

# ADVANCER EXTRA .....

## BREAK-IN AT ABI

Monday, June 29, 2009

Dear Friends of Albanian Bible Institute,

This day finds us all a bit sad as we have been hit by an unexpected tragedy at ABI. Last Tuesday night, June 23, a thief broke into our school and stole the money that we had in the cash box. This was totally unexpected by us because we consider our neighborhood to be safe and we have heard no reports of things like this happening around here in a long time. The thief who attacked us climbed over a high wall topped with iron bars and broken glass to get inside our courtyard. He then pried open a window without a burglar bar to gain access



to our veranda. Although the first-floor office area was protected by an iron gate and windows with burglar bars, the thief managed to dislodge some bars and climb through a window into the secretary's office. After ransacking her office and finding nothing, he broke open the door of our financial office and got into a locked file cabinet which held the cash boxes. All together, the thief took over \$12,000. About two thirds of this was for the building program so we could finish work on the central heating system that you have heard us speak of in our previous newsletters. A little over \$4000 was for the general operating fund.

Normally we do not keep such large amounts of money on hand. Just a week before the break-in, our funds were getting kind of low, but money came in over the

course of the next several days. We were happy to see God meeting these needs and just had not taken the time to get to the bank to deposit the money. We thought our cash was secure. I guess our thief is happy we did not make it to the bank. Although he had no way of knowing in advance, he hit the jackpot on Tuesday night.

In spite of this great loss, we are fortunate that no one was hurt and nothing else was stolen. We had several computers and a camera on the first floor, which he did not take. He was interested only in the money. Replacing money is easier than trying to heal someone who has been seriously traumatized, physically hurt or has died as a result of a burglar's work.

I think we took reasonable measures to deter such an act of vandalism from happening, but it happened. Since this incident, we have taken even more measures to improve the security of our building and grounds. When criminals are determined to hurt you, they will find a way to do it, no matter what. But security is ultimately from the Lord. God knew all of this ahead of time and did not stop it. Although God did not inspire the thief to steal from us, I believe he had a purpose in allowing this. This is indeed a test for us on many fronts. My prayer is that we will be found righteous in our actions and attitudes through all of this.

Last week while I was at the meeting of missionaries from our organization, we sang a song about God's great compassion for sinners. The Lord used these words to challenge me with the question, "What do you want more? The return of the money or the salvation of this man who stole your money?" To be honest I resented that question. I am ashamed to say that my first response to that question is that I wanted the \$12,000 returned more than I wanted to see the guy go to heaven. As the worship services continued that day and the next, God spoke to me again and broke me until I could honestly say from my heart that **I am more interested in the salvation of this man than the money.** When I think of God's great compassion on me and my sins, which are many, how can I not desire God's mercy for this one who has done something so hurtful? He needs God.

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# ALBANIAN BIBLE INSTITUTE (ABI)

INSTITUTI BIBLIK SHQIPTAR (IBSh)

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I share all of this with you to let you know this time has been a great test for us. This has been a test of our character and now presents a big test as we face an immediate crisis, which is finding money to replace the stolen money. We do not like asking for more help and realize that these are tough economic times for many of you. Still, we are faced with no other choice than to come boldly and ask for your help to get us through this crisis. We have to pay social insurance and health insurance by July 20th. We also have to make payroll by the 28th of July. Right now we do not have enough money to do either. We had to scramble around to make payroll last Friday since it was the end of the month. We were able to do it, but if we do not have an immediate and large infusion of cash in the next few weeks, we will not be able to do this in July.

Compounding our need for money for the general fund is our need for a new central heating system. Although it seems strange to talk about heating systems in the middle of the summer, we are also going to need money to install the heating system. It is something we can not delay for another year or two. We now have no reliable heating alternative since last month we cleaned out the building and gave away our old diesel stoves in anticipation of the new system to be installed this summer. We need to have a heating system before winter comes in early November.

More than ever, this is an opportunity to demonstrate our trust in the sovereignty and faithfulness of God. Will you join us in praying that we will honor Him above all else during this time of testing? We have asked you to **pray that God will supply the students that He wants to be equipped for ministry at ABI**. Now will you also **pray that He will provide the funds necessary to provide that training?**

If God prompts you to make a contribution to help us recover the lost money, please send your donation to International Ministries, 1420 Kerrway Ct. Fort Wayne, Indiana 46805. You may designate your check for either our ABI building fund or the ABI general operating fund. International Ministries will make sure that the money is transferred to us soon. We appreciate very much your help during this time of crisis.

God bless you all!

LEE BRADLEY  
Director, Albanian Bible Institute

