



# Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

## كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

ABTS Newsletter

July 2013

### Insight into MEC 2013

Between 17 and 21 June, IMES held its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Middle East Conference, titled **“Your Rights & My Responsibilities: Biblical and Islamic Perspectives on Human Rights.”** The conference was a unique opportunity for a mostly evangelical audience to interact with evangelical scholars, evangelical and secular human rights advocates, and a variety of Muslim community representatives and scholars, including Shiite and Sunni clerics.



In their feedback to IMES, MEC participants appreciated gaining knowledge about human rights issues in the MENA context, human trafficking, local perspectives on human rights, and were inspired to integrate human rights philosophies into the ministry. Participants equally appreciated building connections with Christians from MENA countries and having insights into Muslim views on human rights. Some mentioned that the conference allows them to help people in their community [in the west] gain a global perspective. Participants working in the Arab world said the conference helps them address the plight of Palestinian and Syrian refugees.

IMES blogging team posted daily audience reflections on MEC sessions on [the IMES blog](#).

Reflecting on the first day session, “Theological & Biblical Foundations for Human Rights Based Approaches”, one conference participant wrote “This morning, Dr. Paul Fiddes provided a theological and biblical basis for human rights. He began by demonstrating that human rights are not merely a construct of Western individualism but rather they are reciprocal events embedded within social relations. In discussing the theological grounding for these rights, Fiddes argued that they are inherent because of the worth that is bestowed to all by God’s love, because they are a representation of the image of God, and because they emanate out of God’s desire for humankind’s well-being.” [Continue reading.](#)



In another reflection posted on our blog, we read, “Our third day of the MEC began with an excellent session from Paul Fiddes illuminating the rich Baptist tradition of advocating for religious rights and freedoms. (...) Ziya Meral then discussed the various



phases that have shaped the contemporary MENA context. He described how the MENA went from being a region with newly-formed nation-states right after WWI, to one in which Islamism entered center stage and began to clash with Christianity, and finally, to one that saw the emergence of militant Islam and that placed Christians in a very vulnerable position. In response to these phases, Meral presented three possible options for the MENA church: fleeing, retreat, or reactive / proactive engagement.” [Continue reading.](#)

One participant reflecting upon the final day’s session, “The Situation Facing Domestic Workers in Lebanon & the Middle East”, wrote, “We’ve had great speakers and teachers at the IMES conference, but no one touched me with words so powerfully as the young girl from Africa who was held in slavery by a Lebanese family. Her powerful story lent a moving personal face to the problem of human trafficking in Lebanon, and wherever people are treated as property.” [Continue reading.](#)

Already IMES is looking forward to next year’s Middle



East Conference that will take place 16-20 June 2014. In discussion with various conference participants this year, IMES is exploring the possibility of focusing on religious radicalism, and its impact in our region and beyond. The tentative title at this stage is “Religious Radicalism in an Evolving Middle East”. It is clear that religious radicalism, be it Islamic, Jewish or Christian is having a significant impact on the MENA region and beyond. How should followers of the Prince of Peace respond in the face of such challenges? Further details will become available over the coming months, so please stay tuned [to the IMES blog](#) and to the [IMES page on ABTS’ website](#).



## ABTS 2013-2014 Academic Calendar

In fall 2013, ABTS continues a journey that began in 2009 with a new curriculum that moves beyond the traditional academic paradigm of theological education to a more formative approach to leadership training and holistic theological education. [Specifics of New Curriculum \(ABTS website\)](#).

The 2013-2014 Academic Calendar is as follows. 2<sup>nd</sup> year is part of a two-year cycle and is common to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students.

Dates	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year
9 September to 25 October 2013		Track and Elective Courses
28 October to 29 November 2013	Induction Module and Survey Module	Module: Empowering Leadership
2 to 13 December 2013		Track and Elective Courses
16 to 20 December 2013	Communication Module	Module: The Missional Church
21 December 2013 to 7 January 2014	Christmas Break	
8 to 31 January 2014	Communication Module (cont.)	Module: The Missional Church (cont.)
1 to 9 February 2014	Spring Break	
10 February to 13 March 2014	Interpretation Module	Track and Elective Courses
16 to 27 March 2014	Introduction to Islam	
30 March to 17 April 2014	Church and Society Module	Module: The Kingdom of God
18 to 28 April 2014	Easter Break	
29 April to 8 May 2014	Church and Society Module (cont.)	Module: The Kingdom of God (cont.)
11 May to 12 June 2014	Biblical and Historical Theology Module	Track and Elective Courses
15 to 19 June 2014	Middle East Conference XI	