



Life-Long Learners in God's Field

The Current Courses of Our Certificate in Ministry

We praise God for our online Certificate in Ministry students who are serving Him in different ministry contexts across the Arab world and beyond. As they come to us seeking theological education, we often find ourselves learning from them as well. We learn from their amazing encounters with Christ. We learn from their unrelenting commitment to making Him known and the tough decisions they make along the way. In this newsletter, we highlight the courses that our Certificate in Ministry students are currently taking. We pray you are encouraged by reading the experiences of our tutors and students, as we were encouraged by hearing them.

Effective Bible Teaching

Not only does this course stress the importance of teaching Christ followers and equipping them to serve a broken world; it also offers students creative teaching and learning approaches for their ministries and instructions for a fruitful Bible study.

Mireille Haddad, one of our course tutors, shared her thoughts on why this course benefits ministry in the Arab world saying,

It helps any teacher in preparing a Bible lesson for any age group. It is especially useful for believers from non-Christian backgrounds who need to improve their biblical knowledge and understanding. It helps make the lesson more teachable and more appealing because it allows the students to share more and learn from one another during workshops. The course is not based on lecturing but more on discussions as it touches on the cognitive, affective, behavioral, ethical and social sides of the students' personalities while relating them to the spiritual side.

For instance, Mireille shared how this course greatly impacted her own ministry of preparing Bible studies for Iraqi women refugees in Lebanon, and it showed her how much they are learning and how much they have been touched by the life-

changing word of God. She also shared how the students taking this course are seeking change, especially in the affective side of teaching/learning. Students are discovering that rote learning alone does not change the learners' behaviors because it doesn't show them how they can apply theoretical knowledge in real-life situations.



Mireille Haddad

Fedaa from Syria serves part-time at a church in the Arabian Gulf through preaching and teaching. He leads Bible studies, and sometimes, he leads the worship. He said,

With the continuous technological advancement and innovation in teaching, we must always stay up to date with new teaching approaches. For change to be holistic, learning shouldn't be only cognitive. It must be affective and behavioral as well. The course is introducing us to widely used pedagogical and psychological theories such as Piaget's theory of cognitive development. I am applying much of what I am learning in my own teaching ministry.



Fatat is a Sunday school teacher from Syria. She shared:

The course showed me how to tell the kids Bible stories with specific objectives in mind. More importantly, it showed me how I can nurture an emotional connection with the kids and with teenagers as well, especially during the pandemic. I will be sharing what I learned with all those who serve the young people at my local church. Our teaching is useless if there is no bond of love and trust. I will be encouraging my local church to prepare activities for children and teenagers and to hold meetings to see how we can help young people with whatever problems they are facing. I will also be using what I learned in the women's ministry at church.



faith. Some of them grow up in Christian families who still hold on to the historical enmity between Christians and Muslims. We are currently learning about understanding the other, and that is not easy, because we are not seeking to exhibit outward niceties, but a genuine change of inward beliefs. I can see this in the students' assignments and interactions on the forums. If a student were to express an inaccurate belief about the other, another student would kindly correct his misconception.

Mohamad from Syria, who serves God at his local church in Lebanon and helps families in need, shared:

Through this course, I was able to reconsider my negative view of Islam. I am learning to approach Islam in a friendly yet analytical way. Though I already see Muslims as my brothers, I will be seeking to understand them on a deeper level. Hence, my primary mission is to understand a Muslim, rather than criticize them, while sharing my faith. As part of the course's activities, I had friendly discussions with some of my Muslim friends. These discussions helped clear some of the misconceptions I had and prepared me to better serve my community.



Introduction to Islam

The Church must build healthy relationships with Muslims and reflect the love of Christ. This course goes further than

explaining Islamic doctrine, writings and practices. It challenges the learners to examine their inward biases against Islam so that an attitude shift will take place in their dealings with Muslims. Abed El Kareem Zien El Dien, one of the course tutors, shared that he could see the significance of this course in some of our students' changing attitudes. He said,



Some of them come from non-Christian backgrounds, and they have negative experiences with family and friends due to their change of

The Elements of the Christian Faith between the Past and the Present

The course helps emerging leaders understand the basics of the Christian faith in light of today's pressing social issues. Course tutor Almess Youssef from Iraq, who is also one of our 2003 Bachelor of Theology graduates, shared her experience with the Certificate in Ministry program. When she first joined the program, she feared that it might be difficult and dull because it takes place before a computer screen. She soon found out that "the courses are designed in a way so as to include the practical and the academic at the same time. A student can interact with tutors and other fellow students with ease." She shared:

I really enjoyed my ministry in the field of theological education. My goal is to invest my time in the students' lives and encourage them to go on learning and growing despite all the challenges. I am always encouraged whenever I hear the many testimonies of those who have studied at ABTS and how their theological education helped enhance their understanding of Scripture and of others so that their ministries among their communities became more effective.

Juliana from Syria organizes conferences for new non-Christian background believers in Syria. She also serves a home group and follows up with its members. She shared:

This course is making me more passionate about God's word and about applying it in my daily life. The course highlights the Lord's saving and prophetic work since the beginning of creation, and His continuous work among the nations up until today. It presents a number of realistic case studies that help us deal with our own real-life scenarios. This course has positively influenced my ministry as it showed me new ways to deal with individuals, and now, I can present the gospel and the Christian faith to the group I serve in an engaging way.

Olfat from Syria is part of a charity foundation that is helping thousands of underprivileged individuals. They tell them about Jesus and follow up with many of them. She shared:

My academic journey at ABTS has been wonderful. It is helping me see the full portrait of God's love and redemption with all its intricate details. This course is giving me the ability to engage in intellectual discussions on the authenticity, power, and authority of Scripture as I disciple new believers. The course showed me the prophetic role of the Church as I help people from different religions and ethnicities. We should be spent for the sake of others and always remember, before sharing the gospel, that we are sinners who were once redeemed.

Life and Teachings of Jesus

The greatest knowledge we can have, as servants, is that of Jesus' life and teachings so that we follow his example in our ministry. This course aims to study the life of the Lord, His words and His deeds, so that students have more insight on Jesus'



Olfat and Fatat serving among refugees as part of their charity work



divine nature and human nature and find applications for their daily life. Our hope is that we live as He lived, and we serve as He served. We need to live Christ.

Course tutor Zeina from Jordan is one of our 2019 Bachelor of Theology graduates. She is really enjoying communicating with students and answering their questions about Jesus' challenging teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. "It is wonderful to see such depth and hunger to know Christ more in both men and women, and to sense their passion for God's word."

Our student Joseph from Egypt, who lives in Canada, shared:

The lessons are not merely academic; they have elevated our souls to a mountaintop of delight in God's glory and majesty. I learned to meditate on the Lord's great merits – those merits we often take for granted. Studying Christ's miracles and parables filled me with awe. One cannot but fall down in worship declaring the greatness of our Lord.

The harvest is plentiful, so pray for our online students whose hearts' desire is to bring glory to God and extend His Kingdom in the region.

Follow our weekly blog!

Some recent blog posts:



[*Are We Living Double Lives?: Sex, Money, Power, and the Gospel*](#)
By Wissam Nasrallah



[*Ramadan Kareem!: Thoughts for Christians about Engaging Muslims this Ramadan*](#)
By Abed El Kareem Zien El Dien



[*Of Difficult Decisions and Healthy Harmonies: The Potential of Thinking About Vocation in Terms of 'Ensemble'*](#)
By Kees van der Knijff



[*God will Judge Them: The Cancel Culture Debate and Leaving Sinners Alone*](#)
By Nabil Habibi

As MRel student *Michael* approaches graduation, he shared: "I had hoped to find a Master's program that would equip me to minister in the Middle East holistically. I found that the MRel program was a perfect fit for me and flexible enough for a busy father of three. After completing the MRel, I can honestly say that it was even better than I expected. I recently launched into a new role in the Middle East, and I have already seen so many ways that God used this program to prepare me for life and ministry here. Whenever I meet someone with a similar passion and vision, I encourage them to consider the MRel program."

Learn more about our *Master of Religion in Middle Eastern and North African Studies* [here](#).

Pray with Us: Prayers from some of our Online Certificate in Ministry Students and Tutors

Joseph | Egyptian student

I don't want to serve God without listening to His voice first. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 NIV)" Please pray that having chosen this path, I do not seek my own comfort, safety or renown, but pray that I constantly care for others and for the matters of the Spirit.

Fatat | Syrian student

Pray for me and my husband as we serve those who are suffering amid the taxing economic situation in Syria. May God use us to help the underprivileged and the sick and to show them the love of Christ.

Olfat | Syrian student

I am currently part of a charity that is working alongside churches to offer help to those who are underprivileged; we tell them about Jesus and follow up with many. Pray that whatever we do is for the glory of God.

Nadim | Lebanese student

My mother has been struggling with COVID-19. She got out of the hospital, but she still has to use a ventilator all the time. This has been a very hard time for the family, so keep us in your prayers. Pray also that our gospel work bears fruit in the North of Lebanon.

Almess Youssef | Iraqi tutor

Pray for the students I tutor. Please pray that they find balance between all of their responsibilities including work, ministry and studying. I really appreciate their hard work. I notice that many of them hand in their assignments after midnight, which shows how dedicated they are to be equipped for ministry.

Zeina | Jordanian tutor

Please pray that God would help our students grow in theological understanding. Pray also that God grants me grace and wisdom to answer questions on controversial issues in light of God's word.

Abed El Kareem Zien El Dien | Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry

Please pray for my parents, who are from a non-Christian community, that the Lord works in their hearts and they know Jesus as Savior. Pray especially for my father, who is accepting the gospel but is still hesitating. Pray that God uses me among them.

Dalal | Lebanese student

I serve at Bible Club with children whose ages range from seven to eleven. Please pray that God gives me creative ideas to do ministry as the pandemic continues to spread, and pray that my family members find salvation in Christ.