

August 1, 2025

Six hungry lions—four females, two young males. A lone buffalo with her calf, perhaps 6 months old. Who knows how they got separated from their herd. But now, they’re in serious jeopardy. The lions are stalking their prey.

The real target: that weak, slow, vulnerable youngster.

I witnessed this life-and-death competition personally, at Nairobi National Park in Africa, from the safety of an SUV.

At first glance, the odds certainly seemed to favor the lions. Two lionesses served as stalkers, one “outfielder” waiting strategically for the cow and calf to run away from them. But the mother was brave beyond belief!

Again and again, the lionesses closed around the cow and calf, but then the cow would charge the predators at full speed. The calf knew instinctively to keep close to the mother’s side.

Each of the buffalo’s sudden angry charges sent the encroaching lions running. Her horns were no idle threat. And her speed was shocking. It was obvious that the lions had to exert great effort to outrun her.

The drama went on and on . . . until the cow’s maneuvers led the lions into an area too remote for our SUV to follow. As we departed, it became clear that there had been two teams of witnesses: lion fans and buffalo fans. Some hoping to witness the devastating “circle of life” drama of a kill. Others rooting for the triumph of life, the hope of another day.

Why was I there? It was simply a final 4-hour respite at the end of a long ministry expedition—another life-and-death drama, but one with *eternal consequences*. The drama of redemption!

The journey began with 20 hours of actual flying time, from north Texas to south Kenya. I went to find an answer to a single profound question, asked by a church in the U.S.:

Would it be feasible to plant 100 churches in Kenya?

It’s a fascinating mission field. Kenya is positively disposed toward the Gospel—90% of the people think themselves to be Christians—but here’s the catch: **only 20% know what the Bible says it really means to be a Christian.**



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When I got to Kenya, every time I told someone why I had come, I shared the statistics—how many think they’re okay with God versus how many know what a Christian really is. I repeatedly quoted Jesus’ words from Matthew 7:21-24:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.

Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’

And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

The people I encountered in Kenya always wanted to know how they could receive the Lord in the way the Scriptures say it is to be done: “That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

By God’s grace, every person we shared with, in our daily five- to six-hour “saturation evangelism” sessions, prayed to receive the Lord!

- *More than 1,400 people prayed to receive the Lord in six days!*
- Working with a team of Kenyans who translated for us into Swahili, we launched four new churches in four villages, and left four pastors in place to lead them.

In a central church in Nairobi, I preached at both morning services, and met college students who may join us in the planting of the churches. It was a happy celebration, the discovery of another *very ripe* field for harvest. The people were very kind, very warm, and most receptive to the Gospel. We might call it low-hanging fruit!

At the same time, there’s tremendous need in the physical realm. We could make a huge impact by bringing in U.S. farmers simply to share how to plant and nurture corn crops, so that the Kenyans can produce more food.

Many of their waterholes are contaminated. Children are especially falling victim to dreadful and even deadly diseases for lack of clean water. We could help the Kenyans dig deeper water wells to gain access to clean, safe water.

- So—a new field is born! We praise the Lord for the opportunity to bring help and hope to that part of the world.
- BUT at the same moment, as the life-and-death struggle for eternity continues, *another fertile field is at risk*.

The same church now sensing the Lord’s leading to fund 100 new churches in Kenya has been funding, for two years, church planting in the Philippines.

We have seen phenomenal advances in the Philippines: 257 churches started by 62 church planters in 22 months!



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I am so grateful for these new churches, and the faithful believers in the U.S. whose generosity set it all in motion. At the same time, I am deeply grateful for the churches that will be planted in Kenya in the next two years.

But this can't be "either/or." It must be "both/and."

The work in the Philippines must continue! Of their 110 million people, 100 million are still unsaved.

The Filipino church planters are on fire. They are faithful. They are disciplined. Of all the church planters you're supporting around the world, these brothers and sisters deliver the best and most complete reports of their ministry work—like clockwork.

In a classic move, perfect for the Filipino culture, they even invented an evangelism "rewards program" for church planters sharing the Gospel:

- The "Highest Honor" award last month went to a leader who shared Christ with 2,052 people—1,017 received the Lord, and 965 joined Bible studies!
- 2nd-place "High Honor": 1,875 reached, with 930 accepting the Lord, and 760 joining Bible studies.
- 3rd-place honorable mention was an amazing 1,323 people reached, 626 conversions, and 689 in Bible studies!

In just these last 22 months, the Gospel has been presented to almost 400,000 people in the Philippines, and more than 200,000 have come to faith in Christ—with 257 churches planted by a total of 62 workers and their volunteer teams!

You and I rejoice. In the life-and-death struggle for eternity, *life is winning!*

But of course, some won't find this to be cause for rejoicing. Their response will be more along the lines of "no big deal." Many in our world today ignore or avoid the spiritual realm. Biblical definitions don't impress them. What glorifies the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Doesn't really matter much.

The Scriptures refer to these attitudes as "profane"—depreciating that which God holds in high esteem, taking lightly or assigning low value to things that are precious in His sight.

Ours is not the first culture beset by such profane attitudes. All the way back in the days of Hebrews 12, the author observes the particular mindset that treats the spiritual as of little value. And he zeroes in on *what's at stake*: One who **misses the grace of God** may become like a **bitter root** whose infidelity to God affects others.

Look at the drama of Esau and Jacob. The elder brother's profane character leads him to sell **his inheritance rights as the oldest son** for the temporary gratification of **one brief meal**. Later, he finds that his inheritance privileges have been irrevocably lost; he can't get them back ever again, though he seeks them with many tears.



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Likewise, today. In our materialistic society, many are so bound to the “here and now” that they forget the most important truth:

→ **Our existence in this planet is a test-tube experience that will define the rest of our eternal existence. The scant 80 to 100 years we spend on earth is a brief dash on our way to eternity.**

Perhaps the “here and now” is most dominating and distracting to us in the summer season. It’s a time of extracurricular activities that carry us in myriads of directions, a time of wandering, of seeking rest or adventure.

But the Lord reminds us that the main staples of life need to be maintained in clear focus. We may take a vacation, but we are still employed! We may pursue some new destinations, but the harvest is still the priority.

Proverbs 10:5 says a wise son gathers in summer. Let us keep our spiritual vitality and focus in summer, availing ourselves of opportunities for relaxation and rejuvenation, yet emerging with something of spiritual value to show as a result.

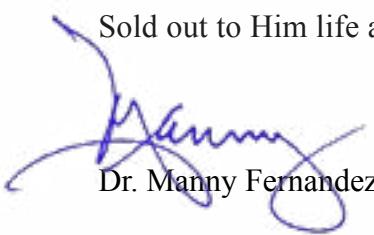
Perhaps you’ll wrap up your summer with travel, or some other delightful activity. Wherever these waning days of the season may take us, we are never away from the One who wants to abide in us, and us in Him. We can be His agents and His servants wherever we are because “He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist” (Acts 17:27-28).

→ This summer, let’s stand with our fellow believers in the Philippines. Let’s keep supporting church planters and leaders who are so faithfully and effectively reaching out to that nation’s **100 million souls still lost in sin and despair**.

I hope to hear from you soon, with your generous gift of Christ-like compassion for the people of the Philippines. God has raised up a powerful harvest team there, and it will be our eternal treasure to have partnered with them. Just 35 partners giving \$200 per month—or 70 partners giving \$100 a month—or every one of us giving whatever the Lord leads us to give—can *keep open* the eternal gold mines of the Philippines!

This is God’s plan! You and I are His strategic partners **even** in the summer!

Sold out to Him life and soul,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. This year has to be about the busiest I remember, ever! I’ve been on the road every month since January, and the schedule shows no sign of stopping. I need you with me in spirit and in giving. Thank you for understanding the stakes and responding with a heart of compassion for a world in need of Jesus!



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