



September 1, 2022

Dear Ministry Partner,

Warm greetings at the start of another school year . . . another year of ministry . . . another harvest season!

No, ministry isn't always a "walk in the park"—far from it. Ministry is a spiritual undertaking, which means spiritual warfare . . . real perils . . . real casualties.

Africa BY THE HUNDREDS

We always ask God to align seven "necessary factors" before we begin work in any field: (1) students, (2) teachers, (3) meeting places, (4) curriculum (in the local language), (5) funding, and (6) a supervisor (7) God given maturity in all the other 6 factors. In Liberia, West Africa, God's favor was accounted for in every way. What could possibly go wrong? Welcome to spiritual warfare. Suddenly we faced an invisible enemy: *Ebola*.

The entire project seemed to be in danger of dying before it even began. But we knew God had set the stage. We stayed the course. We went to Liberia. We interviewed potential church planters. We launched our ministry in that country—in the middle of the *Ebola crisis*.

Result: As you read these words, Liberia has *hundreds of churches!*

Venezuela DEATH THREAT

Venezuela seemed to be going well. In spite of the country's many problems, we were advancing steadily. But as the old military saying goes, "there are no friendly beaches." For every beachhead, a price must be paid.

We found the seven necessary factors beautifully aligned in Venezuela. Alex would be our supervisor. He is a humble servant recognized by pastors around the country as a man of God, one chosen as national president of the "Confraternities of Pastors."

But then the phone rings. The man at the other end of the line says an order has been given by one of the cartels to either kill him, or kill one of his family—the price is already paid.

The man has a counteroffer, however. If Alex can pay a bigger sum, the hitman can kill the one who gave the order. Alex will be free of threats.

Alex doesn't know what to do. He goes to the Venezuelan police. They're puzzled! The counteroffer is not typical. They can only recommend watchfulness. *If you move around, keep an eye out* . . . not much help.

The phone rings again. The order must be carried out, he says. Alex answers with the boldness of the apostle Paul.

"You can kill me, and I will go to heaven," he says simply. "But where will your soul go?"



The hitman doesn't answer.

Here's one truly amazing wrinkle in this story: Alex didn't want me to know about the threat. He tried to keep the information from me. Why? **He told one of our ministers he didn't want, under any circumstance, for the 315 church plants to be stopped. It is the largest ministry undertaking he has seen in Venezuela and in his life.**

We always mention seven factors in launching our program into any given country. But there is actually one additional, parenthetical factor. Factor 8 is *opposition or persecution*. Just as surely as we must have the first seven components, there is almost always opposition, some barrier that would keep us from accelerating church-planting.

Whenever we meet Factor 8, here's what we do: **Stay the course!** (Alex had overlooked this. It's his first time. We've known it all along.) *We must stay the course.* But of course it's thrilling to see his ultimate decision: He wanted the program to go on, *even if it cost him his life.*

But Venezuela is only one of many fields where God is at work through your faithful prayers and generous giving! . . .

Spain REACHING THE WORLD

In Spain, more students are asking to enroll in our seminary. They're driven by a passion for evangelism on the old, spiritually ossified continent of Europe.

We are on the cutting edge! We've added a social media outreach, engaging a whole new audience of young people, offering a faith they can understand and embrace—something they've never seen before. We're beginning to gather a following—the work of bearing fruit!

A bright young man named Andrew leads and works daily in this ministry, and he is a delight. As a new student, he signed up for a single apologetics course—and it revolutionized his entire outlook on the Christian life, revamped his personal witness, and reshaped his career!

His wife was ahead of him. She graduated from our four-year program in May. Now her husband Andrew is determined to go through the four years of study himself!

But with him, it's not just "him." *He shares everything he receives in the classroom with the young people who read his posts.* He's also interviewing our faculty, our graduates, and our current students . . . multiplying the power of every testimony beyond our ability to calculate, via what we used to call the World Wide Web (a term many young people today don't even know!).

Andrew got passionate about this online outreach because he saw the following of other podcasts in Latin America and Spain. He's frustrated that people follow others by the millions—those who speak "truths" in the name of the Bible which are not in the Bible at all—and in fact are contrary to the Scriptures. Andrew is recording video interviews and posting to our YouTube channel!

Every week Andrew turns in a report on the impact we're making on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram – all these channels in Spanish. We are reaching hundreds of times more people than ever before!

In the Spanish-speaking social media world, we were silent—until now. With evil running rampant, unrestrained, we cannot remain silent. Social media is spreading the Word not only in Spain and the Spanish-speaking world, but also here in the U.S. (More than 40 million people in the U.S. speak Spanish at home!)

Portugal, Nepal—DIVINE CONNECTION

We have now also employed Ligia, the daughter of a Brazilian pastor who studied with us. Brazilians speak Portuguese, and Ligia is working to reach multitudes as she pursues her university degree.

Meanwhile in Portugal, I'll begin training Nepalese pastors in homiletics. Nepalese, in Portugal? Yes. Some 100 congregations of Nepalese people have come out to the west in search of better lives. One graduate of our program is organizing 100 pastors—who will now understand, for the first time, the proper study and application of the Scriptures.

Dinesh, the young leader of this movement, has witnessed the glaring problems that occur when there's a lack of knowledge. He has cried out to us to train the pastors of Nepalese congregations in Spain and Portugal also. Thanks to you, we were able to say "yes!"

India cries—MORE CHURCHES, PLEASE!

In the south of India, demand is growing for teaching and for church planters. *Please train pastors and workers!* That's the cry.

We've been urgently invited to the southernmost parts of India to see the work of some 50 church planters we've never met. They're faithful, and they're productive. They want guidance for their next steps! We're working with a highly trained US counseling professor who will teach them counseling. Pastors in the region recognize that they need to understand how to deploy the Word of God in counseling. We're laying plans now for a major teaching opportunity.

Meanwhile, our church planter in the region is doing great work, and working hand in hand with schools for marginalized children—10 schools so far, with more asking for help. It's always true: awareness creates greater demand. But it's also true that "whoever gives to the poor lends to the Lord. And He will repay him for his good deed" (Proverbs 19:17).

I'm grateful that **God considers it a personal loan to Him when we give to the poor. Talk about an investment opportunity!**

So, I will go to India in the first quarter of 2023. While I'm there, I also plan to see dozens of wells that friends like you have helped us to dig. By the time I arrive, they should be fully operational. *DOZENS OF COMMUNITIES WITH ACCESS TO CLEAN, SAFE WATER—for the first time ever.* Thank you!

And in every village, we hope to see a new church planted. So far, we've seen that wherever wells go in, whole villages receive the Lord Jesus!

HOW DOES IT ALL HAPPEN?

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:14,17, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain . . . and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are

still in your sins.”

The implications of a faith not backed up by forensic science about the resurrection would be disastrous . . . with severe consequences! Faith without the resurrection is like currency without the gold backing. Christ not raised? We’re still in our sin.

Christ’s resurrection is the bedrock of our faith . . . our salvation . . . our investment . . . our reward.

I can’t help but think of Dr. Simon Greenleaf, a founder of the Harvard Law School, and an expert in the field of legal evidence. He set out to disprove the biblical testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus, certain that a careful examination of the Gospels would dispel all the myths at the heart of Christianity.

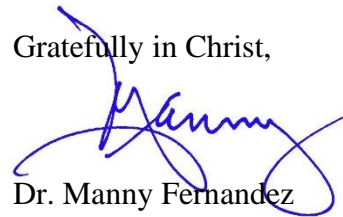
His conclusion: The witnesses were reliable, and the resurrection did in fact happen.

He became an ardent promoter of the Christian faith!

Thank you for your well-founded faith and for your *exercise* of your faith. Thank you for not only believing but investing in the promotion of your faith. Thank you for not merely “keeping the faith,” but passing it on—to the ends of the earth!

Please help us to launch this new school ministry year in a mighty way . . . that the Lord may find us faithful at His coming! Thank you! God bless you!

Gratefully in Christ,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. Liberia, Venezuela, Spain, Portugal, India . . . your love is felt, your passion is making an impact in far-flung corners of the earth. Please give generously again today and let God use you supernaturally in His harvest work around the world! Thank you again!