



January 1, 2014

Dearest Ministry Prayer Partners,

Warm greetings to you and your loved ones in the Savior's name! We praise the Lord that as we stare into the future, we can be fully confident of His unwavering love and His unchanging nature. "Such is our God, He will guide us forever."

I am in the field of Spain as I write today. It's late in December and I expect to leave for home tomorrow. It's an odd feeling, but great at the same time, to be in the field so late in the year. Many families are already gathered for the holidays. I had the privilege of leading fifteen more people to Christ just a couple of days ago. That's a great Christmas!

As I depart, our students are leaving for home as well. But while I've been here, it's been beautiful to see how they relish the truths we're teaching them. They are heading home with a deeper and greater understanding of—and greater joy in—the celebrations of the season. It has been a great blessing to teach them and to see their faces light up with enthusiasm for the Word. I wish you could have seen it yourself, you, as a partner who is helping us to train them!

I can't resist introducing you personally, right here and now:

- Esteban, 28, is from the Barcelona region. He came to Christ just a year ago. He is incredibly diligent and very, very smart. He's a very serious student. He's taking everything in.

Esteban is the first in his family to come to Christ. He wants to take it all in because he feels the salvation of the family depends on his getting it right! He is absolutely correct—even more than he realizes! There are thousands, even millions, of people out there who desperately need for us to get it right!

This is God's multiplication principle in action: someone had to "get it right" for you to come to faith. They needed to know the essentials of the Gospel and be willing to step into your path and pass it on. For many folks, it's a family member who gets it right and passes it on. Often it's a trusted parent. Sometimes it's a son, a brother, a sister.

And in some cases, it's ... a stranger! The more distant the relationship, the more preparation is needed in order to effectively reach out, present the Good News, and provide whatever supporting information the conversation requires.

Esteban has a heart of gold. He is hungry not only for the content of the message, but also for the skills he will need to share it, to defend it, to apply it.

After knowing so many young leaders over the years, I look at Esteban and truly believe that he is going to be a champion of the faith. And he is not alone! I saw other champions-to-be in the room all around him.

- A couple has only recently joined us. He was just installed as a pastor in a young church in Madrid. He and his wife have no training! He was called to the post because of his leadership skills and his love for the Lord. So this young couple made a beeline for our seminary. They had been saddled with a huge responsibility in the name of their young congregation: to get it right!
- Then there is a young woman I'll call Melissa. She and her partner are from a southern country. They've started putting teams together to reach back to their country. They're recruiting leaders from our seminary in Spain who can help them launch an effective outreach to their own people.

Their goal: to build a World Link School in their country, so they can multiply disciples, and through them saturate the nation with the Gospel, planting churches. Now that sounds very familiar! You should feel flattered! What they're planning is exactly what you and I have done together to reach these guys in the first place!

- Then there's Andrew from Bolivia, with a similar story. He wants to be trained and then go back to reach out far and wide to his people.

Your love, your passion for God, is multiplying worldwide! Just yesterday I got a Christmas card from a couple in Brazil whom we trained long ago. "We thank God for your lives, hard work, and efforts to serve the Lord," they wrote. "You have been a blessing in our lives and we really appreciate the help and inspiration you have been to us."

Their message is for YOU. This couple has now been in ministry in Brazil for some fifteen years. They have taken several ministry posts, taking on greater and greater responsibility, and making a greater and greater impact with every new role. They are touching thousands of others. They got it right ... because you got it right.

I could tell you many, many more stories of wonderful people we're training, thanks to you, for the good works that the Lord has prepared for them so that they may walk in them (Ephesians 2:10). These stories—the lives of these young ministers—are eternal riches that you and I will have with us forever in the presence of the Lord!

Jesus talked about these "true riches" in Luke 16, when He told the parable of the shrewd steward. In this extraordinary story, He made three powerful applications:

1. We should use money to win people into eternal life so that they, in heaven, will receive us into heavenly mansions.
2. Using worldly riches will be rewarded with what He called true riches in heaven.
3. Our life focus should be to serve God, not to serve material ends.

Of course, the Pharisees sneered at Jesus' teaching. They felt, since they were wealthier than Jesus, that He was not the financial guru to be lecturing them about money. They didn't get it right. Not by a long shot!

Today, I'm praying that we will get it right. Especially in January.

To be honest, January last year was a chink in our armor. We had a banner year as a whole, but in January, giving dropped dramatically. It is no exaggeration to say that January nearly shut us down. We had a sudden deficit of more than \$50,000. We could hardly believe it when in February and March we were nearly out of funds.

We audited our own books to make sure no mistakes had been made, no decimal points had been misplaced. We knew we had not bought any equipment or made any other capital investments. The bottom line, when all was said and done, was that giving had dropped in a big way in January 2013.

We obviously want to make sure that does not happen this January!

For the sake of so many young ministers-in-training, and so many more already at work in the field, we need to get this right.

Please hear my heart: I am deeply grateful for end-of-year giving as the Lord leads. People are generous at year's end. This is great. But the outpouring of year-end giving only makes up the shortfall caused by unexpected expenses over the course of the year. It's very welcome—like cold water to a thirsty soul—but it does not leave us with a rich supply of cash sitting in the bank!

Unexpected expenses can be expected! For example, our server and two computers must be replaced because of upgrades in our software. The software (and the upgrades) are part and parcel of the upkeep of our ministry office operation. And this is only one "blip on the radar"—one example among many, small and large, that come our way over the course of the year.

- One of the larger "hits" this year: the retirement of an employee in Madrid. Under the law of Spain, we will have to provide retirement pay: \$8,000.00. (It's fortunate that this employee has been with us a short amount of years. The size of this payment is linked to years of service.)
- Also, at Christmastime and in August, the law of the land requires that we pay double paychecks to our employees in the country. We always grit our teeth when these two happy months are coming up—double payroll!

The generous year-end giving of our friends makes it possible for us to handle these expenses without a crisis. When someone gives an extra gift from time to time over the year, it's a blessing, because it enables us to deal with "bumps" like these.

But the end result is that there is no end-of-year surplus in our account...

...Which makes it absolutely imperative that our friends continue to support us generously and faithfully in January.

Our support for each field must go out like clockwork each month—otherwise, our workers suffer.

On the other hand, as we remain faithful in our commitments—even in January—we see God doing beautiful things. I praise God for the many grand achievements for His sake that we see everywhere we turn. I sincerely try to communicate it all to you, but I know I fall very short of the mark. I only hope somehow the Holy Spirit helps you understand that what you are involved in here is disciple-making and church-planting par excellence!

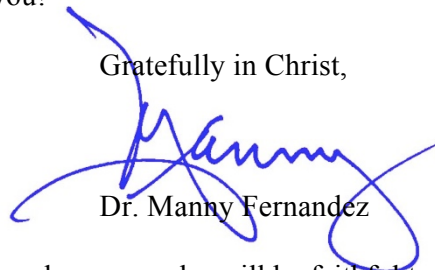
Even major, well-respected organizations are standing up and noticing what God is doing through your support of this ministry. I met just days ago with Dr. Paige Patterson, President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has granted a presidential scholarship to some of our graduates. (You gave them scholarships first! Thank you!) Dr. Patterson wants these students to earn their master's at Southwestern and go on to earn their doctorate as well.

To me it feels like we've reached the summit! As he was laying out this vision, I was thinking, We did it! We are doing it! You and we together!

So I am asking boldly today that you help us get this right. Help us keep a good grip and stay a steady course on this wonderful, God-directed, disciple-making venture. We have seen the results, and we keep seeing results. We got it right! Now please give generously to help us help others get it right ... so they can reach their families, their friends, their peoples.

Please let me hear from you as soon as possible ... so we can get the month of January right this year! Thank you! God bless you!

Gratefully in Christ,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. God is using you to raise up men and women who will be faithful to Christ's Great Commission and reach millions for eternity. These are your TRUE riches.