

Reformation Christian Ministries

Italy Report

~ ~ ~ May ~ June 2006 ~ ~ ~

June 19, 2006

Dear Friends of Italy and Dr. & Mrs. Franco Maggiotto:

Out of the midst of the dust clouds of fighting illness and evil, we again hear from our good friend and colleague in Christ, Dr. Franco Maggiotto. As you will see by the accompanying newsletter, he continues his battle both against the remnants of leukemia as well as the power house of Romanism and darkness in Italy.

Please keep this Reformer in your prayers and support him through prayer and finances as much as possible. Pray also for the medicine awaited from the U.S. for the final stage of his treatment to remove the last remaining signs of leukemia. The first round was so successful, but since the medicine is considered experimental in Italy, requires approval from the Italian Minister of Health. Apparently that approval has been received, and he and his doctors now await the final arrival of the treatment medicine. In the meantime, he continues with maintenance doses of chemotherapy.

Look forward to a picture prayer card of Franco and Aurora in the upcoming RCM newsletter.

In thanks to God for your co-labors in this ministry,

Geoffrey W. Donnan, Director

To be added to our mailing list, or to make a donation, please cut and send to:

Reformation Christian Ministries. FOR: ITALY PROJECT (Ministry of Rev. Franco Maggiotto)

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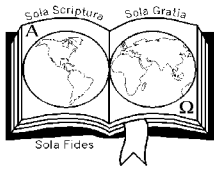
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Reformation Christian Ministries

**Letter from Alpignano, Italy
May 29, 2006**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I ask you to excuse my long period of silence. You have continually been in my heart and prayers, however.

I have spent this time between the hospital, transfusions, chemo, etc., with highs and lows, but all of this has not kept me from the work of the Lord, although it has been different. Our work continues to work to reach the same goal: to have the message of the Gospel reach the minds and hearts of Italians. There is some news that relates to the churches where I preach the Gospel. As you already know, Turin has always been a missionary point, a place for people to investigate and for serious and profound preaching of the Gospel. The fruit of this work has been disseminated throughout Italy, and not only Italy; I also receive letters from France, from the Czech Republic, and others. Many of these believers have found themselves in situations and positions in which the Word of God was announced for the first time. But the Church Council has decided to close this location. My sickness and my absence from the Church for at least nine months has certainly contributed to the fact that many have left, especially those who came most recently. It is also true that we have had new people who have come, especially young university students who are very attentive. We are trying to help them in every way possible with the services that are continuing in Alpignano or in a house in Turin. The greatest difficulty for the Turin church was the high cost for the rent of the space. It was decided therefore to close that location and to continue to meet with the brothers and sisters in Antonio's house.

The church in Finale has made tremendous progress, especially in the knowledge of the Gospel. This growth has brought them to create new opportunities to announce the Gospel, and to be called where no one else has been called to carry the Word of God in a serious, profound and relevant way. Alpignano has also grown. It needs to work harder in evangelization, perhaps, especially since my sickness prohibits me to be involved in this way for the moment. Alpignano has become a point of reference for many. I receive telephone calls and I see things on television that were taboo but now are said in a critical way by people who I have had contact with for some time. Some are speaking about Reformation. Perry, a pastor with whom I collaborate, told me about a recent conversation with a businessman. He explained to him the five points of the Reformation that I wrote and disseminated more than twenty years ago. The man was very satisfied and said to him that he had received more from these fifteen minutes of conversation than from years of conversation about the same old nothing with Italian work colleagues and friends.

Saturday and Sunday I will have an important appointment with a group that I have been helping for years. I have asked you to pray for them in the past. The group has grown and has opened itself to other interesting situations in order to announce the Gospel. I will be meeting with various leaders of different movements. And with this comes the largest and most tiring work of this period of illness: drafting the booklets that I will leave behind. These contain the things I have said and discussed, and through these I maintain deep relations with attendees in various parts of Europe. The work contained in these booklets is very painstaking and serious, and it has the role of showing how the Gospel of Jesus, the Revelation of God, surpasses by far any other thinking. The greatest challenge is to abandon unbiblical concepts that are really pagan and deeply rooted in our culture, ideas that destroy us, in order to draw near to what the Bible tells us. Normally I take about 500 booklets with me, and they are never enough.

Dear brothers and sisters, it seems to me that I have described the situation that I am asking you to pray about and to remember constantly before the Throne of God, so that His will be done in every thing.

Greetings to you and thank you for your prayers and for your faith!

Franco, Aurora, Tabitha and Alberto Maggiotto

THE PRIEST

**“The veil of the Temple was torn in two,
from top to bottom.” (Mark 15:38)**

In Italy, filled with lots of post-election discussion, the announcement of a reform of the Mass, the central moment of worship for Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, has received little comment. Benedict XVI intends to return to the past when the priest, instead of leading while turned facing the church body, turned his back to it. With all respect, this renewed accentuation of the individual and exclusive role of the priest appears to contradict the meaning that the Gospels give to the irruption of the Son of God in history. According to widespread interpretation, the veil of the Temple, which separated the place of the Holy of Holies (accessible only to the High Priest) and which was torn at the moment of the death of Jesus, is the symbol of the direct access to God that believers have obtained with this death. This is also in line with the clear affirmation of the letter to the Hebrews: Christ was the last High Priest; his death reconciled us once and for all with God. And Paul writes to Timothy, there is only one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.

Beyond these and other traditional arguments, which justify the different concept and different practices of the reformed churches, I am caused to consider an episode in the book of Acts. Peter and John have returned to the church body after a trial before the Sanhedrin and make reference to the prohibition to continue to preach, of their refusal, and of the threats that follow. And here it is that the community of faith gathers together spontaneously and in unity in a moment of worship in which four elements are

recognizable: an invocation (“Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them”); a biblical passage (“who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together against the LORD and against His Christ’”); a reflection that presents the text in contemporary terms (“For truly in this city against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate were gathered together, with the Gentiles”); and a prayer (partial citations).

This today is still the essential format of worship as we perceive it in the churches where the Bible is followed. But we have no great need to be filled with pride; the Acts account tells us that after they had prayed “the place where they were gathered shook”. We can also smile on the “special effects” that Luke often adds to describe what was being felt, the emotions, and the feelings of these first Christians. But to “feel the earth shake beneath your feet” is a rather comprehensible experience without turning to the supernatural. It is only that, in our time, it does not seem to be very frequent among us...

We also always have need of some type of reform, one that revitalizes our worship and enables us even more to experience crucial moments of confrontation between the Word and our personal and collective life, moments of prayer, and of the invocation of a Presence that makes the earth under our feet to tremble.

Franco Maggiotto