

Dear friends,

As 2008 draws to a close, we cannot but look back and reflect on God's blessings and provisions throughout the year, on a personal level as well as on a ministry level at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS). A lot has happened that witnesses to the goodness and faithfulness of God. Here is a small glimpse.

Middle East Conference

We had our fifth annual Middle East Conference this past June, which was hosted by ABTS' Institute of Middle East Studies. This Conference presents a unique opportunity for Arab and Western Christians, who seek better understanding of Islam, to interact together, to learn from one another, and to come to know the realities of Islam directly from Muslims. The title of the conference this year was: "Islam, Its Message and Law, and the Future of Our Societies".



During the Morning Lectures

During the day, we had expert Christian scholars/practitioners speak on Islam in the contemporary world, minority religions under Islam, and approaches to peacemaking in our communities. The theme of the evening public

forums this year was on peacemaking. We had Christian and Muslim leaders speak from their own faith perspectives on values and approaches for peaceful living and on models and paradigms for peacemaking inspired by faith traditions.

Educational Ministries Resource Center

The Educational Ministries Resource Center (EMRC) was recently founded at ABTS to provide resources and training that empower the Church in the Arab World and beyond for holistic educational ministries. Our public lecture series this year is focusing on the educational ministries of our local churches. We want to help our churches become more serious and intentional about their educational ministries in order for them to be able to equip more leaders that are biblically informed and reflective in their ministry.

In November, we invited Kevin Lawson, the director of the PhD and EdD programs in Educational Studies at the Talbot School of Theology at Biola University, to come to ABTS and present a series of lectures on Christian Education. Many leaders from our local churches were present. Dr. Lawson spoke on "Deep Teaching in a Fast-Food World", "Children and God: Reflections on Ministry Issues", and on "The Christian Education We Need and Why We Need It".

EMRC had many major activities this year, such as a series of training conferences for Sunday School teachers of the Presbyterian Synod of Syria and Lebanon, and training conferences for empowering women leaders in the Presbyterian,

Armenian, Lutheran, and Anglican churches of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt.

I (Elie) had the privilege of getting involved in leadership training for thirty Iranian church leaders that was held in Syria last September. This was a remarkable opportunity for me to get to know these leaders and to better understand their context and the challenges that they face.



Elie Training through a Translator

Dedication Service

On October 19 we had a double dedication service. I (Elie) was officially installed as the new president of ABTS, and we dedicated the new Sam & Peggy Moore Conference Center. Many friends, partners, and ministry and church leaders celebrated with us these two milestones in the life of our ministry.



The Sam & Peggy Moore Conference Center

A Special Christmas Program

It's always very special when we are able to share the spirit of this season with under-privileged people. We were able to do that last week. Our local church, Faith Baptist Church, and ABTS organized a half-day program for children living in a Christian shelter for street kids. The program consisted of a time of worship and song, fun and games, and a festive dinner. This was such a blessing for all of us.



Mireille Doing Crafts with the Children

Dear friends, Mireille and I want to thank you for your continued support and want to wish you a merry Christmas. May the message of the incarnation be a constant reminder to us of God's love, and a constant challenge for us to live our lives incarnationally and to love others as He loved us!

If you are interested in becoming our Partner in Mission, please contact Eileen at eileenm@cbmin.org, or go to www.cbmin.org.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord"

We would love to hear from you. You can contact us at:

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