

# EMU<sup>+</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL

*Evangelical Mission to the Unreached*

*Evangelical Mission to Uruguay*

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

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*Ken & Joan Jensen  
Assistant Director*

### ALONG THE WAY . . .

While at the Workers' Conference at Camp Emmanuel February 17-19, **Ursula Thiessen** fell outside the ladies' cabin one evening. She had left at the beginning of a service to retrieve her hearing aid from her room. Thankfully, two other missionary ladies were late in leaving for the meeting and were able to help Ursula get to a bench outside the dorm. The EMS that came to the camp said they did not think she had any broken bones, so Ursula spent that night at camp. The next day, she was taken home to recuperate under the care of her niece. An x-ray indicated a hairline break in her pelvis, so the doctor has ordered her to stay in bed for a month. Please pray for her quick recovery. She is not a person who relishes sedentary days!

Another lady who has been with EMU for a very long time, though not as a missionary, is **Julia Piedad**. She became the housekeeper for the Dabolds in 1950. She remained the housekeeper of the Mission House in Montevideo after the Dabolds' passing and continued to live in this residence until February 2020. The Steels had been renting and living in the Mission House, but they moved to an apartment a few blocks away in February. At 94 years old, Julia was not able to live alone, so she was moved into a nursing home in February. Calvary Temple of Montevideo, where Julia has been a church member since she became a Christian, is helping with the expense of the nursing home, as is EMU and Julia's

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## PROVIDENCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

*by Jeff Davis, director of EMU International*

What is the largest organism in the world? How about the Blue Whale which can weigh in at 109 tons and reach to over 100 feet in length? Or maybe a giant redwood at over 200 feet high with a trunk 100 feet around? Or maybe it is the Utah State Tree, the Quaking Aspen. Huh? Each mature tree is usually only 65-80 feet tall, with a trunk around 1-2 feet in diameter.

According to the NY Times, the world's largest organism has been identified in the Wasatch Mountains of Utah. It is a huge stand of 47,000 Quaking Aspen trees and stems, growing from a single root system that covers 106 acres and is genetically uniform and acts as a single organism. When the trees change color in the fall, they do so in unison, like the card section at halftime of a football game. It weighs 6,000 tons. Its root system is alleged to be intact.

The Quaking Aspen's preferred method of growth is by new shoots off the old roots. In this way, an individual plant may cover hundreds of acres all growing from a single interconnected root system. While the individual stems rarely live over a hundred years, a stand like the one described above may be several thousand years old. The interconnectedness of the Aspen gives life and strength.

What a tremendous lesson for us. We in the church are meant to be like the mighty aspen, not like the single tree fighting for survival on our own, but growing from a common root of fellowship in Christ Jesus around the true gospel.

In planning for my annual trip to Uruguay for the February Workers' Conference and Family Camp, I had a burden to communicate the importance of partnerships and cooperation between like-minded churches and individuals. That would also include mission agencies. This past year I have had opportunities to connect with different mission agencies and their leadership teams. I have expressed my desire to not compromise doctrine, but to find areas of cooperation where we

can maintain our identities and our unique personalities while still working together.

In November, I was part of a video chat with ten other mission directors. Most of them were only somewhat familiar with EMU International, so it was a privilege to share with them for about 20 minutes the history of our mission and the amazing work that God is currently doing through our missionaries around the world. One of the statements that I made to the group is that we are stronger together. I wasn't suggesting that we just merge all of our organizations but that we need each other. Like the Quaking Aspen, when rooted together in doctrinal truth around the gospel, we could all grow stronger and make a greater impact for the cause of Christ. In that meeting, I also emphasized EMU International's historic philosophy of training nationals to reach their own people.



*(l-r) David Shumate, Pedro Donz , & Jeff Davis in the Montevideo airport*

As we were wrapping up the meeting, I received a text message from my friend Dr. David Shumate who was part of the meeting. He wanted me to call him when the video chat was completed. I immediately placed the call and was encouraged to hear that he shared my desire for cooperation between agencies, particularly in the area of training nationals.

A month earlier, **JD Crowley**, EMU missionary to Cambodia, suffered a stroke

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## Providence and Partnerships

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shortly after returning to Cambodia from his furlough in the USA. JD was originally scheduled to speak at the Workers' Conference and Family Camp in Uruguay in February. I wanted him to share how God has blessed the work in Cambodia through the Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ material. The theme for the summer camps in Uruguay was "The Life of Christ," so it seemed like a perfect opportunity for JD to take his first trip to Uruguay. Following his stroke, we determined that it would be best for him to go another time. Since we were in need of a speaker, and because David speaks fluent Spanish, and because he was familiar with our ministry, having preached for the Family Camp back in 2011, it seemed providential that I was having a conversation with him.

**Dr. David Shumate** lives in Phoenix, Arizona, and is the General Director of MGMI (formerly Mexican Gospel Mission). He holds a law degree from Harvard (1986), where he was attending when he and his wife, Linda, accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. He subsequently received Master of Divinity (1993) and Doctor of Philosophy degrees (Old Testament Theology, 2001) from Bob Jones University Seminary. He taught in the School of Religion and the Seminary at Bob Jones for eight years. David served as Associate Pastor under Dr. John Vaughn at Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina, for fifteen years. He has been involved for many years in providing theological training for national pastors, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

David and I left for Uruguay on Friday, February 14. In God's providence, we were together in Charlotte, NC, for meetings from Monday through Wednesday before we left and were able to organize some of our plans. He would fly out of Charlotte. I would fly out of Greenville. We would meet in Miami and take the same flight to Montevideo, Uruguay, arriving on Saturday morning. At least, that's how we thought it would work. Our flights left about the same time, but just before takeoff, as the doors of the airplane were closing, my phone buzzed with an alert telling me that our flight to Uruguay had been delayed until 8:00 a.m. the next morning, a nine-hour delay. As the announcement went out over the speakers, "Please switch all devices to airplane mode," I sent a quick text message to my wife Joanna to call American Airlines and get instructions for what we were supposed to do. I let David know also. Since I would arrive a few minutes before he did, I would begin the process of seeing about hotel and meal vouchers for the night. The reason for the delay was that the pilots had not been able to rest the required amount of time, so the airline arranged for us to stay in a nice hotel nearby. Again, God's providence was allowing us to spend more time together

to strategize before we would leave for Uruguay.

We actually didn't leave until 11:30 a.m. on Saturday. Twelve and a half hours after our scheduled departure, we finally were on our nine-hour flight to Uruguay. The flight was full, but David had a seat open next to him. Since we were flying through the day and not the night, both of us were able to get work done. I also moved over next to him, and we talked for a couple of hours. We finally arrived at Carrasco International Airport in Montevideo, Uruguay, around 10:45 p.m. We had several suitcases to get through customs, as I was taking a box for the Espinels, books and other items for the Steels, and an entire suitcase of technological equipment for Pedro. I anticipated we would be stopped by an official, but we sailed through the process in record time. **Pedro Donzé** was there to pick us up and take us to the camp. We arrived at the Casita (little house) around midnight and unpacked, getting to bed around 1 a.m.

The next day we left early to drive to Montevideo, stopping for a quick breakfast of empanadas and dulce de leche lattes. Pedro dropped us off at Iglesia Evangélica Siloé. **Matias Espinel** and his family greeted us. I'm not sure if the kids were more excited about seeing David and me or about the box full of surprises. It was a joy to see many familiar faces at the church. There was a sweet spirit and an energy in the congregation. They have several young families and are praying about how to expand their facilities. I shared an update on the mission and David preached. Following the service, we had lunch at the Espinels' house and spent the afternoon talking and playing games with the children.

Much of the conversation centered around the question of how we could better facilitate the training process between missionaries and nationals. Matias serves as the director of FEBU (Facultad de Estudios Bíblicos del Uruguay), the country's first four-year Bible college. The ministry is a cooperative effort between other fundamental missionaries. Their first semester of classes began in March of 2014. We exchanged ideas of how EMU, the Uruguayan Bible Institute, FEBU, and MGMI, could form a strategic partnership for equipping nationals and encouraging one another. Since David and I were going to be at the EMU Workers' Conference at Camp Emmanuel during the week, we made plans to have several of the FEBU professors join us to meet with the pastors.

That evening Matias took us to Iglesia Cristiana Getsemani on the other side of Montevideo. The church is pastored by **Gabriel Gomez**, who also serves as the Vice President of the EMU Board of Directors in Uruguay. We were greeted by Juan Gonzalez, our missionary evangelist. David preached on the Bible's inspiration and perfection. Following the service, I was able to talk with **Elsa Camacho**. Her

husband, **Ariel**, who is now with the Lord, was the former pastor of Getsemani and served on the Uruguay Board of Directors.

The next morning, while waiting on our workers to arrive for the conference, I toured the campsite to see the many improvements that were made during the work trip led by Rick Jensen in October. The work team had poured new sidewalks and flooring in the ladies' cabin area. They used the left-over concrete to pour a patio for the back of the casita. The dangerous steps on the back porch of the dining hall were removed and a wall added. A new roof was added to the old water tank. The second and third floors of the tank were modified to add additional storage. The tank was given a fresh new coat of white paint. In the chapel, a new screen and projector were added, along with computers in the sound room. I was surprised to see new sound panels suspended from the ceiling. I had seen photos of the new climbing wall but was thrilled to see it in person. I'm sure the young people love this new addition, but probably not as much as the new pellet gun range. The most appreciated new addition has to be the three new HVAC units installed in the dining hall. For the two weeks that I was in Uruguay, the weather was very pleasant, and we only used them a couple of times. The week before I arrived the temperatures were hovering in the high 90's, so the units were used, and the campers and workers were grateful to have a place to seek relief from the heat.

Shortly after the workers arrived, we began our meetings. Each session began with about fifteen minutes of fervent singing. David taught nine sessions on how to preach from the Old Testament, with an emphasis on seeing Christ in the Old Testament.



*February 2020 Workers' Conference  
at Camp Emmanuel*

On Tuesday afternoon, a meeting was held with the pastors of our mission. Pastors and representatives from our twelve churches gathered to discuss opportunities for partnering together in mission. In 2016, we implemented "The Plan" to move our pastors out from under the financial support from the mission and have each church support their own pastor. Over time EMU incrementally decreased its contribution to their salaries, and the churches raised their contributions. By the end of this year, all but one of our churches will completely support their own pastors. This is changing the dynamic of our mission in Uruguay in a

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## Providence and Partnerships

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good way as the nationals are owning more and more of the ministry. Gabriel Gomez made the statement, "What held us together before was our dependence. Now, we are held together by our doctrine." Praise the Lord! For the first hour of the meeting, we had several of the FEBU professors meet with Dr. Shumate and the EMU pastors and representatives. Joining us for the meeting were Sergio Duarte, who in addition to teaching, also serves as President of FEBU, Jimmy Carter, Larry Carlyle, and Matias Espinel.



(l-r) David Shumate, Jim Carter, Sergio Duarte, Larry Carlyle, & Matias Espinel

On Wednesday night, I shared with our workers the entire ministry of EMU International and what God is doing in each of the ten countries where we serve. I also shared updates from Pedro's trip to the USA this past summer and my trip to Croatia back in November. The conference ended with lunch on Thursday. David and I spent the rest of the day catching up on emails and working on articles and sermons for upcoming commitments. One of the highlights of the week for me personally was just getting to spend time with a ministry friend. I thoroughly enjoyed the theological conversations. I felt like we were two pieces of iron that were sharpening one another.

Friday, before taking David to the airport for his return flight, Pedro took us to Montevideo for a late lunch. We parked at Plaza Independencia, the city square that commemorates the emergence of Uruguay as a sovereign nation. In the center of the square is a 55-foot-high statue of José Artigas, considered the father of Uruguayan independence. We walked through Ciudad Vieja (the Old City) towards the Port. I felt like I was on a European sidewalk. We had lunch at the Mercado del Puerto (the Port Market). A train station at one time, this wrought-iron structure is now a market housing an array of restaurants that can only be described as a foodie's dream. As we approached the market, we could smell the meats being cooked. Pedro's brother Carlos owns a restaurant called The Port Station. He had invited us for a meal they call braserito. We enjoyed papas fritas (French fries), Pomelo (grapefruit) soda, chimichurri

verde sauce, and the braserito, several cuts of meat and sausages. Just thinking back on the experience makes me long for a siesta. If that wasn't enough, Pedro wanted to stop for ice cream on our way to the airport. I'm not sure why, but the ice cream in Uruguay is better than the ice cream in the States. It is creamier and has more flavor. I enjoyed my three small scoops of banana and dulce-de-leche, peach, and cookies and cream. As we dropped David off at the airport, each of us was rejoicing in God's providence and also the potential for future partnerships, not just with our two agencies, but others as well.

Over the weekend, I was privileged to speak at Calvary Temple in Montevideo. **Pastor Gustavo Oliveira** is doing an amazing job of training his people to do ministry. I have preached at this church several times and was encouraged to see many familiar faces. It was also a joy to visit with a couple of our retired EMU missionaries, **Alicia Rossi** and **Marianne Rauter**. Though they cannot do what they once did, they are still serving the Lord through their church. **Chicha** hosted the pastor's family and me for lunch. **Elias**, the pastor's sixteen-year-old son, speaks very good English and was a huge help as the men talked while the ladies finished preparing the meal.

**John Mark and Deborah Steel** picked me up at 4:00 p.m., and we drove to Iglesia Biblica Maranatha in Pando. The church was pastored by Deborah's father, **Don Garwood**. John Mark is now one of the leaders in the church and does much of the preaching. I spoke during the Sunday School time and shared an update on EMU. I also spoke about partnership opportunities. Though not officially an EMU church, many of the people of the church regularly attend our camp activities. One of the young leaders in the church is Matias Acevedo, the nephew of one of our pastors, **Ovidio Acevedo**. **Matias and Bethany Acevedo** serve with SCORE International. Their ministries discipleship and church planting director is a close family friend of my wife, so it was neat to make a new connection. On the way back to camp, the Steels wanted to stop in Atlantida for chivitos. That was a great way to end the day.



Matias & Bethany Acevedo in Pando

Matias and John Mark helped during the week of Family Camp. Matias translated for me and John Mark helped Pedro in the seminar on music. JM also played the keyboard during a few of the services. In

addition to teaching at FEBU, John Mark is serving as the director of the EMU Bible Institute. On Thursday evening, he met with **Pastor Jose Kowalczyk** and several interested students. Pedro is going to travel to Durazno every other week and teach. On the off weeks, **Paul Harmon**, a missionary serving with Baptist World Missions, will monitor the video lessons using the OREMUNDO material. Founded as OREMEX in 1981, the name stands for Organizing local churches through the Recruiting of national workers for the Evangelization of the Spanish speaking world. In 2006, the name changed to OREMUNDO Ministries to express their expanded vision to reach the Spanish-speaking world. I just love how we are seeing partnerships grow!

On Friday night, after speaking ten different times throughout the week, I stood in front of our family campers for the last time. A little moist spot began to form in the corner



Matias Espinel translating for Jeff Davis at the Family Camp

of my eye. I felt like Paul in Philippians 1:7 as he proclaimed, "I have you in my heart." In the previous verses, he mentioned how he remembered them and prayed for them with joy. What was the reason? Verse 5 says, "your fellowship in the gospel." Many translations read, "your partnership." We in the church are meant to be like the mighty aspen, not like the single tree fighting for survival on our own, but growing from a



Family Camp - February 2020

common root of fellowship in Christ Jesus around the true gospel.

View photos from this trip on my Facebook page: <https://facebook.com/pastorjd> †

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## ALONG THE WAY...

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retirement income. So, for the first time since the Dabolds bought the house on Garibaldi Avenue in Montevideo, the house is empty of residents. The Uruguay home office is still located at this address, and the Bible Institute still uses the main floor for classes. Some options are being considered for future use of the house.

The first semester of 2020 begins for the **Bible Institute** and **FEBU** on March 2, the official start of school in Uruguay. Pray that those students who begin this year of Bible classes will persevere in their studies.

A special anniversary celebration will be held March 19-22 at **Calvary Temple of Rivera** in northern Uruguay. The church will commemorate its 50th anniversary. This church in Rivera has had three pastors during their five decades: **Eutemio Echebengua**, until his death in a van accident in 1988; **Hector Gomez**, until his retirement in 2018; and **Pablo Billafán**, the current pastor. The days of celebration will include evangelistic services. The anniversary commemorates the day the finished church building was dedicated on March 22, 1970.

Although we feature more about the camps at Camp Emmanuel, there are two other EMU camps in Uruguay. **Camp Bethel** in the Department of Treinta y Tres is the most active of the two. From January 27-31, there was a youth camp at Bethel. **Pastor Carlos Olivera** of Pando was the guest speaker for the week.



*Jovenes week at Camp Bethel 2020*

**Jeff Davis** has been in Uruguay since February 15 and will be back home in Greer, SC, on March 1. An article in this newsletter will cover his time with our missionaries and at Camp Emmanuel. We do especially thank **Dave Shumate**, director of MGM International mission, for being the teacher at the Workers' Conference and for his preaching in a couple of EMU churches on the Sunday before the camp started.

Jeff will have a busy March. **Kornel Crnković** will be Stateside for most of March, and Jeff will be taking him to different churches and conferences. Then on March 26, Jeff flies to Cancún, Mexico, to be with the Nuñezes until April 6. Chris Snowden of Exalt Missionary Video will accompany Jeff with the end plan of creating a video of the Nuñezes' ministries in southern Mexico.

While Kornel is in the Greenville, SC, area, **EMU** will hold its annual **board meeting** on Saturday, March 21. Only one of our out-of-state board members will be able to attend – Brad Lapiska. (Steve Erkens in China and Steve Ridge in Colorado Springs will not be in town.) We would appreciate your prayers for this important meeting.

**The Erkens family** returned to Beijing on February 16 after several weeks of flight-uncertainty due to the Coronavirus. Their airline carrier and route changed a few times. The university where Steve teaches English remains closed to boarders, but the courses are being taught over the Internet. Steve says the prep work is more time consuming, and he prefers being on campus for classes. He started teaching on February 24. The Erkens are permitted to leave the apartment complex two-at-a-time, and Charity can have groceries delivered to one of the complex gates. The whole family is glad to be home again in Beijing. One continuing change in schedule is that their church is closed until the government allows large gatherings again.

**The Farmer family** returned to Cambodia on February 6. After spending several days in the capital, Phnom Penh, where they reunited with **Brooke Illsley**, they took a van home to Stung Treng in the far northeast of Cambodia, not far from the Mekong River. Pray for the Farmers and Brooke as they settle into their school and ministry routines.

**Tom and Connie Chapman** will return to Antofagasta, Chile, on March 12. While traveling in the northeast visiting family and friends, Connie developed pneumonia from a cold she was fighting while in Greenville, SC, in January. Connie is doing much better. In their last couple of weeks in the States, Tom and Connie are visiting their daughter, Karen, and her family in York, PA.

**Ted Allston** will be doing a good bit of traveling and teaching in the coming months. He flies to Uganda on March 19, where he will teach the refugee church leaders from South Sudan until April 4. From Uganda he goes to Zambia to teach a group of Christian leaders until April 12. We are looking forward to those reports! Then May 9-24 Ted will be teaching in India. This is a relatively new ministry group for Ted, and many decisions need to be made concerning the continuation of this opportunity.

**Billy Judson** attended another graduation for students at one of their Good News Bible College and Seminary schools. This was the first graduation class for the students at Kristhu Aadarana Singam, East Kammappalm, Ongole, India.

Thank you for your continuing prayers for the ministries of EMU International. †

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

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

*Phone:* (864) 268-9267