

The ABI Advancer



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

Update from the Director

Greetings from Dures!

It is a pleasure to write and share about God's goodness here at ABI. The new school year has gotten under way and we are off to a very encouraging start. We have four new full time students and one new part time student, bringing our student body up to ten students. The students we have this year are serious about learning and have a very teachable spirit. There is also a great servant spirit among them. We often don't have to ask for help with chores. They ask what they can do to help. This is impressive!

The start of the new school year was even more special this year because all the essential building modifications were finished before the students arrived. This was no small feat. During the last six weeks of the summer, we painted the inside of the building, installed new light fixtures, re-wired the second floor, bought new furniture, remodeled two classrooms, cleaned out one large storage room, transformed it into a recreation room, installed new interior doors and laid tile on the first and second floors of the building. This wasn't easy, but God was with us every step of the way. We are very proud of all He helped us do. Our thanks to all of you who helped us have enough money to do all of this. A special word of thanks goes out to the men of First Baptist Church in Gulf Shores, Alabama, who came and laid a lot of tile in a span of 5 days. Without the help of these men, we would not have been able to finish everything before the students arrived for the first day of classes.

Unlike other schools who have graduations at the end of the school year, we hold graduation exercises in the fall of the year. Last month, we celebrated the first graduation of students since our re-organization began back in 2007. The service was very, very joyful as our graduates shared what God has done in their lives through their time at ABI. It is gratifying to see this growth and to feel some reward in what we are doing. The joy was increased even more when we learned that morning that one of our students, Elona Shehu, would be leaving that week to begin missionary service in Istanbul, Turkey. We are very proud of her. One of our other graduates, Tonin Koceku, now awaits the completion of his appointment process so he can serve in Turkey as well. Elona and Tonin's call to serve in Turkey was solidified this summer while we went on a vision trip sponsored by the Daniel Project, an American based organization that seeks to find and support near-culture missionaries who will work among the Turks and Kurds.

We once again thank Daniel Project for their invitation to our students to go on this trip. I hope that even more of our students will go to serve there in the future.



This summer while we were making many changes to our building, we also had an opportunity to see photographs of changes made to the building over the thirteen years of our existence. In this time we have trained 92 full-time and part-time students. We are happy about this, but not totally content. There are many more who are in need of training. During this school year we as a staff will be out in local churches leading seminars and preaching in order to improve the level of teaching, discipleship and ministry skills. To increase student enrollment in our residential program, we are going to need to increase the hunger in the churches for the kind of solid teaching we offer. If we have any regret about the last three years since our reorganization began, it is that ABI has been underutilized by the churches of Albania. This year we seek to reverse this trend by being better connected to the churches through an itinerant ministry of teaching. We also seek to expand our ministry in neighboring Kosova, since a new highway has been built which brings the two countries much closer together. With easier access, we should be able to increase our base of training and impact among the Albanian believers in both countries.

Your investment of finances and prayer in the ministry of ABI is making an impact. Students are learning in the classrooms. They are growing in their faith and becoming more Christlike in their character. They are becoming more competent to preach and teach God's word. They are serving faithfully in local churches. Some are now going beyond the borders of Albania with the gospel. Currently we have three graduates serving as missionaries in Kosova, one in Macedonia and two on their way to Turkey. May God continue to use us as we work to equip Albanian believers for life, ministry and world impact. Thank you for all you do to help us fulfill our mission. We are all in this together.

Sincerely,
LEE BRADLEY

Student Testimonies

Valbona Zace



Hi! I am Valbona Zace from Shalom Church in Tirana. I have been a believer for eight years, accepting Christ through the ministry of a lady who directed Christian women's meetings in our area. Today I serve the Lord by leading women's meetings and student ministries in Elbasan and Durres.

One of the reasons I have chosen to come to ABI is to know better the word of God and to be better equipped for ministry. This school is really helping me and is a blessing. The students and staff are a great encouragement. Each day at the school begins and ends with the Lord. Throughout the day he is preparing us for our ministry and filling us with the knowledge we need. I am very happy that I have come to ABI.

Fllanxa Vladi

I am Fllanxa Vladi from Bathore, a suburb of Tirana. I have been a believer for six years thanks to the work of two missionaries who came to our area to start a church several years ago. We had just moved to this area from a village in the north to find a better life down in Tirana. As a result, my family found a better life. It is life in Christ.

During the years that I have been a believer, we have had Bible studies and children's meetings in my house. As the years have gone by, the church has grown and moved to rented facilities.

We now have a Brazilian missionary



family working among us and the community recognizes that we have a real church.

I have been working with the children's meetings. Still, I want to serve the Lord even more.

Thanks to the encouragement of the missionaries, I am now at ABI trying to learn more which will help me better serve Him. I am learning about theology and the Bible and growing in my relationship with the Lord. This has been a great, great blessing in my life. I am very happy I have come to ABI. He has provided the way and the means to study here.

The fellowship is very, very good. I know I am learning a lot that is helping me now and will help me serve the Lord in the future.

Bestar Flamuraj

I am Bestar Flamuraj and am a first year student at Albanian Bible Institute. I came to Christ when I was a child only 11 years old. God used a childhood friend to tell me about Jesus and lead me to accept him as savior and Lord.

Currently I live in Tirana and serve in Shalom Church, doing evangelism and student ministry. I want to live for the Lord and serve him all my life. Therefore, I have come to Albanian Bible Institute to study and be equipped to serve the Lord according to his purposes. My life goal is to see Albania and the all the Alba

nian people, calling upon the name of the Lord and believing in Him.

I am very pleased to be a part of ABI. We are like a family. God is using ABI for his glory and to be a blessing for the Albanian people. My own family has been against my faith, but at ABI we are like a family in Christ. I am thankful to God for this school.



Staff Testimonies

Hello.

My name is Brandon Clark. I was born and raised on a ranch outside of Rosebud, Montana. That in itself was a great blessing for me. However, an even greater blessing in my life is that I grew up in a Christian family. I was taught and modeled the teachings of the Bible from a very early age. This took root in my life and became my personal faith at a very young age. Since then I can truly say that my life has never been the same. While it is no simple matter to grow in Christ, it is both a challenging and rewarding journey. My journey lead me to East Texas Baptist University where I was challenged and awakened to the idea of actually getting involved in missions. After university I felt led to spend a period of my life in prayer and openness to his leading. It was during this time that a missionary by the name of Lee Bradley (ABI director) came to my home church in Forsyth, MT on a stateside assignment and offered me a job – the possibility of serving in Albania and working with students. Think about this for a second. A missionary serving in Albania from Alabama came to a small rural town in Montana and... This world is either a weird place or God is an amazing God. Probably both. Now this country boy from Montana is in his second year serving at ABI in Durres, Albania. My job description was to help disciple students. I have found myself teaching classes like intro to Old Testament and Guitar; hanging out with students by getting to know their lives and meeting their families; painting, laying tile at the School; and helping Albanian churches with music. Serving here is not an easy task, but it is worth it. It is both great privilege to serve God at ABI and a blessing to be a part of something bigger than anyone. The longer I am here the more I like it because I am able to communicate with people better. With communication comes relationships. And with relationships come life changes. It is the relationships that I am making through my ministry at ABI that I will never forget. It is my prayer and life goal to be all about being an instrument that God can use for life change. I believe that God has led me to ABI for this purpose. God is good!



Financial update

It is with joy that we write to thank you for all you have done for us in the last couple of years as we have made many changes to the building, including the construction of the dormitory. Your support has been tremendous and we continually thank the Lord for what you have done. In a time when the world-wide economy has slowed down considerably, you have not abandoned us. Instead, you have kept us going. Even this summer after we were robbed, many of you sent us money to help us recover what was lost. We are so thankful to you for your sacrificial giving, especially in that very difficult time. We know that no one gives sacrificially unless he really believes in the cause to which he gives. Your generous and sacrificial gifts are a vote of confidence in our ministry. Thank you for this encouragement and support.

Tonight as I write this, I am glad to report that God has provided what we needed to purchase and install the heating system that we have needed for so long. Last month we were about \$5000 short, but the money we needed has come through a donor who has given the school an interest free loan which we can repay at \$100 a month until it is paid in full. We are grateful this money is available. However, we do not like to be in debt. If you would like to help us pay off this loan quickly, your gifts will certainly be accepted and appreciated. Please just designate those gifts for the ABI building fund when you send your donation. The address is International Ministries

FEC, 1420 Kerrway Ct. Ft. Wayne, IN 46805.

By the time you get this newsletter, the new heating system will be installed, just in time for the cold weather to arrive. With this project finished, all the building modifications in phase two of the building campaign are complete. Praise God! We will now be taking a break from new building projects for a little while. However, we have dreams to do one more project. We want to add a large classroom/auditorium to the third floor of our building that will enable us to have larger classes and conferences to serve the greater Albanian church community. We certainly will not turn away any gifts you might want to give to help us get started with preliminary work like architectural plans and legal documents. You can designate these gifts to the ABI building fund, just as you have done in the previous building campaigns.

Friends, you have been a great blessing to us. We appreciate all you have done to help us serve unhindered through your faithful financial support.

God bless you all!



PRAYER REQUESTS

from Albanian Bible Institute

- 1. Pray that our students who have started the school year with such good attitudes will continue to have teachable minds and hearts.**
- 2. Pray for the staff of ABI as we expand our teaching ministry to local churches. This will be more work for all of us, but will provide excellent opportunities to develop stronger ties with the churches and increase their hunger for God's word. Pray for strength for our staff as we attempt to do more teaching and do more traveling in the process. Pray that this new itinerant teaching ministry will stimulate many in the churches to come to ABI for full-time studies in the future.**
- 3. Pray for the new Lay Church Planters School, which will begin in January. Pray that this effort will be used to equip many Albanian believers for church planting.**
- 4. Pray for Elona Shehu, one of our recent students who has just gone to Turkey to begin a three year term of missionary service in Istanbul. Please pray for Tonin Koceku who is in the process of gathering support and completing formalities to go to Turkey and begin his service there in January.**

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