

ENGLISH SPEAKING CONGREGATION OF TURIN

Newsletter, February 2009



Dear Folks

Since our last newsletter this interesting photo has been given to the church by the parents of Nita, the Nigerian girl who celebrated her birthday in August 2008 with such style. The photo shows many of the congregation with some of Nita's friends and relatives and is such a happy picture of a wonderful occasion that I felt it needed a wider audience. We have had to say good-bye or at least farewell to the two tall guys at the back of the picture. Prem, a research graduate from south India, went home to be married and we are hoping to see him and his new wife back among us at the beginning of March. Gary from USA was suddenly recalled by his firm, perhaps an early victim of the recession. We miss them very much. But that is the continuing story of this congregation, constantly coming and going, and we try to provide a stable Christian base for them while they are here. Many have spoken of their appreciation of this provision.

God bless.

Alex

Since the last newsletter in September we have had our harvest thanksgiving service when tinned goods and toiletries were gathered for the many immigrants who come to the Chiesa Valdese on a Friday morning looking for work, for food, for clothing and for any help which we can give them. Many of these are young men living in shared accommodation and they were particularly grateful for the toiletries. Even a tube of toothpaste brought smiles to their worried faces.

Our retreat held at Torre Pellice in early November was inspirational, though not many people were able to attend. This was a pity as a full day together to get to know one another has benefits far beyond the immediate horizon. Even the journey there in the train was fun.

In November the church was busy with the two Nigerian children in Torino for heart operations. Heart Aid Trust provides a flat in Via Nizza and operations are done at hospital. Oreva, aged 3, and Harry, aged 9, both came through their operations successfully and both attended church with mother Efi and nurse Rebecca. It was lovely to see them and we give thanks to God. Moira Achilli organised members of the church to help the visitors settle in the flat and show them how to get about in Torino. We were so glad to have a share in this good work.

Rebecca wrote 'The Board of Heart Aid Trust, Jos, Nigeria, heartily expresses its gratitude to the members of the English speaking church for their love, support and care for the Nigerian children and parents. May the good Lord, the anchor of our faith, richly bless all of you.'

The Bicchier d'Acqua ladies again provided warm clothing. We thank them sincerely. At the time of writing there is bad news from Jos, Nigeria, with riots following a disputed election and many killed or injured. May the peace of God descend on that place and smooth the way for our friends.

Dr Moira
Achilli with
Efi, Rebecca,
Oreva and
Harry



At our services we have started to have a short part especially for children. This is very enjoyable for all. One of these children had an accident in the home but good treatment and care has made her better now. She was very brave during the time of healing and was remembered in the prayers of the church. Prayers were also said for a nephew of one member and for a suddenly-bereaved friend, along with others.

In December we had a service where everyone came in national dress, bringing a dish of food typical of their own country. Each person was interviewed and spoke about their home. Korea, Ireland, India, USA and England were among the places we heard about. The Lord's Prayer was said, each in his own language. Afterwards we enjoyed a varied lunch. We discovered that, though we were all of different nationalities, we had something in common; we were all members of God's family.

Koreans and Scots go



hand in hand

The church has raised money for for the Mamre Project in Rotterdam. Supporting this is the Presbytery of Europe's project for 2009. Mamre is a vitally necessary purpose-built centre, nearing completion, for welcoming immigrants. Pastor Alex will be attending Presbytery's meeting in Rome early in March and while he is there the future of our little church will be under discussion. Alex's two year contract will be finishing this summer and he thinks the ESC is a vital part of the Christian witness in Torino and very much wants it to continue but there is some doubt about the availability of the flat for the next pastor. Much needs to be discussed and the prayers of everyone are requested that God will make the future plain for us to see.

Looking forward , Pastor Platone and Pastor Alex are planning a joint service in the Tempio on Sunday 5th April at 10.30am. This will be in Italian and in English and accompanies the setting up of an exhibition of paintings by the late Anna Greta Martin, the 7 year old who died in June 2007. Anna's mother Polly gathered together the remarkably talented work of her little girl during her last illness and the exhibition will be mounted in the Sala and any donations given to Casa Oz.