

Southwest District Mission Program, Inc.

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Cuba 2017 Report

Below you can see the activities and accomplishments in the past year. I give all the credit to our Lord Jesus Christ, plus God loving individuals throughout the United States that have blessed us with their prayers and financial support. Thank you so much!

New Sister Church Relationships:

Christ UMC of Leigh Acres; Centeno, Holguin Norte

Good Shepard UMC North Fort Myers; Antillia, Holguin Norte

Venice - Nokomis UMC, Nokomis; Pontezualo, Holguin Norte

Venus UMC, Venus; Not yet designated, Guantanamo

Second Sister Churches:

Gulf Cove UMC, Port Charlotte; Frank Pais, Holguin Norte

First UMC of Sarasota; Madama, Holguin Norte

Reconnected Relationships: *None*

Lost Relationships: *None*

General Information on the District:

Number of churches in Holguin Norte District; **47**

Number of new churches 2017; **4**

Number of Cuban churches with a sister church; **38**

Number churches in the South West District; **65**

Total Number of travelers that went to Cuba in 2017; **21**

Number on Youth Trip; **3**

Number of first time travelers to Cuba; **7**

Number of churches represented in the

AWAY!

travelers; **12**

Non-alliance trip taken in March; **1**

Non-alliance travelers that went to Cuba; **0**

Number of Cuban pastor visits to the United States; **5**

District Superintendent of Holguin Norte; Pastor Isel Acanda **2**

District Superintendent of Sancti Spiritus; Pastor Jose Ramon **2**

Pastor Oliver, visited Edgewater UMC, Port Charlotte **1**

Adopt a Cuban Pastor: *We have nine pastors without a Sister Church in the Holguin Norte District but again this year all pastor salaries are paid in the Holguin Norte District through the Adopt a Pastor project. Pine Level UMC in Arcadia has a sister church in Bijaru, Cuba but it is a Mission church and cannot be counted until it becomes a full-fledged church. The Guantanamo District is different. We have fourteen pastors without salaries. Guantanamo has the most difficult conditions in Cuba. This would be a great place to bless a Cuban family.*

Bibles for Cuba: *More than 5,000 Bibles (over the length of the program) have been distributed in seven different districts in Cuba; Holguin Norte, Guantanamo, Sancti Spiritus, Granma, Isla de la Juventud, Las Tunas and Pinar de Rio.*

In 2017 we extended this program with the purchase of one hundred Galcom recorded Bibles. This was in the effort to reach more in a sector we are doing very little with; the blind, people with intellectual disabilities, and those in remote areas.

Bicycles Purchased: *25 new bicycles were purchased for pastors in the Sancti Spiritus and the Holguin Norte Districts.*

A new initiative was launch November 2017 in conjunction with Edgewater UMC in Port Charlotte to supply twenty-five used bicycle to be shipped to Cuba with Agape Flights. The first shipment date will be in January 2018.

Water Purification Systems:

The second shipment of systems (WPS) have met with numerous challenges. The number of hurricanes in the Caribbean, Florida, flooding and power outage at the production site in Florida have caused delays. November 29th the WPS were delivered to Agape Flights in Venice for delivery in January 2018. (Date not set at this time.)

Guantanamo Effort:

In the month of October the Southwest District Mission Program, Inc. (SWDMP) in conjunction with Agape Flights purchased, delivered and distributed three and half tons of rice, beans, cooking oil and powdered milk to hurricane-damaged Baracoa, Cuba in the Guantanamo District. These items were given to not only Methodist churches but all churches in the area. We thank Agape Flights and Midwest Food Bank out of Fort Myers, Florida for the opportunity to work with them and serve others.

Lisy's Dream: *Most of you know this story so I am not going to go over that. Just to enlighten you briefly the (SWDMP) has initiated the establishment of a Christian preschool in Mayari in the Holguin Norte District the first in sixty years. We are making history here. I received approval from Bishop Pereira in Cuba and our District Superintendent Rini Hernandez. The first pledged funds have been delivered to Cuba. The repairs of the present classrooms have begun. We have pledges from churches in the South West District and are receiving private donations. We ask for your support and prayers as we move forward with God's plan to make Lisy's Dream come true....*

Just as I said at our meeting in November and as I said a few days ago in Cuba. "God has blessed us and we are doing pretty good, but we can do better and with God on our side we have no limit to what we can achieve. So dream and achieve!"

Merry Christmas and blessings to all!

In Christ,
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