

# CONTENTS

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

- 3 Mission Statement - Dr. Ameen Albert Rihani
- 7 USA Tour of NDU President and Vice-President
- 8 Scholarship for Uganda

*An interface between two complementary forces is what we want, not conflict between two adversaries. The existence of two rival camps and of two conflicting groups of media can only be a danger, but we see now incitement to violence in districts of Beirut and at the same time the tracing of new lines of demarcation, which we thought belonged to the past, just when we were looking for construction and prosperity. There are calls for meetings of two parties or of four, and for initiatives foreign or Arab, for cooperation with the security forces, etc., etc., while at the same time the hurling of odious accusations and the laying down of futile conditions continue, together with threats of sit-ins, absence of authority, break-up and destructive and purposeless wars. Lebanon is no longer, as before, a land of peaceful coexistence with a message for the whole world. Is there a reason for its continued existence? If such is the case, let it have its proper place in the international arena. Let Lebanon be a meeting place for elements representing culture, civilization and true religion.*  
Editorial Staff

March 2008 | issue 42

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## ACADEMIC AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

9 NDU Choir in the USA

WEERC

14 Workshop - the Janneh Dam

16 LERC News

FAAD

21 NDU 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition

22 Workshop at Aleppo City - Elissar Doumit

26 Workshop: Art to Wear or Fashion?

26 NDU and *Hema* at Amsterdam

FH

29 Chinese in NDU

30 Mass Communication Events

31 Writing Center Phase Two

FNAS

32 First CTACCS Conference 2008

35 Mechanical Engineering at NDU  
- Dr. Michel Hayek

38 Armenian Ambassador visits NDU

38 Placement Office and Alfa Training  
Project

39 Bridging Twenty Years

40 *Communio*

41 Dr. C. Sabieh, President of Psychological  
Association

42 *Kun Hadi* at NDU

43 Sports Office News

SOCIAL

44 Births, Obituary



## OPINION AND CULTURE

45 Life at NDU - Yasmine Haddad

46 Crime Corner - Murder!

47 Algernon Swinburne - K.J. Mortimer

49 The Development of NDU - Mary Martinos Khoury

50 Balanced Diet - Elsa Abi Nader

51 *Ecrire ou se balader* - Dr. Abdo Kahy

55 Let's React to God - Fadia El-Hage

56 Something for your Grey Matter - Crossword

(N.B. Opinions are those of the authors and do not engage the editors.)

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## The President's Message

### A Possible Dialogue Between Policy Makers and Policy Executors

**I**n any endeavor aiming at reviewing the system and the structure of the University the policy makers and the policy executors are the two groups of administrators who are directly involved in producing and implementing new policies. In such an important endeavor the policy makers' approach might well be different from that of the policy executors. The first might be concerned with the system and the methodology, but the latter with the management and administration. This is where the possible misinterpretation of any specific policy might lead, even unintentionally, to a counter-effect or to a contrary result.

One of the best ways of avoiding such misunderstandings is to create a channel of on-going dialogue between the policy maker and the policy executor. This dialogue should address itself to related issues that may answer basic and inter-related questions, such as- What is the purpose for a new policy? How could it be implemented? Would it go contrary to other policies within the system? Would it reinforce, or support, other correlated policies?

Would it be easier or more difficult to implement in certain divisions, or units, and not in others? Why? What groups of students and faculty members are addressed by such a policy? Why is it difficult to implement policies most of the time with some people, and easy to apply the same policies with others?

These are the types of questions the University community has to ask itself regularly while in the process of bringing about significant change at different academic and administrative levels. Preparing the ground and proper communication are two crucial steps in such endeavors. To prepare the ground the dialogue should go horizontally and vertically.

It would be a wise step on the part of the policy makers and the policy executors to pursue on-going dialogue in order to be able to address the question of the feasibility of projected policies. Avoiding any future surprises and/or negative later reactions would be the purpose of such horizontal dialogues, which are expected to take place ahead of time among colleagues directly involved in deciding on, or implementing, a certain policy.

It is equally wise to insure proper communication after a certain policy has been applied, and to follow up its application by an awareness campaign in order to pave the way for an appropriate understanding and implementation of the new procedure. Discussions on campus are vital for the proper comprehension and understanding of new university rules and regulations. Everybody should be aware of the change; everybody should be responsive to the need of such an alteration.

Observations could be made to improve the why and how of making or implementing policies. In the absence of related dialogues the focus might not be in the right direction. Dialogue on anticipated change will fine-tune, direct and sharpen policies, and express the real needs and the necessary transformations expected. In such a case it is very significant to realize the magnitude of issuing and implementing new policies. Preparing the ground is a necessary first step. Conducting an awareness campaign becomes an essential last step.

One last observation along these lines concerns the significance of creating the proper and healthy environment for change. Starting a vigorous dialogue needs to be supported with the indispensable arguments that are able to persuade others to accept the suggested change, on the basis of the obvious necessities arising. A basic condition for building a proper academic environment is the provision of different alternatives for each situation, different options for each circumstance. The idea is to keep the mind open for every possibility, and to continue motivating the intelligence in order to allow the flow of choices for every particular problem. Let us all keep our minds open and motivated for expected change. Does this sound logical? Does logic prevail?

President

*Rev. Fr. Walid Moussa S.T.D.*



## NDU Mission Statement, Burden or Inspiration?

o | Ameen Albert Rihani

An immediate answer to this question may be that the mission statement of any institution of higher education becomes a burden if we do not make an effort to understand it. It becomes an inspiration when such an effort is made, and when an on-going discussion on campus is activated towards that purpose. In order to better understand the mission statement of NDU perhaps it would help to split the paragraphs into a preface, or preamble, and four parts: the preface determines the identity of the University in five key terms: Catholicism, "Maronology", Mariology, cultural heritage, and spiritual heritage. The statement starts thus:

**"As a Catholic institution inspired by the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary, Notre Dame University-Louaize..."**  
(Mission Statement, lines 1-2).

### Identity

Among the meanings of being Catholic there is to have, and enjoy, the audacity of hope; to advance the dialogue between faith and reason; to discover the truth, accept it, embrace it, preserve it, and impart it in all its different forms; to let your performance be an act of love to your

family, your University, your community, and to humanity at large.

To be inspired by the cultural heritage of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary is to know, analyze, and stimulate this culture heritage which is characterized by serving the community in shaping its values; educating the community in grasping and using knowledge; supporting the community in building a sense of attachment to the land, to society, and to the nation; and assisting the community in providing knowledge and education for all. A landmark of the cultural heritage of the Lebanese Synod in 1736 is that Education is a Right. It is worthwhile to notice here that NDU, being inspired by the cultural heritage of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary, is motivated at the same time by the motto well-known in Europe since the 16th century considering a distinguished intellectual researcher to be "a scholar like a Maronite".

To be inspired by the spiritual heritage of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary is to identify, recognize, and be motivated by this spiritual heritage which is characterized by maintaining a successful history of Maronite rituals and traditions as practiced in the Lebanese mountains

hundreds of years ago; focusing on the spiritual significance of the Holy Virgin Mary as a symbol of divine motherhood who uniquely supports and enriches our relationship with the Divine beyond; and building a sense of compassion and tenderness in our conception of humanity in its transcendental journey towards the Creator of the Universe.

### Nature of Education

The first part of the Mission Statement sets up the nature of education provided at the University. It highlights that –

**NDU seeks to provide comprehensive quality education that fosters excellence in scholarship, life-long learning, enlightened citizenship, human solidarity, moral integrity, and belief in God.** (Mission Statement, lines 3-5).

In this respect I thought that it would be worthwhile explaining what I understand, personally, by each of the key



terms found in this previous section. If the previous paragraph attempts to determine the meaning of “comprehensive quality education” by providing precise following terms, then I, as a reader, should give specific meanings to each and every term developed afterwards.

**Excellence** is a term frequently used, and rightly so, in such contexts; that is why it is imperative to explain it. Excellence in scholarship means to me effective learning, distinction in learning, writing across the curriculum, thinking across the curriculum, quality research, applied research, and a clear move from acquiring knowledge to using knowledge, to creating knowledge.

**Life-long learning** signifies acquiring the habit of on-going education, keeping abreast with the latest knowledge in our field of education, keeping acquainted with general information in other areas of knowledge, allowing our intellectual growth to be global and our academic service to be national, and bearing in mind that we can learn from the most ignorant, and that we should learn how “the world is flat”.

**Enlightened citizenship** indicates the need to be engaged in the values of human rights, to appeal to the welfare of our community, to build a liberal progressive spirit while dealing with our national concerns, to get attracted to a better future, and to learn how to accept the other and how to be tolerant in our common apprehensions.

**Human solidarity** designates a mutual respect and appreciation of each other, an awareness of our self value and self esteem, an understanding of the common human values across cultures, religions, languages, races, and nations, and an on-going discovery of the universal common standards of morality.

**Moral integrity** implies that the effect of any action will turn out to be right only if good causes are set in motion; that our daily life should be based on the trinity of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds; that it is crucial to build a sense of personal ethics, and self-reliance, in expressing ourselves in pure beliefs, clean language, and bright conduct; and that honesty is one corner of moral integrity. Another aspect would be maturity, a third would be responsibility, and a fourth an act of love.

**Belief in God** becomes significant if, and when, we benefit from our rational skills to support our belief; if, and when, we assist our reason with the power of our belief; if, and while at the top of our scientific skills and achievements we rediscover God; and at the end of our belief we recognize

the role of science, literature and art in human development.

### Philosophy and Standards of Education

The second part of the mission statement defines the kind of educational standards provided at the University. It emphasizes that –

**In designing its curricula, NDU is committed to the philosophy and standards of the American model of liberal arts education.** (Mission Statement, lines 5-7).

The philosophy of the American education is based on the liberal arts module, which proved to be a successful system of higher education throughout the world. It is important, in this context, to try to explain the significance of the term *liberal arts*.

**The Liberal Arts Education** is distinguished by its flexibility where student assessment is based on his/her achievement in each course; by diversity where students may chose majors, minors, and courses within their field of specialty and within the University educational requirements; by educational freedom where the students may pick up free electives and free minors, and enjoy partial freedom within the major; by comprehensiveness that allows learning everything about something (the Major) and to recognize something about everything (the General Educational Requirements, GER); by internationalism that allocates direct access to the American university



system worldwide; and effectiveness that gives a good graduate student from an American-system university the chance to be accepted for his/her M.A. and/or Ph.D. in the most prestigious universities in the world such as Harvard, which, for instance, a few years ago accepted one of our NDU students for him to pursue his Master's Degree in Architecture.

According to the *Association of American Colleges and Universities*, liberal learning "...is an education that fosters a well-grounded intellectual flexibility, a disposition toward life-long learning, and an acceptance of responsibility for the ethical consequences of our ideas and actions." Liberal learning "requires that we understand the foundations of knowledge and inquiry about nature, culture and society; that we master core skills of perception, analysis, and expression; that we cultivate a respect for truth; that we recognize the importance of historical and cultural context; and that we explore connections among formal learning, citizenship, and service to our communities."

[www.aacu.org/resources/liberaleducation/index.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/resources/liberaleducation/index.cfm)

## —Values

The third part of the Mission Statement determines the values that NDU promotes. Some of these values are already integrated within the nature of education and within the philosophy and standards of education at NDU. However the following values may stand by themselves in order to

complete the whole moral and human image of the University. This third part states the following:

**Conceiving itself as an authentic academic community, NDU promotes diversity, respect for human dignity and rights, and concern for the common good.** (Mission Statement, lines 7-9).

**Diversity** requires encouraging multiculturalism by including students and/or faculty members of different backgrounds in our academic life and our research and other intellectual projects. Diversity entails assuring tolerance for people of different backgrounds. It educates students how to function in a multicultural environment and open their minds to the external world. Diversity supports creativity, flexibility and innovation among students and faculty members.

**Human Dignity and Rights** necessitate a certain attitude in expressing our admiration for innate dignity and equal, absolute rights of all members of the human family around the world; in recognizing freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want; in supporting the right of education for everybody; in maintaining the right of work, and the right of being protected by the law; in developing the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of the individual; and in sustaining the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he/she is the author.

**The Common Good** suggests apprehension of the good that is shared and is beneficial for all, or most, members of a given community; concern for the universal excellence that represents "the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number of individuals"; an awareness and an admission of the individual's basic rights in society; and the distinction to be made between the Good and the Just: the Good, which actively creates an improved world however that may be identified, and the Just, which creates a fair and liberal social infrastructure that allows the search of virtue.

## —Future Leaders

The fourth and last part of the Mission Statement establishes the framework for the future leaders that NDU prepares and endorses. In this context the Mission Statement comes to a closure with this following affirmation:

**Its profound aspiration is to prepare its students to be future leaders who can exercise reason upon knowledge and shape a world of truth, justice, love and freedom.** (Mission Statement, lines 9-10).

Exercising reason upon knowledge calls for an

engagement in the processing, integration, and acquisition of knowledge. Processing is the proper handing out of knowledge in the right context, integration is the incorporation of knowledge within a larger framework, and acquisition is the gaining of knowledge and adding it to previous comprehension skills.

**Truth** is a major concern in philosophy, theology, science, and other aspects of human thought. When it becomes a part of a mission statement it is definitely one of the key words in that particular statement. This term carries a wide range of meanings, and it is crucial to define the significance of the term within the context of our immediate concern. In order to shape a world of truth the expression, in this sense, indicates honesty, candor, genuineness, and good faith. For each phenomenon there is a philosophic truth, a theological truth, a scientific truth, and even a human emotional truth.

**Justice**, in this context, could mean *Distributive Justice*, and this is concerned with the proper sharing of the material and moral good in all its forms such as wealth, power, evaluation, reward, and respect among different people around the world, and among students, faculty members and staff. It could

mean also *Retributive Justice*, and this is concerned with the proper reaction to misconduct. Justice might be more significant when it implies harmony, divine command, inspiring leadership, natural law, egalitarianism, fairness, and so on.

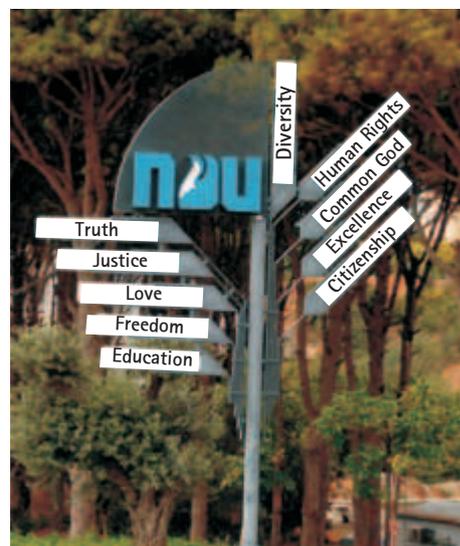
**Love**, or shaping a world of love, invites you to try to imagine a world without love and find out how dry it may look to; try to think how our world may possibly be transformed into a better one, into a world of love; to think of any one performance of yours and look at the difference between performance as an act of love and performance as an act of duty. This raises the following question: When can an act of duty becomes an act of love?

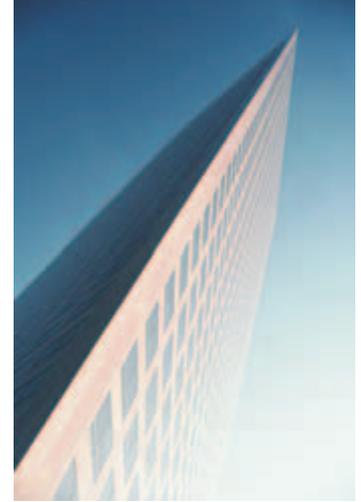
**Freedom** in this context is an attitude and a state of mind. It means the freedom of inquiry and acquisition of knowledge for students and faculty members, which is essential to the educational mission of any academic community. Freedom of questioning a certain truth is maintained within a healthy academic environment. Teaching the value of freedom for a human being, and particularly for a student or a scholar within an academic environment, is part of teaching human rights and democracy. Liberal arts education is one effective way to understand and practice our intellectual freedom based on our rights and responsibilities.

## Conclusion

The above interpretations of the mission statement of our University are but simple suggestions that may invite other ideas, similar or different, capable of enriching the scope of this statement and the spectrum of unlimited meanings that it carries today, and might carry tomorrow. In that sense the mission statement is the inspiring document that shall generate articles, debates, dialogues, and on-going discussions stirring a significant and vibrant intellectual atmosphere about this subject on campus.

For this purpose I have sorted out nineteen key words, or key terms, from this statement given below. These are Catholicism, Maronology, Mariology, Effective Teaching, Life-long Learning, Enlightened Citizenship, Human Solidarity, Moral Integrity, Belief in God, Liberal Learning, Diversity, Human Dignity and Rights, Common Good, Reason and Knowledge, Science and Religion, Future Leaders and Leadership, Truth, Love, Freedom. These are the spiritual, intellectual, and academic cornerstones of NDU's past, present, and future.





## USA Tour, Washington D.C. and Los Angeles

NDU President Fr. Walid Moussa and Dr. Assaad Eid, Vice-President for Research and Development, recently went on a tour of the United States, where they first took part in a Washington conference of Catholic Universities and Institutes that lasted from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of February, 2008. Participants there included representatives of Catholic institutions of higher education from around the world, coming with the aim of ensuring effective all-round cooperation in the future.

At the conference, attention was focused on certain basic questions, in particular those concerning the social role of the Catholic Church and its universities, with particular insistence on the values upheld by the Church and the part they play in serving the general community, as well as the role of the Church in university administration.

The question was treated of the renewal required in order to face the series of challenges peculiar to the present time, with special attention to globalization and the demands of technology which affect academic life. Most important was consideration of the role of the Catholic university and the changes necessary without departure from its Catholic identity and mission.

The President and Vice-President also represented NDU at the Ninetieth Yearly Conference of the American Council of Education held in California from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> of February, with a massive participation of universities and institutes from all around the world. The conference opened with a general and comprehensive review of higher learning and the challenges facing its leaders in the United States. Study groups considered common

concerns and new models for world cooperation in higher learning and their utility, with attention to the exchange of programs, research, faculty members and students and to the part played by technology in multiplying opportunities for gaining knowledge through new techniques and procedures, taking into account the advantages and disadvantages for university education. The conference wound up with a presentation of its conclusions and of the solutions to be applied in the future.

Fr. Walid Moussa and Dr. Assaad Eid also made contact with influential personalities in the city of Los Angeles, among them Dennis Zine, member of the City Council, to discuss the twinning of Los Angeles with Beirut. During the subsequent stage of their tour they met the Friends of NDU in Boston.

► *From left to right: Mr. Nachef, Dr. J. Nachef, Dr. A. Eid, Mr. Dennis Zine of LA City Hall, Rev. Fr. Walid Moussa, and Mr. I. Baaklini.*



As a Catholic university, NDU is committed to cultivating a spirit of charity and goodwill

## Scholarship

NDU has always sought to make quality higher education available to Lebanese students through scholarships, work-study and financial aid. Recently, Father President Walid Moussa wisely decided to extend this policy to international students, offering a scholarship to Ms. Millie Achaa of Uganda Martyrs University, Uganda, East Africa. She is pursuing a Master's degree in Architecture and has already successfully completed her first semester of preparatory 500 level undergraduate courses and looks forward to another challenging semester in spring, 2008.

As a Catholic university, NDU is committed to cultivating a spirit of charity and goodwill through these activities, first by reaching out to Christian and Muslim students in Lebanon and now to students from reputable Catholic universities abroad. Father Moussa believes that this small step is significant in that it establishes a precedent whereby NDU's international character may be strengthened. This is not only commensurate with NDU's identity as a Catholic university, but also in accord with its recent decision to pursue American accreditation.

Millie has told *NDU Spirit* that she has found Lebanon and NDU to be quite a challenge, especially in view of the cold weather, for she presently resides in Ajaltoun. Another challenge comes from the fact of there being very, very few other African students at NDU. She hopes that more Africans will be attending NDU in the near future. Millie also tells us that she is impressed by her teachers and by the program and has found most of the students in her department to be helpful.

o | Dr. Edward Alam

► Dr. Ameen Rihani,  
Miss Millie Achaa,  
Rev. Fr. Walid Moussa,  
and Dr. Edward Alam.





## NDU Choir in the USA

*As part of the University's twentieth anniversary celebrations, NDU's choir went on a two-week American tour that included performances in Los Angeles, Detroit and Boston. The tour was part of an ongoing initiative to build relationships with American universities and further develop the American Friends of NDU support group. To that end, the Choir's tour was a great success.*

*In Los Angeles, the visit to El Camino College laid a solid foundation for future cooperation between the two institutions.*

*During the remaining days of the journey, the Choir was featured in several performances. In attendance were many Lebanese Americans, academics, and civic and religious figures.*

► *The choir's tour of Los Angeles comprised a visit to Disneyland.*

### o First Stop: Los Angeles

Notre Dame University-Louaize, Lebanon, and El Camino College became partners during Summer 2006. In Fall 2006, the video-conferencing connections between the choirs of the two institutions were most successful. The students performed for each other live over the internet. Plans were then put in place to bring the Notre Dame University Choir to Los Angeles. El Camino College extended an official invitation to NDU and thanks to the generous donations of a few philanthropists, the Notre Dame

Choir visited the campus of El Camino College. A choral exchange allowed the students to interact, sing and communicate with great warmth and friendliness. Dr. Tom Fallo, President of El Camino College, welcomed the NDU delegation at his office. Dr. Assaad Eid, Father Samir Ghsoub, and Father Khalil Rahme met Dr. Fransisco Arce, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Gloria Miranda, Dean of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Dr. James Schwartz,



Interim Dean of Fine Arts, and Bo Morton, Director of Grants.

During the afternoon reception, the students demonstrated their mutual friendly intimacy with dances, fun and laughter. Dress rehearsals followed in preparation for the NDU Choir LA Debut at El Camino on May 19<sup>th</sup>, for the Ambassadors of Harmony concert. 180 choral singers, who included 85 singers who performed with Dr. Nachef on March 25, 2007, at Carnegie Hall, N.Y., and the NDU Choir presented Mozart's *Coronation Mass* with El Camino Symphony under the baton of Dr. Joanna Medawar Nachef. The NDU Choir, with an instrumental ensemble, presented outstanding Lebanese music in the second half. The audience of some eight hundred or more were most moved by the concert and showed their

appreciation with a spontaneous standing ovation. At the start of the event Dr. Nachef and Dr. Eid spoke of the collaboration between the two institutions, NDU and El Camino, and the progress that had been made. In his brief address, Dr. Eid thanked Dr. Nachef and El Camino community for the warm welcome, and promised closer cooperation with El Camino College.

Mr. Ferris Wehbe, President of LA/Beirut Sister City Organization arranged with Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti and Council members Dennis Zine and Tome La Bonge, a historic celebration of the unveiling of the Beirut Sign, as Beirut became the 22<sup>nd</sup> sister city of LA this past summer. Both the ECC choir and the visiting NDU Choir sang the National Anthems of their respective countries and performed other musical selections on Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, in the presence of the Honorable Charbel Wehbe, Ambassador of Lebanon, and many other dignitaries. The NDU choir was also featured at the Heritage Night on May 18<sup>th</sup>, at Our Lady of

Mount Lebanon Cathedral, Beverly Hills.

The parishioners were most impressed with the professionalism, musicality and excellence of NDU's performance. The excitement among the Lebanese who were attending was electrifying and they were swept away by the beautiful and nostalgic musical journey. Father Zaidan extended an invitation to the NDU Choir to participate at Mass on Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>. The Mass was most moving and memorable with the marvelous solo and choral segments of the NDU choir.

The Grove Celebration of the Sister Cities, May 20<sup>th</sup>, also featured the NDU Choir in an outdoor musicale representing LA/Beirut with its performances of Lebanese folk music. All twenty-two sister cities were present with their Consul Generals, delegates and musical performers. The open-air setting allowed hundreds of people to witness this amazing celebration of cultures and countries. Dr. Eid spoke briefly at the occasion. He said:

▼ *NDU members with students and staff of El Camino College.*

▼ *The El Camino Choir.*





*For many years Lebanon has lived in a state of war, quite often in the form of internal conflict, or of different forms of suppression from the neighboring countries. The outcome was a devastating destruction of the major parts of its cities; Beirut, the capital, suffered the most. The downtown area, where the fiercest fights took place, was completely destroyed, but Lebanon prevailed. Lebanon shall never fall into despair. What we have witnessed here today confirms our trust in the future and with equal devotion and enthusiasm holds us to our belief in an eternal Lebanon, and highlights those values we both share: We both believe in freedom and hold to it. We both believe in democracy and hold to it. We both suffered a lot to gain independence and sovereignty. We both have paid a heavy price in the face of terrorism. But because we enjoy the will-power, determination and courage to always strive for a better future for our countries and because we both have faith in our countries, we shall prevail.*

During their LA stay, the members of the NDU delegation were the guests of many generous Lebanese Americans:

○ | *A warm welcome by Mayfair Hotel manager Mr. Ghassan Sader gave the travelers a sense of comfort and relaxation.*

○ | *A delicious welcoming dinner was offered by LA/Beirut Sister City President Mr. Ferris Wehbe and his family at Bucca Di Peppo restaurant in Universal City.*

○ | *Mr. Michel Medawar, the famous Lebanese inventor of the Talking Clocks, hosted the group at his family's Jewelry Store in Palos Verdes, Medawar's Jewelers. A visit to his workshop, a photo-*

*op at the First Flower Talking Clock in the US and an authentic Mexican meal followed at the Red Onion Restaurant with the Medawar and Nachef clan.*

○ | *LA/Beirut Sister City Organization held their farewell dinner for the NDU Choir at the impressive and elegant Phoenicia Restaurant in Glendale. Our generous host, Mr. Ara Kalfayan, made the event most enjoyable with his professional treatment and warm welcome.*

## ○ Second Stop: Detroit

On Monday, May 21, the choir continued their US journey by

travelling to Detroit, Michigan. At the airport, Fr. Khalil and his assistants were anxiously waiting to welcome the choir. Following a short drive around the city, and a welcoming early dinner, the choir were received by Madonna University personnel. Sister Nancy's warm welcome and hospitality in addition to the surrounding beautiful natural setting made the travelers enjoy a really comfortable and relaxing night.

On Tuesday, May 22, the choir finally had their shopping tour. Fr. Khalil and his assistants were most helpful. A delicious lunch was later offered by Elie's Restaurant, a luxurious Lebanese restaurant in the suburbs of Livonia, Michigan. That evening featured the St. Charbel Concert, which turned out to be a real festival. Three speeches opened the event,

▼ *The unveiling of the Beirut Sign for the twinning of LA and Beirut.*



▼ *The welcome of Madonna University.*



those of Monsignor Michael Kail, Dr. Assaad Eid, and Fr. J. Khalil.

The program included a variety of musical pieces.

### o Third Stop: Boston

On Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, the choir of NDU presented a splendid concert at Boston College, Boston, USA. It was the first time the choir had performed in Boston and was the last concert of a three-city American tour that included performances in Los Angeles and Detroit. The Boston concert was co-sponsored by Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon Church, American Friends of NDU, and the Boston chapter of the World Lebanese Cultural Union (WLCU). The concert was hosted by Boston College. The Lebanese community in Boston and Massachusetts truly came together in

preparing for this world-class artistic event. The talent and brilliance exhibited by the visiting artists from Lebanon electrified the audience, and as one member of the audience said, "It showed a beautiful face of Lebanon that sometimes gets murky from the fog of war and conflict."

Four speakers spoke briefly at the start of the event: Mr. Michael Halal (of the WLCU) focused on the theme of the concerts, "Voices of Hope from Lebanon". Dr. Loutfallah Georges Chedid (President of the Boston Chapter of American Friends of NDU) spoke of the noble mission of NDU, its remarkable accomplishments in the last 20 years, the need to support this institution, and the role of American Friends of NDU. Chorbishop Joseph Lahoud of Our Lady of the Cedars Church stressed the historical and cultural links between Lebanon and the Boston area, and the role that NDU plays in strengthening those links. Dr. Assaad Eid delivered the greetings of the President, faculty and students of NDU to the Boston audience, and gave a brief introduction outlining NDU's goals, its accomplishments and its future plans.

programs among the American-Lebanese community. The tour was part of an ongoing initiative to build relationships with American universities and further develop the American Friends of NDU support group. To that end, the NDU choir's Boston performance was a great success. In attendance were many Lebanese Americans, academics, artists, and political, civic and religious leaders. The choir thrilled the audience of the 600-seat Robsham Theater of Boston College with an unforgettable performance.

The program included a variety of musical pieces including old hymns, popular Lebanese love songs and folklore pieces. The audience enjoyed sparkling new arrangements of familiar secular and sacred songs. The performance also featured some original compositions by Father Rahme, including *Halleluia, In A Village Obscure* and the premiere performance of *Charbel Makhoulouf*, both of which received enthusiastic standing ovations from the audience, as did many other pieces.

Legendary master percussionist Michel Merhej accompanied the choir. Michel Merhej has taught at Lebanon's National Conservatory and played for the Rahbani Brothers and Fairuz, and currently performs with the brilliant composer and performer Simon Shaheen and his ensemble. The choir was also accompanied by an outstanding local string quartet from the Newton Symphony Orchestra. Caught up in the spirit of music, and delighted by the novelty of performing

▼ *The beautiful Madonna University Campus.*



The tour of the choir was part of NDU's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations by which the University aspired to raise awareness of its educational and cultural



alongside 'anun and tableh, these American musicians played like "natives" of the Levant.

With emotional expressions of gratitude, at the end of the performance the concert organizing committee presented the University with a check of proceeds from the concert to the amount of \$10,000 to be used for scholarships for needy students. In turn, the choir and Dean Eid presented the organizing committee members with NDU choir plaques as a token of appreciation for their hospitality and for their having helped to organize the concert. The young children of two of the organizing committee members presented red roses to each of the performers.

In the days following the concert, the bonds between NDU and the Boston community continued to grow. The choir members were treated to a tour of Boston, and Chorbishop Lahoud offered an elegant luncheon for the choir and the members of the organizing committee. A truly memorable Mass at Our Lady of the

Cedars Church was enlivened by the voice of soloist Aida Tomb. The local Lebanese-American newspaper, *Profile News*, ran an article proclaiming the resounding success of the NDU Choir's performance. No doubt the beauty and significance of the event will resonate with all those who had the good fortune to be associated with it for years to come.

The choir members and their roles at this concert were as follows: director: Father Khalil Rahme; soloist: Aida Tomb – Ronza; organist: Dolcy Laoun; 'anunist: Maguy Makhoul; SOPRANOS: Josiane Chalhoub, Pascale Haddad, Tamy Helou, and Nadine Nassar; ALTOS: Lody Batal, Rana Richa, Rania Zeidan; TENORS: Charbel Abi Rached, Mario Nakouzi, Jalal Possik; and BASS: Fernando Affara, Alain Chalhoub, Fady Nakouzi, and Tony Sfeir.

The organizing committee members in Boston were the following: Loutfallah Georges Chedid, Nancy Chedid, Susan Fuccillo, Mona Tamo, Maguy Pollak, David Abi Chaker, Nicole Gabriel Nassar, Pierre Gabriel, Charles El-Helou, Henriette Kassis, Rosanne Solomon,

Ghazi Saab, Jean Dagher, Marcel Georges, Chorbishop Joseph Lahoud, and Michael Halal.

Finally, this U.S journey would not have been possible without the efforts of all those who contributed to it, namely:

Mrs. Joanna Nachef, Mr. and Mrs. Medawar, Mr. Ferris Wehbe, El Camino Community College, El Camino Choir, LA/Beirut Sisters City, Father Zeidan, Father Joseph Khalil, The Maronite Mariamite Community in Michigan, Sister Nancy, Madonna University, Monsignor Kail, Monsignor Lahoud, Dr. Loutfallah Chedid and his family, American Friends of NDU in Boston, Father Sami Farah, Ghada, Jeanette, Carol, Joseph, Gilbert, Father Boutros Tarabay, Father Samir Ghousoub, Dr. Ameen Rihani, NDU, Father Walid Moussa, and Father Elie Zwein.

▼ *The Boston College Concert.*



▼ *A welcome from the Church of Our Lady of the Cedars.*



## WEERC Workshop

*On Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2007, the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) and the Water, Energy and Environment Research Center of NDU, held a joint workshop entitled The Implementation of Janneh Dam on Nahr Ibrahim River – Jbeil at the Old Campus, in collaboration with Consolidated Engineering Company – Khatib & Alami. It was sponsored by Byblos Bank. At the opening, the speakers were Fr. Walid Moussa, NDU President, Mr. Suhail Matar, NDU General Director of Public Relations, Dr. Fadi Comair, Director General at the MEW and Director of WEERC, representing Minister Mohammad Al Safadi, and Mr. Fadi Nassar, AGM – Head of Corporate Banking, representing Dr. François Bassil, Chairman and General Manager of Byblos Bank S.A.L..*

The first session was presided by Dr. Adel Cortas, former Minister of Agriculture. Dr. Fadi Comair spoke on Public and Private Partnership for Project Financing D.B.O.T.. Dr. Adel Abou Jaoudé, Civil and Hydraulic Engineer at Khatib & Alami spoke on Water Management. Finally, before the coffee break, Ms. Laurence Charbel, Geologist at Khatib & Alami, spoke on Surface Geology and Investigation.

At the second session, presided by Dr. Ali Moumen, FAO Representative in Lebanon, Dr. Hadi Jaafar, Agricultural Engineer and Hydrologist at Khatib & Alami, spoke on the Hydrology of Nahr Ibrahim. Mrs Nasrine Ghattas, Hydraulic Structure Engineer at Khatib & Alami, and Mr. André Atallah, Professor of Hydraulic Structures, dealt with Project Design. Dr. Adel Abou Jaoudé spoke on Hydroelectricity Production and was followed by two of





Khatib & Alami's Environmental Engineers, Dr. Ali Zeidan and Ms. Héra Haytayan, dealing with the vital subject of Environmental Impact Assessment. There was general discussion and then lunch.

### Objective

The statement of the objective of the workshop points out that whereas human activity has always used water as indispensable for life, now demographic growth, climatic change and the social and economic transformations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have created a new situation with much environmental degradation. In Lebanon water has become a resource that is rare and limits development.

Therefore the General Directorate of Hydraulic and Electrical Resources has undertaken an ambition programme within the framework of its ten-year plan, 2000 – 2009.

This programme provides for some thirty dams and hillside lakes to hold a yearly volume of 800 million cubic metres of water to be distributed in times of drought. With its eight-million cubic metre capacity, the Chabrouh Dam inaugurated 3rd October, 2007, will make good the shortage of drinking water in Kesrouan and a part of Metn until 2025. The plan also provides for the collection of waste water throughout Lebanon and its use for irrigation. Further, water

that is normally lost in the sea during the winter is to be returned naturally or artificially into the subterranean table. For this a White Book will be necessary.

Finally, the countries of the region must reach agreement on the use of water to ensure future peace.



▲ *The opening of the workshop.*

► *Dr. Fadi Comair representing Minister Al Safadi.*



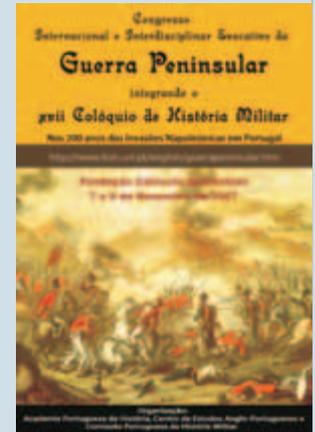
► *The scientific audience.*



## Lisbon Event

In Lisbon, Portugal, between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November 2007, the Portuguese Historical Academy, the Centre for Anglo-Portuguese Studies and the Centre of History at Lisbon University together hosted *The International and Interdisciplinary Congress on the Peninsular War (1807-1814)*, which commemorated the second centenary of the Napoleonic invasions of Portugal. The sessions were held at Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, with an exhibition at the National Library relating to the Peninsular War running concurrently.

Roberto Khatlab, writer and researcher, and LERC's Latin-American Liaison Officer, represented The Lebanese Emigration Research Center of NDU and the Museum National/University Federal of Rio de Janeiro (MN/UFRJ). Mr. Khatlab examined the historic relationship between Lebanon-Portugal-Brazil that dawned during the Phoenician era, was strengthened during the Crusades of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, and evolved with these "Christians of the Orient" who arrived by sea in Brazil with the Portuguese.



## Mexico Event Commemorating Lebanese Emigrants

Beirut, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2007: The rain held off for a few hours to allow a commemorative ceremony celebrating the remarkable role of migration in the modern history of both Mexico and Lebanon at the memorial of the Lebanese Emigrant at Charles Helou Avenue, who poignantly faces the Port of Beirut, main point of departure to Mexico for thousands of Lebanese emigrants.

Concurrently, a replica of the Lebanese Emigrant statue was unveiled at the Port of Veracruz, in Mexico, main port of landing for Lebanese emigrants. The ceremony was attended by Veracruz State Governor Fidel Herrera,

President of the Municipality Julem Rementería, members of the Executive Committee of the Lebanese Club in Mexico and other members, Lebanese Ambassador to Mexico H.E. Nouhad Mahmoud, Maronite Bishop for Mexico Msgr. Georges Saad Abi Younes, and members of the Lebanese community.

In Lebanon the ceremony was attended

by the Mexican Ambassador to Lebanon, H.E Jorge Alvarez and the Honorary Consul of Mexico, Roger Abed, members of the Municipal Council of Beirut, the Associate Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center Ms. Guita Hourani, the President of the Mexican-Lebanese Friendship Association Dr. George Hayek, and the Secretary General of

◀ *H. E. the Ambassador of Mexico, Jorge Alvarez, addressing the audience at the site of the Lebanese Emigrant memorial at the Port of Beirut (2007)*



◀ *The Lebanese Emigrant monument stands proudly in the idyllic port of Veracruz, a popular landing point for Lebanese entering Mexico (2007).*





the World Lebanese Cultural Union. Also present were Latin-American ambassadors, mayors of Lebanese villages with many emigrants to Mexico, members of the Mexican community in Lebanon and Lebanese-Mexican returnees and their families. Both ceremonies highlighted the Lebanese emigrants' contribution to Mexico as well as their deep attachment to the land of their ancestors. A statement issued by the Mexican Embassy paid tribute to the qualities and contributions of the Lebanese migrants and their descendants

Traditionally, it said, Lebanon was often seen as the embodiment of the many push-and-pull factors that incite people to leave their homelands and attract some to return after long journeys. Modern-day Mexico was a fine example of an organized, supportive and well-integrated community of Mexicans of Lebanese origin that was seen to have created a

bridge between the two countries and their peoples.

During the ceremony in Beirut, all those attending stood in tents erected around the statue but stepped out into the court while the national flags of both countries were hoisted and the national anthems played. H. E. Jorge Alvarez then paid a moving tribute to the history and customs of Lebanese emigrants to Mexico, explaining with mesmerizing eloquence the deep friendship between both countries and peoples. Other brief speeches and poems marked the occasion and linked symbolically the ceremonies at the two widely-separated ports.

LERC was represented at the event by Associate Director Guita Hourani, by Research Assistant Elie Nabhan, by LERC's Latin-American liaison officer Roberto Khatlab, and by Rodrigue Hourani, a returnee and a member of the Friends of LERC.

◀ *At the unveiling of the Lebanese Emigrant monument in Mexico: H.E. Fidel Herrera, Governor of the State of Veracruz, receiving a memento to mark the event (2007).*



◀ *Attending the Mexican ceremony in Beirut, from left to right: Mr. Elie Nabhan, LERC's Rapporteur/Website Editor; Associate Director of LERC Ms. Guita Hourani; H.E the Ambassador of Mexico Jorge Alvarez; and Mr. Rodrigue Hourani, an expatriate. (2007)*



**NDU publication launched at BIEL**

Beirut 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2007: A book-signing by author Dr. Dunia Fayad Taan of her work *The Lebanese in the Ivory Coast 1900-1986*, took place at the Notre Dame University stand at the 51<sup>st</sup> Beirut International Arab Book Festival held in the Beirut International Exhibition and Leisure (BIEL) Conference Center. 133 publishing houses were represented at an event which has taken place every year since 1956 despite the most violent upheavals. Its relative openness and tolerance is a tribute to the freedom of thought and speech throughout the Arab World.

Dr. Taan, an Associate Researcher at the Lebanese Emigration and Research Center of NDU, is an ethnologist with a Ph.D. from the Université de Nice in France and her book, an expansion of her dissertation *Les Libanais en Côte d'Ivoire d'Hier à Aujourd'hui*, was a recent publication of NDU. She hails from South Lebanon and has spent time studying and living abroad, especially in France, Morocco and the Ivory Coast. The book is a result of

## Resources pooled at international conference on "gender" research

further research into West Africa and will prove invaluable to researchers and students interested in the field of migration. Supporters from NDU, from Dr. Taan's family and from her wide circle of friends attended the signing.



▲ *Book-signing of The Lebanese in the Ivory Coast 1900-1986 at the NDU Stand at BIEL. From left to right: Mr. George Mghames, Director of Publications, NDU, author Dr. Dunia Fayad-Ta'an and LERC's Associate Director, Ms. Guita Hourani (2007).*



▲ *Dr. Dunia Fayad-Ta'an, author, talking to Dr. Mansour Eid, Chairperson Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, NDU, and other guests.*

An international conference titled The Status of Gender Research in Denmark and the Arab Region was held at the Lebanese American University in Beirut from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008. The conference brought together the Danish Centre for Information on Women and Gender (KVINFO) and the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) of the LAU with the aim of addressing the current challenges of gender research in both Denmark and the Arab region in two simultaneous workshops, namely Women, Minorities and Migration and Women, Secular and Religious Laws. The Conference successfully realized its goal of creating a network among researchers working on gender in Denmark and the Arab region. The experts focused on the status of research status in Denmark, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Yemen, with each

presentation being followed by discussion.

With the presentations taking place in the morning, the afternoons were dedicated to two simultaneous workshops conducted by two scholars, one hailing from Denmark and the other from the Arab region. Workshop I focused on the theme of Women, Minorities and Migration, while Workshop II concentrated on Women, Secular and Religious Laws. Members working within the network established during this conference were encouraged to discuss future research ideas for more research possibilities.

Ms. Guita Hourani, Associate Director of the Lebanese Emigration and Research Center at the Notre Dame University, represented the Center and participated in the three-day event as an expert on migration in Lebanon.

► *Opening session of the LAU conference on the Status of Gender. From left to right: Dr. Mahmoud Issa, Senior Consultant, KVINFO; Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, VPAA, LAU; and Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, Director, IWSAW (2007).*



▼ *The participants at the Conference on Gender at the LAU, 2007. LERC's Associate Director Guita Hourani is seventh from the left at the back.*





**Basma Abdel Khalek** graduated from Saint Joseph University in Beirut in June 2007, with a BA in Economics. While there, she was an active member of *Lebyouth*, an NGO established by university students in Lebanon. Lebyouth established the Internship Program in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance in Lebanon. And through this Abdel Khalek was accepted for a one-month internship at the Ministry during summer 2007. She was also recommended by her

superior in the Department of the Budget to undergo another internship at a different department. She is also active in *Naharashabab* and is preparing a research directed by the Shadow Government of Youth to study implementation of administrative decentralization in Lebanon to provide the Lebanese people and policymakers with ideas about how to enhance governmental work and public service. She participates in the Youth Economic Forum's activities, which constitute a platform for economic dialogue among young Lebanese from various backgrounds, to encourage new recommendations and initiatives for economic growth and empowerment of both the public and private sectors.

While at LERC, Abdel Khalek will be conducting primary research on the Lebanese banking services, including housing loans, directed at Lebanese expatriates.



**Edward J. Alam**, Associate Professor at NDU since 1996, American and Lebanese national. As Director of International Academic Affairs he helped to implement many ground-breaking projects. He has published one major book and articles and reviews in important international philosophical and theological journals, notably the Catholic Review *Communio*. Dr. Alam initiated and directed a Metanexus LSI project, devoted to the interface between religion and science,

which was awarded a supplementary grant in 2004 for its outstanding accomplishments and innovations.

Dr. Alam has spoken in Rome and Bangkok on Metaphysics and Mysticism, and twice in Iran on the Catholic contribution to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He presided over a gathering of prominent Lebanese intellectuals and published the proceedings in a volume titled *God in Multicultural Society*. He taught for one month in the Faculty of Theology at Sweden's Uppsala University.

Dr. Alam joins LERC as an Adjunct Research Associate to conduct research on Diaspora and Religion. [ ealam@ndu.edu.lb ]



**Dina Almissber-von Angern**, a Syrian national, graduated from Damascus University with a B.A. in Architectural Engineering. Her final project was entitled *A Combined Center for Biological Research and Natural Tourism in the Umm at-Tuyoor National Park*. She spent two years at Halle University in Germany as a guest student. She then worked in Damascus free-lance on the restoration and re-use of antique houses in the old town of Damascus and the planning of buildings related to pastoral projects. She finished a Diploma in Architecture and Planning at Damascus University with a thesis entitled *Consequences of the Lack of Urban and Regional Planning in Suburban Settlements as a Problem for Infrastructural Development, Life Quality and Safety*. Currently, she is the head of studies at the Engineering Department of the Ministry of Higher Education in Damascus, where she is responsible for the infrastructural development of the Syrian State University.

While her husband Wolf-Hagen von Angern is conducting his research work at LERC, Dina will benefit from the facilities at NDU by continuing her work on her Master's thesis in Urban and Regional Planning.

[dinamissber@yahoo.com](mailto:dinamissber@yahoo.com)



**Alex Henley**, dual British and French citizenship, BA in Theology and Religion, MA with distinction in Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies from Durham, UK, 2007. His thesis was entitled *Lebanon's Turbulent See: A Study on the Impact of the Lebanese Civil War on the Institution of the Maronite Patriarchate*. He has been engaged in journalism and academic work focused on Middle Eastern politics, and particularly Lebanese religious identities. He has written for *The Tablet*, London, and the *Middle East Times*, Washington DC, as well as taking up an internship in BBC Current Affairs. His article *Politics of a Church at War: Maronite Catholicism in the Lebanese Civil War* is under consideration for publication, and he has been invited to speak at the Middle East Studies Association annual conference in Washington this November. He hopes shortly to begin doctoral research on clerical leadership in Lebanon's power-sharing communities.

During his association with the Lebanese Emigration Research Center in the Spring Semester of 2008, he will be working on Religion and Diaspora with Dr. Edward Alam.

**Ali Hijazi, BA:** He is an MBA student at the Holy Spirit University with a BA in Auditing and Accounting and a one-year study abroad at the Henry Ford Community College in Michigan, USA. Mr. Hijazi has worked as a Field Officer for Relief International, as Junior Accountant at the Trust for Consulting and Auditing, as Assistant Financial Manager at *Dar Al Mughtareb* for Printing and Editing, and as Accountant for the Teachers' Syndicate.

Mr. Hijazi has been associated with LERC as a Research Assistant for a year. His recent task was to assess the economic and social situation in eight villages/towns in the Caza of Sour (Tyre) and to interview stakeholders and micro-credit beneficiaries for a project aiming at studying the potential impact of micro-credit on curbing emigration from the South.



**Nanor Karageozian** graduated with a BA in Business Administration from Haigazian University in 2003 with High Honors following her placement on the President's List. She studied part of her MA in Public Administration at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada and completed it at the American University of Beirut in November of 2007. Her MA thesis dealt with Armenia's diaspora policies, for which she traveled to Armenia and conducted interviews with

key policy actors. Karageozian worked as a graduate research assistant at AUB from 2005 to 2007, and then at the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration. She has also worked as a freelance editor and has been involved in Armenian-Lebanese community activities. She is currently on LAU staff working as the web editor of the Lebanese American University's Marketing and Communications Department.

As a Research Assistant at the Lebanese Emigration Research Center, Ms. Karageozian will be researching the migration of the Armenian-Lebanese. She will carry out historical analysis and analysis of secondary sources, as well as conducting interviews with Armenian and Lebanese community leaders, and with government officials, in order to study the migration of the Armenian-Lebanese and other Lebanese, with its causes and with its effects on both their community and on Lebanon.



**Dennis Kumetat**, German-born, holds a Master's Degree in Contemporary and Medieval History, specializing in Modern Economic History. His Master's thesis, *German Business and Policies in the Middle East: Iraq, Egypt, Saudi-Arabia 1933-1939* is to be published in a series of working papers on the economy of the Middle East of the Freie University, Berlin. Kumetat has also studied Protestant Theology,

History, Philosophy, Arabic and Social Sciences at the Universities of Cologne and Bonn, Germany, and spent one year (2004/05) at the AUB and the Near East School of Theology, Beirut. He has worked on publications in other fields of interests, such as Germany's foreign policy and her expatriates in the Levant during WW II, and written articles in the magazine of the German-Speaking Protestant Congregation of Beirut as well as *The Conception of Truth in Christianity and World Religions: Recent Theological Developments*, to be published by mid-2008. He is currently preparing a second Master's Degree in Middle Eastern Studies at the AUB which is being offered by the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies (CAMES). Kumetat plans to stay in Lebanon until summer 2008 carrying out a survey of the German commitment to Lebanon combined with a series of stakeholder interviews with representatives of German and Lebanese institutions. [d.kumetat@gmx.de](mailto:d.kumetat@gmx.de)

Yara Romariz Maasri is a dual Brazilian and Lebanese national, former English Literature student at AUB, for three semesters on the Dean's Honor List, Faculty of Arts and Sciences. She transferred to the University of St Andrew's, Scotland, graduating in 2005 with MA First Class Honours in English with Linguistics. Her undergraduate dissertation was titled *The Century of Strangers: culture, generation and gender in "White Teeth"*. She spent a year in Rome, studying Italian and volunteering for three-and-a-half months at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In 2006 she began her postgraduate studies at the Refugee Studies Centre of the University of Oxford, completing her MSc in Forced Migration in 2007. While at the University of Oxford, in addition to producing her postgraduate thesis titled *You have your Lebanon and I have my Lebanon: conflict-induced displacement and identity*, she researched and co-authored a project titled *Dispersing the Displaced: Adaptive Strategies in the Face of UK Dispersal Policy*. She is the co-author of *Internships: rite of passage for students of forced migration?* in issue 28 of *Forced Migration Review*. Her interests include sociolinguistics, transnationalism and diaspora, and notions of identity, especially in the light of migration. During her association with the Lebanese Emigration Research Center she will be researching and writing a paper on the topic of diaspora and investment.



Leonardo Augusto Schiocchet is a Brazilian and Italian national, BA Social Science, Universidade Federal do Paraná (1999-2003), MA from the prestigious Masters Program in Social Anthropology at the Universidade de Brasília (2003-2005), currently a CAPES/FULBRIGHT Scholarship Fellow and PhD candidate in Social Anthropology at Boston University.

Schiochet was a researcher at the Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations at Boston University and at the Social Science and Religion Network (SSRN) at Boston University. and taught on the Power and Society in the Middle East at the Department of Anthropology at Boston University.

Schiochet wrote *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* and many publications in Portuguese. He has participated in public debates, including one with Anat Biletski on *Inside Lebanon: Centripetal and Centrifugal Identity Tendencies-Schism and Reconciliation* at Boston University in 2007 and another on *Challenges from the Field* at the Social Science and Religion Network of Boston University in 2006. He is also a passionate photographer with several exhibitions under his belt.

During his association with the Lebanese Emigration Research Centre, Schiocchet will be conducting field research and examining Palestinian identities among camp dwellers in Lebanon, mainly the Wavell Camp next to Baalbak and the Dbayeh Camp, one of the smallest camps in Lebanon, for his Ph.D. thesis at Boston University, USA.



Wolf-Hagen von Angern, a German National, is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Islamic and Arab Studies at the University of Cologne in Germany and PhD-stipendiary of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation. He received in 2005 and 2006 stipends from the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD for Arabic language studies in Damascus, Syria. Since November 2007 he has also been affiliate researcher at the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies (CAMES) at the American University of Beirut. His dissertation is entitled *World View, Judgment and Role of Confessional Groups in Lebanon: Self-Conception and Images of "the others" in a Multi-Confessional Society*. This research project is aimed at detecting chances and obstacles for coexistence of Lebanon's confessional groups from a historical, sociological and religious perspective by identifying deep-rooted biases and preconceptions among the Lebanese communities. The research will also touch upon the issue of emigration as a means to overcome the troubled situation in Lebanon.

He studied Extra-European History with focus on decolonization processes in the Middle East and South East Asia and International Relations with focus on Security Policy in the Arab Gulf at the University of Hagen, Germany. His Master's thesis was entitled *The Gulf Cooperation Council GCC – Security by Military Cooperation?* and dealt with the national and international impacts on implementing cooperative security structures in a highly volatile regional environment. During his affiliation with the Lebanese Emigration Research Center LERC, von Angern will be conducting a questionnaire-based field research and a series of expert interviews.

## LERC New Program of Unpaid Internships for Local and International Students

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center at Notre Dame University offers a limited number of unpaid internships for current graduate students, or recent graduates, who have either studied or are conducting their senior research project or Master's thesis on migration-related subjects. They usually last between three months and one year and allow a graduate to gain valuable work experience while improving communication and networking skills. They prepare a young graduate to enter the job market and help him or her to build up human and social capital.

The main assignment of the interns is either to assist LERC in research on a project such as Diaspora and Religion, Diaspora and Investment or Emigration from Lebanon, or to conduct independent research of interest to LERC and of benefit to Lebanese migration studies. The interns will review theory and literature, collect and review media coverage, and conduct original research using social science methodologies. They may also assist with gathering information for projects and in drafting papers.

Interns will have access to LERC's library, electronic archives, database, museum, private archives and collections, and to NDU and other university libraries and facilities. They will enjoy facilities for their fieldwork, interviews and surveys, and access to local and/or international experts.

The Program was launched at the beginning of January 2008 and so far Mr. Alex Henley, MA Durham, UK, Ms. Yara Maasri, MSc Oxford also UK, and Ms. Basma Abdel Khalek, BA Saint Joseph's University in Lebanon have been accepted. During their association with the Center, Henley will be working on Religion and Diaspora, Maasri will be researching Expatriate Direct Investment, and Abdel Khalek will be conducting field work on Banking Services to Expatriates.

# NDU 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## FAAD Exhibition

In the framework of the NDU 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities, the FAAD Design Department organized an exhibition in Friends' Hall, lasting from December 5 until December 12.

The Director General of the Education Ministry, Mr. Fady Yarak, and the President of NDU, Fr. Walid Moussa, attended the exhibition, as well as Chairpersons and other officials of the University. Mr. Habib Melki, Dean of FAAD, welcomed the assembly and declared the exhibition open; he thanked the instructors, the jury and the members of the organizing committee, namely Ms. Roula

Majdalani and the students Abdou Gemayel and Fares Ayoub.

Fr. Walid Moussa expressed appreciation of the creativity and skills of the students and encouraged them to continue with the same motivation in their future professional career.

More than two hundred projects in photography, conceptual communication, drawing, basic design and technical skills were exhibited. NDU students endeavored to convey through art and design the special relationship that ties them to their University.

The projects were part of the NDU 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Competition launched in May 2007 entitled *From Joining to Belonging*. The winners and the prizes were to be announced in another ceremony.

A special ceramics sale took place at which more than three hundred pieces were displayed. Many were sold, the money raised going to charity.

This display of FAAD's work will be followed by other exhibitions boosting the student's motivation and expanding their horizons.



▲ Left to right: Fadi Yarak, Suheil Matar, Sabah Matar, and Fr. Walid Moussa.



▲ Left to right: H. Melki, Fr. Moussa, F. Yarak, R. Majdalani, S. Matar, and S. Muller

▼ Removing the masks.



## Workshop at Aleppo City

*Spring 2007 - Aleppo*

Elissar Doumit, Senior,  
FAAD

Photos: Nicolas Gabriel  
and William Choukeir

A university should not be merely a facility that provides its student body with an education through textbooks and practical work but should ensure interactive life-teaching experiences, ones similar to the workshop at Aleppo City attended by faculty and staff members of FAAD (Faculty of Architecture, Art & Design), three graduate students and the twelve students of Urbanism II during Spring 2007.

In the early hours of the morning on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, 2007, we, faculty, staff and students, gathered at the main campus of NDU eager to start our journey. After a long drive, we arrived at our first destination, the *Crac des Chevaliers* near Homs. This medieval

fortress which dates back to the Crusades is an absolutely amazing work of architecture that represents the impressive craftsmanship of ancient times. It is a well-preserved castle built on a grandiose scale, one that would have been impregnable to its enemies due to its high curtain walls that surround the entire location. Made of stone blocks, with arched doorways and windows, arrow-slits for defense, and greenery spread over its grounds, this castle is evidence of the civilizations that dominated the Middle East for a long period.

After spending several hours lost inside the fortress, we got back inside the bus to visit the Church of Our Lady of the Belt and the Church of the Forty



- ▲▼ *A delightful pause in Tripoli.*
- ◀◀ *Author Elissar at Crac des Chevaliers.*
- ◀ *The group under the massive walls of the Crac.*
- ▲▼ *Some workshop members overawed by the mighty Crac.*
- ▶ *Our two expert photographers snapping the charms of Homs.*



Martyrs in Homs and then we were off to Aleppo City. After a quick lunch we reached our hotel to unpack, refresh ourselves and get some rest before heading out for a night tour of the city. We had dinner at Waness Restaurant, known for its hearty *masheweh*, but not before stopping at the main mosque of Aleppo, with its wide courtyard, traditional Islamic architecture, intricate ornamentation and wide arches, all of which make the mosque a striking tourist site of the city.

The following day, the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 2007, we took part in the workshop hosted by Mr. Khaldoun Fansa of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Syria. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture includes several programs, among them *The Historic Cities Support Program*, which is concerned with the conservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings in the Islamic World. Moreover, this program includes more than purely

architectural aspects, for it covers environmental, economic, cultural and social developments such as the participation of the community and the training of local staff.

Upon arrival in the city center we walked along its beautiful streets to reach the Shibani School in an already restored section of Aleppo. We were received by Mr. Fansa and Mr. Majed Zammar, head of the Design Department of the Directorate of the Old City of Aleppo, who led us into the museum to explain about the ongoing rehabilitation process of the city and citadel and the need for rehabilitation in the first place.

Considered one of the oldest cities in the world, Aleppo reflects ancient history in its *souk* and old street layout dating back to the Hellenistic, Byzantine and Ottoman periods, However, the deteriorating state of the buildings forced the residents to move

out, as they were unable to afford restoration work. Unfortunately, this resulted in the Master Plan of '74 based on razing the old buildings. However, the need to preserve cultural heritage became more evident when Aleppo was declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage in 1986. Aiming to preserve the living urban fabric while renovating the Old City, the program tackled issues such as developing its framework, upgrading public space, renewal of the water supply and sewer networks, traffic management, housing funds, urban environment

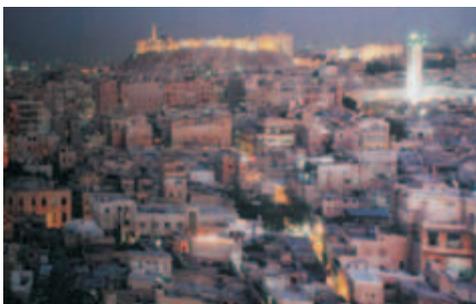
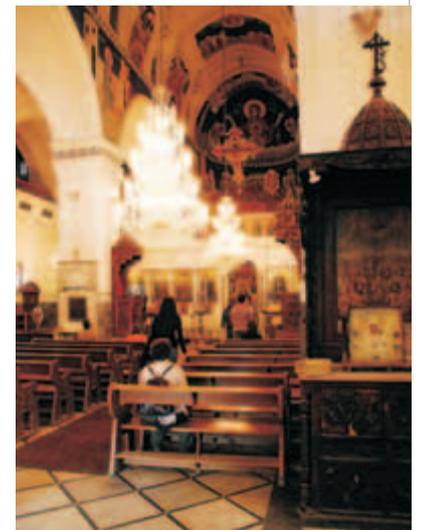


◀ A relaxed ambiance for refreshment in Homs.

▶ The Church of the Forty Martyrs in Homs.

▼▲ The night-time beauty of Aleppo, with its mighty fortress.

▼▲ Presentation in the Shibani School, with French and local experts explaining.



development, restoration of monuments, tourism, and social, cultural, and community development. The steps involved included assessing land use for a harmonious mixing of residential, business, and open space, and for securing clean water supply for the residents while avoiding leakage, which would damage the infrastructure. Furthermore, there are well-designed traffic plans that will reduce traffic problems, noise and air pollution and plans for the planting of trees in squares and courtyards, alongside waste collection and cleaning, to improve the environment. A promising feature of the program is the inclusion of cultural activities such as concerts and exhibitions that will keep the locals interested and

make Aleppo a more tourist-friendly city. However, none of this would have been possible without the cooperation of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Arab Fund for Social and Economic development.

After our visit to the museum, there were three presentations given in the conference room of the Shibani School by Mr. Fansa, Ms. Reem Qudsi (Architect) and Mr. Thierry Grandin (Architect & Restorer). Mr. Fansa spoke of historic castle restoration carried out in Syria, emphasizing the Open Space Intervention Technique that was being implemented in Aleppo, while Ms. Qudsi and Mr. Grandin showed us slides of current work in the Citadel of Aleppo based on viewpoints, green points, and paths. However, teachers and students alike questioned the rather alien interventions in a traditional environment. Would these interventions overshadow this

centuries-old structure? Would they decrease its value? Most were concerned lest these realizations would not be what visitors were expecting to see, so they might spoil the visitors' overall experience. In other words, it is extremely important when making improvements to use architecture in more subtle ways that do not affect the unique character of the place, especially insofar as ancient structures are concerned.

The second phase of the seminar involved Mr. Fansa taking us on a tour of the *souk* with its intricate maze of dark and overcrowded alleys that end with the grandiose Citadel standing on a mound of earth which seemingly was once surrounded by a huge moat. This medieval-looking Citadel has several guarding towers surrounding its site which emphasize the need for security in ancient times. If the massive Citadel, the moat and the curtain wall were not



- ◀ NDU Faculty member Habib Melki enjoys an old tradition, the shoe-shine boy!
- ◀ A setting of splendor for taking a bath, the old hammam!
- ▼ The group on the fortress roof.
- ▶ Plaque at the Agha Khan Trust for Culture, a prestigious organization.



intimidating enough, the huge gate reached over a bridge is a testimony to the amazing work of architects of past civilizations. Although the ensemble is not so well preserved as *Crac des Chevaliers*, what remains of this remarkable architecture includes vaults, arched windows and doorways, columns, amphitheater, royal apartments, guard towers and many other features that together overlook the entire city.

Later in the evening we all went out for a farewell dinner at the Touring Club, where we enjoyed fine oriental cuisine and oriental dancing, before we packed up our belongings and headed back home the following day.

I have to say that this workshop and journey were not only enriching in the cultural sense but also an unforgettable bonding experience bringing faculty members and students together. Although we were eager to

be back home with our families, we left Aleppo a little wiser and full of hope for a better prospect for the Orient. As we share the same background, it is to be hoped that as Lebanese architects, future architects or simply concerned citizens, we should show the same degree of devotion to our land and heritage, and endeavor to preserve and maintain it, for the past is the only foundation of the future.

Finally, we should like to thank Mr. Nicolas Gabriel for investing so much time in making this workshop a success, also Dr. Jean-Pierre el Asmar, Chairman of the Architecture Department, and Dr. Assad Eid, then Dean of FAAD,. We thank also the University for giving the project the green light and for covering most of the expenses, and last but not least the Aga Khan Trust for Culture Preservation, Mr. Fansa, and Mr. Adli Qudsi, the representative of the Aga Khan in Syria, for the invitation.

### Participants in the Workshop:

**Faculty:** Nicholas Gabriel, Workshop Organizer, Architecture Dept.; Habib Melki, Architecture Dept.; Graziella Dagfal, Design Dept..

**Staff:** Diana Sarkis, Architecture Dept..

### Graduate Students:

Ms. Dina Baroud, Miss Kinda Tabbah, Mr. Chady Bteich.

### ARP 562 – Urbanism II

**Students:** Abdo Barouky, Camilia Chamieh, Chantal Jurdi, Elissar Doumit, Hanna Bassim, Imad Kfoury, Joseph Azar, Anthony Keyrouz, Rachel Haddad, Roland Darrous, Shadi Hanna, William Choukeir.



◀ The workshop group at the door of the Aleppo fortress.

▲ In the courtyard of the offices of the Agha Khan Trust.

▶ Mr. Nicolas Gabriel of NDU invited in the premises of the Agha Khan Trust.

▶▶ A fine dinner to round off the visit.

## FAAD New Major: Fashion Design

### Workshop: Art to Wear or Fashion?

*As part of its program of expansion and development, the Department of Design, FAAD, launched a new BA major, Fashion Design, in Fall 2007. This was intended to enable graduates to produce traditional as well as innovative and contemporary design concepts adapted to the national, regional and international market. Upon graduation, the student will be ready to work for example as fashion designer, fashion exporter or wholesaler, fashion journalist or patternmaker.*

Today, thirteen students are making full use of the fashion studios and benefiting from the professional equipments and facilities, including computers, sewing machines, steam iron and mannequins.

A workshop entitled *Art to Wear or Fashion?* was organized on the FAAD premises from February 19<sup>th</sup> to February 25<sup>th</sup>, featuring Ms. Guitta Melki, who introduced students of both Fashion and Interior Design to the fields of fibers, textile design and garment forms, with attention to craftsmanship and the use of fiber as a conceptual medium. During six days Miss Melki helped students to explore the history of basketry and felting

along with the actual steps and material used in textile fabrications for industry.

Further to the methodology, visuals and practical hands-on creativity involved doing two main projects and three exercises in using different materials. Participation in class critiques and a short quiz on terms and definitions helped students to develop analytical and verbal skills.

On February 21st during the workshop, Ms. Melki gave a public lecture in Abou Khater Auditorium. She reviewed clothing concepts as a subject of personal expression and as a way of exploring innovative fabrics, and

▼ *Material and technique.*



▼ *Materials and technique.*



▲ *Ms. Guitta Melki's lecture.*

discussed various intellectual and aesthetic issues such as the controversy over whether fashion should be considered as an industry or as a form of Art.

The Fashion and Textile Design major offers credits, and involves courses required for the formation of professional fashion designers. According to Mrs. Linda Choueiri, present Chairperson of the Design Department:

"Fashion Design satisfies all the student's needs for completing a serious major. It took a year to develop, research and update the curricula. We offer a professional degree with academic standards, which opens the door to greater creativity based on research and concept in the proper contextual setting. Many books and journals have been ordered to enhance the academic level.

"If you come to see us you will see strange and queerly dressed students all giggling. Our present thirteen students have strange styles to

communicate their personal and individual expression."

Mrs. Choueiri mentioned the foresight of the NDU Administration in supporting the creation of this new major, which has the potential to expand vigorously at NDU with the help of field trips to become acquainted with the Lebanese market and to attend workshops and lectures prepared by local and international professionals.

**Ms. Melki's Background:** She is a textile designer for woven fabrics with an experience of more than nine years in the field of home fabrics and has also been adjunct faculty at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, USA. Her interest in fabrics and fibers has been a natural outcome of being surrounded with the family's old business of sewing, embroidery and related supplies.

During the early 80's, when she was in the States to pursue an MA degree in art education, Guitta was exposed to classes in "shibori" among other

processes in textiles, attracting her to change course into the field of "fiberarts".

While teaching at NDU for twelve years, Guitta chaired a vigorously growing Art Department (1991-1995) from which the Department of Visual Arts was subsequently born. The Department, which then had four faculty members and thirty Design students, turned into one of 30 faculty members and 300 students within four years. In 1999, Guitta left for The Savannah College of Art and Design, Georgia, to finish an MFA in Textile Design, which she started during her sabbatical. Since then, she has been a textile designer for Wesley Mancini Home Fabrics.

◉ | Photos by Noel Nasr



◀ Workshop ▶





## FAAD-El Hema at Mediamatic, Amsterdam

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, 2007, in the Friends' Hall, a lecture entitled *El Hema* was delivered by Mr. Wael Morcos of NDU, Mr. Khajack Appelian of NDU, Maria Hakim of AUB, and Raya Tueni of AUB in coordination with FAAD Graphic Design part-time instructor Mr. Pascal Zoghbi, who was present. The lecturers shared their great experience in working with *Khatt Foundation* and *Mediamatic*, a Dutch typography company.

Graduated from NDU with a BA in Graphic Design, Pascal Zoghbi, Wael Morcos and Khajag Apelian share a passion for all aspects of Graphic Design and Visual Communication with, foremost, a profound interest in Typography, mostly Arabic, and its contemporary development

This group was invited to prepare an exhibition in Amsterdam of an Arabic version of a typical and famous Dutch store, *El Hema*. The aim of the exhibition was to put the five new Arabic type faces on the TTM project (Fedra Arabic, Sada, Fresco Arabic,

BigVesta Arabic, and The Mix Arabic) to applications (items and products) that were going to be sold in the *El Hema* exhibition and to create a culture awareness and exchange between the Arabic and Dutch cultures.

Among the products were chocolate letters, chocolate bars, chocolate sprinkles, wine bottles, coffee bags, T-shirts, socks, underwear, scarves, djalabas, condoms and other articles.

The work was an attempt to present cross-cultural typographic expressions between Arabic and Latin (Dutch) typographies.

The lecture presented the phases of work, with the final outcome, the exhibition, performances, award and media coverage. The lecture highlighted the process of work, multidisciplinary commitments in accomplishing the work, problematic design conceptualizing preparation for the final exhibition and its realization and feedbacks of the work as a whole.

After the nomination of the exhibition projects as one of the best Dutch designs, the *El Hema* exhibition won the first prize in The Dutch Annual Design Award: *the Visual Identity Category*, and the second place in the *Public Choice Award*.

The lecture was followed by a short discussion about the graphic designers' experience in Holland. Pascal Zoghbi, Wael Morcos and Khajak Apelian generously presented the same lecture at NDU-NLC North Lebanon Campus on 7 December 2007. The possibility for having similar experiences and projects in the future was raised, in the belief that such exposure is essential for developing the students' skills and conceptions.

▼ *Scarf Products, by Khajak Apelian.*

▶ *The NDU lecture poster.*

◀ *Chocolate Products, by Wael Marcos*



## Chinese, new NDU Courses

The Faculty of Humanities held an Information Session to introduce the new language course Chinese 201 on Tuesday January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Interested students were invited to meet the professor, learn about the methodology and discuss the benefits of taking an introductory course in Chinese. Universities worldwide are now offering courses in Chinese so as to prepare students who wish to work with companies who do business in China.

The Faculty of Humanities has added two Chinese courses to its language program:

- | *Chinese 201- Basic Beginning Chinese, and*
- | *Chinese 202- Intermediate Chinese*

Students at NDU now have the opportunity to choose from seven languages: Chinese, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Syriac and Latin.



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巳.庚.戌.  
庚.

Contributed by Dr. C. Kfourri,  
Dean, Faculty of Humanities

## PR Events

*The Fall semester at NDU was an eventful one for Public Relations students in the Department of Mass Communication and for the NDU community in general. Classes of both Dr. Joe Ajami and Mrs. Brit Warming embarked on a number of projects and invited several personalities well-known in their various areas of interest.*

Students of Dr. Ajami brought *Al Jazeera's* bureau chief in Lebanon, Mr. Ghassan Ben Jeddo, an event which received wide coverage in both the electronic and print media in Lebanon. Dr. Ajami's introduction of Ben Jeddo was transmitted on Radio Free Lebanon. Also invited were TV star and NDU alumna Miss Ward el-Khal, Miss Nadine Njeim, the reigning Miss Lebanon, Miss Claudia Marchelian, TV writer and actress, and Mrs Lilian Nakhal, producer of such famous shows as *Al Arrab* (the Godfather),

*Maestro*, and *Akeed Maestro*. Students of Dr. Ajami, chairperson of the Mass Comm. Department, also organized a Blood Donation Day on Campus and another group visited a nursing home for the elderly in the Harissa area.

Students of Mrs. Warming invited guests including the famous TV presenter Mr. Nishan Der Haroutian, who incidentally is studying for another degree in Radio and Television at Notre Dame University.

► PR students with Dr. Ajami and Miss Ward el-Khal.



▼ PR students with reigning Miss Lebanon Nadine Njeim.



▼ Mr. Ghassan Ben Jeddo.



## Phase Two of Writing Center



All these occasions brought audiences of students and others from both within and outside the University. The Department of Mass Communication also organized a three- hour conference on Lebanese Media's Accountability and Performance, when the panelists were Mrs. May Chidiac, Mr. Yazbek Wehbe, Mr. Georges Abdel Malak, and Mr. Kamal Darouni.

Dr. Ajami and Dr. Fakih moderated the two sessions included on the agenda. A video tape presenting the student's views on media performance was also presented during the conference



▲ Dr. Ajami, Mr. Yazbeck Wehbe, Ms. May Chidiac and Dr. Ameen Rihani.

▼ Mr. Nishan Der Haroutian

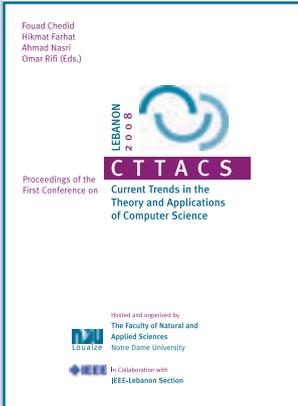


The NDU Writing Center has entered Phase Two of its development. In phase two, the Writing Center opens five days a week from 8 o'clock in the morning till 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The number of teachers has been increased to twenty in order to be able to help as many students as possible. Eight computers have been installed so that students can type and correct their papers in the Writing Center. Also, more workshops on academic research papers, documentation, APA / MLA format, and CVs will be organized by professionals. In addition, students can get free hand-outs from the Writing Center or access them on the NDU website.



▲ Father Roger Chicri, Mr. Suheil Matar, Dr. Carol Kfoury, Mr. Wissam Shibani and Dr. Ameen Rihani.





## Prof. Ray J. Solomonoff

at NDU for CTTACS 2008

First Refereed Conference on Computer Science at NDU with the presence of an outstanding scholar, Prof. Ray J. Solomonoff

▼ Professor Solomonoff imparts his unique learning.



Despite all the turmoil and political tension in the country, the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS) at NDU had its own view of what ought to be done these days. Believing in the words of Dijkstra, a Dutch computer scientist (1930–2002), that "*it is the not the task of a University to offer what society asks for, but to give what society needs*", the FNAS had its First Conference on the Current Trends in the Theory and Applications of Computer Science (CTTACS 2008) on February 28–29, 2008. The call for papers of CTTACS sought submissions in all areas of computer science. A total of 37 papers were submitted from 8 countries and the Program Committee selected 24 of these papers for presentation at the conference and inclusion in the conference proceedings. Each submission was evaluated by at least two program committee members.

A very important part of CTTACS 2008 was the participation of the father of Algorithmic Information Theory, the very distinguished American scientist Ray J. Solomonoff, who traveled specifically from the US to deliver a keynote presentation on the first day of CTTACS and give a two-week short course on his theory and its relation to machine learning in the two weeks following the conference. A second prominent keynote speaker was scheduled for the second day of the conference, Professor

Faruk Abi Khzam, from the American University of Beirut, who gave a keynote on the zeros of all the sections of a given function.

We mention here that the scholarly activities of Solomonoff at NDU began on February 26, 2008, when he visited the Shouf Campus. During that visit, Solomonoff spoke at length about his experience as a person and scientist. Later on during that day, he gave a 90-minute presentation about his work, for which the audience consisted of university professors and high school teachers from the Shouf area.

### Who is Ray Solomonoff?

Born 1926 in Cleveland, Ohio, this son of Russian immigrants is the founder of algorithmic probability theory and universal theory of inductive inference. He invented the concept of Algorithmic Probability around 1960. He was first to encounter the concept of Kolmogorov complexity, and first to prove the celebrated invariance theorem. The notion of the complexity of a string as the length of the shortest program that generates it was first suggested by Solomonoff in 1964, then discovered independently by both Andrei Kolmogorov in 1965 and Gregory Chaitin in 1966.

It is interesting to learn that the work of Solomonoff was for a while

unknown in the US and it was not until Kolmogorov in Russia started to refer to Solomonoff's work that the latter became known in the US. In developing their ideas, Solomonoff and Kolmogorov had two different objectives in mind: while Solomonoff invented the notion of algorithmic probability for the purpose of doing prediction, Kolmogorov invented the notion of Kolmogorov complexity for the purpose of better understanding randomness, that is to say from an algorithmic perspective. It is also worth mentioning that both Solomonoff's and Kolmogorov's work would not have been possible without the notion of a universal Turing machine, which is the work of Alan Turing (1912-1954), an English mathematician often

▼ *Abbot Simaan Abou Abdo presents a memento to Professor Ray Solomonoff. With them are (left to right) Dean Youssef el-Hage, Dr. Ameen Rihani and Dr. Fouad Chedid.*



considered as the father of modern computer science.

### What is algorithmic probability?

First, let us rethink the process of theory formation in science. In general, scientists record their observations about a given phenomenon and, through these observations, attempt to develop a theory (hypothesis or probability distribution) that explains those observations.

Of course, this task is difficult as a scientist does not have access to the entire history of the phenomenon under consideration. Based on just a finite set of observations, s/he

is expected to develop a theory that understands the past history of the phenomenon and, by the same token, be able to predict its future outcome. Now, imagine that someone would claim to have the distribution that explains any set of observations irrespective of their original true distribution. If this is true, then all observations about all phenomena can be explained. This is exactly what Solomonoff's theory is about: a universal probability distribution that can be used to replace any other unknown probability distribution with a guaranteed expected error that is a small constant independent of the original distribution. Unfortunately, the work of Solomonoff has a major drawback: it is incomputable. Still, the theory of Solomonoff has been considered a gold mine of all kinds of principles that offer applicable

approximations of the universal distribution. Examples here include the minimum description length principle and the minimum message length principle. To recap, Solomonoff has made significant contributions to the fields of algorithmic probability theory, universal theory of inductive inference, and machine learning. If you want to learn more about this remarkable scientist, please visit the following web page:

<http://www.idsia.ch/~juergen/ray.html>.

○ | **Fouad B. Chedid, Ph.D.**  
 Professor and Chairman  
 Sciences Division  
 Notre Dame University,  
 Shouf Campus

► *Professor Solomonoff speaking at Shouf Campus.*



▼ *Professor Ray Solomonoff with students of Shouf Campus.*



○ | For this special occasion, the introductory speakers were in order FNAS Dean Dr. Youssef el-Hage, V.-P. for Academic Affairs, Dr. Ameen Rihani, the Superior General of the Maronite Mariamite Order Abbot Simaan bou Abdo and Dr. Fouad Chedid.

## Mechanical Engineering:

# NDU Success Stories

By Dr. Michel Hayek, Chairperson, Mechanical Engineering Department.

According to the World Encyclopedia (OUP, 2005), mechanical engineering is a **“field of engineering concerned with the design, construction, and operation of machinery. Mechanical engineers work in many branches of industry, including transportation, power generation and tool manufacture.”** For a mechanical engineer, mechanical engineering is much more than that. Mechanical engineering encompasses nearly all aspects of modern life. Every human activity is related in some way or another, either

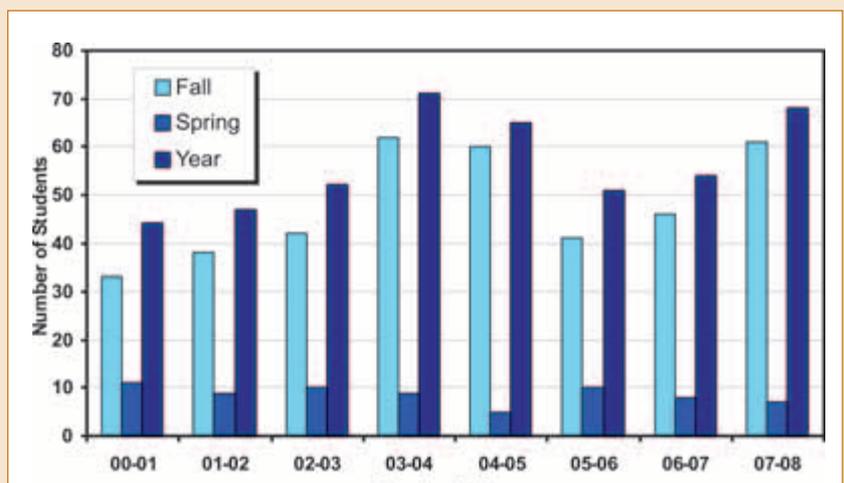
directly or indirectly, to some aspects of mechanical engineering, from the simplest and most tasty cooking to the most sophisticated production of things such as airplanes, space stations, etc..

Owing to the relatively high cost, not all universities can afford offering degrees in mechanical engineering and in Lebanon mechanical engineering is being taught in only a few top universities, including of course Notre Dame University. The program at NDU started with the Faculty of Engineering in 1996 and saw its first pool of graduates in 1999. Currently the ME Department has around 300 students, four full-time faculty members and a pool of part-time faculty members

helping to fulfill the program requirements in specific courses related to their areas of expertise.

The Department has experienced a quite high rate of growth over the past three years (fig.1). The number of applicants is increasing year after year and the number of accepted students has to be limited according to the availability of resources. Such a growth is the direct result of years of sustained development with the main objective of making ME at NDU one of the top ME Departments in the country and the region. Currently the requirements for admission into the Faculty of Engineering are among the hardest to meet. Students are required to be without need of remedial mathematics

► Fig.1 Number of students admitted per semester and academic year.



courses in order to be accepted in Mechanical Engineering. The number of students rejected is relatively high compared to other departments. In other words, the Department is trying to be highly selective, a process that may lead, if sustained, to a better educational environment and, as a result, better graduates. Releasing better graduates onto the market both local and international is generally a key marketing strategy for educational institutions.

The graduation rate (fig.2) in the Mechanical Engineering Department is closely related to the acceptance rate with a shift of four years, which is the normal time required for a student to complete the program requirements (including summers). Therefore, the Department is expecting a net increase the number of graduates in the coming few years. It is to be noticed also that in spite of

the time shift, the number of graduates is less than the corresponding number of admitted students. Such a difference is inherent to the system itself, in which a student is advised, and only advised, to finish during the normal time of four years. Some students are left behind due to many reasons, the most important of which is their difficulty coping with an intensive program of study. Such a discrepancy is to be used to suggest adjustments concerning admission requirements, aiming at minimizing the problems to the maximum extent possible.

So far, around two hundred engineers have been awarded the degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering by NDU (figures as of the end of academic year 2006-2007). Most of them are now working in companies of various kinds and sizes either locally or at an international level. All the feedback the Department has been getting so far is very good, not to say excellent. Our graduates are performing very well on the market and are able to compete with graduates from other universities with a longer history and a wider reputation. A few graduates are

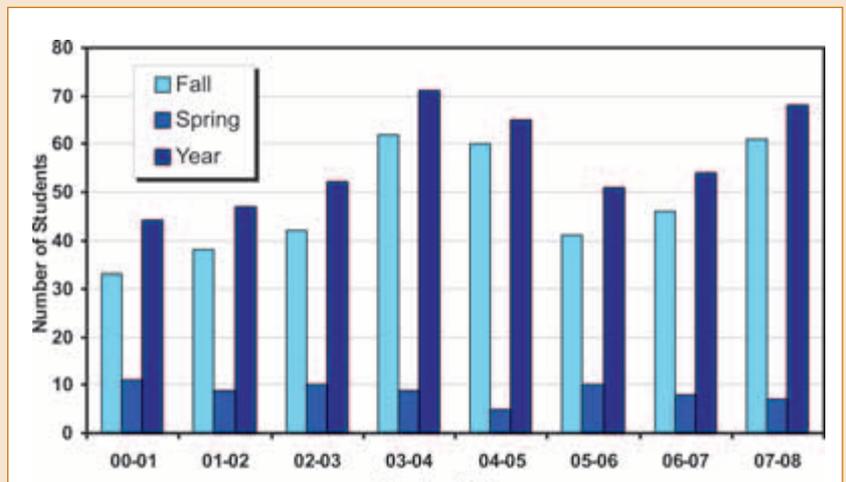
pursuing higher degrees, mainly Master and PhD degrees either locally when available or abroad. Here too, the feedback is excellent.

In an effort to build on the reputation accumulated over the past years, in January 2008 the Mechanical Engineering Department started to make the success stories of ME graduates widely available to the community. The main objective is to show how excellent our graduates are outside and at a later stage to use such human capital to improve the student body by attracting better and better students.

Currently, the Department is trying to update its alumni database and the results accumulated so far reveal many success stories. The presence of three of our graduates on vacation in Lebanon provided an opportunity to invite them during the month of January to give lectures about their particular experience.

○ | Elie Daou gave a lecture entitled *From NDU to the Oil fields: Itinerary of an NDU Graduate in Mechanical Engineering* on January 04, 2008 in the

► Fig.2 Number of ME graduates per semester and academic year.



Auditorium (Museum). Elie graduated from NDU in Spring 2003 with a BE in Mechanical Engineering and an excellent GPA of 3.94. In fact he was the first and, so far, the only mechanical engineering student to become the valedictorian of his promotion. Elie went then to AUB to follow a Master of Engineering Management degree, a degree earned in 2005. He moved afterward to the Gulf region to work in the field of petroleum engineering with different companies, the latest of which is one of the largest petroleum companies worldwide. The event was organized with the kind collaboration of the Alumni Affairs Office.

○ | Dr. Charbel Bou Mosleh gave a lecture entitled *From NDU to Stanford: Itinerary of an NDU Graduate in Mechanical Engineering* on January 10, 2008 in the Auditorium (Museum). Dr. Ch. Bou Mosleh graduated from NDU in Fall 2000 with a BE in Mechanical Engineering and a very good GPA of 3.70. He moved then to the Aerospace Engineering Department at Colorado State University (USA) to pursue a Master of Science degree, which he

earned in 2002. He enrolled next as a PhD candidate in the same institution and earned his PhD degree in 2005. After that, Dr. Ch. Bou Mosleh was accepted at Stanford University (USA) as a post-doctoral scholar to work on advanced research projects for both commercial companies and US public organizations. The lecture was attended by both faculty and students (fig.3), and was organized with the kind collaboration of the Alumni Affairs Office.

○ | Tony Saad gave a lecture entitled *Analytical Models in Propulsion Devices* on January 15, 2008. Tony graduated from NDU in Summer 2003 with a BE in Mechanical Engineering and a very good GPA of 3.65. Tony went then to AUB to pursue a Master of Engineering degree, a degree earned in 2005. He moved afterward to the United States to work for a PhD degree at the University of Tennessee Space Institute under the supervision of one of the leaders worldwide in the area of analytical modeling of flow fields and related phenomena. Tony is highly active as a scholar. He is regularly publishing in top journals and

conference proceedings in his area of expertise. Recently, he was awarded the University of Tennessee's Lloyd Crawford Fellowship for academic year 2007–2008 for his outstanding performance.

Many others are performing very well in both business and academia, a success on which the Department is planning to build an ever greater reputation at both local and international levels. As an example, the Department managed recently, through individual efforts, to place two outstanding ME graduates (Spring 2007) in a reputable university in the USA with full scholarships. One of them even received an award for his outstanding performance while at NDU. Many ideas are being investigated in order to expand the Department and its range of activities, including graduate programs, links with industry, etc..



◀ Fig.3.  
Dr. Ch. Bou  
Mosleh, Stanford  
University,  
lecturing at NDU.

## Armenian Ambassador visits NDU (February 4, 2008)

Notre Dame University invited the Ambassador of Armenia Vahan Terghévondian for a visit during which he met with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Ameen Rihani, the Director General of Public Relations, Mr. Souheil Matar, Professor Hrair Hovivian, and the Assistant to the Director of Public Relations, Ms. Jocelyne Issa.

Several issues were discussed during the meeting, such as the development of relations between Lebanon and Armenia and the possibility of academic exchanges between the University and the Universities of Armenia, covering professors, students, academic programs and scientific research, in addition to cooperation agreements between the two sides. Moreover, they discussed the possibility of strengthening relations and cooperation between the Armenian Embassy and the University through a joint activity program that would provide for the establishment of a series of cultural and social events during the academic year.

After the meeting the Ambassador was taken on a tour around the Campus Faculties, Library, Laboratories, Computer Center, etc, and then lunch was served in his honor at the University restaurant.

## Placement Office

### In coordination with Alfa Managed by Fal Dete Telecommunication

*Alfa, the mobile operator, announced the launch of the Alfa Graduate Program, a leading and first-of-its-kind training project in Lebanon for university students in their final year. The program, effective as of end of January 08, is part of Alfa's commitment to education and development through its long-term strategic alliance with universities in Lebanon.*

A presentation of the Alfa Graduate Program took place in Alfa Company headquarters, Chevrolet, Beirut, on December 27, 2007. The Head of HR at Alfa, Mrs. Pauline Sawaya Nawar, an NDU alumna, gave her presentation in front of NDU, LAU and LU senior students.

The Program targets students in Computer & Communications Engineering, Computer Science or Business Management preparing their

senior projects. More than 30 NDU students (Main & Shouf campuses) in MS, CS or MBA preparing their graduation thesis attended. The placement Officer, Mrs. Christine Atallah, was enthusiastic about accompanying NDU students.

After the presentation, students sat for an IQ test and a case study, which enabled some of them to join the Graduate Program at Alfa.

Names of the chosen candidates were to be communicated when the recruitment process was completed.

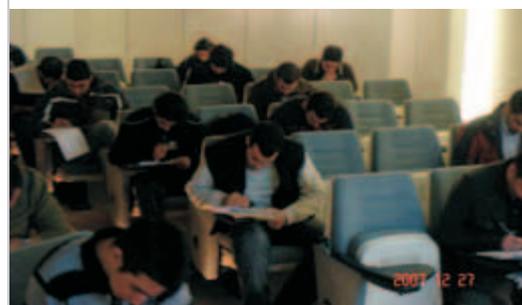
**For further information, please contact the Placement Officer, Mrs. Christine Rayess Atallah, NDU, Tel: 09 218 950 ext 2326, email: [placement@ndu.edu.lb](mailto:placement@ndu.edu.lb)**



▲ Mrs. Sawaya Nawar with her class.



▲ Mrs. Nawar's smile helps learning go down.



► Serious students in comfortable working conditions.



Notre Dame University has hosted a variety of events to celebrate its rich twenty-year history as an academic institution in the region.

## Bridging Twenty Years

*Bridging the Centuries at NDU* honored 36 faculty and staff members who have served NDU since 1987. Held on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 12:15 in Issam Fares Hall, the event gave University officials the opportunity to formally recognize the efforts and commitment of those members of the NDU community who have seen the growth of the University from a satellite of Louaize High School to a modern campus.

Mrs. Mary Khoury, lecturer in the DETE, and Mr. Georges Nader, Sports Office, both gave reflections on their twenty years at the service of the University.

The Studio personnel presented a lively documentary and slide show accompanied by music from the 'eighties. Mr. Souheil Matar read an original poem. Father Walid Moussa, President, distributed the plaques in the presence of the Organizing Committee members, Father Roger Chikri, Dr. Carol Kfourri, Dr. Mansour Eid, and Mrs. Lea Eid. Dr. Akram Khoury, the newest member of NDU's faculty, was moderator at the ceremony.

Fr. Roger Chikri said that the purpose of the event was to recognize the years of generous service, for which those being honored could not be sufficiently rewarded but their contribution had to be acknowledged. Their faithfulness and loyalty had won for themselves and for NDU a high reputation and deep respect. He told the staff that the future would recall the good, faithful and loyal members who had shown self-sacrifice through their diligent work and genuine love for NDU.

Fr. Chikri was followed by NDU President Walid Moussa, who thanked those being honored for being founders of NDU and for giving their mental and professional energy to help develop the University. He added that the ceremony was an expression of gratitude and emphasized the University's love and appreciation.

A cocktail reception followed.

### Faculty Members Honored

Mrs. Janet Gauro-Bassil;  
Mr. Antoine Khalil;  
Mr. Vatche Donerian;  
Dr. Elham S. Hasham;  
Dr. Assaad Eid; Mr. Hrair Hovivian; Dr. Mansour Eid;  
Dr. Roy J. Khoueiri; Dr. Carol-Ann Goff-Kfourri; Dr. Naji B. Oueijan; Mrs. Mary Martinos-Khoury; Mr. Souhail Matar; Mrs. Amal S.-Hajje; Mr. Georges Labib Faysal; Dr. Sami Samra; Mr. Fawzi Baroud; Dr. Boulos Abdulla Sarru'; Mr. Robert E. Haddad; Mr. Habib Henry Melki; Mr. John Kortbawi; Dr. Michel Kraidy.

### Staff members Honored

Mr. Charbel Hajje; Mr. George Tawil; Mrs. Wadia Mghayar; Mr. Georges Nader; Mrs. Dolly K.-Awad; Mrs. Rose Mady; Mr. Hanna Karaan; Mrs. Lea Eid; Mr. Semaan Sfeir; Miss Claire Habballah; Miss Mirna Nehme; Mrs. Viviane T.-Abi Nader; Miss Andrée Kahy; Mr. Marwan Arafat; Mrs. Karuna Gunasakara.

# Communio

## Communio



After all the difficulties caused by recent events, the *Communio* circle resumed its activities on 6th December, 2007, thanks to the hospitality of Dr. Doumit Salameh, NDU, who opened his residence for the occasion. Special interest came from the participation of Mr. Najeeb Awad, much-travelled Presbyterian theologian now at the Near East School of Theology, who was able to compare Catholic-Orthodox teaching about the Holy Spirit with that of his own tradition. Also taking part were Dr. Edward Alam NDU, chairman and presenter, and other members of NDU faculty and staff.

The text taken was the section *The Role of the Holy Spirit* in chapter three of *Christ the Norm of History* by Hans Urs von Balthasar, eminent theologian and with the present Pope one of the inspirers of the *Communio* movement. The point is that it is not enough to say that the Son lived at a certain time and place, fulfilling the will of this father, just one among many others; one must ask how he is to be the immediate and inward norm of every Christian life. This universalising is in a special way an action of the Holy Spirit, who will "guide you into all truth...he will utter the message that has been given to him..." (John 16: 13-14). He exposes the full depth of what has already been completed, giving it total relevance to every moment of history.

The text deals with three phases of the action of the Holy Spirit. The first concerns the forty days after the Resurrection when Christ presented himself as still being in the material world in

our time, except that it was no longer the time of the Passion ending with death, as shown in the gospels of Luke and John and the Acts. Eternity is present in time. This period is a bond between Christ's earthly life and the time of his Church and serves for the whole of history. Then we pass to the sacramental level, the time when Christ, living in the eternity of the Father, is present in the Eucharist and the sacraments, accompanying "his own" throughout time. Then we go to the third level, which perfects the work of the forty days by placing the Church and the individual under the abiding norm of the life of the Lord; the Christian not only meets Christ in the sacraments but lives by his commandment and his law of love. Here the Holy Spirit brings the life of Christ and the believer into accord, and expounds the Word of God to the Church. Our personal intimacy with Christ thus endures to the end.

After the exposition of Dr. Alam, this was the subject of discussion, with keen interest on the part of the participants representing the Reform tradition.

*Communio* meetings are open to all, to Christians and to others who consider that their relationship with God should be placed at the centre of their lives. All who are interested, whether faculty members or students at NDU or elsewhere, or simply members of the public wishing to raise their faith to a more intellectual level, should contact Dr. Edward Alam of the Faculty of Humanities at NDU,

o | [ealam@ndu.edu.lb](mailto:ealam@ndu.edu.lb)

## Dr. Christine Sabieh: Elected President of Lebanese Psychological Association



Dr. Christine Sabieh, Associate Professor at NDU, was elected President of the Lebanese Psychology Association on Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007 after the LPA General Assembly. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: (1) to have a general assembly to sum up the years, especially year 2007 and (2) to elect a new LPA executive board

During the Assembly, the past years of the LPA since its founding in 2004

were reviewed and pertinent issues related to the well-being of LPA's existence vis-à-vis the current situation in Lebanon were discussed as points of order for the new LPA board to consider. Throughout the assembly, the floor was open for input and discussion. This was then followed by having the nine candidates running for the LPA Board introduce themselves. The new LPA Board members are the following:

- President: Christine Sabieh (affiliation: NDU)*
- Vice President: Atika Jari (affiliation: UL)*
- Secretary: Noel Roukoz (private practice)*
- Accountant: Marie Khoury (affiliation: UL & NDU – SAO counseling service)*
- Treasurer: Hanine Hout (affiliation: HU)*
- Public Relations Officer: Jean Daoud (affiliation: NES, Saida)*
- Publications Officer: Samar Zebian (affiliation: LAU)*
- Membership Officer: Tima Al Jamil (affiliation: AUB)*
- Student Officer: Carla Sarkis (affiliation: USJ)*

The goals of the Lebanese Psychological Association are as follows:

1. to highlight the importance of the role of psychology in serving Lebanese society.
2. to establish a network of professionals in psychology for the purpose of exchanging expertise and promoting psychological research, and
3. to work closely with local, regional, and international psychological associations and organizations.

LPA welcomes all psychologists holding an M.A. degree (or above) in any specialty of psychology. Graduate students in psychology can also join as non-voting members. Anyone interested in knowing more about LPA should please contact Dr. Christine Sabieh (ext. 2409 or [sabieh@ndu.edu.lb](mailto:sabieh@ndu.edu.lb)) or Dr. Marie Khoury (SAO ext. 2419)

## *Kun Hadi Association at NDU*

### **Awareness campaign for the use of seat belts**

On January 14, 2008, the Accounting Club at NDU invited *Kun Hadi*, an association for youth awareness about road safety, to held an awareness campaign to stress the importance of the use of the seat belt.

The SAO Director Fr. Bechara Khoury and a large number of students gathered in the court to see the demonstration of the risks of not using the seat belt when a sudden stop occurs, using the "seatbelt convincer" laboratory car.

The President of *Kun Hadi*, Mr. Fadi Gebran, clarified that the lab car was brought by the Association to convince young people of the need to wear the seat belt, which is considered a main factor to prevent or reduce the risk of injury or even death when accidents take place. Mr. Gebran also pointed out that the campaign, which started at NDU, was to continue in all the other Lebanese universities.

In addition to the car demonstration, the campaign consists of giving lectures, distributing flyers and posters at the universities and nightclubs, and using the road ads which focus on the necessity of using seat belts.

NDU students also signed a petition that will be presented to the United Nations with at least 10452 signatures to work on road safety.



▲ *Mr. Fadi Gebran addressing the crowd.*



▲ *Father Bechara Khoury safe in the seat belt!*



▲ *The crowd of students following the demonstration for seat belts.*

◀ *The "seat-belt convincer".*

## NDU Sports Official Honoured

The Lebanese Federation of University Sports gave a dinner to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of its foundation, at the same time honouring its Secretary General Mr. George Nader, who received from the hands of NDU President Father Walid Moussa the decoration of Officer of the Order of

the Cedar awarded him by His Excellency President Emil Lahoud.

The President of the Federation, Judge Nasri Lahoud, spoke at the dinner of the efforts of Secretary General Georges Nader over the last thirty years in the service of university sport.

## NDU Tournament Results

The following are the results of the Christmas Tournament organised by the NDU Sports Office with the participation of various Lebanese universities and held on its Zouk Mosbeh Main Campus.

### Volleyball

○ | **Men:** In the first group NDU came out first and in the second group St. Joseph's (USJ), after the Lebanese-American University (LAU), Jbeil Campus, withdrew following the decease of its player Nazzar Faraj. The NDU Sports Office presented condolences to the family of Nazzar and to his University. RIP. In the final, NDU beat USJ 2-nil.

### Basketball

○ | **Men, second level:** The American University of Beirut (AUB) won in the first group and NDU in the second. In the final AUB beat NDU 82-80.

### Table Tennis

○ | **Men:** 1) Rashid el-Boubou, Hawaii 2) Elie Daou, LU 3) Rock Hakim, NDU, and Anthony Zaarour, Kaslik.

○ | **Ladies:** 1) Rabit Bassibes, USJ 2) Tala Hawaily, USJ 3) Cristal Jalkh, LAU Jbeil, and Christie Jakilian, NDU.

### Chess

○ | **By teams:** 1) American University of Science and Technology 13 points 2) USJ 11.30 points 3) NDU 7 points 4) Haigazian 6 points, and 5) Arab University of Beirut 4 points.

The distribution of prizes organised by the NDU Sports Office took place in the presence of the President of the Lebanese Federation of University Sports Judge Nasri Lahoud and of Father Beshara el-Khoury, Director of the NDU Student Affairs Office. For his part, Judge Lahoud pointed to the support given the Federation by NDU technically, administratively and financially. Then Father Beshara thanked Judge Lahoud and the Federation for their activity in favour of university sports and thanked also the universities whose participation had contributed to the success of the tournament.

The tournament was supervised by NDU Sports Director George Nader with the help of Elias Boutros and devoted instructors.

### Taekwondo University Championships

The Lebanese Universities' Taekwondo championships were held on NDU Main Campus, Louaize, with the participation of 32 men players and 19 ladies from USJ, LU, AUST, ME, and NDU, under the ægis of the Sports Office of the host university. The results were as follows: -

#### Men

##### ○ | Yellow belt:

□ | **under 54 kilos**

1. Paul Khoury USJ

□ | **under 72 kilos**

1. Ala' Bou Ghanem NDU Shouf

2. Saeed Abi Saad LU

□ | **under 78 kilos**

1. Simon Touma LU

2. Rabih Ghanem NDU Shouf

3. Tony Boutros LU

□ | **over 84 kilos**

1. Makram Saady NDU Shouf

2. Jad Mazher LU

▼ *Mr. George Nader with Father Walid Moussa and Judge Nasri Lahoud.*



**o | Blue belt:**

**□ | under 62 kilos**

1. Halim Mufarraj NDU Shouf
2. Wael Boutine NDU Shouf

**o | Red belt:**

**□ | under 72 kilos**

1. Gaby Habib NDU
2. Samah Bou Tahhan NDU Shouf

**□ | under 78 kilos**

1. Jawwad Qansou NDU Shouf
2. Maher Hasbani AUST

**□ | under 84 kilos**

1. Elie Bashaalani NDU
2. Wissam Berjawi AUST
3. Hadi Ghanem LU

**o | Black belt:**

**□ | under 54 kilos**

1. Marc Arakilos USJ

**□ | under 72 kilos**

1. Elie Nehme NDU

**□ | under 78 kilos**

1. Marc Mussin USJ
2. Issa Khoury ME

**□ | under 84 kilos**

1. Alan Daoud NDU

**□ | over 84 kilos**

1. Tony Eftim NDU
2. George Khallaf NDU

**Ladies**

**o | Yellow belt:**

**□ | under 51 kilos**

1. Ahlam Awad LU

**□ | under 59 kilos**

1. Amanda Daher LU

**□ | under 63 kilos**

1. Nadine Eid ME

**□ | under 67 kilos**

1. Nadine Tarabay LU

**o | Black belt:**

**□ | under 47 kilos**

1. Cynthia Khallaf NDU

**□ | under 51 kilos**

1. Alice Shaker USJ

**□ | under 55 kilos**

1. Rachel Khatounian USJ

**□ | under 59 kilos**

1. Yasmina Sady USJ

**□ | under 67 kilos**

1. Abir al-Jurdi NDU Shouf

**□ | over 72 kilos**

1. Lyall Bou Ghanam NDU Shouf

**General ranking, men:**

1. NDU
2. USJ
3. AUST

**General ranking, ladies:**

1. USJ
2. LU
3. NDU

Supervision of the championships: principal referee Joseph Khoury, International Referee, and Federation referees Mirwan al-Shamy, Carla Beaini, Fady Khalil and Antonio Khalil.

The championships closed with distribution of cups and medals to the winners by the Secretary General of the Lebanese Federation of University Sports George Nader.



◀ *Father Bechara Khoury surrounded by winners.*



▲ *George Nader with Souhail Tawk from the Lebanese Taekwondo Federation presenting the cup for first place overall to NDU champion Alain Daoud.*

# Social

**BIRTH**

**Nour Rita Harvey Oueijan**

NDU professor of long standing in NDU, Dr. Naji Oueijan, has proudly informed us of the birth of his granddaughter **Nour Rita Oueijan**, daughter of his son Harvey, also lecturer in NDU, and of Elsy. Dr. Oueijan adds that Jesus sent Nour Rita as a Christmas present on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007.



**Stop press:** Publications Secretary Lydia Zgheib is now mother of Jenny Chidiac.

**OBITUARY**

**Bahjat Camille Chamoun**

Our sympathy goes to Claudine Chamoun, lecturer in Design at Shouf Campus and Marlise Chamoun, lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities and FAAD (Design) at the Main and Shouf campuses, as well as their family, on the occasion of the passing away of their father Bahjat Camille Chamoun, who went to the Lord on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> January,

2008. The requiem took place the following day in the Church of Our Lady of the Hill, Deir el-Qamar.

**Gebran Michel Nehme**

Our sympathy goes also to Dr. Michel Nehme, FPSPAD, and his relatives. following the decease of his father Gebran, who passed away in the morning of Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2008. The requiem took place the next day.

## Life at NDU

Yasmine Haddad

When I finished my secondary school, I said to myself "Well this is a big move, girl, and it's different from school and everyone is more mature." I also reminded myself that no one was going to laugh and make fun of me, for I was going to be treated as a normal person.

Luckily, the first day at the NDU was as I expected. Nobody noticed me since I wasn't in the mood to socialize. I was happy I didn't hear or see weird faces HA...HA...HA! A few days later, when everything was under control, I was walking with a friend by the cafeteria. Suddenly, I heard someone whispering "LOOK AT THAT!", and they looked at me and started laughing. I looked and they seemed

to me normal people, but honestly mentally immature.

What's the difference between us?

HEIGHT! I was brought up to respect others no matter how they looked or acted. Unlike them! I am different and I am proud of who I am.

My ID number is 20071019



## Crime Corner

### Murder of the English Language! – Ed.

One of the fruits of modern progress in education is that supposedly educated people cannot speak their own language properly any more. Here are examples from the BBC and elsewhere.

*The level of security has been increased:* How can a level, which horizontally is infinite in all directions, and extends neither upwards nor downwards, be increased? It can only be raised or lowered, or perhaps improved.

*"Do you think that...?" "Absolutely!"* How can one think absolutely? The answer should be *"Certainly!"*. "I certainly think..."

Sometimes we hear, "Because of bomb incidents, there has been an increase of security." Increase? Surely a decrease! Presumably what is meant is *security measures!*

It is often said in excuse, "Well, that is the way the language is spoken, so we teach descriptive, not normative, English." But children receive an education

so as to be able to write, if not always to speak, clear, grammatical, lucid, logical, *unambiguous* and reasonably elegant English that anybody in any part of the world can understand and enjoy.

**N.B.** It is a common mistake to confuse *few* with *a few*, *little* with *a little*. *Few* and *little* mean not enough. *E.G.:* –

He had few friends, so he was very lonely. He had little money and could not afford good food.

He had a few friends and so he often spent the evening with them. Although not actually rich, he had a little money, which he spent on travelling around the country.

**In case does not mean if.** It indicates fear of a possibility, e.g.: I don't think it will rain, but I am taking my umbrella just in case it rains.

It is wrong to say, "Call me in case you need me!" (...if you need me!)

**Colons and semicolons (: ;)** can come only after a grammatically complete sentence.

**❑ | Wrong:** I want: some cheese, butter, rolls and coffee.

**❑ | Correct:** I want some cheese, butter, rolls and coffee.

OR: I want the following: cheese, butter, rolls and coffee.

Pay attention to unrelated participles, particularly in expressions such as *bearing in mind*.

**❑ | Wrong:** Bearing in mind her nervousness, the patient was prescribed a sedative.

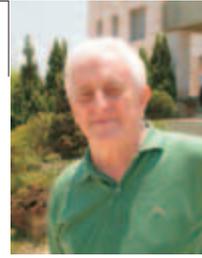
**❑ | Correct:** Bearing in mind her nervousness, the physician prescribed her a sedative.

**N.B.** *Nervous* means frightened. For highly-strung you may use *nervy*.

"I only saw Peter." Literally this means that the speaker saw Peter but did not speak to him or do anything else. More correct would be "I saw only Peter." Here it is clear that the speaker had contact with Peter but with nobody else. The first is acceptable in conversation but in more complicated sentences the misplaced *only* might lead to ambiguity.

In formal writing, *like* and *such as* should be distinguished. The former means *resembling* and the latter means *for example*. – Ed.

**o WARNING!** If you are a man, do not say "My dear!" to another man – unless of course you are both "gays". He may have doubts about your intentions. The expression translates *Mon cheri*, not *Mon cher*.



## Algernon Swinburne (1837–1909)

K.J. Mortimer

Putney High Street is a steep climb from Putney Bridge over the river Thames to the crossroads with Upper Richmond Road. Under the name of Putney Hill, the artery continues its climb to Putney Heath and a pub called the Green Man, a common name for those public houses where in the past a herbal doctor would sell his wares. Beyond the business offices on the crossroad, the first house, dark, tall and stately, is of the kind built by wealthy Victorians, standing detached on its own plot of land. In front is a semi-circular drive for horses and carriage. The building has a basement where the cooks and servants used to toil. In the ground floor were certainly the dining- and reception-rooms, on the first above more private ones, and above that again the bedrooms. The mansard roof contained no doubt the servants' bedrooms, where a mouse would get round-shouldered.

In the nineteen-thirties when we walked past, my grandfather would point out the house as the one where the poet Swinburne had lived. Like so many Victorians influenced by popularisation of the Aesthetic Movement, he held all historical personages and poets, writers and painters in solemn awe, only sometimes mixed with frowning disapproval of their more dubious inclinations. In fact the aura of respect did not imply any real understanding. But in any case I suppose my dear, innocent grandparent knew Swinburne only through what the poet wrote in his later years of respectability.

The latter part of the nineteenth century was the age of the Aesthetic Movement, which was launched in Paris but thanks to painters and poets who had enjoyed the brilliant conversation of the cafés there, such as Whistler, George Moore and Oscar Wilde, soon spread to London. In brief, starting with the Impressionists and culminating in modern abstract art, this meant that in painting what mattered was not the subject portrayed but the purely formal elements, mainly line and colour. In literature it meant that a book could not be moral or immoral but only good or bad according to its literary qualities. Here lay the conflict between the aesthetes, and the "Philistines", the solid middle-class who wanted a picture to tell a story and a book or poem to teach worthy principles. This was a class that the aesthetes, surrounded by a fauna of adoring but not over-intelligent society ladies, enjoyed provoking.

But the aesthetes often over-reached themselves. British Victorian society was not light-heartedly tolerant of loose living and depravity among its geniuses as was French society. It was not a congenial home for a Baudelaire with his *Fleurs du mal* or a perverted genius such as Rimbaud. Oscar Wilde was to find this out to his cost when sent to prison after two trials at which all his wit and posing as a connoisseur served him little. Swinburne was a young man carried away by the excitement of words, which he poured out in a torrent with little attention to their real meaning or

implication. He also sought in a romanticised view of Antiquity an excuse for sexual freedom. The word "vice" had a strong fascination for him:

Could you hurt me, sweet lips,  
though I hurt you?

Men touch them and change in  
a trice

The lilies and languors of virtue



For the roses and raptures of vice.

Likewise the word “sin”. He spoke of “strange great sins” that were “seventy times seven”.

This one thing once worth giving

Life gave, and seemed worth living;

Sin, sweet beyond forgiving

And brief beyond regret...

Ah, one thing worth beginning,

One thread in life worth spinning,

Ah sweet, one sin worth sinning...

To say of shame—what is it?

Or virtue—we can miss it,

Of sin—we can but kiss it,

And it's no longer sin.

(*Before Dawn*)

One may well wonder what possible crime a sin “seventy times seven” could possibly be. Four hundred and ninety times any of the acts of murder, torture and cruelty that go on in the world? But really it was just the words and the mysterious lure of evil they implied that turned the head of Swinburne. He himself never seems to have gone beyond a certain naughtiness, for example running about the house naked with his friend Simeon Solomon. When Simeon Solomon went further and ended up in prison, Swinburne was seriously alarmed and described him as “a thing unmentionable alike by men and women as equally abhorrent to either”. Again one may wonder why he should suggest that love for a woman was evil, in a time when marriage was an ideal and people married quite young to raise large and boisterous families. Victorian prudishness

is often misunderstood; in fact in many ways Victorians were far less prudish than their modern descendants. But if one painted a nude man and woman and called the work *Mr. and Mrs. Brown in their Garden in Twickenham*, one might go to prison even although the two characters were supposed to be decently married; however, if one called it *Ares and Aphrodite in a Garden in the Hesperides*, one might have it exposed in the Royal Academy to be admired by the families of the general public. Certain sheltered ladies of the new upper-middle class, desperately determined to be respectable, certainly suffered from a mixture of the Calvinist tradition, which considered that God's creation had become totally evil with Adam's sin, and the romantic view of classical Greece that started with Goëthe.

It should be remembered that the young Algernon Swinburne had had dreams of becoming a dashing cavalry officer, but had been rejected because of his puny physique. So from the time he was at Oxford he had a grudge against the society, conventions and religion of the Industrial Age. He could be so carried away when reciting verse that once he fell in a fit. His exciting rhythms and alliteration, the latter a return to the old Anglo-Saxon poetry, gave magic to words when serious meaning was lacking, and the student youth of Oxford would march arm-in-arm reciting his daring lines:

Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean? But these thou shalt not take,  
The laurel, the palms and the pæan, the breasts of the nymphs in the brake.

But Swinburne is not to be judged merely by his eccentricity. Two plays published in 1860, *Queen Mother* and *Rosamund*, earned praise from the lordly John Ruskin and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, patron of a distinguished circle of artists and after the success (or notoriety!) in 1865 of *Atalanta in Calydon* more fame came in 1866 with *Chastelard* and *Poems and Ballads*. It is true that his reputation led to him being “sent down” from Oxford, but Dr. Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol, who remained his friend and admirer, did this in the most delicate way

possible, simply suggesting that it might be in his interest not to resume his studies. In a century of great essayists and critics his studies of Shakespeare and Charlotte Brontë were outstanding. Here is an example of his prose, taken from an essay on Leonardo da Vinci:

Of Leonardo the samples are choice and few: full of that undefinable grace and grave mystery which belongs to his slightest and wildest work. Fair strange faces of women full of dim doubt and faint scorn, touched by the shadows of an obscure fate, eager and weary it seems at once, pale and fervent with patience and passion allure and perplex the thoughts and eyes of men.

At a time when writing in newspapers, magazines and newspapers has become so pedestrian, when reading has become a matter only of information and not of enjoyment, of delectation, one can only regret the *belles lettres* of a past age. Sadly, Swinburne did not maintain his verbal magic to the end. Intoxication both literal and intellectual undermined his frail health and in 1879 his family handed him over to the tender care of Theodore-Watts Dunton, lawyer, literary critic and owner of the residence on Putney Hill. The poet was weaned off brandy and led through port, Burgundy, claret and *vin du pays* to homely British beer. Walks on Putney Heath restored freshness to his countenance and health to his body. Harmless occupations were found for him that would not awake his old feverish excitement. Theodore Watts admired his genius but felt that it should be directed to morally uplifting ends. Swinburne became completely tame. The former admirer of France, imbued with French culture, could now write patriotic verse that any smug Victorian could approve but is, alas! best forgotten. In these days when “the noble, the nude, and Antique” are unlikely to make atheists of us, for Swinburne's earlier magic we can be grateful to him. N.B. For the artistic atmosphere of Victorian times, we warmly recommend *The Aesthetic Adventure*, by William Gaunt, Jonathan Cape and Pelican Books, from which we have drawn information.

*The following is the text of a speech delivered by Mrs. Mary Martinos Khoury on Tuesday, November 27th, 2007 at Bridging the Centuries at NDU to honor the faculty and staff who had served NDU for twenty years and more.*



▲ *Mary Khoury receives recognition for long service from the NDU President, Father Walid Moussa.*

## The Development of NDU throughout the Years

Having taught at NDU since fall 1978, I take pride in being one of its pioneers. By having a brief look at NDU's history, I see that NDU has passed through four different stages.

The first stage was the embryo stage which started when the university was founded in 1978 at Notre Dame Louaize School. It was known at that time as L.C.H.E. There was a marriage between two educational institutions, namely Beirut University College and the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which started the mission with only seventy-eight students who mostly came from French schools. All those students took Intensive English courses that semester. There were only three part-time English instructors hired and I was one of them. Three classrooms were given to us in addition to one more classroom which was a very modest language laboratory.

In 1980, LCHE had a new location and a new campus which functioned till 1998. It is the one known now as the Division for Continuing Education (DCE).

The second stage was the baby stage, which witnessed the birth of NDU on August the 14<sup>th</sup>, 1987. The official license was signed that day, which happened to be the eve of the feast or Our Lady's Assumption. A few days

later, Abbot Antoine Sfeir invited us to a luncheon party at La Grillade Restaurant to celebrate the occasion. The number of students enrolled in that year was 155.

The third stage was the childhood stage, which began in fall 1998 when NDU was already eleven years old and all the Faculties had moved to this new campus. The inauguration ceremony took place at the beginning of that Fall Semester. All the NDU family, faculty, staff, administrators and students, were happy to move to this new location not because of the new buildings but because everyone had been squeezed together in a very tight and condensed area in the old campus. There wasn't enough space to park our cars, nor were there enough classrooms to accommodate the rising number of students. At that time the number of students enrolled was 2773.

I can say that the dream of such a huge campus came true because Bishop Beshara Rai, the founder of LCHE, had a fixed aim from the very start, which was to build a big campus in this valley.

The fourth and final stage is the young adult stage. In August 2007, NDU completed its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The total number of students enrolled now at NDU is

5095, including two younger sister campuses, the North and the Shouf. The total number of students now enrolled in the main campus in the Department of English, Translation and Education courses is 2125, and there are nineteen full-time and forty-three part-time instructors.

In conclusion, I believe that the development of NDU throughout the years in numbers and buildings is due not only to our efforts and perseverance, but above all due to the blessing of our Blessed Mother the Virgin Mary, who has always been present in our acts and achievements.

▼ *Mary Khoury on the podium.*





## Balanced Diet

Elsa Abi Nader

Food, food, food! is what Lebanese people think about all the time. Restaurants and snack-bars are the only places working full-time nowadays, and this because all people want to do is to eat. It doesn't matter what mood they are in, happy, upset or just bored, their mind is on food. But what they are not aware of is that what matters is the quality of the food they eat. Eating healthy food is the key to long life. Good health comes from following a balanced diet. This consists of adequate amounts of food and drink to supply energy and nutrition for growth and development, together with plenty of physical activity.

Most men believe that bothering about diet is a waste of time. They think that one lives only once and so should do whatever makes one happy, without regard for long-term consequences. But this is totally wrong. Dying when in one's thirties or

forties is a different prospect to dying in one's seventies or eighties. So while one should certainly be happy and enjoy oneself, at the same time one should take care of oneself. Following a healthy diet will bring many benefits, such as weight loss, more energy, reduced risk of cancer and other diseases, lower cholesterol, and general health all round. But it should be remembered that not the same diet is good for everybody. Some people may be much overweight or suffer from diabetes; every individual needs a differently-planned diet.

Consistently following a healthy balanced diet is not all that easy. Many factors have to be considered to obtain the desired results. Basically one should eat healthy food sufficiently rich in proteins, vitamins, minerals, lipids and fiber. Moreover, one should eat moderately and in specific amounts. Thus one should neither under-eat nor over-eat. As they say, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," and in fact fruit and vegetables are really good for ensuring health and preventing diseases, while at the same time fats should be reduced.

It is easy to talk, but starting the diet is the hard part. One should first make a list of the "do's" and "don't's" so as to have a clear picture of one's goal. This will simplify the task and ensure sustained motivation. However, the diet that is not accompanied by sustained physical activity will not give the desired results. For instance, eating protein without physical activity will only lead to loss of muscle, while the skin will become flabby. Twenty minutes of exercise a day will lead to a substantial reduction of risk of cardiac failure but will not be enough to reduce weight.

In conclusion, no one can obtain good results without having the will to make an effort and working hard. This will be difficult at first, but once one's body gets accustomed to regulating itself and one becomes accustomed to regulating one's body, following the diet will become easier and simpler with time. So one should not put off taking action but rather start working on one's diet and engaging in physical activity without any delay.



## Ecrire ou se balader sur le chemin du dire\*

Abdo Kahi

### I- Ecrire c'est quoi ?

C'est se laisser emporter par l'épreuve du sens sur les cordes musicales du cœur et les logiques rationnelles de la pensée, en aiguisant sa sensibilité à l'esthétique de la joie et de la souffrance, du bonheur et de la tristesse

Il me semble de prime abord que la question qui se pose à partir de l'écriture, est celle qui porte sur la marge que la parole a à traverser dans ses tentatives d'agrémenter le langage par des modulations linguistiques susceptibles de traduire l'intention du dire dans son originalité.

Cette marge nous renvoie à l'espace spatio-temporel qui distingue sans les dissocier la pensée de Ferdinand de Saussure, le père incontestable de la linguistique moderne basée sur une approche structurale faisant considérer la langue comme un système organisé et doué d'une fonction sociale, et Noam Chomsky, le chercheur révolté

contre la structure du sens.

Cette marge débouche ainsi avec Chomsky sur la recherche du sens au travers des structures syntaxiques qui le produisent mais qui ne l'empêchent pas de s'inventer et de se réinventer selon les différentes intentions du dire.

En effet, Ferdinand de Saussure «conçoit la langue comme un système d'éléments interdépendants. Les signes de la langue prennent ainsi sens les uns par rapport aux autres selon des règles qui sont à la fois d'opposition et de distinction<sup>1</sup>. »

Tout signe est composé selon lui de deux facettes : «le signifiant» et «le signifié». Le signifiant correspond à l'image acoustique, c'est-à-dire au son produit pour énoncer un mot. Le signifié renvoie au concept, au contenu sémantique attribué au signe. Pour lui, les relations entre signifiant et signifié structurant ensemble le sens, sont purement arbitraires.

Pour Noam Chomsky, «la linguistique structurale ne parvient, ni à expliquer la grammaire des langues, ni à les comparer entre elles<sup>2</sup>.» Il en est ainsi parce que «cette linguistique ne voit pas que la langue est une machine à générer des phrases et que c'est à ce niveau-là seulement que se pose le problème de la construction du sens et non pas en deçà», c'est-à-dire dans les relations arbitraires entre signifiants et signifiés.

«La production du sens serait ainsi inséparable de la syntaxe. Il s'agit donc de comprendre comment, à partir de propositions bien formées, on peut générer des phrases correctes dans une langue, et c'est là où réside la première fonction de l'écriture».

Ceci nous ramène à dire qu'à partir d'un petit nombre de structures syntaxiques universelles, le langage peut produire une infinité d'énoncés, traduisant les nuances de sens recherchées.

\* Texte adapté à partir de mes deux livres : *La parole promesse du dire*, Ed. Dar AN-NAHAR, 2004, et *Le silence gestuelle de la vie*, Ed. Dar AN-NAHAR, 2006.

<sup>1</sup> De Saussure, Ferdinand (1857-1913) *cours de linguistique générale*, voir revue Sciences Humaines, hors série, numéro 30, Septembre 2000 page 12.

<sup>2</sup> Chomsky, Noam, *Theory of syntax*, 1965, voir revue Sciences Humaines, idem, pp. 74 et 75.

Ceci nous amène aussi à entrevoir une nouvelle approche de la recherche du sens se basant, d'une part sur les structures syntaxiques définies, et d'autre part sur l'infinité de ses énoncés possibles, eu égard à la multiplicité des visions qu'on en a.

Cependant, si le langage comme faculté propre à l'homme, l'habilitant à exprimer sa pensée et à la communiquer aux autres, doit nécessairement passer par une langue spécifique pour se produire sous une forme parlée ou écrite, la parole humaine n'aura de sens que si elle se soumet à un ordre profond gouvernant les structures syntaxiques de chaque langue utilisée, surtout quand elle est écrite.

La parole écrite, comme faculté langagière qui devrait ressembler à la structure inscrite du sens dans la pensée humaine, a besoin ainsi d'une certaine forme de «loi fixe» pour transmettre l'intention du dire et pour produire le sens propre que ce dernier voudrait déchiffrer et communiquer.

Ceci veut dire, selon Chomsky, «qu'il existe dans la profondeur de chaque langue une proposition qui dit qu'un

agent (acteur) a agit (verbe) sur un objet, chose ou sujet (récepteur) ».

Chomsky illustre à cet effet sa pensée par ces deux phrases : «Le chat a attrapé la souris» et «la souris a été attrapée par le chat». Pour lui, si le même sens est conservé par ces deux structures syntaxiques, c'est parce que le chat (acteur) a agi (verbe) sur la souris (récepteur).

La formation de sens est donc une question de syntaxe reliant dans des formes différentes l'acteur au verbe et au récepteur.

L'homme s'engageant dans une parole se trouve ainsi, surtout quand il a à transmettre sa pensée par écrit, en face de trois constellations différentes : la constellation (acteur), la constellation (verbe), la constellation (récepteur).

Ces constellations nous ouvrent sur trois champs de recherche se dessinant en parallèle à l'infini:

**le champ des agents (acteurs),  
le champ des actions (verbe),  
le champ des cibles (récepteurs).**

Par l'écriture, l'homme apprend que les acteurs (tout acteur) et les récepteurs (tout récepteur), sont des états intentionnels du sujet que ce dernier définit en dire propre dépendamment des liens qu'il entretient entre sa volonté, son état d'âme et ce qu'il convient de dire dans un contexte donné, là où dans le concret ces éléments appartiennent au monde des faits qui est indépendant de lui.

Par l'écriture l'homme apprend aussi à ne délimiter le verbe, dans un champ propre de sens, que pour ce qui concerne la structure externe venant des compositions syntaxiques propres à chaque langue.

Par l'écriture l'homme apprend surtout à voir la vraie dynamique du verbe, qui, tout en exprimant «l'agir» à travers une composition syntaxique définie, selon l'humeur, l'intention et la convenance de l'acteur en question, arrive à dépasser toutes les humeurs, intentions et convenances pour rester force de production de sens à l'infini.

Il en serait ainsi parce que le verbe, qui est inhérent à la condition humaine et qui interpelle ensemble l'acteur et le récepteur, dépasse comme capacité infinie de création la condition humaine et toute chose susceptible d'être acteur ou récepteur.

Par l'écriture, l'homme découvre, enfin, qu'il se trouve en fait devant un ordre langagier obligatoire, quelle que soit la langue qu'il utilise. Il découvre que le lecteur, ou le destinataire de sa parole, entretient avec lui des rapports adaptatifs d'écoute et de compréhension, en vue de saisir le sens de son dire, sens qui ne peut se produire dans le monde et s'exprimer proprement qu'à travers l'adaptation du verbe à un acteur et à un récepteur au sein de l'énoncé d'une parole.

Par l'écriture, l'homme constate que la parole, et surtout la parole écrite, est dotée d'un mouvement interne et d'un mouvement externe entre des éléments



distincts mais qui remplissent les mêmes fonctions.

La parole est intrinsèquement un verbe en action faisant prévaloir l'existence d'un acteur et d'un récepteur.

La parole est extrinsèquement un verbe en action se produisant à partir d'un parleur écrivain «énonceur» et cheminant vers un récepteur lecteur effectif ou potentiel.

○ Par l'écriture, l'homme arrive ainsi à baliser les sentiers de la parole, ceux de son intériorité et ceux de son extériorité, ceux qui lui viennent de la structure qui l'édifie comme objet de sens et ceux qui remontent à son antériorité et qui ne s'effacent pas lors de son échéance, ceux qui la raccorde à la source du sens et ceux qui dictent la forme spécifique de son expression.

Par l'écriture l'homme se forme à libérer la parole à partir de sa foi en le verbe qui la constitue et qui la dépasse, qui le constitue et qui le dépasse, ce verbe qu'il délivre à l'épreuve du sens et qui reste prêt à recréer ce sens indéfiniment.

L'homme se formerait ainsi à se battre contre l'entreprise du pouvoir humain

qui ne cesse de renfermer la parole dans les structures des convenances établies du sens, d'une part, et les structures syntaxiques des langues, d'autre part.

## II- Ecrire, est-ce possible?

Pour m'expliquer sur cette question, je vais me référer de nouveau à Noam Chomsky. Je vais l'interroger sur la possibilité d'écrire réellement, ou d'explorer sur un pont, le pont qui relie le sens à son expression, et devant tout le monde, dans la clarté du jour et en pleine exposition aux courants d'air, la nature des liens qui s'établissent entre un compositeur de sens, un écrivain, et la structure de la composition linguistique le concernant.

Noam Chomsky nous informe à ce sujet sur le fait que l'écrivain, ou le compositeur, est le seul qui soit capable de se soumettre à l'épreuve du sens, sur le pont le reliant, comme annonceur de sa version de ce sens, à la structure linguistique, ou la syntaxe formalisant cette structure.

Il nous réfère à cet effet à la situation du poète qui, pour pouvoir interpeller le sens de son vécu propre, doit refuser de se laisser dominer par les

convenances socioculturelles modelant les usages de ce sens.

Le poète se permet ainsi de composer une métaphore qui correspond à ses propres significations pénétrées par ses propres humeurs et sentiments qui reflètent son état d'âme du moment.

Pour illustrer son propos, Noam Chomsky donne l'exemple de la phrase suivante: «Des idées vertes et incolores dorment furieusement».

Dans cette phrase, le compositeur a osé sortir des contraintes structurales du «signifié», selon Ferdinand de Saussure. Il n'a pas cependant échappé à la loi gouvernant l'ordre reliant le «verbe» à «l'acteur» et au récepteur dans une structure syntaxique. Car s'il avait dit : «incolores des idées furieusement dorment et vertes», il aurait complètement perdu tout espoir de déboucher sur quelque sens que ce soit.

Cette phrase nous enseigne ainsi sur l'originalité de l'idée du pont, qui se formalise nécessairement au niveau de l'écrivain où se rencontrent, en toute liberté et en toute souveraineté, le parleur (écrivain) et la structure de la langue qu'il utilise.

Avec cet image de pont, comme tremplin du parleur et de l'écrivain plus particulièrement, il nous sera ainsi plus facile de découvrir que le verbe ne sera jamais épuisé, ni par l'intention du dire du parleur et surtout de l'écrivain, ni par la structure ordonnée à l'exprimer.

Il nous sera pareillement plus aisé de constater que les intentions du dire sont libres et peuvent varier à l'infini.

Avec l'écriture, nous pouvons ainsi comprendre pourquoi le dire humain, comme construction de sens, a intérêt, pour appartenir à la vie, à ne pas s'enfermer dans ce qui est construit en tant que «propos signifié» interchangeable, standardisé et fixé avant lui. Ce dire se découvrira, de ce fait, comme un verbe en action pouvant s'authentifier indéfiniment en rapport avec la structure syntaxique qui est la même dans toutes les langues établies.

Par l'écriture, nous pouvons aussi toucher de plus près à l'activité du verbe, qui tout en

se pliant aux entendements établis et à l'intention du parleur devenu écrivain, ou énonceur d'un dire propre, au travers de son écriture, reste égal à lui-même, au-delà de tout entendement ou intention de production de sens.

De là à se demander si primitivement l'écrivain, et surtout le poète, n'était pas ce génie de la parole qui réussissait à lire à haute voix «ce qui est écrit dans le ciel», et si le prophète n'était pas ce déchiffreur de signes qui arrivait à décoder les messages divins inscrits dans sa mémoire.

Dans ce sens, le sens précède le signifié et se trouve inscrit dans le signifiant, tout signifiant qui tend à rejoindre les autres signifiants sur une ligne silencieuse qui leur assure leur unité, leur égalité et leur continuité.

A partir de là, il devient possible de dire, que c'est l'inscription du sens dans des codes spécifiques qui tendent à se regrouper sur une même ligne, qui lui assure sa pérennité tout au long de l'histoire des temps.

Mais si l'inscription fixe le sens, elle ne le fige pas. Elle lui permet, tout au contraire, de se transmettre au monde et de devenir connaissance se dispensant en se diversifiant à travers l'écriture, qui, en décodant ses signalisations dans l'esprit et dans la matière, le rend accessible au langage humain.

C'est ainsi que Dieu, du haut du mont Sinai a transmis à Moïse la table de ses lois écrites sur de la pierre après les avoir inscrites dans les traditions et les mœurs de son peuple.

C'est ainsi, pareillement, que les poèmes épiques et les chants d'amour (*Illiade* d'Homère et *le Cantique des cantiques* de la Bible), à titre d'exemple, ont été conservés dans la mémoire des gens pendant des centaines d'années avant d'être produits par écrit sur des supports matériels.

L'écriture devient, de ce fait, ce pont qui relie les inscriptions faites dans les couloirs de la ligne du sens aux sens et à l'entendement humains.

Elle s'emploie, ainsi, à traduire les inscriptions du sens, en les localisant dans la mémoire humaine tout au long des civilisations orales, et en les retracent sur du papier comme support annexe à cette mémoire dans les civilisations récentes du livre.

Partant de ces impressions et des constatations qui en découlent, je tends de plus en plus à croire que l'écriture est l'instrument du silence de la lettre qui fait passer les inscriptions du sens de leur état abstrait à l'expérience de l'incarnation dans le bruit de l'existence. Je tends à croire aussi que la poésie, comme chant rythmé, et la Bible comme récit d'un dire oral ne sont en fait qu'une lecture de ce qui a été déjà inscrit dans l'esprit du poète et du prophète avant d'être prononcé par leurs lèvres ou transcrit par leurs doigts.

Sur ce, l'écriture m'apparaît subitement comme lecture et transcription simultanées du verbe, en vue de le communiquer au monde et de l'inscrire dans le temps. ○



## Let's React to God

When studying reaction, we find it means the way beings react to various stimulants. When it comes to spiritual topics, especially prayer, it is reacting towards God.

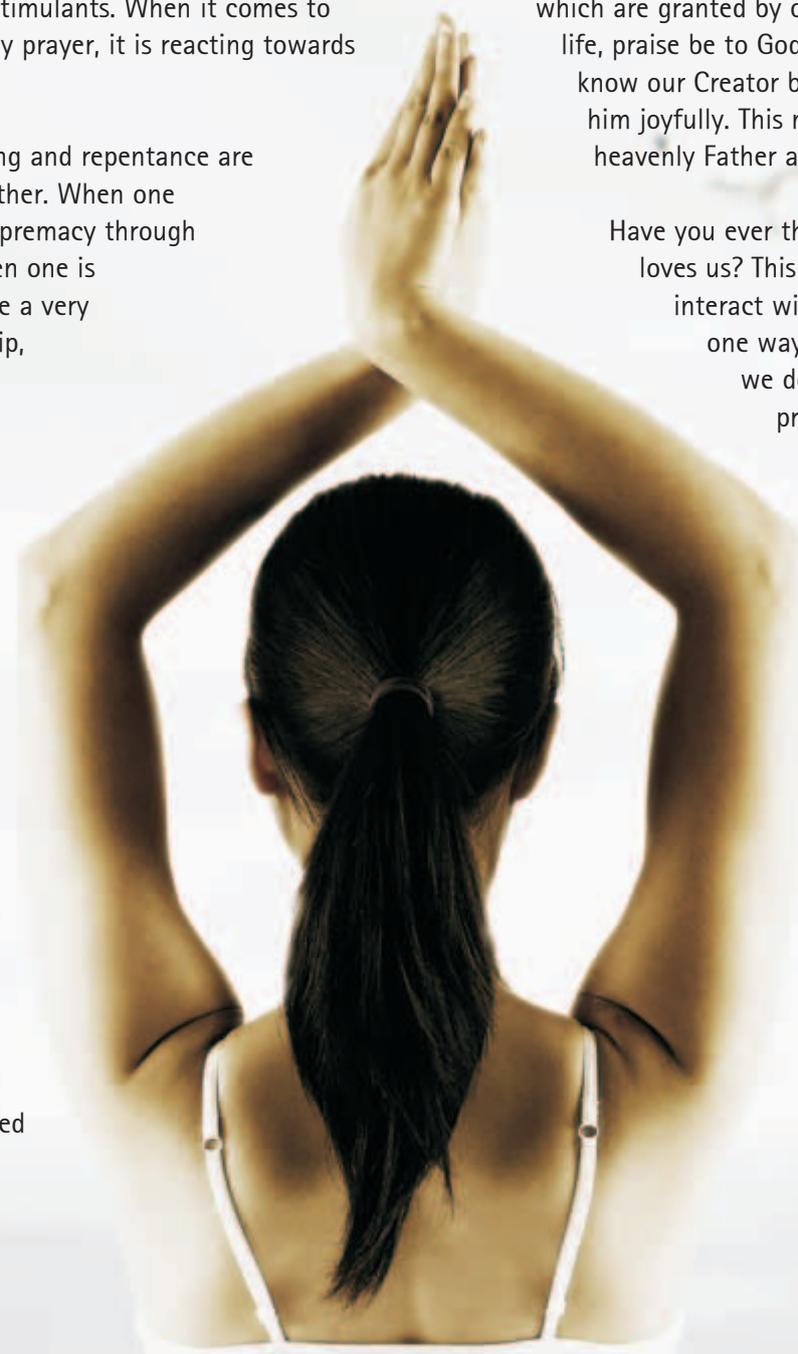
Kneeling, praying, praising and repentance are reactions to our Holy Father. When one thinks of God and his supremacy through the graces he offers when one is meditating, one will have a very strong impulse to worship, kneel and fall down in adoration with one's whole person alert to his goodness.

When one discovers that everything is created by God and is his work, one should feel the reality God's existence and surrender to it; one should chant and recite the psalms. The holiness of God, leads us to feel how we ourselves are tiny and how great is our sin.

The Prophet Isaiah said: "Woe unto me! I've passed away, my lips sinned to God." Isaiah 6:5.

If one thinks of the immense number of graces which are granted by our Father during one's life, praise be to God! For praise leads us to know our Creator better and to turn to him joyfully. This might lead us to our heavenly Father and His Glory.

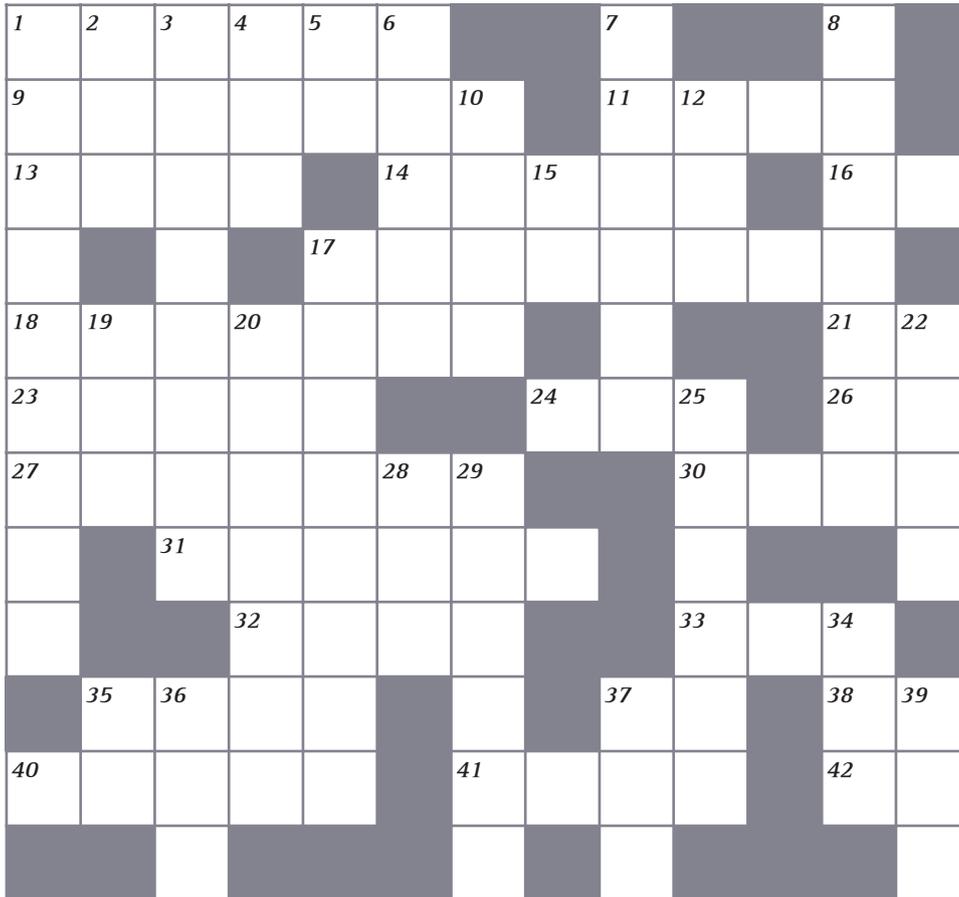
Have you ever thought how much God loves us? This should lead us to interact with our Savior. Praying is one way of reacting. Sometimes we don't concentrate when praying. We need to keep trying to concentrate and persevere in praying. We need to practice meditation to reach a state of prayer as if a mirror were sending its light. One might some day discover God's perfection but how? Keep on praying, meditating without losing the courage which supports our joy and hope.



Fadia El-Hage

# Something for your grey matter

## Crossword



### Answers for issue 41

**Across:** 1. new 4. regent  
8. units 10. urn 11. rat  
12. Etna 14. scheme 17. so  
18. pi 19. it 20. remiss  
22. Dr. 23. UNESCO 25.  
great 27. anise 29. star  
32. pelts 33. Eire 34.  
sadden 35. sun 38. eel  
39. tremendous

**Down:** 1. nursing 2.enact  
3. with 5. guesses 6. nun  
7. trap 9. same 13. toss  
15. errant 16. emu 21. in  
22. deal 24. Omar 26.  
tissue 28. ended 29. see  
30. tines 31. reel 32. post  
36. ancient city 37. north-  
east

### Across:

1. late meal 9. infuriates 11. smile maliciously 13.  
satellite 14. detector of submarines 16. in the  
morning 17. grape orchard 18. done on waves and on  
internet 21. fashionable 23. something to give special  
enjoyment 24. wrath 26. refusal 27. entrap 30.  
annoys; old horses 31. salty 32. extremities; advice  
33. creeping plant on walls 35. leave out 37. kind of  
current 38. after the Lord 40. place of English victory  
over French, 13<sup>th</sup> century 41. thick cord 42. Italian  
river

### Down:

1, four-month academic periods 2. international  
organisation 3. advance 4.god of shepherds who  
played on pipes 5. for example (Latin initials) 6.  
sticky, flammable sap 7. participant in game 8.  
commerce 10. piece of music for voice 12. long  
period 15. one of eight compass points 17. vigorous  
life, energy 19. vase 20. extremist 22. proboscis 25.  
persuade, attract 28. tear vigorously 29. make  
something certain 34. small dog's bark 35.  
subjunctive for alternatives 36. dogs bark and cats ...  
37.imitate (pejorative) 39. point