

EMU⁺

INTERNATIONAL

Evangelical Mission to the Unreached

Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

Volume LXIV

January 2021

Number 1



Ken & Joan Jensen
Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

It is nice to see the number 2021 – finally. Although my expectations of the new year are not greatly enhanced in light of current conditions. The promise of major changes in COVID restrictions after a vaccine is on the market has been silenced with even more shutdown regulations. And with the advent of the mutated COVID from England on the present stage, the old normal of a year ago is destined to remain on the shelf of history for the foreseeable future. Even this January Newsletter fell victim to the fortunes of 2020. Originally, I planned for this issue to be a pictorial newsletter sporting updated faces of the EMU family. However, a dearth of new pictures spanned December 2020, so I opted to postpone the pictorial newsletter until the February publication.

In spite of continuing “distancing” regulations in the countries where EMU has missionaries, our missionaries had a lot going on in December. From Uruguay, the **Steels** and **Espinels** flew Stateside in December to begin short furloughs. We have yet to see either family, though both are in South Carolina. The Steels will be traveling to Florida in January for a visit with Deborah’s stepmother and her family. We plan to see these two missionary families before they return to Uruguay in February.

Maria Teresa “Chicha” Rodriguez is scheduled to fly back to Uruguay
(continued on page 2)

JESUS CHRIST MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

by Ken Jensen

(Recently I began re-reading a missionary autobiography that I read some 50 years ago as a teenager. The story of John Paton and his missionary work in the New Hebrides was once a well-known story among Christians. I think I would be safe in asserting that few Christians today have heard of or remember the significance of Tanna. I know I had forgotten! The New Hebrides are now the nation of Vanuatu off the northeastern coast of Australia. Tanna and Aneityum are the two most southerly islands of the Vanuatu archipelago. When Paton arrived on Tanna with his young wife and baby son, the society of Aneityum had already been revolutionized by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with many thousands of converts. Tanna was still in the grip of its ancient heritage of cannibalism, murder, revenge wars, immorality, thieving, and deceit. John’s wife and child succumbed to tropical fever soon after they settled on the island. His narrative of the next few years recounts the Tannese rejection of the Gospel, preferring their worship of the island spirits to Jehovah. The wickedness of their society was in stark contrast to the peaceful, prosperous society of Aneityum. I recommend that every Christian read or reread this autobiography.)

The point I wish to emphasize is the overwhelming sense on every page of the book of the difference that the Gospel of Christ makes in individuals and societies. Sadly, the “civilized” British traders were as wicked as the Tannese and actually instigated the murder of Paton and other missionaries by the natives!

In preparing for this issue of the EMU Newsletter, I came across the following letters from two of our national pastors in Uruguay. They contain excellent examples of how the Gospel still radically changes people. As we enter 2021 and the uncertainties ahead, we can be assured that, though we cannot impose Christianity on any society, Christianity does change society one person at a time. Let your light so shine.)

Rubito Rodriguez - pastor of Calvary Temple in “33,” Uruguay

Early in December we baptized four believers, two men and two ladies:

Nicolas is a 27-year-old young man who spent many of his teen years enslaved to drugs. Before he started drugs, he arrived home one day and found his parents dead. His father had killed his mother and then took his own life. This led Nicolas to take refuge in drugs. Over a year ago he came to our church and accepted the Lord Jesus, and his life changed completely.

José is a 28-year-old young man who also used drugs for many years and came to church with Nicolás. Though he was drug-free through Christ, he became homeless. Both young men have not relapsed and both are working and have very good testimonies at their workplaces.

Cristina Méndez is a 15-year-old girl who is very mature in her faith. She is the fifth member of the Méndez family to be baptized and become a member of our church. I told you about the Mendez family a long time ago. They were Mormons and converted to Christ. God has done a great work in that family.

(continued on page 2)



(l-r) Elizabeth, Nicolas, Jose, Cristina, and Pastor Rubito Rodriguez

Jesus Christ Makes . . . Difference

(continued from page 1)

Elizabeth Fernández is the wife of Miguel, who came to Christ first. He attended church alone but was always praying for his wife. Two years ago, she began to attend and accepted the Lord in an evangelistic meeting. They are a young couple, and we have high hopes for them.

In November we had a nice men's gathering at our church. Three new men attended. On Saturday, December 12, we had an evangelistic meeting for young people. A Christian film was shown and then one of our young people gave his testimony.

Even though it has been a year of trials, God has been faithful and has sustained our church.

Carlos Olivera - pastor of Bethel Church in Pando, Uruguay

We continue to disciple people through Zoom, and we now have contacts from all over the country. I am also in contact with some people I knew when I was in the military and have been connecting with them on Facebook. I met a man by the name of Pablo who told me he had met a Carlos Olivera in the 12th Infantry, and I replied, "I'm Carlos Olivera." He could not believe it. He kept saying, "You are a pastor? I can't believe it." He added me to a FB group, and I have been witnessing to several people in the group. They have many questions, but at the same time, they tease me because of how I used to be. They asked if I am still into fights. They recently had an in-person meeting, but I did not go. I wanted to be cautious because of Covid and my ministry with our church family.

I am working with several young men, but I do not see a desire in any of them to become a full-time pastor or even to consider becoming a pastor. One of them, my grandson, is committed to ministry and working. He has been a great help. I am paying for his music lessons, and he is doing a wonderful job with the violin. I am praying about giving some additional financial support for him. He wants to go to the Bible Institute. He finishes high school next year and has good grades. He is a consecrated young man and a great prospect for God's ministry. Please do pray for him.

As of 12/12/2020 I have served as the pastor in the Pando church for 18 years. We are extremely grateful for the opportunity we've had to serve the Lord. Last week we rearranged another room besides the church auditorium so we can seat more people and be distanced from each other. This will allow more people to come. We purchased a smart TV to broadcast the same content that is going on in the church service. We will put metal bars in the front windows to deter theft. The economy has been tight, but God has been faithful and has continued to provide. †

ALONG THE WAY . . .

(continued from page 1)

on January 8. However, an outbreak of COVID in Uruguay prompted the government to tighten restrictions in many areas, including international travel. So, there is still a chance Chicha will be extending her stay in South Carolina.

Another possible casualty to these stronger regulations are the summer camps at **Camp Emmanuel in Guazuvirá, Uruguay**. For many months, **Pedro Donzé**, the director of the camp, and his advisory committee have been working to get the camp COVID-compliant for the January camps. However, just before Christmas the Uruguayan government announced that it would make a final decision on January 10 about whether places like camps and other group-gatherings can be held. The proposed staff for the camp is being trained via the Internet since in-person training is currently not permitted. Usually, by now, Pedro would have all of the food and other supplies ordered for the summer camps, but he is being forced to wait until literally the last minute to accumulate the merchandise. Campers are being registered for the camps just in case the government gives the go-ahead, but for now, final decisions are left "in the air." Pray that the Lord will give Pedro and his team wisdom to know how to proceed. If camps can be held, the Children's Camp will begin January 12, followed by teen camps.

One bit of good news from Camp Emmanuel is that the **Henry Castro family** has been able to move into the camp's caretaker house. It has been a major effort to renovate this house from top to bottom.

A few months ago, I mentioned in this paper that **Luis and Adriana Rios**, the former caretakers at Camp Emmanuel, had been in a car accident in which both were injured. I received an email from Luis just before Christmas letting us know that Adriana, who had a few broken bones, has fully recovered. We are certainly grateful for this news.

Pastor Gabriel Gomez of Gethsemani Church in Montevideo, Uruguay, wrote in his December prayer letter about the recent activities at the church. One highlight came in November with the baptism of three teenagers, one of which was **Lucas**, the pastor's second son.

The **Coles** were almost victims of the stricter COVID rules in Europe following the discovery of the mutated coronavirus in England. The Coles had tickets with British Airways to fly to North Carolina on January 4 for their long-awaited furlough. Their flights in and out of London were cancelled for their trip. Thankfully, they were able to reschedule

their flights a day earlier! On December 31, the Coles took a train from Bordeaux to Paris to spend a few days with the Bixby family before "jumping the pond." If you receive this newsletter before January 3, pray for the Coles' travels as Michael is still recovering from his table saw accident.



The Bixby family with the new bride and groom after the church wedding

In the **Bixbys'** December prayer letter, **Tim and Ruth** presented some blessings and encouraging news. First was a wedding at Bible Baptist Church of Gran Roissy for a couple from their church. Regulations limited the in-person attendance to 30 at the church, but over 100 people joined via Zoom. Also, the church leaders were able to secure a Christian real estate lawyer to help with the purchase of their building. And in December the church witnessed an outpouring of benevolence towards the purchase of the church building. Tim writes, "Also, within the week God gave us 10,000€ in gifts from this side of the ocean as well as two unsolicited offers of zero-interest loans totaling up to 90,000€, also from here in Europe. Since then we have received more than \$15,000 from a few friends in the States, the largest part of that coming from an anonymous donor. Then, just this week, one of our supporting churches informed us that they would like to take a step of faith, making a larger commitment than any they have ever made to a single project as a church, and expressed their intention to donate \$50,000 towards the building at the time of the sale. Then we were blown away when a young family who lives very frugally wrote to us that they wanted to add sacrifice to their prayers and offer \$50,000 from their savings! We are now more than halfway to our final goal. Though there is still a long way to go, we are encouraged by these donations and see in them a sign of God's good care of us and an encouragement to pursue this purchase."

A financial blessing was also seen by **Alexis Shoemaker** in December. She reached 100% of her needed support goal for one year in Lima, Perú. Alexis already has her ticket to fly to Lima in mid-January. Like many other countries,

(continued on page 4)

Tampuan New Testament

by JD & Kim Crowley, missionaries in Ban Lung, Cambodia

I felt like a man in a dream as I watched the newly printed Tampuan New Testament being handed to Tampuan church leaders in a small ceremony in November (Covid-limited). Bible translators Andrew and Tanuja Carson of Australia have spent the better part of their adult lives working with local Christians to produce this historic publication. In a later celebration for expats, Andrew asked me to share about the early preparatory years of the project. Here are my remarks:

The Early Days of the Tampuan Bible Translation Project (B.C. — Before Carsons)

I waited 27 years to witness what I saw on Wednesday – the Tampuan New Testament being presented to Tampuan church leaders. Twenty-seven years ago, in the fall of 1993, I was having a conversation with Chuck Keller at the Wycliffe center in North Carolina. That is when I first heard the word “Tampuan” as he listed the various tribes in Ratanakiri. Hearing that name ignited in Kim and me a dream that someday by God’s grace there would be Tampuan Christians, Tampuan churches, and a Tampuan Bible.

To translate the Bible, you need (1) a translator (usually a missionary); (2) local translation helpers (ideally Christians with some Bible knowledge); and (3) an alphabet. Kim and I were in the process of getting ready to go be the missionaries, but there was no Tampuan alphabet and, as far as we knew, no Tampuan Christians.

Just 12 months after that conversation with Chuck, God had us here in Ratanakiri learning Khmer, then translating Creation-to-Christ into Khmer. By that time there were a few Tampuan believers who had been evangelized by dental trainers, here for a 6-month project under Dr. Kreg Mallow’s leadership. Those Tampouns became our first language informants.

In 1997 we presented our first public teaching of Creation-to-Christ. It was a small affair, seemingly insignificant, for a tiny group of new believers at a farm near Kachañ rubber plantation. In that group was a quiet Tampuan man who listened intently. He was to become my Tampuan teacher, my colleague in developing the Tampuan alphabet, a key specialist in helping EMU and ICC develop Tampuan literacy materials, a co-author with me of the Tampuan Dictionary, but most importantly, Andrew Carson’s co-translator for 13 years in the translation of the Tampuan Bible. His name is Wai Tieng. You never know when you share the gospel with someone how God is going to use that person.

(By the way, also attending that seemingly insignificant event was a Krung man



The new Tampuan New Testament named Nai who was also to become a key member of a translation team, the Krung team. Nai eventually became a pastor, the musical leader of the Ratanakiri churches, the head of the Krung Bible School, and Brian Kane’s partner in the work of community-checking the Krung Bible. Nai and Tieng were among the first crop of students in the Ratanakiri Bible School a couple of years later.)

So, we had a missionary, we had some Tampuan Christians, but we still did not have an alphabet. To make an alphabet for a language you need to research and analyze all the sounds in the language, and know which sounds matter and which sounds don’t matter as much. This is called a phonology, and EMU’s phonology of Tampuan was finished in 1999 and published with Ken Gregerson’s help a short time later. That same year God helped us finish the draft Tampuan alphabet in a form not much different from what you would see in the Tampuan New Testament today. (I think it is an important historical note that the first book ever published in the Tampuan language was a 12-page Christian hymnbook produced in 1999. Christianity has been an incalculable motivation for worldwide literacy.)

God had set the stage for the Tampuan translation project. We had an alphabet. We had Tampuan Christians who could be translation helpers. The time had come for us to redouble our Tampuan focus and get ready to dive into Genesis 1:1. And that is when we heard the too-good-to-be-true rumor that a family from Australia was praying about coming to translate the Tampuan Bible. This was great news for me, because, one, I knew they would do a better job, and two, the church

was growing at a rapid pace all over the province, and I believed that God wanted me to focus on training the pastors in all the language groups, not just Tampuan.

I will never forget the day at the dusty airport when a gaunt Australian and his beautiful Sri Lankan wife and two small children walked down the steps of the old Russian Antanov AN-24 to begin the work that saw its culmination this week with the presentation of the Tampuan New Testament. Thank you Andrew and Tanuja Carson for giving the best years of your lives so that the Tampuan people could have God’s word in their language. How beautiful are your dusty feet.

Buildings are less important than Bibles, but...

The church here in town that we’ve been a very close part of for 20 years (when we’re not in a village) has received a valuable piece of land in the center of town from one of their church members and is raising funds to build a modest building. EMU has offered to help them if they will agree to build it a little less modestly! – just large enough to be a permanent location for the twice-yearly Ratanakiri Pastors School (12 meters by 13 meters, two stories). Our central Bible school has met in rented and borrowed facilities for 20 years, and this will be an opportunity to put down some deeper roots for the future at a relatively small investment. The total cost for this phase will be about \$60,000. The church has almost \$30,000 of that in offerings and capital. EMU is using a special Cambodia fund to provide another \$10,000, which leaves \$20,000 that I hope you’ll consider helping with and praying for.

(Note: Almost \$9,000 of the needed amount has been given since this need was first shared.)



Proposed church/Bible school building in Ban Lung, Cambodia

Keep praying for wisdom and grace for me as I write a small commentary/handbook on 1 John to help Cambodian churches battle the many cults that have entered the country. It will have an appendix detailing each of the false groups. †

Page 4

ALONG THE WAY . . .

(continued from page 2)

Perú reverted to tighter restrictions in December. Alexis has been very diligent over these past several months raising support and making plans to move to Lima, all while finishing her on-line teaching responsibilities. Pray that she will have wisdom and safety as she gets settled into life and ministry in Perú.

Billy Judson participated in the graduation ceremony for twenty-two men and women from the Good News Bible College and Seminary in Secunderabad, India, in December. Pray that these schools around India would be able to continue teaching God's Word.

services were cancelled until further notice due to new outbreaks of COVID. Religious gatherings in Beijing have not been this restrictive since **Steve and Charity** first went to China almost twenty years ago.

In Cambodia, our missionaries are still free to travel and hold limited meetings. In December, **JD Crowley** held a Creation-to-Christ seminar for a group of church leaders in Phnom Penh for the first time. It was also good to hear that the Crowleys drove to Oyadao, Cambodia, to spend Christmas Day with **Josh and Amy Jensen's family**. From the Jensen



Mary (aka Clara), Joseph (aka Isaiah), & Jesus (aka Micah)

has been phenomenal! We would have expected reduced giving because of the recession and job losses in the USA. It seems like the Lord is making a point to say He is still in control and can pour out blessings regardless of what governments dictate. We, the EMU family, want to thank you for your faithfulness and generosity in 2020, and may He continue to provide your every need in 2021. †



December 2020 graduating class of the Secunderbad Good News Bible College
(Billy Judson is 2nd from left on the front row)

Just before Christmas, we learned that **Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez** had COVID, as did Marco's sister who lives down their street, and **Toño Alvarado** and **Daniel Fernandez**, who help with the ministry in Cancún. Marco says they are all recovering well.

The Chinese government announced the day before Christmas Eve that all church

Dimension, Amy's blog, we saw that the Jensen kids' Christmas pageant included a live baby this year!

Joan and I were discussing the craziness in the Home Office here during December. We realized that the end-of-the-year giving towards our EMU missionaries, and especially for several special projects,

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