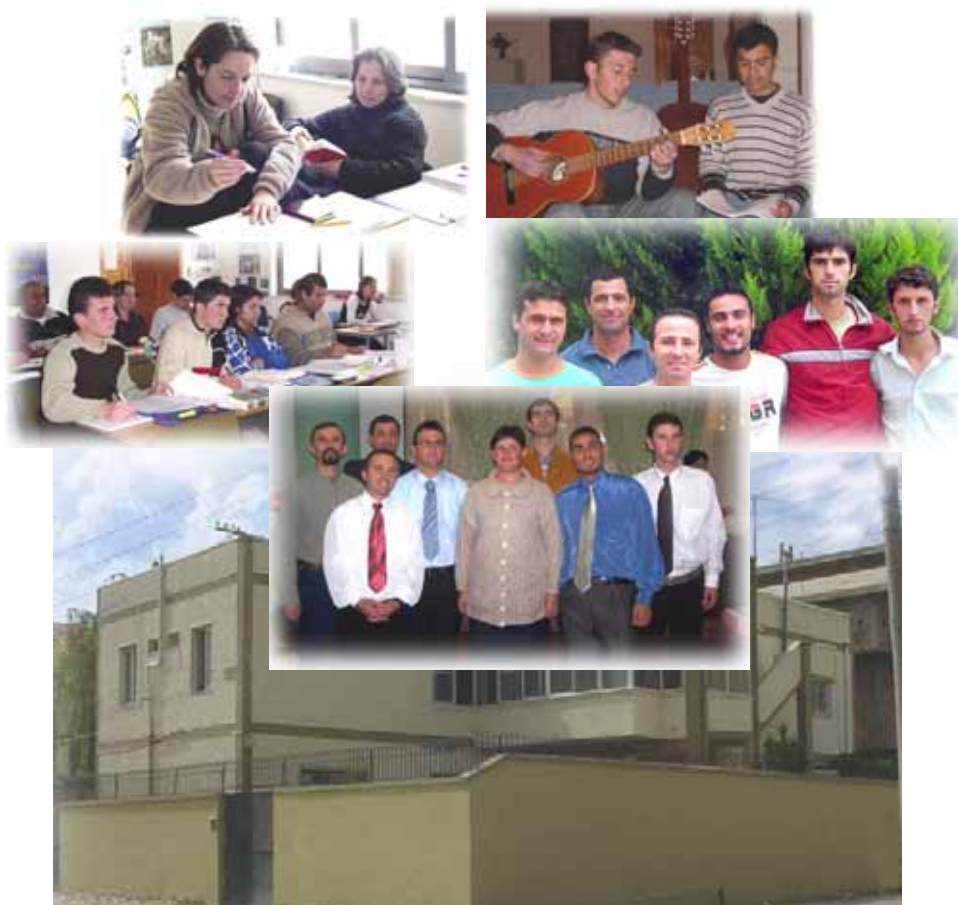


THE ABI ADVANCER

A Newsletter of Albanian Bible Institute

**“ABI ...equipping Albanian Christians for life,
ministry and world impact”**



Address: ABI - K.P. 250 - Durrës, Albania

Email: ibsh@icc-al.org

Tel. 355 52 335 20

Celular 355 69 20 76266

Web Address: www.albanianbibleinstitute.com

THE ABI ADVANCER

FROM THE DIRECTOR

MAY 2007



These are very exciting times at Albanian Bible Institute! We are only four months away from the opening of the new school. During this time without students, we have accomplished much. Each week the staff has come together to pray for one another and the needs of the school. Some have been involved in fasting. The teachers have finished work on scheduling courses for the upcoming year. We have also completed work on policy manuals for faculty and students. The library has been inventoried. The old beds we have had for the last ten years left the other day on a truck going to summer camp. (Good thing kids have better backs than us adults). We can now clearly see walls that need painting and replastering. We've just gotten word that one of our former staff members is returning for the upcoming school year. We might even have an Albanian pastor joining our staff as a teacher trainee this fall. Changes are taking place a little at the time as we get ready for September 17th.

An exciting opportunity for further growth is about to come upon us and we very much need your help to see this dream come true. We need to expand our facilities for housing the students who come for training at ABI. At their March 19-20th meeting, the school's board voted to add a third floor to the existing building which will give us space for three dormitory rooms for male students, a large bath and shower room, and two rooms for married couples to stay. (Currently, we have no place for married couples to stay if they want to come to school). This third floor will also include a metal roof and solar panels for economical heating for years to come.

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Currently, we have \$60,000 for the project and need another \$20,000 to complete it. **Our goal is to finish everything this summer before the students arrive for classes on September 17th.** This is quite a leap of faith, but we have every reason to believe God wants us to move forward at this time. We have a very dedicated Christian architect and engineer who have committed themselves to the project. Usually this man is very busy with much bigger projects, but he has dedicated himself to the expansion of ABI this summer. We will have no students on campus this summer; thus, the work will not interfere with school.

Stepping out in faith sometimes means asking for help. The Bible tells us we have not because we ask not. We have been asking God and we are also asking you to join us in meeting this need. The addition of this third floor will enable us to expand the number of students we train, especially married couples. We will increase student capacity by 20 percent and simultaneously make more space available on the lower floors for offices and classrooms. **We really need the space!**

If you would like to give for the addition of the third floor, please send your donations to International Ministries, who will forward the money to us. Their address is: International Ministries, 1420 Kerrway Ct. Ft. Wayne, IN 46805. Please make sure you include a short note specifying that the money is for the ABI building fund. If you prefer to send the money directly to the school through a wire transfer, please contact us so we can give you the specific banking information. Your donations will greatly assist us in the training of many Albanian church leaders, church planters and missionaries for many years to come. Thanks for joining us in the leap of faith!

Sincerely,

**STUDENT TESTIMONY: ERI LEKA,
CLASS OF 2006**

I have a passion for ABI and I take advantage of every opportunity possible to recruit students and tell them about



our school. It is not an obligation, but comes from my heart. I think ABI is the best Bible school in Albania.

My Biblical knowledge before I came to ABI was very weak and limited, but it really expanded as a result of my time here. I now have tools to open the word of God with university students. As I prepare Bible studies, I now ask questions about interpretation, context, and meaning of the passage so I can share with others. This came as a result of my time in the hermeneutics classes.

While at ABI I learned how to manage with few financial resources. As a student I didn't always have much money. This was a good experience to teach me how to manage without a lot of money in my ministry.

Probably the greatest blessing of my time at ABI was the relationships. Teachers were not just teachers for us, but they were a family. The relationships between staff and students was great! I have great friendships now because of my time at ABI.

Eri works in the Shalom Church of Tirana and serves in student ministry with "Peace With God," an organization for student discipleship and evangelism. Eri and her team serve on campuses in the cities of Tirana, Durres and Elbasan.

**STUDENT TESTIMONY: LANDI RIZALLARAJ,
CLASS OF 2006**

One of the best blessings God has ever given me was the time I spent at ABI. At ABI I learned not only theology, but also character and dedi-

cation. I also see the effects of this in my ministry today. I serve in six villages near Delvina, taking the gospel to people there.



When I left ABI, I was sad and did not want my experience to end. It was that good. I think it must have been like the three disciples felt on the Mountain of Transfiguration when they did not want that mountain top experience to end. The staff of this school, Jerry, Lee, Adam, David and their families are great. I am thankful to God for them. We are very indebted to them for their dedication. May this school continue to serve until Jesus comes!

Landi serves on the ministry team in the Reformed Church of Delvina, working primarily in the regional villages to do evangelism in areas with no church. He is also bivocational and works in a furniture shop to support himself. He and two other students from Delvina traveled 7 hours each week on the bus to attend classes.

**STUDENT TESTIMONY: ERTON SHYTI,
CLASS OF 2005**

ABI has been a great help in my life. Before I came to ABI, my knowledge of the scripture was very superfi-

cial, though at the time I thought I knew a lot. Back then, I was the assistant pastor of my church. I had no idea then how much coming to ABI was going to help me. I now see that ABI was a great foundation God used in my life to help me grow in knowledge, maturity and character.

Today I work on Campus Crusade's coverage team for the AERO project of 2006. We go into 13 villages in the Pogradec area doing evangelism and church planting. Many of these villages are Muslim or Orthodox. We don't always immediately know how to approach these villages with the gospel. My worldview studies at ABI have helped me and my team understand how other people who are different from us think. It has helped us learn to build bridges with them. As a result, we are seeing fruit from our work and lives are being changed.

I don't know where I would be today without ABI. I have many great friends as a result of my time in this school. It has been invaluable preparation to my ministry.

Since graduating from ABI, Erton has served with Campus Crusade's coverage team in the areas of Gramsh and Pogradec. While a student he had a 4 1/2 hour bus ride each week to ABI.



**STUDENT TESTIMONY: ERMIR TAJA,
CLASS OF 2004**



Before I came to ABI, my sermons were very short and not too substantial. Now I have the tools to prepare for preaching. I laugh when I compare my sermons from then with those I preach today.

Coming to ABI was full of challenges for me and my young family. I was married and had two little girls at the time. My mother died while I was in school. Still, God was faithful and brought us through the difficulties of being a young family, pastoring a new church and going to school. He gave us strength through it all.

While at ABI I received many blessings. I learned spiritual discipline through the numerous Bible studies we had there. I felt the presence of God through the staff, their lessons, the fellowship, the informal times of socializing with the students, and even during the meal times.

The teachers we had here were great. They are servants and doers of the word, not just people who know it in their heads.

The students at ABI come from many different places throughout Albania. I am glad to say that we built bridges of friendship with one another, though we were different. Sometimes we had to learn how to get along with one another. We had to learn to forgive and be forgiven. It is good to drive through cities and villages of Albania and to remember former students who live and minister in these places.

Because of ABI, church leaders are growing and their level of teaching is growing as well. With growing leaders we are much more likely to have growing churches as well.

I thank God for the director, staff, board, and all those who support Albanian Bible Institute. God bless you all!

Ermir is married with two daughters, ages 7 and 4. They live and work in Marikaj, a community between Durres and Tirana. Ermir is the pastor of the Church of God in Marikaj where he has been serving since 1998.

We could use your help!

While I am in this mode of sharing needs, please allow me to share some other ways you can be involved in helping us create a more welcoming environment for our students to live and study. Our building has been serving us relatively well over the last ten years, but signs of deterioration are beginning to show. Situated in the coastal city of Durres, our building gets its share of moisture. This means that plastered walls have begun to peel and crack badly in some places. Some of our floor tiles are buckling and broken. Our furniture is looking old and out of style after ten years of usage. (All of it may have been used before we got it). The building needs to be painted inside and outside. Allow me to share some specific needs that we think will help us create a more warm and homey environment for our students. We could use your help!

- 1. Painting inside and outside..... \$ 1,500
- 2. Tile for the second floor, plus labor..... \$ 3,500
- 3. Furnishings for student living room/dining room \$ 2,000
- 4. Furnishings for two couples' rooms \$ 2,000

CREATING A WARM AND HOMEY ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS TO LIVE AND STUDY...

Perhaps you, your Sunday School class, missions group or church would like to donate to one of these specific projects. You can send your donation through International Ministries, whose address was included in the director's report.

If you are looking for a big and ambitious project, we have one more! ABI really needs a **strong, central heating system for all three floors**. Currently, we use diesel or electrical heaters in each room, which are neither efficient nor economical. Hauling a big can of diesel fuel up two flights of stairs isn't much fun. The smell isn't so great either! We would like to replace all of these old heaters with a central heating system that would save money and keep the place much warmer. The cost of doing this will be \$13,000! Yes, this is a big ticket item, but one that is very necessary in the damp, winter months when it feels so cold indoors (sometimes colder indoors than outside). Would you join us in praying that God will lay this big project on the hearts of people who want to help us create a warmer, more homey environment for our students to live and study?

PRIORITY PRAYER REQUESTS FOR ALBANIAN BIBLE INSTITUTE

May 2007

Lee Bradley, Director

1. Pray for **serious and highly committed students** to come to ABI this fall to begin training for the ministry. In a country with a poor economy, there is much pressure to pursue good paying jobs rather than training for church leadership. Many of the young people feel the pressure from their parents to work instead of study for a ministry with no financial guarantees after graduation.
 2. Pray for our **new discipleship program** that will begin this fall. Each student will be paired with a faculty mentor and spend at least one hour a week in one on one discipleship. We are seeking to more greatly invest in our students' character and spiritual maturity. These are even more essential foundations for the ministry than the teaching they get in the classroom. We seek to disciple those who will disciple others.
 3. Pray for all of the **financial needs** which have been explained in detail. Pray that God will touch many hearts in order to supply all that we need. While these seem like big needs to us, \$42,000 is not a lot of money for God.
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