

EMU⁺

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Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

In September, we received news from Uruguay that **Elsa Camacho** passed away in her sleep. Elsa was the wife of **Ariel**, who was the former pastor of Gethsemani Church and a long-time member of the Uruguayan Board of Directors. For many years, when my father was the director of the mission and the early years that I was director, Ariel was the office administrator of the mission in Uruguay. Ariel retired in 2003 and passed away in 2018 after several years with dementia. Elsa learned English at the prestigious high school she attended in Montevideo, and she was such a fun lady to talk to. I called her “mom,” since she was always teasingly giving me instructions when we were together - usually at Camp Emmanuel. Although in recent years she was unable to attend church due to health problems, and though I have not seen her for years, we will all miss her. She was a good pastor’s wife and supported her husband in all of his responsibilities.

This reminds me that I have neglected to keep you updated on the prayer requests for physical needs that many of our Uruguay families are experiencing. Because the list is a bit long, the requests will be succinct:

Ursula Thiessen, living near Montevideo, is suffering a lot of back pain and is often not able to get out of bed without assistance. She is 95 years old. On October 27, there will be a celebration by the German community in Uruguay of their

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Brooke On The River

by Brooke Illsley, homeschool teacher in Stung Treng, Cambodia

(Recently, I learned that the Khmer word “Stung” means river, though some would say, stream. The town of Stung Treng is right on the Stung Treng River – which looks very much like a river - in NE Cambodia. I thought you might enjoy the play on words, too. - kj)

Hot season has been survived; the rains are wonderfully welcome; “summer” break is over; and we are entering our sixth week of school already! This past year has been filled with joyful noise. Abi (1st born) and Isa (2nd) came back to Cambodia for their summer break, and our evening singing sessions were filled with their voices. Isa and Eden (4th) wrote and composed a song together that made me cry tears of joy each time I heard it. Bonnie Ruth has been setting scripture and scripture truths to music for the young church in the village of Na Ong. Each Sunday morning a growing group of Lao families meets together to come into the presence of their Creator with singing. They know that the Lord is God. They have learned that He made them, and they are His. I am so excited to tell you that we are hoping to have our first baptismal service soon. Pray with us! First, pray that God’s faithfulness will extend to these young believers and to the many coming generations. Pray that He will reveal to the believers in Na Ong the areas in their lives that they no longer should put their trust in: protection charms, horoscopes, animal sacrifices, etc. Pray for Jeremy and Proin as



Jeremy teaching at the Na Ong church

they work through a basic catechism with those who desire to profess Christ as their only Savior and God. The Lord is good, and He is doing a mighty work in the hearts of His people!

Start of School

We have another Senior! Gloria (3rd) started her senior year of high school this year. Getting Abi and Isa through high school and all the firsts of transitions was hard work. This time around is much easier. It’s much easier logistically, but not any easier on the heart. Gloria has grown into a beautiful young woman. She loves the Lord and has a heart for missions. I have always felt very strongly that in helping teach missionary kids, I am teaching the future generations of missionaries. Not all missionary kids return to the foreign mission field, but many of them are so uniquely equipped to do so! All three of the older Farmer girls are actively pursuing missions. After growing up here in Cambodia, both Abi and Gloria have seen the spiritual and physical needs of the Cambodian people. Abi has changed her major to nursing, and Gloria plans to join her next fall. Isa sees the needs of missionary families and would like to pursue a position in missions similar to mine. Praise the Lord with me for how He is faithfully guiding these young women.

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The Farmer Homeschool - Brooke is standing & Bonnie Ruth is at the desk in the far back

Winter Camps, Retreats, and Rallies

by Marcos & Tali Gomez, Uruguay office & Camp Emmanuel assistant to Pedro Donzé

I am very tired after several long days of physical work, but I am joyful in what God is allowing us to do on the current project at Camp Emmanuel. As with each letter, I will share a little of our recent work and ministry.

Camp Emmanuel



Adolescents' Winter Retreat 2023

The Lord allowed us to have a precious group of 30 adolescents at the Winter Retreat who had a desire to know more about the Lord. I had the privilege of speaking with several of them regarding some doubts and questions they had about the Bible and their spiritual lives. The book of Proverbs was the basis for the teachings during this retreat. We took advice from King Solomon and applied it to our lives. The Word was very clear. We hope and pray that the Lord did and is doing a work in each one of the campers. We also had a couple of workshops focused on courtship and modesty. It was interesting to hear what the campers think about these subjects and then see what God says.



Senior Youth Retreat service

We had the Senior Youth retreat at the end of August. We started this new camp last year, and it was a great blessing for those who came. This year it was a longer retreat.

Pastor Gabriel Gómez, my father, taught about spiritual gifts. Last year the campers were challenged to serve in their churches. Many of them wondered how they can know which gifts they have in order that they can serve better. It was with that in mind that we chose this topic. We want to help them learn and apply their gifts, along with the other topics.

Church

We thank God for the opportunity to serve alongside our church leadership. We continue to study the book of Psalms with the young people. This is a great blessing in my life. It is our prayer that it is in their lives as well.



Marcos teaching at the MEU youth rally

At the end of July, we had a MEU Youth meeting. We invited all the youth from the different churches associated with MEU. We also invited youth from some churches that do not belong to MEU but share the same doctrine. We wanted to include and



Gabriel & Rosanna Gomez watching field competition at the Senior Youth Retreat

meet other young people who have the same love and desire for God. This meeting took place in our church, Gethsemani. It was great to see our young people get involved in hosting: some with the games, others with the music, some to help set-up the church (the auditorium had to be rearranged to hold more people than normal), others served refreshments, and others received our guests. It was a great blessing to see them serving in these areas.

For this meeting I had the blessing of sharing the Word. I spoke from Psalm 78, challenging the young people to take responsibility as "the new generation of Christians" within our churches. As part of this generation, we have the responsibility of reminding the next generation of what God has done and will do for His people, to warn men of the consequences of living without God, and to work to preserve the Gospel and prevent Satan from usurping the truth of Christ in their lives. We had a lovely time with a group of 95 young people.

Family

The last week of July we took a few days off to rest. By the grace of God, it was very helpful to renew our energy for what lies ahead. We continue to pray and ask that the Lord will allow Tali and me to buy a vehicle so we will not have to take the bus wherever we go. We would appreciate it if you will continue to pray for this need.

I also ask that you continue to pray for my wife's health. She continues to undergo medical tests. Several have been completed, but they still can't find what is causing her so much stomach pain. We ask that you pray for her and also for financial provision. Each test has a cost, and some of the tests are expensive. This month she will have about 10 tests.

Thank you once again for your prayers and support for our ministry. May the Lord bless you and continue to use you for His work. †

ALONG THE WAY...

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75th anniversary of arriving in Uruguay as refugees after WWII.

Julia Alvarez of La Charqueada had major surgery on August 24. She is recovering well at home.

Carlos Pereira, retired pastor in Tacuarembó, had gallbladder surgery on August 14, but he needs treatment for an abscess on his leg. His wife, **Graciela**, has a severe problem in her lower back which has hindered her ability to walk. She is undergoing tests to determine a prognosis. The congregation in Tacuarembó is thrilled

to have the **Nicolas Gomez family** serving as leaders of their church now.

Pastor **Ricardo Windmoller** had an uptick in his high blood pressure this winter (US summer), so he has been put on increased medication. He and his wife, Mayka, serve in the church in Vergara.

Pati Donzé, the wife of our office administrator in Uruguay and director of Camp Emmanuel, has been suffering from chronic leg pain the last several months. The discomfort keeps her from resting at night. Her leg problems are probably a result of her being on her feet over the past months working in the kitchen at the camp. When Nicolas Gomez became the

pastor in Tacuarembó, the camp lost its chief chef. The camp leadership asked us to pray for a reliable replacement. Pati is still undergoing tests to determine what can be done to heal her leg pain. Another request that **Pedro Donzé** has expressed is that the mission house in Montevideo will sell soon. The buying or selling of anything large in Uruguay is very complicated.

Marita Rodriguez, wife of the pastor in Treinta y Tres, needs a hernia operation, though this may have already been done before you read this. She still needs prayer!

In the two articles by Uruguayans in this newsletter, you will see at the conclusion

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Brooke on the River

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We started our school year in July. Our goal is to be finished in early April so we can pack up and head to America by April's end. The first week was a breeze, and everyone transitioned back into the classroom readily. However, the next week, our second-grade boys decided playing outside is better. While I might agree with them, please pray with us that they will learn to love learning. Pray for wisdom for Bonnie Ruth and me as we seek to inspire that love of learning.

Upcoming Furlough

Now that you know why our school year will be ending in early April, I want to let you know that I am looking forward with great excitement to this coming furlough! I've used this word "furlough" for many years, but I know some might not know why I prefer this term. Many missionary organizations now refer to the time back "home" as Home Leave or Home Assignment. However, there is something about Cambodia that is very much home for me. Home is here, and home is there. So, I prefer to think of my time in the States as a "leave of absence from duty granted especially to a soldier." We are leaving our home on the front lines of pioneer missions and coming home to reconnect with family and friends.

Words cannot express how much I look forward to singing with my church family in Greenville [Greer], SC. Even right now, my eyes are teary thinking about my first Sunday back with my brothers and sisters in Christ at Heritage Bible Church. I look forward to sitting down and catching up with many of you. I look forward to seeing the beauty of America as I vacation out West. I also look forward to all God has in store here in Cambodia over the next 8 months as we continue to serve our Cambodian brothers and sisters.

Life in Stung Treng

Since my last letter, I have attended a funeral that was only accessible by boat; attended the 1st birthday of a baby long



(l-r) Jeremy, Brooke, Eden, & Gloria on their way to the funeral via the Stung Treng River

prayed for; reunited with Abi and Isa; and worshipped with our growing expat community.

Living and working with the Farmer family for 9 years now, I have developed some traditions with the Farmer kids. When they read the whole *Lord of the Rings* book they can watch the *Lord of the Rings* movies with me. Each time someone finishes the book, all those who have read it come to my house to enjoy popcorn and LONG movies. The first time, many years ago, there were 2 kids, then 3, then 4, and now 5! Having Abi and Isa here for Judson's turn to see the



Watching "Lord of the Rings" in Brooke's terribly "cold" house!

movies was an extra special treat. As you can see in the picture, the kids think my house is freezing, even though it's set at a nice cool 80 degrees. †

PRAYING FOR A REPLACEMENT

by Carlos & Mabel Olivera, pastor of Bethel Church in Pando, Uruguay



Mabel & Carlos Olivera of Pando

(Carlos Olivera well states a concern that many of our Uruguayan pastors have. Many of these men have been in the ministry for decades and are reaching or have reached retirement age; yet they have no one to take over as pastor of their church. Please make this a matter of prayer. - kj)

As always, it is a blessing to share about the work here in Pando. We rejoice in what God is doing in us as we work to build His church and teach men and women to follow Christ and learn to work together.

I am asking God to touch the hearts of

the young men in our congregation as they are the future of our church. We need committed leaders; but I do not see any with a desire to make the commitment to preach the Word of God. I continually seek to encourage them to serve the Lord in all areas of our ministry and show them the need to listen to His Word. I don't want to be the kind of pastor who is stubborn and will not retire. My prayer is that God will raise up a man, from within our midst, to be the next pastor. I know this call is of God and that He is the one who will bring the right person. I would not want it to be someone who does the work for convenience.

I am working with another Cuban couple. The wife, Lasarita, is saved and is very happy and excited about serving the Lord. After several hours of counseling and discipleship in July, she and her husband are understanding the Word of God better. They are showing a desire for the Lord that they did not have or show before. They come from the Lutheran Church in Cuba. She states that our church's teaching of the Word of God is deeper. She is delighted to be here. She is a woman who wants to serve the Lord and is willing to help in any way, even cleaning the church.

Some of our church members are having good meetings with the men, women, and children in the Barrio Talar area, just west of Pando. Elisabeth, Dayan, Maximiliano, Alvaro, and Yesica are a great team. They take responsibility for the Talar ministry and do not rely on me for motivation. I do not even need to attend the activities in Talar.

Regarding the Junta (MEU Board of Directors) meetings, I continue to learn and contribute as best I can for God's work. I am not working at Camp Emmanuel on a regular basis like I used to, but I always encourage our brothers to help and be useful there. Mabel and I were able to make a quick trip to camp early in August to see Rick Jensen. It was very good to be with him.

We are thanking God that my colon ulcers are well controlled, but I need to take care of myself. Mabel continues to struggle with her health, but when she is feeling good, she is too active. I have to keep an eye on her because if she doesn't take care of herself, her whole-body aches. We are happy to be tools in the hands of God, and a testimony and help to those we love. Everything is for the glory of God. †

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of their reports the physical needs of other MEU/EMU family members.

Though many of our missionaries in Uruguay are getting up in years and have added physical challenges, all is not gloom-and-doom. Many wonderful things are taking place, too.



*Above: Bethel Winter Youth Camp
Below: Bethel Ladies' Spring Retreat*



Camp Bethel in the Department of Treinta y Tres has had two great camps recently. The first was the semester break camp for teens, and the second was a ladies' retreat.

Calvary Temple of Montevideo held its annual Spring Ladies' meeting on September 9 with about 100 in attendance.



Calvary Temple Spring Ladies' meeting with Mrs. Kechichian

The guest speaker was veteran missionary wife Virginia Kechichian, who serves in Uruguay. The church will also celebrate its 63rd anniversary in October. Missionary to Argentina, Ron Self, will be the guest speaker. The congregation will also hold a short retreat at Camp Emmanuel this month.

In other news, the **Josh Jensen family** was able to return home to Oyadao with their new daughter - and the other six kids. Josh is starting the translation of I Timothy, and Acts is waiting for the outside consultant to review the book.

Brian Kane continues to work diligently towards the printing of the Krung New Testament at the beginning of 2024. (He needs prayer for his back pain, too.)

JD and Kim Crowley are back in Ban Lung after their recent US visit. Kim returned to Greenville in mid-August to help oldest daughter, Charis, with the children during the health crisis with baby Job, who was born earlier this year. On September 15, JD flew to Greenville as the keynote speaker at Bob Jones University's mission conference. The couple returned to Cambodia on September 23. JD developed an infection while stateside which subdued him slightly, but he says he is doing better now. If you want to hear JD's messages from the conference, they can be accessed either at the BJU website or Sermon Audio.



JD Crowley at BJU conference

Ted and Marla Allston travel to Norway for two weeks beginning October 4. Ted will be preaching at a supporting church, and the couple will also visit Ted's sister and husband, who are missionaries in Norway. (Marla is praying for snow!)

The **Bixbys'** church in Sarcelles, France, will hold a Bible conference the end of September into October. The guest speaker will be Pastor **Mark Minnick** of Greenville, where Tim was a member years ago. Then later in October, Tim will participate in a conference for leaders of independent churches in France.

Though it is a little late to pray for this, the **Crnkovićs'** church in Koprivnica, Croatia, is having a youth conference for all Baptist churches in Croatia who care to attend. We are looking forward to hearing more about this event.

Marco and Gwendolyn Nunez took a short furlough to visit some supporting churches and friends and family in the southeast between September 8-30. It was good to see them again, if only for a short time.

John and Suzie Lehman, one of our most recent EMU missionary families, continue on deputation and will be in the mid-Atlantic states during the next few weeks. They still have much support to raise, hopefully by the end of this year when John will no longer be on the pastoral staff at Hampton Park Baptist Church. Pray for safety in travel and success of their meetings.

Though Autumn has cooled our temperatures, we are grateful that your interest in the ministries of EMU continue warm. We rely on your prayers and financial support. †

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