



November 1, 2022

Dear Ministry Partner,

Would you go into Ukraine? Some felt I shouldn't go. "Too dangerous," one friend in New England said. But I went.

And you were there too, in spirit. Your generosity was on display everywhere. Give me just the next two minutes, and I'll show you. . . .

Of course, the war is still a dangerous reality—tragedies occurring every day. As I write this, Kyiv has just been attacked by Russian missiles from the east and from inside Belarus. When I arrived, the Ukrainian army had recaptured two cities from the Russians, cities supposedly "annexed" to Russia. Vladimir Putin showed up in the media shaking hands in solidarity with the would-be new Russian provinces. The world rejected the sham.

But I wasn't there for a "photo op." I was there to see *the power of your giving in action*. What I experienced there were hugs from people sobbing in gratitude for the help you sent.

- Russian soldiers descended on one home for 10 days. Every day, they milked the family's cow and drank the milk but never turned the animal out to pasture to graze. When the cow stopped producing milk, the soldiers shot it! Through their agonized tears, they cried, *How can a cow give milk if you don't feed it?*
- At another home, Russian soldiers slaughtered the family's pig, roasted it, and ate it in front of them.
- Some saw their daughters and wives abused. I can't describe it. I can't imagine the horror. The hardest thing was to hear their grief-stricken accounts, unable to offer justice for the suffering they had endured.

And yet . . . and yet! Again and again I saw it: *Your compassion, your generosity . . . the love of God . . . PREVAILED!*

I met so many people who are alive today because you provided food for weeks. Many thanked me because your gifts helped them fix windows, doors, or roofs damaged by explosions, or bullets, or shrapnel.

- One family's home suffered a direct hit. The house completely collapsed. Neighbors ran to see if they had survived. What they witnessed was a miracle. One person was in the doorway on one side, the other in the doorway on the other side. When the house imploded, they were both left standing *outside the house!*

➤

Yet next to the pile of rubble that used to be their house, a new house had already been built—with the help of friends from our network, empowered by your giving! They were so grateful! I wish I could somehow have taken you there to see and feel the tears of joy, their embrace of gratitude.



And truly, someday in eternity you will. Heaven will be the place for the greatest celebrations! Heaven will be the place where we can meet each other and speak the same language. *You'll receive their thanks yourself!*

➤ An older couple in another village told me how they survived. As the Russians occupied their village, they went into their crawlspace under their tidy pink house—translated “shallow basement.” They lay there for days, barely low enough to avoid the gunfire, as soldiers riddled their house with bullets.

They showed me how one bullet had gone through the front wall of the house, through the living room, through the kitchen wall, and through the refrigerator, exiting through the back wall. A 50-caliber bullet had pierced everything in its path.

Every wall in the house had craters from bullets and shrapnel.

But by the time I got there, the entire house had been completely restored, paneled and painted an elegant gray. This lovely couple send their love and gratitude to their American brothers and sisters! Thank you for the gift of *total restoration!*

I visited Irpin, a city north of Kyiv, as far south as one column of Russians was able to go. A bridge there was blown up by the Ukrainians to impede the advance of tanks and military personnel. The brave Ukrainians held their ground.

The enraged Russians began to demolish civilian housing. They shot up cars and set them on fire. They shot and killed anyone who ventured out in the streets. Large buildings are charred and reduced to ruins. Many dwellings are so badly damaged, they'll have to be torn down and rebuilt from the ground up.

Yet “our God is greater”! In the heart of the city of Irpin is a beautiful church—a Bible-believing, God honoring church. A church that has led the way in helping people during the horrible days of Russian occupation. A church sitting on a campus once used as a camp for youth and children’s activities.

This church was planted by a Ukrainian graduate of Dallas Seminary who had a great vision for all that a church could be and should do. The Lord has been using this church in partnership with you to serve the beleaguered people of Irpin in their hour of need.

A rocket fell less than 15 feet from the main campus building. A women’s prayer meeting was going on at the time. Every window on that side of the building suffered the blast. But the harsh winters make it necessary to insulate each window with three windowpanes. The explosion broke only the outermost glass. There were no injuries!

The Irpin church has also established a **refugee escape program**. They’ve helped thousands of refugees get out during the toughest time of the Russian occupation. You helped provide food every day for hundreds of people, along with medicines and other supplies.

You also helped this church arrange a “**mobile gas station,**” a van loaded with two thousand-liter tanks—one gasoline, the other diesel. People in our network were able to deliver fuel to pastors so they could transport sick people, refugees, and people stranded without fuel.

Your giving enabled us to keep refilling the tanks.

You also enabled the church (and other groups) to set up **Christian camp programs for children** who would be otherwise shut in at home—including refugee children. Through this unique ministry, every child heard the Gospel.

While I was there, our teammates mounted a **food distribution**. We delivered food to family after family. I wish you could have seen their beaming smiles and joyful gratitude!

Bogdan, one of our church planters, organized a **children's fair**, and you enabled his team to bring food to their families. Bogdan shared the Gospel there—and many received the Lord! *A Bible study has already started among the new believers!* At last report, since my return from Ukraine, more than 200 people have received Jesus!

And Bogdan continues traveling from village to village with an evangelism program. He's not focused on the problems of war. He says that people's hearts are open. "It is a great time to help people," he declares, "to share the Gospel, and bring people to Jesus!"

Now, back home, I hear of the terrorist acts of Vladimir Putin punishing the Ukrainians for bombing a bridge to Crimea, a region he has "rightfully" stolen, insisting that he will punish any attacks on "his" territory (demanding no opposition for the brutal terrorist attacks he has been perpetrating on the Ukrainians).

But God is doing something greater than any earthly despot can manage. I'm so grateful that you are standing with me, and with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, to seize the day for the cause of Christ. We are not idly standing by, not letting things run their course. The people of Ukraine recognize the fact that *only God can bring total justice*—and that He will make the biggest difference in the midst of this tragedy.

People are turning to God in great multitudes. Even in a landscape of heartache, God is at work fulfilling His highest purpose. And you are part of it. You have a personal stake, a personal role, in the work of God in Ukraine and in Russia.

Ruslan, our partner at Kyiv Theological Seminary, posted this about you on social media:

- "Thank you very much to brave brothers, Dr. Manny Fernandez . . . for a visit to Ukraine in such difficult time for a country, for your encouragement, love and Gospel for many people in the war time in Ukraine. We are very appreciating for your commitments to ministry to people in Jesus' name."

You are reaching grateful people. You are empowering the courageous, resourceful Ukrainians.

They are not sitting back, depending on others.

In their gratitude, they are doing their part in a diligent and brave way.

The church is sharing the Gospel in multiple ways, seeing this ghastly war as a God-given opportunity to speak to their fellow countrymen.

They know that *Today is the day of salvation* for their countrymen.

They know that this is a time for the Lord to work in the hearts of people who have been wandering in darkness and ignorance.

The Gospel is blowing like a whirlwind in the nations of Ukraine and Russia!

The strength of our ministry is the strength of our joint commitment. I praise God that together we see mighty deeds of the Lord.

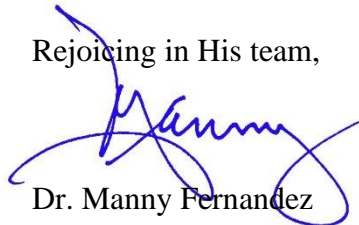
So I thank you, from my heart, and I pray that you will be inspired by the colossal efforts of our Ukrainian friends and that you will give generously again today.

Our work is far from finished. Ukraine is only one field where God has opened the door to us. On the airplane, on the way home, I received 40 photos of the devastation from Hurricane Ian in Cuba. Roofs gone. Many homes destroyed. Our workers were hit hard. Many church members have been left homeless.

By God's grace, your generosity is already making a great difference there. By the time you read this, our team will already be rebuilding homes. As always, the Gospel leads the way. Thank God for the everlasting arms!

You set it all in motion through your beautiful giving. Please give again today, as God has blessed you. Let us join the Father and the Son in their work. They are the source of our strength. As we draw near, God will show us how He can use us in ways we never thought possible! I hope to hear from you soon. I pray God's blessings upon you!

Rejoicing in His team,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Manny', with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. In the U.S. we speak of “the holiday season.” Yes, it’s a time for celebration. But so many still need the Lord . . . please give as generously as possible today to reach them with the good news in ways both spiritual and practical. Let this be your “Thanksgiving gift” of Christ-like compassion. Thank you again!