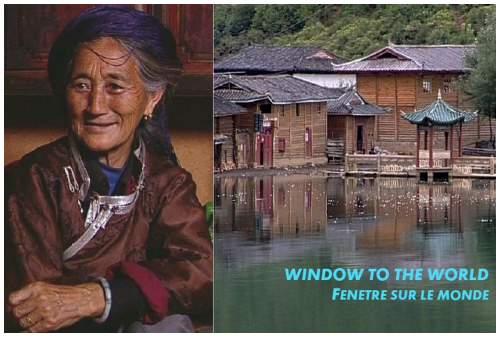

CUBA: YORUBAS IN CUBA

Director(s): Gonzalo ARIJON, José MALDAVSKI

Jan. 28, 1998 marks the first visit to Cuba for Pope John Paul II. Catholic faith has remained strong despite 40 years of Communist regime. A regime weakened, though, by the fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of Soviet aid. Cubans have to live with rationing and face severe shortages in basic necessities. In these desperate circumstances, the Cubans seeking solace turn more and more to the 'Orishas', a world of ancestral magic - a religion handed down to them by the Yorubas slaves from the coasts of Nigeria and Benin. John Paul II will be meeting a population that, despite its strong links with the Catholic church, is tempted to return to its African roots in order to deal with one of the worst crises in the country's history.

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