

Saludos desde Buenos Aires

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Dear Friends,

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all". (2 Corinthians 13.14)

School year begins.

Our school year started very shortly after my arriving back in Argentina in early March from a trip to the United States. Since this is the first time we have offered courses in the Bible Institute in an unofficial capacity, we were happy to have some eleven students begin class this year, along with several auditors. The class I am teaching is on "Small Group Ministries", which is an area I and others work with in the Caballito congregation. Our small groups are called "grupos hogareños" ("Home Groups"). Four other Bible text and doctrinal courses are being offered during the day and in the evening.

"Home Groups": theory and practice!

Teaching the small group ministries class has especially benefited me by forcing me to continue to evaluate our outreach in this area in the Caballito congregation. This has meant reading, evaluating, planning, and in some aspects beginning to introduce adjustments.



"A small group practicing with a new format at a training retreat"

Pedro Soto, who works with me in this area is currently designing a site for our small groups to replace the one that is presently at gh.iglesiadecristo.org.ar. (Please see link. The "gh" in the address stands for "grupos hogareños", i.e. home groups).

One change we are implementing in the current blog is to provide discussion questions for group leaders. These questions are based on our Sunday sermon, so that home groups that do not presently have material will have something to turn to. This is designed also to help new groups to form in a unified manner. If you read Spanish you can see some of our first efforts to provide discussion questions under "[reflexiones dominicales](#)" (Sunday reflections). We usually have a different preacher almost every Sunday in Caballito, several designated men taking turns. This makes preparing the small group questions in a similar format each week something of a challenge. Last Sunday, Osvaldo Valdez, one of our teammates, wrote the discussion questions to follow up on his sermon on

the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24). May the Lord bless this effort so that more members and visitors can meet during the week to reflect on God's word, pray, grow spiritually, and bring non-Christian friends into contact with the church. A retreat last weekend for those working with small groups was designed to help explain some of the modifications mentioned in this newsletter.

Others are using their talents to help the congregation grow in ways that strengthen it through the small group outreach. Another young man, Gabriel Ferrarese, from a congregation in Córdoba, Argentina, is doing his senior thesis for an engineering degree by putting together an attendance program for Sundays and home groups. María Laura Valdez films Sunday sermons and places them on-line. We hope that the filming of these sermons may become another resource for potential small group leaders to review before meetings. May the Lord bless these efforts to share our faith with other Christians and visitors. In order to strive for unity among a diversity of groups, guidelines are provided; these are posted under "pautas" (guidelines) on the blog.

From on line to in church.

People looking for a place to worship in Buenos Aires find us mainly through Internet. After the Let's Start Talking (LST) ministry, Internet is the most frequent way people come into contact with the Caballito congregation—and a good number of those who come from LST first contact us on line. Keeping our various sites up-to-date and clean of viruses and other hazards has occupied a greater part of my working fund budget. If you would like to know how to help with this need, please ask me for more information. Besides the necessity for technical maintenance, we would like to be able to advertise for our sites locally, knowing that publicity aimed at Buenos Aires also reaches other parts of the country. Advertising has become more expensive in Argentina because of inflation, to the point that we cannot adequately promote LST or Internet evangelism any more by mass media.

New Births.

The first Sunday I was back from the States, Silvia, María, and Anny were baptized. A few weeks later, Leandro was also born again through baptism. Today Lihuel, Ruth, Belén, and Nestor were baptized. Of these persons, some of you who worked with Let's Start Talking may remember Leandro, Silvia, and Lihuel. Please remember them all as members of the congregation strive to continue to "teach them to obey all things Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28.20). Teaching new Christians is a vital part of the Lord's work that requires time and dedication.

Thank you for your partnership in spreading the Lord's good news in Argentina.



Prayer for Silvia, María, and Anny

In Christ,

Joel Banks