

The EMU Newsletter

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

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Ken & Joan Jensen
Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

It is (or should be) difficult, when contemplating Easter, not to also remember the Passover, the Jewish festival that Jesus the Christ went to Jerusalem to celebrate with His disciples before His crucifixion. Almost all Christians know the story behind the first Passover, which took place in Egypt following nine devastating plagues, prompted by Pharaoh's adamance against letting the Israelites leave Egypt under Moses' direction. The Jewish Passover lasts for seven days, whereas most Protestants celebrate only Easter Sunday. (I realize there are many more lengthy traditions ensconced in various denominations and individual churches.) This year (2015) Easter and the beginning of Passover are celebrated one day apart. (Some serious Internet surfing, including a plethora of contradicting views, has led me to the position that Easter and Passover never occur on the same day but have purposely been kept separate for many centuries.)

For thousands of years before Jesus Christ was born and for two thousand years since His Incarnation, the religious Jews have celebrated the Passover. Yet throughout most of those millennium, the Jews have lived in bondage to other nations. And even today, most Jews live outside of Israel. Also, they cannot celebrate the Passover as Moses prescribed.

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WAVES OF BLESSING

by Ovidio Acevedo, pastor of Emmanuel Church in El Cerro, Uruguay

We thank God for your love toward us. We have seen His mercy in giving us so many things we do not deserve. Earlier this month we had a baptism service for three sisters and one brother who were ready to take this step of obedience. All four of them have been with us for a long time, and through the teaching of the Word of God, they have come to understand that baptism is necessary to obey God. The weather was quite appropriate for a baptism earlier that day, but when we left for the service, it got cloudy and became a little cold.

We had a short service at the beach, and then when we entered the water, the wind started bringing bigger waves. Thank God, with the help of brother Richard, we were able to fulfill this step of obedience in their lives. We would appreciate your prayers for these sisters and brother. They will surely have some battles to fight as they continue their walk with the Lord.

I want to let you know a little about our family. We are currently a family of four: my wife Yusara and my son Rodrigo, as well as a nephew, son of one of our retired pastors. We also have a daughter who was married last March.

About 30 - 35 attend our church; most of

them are believers and are also members. We have visitors, and it is good to see the fellowship and love of the brothers and sisters for them. Among us is a man who left the pastorate after his wife died at the beginning of last year. It is a great honor for me to have him in our congregation, and he is creating a nice spirit of help and concern for one another in our church.

We are having two prayer meetings each Thursday. The ladies meet early. They are a nice little group of faithful, elderly ladies. My wife has been in charge of these meetings for many years. Later, another group of brothers and sisters comes for another prayer meeting. This group is a little bigger. We thank God for the time in prayer. It is what sustains us all.

We also work with children on Saturday afternoons, then with adolescents, and later with the young people. We are praying for leaders, men prepared by God to work for Him.

I have a variety of activities: visits, helping families in their difficulties, being with them in different trials. This past summer I taught counselors at the staff training week for the different camps. It was a good opportunity to give them Biblical tools to use. ✝



(lft) Pastor Acevedo with the 4 baptismal candidates.

(top) A rough baptismal pool!

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What a blessing that we as Christ-followers can have an unchanging celebration of Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Those who have been freed from the power of sin and death through His Blood can never be bound by either again.

Romans 8:35-39 (AV) "35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Having rejected the risen Messiah, the Judaizers have nothing to celebrate, as they remain in bondage to sin and death, and usually the bondage of nations and societies.

But Jesus not only fulfilled the Passover through His sacrifice, but He fulfilled all of the Mosaic sacrifices, including the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and all the daily sacrifices. What a fabulous message we have to tell the world, and not just the Jews.

In February, the First Fundamental Baptist Church of Cancún (FFBCC), under **Pastor Marco Nuñez**, baptized five new believers, who, though Mestizo Mexicans, are actually more Jewish than the most pious Rabbi. (Romans 2:29 *But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.*) Since that baptism, others have come to know Jesus as their Messiah through the ministry of FFBCC. **Raul Flores**, the former youth pastor of the church, continues to be up and down in his spiritual life and still has not confessed and forsaken all of his known sins – some of which he blames on others. We all still love the Flores family and desire to see them fully restored to FFBCC. Another



(l-rt) Alex, Angelica, Marco, Yumeri, Antonia, & Ely baptized in the Caribbean off Cancun

lingering problem is the mental condition of the wife of one of the pastors who Marco trained and is now establishing a church in his hometown. One of the main problems in this case is trying to determine if the problem is spiritual or physical. Pray that the doctor, Marco, and the husband will be able to direct her in the right way for healing.

On March 26, the Nuñezes welcomed a first time visitor to Cancún. Marco asked **Steve Erkens** to preach at FFBCC on Easter Sunday. The twelve-day trip will include a few other preaching times as Marco takes Steve to visit some of the other churches on the Yucatan Peninsula. Charity and the boys stayed back in Taylors, SC. The Erkens are in need of much more support before Steve can take any of them with him as he endeavors to meet more of our EMU missionaries on their fields of service.

When **Steve and I** are in Taylors, we continue to meet to discuss EMU issues – past, present, and future. Steve is a good learner and wonderful to work with. (I know I have said that before, but the statement continues to stand true, for which I am grateful.) As most of you know, we were going to give this training/transition time two years before Steve would become the director, which was to be completed at the next Board meeting in May. However, it appears that we will be delaying the reversal of positions for at least a year – give or take a month or two. Although I told our missionaries in Uruguay that Steve would probably be the director of the mission when he and I returned to Uruguay at the workers' conference in 2016, that wishful thinking on my part will be delayed. In all honesty, I am a bit disappointed since being "second banana," I hope, will be easier on my health. However, I, Joan, Steve, and the rest of our families know that the Lord will give me the health I need to do the job He wants me to do as long as I am the director. I truly love all of our missionaries dearly, so this is not a burden for me. I only wish I could serve them more fully – as they deserve. Hopefully, the May Newsletter will have an article and photos of Steve's adventures in southern Mexico.

Three of our dear missionary families, who are usually overseas, are with us for a while as they are on furlough. It has been a real joy to have meals with and just sit and talk to **JD and Kim Crowley, Michael and Liz Cole, and Brian and Lydia Kane**. With the latter two families we have been with their children, too (4 and 6 respectively). I do not know what kind of relationship most mission directors have with their missionaries, and especially the MKs, but **Joan and I** truly feel like grandparents to these

children – and the ones still on the field. The MKs know us by name – usually Grandpa Ken and Grandma Joan, and they interact with us in the most fun ways. And the huge number of hugs we get from them doesn't hurt either!

JD has already made a few trips to North Carolina to visit his parents. Because of their physical maladies, his parents live separately, which is very discouraging to his dad. Pray that the Crowley siblings will have wisdom as they make decisions about their parents. I have always enjoyed my fellowship with this couple when they were in good health and living in Virginia. **JD** and **Kim** are also visiting some of their supporting churches to update them on the work in Cambodia. Also, pray that the Crowleys will add some much needed support during this furlough. (That's a subject **JD** doesn't mention to others very often, so I will.)

Both the **Kanes** and the **Coles** had to cancel services in March due to sickness. For both families, it was the kind of illness that jumped from family member to family member, making sure everyone got sick, but not everyone at the same time! **Brian** still sounds like a Mafia hitman with his deep tone, but otherwise the two families seem to be recovered and are continuing their travels. We would ask your prayers for **Lydia Kane's father Dennis Potts**. He has been ill for some time. The Potts have been faithful missionaries in the Philippines under GFA for decades.

One other Cambodia missionary was here in March, but not with his family or on furlough. **Matt Hancock** came to Greenville, SC, for the wedding of his brother and was here for about a week. **Joan** and I were able to spend some time with him when he came by the office to pick up some prayer cards. **Matt** is not a large guy to begin with, but **Joan** and I both simultaneously asked him if he had lost weight. "Yes, about 10 pounds." He had a bug for a while in Phnom Penh, but he is now doing much better. **Matt** was able to present his ministry at his home church of Trinity Bible Church of Greer during the Wednesday evening service on March 25. **Matt's** parents and **Becky's** parents were also in town for the wedding. **Matt's** and **Becky's** language training is going well, and they are encouraged about their ministry.

On April 3 the **Farmer family** will arrive from Cambodia to begin their furlough. (Strange how that worked out to have four of our Cambodia missionaries stateside within a few days of each other.) The **Farmers** will first be coming to Greenville, SC, where **Jeremy's** parents live. **Bonnie Ruth's** mom lives in a city a little further south of Greenville. **Steve** and I will be having a group meeting with our Cambodia missionaries later this

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Jeremy teaching at the Khmer Bible School in Ban Lung, Cambodia

month. It is one of the only times we will all be in the same town at the same time. In June the Farmers will drive north to visit supporting churches in the upper mid-west for a few months. Eventually, their family will be stationed in Tennessee where their children will attend the first semester of a Christian school. Sadly, as this

furlough begins, the Farmers will be losing the help of **Brooke** as she reunites with her family here in the Greenville area. Brooke has been a tremendous blessing to the whole Farmer family during these early months of Henry's life. A thousand thanks to Brooke!

The day before the Farmers arrive in Greenville, there will be a luncheon for some of the mothers of our Cambodia missionaries here at our house. Joan says that she is expecting seven - including herself. This is not the first time they have met, but varied schedules make these gatherings rare. It's becoming quite a large group.

The **Chapmans** in Antofagasta, Chile, have just seen a dream-come-true as **Daniel and Angelo Salvatierra** were both ordained on



The two Salvatierra brothers (center) sitting for their ordination examination

March 29. The brothers are to be installed as the new pastors of the church on April 12. The week before the ordination, nine



(l-rt) Angelo & Nalleli, Daniel & Emily, and Tom & Connie

new members were added to **Emmanuel Bible Church of Antofagasta**, and two people were baptized. After the installation of Daniel and Angelo as pastors, Tom and Connie will be taking several weeks off, which will include several weeks in Lima, Perú, with **Tim and Cheryl Chapman's** family. Tom's health, though improving somewhat, still seems to be, as we say in Spanish, "mas o menos," with a tendency toward the "menos." One question that



The youth camp in Lima, Peru, that Tim Chapman directed this summer (February 2015)

many of you will have is, "What will Tom and Connie be doing now that the church has national leadership?" I will share the answer to that in an upcoming EMU Newsletter. Pray for Emmanuel Bible Church as they begin this new chapter in their ministry. And pray that Tom and Connie will be greatly refreshed by their time away from Antofagasta.

Tim and Ruth Bixby's family received some wonderful news recently. For many months they have been going through the arduous, bureaucratic process of applying for ten-year residency to live in France. At the end of March, a lady called the Bixbys.

She had been one of the first people the Bixbys dealt with last year as they started this process. At that time, this lady kindly informed the family that the probability of receiving the ten-year permission was slight. However, when the permission was granted a few weeks ago, this lady "just had to call Tim and Ruth to give them the good news," even through a letter of approval was being sent to the Bixbys. She was so excited she wanted to give the Bixbys the news immediately. **Miriam**, the Bixbys' ten-year old daughter put it in perspective by declaring, "I'll be twenty-years old before you have to get our next residency permit! On April 19, volunteers from the Saint Denis church will help the Bixbys with an outreach program in Sarcelles that will include a meeting at a restaurant for folks in the community who want to know more about Christianity. Space at the eatery

has already been rented. Pray for a great response to this endeavor.

Ted Allston leaves for Morocco with his youngest son, **Jonathan**, on April 16 for a teaching trip. Before returning home, the pair will make a shorter visit to Tunisia for a survey trip. This will be a ten-day journey. I have requested that Ted and Jonathan not visit any museums in the capital, Tunis. **Ted and Marla** have been asked to travel to Oslo, Norway, again to

help with the transition of church leadership in the international church where they have ministered a couple of times. The current church leaders very much respect Ted's insight and leadership in these matters. The Allstons plan to fly to Oslo on May 13 for a six-week visit.

The ministries in Uruguay have settled into their Fall routines. The **Bible**

Institute and **FEBU** both started their first semester of classes in March. But everyone, including public school kids, will have a week off for Easter vacation. Many of the churches will have special times at one of our three camps, and all the churches will have Easter programs. Needless to say, this is an opportune time to teach about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **Rev. Bill Hill** will fly to Uruguay on April 9 and return to North Carolina on April 27. He will be teaching at three different locations during this visit. Pray that the attendees of the seminars will be edified by Bill's Bible teaching.

In a year such as this when Easter and Passover are so close, it is comforting to note the stark differences between Judaism and Christianity. The former has not offered blood sacrifices since the destruction of the Temple by Titus in 70 A.D. and the disappearance of the Ark of the Covenant. But what is devastating to Judaism is that these Jews reject the blood sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah, a sacrifice that only needed to be given once. Judaism can offer no remission of sins according to the Mosaic Law. The New Covenant between God and His people was sealed once for all through Jesus' blood. And He rose again the third day as a witness that He was Who He said He was - the Son of God, the Messiah, the redeemer of mankind. I trust that this April will be a special time when you contemplate these truths, as well as praise God for calling you to be His child, a position we did not deserve or earn. And what is more, He has called each of us to participate in building His Church on earth through our witnessing, prayers, and giving. Thank you for helping the missionaries of EMU carry on this work of the ages. ✝

Collateral Damage

by Ken Jensen

Usually used in military situations, the term Collateral Damage is not restricted to such settings. In short, collateral damage takes place when a deliberate action injures or destroys a person, place, or thing that the perpetrator of the action did not intend to injure or destroy.

In the early years of the 20th Century, there was a major push-back by Bible-believing Christians against growing religious liberalism. The anchor doctrine of those conservatives was the Inerrancy of Scripture, without which the rest of historic orthodoxy has no foundation. The other four main statements of commonality among this group were (1) the literal interpretation of the Bible, (2) the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, (3) the bodily resurrection and physical return of Jesus Christ, and (4) the substitutionary atonement of Christ on the cross. These five were the basis of what became known as "fundamentalism." The purveyors of these five truths were often found in cooperation with one another for the cause of Christ.

As has happened throughout religious history, changes began to creep into the fundamental movement. The shift came when denominations, conferences, and individual churches decided that the "fundamentals" were not fundamental enough. They began adding cultural and preferential items to the list. Eventually the add-ons became as important, or in some cases more important, than the original "fundamentals." Some fundamentalists even reached the point that they could not even recite the original list! The situation progressed (degraded) to the point that if you did not adhere to the proper list, you were obviously not a fundamentalist, and separation was necessary.

For decades denominations, conferences, and Bible colleges were the chief regulators of such things. But in recent years those authorities have lessened their hold. And as a result, we

are seeing dramatic changes in the contents of the "list" in churches who have long considered themselves "fundamentalist." Most still hold to the original "fundamentals" of the faith, but almost everything else is on the table for change, especially in the eyes of the younger generations and many folks my age (real, real old!).

Let me state that I, too, have cultural and personal preferences when it comes to worship services. I don't want to lose my hearing as a result of a praise service, nor am I terribly comfortable with a presiding preacher dressed in an old t-shirt, shorts, and flip-flops. On the other hand, I have never attended a church where I agreed with all the culture and preferences of the other congregants.

Fundamental churches around America are in flux, whether we accept it or not. Of course there are some churches that have dug in their heels and stated, "If our standards were right 50 years ago, then they're right today. And anyone who leaves our church because of them is not really a fundamentalist." Sadly, that is not a parody. I have seen churches close because all of the old people died and no younger families were there because they didn't agree with their "list." Families have been split in worship as young people have left the churches they grew up in because they wanted to get back to the original fundamentals. Unfortunately, many of those younger families have chosen churches that their still-living-parents would find so obnoxious with their ear-splitting music, they would never accompany their children. Then there are churches that are trying to make changes so as to shorten the culture and preference list and make their "list" more Biblical, but they are losing families that have dug in their heels against change. Others are leaving for churches that have gone to the far left of the pendulum in their worship style. Though there has always been movement between fundamentalists changing their membership, we are in a period unlike anything I have seen in my lifetime.

So, what does all of this have to do with collateral damage? Just this: every church has established programs and ministries. To fulfill the "Great Commission" most have a missions program whereby missionaries are supported monthly. When non-doctrinal changes take place in a church or in an individual's mind, people tend to leave their church for another one closer to their likes. And there is almost always a "good Bible reason" for doing so. But actually, the reason for the change is almost ALWAYS based on personal preference.

But there is a very important consequence that is usually overlooked. When a person leaves a church, they take their offerings with them. If the church has a missions program, there are missionaries who depend on that church's support. Most Christians would not say, "I don't care what happens to the missionaries. Lost support is their problem, even if I am part of the cause for the loss." The missionary has little if any influence over the changes that take place in a church, especially if it is not their sending church. But they are some of the innocents who suffer in these "Holy Wars."

Missionaries have become the collateral damage among fundamental churches. They are often the first to be cut when offerings decline. And it is doubtful if the church which the church hopper joins will take on the support of the missionaries from the previous church.

If you are contemplating changing churches from one Bible-believing church to another, ask yourself this: Am I changing because my current church no longer holds to the true fundamentals of the Christian faith? Or do I just not like the preference changes that are being made? Is it worth having missionaries lose their support over this or that issue? ☩

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