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hugged it to herself. Please pray for her, her son, and her sister.

To finish off, I just wanted to share with you that for a while I have been starting to believe that maybe my time in Concepcion is drawing to a close, and that God is leading me back home, probably in the next year or so. I know there is always work to do here, as there is everywhere. The encouraging thing is, is that there is now a strong team working with the children and I know they will carry it on. It isn't a 100% definite decision yet, although it nearly is. I would appreciate your prayers as I do make a final decision though. I have told the people I work closest with that it is a possibility.

Over the next few months it will be good to have teams out and friends and family from home. I will write closer to the time to let you know more details. Thank you so much for all your support and prayers. I am sending some personal letters home with visitors who will be travelling at the end of March, and in April. There is more chance of them getting there that way.

May God, bless you and keep you.

Love,

Claire

The letter is sent out by

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# CLAIRE'S NEWS FROM CONCEPCION

SPRING 2008

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Dear Prayer Partner,

I hope that you are doing well and that you had a good Christmas. It is probably a distant memory by now. My last prayer letter was a bit before Christmas and a lot has happened since then.

The month of

December was busy with Nativity Plays, Children's camps, and end of year parties. They all went well, and it was good to see the children having fun. They are already asking when the next camp will be. For many of them it is their only day out during the year. The Nativity plays went well too. Most of the parents came and it is a good opportunity to have more contact with the parents, and also to teach about what Christmas is really about, and why Jesus came.

After Christmas I had two weeks holiday in Brazil. It was really good just to get away and relax a bit and to see the sea. As January is so hot here and it is the summer holidays the pace was a bit slower then which was also good. At the end of the January all the activities started back again. I am teaching English for a few hours a week in the same school that I have been in for the last few years. It is a good way of having more contact with

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people, both the children, and the teachers, and to know what is going on in their world. Although it isn't a Christian school, a few weeks ago they asked me for resources to teach values to the older children including



Bible teaching which is encouraging. We have also been asked to teach the Bible to the younger classes in another school that is close to the church as well. Once a week we will go as a team, and divide ourselves up amongst the different classes. We thank God for these opportunities.

Within the church we continue to work as a team with groups of children and young people in 4 parts of Concepcion as well as travelling to Horqueta and the Chaco weekly. Javier and Myrian are leaders of the older youth. We usually pick up a lot of the children in the truck to bring them to church on a Sunday as well. It hasn't been working very well for the past weeks, but it has been encouraging to see them coming walking even though it is a half hour walk in the heat. It is our prayer that God will use these children to make a difference for him in Paraguay. We have also been helping the children buy some of the things they need for school, as some of them don't have the basics necessary, and the schools here don't provide any books or anything. One family of 3 children have started for the first time this year. They haven't been going to school as they didn't have the books or uniform so it is good to see them having that opportunity.

As you know, for a long time the church has been in the process of looking

for a new diocesan bishop. Hopefully there will soon be news of that, but as yet I know the commission who are working on that would appreciate your prayers. We would also appreciate your prayers for the wee girl that we helping with - Romina. Someone from the church is looking after her because her mum can't and won't. She is doing so much better and has put on 3 kilos in the last 3 months, going up to 10 kilos. She had her fourth birthday a few weeks ago and we had a party for her. At the end of this week we have to take her to Asuncion for another operation. As yet she doesn't sit up or walk and needs physiotherapy which is almost impossible to get in Concepcion as regularly as she needs. We are praying that she will soon be able to walk and that this operation will make a big difference to her life.

Next week for Holy Week we are planning some special activities. On Thursday and Friday evening we are going to have a special service in Inmaculada, in the church that the team built last summer. Every week we meet in the church with the children, but hope that this will be a time when the whole family comes. On Easter Sunday we are going to have a special event for youth as a way of opening a youth service there each week. On Good Friday in Paraguay most people go to the cemetery to visit the graves, and many light candles and say a prayer for the dead. As a church we plan to be there as well, where the people are, with cold water, ice and juice, which in the heat is what people most need. The idea is to be there, to pray, to have opportunities to talk, and to have portions of the Bible available for anyone who wants. Thank you for your prayers for this event. It can be a time of despair for many, as people remember their loved ones who have died and is a good opportunity to share the hope of the Lord with them.

I was reminded this week of the urgent need to share that Good News with people when I went to be with and pray with a lady in her late 30's who has AIDS and is fading away. She is a new Christian and although the doctors and this world give her little hope, you can see her hope and faith shining through. I gave her a wee picture that says "Jesus, my strength" and she