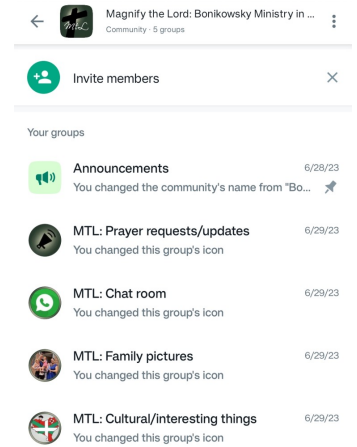


January 2024 Many First Experiences

Hello friends, as always thank you so much for your prayers. Once again I apologize for such a long gap between this and my last post. I plan to be more regular with updates from now on. I'm also transitioning more and more to Whatsapp for regular communication with those who follow the ministry. For those of you who want a closer look at what the Lord is doing, I'd love to see you in one of our Whatsapp groups. You can join the ministry updates group here (bit.ly/whatsapp-bonikowsky-updates), or some of the other groups here (bit.ly/whatsapp-bonikowsky).

I send short-form updates and pictures on the messaging app WhatsApp. Hope to see you there!



A lot has happened since our last email update. There were a couple of first experiences for me. I officiated the funeral of an elderly lady from church (which resulted in around 30 unsaved family members visiting church for the following Sunday morning memorial service). I also officiated a wedding ceremony for a couple from our church. I began scheduling regular office hours at our church building three days a week. And while this allows me to get more work done during the hours the kids are awake at home, the main benefit is simply having the church doors open so that the neighborhood sees daily movement and extra activity in church. Unlike church buildings in most of America, our church is in a fully residential neighborhood. I try to take every opportunity I can to interact with church neighbors.



Our highest-attended church service to date for a memorial service.

Speaking of neighbors, in the days before Christmas, Sofia and I went door-to-door through all the apartment buildings near church, and we handed out cookies, calendars, and invitations to our Christmas cantata. Thankfully our neighbors are, for the most part, friendly towards our church. This is sadly an exception to the rule, as it is fairly normal for evangelical/non-catholic churches in our culture to be somewhat odious in their communities, for the simple reason that their music style could be described as clamorous. On Sunday mornings with just thin walls between them and sleepy neighbors, many nasty things get said about these churches. In our case, we have thick soundproofing in place, and more importantly, our music style is, I believe, appropriately joyful and respectful to our community.

Sofia and I going door-to-door, handing out cookies, calendars, and invitations to our church neighbors.



The biggest recent change, on a family level, is that our oldest, 3-year-old Leire, is now going to school. Raquel and I have spent a lot of time in prayer and thought about how to approach the education of our children, and we've decided to start by sending them to a private Catholic school in our city. One thing that many don't know about Spain is that, despite its very strong Roman Catholic

history, the nation as a whole is extremely secular. In our region especially, it is very difficult to find anyone who actually practices the faith in any significant way. Catholicism is almost entirely a cultural backdrop, not something that influences people's thoughts or actions. That being said, the Catholic church still exists, and this school is run by devout Catholics. This means two significant things to us. Firstly, the school takes a strong stand against modern ethical trends like the deconstruction of gender identities, issues like extramarital sex and abortion, and dangers in modern child psychology. Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, it brings us as parents into contact with other parents who share some of our concerns and values. The school is small enough that we parents form a social group that will bring many opportunities to share the Gospel. Through birthday parties and school events, we are now getting many chances to have conversations about important spiritual topics.

Leire racing in a school activity. After the races, we had lunch with the other parents from her class.



Remember you can always join our email list for a lot more photos, details, and prayer requests. Thank you all for your prayers, as always. God bless!

David

Psalm 34:3



Combined church fellowship activity with a new Baptist church plant in Hondarribia



Teaching at the Missionary Teen Retreat at the Aierdi farmhouse



Raquel and her father this Christmas in Gandia



Me with 3 church members at a regional Bible study (Intensive Institute)