

November 2011

Dear Friends,

Over recent months much has happened internationally and within our Fellowship, both here in Britain and in Italy. I am grateful to Massimo Long for sending 3 reflections on the Italians' visit to the UK in July. It is always interesting to learn how others see us. John Bremner brings his thoughts on the Waldensian Synod, and Margaret Neil reports on one of the talks given at Hinsley Hall last month by our guest, Lucetta Geymonat. Most of the contributors are wrestling with the question of how do we as Christians face up to the many challenges facing our world, how do we show God's love to others and seek to help bring God's kingdom closer. Yvonne has some information on next year's trip to the Valleys and Turin, which we hope you will find attractive.

We do not know what further twists and turns there will be before the end of the year, but I wish you all a Peaceful Christmas and God's blessings in the coming year.

Kate Grand

### **'...there will your heart be also'**

This was the theme of this June's Kirchentag in Dresden. As usual, Waldensians, both Italian and German, were to be found at their stand on the Market of Opportunities, spreading the word about their activities and *foresterie* in Italy from a stifling hot tent a tram ride from the centre. On the Saturday morning they were, however, literally centre stage before a sizeable crowd on the Altmarkt, the old market square, as Sergio Manna, minister at Pomaretto and his German wife, Elisabeth Löh, also a minister there, led one of the many Bible studies on offer.

They took turns to speak, taking as their text Matthew 6: 19 – 34 and speaking as the parents of 3 children growing up in an Italy where the future is anything but secure. How can they not fear for their children? Is it wrong to worry about them? Is *not* worrying an invitation to laziness? Sergio explained that some see Jesus' words as meant for the disciples alone, or for others embarking on mission, but not us. Elisabeth saw Jesus' words more as poetry, words to

make us think. What makes us afraid? What makes young people afraid? Fear of bad marks at school, even if they are doing very well; fear of not wearing the right clothes; of not being recognized for themselves. For a grandmother who had fled Albania and lost everything, it was fear for her grandchildren and the future of all young people; for African refugees washed up on the Italian coast, fear of not fitting in, of not belonging; for Europe in financial crisis, fear of insecurity, poverty, hunger, unemployment, and what if they have to share with refugees?

But money and possessions do not bring security and certainty: they can lead to a false sense of security, to idolatry and often to even greater worries. Elisabeth quoted Martin Luther who said that work is God's service. In German there is a play on words: Gottesdienst, the word for worship service, means literally God's service. But desire for work can also be misplaced. She told the story of a man who came home late from work, worn out by his labours. His five-year old son was waiting for him at the door. 'How much do you earn an hour, daddy?' 'Why? I get €20.' 'Can I borrow €10, please?' 'Just for a toy? You're being selfish. I've no time for this rubbish! Go to your room!' The father slumped in the chair and watched TV, then began to wonder if he had overreacted after his long hard day. He went to his son's bedroom and gave him the €10. The lad got his money box from under the bed. Now he had enough. He handed the €20 to his father and asked, 'Can I buy an hour of your time, daddy?'

The eyes are constantly taking in information. What is important and what not? Seeing is education of the soul, for us and for our children. If you have a squint, each eye looks in a different direction. We do that in our lives too. Or we only see our own problems. Jesus sees from a different perspective. What really lasts is God's word, his promise of love and grace in all their fullness, his kingdom which is here and now as well as in the future. So we should live and strive for that.

Elisabeth recalled the Heidelberg catechism she had learned as a child. One of the questions was not 'What belongs to you?' but 'Who do you belong to?'

Kate Grand

## **Report on the Italian Session of the 2011 Waldensian Synod**

This year's Italian Session of the Waldensian Synod opened in traditional style at the Tempio in Torre Pellice. The preacher was Massimo Aquilante, former President of the Italian Methodist Church Executive Committee and currently President of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy. Thus were two important, and interlinked, anniversaries recognised and celebrated at this Synod, not only at its opening but throughout the week's business: the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unification of Italy, and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Methodist Church's presence in the country. Massimo preached a wide ranging sermon, based on Matthew 9: 35 – 10: 1, which asked the question whether the practical spirituality of Matthew's Gospel might not have a greater appeal to the Italian people than the Pauline theology so often presented to them by the Protestant churches.

During the service, Francesco Mayer was consecrated a Minister of Word and Sacraments. Francesco, Napoli born and bred, and now in his late forties, brings with him an understanding of his native city and its culture which has already proved useful in his probationary period at Vomero (where Luca Baratto started his ministerial work many moons ago). He is well-known in Naples as a folk singer and comes to the Waldensian Church via Pentecostalism from a Roman Catholic background. He will stay in the Naples area for all of his ministry, and will be largely self-supporting as far as finances are concerned.

I mentioned in last year's report the number of immigrants present at Synod as full participants, a sign of how much recent immigration is changing the life of Protestant churches in Italy. This year there were fewer immigrants present, but a new congregation was welcomed into the Synod. This congregation is, in effect, a daughter church of the Methodist Church at Vicenza, near Padua, formed initially by a large group of Ghanaians resident in a small town near the city, who wanted to concentrate their activities in the town itself, rather than having to go into the city. The city church welcomed the idea and Synod now recognises the group as an independent congregation. On this subject, there are at least three Waldensian ministers now learning the Twi language, apart from the two

Ghanaian ministers who have been sent over to Italy to help with the Ghanaian communities in the Po valley. Needless to say, the new opportunities for experimenting in new styles of worship which come with the immigrant communities are being used by many congregations. Not that it is all plain sailing! There is still much to be done by way of helping the immigrants to understand the way Protestant churches in Italy think, and the way Italian culture works.

Another aspect of immigration is the changing balance between Methodist and Waldensian numbers. For at least twenty years, Methodists have been over-represented at Synod. This year, by some calculations, there was parity and it may well be that soon the number of Methodists at Synod will have to increase to take account of the effect of immigration on many Methodist congregations.

Otto per Mille (8/‰), the scheme by which 8 euros for every 1000 paid in income tax may be designated for a charitable cause, is soon to include money from people who do not designate any particular charity. It is thought that this will increase the amount given to the Waldensian Church by some 30%, and the amounts now coming to the church mean that a full-time administrator may be needed for the office dealing with this matter. One third of the 8 per thousand income goes to third world causes, and, as one of the guests from Switzerland pointed out, after centuries of always being at the receiving end of other people's charity, the Waldensians are now able to offer substantial financial support and encouragement to others, through their participation in international Protestant church organisations, such as HEKS (Hilfswerk der evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz).

Politics, both national and international, were never far from people's minds as they discussed the church's role in the world. The events in North Africa (only an overnight ferry journey from Sicily) and the Middle East were at the forefront, but cutbacks in national government spending are leading to many people finding that the social structures built over many years (health service etc.) are beginning to creak. One example is in Genoa, where the International Protestant Hospital, now 150 years old, has for some time been integrated into the local health board's plan. Now,

because of the efficient way it is run, it has been asked to take under its wing another, failing hospital. No additional money will be provided, and if the IPH refuses, it will have its state funding stopped. The nightmare of the experience in Piedmont ten years ago, when the Waldensian Hospitals in Turin and the Valleys had to be “sold” to the Region for 1 euro, after many years of struggling to get the Region to honour its financial commitments, was very much on people’s minds as they heard the report from the IPH during the session dedicated to diaconal work. We shall see how things develop. As for Berlusconi, one or two delegates who had been abroad for international church meetings commented on how he is seen by those who live in other countries. Even some people from sub-Saharan Africa at, for example, the International Methodist Conference held recently, have expressed their surprise at his survival!

Health and Safety reared its all too familiar head at Synod with the imposition of a reduction in the number of people able to be present in the Synod Hall. The result was, to some extent, a vast improvement, in that members of the public were provided with a large marquee on the rear lawn, behind the Hall, wherein were placed two huge screens and speakers. The screens were supplied by new video equipment, a colour camera able to swivel around to find the speaker, and able to give close-up shots of the motions being debated. The translators also benefitted hugely from this new equipment, with new television screens in the translators’ booths. But was it just my impression, or was the focus often on the younger female participants, whether they were speaking or not, when Gregorio Plescan’s son, Stefano, was in charge of the camera?

And finally, Maria Bonafede was re-elected as Moderator. This will be her last year in this post, and the search for her successor included a “closed doors” session of Synod on Wednesday evening. Naturally, I cannot divulge anything said during that meeting as I was not there, nor were any translations allowed. However, it would seem that Eugenio Bernardini has emerged as the leading candidate. He is from Milan, has served as Vice-Moderator, and is presently minister at San Secondo. He doesn’t have Maria’s pastoral skills but is acknowledged as a good administrator. He also said to

me about four years ago, that I only have to give the Tavola (Executive) two years' notice and they will find me whatever church I want.....

So, was that "in-service training" as understood by the United Reformed Church? After all, the church pays my transport costs to and from Italy, and accredits my participation as on-going theological formation. The answer, I believe, is "yes", if only because of the opportunity the Synod gives me for meeting folk from so many different churches, not only around Europe but around the world. Particularly this year, Synod was pleased to welcome Setri Nyomi, General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, for whom I did some translation work as he was interviewed for Radio Beckwith. But also my own experience in Italy enables me to discuss many aspects of immigrant life with those who have come from abroad. And of course, it enables me to meet up with so many friends, with whom I spent those six years back in the 1990s, and find out from them how the call to Christian witness is viewed and lived in Italy today.

John S. Bremner

### **Lilly Chiavia's Diary**

This year's visit was different from the ones in other years. Usually we have gone to discover an England of countryside and little towns, meet little church communities scattered across beautiful English landscapes. This year we plunged into the great city: London. Our group consisted of 16 people: 6 from the Waldensian Valleys, 7 from Turin, 1 from Rome, 1 from Verbania [on Lake Maggiore] and 1 from Monfalcone [on the Gulf of Trieste].

We had a very full programme: in just a few days we managed to cover miles on foot and by tube, discovering a very hectic city but one full of interest, things to do, to visit and discover. In the company of Gwynne Pickering we visited the Wesley Methodist Chapel, the Barbican Centre, St. Giles Cripplegate and St. Paul's Cathedral, which we were also able to admire from above by climbing up onto a terrace from which we could see a good deal of the centre of London. At St. Paul's we also had the honour of attending evensong at 5pm with reserved seats in the choir stalls.

With Anthony Earl, after visiting Westminster Abbey, we had a lovely walk along the Thames, crossing the Millennium Bridge, stopping at the Globe Theatre and the Tate Modern Art Gallery, going into St. James' Park and arriving at Trafalgar Square, where in St. Martin-in-the-Fields we attended a lovely piano recital. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Gwynne and Anthony for the time they gave us, for their kindness and expertise.

Of course we made the most of having accommodation at the St. Katharine's Centre, a very peaceful place in the docks area that was also convenient for transport. In the evenings, after sharing our thoughts on the day we'd just spent and a time of prayer, some of the group went out again for a last walk of the day in the area round Tower Bridge or St Katharine's Dock to admire London after sunset and enjoy the fresh air.

The final two days we spent in Cambridge, a very beautiful town bisected by its river, the Cam, full of young students who attend the famous colleges surrounded by wonderful, immaculately kept parks and gardens. The two United Reformed churches, Emmanuel and St. Columba's, organised a really fraternal welcome for our group. The evening of our arrival a very fine meal awaited us with foods from many parts of the world and scents and aromas different from our own. The whole thing was enhanced by two very fine artists who regaled us with good music and good humour. On Sunday we split into two groups to attend worship with both congregations and then met up again for lunch. So we were able to greet Erica Scropo, Pastor Daniele Pevarello, and our friends Hilary and David who had come from Folkestone to meet us before going on to Wales.

In the afternoon we visited Westminster College and some of us took a boat trip on the river. Besides the fraternity and friendship shared with our host families, Cambridge also gave us sun and lovely warmth just as we were about to leave. Our thanks to those who made the preparations for this very full journey, so packed with interesting things, meetings and encounters, friends revisited, new acquaintances and special moments of happiness and joy.

Lilly Chiavia

## **A Multi Faith Experience in London**

How do you make sense of different religions living cheek by jowl? Especially if some of them contradict each other and conflict results? These are some of the questions many people have asked and are still asking, especially in those countries where religious pluralism has existed for centuries and where attempts have been made to live alongside one another as best they can. For Great Britain, a country which was formerly Christian with a Jewish minority (and increasing secularism), this is a quite recent experience. So, when in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was altered by population change, the resulting new religious plurality, coinciding with post-colonial theological reflection, posed sharp new questions. What sense do you make of being part of a traditional, exclusivist, missionary religion, in a world that is now multi-faith and increasingly secular at the same time? How does a faith like Christianity bear witness in a mixed faith context?

That is how our meeting began with Pastor Maggie Hindley who has been working at the London Inter Faith Centre for some years. The centre was founded in 1998 by the Anglican Church and since 2001 the United Reformed Church has played an active role in its management. Even though it was founded and managed by a single faith (Christianity), it is offered as a space for meeting, study and dialogue between the various religions and the secular world. This comes about through a variety of courses, conferences, seminars and events open to all, where the various faiths can meet without preconceptions, above all respecting the centre's motto: 'true to self and open to others.' In this way they seek to create 'a safe space' in which people of different and at times conflicting positions may begin to build a dialogue based on mutual respect and trust leading to shared projects of help and cooperation.

The work carried out by the centre is very interesting and the questions from our group keep on coming after we hear from Imam Al-Khoei of the initiatives involving the Muslim community. We are truly amazed at the work the centre succeeds in doing, involving almost all the faiths in this area on the edge of the city. Our morning flies by; after a time of meditation we share lunch with those in



charge of the centre, and then, accompanied by the imam, pay a short visit to the mosque before rushing for the tube to return to the city centre and a few hours as tourists.

Massimo Long

## **The Hot English August**

Summer 2011 will be remembered principally for two events: the turbulence of the financial markets with heavy interventions by central governments in the attempt to halt financial speculation and the rage of young people in London's suburbs. There may not seem to be any connection between the two events, but this is not so. The crisis which is assailing all Western countries and leading governments to make incisive cuts in public spending is hitting the young and the poorest and most disadvantaged sections of society particularly hard.

There is a thread which unites the banlieues of France with the revolts for bread and work in Tunisia, the Arab spring, the 'indignant' Spanish protesters and the demonstrations of young Israelis. It is the rage and anxiety of young people who see little hope for their future, few opportunities and a life where everything seems too precarious. No government can allow itself to ignore this anger which unites young people all over the world. No government can allow itself to ignore the disparities and each must do everything it can to bring down these barriers.

This July, as part of the biennial exchanges organised by the URC Waldensian Fellowship, just a month before the August riots, we visited some of the Protestant churches in areas where the violent clashes with the police broke out.

Some English churches have had to find a new role for themselves seeking to keep abreast of a social dimension in continuous change. To understand and help a new reality growing around them has been a great challenge and has allowed these church communities to reinvent themselves and become a reference point in areas on the edge of London.

I am thinking of **the London Inter Faith Centre**, set up to create a

relationship between the different religions in the area. Those in charge explain to us the great commitment to young people of the area and give us examples of aid and integration projects. Then they call the leader of the Muslim community who invites us to visit the mosque just a few blocks away. In the mosque, which is very clean and tidy, some of the faithful are praying in a composed and dignified manner. Italy, with no specific law recognising places of worship and its images of Muslims praying on town and city pavements, victims of prejudice and ignorance, seems far away. Between the Muslim community and the centre there is constant collaboration on projects for the area round about that enriches both sides and promotes the process of integration. Certainly there is still much to do, but the experience of the interfaith centre on the edge of London shows a journey of integration and collaboration between different faiths.

Another interesting experiment is that of the **Lumen Church**. Verena Jones and Catharine Pickard tell us the story of this church which was founded in 1801 to host Gaelic immigrants. The first church, built in 1827 in Gothic style, was totally destroyed in 1945 by German bombings. It was rebuilt in 1966 and completely remodelled in 2006 to meet the new demands and needs of the surrounding area. This renewal is a real change for the church, which decides not only to change its name but also to become a reference point in the heart of London's Bloomsbury. Today, with its innovative and functional architecture, it is an example of how churches ought to be in a great metropolis. At the entrance we find an elegant and very modern café / restaurant open every day and frequented by students and workers from round about. Next to it is an enormous white cone called 'sacred space', where you can lie down, read a book, even in the lunch hour, or simply enjoy a space for silence and meditation. Finally, there is the worship area with a most luminous window, a mosaic of 1000 pieces of glass mounted in 21 panels. This is an example of modern architecture that attracts visitors from all over the globe, in the harmony of a community that has learnt how to renew itself by adapting to a changing world.

It is not easy to explain what happened in the tumult of the hot August nights that brought some English cities to crisis point. Among

those young people there were, no doubt, many offenders but there was also the rage and exasperation of those who have been excluded from a life of well-being and the hopes of attaining it; exclusion from well-being, which becomes exclusion from a better future, from education, from the social and economic system. This explosive mix is behind the waves of violence and rage that unite French suburbs with English ones, behind the people's anger in Greece, behind the 'indignados' in Spain. Ever greater swathes of citizens are excluded from well-being, from the possibility of a steady job, an education and representation of their problems.

On 17<sup>th</sup> December last year the revolt for bread and work in Tunisia was triggered by a 25 year old, Mohamed Bouazizi, a graduate, but one forced into becoming an illegal street-seller. From this young Tunisian's protest came the spark that is changing the history of many Arab countries: a new spring giving new hope to the dreams of so many young people.

If European governments are not going to be capable of understanding all these signs of malaise and suffering, it will become ever more difficult to contain the rage and blind violence.

The churches too can and must do more, providing those spaces for dialogue and giving voice, representation, and projects, to that social malaise that can never be wiped out simply by sending the forces of law and order into the suburbs of large conurbations.

New prescriptions for society's ills are needed that European governments must find together before it is too late.

Roberto Russo

## **New Issues facing the Waldensian Church**

Lucetta Geymonat, our guest speaker from Italy, is our friend of long standing and a great supporter of the Fellowship. She is also an Elder in her home church, chair of governors of the Liceo, and much more. She addressed us on two occasions, giving a well reasoned and enthusiastic account each time she spoke. From the point of view of an Elder at her home church in Torre Pellice, she expressed the concerns of the Parish and the wider church.

New and Old The chief concern of the Waldensian Church has always been that of serving the community, helping people in need. In these hard times of 'the new poor', the lack of employment bites hard in the Valleys. Three out of ten young people are without jobs, have never had a steady job or even a job at all. Nationally there is a brain drain. The Italian government has spent money on education and training for young people who are now finding work in the USA and elsewhere rather than being employed in Italy to build up the economy. While parties vie with each other in discussions that lead nowhere, young people's problems are being ignored and poverty increases. So, every Monday morning at the manse, a group of ladies gathers to listen and help today's people in need. They help them to cope with their money problems and try to find jobs if they are unemployed. There are two lists: one for names of those offering work and one for those seeking work. Alas, the latter list is far longer. At the very least all comers feel better because they have shared their problems and now know they have not been abandoned.

Church Attendance The majority of the congregations are elderly, whereas younger people seem to forget about church and their spiritual lives. A new initiative began with a German lady in one of the Valley churches, which has now been adopted by the church in Torre Pellice and elsewhere. The '*culto col ciuccio*', literally 'service with a dummy', is for very young children from 3 months to 6 years with their parents, and of course, grandparents. The children become familiar with the church from an early age and the parents learn to understand the importance of their children's spiritual development.

Parish Day This '*giornata comunitaria*', which was introduced 2 years ago by the minister Claudio Pasquet, takes place twice a year. After a short service with a dialogue instead of a sermon, the congregation share lunch together. This is followed by other initiatives, discussion and entertainment in the afternoon. Usually there are new members to be presented. At the Parish Day in June a new member read out the letter she had written when applying for membership:-

Dear Sisters and Brothers in faith,

My name is Donatella Murtas. I am 45 years old and I have met Jesus Christ. I believe in God and I believe that Jesus Christ is His son who was sent to earth to announce God's reign, to save us through his death on the cross and leave us the only message which will enable mankind to be saved: love. It is as if someone has passed on a torch to me. I lit it and at first I could not see much and, looking around me, I could not understand... Then I saw a path, and the more I walked along it the thinner the darkness became. As I approached the goal, the light became stronger, so I switched off the torch.

Since I walked into Torre Pellice Church, even if I continue to keep the torch, everything has become clearer, warmer and brighter. My faith is not strong; it is full of doubts and questions, but I have the strength to go on and nourish it, in spite of my doubts and questions. Yes, I am happy because I have met Jesus Christ.

I wonder why I want to become a member of the Waldensian Church. I could continue as I am, nourishing my faith and attending church. I have asked Jesus to give me answers, to help me to understand, and I think he has answered me in some ways. I would like to become a member of this church because I think that Jesus has a project for me here. I would like to join this family because this is what I feel like when I come here: a member of a family. I should like to become a member of this church because Christ said that where two or more people are gathered in His name, that is, where His church is.

And I think that this is my place. I feel the physical and spiritual need to belong, besides I think that it is right to take decisions in the course of one's life and to get on the move rather than keep on the margins, uncertain and irresolute. I think that the Waldensian Church needs me too, it needs my support and my presence.

I hope I shall be welcomed by you all with affection, as I was when I entered the church for the first time. I shall never

forget that day, I shall never forget people's smiles and warmth.  
Thank you.

Donatella Murtas

The congregation welcomes being together for the whole day, sharing and feeling that sense of belonging.

Parish Afternoons These take place once a month and are held in private homes in each district of Torre Pellice. A minister or elder in charge of the district leads the meeting which has a friendly, relaxed feel to it. A recent dialogue between a minister and a secondary school girl brought forth a comment that is worth thinking about. She said, 'Spiritual life is passed on to young people like bread, ready prepared and baked. Young people should be listened to and given the opportunity to bring fresh ideas.'

#### New Issues recently discussed in Waldensian Churches

The blessing of same sex couples has roused great attention but also some strong opposition. Discussion at Synod in 2010 was sparked by a letter in the spring, signed by over 100 people who strongly criticised the baptism administered during a service in Rome. The parents were two men: one of them the child's father and the other the father's partner. The subject continues to be widely debated in churches all over the country. At Synod 2011 a few members surprised the gathering by openly declaring their homosexuality. Others expressed their opposition and fear that if Synod voted in favour of blessing same sex couples it would be very difficult for them to present that decision to their congregations. This was especially true for African ministers or those with African congregations. In the end churches were invited to consider any request for such a blessing at their church meeting and come to a decision on each case as it arose. Churches were also asked to discuss the matter in a series of Bible studies. Lucetta was involved in writing the document which will be discussed in Torre Pellice at the November church meeting. This issue cannot be ignored.

Lucetta shared with us the definition of 'blessing' which her study group had discussed. What do same sex couples want when they

ask for blessing? They want their being together to be blessed. They want to be accepted and be together with other people who love God. Blessing, it was said, can have a double meaning. It can be *asked for*, as when we ask God to be with a person in need, but it can also be *given*, as, pastors do at the end of a service, when the congregation is about to leave. She gave an example of a suitable blessing from an Anglican liturgy:-

The night shall be no more  
And we will need no light from lamps,  
For God is our light  
And always walks before us.  
Go forth into the light  
And share in the re-creating of the world.  
And may God the beginning give you a new day,  
God the Christ take you by the hand  
And God the Spirit give you energy and peace.    Amen.

Immigration    This issue is part of the Waldensian Church's continuing work of welcoming strangers, helping them become part of one nation. For the last 2 years a banner text from Leviticus 19:33-34 has hung outside the church in Torre Pellice. In Torre Pellice there are not many people from other parts of the world but at the moment they are looking after eight young people, 4 couples from Nigeria who had been working in Libya but had fled by boat and landed on Lampedusa. They are accommodated in a flat belonging to the church and daily sustenance is provided. But there is a dilemma .... They cannot work because they are illegal immigrants and they seem to have no sense of time whatsoever. When invited to sing in church, they turned up at lunchtime. The church does not give up, however, and is involving them in voluntary work wherever possible. It is not easy to understand other cultures and traditions without judging, but we must try.

Celebration of Unification    As a conclusion to her address, Lucetta spoke of an exhibition celebrating the 150 years of the Italian State which was born in 1861. She stressed the importance of the Bible and freedom then and now. Though Italy is one nation, not all the values of the Risorgimento are respected, so there is a project

aimed at spreading the word of the Bible to the nation as a whole. She also showed part of a DVD produced by a group of 15 young people from Torre Pellice to celebrate the Unification in song. They had written, practised and given three sell-out performances at Synod of a show entitled '*Italia Canta*' (Italy is singing.) As she said, 'When they want ... they can do it.' They will be pleased to hear of their fourth public performance.

Margaret Neil

[The Fellowship now owns that DVD thanks to Lucetta's generosity.]

### ***Il Vangelo secondo Harry Potter***

Last October when we visited Forano Sabino, about an hour's drive north of Rome, we received a very warm welcome, enjoyed a marvellous lunch prepared by the ladies of the church and learned about the church's history and life there now. Later, en route for the Benedictine abbey of Farfa, an oasis of medieval calm, nestling in a valley nearby, the pastor, Peter Ciaccio, mentioned that he was writing a book, which he hoped would be finished by Christmas, on the Gospel according to Harry Potter. I recently discovered it had been published by Claudiana and promptly ordered a copy. It arrived last week and, despite having the Newsletter to put together, I could not resist reading the first chapter. Fatal! I could not put it down and sat up till the early hours finishing it. For Harry Potter fans with a knowledge of Italian I heartily recommend it. For those who see Harry Potter as dangerous for young minds, again I recommend it. I am almost tempted to start re-reading the novels but if I succumbed you would never receive this Newsletter.

### ***Un Viaggio chiamato Riesi***

To mark Servizio Cristiano's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Claudiana has published a book, which has text in 4 languages: Italian, German, French and English, and many photographs. It is available for €20, plus €10 for postage and packing, via the Claudiana website, [www.claudiana.it](http://www.claudiana.it), by contacting Servizio Cristiano direct. Or post free, if you join in the visit to Torre Pellice and Turin next May! Do contact me if you have difficulty.

Kate Grand