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HOPE Outreach of Canada is actively searching for a Director/CEO. For information or to apply, contact Board Chairman, Paul Estabrooks, at the address below:

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Students' Biggest Challenge

By Grace Al Zoughbi

The summer holidays are almost over. Students at Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) are getting ready to begin their new term of Autumn 2014. It has been such a long and hot summer; the students have been on holidays for three whole months; whilst teachers have spent some of our time preparing lectures. There will be new faces, new courses and new adventures for this year. It's always heartening to see students excited during their first week of term, happy to see one another and happy (hopefully!) to see their teachers.

This will be my fourth year teaching at BBC, I am looking forward to all the work God will do in my life and the lives of my students as we study His Word together. This semester, I will be teaching a course on spirituality and another, on the book of Acts. I've always loved teaching - and learning! It's a reciprocal process, of course, and what better place to teach and learn the Bible than a Bible College, for in Christ and His Word "all treasures of wisdom are hidden."

From previous experience, I know that one of the challenges my students will encounter whilst taking the spirituality class is actually how to live out being a Christian in our highly volatile context. The core of spirituality is to love God with all our hearts, minds and souls and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

My students always struggle with this concept. How can you love in such a tough situation? How can you not repay evil with evil? How can you turn the other cheek? Since the recent escalation of the political situation in this part of the world, this question has become even more poignant. How to love, when

continued ...



Grace (right) and student

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hatred is all around, how to tolerate when injustice seems to prevail, how to continue to have faith when doubt bites through your being?

I myself was a student at BBC not so long ago and I remember these days very well. I remember being very eager to learn the Word of God. It is all I desired and sought. But at the same time, I had my struggles. I found it especially difficult to live in a Christ-like way when I felt victimised every day, seeing no justice, no freedom and at times no dignity. Nothing was easy; nothing is easy, still.

As I teach this term, I pray that God's Spirit will deal with our shortcomings and weaknesses, that my students and I will have increasingly open hearts and minds to listen to His voice; that in our small and big decisions He will be the Guide, the Master, the All in all; that people will see our Light, and glorify our heavenly Father. I pray that we will all sit at the feet of Jesus with our anger and sense of injustice and continue to offer forgiveness as much as His grace allows us.

Without Christ's strength and grace, we cannot be spiritual beings. We will be tempted to be carnal Christians, walking in the flesh. It is only His power that can continually transform us so that we are more like Him every day.



Grace (right) interprets in a class

Theological Education is very meagre in the West Bank. Bethlehem Bible College (based in Bethlehem and its two extensions in Gaza and Galilee) uniquely seeks to offer theological education to Palestinians. I thank the Lord for this beacon of light in what can seem like a very dark place. I am humbled that He can use us as His agents, ambassadors, and teachers to make disciples in the very place where He Himself was born, lived and ministered.

— Grace

(Originally written for Sat-7)

Christmas Evangelistic Project in Bethlehem

Each Christmas, Bethlehem Bible College and the Shepherd Society provide a community Christmas dinner in Bethlehem, Jesus' birthplace, at which an evangelistic message is shared. Last Christmas approximately 1000 people were at the dinner and our own board member, Arabic-speaking evangelist Nizar Shaheen (Light To All Nations), addressed the group (see photo). He estimates that approximately 100 people responded to the gospel invitation that night.

This year, Nizar is working on an even larger event with many more non-Christians attending. He is there right now working out the details. As a board at HOPE Outreach, we are



very excited about this significant opportunity. We will be communicating with you soon as to

the cost of this outreach event and how you can be financially and prayerfully involved.

Featured Student Scholarship Profile: Monica Hawash

Family Life: I live with my husband and five children, not far from the College. My husband is a construction worker; I do not work outside my home, as I am a mother of five. I decided to continue my education, which is something I had in my heart to do for the longest time, to be able to serve in my church, particularly in the area of Women's Ministry.

My husband is a believer in the Lord Jesus, and he encourages me to study, because he knows how much I love the field of Christian Service, and going deeper into God's word.

Please pray for my home and family and my husband's work (employment) that God would bless my husband's work and enable him to meet all the home and children's expenses, so I can complete my studies and devote myself full-time to working in the Lord's vineyard.

Academic Progress: I completed a B.A. in Christian Education in 2010, and after graduation gave myself completely to looking after my children for two years, but the Lord laid it on my heart to go back to school to do my M.A. in Christian Education, a field of study I love very much.

This study will help me very much in my work with Women's Ministries as well as with Sunday School, and I believe it will better my skills in leading more women, particularly, to the Lord.

I am asking that you pray for me to complete my studies to the glory of God, to be a good worker, ready and competent to work in the service of the Lord Jesus in the areas of Women's Ministries as well as Sunday School.

Ministry Update: I presently serve among women in my church, and I run two services weekly for women, and am asked to prepare Biblical studies of particular relevance to this constituency, and to train and disciple women to live lives of obedience to the Lord and to His word through study of the Scriptures.

My greatest challenge is that I deal with women who do not have a good understanding of the word of God, and my prayer is to convey to each of them the truth of the Gospel, and help each one delve deeper in her relationship with the Lord and to experience His love.

When do you anticipate completion of your degree?

What are your future ministry/academic plans? I expect to complete my M.A. in three years. As for my plans for future ministry, I expect to develop better knowledge and skills for working in Women's Ministries, and to hone my teaching skills in this regard.

Scholarship Impact: This scholarship means a great deal to me because it will enable me to complete my M.A., and will give me the opportunity to excel as a woman of God. Without this scholarship, there is absolutely no way I could finance my M.A. studies.

Brief Testimony: I grew up in a family that had a Christian basis, but it was only after I got married that I started to attend a Christian Women's Ministry, and to

listen to hymns and sermons, and to study the word of God, at home, and by myself. One day, I heard a still small voice, prodding me to respond to the message of salvation. I have never forgotten that voice, and never will, no matter what happens.

This voice became God's voice that spoke to me again and again on a personal level. I realized that I had the capability to study and learn even after a period of more than 15 years away from school. And God completed in my life what He began, and I thank Him for providing me with the opportunity to study again and for giving me the ability and strength to complete this passage

and to bring glory to His name. Every day, I sense God's calling me to service, especially among women.

After coming to Christ and accepting Him as my Saviour and Lord over my life, He changed my life and transformed me into a new creation, a totally different person. My life is now focused on thinking of Him and wanting to serve Him.

The Lord has blessed my life, and my husband and household all came to the Lord and declared their faith in Him. We have become a united family in our faith in Jesus. I thank God for the grace bestowed upon us, and His free gift of salvation. All praise and thanksgiving and glory be to Jesus. Amen.



Monica Hawash

The Language of Hope

Salim Munayer, Director of Musalaha in Jerusalem has penned a thoughtful response to the recent conflict in Israel and Gaza.

As a staff we have been reflecting on the current war in Gaza and the reactions of those in our communities, some who have been involved in reconciliation and some who have not. The last cycle of violence has affected our societies; some feel betrayed, some are depressed, and others feel their principles have been compromised. Some are expressing themselves with bitterness and hate for the other side. Both Israelis and Palestinians feel they have lost their joy, and are questioning the future. When you listen to people you hear cynicism, distrust, and hopelessness and you see the increasing polarization of our two communities.

We are currently processing what is going on in our society. One of our staff members asked, how do we see our future? What is our hope? While it is good for us to evaluate our experiences, at the same time we need to remember that we are a people of hope and we need to look at how we can pass on this hope to the next generation. We

cannot allow ourselves to sink into the bleakness in our societies. It reminds me of Walter Brueggemann's call to us in his book *Prophetic Imagination*. He shares that "the task of prophetic imagination is to cut through the numbness, to penetrate the self-deception, so that the God of endings is confessed as Lord."^[1]

The need for our prophetic role in community is evidenced in the use of language in Israeli and Palestinian communities. It has been devastatingly hurtful to hear the words people have used when commenting on this past summer's hostilities. Much of the language used in social media and other outlets is dehumanizing, violent, and hateful. The more we speak about it and allow the bad to consume our lives, the further it will move us away from hope.

As believers, we need to remember that "the prophet is engaged in a battle for language, in an effort to create a different epistemology out of which another community might emerge. This is the hope that the ache of God could penetrate the

numbness of history. He engages not in scare or threat but only in a yearning that grows with and out of pain."^[2] As a ministry, we must then ask ourselves, what language are we using? Are we careful in what we say or are we following the crowd, our political leaders, or the mainstream media? Our message should be one that penetrates through the despair and shares the redemption that God has for us individually, communally and nationally.

Right now, our challenge is to hold on to hope. Hope is the refusal to accept the current destructive reality. When we continue to talk about reconciliation, we continue to embrace hope. We continue to believe in the possibility of a better present. We want to speak peace, seek peace, and maintain our hope.

By Salim J. Munayer, Ph.D
Musalaha Director

[1] Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 2001, p. 45.

[2] *Ibid*, p.55.

"...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Shepherd Society Report

Prepared by Rev. Alex Awad

Jordan: The civil war in Syria and Iraq is causing unprecedented human suffering with millions fleeing their homes and taking refuge in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. The Shepherd Society, encouraged by the leadership of Bethlehem Bible College, decided to aid Syrian refugees in Jordan with basic items of relief. So far we have sent five teams of students and church volunteers to minister to the refugees in Mafraq, Jordan, and our next trip will be in November of this year. We are thankful for the opportunity God has given us to minister to these dear people, and also for the generosity of all who have given; your gifts enable us to demonstrate the love of Christ in tangible ways to men, women and children who have suffered so much.

Bethlehem: Frightened by the instability in the Middle East and the war in Gaza, many tour groups have cancelled; this has caused great loss for Bethlehem's main industry, tourism. Consequently, many people have either lost their job or much of their income. However, the Shepherd Society continues to provide food and medical care for needy families. In these recent months, more people have knocked at our door and more people have received help. We thank God for the privilege of assisting the needy in the name of Christ, and we thank all who have donated to the Shepherd Society in Bethlehem. Without your contributions, we would be unable to give to the needy as we seek to share the compassion of our Lord.

For every prayer offered, for every tear shed, for every donation given, we, at the Shepherd Society, give thanks.

Alex, George and Muna

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