



December 1, 2022

Dear Ministry Partner,

Warm greetings from Cuba!

I wish you had been here yesterday—to see and hear, personally, the incredible testimonies of God’s miraculous provision for the poorest of the poor in the region most horribly devastated by Hurricane Ian.

You probably haven’t seen much in the U.S. media about the damage to Cuba. No surprise. Cuba is officially a pariah to the U.S., so what happens there is normally not reported in any detail, if at all.

But if we reach a point where we don’t care what happens to extremely poor people, regardless of politics, then we have tragically derailed from our calling as Christians—to love our neighbor.

You know how Jesus talked about loving our neighbor as ourselves: He regarded it as the second Great Commandment, a comprehensive summary of all the law and the prophets. It’s right up there with loving God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength!

I am so grateful that you are living in this kind of love . . . partnering with me in this work of compassion. Yesterday here in Cuba, we celebrated with the poor and weather-beaten Cubans. They shared with tears—and with joy and gratitude—how God led them through the monster storm and then provided for their lives to be restored . . . through your great generosity.

Ian struck the area at about 4 a.m. The mayhem lasted for hours. Older folks declared—even though Cuba sees hurricanes every single year—that they had never experienced anything like the brutal force of this storm.

It was a time of sheer terror, with a deep darkness and the roar of winds. There was the crackling and snapping of trees. There was the shouting of prayers, cries to God for help. Terrified children cried and screamed.

Families had resolved that they would get through this nightmare. Then came the astonishing force of the howling winds, louder than anything they had ever heard before, and the violent shaking of the houses. The roofs began to shake. *Then the ground itself began to shake.*

Suddenly, at more than one home, there was a ferocious *SNAP*—and the entire roof was gone. The storm was on top of them! The “protection” had been removed!

What now? Tears exploded. Parents pulled their children under beds and held onto them for dear life.



In one household, the husband had rigged a tarp under the roof, just in case the roof was taken. Sure enough, the roof was wrenched off. The tarp was still there, but securely anchored only at one end. The husband grabbed the loose end of the tarp and hung on, desperate to keep the storm from taking the family's precious mattresses. *Their mattresses were among their most valuable possessions.*

Hour after hour the man clung to the tarp, struggling to ride the wind as the tarp flapped furiously. One hour, two hours . . . the man was exhausted, but he was determined not to let go.

Every so often his wife peeked out from under the bed to see if her husband was still alive. He was still there! Her hope and prayer was that he could hold on. He was holding on!

Three hours, four hours . . . the muscles in his arms were screaming for rest.

Finally, after five hours of grappling with hurricane-force winds, his arms simply gave way. He let go and dropped to the ground in defeat. The storm would win. The family's tears flowed. They had been unable to hold on to their meager resources. *Everything was gone.*

Eventually, the wind stopped. Remorse overwhelmed them. *If only they could have held on a while longer!* Ian had made a mockery of their efforts. They had almost done it. But in the end, they *lost*. The cruel storm came to take it all—and cruelly succeeded.

I listened with a broken heart as these brothers and sisters told their traumatic tales. . . .

For some who had lost everything, second thoughts and recriminations seeped into their minds. *We tried to be brave. We tried to have faith in God. He could have spoken peace to the storm, couldn't He? He could have detoured it.*

For others who had been wiped out, it was a time to reaffirm God's sovereignty: *He owns the storm. The storm was somehow necessary. God will still take care of us.* But how? They had no idea. Everyone wept—hour by hour . . . for three long, grief-stricken days.

But then—their story abruptly changed. Their faces brightened as they began to recount the next chapter . . . a miraculous development . . . a Christmas moment:

“ANGELS came!”

Your generous support for World Link Ministries enabled us to rush emergency aid to this storm-ravaged region.

By God's grace, we were able to take an amazing \$65,000 into Cuba—but even more astonishing was how God multiplied the loaves and fishes—by more than *six times*. Yes, the exchange rate turned \$65,000 into more than 10 million Cuban pesos: that's the equivalent of \$400,000 . . . a 615.38 percent increase!

The Cubans—believers and unbelievers alike—were stunned by this miracle . . .

. . . not only that help unexpectedly arrived, but that \$400,000 was exactly the total amount it was going to take to rebuild these homes and restore their lost possessions!

No, this was not a dream! It was absolute reality. *God had not forgotten them—and His provision was mathematically exact.*

- Yes, I wish you could have been there, in that place packed to overflowing, to see both Christians and non-Christians—jammed into every available seat and doorway and open window—thanking God, “the Master of the Storm” . . . and thanking you, as a friend who was used by God to meet the need.

There was a program of wonderful music. Out back, a special meal of pork and yellow rice was being cooked in stages in order to serve the huge crowd. But inside, the most important work—the work of *eternity*—was taking place.

The message of the day was “God, the Master of the Storm.” God was making the region whole again. He was using the storm. He knew of the needs of those in its path. *He is not only the Master of the Storm, He also attends to the smallest personal need*, both Sovereign and Savior!

I spoke on how to have victory in the storm, how to choose faith, even in the face of fear. The people were beautifully responsive. Many committed to choose faith as the antidote to fear. **Some 75 chose to receive Christ as their Savior!**

It was a grand finale to a four-day week of wonderful ministry experiences. The team and I had already visited several congregations and seen a total of around 200 decisions for Christ.

But as I humbly thank our Father for these marvelous outcomes, I also think back to how it all began . . . as Hurricane Ian was just beginning to descend on the island nation of Cuba. At that moment, I was on a flight back home from ministry in Ukraine. I was quietly rejoicing, in my heart, to have witnessed the power of your Christlike compassion and the thrilling deployment of the Gospel in that heartrending war zone.

But suddenly my phone came to life. I had forgotten to put it in “airplane mode,” and it began dinging repeatedly—rapidly loading 40 or more photos of utter destruction that Ian had just wrought in the Pinar Del Rio region of western Cuba.

In God’s perfect timing, our ministry’s board was scheduled to meet the next day. Board members were disturbed that the devastation in Cuba hadn’t made the news in the U.S.—but they immediately moved to the solution side of the equation. Our teams in Cuba were crying out for some way to help the people whose lives had been shattered by this cataclysmic storm.

It seemed impossible to even make a dent in this tragedy. Whatever we could send immediately would seem inadequate. And yet, these few committed leaders serving on our board determined to do whatever they could. *We have to do something*, they said. And we would trust the Lord to multiply our loaves and fishes.

Which is exactly what happened. *With your strong support, we helped more than 300 families!*

So we see once again that God is in the business of taking our small investments in the kingdom and turning them to *gold for eternity!*

We were experiencing the living truth of Jesus' teaching in Luke 16: The resources are God's, and we are stewards of these resources. We are called to use the Lord's resources to further the Lord's goals. We've been entrusted with material possessions, and we invest them in order to achieve the eternal gains He has purposed to bring about.

- What we have seen in Cuba this week is that it doesn't necessarily take a millionaire. It doesn't take a superstar. It doesn't take a celebrity political leader.

It only takes one person like you, sharing whatever loaves and fishes you happen to have in your hand. Someone like you who simply asks . . .

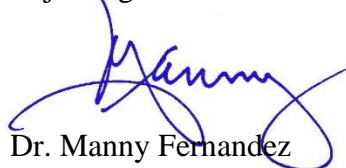
How has God blessed me? What has He entrusted to me?

How can I best use it for His glory in the work of the harvest?

I warmly invite you to ask these questions again today and give as generously as possible in these closing days of the year. As you prepare for Christmas with your loved ones, I wish you a glorious season of light and love . . . recognizing that Christmas is not just a fleeting celebration.

We saw Christmas every day this week as we proclaimed to the Cuban people that a Savior had been "born unto them," and they gratefully embraced Him! Through your prayers and giving, you proclaim the Christmas message all year long, all around the world! Please let me hear from you quickly. Thank you in advance. God bless you!

Rejoicing in Christmas all year long!



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. Your "Christmas gift" today will shine the light of God's great Gift into the spiritual darkness, and someone's life will be transformed by Christ's love. On behalf of that soul saved by grace, I thank you again!