

**ITEM B.200
FOR INFORMATION**

**WORLD MISSION UPDATES AND CUBA REPORT
A NEW MOMENTUM IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IN CUBA**

The pace of life and society is changing fast in Cuba. The opening of embassies in Washington, DC and in Havana was a great sign of hope for the people of Cuba, and President Obama's trip is another important gesture of friendship and mutual respect. Although our two governments have been estranged since the Cuban Revolution of 1959, several PC (USA) presbyteries and congregations have maintained relationships with churches there. The Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba was part of the Synod of New Jersey prior to the revolution and is a long-time World Mission global partner. The PC (USA) currently has over 80 congregational and presbytery partnerships with church bodies in Cuba.

The following highlights have been accomplished:

1. World Mission Co-Workers Rev. Dr. David Fuentes-Cortez & Josey Saez-Acevedo

After the re-establishment of diplomatic relationships between the U.S. and Cuba in July 2015, World Mission responded to the request of our partner, the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Mantanzas, Cuba, to send a New Testament Professor. Since the beginning of 2016, Dr. David Cortes-Fuentes and his wife Josefina Saez-Acevedo are residing in Matanzas, where David teaches New Testament and Greek, and Josey is using her experience in Christian education and ministry to serve church partners. Our last PC(USA) mission co-worker, Lois Kroeler, didn't leave Cuba until 1992. She is retired in Seattle and served the church in Cuba after the revolution.

A newsletter from David and Josey can be found here. – Ministry Announcement

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/david-cortes-and-josey-saez-2015-09/>

2. Advocacy – Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), Cuba Partner Network, and World Mission

Our Cuban church partners have consistently asked the PC (USA) to work toward restoring diplomatic relations between our two countries and lifting the embargo. Since 1969, we have worked toward this end. In fulfillment of the assignment of the 221st General Assembly (2014), World Mission has been supporting the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the Cuba Partners Network, and has been in consultation with representatives of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba, to present its recommendations to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

3. Florida Presbyteries reconciliation

Recently three South Florida Presbyteries made their first visit to the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba. They had frank conversations about their history during this visit, especially because these three Presbyteries were recipients of Cuban pastors who left the ministry of the church in Cuba behind. A conversation around reconciliation started among them.

4. Washington office, President Obama's visit

We continue to work and interact with Presbyterian Office of Public Witness, through webinars, on conversations about Cuba: “What Next?” Building on the momentum of President Obama’s trip to Cuba, World Mission continues to discuss the current state of affairs in Cuba and the prospects for an end to the US embargo.