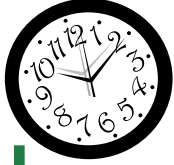


Take 10



A Ten-Minute Informative Communication of the
International Association of Conference Center Administrators



Summer 2007

A View from Cuba – Florida Baptists form Partnership

This past year, the Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center in Leesburg, Florida, formed a partnership with a Baptist camp in Matanzas, Cuba. Matanzas is approximately two hours east of Havana. Cuba is located in the Caribbean Sea just 90 miles south of the coastline of Florida and covers 44,218 square miles (slightly smaller than the state of Pennsylvania).

In 1959, Fidel Castro led a rebel army to victory and the country has been under Communist rule since that time. As you drive through the countryside, you feel as though you have stepped back in time with many of the original buildings that were constructed prior to the revolution and Cubans still driving their 50's Chevrolet's and Ford's. Since the United State embargo in 1990, many restrictions have been in place for American citizens traveling into the country. Only those with political, journalism, and religious visas are approved by our government and are allowed to enter.

The Florida Baptist Convention has been fortunate enough to have formed a partnership with the Western Baptist Convention and has received permission to travel to Cuba. The Western Baptist Convention was organized in 1905 and is made up of 1,500 churches with over 16,000 members. Even though Cuban Baptists live in very difficult times, each lives life with optimism and confidence, and has a deep desire to see that each Cuban has an opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel.

The Baptist Camp has developed into a truly remarkable facility under the leadership of Lazaro Cue. The property sits in the middle of the beautiful Yumuri Valley. You can walk up to a summit on the property where you are able to see for miles



The property sits in the middle of the beautiful Yumuri Valley in Cuba. It is a true conference center with air-conditioned motel style rooms.



The Staff from Lake Yale helped construct the new dining room which seats up to 300 and an auditorium that will seat up to 600 at one time.

the beautiful mountains and countryside covered in royal palms and lush tropical vegetation.

Over the past several decades the camp has developed into a true conference center with air-conditioned motel rooms. There is also a brand new dining room that can seat up to 300 and a second floor auditorium that can seat up to 600. Lake Yale has been able to take a number of its staff over the past two years to provide some much needed work. Projects have included renovations of the main bathrooms, the construction of the dining room and auditorium, interior and exterior painting, and the digging of a cistern to increase the water supply to the facility. The teams have also had opportunities to associate with the Cuban Baptists, including the children who love to come and play on the grounds after school.



The staff takes a moment to pose for their American friends.



Members of the Lake Yale Conference Center team had the opportunity to share their skills at another camp that is in great need of support.

I asked Lazaro who uses the facility during the year and his response was that the Cuban Baptists fill it up throughout the summer and on weekends in the other seasons. He frequently is asked by other groups if they can use it but he hasn't been able to find them any time on the calendar. I wish that were true of our own facilities here in the United States.

This special partnership with a camp in another part of the world has been a tremendous blessing for staff members who have been able



Don Sawyer and Lazaro Cue had the opportunity to discuss conference center management during the visit to Cuba.

to go. They have benefited significantly from going to Cuba and sharing their skills at another camp that is in such great need of our support. The monies that have been set aside in our budget for our staff expenses have been well worth the cost. Those who have returned have a much deeper sense of not only how blessed we are here in America but most importantly, the mission that God has set before us at our place and around the world. I would encourage all to consider an international partnership.



Take Ten is a periodic publication of the International Association of Conference Center Administrators

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