

THE YETZER FAMILY

Missionaries to the People of Italy



September 2016

Grace to Our Brothers and Sisters Through Christ,

The Happiest Place on Earth

We have had a busy last couple months, which is the cause of the delay for this prayer letter. In July we celebrated our 10-year anniversary of being married. The Lord provided for us to take a short vacation to Paris. While there we took one day and went to “The Happiest Place on Earth.” I disagree with the logo, as I have many places on my list happier than the land of make-believe; however, we did have an enjoyable time. Then we stopped by Genève, Switzerland (the home of the Italian Bible translator, Giovanni Diodati), where we stayed for a day before arriving back home.

While home is one of the top places on my list of happier than “Never-Never Land,” Milan is not necessarily one of them. However, it was ranked in 2015 as the second-best place to live in Italy, and in 2016 it was ranked first in Italy for quality of living. These numbers may be somewhat misleading, as they only include Italy. For instance, the Mercer Quality of Living Survey, which showed Milan first in Italy, had Milan twenty-first in Europe and forty-first in the world. Milan provides its citizens with a lot of entertainment and a decent living situation. The Italian word for “amusement” is *divertimento*, which is made from two words: *diverti* meaning “divert” and *mento* meaning “mind.” So Milan provides many ways for its inhabitants to divert their minds. Divert them from what, though? From reality, from life, from death, from God? In meditating on the spiritual climate of different places, it can be recognized that generally the poorer the people are, the more open they are to God. Countries with lower life expectancies seem to be more spiritual. People who pride themselves on the sciences lack faith. Milan is a city where people do not think of God very often, which can manifest into complications for the general population and for us as we preach to the lost.

As far as I can tell, Italy has never had a true revival, not in any city or any time in history, and yet it seems as if God is trying to get their attention. Recently another missionary invited me to travel with him to two cities in central Italy. We headed out before 4 a.m. to get down to L’Aquila, where at 3:32 a.m. on April 6, 2009, an earthquake killed 308 people. This town of over 70,000 people was still a disaster 7 years after the earthquake. We counted about 40 cranes in the downtown area alone. Almost every building had scaffolding and some sort of brace holding it together. There were still collapsed buildings, which had not been cleaned up yet, and memorials for those who had died hanging on fences outside of those buildings. We went through the town



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and passed out John & Romans, mostly to the hundreds of construction workers, including many Eastern Europeans.

After spending a couple hours there, we went up north into the hills to a small town called Amatrice. This is a town of about 2,000 inhabitants, where on August 24 of this year at 3:36 a.m. an earthquake struck. About 295 people were killed. Again this was a very somber experience. Over 4,000 workers from all branches of public service had come to help those affected. Seemingly every building had some damage, and some places were completely blocked off to travel. Camps were set up for the displaced, and roads were being built to help the locals with transportation problems. With the limited time we had and the confusion about where camps for the locals were located, we received permission to enter a small camp inside a downtown park. Just a few people were in this camp. While they were not necessarily open to talking, they kindly took John & Romans. This was a valuable experience and taught us some important lessons on how to be more effective next time. No photo can impart the compassion you receive from being there in person and looking into the eyes of those lost people. Not everything on this earth is sunshine and fairy tales, but we want to encourage people that they can have a "happily ever after" ending.

Back in Milan we have had more joyful experiences, as we held our first wedding for two of our members who were married. We do not have official permission in Italy to perform a legal marriage, but we still held a ceremony for the couple to make their vows to God and in front of their Christian family. We have also been blessed to see a couple Africans trust Christ and are preparing for baptisms.

Our family is doing well. William is nine and enjoying fourth grade. Ann Marie is five and enjoying her first year of school. We also are excited to announce that we are expecting our third child, which is due February 27. Please pray for Amy and the baby's development.

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Christopher, Amy, William, & AnnMarie Yetzer

Handwritten signature of Christopher Yetzer.



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