



# Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

## كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

October 2020

RESERVE NOVEMBER 12 to join us online for our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration!

We will be going LIVE on our Facebook page: [Follow us here](#)



Visit our website to read the latest article in our unfolding story of the *New Strategic Direction* titled: **Innovation and Collaboration**  
By Elie Haddad

*“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13:20,21 ESV)*

Our 2019-2020 academic year ended on September 23. Looking back, we praise God for walking us through this precarious journey and teaching us to turn obstacles into opportunities. We find joy in the faithfulness of our students and their progression into maturity in Christ, so in this newsletter, we highlight the accounts of some of our graduating students who are now in their home countries getting ready for ministry.

### HIBA AND RAFED FROM SYRIA | BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY

“We had been away from our hometown in Syria for ten years after our house crumbled and we ran for our lives.” Rafed shared, “The area has changed so much. Most of it is demolished, and most of its people left. Life here is more demanding than it used to be in Lebanon, but there is an inexplicable joy in obedience.”

“Years back, when we were trying to emigrate from Lebanon to Canada for a better life, God said ‘no’, and He made it clear to us that He wanted us to return to our war torn country. He led us to seminary, and from the start, our vision was aligned with theirs. Ever since saying ‘yes’ to God, He has been paving the way and reminding us that He will finish what He began.”

Hiba added, “We are looking forward to building relationships with the believers in Syria helping them draw closer to God after having been shaken by the cruel war.”

The ministry of Rafed and Hiba has been on hold as they transitioned to life in Syria. Their kids have been in school for a month, and Hiba is expecting a new baby soon. The couple plans to start visiting believing families soon to form a home prayer group.

Rafed shared, “The past three years made us more practical and more confident in God. We have trained ourselves to spend time in the Word regularly before sharing it with others.” Hiba added, “We have gained skills that will be of great use as we begin to serve those who were impacted by the Syrian Civil War.”



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**ZEINAB AND NABOU FROM SYRIA | DIPLOMA AND BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY**

“Our vision is to carry the Good News of the gospel to the Kurdish people in Lebanon and Syria, especially those whose perception of God has been distorted through the hardships they encountered at the hands of religious extremist groups,” they recently shared.

Zeinab and Nabou are shepherding a group of Kurdish residents in a poorer suburb of Beirut with Resurrection Church. They create material in Kurdish (videos, songs, sermons, etc.) and share it through their ministry.

“Lost souls, poverty, and oppression,” Zeinab shared, “These are the things that move me to serve my people who have been displaced against their will. After all, Jesus urged us to reach out to the poor and lost.”

Zeinab adds, “At ABTS, personal transformation and theological education are inseparable. I have become a new person during my time here. I have learned to see the world in all its complexity rather than resort to an oversimplified explanation. Taking my time to understand people infused me with a humility that seeks to learn from others rather than patronize them.”



**EILIA FROM SUDAN | BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY**



“I want to serve youth groups through sports ministries. It is a wonderful way of helping youths become positive influences in their societies, regardless of their religious background. The youths here have the energy and the capacity, and being in quarantine for a long time, a sports ministry would provide the ideal outlet for them. This would help them stay out of trouble.” Eilia shared about his vision for ministry in Sudan.

He has already gathered several youths and started a sports ministry with a social/cultural center in Sudan. Through the sports ministry, Eilia and his team are teaching these youths how to better their communities and work for the common good. With his church, Eilia also started a discipleship school for new believers and future servants.

He also shared, “My experience at ABTS changed me tremendously. I learned to have empathy and engage with others in a positive way. Because of this change, I am able to empower and encourage the team members with whom I serve.”

**ABEER FROM SUDAN | BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY**

Abeer shared, “I will not forget these past three years of training at ABTS. I cannot forget the people who selflessly invested in me and became my family in the process. Boarding the plane home wasn’t easy, but how happy I was at the warm welcome of my local church! They were so happy to have me back and confident that I would bring a positive change to the church. They showed their readiness to support me as we work together in ministry, overcome challenges, and better the church together.

“I am glad to be with my church family again and with the children at my local church. I had received God’s call to work with children before coming to seminary. While studying here, however, God showed me other ways He can use me, which are mainly with women, young adults and home groups.”

**JOHN FROM EGYPT | MASTER OF DIVINITY**

“I commend ABTS for reacting quickly as this helped me finish my degree on time.” John said, “Living in Lebanon and being immersed in the multicultural experience at seminary for the past three years was quite enriching. This meant I was in constant contact with different people. I was also introduced to the Islamic culture and teachings. The *Introduction to Islam* classes weren’t exactly ordinary. They were quite uncomfortable – in a good way!



“The past three years were certainly not easy; hard work defined much of them, but I am so glad for every moment. I came to ABTS as an impulsive young man and came out as a more mature leader. I became a better researcher and a better critical thinker.”

Before the pandemic, John was planning to serve his local church upon his return home. With the pandemic spread in Egypt, nothing is yet certain. He has begun to look for job opportunities, while he earnestly seeks the Lord’s voice for the coming ministry. “During this period,” he shared, “He fills my heart with comforting peace and reminds me that even times of waiting have a purpose.”

John has a passion to shepherd others. He feels called to share his people’s burdens, to comfort and encourage them, to pray and care for them.

### STUDENT FROM EGYPT | BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY

“I can put most of what I learned at ABTS into practice. It has made me stand out in my ministry whether it is in the way I deliver a message, form academic discussions, do thorough research, or manage my time. Those who serve alongside me in Egypt can see the difference,” said this Egyptian student.

He is currently busy in active service, answering the questions of seekers and discipling new believers coming from a non-Christian background. He is doing that through his local church and other ministries. His ministry activities include writing articles, giving lectures on apologetics and writing content for media outreach ministries. He and his church leader also organize Zoom Bible studies twice a week where they invite Evangelical theologians to discuss Biblical issues.

He added, “The Lord called me to reach out to those coming from a non-Christian background. My goal is to share the message of Christ in a way they would understand. Despite the pandemic, ministry among non-Christians has been growing remarkably in the past year with the move to social media platforms. Those who are reluctant to show their interest publicly are finding online platforms to be a safer option.”

### STEPHANY FROM LEBANON | CERTIFICATE IN MINISTRY

Stephany and her husband Anthony [both online graduating students] serve at the ministry center of an evangelical church in the North of Lebanon. Stephany shared, “I praise God for leading me to this center. I found they had the same vision as mine – that of multiplying Christ disciples. We care about getting to know people, following up with them and discipling them so that they, in turn, can bring more people to Christ and disciple them.”

“I got to help some of the ministry team members to grow because of the online course material. The courses made me a stronger believer.” Stephany shared concerning her online theological education, “They gave me the needed knowledge to share my faith effectively and a deeper understanding of the Bible. I learned to consider the context whether it is the textual, cultural, historical, geographical and so on.”

For instance, Stephany enjoyed taking the Counselling course. Because of this course, Stephany decided to delve deeper into this ministry field. She also enjoyed taking the Introduction to Islam course, which helped her develop better relationships with the Muslims of her community.



Stephany shared her hope that the ministry center becomes a growing church. She desires to help her community through the various ministries of the center, but she also is passionate about sharing Christ with others.

**Our graduating students have finished this year without having the thrill of walking the graduation march in a graduation celebration. We pray, if God allows, that they can join us for a ceremony next June to celebrate their graduation. We ask you to pray for this academic year’s graduates in all our programs as the Lord of the harvest sends them into the field, because the harvest is plentiful in the region. Pray that they are always receptive to God’s transformative work in their life-long learning journey towards Christ-likeness.**

## Pray with Us: New Academic Year

- ◆ Please pray for our continuing students as their 2020-2021 academic year officially started on October 5. We began the year with the *Nature and Character of God* module. Knowing the nature and character of God is essential for emerging leaders as they seek to serve a church striving towards a life characterized by unity, holiness, love, justice, goodness, and wisdom.
- ◆ Please pray for faculty as they take on a new role in our new integrated theology program. Faculty will now be the main link to our students, which increases their role significantly outside the formal classroom. We are still exploring the implications of this reality as we continue to develop the new delivery format of our program.
- ◆ Pray for our online students who are scattered all around the Arab world and beyond. Term 1, 2020 started on September 23 with 103 active students in the program. Pray that their training equips them to serve the church in closed countries.
- ◆ Pray for both our new and continuing Master of Religion in Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Studies students who started their MENA Islam module on October 12. Pray that the Lord uses the upcoming module to equip them with a deeper understanding of Islam and the region they wish to serve.
- ◆ As the new academic year unravels, we ask you to pray that we are always sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading. Pray that we continue to serve our community through our peacebuilding initiatives, our facilities or any other way. Crises will occur, and people will continue to suffer under the weight of a crumbling nation that has been and continues to be surrounded by troubles on every side. Yet, in all of this, we trust that our God is good, and He seeks the needy and the broken hearted. In such pressing times, may we be on the lookout for God's work around us.
- ◆ We ask you to continue praying for Lebanon's deliverance, even if it seems far off. Pray for the people of Lebanon to withstand and for the Church in Lebanon to go around, as its Lord once did when He walked the earth, "doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil".

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محادثات الشرق الأوسط • MIDDLE EAST CONVERSATIONS

## Lebanon's Year of Meltdown: Faith Refined

Contributors include:

Conversation Host: **Martin Accad**, Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

Guest: **Eugene Sensenig**, Notre Dame University in Lebanon

Guest: **Nadia Khouri Accad**, Tahaddi, Beirut

Guest: **Wissam al-Saliby**, World Evangelical Alliance

October 22, 6:00-7:30 pm Beirut Time

Register Now!

