



# Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

## كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

www.abtslebanon.org

July 2023

MADE  
FOR A TIME  
AS THIS

Godly Leaders for a Time of Uncertainty

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a church-planting movement began to unfold in the Arab world, there was an acute awareness of the need for Biblically trained and theologically equipped leaders who could lead their churches and serve their communities in a Christlike and effective manner. This is why, since inception, leadership formation has been a key aspect of the ministry of ABTS. Today, with the influx of an unprecedented number of new believers in Christ to the Arab Church, the need for effective leaders is more present than ever. From February 20 till June 4, our Integrated Theology Program students went through the *Leadership* module to learn just what it is to be steward-leaders. Led by Academic Dean Walid Zailaa, the module provided our students with the opportunity to study leadership in its Biblical, historical, contextual, and ministerial aspects.

The module began with an introductory session that helped set the tone for the topics that the students would engage in throughout their courses. During the session, ABTS President Elie Haddad presented a framework for the different aspects of leadership, emphasized the importance of steward-ship, and challenged students to think outside of the cultural norm. **Reflecting on the session, Elie shared:**

*In our Arab context, we tend to think of leadership positions as positions of power or reverence. Instead, we want to push our students to have servant hearts when thinking of leadership. We also want to help them understand how important stewardship is for effective leaders; we need to empower others while also being faithful to the mission God is calling us to. These steward-leaders are vital for the Church in the Arab world. The Church in the region is experiencing a crisis of leadership. What we need are godly leaders who can read and understand the signs of the time and lead church ministries and mobilize their communities to respond appropriately.*



ABTS President — Elie Haddad

Students began by working on the *Biblical Perspectives on Leadership* course with Walid. Through the course, students looked at the different aspects of leadership as they come up in Biblical characters, examined the circumstances where these characteristics come to life, and reflected on their own leadership styles. **Speaking about the course, Walid shared:**

*We wanted to give our students a look at the fundamental characteristics of leadership as reflected in Biblical characters. We looked at Nehemiah, for example, to see how he practiced communal leadership in the building of the walls and contrasted that with a worldly approach to leadership. As students unpacked the characteristics of steward-ship, and as they came face to face with these Biblical models of leaders, they were able to ask themselves questions on how they can be better servants and leaders. Students were also able to engage in very productive discussions through our Zoom sessions. They showed a lot of courage as they shared their own personal experiences with leadership.*



Academic Dean — Walid Zailaa

Elyas, a third-year student, shared that he benefitted a lot from the module. **Speaking about his experience, Elyas shared:**

*The courses taught me how to empower others. A good leader helps others use their skills for the benefit of the Church and does not shy away from adversity. In fact, it is in adversity that a true leader shines. A leader's duty is to prepare and equip their team so that they are able to carry out ministry effectively. In the Bible, we see the Lord develop and equip Christlike and faithful men and women to fulfill their callings and serve the Kingdom. Similarly, Christlike leaders must discern the talents in their teams and help their team members grow as faithful stewards and servants of the Kingdom.*



Third -Year Student — Elyas

Afterwards, students began work on the *Living Lessons from Church History* taught by Assistant Professor Abed El Kareem Zien El Dien. Through the course, the students looked at different examples of leadership throughout the history of the Church to see how these leaders were able to reflect transformative and Christlike leadership and create change in their communities while also helping support those around them. **Speaking about the course, Abed shared:**





**Assistant Professor — Abed El  
Kareem Zien El Dien**

We wanted to equip our students so that they, as faithful stewards, can take the gifts that the Lord has entrusted them with and share them with others so that they can be used for the growth of the Kingdom. So, we looked at key Christian leaders throughout history to see how they were able to make a change and impact others. Of course, we started with characters from the Bible and moved from there to the church fathers, the monks, the leaders of the reformation, and even looked at some contemporary leaders. Some of the leaders we studied included Martin Luther, Saint Francis, John Wesley, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, and Anna Graham. The circumstances around us, as we know, are constantly changing, and we wanted to equip our students so that they could adapt to these changes and meet the needs of their communities in Christlike and effective ways and serve the Kingdom faithfully.

**Zineb, a fourth-year student, shared that the course helped her correct her understanding of Christian leadership. She said:**

*Through my studies, I learned not only what a leader is but also how to choose a good leader. Christian leadership is a spiritual gift from God: not everyone can be a leader, and so we need to be faithful in not only how we practice leadership, but also how we choose our leaders. This helped me reflect on my own experience of leadership and showed me how, as a leader in my ministry, I and my team lacked a proper understanding of leadership and were making mistakes in how we moved our ministry. The module helped me learn to be a better leader who is guided by the Lord and not by my own understanding.*



**Fourth-Year Student— Zineb**



**Assistant Professor — Bassem Melki**

The last course given through the module was the *Personal Journeys in Leadership* course, taught by Assistant Professor Bassem Melki. The course focused on applying the Biblical and historical perspectives on leadership to our students' personal and ministerial lives. Through the course, the students had the space to share their experiences in ministry, reflect on their struggles, and contemplate what Biblical leadership would look like in their own contexts. **Talking about the course, Bassem shared:**

*The course took the students on a personal journey of evaluating their being and doing in leadership. They looked at their strengths and weaknesses, limitations and flaws, and assessed how these can hinder or empower God's leadership through them. In this way, the students were simultaneously learning theology and being transformed by the Holy Spirit. The conversations we had were amazing. It was a blessing to see the students grow as they did. Some were able to reconcile with themselves. Others decided to challenge the status quo.*



**Anthony, a fourth-year student who also took the module alongside his wife, Stephanie, shared that the courses helped them make a decisive change in their ministry. Anthony shared:**

*The module had a profound impact on our lives and ministry. Through it, I came to see what Biblical leadership and mentorship looked like and how these seek to build and empower others. The courses corrected my perception on many aspects of leadership and empowered and equipped me to take a step towards correcting my direction in ministry.*

At the end of the module, students brought all their learning together in the Integrative Project. **Talking about the project, Walid shared:**

*Through it, students were challenged to take these theoretical ideas and seek to apply them in their own contexts. This was difficult as it meant they needed to look at their leadership in an objective manner, but that difficulty allowed them to see their ministries from different perspectives. This is what sets our curriculum apart; the Integrative Project pushes the student to use the different lenses, integrate them together, and then apply them to their community, personal experiences, and church life, so that they can be agents of change wherever the Lord uses them.*

As they continue their journeys of theological education and continue to be formed into steward-leaders through the modules we provide through our program, we pray that our students become godly leaders, ready to pick up the gauntlet amidst all the difficulties that the region is experiencing so that they can be His Light and Salt in the world.

## Check out our latest Blog Posts



[Christian Purpose and Meaning in Late-Stage Capitalism](#)



[Liberating Arab Evangelicalism from Patriarchy through Inclusive Community](#)

## - Pray with Us - Some of our Integrated Theology Program Students

### Elyas

Please pray for my ministry, that the Lord uses us for His glory, and that the small seeds that He uses us to plant grow into fruitful trees that contribute to the growth of His Kingdom.

### Zineb

I ask you to pray for my parents and country Morocco, that their minds and hearts are opened to His truth. Also, pray for my fellow students, that they continue to grow through their theological education, and that their minds and hearts are opened to the mission the Lord has given us as His followers.

### Mohamed

I currently serve the Lord by discipling a group of believers in the Arabian gulf. Please pray for the group, that the Lord uses us to bring people to Himself. Pray that the Lord helps us build a strong foundation in Him, and that we grow together as a church. Pray that we learn to support each other and help each other as we discern the spiritual gifts He has given us and seek to use them for His Kingdom. Finally, pray that He helps us be faithful.

### Najib

Pray for my ministry among non-Christian background individuals, that it bears fruit and that the Holy Spirit works in their hearts to bring them to Christ. Pray that the Lord fulfills His plan for our lives. Finally, pray that we see a proliferation of disciples and leaders in Arab churches and ministries.



**Stephanie**

I ask you to pray that, in everything I do, I do it to bring glory to God. Pray for the changes that my ministry is experiencing, that the Lord uses these changes so that my husband and I can be better and more fruitful servants of His Kingdom. Finally, pray that He forms me into a servant-leader who can bring Christlike change into the community.

**Fatima**

Please pray for my country, Morocco, that the Lord would open the hearts of the people to His word. Pray for the Moroccan churches, that we can stand together and support each other as members of one Body. Finally, pray for my studies and my journey of theological education.

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