

RICHARD AND PINUCCIA WILSON

SERVING IN TRENTO, ITALY

With Stefania, Daniele, Luca and Mattia

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This is a time of preparation for the new school year, and hence also the church year. After a bit of a break, I am enthusiastic about what I can do this year, although there is still some uncertainty as to what exactly of our life will look like this year.

In the church

The summer months, which are coming to a close, are characterised by a camp and outreach ministry in the church, rather than the usual activities that go into recess. In June and July, the church organised four camps, and three groups came from other countries to be involved in various types of evangelism. We were mostly involved in the church children's camp that saw 15 children come together for three days in June. There were two highlights for me. Having worked with the elder boys (now 10-11 years old) for a long time, it was good to see more maturity this year. There were still problems (they *are* still only boys!), but there has been growth over the years. The second highlight was finishing a small group Bible study and suggesting that everyone pray to finish. Yago replied that he did not know how to pray as he had never done it. We talked about what prayer is and what he could say to God, and then he said it. It is a great privilege to hear someone pray for the first time!

The church has also been present all August at the weekly evening activities in a park near the hall. These evenings are organised by the local associations, with each one offering different activities. As well as getting known and getting to know the people in the neighbourhood, the church is also becoming a part of the social fabric of the society. The other associations do notice that we are a bit different: we eat and share together our picnic dinner, because there are relationships between our members that do not exist in the other associations.

After a "sabbatical year" from leading Bible studies in the church, I will be leading them again this year, as well as continuing with in the Sunday School. As I write, it is not clear which Bible study groups I will be doing; the leadership of the church is still thinking about this while planning for the restart of the church activities in mid-September. One certain change is that after 17 years of leadership of the Sunday School, Pinuccia has handed it over to Jury, although she will remain one of the teachers. Stefania too has left the Sunday School, and will now be a part of the youth group, so the family will be part of this ministry again as well.

In the mission

I have mentioned in the past that I have various international responsibilities in ECM, but I have never really described them. I thought it would be helpful to do this, so you can have a better idea of what ministry you are supporting.

1) I am the *Field Leader* for Italy, which means I have oversight of all the ministry of the mission in the country. Someone else does the member care of the missionaries, and I look after the rest, such as organisation, visioning, communication with the rest of the mission, and talking with possible new missionaries. Since currently ECM in Italy is just two couples and a single lady, of whom I have been in Italy the least time (only 27 years!), there is not actually a lot of direction needed.

2) The leadership and running of the about 200 ECM field missionaries is done by three groups. There is an executive leadership team, and two other groups – Vision and Strategy, and Ministry Direction. I am the only person in both of those groups, and am the secretary of both. They each have Internet meetings about every two months, and once a year have a one day face to face meeting – on consecutive days, so I only have to travel once.

The *Vision and Strategy* group worked on the creation and implementation of a new values statement and strategic plan.



Bible study with the boys. Yago is on the left bottom.

The implementation is on-going, and we are working especially in this period on helping national workers and on church planting coaching. We are also looking at how to help the fields and missionaries in their visioning. I must admit, as a practical and concrete person, I find the discussions of the visionaries in the group hard to relate to at times. However, it has been a learning experience for me, and I have discovered that I can make and implement policy.

The *Ministry Direction* group, on the other hand, is concerned more with the ministries as they are now. Each year we collect plans and reports from all the teams, as well as their requests for resources (new missionaries or funds for special projects). In this way, we act as a "bridge" with the other parts of the mission (the offices who send missionaries, human resources, IT, etc.), making sure that everyone receives the information that they need. This does mean a lot of (virtual) paperwork, although we do try to simplify and reduce the bureaucracy as much as we can, and make the form filling as human as possible. As the annual plans are due in mid-September, I will

be particularly busy for a month collecting and collating the information, as that is mostly my responsibility, so that it is ready to be read and discussed by others.



Daniele and Stefania have grown—and they learnt to do stilt walking at the activities at the park near the church.

In the family

Stefania struggled with various aspects of middle school for 2.5 years, but got used to it in her final semester, and ended up with an excellent mark for her exams. She will soon be starting her five years of high school. It will be another big change, and we'll see how long it takes

Prayer and thanksgiving points

- Give thanks for the growth of the boys in church, and that it will continue - and that Yago will continue to pray.
- Pray for the ministry of the Sunday School and Bible study groups this year.
- Pray that the leadership groups will be a real help to all the field missionaries, not just abstract ideas and bureaucracy.
- Give thanks that Stefania finished middle school well, and pray for her adaption to high school. Pray also for the next school year for Daniele, Luca, and Mattia.

to get used to the different expectations and lifestyle that high school will bring.

Pinuccia starts work at the beginning of September. This year she will be a support teacher for a child with difficulties at a school 5 km away, for 5 hours each day in the morning and early afternoon. We are still waiting to find out the exact hours, and then we can work out how to organise our family lift this year.

Upcoming events

2 September: back to preschool for Pinuccia, Luca, and Mattia
12 September: back to school for Stefania and Daniele. Sunday school and other church activities will also restart this week
14-17 October: more than 2 days of meetings at Madrid of the two field ministry leadership groups

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