



Emad and Almess Botros:
→ **CBM Field Staff, Lebanon**



“Sudden changes” describes the life of Canadian Baptist Ministries field staff working in Lebanon. In the last year they have experienced political unrest, an economic and financial crisis, and now the outcome of COVID-19.

These stresses are not new to Emad and Almess Botros who have grown up in Middle East turmoil. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they went from a busy schedule at Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) to greater responsibilities: caring for 26 Bible school students stranded and isolated in the school dorms; the inability to travel to help aging parents; their children’s disrupted education; and an increased concern for those in the refugee camps.

Emad, as a professor at ABTS for the past five years, thanks the Lord that though many activities have been cancelled or delayed, they have been better prepared to carry on teaching than many Canadian Bible schools. “The switch from in-class to online instruction has been with reasonable effort and without

compromising quality.” Two years ago, all the seminary’s first-year courses were available online. The professors are working to complete the second- and third-year courses so that students across the Middle East and overseas can complete a theological degree online.

With all the ongoing challenges, Almess has faithfully worked to care for family needs. Weekly she enjoys teaching online and tutoring students from various countries. Almess and others have been limited in the outreach program to a small number of the 20,000 refugees who are unable to practise social distancing, have little medical assistance, and no money for medicine.

A visiting professor from Amsterdam, Bernhard Reitsma, directed a message to students who come from war-torn countries: “The tendency in our world is to run away from suffering. In this time of our life, God sometimes takes us through suffering to be glorified with Christ. That is a difficult message to understand. It is not because God wants us to suffer, but He works within suffering for the good of the world.”

In some ways, Canadians can also relate to the previous statement. The outcome of our present inconvenience is to pray more on a daily basis and to remember our CBM field staff and their partners around the world. ABTS in Lebanon asks for specific prayer as they look to the future.

Praise and Petition

→ Give thanks that, with one exception, the students stranded at the school since the March closure were able to return to their home countries in July.

→ In April, at the end of a 10-year journey, Emad completed his PhD dissertation.

→ Pray for the ongoing goal of the completion of the group project to write a Bible commentary for those who read the Bible from the context of Islam.

→ In August, Beirut suffered a massive explosion. In spite of the ongoing threat of COVID-19, Christians took to the streets to help the wounded, and ABTS opened its guesthouse for many left homeless. The devastating explosion added deep strain to Lebanon’s unstable political and economic situation.

→ Pray for ABTS staff and students who are adapting to a modified residential program in response to the pandemic. Read more on ABTS’s new strategic direction in this link: <https://abtslebanon.org/portfolio-item/new-strategic-direction/>.

by Ruth Anna Dana

Sources:

Botros Family CBM ministry updates (cbmin.org), Canadian Baptist Ministries Facebook posts, and www.abtslebanon.org.