

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friends and partners in ministry,

Another year has raced by us and we have now entered 2018! As I sit and reflect upon the previous year, I am grateful to Jesus for the ways that He has led us, provided for us, and cared for us each day of this year. By God's grace, we have seen students being transformed by the good news and growing in love for Him, His word and His mission.

For me personally there have been a few highlights in the past year for which I want to thank God:

First, the staff team has prayed and worked hard to see BCSU grow as a missional community. It is our great desire that all our students would know that they are missionaries in their universities, would be well equipped for this mission, and would joyfully share their faith with others. Though we still have much room to grow in this area, it has been exciting for me to see students throughout the country share testimonies of how they are growing in witness and in passion for God's mission. This is a clear work of God among our students and we continue to pray that each of the student groups throughout the country would have the joy of witnessing at least one person coming to saving faith in Jesus this year.

Speaking of the student groups, this has been another area where we have experienced God's grace. In June, it looked as if the student groups in Ruse and Burgas would be coming to an end as many of the students in these groups had graduated and moved on. As the fall semester began, I felt the weight of the fact that we had not found students for these groups and that these university cities would be without a witnessing community of students. But God is faithful, and we have seen small groups of students in these cities emerge that gather weekly to study God's word, pray for their universities, and seek to reach out to their colleagues. As I have spoken to these students, I have heard testimonies of how these groups have been a great blessing to them!

Finally, I give thanks to God for the start of our Barnabas internship program this year. It has been a joy to see these 8 students and recent graduates serve others with skill and passion, seek opportunities to share their faith with others and grow as leaders in our mission. Some are mentoring younger students, others are leading accountability groups, and others are having conversations late into the night with their friends about Jesus. This is our first group of interns and I am excited to see how God continues to use these 8 people and future generations of interns for his kingdom.

With thanksgiving and trust we now enter 2018, knowing that the God who has begun a good work among us will be faithful to carry it out to completion for His glory. There are real powers in the world that are seeking to kill and destroy students, but Jesus – who is greater and more glorious – has come to give them abundant life, forgiveness of sin, and an inheritance of hope. What a joy and privilege it is to get to carry this good news to students throughout Bulgaria.

We are thankful for your prayers and generous gifts which make this work among students possible so that many can hear and experience this good news! I hope that this report of 2017 in BCSU encourages you in your partnership with us – giving you cause to praise God for his faithfulness as well as further motivation to pray for our students in the coming year.

Many thanks,

*Craig Weyrens*

BCSU National Director

# IMPORTANT FACTS

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 Student groups in cities: Plovdiv, Sofia, Varna, Burgas, Ruse, Blagoevgrad, Veliko Turnovo



around 60 active students this fall

95 Bulgarian and 30 International students have come at least once to our groups



21 new students in the groups

BCSU has a new managing board

Number of student leaders:

17

We are working regularly with international students

7

8

Participants in our new leadership program "Barnabas"

6 full-time staff:



6 volunteers

1 We published a book - "Practical Evangelism"



7

National events held throughout the year:

- Leadership Conference
- Forum
- Trilogy: Mark
- General assembly
- Bible Competition
- Alumni conference
- European Evangelism Conference

# CALENDAR AND TESTIMONIES

JANUARY

The team of BCSU held its work meeting for planning and prayer for the upcoming year.

FEBRUARY

## Seminar “Practical evangelism” for the whole country:

Valentin said: *We are given a task-to preach the Gospel correctly-with the knowledge that it is the power of God for salvation. For me, Practical Evangelism was a useful seminar, where I had the opportunity to spend time with believers and to share examples from our experience, to talk about the great sacrifice of our Savior and to think about the needs of the perishing world-how everyone needs Christ. We have a task and we know: if God is for us, who will be against us?*



MARCH

## Leadership Conference:

Vicky shared: *From the very beginning of my student life I had the opportunity to attend the gatherings of BCSU. I decided to participate in Leadership Conference 2017, excited for something new and interesting and I was not disappointed. During those three days I understood in more detail the structure and purpose of BCSU. There, for the first time, I was introduced to the inductive Bible study method and its practical implications for small groups and our personal time with God’s Word. At the end of the conference I left with a clearer idea of what the main qualities of a leader are, how to fully prepare Bible study for a small group, and how to properly ask questions. We had the opportunity to study the leadership qualities of Jesus that are described in the gospels, and his roles as a mentor and servant. The conference was also an opportunity for us to get to know believing students from around the country and to encourage each other and build each other up. We had a wonderful and blessed time in prayer and worship together as well.*

## III Bible Competition:

*“The Bible competition for me in three words: Discovery of treasures. Of course, as Christians, we all try to read the Bible, but sometimes we do not realize that we are not giving our minds and hearts entirely to studying this divine book. By participating in the competition, I began to pay attention to some of the small details, which allowed me to know God better and more closely. The time with my teammates and coaches was also unforgettable: the very fact that we are gathering in God's name to learn more about Him is exciting. We also got to know each other better and discovered how we can use our strengths to help each other. And the most precious thing of all is that when we go through a difficult moment or we are tempted to act selfishly, we recall what we have recently read, what the Bible says about the situation, and we pass the test successfully.”- Violeta*

**Meeting for graduate students and alumni:** This year BCSU resumed meetings for graduates. Desi from Shumen shared:



*“I had a great time at the BCSU gathering for graduates. It was a small group, which made it possible to spend time with and talk to all of the participants. I got to know wonderful people. There was plenty of time for rest and an excursion to Etara (an ethnographic neighborhood/ open-air museum), and also for useful discussions. I really enjoyed the psychological test, which with incredible accuracy describes our personalities and reminded me that some traits of our character are not necessarily flaws, but they are due to the uniqueness God has given us.”*

APRIL

**European Student Conference in Aschaffenburg, Germany:**

*"The Lord Jesus Christ is alive and is coming soon to reign. And all of this is so real...To see how God has touched around 2000 students from all over the world, who worship and sing how great a Savior he is, is something indescribable. The Lord Jesus gave me friends from Spain, the Czech Republic, Peru, Israel, Hungary, Luxembourg ... I am also friends with a couple from the Netherlands who got married in July. The conference was so touching that even so long afterwards, as I write with my new friends, my heart starts burning strongly for God!"- Krasimir*

MAY

**General Assembly of BCSU:**

Celia says: *"It is wonderful to be part of something large. The General Assembly gave me the opportunity to meet representatives of the other groups and to feel that what we are doing is not just on a local level. That is, the kingdom of God is something great, and together we can achieve much more. This event filled me with the hope that there is strength in unity and that we can truly be a good influence on the earth."*



SUMMER

The team of BCSU prepared new ideas, spent time on training, and traveled for fundraising. They actively worked on the book "Practical Evangelism".

SEPTEMBER



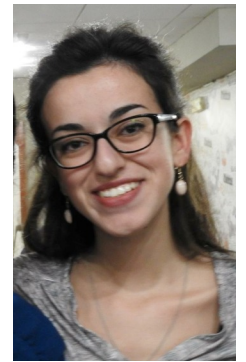
**Leadership Program "Barnabas":**

Eva shared: *"For me, program "Barnabas" is an incredible opportunity to grow closer to God in a new way, together with the support of the other participants, who are going through the same thing as you. And accountability to someone close to you is a great incentive to achieve the things that you always wanted, but also always postponed, both in your personal life and in the growth of the BCSU group."*

OCTOBER

**Forum:** Students and graduates from the whole country met, to discuss the Gospel of John and the newly translated book for evangelistic Bible Studies, "Uncover"

Iren said: *"For me, the National Forum was very encouraging. An in-depth reading of the Word and talking in groups helped me to see the opinions of the other people and to learn new things."*

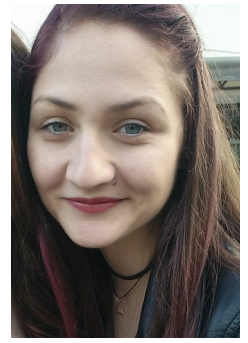


NOVEMBER

The book "Practical Evangelism" was printed and became the main aid for the Bible studies for the students in the whole country.

**Trilogy “Mark”:** We finished the year by gathering in Varna for a week of inductive Bible study on the Gospel of Mark.

Annie shared: *“At Trilogy I learned that God always gives new opportunities to change the direction of our own paths. There is always forgiveness, because he came for the sick, not the healthy”*



## THE YEAR IN PICTURES

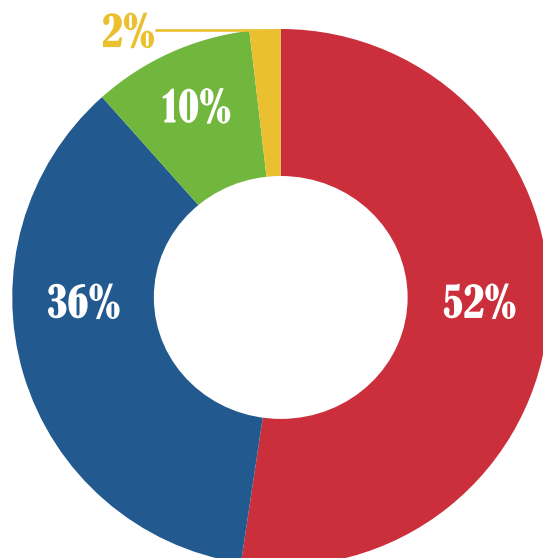


# 2016 FINANCES AT A GLANCE

## INCOME:

■ Donations from outside of Bulgaria:	\$23,500
■ Donations from Bulgarians and BCSU alumni:	\$16,175
■ Grant money for “Leadership in Practice” project:	\$4,365
■ Investments and other offerings:	\$840

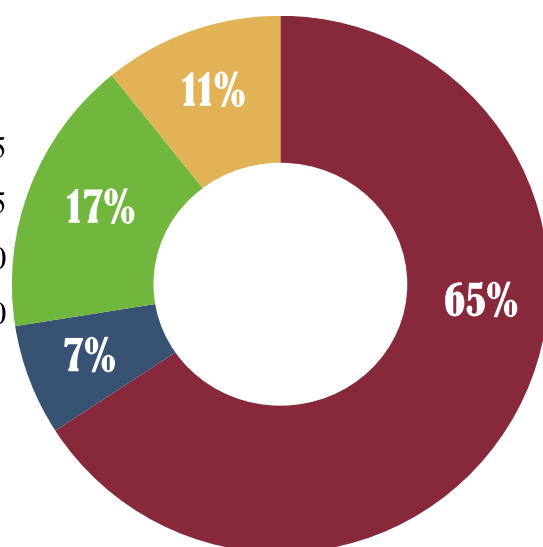
Total Income: \$44,880



## EXPENSES:

■ Salaries and benefits:	\$27,215
■ Staff ministry expenses:	\$2,765
■ Office, taxes and administration:	\$6,900
■ Conferences and scholarships:	\$4,470

Total Expenses: \$41,350



## A REPORT ON OUR 2017 APPEAL

In BCSU’s 2017 Annual Report, we asked you to support the growing and evolving student ministry in Bulgaria as we faced new challenges. We would now like to thank you for the dedicated support that you have shown us through your many prayers, hours of volunteering, and generosity in giving. We appreciate every act of help and service you have shown us; every response to this appeal has been of great value and significance to us. Without you, the small BCSU team would not have been able to organize all that has happened throughout the year to serve students and graduates in our country. We are also grateful to our Lord, who has blessed us with all that we have needed and who continues to send us faithful friends and supporters.

In our previous report, we shared with you our desire to hire another BCSU staff worker as we see the need to add to our team a young and energetic person from this generation of students who is enthusiastic to serve and to learn. We were blown away by the response we received for funding another staff worker and we are happy to say that if we continue to receive the generous support this year that we will soon be able to take the next step in hiring a new team member. This will be possible if we continue to raise 14,700 lev (\$9,100) annually or 1,250 lev (\$780) per month. As we said, for this to happen we are seeking:

- 3 people to regularly give \$100 per month
- 5 people to regularly give \$50 per month
- 12 people to regularly give \$20 per month

I hope you will continue to support us in this endeavor in 2018.

Unfortunately, in financial terms 2018 is looking to be a difficult year for BCSU. One of our major ministry sponsors had informed us that they would not be able to meet their funding goals for 2017 and we have now learned that in 2018 they will reduce their giving by 70%. This clearly will have a negative impact on the entire BCSU budget and it poses new challenges for us in the coming years, as they will be unable to continue their support in the future.

We believe that when our Lord closes one door, He remains faithful and that He will direct us to new opportunities. Our new appeal to you is to pray for this need and for God's leadership and to give to the important work of BCSU. Our goal through this campaign is to reach greater long-term stability in our ministry as we find many donors who are willing to give small yet regular amounts to this student work.

Wishing you a blessed and successful new year,

*Darena Tzoneva-Dimitrova*

Financial Director of BCSU

## FOR DONATIONS:

You can send money by bank transfer to the following account:

Bulgarian Christian Student Union, UniCredit BulbankLtd., Kaloyan Branch, Sofia,  
BIC: UNCRBGSF, IBAN: BG39UNCR76301139276954 (USD)

## 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.