



Jon and Becky Liles
Missionaries to Italy

Annual Thanksgiving Letter
November 2011

We thank God when we remember you...

People ask us almost every day "What is your job?" As a new church planter in a foreign country (where there is already a formidable church present and hundreds of years of church history) the answers almost always seem to fall flat. "We are here to start a church", "We are Bible teachers", or "I am a Baptist pastor". *These responses cause suspicion not joy.* I don't have one of those stories yet where I tell someone I am a Baptist pastor and they grab me by the face, embrace me, and tell me they have been waiting all these years for someone to come start a church and that their 150 family members will join immediately.

What they really want to know is, "How do you live here and why"? People are often shocked to find out that Baptist churches all over the United States have partnered with us to finance a church plant here. A church that will make Jesus known throughout Rome and all of Italy. Rome, Italy? ...needs Jesus? Then I can ask something like, "When was the last time Jesus really mattered to you?" or, "Do you feel like your life is pleasing to God?" In a country that has access to the Bible, many here have never cracked one open for themselves. The conversations can get much more interesting from there.

The way I like to explain this is that the Bible and the Good News is most important to these believers in the United States. So important that they are willing to sacrifice through difficult financial times to make sure other people all over the world have the opportunity to hear and respond to the Good News. This is a very different picture of the United States than what they see in movies. Your witness is often a door God uses to start conversations about their need for Jesus. *Often when we have these conversations we remember your love, sacrifice, and example through giving.* Thank you for sending us here and keeping us here by supporting us and praying for us!

The Liles — Rome, Italy

Italy4Christ@hotmail.com

417.942.0274