

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate

Bir-Zeit Orthodox Committee

Bir-Zeit New Orthodox Church

**WORK PLAN FOR CONSTRUCTION OF
NEW ORTHODOX CHURCH IN BIR-ZEIT**

September, 2009

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**WORKPLAN FOR CONSTRUCTION OF
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1 SUMMARY

This project aims at supporting the Christian Orthodox community in constructing a new Orthodox Church in the main square of Bir-Zeit in addition to other facilities through which the local Christian community can socialize and practice several activities. The project will include constructing 2700 m² of three floors church, a multipurpose hall, library, youth club, computer room, office in addition to sanitary units. This project will benefit 2000 of Congregation of Bir-Zeit, in addition to 12,000 of congregations of the surrounding neighborhood. Bir-Zeit Church will be the center for all orthodox churches in the central areas. The total cost of this project is \$ **5,000,000**. It is estimated that the project will be implemented in twenty months.

With support from the Orthodox Patriarchate, the detailed work plans and designs were prepared. Under the overall supervision of the Orthodox Patriarchate, the local community of Bir-Zeit will keep the church functioning properly.

2 BACKGROUND

Palestinian Christians are unique due to their centuries of history and attachment to the land of Jesus Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. Some of these Christians can trace their family lineage to the early days of the church; they are the direct descendants of those who first followed Jesus.

Living under Israeli occupation, seeing their homes and lands confiscated, having schools repeatedly closed, blocked from traveling even for health or religious purposes, and with increasingly limited employment opportunities, many of the Christians have emigrated to other countries. Some emigration since the second Intifada is also blamed on the general

state of conflict and hardship in the area, which was especially felt by the Christian community due to political situation and the economical burdens.

Bir-Zeit town is located about 10 Kilometers (6.2 miles) of Ramallah city and about 25 Kilometers (15.6 miles) North of Jerusalem city. It has an existing population of around 7000 capita with 55% Christians and 45% Muslims.

The current church of Bir-Zeit -Saint George Church- was founded in 1871 at the eastern side of the old town of Bir-Zeit, and is considered to be the first church that was established in Bir-Zeit. The orthodox congregation of Bir-Zeit counts around 2000 orthodox Christians.

The capacity of the existing church is 100 prayers only; it has a very small annex that is being used for ceremonies like weddings, funerals, meetings and other occasions. Bir-Zeit Orthodox Committee; was formed to manage the church and help Christians cope with the current situation. This committee is facing burdens of meeting local community needs for having a bigger church where they all can practice their religious prayers and attend different religious activities and events.

The local community of Bir-Zeit owns a land of 4000 m² to build a bigger space church. This land was used by 7 refugee families since 1948. Recently and with help from the Palestinian Authority, the land was evacuated and prepared for the construction of the new church.

The local community is active in practicing the following activities:

1- St. George Greek Orthodox Women Committee

This committee was founded in 2002 by the Orthodox women of Birzeit (20 lady) .Its main goal is to provide spiritual and social services to the Christian congregation in Bir-Zeit. Achievements:

- ❖ Expand Christian families' knowledge in Bible and religious places.
- ❖ Activate women role in the local community.
- ❖ Provide different services to disabled and old people in the community.

- ❖ Prepare and distribute a monthly spiritual magazine: “The Holy Spirit”
- ❖ Prepare and distribute a yearly calendar that contains the feasts of the Orthodox Church during the Liturgical year.
- ❖ Prepare religious journeys to the holy places in Palestine.
- ❖ Meet all the social requirements of the church (prepare Palm Sunday candles, decorate the coffin of the Good Friday, prepare for the special events after the divine Liturgy, funerals, roses, cleaning, etc...).

2-Bir-Zeit Orthodox Boy Scout Group

This group was founded in 1985 by a group of young members. The goal is to provide its members with spiritual, mental and physical needs and promote their abilities in order to affect the society positively. Nowadays, it consists of 200 members. Achievements:

- ❖ Raising awareness of young people in different subjects related to team spirit, accepting the other and being responsible...etc.
- ❖ Minimize violence inside the community, through promoting positive activities by conducting creative activities and encouraging non-violent environment.
- ❖ Participate in public events like Easter and Christmas yearly marches and other important occasions.

3-Sunday Orthodox school

This school was founded in 2006 and consists of 70 children. The Sunday school first duty is to raise good quality of new generation by encouraging non-violent environment in addition to teaching the Bible and faith. The aim of the school is to teach the principles of Christianity, to educate the children by a number of psalmody and songs and basic prayer, as well as to teach them how to participate in the celebration of the holy liturgy

Bir-Zeit church provides valuable contributions to the local community of Bir-Zeit and other five Christian communities in the area. Through this project, Christian communities

will be provided by a space that will be used as an address to alleviate their burdens and help them cope with the current tough political and economical situation. With the closure imposed by the Israeli Government, Christians will use the church facilities as a recreation outlet to meet and socialize positively which will lessen the stress.

These benefits positively improve the local community in direct and indirect ways, and will enhance stability and the long-term health of community. It will minimize the number of youth immigrants. The leaders of the local community are working hard to maintain the role of the church to positively affect the community.

Implementing this project will contribute to alleviate the economical burdens of some vulnerable families through creating temporary jobs to some skilled and unskilled labors. Around 100 of engineers, construction workers, carpenters, welders, plumbers, in addition to vendors of stone, cement, steel, electricity...etc will directly benefit from this project.

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project deals with the construction of a new Orthodox church at Bir-Zeit town that will consist of three floors with an area of 900 m² for each floor.

- Basement floor consists of a multipurpose hall, library, youth club, computer room, office, toilet unit and a kitchen.
- Ground floor consists of the main church where religious events take place with participation of at least 1000 worships.
- First floor consists of a gallery for the church.

The estimated total cost of the project is \$ 5, 000,000. The project will be implemented within a period of twenty four months

Location of the Project

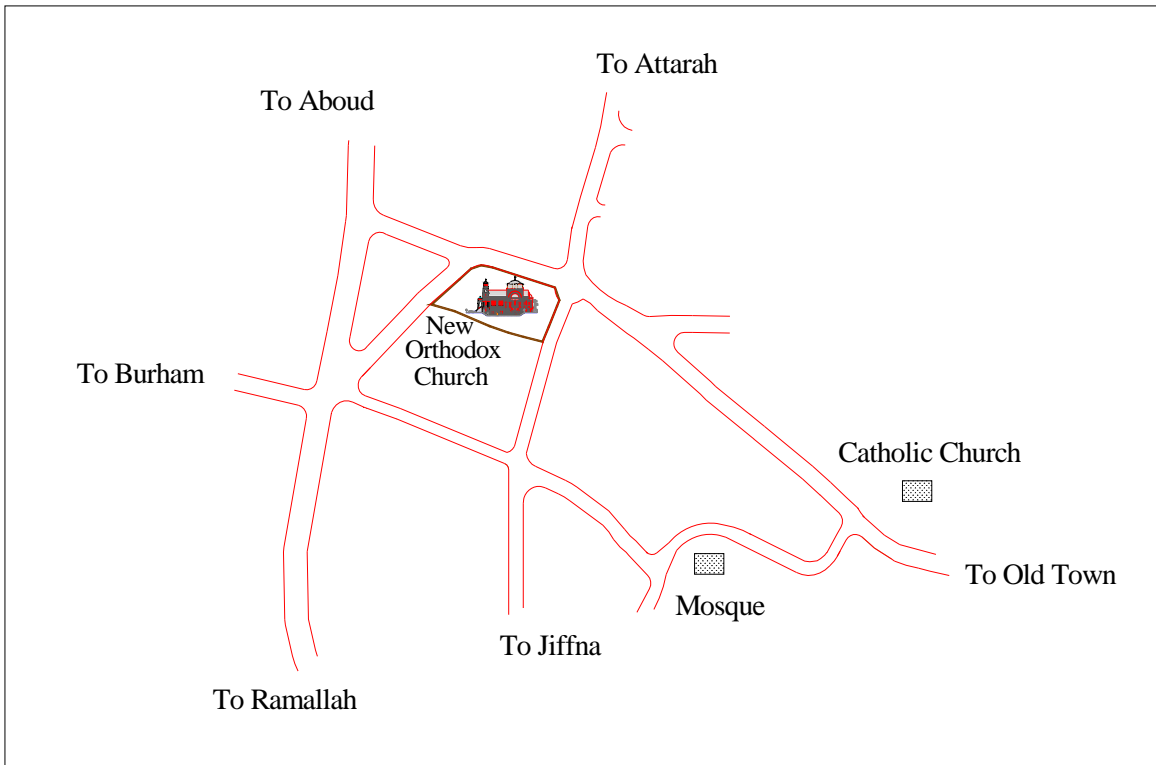


Figure1. Location of the new Orthodox church at Bir-Zeit town

3.1 Objectives:

The short term objective is to construct a bigger space church for Orthodox Christians in Bir-Zeit and other 5 surrounding neighborhood.

The long term objective is to support Christians of Bir-Zeit to have a fruitful role in their Palestinian society.

The proposed project aims at satisfying the following immediate objectives:

- To provide bigger space church for 2000 Christian worships of Bir-Zeit residents and the nearby communities.
- To alleviate the suffering of the residents during weddings and funerals and feasts due to the small place of the church and the hall.

- To help improve the local committees achievements (Women, Boy Scout, Sunday Schools, Youth).
- To refresh the economic situation at Bir-Zeit and the neighborhood areas and create temporary jobs for laborers in the community.

3.2 Outputs of the proposed project:

The outputs of the project are expected to be as follows:

- 2700 m² the area of a wider church with a hall constructed
- 1200 residents have better access to pray and share religious ceremonies
- 20 ladies have a place for meetings and different activities, and activate more women in the local community.
- 70 children have a place to participate Sunday schools
- 200 youth of both boys and girls scouts can meet and have exercises
- 5 permanent jobs created at the end of project implementation
- 25 households will have increased income during the project implementation

3.3 Beneficiaries:

- Direct beneficiaries: 2000 inhabitants who are the Orthodox Christians residents of Birzeit.
- Indirect beneficiaries: All the citizens of the neighboring villages (12,000 residents).

4 BUDGET BREAKDOWN

The total estimated budget of the proposed project is \$ 5,022,000 broken down as follows:

No.	Description	Amount in \$
1.	Construction cost	4,650,000
2.	Engineering, and management (3 % of total cost)	139,500
3.	Contingencies (5% of total cost)	232,500
4.	Total	5,022,000

5 PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

The proposed project will be implemented by Orthodox Patriarchate through its General Secretary office in cooperation with the local community. The technical members from the local committee (Bir-Zeit Orthodox Committee) in cooperation with the General Secretary will supervise both the construction and the implementation of this project.

Bir-Zeit Orthodox Committee is at the top of the supervision of over all aspects of the projects. Its duties start from the early planning process up to the continuous evaluation of the project.

6 PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC):

A Project Steering Committee will be established at the beginning of the project. The Committee will be comprised from Orthodox Patriarchate, and local community representatives in addition to the supervising engineering and project manager.

The PSC will convene regularly at least once a week to assess the progress of the implementation, report and find the proper solution for any problem which may endanger the smooth operation of implementation.

7 DURATION

The proposed project will be implemented during twenty (20) months in accordance with the following activities:

⇒ Preparing Tender Documents	1 month
⇒ Tendering and Awarding of Contracts	2 month
⇒ Execution of works	15-17 months
⇒ Delays	1 month

So the estimated time for implementation of this program is twenty and one months.

8 BIDDING ARRANGEMENTS:

All construction works will be executed through Competitive Negotiated Procedures. The PSC will execute and evaluate the bidding process, analyzing the offers and award to the best contractor, considering the quality and execution period.

9 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

All the financial aspects of the project will be handled by PSC under the supervision of Orthodox Patriarchate.

10 PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY:

Bir-Zeit community under the supervision of Orthodox Patriarchate will ensure the sustainability of the project.

10.1 Maintenance:

All necessary maintenance works which will be needed for the ensuring the sustainability of the church, hall and library in addition to the computer center will be covered by:

- 1) The Orthodox Patriarchate will be responsible for the overall maintenance works.
- 2) Donations and grants from different International Organizations and friendly countries.
- 3) The budget of the church.

11 RISKS:

All projects in West Bank are subjected to two main risks:

- 1) Delay in implementation due to the frequent closures of the Palestinian Territories by the Israelis. These closures stop the flow of the construction materials, which are imported from Israel, to the construction sites.
- 2) Increase in the cost of the project: Due to the continuous fluctuation in the prices of the construction materials or unexpected decrease in the exchange rate of the EURO, US Dollar, the cost of the project might increase accordingly. A more accurate

approximate cost will be known after opening the tenders. The exact cost will be known after closing the individual contracts. If there will be an increase in the cost of the project, this increase will be handled by:

- using the Contingencies;
- decreasing the output of the project.

12 PROJECT EVALUATION:

PSC will carry out frequent evaluations during and after implementation. This evaluation will measure the degree to which the proposed project is achieving its objectives either quantitatively or qualitatively.

The main quantitative measures will be

- 1) The progress reports of the site engineer/s (daily, monthly, mid term and final)
- 2) The Invoices for material Purchasing.
- 3) Field surveying and visits.
- 4) Work measurements and checking.
- 5) Project time plan.
- 6) In addition to other financial tools like cash flow statement.

The main qualitative measure will be:

- 1) The Progress Reports of the Site Engineer.
- 2) The progress reports of all other relevant institutions.
- 3) Finishing work of the school.
- 4) Local Community reaction and satisfaction.

13 CONCLUSION

The implementation of this project is very essential and important to residents of Bir-Zeit and the surrounding villages and specifically Orthodox Christians who will use the church. This project will help the Orthodox Patriarchate and consequently the local committee of Bir-Zeit to respond to one of the top priorities identified by the local community.

This project will contribute to revitalizing the economic situation in Bir-Zeit through creating jobs and activating purchasing power. Furthermore, constructing such big church will increase social tight between Christian communities and decrease youth immigrants.

Your Support

The great possibilities this new church will provide for all members of our community, certainly is evidence of God's blessings and love for us that we have achieved so much for ourselves and our children.

We have been delighted by the response of those who have taken this project to their hearts and already generously offered their financial support. We would be grateful for your encouragement in the way of any contributions you are able to make.

Thank you for your prayers, your love and your support, and may God bless you.

If you would like to support the work through a donation, please donate at our account:

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For any comments, inquiries, please feel free to contact us on the church' email:

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