



Dr. Joseph Pipa in Italy



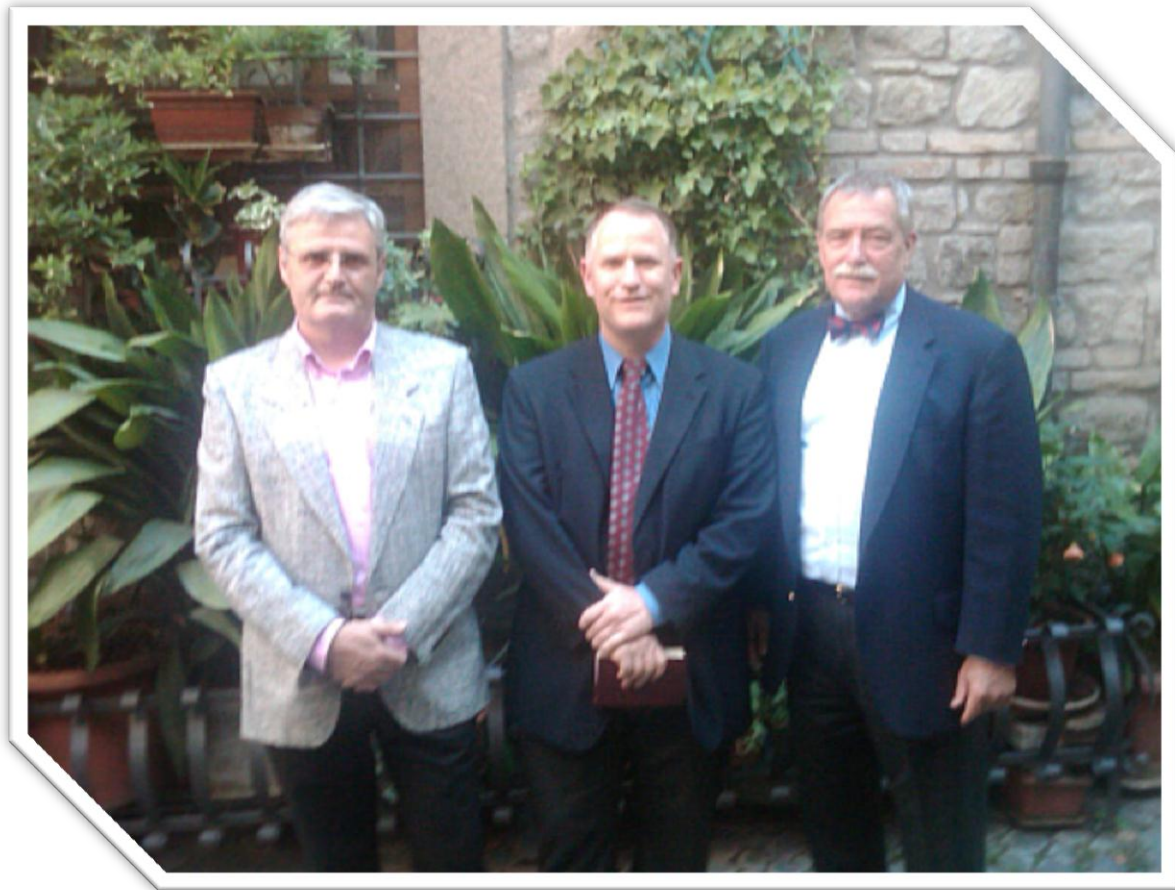
Dr. Joseph A. Pipa Jr.

Mission Trip to Italy

Spring 2011

GPTS Outreach in Italy

In June of 2006, my wife and I went to Viterbo, Italy to minister with a Greenville student, Mario Forieri. Mario is a chiropractor who pastored a small, independent congregation. As he became convicted of Presbyterianism, he enrolled at Greenville Seminary as a distant student to prepare for ordination. Through this process, he came to the conviction that he should not administer the sacraments; therefore, the congregation rarely had communion. I went in 2006 to minister and to determine what we could do for oversight.



ABOVE (L TO R): MARIO FORIERI, MICHAEL CUNEO, DR. JOSEPH PIPA JR.

I returned from that visit to recruit a church planter. God called Mike Cuneo, a GPTS alumnus, to go to Viterbo and serve as missionary-pastor. Mike is sent out by Calvary Presbytery, and I serve on his oversight session. He has been in Viterbo for two years, and no one from the committee had been able to visit him up to this time. Because of your generosity to our Missionary Travel Fund, we were able to go in the Spring of 2011. Mario and Mike asked me to do a conference on End Times. I lectured on Matthew 24, the signs of the times; 1 Thess. 4:13-18, the return of Christ; Matt. 5 on Hell; and Rev. 21:9-22:4 on Heaven. We had over twenty people at the two Saturday lectures and close to twenty for the Sunday morning lecture and Sunday evening worship service. One couple in whom the Lord had been working, Gianni and Ada-Nella, give some evidence of having been converted. In a question period after the Sunday morning



message on Hell, she said, “Halfway through the message, I wanted to run away; but I am glad I didn’t, because I learned where to run (to Christ).”

The work is small and struggling, but they have received two women by profession of faith in the last 3 years, and now perhaps Gianni and Ada-nella have been converted. They have continued to attend worship after the conference and attend a weekly Bible study that Mario and Mike have with them.



On Monday we drove north to Tuscany to an isolated village, Fornaci di Barga, where Mike did a Bible study with members of an extended family — an older lady, Emilia, with her husband, daughter and son-in-law. Not all family members were present. Emilia came to Christ through the witness of two Italian sisters who left the village after World War II to work in Scotland, where they both were converted under the preaching ministry of a Presbyterian church. They returned to their village and began to witness, with hopes of seeing many come to Christ. After many years of witnessing, Emilia seems to have been the only convert. One of the sisters has passed on to be with the Lord, and the other is in frail health. Through Emilia’s witness, her daughters and sons-in-law apparently have been converted. Periodically, Mike or

Mario go up to do a Saturday Bible study and a Sunday worship. On our trip, we discovered the nearby town, Barga, which boasts to be the most Scottish town in Italy. It has many family connections to Scotland and the rest of the English-speaking world and a Waldensian church. Mike is going to canvas the area for outreach. It is not uncommon to find small pockets of believers with few or no nearby Christian communities. There are only a handful of Reformed works in Italy amongst a population of 60 million. It is long-term generational work. Italy is often not considered a mission field, thus it is often neglected. The spiritual darkness, however, is great; and the Christians are often marginalized and struggle to maintain a witness. They need your prayers.



Lord willing, my wife and I we will return next summer to do another conference and perhaps have a retreat with our alumni and other interested men in Europe. Again it is your generosity that enables us to minister in these destitute places. I hope you will be able to help us train the students and to help in their countries.



ABOVE: MARIO AND CLARA FORIERI AND SISSY AND JOSEPH PIPA

