



My prayer for you today: that you may follow after the Lord as your Shepherd . . . that you may not want . . . that goodness and mercy may be to you like an ever-present **military escort** (Hebrew text) in 2015 and all the days of your life! Amen!

February 1, 2015

Dear Ministry Prayer Partners,

If you wanted me to give you a “telegraphic” update on your investment in this ministry since the beginning of the new year, here’s how it would go:

India—VICTORY! Cuba—VICTORY! Spain—VICTORY! *Victory on every front!*

But as I write these words, I must tell you . . . my heart is still in India.

Look at these children. They’ve been rescued from the streets. Rescued from a horrible fate—from prostitution and suffering and death.

These children now have a future, thanks to the work of godly men and women in that country. I went there to teach 70 pastors in the southeast, on the Bay of Bengal coast. It was fantastic!

Some pastors actually traveled 2,500 kilometers—1,553 miles—48 hours by train from the north, on the border with Nepal. Yet they were elated to be there, incredibly grateful for the things that they learned. To them, it was a treasure trove of principles that they have been missing for years, for decades!

Let me share with you the same story I shared with them:

THE FISH STORY

When my son, Manny, was about 4 years old, I took him fishing. The day started out with joy and enthusiasm; even though it was cold, we were *men* on a *manly* activity! But hours went by and we had not even one bite! Frustrating.

About the third hour, a man showed up, alone, but with two buckets and *six* fishing poles. This was serious business. He began “chumming”—casting his bread upon the waters, literally, trusting that he would get it back in short order. Then he baited each pole, attached a little bell to the tip, cast, and stood the pole in the sand.



By the time he finished baiting and casting the sixth pole, he already had a fish ringing the bell on one of the lines. He rushed over, pulled up the fish, put it in a bucket, and prepared and cast the pole again.

In two hours, he caught two buckets full of fish. Manny was enjoying the show, watching someone who was so “lucky.” I was mesmerized, hanging on to my useless pole, looking over my shoulder at him, dumbfounded. I almost heard an audible voice saying to me: “I told you I would make you a fisher of men, but first you have to learn to catch fish!”

The lesson was powerful. I thought about it for days. (I’m still thinking about it!) Soon I decided I needed to set *multiple poles* in my ministry so I could catch fish in different venues: one in radio; another in youth work; another in camping; another in direct church-planting—six in all. The fishing for men had begun. (My first big fish came in radio. The bell on the radio pole would not stop ringing!)

Back in India, when I finished telling the story, the pastors roared their approval with thunderous applause. Then I challenged them: *How many poles are you using?* (One.) *How many rods could you muster?* In other words: How many people could they mobilize into ministry in towns adjacent to their churches? (Five each.) How many rods could each of your people use? Could each be encouraged to plant three—“like they do in Cuba”?

We did the math: 70 pastors times 5 home missionaries, times 3 = 1,050 church plants. Could they believe God for each of their five to set up a mission point for church-planting in three towns? Their resounding answer: Yes! (On top of this, they want me to return to the north of the country to bring the same challenge to pastors who couldn’t attend this conference!)

THE EIGHTH FACTOR

I’ve shared many times the seven factors of effective church-planting. They’re all alive and well in the nation of India. There is an eighth factor too, however—which we don’t have to go looking for, yet it always finds us: *opposition*. And here in India, we did not have to wait for the opposition shoe to drop.

It’s all over the news, all over the country that the new Hindu administration is aggressively seeking to stop any “conversions.” According to reports, they’re even forcing some Christian converts to “reconvert” to Hinduism. The nation is also on the brink of passing laws that will make proselytizing illegal. You can’t help but think of the early New Testament Church. It’s a mission field!

Another stark reason India desperately needs help: Their culture is devastating them. Boys are everything; girls are garbage. A baby girl is often the target of her own parents.



Part of the problem is money. The dowry required to marry off a daughter is too expensive. I've heard countless heartrending stories of women who have given birth to as many as four baby girls, only to have them exterminated like animals as their husbands continue to demand a son. This is not a phenomenon unique to the lower classes. Even educated people participate in this culture of "gendercide."

For years, Indian parents requested ultrasounds to determine the gender of their unborn baby and order an abortion if the baby was a girl. The government of India eventually banned ultrasounds, but many medical technicians and even doctors still conduct ultrasounds for large sums of money. The practice is so lucrative that some people are buying ultrasound machines for this very purpose.

But those who can't afford an expensive, clandestine ultrasound simply wait till the baby is delivered—then do away with the baby girl by any number of horrible methods. One simple "home remedy": feed the baby gobs of salt till the intestines burn through and kill the child. Other techniques are even more ghastly. I can't write about them; they would make us both cry.

During our training conference, I met the daughter of an attendee: a beautiful and very intelligent 4-year-old, Abigail. Every time I saw her, I thanked God for her life! It was wonderful to realize that she had such a delicate "landing" in a country where girls are routinely murdered.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Here is the bottom line: ***India needs the Lord in a desperate way.*** Hinduism is by far the leading religion of India. Almost every one of the pastors at our conference is evangelizing and planting churches among Hindus. Their high success rate is especially encouraging because people trapped in Hinduism represent *desperate spiritual need.*

We must reach into this country. We cannot abandon India to Satan's destructive strategies.

We know that we can make a difference there. As I shared our Cuban church-planting strategy with our Indian brothers, I spoke of the "currency of obedience." Even in a place with so many restrictions, obstacles, challenges and problems, the Cuban workers trade only in the "currency of obedience."

The Indian pastors responded to this concept in a way that stunned me. "The church in India has so much more," one pastor said, "yet it takes it for granted."



In the mission field of India—in a place where restrictions are growing, where obstacles are everywhere, where challenges and problems are commonplace—their vision was focused only on the possibilities . . . the God-given potential!

The believers in India are ready to trade in the “currency of obedience.” The pastors left our conference committed to do all they can without delay. But they will be able to do so much more if we are willing to help them

As I turned my heart toward home, I couldn’t help but think about those four words: “takes it for granted.” I almost shuddered. If they said this of themselves in comparison to the Church in Cuba, what would they say about the Church in America? How great is the “currency of obedience” in our churches? How great is the “currency of obedience” in our own lives?

I can tell you honestly, I have sometimes turned away from places that seemed so unreachable that we would be helpless to help them, helpless to make a real difference—and India has been like this for me. It seems too BIG. So hard to make an impact on.

But God has made a difference in my heart on this trip.

The Lord has given me a vision of how we can launch 1,000 churches in short order, beginning with a small gathering of pastors.

I believe the Lord is calling us to plant 20,000 churches in India faster than we’ve planted 10,000 churches in Cuba. (*You might say: India is the biggest Cuba I’ve ever seen!*)

My friend, I bring you this challenge, this opportunity with a hopeful heart. My prayer is that you will trade in the currency of obedience. Please respond to His calling. Here is the practical truth of the matter: ***God only expects us to do what He empowers us to do.*** But **He empowers us to obey.**

We will not diminish our work in Cuba. In fact, our target is to plant 1,200 more churches in Cuba this year! I learned to fish for men in Spain, and we have pulled many buckets of fish out of the water in Cuba. But both of these seem to me to be only a warm-up to the biggest fish pond of all . . . a nation only 13 years away from becoming even more populous than China . . . **India!**

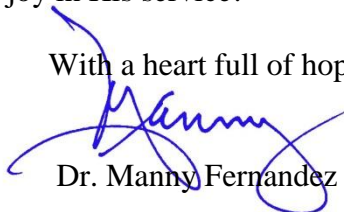
You already know that our church planters in Cuba need only \$25 per month to plant three churches. In India it will take \$50 per month . . . still a fantastic “bargain”! Try employing this math anywhere in the United States: We can plant 100 new churches for only \$1,500 per month!



I will give my all to this effort. That is my piece. I would only ask you do as God would have you to do. That will be your piece. Please fill out the enclosed reply form and return it to me today. I hope to hear from you soon.

May God bless you and give you joy in His service!

With a heart full of hope for the world,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. India presents us with a new opportunity to join the Father in an exercise of compassion, in a place that desperately needs Him. Please don't let this extraordinary moment pass without being part of it. Thank you for understanding my sense of urgency and the depth of my passion for the amazing door that God has so beautifully opened before us.