

You can email Richard and Linda at :
 squelched77@yahoo.com

Please pray for :

- Yeti and Dea
- Practical support
- Jorgo, Lena and their children

Albania focus

THE WORK OF RICHARD AND LINDA WELCH IN ALBANIA

Dear Friends,

This letter comes with our warm greetings and gratitude for your faithfulness in continuing to stand with our Albanian partners and ourselves. More than ever we appreciate the value of consistent belief and support for what we seek to achieve under our Lord's guidance. I hope that you will be encouraged by the photographs I am enclosing, since they tell us a little bit about how things look as we emerge from a very long tunnel. God willing, I will be able to travel to Albania in the coming weeks. To put it mildly, not getting there has been a great frustration. However, as you have read, the work and the vision has not only continued but flourished! We thank God.

With love and thanks to you all—Richard.

MORE THAN SURVIVAL

Far from it being a case of struggling to hold on, it's remarkable to be able to report new life and growth. To be clear, Albania has experienced some very dark days in the past 18 months, but there have been no voices of despair from our partners - only occasional requests for specific prayer and positivity.

Within these unforeseeable times, days in which we would think that healthy fruit was impossible, that is just what we are seeing! I haven't been able to spend time in Albania since the early months of last year, but daily contact has kept us well connected. However, as many of us would say, there's no substitute for face to face time together.

INITIATIVE

When Eli and Jorgo first talked, many weeks ago, of hosting a team of young Albanian people from a bible school from Durres I was sceptical. Although movement around the country was beginning to be allowed again, the virus wasn't properly under control and the programme of vaccinations was not yet underway. Risky? Unwise?

I received assurance that this was being well thought through and that responsible decisions would be made... by both hosts and visitors.

For sure, a well trained and enthusiastic group of Christian students would be welcome companions as our own leaders looked to reach out again into a battered community. In the following weeks I am delighted to report that the virus situation began easing considerably. A well organised programme of vaccinations has transformed things. The visit was possible!

SUPPORTING The work of RICHARD & LINDA



If you would like to support the work of Richard and Linda on a regular basis we can send you out a standing order and gift aid forms. Address and contact details are shown below.

Direct payments can be made to the following bank account:

Lloyds TSB Sort code:30-92-33
 Account: 05629646
 Reference :

- "Albanian Support" to support the general work of Richard and Linda or
- "Richard & Linda" to support Richard and Linda's living costs or
- "Jorgo and Lena" to support them as church leaders in Chooka

Cheques should be made payable to Mosaic Church and marked on the reverse with the reference above.

“WHAT WE’VE DREAMED OF

Albanian church leaders taking initiative and responsibility for their own church families and outreach into the wider community has been something we have dreamed of for many years. For a long time it was almost impossible to see how that could happen, because where would such rare people come from?

We still have much work to do, but what I mention above strongly suggests that we do not labour in vain.

There has been a steady flow of practical support being given to some of the most needy families in Saranda and Çukë over many months - initiated by our partners across the water. Distributing aid, such as bags of food, often brings problems, such as jealousy, but the work has continued without a flinch.

See photograph opposite.



BAPTISM

A few days ago I received some photographs. Not much comment accompanied them, but few words were needed. They showed two baptisms taking place on the Saranda shoreline. Nine youngsters wanting to affirm their Christian faith, "The light of the world" was now shining into their young lives; fresh beginnings were being made.

Many lives have been changed for the good through the work carried out with our friends from Durres.



WATCHING CLOSELY.

In one photograph you will see Jorgo's younger daughter, Joela, watching her father presiding at the first of two baptismal services. In a subsequent conversation, Jorgo told me that his daughters take a greater and greater interest in his work. "It's good that they understand what Christian service to others is about."

I loved that. Maybe, even in their infant years, a new generation of leaders is being equipped for the future.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Thank you very much for remembering our friends in your prayers.

We would all like you to remember Jeti (Yettie) as his battle with serious illness goes on. In this recent photograph he is shown with his beloved 6 year old daughter, Dea. He remains in remarkably good spirits and enjoys telling me about the church he has found in his town of Pogradec, including relaying Sunday messages. Increasingly he tells me that he now understands that God is the source of the love and care he receives.

He has begun to pray regularly for somebody else that is suffering with serious illness, even though he has never met him. The person is a friend I told him about who lives far beyond Albania's borders - and that tells us that Jeti's horizons have broadened. When asked if he has a message to pass on? Jeti replied, "Yes, tell him that as we remember others, we should not forget to pray for ourselves."

