



Celebrating Transformation in Argentina

By Beth Gómez

It was standing room only in the municipal theatre. Even the rain outside couldn't dampen the mood! Local government officials joined people from eight nations along with Argentinians from various locations, and hundreds of community residents. They all gathered to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Free Methodist Church in Argentina on March 16, 2019. The atmosphere was electric! Lights were pulsing! The smoke machine was spewing! The speakers were at full throttle! And the children were energetic!

Twenty-five years prior, Pastors Ricardo and Maria Elena Guerrero and their three young children, immigrated from Chile to the town of Carmen de Areco. Upon arrival, a struggling pastor suggested that they move on because, as he said, "A lot of people have come and tried to plant churches here, but they have all failed." As a result, Pastor Ricardo decided that Carmen de Areco needed a church.

The Guerrero's arrived with nothing but a strong call from God. Sometimes the loaf of bread that neighbors brought was the only food their family had to eat, but God was faithful.

The fruit of 25 years of love was on display in the theater. Young and old (including the church's original worship team) praised God with passion and talent. Youth and children recounted the

mission and story of the church through dance and drama.

Throughout their ministry, the Guerrero family enfolded countless children from the streets and loved them into a personal relationship with God. Adults who had been rescued as children came with their children and grandchildren. The testimonies of lives and generations transformed by God's saving grace could have extended for hours! Everyone celebrated a family who had followed the leading of the Holy Spirit, sacrificed the comfort of their home country, and invested in the lives of others.

The mayor presented the church with a small check to cover the paperwork for the construction of a new center for children. The money was a token of the town's appreciation for the transformation the Free Methodist Church has made in their local community. It was also a vote of confidence for the future impact on children and families.

Today, the Carmen de Areco church has 600+ members, but the story doesn't end there. Eight churches have been planted out of this church. Today there are approximately 1,500 Free Methodist members throughout Argentina, and they support a small but growing church in Uruguay. We celebrate the faithful ministry of the Guerrero family and give God the glory.