



Seminario Evangélico de Teología

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Protestant and Reformed Theological Education Campus in Havana

Vision

For the Evangelical Seminary of Theology (SET) to prepare in Havana future leaders of the Cuban Protestant and Reformed Churches.

Specific Project Objectives

1. To establish SET's permanent and solid presence in Cuba's Capital city in order to strengthen its Protestant and Reformed theological education.
2. To provide a permanent and safe space for the SET's regular classes, seminars and symposiums.
3. To provide its own accommodation for students, professors and other groups which can become an income source for the Seminary.

Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas

The SET is a Christian and ecumenical nonprofit organization which offers education, religious and outreach services. It was founded in 1946 in Matanzas (60 miles East of Havana), based on a solid ecumenical commitment and action. It focuses on relevant and effective high standard academic, ethical, moral, civic and spiritual formation of all those who feel called by God to serve in ordained ministry, and other ministries in their churches. This is crucial today, in the context of the social transformation that is taking place in the island.

The Presbyterian and Methodist Churches initially founded the SET. Currently, the Presbyterian-Reformed Church, the Episcopal Church, The Fraternity of Baptist Churches and the Quaker Brethren are members of the board of the SET.

The Need for a SET Campus in Havana

The SET needs to establish a permanent presence in Cuba's Capital city in order to strengthen and expand its vision and mission through classes, seminars, symposiums and other activities. This would provide a stable ecumenical location for all its programs, which include undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate studies in the areas of Bible and theology, sciences of religion, Christian Education and liturgy. So far and for many years, the SET has tried to develop in Havana its academic programs—involving more that 15 professors and 300 students—in different church facilities, which have been very unstable since often times they need their spaces for their own activities. The campus needs to be equipped with multi-purpose rooms for all its academic activities as well as administrative offices, dormitories, a kitchen and a dining room.

Budget (in USD)

\$530,000	properties purchase (350,000 + 180,000).
\$150,000	equipping and adapting properties (computers, projectors, TV sets, amplifiers, telephone, internet access) and adapting multi-purpose rooms for all the academic activities as well as administrative offices, dormitories, a kitchen and a dining room.
\$120,000	contingency
\$500,000	start up operations fund
\$1,300,000	total

Note: This is an ASK for commitment of new funds and not shifting of funds from partner congregations.

Contact persons

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Matanzas, December 18th 2023

(Addendum next page)

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Addendum - Updating on the Current Situation in Cuba – November 2023

The Cuban people are currently living through the most acute economic contraction and crisis of values since the “special period” (decade of the 1990s) when the Soviet Union and socialist bloc collapsed. Cuba has not yet recovered from those times. The crisis has become worse due to several factors.

On one hand, the aggressive policy of the government of the United States against Cuba, particularly during the Donald Trump administration, which imposed 243 measures, most of them during the Covid-19 pandemic, against the Cuban people to try to smother them. In the past session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 2, 187 nations voted in favor of the Republic of Cuba against the blockade, with two votes against and one abstention. The current Biden’s Administration has not done much to reverse Trump’s aggressive policies towards Cuba.

On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought negative consequences: the sad death of loved ones, producing great emotional impact on the people. Furthermore, the Cuban State has lost millions of dollars above all due to the fall of tourism. Also, the current global financial crisis, of course has had a strong negative impact in the island’s economy as well.

Finally, the crisis has intensified because of the economic measures taken by the Cuban State two years ago. Even though salaries have increased, and the government has reiterated the promise that no one will be defenseless, the truth is that the population must pay five times more for food and electricity, water, gas, telephone, and other services. Inflation has far exceeded the meager increase in salaries.

One of the most adverse consequences of the crisis is the irregular migration: Over 250,000 in 2022! more than 2% of the island’s 11 million population (125,000 in 1980; 34,000 in 1994). Among all these migrants many churches have lost leaders and therefore we need to be even more intentional in the theological formation of the remaining members.

In the long term, all these factors will have a huge negative impact on the economy of the nation, which of course, will have a direct effect on the churches in general and the Matanzas Theological Seminary in particular. In this new situation, it is even more compelling for the Seminary to establish a permanent and solid presence in Cuba’s Capital city, to strengthen its Protestant theological education, including the preparation and training of pastors. The mainline Reformed churches require a renewed pastorate and leadership for the new times, for this *Kairos* of the country, in a post-Covid period that will not be the same, to be proactive participants in the new society we are trying to build. Furthermore, the campus will provide its own accommodations for students, professors and other groups which can become an income source for the Seminary.