
THE ALVAREZ FAMILY

BBFI MISSIONARIES TO URUGUAY

“WE SURVIVED 2021” seems to be one of the most popular phrases between December 31st and January 1st (at least here in Uruguay). The world has experienced one of the most traumatic, tragic seasons in the last two years. Although the tendency is to compare casualties and numbers with things of the past, we must remember that we live now and people close to us are suffering painful situations. For that reason the Gospel must be proclaimed as the source of salvation, hope and comfort. We have seen first hand how once a person is confronted with his or her sin and understands that repentance and faith must be exercised, then they experience true salvation and life starts to have true meaning. We have seen in this past year people saved, disciplined and baptized and for that we give God the glory He deserves. We have also seen people walking away from the faith and many families in our midst have not even seen their loved ones coming even closer to church, causing them an immense amount of pain. For that I consider myself blessed and many times my sinful ingratitude creeps in, especially when I get weary of things around me that appear to be unresolved. But then God uses my surrounding to correct me. I see my parents and in-laws being faithful in ministry for over 40 years. I see our kids growing and serving God, I see the many great things God has done in our church and my heart is placed back on track. I must be thankful for a challenging 2021 when God has showed me where I was failing. I must be thankful for a 2021 when I have seen people coming from spiritual death to life in Christ. I must be thankful to God for His mercy and grace towards me every day. I must be thankful that He will accomplish His plan regardless of the times I don't see how. I must be thankful that a new year will allow us to continue serving Him proclaiming His name before the people of Uruguay.

Esteban

We ended the year on a high note. December 19th, we had two baptisms, the Lord Supper and our Christmas celebration. It was a special day for me as a father and a pastor because I was able to baptize our youngest son Nicolas. I count this such an honor and a blessing from God, and he is thankful I didn't leave him under the water for too long. He has grown so much in the last year and our prayer is that he will follow Jesus for the rest of his life.



Blanca started to watch our online services on Father’s Day 2019. Our church did a “Dad Jokes” Sunday and we asked people to vote for the best joke. She continued to watch every time we were on. After several months she made a profession of faith and started discipleship. For almost two years she has been discipled by pastor Gabriel and his wife Gabriela over video call. Blanca is a single mom with almost no source of income. Every time she had a Bible verse to learn, she asked her 10 year old son Rodrigo to learn it with her. Blanca has fallen in ove with Jesus and she got baptized on December 19th as well. Our church rejoiced in the fact that she is growing in her faith.



Pastor Gabriel baptizing Blanca

CHRISTMAS 2021. Every year we have a special Christmas service. This year the program included the Lord Supper as well, celebrating the baptisms that took place at the beginning of the service with our new church members. The time of remembrance is always special; a time of reflection and self assessment of our spiritual walk.

After the Lord’s Supper we started our Christmas celebration with a Medley of Christmas carols but with a more modern flavor. Then we transitioned into a biblical challenge talking about the fact that Jesus came to bring peace and that He is our peace as Paul wrote to the Ephesian church.

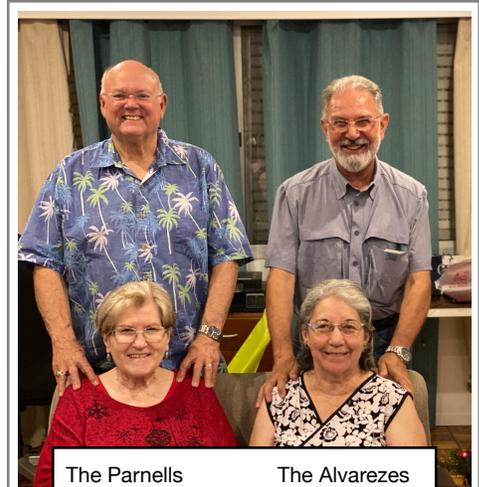
After that challenge, we sang some traditional Christmas songs ending with Silent Night.

The Uruguayan culture hugs a lot, and at the end of the service there were a lot of hugs wishing one another Merry Christmas. 2021 was a hard year but I can see that people are ready to get out to share life with one another and to see others come to Christ.



FAMILY: We spent Christmas with our parents. This year was very special because Esteban’s mom just got diagnosed with beginning stages of Alzheimers but she was in great spirits. Each day brings its own challenges but God IS good. Please pray for Esteban’s dad while he takes care of his wife and pray for her as she copes with her new stage in life.

Also pray for Emily’s parents who will be traveling to the US for a short furlough time. Please pray for their safety during this trip.



The Parnells The Alvarezes