



Annual Report

20

21



Enter to
Learn
Leave to
Serve



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A Word from Our President



As you know, the years 2020 -2021 have been different from any other year - not just for Bethlehem Bible College, but on a national and global scale as well. This was highlighted with another war on Gaza in May, the repercussions of which affected all of the West Bank and Jerusalem. Just surviving during such a time has been hard, but to thrive and continue to advance and succeed *is a demonstration of God's faithfulness. This verse sums up our journey: "For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing"* (Deuteronomy 2:7). Though we walked as if in an unpredictable wilderness, Jesus has been with us and walks the path with us.

We are at a turning point in overcoming the hardships of the pandemic. As a community, social distancing has been hard on us. Previously we would gather daily for prayer, have lunch together, and have more activities. Now we are trying to get back to a new reality - we are used to hearing from staff telling us that she or he is sick with COVID-19. Thank God most people are only having mild symptoms, but it still continues to interrupt the flow of life and work. As president, my responsibilities include representing the College local and globally, but I have been restricted to mainly local events. My hope is that 2022 will be different and I will be able to visit with our partners around the world and make new partners.

Bethlehem Bible College continues to move forward in initiating new academic programs (including graduate studies), reaching out to Arabic speakers globally with quality training, and more than anything else, we continue to be a light in our country and beyond.

Thank you all for supporting us and especially for the prayers which are continually lifted on our behalf before the throne of grace.

Rev. Dr. Jack Para



Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve...



Preparation and expansion have been key words for Bethlehem Bible College in 2021. The world experienced the continuation of a global pandemic, instability, shortages, strikes, lockdowns, and violence, and none of that was lacking here in Bethlehem. But like Paul said in II Corinthians 4:8, *"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed..."* On the contrary, Bethlehem Bible College flourished during this difficult year. We were able to complete our new five-year strategic plan, expand our programs to draw in a larger audience, make progress on the complete renovation of our Guest House, and even launch a thriving new program – the ***Bethlehem Institute of Peace and Justice***.



Our students ***enter to learn*** – to gain a deeper understanding of the Word of God and how to be formed by Him into the image of Christ, then they ***leave to serve*** – to take what they have learned and put it into practice in their community. In 2021 the average enrollment in our core programs was 187 students, nearly half women and half men. On June 26, we graduated 11 students with a BA in Biblical Studies and 21 students with a Tour Guide Diploma. We also celebrated the completion of four more online Biblical Studies students. Although these students live all around the world, they all come from Middle Eastern backgrounds to study the Bible together through this program. Additionally, we celebrated the graduation of our first cohort of students in our Hebrew Language Program on August 12.

Bethlehem Bible College is on the leading edge of international education, now offering our theology programs, in Arabic, to students worldwide. ***Our Online Biblical Studies Diploma Program*** is being expanded into a full BA Program, in part to be responsive to our students interests and needs as many of our them are already pastors, church planters, and disciple-makers throughout the Middle East and among Arab populations around the world.

Additionally, our MA Program is being developed into a platform that can be offered online, for Arabic-speaking students around the world. While the focus of this program is still leadership, it is being reframed into an MA Degree in *Theology in the Public Square* by adding in additional courses such as Issues of Public Concern, The Church in Palestine and the Middle East, and Theology of Peace and Justice.

In the fall semester we inaugurated the first course of the *Bethlehem Institute of Peace and Justice (BIPJ)* with 30 students worldwide. At the core of the BIPJ are two online courses, "Peacemaking & Justice in the Palestinian Context 1 and 2." These courses, along with a two-week intensive residential workshop in the summer will make up our Certificate Program. Additionally, the BIPJ will mentor emerging Palestinian leaders and provide training for local professionals in trauma recovery, and a local lecture series.

Our beginner-level Arabic courses have now become a steady income stream, along with the Discovery Courses offered online by the Coordinator of our Tour Guide Department. *Discover Bethlehem, Discover Jerusalem, Discover Galilee, and Discover the Central Highlands* all were a resounding success, helped to build an international community, and generated additional income from our international online courses.



On November 5th, Bethlehem Bible College conducted our first academic conference, titled "Faith and Crisis." Several members of the faculty presented papers on the theme, and our Academic Dean, Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac, interviewed Ms. Matilda Sabbagh Maltby (a church leader from Syria) via Zoom.

In order to determine the strategic plan for the next five years, the College drew input from our faculty, staff, Board members, students, and beneficiaries. Envisioning where we are going necessitates seeing where we have been, what has been successful, and what has not worked. After a lengthy process, our specific objectives will focus on the areas of:

Contextual and authentic academic research, theological resources and training platforms

Improved socioeconomic, educational, and spiritual service provision

Strengthened work environment, effective institutional and human capacity development

Increased financial sustainability through income generation

The effect of COVID-19 on the economy of Bethlehem remained devastating, as it depends so much on tourism (the main source of income), which continued to be nonexistent throughout the year. During the last few months of 2021, tourists began trickling back into the West Bank, especially for Christmas. However, Bethlehem Bible College has taken advantage of this lack of tourism to totally renovate our Guest House. It is being expanded from just one floor (housing 25 guests) to fill all four floors of the building, and will be large enough to accommodate an entire busload of tourists and visitors. We are developing this as an income-generating project to assist in the College's efforts to become more sustainable, as it will nearly triple our yearly income from the Guest House. We are well underway with this project, but we still remain short of our financial goal to complete the renovation.

We are so pleased to be able to present to you our 2021 Annual Report so you can rejoice with us at the difference Bethlehem Bible College has made in the lives of our students, staff, faculty, and beneficiaries. We have prepared for our students to enter to learn and leave to serve, and expanded the opportunities for their learning in Bethlehem and around the world. May all glory be to God!



Bethlehem Bible College Academic Programs

MA Program in Christian Leadership & Ministry



This has been a landmark year for our MA Program at Bethlehem Bible College. While maintaining our focus on **Christian Leadership and Ministry**, we are changing the program to **Theology in the Public Square**. The idea behind this is to expand the concept of

Christian leadership beyond the realm of traditional church work, and train leaders who are able to serve both in the church and the public square. This will require several new courses for the cohort of students starting in the spring of 2022.



For our students finishing the current cohort, they have faced real challenges in working through the pandemic (as have all our students), but they are finishing up their theses to present and be ready for

graduation in 2022, instead of 2021. One advantage that has come out of our students studying through the pandemic is that we are now able to offer “blended” classes in our MA Program – both in-person and via Zoom. This will now enable Arabic-speaking students from around the world to participate in our program – a unique feature, as there is no other university offering a Master’s degree program like this!

Eleanor, one of our MA students living in Gaza as she completes this rigorous three-year program, says, *“Here in Gaza we face many challenges, especially Christians, who number less than 1,000 people. We face the obstacles of all Gazans, such as lack of electricity and movement restrictions. Plus we face the challenges of being a minority. Some people don’t even know there are Christians in Gaza, so they treat us as if we are from another place. The youth in Gaza face the scarcity of job opportunities, especially for Christians, so we have a high rate of unemployment. Yet despite all these challenges, we won’t leave Gaza. We continue to live and to witness for our Lord because this is our call.”*



BA Program in Biblical Studies

Out of 67 students in the BA in Biblical Studies Program we have nine new first-year students. Some of these students have degrees in other majors but have now chosen to study the word of God. One of these is Jumana Sakakini. She loves the Lord and continues to thank the faculty and staff for this unique opportunity to study at Bethlehem Bible College where



she can focus on and study the Bible. She loves our bi-weekly Chapel sessions and considers it as her church time. Another student, Marisol Ghawali, expresses how she loves the way she is treated as a family member. She was doubtful at first that she would be able to meet the academic requirements, but she is very focused, dedicated, and faithful to meet all of the requirements. Her desire now is to continue her studies, even to pursue a Master's degree so that she can teach in a Christian organization. Our faculty members are very pleased with the quality of our students and the changes they see in their lives. Students share with us the difficulties they face in their everyday lives, and we encourage them as they walk through various trials. We love seeing our students **enter to learn** so that they may **leave to serve**.



ONLINE Biblical Studies Diploma

Our **Online Biblical Studies Diploma** continues to grow in many ways, with over 100 registered students from 28 countries around the world. We are expanding this program from a Diploma Program to a full BA Program at the request of our students. The first two of these BA courses were taught in 2021, with four more scheduled to be introduced by the summer of 2022. These two unique courses present a local Palestinian biblical theology and are among the first Arabic theological material presented in the Middle East. Our students are extremely grateful for this indigenous perspective.

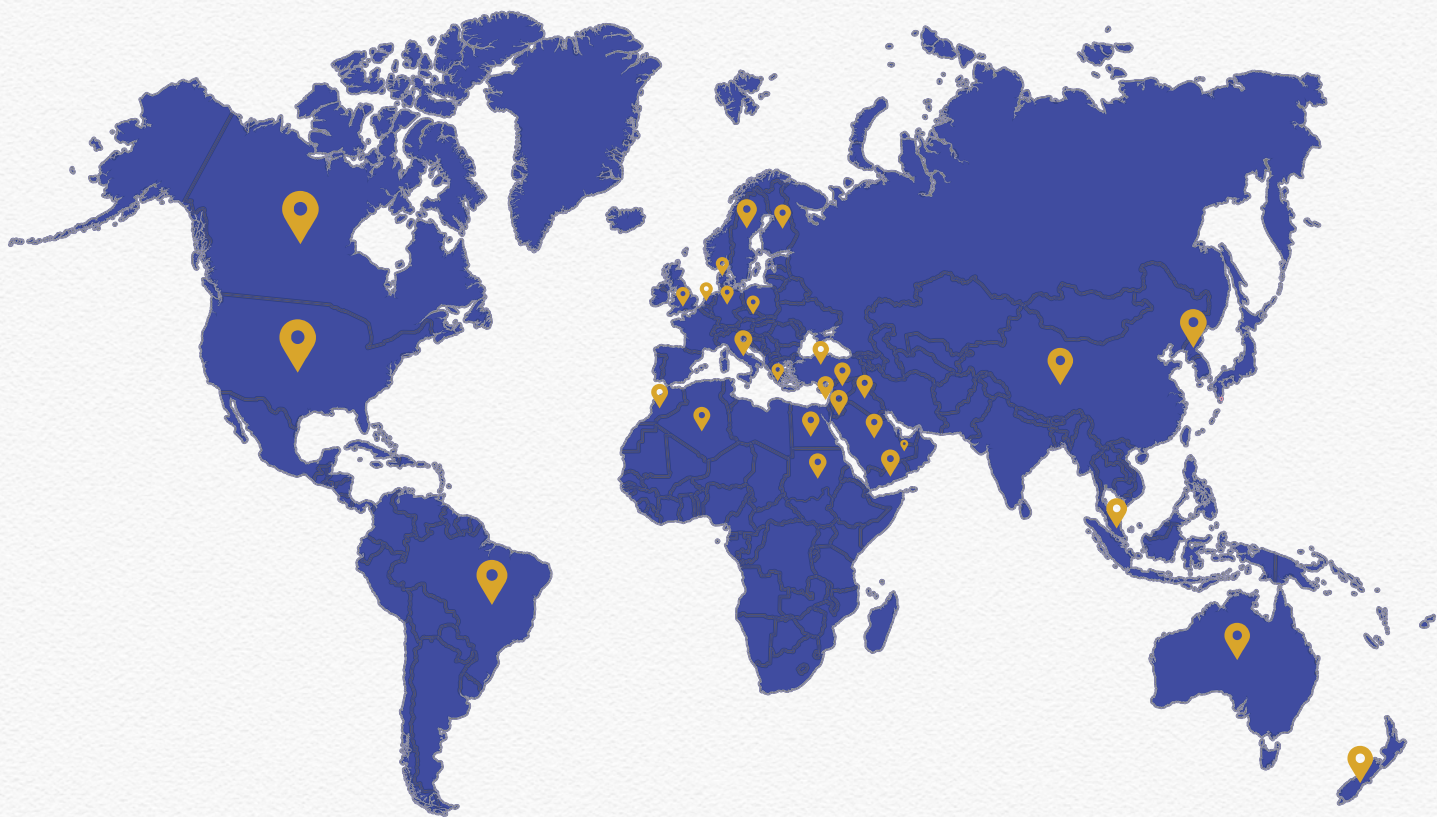
One of our graduates says, *"Today, on a personal level, I feel happy and accomplished, not only because I got an academic degree, but because I was able to place a cornerstone in the journey of building my spirituality that started with passion and ended with more passion. The momentum and richness of the courses that we have read during the past three years in an intensive study required a lot of effort, time and dedication. However, it makes me feel that we can spend an entire life studying the Bible without end, so I believe this is a moment of beginning, not a moment of arrival."*

You might wonder what the results of this program are. Many of our students have established "home churches" or minister in underground movements. Some, despite war and conflict, continue to minister in their home countries. Others serve as ministers in churches in more than a dozen countries, and some perform secular jobs drawing on their faith. To God be the glory!



Online Students Geographic Distribution

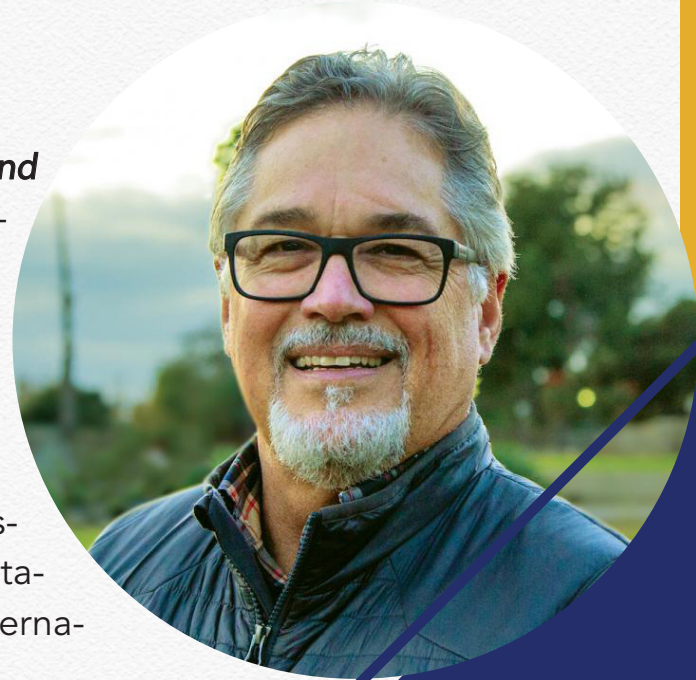
All of our students are Arabs, living in the following countries:



Iraq	11	Qatar	1	USA	2
Palestine	15	Sweden	11	Sudan	2
Egypt	14	New Zealand	2	Saudi Arabia	1
Syria	2	France	1	The Netherlands	2
Australia	4	Greece	1	North Korea	1
Yemen	3	Germany	6	Jordan	2
Brazil	2	Italy	1	Armenia	1
Lebanon	2	Malaysia	3	Austria	2
Turkey	5	Morocco	2	Canada	1
				Switzerland	1

Bethlehem Institute of Peace and Justice

The goal of the **Bethlehem Institute of Peace and Justice (BIPJ)** is “to equip local and international peacemakers to be a part of preventing, mitigating, and transforming conflict and establishing sustainable peace and justice in Palestine, Israel, and throughout the world,” says Rev. Dr. Andrew Bush, who serves as the Director of the BIPJ and instructor of the courses. He continues, “We are pleased to have notable global Christian leaders comprise our International Advisory Committees.”

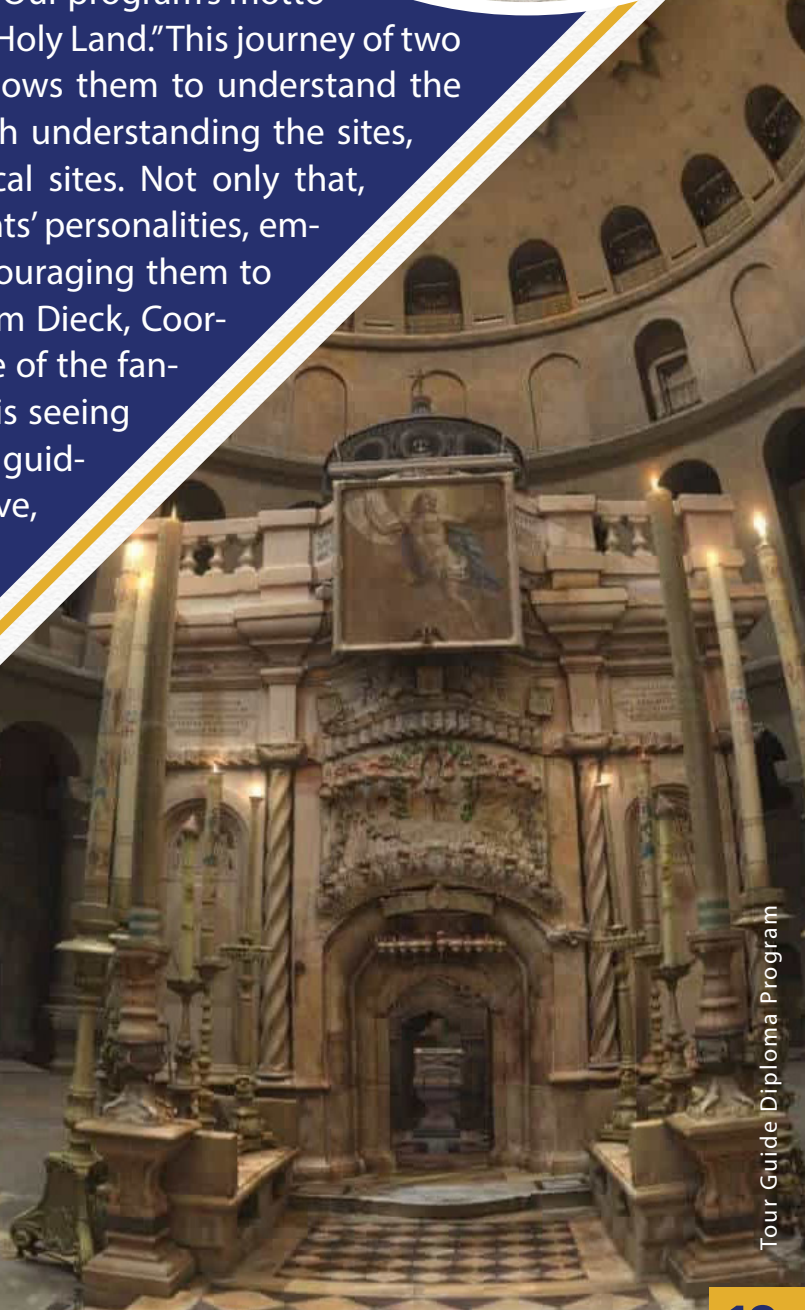


Our Certificate Program (<https://bipj.org/certificate-program/>) consists of two online semester-length courses entitled Introduction to Peacemaking and Justice in the Palestinian Context 1 and 2 and a two-week on-site Summer Intensive. The Certificate Program is an important building block in the BIPJ. The first course began in September 2021. Thirty-three students were enrolled from nine nations. The lectures were pre-recorded by leading Palestinian and international scholars. To conclude the semester an online seminar was conducted with special guest, Palestinian Ambassador to the United Nations, Feda Abdelhady. We opened this to the public and had one hundred people were in attendance.

In December 2021, the BIPJ established an accredited, joint MA Degree in Peace and Justice with St. Stephen's University of New Brunswick, Canada. The Certificate Program courses, including the Summer Intensive, are part of the curriculum of the MA Program. We are very pleased with the start of this program and have high hopes for the impact it will have locally and around the world.

Tour Guide Diploma Program

Since its establishment in 1998, the Tour Guide Program at Bethlehem Bible College is truly a unique program that established us as a well-known professional institution for teaching and training tour guides for over 24 years. Our program's motto is "to graduate a walking encyclopedia of the Holy Land." This journey of two years changes students' perspectives and allows them to understand the "Fifth Gospel of the Bible" (the Land) through understanding the sites, stories, and traditions associated with biblical sites. Not only that, but our program invests in enhancing students' personalities, empowering their presentational skills, and encouraging them to speak publicly in front of groups. Mr. Haytham Dieck, Coordinator of the Tour Guide Program, says, "One of the fantastic things for me as the program director is seeing our graduate students working in the fields, guiding groups professionally with passion and love, and reflecting all the hard work and impact BethBC had on them through the two-year journey." Because of this intense program, the fruits of our success were demonstrated on the last Tour Guiding Ministry exam, which all of our graduates from the previous class passed successfully, an extreme rarity in Bethlehem!



Hebrew Diploma Program



Our **Professional Diploma in the Hebrew** Language enables our students to become more familiar with the Hebrew language; it enables them to read, write, and speak Hebrew fluently. This helps to enrich Palestinian society through identifying educational needs and providing programs and training courses that focus on acquiring professional skills and languages that are highly necessary and in demand within the accelerating labor market and globalization.



A graduate of the program from Bethlehem says, *"I had some previous knowledge in Hebrew but I gained a lot of information of the Hebrew language through well-qualified, professional teachers that helped me to deepen my knowledge in this field. I chose to study at Bethlehem Bible College due to its professional programs and good reputation in delivering language courses. I also needed to have an accredited certificate from the Palestinian Minis-*

try of Higher Education, which this program offers. I am now a teacher in Al Nukhba School in Bethlehem, where I teach Hebrew Language for secondary students, and I'm also now the Hebrew teacher at Bethlehem Bible College where I teach short Hebrew courses for the community in the afternoon. Bethlehem Bible College has helped me develop the skills needed and provided the opportunity for me to find another source of income for my family and I'm very thankful."

In August, Bethlehem Bible College graduated the first batch of students from the Professional Diploma Program in the Hebrew Language. This cohort faced great challenges due to the pandemic, but with the cooperation of professors and students, they were able to complete all the requirements of the program and graduate. We are so pleased to be able to offer language courses both online (for internationals) and for our local community.

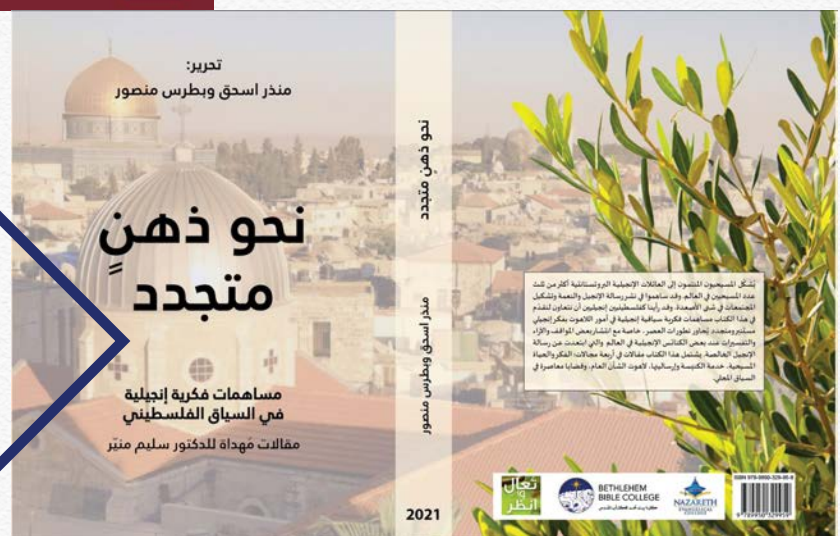
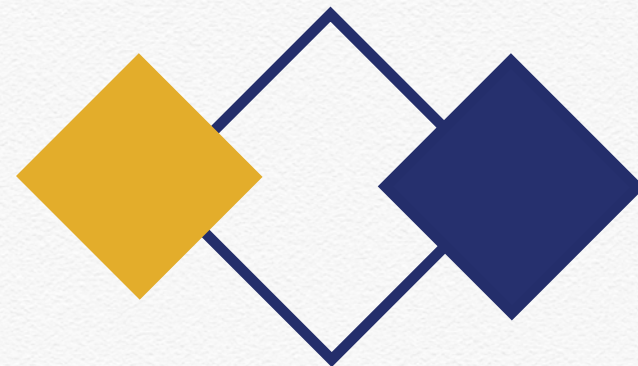
Arabic Academic Publications

In 2021, Bethlehem Bible College began offering another dimension to our academic programs, *Arabic Academic Publications*. More resources are needed in theological circles for Arabic speakers in their mother tongue. Bethlehem Bible College has a history of publishing research and academic papers, with a main focus on Palestinian theology, and this has been adopted into our Strategic Plan. In 2021, two books were published in Arabic:

The Promised Land: A Theological Reading in the Palestinian Context, by Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac

Towards a Renewed Mind: Evangelical Thinking in the Palesitnian Context - Essays in Honor of Salim Munayer, edited by Rev. Dr. Botrous Mansour and Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac

It is our hope to become a respected and trusted resource for Arabic theologians worldwide.



Graduation 2021

On June 26, 2021 Bethlehem Bible College graduated 32 students, 11 from the *Biblical Studies Program* (including 7 from last year who were unable to participate in a graduation ceremony due to Covid-19), and 21 students from the *Tour Guide Program*.

You can see a video of our graduates here
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaSMQAUuxcA>).



Suhad Lolas says,
"I was supposed to graduate from Bethlehem Bible College in 2020. But due to the pandemic, the College had to postpone our graduation to 2021. I had hoped to have the joy of graduating right after finishing my studies; the graduation in 2021 had a little different taste, since I graduated with students of the next class and tour guide students."

"It was a special day. I was overwhelmed with the joy of achievement, especially since I obtained an honor degree under the supervision of the most excellent teachers. But it was also a sad day for me, the day I would say goodbye to my special place, where I grew in faith and established strong relationships."

"After graduation, I taught Christian education, helped with the College's summer camp, and got a leadership certificate via Zoom. Now I'm serving with the Shepherd Society at the College. I am pleased to know more about their work of helping and meeting the community's needs."

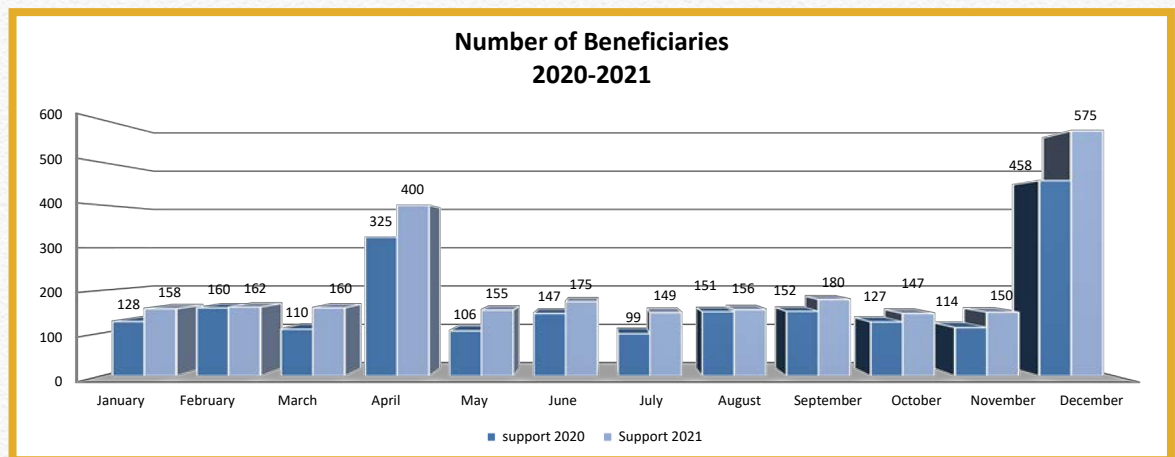
"I have gained a broader experience and a clearer view of life and social relations, and all this credit goes to my beloved Bethlehem Bible College, which has my utmost respect and appreciation."

Bethlehem Bible College

Outreach and Development Center

Shepherd Society

2021 was a banner year for the **Shepherd Society** as we celebrated our 25th Anniversary. We began in 1996 with the aim of modeling Christ to every person that knocks at our door, transforming the lives of those who seek our help. We celebrated this anniversary with friends and partners around the world via Zoom. Through these friends and partners our available finances increased this year, so we were able to do more through our community and development outreach.



The programs of the Shepherd Society reached more beneficiaries this year because of the great need in Bethlehem due to the Covid-19 crisis. Medical assistance for vulnerable individuals and families increased by 15%, while food parcels distributed increased due to the high rate of unemployment (28%) in the Bethlehem district. Our Christmas outreach reached over 2,000 children with a special gift.

Following the attack on Gaza in May 2021, the Shepherd Society raised \$50,000 which was distributed through friends of the College (hospitals, churches, schools, and the Bible Society) for meals and food parcels, assistance with repairs, hospital equipment, and trauma counseling (in partnership with a graduate of Bethlehem Bible College). During the first month of implementation our partners provided food packages for 50 families. One father said, *"We have not had a meal in two days. The packages arrived at the most needed time."* Another family said, *"You are always welcome to visit us because nobody cares for us, nobody reaches out to us except you. We really thank you and need you!"*



A Pot in His Hand Women's Ministry

"A Pot in His Hand" Women's Ministry continued to be mostly online during 2021, but God is faithful to meet us where we are. We held several Zoom gatherings for an average of 50 women, and were finally able to have a face-to-face event for Christmas. This year we mostly focused on using media and Facebook in reaching out to our participants. We covered topics such as *Social Distancing and Emotional Deprivation, How to Overcome Depression, Conflict Resolution, and Refilling Our Emotional Tank*. We have 15 women in our small group meetings, and about 11 others in one-on-one counseling (sometimes by phone). We focus on these disciples in order to "make disciples who will make disciples...."

The depth of our ministry continues to impact our ladies spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and interpersonally. And the breadth of the ministry is expanding, now including special events and gatherings, one-on-one ministry, mentoring, group support, a Facebook page, a website, our magazine, and previously recorded TV episodes. One member says, *"The message is communicated in a simple, understandable, practical, and applicable way. It shows in my relationship with the Lord, my relationship with my husband, my family, and with all other friendships and people around me. With the reality of current difficulties of life, this ministry is encouraging and supportive."*



We are so pleased that we were able to launch our website (in Arabic) - aniyeh.org - which now provides all of our ministry work and published materials, articles, videos, previously recorded TV program, YouTube channel, and magazines. Through this, Arabic women anywhere in the world have access to use any materials we provide, and these women use our materials in their own women's ministries. The impact keeps growing!





New Vision Media Center



The **New Vision Media Center (NVMC)** provides invaluable academic support by producing webinars and lecture videos for online courses, recording messages from the College, conferences, graduation, and seasonal programs. The NVMC also has outreach ministries including "Bible Live," a resource in Arabic and English for spiritual reflection through monthly devotional videos featuring sites in the Holy Land with prayers and meditations, which helps people meet some spiritual needs online. In 2021 we had over 126,000 views of these videos.

One of our premier projects of the New Vision Media Center is a 10-minute bi-monthly program (24 episodes) called "New Vision." This program creates a platform for the voiceless in Palestinian society, promoting democracy and human rights through media and training.

Another project of the NVMC addressed the marginalization of women in the church and society. We brought together 25 influential Christian church and civil leaders for dialogue and action. The project resulted in a better understanding of public opinion regarding women's role, which will be an ongoing process, and a determination to involve more organizations to raise awareness, advocate for gender equality, and build connections for lasting impact.



Community Training

Our **Community Training** Department was established for two main purposes. First is to provide opportunities for our neighbors in the Bethlehem area to get professional training so they have a better chance of finding job opportunities in our community. Second, Bethlehem Bible College is reaching out to the local community, especially non-believers, as a way of outreach and to bless people. Through the programs, our teachers get to be living examples of the gospel by interacting first hand with our students. Students share with us their unique experience here at the College as they can feel a different

atmosphere than other places in the community - they feel as though they are among family! People from Bethlehem and surrounding areas sign up for our courses. In total, we had 70 students enrolled in our programs in 2021, most of whom are women, and approximately 90% of whom are Muslim. For example, we had 10 students enrolled from Hebron, a city considered to be 100% Muslim.

Our courses include:

Short language courses: English, Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew

Practical training in marketing through social media

UCMAS (Universal Concept of Mental Arithmetic System) – a child development program based on mental math and the abacus for children 5-13 years old

Summer camps for children 5-12 years old

Online Arabic courses (levels 1-6) for internationals

Online tourism courses for internationals that allow participants to discover the Holy Land



Star Bazaar Gift Shop

In order for Bethlehem Bible College to achieve our mission, there is always a need for external funding. We are grateful to all of our donors, yet we also feel the responsibility to do what we can to help generate these much needed funds and live out our mission. We have a **gift shop - the Star Bazaar** - that gives marginalized vendors in our struggling community a platform to sell their items, and also gives our customers the opportunity to become part of our mission. One of these vendors is a man named Michael, an individual who has a physical disability and therefore cannot

do hard labor. We helped him set up a small workshop where

he specializes in making some of the most beautiful crosses, coasters and hotplates that we sell in the gift shop. By doing so, everyone benefits as 100% of the profits go to funding various initiatives and scholarships, while our vendors have much

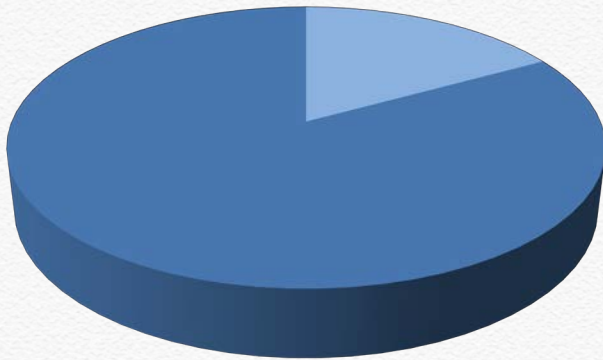
needed income and new hope, especially since lockdowns have further restricted movement due to the pandemic.

Our supporters get to take home an unique and high quality product from Bethlehem.



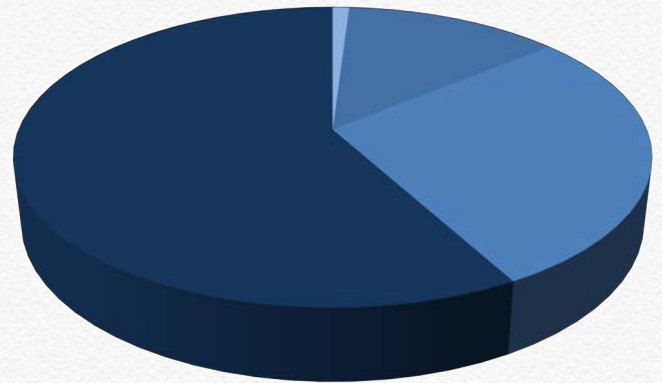
Financial Overview 2021

Source of Funds



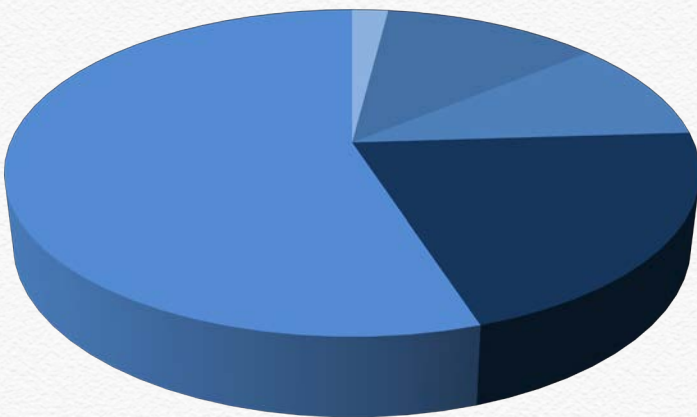
Revenues from Activities (17%)
Contribution (83%)

Contribution by type



Businesses (1%)
Churches (13%)
Individuals (28%)
Foundations (58%)

Functional Expenses



Salaries & Staff Benefits (55%)
Admin & General Expenses (21%)
Program Expenses (10%)
Depreciation (12%)
Cost of Goods Sold (2%)

\$1,821,626

Total Income

\$1,539,986

Total Expenses

Summary Financial Statement

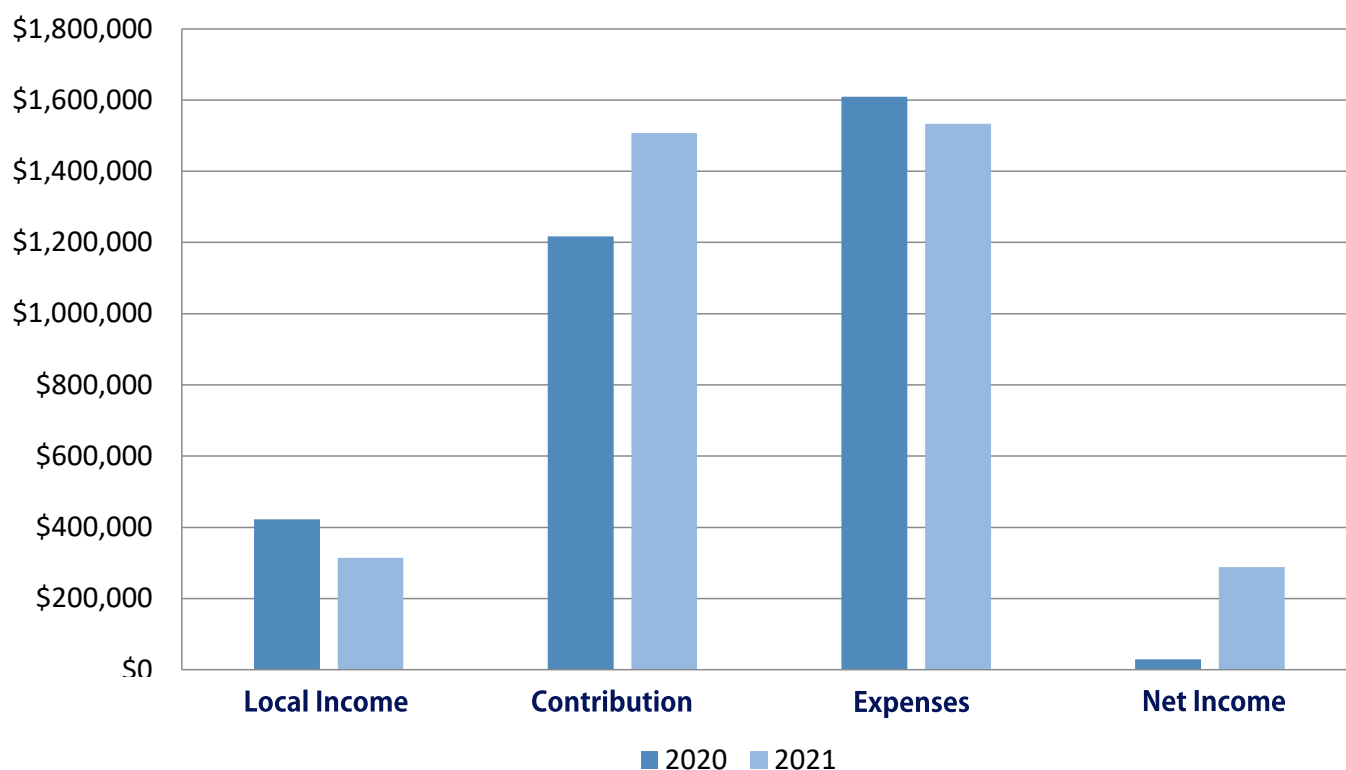
Statement of Financial Position 2021

Assets	\$ 5,996,925
Liabilities	1,516,935
Net Assets	4,479,990
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$5,996,925

Statement of Activities 2021

Income	\$ 1,821,626
Expense	1,539,986
Net Income	\$ 281,640

Income and Expense Comparison



- Please note that this information is based on unaudited financial statements; any variations will be noted in the 2021 audit report.

A Word from Our Board of Trustees



First, I would like to say thank you that despite the hardships all of us are going through you still carry Bethlehem Bible College in your thoughts, prayers, love, and support. I believe these hardships bring us closer to the Lord and have made us realize even more that our hope is built on nothing else but the Lord. Throughout the year the Board of Trustees have met via Zoom but for this last meeting we were very blessed to meet face-to-face. It was great to catch up with everyone and everything that is going on and look at our new plans. What a great accomplishment to be able to review the College strategy and look at the future! The faculty, staff, and Board were all involved in setting our new vision, mission, and strategy.

So please allow me to share with you our vision and mission:

Vision

Toward a society built on the Word of God and the values of love, mercy, justice, and truth.

Mission

We are a Palestinian Christian Evangelical university college that works in the service of, with, and through the Palestinian community, and aims to prepare potential leaders in Palestine and the world and participate in promoting a Palestinian Christian theology locally and internationally.

I pray that this year will be an amazing year for all and that the Lord will bless us as we serve Him in this part of the world.

Thank You



The story of 2021 was a support and prayers of and diligence of our faculty students, and the grace of God.

God expands as our students enter

YOU the image is not complete, but with your encouragement we accomplished all that the Lord put in our path to do. As you enter in with us through your prayers and giving, so many are served through the ministry of Bethlehem Bible College!

mosaic made up of the our partners, the passion and staff, the tenacity of our This picture of the kingdom of to learn and leave to serve. ***Without***