

February 1, 2014

Dearest Ministry Prayer Partners,

The year is off and running like a Super Bowl! People are getting saved left and right!

As I write, it's still January, yet I've already been to Cuba twice—and I leave for Spain tomorrow. I don't want to exaggerate, but I think this may be the most amazing ministry travelogue I've ever sent you....

Amazing Week Number One

On the first Cuba trip, I was with five young guys from Criswell College—and quite frankly, I was not expecting a whole lot. They seemed like five ordinary students, not too interested in the project, mostly just wanting to fulfill a missions practicum. A couple of them were first-year students, the other three were part-time pastors and/or part-time students. But when the fireworks began, it was electrifying!

It turns out these were five young men who signed up at Criswell because *they are committing their whole lives to serving God*—the fire was already burning inside them! The Word and the Spirit flowed! One of them, Jason, has actually been pastoring a church since he was 19. He has no “jitters” about standing before a church crowd. He was sensational as he spoke—with enthusiastic love and giftedness—to the adoring Cuban audiences! *¡Gloria a Dios!*

John, another gifted speaker, was in a class all his own. He was able to connect with the audiences like no one who has ever come with us to Cuba before. (My apologies to the many preachers who have come before!) The people reacted with glee to his charisma, and to his gifted handling of the Word. He is not quite 30 yet. Yet from the moment he started, the audience began grinning—and grinned all the way till the end. It was as if they were eating the Word out of his hand!

The third pastor-student, Mark, was excellent—yet he had an entirely different approach. His life was the message. He was abused as a boy, and suffered much. He was LOST in a world of darkness—a world of darkened adults. Coming out was a very precarious journey. Victory was a happy finale. There were tears and compassion in the audience. The Savior shined through the victory that delivered Mark. Many identified totally with him. Sex abuse and verbal abuse have been rampant among them.

Then there were “the rookies.” We all held our breath: How would they do following such stellar speakers? What followed was ... a happy surprise! The first, Matt, was humble about his start, but he had “something to say.” He wasn't there simply because he “had to say something.” The Word, the authority, and the power were from the same God—no apologies!

We had one last student to hear. Obviously, he had the pressure of following everyone before him. His “older brothers” rallied to coach him and encourage him ... a magnanimous act of brotherly love; I was blessed in the depths of my soul to witness it. Still, the delivery was something he was going to have to do all by himself.

Well, he was not afraid. He had a powerful witness. He spoke of a father who was physically abusive to his mother and to him as well. Then his father was sent to jail for dealing drugs. So Jeremy did not see him for the next few years. One day, he got a letter in the mail from jail, from his father. His father was deeply apologetic. He shared with Jeremy how, while in jail, God changed him.

Jeremy could scarcely believe it. He wasn't entirely sure it was true. But his father was asking to be forgiven in a very different way. Jeremy went to the jail to see for himself. He was shocked to see the change in this man: He spoke openly about all the wrong he had committed. There were many more things than those Jeremy had known about!

But he also shared how God spoke to him as he began to read the Bible in his cell. He prayed to receive the Lord, and he felt he needed to start a brand-new life. He had been living the wrong way, with wrong goals. He wanted everything to be new. He also wanted to be a new, good father.

Jeremy was dazed by the panorama he had just been through. He loved his father, and this man sounded like the *dream-dad* he had wished for so many times in his worst moments. He felt he wanted to start over with him. *When his dad asked him to kneel with him and pray to receive Jesus, Jeremy gave His life to the Lord!*

Jeremy's mom was shocked to hear this story from Jeremy. *Her prayers were being answered! Jesus had come to their home!* He made everyone whole! The joy of the healing for all of them "filled their mouth with laughter and they were glad" (Ps. 126)—indeed!

Imagine the moment ... my moment of realization ... there, in Cuba ... that God had given me such a POWER TEAM!

From this moment, my job was easy. After these five amazing young people spoke, I would walk up to give the invitation: "Jesus has come here now. He wants to make you whole. He wants to give you a new beginning." I would share a brief message and an invitation. *People came to Christ in scores.* After all was said and done, nearly 300 people came to Christ!

And I must say, with a huge smile on my face: These five young preachers were out of their gourd with excitement! *There were over 100 baptisms!* It was a "soul harvest party"! We celebrated! And three of these young men want to go on to Dallas Seminary now!

Well ... OK ... this first week was fine for *preachers*, young or old ... but what about "non-preachers"? ... What about just *regular folks*? I'm glad you asked!...

Amazing Week Number Two

In the second week, we were traveling and ministering with "regular folks." They were literally *reading* their testimonies to the audiences! They got nervous. They lost their place—more than once! We had bankers, engineers, group managers—and an orthodontist. But God,

who uses anyone who joins Him, was just as victorious with one group as He was with the other!

The first shock was that every one of these “regular folks” had a personal story of dramatic extremes ... of impossible, messy situations apart from God. Apart from God, nothing worked—in *any* of their lives. With God, every one of them found a life of sweetness and abundance! This was the testimony of each and every one of them!

The miracle here was that these eight men *appeared* to be ambassadors from the halls of wisdom and perfection. The *shock* came when they shared the mess of their folly. Everyone in the audience was shocked. Seeing them now “dressed and in their right minds,” no one would suspect the demons that possessed them in the past. “Jesus made me whole” was the theme of their song. It was beautiful.

Anyone could see in these eight men from the business world, the embodiment of success. The unbelievable part was how they nearly died, or failed, or gave up, or almost committed suicide. Now they were telling how they lived to tell their story—and how Jesus snatched them from the edge of oblivion.

People took the advice. To build a life abundant and eternal, you need a foundation, a Rock, a Savior! Grab hold, climb on, receive! More than 200 said “yes.” Another 100-plus were baptized!

Then we went to a church-start being launched that evening. More than 40 people came to Christ. Everyone was there for the very first time. On the last evening, we went to another “house meeting”—but get this: 1,000 people were there ... at the “house meeting”! 50-some people chose Christ that night! 39 people were baptized in the backyard—with temperature in the 40s. In Cuba!

A house meeting — with 1,000? Yes! How is this possible? It was a large house, OK? 39 people baptized in the “house meeting?” Well, it happened in the backyard. It was all real, it was all true, it was all God. Those eight men are reading this report! God can do this. And He chooses to do it—with those who want to partner with Him in faith! These men, like the five students, had heard ... they had understood ... they chose to be part of it.

All of these who traveled with me wanted to see for themselves *the ministry you are making possible*. They wanted to *test the reality*. Here’s what they found:

They found that there are multitudes of true stories in an “unknown world” *behind* the reports! They found out that they had not heard “the half of it” by a very long shot! They were shocked and blessed at the same time. God is at work! It is awesome indeed.

Today, those who traveled with me to see for themselves, want to join Him. They want to be part of it. They want to go back. All eight of them committed on the spot to give \$500 to build a church building—\$6,000 total cost. They gave \$2,000 right then and there. I didn’t have to ask them, they saw it and “got it” in the same moment!

But—"Blessed are they who did not see and yet believed." You're different. You haven't seen it firsthand, but you haven't needed to. You've believed without seeing. *You are part and parcel of all the happenings!*

I thank God for all those who stood behind those who were sent: the five, and the eight. These 13 were fully aware that an average of 33 people were standing behind each of them as generous sponsors. In the same way, those hundreds deployed at this moment through our ministry in the various countries are being sent by *you*.

Thank you so much: Whether you have come to the field, or whether you have sent others to the field, you are part of God's equation for redemption in the fields.

God, the All-Powerful One, asks "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15)

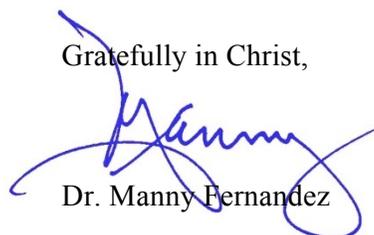
God was counting us, you and me, in the equation of the formula of redemption. The stories I've shared with you in this letter are not merely about what happened on the field. They are about how people were sent, about how those who were sent preached, about how those who heard the preaching called on the name of the Lord ... and on and on, until He came and saved many people!

Amazing Weeks Ahead

I enthusiastically ask for your continuing help in the ministry God has given us together in the reconciliation of the lost.

Thank you in advance for your cheerful and prompt response. Through the efforts I've described in this letter, nearly 500 people have come to Christ. But the hundreds of national preachers you empower through your generosity today will lead tens of thousands to Christ by the end of the month! God bless you greatly in His service. May He meet all your needs according to His riches in glory!

Gratefully in Christ,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. As you empower the preaching, you answer the All-Powerful God's command, "How will they preach unless they are sent?" Your answer: "We will send them!" And thanks to your response, some young person, full of the fire of the Lord, will answer, "Here am I, Lord. Send me!"