



Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

www.abtslebanon.org

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A HEART FOR GOD'S KINGDOM

Ministry Update from
our Graduate Habil



Our students and graduates are central to our ministry at ABTS. We are always humbled by His powers of transformation as we walk alongside them during their journeys of theological education and see them grow into effective Church ministers and leaders who serve the growth of the Kingdom. We recently had the opportunity to sit down with Habil, our 2019 Bachelor of Theology graduate from Sudan who currently serves with the Episcopal Church in Khartoum, and hear about how the Lord has worked in and around him through his theological education and ministry.

Habil came to ABTS in 2016 to pursue theological education. His first year at ABTS was difficult.

I remember feeling so lost and confused during my first months at seminary. Three months in and I was ready to throw in the towel! I wanted to give it up and go back home. But every time I prayed about it, the Lord would tell me in one way or another to do my best and persevere, so I did. When I went back home in 2019, I went back a different man.

It didn't take Habil long to begin applying what he had learned at ABTS.



Habil's interview with Jad

The first thing I did when I went back home was make peace with a pastor I had fallen out with years before. It used to be that when we saw each other, we would go out of our way to avoid each other. If I walked into a room he would leave it, and if I saw him walking down the street I would cross to the other side! But at seminary, I learned that I could not serve the Lord without acting like Him, so I strove to make peace, and I am thankful for it. Today, he constantly encourages me and supports my ministry.

Habil then began to invest his time in ministry.

Before I came to seminary, the diocese I was part of had been struggling to maintain its youth ministry because of conflict between the ministry team leaders. This conflict had led the ministry to be shut down, and it remained inactive throughout my stay at ABTS. When I went back, I knew that this did not please the Lord, and so I worked to restore relationships between the ministry team and with the youth in the community. It took time, but bit by bit, youth started to come back to the ministry, and today, it is stronger than ever! I praise God for His benevolence.



During his time studying theology, Habil came to see the value of strong teaching for the Church.

At seminary, so many of my misconceptions were corrected, and so many of my principles were examined and reshaped into Christlike principles. The Lord shaped and formed me so that I really did come to live the Kingdom ethics we used to talk about. When I went back to my church, I focused on developing our list of topics so that we could engage more deeply with the word of God and have Him shape us more effectively. And, over the past couple of years, I've seen the Lord grow us into more loving, giving, and persevering children of His Kingdom.

While he was at ABTS, Habil underwent training to become one of the leaders for our [Khebz w Meleh](#) (Bread and Salt) peacebuilding initiative in Sudan. With the pandemic and the difficulties that Sudan has been experiencing over the past years, new needs were emerging in the Sudanese community that this peacebuilding initiative could meet.

Faculty always emphasized the importance of contextuality for our ministries, so when I went back to Sudan, I called the ministry a cup of coffee to suit the context! In 2021, the ministry saw a lot of growth, but it was in 2022 that we saw the largest impact. The Lord helped me carry out 5 groups in 2022, all in the Omdurman area of Khartoum. One of the groups reached out to an underequipped refugee camp through a relief effort that created opportunities for us to share the gospel with them. When the refugees asked why we were doing this, we always answered that we were just doing what the Lord told us to do. Another group that we helped were the teachers at a local school in the Hay Al Zahra area (a neighborhood in Omdurman). The teachers were facing a lot of internal conflicts and difficulties. Having them come together in open conversation through the [KwM guiding principles](#) helped them deal with their issues. They then took initiative and started their own internal committee to deal with student and faculty affairs!



Habil is currently assistant pastor of the Episcopal Church in Khartoum. He also serves with the diocese of the Episcopal Church in Sudan through administration and supervision, teaching and training, and through leading the youth ministry.

Without theological education, I do not think I could have ever allowed the Lord to work through me as He has so far. I used to be very aggressive when dealing with conflict inside the church and was timid and shy when reaching out with the gospel, but the Lord changed all of that. He showed me how important it is to make peace and share peace with those around me. He also gave me the sensitivity and courage to share the gospel with anyone and in every context.

Recently, Habil and his church have been focusing on outreach to non-Christian areas in Sudan.

It is amazing how the Lord is growing the church in places where believers are not allowed to practice their faith. More and more people are coming to Christ, and we are doing our best to serve them. They currently come together in small home groups to worship and pray together. I do not know what God is going to do through them, but I am thankful that He is allowing us to be a part of this ministry, and I pray that He continues to use us as we reach out to those who have yet to receive the gospel message.

Moving forward, Habil has a vision to prepare youth for effective church ministry.

Our church ministers and leaders often engage in ministry without receiving proper training or discipleship. This causes our churches to have strong but shallow engagement with our faith. We have a need for ministers who have strong theological foundations, so I want to focus on training youths from a young age and disciple them so that they have strong roots in the word of God. This will help the church altogether. It will also help us break out of our restrictive customs and embrace a God-centered direction that seeks spiritual growth with Him first and foremost.

We thank the Lord for using Habil for the growth of the Kingdom. We pray that He continues to guide our students and graduates as they seek to live out His will for their lives.

In Pursuit of Excellence: Our 2023 Accreditation Visit

The pursuit of excellence is a core value at ABTS. As we seek to serve Him and the growth of His Kingdom in the Arab world, we cannot but bring our best and lay it down at His feet. And, as He uses our ministry for His purposes, we cannot help but be formed according to His will.

Our accreditation journey, [which began in 2007](#), is a direct result of this pursuit. To guarantee high-quality theological education, ABTS pursued institutional accreditation and accreditation for its different programs through the [European Council for Theological Education](#) (ECTE). ABTS became a member of ECTE in 2007 and received its first Visiting Evaluation Team (VET) and institutional accreditation in 2012. Later in 2014 a second VET team visited ABTS to accredit more programs. Our accreditation was first renewed in 2019 and is now due for another renewal.

Since 2019 and our commitment to a [new strategic direction](#), and with the launch of our new Master of Theology program and the changes that our Integrated Theology program has undergone, we were due for a re-assessment. Over the past months, our Academic Team, faculty, and Registrar's Office were hard at work preparing all that was needed for our latest accreditation visit. Spearheaded by our Registrar Rana Wazir, who also serves on the [ECTE Accreditation Commission](#), ABTS faculty and staff worked hard to compile documents on our policies and curricula that were sent to ECTE in preparation for the visit. From the 3rd to the 5th of April, ABTS received a team of five professionals, including a student representative and a trainee from Middle East and North Africa Association for Theological Education ([MENATE](#)), who carried out meetings and interviews with students, graduates, faculty, program leads, leadership, and board members. At the end of their visit, the VET shared with us their initial findings, which were overwhelmingly positive. This visit will inform the decision that the Accreditation Commission will take in their meeting later this summer.



ABTS leadership team with the VET team

Talking about the importance of the accreditation process for ABTS, Rana shared,

It is an essential part of our pursuit of excellence. Through it, we are able to assess how effective we are at carrying out our mission of offering specialized learning resources and equipping faithful men and women for effective ministry. It assures our students that our degrees meet European academic standards, and it provides opportunities for future study outside the MENA region. It also helps us take a step back and look at our programs from the outside. This helps us highlight areas that require further attention and growth.

We thank the Lord for bringing us thus far. We pray that He gives us wisdom as we seek to serve Him and His Kingdom through the Church in the Arab world.

Check out our latest Blog Posts



[Easter Reflections From the Arab Baptist
Theological Seminary For 2023](#)



[Toxic Positivity: Biblical Perspectives on a Harmful Trend](#)

- Pray with Us - Some of Our Graduates and Staff

Maria Mansour | Academic Assistant

Pray that the Lord grants me wisdom and perseverance as I seek to serve Him through my work at ABTS. Pray for our students, faculty, and staff, that they remain faithful in their walks with Him. Pray that we may all grow and reflect Christ to the people around us. Also, pray that we are active participants in sharing the gospel with our communities.

Mirella Kazan | Administrative Coordinator

I am thankful for what the Lord is doing in and around us. I ask you to pray for our students, that the Lord continues to shape them into Christlike ministers through their theological education. Pray for our faculty and staff who always work hard, that we always give our best to the Lord.

Josephine Sabbagh | Alumni Relations Coordinator

Please pray for our alumni, who are engaged in different ministries around the world. Many of them face challenges, so I ask you to pray for physical, emotional, and spiritual protection over them.

Habil Luka | Bachelor of Theology graduate serving in Sudan

Pray that we as His Church embody Kingdom Ethics as we reach out to those who have not received the gospel message yet. Pray that the Lord plants churches in non-Christian areas so that non-Christian background believers can have a place to meet and practice their faith. Finally, pray for Sudan, that the Lord uses His Church, amidst the difficulty, to create peace and share His hope.

Yaser Shinan | Bachelor of Theology graduate serving in Lebanon

The church I pastor is moving to a new, larger building where we can better serve the differently abled people in our community. Pray for this move, that the Lord sees us through it, and that He carries it out smoothly. Also, pray for us, that the Lord uses us as His Salt and Light. Finally, pray for the growth of His Kingdom, that more souls would be saved through Christ.

Sousanna | Bachelor of Theology graduate serving in Sudan

The Lord has blessed us with a bountiful harvest, and His Church here is growing. Please pray for my husband and I as we lead the church here, that the Lord gives us the wisdom we need to serve Him and share His gospel. Pray for the people who are part of our church, that the Lord strengthens them in their faith. Pray we all remain faithful stewards over the resources He has entrusted us with.