

# The EMU Newsletter

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

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Director

## ALONG THE WAY . . .

*(I realize that some readers of the EMU Newsletter prefer just mission facts, and then only about certain missionaries. That's fine, and I won't hold it against you if you skip down to the first "bold" name which indicates the cessation of this protracted introduction.)*

If you live in any of the east coast states, other than Florida, you probably experienced the biggest news story of January: the snow/freezing rain storm. In many areas, the reality was worse than the prediction. Here in the Greenville area of South Carolina - north of I-85 - we ended up with seven inches of snow on top of a layer of sleet and freezing rain. Thankfully, the change-over to snow and the lack of strong winds spared us an excess of tree and powerline damage, though most of my pine trees were somewhat "pruned." I'm even more grateful that we don't live in the Washington, D.C., area!

On the Sunday after the storm, with church cancelled, Joan and I took a walk on the golf course path across the street from our house. There were no clouds in the sky, and our timing coincided with a bright sun. At times the snow-covered fairways were so bright from the sun's reflection, that we couldn't look at them. Their whiteness was stunning! I've never been snow-blinded, but I understand how it happens.

I began thinking about the properties of white and black, and light and darkness. Through a bit of research, I became amazed  
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## SUMMER CAMPS IN URUGUAY

*I have no articles about the January camps, yet, but thought you would like to see pictures from the Jovenes camp at Camp Emmanuel. In the March Newsletter, I am sure to have more text and photos than I can handle!*



*The theme for the camps has been missions.*

*(left) Some of the Joven ladies during "picture hour."*



Pastor Elias Huamen



Kitchen & maintenance staff



Counseling & recreation staff



*(left) One of the Joven men's cabin Bible studies.*

*You can figure out the other photos!*



**ALONG THE WAY...***(continued from page 1)*

at how perfectly these opposites illustrate spiritual truths.

Basically, light, as exemplified by the sun, is white in that it emits all the color bands at once. Absolute darkness is the absence of light. White is white because it reflects all light bands, absorbing none. However, its surface must be coarse enough to reflect all the light in all directions at the same time. White cannot have a mirror surface. Also a white surface is not light itself. Absolute black is a surface which absorbs all the bands of light. Most of us have never seen absolute black, but we have heard of Black Holes in space. These are about as absolute as nature comes to total blackness.

Years ago Joan and I visited Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. At one point in our descent into the caverns, our guide had our troop sit down and told us not to move. He then turned out the lights in that part of the cave. It was the darkest dark I have ever experienced. One could understand how such a persisting condition would be first oppressive and then life threatening as all movement would be dangerous. However, as black as it seemed, it could not be said that the cave walls were black, because when light was present there was color all around. While visiting another national park, Craters of the Moon in Idaho, I entered an obsidian lava cave. This volcanic glass was truly black. Even sunlight did not reflect from the black lava walls, and going more than a few feet into the cave was hazardous. Even with a flashlight you could not see what you were standing on!

The Bible contrasts light and darkness often, but not white and black. (Actually, the color of sin is only given as crimson and scarlet, never black.) However, there is a history stretching back thousands of years and through various cultures equating white with righteous deeds and black with wickedness, which is no doubt why Christianity has used the metaphors for centuries.

There are two main types of darkness used as spiritual conditions in the NT, exemplified by my two cave experiences. One is the darkness that was dispelled with the coming of Jesus Christ and His Gospel: Matthew 4:16 *The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.* This light cannot be overcome by darkness. However, there is another type of darkness which remains impervious to the light. This is the eternal state of the wicked – angels and humans: Matthew 25:30 (KJV) *And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* (I always wondered how Hell could be fire and blackness at the same time. That was before I read about Black Holes. It is not that Hell is a Black Hole, but God has already given us an example that the phenomena can and does exist.)

It is clear from the NT that the wicked endeavor to hide from the Light and even hate the Light. In contrast, those who are brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus as Lord and Savior not only love the Light, but have, through Christ's indwelling Spirit, become Light: Ephesians 5:8-11(NKJV) *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.* What an amazing privilege!

Now to change the metaphor to white and black in a cultural sense. As those who are to work righteousness, goodness, and truth, we represent white to a black world. As white, we are reflecting in every direction and from every aspect of our lives the righteousness of Christ. The wicked see the light from the white and in essence seek to destroy the light of the Saints through persecution, lies, murder, subterfuge, and Satan's litany for silencing God's people. (An incredible example of this just took place nationally as the man and woman, who produced videos showing Planned Parenthood executives selling babies' body parts from abortions, were indicted by our government while Planned Parenthood continues to receive millions of our tax dollars.) The black promotes darkness.

In conclusion: first, if we claim to be sons and daughters of God, we must walk in the white light of Christ and reflect the fruits of the Spirit to all people, at all times. Secondly, as Jesus taught His disciples, we should expect the followers of darkness to seek to overcome us at every turn. Satan's army does not sleep, nor should we. Thirdly, we should never be discouraged in this spiritual battle, even though we will be maligned, marginalized, persecuted, and possibly killed for being white light. Our confidence is in knowing that the darkness cannot separate us from the love of God, and we know the eternal end of all things. Fourthly, there are still those sitting in darkness and in need of the Light of the Gospel. Many of those people are already following non-white luminaries, thinking they have truth. As Christians, we ALL have a job to do in being white light in our sphere of life, which includes building one another up through fellowship around the Word of God. May our light so shine that the world will see our good works and glorify our Father Who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

January saw the return to the Far East of two of our missionary families. **The Erkens** left Greenville, SC, on the 8th. The cold morning drizzle resembled Joan's and my hearts as we drove the Erkens and their luggage to the airport. Thankfully, Steve and Charity had packed almost all of their belongings in plastic containers from Costco, so the wet drive to GSP airport did not ruin any luggage, and the carry-ons were in the car. It was a bit strange to be outside



*Joan with Luke, Caleb, & Jacob after loading our pick-up with the Erkens' luggage.*

the security gate saying good-bye to our grandsons, Steve, and Charity, knowing that they would not be back for probably several years. We loved having them stay at our house since September, when they sold their condo. Truly our house has lost some of its life and liveliness.

The Erkens had a specific list of items to pray for. The first was an apartment in downtown Beijing. Some friends loaned the Erkens their apartment until Steve and Charity could find a place of their own, so this took some pressure off. However, after only one day of viewing apartments, the Erkens found pretty much what they were looking for and for an affordable price. Amazingly, the apartment was in the same building where they rented an apartment before they left China! The Japanese renters had kept the apartment relatively clean, so the time it took Steve and Charity to deep-clean and paint was not as long as for past apartments they had rented in Beijing. The one unfortunate aspect of painting in mid-winter was that they had to keep the windows open for several days to air-out the paint smell. With temperatures as low as two degrees at night, the apartment was not very comfortable for the first few days until the radiator heat caught up again. An Ikea store, an online store with excellent delivery service, and a few other stores allowed the new residents to furnish their abode in a few short days of shopping. (Ikea has a good delivery service in Beijing, too.) So, in one week they were moved into their own housing. Their prayer list was greatly shortened. Also, they have begun attending the same language school they were enrolled in three years ago, but at a new location. As an added blessing, the leaders and Sunday school teachers at Kuanjie Church, where Steve and Charity ministered before moving to Greenville, asked them to attend their teachers' meeting. Although not a "sure thing," there is the possibility of both of them being able to teach at this church again. (That, too, was on the prayer list!)

**The Farmer family** left Greenville, SC, on the 6<sup>th</sup> to return to Cambodia. Their travel was a little more complicated with seven young children. Thankfully, **Brooke Illsley** flew back with them to assist with caring for the kids. The Farmers arrived in Cambodia without a house or apartment – or a vehicle.

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**ALONG THE WAY . . .***(continued from page 2)**This van would hold the Farmer family, but it was not their first choice!*

After renting some hotel rooms, the next matter of business was to find a vehicle that would accommodate the family. Jeremy, while looking for vans, found out that as an expat he could not purchase an 11-passenger van and get it insured. The Cambodian government is fearful that expats will use the larger vans as taxi vehicles, so only Cambodians can get the insurance. Jeremy and Bonnie Ruth likened finding a suitable vehicle in Phnom Penh to finding a needle in a haystack. It is always good to know that God knows where the needle is! They were able to purchase a 2006 9-seat Hyundai Starex van. This vehicle, according to online articles I read, has an excellent reputation for reliability.

*The "needle in the haystack" van*

From Phnom Penh, the Farmers drove to Ban Lung where the Crowleys, Kanes, and Jensens live. After a short stay, the Farmer gang loaded into their van and headed for the provincial capital of Stung Treng, which happens to be Stung Treng. They are looking for a house to rent in this city, where thousands of Laotians reside. The Farmers' goal is to learn the Laotian language and begin helping Laotian Christians establish a church and a Bible school. (Through a little research I learned that Stung Treng Province was once a part of Laos during the French rule of Southeast Asia. However, Stung Treng was traded to Cambodia for a Cambodian province that was more geographically in the sphere of Laos. Anyway, this is one reason there are so many Laotians in Cambodia Stung Treng.) At this writing, the Farmers have not yet found living quarters to rent. Keep that on your prayer list.

**Josh Jensen** is continuing his work on an orthography for the Kachok language. Joan and I recently had a long phone conversation with Josh and Amy, and we learned much more about this project. For two nights and three days in the last week of January, Josh travelled to one of the Kachok villages to further his study. I know he made it back home, but not much else. There are

discussions and meetings taking place between EMU missionaries and another mission board concerning whether Josh should continue his work on the Kachok language to the point of translating the Bible, or finish the orthography and then begin work with the Jarai language – his initial target language. However, the Kachok have no written language and are pleading for a translation of the Bible in their tongue. Difficult decisions need to be made. Keep that on your prayer list, too. Also, **Amy's** pregnancy continues to progress well. The Jensen family will travel to Bangkok, Thailand, later in February to prepare for the birth of their fourth child in early March. (This is standard operating procedure for missionary families serving in Cambodia.) They will be flying a young Christian Khmer lady to Bangkok to assist them with the older three children.

Another "infanticipating" EMU Cambodian missionary is **Lydia Kane**, who is due in early June. Thus far, this pregnancy has been an easier one than her last, for which all are grateful. **Brian** continues to travel to a Krung village to work with **Nigh**, the Krung gentleman who is a Christian farmer and church leader. The work is a continuation of the translation of the Bible into Krung. Like Joshua's travels, these trips are usually made solo as Brian is living in a rented, VERY unfinished house and works upwards to 15 hours per day while in the village. With home schooling and regular family life with 6 children, Lydia stays at home in Ban Lung. These village trips are extra hard on vehicles, so also pray that these men's 4-Runners will hold up. You truly would not believe the condition of the roads (paths) going to some of the villages!

**The Hancocks** began 2016 in Phnom Penh where they continue Khmer language study. As I have mentioned several times in the EMU Newsletters, Matt and Becky had planned to work with a veteran missionary couple to learn the ins-and-outs of church planting in Cambodia. However, as last year progressed, the husband realized that he would need to change his ministry activity because of health problems. The decision was finally made to cancel the plans for the Hancocks to intern with them. Obviously, this means a big decision for the Hancocks. Matt and Becky have been in contact with Cambodian Khmer church planters from other mission organizations concerning working with one of them for the next two years to gain practical experience before Matt and Becky set out on their own. At this point, no firm decision has been made. However, Matt and Becky will continue their Khmer language study while in the capital. Matt is grateful for the opportunity to help teach a Khmer Bible study at a local university. In February, the Hancocks will make a visit to Ban Lung to meet with the rest of the EMU team. This will be Becky's first visit to Ban Lung. Also, in January, Becky's parents went to Phnom Penh for two weeks. This was a real encouragement to the Hancock family.

So far this has been a Far East newsletter. Other ministries are continuing on our other fields. However, I actually do not have much updated material for most of the other missionaries that would be considered new news. One notable exception is always the **Coles and Bixbys**, who send us monthly reports. Michael's latest prayer letter was

*Tim Bixby preaching at Saint Denis Baptist Church*

mainly a review of the past four years of being in France and the progress made. It was a real blessing to "see" how the Lord has answered the prayers of the Bixbys and Coles over those years in bringing them to this place of planting a church in Sarcelles, north of Paris. With the help of **Krista Colas** and several individuals and families from the Saint Denis Baptist Church, much progress has been made, and some local residents in Sarcelles are already meeting in that township for Bible studies. The highest hurdle is still finding a more suitable place to rent for the services. Both families are also looking for more suitable homes closer to where they hope the new church will be located. Please pray with us for all the real estate needs.

*Krista Colas teaching a ladies' class.*

For almost the entire month of January, our **Uruguayan missionaries** have been involved at varying levels with **summer camps**. And this emphasis will continue through February, until schools begin their first semester in early March. I will be able to obtain more thorough reports on the children's, Jovenes', and adolescents' camps at Camp Emmanuel when I arrive at the camp on February 4. (More

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*Return Service Requested*

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## **ALONG THE WAY . . .**

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about that in a moment.) Still scheduled for Camp Emmanuel are the Family Camp (Feb. 8-13) and the Workers' Conference (Feb. 15-18). During the few summer weeks when Camp Emmanuel is not being used by EMU, there are interior weeks of camp at Camp Bethel in Treinta y Tres and Camp Las Flores in Las Flores in the north.

The primary speaker at Camp Emmanuel this January and February was/is **Elias Huaman** from Perú. He traveled to Uruguay with several other Peruvians from a Bible seminary in Trujillo, Perú. (Pastor Segundo, who has been a speaker at EMU camps in past years, was our contact with these men.) The young Peruvian men accompanying Elias have worked with our staff at the camps, as well as with other ministry outreaches. I look forward to meeting these Peruvians for the first time when I arrive in Uruguay.

On February 3, I fly to Uruguay with **Jeff Davis**. This is a multi-purpose trip and promises to be quite busy. As usual, the timing of this winter/summer visit coincides with the Family Camp and Workers' Conference, where my primary goal is to interview all of our Uruguayan missionaries. Usually, even two weeks is not sufficient to meet with all of them, but that is still the goal. Though Jeff only started with EMU in January, I felt that this would be an excellent opportunity for him to get to know our missionaries in Uruguay. He will be sitting in on each of the interviews as we discuss each individual's ministry and family. Jeff has already been preparing himself by reading over the interviews from the past two years, as well as the Junta (Board) Minutes from Uruguay. Thankfully, Elias will be preaching at the camps, so Jeff can concentrate on just learning. However, on the first two Sundays we are in Uruguay, Jeff and I, along with a translator, will be visiting at least a couple

of our churches each day to preach at those churches, and get to know the folks in the church and learn the environment of the church.

Another aspect of this trip has to do with a "plan" we are working on to help encourage the churches to fully support their pastors. The plan is complicated, so I won't attempt to explain it in this paper. However, my initial plan has already encountered variables that require changes. The day after we arrive in Uruguay, the Junta will meet to discuss other aspects of the plan. Whatever we hammer out in the next week and a half before the Workers' Conference will be presented to the affected pastors at the conference. No doubt more tweaking will be done then. Then, if we actually have an approved plan by the time the conference is over, **Pedro Donzé** (the office administrator), a translator (probably **Chicha Rodriguez**), Jeff, and I will drive north to visit several of our interior churches to explain the plan to the congregations. I will be the initial mouthpiece of the mission (as director), hopefully to add weight to the plan. Pedro will then make sure that all points of the plan are understood by the church members. This will also give Jeff the opportunity to see many of the interior churches, and also get a better sense of the geography and demographics of Uruguay's interior. Jeff will fly back to the USA on Monday night, Feb. 22. I will remain in Uruguay for another week to visit the southern churches with Pedro and Chicha to explain the plan. I might add, the particulars of the plan are different for each church - so far - so each church visit will be unique.

Soon after Jeff returns home to Anderson, SC, he and Joanna hope to be able to put their house on the market, while at the same time look for a house to purchase in the Greenville area, closer to the EMU office. And as if that is not enough, the **Davises** hope to begin deputation this spring.

Currently their income is being provided from the General Account of EMU; however, for every dollar they can raise in personal support, one more dollar will be available to use elsewhere in the mission. For a "non-field" missionary, raising support can be as discouraging as trying to get Jell-O to stick to a wall, and almost as successful! Even for a position that is vital to the functioning of a mission organization and which has an impact on every missionary with that organization, it is extremely difficult to raise support. Pray for the Davises' success in this endeavor. Jeff is very much looking forward to being able to present just the ministries of EMU in churches rather than raising personal support.

As usual, **Kami Brenneman** will be in the office every day, so Joan will have someone around most of the day. But **Joan** does have a new girl "friend" who lives at our house, who will hopefully be good company: **Trina** is a 5 year-old German Shepherd who adores Joan. Joan and I are both exceedingly grateful for this gorgeous gift from some longtime friends. God is the ultimate protector of His people; but a German Shepherd, even a sweetie like Trina, is an added comfort at night!

I realize that I have not covered the panoply of EMU missionaries in the newsletter, so if your "favorite" family was not mentioned, I apologize. Their absence was not a result of a lack-of-love on my part. They all continue to be the Light of Christ along with "the blazing white works of righteousness" among those with whom they minister. Thank for your prayers for, emails to, and support of the missionaries of EMU International. ☩

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