

ARAB BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

www.abtslebanon.org

Newsletter - August 2014

A Kurdish Heart at ABTS

Nihad joined ABTS staff in September 2013. In this first-person narrative (translated from Arabic), Nihad shares with us his journey that led him to working at our Seminary and to ministry among his people, Syria's Kurds.

My name is Nihad. I am Kurdish from the province of Aleppo in Syria. My town is called Afrin, located on the Syrian-Turkish border. Afrin is one of the three Kurdish provinces in Syria and 95% of its population is made up of Kurds who speak both Arabic and Kurmanji (Kurmanji is one of the four Kurdish dialects in the Middle East).

I first heard about Christ over the radio when I joined the compulsory military service in Syria. In 2003, I came to Lebanon to work in or-



Nihad delivering a sermon in Kurdish (Beirut 2013)

der to support my family. My Lebanese neighbors kept inviting me to their church but I never accepted the invitation until they gave me a little book entitled: *How to Become a New Creation*. I accepted their invitation and went with them to church to pray for my brother who had been missing for four years. After that church visit, my family in Syria heard from my brother for the first time since four years. I returned to Syria and that is when I started experiencing God's hand and work in my life. I went through some really difficult situations through

which I encountered Christ who revealed himself to me and told me: "Do not be afraid, I am with you. I am your rock and I love you." Since then, God has used me to serve Him in places I always dreamed to be in.

In 2007, I returned to Lebanon. God showed me in a dream the church which I would be serving in Lebanon. I was disciplined and baptized in the same church where I started serving among Kurdish Syrians and other Arabs, preaching in Kurdish and Arabic. I am still a member of

this church in one of Beirut's suburbs where I preach every Tuesday in Kurdish, in addition to my pastoral and follow-up ministries. We recently built a team of seven people for a ministry called "Kingdom of God", which includes discipleship for Kurds and Syrians. Our vision is to equip servants for Syria, Kurds and Arabs, putting each and everyone's gifts at His service.

I studied two years at a Bible school to get a deeper knowledge of the Bible. Once I finished the program I started looking for a job. I had told God I want to

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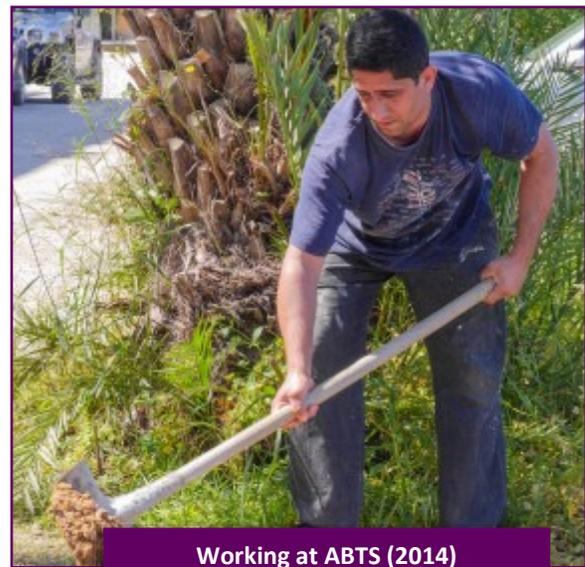
work for Him. Within a few weeks, ABTS contacted me to tell me about the vacancy as a technician in the facilities department. Since September 2013, I became part of the facilities and maintenance team.

I learned new things at ABTS, such as patience and living up to my responsibilities. I started dreaming of a Kurdish seminary ever since I came to ABTS! I have also met many new people from different Arab and western countries as students, faculty and staff. I learned a lot from their experiences and ministry. I also learned how I can contextualize their evange-

lism and ministry approaches to use with my people. From these interactions, I have developed a greater understanding and respect for different ethnic groups, cultural backgrounds, traditions and history. All this will benefit my ministry among my people, because even Kurdish people have diverse Kurdish backgrounds and tribal groups who speak different languages and each have a unique history.



Nihad leading Tuesday's Kurdish service (Beirut 2014)



Working at ABTS (2014)

Partner with Us: Sponsor a Student!

Students come to Lebanon to enroll at ABTS from across the Arab World in response to God's calling on their lives to train for service in His Kingdom. The challenge is that neither they nor their sending churches can afford to cover their tuition or residency fees. As a ministry with a mission to train faithful Arab men and women for effective service, ABTS accepts qualified, eligible students and then sets out to raise the needed scholarship support for each student. In doing so, we seek partners who would invest in God's work in the Arab World

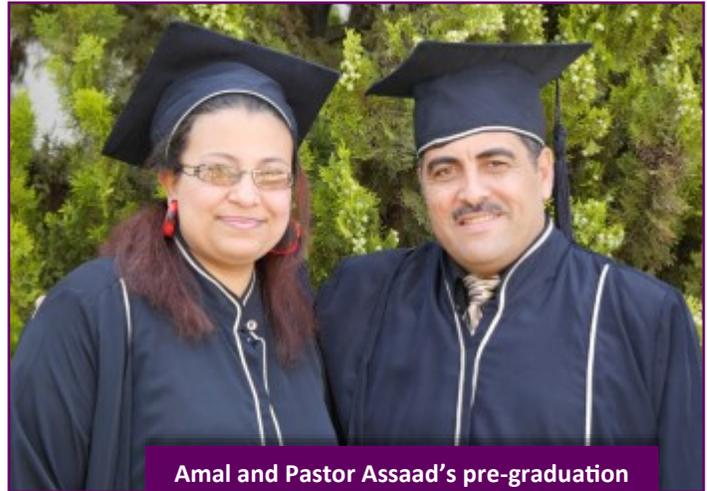
through providing scholarship support for one or more of our students and/or their children. The annual cost of tuition, fees and room and board per student is US\$ 9,500 and the cost for the nursery and/or schooling and room and board of our students' children is US\$ 7,000 per child.

Manal*, graduate from Morocco: "Before coming to ABTS, I thought it was impossible for a couple from our background to continue our education, and with three children! I learned from this experience that if God wants something, He will make all things work to accomplish His purposes."

**Not her real name*

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.

Pastor Assaad and his wife Amal, graduates from Egypt: "ABTS provided a suitable atmosphere for studying where we could also bring our children along. The theological formation we received and ministry opportunities in Lebanon improved our ministry on many levels. Acting Academic Dean Dr. Perry Shaw kept reminding us that the more we mature as Christians, the more our churches become mature which in turn will definitely reflect upon the whole community."



Amal and Pastor Assaad's pre-graduation photo at ABTS, June 2014

August Prayer Requests

August may be a calm month for many, but at ABTS it's just as busy as every other month!

Please pray for our admissions team who is receiving and reviewing applications from new candidates to study at ABTS. The team is asking for wisdom in selecting the right candidates, as ABTS's registrar Rana Zailaa says: "I believe it is a huge responsibility, please pray for God's guidance in the selection process and wisdom to accept those whom He has called to His service."

Please pray for the travel of our returning students in September. Second and third year students begin classes on September 8, 2014. Also, please pray for the granting of visas for first year students who will start arriving early October. Please lift them up with their families in prayer as they prepare to leave their ministry, community and country to begin a new journey in their lives.



Our old faculty building renovated, now capable of accommodating 24 students in 12 double rooms

We want to praise the Lord for helping us finish the renovation of the old faculty building to become our new students' residency building. We have finished the housing section and it is ready to accommodate new students; however, other parts of the building need further work. Pray for our facilities team as they prepare the renovated building and follow up with the renovation of our kitchen and dining facilities.