



Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

www.abtslebanon.org

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A Handful of Christmas into Every Heart

STUDENTS MINISTER TO THE LESS PRIVILEGED DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He walked the tiled streets of the city with His dusty sandals. He struck vibrant conversations with the city vendors at the market stands. He entered our homes and shared our meals. Perhaps, He offered His cloak to warm a homeless man on a frosty morning, but it is certain that His smile warmed the hearts of many. He is Jesus who went around healing the lame and the blind, setting free those who had been under the dominion of evil for so long. He is Jesus who sat on the ground beside the lonely and the downtrodden making known to them that they will never again be alone. He is Jesus who came to earth to make the Father manifest and to fulfil His work of redemption. Before Him, death trembles, and angels tend to Him day and night as He sits at the right hand of the Father. Heaven and earth intertwined in the person of Jesus.

The incarnational work is ongoing through the Holy Spirit in the Church. We move out of our own self-centered experiences and enter into the experience of another person or community. It is a great form of love to show the way to Christ, but to show Christ is just as vital. We train our students to have the kind of ministry that Jesus had. They learn to cross social, political and religious barriers through respectful dialogue and forming relationships. Students engage in active ministry during their holistic training period. Their ministry is not a form of extracurricular work but a necessary part of their formation. They come to know that theology is more than sitting in the library or in the classroom.

This Christmas wasn't easy for the more vulnerable groups in Lebanon. That is why a good number of our students joined the Compassionate Care Ministry team, with the help of our Registrar Rana Wazir, and decided to make use of the holidays and make Christmas a bit brighter for some.

We invite you to come with us outside the classroom to see the students live in action.



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December 26

The ministry team members started their day preparing food packages. That day, students visited twenty Syrian refugee families in the area. In coordination with [MERATH](#) and [Beirut Baptist School](#) (BBS), they distributed gifts prepared by the BBS students to children of the refugee families. Just when they had concluded their work, they heard about a few families in Ain Saadeh (located directly above Mansourieh). The road down was steep and rough. The team was drenched in heavy rain as they walked in the seemingly uninhabited area until they saw two tents pitched among the trees. The residents had lit a fire against the December frost while water leaked into their tents. The team knew there were families to visit as soon as eight little faces peeped out of the tents to say hello. For a short period, they were able to experience what these families experience every day.

Our student Shadi from Syria shared,

“The families were so happy with the gifts. We shared the Christmas story and prayed with them. I am so glad we came across the people in Ain Saadeh. We did not know while preparing the packages that God had them in mind.”

**December 28**

An expert puppeteer trained most of our students on how to use puppets. The Compassionate Care Ministry team had already acquired puppets and a stage, and the trainer brought his puppets with him, so all students had a chance to try them out. The trainer also taught them how to make puppets out of any object such as a pan and a book.

One of our students from Egypt shared,

“The puppet training was fun and quite beneficial. At first, I wanted to take part in the training just to make kids happy. Then, I discovered skills to make adults happy too. Every adult still has a child somewhere

inside them. I saw it in the eyes of the parents who attended the puppet show with their children the next day.

“One of the best things I learned is that you can create a character out of common kitchen or cleaning utensils. As soon as we go out of our way to make a child happy – a child who perhaps could not experience happiness because of his or her circumstances – the Lord will guide us to do it even with our limited resources.

“The training showed me that we can share the Gospel in creative ways that might seem unusual at first. The success of any method, in the end, depends on whether we allow the Lord to lead.”

December 29

The ministry team welcomed more than 120 Syrian refugee kids at the carnival, which took place in the afternoon at the soccer courts near our campus. The team had a wonderful time singing with the kids and acting out a fun puppet show. The latter stressed that those who have should give to those who do not. Each kid had a meal and then enjoyed the playtime with inflatables; this included a popcorn stand, a cotton candy stand and cookies. Many of the kids who showed up do not have access to such activities because of their economic situation. It was a time for them to experience being served and loved unconditionally.

December 30

The home visits and the aid distribution continued. Similar to their first round of visits, the ministry team gave out packages and prayed with the families. They realized that the need was greater than they expected, and often, families led them to more families. One Lebanese man shared about his brother who suffers from a chronic illness. They promised to visit his brother at the start of the coming year.

January 4

This time, the ministry team visited a shelter for children at risk coming from different Arab nationalities. When the team acted out the puppet show, the kids were taken by it. Soon after the team had lunch with them, the kids opened up and shared about their difficulties. Each kid received a big box that contained items such as a backpack, hygiene products, snacks and a towel with their name embroidered on it. Receiving this customized gift meant a lot to them. At the end of their visit, the kids clung to the team members and didn't want them to leave. This brought them to tears, and they promised they would visit again.



ways my wife and I could apply such a ministry in our own context once we graduate. There are more poor homes in remote areas that no one knows; may God burden our hearts and lead us to them as we continue to serve Him.”

Registrar Rana Wazir also stated that the overall experience will not leave her unchanged. She says,

“The ministry caused me to empathize deeply with those around me. Working with students led me to know them in a new way and to witness their passion as they served others during their Christmas break. While getting the kids at the shelter gifts, I was so excited at the thought of how happy they will be. Well, their reaction made me even more excited! The whole experience left me emotional, and I realized nothing we give them could bring true, lasting healing except for Jesus.”

Awney from Egypt, the current leader of the ministry said,

“I had good conversations with some of the kids who were on the streets and felt completely abandoned. One of them, an Egyptian like myself, somehow ended up in Lebanon with deep hurt and trust issues. Even the kids who gave us a hard time grew attached to us. Our goal was to simply bring them joy, and I believe we achieved it. We are planning to pay them another visit in the coming months.”

Ibrahim from Sudan shared,

“This experience deeply moved me. I don’t think I will easily forget these children. Listening to their stories brought back memories of my own childhood. I grew up in an abusive environment, too, so I was happy to encourage them and reassure them that they are not alone.”

Youssef from Sudan, who will take over the leadership of the Compassionate Care Ministry once Awney graduates this summer shared,

“We had been studying about the missional church lately. Doing ministry this Christmas holiday made me see it in action through acts such as visiting orphans and street children. It made me think of



**Are you called to be part of God’s work in the Arab world?
Do you want to know more about the ministry of ABTS, and how you can be involved
in what God is doing in the region? Would you want one of our ABTS leaders to visit your church?**

Email us at info@abtslebanon.org

Pray with Us: Requests from the Compassionate Care Ministry Team

Demyana | Egypt

Please pray for the children we met at the shelter that God might continually send people who treat them kindly. Pray that God uses us in their lives.

Awney | Egypt

I think of the parents who abandoned their children, and I pray that God will bring about a change of heart in them. Please pray that we serve such children well.

Student | Morocco

Pray for us Compassionate Care Ministry team members that the Lord might use us to fulfil His mission. Pray for the refugees who live in difficult circumstances, the kids who are on the streets, and the kids in the shelter. Things are not easy for them. May the Lord care for them and light up their lives, now and in the future.

Student | Egypt

Brothers and sisters, please pray that this ministry continues to grow and reach those who are related to the children including family, friends, classmates and neighbors. Many of them endured the cruelty of war, and they have had enough, so pray that we bring them more of the love of Christ. May the Lord bless you.

Youssef | Sudan

The families we visited are facing many difficulties. Please pray for them, and for us, so that we stand by them and show them love. The team members were so touched by the recent ministry; some of them expressed the desire to do something similar in their home countries. Pray that the unity and enthusiasm the team members exhibited this Christmas will last throughout the academic year.

Ibrahim | Sudan

Pray for the kids we met at the shelter, and pray for the coming visits we hope to make. They need a listening ear and a supportive presence. On the personal level, the problems with my family back home are ongoing because of my faith, so I ask you to continue to pray. Pray also for my church as it continues to work on getting the official papers for its land.

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Prayer Request from the ABTS family

We usually look for new beginnings at the start of each year. As we welcome 2020, we look back at another year that has passed, gleaning lessons for the year to come. Join us in prayer for God's work to extend more in the region. May our hearts be ready to heed His voice, fixing our eyes on the goal, redeeming the time, making use of every opportunity.

While, in Lebanon, we are still in the middle of a crisis, we continue to put our trust in the Mighty God whom we serve as we join Him on His mission. We also rejoice at the sight of our students maturing into vessels of much use for the Kingdom, and we ask you to pray for them knowing that He who began a good work in them will complete it.