

Albanian ministry begins with old hurdles



Great friends and partners in ministry from the main city in Southeast Albanian just 250 km or 2.5 hours from our home

We have worked with Albanians since 1999 and were heavily involved in the Kosovo war relief (2000-2002). This beautiful family became our friends because Algent and I both love cycling. We have made many memories leading trips with groups around our beautiful, un-explored secret places of our region.

Recently, various factors made it clear that our FM mission should start building Kingdom relationships in Albania with Genti and Rona as everyone calls them. I messaged our Director in Spain, Josh, who also knows them and he booked a flight with his wife, Susy, to come set things up. Algent has been to Spain many times of the

past 8 years and his family has vacationed there one summer at Peter Clark's home. Peter Clark is a long time member of the Madrid FM Church and is also known as Mr. Bicycle Trip.

Albania is an unique, uncommercialized, and inviting place with natural beauty and many special challenges for life and ministry. For example, Josh and Susy arrived last month for a quick visit to Albania and then back to Spain while still under COVID restrictions. The Greek mission is donating our old van to the Albania work. So we drove the new van with the old van to Albania which is just two and a half hours away. All the documents were made up and after passing 5 police checks in Greece, we made it to the Albanian side of the border and everything was going as expected. Then, the Albanian passport police informed us just before stamping our passport that if we enter Albania, we would have to stay 14 days quarantine before being allowed to leave. Quickly, we refused those conditions and retreated back to "no man's land" between the two border crossings to wait for Genti to come for the van.

While waiting in the "no man's land", the Greek police approached us and informed us that re-entrance into Greece was not an option because do to Covid Greek border allowed only exits. So now we were really stuck. No way to go back and going forward was a mess. We found out the new quarantine requirements were just announced the day before by the Albanian government to deter Albanians from outside of the country from voting in the elections scheduled for in just five days. What a joke!!! Inside of Albania, there is no mask wearing, nor distancing nor sanitization. WE WERE TRAPPED BY LOCAL POLITICS!!! Talk about bad timing!

Genti finally came with a business friend who knows the border police captains and arranged for a four hour transit permit for me to enter Albania and exist into the next country of N. Macedonia so that I could drive back to Greece. Josh called the Spanish Embassy and got assurances that he and Susy would be able to fly out of the capital airport back to Spain on the Saturday before the election.

So typical for ministry in Albania, everything worked out in the end ... just differently than planned or expected. As a result Josh and Susy got two full days together with Genti and Rona. Things are moving forward. Although still it is not allowed for Albanians to enter Greece, Genti and two other Albanians just crossed the border today because of the partnership with our Greek organization.

We look forward to getting orientated together and building the bond of partnership between our neighboring nations. This relationship-based ministry feels so natural and hopes to grow around our region without the restrictions of boundaries. Because this mission move is based on years of trust, the expected hurdles do not trouble us ...

rather they are part of the normal adventure of bringing nations together in the union of Jesus Christ.

Your prayers and support are appreciated and needed.

I hope you enjoyed the long story of the daily life and workings of our part of the world