Description of Project

In 2018, Israel made $6.3 billion dollars from tourism. Many of my friends who visited told me about going to Bethlehem, the place of Jesus’ birth in the Biblical stories. I was surprised to learn that this ancient city is in the Palestinian Territories, and I have heard that some tours do their best to hide that from the tourists too. Many Churches promote tours of the Holy Land that either purposely or incidentally support a Zionist view of the relationship between Israel and Palestine. There are now tours that have a “dual narrative” which attempts to show the Israeli point of view and the Palestinian point of view. Although this conflict is one of the most controversial in the world, I think that the narrative being told often makes the choices seem black or white, but the reality is that peace is more complicated than just choosing a side. I want to show that there are people on all sides who want peace, but the path there is not clear because the stories told are not the same. As a Christian, I feel a responsibility for the land where my faith was born and where so many others find their holy inspiration. I do not think that I can solve the conflict, but I hope that I can broaden the way that some American Christians think about what is going on in that Holy Land.

Proposed Activities

During my six-week stay in Israel I will film and make a short documentary about the way that different tours talk about the same sites. In order to do that I will hire a local film crew (with both Israeli and Palestinian members) to go on three tours with me of the Holy Land. I have connections with people who have recently been or who live and work there. I have been in contact with folks at the Bethlehem Bible College about working with them. I hope that I augment those students’ experiences by bringing them into a cross-cultural conversation. During my first two weeks I will be acclimating to being in Israel and working to secure permission from different tour companies and going on different tours myself to get an idea of the best items to film. I will also hire my film crew. During the second two weeks I will do the actual filming. The final two weeks will be spent on post-production. I hope to have to have multiple screenings here in New York City in the Fall of 2020.

Results and Goals

Before the project even begins, I will be reaching out to partners here in New York to secure screening dates and locations for the Fall of 2020. These sites can also be a source of additional funding. The result
will be a documentary at the end of this process. I will also work with groups to host the film online to reach a broader audience, I am hoping to hear back from the communications director at JustVision.org.

Another goal I have is to build cross-cultural relationships during the making of the film itself. I will facilitate discussions during the process of planning, filming and editing. Since I am going to hire both Palestinians and Israelis, I hope that this work and discussions can give them the space to continue to think more deeply about what it means for them to be working and living together.

**Indicators of Success**

My goals are twofold, both the work of making the film and the film itself. My first indicator of success will be the relationships that I form and the discussions that I facilitate among the people working with me on the film. The second indicator of success will be a film that I can share with people here in the US. I hope to have at least three screenings here in New York and two online partners who will share the video.