

Woman, Instrumental in Building the Lutheran Church in Albania, in need of assistance

Request from Pastor Greg Bey, Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Crete, Illinois and Joshua O'Dell, seminary student and missionary in Albania

"Vitori Mece (pronounced, Meche) and her husband Agron have been extremely helpful in building the Lutheran Church here in Albania, which just celebrated its ten year anniversary. She is 50 and was one of the first contacts that our Lutheran Church had in Albania. Since Vitori is by profession an English teacher, she has been instrumental as a translator of spiritual materials for the church here. In fact, in the time that she worked as a secretary and translator for the church, she has translated three adult instruction courses, nine self study series booklets, a book and other materials as well. She and her husband Agron were also special blessings to the church when in 1997 our missionaries fled the country because of dangerous civil unrest. Agron and Vitori, however, remained and continued to serve God's people during that difficult time. Vittori translated a sermon and prayers for the church services almost every week from 1997-2002. More recently, Vitori was volunteering her time to lead a children's Bible study.

In addition to these very tangible benefits that Vittori has provided the church here, there are also some equally valuable intangibles that she provides. She is the other half of a wonderful man who, by the grace of God will one day soon be the only indigenous preacher/full time worker of this Albanian Lutheran church. She was working full-time to support his efforts as he transitions into and trains for that role before her health sidelined her. Also, Vittori is what one might call a natural people person. Since she and Agron live in a large apartment complex, Vittori has done a superb job of making friends and familiarizing people with the new Christian information center on the first floor of their apartment complex.

However, most of this has been put on hold for the moment.

Vitori is now fighting a condition where her body produces too many red blood cells, creating an obvious possibility for clots to form. Recently, she found out that a clot had indeed formed in the portal vein, and that consequently, blood was redirecting itself through the veins in her esophagus. This has created a condition called Esophageal Varices, which is basically like having varicose veins in the esophagus. This is especially dangerous because if these currently enlarged and distended veins were to rupture (due to rough food or any variety of things), she could begin to bleed internally and not even know it since the esophagus does not have pain receptors. The above conditions are not only dangerous, but also can and have caused severe headaches and weakness.

She is seeking medical help as much as is possible. This has recently led her to travel to the U.S., where she underwent extensive testing to diagnose the exact problem and hopefully find some solutions. While it was good for her to get good medical treatment in the U.S., this also caused a problem.

Vitori currently volunteers her time to the church in Albania. Thus, she does not have insurance through the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Rather, her insurance is through her job teaching in Albania. But unfortunately, this does not cover the charge of tests in the United States. The Mece's live on the income of Albanians, and they have the insurance of Albanians, and these are not nearly ideal for dealing with the medical system of the United States. After a trip across the ocean and extensive testing, they have racked up considerable bills. Currently, their family is helping them out as best as they can, but an uncertain future lies ahead of them. Praise God that at least they do know who holds the future.

I simply write to see if there is anyone out there who is willing to help, whether this be financially or simply through their prayers. All are very much appreciated.

Josh O'Dell
Missionary, currently serving in Albania