

# The ABI Advancer



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

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

- 1. Please pray that our students will have an even greater hunger to learn God’s word and greater ability to serve their churches***
- 2. Please pray for our school to have an even greater impact in Albania through our new evangelistic outreach, our new Lay Church Planters School and the local church seminars we will be doing this spring.***
- 3. Pray that God will send more students for training this fall.***

## Update from the Director

It has been awhile since I have written you a report, but wanted to let you know that we are still moving forward and having a very good time in the process. These last few months have been a busy time, but also a time of great encouragement in almost every way.

### The students

The students we have this year have the best attitude of any group we have seen in a long time. We are thrilled with their teachability and their concern for the lost. This year on two occasions we have been able to give a generous offering to ABI graduates who serve in Turkey because our students have given sacrificially. Believe me. These students are not rich, but they are very generous. Sometimes when I see that offering bag that we have, I know that there are some gifts in there like the widow's mite.

This semester we have organized a couple of Saturdays for street evangelism on the boardwalk of Durres. Actually, I did not plan for us to do this but one time, but after the students did it one time and had such a good time doing evangelism together, they asked, "Can we do this again?" Who was I to tell them that they could not go witnessing again? So, we did it again. Altogether, after two Saturdays of street witnessing, the students have talked with about 30 individuals about their relationship with the Lord. There have been a few people who have been open to the gospel and some follow-up is being done.

Sometimes I can not believe this group that we have. There have been opportunities for them to go home early on Friday, but they have chosen to stay on campus and spend the night here so they can have fellowship with each other. Some attend classes even when they don't have to, simply because they want to learn more. I really like this attitude.



### The courses

People sometimes ask me what we teach our students at ABI. I often give a very general answer that we teach Bible, theology, hermeneutics, missions and church planting. Sometimes they understand what this means. Sometimes they don't. I'd like to give you specifics of some of the courses the students have had this past semester:



1. Preaching...Students organized and preached two original sermons during the course.
2. Angels and Demons...Students learned the Biblical information about angels and demons and how their activity can affect Albanian church life and Christian ministry.
3. Principles of Hermeneutics...Students learn how to interpret the Bible within a historical context. This is so important since much Bible teaching in churches tends to be propagandistic and out of context. Groups like Jehovah's Witnesses have this approach, but so do many of the Evangelical churches. Some churches teach the Bible at a very superficial level that focuses only on knowing facts about a story, rather than drawing out major points and ways of application.
4. Introduction to Worship...Students learned how to prepare worship services and even directed two of the Wednesday night chapel services using the outline they prepared from the course.
5. Chronological Bible Teaching...Students in the church planting track taught two lessons from the Firm Foundations material, which is designed to help people with little or no knowledge of the Bible to understand the plan of salvation from Genesis to the Resurrection.
6. Small Group Bible Studies...Students learned to write a lesson plan and discussion questions in order to lead a small group Bible study. They used these lesson plans and led two small group Bible studies during the course.
7. Perspectives in Global Missions...This course is sometimes referred to as the KAIROS course. Students got a taste of the challenges and needs in each continent of the world and were challenged to consider being missionaries or being involved to a greater degree in international missions.

The teachers

I am thrilled with the good job our teachers have done this year. There are four good men on our staff who teach regularly: Adam Roseboom, Brandon Clark, Pelumb Ranxha and myself. All of these men are highly committed to the task of teaching and investing in the lives of students. They often stay after class and spend time with the students. Our teachers and some of their wives help with the discipleship of the students. Even our school secretary, Ornela, is spending time discipling one of our female students. This investment of time and heart is paying off as our students are growing spiritually, as well as in knowledge and skills.

We have also been blessed to have guest teachers come in and help us with some courses. Some of these guest teachers have been foreign missionaries who live and work in Albania. Others have been Albanian church leaders who are now gaining more experience and proving their abilities in teaching. Two or three of these who have taught this year are ABI graduates. It is good to see the reward of yesterday's work coming to realization as we see these men come back and teach for us. Applause for those who taught these guys so many years ago and wondered if they would ever get this far.

Out and about

In the last semester our teachers have been out among the churches preaching and doing seminars. During the third weekend of November, a group of five of us went to Kosova to do seminars in three different churches. We are also doing more seminars this semester. We are making every effort to get out in the churches and to become more useful to them. We also hope this will result in more students attending ABI in the future.

The newest adventure...Lay Church Planters School

It has been a thrill to see what God has done with the vision of my Korean colleagues who have had a burden for more church planting and church planting training in Albania. This past year they approached us with a vision for starting a Lay Church Planters School. At first this seemed like something that would be too much additional work. Still, I felt prodded by the Lord to do it. To be honest, I wasn't even sure that many people would be that interested. I now see that God was challenging me to have greater faith.

After months of preparation, meetings and prayer (the

most important part), this new school began on January 8th. We were encouraged to see 19 students come for the first weekend course, which was on personal evangelism. It was quite an exciting weekend. We had students from four different cities and five different churches.

In the Lay Church Planters School, students must DO a practicum with each course they take. No tests. No essays. Just practice what is taught. Nothing is fully learned until it is applied.

This weekend, we picked up two new students and had a couple of guests who will possibly come again as students. We have courses every other weekend, from Friday afternoon at 5:00 till Saturday at 4:00.

Each week over 1,000 people across the globe pray for the lay church planters school. Perhaps you are one of those. How we thank God for you! When people pray together, God does big things. Thank you for being a part of this new opportunity to train church leaders in Albania.

The building

The heating system was finally installed in December, bringing phase two of our building campaign to a close. As happens so many times, the costs were higher than expected. Still, God's people provided all we needed. Thank you for giving to this. It is nice to sit here and write this from a warm office. The students are quite pleased as well.

Closing thoughts

These have been encouraging days. It has been a joy to serve in this place and to see rewards from our labors and prayers. God is faithful. We thank him for this and thank him for calling us to serve at Albanian Bible Institute. Thank you so much for all you do to help us, both financially and through your prayers. We know we are not doing this alone. God bless you for your partnership with us.

Sincerely,

LEE BRADLEY



My name is Tonin Koceku.

I'm 27 years old and I'm from Albania. I was born in a small village in the north east of Albania in the region of Dibra. I came to faith in Christ when I was a little boy 11 years old. My family's

background is Catholic, but we didn't know much about Christ. God blessed me because He sent people to tell me about Christ's salvation as a free gift and how to be with Him in eternity. Since then I have believed in Christ and have seen his hand upon my life. In 1996 I moved to Tirana, which is the capital of Albania, and started school and joined a small Church in the periphery of Tirana.

The church is called New Life. I had a desire to serve at my church but I didn't have enough tools to help others in their walk with Christ. One of my close friends and sisters in Christ, Eri Leka, was doing student ministries. At that time I helped her in that ministry. She had taken Bible lessons at Albanian Bible Institute and was doing a great job with the students. She encouraged me to go to Albanian Bible Institute so I could be used by God in my church and other places. So I decided to go to know God on a deeper level and to be able to help others in their walk with Christ. I went for two years from 2007 to 2009. During this time I began to know God better, how His love and grace for us was shown through the Cross. Also I got to know His compassion for the lost and His plan to send the gospel to all the world through the Church (II Peter

3:9;Matt 28:19).At the same time Albanian Bible Institute helped me personally in my walk with Christ, to know His plan for my life and to be able to help others in their walk also. For some time I have had the opportunity to preach, teach in my church, and also to let others know of the good news of the gospel in my neighborhood.

During the last year God has put compassion in my heart, not only for my own people but also for those in other places that haven't heard the gospel. Last June the students of ABI took a vision trip to Turkey to see the needs there and to see how we can help. On this trip God opened my eyes for going there, and I decided to go and be a part of God's work in Turkey. Six weeks ago I came over to begin my service here. At the moment I'm studying Turkish in one of the universities in Istanbul, learning the culture, building relationships, getting to know other local believers and trying to know how I can be used by God to help over here.

After I learn some Turkish I will be going to Eskisehir, one of the cities near Istanbul. The city has six hundred thousand people and there is only one Church. The Church has 10 believers. I will be part of that Church and will help them in any way that I can. My first term will be for three years. After that I will see where God will direct me.

How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!.(Rom 10:15)

My name is Elona Shehu.



I was born in Skrapar, but I have lived in Durrës for 6 years. I have been a Christian for 15 years. Before, I was a Muslim, a Bektashi, to be precise, so devoted that I would perform the rituals. I always was interested to know more about God, but my way of approaching

Him was wrong. The more I would practice the Bektashi rites, the more I would feel empty. I was searching for God, but could not find him.

Fortunately, God found me. A girl introduced me to the Gospel while I was in the fourth year of high school. In that moment I was going through a very difficult time in my life as I didn't want to live any more, but God helped me know that He loved me. It wasn't in vain that I was in this world. God created me and had a wonderful plan for me. When I heard about this, I accepted Jesus in my life. This happened on March 13, 1995. My emptiness was filled with Him. His happiness came to me and has been in me since that day. I gave my life to him and he never disappointed me. God restored my life, giving it new meaning, and since that day I want to tell to those who don't know him how wonderful God is.

God gave me the opportunity to proclaim His love in Albania. I have also had the opportunity to go to Turkey too. He worked in me, and is working day by day, using other persons and means so that I would be equipped to serve Him in the best way. Three years ago I heard about a Bible School starting a new track of studies in Church Planting and Missions. I needed this school because I was going to Turkey to fulfill God's calling. On September 17, 2007 I started my studies at ABI. It was a great blessing and encouragement for me. The courses I took at ABI have been of good quality and very helpful for me. I was able to use them immediately in the ministry that I had at my church in Albania. The teachers have been a blessing for me, teaching and encouraging me in my calling. This helped me very much in a time of great opposi-

tion to my call from family and some friends. I was glad to have these people who understood and supported me. ABI was positive and a blessing for me. We had missionaries who serve in different countries, coming and sharing with us as students about their ministry. They told us many things about missions, which was very much my interest. Many times I imagined myself in Turkey, while they were speaking or advising us. ABI helped me to learn more about the Bible and the relationship we must have with God. It helped me to be effective in serving.

ABI helped me come to Turkey by introducing me to the company that enables me to serve here. I have now been here for about 4 months, serving in the country to which the Lord called me 10 years ago. Now I am working in a kindergarten where children learn English. This is a blessing for me. I am very happy with the work here. At the same time I am learning Turkish language through private courses that I take after work. As for the ministry, I am in the first steps of contacting some women and a student who know my faith because I have been sharing with them. I have given them the New Testament and the CD with the Jesus and Magdalena film. They gladly accepted my gifts, but I still don't have any reaction from them. I am praying for them, believing that it wasn't a coincidence that I met them. I am helping in a ministry with non-believing children, helping two twin children to practice English. I am praying that they would know and accept God in their lives one day. My goal is to share the gospel with people who don't know God, and to introduce them to the body of Christ so that we can all live and work with God together. I desire that the Turkish people turn to the true God, who is waiting with open arms for his lost children.

Thank you for making it possible for ABI to continue to train, equip, and encourage Christians to serve God effectively. God bless you. Romans 8:28.

With love in Christ Jesus,

Elona Shehu

### **AT LONG LAST...HEATING SYSTEM INSTALLED!!!**

It took longer than we wanted, but our dream of having a central heating system has come finally true. The workers finished their work at the beginning of January and the building is now very warm. Many of you have given money and prayed for this need for several months. Thanks to you, we now have a more comfortable building. This second phase of our building improvement campaign is now over. God has been so good to us! He has given us what we needed, just when we needed it. We hope you will rejoice with us today as you see the pictures.



It is our hope to add a large classroom on the third floor of our building in 2012. This would enable us to have seminars and conferences here at ABI. It would also give us more room for our new lay church planters school. Although we are still some time away from 2012, we want to prepare now for the construction of this addition to our school. So far, we have about \$2,800 for what will be about a \$50,000 project. If you would like to contribute now to help us begin to secure legal documents and architectural plans for this expansion, we would be grateful. You may make your donations to International Ministries, 1420 Kerrway Ct. Ft. Wayne, IN 46805. Please designate these gifts for the ABI Building Fund.

**Instituti Biblik Shqiptar**

**K.P. 250**

**2000 Durrës, Albania**



**Instituti  
Biblik Shqiptar**

[www.albanianbibleinstitute.com](http://www.albanianbibleinstitute.com)