

HOPE

HOPE Outreach of Canada



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New Website

HOPE Outreach has a new website at our same address:

www.hopeoutreach.ca

Please stop by for a visit.

SAVE THE DATE!

“Christ At The Checkpoint”

Conference for 2018 is scheduled in Bethlehem for May 28 – June 1. A great time of year to visit the Holy Land.

We can cut expenses by sending you this newsletter by e-mail. Please send us your email address.

A New School Year in Bethlehem

There’s a coolness in the air signalling the soon-ending summer! And another school year begins here and also at Bethlehem Bible College (BBC). Students and teachers are always excited at new beginnings. On Page Three we feature the story of BBC student Joe Guirguis who is involved in TV, film and music ministry. It is a wonderful opportunity we have at HOPE Outreach of Canada to provide scholarships for deserving students at BBC. We hope you will take advantage of this great opportunity this new school year.

BBC is also excited about the fifty-one Arabic students enrolled in the new online Biblical Studies program. These students are in Egypt, Iraq, Gaza, Hong Kong, Germany and even the United States.

Daniel Bannoura, one of the teachers and facilitators of the online program, said that they use a very unique education technique based on three main points: the mind, heart and hands. Engage with the **mind** by teaching the Word of God. The **heart** encourages them to grow in their lives with Christ. And the **hands** are moved to action by giving the students tools and advice to use within their ministries in their communities and churches.

Daniel enjoys seeing the love between the students. For example, Yemen and Saudi Arabia are at war, and when “Mira,” the Saudi student, and “Abu Ayman,” the Yemeni student, talk to each other through video conference, you see the love of Christ and respect they show to each other.

There are also four Muslim students from Gaza. Of the four, two of them have a Ph.D. in Islamic Sharia Law. They are interested in learning more about Christianity because of fear and ignorance in their community. BBC managed to send them 150 copies of the Bible in Arabic which they will give to school teachers in Gaza.

Please pray for these students in Palestine and across the globe! May the Word of God touch and change their lives. You can help the process by providing scholarship funds.



BBC teacher, Daniel Bannoura

Palestinian Muslim, Ismail, Pursues Christ but Pays a High Price

Growing up in a devout Muslim family on the West Bank, Ismail (not his real name) knew that following Christ would cost him everything: his status, his income, his house, his friends and his family. And yet he still chose to pursue Jesus. This is how a Koran memorizing Palestinian teenager turned more and more towards Christ. And he keeps following Him, despite all the struggles he encounters while living as a Jesus-follower in the West Bank.

Ismail remembers vividly when he first laid eyes on a Christian book. “One day I came home from high school. A package from Europe had been delivered to my cousin. I was curious because there was English writing on it. He had written to a Christian organization and they had sent him some evangelistic materials.”

Ismail and his friends had just been busy memorizing the complete Koran—a process that takes a number of years in many young Muslim’s lives. “Whenever we had another third part of the book memorized, there was a celebration in the mosque. That week I had just been memorizing two chapters about Mary and Jesus. The Koran teaches that Jesus was not crucified but Judas instead of him,” Ismail explains.

He started studying the Bible together with his cousin. A neighbor then introduced Ismail to a group of Christian students. “They told me more about Jesus and their religion. I had tons of questions for them.” What he didn’t see back then is



Studying Koran in a Palestinian Mosque

that he gradually started growing towards Jesus. “In my heart, there was still doubt. The Muslim notion of ‘what you don’t see doesn’t exist’ kept me from following Christ.”

Then God intervened and a simple and short dream cleared that barrier: “I saw a white face and heard a voice: ‘Follow Me.’ Nothing more. But it was enough. I made the decision to follow Him.”

It may sound easy now, but that was the hardest decision Ismail ever made. “Following Christ would mean losing my family and losing my nice life. Being born again meant, for me, being completely alone with a lot of problems.”

He explains how, in the Palestinian village he grew up in, leaving Islam was seen as bringing shame onto the whole family and community. “Instantly, I was the black sheep, the worst family member they had. In our tradition you have to respect the community, and you have to take care of the elders. Social status is everything. When you lose that, it’s not easy to rebuild.”

He left all of this behind when he was cast out of his community directly after his family found out about his newfound faith. “I lost all my status, all my family. I was

forced to leave the house. My father told me to leave and never come back again.”

A new chapter started in Ismail’s life. He started to read the Bible even more intensively, writing down all his questions. The group of students quickly became his new family, and he started reaching out to other Muslims with the gospel. “My faith is not something that affects just the Sunday prayer time and church visits, like it is for some Christians. For me - someone who lost his entire normal life - my faith in Christ is everything. It fills my whole existence.”

Ismail saw several Muslims accept Jesus as their Savior over recent years. “We don’t do the work, we are just a tool,” he says. “Most Muslims come to the Lord through visions and dreams, not through evangelists.”

He started his own group primarily with believers from a Muslim background. They meet in secret on the West Bank. “We are poor since we are all disconnected from our communities. But in God we are rich. We believe in Christ, that’s how we put it. It’s not about having a religion but about having a relationship.”

Please pray for the believers from Muslim background like Ismail in the Palestinian Territories. It is no easier for them to follow Jesus there than in other Middle Eastern countries.



Muslims praying in the West Bank

Meet BBC Student, Joe Guirguis

Joe Guirguis is Egyptian, born in Alexandria to a Christian family who had already dedicated their whole lives to the ministry of the Lord. However, his experiencing the grace of the Lord came at a later age. God called his parents to ministry in the Holy Land and that's when they all moved to live in Jerusalem, Gaza, and Nazareth.

Growing up as a pastor's son was always a challenge for Joe, especially his personal and social life being held to higher standards than most of his peers. Joe was baptized as a grownup after he heard and responded to God's call. "My testimony might not be very similar to that of many of my peers; however, I experienced God's hand in my life every single day in simple things and in great things. I believe He will always be by my side and will help me grow



Joe Guirguis

my relationship with Him throughout all that I do in my life."

Currently, Joe is in ministry with Alhayat TV which is a satellite television channel that has a vision of reaching out to Muslims throughout the world. He is also a keyboard player with the Redeemer's Praise team and often shares his gifting at Bethlehem Bible College's chapel time. Most recently, the Lord has guided him to study and minister among local youth in this land. He is a leader at his church's youth group with about twenty-five members.

Joe studied two years of film production that allowed him to also get involved in that ministry area. He is still taking different courses in relational counseling and development that he uses and benefits from to implement in his ministry among the youth.

Meet BBC Volunteer, Dee Lewis

People love Bethlehem, Palestine, and Bethlehem Bible College in particular. They come from all over the world during the year to visit, to volunteer, and to teach at the campus. Their lives are changed, their perspective on the situation is changed as well, through living and communicating with the local Palestinian people, and observing their daily life. One such person is Dee Lewis from Michigan who has been visiting annually for nine years to teach English.

Dee says, "I thought that Palestinians were all terrorists, or all Muslims. I had a very prejudiced, narrow view of Arabs and Palestine. I came to volunteer at BBC only for one week but I kept coming back to the family who hosted me, because I fell in love with them. I went back for three years to live with them!

"The first year I came here, I had a student in my class who worked in the police, and he said: 'Dee, you have nothing to fear here in Bethlehem,' but he still gave me his card. 'If you do, just give me a

call.' I never had to call! Now after being here for nine years, I walk at 11:00 pm by myself to go home, and I have never felt fear, never!

"Daniel Aqleh, a former BBC staffer, was my translator, and he was the one who helped me to adjust here. He translated to the students, and that helped. Samar (the receptionist) was always there, ready to make coffee, smiling, cheerful, happy, and always assisting me to make my stay here at BBC pleasant. Dr. Bishara Awad was also welcoming too, and I went to the church with him and his wife. Everybody at BBC is so welcoming.

"If you want to continue to be a learner, come here and you will grow in so many areas. There are so many ways that your eyes will be opened, biblically and culturally. Whatever you learn here you can take back, and hopefully you will find someone to listen to your stories of what's happening, and then encourage others to come here."



Dee Lewis & new friends



Dee Lewis teaching English

Musalaha Summer Camp Report 2017

Thanks to our supporters who helped sponsor Musalaha's summer camps. They are becoming known in new cities and villages, with various groups and organizations giving invitations to their communities. Due to the growing opportunities, this year Musalaha decided to host two weeks of camp in Bethlehem instead of one.

Compared to other cities throughout the West Bank, Bethlehem is a much more open community. The new campers, who came from as far as the northern West Bank to attend the camps, added welcome diversity as they were from Muslim backgrounds. Games, craft activities, and trained leadership attracted them to attend the camps. The children also receive the invaluable teachings on biblical principles from Galatians Chapter Five, about the Fruit of the Spirit and accepting one another.

Even some parents attend. One parent shared with the West Bank Camp Coordinator, "You have no idea what



Children's camp - learning about the Fruit of the Holy Spirit

your teaching and enthusiasm did for me. I came here this morning disappointed and feeling miserable, but your teaching changed my attitude!" The mother then hugged the Camp Coordinator and began to cry. Because her child was able to attend camp, she learned about healthy responses to harmful attitudes with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Groups from the USA and Europe went to help serve in the summer. Here's what one pastor from Austin Texas said about the camp in Nablus:

"On both sides of the wall I saw kids who reminded me of our kids. They loved ice cream. They loved playing. They loved each other. Another commonality we all share—we don't like to be stereotyped. No one likes to be misunderstood. Not all Israelis are the same. Not all Palestinians are the same. Not all North Americans are the same. The best way to understand others is to actually get to know them. Serving in Nablus in the West Bank gave us that opportunity.

"One moment during the camp which really struck me was when the kids started to learn a Palestinian cultural dance called *dabke*. Mohammad is the son of the janitor at the center where the camp was held in Nablus. He wanted to do the *dabke* with me. We did this for about thirty minutes, two different days. What a beautiful world where an American pastor who follows Jesus can dance with a Palestinian Muslim kid named Mohammad for an hour, in the summer of 2017."

Thanks to everyone who prayed for and contributed to these summer camps.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Pray for faculty, staff and students at BBC as a new school year begins
- Pray for our HOPE ministry team visiting the Holy Land in late October thru mid-November
- Pray for Musalaha and their many-faceted reconciliation programs including women and youth
- Pray for HOPE Outreach of Canada's need for a new board member.

Donate securely through our new website: www.hopeoutreach.ca. While there you can learn more about our ministry through partners in the Holy Land. Be sure to see the video on the HOME page about a Bethlehem Bible College student who is a cancer survivor.



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