

EMU

INTERNATIONAL

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Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

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Ken & Joan Jensen
Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

For most Americans, Thanksgiving is the portal to the Christmas season. And we trust you had a Thanksgiving filled with the giving of thanks to the Lord for His many blessings. The Christmas season is the longest, most intense and tradition-filled of all the seasons that most of us celebrate each year. Trees sprout throughout our houses, watered by the nutrient-rich melodies of new and old Christmas songs, which inspires a plethora of other decorations to appear inside and outside our residences. And the economies of countries around the world shift to take advantage of the seasonal atmosphere. Christmas seems to be everywhere. However, this comes in an age when Christianity is under attack and ridiculed to a greater extent than ever before in “civilized” societies.

The day before I had my bike accident on September 12, I had just begun to read a book entitled “The Fortunes of Africa” by Martin Meredith, a rather hefty tome on the history of Africa. I finished the book on Thanksgiving Day. At that time I was also beginning to work on the article by Hector and Graciela Gomez about Equatorial Guinea, presented in this Newsletter. All of this got me considering the question: How did the coming of Jesus Christ change the world, specifically in Africa?

It was through the efforts of Christian leaders like William Wilberforce and David Livingstone and a host of common folks that
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“KILL SIN OR SIN WILL KILL YOU”

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



November 2022 Ratanakiri Pastors' School

A pastor shook my hand as he left for his village and said, “I’m now committed to killing the sins that are still left in my heart.” After a pause, he added, “...by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

He was referring to Romans 8:14-15, one of the 30 lessons from Romans chapters 6-8 that we studied in this session of the Ratanakiri Pastors' School: “*For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*” Paul is describing the mortal combat against indwelling sin that the Holy Spirit is constantly leading a Christian to engage in. It’s a battle that can be resolved only by the death of one of the combatants: Kill sin or sin will kill you, Paul is saying.

Our Pastors' School block classes are part academic seminar and part Bible conference. In this session, seven missionaries and a visiting pastor teamed to teach through Romans 6-8. They are **Jeremy Farmer** (EMU), **Kreg Mallow** (OMF), **Pastor Siem Seiha**, **Nal Nhoemvan** (Pioneers), **Brian Kane** (EMU), **JD** (EMU), **Josh Jensen** (EMU), and **Ryan Quey** (Action International). For over twenty years, the Bible school movement in Ratanakiri has been a catalyst for fellowship and doctrinal unity among Bible-believing pastors, churches, and missionaries.

Josh Jensen taught from Romans 6 on what it means to be “baptized into Christ’s death.” The banner behind him said “The War of the Great Powers,” referring to Paul’s frequent references in Romans 6-8 to the superpowers that are fighting for the souls of believers and unbelievers. On the one side, the axis powers of Sin, Death, and the Flesh are trying to exploit our minds and bodies to be their allies — and God’s good law by itself is powerless to defeat them, according to Romans 7. On the other side are the Gospel, Union with Christ, and especially God the Holy Spirit, who daily leads us into holy battle against our indwelling sin.

Jeremy Farmer taught the students how to start a Bible reading group in their villages.

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(l-r) Jeremy Farmer, Kreg Mallow, Siem Seiha, Nal Nhoemvan, Brian Kane, JD Crowley, Josh Jensen, & Ryan Quey

“Africa, Lord?”

by Hector & Graciela Gomez, retired pastor from Rivera, Uruguay

(kj - Hector and Graciela Gomez joined the EMU family of missionaries in Uruguay in 1987 and served faithfully until their retirement four years ago. Before entering the mission, Hector was a hospital nurse and Graciela was a school teacher for over forty years. They continue to live in a house they built themselves in Rivera, the city where Hector last pastored. They remained active in serving in the church and at Camp Emmanuel and Camp Las Flores in many ways, from preaching and teaching to manual labor. But for many years, they talked to me about their desire to serve as missionaries in Africa in a supporting role with other missionaries. The Gómezes met and became friends with Manuel and Reyna Diaz, veteran missionaries to Equatorial Guinea in West Africa. The path to this new field of service has been windy and uncertain, but they persevered. Hector and Graciela paid their own way to Spain and then Africa.

Equatorial Guinea is one of the smallest nations in Africa and has a population of less than one and a half million. The capital city, Malabo, is on an island about 120 miles north-northwest of the country's mainland. Oil sales have made this the richest country in Africa, though the wealth is in the hands of a tiny minority, and the population is one of the poorest in Africa. Equatorial Guinea was a Spanish colony before independence and is the only African country where Spanish is the majority language. Bata is the largest city and is located on the Atlantic coast.)

Thank the Lord, we are now in Equatorial Guinea (EG) at last! After nearly five months of setbacks with our documents in Spain, we were able to obtain our entry Visas to EG. We left Madrid on Friday, September 16, landing first at EG's island capital of Malabo. We then boarded our flight to Bata, a major coastal city on EG's mainland. The airports were all very disorganized and messy, with shouting everywhere and even some fights!

Upon arrival in Bata, we were greeted by brother Tiburcio, a national pastor with the Pentecostal Church in Bata. We connected with him through his sister, Ester, an Equatorial Guinean sister in Christ whom we met at a camp in Argentina. (Hector spoke at summer camps in Argentina for several years running.) Tiburcio's family was very kind, and they affectionately welcomed us into their home. Although we discussed some of our doctrinal differences, we did so openly in Christian love and respect. It was really a good time of fellowship that we enjoyed with them.

On September 24, we moved to the house of brother Eric and sister Airem Diaz. Eric is the son of brother Manuel Diaz and his wife, Reyna. It was this older couple who

invited us to EG to help with their ministry many years ago. We started working at Monte Abarim Church in one of their annex buildings called “the blue house,” located near Eric's house. Graciela is working in the school teaching Spanish to classes of 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. I teach a Bible class to the same groups, but on Thursdays and Fridays I teach in the chapel time for the whole school.



Graciela Gomez teaching a class

On Sundays we have Sunday School activities. There are many children that are reached. Graciela teaches a group of 8-10 year olds, and I teach the adult class. On Mondays in the “Casita,” I lead a Bible course. This study will take several weeks. Graciela has also begun to teach reading to adults on Wednesdays. On Mondays and Thursdays she teaches another group of adults how to effectively work with children. There are a lot of ministry opportunities here! But there are few workers who want to dedicate their full time to serving the Lord. We are happy to be useful.

The need is great, both materially and medically. Generally, the people in this area have a daily meal at about 4:00 p.m. Medical care is very precarious. We accompany Airem Diaz, who is a doctor, to a neighborhood where she cares for the physical problems of women. The need is so great that Eric and Airem buy the medication and give it out free. They always take the opportunity to share the Word of God. And the patients are invited to meetings in the area. The average lifespan here is 50 years. It is good to see that people are open to the Gospel. Door-to-door visitation is done once a week, and residents even invite us into their homes to listen to the message.

As for diseases, they are many and varied. And we must take precautions for our health. We buy our own drinking water because what is called “the town's water” is not very safe. There are water faucets every 400 meters in the community. In addition, many drink water from the wells, which can lead to typhoid fever. Another problem is malaria, caused by mosquitos or “moscos,” as they call them. So, we use repellent on our skin, spirals (a slow burning punk that

repels mosquitoes) inside the house, and we even spray insecticides when needed. Brother Eric told us that all the missionaries have had malaria at least once. It is comforting to know that malarial medication is freely available and accessible.

It rains here every day, and it's very hot. This is the rainy season. This is also why all the trees and plants are producing a lot of fruit. Just outside our front door we have mango trees whose fruit we use to make smoothies – that is, when we have electricity. There are many businesses in the neighborhoods, and they are generally run by foreigners. We buy water and gas in drums. Fruits and vegetables are sold from heaping stalls that border the streets. All the produce seems to cost 500 EFA francs, which is approximately 1 dollar. And if you buy a lot, they always give you extra. When we need rice, meat, noodles, or cleaning supplies, we go to one of the three supermarkets in Bata. There you will find meat from India, Pakistan, Turkey, Spain, China, or Ethiopia, but not from Uruguay.

The Lord has laid it on our hearts to help two children enroll in school for this year. In addition, we are already buying powdered milk, sugar, and cocoa for the children at the school who would not otherwise have breakfast. We are still organizing this activity. One problem is that many of the nationals do not miss an opportunity to take advantage of foreigners. So, Pastor Manuel, who has experience in matters like this, told us that he will hold a meeting with parents to announce how this program will be run.



Hector Gomez with 3 of the Gomezes' new little friends. (I'm not sure if 2 of these girls are the ones the Gomezes want to sponsor.)

We have power outages at any time - and sometimes for days. This has taken us by surprise many times, resulting in uncharged cell phones, flashlights, and tablets. But

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"Africa, Lord?"

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the worst thing is what happens to the food in the refrigerators. Brother Samuel, who oversees the place where we live, reminds us, "Brother Héctor, we are in Africa now." The place where we live is called A.C.T.B. They oversee translating and disseminating the Bible in the Fang language, which is spoken in this part of Africa. We recently moved, and we are very close to the Díaz's house.

An interesting aspect about Bata is that few of the streets have names. So, if you go somewhere you use many reference points to get there. And unless you own a car, you have to go by taxi, since there are no buses. (In Uruguay, where buses are ubiquitous, you can travel anywhere in the country.)

Since October 20 (*this letter was written at the end of October*), we have not been able to leave the house; although, I did go out to preach at the annex building that is two blocks away. The reason for this inconvenience is because the government is clamping down on foreigners who don't have valid documents. The violators are deported to their country of origin. We have valid visas, so this shouldn't affect us. However, as was explained to us, police, military, or other government officials will often try to take advantage of people by saying that something is wrong with their documents and then take their passports. They hold your papers until you give them money. We really do not want to spend our money on something so unfair. Therefore, we will wait a few days until things calm down.

I was thinking a few days ago about when we first started getting this idea of ministering in Africa. Dr. George Jensen used to tell stories about great missionaries of the past when he spoke at the youth and family camps at Camp Emmanuel in Uruguay. And we remember well the account of David Livingston. The Lord called us to first minister in Uruguay, which we did until we retired. But since then, we have worked and saved to be able to travel and take up the cause of Christ in Africa. We are so grateful for this opportunity to serve Him here among other faithful missionaries.

(Hector and Graciela are hoping to find a place further into the interior of EG where there is even less Gospel outreach and teaching.) †

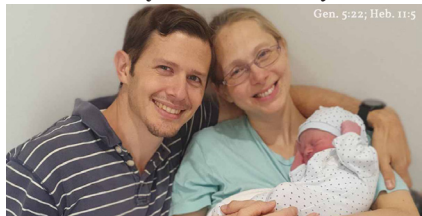
ALONG THE WAY...

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slavery, especially the slavery of Africans, became illegal, first in Britain and then in most advanced nations within a few years. But this is not the only evil in Africa that was, if not eliminated, at least greatly subverted. Cannibalism, polygamy, human sacrifice, blatant exploitation of women and children for sex and labor, female genital mutilation (generally practiced in Muslim controlled areas), wholesale murder between tribal groups, and the list could go on. It is not that Africa became a Christian continent, but the influence of missionaries and quasi-Christian European countries helped to change hundreds and even thousands of years of repressive traditions and practices. Though I'm singling out Africa in this column, many of these same evils were practiced in other countries, along with other atrocities such as *sati* (widow burning) in India and foot binding of girls in China, which were eventually banned due to the work of Christian missionaries.

The incarnation of the Messiah changed the world in countless ways, which today we take for granted. But far beyond Christ's influence on societies is His radical impact on the lives of every person who has ever turned to Him as Lord and Savior, which not only affects the here-and-now, but also eternity. What a marvelous gift(s) we have in Christ Jesus. Let us never forget!

Although the Virgin Birth was an amazing and blessed event, every birth brings with it some amazement and blessing. And the **Matt and Becky Hancock** family was



Matt, Becky, & baby Enoch

blessed on November 17 with the arrival of **Enoch Samuel**, one of our newest South Carolinians. He weighed 6 lbs. 11 oz. and was 20 inches long. The Hancocks were here for lunch shortly after they moved back to the Greenville area, but we have not seen them since Enoch's debut.

On October 2, in Sarcelles, France, **Tim Bixby** baptized a "newborn" at the church there. Dorise Joseph had been an avid Jehovah's Witness for thirty years, while her husband and daughter had become believers



(left) Dorise Joseph

in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Through studying the Bible – the Christian Bible, not the JW Bible – she came to

understand and believe that Jesus is God/man and the only way to salvation. The family is now one in Christ. Tim wrote, "Of the nearly 200 people present, we estimate that about 80 were unconverted family members and friends! Many were Roman Catholic, many had no faith, and some were JW's or Hindus. It was a joy to preach the Gospel to them! Please pray for God to reap a harvest from the seed that was sown."

In October of 2020, **Paul and Theresa Bixby** were supposed to travel to Uruguay where Paul was to be the guest preacher for the 60th anniversary of Calvary Temple of Montevideo. Covid nixed those plans. But this year the Bixbys did fly to Uruguay at the end of September for Theresa to speak at the ladies' spring retreat (Sep. 29-Oct. 1) at Camp Emmanuel and for Paul to preach at the 62nd anniversary of CT. The Bixbys are members of our own Hampton Park Baptist Church, where Paul heads up the Spanish ministry and Theresa, until a couple of years ago, was the women's director of HPBC. Because of a shortage of workers at the ladies' retreat, Paul was drafted into the kitchen corps. Both Bixbys did great at their respective jobs – the ladies were blessed by the teaching, and no one got sick from food poisoning! The following two weekends Calvary Temple held their annual church retreat at Camp Emmanuel, at which Paul was the Bible teacher, and then the next weekend, Paul preached at the anniversary services in Montevideo. The Bixbys flew home the next day, rounding out their three-week adventure. Our folks in Uruguay very much appreciate this dear couple.



(l-r) Paul & Theresa, Carlos & Beatriz (the camp secretary), and Pati & Pedro Donze (camp director)

The **Espinell family** will be ending their furlough and flying back to Uruguay on December 7.

Ted Allston had a good trip to Uganda and Kenya October 13-31. He will be writing an article soon about a national brother he has been working with.

Thank you so much for your prayers for EMU. God grant you a blessed Christmas. †



Please consider the Christmas Fund offering
and
the Camp Sponsorship Fund offering



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Kill Sin or Sin Will Kill You

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Pastor Siem Seiha teaching the Pastors' School students in the Labanseak Church

Ten months ago, he felt that the main problem with Christians in Cambodia was that they were starving for God's Word. So, he invited key Christian leaders in his town of Stung Treng to meet with him for one hour each Saturday morning to do nothing but take turns slowly reading one chapter of the Bible eight times — no teaching, no singing, no snacks — the only attraction was the Word of God. Since then, they've made their way through Philippians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy and other books, and they have even spawned another reading group in one of the local churches. The results have truly been life-changing for them. Our prayer is that this will become a movement in our area and across Cambodia.

This is the third time that the Ratanakiri Pastors' Institute has been able to use the beautiful new auditorium at the Labanseak Church. You may remember that the Labanseak Church wanted to build a modest building on valuable downtown property donated by one of their church members. We asked them if we could help them build

a somewhat larger facility that would be big enough for the Pastors' Institute to teach and house 70 pastors twice a year. Many of you participated in that special offering, and a total of around \$35,000 was given—enough to help build a two-story, 3500 square foot building. That's only \$10 a square foot for a brick-and-concrete lower floor and a metal-framed auditorium on the second floor that boasts tropical wood flooring from nearby forests. God bless all of you who had a part in this successful collaboration among many churches and individuals spanning two continents.

PRAY

- Please ask God to help the pastors here to become skilled at offering to their people the tender assurances of God that fill Romans 5-8, rather than just "keeping them in line" with commands and warnings—as holy and necessary as those commands might be.
- Undoubtedly all of us who attended, both students and teachers, need to listen to

the Holy Spirit as He leads us into mortal combat against the sin that still remains in our hearts, rather than protecting and feeding that sin as if it were a "darling pet viper," in the words of Charles Spurgeon. "Kill the viper, or it will kill you."

- Pray that many Christians in Ratanakiri would start weekly Bible reading groups, and that this would become a movement across the nation, to the glory of God.
- Pray for the sixth reprint of *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ* by Trevor McIlwain (translated and produced by EMU)—the largest reprint ever, at 3000 copies. It has been one of the bestselling Christian books in Cambodia for the past 20 years. Please ask God if he might want you to help subsidize the cost of this book to make it more affordable to pastors, nearly all of whom are bi-vocational. (*Total cost- \$9,735, about \$3.25 each*) †



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