

EMU⁺

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Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

I realize that Christmas has been over for almost a month and a half, but so many of our recent missionary reports have mentioned the holidays, and I couldn't squeeze them into one newsletter. So, please forgive the continued references to December in this edition. Pretend this is just a very late January newsletter!

Christmas is a VERY big deal for all of our missionaries, not just because of its significance to their families, but even more because it is such a perfect time to reach people with the Gospel. All of our missionaries are involved to a greater or lesser extent in special programs, musical presentations, and teaching on the subject. And the preparation often begins in November or sooner. Seldom have I carried the subject of Christmas over into the February Newsletter, but I always feel a bit guilty for not doing so, as we have so many reports on the subject from our missionaries.

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This is the Christmas youth orchestra led by Tom Chapman at the church in Antofagasta, Chile

THE HOLIDAYS IN FRANCE

by Tim & Ruth Bixby, church planters in Sarcelles, France

We begin this letter with the French greeting that is considered absolutely necessary in all interactions with one's acquaintances the first time you see them in the new year: *Bonne année et meilleurs vœux!* (Happy New Year and best wishes!)

Our heart's desire for each of you at this time is that the Lord will richly bless you and particularly that He will prosper you spiritually in 2023. It is with much gratitude for your part in our ministry that we share our news and prayer requests with you, along with this reminder from James O. Fraser, missionary to China (1886-1938): "Solid, lasting missionary work is done on our knees." He also wrote in 1918: "We cannot fret souls into the Kingdom of Heaven; neither, when they are once converted, can we worry them into maturity." That is the conviction that drove him to regularly and persistently request prayer. We, too, would like to humbly, yet earnestly, request your renewed prayers for each of us, our family, and our ministry in 2023.

Young adult retreat

God blessed us with a very full and beneficial young adult meeting on November 11. We had more than 110 young adults, from a number of different churches



(l-r) Tim and Ruth Bixby with Theo and Sarah van Reijn, who spoke at the youth conference.



(l-r) Miriam, Rabelais (dog), Micaiah, Ruth, Siméon, Tim, Zacharie, & Gabriel

in the greater Paris area, come for a full day of preaching and fellowship. Fellow missionary Theo Van Reijn did an excellent job speaking on the need of youth to radically commit themselves to God and of the importance of the local church to their maturity and growth.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Day found our family of seven in seven different locations at once! Each of our five children is in a different school, and Tim happened to be in Paris for a checkup with a specialist who oversees his treatment plan for rheumatoid arthritis. (We are thankful that it seems to be contained at the moment.) So we had our traditional Thanksgiving meal on Friday evening. We invited an elderly couple who live on our street to join us. Jean-Pierre spent his whole career running the *boulangerie* (a bakery) in our town. He



The Bixby family with their neighbor couple who joined them for Thanksgiving dinner.

and his wife, Anne-Marie, shared many interesting stories of how things used to be in our area, and we were able to speak to them of the Christian significance of Thanksgiving. Pray that God will save this

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The Holidays in France - (continued from page 1)

couple, both of whom are always warm and interested in our family, but to this point they seem to have little interest in taking the time to consider their spiritual needs as they face eternity. Our daughter, Miriam, also had an excellent opportunity to speak recently to her best friend at school of how our faith differs from the Catholic system of works and pilgrimages. Please pray for the salvation of Olivia and her family. Pray for us that as individuals and as a family we would be quick to seize every opportunity God puts on our path to show forth the light of Jesus Christ in a culture that is increasingly hostile to any sort of outward demonstration of faith and spiritual values.

Christmas

As a Christmas outreach, we joined forces with our mother church in Saint Denis and presented the same program at our two



Co-worker Kristi Colas produced & led the special Christmas program made up of members from our church & the mother church in Saint Denis.



Sarcelles congregation at the Christmas program



After the Christmas service, about 30 church members stayed for the Christmas dinner. There were friends from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Iraq, Moldavia, the Caribbean Islands, Haiti, and, of course, France.

different churches one week apart. We had about 150 in attendance at our church for the program. We are especially thankful for our coworker, Kristi Colas, and for the tremendous effort she put into the organizational aspects and musical direction of the program. On Christmas day, we celebrated the Lord's supper at church. It was a joy to celebrate both Christ's birth and His death in the same service. We then shared a special Christmas dinner that Ruth organized with the help of several other ladies for those who didn't have other family commitments. We are thankful for the family in Christ we have with people from so many different places and different backgrounds.

The new year is also bringing with it more opportunities to encourage our Christian brothers and sisters to give God's Word the priority it deserves in their daily lives. We are doing several workshops centered on straight Bible reading in small groups during this month of January. The ladies are also beginning a series of studies in the book of Proverbs. Pray with us that God would convince His people of the necessity of being in the Word!

Individual meetings and Bible studies

We are presently meeting with five different couples concerning marriage. Two of these couples are engaged to be married. (We will be having a wedding at our church on February 4.) Another couple is in a situation where we are unsure of their spiritual state (A. & F.). Please pray that God will bless these individuals and give us much wisdom.

We have found video calls to be an effective tool as well. Please pray for three ladies with whom Ruth is doing regular studies in this manner, as well as with L., who does not yet know the Lord but who is showing a real interest and has begun to meet regularly with Tim.

Family

Finally, a quick update on our family: Simeon (3-years old) is now attending school four mornings a week. He does well most days, though some days are harder. He seems to catch every bug that goes around, which is never fun, but it does come with the benefit of having him stay at home with Mommy! Through some sort of paperwork error, our court case was closed without the second hearing that we were expecting, so there is now no possibility that the refusal for us to homeschool this year will be overturned. We are considering what concrete steps to take concerning next year, and we will likely be submitting an official request soon in hopes of being granted permission to homeschool Simeon in K-4 next year, as well as Gabriel, who will be in 6th grade (the transitional year in which we have always chosen to homeschool our previous children). Obviously, the government is less and less willing to grant this permission. So please pray with us for wisdom and that God's will would be done. Now that Zacharie, our first child born on French soil, has turned 13, he is able to confirm his right for French citizenship (he will maintain dual nationality). We have an appointment to turn in all the paperwork tomorrow and have been told that it should be processed in a matter of months. Once he has been naturalized, it should open up more doors for our older two children as well. Miriam is halfway through her senior year of high school, and we are praying for God's direction concerning her next steps. As always, we covet your prayers for all of our children, that God would preserve each one of them from evil and turn their hearts unreservedly towards Him.

Upcoming visit to the States

We are planning to make a trip to the USA during the months of July and August. Our plan at present is to be in New England for the month of July and in the Carolinas for August. We hope to see some of you while we are there! †

Christmas in Ban Lung

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



Special ladies choir at the Khmer language church in Ban Lung that the Kanes attend

This year, more than ever before, our little town of Ban Lung has wholeheartedly embraced the celebration of the Christmas holiday. The nostalgia we feel at seeing Christmas trees, Christmas lights, and hearing Christmas carols is tempered by



The children's choir at the Khmer church. Three of the Kane kids are in this group.



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

the sadness knowing that they are primarily doing so only for its commercial value. But there is a small minority of people here who have been celebrating Christmas for more than 25 years already, people whose hearts are thrilled not by a western holiday celebration, but by the incredible miracle of Christ's birth. It's always exciting to see my brothers and sisters here making much of Jesus' birth, and this year was no exception. We enjoyed joining in with both the Krung and Khmer church celebrations scattered throughout the month of December.

In December one more piece clicked into place for printing the Krung New Testament

this year. Our team was able to finish the checking process for the book of 2 Corinthians, leaving only Hebrews and parts



Christmas service in the main Krung village where the Kanes, especially Brian, attend.

of John remaining to be checked. After this there will be several more months for the typesetting process before publication. We praise God for His help in getting this far. Please continue to pray for us as we push forward towards completion.

As we look back over this last year, we praise God for what He has done here in Ratanakiri and also praise Him for the part that each of you have played, both by giving and praying. Thank you! We trust that God will bless each of you and reward you for your faithfulness. †

Bible Institute Graduate

by John Mark & Deborah Steel, professors at the Bible Institute & FEBU



(l-r) Pastor Carlos Olivera of Bethel Church. Maxi Ferreyra, & John Mark Steel

In November, Maxi Ferreyra, a young man from Pando, graduated from the first level of the Instituto Bíblico Dabold (IBD) program. For many years this level has consisted of the Oremex/Oremundo video courses, a program that has served not only the Pando students, but also in Rivera, Tacuarembó, Durazno, Treinta y Tres, and Vergara. Maxi and several classmates have also participated in live classes originating from Montevideo (and sometimes from other locations while we've

traveled). The second level, the "Montevideo program," has traditionally been made up of live, in-person classes. As it has become more common for students in the interior to connect to classes via internet, and given the likely sale of the MEU house/office building (currently the main classroom space), we plan to combine the two programs into one. The same two diplomas (one 30-credit and the other 60-credit) will be offered, but all IBD students will connect to the same classes, some in local groups in churches, and others, if necessary, connecting directly from their homes.

Maxi attended Iglesia Biblica Maranatha (where John Mark pastors) as a boy, was later saved, is now married, and serves in Templo Betel, the MEU church in Pando pastored by Carlos Olivera. It is encouraging to see this fruit from the Garwoods' sowing the Gospel seed many years ago (Deborah's parents, who used to pastor Maranatha), the ministry of Campamento Emanuel, and the prayers of Maxi's grandmother, Nelly. Nelly faithfully attended Maranatha during the last decade or so of her life. Please pray that



Maximiliano Ferreyra with his wife, Mariana

Maxi and Mariana would continue to grow and to follow God's leading.

Also in November, the church in Vergara, pastored by Ricardo Windmoller, organized an evangelistic effort in which several IBD students participated. Given the size of this little town on the prairie, it is encouraging to see the group that the Lord has assembled there. Please pray for this congregation and for the salvation of a couple of contacts I made during the weekend there. †

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ALONG THE WAY...

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*Billy & Saritha Judson with daughters
Bernice & Keren*

On Wednesday, January 25, **Billy Judson** travelled to one of the Good News College & Seminaries (GNCS) in a church on the east coast of India for a graduation ceremony. Unfortunately, I couldn't find the city's name. Also, on January 7, Billy began teaching a new semester of the GNCS in Secunderabad, close to where the Judsons live. They were recently able to rent new office/classroom space in this area.



Graduation ceremony in India

Ted Allston flew to eastern India on January 19 to begin another session of teaching church leaders. Shortly after returning home in February, he will be going to Kenya with Jake Derksen to teach church leaders there. I trust he will have more info for you soon.

Jeremy Farmer and some other missionaries in the Stung Treng area of Cambodia began

a new monthly ministry of Bible school with church leaders. The first class was Saturday, January 7. Jeremy was amazed that 50 students showed up, as they were only expecting 20 or so. He "optimistically" projected that the number will lessen considerably over time!

Summer camps have started at **Camp Emmanuel** in Guazuvirá, Uruguay. The staff training, which was begun via the internet in September, met in person for the last days of classes at the camp. The next week, children's camp was held (January



2023 Staff for summer camps at Camp Emmanuel

17-21), followed by the Jovenes camp (January 24-28) and the younger teens camp (January 31-February 4). Because of the busyness of this time, **Pedro Donzé**, the camp director, has not had time to write a report about any of these camps. But I do want to share this

photo of the staff. An unusual addition to the staff this year is three young adults from **Tim Chapman's** church in Lima, Peru, who volunteered to fly to Uruguay to help with the three camps.

Following the last camp mentioned above, the facilities will be rented for a children's camp. Though added work for our staff,

the rental camps are a prime means of income to help with the upkeep and repair of the grounds. Our EMU church camps are basically "break even" weeks for food and utilities.

Jeff Davis will be flying to Uruguay on February 17 to attend the family camp (February 20-25) and the workers' conference (February 27-March 1). Jeff will be one of the main speakers at the family camp. The workers' conference speaker this year is **Dr. Kevin Oberlin**, a professor of Bible at Bob Jones University. He will arrive two days

before the conference so he can preach in some of our churches in the Montevideo area. Jeff will return Stateside on March 6, which will give him time to visit some of the EMU churches in the interior. Pray for good health for these men as they travel, and for the Word as it is preached and taught.

On Saturday, February 4, there will be a special meeting of the **EMU Board** to decide some important matters. I trust that in the next Newsletter, I can present the exciting results. Until then, thank you again for your prayers for the ministries of EMU, and, when possible, your financial assistance. The Lord continues to supply our needs in so many ways. We thank the Lord for His supply and for your faithfulness in encouraging us in our various ministries. May the Lord richly bless you in this life and the next for your part in His work! †

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