

News and prayer info from Richard, Pinuccia, Stefania and Daniele Wilson

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Helping a church plant new churches and start new ministries in Trento, Italy

In the church

At the beginning of November the church had its first leaders' "retreat" – a day at a house in the mountains for the leaders of the church and of its various groups and ministries, including a few who are in preparation. There were 29 adults and 18 children, plus five others to give us input and help with the food and children. It was a privilege to be a part of this group. I have served together with many of them for over 20 years, others I have helped in becoming leaders, and others have helped me a lot. The participants expressed their appreciation of being able to get away for a day, and with carers for the children they were able to concentrate on their relationships with the other leaders and on how they can help the church to grow as a community even more. The children loved having a whole day to play together, rather than just a few minutes after church. Definitely something we will repeat in the future.



On December 1 there was the Sunday School's annual fund raising event for a school in India. But more than fund raising, the aim has always been to have the children give what they can offer for the good of other children. This year we did something new, transforming the monthly church lunch after the service into the Sunday School Sandwich Shop, with the children busy making bread rolls and waiting on the tables, and the "clients" making a donation for the lunch. The church hall was nicely transformed into a restaurant for the occasion, and unexpectedly more people turned up than usual for a church lunch, which stretched our resources. But we found enough space, even though not enough tables, and had enough food, with a little left over which we could give to a couple of homeless people who have been attending the church lately. We raised €45 for the school, but more importantly it was the children who, indirectly, gave the money.

Recently someone sent an e-mail to the church, in English, asking to talk to someone about faith. I went to see him one evening last night, and it turned out to be one of my best

evenings for a long time. We went to a nearby bar, where he told me a bit of his story. He is from Pakistan, and had been attracted to Christianity for a long time, but could not even ask questions about it. Now he has come to Trento on a scholarship to do a Masters degree, and wanted to learn more about the Bible. After hearing this, over the noise of the bar and the football being played at maximum volume on the TV, I realised that this was not the divine appointment. 500 metres down the road lives Latif, the Pakistani who was a pastor there before he was forced to flee the country a couple of years ago, and who now attends our church. So we left the bar to go to visit him, who happened to have another Pakistan Christian with him. So I had a wonderful evening listening to them tell their stories and evangelising in Urdu, and I was giving thanks to God that he brings people from the other side of the world and puts them near to each other, and that he was using a little kitchen with a couple of stools in a village just outside Trento to bring about his purposes. Later I spoke about the evening with Nick, who runs the international Bible study in the church, and he said that he had been praying for more contacts with the Indian and Pakistani students, so that helps to explain the evening as well.

After coming to church, the student (Aakash) wrote to me: *It was a wonderful morning for me. I was feeling so good after the prayers, I could not speak at that moment. My past made me less confident, I suffered a lot all my life. I felt so close to God, I felt something inside me I really can not explain. I was praying for forgiveness of my sins. It was a best spiritual experience in my life. I faced so bad circumstances in life and Lord saved me and protected me always. Today I was feeling I am under the shelter of God. Nobody can stop me thinking about my belief. I can not tell you how peaceful I feel inside. Pray for me that may God help me in my journey to truth. I am thankful to God that I found you and now I can come and with the passage of time I will know more and more about faith and truth. I was praying in heart in the Church, I tell all my suffering to God, I know he will heal my pains and sorrows. I told you that in Pakistan when I was in University there, my hostel mates saw that I have the holy book but I can not tell you what they did with me as a punishment, I am still suffering psychologically after that painful experience.*

Even though Aakash is freer to ask questions and learn about Christianity in Italy, he is not completely free. The other Pakistani students at Trento are already a bit suspicious, and ask him why he does not go to the mosque or say the daily prayers. So the Pakistani pastor warned him to be careful, because he could create problems both for himself and the pastor, but promised that he and the church will support and help him in every way possible. Pray for them, and give thanks to God with me for how he is using our small church for his Church in Pakistan (and many other countries).

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On the computer

In mid November, I finished preparing the Bible studies for the church this year. This means that until May, when I will start preparing the studies for after the summer, I have a bit more time for other projects. This is principally the computer work, for which I have quite a few ideas that I would like to implement. What is different now is that I have a virtual team helping me: people that I do not know, but who have offered to help me with their time and abilities, and that I give direction to and incorporate into the whole LaParola vision. So in the next few months the main computer projects I will be working on are:

New graphics for the site – after 12 years essentially the same, it is getting a bit dated. But I am no good on graphics, so someone is working on a new site design into which I will slot the contents of the site.

Bible quiz – someone has sent me over 1200 questions on the Bible, for which it was easy to create a web interface, and I have put into my Windows program, and will create an independent Android app.

Windows program – I'm working on this by myself still, because it is a mature program with little work needed. But last week I finally added an often requested new feature, to project the Bible text onto a second screen.

Android app – I wrote the core part of this program, and someone else the interface. There is not much else to do in the core, but I give advice to the other person as he adds new features to the program in the interface, calling the parts of the core that are already written.

iPhone/iPad app – I have three volunteers to work on the interface of this new program. First I have to modify the core of the Macintosh program to create a new core for an iOS program – they are similar, but not identical.

Hard Passages of the Bible – answers to common questions on the Bible that I am writing. I am continuing this by myself, both to keep it consistent and to keep me studying the Bible whilst I am not preparing Bible studies.

Paid resources – a publishing house wants to put their commentaries in my program, so I am converting their files into the format I use, and making some changes to the program so that it can manage resources that people pay for.

Greek vocabulary – someone sent me the files for a public domain Greek-English dictionary, so once I have converted the files I will include the dictionary in the program and the Greek NT section of the site.

Points for prayer

- For our ministries with the church leaders and in the Sunday School, that they will result in transformed lives.
- For good solutions to our good problem of a lack of space in the church hall, as the congregation has already outgrown it.
- For Aakash, and for Latif, Nick, and the rest of the church as we reach out into the whole world.
- That I can find the best way to use my time amongst all the interesting projects for the computer ministry.
- For the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth of Stefania and Daniele. Their teachers are very pleased with their work and behaviour at school, and we of their relationship with God.
- For a good Christmas and New Year with Pinuccia's parents, a nephew, a niece and her fiancé, who will be staying with us. It will be crowded, but great fun!

In the family

Last week Stefania performed in her first musical, in the end of year recital for her dance class. Daniele is doing handball this year for sport, but has taken up chess as well. At the beginning of the month he played in his first tournament, and was excited to win two prizes (one for participating, another for being the youngest player). As I have gotten to know the club in the past few months, I have played a few tournaments as well, after a break of 30 years. There are some photos at <http://bit.ly/1ehx6W5>.

Daniele has been diagnosed with scoliosis, and next week will be getting a plastic brace which he will have to wear for a lengthy period of time.

Pinuccia's family had some serious health problems lately, with a nephew in coma and now in rehabilitation after a motor bike accident, and her sister having to go to Milan from Sicily for an operation. Pinuccia felt the distance from her family, but was able to go to Milan for a few days to spend some time with her sister at the hospital.