



MINISTRY PROPOSAL

Church Plant In Lecce - Italy

Bringing the Reformation
Back to Italy

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“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?
And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
And how are they to preach unless they are sent?”

Romans 10:14-15



Letter of Introduction – Julius Kim

Dear friends and partners in the Gospel,

Greetings in the matchless name of Jesus! I give thanks for all of you as you strive to know Christ more and make him known to the ends of the earth.

I currently serve as the President of The Gospel Coalition (TGC), Professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Seminary California, and Associate Pastor at New Life PCA in Escondido, CA. Thank you for allowing me to write this letter of introduction for Vincenzo Coluccia and his wife Judit, who are preparing to be long-term missionaries in Italy with MTW.

I am fully aware that there are many wonderful missionaries and missions to support, but I want to urge you to consider partnering with them in this important work as they seek to plant a church and be part of a larger church plant movement in southern Italy, specifically in Lecce. As you will read in the brochure below, Italy is in desperate need of God-honoring, Gospel-centered, Christ-proclaiming servants to share the love and hope of Jesus.

Having been a professor now for 20 years and one of Vincenzo's pastors of the church in which he is a pastoral intern, I can honestly say that Vincenzo has more than just the requisite skills to be a pastor and missionary. In fact, he was not only one of the top students I've had the privilege to teach and mentor (and he did so in second language!), but he is also someone in terms of pastoral competency and character, uniquely gifted and skilled to make a tremendous impact in Italy. I cannot recommend him highly enough.

And now, while serving in Italy, Vincenzo and Judit are seeking partners to partner with them in prayer and finances. Would you prayerfully consider supporting them as they seek to obey God's call in this important work? Along with my church, we humbly request your partnership in [MTW Project #P-0308](#).

More than ever before, we need more faithful laborers for the harvest, especially for such a time as this. As people all over the world, especially in Italy, are searching for light and hope in the midst of darkness and death, I pray that you will join me in supporting this great kingdom cause.

Warmly, in Christ,

Rev. Julius J. Kim, PhD



Who We Are?

Vincenzo. Currently I am a Teaching Elder at the South Coast Presbytery, and I am serving out of bounds as the church planter pastor at the **Chiesa Presbiteriana Pietra Vivente** in Lecce, Italy.

I was born in Lecce, Italy, in 1981 and was raised in the Roman Catholic Church. When I was 7, the gospel broke into my life, but it took almost 19 years for it to mature. In 2000, I moved to Turin to study engineering at the University. After graduating, I worked as an engineer for almost ten years. In 2006, Christ got a hold of my heart and saved me. Eventually, all the members of my family also put their trust in Jesus.

My desire to serve God began to grow initially at a large Assemblies of God church that I first attended, and then in 2009, I was appointed as the Area Director for *The Gideons International* and then eventually as leader of the outreach team. By 2010, God began to open my heart to the doctrines of grace, and by hearing Reformed preachers, I was convinced of the soundness of the historic Reformed faith. So, I eventually joined a new Reformed Church in Turin and began to grow and serve there.

As the call to full-time ministry became clearer to me, I visited *Westminster Seminary California* (WSC) in 2015, and in the following year, after ten years of working as a structural engineer, I enrolled in the Master of Divinity program and left for the US. By God's grace, I completed my MDiv degree on June 1, 2019. I used to design "dead structures" for cities; now, I am called to equip "living stones" for Christ and his church.

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Prior to graduation, I joined the work of the **Reformation Italy** project (www.reformationitaly.org) supervised by the consistories of *Christ URC* in Santee (CA) and *Escondido URC*, that, on account of the *United Reformed Churches in North America* (URCNA), they also oversee the missionary work of the Rev. Michael G. Brown in the Reformed church in Milan, and the Rev. Andrea Ferrari in the Reformed church in Perugia.

After graduation, I married Judit, a beautiful and gifted Reformed Christian from Hungary, and we now live in Escondido. We both attend and serve our church family at *New Life PCA* in Escondido, serving primarily as the Children's Ministry Coordinator while also engaging in other pastoral duties. During that time, Judit and I received the required training and underwent assessment through the PCA's *Mission to the World* (MTW). In March 2020, I was licensed to preach in the South Coast Presbytery of the PCA, sustaining in May the ordination exam. On July 12, 2020, I was ordained and installed as an evangelist and church planter of the South Coast Presbytery. In May 2021, we moved back to Italy to start serving the people in Lecce.

During these many years of studying and training, I have been exposed to and matured by the teaching of many godly mentors. These experiences have provided a deeper understanding and appreciation of both the beauty and gravity of the pastoral call.



Judit. I was born in 1991 and grew up in a Christian home, along with my four siblings in Budapest, Hungary. Both of my parents are believers, and they raised us in the Reformed faith. I grew up seeing my parents serving faithfully in our church. My father served as an elder and played the organ every Lord's Day. My mother led the children's ministry.

Growing up in this church environment helped me to experience the multiform beauty of the body of Christ. I could see a living church where the Holy Spirit was working in His people through the preaching of the gospel with His sanctifying power. Although, as a kid, I believed in God, praying and reading His Word, it was only when I became a teenager that I understood that being a covenant child was not enough for my salvation. I was like Paul, who had a wonderful religious education but was still Christ's enemy.

By God's grace, I realized my lost condition and my need for the Savior. Christ saved me, and I began to serve in the children's ministry. I attended a Christian school, which was crucial in fostering my knowledge and spiritual growth. I eventually attended university to become a teacher, and I saw this vocation as an opportunity to serve the Lord and bringing the gospel to my students.

Over the years, God matured in me the desire to serve Him with all my heart, which included going anywhere He would send me. But it was when I spent six months studying in Italy and attending the Reformed Church in Milan, that I realized the spiritual need of that "Christian" country. After two years of working as a Latin and Hungarian teacher in Hungary, I married Vincenzo. During these few last years, the Lord has worked in my heart. He has graciously prepared me to answer His call to Italy, to leave my family, my church, my country, and my job, in order to serve Christ with Vincenzo in Lecce.

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Now I am excited to taking part in this work. I can use the gifts and experiences with which the Lord equipped me during my whole life, including this year since I had the opportunity to take courses at Westminster Seminary California and serve in the children's ministry and Sunday school at New Life Escondido.

I am comforted in seeing God working in me, realizing He daily sustains me through His promises and His steadfast love, found ultimately in Jesus.



The Coluccias at a Glance

Coluccia	Vincenzo	Judit
Date of Birth	2/9/1981	9/24/1991
Children:	Abigail , born on August 25, 2020	
Church Membership:	New Life PCA Escondido, CA - South Coast Presbytery	Újpest-Belsővárosi Református Egyházközség (HUN)
Church Attending:	New Life PCA, 03/18 - 05/20 Christ URC, 07/16 - 02/18 Reformed Church Turin (ITA), 06/14 - 06/16 Assemblies of God Turin (ITA), 1/07 - 5/14	New Life PCA, 08/19 - 05/20 Újpest-Belsővárosi Református Egyházközség (HUN), since born - 07/19
Licensure and Ordination Exams:	March 18 and May 19, 2020. South Coast Presbytery PCA	N/A
Date of Ordination:	July 12, 2020, by the South Coast Presbytery, at New Life PCA Escondido	N/A
Educational Background:	“Protect My Ministry,” March 2020, Child Safety Training for Abuse Prevention WSC, Master of Divinity, 7/16 - 5/19 Politecnico di Torino (ITA), 9/04 - 3/07, MS/Structural Engineering Politecnico di Torino (ITA), 9/00 - 9/04, BA/Structural Engineering	Pázmány Péter Catholic University (HUN), 8/14 - 2/17, MA Teacher Education Pázmány Péter Catholic University (HUN), 8/11 - 7/14, BA/Ancient Languages and Cultures (Classic Philology) & BA/Hungarian Language and Literature Biblia Szövetség/Bible Union School (HUN), 9/10 - 6/14
Employment Background:	MTW, 03/20 - now, International Associate Missionary New Life PCA, 09/19 - 03/21, Children Ministry Coordinator WSC, 9/18 - 5/19, Assistant Librarian IPE Progetti Srl (ITA), 9/06 - 6/16, Structural Engineer Project Manager	MTW, 03/20 - now, International Associate Missionary Ferencs Gimnázium Szentendre (HUN), 3/17-7/19, Latin, Hungarian Language and Literature Teacher Baár-Madas Református Gimnázium (HUN), 9/16 - 6/17, Latin Teacher
Ministry Experience:	New Life PCA, 09/19 - 03/21, Children Ministry Coordinator New Life PCA, 03/18 - 03/21, Pastoral Intern PCA South Coast Presbytery, 04/19 - 02/20, Pastoral Intern Reformation Italy, 2018 - now, missionary Reformed Church in Turin, 2017 - 2018, Ruling Elder & Pastoral Intern The Gideons International, 1/09 - 6/15, Area Director Northwest Italy Assemblies of God (ITA) 2/09 - 5/14, Outreach Team Leader	New Life PCA, 09/19 - 03/21, Children Ministry Volunteer Újpest-Belsővárosi Református Egyházközség (HUN), 2011 - 2019, Youth Group Leader Újpest-Belsővárosi Református Egyházközség (HUN), 2007 - 2011, Children’s Ministry Leader Biblia Szövetség/Bible Union (HUN), 2009 - 2019, Children’s and Youth Ministry Volunteer





Why Support This Ministry?

When the light of God's Word shines into places of spiritual darkness, sinners are convicted of sin, called to repentance, and a spiritual and moral reformation takes place. This is why one of the key mottos of the 16th century Protestant Reformation was *Post Tenebras, Lux*, "After Darkness, Light." Not so in Italy.

Although Italy was the birthplace of the Renaissance, by the time of the Reformation, this *Belpaese* had become a graveyard. During this time, the Inquisition and the Council of Trent wiped out any real hopes for an Italian Reformation. And then as today, the Vatican continues to keep Italians hostage to darkness.

A group of people is considered "unreached" if less than 2% of the population is evangelical Christian, meaning that there are too few believers to evangelize the rest of that people group. In Italy, only 1% of the population belongs to a Protestant church, and of them, less than 200 believers are members of reformed and Presbyterian churches. So, based on the above definition, close to 60 million people are essentially unreached. Italians are unable to hear God's Word because there are not enough gospel-centered Christians and churches around them.

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Furthermore, only a small percentage of Italian protestant ministers have been trained. In Italy, there are no theological seminaries, which means that the vast majority of pastors are self-taught. Moreover, many of them do not have access to vital reformed resources because they cannot read and speak English. With the pressure of the Catholic church, on the one hand, and lack of reformed training and resources on the other, it is a dire situation.

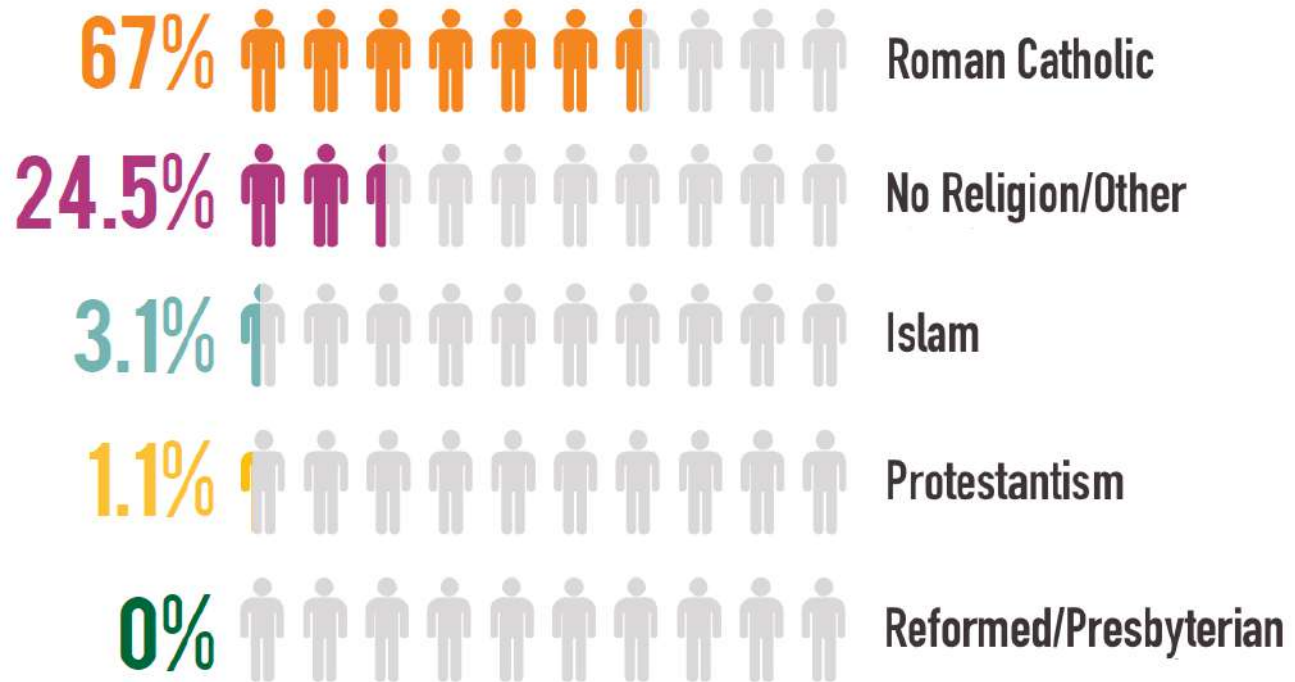
I believe Christ's mandate is clear. Having been trained in a solid seminary and now as an ordained PCA minister, I am called to go to this unreached people group. I want to go and preach the true gospel, make disciples of Christ, and plant the first reformed and Presbyterian church in southern Italy.

Yet my wife and I are fully aware that we cannot go alone. For a ministry to not just survive but thrive requires much support and commitment. It is a church-wide effort, made not only by those who go but also by those who will pray and send them. I believe, together, we can be instruments in God's hand that can make a difference in the destiny of many Italians.

For the last several years, a core group of evangelical believers in the Lecce area have been meeting together, hoping to become a church one day. Since 2017, they have been worshipping on Sundays with churches in Milan and Perugia through videoconferencing. We believe God is calling us to minister to this core group. Born and raised in Lecce, I would like to plant a church there. Moreover, cooperating with the Rev. Michael Cuneo (TE called to Italy by the *Calvary PCA Presbyter*), the Rev. M. G. Brown, the Rev. A. Ferrari, and other like-minded pastors and missionaries, I would like to help foster a church plant movement and training of future pastors for this entire region that is devoid of the gospel. My wife and I are fully committed to this work and believe God has prepared us for such a time as this.

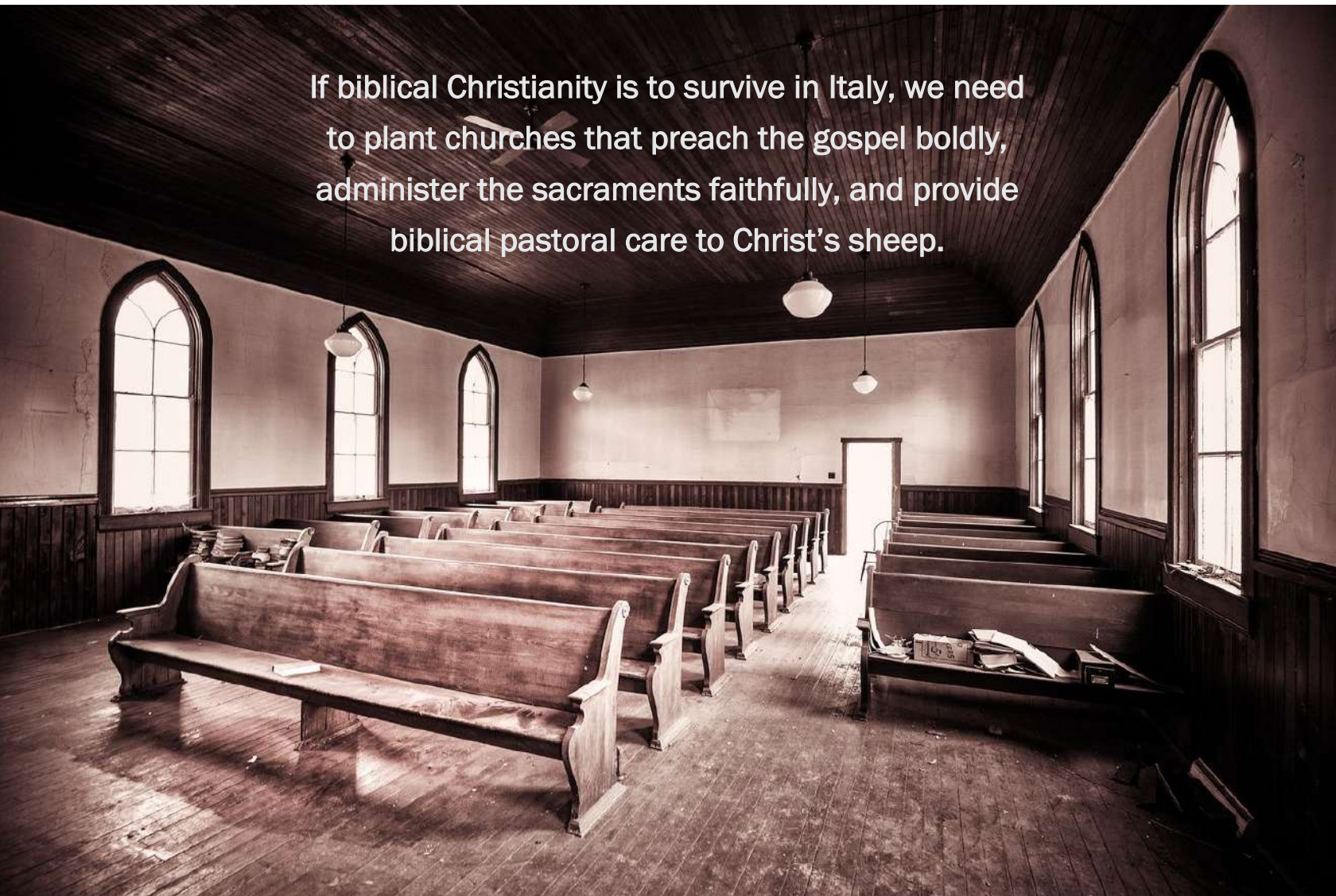


Religions in Italy



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Italy. Accessed in May 2020.

If biblical Christianity is to survive in Italy, we need to plant churches that preach the gospel boldly, administer the sacraments faithfully, and provide biblical pastoral care to Christ's sheep.





What is Our Vision?

As we prepare to go to the mission field, we have both short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals.

Our **short-term goal** is to plant a Christ-centered, gospel-driven Presbyterian Church in Lecce, which will hopefully become self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. As a covenant family sent in mission, we are Christ's ambassadors and servants, willing to make the most of every opportunity to share the gospel with the lost, including the vast number nominal Roman Catholics in the area.

As a PCA missionary, my primary task would be to pastor the flock of God entrusted to me. I would preach the Word, administer the sacraments, lead in worship, give catechetical instruction, and provide pastoral care to members. Moreover, I would lead and promote evangelism and outreach in the community, meet with visitors, train and develop leaders, and partner with other like-minded ministries.

Judit will collaborate in the secretarial work, to develop the Children's and Women's ministry and, when female presence is required, in biblical counseling. She will aid in the development of the church's Psalter and Hymnal and will help oversee evangelistic tools such as the church's website and the social media communication.

Our vision is calling sinners to repentance by communicating to them the changeless Christ, equipping the "living stones" by preaching to them the whole gospel, and building up the body of Christ in Lecce, while worshipping the Triune God.

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In partnership with the Reformation Italy mission work, our **mid-term goal** is helping to establish an indigenous reformed denomination that can foster the planting of more reformed confessional churches.

In partnership with reformed and Presbyterian churches from the US and Europe, and with theological seminaries (like Westminster Seminary California), the **long-term goal** would include helping to organize and establish an Italian Reformed theological school.

It is our prayer that the Lord will lead us and bless these goals for the sake of Christ, his Gospel, and his church in Italy.



Giuseppe Libertini Street | Downtown



July 13 & 14, 2019

In the City Hall of Cannole (Lecce) a delegations of the New Life PCA Session (the RE and engineer B. Qualls, the RE and attorney J. Yphantides, the TE and TGC President Dr. J. Kim), met with the Mayor L. Rubichi, the Rev. P. Luther (MTW Regional Director for Italy), and a delegation from the URCNA, and the Hungarian and Italian Reformed Churches to discuss the Church plant in Lecce.



On the Lord's Day was held the first Presbyterian Service ever in South Italy.



Where Are We Called to Go?

Located in the region of Apulia, at the "heel" of the "Italian boot," **Lecce** is the capital city of the province of Lecce and the most important city of the Salentine Peninsula.

It is also my home. Being born and raised in this region and having studied in Lecce, I am quite familiar with the local culture and customs. Furthermore, I can speak both the Italian language as well as the local dialect, which is still very much present in this area.

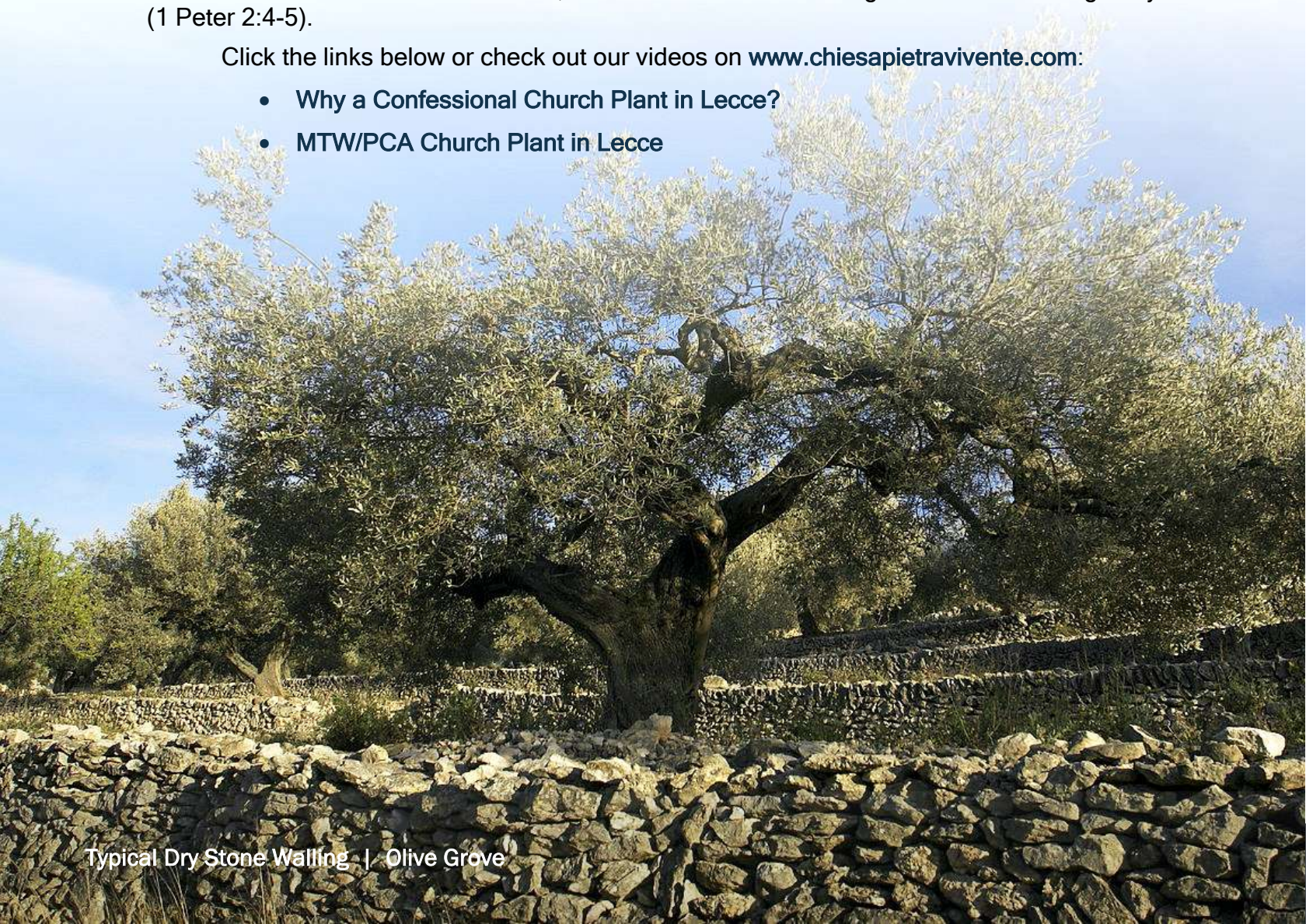
Although the city of Lecce counts about 100,000 inhabitants, the surrounding area is densely populated, and over a million people live within a radius of 40 miles. However, the Protestant presence on the Salento peninsula is almost nonexistent. There are only about 200-250 believers, scattered in a few Evangelical churches. No Presbyterian or Reformed churches exist throughout Southern Italy.

Rich in history, culture, and folklore, because of its Baroque architectural monuments, Lecce is commonly nicknamed "The Florence of the South." This is an area of ancient olive trees, generous vines, and ancient dry-stone walling, also called "living stone walls," which are UNESCO World Heritage.

It is from these dry-stone walling and the colors of Lecce's land, the core group created the church's plant logo and decided the name, "*Pietra Vivente*" (Living Stone), alluding to Christ our Lord and Foundation of life, and to the believers that together form His living body (1 Peter 2:4-5).

Click the links below or check out our videos on www.chiesapietravivente.com:

- [Why a Confessional Church Plant in Lecce?](#)
- [MTW/PCA Church Plant in Lecce](#)



Typical Dry Stone Walling | Olive Grove



Cathedral Square | 12th Century



Roman Amphitheater | 1st Century



How Can You Support This Ministry?

The Lecce Church Plant (**MTW Project #P-0308**), is a *Mission to the World* (MTW) Project, the foreign missions' agency of the *Presbyterian Church in America* (PCA). Therefore, this denomination will provide all spiritual and financial accountability for our work through its presbytery and mission agency. As an ordained minister in the PCA, my spiritual accountability will be through the South Coast Presbytery, which is based on Southern California. All financial accountability will be through MTW, which is based at the denomination's headquarters in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

If you would like to partner with us in the spread of the Gospel in Lecce, you can find more information on the MTW website by typing the following URL in your browser:

<https://mtw.org/missionaries/details/coluccia-vincenzo-and-judit>

or by scanning the QR code beside



MTW offers several ways to give. You can send a one-time gift, set up a recurring monthly gift, or even give anonymously. You can also send a check with our Project number (**MTW Project P-0308**) in the memo line to:

Mission to the World
P.O. Box 744165
Atlanta, GA 30374-4165.

For more information concerning our preparation for the mission, the MTW Project, and the detailed budget narrative built with MTW, please, visit the church plant website:

www.chiesapietravivente.com

or feel free to write or call at:

Email: info@chiesapietravivente.com
 vincenzo@chiesapietravivente.com

ITA Mobile: +39 3355801294

Conclusion

With the arrival of a pandemic and much heartbreaking loss, Italy seems poised to hear a message of comfort and hope. In spite of uncertainty and fear, this is an exciting time to bring the gospel to the country of Italy. The Lord is opening a door of opportunity to fulfill his Great Commission in a land that has long been in darkness. We hope to partner with you to bring the light and life found only in the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Lecce.

It is our prayer that through your generous support and partnership, many in Italy will be blessed by the good news for many generations to come. May God fill our sails with the wind of his Spirit so that we may never tire of making disciples of all nations!

“I will build my church,
and the gates of hell
shall not prevail against it.”

Matthew 16:18



Arch of Triumph of Charles V | 16th Century



Church Plant in Lecce

ITALY

Preaching His Gospel | Building His Church



Together We Can Go!