

75 Years

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Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

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Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

North of the Equator, **March** brings anticipation for the start of Spring, which begins on March 20 this year. The “birth flower” for those born in March is, not surprisingly, the daffodil, which, in our yard, will be in bloom soon. However, March has a darker side. This month is named for the Roman god Mars, the god of War. In the northern climate, spring, before mechanized warfare, was the traditional time to begin military campaigns, thus the god of war month.

It was in March of 2020 that the COVID-19 pandemic began, which ushered in the global “war against the coronavirus.” And, as with all wars, civil liberties became casualties in every society. Whether or not you agree with the lockdowns of churches, businesses, sporting events, and social distancing and wearing face coverings, it is still obvious that civil liberties have suffered. As March 2021 begins, the war against COVID has no end in sight. We are one year into an era unknown in American history, and quite frankly in world history – though individual countries have used lockdowns of this nature from time-to-time.

For most of 2020, the pandemic, for our family, was “out there.” We had family and friends, including EMU missionaries, who contracted COVID, but all recovered, some only having amazingly
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BUILDING PHYSICALLY & SPIRITUALLY

by Jeremy & Bonnie Ruth Farmer, church planters in Stung Treng, Cambodia

A new home

Praise the Lord! He is providing us a home of our own in Stung Treng! Many of you have given so generously and unexpectedly, and we are overwhelmed and humbled by your kindness. Thank you! And God’s provision has not only been financial: for years, we refused to consider building ourselves because we were simply unwilling to invest the time, energy, and potential frustration of working across languages and cultures in a project like this. But Kong, our main guy for all the concrete and foundational work, has been brilliant—he listens carefully to all of our ideas, explains why they will or won’t work, suggests alternatives, then thinks one step ahead of us to help us execute them. Praise God for leading us to Kong. And also pray for us as we continue working through this project, because it does indeed consume much time and energy.

Old Testament overview class

In December, I completed a semester’s worth of teaching to a group of about 15 leaders, teachers, and potential leaders from churches in our province. The consistent attendance, attention, and testimonies of these students speaks loudly to the immense need for regular theological training here. Our current hiatus (due both to my other ministry obligations and the house) speaks also to the need for more teachers besides



(l-r) Isa, Salem, Gloria, Eden, Elisha, Henry, Judson, & Abi Farmer at the new house site (workers in the background)

myself. Praise God for a successful course with these men and women, and pray for more laborers to help in this work.

The church in Pum Tmai village

Many of you may remember the story of the seedling church in Pum Tmai village. We continue to worship weekly with these (now 6) ladies from 3 adjacent villages. Here are two major prayer requests:

The Apollo C. Quiboloy cult is still active in our town, but we are cautiously hopeful that their efforts to target two of our members are failing. Please pray for our

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Old Testament overview class in Stung Treng, Cambodia

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light symptoms. But after Christmas 2021, that began to change for us and especially for our church, **Hampton Park Baptist Church (HPBC)**. Three friends at church were hard hit by the virus and complications that resulted from the illness.

In the February EMU Newsletter, which was at the printer during the last week of January, we asked prayer for **Dan Sallé**, one of our EMU board members and a member of HPBC, who was gravely ill with COVID for over a month. On January 31, Dan passed away. (**Jeff Davis** updated the Facebook version of the Newsletter, announcing Dan's death.) Another dear friend of EMU and HPBC member had just died of, probably, a coronavirus induced stroke the week before. (Another very longtime friend from HPBC is still battling the ravages of COVID.) All three of these men have been, not just personal friends, but supporters of EMU and friends to many of our missionaries.



EMU Board Member Dan Sallé

Dan Sallé became a member of the EMU board of directors in 2014 during a time of major change in EMU. After the 2013 board meeting, three of our board members resigned from the board due to health issues – Ray Hansel had suffered a stroke, **Jack Buttram** and **my father** because of the onset of dementia. (Incidentally, **Ray Hansel** just moved into Shepherd's Care in Greenville.) During this same time, **Steve Erkens** was in the beginning stages of being trained to become the next EMU mission director. At the 2014 board meeting, we elected six new board members. Dan was one of those.

I first met Dan Sallé on the soccer field at Bob Jones University in the early 1970s, when we were in school together. He was seven years my senior, but a break from studies after his high school years before attending BJU allowed our paths to cross. As adults, he and his wife **Dawn** joined HPBC where Joan and I were members.

And years later, Dan and I served as deacons together, though on different committees. God gave Dan the ability to be successful in business. I used to call him Midas. But as a Christian with the gift of giving, unlike Midas, Dan's gift was a blessing to untold people. Like so many other people, Joan and I asked Dan for advice concerning financial decisions concerning EMU over the years. At one point, the Sallés visited the Erkens in China and became more involved in their Beijing ministry. It was actually Dan who first impressed on me the idea that I should ask Steve to become the next director of EMU. Although that pursuit never became reality, I was grateful for Dan's input.

From 2014 to 2020, Dan was an important contributor to the operation of EMU. We will all miss his wise counsel and friendship. Our hearts go out to Dawn, the Sallé sons, and their families.

At the time of Dan's passing, another of our board members, **Nelson Neal**, had COVID. Since the 1970s it has been almost automatic for me to think of Dan and Nelson in the same thought stream because they were such close friends. Also, at this same time at the beginning of February, **Jeff, Joanna, and Hannah Davis**, and **Jeff's mother** had COVID. Nelson and the Davises are all doing well now.

However, another EMU board member currently in need of our prayers is **Rick Miller**, who also came onto the EMU board in 2014. Unawares, over the course of many months, Rick had a cancerous tumor developing in his right forearm. (Seeing him at church last year and noticing his large forearm, I asked if he was becoming Popeye! At that time, he wasn't aware that it was a problem – nor was his doctor.) I'm not sure of the timeline, but sometime this winter, he was finally diagnosed as having a slow growing tumor. By this writing, he has already had five weeks of treatment – chemo and radiation – to reduce the tumor in preparation for surgery on March 30 (tentative date). Besides being tired, he says he is doing better than he expected.

After Christmas, **Chicha Rodriguez**, our visiting missionary from Uruguay, came down with COVID, along with her older sister and her nephew's family, and her brother and his family, all of whom live in the Greenville area. Her sister, Susana, seemed to have the worst case. However, all have recovered. Chicha flew back to Uruguay on February 10, after a few rebookings of her flight because of her COVID and necessary COVID negative test for flying. She was shocked when, after arriving in Uruguay and getting another COVID test required by the Uruguayan government, she received a call from the health department saying she

tested POSITIVE for COVID! It turned out to be a false positive, so she was allowed to end her quarantine status after ten days. And the first thing she did was to visit Ursula Thiessen, who has been cloistered away at her residence outside of Montevideo.

Also, on February 12 and 17 respectively, the **Steels** and **Espinels** flew back to Uruguay to begin their days of quarantine before the beginning of FEBU and the Bible Institute in March. (First semester begins in schools in the southern hemisphere.)

Joan and I had the privilege of "breaking bread" with **Ted and Marla Allston** recently. Although Joan already knew, I learned (probably for the second time!) that Ted is having right knee replacement surgery on March 10. It is actually from an injury sustained decades ago when he was a teenager. In the 90s, a doctor told him that when the pain woke him up at night it would be time for the surgery. Now is that time! The recovery should take 6-8 weeks. Ted continues to meet with his students in Uganda and India via the internet.

We also had the privilege of having the **Coles** spend the night and the next morning at our house towards the end of February. Though they have been stateside since early in January, the family's encounter with COVID changed their schedule greatly. Also, their kids are attending the Christian school that Michael attended in Charlotte, NC, and where Michael's father and mother were teachers for decades. It was a real joy to have time to get reacquainted with the four kids and have time for good talks with Michael and Liz. The day after they left our place, Michael spoke at the two morning services at **Cleveland Park Bible Church** of Spartanburg, their sending church. They will be visiting churches, friends, and family between now and when they return to Bordeaux, France, in August. Oh, and the two fingers he put through the table saw in France have healed nicely!

The **Kanes** were finally able to make their visit to supporters in Florida at the end of February. Family illnesses necessitated several previous postponements of this trip. In January, several of the Kane family, with the exceptions of Brian and the three youngest kids, were able to participate in an activity that kids in Cambodia cannot do. They went on a snow skiing outing with a group of HPBC members to Cataloochee, NC. The Kanes borrowed some winter coverings (gloves, socks, shoes, jackets) from Joan and me for the day on the slopes. It was a day that will be forever remembered by the Kanes.

In February, in light of several circumstances that came together and

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Walking in the Dark

by Marcos & Tali Gomez, Uruguay office & Camp Emmanuel assistant to Pedro Donzé

Undoubtedly the past year has reminded us of the sovereignty of God and His power. I remember January and February last year when we planned for the 2020 camps, retreats, the 2021 summer camps, and lots of activities in the middle. We did the same for church activities, special meetings, times of evangelism, and more. But from one day to the next, we saw our plans and schedules cancelled. The Lord reminded us that beyond our plans, He is in control. We have walked for a year in the dark, taking each step carefully without knowing what will happen, but within all that uncertainty, there was something clear and firm - the Lord was with us. He tells us in His Word that He will not give us anything that we cannot bear, and without a doubt, we could see Him leading and working.

This has been the strangest summer for me. Since I was born, I have never missed the summer camps. I went to Camp Emmanuel every summer with my parents while they served. At the age of 6, I was old enough to be a camper. From the age of 18, I was a volunteer, and from the age of 21, I've been on staff. It has been sad that we had to cancel the camps, but we trust the Lord that the decision made was His will.

The last few months of work have been very tiring. Pedro Donzé, Henry Castro,



Tali & Marcos Gomez

and I worked 10-hour days preparing for the summer camps, doing the necessary installations and implementations in the cabins, chapel, dining room, etc., to comply with the government regulations for opening the camp. In addition to this work, there were still things to be finished from the October projects. Even though we did not get to open for the summer camps, we know that our work was not in vain. Now we are starting to plan for camps for the rest of this year, hopefully starting in April, and for next summer in January and February 2022. We have ideas for different programs as a result of what we have learned during the pandemic.

At Gethsemane Church, where we are members, we help with the Youth and Adolescents, in addition to doing the audiovisual work for the church. In Uruguay, because of the increase in Covid cases this summer, attendance was restricted in the churches, so once again, we had to close the doors and return to having the meetings online from our homes, as we did for much of 2020, starting last March. With the Youth and Adolescents, we continue our Study of Bible Characters and trust that the Word of God is being a blessing in their lives.

By God's grace, both my wife and I are in good health. We are still settling into our new home. We are very grateful for His mercy and care for us.

I would appreciate your prayers that the Lord will supply the money for a new computer. In December, mine broke, and the repair was not worth the value of the computer. Since that date, I've been without a computer to work on at home since it was not an expense that we expected, and it came when we had many household expenses. Now we are saving to buy a new one. For now, I am doing what I can on our tablet, and I do the rest on the computer at the camp. I appreciate your prayers for this. †

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were coming together in March, **Brian and Lydia** decided to set their return-to-Cambodia date for mid-April. We agree that this was a wise decision. Brian Kane will be one of the main speakers at the HPBC mission conference in early March. Lydia's health seemed to have improved during the last weeks of 2020 and into January, but there have been some setbacks that need stabilizing over the next several weeks. They have a lot of work to do before returning to Cambodia, and their arrival in Cambodia and the two-week quarantine is still a concern. Not to mention all the COVID tests they will need for their family before flying and after arriving in Cambodia! Please pray for this family.

We talked to **Josh and Amy Jensen** on the last Monday in February. Their family is doing fine in Cambodia. We did learn that **JD Crowley** and **Josh**, along with missionary **Kreg Mallow**, will be teaching three tribal groups in the Oyadao area, where the Jensens live, March 8-10. This special conference will focus on JD's new commentary on I John with a specific emphasis exposing false cults that

have flourished in Cambodia. The location of the church hosting the conference is about 15 minutes from the Jensens' house. Pray that this important teaching will be well understood by the tribal Christians – and others!

In this Newsletter is an article by **Marcos Gomez**. He gives a good overview of how things have been going in Uruguay since the beginning of 2021. His experiences are similar to the other churches and camps in Uruguay. Activities are continuing in all of our churches there.



Pastor Rubito Rodriguez and Paula before her baptism in Tupambaé



Paula being baptized in a children's wading pool

Pastor Rubito Rodriguez sent a letter and photos of a recent baptism in a small town about 45 minutes from his base-church in Treinta y Tres. Though people from Tupambaé have been baptized by Rubito before, this was the first baptism among this group in Tupambaé itself. **Paula** is 80 years old. A children's pool served as the baptismal pool. Several of

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our churches in Uruguay are planning baptismal services in March or April.

Jeff Davis will be spending the days before and after Easter (April 4) teaching and preaching at the church **Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez** started in Cancún, Mexico. Upon returning stateside, Jeff will drive to Beckley, WV, for a mission emphasis time at Appalachian Bible College. Jeff and **Billy Judson** have been working on a virtual **360 Conference** in Hyderabad, India. Thus far, nine USA preachers/teachers are scheduled to submit a 30-minute message to Billy. He will then insert a vocal translation every sentence or two into the Telugu language. Currently, the conference is slated to be held April 8-10.

The Lord spared South Carolina from the **Polar Vortex** that put much of the USA into the deep-freeze. Yes, it was cold elsewhere, but consider this: in 1899, on Valentine's Day, ice flows were observed exiting the Mississippi River at New Orleans and entering the Gulf of Mexico!! That was the coldest Polar Vortex on record for the central states. Human nature tends to gauge all things according to personal experience whether it be the weather, the economy, politics, or societal norms. Ebb-and-flow change we can handle; peaks and valleys are another matter. Thankfully, there is one constant, not only for us, but for history and the future: the God of the Bible. As long as our hands are in His, we are safe. May He grant you a peaceful March. And thank you for your interest in the work of EMU International. †

Building Physically & Spiritually

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ladies, that they would be confident in their rejection of this false gospel and willing to take whatever counter-cultural steps are necessary in order to follow the true Christ.

Pray for conversions, particularly for men, and for future local leadership for this little flock.

Lao village of Na Ong

Our friends in Na Ong continue to receive us warmly as we slowly teach through foundational biblical stories. Week after week, a core group of 10-15 adults and 20+ children listen attentively as I plod through these stories in my broken Lao. Please keep praying for understanding, faith, and repentance.



Jeremy speaking with the men at Na Ong

Children at Na Ong



Neighborhood Bible class in Stung Treng

Home and school

Please pray also for the many neighbor kids who play in our yard every day and come to our Bible time every other week.

Our school-aged kids continue to progress under the omni-competent tutelage of Bonnie Ruth and Brooke. Abi and Isa (11th grade) are prepping for the SAT and looking into college options. We and they would appreciate your prayers as we navigate this new territory.

Spiritual needs

Please pray for a renewed love for the people and place God has called us to serve and for a renewed joy in that work. And while God waits to answer that prayer, pray that we will obey faithfully. †

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