**Bethel Bible College Annual Report-2018**

Praise be to God. On behalf of the BBC Board members, staff and students I warmly welcome all of you to the 8th Bachelor of Divinity graduation ceremony of Bethel Bible College, this day. Thank you very much for graciously accepting our humble invitation and being prayerfully present to bless the occasion.

We are grateful to the Honorable Shri N. Ananda Babu, Minister for Social Welfare & Tribal Welfare, Government of Andhra Pradesh for accepting our request to be the chief guest and to inspire the graduating students to dynamically serve the church and society at large.

BBC is thankful to Rev. Scott Alan Norling for his unfailing preparedness to address the graduating students and to Mrs. Melody Norling for her involvement in encouraging them. Their ministerial journey with us is quite enriching.

Rev. Dr. P.N.S. Chandra Bose, the General Secretary of Gospel Mission of India and the President of Bethel Bible College is always in the forefront, leading and strengthening the institution. In spite of many challenges, his commitment to empower dedicated women and men, particularly from deprived section of the society, for God’s ministry in the church and society has yielded remarkable results. The 22 graduating students of this academic year and the 296 earlier graduates who are wide spread all over India and beyond the borders to bring about transformation in the life of many are the telling testimonies of his vision. We profoundly thank God for his life and ministry.

Our sincere gratitude is to the Rt. Rev. Dr. A. Rajavelu, Bishop of Vellore Diocese, CSI for setting apart his valuable time to speak to the graduating students this day. Seven students from his esteemed diocese have already completed their BD studies from BBC and three are currently pursuing their third year BD studies. Of the seven graduates, three are serving the church as pastorate chairmen and others in different capacities. We are richly blessed by the support, presence and encouragement of the bishop.

BBC is grateful to the Most Rev. K.F. Paradesi Babu, the Moderator-Bishop of Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church for accepting our invitation and being kind enough to greet all of us and specially the graduating students. AELC has always been great support to BBC. The faculty members and students from AELC are integral to the ecumenical vision of BBC.

We thank the Most Rev. Dr. N. John S. D. Raju, Moderator, I.C.M. Churches for accepting our invitation to bring greetings on behalf of I.C. M. Churches.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mahanthy, Director, A.M.G. International is a friend and well-wisher of GMI. We are grateful to him for being with us and bringing greetings. Thanks to Rev. Dr. Rakshanandam for his presence and greetings.

We thank Dr. Leela Bose, Member of the Board of directors and director of GMI Educational Institutions for her constant support and contributions to the stability and progress of BBC.

Mr. Jeevan Sylvanus, Chief Operational Officer-GMI, and Chairman- Olive Tree Creative Works deserves special appreciation. His constant financial and administrative support merits special acknowledgment. He, in fact, financially sponsors today’s entire physical arrangements for the graduation service and the ensuing dinner. His wife Dr. Raga Deepika always extends her helping hands to our students. We thank both of them for their generosity and dedication for God’s work.

Rev. Dr. Mani Chacko, General Secretary of the Bible Society of India is one of our Board Members and academic adviser. We thank him for the gift from BSI to the graduating students. Thanks to Rev. B.S. Rajasekhar, B.S.I. Auxiliary Secretary, A.P. for participating in the service.

We thank Dr. Joseph Paturi, (Trans-world Ministries) for accepting to be a Promotional Director of BBC and for supporting 25 students to cover their subsidized scholarship granted by the college.

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, USA sponsors two BD students. We thank Rev. James H. Rockey, pastor and Mrs. Lois Schaefer, USA for their commitment for theological education and assuring us their continuous partnership.

Re. Pau Za Khup and Mrs. Dorathy Khup are exploring new avenues to promote BBC and we thank them for all their efforts. We also specially recognize the friends from Finland, Norway and Russia.

We remain grateful to all the churches, organizations and individuals who sponsor and recommend students to BBC. Special thanks to Indian Missionary Society (IMS) for continuously sponsoring students from Odisha. We thank all those who in one or another way contributed to the ministry of BBC. Hearty thanks to all the other dignitaries, graduating students, guests, parents, friends, professors and BBC family.

Congratulations to all graduating students who have successfully completed all the requirements pertaining to BD degree studies and are eligible to the award of Bethel Bible College Diploma, this day. I also congratulate the recipients of special awards.

**Students, Faculty and Staff**

54 new students, including five women were given admission for BD studies during the academic year 2017-18. The session started with an opening service on the 11th June 2017. The total number of students in the BD degree studies during the academic year is one hundred thirty one.

 The dedicated service, endurance, unconditional cooperation and exemplary life of the faculty members of BBC are behind today’s celebration. They held different additional responsibilities in addition to their regular teaching schedule to ensure the smooth functioning of the college. Dr. Viju Wilson (Theology) received his D.Th. degree from the Serampore College in December 2017. We praise God for the life and witness of all the faculty Members.

We sincerely acknowledge the dedicated services of all the non-teaching staff of BBC and the student leaders who together made our life refreshing.

**Activities and Events**

BBC students organized a freshers day program on the 26th June 2016 to welcome the new students. The students felicitated the faculty members on the 5th September 2016 as a part of teacher’s day celebration.

Three of our students represented BBC in a National Consultation on “Environmental Justice: Issues and Challenges” held between 5th and 7th July, 2016 at Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore.

Two students participated in a three day Workshop on *Religion and Sexuality for Seminary Students*, jointly organized by Ecumenical Christian Centre, Aneka Trust & NCCI, in Bangalore between July 26 and 28, 2016.

One student attended a three day seminar on “Challenges to Christian Ministry and faith” organized by the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC), in HMI, Hyderabad, between 19th and 21st of November 2016.

Two students represented BBC in a conference on “*Hermeneutics from a Palestinian perspective”,* held between22nd and 24th of November, 2016 at SCMI, Bangalore.

Two students represented BBC in a writers workshop with the theme *Prophetic writings* organized by SCMI and BTESSC at Bangalore between 16th and 18th of February 2017.

We celebrated college foundation day cum sports day on the 6th November 2016 to thank God for His abundant grace and marvelous guidance upon the institution and to refresh BBC family with some games and sports. The College celebrated Christmas on 10th December 2016 before the students left for Christmas vacation.

As we are drawing closer to this academic year the student body organized a farewell program to the graduating students on the 5th March 2017. The graduating students, in return, hosted a thanks giving service on the 12th March 2017.

**New Venture (External Programs of the Senate)**

BBC has started to facilitate external theological education of the Senate of Serampore College to the members of all the churches. As a result, BBC has enrolled 142 students for Bachelor of Christian Studies and 141 students for Diploma in Christian studies during the current academic year. As on today we have 163 BCS and 152 DCS students. This became possible only with the sincere help and hard work of our dedicated external study coordinators and their study centers at …different places in Andhra Pradesh.

We are grateful to all the coordinators for accepting our invitation and making it possible to be with us today to bless the occasion. We look forward to their continuous partnership in theological education so that these programs can be extended to all parts of Andhra Pradesh.

**Graduates**

This is our thirteenth year with the BD degree program and the eighth BD graduation. BBC, till date, has prepared 296 dedicated BD graduates to serve the society and church. These graduates represented 16 different states, 20 different churches/denominations and different language groups. 66% of BBC graduates are doing pastoral ministry, 13% of them are in teaching/ higher studies (M.Th. and D.Th[4]) and 8% serve as missionaries. Others are engaged in different forms of ministry including pioneering works.

We thank God for the life and commitment of the 22 graduating students (details in the order of service booklet). They are fully equipped to serve God in all situations. It is true that we shall miss their fellowship but it is our joy that they are molded to create larger fellowship for the glory of God. We wish them God’s blessing as they step out into the wider arena of ministry with multiple challenges and possibilities.

**A Unique Opportunity**

Today’s gathering is a powerful fusion of representative/s from the government, churches and organizations in Andhra Pradesh. BBC has been offering BD degree program from the year 2005. We should have moved forward to Master and Research programs long back except for an enhanced library. If all the representatives on the stage extend your kind cooperation and share your resources towards this end BBC will soon become a Theological Research Institute in Andhra Pradesh. I am sure you will not allow this opportunity to slip away. The ways in which you can partner with us is placed in our college website bethelbiblecollege.edu.in.

Thanking You

Guntur, 23rd March 2018