

March 1, 2013

Dear Ministry Prayer Partner,

It is our earnest prayer that the goodness of the Lord, the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, may translate His goodness into wonderful provision and protection for you and your loved ones.

I praise the Lord for the immense privilege of serving Him in His Soul Harvest with partners like you. I am very excited to share the “fruit” report from Cuba 2012 with you....

First, the “bird’s-eye view” of the entire year:

- Persons evangelized (presented with the Gospel): 600,773
- Decisions for salvation: 81,695
- Churches planted: 688

We are thrilled at all that was done ... all the more because these figures do not include the results of volunteer church-planters being coached by our workers. They only include the results posted by our paid workers! If we count the results of our “lay missionaries” the figures would swell to three times as many as with the paid workers alone!

Now, “zoom in” with me for a snapshot of just the last 10 days:

- We saw 447 decisions for Christ.
- More than 100 people were baptized.
- We gave funds for finishing the construction of a church in Trinidad.
- We gave funds for a sound system and construction in Caibarien.
- We have approved funds for purchase and construction in Ranchuelo with Pedro.
- We have approved funds and construction for Nelson in Zulueta.
- We have approved the launching of a program to plant 100 new churches in relationship with Andy Garcia out of Caibarien. The idea is to make his church another mother church like Porfirio’s out of Caibarien. *This is a “grandchildren churches” movement — since Caibarien is one of 61 churches planted by Porfirio’s church!*

Finally, let me take you all the way for a “close-up”:

I was flying out of Cuba and feeling the impact of the last few days; short nights of sleep and long days. The night before our flight we got three hours of sleep. But the man next to me, whom I’ll call Waleed, was like a kid on his first airplane ride! He was curious about everything and enjoying even the menial details of the flight. He was just sure I was enjoying the flight myself!

He wanted to compare notes on our experience in Cuba. I didn't veil any detail of my wonderful trip. I shared how much joy I get from people who are transferred from darkness to light. I am not tired of it, and we see it all over the world.

The man was very interested in this "phenomenon." He asked for details of our work: our training, our background. He took it all in with sincere wonder.

Waleed decided to share his own confusion and need for clarity. He is a medical doctor in Winston-Salem. His parents are Palestinians but, tired of the past, they opted to become Catholics. So Waleed Hagan was raised Catholic.

We had a lot of questions to work through. Waleed was very thorough in trying to understand Christianity as it is revealed in the Scriptures. I was happy to respond, impressed by his genuine interest and his ability to assimilate the information and reason his way to very logical conclusions. Our time to Panama flew by — literally!

Waleed, with his good logic, was ready to receive Jesus Christ for salvation by faith apart from any merit he could muster. He realized the reason for the need of grace, of unmerited favor.

Waleed wants to stay in touch. He wants a relationship with a good church. I have already sent him a study Bible and the names of two good churches close to where he lives. Waleed is on his way!

Exciting weeks in ministry — what more could one hope for?

But there was another surprise looming....

When I got back from the great wonders we witnessed in the field, I was met with the news that our small \$7,000 shortfall had jumped to a \$54,000 deficit! This was a shock. It hardly seemed possible. We looked at the numbers in every month and every week. We have not had any odd expense, equipment failure, or the like.

So why the \$50,000 drop? Income. The support in January dropped dramatically. Yes, January is often a difficult month. But this is more difficult than ever.

As my mind reeled, I found myself going back to Psalm 89, written by Ethan the Ezrahite, remembering the promises made to David. Ethan was perplexed by the age-old apparent conflict between the promises of a faithful and loving God and the catastrophes that often occur.



We know God's promises are sure. We see this fact in the fields, over and over: powerful manifestations of God's faithful and mighty promises to save eternal souls. His Word goes out and it does not return void; it accomplishes that for which it was sent out.

It works like clockwork — even when confronted with demonic forces in Cuba where I quoted God's Word, and the demonized man fled! God's Word and God's promises are as accurate as clockwork!

But as Ethan lamented, even after He promised to be with David (89:30-37), God allowed defeat! In spite of the covenant promises! "But you have cast off and rejected," he wailed. "You have spurned the covenant of your servant"(89:38-39).

He was petitioning the Lord to remember His oath and come to his aid. Life is too short; it flies by. We could do so much more!

*This is where we stand today. We are petitioning the Lord to remember His oath and come to our aid. But it is clear: He will come to our aid **through friends like you.***

You can give with confidence, knowing that your gift will be multiplied dramatically in the field. A friend introduced me at a meeting with this statement: "One thing you need to know to understand World Link Ministries is that they undersell and over-deliver." This is true. I praise the Lord that by mobilizing "small" resources, we can get such an incredible return on investment.

But it all begins with the generosity, the faithfulness, of a friend like you ... praying and giving to send workers into the harvest fields.

I'm almost amused by the way some Christians approach giving. Some employ what might be called a "wet fleece/dry fleece" approach. They set up some sort of a "chance" test to determine whether to give or not to give, or "how" to give. "The mailman came early, before I had a chance to write the check — so I figure it wasn't meant to be."

Superstition! Do you realize that many common superstitions — unlucky 13, walking under a ladder, crossing your fingers, knocking on wood — began as "Christian" superstitions? "Walking under a ladder" isn't about the danger of knocking someone down. No, the open ladder creates a triangle, often used to represent the Holy Trinity. Breaking this symbol was thought to be blasphemous, bringing wrath upon the transgressor!

God does not call us to give according to superstition or by chance. Look at the "theology of giving" Paul laid out in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5:

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

In the midst of a **very severe trial**, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in **rich generosity**.

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even **beyond their ability**. Entirely on their own, they *urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing* in this service to the Lord's people.

And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

I used to think Paul was using "child psychology" on his Corinthian audience. "Look how well the Macedonians did; don't you want to be like those good guys?" But then I saw how our Cuban brothers live — getting up before dawn to get their secular work done by noon so they can devote their time and energy to the service of the Lord. Of the more than 3,000 church-planters, only 500 are paid. The rest are working part-time jobs so they can plant churches fulltime.

The Cubans revealed to me that Paul wasn't employing child psychology. He was describing a profound commitment to the theology of giving ... the life that we are supposed to be living for the Lord. You won't find Cubans hiding behind the convenience of superstition or the karma of "what is meant to be"; they are living according to God's revealed will in the Scriptures.

They're serious about the One who died for all so that those who live may live *no longer for themselves* but for Him who for their sakes died and was raised.

God's revealed will is not left up to chance or happenstance.
God wants all His children to engage in the ministry of reconciliation.
He wants us to pray real prayers according to the biblical theology of prayer.
He wants us to give according to the biblical theology of giving.
He wants us to go even when the going is not certain nor the outcome guaranteed.

And so, we shall. I invite you to stand with us as we do.

We are in a difficult hour, financially. We claim the promises of God, even in this adversity, like the heroes of the faith, who "were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised!... They were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them" (Hebrews 11:13-16).

This is God's Word. These are His thoughts. This is His heart. Asking God's people to trust Him for provision and give to His work is not a matter for the "court of opinion." God's Word does not return void; it will be fulfilled "like clockwork."



It is my heartfelt hope that we may simply say "Yes" to the Spirit of God and that we may be counted among the faithful. By responding in obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit in the light of the Scriptures, we will be one and the same with heroic Christians in very difficult places.

Please help us to catch up to deeds of ministry we have already done. Help us to erase the deficit between what we have already paid for in the field and funds that have been delayed or denied for whatever reasons.

The theology of giving is best exemplified by the Macedonians: their poverty and joy for the things of the Lord welled up in exemplary generosity. May we allow the Spirit to repeat that Grace in our lives today.

Sincerely in Christ,

Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. Trusting in God, full of joy over what He has done and is doing ... yet with a deep concern for the work of evangelism in the days ahead ... I urge you to get back to me quickly, as generously as possible. *How many more Waleeds will we be able to reach in the next week, the next month, the next year? Your gift today will help to send us.* Thank you for understanding and for standing with us! God bless you!