

The EMU Newsletter

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

Volume LX

February 2017

Number 2



Ken & Joan Jensen
Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

As the editor and sole contributor to the newsletter this month, I have opted to truncate this column so that the already heavily edited article on Cambodia and China can appear in a single newsletter. The March EMU Newsletter will probably originate from Camp Emmanuel in Guazuvirá, Uruguay. **Jeff, Joanna, and Hannah Davis** will accompany **Joan and me** to Uruguay, leaving the States on February 17 and returning on March 6. The impetus of this trip is multifaceted. As usual, I will be interviewing all of our missionaries, hopefully during the Workers' Conference (Feb. 20-23) and the Family Camp (Feb. 27-Mar. 4). Jeff will sit in on as many of these interviews as possible in order to get to know the national workers better. However, Jeff is also the guest speaker for both camps. He has nine sessions for the Workers' Conference and five for the Family Camp. Hannah will be getting to know people as she works in the camp kitchen and through camp activities. The Davis family will also be visiting Calvary Temple of "33" the weekend between the camps, and meetings are being lined up for Jeff in various churches in the south of Uruguay for the other two Sundays. Though this is Jeff's second trip to Uruguay, it is the first time that Joanna and Hannah will be there, and we believe it is very important for these two and our Uruguayans to get to know each other.

JD, Kim, and Nathaniel Crowley journeyed
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THE TALE OF TWO TRAVELERS

by Ken Jensen, director EMU International

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of fellowship, it was the age of solitude, it was the epoch of health, it was the epoch of illness." Charles Dickens began *The Tale of Two Cities* with a similar anaphora in his 1859 novel contrasting London and Paris in the time of the French Revolution. My opening sentence above is not the prelude to a novel, but rather real life. The time frame did not sport a revolution, merely three weeks in the Orient. And the contrast is not between cities, but between two individuals: Joan Jensen and Ken Jensen. The mission trip that Joan and I embarked on beginning Monday, 21 November, and disembarked from on Wednesday, 14 December, was quite possibly the most enjoyable foreign adventure Joan has ever relished, and was quite possibly my most miserable in forty-four years!

Our tightly arranged schedule was to touch the lives of six EMU missionary families in Cambodia and China. Leaving our house at 4:30 AM for the GSP airport, a half hour away, was followed by a blessing at the check-in desk as the attendant decreased the fee for our extra luggage from \$400 to \$150. Being allowed one check-in bag each for "free," we *each* had two 50 lb. boxes of gifts for our missionaries. Mrs. Claus (aka Grandma Jensen, aka Grandma Joan, aka Aunt Joan) has no greater joy than to distribute gifts to children and adults around the world, especially if those families are with EMU.

Our experiences with the plethora of security check-points did not fare as well for Joan and me. Multiple times she was made to unpack her carry-on and even one of the boxes because of batteries. And each time the security official questioned a different battery! As for me, I had more "dangerous objects and substances" taken away from me than ever before!

This trip was prompted by the discovery of discount tickets to Beijing, China, earlier in the year, which then led Joan to find discount tickets from Beijing to Siem Reap, Cambodia. Our initial stay in Beijing with Steve and Charity's family lasted one full day and snippets of two others - November 22-24. Thankfully,

we were able to leave two of the 50 lb. boxes in the tiny apartment of the E's. (I have been requested to cease using their last name in the EMU Newsletter.) On Thanksgiving morning, an "Uber" type taxi took Joan and me to a different Beijing airport to fly to Cambodia. As Steve and Charity waited outside with us for our ride, we were all bundled up against the 14 degree morning breeze. At the last moment, we decided to leave our heavy coats with Steve and Charity, a smart move considering our destination. At the end of our 2,000-mile flight - with a stop in Guangzhou - we were greeted in Siem Reap (S.R.) by our son Joshua and humidity-laden 90+ degree weather. After a restful night at the Freedom Hotel in S.R., Josh drove us to Ban Lung (B.L.), where the Crowleys and Kanes live. The 280-mile journey took most of the daylight hours over the rolling 2-lane roads. I would like to report that this drive proceeded without incident, but alas! One horrid event will remain unidentified. The other came in the form of a flat tire about 45-minutes short of B.L. The temperature, thick red dust, and a spare that sported a different rim made this an unpleasant and anxious experience. I became overly heated and then, in the car, overly cooled, which I believe, was the catalyst of my next-day's malady. However, the countryside was beautiful as we passed through ripped rice fields, manioc groves, and rubber tree forests. Josh took us directly to the hotel where JD had reserved a room for Joan and me.

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Grandma Jensen reading to Becca, Anna, and Isaiah Jensen

The Tale of Two Travelers

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In the hotel parking lot, a man in a Camry full of immodestly dressed women rammed our vehicle as he backed up without looking. This became a rather long ordeal, wasting a good hour in the parking lot as decisions were made concerning reporting the accident and getting our vehicle fixed. (The car actually belongs to JD, so phone calls were also involved.) We finally made it to our room in time to shower and take a short rest before the Thanksgiving gathering that evening.

Josh left us and met Amy and their kids at a different hotel. (Their hotel was cheaper, but had a nicer pool for kids.) We arrived at the Crowleys' house as the sun plummeted below the horizon, as it does close to the Equator. The next-door neighbors of the Crowleys are missionaries and had volunteered to host the **Thanksgiving** dinner extravaganza for all missionary expats in Ratanakiri Province. Their lush, verdant yard was temporarily adorned with tables and chairs to accommodate over 60 celebrants. There was more food than three-times this many people could eat, and the fare included turkey and pumpkin pie! It was a wonderful evening of fellowship with old and new friends, and the food was worth the extra day's wait!

Saturday started out well enough for us as Joan and I had breakfast with the Jensen family at a local open-sided restaurant. **Josh and Amy** had planned several activities for us and our four grandkids for the day. But upon returning to our hotel, I realized something new was not quite right with me. As it turned out, I had a cold, which, true-to-form, lasted about two weeks! So, while Joan swam with the grandchildren, had a birthday dinner at the afore-mentioned restaurant for **Becca's** 7th, and took a hike to a waterfall, I remained secluded at the hotel with a rapidly expanding internal viral colony.

The next few days were to be spent with Josh's family at their house in Oyadao, a town about a 45-minute drive on the road to Vietnam. On Sunday, I stayed sequestered in the hotel room while Joan drove to Oyadao to attend church with Josh and Amy's family. Oyadao has a Khmer population of about 2,000, but the town is surrounded by Jarai tribal villages, one of which backs up to the Jensens' back yard. The Jensens attend a Jarai church a short drive from their house. Josh has preached in this church a few times, but only in the Khmer language as he is learning the Jarai tongue, both through a language teacher and by being with Jarai people. After the service, a birthday party was held for Becca at their house with neighbor children invited. The Panda cake and games were a big hit. Before darkness could catch Joan on the road, she drove back to B.L. and to her exceedingly surly husband. (I'm a horrible patient!) On Monday, Joan again drove to Oyadao to enjoy the day with the Jensens.

Riddled with guilt for not spending time with my son's family, I agreed to accompany



Amy, Josh, Joan, and kids in front of Oyadao house - notice the swings!

Joan back to Oyadao on Tuesday morning. The drive was a pleasant one, and Joan did not get stopped by the police for speeding. (Oh, that was part of Joan's adventure going to Oyadao on Monday morning. Interesting story, but too long to tell here!) The Jensens' house looks like most other Khmer houses in Oyadao - a wood structure perched 12-feet above the ground on concrete or wooden pillars, with exaggerated overhangs to shelter porches on 2 sides of the house. One of the porches is the Jensens' main "dining room," off of which is Josh's office door. A block kitchen and bathroom were added upstairs over the downstairs bathroom and kitchen-turned-storage-room. A water tank on the roof affords meager water pressure upstairs. Nature or fans provide whatever cooling the house receives.

As soon as we arrived at Josh and Amy's house, we abandoned our vehicle and all piled into the Jensens' SUV for a trip to a Tampuan village. Josh wanted us to meet a missionary family that had moved to a tribal village and built their own house, something Josh and Amy are considering after they learn Jarai. We had a delightful time with this family over lunch and a tour of the village. I crashed on our hosts' couch about halfway through the afternoon, and continued in la-la land after we returned to Oyadao. While I napped after breakfast on Wednesday, Josh gave Joan a tour on the back of his motorcycle of Oyadao and a large Jarai village. From what I have seen, the Jarai villages are a-cut-above the villages of other tribal people. At lunch, Joan presented the box containing Christmas presents for the Jensens, which included 4 swings. Josh adeptly attached the chains to the beams under the house (12 ft. off the ground). Not only do the grandkids love the swings, but so do the neighbor children. That afternoon, Josh drove me to the Vietnamese border, which is only a half hour away. Joan and I returned to B.L. before dark to take up residence in the Crowleys' first floor apartment.

I would like to relate one short story that was told to Amy. A group of Khmer women were discussing the Jensens and how Josh goes to the market to shop for his wife and helps with the children. Their concluding question was, "Why can't our husbands be like Josh? Our husbands use their salaries to go to bars and get drunk, and then come home and beat us." Hopefully, these families will soon learn about Jesus Christ, and the difference

He makes!

On Thursday morning, after a long breakfast with JD and Kim, Joan drove me to Stung Treng (S.T.) on the Tonle Sekong River, just a few short miles from where it empties into the mighty Mekong River. The **Farmer** family moved here last year to begin learning the Laotian language, and this is where they hope to begin helping establish a Bible-believing church among the Laotian people. The Farmers' driveway, shared by 10-12 other families, comes off of the main river-front road. Their house is very Khmer also, and the add-on section provides ample room for the family of 10 plus their American helper, Brooke Illsley, who lives on the ground floor. The trade-off for being in a cooler location under the stilted house is that scorpions and spiders prefer Brooke's room! All of the Farmer children sleep on bamboo mats in their beds rather than mattresses, which tend to attract ants. The children say that the mats are comfortable and cool. Jeremy and Bonnie Ruth have yet to change their bedding platform! Joan and I stayed in a \$20 hotel a block from the Farmers' house, and our bedroom window overlooked the broad, brown river. Beautiful!



Lunch at the Farmers' house

Though new to the area, the Farmers have fit in nicely to life in S.T. Neighbor children seem to be ever-present in the Farmers' yard. Jeremy rents a small office about a mile away where he can meet with his language teacher and study. Back at the Farmers' house, there is a large room that is used for homeschooling, and the setup is quite impressive. Like the Jensens, the Farmers take most of their meals outside, but not on an elevated porch. Rather, Jeremy prepared an area under the house for meals, decked with lighting, ceiling fans, and a very large dinner table. (The upstairs dining room is extremely hot most of the year.)

We did not spend much time in S.T. or attend church as we were there on Thursday and Friday, with both days including the long drive from and to B.L. (Depending on the source, the drive is either 70 or 100 miles, but felt more like the latter.) It was so good to see how the Farmers have acclimated to their new living conditions. The main problem is the heat, as S.T. is lower than the hill country of B.L. Jeremy and Bonnie Ruth gave Joan and me a tour around part of their city, to Jeremy's office, and out to the abandoned airport where the Farmers play baseball on the runway. (There is little or no flat recreational space in any of the cities in

Cambodia we visited, so the Farmers have a special blessing!)

We arrived back in B.L. in time to go to the **Kanes** house for supper. Their rented house is also typical Khmer, but for this season there were three different colors of Christmas lights strung on the balcony railing, and an artificial Christmas tree in the corner of the living room. (I think all of our missionaries had a Christmas tree.) The Kane children treat Joan and me like beloved family and are a lot of fun. However, 6-year old Julia got a little too familiar with me. While sitting in the living room and talking to Brian, Mia, and Sophia, Julia jumped onto my lap and laid her head on my tummy. After a few seconds, she sat up, patted my stomach and proclaimed, "You're fat." I love Julia too much to throw her off the balcony, so I just said, "I know. I'm Santa Clause." All of our missionaries and MKs in Cambodia are lean, so I was an anomaly! The Kanes' dining room is also on the balcony, and we enjoyed a delightful meal, accompanied by a refreshing zephyr.

Saturday was supposed to be spent with JD and Kim and doing laundry. After a prolonged breakfast on the Crowleys' living room balcony, I headed back to bed for a rest that lasted most of the day, while Joan and Kim got "caught up" in part. That evening, the **Crowleys'** living room filled with expat missionaries and some visitors from other countries. There were so many nationalities present that we could have started our own United Nations! JD had prepared an appropriate outline of song and scriptures for the Christmas season. The last entry on the schedule was "Ken Jensen - Message." The subject was one I had not spoken on in a while, but it seemed apropos considering the number of MKs in the audience, but it was for adults, too - The Blessing of Being an MK. The Lord gave me strength to "preach" that night, as our travels had worn me out. After the service part of the evening, we enjoyed desserts provided by JD & Kim, including a bottomless bucket of "JD's Best Ever Popcorn." It was a blessing to also meet several people I did not know before.

The next morning, Joan and I were picked up by **Lydia Kane** and 6 of their children to drive out to the Krung church that the Kanes have been assisting, and where Brian's Krung co-worker, Nigh, is the elder pastor. Brian and Hugh had gone ahead by motorcycle. The drive to and from the village was amazing. The "road" led through and around rubber plantations that seemed endless in their breadth. The rutted route lay between the rows of trees planted in perfect squares. How Lydia could remember the way is still amazing. The rubber forests are not owned by the tribal people, but they live in the midst of these plantations. Coming out of rows of trees, we emerged into a partially cleared jungle dotted with wood-slat houses built on short stilts, much lower than the Khmer houses. Brian rents a house here that is in the process of being built. Solar panels provide electricity for computers, fans, lights, and the well pump. The amenities are sparse, but the space is surprisingly suited for short weekly overnight

visits by Brian and whichever family members are able to accompany him. When the house is completed, Brian will need to find another place to stay - possibly building his own house if government and tribal permissions are given.

The main event for this Sunday morning was the baptism of 3 young men, one of them being 9-year old **Hugh Kane**. This was a time when being Presbyterian or Methodist would have been more convenient as the baptismal pool was about a mile hike down the side of the mountain that the village sat atop. The land on this side of the mountain had been cleared in the last few years, so there was little shade on this rapidly warming day. Walking single file on the trail was a must as tall weeds and manioc plants narrowed the path. Two motorcycles made the drive almost to the creek, one carrying Brian, Lydia, and their baby. Thankfully, it had rained enough recently to supply enough water in the "pool" to fully dunk the youth. The pool was just above two sharp turns in the waterway before opening up into a shallow area with sparse brush on the banks, making it a perfect place for the children to cool off in the water, which many did. Colorful woven mats were laid on the ground covering most of the mini-peninsula that was flat enough and large



Part of the congregation singing at the baptismal service.

enough to hold the congregation. Three tribal instruments were carried down to assist with singing. After several songs and a short talk about the importance of baptism, Brian, a young elder, and Hugh waded the few feet from the bank into the knee-deep center of the stream. After a few words from Brian, Hugh was immersed, but just barely. Another foot of water would have been perfect. After the other 2 young men were baptized, there was a special prayer for them, and then more singing. Finally, communion was given. And it was the most unusual of my long life. The unleavened bread was Pepperidge Farm Gold Fish, and the juice was a nearly clear fruit juice. I'm not sure these folks have ever seen grapes. Nonetheless, it was a blessing to take communion with these humble believers.



Young elder, Hugh, & Brian

After the baptism service, the elders decided to put on a musical presentation for us visitors. We climbed back up to the church, where at least six musicians had gathered, along with a number of female singers. The music was enjoyable to listen to. BUT it was oven-hot in the church. Regardless of how much I drank, I couldn't cool off. I have had heat stroke before, and knew I was headed in that direction rapidly. So Brian took me back to his "house," put me in a hammock, turned a fan on me, and gave me ice water. It took a while, but my temperature finally regulated to normal. The concert went on for another 45 minutes, after which time the Kanes and Joan came to the house and made sloppy joes for lunch. I was exhausted by the time we got back to the Crowleys.

After a restless night for me, we rose somewhat early to get ready to go to Kampong Cham (K.C.) on the west bank of the Mekong River, about 80 miles upriver from the capital of Phnom Penh. The **Hancock** family moved here earlier in 2016 to work with 2 other missionary families to start a Khmer church. One of the missionaries has been in Cambodia for several years and has experience with starting churches. The Hancocks and the other family are desirous of learning from this veteran missionary. JD was our chauffeur and navigator for the day-long drive southwest. JD decided on a route that was a greater distance than the customary track, but road construction on the primary motorway made it a secondary choice. Our journey took us almost straight south to within sight of Vietnam and then followed the border until intersecting and turning onto a main artery of transport between Vietnam and Phnom Penh. The pavement on this connector is horribly abused by the steady flow of overweight transports and vans. However, our route took us through some national wildlife preserves and into the highest provincial capital in Cambodia. The city clings to the side of a high ridge, and is touristy in construction. And the fresh air of altitude was welcoming. To no avail, I asked JD to move his base of operation to this town!

The combination of being tired, yet hyper, and the tension caused by unbelievable driving conditions as we scampered across the lowlands leading to the Mekong River, overcame my medication which holds my *Trigeminal Neuralgia* at bay, and a relapse commenced. Our schedule called for having dinner with the Hancocks, meeting the two co-worker families, and then checking into our hotel. When the T.N. begins, I am best left alone to rest. So, we checked into our hotel rooms first, and Joan and JD drove to the Hancocks' house for supper and later had dessert with the other two missionary families. I felt it important that at least JD and Joan interact with these folks to better understand the ministry in K.C.

The next morning, after breakfast at the hotel, we three drove to the Hancocks' house. Matt had volunteered to drive Joan and me to Siem Reap for our flight back to Beijing
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the following morning. I was able to spend a little time with Matt, Becky, and the kids. Their rented house style is more “upscale” Khmer, but it was a good price, roomy, and conveniently located. The Hancock children were excited to receive the Christmas gifts that family members had sent with us. The 3 missionary families are actively endeavoring to make contacts and friends in neighborhoods and around this provincial capital. Our time at the Hancocks’ home was short, as the drive to S.R. was long. (JD drove on to Phnom Penh to get some papers approved for his vehicle.)

The drive to S.R. was relaxing compared to the previous day’s adventures. Matt dropped Joan and me off at **Ethan** (the Crowleys’ oldest son) and **Emily’s** house, then he checked into the Freedom Hotel for the night. Once again, I slept through supper and then all night, but I did have the opportunity to be with Emily and Ethan before they left for work the next morning. Emily teaches English at a school part-time and Ethan works with a travel agency located in S.R. They have a very busy toddler that keeps their helper on her toes!

The journey back to Beijing took all day again, but it was good to be back at **Steve and Charity’s** apartment where we would spend the next week – for me, most of it was sleeping! Joan took several outings with the E’s, and I was coaxed out a few times to dine at Chinese restaurants.

Joan accompanied the E’s to the new church they are attending on Sundays. Early on in their joining this church, the leadership asked Steve to help teach a Sunday school class, and Charity to assist the children’s choir director and help in the younger class. This church is part of one of the main seminaries in China, so there are a number of younger adults who attend and help at the church. The E’s have already had the

opportunity to have a group of these students at their apartment for food and fellowship. One day, Steve took us to the offices of a man who has a ministry of translating Christian books into Chinese. They also have a Bible study website that Steve has been helping with. What a fabulous opportunity this is.

On the last day of our time in Beijing, I traveled with Charity and the boys to the public university where Steve teaches several English language classes. The morning was frigid, but walking with Charity is like a marathon sprint (if there is such a thing), so sweating while on the move and freezing when standing still was my lot for the morning. At the class, Steve introduced all of us (Joan was at the apartment packing for our trip to the USA that afternoon), and then asked me to field questions from the students. It was a very enjoyable experience, and a couple of the questions lent themselves to giving a testimony for God. One answer elicited clapping from the class.



Steve teaching at the university in Beijing

No doubt Joan would have had much more to say about our Far East trip, since she was awake for most of it! But even my recollections are more than enough to fill this Newsletter. My greatest joy over those 3 weeks was to see how much our missionaries love what they are doing and where they live – as it ought to be in God’s will. And the work they are doing is advancing the Kingdom. †

ALONG THE WAY . . .

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to the Island of Cyprus and arrived on January 30, remaining through February 4. JD and Kim are speaking at a couples’ retreat for another missionary organization. And Nat will be going on a few homeschool field trips while in the Mediterranean!

The **Espinels** will be visiting with us on February 2, and they will have services at two churches in the Greenville, SC, area on Sunday, February 5. They return to Uruguay on February 7.

Tom and Connie Chapman are still stateside visiting churches, friends, and family. We won’t be seeing them until we return from Uruguay.

Marco and Gwendolyn Nunez traveled to San Antonio, TX, in the last full week of January to be with Marco’s mother, whose health was failing rapidly. She went to heaven on Sunday the 22nd. Her condition was

such that her passing was a blessing to her and the family. Marco and Gwendolyn are back in Cancun, Mexico, again and are doing fine.

Yes, I’m ending “Along the Way” here! This is a record for brevity in this column. However, we are not short of our thanks to you for your interest in EMU International and for your prayer and financial support when possible. Though none of us knows all of you, all of us appreciate all of you! God bless. And happy Valentine’s

Day. †

*If you would like to see more photos, email the EMU office and request the **MailChimp** version of the Newsletter.*

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