

LAMS Chronicles

IGLESIA EPISCOPAL REFORMADA/ADOC LATIN AMERICA MISSION SOCIETY • FALL 2025

Colombia 2025...

The Rt. Reverend John Boozaaier

First half of the visit was in Cali, touring ministry points, visiting in the home of the Bishop Emeritus, and observing at several mission stations with social ministries. The second half was two hours north, in Tuluá, the residence and parish of the Bishop Ordinary, where a portion of the clergy gathered for their first synod in over five years. The ministry complex is a former retreat center. The diocese insisted on providing all hospitality: food, lodging, and transportation. They were very thoughtful and generous in their hosting, doing all they could for us.

Each of the team used his/her gifts not only in translation, but also in observing from his/her own unique perspective. (Gustavo, Venezuelan REC pastor; Clara his wife, choir; Howden+, South American experience; Dr. Bernier, Dean of Hispanic Studies; Canon Mayo, Joint Latin American Mission Society).

Much of their diocesan ministry is in social settings, such as a funeral home, homeless ministry, urban farms, provision for the poor and neglected, and economic recovery and reconciliation for victims of gang and cartel violence. Local, regional, and national government authorizes and funds many church ministries. The diocese has been favorably received and recognized by government's "Office of Religious Affairs." Our team met with the regional chamber, national representatives, and local administration, each of which praised the diocese for its social ministry.

Most of the clergy are of a Roman background and appreciate the formation they received; they noted that a defined pathway is needed for vocations in their own diocese. The clergy have received a solid education in magisterial formation, but would benefit from deeper biblical knowledge, a Prayer Book Rule of Life, and instruction in culturally appropriate liturgical preaching and behavior.

This is a cheerful, hopeful, generous, and skilled group of clergy, and it was a delight to be hosted and befriended by such a wonderful group of people in their



Bishops Wilmar, Boonzaaijer & Tamayo

own colorful and exuberant culture. Its leadership, liturgy, and structures require further development before they can rightly be identified and labelled as Reformed Episcopal.

Visitor Reports

The Reverend Ben Bernier

On our recent trip to Colombia, we had the opportunity to engage firsthand with our brethren who are eager to receive further theological instruction in classical Anglicanism in Spanish. This has been a longstanding need and challenge in the region, presenting the potential for great fruit. The brethren expressed particular interest in learning more about the experience of married clergy with believing children—a reality that, due to the cultural and religious tradition of the Latin American culture is still a rarity for many of them. Please continue to pray for us as we seek to serve faithfully in these key areas of teaching and training, and as we consider the prospect of providing seminary instruction and also the use of the prayer book in Spanish.

The Reverend Paul Howden

On the way to Colombia, I wondered how it would be. We had never met these Anglican brethren in person, and I had no idea what we were getting into. The first days were spent in the big city of Cali. (2.5 million) On Wednesday afternoon, Fr. Juan Cabal gave us a tour of downtown Cali, Colombia, and showed us churches, cathedrals, historic sites, and curious places.

Thursday morning, we travelled to the city of Tulua, to St. Paul's Anglican Church, where we were welcomed with a party! After the dancing, introductions, and a feast, we got ready to celebrate the Eucharist. It was quite an event. Possibly up to 250 people showed up, including four or five police in uniform standing in the back. Bishop Wilmar sang and led the liturgy; he has a powerful voice. The love and fellowship of the Columbians for us was warm and wonderful.



Gustavo's Ordination in July.

Canon Barclay and I travelled in a truck with Padre Edilson Huerfano, and his two bodyguards. Part of Fr. Huerfano's calling is to travel around the country and act as mediator to keep innocent citizens from being shot and killed in the battles between rival drug cartels, and revolutionary groups. The local authorities invite him to come and help them solve problems.

On Friday and Saturday morning, Fr. Paul led a scaled-down version of Morning Prayer followed by teaching sessions led by Bishop Boonzaaijer. Gustavo gave an excellent teaching lesson on Anglican rosaries. On Saturday we gave theological exams to the Colombian priests. The most beautiful service was the Sunday morning Holy Communion with confirmations, and the ordination of Gustavo as Deacon. The singing and music were sublime, and the six of us as a team sang a sextet for those in attendance.

The week came off well, I think. I loved Bishop Perez, the priests, the people, the fellowship, food, and worship. It seems that this group has a way to go to get completely aligned with the churchmanship and culture of the

Reformed Episcopal Church, but I have faith that with our assistance and prayers they will get there.

The Rev. Gustavo Rendon Yanez (Caracas, Venezuela)

In July 2025, I had the privilege of traveling with my wife, Clara, to Colombia to participate in the Synod of the Diocese of Colombia. This trip was part of my journey of regularization into holy orders under apostolic succession. After being confirmed in Havana in 2024 during the Synod of the Diocese of Cuba, I was ordained as a Deacon on July 20, 2025, by Bishop John Boonzaaijer, Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Cuba (REC) and International Missionary Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church. Clara was also confirmed during the synod, a milestone that brought us both deep joy as we continue serving the Lord together in Caracas.

The week in Colombia was filled with gratitude and fellowship. We were blessed to share in worship and conversation with Bishop Boonzaaijer, the Rev. Canon Barclay Mayo, and Fathers Benjamin Bernier and Paul Howden, whose encouragement and friendship we greatly value. It was also a joy to connect with clergy and laity from this young but vibrant diocese, whose commitment to building a faithful Anglican witness in Latin America is truly inspiring. We return to Caracas with renewed zeal for the ministry of the United Christian Church of Caracas and look forward, God willing, to joining our Colombian brothers and sisters again next year. Please join us in prayer for the continued growth and strengthening of orthodox, biblical Anglicanism across our continent.

The Reverend Canon Barclay Mayo

As a Canadian Anglican, whose national reputation is "all things decent and in good order", and even though I would personally identify as a charismatic believer, the exuberance of the Colombian culture...even in the church, was a bit of a shock! However, once I got over the initial expressive onslaught, it was a joy to experience the love our Colombian brothers and sisters had for God, for each other and for us. As the rest of the team have indicated, they have a bit of a journey ahead of them as they work to become an integral part of the Reformed Episcopal family. However, I believe that there is a willingness to learn and grow.

I was greatly impacted by three things that are very different from our North American, first world, experience. The first, already mentioned by Bishop John, was the intentional willingness of three levels of government to support and resource the mission and ministries of the church, especially where it can deal with the issues of poverty and reconciliation between warring factions. The second was the ministry of Padre Edilson Huerfano, who has facilitated many projects that have been successful in bringing together gangs and opposing sides to work together to provide safety, employment and food for their communities. Finally, there is a readiness

among these clergy to intentionally put themselves in harm's way, in extremely dangerous areas of the country, to bring the gospel and love of God to the people. Their personal sacrifice and the trauma that comes from it are obvious. However, their love for Christ Jesus empowers and enables them to continue.

I am excited to see the Reformed Episcopal Church and the Latin America Mission Society expand and thrive as we seek to bring gospel ministry and the love of God to people in other societies. It is, however, complicated and fragile mission that requires close attention and much prayer. Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil are just the beginning, and you and I are the heart, hands and feet of Christ to this lost and broken world.

The Reverend Alexei Gonzalez (São Paulo, Brazil)

My dear brother, thank God we're all well. We're facing the challenges of a new world, because everything here is new to us, everything is an adventure but thank God everything is fine. My father (stepfather) has been working at a marble and granite company since he arrived. My mother can't work because she's over 60, and the government provides her with a basic salary. They haven't yet managed to start the paperwork to complete these procedures.

The children (Anaysa, Lisner, and Alexa) are enrolled and attending school, earning excellent grades and fluent in their new language. Little Alexa speaks very little Spanish, but although she understands it perfectly, she is now adopting Portuguese as her language.

Aniet, has found a job! She is working in the accounting department of a company that does business between Brazil, Japan, and the United States. Aniet is currently in training, but thank God everything is



Alexei and his Family reunited in Brazil.

going well. She, Lisner, and Alexa already have all the documentation this country offers as political refugees. I still need a residence card for foreigners because I entered through a different border. I must apply again in September.

I still can't say I speak Portuguese fluently, although I understand about 80%. The language has been a huge obstacle for me, but thank God I now have an official job, a registered job. It's at a hotel, as a cleaner. I have a salary plus benefits: 1,800 reais, and the benefits are 400 reais to cover transportation costs and 500 reais for food. In this country, this would be a good job, although it doesn't really cover basic expenses. That's why we all want to work to share the expenses and be able to save to cover other needs. Anabel and Anaymeé are still in Paraguay, they're doing well, hoping we can achieve a little more stability here so we can reunite again.

I am very grateful to be able to collaborate with the Diocese in Cuba in the training of the clergy, a small contribution to the building of the Church. Now my time is more limited; I can barely dedicate three or four hours a day to individual meetings with the 16 brothers who have agreed to continue their formation in this way.

On Sunday mornings or evenings (depending on my schedule), we are meeting at home with other family members and brothers from other countries: seven in Brazil, four in Paraguay, and two in the United States. We are still trying to find the most appropriate digital platforms to fulfill the objectives of this new form of congregation. I have also been working on translating into Brazilian Portuguese the most essential parts of the LOC, essentially the rites of Holy Communion, Baptism, and Marriage Celebration, as I consider them to be the highest priority right now. We thank the Lord for his care and provision during this time and ask for his discernment to continue walking in holiness and in his will.

Please know that every day we pray for the missionary societies and the Diocese of Cuba so that the Lord may show them the path to follow at every moment. For my part, I am also praying, comforting, and encouraging each of my brothers and sisters in the midst of so many limitations and difficult situations. May the peace of the Lord remain with you.

The Reverend Walter Serrano (Holguin, Cuba)

The food security situation in many areas of Cuba is desperate. The Reverend Walter Serrano of Pan de Vida (Bread of Life) parish in Holguin, requested assistance with a project to meet some of this great need while ministering the gospel to his congregation and the surrounding community. The project was approved and resourced from this year's budget. Here is his report.

The Ministry Project has been implemented and operating in our Parish for over 3 months now. We feed lunch to the Congregation twice a month on alternate Sundays.

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Last Sunday we served our 6th lunch since we got started. What a joy to see the brethren having a good meal together in unity after praising and worshipping God Almighty! We also send portions to brethren sick at home, and some neighbors in dire need. We gathered a team of cooks and helpers who arrive at the church at 6.30 am ready to cook a delicious meal. We have many faced challenges, but we're learning; and we get better at serving the brethren every Lunch Sunday.

"The Bread of Life" Project is an answer to a dear prayer of old that has come true in our midst. It is not just about feeding the hungry. It is also forging of a bond of love and service in Christ. Prices are on the rise, and inflation here is sky rocketing, but we keep praying and working. We thank God Almighty every day for this great blessing. We also thank our Bishop John and all of those who have supported this Project for us. Thank you!



Bread of Life Feeding Program

How Can You Help?

The Reverend Canon Barclay Mayo

We are in desperate need of your help! The board has asked me to encourage "Come and See" trips as soon as possible... with the East Convocation as a priority, but to the other two Convocations as well. Even one couple in each area traveling to resorts in Guardalavaca, (Holguin/East) Cayo Coco (Ciego de Ávila/Central) or Veradero (Havana/West) on vacation and willing to visit with at least one of the local churches while there, bringing the Convocations' salaries and a med kit, would be immensely helpful. That could potentially get 6 med-kits and \$30,000 (1/4 of the budget) into the hands of our churches without the crippling exchange rate. Please call Canon Barclay at 604-815-8309 for more information as soon as possible.

In order to continue covering all the pastors' salaries & diocesan expenses, we need to raise \$126,000 USD annually. The Canadian portion (half) comes to \$63,000 or just over \$5,000 USD/Mo. That is sixteen pastors and their ministries for the average cost of one Canadian ministry! It is an amazing "bang for the buck", as it were. Thank you to those who have been faithful donors over the years. Could I ask you to please share this newsletter with your congregations and with any others who may be feeling the call to support God's work in a foreign land. The CRA is telling us that the new charity application should be approved by early October. In the meantime, please continue to send your donations to the charities and addresses listed below.

How You Can Give to the Latin America Mission Society - Cuba Mission

Canadian donations should now be made out and sent to:

**The Diocese of Central and Eastern Canada of
The Reformed Episcopal Church,
10 Welch Lane, Hamilton, Ontario, L9C 0G1
nelsonbuffett@gmail.com 905-527-1549**

or in the USA

**c/o REC Board of Foreign Missions
23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd, Ste H120 #642,
Katy, TX 77494
www.rec-bfm.org**

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For more info about the Cuba Mission please contact:

The Rt. Rev. Charles Dorrington, REC Diocese of Western Canada,
70-7570 Tetayut Rd. Saanichton, BC V8M 2H4 | 250-507-0730 | revchas@shaw.ca or
Mrs. Claudia Dorrington, Corresponding Secretary, REC-ANiC Society | 250-652-8850

The Rt. Rev. Trevor Walters, ADoC Assisting Bishop (ret.), walters34@shaw.ca

The Rt. Rev. Walter Banek, REC USA, wrbane@mac.com

The Rt. Rev. John Boonzaaijer - REC International Missionary Bishop and Suffragan, john.boonzaaijer@gmail.com

To explore how you can become more involved, please contact:

The Rev. Canon Barclay Mayo, Mission Partnerships Coordinator, barclay.mayo@gmail.com | 604-815-8309

