

Bulgarian Christian Student Union's Annual Report 2021



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
PARTNERSHIP WITH US**

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The director of BCSU reflects on this past year and what he has learned.

A QUICK LOOK AT 2021

See a quick summary of BCSU's work among students in 2021.

STUDENT TESTIMONIES

Read how students were impacted through this ministry.

FINANCES AT A GLANCE

See a quick summary of our finances in 2021.

70 FOR PLOVDIV

Read how you can participate with us in reaching the students of Plovdiv.



**STUDENT
MINISTRY**

www.bhss-org.com

“WHO DARES DESPISE THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?”

LETTER

from the Director

God’s temple was in complete ruins – having been destroyed by the heathen Babylonians. Years later by God’s grace, his people had returned to the promised land, but the land was not the same. The temple, which symbolically stood at the center of the nation and which was meant to display the glory of God’s good presence in the land, lied in complete ruins. Every attempt God’s people had made to begin a rebuilding project was thwarted by pressures both from within and without. From a human perspective, it looked altogether hopeless. Would God’s presence and blessing ever be known among his people again? Would the joy of the Lord be experienced again?

Times and situations are obviously different today, but in BCSU we found ourselves experiencing similar fears and doubts. With the coming of Covid and the different stages of lockdown in the country throughout the last few years, the student groups in the country struggled significantly – to our dismay a few have completely disappeared. Student leaders, who we had invested in deeply, were nowhere to be found. Though we tried reaching out to students in many different ways during this period, little seemed to work well. By June of this last year, our ministry, like the temple of Jerusalem, seemed to be in a pile of ruins.

God graciously sent a message to the prophet Zechariah for the people of Israel ([see Zechariah chapter 4](#)). Our Lord saw the ruins and yet he was not constrained by it. Out of the very mountain of rubble, the people would bring out a capstone to lay the foundations for a new temple. This would not be the works of great political power or military strength, but the work of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that brought about the original creation, saved his people from slavery, and enabled the building of the first temple, would work in new and glorious ways among God’s people to make His name known among the nations. People would see this and shout praise to God’s glory and grace among them!

Two specific ideas in this prophecy stand out to me as I have been reflecting on it and listening to it in our current situation. First, the message (vs 6-10) is wrapped in an image of an active temple-garden with lamps and trees (vs 1-5, 11-14). God seems to be saying that despite how things look with human eyes, the truth is that God’s temple presence is among His people. The people of God thought his presence required the temple; He was telling them that He was among them at this very moment. It was not the case that they had to wait for some future date or situation for Him to bless them and live among them, but that at this very moment His blessing and grace were active, alive and at work among them! God is not and will never be constrained by the things that constrain us! What good news for us these days! Despite how things look from a human perspective in BCSU, God is at work among us.

Secondly, God asks a question that cut me to the heart: “who dares despise the day of small things?” (vs 10). Do I only serve God joyfully when things look bright and fresh, when ministry numbers are good and growing, and when the budget is met? Do I understand the value of serving in the days when things are difficult and seem unremarkable? God’s invitation to us during this time was to continue to be faithful in our service despite how things looked and to see the value of our seemingly insignificant work. His word was to go back to the very basics and foundations of our ministry in one-to-one meetings, discipleship and evangelism.

It has been a season of small things in BCSU. We have lost a few of our student groups throughout the country and many of them have suffered the loss of students and student leaders in the past few years. But God continues to be good and to be at work among students among Bulgaria. God is faithful and His work is unconstrained!

Thankfully, this is not the end of the story. As you will see in the following pages, in the numbers of BCSU, we are observing that God is starting a new thing among us. Little by little this Fall we are having more and more opportunities to serve greater numbers of students. I am especially grateful to the work of our staff in Varna, where by the grace of God the Bulgarian and International student groups are growing to the size that they will have to divide this winter in order to have space for new students. In other places, like Plovdiv and Ruse, however our work needs to be replanted. We are praying for God's resurrection power to be at work in these student groups. (Please read more about Plovdiv at the end of this report.) Even more significant to me than the numbers that you will read below are the testimonies of individual students, for whom these numbers represent. These statements from various students throughout the country give witness to the fact that God continues to be at work and is bringing life to students!

I want to thank you for the important role that you continue to play in this ministry! Thank you for your prayers, letters of encouragement, and your finances which make it possible for us to continue. God is using your partnership to bless students! I also want to thank the staff team that works tirelessly and competently to bring God's good news to students in Bulgaria. More than ever this year, through their service in the "days of small things" I have admired their faithfulness, love and commitment to God and the gospel.

Mostly this report is created to give glory to God. Through it I hope that you see that God is at work and that He is good. The work of BCSU is not accomplished by might nor by power but by the Spirit of God (Zech. 4:6). As you read below, I invite you to give thanks and praise to God along with us for He is the faithful one! Because of His faithfulness, goodness and strength, we enter this new year with hope, not despising any of the days given to us to serve.

Craig Weyrens

/Director of BCSU





STUDENT GROUPS

We served in 5 cities: Sofia, Plovdiv, Veliko Turno, Ruse and Varna. With groups for international students in Sofia and Varna.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

We had around 70 committed students in these groups this fall. Altogether, we had 65 Bulgarian students and 75 international students that came to at least one event organized by BCSU throughout the year where the gospel was shared. More than 40% of these are not yet followers of Jesus and 50% are new to BCSU.

LOCAL INITIATIVES

We have organized 45 local initiatives throughout the year intended to reach out to non-Christians; and we have 14 students (a number that is growing each month!) who are meeting individually with staff or volunteers for discipleship training and mentorship.

LEADERS

16 students received leadership training this year and a growing number of students are taking an active leadership role in their groups this Fall.

We have 7 full time staff workers, 5 volunteers and 1 intern in the Barnabas program.



NEW WEBSITE

We initiated and created a new website “Come and See” (ela-vizh.net) to serve the Evangelical Union of Bulgaria which highlights the different missions and para-church organization throughout the country.

NEW VIDEO PROJECT

We started a new video project “YOU” with monthly videos to introduce today’s students to the Christian faith and answer questions that they have. [Check it out!](#)

CONFERENCES

At the beginning of the fall semester we organized a “New Beginnings” conference for Bulgarian students and a “Week-end Away” retreat for International students.



OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS PAST YEAR



NATIONAL ONLINE MEETINGS

We organized monthly national prayer meetings as well as monthly meetings for recent graduates on different topics - both online.



TESTIMONIES

“As soon as I saw that BCSU was organizing a conference in Tryavna, I felt that it would be an event that I should not miss! The “New Beginning” Conference was truly a new beginning for me! During this time, I began a deeper relationship with my heavenly Father. I was especially encouraged to let God's spirit speak to me and to listen carefully to His words. I am grateful to the BCSU team for helping me to participate in this conference and to everyone whose finances made this possible for me! “God is love” and every member of the BCSU staff team carries the loving heart of his Father! It was a blessing for me to attend the conference, and now it is an even greater blessing to be a member of one of the Bible study groups!”

- Sofia - student in Varna



“BCSU is a great blessing for me! I had heard a lot about their meetings and so when I became a student, I couldn't wait to go and experience it for myself. The fellowship I have experienced with others and with God during our times together has been a great encouragement and blessing, and the things we learn together are very useful for my spiritual development. I appreciate that what we are learning and doing are things that we can actively practice in our lives.”

- Deborah - student in Varna



“The International retreat was one of the best things to happen to me in this otherwise drab year. I was able to meet new folks and develop wonderful relationships, see a beautiful part of the country I currently call home, and learn more about Scripture in a wonderful fellowship with more people. I genuinely feel blessed to have been part of this trip and I've already started marking on my calendar the days until the next event.”

- Joel - international student

TESTIMONIES

“The seminar about how to study the Bible was interesting, useful and practical! I am sure that looking at God’s word in this way, I will be able to stay focused on the context and purpose of His message, as well as to be able to notice more details in order to form a better understanding of the passage.”

- Yoana – student in Sofia



“I have grown incredibly thanks to the weekly BCSU gatherings. At these meetings I appreciate that we are able to share our needs and problems with others, to pray for each other and to support each other. Since I have started attending the BCSU meetings, I have

seen and felt a change in my life. As we meditate on the Word and discuss together, I have received answers to many of my questions and found help with things I have not understood.”

- Natasha – student in Veliko Turnovo

“My name is Chris and I am a first year student in Sofia. Due to my busy schedule at the university this semester, I haven’t had the opportunity to attend the weekly BCSU meetings, but every week I have had the pleasure to meet with Craig to study Christian discipleship. These meetings are a blessing and a gift from the Lord. Craig approaches the whole process with a lot of wisdom and attention, and I am learning not only how to be a disciple of Christ, but also where I am in my relationship with Jesus! I have also managed to attend a few of the different events organized by BCSU throughout the semester. I can understand why many young students find this to be a pleasant and conducive environment for growing in the knowledge of God and where they find and build lasting friendships!”

- Chris – student in Sofia

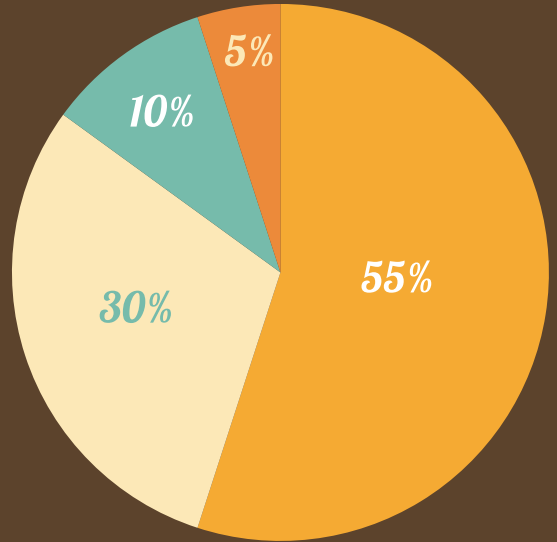




FINANCES AT GLANCE

Income:

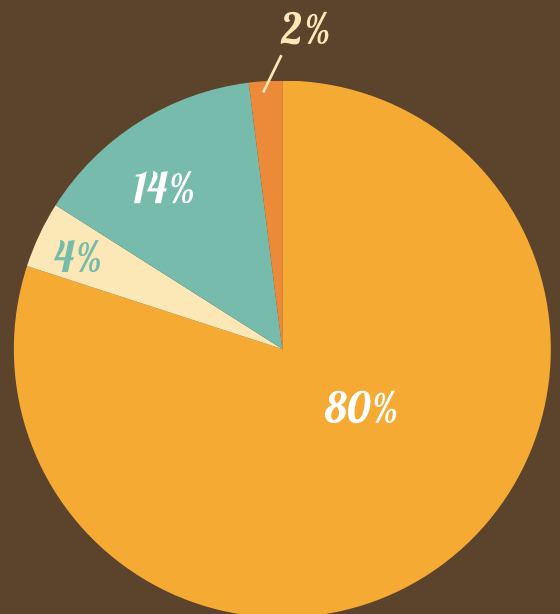
- Donation from outside of Bulgaria..... 48,660 lev
- Donations from Bulgarians and BCSU alumni.... 26,120 lev
- Grants, offerings and investments.....10,080 lev
- Project 70 3,830 lev



Total: 88,690 lev

Expenses:

- Salaries and benefits..... 64,030 lev
- Staff ministry expenses..... 3,495 lev
- Office, taxes and administration..... 11,430 lev
- Conferences and training events..... 1,220 lev



Total: 80,175 lev





Help us reach students in Plovdiv with the Gospel

Our experience in the last few years has taught us that we see the greatest fruit in our student work where we have a full-time worker. Though we have sought to minister to the students of Plovdiv from a distance and with the help of volunteers over the past few years, we believe that the time has come for us to raise funds to have a full-time worker in this great Bulgarian city. Plovdiv has more than 25,000 students and yet to our knowledge there is currently no ministry specifically seeking to reach these students with the good news of Jesus. Our desire, with the help of God, is to see a witnessing community of students formed that are growing in Christlikeness and which are learning to be His witnesses in their universities. Our prayer is that by next Fall we would be able to hire a staff worker and begin a strategic work in this city.

This is a completely attainable goal, but we need your help! In the gospel of Luke, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, saying “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2). This is certainly true in Plovdiv – where the students are many but the work among them is few. Jesus then sends out 70 of his followers to be the answer to this great prayer, as the Lord of the Harvest works in and through them to bring good news to the people.

Many of us today cannot leave and go to Plovdiv to reach the students there. But we could all be a part of sending a gospel worker to Plovdiv. It just so happens that if we could find 70 people who would give 20 lev per month or 240 lev each year that we would be able to

support the work of a full-time worker in Plovdiv. We are also seeking people who would pray for the city of Plovdiv and the students there regularly, as well as for our work among the students there and the staff worker.

We began this campaign in November of 2021 and we have been thankful for the great response we have already received. At this point we have 25 people who have joined the campaign. Some of these have given a one-time gift while others are giving monthly towards this goal. At this point we have raised almost 4000 lev or almost 25% of our budget for the first year.

Would you consider joining this team of people who will send a worker to Plovdiv? You can find out more at our site: <https://en.bhss-org.com/70>

We are grateful for your partnership in this ministry. If you have any questions about this campaign or how you can support the work of BCSU, please don't hesitate to contact us.





BCSU is a movement of students, built into communities of disciples, transformed by the gospel and impacting the university, the church and society for the glory of Christ.

FOR GIVING & PRAYER

You can give and subscribe to our prayer letters through our site:

www.bhss-org.com/give

Contact

Bulgarian Christian Student Union
13 Hristo Botev bul., apt. 8
Sofia 1606

office@bhss-org.com
www.bhss-org.com



Bulgarian Christian
Student Union