

Concepción - A Place Apart

Concepción in Paraguay is situated about 400 km by road from the capital city Asunción. In the locality of Concepción there is a population of around 44,000 people in the city and in the surrounding rural area.



It is a place which has been neglected by successive governments. Poverty and unemployment are rife and education for many people is minimal. Even to have the basics which we take for granted are expensive and often unobtainable for these people. Sadly for the majority who are unemployed, even a Bible which costs £2.50 (the equivalent of a day's wage) is financially out of reach.

There is basically only one road into Concepción and it was only completed in

March 2000. Previously it was a dirt road which in the rainy season deteriorated into 35 cms of mud which 4 wheel drive vehicles had difficulty moving in. Modes of transport are largely scooters or motorbikes, bicycles, horses and carts, with cars becoming more frequently used. Ancient buses are the most common form of transport. Travel to the capital is also possible via a 22 hour river journey.

In previous years the SAMS Ireland BTN Summer Volunteer teams have worked in the area helping to rebuild a hostel for the indigenous people, building churches and water cisterns, as well as assisting in organising Holiday Bible clubs for the



children of the Concepción. The ministry team in Concepción is under the direction of the auxiliary Bishop of Paraguay, Rt Rev Andres Rodriguez. Bishop Andres and his wife Estela (pictured above with his family) have been working in the



Concepción area for a number of years. Other team members are Claire Holmes

(pictured above) from Richhill and Guillermo & Rossi Diana (national Paraguayans).

The area in which the team minister is over 200 square km and they can only reach some of the more remote areas only once a week or even once a fortnight. In many places the Good News of Jesus Christ has never been heard and only now is being preached. Outreach through social compassion is therefore a priority.

The ministry team also serves in the Chaco area among Indians which has seen a huge number turn to the Gospel. However, much more work and support is needed for these people who live in very meagre circumstances.

Another part of the work is with a group of

people who are known as the Campesinos “the country people.” These are people who have been waiting for decades for the government to act and give them land to build houses and grow food to sustain themselves. Sadly, the government is slow to move and financial assistance does not exist, so they wait in the country... often without hope.



The Christians of the Concepción area are very faithful and committed. Their faithfulness to Christ and to each other; their desire to reach out to others in love and social compassion; their hunger for God's word are all characteristics which challenge our lives. Despite the huge opposition to the Gospel

message from occultic groups God's kingdom is being extended in this place.

Concepción is a place very far removed from our own, both geographically and culturally. Yet it is a place where God is being glorified and where His kingdom is being extended by ordinary people who are faithful to His call.

If you would like to prayerfully or financially support the work in this area please contact:

SAMS House

1 Irwin Crescent

Lurgan

Craigavon

BT66 7EZ

Tel: 028 3831 0144 or 028 3832 2044

Email: info@samsireland.com

Web site: www.samsireland.com

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