

ANNUAL MINISTRY REPORT

2016



BETHLEHEM
BIBLE COLLEGE

كلية بيت لحم للكتاب المقدس

But you, Oh Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Are only a small village among
all the people of Judah
Yet a ruler of Israel,
Whose origins are in the distant past,
Will come from you on my behalf.
Micah 5:2

BUT YOU, OH BETHLEHEM!

We still remain a small village among the great nations of the earth, yet we feel we are in the hearts of many Christians around the world because of the glorious birth of our Lord Christ Jesus. As president of Bethlehem Bible College, I am thrilled to share with you what God has been doing through the lives of our students, faculty and staff.

What can a small Christian college in the West Bank accomplish? Surrounded by majority groups, we, as Evangelicals, are a minority even amongst the tiny Christian minority of 1.5 % of the population. We hold virtually no political power. Most of our brothers and sisters have departed these lands due to the tumultuous political situation and depressed economy in the West Bank. Despite these challenges, Palestinian Christians are making an impact around the world; an impact that is proportionally very high when compared to our numbers.

Since its inception, Bethlehem Bible College was envisioned by its founder Dr. Bishara Awad to be a center for theological training for the whole of the Arab world. Although in the early days the college was able to reach out to some Arab students outside of Palestine, in later years, access to the college for Arabs beyond Palestine became restricted. The Palestinian territories were becoming more isolated from the rest of the Arab world due to political turmoil. This left the vision unfulfilled. Nevertheless, by God's grace, this vision is becoming a reality. On September 15, 2016, Bethlehem Bible College initiated its online program in Biblical Studies enrolling forty-four Arab students living all around the world!

We hope you enjoy reading about what we have been up to this year and we pray through these pages you will feel connected with the work God is doing through Bethlehem Bible College.

With kind regards, best wishes and our prayers for you,



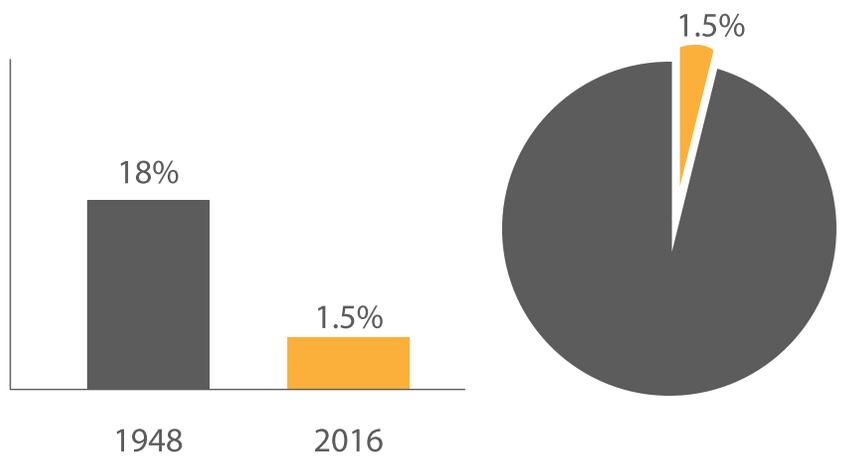
REV. JACK SARA

President of Bethlehem Bible College



OUR CITY

Imagine Christmas in Bethlehem with no Christians to celebrate it. This may sound like an exaggerated statement, and yet statistically speaking, this could easily become the case in Bethlehem. While comprising only 18% of the population in 1948, the number of Palestinian Christians has been dwindling over the past several decades. In 2016, only 1.5% of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza are Christian, with the majority of them living in the Bethlehem area. BBC was founded to raise and retain strong Christian leadership in our communities.



OUR VISION

Bethlehem Bible College exists to:

- train people to serve Christ in the world
- advocate a Palestinian evangelical perspective
- model Christ through community development.

OUR CORE VALUES

1. Christian Ethical Standards
2. Christ-Honoring Community Relationships
3. The Evangelical Christian Faith Is Our Foundation
4. Academic Excellence
5. Palestinian Context
6. Gender Equality



ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT



GRADUATION 2016

In June, 2016 Bethlehem Bible College celebrated its 29th Commencement Ceremony. Our students completed their four-year training in Biblical Studies at Bethlehem Bible College, prepared for their graduation and for the good work that God has prepared in advance for them to do. Every day, more than 360 alumni are using what they learned at Bethlehem Bible College to be the presence of Jesus in the Holy Land and beyond.

An impact assessment research study about BBC graduates in the last ten years concluded that 51% of our Biblical Studies graduates are involved in ministry. Whether by being a religious education teacher, a pastor or a full time minister at a local church or religious organization, our students are impacting our society with Kingdom values.

BETHLEHEM BIBLE COLLEGE BEGINS ONLINE COURSES IN BIBLICAL STUDIES

This program is the first university-level program in Biblical Studies offered entirely online in Arabic. For Anton Deik, the e-Learning Coordinator, what makes this program unique is "its academic approach combined with a focus on personal transformation". The program also represents a unique opportunity for Arab believers to connect with each other and learn together from their different backgrounds and perspectives. It is rather special that the program comes from the Holy Land where the Word of God became flesh and where most of the Bible was written. It is our prayer and utmost desire that each student will come to a deep understanding of Scriptures that will result in lives being transformed by the Word of God. We also pray that this, in turn, will become a blessing for the Arab community worldwide.

A NEW VISION MEDIA CENTER PRODUCTION: "WOMEN BETWEEN NORMS AND LAWS"

On July 19th, the New Vision Media Center of Bethlehem Bible College organized a workshop entitled "Women Between Norms and Laws." The workshop was opened by the president of Bethlehem Bible College, Rev. Dr. Jack Sara, and was attended by more than thirty women from various segments of the Bethlehem, Hebron and Ramallah Governorates. The lectures tackled different aspects aimed to raise awareness of the legal and social rights of women.

This workshop comes as part of the Center's activities, which aims to bring about positive change in Palestinian society, and to form positive public opinion on issues of justice in our society, especially with regard to the most vulnerable groups.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM EXAM AT BBC

For the last three years, BBC has been honored to host the Ministry of Tourism, and provide the space and facilities for students across the West Bank to take the test that will allow them to be licensed tour guides. This exam is usually given once a year and consists of three major components: a written test, an oral exam and a language proficiency section.

Components: written test, oral exam and language proficiency.

It is considered a great achievement when one passes this exam, and BBC is proud of the students in this program for their diligence in studying and preparation for this final exam.

THE GAZA STUDY CENTRE

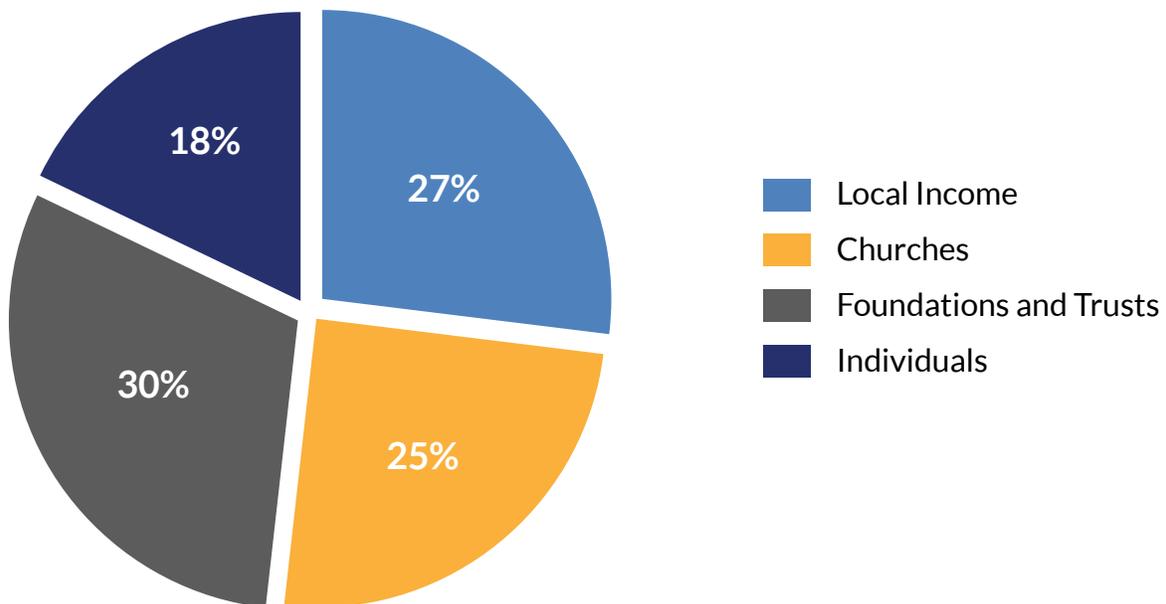
The centre is now in its third year. It has survived through a serious war in 2014 and the restrictions imposed on the people of Gaza following the conflict - electricity power cuts, lack of building materials, difficult economic conditions, high unemployment, inadequate water provision and severe limitations on movement in and out of the Strip. Lectures have been conducted by internationals willing to enter and stay in Gaza, using Skype and more recently through on line learning. In spite of the difficulties the Centre - small but beautiful - is thriving. Rev John Angle from England directs the centre and visits and teaches regularly. There are six studying at MA level and three at BA level. Some members of the Christian community audit parts of the courses. Additionally several Gazans are beginning to link up with the College's on line Diploma learning programme. The Centre has minimum but adequate facilities occupying a room with a small library, TV, desks and wifi access supported by solar panels for regular electricity. Your prayers are requested for student's to find joy and blessing in their work, for their safety, and for students to have the ability to concentrate on their studies when the are surrounded by the trauma and sadness which is Gaza!

CATCP

Our 4th biannual Christ at the Checkpoint conference was a great success. With a timely theme, "The Gospel in the Face of Religious Extremism" we explored a host of related issues, emphasizing aspects of extremism in all three Abrahamic religions, especially in the context of Israel/Palestine, and explored the gospel response to such extremism. We had a host of outstanding speakers and scholars from around the world, many participants said that their favorite part of the conference was the evening that our CATC Young Adults took to the stage and shared their unique perspectives. About that event, BBC graduate and staff member, Amira Farhoud says: "If you ask me about one thing that I have done in my life that I am most proud of, I would say—that day! The day I stood on the Christ at the Checkpoint stage with three inspiring friends, in front of hundreds of people, and telling them how this conference had changed my life, while also encouraging the upcoming generation to do something for their homeland. At that moment, as I spoke for my people, I realized that this country of conflicts and war has become my favorite place on earth!"



FINANCE AT A GLANCE INCOME BREAKDOWN 2016





NEW FACULTY MEMBER: DANIEL BANNOURA

As the newest faculty addition to Bethlehem Bible College, Daniel Bannoura serves as one of the developers of the Online Biblical Studies program. His background in science, philosophy and theology now come together in such a way that provides a unique platform for him to not only minister to his local community here in Palestine, but regionally and even globally.

Daniel works in developing and facilitating the Online Biblical Studies Diploma program. He is tasked with writing course material in Church History, New Testament, and Islam. He will also be doing some teaching in these courses, continue to develop the program, as well as tutor and keep up with the students.



COLLEGE STAFF MEMBER NOMINATED FOR WORLD SUMMIT INITIATIVE MOBILE PHONE E-CONTENT AWARD

On August 22, 2016, the World Summit Initiative on e-Content (Palestine) held a press conference at the headquarters of the Supreme Council for Creativity and Excellence. There were seven projects nominated to represent the state of Palestine in the competition including Dentex, a project by Joseph Hodali, one of our staff at Bethlehem Bible College. Dentex is a dentistry administration system, which was designed specifically to meet the advanced and ever changing needs in the dental sector. It creates a unique platform to connect staff, doctors, suppliers, patients, and administrators in a single integrated environment. This award operates in compliance with the United Nations, and its purpose is the development of electronic applications in the fields of the Internet, mobile phones and back-office applications.



On behalf of Bethlehem Bible College, we extend our warmest congratulations for our outstanding staff member, Joseph Hodali, on this wonderful achievement.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



BBC HOSTS THE THIRD GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT IN BETHLEHEM

In October, Bethlehem Bible hosted the 3rd Global Leadership Summit (GLS) in Bethlehem, which was a satellite campus for the telecasted events taking place in North America. We were one of the 675+ sites in 125 countries, and BBC ended up drawing more than 150 participants.

One highlight of the conference was the live panel discussion of three successful Palestinian female leaders. Honey Thaljieh, the co-founder of women's football in Palestine, the first captain of the Palestinian national football team, and the first woman in the Middle East to obtain a FIFA Master and to be employed by FIFA, was one member of the panel. She encouraged attendees to believe in themselves and fight for their dreams even if it means breaking social stereotypes.

The panel also featured, Madleine Sara, a Christian counselor and the founder of “I Am A Pot in His Hand” women’s ministry. Her aim was to empower women to be active in their external roles in society. Lastly, the participants heard Mary Sakran, who is the director of the largest college of human development in the Arab world, and author of the first children’s story book about human development.

Bethlehem Bible College is honored to serve the Palestinian community with events that empower leaders to sharpen their skills and develop the people they lead. We are excited for our next leadership summit in October 2017.

YOUNGER LEADERS GATHERING 2016, INDONESIA: A PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION

Saleem Anfous is one of our Biblical Studies graduates as well as a current student in our MA in Christian Leadership who attended the 2016 Younger Leaders Gathering in Indonesia. The YLG2016 gathered more than 1,000 young leaders from over 160 countries who connected, prayed, and sought to understand God’s leading of their generation for His global mission. The gathering theme was ‘United in the Great Story’.

Saleem shared: “When I had the opportunity to see 1,300 people from 160 countries the same age as me, thinking the same way, and moving the same way, I was definitely able to see God’s connection in a miraculous way. To see all of this happening in the world, and not only in Palestine encouraged me a lot. It helps me to know that we are part of a great story.”



MENTORING AND DISCIPLESHIP

DR. RAVI ZACHARIAS GIVES A LECTURE IN OUR CAMPUS

On April 6th Dr. Ravi Zacharias gave a lecture at Bethlehem Bible College. The lecture was about being witnesses for Christ in the time of Religious extremism. More than 180 people came, our auditorium was full of students from all over Palestine and Israel.

Watch this short clip about the lecture and get a feel of Dr. Ravi’s lecture [here](#).

THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF ONE SMALL COLLEGE

“But you will receive power and ability when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

From the far east of Hong Kong to the American Midwest and from seminaries to churches, the faculty of Bethlehem Bible College is frequently found overseas, sharing what the Lord is doing in our homeland and speaking about the three-fold mission of BBC: to train people to serve Christ in the world, to advocate a Palestinian evangelical perspective, and model Christ through community development.

Want to know where our faculty and staff have been? The short answer is: Cyprus, England, Canada, Sweden, Asia (various places, including Hong Kong and Thailand), Jordan, Spain, USA (Nebraska, Washington, California, Illinois, Ohio, Texas, Oregon), and Germany.

For this, we give the thanks and praise to God who continues to open doors for His glory--both in our own community and around the world, proving that in our weakness He is strong. It is the Lord who has empowered us to fulfill the words of Christ that we would be His witnesses from Jerusalem even to the ends of the earth.

Thanks to all who have hosted us. We are grateful for your support and friendship in Christ. Please check with us if you would like to host one of our speakers in your area, if you haven’t yet – or even better, come and visit us in Bethlehem!

WOMEN’S MINISTRY AT BETHLEHEM BIBLE COLLEGE

“A Pot In His Hand” is a women’s ministry that seeks to counsel and guide women. Founded by Madeline Sara, an educational specialist and Christian counselor, the ministry provides a number of activities including awareness and educational sessions, individual counseling, and monthly events. The ministry hosted seven monthly events successfully, which drew attendance from women all around the Bethlehem area. Topics were covered ranging from how to deal with people, to how we can overcome the difficulties and make changes in own lives, the keys to success in life, Christian leadership, and our real identity in Christ.

The ministry offered two courses for women this year. The first was about raising children, and the second was about self-awareness. Last but not least, the ministry published two issues of “A Pot In His Hand” magazine that had inspiring articles written by well-educated Palestinian women.



RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT:

CHILDREN'S SUMMER CAMP AT BETHLEHEM BIBLE COLLEGE

For many years Bethlehem Bible College hosted a summer camp for Christian children. This was our first outreach to the Muslim and Christian community together. We specifically targeted children from the Bethlehem area, which included the Azza and Aida refugee camps, both of which are in very close proximity to our college. To our great joy 101 children attended this year's summer camp, from both Christian and Muslim families. Many of the children came from Muslim families around our neighborhood and this allowed the staff of the college to connect with our Muslim neighbors. We also invited Muslim volunteers to help with the camp and were so pleased to see them integrate well with the team and developed friendships with the Wet Foot team as well.

Follow this link to watch our short video about the summer camp [here](#).

SHEPHERD SOCIETY RECEIVES LOCAL HONORS

In a small event before Easter, the Shepherd Society was recognized with a plaque and a special ceremony for its contribution to minister to the poor and needy in Bethlehem District. Several weeks later, the Society received another plaque from the Ministry of Social Welfare.

The Palestinian Authority governor of Bethlehem, Gibreen Al-Bakri, gave the plaque to Director George Abdo, while announcing that the Shepherd Society is one of the most influential institutions that helps the Palestinian community. George Abdo said: "We are so happy and proud of these plaques, because they show that the Shepherd Society is reaching its goals in showing the love of Christ through the services it makes." He added: "We thank God for his leadership for the Shepherd Society, and we thank the donors who gave every dollar to us, because now we can see

the fruit of their seeds!"

SHEPHERD SOCIETY MAKES THEIR EIGHTH MISSION TRIP TO JORDAN

The Shepherd Society managed a six-day trip to visit the Iraqi and Syrian refugees in Amman, Jordan. The team was able to deliver many needed items including fans (none of the refugees we visited had air conditioning), and large bags of food filled with items such as rice, pasta, oil, sugar, and tea. We also delivered clothing, soap and toys.

BBC's Dean of Students, Shireen Awwad, stated: "One of our goals for this trip was to take a step outside our own situation here in Palestine. We need to get our eyes off of our own suffering and on to the suffering of others. This trip helped our students to connect in a deeper way with their faith and stirred a desire in them to grow closer to the Lord."

SHEPHERD SOCIETY CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

On June 10, Shepherd Society celebrated twenty years of service in Bethlehem. Among our local staff and community participants, various dignitaries and leaders from the region, including officials representing the Palestinian Authority attended the celebration.

What began as a vision of a small group of men has evolved into a ministry that reaches poor and needy Christians and Muslims not only in the Bethlehem region, but also in Gaza and even more recently, refugees in Jordan. "We praise God that we have been able to reflect Christ's love in a practical way, which is our main goal. The Shepherd Society has grown beyond our expectation," said Director George Abdo.



MEET ONE OF OUR 2016 GRADUATES – JOHN MATAR

We'd like to introduce you to John Matar, a 23 year-old Biblical Studies graduate who we know is going to do great things for the Body of Christ in our region.

"During my four years at BBC, I felt like a spoiled child among an amazing, big family. My spiritual life has grown tremendously during these years; thanks to the morning devotions we do twice a week and our times of group prayer. I am currently leading a youth ministry, where we host weekly meetings to share the Bible, pray and have a time of fun fellowship. I have been sharing everything I learned at BBC with the young men and women because I want His Word to go deep into their minds and hearts. I also have a ministry in visiting people in need of encouragement and prayer. We listen to their stories and talk about the love of Christ and the great things that he has done in our lives.

I want to be a youth pastor in the Bethlehem area, because it is written that the harvest is great but the workers are few. The college helped me with theological information and helped to grow my faith and confidence—and now it's my turn to go out to the world and share the gospel.

"I encourage every student to come to BBC, either to study theology or to sign up for another program, because it's not just an ordinary school. BBC is a family where the Spirit of God is living and working."



MEET SOME OF OUR BIBLICAL STUDIES ALUMNI AND THEIR IMPACT OUTSIDE PALESTINE

Bethlehem Bible College's main goal will always be to create influential leaders to serve the Lord in their country and everywhere He sends them.

About 500 graduates have come out from BBC. That might seem like a small number at first glance, but it is actually a very high per capita of our tiny Christian population compared to many Christian-majority nations. Most of our students graduate with a Biblical Studies degree, while others gain degrees from the Mass Media, Tour Guide and Masters in Leadership programs, as well as the Master of Peace studies, which is in its first year. Most of our graduates stay and work here in Palestine, but others have followed the Lord's calling to other countries. Wherever they have gone, they have carried the power and light of the gospel.

LET'S MEET SOME OF THEM...

Niveen Amer is a 2003 BBC graduate. "BBC was like my second home, we were like one family. It taught me the truth of the Bible, how to know and love the Lord more, and how to live my life for Him." Niveen is now living and ministering among the Syrian refugees in Lebanon. She is also part of an evangelism team that reaches the Syrian families. "I feel special and blessed to be a Palestinian Christian holding the light and truth of Jesus to the Syrians in Lebanon!"

Alaa Qasasfa is a 2005 BBC graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Biblical Studies. "In 2008, I graduated with a Masters degree in Biblical History and Geography in Jerusalem. Afterward, I joined the BBC faculty and served as an instructor of Biblical History for seven years. Last year, I decided to resign from my position at BBC in order

to seek further Biblical education in the United States. I am currently studying for another Masters degree in Biblical Archaeology at Wheaton College in Illinois. My ultimate goal and dream with all of these studies is to get a Ph.D. in Biblical Archaeology."

"My name is Alia Hanouneh Toume and I am currently living in Chicago. I was a student at BBC, and graduated in 2006." Alia is now serving the Lord in her church as the worship leader for the Arab team. She also serves with the women and children's ministry in her church. "I feel so blessed to serve a different culture that knows God. Some people in the West think that there are no Arab Christians in the Holy Land, but when they meet us, they know and see Jesus Christ through us. That's what I love most about my ministry in the USA!"

