



January 1, 2023

Dear Ministry Partner,

I hope you and your loved ones are having a wonderful Christmas season and that you're ready to start another happy year living in the never-changing promises of the Lord.

As I write you today, I'm in Madrid, finishing up the teaching of a course before I head back to catch up with my family. I'll get back in time for Christmas! I've been away for a long time, but it feels wonderful—because of the many great and wonderful things I've seen God doing . . . *your prayers and giving bearing fruit!*

**You're a blessing to our brothers and sisters in UKRAINE. . .**

The war has devastated multitudes, and one of the most desperate needs this winter is for electrical power, for heat, for cooking, for so many functions of life and ministry. Our Kyiv Theological Seminary has been wracked by power outages—but your generosity provided an astounding Christmas gift: *a big generator*.

Our seminary supervisor Ruslan sends this exuberant expression of gratitude:

The generator is working very well and provides power for the entire campus. Now we are still installing the power line (70 kw! It is dangerous power) and needs work for some details and some accessories.

Thank you very much for this machine for seminary. ***Thanks to you the seminary has power and heating during blackouts in Kyiv.***

With huge appreciation for your influence in Ukraine,

*Ruslan*

This thank-you is for you . . . for faithfully supporting the work of God (not only in Ukraine but around the world).

Here again in Ukraine, “the people who walked in darkness are seeing a great light”! What a beautiful blessing—electricity for the whole compound—four large buildings. The entire campus—dorms, classrooms, kitchen, dining hall, and more—all ON!

But your Christmas gift to the seminary in Kyiv goes beyond our students and faculty. People in the neighborhood are also being welcomed in, to heat water and meet their basic cooking needs . . . wonderful blessings when the power outages turn the city cold and dark!

We saw this kind of compassion in action on a much smaller scale in our own home area last year when the electrical grid gave out in north Texas. Thousands of people suffered through days of severe cold, saw enormous amounts of food spoiled, and lost many comforts we've come to take for granted. (Someone had to be held accountable for this major mess. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas proved to be unreliable!)



But in the midst of it all, people came together. Where people still had electricity, family and friends were invited to gather. Limited resources were shared. My own household became an outpost. I witnessed the relief and the blessing firsthand.

Today, your Christmas gift of electrical power is being shared by our seminary staff with those in need all around, as Kyiv moves through its coldest month of the year, January—with average daily *high* temperatures below freezing! *Every day people are being warmed and blessed by electricity, as well as fresh water, thanks to you.*

And as always, God uses a crisis to draw those in darkness to the Light. As neighbors turn to the seminary for physical power, they're encountering the good news—the source of *spiritual* power!

**You're also blessing our brothers and sisters in INDIA . . .**

By the time you read these words, I'll be there teaching workers but also celebrating the traditional Feast of the Three Kings, which remembers the Wise Men's visit to the child Jesus, with the children in our school program in Tamil Nadu.

Students will perform Christmas skits and songs, and we'll give a Christmas gift bag to each child—along with a wonderful Christmas meal!

Through your faithfulness and generosity, you'll be sponsoring the party . . . you'll be with us in spirit! Even more importantly, you are sponsoring the education that these children are receiving day-to-day and week-to-week: reading, writing, math, every subject, all thanks to you . . . plus biblical education . . . and the main meal of the day, right there at school. *Thank you for feeding their bodies, minds, and souls!*

**And now in the new year, you will be a blessing to multitudes more! In SIERRA LEONE . . . CUBA . . . *the list goes on.* You'll be a blessing in VENEZUELA . . . where we're looking forward to launching another 300 churches in the Caracas region—in the first quarter alone!**

My beloved friend, this is the simple heart of my message to you today: By God's grace, WE HAVE A BANNER YEAR AHEAD! Here's my prayer: May this new year prove to be even *greater* than we foresee . . . to the glory of God!

Yet even as we strive to see God's "big picture," I can't help but smile as I see His love manifested on a personal level. Here's what I mean: *Today, two of our student couples are expecting a child!*

Angelo and Aida got to see their baby in a sonogram yesterday. Today they were beaming! The image of the baby was so clear! They could hear the heartbeat and see the profile in wonderful detail. As I write you, it's not quite yet Christmas, and I can tell you Angelo and Aida are feeling a special kind of empathy with Joseph and Mary . . . and a special sense of God's purpose for their lives.

Angelo is a great leader, full of enthusiasm. He's already planted several churches, and he's been instrumental in helping us open up our ministry operations in Venezuela.



His sweet wife Aida, who hails from Spain, is thrilled to see God involving them in such significant ministry projects in their work together. I conducted their wedding last summer, but it feels like they're already on a national—and even international—platform.

Aida will now study in the seminary for the next four years. She sees the need quite personally, because when Angelo teaches or preaches, so many people approach her with follow-up questions!

Their future seems so big and so promising . . . yet at the same time, Angelo's home country, Peru, is ensnared in strong political turmoil and uprisings. We see in this little family, in this new "Mary and Joseph," how God moves. . . .

***Times are churning. God is working. Ministry is exploding. A child is on the way.***

It seems the story repeats itself time and time again.

The world has not changed much in the struggles it constantly goes through! The Lord continues to raise couples who are eager to answer the call and pour their lives at His feet to accomplish His purposes.

**You'll also be a blessing in SPAIN through Andrés and Sarah.** A Colombian by birth, Andrés is an amazing student and a very strategic thinker, the outstanding director of our social media ministries.

Andrés and Sarah are also expecting a baby as they launch their lives into the ministry in sincere faith. You are their partner too! You are sponsoring them and others like them. Faith is what *you* exercise—and faith is *their* motivation also, as they seek the Lord according to the coordinates in His Word.

(I thank God for so many friends who saw my wife and me in the very same condition 43 years ago! We were in seminary and our first son was on the way. We had faith—and lots of dreams of what God might have us do. These four-plus decades later, we've seen the planting of tens of thousands of churches, and with a presence in all the inhabited continents on the planet. And it seems the work is still just the beginning!)

I just spent the evening with Andrés and a band of students—a band, literally! In an open crowd, they played Christmas carols and together we shared the meaning of Christmas at this "random" gathering of total strangers. The students were exhilarated! They haven't done much of this kind of ministry before. Being part of it, watching and learning how to preach to an open crowd, was high adventure for them!

- Biggest impact on these young men and women: seeing how strangers can be so cold to even the *idea* of Christianity, seeming *eons* away from the Lord—yet when the Bible is opened to them, and a believer shares what it says and what it means, suddenly those "far away" *engage* . . . we see that they were only one short message away from being introduced to the Savior!

The students and teachers came back excited by their successful expedition. We had proclaimed the Gospel as the heart of Christmas. People turned to Christ as the Savior who was born.



What a blessing to show this small but powerful band how to be ready for any opportunity to share the good news—in the street, in impromptu meetings, anywhere. Christmas *anytime!* Christmas *all the time!* But on this evening, the people who walked in darkness saw a great Light—and embraced the Christ—at Christmas!

**Thank you for giving such wonderful gifts.** Physical gifts are a passing fancy, but you are giving gifts that will shine through eternity!

I wish you could be with me every mile of the way in all my travels around the globe. It is a sincere wish, my true longing. *You are sharing Christmas with the world.* I pray that the Spirit will make the connection for you . . . so you can see your role as the vital root—and the precious fruit that is being produced through your prayers and gifts!

**Now, we look to Christ's calling upon our lives for 2023.** This New Year's advice comes from Jesus Christ Himself. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. . . . For where your treasure is there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19,21).

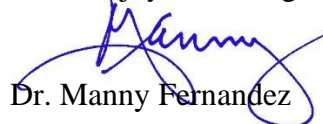
I praise the Lord for our partnership. I am grateful that He has seen fit to use us all these years to share His love globally. And I pray that you will experience God-given inspiration to make 2023 a banner year, serving Him in your divinely ordained role.

Anticipating what God can do through us together in this new year, I can only say to you what Paul the apostle said, in the Spirit, to young Timothy in his urgency to fulfill the mission before them: "**For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you. . .**" (2 Timothy 1:6).

Kindling afresh the gifts God has put in us—this is a great goal for the new year! Better even than well intentioned New Year's resolutions. "Kindling afresh" God's gifts is God's idea . . . a strategy He Himself will empower and guide . . . if we are willing to go with Him!

Let's join with Him together. Our God-given achievements have already been beyond our dreams. What will God do through us next? He will lead us from victory to victory!

There is joy in serving Jesus!



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. Please let me hear from you as you enthusiastically join in. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed" (2 Corinthians 9:8).



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