Salta, Argentina

December 6, 2021

Dear Friends and financial supporters:

Hopefully by now you’ve received our prayer letter. If you haven’t, please let us know via email and we’ll figure out how to get it to you.

As always, life in Argentina is never dull. As I recorded the Weds. and Thurs. messages for the church in La Merced, I felt like an Argentine soccer coach on Monday morning. Each Monday they give a medical update and team evaluation regarding what has happened over the weekend. Things have been so crazy here it seems like we’ve had more medical problems than ever before. Here’s the latest update, all related to ministry.

**MEDICAL NEWS**

Jackie noticed some problems with blurred vision in her left eye about two months ago. We discovered she has a cataract which is usually caused by high arterial blood pressure. That was a big surprise! After doing all of the cardiology tests (echo-Doppler, CAT scans, and monitoring her blood pressure every 20 minutes for 24 hours), her heart is fine. She is also glaucoma free. She had her surgery last Thursday and is now the proud owner of a new lens.

The challenge for Jackie will be the recovery time. With all the dust and pollen in the air this time of year, she won’t be able to work outside for quite a while. She has been able to download audio books from the library and that helps the process be less boring. So far she’s noticed a big difference in lights at night, especially those of on-coming cars. Now she’s trying to determine which eye sees the most accurate colors.

The Coronado family from the seminary and church are doing much better. They are now “cast free”, but two of them are still unable to put weight on their legs. At least they can sit in a chair in their living room instead of being in bed. The young girl with the brain tumor is currently waiting for the latest lab results to see whether her treatment will be surgical or chemical. The results should be back next week (they have to send the bloodwork to Buenos Aires).

There was much excitement this past week. Claudio Fregenal, a seminary student, had a stroke last Thursday as he was taking a break from work. He woke up in the hospital with paresis (not paralysis) and is just starting the long road to recovery. All of his appendages were affected and at present, he can’t even hold his cell phone (the end of the world for a Gen-Xer). As I was writing this letter, we received news that he is out of the hospital and back at home. The neurologist I work with is planning on giving him individualized follow-up so he doesn’t need to go back to the hospital. That’s a huge blessing. He is due to have a Holter test this week to check for any cardiac damage.

Yésica Arias, a new seminary student, had a baby via C-section on Thursday. On Saturday when she was sent home, she started having major migraines and it turns out the anesthesiologist left a bubble in her spinal fluid when he placed the epidural. She is trying to recover in Libertador, Jujuy where she lives, about a four-hour drive from Salta. If she isn’t much better in a few days, we’ll have an OB/GYN surgeon here examine her.

**LA MERCED NEWS**

Viviana, a grandmother from the La Merced church approached us on Friday. She has had all but one tooth pulled, but her equivalent of Medicare, won’t give her an appointment to pull the last tooth or have false teeth made until March. We’re working on getting her in to a young Christian dentist to start her healing process so she can eat again. She has an appointment this Friday to start the process.

The youth group is still recovering from the Coronado’s accident. The fact that it happened on the way home from a youth meeting was very impactful. We’re helping them understand that Christians are not exempt from problems.

On the positive side, our much-postponed baptismal service is on for December 26th. Every time we’ve planned it over the past year, there have been closures due to Covid. Since we’re currently moving into summer, we should be able to baptize the five candidates before things shut down again.

**SEMINARY NEWS**

We’re rapidly coming to the end of the year for classes. Each student and their mentor have a final interview with the professor of practical theology and the seminary director. It’s always difficult to coordinate four schedules during the time leading up to Christmas, but now that classes are virtual, we have other challenges. With students spread out in different provinces, it’s not the same as having everyone show up at the seminary for interviews.

This year we have several students who will finish their four years of classes. They still have two final projects to present, a complete word study using all of the basic tools of Bible study methods and a personal doctrinal statement. The word study demonstrates that they’ve learned how to use all of the major study resources correctly. The doctrinal statement allows us to see what they believe and also evaluate areas where we need to strengthen our courses. Instead of signing a doctrinal statement, they need to be able to present what they believe and defend it from a biblical perspective. Over the years we’ve learned that this is the best review a student can have of their four years of studies.

Once again, thanks so much for all of your prayer and financial support. We truly appreciate it. As we say in “castellano”, Qué Dios les bendiga.

Rod y Jackie Allen