

# So, what's the difference?

October 2011 update on the ministry of Scott & Sharon MacLean serving in Italy with CrossWorld

“So, what’s the difference between what we Catholics believe and what you evangelicals believe?” That’s a question that I get asked quite often by folks here in Domodossola. While fully answering that question could fill a good sized book, I’ve tried to come up with a few basic answers to give folks, hoping that the answers will lead to further questions.

Recently, I heard of a Roman Catholic priest here in Italy who decided to leave the Roman Catholic Church and become an “evangelical”. As I listened to his story on YouTube, I was stuck by how closely his testimony related to the basic answers that I give to the question above. So what are these key differences, and how did they come into play in the life of this now ex-priest?

The first answer I give folks has to do with authority. We, as evangelicals, have the Bible as our sole authority. The Bible is over the church and the church must submit to its authority.

The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, also accepts as an authority “tradition” or the official teachings of the church as an institution. This “tradition” has equal (if not greater) authority than the Scriptures. And from this fundamental difference spring most, if not all, of the other differences that there are.

Luca, the ex-priest, began his journey by reading the Bible “without pre-conceived ideas”. This reading of the Bible, and letting it speak for itself,

was the beginning of the change. He found an Evangelical Church which, rather than telling him what to believe, encouraged him to keep reading the Bible and listen to what it said.

Through his reading of the Bible, Luca came to have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Something that, in his words “I didn’t have before.”

This “personal relationship” aspect of salvation is another key difference that I mention. We, as evangelicals, see salvation occurring in a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The church, then, is the gathering together of those who have been saved in Jesus Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, sees itself as the vehicle of salvation – the conduit of grace. One enters salvation by way of the church who bestows the grace to those who meet the requirements. One comes to the “church” who can then bestow God’s salvation. According to Roman Catholic doctrine, salvation is not found outside of the Roman Catholic Church.

This putting of the Bible in first place, and teaching on the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ for salvation, did not please Luca’s superiors and he was removed from his position and has been (or soon will be) excommunicated for what he has come to believe.

While these two points that I often share don’t begin to cover all the differences that there are, I do find that they are foundational enough in nature, that they can often lead into an understanding of many of the other differences. And while what I have shared here is obviously not a full explanation, hopefully it will give you some idea of what we share with the folks here.

We were limited to just two children’s clubs in the park this fall. The rules were changed this summer (previously we had not needed to ask permission), and we were only granted two of

## ITALIAN INFO

Sales tax in Italy (known as IVA) was recently increased. What sales tax rate do we now pay on most items?

- A) 7%    B) 15%
- C) 18%    D) 21%

Answer to last letter’s question:

Mailing a post card or letter to the US from Italy now costs €1.60 (D) (about \$2.25).

“He was also saying to them ‘you nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition’.” – Mark 7:9 (NASB)

the four days that we requested. But the Bible clubs went well, despite having to compete with birthday cake (see PL Extras on our website for details). There is a good group of kids that come and we are thankful for the opportunity to share with them (and the adults that listen in) the Good News.

We have also had the joy of a few new believers who have found our church in recent months. All of them fit age wise into our youth group – which now makes up the majority of the church. As we start our new year of youth group, we are excited to see what God will do though these young men and women.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers and support of the work here!

His Servants,



Scott, Sharon & Karis MacLean

### QUICKLY NOTED ...

- 📄 **On our Website** – New pictures, updated prayer requests, and in the “Life in Italy” section – figuring out the hours for government offices here.
- 🔑 **Health Insurance increase** – As of September 1, our health insurance premium increased by \$440/month. Please pray that the Lord will provide for this need in our financial support. For more details on this visit the “PL Extras” section of our website.
- ☺ **Adoption News** – We recently heard that our adoption should be final sometime in April of next year.

### Prayer & Praise

- ✓ Praise for good Children’s clubs in the park this summer and fall.
- ✓ Pray for the witness of several in our church to their unsaved family members.
- ✓ Praise for a vibrant youth group that makes up the majority of our church. Pray as we begin a new year of youth group seeking to help them continue to grow in the Lord.
- ✓ Praise for several new believers that have found the church over the past few months, and pray for us as we follow up with them in their new relationship with the Lord.
- ✓ Pray for wisdom and provision as we continue to seek a new meeting location for the church. Continue to pray also for the possibility of getting a free piece of land on which to build a church building.
- ✓ Pray that the Lord would lead us to thirsty souls – those He has prepared to hear the Gospel message, those who are open and interested in hearing what God has to say.
- ✓ Praise the Lord that it seems that the delay we were experiencing with renewing our residency permits has been resolved without having to spend much time on the problem.
- ✓ Pray for good conversations at the book table, and in our everyday relationships.
- ✓ Pray for the Lord’s provision for the increased costs of our health insurance.
- ✓ Pray that the Lord would cause us as a church to increase and abound in love for one another and for all men. (1 Thess. 3:12)
- ✓ Pray for a great working of God in the Ossola Valleys. May He draw many people to Himself and build His church!

Direct Address:	Electronic:	Permanent Address:	Mission Address:
Via C. Ravasenga, 2 28845 Domodossola (VB) ITALY ☎ 011-39-0324-482-259	www.snsMacLean.net Skype name:	c/o MacLean 814 Little Shilo Rd. West Chester, PA 19382 ☎	CrossWorld 10,000 N Oak Trafficway Kansas City, MO 64155 ☎ 816-479-7300