

ARAB BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

ABTS Newsletter

November 2013

First Year Students Share Their Journeys with the Lord

This year God entrusted us with 18 new students—an increase of 7 students over last year. Coming from Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Sudan and Yemen, each student adds to ABTS' cultural diversity. In this newsletter, you will read about the journeys of some these students with God prior to joining ABTS.



Fouad, 26 years, Sudan

My father is Sudanese and my mother is Syrian; both my parents are faithful servants at our church, who guided me to the love of Christ. I have been serving in the worship team at our

church for 12 years now. Our team's ministry goes beyond the walls of the church; we evangelize among the youth through worship in Sudan. The team uses Northern beats and melodies with Christian lyrics; the combination attracts the youth and evokes questions. I also lead the teenagers worship team; it is a big responsibility since they look up to me as a leader. I have a role in discipling and mentoring them, for this I need to have a deeper knowledge in the Bible and receive leadership training. Even though leaving home to study theology in Lebanon was not easy, my parents encouraged me to trust God's calling for my life.

Student stories continue on page 2



Elias, 20 years, Lebanon

I never had faith in Jesus until I turned 17. My family was a traditional Lebanese Christian family, who attended church on occasions. Before I met with Jesus, my friend and I always thought of twisted illegal ways to make money. One day a man shared Jesus with me, I prayed and asked Jesus to change me. I decided to live for Jesus alone, but did not have a community, until I was told about a home group. It was the first time I ever learned about worship and Bible study - my first time to enjoy God with others. Later, I became involved in a church planting ministry. I am only 20, and my vision is to see churches planted in every neighborhood in Lebanon and that God would use me to fulfill this vision. Studying theology at ABTS will not only give me the proper academic education but also equip me with practical tools for my ministry.

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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.

Gabi, 28 years, Syria

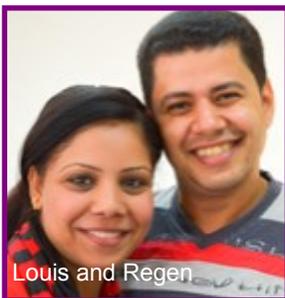


Before joining ABTS I worked with Life Agape Syria as an IT technician, video editor, and web designer. I came to Lebanon to study theology in order to use my expertise and gifts in ministry. I always wanted to use media for evangelism through short movies and drama. I have had experience in writing scripts for short movies, however, it was challenging for me to write a script with a strong biblical message.

I knew then that I lacked biblical knowledge and that I had so much to learn as a servant, to be able to use media as a tool to reach others with the Gospel. When I go back to Syria I am hoping to become a full time servant with Life Agape, and take part in more ministries, which include evangelism and following up on new believers.

“I have a role in mentoring and discipling teenagers in the worship team I lead. This requires deeper biblical knowledge and training to acquire leadership skills — something I’m seeking at ABTS” Fouad, Sudan

Louis, 28 years, Egypt



In 2006, I discovered that God’s calling for me is in the church planting ministry. I joined a church planting team on that year until 2013; the first home group our team led was at my town in Al-Menya province in Egypt. Later on, I became the leader of a team which grew in number from 3 members into 20 servants, planting churches in 19 different villages in our province, some of which were unreached areas. I met Regen, who is now my husband, at one of our

mission trips and he was the worship leader. We got married on the 16th of May 2013; 14 days after our marriage we attended a conference organized by the union of servants in Upper Egypt. The conference included profound reflections from the bible, so my husband and I felt how much biblical knowledge we lack even though we have been in ministry for a long time. We could not find a fulltime program in our province, however, we were told about ABTS by pastor Assaad who is a current student. It was a hard decision because studying theology in Lebanon meant we had to leave our jobs, established ministries, and families. Despite all the challenges, God gave us peace and opened every door for this three years journey.

Mona*, 35 years, Algeria

I come from Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria. I grew up in a Berber family with 9 other siblings. I started attending church since I was 15. God had put on my heart serving among the church’s children at Sunday school;

not many in our churches give attention to children’s growth in Christ, so I took the responsibility believing that those children are the future leaders of the Algerian church. I am also involved in the women’s ministry. This ministry started off with four women praying and studying the bible together and we kept on growing. It helped many women bring their husbands to Christ through fervent prayers. I am also part of the worship team however, when I return home, my ministry will be mainly with children.

* Not her real name

Read one more story about a student from Egypt on our website www.abtslebanon.org

First Module for 2nd & 3rd year students: Courses in “Empowering Leadership”

For the church to fulfill its missional mandate it needs faithful, high caliber leaders who recognize God-given gifts in themselves and in others; Leaders who use their influence and skills to bring to light the divine gifting in the whole Body of Christ.

Biblical Perspectives on Leadership

Taught by [Perry Shaw](#), Professor of Christian Education, this course will observe leadership principles in action through the lives of some of the people in the Bible, and examine biblical paradigms for Christian leadership, particularly as seen in the life of Jesus and in the early church. The goal of this course is to allow the Scriptures to shape the student’s present and future leadership.

Living Lessons from Church History and Biblical Leaders Engaging Culture

These two courses seek to provide tools for reflecting upon the relationship between culture and leadership, allowing Scriptures to assess culture in terms of reflecting both the character of God and the Fall. The “Living Lessons from Church History” course will be



Personal Journeys in Leadership class with Graham Cheesman (seated) & Paul Sanders to his right

taught by [Daniel Chetti](#), Associate Professor of History & Theology, while Perry Shaw will teach the “Biblical Leaders Engaging Cultures” course.

Personal Journeys in Leadership

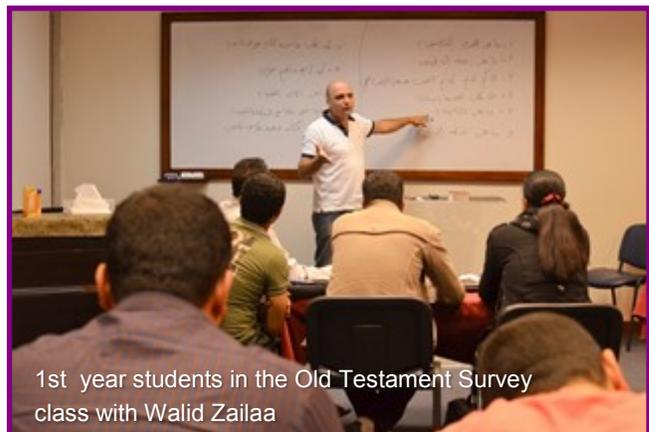
This course seeks to nurture a desire within emerging leaders to walk with others in their leadership pilgrimage, and to provide tools for influencing and motivating all members of the Body of Christ to fulfill their potential in the realization of the Church’s mission. The course was given by [Paul Sanders](#) and [Graham Cheesman](#).

First Module for 1st Year Students: “Old and New Testament Surveys” Courses

The purpose of this module is to lay a foundation for successful theological study at ABTS. Many of our new students arrive with false expectations and often lack a full understanding of the purpose of theological education. The course guides students to more profound self-understanding, by helping them to view their study through the lenses of the Kingdom of God and their future ministries.

Old Testament and New Testament Surveys

This unit will present an overview of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The “Old Testament Survey”



1st year students in the Old Testament Survey class with Walid Zailaa

course, given by [Walid Zailaa](#), will focus on understanding the biblical flow of history, seeing the unified story presented in the Old Testament, and relating the individual books to this history and story. On the other hand, the New Testament Survey will be given by [Ara Badalian](#), church pastor in Iraq and bible instructor, to help students gain a better understanding of how each book in the New Testament contributes to our understanding of God’s redemptive work and the acknowledgement of His Kingdom.

Church History

This course will introduce students to key people, places and events in church history as a first step towards seeing God’s sovereign purposes across history, understanding our theological heritage, under-



1st year students in the Church History class with Rodolphe Hayek

standing the contemporary church, learning from the mistakes of history, respect and cooperation with other Christians, and an appreciation of their contribution to the big story. The church history course is given by Rodolph Hayek, researcher and adjunct faculty at ABTS.

Christian Doctrine

This course is designed to give students an overview of the general boundaries of Christian orthodoxy and a shared theological language as essential tools for the theological work that will take place at ABTS. This course is given by [Ghassan Khalaf](#), professor of biblical studies and the former president of ABTS.

***Student’s Retreat 2013:
Ensuring the holistic
wellbeing of our students***

The annual students retreat was held on November 8 and 9. It explored the importance of self-leadership for Christians.

Even though all our students speak Arabic, they are overwhelmed as they try to balance between meeting with the academic demands and adjusting to this new lifestyle and to the cultural blend. The student retreat this year was an opportunity for 2nd and 3rd year students to share their experiences with the 1st year students, prepare for the year’s compassionate care ministry, enjoy fellowship and grow in unity together along with our staff.

Abram, 1st year: *“It was a great time. I really felt that we are a big family. I wish we could have more than one retreat each year.”*

Hanan, 3rd year: *“It was a great opportunity to get to know the 1st year students better. Small group discussions were realistic and really benefited me.”*

Prayer requests

Please keep Rodolph Hayek, researcher and adjunct faculty at ABTS, and his wife, children and family, in fervent prayers as he is in a critical condition fighting cancer.

Pray with us for our first year students as they try to adapt to the new culture, food and lifestyle since they come from different Arab countries. Also pray for the students’ children who are struggling to adapt to their new schools and new curriculum, especially the children of the first year students.