

ARABIC LUTHERAN MINISTRY

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19)

We are pleased to announce the release of an Arabic Discipleship Program based on Luther’s Small Catechism.

THE NEED FOR A LUTHERAN ARABIC CURRICULUM...

For the last 12 years I have been serving as an LCMS Missionary and Church Planter in the District of Texas to Arab immigrants in North Texas. I am the founding Pastor of Antiochian Apostolic Church, the only chartered Arabic Lutheran Congregation in the Texas District. Since 2014 I have partnered with Faith Lutheran Church in Troy Michigan to reach out to Arabs in Detroit area. Through our ministry more than 14 Muslims have been baptized. In my outreach to disciple the thousands of Arab Christian and Muslims alike, who have flooded American cities I discovered one very important thing. There is a great need for discipleship books and curriculum in Arabic, written from a specifically Lutheran perspective.

I hold two doctorates; my first degree is in Catechesis and focuses on developing curriculum for Youth in the Arab world. My second degree is in Mission and Evangelism and focuses on Muslim Evangelism. For the last nine years I have been teaching Arabic Language and Culture at Baylor University in Waco, TX and for the last four years I have been teaching a summer course in Muslim Evangelism at Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis.

Without compromising our Lutheran theology, I used my training in these fields, together with Luther’s Catechism and the Book of Concord, to develop this program into a structure and language that Middle Eastern (Christians and Muslim) audiences could relate to. I have attempted to answer questions that Muslims ask about Christian faith, such as the meaning of the titles of Christ in the Bible; how do we explain the incarnation of Christ, his death on the Cross and his resurrection to Muslims? I have put all this in a language familiar to the Eastern Christian and Muslims.

This method was used by the first two LCMS Missionaries to the Middle East, Hilgendorf and Stelling in 1965. The MELM (Middle Eastern Lutheran Mission) simply stated: *“Christian and Muslims understanding and sharing the love of God for all men in Christ.”* They were the first who advocated for contextualized Christian resources in the midst of various Middle Eastern Christian churches living in an Islamic context (Cf. David Grafton. *Piety, Politics, and Power: Lutherans Encountering Islam in the Middle East*, Pick Wick Publication, Eugene OR 2009, 182-192).

LUTHER CATECHISM IN ARABIC ...

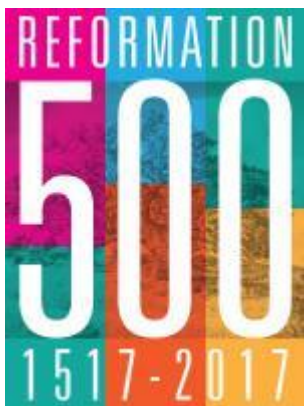
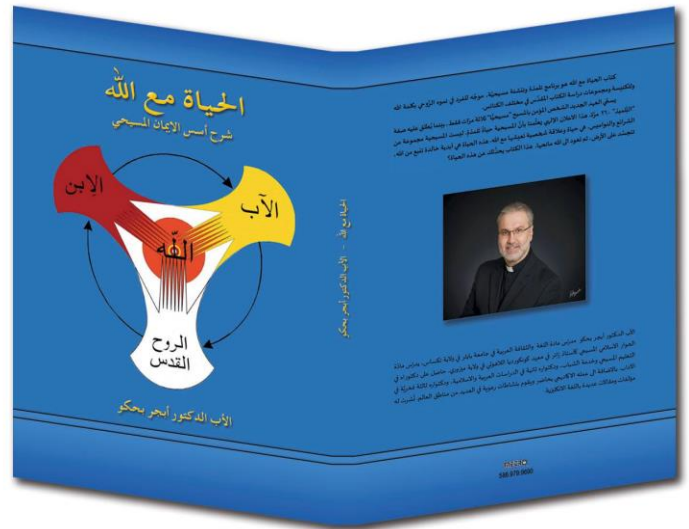
In 1988 Luther's Catechism was translated into Arabic. However, it was not enough just to translate a document from English in Arabic due to the fact that the book was written in the 16th century in German and was translated in English and was addressed to specifically European and American Lutheran Churches; additional work was needed.

In 2015 I began to disciple an Iraqi Muslim family from Detroit, Michigan before they were baptized. For security reasons we cannot release their real names. When we started the classes they have already read the Arabic translation of Luther Catechism. However, their comment was that,

"This book is difficult to understand, the vocabularies are alien to our Arabic minds, especially coming from a Muslim background. We really did not get a lot of teachings from this book."

I then began to email them the drafted notes of *Life with God*, and they began to listen to my sermons online... the notes and the sermon touched them and their comment was,

"That is really appealing to us... it is very easy to understand your teaching, and the notes you send us are exactly what we need. Thank you, we are learning a lot and we are touched by the teachings."



Life with God was published for occasion of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, and is totally sponsored by our Arabic Ministry. The first part of this project was completed in the summer of 2017. The next phase of the project is to film a series of videos to accompany the text. We have already started to film raw videos and we are currently looking for financial support and a professional Video Editor to continue working on this project. These video teachings will be broadcast on various Christian Arabic Satellites that reach millions all over the world, specifically within the Arab World.

IMPACTING LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY ...

For the last 12 years I have been using the material of this book in my preaching, teaching and media ministry and for the last 2 years I have assigned it as a required book for my Independent Reading Arabic Class. (A course that I teach every semester at



Baylor University for advanced students.) In the spring of 2017 I taught a 12 weeks Arabic Bible study through Skype to a group of Iraqi immigrants living in Detroit that meet every Tuesday with Pastor Tony Boos.

The testimonies have been numerous so we have chosen just a few to share.

LIFE WITH GOD... IMPACTING THE WORLD

“Many of us here in Sweden have been watching Farther Abjar’s teachings and preaching either on his YouTube Channel, Facebook Page, or on ABN Christian Satellite.

In the Syrian Orthodox Church we follow written texts and fixed liturgy. Our Sunday Mass becomes a set of rules and regulations, instead of being a lively encounter with the Risen Christ. To use the sentences that Father Abjar uses: “Mass becomes Law not Gospel.”

Following the teachings and the prayers you offer every Sunday we noticed the freedom and style of prayers that you introduce to your holy Eucharist each service... this is what we need... people here in Sweden are in need of prayer that touches their lives...

Through your teachings we become more attracted to the person of Christ and encouraged to follow His Good News of the Gospel. Every week many of us eagerly await your post on social media networks. Your sermons challenge us to grow in Christ, to grow in the gift of our Baptism, and to be faithful to the gift of God's love and forgiveness

that is offered to us through the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. The way you explain the Bible verses and stories enriches our mind, hearts and spirit. We also follow your ministry and service with our Iraqi brothers and sisters and we are thankful for your service to them.”

God bless you and your family.

Paul,
Stockholm Sweden.



My name is Mohammad Alawadi, currently I live in Dallas Texas, I am studying premed chemistry at Baylor, I plan to attend medical school for the future I want to be a plastic surgeon. As my name indicates I am a Muslim, born in Kuwait on April 1st 1994, my dad is from Kuwait, and my mom is from Palestine. Part of my education at Baylor is to take 6 semesters of Foreign Language. Because I grow up in Arabic and Muslim family I decided to take Arabic language. I have been studying with Dr. Bahkou for 2 years. This semester I was able to take his Independent Arabic Reading Class (ARB 3V70.) In this class students read with Dr. Bahkou his book Life with God.

Being, and having a different religion view while reading life with god was very interesting. Reading life with God made me have a different perspective. I learned so much, and it was very easy to



understand. I learned a lot about Christ. I was very interested while reading it with Dr. Bahkou, he cleared so many misunderstandings that I had. Life with God helped understand the Christian religion, and how everything came to be. The writing was easy to follow. My feedback would be very positive about

the book. I think everyone needs to read the book, because again at first I thought I had a very good understanding, but the more I read life with god the more knowledge I gained. This semester was particularly challenging, the parts we read in the book were an eye opener for me, because we spend most of the classes reading and learning about the titles given to Jesus. Some of these titles such as "Jesus as the Word from God; the Messiah, the Spirit from God" are familiar to us Muslims, and we read them in the Quran, but we interpret them in different ways. Reading Life with God with Dr. Bahkou explained the Christian and Biblical view in a simple and clear way without offending Muslim.

The thing that intrigued me about this book is the many quotations and examples from Martin Luther's life and teaching, and also from the Book of Concord. I took classes in Religion and Bible here at Baylor, I heard this names but I did not realized how fascinating the life of Martin Luther and his teaching was. Unfortunately, with my slow Arabic reading comprehension skills, Dr. Bahkou and I were not able to read everything in the book because the semester ended. I am hoping that I can take another Arabic Reading Independent Study to learn more about Life with God, especially since the book is available in the market.

For everyone, even if you have a different religion, or different belief. I highly recommend reading Life with God.

Mohammad Alawadi
4/24/17

M ...Senior Student from Baylor University...

When I first came to Baylor as a freshman, I was a fairly convinced evangelical who knew nothing about the Lutheran church. This changed when I began taking Arabic with Dr. Bahkou, where Christianity would occasionally make its way into our class discussions. There I heard him speak with an understanding of the faith that was deeply sacramental, which intrigued me deeply. I had previously had somewhat of an interest in Roman Catholicism, but had never allowed myself to consider it seriously because of the issue of justification. So I was fascinated to discover the Lutheran understanding of the faith that got justification right but also had so much of the ancient catholic faith that I found myself drawn to. Once Dr. Bahkou had sparked my interest, I began to research the

Lutheran church for myself, and was amazed to discover not only that Lutheranism is faithful to the scriptures and consistent with the beliefs of the ancient church, but also that its understanding of the sacraments is a source of objective assurance not found in my own emotional experiences. I can know for sure that Jesus is for me. Long story short, I was convinced, and I became a Lutheran this past September.

My move over to the LCMS coincided quite nicely with the Arabic class I took last semester. Being a senior, I had the opportunity to take an independent study reading course with Dr. Bahkou, where we spent the entire semester reading his book *Life with God in Arabic*. Since one of the reasons I decided to study Arabic was so that I could speak to my Muslim friends about the gospel, it was wonderful to spend

the past few months immersed in a book that approaches the Christian faith from a Lutheran viewpoint but also has the worldview of Arabic speakers in mind. Drawing from the Small Catechism and the church fathers, this book has a wonderfully unique perspective and has been beneficial to me in more ways than one. I have not only learned a useful set of vocabulary that I can utilize in my future conversations with my Muslim friends, but I have also grown spiritually as I learn more about what the sacramental understanding of the faith means. We plan to continue our independent study next semester, where I am looking forward to learning even more.

Since (M) is going into the mission field after graduation she has asked us not to use her real name or publish her picture.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

The Cost of printing 1000 copies is \$ 10,000 (which includes shipping and handling and paying the artist and additional designers).

Cost of filming and editing of 50 segments, duration of each 30 minutes is \$ 5,000.

Total cost of this project is \$ 15,000.

At this time, we have been blessed with partial funding. As this material is now available we are seeking sponsors for books to distribute at no cost.

You can sponsor a set of books to be distributed in the following amounts:

15 Books / \$150.00
25 Books / \$250.00
50 Books / \$500.00
100 Books / \$1000.00

I urge you to consider helping this unique and historical project that is impacting the world...

LIFE WITH GOD

Because this text is written in Arabic, we've developed an English summary for our donors.

The purpose of the title *Life with God* is quite simple, Christianity is not a religion, Christianity is Life. This life is a gift from God that comes from heaven and we are united with this life through Baptism. But it is not enough only to have this life, we must grow in it. The process of growing in our Baptism is called "Discipleship."

The one who was gifted life with God through Baptism must show that he is alive with God. How can he, or she, do that? The answer is, by living out the four signs that represent life with God; these signs are summarized in four simple words: *Death, Word, Faith, and Grace*. The book is divided into four parts that represent these signs.

Chapter 1: *Death before Life* - We must die before we live, the state of death that we inherited when we were born must be destroyed before we began life. This Chapter is divided into two parts. Part 1: *What Does Death Mean?* And Part 2: *The Cross the Place where Death Dies*. Here we present the entirety of the Lutheran theology of the Cross, quoting from Luther and the book of Concord.

Chapter 2: *Life with God is life in the Word* - This chapter is divided in three parts: Part 1, the meaning of the word of God in the Christian Life, and for the Christian Disciple. Part 2, Law and Gospel. Part 3, exposition of the Ten Commandments.

Chapter 3: *Life with God is the Life of faith* – This chapter includes an explain of the Nicene Creed, the office of the keys, and the Lord's Prayer. This chapter is divided into five parts: Part 1, entitled *Life of Faith is Life in God the Father*. Part 2, entitled, *Life of Faith is the Life of Faith in the Son Jesus Christ*. In addition, we explain the second article of faith as it is presented in the Catechism as well as why was Jesus called *the life of the world* and the titles that Jesus was given in the Bible. What does it mean when we as Christians say: "Jesus is the Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah, Lord, and the Word of God (titles that shared in both the Bible and the Qur'an). This is important for responding to Muslims who ask questions about these titles. Part 3, entitled, *Life of Faith is Life in the Spirit*, the third article of faith. Part 4, entitled, *Life with God is the Life lived in the Church*,

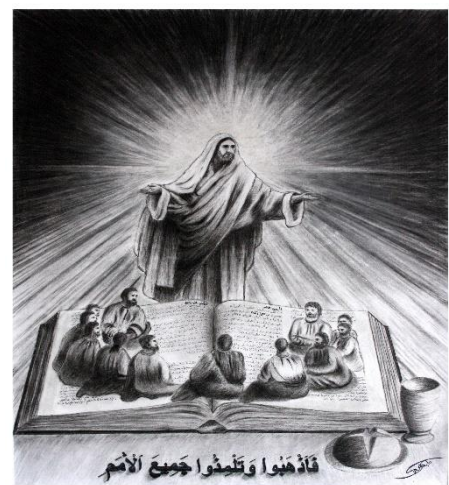
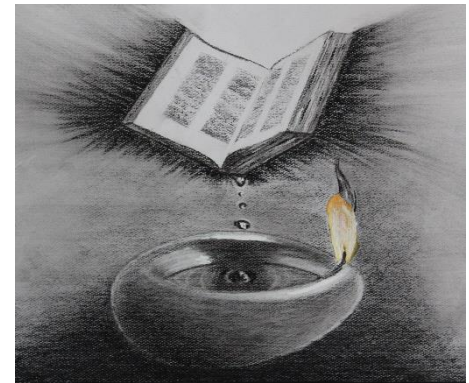
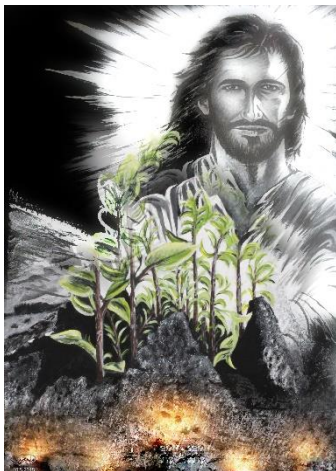
in which the office of pastoral ministry and the office of the key. And finally, Part 5, entitled, *Life of Faith is the Life of Prayer* in which the Lord's Prayer is explained.

Chapter 4: *Life with God is the Life of Grace* -This chapter is divided into two parts. Part 1- the meaning of Grace in the Christian life where the vocabularies of salvation: justification, redemption, covenant, reconciliation are explained. A portion of the life of Martin Luther is explained and his transformation as an example of how God's Grace transforms people's hearts. Part 2, explains the means of grace and the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.

BOOK DESIGN...

To complete this task and make the book more appealing to Middle Eastern context, we have asked artist Michael Bako in Germany to draw pictures inspired by the four parts of the book, the artist read the book and created special drawings for the curriculum to be used as illustration that accompany the teaching. These designs are available with English explanation.

These will be made available on our website.



WHERE TO FIND US...

YouTube:

frabjar72

Facebook:

Father Abjar

Website:

Fatherabjar.Org

Email:

Abjar_bahkou@baylor.edu

Many Thanks to our Ministry Partners

Peace Lutheran Church; Hurst, TX

has provided a home for us to worship and fellowship since 2010.

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Faith Lutheran Church; Troy, Michigan

Fr. Abjar Bahkou

6613 Tejas Drive

Waco, TX 76712