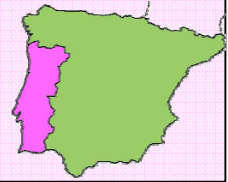




**News and Prayer Requests from Sue Woodcock  
in Sabadell, Spain**

**February 2009**



# **Crònica Catalana**

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Dear Friends,

Christmas has come and gone, and almost before I have been able to draw breath, here we are in February! First of all, a huge thank you to all those who sent greetings for Christmas and the New Year. I really do enjoy receiving your cards, letters and emails that bring news of yourself, your family and your church, although with my lack of response you could be forgiven for thinking otherwise. This year I have decided to enjoy the Christmas cards putting different ones up every week during the first few months of the year!

Today, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>, was in my diary as an office day. Let me tell you what the morning held:

- Be around and attentive to the men installing the new **windows** in the church; it fell to me because I live "above the shop" and was planning to be in anyway. They should finish the job this week. Although the new windows are the same size as the old ones, it looks much lighter.
- Take delivery of 90 bottles of sunflower oil for **distribution** next week; it was supposed to come this afternoon. We live the crisis every week alongside those we help, and are now distributing between 80 and 90 bags of food a week. Last year the total was nearly 19,000 kg of food, plus more than 8,500 items of clothing. More than 300 families were helped to a lesser or greater degree. Oh, and at Christmas there were toys for 88 children at the Christmas party. We keep thinking we have reached the limit, but the Lord keeps providing, and has brought along some new helpers too. The city council has finally agreed to finance the adaptation of the property offered as a central food store/distribution point for the **Rebost Solidari**; so after more than four years of work, there is now a real possibility of it opening this year. I have stood down from the management committee of the project in order to reduce the number of my responsibilities.
- Sort out how to make a South African Anglican baptism certificate acceptable to the registrar in a Roman Catholic parish in Barcelona. The unknown couple didn't want my involvement with the wedding, just with the **paperwork**! But there will be one wedding in the church in Sabadell this year, that of Matthew and Meritxell on 4<sup>th</sup> July.
- Set up interviews for the visit to **Barcelona** next week of two Australians; it is hoped that one or both will sense the Lord's call to work with the IERE there, thus relieving me of another responsibility. Please pray for clear guidance for them and for the Bishop.
- Browse through a rather large booklet, just arrived by e-mail, setting out the background to the new Catalan National Pact on Immigration. I don't think that I'll get round to reading it all!
- Deal with a long list of **e-mails** that had come in since Friday.
- And at the end of the morning, visit the police station to sort out renewal of my identity card. They no longer issue them to EU citizens, and since Britain does not have identity cards, my passport will have to be my permanent companion from here on.

The jobs that I had hoped to do this morning – this letter and the material for next week's small groups – were still on the pending list at 6pm this afternoon. Many of you will know the feeling, but I have set out the list so you can get an idea of what a "quiet morning in the office" here might bring.

Now for a quick round-up on other fronts.

- **Alpha** has been going very well, probably the best course we have run so far, with two not-yet-Christians involved. We have four sessions left.
- There are now regularly six or more **children** in church, and we need to provide an additional group for three toddlers, alongside the two Sunday School classes we have now for the 5-6 year olds and the 8-9 year olds. Who will be responsible for and/or run it?
- One of the most encouraging developments recently has been the growing group of **young adults**, very enthusiastic and wanting to meet regularly to deepen friendships and increase mutual support. There have been a dozen or more at each of the first three social evenings.
- The **Reus** congregation now meet in a rented place, permitting them to hold mid-week meetings in a central point. Keeping up with the accompanying financial commitment is a real challenge to them. Pray for Rafa and Anna in their leadership of this new church.

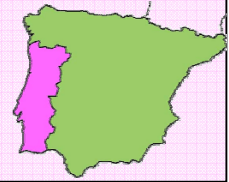


**South American Mission Society**

Allen Gardiner Cottage, Pembury Road, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QU  
Registered No 65048 Registered Charity Number 221328



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- The new **Diocesan Plan** is just about ready for presentation to the churches, so that they can study it and send in feedback before its final presentation to Synod in May.
- We held our Annual General Meeting last Saturday. Praise the Lord for good financial results that will enable us to pay for the windows we are now installing. **Dani, Joan J.** and **Lidia** were elected to the PCC with **Rafael** being elected as our representative to Synod. Please pray for the appointment of a new **Treasurer** for the church here in Sabadell – there is no obvious candidate among those available.
- During the year we hope to focus in turn on the **different cultures** represented in the church here. At the end of January we kicked off with an International Buffet, which was a great success.

The calendar is still relatively free, but I am sure that state of affairs will not last long. Here are some of the activities already written in:

- 7<sup>th</sup> February:** Music rehearsal, one of our strategies for improving our worship.
- 11<sup>th</sup> February:** First meeting of the new PCC.
- 14<sup>th</sup> February:** J+, the young adults. I'll be out all day for a country walk with the Witty Walkers.
- 15<sup>th</sup> February:** Visit Reus for a service of Holy Communion. Also subsequent third Sundays.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> February:** A *calçotada* after church. It sounds nothing when I tell you that it consists of a kind of barbecued spring onion, but it is a delicious Catalan speciality!

- 14<sup>th</sup> March:** Meeting of the Diocesan Standing Committee in Madrid.
- 19-22<sup>nd</sup> March:** Diocesan Pastors' Conference, also in Madrid
- 28<sup>th</sup> March:** *Consell Evangèlic de Catalunya*, full meeting of members.

**7<sup>th</sup> April:** United Service for Holy Week with the Baptist churches of Sabadell. Two of the Baptist churches in the city are without a pastor, both having resigned unexpectedly. The third is leaving, but with a slightly more planned hand-over. Pastors are **under spiritual fire** at present. I got on very well with all three Baptist pastors, and although we didn't see each other often, their presence in the city was supportive. So I have been feeling rather bereft recently. We will hold other special services for Holy Week in the church here.

- 1-19<sup>th</sup> May:** Visits to three supporting churches in Britain: St. Mary's, Stoke Bishop, Bristol; St. Paul's, Jersey; St. Giles', Ickenham. I hope that several people from the church here will join me for the weekend in Bristol.
- 22-24<sup>th</sup> May:** IL Diocesan Synod in Madrid.

The small groups meet fortnightly on Tuesdays; *Alpha* also meets on Tuesday evenings; the Grup de Gent Gran meets monthly on the afternoon of the second or third Thursday, and the young adults on a middle Saturday each month. Distribution of food, clothing, etc. on Monday mornings and the Prayer Meeting on Wednesdays complete the regular calendar. And a day off? Either Thursday, Friday or Saturday, depending on the diary. Pray that I be able to keep a **full day free each week**.

You may have seen in the Christian press that in both **SAMS** and **CMS** the appropriate bodies have voted in favour of a merger. Pray for the leadership of both Societies as they work out the details during the coming months.

Special thanks to those individuals and churches that gave towards my **support** in 2008. In 2009, my budget is £19,318. Please pray that the Lord provide this for me. And thanks to you all for your prayers and support in other non-financial ways. May the Lord make your generosity return to you multiplied.

*With love in the Lord, Jesus, Sue*

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