BAPTIST COURIERS FOR CHRIST EST 1979
November 2026

Knowledge of the Truth

Scripture Distribution Campaign

by Joshua Stertz



Italy Campaign Team

First of all, we thank our Lord and Saviour for all of his provision, protection, and power that he gave for us to do the work at hand! We also say "Thank you" to all of our ministry partners for your love, prayers, and support that provide us the opportunity to take teams of American believers to places like Bologna, Italy, to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. We had a total of 28 Americans from nine different states across the USA take part in this outreach with the Clifford Keister family. The Keisters have served for nearly seven years in the difficult field of Italy, and it was our privilege to aid their work for nearly two weeks of scripture distribution. Please pray for this family as they continue to labor in the field to which God has called them without experiencing much fruit to date. After nine days of distribution and over 40,000 John and Romans (with invitations) distributed--we did not have one person attend the evangelistic service at the end of the trip. We were saddened by this reality, knowing that Italians all across the region need to understand that religion does not put anyone in good standing with God concerning their sin-stained heart/soul. The only way that they can be forgiven of that sin and spend eternity with God is by receiving Christ's free gift of salvation, thus entering into a personal relationship with him. In spite of no visitors, Brother Cliff had arranged for a videographer to tape the whole service, and Rafael heard a clear presentation of the gospel. At the close of the service, we were able to present him with a Bible, which he gladly received. Please pray for Rafael's salvation. We also made many good connections with the hotel staff where we stayed and presented them with Bibles. I wish I had videoed their responses, because they were elated to have their own copies of God's word. Please pray that their eyes would be opened to the truth of the gospel and they would be saved. Two days after the campaign, Brother Cliff received communication from an older gentleman concerning the event, and they arranged a visit. Cliff gave him his own Bible and is desiring to start a Bible study with him. Pray for Vincenzo to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.



Hotel manager who received her first Bible from Kelli.



Cameraman who willingly received his first copy of God's word.

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HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

Notes from the Volga

Summer 1999

by Larry Ingalls

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it." --Isaiah 55:11

Where It All Began

In the summer of 1999, God started something along the Volga River in Russia that is still going on today. The three-month Volga River Campaign was the catalyst that later Couriers' scripture distribution campaigns would emulate to put God's word into people's hands. Over that summer, 242 men came for two weeks each, divided into ten groups, and I had the privilege of serving as one of the team leaders.

We started with a work team from Cleveland Baptist Church under Pastor Roy Thompson. Together we built and trained a group of young Russian nationals who traveled with us the entire summer. They became the backbone of everything that followed.

Hammers, Paint, and Open Hearts

Before the distribution teams arrived, the Cleveland work team, the nationals, and the team leaders went to work on a badly run-down building in Yaroslavl that would become a sports clinic. While we were there, we learned of an orphanage nearby. It needed repairs, but more than that, it had children who needed love and attention. When I asked the woman in charge about conditions there, she gave me a 15-minute lecture on what had happened to the orphans from the time Gorbachev took office through the years under President Boris Yeltsin. The workers were left to provide all the care, clothing, and food themselves. Then they had to go out into the streets and beg for money just to keep the doors open. So we made a commitment to help on a regular basis. That summer we painted, fixed what was broken, and put in at least some indoor plumbing. When we walked out five days later, there wasn't a dry eye in the place. Five teenage girls and a crew of tough construction men all cried together.







"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world." --James 1:27

That simple act of service opened a door no one could have predicted. Today a missionary code-named James is in that city and has taken over the Bible study. Every week he visits that orphanage and spends time with the children. Because the door was opened, he has led three of the women who work there to the Lord, plus one of the doctors who comes to check on the children.

A Young Preacher Turned Loose

During that same time, I gathered our young Russian staff and told them, "You're the ones who will be working with the men coming over. You need to know what they'll be doing. So we're going downtown, and we're going to practice." We put together some song books, learned a couple of songs in Russian and English, and went to a big marketplace downtown. We sang until a crowd gathered, and then we turned Sergey loose to preach.

Sergey was only 19 years old and had been saved just five years, but God used that young man in a mighty way over the next three days. On our last afternoon alone, in about two hours, we saw ten people saved and gave out about 15,000 tracts.

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." --1 Timothy 4:12

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Cliff and Christina Keister were wonderful hosts. Please pray for their continued work in Bologna, Italy.

The Lord blessed us with a wonderful team. Some of our members have been on multiple trips, but for some this was their first mission trip ever. The following excerpts are the thoughts of a few of our team members in their own words concerning their experience.

"When we first arrived, getting to see the city from atop the mountain at the Sanctuary of San Luca on our very first day truly set the stage for why we were there. Throughout the trip, the moments we spent telling stories to one another and sharing our burdens forged a bond that meant the world to me.

"I came here hoping for a change--not just in my routine, but deep within myself. On the second or third night, I found myself on my knees beside my bed, crying out to God and telling him that the rest of my life belongs to him and his plans for me. I don't fully know what all of that entails yet, but I am praying daily for wisdom, clarity, and direction."

--Derek from Pennsylvania

"I am very grateful the Lord opened the door for me to go on the trip to Italy. He has worked in my life through it. Already I miss the people I met and the work we did; I think I could have stayed much longer there distributing John and Romans. The Lord has greatly increased my boldness to witness for him and my burden for the lost around me. Even as I journeyed home, the Lord kept helping me to give tracts or talk about him."

--Meagan from Nebraska



The ladies of our team next to a stack of John and Romans produced by BPS--Milford.

"Another blessing was being able to really see the missionary's life firsthand. The Keisters currently have a handful of members in their church, but they continue to sow the seed and serve the Lord faithfully. It's like seeing one sprout come up through the soil, and you get excited, already envisioning the whole crop at harvest time. But then, no more sprouts come up. And you have to keep waiting, and sowing more seeds, and waiting. Their faithfulness in persisting in doing the Lord's work despite having little apparent success was so impactful to me."

--Lisa from California



Our leadership team: Jeff Shergalis (missionary to Bulgaria), Ken Stertz, Josh Stertz, Don Stertz, and host missionary Clifford Keister

Many seeds were sown, and now we implore our heavenly father to touch hearts and lives in his time and that the word in homes would bear fruit in the years to come. We pray that some of these folks would reach out to the Keister family for discipleship and growth in the knowledge of the truth!

"For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." --I Timothy 2:3,4

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HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

Flowers and a Pond

On Sunday we went to New Life Baptist Church, where everyone saved over the past three weeks was ready to be baptized. One by one, they came forward and told how they got saved. Each one was given flowers. Then they were led down to a pond just behind the church and baptized. Watching new believers step into that water, I was reminded that every swing of the hammer, every song, and every tract was worth it. Thank you for praying, giving, and partnering with Couriers for Christ. Your part in this harvest is still bearing fruit!

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*." --Psalm 126:6

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