

RICHARD AND PINUCCIA WILSON

SERVING IN ROVERETO, ITALY

With Stefania, Daniele, Luca, and Mattia

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We are getting to know the church at Rovereto and also how we can serve in it. I thought it was a good time for you as well to get to know the church a bit better, so in this newsletter I have included the names of some of the people we are working with, so you can pray for them as well.

In the church

We have been gradually getting involved in ministry in our new church at Rovereto. We wanted first to be involved in the church life and to offer hospitality, to know the people in the congregation and understand what is needed, before jumping in and doing things. We especially did not want to take over what the church members were already doing well, although I do make an exception in replacing **Angelo**, the pastor, in a few of his many roles.

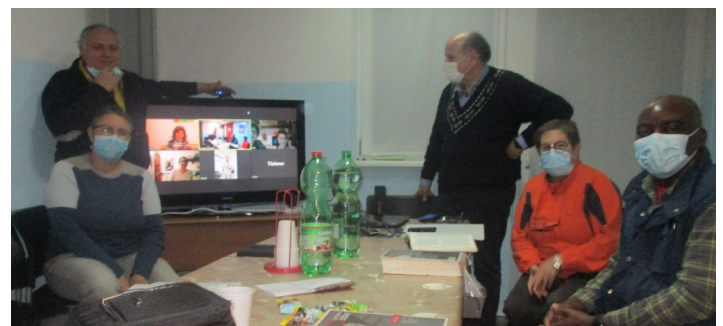
When we were considering moving to Rovereto, we could foresee very few disadvantages. The one that we were most concerned about was that there was no Sunday School, because there were no children in the congregation. However, we were willing to start a Sunday School just for our Luca and Mattia; after, it is not uncommon for missionaries in a church plant to have only their own children present. But God was gracious, and once the Sunday School was going, the children started to arrive. **Vincenzo and Teresa** bring their three grandchildren. A divorced man brings his daughter when she is at his house. Another lady brings some relatives. So there have been up to eight children present, and most weeks at least five. Pinuccia, although she did start the Sunday School and is also responsible for it, has also been able to share the work and mobilise others, taking turns with **Teresa and Liliana** as the teacher, with three girls as assistants (**Marika, Virginia**, and our Stefania).



Stefania, Virginia, Liliana, Teresa, Pinuccia at a Sunday School teachers' meeting in our apartment.

One of my main roles in the church at Trento in the past few years has been teaching in small groups, and it is now what I will be doing at Rovereto. I have already started leading the men's Bible study, that meets monthly at the same time as the women's Bible study, and which had had an 18 month pandemic enforced break. From January I will also be leading the mid week Bible study, which is currently in a hybrid form—half the group meets in the hall, the other half on Zoom. Angelo

was preparing the studies three times a month, with three other people (**Mariangela, Jonathan, Cornelia**) taking turns to prepare the fourth. My condition on taking over the leadership of the group was that those three continue to do one study a month, which was not the church leadership's original idea, but I managed to convince them.



Cornelia, Lino, Angelo, Mariangela, Jonathan (and others on Zoom) at the Wednesday night Bible study.

When we started attending at Rovereto, the worship in the church services was being led by **Emanuela** on guitar, her husband **Jonathan** (a different Jonathan from the Bible studies) on drums, and **Carolina** on piano. However, Carolina had to stop because increased family commitments meant she could not attend the practices. So I offered to help out, and have restarted playing the piano in church after a break of about 20 years. I am starting to remember how to play! In the music group there is also **Paolo**, currently at the mixer but a good guitar player, and who needs a big of encouragement, not just to play in the services, but also in his life generally. I have known him, on and off, for about 15 years (I led quite a few Bible studies at his house at Rovereto before the church was planted), and hope to be able to use the time together in the music group to be a help for him.

We are also continuing some ministry with the church at Trento. I still lead a weekly Bible study there (on Zoom, although I am trying to move it at least to hybrid), which I will continue until June. We are also trying to maintain our relationships with friends at Trento, inviting them to our house. Since the teenagers' group is combined between the two churches, and we have two teenagers in the group, we are also involved in that ministry, mostly with logistics to support the leaders (**Ruben** from Trento and **Emanuela** from Rovereto), so that they can concentrate on spending time with the teenagers. This means giving a lot of lifts (having the largest family and hence the largest car in the two churches is a factor) to help get the teenagers spread around the province to the meetings. We also hosted one of the meetings, being able to convert our downstairs area into a cinema whilst we prepared dinner for the teenagers and some of the parents upstairs.

On the computer

Last month I added another Italian translation of the Bible to my site and apps (laparola.net), the seventh that I have made available. A lot less than what is available in English, but there are a lot less translations made to begin with, and finding electronic texts and obtaining permissions are further limitations. This latest translation is from 1781, and although it is not used any more, it is an important witness from a period when the Bible was little read.

The preparation of the text of this Bible translation took me about six months, on and off. I thought I would give you an idea of what my computer ministry entails. First I had to transform the electronic text that I had obtained to a format that I could use. In the texts I distribute, all words have a “standard” form. For a verb, it is the infinitive, so that a search for a verb can find all of the 50 to 100 possible conjugations and not just one form. Other parts of speech need a similar process. For proper nouns, the Bible dictionary I wrote uses a certain spelling, and all the alternative spellings need to be mapped to it so that the dictionary can be used with all Bible translations. In the electronic text that I had obtained, there were more than 10000 words to which I had not yet assigned a “standard” form. So I had to go through them all, assigning the infinitive to the verbs (which I was able to write a computer program to do automatically, but they still needed a manual check), finding the spelling of proper nouns in other Bible translations, and checking some PDFs in Google Books to correct the many scanning errors in the text that I had found. Then there was about a week of work creating the files for distribution for the programs and apps, updating documentation, adding the text to the database that generates the text for the site, and then modifying the text of several pages of the site to include the new version.

Support

In our previous newsletter, I wrote that we had a shortfall in our support level. There has been an increase in our financial support since then, so that for the moment we are receiving enough. In the Trento church, we have been studying 2Corinthians, and when we arrived at the last paragraph of chapter 9, I made sure that they understood why I was able to teach that passage—because of the generosity of supporters (in

prayer and financially) around the world. This created thanksgiving to God for you, not only from us but from the churches that benefit from your gifts as well.

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God... for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

This is also a good reminder as we approach Christmas: we thank God for his indescribable gift of Jesus Christ, but also for his grace towards each one of us that makes us show the same grace and generosity, so that more people will praise God.

Prayer and thanksgiving points

- Give thanks that we are finding ways that God can use us to edify his church at Rovereto.
- Pray for Angelo, with his wife Melina, as they lead the church.
- Give thanks for the children coming to the Sunday School, and pray for those who lead it.
- Pray that I will faithfully teach the Bible in the church, and that the sown seed will bear much fruit.
- Pray for the teenagers of the two churches, and for the leadership of Ruben and Emanuela.
- Give thanks for God’s provision and the generosity of our supporters.

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