

ARAB BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ABTS began in 1960 and from its start had a vision for training Christian leaders for the whole Arab world. During the civil war (1975-1990) students mostly came from Lebanon, but more recently they have drawn students from both the Middle East and North Africa. In many of these countries Christian colleges do not exist and so keen young Christians look to countries like Lebanon for their theological and ministerial training.

The college takes very seriously the responsibility it has to look beyond its national border. It is a hub of resourcing and leadership for the region. Its annual conferences on peace issues, and its resource centre have been supplemented recently with significant translation programs to get good material to the church in Arabic.

ABTS is one of four evangelical colleges in Lebanon. It is a dynamic partner to the Baptist church in the country, closely associated with the local welfare and publishing arms of the church. It seeks to train leaders for contextually relevant ministry which is both sensitive to the majority religion, but also dynamic in its activity of bringing Christ to the region.

The college works closely with local churches in times of national crisis such as in 2007 when Israeli attacks in the south of the country led to thousands of short term refugees being cared for in the college grounds.

ABTS AT A GLANCE

32 full-time and 5 part-time students, as well as 55 students studying by distance.

15 full-time faculty, and 20 visiting faculty members also lecture.

Institutional mentoring of other small Bible schools in the region.

Administration led by principal Mr Elie Haddad.

Degree offerings: Certificate of Theology, Certificate of Ministry, Diploma of Theology, Bachelor of Theology, Masters of Divinity, Masters in Middle East Studies.

The college is a candidate member of the Middle East Association of Theological Education.



كلية اللاهوت المعمدانية العربية
Arab Baptist Theological Seminary



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ABTS Principal Elie Haddad

ABTS IN CONTEXT

Lebanon lies at the intersection of the Mediterranean Basin and the Arabian lands, and has therefore enjoyed a rich history of religious and ethnic diversity.

Upon the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, the territory of modern-day Lebanon was parceled to the French. Lebanon gained independence in 1943 – not without a struggle – and assumed an innovative political system based on the sharing of power between religious communities, called confessionalism.

A prosperous peace lasted several decades in which tourism, agriculture and the banking industry thrived. Civil war broke out in 1975 and for fifteen years tore the country apart. Some 150,000 were killed and 900,000 displaced – a fifth of the population. The war was not 'resolved' but rather died out when local militias, variously backed by Israel and the Palestinians, ceased fire. Syrian troops had occupied large areas defending their trade routes also gradually withdrew. In the years since the war, the economy has remained sickly, ruptured by occasional skirmishes involving Palestinian insurgents and neighbouring Israel. The rebuilding of bombed out Beirut has been an enormous and successful undertaking throughout the 1990's.

A tightly restricted banking framework enabled Lebanon to avoid the worst of the Global Financial Crisis, and tourism figures in 2009 were the strongest in Lebanon's history. The Lebanese economy shows a tenacity that may return the country to its erstwhile prosperity. The ratio of Christians has fallen dramatically, from 62% in 1970 to 32% in 2010. Their challenge is to remain, rather than migrate, and work to recover all that has been lost.



POPULATION: 4.3 million

MUSLIM: 59%

CHRISTIAN: 32%

Lebanon is the only Arab state to be not officially Islamic.

The last reliable census data were collected in 1932.



Ms Alia Abboud in Australia for 2014 OCA Annual Dinner Series

