



Department of Social Development and World Peace

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August 23, 1995

Mr. Alfonso Fraga Pérez  
Chief  
Cuban Interests Section  
2360 16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Ambassador Fraga,

It is my understanding that Mr. Orson Vila Santiago, a district superintendent for the Assemblies of God in Camaguey, was arrested last May and sentenced to prison for almost two years, since reduced to eighteen months, for the sole offense of conducting Bible study and prayer services in his home. It is also my understanding that a number of such "house churches" (*casas culto*) have been forcibly shut down in recent weeks, despite the fact that their existence had reportedly been authorized by your government.

I would be grateful to learn what specific charges have been brought against Mr. Vila. I would also be grateful if you could tell me why the Cuban authorities have seen fit at this time to impose new restrictions on religious expression. Given the evident improvement in the government's dealings with religious groups over recent years, it is not encouraging to see signs of reversal in this fundamental matter of religious freedom.

Hoping for your early reply, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Robert T. Hennemeyer  
Acting Director  
Ambassador (ret.)