

*The Journal of
Florida Baptist Heritage
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Florida Baptist Heritage
Journal of the Florida Baptist Historical Society

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Cover: Baptist leaders (L to R) Carlos Ferrer, North American Mission Board; Kevin Ezell, president, North American Mission Board; John Sullivan, executive director-treasurer, Florida Baptist Convention; and David Gonzales, volunteer coordinator and publishing director for the Western Cuba Baptist Convention, on the rooftop of the Western Cuba Baptist Convention and Calvary Baptist Church building overlooking the city of Havana, Cuba

Back cover: Western Cuba Baptist Convention building and Calvary Baptist Church, Havana, Cuba

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INTRODUCTION



Jerry Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Florida Baptist Historical Society

Welcome to the fourteenth Issue of The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage

Cuba is 700 miles long and 50 miles wide. It has 11 million people and is larger than Kentucky but smaller than Alabama. It is so close to Florida that in 1978, when the United States Navy considered withdrawing naval forces from the Keys, Mayor Charles McCoy of Key West water skied to Cuba to remind the public that Cuba is next door.

Columbus reached Cuba in 1492, and there were 50,000 Indians living in Cuba at the time. Cuba remained under Spanish rule until 1898 except for the brief 1762-1763 British occupation of Havana. Spain, sugar and sun ran Cuba for 400 years.

The language has been Spanish. The culture has been Spanish and the religion has been Catholic. Cuba and Florida have been closely connected in the modern era because of the 90 mile proximity of Key West, sugar plantations and a nagging feeling that Cuba needed more than they had.

In 1884, the Florida Baptist Convention passed a resolution that authorized Baptist work to begin in Cuba. Since then Florida Baptists have determined to reach out to Cuba with love. This issue speaks to that committed missions endeavor.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Windsor". The signature is stylized and cursive.

CHAPTER 1 "IN 1492, COLUMBUS SAILED THE OCEAN BLUE" (1492-1762)

In *The Current* magazine, published in Chicago in 1884, Robert McReynolds has a helpful article on "The Crypt of Columbus." McReynolds states that it was one of our countrymen who wrote the "silly verses":

"In fourteen hundred and ninety two
Columbus crossed the ocean blue,
and found a wild and desert shore
where never a ship had sailed before."

These "silly verses" caught on and as late as 1991 a children's book was written by Jean Marzollo, entitled *In 1492*, that starts out:

"In fourteen hundred ninety two
Columbus sailed the ocean blue."

These words have been learned by school children in North America as they remind themselves of the who, when and what of discovery by Christopher Columbus.

Native People

Some 50,000 people lived in Cuba when it was reached by Columbus in 1492. The name Cuba is a name derived from the native word Cubanacan. It was on October 28, 1492, that the Columbus fleet sailed onto a large island the Indians called "Colba."¹ For the first time an European was exposed to maize or Indian corn. He also saw hammocks, tobacco, cotton and yams. But no Chinese junkets and no gold except the small amount worn by the Indians. Columbus thought "Colba" was Japan or a part of China.

Cuba became a slave based sugar plantation that depended on the sun and the sea for its economic success. But no gold. Native guides kept assuring Columbus there was gold but none could be found. The islanders were peaceful, innocent and trusting but the often mentioned gold reserves were myths.

The Columbus Motivation

Theories have been propounded and books have been written as to why Columbus set out on his voyage to the west. The basic motivation of Columbus not only foreshadowed his journey but also gives meaning to his October 12, 1492 discovery.



Christopher Columbus

There was certainly a political motivation. On January 19, 1492, Columbus made his final appeal to Isabella and was unexpectedly rejected. It was from the personal and financial involvement of Luis de Santangel that Isabella changed her mind and agreed to back Columbus. It was politically important for him to find the "islands and mainlands in the ocean sea" for Castile. Samuel Eliot Morison in *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, notes that the whole picture changed when Santangel, "keeper of the party purse," pointed out to the queen that the Columbus undertaking could "increase glory for her realms and crown."²

Also there was the monetary motivation. Gold was seen as the answer to each quest and the proper explanation for each conquest. George Grant in *The Last Crusader*, sees the gold influence as a temporary distraction and Peter Marshall and David Manuel in *The Light and the Glory*, views gold as the satanic influence of the love of money.³ Yet money was needed to finance the voyages and had to be a consideration. Queen Isabella had talked with Columbus in 1486 about the possibility of an Indies exploration but was ever cautious

in her dealings with him. When she married Ferdinand of Aragon she succeeded in uniting all the Spains except Portugal. According to Morison Isabella was an able administrator, strong leader and shared a basic religious mysticism that was also a fundamental characteristic of Columbus.

From 1486 to 1492 Columbus was a miserable man. He had a great plan, great ambition and basic honesty, but he needed a sponsor. Isabella could be counted on but she was a procrastinator. She appointed Hernando de Talavera to investigate the feasibility of the Indies investment and Columbus waited. Samuel Eliot Morison said that Columbus had a continuous battle against prejudice, ignorance, rudeness, and indifference. Columbus felt that the combination of gold and native conversions should be enough for Isabella to become a generous benefactor. She depended upon Talavera, and his commission finally issued a negative report in 1490, and this embittered Columbus. The commission stated that the plans of Columbus "rested on weak foundations." They gave interesting reasons for withholding their support and the reasons included: too uncertain, too far, and too expensive. However it was the theological argument that put the nail in the coffin for they felt God would never have allowed any uninhabited land of real value to be concealed from His people for so many centuries.

Columbus did not back down, he doubled down. Rather than giving up he came to the Queen in 1491 with a new set of requirements. He was willing to go for "souls and gold" but he had demands. He wanted the title of admiral, he wanted to be governor of the new lands he discovered, he wanted all titles to be hereditary for his family and he wanted ten percent of the take. Morison spins out a story of persistence and providence in his first two chapters of *The European Discovery of America*. Columbus suffered ridicule and rejection but he would not quit.

Another consideration was the sad part that ignorance played in the whole Columbus venture. Winston Churchill pointed out "That he left without knowing where he was going, arrived where

he did not think he would, all of it at the expense of others, and still emerged a hero..."⁴ Samuel Eliot Morison was even more definitive about the ignorance factor. Morison points out that the world for Columbus was simply too small and too small by his own calculation. Morison notes that through several basic



Ferdinand and Isabella with their subjects

errors Columbus reduced the length of a degree of longitude by one-quarter. Morison goes on to say "That is why those islands were given the name "Las Indias," and their inhabitants called "Indios." Japan and China were then being reckoned as part of "The Indies." Our world is 70 percent water and 30 percent land. Columbus had a world that was 70 percent land and 30 percent water. These illogical findings put India, China and Japan in his sailing sights but not in his experience. His world was simply too small."⁵

Most history books do not record the fact that there was a faith based motivation in the thinking of Columbus. As late as 1494 Columbus still believed he could follow the coast of Cuba and make a Chinese contact with the mighty Grand Khan. He was convinced that Cuba was a continent and on some maps as late as 1515 is found "Terra de Cuba Asiae Partis." Yet navigational errors and the hope for gold does not diminish the fact that Columbus still had some basic religious motivation.

Marshall and Manuel point out in *The Light and the Glory* (p. 43), that "on every island at which they stopped, Columbus had his men erect a large wooden cross "as a token of Jesus Christ our Lord, and in honor of the Christian faith." George Grant in *The Last Crusader* (p. 109), quotes Columbus from his *Book of Prophecies*, giving a confessional statement that would be gladly welcomed in any Baptist church. Columbus uses all the language

of Zion with such statements as "I am a most unworthy sinner, but I have cried out to the Lord for grace and mercy and they have covered me completely. I have found the sweetest consolation since I made it my whole purpose to enjoy his marvelous presence..." The right words were written by Columbus but when you parse them what do the words mean?

Ferdinand Columbus, a son of Christopher Columbus, that was constantly with his father between the ages of twelve and eighteen said, "In matters of religion he was so strict that for fasting and saying all the canonical offices he might have been taken for a member of a religious order." Ferdinand said his father was opposed to all cursing and swearing and it was also reported he was sober and moderate in eating, drinking and clothing. Samuel Eliot Morison goes so far as to say "Men may doubt this, but there can be no doubt that the faith of Columbus was genuine and sincere, and that his frequent communion with forces unseen was a vital element in his achievement."⁶

Columbus was a confessing Christian. He felt called, he felt driven and he was devotedly Catholic. His religious experience appeared to be genuine and his piety real but there was a huge fly in the ointment. Dr. John A. Mackey, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, and former Presbyterian missionary to Peru, said that Columbus seemed to only know a dead Christ and not a living Lord. Mackey charged that the cross was only a symbol of piety and was only custom for Columbus and his cohorts. Mackey goes so far as to raise this question: "Why did the Christ of the Gospel not accompany Columbus to America? It was because He was not allowed." Mackey believed that the Columbus who planted crosses had the romantic concept of religion that allowed for "a poor Christ" but not a living Lord. In a 1944 gathering at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, Dr. Mackey delivered an address "The Unfulfilled Dream of Columbus." Mackey felt religion in the Columbian discoveries was Roman Catholic romance but not radical "Follow Me" regeneration.

Mackey stated that the religion introduced by Columbus was the type that could never connect belief and ethics. He felt the so called religious invasion of South America brought tradition and ritual but no change in personal belief or behavior.⁷ This charge seems personally biased but it must be admitted the presence of a mistress, forced Indian labor, intended exclusion of all Jews, infidels, foreigners, and heretics from the new world does not seem to reflect open minded or open hearted Christianity.⁸

If New Testament piety and regeneration salvation was not in the mix exactly what was the "religious motivation" of Columbus in 1492 when he came to the Americas?

Columbus spoke of mandates, commissions, conversions and colonizing. But what was the thing that he saw off on the horizon? What was his ultimate goal? Why did he keep going back to sea when honors and prestige were his as early as age 41? In 1944, Dr. John Mackey stated that Isaiah 60:9, was the life verse or "text of Columbus." The verse reads "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee." One theory is that in 1492 the life verse and life desire of Columbus met. When the crusaders failed, the last of the Christians were driven out of Syria in 1291. The Ottoman (so called from their leader Othman) Turks eventually got Asia Minor under their control and through their sultans (leaders) captured Constantinople in 1453. With this, the last power of the ancient Roman Empire disappeared. The Holy Land and its history came under the power of the Moslems. This was personal and ultimate failure for the Christian cause.

The true Catholic nature of Christopher Columbus led him to believe that he was called to evangelize the kingdoms of the sea and bring their population and gold under the control of the King and Queen. The 33 day voyage was a combined search for converts and gold. The converts were to be loyal subjects and the

gold was to be used to regain the Holy Land. Where the Crusades failed the explorations would succeed. Gold was the key to finance the greatest expedition of all, the retaking of Jerusalem. A successful crusade would free the Holy Land and bring in New Jerusalem. Columbus stated "For I maintained to your Highnesses that all profits from this enterprise should be devoted to the conquest of Jerusalem, and your Highnesses smiled and said that such was your will, and that even without these gains you had the same earnest desire."⁹ This piety must be taken with a grain of salt because Columbus was already signed up for his 10 percent of all profits in barter and trade.

First Protestant Service In Cuba

For over 400 years Spain ruled Cuba. Columbus discovered the Island and the Spanish throne and Roman Catholic Church ruled the island even though there were raids from English, Dutch and French pirates. In 1608 the Cuban capital was moved from Santiago to Havana and in 1762, English Lord Albemarle with over 200 ships gained Havana but the English ruled for only one year. Cuba was returned a year later in the Treaty of Paris when Spain gave England the area of Florida (east of the Mississippi) in exchange for Cuba. Therefore Cuba was under Spanish dominion from 1492-1898 except for the 1762 British invasion.

In 1965, Harold Edward Greer, Jr., wrote his doctoral dissertation on the *History of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Cuba, 1886-1916*. This work was done at the University of Alabama and Greer set the stage for his research by reporting that the native religion of Cuba was a combination of spiritualism and African fetishism that incorporated Christian symbols and terminology.¹⁰ All the right religious words were used, they just had a

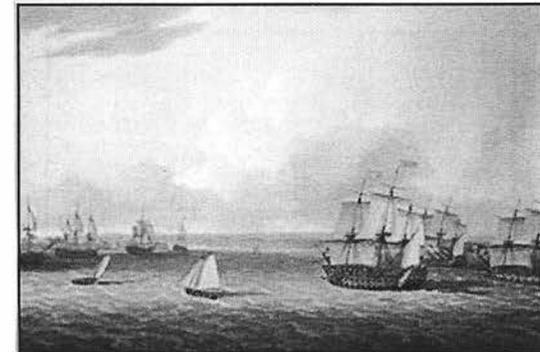


**George Keppel
3rd Earl of Albemarle**

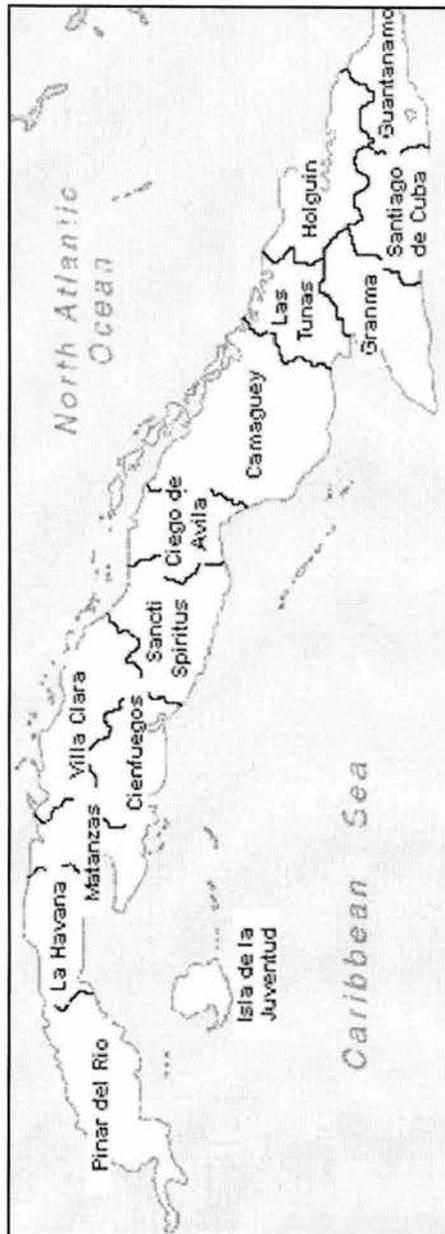
more inclusive meaning.

It was probably in 1762 when the first Protestant service was held in Cuba. English and American chaplains were part of the military forces under Albermarle and they led in services for the troops. Over 30,000 lives were lost and one regiment of American troops from New England fought for the British. According to Greer it was 1883 before another Cuban Protestant worship service was recorded.

In 1762, France ceded Louisiana to Spain to keep it from falling into British hands. The British forced the issue when they invaded Cuba and Britain ended up with Cuba for about a year. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 gave the Florida Parishes (west of the Mississippi) to England and returned Cuba to Spain. This meant Florida came under British rule and Spain continued its rule of Cuba.



The British Fleet closing in on Havana 1762



Endnotes

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 - 2 Samuel Eliot Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea. A Life of Christopher Columbus*. Little, Brown and Company, Boston. 1942, pp. 102-104. (Hereafter Morison, *Columbus*).
 - 3 George Grant, *The Last Crusader*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1992. (Hereafter Grant, *Crusader*). See also *The Light and the Glory* by Peter Marshall and David Manuel, Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1977. (Hereafter Marshall, *Light*).
 - 4 Grant, *Crusader*, p. 137.
 - 5 Morison, *Discovery*, pp. 26-31.
 - 6 Morison, *Discovery*, p. 47.
 - 7 *Florida Baptist Witness*, September 14, 1944, p. 5.
 - 8 Morison, *Discovery*, p. 93.
 - 9 Marshall, *Light*, p. 45.
 - 10 Harold Edward Greer, *History of Southern Baptist Work in Cuba, 1886-1916*, University of Alabama, 1965, Ph. D. dissertation. (Hereafter Greer, *Cuba*).
- Map source <http://www.cubamapa.com/>

CHAPTER 2 "NEITHER OF THESE INCIDENTS AFFECTED IN THE LEAST" (1763-1868)

Cuban Location

Primitiva Delgado was born, reared and converted to the Baptist form of the Christian faith in Cuba. In 1947, Delgado wrote his doctoral dissertation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky on the subject, *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1945*. As a native Delgado liked to quote Columbus in saying Cuba was the "Pearl of the Antilles." He also quoted Robert Hill who wrote *Cuba and Porto Rico*, by stating "Cuba was the fairest, the most fertile, and most diversified of the tropical islands."¹

Una Roberts Lawrence was carried away with the beauty of the island and spent research time there through the Southern Baptist Convention. Lawrence wrote *Cuba For Christ* in 1926, and it was published by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Lawrence tells the Cuba story better than any Southern Baptist. She saw it, researched it, and still rejoiced at the end. Lawrence is weak on dates, continuity and documentation but her work is strong on narrative and a great love of Cuba. There are 45,881 square miles of Cuba and Lawrence says Cuba is "Our Little Sister of the Sea" and "The Sugar Bowl of the World."²

Delgado points out in his research that Cuba is important for it commands three vital gateways. It is the gateway to Florida, the Windward Passage and the Panama Canal. Haiti is only fifty-four miles away and Jamaica is eighty-five miles away. It has 2,000 miles of coast and an abundance of rivers and streams. The Cauto River is 250 miles long and rainfall averages about forty inches a

year but can amount to as much as eighty inches a year. A climate consideration that is too many times overlooked is that Cuba has high humidity and its extreme heat can be discomforting and even life threatening unless the proper lifestyle is practiced. Cuban weather has proven to be a threat to many missionaries who have served there. Their ministries and lives were cut short due to the humidity and heat.



Una Roberts
Lawrence

Roman Catholic Influence

Una Roberts Lawrence in *Cuba For Christ*, is very direct as it relates to the negative influence of the Roman Catholic Church upon Protestant mission work in Cuba. Delgado and Greer in their academic research speak to Catholic interference but Lawrence documents planned persecution. The studies of Delgado and Greer indicate that the Protestants and the Baptists actually had a better relationship with the Cuban government than they did with the Roman church.

Delgado states that the three main causes of trouble were wrong headed Christian evangelism, Spanish Crown exploitation and the heel of the Captain-General that ruled the island.³ Yet there were always some mitigating circumstances. The local Cuban governments recognized good deeds when they saw them and the Cuban press expressed a liberal view of human rights. This aided the Protestants in getting a foothold in Cuba.

But there is the record of Una Roberts Lawrence that cannot be ignored. Roberts has five positive chapter headings in her 288 page Home Mission book of 1926, but again she returns to the direct intervention of the Roman Catholic priests on the side of opposition, mayhem and even murder.

Lawrence recorded the priests were involved in Sunday cock fights after mass, and challenged all comers at the cock pits with their favorite birds. The lottery, gambling and personal disruption

of Protestant services were encouraged by the local priests.

A case in point is the ministry of one particular Baptist believer. Alberto Diaz is frequently referred to as "the apostle to Cuba" and he was ordained as a Baptist minister at First Baptist Church, Key West, on December 13, 1885. Diaz immediately began to do pastoral work in Cuba and persecution seemed to follow him every place he went. Roberts states that "The preaching of the eloquent and energetic Diaz soon stirred the anger of the Catholic powers and steps were taken to crush the intruder into their stronghold."⁴

Lawrence was careful to document much more widespread and sinister opposition. As late as 1921, the Baptists bought a tent to be used in evangelism and the outreach was a positive factor in outdoor services. However, Lawrence pointed out, "The work was not all joy and success, for in many places the gospel tent and its company attracted the bitter opposition of the priests whose territory they were invading."⁵

Dramatically Lawrence pointed out things got worse. Evangelist Pinelo, organized several churches in Vinales Valley. He was confronted by a man with a machete and told that he had been "bribed by the priest of the town to kill the Baptist preacher..."

The same priest hired six ruffians to make a disturbance in a house worship service and "kill the preacher in the confusion." The ruffians began to throw eggs and rocks at Pinelo but the preacher prayed out loud for them to be forgiven. Another man rushed from the back of the room with a knife and had it not been for a dog in the house that belonged to the owner the preacher would have been killed. The dog "sprang at the throat of the man threatening him. In the confusion resulting the man threw the knife at Pinelo, and it sank four inches into the wall behind him. The dog downed the man, however, and the others became frightened



Alberto Diaz

and ran, while Pinelo drew the dog off the fighting man."⁶

Lawrence was not bashful in recording Roman Catholic persecution in the years of early Baptist work in Cuba. She named names, gave dates and locations of severe persecutions. However these incidents of persecution were born in a far more dangerous time than the Baptist arrival in Cuba in 1885.

Geoff Simmons in *Cuba: From Conquistador to Castro* (1996, p. 74), gives a much more rudimentary reason for the persecution than just nineteenth century Roman Catholic opposition. Simmons wrote that the roles of the Spanish government and the Roman Catholic church were so intertwined in the colonization of the island that a document entitled "Proclamation of the Conquistadors" was read to the indigenous peoples that included disastrous consequences for any who did not submit to the Roman Catholic Church. The Proclamation read:

The Lord has delegated to Peter and his successors all power over all the peoples of the earth, so that all people must obey the successors of Peter. Now one of these popes has made a gift of the newly discovered islands and countries in America and everything that they contain to the kings of Spain, so that, by virtue of this gift, their majesties are now kings and lords of these islands and the continent. You are therefore required to recognize the holy Church as mistress and ruler of the whole world and to pay homage to the Spanish king as your new lord. Otherwise, we shall, with God's help, proceed against you with violence and force you under the yoke of the Church and the king, treating you as rebellious vassals deserve to be treated. We shall take your property away from you and make your women and children slaves. At the same time, we solemnly declare that only you will be to blame for the bloodshed and the disaster that will overtake you.

Another documented source of the criminal behaviour of the times includes the Harold Edward Greer, University of Alabama work

of 1963. Greer wrote *History of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Cuba from its Beginnings to 1896* and states:

We will not discuss the horrifying practices employed by the Spanish that contributed so dramatically to the demise of the Indian people or the harm it did to the mission of the church, but suffice it to say that due to Spanish aggression, disease, displacement, and the shock of occupation and suicide, the indigenous population of Cuba was virtually annihilated a short sixty years after the Europeans arrived.⁷

Una Roberts Lawrence was more emotional and less documented than Simmons or Greer but she gained much insight through records and interviews. The Catholic influence on evangelism was cruel and negative for over 300 years.

In her chapter "So Near and Yet So Far," Lawrence explains the personal hurt and injury that came to Cuba in the Spanish-Catholic Coalition. "We must remember the atmosphere in which generations of Cubans have been reared, permeated with soul destroying teachings of the Church of Rome..." Lawrence goes on to state that "The history of the Catholic Church in Cuba is no different from its history in all other countries of the New World. Alongside the claim of the King of Spain was laid the laws of the Pope of Rome to all lands touched by Spanish discoverers, the cross and the standard of Spain being set up side by side... a ruling bishop came to share the powers and privileges of the captain-general. Often the bishop was much stronger than the representative of the Spanish government."⁸

Lawrence quotes J. H. Mclean in *The Living Christ for Latin-America*, in assessing Catholic theology. McLean said "The Christian teaching afforded by the Roman Catholic Church in Latin-America is so obscured, confused, adulterated and counteracted by error within the same system that only an occasional noble soul breaks through the encircling gloom to find the life and light."⁹

Lawrence says for the Cubans it was "conversion by force" and theology by compromise. It was the theological failures that seemed to bother Lawrence the most. Lawrence said the priests preached "the church" and not "The Christ." Expensive rituals drained the economic blood of the Cuban citizens when they were charged \$51.00 for a proper burial and \$3.00 for the baptism of each baby. And this general profit taking caused a hardness in the heart of many Cuban people because they were trapped in a failed religion that they could not understand, appreciate, propagate or afford.

Shame of Slavery

In 1526 the first enslaved Africans arrived on the shores of North America¹⁰ The first slaves in Cuba probably came from southern Spain. Spanish explorers came into the Western hemisphere with motives of basic greed and possibly adventure. Samuel Eliot Morison said "Columbus planned a permanent settlement and the transfer of Hispanic culture and Catholic Christianity to the Indies, but nobody outside his family and a few faithful, humble souls like Fray Ramon Pane cared for that. Their primary object was to get gold quick and go home to spend it"¹¹

Columbus arrived in Cuba in 1492, but colonization was not initiated until 1511, under Diego de Valazques. The indigenous population of Cuba were the Taino and Siboney peoples. Their ancestors emigrated from the mainland of South America and over ran Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and the Bahamas.¹² Morison states "of the original natives, estimated by a modern etymologist at 300,000 in number, one third were killed off between 1494 and 1496. By 1508 an enumeration showed only 60,000 alive. Four years later that number was reduced by two thirds; and in 1548 Oviedo doubted whether 500 Indians remained."¹³

The genocide of the Indians brought a shortage of labor that had to be filled quickly. Imported slaves became the economic answer and by 1800 there were 500,000 slaves working in sugar

production and 30,000 more worked on the coffee plantations in Cuba. The Catholic church introduced the system of "cabildos" that was a social network formed along ethnolinguistic lines. This effort pleased the church because the priests had a better opportunity to give religious instruction. It pleased the slave owners because it provided some social connections and a means of monitoring slave activities. "The Cabildos" were useful for the slaves for social networking, language preservation and basic African religious practices.¹⁴ Slavery was banned in England in 1833, the United States in 1865 and in Brazil in 1888. The church and society were slow to see the personal, family and national tragedy that surrounded slavery. According to Kurt Urbanek the last slave ship landed in Cuba in 1865. By then one-third of the Cuban population was estimated to be of African descent.¹⁵

The Bible of Cuba

The King James Version was a 1611 English translation but there was a Spanish New Testament translation as early as 1557, when de Reina, fled from Spain to England. The English throne protected the work of de Rina and Queen Elizabeth encouraged the work of a Spanish translation. The early Spanish Bibles were nineteen volumes in length and the cost was prohibitive. Even the priests could not afford a complete Bible. A less ponderous text was finally rendered and in 1925 a Spanish Bible in four volumes could be purchased for \$30.00.¹⁶

In 1596, a converted monk by the name of de Alera, also a refugee in England, translated the Old Testament into Spanish. Later revisions of both Testaments bore his name.¹⁷ Much later American and English sea captains would sell copies of the Bible at the ports but all of this activity was illegal. The de Valera ver-



1611
King James Bible

sion was the only one available for the Cuban people until 1893, when a Presbyterian missionary, Pratt, gave a newer revision. This version known as the Moderna, was used until 1923, when the American and British Bible Societies sponsored a new version translated by a group of scholars in Spain. The Southern Baptist Publishing House, in El Paso, Texas, prepared a more recent version that has been widely used in Cuba.¹⁸

Bible translation was not the main problem in Cuba. It was Bible distribution. Lawrence states that "if there had been a thousand versions they could have brought no blessing to the Catholic-ridden land, as long as the priests destroyed every copy found, and persecuted the man or woman who dared to possess one."¹⁹ Time and again Lawrence gives detailed accounts of persecution and suffering for those who worked at bringing the Bible to Cuba.

The first Protestant service in Cuba was in 1762, when a chaplain of the English army had services in Havana. "From August 10th of that year until July 6th of the next year, Episcopal services were held regularly in the chapel of the Franciscan church, later converted into a custom-house."²⁰ It was not until 1868, that the next Protestant service was known to be held in Cuba. This was a private service in the room of a hotel and this religious service was actually for tourists and foreign residents of Cuba. As Una Roberts Lawrence states, "Neither of these incidents affected in the least the natives of the island..."²¹

Endnotes

1 Primitiva Delgado. *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1945*. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, thesis, p. 1. Hereafter referred to as Delgado, *Cuba*.

2 Una Roberts Lawrence. *Cuba For Christ*. Study of the Field and Work in Cuba of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Home Mission Board, Atlanta, Georgia, 1926 (The titles of chapters one and two in the book). Hereafter referred to as Lawrence, *Cuba*.

3 Delgado, *Cuba*, p. 7.

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- 4 Lawrence, *Cuba*, p. 150.
5 Lawrence, *Cuba*, pp. 209-211.
6 Lawrence, *Cuba*, pp. 193-196.
7 Harold Edward Greer, *History of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Cuba from its Beginnings in 1896*, The University of Alabama. A thesis. 1963. Hereafter referred to as Greer, *Cuba*.
8 Lawrence, *Cuba*, pp. 126-129. The harshness of Lawrence can be balanced somewhat by Greer and Delgado research. However it must be remembered that Lawrence with many primary sources that included letters and personal interviews with missionaries who served in Cuba.
9 Lawrence, *Cuba*, p. 131.
10 Larry Rivers, *Slavery in Florida*, University Press of Florida, p. 2. Gainesville, 2000. Hereafter referred to as Rivers, *Slavery*.
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13 Morison, *Columbus*, p. 493.
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21 Lawrence, *Cuba*, p. 139.

CHAPTER 3 “THE TIME HAS NOT YET COME” (1869-1881)

The gospel was needed in Cuba but Christian denominations were reluctant to enter a new field of work. The sparse Protestant influence gained no realistic internal momentum in Cuba. So the island suffered due to missionary inertia and lack of vision on the part of the leading religious groups of the United States.¹

Home Mission Board

When the Southern Baptist Convention was organized in 1845, Article V, of the constitution authorized the convention to “elect at each triennial meeting as many Boards of Managers as in its judgment will be necessary.” At that point the Foreign Mission Board at Richmond, Virginia, and the Board of Domestic Missions at Marion, Alabama, were formed. In the first three reports (1846-1848) of the Board of Domestic Missions the work of the board was confined to the slave holding states and Delaware. It would be thirty-three years before any Cuban contact was considered.²

Key West Connection

The earliest recorded date regarding Key West is 1815. That is the year that the Spanish governor of Florida granted the island to Juan Pablo Salas.³ The island was later sold for two million dollars to John W. Simonton of Mobile. Salas sold the island to Simonton in 1822, and through the years there were numerous land disputes over the title to the land. A territorial government was established for Florida in 1819, and at this time Key West began to be settled and developed. The city of Key West was incorporated in 1828, and by 1860 there were 3,000 residents and upwards of 12,000 by 1870.

The year 1868 was significant because of extreme suppression

in Cuba. Many Cubans fled to Key West and Cigar factories were begun that furnished employment for newly arrived Cuban refugees.

The Key West Baptist Church was begun in 1842. Charles C. Lewis was the first pastor and in that there was no Florida Baptist Association available to them they joined the North Stonington, Connecticut, Association. The Key West Church properly related to the North Stonington Association until it was ascertained that the Key West Church had a member who was a slave holder. The church was informed that if they permitted slave owners to be members of the church they could not be members of the North Stonington Association. The members of the Key West Church concluded that they were doing nothing legally wrong in that the United States Constitution allowed slavery. With that decision the Key West Church was dropped from the North Stonington Union Association.

Jefferson B. Browne in his book *Key West: the Old and the New*, gives an interesting synopsis of the Key West Church during the Civil War years and the years down to 1900.

During the Civil War the white Baptists drifted into other churches, and the church building was taken possession of by the negro Baptists, who held services there until the fall of 1879, when Rev. William F. Wood, who had been a chaplain in the Union Army, came to Key West and revived interest in the Baptist church. He continued as pastor until early in 1900, when he went to Fernandina, where he died. During his pastorate in Key West he served as a missionary in Cienfuegos, Cuba, for about two years. He was the first evangelical missionary to that island.⁴

Adela Fales

In 1874, for safety, the family of Adela Fales moved from Cuba to Biloxi, Mississippi. The nation of Cuba remained under Spanish influence from 1492-1898, with the exception of the Eng-

lish occupation from 1762-1763, yet there were numerous rebellions and out right revolutions that resisted Spanish rule. Many people who had the means and access to safety would flee to such ports as Key West, Tampa, Miami and the Gulf Coast when the uprisings came about. From 1868-1878 there was a national disturbance that caused many to relocate.

The Fales family went to Biloxi, Mississippi in 1874, and Maria Aneta and her sister Adela, began to attend Baptist services and Sunday School with their mother. In 1876 the mother and Maria Aneta joined the Baptist church and were baptized at Biloxi. Adela was only seven years of age when her family joined the church and it was in that year that the Fales family returned to Cuba. Adela had not made a public profession of faith but she had been greatly influenced by Sunday School and especially the *Kind Words* literature that had been given to her.⁵

The *Kind Words* publication was begun in 1866, in Greenville, South Carolina by Basil Manly, Jr., and John Albert Broadus. It was a small monthly paper for Sunday School children. By the time Adela came into possession of one of the leaflets the periodical was probably out of print. There was a period of years when the magazine was alive but not printed regularly due to ownership, leadership and printing problems. But *Kind Words* struck such a chord with Adela that she took her copies back to Cuba with her in 1876.

In Cuba, Adela shared *Kind Words* with her friends and according to Primitivo Delgado in his thesis, *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1945*, "often entreated her mother to return to the United States in order that she might go again to her Sunday School and get more copies of *Kind Words*." In 1883, the family did return to the United States and settled in Key West. Adela began attending Sunday School in an Episcopal Church. She was about fifteen years of age by this time and was well aware of the good value of spiritual influence. Adela and her family met William F. Wood who was the pastor at Key West Baptist Church

and on Sunday afternoons Adela would attend the Baptist Sunday School. It was on one of these occasions that pastor Wood distributed copies of *Kind Words*. Una Roberts Lawrence gives a romantic report of this event in *Cuba For Christ*. The exact experience tells as much about pastor Wood as it does Miss Fales.

One afternoon Mr. Wood noticed a Cuban girl sitting quietly in the back of the room. He began distributing copies of *Kind Words*, and offered her a paper. To his amazement she gave one glance at the paper, and then sprang to her feet, with joy lighting her face, kissed it and wept over it. His interested inquiries brought out the whole story of her childhood teaching, her love for the Bible, and the precious paper that had meant so much to her young life. The impression this young girl made upon the consecrated pastor was deepened one day when in a walk through a cemetery he found engraved upon the tombstone of a Methodist minister these words, "Don't give up Cuba." When the Florida Convention met in 1884, Brother Wood brought to it a resolution calling for action in sending the Gospel to Cuba. the Convention instructed him to employ Miss Fales as a teacher and interpreter in his work among the Cubans living in Key West. Thus began what was known as the "Baby Mission..."⁶

A call to Key West in 1879, the Adela Fales experience of 1883, the finding of the J. E. A. Vanduzar tombstone, plus an 1884 visit to Cuba were four powerful influences upon the life of Wood. He became committed to sharing the gospel with the Cubans of Key West and Havana. He found in young Adela a refined, committed Christian who loved the Lord Jesus and was just as eager as he was to share the good news. The work of young Adela was soon viewed as important because of her language skills, connections with Cuba, and a commitment to share God's word and the story of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Chaudoin of the Florida Baptist State Mission Board reported in July, 1885 that "Bro. Wood says that Miss Fales' work is gradually gaining ground..."⁷

An intriguing story of this period involved a brother of Adela. Pastor Wood baptized Adela and her brother Enrequito in Key West. Their father was very unhappy about the religious direction of his son and after his baptism the father "sent him to Havana that he might be removed from Baptist influence."⁸ The father believed that the spiritual work done in Key West could be overcome by the attractions of Havana if he could just get his son away. The very reverse happened. When the son got to Cuba he started witnessing to others. The *Florida Baptist Witness* reported that the brother of Adela "is now devoting a portion of his time to missionary work in Havana, while the remainder he spends in working with his own hands for a livelihood."⁹ Not only did the father fail at his attempt to remove the son from spiritual influences he ended up paying his way back to Cuba and therefore giving to the nation one of its earliest native missionaries.

Adela was an excellent assistant to Wood in the Cuban work. They worked together from 1884-1890. Their work was recognized and appreciated by many. Mrs. A. B. Bailey, Corresponding Secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention Woman's Missionary Union, reported in the *Florida Baptist Witness*, in 1885, that support was coming in for the Cuban mission work. The first response was "five dollars from the "Busy Bees" of Brooksville. This children's group pledged five dollars per quarter to the work in Cuba and five dollars each quarter for the work in China. "The Ladies' Missionary Societies of the Tallahassee, Sanford, Bethlehem and Micanopy churches, have promised quarterly contributions to this work..."¹⁰

Mrs. Bailey went on to report that "Miss Fales is doing a noble work in Key West, and the value of which cannot be estimated by the arithmetic of earth. We all should desire to become co-laborers with her and we may do so by giving her our prayers

and our money."¹¹ Adela, Enrequito, pastor Wood and his wife worked side by side in sharing the good news with all who would listen. They worked in Key West and Cuba but always with the same goal: It was "Cuba for Christ." Wood and Adela were appointed missionaries by the "Florida Missionary Board" and were dependable, effective witnesses for Christ.

In the December 16, 1886, issue of the *Florida Baptist Witness*, Wood sums up the commitment and heart cry of Cuban mission work of the Florida Baptist Convention. Wood wrote:

We have been perplexed; we have had trials; we have had disappointments; but not a shadow of doubt or distrust has darkened our path: we believe in God, and we now believe in our mission. I speak now of myself, my wife, and my faithful helper, Sister Adela. In one thing we are agreed, *It is God's work and must prosper.* We leave it all to Him.

Southern Baptist Convention

Primitivo Delgado in *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1945*, states that the first official mention of Cuba by the Southern Baptist Convention was at their meeting in Atlanta in 1879. The committee on New Fields announced that any new work should have "special claims for Cuba."¹² At the time of this meeting Henry Allen Tupper (1828-1902) was Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Tupper was born in Charleston, South Carolina, and was a friend of missions all of his life. He was the son of a railroad builder and a refined intelligent mother from Philadelphia. They saw to it that Tupper received an excellent education and he attended Madison University, later known as Colgate. Tupper was



Henry Allen
Tupper

baptized by Richard Fuller and served as pastor in Graniteville, South Carolina and later at Washington, Georgia (1853-1872). He also served as chairman of the executive committee on missions in the Georgia Association. He was elected Secretary of the Southern Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in 1872, and served until 1893. Work was begun in Mexico (1880), Brazil (1881), and Japan (1889) in his tenure at the foreign mission board.

It is of much significance to note that it was in the Tupper administration that Southern Baptist women became greatly involved in foreign missions on a convention wide scale. It was in December, 1888, that the first foreign mission offering sponsored by Southern Baptist women began, and it later became the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. In 1880, J. B. Hamberlain, of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, wrote the Foreign Mission Board concerning "three Baptist sisters" who had been in Biloxi, but had now returned to Cuba. This of course was the Fales family, but for the sake of his desiring to have them avoid persecution their names were not used at the time. The Fales ladies had written "longing for a pastor or missionary and able to help support one."

In 1881, the Southern Baptist Convention met in Columbus, Mississippi. A. T. Winkler of Alabama served as chairman of the committee that considered the "Application from Cuba." Winkler noted that new work had been opened in Italy, Brazil and Mexico, and money and labor needed to be devoted to these countries.

In 1881, Winkler and his committee also had a word on the work in Cuba. They reported to the Southern Baptist Convention that "the time had not yet come...."¹³

Endnotes

1 The Protestant efforts of 1762 and 1868 were related to the non-Cuban population. Kurt Urbanek in *Cuba's Great Awakening*, p. 27, quotes Marcus Raines and suggests that as early as 1555, French Corsair Jacques de Sores, might have led in some form of Protestant worship. Urbanek goes on to report that since there were British and Jamaican Protestant abolitionists visiting Cuba in the 1840's and 1850's there might have been worship services led by them. These insights may be

correct but there does not seem to be any documentation to prove the case. (Hereafter referred to as Urbanek, *Planting*.)

2 *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, Volume 1, 4. Broadman Press, Nashville, 1958, Vol. 1, p. 635. Hereafter referred to as *SBC, Encyclopedia*).

3 Jefferson B. Browne, *Key West*. The Old and the New. Facsimile Reproduction of the 1912 edition. University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 1973, p. 7. (Hereafter referred to as Browne, *Key West*).

4 Browne, *Key West*, p. 44.

5 Primitivo Delgado, *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1945*. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary thesis, 1947, pp. 42-45. (Hereafter referred to as Delgado, *Cuba*).

6 Una Roberts Lawrence, *Cuba For Christ*. Home Mission Board. 1926, p. 144. (Hereafter referred to as Lawrence, *Cuba*).

7 *Florida Baptist Witness*, July 16, 1885, p. 1.

8 *Florida Baptist Witness*, July 30, 1885.

9 *Ibid.* It can be asserted that this brother was Enrequito Fales. On December 4, 1886, Enrequito joined Wood and Adela in various missionary endeavors.

10 *Florida Baptist Witness*, August 13, 1885, p. 2.

11 *Ibid.*

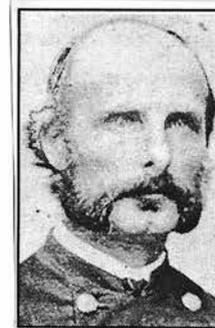
12 Delgado, *Cuba*, pp. 39-40.

13 Delgado, *Cuba*, p. 40. See also *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, I, p. 339. See also Southern Baptist Convention Annual, 1881, p.19.

CHAPTER 4 “THE DOOR TO CUBA IS NOW OPEN” (1879-1885)

Sometimes the man and the hour just meet at the right time. William F. Wood was living in Fernandina and his mind and heart were open to mission service. He did not rush the issue or force a Christian calling. The spiritual needs of the Cuban population in Key West and Havana were stamped upon his heart by a divine imperative. The Baptist Florida-Cuba connection was enhanced because William F. Wood said yes. It may be that Wood was the first Southern Baptist missionary to Jamaica. It may be that Wood was the first Florida Baptist to lead the way for churches outside the United States, to join our Florida Baptist associations. Wood went to Jamaica in 1887. The Southern Baptist Convention did not vote to go until 1954. Wood laid the groundwork for Gethsemane Church in Havana, Cuba to come into the Manatee Association, in Florida, in 1889. He was a called missionary pastor and innovator. His story is worth repeating.

William F. Wood



W. F. Wood

For eleven years (1879-1890) the name of W. F. Wood appeared in nearly every book, article and news release on Baptist work among Cuban evangelicals. Little is known of Wood before 1879, and he died at age 63 in 1890. He served as a chaplain in the Union Army in the Civil War, arrived at Key West in 1879, and died in Fernandina Beach in 1890. He showed calling, courage and commitment to “Cuba For Christ” when others were hesitant and sometimes fearful.¹

In 1891 the Home Mission Board could not go into Cuba and the Foreign Mission Board would not. For some strange reason the Foreign Mission Board would not agree to the Home Mission Board entering Cuba and the Florida Baptist Convention stepped into the controversy with faith and confidence. F. B. Moodie, chair of the "Cuban Mission Committee" reported to the Florida Baptist Convention in 1885, that this is the "instant to seize the God given opportunity... undertake this work at once..." and carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to Cuba. The report was discussed and adopted as follows:

ON CUBAN MISSIONS.

Your Committee on the Cuban Mission beg leave to report, that we have listened with intense interest to the thrilling account that Bro. W. F. Wood has given us, in our private conference to-day, of his recent visit to Havana and other cities in Cuba; to letters recently received by him from anxious and earnest *workers* whom he appointed to publish the good news from God, to the awakened Cubans; and that our hearts were made to burn within us while he talked to *us* of the way—the door that God has opened to us to come over and possess at once the Queen of the Antilles for Christ.

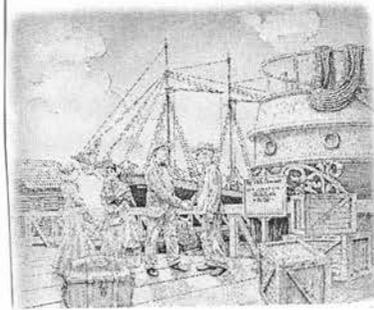
After prayerful and earnest consideration, your committee recommend that as these scores and hundreds of Cubans and Spaniards in the great city of Havana, (containing about 200,000 souls,) and her neighboring cities and towns who manifest evidences of spiritual life, and are now anxiously awaiting the ordinance of baptism, that this convention be *instant* to seize this God-given opportunity, to organize these people into Missionary Baptist Churches at the very earliest practicable moment, realizing that every day's delay is fraught with serious and imminent dangers.

Your committee had the honor and pleasure to-day to invite and have the presence and counsel of our Bro. Tupper, of the Foreign Mission Board, and we unanimously agree that this Macedonian cry from these Islands of the sea *must* have

our *prompt* attention—and the duty to heed this cry is as imperative as it is important, and as important as to obey the mandate of the Master. We conceive that this convention is able to *undertake* this work at once—that is, the preliminary or provisional work—to go and prepare the way—to lay foundations, to throw up breastworks and hold the fort till the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention can come to the rescue, which we hope will not be later than the next meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. We recommend that our beloved Bro. Wood, whom it seems, God has been educating and preparing, in Key West, for this important work, be appointed by this Convention to guard the Cuban Mission, his home being in Key West, with authority to visit the Island of Cuba at least quarterly, to direct, encourage, and foster the various missions there.

The greatest of poets and philosophers said, "There are tides in the affairs of men, which, taken at *the flood*, lead on to"—*success*. We feel that the flood-tide is even *now* at its maximum height, and that as "time and tide wait for no man," fearful, indeed, will be the responsibility if we delay, hesitating to go forward.²

This 1885 document was a high water mark for the young Florida Baptist Convention and it was a clarion call to duty for Wood. A case can be made that Wood visited Cuba in 1884, on his own,³ but it was the official 1885 visit that shows the bare bones work of missions at the time. Wood wrote Dr. Chaudoin, the Florida Baptist state director and told him "The door to Cuba is now open." Wood felt compelled to visit Cuba from his work in Key West but needed financial help to do it. The letter from Wood to Chaudoin and the heart wrenching response is recorded in the July 16, 1885, issue of the *Florida Baptist Witness*:



"Mission to Cuba 1885"

REV. W. N. CHAUDOIN—

Dear Brother: The Cuban Mission of Key West calls for prayer, faith and pecuniary aid. The demands upon us are more urgent than ever before. The door to Cuba is now open. Conditions and circumstances there are such as to almost compel me to visit Havana. Opportunity is presented now for the inauguration of a mission there under very favorable auspices. Such are the representations made to me by parties who are now in the field.

Bro. Godena is laboring in Havana as Bible reader and colporter. We sent him over there two weeks ago; we have good accounts of him. It is necessary that I should visit Havana and I wish to go with the sanction and under instructions from the Board; whatever is accomplished can be reported and receive the proper credit. I am not in funds to meet the expense of the trip, which will be not less than one hundred dollars. Can the Board appropriate this amount? If not a special call on churches and individuals for it and for that purpose, I think it would be raised very readily.

WM. F. WOOD.

REMARKS.

The matter was laid before the Board and it was unanimously decided to appropriate one hundred dollars to

enable Bro. Wood to go to Havana, Cuba. That there might be no delay, Bro. F. B. Moodie advanced us most of the money and I forwarded Bro. W. a hundred dollars the day after the Board met.

We had a few dollars that could appropriately be used thus, but Bro. Moodie gave \$5, the first contribution, doubtless, ever made *especially for mission work in Cuba* by Southern Baptists. Sister Satchwell gave me a dollar to use, which was so applied.³

Dr. Chaudoin took the opportunity to appeal for any money that Florida Baptists might send him for the work in Cuba. He said "Send to at once \$1., \$2., \$5., and a few of you \$10. as a special donation. No one can tell what may come of this effort. Cuba for Jesus may be the result. Would you like to be one who started, or helped to start such a work?"

By 1885, Wood was highly motivated for the Cuba work and apparently saw a need and felt a call to meet the need. The contact with Adela Fales, the commitment of his own wife, the J. E. A. Vanduzar tombstone message of "Don't Forget Cuba" burned an everlasting impression upon him. His 1884 Cuban mission resolution brought to the Florida Baptist State Convention, served as a guide and goal for the final six years of his life.

In 1885, at the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, The Home Mission Board reported that there was a Cuban population in Key West of 5,000. It was also reported that Wood was at work there, at the Cuban mission, aided by "Miss Fales, a lady of Spanish birth possessed of a thorough knowledge of English, and a devoted Christian." The report goes on to tell that "a young man of Cuban parentage, and of marked ability and consecration to the work of the Lord, has been licensed to preach the gospel." This young man was probably Godena. He was then sent to Cuba and it was on his trip there that he found Alberto Jose Diaz, who was to play such a prominent role in Baptist work in Cuba from 1883 to 1903.⁴

The last ten years in the life of W. F. Wood were filled with ministry in Key West, Cuba and even Jamaica. Wood had the heart of a pastor, the feet of an evangelist and the head of a missionary strategist. In 1879 he went to Key West. In 1882 he was asked to visit the Seminole Indians as a mission outreach. In 1882 he baptized 77 at Key West and in the next four years was employed off and on by the Home Mission Board and the Florida Baptist Convention. He was not an independent home missionary but he was one that was not held back by "denominational" priorities and personality conflicts.⁵ He had a heart for Cuba that can only be explained by a Holy Spirit calling.

In the May 21, 1885, issue of the *Florida Baptist Witness*, the pastoral concerns of Wood are personally evident as he expresses his feelings of the Cuban mission work in Key West. He states, "The Cuban Mission requires my constant daily care. Like all new enterprises it must be nursed, and watched, and tendered, or it will perish in the bud. I am more anxious about it than the older church. I watch its fluctuations as the doctor watches the pulse of a feeble patient. The Lord is able to build it up and make it more than we desire it to be."

In the same source Wood mentions "another enterprise on my hands—a mission on the Miami Byscane Bay." Wood had a heart for missions and a challenge from the Florida Baptist Convention to visit the island of Cuba, in September 1885. This was not a part of any personal strategy that he had, but was a response to a missions call to go to regions beyond with the gospel.

It was reported in the *1882 South Florida Baptist Associational Minutes*, that Wood baptized 77 at a Key West church. In that this was such an unusual number it is of note to see the steps they went through to reach a time of immersion for the new converts. There are six distinct steps that the church at Key West took that might be of help to mission minded churches today. First of all they had preaching every Sunday. Tampa and Key West were the only churches in 1882 that had preaching every Sunday in the

South Florida Association. Secondly, they "ascertained" as best they could the "spiritual condition" of the new convert and the "ground of their hope of salvation." Third, they read the church covenant to each new convert and explained the obligations to the convert if he should choose to unite with the church. Fourth, they evaluated the responses of the candidate. Fifth, they then took the chosen candidates before the whole church where the new convert was "required to answer such questions as the brethren present." Sixth, if the candidate was "received" by the church the new convert is then baptized.⁶ There were no easy beliefism at Key West Baptist Church in 1885.

Wood said, "We never urge or persuade any to join the church. We urge, we persuade, we plead with them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, to accept him as their only Saviour, to come to him for eternal life. When they believe, we state to them plainly the duty, the propriety and necessity of acknowledging him as their Lord and Master, by obeying his commands."⁷ Wood went on to admit "our gospel gun may be somewhat old fashioned, but it does not often miss fire."

In September, 1885, Wood went to Cuba. He wanted to follow up on the Godena visit and he wanted to meet a young man by the name of Alberto Jose Diaz that had been brought to his attention. Diaz was stirring up gospel interest in Havana, and probably Godena and the Fales family reported to Wood that Diaz was a powerful gospel preacher, that was looking for assistance. Wood met Diaz and encouraged him. In November, 1885, the Florida Baptist Convention directed its mission board to "establish mission work in Cuba." Diaz was brought by Wood to Key West Baptist Church where Diaz was ordained to the gospel ministry on December 13, 1885. On January 29, 1886, Wood and Diaz conducted the "first Baptist baptisms in Cuba" that were under the auspices of Baptist preachers.⁸ Somehow it seems the Florida Baptist Convention experienced a dream come true. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board would not enter Cuba. But this

state convention that was begun in 1854 has stepped out on faith and volunteered to carry the gospel to a neighbor.

The life of William Wood took strange twists. In the summer of 1878, it was T. J. Sparkman who was visiting Key West on business and found out that yellow fever was in the city. He tried to leave the island but due to adverse wind and tide he had to stay several days. He found there a pastorless Baptist church that was faithful and earnest and was seeking a pastor. When Sparkman returned home he wrote the *Georgia Baptist Index* about the need and W. F. Wood of Fernandina, saw the need and felt the call. Therefore Wood ended up in Key West as pastor in 1879. It was in Key West that he met Adela Fales and in his visit to Havana in 1885, he met Alberto Diaz.⁹

Another twist in the life of Wood occurred in 1886. This event was rather sad yet points out the very focused single mindedness of the man. In August, 1886, Wood found himself without financial support from the Home Mission Board, Florida Baptist Convention or the Key West church. Some of this was no doubt due to the health circumstances of Wood but most of it was just a perfect storm of decisions that thrust Wood and Adela Fales out on their own. Baptists had little money to give and that which was given had to be shared with many. Wood stated his circumstances in a letter printed in the August 26, 1886, issue of the *Florida Baptist Witness*:

"When I returned from the meeting of the home board at Atlanta, I was very much perplexed. I was no longer agent for the Florida State Board, or the Home Mission Board, without a church, and without a support. I appealed unto the Lord, and I think the Lord directed me to go to Cuba. Sister Adela agreed to go with me. Without a dollar, we determined to go. Since then the Lord has made ample provision, in a very providential and to us, wonderful manner; and it is now settled that we all go to the south side of Cuba, in October. I regret that I cannot attend the conven-

tion, but time is precious, and the work pressing. I must not consult my own desires, but go as the Lord directs.

I have arranged with Sister Marion Fales to supply Adela's place from Oct. 1, 1886, to March 31, 1887, subject to approval of the State board. Bro. Godena is now preaching here for the Cuban people, and the cause is reviving. I have employed him, and shall pay him out of private funds; but will report his labors to the State board.

William F. Wood, his wife, and Adela Fales left an impact in Cuba that brought the Florida connection to a sharp focus. Dr. W. N. Chaudoin prayed and pled for Cuba. F. B. Moodie was the first Florida Baptist to give money for Cuba, and in 1885, William F. Wood was right when he wrote the *Florida Baptist Witness* and said, "The door to Cuba is now open."¹⁰

Endnotes

1 According to the *Florida Baptist Witness*, September 23, 1886, Wood went to Key West in 1879. The *1891 Manatee Baptist Association Minutes*, p. 13, relates that he died as a member of Friendship Church in 1890, at 63 years of age.

2 *1885 Florida Baptist Convention Annual*, p. 12.

3 *Florida Baptist Witness*, July 16, 1885, p. 1.

4 Primitivo Delgado. *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1945*. p. 44. Hereafter referred to as Delgado, *Cuba*.

5 The *Florida Baptist Convention Annuals* of 1884-1890, the *South Florida Associational Minutes* of 1886-1882, the *Manatee Association Minutes* of 1886-1890 are good sources on tracing the work of Wood. The *Florida Baptist Witness* from 1886-1890 prints some important letters of his ongoing reports to W. N. Chaudoin.

6 *Florida Baptist Witness*, July 30, 1885, p. 2.

7 *Ibid.*

8 Kurt Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening*, pp. 32-33. Lawrence (p149) identifies the four.

9 W. L. Mahon, "Origin of Cuban Baptist Missions." *Florida Baptist Witness*, March 2, 1898, p. 1.

10 *Florida Baptist Witness*, July 16, 1885, p. 1.

CHAPTER 5

“I DID NOT COME TO HAVE A GOOD TIME” (1886-1898)

The door to Cuba was wide open in 1885. The door to Cuba was one-half open in 1898. William N. Chaudoin (1829-1904), was elected corresponding secretary treasurer of the Florida Baptist State Convention in 1880, and was ready to aggressively move forward with the gospel presentation in all areas of Florida. He had the call, commitment and desire to see Florida come to Christ but he had very little money to work with. The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention had taken Florida under its wing in a big way. The first minutes of the Florida State Mission Board reported receipts of \$104.11 and expenses of \$103.60, leaving a balance of 51 cents in the treasury. The Home Mission Board supplemented the salary of Chaudoin and the board missionaries that were employed. As late as 1900, the total annual gifts to the Florida Baptist Convention were only \$55,029.00, with 23,136 Florida Baptist church members reported.¹ Chaudoin had a heart for missions but no money for missions.

Chaudoin was born August 20, 1829, in Robertson County, Tennessee. He received very little formal education but was a student of life, reading and learning. He was converted at age 16, and on May 16, 1850, married Caroline Frensey. In 1851, he was ordained and served as pastor of Charity Church near Nashville, and later served as pastor of Second Baptist Church in Nashville. He developed a pulmonary infection that handicapped him the rest of his life but it never diminished his drive or vision. He preached to soldiers in the camps in Virginia in the Civil War and



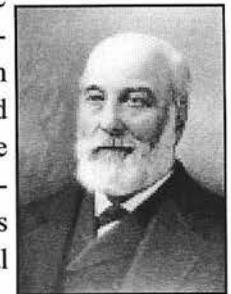
W. N. Chaudoin

“I Did Not Come to Have a Good Time” (1886-1898)

from 1865-1870, he served as pastor in Thomasville, and other southwest Georgia churches. He became district secretary of the Domestic and Indian board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and was responsible for home mission work in Georgia and Florida. Chaudoin spent winters in Florida because of his health and moved to Florida in 1880, where he was elected leader of the newly formed State Board of Missions.

This Chaudoin was the one who led the board to borrow \$100.00 from F. B. Moodie that permitted William F. Wood to make his trip to Cuba in September, 1885. Chaudoin did not have the money to do what he did but he had faith in God, confidence in W. F. Wood, and a good relationship with the Florida Baptist State Board of Missions.²

Chaudoin, Moodie and Wood were not the only visionaries. Isaac Taylor Tichenor (1825-1902), was the Secretary of the Home Mission Board from 1882-1899, and was a broad minded and big idea person. In his 77 years he served as pastor, administrator, educator, business man and convention leader. He was college president once, at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College (later Auburn University; 1872-1882), missionary twice, pastor three times and married four times. He was one of the best mission friends the states of Florida and Texas ever had. Arthur Rutledge said he was the “Father of Mission work in Cuba,” and Tichenor made annual visits to the island for worship, fellowship and encouragement. The quartet of Chaudoin, Wood, Moodie and Tichenor were foundational personalities for the relationship needed for the mission field in Cuba. They all were about to meet the fiery “apostle of Cuba,” Alberto Jose Diaz. It took the leadership of Chaudoin, the money of Moodie, the friendship of Wood and the supervision of Tichenor to lead Diaz and keep him on track for the great work he was called to do.³



I. T. Tichenor

Diaz was the son of a pharmacist and lived in Guanabacoa, just across the Bay and eastward of Havana. Alberto Jose Diaz knew no halfway measures. He was born in Cuba of Roman Catholic parents and received part of his education at the University of Havana. In the Cuban insurrection of 1868-1878, Diaz served in the Cuban army. He was born in 1852, the oldest of twenty-four children, born to one mother, who had married at the age of twelve. While serving with the Cuban forces Diaz and some companions were near the coast when they were cut off from their fellow troops. He and a companion escaped by holding on to a wooden plank and were swept out to sea. The companion drowned. After twenty-four hours Diaz was rescued by a fishing boat, then placed on a steam ship destined for New York. Upon arriving there Diaz found work in a cigar factory and later entered a New York Medical School where he showed special interest in the study of the eye and ear. Due to the cold weather in New York, Diaz contracted pneumonia and had to be hospitalized. A Christian visitor by the name of Alice Tucker, read the New Testament to him and he was especially drawn to the story of blind Bartimaeus. Upon her prayers, kindness and Holy Spirit leading Diaz was converted.⁴ He then found he could purchase a New Testament in Spanish at the "Bible House" at 9th Street and 4th Avenue.

In about 1878, Diaz returned to Cuba. He gathered over one hundred people on a regular basis and he would explain the Bible to them. Due to the opposition and accusations of the local priests his medical eye practice failed. Diaz had been saved, never having attended church, knew no sermon and no preacher. Yet he had a heart felt desire to share the Bible with his fellow countrymen. The priests threatened the people by saying that if they became patients of Diaz in his medical practice, they would not be able to have Christian burial when they died. They called Diaz a heretic and forced Diaz out of his medical work, and he then went back to Brooklyn, New York, and took his family with him. The family settled near Willoughby Avenue, not far from Gethsemane Baptist

Church. Diaz and his older sister Minnie (Asuncion) attended the church and Minnie was baptized in October, 1892. Minnie proved to be a great help to him in his ministry when he went back to Cuba. She served as a teacher in a school they started and served as organist at the church.

Diaz wanted to return to Cuba and preach the gospel, so he visited Dr. Morehouse of the Home Mission Society in New York. The society could not send him at that time due to a lack of commitment and a lack of funds. Another door opened when the Female Bible Society in Philadelphia desired to send a colporteur to Cuba. In 1883, the society chose Diaz and he took his two sisters Minnie and Clotilde with him.

Bible distribution was crucial for any evangelical witness in Cuba. However in 1883 Cubans did not read Bibles primarily for two reasons. Most of them could not read and even if they could Bibles were too expensive. A Spanish Catholic Bible cost \$28.00, and it was a breakthrough when the American Bible Society made Spanish Bibles available for 65¢ each. This infuriated the priests and they had Diaz arrested on suspicion of conspiracy.

While living in Brooklyn the second time, Diaz had become an American citizen. Therefore upon his arrest he wrote to the American Consul who saw to it that he was released. When this happened Diaz and some friends rented a room at the Passage Hotel in Havana and started having Sunday afternoon services. Napoleon Bailey later gave a good detailed explanation of that experience. He and F. B. Moodie took a trip to Key West for an ordination service and took the steamer "Whitney" back home to Tampa. Bailey in a letter to the *Florida Baptist Witness*, January 28, 1886, gave an account of a rather providential meeting aboard the ship.

On Board were two proprietors of hotels in Havana. On learning what our mission to Key West had been, one of them presented Bro. Moodie his card, on which was a picture of his hotel. Holding it up, he said the first Protes-

tant service ever held in Havana was held in one of the parlors of his hotel. On describing the man who conducted the service, he was asked if his name was Diaz. "Yes, that was his name," he replied. Bro. Moodie told him that was the man we had ordained. "Well," said he, "you ordained a man who wields a greater influence in Havana than any other man in it." On having our principles explained to him, he said, "All Havana will come to you. The people are tired of the priests, and if you can have a burying ground and a place of worship, the people will come to you by the thousands. We want a religion that has no priests but Christ." The Cubans are ripe for a pure gospel, and we must furnish it if they have it.

The group of worshippers grew and they wanted government recognition for their services, so they called themselves "The Reformed Church of Cuba." This got them government approval and Diaz preached and Minnie taught the young women. Diaz later married one of the pupils of Minnie and baptized her and her family.

W. F. Wood at this time was working in Key West and through some workers in a cigar shop, Wood found out about Diaz. When Diaz worked in Brooklyn he was a reader in a cigar factory. This meant that those who rolled cigars would hire one person to read to them while they worked. They would choose the lector and the reading material by popular vote. They would then each pay a certain amount to cover the salary of the reader. Some of them had made their way to Key West from Brooklyn and told Wood of the man Diaz.

About this time Godena who had been sent to Havana by Wood, also reported on this young man who was preaching Biblical truth to scores of people. The people were somewhat confused about denominationalism and had become Episcopalians for a while seeking a religious home. Not satisfied with a church that was too near the Catholic belief and practices Diaz wrote to New

York for a copy of a constitution and bylaws of a Baptist church. The reply came that the only guide they needed was the New Testament.

It was at this time that W. F. Wood made his exploratory visit to Havana. In September, 1885, Wood and Diaz met and somehow forged a very valuable friendship. Both were visionary, committed Baptist, independent and determined to lead people to Jesus Christ. Wood was so impressed with Diaz that he made arrangements for Diaz to be ordained on December 13, 1885, at the Baptist Church in Key West. Upon this event the Florida Baptist Convention sent Diaz and his sister Minnie back to Cuba as missionaries. On January 20, 1886, W. F. Wood and Diaz conducted the first baptisms in Cuba that were under Baptist auspices.

Kurt Urbanek in *Cuba's Great Awakening*, points out that in the 1886 baptisms an important precedent was set. This precedent had some advantages but it also had some disadvantages that affect the Cuban Baptist community today. The advantages in the precedent were that ordained ministers were present to perform the baptismal services. This was an important plank in Landmark theology and probably kept down early criticism that could have influenced early Cuban Baptist work. Of course the disadvantage was that if lay people bought into the basic teaching that the New Testament ordinances could only be administered by ordained clergy, then the church and mission growth in Cuba would be restricted to those requirements. Landmark influence has seldom been discussed in print as it relates to New Testament missionary thrust in Cuba but the specter is there.

Wood and Diaz were faced with some immediate obstacles in Baptist work in Cuba. These hindrances included acceptance by the people, acceptance by the government, a place of meeting and a sanctioned cemetery. The first two problems nearly took care of themselves. The people were resistant to Spanish rule and saw the Catholic Church under Spanish control. They sometimes became Baptists as an overreaction to Catholic influence. That is one of

the reasons that Wood and Diaz proposed strong pre-membership requirements in the Baptist church. Sometimes people would have to wait for many months to be baptized simply because their loyalty was being tried and tested.

Government acceptance was encouraged by a free and liberal Cuban press. Newspapers fought for freedom of speech, assembly and worship. In general they supported Baptists because of the concept of liberty rather than any theological motive. The Roman Catholic Church dealt with a heavy hand for many years in Cuba but the Cuban press resisted the wedding of church and state and fought for individual freedom.

The place of meeting was another problem. Una Roberts Lawrence in her *Cuba For Christ*, recorded the fact that ornate Catholic churches were one of the architecture, artistic and tourist attractions of Cuba. The huge, well appointed, nicely decorated churches sent a message of beauty, stability, prosperity, awe and tradition, to all who went by or entered in. Baptists had no such place. There was a basic feeling among Wood, Diaz and Tichenor that a well located building was needed for national pride and identity. Lawrence shared this overview in her 1926 volume *Cuba For Christ*.

Dr. I. T. Tichenor, Secretary of the Home Mission Board, had become intensely interested in the growing work in Cuba. It appealed to him as the entering wedge in a great missionary movement into Catholic Latin-America, and with all the energies of his great soul he entered upon the task of laying deep and broad foundations for the work in the island. One of the immediate needs of the mission was a permanent meeting place, since the law required that meetings be held in a building that could be closed from the public, and security demanded that the building be under the control of the Baptists.

Dr. Tichenor took the matter under his personal supervision, and upon looking over the available sites found a

most desirable property on the market at a very low price. In 1880, a man, named Jane, had built in the very heart of the city a magnificent theater. For some reason it had not proved a successful investment and just at the time the Baptists were seeking a centrally located place of worship the property was offered for sale. After many vexatious delays, caused both by the interminable red tape incident to the purchase of property in Cuba at that time, and by the obstacles thrown in the way by Catholic influence, the building became the property of the Home Mission Board, and the rejoicing little congregation entered upon a new era of usefulness through the added prestige and attractiveness of this beautiful center for all activities.⁵

J. B. Lawrence in his book *History of the Home Mission Board*, stated that the need for a house of worship was so great that Tichenor went to Cuba to find a lot to build on. Finding the Jane Theater was a better deal all around. The building was built of stone, well lighted and perfectly ventilated. It occupied a corner lot of 120 by 150 feet and was near the nation's capital.⁶ The Home Mission Board had voted on February 28, 1888, to resolve the necessity of "a house of worship in Havana capable of holding not less than 1,500 or 2,000 people."

The Jane building was built in 1880 for theatrical purposes at a cost of \$180,000.00. It would seat 3,000 and had good acoustical qualities. The building also had three apartments and two stores. The Home Mission Board, with the personal leadership of Tichenor, bought the building for \$60,000.00 at four annual payments of \$15,000.00 each. It would be January, 1907, before all the legal hurdles had been settled in favor of the board. The Home Mission Board spent \$6,000.00 in legal fees but was offered \$100,000.00 for the property upon the clear title being received. The board refused the offer believing that an important Baptist witness had been set on Dragones Street, between Zuluta Street

and the Prado. This building would provide living quarters for the Southern Baptist Superintendent of Cuban Missions, and his family, teachers in the school, ministerial students, a few boarding pupils, and served as the college assembly area, college classrooms and church auditorium. The building still stands and is a magnificent, important structure as the home of Calvary Baptist Church in Havana.⁷ A sign was placed on a wall behind the pulpit that read "Cuba para Christo." This glorious claim became a rallying cry that still stirs people today.

The church fellowship was named the Gethsemane Church, and A. J. Diaz was the pastor. The name Gethsemane came from the name of the church in Brooklyn where Alberto and Minnie Diaz were baptized. In 1888-1889, in the Gethsemane Church 8,000 people offered themselves for baptism but only 1,100 were accepted. Strict pre-baptismal screening led to some being turned down but the church continued to grow.



Calvary Baptist Church in
Havana, Cuba

The obstacles of acceptance and a meeting place were met but there remained the matter of a cemetery. The Catholic bishop owned the only legitimate and sanctioned cemetery in Havana. It cost \$28.00 to be buried there and the only alternative was a potter's field where a person could be buried for five years and then your body could be "thrown out" to make room for others. According to Lasher in *The Gospel in Cuba*, those who died Protestant had "no hope."⁸ Greer points out that since all the cemeteries were Catholic owned they would not permit Baptists to be buried there. Lasher wrote that a man from Kentucky died in Havana and was buried with criminals and his grave desecrated. The Baptists acted. Diaz and Wood addressed a session of the Southern Baptist Convention when it met in Montgomery, Ala-

bama, May 7, 1886. They reported that J. S. Paine, a Boston Baptist deacon and businessman, who spent his winters in Cuba, had donated \$200.00 for a Baptist cemetery and the Alabama Baptist Convention had given \$300.00 so they had purchased grounds for a six acre cemetery on January 23, 1885. But this did not end the matter.

In the spring of 1888, the Bishop of Havana attacked Diaz and the Baptist cemetery from the pulpit of the Cathedral in Havana. He burned his photograph, excommunicated all Baptists in the city and declared that no one should use the Baptist cemetery. Diaz responded. He preached two different sermons. One was "Which are the Heretics, Catholics or Baptists?" and "Which Cemetery Has Been Blessed of God?" Thousands of people heard the sermons and weighed the issues. By 1898, the cemetery had grown to twenty-two acres. People paid 80¢ to be buried there and the Baptists made many new friends in light of this controversy. The Catholic Bishop became so desperate he offered Diaz \$20,000.00 if he would sell the cemetery and leave the country. Lasher states by 1894, there were 7,000 buried in the Baptist cemetery and much good will had been gained with the Cuban people.

The work of Alberto Jose Diaz cannot be overestimated. The Home Mission Board made mistakes and Diaz made mistakes in their relationship, but Diaz was loved by his fellow countrymen and was rightly called the "apostle in Cuba." It is sad that the Home Mission Board and Diaz could not finally work out their differences. I. T. Tichenor and Diaz dearly loved one another and they tried to overcome obvious differences on matters of supervision, administration and accountability. But it was not to be. The final straw was a letter Diaz wrote to Dr. Tichenor on January 31, 1902. Diaz started out by saying: "Dr. Tichenor, you remember what you told me 'this was my work and you just came to help me.'" It seems to me the Board has changed its policy as now I see the whole work has been taken away from my hands...but feel very sad; very, indeed I think I am dying by inches. I am not hys-

terical; but I could not help every time I think in this things I begin to cry... but is just the same, Cuba has the gospel and the ground was break by me."⁹

Diaz had resigned from the Home Mission Board in 1901, but Tichenor tried to work things out. After one dispute Tichenor had traveled to Cuba to try to smooth things over. While there he got sick and nearly died. He told Diaz if I die, bury me here in the Baptist cemetery and put on my tombstone, "Died Trying to help Diaz."¹⁰

In a letter dated April 17, 1902, Diaz wrote F. C. McConnell, of the Home Mission Board, that he was going to "try to be independent." He said "I now depend entirely, on the Lord and will trust in him in everything..." Thus, Diaz ended seventeen years of hard work, heartache, trials, tribulations and triumphs in working with Southern Baptists. Una Roberts Lawrence in *Cuba For Christ*, said it best; "Alberto Diaz is one of the most spectacular figures in Southern Baptist Mission history."¹¹

The Southern Baptist Convention and the Northern Baptist Convention made a very momentous decision in 1898. On November 23, 1898, committees representing the Northern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, met in the office of the President of Columbia University in Washington, D. C. They decided that Northern Baptists would take responsibility for the Cuban work in the two eastern provinces, Oriente and Camaguey, plus the work in Puerto Rico. The Southern Baptist would work in the four western provinces of Cuba which were Mantanzas, Havana, Pinar del Rio and Santa Clara. This comity agreement of oriental and occidental divisions guided both conventions for nearly 100 years.¹²

In 1887, the Southern Baptist Convention met in Louisville, and Diaz and his wife made a great sacrificial effort to attend. Urbanek, in *Cuba's Great Awakening*, (p. 37) tells the story from the Diaz perspective.

When I organized the church my mother was the first one to enter;

when I organized the cemetery, my only little daughter was the first to be buried." Alberto Diaz and his wife were preparing to leave for the United States to attend the Southern Baptist Convention in Louisville, in 1887, when their daughter became ill and died. In order to make the trip, they had to leave before she was buried. Diaz's brother took care of the burial details. While speaking at the convention meeting, Diaz shared, "I was getting ready to come to this Convention, and did not have time to bury her. Friends brought flowers: my brother remained to bury my little daughter. My wife came with me here; our hearts are sad, and that is why we have not accepted invitations to ride out or to go to different places. I did not come to have a good time, but to tell you of God's work in Cuba."

Endnotes

1 Edward Earl Joiner, *A History of Florida Baptists*, Convention Press, Jacksonville, 1972, p. 63, 310-311. Hereafter referred to as Joiner, *Florida*.

2 H. G. Garwood, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, Broadman Press, I, Nashville, 1958, p. 249. Hereafter referred to as *SBC Encyclopedia*.

3 *SBC Encyclopedia*, II, pp. 1416-1417. For years there have been running arguments over which Southern Baptist Convention Board should oversee the work in Cuba. In January, 1947, Duke McCall wrote in the *SBC, HMB* magazine that the Home Mission Board should be concerned with the USA and the Foreign Mission Board should work in territory outside of the USA (p. 7).

4 There are many good sources on the early life of Diaz. Each source seems to provide one or two details left out by others. Kurt Urbanek in *Cuba's Great Awakening*, (pp. 30-50), gives the best flow to the story. Greer gives excellent background in his *History of Southern Baptist Missions Work in Cuba, 1886-1916*, (pp. 33-77) but the Cuban native Primitivo Delgado in *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1940*, seems to be best in touch with the feelings and pride that Diaz could engender. George William Lasher in *The Gospel in Cuba, the Story of Diaz*, George E. Stevens, Cincinnati, 1894, pp. 5-31, gives family and personal data on Diaz that was not available anywhere else.

5 Una Roberts Lawrence, *Cuba For Christ*. Home Mission Board. Atlanta, 1926, pp. 154-155. Hereafter referred to as Lawrence, *Cuba*.

6 J. B. Lawrence, *History of the Home Mission Board*, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1958, p. 77.

7 The Jane Building is an adventure story unto itself. Riley, Delgado, Greer, Lasher and Urbanek do not agree on the building and selling

price. When interest, legal fees, refinancing and a later \$12,000.00 mortgage is taken into consideration the dollar differences can easily be understood. Also, Lasher points out that \$65,000.00 in "Spanish money" was the same as \$60,000.00 in American gold. B. F. Riley in *A History of the Baptists in the Southern States East of the Mississippi*, (p. 229), says the building cost \$75,000.00. Delgado (p. 51), said \$60,000.00 and Urbanek said the Home Mission Board voted to pay \$65,000.00, (p.14).

8 The sad story of Christian burial in Cuba is told by Lasher, Una Lawrence, Delgado, Greer and Urbanek. J. William Jones in 1888, wrote a piece entitled "Our Cuban Cemetery" in the June 19, 1888, edition of the *Christian Index*.

9 Letter from A. J. Diaz to I. T. Tichenor, January 31, 1902. Letter in Tichenor correspondence at the Southern Baptist Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

10 Actually Diaz resigned from the board numerous times. I. T. Tichenor and B. D. Gray were Southern Baptist Home Mission directors who saw the needs and opportunities of Cuba more clearly than any other denominational leaders. They worked at revival, restoration and reconciliation.

11 Lawrence, *Cuba*, p. 164.

12 You would certainly think that there would be no dispute over such a meeting as to time, place and dates. However, Bryant says the meeting was November 28, Greer says November 23.

CHAPTER 6 "THEY PLANNED, PRAYED AND EXECUTED" (1899-1904)

J. B. Lawrence in his *History of the Home Mission Board* (p. 78), gave a succinct view of the important but tragic years of 1898-1903, in Cuba.

On February 15, 1898, the United States battleship *Maine*, while on a friendly visit, was blown up in the Havana harbor, and on April 19 the Congress of the United States adopted a resolution declaring Cuban independence. War with Spain began at once. The United States invaded Cuba in June, 1898, and the Spanish army surrendered on July 17, 1898. Control of Cuba passed to the United States by the treaty of peace signed in Paris, August 12, 1899. The Cuban Constitutional Convention assembled in November, 1900, and adopted a constitution providing for a republican form of government.

The "Queen of the Antilles" was open for the gospel. But war is always destructive, and during the years of Cuban struggle for independence the mission work in Cuba was almost destroyed. After the war was over there was little left except the property owned by the Home Mission Board. It was 1903 before the mission work was rehabilitated.¹



J. B. Lawrence

In 1899, the editor of the *Florida Baptist Witness* saw the war issue for what it was. The treaty had been signed but there was still a very basic philosophical struggle raging. How long should American troops occupy Cuba? At what point in time would Cuba

be ready to operate her own affairs and care for her own government? Two very influential American generals came to opposing positions on this important issue.

General Leonard Wood, military governor of the province of Santiago, does not agree with General Fitzhugh Lee that the United States should withdraw from Cuba as soon as the people of that island can form a government of their own. General Lee declares that there is in Cuba a growing restlessness under the military rule of this government, and this is probably true.

In the opinion of General Lee, Cuba is pacified, and ready to enter upon self-government.

It has been reported frequently of late that President McKinley has reached a similar conclusion and in his message to Congress when it meets next December, will recommend the early withdrawal of our troops from Cuba.

In his last report to the war department, General Wood takes the position that military rule should be continued in Cuba for a good while.²

During this time of political and spiritual upheaval William David Powell (1854-1934) made his entrance into Cuba. Powell served in Cuba as a pastor, missionary and administrator from 1899-1907. He had a hybrid relationship. He had already served as a foreign missionary to Mexico from 1882-1898. He then worked with the Home Mission Board in the Cuban post-war years to strengthen and build up work that was begun before the war. Powell spoke Spanish "equal to a Cuban" but a break down in health in the unique Cuban climate caused him to have to return to the United States in 1907.³

The first American missionary sent by the Southern Baptist Convention to Cuba was E. Pendleton Jones in 1893. Jones had to return to the United States in 1894 due to health issues. Florida Baptist churches showed interest in Cuba as early as 1878, in the Manatee

Association, but it was 1885, before Florida Baptists sent William F. Wood to Cuba to meet Diaz. Wood and Diaz conducted the first Baptist baptisms in Cuba in 1886, and Southern Baptists sent Pendleton Jones to Cuba in 1893.

Americans began to feel called to Cuba and to Cuba they did go. Bishop Warren Chandler of the Methodist Church of Florida became actively involved in the work in Cuba after 1898. Moses Nathaniel McCall of the Southern Baptist Convention went to Cuba in 1905. Hartwell Robert Mosely was appointed by the Northern Baptist Home Mission Society to Cuba in 1899. The Episcopal Church had gone into Cuba in 1883, the Methodists in 1884, the Baptists in 1885, American Bible Society in 1892, the Friends in 1898, and the Salvation Army in 1926.⁴

As the American volunteers poured in so did the American influence. Baptists have always demanded control of what they financed and this shrewd business model became a flawed missions model. Marcus Antonio Ramos in his book, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba* (1989) goes so far as to say that "In Cuba Protestantism was Cuban until 1898. That year missionary boards that had previously limited themselves to cooperating economically with the local efforts took over. The Cubans who had led the movement thus far were relegated to secondary positions" (p.23).

American influence in the denominations also reached out to American influence in politics. It was difficult for many Baptists to separate their allegiance to the American flag and their commitment to the American church. Culture brought chaos to the Cuban mission scene when United States citizens mixed political power with missionary service.

As early as 1881, the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention showed enough concern for American missionary service in Cuba that they inquired of Secretary of State, James S. Blaine, if American missionaries would be protected if they were sent to Cuba. Blaine replied "any obstacles met in Cuba would not be greater than those met in other countries

where Baptist missions already existed."⁵

On June 25, 1890, American influence in Cuban politics was exerted again. Alberto Diaz, Godenas, and pastor Desiderio Herrera of Guanabacoa, were arrested for holding a service without proper permits. The permitting process was as much of a Catholic intrusion as it was a governmental provision. Over 1,000 Cubans protested and the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Governor of Georgia, Joseph E. Brown, protested to the United State's State Department. The preachers were released within 50 hours.⁶ This appears on the surface to be a victory for religious liberty but it could also be viewed as United States political interference into Cuban domestic relations.

The most interesting incident during the American imposition was an event when Hartwell Mosely, was head of the Northern Baptist Mission Board work in Cuba. Mosely had been appointed in 1899, and later experienced harassment at the hand of some government officers. Bryant reported a personal interview with Cuban missionary Elizabeth Allport in 1953 that gave some details of the bazaar circumstance. "...when the soldiers of the revolution came to take Dr. Mosely, Mrs. Mosely wrapped an American flag about his body, and they did not dare to harm him."⁷

If the Mosely circumstance gave some thought of comic relief, an earlier episode cast a much more serious threat over the prospect of Cuban independence, from American protectionism. In April, 1896, I. T. Tichenor of the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board intervened on behalf of Alberto Diaz who had been jailed again for his religious activities. Tichenor contacted United States Secretary of State, Richard Olney, and sought relief for Diaz. Olney took the matter seriously and over reacted. Secretary of State Olney appeared to be looking for provocation because he wired the Spanish minister and said that if Diaz was not released, "war between Spain and the United States could not be avoided."⁸ Upon this threat Diaz was released and went to

Atlanta. All of this sabre rattling was done in the name of religious freedom and was done nearly two years before the sinking of the Battleship *Maine* in February, 1898.

This type of religious-political power play made a lasting impact upon Cuban and American Christians. Cuban Christians saw the outcome of heavy handed diplomacy and American Christians saw the value of American intervention. This dual threat would haunt American-Cuban mission administration for a generation.

Theron Corse has written "...U. S. missionaries were highly reluctant to hand over control of the church institutions they were building to Cubans, whom they generally viewed as too culturally immature to run their own organizations."⁹ Kurt Urbanek in *Cuba's Great Awakening*, published in 2012, states "As will be seen later Baptist work remained under the control of the United States missions boards until the missionaries were expelled in the years following the Fidel Castro led Revolution in 1959."¹⁰

Meanwhile the Florida Baptist Convention was beginning to awaken to the possibility of a new way to do missions. As questionable mission precedents were being set in Cuba, an Eureka moment was coming to Florida Baptists. W. T. Hundley, served as the presenter of the Home Mission Board report to the Florida Baptist Convention in a meeting in 1898. Hundley stated "One of the most important enterprises which now occupy the attention of the Home Board is that of the evangelization of the Cubans who are on our own shores and at our doors. Cruel war has made it so that we cannot go to Cuba, but it has brought Cuba to us."¹¹

Florida Baptist Associations Respond

Three Florida Baptist association of churches caught a vision of Cuban missions before the state convention (1885) or the Southern Baptist Convention (1893) committed to send workers into the field. South Florida Association, Manatee Association and Peace River Association made early contacts and commitments to

Cuban outreach.

South Florida Association pledged \$100.00, after W. F. Wood came and laid the Cuban challenge before them. It was T. J. Sparkman a pastor in Manatee Association, who traveled to Key West on business, in 1878, and saw the needs of the pastorless congregation. Sparkman wrote to W. N. Chaudoin who made an appeal, and Wood answered the call.

Wood went as pastor of Key West in 1879, and went to Cuba in September, 1885, where he met Diaz. In 1886, Key West was in the Manatee Association and W. F. Wood was pastor. The 1886 Manatee Baptist associational meeting was at Fort Ogden Church, in Manatee County. In the 1886 associational minutes W. F. Wood is listed as pastor at Key West, and J. L. Alberry, Angel Godinas, Adela Fales and Louisa Sawyer are listed as delegates from the Key West church.

In 1887, the Manatee Association gave \$67.00 to assist Godeñas in "Cuban Mission in Key West." In 1889, the Manatee Association had 26 churches and the Gethsemane Baptist Church of Havana, Cuba, was a member of the association, with A. J. Diaz listed as pastor. The 1889 Manatee roll call of churches included a litany of pastors who were stalwarts in the early days of Baptist work in south Florida. J. M. Hendry was pastor at Alafia, Dry Prairie, and Rock Hill. J. M. Hendry was pastor of New Zion and T. J. Sparkman was pastor of Charlotte Harbor, Punta Gorda and Wauchula. It was also in the 1889 Manatee minutes where churches had property values of \$50.00 at Emmaus, \$60.00 at New Zion, \$1,000.00 at Wauchula and \$67,000.00 at Gethsemane in Havana, Cuba. When Florida Baptists saw the value of the Jane Building property they probably felt better about their huge \$65,000.00 investment.

In 1891, A. J. Diaz wrote a letter to the Manatee Association for their annual meeting. He apologized for not being able to attend and announced the building of the female school in Havana. He also made interesting comments about the Jane Building and

the Baptist cemetery in Havana. Diaz wrote "You all know we need to pay by next December the 2nd installment of our church, and as we are poor and do not know how to find money we ask the Lord in prayer." Diaz went on to say in the 1891 letter to the association that "We are compelled to have a cemetery and it was organized about five years ago, and have buried 5,000 remains." Diaz closed his letter to the association with the question, "Will you pray for us?"

In 1898, the Peace River Association had 22 churches and nine of the churches gave a special offering for the Cuban School. The Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program did not begin until 1925, but the Peace River churches were already in a cooperative spirit of sharing, 25 years before there was a convention wide plan of giving.

Florida Baptist WMU Leads the Way

As three south Florida associations saw the need and potential of work in Cuba, Florida Baptist women challenged the convention in mission commitment. The Campbellton, Florida, Baptist Church (Bethlehem originally and name later changed to Campbellton), had a female missionary society as early as 1848. However Florida Baptists were relatively slow about accepting female leadership in missions and it was 1883 before the Committee on Woman's Work in the convention actually had a woman on the committee.¹²

In 1885, "two collars, sent by a sister," elicited a collection of \$15.75, which was then used to support the work of W. F. Wood in his Cuban ministry. This was probably the first Florida Baptist Convention offering for a work in Cuba and the first ladies' mission societies offering for the Cuban work.



Annie Armstrong

In 1888, Florida became a founding member of the Woman's

Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. I. T. Tichenor made an appeal to the newly formed WMU to raise \$5,000.00 to aid in the "work of building a church and enlarging the cemetery in Havana, Cuba." The ten state organization took the challenge of Tichenor and Annie Armstrong and raised thousands of dollars for the work in Cuba.¹³

Annie Armstrong was the corresponding secretary of the WMU and made several trips to Florida to encourage Florida Baptist women in their work. In 1902, she began a Florida train journey that covered 800 miles in 9 days, with stops in 11 places, with 18 meetings. This missions challenge was not new to Florida Baptist women.

In 1889, at the ladies meeting of the Florida Baptist State Convention at Ocala, fourteen different societies reported mission activities. The annual minutes reported that "An interesting paper was read by Miss Nokes, of Orlando, on "The Growth of Missions in Cuba."¹⁴ Florida Baptist women were inspired for missions and they were seeking missions information and education.

In 1892, Mrs. Telford reported "When we consider this work is only six years old in Florida, our progress in it is a matter for congratulation." She pointed out that the Woman's Mission Work (W.M.U.) had raised \$260.00 for the Cuban Girls' School and this exceeded their \$240.00 goal.¹⁵ Also, at the 1892 meeting Mrs. W. D. Chipley of Pensacola, introduced Dr. C. C. Bitting of Philadelphia, who spoke of the Cuban Girls' School.

On January 7, 1893, the Woman's Missionary Society met and prayer was made for the Cuban girls and an offering of \$4.55 was taken for the school. In 1897, Dr. Tichenor addressed the women on the Cuban work. Martha Trotter in her book *Faithful Servants*, gives a more detailed account of the Florida WMU involvement in Cuban ministry in Havana and the United States.

Florida women had begun their support of the Girls' School in Havana under Mrs. Telford's guidance. After her death, they added the hospital in Havana to their mission

causes. Miss Spalding boosted the Cuban work, with its close connections to Florida, while WMU, SBC, also took up the promotion of Cuba as a Home Mission Board field. A Cuban rebellion, which broke out against the oppressive Spanish government in 1895, eventually forced the missionaries temporarily to evacuate to the United States. Some of the displaced national pastors migrated to Tampa, where a large number of Cubans had settled to work in cigar factories. Florida Baptists eagerly began work in Tampa among the newly arrived Cubans.

In 1897 women attending the WMU meeting in St. Augustine had taken a special collection of \$10 "for furnishing the Cuban chapel at Tampa." Later the Union added \$70 more, "and it was the beginning of active interest on the part of Baptists in the work of Rev. J. V. Cova among his people." Soon the State Board of Missions saw the need for another Cuban missionary but had no funds for a salary. To the women they went, suggesting that the WMU take over the weekly rent (\$3) for the chapel. Relieved of that obligation, the Board could employ a helper for Brother Cova. The Union received the suggestion "most cordially" and over the last six months of 1897 paid \$71.43 in rent. The work progressed rapidly. A second missionary was hired, and larger quarters were rented.¹⁶

The first two Southern Baptist Convention American women appointed to Cuba were Mary A. Taylor of Tampa, Florida, and Adelee Branham of Chillicothe, Missouri.¹⁷ Taylor volunteered for mission work and later attended the Baptist Missionary Training School in Chicago. In 1899, the Florida WMU paid the final \$135.00 in expenses for Taylor to attend the Chicago school. This wonderful gesture set the stage for a very important relationship with Mary Taylor and her commitment to serve in Cuba.

In 1900, the Florida Baptist WMU took a momentous step.

The matter of assuming the support of Miss Mary Taylor as missionary in Cuba was presented by Miss Spalding and spoken to by Dr. F. H. Kerfoot, secretary, Home Mission Board. Dr. Kerfoot made an excellent talk upon the expediency and wisdom of this movement. He said having 143 societies, the amount from each for the support of a missionary would be small. He earnestly advised enlarging and taking hold of this work, not to lessen our interest in any other phase of mission work, not to make us narrow, not to cause us to become personal in the matter of missions, but to accept the new work as a privilege and our opportunity to do more for the Master.

Miss Adelee Branham, of Missouri, a newly appointed missionary to Cuba, next addressed the meeting upon her call to mission work. Her sweet, tender talk as she stood in her youth and beauty and told how happy she was in thus laying herself on God's altar, touched every heart.

On motion of Mrs. Chipley, the gentlemen in the lobby were invited to hear the next speaker, Miss Mary Taylor, one of our best loved and most intelligent women. Miss Taylor made a strong Scriptural talk on "Appropriating Christ."¹⁸

Upon the completion of the presentation by Miss Taylor the Florida WMU voted to give \$500.00 over and above their contributions of the previous year. This money was given to the Home Mission Board to be applied to the support of Miss Taylor.

In 1900, a farewell service was held at the Florida Baptist Convention honoring Miss Mary Taylor and Miss Adelee Branham, appointees of the Home Mission Board to Cuba. The service



Martha Trotter

was well planned and ended with the convention singing together "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

In 1901, Jennie L. Spalding, Corresponding Secretary of the Florida Baptist Women's work, noted that Mary Taylor had been struggling with physical illness and language studies. However Taylor reported "God only knows what the knowledge of being remembered constantly in prayer by his children at home means to us in a foreign land steeped in degradation and sin."¹⁹

In the 1902 and 1903 *Peace River Associational Minutes* there are columns in the financial reports that permit the churches to report their various missionary expenditures. One of the headings is "Miss Taylor" as the churches prayed for Mary Taylor and also gave money to support her.

In 1913, Dr. B. D. Gray of the Home Mission Board and Mrs. Charlotte Peelman of the Florida WMU, traveled to Cuba. During the three week stay Peelman visited many of the 24 Southern Baptist mission stations and also spoke to the West Cuba Baptist Convention. Her commitment and enthusiasm was contagious and the Cuban Baptist women began to organize WMU in their churches. In 1942, Dr. M. N. McCall concluded, "The Cuban WMU is a real force in all phases of Cuban mission work."²⁰

The early success of the gospel presentation in Cuba can be attributed to many things. However there is one event that especially needs to be remembered.

In 1898, before T. J. Sparkman and W. F. Wood made an appeal to the Manatee Association, they spent a week together at the home of Sparkman. W. L. Mahon in his article "Origin of Cuba Baptist Missions," made this observation. "That week he spent at Brother Sparkman's house, and together they planned, prayed and executed."²¹ That same formula might be of value to mission leaders as strategies and goals are set today.

Endnotes

1 The "friendly visit" of a battleship sounds like an oxymoron. But regardless of the causes of the war the impact upon Cuba and Cuban Baptist work was devastating.

2 *Florida Baptist Witness*, September 13, 1889, p. 1. *The Examiner*, a Baptist paper established in 1823, had earlier reported that England was concerned about the Cuban situation. Lord Salisbury was quoted as favoring the purchase of Cuba by the United States for the amount of its national debt. (*The Examiner*, October 29, 1896, p. 1).

3 Good sources on the Powell ministry in Cuba include the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, II, p. 1101; *Florida Baptist Witness*, April 12, 1899, p. 2; and *A Baptist Preacher on the Texas Frontier* (1933), By W. D. Powell.

4 These dates were captured from Glenn Bryant, *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1945*, pp. 57-59; and Harold Greer, *History of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Cuba, 1886-1916*, pp. 2, 4. Hereafter referred to as Bryant, *Cuba* and Greer, *Cuba*.

5 Primitivo Delgado, *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1945*, 1947, pp. 41-42. Hereafter referred to as Delgado, *Cuba*.

6 Greer, *Cuba*, pp. 44-45.

7 Bryant, *Cuba*, p. 65. This has to be the height of flag waving with no pun intended.

8 Greer, *Cuba*, p. 52.

9 Theron Corse, *Protestants, Revolution and the Cuba-U. S. Bond*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2007, p. 2.

10 Kurt Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening*, 2012, p. 50.

11 *Florida Baptist Convention Annual, 1898*, pp. 35-36.

12 Martha Pope Trotter, *Faithful Servants. The Story of Florida Woman's Missionary Union, 1894-1994*, Jacksonville, 1994, pp.13-14. Hereafter referred to as Trotter, *WMU*.

13 Trotter, *WMU*, pp. 21-28.

14 *Florida Baptist Convention Annual, 1889*, p. 58.

15 *Florida Baptist Convention Annual, 1892*, p. 1892, p. 65.

16 Trotter, *WMU*, pp. 54-55.

17 Delgado, *Cuba*, p. 67.

18 *Florida Baptist Convention Annual, 1900*, p. 54.

19 *Florida Baptist Convention Annual, 1901*, p. 43.

20 Trotter, *WMU*, pp. 76-77.

21 W. L. Mahon, "Origin of Cuban Baptist Missions," *Florida Baptist Witness*, March 2, 1898, p. 1.

CHAPTER 7 A CRUCIAL YEAR (1905)

The progress of gospel penetration in Cuba from 1905-1946, is an adventure story that could be added to the Book of Acts. Just as Peter, James, John, Paul and Barnabas were used of the Holy Spirit in the Middle East and Europe, B. D. Gray, J. V. Cova, A. U. Cabrera, Gasper de Cardenas and Miguel M. Calejo were used in the United States and Cuba in a profound way. God was working and 1905 was a fruitful year in good news missions among Cubans in the United States and on the Island.

Baron DeKalb Gray (1855-1946) was born near Waynesboro, Mississippi in 1855, and died in Atlanta, Georgia in 1946. Gray served as pastor, college president, denominational worker and Home Mission Board director. At about the age of 16 Gray was converted and called to preach. He graduated from Mississippi College (1878), and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1883). Gray served as pastor of numerous churches in his student years and was always active in denominational work and service. He went as pastor of Hazelhurst, Mississippi in 1888, and after five years became pastor of First Baptist Church, Birmingham, in 1893. He became president of Georgetown College in 1901, and then corresponding secretary of the Home Mission Board from 1903-1928. In the 25 years that Gray headed up the Home Mission Board the departments of church building, loans, and evangelism were begun. J. B. Lawrence, his successor, noted that "Great development in Cuban work was undertaken and extended to the Panama Canal Zone.¹



Baron DeKalb Gray

Pendleton Jones was the first North American missionary to

Cuba (1893), and Charles David Daniel was the superintendent of the Home Mission Board work in Western Cuba from 1901-1905. The Cubans called Daniel "Hombre de Oro" (The Golden Man), because of his commitment and enthusiasm for the work. Daniel had to return to the United States in 1905, due to some health issues in his family.²

In all the efforts the steady hand of B. D. Gray was there. Greer in *History of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Cuba, 1886-1916*, (p. 239) pointed out that Gray made an annual visit to Cuba and this visit included time for fellowship, observation and first hand supervision decisions as needed.

The Western and Eastern Baptist Conventions were organized in 1905. As per the 1898 comity agreement the Northern Baptists led the work in eastern (oriental) Cuba and the Southern Baptists led the work in western (occidental) Cuba. Hartwell Robert Moseley led the work in the Eastern Baptist Convention. Glenn Bryant, who wrote a dissertation from the Northern Baptist perspective noted that Mosely was a faithful worker and "traveled by horseback, oxcart, wagon, small boat and rail" in establishing Baptist work in Cuba.³

The work of four Cubans were also very instrumental in the early success of the spread of the gospel. J. V. Cova, A. U. Cabrera, Gaspar de Cardenas and Miguel M. Calejo were faithful witnesses of the saving power of the gospel in Cuba and the United States.

Jose Victoriano Cova spent over 40 years in the gospel ministry. He was educated at Portland, Maine, for the Episcopal ministry, but became a Baptist in 1889, with the study of Biblical doctrine. Cova could speak Spanish, French, Italian and English. He preached in Havana before the Spanish American War and during the war preached in Tampa. Cova reported that there were 15,000 Cubans living in Tampa in 1896. Refugees arrived from Cuba on Tuesdays and Sundays, in 1896, and Cova ministered to them. He was intelligent, refined and loved the people. He located

to Tampa in April, 1896, when he had to leave Cuba, and founded the Cuban work in Ybor City. In 1897, the Florida WMU heard Cova and donated money to furnish the chapel (church) in Tampa. After the war Cova returned to Cuba and organized a Baptist church in Matanzas. This was the "Athens of Cuba." In his 12 years in Matanzas, he stabilized the church, help found the Cuban Baptist paper, served as its editor, and was known as "the old man eloquent" of Cuban Baptist work. In 1898, the *Florida Baptist Annual* (p. 43) published a report that stated there were 500 or more Cubans in Jacksonville, and Cova had baptized 23 Cuban refugees, which would serve as the "nucleus of a future Cuban congregation." Cova died in 1919, and left a Godly legacy in evangelism.

Alfredo U. Cabrera (1862-1921) was also a committed Cuban Baptist leader. Moses McCall wrote a tribute to Cabrera in 1921, that gives insight into early Cuban work in Key West and on the Island of Cuba.

On the honor roll which the Cuban brethren have made of their pioneers, Alfredo U. Cabrera occupies second place. He was born into a home of culture and refinement in 1863. His early educational advantages were good, and he received his bachelor's degree at the age of sixteen. He entered the Havana University and began the study of law, but that was during the "Ten Years War" that left so many Cuban families in poverty. His patriotic family suffered with others, and he was no longer able to continue his studies. He became a private teacher, which was the only kind that existed in Cuba at the time.

During these years he was an ardent catholic, but the foundation was laid for his conversion some years later. In conversation he once said to the writer, "Let no one tell me the catholic does not worship his image. I have placed the image in one corner of the room and crawled before it in worship hundreds of times." But one day an accident happened to the family saint or image. It fell from a table and cracked, so a carpenter was called to repair it. The

image had been brought by his grandfather from Rome, was said to be made from part of the wood of the original cross, and been blessed by the Pope, so it was greatly prized and venerated. Imagine the surprise of the young teacher when the carpenter found that the image was made of paste and not of wood. His first doubt was born and first wedge entered that was to separate him later from Rome.

At the age of 32 he joined the migration of patriotic Cubans to Key West, where they had to flee for their lives. Here he was active and prominent in the preparations for the Revolution. He belonged to the council of advisers, was secretary of another political club, and head mechanic in the revolutionary shops. It was in Key West that he had his first contact with the Gospel, and he was converted in 1897 under the ministry of a Cuban Methodist minister, who also had been converted after leaving his native land. Immediately after his conversion he began to study for the ministry, became an exhorter, and at the close of the Spanish American War was sent to Matanzas by the Methodist church.

A short time before Cabrera reached Matanzas, Rev. J. V. Cova, brilliant preacher and man of large culture, a Baptist, had been sent by our Home Board to open work in that important city. It was inevitable that these two Cuban patriots should drift together. Cova needed a platform in his preaching hall. The salary of an exhorter was so small that it was necessary for him to do other work when he could. Cabrera, who was a master with almost any tool, went to build the platform for Cova, who perhaps never knew how to drive a nail. When the platform was finished Cabrera was no longer anything but a Baptist. He used to say, "I was never satisfied about some things, and one day after an argument with my immediate superior in the work, he told me I was a Baptist and I ought to go where I belonged." He went, and the Baptist forces gained a great worker. He was sent to Santa Clara, where he was ordained to the ministry in 1899.

He had been working in Santa Clara five years when the

writer first knew him. An untiring worker, he had given himself so completely to his task that his health was broken. It was the day of beginnings, when equipment was almost non-existent, when literature of all kinds in Spanish was hard to get. Cabrera devised and assembled what he needed, when he was able to do so. He built church furniture, wrote hymns and set them to music. He taught several of them to his growing congregation so they could sing them without books. When in a day of opulence it was possible for the church to have a little organ, he made himself the organist till he could train some helpers to take his place. I shall never forget my impressions the first time I attended one of his consecration services. Without announcement he stood and the congregations joined him in singing one of his own hymns which they always used for opening the service. There was an atmosphere of devotion seldom seen.

During his residence in Santa Clara he did not confine his labors to the city. Friends gave him a Cuban pony, and he became a familiar figure in the surrounding country, as he made his weekly excursions to preach in the villages and country homes. The little man, who perhaps never weighed a hundred pounds, and the little white pony were much beloved by all, saint and sinner alike.

When our Board decided to open work in the important city of Cardenas, Cabrera was selected to begin the work. In his six years of labor there he laid strong foundations for the great work that has followed under the leadership of others. It was during his pastorate that the present beautiful church house was erected. Later there was a crisis in the Sagua work, where a mature mind and a delicate touch were needed to conserve the work already done, and again Cabrera was selected for the task. He did not disappoint his brethren, and again did a great work. But his health was broken and he was no longer able to do regular work. His last few years were spent in Havana, the home of his young manhood, where he helped in many things as he was able.

He was small of stature but he had a great heart and mind. He

was a preacher of great eloquence and evangelistic fervor, as ready with the pen as with the spoken word. He founded what was perhaps the first evangelical paper in Cuba, a small monthly publication called "Light and Truth." He set with his own hands the type for the first Sunday School training book published in Spanish, in Cuba or perhaps anywhere, the first *Normal Manual* published by our Sunday School Board.

After a long illness of great suffering he died in 1921, at the age of fifty-nine. In his last moments he kept repeating the words, "So be it Father, for thus it seemeth good in Thy sight." Baptists will perhaps never know how much they owe to him.⁴

The next person to consider in the quartet of early Cuban Baptist workers is Gaspar de Cardenas. He was one of the first four men baptized by W. F. Wood on January 20, 1886, in Havana. Alberto Diaz had been ordained by First Baptist Church, Key West on December 13, 1885, and assisted in the baptismal service. But Diaz waited for the Cardenas baptism until the man who was pastor of the church who ordained him could be present for the service. Kurt Urbanek in *Cuba's Great Awakening* (p. 33) is very astute in noting this early tradition. The waiting for an "ordained minister" from the "mother church" concept had serious Landmark implications and fatal practical precedence in the ministry of church starting. Lay leadership is still bound in many parts of Christendom by the "mother church" succession. All of this was a part of the person, place and authority in the baptism of Cardenas. Upon his baptism Cardenas received his instruction from J. V. Cova in that this was in the pre-seminary days. The first Baptist seminary was opened in Havana in the fall of 1906, with an enrollment of six students. The faculty consisted of Dr. M. N. McCall and Dr. L. T. Mays of Texas in the first year. In the second year Dr. Mays left Cuba and in the third year Dr. W. W. Barnes taught in the seminary and remained there until 1912. Barnes had accompanied B. D. Gray to Cuba in 1909. He went on to become principal of the Cuban-American College and pastor of the Eng-

lish speaking congregation of the Calvary Church. The Calvary Church had Spanish and English services. The church was organized by Diaz under the name Gethsemane Baptist Church but its name was changed to Calvary after Diaz resigned from his Home Mission Board service in 1901. It was C. D. Daniel who actually organized the Calvary Church on February 24, 1902. By 1929, they had 900 members and in 1945, had 1,421 members.⁵

Cardenas later remarked that he did not realize how historic the Baptist baptism of January 20, 1885, in Havana would be viewed. He said that if he had known how important the baptism of the four would be remembered he would have tried to be the first of the four.⁶

He taught in his own private school to support his family, and he and his family were active and faithful to Baptist work from the day he was converted. He was so involved and committed to the cause of Christ that his fellow Baptists called for his ordination to the ministry. During the Spanish American War years he moved to Tampa and "ran a little store to support himself." After the war he returned to Havana and Baptists asked him to go to the interior of the island and begin a new work. Cardenas went there to preach and began a ministry in the province of Pinar del Rio, which had a population of about 12,000. There was much resistance to this new work and no one would rent him a hall to preach in because he was viewed as a heretic. It was upon returning to his hotel room one day and seeing a porter reading a Bible he had left on the table that opened the way for Baptist work in Pinar del Rio Province. Cardenas remained there many years and with a pastor's heart he was the first person to "agitate the question of a Baptist orphanage for Cuba."⁷

The fourth member of the Cuban impact team that meant so much to the early work in Cuba and Florida was Miguel M. Calejo. Upon his death in 1934, Una Roberts Lawrence, wrote an informative and dramatic overview of his life. In the words of Lawrence we get a good description of another early Cuban Bap-

tist pioneer and his impact for Christ.

On July 30th, 1934, Miguel M. Calejo died in his home in Dos Pinos, a suburb of the City of Havana, where he has spent ten years of fruitful ministry as missionary and pastor. His death removes the last one of the group of pioneer Baptist preachers who laid the foundation for our work in the days before Cuba became a Republic.

Miguel M. Calejo was born in Cuba in the turbulent days of struggle for freedom from Spain. While still a young man the War of Independence began, which in Cuban history dates from the early 1890s. Along with many others, he was forced to take refuge in the United States in the latter years of this struggle and came to live in Key West. Either at that time, or earlier he came into contact with the Gospel, and became a Baptist. He was ordained to the ministry by First Baptist Church, Key West on Nov. 30, 1896.

He wished to return to his own land, even before the War ended, but was pressed to stay in the United States by friends who felt his services were needed for the Cause of Cuban Independence and that he was an important contact for them with the United States. He spent one year as missionary to his people in West Tampa, but at the close of the Spanish American War, he went immediately to Cuba, working first in Manzanillo, in the eastern end of the Island under Northern Baptist direction.

When C. D. Daniel began developing a missionary occupation of Havana and the western Provinces, Bro. Calejo came to open the work in Guanabacoa, an important suburb lying across the bay from Havana proper. Here he rendered notable service for four years. Then he went to Cienfuegos, the largest sugar port of the Island where for ten years he ministered in a most fruitful way, followed by two years in Guines, five years in Santa Clara, and came in 1923 back to Havana where in various capacities he spent the rest of his life, pastor, general missionary, teacher and finally a pioneer again, opening the work in Los Pinos, where he developed a large and vigorous church.

Miguel M. Calejo was a versatile man, ministering almost equally well as preacher, teacher and writer. His contribution to Cuban Baptist life has been effectual and manifold. He was a man of quiet manner, high ideals pure and holy life, scholarly tastes, deep sincerity of convictions and power in presenting the Gospel to others. He was especially gifted in attracting young men to him and drawing them into the ministry. A. S. Rodriguez, the most prolific writer Baptist have yet produced in the Spanish world, was a young man on whom Calejo laid his hand, and drew into service. While pastor in Cienfuegos, he found A. T. Bequer, Eladio Becerra and M. A. Calleior, sent them to Dr. McCall to train in the little Seminary then just beginning in Dr. McCall's home, and followed them with affectionate interest in the years since as they became leading missionaries and pastors in the Island.

For many years he taught in the Seminary most acceptably. At different times he held positions of honor among his brethren, Vice President of the Convention, Treasurer of the Convention, Treasurer of the Sunday School Convention and other positions of trust and influence. His greatest ministry however has been as a preacher of the Gospel to unsaved people, a "Shepherd of souls," as a writer in *LA VOZ BAUTISTA* (Havana) calls him, who "better than his own life, loved the souls of others."

"His passion was for the salvation of souls," this writer and longtime friend goes on to say, "And until the last moment he cared for his flock as a shepherd, willing to endure all for his great love – his church."

He is the last of the pioneers in Cuba. There is no one to take his place. For six years we have had no Seminary. Gifted consecrated young men are pleading for training for the ministry. We cannot even bring them to this country to get their education. Five outstanding Baptist leaders have fallen in the past eighteen months. In death, as well as in life, God is calling us to do something about Cuba. What shall we say?

Anytime there is a generational change in leadership a Holy

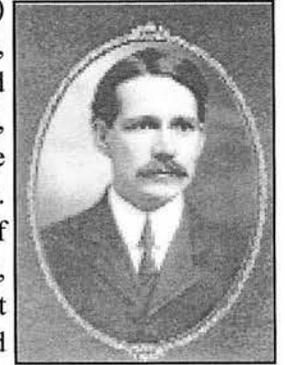
Spirit moment arrives. The greater the problem and the more dire the circumstance the more the Holy Spirit has to show His power. 1905 was one of those years and men and women responded as God called them to service.

Endnotes

- 1 J. B. Lawrence. "Baron DeKalb Gray." *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, I, Broadman, Nashville, 1958, p. 585.
- 2 Kurt Urbanek. *Cuba's Great Awakening*, 2012, p. 52. Hereafter referred to as Urbanek, *Cuba*.
- 3 Glenn E. Bryant. *A History of Baptist Mission Work in Cuba*. 1954, p. 64. Hereafter referred to as Bryant, *Cuba*.
- 4 M. N. McCall, "Alfredo U. Cabrera, Cuban Pioneer." The original document is in the Southern Baptist Library and Archives Cuba Collection in Nashville, Tennessee. The editor does not know if this tribute was ever published in any other source.
- 5 Primitivo Delgado. *The History of Southern Baptist Missions in Cuba to 1945*. pp. 85-103. Hereafter referred to as Delgado, *Cuba*.
- 6 This personal aside of Cardenas is in the Cuba literature files of the Florida Baptist Historical Society but no author or date is listed with the material.
- 7 Delgado, *Cuba*. pp. 85-95.

CHAPTER 8
"A MAN CALLED MOSES"
(1905-1946)

Moses Nathaniel McCall (1874-1947) was born in Sylvania, Screven County, Georgia on December 15, 1874. He died in Jacksonville, Florida, on March 8, 1947, after serving as a Southern Baptist Home missionary to Cuba for over 42 years. McCall died at the Jacksonville home of his son Russell on Saturday morning, March 8, 1947. His home was in Cuba. It was there he raised his family, formed friendships and gave his life in Christian service. McCall attended Mercer University, Denison University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was ordained by Lyerly Baptist Church in Georgia, on January 1, 1900. He was pastor in Dalton, Georgia, when he heard Dr. B. D. Gray of the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board, make an appeal for a principal for the Cuban-American College in Havana. He and his wife had been mission volunteers to Brazil but could not go due to the frail health of his wife. They were appointed to Cuba in November, 1904, and arrived in Cuba on February 15, 1905. Two years later, upon the resignation of Dr. C. D. Daniel, McCall became superintendent of the Southern Baptist Convention work in Cuba.



Moses Nathanael
McCall

It was in 1904 that Dr. McCall heard the "Cuban Call" delivered by B. D. Gray at the Georgia Baptist State Convention. A big problem was the fact that the foster father of Mrs. McCall was opposed to them going to Brazil or Cuba. This attitude softened when the father-in-law became pastor in Tampa. At that point

Cuba did not seem so far away and the McCalls sailed for Cuba on February 13, 1905, arriving on February 15, 1905.¹ When McCall arrived Dr. C. D. Daniel took McCall on a tour of the work. He found out immediately that there were the problems of national rebellion, disease, hunger, and the Diaz controversy that had scattered the church for ten years. But McCall had the strong native preachers J. V. Cova, A. U. Cabrera and M. M. Calejo to help him.

In October, 1907, Dr. McCall's wife, Ruth Nelson McCall, died and they had three small children. Her mother went to Cuba to care for the children for a while but it was the arrival of Mabel Lipscomb, a relative of Mrs. McCalls, that brought some relief. Lipscomb came to replace a school official but ended up with administrative and family responsibilities. Two years later she and Dr. McCall were married and they led a rich and full life together until the death of Dr. McCall in 1947.



Moses and Mabel
McCall

The Christian character and integrity of Dr. McCall endeared him to the Cuban people. After forty years of service to them Dr. McCall was honored with the Order of Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, the highest honor given to any Cuban civilian for meritorious service. There were over 1,500 people present on March 28, 1945, when Dr. McCall was honored.

In assessing the work of Dr. McCall it might be well to let him make his own report for 1918-1927. He built an early foundation of respect and hardwork and then in 1927 he wrote a ten year report for the Home Mission Board.

"Tens Years of Work in Cuba 1918-1927"

by W. N. McCall

The past ten years, 1918-1927, have seen a steady growth in the Cuban work. Statistics do not tell all the story in a field where

a large part of our present assets is the changed and changing attitude of the public toward evangelical missions. But even our statistics tell an eloquent story in their limited way. For example, in 1918 our West Cuba Baptist Convention in annual session had 57 delegates, reported 167 baptisms, \$4,065.20 in total offerings, with a total membership of 1919. In 1927 we met with 108 official delegates, reported 186 baptisms, a total offering of \$21,223.13, and a membership of 2,737. Glancing at the intervening years we find that one year reported 412 baptisms and that on two or three occasions the convention attendance has been larger. In years when our people have been in better circumstances they have made a better showing in some respects.

Looking at the matter a little more closely, we might give a summary of ten years as follows:

PREACHERS—Fifteen preachers, native men, have entered the force most of whom have opened new fields of labor during that time. With two exceptions they have passed through our Seminary in Havana, the exceptions being one man who came to us from Colgate University, and one who was formerly a priest. With one exception these are all young men, with an expectancy of many years of service ahead. Without exception they are fine, consecrated men, who honor their ministry and the Baptist cause. During the same period six American women have been added to the force, five of whom still remain with us.

CHURCHES—These have increased from twenty-five to forty-two. Every year there have been two or three new churches organized, and only one of the former number has been discontinued. The churches have improved in their organization, their methods of work and their gifts. There is forming a stronger body of laymen who are capable of taking an active part in the affairs of the denomination, improving the solidity of the congregations and giving great promise for the future. There has been encouraging growth in the spirit of stewardship, and tithing bands exist in most of the congregations. The native churches have contributed

in the ten years something over \$125,000.00. The spirit of evangelism is strong. The last number of Home and Foreign Fields classifies the churches of the South according to number of baptisms last year. The Havana church would fall into the second group of 67 churches within the bounds of the Convention that had baptized between 100 and 200 during the year. During the ten years approximately two thousand have been baptized. Considering this it would seem, perhaps, that the total number of church members at the present time ought to be larger, but aside from natural causes of shrinkage we have that of shifting population. Cuba is at the cross-roads of the Spanish speaking world and many converted here go to Spain or to other Latin-American countries.

ORGANIZATIONS—There are four general organizations, the Convention, the Sunday School Association, the Women's Missionary Union and B. Y. P. U. Federation. The last of these has been organized during the ten year period (1923), and the W. M. U. was just beginning its work, being composed of just a few faithful women who had to call on a pastor to preside over their meetings. But the W. M. U. has grown into a strong body, active and progressive. Two years ago the Baptist Orphanage was begun. It is small but is doing an excellent and much needed work. About twenty children and six old people have been taken care of during this period.

SCHOOLS—Our school work has not kept pace with other branches of the work in progress, because our outlay has not been as great. We have realized the great need and importance of proper denominational educational facilities, but have not been in position to do what we had planned along that line. However, a number of good schools have been in constant operation, with an average attendance of about a thousand. These fall into two classes" (1) Those schools that have been helped directly by the Home Mission Board, by appropriations for equipment and running expenses. Of these there are two, the Cuban American College, in Havana, and the Colegio Bautista, in Santa Clara.

These have done and are doing a worthy work. Their tuitions have supplied in part the running expenses. (2) Those schools that have been conducted by pastors employed by the Board, but without direct financial help from the Board. The number of these has varied, there being at present six. These have rendered great service to the cause of the Gospel, notwithstanding their lack of equipment and adequate teaching force.

PROPERTIES—During the past ten years the Home Mission Board has built three modest church plants, consisting of chapel and pastor's home. These are in Consolación del Sur, Cruces and Trinidad. The total cost of these, together with the lots, has been about twenty-eight thousand dollars, and their value has increased. During the same period lots have been purchased at Cumanayagua, Guayos, Arroyo Apolo ad Caibarién. In Cumanayagua and Caibarién the lots have houses which are being used as temporary chapels. The cost of the four properties was \$24,500.00. During the same time a very valuable school lot was purchased in Havana. During the ten year period the Home Board has added to its property assests in Cuba approximately \$390,000.00. It is needless to add that all of these acquisitions were made in the early part of the ten year period, the last being the school lot, which was purchased seven years ago.

PRINTING—In its "Imprenta Bautista" the Board has done a worthy work in the publication of literature of different kinds. Several books have been published, the denominational paper has been edited, programs and courses of denominational study have been issued, and more than two million pages of tracts have been printed for distribution in the Cuban field.

The above given are tangible things accomplished. As has been stated, no estimate of the value of the work done should ignore the strengthening of foundations, the establishment of confidence, and the winning of good will, all of which must be given a large place in the estimate of our assets in a field like Cuba.²

The final days of Dr. McCall were as glorious as its beginning.

He died in Jacksonville on March 8, 1947, and his funeral was held at First Baptist Church. His interment was at Apopka, Florida. Dr. Herbert Caudill was his successor in the work in Cuba and was present when Dr. McCall left Cuba for the last time on October 6, 1946. He had hoped to return to Cuba and kept that dream alive until the last few weeks of his life.

Dr. Caudill wrote of the last days and funeral of Dr. McCall in the *Southern Baptist Home Missions* magazine in the May, 1947 issue (p. 4).

"Moses My Servant Is Dead"

by HERBERT CAUDILL

For forty years Moses, the servant of God, guided the people of Israel from the land of bondage across the desert to the borders of the Promised Land. For forty-two years Moses Nathanael McCall, superintendent of the Baptist work in Western Cuba, directed that work with wisdom and patience.

It is said of Moses of the Exodus, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). And Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). Moses was not permitted to enter the land of Canaan, but centuries later he was with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Our Moses McCall, also one of the meekest of men, failed to obtain many of the things which men consider of greatest importance on earth, but certainly he now dwells with Jesus.

I had the privilege of going to the airport on October 6, 1946, when Dr. McCall for the last time left the land that he loved. He hoped to return, and kept that hope until fifteen or twenty days before going to be with the Lord.

On March 8, 1947, at 6:10 in the afternoon, Dr. M. N. McCall breathed his last. Some of the members of the family were at the side of his bed.

Rev. A. Lopez Munoz, pastor of the Baptist Church at

Caibarien, Cuba, and Dr. Rafael Silva went with me to Jacksonville to the funeral. On Monday, March 10, we went to the funeral home to look once more upon him who had been to us our superintendent, pastor, teacher, counselor, friend, and father.

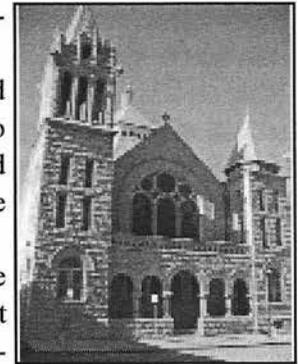
Tuesday before the hour announced for the funeral, we took the Cuban flag to the church and asked that it be placed over his casket, a symbol of the people whom he loved dearly.

At ten o'clock, accompanied by the notes of the organ, we entered the First Baptist Church at Jacksonville. The pastor, Dr. Homer G. Lindsay, began the service by reading several passages from the Word of God. Then Dr. A. M. Herrington, pastor of the Southside Church, led in prayer.

Rev. Elmer F. Bailey, accompanied by Mr. Ralph Grant Copeland at the piano, sang "There Is a Green Hill Far Away," after which Dr. Rafael Silva spoke briefly on "Dr. McCall As Pastor." Dr. Lopez Munoz spoke on "Dr. McCall As Superintendent." The writer spoke on "Dr. McCall As Fellow Missionary."

Dr. Courts Redford brought a message in the name of the Home Mission Board, after which Dr. Lindsey spoke brief words of comfort to the family and friends. We were greatly moved when Brother Bailey sang, "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go." Rev. Walter L. Moore led in a brief prayer. The pastors present were honorary pallbearers, and six of the deacons of the church served as pallbearers.

Immediately after the service we began the long trip to Apopka, Florida. At the grave it was the writer's privilege to read Psalm 90 and Psalm 23 and speak briefly, after which Rev. Lopez Munoz led in the closing prayer. We saw the grave covered with beautiful flowers, and we thought of him whose life had brought fragrance to thousands.



First Baptist Church,
Jacksonville

CHAPTER 9 THE WORK IN CUBA (1930-1940)

Dr. McCall wrought well in Cuba. We now have about sixty-five churches, many of which have adequate buildings and comfortable pastoriums. There are more than fifty pastors eager to work for the growth of the kingdom of God. There are many missionaries. We also have a group of students in our seminary and training school. There are several young people in our churches who have felt the call to the ministry. Baptists in the four provinces in which we work total 5,700. Certainly when we consider what Dr. McCall found when he arrived in Cuba on February 15, 1905, we must exclaim, "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

The Seminary in Havana was begun in 1906. Before that time preachers were trained by individuals. Dr. McCall emphasized native preachers, evangelism, and the carrying of the gospel to all of Cuba. There were six students in the first class and the faculty consisted of Dr. McCall and Dr. L. T. Mays of Texas. Dr. W. W. Barnes joined the faculty in 1908 and taught until 1912. A. T. Bequer was the first graduate and served as pastor of Cienfuegos Church for over 30 years.



Homer G. Lindsay

Endnotes

1 There are printed dates and events in the life of Dr. McCall that are not consistent. This writer believes that Dr. McCall was born December 15, 1874, in Sylvania, Georgia, and graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

2 Written report of Dr. McCall is in the Cuba Collection of materials in the Southern Baptist Library and Archives in Nashville, Tennessee. "Oh Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go," was the favorite hymn of Dr. McCall and must have produced a touching scene when it was sung.

1. How It Was Saved

In Havana, the Seminary which had been the seed bed of the work closed in 1929, not to re-open until the Bottoms Trust made this possible in 1935. For six years the only training of God-called youth possible was that given by busy missionaries to young men who studied the Bible and methods of work under them, or by Seminaries and Training Schools in other lands. The closing of the Seminary meant also the closing of many of the missions in Havana, for most of these were made possible by this force of student work.

In Cuban-American College came the greatest retrenchment. When the disaster came, plans were already drawn for building the first unit for the school on the beautiful, well-located lots purchased in 1920 for that purpose, the money for this and its future development coming from the gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Bottoms. In the crisis these plans had to be laid aside, a sacrifice of dreams of the years for an outstanding Baptist school to train a Cuban Baptist leadership. Not only that, but the day school, housed in the Baptist Temple, carried on only through the sacrificial cooperation of the Cuban teachers, who served without guaranteed salary, sharing the tuition that came in. Professor Stirling McCall and his devoted wife, who had given fruitful years already to the school and had prepared themselves for life service there with exceptional training in the Spanish language and Cuban educational methods, resigned, believing in the crisis that their salaries meant more if released to help the Cuban force to carry on, the smaller school possible under the conditions.

Tuition charges, never very large, were most uncertain during those years, because the people of Cuba grew poorer and poorer, and

many of the students stayed in school only through the help of the missionaries and scholarships provided by their friends in the States. Yet, even in the worst years, the teachers stayed loyally by the work, sharing such income as there was, and the school lived on through depression and Revolution, a powerful influence in evangelization as well as in preparation of future leadership.

Despite their high resolve not to close any fields, some had to be abandoned, not directly as any economy measure, but indirectly as the force grew smaller, and no replacements could be made. In this way the work in Jovellanos, Batabano, Trinidad, San Luis, Santo Domingo, Guayos, and Guane was closed. Two or three of the men who had had business training went back into business, going on with preaching as they could in addition. Many pastors continued by utilizing former training in trades and professions as a supplement to the small salaries possible. The work was saved by the missionaries, but at a great cost.

2. The Price That Was Paid

Death took a dreadful toll in the first five years of the decade. From 1930 to 1935 eight of the outstanding missionaries died. Mrs. Moseley, knowing the dire straits of the work and the continued threat of further cuts in the work, said in her report of the death of one of the older ones:

“I can not help wondering if it is not God’s way of taking care of His own. You will not misunderstand when I say it is easier for us to see them go home to Him than for us to have to drop them from the work to which they have given their all.”

Only two or three of these, however, were old in years. Among them was the saintly Josefa Hunoz, for many years Bible woman of Calvary Baptist Church and one of the greatest soul-winners our Cuban work has ever known; and the pioneer...M. M. Calejo, whose life had been woven into all the work. In 1934, the gifted A. S. Rodriguez, in the prime of his useful life, whose translations, books and pamphlets made the largest contribution to Spanish Baptist liter-

ature of any one man, went to his heavenly home suddenly from his pulpit in Sancti Spiritus.

Then in February, 1935, the consecrated, able Rene Alfonso, for years Dr. McCall’s “other self” in the work, quietly slipped away from the little room on the Temple roof after months of intense suffering. Mrs. Moseley wrote again then, “So many of our preachers have died in recent years, just when we need them most. I have been in Latin American work thirty-two years, and I have never seen such opportunities, nor so many open doors.”

The open doors were there, but there were no replacements of those who fell at their posts. For nine years there were no appointments on the Cuban field. The American force, the smallest it had been since the first period of our work in Cuba, carried on with multiplied responsibilities for each one. Not one escaped the consequences of illness or operations or the necessity for relief from the terrific pressure found either in rest or change of work.

Even Dr. McCall, who had withstood many more years of living in the tropics without a breakdown than most from the States, went down in 1934, stricken by a critical illness that threatened his life for many anxious weeks.

3. Safe In Revolution

As if all these problems were not enough, Cuba blazed into a Revolution in the summer of 1933, the result of long oppression by a political regime that had mortgaged future generations in foreign loans and suppressed any opposition by a murderous terrorism. Because the Revolution centered in Havana the work there was hampered most, though there were difficulties everywhere, if only the increasing poverty of the people and the paralyzing of all business.

In Havana the Baptist Temple is the center of all the work, with Calvary Church auditorium on the ground floor, the school and medical clinic quartered on second, and the American missionaries’ home on third. Located only two blocks from the

National Capitol and across the street from the Central Police Station, it was in the very heart of the of the Revolution. Through the worst of it, Dr. McCall was ill in the States and during much of the worst fighting the only Americans on the field were the women missionaries. Mrs. Moseley wrote of those trying days in the fall of 1933:

“The summer has been hectic. War, pestilence and famine--with a cyclone thrown in for good measure! Today, about 6:00 A. M., firing began in Vedado when the latest President was ushered in by a military stroke. Sergeants became colonels and the real colonels and other high officers took refuge in El Notel Nacional. They have held their ground there until about four this afternoon, when they surrendered to the heavy bombardment. We thought the worst was over, but about 6:00 P. M. it began again down in our neighborhood, shots coming from all directions. We closed all doors and windows, then finally went down one flight of stairs and waited on the landing just above the school rooms, as probably the safest place in the building. Miss Sewell, Miss Matthews, Miss Smith and I huddled there on the marble stairway while a rain of bullets pattered all around us. Some of our neighbors ran in for greater safety. Then the firing ceased and we came back upstairs and had a prayer meeting in our salon in the dark. But it was light in our hearts!

“Last Friday machine guns were turned on the house back of us where there were known to be Communists in hiding. Some of these slid down the water pipe onto our roof and escaped down our stairway.”

Of that episode, Miss Matthews could tell more vividly, for in a lull between the firing she had gone across that roof to see about some neighbors. As she returned, on turning the corner by that waterpipe, she saw a man sliding down it almost into her arms. He was armed and she did not know whether he was fleeing or pursuing someone. At any rate she beat him to the safe shelter of the Temple Quarters and with great relief saw him pass her by and run

for the stairway. Perhaps he was more startled and frightened than she, but neither of them paused to find out!

Mrs. Moseley's graphic pictures of those days made fascinating reading. “There is tension in the air, fear, trembling, anxiety about loved ones, and a great thirst for what we have to offer, the Shelter of a Great Rock, a Refuge in time of trouble--comfort, strength, salvation. Our own people are caught in the situation, on both sides. The other day I visited an old couple whose two Christian sons were petty officers during the Machado regime and are now prisoners. The old folk were greatly distressed and I tried to help. When I was leaving, the old man held my hand and said, ‘God bless you, hermanita, and may He give you many years to comfort others.’ Our work has been interrupted, but not stopped by any means; and I believe our people know the Master better and are closer to Him.”

“The good seed are the children of the kingdom,” even in the blood-stained soil of Revolution.

“No one can foretell the outcome of the present conflict,” wrote Mrs. Moseley again, “but I feel that when it is all over, Cuba, tear-stained and chastened, will fling open doors and hearts to the Gospel as never before. Will Southern Baptists take advantage of their opportunity? I'd like to lend them my glasses that they might see what I see.”

4. In The Hurricane

As if war and want were not enough in the midst of the utmost chaos in the governmental affairs there came the hurricanes, three times bringing devastation and death in their wake. The heaviest blow was at Cardenas, where Dr. Martinez had been the medical missionary since 1929. That beautiful seaport was almost destroyed. Our church, built some twenty-five years ago by the gifts of the Sunbeams of the South is in the downtown section where the storm stuck furiously.

In the living quarters of the building were Miss Virginia Perez,

another missionary and her family. When Dr. Martinez reached the church after desperately braving the storm, he found them huddled in the baptistery, the only secure place when the roof of the church went, the church was almost completely wrecked. The walls, unusually well built, stood, but there was little else left of the well-equipped church and Dr. Martinez' clinical equipment so generously provided in 1931 by the Annie Armstrong Offering of Southern Woman's Missionary Union.

Dr. Martinez was one of a committee sent by the town to Havana to seek help from the Government, then in the throes of Revolution. Some help was sent; trucks of clothing, tents for the homeless, some food for the starving, and medicines and serums with which to fight pestilence and disease.

The church at Sagua la Grande also suffered severely in the storm. Our missionary, Rev. M. A. Calleiro, lived in a part of it. His family was left homeless and without resources to provide for their needs. Here, too, the poverty of the people left them helpless to do very much in repairing or rebuilding. In Cienfuegos the pastor's home, the front of which was the chapel, was destroyed, thus making both church and missionary homeless. Other chapels suffered lesser damage.

Cuban Baptists, poor as they were, rallied with all they could send of clothing, food and money. But they could not rebuild the churches. The Home Mission Board, still tied by its creditors, had no margin with which to meet such emergencies. An appeal to friends of the work in the States and a gift through the Annie Armstrong Offering of 1932 met the most immediate repair needs. Not until the Bottoms Trust provided the necessary money in 1933 was the damage completely restored.

5. The Coming of the Revival

Yet in the midst of war and want and storm, Cuban Baptists felt the Spirit of God moving in power upon their own hearts and the hearts of their people. In 1933, a revival spirit broke out first

in Calvary Church, in downtown Havana, the mother church of our work, where Dr. M. N. McCall is pastor. Here, in January, 1933, Dr. Antonio Martinez preached night after night to crowds that filled to overflowing that large auditorium, the second largest Baptist auditorium in Latin America. The Spirit of God greatly moved on the hearts of the people, and the number of baptisms at the close brought the total reported in May, 1933, to the Southern Baptist Convention to the highest record for Cuba for many years.

Out in the provinces where revivals sprang up in many places there was less politics and more freedom of movement. In Matanzas and Santa Clara, in Cienfuegos and Pinar del Rio, all large cities and important centers of life of the Island, revival tides ran high. In many smaller churches remarkable evidences of an outpouring of God's Spirit upon the people came through the preaching of the Word, the testimony of believers and the distribution of God's Word.

Particularly was this true in Las Cruces. This is a town of some eight thousand in the heart of the sugar plantation country of Santa Clara Province where Rev. and Mrs. Ismael Negrin are missionaries. Here a series of weekly cottage prayer meetings in the homes culminated in a remarkable day-long service when groups of workers went from home to home, returning to the church in the late evening for a thanksgiving service that crowned prayer services since early that morning in which 5,080 people had heard their witness. It was the beginning of a remarkable revival movement in that region affecting all the country round about through the next three years as the revival continued. From the group of workers developed out of this church have come a half a dozen young preachers, active laymen and consecrated young women workers.

Stirred by the knowledge that despite the activity of the missionaries through the years there were many large cities, towns, and wide areas of countryside that had not yet heard the evangelical witness to the gospel, two younger missionaries, A. Lopez and

J. M. Fleytes, planned an evangelistic trip into untouched territory. With a little aid from Calvary Church, Havana, and offerings from a few of the other churches, these two set out as the Seventy of old, burdened with no baggage, and little money; making their way from town to town, walking much of the time, riding with friendly farmers, or, now and then when necessary, paying a bus fare; sleeping in homes when hospitality was offered, and often in the open when no friendly door opened; reading the Bible to any who would listen, wherever they chanced to meet; and taking the words of Jesus literally, "As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 10:7.

Their report to the Cuban Convention in the spring of 1936 stirred the fires still further and the Convention voted a definite evangelistic budget for the year within their Cuban Mission Board plans. The gifts of the churches that year for all causes were \$10,877.75. The new evangelism included the work of both preachers and laymen and women.

Men and women who could find no work looked upon this misfortune as God's providence in giving them time to become evangelists; and here and there bands of volunteer evangelists opened missions where homes were offered, and made regular rounds of open air services in cities and countrysides, believing God would have them use their enforced idleness thus for His cause. There was an unprecedented need for tracts, Gospel portions and Bibles, and the mission treasury was strained to the utmost to provide even a minimum of the demand.

With the opening of the Seminary in the fall of 1935, undergirded by the Bottoms Trust Fund, fifteen young men out of more than forty volunteers for the ministry were selected for the first student body. Most of the rest pursued their studies by correspondence and came to take the two weeks' training course provided by the Summer Assembly which was begun in July, 1937.

This was more than an Assembly. It was in reality a short Seminary, with a faculty of teachers of the highest quality giving

a brief but intensive training in Bible, theology, church methods, and missions. A group of selected young women chosen from the Y. W. A.'s of the churches shared in these courses while carrying on separate organizational activities as a Y. W. A. Camp. The Assembly was held in the Baptist Temple where the enlarged facilities made possible by the Bottoms Trust, 1937-38, provided ample room for all this work.

With the opening of the Seminary came enlargement of the mission program in Havana, and with the graduation of the first class in the spring of 1939 came the re-opening of several centers of mission work, closed or merged with other fields since 1930. Few mission fields have been more sorely beset than our Cuban work through this decade—poverty and want, revolution and hurricanes, and a decreasing income with which to meet these crises. But money is not the "seed of the kingdom." Lives, consecrated and devoted, self-forgetful lives are the "good seed," and of this good seed there was a rich abundance in Cuba, sown to the glory of God.

Bottoms Trust Fund

The mission seeds in Cuba have been influenced by dollars. Mission work in Cuba has always required money from an outside source to undertake the many endeavors that were prayed, dreamed and worked into existence. Schools, clinics, church buildings, assemblies and general property repair, and replacement requires capital funds in large proportions.

The vision and generosity of the Bottoms Trust Fund has proven to be a great friend to Cuban Baptists. On July 31, 1929, Mrs. George Washington Bottoms of Texarkana, Arkansas, set in motion a perpetual trust that has paid out over \$1,000,000.00 for religious, educational and/or benevolent work in Cuba, the Canal Zone, and/or among foreigners in this country. The gift was 1,000 shares of stock of the Crowell and Spencer Lumber Company of Long Leaf, Louisiana. This trust was in addition to the gifts the

Bottoms family had been making to the Home Mission Board since 1918. Glenn Bryant in *A History of Baptist Mission Work in Cuba* (p. 190), gives a touching and telling story of the concern and generosity of Mrs. Bottoms toward Cuban Baptists.

On one occasion, after Mrs. Bottoms had visited Havana where she saw Dr. McCall carrying his sick wife up and down the long flight of stairs, she sent back a check with instructions to purchase an elevator for the Baptist Temple Building.

The Bottoms Trust Fund continued to invest money in Cuban Baptists as long as it was allowed. In the 1958 *Southern Baptist Convention Annual*, (p. 243), the Home Mission Board report to the convention listed \$20,290.69 given from the trust fund. In 1959, \$16,496.83 was given from the fund. In 1960 it was \$19,352.27 and in 1961, \$9,838.54. After the 1959 Communist takeover in Cuba the Bottoms Fund gifts have been listed in general and no Cuban report or break out can be detected. The Bottoms Trust Fund is an encouragement and example of basic Christian stewardship. For nearly one hundred years the Bottoms family has continued to impact Home Mission work in Cuba, the Canal Zone and “among foreigners in this country.” Being dead, yet they speaketh.

This chapter is anonymous. It was found among “Cuba Documents” in the Southern Baptist Convention Library and Archives Collection in Nashville, Tennessee. It was used here because of the concise assessment of the 1930-1940 period.

In the upper right hand corner of the first page of the document this note was penned: “Written for a chapter in *Trail of Seed* but cut out by Miss White, Ch. of WK of Prayer Com.” The editor believes this was written by Una Roberts Lawrence who wrote *The Trail of Seed* in 1941.

The editor added the Bottoms Trust information in that it was very instrumental in the 1930-1940 time frame.

CHAPTER 10 “NO. 981” (1947-1969)

Herbert Caudill was born August 17, 1903, in Scott County, Virginia. He was converted in August, 1918, at New River Church in Mell Association, Georgia. He received his early education in the public schools of Mardela Springs, Maryland, and later at Benedict and Vanceville, Georgia. He attended Tifton High School in 1922, and graduated from Mercer University in 1926 (B. A., M. A.). Caudill then went to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and graduated with his Th. M. degree in 1928.

He was ordained at Tatnell Square Baptist Church, Macon, Georgia, in March, 1926, and served as pastor of a circuit of churches in that area. In 1929, he was appointed as missionary of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and began his work as pastor of the English-speaking church in Havana in 1935, he taught Bible, church history, religious education and English.



Mr. and Mrs.
Herbert Caudill

The Caudill family became immersed in gospel ministry. Herbert and wife Marjorie served in Cuba forty years. Daughter Margaret and son-in-law David Fite, served alongside the Caudills in Cuba from 1960-1969. David was the son of Clifton E. Fite who was pastor of Rosemont Heights Baptist Church in Waynesboro, Georgia. The David Fites had three children, James, John and Mark.

Daughter Jane married Douglas Pringle and they served as missionaries to Panama. They had four children, George, Rebecca,

Marjorie and Ana Pauline. Therefore three couples of this family were serving the Home Mission Board at the same time. Son, Herbert, Jr. married Bonnie and they had a daughter, Carla Jane.



Mr. and Mrs.
David Fite

When the Herbert Caudill and David Fite families left Cuba in 1969, there were no Southern Baptist missionaries in that country for the first time in 83 years. This family left a mark of dedicated service, and committed Christian living, that is still remembered by many Cuban people who lived through the difficult days of persecution and separation.

McCall-Caudill Transition

Dr. McCall and Dr. Caudill worked together in close proximity for 17 years in Cuba, and were friends from May 23, 1929, to October 6, 1946, when Dr. McCall left Cuba for the last time. Their years of friendship provided a Moses-Joshua opportunity for them both. Dr. Caudill went to Cuba in 1929, to serve as pastor of the English-speaking congregation in Havana. Dr. Caudill later recalled that at first it did not occur to him that he was the pastor of Dr. McCall. He said that it was much later when he visited the bedside of his dear friend, and Dr. McCall requested prayer, that he realized they both served one another mutually as pastor. Dr. Caudill in a summary of the McCall years in Cuba observed that

Just a few days before his return for the last time to the United States it dawned on me that I had been his pastor through the years. I as the young minister and pastor had looked upon him as my pastor, and then I saw that he was looking to me in a sense as his pastor.¹

Moses N. McCall (1874-1947) served as superintendent of

Home Mission Board work in Cuba for 42 years. Herbert Caudill became superintendent of Southern Baptist work in Cuba in May, 1947, and served for a total of 40 years. These two spiritual giants set a foundation of compassion, hard work, administrative giftedness and love for the Cuban people.

SBC Visits Cuba in 1952

Dr. McCall and Dr. Caudill did all they could to lead Southern Baptists to have a heart for Cuba. I. T. Tichenor, B. D. Gray and others made frequent trips to Cuba to learn and lead in the Cuban work. Then the year 1952 brought a unique opportunity. The Southern Baptist Convention met in Miami in 1952 and the Home Mission Board offered a visit to the "Land of Fascination," as a pre-convention trip or a post-convention trip. The four day trip to Cuba from Miami was \$80.00 plus meals. The pre-convention trip was May 8-11, 1952, from Miami. On Thursday the entourage went to Key West by bus and toured the Baptist work in Key West and the Summer White House. On Thursday afternoon there was a 45 minute plane flight from Key West to Havana. On Friday, the tour included a visit to five Cuban Baptist churches and the Cuban Baptist assembly grounds. On Saturday, there was a visit to Morro Castle and sightseeing in Havana. On Sunday, there were church and mission services in Havana and a late afternoon flight to Key West via Q Airways and a bus trip to Miami. All of this at a cost of \$80.00 plus meals. Access to Cuba was easy and accommodations and travel arrangements were simple but all of this was about to change.

Communist takes over in 1959

The Cuban people have always loved freedom. In the years they did not have it they were always agitating for it. For hundreds of years there were local skirmishes, resistance and revolts. It was not unusual for turmoil to be so intense that families who could afford it, would send certain family members to the United States

for safety in various kinds of revolutionary turmoil. The Batista regime in Cuba was harsh and the sound of revolution coming from the Fidel Castro insurgence, was met with some mild relief and even expectancy. Urbanek in *Cuba's Great Awakening* (p. 67), quotes Hubert Hurt a Southern Baptist missionary, as praising the new regime for their attack on gambling. There was a Batista connection to United States racketeering and Marjorie Caudill praised the Castro philosophy of forbidding gambling, drinking and immorality.

This 1959 fascination with Fidel Castro seems very logical in the light of history. There was harsh treatment for those who disagreed with Batista and Castro promised social reform and insisted that he was a "humanist" but not a communist. Urbanek points out that the Eastern Baptist Convention of Cuba was more directly involved in the revolutionary movement than the Western Convention. He names some of the young Baptists who became martyrs of the Revolution. He names Jose Pais, Marcelo Saldo, Oscar Lucero, Ruben Casaus and Joel Jordan as evangelical youth who lost their lives in the revolutionary cause.² There were a few seminary students in the Western Convention Seminary in Havana who joined the revolution for a very brief time but soon returned to seminary studies.

Marcos Ramos points out in *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, that church leaders in general saw a need for better education, less corruption, agrarian reform and economic expansion but were blindsided by the shift from humanism to socialism, to communism, in less than two years.

In 1959, the *Southern Baptist Convention Annual* noted (pp. 221-222) that there were 168 missionaries working in Cuba, including wives, and there were 84 churches, 176 missions and a church membership of 8,561. There were 240 WMU societies and most of these traced their roots to the 1913 visit of Charlotte Peelman of the Florida Baptist Convention.

The Florida WMU met at Tampa First Baptist Church in 1959.

Special guests included Marie Mathis of the SBC WMU, Baker James Cauthen of the Foreign Mission Board, Arthur Rutledge of the Home Mission Board and John Maguire of the Florida Baptist Convention. But in addition to these, Martha Trotter in her book *Faithful Servants*, (p. 175), points out a very special guest who was making a timely visit with a timely message.

Umbelina de Landera, the Cuban WMU president, made a presentation that was fresh from Cuba and full of pathos and hope. She spoke of the persecution under the Batista regime and the hope that the Cuban people had for a better day in the Castro government. Trotter states there was a plea for "understanding and prayer" on behalf of the Cuban people. This heart felt need for spiritual guidance and protection was well placed because within 1,000 days, Milton Leach, of the Home Mission Board would go before the WMU convention in Orlando in 1962, and describe an "emergency situation which has arisen because of the staggering influx of Cuban refugees coming into our country through Miami."³ The Florida WMU responded to that mission need with prayer, volunteers, money and hands on leadership. In 1973, Gisela Torres was added to the WMU staff. She and her husband David had been active Baptist leaders in Cuba, and David had been imprisoned in the Castro persecution and was released from prison in 1967. The Home Mission Board, the Jacksonville Baptist Association and the Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church helped them get settled. David and Gisela Torres ministered in the Spanish community in Jacksonville, and in 1973, Gisela became the first woman to serve as liaison between the state WMU and various WMU groups in the state.

In 1980, when the WMU of the SBC launched a National Enlargement Program, a STARTEAM from each state was selected. Clysta de Armas, was part of that team from Florida. Elizabeth Painter and Vanita Baldwin saw the value of this new enlistment approach and Tanna Dawson became STARTEAM coordinator for Florida. By the end of 1985, over 500 churches

had been visited in this enrollment effort. This effort has undergirded missions in the local church and numerous leaders today came out of those mission enlistment endeavors.

The STARTEAM had as a goal to visit each of the 415 Baptist churches in Florida who had no WMU. They sought to speak to the pastor about the value of missions education and identify a woman from each local church that could assist in starting a WMU. Clysta de Armas had the responsibility of all language and ethnic churches and missions in the convention. This was another Florida WMU connection to the hundreds of Cuban, Haitian and Mexican women who were in the churches.

The Rafael de Armas family connection with Florida Baptists started back in the 1950's when a pastor from South Carolina went down to Cuba for a revival meeting. Upon meeting Rafael in one of the Baptist churches there he encouraged him to come to the states to go to school. Rafael had made his profession of faith at the Calvary Baptist Church in Havana and his parents wedding was officiated by Dr. M. N. McCall.

Rafael traveled to North Greenville Junior College and then went to school at Furman. He and his wife Clysta are both graduates of Furman and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. They married in 1958 and worked with the Home Mission Board in Miami, during the Cuban refugee ministry, from 1962-1964. They worked with Mexican migrants for five years at Perrine and then worked in Cuban ministry in Orlando. In 1975, Rafael earned his law degree and he and Clysta worked in a bi-vocational capacity in Orlando and Port Charlotte. In 2012, Rafael and Clysta were ministering to Tampa professional baseball players and continuing Christian missions and ministry in this important way.

In 2012, Rafael and Clysta de Armas, Othoniel and Carmen Valdes and Carlos and Ericka Ludwig, travelled to Cuba to train pastors and lay leaders in the Western part of the nation. Valdes had left Cuba as an 11-year-old when his father, Benjamin had been imprisoned in 1968, as a political prisoner. Valdez, his

mother Carmen and his three siblings left Cuba and Benjamin joined his family after serving three years of a 12 year sentence. Benjamin Valdes later served as pastor of Coral Park Baptist Church and Gethsemane Baptist Church, both in Miami.⁴

In 1960, the Home Mission Board reported that there were "new fields entered in Cuba and Panama." In 1962, the Home Mission Board allocated \$264,928.84, for Cuban ministry and in 1964, Dr. Courts Redford reported to the Southern Baptist Convention that "No Baptist churches have been closed." But he also pointed out "However, those who would interfere with the progress of the mission work are given a free hand to disturb and molest as they desire."

In July, 1963, home missionary medical doctor, Lucille Kerrigan, of Kansas City, her adopted Cuban daughter, Susie, 15 and home missionary Ruby Miller of Ottawa, Kansas, were expelled from Cuba. They reached Miami on July 3, 1963, aboard the Red Cross ship *Maximus*. This ship had carried supplies to Cuba as the last payment for the Bay of Pigs prisoner release. The ship sailed to Miami with 1,200 refugees aboard and that left only four Southern Baptist missionaries on the Island of Cuba. Herbert and Marjorie Caudill were in Havana, and David and Margaret Fite were in Fontanar.

Kerrigan and Miller stated they did not know why they were expelled and noted "We have left our hearts back there." *The Florida Baptist Witness*, of July 18, 1963, reported that the expelled missionaries were staying in the home of Robert Fricke in Miami, who was the director for Southern Baptist relief and resettlement. All out efforts were constantly made by individuals to offer transportation to those who needed to leave Cuba. An attempt was made to offer ferry service from Havana to Key West for \$25.00 per person. Over \$150,000.00 of reservation money was offered until the project was stopped due to "technicalities."

During the effort to seek safety for families some very controversial circumstances arose that are still shrouded in much

mystery. The Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Mariel Boatlift, and even the more recent Elian Gonzalez episode are surrounded by emotional stands rather than reasoned research. A less known effort but one widely discussed in the Cuban community was Operation-Peter Pan that began in 1960, and by 1965, had seen as many as 14,000 Cuban children arrive in the United States. The movement has a controversial history and the children were eventually located in over 35 states in the Union with little documented details of the children and what happened to all of them. Some have said it was a CIA operation founded on the rumor mill and others feel it was a humanitarian effort to keep the children from being indoctrinated into communism. This journal will not settle the controversy but the thousands of children who arrived produced some very effective American citizens and national leaders. Florida Senator Mel Martinez, Magarita Esaquiroz and artist Ana Mendieta were part of the Peter Pan arrivals who lived with family, friends and group homes across the United States. Miami was the open door and many eventually settled there and later proclaimed that Cuba now had "two capitals." One capital located in Havana and another in Miami.

In a short time after the January 1, 1959, takeover the Cuban government began to show its true colors. In October, 1960, the government nationalized all companies that had more than 25 employees. It was not until October 3, 1965, that the movement adopted the name "Cuban Communist Party," but all the indications were there much earlier.

History shows that atheistic materialism took over education, economics and politics. Christians were exposed to "block committees" who spied on them and government confiscation that took away valuables that included furniture, cars, and all personal bank accounts above \$5,000.00. Religious services were restricted to registered religious buildings and all pastors, religious workers and protestant groups had to have government approval for religious activities. Outdoor religious services were banned and the hosting of religious services in the home was declared illegal in

the 1961-1963 period.

On September 11, 1963, a Baptist pastor was arrested, imprisoned, sentenced to 20 years, and left a wife to care for six small children.⁵ Dr. Caudill kept as good of record as possible and he recorded the arrest of a second Baptist pastor on December 18, 1964. A total of seven were arrested and then on April 7, 1965, the president of the Baptist Convention of West Cuba was arrested, which made number eight.

At one o'clock in the morning on April 8, 1965, the Caudills heard a knock on the door. Marjorie Caudill said, "Herbert, they've come to get you." And that was the arrest day of Dr. Caudill and 52 others. There were four arresting officers and they "went through" everything in the house, room by room. They examined closets, shelves, books, letters, files and corners and after two hours the chief officer phoned a supervisor and said, "We have made a careful search of the house and have found nothing." The reply he received on the phone must have been negative because Dr. Caudill was arrested and remained a prisoner for 18 months and fourteen days (April 8, 1965-November 25, 1966). Son-in-law David Fite was also arrested that night and remained in prison for three years, eight months and eight days and was released December 16, 1968. Dr. Caudill had been sentenced to ten years and David had been sentenced to six years but the age and eye infirmity



The Caudill and Fite family

of Dr. Caudill might have played a role in his early but very restricted release. The Caudills refused to leave Cuba until David Fite was released. They felt responsibility to David and to their daughter and three grandsons that would have been left in Cuba. Cuban Baptists suffered and died in this period of time but few names of these Christian martyrs are available. They and their sufferings are known to God. The prisons were hot, crowded, dark

and full of vileness, hunger and thirst. Dr. Caudill, David and a few of the Baptist pastors were in the same prison from time to time but seldom in the same cell. There was harassing interrogation, mice, roaches and bed bugs. They only received six quarts of water per day for everything.

On May 14, 1963, 34 Baptists went on trial. The government asked for a 30 year sentence for Caudill and 18 for Fite. Sentences for other Baptists ranged from nine to thirty years. No complete list of the total number arrested has been compiled. Some were released early for "cooperating" and others died in prison. The Baptists arrested included preachers, pastors and at least four women.

One of the men arrested on April 8, 1965, was Nilo Dominguez, Sr. He attended the Baptist Seminary in Havana and in 1963, delivered the graduation sermon. He served as pastor in San Cristobal and served five years in prison. Dominguez was accused of being a spy and when arrested asked, "What is the CIA?" He came to the United States in 2006 and is pastor in Gainesville.⁶

According to the *Southern Baptist Home Missions* magazine (May, 1965, p. 13) there were 175,000 refugees registered in Miami with the Department of HEW. Southern Baptists aided only 1,318. It was a spiritual battle lost for Southern Baptists. Southern Baptists learned of the sentencing of the Baptists in Cuba just before the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in 1965. Dr. Caudill was charged with counter revolutionary activities, espionage and illegal foreign currency traffic. David Fite was sentenced for illegal currency deals. On February 7, 1969, the Caudills and the Fites were allowed one suitcase each that weighed no more than thirty pounds, and could contain nothing of monetary value. They had to leave home, car, money, possessions and even religious materials that had been accumulated over a family period of 40 years. They flew from Havana to Matamoros, Mexico, where they were met by Arthur Rutledge, executive secretary of the Home Mission Board and three other board

associates. They then rode in a bus to a hotel in Brownsville, Texas, and soon had a meal and were told they could order anything they wanted. Dr. and Mrs. Caudill ordered oysters.

When in prison Dr. Herbert Caudill was "No. 981." Upon leaving Cuba the Caudills stayed for a time in the missionary home of Capital View Baptist Church in Atlanta. Members of the Atlanta Baptist Association presented them with a new car. After 40 years in Cuba and ten years under communism Dr. Caudill said, "We were ready to settle down."⁷



**Caudills and Fites
arriving in Mexico**

Endnotes

1 Herbert Caudill, "What Dr. McCall Meant to Cuba." *Florida Baptist Witness*, March 20, 1947, p. 4.

2 When this journal presentation was planned three years ago there was no way to know that Kurt Urbanek would be publishing *Cuba's Great Awakening*, in 2012. This source is like a magnet in comparing dates, movements and personalities. Urbanek verifies earlier thoughts and projections of the McCall and Caudill administrations on Holy Spirit action in Cuba. The Holy Spirit has been ready. Many Cuban Baptists have been willing and it just seems God is now beginning to pour out His spiritual blessings on the land!

3 Martha Pope Trotter, *Faithful Servants*. The Story of Florida Woman's Missionary Union 1894-1994. Florida WMU. Jacksonville, 1994, p. 182. In 1988, Hubert Hurt wrote a position paper on "The History of Florida Language Congregations." Hurt noted that from 1959 refugees came into Miami by the thousands. Milton Leach, Roy Dobbins and Hurt were leaders in refugee ministry.

4 Carolyn Nichols, *Florida Baptist Witness*, July 12, 2012, p.7.

5 Herbert Caudill, *On Freedom's Edge*, Home Mission Board, 1975, p. 45. Hereafter referred to as Caudill, *Freedom*.

6 Joni B. Hannigan, *Florida Baptist Witness*, April 4, 2012.

7 Caudill, *Freedom*, p. 118.

CHAPTER 11

"THE BOARD NO LONGER HAS MISSIONARIES IN CUBA" (1970-1994)

In the 1970 *Southern Baptist Convention Annual* there is no report on Cuba. J. B. Lawrence served for 24 years as the director of the Home Mission Board work and he died September 5, 1968. Dr. Arthur Rutledge later became Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Home Mission Board. He reported to the 1972 Southern Baptist Convention that there were 2,250 total Home Mission Board missionaries serving in all 50 states. He said home missionaries also serve in Puerto Rico and Panama, but "The board no longer has missionaries in Cuba."

Castro and Communism

Fidel Castro and revolutionary forces took over Cuba on January 1, 1959. Most Baptists were so pleased to see the end of the immoral and corrupt Baptista regime that they failed to evaluate the true nature of the marxist influence. Castro was not honest about his original intentions but as time unfolded the true nature of communist command became known. Dr. Caudill in his book, *On Freedom's Edge*, uses "10 Years Under Communism in Cuba," as his subtitle. Dr. Caudill was an eyewitness to the subtle but true changes that fell upon the Cuban people. Early on Southern Baptist missionaries Hubert Hurt and Marjorie Caudill were quoted as praising the new government for their stand against immorality but they too soon saw the true nature of an atheistic government.¹

The Caudill eyewitness report is chilling when the deceit of communism is shown. Castro early on denied communism but stated he was a humanist. This charade continued until May 1, 1961, when Castro announced "I am a Marxist-Leninist. I have been a communist all my life."² Then a sudden change began to come to Cuba.

Industry was nationalized. Agriculture was not a free people working in a free land, but government controlled crops and harvesting. Cuba ceased diplomatic relations with the United States and the Swiss government became the primary communications source for diplomatic information. Movement became restrictive in the country and military check points and searches replaced freedom of travel.

The control of people movement also enforced a migration of many from the countryside to the city, and many from the city forced to move to the country. This included professionals and many medical doctors and teachers were forced to move to isolated places. Social engineering included the nationalizing of all private schools on May 1, 1961, and this included four Baptist schools. School property was confiscated even when it was owned by Protestant churches. The Cuban government became the sole educator of the children and "Pioneer" groups were formed that controlled the curriculum and educating of the youth of Cuba. Materialistic atheism was taught in the schools and Christianity was ridiculed and denounced. The goal was to literally draw the children of the nation away from any home or church influence.

One Saturday was declared money exchange day. People were informed by radio and newspaper where to go to exchange their money and all above \$5,000.00 was confiscated. Savings, investments and financial plans were wiped out in one day. Castro announced that he would work for \$400.00 a month and common wages were set at \$100.00 a month or less. The Cuban army was to be paid \$7.00 per month but their food, clothing and other essentials were to be provided.

The government seized 100,000 Bibles and ground them to pulp. Religious tracts and literature could not be distributed and outdoor religious services were banned. Churches had to be registered and personal mail was censored. Block committees watched the movements of everyone in the country and arrest was common.

On October 3, 1965, the revolutionary movement chose the name Cuban Communist Party. Kurt Urbanek in a footnote (pp. 69-70), described the horror the Cuban children had to face in the national education system. If a child aspired to a university education one day they were taken from their homes at age twelve or thirteen, and placed in boarding schools in the countryside, where they worked in the fields half a day, and studied half a day. The children were not allowed to take their Bibles with them and were punished for sharing their faith. Restriction of mobility became mind control and soul control.

Some Cuban pastors and their families left the country as the noose of communism tightened around the churches and ministries of local Christians. Six Southern Baptist missionaries also left. The Home Mission Board had suggested that all Southern Baptist missionaries leave the island but left the final decision in the hands of each missionary. The Thomas Law family and the Hubert Hurt family requested a transfer in 1961, and the Laws served for a time in South Texas, but were soon appointed by the Foreign Mission Board to serve in Spain. The Hubert Hurt family was transferred to Panama where they served until 1965. The Hurts served in Cuba from 1957-1961, and Panama, 1961-1965. Hurt directed Florida language work from 1964 until his retirement in 1990. When Hurt arrived in Florida in 1965, there were 36 ethnic churches in Florida. That included 29 Hispanic congregations and seven fellowships representing six other languages. When he retired, there were 275 congregations worshipping in 21 languages, from an ethnic population of 3.5 million. In 2012 there are 1.8 million Cubans and their descendants living in the United States.

Conviction of Caudill and Fite

April 8, 1965, saw the arrest of Baptist leaders in Cuba including pastors, teachers, missionaries, laymen and four women.³ Dr. Caudill had six charges made against him and charges were also

made against other pastors and missionaries. The six charges against Caudill and his response was:

- (1) Conspiracy against the security and integrity of the nation. I was accused of being the leader of a band of spies. These spies were my fellow pastors and missionaries.
- (2) Collaboration with the Central Intelligence Agency.
- (3) Helping people get out of the country illegally.
- (4) Ideological diversion.
- (5) Covering up the activities of others.
- (6) Illegal currency exchange.⁴

Dr. Caudill was able to speak at his trial and he said he denied charges 1, 2, 3, and 5. He argued "We had simply continued to preach and teach the gospel as we had done before the coming of communism. The government under which we lived had changed."

Dr. Caudill spent 19 months and 17 days in prison from his arrest to his release on November 25, 1966. When he was released he was told he could not preach, could not teach, and could not attend religious services. The Caudills chose to remain in Cuba as a support to Christians there and as support to David Fite and his family. David was released December 16, 1968, after serving three years, eight months and eight days. The Caudills and Fites left Cuba February 7, 1969. They had to leave behind clothes, cars, homes, banking accounts and anything of materialistic value.

May 14, 1965, saw the trial of 34 Baptist ministers and laymen, including Caudill and Fite. The government asked for a 30 year sentence against Caudill and an 18 year sentence against Fite. Cuban nationals were given sentences ranging from nine to 30 years. When the Caudills and Fites left Cuba in 1969, there were still numerous Cuban pastors and lay people in prison.

Southern Baptist reaction

The news of the arrest of Caudill and Fite came to the Home Mission Board while the board was in its monthly executive committee meeting. They all immediately paused for prayer for all those arrested and charged. Press releases went out calling for combined prayer for those imprisoned and contacts were made with the United States State Department to see what could be done to help those arrested and their families.

Many Southern Baptist churches responded in more specific ways. The deacons of First Baptist Church, Staunton, Virginia, sent a telegram to Wayne Dehoney, President of the Southern Baptist Convention on June 3, 1965, with four definite possibilities. They suggested contacting the state department. they suggested contacting Bill Donovan. They even suggested the possibility that volunteers from the United States could go and serve their terms for them. If these approaches were not adequate the Virginia church suggested a ransom be paid for the missionaries and the money be raised at the 1965 Southern Baptist Convention by asking each messenger to give two or three dollars to cover the cost.

One of the most unusual suggestions was found in a letter from Helen Falls, missions professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, to Arthur Rutledge of the Home Mission Board, on May 6, 1965. Falls said she received a phone call from a lady in New Orleans who owned a prized bull and was willing to offer it to the Cuban government as a "bribe" to free Caudill and Fite. Falls noted in her letter that the lady was so sincere she suggested to her that she contact the Home Mission Board.⁵

The Southern Baptist Convention met in Dallas in 1965, and they responded with a more sedate resolution on June 2. The Convention called for the "remittance of penalties and release" of the prisoners. Not as glamorous as other solutions but this resolution was backed by the prayers, concern and influence of the 10 million members of the 33,000 Southern Baptist churches.

Gospel Contacts

There were numerous attempts at gospel contact with Cuba from 1970-1994. One of the most unusual was the work of Tom White in his gospel distribution. White would fly over Cuba and make drops of religious literature. On May 27, 1979, he made a drop of literature from his small plane but had to crash land on a Cuban highway and was arrested and jailed until released on October 27, 1980. White stated that he had successfully dropped over 400,000 pieces of Christian literature over Cuba before his May, 1979 arrest.⁶

Kurt Urbanek calls 1970-1994. a "Defining Period" in Cuban Baptist history. Urbanek notes that there were conflicts in the Eastern and Western Baptist Conventions. Suspicion was a natural outcome to trials, imprisonment and release. There was more freedom for some Baptists than others. Persecution was real from 1970-1994, but it was also selective. Government harassment and restrictions continued and Baptists felt the pressure. Some Baptist leaders were allowed to leave the country and actually preach in other places. They were then able to receive some financial income that permitted them to care for their families when they returned home, but this caused more suspicion and some jealousy.

Florida Baptists desired to open their churches and doors for Cuban ministry and mission planning but this did not come about until after 2000.

Urbanek quotes Gonzalez Munoz in noting there were at least ten consequences that Baptists suffered in the 1965-1995 period. They included loss of liberty, separation of families, economic impact on the work, psychological trauma, immigration of church leaders, tension between church and state, loss of young people aspiring for church ministry, radicalization of politics in the Baptist conventions, perceived persecution and the churches abandonment of New Testament social responsibility.⁷ These defining issues resulted in spiritual malaise and a loss of purpose.

In 1978, Oscar Romo and Gerald Palmer of the Home Mis-

sion Board were permitted to visit among Baptists in Western Cuba. They were able to speak in numerous churches and reported the presence of large crowds. They met with pastors and reported that the seminary had eight students, the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba had 114 churches and 6,700 members.⁸

In 1981, an ongoing struggle over freedom and control came to a head in the seminary at Havana. Four seminary professors were fired and Raul Suarez stated that he felt it was over the fact that some were willing to "help in the social tasks of the revolution and some were not." This conflict was seen by some as a separation of church and state issue and others saw the conflict as lack of pastoral and church leadership in the Convention.⁹

It must be noted that hundreds of Cubans suffered family separation that did not involve religious persecution. Communism shut down commerce, travel and communications as it had been known in Cuba. In 2012, Jose Martinez, was able to return to Cuba for the first time since 1962. Martinez came to the United States as an 11-year-old boy and was separated from his family for 50 years. He said he lived in the United States as "an orphan with parents."¹⁰

These are the kind of problems that plagued the convention in the time Urbanek called a "Defining Period." It was also the time that Arthur Rutledge of the Home Mission Board said, "The board no longer has missionaries in Cuba."

Endnotes

1 Kurt Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening*, 2012, p. 67. Hereafter referred to as Urbanek, *Planting*.

2 Herbert Caudill, *On Freedom's Edge*, Home Mission Board, Atlanta, p. 24. Hereafter referred to as Caudill, *Freedom*.

3 The exact number of those arrested on April 8, 1965, is difficult to ascertain. Some Baptists were jailed before then. Some after then. The numbers 53, 54, 55 and 63 are used because some counted those already jailed. Dr. Arthur Rutledge in *Mission to America*, said 53 Cuban nationals plus Americans. Kurt Urbanek in *Planting*, p. 74, says about 55. Caudill in *Freedom*, pp. 63, 66), suggests 63 but he includes eight arrested before April 8, 1965.

It is said that Southern Baptists have no total list of those imprisoned. Only a piece meal, partial list exists. Such Baptists as Juana Luz Garcia and Augusto Abella should be missionary household names for Southern Baptists. Juana Luz Garcia was one of four women arrested and Augusto Abella, pastor of First Baptist Church, Santiago, Cuba, died January 28, 1966, after his imprisonment of September, 1964. Hopefully one day a full list of those Baptists imprisoned will be made public and their stories told.

4 Caudill, *Freedom*, p. 66.

5 Helen Falls letter to Arthur Rutledge, May 6, 1965, Southern Baptist Convention Library and Archives, Cuba collection.

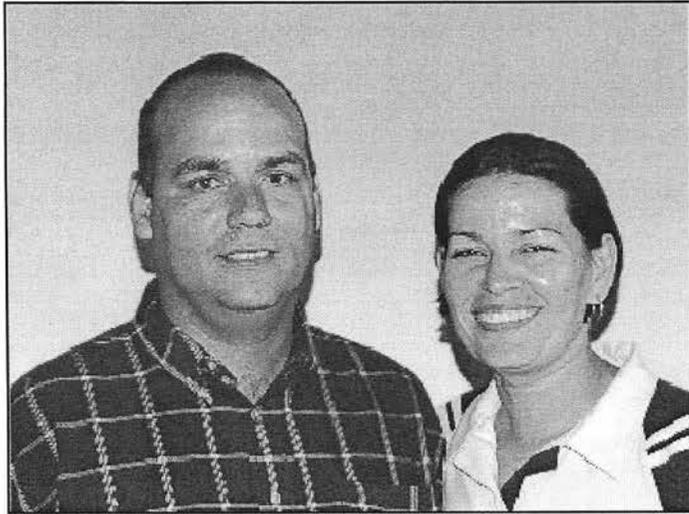
6 D. C. Talk, *Live Like a Jesus Freak*, Bethany House, Minneapolis, 2001, pp. 63-67.

7 Urbanek, *Planting*, pp. 76-77.

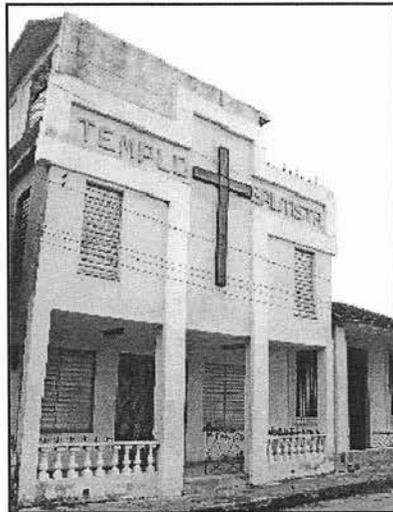
8 Oscar Romo, "Missions in Cuba." *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, Vol. VI, p. 2,178.

9 Jim Newton, "Cuban Churches Alive, Growing in Marxist State," *Florida Baptist Witness*, May 14, 1981, p. 5.

10 Paige Rentz, "Cuba-born Alabama Man sees homeland after 50 years." *Dothan Eagle*, July 21, 2012, p. 5a.

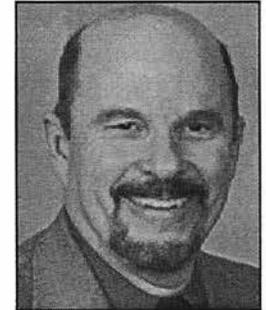


Omar López and María Domínguez



Pedro Betancourt Baptist Church

CHAPTER 12 “BETTER TOGETHER” (1995-2012)



Craig Culbreth

*Lead Strategist Missional Support Group
Florida Baptist Convention*

Obstacles and opportunities often go hand in hand in God’s economy. As the Cuban people were facing obstacles in the early 1990’s, God was moving in the lives of Florida Baptists showing them how they could join with their fellow Christians in Cuba to connect with them in this journey. The combination of Florida Baptists and Cuban brothers and sisters in Christ would see great results in the growth of the church in Cuba.

In the years of 1995-2012 the relationship developed into a very strong bond. When Florida Baptists began this walk with the Cuban Baptists they moved forward together. In fact, the synergy from this relationship produced much more than either party dreamed of at the beginning.

This part of the history will be viewed through several different angles. The first angle will be to see it as a clear call to help.

THE CALL – A POSSIBILITY

The cry of “Cuba for Christ” would rally the Cubans as they tried to reach their island with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This same cry “Cuba for Christ” would also be heard by Florida Baptists.

The early awareness of problems in Cuba was demonstrated by the large numbers of Cubans seeking to leave the island after the fall of the Russian communist government in 1989. The fall of the government in Russia would mean they would quit sending aid to Cuba. The lack of funds created some of the most difficult

times in the lives of Cubans. There were shortages of food, medicine and basic supplies. It was these shortages that brought thousands of "boat people" flooding to Florida.

In September 9, 1994, the Florida Baptist Convention State Board of Missions authorized \$50,000 to be used to buy food, clothing and provide spiritual counseling.¹ This first line of response came through Thomas Diaz, the pastor at White Street Baptist Church in Key West. He served as a jointly funded missionary of the Florida Baptist Convention/Home Mission Board – Southern Baptist Convention. For 35 days Diaz served in the capacity as spiritual advisor to the Cubans and liaison for the United States government. Diaz was credited by the U.S. government for helping maintain the peace in the refugee camps. As he sought to give them hope, he was able to share the Gospel and pray with many of them. He was also able to preach and pass out over 1,500 Bibles.

There was also an effort set up by the Miami area pastors to reach out to refugees in the Bahamas and Grand Cayman Islands. These same pastors set up a "Cuba to Christ" refuge center.²

This "Cuba for Christ" refuge center became a place where families of refugees would come to get information, counseling and to hear the Gospel. These local pastors seized every opportunity to share the Gospel and hand out Spanish New Testaments. They were assisted by the Miami Baptist Association Women's Mission Union organization.

As these Florida Baptist pastors learned of the issues in Cuba, their hearts were eager to see what the Florida Baptist Convention could do in Cuba.

This of course was not the first time Florida Baptists had reached out to the island of Cuba. It was at the 1884 Florida Baptist Convention held in Orlando that Rev. Wood from Key West introduced the need to share the Gospel with the people of Cuba. Following the convention, the Florida Baptist Convention hired Adela Fales as a teacher and interpreter to assist Rev. Wood in

reaching the Cubans living in Key West.

During July 1885 the Florida Baptist Convention State Board of Missions borrowed one hundred dollars from a board member to send Rev. Wood to Cuba. In September of 1885 Rev. Wood traveled to Cuba to meet with Albert Diaz who was preaching at a church in Havana. Albert Diaz had begun to work in the Catholic dominated Cuba. He began to teach the Gospel and gathered people together for worship.

On December 13, 1885 Albert Diaz was ordained as a Baptist Minister at the First Baptist Church of Key West. That same year the Florida Baptist Convention State Board of Missions sent Diaz and his sister back to Cuba as missionaries. On January 20, 1886 Rev. Wood and Albert Diaz conducted the first baptisms in Cuba under the Cuban Baptist Banner.³ Florida Baptists would continue to work with Cuba to establish churches. As the years passed by, this work was turned over to the Home Mission Board. In 1888 the work of Cuba was transferred to the Foreign Mission Board (later renamed The International Mission Board). In an attempt to follow up with the efforts of 1994, Florida would continue its journey to assist Cuba.

In June 1996 Dr. Raul Vazquez (Language Missions Division Director) and Dr. Frank Moreno (Hispanic Church Planting Extension and Development Director) traveled to Cuba on the invitation of the leaders of the Western Cuba Baptist Convention. There they were hosted by the President of the convention, Pastor Nilo Dominguez Gonzalez and General Secretary Leoncio Veguilla.⁴

They escorted Dr. Vazquez and Dr. Moreno to many different churches, the seminary, the Baptist camp and the retirement home operated by the Western Cuba Baptist Convention. This visit produced a report that Dr. Vazquez gave first to the Administrative Staff of the Florida Baptist Convention on June 20, 1996.⁵ This was followed by a report to the Florida Baptist Convention State Board of Missions on September 13, 1996.⁶ It was in this report that Dr. John Sullivan, Executive Director-Treasurer of the Florida

Baptist Convention read a letter from the General Secretary of the Western Cuba Baptist Convention, Dr. LeoncioVeguilla requesting a partnership.⁷

It was reported that the Western Cuba Baptist Convention had 135 churches, 151 missions and 231 home worship centers. These entities were all served by 63 official pastors. It also produced a report that said from 1990 to 1995 baptisms had gone from 421 to 1889 which is a 448% increase in just five years.⁸ There was a feeling that the church in Cuba was exploding. This growth pattern is dealt with in a book *Cuba's Great Awakening* written by an International Mission Board missionary, Dr. Kurt Urbanek. This book traces the growth in Cuba from the 1990's until 2010. He defines it as a Church Planting Movement. The Baptist work grew from 238 churches in 1990 to over 7000 churches, mission house churches and houses of prayer.⁹

The Florida Baptist Convention State Board of Missions voted to pursue the partnership. It was requested that on or before January 31, 1997 a report be submitted including: 1) The negotiations and/or agreements between the two conventions; 2) Any United States government and/or related issues be addressed; and 3) Issues or agreements with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, renamed International Mission Board in 1988.

In 1898 the island was divided into East and West Cuba. The reason the Florida Baptist Convention worked with the Western Baptist Convention was that the West half of the island was assigned to the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board. The East half of the island was given to the Northern Baptist Convention (later renamed American Baptist Convention).¹⁰

The Florida Baptists used this history of a very strong relationship to develop a formal partnership in Cuba. In the next few years we saw this partnership develop as Florida Baptists became involved again with Cuban Baptists.

COOPERATION – THE PLAN

The second angle we will look at in this partnership will be the cooperation. It was essential that this relationship be based on a very strong sense of cooperation. As Dr. John Sullivan reflected back on those early days, he stated "It was essential that we begin with integrity. We knew that we should not promise something we could not provide. We also knew that if we were told not to do something by our partners we had to listen. We can say looking back over the last 15 years we have been able to keep that promise."¹¹

There were several early meetings with the Florida Baptist Leaders (Dr. Raul Vazquez and Dr. Frank Moreno) and the Foreign Mission Board (Ron Wilson and Mark Smith) that lead to a document voted on by the Florida Baptist State Board of Missions on May 23, 1997. This document stating the guidelines of the partnership was reported to the Florida Baptist Convention meeting held on November 10, 1997 in Jacksonville.

This partnership agreement continued to guide the partnership for the next three years. On March 19, 1998 a meeting with the Florida Baptist Convention (Cecil Seagle, Missions Division Director; Jim Brown, Baptist Men's Leader and Wayne Taylor, Volunteers), International Mission Board (Ron Wilson, Region Leader; Kurt Urbanek, Local Strategist and John Seale, Volunteer Leader) and the Western Cuban Baptist Convention (Leoncio Veguilla, President of Convention; Santiago Puentes, Volunteer Coordinator and Victor Gonzalez, Partnership Liaison) was held. At this meeting it was determined that the Missions Division would manage the volunteer teams that would be allowed into Cuba to do mission work.¹²

In April of 1999 another shift was made in the operation of the partnership from the Florida Baptist Convention perspective.

The partnership would be guided by a stand-alone Partnership Coordination Department. This department would be in the Missions Division of the Florida Baptist Convention. Cecil Seagle,

who led the Missions Division at the time, would select Dr. Craig Culbreth, already serving on the Florida Baptist Convention staff in the Church Planting Department, to lead this new department.

On May 21, 1999, Dr. Craig Culbreth would be elected to lead this new way of doing work in Cuba. Six months later that this new work of Partnership Coordination would change its name to Partnership Missions.

In the first year of its existence, it was able to assist in sending two volunteer teams into Cuba. In the current year of 2012 there will be eighteen teams of Florida Baptists going into Cuba. To put it in perspective, every three weeks there is a team of Florida Baptist Volunteers going into Cuba.

In a meeting with the Cuba government on February 18, 2009, a government official said Florida Baptists can be trusted to do what they say they will do. "We like to have you bring your church volunteers; they are a great asset to our country."

This cooperation with the Cuban Baptists and Cuban government would be facilitated several times per year when the Partnership Mission leaders would travel to Cuba to meet face to face. These meetings would be held at the Annual Assembly in February at the Calvary Church located in Havana. Each year the Annual Assembly is a joyous time as hundreds gather for these meetings. Each year speakers encourage the local believers and leaders.

Each year the Florida Baptist Convention has speakers on the program. Some of those speakers have been Dr. John Sullivan, Dr. Craig Culbreth and Rev. Al Fernandez.

The second meeting is held every September. It is at this meeting where volunteer projects would be coordinated. This meeting involves leaders of the Florida Baptist Convention, International Mission Board and the Western Baptist Convention.

In September of 2003 it was requested that Florida have a volunteer coordinator for Cuba assigned to help with the details of these volunteer projects. In January of 2004, David Gonzalez was

assigned to work with the volunteers. His work changed the success of the projects. The projects went from just trying to survive to being very successful.

In January of 2005 Dennis Wilbanks was added to the staff of the Partnership Missions, and this also greatly facilitated the success of the projects. From March 1998, when volunteers became a huge part of the partnership, Dr. Wayne Taylor had served faithfully in this position. Starting in January 2005 it would become an even bigger part of what this cooperation was all about.

Although it involved many people along the way, the relationship between Craig Culbreth (FBC Partnership Missions Director) and Kurt Urbanek (IMB Strategist) would guide this partnership. There have been five different Cuban presidents over the last seventeen years; yet the relationship of these two men has kept the partnership focused.

The Florida Baptist Convention partnership with the Western Baptist Convention consists of several main areas. The first area is volunteers. Volunteers play a huge part in the work of Florida Baptists in Cuba. We have seen the volunteers increase by 300% in total volunteers. Each team is allowed 10 religious visas. The team sends the information to the Florida Baptist Convention. At this point Phoebe Bryan, the Ministry Assistant sends the information to the Western Cuba Baptist Convention. The Cuban Baptists then take the documents to the office of Religious Affairs in Cuba. When they fly from Miami to Havana, the religious visa that each team member is granted allows them entry into Cuba. These flights are operated by charter companies. In 2009 there were two such companies, but by 2012 there were eight of them. The number of charter companies has grown because the restrictions were lifted on American Cubans traveling to Cuba to see family. Because these restrictions were lifted, thousands of Cubans have begun to travel back to Cuba to see family members.

The restrictions being lifted have allowed the volunteer teams

to travel directly to Havana, thus reducing the cost. Before these charters existed all of the volunteer teams had to travel through Cancun, Mexico or Kingston, Jamaica then into Havana, Cuba.

The volunteer teams all arrive on the platform of repairing the Cuban church. The teams provide funding and labor. They also are allowed to teach classes and hold religious services. All of the work done by the volunteers greatly encourages the Cuban Baptist brothers and sisters.

Funding for the budget of the Western Cuba Baptist Convention is the next area of the partnership that is critical. The funding from the Florida Baptist Convention supplies 51% of the annual budget of the Western Cuba Baptist Convention. This funding helps churches, pastors, the seminary, the camp, the retirement home, new church plants and other projects. When the partnership began, all funding was sent through a special license the International Mission Board had. This license allowed for the transfer of funding from the United States to Havana. In January of 2003 the Florida Baptist Convention secured its own license through the U.S. State Department. The license was issued for two years at a time. It was extremely detailed and difficult to renew.

One particular incident stands out in this renewal process. In a long process of trying to get all the documentation, this writer took a phone call from Washington D. C. in the fall of 2005. The voice at the other end said you need to add certain information to the application, and delete other information. After that was done, this writer asked for the person's name. The phone went silent. These changes suggested allowed the special monetary licenses to be renewed. It was this helpful "Angel" who moved this process along. God was working behind the scenes to allow this funding to continue.

In January 28, 2011 the U.S. government stopped the need for this financial license. This facilitated the process of getting funding to the Western Cuba Baptist Convention.

The cooperation of the Florida Baptists with the Western Cuba

Baptist Convention has changed lives. It has changed the lives of Florida Baptists as well as Cuban Baptists. Some of these volunteers have seen the call of God on their lives and have gone into full time ministry. The future is hopeful for this part of the work of Florida and Cuban Baptists.¹³

COMPASSION – THE PASSION

The final angle of this strong partnership is the part that carries it into the future, the part that gives it energy. As one visits Key West, the starting place for Florida Baptist Convention work in Cuba, you can stand by a marker that says "You are standing 90 miles from Cuba." People actually wait in line to have their picture taken by the marker.

Although Florida lies a distance from Cuba, it is held very close in its heart. It would be the Cuban pastors who came to Florida in the early 1990's that would want Florida Baptists to reach out to the Cuban people. It would be this heart felt impact that Dr. Raul Vazquez would feel when he first visited in June of 1996. He would return with a list of needs.¹⁴ These needs would be the backbone on the desire to assist the Cuban Baptists.

This compassion to help the Cuban Baptists has been felt from Dr. John Sullivan, to the Florida Baptist staff, to the volunteers from Florida churches.

There was a chance to show compassion when in February 2003 at the National Assembly Dr. John Sullivan made a decision to buy suits for 70 seminary students. In September of 2003 this writer was able to deliver these suits to some very happy seminary students. These suits were purchased from one of Florida's finest servants, Mr. Jim Tatum. Mr. Jim Tatum, who passed away May 26, 2012, was a man who provided such suits for pastors in Haiti, as well as several partnership states.

In 2008 two hurricanes made landfall in Cuba. First, there was Hurricane Gustav that made landfall on Saturday, August 30, 2008

as a category 4 hurricane. Then, on September 7, 2008 Hurricane Ike made landfall as a category 4 hurricane as well. Both caused death and destruction in Cuba. This provided another chance for Florida Baptists to show compassion.

On September 21, 2008 a team of Florida Baptists (Dr. Craig Culbreth, Partnership Missions Director; Dr. Willy Rice, President of the Florida Baptist Convention and pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Clearwater; Dr. Tim Maynard, pastor of Fruit Cove Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida) headed to Cuba to assess the damage. They were met by a team from the International Mission Board (Kurt Urbanek, Strategist and Roy Cooper, Strategist) and a team from Baptist Global Response (Jim Brown, Coordinator and David Brown, Coordinator). These teams were escorted by the Cuban Baptist leadership and taken to different areas of Cuba to assess damage. The Cuban Baptists were thrilled that their needs would be met.

During this visit there was a meeting with the Cuban government. In an attempt to assist, assurances were asked that the relief would reach our Baptist brothers and sisters. It was a weak response at best, but with this conversation plans were made to ship several containers of roofing materials and food supplies. In cooperation with the Florida Baptist Convention, the International Mission Board and Baptist Global Response, the containers were shipped to Cuba in October 2008.

The ability to turn obstacles into opportunities is what God is really good at. With these events we can see how the Florida-Cuba relationships has flourished.

It has not been easy for Cuban Baptists to flourish and expand, but they have. They have taken a very difficult situation and turned it into a quest to reach Cuba for Christ.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion seems like a strange word to put with this article. A better phrase might be "to be continued." There is no doubt the work of Baptists in Cuba is standing on the shoulders of those that

have gone before us.

The time period of 1995-2012 for Cuban Baptists and Florida Baptists has been a wonderful time in history. Without doubt, the hard work of the Cuban Baptists is evident. There is also no doubt about the role that Florida Baptists have played in this time of history.

Florida Baptists have stood shoulder to shoulder with their Cuban brothers and sisters seeking to reach "Cuba for Christ."

In Havana there is a local historical park that houses a fortress (Fortaleza de San Carlos de la Cabaña) and the Morro Castle (Castillo de los Tres Reyes Magos del Morro). Each night there is a symbolic ceremony – the closing of the city. Ten soldiers dressed in 18th century uniforms march out to shoot off a cannon in a ceremony called "El Cañonazo de las 9," at exactly 9:00 PM, the cannon is fired. You can hear it echo throughout the city. Each evening this ceremony seems to say that the people of the city are locked in and that others are locked out.

In some ways that may be a truthful thought, but from God's view the city is not closed. It is open to the Cuban Baptists who live and serve there. It is open to the Florida Baptists that come there to serve alongside their brothers and sisters in Christ.

The future is bright. The door of opportunity is not closed; it is wide open.

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CHAPTER 13 BCF CUBA MISSION TRIP (2012)

Bill Davis

*Chair of the Music and Worship Division
Baptist College of Florida*



June 14-21, 2012

Team members: Bill Davis, Nick Carter, Donovan Higgins, Joseph Roncali, Lucas Lott, Jacob Presley (member of a church in Gainesville), Jessica Doyle, Rachel Butler, Julia Folsom, Rebeca Salmeron.

Tuesday, June 13

I wish I could say I spent a lot of time today reflecting on the upcoming trip. In reality, it was a hectic, frenetic day getting ready—driving to Dothan to get VBS materials, making a Wal-Mart run, getting packed, getting school bus ready, making sure documents are in order, and tying up loose ends at school and for church this weekend. Honestly, we haven't been given a great deal of particulars about what we'll be doing in Cuba. So there's the feeling of "will we be prepared?" "will the time be well-spent?"

In spare moments, I asked the Lord for His blessing on the trip—especially to work in the lives of our students to give them a lifelong passion for missions. Its midnight now, and we leave at 7 AM. Time to get some shuteye.

Wednesday, June 14

I'm at the home of the minister of music at Fifth Ave in St. Pete. Adam and his wife are still at church with their college group, and have given me the run of their house. I'm sitting on their front

patio, looking out on a beautiful bayou that leads out to Tampa Bay. Trying REALLY hard not to be envious. The other members of our group are staying in homes of the people of Fifth Ave.

Our team left this morning sharply at 7 AM (a minor miracle). I did have to turn around on Smokey Rd to come back for something I had left behind. We picked up Rachel Butler in Live Oak, and Jacob Presley in Gainesville. We arrived at Fifth Ave Baptist in St. Pete around 5:00 PM. We attended their youth praise service. Lucas and I shared with them about our trip. The youth and their leaders gathered around our team and prayed for us. A really sweet time. A smooth, great first day! Tomorrow, Lord willing, we'll be in Cuba! We are all really pumped!

Thursday, June 15

Well, we're not in Cuba! I'm sitting at the Indigo Hotel (a very nice one in downtown St. Pete). This morning we left our bus at Fifth Ave, and their youth and music ministers graciously transported us to the airport. We showed up at 9 AM with bags bulging with personal articles, but also with VBS stuff, Spanish Bibles, and tools for construction. There to meet us was a Florida Baptist Convention volunteer who has taken numerous groups on similar trips to Cuba. Showing up about the same time are about 200 Cubans, loaded down with all sorts of articles to take back to their families—rugs, tires, you name it. With tickets in hand, we approach the check-in area, our FBC "den mother" leading the way. After a lengthy discussion with the ticket agent, he has a concerned expression on his face. Seems that there is a mess-up between the booking agency and the airline (Sky King Charters—gotta love that name). Although we have tickets, we, along with about 30 Cubans, are not listed on the flight manifest—and the flight is full. We try another airline—no luck. So we decide to wait until 1 PM to see if there are any no-shows. We break out the sheet music for the Cuban worship choruses we are learning, and with a couple of guitars, practice our bad Spanish in a corner of the wait-

ing area. We wait until 1 PM, and there's no way there is going to be room for us. Our FBC guy is constantly on the phone with the booking agent. Finally, he lets me know where everything stands. The first possible time we can get on a flight is Sunday morning—maybe. The flight hasn't even been approved by the US government yet. So what do we do? I let the kids in on the situation, and tell them we have three options: 1. Wait it out in south Florida and see if the flight materializes 2. Reschedule the trip and head back to Graceville, or 3. Cancel the trip and refund everyone's money. I had told the students even before the trip that the beatitude (found in the earlier manuscripts) that would be our theme for the trip reads: "Blessed are the flexible, for they will not get bent out of shape" (Hallucinations 4:3). Oh, goodness, that was gonna be a good one! The students want to stay. We all know that if we try to reschedule, somebody won't get to come. So I call Adam at Fifth Ave, and ask if they can come and pick us up. He does, and one of their members, who has connections in a local hotel, (did I say a REALLY nice one), puts us up for the night. Kids are in good spirits, and we have a relaxing time at the pool, and at the hotel. Lord, only You know what tomorrow will bring. We relax in your plan and in your care.

Friday, June 15

Comfort Inn, St. Pete

Kids slept in this morning, while I made a donut run. We left the hotel about 11 AM, and headed back over to the church to rehearse. Adam and his church have been SO gracious. About noon, my cell phone rings. Our FBC guy is on the other end. He blurts out, "We're going to Cuba!" I attempt to go back in to the room where the group is with a "hang-dog" expression, but I can't pull it off. I repeat his words, "We're going to Cuba!" The group erupts in a cheer! We have a prayer time, thanking God for His provision and faithfulness. I let Dr. Hammack know what's going on, and get permission to spend the money we need for food and

lodging for the additional days. After lunch and some more rehearsal on the Cuban choruses (they are really coming along) we check in to a Comfort Inn. We would go to the beach, but it's raining. Naps—that will work! We have supper at a local Mom and Pop restaurant that turns out to be really good. We have a wonderful devotional time. Kids shared that they have appreciated the "down time" and the time to get to know one another. We are bonding as a team.

Saturday, June 16

Hampton Inn, Miami

This morning we leave for Miami—a four or five hour drive. After going over the incredible Sunshine Skyway Bridge, we pick up our FBC guy. He has his wrist bandaged up. I asked him what happened. He says it was a golf cart accident. Serves him right for playing golf while we are anxiously waiting to see if we are going to Cuba or not! We check into our hotel, and leave for a Saturday night service at Christ Fellowship in Miami. Interesting service. After eating, we come back and make sure we are adequately packed, and all our documents are in order. I call my dad and wish him a happy Father's Day tomorrow. In Cuba, we won't have phone or internet access.

We are going to Cuba early tomorrow morning! There has been so much fear and trepidation about Cuba in recent years, I can't help but have butterflies. I feel like we are packing up military gear on the eve of a battle. I feel really responsible for the students under my care. I know they will get a good taste of missions. I pray that God will use it mightily in their lives. Midnight. Time to get some sleep.

Sunday, June 17

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow! We are bunked up at Pastor Omar's house in Pedro Betancourt, CUBA!!!

After a 4:15 wake up call, we leave Hampton at 5 AM. Check in

goes smoothly, and we wait to board our flight. Two of the kids have never flown before. It's kinda fun watching them. I'm still a kid when it comes to flying. I have to look out the window. We see the Keys, and especially Key West. Then an expanse of blue. Sometimes it's hard to see where the water begins and the sky ends. We hardly get to cruising altitude before we begin our descent. The flight is 45 minutes. About like going from Tallahassee to Atlanta. We land in Havana. My heart starts racing a bit, thinking about going through security and customs in a Communist country. I sure am glad to have our FBC guy with us. Actually, everything goes quite smoothly, although it takes quite a while. On the other side of security are hundreds of Cubans, eagerly awaiting the arrival of their family members. Our Cuban Baptist Convention rep, David Gonzales, meets us. We exchange our American dollars (about \$5200) into Cuban bills, and pay David for our expenses for the week. Out in the parking lot, one immediately sees rows and rows of '40s and '50s American automobiles. It's like the mother of all antique car shows! I'm sure I'll find out more about that later. We board the Baptist Convention's bus (no AC, and hard plastic seats—welcome to missions!) and head for our mission site. We pick up our translator, Guillermo. Hallelujah for someone who speaks both languages. Along the way, we pick up another Cuban Baptist worker, Joel. He is seeing his eighteen-year old son off, who will serve in the military for two years. We witness them saying a tearful goodbye to each other. The bus ride is reflective. The engine noise is loud, so it's hard to talk anyway. I sit and drink in the tropical scenery, and pray for our kids, and for the mission. After lunch at a roadside "restaurant" we arrive in Pedro Betancourt. Pastor Omar, his wife Maria, and a team of teenagers help us unload our luggage and get settled. We are staying in the pastor's home. He and his wife have moved out of their room to give the girls a place to stay. All seven of us guys are in one small room. I think we will REALLY get to know each other this week. I walk down to the

church, just down the street. We have been asked to lead worship in an evening service, so I want to check it out. I am greeted by the youth praise team and band, who are rehearsing. Immediately, I sense a big reason we are here—to encourage this worship ministry, and get to know these neat people. The evening meal is amazing—roast pork, black beans and rice, plantains, other vegetables, fresh bread and cheese, and AHHHH! Cuban Coffee. Nick Carter and I (both coffee hounds) are in heaven. The worship service goes great. Our team leads some worship, their folks lead songs and a mime/dance, and I preach from Ephesians 5. Great time of worship! What a day! Thank you Lord for your presence! We feel you in every step. Excited about tomorrow.

Monday, June 18

Tired, but a great tired. The day started with all of the guys wanting to kill the rooster outside our window who started vocalizing about 5:00 AM. We walked to breakfast, at one of the church members' homes. Looks like we'll have all our meals here. Oh my goodness, what a breakfast! Boiled eggs, bread, guava jelly, cheese, pulled pork, and yes, Cuban coffee. Wow! Then it's back to the pastor's home for construction—well, really demolition. We spent the morning moving stacks of tiles, and cleaning out the pastor's backyard. Our FBC guy and a contractor work on removing the tiles from the roof section which will be replaced with a concrete roof. I am proud of our kids—they work really hard. The Cubans are impressed with how hard our girls work! I find two snakes in the tiles, and ask if they are poisonous. One Cuban says yes they are, and so the snakes go to their final reward. Unfortunately, I find out later on that there are no poisonous snakes in Cuba. I hate that I killed the little guys. Lunch is equally huge—all fresh food. Kids are eating like crazy.

We do VBS for the kids in the afternoon. It is very "seat of the pants" but it all works out very well. I am glad to have Rebeca Salmeron with us, who knows Spanish well. What a blessing. We

have about 120 kids, in two fairly small areas. Whew!

We had planned to do a worship service tonight, but get rained out. It allows us some more time to rehearse. What a great day!

Tuesday, June 19

This morning, it's another huge breakfast, then construction. Today we are removing plaster from the inside walls, so that new plastering can be done. What a way to release frustration! Another great morning of hard work. Our kids hang in there, and work really hard. We want to do VBS again, but get rained out. The kids are gathered on street corners and picked up by a bus, so when it rains, it's impractical. So we call an audible, and put out the word to the music worship team members of the church to come and join us for a rehearsal/clinic. The word goes out, and we have about 20 show up. I do a worship band clinic, and have some of them sit in with us on keyboards, drums, guitars, and vocals. They teach us some songs, and we teach them some. We sing together. Their girls teach our girls a tambourine worship dance. The two groups begin to bond. Tonight, our team and their team lead worship together. What an experience! Nick Carter preaches, and does a fine job. Pastor is visually touched. The spontaneous fellowship afterwards was amazing! It was like long-lost family getting to know one another. Praise God!

Wednesday, June 20

Another morning of construction. More plaster removed. Kids still working hard. No complaining. Our students already commenting on what a great team to be part of. No VBS—rained out. No worship—rained out. But good fellowship with Cubans. Played dominoes and Uno with Cubans during the evening. Really fun time. I am sensing that's why we are here—to encourage these fellow believers, and be encouraged and challenged ourselves.

Thursday, June 21

Raining in the morning, so no work. Incredible breakfast, though. Their gift to us is a trip to the beach at Veradero, one of the most beautiful beaches in Cuba. We load up with about a dozen of their young adults on a 1952 Chevy bus (with a Russian diesel under the hood) and take the 2 hour trip. The beach and ocean are beautiful. Several of us had not planned to go swimming. But it soon becomes apparent that everyone is going in the water whether they want to or not. Again, the fellowship is phenomenal. Our guys and their guys "chickenfighting" and building human pyramids in the water, the girls laughing at them—a great time. Lunch at a "pizza place" then souvenir shopping." It occurs to me that we spend more on souvenirs than some of them make in a week. Dominoes and Uno again in the evening. Incredible devotional time with just our team. I love these kids. Already sad that we will be saying goodbyes to the Cuban Christians tomorrow.

Friday, June 21

Up for breakfast, then goodbyes. Time of prayer for Pastor Omar and Maria, and time of prayer for us from the Cubans. Exchange of gifts. Julia gives her guitar to the pastor's son. He's bawling like a baby when we leave. I see some misty eyes from several of our kids, as well as the Cubans. Long, quite ride back to Havana. We get smoothly through security, and are in the air back to Miami! On the ground, in the USA! Harder to get through US customs than Cuba! We pick up bus, and head back toward Graceville. By midnight, I can't drive any farther, and we check into Days Inn near Leesburg.

Saturday, June 22

On the road by eight, and back in Graceville by 1 PM. Awesome trip. Everyone agrees it doesn't need to be our last. We strongly sense God has more for BCF to do in Cuba.

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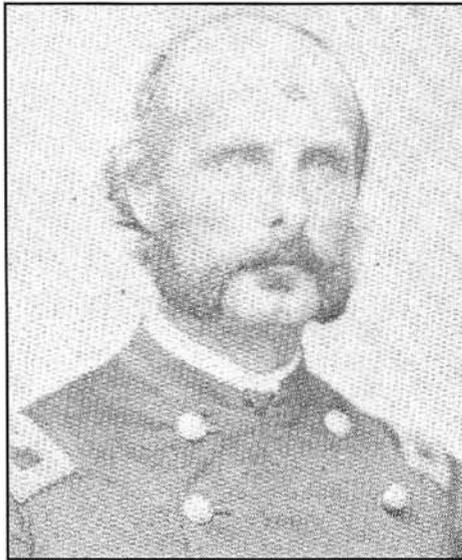
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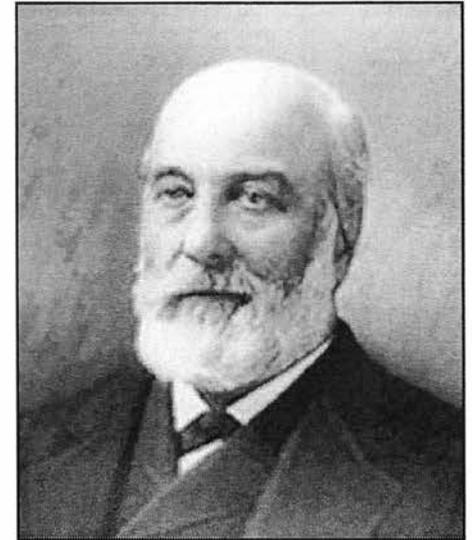
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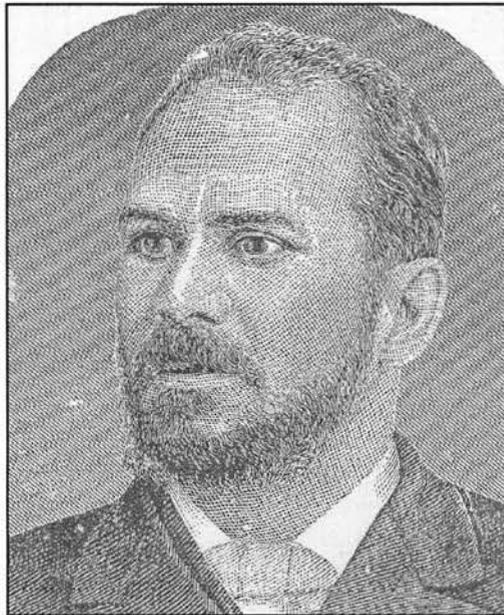
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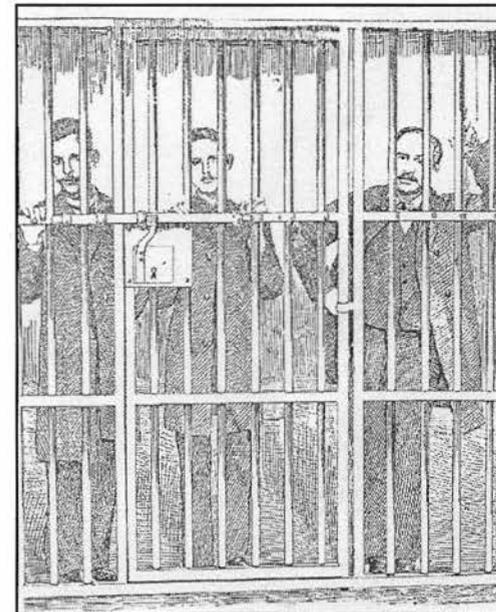
W. F. Wood
about 1865



I. T. Tichenor
Home Mission
Board Executive
Secretary/Treasurer
about 1895



A. J. Diaz
about 1885



**Prison: Herrera,
Godinez, Diaz**
about 1896



Cuban Church dedication (1917)



Cuban Children in Tampa (about 1920)



**Professors J. M. Cabera and W.W. Barnes (seated);
Miss Carmen Fons, Miss Mabel Haynes, Miss Alice
Taylor, and Miss Monica Fons (standing, left to right).
About 1910**



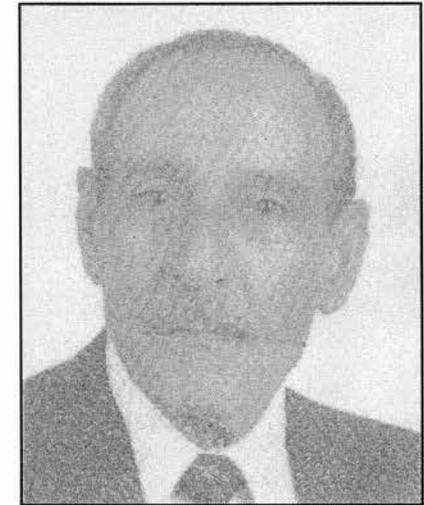
Mrs. M. N. McCall and Adela Gonzalez (1944)



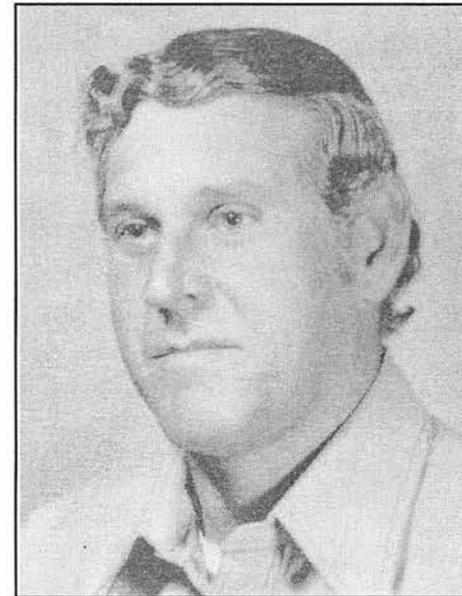
Havana, Cuba. Raquel de Cardenas and her mother, Amparo V. de Cardenas, listen to Dr. M. N. McCall on Sunday mornings at 8:00 when the mother cannot get to church for the service. (1944)



J. B. Lawrence and Courts Redford (about 1950)



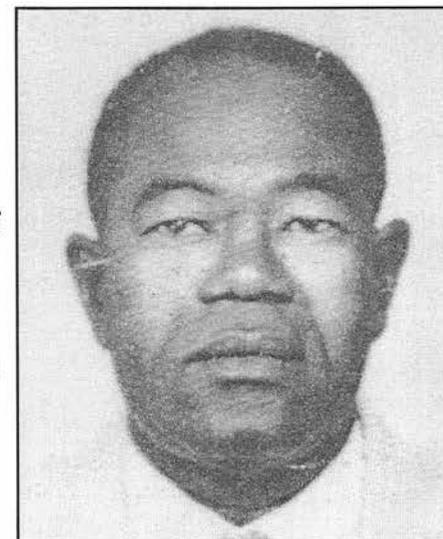
Luis Doger
The “galera” reader who read newspapers, magazines and other publications that were allowed into the prison.



Pedro Rodriguez Medina
Was very active in church activities in Isle of Pines. See The Gospel Behind Bars By Reinaldo Median



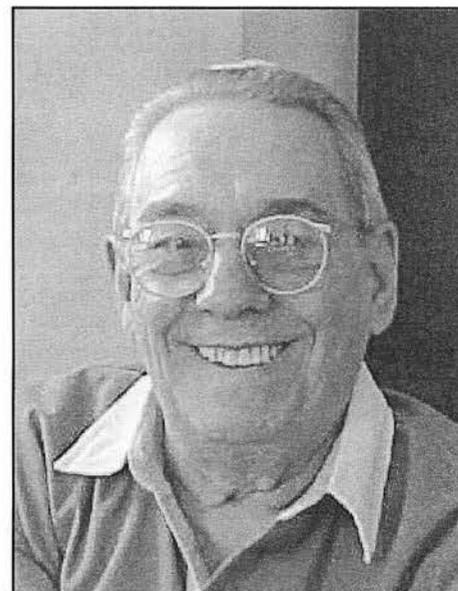
Benjamin Valdes
Suffered 12 years in
prison. He
contributed greatly, as
did other pastors, to the
spiritual strengthening of
those in the political
prisons.



**Antonio Maria Rivero
y Diaz**
A brave herald of the
Gospel. His mission
was to be at the side of
those who were needy:
getting medicine,
washing clothes of the
aged and sick. He died
a few months after
arriving in Miami.



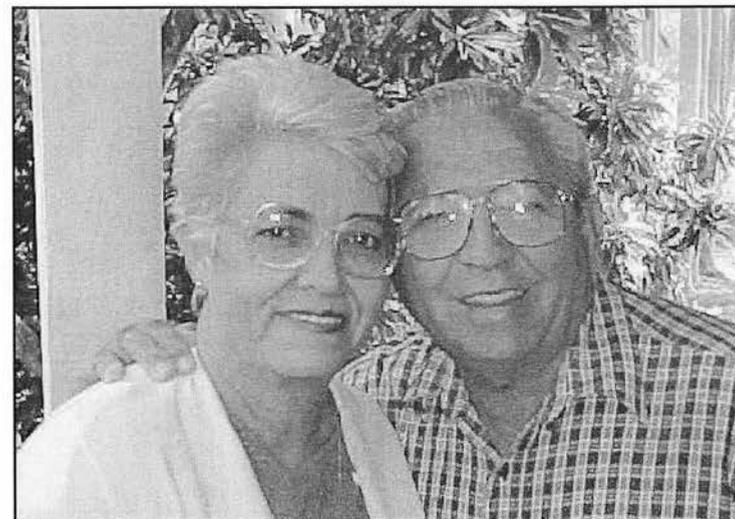
Dr. Alberto Fibras
This is a copy of the
official “mug shot” taken
when he entered Boniato
Prison. He relieved the
suffering of hundreds of
prisoners with the few
medications that were
available.



Leoncio Veguilla
Seminary leader
(1995)



Inside view of Calvary Baptist Church, Havana, Cuba



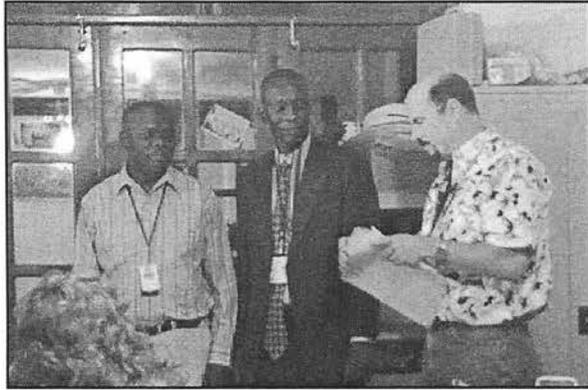
Nilo Dominguez and his wife (1999)



At the Baptist Seminary in Havana, Cuba, Florida Baptist pastor Bill Billingsley (left) gets acquainted with Nilo Dominguez, president of the Western Cuba Baptist Convention (1997)



(LtoR) Renaldo Sanchez former pastor of Calvary Church (1972-2007), Alberto Gonzales president of the convention (2002-2007) and Leoncio Veguilla president of the convention (1997-2002)



Craig Culbreth, Florida Baptist Convention, presenting a love offering to the Director of Ministry in Haiti, De Louise Labranche in July, 2010 after the Jan 12, 2010 earthquake. The offering was given by Cuban Baptists out of their poverty.



John Sullivan, left, executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention preaches for the annual meeting of the Western Cuban Baptist Convention, translated by Roy Cooper, an International Mission Board missionary serving in Cuba, March 22, 2012



(LtoR) Homero Carbonell, pastor of Santa Clara Church, Cuba, John Sullivan, executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention, and Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board



Mission team from Florida, left to right, Rafael and Clysta de Armas, Liberty Community Church; Othoniel and Carmen Valdes, Bay Ceia Baptist Church; Carlos and Ericka Ludwig, Igreja Batista Da Paz. 2012

Appendix 1

Home Mission Board Missionaries Service in Cuba

This is an important but partial list of Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board appointees and employees who have served in Cuba since 1893.

Jones, Pendleton E. (1893)
Diaz, Alberto Jose (1898)
Branham, Adelee (1900)
Taylor, Mary (1900)
Daniel, Charles David (1901)
McCall, Moses N (1904)
Armas, J.R., Mr. and Mrs. (1909)
Barnes, W. W. (1909)
Echevarria, Antonio, Mr. and Mrs. (1909)
Fraguela, Rafael, Mr. and Mrs. (1909)
Machado, R.R., Mr. and Mrs. (1909)
Pinelo, Angel (1909)
Bequer, A.T., Mr. and Mrs. (1910)
Becerra, E., Mr. and Mrs. (1912)
Pereira, Alejandro, Mr. and Mrs. (1912)
Planos, Emilio, Mr. and Mrs. (1914)
Calleiro, M.A., Mr. and Mrs. Sr. (1915)
Garnett, Christine (1918)
Greno, J.L., Mr. and Mrs. (1918)
Santana, Fernando, Mr. and Mrs. (1918)
Sewell, Kathryn (1919)
Corugedo, Arturo, Mr. and Mrs. (1920)
Hernandez, Domingo, Mr. and Mrs. (1920)
Matthews, Mildred (1920)
Negrin, Bessie H. (1920)

Robinson, Edelmira (1920)
Hernandez, Filomeno, Mr. and Mrs. (1921)
Martinez, Antonio, Dr. and Mrs. (1922)
Vivanco, M.R., Dr. and Mrs. (1922)
Gonzales, Moises, Mr. and Mrs. (1923)
Negrin, Isma (1924)
Perez, Virginia (1924)
Smith, Eva (1925)
Ferrer, Juan B., Mr. and Mrs. (1926)
Rodriguez, Heriberto, Mr. and Mrs. (1926)
Fleytes, J.M., Mr. and Mrs. (1927)
Moseley, H.R., Mrs. (1927)
Vazquez, Enrique, Mr. and Mrs. (1927)
Lopez, Augustin, Mr. and Mrs. (1928)
Caudill, Herbert (1929)
Caudill, Marjorie (1930)
Lima, Casto, Mr. and Mrs. (1930)
Molina, Bibiano, Mr. and Mrs. (1932)
Rodriguez, F.J., Mr. and Mrs. (1934)
Garcia, Nemesio, Mr. and Mrs. (1935)
Pina, Enrique, Mr. and Mrs. (1935)
Fricke, Robert and Ann (1955)
Aaron, Phillip Ralph (1957)
Bermudez, Pablo (1957)
Corrales, Jose, Mrs. (1957)
Hurt, Hubert and Eva Mae (1957)
Fite, David and Margaret (1960)

Aguero, Luis M., Mr. and Mrs.
Aguilera, A.J., Mr. and Mrs.
Aleman, Cirilo, Mr. and Mrs.
Allport, Elizabeth
Alves, A. Pereira, Mr. and Mrs.

Arguez, Fermin, Mr. and Mrs.
Armas, J.F., Mr. and Mrs.
Becerra, Esther
Burquet, Bartolome, Mr. and Mrs.
Calleiro, M.A. Jr., Mr. and Mrs.
Capiro, Delio
Carrazana, Alfredo, Mr. and Mrs.
Casanova, Ruben, Mr. and Mrs.
Castano, Cleofas, Mr. and Mrs.
Castano, Teofilo, Mr. and Mrs.
Chavez, Elva
Comesanas, Jorge, Mr. and Mrs.
Couso, J.J., Mr. and Mrs.
Cruz, Humberto, Mr. and Mrs.
Cuellar, Adalberto, Mr. and Mrs.
Cuesta, Lazaro
Dominguez, Cecilia
Dominguez, Humberto, Mr. and Mrs.
Dominguez, Nilo, Mr. and Mrs.
Entenza, M.A., Mr. and Mrs.
Espinosa, Anibal
Fernandez, Ada
Figueredo, Eleuterio, Mr. and Mrs.
Freire, Raul, Mr. and Mrs.
Frieire, J.M., Mr. and Mrs.
Garcia, Juana Luz
Gomez, Eduardo
Gonzales, Romelio, Mr. and Mrs.
Gonzalez, Carmen
Gonzalez, Duice
Gonzalez, Genoveva
Gonzalez, Luis M
Gonzalez, M.A., Mr. and Mrs.
Gonzalez, Raul

Gonzalez, Victor, Mr. and Mrs.
Goodin, Ruth
Guzman, Obel, Mr. and Mrs.
Hernandez, Antonio, Mr. and Mrs.
Hernandez, Carlos, Mr. and Mrs.
Hernandez, Estela
Hernandez, Juan, Mr. and Mrs.
Horta, Efraim
Hughes, Van Earl, Mr. and Mrs.
Kerrigan, Lucille
Kuykendall, Billie
Lapinell, Ivan, Mr. and Mrs.
Larralde, Enrique, Mr. and Mrs.
Law, Tom Jr., Mr. and Mrs.
Leon, Ernesto, Mr. and Mrs.
Levy, Donald, Mr. and Mrs.
Lopez, Jose, Mr. and Mrs.
Machado, Ruben, Mr. and Mrs.
Marquez, Juana
Marquez, Luciano, Mr. and Mrs.
Martinez, Eulalia
Martinez, Leonor
Martinez, Pablo, Mr. and Mrs.
Martinez, Uramis
Maristany, Ondina
Mederos, Jose, Mr. and Mrs.
Medina, Reinaldo
Melian, Rafael, Mr. and Mrs.
Mendoza, Celso J., Mr. and Mrs.
Merlo, Caridad
Merlo, Mario Herminia
Mesa, Ernestina
Millan, J.M., Mr. and Mrs.
Millan, Manuel, Mr. and Mrs.

Millan, Obed, Mr. and Mrs.
Miller, Ruby
Mogena, Cirilo, Mr. and Mrs.
Molina, Natanael, Mr. and Mrs.
Montesinos, Adela
Morales, Fausto, Mr. and Mrs.
Morales, Manuel, Mr. and Mrs.
Munos, Osvaldo A.
Munoz, A. Lopez, Mr. and Mrs.
Napoles, Luis, Mr. and Mrs.
Naranjo, Juan, Mr. and Mrs.
Niebla, Inez
Nunez, Herminio, Mr. and Mrs.
Ocana, Rafael
O'Dell, Ruth
Olivera, Odette, Mr. and Mrs.
Orue, Joaquin R.
Paret, Rogelio, Mr. and Mrs.
Perez, Carlos, Mr. and Mrs.
Perez, Celia
Perez, Juan
Perez, Silvio
Pichs, Guillermo, Mr. and Mrs.
Pool, Frank K., Mrs.
Queen, A.C., Mr. and Mrs.
Quintana, Jorge Alberto
Quintana, Manul, Mr. and Mrs.
Ramirez, Frank, Mr. and Mrs.
Ramos, Antonio, Mr. and Mrs.
Reyes, Petra Eneida
Rivero, Francisco, Mr. and Mrs.
Rodes, Francisco
Rodriguez, Andres, Mr. and Mrs.
Rodriguez, Daniel, Mr. and Mrs.

Rodriguez, Francisco
Rodriguez, J.J., Mr. and Mrs.
Rodriguez, Josefina
Rodriguez, Marcos, Mr. and Mrs.
Rodriguez, Nelson, Mr. and Mrs.
Rodriguez, N.J., Mr. and Mrs.
Rodriguez, Norberto, Mr. and Mrs.
Rodriguez, Raquel
Romero, Carlos
Sanchez, Aguedo, Mr. and Mrs.
Sanchez, J.M., Mr. and Mrs.
Sanchez, Reinaldo, Mr. and Mrs.
Santana, Antonio, Mr. and Mrs.
Silva, A.J. and Miramar
Silvia, Josephine
Silvia, Silvia
Smith, Jewel
Solier, Dora
Suarez, Emillia
Suarez, Raul, Mr. and Mrs.
Tellez, Carlos, Mr. and Mrs.
Torna, Felix, Mr. and Mrs.
Torres, David, Mr. and Mrs.
Travieso, Aurelio
Valdes, Hilario
Valdez, Benjamin, Mr. and Mrs.
Vasquez, Maximo, Mr. and Mrs.
Veguilla, Leoneio, Mr. and Mrs.
Viera, Loida
Yhanes, Saul, Mr. and Mrs.

Appendix 2

Origins of Cuban Baptist work in Florida

Key West

In 1884, work was begun among the Cubans in Key West. (*The Florida Baptist Witness*, November 19, 1885, p. 1). Adela Fales was employed by the Florida Baptist Convention and the Home Mission Board to work in the Cuban mission. W. F. Wood baptized twenty Cubans the first year.

Ybor City

The Tampa church aided Brother Godinez, in beginning work in Ybor City in 1891. (*FBC Annual, 1891*, p. 15)

In 1904, W. Harry Clark and Mary A. Taylor worked in Ybor City with Cubans. (*FBC, Annual, 1904*, p. 44)

The Clark Memorial Church was built in Ybor City. The church was named after W. H. Clark, the African missionary, who died in missionary service at Ybor City. (FBHS files. See Ybor City; W. H. Clark)

Home missionary Aurelia Baez worked at Clark Memorial after having been appointed in 1927 by the HMB. (FBHS files, A. Baez)

Tampa

Many Baptist workers fled Cuba in 1896 due to war. J. V. Cova was one of these. Cova went to Tampa and reported there were 15,000 Cubans living in Tampa in 1896. On his first Sunday in Tampa he led in an evening service and 30 people were present. Harold Edward Greer, *History of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Cuba, 1886-1916*. p. 53.

Jacksonville

In April, 1897, J. V. Cova preached in Jacksonville. In May, 1897, J. J. Parsons, pastor of FBC, Jacksonville, wrote I. T. Tichenor of the SBC Home Mission Board and reported there were 500 Cubans living in Jacksonville. J. L. Rodger, one of the FBC members who spoke Spanish led in mission work and worship. Once a month Cova would travel from Tampa to Jacksonville to conduct services.

Harold Edward Greer, *History of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Cuba, 1886-1916*, p. 53.

Miami

The Spanish ministry was begun in 1948, when a Spanish Department was organized at Central Baptist Church. By 1972, there were nine organized Cuban churches and 21 missions.

(Miami Baptist Association bulletin, 64th Annual meeting, 1972).

Appendix 3

This is the partial list of Baptist laypeople, preachers and missionaries who were arrested and imprisoned in Cuba under the Fidel Castro government.

Adal, Luis Cepero	Herrera, Jesus
Agüero, Luis Manuel	Hidalgo, Felipe
Alemán, Cirilo	Lapinell, Iván
Anduiza, Casto Raimundo	Larralde, Enrique
Armas, Mario Chanez de	Loyola, Antonio Hernández
Barrios, Sixto	Márquez, Luciano
Boffil, Mariano	Martínez, Pablo
Bravo, Sergio	Maytin, Pedro B.
Casanova, Rubén	Medina, Pedro Rodriguez
Caudill, Herbert	Medina, Reinaldo
Chirino, Dagoberto Acosta	Medina, Yolanda
Correa, Enrique Diaz	Mendoza, Celso
Corugedo, Arturo	Mogena, Cirilo
Cuellar, Adalberto	Molina, Natanael
Doger, Luis	Morales, Fausto
Domínguez, Nilo	Naranjo, Juan Francisco
Entenza, Miguel A.	Nieves, Albelito
Fiblas, Alberto	Núñez, Herminio
Figueredo, Eleuterio	Ocaña, Rafael A.
Fite, David	Oropesa, Tomás
Fraguela, Rafael	Paret, Rogelio
García, Andrés	Peña, Luis Manuel González
García, Nemesio	Pérez, Carlos
Gómez, Amador	Pérez, Juan Bautista
González, Miguel A.	Perez, Roberto Martin
González, Rigoberto	Pichs, Guillermo
González, Romelio	Ramos, Antonio
Hernandez, Federico	Rivero, Francisco
Herrera, Enrique	Rodríguez, Francisco

Rodríguez, Heriberto
Rodríguez, Joel
Rodríguez, José Joaquín
Rodríguez, Marcos
Rodríguez, Pedro Rodríguez
Sabater, Alberto
Sastre, Miguel
Seguro, Ignacio
Téllez, Carlos
Tenjido, Antonio
Torna, Felix
Tórres, David
Valdés, Benjamín
Veguilla, Leoncio
Yanes, Saúl

Pastors arrested and released before trial:
Anduiza, Casto Raimundo Lima
González, Miguel A.
Paret, Rogelio
Reyes, Petra Eneida
Rodríguez, Marcos
Torres, David

Three of the women imprisoned were:
Martínez, Juana Luz García
Quintana, Ernestina Mesa
Reyes, Petra Eneida

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Botts, Laura	Greenwood Baptist Church*	Roland, Bill
Breidenbaugh, Joel*	Henry, Ray	Sanders, Guy
Browning, Edwin, Jr.*	Hepburn, Don*	Shaw, Frances*
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Carroll, Barbara	Jukes, Herbert	Sullivan, John*
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Cunningham, Nancy	Laseter, Sue*	Varnum, Troy
DeMott, Linda*	Lefever, Alan	Watford, Doyle
Donehoo, Fred	Lema, David, Jr.	Watford, Helen
Donehoo, June	Lloyd, Bruce*	Windsor, Jerry*
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Draughon, Jackie	Matthews, Peggy	Windsor, John Mark*
Ducanis, Jean*	Mays, C.Parkhill, Jr.*	Wisham, David
Dunaway, Robert*	McMillan, Edward	Yates, Don
FBC, LaBelle	McRae, Martha Kay*	Yates, Helen
FBC, Lynn Haven*	Melton, Carolyne*	
FBC, Madison*	Millette, Caroline W.*	
FBC of Sweetwater*	Mt. Olive Baptist Church*	
FBC, Tallahassee*	Oswalt, Grace	
Flegle, Larry *	Oswalt, Jerry	
Florida Bapt Financial Systems*	Owens, Glen*	
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Annual Meetings	10,000
Office Supplies	500
Storage Supplies	500
Books, Materials	500
Website Operations	500
FBHS Photocopier	600
Digitizing expense of Materials	500
Microfilm	500
	\$55,500

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(Index compiled by Penny Baumgardner)

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