

PRAYER LETTER FROM CLAIRE

Dear Praying Friends,

I hope you are well.

Lots has happened since the last time I wrote.

One of the verses I have been thinking of recently is 'Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.' Recently I shared it with the young people and asked them to think and pray about what it means for them. South Americans love sport and the youth organised a sports competition and invited the young people from other churches. They also invited some of their friends who aren't Christians. Each person received a bracelet with symbols which represent the different



parts of the 'Plan of Salvation.' Our young people practised using the bracelet to share this with others as a tool for personal evangelism. They have been talking about how it has given them opportunities with their friends. We keep praying for them. 'Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because You know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.'

MUSIC & WORSHIP

We have had a few weeks where we have focussed prayer on the area of music and worship in the church especially again in the area of the youth. There is so much talent and we are praying that there will also be real commitment to the Lord and to ministry as these young people mature and use their talent for the Kingdom of God. They have been practising a drama which they presented at an evangelistic event last week organised by different churches. They have been invited to present it again at an evangelistic event that another church is organising next week. The same young people also organised a prayer meeting to pray for Paris, the persecuted church and other areas of the world affected by war. The gospel is relatively new in Concepcion - not much more than 50 years. It's lovely to see mission growing on the hearts of many of the young people - a burden for the lost and suffering not just within their town and country but further afield. 'Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because You know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.'

CHURCH COUNCIL

Since Bishop Andrés retired as pastor of the church a year and a half ago we haven't had a full time pastor, but instead the church council (7 of us) have been keeping things going with a person in charge who works part time for the church. The person in charge is Ricardo and he is also living onsite along with his wife Cristina and 3 young children. It is great to have a

family living onsite again and please pray for Ricardo and his family as they lead us and as they seek the Lord's will for the future.

MISSION TEAMS

July and August were busy months with different teams and volunteers. A team from England came with 'Mission Paraguay' and did sewing workshops, sold glasses which they brought out at a price accessible to anyone and did some practical and children's work. A church flute band from Northern Ireland spent a few weeks with us and they also did some practical and building work as well as parading along the streets in the centre of Concepcion and in the different areas where we work. Needless to say the band drew a lot of attention and we made the most of this to give out Bible passages and invitations to church. Other volunteers helped with Children's Day, spoke at the church and youth services and did speech therapy in a special needs school. It is always lovely to see the local church here and volunteers from home working together for the glory of God and how this encourages and builds up both those here and those who come. 'Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.'

The next few months will have lots going on. In December the children and young people of 6 of the different areas we minister in are presenting a Nativity Play. It is a good opportunity to have contact with the families of the young people and the neighbours of the different annexes. Often the parents

are happy for the children and young people to come to church but they themselves don't come. We continue to pray for them. The young people are also praying for their families. Many of them come from very troubled homes where they are the only Christian. Two of the mums of our young people came to the youth service on Sunday night which was such an encouragement for them and for us.

"STORY TELLING"

Last year a group from home came to Concepcion to train us in a form of Bible Study called 'Simply the Story'. We have been using it since then to learn and discuss Bible Stories. During the first two weeks of January, Bryan Thompson is coming here from Ireland to do training. The first week he will train a group of us who did the course last time to be able to deliver the workshop. The second week we will deliver the workshop to young people and adults from our own church and other churches in Concepcion and other places. Once we have been trained God willing we can train others, even in some of the different country areas where we work.

"NO MORE STEALING"

I will finish with a few stories / testimonies in the context of the verse which I quoted at the beginning reminding us to 'Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because

you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.'

As January is the hottest month here seeing temperatures of 45 degrees with high humidity, and as there are a lot of distractions if we are onsite, we have been looking for a place in the countryside with a pool to have the Bible Course in January. We found a place that we have used once, about 5 miles from Concepcion, and the owners are very happy to let us use their premises. When we went to talk to him about hiring it,

he told us he had read the whole Bible several times. He came to visit us in Concepcion the next day and when he arrived on the church premises said that he used to attend meetings in our church here about 50 years ago when he was in his early teens. He said that he always enjoyed what he learned from the Bible at these meetings and that is when his interest first began.

"M" is a child who has been attending one of our Kids Clubs for years was expelled from a school for being violent. Other children also told us different times that he had stolen stuff from us. On one occasion we saw him doing it and had a chat with him, telling him amongst other things, that now he is a Christian his life has to change and he needs to live as God wants him to. He prayed for forgiveness and for help so that he wouldn't steal again. A few months later in the Bible Study with adults we were talking about

the story of Zacchaeus. He said 'I used to steal, but we talked about how God doesn't like it, and I renounced it, and I haven't stolen anything since.' We pray for changed lives.

PLEASE PRAY...

Of all the areas we minister, Inmaculada is the hardest. It is an area



which is full of drugs, drug dealers etc. We have always said that it is the area where we haven't really seen any lasting fruit and

where there is a big changeover of children and young people. I have said different times that there is no-one from the original group who is carrying on with the Christian life. Recently a young man called Roberth has become a Christian and is coming to the youth services and studying a basic Christianity course. I didn't recognise him but he recognised me and told me he used to go to the 'Children's Club' in Inmaculada when it first started. Please pray for Roberth and his family.

THANK YOU...

The church has now got transport again. Thanks so much to all those who helped make this possible. We are also praying for you. May God bless you! Happy Christmas and New Year from Concepcion.

Love from all here.

Claire

