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May 2025 Newsletter
1 message

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Buongiorno a Tutti!

Hello everyone, we hope that this newsletter finds you well. We are all doing fine and dandy. The weather in Florence is great! Though the price we have to pay for that is allergies. Lots and lots of allergies. But those haven't kept us from doing the work for the last month, so let us tell you what we've been up to...

Missionaries' Retreat That's Just an Excuse to Hang Out With our Friends...

If you've followed our newsletters for the last few years, you will know that (almost) every Easter for the last few years, we've gotten together with the Palmer and Anderson families. The Palmers are missionaries in Colmar, France. The Andersons were living and working in England. They moved back to the States, but are now back in Europe living and working in Belgium.

The first year of the, "MRTJAETHOWOF" took place in 2022, when it was just us and the Andersons. Then in 2023 we were all together. In 2024 it was just the Palmers and Shanahans, and it was in July instead of at Easter. This thing is not very well organized.

This year we all met up in Colmar, as it is about the halfway point for both the Andersons and us. We were fortunate that Betsy Palmer's parents were visiting them at the same time. It was a pleasure to get to know them.

This is always a special time for us. It is a great opportunity for our kids to be with other kids who are both: Americans living abroad and being raised in Christian homes. They almost never have that exact combination. For the adults its a nice opportunity to talk about our different fields and challenges we face. Aaron and I spend a lot of time saying, "How do you say this in French?" or Italian depending on which of us is asking the question.

This year the trip coincided with Rebecca's birthday. Violet and Nell Anderson (who is Violet's age) baked Rebecca a hyper realistic cake (they had a lot of help from Ellen Anderson), that looked like a plate of pasta. It was nice to get to celebrate Rebecca with the families.

We do a little bit of sightseeing (why is this word not, "site seeing?") a lot of eating and a whole lot of laughing. On Sunday we worshiped with the church at Colmar. Aaron and Betsy planted this congregation and it is really amazing to see the work they have done. The worship was very uplifting. Betsy's dad, Tim Frizzell, preached on Hope.

We had a great long weekend with everyone and came back to Italy encouraged and ready to get back to work. Speaking of that...

The Shanahans, Andersons and Palmers, or as we like to call ourselves, "The Shandermers."

The kiddos.

Opportunity with the Kids at Pistoia...

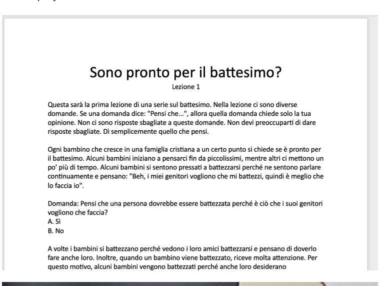
One of the great blessings at Pistoia is that we have a few families with children. One challenge at Pistoia is most of these families have a situation where one parent is a Christian and the other is not. There are several kids who are at worship most Sundays, but not all.

We've been blessed this year to have the Edwards family with us as well. They are going to be in Italy for six months a year and have three young kids.

I counted the other day, and if all of the kids are there we have about 12 kids between the ages of ten and eighteen. Recently, Violet has said a couple of things about baptism. While we're not sure that she's ready, we want her to be prepared when she is ready. So, I put together a little 6 lesson study titled, "Am I Ready to be Baptized?" I've translated it and am giving it to the parents to do with their kids, or to let the kids do it on their own. Violet much prefers having the material and doing the lessons on her own, and then talking about them after. So the lessons are designed so they can be autonomous.

My hope is the kids who read them will consider what it means to be a Christian and then obey the Gospel. I am also hopeful that this will influence their non-Christian parents as well.

Please pray for this effort.



Sono pronto per il battesimo?
Lezione 1

Questa sarà la prima lezione di una serie sul battesimo. Nella lezione ci sono diverse domande. Se una domanda dice: "Pensi che...", allora quella domanda chiede solo la tua opinione. Non ci sono risposte sbagliate a queste domande. Non devi preoccuparti di dare risposte sbagliate. Dì semplicemente quello che pensi.

Ogni bambino che cresce in una famiglia cristiana a un certo punto si chiede se è pronto per il battesimo. Alcuni bambini iniziano a pensarci fin da piccolissimi, mentre altri ci mettono un po' più di tempo. Alcuni bambini si sentono pressati a battezzarsi perché ne sentono parlare continuamente e pensano: "Beh, i miei genitori vogliono che mi battezzi, quindi è meglio che lo faccia io".

Domanda: Pensi che una persona dovrebbe essere battezzata perché è ciò che i suoi genitori vogliono che faccia?
A. Sì
B. No

A volte i bambini si battezzano perché vedono i loro amici battezzarsi e pensano di doverlo fare anche loro. Inoltre, quando un bambino viene battezzato, riceve molta attenzione. Per questo motivo, alcuni bambini vengono battezzati perché anche loro desiderano

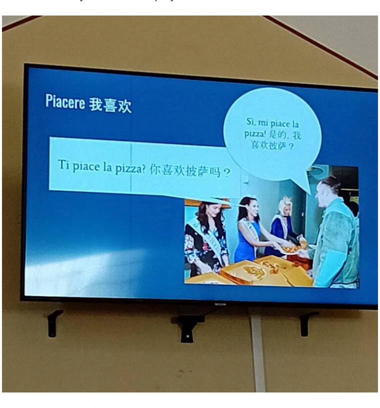
These kids are cousins who all attend worship. The oldest is 14, and the youngest (besides the very little one) is 10. There are two older cousins who are both about 16.

Chinese Class

Our lessons with the Chinese continue to go well. They seem to be enjoying the classes, though we have not seen a great improvement in their Italian. We had gotten down to about four students, but last week there were about twelve who attended worship. A few of them had schedule changes at work, which is allowing them to be at worship more, and one is back from a surgery he had.

A few of them have told us they want to be closer to us, as they do not have many Christian friends. We have given them our phone numbers and have communicated with them some. We are also connected on social media. Rebecca found the picture below on one of their pages. The caption said (in Chinese), "Today the church brother taught us languages. Thank him very much!" I'm hopeful that her Chinese friends will see this and want to come to worship with us. She also has a picture of me preaching on her page.

We believe the efforts with this group will lead to many others coming to Christ and we ask that you continue to pray for this effort as well.



Pounding the Pavement

Our work is going well and we still have Bible studies most days, but a lot of them have fizzled out. We are preparing to go to the States for reporting in June, and we will be gone until mid-August, but we still have a job to do while we're here and when we get back.

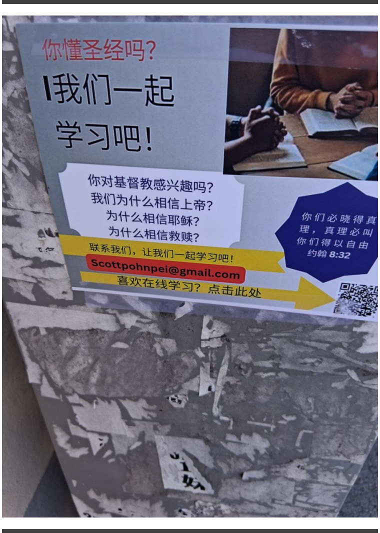
For that reason, I printed up several flyers and posted them around Pistoia, Montecatini Terme (the town next to Pistoia) and Prato.

Prato is where most of the Chinese visitors live. Prato has the highest concentration of Chinese nationals in all of Europe. I printed up some flyers in Chinese advertising Bible studies. I have my email address on them and a link for a website that has Chinese lessons. I spoke to the man who runs the website and he has had 7 hits on the website from Italy. Hopefully, this means we are reaching people there.

One kind of funny thing happened while I was putting up signs in Prato. I couldn't find any bulletin boards, but I saw a few places that had a bunch of little signs on them that looked like advertisements. I thought, "well, I may as well post my signs here." I did this three or four times and then thought, "I wonder what these things say?" So I used google translate to see. I was not ready for what it was, which was prostitution. I laughed at first, but then I got sad, because this probably means human trafficking. But, now if someone goes to try to find a phone number for a prostitute they will also see an advertisement for Bible studies. Maybe, it will touch their heart and get them to reconsider what they are doing.

I advertised both regular Bible studies (which I much prefer) and English through the Bible studies. Praying that we get find some people who are seeking the truth through this effort.

Italian sign advertising studies.



Chinese sign advertising studies, with a QR code for Chinese website.

Screenshot of the translation of the other advertisements.

An Impromptu Sermon

At Pistoia we have a rotation for preaching. There are four or five of us who participate. This past Sunday the man who was scheduled to preach had not checked the schedule and was not prepared. The song leader said, "After this song brother ______ will preach." The brother, who I will leave anonymous, looked surprised. He said, "I did not know I was supposed to preach." I said, "It's okay, I can do it." I then asked the song leader to lead an extra song to let me collect my thoughts. I then preached on Jesus' promise of the church from Matthew 16.

The sermon was well received. After worship, Giovanni (one of the older men), said, "That was really good. You should preach without notice every week." I took that as a compliment.

I am sure this has happened before, but I don't remember when. The moral of the story is - always be prepared!

Family Stuff

If you read the newsletter last month, you learned that Violet hurt her elbow, but we didn't know what was wrong. We had gone to the children's hospital and she had an x-ray, but they did not find anything. About a week later we went to get an MRI. We had to wait 5 days for the results, and we found out she had what they call a "Green Stick Fracture." This, apparently, is quite common in kids. But, the poor thing had been walking around with an untreated broken elbow for two weeks!

We took her to a clinic near our house and they put a soft cast on it. She wore the cast for 20 days and had it removed last week. It was still hurting when the doctor removed the cast, but they thought that was just a result from being in the cast. Little by little she's been healing and now has almost full range of motion back in that arm. We went to a physical therapist yesterday, and she gave her some exercises to do. It seems to be healed, but the PT said it might take another three or four weeks before she has no pain at all. Thank you for your prayers!

We are all doing well. We had a great month, especially with the visit with the Andersons and Palmers, and we are excited about coming back to the States this summer to report. It's been two years since our last visit and we look forward to seeing everyone.

Thank you for all that you do for us!
The Shanahans

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