

RICHARD AND PINUCCIA WILSON

SERVING IN TRENTO, ITALY

With Stefania, Daniele, Luca and Mattia

Number 111, February 2020



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The church at Trento does have quite a few activities going on, both for church members and not, although I do not usually write much about them because I am not directly involved. Although such a broad ministry is good, it does make the church ministry not so deep and also fragmented. So in this newsletter I thought to give a taste of some, but certainly not all, of the ministries of the church.

Craft Lab / Thanksgiving

In November we tried something different, a "double header", with two events open to everybody, one immediately after the other. This was to try to overcome a disadvantage of our fragmented outreach, that people only get to know one part of the church. First there was a craft laboratory for children, that we run once a month. There were almost too many children (of which the majority were from the neighbourhood of the church hall, with a few from the church) at the creative laboratory to be looked after well, but the team managed and built new relationships with the parents. Immediately after the laboratory finished, there was a Thanksgiving Day dinner organised by the English speaking group with the help of a team of Americans. There were about 170 people for dinner, crammed into our hall that seats 100. I estimated that about a third were from the church, the others were friends, families from the laboratory, and people who had seen our ad on Facebook. We have never had that many people in a church event before.

On a family related note, I should add that although I help in the planning of the laboratories, we as a family are not able to go to them. This one, however, was later than usual, so we were all able to attend. Mattia and Luca participated, and Stefania was one of the helpers, whilst I did taxi duty to bring food for the dinner. Stefania helped some children with the craft, that she is good at, and in this way helped us to get to know one of the families at the dinner. Her contribution was very much appreciated by the rest of the laboratory team!

Youth Rally

Another important event in the church in the past few months was a Youth Rally for churches in the region. There was a reasonable turnout, about 35 youth from four towns, plus leaders and support staff. The organiser said that it was "sufficiently encouraging"! Apart from the numbers, I saw three reasons to thank God:

- relationships growing between the towns, not just among the youth but also among the leaders present, creating a basis for working together in the future;
- the importance of the Bible preached. I clearly remember listening to a similar talk when I was 16 years old, which is when I began to seriously read the Bible regularly for myself. I hope that last night's talk will have a similar effect on those present;
- hear the youth really getting into the singing. It was not of course "a thousand tongues" level, but it was certainly a different experience from when all of us older people sing in the church service.

Children and Mission

One ministry that has been going on for many years is the support of a Christian school in India by the children of the Sunday School. In December there was the annual fund raising event, in which the children prepared hot dogs, waffles, coffee, and Christmas cards for the monthly church lunch, for which people gave an offering. The support took a step up recently, when in January one of the young ladies in the church went to India to visit the school. She came back with great stories and an encouragement for the children and the church to continue. We pray that the missionary outlook will continue in all of them for the rest of their life.



Speaking to the other ECMI leaders in Germany in December

Refugees

Eight years ago, the first of the religious refugees from Pakistan that attend the church arrived at Trento with absolutely nothing. Last week, there was the official opening of an apartment, a vision and work of that refugee, to help other refugees that have come and will come to Trento. It has two purposes: to give a place to stay to those who do arrive with nothing, and to give a fixed address to those who have been accepted by the government as refugees and want to bring their families to Italy.

On the Computer

Just as I was finishing writing this newsletter, I received a message from Google saying that one of the pages on my site has had more than a 1000% growth in its visibility this week, from 4 to 2913 visits per day. The reason is that last week there was a very big Italian song contest—five nights in prime time TV. One of the special guests was Roberto Benigni, an Italian Oscar award winning actor. He read parts of “Song of Songs” from the Bible, which he interpreted as an ode to eroticism, also homosexual. So when the viewers wanted to find out more about this book of the Bible, they ended up on the page of my site that contains it, which explained the sudden growth of interest in the page.

Prayer and thanksgiving points

- That the church will remain united in Gospel ministry, even though most members have different visions about what can be done.
- That the youth will find encouragement from healthy relationships with other Christian youth and from their reading of the Bible.
- For a growing missionary outlook for the children of the church.
- That the religious refugees continue to trust in God’s provision for them in Italy.
- For all the people who visit laparola.net, for whatever reason.

A more personal story about the reach of my site begins with one of my hobbies, playing occasionally at a local chess club. One of the newer members, who just moved to Trento to do a Ph.D. in philosophy, saw my e-mail address in the Cc: line of a mailing of the club, and realised that I am the creator of LaParola. So the next we met he told me he used the site often, and that it is very useful for his studies on the philosophy of religion.

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across Europe

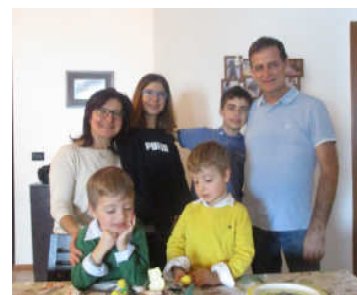
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If you would like to find out ways you can partner with ECM through praying, serving, or giving, please contact our office.

How to give to ECM:

Cheques and money orders: payable to European Christian Mission

Direct Deposit: NAB, Australia, BSB 082171, account 509197512




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