

Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

www.abtslebanon.org

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Sparking Joy in a Child's Heart

An Update on the Student Compassionate Care Ministry

Shady is an eleven-year-old Syrian refugee on a wheelchair. His legs were amputated because of the war. At first, he wasn't able to participate in the games with the rest of the kids until the Compassionate Care Ministry team members noticed him and chose a game in which he, too, can take part. As he later shared his story and his feelings, he said something that left the team members baffled by his sense of contentment. He said, "I accept God's will for my life."

The story of Shady has become commonplace in light of the Syrian war. Many refugees dwell in tent-like camps near the Syrian borders, in dire conditions, often neglected and rejected. During winter, their "homes" make no strong shelter against the outpours of rain and the severe cold. The Church in Lebanon, however, has not been lacking in offering all the help they can offer. ABTS students, who form The Compassionate Care Ministry team, desire to extend hands of



mercy and to reflect Christ-like love to the refugee children they serve in the Zahle area. In a learning experience where students bring what they acquired in class to life, they engage in practical ministry by visiting Syrian refugee camps to reach out to more than 250 children. They desire to influence their lives positively so they, in turn, would do the same when they grow up – so they would help others just as others helped them. Our prayer is that these children will grow to become agents of change in society.

So far, the ministry team has made two trips to Zahle this academic year, the first on February 23 and the second on March 23. The two-hour program, as usual, includes songs that require movement, active games that stress teamwork, and a story. After the program, each of the kids receive a meal. On the first trip, the kids also received Samaritan's Purse gifts. On the second trip, the team made a visit to a new refugee camp in Zahle. The new camp had a wide, convenient space and a playground made especially for the kids. Nearly a hundred kids were present this time. This allowed the team to focus on individual kids more. The kids heard a

story that one of our students had written about sharing with one another. It was very encouraging to see how attentive and engaged the groups of kids were during the entire program.

One of our students from Egypt, who is also part of the ministry team, shared with us her experience during her visit to the camp. When asked what is it that touched her heart most, she said,

"Despite the kids' sad condition, they find joy in the littlest things. They are not mainly drawn to the material things we have to offer. They are happy when we kneel down so that our eyes meet theirs. They are happy when we humbly play with them on the muddy ground. They are happy when they sing to the Lord with us at the top of their lungs. As much as they enjoy receiving a gift, I believe what matters most to them is that someone cared enough to offer them something."



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Tools for Effective Service: Our Recently Offered Online Courses

Since 2015, our online degree has been equipping many Church leaders who cannot join our residential program. It has been able to serve Arab churches in more than 20 different countries. Continue reading to see how each of the courses in the past term aid our students in becoming faithful leaders in the Arab Church, and pray that their voices around the world may glorify Him alone.

New Testament Survey

This course is vital for a proper understanding of New Testament texts in the historical, literary and theological contexts. An important factor for the fulfillment of our vision and mission in the region is a keen understanding of Scriptures so that we allow it to mold us and teach us which way to go.

The course deals with the New Testament background, namely the direct and indirect political, social, moral and religious framework of its events. It also explores the various teachings and doctrines based on the New Testament. The course briefly explains how texts that make up, the New Testament canon, reached the church through the ages. It also presents the life of Christ and His teaching as revealed in the four Gospels, the apostles' ministry in Acts, and the teachings found in the epistles and the book of Revelation.

According to online student Joe from Lebanon, "The material in this course was very enriching. It helped me gain a better understanding of the New Testament historical background. It helped me realize how similar today's societies are to those of the time period in which God's word was written. This makes it still relevant and meaningful today."

Holy Spirit in the Christian Life

Our vision and mission in the region are fulfilled through faithful Christ-followers who allow the Holy Spirit full control over their direction. This course highlights how the Church has understood the role of the Holy Spirit throughout history. It also introduces the historical Church doctrine regarding the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

According to our 2014 graduate Hanane from Morocco, who is currently one of the course tutors,

"My experience tutoring the course was quite rich. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a topic of dispute among various churches. We sometimes avoid talking about the Third Person of the Holy Trinity when we should be giving Him His due attention. Since students come from different countries and denominations, this has enriched our discussions. There were topics such as grieving the Holy Spirit, the conviction that comes from the Holy Spirit, blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, being filled with the Holy Spirit and so on. All Christians have heard such phrases, but not all of them know what they really mean. Both the content of the course and the students' diverse inputs taught me so much."

Our online student Mikhael from Egypt shared,

"The Holy Spirit course made me understand concepts related to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He gives us a blessed fellowship with the Father and the Son so that we bear the fruit of the Spirit. We must not ignore our gifts but rather develop them so, through them, we might build up other members of the Body. The content of this course has greatly benefitted my sermons and personal research."

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Following Jesus and Growing with God

The Arab Church must also have Christ-like disciples who make more Christ-like disciples. This course highlights the concept of discipleship in the Bible. Discipleship dictates that we live according to God's will among people and that we reach out to them. The course addresses topics such as responding to God's call in Christ, understanding the concepts of faith and spiritual life, being sure of one's salvation, finding forgiveness and growth in reconciliation with God and others, explaining baptism and being filled with the Holy Spirit. The course also extracts lessons from the Gospel of Mark on walking with Jesus and leading others to follow Him. It also offers teaching and practical steps that enable the student to grow in service, fellowship and love for the brothers and sisters. The ultimate purpose is to live as faithful stewards and children of God.

According to our student Mohamad from Syria,

"Following Jesus is a wonderful course for every disciple. It greatly benefitted my ministry, especially that of discipleship and home groups. When Jesus taught people, they (including the Pharisees and scribes) saw that He lived every word He spoke. They could not find anything against Him. As His disciples, if we want to tell of Christ's transforming power in us, our life itself must be a testimony of that power. The Lord Jesus taught the disciples to focus on the Kingdom of Heaven. He also said, 'If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.' We should be willing to put His teaching into practice."

Biblical Interpretation

As Christ followers, we should learn to study the Bible better, so we can share it with others. This course presents three topics that are relevant to interpreting God's word and knowing what God wants from us so we can live according to His Word. The first part of the course deals with the importance of interpretation and divine revelation. It sheds light on the authority of God's word in the life of a believer. The second part presents six principles to study a biblical text, and the third part presents twelve steps for study based on the six principles.

According to one of our online students from Jordan,

"I have enjoyed taking the Bible Interpretation course. I found out that some of my past reading of biblical texts contradicts the original intended message of the text at the time and place it was written. After ten years of knowing Jesus, I finally discovered that I should focus on what the writer of the biblical text means rather than on how the reader understands it. I now focus on every word when reading the Bible. I no longer strive to read as much as I can. Instead, I am more interested in slow, careful reading in order to dissect a text. Today, I am no longer a shallow reader of Scriptures."

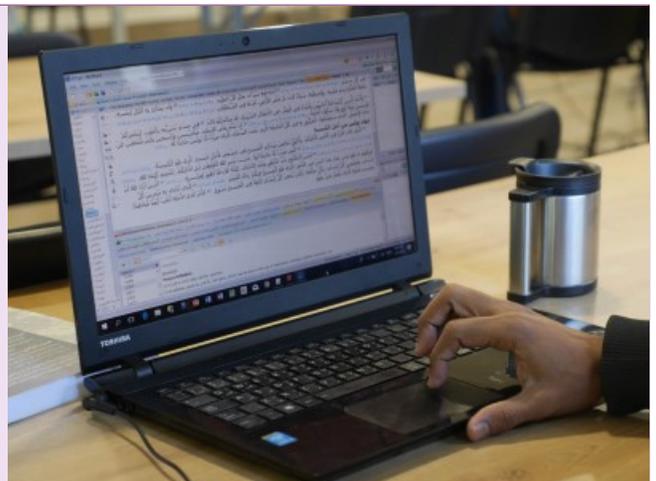
Finally, we ask you to pray for our online students who are also Arab ministry leaders. Pray that, as they are caught up in the busyness of ministry, they would focus on their online theological studies, so that they are transformed into Christ-like servant leaders and bring Him glory in all they do.

Is your heart burdened to see leaders being trained to serve the Arab Church?

This term we have **85 students** enrolled in various courses!

A gift of \$375 supports an online student for one course.

Contact us at information@abtslebanon.org



Pray with Us: Prayer Requests from Our First-year Students

Amin from Sudan

Please pray for my wife and son, who are both in Sudan. I miss them. Pray for the children of Sudan; it is on my heart to develop the children's ministry there. Pray that I may be able to overcome all personal pressures in order to continue my education in a way that pleases God.

Demyana from Egypt

Please pray that my husband Awney and I would be always serving the Lord together. Also, pray that the Lord would guide us through every step after graduation. We await His will for us.

Elissar from Lebanon

Please pray for the Lord to give me the needed strength and wisdom in my relationships and the focus to study diligently while I am here. Please pray for my family members, too. They see the change in me, and I desire to be a witness continuously so that they, too, come to the faith.

El Sadig from Sudan

Please pray for my academic journey here. Pray for the Lord to open my mind so I can understand and benefit from all the lessons and lectures. Please pray for my future ministry after graduation. I would like to invest in children's ministry, so that children would grow up with the love of God in their hearts.

Mahmoud from Egypt

Please pray for my education here and pray that I would continue to have an influential role in my country amid my people. I also ask you to pray for new believers to be smoothly integrated within the Egyptian Church.

Mariam from Egypt

It has been a very difficult time after the recent passing away of my mother; it still is. Please pray for the Lord to restore my focus on my studies.

Student from Morocco

Please pray that my time at ABTS would be fruitful for the Lord, especially after I begin my ministry in Morocco after graduation.

Niyazi from Sudan

Pray for me as I go on with my academic journey. Pray also for my family in Sudan amid the difficult economic situation.

Student from Egypt

Please pray for the unreached communities in my country and all over the world that they may be open to the gospel. Pray that there would be no divisions in Egyptian churches, and pray for my family to know Jesus.

Saleem from Jordan

Please pray for my future ministry. I would like to start an elderly home in my country and a Bible school. I also hope to focus on pastoral work, apologetics and working with young adults.

Tathnia from Sudan

Please pray that I would always heed the Lord's voice in every decision I make. Otherwise, I would lose my way.

Yaser from Syria

Please pray that my parents accept the Lord Jesus. Pray for Syria, Iraq and all countries where war still exists. Pray for me, as well, that I would start a ministry in Syria that calls against conflict and calls for love instead.

Yousif from Sudan

I ask you to pray for my wife and our life together. We have big dreams and visions, so pray for us so that we would know exactly what God wants us to do in Sudan after we graduate. Please pray for our ministry in the Sudanese Community Church here in Lebanon.

Susanna from Sudan

I ask you to pray that we would overcome the ministry challenges in the Sudanese Community Church in Lebanon. Sometimes, it may feel as if we are on our own. Moreover, my husband and I are newlyweds, so pray that we walk in God's way together. May we be a blessing to others wherever we go. May we complete our theological education, and may He use us to fulfil His purposes.

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