



**EMU**  
INTERNATIONAL *Newsletter*

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Issue 5



## ACROSS the LANDS

*Jeff & Joanna Davis, Director*

Some of the strongest people I know in ministry aren't always the ones with briefcases or the ones standing behind pulpits. Often, they're the ones with crumb-filled purses, to-do lists that never quite get finished, and prayer lists that seem to grow longer by the day. Of course, I'm thinking about mothers.

As we enter the month of May, our thoughts turn to **Mother's Day**. Whether she is in Heaven or still with you, I hope you plan to honor your mom this month. I want to challenge each of us, though, to consider another group of mothers—**our missionary moms**—those special saints who sacrifice everything to carry the gospel to the nations. Those who willingly chose to raise their children far away from grandpa and grandma and the familiarity and convenience of home. They learn new languages and new cultures, and face challenges few of us will ever experience. They balance the demands of ministry while caring for their own family, their husband, and their children.

*(continued on p.3)*

# Cross-Cultural COLLABORATION

Part 2

## When Mission Agencies Work Together

● Jeff Davis, Director EMU & Tom Luttmann, Director BVI ●

In early April, the world watched in awe as **Artemis II** soared from Earth on its ten-day lunar flyby mission. Four astronauts blazed a trail of fire toward the moon on the first crewed lunar journey in over half a century. Their mission was daring, but it was not theirs alone. Behind the spacecraft stood a vast team of specialists—engineers, technicians, and international partners whose combined brilliance turned the extraordinary into the possible. In the same way, the work of missions thrives on partnership. That image captures how God advances the gospel across the nations.

At **EMU International**, we are especially thankful for partners like **Tom Luttmann** of **Bible Visuals International**.

Missionary work is never a solitary pursuit. This month, we revisit the theme of collaboration that we introduced last month. His friendship and teamwork with many of our missionary families remind us that when God's servants join forces, Christ's work reaches farther than any of us could dream alone.

BVI is a non-profit ministry based in **Akron, Pennsylvania**, dedicated to "Helping Children See Jesus."



*Tom Luttmann*



Founded in 1959 as an offshoot of Child Evangelism Fellowship of Eastern Pennsylvania, the organization was sparked by the vision of **Helen Odenwelder**, who realized the need for portable, durable teaching tools, leading to the creation of their signature visualized flashcard books.

Since 2010, Tom has served as the **Executive Director** of BVI, bringing with him a background as a **BJU Press** textbook author and a summer missionary with **CEF of Eastern Pennsylvania**. He not only leads the ministry and represents it publicly but also oversees BVI's various production projects. He is joined in this work by his wife, **Betsy**, who provides essential video editing support for the ministry.

*(continued on p.2)*

**Collaboration** *(continued from p.1)*

During my tenure as Director of EMU International, I've had the privilege of getting to know Tom and seeing his heart for BVI's vision firsthand: *"That all children would have the opportunity to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior and to experience God's redemptive power in their lives."* Tom is a good friend to many of our EMU missionaries. He recently told me, "You've got some great folks in the EMU missionary family." Below is an update from his recent trip to Cambodia, followed by other examples of cross-cultural collaboration.

**CAMBODIA**

**Josh and Amy Jensen** serve as missionaries in Cambodia among the **Jarai** people group, and since last year, BVI has partnered to supply a Jarai children's curriculum on the **book of Acts**.



*Jensens & Luttmanns*

I enjoyed a great welcome from the Jensen family, who quickly adopted me into their home. Meals, music, books, games, and study all form the rhythm of this daily life. Living out the Gospel in the space of the home is perhaps the most profound witness missionaries can give to its reality. Over sips of coffee in the morning, I discussed the ongoing project with Josh and Amy. Josh and others have been distributing print copies of individual books of the Bible in Jarai. Despite these books being in the people's heart language (rather than Khmer), adopting a new translation can take time. The Acts children's curriculum will work alongside the new Jarai translation of Acts. As church teachers prepare the weekly lessons, they'll also spend time in the new translation.

One day, I joined Josh and two other men as they traveled several hours north to meet with believers in small Jarai villages. Recent rains made the trek a little challenging in places. Along one hillside, a recently overturned truck served as a warning.

In places like this, where there might only be a handful of believers, these visits can be of great encouragement. As Josh chatted, I noticed him making notes. This is the translator's ongoing work of understanding a language and culture.

Sunday worship proved a trip highlight. We gathered with fellow believers at the Jarai church near the Jensens' home. During the service, they sang "How Great Thou Art." Hearing this familiar tune in a tribal language reminded me of the unity in the Gospel.

The "rolling thunder" arrived later in the service, as the heavens opened and brought intervals of heavy rain just as we made our way to the children's classes. Over the roar of rain on a metal roof, the teachers taught children the **Acts 17 Mars Hill lesson** where Paul boldly declared, *"And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him."* **Acts 17:26-27** This is God's purpose for the Jarai people of Cambodia.

**EMU Collaborations Cambodia**

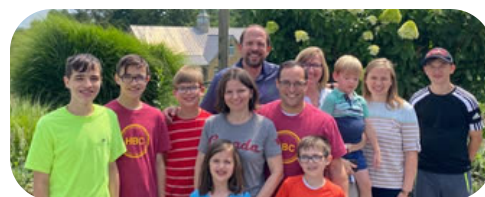


Amy Jensen has written a children's ministry curriculum to accompany the Jarai translation of the book Acts. BVI is working alongside the Jensens by supplying visuals to accompany these lessons. Most of these come from BVI's existing publications; however, additional illustrations are needed, so BVI is working with artist **Abi Farmer (daughter of Jeremy & Bonnie Ruth)** to produce them.

**EMU Collaborations France**

BVI's Family Worship Series books help families gather around the Word of God and worship Him as they read, talk, pray, and sing through the scripture.

**Tim & Ruth Bixby** helped provide a French translator for the **Mark's Gospel** book and have helped with the layout and song selection. Once finalized, the book will be available through Amazon and Amazon.fr, making it easily accessible to others in France.



*Bixbys & Luttmanns*

**EMU Collaborations Uruguay**



*Espinels & Luttmanns*

Matias and Kristine Espinel provided editorial review during the production of BVI's **Advent family worship study**. All of BVI's Family Worship Series books have now been translated into Spanish. Pastors in Uruguay received some of the first fruits during the recent **Workers' Retreat** with **Jeff Davis** and **Dan Wokaty (MGMI)**. BVI and the Espinels continue to work together to ensure these resources are distributed throughout South America. †



*Uruguayan Pastors holding up their Study on the Book of James*

### Across the Lands *(Continued from p.1)*

Still, when I talk with them, they often speak about joy. They find joy in watching their children love people from many nations, in seeing God provide in unique ways, and in serving Christ together as a family.

Missionary moms quietly show a love that crosses borders and supports God's work in ways we may not always see, but God always notices.

As you read this month's updates, will you join me in praying for these faithful women? Pray that they have grace under pressure, joy in everyday moments, and that God protects and guides their families and ministries.

May the Lord bless every mother who helps share the gospel **across the lands**, and may He remind them and us that their work is never wasted.



*Valeria, Ezequiel, Mateo, and Nicolas Gomez*

Speaking of mothers, we want to congratulate **Nico and Val Gomez**, who serve in **Tacuarembó, Uruguay**, on the birth of their second son, **Ezequiel**, on April 11. Mom and baby are doing well, and **Mateo** is already enjoying his new role as big brother and helper.

The annual meeting of the EMU International **Board of Directors** was held Saturday morning, April 18, at **Hampton Park Baptist Church**. In attendance were Chairman **Jeff Davis**, Vice Chairman **Ken Martin**, Treasurer **Nelson Neal**, Secretary **Joan Jensen**, and board members **Ken Jensen, Drew Conley, Greg Mazak, and Rick Miller**. **Steve Ridge** was unable to join us. Our newest board member, former EMU missionary **Tim Chapman**, joined via video conference.

At lunch, the wives of those in attendance joined us at Olive Garden for a sweet time of fellowship. We are grateful for these faithful servants and their leadership.

While many of us are thinking about spring cleaning, several of our missionary families are taking it to the Nth degree—moving boxes included! We're thankful the Lord has met some important housing needs. **John Mark and Deborah Steel** are getting settled into their home in **Malvin, Montevideo**, and tackling repairs and improvements. **Tim and Cheryl Chapman** have also moved into their new home in **Bay City**—nice and close to **Cornerstone Baptist Church**. **Matt and Becky Hancock** continue their work on their new house in **Ou Reang Ov, Cambodia**.

Matt shared this update: *It's been nine months since we broke ground on building our new home, and we are eager to finish this marathon in the next three or four months. The Lord has blessed this process in so many ways in relationships and communication, in protecting all the workers from accidents, in guiding to the right materials, and in providing just the right work teams needed for each phase. In February, we were so encouraged to have a work mission team from Mt. Bethel, PA, visit us. In just over a week of work, they installed almost all of our electrical.*



*Russell Blom and Matt Hancock*

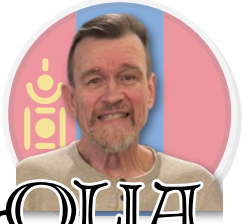
*In addition, Russell & Susan Blom stayed on for an extra month to help with the electrical and plumbing installation. All of this was a fresh reminder that though we sometimes feel quite alone here, we are deeply connected to the body of Christ and are working together to proclaim the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name.*

*(Continued on p.4)*

former missionary  
Tim Chevalier

## Training Nationals in

# MONGOLIA



I traveled to **Mongolia** with EMU missionary **Ted Allston** in 2009, 10, 11, 12, and 18 where we taught multiple Bible courses. Those early trips were with a group of young believers at a critical time in their spiritual development and understanding of God's word. Ted and I developed a very personal connection with this group of believers and, over the years, have sought to advise and encourage them in their development.

In 2020, I was diagnosed with **Parkinson's**, and the disease has progressed significantly. I really wanted to return to Mongolia one last time to follow up and say goodbye. We had planned a trip in October 2024, but that week our area was hit by the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, leaving both of us with issues at our houses that made it impossible to proceed with the trip. I really thought our window of opportunity had passed.

Even though my Parkinson's has progressed significantly, Ted was willing to try to do the trip again, and so we planned for **January 2026**. Many people were concerned that the trip would be too physically demanding, but we trusted the Lord to direct us. We both were convinced it was the right thing to do, and God definitely went before us and prepared the way.

We had three flight connections and nearly 30 hours in airports or airplanes, both going and returning. I never would've made it had it not been for Ted Allston. He had to help me in so many ways because of my Parkinson's limitations, and he was very gracious to do so. By God's grace, we were able to reunite with these dear brothers and sisters in Christ and have quality time together, encouraging one another in the Lord. I really appreciate Ted's willingness to help me go on this trip; it would've been impossible without him.†

# EMU International

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## Across the Lands *(continued from p.3)*

**Brooke Illsley** returned to the U.S. last April after a meaningful season of ministry in **Cambodia**, where she poured herself into discipleship, hospitality, and team support, especially with the **Farmer** family. We rejoice with her as she prepares to marry **Cole Morris** this July and follows the Lord's leading into this new chapter. Please pray for her wedding, her transition to life and ministry in **Savannah**, and for lasting fruit from the relationships she nurtured overseas. Congratulations Brooke!



<https://withjoy.com/brooke-illsley-and-cole-morris>



*Campamento Bethel*



*Campamento Emanuel*

Please pray for **Campamento Bethel** in Uruguay as they recover from a severe windstorm in February that left more than \$80,000 in damage—mainly roof repairs and rebuilding the ladies' dormitory. Also, pray for **Campamento Emanuel** after another storm hit the Canelones coast in early April, bringing down large trees and damaging the playground and perimeter fencing. We're grateful that no buildings were harmed, and local believers are already stepping in; please ask the Lord to provide wisdom, the necessary equipment, and timely resources before the next camp activities. [If you're able, please consider giving toward these recovery needs through the EMU International giving page.](#)



**Billy Judson (India)** continues his MDiv studies in **Disciple Making** through **Bob Jones University**. It's been encouraging to see how intentionally he is putting those principles into practice as he mentors leaders and strengthens local churches across India. Recently, **Good News Bible College & Seminary** marked its 27th year with three graduation services—52 graduates in **Secunderabad**, 17 in **Ongole**, and 50 in **Eluru**—sending trained workers into regions where solid Bible teaching is scarce.



Pray for **John and Susie Lehman** as they serve in **India, Mongolia, and Japan** this month. **Cedric and Candy Wong** return to **Hong Kong** in late May. And please pray for me as I finalize plans to visit **Tom and Connie Chapman** in **Chile** in early June. Thank you for praying and laboring with us as Christ builds His church across the lands.