

75 Years

EMU
INTERNATIONAL

1946-2021

Evangelical Mission to the Unreached

Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

Volume LXIV

July 2021

Number 7



Ken & Joan Jensen
Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

The 2021 EMU Board Meeting is in the books now. The gathering was held on Saturday morning, June 26, at the Fellowship Hall of Hampton Park Baptist Church. Three of the board members were unable to attend, but one of those, **Steve Ridge** of Colorado Springs, did join us via Skype - or some such program. And it was good that he did since he was elected the new vice president of the board, taking the place of **Brad Lapiska**, who served in that position for many years. Brad was our only out-of-towner who came to Greenville for the meeting. He and his wife, **Peg**, drove down from Dover, Delaware, on Thursday and stayed through early Sunday morning. They stayed at our house but were also able to visit several folks during their stay. Brad's health is holding steady, though the leukemia does make him tire more easily. Our other board members are **Jeff Davis** (president), **Nelson Neal** (treasurer), **Joan Jensen** (secretary), **Drew Conley**, **Rick Miller**, **Steve Erkens**, and **me**. (**Ken Martin** and **Greg Mazak** were unable to attend this year.) After the 3 hour business meeting, there was a luncheon at the Mizell Pavilion on the church's property. Jeff's mother and two other ladies provided the barbeque spread, which was delicious. The wives of the members were invited, along with **Ted and Marla Allston**, EMU's 10/40 Window missionary. The fellowship was very enjoyable and encouraging. Thanks to everyone who had a part in making this

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THE END OF AN ERA - FOR THE ERKENS

by Steve & Charity Erkens, former missionaries to Beijing, China

We moved back to Beijing in 2016 with the idea of serving for another seven years and then transitioning back to Greenville when our boys were college-age. We believe that it will serve our boys well to help them transition to working and studying in the States since they have lived most of their lives overseas. So, our plan to move back to the States was not a sudden idea - just a plan that was moved up by about a year and a half.

Since the beginning of COVID and the decrease of in-person ministries in China, we considered how long we would stay in Beijing under those circumstances. There are also new tax laws which made it more apparent to the government that we could not live in Beijing with just the Chinese salary I received. The government has increased scrutiny of foreign workers - especially those receiving supplemental income or those involved in religious or political activities. Having regular in-person ministry would outweigh the risk of being asked to leave, but without regular in-person ministry, there was no reason for us to continue to live in Beijing with support from the States. The persecution of registered and house churches is on the rise - even in Beijing now. Charity and the boys had some good opportunities to help with music and other activities at a children's hospital and with a local family

in late fall, but these types of opportunities were limited because of increased scrutiny of any foreigners working with house churches. Another added pressure is the conflict between our two governments. The propaganda is extreme and has only gotten worse in the last year. Although we were not in Beijing for political reasons and did not try to defend our government, the hatred and pressure affected how others viewed us and our testimony as believers.

We are thankful that the Lord has provided housing for us for June and July until we can move into a townhouse that we purchased in Greenville. I have been looking at job openings online, and after I finish my contracted work through my Chinese university, I will pursue something more actively. We desire to continue to do what we did in Beijing - work and serve in the community and local church God gives us. We are looking forward to what the Lord has for us in this next phase of life and ministry.

We are so thankful for the 17+ years we have served under EMU. We appreciate the care and leadership Ken and Joan (Dad and Mom) have provided and now Jeff's leadership over the past few years. We will continue to pray for God's blessing on EMU International! †



(l-r) Luke, Caleb, Steve, & Jacob Erkens at the Beijing airport with literally everything they brought back from China in a few suitcases and carry-ons.



The Erkens' last English Corner at the university.
Charity (front left), Jacob (behind her), Steve (back left), Caleb (front right), & Luke (behind Caleb at right)

Keeping a Promise, Almost

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

Kim had promised her daughters that she would be with them for the birth of their babies no matter the obstacles, and she kept that promise for 10 years. Then Covid happened. **Charis**, our first born, was expecting her fourth child, and a few weeks before her due date of April 20, 2021, the government of Cambodia closed down all travel, making it nearly impossible to get to the airport in Phnom Penh, 300 miles away. That was bad news, but it got worse.

Two weeks before her due date, Charis came down with Covid! All of Kim's motherly instincts came to the fore: "We really need to go help her." My first thought was, "Who's going to call the Prime Minister?" but I didn't say it out loud. We were stuck in Cambodia. "God provides all good things and controls all bad things."

By God's grace Charis made it through a rough case of Covid and the birth of baby **Rushton**. We were still stuck in Cambodia.

Then Charis told us that Rushton had been diagnosed with a breathing problem caused by a lax larynx. He will eventually grow out of it, but it made for sleepless nights for Charis and Brian. "If we were there, we could take care of Rushton at night," Kim said. Suddenly the Prime Minister lifted the travel ban! That day I bought two tickets to Greenville, and two days later we were driving to Phnom Penh to catch our flight.

Kim wanted to surprise everyone, so we kept it a secret from everyone except Ethan, who would pick us up from the airport. We arrived in the evening, went straight to Charis' house, and knocked on the door. That was a mistake. **Brian** was at work, and Charis had no idea what stranger was banging at her door without having called first. She thought about getting her sidearm (wouldn't that have made national news!), but her neighbor recognized us from her side porch and called Charis to say that there was a nice surprise at her door. It was a happy reunion. That night Kim got her first chance to hold fussy and wheezing Rushton during the night so Charis could get some sleep. The next day we went house to house surprising all of our kids and grandkids, as well as Kim's mom. That was one of the funnest days of our lives.

In quarantine

Now we are back in Cambodia doing our required quarantine in a Phnom Penh hotel that the government chose for us. It's a nice place and the food is pretty good. As we look back on the last six crazy weeks, we see that God was definitely guiding us:

- We were able to help Charis through the first four difficult weeks with Rushton (who is doing better now).
- We were able to receive higher quality

vaccines rather than the inferior Chinese ones that we likely would have been pressured to get here.

- We were able to help **Nathaniel** through the complicated insurance process for his hand surgery. He had broken it wrestling with his friend.
- We had a few excellent opportunities to talk to some of our older **grandkids** about the gospel and faith in Christ.
- We spent many, many happy hours with our kids and grandkids and Kim's mom and dear friends. I was also able to fellowship with and report to a number of pastors in our home church.

Kim and I have decided that we are going to make a short trip to the States once a year until our planned retirement in six years. Every two years we will take our regular 3-month home assignment (furlough) to report to our partner churches. In the alternating years we'll go back to the States on our own dime to spend our yearly vacation with our kids and grandkids. Who wants to vacation alone in Cambodia?! This recent trip was of the yearly vacation variety, and we're so thankful God brought everything together to make it happen.

Prayer

- Three days after we arrived in Phnom Penh we received news that our town in Ratanakiri was experiencing a significant Covid outbreak. Even **Rith**, my dearest Cambodian colleague, pastor, and friend, contracted it along with his daughter **Karuna** (Grace). Rith's case seems mild, but please pray for him and his family.
- Pray that God would have mercy on this province, as we don't have a proper hospital that can take care of Covid patients. Pray that all the believers here will be an example of serenity, love, and hope in the midst of this outbreak that has already claimed the lives of a few people in our town.
- Since Kim and I are fully vaccinated, we'll have more freedom to help Covid patients get to the quarantine sites and to visit them there. Pray that the officials will recognize our American vaccinations



(Adults and babies from left to right) Nathaniel Crowley; Zak, Jenna, & Nico Richards; JD, Grandma Jean Martin, & Kim; Taylor, Emmie, & Marcus Crowley; Brian, Charis, & Rushton Johansen; Ethan & Emily Crowley; & Anna Pruden holding Ivan.

(Children in front) Jeana Johansen; Hudson Crowley (Ethan's son); Martin Johansen; Ami Johansen; Shiloh Crowley (Ethan's daughter); Brett Pruden; & Tasi Pruden. (Adam Pruden not pictured due to work obligations)

and allow us to help in this way.

- Finally, above is a happy picture of our entire family. Thank God with us that by His grace and through your prayers, all our children and their spouses are committed Christians and active church members. Please pray for our grandchildren that they would seek the Lord.

Addendum

(The following is from JD's most recent email to our office, adding some new information. - kj)

We gave the Cambodian government \$4000 when we landed in the capital, and I think the costs of quarantine will only be around \$2000. We should get \$2000 back.

Quarantine day 8 was uneventful. We are in a 16-story hotel, and I got permission to exercise by walking down hallways and up stairwells. I did 24 floors and 4000 steps today, mostly with Kim.

We are supposed to get swabbed on Saturday and leave quarantine on Sunday (July 4). Then we will stay in Phnom Penh for a couple days. Josh Jensen, who will be driving down from our province, wants me to go to the Home Depot type store with him to get stuff for his house project. I need to go there anyway. But then, what man needs an excuse to go to Home Depot?

The food here is decent and the rooms are nice. We visit with Savannah when we're on our balconies. She's two doors down. Here's a view toward downtown from the top of our building. Over forty 30+ multi-story

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by Brian & Lydia Kane, Krung Bible translation in Ban Lung, Cambodia

(This article was written in May 2021 after the Kanes returned to Cambodia. - kj)

Greetings from Phnom Penh, Cambodia! I can't express to you the joy that we feel to be writing to you from our surrogate home. After the strange events of the last year and a half, our particularly more complex return trip was rather unsurprising. After the months-long process of renewing passports, obtaining visas, COVID tests, COVID insurance, and other entry requirements, we began the daunting task of packing our worldly goods into 50 lb. totes, and we-won't-say-how-many-pounds in carry-ons.

On Wednesday, May 19, after celebrating our 20th anniversary (May 18), with a day of frantic last minute packing and good-byes to many wonderful friends and family, we began our 23-hour return across the Pacific. After stowing our 23 pieces of luggage (amazing how much stuff you pick up in the US) in the metal bird, we boarded and left for Detroit.

The first special gift God gave was the chance to check in many of our carry-ons all the way to Phnom Penh, since the plane was



Brian's parents and Joan and I helped ferry the mountain of luggage and Brian & Lydia's family in 3 vehicles to the Charlotte, NC, airport.

(l-r) Brian, Lydia, Natalia, Hugh, Julia, Mia, Brianna, Jackson, & Sophia

too small for carry-ons. Our Detroit to Korea flight was wonderfully uneventful and was staffed by an excellent crew.

But in Korea, we had about 2 hours of terror while the transfer officials told us we had problems with our entry documents and not enough cash for our quarantine deposit for Cambodia. God intervened and they allowed us to continue our flight to Phnom Penh if

we accepted full responsibility for our return flight should we be refused entry. Thankfully, though, our deposit was sufficient when we arrived in the capital and our documents passed muster. After about 2 hours in customs, immigration, and COVID tests, and another couple of hours to get checked into our hotel, we settled in for our two-week quarantine. We have very comfortable rooms to wait things out.

God has been so gracious to us along the way with the kind flight attendants, customs officials, and hotel staff. We are so thankful to Him for His gracious hand along the way. We are also thankful for the many of you who helped us pack, cleaned our house, ran errands, entertained our kids, and faithfully prayed for us throughout these past 18 months.

(By the time the Kanes were released from quarantine, the Farmer family from Stung Treng, Cambodia, had arrived in Phnom Penh to deliver the Kanes' van and to spend several days of fellowship and shopping with the Kanes. The Kanes and Farmers are back at their respective homes in northeastern Cambodia. - kj) †

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board meeting a success and a blessing.

Besides the travels of those presented in this newsletter through their individual articles, there have been and will be more travels by EMU missionaries in June and July.

Tim and Cheryl Chapman and their three children arrive in Midland, MI, on June 30 to begin a few months of furlough. Their sending church is in Midland, where Cheryl's mom lives. **Lauren** Chapman will begin attending Bob Jones University in August, and Tim and Cheryl want to help her transition into the American culture and get settled. The Chapmans plan to be in Greenville beginning August 21, but will only remain for about five days. They fly back to Lima, Peru, on September 9.

In June, **Connie Chapman's** mother passed away in West Virginia. After being told of her mom's nearness to death, **Tom** and **Connie** tried to leave Antofagasta, Chile, immediately. However, when they got to the airport, they found out about new travel regulations imposed by the government that prevented them from leaving the country. **Connie's** mom died while they were at the airport. However, the Chapmans were able

to get a flight out a few days later to attend the funeral in WV. Their daughter and one of their two sons who are serving the Lord at UCLA, a Bible college in Monterrey, Mexico, were also able to attend, as well as their daughter from PA, so **Tom** and **Connie** were able to visit with several of their children. **Tom** and **Connie** plan to stay in the States for several months and hope to be in Greenville, SC, in August when **Tim's** family is here. There seems to be some doubt as to whether they could even return to Chile right now due to new government regulations.

Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez had a COVID "rude" awakening in June, too. They had planned to take a couple of weeks of vacation visiting family in Connecticut and South Carolina in June. **Marco** and **Gwendolyn** had COVID earlier this year, but **Gwendolyn** decided she should get the COVID shot just to make sure she was okay to visit family. Unfortunately, the required COVID test needed to board the plane in Cancun was taken within two weeks of her vaccination, so she tested positive and was refused permission to leave Mexico! They have changed their travel plans to later this

summer. Otherwise, they are doing fine.

In Uruguay, another of our pastors, **Richard Windmoller** of Vergara, contracted COVID. Humorously - or sadly - he contracted it from his brother, who denies that COVID is real. It is! **Richard's** wife and son did not catch the virus, and several of the men in the church stepped in to help keep the church's ministries going while **Richard** recuperated.

It is fall in Uruguay, and the coronavirus has kept churches and schools closed, though the government hopes to begin in-class schooling after the semester break in July.

Interestingly, in spite of the semi-lockdowns, many church ministries in Uruguay continue. **Pastor Carlos Olivera** of Pando has had a unique outreach that I recently learned about. **Carlos** used to be in the Uruguayan army decades ago. But he still knows many folks in the military. There is a military base very close to Pando, and **Carlos** has started a Bible study with about 50 soldiers and ex-soldiers. These men have generally been disaffected towards religion because of the wealth and "high living"

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Return Service Requested

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among some preachers in Uruguay. Many of the soldiers know about Carlos and respect him. (He used to have the reputation of being a brawler, but is now a disciplined, ethical pastor.) Pray that the Lord will turn the hearts of many of these military men to faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.

Kornel and Tanja Crnković wrote from Koprivnica, Croatia, asking prayer for one of their church members, **Zoli**. Zoli is a roofer and was overseeing the reroofing of another church member's house when he fell from the roof, breaking 3 vertebrae and 4 ribs. He seems to be recovering but is in a lot of pain and will be out of work for months. Pray for provision for this family and healing for Zoli.

Also, the Crnkovićs ask prayer for the summer Baptist camp that will take place July 23-31. There are already many more people wanting to attend than there are facilities to accommodate them. Kornel will be doing some of the teaching, and Tanja is in charge of food/cooking this year. She helps with cooking every year, but this year the man who is usually in charge cannot attend.

In the August Newsletter, there will be an article about the **Camp Emmanuel projects** in Uruguay. The main work will begin in September, and my brother Rick will not be able to go to Uruguay again because of COVID regulations.

Thanks to each of you who continue to have an interest in and pray for the ministries of EMU International. We try to keep you informed of the workings of our missionaries, but it seems that every year the available space in this news paper gets more scarce. (As the editor, that's my fault!) We greatly appreciate you. May our Lord bless you as you bless others in His family. †

Keeping a Promise, Almost

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*The Phnom Penh skyline from the Crowleys' hotel window during quarantine.
(I - kj - was in the capital in 1995, too, and cannot believe the changes.)*

buildings are currently under construction. Everything from our hotel to the first high rise in the middle was rice-paddy fields 25 years ago. Nothing you see in this photo was built 20 years ago. Nothing.

Savannah McPhail

(Savannah arrived in Phnom Penh with the Crowleys from the US.

Having grown up in Cambodia, she knows the language, culture, and cuisine well.

She will be helping with the homeschooling of Matt and Becky Hancock's children. She is with Gospel Fellowship Missions, the organization her parents serve with. - kj)



I must express my delight at being back! I had been away so long I had almost forgotten how much I missed Cambodia. Even isolated as I am in quarantine, I am gleefully enjoying what bits of Cambodia surround me. The birds are right again

(sparrows mostly), and the weather is reliably warm and humid. There are motos going by on the street below, and the food is prepared with all the right sauces and seasonings. I can surprise the cleaning staff with my knowledge of the language, and my feet actually get dirty. (In America this rarely happens for some reason.) I feel like a fish back in water.

Once quarantine is over, I will need to do some shopping for my little house in Ov Reang Ov. I look forward to getting to see the Hancocks at last and to be able to go to their province and meet their children! The major transitions are yet to come. In my next update, I should have much more to say.

Pray for the beginning of the school year, which is scheduled for July 12th. †

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