

EMU⁺

INTERNATIONAL

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Evangelical Mission to Uruguay

PROCLAIMING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GOSPEL

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*Ken & Joan Jensen
Assistant Director*

ALONG THE WAY . . .

While planning this May Newsletter, it dawned on me that for the first time in my 71 years of life, I don't have a mother to wish a Happy Mother's Day. Thankfully, I have a wonderful mother-in-law who treats me like one of her own. Loving mothers are such a blessing!

There are a lot of comings and goings again among our EMU missionaries. **Ted Allston** returned home from a 2-week stint of teaching in Kenya on April 28. He leaves soon for India and will be gone May 22-June 9. Ted asks that we not publish his exact whereabouts in most of the countries he visits due to possible security risks among those he ministers to.

On April 26, **John and Suzie Lehman** left the States for teaching engagements in Kenya, Ghana, Togo, and Morocco. They return home on May 21.

Marco and Gwendolyn Nunez will begin a very short furlough to visit five supporting churches in PA, IN, and OH beginning May 5. We will only be able to spend a few hours with them as they pass through Greenville before they return to Cancun, Mexico, on May 27.

JD and Kim Crowley will be in Greenville from May 9-July 18 on their annual ministry vacation to visit family in this area.

Billy and Saritha Judson from Hyderabad, India, arrive in Raleigh, NC, with their 2

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MINISTERING FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

by Gabriel & Rosanna Gomez, pastor of Gethsemani Church in Montevideo, Uruguay

March feels like the true start of the year for us. Bible Institute classes began in the first week of March. On Mondays, I am teaching the Geography of the Holy Land. This year I have 10 students from various parts of Uruguay, since the class is being conducted via Zoom. Lucas, our youngest son, is taking two classes in the B.I. this semester. March also brings our annual church Business Meeting, which is crucial for planning the church activities for the year ahead. Thank the Lord, everything went smoothly, and we had a great time discussing the Lord's work.



(l-r) Gabriel & Lucas Gomez, Gabriel F., Juan Gonzalez, Gethsemani lady, & Roberto Alvez

Another significant event in March was the 55th anniversary celebration at Calvary Temple of Rivera, on the Brazilian border. Many members from other MEU churches participated in the four-day evangelistic campaign. From Gethsemani Church, Juan Gonzalez (MEU's evangelist), Lucas, Gabriel Figueredo, and I were able to assist. It was a truly wonderful time.



Lucas with group in Las Flores

Lucas, Gabriel F., and Roberto Alvez from Maldonado visited the nearby Las Flores Church on Saturday. Lucas led the singing and Roberto preached. They enjoyed a great time of fellowship while the rest of us stayed in Rivera to distribute invitations and tracts. Unfortunately, the weather wasn't favorable that morning. Nonetheless, it was a joy to see the church full that weekend and to reconnect with dear brethren we have known for many years.

I concluded the month at Camp Emmanuel attending the Henry Johnson Conference. I am so grateful for the opportunity to receive instruction from godly and well-prepared men.

Rosanna was busy preparing for the first ladies' meeting of 2025. Since Saturday evenings in March and early April were occupied with Easter rehearsals and the Jovenes (older youth) group, we scheduled the ladies' meeting for lunchtime. Initially, Rosanna thought the ladies might not like this idea, but to her surprise, they loved it because it allowed more time for fellowship (from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM). Rosanna wanted to plan their year's activities with them, so she prepared a shorter message than usual. However, when she finished teaching, it was already 1:30 PM! No one complained. There were 22 ladies in attendance, including one visiting the church for the first time.

April ended with a special Easter celebration. We distributed tracts in areas near the church and at two open-air markets. On Saturday and Sunday, I had three sessions titled "A View to the Cross," "A View on the Tomb," and "A View to the Resurrection."

I ask for your prayers for our discipleship classes. Rosanna has four ladies, I have one man who has been attending for a year and wants to become a member, and our oldest son, Marcos, will soon start discipling a young boy. †

A Dream Come True

by Maria Teresa "Chicha" Rodriguez, missionary in Montevideo, Uruguay

I thank God for strengthening me and helping me serve Him during March and April. Although the family camps are behind us, the blessings of the preached Word and Christian fellowship remain.

I first met Nelsi when she was a child in the small interior village of Las Flores, where her parents worked as missionaries. I stayed with her family, helping with the visitation ministry, and teaching children's and women's classes.

When Nelsi was 18, she had planned to go to Camp Emmanuel with her parents and other Christians from northern Uruguay. Living in a small town far from any big city, camp was the highlight of her year. The trip from the north to south of our country usually took about 7 or 8 hours. Unfortunately, on the way, their vehicle was involved in an accident. Three people died on the spot, and others were seriously injured, including Nelsi. Terrified and unable to move, she screamed, "I want to die." Her mother took her firmly by the arm and said, "Do you want to die? Do you know there is an eternity? There is heaven and hell. Where are you going to go?" Nelsi realized she wasn't ready to meet God and immediately began to cry out, "I want to live." God spared her life. She underwent several surgeries but remained paralyzed



Chicha & Nelsi

from the waist down. This profound experience brought her to God in sincere repentance and conviction, leading to a joyful life of communion with her Savior.

A few months ago, Nelsi called me and shared her dream of coming to camp. Despite her health limitations, after 37 years, she fulfilled her dream and came to camp. She was so happy and thankful to God! Now 55 years old, she radiates joy, peace, and gratitude to the Lord. She loves playing the ukulele and singing hymns. Having Nelsi at camp was a great blessing!

At Camp Bethel, we had a good number of campers, including many couples with children. One girl who had previously attended our children's camp invited her non-believer mother, providing a great opportunity to share the gospel with her. We taught the children Psalm 19 in the mornings and the life of John Newton in the evenings. We encouraged the children to accept Jesus as their Savior, reminding them that one day they will meet God.



Easter Family Camp at Camp Bethel in "33"

In the city of "33," I visited 97-year-old Mrs. Marina once again. When she was a baby, a big fight broke out in her home, and her

grandfather killed two people. Her mother was seriously injured, and her 9-year-old brother stepped forward to defend her, also getting seriously injured. He took his baby sister in his arms, walked through the fields to a police station, and handed her over to the police for care. The brother soon died, but she was saved. We have presented the gospel to Mrs. Marina many times. Although she says she believes in Jesus, she also trusts in her religion and its images. I have told her that her little brother gave his life to save her physically, but Jesus gave His life to save her eternally. Only faith in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ prepares us for the encounter with God.

Another woman asked me to visit her 18-year-old granddaughter who is in prison. She is a young woman imprisoned by her vices and sin. I shared the gospel with her and begged her to be reconciled to God. God is a God of love and mercy, but He is also a God before whom we will have to give an account.

In our interactions with people, we often see apathy and indifference toward spiritual matters. May we, as Christians, not lose sight of the Great Commission: Go and preach to every creature. How else can they prepare themselves if they are not exposed to the Word, which

alone can convict and break them so that they may repent? Thank you for your valuable and necessary prayers for each one of us. †

New Semester, New House, New Travels

by John Mark & Deborah Steel, Bible teachers in Montevideo, Uruguay

Thank you for your prayers for a good start to the school year. Though it usually takes a couple weeks to know for sure how many are enrolled, the Lord has brought together a good group: 37 in the Bible Institute and another 43 in FEBU. Most of these are studying part-time, and several are taking a full program of classes. The FEBU/BJU Hebrew class, taught online by a brother in Colombia, has been a blessing not only to us here but also to several students in Mexico. The current schedule of classes continues through the end of June.

As some of you are aware, we're in the process of moving to a new house on the east side of Montevideo, the northern side of the neighborhood of Malvín. For several years we've been casually looking at options for possibly buying a home in Uruguay and being able to invest in building our own space rather than operating within the limitations of renting. This month the

pieces began to come together (pretty quickly) for us to be able to make this kind of commitment and on accessible terms. The sale is scheduled to be closed early in June. We're looking forward to being able to return to a more regular pattern of hospitality in the months ahead. The new neighborhood is also one in which John Mark has had numerous gospel conversations with some of the people you've prayed for. If you would like more information on the project (or our new physical address), please let us know. Our plan is to advance steadily, if slowly, on needed repairs and improvements in the new-to-us structure.

June and July will be busy months, as will the months to follow, as we settle in to our new place while continuing to teach online in Montevideo and in-person in the adjoining department of Canelones.

We'd like to highlight again a couple of upcoming events and ask that you pray: a Bible-institute retreat (June 12-14) and a winter youth retreat on the theme of Science and the Bible (July 2-5), both at Camp Emmanuel. Dr. Bill Lovegrove will be visiting and speaking. The Río de la Plata culture is notoriously secular; the topic, key.

In our letter last month, we requested prayer that several young men would get permission to travel with John Mark in May. We're thankful to report that all of them will be able to visit the U.S., two of them for the first time. JM, Daniel James (our son), and David will arrive in Miami on May 6 for a week in the SE, joined later by Iván for two weeks in AK, where John Mark will be teaching methods of Bible study and also visiting churches. There will be much opportunity for growth on many levels, and we're looking forward to seeing what the Lord will do. †

New Responsibilities

by Alberto & Carolina Diaz, pastor of Emmanuel Church in San Fernando, Uruguay

I am grateful to be able to share news from San Fernando. Our church has a children's activity every Saturday at 3:30 p.m. We have a dedicated team of teachers: Yoana, Sandra, and Carolina; and Ezequiel Morales, who assists with the music. As pastor, I am responsible for the missionary story.

In early January, Carlos Lopez, the pastor of Monte Grande Church, announced that he was stepping down and that I would assume the pastorate. I spoke to the congregation and expressed my desire to work with them for two years. I asked Carlos to appoint someone to manage the church's finances during this period. My son Iván, who is taking classes at the Bible Institute, will preach one Sunday each month, and Ezequiel Morales will preach another Sunday. We are thankful for their willingness to help, and we pray that the Lord will encourage their hearts toward ministry. I will be preaching at Monte Grande on the first and second Sunday of each month, and I will lead the Thursday afternoon Bible study and prayer time.



(l-r) Alberto, Carolina, & Ivan (son) Diaz

Regarding the Eben-Ezer Church of Las Piedras, we have a wonderful group of brothers and sisters. At the Christmas dinner fellowship, the church appointed me as their pastor and counselor. (This church is a non-MEU congregation whose pastor had to resign last year.) They continue to pray for a permanent pastor and have requested leadership studies. A faithful sister in this congregation will take a class on administration taught by MEU's office

administrator, Pedro Donzé, to help with her duties. Traveling to this church, located in a different Department, has been facilitated by our newer vehicle, which we acquired last year. Selling the truck and getting a more reliable car, along with Iván's potential help with driving, has been a blessing. At Eben-Ezer Church, I will be preaching two Sundays each month. In May we will have a one-day conference with a recently retired MEU missionary/pastor. The materials to be used are some that Bill Hill taught in the past to our MEU workers.

Soon, we will begin Bible Institute classes for a course on Theology II. During the summer vacation months, I introduced some of these teachings to the church, so the attendees will be familiar with the material.

It is a joy and privilege to serve the Lord and fellow believers in various ways and places. We appreciate your love and your prayers, trusting that our sovereign God knows the year ahead and guides each plan and project for His glory and the benefit of His church. †

Biblical Theology

by Tim & Cheryl Chapman, church planters in Lima, Peru

On Monday, April 14th, I headed back down to Peru from Michigan to be a part of our fourth annual theology retreat. On Tuesday night, AJ Gibson, our speaker for the retreat, flew into the Lima airport and I picked him up there. We spent Wednesday morning with the pastors from our church in Lima and then headed back to my house to get ready for the retreat the next morning.

The vision for theology retreats began four years ago as I lay in bed sick with Covid. From some reading that I was doing, the Lord put in my heart the idea of gathering people at a retreat center for the purpose of teaching them theology. After seeing how successful the first retreat was (we had over 100 attendees for the first retreat), we became convinced that the Lord was guiding this plan.

The principal factor for us is our desire to help provide theological grounding for a generation of young Christians in Peru. I'm convinced that when local churches have members who have learned to think theologically and who know how to read their Bibles well, those churches will inevitably trend toward healthiness as a church.

I had asked AJ to speak on the theme of Biblical Theology. From the time that I first began to plan for theology retreats, this is a theme that I have wanted to have taught in



one of our retreats. Biblical Theology takes a look at the whole Bible and seeks to understand theological truth within the framework of the Bible as one story. Over a period of three days, in ten different sessions, AJ began in Genesis and worked his way through the entire Old Testament. The effect of studying through that much of the Bible in three days (while seeing so many connections in the storyline of the Bible) is amazing. So many of us left the retreat with the strong sense that we want to read our Bibles more, and especially read longer passages in one setting. We left with our hearts full of worship to God Who committed Himself to protect the Seed of the woman, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

As we look ahead, even though the Lord has closed the door for us to minister full-time in Peru, we continue with our vision for these theology retreats. Pray with us as we consider our role in seeing these continue. †

*Photos:
Top - AJ Gibson teaching*

Middle - Evening song service before the lesson

Bottom - AJ Gibson (rt) talking to Miguel, one of the pastors at the Lima church

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The First-ever Conference on Christian Finances in Ratanakiri

by JD & Kim Crowley, translator & Bible teachers in BanLung, Cambodia

A year ago our Pastors School held the first ever Christian family conference in our province. All of our pastors are first generation Christians who grew up in pagan homes with no one

modeling for them godly Christian fathering and mothering, not to mention husbanding and wife-ing! You might remember that we invited the wives to attend as well, since Christian parenting must be a partnership. It was a glorious week as 150 hungry hearts joined together to learn God's plan for the family.

Two weeks ago, those same 150 pastors and wives came together again, this time to learn what God's Word says about money and possessions. Post-communist Cambodia is an economic miracle with 6% growth



April 2025 Pastors' (and wives) School in BanLung, Ratanakiri, Cambodia

every year for 30 years! The problem is that most Cambodians—including tribal minorities—are ill-equipped to make wise use of the new financial products available to them, such as loans. When Kim and I moved to NE Cambodia 30 years ago, there was not a single bank in the province. Now there are scores of bank buildings from which swarms of bank workers spread out to every village to convince simple farmers to hock their land for an easy loan with interest rates of "only" 18% a year! Many have lost their land, and some have committed suicide because of debt.

For three solid days we scoured the scriptures together for God's will concerning money and possessions. For the final day, we invited a Christian financial counselor to come from Phnom Penh with his team to teach our families how to figure out their income and expenditures, net worth, and how to create a budget. For many of the couples, this was the first time they had ever discussed finances together. The team from Phnom Penh even

provided free individual financial counseling and planning to those who signed up.

Because the Bible says so much about money, possessions, and true wealth, we will continue

this financial seminar for another four-day session this September. Please pray that Satan's financial strongholds would crumble as God's liberating truth is taught and applied. †

ALONG THE WAY...

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daughters on May 28 to visit supporters and attempt to raise more support. They return home on July 18.

Board member Greg Mazak and his wife Nancy will be visiting the Hancock family in O-Ring-O, Cambodia, May 13-19. Greg is the pastor of the Hancocks' sending church.

Thank you so much for your interest in the ministries of EMU International. We trust you had a blessed Easter week. †

Email: office@emuinternational.org
Website: www.emuinternational.org
Phone: (864) 268-9267



Julia Kane & Kim Crowley with the kids in the "nursery"