

EMU

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PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

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Assistant Director*

ALONG THE WAY . . .

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Every American reading these lines is intimately familiar with the preceding words. Most of us do not remember NOT knowing the Pledge of Allegiance. What many of us do not know is the history of the Pledge. (I promise not to give you an exhaustive recitation of that story at this time!)

The Pledge, as we know it today, did not come into use until 1954. The Cold War was in full swing, atheistic Marxist communism was on the march across the world. The Korean War had just concluded in a stalemate between freedom and totalitarian dictatorship. And Dwight D. Eisenhower was the new president of the United States. Influenced by the suggestions of others, he determined to add the words "under God" to the Pledge. The Congress approved the change. President Eisenhower's stated purpose in adding these two words was to make a stark contrast between the religious heritage of the US as opposed to the atheism of communism. (The basic "formula" of the Pledge dates back to 1892.)

Since the November EMU Newsletter will probably not reach you via paper copy until after November 3, Election Day, I

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20 YEARS A FAITHFUL FRIEND & CO-WORKER

by Ken Jensen

After two decades serving as the camp caretaker at Camp Emmanuel, Guazuvirá, Uruguay, Luis Rios retired in September 2020. Much has occurred during those twenty years bringing both joy and sorrow to the Rios family and to those of us who have grown to love this family.

Though Luis and Olga Rios were members of Calvary Temple of Montevideo before they moved to Camp Emmanuel in July 2000, I really did not know this young family until they became a part of EMU in Uruguay. In December 1999, the former camp caretaker left his position at Camp Emmanuel, leaving us without someone to fill this vital role. At about this same time, Luis, who was a carpenter working for an employer in Montevideo, lost his job and was seeking new work. Luis was told about the opening at Camp Emmanuel and applied for the position. After interviews with the Uruguay board of directors (the Junta), Luis and Olga were offered a one-year trial as caretakers. For Luis, that position spanned 20 years.

Few of you have ever read the Rioses' testimonies. (The last and only time it was printed in the EMU Newsletter was in September 1989!) Luis and Olga were both from strong Roman Catholic families. However, Luis's youngest brother became a Christian as a teenager and maintained a consistent testimony before his family. (There were nine siblings in Luis' family.) When Fiorella, Luis and Olga's first child, was two months old, Luis became a believer in Christ alone. That was June 22,



(l-r) Olga & Luis Rios, a 3rd baptismal candidate, & Pastor Jose Luis Rossi

1986, just shy of his 31st birthday. Olga let Luis know that she was not interested in leaving the Catholic church. Eventually, through Luis's consistent testimony, Olga, too, trusted Christ. The two were baptized in 1989 by Pastor Jose Luis Rossi, the pastor of Calvary Temple of Montevideo at that time. Eleven years later, they moved to Camp Emmanuel.

However, five years prior to that move, Olga was diagnosed with breast cancer. Following a major operation, 40 radiation sessions, and 6 months of chemotherapy she seemed to be doing well. By this time, their youngest of four children was three years old.

The Rios family settled nicely into the routine of life at Camp Emmanuel. It was during these early years that I got to know the family fairly well through yearly interviews and being with the six of them during my stays at Camp Emmanuel.



(l-r) Luis Carlos, Matias, Olga, Luis, Vanessa, & Fiorella Rios at Camp - February 2002

Sadly, Olga's cancer returned a few years after moving to the camp. Again, she underwent various treatments, but in 2004 it became evident that she would not overcome the disease. She passed into Glory on July 29, 2004. In the midst of this sorrow, Luis's oldest sister and brother became Christians as did Olga's sister.

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

want to encourage you here to please make preparations to vote. To say that I have never seen anything like our current political and social climate in my lifetime probably isn't saying much, even though I feel like an old codger. However, the many history books I have read covering American history have never revealed a time such as this. Yes, there have been tragic periods of strife and division, and the Communist Party USA has been around for over a century. But never in the USA's past has there been such widespread demand by a major political party, the mainstream media, university leaders, and even corporate conglomerates to lay waste to our constitution and rights. Our Flag is burned and despised by millionaires and rioters alike. A growing wave of voices is calling for the US to become a Democracy as opposed to a Republic. (Our founding fathers warned us about the tyranny of the 51%.) The hatred for Christianity and moral values is rampant. Truth has become politically incorrect "hate speech." Tribalism pervades US society, turned citizen against citizen based on group identification. Liberty and justice is mocked as rioters are let out of jail without bail, or not even arrested, while church congregants are hassled and even arrested for exercising their freedom of worship. Free enterprise is bashed in favor of socialism, even by those whose financial success is a result of capitalism. The repression of free speech in schools, workplace, and media seems to have no end or shame.

Again, all of these things have been present in some measure in our society for longer than I have been alive; but those voices have never been so close to drowning out the freedoms we enjoy as American citizens. The choice in November has never in the history of our country been as stark as this – not even in Lincoln's first presidential election.

We still have the freedom of one-person-one-vote, and as Christians we should exercise that privilege for the sake of our families and our fellow Americans. Our vote, however, will not "save America" from its sins. Our vote every two years is not a very loud statement in itself, important as it is. A daily life of righteousness by Christians and the preaching and teaching of God's Word are our only weapons against godlessness in our society. We are to be the light of Christ in this dark, sin-cursed world. Our responsibility towards making America a more perfect union does not stop at the ballot box.

I am quite opposed to Unitarian doctrine, but one of their clergymen said something that is apropos at the end of the 19th century. Edward Everett Hale wrote, "I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything; but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not

refuse to do the something that I can do."

(With this, my rant concludes!)

Pedro Donzé is in the process of working on the Camp Emmanuel projects, which we still refer to as the **Rick's Team Projects**, even though Rick Jensen will not be going to Uruguay in October. (Uruguay is still closed to travelers from the USA.) A group of men from around Uruguay are helping with their labor to complete these projects.

New roof for the caretaker's house - \$4,340

New roof and ceiling for the camp kitchen - \$3,494 (Last year the roof of the dining room was replaced.)

Convert the current kiosk into a cabin room for workers or speakers - \$7,680 (The kiosk is where snacks, mementos, and basic toiletry items can be purchased.)

Construct a new wooden kiosk by the pavilion - \$2,300

Expand the pavilion to make room for more games under a roofed area - \$4,789

Upgrade camp facilities to meet the new government requirements - \$710

And there is still the need for helping campers attend Camp Emmanuel for the summer youth camps in January 2021. Donations to the **Camp Sponsorship Fund** help with camper fees and the cost of room and board for the counselors and staff. I do not have a firm cost per individual, but \$100 per person is within a few dollars either way.

In Uruguay, **Ursula Thiessen** was finally able to receive the operation that removed a growth from her face. At this writing, the bandages have been removed, and she is feeling better.

The **EMU churches in Uruguay** are all holding in-building services now. Thankfully, the spring temperatures are allowing for greater comfort for having the windows open.

Pastor Carlos Olivera of Bethel Church in Pando, Uruguay, mentioned in a recent letter that he had just turned sixty years old. His fervent desire is to begin training his replacement, though Carlos is not planning to retire soon. As mentioned in the front-page article, retirement age in Uruguay is usually 65. Our national missionaries can work beyond that age if their health permits it. However, several of our pastors in Uruguay are getting up in years and have all expressed their desire to train their replacement now rather than just before retirement, or worse, leaving the church without a pastor for a time. Pray for these men as they pursue this laudable goal.

Pastor Alberto Diaz's prayer letter mentioned a difficult time his church encountered during the dead of winter. The church was closed because of government regulations at the time. The church building

was broken into, many windows broken, and thieves made off with two guitars, a keyboard, an amplifier, and several kitchen utensils for preparing the simple breakfast provided by the church for poor children before Sunday school. Alberto did say that the items have been replaced by the church. This is the most vandalized church I have ever known!

Also, it seems that many of our non-Uruguay churches are meeting in person again. The EMU church in Lima, Peru, is a notable exception. This country and Chile seem to have been especially hammered by COVID-19. Also, the church that **Steve and Charity** normally attend in Beijing remains closed, though some churches in China have opened.

Steve finally heard from his university bosses concerning his teaching this fall semester. He will be teaching on campus beginning in October. Charity and their boys are well into their first semester of homeschooling. The taking of temperatures and wearing masks indoors continues in Beijing, but a few more stores and restaurants are opening.

The **Coles** in Bordeaux, France, have lost access to the larger room they were renting for their church services as the owner desires to use it for party rental now that COVID restrictions are loosening up. This limits the number of folks who can attend church. They very much need a new place in which to worship.

When the **Bixbys** returned to Sarcelles, France, on August 27, following their short furlough stateside, they found that the church there is thriving. Churches still have some meeting regulations set by the government due to the coronavirus, but the auditorium is large enough to accommodate the required spacing. In their most recent prayer letter, the Bixbys reported on the financial need of the church in regard to the next payment on the building in the middle of 2021. A payment of \$450,000 will be due to the building's owner. The leaders of the church will be having a meeting with the owners on October 21 to discuss this matter, and Tim asks prayer that the meeting will go well. Also, Tim mentioned a personal support need for the Bixby family. Due to some loss of support, they are at 86% of the support level worked out between the Bixbys and the EMU office. The birth of their fifth child added a bit to that support figure. Pray that these financial needs will be met to God's glory and the encouragement of these missionary servants.

Alexis Shoemaker, who is raising support for her proposed ministry in Lima, Peru, at the church started by Tim and Cheryl Chapman, is progressing. At the end of September, she was at 52%. She is still planning on a departure date sometime in the early part of 2021. This fall semester she

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“How do you think the woman responded?”

by Jeremy & Bonnie Ruth Farmer, church planters in Cambodia

Old Testament overview class

Starting Saturday morning, September 12, I began teaching an Old Testament overview class (meeting twice monthly for the next nine months) to about 15 leaders and potential leaders from several churches throughout the province (Stung Treng). Please pray for me as I teach and for my students, that they would grow in their understanding and ability to handle God's word.



Jeremy Farmer teaching

Lao village of Na Ong

On Sunday, September 6, in Na Ong, I taught on the first sin. “And how do you think the woman responded to the serpent's lie?” I asked the 9 adults who had gathered under Sali's house to listen to the lesson. “We don't know,” several responded honestly. “She said NO!” several others said hopefully. But none of them truly knew the



Part of the church in Na Ong - interesting pews

correct answer. And Na Ong is not unique—it is one of many villages all around us full of people who have truly never heard the most foundational stories of Scripture, including the death and resurrection of Christ (and we'll get there as quickly as my faltering Lao will let us!). Please continue to pray for us and our Lao friends.

Another highlight from that Sunday was our learning and then teaching them a Lao hymn with a traditional Lao tune—as far as I know, the first ever song of praise to the Creator in this village! Bonnie Ruth and I were fully prepared for our duet to meet with a combination of bewildered stares and giggles, if not full-blown hysterics. But wow, Na Ong got talent! Almost immediately, a couple of literate villagers shared my song sheet and tried to sing along; others began rhythmic clapping, while others added whooping and hollering (sorry, no video recording equipment was permitted in the sanctuary). In short, we were a hit! An unexpected and unsought response, certainly. But a happy motivation to pray—O Lord, may the village of Na Ong one day sing your praises from hearts full of faith and understanding!

The church in Pum Tmai

The church in Pum Tmai continues to maintain its membership of five sweet Christian ladies along with our family. Our Sunday worship times include a study of the book of Acts. Would you pray first for our faith in the Spirit's power to turn family and neighbors from darkness to light? Conversion is a miracle that we have not seen often, and I sense a weariness in our prayers. Please pray also for one of our dear ladies who has become the target of a group of false teachers who claim that their leader is “the Appointed Son of God” and “Owner of the Universe,” through whom

alone is salvation. Please pray both for this lady's own soul and that she would have the courage to refuse these teachers' entrance into her home (Cambodian hospitality along with family connections to the false teachers are making it extremely difficult for her).

Language helper

Please pray for Can Own, my language helper. In our most recent conversation about the gospel, Can Own told me clearly that his struggle is not Christ vs. Buddha. It is rather Christ vs. his good job that requires him to participate in various religious ceremonies at the village temple. Please pray that God would give him eyes to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, making him eager to sell everything to obtain this treasure.

New school year

The new school year is a month old and off to a solid start. We are very thankful both to God and you for your prayers for us as a family. Indeed, we rely heavily on your labor for us in this way. We did not think it was possible, but in recent months, our neighborhood has become even noisier than before! As you pray for us, please ask for stamina, focused minds, and joy. †



The Farmer children & Brooke Illsley in their school room at home

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continues to teach K-5 online for a Christian school in Lima, Peru. She has also finished her course work for her international certification for Teaching English as a Second Language (TEFL).

The **Crnkovićs'** church in Koprivnica, Croatia, has begun construction on the interior of the second floor of the church, now that the ground floor is finished.

Before you receive the November EMU Newsletter, **Josh and Amy Jensen** should be staying in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, with their five children in a two-room apartment at the Christian and Missionary Alliance guest house. The Jensens' plan is to travel

south a month before Amy's due date at the end of November to wait for the birth of Number Six. In the past, they have travelled to Thailand for the birth of their children, but due to the COVID restrictions and the availability of an acceptable birthing facility in the Cambodian capital, they have opted to birth a “Cambodian child.” During their time in Phnom Penh, Josh will be working on arrangements to get the new Jarai translation of the Gospel of Matthew printed. And, I'm assuming, Amy will continue homeschooling the four oldest children in their new cramped environment.

The **Kanes** were able to visit a supporting church in Oregon during the fall break for

Hampton Park Christian School. The Oregon church graciously paid to have the entire family fly to Oregon for a week to get to know the congregation better. We are looking forward to Brian's report when they return.

It is my firm desire to refrain from politics in future newsletters, and if the opening of this article seemed inappropriate to any of you, I apologize. Eccl. 1:18, “*For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*” Maybe too much reading has led me to the latter state of that verse. Pray about your part in the November elections. And thank you for your prayers for the missionaries and ministries of EMU International. †

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20 Years a Faithful . . .

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(With these conversions, Luis's parents and all his siblings were Christians.)

For the next three years, Luis set about raising his four young children without their mother. Those were some difficult years. Camp Emmanuel is about 40 miles from Montevideo and the Rios' home church, so Luis did not have many helping hands. (Luis did not own his own vehicle until just a few years ago, so much of his family travel was done by bus. And the bus stop is about a mile away on the main highway.) Luis and I talked often when I was in Uruguay, and he always expressed his concern that his children would love and serve the Lord. He continued to hold family devotions and take them to church when possible. Fiorella, about 18 years old when her mom died, basically dropped out of school for a year to help her dad at home.

I believe it was at this time that Luis became a runner and got into very good condition.

Even today he runs marathons. The running also helped with the stamina needed to accomplish his work at the camp.

I do not know the date, but eventually Luis began to get to know Adriana Fernandez (I'm assuming that was her maiden name), the sister of one of our EMU pastors' wives (Carolina Fernandez Diaz, now in San Fernando). Seven years his junior, Adriana had never been married. They were married March 30, 2007, at Camp Emmanuel. And Adriana became mother to four teenagers!

The Lord answered Luis' decades of prayer for his children. Fiorella married a young man from Argentina, and they serve as missionaries in that country. Luis Carlos, the oldest son, Venessa, the second daughter, and Matias, the youngest sibling, all married solid Christians. All the families, except Fiorella's, are active members of Calvary Temple of Montevideo, and Fiorella's family is one of the mission families supported by that church. Having watched these four kids grow up over the last 20 years, it is a thrill for me to see them

following the Lord with their new families. And I can only imagine the great gratitude Luis and Adriana have to God for this amazing blessing.

A few years ago, Luis and Adriana decided that Luis would retire at age 65, the "legal" time for retirement in Uruguay. So, we knew this time was coming. The couple has moved into a rented house in the village of Guazuvirá, so, they have not actually left the neighborhood. Currently, the caretaker's house is being renovated for the family of Henry Castro from Rivera, who has agreed to become the new caretaker. It is hoped that he and his family can move into the house sometime in October. In the November EMU Newsletter, I hope to present the testimonies of Henry and his wife.

A couple of weeks ago, we received word that Luis, Adriana, and Luis Carlos' family were in a car accident – a hit-and-run – in which Luis and Adriana were injured. Luis suffered a cracked rib and Adriana was left with a broken wrist, broken arm, bruised or cracked rib, and a fractured pelvis. Other than bruises, the family of Luis Carlos seem to be fine. Luis did not have collision insurance on his older car, and I do not know if it is drivable. I do know this happened at a rough time for Luis and Adriana, just days after moving from Camp Emmanuel. I will give updates when and if I learn more. (Though Luis and Adriana do not speak English, Fiorella, Pablo, and Sara are fluent in English, so we do have ways to communicate with the Rioses.)

In the years ahead, I will miss seeing the smiling face of Luis when I visit the camp. But I have 20 years of fond memories of his faithfulness and friendship. And that causes me to smile! †



(l-r adults) Luis Carlos & Ruth, Matias & Sara, Luis & Adriana, Pablo & Fiorella, Ezequiel & Vanessa - (Luis Carlos & Vanessa each have another child since this Oct. 2019 photo was taken)

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