



**The Girards**

# ITALY

## Preaching the Good News Of Jesus Christ

Dear Family and Friends,

August 2014

We have some great things to share what God did this month in the hearts of women on the streets. We were joined by two short-term missionaries, Jennie Huyett (a WOC intern) and Amanda Gage (missionary to Ukraine). They were a great blessing to us, and we could not have pulled off so many nights out without them. Your donations towards this ministry gave us the opportunity to get more material for these girls, as well as gifts. We are also able to make some of the first purchases to start the cosmetics business to hire some girls.

### Ministering to Local Prostitutes

There is a darkness that lurks in the streets that's hard to describe. Trying to speak with prostitutes is not always easy. Young men, old men, and *very* old men are out "shopping" for a woman, asking prices and checking out bodies. They pull up, look a woman up and down, and if they don't like what they see, they drive off. Police sometimes swarm the streets waiting to ticket the solicitors, and many of the women are on high alert because either their pimp is around or bad men are coming and watching, or they are trying to impress a potential client. There are always intense feelings of compassion, sadness, power and love flowing through us all at the same time. Jesus is there speaking, but so are the demons. But we have authority over their voices in Jesus' name, so they can have a chance to hear the Gospel! Here are some of the stories of the girls we met. I will start with some of the two greatest testimonies of how God moves in the streets in Arezzo. These are not all the stories, just half of them and not all the details.

One night, God spoke to Jennie and me that there was one specific girl He wanted us to talk to. We drove around and prayed until the Holy Spirit showed us clearly where to stop and who to talk with. Her name is **Mikela**. She is broken, poor and forgotten. She is in her late 40's and was an awkward and rough looking lady but precious heart. As soon as she saw us coming smiling and loving her, she was immediately drawn to us. She opened up quickly about her life. She melted down right there weeping, saying how she never wanted to be a prostitute. She left her husband who used to beat her and her two boys pretty bad. A woman approached her and said she could work for the elderly in Italy. So, she left her boys in an orphanage and set off to work here. When she arrived, the woman robbed her of everything and left her in the streets. She said to us "Believe me, I would never be a prostitute, I had no idea about this, she tricked me. I can only make 100 Euro per month as a prostitute which is not enough to even support my children." Mikela hates her life. She said "This is not a job. It's disgusting". Just a few months before, she was in the hospital because a bad man tried to run over her. Another Romanian woman had compassion on her and offered her to live with her for free. Worse yet, she misses her boys dreadfully. She believes that 100 Euro a month for her boys is better than nothing at all. It pays for their stay in the orphanage and their schooling. I gave her my phone number to meet and talk more about her life and help her in any way we can. She called me the very next morning. We will meet with her soon, praise Jesus! She was hungry to know more about the gospel and does not know the God we preach.

### They are not just prostitutes - they have a name and God knows it!

Some months ago I met **Tanya**. She was hesitant the first time I met her and would not let us pray for her while she knew she was sinning by prostituting. But you could see clearly in her eyes she was interested at the same time, not rejecting Jesus just confused about who He is. She asked for a Bible, and we got her one. Last week when I saw her

again after many months, she asked me a question. "My friend told me not to read the Bible you gave me or to watch the Christian movie you gave me. She said if they are not blessed by the Orthodox priest then they will bring curses on me. I would like to read them. Is this true?". I said to her. "Your friend is wrong about this. But the real enemy here is not your friend, it is Satan. He will do anything he can to keep you from Jesus." She shivered and said "What you said is powerful and true, you give me goose bumps. I will read the Bible again."

**Angela** is in her 50's and from Nigeria. She had never been approached by a women before and was suspicious of us. After giving her a rose ring and breaking the ice talking about where we are from, she opened up with us. I asked her how she felt about having such a dangerous job. She said, "You see all these marks and scares I have (she began to show us), they are from being beaten up by men in this job". She has four children, only one lives with her here in Italy. She had never owned a Bible and took a women's devotional Bible and was happy about it. Her eyes shown after we talked about God's unconditional love for her and how He wants to have her heart as His own. We went back and visited her again, she was happy to see us with a big smile. She has my number and said she would like to call sometime before she works and we can talk.

**Monica**, a girl I have talked with before. She is in her early twenties and has two small children. She did not know the work that was offered to her was prostitution when she first came to Italy. We had met her on her second night of prostituting in May and she was terrified. She told us she had to get a pimp now because she was beaten up really bad twice but got away. Now with a pimp it will be hard for her to leave prostitution and she loses half of her earnings. We went to see her many nights to pray for her and check on how she was doing. We prepared a box full of nice used clothes from my daughters to give to her daughter, she was very happy about that and could not believe that we would give something so nice. On the third visit with her she didn't want to look at me. I asked her what was wrong. I said please, tell me, I care about you. Then she softened up and admitted the prostitute that she lives with, **Andrea**, told her not to speak with us because we brought her bad luck (**Andrea** did not have any clients after we prayed for her!) **Monica** said she likes to talk with us but told us not to go see **Andrea** anymore, because she doesn't want to hear about God or have us as friends.

**Denise** had such a tender heart. Immediately when we told her she was precious and her life counted, she began to tear. I told her that I know she turned to this work because she loves her children, but that its hurting her and there is hope for her to get out and have a future for herself and her children with God's help. She was very emotional and admitted she did not know God was such a caring Father, who was watching over her and not standing over her to judge her and strike her dead. We saw her a few times and prayed for her; each time she was emotional. She took some of our Christian material and thanked us for our kindness.

### **All these ladies share the same story - Yet each one of them is unique**

Another **Monica** and **Andra** both admitted they had never read a Bible before though they were "Orthodox". Monica was an orphan now, her father died when she was small and her mother a few years ago. She did not tell me directly but I could see that she did not know that she was going to be a prostitute when she came to Italy - she also wants out. They were both very touched by our stories and about the words of hope we offered to them.

**Cristiana** was just gorgeous. She began to have tears in her eyes immediately when we talked about Jesus. You could see she hungered to know more, but there is a spiritual battle for her life. She looked at me straight in the face and was listening so carefully to our words, not caring about the world around her, only about our words.

**Aurelia** talked to us for about one hour. She refused clients because she wanted to talk with us. She said, something in our eyes made her trust us. She confessed "since I am in this work I don't cry anymore. I hate the person it has made me become. I used to cry when I felt like crying. Now I cannot. I want to leave this work and I decided in August I will leave. I am only 21 and I have my whole life ahead of me. Being a prostitute is just not worth it." We encouraged her in that direction and spoke words of love to her to restore her soul and encourage her to speak with Jesus about why she cannot cry any more. She has a boyfriend, who does not mind that she works on the streets. She gives him money and it is not likely he will be happy about her leaving prostitution. Probably he has moved

**\*\*If you wish to support us, please send in your tax-deductible donations to World Outreach Center, PO Box 3478. Fort Mill, SC 29708. Please write your checks out to WOC and write "Girards" in the memo to support the family, or "Zoe Center" to support the ministry in Italy. To donate online, go to [www.worldoutreachcommunity.org](http://www.worldoutreachcommunity.org), access our page under Missionaries and then click on Donate. Our new blog site is: [zoecenter.wordpress.com](http://zoecenter.wordpress.com)**

himself in the position of her pimp, it will be hard for her to leave because she speaks many languages and can be useful to a pimp. She first worked in a brothel in Germany and throughout all the cities of Italy. She told us terrible stories of things she has seen and experienced in prostitution in Italy. She talked of a pimp in Florence with 40 girls under him. The man is also head of a mafia and is so fierce even the police are afraid of him and leave him be.

**Larissa** was also very interested in knowing more about Jesus, she was there with **Alina** who was on drugs. I met **Alina** at Christmas, but she was sober then, she was new at the job. She said she likes the DVD we gave her at Christmas, and even though she was drugged, she remembered me right away. But we were then rushed off for a client to come and pick them up.

**Pamela** from Ghana says she is a Christian for many years. She was smuggled into Italy and owes her trafficker 40,000 Euro, then she will be released. This means sleeping with roughly 1,000 men still before she is free! We gave her a Christian worship CD. When we met her again, she had listened to it and she really liked it.

**Monica #3** was offered a job in a night club in Germany. She said her pimp was sending her there sometime soon, but she didn't know when. She did not know the city or anything about the night club. She only speaks Romanian and some Italian. No English or German! I told her she should be very careful when she goes to Germany because women are bought and sold there for the sex industry. Her body language changed, and she was very shocked at what we told her and her friend, she was in disbelief. Some of these girls are so naive about what really happens in the human trafficking industry when they first start. Italy is a starting place for many of these girls because it's easy to get them in the country and because of corruption, they can work almost anywhere after they learn Italian. (Italian sex tourists are one of the top five!)

**Simona** called me today. I took her two gifts for her son who is 8. She is going to see him and bring him back to Italy with her. I told her this is better for him. I told her I'm a mother and I know, it's very important for you to be together. She doesn't see his father anymore, and he isn't involved in her son's life. She said she would put him in my English class this September! This is good news and can start a real friendship with a woman in great need of a friend who cares for her and not just taking from her.

There are so many more stories we could share but it would make this newsletter too long. If it were not for your help, we could not do this. Your prayers are so important and your donations keep this ministry going!

Sunday, Nicolas and I leave on a much needed vacation. It has not been an easy year, and it has been many years since we vacationed as a family. We will spend time in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, staying with family and friends. In Germany, we will be meeting with a movement called the Justice Project to begin planning for the future of the Zoe Center in its efforts fighting human trafficking locally.

Again, we couldn't do it without your help. Thanks for all your donations, prayers, and encouraging notes. You are the best!

Ciao for now!

*Nicolas, Leía, Eva, Elise, Sophie, and Isaiah*

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