



ARAB BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

www.abtslebanon.org

January 2016

Investing in a Safe Community: the New Child Protection Policy

ABTS's parent organization, the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD), has been developing a Child Protection Policy for all of its ministries and entities. In light of the fact that ABTS is a residential training institution for Christian leaders in the region and that our students participate in the Compassionate Care Ministry programs, which often involve ministering to children of all ages, the leadership made two major decisions. The first decision was to hold a campus-wide training event in the middle of December 2015. The second decision was to develop a Community Standards Policy for residential students and families. The Community Standards Policy reflects our desire to live together responsibly and safely. Also, the leadership recognized that the entire campus needed to come together to learn and understand what it means to protect children as a community.



After several months of research by an ABTS Child Protection committee, a team of ABTS staff and faculty led our campus in understanding the dynamics of what it means to protect children. Through presentations, skits, and discussions, the training defined for us all what abuse is, how to recognize it, how to report it, and how to live so that abuse is thwarted. (Continue on P2)

ABTS Moves!

ABTS started 2016 off with our long-awaited office relocation! Extensive renovations of office space in the building next door, which is shared by our parent organization, LSESD, paved the way for new offices for use by ABTS staff and faculty. This move, while helping relieve the overcrowded offices of our growing staff, was initiated primarily to generate greater income for our ministry. ABTS runs a guesthouse, a strategic form of income to serve our seminary and increase our financial sustainability. Our old offices, located on the first floor of the guesthouse, were originally designed as guest rooms and will be reconfigured back into guest rooms after they have been fully vacated. Through this move our guesthouse will gain 20 additional rooms to support our mission to serve the Church in the Arab world by equipping men and women for ministry.

To see more photos from the move and our new offices, check out our [Facebook album here!](#)



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ABTS Dean of Students Bassem Melki leading the training

(cont. from P1) It was amazing to see everyone coming together around this critical topic. It also created space for us to talk about the hidden things that we all know exist. As servant-leaders of the Church, it is important to know how to bring healing and restoration into the dark places of our society. We sense that the implementation of this new policy is a stepping stone to deeper growth and transformation to the honor of Christ whose name we bear.

Children are made in the image of God, and we want to do our very best to protect them, to build them up, and to provide safe places where they can grow and develop into who they were created to be. The adoption of a Child Protection Policy at ABTS will better ensure that this vision is achieved.

Donate to ABTS Today and Double Your Gift!

Friends in the United States,

We are delighted to share with you an exciting grant matching opportunity! A generous partner has given ABTS a \$10,000 grant that will be released after a matching \$10,000 is raised. This gift was given to us through our US affiliate, the Middle East Bible Outreach (MEBO). Give today and see your support of Arab Church leaders double!

You can give directly [online on this page](#). Your gift is tax-deductible. Please make sure that the gift goes towards "Where Needed Most" and that you add "Matching grant" in the Additional Comments box.

You can also mail us a check to the following address, with a cover letter specifying that your gift is going towards the matching grant:

Middle East Bible Outreach
 4780 Ashford Dunwoody Road
 Suite A 540 PMB 472
 Atlanta, GA 30338-5504

MEBO is a 501(c)(3) corporation that coordinates efforts among our US friends and partners to generate awareness and much needed financial gifts and prayers to support the work of ABTS. For more information, contact Partnerships Manager Wissam al-Saliby at walsaliby@abtslebanon.org.

FROM THE BLOG OF THE INSTITUTE OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

'Religious Registration': An Insult to Human Dignity and Decency

By Martin Accad | "Maryam was born a Muslim. Her society required her to live as a Muslim and eventually to die as a Muslim as well. Youssef was born a Christian. His society too required him to live and die as a Christian. But when they fell in love with each other, they came before a dilemma. " [Click here to continue reading.](#)



ABTS Mission: to serve the Church in our region as it realizes its Biblical mission of having Christ acknowledged as Lord by offering specialized learning resources and equipping faithful men and women for effective service.

Christmas @ ABTS!

Each Christmas our Student Affairs Team puts on a number of events to celebrate the birth of Christ. The annual Christmas dinner and program was held for our entire community on December 23rd, which included student-led Christmas carols, skits, games, and a song performance by the children of our students. On Christmas Eve one of our Egyptian students dressed up in a Santa suit and passed out presents purchased and wrapped by Student Affairs to each of the students' children. This year we have 13 children on campus and it was thanks to a generous donation from a family in the US that we were able to buy toys and shoes for each child. Finally, because most of our students are unable to return to their home countries and families during the Christmas break, Student Affairs encouraged staff and faculty to open their homes to the students on Christmas. Several threw parties and dinners for the students including President Elie Haddad and his wife Mireille, who hosted the students for dinner at their apartment after Christmas.



Top right: The students and the children playing a game
 Bottom: Our "Santa Claus" with his son

Community Prayer Requests

Rabih Hasbani, Translation Coordinator: "Please pray for the New Year to be fruitful and for our students to seize every opportunity to learn and grow. Personally I ask for prayer as I seek to understand and live out God's vision for my life."

Sisil al-Agha, Academic Coordinator: "Pray for our students, especially our first year students as they finish the Communication Module. This module was a step up, academically, compared to their previous coursework, and many have found it difficult. Pray that we are able to support them as they finish the final weeks of this module."

Ali Khalil, Executive Assistant: "I ask for prayer for the Compassionate Care Ministry program, that it will be impactful in our community in the New Year without being a burden on our students. Also, personally I would like to focus more on my theological studies this year." (Ali is a part-time student at ABTS, working on his Master of Divinity)

Jesse Wheeler, IMES Projects Manager: "The Master of Religion has its two-week residency this January as part of the MENA Christianity module and we ask for prayers that the program goes well and that it is an illuminating experience for all involved. On a personal level, my wife and I are expecting our second child in early March and ask for prayer for our growing family."

Rana Wazir, Registrar: "Next month will mark the first full year of our Online Certificate in Ministry program. Praise God for this incredible and inspiring year. Additionally our most recent term began the first week of January and we ask for prayers for the new and continuing students and our instructor Abed. Strong prayers are needed for some of our Syrian students living in and outside of Syria in precarious situations."