

Beginnings

The Reeves go to serve in Albania



Josh (Australian) and Ali (N. Ireland), are new missionaries with ECM Australia going to Albania in February. Josh explains how this started 'by accident' while he was living and working in Northern Ireland 10 years ago.

"My former colleague, Mervyn Kirkpatrick, had a vision to start a ministry in Albania when he saw almost nothing there to support people with disabilities ... and there were very few church ministries for the disabled. In 2007 Mervyn co-opted me and then Ali came on board. When Mervyn died in 2009, we took up running the project."

Josh's heart for the disabled was birthed in his time as a social worker among adults in Northern Ireland. **And with Ali a qualified GP, their combined health and social care qualifications make them an excellent fit for their role in Albania.**

Since 2011 they have been trained and equipped at the Sydney Missionary and Bible College for full-time ministry and they are looking forward to working together learning the language and then focusing on disabled children's ministry and church planting. But Albania certainly wasn't love at first sight. Initially Ali wasn't keen on a life of ministry there, but God had other ideas.



Josh and Ali with Isla, Sam and Amalia.

"Once I met the people, God started a change in my heart," Ali says. "It took years, but He changed my heart."

Tirana, Albania's capital city, will be their home during a period of language study before settling into long term ministry. "We'll be joining the ECM team and expect to be working alongside various churches," says Josh.





“Where we go will be decided in consultation between the local churches, ECM and us. We’ll work wherever the needs are but we’re hoping to help local churches start ministries for disabled people and subsequently network those ministries, so that they can share resources and support. **We want to help equip the church to love, serve and share Jesus with those who are among the most marginalised in society.**”

Assessing the success of their ministry will be a challenge. “I honestly don’t know how we’ll do that,” Josh says. “We’ll plant the seeds and pray. If the network grows there will be something measurable but I suspect the fruit will be a long while in showing.”

Many of the believers in Albania are first-generation Christians; and don’t know what it means to be Christian parents. “Most have no experience of raising Christian kids or how different that might look from the world,” says Josh.

The Reeves’ supporters might wonder if Josh and Ali and their three children will be safe in Albania. “I’ve very rarely heard of missionaries getting into trouble but corruption is a problem,” says Josh. “By and large, if you’re not courting trouble, you’ll be left alone.”

Please pray for Josh and Ali as they settle with their young family into language study there.

