

# THE ALVAREZ FAMILY

## BBFI Missionaries to Uruguay, South America

### Mateo's Update

Today we took Mateo to another round of Chemo. He is comfortable around us and now Emily has the title of **"aunt Emily"**. While I stayed with Mateo as he was receiving his treatment, Emily took Monica (Mateo's step mom) for breakfast. This past week Monica received the news that she has uterine cancer. As you can imagine this has been another difficult news for the family. Monica is in great spirits but in the weeks to come she will start the process that requires her to fight the cancer.

I had taken a book with me: **"What Good Is God?"** Thinking that I was going to stay out in the waiting room. Actually they called me in to be with Mateo for the whole hour and a half. He noticed my book and asked me about it. After explaining that the author deals with the fact that no matter how difficult life is God is greater and helps us overcome our circumstances, Mateo said "that is an interesting topic". He was tired and went to sleep for a bit. While sitting there it made me realize how many people are undergoing cancer treatments. Life is hard but God **IS** greater. Let us keep talking to people about Him. Please pray for the Montero family as they walk through these difficult situations.



### Uruguay: a dark place

Although Uruguay is promoted as a non-believing country, that applies for the most part to anything related to the Gospel of Jesus. The reality is that more than 70 different religions and cults are present in our culture.

Each February second my heart turns heavy. Today is the day when the afro descendants celebrate the virgin of the seas, Yemanjá. This cult is highly promoted by the media as a "folk religion" or a religion from "our ancestors" or a "religion of nature".

Tonight thousands of people of all ages will bring their offerings as you can see in the picture above. People seeking hope, healing, financial success, individuals with marital problems or wanting to get married, will bring the offerings to the goddess of the seas.

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## I have a bigger problem

Luis called my father in law, Jesse because he needed to talk. Jesse and I met with this disturbed man who came with a long list of problems. Financial issues, he is without a job, he is almost sure that he will end separating and suddenly he stated that he wanted to put five bullets in his sister because she had stolen 15K dollars from him. Well, the conversation turned into something unexpected. Luis claimed to be a believer because he *used to go to church* until the age of eleven. Then, because of problems at the church his mom left and now at 48 he still says that "God is first in my life". At that point I said with respect and love, "Luis, God has not been the first in your life", and I explained that I came to that conclusion because of an entire page of notes of mostly self inflicted issues from his life. Then I asked him "where is your destination if you die tonight?" He says "no one can surely know that". So Jesse and I walked through the biggest problem in his life which was not having Jesus as his Savior. He looked at my notes and said "Wow, I thought I had all those problems but I realized that I have a bigger problem in my life". He stated that he needed to repent and get things right with God. So we prayed with him. Pray for Luis. His partner does not want him to go to church, but he came once in the last two weeks. He also has a 4 year old son. We are looking forward to discipling him.

This syncretic religion is the fastest growing religion in South America. In the past it was a hidden cult but nowadays, these rituals will be live cast on tv. Satan is using this to take more people into eternal damnation. That is why Uruguay needs the Gospel message.

Each February second I remember the truth contained in Proverbs 14:12 **"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."** Pray that as we proclaim the name of Jesus, people will be delivered from the bondage of this cult.

### Marcos' Story

Growing up in Uruguay, where most of your friends are unchurched and openly mock everyone who professes to be a Christian is hard. One of the kids who made fun of my brother and I was Marcos. He was rough, vulgar and with the need to belittle others. This past week I got a phone call from him. He needed to talk to me. He has been putting this off for quite sometime. His son a pro soccer player is going through a difficult time in his career and needs "someone to talk to". We ended up meeting at our house and had dinner with them. A couple of days before our family had a conversation about meeting new people and establishing new relationships and here God brought us a father and a son to our table. On Monday I met Ivan (the son) and had a one on one conversation. Life, the pressure of performance, his parents divorce, girls, school and I ended the talk with the fact that God is pursuing Him and that is why our conversation was not a coincidence. It was a God ordained moment. Witnessed to him and he said "I've never considered living a life putting God first".

On Tuesday I met with Marcos for an hour that turns into almost four. I heard a man voicing his life issues but mainly we talked about the Bible, the church, why Jesus came to this earth and why is it so important to surrender to him to have eternal life. He told me about how his parents go to church but live a completely different life from Monday to Saturday. At certain points he cried and I could feel a profound interest towards God but with tons of fears. His biggest fear is having to change before becoming a Christian. I clarified how God calls us unto repentance, receives us with His love and then the changes happens.

Marcos told me that he is not interested in coming to church but he wants to continue meeting up with me. This is huge. Thirty years ago I used to dislike him so much, then God did His work in me and He will do His work in Marcos. I believe that.

Pray for Marcos, Ivan and Julieta (little sister); that they come to faith in Jesus.