

In the church

We are going forward with the new hall for the church, and have signed the rental contract and paid the first month's rent, although there are still problems. Basically, it should be zoned for religious services, but the only buildings zoned in that way are Catholic churches, so it is illegal for any other religion to hold services! We will get around this by having our social-cultural association rent the hall as their office, and the association just happens to let the church use the hall for their meetings. The Muslims at Trento have chosen a similar solution. We have talked to many government officials who are aware of the problem but do not want to know about it - they want to can pretend they do not know and so not have to enforce the law. We are going ahead, but are unhappy that we are forced to act illegally, and with the possibility of being closed at any time if the local government should so chose. In fact 17 evangelical churches have been closed in the Milan region in the past year. We will be continuing to meet and talk with the local officials to try to get a legal solution.

Thanksgiving Dinner

ECM will be holding a special meeting to thank God for what he has been doing through the mission, and to hear how he has been transforming the people of Europe. If you would like to give thanks together with the mission, it will be at the Roberts Dale campus of the Sydney Missionary and Bible College (140 Croydon Ave, Croydon Park) on

Saturday 30th June at 6.15pm.

Please RSVP to ecm.oz@ecmi.org or 02 97475446.

With the end of the school year, Pinuccia and I, with the other teachers, have been kept quite busy with the Sunday School activities. At the end of May someone came to visit from the school we support in India, so we prepared some material for him to take back to his students. Last Sunday there was the annual presentation of the year's work to the church. We were able to explain what goes on when all the children disappear during the church service, which will help the church to pray for us. From next Sunday, there will be the big one: the children's camp for 5 days, with 20 children coming along. There has been a lot to prepare, and there still is, but I am looking forward to it. The program is great and the other adults helping are very talented, and make a great team.

One of the church highlights of the year was the baptismal service of the Trento and Rovereto churches, in which five people were baptised. A highlight of this highlight was the baptism of a young lady from Tunisia, a former Muslim. In her testimony she shared how she had seen Jesus in a dream whilst still living in Tunisia, but only considered him to be a great prophet. Then, after a few adventures, she ended up sharing an apartment with Karina, from the church at Trento. At one of the prayer meeting for the young adults that she hosted, Karina asked this Muslim lady if she would like to participate. She did, and was touched by the fact that people prayed even for **her**. At that point decided that

Church corner

Pippo is the elder of the church at Trento. He has been leading the church, together with the other elder Angelo, since it became autonomous from ECM. But since Angelo left in September to lead the church plant at Rovereto, Pippo has been the sole leader. This means about 30 hours a week of ministry in the church, as well as a job at the university and a family to look after. On top of this, he also has a ministry toward the whole Italian church. He is on the national council of the Italian Evangelical Alliance, is one of the experts in the country on the effects of the Christian faith in the culture and economics. This means he also travels often for speaking engagements. For example, this week he will be talking at the Parliament House in Rome on the Cape Town Commitment. All this has had repercussions on his health lately. We are trying to find new leaders to help him, and in the next year will be concentrating on this. His wife **Enrica** helps with the Sunday School, and will be one of the leaders at the camp.



Pippo (right) praying for the people being baptised, with Angelo (left), the other elder. The Tunisian lady is in the middle.

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she wanted to follow Jesus, because convinced that he is also God. However, she still had difficulties reconciling her new faith with her cultural background. But later she visited a church a couple of hundred kilometres away, where she met a Tunisian Christian family, and also some other Arab Christians. She has realised that she can be Christian and remain Tunisian, and was happy to identify herself as such by being baptised. She is now under great pressure from her extended family at Trento, who were all opposed to her baptism, and is worried about her trip in July to Tunisia to visit her immediate family. So please pray for her.

On the computer

Since my website (laparola.net) is the first site on Google when searching for *bibbia* (that is, 'Bible' in Italian), I often receive questions by e-mail about the Bible - usually the same questions. A couple of years ago I started saving my answers, so that I could send it when somebody else asked the same question. Then I thought I would try to be more systematic about it, and started going through the books of the Bible and answering questions either I or others have had, especially on the passages that are more difficult to understand. A couple of weeks ago I finished the New Testament, with quite a few of the more important Old

Testament passages as well - about 300 questions and answers, for a total of 170 pages. Having reached this milestone, I then released the first public version on my web site, where people can download all of the answers as a PDF file, or just look for an answer for a particular question they may have. You can see them all at <http://www.laparola.net/brani/> In the meantime, I have started to go through the Old Testament, to write up more answers to common questions. Hopefully this will reduce my work load. And it has worked: a couple of days later yet another person asked who was Cain's wife, so I was able to just send the link to the answer.

Points for prayer

- Pray for the work that needs to be done in the hall, so that it is ready after the summer. Pray for wisdom to know how much to accept the present situation, and how much to fight for our rights.
- Pray for the children's camp, for its witness (especially to the four non church children), and that the team of leaders will work will together. Pray for energy and good health for Pinuccia as she runs it all.
- Pray for the Tunisian lady, that God will preserve and protect her.
- Give thanks for Pippo, that God gave to the church to equip it for service. It is a privilege for me to serve with him. Pray that God will strengthen him, and also for Enrica and his daughters Elisa and Gaia.
- Pray that my answers to common questions on the Bible will help people to understand and believe the Bible better.



Enrica with the Sunday School class she and I teach, together with Gloria.