

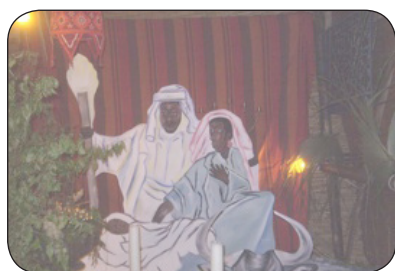
## Prayer Letter February 2009

### A time for everything

*"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven"* Ecclesiastes 3: 1 (NIV)

### Saying goodbye...

The Christmas season, as to be expected, has been a very busy time. A time of laughter and fun but also of sadness as we said goodbye to many of our African friends. We have built up good relationships over the four months they have been studying Italian with us here in Siracusa but as they obtain the much coveted legal documents, which mean



*Wooden nativity scene carved and painted by the African immigrants*

they can officially stay and work in Italy, they head up north where there is work to be found. However, there are scores of new arrivals to fill their places and the work continues.

### Fun and games...

The Christmas Party for the after school club kids on 19 December was a great success and a group of us ladies organised games, action songs and food. At a certain point a strange gentleman dressed in red made his appearance and distributed presents to the delight of the children.



*After school club party*

On 21 December we were invited to share the songs from our CD 'Mi Ami Tu?' with the Methodist Church in Scicli and were delighted to see that the Sunday School kids there and adults had woven four of our songs into their Christmas show.



On 24 December we had a late meal together in the church and saw Christmas Day in as a community. On Christmas Day itself we held a short service in the evening which was very well attended. There were quite a few new faces in the crowd.



On 28 December our children, Edoardo and Ludovica arrived and we had a late traditional Christmas meal with turkey and mince pies followed by a present-opening session. Later that day, Huw and Padre Carlo held a joint ecumenical service at Bosco Minniti at which our worship group sang and the African male voice choir also contributed.

On New Year's Eve a group from our church joined together with the parish of Bosco Minniti again, for an 'African Night'. There was dancing, singing, food and fireworks as hundreds of Africans representing a whole range of African countries celebrated together to see the new year in.



### New horizons..

On 3 January, we said a heavy-hearted, goodbye to the children as they flew off from Catania. Later that same day, Huw met the new archbishop as he did the round of churches in his diocese. It was the turn of the parish of Bosco Minniti and Padre Carlo was keen that Huw was present. Hopefully a longer meeting can be held in the future, perhaps linked to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity which takes place every January.

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### Please pray for:

- ◆ Our children as they continue their lives far away from us
- ◆ Continued healing for inter-church relationships, peace and unity
- ◆ A renewed, shared vision for the church
- ◆ Work with the immigrants and the after school club kids
- ◆ Huw's developing friendship with Padre Carlo and the parish of Bosco Minniti, a very rare example of Catholic-Baptist co-operation
- ◆ Alex's theology course in Catania
- ◆ Us, as a couple as we cope with life in Sicily with all its challenges
- ◆ Long-term fruit from the week of prayer for Christian unity which we are organising with Padre Carlo and the Parish of Bosco Minniti

*Alex and Huw*