



March 1, 2022

Dear Ministry Partner,

Downtime? No way.

The pace of our ministry has not let up since early January! God has given us so much to do—tremendous opportunities in nation after nation!

Even today, I'm writing to you from the field, preparing to teach an afternoon course on Romans to pastors in one country as I teach a morning course on historical theology in a different country! And in the background, the team and I are mapping out extra sessions in Africa and the Philippines!

*As Covid recedes, passion for the harvest SURGES! Workers are clamoring to join our training network. In countries long closed by the pandemic, the call is intense:*

*Let's MOVE!*

**CUBA**—Lockdowns were severe; the people were isolated for so long—they're thrilled that classes and programs will start again this month—deeply grateful to go forward again and make headway into a fruitful future.

**BRAZIL**—A new group of pastors and church planters are catching up to those who began earlier. Leaders new and old will come together next month in Natal for New Testament courses taught by my son, while I teach a group in the northeast of the country—a group that has *doubled* in number since the pandemic began!

**SIERRA LEONE**—Participants from every region of the country are brimming with excitement as they plan to gather in the capital city of Freetown for a major conference on eschatology—study of the “last things.”

These leaders have pleaded from the beginning for this training, on top of anything we might have planned to teach, because they have never understood the biblical subject of the end times.

*These pastors have never taught on the Book of Revelation because they've never understood it! (But they are so eager to learn! We've actually had to book a large venue to accommodate such great numbers.)*

It's a thrill to see how God has been working in Sierra Leone. Our friend and partner Al Cellamare writes from the field that the work we launched on our last trip has been faithfully carried forward by the teams there.



(And by God's grace, our connection with paramilitary police in the bush has helped to establish new respect for our workers; they're now viewed as having the protection of the authorities, so the harassments and threats have ceased. Praise the Lord!)

**UKRAINE**—By the time this letter reaches you, things may have changed dramatically. Our partners of 22 years in this country have deluged us with prayer requests. The mood is tense as Ukrainians prepare to defend their land.

Our appeal is to the Sovereign Lord, that He will defend the Ukrainian people and grant true revival to come from the outcome He already divinely foresees.

**VENEZUELA—INDIA—OTHER FIELDS**—I could fill pages with thrilling headlines and reports! But suffice it to say:

**It's like the Book of Acts!** I see all that the Lord is doing and it reminds me of the way He led the apostle Paul and his team into so many scenarios. I don't claim Paul's inspiration, thrilled to see how God is using you and our teams together in the ministry of reconciliation. It is a true honor to serve with you!

Yet in the midst of all this excitement and joy, we see the negative impacts of the pandemic. . . .

As people emerge, we see varying views of how to go back to life as we knew it—or even *whether* to go back! In some regions of the world, we can see how Christianity has been adversely affected by people distancing themselves from participation in God's program.

In the church I attend, our pastor has noted that some people have developed a “relaxed view” of church attendance. I've heard my fellow church members say, “It's kind of fun to watch the church service in your pajamas.”

Does God have an opinion about it? We can see His view clearly in the Scriptures:

“And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

The great question of the hour is whether we will draw close to the Lord or apart from the Lord.

It's important to understand the powerful meaning behind Psalm 73. This psalm answers a dilemma that has haunted many believers through the ages: *Why do good things happen to bad people? And why do bad things happen to good people?*

In Psalm 73, we see that the psalmist Asaph once felt it was unfair that the evil should be rewarded even though they were arrogant, going so far as to speak against God. “As for me, my feet came close to stumbling and my steps had almost slipped,” Asaph says. He was in danger of falling headlong because he envied the prosperity of the wicked.

But he pivots to a recognition of the *real* danger: To let the question itself drive a wedge between ourselves and our God is a slippery slope.

And how did Asaph dispel the wedge being driven in his relationship with God? He went to church! “When I tried to understand this, it was troublesome to me,” he writes in verses 16 and 17, “Until I came into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end.”

*Restoration of fellowship with the Lord helped him to get the right perspective.* Being drawn away from God leads to destruction. “Those who are far from you will perish,” Asaph declares to the Lord; “You have destroyed all those who go unfaithfully away from you. But as for me to draw near to God is my good.”

Jesus said that to do His words is wisdom, and to not do them is folly. We must build on the Rock. The other option is to build on the sand and suffer great loss.

*We must stay focused on the importance of close fellowship with God and with His people as we ponder how to live a post-Covid life.*

### **Orders remain unchanged!**

Covid didn’t change God. Covid didn’t change God’s plan. We can see that His work has continued in spite of lockdowns and slowdowns. The Gospel was always going and growing!

In fact, multitudes in desperation have gravitated to the things of God. Meanwhile, our teams have taken advantage of open doors created by extraordinary need, for the sake of the Gospel!

**Today, tremendous work lies ahead for us—tremendous spiritual need among multitudes—tremendous opportunity to advance the cause of Christ!**

It’s thrilling to see how much farther down the road we are than when Covid first struck! We have not been crushed. We have not been silenced. Far from it. We have dawned into a bigger, richer reality. With your faithful support and prayers, we are witnessing the advance of the Lord’s purposes even amid these uncertain days. . . .

We are the embodiment of the scriptural promise of “God’s very present help in time of trouble” . . . not only surviving but *thriving* in the work of the Lord!

But today is a day for more than just celebration. It is a day for *advancing*. 2022 is unfolding as an especially busy and promising year. We must be about the calling of Hebrews 10:24, stimulating one another to love the Lord and to accomplish good works of service for Him.

- The challenge before you and me today is to press ahead with a “much more” attitude.

If we were excited to discover unique opportunities in the times of limitations—*how much MORE* now lies before us, when fields are opening up everywhere and more are being added!

Let's press ahead with genuine, authentic, one hundred percent GODSPEED!

**Let's resolve together to make the most of every opportunity . . . to go forward into the future and never look back.**

We are inspired by the way God has carried us through this pandemic and how He has used us. He has demonstrated that He can make the most of any and every opportunity. We believe! Now let's seize our new God-given opportunities for service—and see what He will do through us in the world!

**You and I know our God to be the only true and prevailing force from here to eternity. Our cause is worthwhile . . . the greatest and most worthwhile on the planet. Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due time He will reward us.**

May He find us faithful and eager and ready. Let me hear from you soon. Give as generously as possible according to the blessings that the Father has bestowed upon you against the backdrop of these difficult times. Give with a spirit of gratitude and exaltation. To God be the glory!

Joyful in His service,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. One more brief note: In November, I had a unique opportunity to lead a tour to Israel. Most tourists had abandoned the country because of Covid—so it felt as if the entire Holy Land had been opened up uniquely for us. There was a sense of wonder, of rich and rare blessing from God, a sense of unprecedented possibility.

*That's the spirit I am carrying into this next new season of ministry with you . . . and I invite you to enter into it fully with me. God has prepared this time and place for us. He has a plan to use us uniquely—and bless us immensely! Here we go!*