



# ISTL

International School of Theology and Leadership

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## Increase of Students

2020 was a year full of surprises. When we heard the international news about a new virus in China, we did not worry too much, thinking that we were protected because of the long physical distance. But when we had just finished the week of teaching at ISTL last March, we received the news that Covid 19 had also arrived in Albania. Immediately we were forced to enter a total quarantine. We only had 3 weeks before the next course in April. It was very unsure situation for us: "How would we continue our teaching mission in such conditions?" Our staff gathered in a virtual meeting, prayed and decided to continue teaching via the Zoom platform. When we made

this decision, we did not realize that God had big plans and new territories to achieve using this situation. As the apostle Paul says in the Epistle to the Romans chapter 8 verse 28: "... all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose".

Since April when we first offered online teaching parallel to in-person teaching, ISTL has doubled the number of students who enrolled in the first year. We found it reasonable to invest in this direction by making it possible for Online Learning and classroom interaction. Now ISTL, in addition to the School in Tirana, has 2 other



learning centers. One in the city of Korca and one in Katjel, Perrenjas. We have students from different cities in Albania, but also students from Kosovo and Greece have joined online. What we aim for 2021 is the launch of the Moodle Platform for Continuing Online Teaching, the Mentoring of students we have in all centers and the start of the Accreditation Process. From everything that has happened and we have gone through, we can say with full conviction that God is EMANUEL, God with us. He is our hope.

**Eri Ndreca, Staff ISTL**



[istl.al](http://istl.al)



[info@istl.al](mailto:info@istl.al)



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+355676968726, Rr. Hoxha Tashim, Pll 75, K.1, Tirana, Albania



# Equipping Churches

Arjan Larashi is one of the teachers at ISTL. He teaches a discipleship course. He himself is also a student at the Master's course at ISTL. Arjan writes about his ministry during the previous months.

## Discipleship

The situation of COVID -19 has certainly had a negative impact on our service "**Freedom in Christ Ministries Albania**" - **FICMA**, as we normally give courses where we are physically present in churches and Bible Schools. But as with any situation, God has a second plan for us to continue fulfilling His command to make disciples everywhere. We as a foundation have exactly this focus to make disciples and equip pastors, leaders and churches for the work that Jesus has called us to share with others and to see churches, communities and nations transformed.

I have personally had a time of prayer, fasting and reflection during quarantine, and God has given me a new direction to continue in the ministry. Since we have always had a concept that "church" is only "local church" God taught me to consider his church all those who have been saved, reborn and seek to grow in faith by obeying him and that can be found everywhere. God has called us to make disci-



ples and of course first the local church is the place where we can make disciples. But not only local churches, but also through the internet or radio, television and other means we can reach nations and become disciples.

## Freedom in Christ

The Lord opened my horizons to

realize that I can turn my ministry online also by equipping pastors and leaders and teaching them how to follow Jesus' instructions. I believe that God is bringing his universal church into a new phase of theological development, and that each of us must adapt to the conditions and difficulties in order to continue our mission. It is the time when we are required to have wisdom and we can receive this from God without any doubt as he is ready to give it to us.

I am very happy that even though the world is in trouble I can continue my mission to make disciples without any obstacles. Even the fruits are bigger than before when I have served as pastor and church planter for 24 years in a row.

**Arjan Larashi**

**Administrative Director of the Foundation FICMA.**



**The ISTL staff wishes you God's blessing for 2021**