**Cubans seek solutions and solace in Santería amid crises**

The article “Cubans seek solutions and solace in Santería amid crises” gives a description of the Santería religion, a new religion molded from both African and Catholic influences, which is currently beginning flourish in Latin America, and in the case of the article, Cuba specifically.

The history of Cuba is extremely chaotic; original Spanish colonialists established Catholicism as the dominant religion, and when these colonists then brought thousands of enslaved people from Africa, there was a strong clash between their traditional values and the values of Catholicism that the Spanish attempted to force. In order to keep their faith alive in any way they could, the Africans continued to worship their deities *through* Catholic saints, which also served to keep their faith hidden. Over time, though, the two began to mix, and practices also began to be molded by the unique circumstances present in Cuba, eventually beginning to be named Santería. With the rise and eventual fall of communism in Cuba, Catholicism begun to fade as Fidel Castro dismantled organized religion, while the informal nature of Santería allowed it to flourish (as well as it could, anyway).

The article names a specific individual or two, and describes their experiences when it comes to Santería. In particular, it highlights the informal nature of the religion, mainly derived from its circumstances during its upbringing, and how it is a one-size-fits-all faith. Mandy Arreacaeta is one specific person the article mentioned, because Mandy is a member of the LGBTQ+ community, but found a welcoming home in Santería. His mother was against it originally, disliking him wasting water he placed around the house for offerings, but later circumstances led to his mother joining him in Santería and bringing them closer together.

Nowadays, Santería is one of if not the most major religion found in Cuba. All throughout the country, African-inspired rituals and events occur everyday and is a strong connecting force bringing Cubans together.

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