

Stamatis Status – April 1, 2008

Deborah and I celebrated the anniversary of our 18th year of marriage yesterday. As usual for me at these moments I pause to think about the road we have traveled in our sojourn here on earth. I was again reminded that life is a progressive process of transitions. This reality is evidenced by the events that have impacted our lives over the last month.



A dear friend, partner in our efforts here in Albania, and a great encourager from the day we met her five years ago – Joy Courtney – went home to be with the Lord on March 11. Her family continues to be in our prayers. I will always remember the first time Deborah and I met Joy and her sister Oneida Brown (also a dear friend and sister in Christ) at the train station in Wilmington, Delaware. “Time is filled with swift transition.”

IBIA successfully completed our 2nd Term on Friday, March 21. The school is a progressive process of four week terms followed by a one week break over two years. We work with great intensity during that four week period. The growth and transformation that God is working is not always immediately obvious, but we do are blessed with an occasional glimpse of the positive progress.



Our “International Day” focus on the final day of the term was the Philippines. We were intrigued by this nation of over 7,000 islands and encouraged to see what God is doing in and with His church. The day was like a family holiday gathering. We had six women and a baby in the kitchen most of the day. I was closing up the classroom with

exams and summation lectures. During our breaks the guys kept going into the kitchen to see and smell these new foods. We appreciated Ruth Byrne (missionary in Fier with her husband Steve) coming to organize, share and work to bring a taste of Filipino food to the 17 of us that gathered for the feast.



This year IBIA is expanding our teaching ministry outside of the IBIA classroom. In our attempt to “build bridges” with all the congregations in Albania, we are offering opportunities for deeper Bible study. We are calling this ministry, “Expanding the Kingdom Seminars.” The theme for the four seminars



this year is “Developing a Heart for God” (Studies from Matthew). On Saturday, March 29 about 60 attended from three congregations: 1) the Adriatic congregation in Durres; 2) the Durres congregation; and 3) the Tirana congregation. We were blessed to be able to use the wonderful new facility of the Durres congregation.



Our 3rd Term began on Monday, March 31. Four members of the Adams Boulevard congregation in Bartlesville, Oklahoma have come to work with IBIA, teach some WEI courses and visit with and encourage various workers here in Albania. IBIA is benefiting from Art Henley (pulpit minister of Adams Boulevard) teaching “Old Testament History - 2” and Larry Johnson (retired from Philips Petroleum) teaching “Apologetics - 1” this term. Also Alfred Zike from the Adriatic congregation is teaching “Greek - 1” this term.

We are grateful to those of you who have recently committed to partnering with us on a monthly basis – specifically towards our translator. Those funds are greatly needed and appreciated. The operating budget of IBIA is very tight and your financial partnership is truly a blessing from God. When you are prepared to begin sending those funds, you can send them: c/o IBIA

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We are encouraged by your faith in God, your love for God’s Kingdom and your involvement with us as we seek to glorify God through our efforts with IBIA.

To His glory,
Steve Stamatis