



October 2009

Peace be with you

On 9 October 2009, US President Barack Obama was woken up with the news that he was being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel Committee said he had won it for, 'his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and co-operation between peoples'.

There were a record 205 nominations for this year's peace prize and since the announcement there has been a great deal of discussion about the committee's decision. Some have argued that awarding the prize to him is wrong as he has not yet achieved any definite peace policy, whilst others have said he has already had a significant impact on the world stage.

BibleLand's Overseas Partners regularly find themselves at the cutting edge of the search for peace in the Middle East as they seek to serve the communities of which they are part.

This manifests itself in many ways and one such example is the Johann Ludwig Schneller School situated in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. It seeks to provide education and a healthy home to underprivileged children regardless of gender, race or religion. A main feature of the school is its emphasis on tolerance, co-existence and peace education.

Over 350 young people attend the school, aged between 4 and 20 years old, of which 220 are day students. The children are taught all the usual lessons, including English and German. The students' last two years in the school can be spent in either the academic or vocational training section. High quality vocational training is offered in carpentry, maintenance, general mechanics and auto mechanics in their first year. Plumbing and electrical installation workshops are also available, to those students in their second year.

The school also provides a boarding school with 'families' for boys and girls. There are house mothers and fathers and they work to bring the children up in accordance with ideals of peace and religious tolerance. This makes it possible for children of different backgrounds to live together in harmony. Whilst the school is open to children of all faiths, it has its own chapel and chaplain, and holds morning assemblies and Sunday school for the boarders.

BibleLands has worked with the Johann Ludwig Schneller School since 1976, in a partnership to help promote peace in the Middle East – a partnership underpinned by the school's ethos:

'We teach our students to be righteous, hardworking, honest, and productive persons; tolerant and respectful of the faiths and beliefs of others, and above all we emphasise peace education, care of the environment, and strict adherence to democracy and human rights.'