

In the family

Half the time since our last newsletter was our special trip to Australia. This meant the first complete Wilson family Christmas for 18 years. The family is almost twice as big as it was back then. So it was great to have all this time with them, especially as there were not all the usual deputation commitments as well. It was especially good for the children to get to know this half of their family better. Apart from the first day, there was not all the heat that I had been telling Pinuccia to expect, and the rain did restrict some of our outdoor activities (we only got to go to the beach once), but there was still lots to do.

For Stefania and Daniele, the highlight was maybe a couple of surprises we had organised for them. From our last trip to Australia, we had brought back some DVDs of the Wiggles and Colin Buchanan, which they enjoy and



The family about to watch the Wiggles.



Getting to know a fellow Australian.

watched often in the last 18 months. [For my non Australian readers, they are singers of children's songs.] Both of them had Christmas concerts whilst we were in Australia this time. So one Sunday afternoon we went to the Olympic Park for the last concert of the Wiggles' tour, and the day after to the cathedral for Colin Buchanan's concert. It was a joy to see the pleasure and the excitement beaming out of our children's faces as they realised the nature of their surprises. One of the joys of being a parent, of course, is to give joy to your children. It was however fairly tiring for them. In fact, Daniele went to sleep half way through the noise and lights of the Wiggles' concert, and then again just before Colin's concert so that he only saw the second half of that one.

We also saw great improvements in Stefania's English speaking ability, which we had hoped would happen during the trip. She was forced to speak in English to her relatives, which made her sort out all the words she knew, in order to work out how to form sentences. Now that we are back in Italy, she is still replying to me in English instead in Italian, as she used to. We shall see, however, whether the fact that she always speaks Italian at school will push her English to the back of brain again.

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In the church

At the beginning of December, there was what is starting to become an annual event: the Sunday School fund raising event for a school in India that the children support. The previous weekend the children had created wrappings for the products (made by some people in the church), plus signs and other things for the sale, and practised the new Christmas song I wrote. The goods were then sold at the "market" after church. The good thing is that the children understood the point of the market. They had had some lessons on giving, learning to be thankful for what they had received from God, instead of complaining about what they don't have, when many have a lot less. They also prayed that they would be able to give a lot of money to the school, and in fact at the end almost €1500 was raised.

On December 8, there was an all day conference (with Carl Trueman, from America) on the Evangelical Faith and the Reformation. It was good to have such a conference on the holiday dedicated to the immaculate conception (of Mary, not Jesus), in a hall just a few meters from where the Council of Trent was held. The three talks were well attended by people from the church, and from nearby churches (ie up to 200km away) who came to hear him. The people I talked to found the depth and clearness of his theological and practical thinking helpful. Then on the following afternoon there was a talk for the city on Calvin at a Catholic study centre. There were about 10 people who were not from the

church, and they seemed interested in what was said. In any case, it was good to proclaim publicly what we believe in the city of the Council of Trent.

Now it is time to get back to the "meat" of my work, with the weekly Bible studies restarting this week after the Christmas and New Year break. These meetings do not make exciting newsletter reading, but the weekly meeting with the Word of God and with other Christians are fundamental to see people grow in their knowledge and service of God, and so also for the growth of the church in all the province of Trento, as these equipped disciples go out. So pray for this aspect of my ministry as well, even though I do not mention it often in my newsletters.

Upcoming events

- 17 January:* Monthly service at Rovereto
- 23 January:* Sunday School teachers training, that Pinuccia will be leading
- 8-11 February:* ECM leaders' meeting at Madrid
- 21 February:* Monthly service at Rovereto



The children of the Sunday School at the presentation of the market.