

In the church

My new role in the church as Sunday School teacher is going well. I have taught two lessons (I do two every six weeks), although the second was difficult in working out how to explain abstract concepts like God's eternity, omnipresence and omnipotence to 7 to 10 year olds. I have also been involved, with the other teachers, in preparing for our end of year event next Sunday. A few weeks ago most of the children spent an afternoon together making Christmas cards, which will be sold to the church members to raise funds for a school in India that they support. I have also been teaching them a new song (that I wrote – I have been trying out new talents lately as well!) Since I live in the same house as the person in charge of the Sunday School, I also try to make life easier for her doing some of the secretarial and organisational work for her, so that she can have more time for the more important educational and relationship issues in the Sunday School.

The groups at Trento are continuing to grow – there are now two of the three groups with 14 enrolled members, which is more than is good for the group (and even the third had 10 people last week, although one was a guest). So it is the desire now to create a fourth group after the summer break next year. We are starting to think about the best way to go about that (trying to get around problems of not enough prepared leaders, and finding the best time for it). The groups have existed for quite a few years now, and there are strong relationships within each group. It will be interesting to see if they remember the reason that the

groups exist – not just for inward looking groups that get bigger and bigger, but to multiply themselves. I suspect that there might be some resistance to splitting any of the groups.

At the same time, there has been a bit of a dip in the groups in the Valsugana valley and at Rovereto, where a number of people from last year are not coming anymore. They are mostly still around, but are not committed to the group. Pray that these people will catch the vision of a group not just for their needs, when they don't have anything better to do, but a group that will be a Gospel witness reaching out to their area.

At the university

It is a long time since I have used that title in a newsletter! But I thank God that a GBU group has started at the university again, after an almost 5 year break. There is a Christian (Andrea) that has moved to Trento recently, and is in his second year of study. He is the main mover of the group. Last year through his witness one of his friends in his course was converted. There is also an Austrian student on exchange for a few months, plus three other Christian contacts that don't attend a church regularly. The first week there were also four friends of these people. I was a bit jealous: in 10 years of university ministry for a few months there were five students in the group, but usually I had one or two. And they got 10 at the first meeting! But of course I praise God for this. Pray that the group will continue to grow and develop in their ministry and witness at the university.

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In the mission

Last Saturday, Jury (who will begin his employment in the church soon, and is setting up a social work ministry in the church) and I went to London to speak at the annual meeting for ECM Britain's supporters. It meant leaving home at 3.30am to drive to Milan, where we caught a plane to London. Jury found it helpful and encouraging to see first hand many of the people committed to supporting the church in general and him in particular. Then straight after the meeting it was back to the airport, a flight and a drive home, getting back at half past midnight.

In the family

Daniele has finally started taking a few steps, although he is still not a walker. The first steps (which were

towards my mother-in-law) were two days before he turned 15 months, which was two weeks later than when Stefania started walking. Their growth has in fact followed fairly similar patterns. Pinuccia was at work and missed the excitement, but at least I managed to video the event.

Daniele is booked in for his operation for the undescended testicle on December 5. If all goes well, he should be in and out of the hospital on the day. It depends however whether he can shake off before then the cold that he has had for the past few weeks.



The family (with Pinuccia's mother, and Daniele asleep) in the main square of Trento.

Stefania turned three last month, and it is a joy seeing how much she is growing. She loves going to preschool every morning (although waking up at 8am to get ready is certainly not her favourite activity), and it seems like she brings home a new word or phrase to say every day. She has also learnt to differentiate her languages – she will say something to me in English, then turn around and say it to Pinuccia in Italian without batting an eyelid. We also see her making friends in her preschool class, and is starting to name them to us and even talk to them at times (she is a bit shy usually). This Sunday she will be going to her first party for the birthday of one of the other children in her class.

Upcoming events

30 November: End of year event for the Sunday School, raising funds for the school in India that they support.

5 December: Daniele's operation.

6 December: Bookstall at Trento.

20 December: Bookstall at Rovereto, and Christmas concert with the band.

22 December-10 January: In Sicily with Pinuccia's family.