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Ken & Joan Jensen
Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

Although the global COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unexpected blessings for our missionaries, it continues to wreak havoc with the same missionaries' schedules. From **Jeff Davis's** update at the end of the accompanying article, you can see how his spring travels had to be rescheduled. Our two EMU missionary families in France were hoping to take short furloughs this summer. The **Coles** have decided to postpone their return to the States until a later time; and the **Bixbys** are in the process of deciding whether to make a truncated trip to the States for extended-family reunions or just scrap their long-planned travel. Furlough usually means a time of visiting supporting churches and ministry friends, but church schedules continue to be "iffy." Pray for wisdom for the Coles and Bixbys.

Kim Crowley has tickets to fly Stateside on June 8, first to spend some days with her grandkids (and their parents) in Chicago before arriving in Greenville, SC, to be with the rest of her grandchildren and children. Two new grandchildren are due during Kim's time here. While she is in Greenville, **JD** is hoping to show up at the GSP Airport on or around June 30. Thus far, Kim and JD will return to Cambodia in the first week of August. We are looking forward to seeing them again.

Ted Allston had to cancel all his flights for the spring and summer, but he is making tentative plans to travel again as soon as

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BLESSINGS IN THE STORM - PART 2

by various EMU missionaries around the world

In the May EMU Newsletter, we shared short reports from several of our missionaries concerning how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their ministries. As much as possible, the following reports have been updated to the missionaries' current situations. Again, I am sorry we cannot include reports from all EMU missionaries, but this is a good sampling.

Tim & Cheryl Chapman, church planters in Lima, Perú

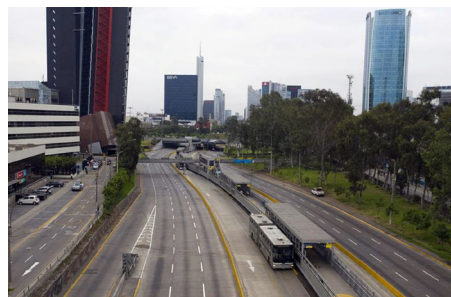
Peru has been in full lockdown since March 15th. We are only allowed to go out to get groceries, go to the pharmacy, or do things of an "essential" nature. Our children, who normally attend a school for missionary kids, are home all day. Eleven Sundays have come and gone without our being able to meet as a church. At first, we were tempted to see it as a great inconvenience. But as time goes on, the Lord has been directing us to acknowledge (and celebrate) some unique blessings in this unusual time. Let me mention two of them specifically.

In the first place, this has been a great time for our family. We've had times in the past when our kids were home for extended periods, but we've never had a situation in which all five of us were at home all the time. We discovered fairly quickly a workable routine which includes work and school from the early morning until mid to late afternoon. Then, we work together on the evening meal, play board games together, have family devotions, and maybe watch something together (if the internet isn't overly saturated). We will probably experience some sadness and nostalgia upon returning to "normalcy."

The second blessing I'll mention has to do with the use of technology during this crisis. As has been the case for many churches, we've been forced to find ways to keep being a church without having the opportunity to meet together physically. With some "trial and error," we've had success in preaching and teaching the Word online. As pastors, we've become more intentional about communicating with our church people via social media. The video conferencing application, Zoom, has been a great tool for teaching the Word during the week. We've also been writing more



(l-r) Cheryl, Micah, Tim, Abigail, & Lauren



Example of the lack of traffic in Lima

articles and devotional readings for our church. The coronavirus crisis has forced us to be more creative and intentional with the communication of the Word to people from a distance. When things eventually begin to move back toward "normal," we want to be diligent in continuing to use these tools for better ministry on a weekly basis.

Steve & Charity, in Beijing, China

During the past 3 months of being back in Beijing, we haven't really seen any benefits of all the new regulations as a result of the pandemic. Our social media opportunities were already becoming more limited over the past year or so, and with the pandemic closing down churches, our

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Blessing in the Storm - Part 2

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ministry opportunities have been essentially shut down. While our church has been livestreaming services and having good “attendance,” we are not able to help with that. Our church has recently started an online children’s ministry, but they’ve asked us not to participate at this time. We keep in touch regularly with church friends and Bible school students with texting, but these are normal activities that we participated in before – there hasn’t been an increase in this kind of communication. At the beginning of this month, restrictions changed so that we can have friends to our apartment again. We had church friends over last weekend. We are excited to start up our ministry of hospitality again.



(l-r) Charity, Steve, Jacob, Caleb, & Luke

Steve is teaching online classes to almost 300 students, and we hold a weekly English corner; but again, face-to-face is a much more effective way to build relationships. We had a wonderful English corner around Easter and shared our faith as we talked about the holiday, and we had wonderful questions, but the group was smaller online than it would have been in person at the school. So, even though we are using whatever opportunities we have to keep up relationships and encourage folks, the media for sharing faith in a political climate that is already trying to shut us down is not conducive for “extra” ministry opportunities.

Our greatest blessings have been our own personal growth and work together as a family. We don’t enjoy all the new regulations and lack of being able to minister at church and university, but we do see how the Lord has blessed and given grace upon grace during this time.

Kornel & Tanja Crnković, church planters in Koprivnica, Croatia

Kornel was in the States in his first week of visiting churches when airports were reported to be closing down. Kornel’s return flight was rebooked, and he was allowed to come home, but he was put under a mandatory 14-day home-isolation quarantine. He was home, but not with us. He lived in his office and had his meals separate from us. We provided him with everything he needed, while we practiced



(l-r) Kornel, Marko, Andrea, Kristina, Tanja, & Nathanael

social distancing. During his time of isolation, the police came to check on him on three occasions. Kornel had time to read several books he brought home from the States, and he finished reading through the Bible earlier than planned this year.

We decided to hold Zoom services every evening from 8:30-10:00 pm. Every evening we praise God through songs, prayers, the reading of God’s Word, and hearing a message from God’s Word from our pastors – Kornel and Nathanael. They take turns preparing the messages.

Due to the lockdown and restrictions, our two electricians – two believers from another Baptist church – who were supposed to come and put the electric wiring into our new church building were not able to come. At the same time, one of our church members who has already done a lot of work on the church building wasn’t able to travel to his work place due to



Workmen on the Koprivnica church building taking lunch. (Kornel is 4th from left)

COVID-19, so he decided to work on our church building. Together with his unsaved brother, our pastors, and some other church members, he has been working on putting the insulation panels on our church building. (Stucco will cover the panels.) The men made sure there were never more than 5 people working together. That was one of the government restrictions. Everyday the men worked hard, and the ladies took turns preparing meals for them. What a blessing that the work on the church building didn’t stop. We are still waiting for the electricians to come. Maybe they will be able to come in May. Today we had two workers come and start installing the HVAC system.

The Lord has also opened the doors for evangelism. The church’s next door neighbor is also a builder. Every day he watched our men work. Little by little, he

came closer and our men started talking to him. He is now working every day with our men. They have had many opportunities to share the Gospel with them. One of his bad habits is cursing. One of our brothers, the builder, took him aside and talked to him about his bad language. He has stopped cursing, and when meal time comes, he waits for the men to pray. Please pray for the salvation of Josip (Joseph).

The COVID-19 situation brought our two daughters home from college. We are especially glad that Andrea didn’t stay in Osijek because that town was hit hard by COVID-19. Tanja is now teaching online, and our children are taking their classes online. We praise God for the close fellowship we are having with each other – physically and spiritually. The COVID situation is bonding families. We do not have to juggle school and work schedules to have meals together, to have devotions, family time for walks, laughing, playing, and just talking and enjoying each other. Family time has become precious again and much appreciated.

Tom & Connie Chapman, church planters in Antofagasta, Chile

In our city of Antofagasta, Chile, there have been around 1500 cases of Covid-19, and 12 people have died as a result of the disease. We are now in complete quarantine and need permission to go out for food and medicines. Thankfully, our city is observing the protocols of wearing masks and, in some cases, gloves. Connie has been able to go out once a week to buy food, until today, May 16. For at least one week, no one age 75 and over is allowed to leave his home, and as of May 7, we both fall into that category. Our church people have offered to help if we need them, and the lady at the small neighborhood store will bring us things, also. Praise the Lord we are well cared for.



Tom & Connie

A few of our church people have been affected financially, but God’s people have been providing for them in a wonderful way. It has been a blessing seeing them trust God in this situation and seeing others respond to their need. Our church services are online, of course, on Sunday mornings, with separate classes for adults and children, Sunday evenings, and for Wednesday prayer meeting. Also, the ladies meet once a week in groups of three by way of What’sApp to pray together and have a short devotional. Also, last Saturday, Connie was able to have the pastors’ wives meeting on Zoom.

We praise the Lord for healing Roberto and various other friends in Chile. Odette, the

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architect who is doing our church plans, has had several family members with the virus at the same time she is going through chemotherapy for leukemia. We appreciate your prayers for this family.

Marco & Gwendolyn Nuñez, church planters in southern Mexico

The one man in our church whom the doctors “thought” had COVID-19, had to rest at home in isolation, since the hospitals were full. Praise the LORD, he is up and well now. Maybe he didn’t have it, I don’t know. Apart from him, no one in our congregation has been sick.



Marco & Gwendolyn

We are all in quarantine at our homes until further notice. Government offices, schools, churches, and most businesses are closed. Cancún is really taking a beating. Marco saw today that the occupation in the Hotel Zone is only 4%. Most of the church folks have lost their jobs. One of our church members, who is still working, answers the calls that come into the 911 emergency number. She said they are getting lots of calls from people who are afraid they have COVID and calls about domestic violence and robberies.

We are trusting in the Lord Jesus that through all this people would come to Him. Some folks, who have been on the fringe as far as church attendance and living holy lives, have contacted us again. They have expressed an interest in spiritual things and have connected to the Facebook page for the sermons. The Lord is blessing the services on Facebook. Some of our folks are inviting unsaved relatives and friends to listen to the services. A lady came under great conviction and talked to Karina, our Youth Pastor’s wife, and she was saved. Many people whom we don’t even know are also connecting to hear the services on Facebook. Praise the Lord!

(Marco’s sister, Angeles, was saved in May. She moved from Texas into a small house a few doors down from Marco and Gwendolyn in Cancún earlier this year. For several years prior to her conversion to Christ, Angeles was an Orthodox Jew. She now confesses that Jesus is the promised Messiah. kj)

Jose Kowalcuk, pastor of Calvary Temple in Durazno, Uruguay

I get teary and excited whenever I remember that the only national president that asked for prayer in light of this COVID-19 pandemic was your USA president. He got that right, going to God to ask for help. We

are trusting in what God will do, and we praise Him for what He does. My hope is that this situation will get people searching for God.

We had to cancel church services starting in March because of the government’s orders, but we are broadcasting the preaching on the internet. Some people who don’t come to church on a regular basis are listening to the preaching, and my prayer is that God will work in them and that more souls will come to know Him. The distribution of tracts has been well received, so we are going forward with that.

Our brothers and sisters are going through many difficulties due to the lack of jobs. Several companies have closed locally, and the repercussions are clearly felt. We thank God that in spite of it all we go forward. We pray that in this difficult time God will keep His church faithful.

Please pray for this servant, that I may keep planting the precious seed and that nothing will stop me. Here in Durazno we have started the Bible Institute, now online, with a great number of students and with much enthusiasm.

Ovidio & Yusara Acevedo, pastor in El Cerro, Uruguay

We have cancelled our church meetings because of the “less than 5 people gathering” guideline. We are complying as much as possible to be a good testimony and to avoid spreading the virus. I am recording my preaching messages and sending them to the church members. My son-in-law, Santiago, is doing the same thing for the youth group. We are asking the men to take turns giving short devotionals from the Word for a daily blessing to the church family.



Ovidio & Yusara

We started recording the Bible institute classes because we cannot meet in person. We had also scheduled three days of classes at the church for training future leaders, but we had to do it through recordings. I trust God will use all this time to teach us about His love, patience, and discipline.

We have been preparing five young people from our church for baptism. We asked them to be sure they understand salvation and baptism, and all of them have shown good signs of true repentance. We are waiting for this virus to be over so that we can hold the baptismal service.

We have not heard of any Christians that we know who have the virus, although some of our church family must be extremely cautious because of health issues. We trust God will keep His people acknowledging His sovereignty and purposes, which are

always good, holy, and righteous, even when our circumstances are not pleasant.

Our family is doing well. Our daughter and her husband are working from home, and our son is working at the seaport. There is a possibility that he will lose his job because of the economic slowdown.

Pedro & Patricia Donzé, office administrator & camp director in Uruguay

Someone wrote: “Planning for tomorrow is well-invested time, but to worry about tomorrow is wasted time.” God brought this thought to my mind this morning. I heard a preacher once ask, “How do you react when God changes your agenda?” And that question pops in my head every time something goes wrong and plans change. Just like the rest of the world, our country is dealing with Covid-19, and our plans have changed like never before. But God has challenged me as I meditate on Matthew 6:34.

We are in His hands, and our days and times are in His sovereign, perfect plan. Sometimes tragedy for one person is someone else’s blessing. This time has been a great blessing for my family. After being away from home much of the last six months because of the summer camps and the preparations thereof, being together as a family and sharing time at home has been very good. It also is helping me get caught up on work that was overdue. The administrative office work is getting back to where it needs to be. I finally have things under control. So, overall, this time has been very profitable.

Paty’s doctors have instructed us to be very careful about her health, which we are doing. We remain well.

It is a hard time for Camp Emmanuel. All the fall and winter camps have been cancelled through July, when we usually have the semester-break winter camp. This affects our camp income and rent. We are trusting in God’s provision. He has always been faithful in providing for the camp needs, and we would appreciate it if you would pray that God will give us wisdom to manage the situation at this point.

I have been able to continue teaching classes at the Durazno Bible Institute online. Our church services for Gethsemani Church are held virtually, also, and we have enjoyed sharing with our brothers and sisters and seeing each other that way. We get the messages our pastor sends periodically, and we have meetings at home, praying for each other. It is different, but we are pressing on despite being apart, or better said nowadays, quarantined. Maxi is receiving classwork assignments from his various teachers, and after completing them, he sends them back through an online platform that keeps him in communication with his teachers and classmates.

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Pablo & Cristina Billafán, pastor of Calvary Temple in Rivera, Uruguay



(l-r) Hector Gomez, former pastor of Calvary Temple of Rivera, & Pablo

By the grace of God, we are in good health. Our local brethren are well also, except for some normal health problems.

We have been unable to gather because of Covid-19 since March 15. It is incredibly sad to see the church building empty and not be able to meet. We are becoming virtual shepherds. Thank God for these electronic means that we can use, but not all have access to them.

There are many financial problems because of the lack of work in our country, and this is also a problem in our church. We were left with everything that we had purchased for the 50-year anniversary campaign (scheduled for the end of March), which had to be cancelled. We trust that the Lord will allow us to celebrate the 50th next year.

Jeff & Joanna Davis, director of EMU

As the government restrictions began to lighten in South Carolina, we were able to hold the wedding of our daughter Abigail to Caleb Prigge on May 9, at Palmetto Baptist Church in Powdersville, SC. They invited just family, those they work with at the



Abigail & Caleb Prigge wedding

Wilds Christian Camp, and the bridal party. Caleb's father, Chad Prigge, who serves as Senior Pastor at Fellowship Baptist Church in Watertown, WI, welcomed the guests, and then took his position as best man. After prayer, I had the privilege of performing the ceremony. For the honeymoon, they stayed at Restoration Farm, hosted by Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, in Baldwin, MD. Pastor Robert Condict and his church were very kind to allow them to stay at the retreat center.

Lord willing, I will be flying to Alaska to speak in a couple of churches and a Missions Conference, July 23 - August 4. My trip to Mexico to visit Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez with videographer Chris Snowden of Exalt Video has been moved to August 27 - September 7. I will be in Peru with Tim and Cheryl Chapman and Chile with Tom and Connie Chapman, September 25 - October 8.

Joanna and I would appreciate your prayers for our daughter Bethany and her husband, Kris Wilder, as they are expecting a little girl, our second grandchild, on July 6. †

ALONG THE WAY...

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flights open up. There are some exciting developments for his ministry in India.

Alicia Rossi, one of our widowed missionaries in Uruguay, has been a faithful witness to her friends and neighbors. In early May, through a "virtual check-up" with her doctor, he became concerned about Alicia's heart condition. Usually, in Uruguay, any medical procedure takes months for diagnosis, multiple doctor appointments, and long waits for surgery. Alicia was able to get a pacemaker installed within one day. And she feels much better. Since elective surgeries are on hold, all necessary operations are streamlined with no backlog. Quite a blessing.

Lydia Kane has been given an appointment with a neurology doctor specializing in seizures in Charleston, SC, on June 24. Receiving this appointment is a big step in diagnosing Lydia's physical difficulties. In early May she received a high-contrast MRI. She has been having more good days than bad ones over the last five months. Joan and I have really enjoyed fellowship with the Kane family this spring.

The EMU mission house in Montevideo, Uruguay, is being renovated to prepare for rental by **FEBU**, the Bible college, as a much-needed dorm for men. This is a real answer to prayer. The ground floor and basement will still host the Bible Institute and the EMU Uruguay office.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support during this most unusual time in modern world history! †

Email: office@emuinternational.org

Website: www.emuinternational.org

Phone: (864) 268-9267