



BETHLEHEM
BIBLE COLLEGE

كلية بيت لحم للكتاب المقدس

Case for Support 2019

Bethlehem Bible College
PO Box 11737, Jerusalem 91116, Israel
+970-2-2741190

US Office: 614-C Bus IH-35
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-708-7444

Table of Contents

- Introduction 2
 - BethBC Mission and Vision 2
 - BethBC Core Values 2
- BethBC History and Impact 3
- BethBC Goals and Outcomes 4
- BethBC Strategies and Objectives 4
- BethBC Programs and Services 5
 - BA Program in Biblical Studies and Christian Education: 5
 - MA Program in Christian Leadership and Ministry: 5
 - Nazareth Evangelical College: 5
 - Gaza Extension: 5
 - Mass Media: 6
 - Tour Guide: 6
 - Online Education Program: 6
 - Women’s Ministry: 6
 - Shepherd Society: 6
 - Christ at the Checkpoint Conference: 6
 - Community Programs: 7
 - Gift Shop: 7
 - Guest House: 7
- BethBC Statement of Needs 7
- BethBC Giving Opportunities **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- BethBC Key Measures of Success 8

BethBC Case for Support

Introduction

Bethlehem Bible College was founded because of the need for quality theological education located in Palestine. When the College began in 1979, many of the area's most promising Christian leaders were leaving the country for an education. Once abroad, many of them, attracted by a new life style and opportunities, did not return to help lead the church in their own country. The College gives young leaders a local option that helps to stem this exodus. ***BethBC is the only institution of its kind in Palestine or Israel that trains Palestinians in the Arabic language for a BA in Biblical Studies and Christian Education and MA in Christian Leadership and Ministry.*** The College also trains students in Mass Media and Tour Guiding. Annually the college trains between 150 and 200 students and reaches out to thousands in the community through humanitarian ministries. BethBC has nearly 40 years of experience in training Christian leaders. Their faculty includes world-renowned academics who are experts in the field of Palestinian theology.

Bethlehem Bible College serves to encourage the church's continuing presence in both Palestine and Israel by empowering the Christians that have been the forerunners and bastion of the Christian faith for centuries. This is an urgent need due to the rapid decline of the Christian community over several decades from 9% to less than 2%, indicated by their classification as an Unreached People Group. Palestinian Christians continue to leave the Holy Land as a result of the ongoing Israeli/Palestinian conflict and the physical and economic hardships that it creates. BethBC works alongside other Christian organizations to strengthen and revitalize the Christian community, and serve as a respected bridge with the Muslim majority.

BethBC Mission and Vision

Bethlehem Bible College exists to:

- Train people to serve Christ in the world,
- Advocate a Palestinian Evangelical perspective,
- And model Christ through community development.

BethBC seeks to prepare Christian leaders to serve churches and society in Israel and Palestine. We train our students to model Christ centeredness, godly humility, and biblical wholeness. As lifelong learners, our graduates follow Jesus' way of creative justice and mercy in both their personal and professional lives.

BethBC Core Values

- Christian Ethical Standards: Actions toward one another will be examples of Jesus' love within our BethBC community. We follow the biblical teachings and Christian ethics demonstrated by love, justice, integrity, fairness, transparency, mercy, accountability, integrity, responsibility and respect for all persons.
- Christ-Honoring Community Relationships: Actions within our wider Bethlehem and Palestinian community reflect Christ to our neighbors. We regard each person in our wider community as

created in the image of God. Our interactions with everyone demonstrate the same values listed above in #1.

- The Evangelical Christian Faith Is Our Foundation: We empower leaders to evangelize the Palestinian people. We practice pure biblical teaching and believe in the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Academic Excellence: Quality teachers who are specialists in their areas and a continually developing curriculum empower students to be ambassadors for Christ in their communities. College leadership is committed to the continuing accreditation, development and growth of the college. Academic facilities are first-class.
- Palestinian Context: The values of God's Kingdom are communicated and applied to the socio-political and cultural realities of the Palestinian people. BethBC's location in Bethlehem and its curriculum offered in the local language address the needs of the local population.
- Gender Equality: BethBC provides equal employment and educational opportunities, rights and benefits for both females and males.

BethBC History and Impact

Bethlehem Bible College was formed in 1979 in response to the need for quality theological education for Palestinian students. Founder Bishara Awad saw many of his students travel abroad for university education, and many of those who wanted to study theology unfortunately never returned. After presenting his idea to a group of local Arab pastors, one gave him a check for \$20 to start a new venture. From there, more support followed and they started their first class with 9 students in the same year.

Responding to a growing need for theological training for Arab Christian servant-leaders for churches and society within Israel, BethBC extended its program to an additional campus, known as Nazareth Evangelical College, in northern Israel, as well as an extension campus in Gaza.

BethBC's continued vision of graduating students who are thoroughly equipped to lead the local church with wisdom, compassion and integrity, and who will serve their communities with care and love, has led to the development of both academic and service programs based in the College, targeting the needs of the local Bethlehem community. The Tour Guide program and Media Studies diploma programs were started to respond to the diminished economic situation in Bethlehem and the lack of employment. Not only do students gain practical skills for employment through these programs, but learn them in the context of Christ-centered Biblical education, enabling them to be the light of Christ in their communities.

Today, Bethlehem Bible College is a flourishing college with a BA Program in Biblical Studies and Christian Education, an MA Program in Christian Leadership and Ministry, and Diploma Programs in Tour Guiding and Media Studies, accredited through MEATE (Middle East Association for Theological Education), the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education, ATA (Asia Theological Association), and provisionally ECTE (European Council for Theological Education). Starting with 9 students and international teachers, BethBC, with its current team of highly qualified local faculty and staff, has come a long way in providing educated Christian leaders able to serve the Palestinian community, as well as Arabic speaking Christians in Israel. Bethlehem Bible College serves a vital role in providing Christian higher education in Palestine, as well as serving the needs of the local community in the face of numerous political and social pressures.

BethBC Goals and Outcomes (What do you hope to achieve?)

- a. Provide sound theological education with a distinctively Palestinian perspective
- b. Train students to maintain a godly influence and perspective in their field of influence, wherever that may be
- c. Serve the local community through tangible service
- d. Serve the church worldwide by advocating awareness of peace and justice issues

BethBC Strategies and Objectives

The underlying goal of our organization, to be a witness for Jesus throughout all operations, is fostered through staff devotionals, bi-weekly chapel for students and faculty, and encouragement of personal and corporate spiritual formation. This then permeates course development and instruction in our primary program objectives - our BA, MA, and diploma course studies.

Some changes have been made in the academic department as a result of the developing strategic plan (discussed in the strategic plan document). The steadily decreasing Christian demographic in Bethlehem and Palestine is affecting our operations. Christians in Palestine make up only 1% of the population. This compels us to review our plan, which currently involves traditional classroom instruction for students over the course of their 2- to 4-year program. We are countering this challenge by opening opportunities to a broader spectrum of students, as not all who desire theological training can attend a daytime classroom setting. People employed full-time, parents, and Palestinians who are hindered in travel because of the occupation can study with BethBC online, or through our “blended” education, which incorporates both online and classroom settings (day or night). We have begun placing more focus on our Online Program, which reaches students in 19 countries around the world, but as our mission is to strengthen the existing church in Palestine and to train students in-country to lead the church and society, we want to maintain our priority of developing leaders here in Palestine. Adjustments in our academic plan are being considered, and changes being made as appropriate alternatives emerge. For current operations, educational integrity and compliance are monitored by the Academic Dean and department heads, evaluated by accrediting agencies. Educational excellence is encouraged by continuing educational opportunities for the faculty. Currently, two faculty members are working on doctoral degrees.

On a practical level, recruitment of students for our academic programs is undertaken through meeting with pastors, schools and prospective students. We have begun incorporating current students into this plan by arranging field trips to local schools. Recruitment for the Online Program takes place through Internet advertising, print brochures, and travel to venues or conferences frequented by Arab Christian leaders. Fundraising for operational costs and student scholarships (due to the depressed economic situation in our region) is undertaken by the Development Department through fostering relationships with current and potential donors, foundations, corporations, churches, and individuals. Speaking engagements, both local and international, also enhance these relationships. Grant applications, compliance, and reporting also fall to that department. Social media is used to increase awareness and promote College campaigns, such as #GivingTuesday and our Christmas campaign.

The broader community is served in a number of ways through low cost educational opportunities sponsored by Bethlehem Bible College. One example is the Global Leadership Summit, which draws in both Christian and Muslim leaders in business, education, church, and government. Another example is the summer camps for Christian and Muslim children, mostly from neighboring refugee camps.

Additionally, BethBC offers Community Education courses in English, Hebrew, accounting, and mathematics for children.

BethBC Programs and Services

BA Program in Biblical Studies and Christian Education: Our courses in theology, church history, Biblical exegesis, archaeology, ministry, and spirituality aim to educate Christian leaders and specialists in the Word of God. In the fourth year, students are required to take a course in community service, giving them practical skills in Christian ministry. In addition, our BA in Biblical Studies is combined with a minor in Christian Education. Courses in youth leadership, teaching methods, elementary education, counseling and a practicum in a local school enable graduates to teach in governmental and private educational institutions in Palestine. Our BA in Biblical Studies is accredited through MEATE (Middle East Association for Theological Education), the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education, and ATA (Asia Theological Association). BethBC also offers a Diploma Program in Biblical Studies.

MA Program in Christian Leadership and Ministry: BethBC founded the first Master's degree in Ministry for Arabic speakers in the Holy Land in 2009. Due to the decreasing Christian population in the Holy Land, there is an urgent need for strong Christian Arab leaders who are informed, use critical thinking, and are wise in theological, ethical and social spheres. The MA in Christian Leadership & Ministry at BethBC provides godly leaders who value the word of God, who are committed to faithful and informed ministry, and who seek unity among believers in Israel and the West Bank. Each participant must establish a new ministry or develop an existing one in order to graduate. The MA in Christian Leadership and Ministry is accredited through MEATE (Middle East Association for Theological Education), ATA (Asia Theological Association), and is awaiting full accreditation with ECTE (European Council for Theological Education). Accreditation of the MA Program with the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education is awaiting additional accredited BA programs.

Nazareth Evangelical College: Responding to a growing need for theological training for Arab Christian servant-leaders for churches and society within Israel, Bethlehem Bible College extended its program to an additional campus in Northern Israel. Galilee Bible College was thus formed in 2007, and in 2015 merged with Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary to become Nazareth Evangelical College. NEC extends BethBC's mission of training Christian leaders throughout the Holy Land. It aims to prepare its students with excellent Christian academic training and ministry opportunities, widening their horizons by exposing them to alternative Christian viewpoints and creating awareness of environmental, social, political, and religious challenges. NEC also promotes church growth and development by encouraging the unity of the Body of Christ.

Gaza Extension: BethBC is developing its teaching ministry in Gaza. Prior to the de facto sealing of the borders in Gaza, students from Gaza came to study at the College, and lecturers visited and held classes in Gaza. All this had to stop, and now Christians in Gaza have asked the College to continue to help them develop their Biblical and theological understanding. Classes are taught in modules through visiting lecturers (primarily international instructors) and through distance education. Most Gaza students participate now through our Online Education Program. While only a small number of students are able to participate at this time, BethBC has both BA and MA students in this vital program, which will serve to strengthen the small Christian community found throughout the Gaza Strip.

Mass Media: The Media Program at Bethlehem Bible College began in 2003 in order to bring hope and encouragement to the Palestinian people. The program provides a way of developing skills, providing employment, and a means of using media to promote a better society. Responding to the economic situation, BethBC developed academic programs that teach valuable skills and provide gainful employment amidst economic difficulty. The Media Program offers a 2-year degree diploma to 10-20 students every two years. It provides courses in journalism theories, radio recording and editing, and TV filming and editing. Students practice and enhance their skills by working with the New Vision Media Center, launched in 2011, which produces television programs to be broadcast every week on local, national and regional television. The Mass Media Diploma Program is accredited with the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education.

Tour Guide: The BethBC Tour Guide Program began in 1998 to serve the Palestinian and international communities by offering a unique Bible-centered curriculum taught in English. The curriculum provides professional training, education and practical preparation to tour guides for the Holy Land. These guides meet the needs of those who visit the Holy Land by providing inspirational and informative guided tours. At the same time, it will offer young Palestinians job opportunities and allow them to discover their own heritage through a rewarding and fulfilling vocation, while also acting as ambassadors of their own people and culture to international visitors.

Online Education Program: Church leaders (especially underground churches) in the Middle East are not always able to leave their churches to pursue formal Biblical training. Many cannot always find Biblical training in their home country, as Bible colleges are not found in most of the Arab world. In Israel/Palestine, the fragmentation of the Palestinian territories complicates the teaching and learning processes. Currently the BethBC Online Education Program has 70 students in 19 countries across 5 continents, all studying Biblical studies in their native Arabic language. The program also provides a platform for mutual encouragement among the students and faculty, which is something they may not experience in their home culture, some of which are actively persecuting Christians.

Women's Ministry: Women are among the least privileged groups in Arab society. Some facets of traditional Arab culture tend to inhibit women from educational and work opportunities outside of the home, and can result in the passing on of myths or incorrect information within the home. Bethlehem Bible College seeks to assist women – both students and others in the community – to embrace their worth and their God-given purpose in life, giving them the tools and power to pursue their visions and dreams. To accomplish this goal, BethBC has established a women's ministry entitled "A Pot in His Hand," which consists of meetings and support groups, individual counseling, retreats, "A Pot in His Hand Magazine," and a television series entitled "Women of the Lord."

Shepherd Society: The Shepherd Society was established in Bethlehem in 1996 to extend Christ's love in a practical way to those in need within our community. As the charitable arm of Bethlehem Bible College, it is one of the avenues through which we respond to the Gospel's call to love our neighbor and care for the poor. The goal of the Shepherd Society is to provide a means for the global Christian community to encourage and financially assist the struggling Palestinian people in the West Bank. We support families in need via several different relief programs: job creation, food parcel distribution, in-kind contributions of clothing, health kits, food, etc., medical aid, and family sponsorships.

Christ at the Checkpoint Conference: The mission of "Christ at the Checkpoint" is to challenge Evangelicals to take responsibility to help resolve the conflicts in Israel/Palestine by engaging

with the teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God. The conference brings together evangelical Christians who believe that following Jesus with integrity leads to a fearless life of discipleship in the complexities of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. We believe that one of the first hallmarks of discipleship is love for both our own community and for our enemies, and means finding courageous love for Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews alike.

Community Programs: Bethlehem Bible College endeavors to respond to the Gospel's call to love our neighbors, who suffer from difficult political and economic times, by offering programs for the community that encourage them and help contribute to our society. Community activities include children's summer camps, mathematics and accounting courses, and English as a Second Language courses (Hebrew, Spanish, and Portuguese have also been offered). These courses enable learning skills to increase employment opportunities (relieving economic difficulty). The BethBC Library, while offering a resource for students to improve their academic education, is open to the public. With over 25,000 books in English and Arabic and modern computing services, the library is essential to the life of the College, while providing a resource for the community.

Gift Shop: The BethBC Gift Shop offers a place for visitors to shop and bring back a memory token of their time in the Holy Land. It is also a way for BethBC to support the local Christian community. Many of the olive wood products sold are created by local workshops owned by Christian families. As tourism in the past ten years has decreased, the Gift Shop has offered these families a way to sell their products and in turn support their families.

Guest House: The Bethlehem Bible College Guest House is available for international tourists and local travelers to enjoy their stay in the Holy Land. We provide not only an inviting atmosphere to stay, but also opportunities to visit holy sites, hear lectures from our qualified staff, and experience activities at BethBC. The tourists who come here are given an opportunity to learn about local Palestinian Christians and worship and experience life with them. They are given opportunities to support the local community by hiring local tour guides and shopping in the BethBC Gift Shop. The Guest House gives the space for Christians around the world to support the Christians of the Holy Land.

BethBC Statement of Needs

1. Operating Expenses: \$917,000
2. Student Scholarships: \$9,000 per full time student; \$5,000 per part time student
3. Faculty Scholarships: \$25,548 per instructor
4. Capital Development: \$750,000 for the purchase of an adjacent plot of land for campus expansion
5. Online Education Program: \$64,000 per year
6. Student Activities: \$28,000 per year
7. Other programs, including Shepherd Society, Women Ministry, Christ at the Checkpoint Conference, Community Programs, media and tour guide projects, etc.

BethBC Key Measures of Success

In December of 2013, the final steps for a merger between Bethlehem Bible College's daughter branch, Galilee Bible College, and NETS (Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary) were approved. This is a positive move as it will promote unity within the churches in the Galilee region and it will help to develop a stronger BA and MA program for the College.

Additionally, in January 2014, [Asia Theological Association](#) granted Bethlehem Bible College full accreditation for its BA program and provisional accreditation for its MA program. We praise God for this remarkable achievement which our academic department worked diligently towards.

The church and Christian community in the Holy Land is being blessed by graduates of Bethlehem Bible College. In the past 35 years, the College has graduated hundreds of leaders, many of whom are having a great impact on the church today. Throughout the land, from the North to the South, graduates of BethBC are serving in strategic places. A sample of graduates from the previous 10 years are:

Grace Al Zoughbi Arteen is an instructor at Bethlehem Bible College. She finished her Master's program in London and has returned to serve as head of the Biblical Studies Department at the College. She has been a great asset to the college during the past year as she was responsible for overseeing the College's accreditation application to ATA, which was approved in February of 2014.

Gabriel Hanna graduated from BethBC's MA program in 2012. He is now the Director of the Mass Media Program at the College and is host of a weekly television show produced by the New Vision Media Center that reaches the entire Bethlehem area. He and the Media team also produce Christian programs that are aired regionally on Christian satellite TV.

Rev. Dr. Jack Sara is the President of Bethlehem Bible College. He studied at BethBC after committing his life to Christ then went to the Philippines to study at the Alliance Biblical Seminary and came back with an MDiv degree. After serving the church for 13 years as a senior pastor (ordained with the Evangelical Alliance Church in the Holy Land), he saw the Alliance church become a church planting movement. Rev. Jack holds a doctorate degree from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in Missions and Cross Cultural Studies. He travels around the globe, teaching about Missions and Cross Cultural work in the Middle East.

Anton Nassar graduated from Bethlehem Bible College's MA Program. During his studies at BethBC he started to work at a Lutheran school in Bethlehem, *Dar Al-Kalima School*, as teacher of Religious Education from grades 1-12. He moved from teacher to Deputy Principle, then in 2015 he was named Principle of the school.

Yousef Al Khoury is from Bethlehem but raised in Gaza. In 2007, he got a permit to move to Bethlehem. For Yousef this was a sign that God wanted a change in his life, for Yousef to live for Him. In 2008 he enrolled in BethBC. After graduation Yousef and his wife Merna served at BethBC and their local church. Yousef received his MA at the Alliance Theological Seminary in New York, and has again returned to serve as faculty at BethBC.