

Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

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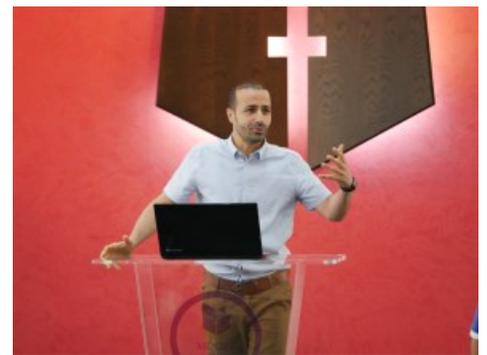
Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:18,19 NIV).

And, sure enough, disciples made disciples and the Church turned the world upside down—not by military prowess or political tactics—but by the power of the living God. Today, God is still drawing people to Himself, and discipleship is still pivotal to Church growth. Effective discipleship, however, often requires persistence and intentionality so that those who come to faith can connect Scripture to the complex conundrums of daily life and to understand the meaning of lifelong growth. Too often, new followers of Christ are led to faith and abandoned or given a brief discipleship program that provides only a superficial understanding of the life changing implications of the gospel. The Church glorifies God in word and deed and fulfills its missional mandate when its members become lifelong disciples and disciple makers. We invite you to take a look at the courses we offer our students in the *Disciples Making Disciples* module.

History of Discipleship Movements taught by Abed El Kareem Zien El Dien

The yearning for a closer walk with Christ has characterized Christians throughout the history of the Church. Today, we have a great heritage of spiritual formation that instructs and guides Christians in the twenty-first century. The purpose of this course is to introduce emerging leaders to this great heritage and thereby glean principles and tools that can be applied to the practice of contemporary formational ministry. Abed shared:

I taught the History of Discipleship Movements course focusing on John Wesley's Methodist movement and his ten principles. I also focused on contemporary movements of people following Christ in different parts of the world. The students were encouraged to see miraculous and real stories of growth in the Church.



Our student Balgis, who is a deacon at her local Episcopal church in Sudan, shared:

The readings told stories of growing churches despite the opposition. This reminded me that the Holy Spirit is working when I share the gospel and that I should not give up on people even when I am faced with indifference or persecution.

The Challenges of Discipleship in the MENA Context taught by Wes Watkins

Wes, Assistant Professor of Missiology, shared that it is important for students to understand issues related to socio-religious identity for those who come to faith from non-evangelical backgrounds:

This course deals with the sense of belonging and community. It deals with persecution, and especially avoiding unnecessary persecution. It's typically an exciting course because the subject matter is by nature controversial, and a lot of our students have very diverse backgrounds and first-hand experiences that they debrief with their peers. So, as the course happens in real time, in the forums and in our Zoom sessions, the discussions are very lively.

Both those who are conservative and progressive on some of the issues that we discussed have told me after the course that they see the issues as much more complex than they have realized. They are also more committed to see people formed in Christ and to focus more on Jesus in their application. Whenever Jesus becomes central, that's always a great win for any professor or any seminary or any church.



Spiritual Disciplines taught by Grace Al Zoughbi

God desires to be in constant fellowship with His children. As the Good Shepherd, He invites us to listen to His voice and for us to talk to Him. It is important for Christ's followers, especially in the Arab world—given the complexity of the region—to practice spiritual disciplines to grow ever deeper in their relationship with the Lord and to be transformed to the likeness of Him who loved us and called us to serve Him.

Grace Al Zoughbi, Lecturer in Theological Education, shared:

I have found the students' engagement with the material exciting. Their questions animate the contents of the course. Their renewed commitment to follow Christ in dire circumstances is both inspiring and humbling. Yet, their genuine confession that, at times, it is not easy to practice spiritual disciplines help us encourage one another in this journey.

Our student Jalil from Yemen, who serves his people while living in Egypt, shared about one lesson he learned:

I used to unknowingly depend on my own ability and wisdom, and then find myself neglecting prayer. So, I have decided to dedicate more time for prayer, and now, prayer is an integral part of life and ministry. I have been intentional about passing on this lesson to the members of the ministry team that I lead.



In Quest of the Rock: Peter's Transformative Journey with Jesus taught by Abed El Kareem Zien El Dien

This course draws insights from [Mike Kuhn's book](#), which is of the same title as the course. It explores at length the spiritual formation of Peter from fisherman to apostle through the power of relational encounter. Abed shared that he was learning just as much as the students were:

We were able to see the importance of knowing God but also of knowing oneself because one should not happen without the other. Otherwise, we run the risk of becoming mystical and detached, and that's not the best thing. The students were vulnerable and real in the environment we created. They were interacting beautifully and accepting the brokenness in themselves and each other. This is the thing I loved most because true discipleship cannot take place if people think they are perfect.

Our student Haroun from Sudan serves college students in his country. He shared:

I learned to walk with God and allow Him to transform me as He had done with Peter. This will change the way I disciple others because it will arm me with patience and perseverance in following up with new believers as they put off the old identity and put on the new identity in Christ.

Biblical Theology of Discipleship taught by Emad Botros

This course helps students to examine different approaches to discipleship practiced by the Church today and to come up with an understanding of discipleship based on the whole Bible. During the course, we focused on the concept of discipleship, rather than on the term itself, that is, following the Master. Usually, our study of the topic of discipleship is limited to the New Testament, particularly the Gospels. When we speak about the biblical theology of discipleship, we trace the concept of "following the Master" in both Testaments. For example, we study how the people of God in the Old Testament are called to follow God in a covenant relationship; they are called to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deut. 6:4-5). By doing so, we learn that Jesus' call of discipleship was a reiteration and extension of the call God had given to His people centuries before (Mark 12:29-31).



Emad shared:

One major point students took out of this course and applied to their ministry is that they not only invite people to believe in Jesus, but also teach them how to follow and walk with Him in the real world.

As we equip men and women for effective ministry, we ask you to pray that they are always found faithful to their calling, allowing God to work in their lives so that they are lifelong disciples who make disciples out of others according to the Great Commission.

We Are One Because We Belong To Him

ABTS Team Gathers for Fellowship, Teambuilding, and Training

This is the start of another year. And what better way to start, as an ABTS family, than to remember our oneness in Christ and our commitment to one vision and one mission. So we gathered earlier this month for a one-day team training focusing on our different personalities and team dynamics. Starting with a time of worship and devotion, we gleaned lessons from Psalm 85, mainly looking back at the past year and remembering God's goodness and mercy to us, and in a similar sentiment to that of the Psalmist, asking the Lord how He can manifest His mercy and salvation through us this year.

We were reminded that God divided gifts among us in such a way that we cannot function on our own. We need each other. Aside from the team building activities and the fellowship, we had a good time knowing more about ourselves and our differences through the DISC personality test and analysis. We discussed our strengths and potential weaknesses to create better understanding and make communication more effective among team members. The group discussions allowed for our team to be vulnerable and open about their struggles, and overall, we left the training having a better understanding and more appreciation of ourselves and one another.



We praise God for the beautiful mosaic that is our ABTS family. Each team member contributes to the vision and mission of the seminary, and God is using each of our unique skills and personalities for His glory. We look ahead in expectation to what God has in store for each one of us, and we pray that He stretches and challenges us to get out of our comfort zones and work together for the growth of His Kingdom.

Check out our latest blog posts:



[The Sphere of Christ's Presence: A Christmas Compass through the Holy Land](#)



[ABTS Christmas Blog](#)

- Pray with Us -

Prayer Requests of Some of Our Integrated Theology Program Students

Atieh from Syria

Please pray for me and my wife as we venture to interact with a group of people who have a desire to hear God's word. We pray that God grants us wisdom and that we use what we learn at seminary to communicate the gospel to them faithfully. We also pray that the Lord grants us enough time to focus on our children. We do not want to do ministry at the expense of our children.

Zineb from Morocco

Please pray for my family in Morocco and my husband's family in Syria that they may know the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Please also pray for my daughters because they are going through their teenage years, so may they experience God's care and follow His path rather than the path of the world.

Jalil from Yemen

Please pray that I may be given strength as I pursue my theological education this year. Pray that I have new encounters with God and experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I also ask you to pray for my ministry among the Yemeni people.

Balgis from Sudan

Recently, I took a translation course, something I have been wanting to do for quite a while. I have a vision of translating the Bible to my mother tongue because I firmly believe that more people from my Sudanese tribe will be coming to Christ, and they will be needing Bibles in their language. So, I ask you to pray for me as I pursue this endeavor.

Haroun from Sudan

Pray for me that the Lord grants me grace, wisdom, power, and energy so I may move forward in my ministry to college students according to the Lord's calling for me.

Elias from Syria

Please pray for my ministry at my local church, and please pray that He uses me more and more for His glory. May the seeds that God sows through me fall on good ground so that they grow and bear fruit in due time.