

## **SW DISTRICT CUBA CONNECTION**

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### **How Could This Be Possible?**

About six months ago I received an email from Pastor Rafael Fernandez Valdes from Falla, Cuba in the Ciego de Avila District. This is not a district that I cover but have passed through many times. The pastor was telling me, another pastor gave him my name and that I could help him. He was the pastor of a little church in Falla that had about 30 members. Things were very difficult for him and his church, he was praying that I could find him a sister church to help them. Just the fact I received his email was a miracle because many of them from remote areas never get out of Cuba. I immediately sent back an email of encouragement and blessings. I put his email address on our "Pensamiento del Dia" (Thought for Today) devotion I have sent out every morning.

The last several months I have told Pastor Rafael to continue praying and God will answer your prayers. In the mean time I was working with Pastor Jose' Ramon planning a side trip on my March trip to visit them. Naturally we had difficulties along the way, it's Cuba. We had arranged my schedule that I would be traveling though Falla on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Later we found out that Pastor Rafael was in seminary in Havana until the 25<sup>th</sup>. Jose called a friend at seminary and received permission for Pastor Rafael to get out of class a couple of days early.

Pastor Rafael knows nothing what is happening in the back ground as I continue to tell him to pray. God will answer your prayers. The last week in February Rafael tells me, "The church is fasting for three days for me that somehow we can meet." We have arranged with the District Superintendent to purchase a pig so we can have a pig roast to feed the village when we are there. It's the last week of the month so food is very short everywhere. I arrive to Cuba to find everything is in order and the seminary has informed Pastor Rafael that his prayers have been answered.

The anticipation of our meeting was running in high gear as we approached the village of Falla. The chimney from the Sugar Cane Mill was pumping out black smoke on the edge of town as we turned and drove by this

dilapidated mill along the railroad tracks. Just a few homes from the mill stood the Falla Methodist Church.

The houses on the street all look the same as at one time they were the housing for the mill workers. I later found out the mill had been closed for five years and had just recently been reopened. I was met by the pastor and his wife and two beautiful children. In the back of the property I could see this open sided church with thirty to forty people waiting for our arrival.

We sat and talked about their church and how God managed to bring this all together. When I heard how hard the pastor had been praying for this meeting I am humbled by the meeting of this event. Do not try to use logic here because it does not work, forget it. During our conversation with the District Superintendent I find out there has not been a visitor from the United States in this district for three years, yes three years.

How could we have failed the district for this long?

We worshipped we prayed and gave thanks to our God for bringing us together. As I watch the church members with full plates of food laughing and smiling it was another one of those blessings I will never forget. *How could this be possible?*

Oh I know, just another answered pray!

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