



August 1, 2011

Dear Followers of Christ,

“Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in Him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you’re on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute! Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.” These are the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:4-7 as paraphrased by Eugene Peterson in *The Message*. I pray you will embrace them with me!

I am writing just having returned from Cuba, and I write rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves! We have the joy, you and I, to have added close to 1,000 people to the roster of salvation in the last week! We had a fantastic week of evangelistic and teaching activities. The work of the Spirit of God goes beyond human accounting, but in order to give you some sense of how God is moving in Cuba today, please allow me to share some numbers from our work in Cuba this year alone.

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**2011 Cuba Ministry Overview**  
PAID World Link Ministries Staff Only

| Month    | Presented Gospel | Follow-up | Decisions |
|----------|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| January  | 12,952           | 2,852     | 890       |
| February | 12,895           | 2,945     | 915       |
| March    | 11,991           | 2,993     | 1,244     |
| April    | 11,356           | 3,000     | 1,064     |
| May      | 11,400           | 2,856     | 850       |
| June     | 14,065           | 4,090     | 1,217     |

**Our One-Week Eastern Cuba Campaign**

| Presented Gospel | Follow-up | Decisions |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1,822            | 767       | 902       |

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Beyond these numbers, there are real lives filled with trauma of every kind who are now experiencing a peace they have never known before.

We conducted family and marriage seminars that ministered to the parents who came to the conference. Stories of discord, abuse, divorce, teenage troubles – you name it – were shared again and again. There were so many tears that we went to store after store to buy Kleenex for the sessions! Like many things in Cuba today, there was no Kleenex to be found. We had to improvise, so we bought a lot of napkins!

### Alan's Incredible Story

A young man named Alan, whom I met on my second to the last day in Cuba, has one of the most remarkable stories I have ever encountered. Alan was a powerful, athletic-looking guy and it was a bit of a shock to learn that he couldn't walk. When I first saw him in his wheelchair, I couldn't believe a guy that looked so physically strong and healthy was paralyzed! Turns out that he has not been paralyzed from the waist down for all that long.

I was told that Alan was once one of the top three criminals in all of Cuba. His temper and violence gave him the respect and fear of the people who knew him – and the dread and fear of the police. Whenever police patrols came upon him, Alan would fight back and seize control. He wasn't afraid to attack three or four officers, taking their weapons. One time he even overturned a police car – all on his own!

The condition that controlled Alan's behavior was even worse than his rebellion. He was clinically defined as a *sadomasochist*. This mindset derives pleasure from giving, and even receiving, pain. It means that Alan was getting his thrills from making others suffer, and when there were no others to abuse, he attacked himself! His arms are full of scars from attempted suicides; distorted where he tore chunks of flesh from his arm during fits of rage.

### Most People Thought Alan Was Either Crazy or Demon Possessed

Eventually Alan was arrested and thrown in prison, where he was isolated because of his frequent attacks on other prisoners. So when he couldn't attack others, he turned his rage on himself.

As I sat and talked with Alan, I was continually amazed by the bizarre chapters of his life. After hearing the high points – or more accurately, the low points – I asked him how he viewed the Gospel in his former life. Alan explained that he had a worldview that was closed and sealed off from the Gospel. His uncle – ironically, our representative in Eastern Cuba – would talk to him about Jesus, but God was an absolutely absurd thought to him. He told me, "My ears were closed" to the Gospel.

Alan ridiculed his uncle – who he considered crazy for believing in Jesus – again and again: "How can you believe in someone you have never seen? Those stories," Alan would say in mocking tones, "if they even happened, were in such a different time of history that they have no meaning today!" To Alan, his uncle was absolutely and hopelessly out of touch with the real world.

Alan's "closed ears" heard that a true friend was someone who gave you a cigarette, a drink, drugs – or drugs and a girl – so you could do to her whatever you wanted to make yourself feel good. His friends had a violent criminal mindset that only fed his fury!

### The Unbelievable Event that God Used to Open Alan's "Closed Ears"

I asked Alan, "What event helped open your closed ears?" He told me that he had been sentenced to thirty years in jail for murder. He was getting his thrills terrorizing and abusing prisoners, but got more and more angry at the thought of being in jail for the best years of his life. When it became obvious that he was stuck in jail, he decided to kill himself. "Death," he told me, "was better than living in that hell hole."

He planned what he thought was "the perfect suicide." He would jump off the roof of a five-story building in the jail complex. He planned it all very carefully. If he jumped into the courtyard, the other prisoners would abuse him – even in death. They would rape his dead body just as he had raped them in

life. No, he would jump toward the fence so the guards would see him and quickly take his dead body away. Just to be absolutely certain that his suicide would succeed, Alan would put a noose around his neck. That way he had two ways to die. First, his neck would be broken, and then the fall would finish him off for certain.

With the details in place, Alan climbed to the top of the prison building. As he looked toward the courtyard, everyone was there just like he expected. He walked toward the fence and made sure the guards were watching. He fastened the noose around his neck, tied it to the wall, and jumped!

### **When the “Perfect Suicide” Failed, God Got Alan’s Attention!**

A second later he was on the ground – but he was fully conscious! The noose broke too soon, and he landed in a sitting position. He was alive. Soon a guard turned his face with his boot and said, “This one is dead.” Alan calmly answered, “*No, I am alive.*” The stunned guards rushed Alan to the infirmary. His back was broken.

Alan was dazed and amazed to be alive. He had been sure that there would not be a single conscious thought after his jump. Suddenly Alan realized he was not in control – even of his own life. What little control he had in jail was now gone; he was paralyzed. As incredible as it may seem, a profound conviction came over Alan: “God exists and He is aware and mindful of me!”

Alan says, “Then my ears got sweet! I would hear someone say *God* and it sounded special. A person would say *Bible*, or *Jesus*, and I WANTED them to tell me all they knew.”

So Alan put his trust in Jesus as the Spirit of God reached out to save him from utter despair and hopelessness. The amazement of it all began to unfold and settle in Alan’s heart and mind while he was still in the infirmary. It was like waking up from a very bad dream and finding yourself in a much better place.

### **Alan Is Now Living a Life Almost No One Thought Possible**

These days Alan is serving his prison sentence at home. He is allowed to go to church and watches the world go by from his porch. Other criminals come by once in a while to verify what they hear of his conversion. Alan shares with them the reality of what transformed him.

A hardened criminal acquaintance of Alan’s challenged the possibility of such a “conversion.” He said, “It’s not possible. I have killed seven different people and I KNOW I can’t be forgiven. Everyone knows you are much worse than I am.” Alan replied with serenity and conviction, “I know how you feel. I am telling you He is not just ‘much bigger.’ He is infinite. His life is also infinite. If He can forgive me, then He can forgive you.”

Alan is thrilled to be able to go to church and sing the praises of a God who overruled his decision to leave this world, a hardened criminal at the end of his rope. ***God broke the rope*** and Alan landed into a new and eternal life.

### **Statistics Mean More When You See Them with Skin, Hair, and Hope**

I praise God for His marvelous and boundless grace! We will never know this side of heaven just how many thousands of lives are being transformed and saved by the Gospel. I praise God that the harvest is not over, nor is it on sabbatical for the summer!



We are thrilled that our ministry teams are working nonstop around the world. Our teams in Cuba reached thousands with the Gospel the first two weeks of July alone! But we could do so much more with more full-time workers. Here is quick accounting of our ministry workers in Eastern Cuba alone at this moment:

**Eastern Cuba Ministry Overview, July 2011**

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Workers serving full time <i>WITH</i> pay     | 181        |
| Workers serving full time <i>WITHOUT</i> pay  | 150        |
| Official churches registered so far this year | 82         |
| New churches waiting to be registered         | 150        |
| <b>Workers waiting to join our ranks</b>      | <b>600</b> |

I hope it is as clear to you as it is to me: we need more full-time, paid workers! Everyone who joins our ministry teams full time produces dividends like no other: more people come to know and love our Savior! And it costs just \$25 per month for each full-time worker we add to our team in Cuba.

**Will You Help Us Put More Full-Time Workers into the Harvest Fields?**

I share all of these facts with you because of your interest in this ministry. God is using you to make an eternal difference, as we are in the middle of a wonderful Summer Soul Harvest.

We are committed to make the most of every ministry opportunity, and we need your help: your prayers, your one-time gifts, your monthly support. We turn to you again, as a beloved partner in ministry, and ask for your faithful help to put more workers into the harvest.

Just as we are keen on making the most of every opportunity, if you see your way clear to add more impact, please help us to do more in the harvest fields!

Will you prayerfully consider supporting one or more new full-time workers? I cannot imagine \$25 doing more eternal good! Please send your generous help as the Lord would have you do. He will grant you the desires of your heart.

Joyfully in Christ,

Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. The “fields are so white unto harvest” that even on the way to the airport and at the airport in Havana, we led four more people to the Lord! God is at work. Join Him in every way you can! And if you are able to send an especially generous gift this month it will go farther than ever before. Perhaps even as far as the next “closed ears.”