

EMU⁺ *Newsletter*

INTERNATIONAL

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Issue 7

ACROSS the LANDS

Jeff & Joanna Davis, Director



AMERICA at 250

CELEBRATING GOD'S HEART FOR THE NATIONS

As our country marks its 250th anniversary, patriotism is in full swing. Yet even as we give thanks for God's grace in America's story, we remember that our highest citizenship is in heaven and our calling reaches far beyond our borders. God has used America as a launching pad for global missions, but His work has never belonged to one nation alone. His purpose is that His salvation be known "among all nations" (Psalm 67:2) until a multitude from "every nation, tribe, people and language" stands before the Lamb (Revelation 7:9). That is the heart behind my message, "**America at 250 and God's Heart for the Nations**": to look back with gratitude, look around with clarity, and look forward with renewed purpose in the global advance of the gospel. Please pray for me as I have the privilege of sharing this message each week in July, in North Carolina, Michigan, and Minnesota. I invite you to join me in praying for open hearts, lasting impact, and that together we would embrace God's vision for the world.

(Continued on p.4)

Brooke Illsley – the soon to be Mrs. Cole Morris

A BENEDICTION

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Far More Abundantly

Can we truly fathom the multitude of our own sins and the great need we have for a Savior? Can we ever fully understand the power at work within us? His grace and mercy are abundant! Take a minute to add some more thoughts to "all that we ask or think," and know that God is able to do FAR more. God is so gracious and vast in his love and goodness toward us.

As a young child, God directed me toward missions. In his sovereign plan, he orchestrated each step along the path that led me to **Cambodia**, the **Farmer family**, and the **Khmer** and **Lao** people. As an adult woman, he continues to faithfully guide me and do far more abundantly than I could ever ask or think. Part of that abundance has been the privilege to watch the Farmer children grow up. I didn't know, I couldn't fathom, the plan that God had for me. My plans were for 9 months; his were for **12 years**. A very unexpected part of that abundance was meeting **Cole** and the blessing of marrying him on Saturday, July 18. By God's grace and patient love, he is working a great power in us to shape us into the image of Christ. All glory to God!

Last Update Letter

How can I write a letter that contains all the gratitude and emotions that I feel here at the end of my ministry with **EMU International**? There aren't adequate words for some of the emotions I have been feeling as I type this letter. Bittersweet doesn't quite cover it. God has created us in such an amazing way! I am overwhelmed with excitement for my upcoming marriage and life with Cole, and with sadness at leaving the Farmers and Cambodia. All of that is blanketed with joy, as Christ continues to show his faithfulness in all things.

The apostle Paul came and went often among those with whom he shared the gospel. He regularly wrote letters for various reasons and often finished them with a blessing. As I read the benediction at the end of the letter to the Ephesians, I know I have been living under that blessing. God's great, unfathomable plan of salvation reaches to all people groups and all corners of the world, even me.



The Lao Church in Na Ong Village, Cambodia

(Continued on p.2)



PRECIOUS MEMORIES WITH PRECIOUS PEOPLE

I've been blessed to watch the growth of God's church in Cambodia. People who had never heard of Christ, now live and die as followers of Christ. God's faithfulness to his people helps me look forward to the future generations that will give him glory.

We finished our school year! **Eden** graduated! Summer has begun! It's been quite the competition this year to figure out who is most excited for the end of the school year.

Abi, the oldest Farmer, is getting married on July 31st to an amazing young man! She has one more year of college in order to finish her nursing degree, so they will continue to live in Greenville, SC.

Isa graduated in May and is now working at a child development center in the Greenville area. Lord willing, she will have the opportunity to travel to Cambodia with the Farmers and stay with them for about 5 weeks to help get the next school year started.

Gloria is entering the 3rd year of her nursing program and doing well! She is looking forward to this coming semester as she has some new leadership opportunities in her dorm.

Eden graduated! Senioritis hit hard in the last weeks of school, but she persevered and wrapped up the first 18 years of her growth and education at home. She is entering Bob Jones University in the fall and pursuing a degree in kinesiology.

Judson and **Salem** have finished their 9th-grade year and are now entering the wise-fool year. Judson is taller than Jeremy (at least when his hair is poofy-curly) and has thoroughly enjoyed the local disc golf scene while in America. Salem is growing into a lovely young woman and has embraced the discipline of karate at the Scota Karate Academy. All five kids love it, but she is all in!

Henry and **Elisha** definitely thought they looked forward to summer more than anyone else! And now they're bored. Just kidding. It was hard for them since they wrapped up a little earlier than their siblings, but now their time is filled with audiobooks, legos, puzzles, karate, library visits, park visits. They're not bored anymore. They finished 4th grade and are looking forward to finally being back in Cambodia for 5th grade.

Jeremy, Bonnie Ruth, Judson, Salem, Henry, and Elisha will hop on a plane on **September 15th** and take the long journey back to Cambodia, leaving behind 4 daughters/sisters. Pray for them as they settle into a new normal and new rhythms of life. As with all beginnings and endings, there is sadness and excitement. They look forward to joining the church in **Na Ong** and ministering to and growing alongside those brothers and sisters in Christ.†

Tom & Connie Chapman
Missionaries to Antofagasta, Chile

LITTLE MADE MUCH



June has always been a special month for us, with two grandchildren celebrating birthdays and 4 of our 6 children celebrating anniversaries. Now we have added some special June events to our cherished memories here in Chile. We are happy to share two of these in this update of what God is doing in **Antofagasta**.

When we learned that **Jeff Davis**, our mission director, was taking a weeklong trip to visit us, we began thinking about activities we would do with him. During his first visit, we took him to some mining ruins about an hour away. Also, we visited a few other sites in the city and showed him the places where **Emanuel Bible Church** was located in past years. In our isolated desert city, the nearest tourist sites are 3 and 5 hours away and really demand an overnight stay to take advantage of the area. Knowing how much Jeff travels, we also wanted to give him a comfortable place to rest and time to work when he needed to.

Then the Lord put it in our hearts to ask if he would be willing to do a **Men's Conference**.

For our church, it would be a first-time event designed especially for men. We presented the idea to **Pastor Daniel**, and he was excited about the prospect, not just for the men of our church, but for the men in the three other churches with which we have fellowship. This kind of event has never been possible before because of the limited space in each church. What a blessing it is to have the new building and to now be using the four classrooms that the men are still laboring so hard to finish.

(Continued on p.3)



Maria Teresa "Chicha" Rodriguez
Missionary serving in Uruguay

**GOD'S
GOOD
HAND**

*The hand of our
God is for good, upon
all who seek him."
Ezra 8:22*



Construction at Camp Bethel in Uruguay

The theme of the "good hand of God" runs throughout the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. As I understand it, it refers to God's power, His strength, His work, and His ability to help His people to accomplish their tasks. Specifically, in the book of Nehemiah, they did a reconstruction job, and the task was accomplished in record time - 52 days! (*Nehemiah 6:15*) Many of you may have already heard that during a storm in February, the roof of the women's cabin at **Camp Bethel** was completely destroyed, and as a result, the walls and floors were also damaged. Consequently, the area had to be cleared of the destroyed dorm and prepared for building a new dorm from the ground up.



Ladies Retreat at Camp Bethel in Uruguay

If the needed funds are made available soon, the project could be finished by the end of August or the beginning of September. We still need about \$50,000 USD.

Next week, God willing, work will begin on installing the new roof. As the funds come in, we still need to purchase doors and windows, plastering materials for the exterior and interior, electrical wiring, floor tiles, and paint. We also need to pay the wages of two other men who are working every day.

In our hearts, we know that God is good to us, and we are very encouraged by all He is doing! Thus far, the Lord has helped us! Gifts from believers in Uruguay, as well as from some of you in the States, have enabled us to get off to a good start on the project.

For those who haven't yet financially contributed to this project, we encourage you to pray about becoming part of it. As in the days of Nehemiah, working in groups can accomplish much more. *Visit the link at the bottom of the page to give.*

I am writing from **Greenville, SC**, where I've come to escape the cold days of winter in Uruguay. It is always a joy and a blessing to be with my family and with God's family here, with whom I share a beautiful bond of love and fellowship in the Lord. I trust in God that His good hand will be with me during the weeks I'm here, and that He will help me remain close to Him and fulfill His ministry in every opportunity He gives me.†



Family Retreat at Camp Bethel in Uruguay



Designate
"Camp Bethel"

Chile Update

(Continued from p.2)



Jeff preaching at the Men's Conference in Antofagasta, Chile, in Emanuel Bible Church's newly constructed building.

There was a great response, and 48 men attended the three sessions on Christlike male leadership in the areas of personal character, family life, and church participation. We would like to share some comments from some of the men who show how God is using Jeff's teaching to change their personal lives and relationships. For instance, one man said after the session on family relationships, "I needed this!"

Another young 20-year-old wrote, "It was very edifying, especially when he spoke about surrendering the sins in our lives to the Lord, since it directly influences our personal lives, our relationships with our families, and our relationship with the church. That specific point was very helpful to me in being more diligent and less hypocritical in how I live my life when I'm alone, with my family, and with the church, since my sin affects how I relate to my family and brothers and sisters. It was also wonderful to meet the brothers and sisters in the church; it's nice to learn about other congregations and see how the Lord works in different places with different people."

Another wrote, "The men's conference in Antofagasta by Pastor Jeff Davis was a blessing. It encouraged us to be consistent in loving our wives and children, and to assume the discipline that corresponds to fathers, leading spiritually in the home. It made me understand that we must take steps to remodel our homes to instruct our children in the fear of the Lord and to draw our wives ever closer to the Lord. What we do today in our homes will impact the lives of our children, leaving a legacy for eternity."

(Continued on p.4)

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Across the Lands *(continued from p.1)*

In **Cancún**, three armed men entered the church during the **June 17 Wednesday service**, forcing everyone to the floor and stealing cash, phones, keys, and other valuables while also ransacking the nursery, children's room, and the **Núñez** home upstairs. Police arrived three minutes after the thieves fled, and the church gathered to pray, sing a hymn, and read *Hebrews 10:34* together. Over the next three days, the men of the church installed cameras and other security measures, and many stolen items—including the stolen getaway car and all of the cell phones—were eventually recovered. Although one unsaved family stopped attending, the rest of the congregation has returned, and Marco reports that the church has actually grown closer and attendance is up in all services; pray for the Nuñezes and their church family as they continue forward in faith, trusting God's presence and justice. **Marco and Gwendolyn** will make a short furlough visit to **Colorado** July 2–21, where they will visit five churches.

Please pray for **Tim and Ruth Bixby** and their family as they are on a short furlough in the States from **June 23 to August 27**. Their packed travel schedule includes updates at 20 churches in 10 different states. Pray also for **Pastor Albert Xandry** and his wife, **Patricia**, who will care for their church in Paris during their absence. Albert recently took early retirement from his teaching position in order to devote himself more fully to the work of the ministry.

Matt and Becky Hancock are nearing the final stages of construction on their new house in **Ou Reang Ov, Cambodia**. They hope to move in by the end of August. Matt's parents plan to visit and help during that time.

I met briefly last week with **Rick Jensen** and discussed the final preparations for the upcoming **"Rick's Projects" Worktrip for Ururuay**, at **Camp Emmanuel**, August 3–16. These projects will strengthen year-round ministry to children, teens, families, and pastors. Please pray for safety, unity, and provision, and consider giving toward these needs so the camp can continue serving with excellence. View a detailed list of these projects in last month's newsletter.†

Chile Update *(Continued from p.3)*

Our other June blessing grew out of a sad happening in February. Our new building was broken into, and the electric Yamaha piano, security cameras, and digital projector were stolen. Since then, Connie and others have had to make do with a 5-octave keyboard. The Lord has turned this loss into a tremendous blessing by providing **a grand piano** for the church. We initiated it this past Sunday, and everyone was overjoyed and thankful. Our church loves to sing, and the new piano adds to that time of praise and worship each time we meet. We are also working to train several young people who can become future pianists.

We hope you were blessed as we reflect on the way God has taken our "little" and made it into a more far-reaching blessing for others. God is building His church where the truth of His Word is being proclaimed in this needy city. Thank you for your prayers and support through the years. To God be the Glory!†