



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





AFRICA

4 – 13

Africa International University (AIU), Kenya

Bangui Evangelical School of Theology (BEST), CAR

Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST), Ethiopia

ASIA

14 – 29

Allahabad Bible Seminary (ABS), India

Asian Theological Seminary (ATS), Philippines

Hanoi Bible College (HBC), Vietnam

Nepal Ebenezer Bible College (NEBC), Nepal

New Theological College (NTC), India

Shalom Bible Seminary (SBS), India

Tyrannus Bible Seminary (TBS), India

EUROPE

30 – 39

Evangelical School of Theology (EST), Poland

Kuban Evangelical Christian University (KECU), Russia

Odessa Theological Seminary (OTS), Ukraine

Trivellius Institute (TI), Bulgaria

Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary (UETS), Ukraine

LATIN AMERICA

40 – 51

Biblical Seminary of Colombia (BSC), Colombia

*Evangelical Seminary for Pastoral Education (ESEPA),
Costa Rica*

*International Faculty of Theological Education (FIET),
Argentina*

Methodist Seminary of Cuba (MSC), Cuba

Central American Theological Seminary (SETECA), Guatemala

Word of Life Seminary (WOL), Brazil

MIDDLE EAST

52 – 61

Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS), Lebanon

Bethlehem Bible College (BBC), West Bank

ELAM Ministries (ELAM), Iran

Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo (ETSC), Egypt

Nazareth Evangelical College (NEC), Israel



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

AFRICA





REGIONAL UPDATES

FROM JOHN JUSU

REGIONAL DIRECTOR, AFRICA

This year started with several great ministry expectations. One of these expectations was for our partner seminaries to further explore new and alternative ways of providing theological education, so that they can more effectively confront the Global Leadership Challenge. I thank God that this expectation was actually accelerated by the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

For instance, this year I've worked with a number of seminaries specifically to prepare them for technology-mediated learning, as schools have closed in-person classes and shifted to online training. I've conducted several webinars with schools, including several with International Leadership University (ILU) in Kenya, about responding to the pandemic in the training of pastors. My webinars with ILU attracted over 15 seminary faculty members and 60 church leaders from across the globe. As a result of this consultation, ILU developed a renewed, integrated curriculum that will outlive the pandemic, and the church leaders deepened their connections with their congregations by using several alternative ways of "keeping church alive during the pandemic" which they learned during the webinars. I not only led the webinar sessions, but I also trained two other pastors to



help other churches with the same training. Each of these pastors have since led webinar trainings reaching over 120 church leaders.

I am grateful to our friends and partners who continually give to support the work in Africa. The work is immense, but through your support to me as Regional Director, a lot has been done in raising leaders and disciple makers for the Kingdom during this pandemic. I pray that God will bless our mutual efforts in raising workers for His ever-growing harvest. My family and I will covet your prayers for us for good health and for break times of deep reflection and intentional soul care.



FROM MARDOCHEE NADOUMNGAR REGIONAL DIRECTOR, FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

The pandemic hit our partner schools in Francophone Africa badly. In March, by government orders, schools around the region closed their doors to in-person teaching. A few remained without any educational activities for two to three months. However, others were able to more quickly resume classes by shifting to online courses. For this new paradigm, teachers and students both had to be trained in the use of online tools. Efforts to organize online courses allowed schools to finish the 2019-20 academic year and then to prepare to open for the 2020-21 academic year.

Anticipating that I would be called upon by our partner seminaries to help them through the challenges brought about by the pandemic, I trained myself through tutorials and short courses on the use of Zoom and Moodle, as well as online pedagogy. I was then able to organize virtual consultations with school leaders to encourage them and to point them in the direction of learning how to effectively use online tools.

The pandemic not only disrupted education, but all the schools in my region also experienced financial difficulties. Typically, their financial support came from local churches, school fees and income generating activities (such as renting out their guesthouses and classrooms for



seminars etc.). The closure of churches, schools, and guesthouses made the financial condition very precarious, leading to difficulty in paying salaries as well as utility bills. In these conditions, the Stabilization Funds we sent to these schools were received as a breath of fresh air for which presidents of these schools express their deep gratitude and appreciation to the donors.

As you pray for schools in my region, remember: Teacher training for online courses; ongoing financial challenges that schools are facing; provision of high-speed Internet bandwidth for offering more online courses.

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (AIU) KENYA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Diploma in Theology
- Bachelor of Theology
- Post Graduate Diploma in Theology
- Master of Arts
- Master of Divinity
- Doctor of Philosophy

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

1,500 Students

WITH THE COMING OF THE PANDEMIC, WE STOPPED ALL IN-PERSON TEACHING. MOST STUDENTS AND STAFF RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES, PER GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE. HOWEVER, OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES REMAINED ON CAMPUS.

We smoothly transitioned over 65% of our students to remote learning. Some, however, did not have access to Internet connectivity because of their locations. In September 2020, we began a new semester with orientation happening remotely.

Since March, we have initiated various ways of both providing support and continuing our mission in the wake of the pandemic. We . . .

provided basic needs to deserving students • allocated campus land to international students to use as gardens to enable them to grow their own vegetables • made faculty available to give expert opinion on education in light of Covid • organized counseling webinars to support families in the area • partnered with Internet service providers to provide data to faculty and students at a subsidized cost • reduced fees to make education more accessible • provided spiritual support through online chapel services, virtual Christian Union meetings and Bible study.

We continue to navigate the various challenges to ensure we fulfil our mandate of raising Christ-centered leaders in this generation.

We thank you for your generous contributions towards supporting our students, who rely on us for help.

Continue in your prayers for us:

Capital campaign that kicked off October 5. Pray that the Lord will guide us in tapping into His resources • For new projects: mentorship programs both in high schools and universities, construction of new buildings on campus, and upgrading of clinic services • Commit an upcoming stakeholders meeting to the Lord – that it will be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit • Pray for our students who are studying remotely; some are struggling to connect • Commit faculty to the Lord as they continue adjusting to new ways of teaching, and for supporting staff • Our leadership – it is not easy for them during this period of uncertainty • Pray for new self-supporting students to enroll and also for those struggling with fees • Pray for both Governing Council and Trustee members - that the Lord will guide them.

BANGUI EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (BEST) CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Bachelor in Theology
- Professional Master in Leadership and Management
- Professional Master in Missiology and Practical Theology
- Master of Research in Biblical Studies
- D.Min in Practical Theology
- PhD in Biblical Studies

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

188 students

UNCERTAINTIES FILLED THIS ACADEMIC YEAR. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THE PANDEMIC PUT ON HOLD OUR ABILITY TO COMPLETE THE SCHOOL YEAR. ALTHOUGH THE PANDEMIC IS STILL WITH US, WE CAN SAY LIKE THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL: “THUS FAR HAS THE LORD HELPED US.”

Since March when the pandemic was detected in Central African Republic, there has not been a single person infected at BEST. We took aggressive measures to avoid infection, and we believe God worked through these efforts to keep the campus community safe.

The government shut down BEST’s educational programs for almost four months. Yet, by the end of August, we were able to complete the academic year. More than 1,000 people, gathered for our graduation for 28 men and women, now ready to take up their ministries in five African countries.

The schools we operate for children and youth (pre-school, primary school and secondary school) were also closed, but they are now all open again. Parents are surprisingly confident, sending their children to BEST to complete their school year. By the end of September, the students will be able to move on to their next grade, with the new school year for children beginning in October.

The pandemic has made BEST’s financial situation fragile. When schools were closed, we laid off a significant number of campus workers and reduced the salaries of others. With schools now reopened, many of those laid off will gradually return to work. These personnel decisions have been difficult for everyone. People need employment, and BEST needs financial stability in order to carry out its mission. We would like to thank you for your prayers and for your financial support of the ministry of BEST during this time of crisis. We are now looking forward to the next academic year in October.

Please pray for us as we are:

Preparing a safe environment for opening the new academic year • Receiving and helping new students who desire to be equipped for ministry • Preserving peace during the presidential elections coming in December • Protecting the seminary’s financial health in the midst of the pandemic.

ETHIOPIAN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (EGST)

ETHIOPIA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Post Graduate Diploma in Biblical and Theological Studies
- Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies
- Master of Arts in Leadership and Management
- Master of Arts in Development Studies Management
- Master of Theology
- Doctor of Philosophy Management

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

200 students

GREETINGS TO YOU FROM THE ETHIOPIAN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (EGST). FIRST OF ALL, WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO OVERSEAS COUNCIL FOR SHARING OUR STORY TO OTHERS WHO WOULD STAND BY OUR SIDE, WHICH, AS YOU INDICATED, IS THE REFLECTION OF OUR LONGSTANDING RELATIONSHIP. WE VALUE THE RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE WITH OC SINCE EGST'S ESTABLISHMENT! THE FRUIT OF OUR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS ARE HONORED IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, AS A NUMBER OF OUR GRADUATES HOLD KEY MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS.

Though we are known for our on-campus programs, we were forced to resort to e-learning since April 2020. This has been a challenge for both our faculty and students, most of whom have little or no experience in e-learning. We thank God for the agility and resilience they have shown!

For the academic year of 2020-2021, we are planning to hold hybrid classes, where much of the classes will be held on campus with few weeks of online learning. We are confident that our faculty and students will have a smoother experience than before.

To ensure institutional stability and growth, we are in the process of revising the current strategic plan and developing a new one for the period 2021-2025. The revision process is being carried out by our faculty and staff with the right skill set and experience.

Though our graduation was delayed, 56 students graduated in November, 2020.

Please, pray for us:

That the teaching-learning process may not be interrupted due to the pandemic • That our faculty, staff, and students remain healthy and strong • That we may be able to equip ministers serving in regional cities and towns • That our graduates continue to labor for the betterment of churches and society • That we would have sufficient finances to support needy students • That we may secure a reliable online learning platform to expand the horizon of our ministry • That Ethiopia would be stable from sociopolitical tensions.

Thank you again and God bless you abundantly!

*STUDENT PROFILE***STEVEN NJERU WAMBUGU***MASTER'S IN THEOLOGY AND MISSIONS STUDIES*

I was a wild kind of boy who often got into trouble. It was a miserable adventure, and only by God's grace did I live to confess my sins. My parents were not good role models, and their separation deeply affected us children. I lost interest in school and gained interest in drinking alcohol and a wild lifestyle. My mother's business went from bad to worse and so did her depression and drinking. We lost everything, and I abandoned my mum and stayed with my dad in his rural home. I blamed my parents for everything, and I contemplated suicide. I got kicked out of my dad's home and left for Nairobi.

I asked a friend to take me to a church I had once visited. The moment I entered I experienced a real sense of my sinful life. That day, with tears, I accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. I discovered God in the next weeks and committed my life to serve Him. I got involved in church outreach and children's and marriage ministries. For the next twenty years, my wife and I served in full-time ministry with Life Ministry Kenya (Cru).

I left Kenya to plant a church in Malawi in 2014. We returned to Kenya after handing over the church to a local pastor, and I enrolled in AIU to complete my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Theology and Missions, even at this late stage in life (I am in my late fifties)! I realized that most churches have not prioritized the

Great Commission, focusing instead on programs for the 'containment' of believers, rather than equipping and sending them out. My major goal is to develop a discipleship model for Africa that can be contextualized and adapted for other cultures. My aim is to never "retire" but continue doing, to quote Bill Bright, "the greatest job on earth": introducing others to Christ and establishing them in God's Word as the only way of transforming the world for God.

"MY MAJOR GOAL IS TO DEVELOP A DISCIPLESHIP MODEL FOR AFRICA THAT CAN BE CONTEXTUALIZED AND ADAPTED FOR OTHER CULTURES."



*STUDENT PROFILE***DJENOUDJI PARMINASSE**

**BANGUI EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (BEST)
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

Last year I came from my country of Chad to be a student in the BEST extension center in Cameroon.

**“MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED
FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE;
BECAUSE YOU HAVE
REJECTED KNOWLEDGE,
I REJECT YOU FROM BEING A
PRIEST TO ME.” HOSEA 4:6**

This passage motivated me to gain knowledge of the Word of God through the theological training offered by BEST. I resolved to acquire the necessary tools to impact my region and bring more souls to the kingdom of God. In this I have followed another passage, Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to do it and teach the statutes and ordinances of Israel.” Like Ezra, I have applied my heart to study, to practice, and then to teach the Word of God.

I am so grateful for the scholarship we received from Overseas Council during the last academic term. The scholarship helped us to overcome challenges we were facing. As a foreigner, it helped me complete my first year in the masters program. I really appreciate the donors that are sacrificing during this period

of Covid-19. Without this support I would have gone back to my home country.

Before coming to BEST I was just preaching, but with no evidence to explain the mind of God through his Word. Now I am preaching with a focus. It is now that I realize that my preaching was empty. The courses of hermeneutics and exegesis have helped me to have a clearer understanding of the Scriptures. In a local church where I am doing an internship I recently conducted a seminar on the topic, “Divine Protection” based on Psalm 91. People were so amazed at the teaching of God’s Word.

Our prayer is that God continues to sustain your work in His vineyard. I would also like for you to pray for BEST during this period of hardship. Be blessed in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.



*STUDENT PROFILE***AYANSA OBSI***MA IN BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*

My name is Pastor Ayansa Obsi. I am married with four children. I first came to the Lord when I was nineteen. After two years of professional service, I sensed God's call to a full-time ministry and began to pastor local churches. To prepare myself better for my pastoral ministry, I earned a Bachelor's degree in Bible and Theology at Addis Ababa Bible College.

Then, I realized that an in-depth theological study is important for my ministry and came to EGST for further training. Studying at EGST is a joy and a privilege. My experience during these two years have surpassed my expectations. The education has strengthened my faith, opened my eyes to see the Bible with a fresh perspective, and enhanced my motivation for preaching and teaching. God willing, I will graduate in July 2021.

I would like to thank EGST for granting me a scholarship that covered my entire tuition fee. The scholarship I received from EGST has eased my financial burden and allowed me to focus on my studies, so that I would fulfill God's will for my life. Had it not been for your financial support, I and my family would have suffered a lot, since we would not be able to cover for our children's school fees and basic necessities as food. Thank you so much for your support, and God bless you richly!

I have recently been appointed in a leadership role overseeing approximately 400 local churches across the country. I now have opportunity and responsibility to train and empower thousands of our church ministers. Your investment in my studies has not been in vain. The knowledge, wisdom, and inspiration I am receiving at EGST hones my life and my ministry in a way that glorifies God!

“HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT, I AND MY FAMILY WOULD HAVE SUFFERED A LOT, SINCE WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO COVER FOR OUR CHILDREN'S SCHOOL FEES AND BASIC NECESSITIES AS FOOD.”



ASIA





REGIONAL UPDATES FROM JAISON THOMAS REGIONAL DIRECTOR, SOUTH ASIA

OC serves the churches in my region by equipping Christ-like leaders through our partnerships with 14 premier seminaries in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. I am witnessing how multi-faceted, wholistic training can lead to the transformation of South Asia – village by village.

The pandemic lockdown provided us with the opportunity to accelerate different forms of online theological education initiatives. Some schools were not capable of launching online education by themselves, and so, one of my major projects this year was to establish a consortium of four seminaries in Nepal, Bangladesh and India to cooperate in online education. Now digital education has become a reality for our seminaries, with a combined enrolment of 300 students. Despite the challenges of Internet connectivity and access to digital devices, about 80% of their students returned through online education in the pandemic. In addition, 120 new students freshly joined the academic programs. Please pray with us as we tread this new path with faith and prayer.

Binda and Bimala are BTh students at Nepal Ebenezer Bible College, one of the four consortium schools. They are first generation Christians from their Nepali village. Their story of joining the online learning mode



is one of incredible creativity and passion. Hailing from a location with no Internet connectivity and frequent electricity failures, they had to build a small hut on a hilltop (where they could get Internet connectivity) to make their educational dreams come true. They did it! Every morning they get up early, pack their lunch, walk up the hill and join Zoom classes with lots of enthusiasm and gratitude!

The commitment to provide a meaningful learning experience for faculty and students coupled with an excellent digital platform has been an incredible journey for both students and faculty. Thank you for holding hands with us.

FROM JOANNA SOBERANO REGIONAL DIRECTOR, SE ASIA

The pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for partner seminaries in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, and South Korea. As in other parts of the world, because of government restrictions on gatherings, all of our partner seminaries in the region had to stop all in-person teaching and then pivot quickly to fully online delivery of courses. Those with on-campus dormitories had to send their students back to their villages. Schools also faced financial challenges, and OC's financial assistance through the Stabilization Fund was timely evidence of God's faithfulness to them. These school leaders expressed deep gratitude to OC friends.

During this pandemic, one seminary in particular I have journeyed with is the Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. Prior to the pandemic, they had no experience in online teaching. So, via Zoom I facilitated a faculty development workshop to assist them to prepare for online teaching. Faculty members were eager to learn to be effective through this new mode of teaching, as this would be the only way to continue engaging with students. The leadership shared that the generous financial support they received from OC was used to purchase new laptops for faculty and a new book scanner for the library.



In my conversations with leaders, I see how their personal lives have been affected, too. And, so I also see the need for regular times of spiritual refreshment for the leadership, faculty, staff and students. This need should be seriously factored into the online curriculum.

The stories of these seminaries attest to the goodness of God in seeing them through this pandemic. Thank you for your continuing support! Do continue to pray for the work that I have started, assisting the seminaries to continue to serve the Church during these challenging times.

ASIA

REGIONAL UPDATE ***FROM PETER DENG*** ***REGIONAL DIRECTOR, CHINA***

This year has been rather challenging for my ministry, as the general atmosphere has grown tighter, security-wise. In addition, the pandemic resulted in all of my travel and much of my substantive communications with our Chinese partners to come to a sudden stop. Before the pandemic, I conducted 10 workshops with close to 300 leaders trained on various leadership development subjects.

The challenges within the country have actually resulted in further growth for the church. With the trend of large churches splitting into smaller groups for security reasons, an urgent need for more leaders emerged. In partnership with church-training programs, we responded to this need with new efforts to train small group leaders. These new leaders are starting new groups and even planting new small churches. One small group more than doubled in size in only three months, growing from 8 people to 20 people, before splitting into two groups. With the outbreak of the pandemic, church gatherings stopped. Yet, Chinese churches reacted quickly, shifting to the online format, which actually resulted in increased attendance. The enrollment of one church training program doubled using

the online format, while the residential model had previously experienced lower enrollment. Although we can't generalize from a few examples, this does point to the resilience of the church and the positive potential.

Our OC project to provide Chinese-language library books for training programs has continued even through the pandemic. We donated 930 books to two strategic seminaries. The smooth delivery of books has been a remarkable help to these training programs.

I'm very grateful for your generous support and faithful prayers. Please continue to pray for OC's partner churches and their training programs to respond to challenges with innovative approaches, thus experiencing growth by the mighty power of our Lord.

ALLAHABAD BIBLE SEMINARY (ABS)

INDIA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Diploma in Christian Studies
- Bachelor of Divinity
- Bachelor of Christian Studies
- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Christian Studies

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

2,759 Students

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK EACH OF YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN THE FORM OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NEEDY STUDENTS. WE PRAISE GOD FOR THE VISION OF OVERSEAS COUNCIL FOR YOUR FAITHFUL PARTNERSHIP IN DEVELOPING THEOLOGICAL FORMATION AT ABS.

God has uniquely placed us and equipped us to serve the Indian Church through our diverse programs. While we offer rigorous academic programs, we believe strongly in the holistic formation of our students, and so we also have requirements for significant practical student ministry. We are also one of the few seminaries which offer degree programs in both English and Hindi. We understand the need for grassroots training, and so we offer a very popular degree program through extension. Nearly 2,400 grassroots evangelists are taking extension courses, sent to us by many of the indigenous Indian mission agencies. We believe that it is critical for Christian leaders to understand Hinduism, since it is so dominant in our culture. So, three years ago we established a Centre for the Study of Indian Culture and Society which offers short courses on Hinduism, equipping grassroots pastors and church planters to speak the Gospel more clearly to our Hindu neighbors. Nearly 300 students have completed these courses.

Village ministry is one of the very important ministries of ABS. Our students go to various villages on the weekends, bearing the Gospel. Many people are very receptive to the Gospel. They give their own houses to have children's ministry and worship services. Often our students find it very difficult to reach the villages, due to poor transportation. However, once we reach there and see the villagers and their receptivity, we feel that it is worth the challenging travel. The students are exposed to realities on the ground. They get involved in uplifting rural society by creating awareness of the social issues. Each year we identify new villages and venture into them. At present we have about 32 worshipping groups in as many villages. The students and faculty face spiritual power encounters which they overcome with much prayer.

ASIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (ATS) PHILIPPINES



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Graduate Diploma
- Master of Arts
- Master of Divinity in Biblical Studies
- Master of Divinity in Christian Education
- Master of Divinity in Counseling
- Master of Divinity in Intercultural & Urban Studies
- Master of Divinity in Theology
- Master of Divinity in Transformational Urban Leadership
- Master of Divinity in Pastoral Studies

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

216 Students

WHEN THE PANDEMIC CAME TO MANILA AND LOCKDOWN WAS IMPLEMENTED, WE SHIFTED ALL OUR CLASSES TO FULLY ONLINE. WHILE WE HAVE BEEN OFFERING TWO FULLY ONLINE DEGREE PROGRAMS SINCE 2017, SHIFTING ALL OUR CLASSES TO ONLINE STILL MEANT DISRUPTION AND MAJOR ADJUSTMENTS. WE ARE GRATEFUL, HOWEVER, THAT AS EARLY AS 2013, WE ALREADY IDENTIFIED ONLINE LEARNING AS A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE. IN DEVELOPING IN THIS AREA, WE RECEIVED MUCH GUIDANCE THROUGH A STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTATION FOR ATS WITH HELP FROM OVERSEAS COUNCIL.

We rejoiced in June 2020 as we virtually sent off 44 graduates, and then began our new semester in September, again, all virtually, with a total enrolment slightly higher than last year's. We also press on with our non-formal certificate programs via webinars and maintain key extension centers in the provinces and rural areas. Glory to God for His faithfulness!

A major hurdle to our shift to online learning is that not all our students have laptops or tablets and a stable Internet connection. However, the students have been extremely grateful for the efforts of their professors, who have shown flexibility in the submission of requirements and were considerate with everyone's individual struggles.

We are continuously enhancing our work-from-home scheme with online systems for faculty and staff to effectively provide our services and assistance to our students. Inevitably, home and work responsibilities overlap, so difficulty arises in terms of maintaining balance and boundaries. Even so, we are deeply grateful to God that we can still fulfill the mission God has for the seminary of equipping God's workers for the harvest, even in a time as this.

We are together in this journey of making God's truth known to all the nations – despite the ongoing pandemic. Your continued partnership has encouraged us to work with humility and joy. Please pray with us as we continue to make major adjustments, since everything, including our chapel services, is being done virtually. All glory and praise to our God for the LORD's amazing grace to us all, even to Asian Theological Seminary!

HANOI BIBLE COLLEGE (HBC) VIETNAM



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Bachelor of the Bible
- Bachelor of Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

72 Students

HANOI BIBLE COLLEGE TRAINS LEADERS FOR THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF VIETNAM (NORTH), ONE OF ONLY A FEW SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTRY ALLOWED TO DO SO. WE CURRENTLY HAVE 72 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY PROGRAM. MOST OF OUR STUDENTS COME FROM ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS OF VIETNAM. THEY COME FROM CHURCHES SCATTERED IN FAR-FLUNG MOUNTAINOUS AREAS. IN PARTICULAR, THE HMONG PEOPLE MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF OUR STUDENTS.

With the pandemic, this past year has been an adventure for us. We admitted our fourth batch of new students in August 2019. After one semester of study, COVID-19 hit Vietnam. The outbreak shut down the school for several weeks as the entire country went into lockdown. We had one week with students before sending them back to their homes. We were able to shift to online instruction for our Batch 2 students for about nine weeks. Unfortunately, our Batch 4 students did not have computers, so we had to send them home for the semester. Through online instruction and then several weeks of in-person instruction, our Batch 2 students completed their graduation requirements in June 2020, a month before the second wave of the virus hit Vietnam in July. Thankfully, the outbreak was contained, and we started a summer intensive in early August and then started our Fall semester at the end of August, all in-person. Our Batch 3 students spent all of last year, as planned, with their home churches doing internships. They completed their internships and have returned to classes since August.

We thank God that our second batch of students were able to finish their program. They are now back in their home churches, sharing the Gospel and serving their churches.

You can pray for God's continued protection for the school, so that the program may continue in-person. We discovered that online education is difficult for our students, due to their remote locations. It was impossible for our Batch 4 students to study online. Please pray also that as a school we will continue to grow in our ability to provide good quality instruction with reliable administrative support.

NEPAL EBENEZER BIBLE COLLEGE (NEBC)

NEPAL



VIDEO FEATURE



**I CONVEY GREETINGS FROM NEBC IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.
I THANK YOU FOR THE SELFLESS SUPPORT YOU ARE RENDERING TOWARDS THE
DEVELOPMENT OF NEPAL EBENEZER BIBLE COLLEGE AND OUR STUDENTS.**

Despite the pandemic, we are able to continue the ministry of the college, though some changes had to be made. We were not able to continue with in-person classes for two months as the government restricted all gatherings and movements at the end of March 2020. We had to send our students to their homes, but we started fellowship and prayer meetings with them and with our faculty and staff through Zoom. We started online classes in June and completed the 2019/20 academic session. Four students from the M.Div. program and eleven students from the B.Th. completed their studies; but the graduation service has not yet taken place.

In response to the needs of rural pastors, this year we planned to start vocational training for the students and also to start a diploma by extension for pastors and leaders who are in the villages. However, these new projects are paused because of the current situation. We are praying and planning to start these programs once the situation allows.

PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Diploma of Theology
- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

72 Students

We were able to enroll 24 new students for our M.Div. program for our new academic session which started in August. We decided not to enroll any new students for the Dip.Th. and B.Th. program. Nevertheless, we are praying and waiting for the right time to do so. The other programs are continuing through online (Zoom) with teachers and students adjusting and coping with the new method of online education.

We would like to thank the team of OC for your prayers, encouragement and support towards NEBC. The amount which we receive from Overseas Council for the students is of great help as we provide scholarships for those who need it. We praise God for His providence and for enabling us to meet the needs of the college through generous contributions from you. We look forward to work as partner organizations even in the days to come.

NEW THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE (NTC) INDIA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Certificate in Theology
- Diploma in Worship & Music
- Bachelor of Divinity
- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

280 Students

COVID DESCENDED ON US AROUND MID-MARCH. THE COLLEGE WAS IMMEDIATELY CLOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT. STUDENTS QUICKLY TRAVELLED BACK TO THEIR HOMES AND CHURCHES. FOR A MONTH OR SO, THE COLLEGE WAS LOCKED DOWN AND ALL ACTIVITIES CAME TO A STANDSTILL. WE WERE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THINGS MIGHT CHANGE AFTER A MONTH, BUT THEN WE REALIZED THAT THIS WOULD LAST. SO, WE FACED THE CHALLENGE TO COMPLETE THE SEMESTER AND BEGIN THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR.

The Lord gave us a theme in February for the next academic year and that was 'God is our Refuge' (Ps. 46). We claimed this as God's promise for us, and the Lord remained faithful to us all these months. All academic activities were switched to online mode, using Google Classroom and Zoom for lectures, chapel, and counselling and pastoral care group meetings. We also provided the necessary training for teachers and staff.

The admission process was conducted completely online, and we admitted 88 new students for this year, our maximum capacity. All campus life and programs were shifted to online, which was a difficult task, but by July we were ready to go fully online for this academic year. Now that mode is continuing and there is an excitement. In some locations, students have Internet connectivity problems, so we send them recorded lectures.

OC sent an increased amount of scholarship funding. We gave full scholarships to 14 deserving students and partial scholarship to 16 others. I want to give OC and the donors a big thank you.

Prayer Requests:

Pray for students who are unable to attend online classes due to connectivity problems • Financial needs of 30% of our students who are unable to afford online classes • Covid is on rise in rural India, and so pray for God's protection • Pray for the income of the college. Churches are not meeting, so the income in churches is less. They are finding it difficult to support their students • Before the end of this academic year, we wish to have a few months of on-campus learning and mentoring.

SHALOM BIBLE SEMINARY (SBS)

INDIA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Divinity in Youth Ministry & Family
- Master of Theology in Practical Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

204 Students

THE SLOW, PAINFUL UNCERTAINTIES OF LIFE UNDER THE PANDEMIC HAVE PARALYZED LIFE ON A GLOBAL SCALE. INITIALLY, WE LIVED UNDER A CLOUD OF GLOOM. HOWEVER, I WANT TO PUT THE PANDEMIC IN A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE - TO COUNT ITS BLESSINGS.

With the sudden lockdowns, we had just a few hours to send our students scrambling across borders that were soon to close. With great difficulty, they safely reached home. Trusting our students into God's able hands took new meaning.

"We will wait for normalcy to return," we thought, to conduct our final exams, and also our entrance exams for prospective new students. When that did not happen, we resorted to open book exams, and everything went well. For the first time, local church pastors and our alumni helped to conduct entrance exams remotely. The new candidates were interviewed via Zoom and video calls. And, this year was our largest intake on new students!

We also had to prepare to teach online, a new educational mode for us. Fortunately, we received much help from colleagues and others. And, now our students are enjoying the novelty, and teachers have zealously taken to the new way of teaching.

On campus, where all the staff and faculty lived, we got to appreciate the natural bounty during the lockdown food scarcity. Our Shalom community foraged for food in the jungles around our seminary. We also tilled the land around our backyards to grow vegetables.

With the pandemic restricting gatherings for church services, we adapted to online preaching to encourage our community members. This pushed us to become innovative in video and audio, a path many of us would not have learned unless compelled.

I wonder if God might have brought about the pandemic to revitalize our Shalom community. Indeed, we have learned to trust Him in many new ways and seen His blessings. We thank God for leading us faithfully thus far. All glory and honor to our God!

TYRANNUS BIBLE SEMINARY (TBS) INDONESIA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Certificate Programs
- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

142 Students

WE ARE REALLY THANKFUL TO THE LORD FOR THE GENEROSITY OF OUR DONORS, SUCH AS OC, WHICH ENABLES THE SEMINARY TO CONTINUE OUR MINISTRY AMID THIS DIFFICULT TIME.

WE ARE EXCITED TO WELCOME NEW STUDENTS FOR OUR TWO MAIN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, 15 FOR OUR BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY PROGRAM AND 2 IN OUR MASTER OF THEOLOGY STUDIES. WE NOW HAVE 87 STUDENTS IN OUR BTH AND 55 IN MTH PROGRAMS.

The pandemic has brought significant changes to our campus. Both faculty and students are adjusting to our new online learning system. We are facing some difficulties, as our Internet connection is not always stable. Some students are living off-campus, and it is difficult for them to visit the library. Some older faculty are still learning to manage online teaching. Online teaching has also resulted in costs for Internet bandwidth capacity for both the campus and the students.

Assuming that online classes are here to stay, we are remodeling some classrooms for online teaching and learning. Four small rooms will be used for video recordings to be distributed to students, churches and partners in need, and one bigger room will be for blended learning.

The Indonesian government regulates quality standards for all schools in the country, including seminaries. Because of these requirements, one of our current needs is for the training of additional faculty at higher academic levels. The government requires seminaries to have 5 full-time trained faculty for each program of study. We have a sufficient number of lecturers, but it is essential that we train younger staff because of impending retirements. We were so pleased to receive the renewal of our government operating permit for our MTh program in August.

Please pray along with us for:

Recruitment and development for new faculty • Renewal of government accreditation for our BTh program • Coping with the effects of the pandemic: The learning progress for new coming students who cannot come to the campus • Management of online learning programs • Internet connectivity development • Development of online classrooms and blended learning facility • Revenue to support the institution. Our budget is \$22,000 per month.

*STUDENT PROFILE***ISREAL B. VILLA***MASTER OF ARTS IN PASTORAL STUDIES*

I praise the Lord for OC scholarship assistance for almost two years. This scholarship was my top prayer request after I graduated from my bachelor's degree. I really dreamed of pursuing further studies, however, my church and family are less fortunate when it comes to finances. We are full-time ministers in an independent church here in the Philippines. Somehow, I knew that the Lord would use me, even if I did not pursue further studies, but if it is His will to equip me more for the benefit of His Kingdom, then I will follow.

It is not easy to study in the Master's program, especially when everyone is affected by the pandemic. But the ATS community extended their love through their extra efforts by providing the same quality education and service even in this time. The administration, staff, and faculty are very interactive when it comes to our concerns, whether with online technicalities, or emotional, spiritual, and financial needs. When I struggle with my Internet connection our professor exerts extra effort to record the session and send the link in Moodle. And, there are online groups that I can join. It makes me feel that I have a community who cares for me.

Studying at ATS helps our church and personal growth. The training and guidance from courses like Hermeneutics, Homiletics,

and Preaching Clinic gives me more confidence to preach the gospel clearly, and I become more dependent on the Holy Spirit. The Spiritual Formation and Education courses help me to teach our church members according to their needs. All of the pastoral studies subjects are shaping me as a pastor.

Today, I am helping my church in conducting services, seminars, and events online. With the partnership of Alternative Learning System in public schools, I am also currently teaching values education to students online, sharing the story of Jesus and God's kingdom.

Again, thank you for your generosity. May the Lord bless you and gives you more strength in helping others!

“THIS SCHOLARSHIP WAS MY TOP PRAYER REQUEST AFTER I GRADUATED FROM MY BACHELOR’S DEGREE.”

ASIAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY (ATS)
PHILIPPINES



STUDENT PROFILE

NAI

BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY



My name is Nai, and I am from the Dao ethnic group. I grew up in the countryside in a godly family of rice farmers.

My parents brought me to church every Sunday, where I heard the pastor share the Bible, but I didn't know God personally. When I left home to go to high school, I stopped going to church.

I was seduced by classmates and fell into bad behavior. My life was so empty and lonely. I would wonder why I was going to school and what my life meant. But each time I had a difficulty, I remembered what I was taught as a child. I would read the Bible and began to pray, and I felt comforted and at peace. My faith in God grew stronger.

Once I trusted Jesus, my life was strangely changed. I became aware of my sins. I came to know that God has a purpose for my life. I began to love the Bible and no longer liked hanging out with my old friends.

After high school, I decided to go to Hanoi to work and live at the church. There I heard good preachers explain the Bible. I thought of my homeland where not many people hear God's Word clearly. I wanted to learn God's Word and help the people in my hometown.

I met friends who studied at Bible school who understood God's Word and were full of love and encouragement.

I knew then that Hanoi Bible College would be a good environment for me to train my character and learn God's Word.

I appreciate studying with pastors with long experience as well as extensive Bible knowledge.

After graduation I will return to my people to share God's Word. My vision is that all Dao people hear the Gospel. I pray that God would use me for His work in the future, first of all for my people and then other peoples who have never had a chance to hear the Gospel.

"I THOUGHT OF MY HOMETLAND WHERE NOT MANY PEOPLE HEAR GOD'S WORD CLEARLY. I WANTED TO LEARN GOD'S WORD AND HELP THE PEOPLE IN MY HOMETOWN."



*STUDENT PROFILE***AKASH SHRESTHA**

In the beginning of 2020 my ministry was as before: I am involved in worship ministry as a sound technician, preaching and leading fellowships. The biggest challenge was to manage my time due to my busy schedule, combining study at NEBC with ministry. But, with the pandemic, challenges came to every aspects of my life. As a Christian, I believe that God brings beauty out of the chaos, and I experienced the beauty of God in my life and ministry in various forms over the last year.

Since the lockdown was implemented all over Nepal, I could use the more time for study. With the online virtual class schedule implemented by NEBC, I could acquire more knowledge and understanding through my study.

Our local church also started to fellowship online. I coordinated with the church to set up arrangements at my home for video recording the fellowship, as there was no internet connection at my church. Now with my team each week I serve in worship, video shooting, and livestreaming our fellowship on Facebook.

After some weeks, God gave me the idea to combine other like-minded churches in a fellowship. So, I coordinated with the deacons of two other churches, Koinonia Thankot

church and Koinonia Balambu church, and we were able to do a combined fellowship every Saturday, where preachers and choir groups of all three churches work together. It came to be a good example for other churches.

With the success of the combined church fellowship, God encouraged me to coordinate a combined youth fellowship also. So, I worked with the youth leaders of three other churches, and we started a combined youth fellowship.

As I am studying theology, I have zeal to teach others. So, I started chapter-by-chapter Bible study in youth fellowship every week for two hours. My aim is to build our youth in their basic understanding of the Scripture and to prepare them for future discussions about the Bible. The next step will be to introduce theological topics as part of their Bible study.

“AS A CHRISTIAN, I BELIEVE THAT GOD BRINGS BEAUTY OUT OF THE CHAOS, AND I EXPERIENCED THE BEAUTY OF GOD IN MY LIFE AND MINISTRY...”

**NEPAL EBENEZER BIBLE
COLLEGE (NEBC)
NEPAL**



STUDENT PROFILE

HARI BANSA DAHIT

GRADUATE OF CERTIFICATE IN THEOLOGY

After graduation two years ago, I returned to my village on the Nepal-India border for ministry. The Lord quickly gave me an opening in the interior regions of Nepal.

My wife and I entered these remote hill regions through a ministry program for women, teaching them about health and hygiene. This was a subject I studied at NTC, and it is really helping us in ministry now. From our meager means we began to provide some simple medicines and basic hygiene needs to these women. This brought much attention among women, and others began to attend our classes.

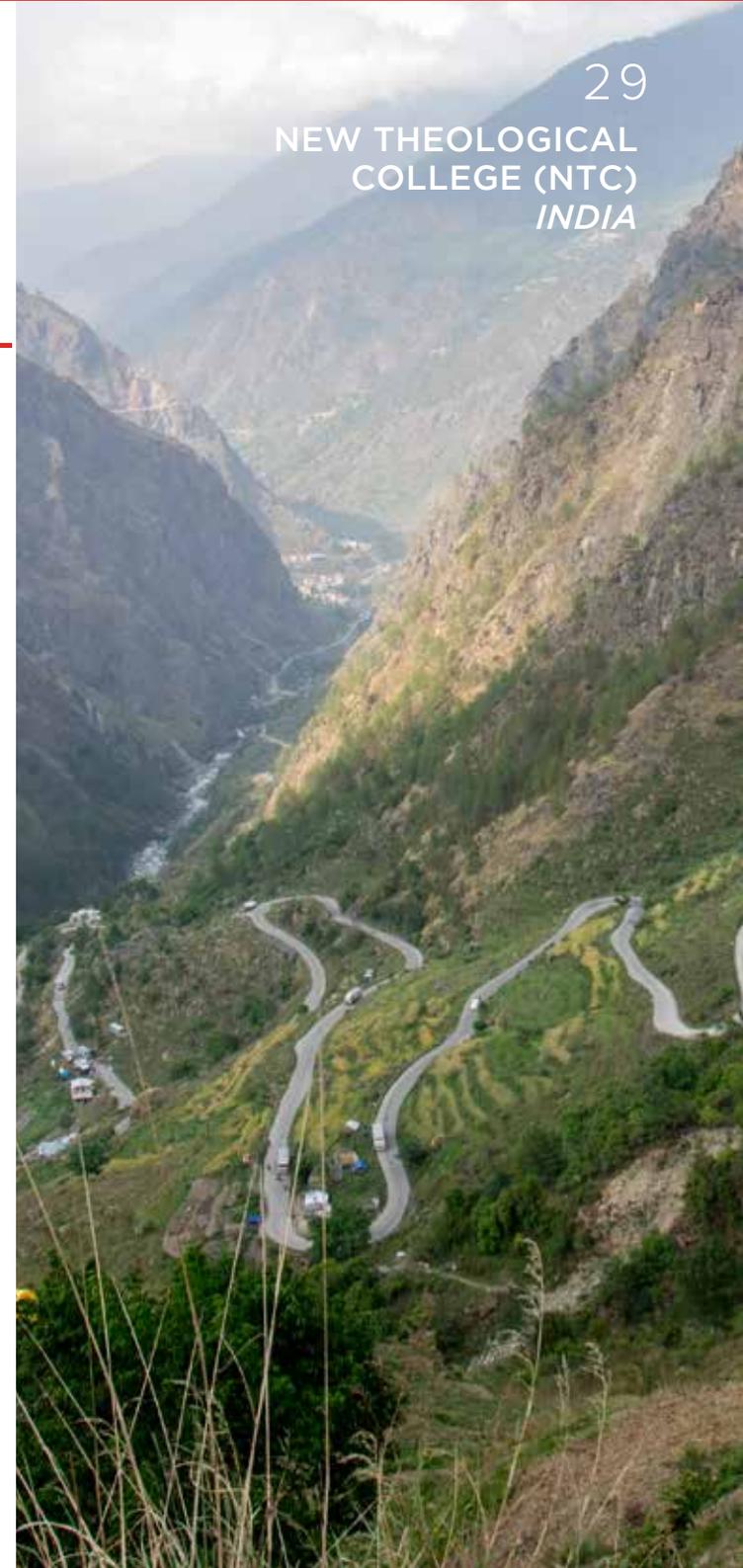
These classes then became prayer sessions where we prayed for healing and health. The Lord began to work wonders among these illiterate and poor women. A number of them experienced God's healing touch and deliverance from evil spirits. Then we began Bible study sessions. People began to see changes in their health and in their families.

As a result, a number of people expressed their desire to be baptized, and in the last two years we baptized hundreds of people. With the help of NTC's church planting wing called Christian Evangelistic Ministries, we built a few church buildings. Other gatherings continued as house churches.

I conducted revival meetings here in October. In November we conducted youth meetings where all youths of the house churches gathered. Once a month we come together for a Bible study and also a watch night service which begins at 10 pm and goes until 3 am. Believers who come for the watch night service rest here in the night following prayers and attend Bible study the following day before they return their homes in the hills. The Lord is doing mighty work in this region.

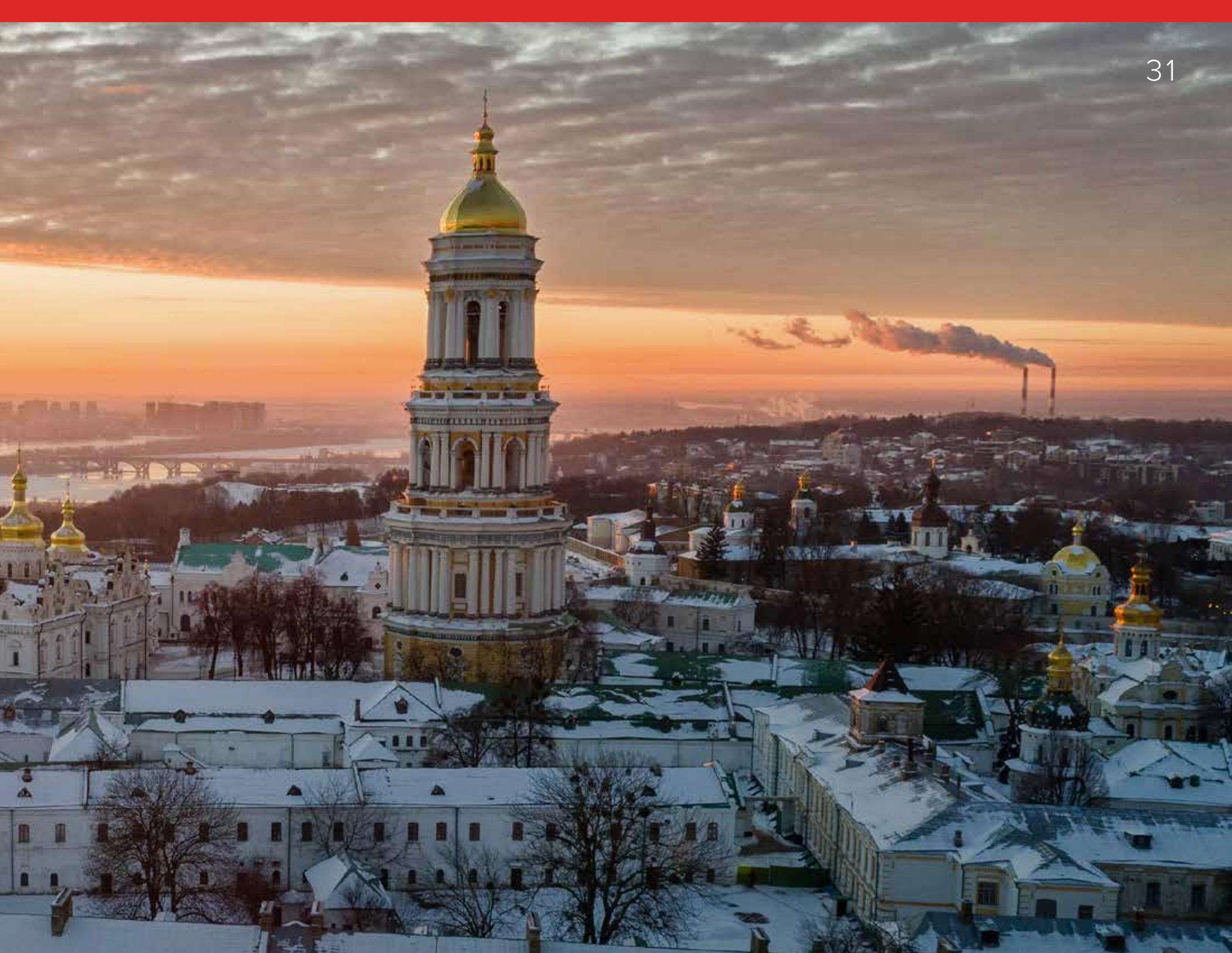
I want to thank OC for sponsoring my studies in NTC. I have a desire to study in the MDiv online. I understand that NTC will launch online classes for pastors, and I plan to do that when it starts.

**"THE LORD BEGAN TO WORK
WONDERS AMONG THESE
ILLITERATE AND POOR WOMEN."**



An aerial photograph of a city during a vibrant sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow across the sky and reflecting on a wide river. A long bridge spans the river in the middle ground. In the foreground, there are snow-covered rooftops and several churches with prominent golden domes. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

EUROPE



REGIONAL UPDATE

FROM TARAS DYATLIK

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

I would like to thank you for your faithful and ongoing support of the ministry of Overseas Council in training Christian leaders who influence and serve others out of Christ's interests to accomplish His purposes for the Church and the world.

As you may have heard in the news, a hybrid war has been taking place in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. During these six years, 13,500 people have been killed; more than 31,000 people wounded; and about 1.5 million people have been forced from their homes in addition to the more than 600,000 who have emigrated to other countries out of the conflict zone. In response to this tragic situation, together with the Mennonite Central Committee, I am assisting as a workshop leader in the training of local pastors at the front line in peacebuilding, helping them to learn how share the Gospel and be agents of peace in this context. More than 50 pastors have been trained so far, and we plan to teach even more the next year. One of my goals is to multiply our training by helping to establish a training program at the masters level in one of our partner seminaries. This program would train a half-dozen individuals each year who would then



train Ukrainian pastors with the biblical understanding and practical skills of peacebuilding.

We would appreciate your prayers for peace in Eastern Ukraine, and that we will be the agents of the Prince of Peace among so many thousands of suffering people in that region. I also have a personal request. Pray for my son, Nazar, and his wife, Di, that they might accept Jesus as their Savior, especially as they struggle with Covid right now. Among many other needs, this is our priority prayer.

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (EST) *POLAND*



EST STUDENT TESTIMONIES



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Academy of the Third Age
- Institute of Church Development
- Bachelor of Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

51 Students

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OVERSEAS COUNCIL FOR YOUR FAITHFUL SUPPORT, PRAYERS AND ENCOURAGEMENT. GOD HAS OPENED UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES, AND OC HAS BEEN A GREAT PARTNER IN HELPING US GROW AND HAVE AN IMPACT ON MANY LIVES. EST IS THE ONLY PROTESTANT SCHOOL ACCREDITED BY THE POLISH GOVERNMENT, BUT WE ALSO OFFER MANY NON-FORMAL PROGRAMS, SERVING ALMOST 20 DENOMINATIONS AS WELL AS OUR COMMUNITY. LAST ACADEMIC YEAR WE SERVED MORE THAN 4,400 PARTICIPANTS IN VARIOUS PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS.

Last academic year our bachelor's program started off really well. It is the largest Protestant theological program in Poland. With the pandemic, we shifted to online classes. Actually, the classes grew to the largest class to date of new students. For this year, we will be using online technology with a mix of in-person and online participation.

Our Academy of the Third Age is for seniors and offers general courses, such as language classes, Film Discussion Club, and art therapy. With the pandemic, we trained seniors to use Zoom. The Academy usually serves about 200 seniors.

The Institute of Church Development had planned a course on public speaking for women, a project on helping people with various needs, a worship camp and family summer camp.

The School of Dialogue offers such events as a Festival of Science, Senior Days, Days of Reformation, Week of Prayer for Unity of Christians, and Festival of Protestant Culture. Our Festival of Protestant Culture typically attracts 4,000-5,000 participants.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we had to pause many of these programs. Instead, we employed creative ways to reach people: Online interviews with prominent Christian leaders, posted on the EST website • Online student testimonials • Visits with Polish pastors for encouragement, teaching and recruitment of new B.A. students.

Prayer requests:

Wisdom as we develop our online activities to broaden the scope of our ministry in a most effective way • Currently, the number of positive cases and deaths in Poland are increasing and the government has put restrictions in place to hopefully limit the spread of COVID.

KUBAN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (KECU) RUSSIA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Certificate of Counseling
- Certificate of Preaching
- Certificate of Youth Ministry
- Bachelor of Biblical Counseling
- Bachelor of Christian Ministry
- Bachelor of Youth Ministry
- Master of Church History

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

205 Students

AS WE STEPPED INTO A NEW SCHOOL YEAR HERE IN KRASNODAR (SOUTH RUSSIA), WE ARE FACED WITH BOTH UNCERTAINTY AND OPPORTUNITIES.

The pandemic has shaken foundations that seemed unshakable and pushed us to the limit. Yet in all of this, we know we can be “more than conquerors” (Romans 8:37) through Him who never ceases to love us. God is faithful, providing exactly what we needed at just the right moment.

- The Russian government education agency lost its case in court and was required to recognize the school’s right to exist. This is unprecedented in Russia, and we hope it will serve other schools that choose to stand up against “Goliath”.
- The lockdown served as a blessing in disguise, as we were pushed to move our classes online, a direction that we had only talked about earlier. The students appreciated it, as many were wondering whether they would be able to continue their studies with the lockdown.
- In September, we returned to in-person classes, thanks to easing of the restrictions. We keep all of the safety measures including taking temperature, providing masks and sanitizer to students, and encouraging social distancing.

Please pray for us in this new school year.

For the health of our KECU community. Several people have tested positive. Thankfully, all have either recovered or are in the process of recovery. The risk of getting the virus is still high • For wisdom in managing the school finances given the unprecedented circumstances. A large part of our revenue came from leasing facilities and living spaces - which is taking a huge hit with the lockdown • For a clear vision of what’s next for the school in light of the pandemic.

Thank you so much for faithfully continuing to invest in the Kingdom by supporting the work of theological education in Russia! We are very grateful that, in spite of the hardships you face on your side, you have continued to give. In many ways the pandemic has brought the “givers” and the “receivers” a lot closer. Let us know how we can be praying for you!

ODESSA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (OTS) UKRAINE



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Bachelors Programs
- Master of Biblical Preaching
- Master of Biblical Studies
- Master of Christian Education
- Master of Pastoral Ministry

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

170 Students

UNSURPRISINGLY, LAST YEAR WAS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS ONES. IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TEACHING IN THE PANDEMIC WE QUICKLY SHIFTED ALL OUR CLASSES TO DISTANCE EDUCATION. THIS CHANGE EXPOSED SOME CHALLENGES: AN UNDERDEVELOPED DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM, AND THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS WHO HAVE POOR ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AND ARE UNABLE TO JOIN STREAMING DISCUSSIONS AND SEMINARS. ALL VISITING FOREIGN TEACHERS CANCELLED THEIR FLIGHTS, AND WE HAD TO GET ALONG WITHOUT THEIR HELP. BUT, THE EDUCATION PROCESS WAS NEVER SUSPENDED, AND WE DID OUR BEST NOT TO COMPROMISE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION.

Our faculty has also contributed to assisting the needs of churches in light of the pandemic. We organized and took part in online conferences and published some research materials. For instance, we addressed a new issue for the church: How are we to perform the Communion remotely? Our faculty quickly wrote “Communion Online” and shared it with pastors before the first Communion Sunday of the lockdown. We received feedback from pastors all over the Russian-speaking world, and even from immigrant churches in the US and Canada, telling us that it was a timely response to this predicament.

To address such needs and challenges of the evangelical churches in the future we are developing the Centre of Practical Theology. The Centre’s goal will be to assist Ukrainian churches as a witness in changing circumstances. This Centre will use research and publishing projects and formal and non-formal programs to foster a generation of reflective practitioners who will engage the challenges of their context.

Looking back at the history of the partnership with OC, we thank the Lord for His blessing to grant us with true and faithful friends. Thank you very much for supporting us at all times and during various challenges. Because of your help we have trained a large number of students who now make a difference in churches and society.

We would appreciate if you would pray:

For the new students and continuing enrolment process • That the seminary could deal properly with the challenges of the new year in quarantine • For stable and sufficient funding for our school.

TRIVELIUS INSTITUTE (TI) *BULGARIA*



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Counseling
- Master of Spiritual Formation
- Master of Logotherapy

WITH THE COMING OF THE PANDEMIC, LIKE ALL THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN BULGARIA, ST. TRIVELIUS INSTITUTE WAS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON SESSIONS FOR THREE MONTHS.

For several years we have discussed the need to provide online training. Now, we needed to quickly shift to online, and not just for a few classes, but for the whole program. This was a challenge for both students and professors. To prepare materials for online and to record the video or do a live video class is different than teaching in-person.

But, God opened our eyes to see the need of education from a different angle. With His help we moved 70% of our classes online and continued to train Kingdom workers for the church and community in Bulgaria.

Our goal for this year is to continue developing the online programs. We will also be experimenting with hybrid classes (combining in-person and online training), as we believe students need character formation more than anything else – and this is best done in-person and in community.

This new reality has actually opened the door to reach to a new target group of students - young urban professionals who are willing to spend time online to advance their Bible knowledge.

In September we started the new school year with the BA in Theology and two MA programs in Counseling and Spiritual Formation. We now have the highest enrollment in the last five years. We have also launched a new program, the MA in Logotherapy, which will open the doors for graduates to enter a new segment of Bulgarian community.

We are deeply thankful for the support from OC we received during this time, as it enables our students to grow in knowledge and passion for sharing the Gospel.

We appreciate your prayerful support:

To have wisdom in the future months how to respond to changing pandemic realities • For our graduating students and their ministries in local churches and communities • For the health of our staff and families • For government accreditation of St. Trivelius Institute by the end of 2021.

UKRAINIAN EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (UETS) UKRAINE



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Bachelor of Theology
 - Focuses in Music, Christian Ministry, Messianic Theology, Missiology, Practical Psychology
- Master of Leadership
- Master of Urban Missions
- Master of History
- Master of Psychological Counseling and Trauma Therapy
- Master of Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

550 Students

UETS IS AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL SEMINARY IN KYIV, UKRAINE. WE EQUIP CHURCH LEADERS FROM UKRAINE, CENTRAL EUROPE, AND CENTRAL ASIA IN THEOLOGY, COUNSELING, MUSIC MINISTRY, LEADERSHIP, AND MISSIOLOGY.

This year, with the lockdown and the departure of our residential students, we immediately launched online learning. Now, we see new possibilities for distance learning. We have already launched our first fully online program, Foundations of Mission and Church Ministry.

The lockdown was the major event last academic year, but there were other significant events in our ministry to the Church.

- Our Theology for Life conference demonstrates how theology is applicable for all people, even those not involved in professional ministry.
- A woman's conference helped women understand how they are part of God's mission. There is an urgent need to invest in women's ministry, and we want to continue to contribute to this.
- We had one of our largest graduations this year - over 100 graduates. In addition, fifty church leaders at a regional school in Central Asia completed a diploma program.

In September, we started a new academic year, in-person. This year we have over 150 new students. It is amazing, but we have more new students compared to last year.

Financially we are not doing extremely well due to the pandemic. We are thankful to all our partners who have been supporting us. Your support through the Stabilization Fund was crucial for us. I just have no word to explain how grateful we are to you and to all of your partners who supported us.

This was a tough season for me as the UETS president. I was very encouraged by calls and emails from Taras, the OC Regional Director. It was clear to me that we are not alone, that we have friends who are staying with us and trying their best to help.

Continue praying for us:

For the health of our students, faculty and staff; financial stability of the seminary; and ministry of our students, especially near the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and in closed Muslim countries of Central Asia.

*STUDENT PROFILE***ARTHUR AND MARIA OVOD***CERTIFICATE IN BIBLE COUNSELING*

We both graduated from KECU in 2018 with Certificate in Biblical Counseling. Later that year I was ordained as a pastor and, together with my wife, we have been serving a church in Novorossiysk. Our ministry includes helping families and young people, working with church elders, teaching and preaching, baptisms, discipling, and, of course, counseling.

Our studies have been a great blessing and helped us prepare to serve in full-time church ministry. We regularly counsel both individually and as a husband-wife team (especially when counseling couples). There are many testimonies of God's work in the hearts of His children. In the short time that we've been counseling we've served people with addictions, depression, sexual sins, fears and marital problems. The KECU counseling program equipped us to become better qualified counselors, competent to counsel people with various issues.

Even in my preaching I use principles garnered while studying counseling which are useful for teaching and instructing the congregation.

Since we have received so much in our studies at KECU, we continue to encourage and send other folks from our church to study counseling at KECU. In our view, this is one of the most practical programs to help people to resolve the most complex and deepest heart problems. It is both academically rich and practically sound.

We are excited to see the real changes taking place in our church members because of our counseling studies. We are very grateful to you, as scholarship donors, for having made our studies possible and allowing us to study as a couple. As we see, this has turned out a blessing both for us and for our church.

“THERE ARE MANY TESTIMONIES OF GOD’S WORK IN THE HEARTS OF HIS CHILDREN.”

KUBAN EVANGELICAL
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (KECU)
RUSSIA



STUDENT PROFILE

MARAT ASANOV

UETS REGIONAL SCHOOL

I came to know the Lord in a miraculous way. When my wife gave birth to our first child, she left home for six months. With the birth of our second, she fled again, this time for nine months. I used to beat her and hang out with my friends for several days at a time. However, one day in 1995, my life underwent drastic change. I was at home alone, drinking tea and listening to the radio. All of a sudden, I was seized with fear. Having felt God's presence, I fell on my knees and cried for half an hour. Then, my heart was filled with incredible peace and joy.

We endured serious hardships because of our conversion. When my wife and I came to know Christ, my parents renounced me. In their eyes we became traitors of the Muslim faith and "contagious" societal outcasts.

Currently, I am involved in pastoral ministry. I serve at the church in the city of Kara-Balta which has around 100 people. We also have affiliated churches in five villages. I also regularly participate in mission trips to different parts of Kyrgyzstan to hold two or three day seminars at our partner churches. In this way, we raise up new leaders.

As our church consists primarily of former Muslims, we focus on explaining the grace that was unknown to them before. We also

show Christ's love by cleaning up public places and helping elderly people and disabled children.

My studying at the seminary helps me grow spiritually. Today, I perceive the Scriptures differently. The knowledge I have gained at the seminary has equipped me to conduct seminars on the rights of the believer and his role in Muslim society. We go to different churches and share with Christians important information about our constitutional rights. I believe this is only the beginning. Lord willing, we'll keep on studying, and He will open new doors for us.

"AS OUR CHURCH CONSISTS PRIMARILY OF FORMER MUSLIMS, WE FOCUS ON EXPLAINING THE GRACE THAT WAS UNKNOWN TO THEM BEFORE."



A man wearing a white hat and a plaid shirt is shown from the side, tending to a young coffee plant in a field. The background features rolling green hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. The text 'LATIN AMERICA' is overlaid on the image, underlined with a red line.

LATIN AMERICA



LATIN AMERICA

REGIONAL UPDATE *FROM JOSUÉ FERNANDEZ REGIONAL DIRECTOR*

“In heaven there is not panic, but perfect plans.” This is what I heard from a friend as the pandemic started. Suddenly all our plans were cancelled. But, the Lord showed us clearly that everything was under His control in His plans.

For instance, for many years OC has held Institutes for Excellence workshops for seminary leaders. We’ve touched various themes to help our partner schools provide quality theological education. One theme frequently touched upon has been the role of Internet technology in the future of theological education. Some schools, like the South American Theological Seminary (Brazil), became a 100% online school, now with more than 2,000 students. Other partner seminaries developed very strong departments of online education. As a result of the Institute for Excellence and the development of online education, many of our partners were able to quickly and effectively shift to fully online training with the changes forced by the pandemic.

More recently we saw something similar in Cuba, a country with poor Internet infrastructure. In the last three years OC has provided over



\$30,000 to establish five “Internet Access Centers” across Cuba for seminary students, professors and pastors to have access to good Internet in order to take classes and do research. Then, in early March, as the pandemic unfolded, we were already scheduled to provide training for Cuban seminaries on how to provide good online theological education. This was the first time this kind of training had been made available – just in time for the pandemic. More evidence of God’s “perfect plans”.

Your prayers are very important for us in order to continue being the leading voice in the region to guide seminaries in finding new strategic beginnings for the future, just as we have done thus far.

BIBLICAL SEMINARY OF COLOMBIA (BSC) COLOMBIA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Program of Christian Worldview & Ethics
- Non-formal programs
- Bachelor of Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

1,409 Students

THE HEALTH AND ECONOMIC EMERGENCY CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESULTED IN CHANGES THAT AFFECTED OUR OPERATIONS IN 2020 AND WILL CONTINUE TO AFFECT US UNTIL AT LEAST 2022. AT THE SAME TIME, IT HAS POINTED TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT.

Some of the immediate impact included: Changing to online education for our residential students and non-formal courses • Discounting tuition fees (20%) in order to retain students. The result was a low dropout rate • New students for our residential B.A. decreased, but not in our online program • Reductions of income from the use of our facilities (dorms and meeting spaces for church events), student fees from non-formal programs and conferences, and married students getting behind in their rent • Increased expenditures for sanitary provisions.

On the other hand, the challenges of the pandemic offered opportunity to grow. Our staff have demonstrated dedication, flexibility and creativity, as all had to adapt to remote work. Our weekly online chapel time has brought together students from the residential and on-line degree programs, faculty living in five different countries, staff and board members around biblical reflection and prayer. Members of the community have made a significant financial contribution by standing in for absent employees or by foregoing part of their salary to contribute to the financial viability of the institution. We have found new ways to support the church through technology-mediated non-formal courses. This may turn out to be a whole new scenario for future ministry to the church.

And, there are still more opportunities for us to grow, improving Internet connectivity on campus, expanding the reach of our non-formal offerings through remote classes and collaborating with other institutions of theological education through our online courses.

We are deeply grateful for support given through OC to make possible the tuition discount for all students in degree programs and assistance in our operational costs.

Please pray with us for:

Wisdom as we prepare to return to in-person teaching in January 2021 • Travel safety for faculty who will be returning to Colombia to start the 2021 school year • Protection from contagion for students, faculty, staff, and their families • Provision for changes in disinfecting stations necessary to return to face-to-face classes.

We are including just one picture, which illustrates one of our responses to the pandemic: the use of masks among campus residents and encouragement to pastors to do the same as they care for the flock of God.

EVANGELICAL SEMINARY FOR PASTORAL EDUCATION (ESEPA) COSTA RICA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Additional Certificate Programs
- Bachelor of Apologetics
- Bachelor of Bible
- Bachelor of Christian Studies
- Bachelor of Intercultural Studies
- Bachelor of Pastoral Ministry
- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Biblical Exegesis & Pastoral Leadership

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

235 Students

AS WITH MANY INSTITUTIONS, 2020 HAS BEEN A DRAMATIC YEAR HERE AT ESEPA SEMINARY. OF COURSE, WE HAVE SUFFERED THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE ALSO EXPERIENCED A NUMBER OF OTHER CHANGES.

When Costa Rica closed down, we were forced stop having in-person classes on our campus. However, in 2019 we had begun developing a way to offer courses through Zoom that would allow students to attend and participate in live classes via the Zoom platform. The Lord used this to help us smoothly transition totally over to Zoom in 2020 during the pandemic. As a result, we did not have to cancel any of our classes this year. In terms of student numbers, while we have not shrunk, ESEPA has not grown during this time. We remain steady at about 235 students across all our programs.

One of the areas we have focused on is maintenance of our facility. Recently churches were allowed to start meeting in-person again, and several came to us to see if they could rent space from us. The Lord has been gracious, and we have been able to generate some additional income for the seminary which we are using for maintenance and improvements.

We are grateful the Lord for his generous provision through your gifts. We would have had a very difficult time if it had not been for the very generous scholarship funding that we were able to pass along to our students. Thank you for thinking of the Lord's work in Latin America and for your participation in the preparation of Latin American pastors and scholars.

We would love for you to pray for us and this ministry:

You can pray that our students would be able to return to campus soon • Pray for this time of transition between seminary presidents and for God's direction for the board and those of us in leadership • Finally, pray that God would continue to bring new students and allow us to grow.

We would love to have a greater impact across Costa Rica and Latin America.

INTERNATIONAL FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (FIET) ARGENTINA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Certificate and Diploma Programs
- Bachelors Programs
- Masters Programs

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

2,000 Students

ARGENTINA EXCEEDED 200 DAYS OF QUARANTINE IMPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT - THE LONGEST IN THE WORLD. THE STRICTNESS OF THE QUARANTINE VARIES BY REGION. HOWEVER, FREE MOVEMENT AROUND THE COUNTRY IS LIMITED AND LOCAL AIRPORTS ARE CLOSED. THE NUMBER OF INFECTED PEOPLE GROWS DAILY AND, UNFORTUNATELY, ALSO THE NUMBER OF DEATHS DUE TO COVID. IN POLITICS, THE COUNTRY IS ADRIFT WITHOUT AN ENCOURAGING COURSE FOR THE FUTURE. ECONOMICALLY, THE GDP REGISTERED A FALL OF MORE THAN 30%. BUSINESSES HAVE CLOSED COMPLETELY; SMALL INDUSTRIES HAVE GONE BANKRUPT; AND COMPANIES ARE SELLING THEIR ASSETS AND LEAVING THE COUNTRY. THE SITUATION IS VERY SAD AND CRITICAL FOR THE NEAR AND DISTANT FUTURE OF ARGENTINA.

Theological education is not a priority for Argentines in this pandemic. Many students have suspended their studies because of unemployment. Our projection for the number of students for next year is a decrease of more than half. So, for this coming year, FIET will not exceed 2,000 students in all its courses.

To get through this crisis we have also decreased our operating financial budget by half. We reduced some services (like Internet speed). We canceled additional employee services. We arranged for special payments of taxes. We agreed to partially pay essential service providers (printing, design). We canceled all the institutional advancement projects that had been arranged for 2020.

We have closed most of our in-person classes. Some study groups remain open in parts of the country with not so rigid quarantine. Most students have migrated to our online platform. For this, we have strengthened our virtual link through a web page with easy-to-use educational platforms, Zoom or video-recorded classes, a virtual store with educational resources, etc.

We thank God for your faithfulness and for the close partners in ministry such as Overseas Council. Thanks to each one of you for your contributions that have helped so many students continue their studies through scholarship gifts. And, thank you for the gifts to FIET, so that we can continue with the ministry that God has entrusted to us.

METHODIST SEMINARY OF CUBA (SEM)

CUBA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Program of Christian Education
- Bachelor of Theology

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

2,160 Students

DURING LAST SCHOOL YEAR, OUR SEMINARY WAS CHALLENGED IN MANY WAYS. LIKE OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD, THE PANDEMIC FORCED US TO FIND NEW STRATEGIES. THANKFULLY, ALL OUR BACHELOR STUDENTS WERE ABLE TO COMPLETE THIS SCHOOL YEAR. UNFORTUNATELY, STUDENTS AT THE EXTENSION CENTERS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO COMPLETE THE SCHOOL YEAR. THOUGH SOME EXTENSION PRINCIPALS MADE AN EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT TO REACH ALL THEIR STUDENTS THROUGH WHATSAPP GROUPS, IT IS SO HARD DUE TO THE INEFFECTIVE INTERNET SERVICE IN CUBA. A GREAT NUMBER OF STUDENTS DO NOT HAVE ANY ACCESS TO INTERNET, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN RURAL AREAS. ABOUT 400 STUDENTS WILL GRADUATE FROM THE DIPLOMA PROGRAM IN THE EXTENSION CENTERS, ONCE CONDITIONS ALLOW THEM TO COMPLETE THE SCHOOL YEAR.

All the graduates are serving as pastors and teachers. Some of them are now teaching in our seminary extension centers.

Before OC's ministry in Cuba, no opportunity existed on the island to earn a graduate degree in theology from an evangelical perspective. But, now, thanks to the help of Overseas Council, most of our professors have now earned a master's degree; two of them, a PhD; two professors are currently pursuing their Doctor of Ministry; and four are in their master's studies. Also, special appreciation goes to OC for training us in Online Education prior to the pandemic. I consider it prophetically scheduled, for we have had to apply many of the things we learned, adapting them to our context, for the new students in our Bachelor program.

We also appreciate OC's support to provide some scholarships every year. It means so much to us, since these students are not able to cover their own studies, and you've made it possible for them.

Prayer requests:

For the graduates to be good and effective servants and pastors • For the continuity of our seminary activities in the midst of the economic crisis our country is facing, which is even harder due to this pandemic • For the professors who are pursuing their studies.

CENTRAL AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (SETECA) GUATEMALA



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Associate Programs
- Bachelor Programs
- Masters Programs
- Doctor of Theological Education

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

800 Students

OUR HEARTS ARE FILLED WITH THANKSGIVING TO THE LORD FOR HIS FAITHFULNESS THIS YEAR AT SETECA.

We are grateful for the training programs that Josué, the OC Regional Director, has offered. Josué has also come alongside us as a mentor and encourager.

Enrollment for our last two terms has continued strong with some 800 students. All the instruction has been online since March, and both teachers and students have responded well to the change. There are challenges, particularly in the rural areas where Internet service can be irregular. However, we are grateful to hear from our students how their classes have been a help for them personally as well as for their ministries.

SETECA is training students from over 20 countries. We offer a variety of programs from non-formal education for church leaders to undergraduate and graduate degree programs including doctoral studies. Our graduates serve in nearly 40 countries on all the continents. We thank God for His blessing on the ministry of the Seminary.

Our teachers are finding new ways for students to learn and new opportunities to serve, like a program of eight short courses providing biblical orientation for families. Our Music School teachers designed a program for over forty worship leaders to help prepare and record the music for online church services.

Campus closure meant the loss of income from services which represented an important part of the budget. We are grateful for the way God has provided for the needs of the Seminary in this time of crisis through a good enrollment and increased donations from our friends. Your contribution through Overseas Council has been a significant part of that!

We are also grateful for your prayers. Here are ways you can pray for us:

Pray that teachers and students will continue faithfully with their classes, and not get discouraged because of difficulties that may come along • Pray that the teaching of God's Word will continue to produce spiritual growth and transformation • Pray for God's leading for the Board of Directors in their search for the next President.

Thank you again for your investment in God's work through SETECA. We are indeed deeply grateful

WORD OF LIFE SEMINARY (WOL) BRAZIL



PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Certificate and Diploma Programs
- Ministerial Theological Course
- Master of Ministry
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Theology and Biblical Counseling

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

533 Students

SINCE 1965, THE WORD OF LIFE BIBLE SEMINARY HAS FORMED PASTORS, THEOLOGIANS, LEADERS, EDUCATORS AND MISSIONARIES FOR THE BRAZILIAN AND GLOBAL CHURCH. OUR PROGRAMS INTEGRATE ACADEMIC FORMATION, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND THE TRAINING IN THE USE OF DIVERSE MINISTRY TOOLS UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF EXPERIENCED TEACHERS. WE HAVE AMONG OUR GRADUATES, WORKERS IN LARGE URBAN CENTERS IN BRAZIL AS WELL AS IN COUNTRIES COMPLETELY “CLOSED” TO THE GOSPEL.

This last year we praised God for some events and prayed to God for wisdom for the new challenges. One of the great joys of this last year was our graduation. We had 96 students who graduated, among all our courses. A great joy and responsibility is the six-month long internships by our students, through which we serve about 30 local churches in various ministries such as youth, children, teaching, and discipleship.

A major challenge that we are facing is the development of our online teaching platform. Currently this platform is being used to support our in-person courses. Due to the pandemic, our graduate level programs will still work fully online this year. Another challenge is the development of a basic theology course which will be completely online. We pray that God will give us the capacity and wisdom to develop this project.

Prayer Requests:

The economic and political crises Brazil and the World is facing, has its effect on the seminary attendance in every program, as well as our finances. Families and churches are deeply hurt • Please pray for our staff. Everyone is wearing more hats each year as the number of professors decreases. Pray for good health and strength for each one of us • Pray for increased enrollment of students for the next school year • Pray for the board of directors – they need God’s wisdom to make hard decision in times of crises.

We would like to thank Overseas Council for the support and development of the ministry of formation of workers for the Brazilian churches. We also want to thank all those who support Overseas Council’s ministry. Your contributions have been extremely relevant and meaningful to our students, without which many could not participate in theological training.

STUDENT PROFILE

ANDRES ROMERO

STUDENT IN BACHELORS OF THEOLOGY

My name is Andres Romero, and I'm a missionary called to China. Currently I am in Costa Rica preparing as a student at ESEPA, thanks to the scholarship I am receiving. I would like to show my appreciation by sharing my story and vision for our ministry.

Even before my mission calling began to take shape, I felt the need for additional training. However, this has been a challenge because my wife and I are also raising support for missions.

This year started out frustrating, but God had planned a step which we have been longing for. With the quarantine, ESEPA became an option for us as they made the Bachelor's in Theology course available completely online. This was perfect because the nature of my ministry requires me to leave the country many times throughout the year. With this new opportunity, I could start my studies.

But this year has been tough for our donors, and we couldn't fit the cost of studies into our budget. We began to pray. Hearing of a scholarship was the answer to our prayer. I have countless dreams and visions for our ministry, equipped with the knowledge and preparation I'm acquiring. There is a long road ahead, but I'm already using these new tools. Currently, I'm teaching English to a house

pastor in China through video calls. In this relationship I found out that even the little that I have learned and am still learning is enough to keep up with the hunger of this self-taught pastor as well as one of the church members whom I'm also discipling.

I am sorry for not using my real name due to the details shared in this letter, but I want to express my deep appreciation for this scholarship. The ability to share the Bible with this little network of Chinese church leaders is the beginning of our long-term mission.

"I HAVE COUNTLESS DREAMS AND VISIONS FOR OUR MINISTRY, EQUIPPED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND PREPARATION I'M ACQUIRING."

*STUDENT PROFILE***OMAR AGÜERO***DIPLOMA IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM*

I am a pastor of the Christian Community. I am married to Silvia with four children and three grandchildren. We live in Patagonia in Argentina.

As a presbyter of the Christian Community, I supervise the congregations in Patagonia and support pastors in their ministry tasks and in their married life. I am also in charge of three congregations with about 400 people, including a new church plant.

A few years ago, we bought a farm and are building on it a “house of refuge” for victims of family violence. This area has many migrant workers, but they dedicate themselves mostly to work and neglect their families. There is a high incidence of drug addiction, juvenile delinquency and domestic violence. No one here was working for the prevention and treatment of victims of family violence. So, we have started a project to shelter women and children and to offer them pastoral care, counseling, and legal and medical assistance.

Because of the varied demands of my pastoral ministry, I found myself in need of training. So, we started (with my wife and some team members) to study a Diploma in Leadership with FIET. The quarantine helped us focus on studying without the distractions of trips and church visits. In December we will graduate.

My studies are serving me in a very practical way to develop and guide projects, in people management, financial projection and measurement of goals. I also reviewed my spiritual life in light of God’s Word. Learning through virtual meetings with leaders of other denominations was very helpful. Though coming from different regions and each one with very different projects, we all shared one objective: Honoring the Lord, serving others, and announcing the Gospel in word and deed.

I am very grateful for the financial help you have given me through Overseas Council. All our resources are dedicated to the shelter house. Therefore, with your contribution you enabled me to study, making you part of the work of the “house of refuge”.

“MY STUDIES ARE SERVING ME IN A VERY PRACTICAL WAY TO DEVELOP AND GUIDE PROJECTS, IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT, FINANCIAL PROJECTION AND MEASUREMENT OF GOALS”

**INTERNATIONAL FACULTY OF
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (FIET)
ARGENTINA**



*STUDENT PROFILE***ORLANDO JEREZ PACHECO***BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY*

I am also a fourth-year student in the Bachelor of Theology program. The seminary has been very helpful in my training for the ministry, I give thanks to God for the people who help to support my studies, and I pray God's blessings on your lives and ministries.

I appreciate the help and financial support that OC contributes to our seminary, so I can be blessed with theological education, since I have no other way to receive training. I have been in pastoral ministry for seven years and now a pastor in a church of 300 members in La Fe, a town on the Isle of Youth, in Cuba. It is a growing church with several mission outreaches and a ministry of evangelism through baseball.

In our church we have an extension branch of the seminary to train local leaders who are in our church and other nearby churches. We already had our first graduation. Being a teacher in the extension allows me to be closely linked to the seminary. I can give from what I've been receiving. At this time, we are building classrooms for Sunday school, especially for children and youth. These will also serve as classrooms for the extension of the seminary.

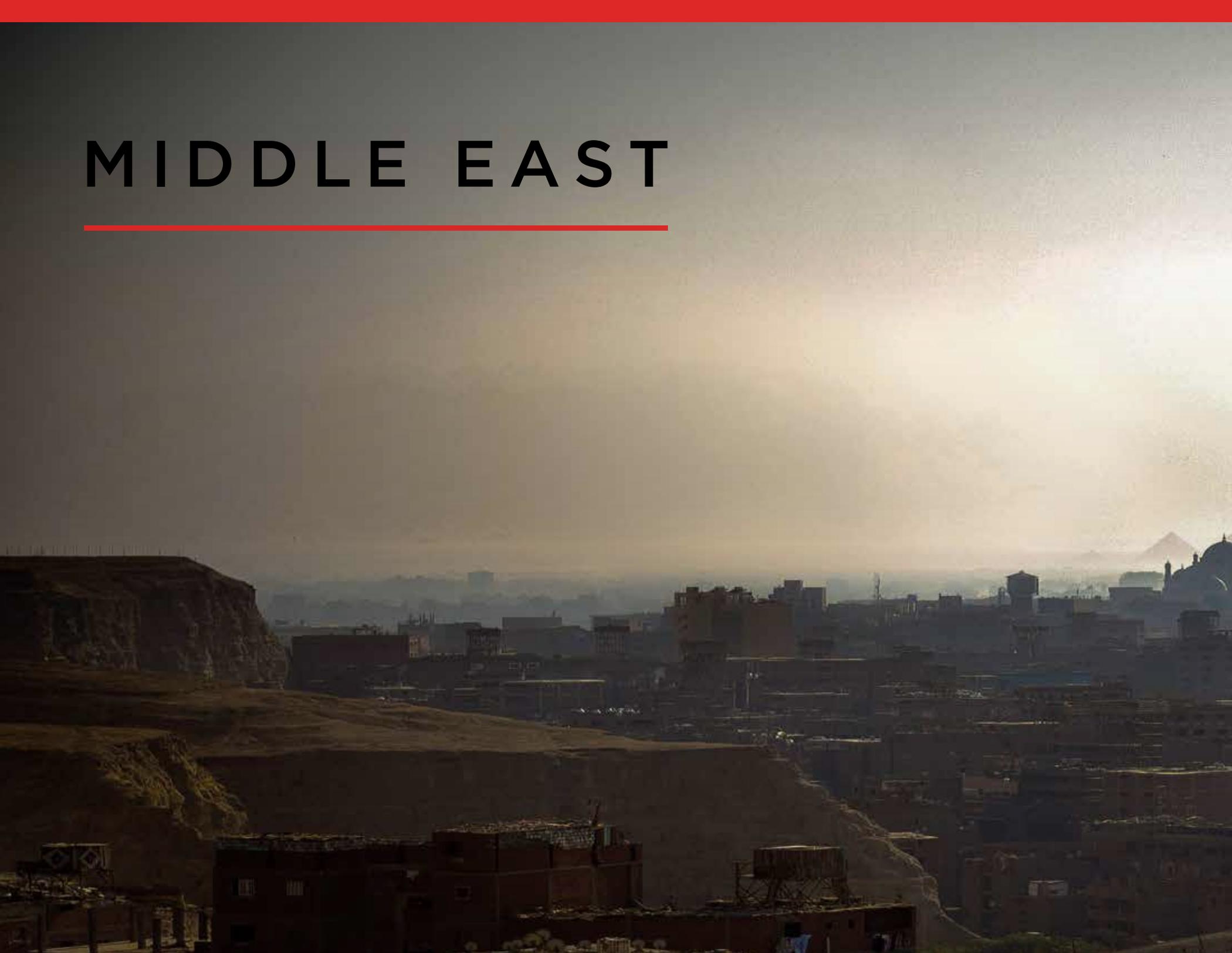
I am currently writing my thesis on the subject of a biblical teaching program for teenagers.

I am happily married and a father of six-year old twins and a little two-year old. They fill me with joy and complement my ministry because we are able to minister as a family. I thank God for the seminary and the people who, in one way or another, contribute with resources, efforts and spiritual support, so that pastors in Cuba like me can receive a quality education, and thus better serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

“I APPRECIATE THE HELP AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT THAT OC CONTRIBUTES TO OUR SEMINARY, SO I CAN BE BLESSED WITH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, SINCE I HAVE NO OTHER WAY TO RECEIVE TRAINING”



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



PROGRAMS OFFERED

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

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

192 Students

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.

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.

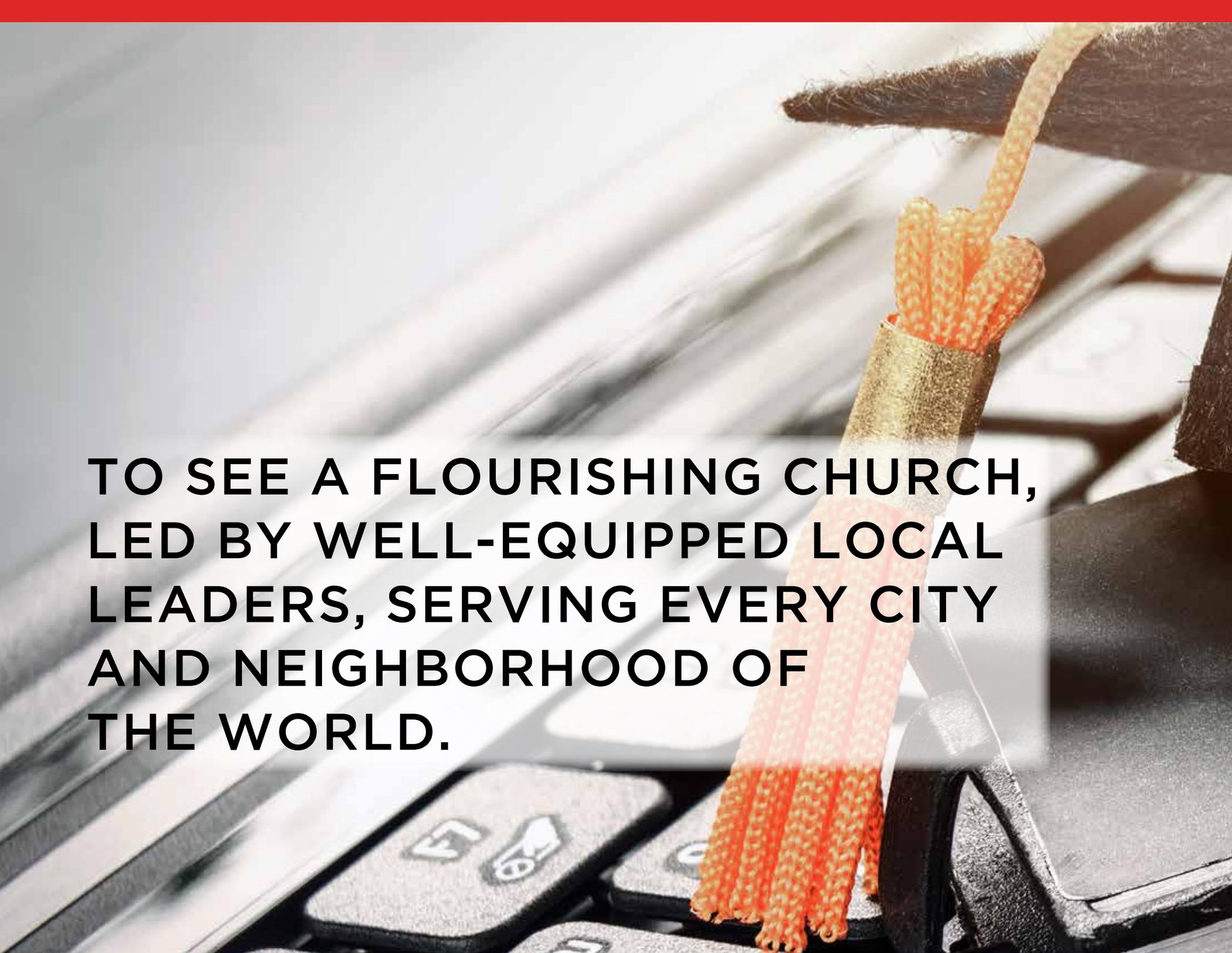
My purpose in joining the Nazareth Evangelical College was to develop my biblical knowledge, theological foundation, and critical thinking. I'm already using these tools with those I'm serving, especially at church and in ministry with students.

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.**



Overseas Council
205 Regency Executive Park Dr, Suite 430
Charlotte, NC 28217

Please Send Donations to:
Overseas Council
PO Box 602002
Charlotte, NC 28260-2002 USA

overseas.org