

10 Countries
38 US Missionaries
51 National Missionaries
1 Great Commision

Jeff and Joanna Davis

- Works of Evangelism
- Establishing Churches
- Equipping Nationals



EXHORT  EQUIP

ENLIST  ENGAGE

March 2023

SUMMON THE HEROES

We gazed in awe at the breathtaking view of the night sky as we stood on the small cliff overlooking the beach in Guazuvirá, Uruguay. We were only a half mile from Campamento Emanuel. One of our missionaries told me that I needed to take Kevin Oberlin down to the shore and just look up. We were amazed at the exhilarating view of the Milky Way, which stretched across the sky like a sparkling river, dotted with countless constellations. While the north pole faces outwards to the universe beyond, the south pole points to the galactic center of the Milky Way. I had been told that because we were in the southern hemisphere, there is no South Star like we have the North Star. Instead, lighting the celestial display is the Southern Cross, a well-known symbol of the region. With minimal light pollution, the stars appear brighter and more vibrant, making it a breathtaking sight. We quoted together a verse that I preached on just a few days earlier at Family Camp, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament (the skies above) sheweth (proclaims) His handywork." Psalm 19:1

My journey for my annual trip to Uruguay began a little over a week earlier when I left home at 5 a.m. on February 17. I had to sit in Charlotte all day, waiting for my flight to Miami. I worked extensively translating notes for our sessions from English into Spanish. I can understand a little Spanish, but I don't speak well at all. "Mi español es muy malo." (My Spanish is very bad). I am, however, fluent in Google Translate. With the help of Google and the little bit of Spanish that I know, I was able to put together the notes for our Workers' Retreat and build an entire deck of PowerPoint slides.



When I arrived in Uruguay the next morning, I breezed through Passport Control and Immigration and was greeted by Pedro Donzé, our camp director. The weather was beautiful with temperatures in the low 60s. Pedro told me that the week before the temperature had risen to 104 degrees, the highest it had been in years. They had had a big storm, and the temperature dropped to 48 degrees. Shortly after arriving at the camp, Pedro showed me around so I could see the many projects that had been accomplished. They have taken down a lot of trees to protect the buildings and to open the campsite. Fortunately, they were able to sell the wood for a small profit. Saturday was a busy day of preparation for my ministry on Sunday and for the upcoming Family Camp.



EMU International
 209 Roberts Road
 Taylors, SC 29687
 (864) 268-9267
 office@emuinternational.org

Jeff & Joanna Davis
 119 Oak Wind Circle
 Greer, SC 29651
 (864) 617-7156
 jeff@emuinternational.org
 mrspastorjd@gmail.com

pastorjeffdavis.com

On Sunday, Pedro and his family took me to Chicha Rodriguez's house. She drove me to San Fernando where we met Alberto and Carolina Diaz at Emmanuel Church. I preached on the Publican and the Pharisee, a bad man saved, and a good man lost. Chicha did an outstanding job translating for me. Following the preaching, everyone stayed for a time of fellowship with coffee and cakes. We enjoyed a delicious meal at the Diaz's house. This would be the first of my many interviews with our Uruguayan workers over the next two weeks. On the way back to camp, we stopped for a sweet visit with Ursula Thiessen. Many of you know her story and have read her small autobiography, which was first printed in 2020. She was one of the first graduates from the Bible Institute. She currently lives with her sister in a small house on property owned by her niece. Though she can't get out like she once did, she is still faithfully serving the Lord from home. She turned 95 the following Friday.



Kevin Oberlin, the pastor of Beth Haven Baptist Church in Simpsonville, SC, and the Dean of the School of Religion at Bob Jones University, arrived in Uruguay around 1 pm that Saturday. Pedro and I picked him up at the airport and then took him to an area restaurant so we could treat him to Uruguay's national dish, the chivito al plato. Uruguayans are proud of their football (soccer) and of their beef. As the largest producer of beef per capita in the world, Uruguay is a meat-lovers paradise. Immediately, we had won Kevin's heart (or his stomach) to the culture of this small South American country. Kevin has traveled to over 60 different countries and has served several years in Southeast Asia. This was his first trip to South America. We went back to the camp to unpack and then returned to Montevideo where we ministered in a youth meeting at Emmanuel Church of El Cerro, pastored by Ovidio Acevedo.



On Monday, campers began to arrive. Pedro wanted to give Chicha a break from translating, so Rosanna Gomez, wife of Pastor Gaby Gomez, translated for me. She did an excellent job as I spoke on the camp theme of "The Authoritative Word of God." Over the next several days, I would speak to as many as 128 campers on my theme, "Can I Trust My Bible?": (1) "God Has Spoken" – Revelation, (2) "The Authority of the Bible" – Inspiration, (3) "The Implications of Inspiration" – Inerrancy, (4) "Why 66 Books?" – The Canon of Scripture, (5) "The Clarity of the Bible" – Illumination, and (6) "Answering the Critic" – Interpretation. Pastor Ovidio Acevedo spoke in four other sessions on the theme of Bible prophecy. Several of our workers were present, which allowed me to hold more interviews with these amazing servants. The temperature gradually climbed all week until we had another storm to cool everything off, just in time for the weekend. The family camp officially ended on Saturday morning.

Sunday was a full day for us. We were with Pastor Gustavo de Oliveira for the morning service at Calvary Temple of Montevideo. Kevin preached a challenging message on intercessory prayer, followed by an hour of corporate prayer with the members of the church. We spent the afternoon with John Mark and Deborah Steel at the home of Matias and Kristine Espinel. The Church at Siloé had scheduled a baptism service on Sunday night at Calvary Temple of Montevideo. What a joy to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of three precious church members. On the way back to camp that night, we stopped at the beach to look at the stars.



On Monday morning, our Uruguayan national workers began to arrive at camp for our workers' retreat. Though none of them wear a cape or have superpowers, they are my heroes. They are the ones who are in the trenches faithfully serving the Lord, often without any recognition. As I interviewed each of our workers, I was again touched by their love for Christ, His Word, and His church. We meet together each year at the end of February for a special time of edification and encouragement in the work. This year we summoned these heroes with a unique purpose. Though Kevin is a tremendous preacher, I wanted him to coach our group



for ten highly interactive sessions on the subject of leadership. We took the word for “lead,” which is “líder” in Spanish, and built an acrostic that formed the framework for our sessions.

L.í.D.E.R. – Effectively Managing Your Life:
L – Lessons | í – Intentionally Eliminate | D - Design
E - Execute | R – Review / Rest / Recreate



These sessions would have been highly unusual for any of us to participate in, but for the Uruguayans, it was way outside of their comfort zone. I jumped in during the first session and started to ask pointed questions to individuals. They were a little slow to respond at first, but they started to warm up, and by the end, we could not keep them quiet. It was an exciting week of discussion, role-playing, and prayer. We could not have led these incredible sessions without the help of Matias and John Mark for translation. On Thursday, we had our last session. Everyone seemed to appreciate the discussion and the teaching style. I'm hoping that coaching becomes a big part of our future strategy, particularly with future generations. As the conference ended, it was a joy to get a big hug from each of my heroes.

Before Kevin returned to the USA, we took him to Piriápolis so he could shop for a few souvenirs and taste some of the delicious Uruguayan ice cream. I stayed around through the weekend. Calvary Temple celebrated Chicha's birthday with a special service on Saturday with over 180 people in attendance. I spoke on Sunday in Pando at Bethel Church for Pastor Carlos Olivera. Later that afternoon Chicha and I saw the Olivera's new house and enjoyed a delicious cookout with one of his church families. I returned to the USA on Tuesday with my heart full of gratitude for how God had blessed this extremely busy trip.



One week earlier, as Kevin, Matias, and I gazed at the night sky, without my stargazing app, I recognized the distinct pattern of Orion located on the celestial equator, named after the hunter in Greek mythology. We discussed how for thousands of years the heroes of mythology have been immortalized by the names of the various constellations. Orion is mentioned three times in the Bible: Job 9:9; 38:31; and Amos 5:8. While the Greeks and Romans sought to immortalize their heroes, we know that the heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), the Hero behind our heroes who are serving in Uruguay.

To view a photo album of Jeff's trip to Uruguay, including a link to Chicha's 80th birthday celebration:
<https://emuinternational.org/uruguay2023/> †

