



ARAB BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

ABTS Newsletter

October 2013

Student Summer Ministries

Part 2: Syria, Morocco, Sudan, and Iraq

On September 9, 2013, second and third year students resumed their studies after two months of ministry in their home countries. In our September newsletter, we wrote on the summer ministries of two Egyptian couples. The following are some highlights of our students from Syria, Morocco, Sudan, and Iraq. For part 1 and part 3 of summer ministry stories, visit www.abtslebanon.org and read our September newsletter edition at www.abtslebanon.org/newsletters.

Micheline from Syria

This year was very busy; I went to London where we run a project that targets Arab tourists. We reached out to people on the streets and under the rain from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. One of the beautiful experiences was when a woman came up to me and told me she became a follower of Christ after watching the movie we gave her 5 years ago, and then started reading the Bible. The Lord had spoken to her in a vision. She told us "I couldn't tell anyone because I live in a mansion. I'm part of the ruling family in my home country."

We went back to our church in Syria and heard that relatives of a church member of ours had been killed. Many other members also lost loved ones, so my husband went from house to house, funeral to funeral, consoling their families.

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Conference for Life Agape's Syrian team at the Cedars, Lebanon



Demolished neighborhood in Syria

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.

My husband and I are the leaders of Life Agape ministry in Syria, a non-denominational ministry serving those who are displaced within the country. In these difficult times, people are seeking and coming to

the Lord; therefore we desire to influence and support Syrian churches to reach out to their Syrian brothers. Our team members are working zealously even though they face death every day while carrying out their ministry.



Syrian women waiting for their turn to receive the aid

Early September at the Cedars in Lebanon, Life Agape ministry had a conference for 90 of its team members who are living in Syria; it was a great conference of encouragement. Please pray for the protection of our staff and church members. Also pray that we will be able to handle any losses if God allows it to happen.

Read more stories on our website

www.abtslebanon.org

Samir and Rima, a couple from Morocco

First person account by Rima | My husband has been working on translating the Bible into the Tamazight (our local Berber language) since 1997. When we returned this summer, my husband spent most of his time with consultants leading training sessions for people on how to translate the Bible into Tamazight. The main tool was “Paratext Scripture Translation software”. They have finished reviewing some of the books in the Old Testament including the book of “Jeremiah” and “Proverbs”.

Upon our arrival in Morocco, we organized a meeting for couples we have been praying with for years. At their request, instead of bringing in gifts we carried with us courses from ABTS. I gave sessions on “Early Childhood Psychological Development”, and my husband gave sessions on “Financial Management of the Church”.

After this we prepared a 10 day summer camp which is organized by our church every August. My husband was



Worship time at the summer camp in Morocco

responsible for morning devotions and some of the teaching, while I took care of the Sunday School and Youth activities. A highlight of the camp was a visit from our brother Elie, ABTS President.

Throughout our trip, we found ourselves in a position of counselors for young people and couples. Courses we took at ABTS helped us give people constructive spiritual advice. We observed an increase in women attending church, unlike the previous years.

Ammar from Sudan

I took part in organizing a youth conference, attended by 15 to 20 year-old youth coming from wide variety of churches in Sudan. Courses like “Evangelism and Discipleship” came in very handy as I delivered some of the sessions. We relied on local financial support and so God provided for us during 3 days and a half. During the conference, 20 youth came to the Lord so eager to serve him. I was able listen to them, and act as a counselor at some points thanks to courses I took on counseling at ABTS.

By the end of the conference I started a bible study on Mondays with the youth and delivered Sunday sermons at my church. I consider it a very valuable experience

from which I learned a lot. After the conference I served at home churches in non-Christian neighborhoods, many neighbors were drawn to the worship music and started joining us. Next summer, I would like to organize a conference focused on fasting and prayer for our youth to understand the importance of fasting and prayer.



Youth Conference, evening lecture in Sudan

Atheer from Iraq

Prior to leaving ABTS, I received a request by the Presbyterian council in Iraq to pastor a church in Kirkuk. I accepted the request, despite the challenges. As a substitute pastor I delivered Sunday sermons, led



Atheer pastoring the church in Kirkuk, Iraq

Bible study and prayer meetings, and made pastoral visits to the elderly and cancer patients. I chose to lead the Bible study sessions based on Dr. Perry Shaw’s (ABTS faculty) course. The

congregation found this approach more interactive and educational. The church also supports women leaders in carrying out prison ministry, which targets 600 women at the district’s prison every year.

Iraq’s stability is not improving and in July alone 2000 Iraqis died and there were 22 car bombings across Iraq.

The church in Iraq is being attacked and threatened by terrorists. The church building is similar to an army barricade, with barbwire and protection. Therefore, they are losing a great number of members every month. Most Christians are either moving to Erbil (Iraqi Kurdish capital) or emigrating to Europe or America. Even in the midst of this chaos, pastoring the church was an excellent experience.



Sunday School at Kirkuk Church in Iraq

IMES Blog: a Voice for Transformation

Each week, the Institute of Middle East Studies (IMES) addresses a variety of topics significant to the Middle East and North African (MENA) region on its blog site, IMESLebanon.wordpress.com. Our posts provide well-informed views and analyses in a prophetic, sensitive, and objective manner in an effort to fulfill IMES's mandate *to bring about positive transformation in thinking and practice between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and beyond*. The weekly posts are published by Thursday evening Beirut time (morning US time). Occasionally the IMES blog publishes posts by guest bloggers. Please find below a sampling of our most recent topics discussed:



Martin Accad, IMES Director

- [You – Yes YOU Can Influence the Future of Syria!](#)
- [Redeeming the Enemy: A Call to Civil Disobedience](#)
- [The Day Hamas Walked Away from Damascus: What Future for the MENA Church?](#)



Arthur Brown, IMES Assistant Director

- [Survival Sex: When Living Becomes the Ultimate Sacrifice](#)
- [Trafficking of Migrant Domestic Workers: A Tale of Two Cities](#)
- [Whose Side Is God On?](#)



Rupen Das, MRel in MENA Studies Director and Director of LSESD Relief and Development Program

- [Is there a limit to hospitality?](#)
- [Saving Syria](#)
- [Humanitarian Aid as a Weapon of War in Syria](#)



Jesse Wheeler, IMES Project Manager

- [Remembering Well: A 911 Reflection from the American at IMES](#)
- [Faith & Politics: The Reign of God in Christianity and Islam](#)
- ["Is Allah God?" 5 Reasons I Am Convinced \(A Primer to a Much Larger Conversation\)](#)



Wissam al-Saliby, ABTS Partnerships Manager

- [Children Participating in Syria's Armed Conflict](#)
- [A Christian, Rights-Based Approach to Egyptian Developments](#)
- [The Outlook for the Church in Sudan](#)



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