

May the joy of the Lord be your refuge ever and always.

May His peace beyond understanding guard your mind and heart as you turn any anxiety to thankful prayers and requests:

"He will keep him 'shalom shalom' (perfect peace), whose mind is stayed on Him because he trusts in Him." (See Isaiah 26:3)

July 1, 2013

Dear Ministry Prayer Partner,

A wise son gathers in summer, Proverbs 10:5 tells us ... and there is much that needs to be gathered in the great harvest for souls!

I just got back from Cuba — again. I'll make a total of three trips there this summer alone. The march of the ministry is relentless — so is the growth!

We visited a church that just launched two new daughter churches, of 200 members each, in cities near Havana. This makes a total of 7 daughter churches birthed by this one congregation in the last two years!

An American church group was traveling with me, and they were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the Cubans. Several people in the group said at different times that they wished they could bottle it up and bring it to the churches in the U.S.!

It was like a Fourth of July fireworks display — but much more so. When fireworks are launched, there's a *bang*. Then there's a *boom* high in the sky — and an awe-inspiring sight. But just as the lights begin to disintegrate, three or more new explosions come along ... giving the fireworks show the "staying power" of sheer delight.

Yet the beauty of our explosive growth in the soul harvest is far better — because it does not wane, it does not fade! It keeps exploding, more and more, well beyond the first *bang*!

We see it in the ministry of Oscar, a pastor who works in Sancti Espiritus province. In the "mother church," Oscar preaches, his wife leads the music — and their 12-year-old son, a percussion student, plays the drums during worship services. Sounds like a classic mom-and-pop operation, right?

But no. This church has some 400 members — and more importantly, 120 daughter churches. And these 120 daughter churches are in the process of planting more than 200 additional churches! *Bang! Boom! Kaboom!*

And these astonishing numbers — one church planting seven in two years, another church which has planted 120 is now planting 200 more — are not the exception. Again and again, all across Cuba, we see amazing multiplication of ministry. Edgar, for example, is a former tank officer in the Cuban army: he started a church, which planted 60 daughter churches. Today he pastors one of the 60 — and they have planted more 100 “granddaughter churches”!

When I get back to Cuba, in a little more than two weeks, I’m scheduled to meet with a pastor in the province of Villa Clara; he is preparing to tell us where he wants to plant *his next 100 churches*. And his church is one of 61 launched eight years ago!

Bang! Boom! Kaboom! How could we not rejoice! How could we not give everything possible to the work God is doing!

The Lord is showing us, beyond a shadow of a doubt, where He is at work — so that we may join Him in the glorious campaign, the ministry of reconciliation to which He has called us all (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

**But please understand: The road is not necessarily smooth.
Troubles come. Sometimes we suffer disappointment ...
confusion ... heartbreak.**

Yet even when things don’t always come out as we wish, God shows us that He is more than able to *take what we invest with Him ... and get victory from it!* Just this week, I encountered this beautiful truth — in an astonishing twist to a 15-year-old story....

I was doing an evangelistic outreach in a large neighborhood of Madrid. A young man named Carlos asked if he could help with the project; he said he might also be able to recruit a band to play at events. Burdened with work, I happily agreed.

Well, Carlos did more than “help.” He did a fantastic job! He hit it off with the assistant to the Mayor of the district and got *city funds* to take this “Christmas presentation” to a whole new level! He organized the band, he produced a beautiful living Bethlehem, he recruited and coordinated a host of volunteers, he had everyone in place ahead of schedule — he was a genius!

Carlos and his wife Mary began studying with us in our Spain seminary. They were both from Brazil and gifted in many ways. Everyone who met them perceived their gifting. Their lives were — in the words of the children’s song — “a great big bundle of potentiality”!

An Arizona church partnering with us fell in love with Carlos and Mary, and wanted to adopt them on the spot. The church’s leadership invited Carlos on an all-expenses-paid trip to Arizona. There was talk of giving them a full scholarship to Phoenix Bible Seminary.

Such great expectations! *But then came the bitter disappointment.*

They were within reach of graduation at our school in Madrid when, without a word —

without indication of anything being wrong — Carlos and Mary disappeared ... literally overnight! Didn't show up for class, didn't answer the phone, and didn't answer the door of their apartment. The apartment manager said they had moved out. The place was empty. There were no words, no reasons, no good-byes!

We on the staff and faculty did a lot of soul searching. We asked each other if there had been any incident that could account for their sudden departure — nothing.

Months later we learned the truth. Carlos had somehow gotten a vision of becoming a successful businessman. He was going to set up a lucrative insurance business and “rise to the heights he was capable of.” He felt if he could *think* it, he could *do* it. He began to live as if he had already achieved it. He bought a house and two cars, clothes for the business world, etc....

He was all set — until the bills began to come.

It broke my heart to learn that Carlos and Mary and their baby girl ended up in the street. From time to time, kind people from a church took them home and kept them alive by feeding them with food from charities. A long time passed before the little family came up with enough funds to fly back to Brazil to their families.

But this story was by no means finished.

Fifteen years later — three days ago — I got this incredible letter in the mail:

Dear brother Manny, peace to you!

I am writing you to ask for forgiveness. The Lord led me this morning to write to you and ask you to please forgive me.

I have been a pastor in a Baptist church for a number of years now in Bahia, Brazil.

I realize that I have never seen what I did to you from your perspective. I have not understood things from a perspective of loyalty, gratitude, and spiritual authority. I confess that I acted focusing on my fears and my immaturity, in an independent way without seeking advice or counsel.

Anger and rebelliousness always have consequences; I hope that, in the Lord, you may be able to forgive me. God in His mercy has changed what could have been a tragic end to a happy career in ministry. To God be the glory.

I want you to know that I have been very blessed with a wonderful family that loves the Lord.

Mary and I have been married for 20 years now. Our kids are growing fast. Our oldest is now 15; she studies in an online high school from the U.S., some friends whom we met when you helped us to travel to Arizona many years ago made this possible. Our oldest also speaks four languages fluently.

The other two children are 11 and 9, respectively and they follow the good example of their oldest sister.

What we love most about our kids is their love for the Lord and the way they live it. They are very united in their love and relationship with one another.

I am currently on a personal retreat planning what we hope will be the future of our church and ministry.

I wish you the best for you and your ministry from the depths of my heart. May the Lord bless you.

*With the love of the Lord,
Carlos*

Praise the Lord! What a thrill to learn of the wonderful work of the Lord — way beyond ourselves. ***God will not waste any investment we make in Him and through Him.*** Even in cases where we think “they went bad,” it can actually be a case of God not showing us His purpose yet, not yet revealing the last chapter!

What seemed like a bitter disappointment is now a sweet victory ... not just the victory of one family, but of all the families they are touching through their ministry as well. God’s work multiplies! Think of the *BOOM* of the hundreds of churches planted since our beginnings; think of the *KABOOM* of the thousands planted because of those hundreds. Think of the countless lives those churches are touching today because *you worked together with us* to reach out!

And today, I pray you will stand with us again, in generous giving. In fact, the truth is, we urgently need you.

Many people disconnect in summer time — summer’s shifting schedule makes for a fluid situation, and when friends don’t give, we can’t achieve our ministry objectives. “A wise son gathers in summer, but he who sleeps in harvest is a disgraceful son.” God would have us be wise sons and daughters and “gather in summer.”

Our reality is this: The ministry is growing, but summer giving has diminished — leaving us in a very precarious, even dangerous position. We DO NOT dread the growth — we embrace it! But we need partners — friends like you — to grow with us. We need help to embrace it!

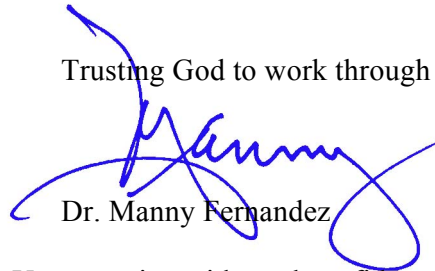
As you read these words, we are like Christ’s disciples dealing with the great catch of fish in Luke 5:

“...They caught such a large number of fish that **their nets began to break. So *they signaled to their partners* in the other boat to *come to help them*, and **they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink!**”**



We are signaling you in your boat. This is a serious S.O.S. Please come help us gather souls this summer. We are sinking!

Trusting God to work through you,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. By God's grace, our work is proven. You can give with total confidence to this ministry, recognizing what God has done down through the years and continues to do. The work you make possible today will be multiplied again and again. Lives will be touched and transformed by the power of God's love far beyond our ability to track the details or even imagine. Please let me hear from you quickly. We need you. Thank you. God bless you!