

## MBoB Nation Profile – March 2024

Darren Andrew's daughter, Eden, will be travelling to South America later this year for two years mission experience. She will be based in Salta, in the N. West of the country. (Darren along with Jon Price, Nev Kite and Bob Toan visited Salta in 2006 as part of a mission trip.) So, this month, we thought we would focus on **Argentina**. She will be making a short presentation at St Peter's on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April.

### A brief nation profile:

Argentina, with a population of 46 million, stretches 4,000km from its sub-tropical north to the sub-Antarctic south. It is rich in resources, has a well-educated workforce, and is one of South America's largest economies. Far-right libertarian outsider Javier Milei won Argentina's presidential run-off in November 2023. He has been likened to former US President Donald Trump and Brazilian ex-leader Jair Bolsonaro. He has little political experience but the fact that he is a political outsider was part of his appeal for many voters. In a country where annual inflation is now over 140% and two in five people live in poverty, his win proves that Argentines are fed up with traditional politics and economic disaster.

### The church in Argentina.

Christians, mainly Catholic, make up close to 90% of the population. The last 40 years have seen a large growth in evangelical Christians from 1 million in 1980 to 4.5 m in 2020. There is also an underlying connection with animism in the Christian community with many shrines found on roadsides. Pacha Mama (Mother Earth) is offered food and drink offerings on hillsides, etc.

Specific sections of the population with ministry and outreach needs are numerous:

- The urban poor. This group has grown and includes up to 500,000 slum dwellers, homeless people and thousands of street kids. Local churches are increasing their focus in this area, but significantly more needs to be done on every level - spiritual, social and economic. Buenos Aires is one of the world's largest urban areas; many of those who live there do so in poverty and with virtually no meaningful engagement with the gospel.
- University students, many living below the poverty line, number 1.2 million just in state universities alone, over half being in Buenos Aires. There are few students who actively witness. Pray for ABUA(IFES) and Cru - they have over 20 groups and more than 60 workers.
- Quechua and Aymara people from Argentina, Chile and Bolivia flocked to Buenos Aires, where they have become a labouring under-class. They have a small evangelical minority but are mostly syncretized Catholics or animists.

### Focus for prayer:

- Church leadership remains a critical bottleneck in further growth. Leaders who train, disciple and release other leaders into ministry and who minister in the Word and the Spirit are always needed. Pray for those involved in training through seminaries, Bible schools and Theological Education by Extension (TEE – distance learning programmes); there are literally hundreds across the country. Pray also for students who are hindered by lack of finance, facilities or time.
- The missionary vision of the national Church is growing and maturing - and it possesses great potential to make Argentina a major sending nation. The Argentinean mission movement has set ambitious goals in terms of mobilizing churches, generating finance and sending workers. Pray that pastors and churches may gain a vision for the unreached peoples of the world.
- For Eden Andrews as she continues making plans for her time in this country. This includes developing her skills in speaking Spanish. She is expected to be part of a small group of young people from the UK. She is going out with Latin Links.

