

## In the family

A lot of the time since the last newsletter was spent **in Sicily**, visiting Pinuccia's family and friends (and mine too now!). In one sense it was a good relaxing time, although we were also very busy going out often with others. The children did manage to adjust to the different lifestyle. For example, in Sicily in summer people have dinner around 9pm or later (and we had to keep refusing invitations to dinner after church around 11pm), whereas at home we start to put them to sleep at 8.30. It was also good to be able to participate in various family milestones: Pinuccia's sister's birthday, her parents' anniversary and brother's birthday the following week, a cousin's wedding (who will be moving near Trento), and then Daniele's second birthday with the extended family.

The highlight for the children however was probably going to the beach about every second day. They have been to the beach a few times, but with the nature of our travels it has almost always been in winter. Stefania liked wading out until the water got up to her neck (since the beach was on the Mediterranean Sea, not the ocean, there were no waves to speak of), whilst Daniele played in the sand on the water's edge.

Pinuccia this year has a **job which is a lot better** than last year's in many ways. It is still 2.5 hours per day (which is all we really want), but from 1pm instead of from 3pm. This means that:

- although I will still pick up Stefania from school, Pinuccia will get home shortly afterwards, which gives her a much longer time to be together with the children. Last year, Pinuccia got home, had just half an hour to play with them, then it was time for dinner and bed;
- I get some time to work in the afternoon (although I lose a bit in the morning - see later);
- since it is in school hours, not the after school care, Pinuccia gets to do some actual teaching, rather than babysitting;
- as she will be helping a child with problems, she won't have to look after 25 children by herself, but there will be another teacher in the class;
- Pinuccia will be able to do a course.** A few months ago Pinuccia applied to teach English in the preschool, and she was accepted, but needs to do a course of 180 hours to bring her own English level up a bit and to learn how to teach it

to children. The course is in the afternoon, so with last year's job she would not have been able to do it. But this year twice a week she will go straight from school to the course. She will also need to study for it, so probably she will lock herself in my office for an hour every morning, and I will look after Daniele (whilst Stefania is at school). So I might lose an hour of work there, but I get it back in the afternoon.

So on September 1 **Pinuccia started this job**, and on the same day **Stefania went back to school**. We are still adjusting to the new rhythms, especially as a "middle" (an (almost) four year old, between the three and five year olds with her in her class) she no longer has a nap after lunch at school so we have to work out good sleeping times for her. Going to bed is not one of her favourite activities - for her it is a waste of time that could be better used playing. As a "middle", she will shortly start going to the gymnasium with the other children her age once a week, and she is really looking forward to it. She also likes having the Bible read to her, praying, and asking God for forgiveness if she was naughty during the day.



Celebrating Daniele's birthday

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## In the church

Unfortunately, during the summer break in the church activities I was not able to prepare as many Bible studies as I was hoping to, which means that **there are still be a lot to do in the next few months**. Whilst I do those, my computer ministry is greatly reduced: I do keep replying to e-mail enquiries (which are still quite numerous) and maintaining my sites, but I can not develop much new. But probably after the new year I will have the opportunity to do some more programming and creation of new resources to study the Bible.

In the next couple of weeks, **all of the church activities will be restarting**. For Pinuccia, this means meeting together with the Sunday School teachers for some training, planning and prayer. She will also be meeting with a couple of other women to map out the monthly ladies' meetings for this year. For Richard, it means organising the enrolments in the eight small groups, and getting the three that he is responsible for started.

As I mentioned last time, one of these is a **new group in the western Valsugana valley**. But since last time, another one of the ladies is pregnant, so apart from the six couples we will now have eight children under four years old and two on the way. This does create some logistic problems in finding spaces large enough for the group, and ministry problems in inviting others to the group as it is already large and with a very precise demographic. But the advantages of the group outweigh the disadvantages. Maybe there will be **two** planted churches in the valley as a result! I am looking forward to being involved with the Valsugana again. In a sense I left my heart there when I handed it over to the Italian leaders a few years ago. My hope is that I will only be involved for a couple of years (time to train some leaders for the new group), but I am sure that in that time I will have the same pleasure as I did leading the old group there.

On the other hand, with **Suzanne Bikker**, the new missionary, now settled in at Rovereto, she will be starting to do more there. For the moment I will keep leading the Bible study group, and she will be initiating new ministries there, especially evangelistic. I will be trying to help her in this, so pray for our relationship as we regularly meet together, that I will be able to help her serve God faithfully at Rovereto.

## Upcoming events

*21-24 September:* ECM country leader meeting at Madrid

*19 October:* Meeting together of ECM missionaries in Italy

*13-15 November:* A weekend of meetings with Louis Priolo on the Christian family and the Biblical principles for educating of children.

*8 December:* Three public conferences on "The evangelical faith, from the Reformation to the contemporary world" with Carl Trueman from the Westminster Theological Seminary in USA.

