

## God Uses the Prayers of Children: Albania

Thirty years ago (late 1980s), a group of children lived in the country of Albania in Eastern Europe. At that time, Albania had an atheist government. Albania's leaders did not believe in God and they didn't want the people in their country to believe in God, either. It was against the law for families to have Bibles, to pray, or to meet together for church. Many churches were destroyed during those years. People who were caught with books about God could be put in jail.

Electric fences and soldiers with guns surrounded the borders of Albania. People had to have permission to travel out of the country. These fences also kept missionaries from going into Albania. The government even controlled what the TV and radio stations broadcast. Any Christian shows about God were blocked so people would not hear about Jesus.

But God is stronger than electric fences, soldiers with weapons, and leaders of countries. At that time, God chose to work in a way that no one would have imagined. One day, a group of boys and girls were exploring their attic. It was dark, dusty, and covered with spider webs. Suddenly, the beam from their flashlights stopped on an old radio. One boy stepped forward, picked up the radio, and brushed the dust off the top. "It's an old radio. Let's plug it in and see if it still works," he said. At first, they just heard static, but after fiddling with the dials, the children tuned in to one station that they could hear clearly. The man on the radio program was talking about God. One older girl reached out and turned the volume down.

"What are you doing? I can't hear the Bible story. Turn it back up," complained her younger sister.

"No!" the older girl explained. Radio broadcasts about God are against the law. If Mom and Dad found out we were listening to Bible stories, they'd take this radio away from us for sure. If the neighbors found out, they might report Mom and Dad to the police. Do any of you here want your parents to go to jail?" All the children shook their heads "no."

"Then the only way we can keep this radio is to follow a few rules. #1. You can never tell anyone about our discovery. This radio is our secret. #2. We only listen to it when we are all together. #3. When we turn it on, we must keep the volume low." All the boys and girls agreed to follow the rules.

Every day after school, the children climbed the stairs to the attic. Gathering around the radio, they leaned in close to hear wonderful Bible stories. They learned that God created them and loved them. They learned that God sent his son, Jesus, to die for their sin. As they learned more, the children began to put their trust in Jesus. One day, the children learned that Jesus could heal people. "Did you hear that?" one boy whispered. "Jesus can heal sick people. I know where there's lots of sick people. Let's go!"

The group of children walked several blocks to the hospital and climbed the stairway to the third floor. Peeking in the first room, they saw a sick man lying in bed. They stood outside his room and began to pray, asking Jesus to heal him. They moved on to the next patient. Outside her door, they bowed their heads, too. The children continued down the hallway, stopping at every door to ask Jesus to heal the patient in the room.

Reaching the end of the hallway, the children walked down the stairs and out of the building. Meanwhile, patients were climbing out of their beds and walking around in the hallway. Nurses scrambled to get them back into their beds. Each person insisted that they weren't sick anymore. The patients kept telling the nurses the same story – a group of children had stood at their door and prayed right before they were healed.

One worker recognized the children from the description given by the patients. Later when she saw the boys and girls in town, she stopped to talk to them. "Did you know what happened the day you visited the hospital? Everyone on the third floor was healed."

"Of course," said a boy in the group. "Jesus can heal anyone. He's God's son."

**God used children in Albania to pray for sick people in the hospital ... and God can use you, too.** Your prayers are powerful because you are talking to the God of the universe – the loving, powerful God who made the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, and even brought dead people back to life. God uses prayers to change the world. Could you pray for people who are sick or hurt?

Background information from *Too Small To Ignore: Why Children Are the Next Big Thing* by Dr. Wess Stafford, (2005).