

Cuba was one of the last of Spain's colonies to be established in the New World. Protestants have been active in Cuba from at least 1741. Cuba won its Independence from Spain in 1898. Castro's Revolution in 1959 brought Communism to power. After decades of exporting Revolution throughout Latin America and Africa, Cuba remains one of the last bastions of Cold War Communism.

Worldviews in Conflict

In 1976, the Constitution of Cuba added a clause, making the country officially an Atheistic state, where it was *"punishable by law to oppose one's Faith or religious belief to the Revolution."* Strict control of all church activities and repression of religious expression is enforced as the Communist Party of Cuba strives to ensure that Cuba remains a secular state. Churches are perceived as a threat to the secular and atheistic regime. In 1998, Christmas was once again recognised as a national holiday.

Churches Under Pressure

The Cuban Council of Churches (CCC) is an umbrella body sanctioned by the regime. The CCC endorses the Revolutionary ideals of the regime, including Liberation Theology. Officially, Cuba has a population of 11 million. 56% would identify themselves as Christians. 25% as non-religious. Approximately 10% of the population is Evangelical, representing over a million people. There are an estimated 16,500 congregations in Cuba, of which over 808 are Roman Catholic, 4,500 Assemblies of God, 2,300 Baptist Convention of East Cuba and another 1,118 congregations of the Baptist Convention of West Cuba. Evangelical churches have been undermined by waves of immigration to the USA with more Christian Cubans living outside the country, than within it. The majority of Cuban Protestants do not belong to the ecumenical Cuban Council of Churches.

Faith Through the Fire

Opposition and hostility towards the Christian Church has refined, purged and purified it, causing believers to depend radically upon God, strengthening their prayer life and encouraging unity in the Body of Christ. Although Christian resources are hard to come by for churches not aligned with the state, Evangelicals and Charismatics have become increasingly innovative and bold and have continued to multiply at impressive rates. The Evangelical church in Cuba is dynamic and growing fast. Although 48% of the population of Cuba would claim to be Roman Catholic, less than 10% frequent Mass.

The House Church Movement

The Communist government of Cuba tries to strangle Christian growth, by making it nearly impossible to build new churches. The House Church movement has exploded, but is frequently harassed, raided and the focus of intense government persecution. The attempted infiltration of informers into churches has resulted in more stringent membership and baptism criteria, resulting in more committed and mature members. However, there is also a lot of distrust and suspicion as almost any new member could be an infiltrator, or informer, of the state.

Restricted Access Country

Missions are heavily restricted to occasional visits from outside the country. Many foreign

Missions and organisations have been blacklisted by the state. The need for Bibles remains urgent. The need for state appointed Council of Churches approval for Bible translations limits the options and prevents good translations from being available in Cuba.

Restrictions on Print and Radio Ministry

Christian literature is in extremely short supply. Permission for local printing is difficult to obtain. Local Christian radio broadcasting is not permitted in Cuba. Christian broadcasts from outside the country are limited to shortwave. However shortwave radios are illegal in Cuba.

The Battle for the Mind

Approximately half a million Christians have been imprisoned for ideological reasons and millions more have fled the country. With the need for creativity in Evangelism, many Protestant churches use musical and cultural programmes. At the time of the Revolution, the once thriving Protestant schools were closed down so that all children could receive compulsory atheistic education/indoctrination.

Hunger for Reality

There is a great hunger for God and many have described the rapid growth of Evangelical Protestants in Cuba as a decades-long Revival.

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have Faith. But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one." 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3

Dr. Peter Hammond

Frontline Fellowship
P.O. Box 74 Newlands 7725
Cape Town South Africa
Tel: 021-689-4480
Email: mission@frontline.org.za
Website: www.frontline.org.za

See also:

[*Cuba, Castro and Communism*](#)
[*Communist Liberation - Myth and Reality*](#)
[*Liberation Theology*](#)
[*Glamourising a Mass Murderer*](#)
[*The Heart and Soul of Karl Marx*](#)
[*The Greatest Killer*](#)