



ISTL

International School of Theology and Leadership

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Transforming a Nation

From a lecturer

I first visited Albania in the spring of 2017, and immediately the people and hospitality of Albanians captured my heart. Like many Westerners, I knew very little about this resilient country before I arrived. Having withstood violent oppression and foreign rule for much of its history, Albanians have inspired me with their optimism and hope for the future.

As the Associate Coordinator for ITEN (International Theological Education Network), I have had the immense privilege of partnering with indigenous leader with the aim of providing desperately needed theological education among unreached people groups around the world. When I first met Hervin Fushekati, it was abundantly clear that he shared our passion for training leaders and expanding the renown of Jesus throughout Albania. It is a contagious passion that I have seen in his students at ISTL every time I come to teach.

After arriving in the evening after a full day of work, the students at

ISTL have always impressed me with their hard work and genuine desire to learn and develop. It is a desire that emerges from their deep questions and unique insights gained from lives dedicated to ministering to others.

However, what has always touched me most about the students at ISTL is their profound commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and their unwavering willingness to sacrifice everything in pursuit of his Kingdom. Each time I have had the honor to come and teach a course at ISTL, I have left with more stories from students who have lost family, friends, wealth, and opportunities in their pursuit of Jesus. While the pain of sacrifice remains, they are quick to remind me that what they have gained in following Christ is a treasure of inestimable value.

And so it is, that when I stare into the eyes of these eager students at ISTL, I see the future of Albania. I see a future full of leaders who long to serve, rather than to be served. Leaders who recognize that any power they are given is

to be used in the service of others, rather than an opportunity for selfish gain. I see a future full of leaders who are passionate about Jesus and fervently believe in the power of the gospel to not only transform lives, but an entire nation. And I see a future where graduates of ISTL are dispersed to the farthest corners of Albania, that wherever their feet tread, the ground becomes new territory reclaimed by the rightful King

In a country that has known so much oppression, ISTL is raising up a new generation of leaders that are proclaiming freedom to those long imprisoned in darkness. They are an inspiration to the global church, and to me personally. In the years since I first began teaching at ISTL it has become increasingly clear that by their example, I have been the student, and they have been my teachers.

Dr. Stephen L. Woodworth
Ass. Coordinator of ITEN

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Training Leaders



From a student



Klodian Jorgo is the leader of the Church in Gerdec, in Vora. He describes ISTL as a special experience, with a great impact. ISTL has helped him to grow more in the Word of God. He has gone deeper in the Word of God because of his studies and he believes that what he has studied in ISTL will remain and benefit him in his ministry. Click [here](#) to see his story.

From the director

Mental Health Course

ISTL has an atmosphere of family with students that experience a team approach in an informal setting. Our student body is one who networks in a non-competitive learning environment that fosters joy, encouragement, excitement, growth and grace. One way that you can see the dif-

ference with ISTL is through selected courses that our students study.

In March, we offered a course with the topic of **“Mental Health”**. We want to train our students in Theology and Leadership but we also feel it is very important for the Church to be educated and prepared for areas of ministry that arise in individuals. One of these areas that the Church has much to learn and walk out concerns Mental Health Issues.

It is time for the Church to become a part of the solution and to learn to walk alongside families with loved ones that struggle with Mental Health Issues. Tragedies have a tendency to produce awareness and conversation and with awareness comes responsibility. There are many people within churches that either struggle with a mental health issue themselves or they have a close friend or family member that is struggling.

Because we realize that Mental Health Issues are real, treatable, and manageable and conditions can be caused by genetic, biological, and environmental factors, we *advocate that those suffering do need to seek professional help* but we also realize that these loved ones also need care. We desire the stigma and prejudice that goes along with Mental Health Issues to dissipate, but in order for that to

happen, the Church needs to become more involved in the care ministry aspect with families that are suffering. These families need support, care, love, friendship, and acceptance.

Our students at ISTL are also receiving training on social issues that they will face as they become leaders in ministries. We desire to be a resource center and training grounds for all areas of ministry that our students will encounter.

Thank you for believing in the ministry of ISTL. Your donations and gifts are making a huge difference in the Kingdom. This is just one of the courses that you have been a part of our students having access to. Please continue to stand with us and this next generation of pastors and leaders as they receive further training for what God has called them to do.

Hervin Fushekati,
Director ISTL

Donations

ISTL is fully depending on gifts and contributions from funds, churches and individuals. Please support the work of ISTL by donating to:

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