



**Seth David Emily Lora Dale**

# The Brileys

Your Missionaries to the **WORLD**, Serving in **COSTA RICA** since 1993

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Dear Faithful Churches and Friends,

**1 Corinthians 15:10a “But by THE GRACE OF GOD I am what I am; and HIS GRACE which was bestowed upon me was not in vain;”**

One Saturday, **Pastor Jorge Ulloa** and I visited his mother, **Ana Cecilia**, to again invite her to church. Ever since I first met her about 18 years ago, she had very seldom come to church, and that was only for some special occasion like a wedding or Mother’s Day. She had heard the gospel, but as far as we know she had never personally believed on the Lord to be saved. Sadly, her life had been a life of booze and worldly living.

Then one Friday morning at 3am, Bro. Ulloa called me to inform me that **Ana Cecilia** had abruptly died in her home just after midnight; she was 50 years old. Bro. Ulloa’s heart was very heavy, not knowing whether his mother was in heaven or hell. He knew that I had worked for 2½ years at a funeral home, so he called me not only to let me know that his mother had died, but to also ask for assistance concerning funeral arrangements. In agreement with the laws here in Costa Rica, a police report was done at the location where Ana died, then the body was taken to the national morgue in the city of Heredia where a required autopsy would be performed.

During all the following morning and into the early evening, plans were made for both the **funeral** as well as the **wake**. The **wake** is a spontaneous time of gathering of acquaintances for paying last respects before a funeral and burial (or cremation). The **wake** is a common practice here in Costa Rica due to the fact that the majority of the deceased are *not embalmed*; and for public health reasons any corpse that is *not embalmed* has to be buried no later than 24 hours after death; therefore, a **wake** is often done throughout an entire night before a burial the next day.

Later that evening at sunset, I, Bro. Ulloa and 4 others took a casket to the morgue to retrieve the body. A couple of ladies first clothed the body, then we placed the body in the casket and loaded it in our van, carrying it to our church where people had been waiting to begin the first of 2 **wakes**. The crowd quickly grew to over 100.

In the midst of the **first wake**, which lasted from 8pm-11pm, a mortician had to come because of the 24-hour limit and embalm the body onsite there inside of the church, the crowd being asked to wait outside. We then had an open service inside the church in which **Carlos Leitón, pastor of a sister church**, brought a message from the Word of God; the available seating was filled while at the same time folks were coming in and out of the church to view the body lying in state. **Three young men got saved that evening!!!**

Afterward, we transported the body to a **second wake** which lasted throughout the night, hosted in a Pentecostal church near the home of Ana Cecilia. I did not personally stay overnight for that **wake**.

The following morning at 9am, we again loaded the casket into our van as you see in the pics and slowly went with the crowd of about 125 people to the cemetery 2 miles away. There were a few people in the van, 2 men were on motorcycles helping with safety in traffic, and all other people were on foot.



At the cemetery, more consolation from the Word of God was given by **Bro. Carlos Leitón**. Some of the men then carried the casket to a wall of vaults constructed 4 rows high, and placed the casket into an open vault which was on the third row above ground level. A bricklayer then began to brick up the opening of the vault, later covering the brick with plaster.

While the bricklayer was doing his work; some among the crowd, including a couple of Ana Cecilia’s adult sons; began to do things which were very heart-breaking to me and other Christians. A man who was a neighbor of Ana Cecilia had gone to a store next to the cemetery and bought two 2-liter bottles of booze and 4 six-packs of 12oz. cans of the same. About 30 people ranging in ages from teens to elderlies, both male and female, began to drink the booze—in a way I had never seen. A person would take one drink from a bottle or can, then randomly hold the container out in the air in front of himself/herself until someone else would take the container and repeat the same thing, each container going about from mouth to mouth until each container was empty. This was a vivid example of the kind of life that Ana Cecilia was living.

Seeing what I saw among the kinfolks of **Pastor Jorge Ulloa** throughout both the **vela** and the **funeral** magnified for me the magnificent GRACE OF GOD in the life of Bro. Ulloa and his family!! Bro. Jorge showed me pictures of he and his three siblings (he is the oldest) when they were kids—all in the *same* home, the *same* neighborhood, the *same* school, the *same* environment. The thing that has made the difference between the life of Bro. Ulloa and that of his kin is **CHRIST! Christ is the answer!!!**

**1 Timothy 2:4, “Who will have ALL men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” Praise the Lord that more of Bro. Ulloa’s kin have come to know Christ since the funeral!!! Your faithful part in prayers and finances has made it all possible, and we thank God for you.**

In the Lord Jesus Christ,

Dale Briley