



PROJECT BETHLEHEM

A Vision to Establish the World's Great Christian Holy City

The Birthplace of Jesus Christ • Bethlehem • The Holy Land

A Strategic Framework for Global Christian Cooperation, Real Estate, Pilgrimage & Permanent Presence

Prepared for:

Christian Leaders, Denominations, Foundations & Investors Worldwide



PREAMBLE — A LETTER TO ALL CHRISTIANS

Brothers and sisters in Christ — across every nation, every denomination, every tongue — this document carries a single, urgent question:

"If Mecca belongs to Islam, and Ayodhya belongs to Hinduism — why does Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ, not belong to Christianity?"

The answer is not that we lack the faith. It is that we have lacked the unity, the strategy, and the will to act together as one Body.

SECTION 1 — THE VISION: A CHRISTIAN HOLY CITY

1.1 What We Are Building

Project Bethlehem is a long-term, multi-decade, interfaith Christian initiative to transform the greater Bethlehem area into the permanent, recognized, and thriving spiritual capital of Christianity worldwide — the equivalent of what Mecca is for Islam and what Ayodhya is for Hinduism.

This is not a political project. It is not a military project. It is a project of faith, real estate, economics, demographics, and civilizational intention — pursued through entirely lawful, peaceful, and cooperative means.

1.2 The Three Pillars of the Vision

PRESENCE	PRESERVATION	PILGRIMAGE
Establish permanent Christian communities, institutions, and residences in and around Bethlehem	Protect, restore, and steward every sacred Christian site from the Church of the Nativity to the Shepherd's Field	Make Bethlehem the world's foremost Christian pilgrimage destination — rivalling Mecca in global scale
Acquire land and real estate through legal purchase and long-term lease to create a Christian-majority district	Establish legal, ecclesiastical, and diplomatic frameworks to ensure permanent Christian rights over sacred sites	Build world-class infrastructure to receive 20 million Christian pilgrims annually by 2060

1.3 Why Now — The Urgency

The Christian community of Bethlehem is in crisis. At the time of Christ's birth, it was an entirely Jewish and later early-Christian town. At the founding of the modern era, Bethlehem was majority Christian. Today, the Christian population of Bethlehem has collapsed from over 80% in 1947 to fewer than 15% today — and continues to fall.

If nothing changes, within one generation, the birthplace of Jesus Christ may have virtually no indigenous Christian presence. The churches will stand — but as museums, not living communities. If Christianity does not act now, history will record that the faith did nothing while its holiest city slipped away.

Christian Population 1947	Over 80% of Bethlehem area
Christian Population Today	Approximately 12–15% and declining
Pace of Emigration	Thousands of Christian families leaving per decade
Primary Cause	Economic hardship, conflict, lack of Christian institutional support

Window of Opportunity

Estimated 15–30 years before Christian community is marginal

SECTION 2 — LEARNING FROM MECCA, MEDINA & AYODHYA

Our vision is not unprecedented. Three great world religions have already demonstrated the pathway to securing a holy city. We must study these models with humility and apply their lessons with wisdom.

2.1 The Islamic Model — Mecca & Medina

Spiritual Significance	Birthplace of Islam; site of the Kaaba; direction of all Muslim prayer
How Secured	Saudi state, Waqf (religious endowment) system, OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation), global Hajj funding
Annual Pilgrims	2.5 million for Hajj; up to 15 million for Umrah annually
Economic Model	Hajj generates \$12 billion+ annually for the Saudi economy
Key Lesson for Christians	Religious endowment (Waqf) model — permanent, inalienable religious property trusts that cannot be sold

2.2 The Hindu Model — Ayodhya

Spiritual Significance	Birthplace of Rama; one of the seven sacred cities of Hinduism
How Secured	Supreme Court ruling, national government construction of Ram Mandir, Hindu diaspora funding
Restoration Cost	Ram Mandir temple complex — estimated \$250 million USD
Annual Pilgrims Target	50 million pilgrims annually by 2030 (government target)
Key Lesson for Christians	Diaspora funding model — global Hindu community donated regardless of nationality; unified sacred purpose overrode sectarian differences

2.3 What Christianity Has That Others Did Not

Christianity already has enormous structural advantages that neither Islam nor Hinduism possessed when building their holy city models:

- 2.4 billion Christians worldwide — the largest single religious group on earth
- Estimated \$1–5 trillion in global church assets and endowments
- Existing presence and legal ownership of key sites in Bethlehem (Church of the Nativity, etc.)
- The Vatican — a recognized sovereign state — as a potential diplomatic anchor
- Global diaspora communities with enormous economic capacity

- Universal emotional and spiritual connection to Bethlehem through Christmas — celebrated by billions

What Christianity has lacked is not resources. It has lacked coordination. This project provides the coordination.

SECTION 3 — REAL ESTATE & LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY

The foundation of any enduring holy city is land. Land that is owned, protected, and dedicated in perpetuity to the faith community. This section outlines a comprehensive, entirely legal real estate strategy to establish a permanent Christian-majority zone around the sacred sites of Bethlehem.

3.1 Target Zones for Acquisition

ZONE	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY
Zone A — Sacred Core	Manger Square, Church of the Nativity, immediate surroundings	Highest
Zone B — Pilgrim District	Hotels, guesthouses, pilgrim services within 1km of Nativity	Very High
Zone C — Shepherd's Field	Beit Sahour area; traditional site of angel announcement	High
Zone D — Residential Settlement	New Christian residential communities for returning diaspora	High
Zone E — Agricultural Buffer	Surrounding land to create sustainable community & green buffer	Medium
Zone F — Educational Corridor	Land for Christian schools, seminaries, universities	Medium

3.2 Legal Mechanisms for Acquisition

- **Legal purchase of privately owned land and properties through a designated Christian land fund, offering fair market value or above**
- **Negotiated long-term leases from Palestinian Authority, private owners, and municipal authorities — modeled on the Vatican's own land arrangements**
- **Establish an international Christian Waqf — a permanent, inalienable religious property trust modeled on the Islamic Waqf system — so that land, once acquired, can never be sold away from the Christian community**
- **Identify and assist Palestinian Christian families who owned property before displacement to reclaim or receive compensation, bringing them back as anchor communities**
- **Partner with the Palestinian Authority to develop Bethlehem as a world-class religious tourism hub — presenting Christian presence as an economic benefit, not a political threat**

3.3 Estimated Land Acquisition Budget

Zone A — Sacred Core (50 properties)	USD \$80 million — \$150 million
Zone B — Pilgrim District (200 properties)	USD \$200 million — \$400 million
Zone C — Shepherd's Field Area	USD \$30 million — \$60 million
Zone D — Residential Communities (500 units)	USD \$150 million — \$300 million
Zone E — Agricultural Buffer (500 acres)	USD \$25 million — \$50 million
Zone F — Educational Corridor (10 campuses)	USD \$100 million — \$200 million
Legal, Administrative & Endowment Setup	USD \$50 million
TOTAL ESTIMATED (Phase 1-2)	USD \$635 million — \$1.21 billion

This figure — while large — represents less than 0.1% of global Christian church assets. Across 2.4 billion Christians, it is approximately \$0.50 per Christian worldwide. The question is not whether Christianity has the resources. It does. The question is whether we have the will.

SECTION 4 — STRUCTURE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The greatest challenge of this project is not money. It is unity. Christianity's greatest historical weakness has been fragmentation — Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, Coptic, Anglican, Armenian — each with separate hierarchies, separate priorities, and centuries of division.

But Bethlehem belongs to all of them. And Bethlehem can unite them.

4.1 The Bethlehem Christian Council (BCC)

We propose the establishment of the Bethlehem Christian Council — an international governing body composed of equal representation from every major Christian tradition, with a single mandate: to protect, develop, and spiritually steward the Bethlehem holy city zone.

TRADITION	REPRESENTATION	CURRENT BETHLEHEM PRESENCE
Roman Catholic	3 seats (Vatican, Latin Patriarch, Global Orders)	Significant — Franciscans hold Nativity Church rights
Eastern Orthodox	3 seats (Greek, Russian, Antiochian)	Greek Orthodox hold major Nativity Church rights
Oriental Orthodox	2 seats (Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian)	Armenian Orthodox hold Nativity Church rights
Protestant/Evangelical	3 seats (Global Evangelical Alliance, WCC)	Growing presence, significant diaspora support
Anglican	1 seat (Archbishop of Canterbury)	Diocese of Jerusalem
Baptist/Pentecostal	1 seat (World Baptist Alliance, Pentecostal World Fellowship)	Mission presence
Independent Observer	1 seat (rotating)	Academic / civil society

4.2 Founding Declaration of Unity

"We are divided in doctrine. We are one in Bethlehem."

All member denominations of the BCC agree to set aside internal theological disputes for the sole purpose of this project. Bethlehem is the one altar at which all Christians can kneel together. Participation in the BCC requires no compromise of doctrine — only a shared commitment to the birthplace of Christ.

4.3 Global Partner Network

- National Christian Councils in 120+ countries — as funding and advocacy partners
- Christian Diaspora Associations — Palestinian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Ethiopian communities worldwide
- Major Christian foundations — Gates Foundation faith division, Templeton Foundation, Christian Solidarity Worldwide
- Christian universities and seminaries — Notre Dame, Wheaton, Oxford theology faculty, etc.
- Christian media networks — EWTN, TBN, Premier Christian Radio, Christian Today
- Christian investment funds — Eventide, Pax World, Christian Community Credit Union networks

SECTION 5 — IMPLEMENTATION: FOUR PHASES

PHASE 1

2025–2028

Foundation & Unity (Years 1–3)

- Convene inaugural Bethlehem Christian Summit — invite heads of all major denominations
- Establish the Bethlehem Christian Council (BCC) with founding charter
- Launch the Global Bethlehem Fund — target first \$100 million from 10 major donors
- Commission full legal, real estate, and political landscape assessment
- Establish legal entity in neutral jurisdiction (Switzerland/Vatican City)
- Begin quiet acquisition of Zone A Sacred Core properties
- Launch public awareness campaign: 'Bethlehem Belongs to Christ'

PHASE 2

2028–2035

Land, Community & Infrastructure (Years 4–10)

- Complete Zone A and B acquisitions; establish Christian Waqf endowment
- Build 500-unit Christian residential community for returning diaspora families
- Establish Bethlehem International Christian University (first campus)
- Construct the Global Christian Pilgrimage Centre — capacity 5,000 pilgrims daily
- Restore and upgrade 12 key sacred sites with international archaeological support
- Negotiate Bethlehem Special Economic Zone with Palestinian Authority
- Launch Bethlehem Christmas World Festival — annual global event

PHASE 3

2035–2050

Holy City Development (Years 10–25)

- Achieve Christian-majority district in Zones A–D through residential growth
- Open Bethlehem Seminary — train 1,000 clergy from 80 nations annually
- Complete Bethlehem International Airport (joint PA-BCC project)
- Reach 5 million annual pilgrims; \$3 billion annual pilgrimage economy
- Establish Bethlehem as seat of Christian ecumenical councils
- Construct the Cathedral of All Christians — a non-denominational sacred space
- Seek UNESCO World Heritage recognition for expanded Bethlehem Christian Zone

PHASE 4

2050 & Beyond

The Living Holy City (Year 25+)

- Bethlehem established as the permanent spiritual capital of global Christianity
- 20+ million annual pilgrims — rivalling Mecca's Hajj in scale
- Self-sustaining economy driven by pilgrimage, education, and commerce
- Christian population stabilized at 50%+ in greater Bethlehem zone
- Bethlehem Waqf endowment managing \$10+ billion in permanent assets



- Annual Christmas in Bethlehem broadcast reaching 2 billion viewers globally
- The birthplace of Christ — secured, thriving, and alive — for all generations

SECTION 6 — ECONOMICS & FUNDING MODEL

6.1 The Global Bethlehem Fund

Modeled on the Waqf system and the global fundraising structures of Islamic charitable foundations, the Global Bethlehem Fund (GBF) will operate as an international religious endowment with three funding streams:

STREAM	SOURCE	TARGET (10 YEARS)
Major Donors	Christian billionaires, mega-churches, national church councils	USD \$500 million
Mass Giving	'Bethlehem Dollar' campaign — 2.4 billion Christians give \$1/year	USD \$2.4 billion/year
Pilgrimage Revenue	Pilgrimage fees, accommodation, tourism, services	USD \$1 billion/year by Year 10
Endowment Returns	Investment returns from Waqf property and financial assets	USD \$200 million/year
Government Partnerships	EU cultural funding, Palestinian Authority co-investment, sympathetic states	USD \$300 million

6.2 The 'Bethlehem Dollar' Mass Campaign

If every Christian on earth donated just \$1 per year for Bethlehem — the fund receives \$2.4 billion annually. This is the single most powerful funding mechanism available and requires no wealthy donors, no political support, and no institutional approval. It requires only a unified call from Christian leaders worldwide.

2,400,000,000 Christians x \$1/year = \$2.4 Billion annually for Bethlehem

6.3 Revenue From Pilgrimage

Current Annual Pilgrims (Bethlehem)	Approx. 1.5 million — severely impacted by conflict
Target — Phase 2 (2035)	5 million pilgrims annually
Target — Phase 4 (2050)	20 million pilgrims annually
Average Pilgrim Spend (estimated)	USD \$1,500 per visit (flights, accommodation, services)

Phase 2 Annual Economy	USD \$7.5 billion pilgrimage economy
Phase 4 Annual Economy	USD \$30 billion pilgrimage economy
Community Benefit	Employs 150,000–500,000 local Christians and Palestinians

SECTION 7 — CALL TO ACTION

This document is a beginning, not an end. It is an invitation — to every Christian leader, every pastor, every bishop, every believer who reads it — to take one step.

For Church Leaders & Denominations

- Sign the Founding Declaration of Unity and join the Bethlehem Christian Council
- Commit your denomination to the Bethlehem Dollar campaign for a 10-year period
- Send representatives to the inaugural Bethlehem Christian Summit
- Designate Bethlehem as the official pilgrimage destination for your community

For Christian Foundations & Investors

- Contribute founding capital to the Global Bethlehem Fund
- Invest in Bethlehem-area real estate through the Christian Waqf structure
- Fund the legal and structural establishment of the BCC
- Sponsor the construction of the Pilgrim Centre, the Seminary, or the Cathedral of All Christians

For Every Christian

- Give your Bethlehem Dollar — \$1 per year. Tell everyone you know.
- Pray for Bethlehem by name, daily. The place where Christ was born deserves our daily prayer.
- Plan your pilgrimage to Bethlehem — your presence is itself an act of witness.
- Share this vision. Post it. Preach it. Carry it to your church.

"For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given..."

Isaiah 9:6 — Spoken of Bethlehem. Fulfilled in Bethlehem.

The star still shines over Bethlehem.

It is time for the Church to follow it — together.

† Project Bethlehem †

A Global Christian Vision • One Body • One Birthplace • One Mission