Arab Baptist Theological Seminary
كليّة اللاهوت المعمدانيّة العربيّة
www.abtslebanon.org
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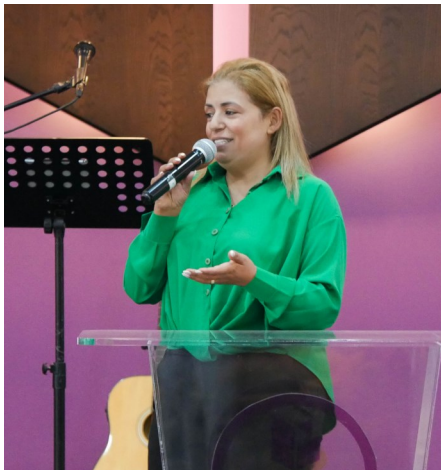
Each year, the Lord blesses us with a new cohort of believers called to be equipped for effective ministry through the Arab Church. These men and women come from across the Arab world and its diasporas, carrying with them stories of God's dealings in their lives and the callings that the Lord has entrusted them with. As we hear their testimonies, it is always encouraging for us to see how the Lord works through their lives and ministries.

## Sanaa from Syria



I grew up in an evangelical family, but faith didn't really mean much to us, so I grew up very distant from God. My grandpa was the true believer in the family. He had been one of the first people to come to Christ and begin reaching out with the gospel in Syria. Growing up, I would always go with him to church until one day the sermon was on love. I told my grandpa afterwards that if God truly loved us, then why did He put us in a world so full of suffering and hate? My grandpa got upset and said some stern words to me, and I stopped going to church right then and there. Years later, I had grown up and started my own business, but I still felt empty inside. One day, my brother, who knew that I had a lot of questions, kept on insisting that I go to church with him, so I did. We attended a Sudanese service where the sermon was again on God's love, and though the dialect was difficult for me to understand, the words reached deep into my heart. After the service, the pastor came to talk to me, and he said words that I felt were coming from God Himself. He told me that Christ loved me, that He had died for me, and had paid the cost of my sin, and he asked me to pray with him. As I did, I felt a warm embrace and came to know true fatherhood in that moment.

My husband and I pastor the Baptist Church in Jaramana. The church seeks to serve its community through relief and outreach. We want to build bridges and share the love of Christ with those around us. I also serve through the Sunday school ministry, which has always been something that I am passionate about. I started studying through the online Certificate in Ministry program because studying theology had always been my

dream. Today, I am continuing to pursue theological education because I saw how much impact the Certificate program had on my life and ministry, and because I want to continue to mature as a follower of Christ.

## Ibrahim from Iraq

When I was a kid, I went through a difficult experience in Iraq that impacted my life for years to come. It left me with a sense of darkness and emptiness that I could not overcome. When my family and I moved to Turkey, and I moved off to college, I found the opportunity to try all the things that I thought would give me peace, but none of them worked. I fell into an inconsolable sadness, to the point where I wanted to end my life. One day, I was talking to my dad about politics and our home country when he started telling me about Christ and what He had done in his life. I was surprised, and I felt like this was the last thing I wanted to hear, but my dad said one sentence that hit me right in the heart. He said: "let Christ show you Himself." A couple of days later, I saw Christ in a dream. I was in a dark forest but could see a strong source of light in the distance, so I made my way to it. There I saw Christ, but I could not approach Him. I felt too sinful. But He told me to come to Him so that He could cleanse me of my sins. I came close to Him and put my head on His shoulder and wept. The next day, I woke up a renewed man. The Lord had filled up the emptiness inside of me and healed me of my scars.

Shortly after, I joined a church in Turkey where the Lord used me to serve the youth through outreach and follow up. Because I know the difficulties that youth can face and the sadness they can experience in the world, I would like to help them find hope in Christ. Today, I have moved back to Iraq where I have joined a local church, and I have a vision to serve the youth there. I decided to study theology so that I could continue to grow with God and respond to His calling for my life.

## Jalal from Syria

I am Kurdish, and growing up, my family was never religious. My worldview was so distant from love and forgiveness. It was built on revenge, anger, and the pursuit of money and fame, and so I lived a very worldly life. I never felt like I had a religious belonging, so I never knew who to even pray for. When the war broke out in Syria, I became a drifter, always looking for a place to stay. It was very difficult to feel so alone in the world.

Later, one of my friends introduced me to a believer who invited me to church and who gave me a Bible. The more I read, the more the Lord worked in me, and soon I felt like He was calling me to follow Him. So, one day I asked the Lord to enter my life, and that is when He began to change me and rid me of my old ways. I used to be a very angry and hurtful person, and I hurt my friends and family a lot. One day, as I was praying, I felt the Lord working in me to change me. He showed me all the people I had hurt, and I began to cry. I fell asleep, and I saw the Lord ask me to become gentle like Moses. The next day, I woke up a changed man. I apologized to everyone I had hurt, and I left my old ways.

I currently serve with my church through our youth ministry. I want to study theology because I feel called to serve the Kurdish people, and to do that effectively I need to be properly equipped.

## Student from Egypt

I grew up in a non-Christian family. Ever since I was a kid, I wanted to know more about God, but my family would always dissuade me from it because they feared I would become an extremist. Still, I wanted to find out more, so I studied and asked a lot, and for a time I was convinced that I was on the right path. At some point, I had questions that I could not find answers to, and these planted seeds of doubt in my mind. In 2006, I came across a video on Christian apologetics, and I felt that I wanted to become a keyboard warrior and attack all those who spoke out against my religion, but to do so, I needed to know more about my own religion, so again I started to study. However, the deeper I got into religion, the more I saw mistakes, and soon I became an atheist! In 2010, while on a trip to Germany, I heard about Christ and I became curious, so I started to study the Bible, and slowly, the Lord captured my heart. I gave my life to Christ, and I was baptized in 2013.

I currently lead a home group. Ever since coming to Christ, I have had this dream of starting a church in Egypt that serves those from my background, and so I want to study theology so that I can continue to grow with Christ and become a better servant of His Kingdom through the vision He has given me.

## Zarmine from Syria

I grew up in Aleppo, in a devout Christian Armenian family. I used to carry out all my religious duties, and I served the differently abled at my local traditional church. I had a family, and I enjoyed my life. However, when the war started, it brought with it tragedy. Suddenly I had lost my home, my possessions, and my parents. My kids and I had to come to Lebanon to find safety. In Lebanon, I struggled a lot with God. I would always ask Him why He had allowed all this to happen. Later, a friend of mine introduced me to a pastor at the Resurrection Church – Beirut, and I started to serve with the church, but I had yet to know the peace and joy that the other believers around me had experienced. One day during a sermon, the pastor pointed at me and asked me if I would accept Jesus as my savior. A little embarrassed, and out of respect for the pastor, I said that I do. That day was the best day of my life. My fear and sorrow left me, and I was filled with peace, joy, and reassurance that I had never known before. From that day on, the Lord started to change me bit by bit and prepare me to serve His Kingdom.

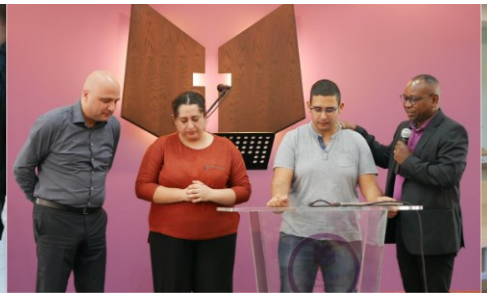
I first studied through the online Certificate in Ministry program at ABTS. It was my education that encouraged me to serve the Lord without fear. Today, I serve many Armenian families through follow up and pastoral care. I am continuing to study theology because I have seen how much the Lord has helped me grow through the Certificate program, and I want to continue to be shaped so that I can serve my people in a Christlike manner.

## Zouhir from Algeria

I come from a large non-Christian family. When I was younger, I would always try to carry out my religious duties so that I could get closer to God, but more and more I realized that I had gotten to a place where my life felt empty and full of sadness. I had grown up watching a lot of Western movies, and I was always captivated by how simply people talked to God in those movies, so I adopted direct prayer from a young age, and I was always curious to read scripture from other religions. I said this to a friend in school, and the next day he brought his brother over to talk to me about Christ. I would ask questions, and the man would talk, and bit by bit I became convinced. At the end of the conversation, I gave my life to Christ. In that moment, I finally felt like my life had meaning, and I was overwhelmed by joy and gratitude that I had never experienced before.

When I came to Christ, the Church in Algeria was witnessing a revival, and I was blessed to be part of the work of the Holy Spirit back then. I currently serve with my church and with the Bible school here in Algeria through teaching. I feel called to teach theology. I first came to ABTS because I had a deep desire to know more about the word of God. My journey began with the online Certificate in Ministry program, and I am thankful that I can continue now toward a Bachelor of Theology.

We thank the Lord for how He has worked in the lives of these men and women to bring hope, joy, and meaning into their lives, and for allowing us to walk alongside them as He shapes them through our programs. With all of the difficulties the Arab world is seeing, the Arab Church is in need of faithful men and women who can contend with the challenges to ministry in the region and who can bear the witness of Christ in an effective and relevant manner to their communities.



## Check out our latest Blog Posts

The Predicament of Confrontation

Layers of Peace: Highlights from the 2023 Middle East Consultation at ABTS

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

**Joseph from Lebanon**
Pray for peace in the region, especially with all that is happening recently. Pray for the Church, so that it is able to make a difference in the lives of those in need. Finally, pray for me so that I can better focus on my studies and my ministry in the middle of all these difficulties.

**Zouhir from Algeria**
Pray for the Church in Algeria, that the Lord gives our leadership wisdom to navigate the difficulties we are facing. Pray for me, that the Lord helps me balance between my family, ministry, and education. Also, pray for my wife and kids, that the Lord blesses them in all that they do.

**Student from Lebanon**
Pray for all the difficulties that we are going through in the region. My family and I have also been dealing with some illnesses, which has been stressful. Pray for me, that the Lord gives me strength and wisdom as I am beginning my pursuit of studying theology. Pray, also, that He brings peace into our lives and helps us navigate the storms of this world.

**Jalal from Syria**
Please pray for Syria and the Syrian people as we are experiencing a lot of economic difficulties. Pray for the Kurdish people who are suffering because of the civil war. Pray for the Kurdish Church, that it can share the message of the hope of Christ to those around us. Finally, pray for my theological education, that the Lord gives me wisdom and strength.

**Sanaa from Syria**
Pray for our relief ministry which supports some families in our area. Pray that we are able to share the love of Christ with them without any reservations. Pray also, for more opportunities for us to share His gospel and serve His Kingdom.

**Zarmine from Syria**
Please pray for my children, that they come to know the Lord. The world is a dangerous place, and I ask you to pray with me for protection over their lives.

**Student from Egypt**
Pray for the Arab world, that the Lord would intervene and bring His peace upon our region. Pray also for his providence as the economic crisis in Egypt has really impacted my family.

**Sevin from Syria**
Please pray for protection over Lebanon amid all the tensions in our area. War is difficult, and I pray we never have to experience it again after what we went through because of the civil war in Syria.

**The Lord has taken the ministry of ABTS on a long and blessed journey over the years. Watch this video to hear more about the history of our ministry, its founding, and how the Lord has shaped it over the years!**