



# FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND

## FACTS AT A GLANCE

### PRINCIPLE PURPOSE AND MISSION

Founded in 1994, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) was created and established by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land to help stem the Christian exodus from the region. Through numerous humanitarian programs and projects, the FFHL is working tirelessly to provide the needed incentives for the Christians to remain in their land.

### THE CHALLENGE

Today there are approximately 150,000 – 160,000 Christians living in the Holy Land. Due to severe political and economic hardships, an estimated 300 Christians families leave the Holy Land each year. This steady emigration suggests that one day the Christian community and the Christian church may cease to exist in this part of the world. As the Christian population struggles to survive in a volatile political environment of ethnic distrust, the FFHL uses every available resource to help the poor and unemployed to meet their needs.

**Church leaders predict that if the current exodus continues, Christianity could easily cease to exist in the Holy Land within 50 years.**

One of the solutions to this problem has been providing financial assistance towards higher education which eventually leads to economic advancement. We believe that our University Scholarship Program is the cornerstone of the solution.

### UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The program initially aspired to award 75 full scholarship grants. Since 1997 the FFHL has given full university scholarships to over 350 students who were economically marginalized but had strong academic talent. The Franciscan Foundation pays for 4 years of college including tuition and books. Hence, through the generosity of Christians in the U.S., FFHL is holding the 'educational doors of opportunity' open for the Christian community in the Holy Land.

### PROGRAM GROWTH

Since 1997, FFHL has given over \$6 million in both university scholarships and special educational grants to marginalized Christian students. The current graduation rate is approximately 95%.

### MOST POPULAR FIELDS OF STUDY

- Business Administration
- Accounting
- Medicine
- Engineering
- Pharmacy
- Law



### OUR SPIRITUAL HOMELAND AT RISK

#### Population in the Holy Land (2016)

Israelis:	6.34 million
Moslems:	4.75 million
Christians:	150,000 – 160,000

In the 1950's, indigenous Christians represented 25% of the population. Today, Christians account for less than 2%.

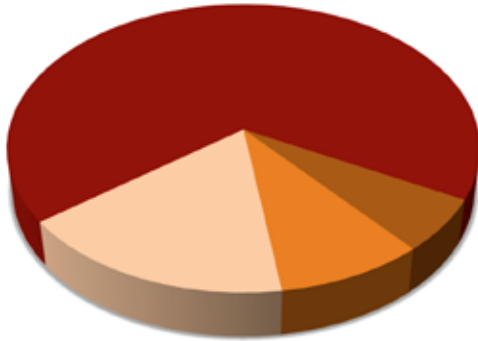
- **Jerusalem:**
  - ~ 1945 – 31,300 Christians
  - ~ 1967 – 24,200 Christians
  - ~ 2016 – 15,000 Christians
- **Bethlehem:**
  - ~ 1946 – Christians 70%
  - Moslems 30%
  - ~ 2016 – Christians 10%
  - Moslems 90%

## FINANCIAL BACKGROUND

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is principally supported by Individuals, Benefit Dinners, Religious Organizations, and other Public Relations Efforts.

## SOURCES OF SUPPORT

- Individuals
- Public Relations Efforts
- Religious Organizations
- Benefit Dinners



## The Economic Landscape

- The majority of Palestinians live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Most of the Christians living in the Holy Land are of Palestinian decent and are severely handicapped by the political side effects of aggression on both sides of the Moslem-Israeli conflict.
- Politically motivated “closures” to Israel proper have had a strong negative impact on the Palestinian economy which directly affects the local Christians. Millions of dollars in revenue are lost every day within the West Bank and Gaza because Israel controls all the borders, preventing imports and exports from coming into or out of those regions.
- Income:
  - ~ Israelis in the Holy Land – average income is \$28,000- \$30,000 per annum.
  - ~ Palestinians in the Holy Land – average income is \$5,000 -\$6,000 per annum.
- 75% of Palestinians live below the poverty level (under \$3,000 per year), affecting 2 in 3 Palestinians – of which 3% are Christians.
- Currently, 64% of Palestinian men and 85% of Palestinian women are unemployed.

## FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

The focus of FFHL is to keep a Christian presence in the Holy Land by providing education, housing and employment.

### EDUCATION

- **University Scholarship and Special Educational Grants Program:** Provides funding for tuition and books for four years. Depending on the university, scholarship costs run between \$4,000 and \$6,000 per year.
- **Vocational/Trade Educational Grants:** Provides funding for tuition and books for a two year program to learn plumbing, electricity, metal works, carpentry, auto mechanics, hotel management, telecommunications and food cuisine. The two year program costs \$2,000 per year.
- **Child Sponsorship Program:** Provides primary and secondary educational financial assistance for economically marginalized families. A child sponsorship is \$3,500 funded over seven years.
- **Music Scholarships:** Provides tuition for young children who are gifted musically and wish to learn piano, violin, flute or composing.

### HOUSING

- **Housing Development Program:** Provides subsidized housing to Christian families who would otherwise be forced to reside abroad. The Franciscan Custody, with the assistance of FFHL, has already completed over 100 apartment units in Bethlehem and is planning another 120 units in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives as well as 220 units in Nazareth and Jaffa.

### EMPLOYMENT

- **Job Placement Program:** Creates new positions to employ Christians barred indefinitely from entering Israel to work in a variety of fields including administration, clerical and custodial positions in Franciscan schools, churches, parish centers and medical facilities. New jobs are also created in construction trades as FFHL housing developments are built.

### Other FFHL Programs:

- Franciscan Boys Home – Bethlehem
- Children Without Borders
- Franciscan Family Center – Bethlehem/Nazareth
- Children’s March for Peace Program
- Bethlehem Christmas Program
- Medical Assistance Program – Jerusalem/Bethlehem

