

10

Countries

38

US Missionaries

59

National Missionaries

1

Great Commission



- Works of Evangelism
- Establishing Churches
- Equipping Nationals



EXHORT EQUIP

ENLIST ENGAGE

A Culture of Discipleship



A ministry leader stood before a group of pastors and challenged their assumptions. "Let's see how much you know about what business certain companies represent." He called out different brand names and asked them what the business was of each company. "I'm going to say a brand name or a popular trademark. I want you to answer, with only one word, what the business is that the company represents. Are you ready?"

"Starbucks." "Coffee."

"Toyota." "Cars."

"Rolex." "Watches."

No problem. These were too easy. So, he gave them one more. "What about the Church?"

Silence filled the room as the pastors contemplated an answer. What is the business of the church? We have a purpose. Jesus even laid out our mission for us when He said, "make disciples of all nations." That is what drives each of our EMU missionaries, but that should also drive each one of us as

Christians. A church can do a lot of things, but it must have as its foundational purpose to glorify God by making disciples, and the target market is the world.

One country that has been a focus of EMU International since August of 1995 is the country of Mexico. God worked in the heart of Marco Nuñez, a middle-aged man who had immigrated to the USA, attained U.S. citizenship, and then was called of *continued*



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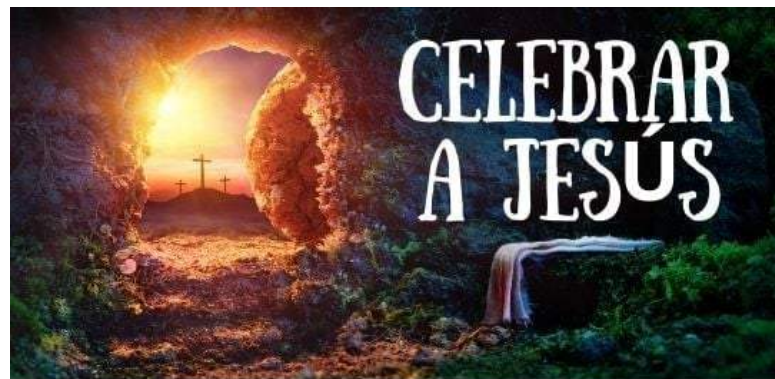
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God to return to his homeland. He and his wife, Gwendolyn, serve in Cancún, a city that has in the past fifty years been transformed from a small fishing village to a thriving tourist destination where nearly one million people now live and work. Shortly after arriving in Mexico, Marco founded the First Fundamental Baptist Church. He began his ministry by visiting with the workers who had come into Cancún from outside cities and villages. He would take them bottled water and witness to them. Some people laughed at him, but some listened. Several were saved and a church was launched. Marco then began a Bible school to train the nationals to reach their own people. He now supports 7 of his graduates who have been commissioned by his church to begin churches across the Yucatán Peninsula:

- **Ciro Alvarado** – Santa Martha, Chiapas
- **Antonio “Toño” Alvarado** – Cancún, Quintana Roo
- **Pascual Balam (Leydi)** – Chemax, Yucatán
- **Tomas Noh** – Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo
- **Vicente Puc** – Valladolid, Yucatán
- **Jose Luis Uc** – Becal, Campeche
- **Newest student Daniel Hernandez** – Cancún, Quintana Roo

I sat on the runway at Raleigh Durham International airport, having breezed through security and boarded the Delta Boeing B752 that would take me through Atlanta and then on to Cancún, Mexico. My phone rang as I was trying to get settled into my seat. “Hello,” I said through the stifling required face cloth. On the other end was a friend who served on staff with me at one of my previous ministries. He was needling me about taking a mission trip to Cancún. Who wouldn’t want that gig?

It had been 397 days since my last international flight. Due to COVID, I had to cancel or postpone trips to Mexico, Peru, Chile, Uruguay, and Alaska. Even with the added challenges of masks, social distancing, and negative COVID tests, I was thrilled to finally be able to make the two hours and twenty-three-minute flight to visit with my dear friends, Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez.



Miércoles 31 de marzo - Viernes 2 de abril - Domingo 4 de abril



Primera Iglesia Bautista Fundamental de Cancun
Playa Hermosa No. 25, Supermanzana 29 Manzana 8, Cancún, Quintana Roo 77500

Marco had invited me to come for Easter weekend. We began to plan and settled on an intense but enjoyable and fruitful schedule. I spoke at Marco’s church on Wednesday evening, on Good Friday, in the morning and the evening of Easter Sunday, and then the following Wednesday. Each of the messages centered around Holy Week: the Upper Room, the Cross, the Empty Tomb, and the declaration of Jesus that He is the resurrection and the life. Due to COVID, the attendance at his church is running around 80% of what is normal. But the energy among the church family was encouraging for me. Despite the government-mandated face coverings, the singing was enthusiastic. Every service the congregation quoted Scripture and then the books of the Bible. This also is the common practice in each of the church plants. Following each service the people stayed and fellowshiped for a long time. It was the perfect time of the year to visit. The temperature in Cancún is usually just under 90 degrees this time of year, but Marco and Gwendolyn were amazed at the pleasant temperatures and good weather we experienced. We had a couple of needed rain showers that seemed to keep the temperatures down, at least relatively. I enjoyed the daily walks and discussions with Marco. His vision for the ministry continues to grow. He told me that he has a goal of seeing at least one person saved per month. During the time of my visit, he had already seen two people saved that month. Gwendolyn is an exceptional cook, and she kept us well fed. Marco wanted me to experience some of the regional cuisines at several local restaurants and get the full experience of some famous street tacos. I love spicy foods. If I believed in reincarnation, I would think that I probably was Mexican in a previous life.





(standing l-r) Jose Luis, Marco, Jeff, & Toño
(sitting l-r) Pascual, Daniel, Vicente, & Tomas

In addition to ministering to his church, Marco had invited his pastors to join us for twelve sessions of training on Monday through Wednesday where I taught on how to teach others to study the Bible. All but Ciro were able to attend. I really enjoyed spending time with these men who impressed me with their desire to grow and develop their pastoral leadership skills. The sessions were energetic, and everyone participated in the discussions.

Discipleship is about relationships. Consider the examples of Jesus and the Apostle Paul. They didn't just preach one service or lead a Sunday School class. They were pouring their lives into individuals.

Someone once said, "The gospel came to you because it was heading to someone else. God never intended for your salvation to be an end, but a beginning. God saved you to be a conduit through whom His glorious, life-changing gospel would flow to others. You are a link in the chain of **2 Timothy 2:2**, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*

As we were concluding the training sessions, I looked at each one of his pastors and said, "Tomas, you need to find your Tomas." "Vicente, you need to find your Vicente." Our goal should not be to just teach someone the Bible but to teach others the Bible and equip them so that they will be able to teach others. The result is a culture of discipleship. That should be the goal of each of our ministries. I was thrilled to spend nine days in Cancún, Mexico, where I witnessed that culture of discipleship in the lives and ministries of our missionaries, Marco and Gwendolyn Nuñez. To view an online album of my trip to Mexico visit <https://emuinternational.org/jeffmexico/>

My return flight took me back to Raleigh, NC, where I was greeted by my friend Joe Henson, who let me park my car at his church. Joe has a huge burden for missions and is leading a church revitalization effort at Trinity Bible Church in Durham. The pollen that covered my car reminded me of what season we were experiencing in the South. The next day I drove to Beckley, WV, where I preached at Beckley Regular Baptist Church, pastored by Steven Beverly. I had re-connected with this pastor through a contact I made at a Discipleship Conference a couple of years earlier. The first time we met was back in 2004 when Tabernacle Baptist Church in Wilson, NC, the church I was pastoring at the time, hosted a Discipleship Conference. It was a joy to introduce this church family to the ministry of EMU International and share how each of our missionaries is seeking to obey the Great Commission by making disciples of all nations.

I spent the next two days at Appalachian Bible College in Mount Hope, West Virginia. Back in October the school held its annual Missions Conference. During a morning session, I spoke on "Missions and Prayer," and then in the afternoon session I told the story of how God has used our team of missionaries in Cambodia, a country that 27 years ago was still in darkness. At that time there was not a single person among the six tribal groups in Ratanakiri Province, NE Cambodia, who had even heard the name, Jesus. Today, there are over 3,000 believers in six previously unreached people groups meeting in over 70 churches with over 100 first-generation and second-generation church leaders. New churches are being planted by the local believers at the rate of about one every nine months. Perhaps more surprising is that the churches now run their own completely indigenous Bible school programs in four different languages using their own teachers and their own finances: disciples making disciples. That is what it is all about.



Dr. Dan Anderson serves as the President of ABC. He had invited me to preach one of the last chapel messages of the school year. I spoke on Psalm 46, a message that I call, “No Fear.” This passage has been especially encouraging to me throughout the global pandemic. This Psalm is known as Luther’s Psalm, after the great reformer Martin Luther. It is said that in times of furious opposition, he was heard to say to Melancthon, “Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm, and let the devil do his worst.” Based on this Psalm, he composed “Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.” Today we sing Frederick Hedge’s translation, known as the familiar hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” Interestingly, Luther composed the hymn in 1527, a time of global pandemic as the dreaded black plague had decimated Wittenberg, Germany.

Most of us are familiar with the command found in verse 10, “Be still, (literally stop your striving) and know that I am God,” but do we pay attention to the second part of the verse? “I will be exalted among the heathen (among the nations), I will be exalted in the earth.” We have all seen the words, “Be still” on a lovely postcard or stitched on a pillow. The scene is usually a quiet, peaceful meadow at sunset or something similar. Though that is not the context of this passage. This command is given against the scene of mountains being hurled into the sea and amidst destructive floods and earthquakes. God is shouting out to us, “Be still, stop striving! I am at work. I will be exalted among the nations. Trust me. I am your refuge and strength. I am your help in time of trouble.” “The body they may kill; His truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever.”

I also had the unexpected opportunity of preaching the same message to a group of college students at Maranatha Baptist University in Watertown, Wisconsin, for one of their last chapel messages of the school year. I had found a discounted plane ticket to Madison, WI, and had arranged to spend two Sundays in the area. I spoke at Rock Lake Baptist Church, in Lake Mills, pastored by my old college buddy Robert Stroup, for a Missions Emphasis Sunday on April 25.



I then spent a week with Pastor Chad Prigge and his family in Watertown. Chad pastors the Fellowship Baptist Church about two miles from Maranatha Baptist University. He and I had met approximately one year earlier when his son Caleb Prigge married my daughter Abby. It was a joy to spend the week with him and connect with ministry leaders in the Watertown area.

I visited the campus of Maranatha on Monday and attended chapel. I was blessed by the preaching of one of the students, Micah Herbster, son of Mike Herbster, director of Southland Christian Camp. After chapel I spent time with several of the faculty at a reception and connected with the President, Dr. Marty Marriott. He was the founding pastor of Oak Ridge Baptist Church, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Mark Herbster serves as Dean of the College of Bible and Church Ministries. This was my first time on the campus, so he gave me a tour and shared with me the history of the school. He mentioned that they had another student scheduled to speak on Tuesday. I told him that I would be back for chapel the next day and would have lunch and then hang out in the dining common and library. On Tuesday morning, one hour before chapel, I received a phone call from Mark that the student was sick and would not be able to speak and would I be willing to preach for chapel. I told him that I would see him in an hour, and I preached the same message on Psalm 46.

On Sunday, May 2, Fellowship Baptist Church hosted a Missions Emphasis Sunday, and I had the privilege of preaching both morning services and sharing the ministry of EMU International during the evening service. It is always exciting to see people responding to the message of missions, to make disciples of all nations. When introducing me to his congregation, Chad said, “Jeff is a preacher at heart.” It is my burden when I preach to get people to understand that too often we have relegated evangelism, discipleship, and missions to simply being programs that we add to an already overly crowded calendar when biblically we see that each of these is part of God’s pattern for what our churches should be. To put it simply, our ministries should be marked by a culture of discipleship. Whether that is taking place in Christian colleges, church revitalization or church planting efforts, or global missions endeavors, discipleship should be as natural as the next breath we take. We are called to be disciples and to make disciples. Starbucks is known for coffee. Toyota is known for cars. Rolex is known for watches. What about the church? †



Thank you for your faithful financial support and prayers for our missionaries. Like Paul in Philippians 1:3-11, we are grateful for your fellowship (partnership) in the Gospel.

On Memorial Day, I spoke to Mohamed, one of the nicest young men that I have ever met. He was born in Saudi Arabia into a wealthy Muslim family. As I talked with Mohamed about his background, he began to open up to me about his impressions of America. He had come to the States with multiple misconceptions. He had found a different country than the one that he had imagined. There was much to be commended about our country and he was glad to be here. At the same time, he was grieved by what you and I would call carnality. He is trying to rear children with standards of modesty and respect. I asked him what he knew about Christianity. He said that he had talked with some people about Jesus and had even visited a couple of churches. He told me that much of what we believe is similar. My next comments would be intentional as I tried to find common ground for conversation. I started by agreeing that there were many similarities, but that Muslims believe that Jesus was a good man and that Christians believe that Jesus is God. "That is a huge difference," I said. He nodded in agreement. I went on to say that I have talked with people from many different religions and when it comes down to it there are only two ideas. One is people try to work their way to God. The other is what Christianity teaches; God came to us in the person of Jesus Christ. When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He did for us what we could not do for ourselves. I mentioned John 3:16 and how God loved the world and gave His Son. I mentioned Ephesians 2:8-9, how salvation was a gift from God and that it was not of works. I pointed out that the difference between the teachings of Islam and the teachings of the Bible is that Jesus paid it all and there is nothing we can do but believe. I used the illustration of my daughter having to trust me to catch her when she was stuck in the treehouse and that each one of us in faith must leap into the arms of God by putting our faith in Jesus. When I left Mohamed, he mentioned how much he had enjoyed our thirty-minute conversation. He gave me his phone number and even offered for me to stay at his house if I was ever in the area again. I introduced him to a youth leader who is going to try to cultivate the relationship and hopefully see Mohamed and his family trust Jesus. Please pray with me for God to work in Mohamed's heart.

My daughter Hannah and I had the privilege of traveling out West to visit ministry friends in Colorado and Utah this past



month. We were glad to spend a few days together before she begins her fifth summer working at the Wilds Christian Camp. We also were able to spend some time with my son who is in Sandy, Utah, with the goal of planting a church. On each of our flights, Hannah went into evangelist mode as she struck up conversations with the ladies sitting next to her. Three of the four were Christians and they passed the time encouraging each other in the Lord. On our last flight, our seats were not next to each other. As we made our way to the gate, the announcement was made that they were looking for volunteers to move their seats to the front of the plane. We were the first to the ticketing agent. They reassigned us next to each other and put us on the front row. I rejoiced that we were next to each other but also was grateful for the extra legroom. In God's providence, we were put next to a young professional lady who was returning from her grandfather's funeral. This lady was from a staunch L.D.S. (Mormon) family, but she was not actively involved in the church. God gave Hannah great wisdom as she tactfully established a relationship with this young lady and then used the Bible to share Christ. Please pray for God to use the Gospel seed that was planted in the heart of this young lady.

My prayers this morning were for each of our missionaries who are serving in cultures that are religious but inundated with false teaching. I am thinking about the strong Catholic teachings that influence the people of Mexico, South America, France, and Croatia. I am thinking about India with its predominant Hindu teaching. I am thinking about the animistic Buddhists of Cambodia. I am thinking about the teachings of Islam that dominate the 10-40 Window. Each of these false religions is trying to somehow work their way to God when God has already done the work. Would you join me in prayer and ask God to give our missionaries wisdom as they confront false teaching with the true Gospel of Jesus Christ?



Front Range Baptist Church
Fort Collins, CO



Kent and Tabitha Woods with
Hannah and me



Pastor Danny Brooks



Gospel Hope Church
Riverton, UT



PRAYER FOCUS

Please pray as I continue to assist Billy Judson, missionary to India as we put together a virtual conference called Good News 360 which will include ten speakers from the USA. The logistics of this are very demanding, but the potential is incredible.

- June 1 - Meadowlake Baptist Church, Mobile, AL
- June 13 - Grace Baptist Fellowship - Verona, TN
- June 14-16 - FBFI National Fellowship
Colonial Hills Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN
- June 26 - EMU Annual Board Meeting
- June 30 - Westgate Baptist Church, Spartanburg, SC
Family Conference
- July 23-August 3 - ALASKA TRIP
- July 25 - Sterling Baptist Church, Sterling, AK
- July 26-28 - FBFI Regional Fellowship
I will be speaking each day of the conference
- August 1 - Soldotna Baptist Church, Soldotna, AK

I would love the opportunity of sharing with your church family how God is using the ministry of EMU International and to encourage a culture of discipleship within your church with an ultimate goal of taking this message to the world. For more information, please contact me via email: jeff@emuinternational.org



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