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My Experience in Maisi and Baracoa



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On November 16th, I had the opportunity to visit the villages of Maisi and Baracoa with the president of the Eastern Baptist Convention of Cuba, Rev. Osbel Gutierrez, his wife, Sarita, Rev. Roy Acosta, and a delegation from Puerto Rico, among this group were Rev. Edwin Mojica and Brunilda Gonzalez. The Puerto Rican group left at 3am from Jiguani heading to Santiago where we would meet our Baptist leaders from Cuba. By 4:00 am, we were on our way to Maisi and Baracoa. It was a long journey, but it was worth it.

We saw the ravages of Hurricane Matthew during much of our journey. It was devastating to see how houses, churches, and entire schools were totally destroyed, even coconut palm trees were literally uprooted! These two villages are coconut and cacao farmers, and all their plantations suffered total loss. There is nothing.

In the midst of this chaos, we had the opportunity to celebrate a local church becoming part of the Baptist Convention. God gave us a reason to rejoice: in a time of destruction, a new church was being formed. In order to go to this event we had first to ride an improvised boat to cross the river, and then we had to travel several more kilometers in a construction truck. It was a hard and difficult road but it was worth seeing with my own eyes: on one hand the devastation that Hurricane Matthew had done, and on the other hand, the endurance, determination and drive of the Cuban people ready to rise together.

Thanks to funds from White Cross and donations from ABCUSA churches of Puerto Rico, I was able to deliver some canvases to provisionally cover roofs, to bring water purifiers, and some construction tools.

Thanks to OGHS offering many churches and homes will be rebuilt.

What a blessing to have such an experience: Emmanuel, God with us, as I keep witnessing Christians joining hands in solidarity with victims of Hurricane Matthew.

Let us keep praying and serving so that during this Christmas season this reality, Emmanuel, is with people near and far from us.

In God's service,
Madeline Flores-Lopez