

EMU

INTERNATIONAL

Evangelical Mission to the Unreached

Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

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Ken & Joan Jensen
Assistant Director

ALONG THE WAY . . .

Like most Christian families, Joan and I look forward to Easter each year. And though every Sunday is actually a reminder of Jesus' resurrection day, during Easter, the commemoration goes a bit deeper. By the time you read this newsletter, Easter will be past, so I will simply say that I trust you had a blessed Easter.

Easter 2024 has an added dimension of blessing for **Joan and me**, as it will be the first time in ten years that our kids and their families will be with us together - for any occasion! **Josh and Amy Jensen's family** has been in town for a few weeks, but all of our family schedules have not lined up to be together. Lord willing, Easter Day will end that dearth of reunions. (The last time Josh and Amy were Stateside, the **Steve Erkens family** was in Beijing, China, serving with EMU.) And we anticipate a few more gatherings before summer.

Though still residing in Greenville, SC, the Josh Jensen family will be traveling in North & South Carolina and Pennsylvania for services in the coming weeks.

The **Jeremy Farmers** will begin their furlough in Greenville on April 19, along with co-worker **Brooke Illsley**. **Abi and Isa Farmer**, students at Bob Jones University, are looking forward to seeing their family again. When the Farmers and Brooke return to northeastern Cambodia in September, they will be leaving another daughter, **Gloria**, in

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SUCCESSFUL SUMMER CAMPS

by Marcos Gomez, assistant to the director of Camp Emmanuel in Uruguay

I want to thank each of you for the special offerings to the Camp Sponsorship Fund. We were able to help more than 50% of the campers who attended. None of them would have been able to come if it weren't for your love.

We began 2024 with the PEP (In-Person Training Program) with all the people who would be working on staff at Camp Emmanuel this summer (January & February).

Summer camps started on January 9 with the children's week. I was the counselor for a group of 6 of the youngest children at the Camp. Many of the campers already knew the gospel, and, except for a few, they had attended Camp before. The majority had not yet given their hearts to the Lord, so we took advantage of every opportunity we had to present the gospel to them.



Children's Camp

After the Children's Camp came the Joven Camp (*older youth*). The majority have been coming to the Camp for many years now. I was the counselor for a group of 7 young people. For many of these campers, it was a week in which the Lord worked in their lives through the preaching and personal ministry we had with them.



Jovenes Camp

On Tuesday, January 23, we began the last of the January camps - Adolescent Camp. This was different from the previous camps as most of the campers were attending for the first time. And many of them came from very poor homes and some with very difficult family situations (abuse, addictions, etc.). It was a week of many challenges for each of the staff - especially for the counselors. But knowing these difficulties helped us appreciate even more seeing how much they enjoyed the Camp and how the Lord worked in their lives. Many of these teens asked for counsel and daily devotional material for when they returned home.



Adolescent Camp

Pastor **Luis Miguel** from Tim Chapman's church in Lima, Peru, was the teacher for the Adolescent and Jovenes Camps. His new bride, **Liseth**, accompanied him for the two weeks. Luis helped at Camp Emmanuel last year when a group of young people from Lima came to help us.



The theme for the camps was "The Life of Daniel" and "The Great God of Daniel." This year's camps were a great blessing.

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Missions in the Interior of Uruguay

by Jeff Davis, director of EMU

Today is another blank page, an opportunity to put pen to paper in the grand narrative of ministry. As I mentioned in last month's newsletter article, it is our responsibility to "Write the next chapter." The book of Acts indeed ends at chapter 28:31, but the command given in Acts 1:8 to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, requires that the story continue beyond that last verse. We are not writing by inspiration but by application and obedience to the Great Commission. Turning the page to the next chapter is another opportunity to partner with the sovereign One Who is penning the ultimate story.

Friday, February 23, was a beautiful morning in Guazuvirá, Uruguay, at Campamento Emanuel. One day earlier we had concluded two weeks of ministry with missionaries David and Maribel Bell for our Family Camp and Annual Workers' Conference. Following our last breakfast together, John Mark Steel arrived at the camp to take the Bells on a journey with his family to visit picturesque Colonia in the Southwest corner of Uruguay. This was my last time to see the Bells, as they would return to Spain the next day, and I would spend the next three days in the interior. Chicha Rodriguez, my chauffeur and translator for the weekend, arrived to pick me up for our planned excursion.

A Not So Rugged Journey

In 2016, our former director Ken Jensen led me on my first trip into the interior of Uruguay. When he mentioned we were visiting the interior, my mind immediately pictured a rugged and arduous journey akin to David Livingstone, machete in hand, carving his way into the interior of Africa. I wondered what kind of shots were going to be required for my visit. It is not like that. Instead, picture a nice scenic drive across the rolling hills of Nebraska or Kansas. We left behind the urban sprawl of the capital city of Montevideo traveling eastward across the verdant canvas of the Uruguayan Pampas. The sweeping plains stretch as far as the eye can see with open countryside, marked by expansive fields, and dotted with cattle ranches and grazing livestock. Along the way, we passed through quaint rural towns and villages, each with its own distinct charm.

On drives like this in the past, Chicha and I have listened to the missionary biographies of David Livingstone and Amy Carmichael, but on this trip, I decided that I wanted to just focus on Chicha and her ministry. The four-hour drive gave us plenty of time to catch up. We celebrated her 80th birthday last year, but don't let her age fool you. She is as busy as ever, continuing to work in ladies' and children's ministries. She also regularly ministers in the prisons and continues to serve on our Uruguayan Board

of Directors. As mentioned earlier, she is my main translator and chauffeur. She is an invaluable link in the ministerial chain that is EMU's ministry in Uruguay.

As we made our way further east, the terrain began to subtly change, with meandering hills offering breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside. We stopped for lunch in Minas, a town of about 40,000 people named for the mines in the area. It is a beautiful setting, surrounded by the Minas and Carapé Mountain Ranges and by the beautiful Santa Lucía River. Chicha wanted to drive me through the resort area of Villa Seranna, with its curvy roads and significantly higher elevations. We drove through the small town of José Pedro Varela, where former EMU missionaries Gilberto Torres and Carlos Piedad served. We stopped in another small town to visit a lady that Chicha has been trying to reach. Our target destination was the town of Treinta y Tres (Thirty-Three in English), named after the 33 Orientales, national heroes, who established the independence of Uruguay.

Treinta y Tres - No Place Like Home

We arrived at the new home of Pastor Rubito Rodriguez and his wife Marita. He built the house himself over the span of about five years. They have a nice guestroom downstairs with air-conditioning where I slept for a couple of nights. Their bedroom and his office are upstairs, along with a beautiful deck that we enjoyed under the full moon later that night. He expanded the outside carport to allow for groups to gather. They are using their home for ministry. Several of his neighbors know the Lord and are members of his church. In the backyard, they have another building where they keep their tools and landscaping equipment. Marita has quite a green thumb and a gorgeous garden. We sat outside and learned how the Lord is blessing their ministry and about some of the challenges they have faced. After a while, the weather turned cooler and windy. It started raining so we went into the shed. The neighbor called out to us, and we saw a full rainbow. We enjoyed a delicious meal together and more conversation before settling down for the night.



Marita & Rubito with Jeff

Saturday, February 24, was a full day. Rubito is an amateur archeologist. His hobby is hunting for historic relics, which

are in abundance in that region. He has shelves downstairs and upstairs at his house displaying arrowheads, bells, bullets, cannon balls, and even pieces of swords. Several times when I have been with Rubito, I have mentioned wanting to see how he collects these objects. Following breakfast, he took me through town to the Olimar Grande River where we searched for treasures using a couple of metal detectors. With gauchos on horses riding across the river, we explored much of that area, but we only found bottle caps and the rings for the tops of cans. I was hoping to find a gold nugget like one of his friends did. It was fun just to spend time with my friend. We went back to the house and enjoyed a delicious lunch and then rested for a little bit.

La Charqueada - Honoring the Life of a Dedicated Missionary

Later that afternoon, Rubito and Marita joined Chicha and me for another beautiful drive across the Uruguayan countryside. We stopped for a quick visit to view the many improvements made at Camp Bethel. There was a family staying at the camp for the weekend, and a man was working on the new bathhouse. The camp is more rustic than Camp Emmanuel, but it is still a nice place to hold camps, and it is used often by our interior churches.

We then left for a short drive to La Charqueada, a small town where Pastor Rubito's church holds satellite services. We stopped at the church which was the home to former EMU missionary Julia Alvarez. In February's newsletter, there was a sweet tribute to Julia, who unexpectedly passed away in January. She had served faithfully as one of our missionaries for fifty-one years. As we stopped by the church, it was sad to think about Julia not being there. I got emotional seeing the motorcycle she used for ministry in the middle room. I took a few photos, and then several other families started to arrive. We prayed together and then proceeded to the cemetery for a celebration of life service. It was a unique experience for me as I had never been inside a cemetery in this country. They do things differently than us. They do not embalm, so they bury the bodies quickly. They put them in a coffin, and then place them in a little mausoleum for two years. They then reduce the bones to a smaller box. We had about 40 people show up for the service, including local friends and family, and several folks from Rubito's church in Treinta y Tres and Pastor Ricardo Windmoller's church in Vergara. Julia's sister brought a beautiful plaque that read, in Spanish, "With love from her family and her EMU missionary family." It was a touching moment. We then triumphantly sang, "Because He Lives," followed by a clear gospel presentation by Pastor Rubito. Many of the folks in

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Missions in the Interior

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the crowd are not saved, but they heard a powerful gospel message.

Vergara: A New Name Written Down in Glory

Chicha and I then followed Pastor Ricardo on a cross-country drive to Vergara. It took about an hour on a gravel and dirt road. It was very bumpy, but it was a gorgeous drive past soybean and rice fields as the sun set in the West. As we drove into town, we passed an old, abandoned train station. It felt like we were going back in time 100 years. We went to Ricardo's house, which is also home to the Liberator Radio Station. We were greeted by his wife, Mayka. Gabriel, their seven-year-old son, was taking a nap.



(l-r) Jeff & Chicha with Gabriel, Mayka, & Ricardo Windmoller

They showed us around and then we sat down for coffee and tea. It was good to have time to catch up with them and hear about their ministry. We then enjoyed a delicious supper and were entertained by the outgoing personality of their son Gabriel. The town of Vergara is much smaller than "33." When I was last there five years ago, I learned that their church had knocked on every door in town at least three times. I challenged them to add a relational approach to their strategy. Since then, they have implemented several new initiatives to build intentional redemptive relationships. One new effort has been quarterly cookouts for the men. We would learn the next day how God is using this approach.

On Sunday morning, February 25, Chicha and I were up early because we were going on the air at 7:10 AM. Ricardo suggested that I preach on Psalm 46, a message I call,



Jeff & Chicha in the Liberator studio

"No Fear." As always, Chicha's translation and pacing were perfect, and the thirty-five-minute message seemed to be used by God. We had listeners tuning in from Germany, Russia, the United States, and Uruguay. Following a light breakfast with coffee and some pastries from a nearby bakery, we went to church for an early morning prayer meeting. Ricardo and I then drove to Rincon to pick up one of his church members. I preached that morning on the theme that I introduced earlier, "Write the Next Chapter." I had everybody turn to Acts 29, of course, which does not exist. We talked about the outline of the Book of Acts and how it ends so abruptly. I challenged the folks that we are to continue the story, obeying the commands that Jesus had given before His ascension. We went back to Matthew chapter 28, and I explained the text in detail and also gave a strong evangelistic appeal. For my conclusion, I told the story of my daughter Abby getting stuck in a treehouse when she was four years old. She cried out to me, "Daddy, help me!" I told her to jump into my arms. She put her toes on the edge of the treehouse and leaned out but wouldn't jump. I asked her if she trusted me. She replied, "Yes." I asked her if she thought that I would let her get hurt. She replied, "No." But, she wouldn't jump. I told the congregation that there are many people like that about Jesus. They say that they trust Him and that they know that He will save them, but they are like Abby in the treehouse. They have never jumped into His arms. Following the service, I had the privilege of talking to several people



Jeff & Juan

about their spiritual needs. One man who had come to a few of the men's cookouts wanted to talk to me. He had climbed up on a ladder outside to help get one of the children's toys off the roof. He was visibly nervous, as he was way up high. I clapped my hands and jokingly said, "Jump, Abby." He responded, "That's what I need to do, jump into Jesus's arms." I pulled him aside, and asked him, "Have you never done that?" He replied, "No." Chicha helped as I talked to him about the Gospel. He said, "What do I have to do to be converted?" I asked him if he knew that he was a sinner. "Oh, yes," he replied. I asked him if he understood that Jesus died for his sins and rose again so that he could have life. He replied, "Yes." Chicha and I paused

for about thirty seconds as we watched the wheels turn. He emotionally stated that he had been in a play when he was younger and that he had butterflies in his stomach. He said that he was experiencing that again, but this time it was better. I told him that if he believed in his heart, God promises eternal life. We then prayed together, and he trusted Christ as His Savior. It was like picking ripe fruit. He was so ready. He hugged me four times before we left, and he kept thanking me for telling the story about Abby. We gave him a Bible. He asked where to start reading. I turned to the book of John (Juan in Spanish) and dog-eared the corner. He was pleased to hear that there is a book in the Bible that bears his name.

Treinta y Tres – Many Happy Returns

Following lunch with the Windmollers, Chicha and I decided to go ahead and head back to Treinta y Tres to rest some before the evening service. I took a much-needed 45-minute nap. We stopped by Chicha's brother's house. He is also Pastor Rubito's father. We picked up Rubito's sister Susanita and arrived at the church around 6:30 PM. Every time I have attended this church, there is excitement as the congregation gathers. The church filled up quickly. It was a very sweet service. I felt especially safe as there were seven policemen present who regularly attend. They also have ten school teachers who attend. The church has a lot of musical people, and the song service was a blessing. Rubito wanted me to preach the same message that I preached in Vergara. Again, God blessed us as there was a good response from the people, and they were engaged the entire message. Rubito commented on how clear the gospel was and how helpful the message was. We returned home for another delicious supper and a wonderful conversation.

The next day, Monday, February 26, we drove back to Montevideo for my return trip to the USA that evening. It was very rainy throughout the morning. As Chicha and I made our way out of town, the streets looked like rivers flowing with eddies and currents swirling around the cars parked on the sides of the road. We drove through the giant arch that spans the street on the exit of the city. The words on the side read, "Buen Viaje," "Have a good trip." I prayed for us, "Lord, thank You for blessing our trip to the interior. Thank You for the opportunity to spend time with these wonderful missionaries. Thank You for allowing us to be blessed and to be a blessing to these people. Thank You for the new soul that is on his way to heaven now. Thank You for the opportunity to celebrate the life of one of Your choice servants. As the rain falls on us this morning, I ask You, Lord, to send showers of blessings upon Your ministry here in the interior of Uruguay. Help these churches, these pastors, these individuals to write the next chapter."

View Facebook photo album: <https://emuinternational.org/uruguay2024/> †

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Successful Summer Camps (continued from page 1)



Family Camp began on February 12. The keynote speaker was Dr. David Bell, missionary to Spain. His wife, Maribel, accompanied him and also had a session with the ladies.



The three-day MEU Workers' Conference began the following Monday. Once again, David Bell was the guest speaker. We so much appreciate the Bells' ministry to our Uruguayans, both at camps and in churches.



Bethel Camp in the interior of Uruguay also held camps this summer (January & February). The first was the Children's Camp, shown here.



This photo is of Camp Bethel's young peoples' week, which includes teens and young adults.

Also, camps were held at Camp Las Flores in north central Uruguay.

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

Greenville where she will be a freshman at BJU.

The **Pastors' School** will have another three-day "semester" April 17-19. The theme of this block is "The Christian Family." Pray for the teachers and students who will travel to Ban Lung for the event. **JD and Kim Crowley** will take a two-month furlough beginning in May.

Tom and Connie Chapman have arrived home in Antofagasta, Chile, following their months of furlough. Before traveling to Chile, they visited family in Monterrey, Mexico.

Ted and Marla Allston were in Togo, West Africa, March 17-29 for a special celebration. The Allstons were missionaries in Togo 1987-1998 under ABWE. **Dal and Kay Washer** started the mission program there 50 years ago, and ABWE invited the Allstons to join the celebration. Also, **Pastor Drew and Mary Ellen Conley**, from Hampton Park Baptist Church, attended. The Washers were among the first missionaries that HPBC supported, and the work in Togo has been a part of the HPBC family for decades.

Lord willing we will be holding the EMU Board Meeting in Greenville on Saturday, April 20. Your prayers are appreciated.

Joan lamented to me on March 19 that the winter passed without a single snowflake in our vicinity. Though at this point I'd rather not see freezing temps again. The new spring growth is too beautiful. As we enter this new season, we want to thank each of you for your interest in and prayers for the works of EMU International. May the Lord bless you. †

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