

# The ABI Advancer



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

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings in the Name of the Lord!

The new school year started a couple of weeks ago and we have gotten off to a very good start. In this issue of the ABI Advancer we want to introduce you to some of our students and share with you some of the progress that has been going on since our last newsletter.

Over the summer we worked day and night to get our building ready for the incoming students. The inside and outside of the building are now painted. A group of volunteers from the Swedish Baptist Union were a great help to us in getting the inside painted. Some former students, staff and local believers also joined in the fun of painting the outside. We got rid of a lot of old stuff that was no longer usable. Offices that were on the second floor were moved to the first floor. New doors were installed for the offices and reception area. The bathroom for the staff was remodeled. Batteries have been purchased for the inverter system we use when the electricity is cut by the power company. (Still a frequent occurrence in Albania).

The library was moved to a larger and brighter room, making it look more inviting for our students. A com-

puter and printer have been bought to help the students write their papers. New curtains have been donated and installed which make every room look so much better. New beds have been bought for the student bedrooms. Some wonderful people from First Baptist Church of Colstrip, Montana made some beautiful and warm blankets for our beds. New light fixtures inside and outside the building have also added to the new ambiance of the school. We are so proud of everything that has been done to the building in the last four months to get it ready for the start of school. The enthusiasm of the volunteers, staff and donors to make ABI look its best blessed me. I am thankful for every one of you. I think the Lord loves seeing this kind of cooperation and generosity among his people.

Today we thank the Lord for sending us four full-time students and two part-time students who take classes at night. These new student work very hard and use their spare time to study and prepare for their assignments. Four of our six students think that God is leading them to serve overseas as missionaries to the Muslim

world. This, in and of itself, is a great step forward for the Albanian church. Two lingering results of the communist era on both society and the church have been an aversion to taking risks and a mentality of dependence. Unfortunately these factors fostered irresponsibility and self-absorption among many in society, including believers. Seeing Albanian Christians becoming burdened for lost people in other lands and preparing to go to these places with the gospel is a true work of God.

*“The enthusiasm of the volunteers, staff and donors to make ABI look its best blessed me”*

In addition to this good news, we have been encouraged by your gifts to our building fund. I will say more about that on another page of this letter. Thank you for what you

have done so far in helping us meet this need. Your prayer support and ministry of giving to Albanian Bible Institute is seen as a vote of confidence in our ministry of equipping Albanian believers for life, ministry and world impact.

God bless you all!  
Lee Bradley



*In this issue of the ABI Advancer we would like for you to meet two of our students, Gjergj and Mira Lleshi, and their daughter, Emanuela. They began their studies last month. In only the second time in the school's history, we have a married couple studying with us. We would like for you to hear their testimonies.*

### **Gjergj**

I am Gjergj Lleshi and 25 years old. I am married and have a daughter 18 months old. I come from a Catholic family, though they never go to church.

I accepted Christ as Lord of my life in 1997 when I was only 15 years old. I was invited to church and went. There I heard about the living God and saw love in the church that the people had for one another. I needed a little time to understand about Jesus and that he had died for me. Soon I began to understand and believed in Jesus.

I have been involved in church over the years. Right now I am a member of "Way of Salvation" Church in Laprake (Tirana) where I live with my family. I have served on the evangelism team and even as the leader of that group. I have done different practical jobs in the church like painting and repairing things.

My desire is to serve the Lord as a missionary wherever God directs. To

## STUDENT TESTIMONIES

accomplish this goal, I need more knowledge. This has led me to study at Albanian Bible Institute where, with the help of God, I will be prepared. At ABI I have seen the strong commitment and preparation of our teachers. In fact, in our school everything is prepared well including the lessons, assignments, food, and the different activities we have.

After I finish school, I would like to be a missionary in Africa because there is great need there. At the end of my time at ABI, I expect that I will be better prepared in the word of God, in preaching, leading Bible studies and worship.

### **Mira**

I accepted Christ in 2007. I come from a Muslim background (Bektashi branch) and served an idol until that day when my younger sister came with a Bible that she received from her biology teacher. I began to read about Jesus. One day in a vision God revealed to me that Jesus was the truth. From that point on, I have believed in Him.

Currently, I attend the "Way of Salvation" Church in Tirana. In the past I have worked with children, helping them learn the stories of the Bible. That also helped me learn the stories of the Bible. For two years I worked in a special ministry to the Gypsy children at the canal of Tirana.

I have come to ABI to prepare to serve my entire life for Jesus and to grow in my knowledge of him. I

would like to become a worthy servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and to serve him wherever he leads. I am especially interested to serve as a missionary to Africa.

I especially appreciate the lessons and preparation that we receive in Albanian Bible Institute. We have learned and continue to learn to study the Bible step by step. We have learned how to preach and to analyze passages in the Bible. It is a pleasure to study at this school.

### **Emanuela**

I am a talented 18 month baby girl and have already learned to write and help my parents with their lessons.



Okay, that's not quite true. However, I would like to say that I like being at Albanian Bible Institute almost as much as my parents. Everyone gives me their full attention and I smile and laugh at them. I like running all over the place and staying with Manjola, Pellumb's wife, when my mom and dad are in their classes. While at Manjola's I play with Ildi and Andrea, as well as their toys. I even have a few toys of my own. I expect that coming to ABI is just one of many times in my life when I will be with my parents as they follow God's direction in their lives. I heard them say something the other day about Africa. Do they have toys there?

Welcome Pellumb Ranxha!



*One of the great answers to prayer this year has been the coming of Pellumb Ranxha as our first teacher trainee. Pellumb has served for many years as pastor and assistant pastor in the Gramsh Christian Church. He and his wife, Manjola, arrived with their two sons, Andrea and Ildi, in late August to begin this new ministry with us. Pellumb is a 2001 graduate of Albanian Bible Institute and knows first hand the benefits of the training our school offers Albanian church leaders. we would like for you to hear his story.*

I started to be involved in ministry soon after I came to know the Lord in April of 1995. My first ministry was teaching children and doing evangelism in the villages of Gramsh. This was a launching point for ministry as I began to see that the Lord called me to a life of ministry.

After fulfilling my military duties in 1998, I came back to Gramsh to begin ministering in the church. It was then that I began studying at Albanian Bible Institute. I learned a lot that was helpful to me like how to preach, how to study the Bible, and how to have a healthy family life. The courses on pastoral is-

sues, church history and Biblical studies were a great help to me as they helped me know better how to deal with conflicts in the church. My faith in the Lord grew a lot during my time at ABI.

Throughout the years I continued serving in Gramsh, doing all the duties that pastors fulfill like teaching, preaching, counseling, organizing meetings, and directing special services like weddings and baptism. For the last twelve years I have served as a church leader in one capacity or another.

The choice to come to ABI as a teacher trainee was made easier because there was good leadership in the church that could continue the work without me. I believe the Lord has called me in the ministry to make disciples in the Albanian church. ABI is a very good place to carry out this ministry of discipleship as we expect many stu-



Pellumb Graduation 2001

dents and future leaders to come here over the years. Before Manjola and I decided to come, we prayed and fasted. We shared with our former pastor, church leaders, and parents the opportunity we were being offered at ABI. Everyone had peace that we were to take this job. Their peace gave us great assur-

ance and increased our desire to begin this ministry at ABI.

I believe that ABI will continue to effectively train church leaders for the Albanian church now and in the future. The need for training will continue to be great. ABI will continue to equip them better for the ministries of

*My faith in the Lord grew a lot during my time at ABI.*

discipleship, teaching, preaching, and counseling, with the intent that they in turn will raise up new leaders for future generations. I have heard pastors and church leaders

share about how differently they think their lives and ministries would have been if they had not come to study at ABI. The training our school offers makes a great difference!

*Having Pellumb on our staff is one of the early steps toward full indigenization of the teaching staff. It is our goal that one day the entire staff of ABI will be made up of well trained and experienced Albanian teachers. We who now serve on the staff of ABI are looking forward to the day when we will no longer be needed because there is a staff of godly Albanian teachers who can do the jobs we now do.*

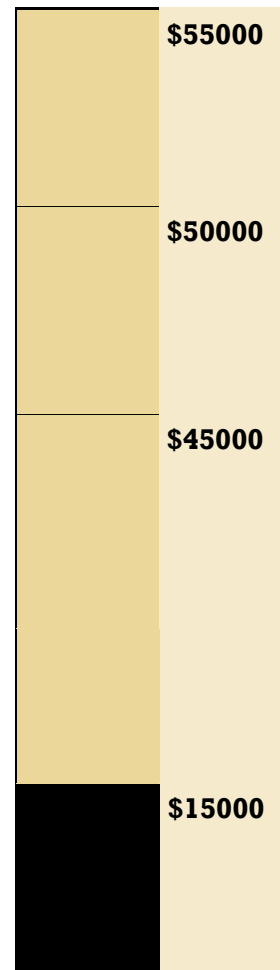
**PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN THE BUILDING OF STUDENT HOUSING**

In our last letter we shared with you our vision to add a third floor to our building which will enable us to house more students in future years. Two of these rooms will be for married couples who come for training. So far, we have received \$15,500 for this project. Our original goal was to raise \$45,000 to complete everything. Since we first began to speak with you about this project in the spring, new tax laws and some building modifications have increased our need from \$45,000 to \$55,000. The five percent drop in the value in the dollar in the last six months has also increased the expenses we are facing. Up to this point, we have raised about 28% of our goal. Your prayers and gifts for this addition have been greatly appreciated. As you might expect, we still continue to ask for your help in raising the remaining 72%.

Though we have not raised all the money necessary for the additional housing, we have not been discouraged. Since the municipal elections this winter, no building commission has been appointed by the new mayor to approve building permits. We could not have built legally even if we had all the money necessary. These kinds of roadblocks are sometimes frustrating, but totally out of our hands. Facing them reminds us that God is sovereign and has perfect plans and timing for everything, including building permits. We will get the building permit AND money to build in God's timing. Knowing this keeps us from despairing.

Thank you all for praying for these needs we have. We ask for your continued prayers that we obtain a building permit. We also ask you to pray that God will send the financial support necessary for the expansion of student housing. The \$40,000 that we lack is not a big problem for God. The extra space we need will assist us in training what we hope will be an expanding student body in the years to come. Our hope is to finish all the construction before the school year ends in June. A lot of prayer is going to be needed to bring all of this about! We hope we can continue to count on you for that.

*"...God is sovereign and has perfect plans and timing for everything ... including ... money to build "*



**PRAYER REQUESTS FOR  
ALBANIAN BIBLE INSTITUTE**

*October 2007*

1. Please pray for the necessary funding for the addition of the third floor to our building. We are still in need of \$40,000 to complete everything.
2. Please pray for more people to join our student sponsorship campaign. So far, we have found 60% of the necessary money to sponsor students for this school year. Each sponsorship costs \$500.
3. Please pray that the students that we have this year will continue to take advantage of every opportunity they have to learn and prepare themselves for present and future ministry. We are especially excited about the commitment many of them have to serve one day as missionaries to the Muslim world.
4. Please pray for the spiritual development of each student during his or her time at ABI. This year each student has a faculty mentor with whom he or she spends time weekly in personal discipleship. Pray that each student will possess and demonstrate growing godly character that will equip him for fruitful service for Jesus.