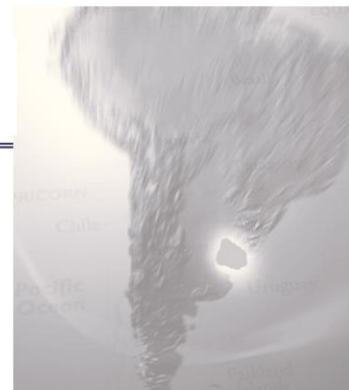


PLANTING AND ASSISTING CHURCHES IN **URUGUAY**

John Mason Neale (1818-1866) was a minister in the Church of England who labored in relative obscurity most of his life. While working with the poor and orphans, he turned out a surprising number of hymns and essays. One of his hymns well captures the spirit of Christmas and has become a classic.

Merry Christmas

Micki, Owen, and I want to wish you a very Merry Christmas! As I write, Micki is finishing up decorating cookies for some friends and the seminary students. Recently, we have enjoyed playing the new Christmas songs uploaded to our YouTube channel. One of my personal favorites is *O Come, O Come Emanuel* (*O ven, bendito Imanuel* in Spanish). The seventh strophe in Spanish more clearly emphasizes how Christ will fully establish peace during his earthly reign. The English lines are beautiful too and echo our desire for the return of Christ:

O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace.

Our prayer for you this Christmas is that the God of hope “fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Back in Uruguay

After eight months of furlough, we flew back to Uruguay in time for our full-time summer seminary. We have begun the year with eleven students: seven men and four women. A few are attending virtually in December, but when all are present in January, I will send you a new photo of our group. Our life in Uruguay has proved to be one of continual projects; besides waiting for the paperwork to be updated to buy the building adjacent to the church and seminary, in January we are building a new fellowship hall with the help of one of our supporting churches. We thank God for the committed interest of our supporters that continually stimulates fulfillment of the Great Commission here in Uruguay.

Pushing Forward

Next year, Micki and I will celebrate ten years of being in Uruguay. I have always said that at the ten-year mark we will reflect on our growth, usefulness, and opportunities to see if we need to make any important adjustments. I often feel like we are in a marathon, where the different checkpoints may be confused with the finish line but are just reminders of progress and the importance of pushing forward. I rejoice to see clear evidence of our growth as a family and our usefulness to the work here. Your prayers are what make the difference for those who are coming to love and serve our great “King of Peace”.

Please pray for endurance as we begin another seminary season and for safety as we prepare to build the fellowship hall. Please also pray that we can sell our apartment and build a house on our property that is closer to the seminary. If any of you would be interested in helping us build, please stay tuned to a future prayer letter!

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