Arab Baptist Theological Seminary
كليّة اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية
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A Summer Spent in Service of the King

Our second-and-third-year students certainly did not spend their summers in idleness. Without exception, everywhere they went, there was a deep thirst for the word of God. What a joy it is to know that our students were bold and ready to preach, teach and love their communities by the leading of His Spirit. This month, we share with you the accounts of some of our returning students. Continue reading about their various ministries in different countries across the Arab world.

Abir, second-year student from Sudan

I have a small confession. When I stepped foot in Sudan, I said to myself "I am not going back to ABTS." It felt good to be free from strict schedules and the pressures of education. I was so tired, the first thing I did was rest. Then, I served at the children's Sunday school at my local church. I also served with young adults on Saturdays. My local church also formed a prayer and fasting group made up of mothers and fathers. I only attended at first, but then they asked me to share from the Bible with them. It was then that I realized that I must return to ABTS once more and continue my education. It was for this purpose that I had first joined, so that I could be equipped to benefit others.

Eilia, second-year student from Sudan

My training at ABTS has already begun to bear fruit, and I witnessed this during my summer ministry. For instance, it taught me to humble myself as I go on to serve at my local church in Sudan where I preached on many occasions. I also took part in three workshops for the young adults and led five seminars. I conducted a workshop on the secretarial work in church for project planning and coordinating. In addition, I taught Christian education at three schools. Finally, six teachers including myself started an initiative supporting education for children. We raised funds, and with the help of a teacher who works with the Ministry of Education, we were able to distribute free textbooks to schoolchildren.

Eilia's vision is to train Christian Education teachers to spread out in different provinces of Sudan. He also aims to disciple believers and train them to preach.

Eilia teaching Christian Education

Habil, second-year student from Sudan

My main ministry this summer was the *Khebz w Meleh* peacebuilding initiative . I put up fourteen sessions and created two groups. Before *Khebz w Meleh*, I didn't have close relations with people from different faiths. Through this initiative, I was able to meet with Muslims, enter their homes, and form good friendships.

Other than that, I spoke several times at my local church. I also prepared a Bible study series for youth on relationships and participated in several ministries such as camps, workshops, and speaking at other churches. I also teamed up with ABTS student Sam in workshops targeting young adults and women. I praise God for giving me the privilege of doing all of this. Truly, the feedback I received was very encouraging.

Read more about Khebz w Meleh here.

Khebz w Meleh

Rafed and Hiba, second-year married couple from Syria

Rafed shared, "After having lost everything, and after fleeing our home country, my wife and I went to Syria this summer. Things are much calmer now, yet most of Syria has turned to rubble. Upon our arrival, we were invited to a conference for ministry leaders in Saidnaya, Syria. It reminded us of the *Communication* module, as its sessions were on identity and understanding others. It was so encouraging listening to Syrian leaders describing their ministry in Syria and the way they dealt with suffering. We greatly rejoiced to know that there are still people in Syria whose hearts delight in serving others. My wife and I shared something about our ministry and our spiritual experiences too."

Hiba shared, "We visited our hometown Qseir; it is in ruins, but it still has our loved ones. Both my mother and Rafed's mother had recently undergone surgery. We hadn't seen them for three years, and they hadn't heard much about us all this while either. We spent a beautiful time serving them and reflecting the change Christ had wrought in us. We also shared Christ with those who came to visit our parents."

Awad, second-year student from South Sudan

I had been in Uganda as a refugee for six years before I came to ABTS. This summer, however, I went back to South Sudan. There, I applied the *Khebz w Meleh* initiative, and I spoke at four different churches. I put up two seminars to train leaders coming from several churches in Wau. The seminars included the material from one of Dr. Perry's classes on the structure of a successful church.

During my stay, we lost the leader of our tribe, and I was invited to speak at his funeral. It was a privilege to stand before my community. I also had a good time with my family, and I helped them in their farming labor. I had not seen them for seven years; it was a cause of celebration. We had a huge celebration!

Abu Kindy, second-year student from Sudan

I was thrilled to see my wife and kids again after nine months in Lebanon. The economic situation in Sudan, on the other hand, was quite challenging. Every day, I woke up at four in the morning and stood in a long queue in order to get my family's daily bread portion. There was also the lack of fuel.

As for my summer ministry, I preached several times at my local church. Moreover, I presented a four-sermon series about the responsibility of a believer. As soon as you're a theology student, you are in high demand when it comes to ministry work. Outside church walls, I taught Christian education at a center that is run by a Catholic church.

Abu Kindy and his family are paying the great price of being apart for many months so that he can be trained for effective ministry. His vision is to help supply the church with deeper biblical knowledge and train them to think critically about the beliefs they had inherited from their fathers. He also wants to train them to teach children and to develop curricula for this purpose.

Waheed, second-year student from Sudan

I praise God for my ministry this summer. I got the chance to teach at my local church during morning and evening services, at youth and young adult meetings, at Bible study meetings and at house group meetings. I also met with a family who had stopped attending church. A friend of mine will continue to follow up with them while I'm away.

I also participated in a practical training that follows a nine-month discipleship course offered by my church. Trainees were dispersed across several Sudanese states. The area I visited was two hours away from Khartoum. I met South Sudanese refugees and shared Christ with them. The experience taught me about serving poor communities with humility and love.

I took part in a thanksgiving service over the life of Pastor Ghassan Khalaf, put up by Sudanese ABTS graduates (from 1995 to 2018). It was so refreshing to hear the testimonies of those who had met Dr. Khalaf in person. Many had fallen in love with ministry because of the influence of this good teacher.

Second-year student from Egypt

My summer ministry can be divided into three periods. I first served at my local church with groups of new followers of Christ who were not familiar with a church setting. Next, I worked with ABTS graduate Noha form Egypt in an online ministry. One of its ministries is an online Bible school. During the academic year, students meet face-to-face every three months. I shared in some of those meetings.

Thirdly, I worked on the SHAREK Online website, on which they post videos and articles about different topics such as faith, relationships, marriage and so on. We received many messages; using an application, we were able to manage and reply to them all. We redirected some to the counselling offices of our church while we answered questions pertaining to the faith.

Pastor, Mentor, Theologian, Teacher

A thanksgiving service for the life and legacy of Dr. Ghassan Khalaf, former ABTS president and renowned Arab theologian, was held on Sunday, October 14, 2018 in the Elias Salibi Hall at ABTS's Moore Conference Center. Around 250 attendees came together to celebrate a life well spent for Christ. Twenty speakers from the Middle East and Europe shared about the impact Ghassan had as a pastor, mentor, theologian and teacher. They shared many uplifting memories and stories. We were all reminded and encouraged by how God was continuously at work, whether during the Lebanese Civil war or after the missionaries left ABTS. We were also reminded that a man of God is a man of prayer.

One Sudanese speaker told a heart-warming story of Pastor Ghassan's "Welcome, Sudan's Hero!" upon his first arrival to Lebanon twenty years ago. He was broken and discouraged by the many troubles he had faced. He felt exhausted and completely worn out. This warm and encouraging welcome was a source of healing to him. Ghassan's servant leadership helped guide him to become one of Sudan's most influential Church leaders.

The service, mainly in Arabic, was broadcast live on our Facebook page.

"A man of God is a man of prayer"

Pray with Us: Prayer Requests from Our Returning Students

Habil, second-year student from Sudan

My sister-in-law passed away two weeks ago. Our hearts are broken over the loss. Her presence in our family was a wonderful blessing. Please pray that my brother and his three children may be comforted during this difficult time. Please pray for my other brother who is currently studying in Uganda and for my mother who is ill and tired. We trust in God's goodness in all things.

Rafed and Hiba, second-year married couple from Syria

Please pray for our country Syria. Now that the embers of the war have begun to cool off, much has turned to ashes. Much has been destroyed. Pray for our future ministry in our home country, as our return will not be easy, but we trust that God will use us there. We also ask you to pray that we will excel in our studies during this academic year, and pray for our kids, Milia and Shadi as they return to school.

Awad, second-year student from South Sudan

Please pray for my future ministry in South Sudan. Going back will be difficult as I had been away for many years now, and the economic situation is getting worse. Pray that I will adapt and that I will be a light amid the gloom that surrounds the country.

Third-year student from Mauritania

Pray that I would be able to serve people coming from the same background as I when I end my academic journey this coming June. My theological training here has taught me the importance of serving among people who share my background, and I look forward to starting my ministry.

Awney, second-year student from Egypt

Please pray that God would continue to shape my vision for my future ministry. Pray for my marriage as well. I got married this summer, and my wife has joined me as an ABTS student.

Waheed, second-year student from Sudan

Please pray that I would benefit as much as I can from my theological education. I aim to plant churches in deprived Sudanese areas, and I need to be well-equipped for such a ministry.

Second-year male student from Egypt

Pray that mission work would continue to grow with each year in Egypt. Pray for me that I might be able to support Christ followers coming from non-Christian backgrounds. Finally, I ask you to pray for my family; I already miss my mom.

Eilia, second-year student from Sudan

There are two non-Christian background believers in one of our local church's home groups back in Sudan. Please pray that they might be grounded in the faith.

Abu Kindy, second-year student from Sudan

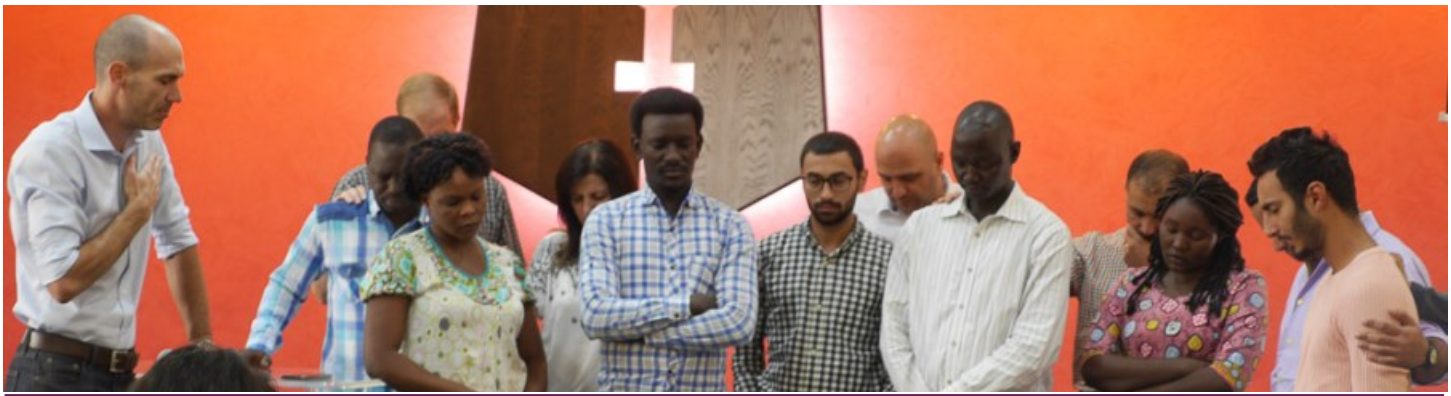
Pray for me as I start this academic year that I would be ready to take on the challenges that come ahead. Pray that God may protect my wife and kids in Sudan while I am away for almost nine months.

Abir, second-year student form Sudan

This is my second year at ABTS, and it seems, from the start, that the academic load will not be light. I ask you then to pray for me that I might not only start this academic year well but that I might finish well too.

Third-year student from Jordan

Please pray that I would be able to spend quality time with my children, to grow in my walk with God, and to focus on my theological education.



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