

# ARAB BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

ABTS Newsletter

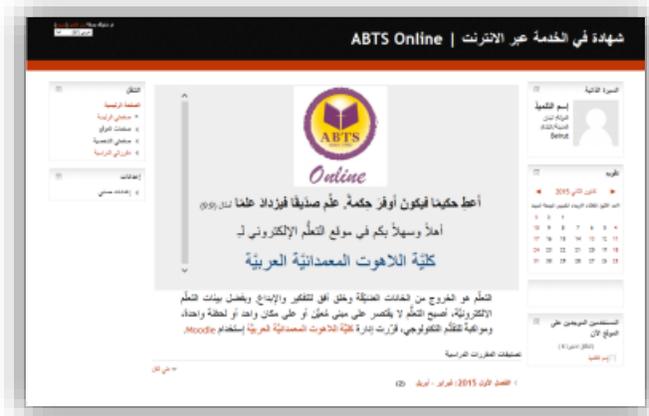
January 2015

### ABTS Online

This February, the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary is excited to introduce its newest program in the Department of Theology to serve the Church in the Middle East and North Africa. The Certificate in Ministry is an Arabic-language, Internet-based program of study that aims to equip Arab Christian leaders all over the world for ministry. The Certificate in Ministry engages students in a systematic study facilitated by ABTS tutors. The two-year program centers on Biblical theological formation and its application in the Arab cultural context. The degree requires 14 core courses and 3 elective courses. Courses include Church History in the Middle East, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Biblical Interpretation, Surveys of the Old Testament and the New Testament, Effective Bible Teaching, and Small Groups for Church Expansion.

Just like ABTS's traditional residential degrees, in addition to academic growth, the online Certificate program places equal importance on spiritual formation. ABTS will work with church leaders in the region to select a mentor for each student, to encourage them in their spiritual and academic progress.

The courses, adapted from the TEACH program by the ABTS Academic Team, has formation as a primary value



and has formative elements embedded in every course. TEACH is a project of the Middle East Association of Theological Education, in partnership with the pan-Arab Christian satellite television channel SAT-7. TEACH developed theological and formative courses for training leaders in the Arab world with two streams of delivery: online through seminaries and over satellite broadcasting.

In each course, students pursuing ABTS's online Certificate in Ministry courses are grouped into cohorts facilitated by a tutor. Each cohort has at least five students and no more than 20. Students are grouped into course cohorts based on their geographical location. In their native Arabic, each student will study the lesson content, and interact with the learning activities online, such as lesson questions, quizzes, case studies, forums, and writing assignments.

**ABTS Online Coordinator, Elias Ghazal, on how the new program differs from the traditional ABTS education: "The Certificate in Ministry offers a strategic way to reach out to students all over the world. It provides ABTS with a virtual classroom to train ministry leaders and prepare them for effective ministry. There are various legal, financial, and personal limitations that hinder prospective students in the Middle East from attending ABTS classes. With online education, students can benefit from seminary courses without having to cross borders, pay travel tickets, or interrupt their church ministry. It also attracts students who are looking for flexibility in their program of study."**



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ABTS President Elie Haddad on the importance of developing online theological education in the Arab world: *“One of the major challenges for the Church in the Arab world is leadership. As the Church is rapidly growing there is an increased need for leadership formation, forming leaders who are well-trained in engaging their Bible and engaging their culture so that they can make the Good News of the Gospel relevant to their communities.*

*There are very few seminaries that are legally able to train non-Christian background leaders in Arabic, in an Arab context. ABTS is one of these seminaries. Our students come from all over the Middle East and North Africa. However, due to capacity limitations and due to the inability of many to move to Lebanon for training, there is a need for more accessible education. We need to be able to take the learning to the leaders where they are serving. Hundreds more will be able to be equipped and prepared for ministry through this mode of delivery.*

*At the institutional level, online learning allows us to go to learners who cannot come to the seminary, thus increasing accessibility and providing much needed training for hundreds or even thousands more. Online learning also allows us to package the expertise of the few and distribute it to the many. There are not enough qualified theologians/educators who can cover the huge need in the Arab world.*

*At the instructional level, online education is proving to be very effective in motivating and engaging learners. Using rich media in online education helps bring life to concepts and processes. It expands the learning environment from a classroom setting. It fosters inquiry and problem-solving skills. It facilitates skill formation, provides flexibility, and offers interaction and communication. Students learn how to become independent life-long learners by managing their own learning activities.”*

**Prayer Requests**

- Praise God for the Certificate in Ministry program. May He be glorified through the numerous possibilities of this program. May the Arab Church leaders be better equipped and more effective as a result of the program.
- Pray that *ABTS Online* will reach the students who have the right mindset and commitment to persevere and succeed in online learning.
- Please pray that God would give the online tutors wisdom to deal with students and situations appropriately.
- Pray that our new program would be able to meet and overcome challenges. Specifically pray for the security of its students and that the right local mentors will be matched with each student. Pray that the Program Coordinators would have wisdom for the other unknown challenges ahead. May they continue to learn from their experiences and adapt the courses as needed.



*Are you interested in supporting ABTS Online and its aim to equip Arab leaders all over the world?*

*Contact Wissam al-Saliby, Partnerships Manager, at [walsaliby@abtslebanon.org](mailto:walsaliby@abtslebanon.org) for more information of how together we can make ABTS's online Certificate in Ministry more accessible for all Arab church leaders.*

**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.*

### ***Campus Life: Students' Children Celebrate Christmas, Receive Gifts***

From all of us at ABTS, we hope you and your families had a wonderful and blessed Christmas. It was a joyous and peaceful Christmas this year in Lebanon, but for many of our non-Lebanese students and their young children, this can be a difficult time as they are away from their homes and families.

This year, God blessed us with nine boys and eight girls on campus, who accompany their parents as they pursue their theological formation at ABTS. Thirteen are school-aged and four are nursery-aged. ABTS was able to purchase presents for our students' children with the generous support of our friends and partners. The children gathered on Christmas Eve as one of our students dressed up like Santa Claus and passed out toys and new clothing. We are so grateful to our generous partners for making this Christmas a special day for our seminary students' children.



***Sponsor a Student's Child*** | In addition to providing scholarship support, we invite friends and partners to help us provide for the additional cost of US \$7,000/child ABTS incurs each year to cover the school tuition or nursery costs and room and board of our students' children. For more information, please contact ABTS Partnerships Manager Wissam al-Saliby at [walsaliby@abtslebanon.org](mailto:walsaliby@abtslebanon.org)