



A pilgrim
praying
at the top of
the Holy Steps



ROAD to



A statue of
St. Paul in the
Basilica di
San Giovanni

ROME

CALVARY CHAPEL FORT LAUDERDALE REACHES OUT TO PILGRIMS AT JUBILEE 2000

Story and photographs by Tom Price

“We saw the image of God over you while you were praying,” the young Catholic priests said excitedly. The praying women from CC Fort Lauderdale looked up at them, hardly believing what they had heard.

The team had only been in Rome for one day. Several of the women had knelt to pray as another team member witnessed to one of the thousands of pilgrims in Rome for Pope John Paul II’s Jubilee 2000.

The two young Brazilian priests, who were studying at the Vatican, had been strolling through this ancient Italian city. They noticed the group praying outside the Pantheon, built 2,000 years ago by King Agrippa.

“May we bless you and pray over you?” one priest asked.

After a moment, Steve Lingo, the CC team leader, led the group in the Lord’s prayer. The Fort Lauderdale team prayed in English while the priests prayed in Portuguese.

Afterwards, Steve and Ginger Lingo said that the experience illustrates the need to be prepared for unexpected opportunities to share. They were all deeply touched by this encounter.

CC Fort Lauderdale was on the third of five outreaches planned in Rome throughout the past spring, summer, and fall. Months before, the Fort Lauderdale missions department felt the Lord was leading them to send teams to hand out Bibles and share the Gospel with the estimated 30 million pilgrims journeying to the Vatican for the Pope’s celebration of Jubilee 2000.

“My heart breaks when I see these wonderful people coming here to find religion rather than relationship,” said Steve. “Some don’t realize that they

Left: Two Brazilian priests watch as CC Fort Lauderdale women pray at the Pantheon. The priests said they saw the image of God over the praying women.

can have that personal relationship with our Savior, Jesus Christ, and one that relies on grace and forgiveness.”

Antonio Capodici had journeyed to Rome to find his faith after experiencing the death of two close family members. Antonio walked through the Holy Doors, which had been designated by Pope John Paul II as a way of receiving forgiveness for past sins. His passage through the doors left him empty.

He listened to CC team member Ana Steele, fluent in Italian, share her faith at the Trevi Fountain. Tears welled in his eyes as Ana shared the Good News and asked him if he would like to accept the Lord Jesus as his personal Savior.



Ginger Lingo shares with two young priests.

“I have a hard time believing that salvation can be this easy,” said Antonio. Nevertheless, he was joyful to begin the path of belief in God’s abundant grace upon His children. Steve also spent time with Antonio, and everyone exchanged addresses before departing.

The Fort Lauderdale team’s five weeks of preparation gave them practical tools for the ministry ahead. They trained in cross-cultural communications and studied the history of the Catholic Church. In Rome, they handed out Bibles in Italian, French, Spanish, German, and

English. Always remaining calm, listening politely, and firmly stating the Gospel message was the hallmark of their witness.

The next day the team watched as Jubilee pilgrims who were on their knees painfully climbed the Holy Steps across from Saint John’s Basilica. At each step, the pilgrims stopped to beg forgiveness for their sins. Tears flowed as many strained during the long quest for atonement.

“People travel from all over the world to come here and seek penance, climbing up marble stairs on bleeding knees,” said Steve. “Our message to them is that Jesus is a compassionate Savior and the Intercessor to God for

JESUS SAID, "I AM THE DOOR. IF ANYONE ENTERS BY ME, HE WILL BE SAVED, AND WILL GO IN AND OUT AND FIND PASTURE." JOHN 10:9

us. He died that our sins may be forgiven. No work of our own could ever match up."

The Lord said, *"For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."* Jeremiah 31:34

CC Fort Lauderdale works with Italy for Christ (IFC), an evangelical



Pat Mafera (right) shares with one of the Jubilee pilgrims.



Ginger Lingo, amazed at the wonderful opportunity to share with Catholic leaders, glorifies God.



Corey McFarlane (right) shares his faith with Italian men at the pier in Ostia.

pel with the Italian population. Rusty and Janet Richards work with the organization in Rome and lead the teams coming over.

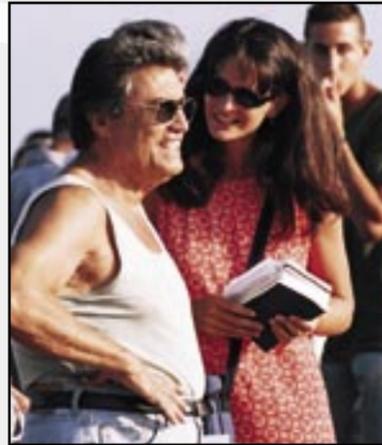
Evangelical churches sent close to 50 teams during the Jubilee. Their goal was to share drama, mime, and music with the pilgrims. Like CC Fort Lauderdale, the groups pass out literature, pray, and connect through one-on-one conversations. One million Bibles were distributed during the Jubilee.

SHARPENING THE EDGE

If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; but wisdom brings success. Ecclesiastes 10:10

"Frequently missionaries go out in the field with a great heart and passion. They may have gone on a couple of mission trips and caught a vision for it," said Roman Williams, director of Calvary Chapel Bible Institute, a ministry of CC Fort Lauderdale, "but some go out with dull axes." Roman was sent as a missionary from Fort Lauderdale to Russia from 1994 to 1997. When he returned home, he recognized the need for further training. He went on for a masters degree in Bible and Missions at Columbia International University.

"The Bible Institute's vision is to support the church in the task of world evangelization by equipping, training, and mobilizing Christian servant leaders. If you can imagine going out in a forest with a dull ax to build a home," Roman continued, "it can be done, but it requires much more work. It can lead to frustration and exhaustion."



Alana Gerlach shares her testimony in Ostia.

effective. We want to serve those who want to not only know God, but also to have practical tools of ministry by providing training to accomplish those goals through our Pastoral Ministry and Missions programs."

Kelly Lyon, CC Fort Lauderdale's Director of Missions since 1998, grew up in the Amazon in Peru. His missionary parents were 40-year veterans as Wycliffe Bible translators. At the age of 19, Kelly left Peru for college in the U.S. His parents eventually retired in the United States.

"A dilemma faced by every growing church is their philosophy on how to send missionaries," said Kelly. At CC Fort Lauderdale, a missions board was formed. They prayerfully talked through the needs of the world and the strengths of their church, matching the two together. "One of the strong points of Calvary Chapel is meeting the needs of this generation. There is a real connection with the youth. We also have a good foundation of training strong Bible teachers, so teaching the Word would also be a focus."

Studying through Acts, the members of the missions board concluded that the early church always sent their best preachers and teachers out



Antonio Capodici, a pilgrim from Argentina, is amazed at the simplicity of the Gospel. He accepts Christ as his personal Savior as Ana Steele shares the Gospel in Italian at the Trevi Fountain.

Right: Ana Steele speaks with a Polish group at the Trevi Fountain.
 Below: Jubilee participants from Poland celebrate as Pope John Paul II recognizes their group during the Papal blessing.



into the world. The church in Antioch sent out the most ardent missionary, the Apostle Paul. “The example of Brian Brodersen, willing to leave a thriving American church to start all over again in London, encouraged us. Now you may not always want to send your senior pastor, but it should be someone of top caliber.”

The missions board began to look at the call in people’s lives. “Our understanding nationwide is that half of the missionaries return home after their first year in the field. Of those, 80 percent never return at all. We feel that is due to a lack of preparation. To combat this, we devised a training program that defines who we are at Calvary Chapel and prepares those entering overseas ministry. We borrowed much of the training from InterVarsity and tailored it to Calvary Chapel. It is just an introduction, but it prepares people to deal with culture shock and interpersonal relationships. Many leave the mission field due to a lack of progress in the initial outreach time.” The training gives the candidate a world perspective, focusing on unreached people groups. It also teaches how to share the Gospel in a different culture.

“In the United States, we have a responsibility for the blessing upon us,” said Kelly. The mission students learn about that responsibility in a class that Kelly facilitates. “We extensively taught the teams that went to Rome, helping the short-term missionaries to understand the importance of compassion as they share the Gospel. We have seen the fruit of the training.”

PRESSING ON WITH THE GOSPEL

At the Piazza Navona in Rome, the Fort Lauderdale team approached those who had stopped to watch the performance of mimes. Two Americans, Jim and Lynne Dickinson, had moved to Hungary and taken their Christian mime ministry to the streets. They had also trained two Hungarians in their craft, and now all four were in Rome with the Fort Lauderdale team to win souls for Christ. Their special ministry easily reached across language barriers. Afterwards, Luca Sinatra from IFC related to the crowd what they had seen and shared the Gospel message. Several engaged in conversation and gave their lives to the Lord.

Sunday morning at the Vatican, the team watched as thousands of pilgrims filled St. Peter’s Square and fervently waved their countries’ flags while the Pope blessed the masses from his window.

“We learned that millions of pilgrims would journey to Rome for Jubilee 2000 to seek forgiveness of their sins. Their desire for renewal of spiritual commitment offered a unique opportunity for our generation to share the Gospel,” said Karen Dillon, missions coordinator at CC Fort Lauderdale.

“Over 30 million tourists visited Rome throughout the year seeking spiritual wholeness by walking through Holy Doors designated by the Pope. CC Fort Lauderdale wanted to share the message that Jesus is the only true door to the Father,” said Karen. As the team weighed the truth and inerrancy of Scripture against historical church teachings, they actively shared the simple Gospel message in the Bible with the pilgrims streaming out of Vatican City. ☺



Julie Schultz poses for a photograph with reenactors at the Roman Coliseum.



Group shot of the CC Fort Lauderdale team at the Roman Forum.



Pilgrims pray as they climb the Holy Steps on their knees, sometimes taking an hour to reach the top.



THE LORD SAID,
 “FOR I WILL FORGIVE THEIR INIQUITY, AND THEIR SIN I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.”

JEREMIAH 31:34

Lynne Dickinson, a missionary mime, shares with a young Italian girl after the performance at Piazza Navona.