

Waylanders plan to answer their Macedonian call

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PLAINVIEW—In preparation for a two-week mission trip to Macedonia, a group of Wayland Baptist University students is collecting clothing and other items to be distributed in a village on their trip.

The group, headed by Rick Shaw, director of the Wayland Missions Center and assistant professor of religion, will leave May 29 for the area, traveling first to Macedonia, then to Kosovo, then taking in some sights in Greece.

Rick Shaw (on piano) leads the mission team heading to Macedonia in a worship song in the language in special classes preparing Wayland Baptist University students to worship and share testimonies in Macedonia. Melanie Vasquez, Taylor Phillips, Khyrstyne Eckerd, Micah Evans, Amber Hamilton and Kevin Burrow (front) rehearse a song.

Supplies will be delivered to Konjare e Mesme, an Albanian/Bosnian village in Macedonia. The group is collecting gently used children's clothing and small toys as well as over-the-counter pain relief medications, such as Ibuprofen, in sealed packages.

Many of the locations to be visited on the trip are places Shaw and his wife, Martha, served as missionaries, and the group will be working with many of the pastors and churches he planted while on the field. He is excited to take the next step in the missions journey—taking his own charges to meet

those converts.

“My dream is to offer students cross-cultural missions experiences, for our religion majors as well as any students who would like to do that,” he said.

The trip to Macedonia will do just that as students are exposed first-hand to Muslims in their own culture, Shaw said.

“They have very little experience with Muslims, and even a little fear and anxiety about them,” he said. “They’ll come back changed people, for sure.”

Melanie Vasquez, a religion major from Hobbs, N.M., with an interest in missions, has participated in other international missions experiences, but she said this trip will be different.

Reaching out to Muslims

“What interested me is the Muslim people,” she said. “I see the need for people to reach out to the Muslim people. A lot of Christians are afraid of them and don’t want to approach them, but God loves all people, and we need to reach them too.”

While overseas, junior Kevin Burrow will preach and lead a sports camp in a Macedonian village. Vasquez, sophomore Khrystyne Eckerd and junior Amber Hamilton will help teach English-as-a-Second-Language in Macedonia and Kosovo and give their testimonies at an all-Balkan women’s conference. Senior Micah Evans and sophomore Taylor Phillips will preach and help lead in several areas. The group also will speak, sing and perform drama in Macedonian churches.

“We’ve been meeting for two weeks for language lessons and Bible study in preparation for the trip, and they are doing very well,” Shaw said. “Some of them have had other languages and are picking it up very quickly.”

The training sessions will continue until the group leaves May 29. They are set to return June 14.

Making the Bible real

Besides hard work in Macedonia and Kosovo, Shaw noted he has planned some tourist attractions for the students, including visits to Thessalonica and Philippi in Greece, touring many of the sites covered in Paul's missionary journeys in the Bible.

"These places really make the Bible real to people," he said.

Shaw also will lead a group of students, along with two groups from area churches, to Kenya in July. Groups from First Baptist Church in Matador and First Baptist Church in Plainview will join the trip at different intervals, with the charge of building an eight-foot stone security fence around one of the churches in a ghetto neighborhood. The church has been vandalized repeatedly. The group from Matador, composed of several contractors, will begin the project, and the group from Plainview hopes to complete the fence. The groups and students also will work with another church that houses an orphanage for children whose parents have died from AIDS.