

September 2026 family update



EMU International, Director

I'm writing to you from the beautiful, rolling hills of **Ohio's Amish Country**, where we have just concluded the annual **Fellowship of Missions CEO Retreat**. Over the past few days, about twenty mission agency directors and their wives gathered for worship, rich conversation, and mutual encouragement. In all of our interactions, one recurring theme stood out: even those who devote their lives to encouraging others need the Shepherd's restoring care for their own souls.

Following a sweet time of corporate worship and a delicious meal, on Sunday afternoon, we visited the **Ernest Warther Museum and Gardens**, which the Smithsonian has valued as "priceless." Mooney Warther's carvings of the history of the steam engine and his handcrafted knives beautifully display craftsmanship and patience. As we all stood in awe at the artist's gift, I was reminded that gospel ministry is also slow, faithful, careful work, deeply dependent on the Master's hand. Missionaries often carry invisible burdens — loneliness, cultural stress, family concerns, and spiritual responsibility — and they need the Shepherd's steady care.



One burden we share as missionary directors is caring for the souls of each other and for our missionaries. In our September Fellowship of Missions email, I reviewed **"The Pastor's Soul,"** by **Brian Croft**. In this book, he addresses pastors specifically, but his message goes beyond the pulpit. Several missionaries have shared that the greatest challenge is not always opposition or lack of opportunity, but the steady weariness of carrying heavy responsibilities over time. A neglected soul eventually becomes a depleted ministry, so in addition to praying for ministry output, we should pray for the spiritual health of the workers themselves.

We are very thankful for your financial gifts, but more than that, we covet your prayers for our missionaries. Across our EMU family, we see tremendous gospel opportunities, but effective ministry depends on healthy missionaries whose hearts are continually renewed by Christ.

As you pray, ask God not only to bless their work, but to guard their hearts. Pray that their daily walk with God will remain unhurried and intimate. Pray for emotional healing where isolation or grief has left its mark, for strength in their marriages and families, and for the deep assurance that they are beloved children of God before they are workers in His harvest.

Tomorrow, as I help lead the Fellowship of Missions **Annual Meeting**, we will turn our focus to this year's theme: **"Wisdom and Witness: Navigating A.I. to Advance the Gospel."** Artificial intelligence presents tremendous opportunities, but also major challenges to the work of missions. God's truth remains unchanged. The heart of ministry is still the same. No tool can ever replace the spiritual health of the worker. Our missionaries must serve with wisdom and humility, with souls anchored in Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, not a machine.

Thank you for standing with us in prayer and partnership. As God continues to open doors for gospel ministry, your faithful support helps ensure that His servants are cared for, encouraged, and strengthened for the work He has called us to do.



Looking Back

It has been a full year of travel. So far in 2026, I've been in 33 churches, attended 7 conferences, preached 50 times, and traveled through 13 states and 3 international destinations. Things typically become even busier in the fall with missions conferences at churches and Christian colleges.

I intentionally planned to stay closer to home during **August**. It was a blessing to attend **Palmetto Baptist Church**, our home church, for a couple of Sundays. **Joanna** and I also had the privilege of traveling to **Sumter, South Carolina**, where I shared an update on EMU International and preached a missions challenge for **Pastor Ron Davis** at **Sumter Bible Church**. I then participated in a three-day missions cohort with pastors and missionary leaders from across the country. At the end of August, I traveled to **Ohio** for the annual meeting of the **Fellowship of Missions**.

Looking Ahead

On **Saturday, September 12**, I will travel to the **Raleigh, North Carolina**, area.

I am looking for a church near Raleigh that would be interested in having me share our ministry on Sunday morning.

If your church or a church you know has an opening, please let me know.

On **Sunday evening, September 13**, I will speak at **Friendship Baptist Church** in Raleigh. This is the church where my son-in-law serves as youth pastor. It is also the church where **Ruth Bixby** grew up. Friendship Baptist supports several of our EMU missionary families, and I look forward to being with them.

Over the following days, I will participate in a **preachers' conference** whose theme is **Leading from the Pulpit**.

Sunday, September 20, is currently open. If you would like me to share the ministry of EMU International with your church, either in the morning or evening service, please let me know.

REACH

From **Monday, September 21**, through **Wednesday, September 23**, I will participate in **REACH Week** at **Bob Jones University**. This year's theme is **Ministry Is Overflow (Acts 4:20)**. Please pray that God will provide many opportunities to share the ministry of EMU International and that He will lead us to new ministry partners.

On **Thursday, September 24**, Joanna and I will fly to **Louisiana**, where we will spend a couple of days with my cousins. Their mother, **Carolyn Swanner**, my dad's sister, passed away while I was in Uruguay this past February. We are thankful for the opportunity to spend time with family during this visit.

That weekend, we also look forward to being with **Pastor Ken Burkett** and our dear friends at **Greenville Bible Church** in Mississippi. We have scheduled a dental appointment while in town as well. Please pray that everything goes smoothly during this trip.

The following **Friday and Saturday, October 2-3**, I have the privilege of speaking at **The Wilds Christian Camp** for their **Father-Son Campout** for men and boys ages six and up.

Faith for Our
FAMILY ADVENTURE



For More Information or to Register
wildsnc.org/camps/father-son/

This year, I'll be preaching from **Joshua 3-4** in a series titled **Faith for Our Family Adventure**. The book of Joshua is one of Scripture's great adventure stories, filled with courage, danger, miracles, battles, and God's faithful leadership. Boys love stories of quests and heroes, and dads understand that real faith often requires stepping into the unknown. Joshua 3-4 gives us both.

Our sessions will be interactive and story-driven, designed to help fathers and sons grow together through God's Word. We'll have opportunities to talk, pray, laugh, and build memories that last.

If you're looking for a weekend of spiritual encouragement, outdoor adventure, and intentional father-son time, I'd love for you to join us.

Your Invitation & Promotional Materials
<https://pastorjeffdavis.com/campout>

the Wilds® FATHER SON CAMPOUT

Rustic cabin accommodations give the feel of a campout without the hassle of setting up tents. Hearty meals served outdoors around campfires and sessions under an open gazebo complete the outdoor experience. With the wide range of Freetime activities, dads and sons of all ages are sure to make lasting memories!

 **OCT 2-3**



Jeff Davis
Director, EMU International

EMU INTERNATIONAL September Newsletter

This month's issue opens with **Less Than a Day to Live**, a powerful reflection drawn from **JD Crowley's** message on the shrewd manager. Read an update from **Pedro** on the **Rick's Work Trip** at **Camp Emanuel** in Uruguay.



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