

NEW HOPES AND REALITIES IN CUBAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS: A “NUEVO MOMENTO”

A Social Witness Policy Statement Approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

In fulfillment of the assignment of the 221st General Assembly (2014), in cooperation with the Cuba Partners Network, and after consultation with representatives of La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (The Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

1. Approve the following affirmation and receive the study paper and discussion questions (as found in the *Rationale* section):

Affirmation of Cuban and U.S. Presbyterian Mission Achievements and Goals for the Future

The United States and Cuba are poised to end one of the last chapters of the Cold War and to reestablish full official governmental and economic relations. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms that direction and looks forward to a free and open relationship between our peoples and churches. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) rejoices at the prospect of deepening our communion with La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC). We earnestly look to our sister church for guidance in how to proceed, not only for our mutual upbuilding in our shared faith in Jesus Christ, but for the blessing and wisdom of our peoples.

As this long-hoped-for process gains momentum and acceptance, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms that the Cuban Revolution did not break all ties across those Florida straits. We honor those who maintained connections and kept faith over the fifty-seven years since that revolution. Cubans and Cuban Americans have negotiated a complex relationship that contains within it a longer history of colonization and settlement, cultural exchange and missionary endeavor, economic development and economic exploitation. The church recognizes those who were determined to remain Presbyterian in Cuba after 1959 and those who created and shared in more than eighty mission partnerships between Cuban and U.S. synods, presbyteries, seminaries, and congregations. This has not simply been a form of “citizen diplomacy.” This has been a joint labor of love that has sought to embody God’s peace across daunting ideological lines.

At the same time, the church presents this report as a call for a better and fairer relationship than our nations have had both before and after Cuba’s 1959 revolution. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to support the self-determination and initiative of the Cuban people, a cause for which they have struggled for more than two centuries. Cuba has represented resistance to the hegemony of the United States in this hemisphere, and thus has played a symbolic role in regional movements for greater social and economic equality, as its social progress—though not its form of government—has been emulated. Cuba was also affected by its positioning within the bipolar competition of the Cold War. Now oligarchic rule in many Latin American nations has been transformed, and indigenous populations have begun to receive better treatment. In this “Momento Nuevo,” we hope that a transformed U.S.-Cuban relationship can help improve relations between peoples, governments, and cultures throughout Latin America. The General Assembly called for this report in June of 2014 in hopes of hastening the

reconciliation of our peoples and churches, six months before the December 17, 2014, joint announcement of reopening diplomatic relations.

While there is much to celebrate, ensuring a sustainable future will require much practical and painstaking work of reconciliation. The problems of racism, inequality, and poverty persist in both our nations, stunting hope and distorting values, though in different ways. We are particularly encouraged at the role taken at the highest level of the Roman Catholic Church's leadership in helping break a long impasse; our prayer is for the self-determination of the Cuban people to be respected among all the nations of the world. Just as we hope for better understanding of the sacrifices and achievements made during the years of separation, we know some real wounds remain to be healed. As citizens of the larger country, we bear the greater responsibility for the impact of the embargo and economic damage caused from outside (to speak of moral, not specific legal responsibilities). We acknowledge the suffering of split families and the wounds of migration between those who left Cuba for the U.S. and other countries and those who chose to or had to stay.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has sought to understand and respond to events since its 1969 statement, *Illusion and Reality in Inter-American Relations*. The church has analyzed and addressed the revolution, the Bay of Pigs attempted invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the tensions of proxy wars in Southern Africa, the real and imagined influence of Cuba on other countries, and the political decisions favoring Cuban immigration. While opposing all limitations on human rights in Cuba, the General Assembly has repeatedly called for an end to the economic embargo and other sanctions that have divided families and limited development without bringing about significant political change. The General Assembly and the World Mission area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency have also supported the development of a dedicated and creative mission network, The Cuba Partners Network. It has fostered more than eighty partnerships, benefitting the church as a whole and this study in particular.

Since that initial study in 1969, seeking to understand the causes and hopes of the Cuban Revolution as part of building more constructive relationships with all of Latin America, there have been both tragic wars and considerable gains for greater numbers of citizens. We believe that the example of partnership between La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) and the PC(USA) played a role in the struggles for justice across the hemisphere, joining ecumenically with other churches in opposing interventions and seeking to reduce hostility. Moving forward, improved U.S.-Cuba relations should continue to contribute to a wider horizon of peace and mutual respect among nations. The assembly states its appreciation for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy's ability to meet with Cuban government representatives and officials of the State Department and National Security Council of the United States.

The study paper that supports these recommendations provides data and summary analysis on these topics: economic change and human values, social and racial concerns, Cuban American and Cuban communities, the religious environment, the natural environment, political dynamics, military and human security factors (with the U.S. and other nations in the region).

This report affirms Cuba's gains in some economic and social areas, such as in education and medical care, without ignoring limitations on civil and other rights. Our recommendations, both to governmental

policymakers in the United States and nongovernmental organizations, including religious bodies, focus on ways to improve the process of transition. We do not want to repeat the distorted development, cultural and military imperialism, and internal restrictiveness of the past.

2. Approve the following recommendations:

a. For the Church:

(1) Celebrate and strengthen the ecclesial relationship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) as sister churches, highlighting our shared history, faith tradition, and participation in ecumenical bodies, such as the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches. Although the relationship between our two churches is unique in some ways, the IPRC and the PC(USA) engage in common ministry and mission with and through other ecumenical partners and organizations. We recognize and support the many contributions of the IPRC to the church universal through its leadership and witness over the years in ecumenical bodies.

(2) Celebrate and strengthen our partnership with the IPRC (including the partner congregations, presbyteries, and the many relationships and projects that have united members of our churches) with special attention to incarnating the principles and commitments of mutuality and interdependence in the discipline of mission partnership and to promoting and supporting the priorities of the IPRC as a church that God has called and planted in Cuban soil.

(3) Update our partnership agreement between the PC(USA) and IPRC in light of new hopes and realities as we assess together new opportunities for mutual mission. In this partnership, the PC(USA) normally addresses the U.S. government and the IPRC addresses the Cuban government.

(4) Direct the Office of the General Assembly to see that this report is posted in easily downloadable form, printed in limited quantity, and shared with church partners, ecumenical bodies, and public officials.

b. In Support of Changes in Cuban Church Life:

Support the IPRC's efforts to receive legal recognition as a church through changes in Cuban law concerning religious bodies, consistent with their exercise of religious liberty¹, and with control over the disposition or improvement of church properties. Recognizing the possibility of more competition for members if foreign capital is allowed to pour without restraint into some kinds of religious groups, we affirm the importance for congregations that are part of historically recognized churches to continue to receive contributions to their mission from overseas partners. We acknowledge that sometimes when hopes outrun realities people may seek new religions promising almost magic change and prosperity; let us learn also from the mistakes and successes of churches in countries that have gone through major social transitions.

c. For Governmental and NGO Engagement:

Support church, civil, and governmental groups working alongside the Cuban government to protect undeveloped areas and the Cuban environment from ill-considered mining, housing, or industrial uses, to plan responsible tourism that enhances biodiversity, and to cooperate with international efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, preserve Caribbean ecology, etc. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will seek to support environmental and social responsibility in the visits of its partner congregations and in the recreational travel of families and individuals.

d. For international Financial Mechanisms and Corresponding National Policies:

(1) Support the invention or retention of as many culturally appropriate and communitarian solutions as are feasible to maintain the social achievements of Cuba, in health, education, social solidarity, and public services, while at the same time assessing, modifying, and implementing market mechanisms that can improve investment, productivity, and incentives in economic life. An important goal is to allow for orderly exposure to globalization and new communications, banking, and currency practices without price shocks and housing crises, although the economic opening and more remittances are already increasing inequality. Note: the accompanying study carefully documents the economic stress already present in Cuban life, and thus supports the cautious opening process recommended by our church partners.

(2) On the key issue of requests to reclaim private property abandoned or lost during the revolution, the assembly affirms the need to address those claims in light of subsequent history, without exploiting the inequality of negotiating power between our countries, and recommends that other dimensions of the larger reconciliation process should proceed in the meantime.²

(3) To support Cuba in overcoming the lingering economic effects of the embargo and of its past internal policies, we advocate for the U.S. government to offer mutually agreed-upon economic development assistance and to end its (now legally mandated) opposition to Cuba's membership in the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank.

e. For Reducing Military Hostility and Restoring International Law:

(1) Commend the U.S. government and the Cuban government for reinstating their embassies in the two countries and initiating other diplomatic engagements, and encourage lawmakers of all persuasions to support this constructive direction. We note with appreciation the openness in both governments to the role of the Papacy and welcome further ecumenical cooperation. We affirm the appropriate removal of the Cuban government from the list of state sponsors of terror (May 2015) and the expansion of civil liberties in Cuba, both encouraged by past General Assemblies.³

(2) End policies of isolation and the threat of regime change. This would include the embargo or "el Bloqueo," the impedimentary acts, and pressures on other nations to exclude or constrict opportunities for Cubans. Surveillance overflights and other intrusion into Cuban sovereignty should have judicial review and public accountability and disclosure. The United States should support regional relationships that normalize relations and develop a common security model against smuggling, trafficking, infectious diseases, and any credible threats of terrorism. Radio Marti and other publicly funded propaganda and/or destabilization efforts, and all public monies going to private or nonprofit groups sponsoring such efforts,

should be ended. The State Department should continue its human rights and religious liberty reporting on Cuba, consistent with its general practice.

(3) Return Guantanamo to the Cuban nation. The prisons on Guantanamo set up under the second Bush administration to avoid provisions of due process guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, remain an affront to human rights everywhere and damage the reputation of the United States. We remember that this military base imprisoned Haitians in the past. It also has surveillance facilities to monitor the lives of Cubans and others. As was formerly the case in Panama, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and other former colonies, the unwanted presence of military and other foreign-controlled bases constitutes a limited occupation of Cuba and should be ended.⁴

(4) Normalize immigration policies: The Cuban Adjustment Act, the Medical Doctor Parole Program, and other preferential measures for Cuban immigrants to the U.S.A. are now out-of-date as Cuba changes. To the extent that these programs were meant to weaken the Cuban government by taking in human capital, their purpose is no longer served, and they are counterproductive to building positive relationships between our peoples. Such steps will also improve relations with other nations by ending double-standards for Cubans.

(5) In the spirit of a doxology, the General Assembly promises on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to pray for our sister and partner church, the IPRC, and requests prayers in return, so that we both may minister and witness to God's domination-free reign.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral:

2014 Referral: Item 11-06. Refer Back to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Cuba Partners Network to Rework This Important Concept (and Future Funding Sources) in Light of the PC(USA)'s and This Assembly's Commitment to Deepening Our Relationship by Careful Analysis of the Ongoing Complex Situation in Cuba (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 66, 832–35).

New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A Nuevo Momento

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Christians, one of our fundamental concerns must always be for peace and reconciliation. In the case of Cuban-U.S. relations, this means understanding the impact of economic and other sanctions imposed on Cuba in response to its revolution, and the ways U.S. foreign policy throughout the Caribbean reflected a long cold-war strategy of isolation and impoverishment. Cuba's own policies were affected by its relationship with the then-Soviet Union in a bipolar ideological competition with the "West." Recent scholarship continues to reveal ways in which the U.S. government has sought to undermine or overthrow the Cuban government. So the current welcome moment and its new, different approach through licensed travel, scripted dialogue, and incremental diplomacy stands in real tension with the "regime change" that continues to be the official policy of the U.S. government.⁵ But Cuba cannot be reduced to its government, and nor should the influence of that government be reduced to a caricature.

The Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba (IPRC), the Cuba Partners Mission Network, and PC(USA)'s World Mission ministry area have been invaluable for understanding the spiritual and cultural impacts of Cuban governance on the church and society generally. Broadly speaking, at the cost of some civic freedoms, Cuba made very considerable gains in social and economic rights, largely equalizing and making universal the provision of medical care, education, housing, nutrition, and other safety-net components. Cuba attained rankings in many categories of social welfare comparable to developed European and Asian nations, and has maintained many of these achievements since, despite the end of Russian oil subsidies subsequent to 1989 and a "Special Period in Time of Peace" of austerity, depression, and "out-migration" that followed. Perhaps ironically, the aging trends for the Cuban population (discussed below) are similar to some of those developed nations, though domestic policies and economic weaknesses contribute to making longevity more problematic for society.

Cuba has also played a critical role in the relation between the U.S. and Latin America and the Caribbean. For example, U.S. foreign policy has been critical of the Venezuelan government since the election of the late Hugo Chavez for providing oil to Cuba at reduced prices. Added to other exclusions and pressures described in the body of this report, this opposition to a pro-Cuba government reinforces the perception in much of Latin America that the United States presumes a continuing right to influence other nations in its sphere of influence. While it is an equally common assessment that the embargo and other U.S. pressures have strengthened the Castro-led government, providing a constant excuse for austerity and surveillance, Cuba's nationalism and social commitments long antedate the 1959–1961 revolution, going back to Jose Marti and struggles against Spanish colonial rule. This report looks at some of those enduring Cuban values and aspirations, including the desire not to have its society, economy, and environment reshaped—again—by or for the benefit of outside interests.

This report also looks at less well-known aspects of Cuban life: the movement from an atheistic state to a secular one, permitting increasing amounts of religious liberty; the scope of economic liberalization and increasing trade and tourism; the emergence of some racial and social inequality as outside remittances and investment reenter; the generational transition in attitudes among the two million Cuban Americans, no longer wedded to efforts to punish a regime identified with the Castro brothers; and transformations in that regime. The Cuban military is not given in-depth treatment here, partly due to limited information, but largely due to its primarily defensive capacity ("war of the people") since the end of the major Soviet subsidies (during the 1970s and 1980s).⁶

The Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba was begun by Cuban patriots in the 1890s, but became part of U.S. Presbyterianism for much of the 20th century. After the revolution and failed Bay of Pigs invasion, only 30 percent of Cuban Presbyterian pastors remained, among other reductions in members and resources. The IPRC chose to become an independent church, but at the same time a faithful partnership began with sister U.S. congregations and presbyteries, despite the embargo. The church suffered under official antireligious policies that have lessened since 1991. With the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, all religious bodies continue to lack standing except as associations that are part of civil society. The testimony of our partnerships is of a brave and determined church that remains committed to both evangelism and social justice in its society.

Key recommendations are: to celebrate the life of the La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba and maintain its fruitful partnerships with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); to support the IPRC's legal standing as a Christian church among other religious bodies; to honor the social achievements and democratic values of Cuba, while encouraging full civil liberties; to support the normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations within a productive Caribbean community of nations, necessarily ending the embargo; to affirm steps already taken in removing barriers and hostility, while calling for an end to immigration preferences that encourage emigration, particularly of physicians; and to renew the call to return Guantanamo Bay naval station, closing its infamous prison and ending its unconstitutional violations of human rights. Many of these are not matters for "quid pro quo negotiation" as they are unilateral laws or practices of the U.S., with no commensurate measures on the part of Cuba. Looking forward, the

church seeks to learn from and participate with our Cuban partner church in social and environmental mission and witness that seek the common good of their country and ours.

A. *Introduction*

In the spring and summer of 2015, a joint committee comprised of members of the Cuba Partners Network (CPN), the Advisory Committee of Social Witness Policy (ASCWP), Presbyterian World Mission, and the La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) undertook the task of updating the Presbyterian policy on Cuba for consideration by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Assembling as “partners” in Havana and Matanzas, Cuba, and in Washington, D.C., to hear from experts representing both governments and church organizations, advocacy groups, ecumenical partners, social educators, and other activists, the committee’s task was to gain an understanding of the current economic and social reality in Cuba and make recommendations that build on PC(USA)’s long and strong relationship with the Cuban church. Along with the public policy dimension, this report and its recommendations also reflect on mission strategies for our two churches, as a contribution to the work of Presbyterian World Mission ministries in the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The assembly’s assignment came in the form of a referral to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Cuba Partners Mission Network “to rework this important concept (and future funding sources) in light of the PC(USA)’s and this assembly’s commitment to deepening our relationship by careful analysis of the ongoing complex situation in Cuba” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 67, 832). The concept referred to was that of a consultation in both countries proposed in an overture from the Presbytery of Santa Fe (Item 11-06). The funding question was answered by the generosity of the Cuba Partners Mission Network in raising funds,⁷ and all ACSWP members participating also donated personally. More will be said on the assignment below, but it is important to note that the assembly approved two other measures designed to improve U.S.-Cuba relations: removal of Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (see Item 11-03, *Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 66, 826), and lifting of the travel ban (Item 11-05, *Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 66, 830).

That the joint committee’s task could not have been more timely is an understatement. In December of 2014, during early stages of the joint committee’s work, the Obama administration introduced a set of reforms that included the reestablishment of diplomatic ties with Cuba, expansion of travel under general licenses, and a promise to review Cuba’s designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. (Cuba was officially removed from the list on May 28, 2015.)⁸ In initiating this reopening process, President Obama gave credit to Pope Francis, the Vatican’s first pope of Latin American (Argentinian) origin, for his influence as encourager of a “new moment” and time for reconciliation.

The announcement was also well received in Cuba by our Cuban church partners, la Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada de Cuba (IPRC). On December 17, 2014, the IPRC officers released a historic “declaration” recognizing the necessity to put to rest “the hostility of more than half a century” between the two nations. Welcoming President Obama’s announcement, the IPRC statement emphasized years of serving as “bridges for meetings” and exchanges between Cuban and U.S. churches consistent with the church’s historic mission to “struggle for peace and justice” while equally reminding us of the “harsh economic and trade measures” that the United States has imposed on the Cuban people (Declaration of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba, December 17, 2014).

Since then, the U.S. Congress has revisited the economic and trade measures against Cuba—the fifty-one-year old *bloqueo* (embargo)—and bipartisan efforts have sought to reduce the sanctions (see discussion below). National media, reflecting the general sentiment in the North American public, have also weighed in on the debate, best exemplified by the *New York Times* calling the “web of laws and regulations” as “frozen in time,” ultimately surmounting to a “failed attempt” of “coercive means” toward political change.⁹ Then on July 20th, 2015, the

Cuban flag went up in Washington, D.C. for the first time in fifty-four years. Members of the Cuban guard raised the Cuban flag at the historic Washington, D.C., Cuban Interests Section with onlookers shouting, “Cuba Si! Embargo No!” This was followed by the former Cuban Interests Section raising the U.S. flag in Havana on August 13, 2015. These acts signified the openings of both embassies and the day-to-day practicalities of diplomatic relations.¹⁰

To reiterate, many of these “incremental” changes have long been recommendations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), representative of years of energy, resources, and work by faithful partners here and in Cuba (see Statements in Appendix). Undoubtedly, President Obama has taken a monumental first step towards “normalization” of relations between the two countries, but as outlined in the following pages, we remain faithfully optimistic but also critically cautious, given myriad potential consequences for Cuba and the United States. Historically, relations between the two countries have never been “normal,” neither during the prerevolutionary years (pre-1959) nor during the Cold War.

Prior to the revolution, Cuba’s resources had long been exploited by the United States, represented by U.S. supported, often violent and oppressive puppet regimes whose main purpose was to advance interests of agribusinesses at the cost of economic and political livelihoods of resident Cubans.¹¹ The revolution, largely a movement to uproot the “dependency models” from Cuba and other “banana republics,” would occupy much of the western hemisphere during the late 19th and through the 20th century, and would be met with great resistance by the United States. This resistance is best exemplified by the array of Cold War sanctions that compose the now fifty-three-year-old embargo as well as government-level support for many of the revolution’s most vociferous opponents in the Cuban exilic community.¹²

Much has changed since then, with a more politically diverse Cuban American community largely comprised of “transnational immigrants” who view migration as part of a “family project” and support reconciliation between the two countries, along with overwhelming support for diplomacy by U.S. citizens in general.¹³ But resistance by a handful of powerful members of Congress remains, and “change,” as we learned through our Cuban partners, isn’t always good, with potential negative ramifications if not fomented in ways that respects the environmental, political, economic, cultural, and religious autonomy of the Cuban people. This report, then, examines the political and economic changes occurring in Cuba and the region, and looks at ways the church should both adapt to and seek to affect those changes. It was produced with the input of numerous voices, above all that of the IPRC, though it is not a joint report and they are not responsible for any recommendations.

B. *Sisters and Brothers in an Enduring Relationship: The Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

This section examines the history of the IPRC in Cuba, with an eye on relations with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and current pastoral and mission challenges.

1. *The Early Years*

Protestantism was introduced in Cuba, not by U.S. missionaries, but by Cuban patriots who had spent time in the U.S. in the 1870s and 1880s as they worked for independence. One of these was Evaristo Collazo, who, with his wife Magdalena, started a school and worship services in their home in the 1880s. In early 1890, he wrote to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) asking them to send someone to see what he was doing and determine if it would merit some support.

The PCUS immediately sent the Reverend Anthony Graybill. Before he returned to Mexico, he held preaching services in Havana, baptized some forty adults who elected two men to form a session, ordained those two as elders, “organized” a Presbyterian church, and finally, by his own hand, ordained Collazo to the ministry and installed him as pastor of the new congregation. He also had visited Santa Clara, the home of Magdalena, and left a group of converts there as well.

These events founded the Cuban Presbyterian Church institutionally and began the relationship with the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Graybill and others visited the mission on several occasions in the next few years, strengthening the work in Havana and bringing more formal organization in Santa Clara and surrounding towns.

When José Martí, Maximo Gómez and others initiated the Third War for Cuban Independence in 1895, Cuban patriot Evaristo Collazo enlisted. In the chaotic and repressive climate during the next few years and without indigenous leadership, the nascent congregations melted away.

After the U.S. took ownership of the war in 1898 when it was almost over, changed its name to the Spanish-American war, and occupied Cuba, missionaries of both the PCUS and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) soon went to Cuba.¹⁴ Missionaries dominated the work to the extent that the Presbytery of Cuba celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1950, counting from the arrival of the missionaries rather than the work of Collazo. In fact, there was a strong sentiment in the U.S., among the churches as well as the nation, that Cuba should be annexed by the U.S., a vision that dates back to the Founding Fathers! The PCUSA actually assigned oversight of its work in Cuba to the Board of National Missions.

The PCUSA missionaries connected with Evaristo Collazo, who had survived the conflict, and began to organize churches and schools. Scarcely five years after the first resident missionaries arrived, the relationship to the PCUSA was profoundly altered. The Presbytery of Havana was organized in 1904 with seven congregations and five ministers. It was assigned by the General Assembly to the Synod of New Jersey and remained such until the Cuban church became autonomous. in 1967. From mission field to an organic part of the PCUSA, sending commissioners to the General Assembly! Though still dependent on the support of the Board of National Missions, the Cuban Presbyterians controlled many aspects of their work, the preparation of their leadership, and ordained their ministers.

The PCUS centered their work around Santa Clara and in Cárdenas, where the oldest continuing congregation in Cuban Presbyterianism was organized in 1900. In that same year, Robert Wharton started the school that grew into the famous and influential Colegio la Progresiva. A number of congregations and schools were established in the towns around Santa Clara, but the PCUS did not constitute a Cuban presbytery until 1914, and even after that “The Mission” remained intact with authority over much of the work.

A spirit of ecumenism and comity dominated the U.S. Protestant mission enterprise in the early 1900s. In 1909, the Congregational Church turned its Cuba mission over to the PCUSA, four ministers and five congregations, including San Antonio de los Baños and Guanabacoa. In 1918, the Disciples of Christ also ended their work in Cuba, and a pastor and two churches, Matanzas Central for one, became part of the Presbytery of Havana. The most consequential addition came also in 1918, when the PCUS ceded its mission to the PCUSA, an early example of Presbyterian reunion. The new Presbytery of Cuba gained six ministers and eight churches, including Cárdenas, Placetas, and Caibarién, as well as several more schools and La Progresiva. The accession of sizeable numbers of ministers and congregations from non-Presbyterian traditions of theology and polity exerted their influence and a “Cuban way” began to emerge.

Presbyterians had a theological school in Cárdenas for many years, but in 1946 it was closed and merged into the new Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, founded by the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Methodist Churches of Cuba. Preparation of indigenous leadership had been an objective of the PCUSA from the beginning and the churches and schools in Cuba were led by Cubans from the earliest years.

2. *Aftermath of the Cuban Revolution*

A number of Cuban Presbyterians, including students at La Progresiva, were active in the movement to overthrow Cuban Dictator Fulgencio Batista. When that movement succeeded in the triumph of the armed resistance led by Fidel Castro on January 1, 1959, a number of Cuban Presbyterians initially served in national and provincial positions. The Presbytery of Cuba, with generous financial support from the Board of National Missions, was given a tract of land in the mountains of Eastern Cuba and established a health and education center in Tanamo.

That brief “honeymoon” ended abruptly in 1961 with the bombing of Cuban airports, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, the U.S. termination of diplomatic relations, and the establishment of the embargo, always known in Cuba as the “blockade.” The Cuban Revolution was declared to be socialist with Marxist-Leninist ideology, the schools and clinics of the Presbytery of Cuba were nationalized, and Cuba was proclaimed an officially atheist country. Large numbers of Presbyterian clergy and lay people left Cuba and the Presbyterians of Cuba entered a thirty-year wilderness journey.

Fifty years of mission dependency ended almost overnight, as the U.S. embargo made it impossible for the PCUSA to supply financial aid, or even to pay its Cuban pensioners what they were due. The Cuban Presbyterian Church would have to survive on its own commitment and its own resources if it were to survive. The small cadre of leaders who chose to remain in Cuba made heroic choices and the church survived though it dwindled down to a veritable remnant. A number of Cuban clergy who had been studying abroad returned to Cuba and joined the core leadership of the remnant church.

In October 1963, the whole church was called to gather in the First National Institute to discern a way forward. Dr. John Mackay, the beloved Scottish Latin American missionary, then President of Princeton Seminary, led the worship and delivered the keynote addresses. Two years of follow-up that included a study process in the congregations, consultation with the Board of National Missions when they could meet in World Council of Churches meetings, and the work of a special commission resulted in a proposal adopted by the presbytery in March of 1966 to overture the 1966 General Assembly, to meet in Boston, to dismiss the Presbytery of Cuba in order to constitute an autonomous and independent Presbyterian church. In spite of the opposition of the Synod of New Jersey, of which the Presbytery of Cuba was a part, the General Assembly approved the overture.

The Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba was constituted in January 1967 in the First Presbyterian Church of Havana. The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) moderator and stated clerk and the general secretary of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations had obtained State Department permission to travel to Cuba to represent the UPCUSA and certify the official actions. The new IPRC immediately voted to join the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches as well as other ecumenical bodies. They also ordained Ofelia Ortega Suárez to the ministry, the first Presbyterian/Reformed woman in Latin America to be ordained.

This event again changed the relationship between Presbyterian bodies in Cuba and the U.S. Though many U.S. Presbyterians think of Cuba as a “daughter church” during the long years of joint existence, in reality from 1904 onward it was simply an organic part of the U.S. Presbyterian church, like the Presbytery of Chicago or the Presbytery of Monmouth. For most of those years, the Board of National Missions provided the essential linkage

between us as well as mission support, which was like support for Spanish work in New Mexico or Native American ministry in North Dakota. Now, in 1967, the Cuban church became a sister denomination and the mantle of relationship passed to the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations. That move, of course, did not make communication easier or escape the stranglehold of the U.S. embargo.

3. *New Mission Partnership Models and Methods*

The reunion of the UPCUSA and the PCUS in 1983 renewed the long-dormant Cuba connection of the PCUS. Though the reunited church was one, the program and mission agencies of the two former denominations remained in place for five years. In 1985, the IPRC invited the two U.S. denominational mission agencies to a partnership consultation in Havana, which produced a Mutual Mission Agreement that was approved by both churches.

The 198th General Assembly (1986) approved the Mutual Mission Agreement that had been developed by representatives of the IPRC and PC(USA) leaders, authorizing a Partnership in Mission that included: “exchange of seminary professors and students”; “participation of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba in the Mission to the USA Program”; “joint ministry in peacemaking programs”; “exchange programs between youth, women, and other groups”; and “relating middle governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba” (*Minutes*, 1986, Part I, pp. 589–90), subsequently amended also to authorize partnerships between congregations of the two denominations.

This historic agreement authorized the formation of official partnership agreements between presbyteries of the two churches, broadening the understanding of partnership beyond the traditional pattern of denomination to denomination. Agreements between the Presbytery of Long Island and the Presbytery of Havana, the Presbytery of South Louisiana and the Presbytery of Matanzas, the Presbytery of Transylvania and Presbytery del Centro, and the Presbytery of Santa Fe and the IPRC Council were soon established. Mutual visits began, in spite of the restrictions of the U.S embargo. The Presbyterian Cuba Connection was established in 1996 to inform individual Presbyterians about the mission and ministry of the IPRC and to support it financially.¹⁵

The 1986 agreement opened the way to a mission partnership of unprecedented breadth and depth between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba. A consultation on “Mission in the New Millennium” was organized in November 2000 in Cuba, which brought together for the first time representatives of all the denominational and presbytery partnerships.¹⁶ From that celebratory and reflective meeting, a vision was born for a place where U.S. and Cuban church partners could learn from each other’s experiences, assist fledgling partnerships, and stay current with the concerns of the IPRC. Subsequently, the PC(USA) Cuba Partners Network was organized and the Mutual Mission Agreement was amended to allow congregation-to-congregation partnerships.

The 215th General Assembly (2003) approved the policy “Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership” to guide our relationships within the PC(USA) and between PC(USA) entities and sister churches and institutions internationally. Understanding “mission” as “God’s mission” in the world (*Missio Dei*)—a mission to which we are all called—became the foundation for the mission partnerships. In this discipline of partnership with other communions around the world, PC(USA) members and bodies are asked to:

- affirm that we are all recipients of the same grace that calls us to confess our individual and collective failings, to seek forgiveness for our complicity in injustice, to repent our histories of exploitation, and to move toward common celebration of Christ’s work of reconciliation;
- relate to others in mutuality and interdependence;
- recognize and respect each one’s equal standing before God;

- engage in dialogue, common discernment, and transparency, with differences mediated in a Christ-like manner; and
- share resources of all types with each other: human, cultural, financial, and spiritual.

This partnership model of mission has guided subsequent mission partnerships at all levels of the PC(USA) since its approval in 2003.

The growth in the number of partnerships and of the Cuba Partners Network of presbyteries, congregations, and organizations constitutes a dramatic and dynamic new era of mission partnership between the PC(USA) and the IPRC, and brings sizeable support and solidarity for the life and mission of the IPRC. But, it also holds a new danger of “missionary dependence,” financially and culturally, for a Cuban church proud of its ability to survive on its own.

Currently the network includes some fifteen PC(USA) presbyteries and synods, ninety congregations, the Outreach Foundation, the Presbyterian Cuba Connection, and Living Waters for the World and Presbyterian World Mission working together in the Presbyterian Cuba Partners Network. At its annual meeting in 2013, the Cuba Partners Network, Presbyterian World Mission of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba affirmed the intention to work cooperatively as a “community of mission practice.”

The year 2014 marked the 45th anniversary of the basic policy toward Cuba adopted by the 181st General Assembly (1969) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) stating that “consistent with the right of self-determination ... the United States Government should immediately take steps to re-establish normal relations with the Government of Cuba. This should include the lifting of the trade embargo against Cuba. ... The three United States military bases in Latin America should eventually be dismantled, subject to negotiation with Panama and Cuba” (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1969, Part I, pp.742, 744). Subsequent General Assemblies have reaffirmed and amplified this policy as U.S. policy toward Cuba has changed under succeeding administrations, though the fundamental realities first addressed in 1969 remain largely unchanged.

The 215th General Assembly (2014) considered and passed three overtures pertaining to Cuba: advocate for Cuba’s removal from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism and a lifting of the travel ban to Cuba. The third overture approved the consultation about which this document reports.

The continued involvement of thousands of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the life of their sisters and brothers in Cuba and their experience of the impact of the continued U.S. embargo on them and all the people of Cuba give the PC(USA) an unusually profound insight into the human impact of U.S. policy toward Cuba and an almost “personal stake” in continuing to seek just and peaceful relations between our two nations. Recent changes in Cuba bring new urgency to that quest and new hope for its successful outcome.

4. *The IPRC Pastoral Landscape*

The changes in the nature of partnership in the 1980s and '90s were not the only forces acting on the IPRC. The nation of Cuba entered a long “Special Period in Time of Peace” after the disintegration of the European Communist bloc in 1989 suddenly ended the support and subsidies for Cuba. In 1990, Fidel Castro met with leaders of the Protestant Church in Cuba and requested their moral support in the very trying times. His approach to the churches was made known in the mass media and things began to change for the churches. It was all right to go to church! The Cuban Constitution was changed in 1991 to eliminate the official commitment to atheism and instead make the state neutral in matters of religion.

It became possible to renovate church facilities that had almost collapsed. New people started to come to church, many who had dropped out in the '60s returned, new vocations for the ministry increased. Some of the new members were actually Presbyterians who did not leave Cuba in the post-revolutionary exodus, but who left the church. Most new members were completely new to Christian faith, without biblical knowledge and or much ethical teaching apart from the social commitments stemming from the revolution. Pastors faced the challenge of reconciling those who stayed with the church and those who left, as well as a renewed emphasis on Bible study and teaching of basic Christian values. The IPRC is still struggling to meet these challenges.

More significant for the IPRC, it became possible again to move slowly and cautiously into social space to serve people. The IPRC had developed and adopted a Confession of Faith in 1977, until recently the only confession adopted in Latin America, and one done in the context of a socialist state. Its emphasis on service was very strong, harkening back to the days before the revolution when education and medical care were prominent needs. One of the dramatic indications of this new ability to move into social space came in June of 1999 with the Cuban Evangelical Celebration, a series of regional assemblies culminating in a huge celebration in Revolution Place in Havana with Fidel Castro and high officials present.

Since the early '90s, economic and social change in Cuba has been ongoing and accelerating. Changes have brought new challenges and opportunities formerly forbidden to the church. Whenever possible with new openings, pastors have led their congregations into new ministries of service and evangelism. Among them are breakfast feeding programs, physical exercise, social interaction and laundry services for the elderly, urban gardening demonstration plots, prison ministries, and AA program space. More recently they have also engaged in agricultural cooperatives and provision of clean community water in cooperation with Living Waters for the World. These missions came into being with limited resources, but often with the support of PC(USA) partners. All are in addition to traditional pastoral responsibilities of worship, education, counseling, care for the sick and grieving, working with lay leadership, and moderating the consistory (session).

At present with a few exceptions, congregations lie within the three presbyteries that constitute the synod. The IPRC Synod administratively is roughly equivalent to the PC(USA) General Assembly. There are thirty-three organized congregations in the IPRC Synod and fourteen dependent congregations (preaching points or mission outreach of an organized congregation), for a total of forty-seven. To serve these congregations, there are a total of twenty-five active ordained pastors, some already past retirement age and another seven lay pastors. There are roughly an equal number of men and women. According to recent figures there are at present five seminarians but the educational process is lengthy.

- Havana Presbytery: There are 11 congregations (9 organized and 2 dependent) served by 8 pastors.
- Matanzas Presbytery: There are 19 congregations (11 organized and 8 dependent) and 11 pastors; 2 lay pastors.
- El Centro Presbytery: There are 17 congregations (13 organized and 4 dependent.) There are just 6 pastors; 5 lay pastors.

Another eight ordained Presbyterian Reformed pastors serve in other roles such as staff within world ecumenical organizations, the Evangelical Theological Seminary (SET), and in preparing and publishing educational materials.

Challenges and opportunities for an IPRC pastor are real. Every pastor needs to work with congregations beyond his/her own, and/or to provide services for the presbytery, the IPRC Synod, and the Ecumenical Theological Seminary at Matanzas (SET). IPRC pastors also provide active support to the Cuban Council of Churches, The Caribbean and North American Council for Mission (CANACOM), the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the World Council of Churches as participants, officers, and members of staff. As example of many roles/one

person, the general secretary of the IPRC is a local church pastor, chair of the SET Board of Directors, teaches several times a week at the seminary, and represents the IPRC at meetings both within and without Cuba. To help alleviate the pastoral shortage, seminarians are also providing services on the weekends to pastorless congregations or preaching points.

Often, especially in El Centro and Matanzas, the congregations can be miles from each other requiring the pastor who serves multiple congregations to travel. Travel in Cuba is expensive and difficult. Most pastors do not have a reliable car or motorcycle. Two years ago, the El Centro general secretary was killed in a one-car accident, when he apparently fell asleep at the wheel returning home from moderating the consistory of a distant congregation.

By the grace of God and strong pastoral vocation, the IPRC continues in Christian witness. Sunday services are full and joyous. The gospel is proclaimed. The service flows in typical Reformed liturgical form, but is distinctly Cuban. Cuban hymns are accompanied by guitar, bongo, and tambourine. The benediction is sometimes danced into the street. Weekday activities are well-attended and there is a strong commitment to sharing of resources.

Pastoral training has been provided continuously by the Seminario Evangélico de Teología (SET) since its organization in 1946 by the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopal churches. (The Methodists recently withdrew to form their own seminary, but the Fellowship of Baptists has been added.) SET provides theological education to Cuban Protestant students from many denominations as well as to students from Latin America and around the world. SET has increased the possibilities for broader theological education by offering extension courses around the island, leading to Bachelor of Arts degrees for both pastors and laypersons. It has been at the forefront of training and preparation to move into new areas of social and economic change as the government allows. The rector, the dean, as well as several key professors are members and clergy of the IPRC and also provide pastoral services whenever called upon.

The National Church Camp and Conference Center (CANIP), the land for which was purchased shortly after the revolution, has also functioned continuously. CANIP provides opportunities for summer youth camping, but has become a center for Christian education and theological training for lay leaders and pastors all year. That leadership training is provided by the all too few, but versatile, pastors of the IPRC.

These heavy demands on individuals are an ongoing concern. A major morale issue for many is that the insistent demands on the pastor can have negative impact on family life. Pastor apartments are often in the church, so there are virtually no barriers to protect private family time. Nor has the IPRC been immune to brain drain and its negative impact on morale generally. After years of hope and expectation invested in talented young seminarians, it is painful to see some, after ordination, abandon their posts and emigrate to the U.S., Spain, or elsewhere.

Economic pressures are always present and a constant worry. The General Assembly consultation team met with IPRC pastors at the Seminary in Matanzas for an afternoon. One older pastor expressed appreciation for the participation of PC(USA) churches in the mission projects (discussed above). He said "Our traditional services we can fund. For our mission projects we are dependent on funds from you churches from the north."

While our partnership relationships have been strong and supportive of each other, the limited resources of local IPRC congregations, which host U.S. and other partner visits, are increasingly taxed. Most visitors do not speak Spanish and first-time visitors often have little sense of Cuban history and culture. English-speaking pastors and congregants are called on to travel with visitors to translate and provide needed orientation. Beyond housing, hosts provide meals and transportation for visitors. Although PC(USA) partners always reimburse them for these things, foodstuffs and vehicular resources (auto parts, tires, oil, and gasoline) are limited in availability and expensive. These specific shortages are expected to increase with the relaxation in U.S. travel bans and an upswing in the

number of foreign visitors. Our IPRC partners are beginning to ask their PC(USA) counterparts to limit visits to once per year.

5. *Summary*

In summary, the IPRC confronts enormous challenges in the midst of the dramatic changes occurring in Cuba prior to and independent of the diplomatic opening announced on December 17, 2014, by President Raul Castro and President Barack Obama. The changes will increase in uncertain directions and at an uncertain pace as the modernization of the Cuban economy continues. The IPRC faces a leadership loss of young pastors moving to the U.S. as dramatic as that of the 1960s.

Relations with the Cuban government are characteristically fluid and murky. The activities of the church as well as all dimensions of civil society are still closely regulated by the government, and the IPRC officially needs governmental permission to engage in new activities to respond to a changing culture. The IPRC and other Protestant churches in Cuba are officially “associations” like a Masonic Lodge, not a “church.” Only the Roman Catholic Church is recognized as a church in the Cuban constitution. The IPRC can interface with government agencies only through an Office of Religious Affairs of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. This severely circumscribes the possibilities for public policy advocacy and also the church’s efforts to influence the nature of change in a just and humane direction, one of the foundational commitments of Reformed churches. In its own public policy advocacy activities, the PC(USA) must urge the U.S. government to address these Cuban church/state issues in negotiations toward the establishment of fully normal relations between our two countries.

Accompanying and assisting the IPRC to engage in faithful ministry in the years immediately ahead will pose a continuing challenge to the PC(USA) General Assembly, Presbyterian World Mission, and other Presbyterian Mission Agency offices and the members of the Cuba Partners Network. A stance of careful listening to the IPRC and flexibility in policy and program are fundamental prerequisites together with excellent communication, coordination, and consultation within this community of mission practice.

Cuba Partners Network [Boxed Information Item]

The Cuba Partners Network meets annually in a four-year cycle that places the meetings for three years in the U.S. and the fourth year in Cuba. It is a time of rich sharing of worship, music, and partnership experiences with a variety of Presbyterian entities. At least one official Cuban representative, (and often others) is present at the U.S. meetings to share in theological reflection and to present the current issues and priorities before the Presbyterian- Reformed Church. The meeting in Cuba has an equal number of Cubans and U.S. participants. Workshops and plenaries offer opportunities for friendship and engagement with other partners. Working with Presbyterian World Mission, there are more than ninety U.S. congregations involved in—or seeking—congregational partnerships. Originally, partnerships were between presbyteries and there continue to be a number with a Cuban presbytery or synod counterpart. A number of other organizations engaged in development projects or Cuban issues are affiliated with the network. Living Waters for the World and LAWG (Latin American Working Group) often play an active role. Among other groups affiliated are the Presbyterian Cuban Connection, ARMMS (Association of Retired Pastors and Spouses), and The Outreach Foundation.

C. *New Developments in Cuba*

This section identifies recent key economic, social, political, and religious developments in Cuba, as identified by the array of expertise and experience represented by the joint committee. These developments were either identified

by committee members prior to our initial visit to Cuba, based on previous exchange and experience, or they arose in presentations by speakers as organized by the IPRC and committee members in Washington, D.C. The discussions with speakers, experts from their respective fields (church leaders, government officials, academics, community organizers, seminary students) and representatives of ACSWP/Cuba Partners Network and PC(USA) World Mission, provided a broad interpretive frame for analysis. Through this process, key issues were prioritized by the committee, the Cuba Partners Network, and the IPRC representatives; members then volunteered to draft most of the following sections, which were later edited for reader accessibility.

1. *Cuba's Economy: Current Situation and Options for the Future*

a. *The U.S. Embargo Against Cuba*

One cannot speak of Cuba's current economy without addressing the impact of the embargo, now the longest enduring U.S. trade sanctions against any country. On October 27, 2015, speaking before the United Nations, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez estimated the economic damage to Cuba as \$121 billion dollars since it was first imposed in 1960.

President Obama has begun the process of lifting some of the embargo sanctions through executive order such as easing the rules on travel, internet-based business operations, banking and remittances, and U.S. companies' presence in Cuba. However, as the enforcing laws must be lifted by Congress, the embargo will not easily be dismantled and its other restrictions will remain in place.

The embargo is a complex mix of executive orders, several laws, and many regulations. Known to Cubans as the blockade (*el bloqueo*), the embargo began its development in 1960 under a partial trade sanction initiated by President Eisenhower, followed by full trade sanctions under President Kennedy. It has been added to over time and is largely enforced through six statutes: Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917; Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; Cuban Assets Control Regulations of 1963; Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (the Torricelli Law); Cuban Liberty and Democracy Solidarity Act of 1996 (Helms-Burton Act); and Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Act of 2000. Although treaty making is constitutionally assigned to the Executive branch, President William Clinton ceded authority in Cuban relations to Congress, whose assigned role is treaty ratification.

The embargo is often poorly understood by Americans and yet it is the issue that comes up most frequently when speaking with our IPRC partners about U.S./Cuban relations. They acknowledge that their controlled economy is often at fault for shortages but tell us of the socioeconomic hardships they believe are directly attributable to "el bloqueo." These, they say, fall heavily on the most vulnerable of their people.

Basic foodstuffs remain rationed and in short supply, which affects the elderly disproportionately. Almost every church in the IPRC has a feeding program for seniors. Water supplies are unsafe because of the difficulty of obtaining chemicals for purification or materials for renovation of old systems, endangering public health. Living Waters for the World has installed a number of purification sites at churches and at the seminary in Matanzas. In all cases this potable water is shared with the neighborhood and not restricted to church members. After the tightening of restrictions under the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Laws, the availability of medicines and medical equipment was drastically reduced, targeting the generally high quality of Cuban healthcare delivery. The IPRC church in Luyanó (district in Havana) keeps a garden of medicinal herbs, which is used to teach "traditional" alternative treatments. Herbs are shared with neighbors for such things as fevers, diarrhea, parasites, and depression. Obviously these are stop-gap programs and do not change the deprivation caused by embargo sanctions.

b. *The Broader Economic Picture*

Cuba is the largest Caribbean island country. As a comparison, the Dominican Republic (DR), which shares the island of Hispanola (formerly Quisqueya) with Haiti, is the next largest both in geographic size and population. Until the Cuban revolution in the 1950s, the two countries had a lot in common: they were former Spanish colonies, maintained a system of enslavement well into the 19th century, are composed of majority populations of African origin, functioned as plantation economies that moved toward tourism, and endured corrupt dictatorships. Table 1 shows how the two countries compare in recent years, before the latest move by the U.S. toward broader political and economic relationships with Cuba.

Cuba has 11.3 million in population, which has been declining very slowly (about 0.05 percent per year) since a peak in 2007. This compares favorably to post-socialist economies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, most of which have had substantial population declines since the 1980s. So far, low birth rates, not emigration, have been the main cause of the small population decline in Cuba, but that could change quickly if Cubans get more migration opportunities. Creating good job opportunities in Cuba as the economy opens up would help alleviate the challenge, albeit with emphasis on improved access for marginalized populations (discussed below).

There is already empirical concern that a large exodus of young workers would leave a problem for supporting the aging population that remains (see Section C.5. Cuba's Aging Population). During our joint visit to Cuba, members of the IPRC repeatedly expressed this concern. Within Cuba, substantial numbers are migrating from poorer areas in the southeast end of the island toward the northwest end of the island, where the capitol, Havana, is located. This is also anchored by the Cuban government's emphasis on building the port of Mariel (located west of Havana) that, when completed, would be the largest port of commerce in the Caribbean.

Table 1: Cuba and Dominican Republic, Compared (2011. World Bank database)

	Cuba	Dominican Republic
Land Area	107,400 sq. mi.	48,670 sq. mi.
Population	11.3 m	10.1 m
	Slight declines since 2007 peak	+ 1.3% growth per annum recently
Percent rural	23%	25%
Age 0–14	17%	31%
Age 65+	12%	6%
Life Expected, at birth	79	73
Fertility (births per woman)	1.45	2.5
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	5.4	16.9
GDP	\$68.2 b	\$58.1 b
GDP per capita US \$	\$6,081	\$5,730
GDP per capita, ppp	\$18,796	\$11,264
Exports % GDP	20%	26%
Imports % GDP	19%	31%
Tourism Arrivals	2.7 m	4.3 m
Tourism receipts	\$2.5 b (=3.7% GDP)	\$4.4 b (=7.6% GDP)
Cell phones per 100 persons*	18	88
Internet users per 100 persons*	26	46
*(2013)		

Cuba's per capita GDP of a little more than U.S. \$6,000 (at official exchange rates) is comparable to that of the DR (and Jamaica). Cuba looks better when converting with purchasing power parity (ppp), because that calculation is based on prices of basic necessities, which are kept down in Cuba. Consumer manufactured goods are less available and effectively costlier, although Cuba does a lot of trade with China (its largest trade partner since the dismantling of the Soviet Union in early 1990s) and other non-U.S. partners. Cuban exports and imports each equaled about 20 percent of GDP in 2011. These will grow as Cuba integrates more into the global economy. Speakers we met said they are concerned about the possible impact of rapid economic liberalization and did not want the country to lose its cultural distinctiveness, communitarian values, or social protections. Cubans will need to debate and decide what all this means, but it surely includes avoiding a big-bang economic opening that could decimate existing industries and agriculture and lead to mass unemployment and underemployment. This happened in Russia and other former soviet economies when they opened quickly in the early 1990s.

As the Cuban economy opens, they and their Caribbean neighbors will decide how to relate to each other and to the tourism business from the United States and elsewhere. In the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and other regional organizations, where the Dominican Republic has participated less than its size could warrant, the potential role of Cuba is unclear. The U.S. offers special trade and tax regimes to many Caribbean countries, and negotiations will need to determine how much Cuba could and would want to participate in that. The direction of Puerto Rico is also relevant for Cuba's future. Puerto Rico, officially known as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, is an unincorporated territory of the United States. Burdened by high debt and outmigration, there are movements among mainland and island Puerto Ricans to join regional trade and political alliances that could mutually benefit this longtime U.S. possession as well as Cuba.

Tourism is the most obvious source of potential growth for Cuba. The tourist arrivals per year must have already increased from the 2.5 million in 2011 and now are growing rapidly as transportation options with the U.S. increase. Still, even if tourism receipts double from the 2011 level, they will still be well under 10 percent of GDP. Cuba will need to decide how much tourism to accept and how to regulate it, given its documented effects on culture and the environment. The Caribbean countries have struggled to form a united front in regulating the cruise-ship business, for instance in the matter of sewage disposal. If Cuba continues to open up to cruise ships, it will face these issues and could play a useful leadership role in the region.

Our IPRC hosts described some unexpected consequences of the tourism upsurge. Hotel service persons often receive tips in the convertible peso used by tourists. Some doctors and teachers are reportedly leaving their regular employment to drive taxis or work in the new privately owned restaurants or hotels since the exchange rate between the Cuban convertible peso (a hard currency) and the Cuban national peso is roughly twenty-four to one. Hence service employees gain a distinct advantage in buying power over other Cubans paid with the national peso. The average Cuban earns an amount equivalent to twenty dollars U.S. each month. Most Cubans cannot afford to stay at the tourist hotels.

Another negative impact of tourism reported is a lack of available foodstuffs for Cuban families. Many difficult-to-find foods are being bought up by the tourist venues leaving those without buying power fewer options in an already scant diet. The Cuban culture, with its strong communitarian values, sees these effects as violating social and economic rights.

Improvement is needed in the production and processing of sugar (partly for rum), coffee, and tobacco for cigars, traditional mainstays of the Cuban economy, largely controlled by outside interests from colonial days up to the revolution. Marketing opportunities for these will expand somewhat with trade opening, but they are stagnant products in the world market, so it is likely Cuba will seek to diversify, if not move toward a mixed-economic model. Cuba could usefully try for specialization in products certified as FairTrade, or organic.

Agricultural production must also benefit the everyday Cuban consumer. An economic reform of recent years allows Cubans to obtain title to unused government land. At present about 40 percent of arable land lies fallow while Cuba has been importing as much as 80 percent of the food it rations for its population. It is now possible for farmers to sell their produce to community markets or hotels. Some new agricultural cooperatives have been formed, increasing the income of individual members working collaboratively rather than competitively, and making more fresh fruit and vegetables available.

Cuba also faces important challenges in the energy sector. Venezuela, which has in recent decades provided oil at subsidized prices to Cuba and other neighboring countries, may be less able or willing to do so. This depends on a variety of factors including its present political instability (some contend influenced by the United States). Cuba has found and is extracting some oil and gas in its own territory, and greater reserves are thought to be just offshore. International oil companies are currently providing technical and financial resources needed for exploration and extraction, but these come with important potential financial, political, and environmental costs.

Cuba, however, leads Latin America in solar energy, and could potentially tap more into wind energy, both environmentally sustainable practices without the geopolitical volatility and conflict that also come with fossil-fuel dependency.

Changing government funding structures will be a challenge in Cuba, as with all primarily state-run countries when the private sector expands or replaces some of the public sector. A tax system should efficiently and fairly raise enough revenue to take the place of any privatization of state-owned enterprises and to track mixed economic growth (including greater opening to outside capital¹⁷). China's experience could also be relevant, where they let subnational governments tax local business and pass part of that revenue to the national government. Higher taxation and regulation in the tourism industry, or profit-splitting models with foreign-owned resorts, could help sustain upward financial flows into the universalized, public institutions (health care, education, housing) for which the revolution is best known.

2. *Race and Racial Discrimination*

Chart 1.1 Racial Self-Identification in Cuba (see under "Additional Resources")

The extent of racial discrimination in Cuba is a matter of contention, given a historic belief grounded in the late 19th century independence movements that Cuba is a "racially democratic" country. Cuban statesperson, author, and poet, Jose Marti, once argued, in contrast to Spain, that to be Cuban was to be "more than white, more than black, more than mulatto." But this sentiment, however grounded in the "color-blind," all-inclusive nationalist discourse that comprises Cubanidad (the "state" or "process" of Cuban identity) unfortunately has been refuted. The violent repression of Cuba's black citizens during the 20th century, perhaps best exemplified by the Race War of 1912 and subsequent oppressive treatment during the Machado and Batista dictatorships, have received considerable treatment in the academic literature (De La Fuente, 2001; Helg 1998, 2012, Moore, 1988). When the revolution began to implement numerous social and economic reforms in the 1960s, embedded within was the specific focus on youth and the improvement of overall living conditions for the country's black citizens. Since then, the revolutionary government, in providing access to health care, education, and housing to all Cuban citizens, has argued at times that institutionalized racism has been eliminated, but that claim has not stood up to empirical scrutiny.

Latin American scholars refer to racism as "negrophobia" or fear of blackness. Negrophobia is rooted in the context of white hegemony that creates conditions in which people seek to upgrade their social status. This legacy of racism in Cuba is best demonstrated by Chart 1.1. This chart highlights racial self-identification on the island via the latest (2012) Cuban census as compared to the 2002 Census (top left-hand corner embedded in the pie graph). Notable is

that nearly 65 percent of the Cuban population self-identifies as “white,” while nearly 27 percent identify as “mulatto” (mixed African/European origin), and the remainder (9.3 percent) as black. Numerous experts note that these are severe underestimates for those who identify as black or mulatto, given the histories of race on the island.

For example, during the early 20th century, the Cuban government promoted a “blanqueamiento” movement, in which so-called “white” immigrants from Europe, especially men, were encouraged to migrate to the island so as to “whiten” the population, while at the same time the island’s Afro-Cuban population experienced violent repression. Much of this mentality still operates in new guises when Ibero-American investors in the tourism industry are documented hiring “white” or lighter-skinned Cubans. These figures for white also appear inflated in that during the early stages of the Cuban revolution (1960s to early 1970s), “white” Cubans disproportionately fled the island, taking advantage of their generally middle or upper class ability to relocate. An important 1976 study examining Cuban Census data by sociologist Benigno Aguirre documented the inverse impact of the migration process, in that as white Cubans settled in the United States, the island’s population became “darker.”

Impact of “New” Cuban Economy on Afro-Cubans

There is considerable debate about the revolution’s impact on the acute realities of Cuba’s Afro-Cuban population. Scholars often credit the revolution for eliminating “structural” inequalities, given Cuba’s success in vastly improving literacy rates, providing universal housing and education, and the creation of a world-renowned, high-quality health-care system. From this angle, the numerous quality of life indicators have upended the systemic racial oppression under Batista and previous U.S. puppet regimes, underscoring the revolution’s success in improving conditions for blacks on the island.

The debate, however, centers largely around the elimination of “cultural racism,” which arguably never disappeared under the revolution and is now magnified in a post-Soviet, market-reform based reality. Scholar Sarah Blue (2007), for example, used survey data that examine racial inequalities in Cuban families through the post-1993 reforms. Analyzing familial access to dollars through state employment, recently allowed self-employment or remittances, along with impact of educational attainment on income, Blue found “disappointing results.” The structural gain of the revolution designed to counter racial discrimination in access to education and employment has, in her words, “lost its equalizing force in contemporary Cuba.” This is backed by Alejandro De La Fuente (2001) and other interdisciplinary observation, perhaps best summarized in political scientist Samuel Farber’s words that since the Soviet Union fell “conditions for Afro-Cubans have worsened in real and absolute terms.”¹⁸

3. Effects of Ongoing Change on Cuban Women

Among the concerns consistently raised by our Cuban sisters and brothers as a result of the “new Cuba” is its impact on women. Constant adaptation to regulated markets, increases in the role of civil society and private sector change, and cuts to the public sector have affected women from the workplace to the household, especially Afro-Cuban women, in line with the preceding section’s summary.

Research suggests that as a “brain drain” from the island occurs, and as younger educated Cubans migrate to the U.S. or elsewhere, there are less funds for government investment in social programs. This has an adverse effect on an aging, female-dominant population. Coupled with ongoing cuts to the public sector where women have long held jobs because of the social initiatives of the revolution and today’s movement toward models of self-employment, women are generally more vulnerable because they lack the resources men are more apt to possess. Those with loved ones in the diaspora, most of whom are white and better resourced, can financially benefit from their networks abroad—networks not generally available to their sisters of color. The embargo, then, adds a degree of inequality to

“work around” economic practices, impacting the household level where deeply rooted machismo and traditional female roles run up against modern challenges of balancing home and work for income.

D.M. Weissman’s 2011 study of the neo-liberal changes in Cuba summarizes the current context consistent with our learnings as a group. Placing the impact of external factors, including the embargo, in context with newer state-level changes she states:

The process of assuring health and hygiene in the home, transportation to day care or school and other family chores, have been complicated by shortages of all household items and fuels, thus exponentially increasing the working hours of women. ... The burdens are often so time-consuming that some women have abandoned paid work and social participation in mass organizations outside the home. (p.242, 2011)

Weissman goes on to highlight the increased reliance on extended family members for basic household and family needs. She comments on the decline of daily caloric intake for women as they sacrifice their own nutrition and other health consequences for loved ones (primarily children), as well as a rising divorce rate in the current context.

Our church partners and other religious leaders shared these concerns repeatedly. This suggests that as we engage in partnership with the IPRC, we be mindful in polity and practice of the broad need and limited resources faced by our partner. Through their activities, programs, and outright nutritional support for women and families, the churches are sometimes the only community based provider for those experiencing economic displacement.

4. *Disproportionate Role of Remittances*

Many of today’s Cubans live in a “transnational” reality of economic globalization. As dominant, interrelated economic systems permeate the globe and spur “northward” flows of migration, those who stay behind are more closely interconnected, if not dependent on, their loved ones living in relatively richer countries. In the early 1990s, the Cuban government, in response to increasing discontent during the Special Period in Time of Peace, permitted the receipt of remittances from family members in the United States. Blue’s aforementioned study is useful, as it underscores the disproportionate patterns of those receiving, or not receiving, outside remittances.

These findings have been seconded by a more recent (2015) scientific poll.¹⁹ The 2007 survey Blue studied, which asked resident Cubans if they received money from a family member or friend in another country, found that 34 percent of respondents affirmed these transactions, and of those 61 percent said the money hails from relatives in the United States.²⁰ The 2015 poll found that the average individual payment is near \$1,000, that most (70 percent) receive funds on a monthly basis, and that of those an overwhelming percentage (90 percent) share their remittances with at least another person of their household. These percentages amount to an estimated \$3 billion in annual remittances, with most recipients using the monies for “every day expenses.” This underscores the waning power of the state and increased self-reliance (see discussion above).

But within these findings, there is little secret in Cuba that, in De La Fuente’s (2013) words, “whites have had and continue to have privileged access to hard currency remittances from abroad.” Specifically, Blue (2007) found that 44% of white Cuban households received remittances, while only 23 percent of black households did. Of note during our consultation in Cuba, members and guests of the IPRC repeatedly referred to visual indicators of these apparent inequalities, pointing to maintained home facades as evidence that “this family receives remittances, but this family probably does not.” Those with the financial resources may then open a private restaurant or a room in their home for tourist rental, increasing their economic capacity.

5. *Cuba’s Aging Population*

The demographic projection of the United Nations places Cuba among the most aged populations in the world by 2050, when 39.2 percent of the inhabitants will be sixty years old or more, according to the latest estimates. At that time, the average age of Cubans will be fifty-two, the fourth nation in the world with that indicator, surpassed only by Bosnia Herzegovina, Japan, and Portugal. These UN projections, published under the title *World Population Prospects: the 2010 Revision*, also place the Caribbean island eighth on the list of nations with more elderly people than people of working age by 2050.

According to the Latin American Caribbean Demographic Center, Cuba's aging population, along with reduced fertility, is a chief cause of the continued decline in the Cuban population.²¹ This decline is exacerbated (per *Granma*) by the U.S. Cuban Adjustment Act (1966, updated 1996), which automatically grants U.S. residence to any islander that arrives on U.S. soil by clandestine, undocumented means (balsas—rafts or land border crossings via Mexico or Canada).

The population in Cuba fell by 84,000 in 2012 due to emigration and the country's low birthrate. In 2011 it had been 11,247,000 and fell to 11,163,000 in 2012 (see chart in C.2. economics section above). The Cuban population is forecast to decline to less than 11 million by 2032. The birthrate in Cuba, which has been in the mid-20s per one thousand of the population during the 1950s, climbed to the mid-30s in the years immediately following the revolution. Starting in the late 1960s it declined to reach 14 per one thousand in 1980, one of the most rapid declines on record. The most recent statistics (9.4 per one thousand) show that the problem is a grave one.²²

The most recent Cuban census reveals that 18.3 percent of the island population is sixty years or over. The official *Granma* newspaper has reported that cabinet level committees are required to develop comprehensive and long-term strategies taking into account economic, social, cultural, and biological factors that affect birthrate and seniors.²³ These demographic trends will take a toll on Cuba's welfare, national defense, health services, and labor force. For context, by 2021, more Cubans will be leaving the workforce than entering. In response, Cuba has recently allowed retirees to work and still collect their pensions. Overall, the aging population will pull down potential economic growth as it reduces the number of productive population and pushes up costs for senior care. This is the face of the challenge, and it was a challenge voiced by many of our church partners and consultation speakers as well.²⁴

6. *Religious Landscape*

Statistical understanding of the "religious landscape" in Cuba is not without controversy, given that only since 1991 has Cuba's status as an "atheistic" society changed to "secular." According to a report by the State Department released in 2010 (and demonstrated in Chart 1.2), the island remains overwhelmingly Roman Catholic (60 percent), with the remainder of religious affiliations comprised of Protestants/Other Christians (11 percent) and African Religions/Other (5 percent). Approximately 24 percent of the Cuban population is identified as "nonreligious."

Chart 1.2—Latest Estimates of Religious Groups in Cuba (see under "Additional Resources")

Within these categories, with specific attention to Protestants, the report finds that the bulk are Baptists and Pentecostals, and the remainder are Jehovah's Witness (95,400), Methodists (35,000), Seventh-Day Adventists (33,000), Anglicans (22,000), Presbyterians (15,000), Quakers (300), and Mormons (50). Additionally, estimates for the Jewish community estimates stand at 1,500 members, most of whom (1,200) reside in the nation's capital, Havana. The Islamic League reports that there are 6,000 to 8,000 Muslims residing in the country, although according to the report, only an estimated 1,000 are Cubans. Other religious groups include Greek and Russian Orthodox, Buddhists, and Bahais.²⁵

One of the many issues raised during our consultations in Cuba and in Washington, D.C., was the emergence and growth of “prosperity gospel.” Often known as the “gospel of success” and equally emergent throughout Latin America, IPRC pastors and seminarians to whom we spoke were concerned at its proliferation, given its celebration of affluence and individualism. Beyond the serious theological problems and frequent pyramid schemes by pastors, widespread allegiance to this “sanctified selfishness” could conceivably dilute resources and energy away from economic and social goods (such as health care, education, housing, and food).

The history of “prosperity gospel” in Cuba goes back to 1990, when the Cuban government relaxed restrictions on “house churches” (prohibited since 1962). The government’s decision was tied to the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba’s longtime ally and trade partner, and the subsequent economic impact it had on the island in the early to mid-1990s (Special Period in Time of Peace [special period]). Since then, “an explosion of Pentecostalism” (Edmonds and Gonzalez, 2010) has occurred, and “prosperity gospel” has grown. Its emphasis on personal wealth as a “sign of God’s blessing” counters the predominant socialism of the island, its appeal linked to the “charismatic style of this theology,” (Edmonds and Gonzalez, 2010: p. 171). This faith may attract poor people disproportionately, but it may also draw on inflated hopes of change that may also crash. Currently the prosperity gospel’s growth is limited by the Cuban government’s restrictions on “house churches” and its relative permissiveness to more traditional denominations.

The Roman Catholic Church benefits from its recognized status, even as its Havana cathedral remains stripped of external Christian ornament. At the same time, through the Francisco Varela Center, it supports some open discussion of the implications of the Gospel for society and the environment. Within the broader religious spectrum, Pentecostalism generally takes Protestant forms and the traditional practices of Santería, often termed folk religion, also exist.

7. *Environmental Issues*

Environmental issues in Cuba are largely connected with economic realities, given that current dominant global models of consumption rely heavily on the manipulation of natural resources. If the opening of economic relations with the United States were to lead to an unchecked “predatory capitalism” alongside a state-driven Cuban production model akin to China and Vietnam, this could prove environmentally disastrous for Cuba and the Caribbean basin.

Water-quality problems in Cuba have (as in many parts of the world) resulted from over-pumping of underground aquifers and construction of dams without adequate attention to drainage infrastructure or salinization of aquifers.²⁶ Climate change is, of course, also a factor, as storms and flooding stemming from drastic, unpredictable changes in atmospheric temperatures as driven by carbon emissions, ultimately lead to polluted water systems.

Mangroves are a key element of the coastal defenses of the Cuban archipelago, as stressed by biology professor Jesús Figueredo of Cuba’s Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center.²⁷ Mangroves have been destroyed by agricultural and tourism projects,²⁸ and were particularly hard-hit when (like many other trees) they were cut down for charcoal in Cuba’s “special period” in the 1990s, after the fall of the Soviet Union. Our IPRC partners talked of this special period, after the loss of Soviet subsidies, as having been extremely difficult, and yet as providing important lessons on “green” agriculture (natural fertilizers, oxen, crop diversity) after an earlier Soviet intensive agriculture system. It was at this time that the Cuban Council of Churches’ “sustainable development” program started encouraging churches to develop community gardens, as part of a wider urban agriculture program in Cuba.²⁹ A combination of the “special period” and the U.S. embargo also led to a serious lack of modern medicines, and the Presbyterian Church of Luyanó, for example, still maintains a garden growing medicinal herbs to try to make up for this deficiency.

As the IPRC presented their environmental concerns, Cuba's need to balance care for the environment with economic development was emphasized. Mining of nickel, Cuba's most significant mineral resource, was one focus.³⁰ Open-pit mining has severely degraded large areas of land in eastern Cuba.³¹ Concerns were expressed that, while it would be better to prevent rather than restore environmental damage, environmental impact rules were rarely observed, and may be more ignored as foreign partnerships increase. Similar concerns were expressed about the environmental impact of rapid growth in the oil and tourism industries, both often affecting important and fragile coastal ecosystems.

D. *Political Perspectives:*

1. *Choices Before Cubans*

Over the past several decades almost all the countries of Latin America and of the former Soviet bloc have had political transitions toward some sort of electoral democracy. While the communist party is the only recognized political party in Cuba, some Cubans tell us anecdotally that provincial voting in Cuba is more democratic than what they read of our electoral primaries. In recent years there have been a number of clergy elected to the National Assembly. The election of IPRC Pastor Ofelia Ortega to the assembly from Matanzas Province is a case in point. Not a communist, Ortega was elected by the grass-root network of those (particularly women) who have witnessed her work on behalf of the community. It appears that there is increasing room to elect a trusted citizen leader who is not a party member, although church members may now also be party members.

Whether, when, or how Cuba manages its political transition, it should be up to the Cuban people. Some U.S. legislation (Helms-Burton, travel ban, etc.) prescribe a system transition—a.k.a. regime change—as a precondition for improving U.S. relations with Cuba on trade, travel, and cultural exchange. Such punitive policies have reinforced Cuban nationalism and alliance with other nations. But they are also against the principle of self-determination, even if we see Cuban practice as undemocratic. It was pointed out that our government does not insist on regime change in our relations with much more powerful countries, such as China and Saudi Arabia, whose records on human rights are poor. Human rights violations are often the rationale of those who oppose reconciling with Cuba. Yet where we have designed and imposed regime change conditions, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, results have not been as advertised. Military intervention and occupation have yielded the documented calamity of sustained violence, economic volatility, and political repression. Cubans are aware of these things.

Without making prescriptions, we may consider some lessons from transitions to democracy in Latin America, former USSR, and Africa: Moving quickly to nationwide elections has often led to conflict and collapse of the very attempt at democracy. Having a substantial degree of rule of law is a critical condition for successful transition. If Cuba is following a Chinese or Vietnamese model, changes are made without elections, as political order is prized even with growth in markets, and its claimed economic rights are more important than civil or political ones. Even if we disagree with this approach, elections that become winner-take-all battles clearly disrupt stability and sustainability; a reason for caution among our partners, despite other statements of frustration and deep reflection on the moral costs to the society of living official and unofficial lives. We recognize further options from elsewhere in Latin America in the notes.³²

2. *Diversification of the Cuban American Community*

Contrary to popular belief, the Cuban American community is not a monolithic group. Much scholarly and popular focus has often been placed on the politics of the Cuban exilic community; those who arrived during the early phases of the Cuban revolution (1959–1980) and passed on a strong anti-Castro sentiment to their U.S.-born

children. Research has consistently shown, however, an increasing political ideological variation in the community, especially amongst most recent arrivals.³³

While there was some political variation amongst the earlier exilic waves, the historical marker for political heterogeneity is often regarded as the Mariel boatlift (1980).³⁴ In 1980, 125,000 Cubans arrived mostly via flotilla to Miami-Dade County over a period of four months. Largely influenced by a wave of late 1970s visits to the island by Cuban exiles who returned to see loved ones, some new arrivals were people economically discontent with revolutionary reforms and others were “pushed” out by the Castro government. This latter group included those released from mental institutions and prisons to join the exodus. This new “wave” of immigrants, labeled as “escoria” (scum) by the Castro government and vilified by the U.S. media as “undesirables,” were immediately stigmatized upon arrival representing an intra-Cuban conflict between what sociologist Sylvia Pedraza called the “Cuba that was” versus the “Cuba that is.”

The boatlift was the first time that a sizable portion (25–40 percent) of black Cubans arrived, the largest percentage since the more socially diverse tobacco workers who created communities in Tampa and Key West in the late 1800s and early 1900s.³⁵ The Mariel boatlift also consisted of members of Cuba’s LGBTQ community, given that they were disproportionately jailed or placed in work camps in Cuba during the 1970s. Their “lifestyle” was viewed as a threat to the revolution. Needless to say, these newer arrivals, now more economically and socially diverse than the predominantly white and middle class exiles (1959–1973), were worried less upon arrival about subverting the Castro government, and more concerned over their own economic livelihoods. Put differently, Cubans, post-1980, now arrive for similar reasons as other Latin American and Asian immigrants.

3. *Cuban American Attitudes Toward the Embargo*

Upon President Obama’s late 2014 announcement of plans to restore ties with Cuba, the most recent poll data available published by Florida International University (2015) supported the White House rationale. Changing attitudes were even evident amongst a South Florida Cuban community long known for rigid attitudes toward Cuban policy. These new trends of support for “normalizing” relations with Cuba differed from that of a 1997 poll conducted by Florida International University and the *Miami Herald* (Grenier and Gladwin, 1997). The more recent poll found that 51 percent of 1,200 Cuban Americans randomly interviewed in Miami-Dade County supported a dialogue with the Cuban government as means toward regime change, a gradual improvement since polls conducted by the same researchers earlier in the decade.³⁶

Of note is the difference between Cubans by stage of arrival, in that those who arrived post-1979 (read: Mariel boatlift and subsequent) were more likely to support “negotiated solutions” than those who arrived previously. Among the exiles differences by race were even more apparent.³⁷ The authors found that 61 percent of black or Mulatto Cubans in Miami-Dade County were in favor of “establishing national dialogue” among exiles, dissidents, and the Cuban government, as compared to 50 percent for white Cubans.³⁸ Regarding economic issues specifically, 57 percent of black and mulatto Cubans in Miami-Dade County were in favor of the United States selling food on the island compared to 38 percent for white Cubans. Regarding lifting the embargo altogether, while both groups overwhelmingly supported the embargo at the time, more black/mulatto Cubans (28 percent) opposed the embargo as compared to white Cubans (21 percent).³⁹

4. *Exilic Cubans and the Cuban American Lobby*

Scholars generally distinguish between the political motivations of “exiles,” those pushed out of their homelands for political or religious reasons, and the typical “immigrants,” who are viewed generally as being “pulled” (or lured) out of their home countries and having migrated “voluntarily.” Legal definitions can often repress nuance of factors

and motivations for migration but it is well accepted that those who arrive as exiles are more likely to influence U.S. foreign policy targeting their homeland as compared to immigrants who arrive to improve their economic position (p. 37, Lindsay, 2002).

For Cubans, it is well-known that as an “ethnic lobby,” they have often put their own interests (read: Cuba) ahead of local or national interests. Portes and Stepick’s (1993) acclaimed book, *City on the Edge*, examines this dynamic, in that while Cuban exiles and their children were instrumental in creating an economically vibrant “capital of the Caribbean” in Miami, it did not come without the political and economic costs to local African Americans and other Latinos. While this may have been more true for the first thirty years of the community’s formation in South Florida, in Lindsay’s words, the “once solid Cuban American lobby now appears to be fracturing among generational lines, with younger Cuban Americans turning away from the parents’ unforgiving hardliner policies” (p. 40, 2002).

It is now 2016, and while these intergenerational and migratory differences are generally accepted by scholars, the reality is that amidst the Cuban community’s growing political fractures, there remains a last gasp effort to reinforce the exilic “isolationist” mantra in Washington, D.C. Within this demographic cross-section of the community, those wealthier than other Cubans continue to fund said policy. Rubenzer (2011), for instance, looked at impact of Cuban American interest groups and individual campaign contributions on votes and key amendments in the 108th and 109th Congress.⁴⁰ He found a significant impact on foreign policy, albeit depending on particular issues. As expected, elected officials representing earlier Cuban immigrants oppose weakening the embargo.⁴¹

Not all of the conflict among exiles has been electoral. During el dialogo (the dialogue) of the 1970s, some Cuban exiles sought to reestablish connection with their island loved ones through diplomatic ties, efforts President Jimmy Carter welcomed and attempted to support. Their acts were met with steep, violent resistance by powerful exiles, best evidenced by a series of bombings in some of Miami’s institutions and the downing of two Cubana Airline planes. The independent organization, Human Rights Watch (HRW), released several reports detailing the extent of harassment and intimidation of more politically moderate members of the Cuban American community. The HRW pointed to past collaboration between “private actors” (Cuban American lobby, especially the Cuban American National Foundation) and the U.S. government in enforcing political discipline. Though the exile community was more peaceful in the 1990s, the environment of fear persisted well into the 2000s, while the U.S. government remained silent.⁴² Violence has thus declined over the years as the Cuban community, now younger and more concerned with economic livelihood, embraces a climate of reconciliation.

5. *Current Policy: “Regime Change” by Other Means*

The current U.S. policy toward Cuba, one largely based on “people-to-people” travel, is on the surface touted to promote “equal exchange” on the island, but with undoubted political undercurrents. During both of our consultations (Havana/Matanzas, Cuba, and Washington, D.C.), it was apparent from meetings with state officials representing both governments that there are no illusions about the predominant U.S. model of seeking to “improve” relations with Cuba. As illustrative, speaking at Florida International University in the summer of 2015, Hillary Clinton (former U.S. Secretary of State and presidential candidate for 2016), offered the following: “The Cuban embargo needs to go, once and for all. We should replace it with a smarter approach that empowers the Cuban private sector, Cuban civil society, and the Cuban American community to spur progress and keep pressure on the regime.”⁴³ In other words, an expanded Cuban “civil society,” already the byproduct of post-Soviet era reforms as initiated and allowed by the Cuban government, would through the influence of U.S. presence usher in a more “democratic” government designed to support free market capitalism.

The U.S. and Cuban governments are currently calibrating a compromise exemplified in the array of “licensed” travel that now allows a U.S. presence on the island. Individuals, groups, families, educators, students, professionals,

and religious organizations, all allowed under the General License categories issued by the U.S. Treasury Department, are viewed as methods of support for the Cuban people to strengthen this “civil society.”⁴⁴ The Cuban government welcomes tourism and other sources of hard currency, but its main objective is likely ending the embargo, for which it is willing to risk an expanded civil society. The recommendations of this report support a lifting of the travel ban beyond these limited categories and restrictions for its own sake, and because travel contributes to opening civic space where the IPRC and other churches may live more freely. As we understand the Cuban church position, they wish to witness and to engage in mission practices of social, environmental, and economic justice that reflect a whole Gospel. These practices tend to support the best achievements of the revolution. Our consultation did not suggest that the Cuban government was fearful of losing its sovereignty; succession plans for the post-Castro era seem already prepared and show a high degree of continuity so far.

6. *Current Legislation—The Remnants of Isolation Policy*

While most U.S. citizens continue to support President Obama’s decision to improve relations with Cuba, and there is legislation to open further relations, there is also legislation from the powerful, albeit waning, voices of the Cuban exilic community. On the openness side, in 2015, S299, the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act was introduced and gained nearly fifty bipartisan cosponsors, designed to undo the laws enacted in 1996 and 2000. During our consultation visit in Washington, D.C., several speakers from ecumenical and international advocacy groups, and Republican (Senator Flake, Arizona) and Democratic (Rep. McGovern, Maine) legislators we met with, requested the PC(USA)’s continued support for the Freedom to Travel Act and other reconciling legislation.

On the opposing end of the spectrum are legislators reaffirming an “isolationist” position toward Cuba, including two presidential candidates of Cuban descent, Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. In June 2015, Senator Marco Rubio (R-Florida), introduced the Cuban Military Transparency Act, also coauthored by Cuban American legislators Robert Menendez (D-New Jersey) and Ted Cruz (R-Texas), to “prohibit transactions with the Cuban military” and for “other purposes.” Since the Cuban military oversees many state-owned businesses, including large segments of Cuba’s growing tourist industry, this act would seek to limit expenditures for U.S. travelers who might access Cuba’s tourism industry. It also would affect the improvement of the island’s internet services and likely make it more difficult for Cuban Americans to visit family members.⁴⁵ This runs contrary to scientific evidence that most Cuban Americans, especially in Miami-Dade County, want to travel with unrestricted access to the island (see above), with the primary purpose of visiting their loved ones.

How, in view of these realities, should the PC(USA) and our IPRC partners reflect theologically on the above issues of exchange, partnership, polity, and action? As U.S. partners, we must watch out for our unconscious assumptions that we know how to fix things; we carry more baggage than we know. In what ways does God call us to serve as *mutual* partners in reconciliation, inclusive of differences and disagreements, as pan-Hemispheric Christians in solidarity for sustainable social, environmental, and economic justice?

E. *Theological Rationale*

In 2 Corinthians 5:16–21, Christ appoints the early Christian community to be ambassadors of reconciliation, recreated by God’s love to share God’s Word with the entire inhabited world. In this brief reflection on our ambassadorship with regard to Cuba-U.S. relations today, we remember first that the IPRC chose to be an independent church at the same time as the United Presbyterian Church was adopting the Confession of 1967, with its basic theme of reconciliation: God was in Christ “reconciling the world to himself . . .” (*Book of Confessions*, 9.07). At this time the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may shortly make the Confession of Belhar the latest part of its *Book of Confessions*. That confession addresses church-dividing issues in calling for unity, justice, and

reconciliation. It is also a call for liberation in a very biblical and South African style, which has similarities to Cuban and other Latin American theology.

We take the church to be the *ecclesia*, the body of Christ comprised of persons “called out” from all nations and given “the ministry of reconciliation.” At its most generic, reconciliation, means “the resumption of friendly relations, thus restoring a state of mutual harmony.” Given the history of our Presbyterian partnership and the needs of a “new moment,” this definition is too abstract and easy-sounding. For U.S.-Cuban relations to gain a better grounding than before, reconciliation should go beyond the restoration of official diplomacy, communication, “people-to-people” exchange, and commerce, should the embargo be lifted. As we have seen in the symbol and reality of Guantanamo naval base and prison, as well as the grinding duration of the embargo/bloqueo, our new hopes still face hard realities.

For the church, reconciliation is a matter of deepening fellowship with our brothers and sisters, cooperating with them in mission and witness, and being transformed in the process. God’s Spirit goes inward and outward, as must any mission done in mutuality. Because we believe God is sovereign and able to work through leaders and nations with different beliefs—like the Persian emperor Cyrus, we are reminded by the Cuban church—we should not absolutize or demonize our political antagonists.⁴⁶ Our faith helps us own our national identities and histories as gifts and burdens. The immigrant and transnational experience of Cuban Americans enriches our capacity for bridge-building, though it also personalizes and complicates the work of reconciliation.

In parts of the Old or First Testament, in order to fulfill the act of reconciliation, there had to be some type of restitution. For instance, the negligent owner of an ox who had gored a neighbor had to pay a settlement or take care of the family, depending on how much short- or long-term suffering the neighbor family would experience. This idea of restitution or reparation has been applied politically to expropriated properties, given the historical subjugation of the Cuban majority, even as those who lost properties seek restitution. For us, reconciliation between people needs to be the larger framework; property and poverty restitution should fit within this larger purpose.

Hard as it may be for Americans to grasp, the Cuban Revolution represented aspirations that echoed biblical promises to the poor and oppressed. Yet, as the Cuban church has dwelt in the tension of proclaimed ideals and sometimes strained actuality, U.S. church partners have learned from them about integrity and patience in bearing difficult burdens. To work toward reconciliation between peoples with vastly different experiences of power, wealth, and freedom, means telling and hearing hard truths about the costs and compromises that have been borne by each side. Hence the frequent pairing of “truth and reconciliation” in public commissions that seek to repair and heal social relations. This report proposes a role for our U.S. church of helping our nation understand some of the price already paid by Cuba in hope that burdens and barriers can be lifted without additional costs added. If, to be reconciled with God through Jesus Christ means to be reconciled with our fellow humans, is this not a worthy path toward reconciliation with our Cuban brothers and sisters?

The partnership between our churches can contribute to our mutual understanding at this time, as we have learned some of the values and virtues that have enabled the IPRC to survive. As part of the larger world church, the IPRC can help the U.S. church to understand our paternalistic and materialistic shadow. But this spiritual and cultural work is not just “about us.” Our reconciliation needs to recognize the racial and cultural diversity of Cuba and of the second and subsequent generations of Cuban Americans, most of whom have (and seek to continue) “transnational” economic and social relationships with family members on the island (see D.2. “Diversification of the Cuban American community above).

The present reality teaches us that we are no longer at war, hot or cold. This is a source of hope for two Presbyterian churches that have consistently sought peace even when leaders on both sides of the Florida Straits have spoken or

acted out of hostility. Our partnership with the IPRC has helped us see Cuba differently. This new acquaintance is part of the energy of reconciliation. We have learned from Cuban Christians of different perspectives, recognizing the rights of Cubans as individuals and as a country. As we call upon our government to live up to its charge to provide for the common defense and welfare by furthering peace with Cuba, the IPRC helps us live up to our charge to be a conscience in the U.S. political *and* cultural process of reconciliation.

It is through these lenses that we call on our church body, and our neighbors and government leaders, to engage in this new moment of reconciliation. The Brazilian hymn “Momento Nuevo” is popular in the IPRC churches in Cuba. It begins (translated), “Today God has called us to a new moment, to walk together with his people/country. ...” During a presentation to the joint committee undertaking the task of this report, the Reverend Francisco Marrero, Moderator of the IPRC, welcomed this “momento nuevo” in history, calling it a “crossroads” whereas we jointly move “toward something new and better” and address in “solidarity and accompaniment, with God’s spirit” many of Cuba’s aforementioned challenges.

With this “new moment” as opportunity, there will of course be voices of caution. We have heard them in recognizing the costs of economic change, the needs for human rights, and the determination of some to continue to punish Cuba. Yet we must always recall the explosion of reconciliation in the life of Jesus, called the Christ. Jesus taught an ethic of universal love that broke through boundaries. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, for example, the hero was not the person his listeners expected, but somebody who didn’t fit their stereotypes. He blessed the poor. He reached out to lepers and tax collectors and others under embargo. He crossed blockades of gender, religion, and ethnicity to converse with the Samaritan woman.

By challenging these structures of alienation, Jesus provoked powerful interests who were invested in maintaining them. When religious leaders and agents of the Roman Empire turned against him, he chose to suffer and asked God to forgive them. In doing this Jesus took the sin and Godforsakenness of the world on himself. God raised Jesus from the dead, breaking the powers of sin, evil, and death that separate us from God and each other. This is our ground for reconciliation.

In the light of this fundamental orientation toward reconnection, U.S.-Cuban relations still bear the burdens of colonial history and the imperial attitudes that claimed multiple territories from Spain, disregarding the independence struggles of others. To this history is added a layer of suspicion and estrangement from the bipolar Cold War with its threats to the Cuban government, positive and negative influence of the Soviet Union, proxy wars, and interventions elsewhere in Latin America. And to that geopolitical antagonism, we see enmity between Cuban expatriates and an authoritarian Cuban government. In this context, we see a Cuban church that, having endured repression and maintained its distinctive witness and solidarity with other Cubans, is now challenged by a newer, “neo-liberal” global order that stresses free markets, privatization, and limited regulation on corporations, while cutting social services and public investment.

As ambassadors of reconciliation, we see possibilities for rapprochement. We welcome a thawing of relations between our government and the government of Cuba. We see a totalizing political and economic order opening opportunities for a civil society and a freer economic order. We see opportunities for mutually enriching partnership in mission, including ways that both societies may deal with issues of race and gender inequality. Even as we celebrate these possibilities, we recognize that each may become an occasion for sin and new alienation, even exploitation. Hence our recommendations that seek to honor the social and economic accomplishments of the Cuban experience, and which call for international equity and respect for self-determination of peoples.

F. *Specific Background to the Recommendations*

This section is written to provide support for the initial affirmation and specific recommendations in the first part of this report. As guided by the overture from the Presbytery of Santa Fe that structured the dual consultation approach, in Havana and Matanzas, Cuba, and in Washington, D.C., the report combined social, economic, cultural, and church dynamics, in addition to the political changes that accelerated six months after the assembly's action. In the U.S., efforts to end Cold War isolation policies still face ideological gridlock in Congress, but have expanded opportunities for travel and family contact. In Cuba, changes have enabled the churches to move into social spaces in new ways, despite continuing economic and legal limitations. The Cuban government itself has shown greater and more positive involvement in the Latin American/Caribbean region, brokering negotiations for peaceful solutions to long intractable conflicts (as in Colombia), and releasing some incarcerated political prisoners while allowing Cuban dissidents more freedom. These individual changes are clearly part of a complex process of reform that continues to unfold in unexpected ways, as the Cuban and U.S. governments interface with other governments in the region.

The consultations focused on orienting future mission engagement and public policy advocacy and the recommendations move from the former to the latter.

1. *Recommendations in Support of Mutual Mission Engagement with the IPRC*

Because of the unique pairing of the Cuba Partners Network and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the report reflects the partners' ongoing struggle to keep paternalism out of partnership, starting with mutual understanding and "sharing of our stories of struggle."⁴⁷ Our IPRC friends consistently suggested that in this "Nuevo Momento" of relations, such a relationship should be based on fundamental principles of "people-to-people" exchange for spiritual growth and learning. This included building on existing theological and practical statements and study of "partnership" and on past experiences of mutuality in mission: of shared community-level projects, of mutual visits to Cuba and the United States, of increasing connections, for instance, with the seminary in Matanzas and seminaries in the United States, of pulpit exchanges and other exchanges for similar opportunities for young adults and seminarians in the United States and in Cuba.

These suggestions of continued exchange, our friends reiterated, should be mindful of the impact and capacity of the Cuban IPRC churches and the overall burden on their human and physical resources that U.S. church visits inadvertently cause.⁴⁸ During one particular session during our consultation in Cuba, we were informed that while the church welcomed visits by partner churches in the United States, they were often "back-to-back" and sometimes consumed more than they provided resources for, impacting the time, energy, and overall "capacity" of the IPRC. Nor are exchanges sometimes mutually beneficial given greater legal difficulty for resident Cubans, especially pastors and seminarians, to travel to the United States (discussed below). This does not mean the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should cease financial and other assistance to exchanges or social projects, but rather define relationship goals beyond "giving" and in service to reconciliation.

Other recommendations in this report provide new opportunities for mutual mission engagement in issues of importance to both our churches and societies: environmental and energy concerns; racial conflict and disparities; aging populations; the status and opportunities for women; hunger and food security; and economic disparities, all of which create the greatest burden on the most vulnerable of our respective societies. These areas of joint concern can provide avenues for new learning, sharing, and action together, in Cuba and in the United States.

And there are, importantly, issues for mission that fall heavily on the U.S. church: advocacy with the U.S. Congress and Administration for the numerous changes in U.S. policy discussed within this report and recommended for action. But, even on these advocacy issues, the Cuban church has lent its voice in delegations and in written communications from the Council of Churches of Cuba and from our IPRC partners in support of these changes in U.S. policy. We welcome and need their continued participation in educating our churches and government leaders

about the effects of U.S. policy on the Cuban people and churches and in advocating with our government. To that end, we call on the U.S. Administration to include the voice of religious leaders in Cuba in their negotiations between the two governments.

On economic matters, pastors we spoke to look forward to change; they would like a decent, living wage, time for vacation with their families, additional forms of transportation (buses and cars) for church-related social projects, and other necessities. To get there, economic “self-sustainability” (not dependency) was a model they were looking forward to as their church both mirrors and takes a more public role in the growth of Cuban civil society. This type of self-sustainability may be discussed more thoroughly in relation to partnership agreements or mission planning. Recommended “capacity-building” could include potential service ministries with Cuban seniors or projects to reduce racial disparities. On the U.S. side, interested congregations and presbyteries should seek and follow the guidance of the synod and presbytery leadership to avoid “doubling up” on some congregations while neglecting others. In general, orientation for all U.S. Presbyterians should include guidance on how to listen, avoid unconsciously patronizing behavior, and recognize important Cuban social cues.

The consultations involved direct discussion of problem of inequality both within the United States and among countries participating in the global markets. The committee heard the perception that “predatory capitalism” foments a massively inequitable distribution of resources, perpetuates climate change, and exacerbates already-existing racial and health disparities. All of these issues remained prominent and central to the concerns of our friends of the IPRC and the various members of Cuban society to which we engaged in dialogue.

2. Recommendation in Support of the IPRC’s Legal Recognition and Political Autonomy

At present, only the Roman Catholic Church is officially recognized by the Cuban government as a religious entity in Cuba; the Protestant churches are recognized in the Law of Associations. We support a legal status that goes beyond simple “association,” one that allows non-Roman churches like the IPRC to have the same treatment and recognition under Cuban law. This may also lead to more access to the Cuban government, beyond the Office of Religious Affairs, especially with regard to social ministries and environmental/energy projects. There are three Protestant ministers in Parliament currently, which is to be affirmed, and they are not formal representatives of the religious community.⁴⁹

3. Recommendation Regarding Joint Work to Address Cuba’s Environmental Concerns

As outlined in the “New Developments” section, environmental concerns are a key focus of the IPRC’s social outreach. Leaders of the IPRC and of the Cuban Council of Churches voiced concerns about water quality, about environmental degradation due to industry, and about the impacts of climate change. The IPRC is directly involved in these issues at the local level, and hopes for more voice in shaping regional and national policy.⁵⁰ For the Cuban Council of Churches, “Sustainable Development” has been a core issue for twenty-four years.⁵¹

Of specific note is the provision of purified drinking water—an issue most visible to visitors to Matanzas seminary and to some of the IPRC churches, which have partnered with Living Waters of the World to install water-purification systems, and which open up their systems for the local community to access.⁵² The John G. Hall Presbyterian Church in the north-Cuban town of Cárdenas has made climate-change a particular concern, working with the Cuban Council of Churches and ACT Alliance. Cárdenas is very low-lying, so it is particularly susceptible to damage from the hurricanes that climate-change is making worse. They are teaching their community about the issue by using workshops and theater, and also taking the concrete steps of tree planting near the beach, to try to build up coastal defenses.⁵³

In addition to water and flooding concerns, the IPRC seeks practical ideas for supporting community agriculture, environmental responsibility, and renewable energy. But the IPRC representatives challenged us to go further in the partnership to share ways to teach environmental values in our communities, and to develop our prophetic voices on environmental issues.

In terms of economic enterprises, our IPRC friends favored financial and logistical support for cooperatives and community programs on the environment, but not for individual business enterprises. This would mean that the Cuban government should decrease the regulatory process for church social projects to permit a wider range of activities. This call was evident when Dr. Reinerio Arce and the Reverend Francisco Marrero stressed the need for a change of mentality in regard to mutual environmental stewardship. “We can’t avoid being political because we’re part of society. ... We need to educate for environmental responsibility. ... We need to do a theological reading of the situation, and we need to do it with you!”

4. *Recommendation to End El Bloqueo (the Embargo) and Subsequent Impedimentary Acts (Cuba Democracy-1992, Helms-Burton 1996)*

There is substantial evidence that the embargo has had more impact on the Cuban people than on their government, and hence this fifty-five-year-old policy is a violation and impediment toward reconciliation.⁵⁴ To call for the end of the embargo is effectively to call for a new trade agreement, preferably one that allows Cuba’s full integration into a stronger Caribbean basin economy. This means revoking the Cuba Democracy Act (1992) and the Helms-Burton Act (1996), which states the embargo cannot be lifted absent “free and fair elections” in Cuba and a “democratic government” minus the Castro brothers.⁵⁵ In support of this recommendation, this report encourages churches and communities in the United States and Cuba to emphasize “fair trade,” and to consider any new arrangement’s impact on U.S. and Cuban workers, the environment, migration, food sovereignty, and on Cuba’s most vulnerable citizens. Most fundamentally, the embargo’s set of U.S. laws contravene international law, unless justified in terms of acts of war. In 2014, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted 188 to 2 for the embargo to be ended, the U.S. was one of the two.

5. *Recommendations on Immigration Policy: End the Cuban Adjustment Act, the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program, and Other Preferential Programs*

The Cuban Adjustment Act is one of the most “preferential” immigration policies in United States history, and one most disruptive of normalizing relations. During both consultations, numerous speakers, including government officials, confirmed the significant role this unique asylum category plays in encouraging immigration to the United States. In favoring its end, we note its Cold War rationale and its alienating effect with other Caribbean and Latin Americans, some of whom might better merit refugee or asylum status for human rights reasons. Of specific concern is the “wet-foot/dry-foot” policy, which was added as an update to the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act under the Clinton Administration (1996). Intended to deter the large amount of dangerous, clandestine migration (often via raft) that was occurring during the Special Period (1994–95 in particular), the act allows Cubans expedited residency (and ultimately citizenship) if they reach U.S. soil, but returns them to Cuba or a third country if they are caught at sea. At present, because there are reports that the Cuban Adjustment Act may soon be revoked, more Cubans are trying to get to the U.S. with the opportunity for preferred status before Cubans may have to get in line like others seeking to emigrate. Currently the act is more likely to benefit “white” Cubans given their familial networks in the U.S. rooted in the early days of the revolution, hence leading to an “admit bias,” though some forms of migration continue to be quite dangerous.

While “brain drain” is a constant for many developing countries, the “Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program” is particularly targeted at a strength of the Cuban medical and educational system, its training of doctors by

subsidizing their relocation and citizenship in the U.S. It was created in 2006 by the George W. Bush Administration. In the program's defense, some see Cuba's offering the in-kind services of teams of doctors in humanitarian crises as a positive public relations ploy, whatever health benefits they may provide. And certainly some of those doctors—perhaps a higher number among those who take advantage of the program—do not like being sent to desperate situations overseas. The Cuban state provides for their education and expects their service in return. Against the program is its preferential operation, both punitive of Cuba and offensive on democratic grounds. It covers nurses, doctors, paramedics, physical therapists, sports trainers, and their spouses as well.⁵⁶ In 2014 alone, an estimated 1,278 medical professionals used this policy as a means to “defect,” a considerable uptick from 995 in 2013 but part of a general trend upward since eleven used it in its first year.⁵⁷ There are seven other specific policies that favor Cuban immigration but the three identified here are the best known.

6. *Recommendation on the Return of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and Prison*

The Guantanamo Bay overseas base is in some ways not unusual. The U.S. has hundreds of military bases in more than seventy countries. The base is unusual, however, in dating back to the seizure of all of Cuba from Spain in 1898 (“Remember the Maine!”). Originally serving as a coal port for the U.S. Navy, it served the Monroe Doctrine's claim that all of the hemisphere is our sphere of influence. It has long been judged an unwanted foreign intrusion on Cuba's sovereignty. The U.S. pays a small check to Cuba each year that is never cashed, but we claim a right to an infinite lease. This follows the pattern of the 1902 Platt Amendment, which authorized unilateral intervention into Cuba by the U.S. military. That amendment was officially revoked in 1934, but the U.S. has wanted the facility for various purposes since, at one time holding Haitians who had attempted to get to the U.S.

The current prison use was started by President George W. Bush and, as noted in the recommendation language and notes, was intended to circumvent the U.S. Constitution. The General Assembly has called for the prison's closure and return of the base to Cuba previously, which is the position of the Obama Administration, although he has been unable to make it happen.⁵⁸ When the base is ultimately returned to Cuba, the U.S. will be morally obligated to clean up any toxins on the site resulting from its military and fuel storage uses.

7. *Recommendation of a New Inter-Denominational Partnership Agreement Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the IPRC of Cuba in 2016*

With the results of this study and recommendations as background, along with the 1986 mutual mission agreement and subsequent 2000 reaffirmation (*Sharing God's Vision*) of that partnership between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we envision the 2016 Cuba Partners Network meeting in Cuba as a venue for a broader participation toward this common reaffirmation. With appropriate funding and resources as committed to this meeting, with leadership from the IPRC Synod and World Mission, Cuba Partners Network would engage in *Hermanamiento* (sisterhood) toward an updated, nuanced mutual agreement.

In advisory capacity, the 2003 PC(USA) Mission in Partnership policy document guides all our mission partnerships, providing the broadest framework for our partnership with the Cuban and all other churches and entities. World Mission, along with the IPRC, should be fully supported to engage in the groundwork prior to the network meeting, sometime after the synod meeting of January 2016. One value of these enduring partnership agreements between denominations is that they set the context for a Cuban presbytery's own partnerships on a domestic level as well as with the Cuba Partners Network. Moreover, embedded within these agreements lies the appropriate framework for advocacy on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), given mutually agreed upon identification of issues and appropriate course of action. For instance, the 216th General Assembly (2004) passed a summary of Social Witness Policy statements in relation to Cuba, and then again when our Cuban friends asked, we listened.

Living Waters for the World in Cuba⁵⁹ [Boxed Information Item]

“We do this for the witness. ... We have cholera in the area and doctors prescribe our water”—*Jorge and Juanita, LWW water system operators, El Fuerte church, Matanzas.*

“It is hard work but it is beautiful work”—*Liudmila Hernandez, Pastor, Sancti Spiritus Church.*

[Living Waters for the World](#) (LWW) began its work in Cuba in 2009, in partnership with the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba (Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada en Cuba–IPRC). Contaminated drinking water is a pervasive problem in Cuba, especially in rural areas, and this mission has positioned the church as the provider and source for safe water in the communities they serve.

LWW is a ministry of the Synod of Living Waters, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), that trains and equips teams of individuals, to assist operating partners in the installation of clean water systems. It has established regional networks in countries with a large number of installations to help identify clean water mission opportunities and to bring initiating and operating partners together to better assure sustainability of installed systems.

In Cuba specifically, the network has achieved its success through the strong support of the leadership of the IPRC and the [Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas](#) (Seminario Evangélico de Teología en Matanzas). They have committed their assistance and support for every LWW team installing in Cuba, regardless of denomination. The seminary has also committed to providing space and administration for a warehouse facility to store water systems and parts to support maintenance needs and sustainability.

A number of the thirty-two water partnerships to date in Cuba are in communities dealing with cholera. These water partnerships have been key in not only providing the message of the Living Water but also providing the only safe drinking water available in these affected communities. The gift of clean water has been a blessing to many others who have suffered from diarrhea, dysentery, and other gastrointestinal issues for their entire lives.

APPENDIX

The two statements included here are specific to the relationship of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The first, from 2000, distills considerable theological sharing in a conference celebrating the partnership since 1986. The earlier document is the Mutual Mission agreement adopted by the two churches in 1986. The experiences of the Cuba Partnership contributed to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s general policy on mission partnerships adopted in 2003: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/mission-partnership/>.

SHARING GOD’S VISION

Statement of the November 2000 IPRC-PC (USA) Partnership Celebration

We, Presbyterians from Cuba and the U.S., representing the Synod of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) and its presbyteries of El Centro, Matanzas and La Habana, the Worldwide Ministries Division of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and partner presbyteries, including Cascades, Chicago, Long Island, Monmouth, Santa Fe, South Louisiana and West Jersey, the Cuba Connection, McCormick Theological Seminary and other interested Presbyterians met at the Centro de Actividades Nacionales de la Iglesia

Presbiteriana (CANIP), November 12-20, 2000, to celebrate our partnership in mission since 1986 and look forward to the new millennium before us.

We recognize that this is God's mission and that we join God in it through partnership. We reaffirm through Bible study and our own experience that mission in partnership has several dynamics. First it requires movement (see Castellanos Bible study, Acts 14:21 and 15:31) and that movement is neither linear nor chartable. Second, it is contextual. This includes the religious, social, political and economic realities of this specific time, as well as personalities. The movement in specific context leads naturally to collisions (Castellanos Bible study). Third, mission in partnership is transformative. It opens doors where transformation is possible. Transformation occurs when there is true mutuality.

Paul's letter to the Philippians (Rickabaugh's Bible study on partnership and Philippians) reminds us that partnership in the gospel means five things: 1) our sharing in God's grace; 2) our sharing in the Spirit; 3) our sharing in the sufferings of Christ; 4) our sharing in the troubles of others, and 5) our sharing with others by both giving and receiving.

In the letter to the Ephesians, we affirm that Christ has broken down the dividing wall of separation (Eph. 2:14). But, we confess that at times we have been busy rebuilding barriers.

This celebration gave opportunity to share the experiences of our journey. Each partner shared stories and gave testimony to what we have done and learned together. We identified six themes that represent a challenge as well as a vision for the immediate future.

- 1) We recognize that a spirituality of partnership and our partnerships are strengthened when they are grounded in Bible study, intercessory prayer, theological reflection and include the sharing of personal experiences.
- 2) We recognize that the new form of cooperation, such as the one we are experiencing, requires new lines of communication and coordination which involve all the partners involved.
- 3) We recognize the need to establish basic principles of financial accountability and planning that depend on the oversight and wisdom of the structures of the respective churches.
- 4) We recognize that the activities of the partnerships call for the establishing of priorities, for strategic planning and for creating a schedule of all partnership activities.
- 5) We recognize that we face the challenge of making our partnerships truly mutual, where each partner experiences a full sense of giving and receiving. Because this relationship is circular, we cannot break this circle, otherwise we will not experience God's intended transformation, and the walls that divide will not come down. The mutual nature of the relationship recognizes specific current realities in our churches, which includes the economic situation in Cuba with specific consideration to the material needs of the Cuban churches and the spiritual needs in the PC (USA) to which the IPRC can bear witness of faithfulness.
- 6) We recognize that our mission partnership:
 - a) calls U.S. Presbyterian partners to the work of advocacy for the normalization of U.S-Cuba relations; and
 - b) calls us all to work together to prepare for the ministry after that normalization.

Unanimously adopted in plenary session in the First Presbyterian Church of Havana on November 20, 2000.

MUTUAL MISSION AGREEMENT

Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and Presbyterian Church (USA)

Adopted by the 198th General Assembly (1986)

Background (Excerpted)

From September 30 to October 6, 1985, a delegation from the Program Agency and the Mission Board visited the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba at its invitation. The delegation traveled to all three of its presbyteries and visited in twelve churches. The situation of each denomination was discussed and an Agreement of Mutual Mission was adopted concerning the relationship and shared ministry of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

MUTUAL MISSION AGREEMENT

The Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (USA), meeting in consultation at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba on October 3-5, 1985, celebrate together the following:

- Our unity in Jesus Christ.
- Our common Reformed tradition.
- Almost a century of partnership in mission, looking forward to the celebration of the Centennial of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba in 1990.
- The effective witness and vitality of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba through its three presbyteries, thirty-five local congregations, active programs of Christian Education and leadership development, and important contributions to the new society coming into being in Cuba.
- The ministry of faith of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as it begins its life as a reunited church and seeks to be faithful in its ministries, such as worship, Christian education, congregation renewal, peacemaking, and social-economic justice.

We also affirm:

- That we share together in “one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.”
- That we are called to deepen the bonds of unity, faith, and common witness between our two churches.
- That we share in one mission of Jesus Christ in Cuba, the USA, and the world.
- That we are called to be peacemakers, creating bonds of friendship and understanding between our peoples.
- That we are committed to sharing our gifts and resources with one another to strengthen the witness of our churches.
- That we shall place our partnership in the context of our common commitment to the church ecumenical.

Among the many common objectives between our two churches we agree to the mutual sharing of resources in the following ways:

A. Partnership in Mission

1. Exchange of seminary professors and students between the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (USA) and churches in other countries.
2. Participation of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba in the Mission to the USA Program.
3. Joint ministry in peacemaking programs.

4. Relating middle governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) with the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba once guidelines are agreed upon.

5. Exchange programs between youth, women, and other groups in the two churches.

B. Restoration of Facilities

We commit ourselves to share together in rebuilding and refurbishing church buildings and the conference center of national activities of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba. We shall implement a plan whereby both churches will use their resources to enable the rebuilding and refurbishing of church buildings, leading to the Centennial celebration of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba in 1990

C. Ecumenical Participation

We shall work together in the Reformed family through the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Association of Reformed Churches of Latin America, the Caribbean Association of Reformed Churches, the Latin American Council of Churches, the Caribbean Conference of Churches, and the World Council of Churches.

D. Mission in a Third Country

We shall share our resources and persons to participate in mission in a third country.

E. Pension Funds

The Presbyterian Church (USA) shall seek to find a solution to the problem of transmitting pension benefits to Cuban pastors who are members of the Board of Pensions.

We express joy in our unity together as brothers and sisters in Christ and express through these concrete agreements to continue to strengthen our common participation in the one mission of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Both delegations unanimously adopt this mutual agreement and recommend it to our two churches for implementation.

Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba: Reinerio Arce, Carlos Camps, Rafael Cepeda, Raimundo García, Orestes González, Héctor Méndez, Javier Naranjo, Marina Pérez.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Carol Davies, Benjamin Gutiérrez, Clifton Kirkpatrick, J. Oscar McCloud, Jayne Ann Sherrod, Eugene Turner, Patricia Turner, David Young.

ANNEX: CUBA-D.C. DELEGATION/CONSULTATION PARTICIPANTS

Cuba Partners Network:

Pat Metcalf, elder, First Presbyterian, Champaign, Ill.

The Reverend Dean Lewis, ret. director, Advisory Council on Church & Society; executive secretary, Cuba Connection, Medanales, N.M.

The Reverend Dr. Glenn Dickson, ret. pastor, Gainesville, Fla.

The Reverend David Cassie, former mission co-worker; ret. executive presbyter, N.J.

The Reverend Jose Luis Casal, general missionary, Tres Rios Presbytery, Midland, Tex.

Cuban representatives of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba:

The Reverend Daniel Izquierdo, general secretary

The Reverend Francisco Marrero, moderator

Members of ACSWP:

Dr. Christine Darden, co-chair, retired NASA scientist, Hampton, Va.

The Reverend Dr. Ray Roberts, co-chair, pastor of Westfield, N.J., Presbyterian Church

Rachael Eggebeen, middle school teacher, Tucson, Ariz. (present Washington, D.C.)

The Reverend Kevin Johnson, pastor, Calvary Church, Detroit, Mich.

Dr. Marsha Fowler, professor of nursing & ethics, Azusa Pacific U., Altadena, Calif.

Dr. Steven Webb, ret. World Bank economist, Reston, Va.

The Reverend Dr. Linda Eastwood, physicist/professor of religion & science, Chicago, Ill.

Dr. Jean Demmler, sociologist, Denver, Colo.

Dr. Kathryn Poethig, professor of global studies, California State University

Mary Jorgenson, national moderator, Presbyterian Women; Kansas City, Mo.

Noelle Royer, administrator, Microsoft, Seattle, Wash.

Liaison from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns:

Dr. Nahida Gordon, ret. prof of statistics, Wooster, Ohio

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The Reverend Virginia Bairby, ACSWP/*Unbound* managing editor, Louisville, Ky.

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The Reverend Dr. Valdir Franca, coordinator, Latin America and the Caribbean, World Mission, Louisville, Ky.

Catherine Gordon, Office of Public Witness, Washington, D.C.

The Reverend Dr. Jo Ella Holman, deployed mission co-worker, Dominican Republic

The Reverend Dr. Christian Iosso, ACSWP coordinator, Louisville, Ky.

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<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article8605607.html> (*Miami Herald*).

ENDNOTES

1. As the study notes, Cuba moved to become a secular rather than atheistic state in 1991. The relevant sections of the Cuban constitution are: Artículo 8.-El Estado reconoce, respeta y garantiza la libertad religiosa.

las instituciones religiosas están separadas del Estado. Las distintas creencias y religiones gozan de igual te Article 8 -The State recognizes, respects and guarantees religious liberty. In the Republic of Cuba, religious institutions are separate from the State. Distinct beliefs and religions enjoy equal consideration. ARTICULO 55.-El Estado, que reconoce, respeta y garantiza la libertad de conciencia y de religión, reconoce, respeta y garantiza a la vez la libertad de cada ciudadano de cambiar de creencias religiosas o no tener ninguna, y a profesar, dentro del respeto a la ley, el culto religioso de su preferencia.

recognizes, respects and guarantees freedom of conscience and of religion, recognizes, respects, and guarantees at the same time the freedom of every citizen to change religious beliefs or not to hold any, and to profess, within respect to the law, the religious group of his/her preference. The law regulates the relations of the State with religious institutions.

2. The compensation issue is complex, as settlement offers were made over time and now include claims based on losses incurred by the blockade (also see endnotes 27 and 28). On the U.S. side, the largest claimants are corporations, and there are differences between U.S. citizens who sustained losses and Cuban nationals who subsequently became U.S. citizens and pursue claims. A Brookings Institution study presents a balanced picture, noting this early offer based on declared tax valuation of lost property and bonds tied to sugar exports: "Notably, in the immediate aftermath of the 1959 agrarian reform law nationalizing large estates, Castro assured the U.S. ambassador in Havana that he recognized Cuba's obligation to pay compensation (albeit based on assessed values for tax purposes and to be paid with 20-year bonds)," p. 12 in <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/12/01-reconciling-us-property-claims-cuba-feinberg/reconciling-us-property-claims-in-cuba-feinberg.pdf>

The July–October 1979 double issue of *Church & Society* magazine on Cuba included articles looking back on the widely known corruption of the Battista years and "Mob" control of much of Cuba's tourism, which are important factors in understanding the expropriation of foreign (not only U.S.) assets. (*Church & Society* back issues are available from ACSWP). A short review of several options for settling U.S. claims noted, "According to a 2008 report from the US Department of Agriculture, Americans controlled three-quarters of Cuba's arable land." One option developed by a Creighton University team in 2006 "didn't involve the transfer of cash or bonds [to corporate claimants]: Instead, they could be given tax-free zones, development rights, and other incentives to invest in the new Cuba." Whether this would seem a reversion to external control by Cuba, it conceivably could provide needed capital if managed in a mutually beneficial way. See Leon Neyfakh, "Cuba, You Owe Us \$7 billion," *Boston Globe*, April 18, 2014.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/04/18/cuba-you-owe-billion/jHAufRfQJ9Bx24TuzOyBNO/story.html>.

3. To look back at some of the documentation behind the assembly's action: from <https://pc-biz.org/#/committee/521/business>: "The Council on Foreign Relations reviews human rights and intelligence reports to which there is public access and summarizes: "intelligence experts have been hard pressed to find evidence that Cuba currently provides weapons or military training to terrorist groups. In 1998, a comprehensive review by the U.S. intelligence community concluded that Cuba does not pose a threat to U.S. national security, which implies that Cuba no longer sponsors terrorism" (2010: <http://www.cfr.org/cuba/state-sponsors-cuba/p9359>). In their view, Cuba remains [remained] on the list because it may have relations with countries that may oppose the United States in some measure (Iran, Venezuela), it may shelter or hold foreign nationals of interest to the United States (not necessarily terrorists), and it may still be an important political concern for parts of the Cuban exile community."
4. The key word in this sentence is, "unwanted." The Philippines or other Pacific nations may want a limited U.S. presence to balance an increasing Chinese presence in the South China Sea or elsewhere. The larger issue is one of self-determination within a rule-governed world order.
5. A recent study of U.S.-Cuba relations is William LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh, *Back Channel to Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). One of their findings was that then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger proposed a massive military attack to "smash Cuba," in response to Cuba's sending troops to Angola to assist that country in fighting South African forces. Frances Robles, "Kissinger Drew Up Plans to Attack Cuba, Records Show," *The New York Times*, Oct. 1, 2014, p. A 3.
6. The Wikipedia link illustrates the lack of information about the Cuban government's military expenditure and military readiness, which is assumed to be focused on anti-drug patrols as well as the internal security of the state: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Revolutionary_Armed_Forces. The CIA World Factbook Cuba entry contains little information beyond noting the two-year compulsory military service and a generally professional army, presumably still with some senior officers who had experience overseas in Angola or elsewhere: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cu.html>.
7. The cost estimate listed under "Financial Implications" included a legal contingency of \$15,000; by working with the Presbyterian Cuba Connection, even the remote possibility of incurring this cost was removed. Changes in U.S. travel regulation subsequent to the ACSWP-CPMN trip have further eased travel, though some limits remained as of mid-2015. This referral appears to have been the first time such a joint effort by a General Assembly committee and a Mission Network was recommended; Presbyterian World Mission involvement was implicit, but the assembly was effectively authorizing a volunteer organization to assist in the development of official church policy.
8. The official statement by the State Department noted that while the United States had "significant concerns and disagreements" with many of Cuba's "policies and actions," it fell outside the "criteria" relevant to the designation of state-sponsored terrorism. For more on the decision, and reactions from Congressional leaders, see Hirschfield Davis, Julie, "U.S. Removes Cuba from State-Sponsored Terrorism List," *The New York Times*, May 29, 2015.
9. See "Growing Momentum to Repeal the Embargo," *The New York Times*, Editorial page, August 3, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/03/opinion/growing-momentum-to-repeal-cuban-embargo.html>
10. See *Latin America Working Group* Press Release: http://lawg.org/storage/documents/Press_Release-us_and_Cuba_Embassies_Reopen.pdf July 20, 2015.
11. For a critical examination of the U.S. intervention in Cuba during the early 20th century, see the following: Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*, 2001.
12. During the early years of development of the Cuban exilic community in Miami, Florida, the U.S. government, in specific the C.I.A., spent several millions on the exilic community with mind to promote the virtues of capitalism on the island.
13. See political scientist Eckstein, Susan's latest book, who argues that Cuba's more recent "transnational" migrants, not the exiles, have done more to influence Cuba's economy and politics. *The Intra-Immigrant Dilemma*, 2007.
14. For ecumenical perspective, see Rafael Cepeda and Carlos R. Molina, *The Infinite Sowing: Itineraries of Mission Work and Protestant Evangelization in Cuba*, Translated by John Walter (N. Charleston, S.C.: Create Space Independent Publishing, 2014).

15. The *Presbyterian Cuba Connection* newsletter, in Spanish and English, edited by Dean H. Lewis, is an engaging chronicle of Cuban Presbyterian and U.S. relations, theology, and politics: <http://www.pcusa.org/news/2014/2/6/cuba-connection/>.
16. The presentations from that consultation, on the theme of partnership, are available from the World Mission Latin America office and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. See: *Biblical Theological Symposium: Foundations of Partnership*, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Villa Bacuranao, Cuba: January 19–21, 2004.
17. International Monetary Fund 2000, *Tax Code of the Republic of Taxastan*. IMF: Washington, D.C.; International Monetary Fund 2011. “Revenue Mobilization in Developing Countries”, prepared by the Fiscal Affairs Department. Processed, March 8, 2011.
18. The arguments of this paragraph and its predecessor condense much material from books noted in the resource list; specific citations are available from Professor Alan Aja.
19. See “International Survey of Cubans Living in Cuba,” Fusion/Univision, April 8, 2015. Available at: https://fusiondotnet.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/fusion_cuba-poll-charts-1.pdf.
20. The poll also found that Spain (12 percent) and Italy (6 percent) were the other two countries where the most money is sent to Cuba. See Bendixen and Amandí (2015).
21. For more, see *Radio Havana* transcription based on an article in the *Daily Granma*. This can be accessed at: <http://www.radiohc.cu/en/especiales/comentarios/31414-10w-birthrate-a-big-problem-in-cuba>.
22. The World Bank figure for 2011 is slightly higher at 9.74 per 1,000.
23. *Granma* is the official newspaper of the Communist Party in Cuba. It is named after the yacht that guerilla leaders took in 1956 from Mexico to Cuba to ignite the revolution. The yacht remains in an enclosed casing as a monument in La Habana Vieja (old Habana).
24. In 2014, numerous reports surfaced highlighting the potential economic impact of an aging population in Cuba. For example, see the following reports and articles by Strug (2014), Leandro (2014) and Pujol (2014): <https://nacla.org/news/2014/11/10/cuba%E2%80%99s-retired-population-struggles-economic-reforms>; <http://www.ascecuba.org/c/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/v22-pujol1rev.pdf>; <http://www.radiohc.cu/en/especiales/comentarios/31414-low-birth-rate-a-big-problem-in-cuba>.
25. For the full report, see: International Religious Freedom Report, State Department, October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2009/127386.htm>.
26. Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Jorge F. Pérez-López, *Conquering Nature: The Environmental Legacy of Socialism in Cuba* (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 23 and 111–37.
27. Presentation to ACSWP, Luyanó, Havana, March 18th, 2015.
28. Diaz-Briquets and Pérez-López, *Conquering Nature*, 157–58 and for broader cutting for survival, pp. 266–67.
29. Scarpaci, Joseph L., Roberto Segre, Mario Coyula, and Roberto Segre. *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
30. Cuba has large deposits of nickel. At the time of the 1959 “triumph of the revolution,” U.S. investment in Cuba, totaling more than \$1 billion, was concentrated in the sugar and nickel industries. Julia E. Sweig, *Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 76.
31. Diaz-Briquets and Pérez-López, *op.cit.*, 157 and 176–83.
33. Establishing rule of law for political transitions could also start at the local and provincial level by having local elections for a while and only later national elections. For instance, that’s how the democratic transitions were done explicitly in Argentina and Brazil in the 1980s, and in some sense Colombia as well, where the 1990 constitution opened the door for parties other than the previous duopoly to win department and municipal elections. These countries have had economic and political problems in the last three decades, but have avoided military coups or other reversion to dictatorship. Subnational variation in winners reduces the problem of national elections being winner take all.

Mexico's more complex experience also supports this idea. Essentially all the elections in the country at all levels had been won by the PRI since 1930, and then a non-PRI party (PRD) won the (national) presidential election in 1988, but the results were cast aside and the PRI stayed in power. Then starting in 1989 and increasingly in the 1990s the PAN and PRD won state and local elections around the country and in 1997 took away PRI's majority in the national congress. Then by 2000, after Congress had taken away the President's big discretionary spending budget and strengthened the Electoral Commission, it was possible for the PAN to win the presidential election and have a peaceful transition of the national executive. Subsequent reforms within the major parties have included primary elections.

34. See for example Susan Eckstein's *The Intra-Immigrant Dilemma* (2008), who argues that today's Cuban immigrants (relatively younger and "transnational") have done more to influence changes in Cuba than the more politically focused "exiles" (those who arrived between 1959 and 1979).

35. For a brief synopsis on the forces of political migration from Cuba, see Sylvia Pedraza's "Cuba's Refugees: Manifold Migrations," *Cuba in Transition*, ASCE, 1995.

36. See Susan Greenbaum's award-winning ethnography, *More Than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa*, 2000.

37. <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article17056742.html>.

38. The authors (Grenier and Gladwin, 1997) stressed the non-monolithic make-up of the Cuban American community, and made other important findings as compared to previous polls taken throughout the 1990s. Among them was evidence of increasing frustration over lack of regime change on the island and support for the Helms-Burton Act (over 75 percent). While only 25 percent felt that the embargo was effective, in contradiction more than 78 percent supported its continuation (including the continuation of penalizing companies who do business on the island). Support for travel to see relatives was also quite high (70 percent) amongst respondents, as was support for human rights groups operating on the island (over 92 percent) and even U.S. invasion of the island (66 percent).

39. See Table 7, "Establishing National Dialogue," Grenier and Gladwin, 1997.

40. See Tables 3 and 10 respectively, Grenier and Gladwin, 1997.

41. Rubenzer, T. (2011), Campaign Contributions and U.S. Foreign Policy Outcomes: An Analysis of Cuban American Interests. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55: 105–16. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00483

42. Rubenzer's study found that three largest recipients of PAC monies by Cuban American lobby all opposed (2004) Davis and Rangel amendments to the embargo. Exilic political leaders who are longtime members of Congress were the key recipients of political contributions. Mario Diaz-Balart (R), who represents a larger district in Miami-Dade County, received the highest level of individual contributions (\$74,000) while Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, another legislator out of Miami-Dade County, was second on list (\$54,000). Rubenzer further found that contributions from opponents to the embargo such as the agri-business PACs and chamber of commerce who are generally "dispersed" in the American political and geographic sphere did not to have an impact on voting behavior (even if they reflect the general sentiment of the American public). This suggests that campaign contributions do matter (especially in the context of Citizens United), and as the author noted, that a concentrated group of pro-embargo folks can outweigh a larger but dispersed group of anti-embargo opponents.

43. See for example <https://www.hrw.org/report/1994/11/01/dangerous-dialogue/revisited-threats-freedom-expression-continue-miamis-cuban>.

44. See Clinton, Hillary, Florida International University, July 31, 2015. http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/miami-hillary-clinton-calls-lifting-cuba-embargo?utm_source=July+31+Newsblast&utm_campaign=August+29+Blast&utm_medium=email. Also see Frumin, Aliyah, "In Miami, Hillary Clinton Calls for Lifting Embargo," MSNBC, 7/31/15.

45. The various categories to which a person can apply for licensed travel include the following: Family Visits, Journalistic Activities, Professional Research, Professional Meetings and Conferences, Educational Activities, Religious Activities, Public Performances (Athletic, Competitions), Humanitarian projects, work with Private foundations, Internet-based services, and other export related transactions.

46. See Cuban Military Transparency Act, 114th Congress, 1st session, found here: http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?a=files.serve&File_id=12dd41b0-7fa1-4238-8848-

[55e99dd7736b&utm_source=JUNE+19&utm_campaign=August+29+Blast&utm_medium=email](#). Also see Cuba Central, The Center for Democracy in the Americas, June 19, 2015.

47. A discussion of some of the theological changes in the Cuban church can be found in *Semper Reformanda Reformed World* (World Alliance of Reformed Churches) volume 52 number 2 (June 2002):

A Cuban experience of mission in unity—"From 1954, Fidel Castro waged a guerrilla campaign against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. At the end of 1958, Batista fled the country. On January 1 1959, Castro's army captured Havana and the Cuban revolution came to power. From the beginning, bread and an honorable life for everybody were the great objectives. Land and housing reform laws were signed. An important literacy campaign, strongly supported by Protestant leaders, taught all Cubans to read and write.

Many Protestant pastors and Christians in general supported the revolution because they saw in it a way of solving structurally the great social needs of the Cuban people, such as education or public health, which were hitherto the responsibility of the churches and private institutions. In fact, some of them even fought against the Batista regime in the 1950s, for example, José A González, Frank País, Esteban Hernández, Rafael Cepeda, Raúl Fernández Ceballos, etc.

Theodore A Braun, in his recent book, *Perspectives on Cuba and Its People*, analyzes this period in a positive and constructive way: "... as Christians who remained in Cuba began to see the hungry being fed, the naked being clothed, the poor being lifted (all of it by the government, outside the aegis of the church), they were filled with surprise. Here was God fulfilling the prayers and aims of the church through the instrument of a secular 'Cyrus.' But there was a big difference—the needs of all the people were now being solved by structural changes in society, not the needs of individuals by Christian charity. That raised a challenge for the church: What was its mission if there were no longer poor people to help? The answer came down to the basic hermeneutical calling of the church: to interpret what God is doing in the world and to join God there. Thus Christians began to have an increasingly active role in revolutionary society."

48. During the last day of our consultation in Cuba, members of the IPRC, ASCWP, and Cuba Partners formed groups to discuss openly our economic and political relationships as a church and discussed what we could "do together." These recommendations stem from those collaborative meetings.

49. The following comment was made by one of the most respected and seasoned leaders of the IPRC. "People are afraid of being critical for fear of what might happen. People have lost the capacity to protest effectively. The church could help to recover that. If we remain silent we will never have any effect. We need to train people on how to protest!"

50. Presentations to ACSWP, in Havana, Matanzas, and Cárdenas, Cuba, March 17th to 20th, 2015.

51. Presentation to ACSWP, Luyanó, Havana, March 19th, 2015.

52. This requires no small commitment to system maintenance, and in some cases funds for filters and other parts come from partner churches in the U.S.A.

53. Presentation to ACSWP, in Cárdenas, Cuba, March 19th, 2015.

54. The Cuban government estimates that the embargo has cost the island nation 1.126 trillion in "economic damages." See UN urges end of U.S. embargo on Cuba," <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/10/un-urges-end-us-embargo-cuba-20131029181034233544.html>.

55. For a good summation of the Cuban embargo in context of current diplomatic efforts, see Council of Foreign Relations, *Backgrounders*, <http://www.cfr.org/cuba/us-cuba-relations/p11113> August 14, 2015.

56. For a brief synopsis of the CMPPP, see the State Department's official 2006 announcement and description here: <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/2009/115414.htm>.

57. See *New York Times* editorial board, "A Cuban Brain Drain, Courtesy of the U.S." Nov. 16, 2014.

58. Here is an excerpt from the White House form letter (July 7, 2015) on this subject:

Many people have serious concerns about the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, and I appreciate hearing from you. The closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay is a national security priority. This is something I have called for repeatedly, because I believe we counter terrorism not only through intelligence and military actions, but also by remaining true to our ideals and setting an example for the rest of the world. I have also

continued to call on Congress to lift the remaining restrictions on detainee transfers so we can move forward with closing the facility.

The Guantanamo facility weakens our Nation's security by emboldening violent extremists, damaging our relationships with key allies and partners, and draining our resources—with costs of about \$2.7 million per year per detainee. As we keep working to close the facility, I have directed my Administration to transfer eligible detainees to the greatest extent possible consistent with national security and our humane treatment policy.

At my direction, there are now Special Envoys at both the Departments of State and Defense focused on transferring detainees. In addition, the Periodic Review Board process—a discretionary, interagency review of whether continued detention of certain Guantanamo detainees is necessary to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States—ensures any ongoing detention is carefully evaluated and justified. My Administration will keep pursuing appropriate dispositions for Guantanamo detainees, including prosecution whenever feasible, based on the facts and circumstances of each case and consistent with our national security interests.

59. U.S. congregations of any denomination or civic organizations who wish to participate in the LWW Cuba Network can contact [Ed Cunningham](#), LWW Cuba Network moderator, for more information. Teams are trained at [Clean Water U](#), please [click here](#) for a list of Living Waters for the World training dates. Newsletters published by the Living Waters for the World Cuba Network may be viewed [here](#).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

A. Questions from the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba, adapted from “A Cuban experience of mission in unity” by Carlos Emilio Ham in *Semper Reformanda Reformed World* World Alliance of Reformed Churches, volume 52 number 2 (June 2002)

These questions relate most to the section of the study on the Cuban Church and Partnership:

“The *Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba* as part of the body of Christ in the country is facing new challenges to its mission in unity:

- How to develop holistic diaconal projects in collaboration rather than in competition?
- As we try to do mission in society, how to be an expedition more than an institution?
- How to be faithful and promote justice in a dual-currency economy (where one can hardly survive without the “hard” currency) as a church, and as church leaders who often have better financial possibilities than those around them?
- How to cope with the “invasion” of “missionaries” (some of them “mercenaries”), who come with lots of dollars to try to “purchase” souls and even pastors and to proselytize?
- How to handle the “charismatic movement”, which can be a blessing, but also creates many divisions?
- How to minister in the context of ideological confrontations and polarization, both internally and in relation to the Cuban exiles?
- How to preach and teach the importance of reconciliation in society, starting right there in the church between the different groups in the congregations: those who remained faithful, those who are returning, and those who come for the first time?
- How to carry out mission in partnership with other churches and organizations abroad?
- How to cope with opportunism of both left and right?
- How to encourage the ecumenical spirit and commitment at a time when there is a reinforcement of denominationalism and apparently less ecumenical will or ethos?”

B. Questions Related to the New Changes in Cuban Society

1. How important are the social, educational, and health achievements attributed to the Cuban Revolution? Do they fulfill a set of human rights that complement the civil and legal rights emphasized most in the United States?
2. How much are the social values of Cuba today shaped by opposition to the excess and inequality of the pre-Revolutionary period? How much have the values of solidarity been undermined by economic hardship and governmental controls, and how much has the spirit of Cuba been shaped by resistance to el bloqueo?
3. Does the lack of energy resources make independence or self-determination for Cuba (or any other Caribbean island) almost impossible? Can newer green technologies change this equation?
4. The Caribbean nations are often divided into two sets by languages, English-speaking and Spanish-speaking, with French-speaking Haiti and a couple of others as exceptions. But is the real division between black and white Caribbean people? How is this divide played out in Cuba, and among Cubans who have emigrated? How different or similar are race relations in the U.S.?
5. How do you explain the aging population in Cuba? Is it simply hard to afford having children, despite assistance in childcare and other social benefits (including contraceptive availability)? Is it the pull of migration to the U.S. and other countries? Who is most affected by that pull?
6. What is the attraction of Cuban travel, and how much is it likely to change Cuba? Do the values of mission partnership conflict with the values of tourism? How much is tourism influenced by a desire to see a more egalitarian society, and how much is it an echo of the 1950s party island for outsiders?

C. Questions Related to U.S.-Cuban Relations

1. Given the society described in this report, does the nation of Cuba pose a threat to the United States of any kind? Does it pose a threat to other nations in the region?
2. Does the U.S. have a right and even a responsibility to seek regime change in Cuba? What is the role of international law and international institutions in this? Has the embargo been effective, and has it had unintended consequences?
3. How much has U.S. policy toward Cuba been influenced by Cuban Americans, particularly those of the initial wave of exiles in the 1960's? Is this a usual pattern of interest groups "capturing" or "owning" an issue, whether it is Wall Street influencing financial regulation, or traditional organized support for the three "T's" of Ireland, Italy, and Israel?
4. How much has the policy of regime change been driven by the desire to help Cubans gain more freedom, and how much has it been driven by a belief in the free enterprise system? How much has any commitment to capitalism for Cuba been influenced by desire to reclaim properties lost?
5. Does the U.S. have a responsibility to assist Cuba today? If so, through what measures—other than direct overthrow of the Cuban government? Are the expansion of markets and raising of living standards likely to change Cuba more than the embargo? Are they likely to change Cuban nationalism?

6. Does Cuba have a responsibility to assist the United States today? If so, what achievements and lessons do we need—other than more educated immigrants? How much does this question challenge a lingering paternalism and materialism—or consumerism—in U.S. attitudes?

7. Do you support “giving” Guantanamo Bay back to Cuba? What about ending immigration preferences and other report recommendations?