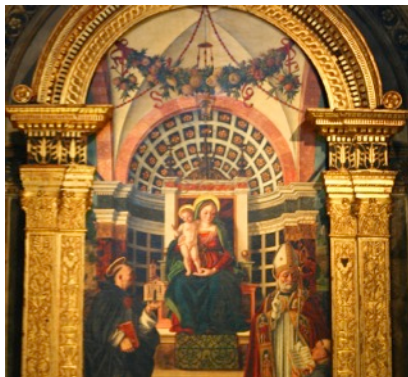


March 2015

A LIGHT IN ITALY'S DARKNESS



Italy IS a beautiful country – home to some of the world’s greatest Christian art, and architecture, home to vineyards and orchards and a countryside that encompasses the Alps, lush valleys and nearly endless coastline.

Yet there is a spiritual darkness to Italy, especially among youth. More than 95% of college students are atheists. And the few religious ones grace the entrance to a church *about twice a year*. Most have never met a Christian university student or professor.

Professors and Students Bring Jesus



This Spring Break, Sarah and I were in Bologna, Italy with Christian students from TCU and a jazz professor from the Univ. of North Texas (*see following page*). The objective: introduce Italian college students to their American peers, who in turn share about their lives and faith.

Other Faculty Commons staff took professors to university towns in Costa Rica and Dominican Republic. Professors’ presence often opens up opportunities for ministry that are closed to traditional missionaries, and helps students see that Christianity isn’t incompatible with intellectual development.

Cristina: Sharing What She Has Found



These short term missions contribute to the work of the longer term missionaries, like Cristina (*left*). She is a graduate of UTexas-Pan Am along the border with Mexico.

Cristina became a Christian after her senior year of college. She had become friends with Christians at on her campus and had even attended Christian meetings for many months -- but didn’t receive Christ until after she graduated. She taught high school the past three years in south Texas, but came to Italy fulltime last fall to help introduce others to the Jesus that has so changed her life.



And The Band Played On

"Fred Hamilton helped open doors with many students we have relationships with, and opened doors with many new students we had never met before."

Jesse Marcos, Director- Italy Campus Ministry



Fred and Lareen Hamilton (*left*) spent their spring break with us ministering to students. A professor of jazz guitar, Fred gave a concert in a crowded club that attracted one of the biggest number of students -- more than 150 -- that the Italian campus ministry has ever attempted. The Christian students invited their non-Christian friends to hear a professor, and the evening led to many discussions about life and faith.

Some things *didn't* work out as planned. We had hoped to meet with faculty from their music school so Fred could present a workshop. His attempts to reach out months ago went unanswered. Despite these disappointments, the trip opened many doors.

Jesse Marcos (*left*) who lives in Bologna and directs all of Italy's campus ministry, concluded about our visit:



"University students in Italy believe that if you are educated, there is no possible way you could believe in God.

"Having them meet university professors who believe in God has challenged this long standing belief system. When Christian professors like Fred come, they help us build credibility with students and other professors within the university."

We are *so thankful* for what you do! You make it possible for us to work with university professors on America's campuses as they each influence hundreds of students each semester. And you have made it possible for us to take that light of Christ now to students across the pond who are meeting Christians for the first time -- and discovering that they, too can have a relationship with Him.

Thank you,

Steve & Sarah