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His Majesty King Abdullah bin Al Hussein
Of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

1 September 2008

Your Majesty

We extend to you the warm greetings and gratitude of the global family of the Baptist World Alliance.

It was a privilege for us to receive the news that you have generously designated a plot of land for the building of a Baptism Centre at the much-visited Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan site, where, according to tradition, Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist.

In our Baptist faith and order, the baptism of Jesus is of central importance to our understanding of the baptism of Christians (Romans 6:3-4) We believe baptism rests on the command of the risen Lord (Matthew 29:18-20) and is integrated with his command to preach the good news to the world; and this command is given authority by his own example at the beginning of his messianic ministry (Luke 3:21-22).

Our President has visited the Baptism Site at Bethany beyond Jordan and was privileged to have a comprehensive guided tour by Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammed. Having studied the relevant scriptures and examined the extensive archaeological work being done, we can affirm the Baptism Site on the eastern bank of the River Jordan, honoured by generations of Christians, as the location for the baptism of Jesus, referred to in the Bible as Bethany-'the other side of Jordan' (John 3:36).

We have shared the news of the proposed opening of the Baptism Centre with our world family of 43 million baptised believers in nearly 200 countries, and their representatives expressed warm support this year at our summer Gathering in Prague. We assure you there is a strong commitment to encourage Baptists to visit the Baptism Centre as a place of prayer and spiritual pilgrimage.

Your Majesty, we continue to pray for the peace and prosperity of the ruler and people of the Hashemite Kingdom.

With our warm greetings

David Coffey
BWA President

Neville Callam
BWA General Secretary