

Annual Report 2016

Letter from the Director

Dear friends,

As I sit and reflect upon all that happened in the last year in BCSU, I am filled with gratitude. I am thankful to God who has faithfully carried us through another year – a year filled with transitions, some struggles, and also many moments of celebration. Through it all, God has been faithful and has continued to make his good news known to students in Bulgaria. It has been a joy to see how our students and staff, empowered by God, have boldly and tirelessly worked to share this good news. It has been a privilege to encourage, equip and direct them as we continue to live out our calling of creating communities of disciples that bring gospel-transformation to our universities, society and churches. By God's grace we are seeing transformation happen!

But I am also grateful to all of you who have helped to make this ministry possible through your prayers and generosity. God is caring out his wonderful purpose among students in Bulgaria but he is using you as his co-workers in this ministry. As Paul so eloquently wrote:

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. (2 Corinthians 9:12-13)

As a small expression of thanks to God and to all of you, I offer this quick review of the previous year. It includes a few snapshots of how we have tried to faithfully live out our mission and the ways that God has walked with us through this year. Again, I thank you for the role that you played in this!

With warm thanks,

Craig Weyrens
BCSU National Director

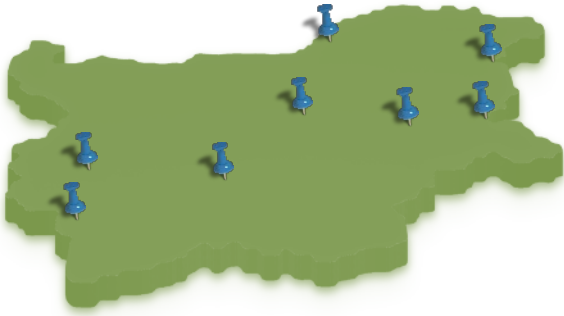


Important Facts

Student groups in

8

cities: Plovdiv, Sofia, Varna, Burgas, Ruse, Blagoevgrad, Sliven, Veliko Turnovo



Number of active students this fall:

80

(a 33% increase from last spring).



They were being formed by their studies of Christian character, the parables of Jesus, the gospels of John and Matthew, Job, and Christian discipleship.

17

Non-Christians have participated in our groups

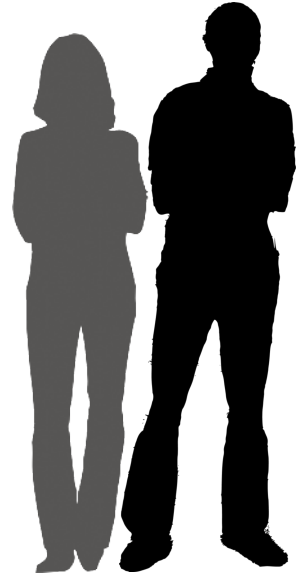


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International students we are reaching

6

full-time staff:



9

volunteers

We published:

1

Book - "Practical Discipleship"



4

issues of our online magazine "Missio Dei"

Number of student leaders:

15



National events held throughout the year:

7

- Leaders Conference,
- Forum,
- Trilogy: Mark,
- Trilogy: Revelation,
- Bible Competition,
- Summer Project,
- Mission week in Varna

Calendar and Testimonies

JANUARY

As the students were busy studying for finals throughout the country, the staff team met to plan and pray for the coming academic year.

Initial meetings were held to support the start of a new student group in Sliven.

FEBRUARY

Leaders Conference: About 25 student leaders and staff met together for a weekend of training at the beginning of March. We studied the book of 2 Timothy together and were challenged to intentionally pass on the good news to others.

Mila said: *I liked that I got to meet a lot of new BCSU people and make friendships. I enjoyed the studying process and that we got to take part in the discussions (rather than just listen to sermons).*

2nd Annual Bible Competition: Ten groups of four students took part in a very challenging and competitive Bible competition organized by BCSU.

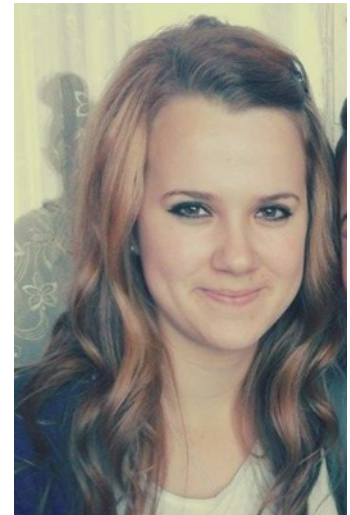
Krasi said: *Touched, changed, blessed... after two years of participation in the Bible competition, God has given me a delight for his word and for knowing Him. God has used these events to help keep me focused on Him as a student.*

MARCH

APRIL

Mission Week, Varna: During this three-day mission event students of BCSU went to the universities to lead conversations about Jesus and His parable of the Prodigal Son. They also invited them to the night events where the good news of Jesus was presented in talks and films.

Sevda said: *This was an exciting event for Christian and non-Christian student alike. Each Christian student who participated got to taste a little of what it was like to be Paul and to carry the good news to the unsaved. I realized how precious is the human soul and the need for Jesus in the lives of each person.*



MAY

BCSU published *Practical Discipleship* – a workbook used for mentoring groups to help them grow as disciples of Jesus.

JUNE

Students again were in finals and the staff team prepared the last details for the student camps and conferences.

JULY

Trilogy: 15 students and staff met for a week to study the Gospel of Mark.

Didi said: *Trilogy for me was an opportunity to go deep into the Bible, to look carefully and to grow in understanding. I came with expectation but I left with more – new sight and thousands of little revelations about the book of Mark and the person of Jesus!*



Summer Project: We gathered 40 students from Bulgaria, Netherlands, Denmark and Ireland for a cultural exchange camp on the topic of Diversity and Culture. We had many opportunities during these days to share our faith through our words and deeds.

Ahmed said: *The summer project is an event I will never forget because it opened my eyes to things and made me live a life I have never experienced before. I met and became a friend with a lot of people from different cultures and backgrounds. I have had a wonderful time with everyone in BCSU.*

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

Formacion: We sent four student leaders and one staff to IFES' tri-annual leadership formation conference in Poland along with students from all over Europe. They learned about leadership, life-long learning, and mentoring through studies on Moses and many interactive challenges.

Raya said: *Formacion helped me know what it means to be called to lead. God showed me that He is the strength in my weakness. He is the one who makes us family with people from the ends of the earth, through the love of Jesus.*

OCTOBER

BCSU welcomed a new staff worker from Germany, Ahlke Spiels, who will be living in Sofia and helping with the International Student Ministry.

The champions of the Bible Competition received their prize – a four-day excursion in Croatia.

The new academic year began and student groups again formed throughout the country. We began our campaign to find the funds to hire a new staff worker.

NOVEMBER



Forum: Students and graduates from all over Bulgaria met to discuss the topic of servanthood and ministry.

Ivan said: *After every Forum, I leave encouraged to share my faith with others. This Forum helped me to realize that I am called by God for this very purpose and that He longs for us to be used so others would know His salvation.*

DECEMBER

We held our “Evangelism in Practice” seminars in different student centers throughout the country.

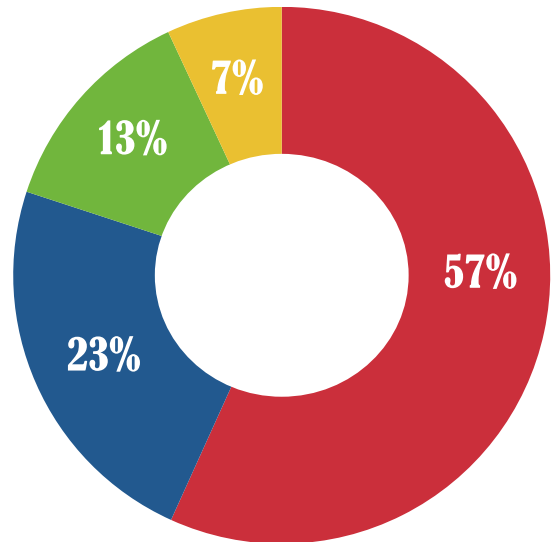
We finished the year with one more Bible camp as we celebrated the coming of the New Year together.

2016 Finances at a glance

Income:

■ Donations from outside of Bulgaria:	\$ 21,985
■ Donations from Bulgarians and BCSU alumni:	\$ 9,015
■ Grant money for “Leadership in Practice” project:	\$ 5,040
■ Investments and other offerings:	\$ 2,690

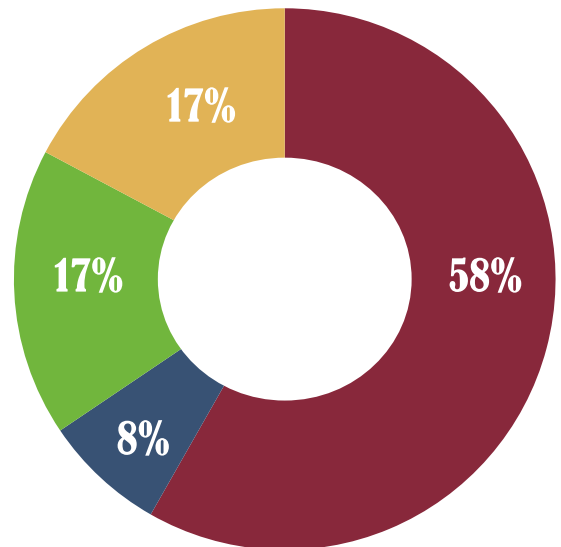
Total Income: \$38,730



Expenses:

■ Salaries and benefits:	\$ 22,440
■ Ministry expenses for workers:	\$ 2,820
■ Office and administration:	\$ 6,630
■ Conferences and scholarships	\$ 6,640

Total Expenses: \$38,530



A Quick Appeal

I would like to briefly make an appeal for your support and prayer for the coming year. God has faithfully carried us through this year. Our ministry continues now in 2017 – we still have many students to meet, to introduce to Jesus, and to help grow as Christ’s disciples. But student work is always fragile. Would you please commit to praying for the work of BCSU? Pray that God would empower us to live out our mission of creating communities of students that have gospel-impact on their universities, societies and churches. Pray that we would be faithful to our calling and that we would continue to be led by Jesus. Finally, pray that we would continue see the fruit of the gospel through lives that are changed and transformed.

Thankfully, as shown above, this year our books were balanced and we were financially stable. We are so grateful that we have had enough funds this year to carry out all the things that we have done. Yet it is our dream to hire at least one more staff worker in order to have more concentrated student work in some of the other cities of Bulgaria. This will only be possible if we are able to raise \$8,000 more a year – or \$650 a month. (This covers the costs of salary, benefits and ministry expenses for one staff worker). This is completely doable if we find:

- 3 people willing to commit to \$100 /month
- 4 people willing to commit to \$50 /month
- 8 people willing to commit to \$20 /month

Might you consider helping us reach this goal? Do you know someone who might be excited about this ministry and help us reach this goal? Please contact us if you would like more information about how you can pray or give to the ministry of BCSU.

Contact Information

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The Bulgarian Christian Student Union 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.