

# ◆ The Garcia Gazette

Reaching Mexico and the Nations for Jesus

Cuba Edition 2023

Link International  
Ministries



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Ensenada Mexico

Reaching Mexico and  
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Dear friends and family,

What a blessing to sit and write to you now from our home in Mexico after being in Cuba for a month. It was an amazing trip – different than all others... but wonderful!



Since being home we have heard back from all of the Cuban professors regarding follow-up and that is even more exciting than our going! With joy we share stories of transformation!

### Discipler Training Conference

With 76 attendees (plus support staff), God moved in people's hearts and helped us overcome logistical and physical challenges during our 15th Cuba Discipleship Conference. Pastors departed the conference equipped and enthusiastic to implement discipleship in their churches!

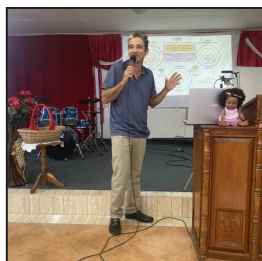


**Our 2023 Team**

The goal since our first DTI conference in 2009 has been to train and equip local teams to execute a conference without foreign (our) help. Praise God for the growth we witnessed in each of our team!

Each Cuban teacher took turns managing staff meetings, teaching the General Sessions, preaching, in addition to their other daily responsibilities.

We paid for BUSES to transport pastors and leaders (mainly from the Havana area), to our location in Palmira (a 3-hour drive), as it was more cost effective to carry out the 5-day conference there. We experienced daily rolling electricity blackouts, so the donated gas generator at the center was critical.



**Teaching the General Sessions**  
Eliezer taught on *Lordship and Abiding in*

*Fellowship with the Holy Spirit*, while Cesar instructed on *God's Character*. Midalys led the facilitation segment and shared tips on mentoring.



All our Cuban partners led workshops and facilitated small groups, as well as collaborating in dramas or skits.



Our hosts Luis and Yanaisy worked tirelessly and diligently for many months to put all the pieces together to be able to host the conference. But they also provided spiritual leadership. In his closing comments at the conference, Pastor Luis said: *"It is very important to embrace the vision of making disciples. It's not just another book. But we are to live it out and teach it."*



Pablo and I are blessed to partner with Frank and Jeannette Meitz. Frank & Jeannette lead the "Train the Trainer" segment of Discipler Training International. Together we passionately serve in Cuba, as the Lord directs and provides. In this picture you will see our son Jacob. He traveled to Cuba in early July on a religious visa to help in the food gathering and preparation of the DTI conference and the Marriage Retreat that was held the following week. (More info on him at the end of this letter!)



This pastor attended a DTI conference 9 years ago and brought 14 from his church this year -- many are his spiritual sons and grandsons.



He said, "I can tell you this is not

just theory or something to stick on the bookshelf. It works. I learned so much more at this conference. We already use DTI in our church, but with my new understanding, it will be taken to a whole new level."



Julio (shown here with his family), took care of so many details from Havana for both of the conferences -- like visas, printing the books, and transportation for us and the Cuban attendees.

DRAMAS provide additional understanding and provide a change of pace to keep the attendees engaged. The Cubans now do all the dramas. This one demonstrates how a new believer may need to depend on the faith and testimony of their mentor in their spiritual infancy. "If you trusted God's character and this is what happened, maybe I can trust Him, too."



SMALL GROUP time spent going through the DTI Tool, is where the "wonder" happens, where God breaks into their lives. We witnessed relationships and marriages healed, as well as growth in their journey with Jesus and passion to implement discipleship using DTI.



### The Marriage Conference

The following week in our trip we held a couples' retreat in a campground in a neighboring province. Each cabin had three rooms so each couple had *their own room* which was conducive to what we were doing! We had 48 couples attend the retreat! The retreat was in the same format as the DTI conference, in that we had 4 Cuban couples that co-led small groups after each general session that we taught. It was an incredible time of teaching –



The team prepping before the conference



The couples had free time to do fun "homework" and to swim in the pool. One of the nights, we had commissioned a person to make 100 baggies of popcorn and bought soda and we took them to "The Very Best Theatre in the Province" (the cafeteria made into a theatre!!) and saw

the movie "Fireproof" to cheers and excitement. After the movie we had a time of prayer over the couples which was sweet and intimate.



One woman gave the testimony that she and her husband had thought that the way they were living their marital relationship was "just how it goes". They didn't know that there could be more – that marriage could be wonderful and deep in between all the difficulty of life – until coming to the retreat. They had "settled" and now they knew different and wanted to live that difference!



Some couples were in the midst of deep difficulty and we were able to counsel and pray with them and the local leadership that helped us is able to continue where we left off.

In fact, after we returned home, two of the couples that co-led with us, just finished re-teaching what we taught at the retreat at their church over a couple of weeks. There was a couple that had been living together their whole adult lives but had never made a formal commitment. After the study, they were married in a civil ceremony and their next step will be the church wedding.

**They are a living testimony of transformation.** After being atheists – following Marxism-Leninism (a form of authoritarian socialism), they made a decision to accept Christ as their Savior and Lord and were taken through the discipleship by Eliezer and Midalys this last year. They were baptized and now are formalizing their commitment to one another before God and the civil laws.

TRANSFORMATION.

### Food is essential!

Our amazing kitchen staff tirelessly cooked delicious meals, often without electricity. At every conference there are wonderful, dedicated women carefully picking the pebbles (yes, small rocks) out of the



rice and beans before cooking. **Last year a 50 pound bag of rice cost about \$30. This year, we had to pay about \$300!**

Our cooks Isvel and Liudvis butchered a hog and prepared that, chicken and lots of beans and rice! Large avocados are growing in many yards, so we enjoyed this delicious add-on. (They also accompanied us the following week and helped in the kitchen at the marriage conference)!



BOOKS (*A Tool for Personal Discipleship*) are highly prized! Each attendee received two manuals and pastors took 20 so they can begin training faithful believers to disciple others. It's almost impossible for them to print their own, and an internet connection (while better than in past years), is still very sketchy and expensive for them to access the DTI app.



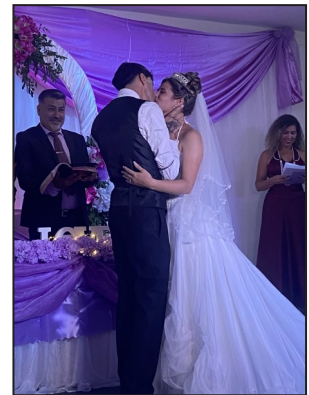
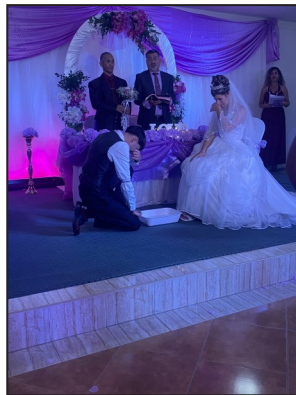
**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

## An update on Jacob. and family matters!!

As we wrote earlier, Jacob flew to Cuba on July 4th and began helping with preparations for the conferences and helping in all that he could at the main ministry center. He has loved Cuba since the very first time he went with us in 2009 and this year his heart was captivated by a lovely young Cuban woman as well! They had a whirlwind romance and Jacob and Elianet were married on September 23rd. There are a lot of funky things that happen with visas in Cuba, so he had to leave the country when his Religious Visa expired and he returned 24 hours later with a tourist visa that was exchanged, once in country, to a family visa also for three months. We aren't sure whether he will have to leave for 24 hours again or be able to renew from there. Jacob and Elianet sat with us for several "pre-marital counseling sessions" and will continue once here in Mexico with another couple. They are happy and love each other and want to serve God with all their lives.

Since being back in Cuba, a German man flew in for a two-week trip and Jacob has served as a translator from English to Spanish while on a road trip from one side of the country to the other. His bride was not able to go on the first half of the trip, but is able to accompany them this second half. He has learned so much and is able to see where people are using the discipleship material and see God's hand at work amidst extreme poverty.

He and Elianet are working on paperwork for her to be immigrated to Mexico but it is possible that it will take 6 months, so they are serving and praying for God's will as they wait!



Yes... that really is an avocado!!



**Family**  
CORNER

Benjamin and Jeanelle flew to Cuba to be together for the wedding and the lovebirds took a few days of their honeymoon (staying in a separate place!!), and they spent time together with all of us, knowing it may be a while until the family is all together again.



Mischa is 12 and beautiful. She started 7th grade in September. Oliver is 7 1/2 and **ENERGETIC!!**



*Thank you for all your support and prayers. God is so faithful through you as you consistently walk with us. We are so grateful.*



Pablo & Martha