

February 1, 2013

Dear Ministry Prayer Partner,

Our prayer for you is for your good health and well-being. The Lord our Great Shepherd is able to deliver according to His good purpose in our lives.

This New Year was off and running even before January 1!

On December 30, we had the joy of leading several Panamanians to Christ — and on December 31 in Cuba, we led the first 20 Cubans of our trip to the Lord!

We went with a group of students from Criswell College to “wake up the year” in Cuba. The trip took us through Panama simply to get the best deal on flights — but God decided it would be worth far more than merely savings on air fare!

The students shared their testimonies, and the guys baptized new believers. Some 40 people were baptized during the first week of the year — and more than 200 came to faith. The dawn of the New Year was filled with Son Shine!

It was a blessing to see how God used the transparency of the students in sharing their testimonies. Every one of them had been touched by sin — “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But God the Savior has touched every one of us by grace!

The people were deeply moved. They first saw these young, good-looking Americans as super-humans — at first sight, it seemed these young people had been born on top of the world, undisturbed by the base things of life — but then their transparency revealed their humanity ... their plight, their need ... and their path to salvation!

- A young man I’ll call Tom talked about his struggles with alcoholism and drugs and growing up without a father. But God rescued him and kept him from going off the deep end.
- A young girl I’ll call Alice was terrified to speak in public. She was in tears. I told her she didn’t have to do it. But when she saw the crowd and remembered why she had come, she asked to be back in the program. And her testimony was powerful.

Alice was someone who always wanted to be in perfect control of her world. She had a place for everything and liked for everything to be in place. But her father was an

alcoholic, and her mother was victimized by long periods of depression. Alice's first attempt at coming to God was not because of her spiritual need; it was a strategy to find

happiness. Someone told her that happiness was found in God, so she got "close to God" to get at happiness. That didn't work!

Alice came to realize that she was making an intellectual attempt to get God to perform in her life. (God was not interested in the "job offer.") She also realized her pride in wanting to be her own "god" and decided she truly was not qualified. She decided to relinquish that control ... and come to God in repentance of heart.

The difference has been amazing in many ways — and the biggest difference is that now Alice's happiness is "real." Her challenge to our audiences was *to go to God with all your heart for a real relationship with Him*.

I followed Alice's testimony with Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of Heaven." I challenged people to do some soul-searching ... to determine if they were assigning some "servile" purpose to God in their lives — or if they really were approaching Him in reverence and sincerity.

We saw many, many conversions and many re-dedications. Every presentation, in every church plant, met with wonderful results. The guys in the group were thrilled to conduct baptisms; none of them had ever baptized anybody before. The people were overjoyed!

- One 67-year-old, white-haired, blue-eyed Cuban man came out of the water and raised his arms toward heaven and cried out, "Now, Lord, you see that I have obeyed in this step just like I promised!" Everyone around the water hole cheered!

Our "wake-up" mission for the New Year stood in stark contrast to the many pagan and secular practices in Cuban society. The end of one year and welcome to the new is normally celebrated not only with festive banquets and dances, common in other cultures, but also with the burning of effigies and superstitious practices intended to "improve" one's future, to invite good luck and keep bad luck away.

The consequences of the fires in the streets are just what you'd expect to find when "playing with fire." The next day you hear of the inevitable results when almost every household on every street is burning effigies.

As for us, however, that first morning of the New Year found us offering truly NEW LIFE! A life in Christ, with the protection and blessing of the Father. Many people,

weary of the “fire drill,” decided to take God at His Word ... celebrating the New Year with confidence in His provision and blessing.

And tomorrow I leave for Cuba to do it all over again, for two and a half weeks — with three different groups! Praise the Lord! It’s thrilling to see such a wonderful harvest so early in the New Year.

People ask if I get tired, but no — I am inspired! If my family were at risk of a Christ-less eternity, I’d want someone to come to them — and come again, and again, and again — until all were safely in His Book of Life.

Even when I’m not on the road in ministry (during my “regroup and retool” time), God gives me the privilege of sharing His Word.

- Just yesterday, I was at the barbershop, and the young man who cut my hair was from ... Cuba! (His accent was the first clue!) He’s from Artemisa — the town where we have our biggest church. What are the chances of such a connection? One hundred percent! These are God’s odds!

I learned that my barber doesn’t know our people in Artemisa — even though the church has more than 2,000 people and 300 daughter churches. He left Cuba before we had a chance to share with him.

So I told my new friend what we do in Cuba, and all that is happening in the country. He drank it all in. Then we were silent for a moment. Finally he said,

“You know, I have a problem, and I wonder if it is spiritual. Every night around 3 a.m., I wake up with the same nightmare. I see people, evil people, standing about two inches from my face. I wake up screaming!”

I asked him if he’s had any part in voodoo, or séances, which are common in Cuba. He said no. We talked about the connection between hallucinations and certain drugs. He said he’d done none of that.

Finally I suggested that one fundamental step in dealing with the spiritual world is to turn your life over to Jesus. I explained the Gospel, and asked if he wanted to do this.

“Yes,” he replied, “I would like to do it.”

I prayed with him to receive the Lord ... and this afternoon, I’ll take him to meet a Cuban pastor working with us in Dallas.

Can you believe it? Right here, our home turf turns out to be part of the



mission field. Right here in the U.S., there are many who have not yet come to faith! We must be ready in season or out of season, to every opportunity. Many of us get used to Christianity without the witness. God NEVER gets used to it.

Let us renew our commitment. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever — which means not only that He will be faithful in His love for us, but also that *He is as intent on reaching out to the lost today as He was last week, last decade, and last century.*

Remember Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you.... For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our God" (2 Timothy 1:6-8).

When the student Alice was terrified, in tears over her upcoming public testimony ... was it timidity? Shame? An extinguished gift? I don't know, maybe all of the above. But her resurgence was beautiful — the rekindling of the fire of the testimony of the Lord! Then there was victory! Then there was salvation and joy!

Let us stay in step with the Lord. Let us trust Him to keep His promises. Let us be obedient to the call He has placed on our lives. He will always lead us to triumph.

The pace of ministry in this New Year is already incredible. To keep up, we need to be a team in the service of the Lord. And our need for your financial support is great because of the relentless pace of the work.

So please give generously. Help us to stay in step as the Lord continually opens doors of opportunity for us. Help us to seize every opportunity as He would have us to do.

The eternal reward will be for us all ... for you and for me and to our teams in the field! Let us hear from you soon. Please give a heartfelt gift to advance the work of the Gospel.

Thank you! God bless you!

Sincerely in Christ,

Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. Panama — Cuba — the barbershop — the mission field is everywhere! With your generous and faithful help, we will keep reaching out to the lost wherever we find



World Link Ministries

Linking the World to a New Life in Christ



them ... and God sees to it that we find the lost *everywhere!* **Your giving is guaranteed to make a difference in eternity.** Please let me hear from you right away. Thank you again!