

The Nazareth Center for Christian Studies



An initiative of the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel (ABCI)

The Baptist House – The Beginning

The Baptist House was paid for by the Southern Baptist Mission Board (IMB) and built by IMB (then FMB) representative, Dr. Dwight Baker in the 1950s. It first served as a residence for Dwight & Emma Baker and their four children. Dr. Baker served as pastor of the Nazareth Baptist Church, Director of Church planting and Bible teacher in Nazareth and throughout the Galilee region.



The Baptist House – The Beginning

In addition to being a residence for the Bakers, the Jim & Betty Smiths, the Ray & Rosemary Registers, the Jack and Shawn Hodges, as well as short-term IMB representatives working together with the ABCI, for 50 years the Baptist House has been a hub for different ministries reaching out to the city and region.



The Baptist House – The Story

- In the late 1990s, the IMB changed its focus and withdrew from its ministry in Nazareth and the Galilee and its partnership with the ABCI.
- In 2002, the IMB decides to sell the Baptist House for the market price of 440,000 USD + Taxes.
- The ABCI suggests that the Baptist House needs to move to the leadership of the local Baptist Churches as it was built for ministry in Nazareth and the Galilee.

The Baptist House – The Story

- Negotiations between the IMB and the ABCI come to no satisfactory conclusion.
- IMB gives the ABCI the option to buy the house for 400,000 USD + Taxes.
- Email correspondence between IMB president, Dr. Jerry Rankin and ABCI executive member, Mr. Bader Mansour reach the press in the USA in March of 2005.
- IMB gives the ABCI a deadline for purchasing the House – otherwise it will be sold in the free market.

The Baptist House – The Story

In May 2005, Dwight and Emma Baker, who served in Nazareth as Baptist representatives and were the first people to live in the house, give a generous donation of 100,000 USD for the ABC to be able to purchase the house.

Dwight (Age 86) and Emma live in Dallas, Texas.



The Baptist House – The Story

- In June 2005, the IMB and the ABCI return to negotiations. They agree that the ABCI will purchase the Baptist House from the IMB for the price of 300,000 USD + Taxes.
- ABCI pays 200,000 USD to the IMB.
- ABCI to pay the IMB 100,000 USD by June 2007.
- Taxes amounting to 60,000 USD need to be paid to the authorities in Israel.

The current use of the Baptist House

- In Christmas of 2005, after the house was renovated, it was dedicated for the ministry again.



- The House will serve as the campus of the Nazareth Center for Christian Studies and incorporating the offices of ABCI.

The current use of the Baptist House

In the last few months the Baptist House is being used for Church special meetings and hosting guests.

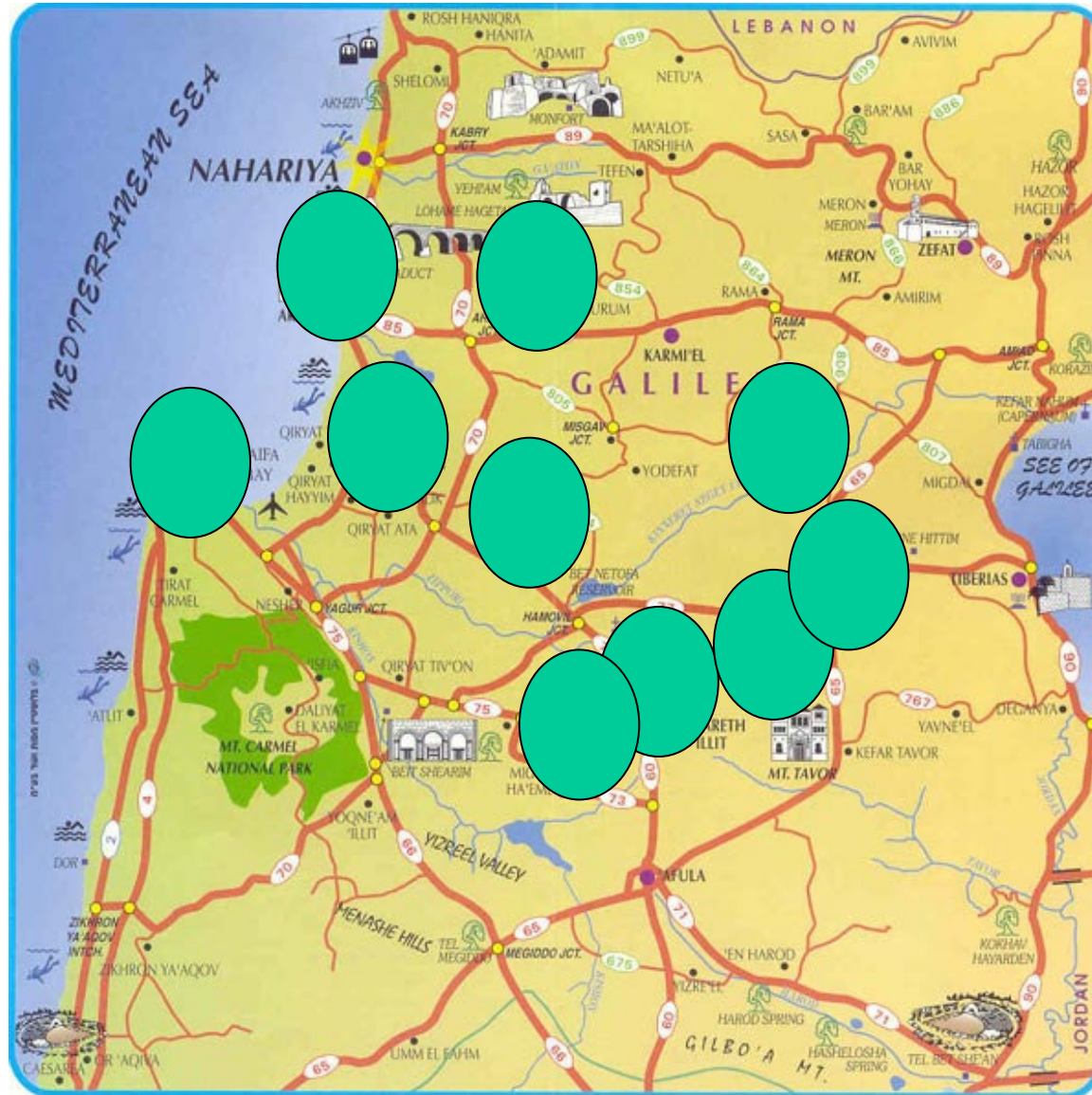


The Nazareth Center – The need



- Nazareth is the city with the largest Christian population in Israel, approximately 25,000.
- There are around 140,000 Christians living in Israel today out of a total population of 7,000,000 (2%).
- There are 5.6 Million Jews in Israel and 1.1 Moslems.
- There is a community of around 3,000 Baptists in Israel in 20 churches associated with the ABCI.
- The Nazareth Center for Christian Studies is an initiative of the ABCI.

Baptist Churches in Israel



- Nazareth
- Haifa
- Acco
- Yaffa
- Cana
- Toraan
- Eilaboun
- Shafamer
- Kufur Yaseef
- Rama

Baptist Churches in Israel

Plants

Tarsheeha

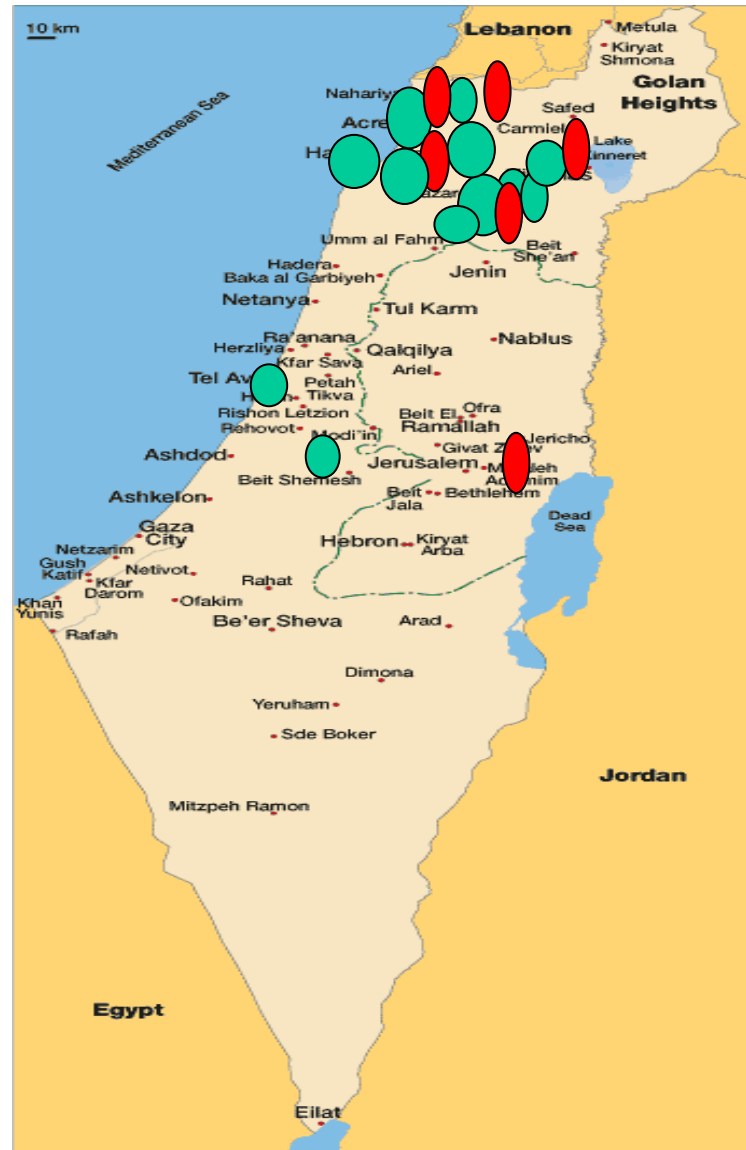
Fasouta

Beani

Taybe

Nazareth Illit

Sakhnin



Nazareth

Haifa

Acco

Yaffa

Cana

Toraan

Eilaboun

Shafamer

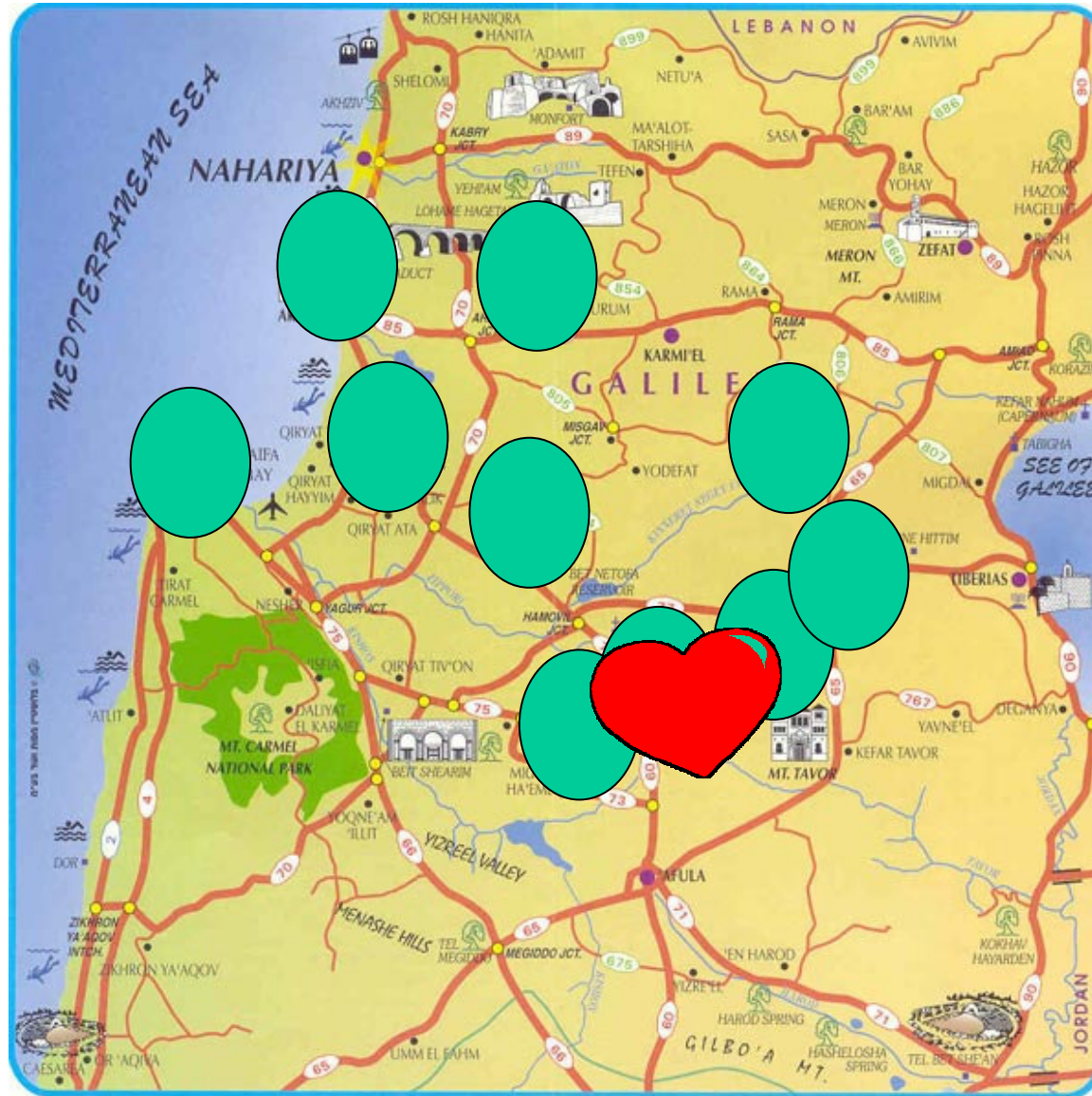
Kufur Yaseef

Rama

Tel Aviv

Ramle

The Center will be the heart of the ABCI



The Contribution to the Local Body

- To serve as a place of excellence in theological and Biblical learning which will help equip leaders of the local congregations and ministries.
- To be a center where ABCI leaders can meet for strategic planning for the strengthening of the ministry, reaching out to the lost and planting churches.
- Promote unity, provide resources, and encourage cooperation among churches.



The Contribution to the Larger Body

- The center will be open for visitors from around the world who are visiting the Holy Land including church groups, students, pastors on sabbatical and others.
- Visitors to the center will be able to study Bible, theology, reconciliation, Hebrew, Arabic, the Middle East, and Islam, among other topics, all from a unique viewpoint from Christians living in the Holy Land.
- The center is located in a quiet neighborhood, walking distance from major Christian sites in Nazareth. Its location is also central to other sites in Galilee which are of special interest to the Christian pilgrim.



A Unique Contribution

The character of the center and its proposed program is unique. It's geographical location in Nazareth, the hometown of Jesus, provides a unrivalled context for in-depth studies into New Testament origins and the foundations of Christianity. The underlying perspective of the center will find its focus on Biblical and theological research.



The Nazareth Center

- The ABCI has invited Rev. Dr. Bryson Arthur to head the Nazareth Center for Christian Studies.
- Bryson and May Arthur will settle in Nazareth by May 2006.



The Nazareth Center – Phases

Phase I – Jun 2005 – Dec 2006

Securing the Baptist House and beginning of operations.

Phase II – Jan 2007 – Sep 2009

Offer lectures and general courses, together with hosting different groups.

Phase III – Oct 2009 – Sep 2012

Launch the Nazareth College for Christian Studies.

Phase IV – Oct 2012 -

Getting additional buildings and facilities to accommodate expansion of the college.

Resources needed for Phase I

Total Amount needed: 400,000 USD

Amount needed for the following:

300,000 USD - Payment to the IMB.

60,000 USD - For taxes.

20,000 USD - For renovations.

5,000 USD - For furniture (A lot was donated locally).

15,000 USD - For general expenses.

200,000 USD - Payment to the IMB - already paid.

100,000 USD - Payment to the IMB - Due by June 2007.

Resources for Phase I

Total Amount needed: 400,000 USD

Amount raised so far:

100,000 USD from ABCI.

100,000 USD from Dwight and Emma Baker.

3,600 USD from the European Baptist Federation.

2,250 USD from Central Baptist Church, Bearden, TN.

1,750 USD from Hartford Baptist Church, England.

3,055 USD from other donors.

Total amount raised: 210,655 USD

Total amount needed: 189,345 USD

For More Information:

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