



Greetings from Lebanon

Thank you for following our news. In this newsletter, you can read about a couple of highlights from the ministry of ABTS (Arab Baptist Theological Seminary), an update on Mireille's ministry, and a piece of CBM news for 2019.

You can follow ABTS's monthly updates by subscribing here: <http://abtslebanon.org/newsletter-signup>. You are also invited to read our weekly ministry blog on <http://imes.blog>.

Middle East Consultation (MEC)

We started a two-year theme last June with MEC 2018. The topic was *Jesus Christ and the Religious Other: Toward a Biblical Understanding of Islam*. We reflected on what our view should be toward other religions and how we can witness effectively in a religiously plural world, with some focus on an Islamic context. Next June, in MEC 2019, we will follow the same theme but focus more on Islam. The topic will be *Thinking Biblically about Muslims, Mohammed, and the Qur'an: Practical Implications for the Church Today*. As the Church engages with Muslims, many times there are particular understandings of Islam or unconscious assumptions that significantly affect its ministry. MEC 2019 will work toward discerning a practically grounded yet biblically faithful understanding of Muslims, Mohammed, and the Qur'an, which can constructively inform the ministry of the Church. We invite you to come and join us next June. For more information: www.abtslebanon.org/mec2019.



A session during MEC 2018

Peacebuilding Initiatives

ABTS's peacebuilding initiatives continue to grow. This year saw the launch of yet another pioneering initiative, the Church-Mosque Network, where committed believers of different faiths are encouraged to visit places of worship of other religious groups in order to get to know them and understand them. This is motivated by a vision to see the Lebanese society overcome sectarian animosity by working together for the common good and promoting healthy interfaith relations. The Network's goal is to provide an effective platform for interfaith dialogue and intergroup cooperation at the grassroots level. This has been quite an experience for the people that have participated.



Muslims attending a church service on Sunday morning



Christians attending Friday prayers at a mosque



Mireille's Ministry

My role with Heart for Lebanon has changed recently. In addition to giving weekly Bible study to Iraqi women, I was asked to write a curriculum for all the Bible studies given in the different centers of Heart for Lebanon. This curriculum will be used for Syrians and for Iraqis. Most of the Syrian refugees live in tents, and this is where some of the Bible studies are held.



The women attending the Bible studies are growing a lot in their faith. They attend regularly the meetings because they find that these meetings calm their souls and comfort them by knowing that God is in control of their situation. They could not have endured their bad situations had God not been working in their hearts and giving them hope. The Syrian women are discovering anew their self-esteem in the teachings of Jesus. The Bible studies are clarifying to them that they are precious individuals made in the image of God, and that they are loved by God.



I pray that God will continue his work in molding them and that He may strengthen them always.

CBM's Work in the Region

In addition to our current roles, earlier this year CBM appointed us as Team Leaders for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The newly created MENA team is CBM's response to the growing needs in the area due to ongoing conflict. The MENA region has become a high priority region for CBM.

We are delighted with this new responsibility, and we are eager to help grow CBM's impact in the region by working with our network of ABTS graduates serving all over the MENA region.

In addition, a new National Field Staff, Joe Bridi, was appointed by CBM, effective January 1, 2019. Joe will help build and implement a strategy for CBM's work in the region.

Our target for 2019 is to start working in Sudan. Despite the challenges of ministry in Sudan, ABTS has a good number of graduates serving there; many of them are key leaders within their churches and denominations. We want to explore effective ways for CBM to come alongside what God is doing there. The plan is to expand into other countries as well by 2020. Please be in prayer for this ministry in a region that badly needs Christ.

Partner with CBM

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing prayer, encouragement and support. Thank you for taking part in what God is doing in our region.

If you wish to become a partner with our ministry, with the MENA ministry, or with any other CBM ministry, please contact Barb Keys bkeys@cbmin.org for more information. Your partnership is key for the sustainability and growth of the ministry.

Stay Connected

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

Elie – ehaddad@cbmin.org

Mireille – mhaddad@cbmin.org

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

“The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.”

Isaiah 9:2