

## In the church

**Spring!** Apart from the change in our life style with the better weather (being able to take the children to the park again, for example), like every year it has marked an increase in attendance and activities in the church. There are now regularly between 90 and 100 people at the Sunday services (including visitors and children), which is certainly creating problems in the hall we use that was designed for half that number. It is always a joy to see the hall overflowing, and to think back to the 15 people and big empty spaces that there were when I first arrived.

Some of the special events in the past few weeks have been:

- The **fortnightly conversations** at a café/cultural centre have continued, with more people present each time
- The **first youth service** "The Bridge", which will be held once a month on a Saturday night - although the second service, due this month, will not be held because eight of the young adults will be going to Germany for Easter for a big European youth mission congress.
- Restarting the **monthly services** (on Sunday afternoons) and **bookstalls** (on Saturdays) at **Rovereto**
- A **day of prayer and fasting** for the vision and projects of the church, culminating in an evening of prayer together as a church.
- For Pinuccia (and sometimes for me), there have been a few meetings and a bit of preparation for the **Sunday School end of year recital** next month and for a **children's camp** for the church at the end of June.

Last Sunday there was also the annual church meeting. Amongst other business, there was the official announcement of a new missionary coming to work with the church, which means that now I am able to mention and talk about her here.

I first had contact with **Suzanne Bikker** about 4 years ago, through the Dutch ECM office. she was interested in working in this part of Italy. We decided that it would be best for her to go through Bible school first. In order to learn Italian and get to know the Italian church and culture at the same time, she went to a Bible school at Rome, where she finishes her third and final year in June. During this time we have kept in contact and talked about Trento. Since she is at Trento in these days to look for accommodation, and there was the annual meeting, we thought it was a good time to make an official announcement and welcome her. Her main ministry will be at Rovereto, where she will be living. We **pray** that she will have a big impact on the church planting work there. She will also be involved in some other ministries at Trento, which we have to decide upon together with the church. She will be moving here in July, and then beginning work in September, after the summer break.

This is the **answer to about 14 years of prayer**, by me and by many of you. It was back in 1995 that we first thought of our church planting vision in the rest of the province of Trento, but realised that we needed the help of other church planting missionaries in order to fulfil it. So I have often asked for prayer for such missionaries; now, in God's timing, one is coming. It will also mean a bit of a change in my ministry.



A full house for the first youth service.

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As well as the ministry I am already involved in, I will be the “team leader” for Suzanne, meeting with her regularly to help her in her ministry, especially as she learns about church planting in another culture. So **pray for our work together**, that we can be a good team and help each other in our respective ministries to help the church. And **keep praying for more church planting missionaries** as well, even if it takes another 14 years. Your prayers are appreciated and effective, as seen by the growth of the church over the years and God sending more workers into the harvest.



## On the computer

I often say that my Bible study computer program gets distributed and used a lot more than the simple accesses and downloads from my site would indicate. Occasionally I get feedback to remind me about this. For example, I recently received an e-mail from a Catholic priest, that I translate here:

On February 26 I participated at the annual meeting for the priests of the city of Rome with our bishop, Pope Benedict XVI. Entering in the room, I found on every seat a free booklet, of a certain Pietro Principe, called “Essential Guide to the Holy Bible”, Vatican Publishing House, 2008. On page 4 there was a brief mention of the theme “Bible and Internet”. It says, “There are many Internet sites dedicated to the Bible: an extraordinary wealth for knowing and studying the Word of God. Amongst the principal references we find...” and then follows a list of 11 sites, in which at fourth place is laparola.net. Personally, I add that some of those mentioned are not really sites on the Bible, but useful databases of pastoral material, and the others can not be compared with the quality of laparola.net and the program LaParola.

Whilst my computer ministry through LaParola.net is important, it is hard to connect it with a church planting ministry, which is the main direction of my ministry. Internet has the advantage of reaching everyone, but it is also a disadvantage because it is hard to focus on one particular geographical area. So whilst I have helped church planting in all of Italy, the effect at Trento has been minimal. So it was encouraging to me that the church received an e-mail last month from a user of my site from a town in the mountains near Trento, who was happy to discover that I was from Trento as well, found out about the church through the links on my site, and so wrote asking about meetings. Then he went to the Monday night Bible study group with a friend. They have not been back, but after more than a decade, someone has come to a church meeting because of LaParola.net, and I am happy that it has happened.

## Upcoming events

*18 April:* Bookstall at Rovereto

*25 April:* Fellowship meeting at Bologna with other churches

*26 April:* Service at Rovereto