



Salta, August 8, 2023

Greetings again from Salta. Believe it or not, this will probably be our last prayer letter written from Argentina. More on that later in the letter. The two photos above are from the Seminary graduation of Ramiro Maestro. He is the last “official” graduate of SEBEA Residencia because the current students will graduate from SEBEA Virtual.

Ramiro has an amazing story. He started studying in the Seminary in 2002 along with his fiancé, Connie. At the time, he was also studying to be an industrial engineer. After four semesters of classes, he dropped out in order to finish his secular degree and get married. Then he and Connie moved to the northern part of the province of Salta for almost a decade. Back in 2017 they returned to Salta and Ramiro decided to finish his classes in SEBEA. Because of his work hours, he was only able to take elective courses and was hoping to finish in 2020, but then the quarantine hit and we switched to virtual classes. After more than 20 years, he finished his courses with one of the highest GPAs in the history of the Seminary.

Ramiro has a tremendous ministry with the youth in his church and also directs the music each Sunday. He has become an exceptional teacher and the plan is to incorporate him into the Seminary faculty in a few years. It was a great privilege to have him receive his diploma before we retire.

### **Argentina Updates**

Life has become even more complicated in Argentina over the past few months, weeks and even days. On August 13<sup>th</sup> we have our primary elections for president. The country is a potential powder keg. The current government has added more restrictions on the U.S. dollar with increasing fines and taxes for using that currency. They have added three more exchange rates in recent weeks which means there are now more than 30 different values of pesos to dollars.

In order to pay some of the debt to the International Monetary Fund, billions of dollars in yuanes (Chinese funds) were borrowed. Now there is no more credit from China. The last payment to the IMF was made via a loan from Qatar. The new government that takes office in December will have billions of dollars in loans to repay to the U.S, China y Qatar. In addition, to try and win the election, the current government has

printed more money (without financial backing) to try and give everyone a “raise” before the elections in October.

### Retirement news



What does retirement have to do with squeezed orange juice? We’ve had two comments frequently made from our Argentine friends and colleagues. First, “the Allen’s are like oranges, we need to extract the last drop of juice before they leave.” The second comment was a quote that Greg Poppovitch of the San Antonio Spurs said of Manu Ginobli, the Argentine basketball star. Coach Pop said “Manu is like a bar of soap, as long as there’s a tiny piece left, you keep using it to the end.”

Between all the people who want to spend time with us before retirement and the huge number of details involved in wrapping up our various ministries in Argentina, we feel like the squeezed orange or the last speck of a bar of soap. There are so many things up in the air that need to be finished correctly that the task seems overwhelming. Everything is coming together, but at times it seems we’re at the bottom of the mountain and an avalanche has just started moving above us. Please pray for the following details in the next three weeks.

All the paperwork on the houses needs to be signed. We will be doing sales next year instead of this year because we can’t move funds out of Argentina. This involves signing contracts in four provinces in the next three weeks. Also pay for our final financial process with the national government and the opening of a bank account.

Pray also for our travel plans. This week we are arranging transportation to the US. It will involve several overnight stops and small layovers since we’re bringing Kesi, our dog, back with us. Most of the details are solved, but this week we need to finalize the major legal/health obstacles.

Pray for a place to live in the US. There is currently a possibility of a house to rent that could be ready for us when we arrive. Our potential arrival date in Oregon is the 21<sup>st</sup> of September. Before that happens, we have furniture that needs to be moved from several locations, a car to pick up from Utah to take to Oregon, and probably several more unexpected surprises

His and yours, *Rod and Jackie Allen*