



May 2019
**News from
David and
Loredana**

CORNELLIUS
ministries

Observations from Visiting Supporters

We were privileged to visit the Standridges last month, as they were conducting their usual ministries in both Sicily and Rome. They met us at the airport in Catania, Sicily, and soon whisked us off to the Wednesday evening Prayer Meeting in Pennisi, where Marco and Simona Albanesi have planted a church. (They are both from Rome and dear friends, whose hearts the Lord has drawn to teach the gospel in Sicily.) David and Loredana make regular mentoring trips there, often including much-appreciated conferences on various topics that they teach to the men and women, respectively.

The atmosphere at their meeting place was welcoming, as the believers gathered. David gave an evening devotional (translated for us by Loredana), we sang several keyboard-accompanied hymns, and then they prayed together. At the close, we were invited to join their weekly buffet fellowship meal of delicious creations by the church women, organized by Simona, before seating ourselves at the two huge round tables. The room was soon filled with lively conversations and easy laughter, which displayed their affection and appreciation for one another!

David and Loredana dropped us at our B&B for the night, and continued on to the Albanesi's home, where they were staying. Left Sicily, we took the ferry that crosses from Catania to Italy mainland, then drove on to their home in Rome. The Lord had led them to a lovely apartment, suited well for the many Bible studies and dinners that happen there, situated with a pleasant view of trees from the balcony, and only a few minutes' drive from their church. After settling into their guest room and enjoying their company, we all retired for a good night's sleep.

On Saturday, David took Ron to their office to show him the projects that go on there with the help of Erkki and some volunteers. David now writes his parents' long-standing monthly newspaper *La Voce del Vangelo*, (The Voice of the Gospel) that has aided and encouraged Italian believers over the past 60 years. Multiple other publications are produced there, as well: gospel tracts, pamphlets, and even translations of theological books from English into Italian. This publishing ministry is a continual source of edification and blessing to Italian Christians, as they grow spiritually, to become ambassadors of Christ in scattered places throughout a nation that knows only a powerful, man-commandeered religion that worships Mary! Such longevity as this ministry holds is very unusual in

Italy, where there are less than 1% of Bible-focused, Christ-centered churches in existence. The Standridge family is to be thankfully acknowledged for their patient perseverance in shedding the Light of God's truth into the spiritual darkness of beautiful, historical Italy. How appropriate that their main workplace is the same city to which Paul, through the Spirit, wrote his most theological epistle!

Saturday brought a surprise teaching opportunity for Barb, as it was the day for a monthly Women's Bible study, this time at the Staniscis' home. It began with affectionate greetings and chatter among the women as they arrived and then served themselves from the delicious brunch offerings, following a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord. The sweet fellowship continued as we all settled at the beautifully-decorated tables (and Cristina had thoughtfully placed English-speakers around Barb, so she could enter in, too!) After the tables were cleared, we all rearranged ourselves to listen to a lesson from Romans 12 that Barb 'just happened' to have on her phone, having taught it at her church in the US. (God always provides!) Loredana graciously translated and answered the women's questions, and then, after yet more fellowship, we parted ways until the next afternoon.

Sunday afternoon at 5:00 is the time for the Vita Nella Grazia church to meet in a rented space that is a ballet studio during the week. This means there are transforming procedures to be done before the service begins, so a helpful team of believers arrive early to place handsome posters of 'Soli' phrases around the room, which serve not only to state the beliefs of the church, but also to reduce the effect of the mirrors that cover the walls. Then the pulpit and chairs are put in place, along with the sound system, hymnals, and tables for published materials and the refreshments that follow the worship service. There is also a standing sign placed on the sidewalk to alert passers by of the church's presence and time of meeting.

As the church families arrive, the room fills with warm greetings before everyone finally settles into a chair to begin worshiping. The singing is led by Loredana and accompanied by Erkki, as voices are lifted in praise and worship to the Lord. David preached (and Cristina Stanisci translated for us) a fine message on our responsibilities before God as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, starting with 1 Peter 4:7-11. (It was of the Lord that verses 10-11 covered the same subject of serving one another as good stewards that the women had heard the day before.) But David's sermon was far more thorough, including praying, persevering in proclaiming the Gospel, displaying 'Christ in [us], the hope of glory', willingness to suffer for the truth, and keeping an eternal perspective rather than a world-centered one in our daily lives. He summarized with Colossians 3:16-17, leaving the congregation with good food for meditation and for discussion in the Second Hour time that follows refreshments. This is also Sunday School hour for the children.

Other Bible study ministries go on during the week within the congregation: for couples, for teens, in believers' homes, scattered around the Roman city and suburbs, for both edification and as outreach opportunities for friends and family.

We were refreshed and thankful to have been witnesses to the many aspects of ministry that happen in Sicily, Rome, and spots all over Italy because the Lord called the Standridges to serve Him. They do it faithfully, conscientiously, patiently, effectively, and fervently, with hearts to truly serve their Savior as His ambassadors. Please join us in supportive prayer and gifts to maintain and even extend these ministries of the Word!

*Blessed by our visit,
Ron and Barb Pierre*

SO, PRAISE! PRAY!
AND PARTNER WITH US!
You representatives in Rome Italy,
David and Loredana

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