



Introducing *Talita Cumi* Girls' Clubs in Cuba

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Cuba: Faith, Resilience, and Hope in Difficult Times

In October 2025, I traveled to Cuba for the first time.

When I arrived in Havana, I got to meet and work together with some of the most kind, thoughtful, prepared, and resilient people I have ever encountered.

My trip began with a small adventure. I had planned to meet my area director at the airport so we could go through immigration together, but her flight was delayed. Suddenly, I found myself navigating immigration alone in a country I had never visited. It was intimidating at first, but everything went smoothly. Soon after, several wonderful local contacts arrived to take me to my guesthouse.

I stayed in a church in the center of Havana. This church is named after William Carey, the pioneering Baptist missionary who said, "Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God." It is a bustling place, with activities all week and guest rooms for visitors. It is a church that is running with that vision of William Carey.

Cuba is in the midst of a severe economic crisis. Across many parts of the island, electricity is cut off for hours each day—even in temperatures approaching 90 degrees. Without power, there is no air conditioning, and people must leave their windows open at night, allowing mosquitoes inside. During my visit, Cuba was experiencing a widespread outbreak of mosquito-borne illnesses such as Dengue and Chikungunya.

The purpose of my visit was to introduce and train local leaders in the ***Talita Cumi* Girls' Clubs program**, which has served churches in Latin America for many years. Over the

course of the trip, I met with seminary leaders, church leaders, and community leaders to explain both the theoretical and theological foundations of the program and to share research showing how it **strengthens girls' social self-efficacy in challenging environments**.

On my second day in Havana, I led an eight-hour workshop. Later, we traveled to the city of Matanzas to conduct another training. When we arrived, a local doctor greeted me with a surprising comment: "You must be very brave to come here." She then explained that **95% of the people in Matanzas had either recently had dengue or were recovering from it**.

Despite those circumstances, ten to twelve leaders came and participated in the workshop. Their commitment to and compassion for the girls in their communities is an example for all of us.

One of the most meaningful moments of the trip occurred that evening when the pastor's wife invited us to meet the girls from her church. I had the opportunity to share my testimony and hear about the realities these girls face in their daily lives. Seeing the **Talita Cumi** program begin to take shape in that moment was a gratifying highlight of my time there.

Another experience that deeply impacted me was visiting churches throughout Cuba that had installed **reverse osmosis water systems**. These churches provide unlimited clean water to anyone who needs it, not just church members, but everyone in the neighborhood.

What moved me most was the way these communities care for one another. In several churches, older residents are invited to come early in the morning while it is still cool to collect their water, so they do not have to stand in line in the heat. Only after the senior citizens have been served do the younger members of the community come to collect their water. It is a beautiful expression of solidarity and compassion.

Today, the people of Cuba are facing immense challenges. While they remain among the most hopeful and resilient people I have ever met, many are becoming exhausted by the daily hardships they endure.

Please join me in praying for our brothers and sisters in Cuba—for a resolution to the crisis, for protection and provision, and for the well-being of all the Cuban people during this difficult time.

A Personal Update

Many of you know that I am now serving **part-time** with **International Ministries as a global servant and regional consultant in Ibero-America**. I am now teaching full-time at

the **School of Public Health at Texas A&M University** nine months of the year. This has been a tremendous blessing.

It has been incredibly meaningful to bring my experiences from *Talita Cumi* and Latin America into the classroom. Even more exciting, doors are opening for students to travel with me to Latin America to serve. I am hopeful that I may be able to bring a small group of students to Nicaragua in October.

Thank you for your continued support of Dwight and me, of this ministry, and of the communities we serve. Because of you, girls across Latin America are discovering that their lives have value, purpose, and hope, women in churches are discovering their gifts in helping young girls begin a lifelong journey of being formed in Christ.

We are deeply grateful, and we look forward to sharing more with you soon, about my time with the Girls' Clubs in Costa Rica in January.







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