

“Early Methodism in Cuba- Towards a National Church, 1883-1958”  
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This Lecture is dedicated to Bishop Armando Rodriguez who sacrificially lived his ministry with the Methodist Church in Cuba on both sides of 1959.

I. A Personal Word

My family arrived in Camaguey, Cuba, on Epiphany Day, January 6, 1951. I was two years old. My older brother David was six. My parents were missionaries with the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church. San Pablo Methodist Church and Pinson College became the center of my life. I lived in a boy's world, playing with my Cuban friends. We made kites out of sticks and paper. We constructed scooters with wood and skates. As cub scouts we built our campsite from the bush. Life was free with few cares, yet we were surrounded by violence and political uncertainty. We lived through the Batista regime, the 26 of July rebel offensive, and a year and a half after the triumph of the revolution. Then one day, we each packed a suitcase. My dad was allowed to take \$100.00. We flew to Miami convinced that we would never return. I was twelve. My childhood was over. Everything I knew was gone- my friends, Pinson, San Pablo. Nevertheless, I would never trade anything for being a “mishkid,” with a bi-lingual and bi-cultural experience. Grace and healing abound!

II. The Cross and the Sword: the Militant Church

Christopher Columbus brought Christianity to Cuba on October 28, 1492. He planted his sword and the standards of the Catholic King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in the sand. He was inspired by what he saw as he wrote in his diary, “... the most beautiful land the human eye has beheld.” He thought he had landed in Japan. As he took possession of all lands in the New World he made two promises to the royals. The indigenous peoples would be converted to the Christianity. All lands and wealth would become possessions of the Catholic royals. The authority of the Church militant became the same for Spain, as the authority of Spain for the Church.

The priests and friars were responsible for the conversion of the Taino people. Little of that occurred. The conquistadors stole the wealth from the Indians and drove them into slave labor. In 1518 a smallpox epidemic wiped out ninety percent of the native population in Cuba. By 1550, 500 survivors remained. Harsh slave labor, massacres, and mass suicides took their toll. Only vestiges of the indigenous culture remain in eastern Cuba today. Taino words are still used: “Canoa,” canoe; “Bohio,” farmhouse; “Cuba,” the island; “Hamaca,” hammock; “Tabaco,” tobacco; “Barbicu,” barbecue, and “Huracan,” hurricane. Tainos cultivated “Yuca,” yucca; “Boniato,” sweet potatoes; “Mahis,” maize, and other crops (Poole).

The mestizo and mulatto races replaced the indigenous people with the blending of Europeans with Indians and Africans, respectively.

Dominican friar Bartolome de las Casas took another path in the treatment of the Indians. Arriving in Hispaniola, he received an "encomienda" a royal title giving him land and Indians. He was converted and called into the priesthood. For the rest of his life, he defended the Indians as human beings, worthy to be converted and deserving heaven.

Catholic Christianity never penetrated the soul of the Cuban people. They were not attracted to the militancy of the Catholic church, with its strict orthodoxy and corruption. The people were preached Christ with threats of hell. Today, most Cubans remain marginalized from the church. They consider themselves Catholic, without practicing it. Future Protestant missionaries would take advantage of this opportunity, with limited success.

The earliest protestant services on the island were held for the British occupying forces briefly holding Guantanamo Bay and the port of Havana in 1741 and 1762.

John Davidson, missionary and abolitionist was the first Methodist to reach Cuba in 1837. His mission was to convert the slaves and preach to them the hope of freedom. He was captured by the Spanish and with the intervention by the British consul was spared execution.

The Ten Years War ended in 1878 with the Treaty of Zanjón. Essentially it was a draw between the Spanish crown and the Cuban freedom fighters, the "Mambises." Disillusioned patriots made their way to Key West, a hotbed of revolutionary activity in exile. There they were exposed to Protestant Christianity. Some were converted. Through Protestantism many exiles equated its teachings with pluralism, liberalism, and the hope for a free Cuba. They rejected the Catholic church as an extension of the oppressive Spanish regime.

### III. 1883 The Founding of the Methodist Church in Cuba

Born in 1856, Rev. Enrique Benito Someillan was the founder of the Methodist mission in Cuba. When he was 13 years old, his father was jailed in a Spanish prison for revolutionary activities. His mother, fearing for her son's life sent him to Key West. A Presbyterian woman introduced him to the new faith. He was offered a scholarship at a Presbyterian college in Tennessee.

In 1873 Rev. Dr. Charles Fulwood was appointed pastor to the Old Stone Methodist Church in Key West. Fulwood founded the Cuban mission. In 1875, the Florida Conference Methodist Episcopal Church South (MECS) voted to support the mission and appointed Rev. J. E. A. Vanduser as the missionary. Someillan received word that his family had arrived from Cuba. He left his college to reunite with them. He became acquainted with Revs. Fulwood and Vanduser and joined the Cuban mission.

Yellow fever devastated Key West in 1876. Rev. Vanduser succumbed to the disease. His dying words were, “No abandone la mision cubana, Don’t abandon the Cuban mission.”

Enrique was ordained an elder in 1878, and become a member of the Florida Conference MECS . He married Sara Reid. They bore six children. A couple of years later, Rev. Someillan felt called to establish a mission in Cuba. In 1883 the Florida Conference of the MECS confirmed his call and appointed him to Havana. Rev. Aurelio Silvera became his co-founder.

Ignoring the prohibitions against Protestant worship by the Spanish authorities, the owner of the Saratoga Hotel in Old Havana, offered the missionaries gratis, a hall for the Methodist meetings.

In 1884 Rev. Someillan was appointed as the Superintendent for the Cuban missions in Tampa Bay, Key West, and Havana. Beginning in 1889, the Board of Missions of MECS voted to fund the mission (Garrido pp. 44-46)..

#### IV. 1898 “Onward Christian Soldiers, Marching as to War”: The Americanization of the Church and Nation in Cuba

At the end of the Civil War, the United States entered into a period of prosperity. America was becoming an industrial and agricultural powerhouse. Most Americans embraced the optimism of the times, aware that this country could do anything it set its mind to. The United States sought to become a world power like Europe, by expanding her influence and territory. The country needed wider markets to sell its goods, and cheap imports to fuel their factories and the demands of its consumers.

Manifest Destiny and Social Darwinism become a part of the American consciousness for some time. The implementation of the Monroe Doctrine justified a new imperialism in Latin America and Cuba specifically. Most Americans believed that their country was exceptionally gifted by God, and called to extend the country’s influence with white Anglo-Saxon culture. The Protestant, Christian God and American power would evangelize the weaker and browner nations. Natural selection ordained that the strong would prevail over the weak. Cuba would be the first adventure.

Matthew McCullough introduces the phrase, “messianic interventionism” to explain America’s unique form of imperialism. In the introduction to his book, “The Cross of War” he writes:

*“... the belief that America can and should intervene altruistically on behalf of other nations. This stance was first embraced by the Spanish-American War of 1898, ...and set the stage for the foreign policy of the next one hundred years.... Christian leaders carefully articulated and defended the notion that*

*America was responsible under God to extend freedom around the world ... by force if necessary."*

The Protestant clergy preached the ideology, rationalizing their support for the new foreign policy.

*"American Christians came to celebrate military intervention as a messianic sacrifice, to trace the hand of God in a victory more painless and complete than anyone had imagined, and to justify the shift in American foreign policy as a divine calling."*

Referring to the Spanish American War, supporters argued that America had no ambitions for territorial expansion, nor to subjugate the people they conquered. Rather, America chose to embark on a "humanitarian" war. It was a Christian, holy war.

*"For R. S. MacArthur of Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, this war's cause was even higher than a war of self-defense. Rather than revenge or military glory, America would fight for peace and justice in Cuba. This cause, he claimed established the war as nothing less than 'a crusade'" (McCullough, pp 23-24).*

And from the *Western Christian Advocate*:

*"... this war... proved that 'the cause of humanity' is the only cause great enough to justify the resort to arms (p. 24, quoted from the Christian Advocate, April 20, 1898).*

Cuban pastors had a different understanding with the events leading up to the War for Cuban Independence in 1895. Methodists and other Protestants believed that victory led by Cuban patriots would open new opportunities for the missions to serve all Cubans by freeing them from Spanish oppression and prohibitions with Protestant Christianity. They believed that they were doing God's work supporting the efforts to free their people.

Threatened with capture by Spanish authorities, Rev. Someillan returned to Key West to continue with the independence movement in exile.

The 1895 War was the fourth conflict in the nineteenth century between Cuban patriots and the Spanish crown. Spain was committed to defeating the rebels once and for all. In 1897 Spanish Governor General Valeriano Weyler forced over 300,000 Cuban peasants into concentration camps. Weyler believed that non-combatants were supporting the rebels. Thousands died in unsanitary conditions. Weyler created the concentration camp as a weapon of war.

The United States entered the war in 1898. Initially the Cuban patriots were hopeful that the Americans would play a supportive role, yet at the end of the conflict, they discovered that the war had changed direction, from a Cuban led conflict to an American victory. The pretext was the explosion and sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine* in the Havana Harbor. The United States declared war on Spain. The War for Cuban Independence became known as the Spanish American War. Secretary of State John Hay referred to “that splendid little war,” as an opportunity for the U.S. to cheaply expand its imperialistic and territorial ambitions.

The first signs of the Americanization of the war was manifested after Spain’s defeat in Santiago de Cuba when the city fell to the Cuban and American forces. General Calixto Garcia’s army was denied the honor of marching in the victory parade. All Cubans were denied to celebrate their victory. After all, this was an American victory. The Americans never asked permission from the Cubans to place an occupying military force on the island. The United States and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898, granting the United States its first empire. No Cubans were present.

The war was over by August, 1898 with the U.S. leaving a military force on the island. While the U.S. military engaged in the recovery of the shattered country, the U.S. State Department chose to lay the ground work for making Cuba a protectorate, rather than an annexation as in Puerto Rico.

In 1901 the U.S. Congress voted to remove the U.S. Army from Cuba. Connecticut Senator Orville Platt introduced his amendment with eight conditions that Cuba must meet to be granted independence. Three were the most onerous.

- 1) The US had the option to intervene in Cuba’s internal affairs whenever its interests, including American private property were threatened;
- 2) All agreements between Cuba and foreign governments had to first be approved by the U.S. Congress;
- 3) Cuba must grant the United States the option to lease or purchase land for the building of a naval base.

Under severe pressure, the Cuban congress voted on the conditions.

“Independence” was granted on May 20, 1902. From then on until 1934, the Platt Amendment was invoked numerous times with military interventions or the threat of interventions. The Platt Amendment was annulled by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

U.S. Military Governor of Cuba, Gen. Leonard Wood wrote to President Theodore Roosevelt on October 28, 1901:

*“There remains little or no real independence for Cuba, under the Platt Amendment. The most sincere Cubans recognize it as such and believe that the only outcome that is done is to seek annexation.”*

(Gomez, pp. 105-130).

U. S. foreign policy became a Christian duty. Louis A. Perez, quotes General Oliver Howard, the “Christian general” in the Latin American Research Review,

*“... ‘We must lift them (Cubans) up by a generous and noble Christian series of efforts,... it is our God-given mission, and the whole Christian world is watching to see if the great American republic is equal to the strain.’”*

Perez summarizes:

*“The U.S. purpose was thus defined early and clearly: to reshape Cuban attitudes, refashion Cuban behaviors, and restructure Cuban institutions in ways that would make Cuban nationality compatible with U.S. sovereignty (Perez)*

## V. Mission Policy Mirrors America’s Policy

Bishop Warren Akin Candler, of the Florida area of the MECS was elected in 1898. Four months after the conclusion of the Spanish American War, he arrived in Havana during Thanksgiving week accompanied by Revs. John James Ransom, Walter Russell Lambuth, presiding elder of the Tampa District, and Rev. Dr. David Carter, missionary to Mexico. Bishop Candler appointed Carter to survey the island to determine if there were opportunities for the establishment of Methodist missions on the island. The Americans met with Rev. Isidoro Barredo pastor of the Havana mission. He had remained in Havana during the war as pastor of the mission. Bishop Candler commended Rev. Barredo and the Havana mission for their faithful ministry. He then preached on the theme, “Why are we in Cuba” (Oxford Handbook)?

By December missionaries replaced the Cuban pastors who became their assistants. For example, George MacDonald was appointed to the Havana mission with Rev. Isidoro Barrero demoted as his assistant.

Rev. Someillan was appointed to Santiago de Cuba. The following year, he requested funds to build a social hall for his growing congregation. He was turned down. Against his wishes, he was appointed for a third year. This was the last straw. He surrendered his credentials and joined the Congregational Church. He never was recognized as the founding pastor of the Havana mission, nor for his ministry as a district superintendent in Cuba, Key West, and Tampa. Rev. Barredo and other pioneers also left in protest (Garrido, pp. 64-65).

Prior to 1898, the Cuba mission was a national church supported by the MECS. After 1898, the Cuban church ceased to be a national church. The Americanization of the began with the arrival of the missionaries.

The 1909 Florida Annual Conference session celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cuban mission. Bishop Candler declared:

*“At this time we celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Methodism in Cuba, though prior to 1898 we had a small congregation in Havana, the results being insignificant that barely they should be considered as an introduction of our Church among the Cuban people”* (Garrido, p. 66, quoting the 1909 MECS Conference Journal).

Fifty year veteran missionary Sterling Augustus Neblett, author of *The First 50 Years of Methodism in Cuba*, refers to the year 1898 as the founding year of the Methodist Church in Cuba, while ignoring the year 1883, as the church’s founding by Cuban nationals.

Bishop Armando Rodriguez defends the founding in 1883 of the Methodist Church in Cuba.

*“Key West and Tampa, Ybor City, were very important places, not only for the revolution of José Martí, but also for the Cuban beginning, of the mission in Cuba. As I told you they were Cuban. Also, they were very close to José Martí and the other leaders of our liberation war, and for us in Cuba this has one tremendous meaning, because the beginning of our church was together with the struggle against Spain and we, the Methodists, we had this great honor and we don’t like to finish, to put out, this great circumstance, and for that reason, we called to celebrate our centennial in 1983.”* (Rodriguez Interviews, 6-5-2008, p. 7).

Bishop Rodriguez reflects on the impact of the arrival of the missionaries.

*“The ideas and plans of the natives who had established the church and who consequently knew well the idiosyncrasy of the Cuban people were ignored. The missionaries arrived in Cuba with their own visions, their tactics and well-intentioned plans, supported by the approval and the money of their boards; but they made the big mistake of ignoring the longing, the fervor, the dreams, and the great ideals of the Cuban pioneers of the gospel, who had the zeal to share with their fellow citizens the message of the liberating power and eternal salvation”* (Rodriguez, Heritage, p. 350)

## VI. Rising Nationalism in the Cuban Church

James Yarenko states that both missionaries and Cubans were in agreement on the goal of “Cubanization,”

*“each had different visions of the process and result. The missionaries felt that the process of indigenization of the church would take more time than the Cubans anticipated.”*

*“By 1909, the disputes between the Cuban pastors and the mission board emerged in a national petition and list of grievances served to the Southern Methodist Board of Missions by its Cuban pastors. The greatest concern in the “Letter of the Cuban Preachers to the Secretary of the Board of Missions” was the need for a greater Cuban role in administration (Yarenko, pp. 54-55.)*

The letter was addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church South W. R. Lambuth.

*“Several of the Cuban Ministers were thinking of locating (surrendering their credentials) in view of the fact that the salary which the church had assigned to them was not sufficient to meet their necessities properly.” “We... must complain of the manner in which the administrative affairs of the Church have been carried on here... The ground of the complaints which we are presenting to you, have been developing for the last two or three years, ...is now no longer possible to endure” (Emory University Archives).*

In response to the letter, Rev. E. E. Clements, serving in Matanzas, sent a report of the letter to Bishop Candler, October 4, 1909. Clements listed reasons why the Board could not comply with the Cuban pastor’s demands.

- 1, *The present salary scale sets a high and difficult standard for the self-supporting the church in the future.*
2. *The present scale puts our native ministry in better condition than our (US) membership.*
3. *... The present scale of the Cuban ministry is in as good a shape as the average ministry at home... Yet the ministry at home continues to sacrifice, and collect money to help the Cubans preach the gospel to their own people. I believe that our native brethren really felt the great need of their own people they would gladly accept and uncomplainingly the help we are giving (Emory University Archives).*

The Cuban Ministers Committee accused some missionaries for demeaning and paternalizing them. For example, E. E. Clements was quoted from the Matanzas Church pulpit, “that the Cuban Ministers are mercenaries who worked for money and not to save souls. The Cuban Ministers’ Committee responded, “We beg of the Board and of Mr. Clements the proof of any such statement.”

## VII. The Torch is Slowly Passed to the National Church

The first twenty years, the Methodist Mission in Cuba were successful with the building of infrastructure and moderate with membership growth. Station churches were built in every province including schools, community centers, and health clinics. Non-Methodists were welcome to receive their services, however few were converted to Methodist Christianity.



Church membership slowly rose from 4,852 in 1918 to 6,428 in the late 1930's at. By 1940 the membership was 5,687 members with 29 congregations. By the end of World War II there were 5,432 members. At the eve of the revolution in 1958, membership was near 10,000 members (Garrido, p. 123).

The union of three U. S. Methodist denominations in 1939 birthed the Methodist Church. The Methodist Church in Cuba's relationship with Board of Missions of the MECS shifted to the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, with a more global theology towards missions.

[Bishop Rodriguez](#) describes the legacy left by missionaries, in spite of the conflicts during the early years. With the arrival of the Cuban revolution in 1959, The Cuban conference expressed appreciation for their missionary sisters and brothers and the solid foundation they had left for the future of the Cuban church.

*"The missionaries were people who came in answer to a vocation and to the call of God.... They brought an ambitious plan and vision for the extension of the church. Through them the church received more than ninety-five per cent of the means to buy land, build chapels, houses, schools, etc. The mission boards, who were the legal owners of all that property, have transferred everything to the Cuban church, a praiseworthy action" (Rodriguez, Heritage p. 350).*

Bishop Rodriguez remembers fondly his relationship with missionary, Garfield Evans:

*"... Garfield Evans, "was a very nice and very active missionary in the Holguín area. He founded the Elena Clinic in Holguín.... [I]t helped the rural people... [The clinic] provided not only medical assistance but also free medicine.... But, more than that, he founded and built about ten more chapels in the rural area... He was a very important leader in our church in Oriente (Rodriquez Interviews, 04-22-2008, p. 5).*

Bishop Rodriguez credits Dr. Neblett for a change of heart from earlier years. He led the formation of the Cuban Council of Churches and the Evangelical Theological Seminary. "These two institutions did more to place Cubans in positions of leadership in the Cuban church" (Rodriquez conversation).

[John Branscomb](#) was elected bishop to the Florida and Cuba conferences in 1953. He was the first Florida leader to bring Cuban and Florida Methodists closer together by fostering Preaching Caravans to Cuba with lay evangelist Harry Denman and hundreds of Florida pastors. Cuban lay leader, Antonio Lopez, member of the San Pablo church in Camaguey, sculpted busts of John Wesley and gave them to the preachers. Through personal contacts, relationships between Floridians and Cubans grew into life long friendships, thus strengthening the bonds between the conferences. The Caravans' name was reborn in 1997, with the church to church

partnerships between Cubans and Floridians through the Methodists United in Prayer (Cuba-Florida Covenant).

#### VIII. The New Missionaries

##### A. Cuban Leaders Partners with Missionaries

By the late 1940's and 50's missionaries established a new relationship with the Cuban church. Pastors and lay leaders were regarded as partners in ministry. My father, Victor Rankin, explained this many years ago. "In the late 40's and into the 50's, Methodist missionary candidates were trained at Scarritt College, Nashville Tennessee. We were 'to work ourselves out of a job.' The goal was to train Cubans, while eliminating dependency, promoting financial independence, and self-sufficiency." Men and women were commissioned as missionaries, pastors, and lay leaders to their own people (Rankin).

##### B. Women Missionaries

Single women missionaries had a profound impact on the development of Cuban leaders. They founded community centers, schools, clinics, and chapels. They worked mostly in rural areas.

They were multi-taskers, able to administer in a variety of ministries, serving as nurses, chaplains, teachers, and mechanics. Their influence among young men and women was profound, who would go on to be pastors and professionals.

Following are three examples among many:

**Rev. Eulalia Cook Gonzalez**, was the first woman ordained elder from the South Carolina conference. She served in Baguanos in eastern Cuba. The locals called her, "la mujer loca" that crazy woman, riding horseback through town, wearing trousers. Her ashes are buried in front of the church, with the approval of the local communist central committee (Rankin, Obituary).

Tampa born **Sara Fernandez** came to the backwater village of Omaja, north of Holguin in Oriente province. There was no drinking water, school, clinic, nor jobs, and much poverty. Many of her students went on to high school and university. Rev. Aldo Martin, and his sister Maria Martin Toledo were among Miss Fernandez's students (Martin).

**Leora Shanks** was born in Dallas, Texas. She arrived in the 1940's and served on a sugar plantation in Santa Rosa, Matanzas province for 20 years. One of her students, Rev. Saul Espino served pastorates in Cuba and is a member of the Florida Annual Conference and retired chaplain in the U. S. Army (Espino).

### C. Missionary couples from 1950-1960: A Few Examples

Following are the few among the many missionaries who served in solidarity with their Cuban colleagues.

The Agricultural School was established in 1945 near Preston, Oriente province. It became a successful experiment in higher education, teaching students in self-sustaining skills in agriculture, engineering, and ministry. Graduates served in marginal, rural areas across the island.

Lay missionaries **Dr. Edgar and Marjorie Nesman** arrived in 1950. Dr. Nesman recalls in his unpublished memoirs the strategy for forming church leaders:

*“There were a number of mission Sunday Schools in the villages... conducted by our students... A small school house was built... and served as a primary school for the ...children and... for Sunday School and church services... The Sunday School was also part of the student mission outreach training” (Nesman).*

**Lloyd and Edith Knox** served for a short time in the shadow of the revolution. They opened a clinic administered by Edith at their church near Havana. They reluctantly left Cuba in 1960 to serve in Buenos Aires, Argentina (Rankin).

**Morrell and Lois Robinson**, served as pastor and nurse at the Mayari Church, near the Agricultural School. Morrell pastored in mountain chapels on horseback, while Lois operated a health clinic (Robinson).

**Carl and Bette Shafer** served as pastor, teacher, and seminary professor. They arrived in 1953 and served at the University Methodist Church in Havana. They moved to Santiago de las Vegas and planted five new congregations and Colegio Wesley (Shafer).

**John and Hazel Stroud**, pastor and teacher, were the developers of the rural ministry in Cuba. They left communist China, moved to Cuba and established chapels, schools, and clinics in the Sierra Maestra and Escambray mountains (Rankin).

### XIX. Emerging National Leadership

In 1961 Bishop James W. Henley appointed **Rev. Angel Fuster** as the Administrative Assistant to the Cuban conference. In effect Rev. Fuster acted as the Cuban bishop. His leadership was a key factor towards the church's autonomy in 1968. His tragic death in 1967 prompted the General Conference of the Methodist Church in Cuba to elect posthumously Rev. Fuster as the first bishop of the autonomous church (Chaviano).

**Hideliza Amores Lopez de la Fe** was born in Holguin in 1937 and nurtured in the church. She attended Methodist schools in Santiago de Cuba and Camaguey. She was licensed to preach in 1957, ordained deacon in 1962, and an elder in 1965. Rev. Amores served in a number of pastoral appointments as well as a district superintendent. Rev. Amores continued to serve churches in the Florida Conference until her retirement (de la Fe).

**Luis Diaz de Arce** received his preacher's license in 1939 and was ordained an elder in 1945. He devoted his ministry to Christian education. He served as executive director of Christian Education for the Cuban conference while teaching at the Union Theological Seminary in Matanzas. Rev. Diaz de Arce edited the *Evangelista Cubano*, (the Cuban Evangelist) the official publication of the Cuban conference and *La Revista Trimestral* (The Trimester Magazine), an adult Sunday school quarterly (Diaz de Arce).

### Gerardo and Teresa Martinez

The Cuban Revolution began on January 1, 1959. By 1961 all the missionaries were forced to leave the island. Most of the ordained Cuban pastors suit as well as most church members. The greatest challenges were just beginning and yet, few could predict the rise of the national church.

### X. Epilogue

In 1998 I took my 80 year old mother, Katherine Rankin, to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the missionaries. Young pastors, and lay leaders shared their love and appreciation to the veterans for their ministry with the Cuban people. They told them, that the autonomous Methodist Church is thriving because of the foundation laid by the missionaries. It is because of this legacy that the church survived during the dark years and has come out even stronger as a national church. My mother returned home filled with memories, and was profoundly satisfied that her labor and those of her late husband, Victor, were not in vain.

Jose Marti, Apostle of Cuba and poet laureate in the 1889 children's book *The Golden Age* wrote:

*"Para los niños trabajamos, porque los niños son los que saben querer, porque los niños son la esperanza del mundo."*

*"Work for children because children are the ones who know what is needed, because children are the hope of the world."*

And so it is for the autonomous Methodist Church in Cuba.

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