

EMU⁺

INTERNATIONAL

Evangelical Mission to the Unreached

Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

Volume LXV

May 2022

Number 5



*Ken & Joan Jensen
Assistant Director*

ALONG THE WAY . . .

April seemed to be over before it really got started due to a few unusual activities for us this month. The most time consuming was clearing out my mother's house for selling after she moved into Shepherd's Care, an assisted living facility here in Greenville. My siblings and I, along with our spouses, were finally able to find homes for all the things Mom did not want to keep. Besides taking a lot of time, the experience was amicable at every level. And the house was sold without having to put it on the market! Joan, who has known my parents almost as long as we siblings, was the main mover-and-shaker to get things done. It would probably have been less hectic for her if she had a competent husband!

The annual **board meeting for EMU International** was held on April 23 in the conference room at Hampton Park Baptist Church. All of our board members were able to attend, sort of. **Brad Lapiska** and **Steve Ridge** attended via their computers. **Jeff Davis** had returned home from Cancun, Mexico, the day before, but the board meeting came off without a hitch, and the required business was accomplished.

Several of our missionaries have been or will be traveling long distances this spring. **JD and Kim Crowley** arrived in Greenville, SC, on the last Saturday of April. They came from Chicago, IL, where they spent some time with their daughter Anna's family - especially the new baby.

(continued on page 4)

"A BREATH OF FRESH AIR"

by Jeff Davis, director of EMU International

Did you hear that loud sigh on Monday, April 18? It was the sound of relief echoing throughout our land as a federal district court in Florida vacated the CDC's 14-month-long mask mandate for air travel and public transport. A pilot on board a JetBlue flight was recorded stating, "We just got an announcement a few minutes ago. Some of you may have seen the press release today that a judge overturned the mask mandate. My company announced that at this moment if you choose to, you may remove your mask. Facemasks are no longer required on public transportation." This announcement was followed by celebration of those on board, and flight attendants walking down the aisle collected the masks of ecstatic passengers. I'm not sure where you stand on masks and their effectiveness, but I for one felt like I had been given back a small portion of my freedom. Now that the federal mask mandates have been ruled unconstitutional, passengers and crew can make their own choices. Some will still choose to wear a mask, but many are grateful that it is now considered a matter of personal choice.

Just five days earlier, as snow covered the ground, my wife Joanna drove me to the airport in Salt Lake City, Utah. We had enjoyed a couple of precious weeks visiting with our son Caleb and his family. It was a joy to preach for Pastor Greg Baker at the Fellowship Bible Church and to visit Gospel Hope Church, pastored by Danny Brooks. It had been a busy couple of weeks of study as I was preparing for my trip to Cancun, Mexico. As Joanna dropped me off, I grabbed my backpack, my carry-on, and my suitcase. I normally like to pack light, but I had packed for two different climates that were polar extremes. In addition, I had packed several books that I was taking for Marco to distribute to his national pastors. I hugged Joanna, donned my required face covering, and made my way quickly through baggage check and security. I had found an \$85 flight from Salt Lake City to Cancun that would take me

through Denver. Someone said, "You get what you pay for." I had to sit around the airport in Denver for ten hours awaiting my 12:55 a.m. flight. Denver International ranks as the third busiest airport in the world and it was hopping. I did not have a lounge pass and could not pay to get into one, but God in His good providence allowed me to find a quiet place upstairs. It was a soft chair, next to a column with an electrical outlet, away from the crowds. Praise the Lord! I was able to get a lot of work done. The flight through the night wasn't too bad, and I was able to doze a little, but not really sleep. We landed early in Cancun, where I again breezed through passport control and baggage claim. Marco Nuñez was pulling up to the door as I walked out of the terminal.

The temperature was in the low 80s with a gentle breeze blowing. The Bougainvillea and Plumeria were in full bloom. I removed my mask and took a deep breath of fresh air. After a big hug from Marco, we loaded up the car and headed to his house where we would meet his wife Gwendolyn, who was preparing a delicious breakfast. I had been looking forward to her cooking since I first ordered my plane tickets a few months

(continued on page 2)



Gwendolyn & Marco Nuñez

"A Breath of Fresh Air"

(continued from page 1)

earlier. I wish I had time to describe each of our meals, but this isn't meant to be a food journal. As we drove, we discussed our plans for the next few days. Marco's church is celebrating its 25th Anniversary. This past year, thanks to Marco's generous donors, the Lord blessed the church with two "newer" passenger vans, which were much needed. They also were able to purchase property for the new church plant, which Lord willing will be launched in August. God also saved six precious souls!

We drove about thirty minutes to get to his house. Cancún is a city that, in the past fifty years, has been transformed from a small fishing village to a thriving tourist destination where nearly one million people now live and work. We were driving through "the Real Cancún." Just a few days earlier, the US State Department had issued their Travel Advisory for April. "Exercise increased caution due to crime. Criminal activity and violence may occur in any location, at any time, including in popular tourist destinations." At no time in my trips to Cancún have I felt unsafe, but we have tried to always exercise caution.



Daniel & Marisol Hernandez with their 3 daughters and Jeff

Marco meets from 9:00 a.m. to noon, four days per week, with Daniel Lopez Hernandez, his newest church planter, and with Toño Alvarado, his youth pastor. They have been studying the doctrine of God's providence and Layton Talbert's book, "Not By Chance." Marco and I would have several opportunities over the next few days to witness God's providence in action. Talbert states, "The providence of God is the bedrock belief that enables us to confidently encounter life's tragedies, triumphs, and perplexities." What a description of life and ministry.

We arrived at his house and enjoyed breakfast, and then, a long nap. The rest of the day we worked to prepare for the busy days ahead. In total, I spoke sixteen times. Even though Marco received a break from preparing sermons, he still had to translate for me, and we tried to go through each of the messages before speaking.



Jeff preaching with Marco translating

Friday morning we got up early and made our way to the Port of Cancún for a three-mile walk. I had also been looking forward to these daily opportunities to not only exercise our bodies, but also our minds and spirits. That afternoon, I had the privilege of meeting Marco's sister Sonia and her husband René. They had come to housesit for Marco's sister Angela, who was on a trip to the Holy Land.

I had the privilege of speaking that night for the Good Friday service at the First Fundamental Baptist Church of Cancún. There were around 110 in attendance. The singing was enthusiastic, and it seemed like the entire church participated in the time of reciting Scripture memory and going through the order of the books of the Bible. They do that every service. The services are also broadcast over Facebook Live, and several tuned in. The children were dismissed to a side room, but Gwendolyn opened the window so that they could listen and participate in the preaching time. I preached on the thief on the cross who was saved. I titled the message, "Swinging on Rotten Vines." I told the story about swinging on vines when I was a child, but one was rotten and resulted in me taking a nasty fall. I talked about the things that people put their trust in that will not get them to heaven, and then I shared the reason that the thief was saved. He saw himself as a sinner, totally guilty, and he placed his trust in Jesus alone. Afterward, Gwendolyn asked the kids if they learned anything. One person said, "He wasn't saved because of his family, or because he was baptized, or because he did good things." After the service, Joanna sent me a photo of my three-year-old grandson Dax, watching Papa preach.



Part of the congregation in Cancun

Sunday, we celebrated the Resurrection with two wonderful services. Again, the church was full and there was an energy in the air.

Marco has enlisted different men to lead the Scripture memory and books of the Bible time. My heart was thrilled to see and hear so many people quoting the Scripture. They have committed eight pages with about twenty-five verses per page to memory. This year they are starting on their ninth page. For the morning message, I preached on Doubting Thomas, a message that I titled, "Do you Believe?" I used an object lesson in which I had a can with \$10 in American money, two five-dollar bills. I had Oscar, one of the men in the church, help me. I told him that I had \$10 in the can and that I was going to give it to him. All he had to do was tell me that he believed me. When I asked him if he believed me, he said no. After a big laugh, I assured him that I was telling the truth. People who know me consider me to be a man of character. Jeff speaks the truth. I also gave him a piece of paper with the words written on it, "this can holds \$10." I even showed the money to a couple of people up front, Sonia and René, and they vouched for me. I handed the can to Oscar and allowed him to shake it and examine it without opening it. Based on his examination, he thought that there could be \$10 in there. I had given him four witnesses to build his faith. Did he believe? He said yes, and with a little bit of a surprised look, he took the \$10. Following the message, Marco was about to dismiss us when Oscar could not contain himself and wanted to speak. With a moist spot in his eye, he talked about salvation being a free gift. He had been a recipient of this gracious gift, and he wanted to share it. He had René come forward and gave him \$5. Marco and I both were thinking that we could not have planned it better. What an illustration for us to take that which we have been given, the gracious gift of the gospel, and to share that with others. Sunday night was another practical message as we learned about the two on the Road to Emmaus in a message that I called, "An Eye-Opening Experience."

Marco's church began from him visiting with construction workers who had come to 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

(continued on page 3)

Baptism in Antofagasta, Chile

by Tom & Connie Chapman, church planters in Antofagasta, Chile

Baptism

Ofentimes in large American churches, baptisms can become routine, commonplace activities that can be seen nearly every Sunday. But in other places in the world, where we make or find our own baptistry, and where maybe conversions to Christ do not occur as often, this ordinance given by God to the local body of Christ has great significance. This past Sunday we at Iglesia Biblica Emanuel were able to be a part of the celebration of four young Christians who have confessed Christ as Savior and have given solid testimony of the work God has done in each of their hearts. We would like to introduce you in a brief way to each of them and ask you to pray for them as well.

Alaniss is from a family that came to Christ about 8 years ago. Her sister, Jasmine, is now studying music at the Christian University of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico. Connie has taught Alaniss piano for several years and is also now teaching her English in preparation for studying Linguistics at UCLA next year or the following. Alaniss' salvation came as a result of a punishment she was



(l-r) Alaniss, Ignacia, Paul & Leslie

given by her parents. This knowledge of her wrongdoing, coupled with the Word of God she heard faithfully at church and in her home, were used by God to wondrously save her. She is a joyful testimony of a young Christian girl who also now has a great desire to share what Christ has done for her with unsaved people.

Ignacia has Christian parents who are faithful to our church and extended family who are active in other local churches. God has used that in her life to reveal who God is, what Christ has done for her, and to show her the sin of her own heart. One

day she sensed the fear of God in her heart and prayed to confess her sin and need of forgiveness in Christ. She has seen how she has a different attitude and perspective on life now than her fellow classmates at a secular school. We pray that God will use her as a testimony for Christ there.

Paul and Leslie were the other two who were baptized. Leslie's mother brought her to the church as an infant and faithfully kept that up. After high school she started working at a company where Paul was working. The Lord worked in Paul's heart to show him his need of salvation, and Pastor Daniel disciplined him and later gave the two of them marriage counseling. I was privileged to perform their marriage ceremony in January of 2019. Three years later, in January of this year, God gave them the difficult trial of having their full-term little baby, Sarah, die in the womb the very day that Leslie was supposed to give birth. Their peace and grace and rest in the will of God has been something to marvel at. Please pray for their spiritual and emotional needs at this time and that God would continue to be their comfort. At present they are also

(continued on page 4)

"A Breath of Fresh Air"

(continued from page 2)

- **Vicente Puc** (wife **Deysi**) – Valladolid, Yucatán
- **Jose Luis Uc** (wife **Martha**) – Becal, Campeche
- **Daniel Lopez Hernandez** (wife **Marisol**) – Bochil, Chiapas (Aug. 2022)



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

On Monday morning, the pastors (students) arrived at the church. Ciro was not able to attend as his home is on the Guatemala border, a 17-hour journey away. Over the next three days, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., we held twelve sessions, four per day. The theme for our training was, "Let the Church be the Church." Not only had I prepared these lessons, but I had also gotten them translated into Spanish. Each man was given outlines and notes to not only use

for these sessions, but also to share with their churches. My goal was to connect the heart (devotional/worship focus) with the head (academic focus) so that we could connect these truths to our hands (focus of application/action steps). The Church follows God's priorities when we are (1) exalting the Savior (Monday's lessons), (2) equipping the Saints (Tuesday's lessons), and (3) evangelizing Sinners (Wednesday's lessons). We had a good balance of the theological with the practical. We even took spiritual gift inventories and worked through how to lead a soul to Christ.

I enjoyed spending time with each of these men and was impressed with their desire to grow. It was encouraging to have everyone participate. Would you pray with me for each of these pastors by name and ask God specifically to help their churches to exalt the Savior, equip the saints, and evangelize sinners? Each of them was saved because Marco made an intentional effort to build a redemptive relationship. May they do the same with new disciples. As we said our goodbyes, and they returned to their respective ministries, I thought to myself, "What a breath of fresh air" to witness their eagerness to listen, but then also to go apply.

I preached again for their Wednesday night service on the question, "Do You Love Me?" (John 21:1-17). That was the question Jesus asked Peter when He restored him to ministry following his denial.

The night before, Marco, Gwendolyn, and

I went to the mall at the Port of Cancún at sunset to walk along the boardwalk. There is something relaxing and calming about water. As we walked, we discussed God's providence, in introducing them to each other and leading them to Cancún, and in God leading me to join the team of EMU International. The sun had set, and we stared up at the stars. Marco opened an app on his iPhone called SkyView Lite. As he pointed it at the stars, the app showed the name of each star and even outlined the constellations. Pretty cool, huh? I was reminded of something Layton Talbert said in his book on providence. He described how not all magnifying devices are the same. Microscopes make tiny things look large. "Telescopes magnify those distant bodies, bringing them 'closer' to the eye and helping us better appreciate their immensity." That is what we are called upon to do, to exalt the Savior.

Marco and I left his home around 5:15 a.m. Friday morning so that I could catch my 7:30 a.m. flight. Upon boarding my American Airlines flight to Miami, we were told that we could remove our face coverings. I did so and took in a deep breath of fresh air. Reflecting on the trip, it is the people and God's work that causes me such encouragement. Each one of these trips is like a breath of fresh air.

To view an online album of my trip to Mexico visit <https://emuinternational.org/jeffmexico/> †

Page 4

ALONG THE WAY...

(continued from page 1)

The Crowleys will fly to Hawaii this month to visit several of their supporting churches and friends before returning to Greenville to await the birth of their daughter Jenna's baby - and get acquainted with their son Taylor's newest child, Vera, born earlier this year. (We were able to speak with JD and Kim at church the day after they arrived, and they seem to be doing great.)

Chicha Rodriguez flew in from Montevideo, Uruguay, on April 26 for a three-month visit. We have yet to see her.

Lauren Chapman, the eldest daughter of Tim and Cheryl, flies home to Lima, Peru, on May 6, after completing her first year of college at BJU in Greenville. Joan and I will greatly miss her at Sunday lunches! (Next semester, there will be four of our MK girls at BJU.)

John Mark Steel will be receiving his doctoral degree from BJU on May 6. A week later, he will be flying home to Montevideo to rejoin his family. Joan and I had a long visit with him before he left for his trip to the mid-west at the end of April.

We also learned that **Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez** will be Stateside in a couple of weeks. Marco's driver's license is expiring. He and Joan tried to get the license renewed at our local DMV, but their efforts were stymied by the department. The Nuñezes will be flying to New York to visit family before working their way down to Greenville, SC.

Billy Judson plans to be in the States between May 25 and June 22. He and **Jeff Davis** will

be visiting churches and presenting Billy's ministry with the goal of raising much needed support for the ministry in India. Saritha and their daughters will not be accompanying Billy on this trip.

Finally, I asked **Brian Kane** to write a short report about the most recent **Pastors' School** in Ban Lung, Cambodia. The following is from Brian:

Starting on Friday, April 8, the weekend of Palm Sunday, the Ratanakiri Pastors School met together again for our "dry season" session. In the weeks leading up to the start, we had felt burdened to pray for revival in these men's hearts towards the Gospel.

Initially we had intended to cover the first eight chapters of the book of Romans, but in the days leading up to the start, we determined that we should try to slow down our pace, covering just the first five chapters in order to give more time to each lesson. The testimonies at the end of the session seemed to justify that decision as several of the men related how the Gospel became clearer and dearer to them over the course of those 4 days. We saw how the Holy Spirit had been working through your prayers and through His word to accomplish more than we could have hoped. †



Ratanakiri Pastors School - April 2022

Baptism in Antofagasta, Chile

(continued from page 3)

dealing with the fast-declining health of Leslie's father, Romelio, and they are also waiting for the hospital system to operate on Leslie's hand after a recent fall she had.

Ministry

Connie and I rejoice that even at our age, we can still be active in ministry. At 78, I am still able to work with a choir and at 76 Connie can play the piano as beautifully as ever. She has been playing the piano for church services since she was 13 or 14. Her fingers are still flexible enough to play rather difficult piano accompaniments to the special music, and I had the strength to participate with our church choir to present an Easter program this past Sunday. Also, after a two-year hiatus, Connie is starting up the monthly pastor's wives' breakfasts again on April 23. And we are still praying about and preparing for the startup of a new ministry in La Chimba, a large area of the city some 3 miles north of where we live where to our knowledge there is no gospel witness. †



Tom Chapman leading the Easter choir

Email: office@emuinternational.org

Website: www.emuinternational.org

Phone: (864) 268-9267