

EMU

INTERNATIONAL

Evangelical Mission to the Unreached

Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

Volume LXII

January 2019

Number 1



Ken & Joan Jensen
Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

Reports on combined trips to Beijing, China, and Cambodia tend to spread across an EMU Newsletter like oil on a still pond. Two years ago, I covered the February 2017 Newsletter with a similar report. As back then, such reports leave little space for other mission news, so brevity begins my January writing, by necessity.

Billy and Saritha Judson have another daughter. Keren was born by C-section on December 4, at 12:45 PM; she was 7.49 lbs. (No length available.) Mother and baby are doing well. There was also the 20th graduation of the Good News Bible College in Hyderabad, India, along with graduations in other cities hosting the GNBC program.

The Coles were stateside for three weeks at the end of 2018 for the 50th wedding anniversary of Liz's parents, who live in Anderson, SC. Michael's folks live in Charlotte, NC, so the Coles were able to spend time with both families. And we had them over twice for lunch. What a wonderful family!

The arsonist, who set fire to the building that the Sarcelles congregation in France has been in the process of leasing-to-purchase, struck again on New Year's Eve. The gasoline fire was not as extensive this time, but it is discouraging. A group of 10 family and friends from the USA will be in Sarcelles to help with building renovations this month of January.

Lastly, thank you for your interest and prayers for EMU. May the Lord grant you a very blessed New Year! †

DICTATORS, DISCIPLES, & DIET COKE

by Jeff Davis, Director of EMU International

When traveling abroad, it is always comforting to find small reminders of home. One such reminder is the familiar script font found on a can of Coca-Cola. (Personally, I prefer the taste of Diet Coke.) In the past nine years, I have had the privilege of taking thirteen mission trips and serving God by visiting and ministering in ten different countries. On each trip, without exception, somewhere along the way, I saw the familiar font and dynamic white wave on a can of Coca-Cola.

From its humble beginnings in 1886, when an Atlanta pharmacist, Dr. John Pemberton, first introduced the world to his caramel-colored syrup concoction at Jacob's Pharmacy, Coca-Cola has grown to be a \$20 billion brand. World statistics today tell us that in the past 132 years, as a result of Coca-Cola's relentless pursuit of fulfilling its mission statement, "To refresh the world," 97% of the world's population has heard of Coca-Cola, 72% of the world's population has seen a can of Coca-Cola, and 51% of the world's population has tasted a Coca-Cola. While 97% of the world's population (about 7.53 billion) have heard about Coca-Cola, an estimated 3 billion people do not have access to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I read recently that every year 17 million people die without having ever heard the name of Jesus!

It is because of statistics like this that I am thrilled to be a part of an organization like EMU with its clearly defined mission statement: to bring glory to God by assisting churches and individuals in carrying out the Great Commission given to the Church Universal by our Lord Jesus Christ through ministries of evangelism, establishing indigenous churches, and training nationals to do the same.

This past month, I had the privilege of witnessing first-hand how our EMU missionaries in China and Cambodia are further carrying out our mission in these two dark countries. I don't want to make this article a lesson in geo-politics, but it is important for us to realize the hostile climate

in which our missionaries serve. Particularly in China, where nine months ago Chinese leader Xi Jinping was reappointed with no term limits, in effect making him "Ruler for Life." Many have compared Xi to former dictator Mao Zedong and are fearful that his power grab will lead to further religious persecution and human rights violations. On December 9, the world witnessed a confirmation of these fears as Chinese officials swarmed apartment complexes and ransacked homes to detain more than 100 leaders and members of a well-known house church. This is just one of the more publicly recognized efforts of the Chinese government to stifle religion, but persecution is also taking place in provinces like Henan and Zhejiang. There is cause for concern which should motivate us to pray regularly for believers in China.

My trip began on Wednesday, November 28. Thirty-hours later Steve picked me up at the **Beijing** Capital International Airport, the second-most congested airport in the world. After a taxi ride to their apartment, and a hot shower, I fell into the bed at 1:00 AM, completely exhausted. Except for a few short cat naps, I had been awake for a little over 32-hours. My strategy to stay awake during my trip seemed to work as I got a good night's sleep and didn't suffer too much from the 13-hour time change.

Steve and Charity, along with their three boys, **Caleb, Luke, and Jacob**, were tremendous hosts. They live in a 900-square-foot

(continued on page 2)



Steve & Charity leading an English Corner

Dictators, Disciples, & Diet Coke
(continued from page 1)

apartment in a high-rise building. Steve and Charity let me stay in their bedroom, and the five of them stayed in the boys' room, which also serves as a classroom and office. My bedroom had a refrigerator stocked with Coke Zero. I felt guilty for having so much room, but I was able to rest well, which helped with the jet lag, I am sure.

Friday morning, having partaken of all of the airplane food I wanted, I was delighted to sit down for breakfast with the boys and conversations of fantasy football, while enjoying delicious apple bread and banana bread. We then walked to Steve's university, which is about a mile from their apartment. The temperature for most of my stay was in the 20s and 30s. Other than the smog and the lousy air quality, I enjoyed the brisk walks.

The school where Steve teaches English was very crowded as students made their way to classes. His class was full of fun and energetic young graduate students. He introduced me to the class, and I told them a little bit about myself and our ministry. They then asked questions which allowed me the opportunity to briefly talk about the gospel. China does not allow any open proselytizing on the streets or in the classrooms, but there are opportunities like this for sharing one's faith. Another great opportunity is in explaining certain aspects of Western culture like Easter and Christmas. Steve has taken advantage of these opportunities, most recently giving students a book called *The Miracle of Christmas*. Please pray with us that these gospel seeds will grow into a harvest of souls for Christ.

This was my third trip to China, but my first visit to Beijing. They made sure I was able to truly experience the culture of the city. The food was delicious, and I enjoyed the variety, especially the spicy dishes. We took the subway to Tiananmen Square and got to climb a small mountain and look down on the ornate Forbidden City. On Saturday, we visited the Great Wall. This is one of those places where photos do not do it justice. We would climb to a tower, and I would say, "Let's go to that next



Charity, Jeff, & Steve at the Great Wall

one." After a few times of doing this, I realized that the wall goes on for thousands of miles. 17,000 steps later (I checked my iPhone app), we stopped for one of the largest pizzas I have ever seen. While standing in the back of the restaurant, I felt like I was standing in the back of an airplane. I said "This is really weird. Is the floor moving, or is it my legs?" The boys laughed and said that it was my legs.

On Sunday, I was greatly challenged to see a large group of Chinese believers gathered for worship at their church. They have been attending this church for a couple of years. Steve and Charity are both teaching in a couple of classes, and Charity also works with the children's choir. After lunch at the church, we attended a year-end workers' meeting. The room was packed with faithful servants. I am grateful to see that the Great Commission, disciples making disciples, is being fulfilled in China even amidst increasing hostility towards religion.

My stay in China was only a little over four days. I really was disappointed to have to leave my friends, but I am sure they were glad to get their bedroom back. I left in a taxi around 11:30 PM on Monday evening. My flight out of Beijing was at 3:25 AM, and I arrived in Hong Kong at 7:00 AM. So much for jet lag. Now I was just sleep deprived. Fortunately, God gave strength and grace, and I really wasn't too tired.

My next flight was from Hong Kong to **Siem Reap, Cambodia**. The temperature was in the mid-80s when we landed. What a contrast from the 30-degree temperatures in China. **JD Crowley** met me around 11 AM. After a much-needed coffee break, followed by a delicious pizza lunch sitting outside of the restaurant, we made our way to a very nice hotel that JD's son **Ethan** had arranged for me. We rested for a couple of hours and then visited Angkor Wat, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Originally built in the first half of the 12th century as a Hindu temple, it spreads across more than 400 acres and is said to be the largest religious monument in the world.

For several weeks I had tried to learn all I could about Cambodia and its storied history. From the 9th to the 15th Century, the Khmer Empire, one of the world's great empires, dominated Southeast Asia, covering present-day Cambodia and also Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. At the zenith of its power, the city of Angkor Wat encompassed 1,000 square km and had a population of over one million people. It is said to have been the largest city in the world before the Industrial Revolution. Over the next few centuries, due to extravagant spending by its kings and most likely infighting, the empire began to crumble.

Cambodia rose to the forefront of the complicated geopolitics of Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. It was Cambodia, not Vietnam, that was the reason for the Kent State Riots. The first resolution calling for the impeachment of Richard Nixon was not for Watergate but for the secret bombing of Cambodia. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge, under

the leadership of Communist dictator Pol Pot, overthrew the government of Cambodia with a goal of creating an agrarian society where everybody cooperated with one another. The "execution" of the plan was horrific. The four-year reign of terror resulted in one of the world's worst genocides. In an effort to purge their own civilization, the Khmer Rouge sought to annihilate anyone considered an "enemy of the state." This included anyone who was a part of the former regime, military, journalists, businessmen, Buddhists and other religious people, teachers, and even people who wore glasses - because that was a sign of intellectualism. While the exact number of people who lost their lives may never be known, it has been estimated that 2 million of Cambodia's 6 million people were killed.

Even though I tried to prepare myself for this trip, I still didn't know what to expect. What I discovered was a beautiful paradise of clear blue skies and lush ripened rice fields; a land of rivers and rolling hills (in the northeast); a country of forests and rubber plantations; of Cassava (tapioca) groves, beautiful palms, and coconut trees. The Cambodian people are some of the friendliest people I have ever encountered. Cambodia is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. It enjoys more religious freedom than any other Southeast Asian country. The official state religion is Buddhism, with a following of 97% of the country's population. Cambodian Buddhism is actually syncretism, a mixture of Hinduism, Buddhism, Ancestral worship, and Animism. Christians in Cambodia make up less than 2% of the population. It is estimated that more than 75% of Cambodia's 14,000 villages do not have a Christian presence. God is at work, though; and along with several other mission organizations, He is using an excellent team of EMU missionaries.

I spent the first few days in Cambodia with our team leader, JD Crowley. He had arranged for us to spend a couple of days together in Siem Reap, where I learned much about the history of Cambodia. We toured several of the Angkor temples, including a morning bike ride around the 8-mile perimeter and on top of the 26-foot-high walls of Angkor Thom. We also took a

(continued on page 3)



JD & Jeff at the Angkor temples

Dictators, Disciples, & Diet Coke (continued from page 2)

boat ride to visit two floating villages on the Tonle Sap Lake.

I had a great time with JD, not only learning about Cambodia, but also about his philosophy of missions and his ministry over the past twenty-five years. JD began with EMU in 1993. Over the course of his first two terms, he wrote an alphabet for the Tampuan tribe, which did not have a written language. Since most of the Tampuan do not have a good understanding of Khmer, the national language, the end goal is a translation of God's Word for this tribe of 37,000 people.

Over a plate of fried rice, while enjoying a Diet Coke, I learned how JD has adapted Trevor McIlwain's *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ* material and has used it extensively to influence the Christians of Northeast Cambodia. In 1999, he founded the Ratanakiri Bible School, an indigenous training program for tribal and Khmer church leaders. My visit came on the heels of the Pastors' School where 70 church leaders had attended and studied Biblical Theology. JD has also worked to produce doctrinally-sound Christian literature in the Cambodian and tribal languages – geared to the culture of SE Asia. He is the author of *The Kingdom of God: Studies in Matthew in Khmer and English*; *Commentary on Romans for Cambodia and Asia* (English language edition available at Amazon.com); *The Tampuan/Khmer/English Dictionary*; co-author of *Gospel Meditations for Missions*; and most recently *Conscience: What it Is, How to Train It, and Loving Those Who Differ* (available on Amazon.com). God has also greatly used his *Two Roads* gospel tract.

JD and his wife, **Kim**, truly serve as a team. Together they have witnessed the establishment of over 50 churches in 5 different language groups, and they have helped disciple the church leaders and their wives. What a joy it was for me to witness these disciples working together to make disciples.

On Friday, we drove about five hours to **Stung Treng**, where I would spend the next few days with the **Jeremy Farmer family**. As we drove, I worked to learn the names of each of the Farmer children: **Abi, Isa, Gloria, Eden, Judson, Salem, Henry, and Elisha**. When we arrived, the children were sitting on the curb awaiting our arrival. They were excited to see Uncle JD and to help me carry my luggage to my downstairs room - with my own private bathroom.

Stung Treng is located on the Sekong River, near where it converges with the mighty Mekong River. It is 30 miles from the border of Laos. Jeremy and Bonnie Ruth moved to Stung Treng in 2016 with a goal of reaching the many Lao who live in the Province. In addition to learning Khmer, Jeremy is also learning to speak Lao with a tutor named **Can On**. His tutor taught me to say, "Eat rice," and

"Take a bath." I'm not sure if he was trying to send me a message or not. Each morning, Jeremy and I met together for prayer. We prayed that God will show Himself real to Can On and that he will be saved. We also prayed that God will give Jeremy a quick understanding of this difficult tonal language. Jeremy is burdened and praying the words of Jesus from Matthew 9:38, that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers to assist in the effort to reach the Lao of Cambodia. Wouldn't it be great if someone reading these words would be the answer to these prayers?



Jeremy teaching a Creation-to-Christ lesson

Jeremy and I have had several previous opportunities to get to know each other better. I knew Jeremy's family from my time pastoring in North Carolina, thirty minutes away from their home. Also, two of my previous ministries support Jeremy's brother Jonathan. I was also Jonathan's wife's youth pastor back in 1996. On top of this, in 1989, I was Jeremy's counselor at The Wilds Christian Camp. God's providence is evident all over Jeremy and Bonnie Ruth's story. He was challenged in the area of pioneer missions by reading the book *Commandos for Christ*, by Bruce Porterfield, a missionary to Bolivia. I had to download the book for future reading. I enjoyed hearing about Jeremy's burden for the Lao people. I was also challenged as we talked several times about mission philosophy.

On Sunday, **Brooke Illsley**, the children's school teacher, joined us for a breakfast of noodle soup at a local restaurant. We then drove to a small village on the outskirts of town where Jeremy taught part of the Creation to Christ lessons I mentioned earlier. The Farmers taught the small congregation a song that had been used for the Pastors' School. Later that day, I learned that it was snowing back home in SC. With temperatures in Stung Treng in the mid-80s, I took a cold shower, climbed into bed underneath the mosquito netting, and turned the fan directly on me.

Monday, after another time of prayer together, we visited the market and Jeremy drove me around town. Later that afternoon, I accompanied Jeremy and the older kids as they went swimming in the river a few miles outside of town. Later that evening we enjoyed another delicious meal. All of our missionary wives are amazing cooks. Each evening we

met together with the family for singing, Scripture, and prayer. We even worked in a couple of Andy Griffith episodes before bed time.

Tuesday, Jeremy and I traveled two hours east to **Banlung** where we met with JD and Brian Kane for a sweet time of prayer. I then took a few minutes to share a challenge from Psalm 131. After Jeremy and Brian left, JD showed me around his property. They built an additional building on the side of his property for the EMU offices. This building also is the location of a new radio station that was started to reach the area with the Gospel message. That evening, over another delicious meal prepared by JD's wife, **Kim**, I met their son **Nat**. He is finishing up his senior year of high school. He also teaches English in a local school for elementary-age children.

I spent the next couple of days with JD as he showed me around Banlung. We visited a couple of waterfalls and the Yak Lom crater lake. We had a great time laughing together and challenging one another. I truly feel like my ax was sharpened just through the interaction with each of our missionaries. I learned more about the religious climate of Northeastern Cambodia. We drove through a Wat and visited a giant sleeping Buddha, nothing more than a gold-painted concrete statue. Almost every house we passed had a spirit house in front. Carrying on the ancient animistic practices inherited from their ancestors, the people place miniature houses or temples on a pillar and place them in front of their main house. These shrines are supposed to provide shelter for spirits that could cause problems for people if they are not appeased. The people live in constant fear of vengeful spirits.

Friday, I had the privilege of spending all day with **Brian and Lydia Kane** and their seven children: **Mia, Sophia, Hugh, Jackson, Julia, Brianna, and Natalia**. Brian and Sophia picked me up at JD's house, and we drove through the rolling forested hills of red volcanic earth. Brian then drove through a rubber plantation with rows upon rows of trees planted in a perfect square pattern. We made our way to the top of a hill with gorgeous views to the home of Nigh, Brian's co-worker in Bible translation and the lead elder in the **Krung church**. As Brian visited with **Nigh** and his family, Sophia showed me around his

(continued on page 4)



Brian (right) with Pastor Nigh and his wife

Return Service Requested

Page 4

Dictators, Disciples, & Diet Coke *(continued from page 3)*

land. She gave me a lesson on the different plants and trees that make up his farm. We then drove to the Krung village. Brian is renting a small house which serves as his office for translation work. We visited with several of the families in the small village.

Thirty-one years earlier, I had also been Brian's counselor at The Wilds Christian Camp. It was fun to reflect back on a ten-year-old Brian who was a part of an honor cabin. We laughed as we both tried to remember our cabin cheer from that summer. As I visited with each of our missionary families, I felt like I was getting reacquainted with long lost friends. The Kanes took me to a restaurant that evening for an incredible meal of fish and chips, accompanied by another Diet Coke. It had been a full day, and very enjoyable.

That evening I returned for my last night with the Crowleys. It was necessary that I end my time there with some of JD's world-renowned popcorn. Seriously, he could market the stuff. JD had talked to me about the influence that John Paton's *Autobiography* had on him, so I downloaded the eBook for future reading.

On Saturday, **Josh Jensen** came, and I accompanied him as he had to run several errands. Amy and his children were at a meeting in town with the other missionary ladies and children from the area. The ladies had a Bible study, and the children shared poems and worked on Christmas crafts. It wasn't hard for me to pick out the five Jensen children: **Rebecca, Isaiah, Anna, Clara, and Ezra**. I had seen them in several photos on the walls at Ken and Joan's house. After lunch that afternoon, we saw several men from the **Jarai** village who were in town to visit a lady who was having a baby. We all went to the hospital just in time for the baby to be born. **Josh and Amy** live in **Oyadao**, a town about 45-minutes east on the road to Vietnam. We got to their home around 4:30 PM, and Josh and I rode his motorcycle

to a nearby Jarai village. He wanted to make arrangements for an elderly gentleman who suffers from Parkinson's disease to accompany us on our trip to Phnom Penh on Monday. We drove back home in the dark. Amy prepared an amazing chili supper. After singing Christmas carols together and family prayer, we all were ready for bed.



Josh with Pastor Chuol in Oyadao

On Sunday, we traveled a few miles to a nearby Jarai village. God has led Josh to work with the Jarai, another minority tribe, animistic in their beliefs. These people believe that objects in the natural world like trees, mountains, and rivers, are inhabited by spirits. In order to appease these vengeful spirits, sacrifices must be made. Amidst all of this fear, perfect love is conquering as the gospel seed is bringing forth a New Testament like harvest. The church grounds were buzzing with life - men and women and lots of children. While the Sunday School time was finishing, Josh showed me the room where he does his translation work. We also were able to visit and pray with **Pastor Chuol**, a pastor who has been very sick and on our prayer list for the past couple of years.

As we began the church service, the building began to fill with people. I would estimate

that there were close to 200 adults sitting on the floor for the service. I was given the opportunity to introduce myself. We then sang for about an hour. Different groups (the ladies, the children, the teens, etc.) formed small choirs and each took a time presenting special music. For the children, Amy had written some of the songs. Josh then preached in Jarai on the subject of Jonah. At the end of the service there were several who went forward for prayer.

Later that afternoon, I had the privilege of filling a large tub with water balloons for the Bible Club Christmas party at the Jensen home for neighbor children. There were over twenty children in attendance. Later that evening, we returned to the Jarai church where they were decorating for the upcoming Christmas program. Josh and Amy helped lead a rehearsal for the children's drama. After returning home, we again had another delicious supper followed by Christmas carol singing and family prayer. I stayed up a little later packing for our trip the next day.

On Monday, we drove all day to **Phnom Penh**. On Tuesday before heading to the airport, I visited two of the most sobering places I have ever seen, the **Chung Ek Killing Fields**, and the **Tuol Sleng Prison**.

I had a wonderful time in China and Cambodia getting to know our EMU missionaries better. I was encouraged to see time and time again, disciples making disciples. After three weeks away from my family, I was ready to return home, but I left a big part of my heart with these families that I have come to love and admire. As I left, I told each of them that they are my heroes. They have dedicated their lives for a true mission - to "refresh the world" with "the real thing." Sorry Coke, but the "real thing" is the gospel of Jesus Christ! That is the best mission statement. †

Email: office@emuinternational.org
Website: www.emuinternational.org
Phone: (864) 268-9267
