



## Our spiritual ancestors could only imagine

Friends and partners of ISTL, it is almost the end of the year, therefore we would love to share with you some pages from the ISTL diary. Knowing how busy these days are, let's get to it.



At the end of September, just like last year, we held a conference to get all the students, even alumni together to share what God has done in their life so far. We had some of them share with everyone their experience with ISTL, and also how their studies have assisted them in their ministry, as well as in the journey of faith. It was not only encouraging for us as a staff but also moving for the other students. We wanted to share their story with you too, and that is why we asked the students, likewise the alumni to retell their stories in front of a camera. Check the videos below to listen to what Emil, Juri, and Martin have to say.

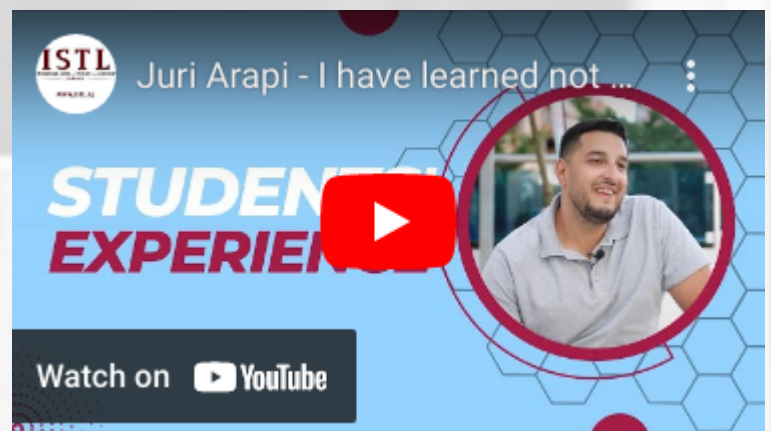
Ps. Other stories will be added to our channel in the months to come.

One week after the conference ISTL academic year started with 27 new students who had decided to find the time to study deeper the word of God. It has become a tradition now that new students start with courses that set a good basis for their formation. This year we started with: Freedom in Christ, Free to Lead, Authentic Leadership, Church Planting, Theology of Worship, Introduction to the New Testament, Diaconia, and Counseling. The course Authentic Leadership mentioned above helps students find their identity in Christ and we believe that knowing who you are in the eyes of the Almighty is the first step in better understanding His Word and His Way. What the first-year students have to say about the course is proof.

*“We, in this generation, get to work with our global Christian family in a way our spiritual Christian ancestors could only imagine.” - Albano Manxhari & Xhulio Pema.*

*“The Authentic Leadership course has helped me clear my mind. I always learned something that challenged my perspectives and enjoyed doing so! Very good course, with real-life examples; useful in my day-to-day life. Thank you, again, for such a wonderful learning experience.” - Agelia Rucolli*

*“So often, we come at leadership as an external activity or event or position. ‘Authentic Leadership’ reminded me that as Christian leaders, everything we DO is derived from our relationship and response to the Lord - to what He has done for us and who we ARE in Him!” -Lisa H. Batchelor, Host of The Mission Suitcase podcast, Dothan, AL, USA*



*“I’m very thankful I’ve had the chance to take the Authentic Leadership course because it has helped me change certain perceptions, which are still very real for many other Christians. There are many, many things I’ve learned, but there are two main things I will always take with me. The first is to guard my heart before anything else, and the other is always to remind myself (when I fall into a crisis of identity or find my purpose) that I’m the beloved daughter of the highest God. There is no greater privilege than that.” - Poliksen Jacellari*

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An event that happened this November was the visit of the Visiting Evaluation Team (VET) from ECTE (European Council for Theological Education). This was a milestone for ISTL and we as a staff had prayed to welcome every compliment and critique in order to serve our students better. After three intensive days of meetings and discussions, the VET gave us a report of commendations, recommendations, and requirements that we have to work on. Most important is that they left us with the feeling that we are on the right track and nothing is impossible with our God.

## **THE VET COMMENDS ISTL FOR STRIVING TO BE RELEVANT IN ITS UNIQUE CONTEXT.**

To close this newsletter, I want to go back to what Albano and Xhulio (from the Authentic Leadership course) have said:

“We, in this generation, get to work with our global Christian family in a way our spiritual Christian ancestors could only imagine.”

Often it seems like we are walking slowly, however, an institution that offers education in theology and leadership in Albania... our spiritual Christian ancestors could only imagine.



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