

Evangelical Christian Humanitarian Outreach to Cuba

WWW.ECHOCUBA.ORG

Letter from the Editor

As I look at our 2 week old son and his 16 month "big" brother who wants to hug him the same way he hugs (a.k.a terrorizes) the cat, it makes me think of... The Church, and by extension our own ministry here at ECHO-Cuba. Our son is extraordinarily passionate about his little brother, just as many groups, churches and individuals are passionate about Cuba. But like the overzealous brother hugger, some groups are not aware of the damage that their well intentioned love can do.

On a recent trip I had the privilege of visiting a small, bayside town that sprang right out of a story-book. As we descended a bumpy dirt road through thick jungle hills, the scenery opened to a rock lined lagoon where a handful of simple wooden homes huddle along the shore. Halfway around the lagoon we came across a steep set of stairs ascending to the stark grey cement walls of what was intended to be a church building, now hallow and roofless, home only to a few birds and termite mounds.

This building's story is one of misguided passion. The local church body had outgrown its palm thatched structure and desired to construct a new building. Miraculously the pastor was able to obtain governmental permission and only lacked finances for construction. Upon hearing of the need, a well meaning North American Church decided to help, and simply handed the pastor \$37,000. This amount isn't much by North American construction standards, but in a country with an average salary of \$8 to \$10 a month, it's an amazing amount of money, and placed the pastor in a position of temptation that proved to be

too great. In the end, the money was squandered, the pastor removed from ministry and the church body deeply wounded. A remnant of the congregation continues meeting behind the cement shell of the would-be church, in their original thatched roof building, which sadly now has room to spare.

The good news is that for every horror story I come across, there are countless victories where money and assistance are provided after a foundation of prayer has been laid alongside faith established relationships. Yet this heart wrenching story is a good reminder of the way we must approach ministry in Cuba, or any other part of the world for that matter. Scripture warns us: "There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death" (Prov. 14:12), and "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain" Psalm 127:1).

Please pray for the staff at ECHO-Cuba, and our various ministries throughout the island. Pray that we would continually seek the Lord's way and not our own, "building" only as he directs so that by God's grace, what is constructed will bless the Church of Cuba and ultimately glorify the Lord our God.



Papa Kevin
ECHO-Cuba
Ministries Coordinator

Inside this issue:

Letter from the Editor

About ECHO-Cuba

Team Ministry Trips

OFAC Licensing Assistance

New Ministries

Prayer Requests

Ministry Guiding Principals

About ECHO -Cuba

Ministry Vision:

Building and empowering the Cuban Evangelical Christian Church, and uniting those who can help, with Cuban Christians who need help.

Ministry Mission: ECHO-Cuba is a mission community of Christ-centered people committed to reaching the people of Cuba with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are strengthened by our compassion for the Evangelical Christian Church. We perform this mission through programs, which promote Christian education, capital projects, social & human services, humanitarian needs, agricultural entrepreneurship, and church organizational capacity.



*Cuba's needs:
physical and spiritual*

How to Contact ECHO-Cuba

E-mail: info@echocuba.org
Phone: 1-800-275-8410 x33
Fax: 305-885-8649
Mail: P.O. Box 546135, Miami, Florida 33154-6135

ECHO-Cuba Prayer Requests

Our ministry efforts are divided between helping U.S. Christian organizations and churches minister more effectively in Cuba, and helping Cubans reach the physical and spiritual needs of their countrymen. Please pray for God's wisdom, as our staff walks the difficult path of helping to facilitate the work of others who want to reach the minds, bodies and souls of Cuba with the tangible and eternal love of Christ, under a government that is not welcoming the Gospel.

Pray also for the difficulties that our Cuban Christian brothers and sisters face everyday; be it political, social or financial. May they be effective in their efforts to share the message of Christ's love and ever-present hope.

And pray for God to help touch the heart of potential donors to join us in our strategic work to help strengthen the Cuban church, so they may be able to achieve organizational excellence, and in doing so, their vital mission of bringing the Word of God to 11 million souls may move forward.

Thank you for your prayers!

Dr. Teo A. Babun, Jr.

National Executive Director

New Ministries

MINISTRY TEAMS TO CUBA

ECHO-Cuba is now facilitating organized mission trips to Cuba for the purpose of encouraging and assisting the Christian Church.

With our **Pre-Arranged Itineraries** groups learn first hand about the situation and life in Cuba as they meet various Christian ministries and observe ongoing mission programs run by Christian leaders working with local churches, children in need, the elderly and the handicapped. With provided translators, English is not a necessity, only a heart to learn, serve and encourage.

Another option is to **Arrange Your Own Itinerary** if you have Churches or ministries you are currently involved with. Let ECHO-Cuba assist you with our Humanitarian Aid to Cuba courier program.

For these and other ministry possibilities contact ECHO-Cuba or visit our website.

New Ministries

OFAC LICENSE APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR MINISTRIES AND CHURCHES TO HELP OBTAIN OFAC LICENSING

One of ECHO-Cuba's ministries is to assist faith-based organizations and churches in obtaining an appropriate OFAC license to conduct ministry transactions in Cuba.

The Cuban Assets Control Regulations, 31 CFR part 515, administered by the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC"), prohibit persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States from engaging in transactions in which Cuba or a Cuban national has any interest. The US Government has authorized OFAC to provide licenses for travel-related transactions involving activities expressly authorized. These include humanitarian, religious, and other activities in support of the Cuban people. The OFAC licensing process is intended to promote the transparency, timeliness, and consistency of OFAC licensing determinations.

With the exception of emergency situations, applications for specific licenses should be made in writing to OFAC in letter format not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the proposed date of departure to Cuba.

ECHO-Cuba provides a number of services related to the completion, submission and operations of OFAC licensing. ECHO-Cuba can help your organization or church obtain the best terms and flexibility possible.

ECHO-Cuba's experience in the OFAC licensing process extends over ten years, please contact us or visit our website for more information.



Children's ministries in Cuba

Ministry Guiding Principles

ECHO-Cuba's strategic work will be to create and adapt methods that will strengthen the church. Through our mutual vision for a strong church, we will achieve great benefits and organizational excellence, and in so doing our vital mission will be moved forward to the benefit of those we serve. We will collaborate with local leaders throughout Cuba and with others to bring hearts, minds and resources together. We agree to face each situation honestly and with determination and in dependence of God. We will be a caring ministry. Our efforts will be non-political.