

Update from Albanian Bible Institute

May 1, 2010

Greetings to all of you who love ABI!

I apologize that I have not written to you in a couple of months. The time slips away and I sometimes do not realize just how long it is between these letters. When I am busy, two weeks ago seems like just a couple of days ago. A month can actually be two or three. I think most of you can relate to this feeling.

It is gratifying to be able to say that this has been a great year at ABI. Sometimes, when a school year starts, the students can seem like angels (I am SURE we seem the same to them). Then after they encounter the first problem or two, the new wears off quickly and we see the "real" them. So far this year, we have been spared such a rude awakening. This does not mean we have had no challenges this year. However, the group of students we have this year has been probably our best ever. They are humble, teachable and have a strong commitment to the Lord. They love Him and are growing in their relationship with him. They are serious about serving the Lord and are open to being disciplined and becoming better equipped to serve Him. We have seen academic and spiritual progress in everyone this year. Their pastors are seeing a difference.

One outstanding case this year is of one of our students who all her life has had a tendency to start new projects. Then, when the new wears off or she encounters even the least bit of adversity, she quits. At the beginning of the school year, I would have confidently bet \$50 she would not have made it till Christmas. I am glad to report to you that I would have lost that \$50. (Also glad I am not a gambling man). We are now at the end of the second semester and she is going stronger than at the beginning of the school year when she came so enthusiastically. How nice it is to be wrong sometimes!

Another one of our students has just gotten his first invitation to preach in another church besides his home church. In fact, he has gotten two invitations to preach in different churches. Last year, I would not have ever imagined such a thing happening. When he preached in our classes last year, it was extremely painful for us all. His point was never clear, his confidence nearly zero, his direction non-existent. His only goal seemed to be doing just enough to pass the course. No passion whatsoever. This year, a new man that KINDA looks like him is standing before us in the preaching class. This new man is confident. He has something to say. He is going somewhere when he speaks. We marvel! God doesn't.

One of our other students has been instrumental in inspiring some other students to do street evangelism this semester, something they have done at the boardwalk of Durres on several weekends this semester. He is currently exploring the possibility of going to Iraq as a missionary one day. Maybe this will happen. Last year, nine people from Albania went out of country to serve as long-term missionaries in other countries in the area. ABI was instrumental in training three of those.

In addition to our residential program, our new lay church planters school has been doing well. Not unexpectedly, after having a large number of students in the beginning, we are now down to about 12 students who are seriously interested AND committed to the ministry of church planting. This semester they have received training in Biblical principles of church planting from the book of Acts, personal discipleship, personal evangelism, leading small group Bible studies, and teaching chronological Bible lessons. We are looking forward to seeing what God will do with these people this summer as their

church planting projects begin in earnest. All of these people keep very busy with studies at the university, or family and work responsibilities. It is a struggle for them to manage all of this, but they come to become better equipped for serving the Lord. Praise God for the way He is working among these good people who are sacrificing so much!

The staff of ABI continues to be out among the churches doing pulpit supply and training events. I am happy that we are having the opportunities to visit churches and see what is going on out there. It is good to make contact with believers who are hungering for more of God's word. In the last couple of months, Pellumb Ranxha has been doing seminars on Biblical creation. I have done a couple of seminars on storying as an evangelistic tool. We have even more opportunities later in the month to do preaching and teaching in Macedonia and Kosova, as well as Albania. I hope that we will have many more opportunities this summer as well.

I will leave you with a couple of important prayer requests:

1. Please pray for new students to attend ABI this fall. We have begun reaching out to churches and individuals who might be interested in what we have to offer. The need for training is acute in Albania, yet the availability of God-called servants is not too plentiful. It takes great sacrifice to come to school. Many are not willing to pay that price in terms of time and financial struggle.
2. Please pray for our financial needs. Until the last few months, our finances have been stable. Since the beginning of 2010, incoming gifts have been way down. Fortunately, we have had money to cover expenses in these lean months. However, we cannot afford to see this trend continue for much longer. Summer is usually a slower time in terms of donations. Maybe this year we will buck that trend. Anyway, I did want you to know where we are financially and to ask for your prayers, and if God leads, your donations to help us maintain our ministry. Gifts can be made to International Ministries (FEC), 1420 Kerrway Ct. Ft. Wayne, IN 46805. Please designate them for ABI General Fund.

Albanian Bible Institute is a ***life-changing ministry*** for our students and those to whom they minister. I marvel that God uses this staff, which has come primarily from small towns in America, and this small plot of land and simple building in Durres, Albania, to impact people in cities and villages all across this country, as well as other places our graduates are working in Kosova, Macedonia and Turkey. I am glad God has called all us to be a part of this. Thank you for standing with us in this valuable ministry.

Sincerely and gratefully,
LEE BRADLEY
Director, Albanian Bible Institute