

We can learn from Iglesia Bautista de Quiebra Hacha, Cuba

Team just returned from Cuba- Walt/Rita Masters, Carolyn Morton, Iris Roman. Thank you for the opportunity to represent New Hope and the Florida Baptist Convention in a country of great needs and opportunities to make Christ known and encourage His church there. Our purpose was primarily 3-fold: Worship, VBS, construction. Tonight we will share pictures and testimonies with you.

(disclaimer- after 11PM, unique time, perspective experience)

We learn from Paul's/Jesus' letters to churches. There is much we can learn from our friends and brothers and sisters in Quiebra Hacha, Cuba. (will relate to scripture)

My observations and the lessons I draw will be of the baptist church in Quiebra Hacha, not Cuba in general.

We can learn:

1. Communication

We regularly use 10+ or – forms of communication to get the word out and inform. E-mail, verbal, Facebook, Projection, Text messaging, phone, flyers/handouts, bulletin, calendar, web site, bulletin board/posters, word of mouth.

The church in **Quiebra Hacha** has one- word of mouth/verbal

I occasionally hear that our communication is not good. Bologne! Sure, we may occasionally fail to saturate all 10 mediums of communication about an event or need. But the

truth is if you missed something it's probably your fault. You are probably suffering from information overload and you're just not processing it effectively or you're in some kind of a semi-awake coma.

Fact: most all of us have failed to fulfill our responsibility to spread the good news about what God is doing. We are severely dependent on being bombarded by multiple formats of info, but we fail miserably to simply listen and tell.

If you don't know, ask. If you know tell! Communicate! This basic system of communication was given to Timothy by Paul....

1 You, therefore, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. **2** And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. **2** Tim 2:1-2 (HCSB)

I have always believed this and now I am more sure than ever- Word of mouth is the best form of communication. That is all the baptist church in Quiebra Hacha has, but it works! That's all Paul had with the exception of a few letters. This is important in transmitting and spreading spiritual truth and it is valuable in our daily communication.

Listen, remember, tell somebody!

2. Stewardship

We are rich! Even if you are living solely on Social Security or Welfare, you are also rich! Most of us have experience some

financial difficulty over the last three years. We have learned at home and at church to turn off lights, set the A/C up, fix the leaky toilet, eat cheaper and smarter, use less gas, to waste less.... But we are still profoundly wasteful consumers and we as believers don't manage the resources God has blessed us with as well as we should.

Quiebra Hacha- lumber, nails

Food- today's leftovers, tomorrow's meal

Tools- ancient, repaired many times, no power tools

Few trash cans (empty)

We can be better stewards. We must! This is the end of the third year of our national, community, church, and personal financial crisis. God has provided! We can/must do better. The refinance of our building is in progress. By just cutting back on our waste/excess in our homes and church, we could probably greatly reduce our debt, support our part-time staff better, and enhance ministries. We are rich! Let's be better managers of the wealth God has blessed us with.

1 He also said to the disciples: "There was a rich man who received an accusation that his manager was squandering his possessions. **2** So he called the manager in and asked, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you can no longer be [my] manager.' **L**uke 16:1-2 (HCSB)

What if today God called us in and made us give an account of how we're managing the things He has so abundantly allowed us to manage? Would He say "well done good and faithful servant," or would there be weeping and gnashing of teeth?

3. Spirit (contentment/joy)

Every day- 90 degrees w/ no A/C, no screens/open windows, no cars, \$18/mo, unreliable water (well/cistern), no cell phone, TV or internet. Yet with all they don't have, Their contentment and joy is profoundly evident and consistent. This cannot be faked. It's the real deal. Their faith and service to the Lord is a bottomless well that overflows through their daily lives. It is profoundly clear that the people of Iglesia Bautista Love God, each other and life.

12 I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret [of being content] —whether well-fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. **13** I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me. **Phil 4:12-13** (HCSB)

Apostle Paul said he learn how to be content. The people of the Baptist Church in Quiebra Hacha have obviously learned the secret of contentment. It doesn't make sense!

Are you content? I'm afraid many of us most of the time rely way too much on the things of this world for our source of contentment and fulfillment, and by doing so, we find ourselves frequently disappointed and unhappy wanting more, getting more but never satisfied.

4 Adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the world's friend becomes God's enemy. **J**ames 4:4 (HCSB)

Paul's secret, the church in Cuba's secret, our secret to contentment and joy in this life is no secret at all! It is found, not in loving the things of this world but in loving and serving God.

4. Worship

We met at the church for worship Saturday, Sunday, and Tuesday night. It was 90+ degrees, extremely humid, roof/ceiling was literally falling in, You could get a better keyboard at a yard sale for \$15, sound system from 1960's didn't work, wood pews. Saturday and Sunday the church was packed and good crowd Tuesday.

Worship was power and dynamic. You could hear the singing blocks away. They sang many of the same songs we sing, old and new. Everyone sang all the songs. Worship was passionate, joyful, and exuberant, and loud, and long! The older people sang the new songs and the younger people sang the old songs. We worshipped for 1 and ½ to 2 hours and they would have stayed longer.

I'm afraid we come to "worship" with so many pre-conditions, expectations, demands, and opinions that we often miss worship all together. Worship is not about comfort, facilities, quantity or quality of music (10+ songs), familiar or new....

It is: God's people coming together

Unashamedly expressing love for God (in spite of circumstances)

Heart and passion for Jesus that refuses to allow outward circumstances to deter our expression of love for God

The Iglesia Bautista de Quiebra Hacha love and serve the same Jesus we love and serve. We have better facilities, better musicians, more comfortable seating, A/C, sound, video.... Where's the passion, joy, undistracted affection and adoration of God?

Quit worrying about time, how many songs, prayers, or sermon points and unashamedly praise and worship the One who has blessed you so much.

1 I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." **P**salms 122:1 (HCSB)

1 Come, let us shout joyfully to the LORD, shout triumphantly to the rock of our salvation! **2** Let us enter His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout triumphantly to Him in song. **P**salms 95:1-2 (HCSB)

Love (people of QA)

God- worship, faithfulness, work, service

Pastor Caleb has the heart of a true servant of God. He did not sit with us at the table. He carried my guitar. He worked hard, grateful, loves God, studies and knows the word, loves the church, humble

Each other- fellowship, work together

Us- though strangers, as kings

At the pastor's dining table, we were served and treated like it was a fine restaurant and we were royalty.

They certainly don't do everything the way I/we would do it. But they have the most important things right. Love God, love people. This is not my opinion. It is Jesus'.

³⁷ He said to him, "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.** ³⁸ This is the greatest and most important commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it: **Love your neighbor as yourself.** ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments." Matt 22:37-40 (HCSB)

Of my 25 or so mission trips- most physically demanding- work, heat, humidity, schedule. I have learned and grown so much!

Our Florida Baptist Convention has partnered with the Cuban Baptist Convention for nearly 20 years. NHBF is now partners with Iglesia Bautista de Quiebra Hach, Cuba. I would like to continue this partnership with your support, encouragement and involvement. We can do so much to help our brothers and sisters in Cuba. God is moving and working. I want to continue being a part of that. Yesterday I got new commitment for the next trip.

We must also be more fervent here in our own city of Cape Coral. The little bit of discomfort, risk or inconvenience we

might have to experience in our to spread the Good News is ridiculously miniscule.

Today, I've been talking to the church about the church. But what about you? Do you know Christ? Does He know you?

22 On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' **23** Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! **Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!**' **Matt 7:22-23 (HCSB)**

More than head knowledge, observation or participation in church stuff, filling out a card, saying a prayer, and getting wet.

It is repentance, faith, and a personal covenant relationship with Christ.