

# EMU

## INTERNATIONAL

Evangelical Mission to the Unreached

Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

Volume LXVI

May 2023

Number 5



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Assistant Director

### ALONG THE WAY . . .

This month of May is traditionally when graduates are honored, from kindergarten grads to Ph.D. grads. And rightly so. One of our EMU MKs is graduating from university this month - **Nate Crowley**, the youngest offspring of **JD and Kim**. He's receiving an undergraduate degree from Bob Jones University - along with his fiancée, **Ally**. They will be getting married on May 6, the day after graduation. Kim and JD are both in town for these momentous events. Kim arrived several weeks earlier, the end of March, for another event - the birth of their eldest daughter's (**Charis**) fifth child. And JD and Kim's second oldest son, **Taylor**, and his wife **Emmy**, are expecting another child in July. Such a growing family! What blessings. (The newsletter proof-reader pointed out that I neglected to announce the high school graduation of our first grandkid, **Caleb Erkens**, son of **Steve and Charity**. Though no longer missionaries with EMU, the Erkens are still rather closely related to active EMU missionaries. Congrats, Caleb!)

While we're on the subject of EMU MKs, **Abi & Isa Farmer**, and **Mia Kane**, all three finishing their Freshman year, and **Lauren Chapman**, completing her sophomore year, and all four attending BJU, will be going home this summer for at least a short time. The Farmer girls and Mia head for northeastern Cambodia,

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## WIDOWS VISITING WIDOWS

by Kim Crowley, missionary in Ban Lung, Cambodia

(JD will be reporting next month on the newly released Khmer book, "What Darwin Got Wrong," but I'm filling in for him with a snippet of life to let you know we're still here. kc)

Early one day we heard that Auntie Tan was in the provincial hospital in serious condition. Tan is a Christian widow with two unmarried daughters. The three of them live on the salary of the youngest daughter, who works as a store clerk, plus the annual cashew crop from their small grove. So I collected two of my most faithful older lady prayer partners—Om, my steady house helper, and Pan, a blind gospeler—and went to see how Tan was doing. (Substitute names are used in this letter.)

Words can't adequately describe a typical hospital scene here. Without the sounds and smells and sights, the description is only half the story. (We're thankful that the present state of the hospital is vastly better than conditions 25 years ago. On one memorable visit, I lost my rubber slipper wading through a slough of mud to get to the entrance of a large room with every manner of illness represented, including the corpse of a child who had died during the night.)

Tan lay right inside the door of the emergency unit on a bare plastic mattress, receiving oxygen. She was unresponsive. Every so often her daughter would get on the bed and squat next to Tan to wipe the foam and saliva off her face or straighten her stiffening limbs. A steady stream of curious onlookers edged over to watch.

My two prayer partners have shared life with Tan for years. They see themselves in her situation—all of them widows with very little support in this life. So they were in a good position to pray for Tan with fervent cries to the Father Who does all things well, proclaiming their faith in His ability to heal, and acknowledging that His ways are higher than our ways.

They asked God to pity the fatherless daughters, and they committed Tan into His all-sufficient hands.

As we prepared to leave, I got a call from a Brao believer who also happened to be in the hospital that day. Mam is from a hard-to-reach river village, and after she got inadequate treatment at the local clinic near her town, her husband brought her to the provincial hospital by motorbike.

We made our way to the wing of the hospital where Mam lay suffering. It took some time for Om to lead Pan by the hand up the corridor. One of the four wooden beds in the room was now vacant, so we sat on it to talk to Mam. Auntie Pan testified to the goodness of God in her life, saying that although she was a sinner who had rebelled against His ways, He still showed His kindness to her and met all of her needs. Blindness does not keep her from experiencing God's grace and declaring His gospel. She prayed fervently for Mam, as one who herself has endured much pain and

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Pan & Om being light for Jesus at the provincial hospital

**ALONG THE WAY...***(continued from page 1)*

and Lauren to Lima, Perú. Lauren will be visiting her family for only two weeks before returning to Greenville, SC, from where she will go to the Wilds Christian Camp of NC to serve as a counselor for the rest of the summer. Lauren and Mia are members of Hampton Park Baptist Church, and they often join us for Sunday lunch. Joan and I will really miss the enlivened discussions around the table. Pray for their travels, health, and ministries/influence this summer.

Many years ago we instituted a policy in Uruguay whereby we give special honor and recognition to our Uruguayan missionaries for two benchmarks of service with MEU (the Uruguayan designation for EMU): 25 years and 50 years, along with a **Service Bonus** corresponding to their years of service and marital status. Over the last several years I have not gone to Uruguay as I had for decades before, and this "program" was not kept as current as I should have. There are three of our MEU missionaries I would like to recognize for their service here, though their service bonuses were given to them in February at the Workers' Conference at Camp Emmanuel. Because you may not be familiar with all of them, a short summary of their ministries and families will follow:

**Julia Alvarez** joined the MEU family in December 1972 (50 years ago), the month after she graduated from the Bible Institute. Dr. Dabold was the mission director at that time. After serving the Lord for many years in the department capital city of Treinta y Tres ("33"), Julia moved to the small village of Rincón, a half hour drive from Vergara, where **Pastor Gonzalo Rodriguez** had a church. Gonzalo had been visiting Rincón for several years, and a core of believers were there, but they desired Bible teaching more often than he could provide. Julia volunteered to live in Rincón and teach the women and children, and to continue evangelism through door-to-door visitation in this remote area. Her



*Chicha Rodriguez & Julia Alvarez at a Ladies' Spring Retreat at Camp Bethel*

house became the meeting place for many believers during the week. With her motorcycle, she also visited neighboring villages to spread the Gospel.

Julia was diagnosed with cancer while ministering in Rincón. Following her extended treatment, she found that she was no longer able to maintain the ministry in Rincón. She moved to La Charqueada where her mother lived and where MEU had a branch work. She has continued her ministry with women and children in this new location. Men from the "33" church visit La Charqueada several times a month to hold services on Sundays in the church building that MEU bought (with Julia's help). I first met Julia in January 1973, just one month after she entered MEU. In her 50 years of ministry, her care for others, her Gospel witness, and her love of God's Word have characterized her life. Early on in our friendship, she told me that she wanted to be like **Ursula Thiessen**, serving the Lord single-mindedly, which she has maintained. (And she makes the best plum pudding ever served!)

**Alberto and Carolina Diaz** joined MEU in 1993 (30 years ago). After graduating from the Bible Institute – Carolina in 1988 and Alberto in 1989 – they assisted another non-MEU missionary in southern Uruguay for four years. Alberto and Carolina's first field of ministry with MEU was in Minas de Corrales, a mining town in north central Uruguay. After they



*Carolina & Alberto Diaz*

served there for several years, EMU asked them to fill the pulpit in the department capital of Tacuarembó, about an hour's drive from Corrales. Alberto also started Bible studies in neighboring villages. In 2014, he began pastoring Emmanuel Church in San Fernando, in southern Uruguay.

Alberto and Carolina have three daughters, each married to fine Christian men, and a son, who is still single. Two of the daughters and their families and the Diazes' son attend Emmanuel Church and are a real help in the ministry there. The third daughter and her family are faithful members of Calvary Temple of Montevideo. In all the years I have known Alberto, the thing that stands out in my mind is his hunger to study the Bible and teach it. He basically taught himself

English in order to read good theology books that had not yet been translated into Spanish.

Our third honoree is **Juan Gonzalez**, MEU's evangelist in Uruguay. When I think of Juan, I picture the house, or compound, where he was raised in the interior of Uruguay. A place called Batovi or Arbolito, in the department of Tacuarembó. (In researching this, I'm not sure where Juan was born. Two of his brothers built church buildings of mud bricks with grass roofs on their own land in each of these tiny villages, which are basically a very small cluster of family-related mud huts. **Ademar Gonzalez**, one of the brothers, became the de facto pastor of both churches, which were about 20 miles apart.) The roads in that area, if they can be called roads, were car-killers, best navigated on horseback. Juan came from a large family of 16 brothers, whose men were experienced gauchos. One of Juan's older brothers first heard and accepted the Gospel message and subsequently passed it through the whole family. Juan was very young at that time, so basically, he grew up in a Christian home in which Bible studies and gatherings were held. He became a Christian at age 12. But even before he was saved, he told others about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His love has, quite literally, always been evangelism. He considered going to the Bible Institute in Montevideo to learn more Bible, but decided it was impossible. He only had an elementary school education, and the family was poor. But during a youth camp at Camp Emmanuel at which my father spoke on David Livingstone in one service, he told the Lord he would attend the B.I. if at all possible. His family supported his decision, and he moved to Montevideo to live, work (in construction), and study. He was an active member of Gethsemani Church in the capital. He graduated in 1996.

After graduation, Juan let us know that he wanted to enter MEU and help evangelize in the interior, especially the Tacuarembó area, near where he grew up. As a side note, the mission's staff evangelist at that time was **Chelo Figueron**, whom the Gonzalez family knew very well from his visits throughout the interior. Juan's calling was to do the kind of interior evangelism that Chelo had done for many decades. Chelo, because of a serious vehicle accident in 1988 and deteriorating health, had been forced to move to Montevideo. Chelo passed away in 2000. EMU did not have funds to take on Juan; however, he felt so strongly about evangelizing in the countryside, by faith he moved to Tacuarembó, living in basically a shed next to the church and relied on donations from MEU churches. From that time, Juan was considered a missionary with MEU, though as an associate.

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## ALONG THE WAY . . .

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There was a young lady in the church in Tacuarembó who had been a faithful, active member for several years.

**Noemi**, six years Juan's senior, had built a government-subsidized house in Tacuarembó and was living in it by this time. (I've always been impressed with her industriousness!) They were married in 1997 and continued to minister in the department of Tacuarembó.



Part of the group at the 50th anniversary of Calvary Temple of Tacuarembó. Juan & Noemi are the 2nd couple from the left. The 1st couple on the left are missionaries Nico & Valeria Gomez (& baby)

I believe it was after Chelo's death when it became evident to the MEU Board that someone was needed to oversee the evangelistic outreaches of the mission in Uruguay. Though these outreaches included all of our churches and some ministries in Montevideo, such as the Sunday morning Feria Meeting (marketplace) in the capital, it was determined to ask the Gonzalezes to move to Montevideo to coordinate the mission's evangelistic programs. They agreed to the move and took up their new station. The Gonzalezes have one adult son who lives out of the home and a younger dependent son.

Honoring these three missionaries is a reminder that the MEU family is aging. Most of our Uruguayan missionaries have reached the 25-year mark and 3, who are still living, have attained the 50-year level. Pray that the Lord will direct the hearts of younger men and women to catch the vision to take up the "sword and trowel" and continue these ministries.

Two of the tools to formally train these needed replacements are the **Bible college (FEBU)** and the **Dabold Bible Institute**. **John Mark and Deborah Steel**, who teach in both of these Bible education venues, recently said that there are about fifty students this semester. John Mark is the director of the DBI, and **Matias Espinel** is the director of FEBU. Several



FEBU retreat to kick-off the 1st semester

of our Uruguay missionaries teach various subjects in the Bible Institute.

In Cambodia at least two Bible schools were recently held. The first was another one-day gathering of the **Stung Treng Bible School** in northeast Cambodia.

**Jeremy Farmer** and a few other missionaries in the area began this school three months ago to help the national Christians learn how to study and appreciate the Bible. April was the third monthly meeting. Most of the students do not have much education or Bible training. The homework between sessions is that attendees are to read an assigned 10-chapter passage twice. Fifty eager students showed up for this third gathering.

From April 9-12, the **Ratanakiri Pastors' School** held their first of two sessions for this year. They covered Romans 9-11. **JD Crowley, Jeremy Farmer, Brian Kane, and Josh Jensen** of the EMU team taught during this block course. I do not have a further report of this event, nor could I find any photos.



Ted & Marla Allston (center back) in La Crete with Jake & Anita (wearing the chiffon scarf & Jake behind her right shoulder), with kids and Anita's parents

**Ted Allston and Jake Derksen** had a successful teaching tour in Kenya in March. Then in April, Ted and Marla flew to northern Alberta, Canada, to visit the Derksens family in La Crete, not far from the Arctic Circle. Jake had invited the Allstons up to see where they live and minister in a church in La Crete. Ted and Marla very much enjoyed their ten days in Alberta, and Marla especially was thrilled with the April snowstorm while they were there!

The **Crnkovičs** wrote asking for prayer about a situation that is causing them ongoing headaches. **Tanja** has worked at the local public school in Koprivnica for many years now. She took this job of teaching music in the public schools for three reasons: (1) her children attended this school and she desired to have some influence there; (2) interacting with the teachers and students would be a good local outreach for Gospel contacts; and (3) their USA support was such that **Kornel** and Tanja determined this was the best way to make up the financial gap in their income/expense budget. Several years ago, after Tanja had been teaching for a few years, a lady with "friends-in-high-places" tried to get Tanja fired so she could have her teaching position. After a



Tanja & Kornel Crnkovič

lot of hassle, including gathering copies of Tanja's degrees and Tanja taking a semester course there for another teaching certification, the school ruled in Tanja's favor. Now, after the passage of a few more years, the same lady has mounted a new attack on her position. The Crnkovičs ask our prayers that this woman will be ruled against by the school authorities so that Tanja can continue her teaching in peace. Also, in the weeks ahead, the Crnkovičs and other church leaders will be planning the summer youth camp in Croatia. Pray for wisdom and success.

The **Bixbys** in northern France received a benchmark blessing recently from their church plant. At a business meeting of the church, the church voted to take on the financial responsibility of paying for the Bixbys' monthly government retirement and medical taxes. This is a huge step for these people. The leaders of the church are working towards the day when the congregation can and will support a full-time national pastor to take Tim's place. This is the first step. The Bixbys will be taking a short furlough this summer, and we will give you those plans when they develop further.

On May 17 a group of five Uruguayans will be paying a visit to the USA. **Pedro and Paty Donzé**, with their 17-year-old son, **Maxi**, and **Beatriz and Carlos Alberti** will arrive in Florida for about five weeks of visiting churches and

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*Return Service Requested*

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### **ALONG THE WAY . . .**

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individuals who have an interest in Camp Emmanuel in Guazuvirá. Pedro is the director of the camp; Beatriz is the camp secretary; and Carlos, a house/building painter by occupation, has been a tireless help at the camp for many decades. Pedro, Beatriz, and Maxi (I'm told) speak English fairly well. **Jeff Davis** will meet them in Florida and then drive them north, first to Greenville, SC, and then to other States to meet friends of the camping ministry. Jeff is putting the finishing touches on their schedule which will take them as far north as Michigan and as far west as Kansas. Though most of their time will be on-the-road, the couples will be staying at our house for a few days around May 23. Maxi also plans to be a camper

at the Wilds of NC one week. Maxi has been around camping programs his whole life, but never at the Wilds. Pray for him as everything will be in English at the camp. And pray for the travels this group is taking that they would be a blessing and possibly raise some much-needed monthly support for Camp Emmanuel. And pray that the expenses of their stateside travels will be covered by the offerings.

The **USA EMU annual board meeting** was held on Saturday, April 22, at HPBC with a picnic lunch for the board and their wives, and all the in-town EMU missionaries. There are always routine things to vote on at the board meeting, but there was nothing out of the ordinary this year. Only two of the board members were unable to attend – both ending up in Pennsylvania on that day! **Jeff's mom**

and **Mrs. Steel**, John Mark's mom, once again provided a delicious barbeque meal. The cold morning rain stopped just in time for us to meet outside in the church's pavilion where there is a playground for the kids. The EMU missionaries in attendance were the **Hancocks**, the **Bishops**, the **Lehmans**, and **Lauren Chapman**. Jonathan Bishop's parents also came, and it was good to meet them for the first time. The Hancocks are heading to Pennsylvania early in May and plan to return to Cambodia from there on May 16. (Sorry we neglected to get pictures again this year!)

We consider it an honor that you choose to take time to read the EMU Newsletter, and we hope you find it informative, a blessing, and fodder for prayer for our missionaries. Thank you! †

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### **Widows Visiting Widows**

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sickness. Mam shared her testimony in return and said that, in heaven, Auntie Pan will not only hear her voice but see her face.

Before leaving, we prayed for two other patients in the room, one who was also from the Brao minority and another from an even more far-flung group, the Kachok. One thing I've found to be true of patients here—they almost never refuse an offer of prayer.

And so went my morning! But can you think of a more satisfying way to spend the day? JD and I remind ourselves often that we're "living the life"—daily seeing God at work in the lives of people who were once without hope and without God in the world.

(To the surprise and delight of all, Auntie

Tan made a complete recovery and is now back with her daughters.)

Two requests for prayer (*written in March*):

- April 9-12, JD and five missionary colleagues will teach Romans 9-11 at the Pastors Institute—one of the most difficult sections of the New Testament. The preparation of materials, lessons, and visuals is labor-intensive, and all of our teachers are busy men. Please pray that God's Spirit would fill the teachers and pastors, transforming their lives by the gospel—by grace (Romans 9), through faith (Romans 10), so that no one can boast (Romans 11).
- Kim leaves for the States in two weeks to be there for the birth of Charis' fifth child. JD will join her in late April for several more auspicious family events—a college graduation, a wedding, and the arrival of yet another

grandchild (#16). We also plan to visit three supporting churches. Please pray for gospel conversations with our own grandchildren and with others we meet. And please pray for our brothers and sisters back in Cambodia. The last time we were in the States, the tribal church we were working with doubled in size! May that happen all over Ratanakiri Province.

Please know that we are daily thankful for your faithful prayers and offerings. It's an honor to be your hands and feet and voices in Cambodia. †

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