

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 . . .

Several weeks ago, I received a request from **Marcos Gomez** in Uruguay, where he assists in the work of the mission office, Camp Emmanuel, and is an active member of **Gethsemani Church** in Montevideo. He is on one of several church committees planning the **50th anniversary celebration of the dedication of the building** that the congregation has used for the past five decades. The special services will span September 12-15. In preparation for a video presentation of the history of Gethsemani Church, he asked if I could find testimonies of the early pastors, old photos, and any other reference material that might be in our EMU Newsletter archives.

I remember my dad going to Uruguay, in part, to speak at the dedication of this new sanctuary, though it would be two years before I actually became an official part of the mission. I thought I knew the history!

What a wonderful blessing it has been to research this subject, read firsthand how God brought this church into existence, and then lead men of God to this ministry when needed. Maybe someday I can share with you what I learned about this solid church. But I mention this topic for two reasons: 1) Please pray for this congregation as they plan the September celebration - that God will be glorified and the Gospel will spread. 2) This reminds us - me especially - that the God of history is the same God of today and tomorrow. The testimony of Gethsemani

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FIFTY-ONE YEARS LATER

by John Mark & Deborah Steel, teacher at FEBU & director of the Bible Institute

In June, the Iglesia Evangélica Calvario [Calvary Evangelical Church] in Tacuarembó held special meetings to celebrate their 51st anniversary. Though 1973 marks the beginning of the ministry in the current location, the history of the work stretches back into the previous decade. In 1966, for example, Pastor Coralino Gómez provided this report:

“Tacuarembó: The work continues. The group of brothers and sisters are very faithful, and they’re encouraged. They work with a high degree of cooperation to reach souls, so we are able to conduct open-air preaching on Saturdays and Sundays. The Sunday school has seen up to 50 children attend, along with many older kids. This success is due to brothers and sisters who take responsibility to bring the children. There are also several open-air classes held by faithful sisters. In addition to this, in a neighborhood 5 kilometers away named ‘La Matutina,’ there is a wonderful family. . . . the lady is a fervent sister who brings the younger and older children together for a meeting that takes place in her house, led by my wife.” (Ecos Misioneros [Missionary Echoes], Jan-Feb, 14-15)



Pastor Coralino, Maria, & baby Samuel
(photo taken in 1957)

Pastor Coralino Gomez’s report could almost substitute for mine. With few adjustments to these details, I observed the same ministry ongoing nearly 60 years later: the believers encouraged, children



John Mark Steel preaching at
the church in Tacuarembó

being taught in a church family’s home, and outreach continuing in a nursing home, the open-air market, and the nearby rural community of Sauce de Tranqueras. Last year Nicolás Gómez and his wife, Valeria (who grew up on a farm outside Tacuarembó), arrived to help the church in their next steps. Nico, now a second-generation pastor, is an answer to your prayers for laborers to enter the harvest. His love for the people, adeptness in this context, and desire to maintain a biblical philosophy of ministry are readily evident. Our conversations included such things as evangelism, perseverance, Lord’s Supper observance, baptism, and church membership.

Like other locations in interior Uruguay, the town (and church) exports much of its youth to Montevideo and elsewhere, where work and other opportunities are more readily available. This reality can be discouraging; many children have come and gone. The church is not large, and many of the group are older saints. But I came away with a new appreciation for the way the Lord continues to accomplish His work and how this out-of-the-way place has enriched other churches around Uruguay. From Sauce de Tranqueras alone, where on this particular Saturday four ladies (and four generations!) attended a living-room service, multiple young people have come to know the Lord over the years and have gone on to serve Him in different ways. Some of them have been our students in the Bible institute and FEBU.

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The Blessings of Service

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

As with every letter, I want to begin by thanking God and you for your love, prayers, and gifts. Without your constant support, our ministry would not be possible.

Camp Emmanuel

It's been a busy couple of months. We had the opportunity to host two schools during the first two weeks of May. After that, a church held its children's camp here. This church has been coming to Camp Emmanuel for several years, and it is a joy to be able to serve them.

In addition, we are working on preparations for the "Rick's Projects 2024" that we hope to do in August. The list of tasks is very extensive, even longer than has been shared. Without a doubt, planning takes a lot of time and dedication. We request your support in prayer, and, if it is within your means, to help financially. I encourage you to read the June EMU Newsletter for the list of projects and needs.

[kj – Funding is still needed for the following projects:

Electric keyboard & sound board for the Chapel - \$3,890

Rebuild stairs on the Old Water Tower - \$2,100

Partitions in the boys' bathroom cabins - \$5,400

Storage Container - \$3,900

Repairs & expansion of the Children's Playground - \$4,350

New Outdoor firepit for evening services - \$2,690]

During July we will have a winter retreat for adolescents and juvenes (16-20s). We will be studying the Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Omnipotence of God,



Tali & Marcos Gomez at Camp Emmanuel

with the help of Pastor Pablo Billafan, the pastor of Calvary Temple in Rivera. We have been working on the planning, the materials for the campers, the workshops, and more. We appreciate your prayers for this retreat, especially for Pastor Pablo as he prepares and shares the Word, and for each of the young people who attend the retreat.

Thank you very much for your love and prayers for the ministry of Camp Emmanuel. This place has been a great blessing to many people over the years. It is our desire to continue making it a place where there are opportunities to encounter Jesus and grow spiritually.

MEU Office

Thank God, in early June the last documents for the sale of the mission house in Montevideo were signed.

We also ask that you pray as we work with our government on the tax exemption for three churches. By law, churches in Uruguay have the right not to pay a certain tax. We have been working for 5 years for these churches to obtain this benefit. We do not know why this has not been granted yet.

Calvary Temple of Montevideo, to be the guest speaker. During these special days, a baptism was held for six new members, one of which was the Billafans' youngest son.



Calvary Temple of Rivera baptism
Cristina & Frederico Billafan (far left)
Pastor Pablo Billafan (far right)

In a prayer letter from **Jose Kowalczyk**, the long-time pastor of **Calvary Temple of Durazno**, it was announced that Jose had recently retired from leading the church.

Each time we've applied we have received a different negative response. This has been discouraging for us, and it has increasingly meant greater economic difficulty for the churches. Many times we do not understand His purposes, but we trust Him.

Gethsemane Church

It is a joy and privilege to be able to serve the Lord in our church. We thank God for the growth of the youth group. We are thrilled that two more young people have expressed a desire for discipleship. It can be difficult to find a time because of schedules, but we thank God for their desire to grow. We would appreciate your prayer for them. In June and July, we are studying about our identity in Christ. The objective is to teach them that when we are children of God, we have a completely different identity based on the work of Christ in our lives.

Along with four other men, I am leading a study in our church on "The Spiritual Disciplines." It has been a great challenge to prepare myself to preach in front of our church on Sunday mornings. I am preaching on the Discipline of Adoration and will be finished by the end of June. Then another brother will begin another discipline before I teach again. Next time I will cover the Discipline of Communion and Service. I would appreciate your prayer on my behalf - that the Lord will use His Word in my life and that I can help in the growth of the church.

Although it is a joy to serve the Lord, I would be lying if I told you that there are no difficulties in the work. Many times we struggle with discouragement. But it is the grace of God that sustains us. It is in these moments that we must cling to Him. †

Some men in the church, whom Jose has trained, will be guiding the congregation, although Jose will remain in the church to help guide the transition.

A prayer letter from **Pastor Ovidio Acevedo** informed us that he plans to retire from being the head pastor of **Emmanuel Church of El Cerro**, which he founded over 35 years ago. He asked for our prayers that the right man will be chosen for this position.

JD and Kim Crowley are back in Cambodia following their short furlough. During the week before they flew out on June 26, their children and their families gathered for one last reunion in Greenville, SC. Actually, all of their kids live in the Greenville area except Anna, who resides with her family in the Chicago area. But Anna drove down with her 4 children for one last goodbye. It is always a blessing to have JD and Kim around.

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ALONG THE WAY . . .

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Church and its congregants was not "tangent blessings on a necklace." There were plenty of hard times. But God's grace has been sufficient through every circumstance. That's the kind of comfort we all need!

Pray, too, for the preparations for the "Rick's Projects 2024" to be tackled in August. Rick Jensen's USA team is very small this year. **Britt Hopper** from Kansas, who has been to Uruguay several times to work at the camp, and **Jeff Hilla** from Ankeny, IA, are scheduled to travel with Rick. In addition, several groups of Uruguayans from our churches will be helping at camp before, during, and after Rick's team returns home.

From March 15-17, **Calvary Temple of Rivera** in Uruguay held its 54th anniversary celebration. **Pastor Billafan** invited **Pastor Gustavo de Oliveira**, the pastor of

Patience

by Matt & Becky Hancock, church planters in Ou Reang Ov, Cambodia

While many in our world rush about getting things done ASAP, the Lord carries out His work patiently, working and waiting, season by season. As we engage in His work, He reminds us to work patiently, too. “*See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient*” (James 5:7b). When you pray for us and all those who labor in gospel work, pray that the Lord would help us work with this patient perspective, that we would labor on diligently without losing heart because of a confident expectation that the Lord will send the rains in season and will gather in His precious fruit in the day of harvest.

Throughout this year we have continued our ministry efforts 1) strengthening local pastors and their churches and 2) evangelizing/ discipling in unreached villages. We are finishing up our evangelism efforts in Prey Sralao village after 9 months of weekly visits there. We praise the Lord for Hun and Channa, who faithfully receive God’s Word each week there, and we ask you to earnestly pray for Hun to have victory over his old habit of drunkenness.

The Lord has recently opened another door for evangelism and discipleship in Andong village, just 10 minutes south of us. A couple of months ago, we discovered that Ain, a woman in her mid-sixties, turned to the Lord last year through her friend’s testimony. She is loosely connected with a church 45 minutes away, but she expressed her desire for regular Bible teaching in



Matt, Becky, & kids

her village, especially so her children and grandchildren could hear the Word. I have begun leading a time of worship with her and various members of her family on Sunday mornings, as well as evangelizing in the area one afternoon each week. It’s been an encouragement to see Ain’s unwavering faith and vibrant testimony to her family. Just in the past couple months, her daughter Deena has professed faith in Christ and moved back to Andong village with her husband. Please pray with us that God may show His saving power in this extended family, drawing the men, like Sambo (Ain’s husband) and Piari (Deena’s husband) to Christ, as well as the other children and grandchildren.

In our previous letter we asked you all to pray for the Lord to guide us as we seek to purchase land and build a house. We are amazed at how graciously the Lord has answered those prayers. He burdened our landlord to offer us almost an acre of his farm on the edge of town. Not only did he sell it for a fair price, but he has offered much of his time and advice in the process of preparing the land and hiring workers to build walls and a garage. Praise the Lord with us for guiding us and providing such a beautiful piece of land for us. Please pray for provision, wisdom, and stamina as we hope to begin building a house later this year.

God has showered us with His blessings in another way as well. The Lord has blessed us with another child on the way! We are all so grateful and excited to meet this little one, due at the beginning of October. We are looking to purchase tickets soon to come to the States for the birth, with plans to stay in Greenville, SC, for a couple months surrounding the birth. Please pray for the Lord’s direction in all this.

We are looking forward to hosting our first intern this month. Samuel Wikki is a young man from Tri-county Bible Church in Ohio who is interested in learning more about cross-cultural ministry. He plans to arrive the middle of June and stay with us for a month. Pray that the Lord would richly bless his time with us. †

ALONG THE WAY . . .

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In June, the youth group from **Calvary Baptist Church** of Midland, MI, took a “summer mission trip” to Lima, Peru - where it is winter! This is the sending church for the **Tim Chapman family**, so, of course, Tim led the team for its week-long ministry trip. The Chapmans’ youngest kid, **Abby**, was part of the team. Hopefully, there will be an article in an upcoming Newsletter concerning that adventure. Tim and Cheryl are still praying about and considering the direction they should take for their ministry.

Continue to pray for the **Joshua Jensen family**, the **Farmer family**, and **Brooke Illsley** as they travel this summer during furlough. Joan and I hope to have Josh and Amy’s family here for a few short days later in July - and celebrate some birthdays - before they head north for the rest of their time in the States.

Micaiah Bixby, the eldest son of **Tim and Ruth** from Sarcelles, France, is spending several weeks on a mission trip to Abai, Papua New Guinea. He will engage in some construction and church ministries.

Hector and Graciela Gomez are ministering in Spain for several months, then back to Equatorial Guinea. As you recall, Hector is the retired pastor of our church in Rivera, Uruguay, where Pablo Billafan now pastors. This is the Gómezes’ second time to minister to the tribal folks in this small African nation - and they love it!

On July 8, **Kornel and Tanja Crnković**, along with their two sons, **Marko and Natanael**, will arrive in New York City to begin an almost two-month “furlough.” (Since they are citizens of Croatia, where they minister, the word furlough is not quite fitting.) They will be visiting supporting churches, presenting their ministry in some new churches, and contacting individual supporting families. A member at Hampton Park Baptist Church, their sending church, is loaning them a vehicle, so they will basically be independent while Stateside. The following is their current schedule of meetings. So if the Crnkovićs are in your area, you should attend to get an update of their ministry in Koprivnica, Croatia.

July 14 - Newtown Bible Church in Newtown, CT (all day)

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Fifty-one Years Later

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As Pastor Coralino ended his report so many years ago, “We very much appreciate the prayers of the churches for this work.” Please continue! †



John Mark Steel (lt) with Pastor Nicolas, Valeria, and Mateo in Tacuarembó

Change of Address, but Not Moving

by Ken Jensen

Since Fred and Seva Dabold left for Uruguay in 1946 (78 years ago) to begin their missionary service, the USA office of Evangelical Mission to Uruguay, and then EMU International, has been housed in the private residence of whomever was handling the home office work. This began with Mrs. Edna Dunn who worked from her home in Fresno, CA. From then until 2024, the mission address has changed five times – reflecting each move to a new residence: Fresno, CA; to Fort Pierce, FL; to Marietta, GA; to Greenville, SC; to Taylors, SC, and then to another Taylors address. And with every move there have been hiccups, to say the least. So, the announcement of yet another address change is made with experience-based foreboding.

Joan and I have had the office in our home since the late 1970s when I took over the USA home office responsibilities from my parents. For several years now we have voiced our goal of moving the office out of our home once we were both in our 70s. In recent years, we have realized that, at our ages, the mission needs to begin transitioning to a new address for the time when Joan and I are no longer active in the mission. This has involved a great deal of planning for a smooth change, both in location and responsibilities.

At this point it is probably propitious to state that this is *not an announcement of retirement* for either of us. But, for the sake of our missionaries and those who support them, it is wise to begin making plans for changes that will be necessitated when we do retire.

We anticipate that this year (sometime after July) the processing of donations will be taking place at an office outside of our house. For the future convenience of those engaged in this aspect of the mission

finances, a Post Office Box address is most conducive. The new batch of return envelopes for EMU International have the address of **P.O. Box 790, Taylors, SC 29687-0016**.

Although many who support EMU still send personal or church checks and can utilize the new Return Envelope, there are several other venues through which funds are sent. Any financial institution Bill-Pay services which are used will need to be notified of this New Address.

We ask that you help us by changing the mailing address for EMU to P.O. Box 790, whether it be for sending donations or correspondence. It is our goal that all donations will be sent to the P.O. Box by the end of this year.

HOWEVER, Lord willing, Joan and I will continue to live at 209 Roberts Road in Taylors, and we will continue to be a part of the mission – if the Board of Directors permits. Therefore, any EMU mail that is sent to this address will eventually make it where it needs to be! It just might take a bit longer.

As a veteran of Address Changes – this will be the 5th one that I've been directly or indirectly involved in – I know this will not be a smooth transition on all fronts, but it is our aim that there will be as few speed-bumps as possible.

Although I am the author of this announcement, keep in mind that Joan is the repository of knowledge for all things Home Office. You can ask any question of her via the new or the old address. And thank you in advance for your patience! †

ALONG THE WAY...

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July 15 - arrive in the **Greenville, SC, area**

July 21 - **Waterman Baptist Church in Kingman, IN** (all day)

July 24 - **Bethany Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, MI** (Wed. evening)

July 28 - **Central Baptist Church in Dothan, AL** (all day)

July 31 - **Morningside Baptist Church in Greenville, SC** (Wed. evening)

August 4 - **Hampton Park Baptist Church in Greenville, SC** (all day)

August 7 - **Westgate Baptist Church in Spartanburg, SC** (Wed. evening)

August 11 - **Oak Ridge Baptist Church in Oak Ridge, TN** (morning)

August 14 - **Anchor Baptist Church in Little River, SC** (Wed. evening)

August 18 - **Faith Bible Church in Easley, SC** (morning)

August 18 - **Grace Baptist Church in East Flat Rock, NC** (evening)

August 20 - arrive in **Croatia**

Pray that this will be a very productive tour for the Crnkovićs. **Jeff Davis** will accompany them on some of their travels.

For those of us north of the Equator, July brings thoughts of family vacation, yard projects, and no school - though most of us are still working most of the time. Keep in mind that the building of God's Kingdom never takes a time-out. So, thank you for your continued prayers and gifts during these summer months. Lord bless you! †

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