

Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية

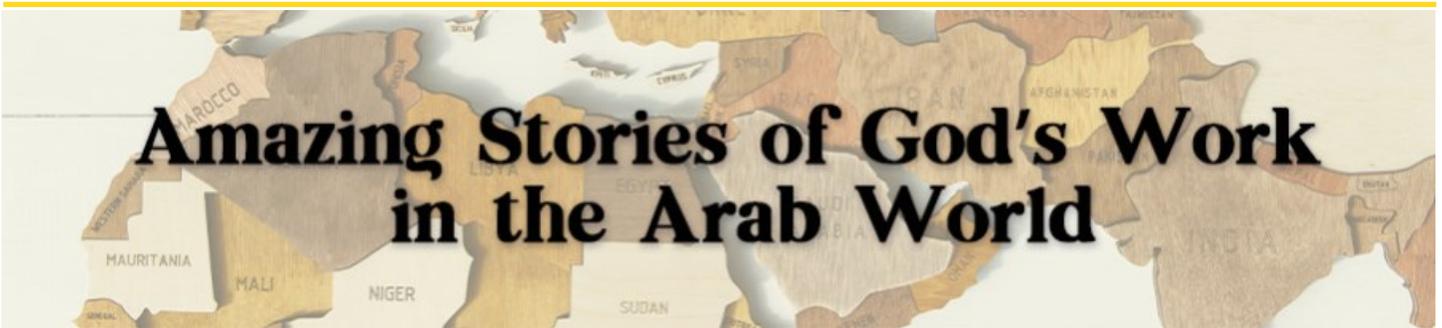
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“God is a peace-loving God, and a peacemaking God. The whole history of redemption, climaxing in the death and resurrection of Jesus, is God’s strategy to bring about a just and lasting peace between people and Himself, and then between an individual and another individual.”

How are we reshaping peacemaking at ABTS? How is Peacemaking reshaping us?

Read Chapter Eight of our developing New Strategic Direction titled: [Reshaping and being Reshaped by Peacemaking at ABTS](#) written by our Dean of Faculty, Bassem Melki.



Our new students have begun the first academic year of our Integrated Theology Program! On January 28, 35 students joined us on Zoom for their first two-week virtual residency. Story after story confirmed to us that no force – no matter how powerful – can hinder the work of God. The rays will penetrate through the cracks. The waters will smooth the rocks. The mustard seed will grow into a huge plant. We pray that your hearts will overflow with worship while you read some of our new students’ stories of devotion and service to God.

Male Student from Yemen

I was the religious leader of my town despite my young age. I had descended from a prominent non-Christian religious family, and I was quite committed to my faith. Then, in 2015, I was at a training conference in Jordan when the Yemeni war erupted, so I had to stay there for almost a year.

In 2016, my spiritual thirst was no longer bearable. I asked a Christian friend to teach me to pray the Christian way, so she directed me to the Bible. In 2017, I was born of the Spirit after a three-week Bible study.

After I returned, I joined the Church in Yemen and began to serve God as an evangelist, a preacher and a teacher, but as the pressures increased, I had to leave for another Arab country where I now pastor a group of refugees, and I continue to serve my Yemeni people online.

I desire for the message of the gospel to reach every Yemeni house through mobilizing church groups in Yemen and through online outreach. I also aim to build bridges through starting an online radio station tailored for the Yemeni community.

Studying theology will help me deliver sound Christian doctrine and the message of the untainted gospel to the Yemeni community, a people group that has so many questions regarding the Christian faith. There is a need for Yemeni theologians, so I aim to pursue my graduate studies in theology to advance the gospel in Yemen and the Middle East.

Fatima from Morocco

I came to know Christ in 2014 during a conference that I was overseeing in my city. There, a Syrian participant intrigued me. Her gentleness and kindness stood out, despite what she went through as a refugee. When she answered my questions about

her faith, I felt a warmth enfold my heart because I found what I had been looking for during my difficult teenage years, which lacked affection and compassion. As soon as I read the gospel of John, I was overcome by a deep love for Christ. I asked my friend to teach me everything related to the Christian faith, and upon that, I took Christ as Lord and Savior.

I joined a home church in Morocco and served the children and youth there. Then after getting married, I joined my husband's home church. When my husband and I moved to another area for a job opportunity, the church gave us its blessing and encouraged us to serve the Lord there, for this is a great opportunity to expand the ministry with the help of our local church. Today, we open our home as a church and a home for new believers. Studying theology will increase my knowledge of God's Word and grant me new skills for preaching and outreach.

Ibtisam from Iraq

As a Catholic, I had studied the catechism and had gone to church since I was a child. Then, at 15, I became a nun. The longing to see Jesus – to feel His presence – was always there. Although I was in a convent, I had failed to experience God personally. As a teenager, I thought it quite tedious to recite prayers all the time.

One day, I was in the downstairs chapel praying, and I felt an inner outpouring of the Spirit that brought me to tears. For the next year, I would inwardly speak to God, as the traditional prayers were recited – as a daughter would speak to a father or a young woman to her betrothed.

Since I had no mentor, I grew lukewarm, and I left the convent at 21. I got married in 2004 and had a child. Then in 2015, we took asylum in Lebanon. My friends would invite me to churches who help refugees, but I would downright refuse.

Then, I visited Resurrection Church Beirut out of curiosity. There was no sermon on that day, only songs of praise. I kept coming



Ibtisam (right) during a ministry leaders' meeting at church

afterwards. The church took me in and helped restore my relationship with God. In August 2016, I got baptized.

Today, I serve as a leader in the church's refugee relief ministry. I serve six home groups, and I tend the persecuted believers at our church. In the future, I wish to start an orphanage for female orphans. I want to study theology in preparation for that ministry.

Stephanie from Lebanon

Stephany graduated in 2020 with a Certificate in Ministry from ABTS and is currently studying for a Bachelor of Theology. All Certificate in Ministry graduates have to go through a bridging program with Year 1 students before they can move on to the next year.



Stephanie (left) during a book fair in North Lebanon

I accepted Christ nine years ago at a worship meeting after having looked for faith for so long. Perhaps this quest for God started because I had battled with a pervasive sense of hollowness throughout my teenage years. My quest led me to take up Islam, but that didn't last long, for God sent someone to share the gospel with me. After accepting Christ, my life changed drastically.

Today, my husband Anthony and I serve at the ministry center of an evangelical church in the North of Lebanon. My ministry is that of evangelism, preaching and teaching. It also includes distributing food vouchers and hygiene kits to refugee families as well as giving them access to free medication and free educational courses.

My vision is to shepherd believers and prepare them to shepherd others through discipleship and encourage them to study theology.

Ali from Algeria

Ali graduated in 2017 with a Certificate in Ministry and is currently studying for a Bachelor of Theology.

I was born to a poor, humble family, so all I wanted was to earn money in all ways attainable. Sadly, the more I tried, the more I failed.

In 2005, I had many problems at work and at home, and I had lost all hope. Then, as I flipped through the satellite channels looking for an answer, to no avail, I got tired of television altogether. My attention turned to the TV screen again, for I saw a Christian TV channel. The next show was a dubbed version of a well-known preacher, and when she offered an invitation to accept the Lord, I simply did.

In 2011, I became the leader of a Bible school in Tizi Ouzou. Classes were first held at a church building, but in 2013, we found another building in Tigzirt. In 2015, we started a church there too, and I became its pastor. The lives of many are changing through our ministry. People come to us out of sheer curiosity, and then they stay.



The Certificate in Ministry program has been a great blessing to my life and ministry, especially in the fields of teaching and preaching. I wish to grow more in my ministry, hence why I applied for a Bachelor of Theology.

Paul from South Sudan

I grew up in Sunday school, but in my teenage years, I left the church and lost my way for nine years. In 2006, after finishing my college education in Khartoum, I travelled to South Darfour. I joined an Episcopal church there and became actively involved. There, the Lord touched my heart, so I accepted Christ and became a committed Christian. Because I was quite active in ministry, I was appointed as deacon of the church just a year after, and an assistant to the parish’s priest in the diocese of Nyala. I continued to serve the Lord among the non-Christians of Darfur. By the help of the Holy Spirit, we were able to lead many to Christ.

As 2010 neared an end, I had to leave South Darfur in tears due to the political cessation between the North and the South. When I returned home to Juba, I was transferred to the parish of Saint Stephen in Juba, and I was asked to start a ministry for Arabic speakers in 2011. In 2015, I was appointed as the curator

of that ministry, which currently has more than 250 members. Most of the members are 18 to 35 years old.

My vision is to start a Bible school in South Sudan in the next five years that prepares the youth for ministry. Without a thorough knowledge of the Bible, I cannot help others to know its content. Theological education will equip me to make a change in others.



Saeed from Egypt

I grew up in Sunday school, but at one point, I left the church after having been hurt by someone. In the time that followed, I had quite a successful career, but I was away from God. In 2014, my then fiancée and I broke up. I remember going to church with one of my relatives and the preacher saying, “If you just got out of a broken relationship, and you’re feeling that all doors are sealed, remember that God’s door is always open.”

I began to pray again, and God began to draw me to Himself. I returned to church and learned to fix my eyes on God, not on men. I began to serve the Lord there as the youth ministry leader and a volunteer in the Sunday school ministry, yet I felt there was something more!



Then, one day, my friend invited me to attend a conference for ministry among refugees. There, God asked me that if I really wanted to serve Him as I claimed, was I ready to leave all behind and take a step into the unknown? After a two-year journey, my

heart was ready. I left my job and went into full-time ministry.

I now serve among Syrian and Iraqi refugees in the Middle East. I listen to them and share the Good News. I also offer discipleship lessons and Bible studies to those who accepted Christ. I want to study theology to gain the research skills needed to offer sound biblical teaching for the growth of His disciples.

Male Student from Syria

My parents separated when I was four, and I had to stay with my mother and sister in a shelter. I grew up with the idea that God loves me and has a plan for me. It was, however, hard for me to form a relationship with the God I cannot see when I couldn't even form a relationship with the father I could see.

I began to lead a two-faced life during my early teenage years. With my friends I was someone, and with Christ followers, I was

someone else. Then at 15, I studied the Bible and saw that everything that ever happened to me was leading me to know God in a deeper way. Though my family disintegrated, God had never left our side.

After graduating from college, I got married, and we now have a baby girl, a gift from the Lord. My wife and I are called to serve youth and help them find the right path. Studying theology will help me serve my community more confidently.

This is only a sample of all the wonderful testimonies our students shared. What a privilege it is to work with these individuals. At a time of significant disruption, we welcome the largest intake of new students in ABTS history! Please continue to pray for us and for our students as this academic year progresses.

Pray with Us: Prayer Requests from Some of our New Students

Ali from Algeria

Please pray for all the local churches that have been shut down in Algeria, not because of the pandemic, but due to the increasing governmental pressures on the Algerian Church.

Student from Yemen

I am constantly praying that the Lord touches the hearts of my mother and siblings, and they come to know Him. Please pray with me for my family members. Some of my friends shared that they waited many years for their mother or other family members to accept Christ. God is able to do much more than we can ever imagine.

Saeed from Egypt

Please pray that the work of the Lord is not hindered where I serve in the Middle East. The work of Christ is being strongly opposed there, and there is a darkness that can be difficult to penetrate. Pray

that new believers there are rooted in the faith, and pray that God sends more workers, because I am currently serving on my own, and there is so much work to do.

Pray also for me because I got into a car accident last September, and I broke my shoulder. The metal implant in my shoulder broke a month ago, so I had to go through another surgery to replace the implant and patch up the broken shoulder bones using thighbones.

Zineb from Morocco

Pray that my family members experience the liberating power of Christ's work. Pray also for my daughters. For a while, my daughters remained without a nationality because of our faith. Sadly, neither my husband nor I could grant them our nationalities due to our Arab countries' religious laws. However, we were able to pass on the Spanish nationality to them

after a long process. I pray that my daughters know Him even at this young age and reflect Him to others.

Stephany from Lebanon

Please pray that I may be given wisdom in balancing between raising the children, serving God and studying theology as it can be stressful sometimes. Pray also that God would continue to grow our local church. Pray that we may be given wisdom to build up new believers, so that those who join the church may find a home in it. Pray also that my parents would come to Christ.

Paul from South Sudan

Please pray that peace, security and stability would permeate South Sudan and the entire world. Millions have been forced to flee their homes due to South Sudan's internal wars while famine and human rights violations continue.

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