



**A LOOK AT THE PARTNER SCHOOLS
AND LEADERS BEING REACHED**





JOHN BERNARD
PRESIDENT, UNITED WORLD MISSION

The global church needs few things more urgently than its own well-trained leaders, and they're needed at every level. Church planters and house church pastors need biblical training accessible where they're serving, and at their level of education. At the same time, the Church in every region of the world needs thought leaders educated at the highest academic levels. United World Mission seeks to equip leaders from the grassroots to the seminary classroom. Thank you for partnering with our Overseas Council ministry and seminaries around the world. Together, we're confronting the Global Leadership Challenge!

As John notes, confronting the Global Leadership Challenge is critical. Nine out of ten churches in the Majority World are led by individuals without formal training. Closing the gap has motivated the Overseas Council's ministry for more than 40 years. We partner with more than 100 strategically selected seminaries located where the Church is growing the fastest, or the needs are the greatest.

We carry out this mission with you because of our shared vision for flourishing churches around the world led by well-equipped leaders.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought government restrictions on in-person teaching, in turn creating financial and emotional stresses. In the stories that follow, you'll learn the challenges our partner seminaries have faced, and the innovative ways they have persevered and overcome. For instance, the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon halted in-person teaching, shifting the program permanently from residential to online. ABTS is now offering several short, on-campus sessions each year. This new approach is more financially sustainable and will allow ABTS to reach more students who might have been hindered from coming for a full-time residential program. Some seminary leaders wrote to say that enrollment actually increased because of the accessibility of innovative online programming.

You'll also read inspiring student testimonies expressing gratitude for your scholarship support, and stories of alumni who are now fruitfully serving

and multiplying. These students are among the 88,000 students who are being equipped each year by OC partner schools, and together their global impact is staggering.

Our Regional Directors' important ministries of walking alongside seminary partners have also recalibrated due to travel restrictions. They're conducting virtual workshops for faculty who are learning how to teach in an online environment. They and their seminary leaders are encouraging each other, praying for one another, and learning together. Their ability to adapt has been extraordinary!

Friends, this is why you and I invest in OC's Kingdom work. I trust you'll be informed and inspired as you read. And on behalf of our seminary partners and their students, thank you for your critical part in confronting the Global Leadership Challenge.



SCOTT CUNNINGHAM
DIRECTOR, OVERSEAS COUNCIL

MIDDLE EAST



MIDDLE EAST

REGIONAL UPDATE *FROM ABRAHAM NAJAR REGIONAL DIRECTOR*

One of our most strategic and encouraging projects in my region is our help for the emerging Algerian Church. Though this country has a majority of people from a different faith, we have seen remarkable growth of the Church. As a result there is a desperate need for trained church leaders. Our project aims to strengthen the Algerian church by assisting them to establish three levels of training – all owned by and designed for the Algerian church. Level one is for grassroots discipleship. After many sessions of training, local church leaders are now equipped to offer this level of training in their congregations. Level two is providing basic training for pastors. They come together to learn how to pastor for one week every month for one full year. The third level is establishing formal training in Algeria. This year is the third year for the first cohort studying Bachelor of Theology. I support my Algerian colleagues in curriculum development, institutional structure, governance, and facility development. In positive developments, the church recently established an independent board for ICA (Christian Institute of Algeria). They also accepted the second cohort

of 17 students in addition to the 13 students of cohort 1. The very first graduation will take place next academic year. In September ICA started the new academic year – all completely online.

As our partner in His Kingdom, please remember to pray for the Middle East. Pray for stability and peace in Algeria, Lebanon, and Sudan. The instability of these countries affects the situation of the churches and our partner seminaries there. Without your support and partnership, it wouldn't be possible for OC to continue in such church-changing ministries like this new school in Algeria. As a Regional Director, I want to thank you for your partnership and prayers.

ARAB BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (ABTS) LEBANON



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Online Programs
- Diploma of Theology
- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Religion in Middle Eastern & North African Studies
- Master of Divinity

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

182 Students

THANK YOU FOR INVESTING IN THE WORK OF ABTS IN SERVICE OF GOD'S KINGDOM. YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT HAS ALLOWED US TO PREPARE FAITHFUL MEN AND WOMEN TO SERVE THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES OF THIS PAST YEAR. THROUGH YOUR PARTNERSHIP, WE CONTINUE TO WORK TO SEE GOD GLORIFIED, PEOPLE RECONCILED, AND COMMUNITIES RESTORED.

This past year has been a turning point for us. We have been responding to the Lord's urging and have opened our guesthouse to host quarantining health responders. We also opened our dormitories to host people who lost their homes in the Beirut port blast and have partnered with local churches to adopt these people beyond their stay at ABTS.

Talking about our new strategic direction, ABTS President Elie Haddad shared: "During these past months, we've had extensive conversations, discussions, and times of reflection and discernment.... The majority of our programs and initiatives revolve around bringing people together, whether in a classroom, in chapel, or in meetings and gatherings.... It has become obvious, however, that we cannot maintain this full-time residential program in which we invested so much and that has worked well for our students and the churches that they serve.... Our new strategy for our core ministry is to transform our full-time residential program into what we are currently calling the modified residential program. This will be a blended program that preserves all the key features of what was successful in our residential program." Students will do a majority of their studies online, while coming to the ABTS campus for one-week intensive modules four times a year. (You can learn more about the new strategic direction here: <https://abtslebanon.org/new-strategic-direction/>)

Thank you, again, for the love you continue to show us.

Pray for:

Our students and our faculty on their theological journey together • The families impacted by the Beirut blast • The Lebanese people as they recover from a difficult year • Finally, that the Lord continues to use us to serve the Kingdom in the Arab world.

BETHLEHEM BIBLE COLLEGE (BBC)

WEST BANK



BBC STUDENT TESTIMONY



BETHLEHEM BIBLE COLLEGE SERVES THE PALESTINIAN CHURCH THROUGH ARABIC-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, OFFERING BOTH DEGREES AND SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS. WE OFFER BACHELOR'S DEGREES IN BIBLICAL STUDIES AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, A MASTER'S DEGREE IN LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY, AS WELL AS OTHER SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS INCLUDING AN ENTIRELY ONLINE BIBLICAL STUDIES PROGRAM, AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMS IN TOUR GUIDING, MASS MEDIA, AND HEBREW LANGUAGE. ANNUALLY, WE TRAIN BETWEEN 150 AND 200 STUDENTS - OUR 2020 SPRING ENROLLMENT WAS 192 STUDENTS.

PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Diploma Programs
- Bachelor of Biblical Studies
- Master of Christian Ministry and Leadership

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

192 Students

With the coming of COVID-19, the government closed everything but essential businesses. We shifted all classes to online instruction, and students finished the spring semester remotely.

Our greatest success throughout this challenging year was the nearly seamless transition of all classes to an online format. We were quite fortunate that we had in place the infrastructure for online education (due to our Online Biblical Studies program), as well as having instructors already familiar with teaching online.

Seeing an opportunity during the lockdown, some of our faculty began to offer free online courses (theology, childhood education, and parenting) for the general public. There was great enthusiasm for these new classes, and over 100 new students enrolled.

We also have the largest and most diverse first-year class in Biblical Studies in many years (19 students). Some of these students found themselves with time on their hands because they had lost their jobs, so they are coming to study at BBC, taking advantage of the online format.

BBC has also been negatively affected by the pandemic, especially financially, because of the closure of tourist activity in Bethlehem, which helps to fund our ministry through our guest house. So, we are grateful to partners, like Overseas Council, who continue to support this strategic ministry. Through your faithfulness we have continued to serve our students, and all needs have been met.

Please pray for:

Our leadership • Our new semester (for wisdom and diligence) • Our students in Bethlehem and around the world • For needed finances to still come in • For safety and health of our entire community.

ELAM MINISTRIES (ELAM)

IRAN



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Intensive Leadership Development Program

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL PRAYERS AND CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP. THE OC SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS ARE INSTRUMENTAL IN TRAINING LEADERS TO REACH AND DISCIPLE PERSIAN SPEAKERS IN THE IRAN REGION.

About our training

Our 3-month program is at the center of our leadership development for new pastors, evangelists and church planters. Participants receive intense biblical and theological training, ministry skills in preaching and discipleship, evangelism and Scripture distribution, as well as hands-on ministry experience.

By God's grace, despite pandemic lockdowns we have continued our leadership training course. In March we transitioned the course to online. This actually allowed students to attend who would otherwise not have been able to do so. In fact, 50 graduates have completed the course so far this year while living in their hometowns, as they do ministry right where they are.

Online learning has proven very effective. The online program retains all the key activities of the residential course. Students gather daily for prayer, Bible teaching and worship. They also meet online with a personal mentor. They learn how to engage in ministry through practical assignments, such as prayer walks in their hometowns, evangelism, and using discipleship material for those they lead to Christ.

Our impact

New house churches are being planted in Iran weekly through our graduates and other trained leaders. Students are developing as leaders, and we see the 5 C's (Christ, community, calling, character, and competencies) taking root and blossoming. Students are demonstrating their growing understanding of biblical teaching on key topics within the Persian-speaking church, including suffering, family, marriage, identity, and addressing conflict.

Please pray with us for:

A growing number of Persian-speaking house churches being planted across the Iran region • A growing awareness within the Muslim world that the message of the Bible is one of hope and love, resulting in a growing interest in Jesus • The safety of believers and leaders serving under threat of persecution • A growing capacity within Elam to identify, train, and deploy Persian-speaking leaders • For wisdom as we select topics for conferences and refine our training courses.

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN CAIRO (ETSC) EGYPT



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Certificate in Church Ministry
- Certificate in Arabic Christian Heritage
- Certificate in Theological Studies
- Master of Arts in Theology
- Master in Leadership and Management
- Master in Media and Leadership
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

509 Students

THIS COMING FALL SEMESTER WILL HAVE A DIFFERENT FEEL ABOUT IT, AS WE WON'T HAVE THE PLEASURE OF FACE TO FACE INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS. ONCE MORE CLASSES WILL BE TAUGHT ONLINE. I WILL MISS SEEING THEM ON CAMPUS AND IN CHAPEL. PERHAPS NO GREATER COMPLIMENT CAN BE PAID TO US AS A SEMINARY THAN THAT THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENTRUSTING THEIR TRAINING TO OUR LEADERSHIP.

We heard from 257 applicants for the fall semester, of whom we accepted 148. The online platform has enabled students to enroll from virtually every part of Egypt and most Middle Eastern countries. Reading through the applications, I was moved by the vision that led each applicant to join the seminary. I'd like to share some of their words with you.

- "I want to guide those who came from ignorance, intolerance and thought intimidation."
- "Although civil war caused me to leave my village and to live as a stranger in a new place, it has helped me to develop my ability to face challenges and to adapt to working with people with different backgrounds."
- One described the painful impact of losing a friend. "The situation pushed me to look for supportive ways to help those who are suffering from depression."
- Another student wrote that after fourteen years of ministry, "I realized that I need some training to face the challenges that are beyond my capability."
- "I have met skeptics and atheists who are struggling with questions about God, the Bible and about suffering in human life. I have had my own questions about the meaning and purpose of life."
- "My vision is to reach children without parents. I love kids so much, and God has called me to help children grow up to be successful men and women in the future."

I must confess that my eyes moisten a bit as I read about their hopes and dreams to serve God. It is a privilege to engage in the good work of preparing these students to live out God's call for their lives. Please pray that we will be successful.

NAZARETH EVANGELICAL COLLEGE (NEC)

ISRAEL



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Bachelor of Biblical Studies
- Master of Christian Ministry and Leadership
- Other Bachelors and Masters Programs

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

85 Students

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE TO OVERSEAS COUNCIL FOR YOUR SUPPORT FOR NAZARETH EVANGELICAL COLLEGE. WHETHER THROUGH YOUR PRAYERS, AND THE HELPFUL INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE WORKSHOPS, OR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT - ALL OF THIS SUPPORTS US IN OUR MISSION OF EQUIPPING CHRISTIAN LEADERS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE IN ISRAEL AND BEYOND.

The pandemic posed a great challenge because of the lockdown in the middle of our Spring semester. This compelled us to convert all our classes to online learning, using Zoom, Google Classroom and other programs. Our current semester that began in September 2020 is also fully online.

This challenge, which in some ways negatively affected our ministry, in other ways became a blessing to us. The number of our students actually tripled. Not only did the number of students increase, but also students with previous degree-level educational experience enrolled, because the flexibility of online learning fit their busy schedules. We also found a new way to reach students far outside of Israel. We could now reach out to Muslim background believers in refugee camps in Greece and Turkey. Some of our faculty previously visited some of these communities, providing some intensive training, but they needed more follow-up and wanted further Biblical training. Until we visit them again, online learning is a new way to serve them.

This fall semester we have about 85 students enrolled in our academic programs.

We are facing a challenge to meet our financial needs for 2020, due to the economic disruptions all over the world. Therefore, your financial support through the Stabilization Fund was a great blessing and an answer to prayer.

Please pray with us for:

Students in the current semester, as we see an increasing number of students, some of them are from non-Christian backgrounds • That our faculty and staff will meet the academic and discipleship needs of students • The challenges we are facing as a result of the pandemic: social distancing, financial needs, and so on.

*STUDENT PROFILE***TALAL***GRADUATE OF MASTER OF DIVINITY*

When I came to study theology at ABTS, I was a wanted man, as the Sudanese government had been oppressing Christians. Throughout my stay, I was worried about going back home. However, during my last year at ABTS, a revolution in Sudan led to the removal of several political figures who were persecuting Christians.

When I returned to Sudan, I looked for a job to support myself. The Lord provided, and I was sponsored by a Sudanese church. My time at ABTS prepared me immensely for my ministry. It helped me see the opportunities that the Lord had given me for ministry and taught me how to serve selflessly and wholeheartedly.

I lead my church's discipleship ministry. My ministry team and I disciple new believers for nine months using eighteen classes that teach new believers how to grow in faith and share their faith with others. After nine months, we split the disciples into small groups and send them on outreach trips. When they come back, they graduate from the discipleship program. We then follow up with the graduates in their ministries to offer support and help them as they serve their churches and communities.

Our goal is to spread this concept of discipleship and follow-up school throughout Sudan. Sudan has 18 states and 25 large

cities. Currently, only my state has a discipleship school. With the success of the initiative here in Khartoum, we've made plans to start a new school in a new city. This initiative started with a ministry team of two. Today, we have grown into six. This year, we were able to send people on outreach trips to nine out of the eighteen states in Sudan, and we now have 25 new students from different denominations.

Thank you for your support. You have offered a part of your life, so I can be prepared to serve His Kingdom. This is a great act of faith – to offer so much without expecting anything in return. It is a beautiful image of Christ's love.

“MY TIME AT ABTS PREPARED ME IMMENSELY FOR MY MINISTRY. IT HELPED ME SEE THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT THE LORD HAD GIVEN ME FOR MINISTRY AND TAUGHT ME HOW TO SERVE SELFLESSLY AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY.”

**ARAB BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY (ABTS)
LEBANON**



STUDENT PROFILE

KHALIL NASRALLAH

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP



My name is Khalil Nasrallah and I'm from the town of Shafa'mer, Israel. I'm a student in the MA Christian Ministry and Leadership at NEC. I serve the Lord in three main fields. The first one is through my profession as a medical doctor, since I see my work as a ministry that glorifies God. The second one is at my local church where I serve as a youth minister. The third one is through Christian apologetics. I run my own YouTube channel where I post apologetic videos about faith and science that reaches hundreds of people. I'm also part of an apologetics team aimed at university students.

I grew up in a Christian home and became a Christian at a young age. However, in my teenage years I became an atheist. Over time God brought me back to faith. During medical school I began to feel God's call to ministry.

As a former atheist, I can easily relate to atheists. I show them that the Gospel is not irrational. And the videos that I post make it clear that one can be well informed in both science and faith.

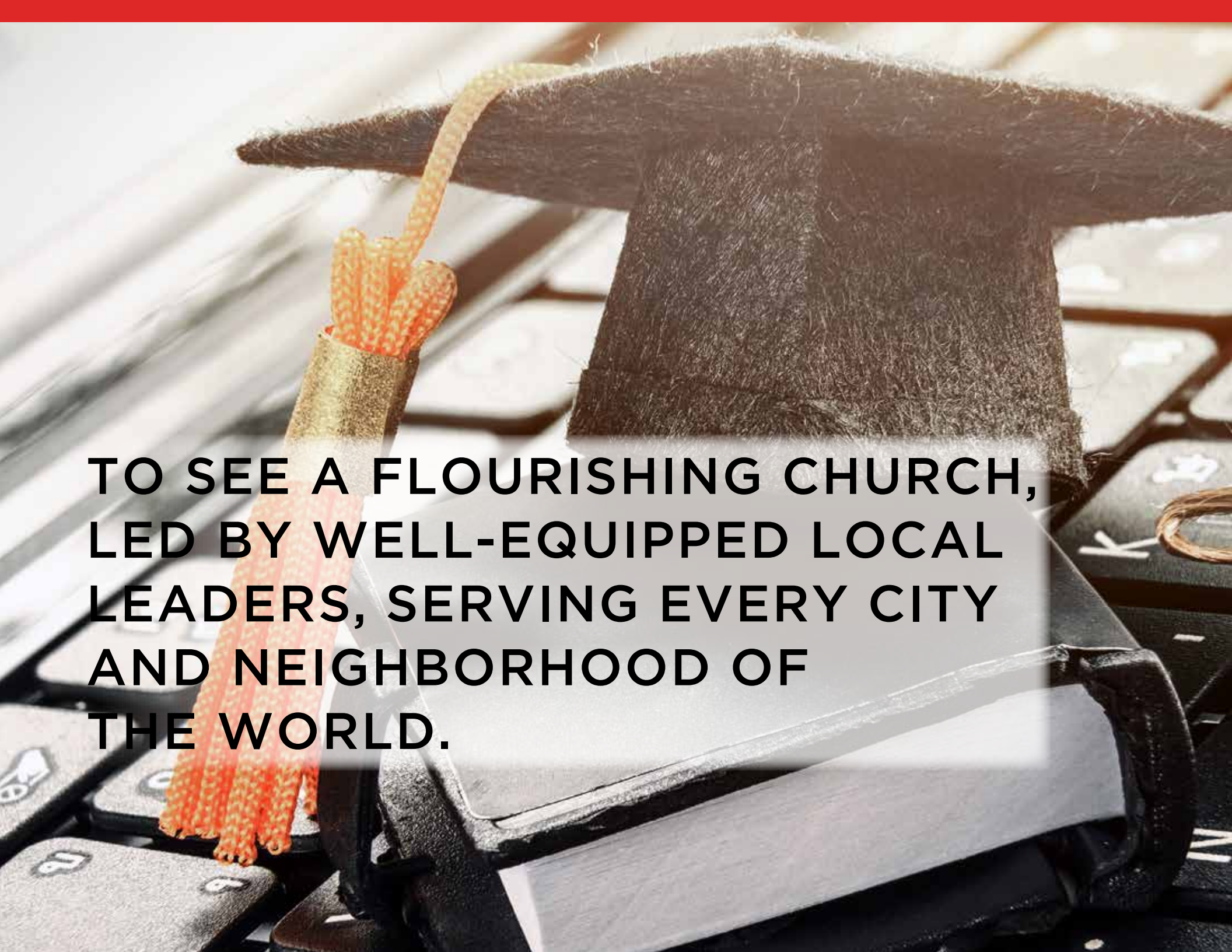
My purpose in joining the Nazareth Evangelical College was to develop my biblical knowledge, theological foundation, and critical thinking. I'm already using these tools with those I'm serving, especially at church and in ministry with students.

Recently I tested positive for the coronavirus. I posted a video speaking about guilt feelings, personal responsibility and dealing with anxiety. Hundreds of people commented and shared the video. I'm not sure if people's lives were changed, but it certainly impacted people's lives in terms of dealing with anxiety and guilt feelings from a Christian perspective.

I cannot express enough my gratitude to Overseas Council for your support. Young couples have many expenses, especially during this pandemic, and the scholarship assists in easing this burden.

"AS A FORMER ATHEIST, I CAN EASILY RELATE TO ATHEISTS. I SHOW THEM THAT THE GOSPEL IS NOT IRRATIONAL."





**TO SEE A FLOURISHING CHURCH,
LED BY WELL-EQUIPPED LOCAL
LEADERS, SERVING EVERY CITY
AND NEIGHBORHOOD OF
THE WORLD.**

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR PARTNERSHIP.
WE COULDN'T DO
THIS WITHOUT YOU.**



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