



February 2012

Hmmm...

One of many lessons learned (read: still being learned...) is the wonderful challenge 'to gospel' life. The more we know and see ourselves, the more we are profoundly grateful to God for His grace, mercy, patience and faithfulness towards us.

We continue to be grateful for your continued interest in us and in our ministry.

In an increasingly twitter-texting styled world, we have decided to be succinct. For those of you, though, who may wish to have a longer, more exhaustive version with more details, you can download it [here](#).

2011

We're still based in the UK (since 2007..). Still lots of commuting, Italy-focused ministry and local involvement. Not an easy year, in many ways, but an opportunity to continue enjoying unlimited grace and dependence on Him! Lots of lessons learned and a growing awareness of the fact that He is sufficient to all things.

- **Big Birthdays:** Rox - 21, Alex - 18, Kristin - 16!
- **Trips:** JD, lots to Italy (at least once a month...), Annette & Kristin to Ukraine to visit family (!)
- **Conferences:** many! Some in Italy, some in the UK, some elsewhere... Some speaking, some 'promotional' for Italian Ministries.
- **Summer in Italy:** a recurring highlight during the past 4 years. Two great camps in Sicily, with encouragement and blessing.
- **Rossana or Rox for friends :**) : challenges but encouraging progress
- **Acts 29 Italia and Porterbrook Italia:** exciting first steps
- **Community:** deepening of meaningful personal relationships
- **JD's M.A.:** Finished!

Family

We are grateful for His faithfulness to us as a family.

Annette's C.F.S/M.E. condition continues to be stable. Generally, after more than 16 years, she is able to pace herself and focus on the doable. She enjoys taking care of the family, local church activities, facebooking and continues to have ongoing meaningful relationships with several young ladies in Italy as well as encouraging relationships over here in England too.

Jonathan has continued to be very busy. The personal highlight has been the completion of his M.A. studies (Pastoral Theology) - a journey (odyssey?) lasting six years. The final dissertation (on 'A BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MENTORING IN THE



CONTEXT OF LEADERSHIP FORMATION WITHIN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN ITALY") was successfully submitted at the end of September!

Alex has now moved into the final year of studies. He will complete 3 A-levels exams by July 2012 and is already looking for an apprenticeship in Graphic Design. He has continued to develop his freelancing business (www.gilmorevisuals.co.uk) and has even appeared in a couple of magazines. During 2011 he was baptized and takes a leading role in the Christian Union ministry at the school he attends. Abi, his girlfriend, is studying nursing at Nottingham so there are frequent weekend trips and lots(!) of calls!

Kristin continues her studies with dedication and success. She will complete her GCSE exams by July and then move into A-levels. The challenges she has faced throughout the year have given her a deeper understanding of God's heart and love. She particularly enjoys meeting with her Italian friends (camps in Sicily, Mission-Net and conferences where she is starting to help out with the children). Just before the summer she was able to do a brief work experience in a local bakery and was subsequently asked to work on Saturdays. She enjoys doing this!

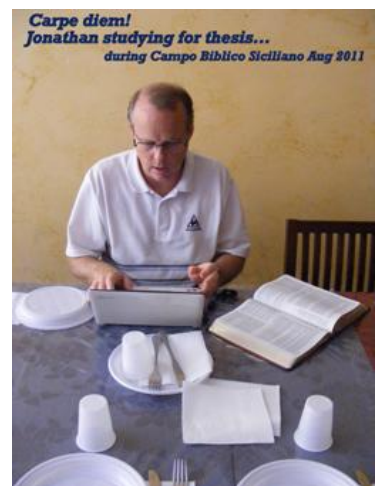
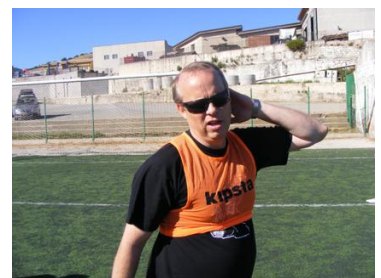
Rox. Here a little more detail needed:

As many of you are aware she attends a Special Needs College about half an hour away (www.craegmoor.co.uk/services-directory/locations/strathmore-college). From September she began a full-time residential experience there. This was a major challenge (away from us, out of her comfort zone and familiar routine...) but God really helped her to settle down quickly. She was based in a house with another learner and staff until Christmas. Some conflicts with the other learner led to her moving into a larger house with a group of 8 other learners. Since the beginning of 2012 she is there and is much happier. Over 2011 there have been some MAJOR encouragements. Rox has been learning living skills (independence, handling relationship conflicts, dealing with change, etc.). Some of the achievements: a challenge and activity week in South Wales doing lots of things she would naturally refuse to do; walking the 15-minute route to the college from her house independently; planning with food preparation for herself, including shopping, money management... Rox has continued to LOVE basketball and now is taking to badminton too. We are truly thankful to all who prayed and who have expressed support and encouragement in different ways. 2012 appears MUCH more challenging than last year. Her time at College ends in July. She will then face the transition into 'adulthood'. We are currently working with a team of professionals and seeking to identify the most appropriate direction she should be taking. The most obvious appears to be supported living - an option by which she would live in accommodation within a supported community and begin employment too. Many details still need to be defined: where will she move to? what will she do in terms of employment? how independent will she be? ... Needless to say we value your continued prayers. Occasionally we send out an update or special request for prayer; should you wish to receive this, then please let us know. Please pray especially for her walk with the Lord as few of the others share the same values as her and she finds herself quite easily influenced by the context around. More prayer items later in this letter...

At a wider level, for those of you who know Jonathan's parents, they have left Sicily and relocated in the north of Italy, closer to Jonathan's sister. This transition has been far from easy and we would value prayers for them and for the coming years.

Ministry

2011 has been a busy year in terms of ministry (surprise?). We have continued to focus our attention (90%) on Italy. Our church here (www.whbc.co.uk) continues to be very supportive and graciously stands



with us in the many trips and general Italy-related ministry.

Locally:

I have been involved in the leadership of a small group in the church (Alsager). Together we have taken steps to embrace a greater missional focus and have run sessions in the local library, open to the public. The encouraging response has prompted us to continue with another series of 'public' events through to Easter. / Through 2011 I was involved at the YMCA and even did a chaplaincy there. The church continues to organize a weekly meeting (TalkShop) with good attendance and interaction. / Towards the end of 2011 we began a Porterbrook Learning (www.porterbrooknetwork.org) group in the church. About a dozen people signed up and we have enjoyed engaging with the challenging, missional material.

In Italy:

Acts 29 Western Europe - During 2011 we finalised the A29 assessment and formalized my role as Acts 29 national coordinator for Italy. This church-planting network reflects many of the values and convictions our own journey has led us to. In thinking through the Italian situation we are increasingly convinced that a new church-planting movement is needed which focuses on essential values, faithfully and relevantly lived out in various appropriate models and forms. This ministry involvement takes on priority status for us. At the beginning of December we organised the first A29 Italia conference. About 70 people attended in what turned out to be a stimulating, encouraging conversation about church-planting in Italy. Response was very good. Several expressed their conviction that this is a direction Italy really needs. We continue to move forward in what is a very exciting project. Lots of details need to fall into place but we are already 'swamped' by positive response which we are trying to attend to. Pray for solid growth as we seek to develop a long-term vision (impacting a generation with a church-planting DNA and actually doing it!). More information to follow!

Porterbrook Italia - during 2011 we finalized agreements with *Porterbrook Learning* to see the full course (24 modules done in 24 months) to be contextualized and translated in Italian. This biblical, contemporary, missional, church-planting programme, we believe, is of strategic importance for Italy. I am coordinating this project with the assistance of several others. In February 2012, Tim Chester will launch the first Porterbrook Italia residential. Some funding has been secured to cover the costs of part of the adaptation/translation work, but we are still asking God to touch hearts and allow us to raise the remaining funds needed (further information about this is available...). The Italian course will be launched under the more relevant name: *Percorsi*.

Italian Ministries - The national missional network continues to move forward (in our 17th year now!). During 2011 we were encouraged to welcome new associates (we now have over 110!), be able to meet together for an encouraging time in the National Conference (in June with Keith Walker from SIM UK), make some headway in the critical area of fiscal/administrative status for missionaries (which took up a lot of our time), consolidate IM International (in the US we have a new Board, in the UK the Board is being strengthened and new opportunities are taking shape, in Germany we still need to consolidate the way forward...).

Early on in 2011 a very encouraging 9.37 (www.nove37.com) conference took place with almost 200 young people present!

Just a little more detail about the fiscal/ administrative issue. We explored the possibility of part-time employing (together with the UCBC) a young Italian Christian professional financial consultant to steer us forward (as a group and individually) in the most appropriate direction to ensure that in terms of taxation and fiscal status, we are operating in a God-glorifying way. Italian legislation requires us to 'come in line' with 'the system' and it is increasingly urgent to ensure that this occurs. Employing Antonio means no small expenditure. We have taken a step of faith and this will begin on March 1. Later during the year we will be



communicating more about this development as we seek to raise funds to cover these costs. Please pray for this whole, sensitive area. UCBC - I continue to be involved with the ongoing development and consolidation of the UCBC network. During March I was able to participate in the Ministry Conference and give several reports/sessions on Cape Town 2010.

Looking ahead

When we relocated to the UK in 2007, we did so for a period estimated to be between 2-5 years. God willing, we should return to Italy later this year. This is a step of faith as many important details have still to fall into place. Whilst in little doubt as to the ministry focus we will be taking on (continuing!), there are still major issues regarding the location we will be basing ourselves in (there are currently over 20 viable options!). Our financial situation also continues to be precarious, so we value your prayers. We also are committed to be part of a church-planting church or team. Right now we are taking several months to pray and discuss what some of these directions might be. We appreciate those who are standing with us in this process and who are giving valuable input. As things become clearer (WHERE and WITH WHOM), we will update you. Pray especially for the implications of our move on Rox's future as she moves, God willing, into supported living here in the UK, and on Alex, who will be 'homeless'(!). Kristin intends to return to Italy with us and complete her studies by distance learning. There are many variables and many unclear elements, but we rest in His care.

Pray

- **Rox's** future steps (beyond July)
 - Apprenticeship (Graphic Design) for **Alex** (beyond July)
 - For details relating to our **move back to Italy** later this year (especially our finances)
 - **Percorsi** (Porterbrook Italia) and **Acts 29 Italia** coordination: for wisdom and His glory to be manifested!
 - **Italian Ministries**: especially for ongoing details regarding fiscal/administrative status for missionaries in Italy
 - For ongoing **trips** to Italy during the first half of 2012.
- February 8-11: Launch of *Percorsi*
- March 1-3: UCBC National Ministry Conference
 - April: Evangelistic youth camp, Sicily
 - November 1-4: Missione 2012, near Rimini (with Patrick Johnstone)

Yes...

We are grateful to God for all the generosity demonstrated by all those who prayerfully and financially support us. Your partnership with us is a strategic part of our service in His kingdom. Please continue to pray as this is a very crucial year. **For those in the UK: we are still very glad for any opportunities to share about the ministry He has called us to; should you be aware of any, please let us know!** Thank you for having taken the time to consider our news. Sempre avanti!

Jaakko & Annette

