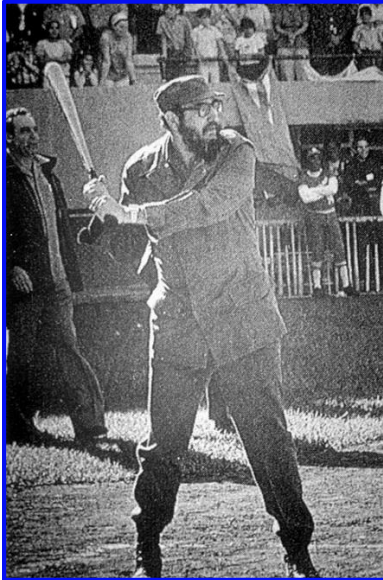


Upstaging the Umpire

In Cuba, baseball rules – except when Fidel Castro, Cuba’s former dictator, would go to bat.

During an exhibition game against Venezuela, the Cuban dictator grabbed an aluminum bat and walked to the plate. Not to be outdone, the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, went to the pitcher’s mound.



The first pitch didn’t even reach the plate. Castro kept the bat on his shoulder.

The next pitch was over the plate, and Castro swung and missed. Two more balls and an attempted bunt later, the two heads of state were locked in a full count.

Castro watched the 3-2 pitch sail through the middle of the strike zone and listened as the umpire called him out.

“No,” Castro said. “That was a ball.” He took first base.

No one argued. Chavez said nothing. The opposing team said nothing, and the umpire said nothing.

Later, Castro joked, “Today just wasn’t Chavez’s day!”

It’s hard to get a batter out when he has the power to overrule the umpire’s calls.

In God’s economy, dictators can’t do that.

In the spiritual realm, however, we may find ourselves behaving like Castro.

God has provided us with rules for healthful and happy living. They are contained in His love letter to us. It’s called the Bible. The temptation is to overrule God’s instructions, which are intended for our benefit, and act in a self-serving way.

When we do, He patiently seeks to draw us back to Him with His love, His grace and His redemption, offered to all through His Son Jesus Christ.

Everyone will face God’s judgment. His word will be final. Let’s heed the Umpire’s message.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter