

75 Years

EMU
INTERNATIONAL

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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 . . .

After fitting in the other two articles for this newsletter, there isn't much space for the rest of the news. However, I am anticipating that there will be at least a couple of articles in the July newsletter telling about some of the events of May. I have asked the Erkens and the Kanes to share reports on their recent travels. The Kane family left Greenville, SC, early Wednesday morning, May 19, for their very long journey back to Cambodia. Preliminary reports indicate that not all went smoothly. They are currently fulfilling their mandatory quarantine in Phnom Penh before they can drive home to Ban Lung.

The Erkens returned to Greenville, SC, on Wednesday night, May 26. Their travels included an airline scheduled layover in Shanghai for 24 hours. They will be undergoing a self-imposed two-week quarantine at the residence they will be renting for June and July.

The Crowleys were able to make a spur-of-the-moment trip to Greenville to be with their oldest daughter who had just had a baby. The Cambodian government made some COVID regulation changes that allowed the Crowleys to leave the country. They return home in mid-June.

EMU will be having its **annual board meeting** on Saturday, June 26.

Thank you for your prayers and support of our missionaries and ministries. More to come next month! †

MK BAPTISMS

by Micaiah & Miriam Bixby in Sarcelles, France; and Elizabeth Steel in Pando, Uruguay

(It is a true blessing when one's children profess faith in Christ as their Savior, and a further blessing if the father of the converts is privileged to baptize them. On Easter Sunday afternoon, Tim Bixby, the pastor of Eglise Biblique Baptiste du Grand Roissy in France, baptized his two oldest children: Micaiah (17) & Miriam (16). On Sunday, May 16, John Mark Steel, pastor of Maranatha Bible Church in Pando, Uruguay, baptized eldest child Elizabeth (15). There were others baptized at both of these services, but I don't have their testimonies or names.)

Micaiah Bixby:

I know that Jesus Christ sacrificed himself on the tree and took my sin upon Himself. He who never committed a single fault. He is my only hope, and I want to hide my life in Him. I know that I have done nothing, and I will not be able to do anything in myself, to obtain the salvation that I need. I am saved by faith alone in Jesus Christ who is at this very moment interceding for me with God. *"It is a sure and faithful saying that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first."* (1 Timothy 1:15)

A few months after I came to France, when I was 6 or 7 years old, an elderly man from the church in Pessac died. That was really the first time I remember facing death. I remember being scared and wondering about my future eternity. At that time, I had a discussion with my father, and I remember praying to Jesus Christ and

repenting, but I am not convinced that I really turned from my sin to follow Jesus that day. I still wanted to live a double life.

Before I knew Jesus Christ, I lived to satisfy my own desires. That was my main goal in life. *"We used to live according to the lusts of our flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of our own minds, and we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest..."* (Ephesians 2:3) I needed a Savior because I was a sinner. I knew I was a sinner, but I liked my sin, and I didn't think it was very serious. In middle school and high school, I wanted to be aware of all the latest sports news so I could talk about it with my friends. I wanted to be as much like them as possible. I often tried to do things to keep up on sports behind my parents' backs. Then I would feel obligated to lie to try to cover up what I was doing. I knew I was lying, but it didn't bother me.

Then little by little I came to realize that if I didn't give my whole life to Jesus Christ, I would never be truly happy. God showed me my sin and I began to feel convicted about my sin. I saw that I was a sinner worthy of eternal death. I began to have a greater thirst for the Word of God, and I found in Jesus Christ a stronghold and true satisfaction. Today, I can be assured that I am His *"for I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He has power to keep my deposit until that day."* (2 Timothy 1:12)

My salvation lies solely in the goodness and mercy of Jesus Christ. He loved me first, and I want to love Him back. I want to be a tool that God can use. I want the Lord to be able to use me mightily for Him, not for my glory, but for the glory of the Lamb slain on the cross for me. I think baptism is the best way to start. *"To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever! Amen!"* (1 Timothy 1:17)

Miriam Bixby:

God, in his grace, gave me Christian
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Micaiah & Miriam Bixby

A Culture of Discipleship

by Jeff Davis, director of EMU International

A ministry leader stood before a group of pastors and challenged their assumptions. “Let’s see how much you know about what business certain companies represent.” He called out different brand names and asked them what the business was of each company. “I’m going to say a brand name or a popular trademark. I want you to answer, with only one word, what the business is that the company represents. Are you ready?”

“Starbucks.” “Coffee.”

“Toyota.” “Cars.”

“Rolex.” “Watches.”

No problem. These were too easy. So, he gave them one more. “What about the Church?”

Silence filled the room as the pastors contemplated an answer. What is the business of the church? We have a purpose. Jesus even laid out our mission for us when He said, “make disciples of all nations.” That is what drives each of our EMU missionaries, but that should also drive each one of us as Christians. A church can do a lot of things, but it must have as its foundational purpose to glorify God by making disciples, and the target market is the world.

One country that has been a focus of EMU International since August of 1995 is the country of Mexico. God worked in the heart of Marco Nuñez, a middle-aged man who had immigrated to the USA, attained U.S. citizenship, and then was called of God to return to his homeland. He and his wife, Gwendolyn, serve in Cancún, a city that has in the past fifty years been transformed from a small fishing village to a thriving tourist destination where nearly one million people now live and work. Shortly after arriving in Mexico, Marco founded the First Fundamental Baptist Church. He began his ministry by visiting with the workers who had come into Cancún from outside cities and villages. He would take them bottled water and witness to them. Some people laughed at him, but some listened. Several were saved and a church was launched. Marco then began a Bible school to train the nationals to reach their own people. He now supports 7 of his graduates who have been commissioned by his church to begin churches across the Yucatán Peninsula:

- **Ciro Alvarado** (wife Dolores) – Santa Martha, Chiapas
- **Antonio “Toño” Alvarado** (wife Karina) – Cancún, Quintana Roo
- **Pascual Balam** (wife Leydi) – Chemax, Yucatán
- **Tomas Noh** (wife Kleyni) – Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo
- **Vicente Puc** (wife Deysi) – Valladolid, Yucatán

- **Jose Luis Uc** (wife Martha) – Becal, Campeche
- **Newest student Daniel Hernandez** (wife Marisol) – Cancún, Quintana Roo

I sat on the runway at Raleigh Durham International airport, having breezed through security and boarded the Delta Boeing B752 that would take me through Atlanta and then on to Cancún, Mexico. My phone rang as I was trying to get settled into my seat. “Hello,” I said through the stifling required face cloth. On the other end was a friend who served on staff with me at one of my previous ministries. He was needing me about taking a mission trip to Cancún. Who wouldn’t want that gig?

It had been 397 days since my last international flight. Due to COVID, I had to cancel or postpone trips to Mexico, Peru, Chile, Uruguay, and Alaska. Even with the added challenges of masks, social distancing, and negative COVID tests, I was thrilled to finally be able to make the two hours and twenty-three-minute flight to visit with my dear friends, Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez.



Gwendolyn teaching a Bible club

Marco had invited me to come for Easter weekend. We began to plan and settled on an intense but enjoyable and fruitful schedule. I spoke at Marco’s church on Wednesday evening, on Good Friday, in the morning and the evening of Easter Sunday, and then the following Wednesday. Each of the messages centered around Holy Week: the Upper Room, the Cross, the Empty Tomb, and the declaration of Jesus that He is the resurrection and the life. Due to COVID, the attendance at his church is running around 80% of what is normal. But the energy among the church family was encouraging for me. Despite the government-mandated face coverings, the singing was enthusiastic. Every service the congregation quoted Scripture and then the books of the Bible. This also is the common practice in each of the church plants. Following each service the people stayed and fellowshiped for a long time.

It was the perfect time of the year to visit. The temperature in Cancún is usually just under 90 degrees this time of year, but Marco and Gwendolyn were amazed at the pleasant temperatures and good

weather we experienced. We had a couple of needed rain showers that seemed to keep the temperatures down, at least relatively. I enjoyed the daily walks and discussions with Marco. His vision for the ministry continues to grow. He told me that he has a goal of seeing at least one person saved per month. During the time of my visit, he had already seen two people saved that month. Gwendolyn is an exceptional cook, and she kept us well fed. Marco wanted me to experience some of the regional cuisines at several local restaurants and get the full experience of some famous street tacos. I love spicy foods. If I believed in reincarnation, I would think that I probably was Mexican in a previous life.

In addition to ministering to his church, Marco had invited his pastors to join us for twelve sessions of training on Monday through Wednesday where I taught on how to teach others to study the Bible. All but **Ciro** were able to attend. I really enjoyed spending time with these men who impressed me with their desire to grow and develop their pastoral leadership skills. The sessions were energetic, and everyone participated in the discussions.

Discipleship is about relationships. Consider the examples of Jesus and the Apostle Paul. They didn’t just preach one service or lead a Sunday School class. They were pouring their lives into individuals. Someone once said, “The gospel came to you because it was heading to someone else. God never intended for your salvation to be an end, but a beginning. God saved you to be a conduit through whom His glorious, life-changing gospel would flow to others. You are a link in the chain of 2 Timothy 2:2, “*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*”



*(standing l-r) Jose Luis, Marco, Jeff, & Toño
(sitting l-r) Pascual, Daniel, Vicente, & Tomas*

As we were concluding the training sessions, I looked at each one of his pastors and said, “Tomas, you need to find your Tomas.” “Vicente, you need to find your Vicente.” Our goal should not be to just teach someone the Bible but to teach others

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A Culture of Discipleship

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the Bible and equip them so that they will be able to teach others. The result is a culture of discipleship. That should be the goal of each of our ministries. I was thrilled to spend nine days in Cancún, Mexico, where I witnessed that culture of discipleship in the lives and ministries of our missionaries, Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez. To view an online album of my trip to Mexico visit <https://emuinternational.org/jeffmexico/>

My return flight took me back to Raleigh, NC, where I was greeted by my friend Joe Henson, who let me park my car at his church. Joe has a huge burden for missions and is leading a church revitalization effort at Trinity Bible Church in Durham. The pollen that covered my car reminded me of what season we were experiencing in the South. The next day I drove to Beckley, WV, where I preached at Beckley Regular Baptist Church, pastored by Steven Beverly. I had re-connected with this pastor through a contact I made at a Discipleship Conference a couple of years earlier. The first time we met was back in 2004 when Tabernacle Baptist Church in Wilson, NC, the church I was pastoring at the time, hosted a Discipleship Conference. It was a joy to introduce this church family to the ministry of EMU International and share how each of our missionaries is seeking to obey the Great Commission by making disciples of all nations.



I spent the next two days at Appalachian Bible College in Mount Hope, West Virginia. Back in October the school held its annual Missions Conference. During a morning session, I spoke on "Missions and Prayer," and then in the afternoon session I told the story of how God has used our team of missionaries in Cambodia, a country that 27 years ago was still in darkness.

At that time there was not a single person among the six tribal groups in Ratanakiri Province, NE Cambodia, who had even heard the name, Jesus. Today, there are over 3,000 believers in six previously unreached people groups meeting in over 70 churches with over 100 first-generation and second-generation church leaders. New churches are being planted by the local believers at the rate of about one every nine months. Perhaps more surprising is that the churches now run their own completely indigenous Bible school programs in four different

languages using their own teachers and their own finances: disciples making disciples. That is what it is all about.

Dr. Dan Anderson serves as the President of ABC. He had invited me to preach one of the last chapel messages of the school year. I spoke on Psalm 46, a message that I call, "No Fear." This passage has been especially encouraging to me throughout the global pandemic. This Psalm is known as Luther's Psalm, after the great reformer Martin Luther. It is said that in times of furious opposition, he was heard to say to Melancthon, "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm, and let the devil do his worst." Based on this Psalm, he composed "*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*." Today we sing Frederick Hedge's translation, known as the familiar hymn, "*A Mighty Fortress is Our God*." Interestingly, Luther composed the hymn in 1527, a time of global pandemic as the dreaded black plague had decimated Wittenberg, Germany.

Most of us are familiar with the command found in verse 10, "*Be still, (literally stop your striving) and know that I am God,*" but do we pay attention to the second part of the verse? "*I will be exalted among the heathen (among the nations), I will be exalted in the earth.*" We have all seen the words, "Be still" on a lovely postcard or stitched on a pillow. The scene is usually a quiet, peaceful meadow at sunset or something similar. Though that is not the context of this passage. This command is given against the scene of mountains being hurled into the sea and amidst destructive floods and earthquakes. God is shouting out to us, "Be still, stop striving! I am at work. I will be exalted among the nations. Trust me. I am your refuge and strength. I am your help in time of trouble." "*The body they may kill; His truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever.*"

I also had the unexpected opportunity of preaching the same message to a group of college students at Maranatha Baptist University in Watertown, Wisconsin, for one of their last chapel messages of the school year. I had found a discounted plane ticket to Madison, WI, and had arranged to spend two Sundays in the area. I spoke at Rock Lake Baptist Church, in Lake Mills, pastored by my old college buddy Robert Stroup, for a Missions Emphasis Sunday on April 25. I then spent a week with Pastor Chad Prigge and his family in Watertown.



Chad pastors the Fellowship Baptist Church about two miles from Maranatha Baptist University. He and I had met approximately one year earlier when his son Caleb Prigge married my daughter Abby. It was a joy to spend the week with him and connect with ministry leaders in the Watertown area.

I visited the campus of Maranatha on Monday and attended chapel. I was blessed by the preaching of one of the students, Micah Herbster, son of Mike Herbster, director of Southland Christian Camp. After chapel I spent time with several of the faculty at a reception and connected with the President, Dr. Marty Marriott. He was the founding pastor of Oak Ridge Baptist Church, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Mark Herbster serves as Dean of the College of Bible and Church Ministries. This was my first time on the campus, so he gave me a tour and shared with me the history of the school. He mentioned that they had another student scheduled to speak on Tuesday. I told him that I would be back for chapel the next day and would have lunch and then hang out in the dining common and library. On Tuesday morning, one hour before chapel, I received a phone call from Mark that the student was sick and would not be able to speak and would I be willing to preach for chapel. I told him that I would see him in an hour, and I preached the same message on Psalm 46.

On Sunday, May 2, Fellowship Baptist Church hosted a Missions Emphasis Sunday, and I had the privilege of preaching both morning services and sharing the ministry of EMU International during the evening service. It is always exciting to see people responding to the message of missions, to make disciples of all nations. When introducing me to his congregation, Chad said, "Jeff is a preacher at heart." It is my burden when I preach to get people to understand that too often we have relegated evangelism, discipleship, and missions to simply being programs that we add to an already overly crowded calendar when biblically we see that each of these is part of God's pattern for what our churches should be. To put it simply, our ministries should be marked by a culture of discipleship. Whether that is taking place in Christian colleges, church revitalization or church planting efforts, or global missions endeavors, discipleship should be as natural as the next breath we take. We are called to be disciples and to make disciples. Starbucks is known for coffee. Toyota is known for cars. Rolex is known for watches. What about the church?

I would love the opportunity of sharing with your church family how God is using the ministry of EMU International and to encourage a culture of discipleship within your church with an ultimate goal of taking this message to the world. For more information, please contact jeff@emuinternational.org. †

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MK Baptisms

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parents whose greatest joy here on earth would be to see their five children follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

From a very young age they have taught me the beautiful truths of the Bible, and I don't think I have ever doubted the existence of God. When I was about 6 years old, probably influenced by my older brother's profession of faith, I asked what I had to do to be saved. This question was followed by a long conversation after which I prayed, repented of my sins, and asked God to save me. At that time, I didn't understand all that went along with conversion. But in the years that followed that day, I slowly gained more and more knowledge of God and His nature, and it was during my teenage years that I began to develop a real relationship with Him.

For me, I think what I had the hardest time accepting was that I am a sinner and that I always have been. Ephesians 2 says, "*You were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the ways of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of rebellion.*" All my life I have heard this message. And admitting that I sin is not too difficult. But admitting that hell is really all I deserve and that I can do absolutely nothing to save myself was hard.

God in His great love gave His only Son to save me and to take my punishment on Himself. Only a perfect person, who had never sinned, could do that. Jesus, coming to earth as a man, died on the cross for my sins. "*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*" (Ephesians 1:7) As a child of Christians, I knew this message of salvation early, but I had to make it my own. I too had need of this salvation.

God, in His grace, led me to place my trust in Him alone. I trust that I am safe from God's wrath. Romans 8:1 tells us: "*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" Because of what Jesus Christ did for me at the cross, I know that one day I will see Him face to face in glory.

Everything I know about God pushes me to worship Him. He is so great and majestic, and yet He stooped to save me and form a relationship with me. And I know that I will never stop learning more about God, about who He is.

As a Christian I must submit to God. Baptism is one of the commandments God gives us in the New Covenant. By being baptized, I confess my faith in Christ and in what He has done for me. I also want to become a member of this church because I also believe that it is important as a child of God and as part of His universal church to become a member of a local church in which I can grow spiritually and participate in the fellowship that I can find there.

I asked that we sing "I'd Rather Have Jesus." The desire expressed in this song illustrates the ultimate desire of every Christian. It is not a natural desire, but God works in every Christian, including me, to cause this desire to grow.

Elizabeth Steel:

My testimony begins with the gospel, the message of good news from God about Jesus, for all who believe. I grew up in a Christian family, and my parents taught me this message. That's how, when I was four years old, I understood that I was a sinner and that I needed God's forgiveness in order to have eternal life. I was afraid that when I died, I would go to hell, the just penalty for sin. So I prayed every night that God would save me from my sin. It was later that I had the assurance that, because of Christ's death in my place on the cross and

His resurrection, God had already heard and forgiven me.

Since that moment, I've known Christ as my Savior and, from then on, He has kept me in my ups and downs, and He continues to rescue me from my sin every day. It was later that I recognized that Christ was Lord of my life, and now I want everything I do to be for His glory.

I used to think that my testimony wasn't as good as other people's who were saved from other backgrounds or who had committed "more serious" sins in their past. However, I realize that my heart is full of the seeds of sin and that, if Jesus had not been there to pull up the sprouts, they would have grown into huge trees. And no story of a soul that has been rescued by God is more impressive than any other story because the gospel isn't about us, but about Jesus as Lord and Savior. This is why I'm being baptized; it's a step of obedience, identifying with Jesus. †



John Mark Steel baptizing Elizabeth

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