



Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

www.abtslebanon.org

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No Sacrifice Is Too Great for Christ A Story of two Graduates

On August 1, members of the Development and Partner Relations team and ABTS President went on a trip to the beautiful Chouf District of Mount Lebanon to find out more about the ministry of ABTS graduates Amal and Rasha Saad. We spent a blessed time hearing from Amal at the beginning and then Rasha joined us around noon. In the end, we left the place quite refreshed by God's work in this area of Lebanon. In this month's newsletter, we would like to encourage you just as we were encouraged.



The Lebanese Civil War was a bloody period with a devastating effect on the country. Like many children at the time, eight-year-old Amal was fully trained for battle with one of the fighting political parties and later joined the frontlines at age eleven. Born into a traditional Christian family, he converted to Islam by the end of the war and then became an atheist for a few years. In his search for the truth, Amal found in the Bible what he described as "a constitution for all mankind", that is, "Love your enemies." Amal began to study the Bible and share his findings with others, but it took him almost ten years to accept Jesus as Lord!

God called us to study theology in 2009.

Amal: Soon after accepting Christ in 2003, I began to study theology by extension. I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of Scriptures, and I desired to serve Him. Yet, when He called me, several things held me back from saying "yes" – from leaving all and going into the unknown with God. I had a family to support; our living situation was already bad, let alone the financial debt that I carried. Then in 2009, God called my wife and me to study theology. In human terms, it was impossible. We lived far off, my monthly salary barely covered our basic needs, and we simply could not afford the move. Regardless, we filled the application and waited to see what God had for us. When the Academic Dean of ABTS (Hikmat Kashouh at the time) called me, I least expected that he would tell me this: My wife and I were accepted into seminary. They would provide a place for us and cover the tuition fees of our kids' school. It was a leap of faith on ABTS's part as it was on ours.

We knew serving in the Chouf was not going to be easy.

Amal: My wife graduated in 2012, and I later graduated in 2013. I had resigned from the police force two months before. I had been working while studying to cover my debt. When we first moved to the Chouf, we knew it was not going to be easy as the community there is exclusive and does not easily open up to outsiders. In the same year of my graduation, we noticed the village hosted a significant community of Syrian refugees, so we began to minister to them. Through the help of [MERATH](#) [ABTS sister ministry for relief and development], we provided the



families with relief aid. We later started a Bible study for men and a program for children that gathers 60 children today, and my two teenage daughters help run it. My wife, Rasha, started marriage-counselling sessions with the women. She later pursued a Master's degree in Counselling. In all these things, we pointed them to Christ. Many were receptive to our ministry, but at that point, none had accepted Christ. God had yet to teach us an unforgettable lesson.

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Amal: The shift happened when one of my family members, an Islamic extremist, found out about my ministry. She instigated some extremists who in turn sent me serious threats. I do confess I pondered quitting. Was it all worth it? I would never forgive myself if my wife or kids got hurt. Then, one night, as I lifted my circular saw – as I happen to be a blacksmith by trade in support of my family and the ministry – it somehow escaped my grip and flew cutting through my hand, reaching for my mouth and breaking four of my teeth. As my wife rushed me to the hospital, I sensed God speaking to me, “Do not fear suffering for my sake. I will protect you.”

God wants us to proclaim the truth boldly.

Amal: Refugee families came to check on me after the accident. In one visit, as I sat with a family on the balcony, the woman gazed at my injuries intently. When I asked her, she bluntly stated, “I thought God wanted to shut your mouth. Now that I see you got through it with minimal damage, I am certain He protected you.” Right then, an indefinable courage overpowered me. I said, “God wants me to proclaim the truth that salvation is in Christ alone!” My words sent her home in tears. That night, Christ appeared to her in a vision, and she was the first in her community to accept Him and join the Church. In fact, her house welcomed our first Bible study home group. Today, our church has forty-five baptized members, and they serve God boldly and powerfully. Yasser, a current ABTS student, is part of our church, and he serves with us.

God is using our ministry in several ways today.

Amal: In addition to the ministries I mentioned earlier, we serve with *Help The Persecuted* in Syria and Lebanon. My wife runs a center called *I Am a Woman*, which aims to empower women through language and vocational training. We also get to build bridges with the residents of our village. We have a non-formal school for refugee children who cannot go to school elsewhere. We also provide relief aid to local widows. God has used the latter ministry to draw a local family to Himself. Moreover, we support a significant home group in Nabaa, Beirut, which is mostly made up of Syrian Kurdish believers. Sometimes we send Syrian believers on missions to Syria, and Yasser [ABTS student] follows up with them. A few months ago, we baptized 16 new believers.



People are on the lookout for something more.

Amal: The war in Syria has worn people out. Even Lebanese people have not fully recovered from the scars of the Lebanese Civil War. They are looking for something beyond the destitution, having found nothing in those who use religion as a political tool. As we join God in His work, we realize the ministry is growing. We are supported by a few individuals, churches and organizations, but the need is growing. We will soon need to rent a place for our school. We will also need more ministry workers. We pray that either God will enable us to hire more people or He will send volunteers.



[At this point, Amal’s wife Rasha joined us, so we briefly asked her about her ministry.]



Some of the women come to me hopeless and broken.

Rasha: It is so exciting to serve among women who come from different religious backgrounds and to tell them about Christ. We were disheartened when we first opened the center because no one showed up. So I said, “Lord, you can bring the women,” and He did. Through the center, we empower women through offering intensive English courses and vocational training, which includes soap making, chocolate making and makeup application. We also offer a course on marriage and one-on-one counselling. It is such a blessing to share with them lessons from similar life experiences and to relate on a personal level. Some of them come to me hopeless and broken. What a difference it makes to be heard and encouraged knowing that there is hope.

Be it harsh weather conditions during the winter or threats from groups with hardened hearts, Amal and Rasha’s sacrifices in ministry are rewarded by the work of the Holy Spirit in the area. Join us in prayer for the ministry of this family and for ABTS graduates who serve God across the Middle East and North Africa. Many serve in difficult circumstances, yet God is using them plentifully to achieve His great purposes.

New Building Updates!

The lot of the new ABTS dorm building is located behind the old dorm building.

To clear this lot, we recently moved the industrial kitchen that serves the students and their families to the other side of the old dorm building.

The new building will include a fully-equipped kitchen and a suitable dining area for our students.



Pray with Us: Prayer Requests from Alumni and Online Students

Rasha and Amal, 2012 and 2013 Alumni respectively

We are preparing for a workshop to train ministry workers who are serving with the persecuted, so join us in prayer for this point. Pray also for the two conferences we will be part of to advocate for the change of constitution, so Syrians have more freedom of religion. We also ask you to pray for us to be always sensitive and receptive to God's voice so that He is glorified in us. Pray for protection upon us, as safety threats are an inevitable part of our ministry.

Male student from Algeria, Certificate in Ministry

My mother church has asked me to pastor a church it newly planted. Please pray for this matter, that God may guide me to obey His will.

A refugee couple from Iraq, Certificate in Ministry

Please pray for our move to Canada. My husband, who is a pastor, and I will start a ministry with the Arab community in Canada. We should have travelled months ago, but our trip has been delayed, and we still don't know when the exact date of our departure will be. Waiting can be difficult, so pray that we trust the Lord in the midst of uncertainty. Pray for our future ministry and for a plentiful harvest.

Female student from Algeria, Certificate in Ministry

I love what God has called me to do with Sunday school children, so I ask you to pray that He grants me wisdom, teaches me more from His Word, blesses my ministry and uses me more with the children I serve.

Male student from Algeria, Certificate in Ministry

In the future, I would like to continue my theological education beyond the Online Certificate. Then, I can prepare full courses for the benefit of the church and the Bible schools in Algeria. Please pray to God that He enables me to do this.

Joe from Lebanon, Certificate in Ministry

Pray for the believers I work with, who are from a non-Christian background, that they would be strong and grow in the knowledge of Christ. Pray also that I apply practically and effectively what I am learning through the online program.

Female student from Morocco, Certificate in Ministry

Pray with me for my ministry with Sunday school children in Morocco. May the Lord make clear to me and to my husband His vision for us. Pray with me also that my extended family members know Christ.

Walid from Syria, Certificate in Ministry

Pray for my ministry with Kurds in Lebanon through my local church in Zahle. Starting this month, I will be helping 85 Kurdish families and following up with them.

Samir from Syria, Certificate in Ministry

Pray for peace in Syria and in areas of conflict around the world. Pray for ABTS Online students that they may be a lighthouse to those around them in their churches and ministries.

Help us prepare for the new academic year!

ABTS provides students with laptops to help with their studies and allow access to our online platform. Upon graduation, students take the laptops with them for use in their respective ministries.

For better connectivity, we need to install four new mid-range access points for our classrooms and library.

The cost of each access point is \$300.

We also need to add a server, a distribution switch, and three edge switches that will cost up to \$5,750.

Support this project by contacting us at information@abtslebanon.org or by clicking [here!](#)

