



August 1, 2017

Dearest Ministry Partners!

Happy greetings in the Lord! It is my prayer that you may rejoice in the goodness of the Lord and in a life that is full and meaningful in the company of your loved ones. For He said, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly!” (John 10:10).

Greetings from “the road”! I am on my way back from **SPAIN** today, scheduled to reach Cuba tomorrow. I couldn’t be happier with the purpose and the activities of my summer! I am looking forward to a highlight next Wednesday, when we plan to baptize 70 people in eastern Cuba!

It’s never about me! You are keeping us going! “How will they go unless they are sent?” You are sending, and we are going. **Jesus is using you and us**—and as we work together, it is as He said: “**I will build my church.**”

The week in Spain was fantastic . . . hundreds of people in two separate campaigns led by missionaries and groups from the U.S. As I depart, they’re still at work!

- One group is conducting an English course for people in the vicinity of a church-plant. In the mornings the people come to learn English—the parents hugely value this for their children. Then, in the afternoons, the U.S. group leads Vacation Bible School for the same kids.
- The other U.S. group is running a soccer camp and tournament. In the mornings they teach youth from the city how to improve their soccer skills—a very big deal in Spain. In the evenings, they have about 200 youth from the city engaged in the tournament!

**This isn’t “kids stuff.” The competition is stiff!** The team we put together is made up of GREAT soccer athletes from the U.S.—as well as from a group of Brazilians who wanted to join us in the campaign this summer. (Yesterday our team graciously deferred to another team they were playing against—why? Because we didn’t want to walk away with the top tournament prize—that wouldn’t be a good witness!

Every team the Spaniards brought is made up of young men who have played each other for years. Our team, on the other hand, includes two American girls who are excellent ball players—and are doing exceptionally well! The guys are truly impressed, even amazed, at the level of play the girls are demonstrating.



As I write these words, the finals are just a few hours away. But it's not just sport. Our players will share their testimonies. The Gospel will be presented again. . . .

Everyone will be invited to a final "festival" where both groups from the U.S. will participate—then the Gospel will be shared with everyone involved in the week's competitions—as well as the many who simply attend the festival.

(Both groups will return to the U.S. on Saturday, but I've left early in order to lead a group from California into Cuba to conduct evangelism and baptisms for the next nine days. We're scheduled to go into churches twice a day and share testimonies, preach, share the Gospel, and baptize the many who have already indicated they're ready to take the step of baptism.)

God has moved beautifully in Spain. The soccer tournament has given us so many opportunities to share the Gospel through numerous individual conversations. . . .

One of our students helping with the tournament was sharing with four players. One of the four was hostile to the message, so the student asked me to help respond.

It was immediately obvious that the young man was speaking his opinions based on hearsay. He blamed Jesus for His own troubles—"because Jesus was a masochist," he said. How did the young man conclude this? "Because Jesus went around barefoot!" he declared. Going barefoot, in his opinion, was a kind of self-inflicted suffering.

So I asked him if he had ever read the words of John the Baptist: "He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie" (John 1:27). Oops! The young man hadn't read that part! (That part is in Chapter 1—so it was quite evident he hadn't read much!)

From the first 24 hours, we had the joy of reaping. **Seven people prayed to receive the Lord on the first day!** I'm praying that many more come to the Lord in the final days of the tournament.

And now, on to **CUBA**. A couple years ago, we partnered with a church in Texas that wanted to see 100 churches planted on the eastern side of Cuba, in the area known as Holguin. That group of 100 church-plants is ready to baptize 70 believers this month! We'll be there next Wednesday to preach, evangelize, and celebrate those baptisms.



Another highlight of the week is a face-to-face meeting with Cuba's Minister of Justice. This is a momentous event, after the government has spent a couple years vetting our ministry. . .

Normally in Cuba, when a "religious" organization reaches a certain size, **"your head comes off"—no questions asked, and no appeals.** By God's grace, and with your help, we've grown way past the "imaginary line"—because we didn't grow vertically; we grew horizontally. In their own words: "You are EVERYWHERE on the island!"

That's a big "everywhere." The island of Cuba is as long as California (850 miles) and in some places just as wide!

We made it our aim to touch each one of Cuba's 15 provinces by deploying teams in three zones of each province: north, central, and south. As a result, we've been preaching and church-planting in a total of 45 zones—for the last 18 years. The government found out about the range of our work a couple years ago, and it caused real panic—because they *never* allow anything to be *half* this big!

Since then, we've been trying to share with the officials that our work is simply the enabling of local churches to achieve their God-given mission. Now, the vetting process comes to a head—and we need prayer on two key fronts:

- Pray first of all that we will have opportunity to share the Gospel at this high level of the government.
- And please pray, second of all, that the Lord will help us clearly communicate our track record . . . demonstrating that we are not doing nor teaching anything that would be contrary to their government. Christ's kingdom is not of this world!

**Whatever happens, the work will go on**—because it never was about any one man. We have more than 700 workers within the country—in addition to the many who are working with us to go in from the U.S. and from Spain to do ministry. But our prayer is that the government will continue to let us go in and minister personally as we have for so many years.

Meanwhile, the work God has raised up through you is ongoing thousands of miles to the east: At the eastern end of Europe, this is harvest season for the **UKRAINIANS!**

Hundreds of ministry outreaches are under way, led by the thousand churches that have emerged over there. There are **summer camps, Bible day camps, special conferences—**



and don't forget the **baptismal services**, which are high-priority during the summertime, when the Dnipro River isn't frozen over!

Even in the first month of summer, we've already received very encouraging news from our Ukrainian director, Ruslan. The Ukrainian government has mounted a nationwide historical celebration known as "R500," commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

This has opened the door for churches to reach out to children and adults in many parts of the country, even engaging in public speaking in the central squares of many villages and towns. For our church-planters, Ruslan reports, R500 simply means "more evangelism . . . to attract new people!"

Pastor Alexander Korobkin has taken every advantage of it in the Poltava area. In June alone, he and his team personally shared the Gospel with 318 people—and at least 33 of them received the Lord! Pastor Alexander and his wife, Valya, are devoting themselves to these great summertime evangelistic opportunities even as they keep busy with their "tent-making" jobs.

There's another mission field in Ukraine today: **refugees displaced by the war** in eastern Ukraine. Many of them are very poor and struggling to start a new life in other areas of Ukraine. Director Ruslan reports that they would do much more among refugees, but funding is too limited. "Please continue to pray for our church-planting teams in the many summer opportunities in Ukraine," he asks.

Still, what God is doing in Ukraine is amazing. In just the month of June, our teams there accomplished a beautiful range of outreaches:

- 8,250 people were involved in church-planting activities,
- 5,200 people heard the Gospel,
- 172 people that we know of received the Lord, and
- 60 people have been baptized.

**How much more is God doing? How much more is He accomplishing through your prayerful and generous support? How many pages could I fill? *How much time do you have!?***

I'll stop here — and simply add this: Praise God that we have the joy of working in an ever growing number of fields! I praise God because we know that we are not alone. Jesus is at work in many, many lives—including yours and mine—to build His Church!

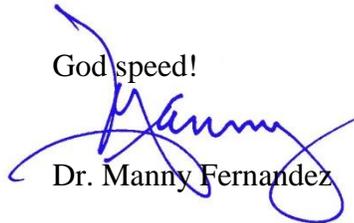


And I also bring you this admonition from my heart: Don't be sidetracked by summer. **Eternity is on the line.** We need to maintain our focus, maintain all our disciplines for the sake of the harvest. Our lives are to be lived for the One who died for us, that we might live for Him!

In Spain, in Cuba, in Ukraine, and all around the world, we need you to be strong, in His strength! Please stand with all these heroic Christians who, even in their poverty, are being obedient and courageous to finish the job! Please do what God has enabled you to do by giving as generously as possible today.

The harvest is our calling, together . . . yours, mine, and theirs. Let me hear from you quickly. Thank you!

God speed!



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. When you invest in the harvest, God gives the harvest. We have seen it! We are seeing it! Please keep this good, proven work going strong, in all the "whitened harvest fields of the Master"! Thank you again! God bless you!