



# Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

ABTS Newsletter

September 2013

## The Admission Committee's role in fulfilling ABTS' mission

**Rana Wazir, Registrar** - As ABTS seeks to serve the Church in our region through equipping faithful men and women for effective service, the role of the admission committee is critical. It is this committee which accepts men and women in order to fulfill this mission.

The admission committee begins its journey on the last week of June every year. The President, Registrar, representatives from the Theology Department, Student Affairs Department, and IMES Department meet on a weekly basis to discuss the application of each prospective student. Accepting and rejecting applicants is a responsibility that the committee takes very seriously, knowing that the future and ministry of those applicants depends on the decisions made in that meeting. We expect our applicants to be strong believers who are highly recommended by their churches and sent as future leaders in their home churches and countries. It's very important for us to have church endorsements since our mission is to train leaders for the church. The applicants are expected to have a few years of ministry experience, a calling to study, and a vision for the future to go back to their countries and serve in their churches.

In this year's first two admission meetings, we had 8 applications; a small number in comparison to the year before where we had 30 applications with which to start. At first the committee was wondering what God's plans are, especially that only a small number of students applied. However, a turning point occurred at the beginning of August. Instead of the mere 8 applications we had, we started receiving not less than 8 applications every week and ended up with more than 35 applicants! On September 1st, 2013, we closed applications (except for Lebanese and for Syrians) and accepted 20 new



### In this issue

- The Admission Committee's role in fulfilling ABTS mission, page 1
- Student Summer Ministries Part 1: Egypt, page 2
- Prayer requests, page 5

**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.

students for the 2013-2014 Academic year resulting in a total of 46 full-time students at ABTS. The number increased tremendously from previous years and around 20% compared to the last academic year. These 20 new students come from Sudan, Egypt, Syria, Algeria, Yemen, and Lebanon. This group of students is also considered more diverse than groups from past years. Yemen is a new country in our list of student home countries. One of our new students is sent by his Catholic Church, which is unprecedented at ABTS. Moreover, one of the students is a journalist in a widely read newspaper in her home country.

The past 2 months of admissions were challenging. The President, the Dean of Students, and I had planned a trip to Egypt to meet prospective students but this trip was cancelled

*It is exciting to see our student body growing every year. "We had made a commitment to God that if He sends us strategic leaders to be trained then we will not turn them down because of finances or limitations of facilities. This means that we have to trust God during our growing pains," says Elie Haddad, ABTS President.*

*With the 20% increase in students this year, God is giving us a bigger responsibility to provide them with adequate accommodations and facilities for their studies.*

*We invite you to partner with us and to contribute to equipping leaders to transform the Arab world. To know more, to receive prayer requests, to visit ABTS or to donate, please contact Wissam al-Saliby, ABTS Partnerships Manager, Email: [walsaliby@abtslebanon.org](mailto:walsaliby@abtslebanon.org) Landline +961 440 1922 ext. 251*



one day prior to departure due to the mass demonstrations yet again in Egypt. Moreover, the situation in the Arab countries didn't allow many of the applicants to send their papers on time, delaying the admission process. Some of our applicants couldn't leave their homes to acquire their official documents from authorities; others didn't have frequent access to internet. But no one can stop God's plan.

Our latest answered prayer was obtaining from Lebanese authorities new student visas. We had applied for the visas at the beginning of September, and we have seen how much God is in control.

So please keep us in your prayers as we start this academic year and pray for our students who are being equipped to go and serve the kingdom of God in the Arab World!

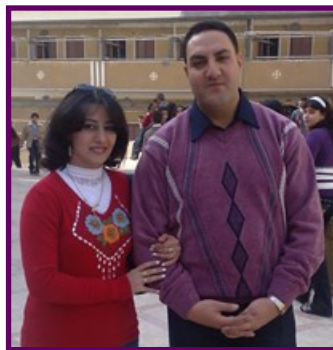
## Student Summer Ministries Part 1: Egypt

On September 9, 2013, our second and third year students resumed their studies after two months of ministry in their respective home countries. Between September 10 and September 13, most of the students shared what they had been doing during the summer. The following are some highlights of our Egyptian students. In the ABTS October newsletter, we will publish on the ministries of students from Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Algeria and Morocco. For additional stories on ministries, visit [www.abtslebanon.org](http://www.abtslebanon.org)

**Dina and Nader, a couple from Egypt** – First person account by Dina

We returned to Egypt to the Fayoum province. The situation in Egypt differed greatly from one province to another. Prior to August 14, 2013, the situation was relatively good; however, the economic situation has greatly deteriorated under the Muslim Brotherhood rule. We were saddened to learn that many church servants left their ministries to get a second job because their financial needs were growing and their income dropping.

The bulk of our ministry was to visit many servants and families we knew prior to coming to ABTS. They were all going through very difficult times and suffered from depression. We put significant effort in encouraging these and motivating these servants of God to keep working for the Kingdom of Heaven.



Before the 14<sup>th</sup> of August, Nader delivered three sermons to several churches in the Fayoum province and another time in the Al-Menya province, at the Sunday \_\_\_\_\_ services and the ladies' meetings.

*“Despite the burning of churches, I was very happy that people got together and prayed together (...) I truly understood what it meant in the book of Acts for the disciples to gather and pray for Peter to be released from prison – ‘behind closed doors’. We were the church!”*

However, everything changed after the government cracked down on protestors in Rabe’a Square on August 14; eight churches in my province were burned along with more than 80 churches across Egypt. From our balcony, we could see the house of the governor burning.

As these events unfolded, we spontaneously called for prayer on Facebook. As the State of Emergency was declared, we organized prayer groups virtually because the curfew began at 7 p.m. every night and we couldn't leave our homes. Despite the burning of churches, I was very happy that people got together and prayed together – even over the phones. We tried to meet



Nader and Dina leading a home group women's meeting in Shaheen area, Al-Menya

up in houses as much as we could to pray. It is then that I truly understood what it meant in the book of Acts for the disciples to gather and pray for Peter to be released from prison – “behind closed doors”. We were the church!

Under curfew, Sunday services stopped, since in Egypt they are held in the evenings considering that Sunday is a regular working day in our country. Many Muslim Egyptians were amazed at the silence of Christians in the face of the attacks; despite readily available weapons such as in the Sa’eed province, Christians did not defend themselves.

After mid-August, we had no ministries as all the churches had closed down. We had times of silence to pray and reflect while hiding in our homes. We succeeded at holding two house prayer meetings before coming back to Lebanon. And thanks to the curfew, Nader read many books and was able to study well.




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**Assaad and Amal, a couple from Egypt** – First person account by Assaad

Before leaving to Egypt, we organized two trainings in Jordan on church planting with a local Church for Egyptians, each training held approximately 25 persons. Later on, several trainees succeeded in establishing several small groups in their houses.

In Egypt, we had two simultaneous conferences for church leaders during the month of June, each for 50 persons. One conference on how to deal with abused women and facing violence, led by Amal; I led the other conference on church planting.

A key part of my ministry in Egypt was to visit servants and families, seeking to encourage them. The visits included many full-time servants who give all their time to serve 350 home groups.

In August the dramatic events started in Egypt and in the governorate of Al-Menya. Shops and business belonging to Christians, churches and ministry offices were systematically burned. All servants had abandoned the churches. Only two Christians died, taken by surprise during the attacks on their businesses.

In Al-Menya, only two church buildings survived the burning, one of which had been staunchly defended by Muslim neighbors against the Muslim Brotherhood thugs.

After these events, we organized a conference for women in an area where there weren’t any churches. Uneducated and some illiterate women were organizing bible study meetings in their homes. It was a great encouragement for us to meet with them, and we sought to encourage them in return.



The Saturday before coming back to ABTS, we organized a one-day conference for a team of 21 persons serving the Lord full-time. The purpose was primarily to encourage, support, and pray for the people who were depressed and frustrated, in the midst of the turmoil.

*Read an additional story from Egypt, on the ministry of Salam, a gifted woman student, on our website [www.abtslebanon.org](http://www.abtslebanon.org).*



Church Leaders conference at Al-Menya



Orthodox church burned down by thugs at Al-Menya



Burnt cars blocking the road at Al-Menya

**ABTS Prayer requests**

Dear Friends,

We ask you for prayer for our staff's personal lives. This year, most of our staff are passing through life changes. Some of them recently got married, others are having new babies, some are preparing for their weddings, some are changing homes, etc. Please pray so that they will be able to see God's hand during these life changes.

Prayers are especially needed for Rodolph Hayek, researcher and adjunct faculty at ABTS, who is undergoing treatment for cancer. Rodolph is also a pastor of a local church. Please pray for healing and strength during his treatment.

Thank you.

**The Newsletter Team.**