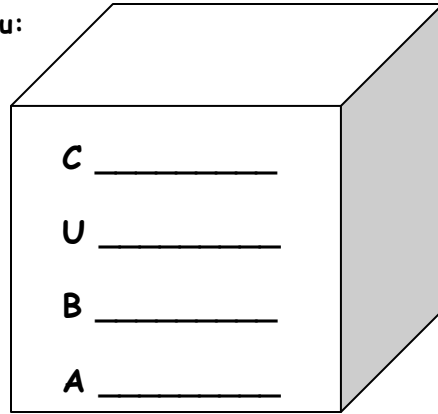


Here's a special puzzle for you:

Can you find people in the Bible whose names begin with each of the letters on the cube? See if you can think of several answers for each letter!



Although life is very difficult in Cuba, many of the buildings are falling down or need painting, and there is even sewage in the streets in some places, the government considers schooling very important. In fact Cuba is #1 in the world for the amount of money spent on education! (18.7% of the gross domestic product) But when children start middle school, they have to leave home and go live at the schools which are in the countryside. These are like little villages where the children do schoolwork, eat and sleep - and they even have to help work in the fields! They only get to go home for holidays, so they can't spend much time with their parents.

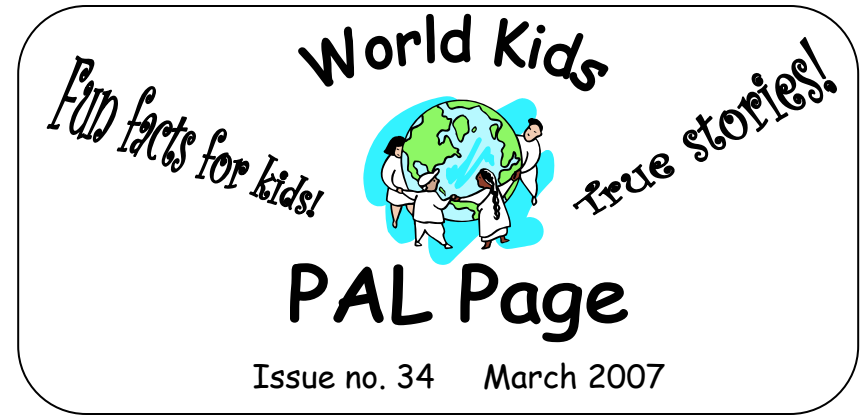


Do you know what the usual meal is in Cuba? Most likely it would be rice with just a few beans mixed in, sliced cucumber or yucca, and nearly always bananas! Aren't you glad you don't live in Cuba? Let's pray and thank Jesus for all the good food we have to eat (even if we don't always like it!) and pray that Jesus will help the children of Cuba soon have a better life.

'Til next time,

Your friend, Shirley

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(Some answers to the puzzle cube: Caleb, Christ, Cain, Cornelius; Uzziah, Uriah; Barnabas, Bathsheba, Benjamin, Balaam, Bartholomew, Bartimaeus; Adam, Abel, Abraham, Ananias, Aaron, Ahab, Anna, Andrew, Abigail, Aquila.)



How do you like your eggs for breakfast? Fried? Boiled? Scrambled?

Sometimes it's hard to decide, right? But you can always choose scrambled today, and then go for fried tomorrow! Imagine how much harder it would be to decide, if you could only eat **3 eggs each month?**

That's what it is like for almost ALL of the children who live in a country only 90 miles from the United States! Do you know which country we are talking about? It's CUBA!

Cuba is a really beautiful tropical island south of Florida, with lovely tall palm trees, gorgeous sandy beaches and clear, turquoise water - a real paradise! But sadly the children living there have a very hard life! Since before their parents (and even some of their grandparents!) were born, the country has been ruled by a man named Fidel Castro and his communist government.



The Cuban flag is blue and white stripes with a white star on a red triangle.



Cuba is a long, narrow island about 700 miles long, that lies south of Florida, between the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Did you know that



Christopher Columbus landed there on his voyage to America in 1492? There were some Indians living there then, but many of those were killed as more and more Spanish people came to live on the lovely island. Through the centuries, Cuba became an important base for many people traveling from Europe to the Americas, and as a result of the slave trade, a



large number of people from Africa also came to live there. Now the more than 11 million inhabitants of Cuba are of many different nationalities. Mostly all speak Spanish, but there are tall people with black hair, short people with blond hair, fat and thin people with red hair, people with pale skin, people with dark skin - ALL kinds of people living and working together!

Fidel Castro led a revolution in Cuba in 1959 and took over with his communist government. At first the people thought life would be better, but sadly the government became very strict. Communists believe there is no such thing as God and for many years bibles were burned, churches destroyed and Christians killed or imprisoned. Many of the teachers, scientists and leaders were also killed. After Russia withdrew its financial help in 1990, life in Cuba became even worse as the people began to starve. Thousands of people tried to escape to Florida in small boats and homemade rafts.



Everybody has to work for the government, and so there are no private stores or businesses. That means there are no "name brands", no billboards or advertising. You can't buy Coca Cola, Twinkies or Hershey's chocolate! It means that everyone makes about the same amount of money, whether they are a teacher, scientist or street sweeper! Can you guess what the average wage for a month is in Cuba? No, not \$500, not \$200, not \$75, not even \$20!! It is less than \$10 per month!!

Food is rationed still today in Cuba, and everyone has a ration book. This means that the people can go to special stores where they buy certain basic foods each month at VERY low prices. Each person is allowed 3 eggs, one pint of oil, 1lb beans and 6lb rice each month. They can also buy HALF a bar of soap every 2 months to wash with! If they want to buy ANY other food, or clothes, furniture or household goods (like toilet paper, pencils...) then they have to go to another type of store, but the prices are the same or more than we pay in the USA!

Imagine how hard it would be to decide what to buy, when after you have paid the rent and electricity, and bought the food with the ration book, you only have \$2 left for the month! Should you spend \$1.20 on 4 toilet rolls, buy a chicken, or save up the money for several months to buy a pair of shoes?



True story!

When I was in Cuba 4 years ago, I stayed with a lady who is a preacher and who has a teenage boy (we'll call him John). They told me that when John was only 3 or 4 years old, his mother was preaching in a village in the mountains when the soldiers marched up to her in the middle of the service. They told her that if she didn't immediately stop preaching and telling people about Jesus, her cute little boy would be beaten up and killed! She was very scared but she knew that John already had given his heart to Jesus. She told the soldiers that she was sorry but she could never stop telling people about Jesus, and that she knew that John was going to live forever with Jesus whenever he died, so she had peace. She went on preaching (and praying!) and eventually the soldiers left and didn't come back!



Have YOU given your heart to Jesus? Read John 5:24