

Project at a Glance:
Constructing housing for
Seminary students

Location: Pune, India

Project ID: FOWM 198

Goal: \$60,000



Providing Housing for Seminary Students

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The Union Biblical Seminary (UBS) in Pune, India is committed to training servant leaders and scholars, who through their Christ-like lifestyle will go out and serve the contemporary world. UBS has 45 students who are getting their Ph.D. and Master of Theology (M.Th.) studies. These 45 research students are doing their post graduate studies while living in the cramped men’s hostel at the UBS campus.

These living arrangements are due to lack of rooms available to house more students. The Seminary is now unable to give admission to new students even when the demand is very high. The number of post graduate students is increasing every year, which also means there are more constraints on post graduate students’ accommodations. UBS is in need of constructing a new single men’s hostel for the M. Th./Ph.D. students.

Background

The Evangelical Fellowship of India, founded in 1951, consisted of cooperating church and mission groups. They felt there was a need for a good evangelical training college. Dr. Frank J. Kline founded the school in Yavatmal, India, in 1953 with the help of several Christian partners. Today there are more than twenty churches,

missions and Christian organizations represented in the Union Biblical Seminary Association, the body that governs the Seminary. In 1975, the Union Biblical Seminary Association decided to relocate the Seminary to the city of Pune, and the new site was completed in 1983. Approximately 3,000 students have received Christian training since UBS was founded over 50 years ago. The UBS faculty staff, and students are committed to the Biblical and historical foundations of the church and seek to express this commitment in their personal and corporate lives. For further information on UBS, please visit www.ubs.ac.in.

UBS has 260 students enrolled as residential students. Out of these 260 students, the 45 M.Th./Ph.D. students are living in cramped accommodations. This is due to lack of housing available to these students. At this time, the Union Biblical Seminary is unable to give admission to new students. The number of post graduate students is increasing every year, but housing is becoming very limited. UBS needs to construct a new single men’s hostel for the M.Th. and Ph.D. students in order to accept more students. The hostel facilities for these students will provide better accommodations, but also a place for the students to do research and to study.



Objectives

This project will allow the Seminary to:

- **Purchase construction materials** needed to build the new hostel.
- **Admit 32 new post graduate students**, who will be involved in the Doctoral and Master of Theology program at UBS.
- **Provide better housing** for these students as they complete their studies.
- **Provide a place for students** to do research and to study.

Anticipated Impact

The purpose of the Union Bible Seminary in Pune is to provide scholastic, vocational and spiritual training for the varied ministries of the church. There is an emphasis on: Bible-centered teaching that is evangelical in theology; holiness of thought and life, prayer, and growth in Christ; and the church's mission and witness in the contemporary world under the authority of the Scriptures. The vision of UBS from its inception has been to fulfill the Great Commission in the contemporary socio-economic and religious context of India. This involves training committed men and women to become more effective ministers to facilitate the Indian Church in fulfilling its calling. In other words, the Seminary sees itself as a servant of the Indian Church and this self-understanding is reflected in all that it seeks to do.

The Seminary anticipates that more housing will allow UBS to admit 32 new post graduate students, who will be in the Master of Theology/Doctorate program. Most of these graduates will be going out as teachers of theological colleges and seminaries and will occupy important leadership positions in many institutions. More importantly, they will be trained and sent out to fulfill the Great Commission.



Union Biblical Seminary
students in class



The library at Union
Biblical Seminary

Testimonies

Rev. David Walling

David Walling comes from a very poor tribal family in Manipur, India. He struggled in his life, but was able to receive his bachelor's degree. When he applied to UBS for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree he did not have financial resources available to him. UBS came forward to provide a full scholarship so that he could complete his M.Div. studies. He graduated in 2008.

David is now ministering to several congregations in his area. He has also taken a special interest in development, initiating programs drawing resources from various sources. He is well accepted in his community. David has had success in spiritual development and also in organizing the community where he serves to get involved in development activities.

Dr. Idicheria (Idi) Ninan

Dr. Idi also comes from a very poor family. He arrived at UBS with just one set of clothes and not knowing how the Lord would lead him in his life. But he said, "I believe in God who has called me to serve Him." The Living Lord totally transformed his life. He is now an internationally leader. He graduated from UBS in 1979 with a Bachelor of Divinity degree. He went on to receive a Master of Theology degree in 1986 and later his Ph.D. from Coventry University, in the United Kingdom.

He was called upon to develop a theological seminary at Kottayam, India, from its initial stages. He started with 14 students and today the seminary has 186 students. He is well accepted in his community and churches, but has also established a wider reach to other churches. His focus on spiritual formation stands out as an excellent example among UBS graduates. He led the Spiritual Emphasis Week in 2009 at UBS, providing powerful messages and interacting with students at a personal level.



Rev. David Walling



Dr. Idicheria Ninan



Union Biblical Seminary students working on class assignments

Use of Funds

Funds for this project will go toward constructing a hostel with 32 rooms for seminary students. The construction work will include:

- **Excavation** at the building site
- **Concrete work** throughout the building project
- **Brick work** for the walls of the new building
- **External plastering**
- **Internal plastering**
- **Tiling** needed at the hostel
- **Painting** of walls
- **Electrical work** throughout the new building
- **Miscellaneous items**

TOTAL:
\$60,000

Follow-up Evaluation

The construction work will be completed by November 2011. This will allow the 32 new M.Th. and Ph.D. students to be admitted for the next academic year, 2011-12. Those who will be graduating will then give leadership to various institutions and organization in India and abroad.

Affiliations and Partnerships

- The Union Biblical Seminary (UBS) is closely associated with the Hindustani Covenant Church, which has a partnership with Covenant World Mission.
- Most of the Hindustani Covenant Church pastors and leaders are UBS graduates.
- UBS is also supporting the ministry of Truthseekers International by providing a research facility. Covenant World Mission also partners with Truthseekers International in India.
- UBS is closely linked with the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (MCCS), another international ministry partner with Covenant World Mission.
- UBS professors have participated with international organizations and at events, including the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches (IFFEC) and the Covenant Midwinter Conference. Rev. Mrs. Rachel Bagh is a member of the Mission Committee for IFFEC. Rev. Dr. Shekhar Singh was a resource person for Covenant World Mission during the Midwinter Conference in 2009.
- Rev. Dr. Boaz Johnson, a professor at North Park University in Chicago, IL, is a UBS graduate and closely associated with Truthseekers International, where UBS is also cooperating with the New Bible Translation in India.



Union Biblical Seminary students in class

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8303 W. Higgins Road
Chicago, Illinois 60631
T: 773-907-3321
F: 773-784-4366
E: fowm@covchurch.org

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TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS PROJECT

Please send checks to: Friends of World Mission, 8303 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631. Please note on memo line: FOWM Project 198.