



January 2010

Happy New Year

It is impossible to start this New Year without recalling the situation in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, especially Gaza, this time last year. News reports were full of the terrible situation faced by ordinary people seeking to live their lives as the conflict escalated and 'normality' was banished.

You will probably remember that we were in regular contact with our partners during that time and their emails and updates told of just how much disruption they faced as they sought to continue serving their communities, even amid the crisis. One of those partners directly affected was the St John Eye Hospital based in East Jerusalem, as they operate static clinics in Gaza, Hebron and Anabta.

Happily, this year has started with less conflict, and news from our partners, including the St John Eye Hospital, has been able to reflect on their Christmas celebrations as well as focussing on long term plans.

The St John Eye Hospital treated 84,329 patients throughout 2009 and carried out 3,000 major operations. The majority of patients come from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, where the hospital is the sole provider of quality ophthalmic care and professional training.

BibleLands has issued a regular grant to the hospital since 1988 and the BibleLands' Spectacle Fund pays for sight tests and lenses for patients from low income families. Donations of children's glasses frames also help to reduce costs to patients and are particularly helpful for families with more than one visually impaired child. If you wish to donate glasses frames to the hospital, please send them to the Spectacle Fund, BibleLands, PO Box 50, High Wycombe HP15 7QU.

In 2010, the St John Eye Hospital will commemorate 50 years of the current Jerusalem building. They also plan to expand the medical retinal unit, as this has been the fastest growing sub-group of eye conditions they have witnessed recently.

Let's pray that this really is a Happy New Year for all BibleLands' partners and the lands in which they work.