

November 2009

Dear Friends,

At Hinsley Hall Eric Allen gave notice of his intention to stand down as Chairman of the Fellowship Committee as he was approaching his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and felt it time to have someone younger. We congratulate Eric on attaining his 81<sup>st</sup> year and thank him for his years of service and encouragement as Chairman. We are delighted that he is willing to continue as a member of the Committee and that John Bremner has agreed to take over the role of Chairman. With his experience of working in Italy, his personal Waldensian links, not least his wife, Mirella, he is an ideal choice.

In this edition John reports at greater length on the *sinodo*: you will soon see why. Lilly Chiavia shares her account of the Italians' visit to England, in Italian this time round; her prayers at Marston in bilingual form; and there is an account of Christmases past in the Valleys. We bring news of the opening of the new premises for the Youth Project in Turin that Massimo wrote about this time last year. In the year of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Calvin's birth Yvonne Jones tells us something of Calvin's influence on the Waldensians as well as giving us more details of the Fellowship visit to Rome next autumn.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and every blessing in 2010,

Kate Grand

**Report on the European Session of the Synod of  
Waldensian and Methodist Churches  
August 2009**

Synod opened in the customary way, with Daniele Garrone preaching on Jeremiah 29: 7 "Seek the welfare of the city." Two young men were consecrated during the service and a new British

Methodist minister was welcomed to serve in Florence. Her husband, an organist, has been offered work there. Synod also said “Good-bye” to Dorothy and Sandy Cairns, who have been serving in Turin for the past two years. This year’s Synod was dominated by three main themes.

Firstly, the continuing experience of immigrants integrating into the life of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches in Italy. For the first time in my experience, there was a noticeable presence of immigrants as representatives of their congregations – mostly Africans from the Venice and Emilia regions – as well as three ministers of African origin. This integration, although not without its problems, is a positive sign that, unlike the British Churches in the 1950s and 60s, the Italian Protestants have known how to welcome their brothers and sisters from overseas. There is a long way still to go, but the signs are positive.

Secondly, the Italian government, in common with many other European governments, including our own, has recently introduced new legislation aimed at reducing the numbers of immigrants entering the country. This is making life even more difficult for those who wish to integrate into Italian society and encouraging criminality as thousands seek to make the crossing from North Africa. Over 70 people died in one boat alone during August, as passing ships refused to help them in the desperate plight. This “Fortress Europe” mentality was mentioned during the debate, regarding two incidents directly involving the Waldensian Church: the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Togo and the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Togo were invited this year to attend the Synod to celebrate a new partnership between the two churches, as Protestants from Togo are arriving in Italy and are integrating into the Waldensian congregations. These two bearers of high office in their Church in Togo are hardly likely to become ‘illegal immigrants’, yet the Italian authorities refused permission for them to travel; and a young Protestant woman from Argentina, of Italian descent, wanted to spend a year volunteering in

a Waldensian centre in Italy, starting this summer (2009). She got all her papers in order, went to the Italian embassy in Buenos Aires, and was granted a visa. But on arrival in Madrid she was arrested. Her passport, mobile phone, money and credit card were taken from her, she was kept 'incomunicada' for eight hours, and then sent back to Argentina. That is the reality of European legislation and practice.

A strongly worded motion was passed by Synod (see below), and on the Wednesday the Synod held a lunch time fast – joined by many folk from Torre Pellice and surrounding areas, including the bishop of Pinerolo. There were messages of support and encouragement from all over Italy. At the conclusion of the morning business Synod processed to the church and heard various readings and prayers, and was led in song. It was a deeply moving experience, especially so when one of the African men broke down in tears halfway through his reading. I have never known Synod to express such strong feelings in such a public manner, and on that day its prophetic voice was heard loud and clear.

Act (provisional number 82)

The Synod of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches

- guided by the Word of God « Seek the welfare of the city » (Jeremiah 29 v7) ;
- recalling the principles upon which our Republic and our common democratic life are founded, according to which all obstacles which discriminate on the basis of « race, faith and personal condition » ought to be removed;
- remembering the experience of emigration – including illegal emigration – which in the past involved many Italians, including many members of our own churches, who then went on to become full citizens of the nations to which they had gone;
- convinced that the promotion of full integration and the obtaining of citizenship on the part of immigrants who

contribute to the wellbeing of Italy, is in the best interests of our Republic and not a threat to be blocked;

expresses its indignation

- at the consequences which the law of July 15, 2009 (law 94/2009) has, not only for immigrants but also for Italian citizens, for the quality of our democracy and for our legal rights;
- at the sentiments of mistrust which are fed by such laws: both amongst immigrants, who find themselves in a situation of psychological subjection, whether or not they are living here legally; and amongst Italians, irresponsibly led to believe that, on the one hand, clandestine immigration is the principal cause of social disorder, and, on the other, that this law will bring greater security to our country, when, in reality, it will contribute to an increase in clandestine activity, favouring the exploitation of foreigners and their «disappearance» into total invisibility, exposing them to the risk of becoming prey to organised crime.

In particular, Synod believes that a law such as 94/2009, which is in open conflict with the fundamental principles of our legal system, is unacceptable, because :

- it charges a person with being an illegal foreigner, even when this condition is caused by bureaucratic sluggishness and has nothing to do with a person's actual behaviour, which might justifiably render him/her liable under our laws;
- it raises unfair obstacles to family life and marriage amongst immigrants when our legal system recognises family and marriage to be of particular social value;
- it limits the access of immigrants to medical care, when our legal system recognises that all have the right to

- health care;
- it limits access to education for immigrant children.

The Waldensian and Methodist churches feel themselves to be directly affected by law 94/2009, both insofar as they are ecclesial organisms and insofar as they have diaconal operations. Pastors and individual believers, members of our churches with institutional responsibilities, will be forced into heartrending choices between, on the one hand, the obligations of conscience and the need for a coherent faith, and, on the other, respect for the law. The same applies to individual believers who are immigrants, especially those who are illegally present in our country.

Synod:

also noting the concerned observations expressed by the President of the Republic when he signed this law, hopes for an immediate commitment on the part of Italian citizens to oppose the discriminating elements of this law, and to work for a revision of the laws governing immigration, and invites the churches to promote this commitment ;

commits the churches to combating the culture of xenophobia with values of the Italian constitution, with the safeguarding of human rights and with a biblically based witness concerning the welcoming of foreigners, and against unfair treatment of the weak ;

encourages the work of the Service for Refugees and Migrants of the Italian Protestant Federation and invites everyone to evaluate the contribution to integration and the positive meeting of cultures constituted by the project « being the church together » ;

invites the church's Executive (Tavola valdese) to protest to the public authorities whenever the restrictions on immigration limit the liberty and autonomy of the life of the churches.

Thirdly, Italian society continues to debate the role of religious education. Earlier this year, the Education Minister decreed that

religious education exams should be included in the final marks awarded to school pupils. The High Court in Lazio overruled this, saying that such a decree was against the constitutional rights of those who did not wish to receive catechism from the Catholic Church (R.E. in Italy is taught by people nominated by the local bishop, who have not necessarily undergone the training required for other teachers). The Minister has appealed against that ruling and the legal battle continues. Synod made its feelings clear!

It was another “steady as she goes” Synod, with Maria Bonafede being returned as Moderator. People are beginning to plan for when she steps down in a couple of years’ time, but, as yet, there is no clear favourite to succeed her – although Paolo Ribet’s name has been mentioned by a few.

More could have been said – as always! – but that’s probably enough for now. It remains a delight and a privilege to serve Synod year by year as an interpreter. I hope to continue for many years to come!

John Bremner

### **Viaggio Inghilterra 3 – 13 Luglio 2009**

Il nostro viaggio ha inizio in una bellissima giornata di sole dall’aeroporto di Torino. Ci accompagna Massimo ormai esperto di viaggi verso l’Inghilterra fra le comunità’ della United Reformed Church Waldensian Fellowship – Londra ci aspetta un po’ grigia. All’aeroporto ci aspettano Dorothy e Kathleen che come due angeli custodi ci hanno accompagnato durante il nostro soggiorno ad Oxford.

La nostra sistemazione all’università d’ Oxford Brookes è stata una cosa positiva, ci siamo sentiti un po’ studenti al College. Con l’affettuosa assistenza di Dorothy e Kathleen abbiamo visitato una parte di Oxford sempre bella, sempre interessante. Abbiamo

avuto l'incontro con la comunità di Marston dove abbiamo cenato con un buon fish and chips. La domenica abbiamo avuto il culto nella loro chiesa, condividendo con loro la giornata e con la comunità di Colliwood dove abbiamo pranzato. Dopo pranzo una bellissima passeggiata sulla collina attraversando la C.S. Lewis Nature Reserve fra stagni e folti boschi. Sulla collina una bella vista su tutta la campagna attorno. Sia gli adulti che i ragazzi si sono cimentati nel far volare gli aquiloni, divertendosi.

Una bella serata di canti e di musica ha chiuso la giornata. Ritornando all'università una grande luna splendente ci augura la buonanotte.

Al lunedì partenza per Leek.

È la prima volta che visitiamo la comunità di Leek. A Birmingham un forte temporale ci accompagna per un bel pezzo di strada. Abbiamo ricevuto un' accoglienza molto calorosa, le famiglie ci hanno ospitati come vecchi amici che ritornano. Grazie della vostra accoglienza così partecipata.

Leek è una bella cittadina un po' in collina al limite del parco [Peak District National Park] di cui abbiamo avuto modo di visitare una parte anche se il tempo è stato inclemente – un parco ondulato su colline, molte farm con allevamenti di bestiame.

Grazie all' autista del pulman, abbiamo avuto molte notizie delle attività che sono dentro al parco sia nel presente che del passato. Siamo stati al castello di Chatsworth dei duchi del Devonshire – visitando una parte del castello ed una parte dell'immenso parco.

A Leek visitiamo la mostra di ricamo su seta, essendo a Leek nel tempo passato un grande centro per la seta, arrivando ad avere circa sessanta mila famiglie che allevano bachi di seta ed era nata una scuola di ricamo su seta rinomata in tutto il mondo. Essendo Leek ricca di acque c'erano le fabbriche tessili. Parlando con il responsabile della mostra ci ha spiegato che Guterman era un loro antagonista nella produzione del cotone.

Giovedì salutiamo la comunità di Leek, e riprendiamo il nostro viaggio verso Sale dove siamo attesi per il pranzo. A Sale troviamo le persone che conosciamo già da lungo tempo, ed è ome ritrovare degli amici, anche se loro vivano lontano da noi.

Anche Ruth Cowhig ha voluto venire a salutarci, la decana della comunità, alla sua veneranda età è ancora molta attiva e presente per quanto riguarda la comunità e per il collegamento fra le nostre comunità e la United Reformed Church Waldensian Fellowship.

Venerdì Gita a Southport, una grande cittadina sul mare, il cielo grigio di Sale diventa azzurro sul mare, l'aria è alquanto fredda. Southport è in prevalenza una meta turistica di vacanza, la circondano bei giardini. Un lungo percorso per camminare in riva al mare, anche se il mare è alquanto lontano per via della bassa ed alta marea.

Al ritorno abbiamo il gradito incontro con la comunità di Ormskirk per un tè contornato da buoni panini e dolci.

Per cena siamo alla comunità di George Morton. Si unisce a noi una parte di quella di Sale. Così si ha la possibilità di scambiare notizie ed opinioni.

Si può dire che abbiamo avuto modo di cenare o pranzare in diverse comunità o in famiglia godendo ed assaporando degli ottimi cibi e dei dolci squisiti.

Sabato partenza per Barnes Close. Arriviamo per pranzo.

È sempre bello retornare alla forsteria di Barnes Close in mezzo al verde, così riposante con quella bellissima collina dove si può camminare ullati dal vento avendo attorno un paesaggio agreste ed in lontananza la città di Birmingham.

La domenica sono veduti alla foresteria diversi amici per passare la giornata con noi, tra cui David Hadfield, che dalle sponde della manica è arrivato fino lassù per incontrarci.

Si è condiviso il pranzo, conversando su diversi argomenti, si è



anche parlato del prossimo viaggio che faranno gli inglesi in Italia, probabilmente a Roma ad ottobre 2010.

Il nostro viaggio è finito lunedì 13 luglio con il volo da Birmingham verso Milano. Grazie a tutti gli amici dell' Inghilterra che hanno reso possibile questo nostro viaggio.

Abbiamo scoperto nuove cose, nuovi luoghi, incontrato persone lungo il percorso che ci hanno dato la loro disponibilità e hanno condiviso con noi questi giorni . Ogni viaggio è un nuovo viaggio che porta a nuove conoscenze di luoghi e di persone e questo arricchisce il nostro rapporto verso gli altri, condividendo i nostri giorni sia presenti che futuri.

Lilly Chiavia

A translation of Lilly's account of the visit will appear in the next edition of the Newsletter.

### **Preghiera per il culto con la comunità di Marston** **Prayer for the Service with the Marston congregation.**

Signore, come pellegrini  
Ogni giorno  
Il nostro cammino  
Si dipana sulle strade del mondo.  
Oggi il nostro cammino  
Ci ha portati fino a qua  
Una terra lontana  
Dal nostro vivere quotidiano.  
Abbiamo ritrovato gli amici  
Persone di cui abbiamo  
Percorso un breve tratto di strada  
Insieme.  
Signore, ancora una volta  
Ci dai la possibilità

Lord, as pilgrims  
Every day  
Our pathway  
Winds onto the world's ways.  
Today our journey  
Has brought us here  
To a land far  
From our daily living.  
We have found once more  
Friends, people with whom  
We have shared a brief stretch  
Of our journeying together.  
Lord, once more  
Grant us the possibility

Di capire  
Quanto è importante  
Il nostro camminare  
Verso gli altri  
Di guardare attorno  
Di capire.  
Signore, ti ringraziamo  
Per questa opportunità.  
Signore, in questi giorni  
Avremo modo di ammirare  
La tua creazione  
- Il creato!  
Avremo modo di confrontarsi

In nuove cose,  
Ammirando e godendo tutto ciò.  
Accompagna questo nostro cammino,  
Fra questo posante paesaggio.  
Fai che la nostra strada  
Sia sicura,  
Veglia paternamente  
Su di noi,  
Sulla nostra casa lontana,  
Con chi è rimasto  
Ad aspettare il nostro ritorno.  
Signore, che la tua pace  
Ed il tuo amore sia per noi  
Una fonte inesauribile  
In ogni momento.  
In questo lungo cammino  
Che ogni giorno ci porta a te.  
Signore, accompagna  
Tutte le persone  
Di questo mondo  
Verso una strada  
Priva di ostacoli,

Of understanding  
How important it is  
For us to journey  
Towards others  
To look around  
To comprehend.  
Lord, we thank you  
For this opportunity.  
Lord, in these days  
We shall be able to admire  
Your creation  
-- the created world!  
We shall be able to meet face  
to face  
In new things,  
Admiring and enjoying it all.  
Be with us on our journey  
Through this landscape.  
May our way  
Be safe,  
Like a loving father  
Watch over us,  
Over our distant homes,  
With those who remain behind  
Awaiting our return.  
Lord, may your peace  
And your love be for us  
A never failing source  
At every moment.  
On this long journey  
May each day bring us to you.  
Lord, accompany  
Every single person  
In this our world  
Towards a road  
Free from obstacles

Che sappia condurre a Tè  
Verso la Tua luce,  
Verso la Tua pace,  
Verso il Tuo amore.  
Amen

That leads to you,  
To your light,  
To your peace,  
To your love.  
Amen

Lilly Chiavia

### **Christmas Story**

Many years ago a little girl lived in a little village surrounded by high mountains, at the foot of a valley like many other valleys in our surrounding area. That little girl lived a carefree life, surrounded by the love of her family and unaware of the world far away.

That little world was enough for her, each season brought novelty, colours, scents, nature was rich in gifts, hundreds of things helped her to create hundreds more things, each day presenting her with something new: flowers, garlands, rocks, twigs and branches were there for her to create new toys.

But there was one season in particular that brought great novelties and that came with the end of autumn and arrival of winter. Christmas was near and how many things there were to be done for that important day! Papa would go down into Torre Pellice and when he returned home with his large rucksack there were lovely surprises: animal-shaped biscuits that smelled wonderful, just ready to be dipped in milk and counted to see who had more cows or sheep, there were hens, tiny fishes, piglets and other creatures too. But the loveliest surprise of all was the packet of Christmas cards, with magical illustrations in colour, so lovely to look at! And ready to be written to relatives who had long since moved to the plain and to distant friends. The children sitting with Papa at the little table by the kitchen window would carefully choose a card, and decide who it was to be sent to: it was an important and heartfelt moment.

What a mixture of feelings and emotions in the days up to Christmas as rehearsals for the Sunday School Christmas concert took place! Each of those children in that little village was so proud of learning the poems and plays to be performed with their friends on Christmas Night.

A few days before Christmas Papa would go into the woods and cut down a fir branch to be the Christmas tree. It would be set up on the little kitchen windowsill, decorated with small objects, hazelnuts and walnuts wrapped in sweet papers, velvety papers from oranges jealously kept from one year to the next, acorns and pebbles were wrapped up, little bows made of coloured wool, bits of string and straw and when the little red candles with tiny wicks (like magic stars) were on it the tree looked very beautiful on that little windowsill, bringing joy and happiness into the kitchen.

In those days there was usually a note from the post office about a parcel to be picked up. For the children, bursting with curiosity, it was a long wait: what could there be in that parcel? Friends in distant England had thought of giving them a Christmas different from their friends in the valleys. There was always great surprise opening the parcel: look, sweets, biscuits, a cake, clothes and other things kept appearing. So Christmas was gratefully shared with distant friends.

The week before Christmas a large Christmas tree would be erected in the church, cut down and transported there by the young men. They would put up a little stage next to the Christmas tree too – the one where the children performed their play or concert. A little shy, a little worried about remembering their lines, all played their part on that little stage and all were very proud of their role. They would be applauded by all the public assembled there for a very special evening.

At that time electric light had not yet made it so far up the valley, so the church was lit with the candles on the tree and oil lamps, then in

later years acetylene brought a stronger and longer-lasting light. At that time it used to snow a lot, at Christmas everything was clothed in a blanket of white. All the houses would be covered in a thick layer of snow which made them look like great iced cakes and in your imagination you could enter into a never-ending fairy tale, where everyone could feast on cakes in all shapes and sizes, where everything was allowed, but this was only a fairy tale.

At last the longed for evening arrived. In the houses everyone was getting ready, dinner had been made in haste, even the animals had been attended to by then and were resting in the sweet warmth of their stalls. The children were impatient, outside it was biting cold, but the sky was quilted with stars and a silvery moon rose from behind the mountains and illuminated the whole valley, the snow shone like crystal. Along the icy little roads and paths figures could be seen walking in single file, with the shouting children announcing their arrival, the church filled rapidly, it really was a special night, as all the people of the village took part in the festivity and all the children were there to applaud their companions.

The church was packed full of people, the light from the little candles cast strange flourishes on the walls, like great garlands waving up and down, forming curious designs that each could interpret in their own way.

All on stage ready to perform, the children sought out their parents' faces to feel more secure. After the play, after the applause, each child received a little present, an orange, a brioche plait with granulated sugar on top, and then a book. What a marvel, a book! What beautiful pictures, what adventures in those pages, that would be read and re-read many times during the year.

On the way out of church there were sweets for all the children there. In spite of the myriad difficulties of daily life in that little village the church shared with all the villagers. The evening was over: in front of the church families made their joyful goodbyes, wishing each

other a Happy Christmas. The cold bit into noses, the road home was icy and slippery but the joy was immense at the little gifts they'd received, the applause, the meeting up with friends, exchanging greetings, and those children along the road felt big and important.

From the sky the moon and stars watched over them, and glinted on that white landscape of frozen snow with a thousand flashes like sparkling diamonds just for them. That night in bed the children would dream only of lovely things, waiting for Christmas.

Now that child from the little village has grown up, she no longer lives up there near her mountains. She is an adult and has a little granddaughter to whom she tells stories, made-up ones and true ones too, that help her grow up, lending meaning to the days to come.

But every year on Christmas Eve she sets out on the road that leads her back to her village and up there on the rock is her church: lit up, it seems like a beacon in the night, it is there as always, waiting for its people to come and fill it with hymns and joy.

In that magical place the little girl now grown finds anew the emotions of the tree with its candles, the perfumes return as so long ago, she finds again her people, finds anew the joy of exchanging greetings and good wishes, in the smiles of those around her and it's a magic that transports her back to those years long ago.

And with a silent tear moistening her lashes, she raises her eyes to the sky and finds once more that mantle of stars and a silver moon lighting up all the valley.

Lilly Chiavia

### **The Turin Youth Centre is born: it will be called CO<sub>7</sub>**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> October lots of us got up and glanced at the weather...no! It can't rain today! Today, at long last it's the opening of the new premises adjacent to the church at No. 7 Corso Oddone. The project was started in 2003, with the intention of refurbishing the premises where youth activities were held, but at the same time turning them into a place for experimenting with new activities, new meetings, new exchanges, opening ourselves up to other organisations in that part of town. This "selfish" dream we wished to indulge in: having newer, finer, more functional space became, instead, the opportunity to take more risks, not on our own this time but with whoever might be interested in sharing them, in giving something of themselves in order to receive something of the others in exchange, to build something together, to grow and make this place flourish.

The building work has taken a long time and at times has been a bit demoralising: we had so many ideas and such desire to get cracking, to involve people in this new beginning that, fortunately, carries within it the past, the memories of these premises as they were, of those who used them and now of those who will use the new ones. At last the decision has been made! On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2009 the premises are opening! With a big party to mark an end and a new beginning. The end of the building work... these premises are beautiful . and now what? Now we can move on to the other part of the dream, the part that envisaged not only filling them with the activities already happening but also coming up with new ideas, seeing this place become a safe haven where people feel free to experiment and be guinea pigs, where the finger of suspicion is not pointed at new ideas, but where they are welcomed and discussed.

For some time one of the major headaches of those concerned with the future life of this centre was what its name should be: we wanted something with appeal but something that would keep a flavour of the common usage " Let's go to Corso Oddone." (because yes, there's not much to do... those who go there often do say that!), we

wanted something to indicate where it is but also what it represents ... we wanted too many things, so we had to put them all together, because we did not like the idea of giving something up before we'd even begun. We found a name, and yes, it represents that whole agglomeration of things and people that have passed through, are passing and will pass through this place: CO<sub>7</sub>, Corso Oddone 7, Casa Oddone 7, Cantiere (building site) Oddone 7.

Saturday was a very full day, full of the usual last minute things to be done, full of joy, full of memories, full of dreams for the future and happiness for the dreams come true, full of hugs from people who'd not seen each other for some time and hugs between people who scarcely knew each other. There was time for speeches and thanks for those who in various ways had played a part in bringing the project to fruition; there was time to look around the new premises, trying to see how they might be used, there was time to appreciate the technology, thanks to which Radio Beckwith was able to broadcast the whole event live, reaching those who, for whatever reason, were not able to be there in person; there was time to sing, play music, enjoy ourselves and let ourselves go, delighted to be able share with others what we were feeling in our hearts.

Valentina Pinto

The Italian text was passed on by Massimo Long from the website of the Waldensian Church in Turin at [www.torinovaldese.org](http://www.torinovaldese.org) where you can see two hazy photographs of the new building.

The new premises have a lounge on the ground floor, 2 activity rooms on the first floor and a multipurpose hall on the second floor; in the basement is a rehearsal room for young musicians.

You may remember Massimo wrote of aims to provide after-school activities, and hospitality for young Protestants from Italy and abroad to create opportunities for young people to meet, hold conferences, share projects etc., as well as institutional church youth activities.



## **CALVIN QUINCENTENARY VISIT TO TORRE PELLICE**

In September, I was very fortunate to be in a Group led by Anthony Earl following what has now become known as a Reformation Pilgrimage. This year to coincide with the quincentenary of the birth of John Calvin, we spent most of our time in Geneva and then the final weekend at Torre Pellice. Here we learnt of Calvin's links with the Waldensian Church through a very informative talk and discussion by Revd Dr Giorgio Tourn who is a well respected Church historian.

It is well known that the Waldensian Church is a Church in the Calvinist tradition. However, I had not appreciated the extent to which the sixteenth century Swiss reformers involved themselves with the Waldensians. There had been contact between the reformers and the Waldensians before Calvin arrived in Geneva in 1529 at the time he was a student in Paris. Calvin however was to have a less prominent role than Farel initially. It was Farel who attended the Meeting at Chanforan in 1532 and had been given the responsibility of translating the Bible into French, the language of the valleys at that time. We know however, that the translation was later assigned to a relation of Calvin's, Pierre Robert, a humanist who lived in Geneva. 'Olivétan', as he became known, stayed in the valleys during the last two years' of his work (1553/4). It is accepted that Calvin must have known about the Waldensians before this time. The Olivétan Bible, as the translation became known, was published in Neuchâtel (June 1535), and has the preface to the Bible and an introduction to the New Testament written by Calvin.

The following year both Farel and Calvin left Geneva and went to Strasbourg where Calvin remained for about three years. During that time, Piedmont entered a period of repression under the King of France, and edicts were passed condemning the Reformed Church. Immediately, Calvin intervened successfully to defend the Waldensians whom he regarded as a persecuted minority established in the image of the first true Church of the apostles. This

is further evidence that he was sympathetic to the Waldensian cause.

Later, in 1555, when Calvin had returned to Geneva he led a number of pastors on a mission to the French-speaking areas. Their aim was simply to determine the spread of the reformed groups and to determine whether it would be possible to organise these into a coherent Church. He also favoured consistories of elders to maintain discipline within the church which he had developed in Geneva.

Piedmont had a Catholic Governor and the missionaries were well received by the Waldensians. They asked for ministry from Geneva and they were given preferential treatment with three annual visits from the reformed pastors. After this time, there is no documented evidence of links between the Waldensians and Calvin himself. (Calvin was to die in 1564).

Although it is worth noting that in 1561, a document was agreed at Cavour. Here, the Catholic Prince gave recognition to the dissident Waldensians, allowing them to worship freely in the restricted area of the Valleys. Whether this toleration was due to Calvin's intervention is not known; we know however, this was to be only a temporary reprieve.

Yvonne Jones

### **MARGARET EVANS 1926 – 2009**

I was sad to hear of the death of Margaret Evans who had been such a faithful member of our Fellowship for so many years. She first came with us to Sicily in 1988; she was by nature a very private person who, on that occasion, preferred to spend time alone with a book rather than mixing with the group. After she got to know everyone better, she became an essential part of the group and I think the Fellowship became very valuable to her.

But she never missed coming on holiday with us, (her last visit was

to Florence and Elba in 2006) and on the alternate years joining us in Manchester, in Barnes Close and latterly in Hinsley Hall, Leeds at our Biennial Gatherings.

Once, her husband, Revd Colin Evans, was able to come when our visit was to Elba, led by our much loved Italian friend, Elena Vigliano.

Margaret will be much missed by her many friends.

Ruth Cowhig

Margaret, who had an inoperable heart condition, died peacefully in Leeds General Infirmary on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

On behalf of the Fellowship Ruth and Edward Sheldrake and I attended a service of thanksgiving for her life at St. Andrew's Roundhay. In words and pictures we learned she was born into a church family, grew up with Colin, a friend of her brother, whom she married in 1950. Only later did he train for the ministry. She was an organiser, a determined lady, one who gave support and encouragement without any mollycoddling. She held a number of administrative posts. She had 4 children and a stream of grandchildren straddling 3 continents, of whom she was very proud. She was active within the church as elder, district and synod representative and in many other ways. She was a great support to Colin throughout his ministry and cared for him devotedly when he began to suffer from Parkinson's disease. She even became Chair of the Parkinson's Disease Society, for which there was a retiring collection in her memory. The lovely service was followed by "one last bunfight for Margaret," as she wished.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family at this time.

If you would like to write to him, Colin's address is: Revd Colin Evans, Sabourn Court Residential Home, Oakwood Grove, LEEDS LS8 2PA.

Kate Grand

**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
WALDENSIAN FELLOWSHIP**

**VISIT TO ROME**

**24<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> October 2010**

Plans have been made for our Biennial Visit to Italy next year. We hope as many of you as possible will be able to be part of this group.

We shall stay at the Casa Valdese in Rome which is very comfortable and all rooms have en suite facilities, TV and telephone - it now has 3\* Hotel rating. The Visit itself will only be for a week.

At this time of year, the temperatures will be more suitable for local sight-seeing.

As well visiting the local Waldensian Church for which we have already received an invitation, we shall renew our contacts with friends in the area. We shall have a coach to visit some of the out-lying rural areas during the week.

We expect to be joined in Rome by some of the Group of Waldensians who visited us last July who will be staying with us. Further details of the Visit are included in the accompanying Booking Form.

Yvonne Jones