



*“We have **hope**. The Lord’s loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is His faithfulness.” —Lamentations 3:21-23*

August 1, 2015

Dearest Friend,

I pray you are having a good summer—rejoicing in all the wonderful blessings that the Lord presents you on a daily basis!

My summer has been . . . unpredictable. I never expected to spend a portion of this season in **Dominican Republic**, or D.R.—but that’s where I just returned from. Why? Because word is spreading far and wide of how God is moving through our work together! Church leaders in Santo Domingo, the capital of D.R., keep hearing about the incredible things happening in nearby Cuba, and they asked us to come help them in D.R. too.

To be sure, we are receiving these types of requests more and more frequently—but I don’t automatically say “yes.” Before we launch into a new region, we always look for *seven factors* that God has planted in our hearts over the years. The biggest and most important is #7: the God factor—a God-given ripeness of the other six!

So when Christians in D.R. began writing to us some time ago, it was clear that the time was not yet right. But over time, they wrote again, and again—a total of six separate requests—asking us to help them, as we have helped the Cubans, with mobilization, evangelism and church-planting.

And over time, it seemed that our seven God-given factors were falling into place. So finally, I made the journey to D.R. I met with a dozen leaders and shared what we do, how we do it, and how the process unfolds in each country. The leaders, of course, asked all the logical questions. But by the time our discussions ended, there was no question: I saw in these leaders a sober resolve to embrace our initiative in evangelism and church-planting.

And as I traveled throughout their country, I saw why.

**This was one of the most sobering
journeys I have ever experienced in
ministry.**



- In D.R., immorality reigns. As long as there are no complaints to the police, *anything goes!* In the more financially depressed areas, parents will welcome people into their home under the guise of “family” visiting from abroad. These strangers are actually customers; they’ve come to D.R. as “sex tourists.” In some cases, the family will offer services from any member in the household. If there is no “complaint,” there is no “crime.”
- Meanwhile, sad episodes of corruption have reached high into the government and, tragically, into Evangelical churches as well. The sordid details were in the local news even during my short visit.
- The president of a conservative Evangelical denomination told me that the church has no voice in the upper echelons of D.R. society. Christianity is a phenomenon of the lower class only—even after more than 100 years of history in this country. This helped me to understand various preachers I heard on the radio while I was there. They offered only very shallow explanations of very basic Bible principles and applications that reminded me of my early days in Sunday school.
- This is also a quagmire of theologies: Christianity is mixed with the occult practices of Afro-Caribbean religion. More than 95 percent of the population has a significant African background. Deeply ingrained within their culture are African Voodoo and the traditions of the African Diaspora. They need to learn to obey all the things that Jesus commanded us to obey . . . to learn that we are *not* meant to merge religious traditions with Christianity, but rather to become the counterculture Jesus wants us to be as the people of God!

In just a matter of a few short days’ visit, it was painfully clear to me: There is a great need for teaching of the doctrines of the Christian faith and sound biblical content to believers throughout this nation!

Among the pastors of D.R., there is discontent and pessimism about the future. They urgently need solid, ongoing education to restore their hope, their enthusiasm for the ministry that God has given them the privilege of performing.

Before I left the country, the Holy Spirit was flooding my mind with ideas for ministry in D.R. First salvo to be fired against the enemy: I suggested that we should organize debates and events to break the stereotypes that prolong a terrible misunderstanding of what true Christianity is!



But much, much more needs to be done in Dominican Republic. The task is HUGE.

Yet as you and I both know, the Lord of the harvest is infinitely powerful. We will not build His church. He is the One who said, “I will build My church.” You and I merely need to **do our part**.

In comparison to the enormity of the mission, we may feel as if we have nothing to contribute but “five small barley loaves and two small fish,” as John put it. He went on to ask the obvious question: “But how far will they go among so many?” (John 6:9,10). Jesus answers by having the people sit down and eat—until they were “filled to capacity”! And there were 12 large baskets left over!

I am challenged in exactly the same way every time I go into a new nation. This is why I don’t like to go wherever I am simply “invited.” The need normally is obvious. The Lord has given our ministry “the answer.” The people ask for help. God’s power is obviously infinite. I sometimes actually feel embarrassed that we call our organization “World Link”—because I feel like the “weak link”!

So on the precipice of every new opportunity, I am confronted by the same question: Are we the “weak link”—or the “World Link”? What can we say? What do you say?

In the words of Jesus, we find the comfort, the assurance that we need in a moment like this. He is the One who promised, “I will build my church.” He is also the One who said, “You shall be my witnesses.”

He has designated us the “World Link”—His link to a waiting world!

As we do our part, **He will do His part**. Each of us has only the responsibility to do the part God has empowered us to play. Yes, we are already “busy.” Yes, we are already *doing*. But this is how He makes us grow! I have seen it with my own eyes, and I have lived it with my own family. . . .

I remember when we first went into Spain. It seemed like a huge undertaking to leave family and comfort behind and go into unfriendly territory to plant one church in that kind of environment. The culture shock and the “sacrifice” seemed mountain-sized. All I wanted was one church! But knowing what God has done through us since then, you know how tiny that vision actually was! You know now that God was simply “warming us up” to do much, much more!



Then came the vision and invitation to plant a seminary. It seemed so much greater. The price seemed so high. *It seemed God was asking for our lifeblood.* The multiplication of extension centers seemed *daring* and *audacious*.

Going on to North Africa felt outrageous—like it couldn't possibly be “serious.”

The call to Cuba felt like it was too far from our “sweet spot.” But the brothers asked and asked, and I finally decided I needed to visit the place just to appease them, so I could be credible saying “No.” I never thought in a million years that I was entering into the most defining phase of our ministry and our lives!

Then Ukraine! When we were challenged by a pastor friend of mine to “replicate” Cuba in that far-off Eastern European country, it seemed it couldn't possibly be more than his passing whim and fancy. Today, we are poised to go far beyond 1,000 churches in Ukraine!

I think God is teaching me something! As we've gone to every other country since then, it has begun to sound more credible! It sounds like ***God may very well be in this!*** It has started to be exciting!

Just do your part, says the Lord, and I will multiply the resources. I can almost hear the Lord say: **“You give them something to eat!”**

Finally, we are learning! Hopefully we are aware that every time we are faced with one of two possibilities—to be “the weak link,” or to be “The World Link”—linking the world to a new life in Christ is the right answer. It is the *final answer!*

Now it's your turn. Please look up to the Lord. He says, “I will build my church.” He says, “You shall be my witness.” He says, “Do the part I have empowered you to do.”

By this *simple exercise* He has been making miracles happen in our ministry together . . . and I believe God is calling us to the next adventure. Please prayerfully consider what part you can play in helping us reach out to the multitudes of Dominican Republic with the life-changing truth of God.

I don't bring you this challenge as a guilt trip. I only bring you this challenge as an opportunity to be a link whom God will use to bring in the Eternal Soul Harvest! We are not a “weak link.” We are the “World Link”!

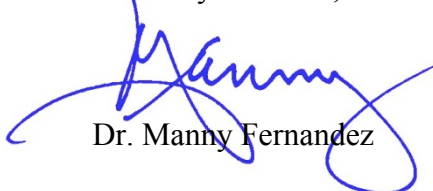


What a journey!

Please say, "Yes, Lord, with your ongoing power, I can say Yes!"

Let us hear from you today! Thank you in advance! God bless you!

Sincerely in Christ,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. What should I tell our brothers and sisters in D.R.? I can only tell them the truth: that I feel led to say "Yes," and I have prayerfully asked for help from our brothers and sisters here in the U.S.

You already know that you can give with confidence. We will move forward with a careful eye on stewardship. We will get absolutely the most out of every dollar.
Whatever you feel led to give today, you know that we will put it immediately to work and that God will use it mightily!

Thank you again!