

Summer Evangelistic Tour – Sicily 2015

God for sure Is Faithful and we are thankful to have friends like you that pray for us, because prayer is effectual.

Currently I am in the States with my family during a time of grief. Pennie's dad went with the Lord on July 23. He was a very influential man and a to-do-man, especially in missions. In the late 70's he took his family on vacation - to Haiti to help missionaries there build a house and church, the rest is history. My wife is proof of it, serving ever since, and with me today.

We do have a Father that makes miracles, after almost a month of ministering all over Sicily with splatexperience with Marc Eckel I flew back here for the funeral. I had literally only a few hours to set up the last week of splat in Sicily. Thanks to the Dye family, the chaplains on base, Sean Hancock, a die-hard Ohio State fan, it all came together.

My kids in Michigan and California had their dad ready to fly out of Catania, hotel reserved by the Rome airport and a stand by ticket to fly directly to Detroit, in a matter of hours. Thank you Lord. The Lord allowed me to be with my wife and my kids and family, for a fitting goodbye to a father-in-law that was loved and remembered by many, here and all over the world.

As you can see from the following report and all the pictures, we were busy about His Business, the sharing of His Word. New brothers and sisters were added to the Kingdom, because you prayed and gave, and the Lord blessed the biggest month for Splat. Again thank you, and keep on praying, the work continues. I am here in Michigan for the month of August, helping in the house, spending time with the family and resting a little. God bless you and enjoy Marc's report below. Giuseppe and Pennie Collesano, Serving together. By the way, Lets go fishing (for souls) really.

By Marc Eckel

Once again the Lord opened the door for me to travel to Sicily, where I would join forces with missionary **Giuseppe Collesano**, to share the gospel. I refer to Giuseppe as "G." My name is **Marc Eckel**, and I am a performance artist with **Splat Experience**. Our purpose for being in ministry is to lead the church in worship and to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the lost. Our adventures in Sicily focused strongly on our evangelistic calling – to proclaim the gospel.



I trust this report will be an encouragement to you. God is at work in this difficult mission field. In 2014 our evangelistic tour saw us perform 16 times in churches and on street corners. This year we decided to expand our reach praying for up to 20 events in 30 days where we would encourage the church in worship and share the good news of Jesus Christ!

After arriving in Catania, I had the opportunity to speak at an evening Bible study at the Naval Air Station, Sigonella. I talked about the Bible and it's authority through a presentation titled *The Word is Alive*. I also shared our video presentation of our newest performance piece, *The Blood*.

On Tuesday we pulled into Casa Di Ospitalita' Per Anziani, a facility where refugees from Africa are housed in San Cataldo. We were told that the great majority of the men there were Muslim. The painting presentation *Above All* was presented, and then G shared the gospel. One Muslim man, named Khafi, interrupted him by shouting, "How do you know Jesus was the Son of God?"

Without hesitation G spoke to this man with scripture declaring Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Afterward we had opportunity to talk to many one-on-one. Sean Hancock joined us and shared his testimony boldly with many. G gave several men new shoes



and shared the love of Jesus with them. We had opportunity to share more with Khafi, and before we left he asked us for a Bible. Continue to pray that these men would accept the truth of the gospel.

At 4:30 in the morning we left for the street market in Ramacca. G is a regular presence in there, where he helps some of the believers set up their goods, and hands out Christian materials including Bibles, pamphlets, children's materials, tracts, etc. And then on Friday we traveled to G's hometown of Castelbuono, one of my favorite little towns in all of Sicily. We visited with G's mother in a nursing home, and spent lunch with Susanna and Dominic (G's friend who led him to the Lord, featured in *The Man in the Black Cape*, a short book that we wrote during the 2014 tour).



We drove to the west coast, arriving in Castelvetrano in time to be part of a Saturday night study at the compound with Tommaso and Barbara Pipitone. I was given another chance to speak again presenting *The Word is Alive*. G translated into Italian. We set up our wall at the Oasis of Grace Church in Castelvetrano. This church ministers to African refugees. After painting *No Greater Love* they had me add an outline of Africa with the words: Jesus loves Africa. One of the pastors gave a sermon on abiding in Christ.

Thursday morning, we started our day by gathering boxes of groceries from G's house, before heading off to the grocery store. Learning of a need, G decided it was time to feed a fellow brother. I loved what he said: **“When your brother needs food, why are you praying? Go shopping!”**



Rafael Hasenfratz, a local believer and social worker, and his family were overwhelmed by our generosity as they received much food with thankfulness.

Our next event took place in an apartment complex in Catania. We partnered with a local pastor and some musicians for this open-air meeting where everyone in this dangerous community was welcome. I presented *Above All*, and then G preached the gospel. A young boy named DeLuca accepted Christ as his savior!

After a day off, we headed to Rometta where we partnered with Chiesa Biblica Christiana for an event in a local courtyard. We were joined by Tim and Amy Croeker and their family, and others. A young man from the church also shared in song before I presented *No Greater Love*. Afterward, G played and sang before sharing the gospel.



After a few slow days, which included a Bible study at the base with G, we headed into Marinai for an event with Club Beyond, a youth outreach ministry to families living at the naval base, and it was very hot (around 100 degrees) as we set up on a soccer field with Mike and Lindsay King. I presented *Truth*, the first time this *Casting Crowns* presentation was ever offered outside of North America, and then shared with the kids



presenting the gospel.

We held an evening outreach event on the waterfront boardwalk on the Mediterranean Sea in Milazzo. Working with Chiesa Biblica Cristiana, the presentations *No Greater Love* and *The Sacrifice* were presented as locals gathered and walked by. We estimated that over 1,000 people saw the paintings and



heard the gospel message. Thanks to Simone and Stephanie Palmieri for their help with these events.

On Saturday, July 18th, we headed over to Siracusa for two events in a public downtown city square. We presented *Above All* and *The Sacrifice*, and shared the gospel to a crowd well over 1,000, by far our largest audience to date on this trip. The following evening, we headed back to Siracusa where G and I were given the opportunity to speak in an evening service at a Pentecostal Community Church. I presented a new talk titled *Good News, Bad News, and Good News*, sharing the gospel and encouraging the church to do likewise. Then we headed back into the downtown city square to present *Truth* and preach the gospel.



Next, we set up the wall at New Hope Christian Center, located right outside the Naval Base where I performed and shared *Our Story* to encourage the church. We drove back into Marinai for our second Club Beyond event with Mike King. After performing our presentation, *The Sacrifice*, I shared a short devotional with the kids called

Ice Cream, Cash, and Computers. It was another hot day, over 100 degrees.

After being invited to perform in the main square in Nicosia in 2014, we ventured back to this square again this year. Due to the passing of Pennie's father, Giuseppe headed back to the states for the funeral. Richard Dye and Sean Hancock filled in, though we missed G very much. This whole tour resulted from his passion for the lost in this country. We held two events here, as Richard preached the gospel and Kasha stepped up to translate. After this event Richard sent Giuseppe the following text: "*The Gospel has gone forth. A boy turned to me in awe and shock when Marc hit the canvas with the splat of red paint. He asked, 'Why?' I said watch as Christ bled for you. His eyes filled with tears as he watched the rest of the painting. Maybe this was a defining moment for him.*"



Under the leadership of Walter Hasenfratz, and the team from Nicosia, we headed off to Troina for two more events. We presented *Truth* and *Above All* to a crowd of onlookers who filled the narrow street. I shared the gospel message after each presentation as Kasha translated. After the two events, the paintings were carried down the

street and placed in a government facility, as the paintings were given to the city upon the mayor's request.

We started out Sunday morning in Nicosia as I spoke for the morning message at Chiesa Cristiana Evangelica, sharing *The Word is Alive* to approximately 25 people. That afternoon, we drove to Sperlinga where we set up across the street from the castle in an open courtyard. We presented *No Greater Love* before Sean Hancock preached the gospel from John chapter four, speaking about Jesus offering Living Water. We also presented *The Sacrifice*, and I was honored to present the



gospel to the gathered crowd. We were told there were approximately 500 people who lived in this small city. About 150 showed up for our events.



On Monday, we headed out for our last event of the tour. Richard Dye, along with his son, Micah, and

daughter, Gwenna, joined us. We presented *The Sacrifice* and Richard shared the gospel message. Kasha's sister, Anna, was visiting from Poland and was somewhat reluctant to attend our event at first. We were glad she came. Kasha said it was the first time her sister heard the gospel as we prayed for her salvation.

When we finished our final performance in Geraci, and were ready to head back to our base in Catania, I introduced Richard Dye to Dominic Schicchi, who had come to visit us with his wife, Susanna, from Castelbuono. I told him, "This is the man who led Giuseppe to Christ!" Richard looked at Dominic with gratefulness and said, "You are very important!" Dominic's response summed up our whole tour. He smiled, and said, "Very important – Jesus Christ!"



During the 30 days of this Sicily Tour, Splat Experience performed 19 times in 12 cities. We traveled over an estimated 3,500 miles sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's farther than the distance between Bangor, Maine, and Seattle, Washington. *That's a lot of fuel!* Aside from the traveling, the performing, and everything that goes along with an endeavor like this, I once again had an inside look at the life of a devoted missionary. Here are just a few of the activities that filled Giuseppe's schedule:



Two weekly Bible studies, cooking for soldiers several times a week, cooking all our meals when we were at home, a great deal of translation work, witnessing to Muslims, buying and delivering groceries for others, picking up and delivering clothes for refugees, distributing Bibles and Christian literature in the street market, washing someone's car, rebinding a soldier's Bible (after going out and buying the leather and materials), working with a mechanic to fix someone's car, buying and giving shoes to refugees, handing out tracts to every toll booth operator we encountered, witnessing to countless people on the streets and in stores, connecting with people and building relationships, praying with and for people, enabling others toward service, working on all our event administration and buying supplies. Not to mention all the work G did beforehand setting up 19 events all over the country, and then having to arrange for our transportation as his car was in the shop practically the whole time I was there.

I often wondered what GOD could do through the ministry if it was fully supported... with prayer and financial gifts. I am continuing to pray that someone would step up with the remaining 40% of the needs. All in all, it was a great month of ministry.

How many people received Christ as Savior?

We may never know. But we were faithful to God's call and obedient in boldly sharing the gospel to the people of Sicily. We worked well together as a team, and with the local churches that stood beside us. I look forward to the next opportunity we have to work together, and G and I have already started that conversation. It's up to the Lord to set another work in motion, and we are ready and willing when that time arrives.



Please pray for those who heard the gospel that the Holy Spirit would water the seeds we sowed in so many hearts. God's Word does not return void! Thanks again for your prayers and financial support. May all the glory be directed to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is alone worthy of our praise!