

CUBA OUTREACH MINISTRY #638 MAY 6-13 2024

Trip Report - by Walter Jakimczuk



Dorothy Belinda Rodger Linda Melodie Olivia Teri Walter Isabella Barbara

On Monday May 6th 2024 Cuba Outreach Ministry sent a team of 10 people including eight (8) members from Bethel Baptist Church for a one week short term mission trip in the Santa Clara area of Cuba. With the purposed of encouraging, equipping and evaluating while visiting all the supported pastors and their families' in their homes, as well as operating a Sorting Day, and hosting a Pastor's Day.

Previously there was sent to Cuba three 50 pound duffle bags of supplies by willing travellers. Each of our team members brought two 50 pound duffle bags while a third bag was added to three, totaling 26 bags weighting 1.300 pounds. These bags contained much needed supplies of medicine, personal hygiene products, etc. all carefully prioritized specifically to meet the needs of the families we serve.

On arrival to Santa Clara airport, everyone had their required copy (digital or printed) of a pre declaration QR code for entry. With this we all able to experience a very smooth easy process going through the Customs and Immigration. An answer to prayer.

We were met at the airport by Pastor Jose E. (Kiki) and his team in Cuba looking after our transportation needs, packing the bags and everyone one into a bus and a 1956 Pontiac driven by Jesus. Jesus was our driver in 2013 who was looking forward to serving us. Some of the bags had to be tied down on the roof of the car in order for us all to go to where we were staying in Santa Clara.

When we finally got settled in at the Hostel Buena Vista in Santa Clara (our home away from home for 10 years) we went over our plans for the week adjusting to what was the reality on the ground

If we have learned anything you must always be flexible as things are very dynamic and changing with little to no notice. A supply of water was provided with more in reserve. Essential to us NOT to drink the local water supply as it would do serious harm. (Parasites)

Every morning was started with us all sharing a meal time, planning the day, sharing a devotional time, spending time in prayer and practising our song we planned to sing on Pastor's Day. (This is the Promise)

The group was able to be divided into two smaller teams to travel around central Cuba visiting Pastors and their families delivering their bags of supplies. We would catch up on news and hear of their plans. Ending our visits with prayer we would continue on.

At the end of the day we were together for a shared supper and a time reflecting on the Day. Belinda and I enjoyed reading a letter every night from our Prayers. A good source of encouragement and a feeling of unity. A closeness even though we are thousands of miles apart there is sense of being well prayed over.



SORTING DAY

Tuesday we organized and executed what we call "Sorting Day". At Getsemini Church in Placetás all the 26 bags go into a large room where they are opened one by one, contents taken out to be organized and reassembled into labeled individual separate bags for delivery. Every team member works as a well-oiled machine with specific assignments. There were four of our duffle bags refilled with medical stuff for distribution, through clinics to go directly helping the most urgent needs. Later on the week at a church in Camahuani a lady wept to receive a colostomy bag. We learned from a doctor that when plates or pins for bones, or prosthetics (hip/knee) are needed they are acquired (reclaimed) from relatives who have passed away (from cadavers).

The special reassembled bags are stored in a designated room where we daily take out those going to the Pastors and their families (plus special gifts for the children).

In one of our visits there was a missionary (Salvador) who had no water. No well of his own. Last trip we provided some funds to take care of this situation but since then he ran into problems digging the well. (rocks). He needed to rent equipment and he has no money so everything stopped. After enquiring the costs of renting equipment, the depth needed, and costs involved. At that moment, team members took up a collection that will take care of it all. Next trip we will visit and see the progress.



PASTOR'S DAY

Pastor's Day was a dynamic time of reunion, worship, music, song, prayer, and Pastor Rodger preached through a translator (Ode) a message addressing their current situation.

There was a very good meal prepared for everyone (75 people) before the people departing for home. Some had to travel several hours by bus back to Cienfuegos province.

Too many God moments to share here except for this one,

Imagine while our team visited the church of our friend Fernando R. in Camahuani. Over the years this church has hosted many Conferences, youth camps and special doctor's clinics. While we were visiting the family we meet three travellers from Toronto Canada who were choosing that day to visit a church and on hearing about us wanted know about what we were doing. After some time of sharing it was discovered that one of our team members (Melodie) personally knew one of them. (Raymond). They maybe interested in returning November to Cuba with Humanitarian supplies.

If you have an opportunity to speak to any team member, you will hear of many many more experiences.

In conclusion, all of our experiences and what was learned will be used to plan and prepare for our next mission trip in early November 2024 which already almost has a full team preparing including our two friends from Quebec. Lord Willing.