



December 1, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Stetson asks me to write a prayer letter once a year, so I would like to use this opportunity to share about our son Isaiah and a need he has regarding his university.

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15)

There has been evidence how the Lord has been directing Isaiah's life from a very early age. By the time he was 1 year old, he had already said an astonishing 150 words. At playdates, other mothers always expressed their surprise at the extensive vocabulary of this now 3-year-old. The Lord directed me to teach him to read early and also to memorize verses. Isaiah was 4 years old when Stetson was carrying him into church and he sounded out 'Fleming Auditorium' all by himself. He was almost 5 years old when he stood in front of the large congregation of our home church and recited over 35 Bible memory verses. The Lord has graciously blessed Isaiah's ability with languages.

It is impossible to share the sacrifices that missionary kids make to follow their parents to the mission field. Isaiah left all he knew in the States, with all its security and comfort, for a foreign land when he was nine years old. You might imagine the sadness and anxiety at a young child's core in spite of the superficial excitement of the 'adventure'. I had homeschooled Isaiah to that point but after much prayer we decided to enroll him in Italian public school. I could spend quite some time discussing that first day of school when he was engulfed and carried in amongst the hoard of little Romans; not knowing the language or culture. When he finally was getting settled with the Italian language and developing friendships, the Lord directed us five hours north to the city of Verona. Through his consistent good character, integrity, kindness, and positive out-look he displayed through his middle school and high school years, he has been a powerful witness in our ministry and has been instrumental in helping to direct people to the saving knowledge of Christ.



Isaiah homeschooling in car on deputation

'Isaiah', Hebrew meaning: Salvation of the Lord

Isaiah, no longer a 'missionary kid', is a young man actively invested in seeing souls saved and this ministry to Verona to grow. He is a missionary in his own right. When he shared with us that he felt the Lord directing him into linguistics, we could easily see the Lord's hand in Isaiah's life since the beginning. He has an expansive vocabulary and is a prolific reader. In high school, he won a writing competition in Italian against other schools in our region of Italy. Not only is Isaiah bi-lingual at a high level but he has also studied French, Spanish, German and Latin...and enjoys it. In addition, he has a deep love for the Lord and his Word and a desire to see souls saved.

This autumn Isaiah was accepted and began at the prominent University of Verona after scoring much higher than the average Italian on their entrance exam into the Linguistics & Literature bachelor's degree program. He has been enjoying his classes, particularly translating and phonetics. After graduating with his bachelor's, he will have a

collegiately high understanding not only of Italian but also French and another language of his choosing. He has been praying for the Lord's direction in regards to how to use this linguistic training.



Isaiah before church in Verona

At 5am most mornings before class, Isaiah sets his alarm and goes and passes out tracts. Of his own accord, he has begun translating into Italian a much needed 'Book of Promises' for new Christians. He spends extra time developing relationships and is essentially Stetson's assistant by helping anyway he can. He has a huge heart for reaching Italians with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah is a very hard-working young man and would love to work a job and earn money to pay for his university costs but a stipulation of our Religious Worker Visa is that we are not permitted to hold a job in the country. It would be nearly impossible for him to obtain a different sort of visa due to the miniscule amount available to Americans and the high level of bureaucracy. It would not be advisable to give up a tenured Religious Worker Visa in good standing for someone interested in continuing sharing the gospel in Italy. We've also heard of two accounts this year of denial of Religious Worker Visas and have suspicions that it may become increasingly more difficult for new missionaries to enter Italy.

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Romans 10:15)

I'm asking you to prayerfully consider helping Isaiah Planck as a mission project for his university expenses as he continues working in the ministry of Verona and reaching Italians for Christ:

- *He is a second generation missionary
- *He has a high level of fluency & knows the culture
- *He knows the city and the people
- *He is active in every ministry of our church
- *He is already using his gift of linguistics in translating
- *He loves the Lord, His Word and desires to serve Him

Unlike everything else in Italy, university costs are relatively lower than that of the U.S. The total cost PER YEAR for his bachelor's degree in Linguistics & Literature is \$4,000. That includes tuition, books, fees, city bus travel, accounting for exchange rate, etc.

Would you consider helping this young man as a mission project or a one-time love offering? It's a wonderful opportunity to partner with a young man who has been instrumental in the ministry in Verona, made many sacrifices and is already actively working and is an integral part of this work.

If you desire to support Isaiah in some way, please send it to our mission agency Mount Abarim Baptist Mission with the note "FOR ISAIAH" and they will deposit it directly into his account.

Love in Christ,
Sandy

P.S. Please do not post this prayer letter on-line. Thank you!



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