

Once Illegal, Christianity Now Spreading in Albania

An unlikely mission field has emerged in the former atheist nation of Albania. For nearly 25 years, from 1967 to 1990, all religious observations throughout the nation were prohibited, and all churches and mosques were closed. But today, The Tide global radio ministry is expanding its programs into Albania to reach people with the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

“Having just returned from Albania, we were truly inspired by Christians in that nation to help them spread the life-changing news of Jesus Christ throughout their once-atheist country,” said The Tide Director Don Shenk. “One former atheist, now a first-generation Christian, told us, ‘No matter how many times I said no to the Lord, when I finally turned to Jesus, He said yes to me.’ This one story reflects God’s saving grace and the way He has used The Tide over the past 68 years. Stories like this motivate us to press on to reach as many people as we can with the hope that is Jesus.”

One of Europe’s poorest nations, Albania has a population of just over 3 million, with more than 55 percent being Muslim, 10 percent Roman Catholic, approximately 7 percent Orthodox, 2.5 percent atheist, and more than 20 percent either another religion or unspecified.

Earlier this summer, Pope Francis announced that his first international trip in Europe would be to Albania, reflecting the openness of that nation to the message of Jesus. His one-day visit is scheduled for Sept. 21.

“It’s all too easy to look at a nation like Albania and feel that Christians are few in comparison to the overall population,” Shenk said. “But instead, we should see an

incredible mission field of souls, ripe for harvest, waiting only for someone to tell them about Jesus. As Romans 10 tells us, 'how can they believe without hearing, and how can they hear without someone telling them?' We are encouraged by this open door God has provided to share the gospel with the people of Albania."