

Richard, Pinuccia, Stefania, Daniele, Luca, Mattia

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

This newsletter is a bit different, being primarily about the family and not the ministry. This is partly because, as happens every summer, the last two months have seen very little happen in the church as people go away on holidays and most activities have a break. It is also because there are various things in the family I have not mentioned before, some new and some long standing, that you could pray for.

In the family

The end of the summer holidays means the beginning of a new school year. Stefania starts what in Australia would be Year 6, that in Italy means a new school – the first of three years of middle school. She is looking forward to this with some trepidation, but should be all right once she adjusts to all the new aspects. Daniele will be doing Year 4. They both start on the 12th - their birthday present to me! Luca and Mattia returned to the nursery for their second and final year on the 1st. This year they are going full time (about 7 hours per day) instead of part time. Pinuccia started at the preschool on the 1st as well. She was given a job at Lavis again, although an hour later than last year (2.00-4.30pm). This will mean some changes to the way we organise our family life, with the timetables of four different schools to juggle, but we'll find out how best to do that once everything is going.

In June Stefania was diagnosed with scoliosis – a curved back bone. This might explain various feet, knee and back pains she has always had. Currently It is not serious: she is about half way between the "come back for regular check ups to make sure it does not get worse" level and the treatment (with a back brace) level. So she has started physiotherapy treatment, with a monthly appointment with the physiotherapist and (hopefully) regular exercises at home. At Daniele's check up in August, we found that his curve has got worse again. So he will restart physiotherapy treatment, and the physiotherapist has kindly agreed to take both of them together to save us lots of trips to the hospital. At this stage it is likely that he will have to have a back brace again when his growth spurt arrives in a couple of years, a fact that Daniele is not too happy about. But a lot can happen in two years.

Back in November Daniele was flagged by the school for not learning as well as he could, and at times disturbing the class. This activates the province's health care system, and we spent a few months visiting various specialists. At the end, the diagnosis was Asperger Syndrome, that is related to but much milder than autism. This was not a great surprise. Firstly because I've known and observed him for 9 years. Secondly, because it is in part a hereditary syndrome, and a good proportion of my family have it. In many ways, he reminds me a lot of myself; but since Asperger manifests itself in different ways in different people, in other ways he is very different. This can be frustrating for me, but that is my problem not Daniele's. Our aim in this process is to learn how to help him as parents, and help his teachers to help him at school. Then Daniele will have to try to discover why God has made him in a special way, just as I (and all of us) had to. My qualities mean there are some things I do better than almost anyone, but at the same time I do other things worse than almost anyone. So I make sure I serve God in the former things, not the latter, because it is what God has called me to do. Daniele will have the advantage of knowing beforehand his best abilities and why, whereas it took me a long time and much trial and error before I discovered it.



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Mission, church, computer

The past two years I have had to reduce greatly my public ministry in order to concentrate on the family, a fact that I found quite frustrating. I think now that it will be possible to gradually return to what I used to do. I have some leadership responsibilities in the mission that require travelling in Europe. I have not done this in the past couple of years as it would have been very difficult for Pinuccia in my absence. However later this month I will be in Spain for four days, and in late November in Germany for four days. (I should actually be there for nine days, but that is still too much at this stage.) I also hope to be able to travel in Italy again, for conferences, and to meet up with other missionaries and other Italian church leaders. In the church, I want to be do more visiting of the small groups and helping their leaders, especially those in the valleys where we want to grow new churches. As always, God has provided when the church has needed help, and Stéphane, who arrived at Trento a couple of years ago, has been able to do that lately. Now we will work together, as the church wants to raise the small groups to a new level. The computer ministry has been very slow lately, with very few small updates, although I have kept up with the e-mail correspondence that comes from it. I am hoping to be able to work more on this ministry now.

Points for prayer and thanksgiving

- Give thanks for some great holiday time together as a family.
- Pray for the new school/job for Stefania and Pinuccia, that they will adjust well.
- Give thanks for the great (free) health care in our province, especially for the way it looks after the needs of children.
- Pray for straight backs for Stefania and Daniele.
- Pray that Daniele will understand the special way in which God made him, and come to understand why as well.
- Pray for God's help to return to the ministry that I would like to do—also help for Pinuccia as I will be out more.
- Pray for the problems with the hall.

The church's purchase of a hall has hit a bureaucratic snag. Nothing like this is ever easy in Italy! The owners of the hall over the past 10 years made some modifications to the property, without informing the council. So we can not get council permission for our renovations without first correcting the discrepancies; that involves getting all the previous owners to agreed Not an easy job. Since the church was not informed of these problems before the sale, as the seller should have done, we actually have the right to get our money back. However, this hall is too good an opportunity to give up on so easily. So currently we are negotiating with the town council about what we can do. In the meantime the renovation work has not yet started.



Chocolate icecream is the best!