



October 1, 2016

Dear Ministry Partner

Warm greetings in the Lord as we enter a beautiful season of the year. It is our prayer that your capacity for the enjoyment of God's blessings may be increased so that you will truly *taste and see that the Lord is good!*

I just got a phone call that was a shock, a blessing, and a great joy, all at once!

A woman said in Spanish, "How are you doing, blessed of the Lord?" I have never been greeted quite like this before! I didn't recognize the voice, so I asked, "Who am I talking to?" Her name was Norma. It took me a few seconds to remember. . . .

Norma used to plant churches with us in Cuba, reaching nine villages. Her "mission field" was about 30 miles from Havana. Not a very long distance to us in the U.S., but in Cuba, with cars in short supply, if you have to walk or hitchhike, 30 miles is a big challenge.

I have shared her remarkable story before. One day she was hitchhiking and a dump truck stopped to pick her up. By the time she got into the cargo bay, it was too late to get off; the truck had already taken off. Norma discovered a group of road workers sitting on the floor of the cargo bay. **Two men touched her from behind, and she knew she was in imminent danger of being brutally assaulted.**

But instead of screaming or kicking and slapping, she began to preach the Gospel to the men! By God's grace, this Spirit-led strategy won the day. The men became supernaturally solemn. Some even seemed to tune in . . . to take the Gospel in!

When I shared her experience with the chairman of Coca-Cola Consolidated, he was so moved, he took his entire family to meet Norma! They were all impressed with this humble servant. They decided to give her a new vehicle—a car or a motorcycle—but they wanted me to keep it a secret. They wanted for her to say what she needed most to fulfill her ministry.

After hearing her testimony firsthand, they asked, "Norma, how can we help your ministry so that you don't have to worry about getting from one village to another, day or night?" Norma looked to me for a clue. I told her to say whatever came to mind, whether large or small.

Her face lit up. It was like a dream come true. She was finally going to have the one thing her heart had longed for during her many long hours of travel over difficult roads.

"A flashlight!" she cried.

*All she needed was a flashlight—and she could plant nine churches!* So which did Norma receive? A car? Or a motorcycle? At the time, neither. When we eventually decided on a motorcycle, we went to a dealership. But the Cuban authorities **at the time (ran a check on her, found that she**



was a Christian, and) informed her that purchase of such a “luxury item” was illegal. She couldn't have one even if we paid several times the price.

Now fast-forward several years. Norma gets papers to move to Miami. She attends a church there, of course. Here, she meets a 40-year-old bachelor—who becomes her husband! In one fell swoop, she gets a husband, a house, and a car—not to mention a greater ministry: Her Miami church commissions her to start a church-planting ministry . . . in two nations of Central America!

But then, fast-forward again. It's September of 2016, just a couple weeks ago. Norma phones me. She's starting ministry in a *third* country—the Dominican Republic—but she's troubled. She feels that her part-time approach is too slow, too limited. *I know that if you get involved, she tells me, it would really fly.*

You and I have a background in the Dominican already. We've conducted an initial reconnaissance visit there—not knowing that Norma was trying to get something going there as well. Her group dreams of an evangelistic campaign . . . a church-planting team . . . teaching for workers!

For a lady who only wanted a flashlight, she has a bigger vision now! She's fully aware of the power of a comprehensive strategy . . . a whole-country approach! Living in the United States, she has seen that we all have flashlights—motorcycles—cars! Norma's perspective is perfectly understandable:

If a hitchhiking lady with one flashlight can take nine villages,  
then—as well-equipped as Americans are—**WE** can reach  
whole cities, whole nations, with the Gospel!

Is she serious? Yes, as serious as she was about needing only one flashlight to reach her nine villages. It was no accident that her phone call began with the biblical greeting, “How are you doing, blessed of the Lord!” This title was used by Laban, in the book of Genesis. Abraham's servant was on a mission, searching for a bride for his master's son, Isaac. Laban called the servant “blessed of the Lord.”

That's you and me! We're servants on a mission. Our mission is the Great Commission—to gather in members of the Bride of Christ for God's Son.

And the methodology of Abraham's servant is the same methodology that has succeeded down through history . . . a model of excellent service and good stewardship:

1. The servant prays before acting on the plan.
2. The servant is quick to praise God when the plan works.
3. The servant has a profound conviction that God can, and does, control all the details of daily life.
4. The servant demonstrates that God shows us His will through prayer.
5. The servant demonstrates the success of those who properly engage in the work of



the Lord.

Note that the riches the servant bestowed on the bride are not his own. The mission and purpose are not his own. The outcome is not his own, but God's. The bride is not his own, but rather intended for the son of his master. Yet this servant is blessed of the Lord—obviously blessed—to be part of such a great enterprise. He is blessed to be part of such a family!

God help us to be like this servant. He was obviously not lax about his mission or his responsibilities. He wanted to succeed, and to quickly achieve the will of the one who sent him. He wanted to be quickly restored to the side of his master. His tone, when he refers to his master, is one of love, loyalty, and respect.

You and I share a commission today in parallel to Abraham's servant. It's not a commission linked to camels, watering holes, or nose rings (although I see that these are coming back!) Our mission today has everything to do with stewardship, prayer, and diligence. For me, it also has to do with long journeys to distant lands!

What lies ahead for us? Just as the servant was not casual about his approach to the task, we need to be focused and purposeful in our service and our stewardship.

- We need to agonize in prayer.
- We need to organize for the task.
- We need to mobilize to execute the plan.
- We need to be ever mindful of our dependence on God.

Today, we face a new ministry year. Every field demonstrates that we can take nothing for granted:

- **CUBA**, our biggest and most productive field, is in desperate need of prayer. The enemy is at work, seeking to take back the ground we have gained in favor with the government. We are working and praying diligently to do all we can and to give God every opportunity to do **what we cannot do ourselves**.
- The war in **UKRAINE** continues raging, even though the news media has lost interest in it. We must support our brothers and sisters there.
- We have goals bigger than ourselves in **SPAIN**. The good news is that our goals are not bigger than our God!
- The government in **INDIA** is hard at work to evict church workers of any stripe. They want India to be Hindu by 2020. We are hard at work to do all we can as quickly as we can!

Yet even in the midst of all our fast-paced activity, we are still not fully recovered from the



slow financial pace of the summer months. So I am asking you today to please pray for us, and please give a generous gift of support today . . . support our workers as your fellow servants, trying diligently to serve the Master!

**India** is a classic example of our dilemma. Our work in India has been productive in an accelerated way. We have 360 churches underway; there are wonderful Christian schools training young children. They're allowed to share the Gospel and teach biblical principles as long as the elementary teachings of the school are delivered with excellence.

Yet our India ministry is running on fumes. Without a miracle outpouring of generosity from friends like you, next month we'll be in the red. We need \$6,000 per month. To that end, please pray about supporting our India ministry as you plan your year-end giving. We would love to make up our shortage and diligently keep step in our accelerated church planting.

**Spain** is another example. We are working toward our building campaign for the work in Spain. It's wonderful to see what God is still doing in this, our first-ever field of ministry from years ago . . . beautiful to see the ripe fruit being produced.

Six of our seminary couples are engaged in the master's program at Southwestern, a very promising group for the future of the Gospel in Spain! Friends like you provided them with the very first scholarships that enabled their ministries to be launched. Thanks to God and to you, we have seen them climb to this level.

The mantle is being passed on beyond us! Heaven will be the sweeter as our works go on beyond us. Yet *a lack of funding, and funding alone, hinders our progress.*

So **I humbly but boldly bring you this challenge:** Please look to the Lord, look to His unfailing promises, and help us with a faith gift that will propel us on another ministry year of resounding victory. Thank you in advance! God bless you!

In His service,

Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. I am grateful for the generosity you have already demonstrated. I never take you for granted. Today, knowing the depth of your commitment to God's work, I invite you to give again . . . because our calling is not a calling of the moment. It is a life calling.

Ours is a mission that does not simply look back at all God has accomplished through us, but forward, to what God can do through us in the future. **People today, tomorrow, next week and next month will come to know Christ, because you gave Today!** Thank you again!