

Good Days & Bad Days ...

An update on the ministry of Scott & Sharon MacLean serving with CrossWorld in Italy – March 2006

“I’m an atheist, but sometimes when I look at the world I realize that there is too much order for it to have just happened.” This part of the discussion I had with a man who stopped by our book table in Villadossola. We talked for several minutes about God, His creation and His Son, and then he gladly accepted a Gospel of John and sheet about the Investigative Bible Studies we offer. It was a “good” day.

Another day I stood shivering in the cold, watching people pass by without even a second glance at the book table. As I packed up to go home for lunch I realized that there had not even been a “nibble” all morning. It was a “bad” day.

Of course we know that we are here to be faithful in proclaiming God’s Good News. And we know that He will use our service for His glory, but it is still frustrating those days when we see so clearly how hard the soil is here.

But the Lord provides the good days as well - days when we have an opportunity to plant seeds and water them – days when we feel (from a human perspective) that our presence here might actually be useful. He seems to know when we need that encouragement and the good days come.

Our first attempt at an Investigative Bible Study has met with mixed results. At our first meeting it was just us and the Falcones. We had a good time of prayer for those we had invited and went

ITALIAN INFO

If you order a “pepperoni” pizza in Italy, it won’t come with the spicy sausage you are used to. In Italian a pepperoni pizza comes with:

- A) pepper ham
- B) bell peppers
- C) bacon
- D) red pepper

Answer to last letter’s question:

The Italians cheered on “the Blues” (D) with cries of “Forza Azzurri” at the Olympic Games in Turin. The Italians won a total of 11 medals (5 gold, 6 bronze).

over the study that I was going to give. It was good practice for my Italian and good for them to experience a sample of how these studies will work. Eventually I hope that they will be leading these studies. So there was some good in what I might have thought was a bad day.

Our second evening of the study we had two guests! As we started our discussion, I began to realize that our guests were there not to learn, but to try to convince us of their beliefs. It was a couple of so called Jehovah’s Witnesses. We spent the evening presenting verses that clearly how the deity of Christ, only to have them ignore those verses and run back to the ones that they distorted to promote their heresy.

The JW’s are the second largest religious group here in the valley (after the Roman Catholic Church). While it was good to have an opportunity to present the Gospel, we were hoping to have someone that would actually be interested in learning. Still we trust the Lord to use His Word and His Gospel (which they heard) to win even these hard souls to Himself.

This Friday (March 24) we begin again with the studies. A new believer is interested in studying with us and will try to bring along her Arab Muslim husband. In any case, from the discussion we had Sunday after church, she is very much in need of getting a better grasp on the basics of the faith. She is hungry, diligently searching the Scriptures, and full of questions. What a wonderful opportunity.

And so it goes. Preparing the soil, scattering the seeds, pouring on the water – and waiting on the one who causes the seeds to grow. We know that the soil is hard, and often it takes years of careful cultivation before the seeds even can get past the surface. And so we seek to be faithful on the good days and on the bad ones. And we rejoice in the glimmers of hope that the Lord provides.

And we seek His wisdom as we look for ways to find openings and as we consider how best we can use our time and the resources He has given us to reach this valley for Christ.

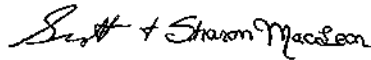
“rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,” Romans 12:12 (NASB)

And we pray. We pray that God may do a work so stunning, so unbelievable, that it will be clear that it is His mighty hand at work. I recently read a book about a revival that occurred in New England in the mid 1700s. It was amazing to read of how mightily the hand of God worked in these villages. One thing that struck me was the author's realization that God often works in situations and through people who from a human perspective would be considered unlikely. That way the glory clearly goes to God.

That is our prayer for this valley. Here where the hearts are hard and the people cold to the things of God – in this unlikely place – we pray that God would pour out His Spirit and do a work that is truly “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,”

Will you pray with us?

His Servants,





Scott, Sharon & Karis MacLean

QUICKLY NOTED ...

- 🌐 **On our web-site (www.snsMacLean.net)** – Story and pictures of our “Olympic Experience” and a new “Life in Italy” section on grocery shopping.
- 🏠 **Support Update** – We now have 93% of our desired prayer support.
- ➔ **Opportunity for ministry**– Is your church interested in sending out a short term missions team? We are at a point in the work here where such a team would be very useful. Contact us for more details.
- 📖 **Free Bible Software** – There is an excellent Bible program available for free. You can download a copy at www.e-sword.net or order it on CD for a donation.
- 📖 **New Prayer Cards** – If you get our Prayer letter only by e-mail you missed our new prayer cards. Contact us and we will be happy to mail you one.

Prayer & Praise

- ✓ Pray for a mighty working of God in the Ossola Valley – that He might be glorified.
- ✓ Praise for the encouraging “good” days the Lord sends our way.
- ✓ We are seeking to have a new full color tract printed up at a per piece price that is less than we were paying for black and white. Pray for the design of the tract (eye-catching, etc.) and that the details of having it printed would work out.
- ✓ Praise for good conversations at the book table.
- ✓ Pray that those we have had these conversations with would stop back by so we can continue the discussions.
- ✓ Praise for the new believer who plans to come to our Bible Studies. Pray that her husband may also come.
- ✓ Pray that the Lord would direct us toward “thirsty souls” whom He has prepared to hear the Good News of His Son.
- ✓ Pray that we would be faithful witnesses for the Lord as we continue to get to know our neighbors and others in the community.
- ✓ Praise the Lord for His provision for our financial support needs.
- ✓ Pray for His continued provision and the prayer partners we are lacking to be raised up.

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