

75 Years

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PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

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Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

I kind of miss the days of yore as a kid when it seemed as though Christmas would never arrive. Now it seems to come around at least twice a year! There is just not enough time between Thanksgiving and New Year, and Christmas is the main cause of this dearth of days. Already, as November ends, our EMU churches and missionaries are preparing for Christmas programs, special music, and gatherings with church members and family. Decorating and Christmas shopping – or in my case, thinking about Christmas shopping – also gobble up time. With all the imposed (often self-imposed) demands on our waking hours during this time of year, we need to consciously strive not to overlook the reason for the season.

This Christmas will be the last of its kind for a few of our missionaries. An accompanying article in this issue of the Newsletter by the Coles tells of their “farewell” trip to France during the past few months. Most of you already know that this will be the last Christmas that the Coles will be an official part of the EMU family. We love and appreciate this family – parents and kids! They have truly felt like family to Joan and me over the many years we have worked with them. Pray especially for Michael’s job search, that he will find meaningful work with which to support his family. And pray that their house in France will sell for a good price soon.

(continued on page 4)

BOCHIL SURVEY TRIP

by Marco & Gwendolyn Nuñez, church planters in southern Mexico

I first met Daniel Hernandez at the jail in Cancún in 2006. Daniel was there for the minor infraction of breaking the windshield of a car. While in jail Daniel was saved. I was able to secure his pardon from the lady who owned the car, and Daniel was freed.

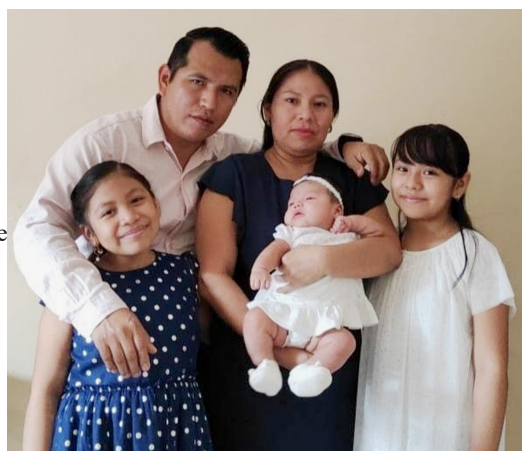
In 2007 when he got out of jail, he began attending our church and was baptized. At the church he met Marisol, one of our teenagers.

Marisol began coming to our church when she was a little girl, and she was saved at our church. In 2010, Daniel and Marisol were married, and now they have three daughters: Yamilet 11, Daniela 9, and Damaris 1. Both Yamilet and Daniela have been saved and baptized.

After several years of faithfully attending our services, Daniel began working for our church in 2017. In 2018, he surrendered to the Lord to preach the Word.

Daniel has developed a tremendous desire to preach and teach God’s Word. He is constantly witnessing to his neighbors and anyone who comes across his path, and he has been instrumental in bringing people to church. Recently one of the men he had been witnessing to was saved at church. Daniel also led one of his cousins, who was critically ill, to the Lord over the phone. During this time of Covid-19, he has helped many people with different needs.

Daniel began his practical and biblical training under me in 2018. Lord willing, in August of 2022 Daniel and his family will be moving to Bochil, Chiapas, to start a church in his hometown.



Daniel & Marisol Hernandez with their three daughters: Daniela, Damaris, & Yamilet

From July 13-26 of this year, Daniel and his family visited Bochil, Chiapas, as a survey trip. They met with a lot of his family and were able to share the Word with them. On Sunday, July 24, they had a service and 24 people attended! Praise the Lord! He was able to share God’s salvation with them.

Daniel has a friend from Bochil who came to Cancún to work many years ago. His name is Martin. We provided a place for him to live, and he worked in Cancún for a while, then returned to Bochil, Chiapas. Daniel continued his friendship with Martin. Via phone calls, he witnessed to Martin for a while. One day Martin told Daniel that he wanted to be saved. Daniel shared again God’s Word with him and told him to meditate on what he had told him. They hung up, and a little while later, Martin wrote Daniel and told him, “I have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior with all of my heart. He is the only one Who can give me eternal life.” Since then Martin has faithfully listened to all of our services on Facebook.

When Daniel visited Bochil with his family, he began looking for a plot of land on which to build the house/church planned for next year. He found a good piece of land that has all the utility services – water, sewer, and electricity. Daniel found out that the land belonged to Martin! He talked to Martin, and they reached an agreement. When Daniel came back to Cancún, he shared with me

(continued on page 3)

A Very Present Help

by Michael & Liz Cole, (former) missionaries to France

Change is unsettling; abrupt change can be distressing. Transitioning away from the mission to France after 9 years on the field and 14 years with EMU seems as though we're living through a multi-month-long earthquake. Solid ground seems to have become surging waves that provide no place for a solid foothold. But God, in His mercy, has given us the Psalms to help us through these periods of uncertainty. Psalm 46 has provided us with a helpful foothold as we try to follow the Lord through this transition. We want to testify in the following paragraphs that He has been a refuge for us. He has been our strength. He has been very present to help us. Our desire is that the following will help you "be still and know that our Lord is God" and that you will join us in exalting Him for the great love He has for us.

We spent September and October in France to begin our transition back to the USA. During these months, our goals were to prepare the church for our departure, prepare our affairs for the move, and say goodbyes to our friends.

Preparing the church for our departure

Michael's primary task in preparing the church during these two months was to teach four men how to prepare expositional sermons from Philippians. These four men have consecrated themselves to each preach one time per quarter. Michael held a Zoom meeting in order to present an overview of Philippians to the group of men. It was a joy to listen to the men discuss the letter and to see their desire for the church to remain faithful to expositional preaching. Over the next 8 weeks, Michael was able to meet individually with each man to help him discover the primary meaning of his assigned passage and to develop an outline that coherently represented that meaning. The first of these men preached his first message on October 31!

Michael's first Sunday with the church was encouraging because of the warmth of the reunion after 8 months apart, but also because of a business meeting that afternoon. Yep, you read that right: a business meeting was a source of joy! During that meeting, the church recognized Lala as its pastor (a function he has already been fulfilling for years). Equally encouraging was the way that the members of the church assumed responsibility for the different ministries of the assembly. The theme of the meeting was that the church was taking responsibility for its future. Autonomy was not reached in the way or in the timing we had anticipated, but our mission was finished by God's grace and in His mercy. The church is functioning as an autonomous entity!

Michael will continue to help the four men



Michael & Liz Cole with their children Mathieu, Adeline, Thomas, & Viviane
with their message preparation, and the church has a goal of becoming a State-recognized entity by April. Please continue to pray for the church as it presses forward for the Lord's glory.

Preparing the house for our departure

Michael began preparing our house in Gradignan for sale the day after arriving back in France. Due to a variety of circumstances, there were several major projects that needed to be finished before we could put the house on the market. In His mercy, God put it on the hearts of three men from our sending church to go over to help Michael. These men arrived one week after Michael landed in France, and they were ready for work! Thanks to their help, all of the unfinished projects were completed so that we could put the house on the market at the beginning of October.

These men's ministry went beyond encouraging us; they also encouraged the church in Pessac by participating in our Sunday worship. In addition, their testimony of love for the Lord and for us influenced the church and our neighbors. Our unbelieving neighbors couldn't believe that our friends would go all the way to France just to help us. God be praised for this testimony of His love through His people.

Everyone told us that our house would sell quickly in the Bordeaux market, but, though we had lots of showings, people were hesitant to make an offer on the house due to a few things that still needed to be renovated. This was a good reminder that our confidence is not in markets, but in the Lord. Long story short, we had three offers before we left for the States, but the offer we had accepted fell through. But, thank the Lord, we received a new offer on November 12th for a higher amount than the previous offer we had accepted. If the Lord allows, the sale should be finalized sometime in

February 2022 (house sales take about 3 months in France).

Once the house was up on the market, the grueling work of packing began in earnest. Liz headed up this massive undertaking as we sold or gave away lots of things that we couldn't take with us. We thank God for helping us correctly determine the size shipping container we needed (20ft), for His provision for the elevated costs (2x more expensive due to covid), and for giving us a loading date while we were still in France. After lots of hard work, the day for loading the container arrived, but almost nothing went as we had planned. The short of it is, the container arrived several hours ahead of schedule, and the driver took it upon himself to begin loading before we were actually ready! After several seemingly chaotic hours, the container was loaded and headed to the coast ahead of schedule, and we were able to enjoy fellowship with the friends who had come to help us. With the help of these friends, we were also able to transfer our metal shed to our neighbor's yard that afternoon instead of several days later, enabling us to get ahead of schedule on yet another task. Again we were able to show our unbelieving neighbors the love that exists in the body of Christ. The Lord reminded us that day that when things seem chaotic to us, He is working out a good plan behind the scenes. (At the time of writing this article, we are awaiting the arrival of our container in the next 2 days.)

Saying goodbyes to our friends

One of the Lord's mercies to us during these weeks was the opportunity to spend time with friends before we left. We treasure each moment shared with them. God graciously reminded us through conversations and shared meals how much He has given us and the ways He has used us. Though weak and flawed, the Lord gave us inroads into lives for His glory. We visited our friends in Luzarches (the town north of Paris where we lived for 4.5 years) and were amazed again at how God had placed us into their lives. God be praised for each one of our unbelieving friends in Gradignan and Luzarches: Danielle, Isabelle, Stephanie, Sophie, Denis and Celine, Jennifer and Francois, Carmen, Frederic and Stefany, Antoine and Julie, Beatrice, Didier, and Annabel. Please continue to pray with us for their salvation.

God enabled us to spend a Sunday with the church in Sarcelles. That Sunday will be a special memory for a long time. Two members shared testimonies about how God had used us in their lives, and then the church shared verses with us for our encouragement during this transition. We treasure these verses and the love of our brothers and sisters that they represent. The

(continued on page 3)

Bochil Survery Trip (continued from page 1)

all about the land. We began praying that the Lord would provide the funds to buy the tract. And the Lord did provide! Thanks to the kindness and generosity of a good friend of mine, the Lord provided the funds to purchase the land.



Marco Nuñez & Daniel Hernandez at the airport in Cancún headed for Chiapas

Daniel and I traveled to Bochil October 21-26 to sign the contract and purchase the land. It was a very memorable trip. We flew from Cancún to Tuxtla Gutierrez, which is the capital of the State of Chiapas. There we rented a car after barely avoiding extortion from the Hertz rental car dealer. They wanted to charge me three times the rental rate for insurance. After I refused to pay that price, they told me I needed to leave a deposit for more than a thousand dollars. I also refused to do that and walked away from them. I was able to get a car rental from another company for half of what Hertz was asking just for the insurance!

We spent the night in Tuxtla Gutierrez and the next morning drove to Bochil. We arrived there about 1 PM. There at the house of one of Daniel's cousins, we signed all the papers: Daniel, Martin, me, and three more witnesses. We then went to see the chief security man (like a notary) of Ejido - a farming community - and he signed and set his seal on the contract. From there we went to see the



Marco & Martin at the contract signing

head of the "Ejido," and he also signed and stamped the purchase contract. So now the land is ours.

We had a great meal at the home of Daniel's cousin with a lot of the family members attending. We then retired to rest a little before setting up for a service at 7:00 PM. I was staying at a small hotel in downtown Bochil, and at seven I arrived at the house for the service. To my great surprise, there were 25 people waiting, including Daniel's father, who had abandoned his children many years ago. Daniel had not seen him for over 30 years! Martin was also there with his wife and children. I was able to share God's Word with them. What a privilege to preach to this group, some who had not heard God's Word before. Also, with the exception of Martin and one of Daniel's aunts, none of the people in attendance had ever read a Bible. I began with Genesis and continued to the New Testament. It is a blessing to see the attentive eyes of people who have never heard the truth!



Marco with the group that gathered for a service during his & Daniel's visit

The next morning Daniel and I left for Santa Martha, Chiapas, to visit Pastor Ciro Alvarado. He and his family were the first ones to go out from our Cancún church to start a church in their home village. Pastor Ciro had been very sick with Covid-19.

As a matter of fact, he was at death's door. For weeks he was on bottled oxygen and a lot of medicine. We prayed earnestly for his recovery. Graciously God answered our prayers and healed Pastor Ciro. On that Sunday

we had two services at the church. There were about 15 people at the services. It was a blessing because Santa Martha is a very, very Catholic town. We are glad that God's Word is being preached in Santa Martha and that there is light in that place full of darkness.



Ciro & Marco in Santa Marta

After spending two days with Ciro, his family, and his church, we drove back to Tuxtla Gutierrez on Monday. We spent the night there, and the next morning we visited the Tuxtla Zoo. In the afternoon we flew back to Cancún. What a wonderful trip. We are glad we accomplished what we set out to do. Thank the Lord for blessing us and guiding us.

We are now praying that the Lord will provide the funds to build the house/church in Bochil. Once we have the funds, we will begin the construction of the house/church. It will include a church sanctuary of 30x24 feet, in front of the Hernandez's living space of three bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen, and a living room.

There are no Bible preaching churches in Bochil. Most of them are Charismatic. We are excited for Daniel to preach and teach God's Word to the people of Bochil. †

A Very Present Help (continued from page 2)

church sent us away with a beautiful wall hanging and a very generous gift.

We spent our last Sunday in France with the church in Pessac. Michael was able to preach one final time to those brothers and sisters. Following our worship service, the church gave us an extremely gracious gift and encouraged us with kind words. After

the service, we went to a park to have a picnic together before leaving France.

A very present help

Looking back on those two months, one theme rises to the forefront. God has been a very present help for us through His people. We have received help from brothers and sisters in the States and in France. Men and women have sacrificed time and money to help us because they love us with the love of God. It is this history of love that gives

us confidence as we wait for our home to sell and for Michael to find work. For the moment, we are in Charlotte where Michael's job is to apply for employment. Please pray with us as we wait for the next manifestation of our Father's provision for us. We'll let you know when He provides this for us so that you can praise Him with us for being our refuge, our strength, and our help. May His name be exalted. †

Page 4

ALONG THE WAY...

(continued from page 1)

Alexis Shoemaker will have her last Christmas as a single young lady. She has been serving the Lord over the past year in Lima, Perú, at the church that **Tim and Cheryl Chapman** started. She and her fiancé have a wedding date of January 22 in Lima, Perú. On November 15, Alexis returned to her parents' home in Pennsylvania for a two-week visit to get needed paperwork for her wedding in 2022, to purchase some items she cannot get in Perú, and to meet with many of those who support her. **Juan Jesus**, her intended, is a Peruvian she has known for over two years. He is an active member of the Lima church and has an excellent reputation among the believers there. He has a fulltime job but is also a student in a university. Upon graduation, he hopes to begin studying for a theology degree in Perú. In November, the Board of EMU, with the recommendation of Tim and Cheryl Chapman, voted to retain Alexis as a missionary in Lima for another year. Her ministry at Grace Baptist Church of Lima has been profound, and the church would like for her to continue working with the children's, youth, and ladies' ministries. If she gets a secular job in Lima, she would have to give up her focused church work. We hope that those who currently support Alexis will decide to continue doing so for at least another year. At the end of 2022, we will all – Alexis and Juan Jesus, the Chapmans, and the Board of EMU – determine if Alexis should remain an official part of EMU. Juan Jesus cannot yet be considered as a missionary with EMU as he has a few years of schooling to complete. Pray for this young couple as they begin their life together in January.

Rubito and Marita Rodriguez, our missionaries in Treinta y Tres, Uruguay, will experience their first "empty nest" Christmas this month, as their only child,

Victoria, was married on November 6 at Camp Bethel to **Marcos Windmoller**.

(Marcos' parents were missionaries with EMU for many years in the interior before resigning.) I've known Vicky and Marcos since they were babies. Both have been very involved in the ministry in Treinta y Tres and each have an excellent testimony. May the Lord greatly bless this union.



Vicky & Marcos Windmoller

It was good to see that **Camp Emmanuel** in Uruguay has been able to have some one-day camps and retreats during their Uruguayan spring. The kitchen/cafeteria project was finished in time for the Ladies' Retreat and the Couples' Retreat. In November, the training of the summer staff began in anticipation of holding children's, youth, and family camps in January and February 2022. Pray that the country's COVID regulations will loosen up even more so that more folks can attend the summer camps.



Above: Ladies' Retreat at Camp Emmanuel

Below: Couples' Retreat at Camp Emmanuel



Tom and Connie Chapman are finally back in Antofagasta, Chile. They took a rather circuitous route home leading them through stays in Monterrey, Mexico, and Santiago, Chile. They are happy to be home.

The **Pastors' School** in Ratanakiri, Cambodia, was held November 18-20. Rather than give an update here, I'll wait until we get a report from one (or several) of our missionaries who participated in the in-person conference with 70 pastors and church leaders. This has been a huge answer to prayer after four cancellations, three because of COVID.

We trust that each of you had a blessed Thanksgiving in November, and that those blessings will continue through the Christmas season and into 2022. It seems that we live in a time of more world-shaking distractions than at any time in the last many decades. There is so much to turn our eyes from the Savior and His work and promises. Thank you for your part in helping us to remain focused on His Kingdom! †

*Please consider a gift to the
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