



Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

November 2016

First-Year Students: Life Journey, Ministry and Vision

This academic year, we are blessed to be serving 30 full-time residential students, including 13 first-year students who arrived in October. In this article, we would like to share with you the stories of some of our new students, their passion for the Lord and for the ministry, their vision and how will their theological education plays a role in realizing it.

Rami from Syria

I came to know about the Lord Jesus through a Christian friend of mine who invited me to church, the Evangelical Baptist Church in Swaida. After a while, I was fully convinced that the Word of God was true and Christ was the Savior who came to take away the sins of the world. I came to Christ, and my wife Rasha, who is also a student here, followed me. I



Rami & Rasha

serve at church with the sound equipment, distributing books, leading Bible studies, sharing faith in Swaida and later in Mount Lebanon, where the majority are from our former community. Our vision is to spread the gospel among that community. Studying theology will help me and my wife to know the Bible more in a structured and academic way. This will prepare me to be a good servant and teacher. **Prayer request:** Pray that the Lord would help me and my wife to overcome the challenges of studying and that He would bless our marriage and help us in raising our son.

Farah from Lebanon

I grew up in a church-going family. As years went by, things got bad between my dad and mom, and I started doubting the goodness of God. After that, I got into a marriage that severed me from my loved ones, and its disintegration severed me from my only



Farah

child. In my despair, I challenged my uncle to either turn me into a believer or that I would turn him into an atheist. The challenge ended in my complete surrender to the Lord Jesus. Before enrolling at ABTS, I used to have a one-on-one ministry with believers who needed discipleship. I am also a part-time intern with Life Agape (Cru in this region). My vision is to reach out for the abused and neglected women and children of the Lebanese society more effectively. Part of my vision is to serve among prostitutes as well. And in the long run, I would like to advocate changing Lebanese legislation to give women more protection. My theological training will help me find scientific answers if I am to share with an atheist about the authenticity of the death and resurrection of Christ. **Prayer request:** Pray that the Lord would help me reach marginalized women and children in the Lebanese society and to present them with the gospel, as well as change Lebanese legislation to increase legal safeguards for them.

Habil from Sudan

I grew up in a Christian family. When I grew up, though, I went away to tend goats and cattle in the village of Kaduqli, the capital of South Kordofan state, Sudan. When I turned fifteen, I left to the capital, Khartoum, with nothing, because a war had emerged in Kaduqli. There I went to an open conference for the Anglican Church of Omdurman. I heard about sin, death and the need for repentance, and I made a decision to be entirely for Christ. I started working with the youth and young adults at church, who range



Habil

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from fourteen to twenty-five-year olds. My vision is to serve the people in Sudan, for many are in need of sound teaching. I aim to start a discipleship school when I return to Sudan. Studying theology will help me to better answer questions about the Word of God. **Prayer request:** Please pray for the safety of my family in Sudan who are in South Kordofan state where there is war. Also, that I recover quickly from my throat illness.

Male student from Sudan

When I turned thirteen, two young men from a Presbyterian Church came to our town in Eastern Sudan and formed home groups with the young men of my extended family. Then, one day, they shared the gospel with us, and I felt my sin and my need of a savior. That’s when I asked Christ to cleanse me and to make me new. At university, there was a big group of Christians; we had debates on campus, Christian book exhibitions and forums. I was head of the spiritual library and later became the general secretary of Christian students in all universities and higher education institutes until now. The Lord burdened my heart to start a ministry among Christian college students in order to equip future Sudanese ministers who are well-learned. My vision is to build a firm foundation for the Church on which to stand and to provide a sound understanding of Christian doctrines to the upcoming generation of Sudanese ministers. My theological training will help me in doing so. **Prayer request:** The Church in Sudan needs to give discipleship lessons in a systematic way. Pray with me that I will be able to help

through opening a center that supplies churches with programs for discipleship, leading to a firm foundation in Scripture.

Wael from Egypt

I accepted Christ as a personal Savior during the last hour of 1999. After that, I had a passion to win souls for the Lord; I had a little Gideon Bible in my pocket all the time, and I would go about spreading God’s Word to the people. I also served with the young people at the Presbyterian church of Nagaa Hammadi, Upper Egypt. Now I attend the Baptist church of Asyut pastored by Zakaria Shehata. Through Pastor Zakaria, I also studied with GLS (Global Leadership School), a school run by Korean missionaries. My vision is to plant missional churches, to pastor and disciple believers and to reach out for the homeless. My theological training will help me in my hope to establish a church in both Syria and Egypt with the help of my life partner, Noura, who is also a student here from Syria, and then plant churches in the 10/40 window. **Prayer request:** Pray for me and my wife Noura, who also studies here, that the Lord might bless our marriage. We got married two weeks ago, at the beginning of November, in Damascus!



Wael

Would you consider supporting the equipping of future leaders for the Arab Church?



We invite you to partner with us in fulfilling our mission of serving the Church in the Arab world

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Nabila & Hanna

Hanna and Nabila are back again to continue their theological education! In the 2011-2012 academic year, this Sudanese couple began their pursuit of obtaining a Master of Divinity. They then had to suspend their education, for they had a baby girl and then another followed. During their absence, they were serving the Lord in Sudan where Hanna led Bible studies at his Presbyterian church, while Nabila served in the ladies’ meeting. Lift them up in prayer for the continuing of their studies and raising their children.

Recent Posts on the Blog of the Institute of Middle East Studies

Every week, the Institute of Middle East Studies (IMES) addresses a variety of topics significant to the Middle East and North Africa on its blog site, IMESLebanon.wordpress.com. We present you with the following sampling of posts published in September, October and November 2016:

[Can Someone Please Take Out the Trash? A Family Systems Approach to Lebanese Dysfunction](#), by Robert Hamd

[Is It for the Poor to Seek Justice and Liberation?](#) by Rupen Das

[Flush Out your Toxic Thinking about Islam before Election Day!](#)

by Martin Accad

[Christian Politics at the Expense of Christian Faith in Lebanon](#),

by Wissam al-Saliby

[The Commodification of Mission in the Muslim World](#), by Mike Kuhn

[Lausanne Global Analysis: The Refugee and the Body of Christ](#),

by Arthur Brown

[Do We Lack the Moral Imagination? Part One: Demasking the Scapegoat](#), by Suzie Lahoud

[Do We Lack the Moral Imagination? Part Two: Seeing the Other](#), by Suzie Lahoud



The Annual Student Retreat

On November 4 and 5, the Student Affairs team held the annual students' retreat in a Christian conference center in a village in Mount Lebanon. On the first day, following a time of praise and worship, the activities centered on the main theme: identity. The following day, Joseph Najem, pastor of the Free Evangelical Church in Beirut, led sessions on identity.

The goal from this retreat was to allow students to see how their past (their culture, family, community etc.) has played a great role in forming their characters or identity and to reflect on their new identity in Christ. As students sat in small groups, there was a sheer openness in sharing their stories. Other than spiritual goals, the aim was to have the students together in

fellowship, get to know each other more, have fun and relax in a place surrounded by nature.

Prayer Requests from the Student Affairs Team

“Please pray that we would be able to provide our students with a family atmosphere as they face the challenge of leaving their homeland and loved ones and coming to a campus and student environment with different cultures. As students get to know each other and learn about their respective cultures, please pray for unity, a spirit of acceptance, peace in relationship among our students. Also, pray for the Lord to provide as some of our students face challenging financial situations. Finally, we need prayers that our goal of nurturing an environment for transformation for the students will be achieved.”