

Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

October 2022

New Bachelor of Theology Students Join Us on Campus



More than two years after the pandemic forced us to close our classrooms, students from several Arab countries came together for an in-person residency at ABTS! During this induction period, from the third to the twelfth of October, we heard them share about their passion for God's work, and we could see as we listened to each of their testimonies during morning chapels that God's fingerprints were evident in each of their lives and ministries. Their personal testimonies are always a highlight for us. They remind us of God's continuous work in our region, and how He is growing His Church within difficult contexts. They also remind us how God leaves the 99 for the one, and at the same time how He welcomes 3000 to His Church in one day; how He mends one broken heart, but also opens the sea to save a multitude of people. They remind us that He is the same God today, whose calling they have obeyed.

During this residency, we strove to lay a foundation by introducing first-year students to theological education at ABTS. Elie Haddad, president of the seminary, introduced the vision and educational philosophy at the seminary, and faculty members gave students a series of introductory teaching in research methodology, critical thinking, and academic integrity. Equally important, the residency aimed to form the students into a cohort and a community of learners. In the words of Academic Dean Walid Zailaa:

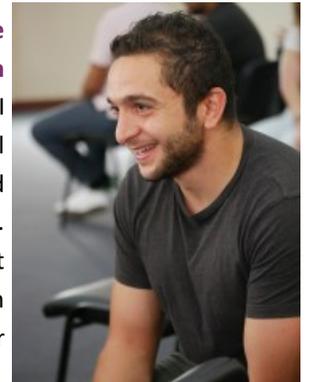
The residency is an indispensable element of our community formation, especially in its holistic focus — not only on the cognitive aspect but also on the behavioral and affective aspects. We could see how the community came into being as the residency progressed. That is why, as much as possible, the residency sought opportunities for fellowship such as a one-day spiritual retreat.

The retreat took place on a Saturday. It is an essential part of the non-formal components of our curriculum. It helped the students to bond together, and with ABTS faculty and staff. We started with individual worship focusing on disciplines such as solitude, silence, personal reflections on Scriptures, and allowing God to speak during prayer. Then, we moved on to communal worship. Bassem Melki, our Dean of Faculty, shared:

When we began to talk about fear and worry, and the story when Jesus calms the storm, we had to stop and pray because some of the students were in tears. There was a lot of room for vulnerability. For instance, one of them shared her fear of balancing between raising her children and studying theology. Several shared that they had never discussed such matters openly in this personal, biblical way. Overall, it was a time that they would remember as they return to their homes.

Twelve of our 14 new students were able to join us on campus. They came from Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Morocco, and for the first time, from Bahrain and Libya.

Carlos from Syria, who serves the Lord in Lebanon through church planting and discipleship, shared, "I got to know my fellow students well during the residency. We laughed together and supported each other. These ten days were very important in that they helped us bond. Although we have returned to each of our



homes, I expect that we will continue to support each other as the year progresses.”

Hasna from Morocco shared, “I loved meeting everybody here at ABTS, and the professors were very helpful. I formed good friendships with students. We went on trips together, and they were all lovely. I learned about the vision and mission of the seminary, and I really liked the library! It has plenty of useful resources for theology students.”



Marianna from Egypt serves the Lord in Lebanon among Syrian refugees in outreach, discipleship, and training leaders for ministry. She shared, “When I heard the testimonies of the students and heard about their encouraging walk with the Lord, I was deeply touched. The whole residency was a push forward as we head toward online education.”

We praise the God who continues to call faithful men and women to serve His Church in the region. Our first-year Bachelor of Theology students have already finished taking their Arabic course and will soon begin taking their first module. We ask you to lift them up in prayer as their theological training begins. May they seek and obey God’s will because He is able to do more than we can ever imagine if we come to Him with ready and teachable hearts and minds.



God Is Faithful: ABTS Graduation Ceremony 2022

God is faithful. He is the Keeper of His covenant. So, when He calls us to take part in a task which only He can do, we rest in the assurance that He will complete it as He had promised. This was a central theme throughout this year’s graduation ceremony as we celebrated God’s work in the region. On the first day of the month, two years after our last in-person graduation ceremony was possible, the audience stood up in honor of the students, and when the magnitude of their applause gradually began to fade, the ceremony commenced. Once more, we were privileged to glorify the God who has called another cohort and equipped them for ministry.



This year’s graduates came from Morocco, Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, and for the Master of Religion program specifically, from Lebanon, Singapore, and the US. The Lord has been using them in the region in each of their unique contexts all throughout their theological training period. Our student speaker for the Bachelor of Theology program, Yaser from Syria, pastors a church that seeks to serve differently abled individuals. During the ceremony, he shared:

Every student at ABTS learned to have a clear vision and mission in their context and to set specific, strategic, measurable goals to fulfill that vision. We learned how to be good communicators and to take practical steps towards change. We learned about the missional church and reaching people from different cultures. We learned that we are all brothers and sisters regardless of our color, race, and past. We learned that the Lord Jesus came to save the brokenhearted, to be with them and comfort them. Today, we need Jesus in our beloved Middle East and North Africa, and in the whole world. How we truly need Him!

With their current academic journeys coming to a close, Hani Hanna, President of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo and the main speaker at the ceremony, encouraged this year’s graduates to proclaim the gospel and to be the order in a world that is



filled with disorder. He said, “God is telling you today that He is a faithful God, and that He has chosen you for a mission that you will accomplish because of His faithfulness.” He reflected on the Lord’s words in Isaiah 49 to His people who were in exile. God told His people: “I will keep you and will make you a covenant for the people.” He wasn’t going to give them another covenant. He was going to turn them into a covenant—an extraordinary presence in the world that says to the captives, “come out!” and to those in the darkness, “be free!”

It is God’s work. He is the one who initiates, and He invites us to come alongside Him. Our graduates have already rolled up their sleeves and gone out into the fields, so we ask you to keep them in your prayers so that they are always watchful to where God is at work because the harvest is plentiful.



Faculty members praying for all graduates



Certificate in Ministry Graduates



On September 27, 2022, ABTS lost a pioneer of theological education in the region and one of its founding faculty members.

Dr. David King taught New Testament and Pastoral Studies at ABTS for more than thirty years, impacting and shaping hundreds of Arab church leaders over the years. He was one of the last American missionaries to leave Lebanon during the dark years of the civil war. "We are grateful to God for the faithful heritage that we received at ABTS," commented ABTS President Elie Haddad. "Dr. King was one of the spiritual giants and thoughtful theologians whom God has used to shape ABTS and generations of church leaders." We pray for his family at this time of celebrating his life and grieving his departure, and we pray that God would raise many more like him who are willing to expend their lives in serving God's church around our region.

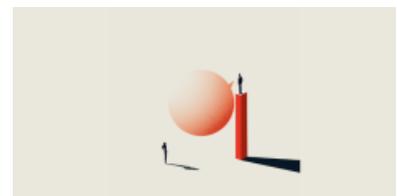
Check out our latest blog posts:



[Community Peace: Part Two of the Middle East Consultation 2022 Blog Series](#)



[Personal Peace: Part One of the Middle East Consultation 2022 Blog Series](#)



[Dear Woman, You Have a Problem. Sincerely, Man](#)

- Pray with Us -

Prayer Requests from Some of Our New Bachelor of Theology Students

Carlos from Syria

Please pray that the Lord grants me wisdom and discernment to know where I should invest my time among the people that I visit and share the gospel with.

Ghossoub from Syria

My prayer is that I remain in the Lord and overcome the challenges that continue to face me in Lebanon. May He grant me the patience to endure trials so that they make my faith stronger.

Hasna from Morocco

My prayer is that all Moroccans know Jesus. There are many challenges to doing ministry in Morocco, so pray that things become easier for us. May the laws change so that we are given more freedom to do ministry.

Marianna from Egypt

The Lord called me and my husband to serve Syrian refugees in Lebanon, but life can be stressful with the taxing economic

crisis the country is going through. So, pray for me and my family, that we may always be in God's will, and that He may give us the right words to speak with those we serve.

Simon from Libya

I ask you to keep me in your prayers. I feel God's voice clearly telling me to return to my country, yet fear has a strong hold over me because of the security risks that may very likely be awaiting me. I am currently residing in Lebanon, but in Libya, I work towards offering psychosocial support to displaced children and advocating for the children's rights and protecting them from violence and exploitation.

Mohamad from Bahrain

I constantly pray that my mother and sisters come to Christ, and I am thankful that my mother and youngest sister have already begun to read God's word. Please pray with me that the Lord continues His work in them so that they get baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.