



RISE UP AND BUILD

When news of Jerusalem’s condition reached Nehemiah, it broke his heart. Scripture says he *“sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven”* (Nehemiah 1:4). The walls were in ruins, the gates burned, and the people were left without protection. His first response was prayer. Later, when King Artaxerxes asked what troubled him, Nehemiah prayed again and then boldly spoke. God moved in the king’s heart, granting him favor and the resources needed for the task. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he quietly surveyed the damage, gathered the people, and shared what God had placed on his heart. Their answer still stirs me: *“Let us rise up and build.”* And the Scripture adds, *“So they strengthened their hands for this good work”* (Nehemiah 2:18).

As we reach the midpoint of 2026, that phrase captures exactly what God is doing **across the lands**. The Lord has allowed me, within the last twelve months, to witness firsthand his work in **Peru**, in **Uruguay**, in **Mexico**, and among the **Arab world** right here in the USA. We have also been privileged to interact with missionaries from **Cambodia, India, and Hong Kong** as they spent time in the **Greenville** area. Now, in early June, I travel to **Chile** to visit missionaries **Tom and Connie Chapman** and to teach at a pastor’s conference on the theme **“Called to Build.”**

I would be grateful for your prayers: please pray for safe travels, for the Lord to use the messages to encourage and equip the pastors, and for God to bless the time with Tom and Connie as they continue their faithful service. Please also remember our missionaries in each of these regions, asking God to strengthen them with wisdom, endurance, and open hearts among those to whom they minister.



Everywhere I look, I see God strengthening the hands of His servants: pastors being encouraged, national leaders being trained, missionaries persevering, and new believers taking their first steps of faith.

And your partnership is part of every one of those stories. Your prayers, your encouragement, and your faithful giving strengthen the hands of those who strengthen others. You help missionaries stay on the field. You help national pastors receive training. You help gospel work continue in places where the soil is hard and the needs are great. We could not do this without you.

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Inside this issue:

- **Cross-Cultural Collaboration** (Part 3) — Dr. Bill Hill and Dr. Rein Allweil return to Uruguay to teach a 12-session Pastor’s Conference.
- **Easter in Mexico** — Encouraging visits with national pastors trained through years of ministry, including vibrant Good Friday and Easter services in Cancún.
- **Rick’s Projects 2026** — High-priority needs at Camp Emmanuel, including a new water treatment system, cabin renovations, tree removal, and improved access roads.
- **Global Ministry Updates** — Marriage seminars and leadership training in India, the Wongs’ transition back to Hong Kong, and new gospel opportunities among Muslim neighbors in the Midwest.

A full, encouraging look at how God continues to lead His servants “to great places” across the lands.

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As we enter the summer months, two areas especially need your support.

First, Rick's Projects at Camp Emmanuel in Uruguay—important improvements like the new water-treatment system, tree removal and replanting, cabin repairs, and access-road work. These projects directly strengthen the camp's ability to minister to children, teens, families, and pastors year-round. (You can see the full list in the June EMU Newsletter.

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Second, our missionaries around the world continue to serve faithfully in places where needs are great, and resources are often limited. Like all of us, they are feeling the effects of rising costs and global economic pressures. If the Lord has enabled you, would you consider adding to your regular support or giving a special mid-year gift? Your partnership helps keep their hands strong for the work God has entrusted to them. Thank you for standing alongside us. Thank you for strengthening the hands of God's servants. And thank you for helping us "rise up and build" in every place the Lord opens a door.

SCHEDULE



JUNE 2026

- 2-10 Chile Trip
- 9 Antofagasta Men's Conference
- 10 Emanuel Bible Church, Chile
- 14 Trinity Baptist, Muncie, IN
- 21 Trinity Bible, Greer, SC
- 25 Open _____

JULY 2026

- 5 Open _____
- 12 Cornerstone Baptist, Bay City, MI
- 19 Childs Bible, Onondaga, MI
- 26 Open Midwest _____

Joanna with her sisters



Candyland with Khloe



With Jud, Karis, and Khloe



Busy Travel Schedule



May was a wonderful month for our family. Joanna's sisters, **Susie** from Tampa and **Rebecca** from Nashville, visited us for a few days. On May 9, we celebrated **Joanna's 60th birthday**—hard to believe! I often remind her she's a year and three months older than me. It was especially special to have most of our family together for the celebration. All of our children and grandchildren joined us, except **Abby's family in Minneapolis**, and we truly appreciated that time.

The Lord opened several opportunities throughout the month to connect with pastors and ministry friends in the area. It was especially nice that some of these meetings were close enough for Joanna to join me. I had the privilege of speaking for three services at **Victory Baptist Church in Walhalla** on Sunday, May 17. We enjoyed our time with **Pastor Jones** and the church family. That afternoon, Joanna and I took a drive through **Seneca** and **Clemson**, our old stomping grounds—places that hold many memories. It was a long day, but a very full and encouraging one. Later in the month, on May 31, I spoke for my good friend **David DeLand** at **Cooley Springs Baptist Church in Chesnee**.

At the end of May, we were grateful to have **Abby's family** visit from Minneapolis. Joanna joined them and traveled to **Topsail Beach** to be with **Bethany's family**. While they were enjoying that time together, I had the privilege of leading a funeral service for **Gene Brinson**, who went home to be with the Lord at 99 years of age. Our connection with the Brinson family goes back over thirty years to our days in **Muncie at Grace Baptist Church**. They have remained dear friends through all these years, and it was an honor to serve them in that moment. Three days later, I left for my trip to Chile.

I must admit, it was a little hard not being with the family at the beach. We hope to get away together later this summer or early fall. On **August 12**, Joanna and I will celebrate our **37th anniversary**. By His grace, it has been a wonderful journey together.

Thank you to so many of you who have been praying for our granddaughter, **Khloe Wilder**. As I mentioned in our last update, this sweet four-year-old has been dealing with a severe case of **juvenile arthritis**. Recently, she had a particularly difficult night and couldn't even make it to her mom's room because of the pain. The doctors have now adjusted her treatment plan from shots to infusions. After just a couple of treatments, she told Bethany, "Mama, my legs feel so much better." We are so thankful for this small, but meaningful progress. **Please continue to pray for her complete relief and for wisdom for those caring for her.**

Looking ahead, Joanna is planning to travel to **Minneapolis on June 25** to be with Abby for the birth of their second son, our tenth grandchild. We are so grateful she has been able to be present for the births of each of our grandchildren, and we trust the Lord to give her strength for this trip. Her **Graves' disease** and ongoing **hip issues** can make travel difficult, so **your prayers for her health and endurance would mean a great deal.**

In **July**, I will be traveling through parts of the **Midwest** for meetings. I hope to connect with churches and pastors along the way—particularly in the **Minneapolis, Wisconsin, or Iowa** areas around **Sunday, June 28**. **If you know of opportunities, I would be grateful to hear from you.**

One very practical prayer request: I am planning to drive for this upcoming trip, if the Lord allows us to finally replace our current vehicle. Our **2011 Toyota Camry** has now passed **265,000 miles**. It has served us faithfully for many years, and we are thankful, but it is not well-suited for a trip that may cover nearly **5,000 miles**. **We are asking the Lord to guide us to the right vehicle at the right time, and at a price we can manage.** Would you **pray with us about this?** We are trusting God to provide in His perfect way.

Thank you, as always, for your faithful prayers, encouragement, and partnership in this ministry. We are continually reminded that we are not serving alone—the Lord has surrounded us with people like you, and we are deeply grateful.