

The ABI Advancer



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



Greetings in the name of Christ!

How good it is to greet you and to say that our God is amazing! His goodness is abundant and his wisdom is perfect. He is sovereign! He is Lord! What assurance we have in the midst of life's successes and storms when we know who is in charge.

One truth that we have been seeing firsthand is that God has plans in everything, even in the surprises of our lives, both those that are pleasant and those that don't seem so pleasant. This fall we were hit with an unpleasant surprise of having no new students apply for admission to the school. Although we tried hard to find new students and invite them to come to ABI, no one accepted this invitation. Over the summer we lost two students from last year's class, leaving us with just two full-time students and two part-time students. What is a school supposed to do in a situation like this?

If we felt like other schools were making progress and we were not, we would think we were doing something wrong and look for ways to change. Sadly, other Bible schools in Albania and the Balkans are having great difficulty attracting students. Some have even closed. The root problem is a lack of serious discipleship in the churches, which is depleting the number of people who surrender themselves for ministry and full-time studies. Our relationships with churches and pastors in Albania and Kosova are very good. In the last year we have been working even harder to cultivate those relationships by preaching in local churches on a very regular basis and spending personal time with pastors. Still, when we meet pastors, the common story is that they have no one who is ready for ABI.

With the problem being at the local level, we are compelled to do what we can to help the churches cultivate stronger disciples who will hunger for the word. Therefore, we will be shifting to a stronger emphasis on training by extension. We will be more present in local churches by leading seminars and teaching Bible series to increase hunger for more serious studies.

We will also be spending more time with pastors and church leaders, encouraging them and giving pastoral care.

So many Albanian pastors are overworked and need personal support. Some of them have very little help, especially those who live in small towns away from Tirana and Durres. We want to do what we can to help these churches and their leaders.



Over the last few years we have been improving our building and expanding our capacity for housing students. How will we utilize our facilities in which we have invested so much? Over the next several years we plan to host seminars here on the campus, inviting pastors and church leaders to come and spend three or four days with us to be encouraged, spiritually renewed and taught God's word. We want to have seminars that are relevant to the church's needs. I hope that at least once a semester and once or twice in the summer we can have a significant conference that will impact the Albanian church in a great way. Spiritual revival has always begun with small groups of people who get right with God and ignite their churches with a passion for Him. I believe our school and its facilities can be a catalyst for this kind of impact.

Although it is our intention to continue our residential program at our campus in Durres, we also want to take ABI to the churches. In this way we can make an impact on a greater number of Albanian believers. We hope to see ABI become known as **"the school for the Albanian church."** Any way that we can be a resource or practical help for the churches, we will seek to do that. Whether it be through Bible teaching, discipleship, pastoral care, printing and distributing books, or preaching in local churches, ABI will seek to be more strategic and fruitful in its mission of equipping Albanian believers for life, ministry and world impact. We look forward to seeing how God will use us in this new paradigm. Albanian Bible Institute's greatest days lie ahead as we become a school on the move.

Sincerely,
LEE BRADLEY

Student testimonies



Ermal Lushi

Leader in Alfa Omega Church, Peshkopi

When I first started ABI in 2005, I was only 18 years old and had just graduated from high school. I was a leader in my young church with many responsibilities, but I had little training or skill for doing them. I did not want to be pastor, even though some thought I should be. Taking on this responsibility was more than I wanted. I tried to get out of this, but God had other plans and brought me to ABI. With the teaching from God's word and the encouragement of the teachers, most of whom were Americans who lived in Albania, I became equipped to do God's work. This was an investment of two years that has really been a blessing to me. The teaching I received and the friendship of the teachers, which continues to this day, have proven to be a great support to me as I lead and serve God's church in Peshkopi.



Eri Leka

Leader of Shalom Church and student work in Tirana

When I was in my first year of ABI, I was really not very mature in my faith and knowledge of God's word. I did not have strong character that was in line with Biblical principles. ABI was an useful school because it helped me understand who I was and what I needed to do in order to become equipped to serve the Lord. During my time at ABI, I learned a lot and grew in character, something that all could see in me. The training was intensive, well-rounded and fruitful. One thing that was really outstanding was the godly staff of the school and their life example that I learned to follow. I thank the Lord for the blessing and opportunity he has given me to attend ABI.



Artan Figu

Pastor of Gramsh Christian Church

I had the privilege of being a student at ABI right after my studies at the university, where I received a degree in engineering. Up to that point, I was quite content with my intellectual ability, as well as my knowledge about God and the Bible. One of my surprises about being a student at ABI was discovering how deep the word of God is. At ABI I learned how to study the Bible as it is and to use it with integrity. At ABI I was also surprised by how broad the body of Christ is. There is much diversity in his church, which is something I appreciate. These blessings have made me grateful that I was challenged to study and graduate from ABI. As the years pass by, I continue to see ABI as a valuable instrument of God to equip his people.



Xhevdet Arapi

Pastor of Emmanuel Church in Kamez

When I first started pastoring the church at Kamez in 1998, I soon realized how much I needed training. The Albanian church at that time was very new and inexperienced. So was I, as one of its leaders. I came to ABI in 2000 and started to really grow as a believer and servant of the Lord. The lessons and courses from God's word helped shape my theology. Living together at the campus, worshiping, exchanging ideas and experiences with others, all helped me to grow. The encouragement, counsel and mentoring that I received from the teachers were invaluable. I learned how to teach others and to make disciples while at ABI. Because of my experience there, I enthusiastically encourage people from my church to attend this school.

Prayer Requests and Praises for ABI November 2010

PRAISES

1. Four from our ABI family went to India on the Eagles of Peace vision trip October 28-November 9. The trip was a blessing for all who went. Possibly some in our group will serve one day as missionaries in that very lost country. How great it would be to see Albanians serving in that country!
2. The semester is now half finished and our students have learned a lot. There is unity in our school and the teachers continue to do a good job.
3. God continues to meet our financial needs! In spite of a down economy worldwide, we have been able to finish our financial year in good shape.
4. The teachers have received several requests to do seminars in local churches. Almost every Sunday some of our teachers are preaching in local churches. This ministry has been a joy to us and we hope a blessing to the churches and pastors as well.

PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Please pray for ABI as we make more changes this year to become a more mobile school with greater connections to local churches. Our aim this year is to do more preaching and seminars in churches throughout the country. We would like to organize more consistent teaching opportunities for churches in the different cities of Albania and not confine ourselves to our campus in Durres.
2. Please pray for the smooth functioning of our school in 2011 while the director is away from Albania for the spring and summer. The ministry of the school will continue without interruption as Jerry Lugbill will be serving as interim director. Please pray for Jerry as he leads. He was interim director of the school from 2003-06 and has been assistant director from 2007 till now. It is reassuring to leave the school in his capable hands for the next 8 months.
3. Please pray for ABI graduates who serve in Albania, Macedonia, Kosova and Turkey. Many of our former students work in difficult places and often do not have many co-workers who are willing to help them. This brings great stress and fatigue and limits the fruitfulness of the work. Please pray for strength for these who serve so well and do so much. Pray for more workers to assist them in their work.

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