

DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING
Albanian Bible Institute
February 1, 2012

Dear Prayer Supporters!

Thank you so much for joining us on this special day of prayer and fasting for the ministry of Albanian Bible Institute. In the 15 years of our school's history, prayer has been the backbone of everything we have done. Over the years we have seen God meet needs, supply vision and use our ministry to help the Albanian Church. All of this has been a result of prayer! Some of you have been participants with us in these victories through your prayers. Thank you!

Once again, we call upon you to join us in prayer as we approach this new year which will present many challenges. The needs we have are quite formidable by man's standards. Only God can meet the needs we have. Please join us in prayer for the needs you find in this letter. Please KEEP praying for these needs even after this special day has passed.

I. **PRAY FOR THE OPENING OF THE NEW ABI BRANCH IN LUSHNJE in MARCH.**

In about 5 weeks we will open a branch of our school in the city of Lushnje. Lushnje, a town of about 20,000, is located about 35 miles south of Durres. It has been one of the more open places to the gospel in Albania and several churches exist in that city and the surrounding area. So far our efforts to talk with the pastors in the area have brought a favorable response as we have explained our desire to take believers deeper in the word.

- a. Pray that God will send us only serious students who will be eager to learn.
- b. Pray that students will grow in their level of perseverance by remaining in the program from start to finish (March-December). This is something very important to learn.
- c. Please pray that our students will be motivated to share what they have learned at school with their churches. We want to equip people with knowledge so that they are useful in the churches, not just so they may have their heads filled with knowledge, which often leads to pride.
- d. Pray that our students will be able to balance well the demands of school, work, family and church.

II. **PRAY FOR THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF OUR SCHOOL IN DURRES.**

In September we started a new one year Bible diploma program with 11 students. At the end of five months, we still have 11 students and sometimes other students come for individual courses. We are proud of the students because they come

straight from work to study three nights a week. Our lessons are 2 hours and 45 minutes long. That is a lot of commitment. So far, the students have done a good job keeping up with the assignments and have maintained a positive attitude. They will complete all their courses by May 15. Our prayer requests for these students are the same as those for our new students in Lushnje which are written in the above paragraph.

III. PRAY FOR WISDOM AS WE MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT PRIORITIES AND the DIRECTION OF OUR WORK

Please pray for wisdom for the staff as we make decisions about priorities and the direction of our work. Currently our full –time teaching staff consists of Pellumb Ranxha and myself (Lee Bradley). Both of us teach several courses a year in the Bible diploma program. We also have frequent requests for our teaching and preaching ministry from local churches, most of which we are able to fill on weekends.

In addition to these ongoing ministries of preaching and teaching, we have been asked to consider expanding our ministry by doing broadcasts of our teaching ministry on Christian radio. It has also been suggested that we publish a theological review every quarter and maintain a website in the Albanian language. We are also thinking about hosting high quality seminars on our campus for pastors and church leaders which meet the greatest priority needs in Albania.

All of these are excellent ideas and all have the potential of being helpful to the churches to some degree or another. Nevertheless, we have to discern which are God’s perfect plans for us and which are simply really good ideas from man. Therefore, we ask you to pray for wisdom as we seek God’s plans for how we should invest our time and energies.

- a. Please pray for wisdom to choose between the good and the best.
- b. Please pray for God’s provision of at least one other Albanian speaking teacher to help us expand our teaching ministry in some of the areas that have been suggested.
- c. Pray for God’s leadership as we decide whether to add a year of advanced Biblical studies for our students in Durres this fall after they finish the diploma in basic Biblical studies.
- d. Pray for wisdom as we decide which seminars we should offer to Albanian Church leaders next year. There are a multitude of needs in the Albanian Church. Understanding Christian ethics, spiritual revival, stewardship, and discipleship are just a few of the more striking needs that our churches face. What needs should we address in 2012? In 2013? Beyond? Who will we invite to help us lead these kinds of seminars? Please pray for direction as we seek Him for the who, what, when and why of seminars to offer in the future.

IV. PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF OUR SCHOOL

(I need to give some context to my Southern Baptist friends here. Your Lottie Moon offerings and Cooperative Program money cover my salary and personal living expenses. However, the IMB does not give funds to cover the ministry of ABI). Our school, which is inter-denominational, functions like most mission ministries across the globe. We plan a budget by faith and raise the money by faith, depending on God to move individuals and churches to donate funds to keep us going.

This year our budget requires \$3700 a month. We have \$850 in guaranteed donations each month. That leaves us with a monthly gap of \$2850. That is a pretty big gap to fill!!!

We live quite economically and keep expenses as low as possible. Still, it costs money to pay for staff, social insurance, taxes, office expenses and utilities. We have a building with three floors and 320 square meters of space to maintain. When we use adjunct teachers, we have to cover their travel expenses and honoraria. This is no cheap enterprise. It costs to do ministry in Albania.

Over the last several months we have run deficits. We are currently using savings from previous years, but those savings will not last much longer. We are trusting God to provide new and larger sources of revenue for ABI SOON!. Would you join us in praying that God will supply us with donors and donations to help us carry out our ministry each month?

I am reminded over and over again that God is big and this budget gap is not difficult for the Lord. He has met our needs in the past and He will do it again. The question is not IF God will meet our needs, but HOW God will meet our needs. In Philipians 4:19 He has promised that he would meet our needs and we believe that promise.

V. THE MINISTRY OF OUR CURRENT AND FORMER STUDENTS

It is impossible to think of ABI without thinking about the students who have attended our school over the years. They are the fruit of our work. We are encouraged by what we see God doing in the lives our our current students, who are all lay people with vital roles in their local churches. God is doing great things in the lives of our former students. Many are growing in their personal relationship with the Lord. Many are growing in their knowledge of the word and are improving their skills of teaching and preaching. Many are having fruitful ministries in local churches throughout Albania. Five of our former students serve beyond the borders of Albania as missionaries. Here are some prayer requests to share with you on their behalf:

- a. Pray for the family lives of our current and former students. Some are newly married. Some have been married for only a few years and have children. Almost all of our former students did not grow up with Christian parents. They had no modeling of what it means to be a godly spouse or parent. They are learning, sometimes through trial and error, what it means to be a Christian family member. Please pray for them to be godly spouses and parents who raise a second generation of godly believers in this country. Pray that their lives will give a strong testimony to the world of what it means to live for Christ.**
- b. Pray for our students who serve in isolated places and discouraging ministries with little or no help. Some of our students work in small towns and villages where people are immigrating to Tirana or out of Albania. This can be very demoralizing. Some of our students have no faithful person to help them carry out the ministry. This is also demoralizing. Some of our students serve with little or no financial support, which brings constant stress and discouragement. Pray that these students will keep their eyes on Jesus instead of their circumstances. Pray for financial relief and laborers for them.**
- c. Pray for our students and their churches to be fruitful in reaching new people for Christ. 99.5% of the people in our country still remain lost without Christ. Pray that our people will be faithful and unhindered by distractions to keep them from evangelizing, discipling believers and planting new churches in Albania.**
- d. Pray that our students will not burn out in the ministry but will keep feeding from God's word, remaining firm, steadfast and energetic for the work of the Lord. A lot of our students are suffering from fatigue and discouragement. This past Sunday I visited with one of our more faithful and hard-working graduates and no one showed up for worship service at his church except his wife and child.**