



CMP Cuba Trip Recap

One of my favorite parts of my job at IM is getting to sit, listen, and share the stories students bring back with them as they come home from their ETEAM and CMP trips. Throughout the past few years, I've heard story after story of students coming back from Cuba and talking about how that place has tremendously impacted how they see the world and their faith. I've heard about different people, like Boris Sarlabous and his family; I've heard about all the rice and beans that are consumed; I've heard about how the power randomly shuts off; I've heard about how the people in the FWB churches have so little in life but the most joy they have ever seen; and so much more.

In the fall of 2025, Leslie Nichols, IM's Director of Mobilization, asked me to help lead a College Missions Program (CMP) team with her and Mark McPeak for the summer of 2026. I instantly said "yes!" I'd heard so many stories and was excited to experience it myself.

On August 1, 2026, 16 of us headed down to Cuba with way too much luggage to count. As soon as we made our way out of the airport, the Sarlabous family - Boris, Ana Marys, Jocabed, Sofia, and Nathan - welcomed us with open arms. Our team hopped on a bus the Sarlabous family and the Cuba Free Will Baptist Youth Board, and headed to stay at the Rio Verde Church in Havana and then on to stay at the Free Will Baptist (Cedars of Lebanon) Seminary in Pinar del Rio.

Throughout our ten days there, we held mini camps at the seminary and various churches, sang during services, helped lead a mini youth camp, had some of the boys on our team preach, and experienced what it's like to live and serve in ministry in Cuba. The team was exceptional, and every student had a place. While we were there, our team faced many hardships and experienced the difficulties Cubans face every single day under the communist regime, such as power outages, limited food and resources, water scarcity, and ultimately, oppression.

In IM's book, *Into the Darkness*, there's a quote that says, "In fact, God was working all along. Though the communist

regime hoped to stop the gospel's spark in Cuba, it fanned the people's fervor into the flame. Stripped of everything, Christians realized they only needed Christ." That still holds true today, as we experienced in the many churches we visited and at the youth camp hosted at the seminary. I had never seen the joy of the Lord so evident in people's lives until I had met the Christians of Cuba.

It was so encouraging to see this and learn more about the legacy of "Mom & Pop" Willey. Their work in the 1940s and 50s has made a lasting impact on the Free

Will Baptists in Cuba, and this legacy continues on through leaders like Boris Sarlabous and others in leadership as one of IM's legacy partner fields. As our team stayed in the Mom Willey House, we saw firsthand the training and raising up of leaders at the FWB Seminary and all across the country, which is producing fruit. Learning now what scholarships and Impact projects go to, I'm so thankful for ministries like WNAC and IM Global Partners who support students to be able to attend the seminary and aid in the work going on there through people who give to these organizations.

As we are all still processing what we saw, smelled, tasted, and experienced as a team, one thing keeps coming back to my mind - I prayed for the Lord to give me a better perspective on why I do what I do, and to burden my heart for the Nations more than it already was. God used this trip to do both of those things. The goodbyes were much harder than I thought they would be, as I fell in love with Cuba and its people. Danny Gasperson once said to me, "It's the hardest place you'll ever love," and I 100% agree with that.

— Written by Lindsey Padden



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To give to the General Fund, scan the QR code or visit: www.iminc.org/generalfund/

Student Missions Applications Due October 15

Are you a high school or college-aged student seeking to serve the Lord overseas or in a different culture? **ETeam** and **CMP** provide opportunities for you to gain cross-cultural experience, live life like a missionary, and serve alongside IM partners. You can also participate by serving as an **ETERN** (serving on staff during ETeam training week in Nashville, TN) or **ETeam Leader**. For more information, visit our website and complete the applications by October 15. <https://iminc.org/go/student-missions/>



Missionary Personnel Changes



Jacob and Hailee Voltz have transitioned from Bulgaria to Japan, where they will serve alongside Rusty and Brenda Carney at Free Will Baptist Kamifukuoka Christ Church (KCC) in the Tokyo area of Saitama Prefecture. You can partner with the Voltz as they raise support for their future ministry in Japan at: <https://iminc.org/missionary/jacob-and-hailee-voltz/>.

Join us in praying for their family as they make this transition and for their upcoming service on the field, so they can reach even more people with the Good News!



Tristen and Sierra White have completed their two-year internship with IM, and they served faithfully in Tokorozawa, Tokyo, Japan, for the last two years. The Whites have now relocated to the Middle Tennessee area, where they will continue to invest in the community through teaching, music, and serving in the local body of

Christ. They continue to live on mission for the Lord in this new season! We thank the Whites for their dedication, service, and ministry. Join us in praying for God to continue blessing their family as they serve Him now in the United States.

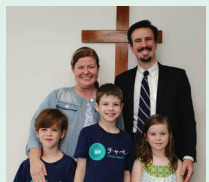
FAMILY HAPPENINGS



Lauren and Cody Herren celebrated the birth of their third child, Norah. Pray for their family as they settle into being a family of five.



After the **Provows' oldest daughter, Naomi**, returned from Truth and Peace, she started leading discipleship with another teenager in their church. Bea shares, "She's been a great part of the children's ministry in the Shumen, Bulgaria, area."



The Champions share, "We have been in Japan for one year! God has sustained us and brought us friends and people to minister to."



McCayde and McLayne Portell, daughters of **Darren and Dana Portell**, started back to school in August in Illinois. Pray they would have a great year!

Perspectives Intensive Opportunity in Arkansas

Join us for the Perspectives intensive week of missions training



PERSPECTIVES USA

hosted by IM and Connect Church in **Russellville, Arkansas**, on **November 1-6, 2026**. Perspectives is a 15-lesson discipleship course exploring different aspects of God's global purpose, where you will grow in your faith and understanding of missions. Learn alongside other FWBs and return to your ministry with a passion for inviting others into God's global story. In this course, you can choose the Key Reader or Certificate track.

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AN IM GOSPEL STORY

Thanks to a gift from our partner, **Bridge Builders for the Cross**, Pastor David Wafula in Kenya was able to purchase 80 Bibles. These were given to pastors and workers undergoing biblical leadership training. We are thankful that these are now in the hands of these pastors and workers. When you give to partners, you

make it possible for leaders to receive sound biblical training, allowing the Gospel to go into new areas! — **A partnership Gospel story from Kenya**

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *Would you pray that God's Word would go deep into their hearts and compel them to share the Gospel with more people in their local areas?*



Osam and Emily Sakamoto welcomed their daughter, **Miley**, in August! Join us in praying for their family as they adjust.



Dennis and Justin Teague directed a basketball camp in Oklahoma with a French girls' team and two French Coaches. Dennis and Carol Teague shared, "Thank you, Rejoice and Bethany churches. These girls heard and felt a lot of God's love during these two weeks."



Anthony and Lea Edgmon celebrated the wedding of their son, **Marc**, and new daughter-in-law, **Bayley**, in July!



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