

a gospel view of argentina

34 00 S, 64 00 W

South Atlantic coast of South America, bordering Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay.



CMS and mission in Argentina

CMS missionaries began work in Argentina in 1979. Much of CMS-Australia's ministry in Argentina has been focused on student work – there are nearly one million university students in 1700 institutions. CMS works with Asociacion Biblica Universitaria Argentina (ABUA), the national Christian student group. Through ABUA, CMS missionaries have sought to establish and encourage groups of students and graduates committed to evangelism and discipleship, and to train them in leadership and outreach. CMS missionaries are also involved in Certeza Argentina, ABUA's literature ministry which publishes biblically-based books at accessible prices.

There are currently two CMS missionary families ministering in Argentina.

Learning Spanish is fairly agreeable for English-speakers. Most missionaries have a good command of Spanish after one year, and achieve a respectable level of fluency within two to three years. English is commonly spoken as a second language.



Population

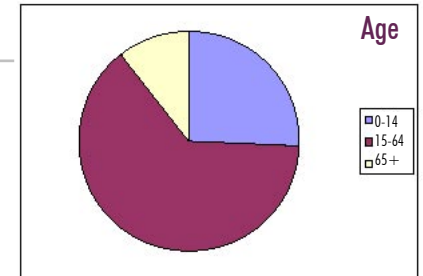
39,144,753 (July 2004 est.)

PRAY for godliness amongst Argentine Christians and ask that they will have a sound and confident witness in society.

Age distribution

Many of Argentina's 927,000 university students live below the poverty line, and few students witness actively.

PRAY for ABUA groups and staff.



Language

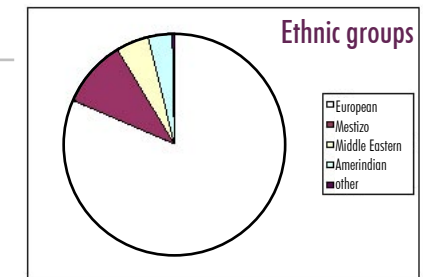
Spanish (official), English, Italian, German, French

PRAY that literature, radio and television ministries will impact Argentinians with the gospel and see many come to faith.

Ethnic groups

Amerindians have long been marginalised and exploited and their culture demeaned.

PRAY for the maturation of the indigenous Church and for sensitivity for missionaries involved.



Poverty Indicator

51.7% (May 2003)

PRAY for local churches addressing social needs among the urban poor.

a gospel view of argentina


34 00 S, 64 00 W

South Atlantic coast of South America, bordering Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay.

History

Following independence from Spain in 1816, Argentina experienced periods of internal political conflict. After World War II, Peron's misrule, inflation and urban terrorism provoked the 1976 military takeover. Military incompetence and a bad record on human rights led to the restoration of democratic rule in 1983. Elections since then have highlighted Argentina's progress in establishing democracy.

Argentina has rich natural resources and high literacy rates. In the last decade the country suffered economic crisis with high inflation, unemployment, external debt and the falling value of the peso. The economy began to improve in 2003, but there is still much poverty.

 Give thanks for Argentina's transition to democracy, and pray the government will act wisely and justly to bring economic stability and alleviate poverty.

Religion


Out of dictatorship and the defeat in the Falklands war has come significant changes leading to religious hunger. Evangelicals grew from less than one million in 1980 to nearly 3 million by 2000. Roman Catholicism has state support, but there is freedom of religion and considerable respect for evangelicals.

Religion	% of population
Christian	92.91
non-religious	3.68
Muslim	1.35
Jewish	1.32
other	0.74

Renewal has impacted nearly every denomination, but revival based on scripture, not emotion, is needed. A challenge for growth is the lack of church leaders who know the Bible well, and who are able to disciple and empower other leaders.

In the 1900s, some Amerindian people groups became Christians through missionary work, and Bible translation work is currently happening in six indigenous languages.

As well as attracting many to Christ, the country's spiritual hunger has inspired many to follow cults. Ministry challenges include reaching the urban poor; the sophisticated upper class of Buenos Aires, who have been difficult to reach with the gospel; and evangelism to rural and provincial areas that have been little affected by the spiritual enthusiasm of the cities.

 PRAY for a deepening of the Holy Spirit in believers, and that the church might impact every level of society for Christ.

Lifestyle and culture

CMS


Traditionally people have been very formal in expressing hospitality, with one room in a house especially presentable for visitors - who were never allowed beyond that point. Now there is more informality, with young people gathering in each others houses to eat pizza or choripan (sausages in bread rolls).

The family network tends to take priority over all else. It is still very difficult for parents to allow their daughters to move out of home before marriage. Many people live very close to their relatives, in the same building or street. Children are treated very affectionately and given plenty of sweets to eat - as long as they behave themselves.

School and university are free, however many

young people from poor homes struggle to get through school. In Corrientes, around 80% of children under 14 come from homes below the poverty line, and over 50% from homes in absolute poverty.

Many families are increasingly accepting of people who convert to Christ. However there is still a significant proportion for whom conversion is a 'major family scandal'. Many new Christians could expect to be threatened with being kicked out of home by their parents or spouse - especially in the more traditional provinces.

 PRAY that the word of God would fall in fertile soil, and produce a great harvest of righteousness in people's lives.

For short people

School is normally organised in two or three shifts per day. The morning 'shiff' has classes from 7.30am until midday. Evening classes may end around 11pm. In many schools the uniform is a white overcoat. It helps even out the differences in what children can afford to wear, though it's possible to make a 'fashion statement' by wearing something different.

Many exams are spoken. Across the country, all students study the same course. If they

fail final exams in December, they have classes and exams in February before school starts again in March.

Argentina's most famous dance is the tango. It began in the capital city of Buenos Aires and talks about the ordinary man and his problems. See what you can find out about the tango and get dancing!

