

Dear friends,

I wish for all of you a blessed year in 2018! I know we should be speaking about the plans and projects for the coming months but I have more to tell about what happened in the last two months of 2017 so we can all rejoice and thank the Lord that still works in people's hearts and lives.

In early November our church together with the Cru's local staff partnered in an outreach for new students here in Vlore. We distributed 1000 invitations and evangelistic materials and for a week students were invited to special meetings to prepare them for a final meeting where the gospel would be clearly presented. On the right top picture I am participating in one of these meetings talking with the new students about the kingdom of God.



Once more this year, we organized for the Independence Day a special service to commemorate the special role that evangelicals played in our country's independence and nationhood. That is 28 of November, in which Brother James from GJirokaster church gave a splendid and passionate account of new facts about that role and what it really cost them. The attendance was good. We had 60 people present in this event, both believers and nonbelievers.



In midst December I had the pleasure of handing out a certificate of achievement to people in both prisons here in Vlore and Fier. We organized as well later in time a Christmas service and heard a lot of good words from them about the good impact that is made in their lives through our weekly ministry of reading together the gospel of Mark. Some of them thanked me personally about not being pushy when it came to making a decision about being followers of Christ in one of our sessions.



Another thing that I did relating to prison ministry is driving to Tirana in 27th of December children from our prison contacts to a New Year event that was organized by the Christian organization that we are partnering with in order to be able to minister inside the Albanian jails. In order not to let them feel awkward I took with me both Lidia and Mateo. They thanked me about the wonderful time there and with my children. Here you have a picture of children from the same situation but from different parts of the country that enjoyed a circus show among other things that day.



We as a family have been able to minister not only to this class of children but to our church's and wider community children. I am very happy to see Lidia and Mateo minister alongside us in small practical ways week after week. This year also we handed out 500 Christmas boxes to different children that were supplied by an Irish Christian organization. We gave together with them a short presentation of the gospel story. Albana was the one who did this when giving out gifts.



The last but not the least among the things I did this last month is getting together with Niko and Besnik and going in Kelcyre to distribute Christian calendars with Bible verses and a Christmas edition of an evangelistic newspaper printed in Albanian as end of the year outreach. Here again we partnered with Gjirokaster church. Kelcyre is 120 km in the SE of the country. I was blessed to hear the reason that Niko came and did it – because I am an evangelical too. That means that slowly he is identifying himself as a believer. This is a recent picture with them in Besnik home.

Prayer points:

- Prison ministry – unity of mind and heart inside the team, open hearts among the prisoners
- Church planting – Ferras, Baltez and Kelcyre; more people to come to know Jesus
- Church life – people might get to know Jesus more in their daily walk in practical ways
- Family – patience and strength for us a couple now that Ylli mother is living close to them; finding ways how to live peacefully most of the time.