



The Macedonian Messenger

Answering the Macedonian call of old, "Come over and help us." Acts 16:9

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OSo neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:7-9 (NIV)

THANK YOU!

First I must say, thank you to all of you that pray on a regular basis, give so generously, and write now and then to encourage me. You are as much a part of this ministry as I am. I want you to know that—and know that I know. I appreciate you so much, and I know that there is no way that I could ever repay you, so I'm asking God to bless you bountifully, and I have faith that he is doing so even in this time of financial trials in our country. Praise be to Him that is the giver of every good and perfect gift!

SPEERS VISIT

This year began as the last three years have, with a visit from Wayne and Brenda Speer. This couple is so valuable to this work! Every year their wisdom and knowledge of the Lord bless us in every possible way, and their friendship and generosity blesses everyone who comes in contact with them. May God give them many more years to live and serve him!

While they were here, Wayne preached for us and taught the classes, Brenda taught the ladies class, and as has become the custom, they entertained in my home. Brenda is a wonderful

cook, and she uses that gift in a powerful way to feed as many as possible earthly food, while giving them a chance also to spend some time in a personal way as well sharing their walk with the Lord.

Wayne is a great preacher and teacher as well. This year Wayne did a series of lessons on Wednesday nights from where the Bible came, the history of the manuscripts and codices, and the translation into English. It was a wonderful set of lessons!

Even more wonderful was what it spawned. After Wayne left a couple of the men continued in the same vein. Artan taught a lesson about when and how the Bible was translated into Albanian, and Sokol did a lesson about the codices that were found here in Albania and it's early Christian history, and then Artan did a lesson about how archeology supports Biblical accuracy. I think the church was really encouraged by these lessons.

GOD GIVES THE INCREASE

This year the men of the congregation have set a theme for the year. I think this is a sign of their growth and their commitment to the growth of the congregation. This year's theme is: "The Challenge of One!" that is: "During One year: each one, evangelize one, teach one and restore one." I truly believe that this started the year out in a wonderful way. With such an emphasis on bringing others to



Christ, our year started off with three new babes in Christ.

Flori Goga is the brother of one of our very faithful members, Vijola Goga. He was baptized in another church when he was pretty young. For several years Flori has been on our periphery off and on. Last summer his sister invited him to go on vacation with a group of the young people, and during that time several of the men spent some quality time with him talking about his soul. Since that time he's been attending pretty consistently, and on February first he decided that to make sure that his baptism was in full consciousness of the forgiveness of sins and commitment to Jesus as Lord. Sokol Thanati baptized him again and he gave his life over to Christ. Praise God!!



Ervin Leka has been my student for almost a year. He started working with Arjan Hyka, and you know the end result of that. Arjan's going to talk to him about his soul for sure! Arjan came to me one day (knowing that I keep a pretty full schedule) and asked if he could give up one of his places and give it to Ervin to study. Of course I accepted his proposal. I generally let my students who are Christians tell me when they are ready to fly without "momma bird." So Ervin has been studying, and he decided he wanted to be a Christian. On February 8, 2009, Wayne baptized him into Christ.

Since his baptism he's decided that he'd like to attend the preacher's school which is a branch of Sunset here. He's met with Steve Stamatis once, and so he's set things into motion. It'll be January before the next session begins but he hopes to start then.

Eneida Kovaçi is a friend of Daniela and Arian Zhusti. They have been working to teach her for some time, and their efforts came to fruition on the 25th of February when Arian immersed her into the Lord. Eneida "Ida" has been very faithful to the meetings of the church, and we are so glad she's our little sister now. She and I have met together a couple of different times for her to ask me some questions that she's had while reading through the Bible. Her eagerness to learn is a wonderful encouragement.



YOUTH ACTIVITIES

This year, I've been asked to do a play for the youth day. Again we have received a wonderful play from Brian Simmons, and Artan has translated it, and we've started work on it. The cast is young, only one old-timer—Erna, but really excited about serving the Lord in this way. The theme of the show is accepting the hand of God in our lives, and being open to his using us in whatever way He wants, not as we want. We've put that together with a new song that we have learned, "He's the God of this City," and have taken the chorus of the song as the stated theme: "There is Still Much to Be Done."

We are excited that Tom Langley is coming to be our Key Note speaker. Tom has proved himself an excellent communicator, and I'm sure that God will bless us through him again. Tom was also working in Romania when I was there on campaigns, and he served as one of Artan's and Erik's teachers, so it's also a great reunion for us to all work together again. We are grateful to those making it possible!



SPECIAL VISITORS

At long last my friends, Fred and Alice Jewell came to Albania! The Jewells have wanted to come for awhile, but it seemed like there was

always something else that needed doing more. This year Harding asked them to teach in the HUG program (Harding University in Greece), and so it's just a hop, skip, and a jump to Albania. Unfortunately that hop, skip, and jump cost a fair amount. Anyway, God was faithful, and they made it. We tried to cram as much as we could into the about 5 days that we had together. We were able to eat good Albania traditional food with Arjan Hyka and his family. His mom makes wonderful stuffed peppers, eggplant, squash, tomatoes, etc. Anything you can stuff, she stuffs it!

With the help of Tom Bonner we traveled and saw the old cities of Apollonia and Berat. They got to see where two of

the most special codices was hidden in the church of Berat, and we got the blessing of hearing Fred preach twice. Most importantly they got to meet some of the people for which they had been praying for

years! It was so special.



joined us for Come Before Winter. Well at long last her dear Endri was granted a visa to go and join her. We are sad to see him go, but we are glad that they can be reunited. We know that it's been a struggle for her to live the Christian life alone in her family, and we know it will be easier

when they are together. That's why God has given us the church. In fact Irida has found a church there in Poughkeepsie, New York and has been warmly received, and we praise God for that. Now Endri will be there with her too, and they will begin their Christian family together.

In addition to this sadness, we are expecting great happiness in this next month. Two of our dear sweet sisters will be giving birth to little boys in the near future. We ask your prayers on them for safe and healthy births.



As you can see we are growing and working in the Lord with you. Isn't it a great blessing to be servants of the Most High? I pray that you too are happy in your service to Him.

With Love and Gratitude,
Ellen

COMINGS AND GOINGS.

When one we love so much goes away, it's a very difficult thing. Such was the case this Saturday. Endri Shehaj, whose gentle, kind spirit and wisdom has blessed us for two and half years, has gone to be reunited with his sweet fiancé. I hope you remember me writing about Irida last time. She was the baby Christian that

