



Chaplain's Training Retreat, Holguin, Cuba

by James Billings
C.E.O. Missionary-in-Training

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I just love it when God confirms that you are EXACTLY where He's wanting you to be. He did this during my last trip in December when he orchestrated Slavic and I meeting in Cardenas, and He did it again in several ways during our recent trip to Holguin. The first and the second were personal confirmations for me. Nearing the end of our first full day in Cuba, we were introduced to the family of Alex, our contact in Holguin. When meeting his mother, we couldn't help but notice that her one shoulder was significantly lower than the other. This resounded loudly with me because of how mine had been similarly injured during my motorcycle accident. What was different was the fact that mine had only dropped by about an inch and a half, and hers seemed to be at least a good 4 inches lower than her good arm! The second confirmation came the next morning during our Sunday morning church service. The service had finished and Terry and I went looking for Brian James to let him know that we were being invited into the pastor's house for a snack and coffee. We found him down in the Sunday school praying with a few of the members of the church. Once I saw the one man that he was praying over I was once again moved to my core. Another injury I've sustained through my accidents is that one of my legs has shifted and is now at times about an inch shorter than the other. Well... this man's right leg must have been 3-4 inches shorter than his left! God started off our mission trip by really encouraging me that no matter how much pain you are in or how bad life can get, there are always others who have it worse. "I once complained about having no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet."



Terry praying with some students @ Teen Challenge on our first day in Holguin.

Our Monday was slated to be one of my favorite types of days, a day full of visiting missions in the depths of the countryside. We weren't even two minutes out from leaving our hotel that morning when we came across a man and two ladies probably in their 70's sitting on the edge of the road holding their mother in their arms. It was obvious that their mother was in dire need of medical attention so we pulled over and carried her into our van. Turns out they had been sitting there for nearly an hour already waiting for an ambulance to arrive. We rushed our way through the countryside and into the city of Holguin, speeding our way to the hospital. Brian, being as strong as he is, carried her into the hospital and we left her along with her two daughters in the caring hands of the medical staff. All we could do from that point was to continue to cover them in prayer while we carried on our day.

We were on our way to the last mission church of our pretty full day when we came up to a horse drawn cart with a man, a woman, and a teenage boy unconscious in her



arms. Realizing that this seemed to be yet another life and death situation, we stopped and Brian helped load the boy into the van. The lady said that the boy was 16 years old and that she was his neighbour. It seems that he had been out drinking and doing drugs with some guys when he had a bad reaction and fell unconscious. Not wanting to drive the boy to the hospital, they drove him to his house and left him by the end of his driveway to die. By the time we got to him it was almost impossible to feel his pulse. The mission church was on the way to the hospital so half of us jumped out there in order to free up room in the van and off the sped to the local hospital.

We sat down in the church and just began to thank our Heavenly Father for allowing us to be in the right place at the right time twice that day and how He allowed us to be used to help and to witness to these people in their times of great need. Terry shared with us the Greek word for compassion, *spagchnizomai*, and then went on to talk about the story of the Good Samaritan. The pastor looked at us, almost in disbelief, and then shared that his church was called Iglesia Evangelica Pentecostal El Buen Samaritano, or "The Good Samaritan!" We've learned many trips ago to expect the unexpected, but it's so beautifully refreshing when God so clearly shows that we are EXACTLY where He's wanting us to be, that He is guiding our very steps.

The second half of our week was spent leading a conference for over 100 chaplains about an hour outside of Holguin. The main topics of the conference revolved around understanding and learning to reprogram our hearts and minds, and also about removing our masks and living lives of integrity. The Chaplains attending the conference work in prisons clear across the island of Cuba, many of whom have been prisoners themselves. Although the conference was a very different flavour from what we had experienced earlier on in our trip, God was still in our midst and moving in some very powerful ways.

It was amazing to see how God used the testimonies of Brian and Terry to help these men to open up about their own struggles that they are facing, and for them to begin reaching out to one another and to us for prayer and support as they began to work through their inner battles. Several times throughout the weekend we witnessed their walls coming down as the tears began flowing like fountains from these once hardened men who now work to bring redemption to Cuba by showing Christ's love to the lowest of the lows in their society.

Another tool that we used to connect with the Chaplains and to come alongside them with support was a stack of blank 3"x 5" cue cards. We told them that they could grab as many as they want and that they could use them to ask us questions in which we would do our best to answer during the sessions and that they could also write out confessions and prayer requests, personal or regarding prisoners within their ministries. We told them to leave the cards anonymous but that Brian, Terry and I would be going through each of



which that were pretty heavy in content. It was evident to see the transformations that were taking place in these men's lives and I have no doubt that their ministries are going to be strengthened because of the spiritual growth they received! JB





BRIEF REPORT ON HAITI AND REPUBLIC DOMINICAN

By Alix and Gertrude Jean-Paul

SAM I AM CENTRE OF LECHAR

A place to meet God, to love God and to serve God

Imagine that you are one of these children. You woke up with an empty belly. You know that you are going to the SAM I AM CENTRE where a good meal will be served, you will have fun and you will learn about Jesus Christ in a loving, safe and caring environment.

Your donation is making a difference. Many children have benefitted from the ministry at the Centre. You have made it possible for Pastors Namphy, Wislin and Gesner to minister to the children both physically and spiritually. Your continued support is needed as the number of children is increasing.

The harvest of souls for eternity is the focus of the Centre. The three pastors have invested time and energy to bring to the people in the area the True Gospel of Salvation through Jesus Christ. Pastor Namphy, with the collaboration of Pastor Wislin and Pastor Gesner work tirelessly in a very challenging environment to reach the people wherever they are and whenever it is. Last year, there were 25 conversions and 14 baptisms. Weekly Bible study averages 30 to 40 people. Sunday service attendance averages 70 to 80 people



Lechard was called the dark place. No one, prior to our arrival had attempted to evangelize the people. The irony is that the request for the church came from the elder of the community, a voodoo priest. He was inspired by the work of Pastor Namphy and his team during VBS in his community.

Many of our new brothers and sisters in Christ are very poor due to limited employment opportunity. The land is unproductive due to frequent drought. Many have shared with Pastor Namphy that they can no longer go back to their previous lifestyle. They are Christians now and they want to live as Christians. CEO, having learned about their predicament has decided to invest in some land so that they can grow a garden which will provide food for both the individuals and the Sam I Am Centre. So, we have just acquired a piece of land to grow a garden. Five of our new members are busy preparing the land for new crops.

Some community individuals, who like what we are doing, have offered to sell us two bigger pieces of land. Pastor Namphy is praying. Land is getting expensive since people with big money are paying sometime twice the market value. They have to launder the cash. For us, it is the best long-term investment for the future of the Centre while providing the well needed employment for our new members.



We have posted this request in the last newsletter: Pastor Namphy is concerned about losing these two young men to better paying job opportunities. He said, it is urgent. He asked me to see if I can get supporters for **Wislin** and **Gesner**. It is not easy to build a pastoral team. These two gentlemen are gifts to the ministry. Please, help us keep them. Our monthly need is \$ 200.00 Canadian for each is necessary for us to keep them. If God puts on your heart a desire to contribute to this specific ministry need, give a call to Alix and Gertrude at: 204 667-6420 or make your intentions clear on the response card. Thank you in advance.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:

The tension in the DR is growing as the immigration issues increase. However, Pastor Noelson and his teachers are trying the best they can under such stressful circumstances. Not knowing how many students might come to school in a given day due to the fact that the deportation of Haitians from DR to Haiti as illegal aliens is intensified by the DR government. Local flooding is also creating some problems for us.

God is good. CEO Ministries in cooperation and Pastor Warkentin and with the financial support of a benefactor are trying to keep the school open. We have around 60 students who are regular attendees. A number of others shows up when they feel safe to come. If you are going to DR and want to visit the school, you are welcome. Give a call to Terry or David Klassen. They will be happy to tell you all that you need to know for a school visit in the Sosua area.

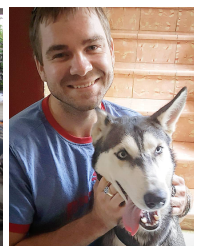


Hannah Hiebert teaches Ladies Sewing, Cooking and Baking throughout Cuba: Jan.3 – Feb. 10
C.E.O. encourages individuals to use their skills to teach internationally to Empower Nationalists

James Lee Billings "Santiago"

Having served on 5 different mission trips with C.E.O. both in Haiti and in Cuba in various capacities, and having proven himself in various ways, the Board of C.E.O. is pleased to recognize Santiago as our newest Missionary-in-Training. We are in the process of applying for his "student visa" (please pray we get it) and stationing him in Holguin, Cuba (hopefully, by mid-August). He will reside in the home of the Director of Teen Challenge and the Director of Chaplain Ministries and be mentored by him. Santiago will serve in these organizations as the Lord directs and allows. Teaching English as a second language is also something we are praying about.

COST: The cost for one year will be \$ 1,000 / month, plus tuition, air travel, and health insurance. If you would like to prayerfully support Santiago either with a one-time gift or a monthly support please indicate your intentions on the response card and marking it "Santiago". Your prayers for his health, effectiveness, and spiritual well-being are welcome.



Caribbean BBQ Thursday, June 21 @ 6:30 pm
Lewis Home: 10 Sunny Hills Road, NE Winnipeg

Multi-purpose Event:

- Commissioning of "Santiago"
- Friend and Fund-Raiser
- Chat with Missionaries
- Quartet music, good food, great fellowship
- Celebrate Terry's 70th and Santiago's 31st birthday

Bring a friend, Bring a Lawn-Chair, Bring a Salad or Dessert, Pray for good weather.... See you there.

WE ARE A TEAM...

Empowering Ministries to ...

Reach the Lost, Revive the weak, Rescue the fallen, Restore the broken, Reconcile the offended, Release the Discipled

CHRISTIANS EMPOWERING ORGANIZATIONS

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