

International School of Theology and Leadership



6 months – 22 classes – 45 students – 19 teachers

John Nash, from the movie 'A Beautiful Mind', would be spending hours trying to decode the numbers above. When we look at them, we see a motion of grace from above, knowledgeable teachers, a patient staff, praying part-

ners, a motivating director, and hard-working students. In this newsletter, the ISTL staff wants to share with you what these 6 months (January to June) have looked like.



As the title indicates, ISTL has had 22 classes on Bible Study, Leadership, Counseling, and Theology since January 2022; and a considerable number of 19 teachers visiting ISTL this year. For some of them, this has been their first time at ISTL and we are grateful for their desire to come back again and teach our students. We were thrilled to have two teachers from the Master's program that ISTL facilitates in Albania teach at our school (Dr. Chuck Sackett and Dr. Joseph Steiner). Dr. Chuck Sackett taught the subject of Introduction to Leadership and through his skills in hermeneutics, he helped the students understand better the Biblical style of leadership.



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At the end of his course, we received a message that made all the exhaustion of the week completely worth it. It was from one of the students from that class, Jeton Bajram, pastor of Christian Centre Church located in Durrës, Albania. He wrote:

"I am endlessly grateful to ISTL! God is restructuring my life spiritually and refining my leadership through your work. Today I received the answer to 7 years of fatigue, tears, and prayers. It was precisely what God had spoken to me, but because of discouragement, I had started to doubt it."

It is these moments that motivate us to keep working on our mission to equip and develop the future generation of Christian leaders.

These 22 classes included new subjects as well. Mental Health Referrals was one of them and we were happy to have an Albanian teacher cover this class - Kristi Kola graduate of General Medicine and resident in Psychiatry, at the University Health Clinic 'Mother Theresa', Tiranë. At ISTL we don't want our students to just learn the basics of Theology, but also learn how to care for their community. According to an INSTAT survey, 60-70% of all Albanian adults suffered from depression at some point. There is no wonder that some of these people can be from our congregations. This class was a needed

innovation in our program and shown in the time that students took to share their stories and share how that class opened a new perspective for them. Let us also note that we have realized how important counseling is currently. The reason we believe so is that also during the class on Basics of Counseling we had in April, the students were all ears and excited about learning those basics.

Another innovative way of operating this year was having physical classes in other cities than Tirana. As you might be aware, ISTL is not limited to Tirana, not limited even to Albania. We have students that attend the classes via Zoom. There are hubs in Korça, Katjel, and Kosovo; this year we had one of the teachers, Dr. Terri Young teach two classes at our hubs, Homiletics in Katjel

and Basics of Counseling in Kosovo. Zoom classes are effective, however, they lack the excitement of having a teacher physically in class. So, we will reapply this method whenever possible next year.

We usually let our partners know what is going on at ISTL, but also fully realize the importance and effect of ISTL staff work, partners' prayers, and support.

This is the end of this academic year, but also a new beginning while we are preparing for the next year's schedule, the new students that will join, and the students' conference at the end of September. Together with this, we are also working on the accreditation process and a soon to be revealed building campaign. Every prayer and support is appreciated.

If you want to stay updated with what happens at ISTL visit our site: istl.al, Facebook: [International School of Theology and Leadership Albania](https://www.facebook.com/International-School-of-Theology-and-Leadership-Albania), Instagram: [istlalbania](https://www.instagram.com/istlalbania), and YouTube: [ISTL Albania](https://www.youtube.com/ISTLAlbania).

Always grateful for your prayers, support, and your sharing of our stories,

ISTL Staff

