

# Cuba Project 2018

## Information Packet

**Location:** San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba

**Project Dates:** March 30 - April 9, 2018

**Total Fee:** \$1,300

**Children 12 and under:** \$1,150

(Age determined on the start date of the project)

*Flight to Havana is not included in the participation fee*



## Maranatha in Cuba

Maranatha has been working in Cuba since the 1990s, renovating and building more than 200 Seventh-day Adventist churches and building the Adventist seminary in Havana.

When Maranatha started the effort, the Adventist Church in Cuba was quite depressed. There were only about 12,000 baptized members, and most of the sanctuaries were in terrible condition. Today, there are more than 31,500 members—an increase that the Church in Cuba attributes to Maranatha.

The work has been slow and complicated, due to government restrictions and other political challenges. Yet God's leading has been steady, and Maranatha's faith has only increased because of our experience in Cuba.

## Project Overview

The San Antonio de los Baños congregation has been meeting in a church member's home for more than 45 years when she made her living room available to the group to meet together each Sabbath. When she passed away, she made sure her children knew that her home was to be a church! The group meeting there soon outgrew the space though, and there are now more than 218 members meeting each week. The house was no longer big enough for the group to worship in the same room each week. The members knocked down the back wall of the house and have done what they can as they've had money, but any progress has been slow going. Now, with the help of Maranatha, they have started to complete an expansion on the building to accommodate their group. For the last year the church members have been meeting in five different members' homes and on the roof of the current church. They are longing for the moment that they will be able to meet together again! Maranatha volunteers on this project will help with the finishing stages of the church construction. The group will paint the interior and exterior of the church.

In addition to the painting, the group will reach out into the community surrounding the church. Some of the community members like the Adventist church, some do not, and some are

### Project Schedule

**Friday, March 30**  
Morning and early afternoon arrival in Havana

**Saturday, March 31**  
Worship with the local congregation

**Sunday, April 1 - Friday, April 6**  
Work days - painting and outreach

**Saturday, April 7**  
Worship with the local congregation

**Sunday, April 8**  
Health education fair

**Monday, April 9**  
Departures from Havana

indifferent. Through these outreach projects the church members and the community members will be able to interact in positive ways and encourage relationships that can grow into evangelism. Currently, plans include three different outreach projects:

1. **Painting and Street Clean Up:** Some of the houses on the street in front of the church are well kept up and others are not. With the permission of the owners, volunteers will paint the street fronts of the houses and stores along this road to make the whole community shine.
2. **Evening Sports Ministry:** There is a school a block down from the church with a beautiful play area. The church has held sports events at this park in the past, but they say if the volunteers come, the whole town will come! Volunteers will get a chance to interact with the local kids, teens, and adults through soccer, volleyball, and basketball a few evenings of the project.
3. **Health Education Fair:** On the final Sunday, the group will have a large health education fair in the local park or in the finished church building. This program will include children's focused learning, adult classes, health screenings, and fun!

## Accommodations

During the project, the group will stay at the Las Yagrumas Hotel in a suburb of Havana, about 10 minutes from the San Antonio de los Baños. Overall the accommodations are basic and range between a 1- and 2-star hotel. We mention this in advance so you can adjust your expectations for this mission trip.



The rooms have a mix of twin and queen beds with air-conditioning and private bathrooms with relatively warm water (may not be hot). Linens are provided, but washcloths are not commonly provided in Cuba, so plan on bringing your own.

The hotel has WiFi access in the lobby through prepaid internet cards. The group will meet together to have meals at the hotel. Because of the government situation in Cuba we're not allowed to worship openly at the hotel. We will work around that challenge by having our group worship at the church or the bus before we head back to the hotel.

Volunteers should plan on staying in double occupancy rooms with a roommate. If you would like to room with someone in particular, please let us know prior to the final deadline of the project (February 26). There are single occupancy rooms available for an additional cost of \$350 per person for the project. If you'd like to book a single room, please email us at [volunteer@maranatha.org](mailto:volunteer@maranatha.org) or call (916) 774-7700.

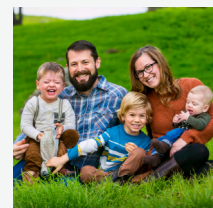
## Excursions

During the project, volunteers will have the unique opportunity to tour Havana on two half-day excursions. This iconic city is a blend of cultures, politics, and time. There are clear European and American influences throughout the city in the architecture and vehicles. Parisian-style balconies, Spanish colonial mansions, and vintage American cars are scattered throughout the city. There is also a plethora of political propaganda lining the streets, monuments to government leaders, and neighborhoods crumbling in decay. It is a fascinating place to visit, and volunteers will be able to experience all parts of this intriguing city.

## Leadership

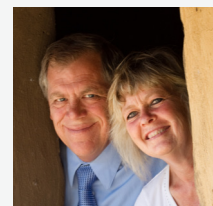
### David Lopez | Project Coordinator

David joins the group from Rocklin, California, where he lives with his wife Alisa, and their three boys, Crosby, Carter, and Garrison. David became involved with Maranatha through the Ultimate Workout, Maranatha's teen project, when he was only fourteen years old. Now, he is the director of volunteer projects and helps to coordinate more than 60 volunteer groups annually. When not traveling the world, the Lopez family enjoys outdoor activities and spending time with family and friends. David will oversee all aspects of this trip as project coordinator.



### Terry Schwartz | Construction Superintendent

Terry joins the group from Lincoln, Nebraska, where he lives with his wife Dina. Terry and Dina have served together with Maranatha in many countries including India, Curacao, Ecuador, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Brazil. Terry is the author of *Never Alone*, a book about the impact Maranatha has had on his life while dealing with cancer. He gathers strength from participating on Maranatha mission trips. When they aren't traveling, Terry and Dina enjoy photography and outdoor activities.



### Mark Herscher | Health Fair Coordinator

Mark Herscher was born and raised in southern Oregon and has been enjoying a career as a family medicine physician since 1985. He and his wife of 45 years, Cheryl, first joined Maranatha on a stateside project in the mid to late 70's and have been dedicated volunteers ever since! They enjoy traveling, and when not on a Maranatha trip, they enjoy working outdoors. Both Mark and Cheryl love mission trips because they can reconnect with old friends, make new friends, and see people accepting and living the Gospel of Jesus in their lives.



### Adrian and Sandra Serna | Sports Ministry Coordinators

Adrian and Sandra join the group from Lincoln, CA where Adrian works as a CFO at Adventist Health and Sandra uses her experience as an educator to homeschool their three kids, Adrian Jr, Isaac, and Caleb. They first joined Maranatha in 2015 on a Family Project and "were hooked." With three boys and an athletic father, sports is the favorite family hobby! So a mission trip where they can combine their love for traveling, missions, and sports together is like a dream come true. The Serna family is looking forward to spreading the love of Jesus through sports and serving with like-minded Christians.



## Expenses

The participation fee covers housing, three vegetarian meals a day, ground transportation in Cuba, local excursions, short-term travel insurance, a Maranatha t-shirt, and luggage tags.

Maranatha must receive all funds and forms by February 26 due to application processing time. Wait for confirmation of acceptance on the project before purchasing your airfare.

All prices are listed in U.S. dollars. Payments can be made by cash or check sent to the Maranatha office in California (please include your name and "Cuba Project 2018") or by credit or debit card online or over the phone.

For Canadian tax-deductible receipts, payments must be made by check to the Maranatha Volunteers International (Canada) Association (address located at the end of this information packet). At this time Maranatha cannot issue tax-deductible receipts for credit card payments.

If you are fundraising or receiving donations please either have them sent directly to you or work with your local church treasurer to collect funds and issue tax-deductible receipts, since it is difficult for Maranatha to track individual small checks. If your church will not work with you, please wait until you have collected the full amount of your participation fee before submitting your participation fee to Maranatha.

## Estimate of Additional Costs

- Flight to Havana: \$300 - \$750
- Passport: \$130 or \$110 for renewal
- Tourist Visa: \$75

## About Cuba

Cuba is the largest island nation in the Caribbean, lying approximately 100 miles south of the state of Florida. It is also the second most populous after the island of Hispaniola, home to Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Cuba is composed of several islands, but the largest island consists of flat, rolling plains and a small range of mountains in the southeast. At one point, the entire island was covered with trees, but large areas were cleared to grow sugarcane and tobacco.



## Facts and Figures

**Capital:**  
Havana

**Population:**  
11 million

**Language:**  
Spanish

**Climate:**  
Tropical. Dry Season November to April

**Currency:**  
Cuban Convertible Peso (currency for tourists, not local citizens)

The indigenous tribe of Taínos first inhabited Cuba. The Spanish colonized the island in the early 1500's, and the indigenous people were virtually wiped out by the unfamiliar diseases brought by the European settlers. After the Spanish-American War, Spain ceded other island nations to the United States. In the midst of this, Cuba gained formal independence from the U.S. in May of 1902. In the 1950's, the country was declared a communist nation after a revolution led by Fidel Castro.

When Castro assumed power, the government became more restrictive of fundamental freedoms and human rights. Political opponents were repressed. In response, the United States imposed embargoes on Cuba and broke diplomatic relations. However, within the last 20 years, the government in Cuba has given more rights to its citizens.

Cuba has a rich culture, and each year more and more tourists enjoy its beaches and cities. Cuba is known as a melting pot of Spanish and African culture. The cuisine of Cuba is often composed of traditional Spanish meals with a Caribbean spice and flavor.

## Travel Information

Volunteers will purchase their own plane tickets to the city of Havana. If you arrive or depart outside the posted time frames, you may have long wait times at the airport or may be responsible for paying the additional transportation for your individual airport transfer.

Currently American, Delta, United, Southwest, and Jetblue Airlines fly in and out of Havana daily.

Please wait for confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your airfare to ensure there is still space on the project. Together volunteers will travel together by bus to the project location.

### Flights

#### Arrival

Please plan to arrive in Havana (airport code HAV) in the morning or afternoon of Friday, March 30. Please arrive before 3 p.m.

#### Departure

Please plan to depart from Havana (HAV) in the morning or afternoon of Monday, April 9.

### Arriving Early or Staying Late

Cuba has some beautiful travel destinations. Some of you may choose to arrive earlier than March 30 or stay beyond April 9 to explore the country on your own. Please make your own hotel and transportation plans for any days outside of the Maranatha project dates. If you have any questions, feel free to call Maranatha at (916) 774-7700.

### Travel Resources

**CI Azumano Travel:** 800-454-4099 or by email with Erle Dpenha or Azumano Team at [corporatetravel@ciazumano.com](mailto:corporatetravel@ciazumano.com)

**Butler Travel:** 503-879-5005 or by email with Nathanael at [nathan@butlertravel.com](mailto:nathan@butlertravel.com) or with Ellen at with [ellen@butlertravel.com](mailto:ellen@butlertravel.com).

**Kayak:** [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)

When contacting the Azumano or Butler travel agencies, make sure you mention Maranatha to receive a discounted service charge.

### Entry Requirements

**Passport** | All passports must be valid for at least six months from the dates of intended travel (October 9, 2018). If you do not have a passport, U.S. citizens can apply at any U.S. post office or online at <http://travel.state.gov>. Canadian citizens can apply online at [www.passport.gc.ca](http://www.passport.gc.ca). It can take up to two months to complete the entire process, so plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to receive your passport.

**Tourist Visa Card** | In addition to a passport, travelers must also have a tourist visa card. The airline you use to fly to Havana will sell this to you at the gate before you leave. The cost is \$75 to \$100 depending on the airline. Your travel falls under “religious activities,” one of the 12 approved categories for travel to Cuba. Before you return home, Maranatha will give you a permission letter from the U.S. Department of State, authorizing your travel to Cuba with Maranatha.

## Staying Healthy

Maranatha requires that every volunteer have a current **tetanus** vaccine (within the last 10 years). The Center of Disease Control (CDC) also recommends vaccines for hepatitis and typhoid.

Some of these you may already have and some of them you may deem unnecessary for this trip. You should schedule a consultation with a travel clinic doctor to talk about the medical risks in Cuba and the ways to minimize them.

### Zika

Recently the Zika virus has been spreading around Latin America. This mosquito-borne disease acts similar to a hard-hitting flu with symptoms lasting about two weeks. There is currently no vaccine or treatment for the disease, and the CDC has issued a **Level 2 warning**. This warning does not suggest that you postpone all travel, but it does urge travelers to take **heightened precautions** to avoid being bitten.

This virus is still being studied, and information is continuing to be released. Currently, there are no known long-term effects; however, there does seem to be a link between the virus and possible birth defects in babies born from women who were infected during their pregnancy. The virus can remain in a woman’s body for approximately eight weeks and in a man’s body for approximately six months, and it can be spread through physical contact. If you or your partner is pregnant, think you might be pregnant, or are trying to get pregnant in the next six months, Maranatha recommends speaking with your doctor to determine if you should travel.

## Giving Opportunity

On this project, volunteers will be interacting with the local Pathfinder club. This club was rated the #1 club in Cuba, but they don’t have a lot of resources. We’re asking volunteers who would like to help to bring tents or other camping supplies to donate to this group of energetic and dedicated teenagers. Confirmed volunteers can look for more information in emails as we get closer to the project.

## How to Register

To register, please complete the online registration and pay the full participation fee or an initial deposit of at least half the total participation fee. You can make this payment by credit card online or over the phone or with a check made out to Maranatha Volunteers International and sent to the address below. If for any reason you need to cancel your participation, Maranatha will do their best to refund your deposit up until one month before travel. After that point, \$150 is non-refundable and the remainder will depend on the reservations and the project arrangements already made.

Register online at [Maranatha.org](http://Maranatha.org) or over the phone.

## Contact Information

**Phone:** (916) 774-7700

**Fax:** (916) 774-7701

**Email:** [volunteer@maranatha.org](mailto:volunteer@maranatha.org)

**Website:** [www.maranatha.org](http://www.maranatha.org)

**Mailing Address:**

Maranatha Volunteers International  
990 Reserve Drive  
Suite 100  
Roseville, CA 95678

**Canadian Payments Only:**

Maranatha Volunteers International  
Association  
c/o V06494C  
PO Box 6494, Station Terminal  
Vancouver, BC V6B 6R3

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\*All confirmed volunteers on an International Maranatha Open Team receive a Maranatha t-shirt as part of their participation fee.

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