

Bishara Awad

Short Bio

Bishara Awad was born in Jerusalem on September 1, 1939 to Elias Nicola Awad and Huda Kuttab Awad. In 1948, during the height of the Arab/Israeli conflict, Bishara's father fell victim to a stray bullet, and Bishara became a refugee along with his mother, three brothers and three sisters. His mother managed to practice nursing and keep a family home by placing her children in boarding schools on an interim basis throughout their elementary and secondary school years.

Bishara attended Dar Al-Awlad Elementary School in Jerusalem from 1948-1954. He attended St. George's High School from 1954-1960. Following his high school education he attended Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, SD, USA from 1960-1964 and earned a BA in mathematics and a minor in chemistry. He then taught high school for several years from 1964-1970. From 1968-1970 he attended evening courses at Missouri State College and received his MA in education in 1970. From 1981-1982, he attended Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, CA for a one year, special program.

Bishara married Salwa Constandi Andria from Gaza in 1970 and they continued to live for two years in the United States, while he taught in Kansas City at Central High School. After the birth of his first son, Sami, in 1972, Bishara joined the Mennonite Central Committee as a volunteer at Hope School in Beit Jala, Palestine. He served as principal for ten years. He and Salwa had two more children, Samir, born in 1973, and Dina, born in 1977. (All of their children are married, Bishara and Salwa are grandparents to four.)

In 1979, Bishara felt led to start Bethlehem Bible College and with the support of other Christian leaders, began this ministry during evening hours at Hope School. From 1979 until the present, Bishara has served as president of Bethlehem Bible College. Today, Bethlehem Bible College is a fully accredited institution that enjoys its own campus and serves over 100 young men and women each year. Extension satellites operate in Nazareth, Ramle, and Gaza. Graduates of Bethlehem Bible College are serving their communities as pastors, Christian educators, counselors and tour guides.

Bishara has been very active in his career, in particular in the development and expansion of Bethlehem Bible College. He has traveled widely in the Middle East, Asia, Europe and the United States. He has several accolades to his credit, from being awarded the most successful alumni of Dakota Wesleyan to being awarded two honorary doctorates (Korea and Jerusalem University College). In 1999, he was the recipient of the Bob Pierce Award for Christian Service, bestowed by World Vision, International. Bishara's motto in life is four fold: (a) Faithfulness (b) Honesty (c) Service and (d) Love. He desires for Palestinians to find hope and peace in their lives through reconciliation to God and to their fellow man.