

## May Prayer Update 2024



### **Pedro and Joy Oliveira Woolmer**

*with Mark, Zoe and Emilia*

*Serving the Lord in Uruguay*



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### **Dear Friends,**

When it comes to the topic of generosity, it can be easy for us missionaries to jump straight to thinking about raising support for our ministries. But passages like Romans 16 show us that biblical generosity never just goes one way. Biblical generosity moves in all directions, involving all parts of the body: the church that sends the missionary, the missionary that supports the church, the married couple who risk their lives for the missionary, the church that welcomes the individual, the Jews who support the Gentile churches, the woman who is a mother not just to her own children... It's an intricate web of inter-dependency that has gospel generosity at its core.

As your missionaries, we have been sent by CMS to serve Uruguay. Our presence and ministry here are very tangible expressions of your gospel generosity to the people of Uruguay. (Thank you!) As we've gotten to know people in Uruguay, we've been on both the giving and receiving ends of generosity. So this month we'd like to

share with you some of the challenges and joys of generosity we've experienced in a Uruguayan context.

## **When generosity gets lost in translation**

How does generosity get lost in translation? Every culture values certain things more than others, and this means that generosity isn't always recognised as generosity. Sometimes we (foreigners) make sacrifices that aren't seen as particularly costly. (Sometimes we also receive generosity that we don't recognise as particularly costly.) A simple example of this is how we show hospitality. We love having people over at our place, but showing hospitality in Uruguay is quite tiring for us! People stay a long time, and they stay late. It's rare for dinner guests to leave before 11pm, and we often drive them home afterwards. For us, hospitality is a very tangible way to show generosity to those around us, to show care and welcome - even if it costs us. But a 11pm finish is child's play to a Uruguayan. And five hours of socialising and meaningful conversation in Spanish - well that's nothing out of the ordinary! What's costly and tiring for us, is hardly noticeable for them. In this context, passages like 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 encourage us to continue in generosity because God is ultimately the one who enables us to keep giving and makes our generosity fruitful. Please pray that we would be cheerful givers, sowing bountifully as we look to our generous God for both the seed and the fruit. Pray also that we would become more and more perceptive and appreciative of the generosity that is being shown to us - especially when it comes in unexpected shapes and sizes!

## **When generosity gives God the glory**

“Just accept it, in the love of Christ!”

These were the words of E, a lady from church, after handing us the keys to her holiday home in arguably Uruguay’s most popular summer holiday destination. We had been trying to work out where we could take Pedro’s brother and sister-in-law for a short holiday during their visit with us from Australia. And everything just looked impossibly expensive - it was peak season. Out of the blue (over a conversation about sewing machines and mending bed-linen, if you must know!), E offered her family’s four-bedroom holiday house (complete with a pool!) situated minutes from the beach, for whenever we needed a break.



*"Parrilla": the classic Uruguayan barbecue*

What a timely and incredible answer to prayer! E then took it upon herself to drive to the house (a good 2.5 hours away) the day before our arrival to make our beds, set up the house, and even get the woodfire barbeque (a Uruguayan classic) ready for us. She treated us like her own children and wouldn't accept anything in return, not even a donation to help with cleaning and laundry costs. Her generosity to us came from her heart, filled with the love of Christ, and not out of compulsion. We couldn't help but "overflow with many thanksgivings to God" in response to her gospel love! Please thank God for E!

## **When generosity is counter-cultural**

Something new that Pedro is doing this year is helping Priscila, a volunteer CBU staff worker, to support-raise. Priscila works full time as a child psychologist but would love more available time to work with the CBU. It's been a really eye-opening process, and has helped us to experience a little how complicated it is for local Uruguayan Christian workers to raise financial support. Almost all pastors work full-time jobs while pastoring their churches. The idea of being a financially-supported campus worker in this sort of Christian ministry culture seems rather luxurious. What gives Priscila the right to ask people to support her, when Christian pastors (including her own) aren't getting financial support from their churches? Please pray for Priscila as she works through her partnership support plan with Pedro. Pray for courage and conviction because it really does rub against the grain of the wider Christian culture here. Pray also for people to see the biblical model of mission



partnership and be motivated to respond with generosity for the good of God's kingdom amongst university students in Uruguay.



*Pray for Priscila as she raises support for her ministry on campus. She's pictured here (front middle in the burnt orange jumper) at a CBU workshop Pedro gave last Saturday on 'Faith in Times of Crisis'.*

## Thank God

- for a wonderful month with Pedro's mum, who came to visit us in April/May. Thank God for many opportunities to have fun together, strengthen our bond, and also to witness Christ. Please pray that God would work in her heart!
- for the regular one-to-ones we have with students of the CBU. We have been really encouraged by Mateo and Lucas (who meet with Pedro), and Ariana and Eli (who meet with Joy). Thank God for their hunger to know him and his will for them, and their growing godliness.
- for ongoing opportunities for Pedro to teach the Bible in our home group. It's been great to get to know people better, and see trust growing within the group. We are being both comforted and challenged by our time together in 1 Peter.



*It is a blessing and joy to study 1 Peter together as a home group.*

## **Please pray**

- for Priscila as she gets in touch with Christian contacts, prepares to meet with potential supporters, and plans a supporters' event. Pray that God would prepare many to respond with generosity. Pray also that we can support and counsel her well in the process.
- for Pedro's involvement in an upcoming young peoples' camp in Mercedes, a town in Uruguay's interior (May 31-June 2). The theme of the camp is 'God's Word among us', and Pedro will be giving three talks and one workshop. Please pray also for Joy and the kids who will be staying home and supporting Pedro from afar!
- for courage and wisdom for Joy to continue chatting with Carlos (the haberdashery store owner) about the hope Jesus offers.



*We miss "Vovó" already. Thank God for a really precious time with Pedro's mum, Cleo.*

## **Lasting Hope Appeal**

We couldn't be discipling and evangelising uni students in Uruguay without your partnership in the gospel. One of the ways to express this partnership is through the CMS Lasting Hope Appeal, which helps keep missionaries like us serving on location, as well as to raise up new workers for God's harvest. Will you prayerfully consider how you can support CMS missionaries as they share the gospel of lasting hope? If you would like to contribute in this way please go to [cms.org.au/nswact/lastinghope](https://cms.org.au/nswact/lastinghope).

Thank you for upholding us in prayer!

*From Pedro and Joy, with Mark, Zoe and Emilia*

Write back to us!





*"Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit  
that increases to your credit."*

Philippians 4:17

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