

*For God so loved
the world...
shouldn't we?*

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***Praying for the World
One Country at Time***



**Cuba
October 30, 2011**

Cuba

Full Name

Republic of Cuba

Capital

Havana



Location

The island of Cuba is the largest Caribbean country, located between the Bahamas in the Caribbean Sea and Jamaica in the Atlantic Ocean, 150 km south of Key West, Florida

Leadership

For nearly 50 years, Cuba has been ruled as a one-party Communist state by Fidel Castro and, since February 2008, by his chosen successor and younger brother, Raul Castro.

Religion

nominally Christian, 85% Roman Catholic; also Protestant, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jewish, Santeria)

Overview

Cuba's native Amer-indian population was largely supplanted by the Spanish following European discovery of the island in 1492. Under Spanish colonial rule, large numbers of African slaves were imported to work vast coffee and sugar plantations. In 1898, with the aid of the United States, Cubans overthrew Spanish rule and in 1902 gained independence from the U.S. Fidel Castro and his rebel army won control of Cuba in 1959 and established a Communist state. Despite declaring an economic embargo of Cuba in 1961, the U.S. retains possession of the Guantanamo Naval Base under a 1903 treaty. Until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Castro and his Communist Party apparatus controlled almost every aspect of life in Cuba and exported Communism to Latin America and Africa, as well. Once Raul Castro assumed power, a few economic reforms were introduced. However, the still- Communist government retains tight control over Cuba's population, severely restricting freedom of expression for both individuals and the media and continuing to imprison numerous political dissidents.



Population

11,087,330 (July 2011 estimate); Race/Ethnicity: 65.1% white, 24.8% mulatto and mestizo, 10.1% black (2002 census)

Economy

The collapse of the USSR resulted in the withdrawal of billions of dollars of Soviet aid to Cuba and tight rationing of energy, food and consumer goods there. Since that time, the Cuban economy has been kept afloat with the help of several other countries and regions. Canadian, European and Latin American investment has largely focused on tourism. Cuba also has forged closer ties with China, especially in support of its nickel industry, and with oil-producing Venezuela. However, money sent home by Cubans living abroad, especially in Florida, is still crucial to the economy and, as they have done since the days of Fidel Castro's revolution, desperate Cubans continue to flee the country in search of a better life in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Prayer Concerns

Environmental: hurricanes, droughts, deforestation, air & water pollution;
Social/Political: poverty; increased prostitution, corruption, and black marketeering; severely restricted freedoms, especially the freedom of expression for both individuals and the media; long-imprisoned political dissidents; and ongoing dangerous & illicit attempts to migrate to the US;