. We take so many things for granted that the Cubans can't even imagine as possible

Jerry Guidicy and Johnnetta Wilde, from the U.S., did this for me years ago, and it was a way to pay back to the Lord

I spent 3 days at the two Palmas, and then returned to Bayamo.

Just to give you a glimpse, there is a deep crisis of fuel oil all over Cuba. It is worse in the east than in the west where I was, but even so, I was limited to only purchasing 20 liters of gas per day.

Sometimes I would have to spend a whole day in a long line to get my allotted 20 liters of gas.

From Bayamo I went onto Manzanillo, my intention was to see Pedro Minardo in Media Luna, but there was not gas on Manzanillo, so I lost 2 more days. This was the 3rd time it happened to me. The churches in Manzanillo and Bayamo used to work very close to me, but right now it is not going well.

From Manzanillo, I went back to Las Tunas.

In Las Tunas, I tried to reach back out to Misael Sanches, who is willing to get involved with us, each time I tried, I was unable to connect. I will save him for another trip.

As previously stated, the churches in Santa Clara, Camaguey, Florida, Ciego de Avila, seemed interested on being supported economically, but showing little interest in our classes.

I came across the same situation in Santi Spiritus.

I finally had a talk with Jose Solis Cancio, even though he is well connected with the national junta, he asked me for 4 positions in our classes for his leaders.

At this point, I was running out of time and I wanted to finish my work in Santa Clara. Isaías and Yenisey were waiting for me and they have both had HIV since a very young age. Isaías's father, Rodolfo was one of my men that I have been able to do a lot of good work with in the past in this area.

In Cuba, people with HIV were locked up in a special camp, although they were allowed to have visitors. But because of HIV, many people were afraid and refused to meet with them.

I began my counseling ministry with them. Visiting them I could reach 12 of them, but the big catch was Isaías and his wife Yenisey.

They were instructed by me first on the theology and later on the field of counseling.

U.S. & Whatsapp [+1] 512-734-4074 Costa Rica 506-8327-0538

www.EBlenlinea.com YouTube: Estudios Bíblicos Abiertos

San Jose, Costa Rica Email: ebi@ebienlinea.com



INSTITUTO DE
ESTUDIOS BÍBLICOS
INTERNACIONALES
EN LINEA • ON LINE

Isaias is preaching on one small congregation with a 45 person membership, and his wife supports him in everything possible.

Now it was my dream to gather and to get all of the people I could with AIDS, but it seems to be that this ministry was assigned to them.

We have started a WhatsApp group, called “Escuelita” where all the old friends from the camp can connect with each other. Many of them still believe in Santeria which is kind of like Voodoo, but all them believe that there is a God.

So, they are preparing for 3 groups to meet with us, but they are so carefully choosing the best candidates to join, apart from the 2 of them (Isaias and Yenisey).

As part of my trip, I reached out to my nephew who is an idolater and is infected with HIV. I took him one of the diabetic kits and some special medication I could buy in the U.S. for him.

I am growing personally for I have stopped arguing with him, now I am trying to love him, showing him love, the way the Lord loves me. It has been a long journey for me. I have been a warrior and in the past I was behaving as such. Now my heart is tender, more like heart of Jesus.

As part of this trip, I took more than 60 pounds of medications that are inaccessible in Cuba. I delivered the 2 cell phones that will be used to teach our classes. I gave out 3 diabetic kits, mosquito repellent, electronic devices, connectors and many other things. It feels like it is never enough, but Jesus once fed 5000 people with 2 fish and 5 loaves, I am sure that he can use what little I could carry to make the same impact.

This trip only gave me a purpose to return next year. I need to take another virtual classroom, or two. I need to follow up with our existing contacts and our new contacts. Cuba is wide open and so receptive. It is fair to say that Cuba could very well be a huge part of our program.

I pray for the opportunity to return to Cuba next year with my 5 loaves and 2 fish.

God Bless,

Luis

U.S. & Whatsapp [+1] 512-734-4074 Costa Rica 506-8327-0538

www.EBlenlinea.com YouTube: Estudios Bíblicos Abiertos

San Jose, Costa Rica Email: ebi@ebienlinea.com