

A Mission Field Hidden In Plain Sight

In a nation of 60 million where over 80% identify as Catholic but less than 3% practise, faithful gospel churches are desperately needed.

During the apostolic age, Italy was at the center of world power. It was also a target for evangelistic endeavours (Rom 1:15, Acts 18 & 27). As the gospel was proclaimed and spread across Europe, a rich tradition developed and societal realities were transformed by the good news of Jesus and strong local churches. A quick view in reverse clearly shows that church tradition has, for better or worse, been intertwined with the Italian peninsula and Europe, more broadly. Sadly, the richness of this reality has become a dead tradition stored in history books. In its place, apathy and agnosticism reign the European continent. Consider some statistics that frame the situation, focusing on Italy: Italy's population is around 60M. Over 80% report that they are Roman Catholic, yet less than 3% practise Catholicism. Among evangelicals, the most positive estimates see 1.0-1.5% of the population connected to protestant, evangelical churches, yet most evangelical researchers place this number closer to 0.5-0.75%. This means one is 4-10 times more likely to hear the gospel in China, Egypt, or Indonesia than in Italy, a so-called "Christian" country. Sadly, this exemplifies the situation across Europe. European society is spiritually dead and deceived, mired in false religion, and growingly secular. Statistics indicate that this situation is growing bleaker.

In Sovereign Grace, our conviction is that the Lord intends to upend these dark realities and give life to the dead. He intends to equip saints to proclaim gospel grace throughout Italy and Europe as churches are established as outposts of truth and hope. It is this conviction that led us to plant the first Italian SGC Church, Grazia Sovrana di Torino (Torino, Italy). Ed O'Mara and Rocco Dalia and their families, a total of 7 people, began meeting

in July 2024 in the O'Mara's home. The Lord has been growing this small work, and presently, the church is around 20 people. Though they still meet in the O'Mara home but are searching for a public meeting location. One might wonder why we would plant in Torino. The first answer is partnership! Ed and Rocco were committed to working together to see an Italian church established and Rocco had both personal connection and burden for Torino. In addition, the Lord opened doors for campus ministry for Rocco, affirming that Torino was a possible location for the first SGC Italian church plant. There are also good strategic reasons for Torino, which is in the Piemonte region of northern Italy. It is Italy's 4th largest city in Italy with roughly ~900,000 inhabitants in the city and over 2M in the immediate metropolitan area. There is a diverse culture owing to roughly 15% of the city's population being immigrants. Currently, Torino is undergoing a slight economic and significant education revitalization, which began in the early 2000s. Due to the major universities, tech companies, and healthcare industry, Torino is one of the few Italian cities that attract young, promising talent from throughout Europe. While the population is growing, the influence of the gospel is not keeping pace. There is a great need for gospel preaching churches in the city, as is true everywhere in Italy and in fact all of Europe. With this in view, Grazia Sovrana is striving to be a maturing and healthy gospel-preaching church that works with other churches in Italy and across Europe.

Since this work has begun, the Lord has been, kindly, raising other churches, plants, and potential plants across Europe that share the same convictions and values. As such, SGC-Europe is growing! While there are only 2 official partners SGC churches

in Europe (Grace Church in Bristol, UK being the first and our church being second), the Lord has seen fit to draw a number of other pastors and churches into a growing fellowship. Presently, 3 churches are in the candidacy phase: Calvary Church in Galway, Ireland, Iglesia Gracias Soberana in Santander, Spain,



and Grazia e Verità in Catania, Italy. Additionally, a new church plant project is ongoing in London, UK led by Pat Tedeschi. There is committed interest from churches in Belarus, Wales and other parts of the UK, and exploratory works are underway in Turkey and Lebanon. Each of these countries have a unique social and cultural context. But they share a deep need for gospel-preaching churches and mature disciples to proclaim Christ in their communities.

The partnership we share within Sovereign Grace is both deeply meaningful and profoundly necessary. As local churches preach Christ crucified and press forward in global mission, it is our prayer that the glory of the King would be resplendent across Europe through the partnership of our family of churches in Europe and across the world!

17:8

Currently planting 17 churches in 8 nations.

England
Italy
Kenya
Namibia
Mexico
Thailand
Philippines
United States

6:2

6 additional church plants in the next 2 years

\$655K

Invested into church planting for Fiscal Year 2025



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