

November 1, 2013

Dear Friend,

May the Lord usher you joyfully into the happy season of the year ahead. May you find, with your loved ones, that *the Lord is good all the time!*

Egor Fedorovich is not an everyday name on our side of the ocean, but it is music to the ears of many in Ukraine where he is a pastor. Egor has been with us for almost two years, and he has one of the *growingest* churches in the capital city of Kiev. One recent Sunday, by the second service his lips were still bluish from having conducted baptisms earlier that morning in the Dnieper River!

The church was packed; we gave up our seats so more people could fit in. We were given chairs in the hallway leading into the church. We ended giving up those seats as well. What great problems!

One couple in the church live and work in Vienna. They were there that morning, and the husband shared in detail the opportunity to launch a church plant among Ukrainians working in Vienna. The church is eager to say “yes” to this opportunity; they’re happily praying for God’s provision.

It was a busy Sunday for us. We were visiting a number of churches in Ukraine, some led by friends, some planted by our own former students. In a beautiful church in another part of Kiev, Pastor Marchenko led in celebration of Ukraine’s Thanksgiving Day. Many people in the congregation had donned their Ukrainian attire for the occasion. They normally dress, with great taste, in Western clothing, but this was a special Sunday.

In spite of language challenges, we could clearly understand the various blessings they were grateful for. I was quite amazed by their true joy and celebration as they thanked God for all the blessings He has bestowed on Ukraine. They were focused on blessings from God in spite of serious economic woes in their country. The people are suffering economically; unemployment is at an all-time high; alcoholism is an epidemic.

Yet on this beautiful and festive morning, those who were focused on the Lord were all smiles ... all gratitude!

It was a blessing to be in the congregation of the grateful, and as I looked at the Thanksgiving decorations in the front of Pastor Marchenko’s church — pumpkins and gourds and a cart overflowing with fruit at the center of the stage — I thought about the spiritual fruit we have witnessed in this country....

When I arrived in Kiev about 9 years ago, I knew no one. I was hoping to connect with a God-given counterpart so we could launch a church-planting movement that would make a difference in the country. We needed the leading of the Lord in a clear way. Where to start?

Through my Jewish friend Mitch Glaser, who leads Chosen People Ministries, I heard of a Messianic pastor named Sasha, married to a Jewish woman named Anya. By email, we arranged to meet. Sasha was a student at the Kiev Theological Seminary. Learning what we were trying to do, he took it upon himself to arrange a meeting for me with Anatoly, the Seminary President, a Dallas Seminary grad—just like me—all the way out in Kiev, Ukraine!

We fellowshiped like long-lost brothers. I shared with Anatoly how the Lord had led us to Ukraine, and he was glad to hear we were coming. He was eager to hear about our seminary in Madrid and was amazed that we had so many things in common.

Our doctrine was no surprise to him: we were taught by the same great men of God. But he was surprised by our strategy of using trained and experienced missionaries for our teaching and training. Our seminary in Madrid had planted scores of churches and ministries, while his seminary had absolutely no church-plants. In fact, they were struggling with a significant “placement” problem. There were not enough pulpits for the graduates!

So as it turned out, I was bringing Anatoly good news: We were being led to plant hundreds of churches while supporting those church-planters. He asked if we could take our church-planters from among those graduates who were likely to succeed. Absolutely!

By God’s grace, since that day 9 years ago, 249 graduates have successfully planted churches. And in most cases, each of these churches has planted two more churches! Two weeks ago when I was there, I learned that some of our statistics were in error. In western Ukraine, some of the churches haven’t planted two churches after all — they’ve actually planted seven!

So to conservatively say that we have planted well over 500 churches in 9 years is an understatement. What a great discovery!

It was a deep-down joy to me to hear President Anatoly declare, “We are a church-planting seminary.” *In that moment, I thought about you and me. We were led of the Lord to help with this!* The Glory is the Lord’s; there is no question about that. God working through each of us had brought this reality to pass. But what a blessed thing to be part of His victory! What an amazing joy to be a part of His team! And the work continues.

One of the original high-potential graduates selected to be a church-planter was a young man named Egor Fedorovich. He has been beautifully successful in the Lord. The next church plant out of Egor’s church is already commissioned, to be led by two members of his congregation, Vladimir and Olga. *They’re the ones working in Vienna.*

They actually work at Vienna’s famous Opera House. Olga won a prize in the “New Voices” contest. She is currently playing the part of the Countess in “The Marriage of Figaro” in the Wiener Staats Oper (Vienna State Opera)!



You might think, *They've got it made!* But, they didn't go to Vienna to pursue classical music. They went to Vienna to serve the Lord! What a concept! They really believe:

1. That the Bible is true.
2. That when Christ died for all, then all died.
3. That those who now live are to live for Him.
4. That we are ambassadors for Christ.

(You know! ... Christianity 101!)

Vladimir and Olga are happy for the free, opera-related publicity, because it will help their message to be heard. They're thinking of the Vienna State Opera as the stage for planting a Ukrainian-led church in Vienna!

In fact, the Director of the Vienna State Opera, Dominique Meyer, has offered Olga a career contract. He considers her "a very important member of the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera." But what about his proposal?

"She has not given me a specific answer," he admits.

How long would it take the average person to answer the call to stardom? Yet Olga — a product of your commitment to this ministry, a woman reached by Egor Fedorovich's church-plant — has not given the Director a specific answer!

What is she thinking?

At the same time, my daughter Elizabeth, soon to finish her pediatrics residency, is being offered positions across the U.S. with salaries in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. But she would rather go to Africa and treat needy children whose families can't afford medical treatment.

What are these people thinking?

I'll tell you.

- "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).
 - "By faith we understand that [all the materials of materialism] were made, (the worlds were made) by the word of God" (v.3).
 - They are strangers and exiles on the earth (v. 13).
 - They are seeking a different kind of "country" (a land of their own) (v.14).
 - They desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one (v. 16).
 - God has prepared a better place for them (v. 16b).
 - Without faith it is impossible to please God (v. 6a).
 - We must believe that He exists and He is the Rewarder of those who seek Him (v. 6b).
- (You know! ... Mere Christianity!)*

Today, you and I have the opportunity to partner with Vladimir and Olga, and Elizabeth, and many others who are serving God without any claim to fame in this world.

While I was in Ukraine, Egor asked me for help — not for himself, but for Olga and Vladimir's work in Vienna. Ruslan, our Ukrainian country coordinator, asked for help too — not for himself, but for the team and for those seeking to join us in planting churches.

Every country where we work has that same breed of saints! In Cuba ... China ... India ... Spain. ***God is not ashamed to be called their God.***

I warmly invite you to stand with them by standing with us. Let each of us ask ourselves: How seriously engaged am I in the service of our God? Am I seriously engaged where He has placed me? Will I step up, shoulder to shoulder with His wonderful servants, in reaching out far and wide?

Please help us to scholarship those who are preparing, evangelizing, and planting.

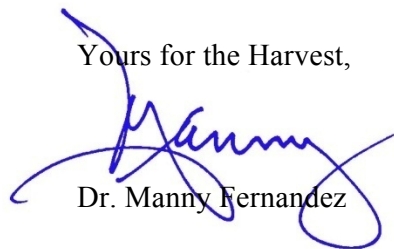
I realize that the meaning of a “real effort” or a “serious effort” is different for each one of us. God knows each situation. But if we let God use our “best efforts” at our own level, He will continue to produce magnificent victories ... the kind of victories that He brings to those who truly do their best. If God is in it, it’s going to be BIG!

And I can assure you ... God is in this! This isn’t the pursuit of self-aggrandizement or fame or riches. This is about reaching a world in need with real hope.

Please let me hear from you as a partner in the live drama of the Redemption of so many. Please continue in the good path He has marked out for you through these opportunities.

May the sweet will of God still draw us closer until we are fully embraced by Him. I hope to hear from you soon! God bless you!

Yours for the Harvest,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. We do our best ... God does the rest. What’s your best? I’m praying that’s what you’ll do today. Thank you again!