

# EMU

## INTERNATIONAL

Evangelical Mission to the Unreached

Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

Volume LXI

February 2018

Number 2



Ken & Joan Jensen  
Assistant Director

### ALONG THE WAY . . .

We trust you enjoyed receiving the **pictorial newsletter** last month. Just as a reminder, we had an overrun printed for any of you who would like to have extra copies – even if you currently receive the MailChimp version.

I hope you noticed that the January newsletter sported a **new masthead**. The graphic design department of a company owned by the

brother of missionary Steve Erkens created this new logo for EMU about three years ago when Steve was training to become the next director of EMU. With the Erkens' return to China two years ago, I "shelved" this logo for the newsletter until Jeff Davis became the director on January 1. (The graphic has been used on letterhead, receipts, and prayer cards since its birth, so some of you may already be used to it.) We (Steve, Jeff, and I) thought this "new look" would be appropriate for the major event of a new director. We trust you like the new look.

Uruguay is our field with the most extensive activity right now, so I'll begin there. January is the beginning of summer camp season at **Camp Emmanuel** in Guazuvirá, about 45 miles east of Montevideo on the coast. During the first full week of the year, the **training of counseling and support staff** was held. We are so grateful to these men and women who, by-in-large, donate a portion of their summer to serve the Lord at Camp Emmanuel. The theme of the camps this summer is **"El Gran Dios de Daniel"** (*The Great God of Daniel*). The **Children's Camp** began on January 15, followed by the **Jovenes Camp** which started the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and finally the **Adolescent Camp** from January 29 through February 3. We do not have any official reports on any of these camps yet, but we hope to have more photos and updates for the March newsletter. We want to once again thank those of you who gave to the Camp Sponsorship Fund, which provided for many young people to attend the camps this summer.

Camp director **Pedro Donzé** has appreciated the help of a new part-time worker, **Marcos Gomez**, the eldest son of **Gabriel and Rosanna Gomez** of Gethsemani Church in Montevideo. The Junta (Board) in Uruguay voted to hire Marcos for six-



Staff for the summer camp at Camp Emmanuel  
Pedro Donzé (1<sup>st</sup> on left standing), Marcos (5<sup>th</sup> on left standing)

months to assist Pedro at the camp. Marcos is studying computer technology in college. He has been a faithful helper at his church and at camp for many years already. Also, Marcos is Pedro's nephew, so he is a VERY known commodity! The set-aside-funds for Marcos will run out in March, and Pedro, the Junta, Jeff, and I strongly request that you pray that the Lord would lay it on the hearts of some to support Marcos for the next few years – at least until Marcos graduates from college. (Though Marcos knows I would love to have him as a full-time missionary in Uruguay someday!) Marcos Gomez's income for working part-time with EMU is **\$600 per month** (including taxes).

On February 9, **Jeff Davis**, and **Paul and Theresa Bixby** left the States and arrived in Uruguay the next day. The events drawing them south are the **Family Camp** beginning on February 12 and the **Workers' Conference** commencing the following Monday (19<sup>th</sup>). Paul and Theresa were missionaries in Spain for twenty-five years with their three children. For the past sixteen years, Paul and Theresa have been serving at **Hampton Park Baptist Church (HPBC)** in the Spanish church, and Theresa is the director of the women's ministries at HPBC. Theresa travelled to Uruguay several years ago with my wife, Joan, to speak at a ladies' retreat at Camp Emmanuel. Paul will be teaching twice a day at the family camp and three times per day at the workers' conference. Theresa will also have some sessions for the women.

**Jeff Davis** will be in Uruguay for the first time as the director of EMU & MEU. He is also now the president of the MEU Junta. There are a lot of missionary interviews and Junta meetings during these two weeks of camp. The goal is to interview all of the Uruguayan and American missionary families. This task alone can take up most of the time when other meetings are not taking place. Then during the workers' conference, especially,

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Daniel Steel & the  
camp theme poster

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

there are Junta meetings, mainly to approve the MEU budget for the year. And there are *always* other issues that the Junta needs to deal with. **Chicha Rodriguez** will be interpreting for Jeff. Pray for Jeff and Chicha that they will organize their time wisely and be able to interview all the missionary families.

If you have the pictorial newsletter handy, you can look up the following cities on the **Uruguay map** to get an idea of their location. Rivera, in the north on the Brazilian border, is officially 505 kilometers (314 miles) from Montevideo, on the southern coast. The drive takes about 6 ½ hours, depending on road conditions (often construction), weather, and whether the driver goes the speed limit.

Jeff will be preaching every weekend before, between, and after the two camps in churches he has yet to visit during his last three trips to Uruguay. The first church Jeff and Chicha will visit before the Family Camp is **Emmanuel Church of San Fernando**. The youngest daughter of their pastor, **Alberto Diaz**, and his wife, **Carolina**, was recently married. (This was their second daughter to marry a man from one of our other churches.) **Micaela** and her new husband, **Sebastian**, are living in Pando and attending the second church that Jeff and Chicha will be in that Sunday, **Bethel Church**, where **Carlos and Mabel Olivera** minister. The Lord has provided so that the Diazes are now living in their newly built house, and the Oliveras are nearing the completion of their new house. If I am reading Carlos's letter and Rubito Rodriguez's Facebook account correctly, Carlos is the camp speaker at **Camp Bethel of Treinta y Tres** this first week of February.

On the Sunday between camps, the director and his translator will drive to **Calvary Temple of Durazno**, 117 miles north of Montevideo. This church recently celebrated the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. On November 11, 1972, MEU evangelist **Chelo Figueron** began services under a large canvass tent he used for such inaugural meetings around Uruguay. The Gospel took hold, and a church was founded. **Jose Kowalczuk** is the current pastor. He and his wife **Maria del Carmen** took over this ministry in 1981 shortly after they were married. Maria passed away in 2010, and Jose has remained a faithful shepherd. Though there is a good solid congregation, in recent years many of the core families have suffered critical illnesses, resulting in a significant decrease in ministry participation on their part. This has put a greater strain on Jose, whose health is not stellar either.

After the workers' conference ends on Thursday morning, Jeff and Chicha

will head for the deep interior to visit more MEU churches. The first stop on this journey is **Calvary Temple of Tacuarembó**, 243 miles north of Montevideo. This church is still without an official pastor since the Diaz family moved south to San Fernando in 2014. However, retired MEU pastor **Carlos Pereira** and men in the church rotate the preaching, and guest speakers from out-of-town also help. All of their ministries continued, including meetings in the village of **Sauce de Tranqueras**, about 45 minutes from Tacuarembó, in a verdant, pastoral setting. Incidentally, Carlos and **Graciela Pereira** will become first-time grandparents this year via their youngest daughter, **Nati**.



*The group at Sauce de Tranqueras*

The northern terminus of this trip is another 70 miles to **Calvary Temple of Rivera**, which will be celebrating its 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary March 23-25. **Esteban Hinnental**, a German missionary and long-time friend of MEU, will be the guest preacher. During this special time, MEU missionary **Pablo Billañán** will be ordained as the new pastor of the church. I will have more to say about Pablo in a later newsletter. The Billañán family will be moving from Colon, in the south of Uruguay, to Rivera sometime in the first quarter of 2018 – the date has not been set. An even more significant change will be taking place at Calvary Temple in the early months of 2018: **Pastor Hector Gomez** will be retiring from full-time pastoring as Pablo Billañán takes the main leadership position. Hector and **Graciela Gomez** moved from Santa Lucia, where they were church planting, to Rivera in December 1988, ten months after a van accident that took the life of **Eutemio Echebengua**, who had pastored the Rivera church from its founding. In December 2017, Hector turned 60, the retirement age for Uruguay. He and Graciela moved out of the church parsonage that is over the church in January and into a house they have been fixing up for several years, as funds allowed. Hector wants to stay active in ministry and help where and when possible. He has battled diabetes for many years, and Graciela, a public-school teacher, has had her share of physical problems. I won't divulge her age, but she has a couple more years before she can retire. Pray especially for a smooth transition in the pastorate in Rivera. Hector's youngest son, **Nicolas**, and his wife, **Valeria**, continue in full-time

ministry through their church. They are not currently supported by MEU and live on very little income. As usual, Nico and Valeria are spending the summer serving at Camp Emmanuel, and they will also help at Camp Las Flores and Bethel Camp when Camp Emmanuel is not being used by MEU. I have known Nico all of his life, and I greatly respect and appreciate his and Valeria's sacrificial ministry. If any of you would like to help with their expenses, I recommend this eternal investment.

Jeff and Chicha return to Montevideo on Monday for Jeff's flight home that night. Pray for safe travels as Chicha does most of the driving with her car. Pray for good services and that Jeff will get to know the church people. Pray that Jeff will make it back to Montevideo in plenty of time for his flight home. Pray, too, for **Joanna Davis** as she is home in Greer with their daughters **Hannah** and **Abby**. Joanna's father just had a fall that landed him in the hospital for treatment as an out-patient. Decisions need to be made concerning where her parents, who both have progressing health problems, will live.

In November of 2017, the mother of **Luis Rios**, the caretaker at Camp Emmanuel, passed away. Luis and his wife, **Adriana**, were called by Luis' sister, who their mother was living with, concerning their matriarch's declining condition. Luis and Adriana were able to arrive at the house the afternoon before she died. On the day of her death, the family took her body to the town of Dolores, some 250 miles away, where Luis was born. Luis was able to preach a graveside message to 50 of his relatives, many who are not Christians. Luis asks our prayers for his extended family who have freshly heard the Gospel.

On Sunday afternoon and evening, February 18, **Paul and Theresa Bixby** will be speaking at **Emmanuel Church in El Cerro**. A letter from the pastor there, **Ovidio Acevedo**, told of his church's last baptism and the Bible Institute classes held at their church, which ended in December. Waiting for warmer weather in late spring in Uruguay, Ovidio scheduled their recent baptism for the first Sunday

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*Ovidio & Paula on the chilly bank of the Rio de la Plata before her baptism*



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in December for **Paulo Fernandez**, a young lady who was recently saved after attending the church for almost two years. Unfortunately, that Sunday was more like late fall, with high winds and cool temps. As Ovidio said, it was a painful baptism! In their video Bible Institute, there were 7 students first semester and 5 in the second.

**Chicha Rodriguez** had the privilege of going to a Bible conference near Porto Alegre, Brazil, from January 13-15. She traveled with several other ladies, including **Julia Alvarez**, **Julia Torres (MK from Pando)**, and **Alejandra de Oliveira** (wife of pastor **Gustavo**, Calvary Temple of Montevideo). These four ladies were asked to sing at the conference. Every year a group of ladies from the Porto Alegre area of southern Brazil make the long drive to attend the spring ladies' retreat at Camp Bethel.



*The MEU Quartet in Porto Alegre, Brazil*

**Camp Bethel** is at least a half-hour drive into the countryside from the city of Treinta y Tres ("33"), the department's capital. **Chicha** and her eleven siblings were born in the house that is now Camp Bethel. She has always had a burden for the people in this region, who live so far from any city or church. From January 6-10, with the help of **Shirley Gadea**, **Miguel Diaz**, and **Adrian** (all members of the church in "33"), and **Julia Alvarez** (MEU missionary in La Charqueada), Chicha visited all the homes along the almost 40 miles of country road between Treinta y Tres and La Charqueada, going a pre-set distance north and south of the road. The group reached over eighty homes during those summer afternoons and evenings. Pray that the Word of God that was given in word and in print (donated copies of "*Good Seed*" were left at each home) will burrow into the hearts of these country folks, and that, as did the Rodriguez family, they will turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

February 5-9, Chicha will teach at the children's camp at **Camp Bethel**; then she will be translating for Jeff Davis at Camp

Emmanuel, for Junta meetings, and in churches from February 10-26.

After 40 years of weekly Sunday morning visits to the third-floor **pediatric wing** at a **national hospital in Montevideo**, a new head nurse on that floor has forbidden MEU from sharing the Gospel with the patients there. Even though the head pediatrician gave his permission, the nurse said that the group of young people who normally visited could only "entertain the children." They are not allowed to even mention the name of Jesus Christ, so they are no longer visiting. Pray that this nurse's heart will be changed, or that she will be removed from her position.

Thirty-four miles northeast of the city of "33" is the town of **Vergara**, where **Ricardo and Mayka Windmoller** minister. This couple is also employed at the local radio station, built by another Christian mission. February will be a time of celebration for them. Two days after Valentine's Day, their son, **Gabriel**, will have his first birthday – always a huge event for Uruguayans. This month there will be a baptism for a 17-year-old young man, a married couple, and a lady who made a profession of faith in 2017.

Some of you heard about this incident already, but since it occurred in December, it did not make it into the EMU Newsletter. Ten days before Christmas, our daughter-in-law, **Amy Jensen**, was driving to a **Jarai village church** in northeastern **Cambodia** to teach a group of lady Sunday school teachers. Becca, Isaiah, and Anna were in the vehicle with her. As she was turning left onto the church property, a tractor-trailer slammed into the back-driver-side of the car, spinning the SUV off the road and eventually careening into the front of a makeshift store. None of the children were seriously injured, but Amy received a hard blow to the back of her head when she was whiplashed into the center pillar between the front and back doors. This sudden accident put into play a long sequence of events before the family was together again at their house. Even now, there are repercussions of the accident as Josh and Amy are without their car, which is supposedly being repaired by the owners of the semitruck. Amy received a few stitches due to the abrasion on her head, along with a concussion, but she is doing much better now. If you would like to read a full account of this event and how the Lord worked in various ways, Amy wrote a full report (with photos) at <http://www.jensendimension.org/> in response to many inquiries and concerns.

But Christmas plans went forward for **Josh and Amy's family** despite the accident and the ensuing inconveniences. Josh was able to preach several times, Amy led a children's choir, and the Jensens had a neighborhood Christmas gathering for children – in addition to



*Josh teaching the Christmas story to the neighborhood children*

their family Christmas time. In Cambodia, China, and India, countries where we have missionaries, the local culture does not recognize Christmas as a holiday.

During the Christmas season, all five of our missionary families in Cambodia gathered for a day of fun, food, and fellowship at the Crowleys' house. When they all get together, they make up a good-sized village! It is a joy to see them gathered like this.



*The five EMU families in Cambodia*

**JD Crowley** will speak at a three-day conference beginning February 23 at **Colonial Baptist Church** in Virginia Beach, VA. After the conference, he will be coming to Greenville to visit family until March 5, when he flies to Chicago to be with Anna and her family for a day, before heading back to Cambodia. Pray for safe travels for JD, and that he will deliver wise words at the conference. And pray for **Kim** and **Nate**, who will remain in Ban Lung, Cambodia.

Saturday evening, January 13, the **Erkens family** arrived at our local GSP airport to begin an almost six-week furlough during their semester break and the Chinese New Year. All three boys have grown so much since we last saw them in Beijing a year ago. So far they have visited two supporting churches in Florida, many individual supporters, and other friends and family in Georgia and South Carolina. In the next couple of weeks, they will be seeing many more of their supporters, family, and friends, and presenting their ministry on Sunday evening, February 18, at their home church, Hampton Park Baptist Church (HPBC). Charity spoke to the HPBC Women for Missions gathering on Tuesday, February 6.

**Ted Allston** took a two-week trip to the capital of **Mongolia**, leaving here on January 3. HPBC church member

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**Tim Chevalier** accompanied Ted, and both taught the group of church leaders/members that they have met with several times over the years. Though amazingly cold outside, Ted and Tim had a blessed time teaching these folks and having meals at the homes of most of them.

**Marla Allston** remained in Greenville during Ted's journey. Her mother, **Bobbie Yearick**, has broken both sides of her hip at two different times in recent weeks. These are difficult days for Mrs. Yearick and her family.

**Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez** had a special visitor in **Cancún, Mexico**, in January. **Barb and Tim Corey** were one of the first supporters of Marco when he went to Cancún as a missionary. Both Barb and Tim visited the Nuñezes many times in Mexico and loved the people and ministries there. Barb had not been to Cancún since her husband passed away a couple of years ago. Along with a lady friend, Barb returned to Cancún for a short visit in January. She was able to teach a children's class and ladies' classes. Soon after Barb and her friend returned to the States, Marco and Gwendolyn flew to a city in the state of Chiapas, Mexico, rented a car, and drove to the home of the **Ciro Alvarado family in Santa Martha**. **Ciro** has pastored in this small village for many years. (I'm glad the Nuñezes flew this time as the roads over the Chiapas mountains are incredibly curvy and dangerous.) **Ciro** and his wife **Dolores** are not able to attend the monthly fellowship of the pastors **Marco** has trained, so **Marco** and **Gwendolyn** try to visit the **Alvarados** every couple of years, at least. (**Marco** and **Ciro** do communicate via phone often.)

The saga of acquiring a **church building** in **Sarcelles, France**, for the new church



*Barb (center back in red) with the ladies' group in Cancún*

plant to meet in has taken another turn, though the latest one is more of a sharp curve than a dead-end. As you may remember, **Tim Bixby** and some other men found a building for sale, which is actually the entire second floor of a Ford dealership on a major road in **Sarcelles**. After several months, the fair but out-of-reach price was negotiated to an unbelievably doable deal. Then something occurred that neither the seller or the buyers imagined. The business that had been using the upstairs of the building was a dance studio. It seems that someone connected with this group, whose lease was not renewed, decided to torch the place. Several containers of incendiary liquid were ignited in the large room one night. The fire department was able to extinguish the flames, but the floor and ceiling were ruined, and smoke damage was extensive. The dealership's insurance is paying for the repairs, but this delays the final contract until all repairs are made. The perpetrator was caught on a surveillance camera, but my inquiry concerning his arrest has not been answered yet. We thank the many folks who have prayed for this project and especially those who have given (in pledges) for this fantastic opportunity.

The **Coles** continue to adjust to their new role of pastoring the **Baptist Church of**

**Pessac** in southwestern France. Their last prayer letter revealed a plethora of reasons for their not having written sooner after their move south. The church in **Pessac** has many decisions to make, one of which is probably finding another meeting place when **Bonnie Bixby**, the former pastor's widow, moves back to the US. The church "auditorium" is on the first floor of her rented house. Pray for wisdom and direction for this congregation.

**Billy Judson**, EMU missionary in **Hyderabad, India**, has let us know about a rather substantial need his ministry has. In 2005, they purchased a 2003 Mahindra Scorpio Turbo, 9-seat vehicle. They have driven it over the horrible India roads to the point that repairs are costing more than the SUV is worth. Billy is selling the old car and putting the money towards a **2015 Mahindra Scorpio Turbo, 9-seat SUV**. (The suspension system on this model is necessary to maneuver the potted pavement he encounters when visiting the many Good News Colleges. The cost of this newer model is **\$18,461**. What he cannot pay in cash will have to be financed, so it will be very beneficial to have as large a down payment as possible. If you would like to contribute to this worthy cause, please let us know at the EMU Home Office.

As we enter this month containing **Valentine's Day**, we at EMU want to thank you for your love toward our missionaries. Your prayers and giving are what allow all of us to be a blessing to others through the preaching and teaching of the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ, Whose love is to be our pattern of service. May the **love of God** be spread abroad in your hearts, too. †

Email: [office@emuinternational.org](mailto:office@emuinternational.org)

Website: [www.emuinternational.org](http://www.emuinternational.org)

Phone: (864) 268-9267