

*I wish you and your loved ones a sweet and blissful Christmas! May the partnership we enjoy in proclaiming Christmas all year long explode for you, with all its blessing, in wonderful celebration!*

December 1, 2013

Dear Ministry Prayer Partner!

I had a friend in college — I'll call him Victor — who lived through very dangerous experiences as he fled his war-torn country of origin. When his bus was stopped by soldiers at an army checkpoint, Victor's heart sank. He had been involved in subversive activities with his country's guerrillas, and his name was on the long list of those wanted by the army and the police.

With guerrilla fighters, the law of the land was **brutal** — and **final**. If caught, Victor would be interrogated and tortured. After a number of horrible days, when it appeared he was no longer useful, he would be executed and "disappear." He knew some who had already suffered such a fate.

The soldiers ordered all the passengers out of the bus so they could check their ID and search the vehicle. Victor knew that, if identified, he was doomed. So he decided to hide by lying on the floor in the last row of seats. His heart was pounding so hard that he thought someone might discover him by hearing it!

A soldier came up the steps into the bus and began to walk the length of the bus looking in every row. With each stride, the tension in Victor's mind intensified.

But then, suddenly, Victor's mind went clear. He began to see his entire life played out for him in perfect detail. He saw a few good things that he had done, but he saw very clearly all the bad things he had done. He could perceive the grimaces on the faces of those he had hurt. He was ashamed, and devastated. He wished desperately that he could take it all back, that he could apologize.

The soldier was about five rows away. Victor pleaded with God. Then, just two rows away, the soldier stopped, turned around, and walked back off the bus!

Victor was drenched with sweat. He felt like passing out. He was afraid to breathe too loud. He kept praying. The bus door made some noises. He heard "normal voices." The passengers were coming back to their seats. The engine roared back to life. The bus began to move.

Victor didn't know where to start to pick up the pieces of his life. *He felt he had undergone a performance review in the presence of God Himself!*

Of course, many have experienced such "life reviews" in near-death situations. They're a phenomenon reported widely across countries, cultures, and peoples of the world. In the United States, more than eight million cases have been reported and studied. The individuals seem to see their life "flash before their eyes." Many report seeing great detail, with events appearing in chronological sequence.

Victor described his experience as seeing himself in a "movie." Many people who experience these episodes report that they were shocked by the detail and clarity, because many of the events were long forgotten.

(Even blind people experiencing a near-death life review "see themselves" going through their own past experiences. Even people *born* blind report "seeing" their lives pass before their eyes!)

Descriptions of the "life review" are so uniform that it's hard to deny the reality of it. "A reformatory purpose seems commonly implicit in the accounts," says one study. In other words, you come away from the near-death experience wanting to do better, to be better, than you were before.

And while some folks report seeing pleasant episodes; most report embarrassment, revulsion and guilt — enough to overwhelm any of the good feelings. "Experiencers describe them as extremely unpleasant from the perspective of the unhappiness they had inflicted on others," the study says.

And what happens next? Usually, **a strong transformative experience.**

*People affected by the episodes report a sharp drop in their materialistic ambitions. They also report a growth in altruism and compassion towards others. A common denominator among those who undergo the life-review is that they strongly turn away from unethical or immoral choices because they become aware of a "record-keeping" — which would confront them later for their actions.*

Victor experienced it too. He gave up his former life — he came to Christ — he enrolled in Bible College at Multnomah; that's where I met him. For the last three decades, Victor has been leading an incredible church-planting movement!

No matter the background of the individual, the study shows, when someone's life "flashes before their eyes," *there is a decidedly moral reformatory impact on all accounts.*

So now we come to the end of another year — and it's time for our own "life review." As Moses prayed in Psalm 90, "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

What would you see if your “2013 passed before your eyes”? **If your year were to be reexamined with the “intense vividness and detail” ... what “moral reformative impact” might you experience?**

Actually, you can make a “reformative impact” — of your own choosing — as we close the books on 2013. Your end-of-year gift can be a game changer in the mission fields where we work. You could help a dedicated church planter to finish 2013 and start 2014 stronger.

Look at the open doors of opportunity before us:

1. I have just returned from Cuba where we have discovered a **shortage of workers** in Matanzas province. Some 267 people came to Christ in one week — for which we absolutely praise God. But we need 20 additional workers in this neediest province! Two years of support for the 20 will take \$10,000 dollars — yes, a lot of money, but the math is exciting: You can support a worker for two full years for only \$500! Amazing!
2. In Caibarien, in Cuba’s Santa Clara province, Pastor Andy Garcia has been forced to expand the foundation and walls another 30% in the church construction project already under way — Why? So he can fit in the **thongs coming to his church!** By God’s grace, he hadn’t put the roof on yet! The walls and roof must go up next — which will take \$9,000. Perhaps you could be one of 10 friends to give \$900 and make it happen ... or perhaps one of 9 to give \$1,000.
3. In Sancti Spiritus, Leonel has built a thatched roof on a building big enough to house 200 people — but the church is now **500 people!** To finish the structure the need will require \$2,000.
4. In Ukraine, 249 churches are planting another two churches each, on average. We’ve heard of some planting **five or even seven!** Even using the most conservative possible figures, we need a 50% increase for the workers — some of whom are already using part of their modest \$200 monthly salary to meet ministry needs. Overall in Ukraine, we need an extra \$1,000 per month for two years, or \$24,000. What part could you play? What impact could you make?
5. In India, we’re aiming to launch our first 50 church planters in April 2014. The cost per worker will be just \$75 per month. But this means a monthly cost for the **entire mission field** of \$4,000. What “moral reformative impact” could you make in India this year?
6. As you read this, our Cuban director, Felix, is in the process of moving permanently to the Dallas-Fort Worth area with his wife, Maricela, and their three boys. The ministry in Cuba is **growing so fast**, we need a Cuba-focused leader on site in our headquarters office. Felix will be tracking all aspects of the ministry in Cuba from North Texas, while Jorge, our new field coordinator, will be executing strategies and policies for the ministry inside Cuba.

We're asking everyone who knows them, every one who has been to Cuba and met them, to please consider giving toward their monthly support. We will start them at \$4,000 per month — for all living expenses and full-time ministry work.

7. Finally, we are being challenged by a “Goliath” in Spain. The purchase of our current building, where the seminary is housed, is due to be sold any day, as they await a building permit. The church which meets there has been given land to build a much-needed bigger building. They must sell to build on the other property. Meanwhile, the property they're selling is still perfectly suitable for us. **We must buy it** in order to continue functioning. Our challenge: \$1 million!

### **Fascinating opportunities!**

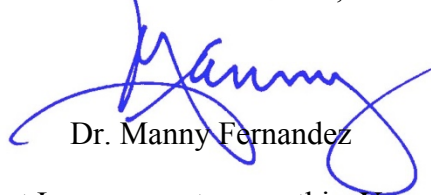
So let me ask you: What was your 2013 like? A comedian was doing a typical monologue about his life and experiences. He said he had a near-death experience and his life flashed before his eyes. But, he added, since his life had been so boring, there were a lot of commercials!

Maybe your year was average. Maybe it was fun, or sad. But whatever character your year has taken on so far, as you wrap up 2013 you have an opportunity to score a big win for eternity. A “big save” — not only for the year ... The decision you make today could bring the Big Save to *multitudes of lost people*.

Whether the Lord would have you take part in one of the projects I've mentioned, or you simply want to be part of the Big Win by giving freely, please let us hear from you today! Let us rejoice together with a great end-of-the-year victory. Let us rejoice together in the service of our God and Savior!

May God bless you richly, and may your New Year be blessed!

For the Soul Harvest,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. There are few guarantees in life, but I can guarantee you this: Your investment in this ministry as we close out 2013 will result in souls saved and churches planted, lives touched and transformed by the power of God's love, in 2014. Thank you in advance for responding generously!