

PILGRIMAGE TO CUBA
LIGHT OF THE WORLD CHRISTIAN CHURCH

November 30 – December 7, 2019

Reflections by Ann Gray

Couldn't sleep at all last night,
Just thinking of Cuba.
The weather isn't helping our plight
This will be a long, wet flight.

Anxiety at the airport,
We're moving kind of slow.
Hope Delta gets it together,
For to Cuba we must go.

Pastor Janae is at the airport
Encouraging her flock
The Richardson's came as well,
To help us watch the clock.

Only half of us made it on the plane.
The rest would take another.
But Pastor did not leave us,
Protective like a mother.

Father God was on our side,
As always, don't you know.
We all met in Atlanta,
Now to Cuba we will go.

Our first hotel was modest and
Beautiful at the same time
Indoor courtyard, rocking chairs,
So peaceful and sublime.

Fresh fruits and vegetables
Were just beyond compare,
Rice and beans were
Staples everywhere.

On the first day of Advent
The streets began to fill,
We were in Old Havana
Another City on a Hill

Our choir performed a concert
That brought the church to cheers.
If any of them were nervous,
El Senor removed their fears.

A choir of African medical students
Joined the concert, as well.
They sang in another language,
But you couldn't even tell.

The Spirit must be universal,
For we felt it everywhere.
Different languages...a barrier?
We didn't even care.

Good food is an understatement,
And fellowship galore.
And the Voices of the Light
Would WOW us even more.

Our spare time was spent looking
For WIFI service.
Sending pictures and calling
Back home was our purpose.

We spent a day with the
Cuban Council of Churches.
They spoke of their mission
And explained their purpose.

Then off to the MLK, Jr.
Memorial Center
And we knew where we were
From the time we could enter.

Artwork and sculpture
Lined the entry door.
We took pictures
Until we could take no more.

We were told of their beginning
And their mission.
We visited one of their projects,
And purchased gifts from women of vision.

The leaders of the Pentecostal Church of
Cuba, welcomed our teams,
Sharing their mission and their future
and their dreams

We toured Old Havana,
Saw shops, restaurants and bars.
But the highlight of this tour,
Was seeing the old vintage cars.

They are shined and polished
To look like new.
And driven with great pride,
For everyone to view.

The embargo prevents them
From getting new parts,
So these cars are kept running by
The owner's inventive hearts.

At a modest Pentecostal Church,
hospitality shown bright.
As they welcomed and received
The Voices of the Light.

The church was the size of a
Trailer, maybe 15 by 50 feet.
And in the entire place
There was not an empty seat.

A crowd gathered outside
When they heard all the noises.
Soon they found out
It was all of the "Voices".

A group from the church
Sang some selections.
The Voices of the Light
Followed with their collections.

The young pastor was moved to tears,
You know, that emotional cry.
He felt he had no purpose,
And let his enthusiasm die.

But after experiencing the concert,
God opened up his heart.
He can see now, that God
Wants him to play a part.

His confession and conviction,
brought us all to tears.
It showed us one more way
God can relieve our fears.

The choir had us all emotional,
bringing us to tears.
Their awesome, moving performance,
Also brought on cheers.

I asked Dir. John Wray how
He chose a choir, so perfect in their tone.
He said, "I didn't choose them,
It was God and God alone."

We had lunch at a beautiful
Restaurant on a scenic hill.
We took pictures and delighted
In the food, what a thrill.

We bussed on to Matanzas to the
Evangelical Theological Seminary.
Another hill full of breathtaking foliage,
Teared gardens, overlooking a Bay.

We watched the audience arrive,
Cordial as they came.
But when they left this awesome place
They would not be the same.

Our choir sang as if anointed.
And by the second song,
That statue stiff audience
Began to sing along.

The Cuban German Gospel Choir,
Joined in and sang along.
Their members made bowing gestures
As the "Voices" sang their song.

The universal quality of the Spirit was seen,
As the audience crossed the aisles,
Holding hands and singing loudly
The stiffness had turned to smiles.

The "Voices" have been transformed,
They are no longer the same.
God has touched them in a mighty way
And their genius is hot as a flame.

At a museum/center called Muraleando,
Made completely out of trash,
They made art objects
And sold them for cash.

They all were anxious
To show off their wares,
And doubly pleased
That somebody cares.

We met people like our friends at home
Reminding us of our kin
Young and old, happy and glad
Beautiful and every color of skin.

Minister April reflected
That we are all the same
More alike than different
Not returning the way we came.

With our sisters and our brothers,
We must continue to pray
We must strengthen the bonds between us.
And end the blockade one day.