


Fishers of Men

September 2008 update on the ministry of Scott & Sharon MacLean serving in Italy with  CrossWorld

The sun glinted off the cold mountain stream as I dropped the baited hook into the rushing water. Sharon and I were taking turns keeping an eye on Karis as she happily stomped in the shallow water near the bank and yelled warnings when the already caught fish tried to flop their way back into the river. It was a beautiful day to go fishing. And it was also a great way for all of us to get to know the folks from the ambulance house (who set up the fishing/BBQ day). Relationships, and the trust that is built through them, are an important part of communicating the Gospel here in Italy. I guess you could say we were fishing for men while fishing for fish.

In fact, fishing for men can be quite a lot of fun. In early July we had a team here from Calvary Bible Church in Lusby, MD. One of the most fruitful things they did was to “have fun”. Seriously! Throughout the week they had a series of English conversation classes with high school students from Domodossola. We use the term “classes” rather loosely - baking apple pies, having a picnic at a local waterfall and the other fun stuff they did weren’t exactly academic in nature - but the teens were speaking English - and building relationships.

And so it was natural for these students to come to the sports and BBQ event in the park on Friday afternoon. While there they sat with rapt attention and watched as their new friends (the team) performed a powerful drama that

portrayed the Gospel message. Will you pray that the Gospel message they heard will bear fruit in their hearts? And pray for us as we seek to follow up with these teens as we start up our fall youth program.

The team also had a wonderful time doing mime in the central piazza of Domodossola, making crafts with children in the park at our Bible club and distributing tracts in mailboxes. Although it was a full week, the team kept us laughing (or at least smiling and shaking our heads ☺).

But not all fishing for men is such fun. Most of us may think of “fishing” as a fun, leisurely activity - perhaps sitting by the bank of a stream with a rod and reel in one hand and a cool drink in the other. But that is not at all what Jesus had in mind when He called Simon Peter and the others to “Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men”

Jesus was talking to professional fishermen. For them fishing was done by repeatedly casting heavy nets into the water, with no guarantee of results. It was hard, repetitive, mostly boring work - a far cry from sitting on the bank with a rod and reel!

And sometimes fishing for men can be like that here in Italy. Setting up the book table every Saturday morning and sitting there for hours - longing for a fruitful conversation, but never quite knowing what will “be in the nets”. Or spending the day hiking up and down the streets of a small mountain town, putting tracts in mail boxes, praying that someone will read the tract, or bring the enclosed coupon to the book table. Or spending the whole day at the ambulance house without having any real conversations. Yup, sometimes fishing for men can just be plain old work.

Sometimes we see people who seem hungry for the Gospel and it is great! Other times we feel like Peter when he said to the Lord “Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing”. But then we know that He knows where the fish are. And He is the one who makes us “fishers of men” as we follow Him.

ITALIAN INFO

Since 2005 it is illegal to smoke in most coffee bars, restaurants and other public places. How many Italians smoked before the ban, and how many smoke now?

- A) 30.2% - Now 26% B) 26% - Now 24.3%
C) 22.1% - Now 22% D) 18% - Now 18.1%

Answer to last letter’s question:

In April elections, Silvio Berlusconi’s (B) coalition won, making him the new Prime Minister of Italy.

“And Jesus said to them ‘Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’” -Mark 1:17

So that is how you can pray for us. Pray that we would be faithful in casting our nets and fishing for men - on the days when the fishing is fun and on the days when it is just plain work. Pray that we would be faithful in following Him. Pray that we would be sensitive to His direction as He brings us in contact with the souls that He has prepared - that we might be able to discern where He is at work and follow Him in that work. We are always seeking new ways to “break though” into people’s lives with the Gospel message. We need His guidance as we do that for He knows where the fish are and where we should cast our nets.

His Servants,



Scott, Sharon & Karis MacLean

QUICKLY NOTED ...

- 🌐 **Visit our website ...** Stop by at www.snsmaclean.net to see some pictures of the team’s time here, get a update on our support situation, hear our latest news, or just to learn a bit more about Italy.
- 👤 **Good news on our residency permits! ...** It looks like both Scott and Sharon will get their renewed residency permits soon. Then we will be all set (until they expire again in eight months ☺).
- 💰 **Hooray for the Dollar! ...** Recent weeks have seen the Dollar make a strong gain against the Euro (up as much as 11%), and while there is still lots of room for improvement (we would need another 17% just to get back to where we were in 2006), it does help ease the financial pressure on European missionaries a bit.

Prayer & Praise

- ✓ Pray as we convert our co-worker’s apartment into a church location in the coming months. There is much to be done, but we are excited at the possibilities. Pray specifically that 40 of the €20 chairs come back in stock before the end of the month (we explain what we mean by this on the “PL Extras” section of our website).
- ✓ Praise for a great time of ministry with the team that was here in July.
- ✓ Pray for those who heard the Gospel during that time and for us as we follow up on contacts which were made.
- ✓ Praise for the Lord’s provision of our financial support needs. While we are still not quite where we need to be, we are much closer than we were in April.
- ✓ Praise for the strengthening of the dollar and pray that it continues to go up against the Euro.
- ✓ Pray for us as we kick off a new year of youth group, Club 252 and various Bible studies. Watch our website for details on our kick-off events.
- ✓ Praise for a great team planning meeting in late August. We came up with some great new ideas and are excited as we look forward to the coming year.
- ✓ Pray that the Lord would bring us in contact with souls He has prepared to hear the Gospel.
- ✓ Praise for good conversations at the book table - and for one of the teens who volunteered to watch the table a few Saturdays until school starts.
- ✓ Pray for a great working of God in the Ossola Valleys. May He draw many people to Himself and build His church!

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