

Father of the Fatherless

By
Bishop Dr. Naim Nassar

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of the
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Dedication

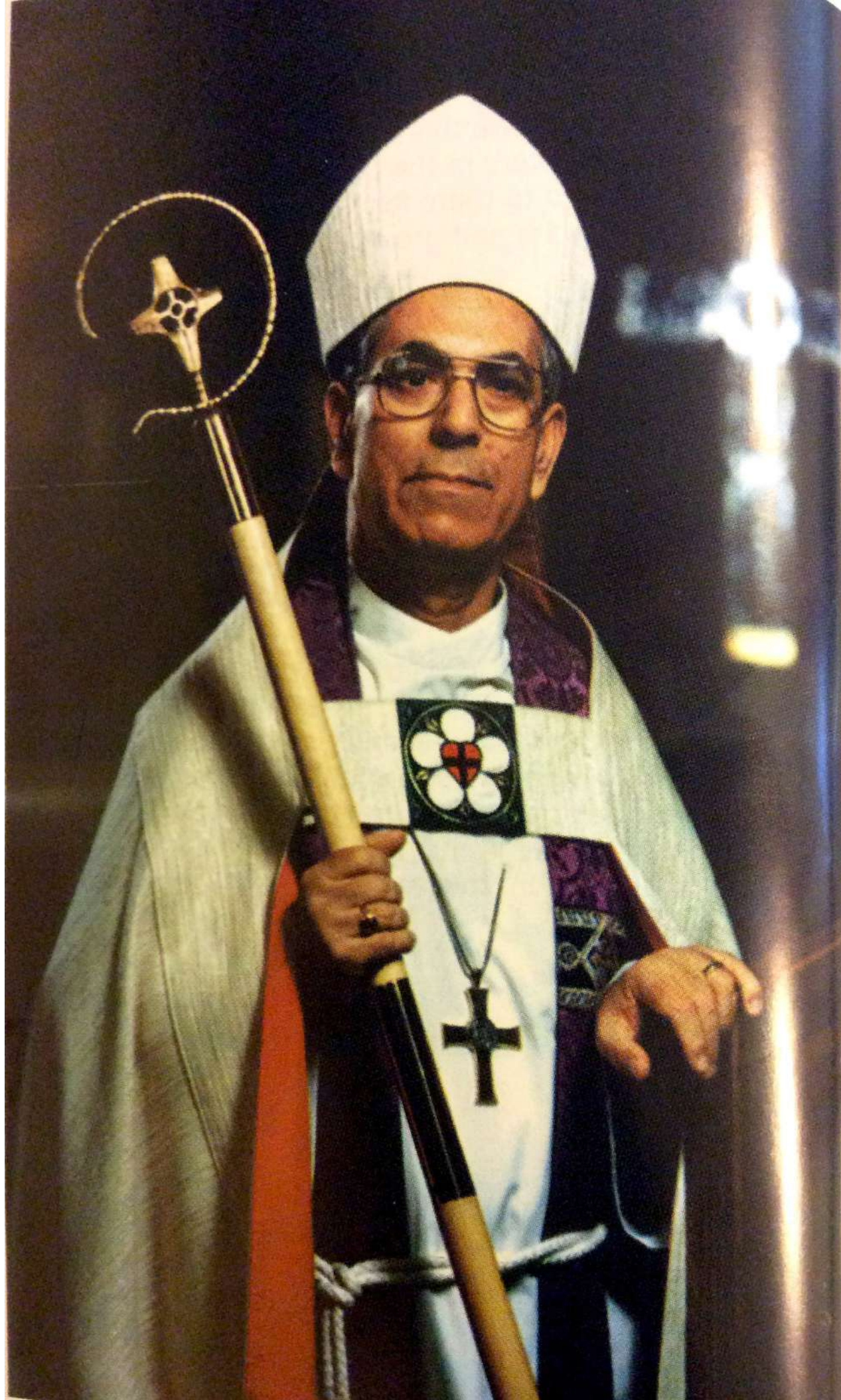
I wish to dedicate this book to those several dear brother and sisters in the Lord who taught me to pray. I am indebted to them for helping me in my personal Christian life and growth.

These dear people are: The Reverend Samuel Howells, Ms. Gladys Thomas, Ms. K. Morgan and Ms. Mary Jean Grupp.

Thanks

My thanks to Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, and the church elders and congregation for their generous support in bringing this book into being. Also, Dr. Don and Jane Sneen for their great help in proofreading this work. In addition, my gratitude goes to everyone who assisted me in the production namely Mr. Gabi Batato.

This book is written on the occasion of my 70th birthday.



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
And the power,
And the glory,
For ever,
Amen.

Matthew 6:9-13

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Forward

**Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.
(Hebrew 13,7)**

It is with great pleasure that we publish the book "Father of the Fatherless" of Dr. Hon. Bishop Emeritus Naim Nassar. Bishop Nassar served the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church for almost quarter of a century. This is where he was first installed as a pastor, and this parish remained almost the one and only parish he served as a pastor before he was then elected as a bishop to serve the whole of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan with its six parishes. The best years of Bishop Nassar's ministry were thus spent in the "little town of Bethlehem". He left here his fingerprints. His testimony is confirmed by many people who were touched through his ministry in the youth work.

Many were transformed by his ministry of counselling. The many families he helped in their need are still remembering him reaching out to them. His leadership had shaped this church for a whole generation. When the Church Council at Christmas Lutheran Church decided to help publish this testimony of its former pastor and bishop, it did adhering to the words of the Hebrew writer: Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. (Hebrew 13,7)

This is indeed more than a biography. It is more

than life coverage. It is more than a memoir. In his writing, Bishop Nassar is not only tracing his own footsteps, but he is tracing God's footprints in his life. It is not a story of the fatherless themselves, but of their Father. This is a life story written from a faith perspective. It is thus a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles in the 20th century. There as well as here, the stories are not seen as acts of the people themselves, but as acts of the Holy Spirit. Our prayer therefore is for the Holy Spirit to use this testimony to touch and transform many lives in the 21st. century. Our prayer to God is to use Bishop Nassar's "Father of the Fatherless" the way he used his preaching, teaching and ministry here in Bethlehem. We thank God for the ministry of Bishop Nassar's among us, for his life in witness. Our hope is that this testimony will be read in Bethlehem, Jerusalem and to the end of the earth.

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb

Senior Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church

General Director of the International Center of Bethlehem & Dar al-Kalima Academy

1.

Forward...

In response to the wish of my Christian brothers and sisters, I decided to present my life story in the form of a testimony. Before I begin however, I would pray God through the Holy Spirit to help me and to grant me the wisdom to write this testimony that it might be a blessing to many people. It is my sincere hope that all would come to know our wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ.

In this writing, I want to show everybody the grace of God and to show people what His grace can do for a person, even a poor orphan child. He continues to show His unchanging grace to me in the same way He always has.

Let me tell you a story of how my life as an orphan is beautifully illustrated through the actions of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels. The story I want to refer to be the feeding of the five thousand. One evening, the disciples came to the Lord Jesus and said, "Let these people go to the nearby

villages in order to find some food." Since they had spent the entire day walking with Jesus, they were hungry and they were tired. The disciples came to Him and told Him to send the people away to the surrounding villages. The Lord Jesus told them "No, give them yourself something to eat." Then Philip came to Jesus and said, "Here is a lad who has five barley loaves and two fish. But how can this satisfy so many people?" The Bible tells us that there were five thousand not including the women and children. This was a great multitude. Five loaves and two fish was hardly enough for two or three people, but here were over 5,000 people asking for food. The boy brought the loaves and fish and gave them to Jesus. And here is the secret, the disciples took whatever they had (which wasn't much) and they came and brought it to Jesus. They put it in the hands of our blessed Lord. The Lord Jesus put it in His hands and lifted up His eyes to heaven and blessed the bread and the fish. He broke it, gave it to the disciples and they distributed it to all the people who were there. And what happened? All of them were fed! Not only did they have enough, but even more than enough. In the end, they gathered about twelve baskets of the leftover pieces of bread

and fish. This was a great miracle that our Lord did for the people.

This is exactly what our Lord has done with His life. He broke it at the cross, distributed it to the world lovingly that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). This is exactly the secret of the Christian life. When we give ourselves to the Lord unreservedly, He will not only bless us, but He makes us a blessing to others.

This, by His grace, is what He has done for me, a poor orphan boy. I still remember when I gave my life to Him to serve Him and to be able to transmit His love to many people. I prayed that the Lord would take me, a poor orphan, who was not thought to be capable of much, just as the loaves and fish were not thought to be much among so many, but in the hands of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, they were multiplied and fed all. It is my hope that my life has been a similar blessing to those whom I have served.

2.

He shall be called a Nazarene...
Matthew 2:23

I was born June 11, 1932 in a small village about five kilometers west of Nazareth. Unfortunately, this village does not exist anymore since it was destroyed during the Palestinian/Israeli war in 1948.

My father was a farmer who spent his time looking after a small farm. God gave my parents four daughters and three sons. My parents were simple but pious people. They lived happily and were God-fearing.

Sadly, this happiness did not last long. Suddenly, in 1932, my father died leaving my mother responsible for the farm and seven children. The oldest of the children was my brother then thirteen while I was the youngest at three months old. What a heavy burden was thrown upon my mother at that time.

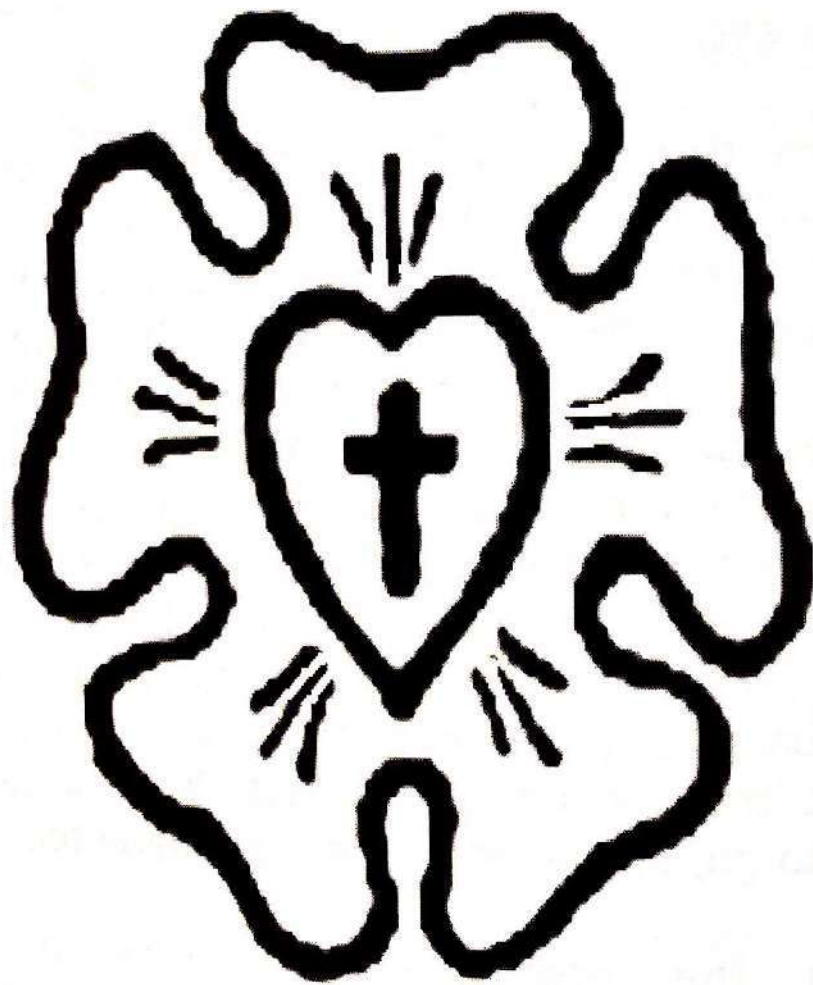
At that time, our country was experiencing difficulties. The circumstances were horrible with unrest, fear and horror everywhere. It seemed that as the British

Mandate was coming to an end in our country, everyone did as they pleased. There was a spirit of lawlessness in the country and it actually resembled the Biblical description of the period of the Judges. This caused problems economically and socially. Although the situation was deteriorating, my mother was able to face the situation with great courage and faith. She believed in the Lord God, our heavenly Father, the Father of the fatherless.

One day, a very honorable visitor came to our village. Somehow he had heard about our problem. This man was touched with our situation. His name was Dr. Herman Schneller. He was the director of a Syrian orphanage and school. After meeting my eldest brother, he invited him to go to Jerusalem to stay in the orphanage. Once my brother went to the orphanage, it opened the way for the whole family to follow him. Gradually, my brothers and sisters began to go to the orphanage. At last, it became my turn to go, so I went to the orphanage too.

In the orphanage we were all so extremely happy. My mother had also come. Out of her thankfulness for what the Lord did through the director of the Syrian orphanage,

she placed herself under the service of the school and helped in every way she could. We were able to finally live a happy life again in that orphanage. We realized that the Father of the fatherless cares for us helps us and looks after us in wonderful ways.



3.

He relieves the orphan...

Psalm 146:9

The orphanage proved to be a great blessing to my family. At the time, it was one of the largest institutions in Palestine. The orphanage was established around 1860 in Jerusalem. Johann Ludwig Schneller established this center. He began the orphanage in response to the incredible needs at the time. In the year of 1860, a massacre of Christians took place in Turkey and expanded to Lebanon and Syria. His mission asked Mr. Schneller if he could take in some of the children who were roaming in the region with no parents or family to look after them. He was asked to care for them. He agreed and took them to his own home where they lived in his house with his family. He and his wife embarked on the task of raising and educating these orphans. He provided food, clothing and shelter as well as a basic Biblical and secular education. This was the start of the great Syrian orphanage. It is one of the greatest evangelical institutions of the land of Palestine and of the entire Middle East. It was founded on God's

love and in the realization that God the Father is the great Father of the fatherless.

The orphanage grew slowly. At the beginning of the Second World War, it accommodated around one hundred and fifty boys, sixty girls, sixty youth apprentices who were trained in various occupations and about 50 blind children. (This was the first school for the blind in the region.) There was also a teacher's seminary with another twelve young people. He was trying to meet the needs of the local community in the country at that time. This school had opportunities for both sexes. He offered workshop training in carpentry, blacksmithing, the printing trade, shoemaking and pottery making. The blind people also had their own special school, one of the pioneering schools catering for young blind children, where they were taught reading and writing in Braille. They learned how to make chairs and brushes. Rather than being a burden on society, they were able to work and earn money for themselves and their families. You can imagine how happy and how much joy I had in being a part of such a big institution.

At the orphanage, I really felt at home. We went to school and learned three languages: Arabic, English and German. We also received vocational training that would help us to make a living later in life. We hoped for this happiness to continue.

Unfortunately, in September 1939 came and with it World War II broke out in Europe. The school had been a German supported institution so it was forced to close. All of its branches had to close as well, forcing the German co-workers to leave the country. The school was then split. The elementary classes were transferred to another orphanage in Nazareth called the Galilean orphanage. The secondary classes were transferred to an institution in Bethlehem.

Because of my age, I soon found myself in a new orphanage in Nazareth with about 150 students. We all had devotions each morning and evening. We had prayers before and after every meal. Every Sunday we used to walk from the school to the Episcopal Church in downtown Nazareth. The walk was about four kilometers back and forth from the school.

Life in the orphanage was very humbling and difficult indeed, as one would expect in a war situation. Thankfully, we did not personally experience the actual war action. We only heard about it. I remained in this orphanage for about seven years. Then I was transferred back to Jerusalem. I was happy again, but soon after this happened, the Palestinian/Israeli wars started and again the school closed. When the shooting started, we weren't able to go home. With the help of the British army, we were able to reach a place where we could take a bus to Bethlehem. I wanted to take the bus to Bethlehem because I heard that my mother and brothers and sisters were there. So I embarked on this wartime journey. Thankfully, there was a reunion of my family. Now we were living as refugees in Bethlehem.



4.

When they were come to Bethlehem...

Ruth 1:19

In Bethlehem, we needed a place to stay. We started to search for an apartment where we could live. I still remember going around Bethlehem looking for a possible apartment to rent. We were not able to find an apartment easily. Wherever we inquired, we were refused. While we were asking, my thoughts went back two thousand years when another couple had come here to Bethlehem seeking a room where they could lodge that winter. They didn't find anything either except a cave where they could rest and stay overnight. That night Jesus was born and that night they greeted God.

At first, we found no room in the city, but finally we found a room. We lived there together with my mother, four sisters, two brothers and me. We lived there during the terrible war situation. The schools were closed and there was no work. We had a very tough time. We were in a small flat with only my eldest brother working, and there were so many people to provide for. Gradually, as

we got settled, my sisters also found work. That helped to ease our burden.

Once the schools were finally opened, I found out that I was not accepted simply because of my age. I was a year or two too old. Therefore I did not know what to do. I tried then to go to a vocational school, but for the same reason they didn't accept me. So what could I do? I was a poor refugee. I was cut off from all possibilities. I was very frustrated and I didn't know what to do.

One day, a friend of mine invited me to go to an evangelistic meeting featuring a very well known evangelist named Reverend Roy Whitman. He was an American, but he spoke Arabic fluently. So we went. The evangelist revealed the Gospel to me. He spoke with the help of the Holy Spirit from Hebrews chapter nine verse twenty-seven. "It is appointed unto man once to die and then afterwards judgment." Then he explained how every person in this world is a sinner and deserves death. Our Lord says that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. He started to expound on how a human being can't save himself or herself no matter how strong, how rich or how

intelligent they are. They cannot save themselves. They need somebody like the Lord Jesus Christ who is able to save unto the uttermost. He is able to give us eternal life and only He is able to take away our sins and grant us peace in our hearts, our minds and our lives. This is a peace that passes all understanding. He explained how we might be saved and he asked if we wanted to come forward and give our lives to Jesus because He gave His life for us and He died for us. He was put on the cross for us, He wants to save us, to take away our sins and give us a new life in His Name through His Person. So, I went with the other young people and I still remember how we knelt for the first time and asked for mercy, cleansing and forgiveness. I asked God to start a new life for me, a new life in Him.

The evangelist said that if we wanted a new life then we would have to read the Bible, pray everyday and tell others about our experience. While I was kneeling, I decided to do that. I wanted to follow Jesus. I determined to read His Word everyday in order to see what He wanted from me and expected from me. I also decided to pray and to spend time with Him, communing with my Lord, my new best friend. To this day, Jesus

is my best friend. He has always been there for me in my time of need. When I was forsaken, when I was poor, when I was a refugee, Jesus was there. I didn't know anybody and I didn't have anybody to lean on, but I had Jesus who saved me and gave me a new life. It was then that I started a new life. I got up from my knees with a burning wish in my heart to follow Him. I decided that wherever He led me, I would go and whatever He asked me to do, I would do.



5.

Let us kneel before the LORD...

Psalms 95:6

When I went home, my mother realized that there was something different about me. She found me in my room kneeling and praying. It was an extraordinary thing for my mother to find me kneeling and praying! That was something! She was so excited that she had to go and gather up the neighbors so they could see that I was praying! When this happened, I got up from my knees and I witnessed to them, sharing what had happened to me in the church when I heard the Gospel for the first time in my life. I heard about The Savior, not only A Savior. No! He is a living Savior and I met him in a personal way that day when I was kneeling. I realized that I could not save myself, but that only He could save me. Only He is able to save sinners. He is able to do it and it is my burning wishes that everybody would come to know Him. I wish that they would come to see His love for us through His sacrifice on the cross. For whom did He die? He died for all, for me personally and for you personally. May God open our eyes to see Him, our great Savior!

In my loneliness and in my poverty, I was able, by His grace, to experience Him, to experience my Savior, my Father, and a Father of the fatherless. I wanted to trust Him, I wanted to love Him as He loved me and I wanted to serve Him all the days of my life.

After meeting the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior, I was constantly involved in the church. I wanted to fellowship with believers. I was active and tried to help in the youth group and the Sunday school. Regardless of my limitations, I still tried to help.

At this time, I began to study the Bible daily. In addition, some of my Christian brethren gave me some Christian books. These books impacted my life dramatically at that time. They influenced my ministry deeply and they still do. The first book that I read was *The Pilgrims Progress* by John Bunyan. Following the Reformation years, this book became a companion book to the Bible for many Christians. John Bunyan described the Christian life. He told the story of carrying a great personal burden in his life. One day, he had a vision. This took

place while he was in prison. In that vision, he saw himself as a pilgrim carrying a heavy burden through life. He met many dangers in life such as wild animals and thieves. In spite of these problems he continued going until he saw a hill afar off and there was a cross on top of that hill. So he began to walk towards the cross. The roads were narrow, slippery and dangerous for him. Yet he pursued the way and came to the cross. When he reached there, he knelt at the foot of the cross and started to pray. He said: "Lord, you have been to the cross for my sake. I want to ask you to cleanse me, forgive me and have mercy on me. Immediately when he said these words, the burden on his back rolled away and fell into the depths of the sea. John Bunyan then got up, his knees liberated, forgiven and having experienced the mercy of the Lord, he went to tell all the people about his experience and also about the joy he now had.

This is exactly what happened to me. After I experienced the joy of the mercy of the Lord, I went forth telling others what He had done for me. At that time, this book moved me very much. I found that my burden had also been miraculously lifted and I wanted to share this with other people.

Even today, I still have this joy of knowing His mercy and forgiveness.

I also was moved by another Christian book about the life of a Roman who became a Christian. It was called *The Robe*. After reading this book, I began to weep due to the story.

The story of the Robe concerned the events associated with the garment that our Lord was wearing the day He was crucified. As the Bible says, His garment would not be divided, but they would cast lots for it. This was a prophecy that took place at the crucifixion of our Lord. The Roman soldiers cast lots, and one of them won the garment. Once the soldier took the robe, he began to think about the events of the crucifixion. He began to think about Jesus. He asked who was he and why did these events take place? Why was the sun darkened? Why did the Temple curtain tear in two? Why was there an earthquake? How could it be that the dead people even rose up and returned to physical life? Who was this man that these things might happen? He must be an extraordinary man. Yes, He was! He was the Son of the Living God, the Savior of the World. Then he realized whose garment he

had. He had the garment of the Christ. Then, He became his Savior. Today, He is ready to be our Savior now even today. If we look at the cross and realize that He suffered for our sins and we realize that He suffered for us, then we can embrace Him as our Savior and Lord.

After reading this book, I gave it to my mother. She also cried she read the story. Then, that book was used as a tremendous witnessing tool as we passed it around to our neighbors. It affected them in the same way. This book proved to be a great blessing to my family, our community and me.

I was also deeply impacted by another book about a person who had opted to embrace a very simple life and go to Africa to minister to the native peoples there. It was the biography of C.T. Studd. He was the son of a rich man, a wealthy English landowner. C.T. Studd was educated in the best schools in England. He was a graduate of Oxford University. He was facing a wonderful career following in his father's footsteps. He was even one of the best cricket players in England. Yet one day when he saw the light of the Gospel, he left everything and went to central Africa as a missionary. The great wish

in his heart was to tell people about the love of Christ. He tried to witness that this marvelous love is not for a specific people, but is for the entire world (John 3:16) and God blessed C.T. Studd. He established many churches in Africa. Many Christians are still living today because he came to them with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

These books truly strengthened my faith. They helped me to see that people who were no different than I was had great ministries for the Lord. They were in some cases very simple people with little or no real resources, but they loved our Lord and through seeking His will, they were able to do wonderful things for Him.

After this time, I also began to study the Bible through correspondence courses. I was in touch with the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois in America. They even offered me a full scholarship to come to their Bible College and study for the ministry, but I could not afford the cost for the trip there. The same thing happened to me again with another Bible school in Switzerland. I had no financial way to get there.

At this time, I was wondering how I could best serve our Lord in His work. So I prayed that the Lord would show me what He wanted me to do. A thought had come to me about working in Kuwait, but another call came to me to go and work in an orphanage in Ramallah, a city 12 kilometers north of Jerusalem. So, I went to Ramallah and started working in an orphanage there. I thank God for that period of my life because it brought me nearer to Him. I had time to pray, to read the Bible and I had plenty of fellowship with brothers, sisters and the people in the home. I had a blessed time and enjoyed it very much. It once again confirmed to me that the Father of the fatherless will never forsake His children.

I worked at the orphanage in Ramallah and I was very happy there. As I said, it was a place where I built my faith and I learned to trust Him more. After two years of serving there, I had a call to go to a Bible School in Beirut, Lebanon. I went to study and to do work in translation. Unfortunately, after a year, the Bible school was closed. You can't imagine how disappointed I was when I had to go back. It was as though the hope for my life was gone. But through this, I had to learn that there is no end of the hope that

comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. He continues to encourage us and to put faith in our hearts through His Word and the promises written therein to believe in the impossible.

When I returned from Beirut, I started praying for an entire day. Near the end of this day a person came to me to ask me to go back to the orphanage in Ramallah where I had worked. So I did and was very thankful that God did not forget me. Although everybody else had forgotten me, He didn't forget me. I was glad to go back and serve the Lord in the orphanage.



6.

Study to show thyself approved...
II Timothy 2:15

While serving in Ramallah, I met three lady missionaries. They were named Gladys Thomas, Katy Morgan and Mary Jean Grupp. These ladies came to establish a girl's orphanage in Ramallah. (It is now known as the Evangelical Girls Home.) They were from a Bible College in Wales and asked me if I wanted to continue my studies. I told them that I hoped to. They then told me that I had to pray. So we arranged for a prayer meeting every day for three months. We prayed everyday for three hours. Then the answer came and our mighty God moved in a wonderful way in answering the prayers of His servants. They told me: "Praise the Lord! The Lord has answered! There is an old lady that has died in Britain and in her will she wrote that her money should be used for somebody who wants to study theology." Believe it or not, I was one of four who were granted a scholarship selected to go to Bible College at the expense of this dear departed sister.

There were four boys who were, by the grace of God, able to go to the Bible College in Wales. I remember the first week that I told my family that I may go to Britain. They were surprised saying, "How would you be able to go there?" And then the next week I came and told them that the day after tomorrow I will be leaving. Everything was set, the tickets, the visas and all the arrangements. It was the first time in my life that I left home for a far away place like Britain where all was unknown to me. I didn't sleep the night before. I had no idea what was waiting for me there. I remember that when I was praying with the three women, they said that when I went to Wales, I would need to pray for everything. Even when I would need toothpaste, I needed to pray for toothpaste. Of course, I had no income at all and I needed to learn to live by faith. I learned to live by faith for three years and what a blessed three years they were. I had experienced the faithfulness of the Father of the fatherless. Life in the Bible College was a wonderful time of prayer and trusting in the Lord. We were able to study the Bible and theology. We worked and were asked to preach every Sunday. It was a blessed life.

7.

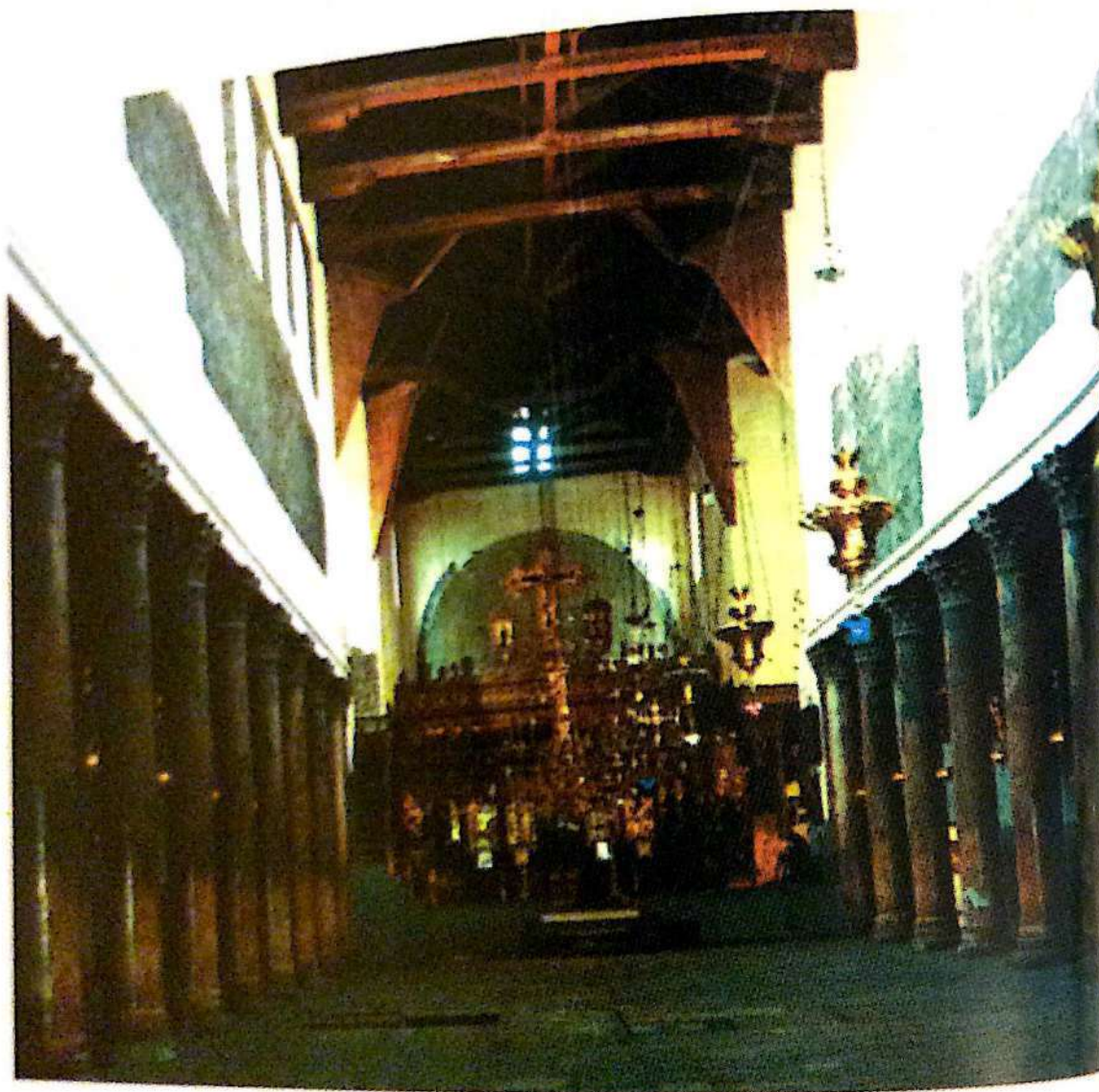
And our shoes became old...

Joshua 9:13

When I first arrived in Wales, we always found ourselves in the rain. The saying goes that children here are born with an umbrella in their hand. Therefore, we all needed warm clothes and warm shoes. Unfortunately, I had not brought any warm shoes with me. Coming from Palestine, we didn't have a need for warm shoes as the weather there doesn't really get to cold and we had snow. This was a problem. When I would walk through the frost in the morning or the wetness during the day, my shoes were not suitable for this weather. I always seemed to have wet feet.

So I was praying and put my need before the Lord. Then one day after that, I came back to my room and found a wonderful pair of warm boots. A paper was inside saying, "For you, Naim." They were beautiful, strong and brand new! I tried them on and they were the right size! I went outside and with joy and happiness I wore those new boots everyday. Until this day, I still don't know from whom they came,

except from my Heavenly Father. He saw
my need and He supplied it. Through this I
saw that He constantly cared for me.



**Church of Nativity
Bethlehem**

8.

Afterwards he was hungry...

Matthew 4:2

While serving in Wales, an extraordinary event happened to me. I want to mention it here to give glory to God, and to the precious name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

While attending Bible College in Wales, I was assigned to minister in two different church services in two villages about fifteen kilometers from the college. When I looked at the bus schedule, I realized that the bus reached the villages when the service was over, so I needed another option to make it on time for the services. One of my friends suggested that I should take a bicycle. So I decided to ride a bicycle to the two villages. Wales is a very hilly country and because of its northerly location, it becomes quite dark early on winter evenings. Not only were the hills an obstacle, but also while I was riding I would have to stop and wait for a car to come and shine their lights on the road signs so I could know where I was going. This was because the bicycle had a small light that shone as long as you were moving, because

the power was generated from the movement of the tire, but when you stopped, you had no light. Not only was I riding in the dark, but I also was cycling during the time of rain and wind.

When I reached the first church, God blessed the first congregation and me in a wonderful way during that service. After the service, I was getting tired and I was a little bit hungry. Thankfully, the pastor's wife asked me to come back to her home for a late lunch. I said to myself: "Wonderful!" I was not expecting a meal at all other than the rice pudding they served us every Sunday at the college. Honestly, rice pudding is not my favorite, so I was hoping that I would get something else. At the meal, the dear old lady told me: "Oh! I have a wonderful pudding dessert for you! I prepared it especially for you!" I wondered what it was and then she explained that it was rice pudding. She said that it tasted lovely. I thanked her for the food. I ate my lunch and I ate my dessert even though I didn't like rice pudding. However, on reflection, I really loved that meal, even the rice pudding, because it was from the hand of that kind pastor's wife who represented

wonderful hand. He is able to do exceeding and abundantly more than what we ask for.

I experienced this miraculous hand of our Lord one day. There were four of us who were in need of financial assistance to finalize our college account and travel home. A boy from Holland came to me and said that God had answered our prayers. He said that his aunt in Holland, who is a believer, had been in prayer and that she had a feeling from the Lord that she needed to give a certain sum of money for His work. So, he said that he would write her and tell her to send the money. However, I told him not to write his aunt because if the Lord told her to put the money aside for Him, He would tell her exactly where He wanted this money to be spent. We didn't wait long for the answer. In two days time, we got a letter from his aunt. She said: "I felt that I should give this sum of money for four boys." This sum of money was exactly enough for us, so we could pay our fees, buy our tickets and go home. There was no doubt that this blessing was from the hand of the Lord. We went home rejoicing; we went home happy and eager to tell people about the love of the Lord Jesus Christ which we had practiced in a very practical way as we prayed for certain

things and then the things would happen. We praise Him for that because this experience helped us in our future ministry.

I had prayed for people, I prayed for everything in my ministry. The Lord had answered us according to His goodness and riches. Here again we know of the kindness and graciousness of our Father, the Father of the fatherless.

Surprisingly, prior to my departure from Wales, I was contacted out of the blue by the leadership of the Lutheran church in Jerusalem. They offered me a position and I accepted the job gladly and thankfully. When I arrived in Jerusalem, they assigned me to work in and be in charge of the boy's home and to teach lessons at the school. This school was composed of boy's ages 14-18, most of who were orphans. I was always overjoyed working with orphans, as I was one myself. During my time there, I was continually praying for the young men.

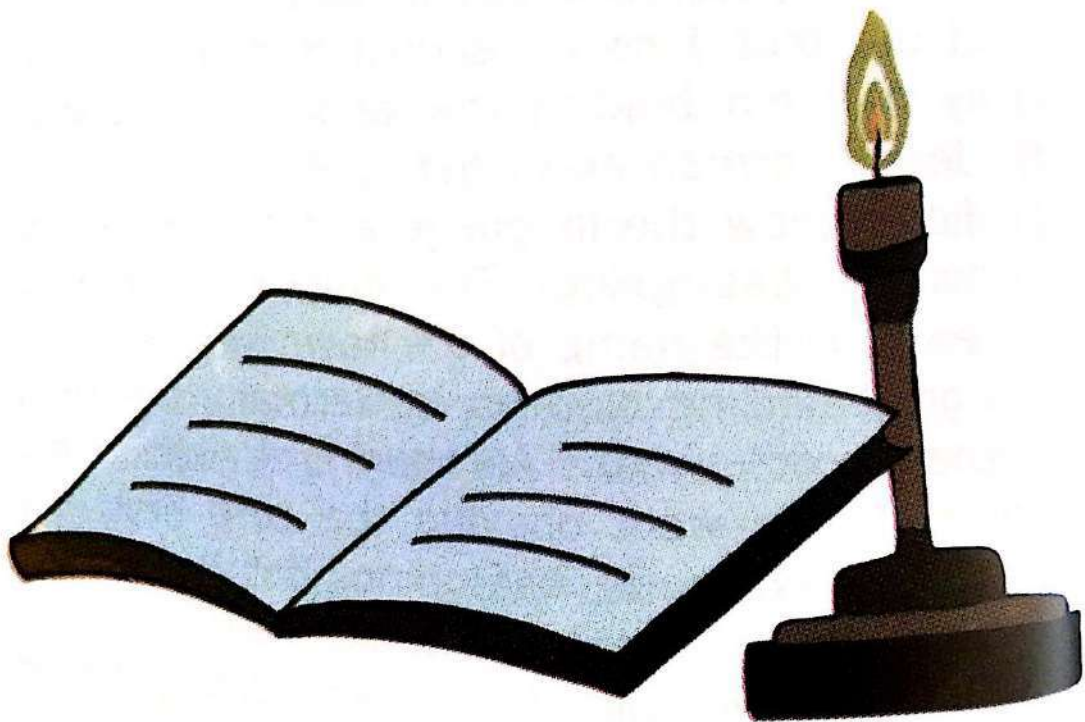
One day, a boy came to me and was shocked by the death of one of his relatives. At that moment, I seized the opportunity to speak to him about the message of salvation. I wanted him to know that Jesus has

overcome death and all the power of darkness. After a long talk, we knelt and he gave his heart to the Lord.

Immediately the fire for Christ spread to the hearts of many of these young men. One after another came to me seeking prayer and many gave their lives to the Lord. I was thrilled and thankful to see the change in their lives. To God be all the praise and glory!

I spent one wonderful year there. At the end of the year, the church asked me if I wanted to continue my studies in Germany. I told them that I did not know German. They told me that I could learn it if that was the only problem holding me back. So I agreed to learn German and I left to go to Germany. I didn't know the language and I didn't know where I was going. The only thing that I knew was the name of the town where I was to go. I had never been in Germany before. I experienced what Abraham of old went through. He went obeying the Lord first, not knowing where he was going. But I was sure of one thing. The Lord would lead me (as it led him) on the right path, the path of righteousness for His name's sake.

When I got to Germany, I received a copy of the speech that was delivered by that first young man who had accepted Christ in the orphanage. At his graduation from the school, he had been selected to give the speech to the graduating class. He spoke about all of his studies, but for him the most important experience was meeting and getting to know our Lord Jesus Christ. This was a great blessing to me to see our Lord working with and through me, an orphan ministering His Gospel to other orphans. He truly is the Father of the fatherless.



12.

Daily in the School of Tyranus...

Acts 19:9

Once again I found myself outside of my native country serving the Lord. After a long trip, I reached the place in Germany where I was to engage in my studies. It was a small town called Neuendettelsau. I found a room for myself and stayed there. I had a schedule for the classes and in the meantime I was studying German. The mission was very kind to me and even provided me with a private tutor.

I would spend two or three hours a day learning German. After one year, I was able to speak and was even able to teach a Sunday school class in German. I stayed there for two years. After that, I had to take a final examination. With the help of the Lord and by His grace, I passed the final exam with good marks. Then I was praying and seeking God's will concerning what to do next.

Before I continue, I want to express the goodness of the Lord, which was shown to me by His grace in answering prayers.

During that two-year period, I selected every Monday as a day of fasting and prayer. I used to go to the woods surrounding our little town and I would stay the whole day there meditating, fasting and praying. I asked for His blessing and asked Him to show me His will. After a while, one of my intimate friends noticed that I went away every Monday and he wanted to know where I was going. So I told him what I was doing and he expressed a wish to join me. We then began to have a day of fasting and prayer together. What a blessing to be in the presence of the Lord, what peace He would fill our hearts with and what fellowship we had when we knelt in the woods as we would commune with our Savior, friend to friend. I didn't know where the Lord wanted me to go with this call to prayer and fasting.

One day, our school director received a call. It was from the director of another institution. He had learned that I, a Palestinian, was studying in the College. He told our director that there was a young Palestinian man at their institution and he didn't speak English or German and they didn't know what he wanted. They couldn't communicate with him. They wanted me to

go and help this young man since I too am a Palestinian. When I arrived, I determined that he desired to become a Christian and he wished to receive baptism. I invited him over to our place to see how far in the faith he was. We spent two hours each evening praying and reading the Bible together. He then started coming with us, during the day of fasting and prayer, I noticed that he had given his heart to the Lord. I wanted to wait a short time to strengthen him in the faith through prayer and Bible study before proceeding with the baptism.

Once we passed a church in a nearby village. This church had not been used in several years. I asked whether or not we could use the place for Bible study. The head pastor of the village approved, so we organized a Bible study in that village. Forty to fifty people from the village came every week to study the Bible together. My Palestinian friend was with me and after a while, he insisted on Baptism. It was a great joy to see his face shining when the Holy Spirit fell upon him, giving him radiant eyes and a face of radiance and glory when he was baptized. The Lord was gracious to him. He dedicated his life to the Lord and he became a firm believer in the blessed Lord.

Afterwards I asked him, what was he going to do? He answered that he wanted to go and study nursing. He desired to help the sick exactly like our Lord and Savior did when He was on the earth. This man is, now in Germany living a wonderful life with his family. He became a nurse and is working in a hospital. How I praise the Lord!

I continued fasting and praying. I had no idea why at the time, but now I know that the Lord led us to the old church. We continued to have meetings there once a week. We praise the Lord for that time and glory that was brought to His name through our work in Germany.

After I finished my studies, I was asked to go to Hamburg in the north of Germany to stay at the Mission Academy, which is a part of the University of Hamburg. So I went there. Hamburg is a very different city than where I had been. At Neuendettelsau, there was that small town warmth with the people, but Hamburg is different. It is a big city and nobody knows anyone: everyone is a stranger.

I stayed there and did enjoy my studies as I studied theology. I wanted to

prepare myself the best I could for the service that the Lord had for me. I also had many times of prayer and experience so I can testify that the Lord did not leave me even in the big city. He was so close to me and I was so blessed to know that He was always with me. During my time in Hamburg, I met some new friends. I met people from all over the world including Ghana, Japan, Indonesia and a variety of other countries. Every day we would go to the University for Classes and enjoy ourselves as we studied. The Academy provided many new activities for us. Every now and then we would be asked to preach in one of the churches and even to go to different places to visit other parts of Germany with all of the students.

13.

It rained for 40 days and 40 nights...

Genesis 7: 12

In 1962, an extraordinary event took place in Hamburg. The winter that year was unseasonably cold and severe. In the month of February it began to rain. It didn't seem to stop. Then the Elbe River began to rise. One side of the river is mountainous while the other side is a plains region. The rising water began to affect the city of Hamburg where the river passed through the city. The water began to rise faster and faster as the rain continued. Many roads were closed. Highways that linked Hamburg to other cities were also affected. Peoples' lives were severely affected. As a result of this flood, more than three hundred people lost their lives. It was an unexpected national tragedy. The call came to some of the students of the Academy to go and work at night on the highway leading to Bremen that was closed due to the flood. I too was called to go, so I went and worked the whole night through. Helicopters brought us sacks of sand to make a barrier between the road and the river.

Then the water in the road was pumped back onto the side where the river was. The road was then drivable by the next day. I was glad to be able to help out in this way. It was an honor to help those in need as an example of Christian love and unity in the city at that time of distress.



14.

**Man and Woman, created He
them...**

Genesis 5:2

As I was nearing the end of my studies, I had to think about my future. While praying, I realized that if I wanted to serve the Lord, I would have to have a mate. I knew that I wanted a girl whose mind was on the Lord, one who loves the Lord; otherwise we could not serve Him together effectively.

While thinking of this matter, my mother wrote me and said that she wanted me to marry a relative from her family. She wanted one who was "bones of her bones and flesh of her flesh." I told my mother that I wanted a mate who was a believer and one who loved the Lord. A short time later, I went on holiday to see my mother in Bethlehem. After visiting my mother and family in Bethlehem the time came to return to Germany. My mother asked me to stop in Lebanon on the way and visit her relatives and meet a potential partner.

My mother had a particular girl in mind. Her name was Georgette. She was from a very strong God-fearing family who were very distant relatives of my mother. Georgette was the middle of five daughters. One of them was too old and another too young, so I was left with three choices. I didn't know these girls, but I prayed that God would lead me to the right girl.

As it turned out a very unusual event took place. When I arrived to visit my mother's family in Lebanon, it happened that Georgette was left at home without her two other sisters. They had left Beirut to attend a church conference for youth. It was unusual because Georgette normally attended such meetings with her elder sister, but this time she remained home. This was for me a clear sign from the Lord that she was the right person for me. How I praise the Lord for His choice for me.

We were married on October 26, 1963 in Beirut in a Presbyterian church. After the wedding, I needed to finish my final exams in Germany, so we went together.

At the same time, the Hamburg church gave me the opportunity to assist another

pastor of a congregation in Hamburg. This congregation was known for its youth work. This was good for me because in the future I would be dealing with youth work extensively. So we went back to Germany and stayed in the parish. I would go to the university once or twice a week and then I was able to finish my thesis. After a year, I had my examination and my thesis was accepted and I received my Bachelors of Theology and Divinity. I received my two degrees and we went back home to Bethlehem in July 1964. In December of 1964, on the third advent, I was ordained into the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. What a great experience! I was very blessed and on the tenth of January in 1965, I was installed in the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem and there I served for twenty-three years.

We started our ministerial work serving our people in Bethlehem. God was very gracious to us and blessed us. He gave us two daughters, Hala and Helen. What a joy they are to us. We praise' God for them. Both eventually married and they have six children between them. Hala was married to a young man from Jerusalem named Bishara Sahhar. Helen was married to another man

from Jerusalem named Bassem Muallem. Our grandchildren are Emil, Georgette, Natalie, Emil, Osama and Najshlah. These children are a joy to their parents, for us and for our whole family. We thank God for them and we pray that they will know the Lord in due time. We pray that they will come to serve Him and believe in Him.



15.

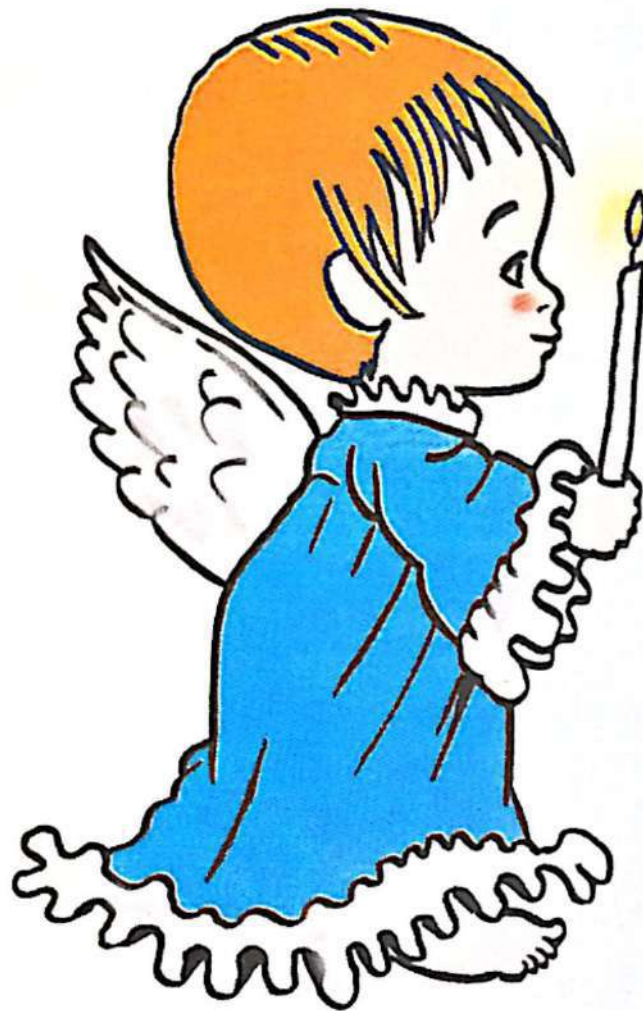
**Bethlehem Ephrata being the
least...**

Matthew 2:6

Bethlehem has a great significance not only to me, but also to all Christians around the world. Although it is but a small town, God used this simple town to bring forth a Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the King of Kings, Lord of Lords and the Savior of all mankind. We often sing about it: "Oh little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie. ..." Indeed it does lie so still, so calm and so beautiful. It speaks to the people of the world about the love of God through Jesus Christ, who came to this world through Bethlehem. In a simple manger He was born in a cave, when there was no room elsewhere. He came into the world as a baby, not born in a palace, but in the poorest conditions imaginable. In reality, He is the King of Kings. In Him, all treasures are defined. All the treasures of God's love are seen in His face. He is the Lord of all. Jesus Christ our Lord was born in this little town of Bethlehem. Though little and quiet, it has become great through this event. He raised

all the meek and lowly and brought them unto Him. Blessed be the Name of our Savior.

So I began my ministry with gratitude to God for giving me the opportunity to preach His Gospel and the beauty of His salvation.



16.

**Train up a child in the way...
Proverbs 22:6**

My wife and I began ministering in the Sunday school with the help of volunteer teachers. I am grateful for those who helped to serve in the Sunday school. It's amazing that now these children as they have grown older are teaching their children about the love of Jesus Christ. These Sunday school meetings evolved into something different. They grew into youth meetings.

We had no place to meet except on the playground. We would play games and have Bible study and prayer. It began small but it was fruitful and multiplied. It grew and grew and developed into a vacation Sunday school in the summer. Children would come and refresh their knowledge of the Bible and also of the normal subjects taught in their day schools rather than roaming in the streets. They would come from eight until one and would learn about the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then it grew, as more children would come.

My eyes were opened to the needs of the youth, especially in Beit Sahour, a Christian village next to Bethlehem. This village was a part of my parish and the responsibility for ministering to it was mine. Young people from Beit Sahour began to come for Bible studies, devotions, prayer, trips, games and good fellowship. This was the beginning of my ministry in Beit Sahour.

Slowly, we began to have youth conferences. Soon the church assigned me to be the youth pastor for the whole church and we would hold youth conferences. The thing is we had no budget for such things. It was a miracle that these meetings could be held at all.

During a prayer meeting for unity that we held every year late in January in Bethlehem, I met a Roman Catholic priest who was in attendance from the House of Abraham in Jerusalem. This facility is dedicated to organizing ecumenical retreats for people from all over the world. This prayer meeting for unity involved all of the churches in Jerusalem and Bethlehem coming together in an ecumenical spirit. This priest spoke German so we had a good talk and there we

began our friendship. He began to visit us in our home regularly.

When the war broke out in 1973, the youth were roaming in the street with nothing to do. One day, two of our young people were walking in the street, talking and joking and there were two Israeli soldiers nearby. When the soldiers heard these kids laughing and joking around, they thought that the young people were mocking them. So the soldiers hit them and beat them and threw them into prison. For three months, their families did not know where they were. Thankfully, they were eventually released and they told us their story. This spoke to my heart and I felt that the Lord was urging me to act in order to avoid such an incident taking place again in the future. I knew I was supposed to do something for the youth. Then the priest of the House of Abraham told me that we could have retreats for the youth in his building because at that time, due to the war situation, no one was using the building. The building is situated on a small hill southeast of Jerusalem. Close by there is a small wooded area and this makes an ideal place for such retreats. So I seized this opportunity and he told me that I did not

need to pay anything. We were grateful to the Lord that He opened this place for our youth ministry.

Shortly thereafter, I gathered about fifty young people from Bethlehem and Beit Sahour and we had our first conference. Then a second and third and then several times a year, we would have conferences. There we would gather together with many congregations from all over the region. We had youth coming from Beit Jala, Ramallah, Beit Sahour and Jerusalem. We would have a large youth conference or retreat and during these conferences, I taught the young people. It was suggested that each would contribute one Jordanian Dinar. Of course, times were difficult and young people didn't have much money. However, those that could not pay didn't and those who could pay did. I then took half of the money and put it into the offering box and with the other half: we made a journey to Jericho, Nablus or Jaffa to see the holy sites and the beauty of our land and the young people were blessed. They all felt that the Lord was blessing each one through the prayers, lessons and Bible studies. We pursued this activity for many years. After that, we had an opportunity to go to Stella Carmel in Haifa. This was a

retreat house for the Anglican Church. There was no money in the budget and we would have to support ourselves. We made it to Stella Cannel and looked over and saw the bay and the city of Haifa, Akko and even the borders of Lebanon. It was a beautiful and amazing view. Due to the success of these early meetings involving young people, the church finally saw the need and began to put money in the budget for youth related activities. These youth activities were unique events in our country and I thank the Lord for allowing me to be a part of them.

In the early 1970's, I also became involved in an international ministry geared toward youth. This involved an exchange program that we had with youth from Europe. This was the first time in the history of our church that we had an exchange program with. Another church youth group from Europe. In 1973, we had youth from our congregation who traveled to Germany. Then we had German youth coming to us through an exchange program where we would have fellowship together. In 1975, we expanded this program to include youth from Finland. We took a group of about thirty Palestinians to Finland as a part of the exchange program. In 1978, we went to

Austria and then again to Germany in 1984. Four times we took youth from our congregations to Europe and four times we welcomed groups to our congregation here. It was a good experience for the youth. They told me that this was the first time that they had taken an airplane and even for some the first time they had left their home country. It was a remarkable experience for them.

While staying in Germany one year, the Palestinian youth stayed in the homes of the German families. The Germans treated them very kindly. They even gave them the keys to their homes so they could come and go whenever they liked. The youth would come up to me and say, "What kind of Christians are these?" They were astonished to see and amazed to see that there were Christians like this in the world even giving them the keys to their houses. We had a chance to see amazing Christian people and shared opportunities to praise the Lord together with them. We enjoyed times together in praise and worship learning to adore our Lord and to live for Him. All the young people and adults who took part in this program enjoyed the fellowship with our brethren from overseas. I was honored to have been involved in these programs. They brought

great experiences of the love of Christ and spread these in the hearts of many people, which served as an example for all.

During these programs, we had Bible studies and group discussions with the Europeans and our young people. It was an educational trip because they learned a lot. They enjoyed it and wanted to continue with these trips because they were new and exciting and, humbly speaking, no other pastor had done anything like this before. Later, some of our pastors, who were initially involved as participants in the youth exchanges, conducted similar activities. As a result, the youth groups became stronger and more unified and the youth conferences were also very dynamic and a source of refreshment and blessings. I had built strong relationships with the youth. Later on, they became the backbone of my church. They became members and they were good leaders. They were well prepared to do good works. They were prepared to sit and discuss matters concerning the churches, schools and education system. Additionally, all of our current pastors and even our bishop were at one time or another involved in the youth group. We are glad and proud that they have chosen a life of service to the Lord our God.

17.

**As touching the ministering...
II Corinthians 9:1**

I always wanted to be involved in work that served our Lord. One way to do this was through non-profit organizations and I was involved in setting up a number of them. I was active not only in the work of the church, but also in social work. I helped establish four social institutions that are still running today.

The first one is the SOS Kinderdorf. I was one of the founding members that helped to establish it. SOS Kinderdorf was an orphanage established after World War II. A man named Dr. Herman Gmeiner, an Austrian, felt that God was calling him to a ministry involving children. He had the idea to open a new style orphanage based on the concept that it should be a type of village. The village was set up with a group of apartments together and in each apartment there seven to nine children. A woman, who acted as their mother, supervised each group of children in their own apartment. This plan aimed to provide a source of long term

stability as well as seeking to model a home and community environment to the children. This facility, I am glad to say, is still going strong and I was blessed to have been a part of bringing it into being in our region.

The second charity is a school we started in Beit Jala called the School of Hope. The Mennonite Central Committee from the USA opened it. One day they came and told us that their policy had changed and they could no longer run this school. It had about one hundred to one hundred and twenty children aged 14-18 from all different parts of Palestine. Mostly, they were orphans and this, of course, speaks to my heart since I was an orphan and could relate to these children. So to assume the leadership position in running the school, we established the Arab Charitable Society. We only had one main message: "Jesus loves you." We did our best to make these children feel that while they did not have a physical family here on this earth, they were members of a more powerful family, the family of our Heavenly Father, the Father of all. Many of these children accepted Jesus, chose to follow Him and now are living for the Lord Jesus.

Initially, the Mennonite Central Committee agreed to help us financially with this school. Over a five-year period, we arranged to assume financial responsibility for the school. After the first five years, we found that we were unable to meet all the expenses related to it and, thankfully, the Mennonites agreed to help us for another five years. The plan was that each year our level of support would be lowered by 20% and at the end of the period we would be totally self-supporting. To raise money for the school, it was decided to open a business venture. We started a chicken farm to support the school. At first, the chicken farm had 2,000 chickens. They produced eggs and we sold chickens. We also provided employment for several staff to manage the farm. Then, the Lord allowed the chicken farm to double in size, and finally it had over 6,000 chickens providing eggs and chickens for food. By the end of the 5-year period, over 80% of the income for the school came from that farm with additional support coming from outside of the country. That school is still, running and is still being supported with income derived from the chicken farm! Praise God for His guidance and many blessings. It is exciting that I was involved in starting this.

The third organization is a house for the blind. It was called the Light House Society for the Blind. A retired German professor contacted me and we worked together to buy a house for a ministry to the blind. We had about fifteen blind girls who had just finished high school and had nothing to do. Many of them faced a life without any some of the girls were from rural backgrounds and their opportunities upon returning to their villages were severely restricted. We decided to train them in different vocations such as receptionists, telephone operators, Braille secretaries or physical therapists. We tried to help these girls get a job and we never differentiated between Christian and Muslim, showing no partiality. To this day, several of these women are working in the jobs for which they were trained. The main thing is that the girls who came to the house of the blind would taste the love of Jesus Christ and then become productive members of society, helping themselves and their families as well.

The fourth and the most amazing charitable establishment is the Bethlehem Bible College. I still remember when Brother Bishara Awad, Alex Awad and I were praying

for this. This institution was founded totally on faith. We decided to start the Bible College using rooms in our church for the first classrooms. Then we moved to a rented apartment and eventually a facility was purchased which is today the Bethlehem Bible College. Now, they have extension ministries in Gaza, in the Galilee and Nazareth. Professors are sent to these areas to conduct intensive study programs. There are about fifty students in all in the school. The college prepares the student to receive a diploma after two years and a Bachelor, of Theology after four years. This college is still running in spite of the current situation. We are thankful to the Lord for the success of this institution.

I am glad to say that the Bethlehem Bible College is recognized in the Middle East as a Christian college. Besides the theological curricula, the college helps students to study the English language. I want to praise the Lord for the blessing that this college has been to the whole area. This is for the benefit of our youth who have a desire to serve the Lord. Many of the graduates are teaching religious studies now in the schools of Bethlehem. They are helping and are a blessing. I am glad to say that I am

chairman of the board of this college and I pray each day that God will bless each one at the school, the staff, teachers, students and all those who are working behind the scenes who have no contact with the people. They are known and don't pretend to be somebody but they are a blessing and we thank God for them. We also thank God for the School of Hope, the House of Light and the SOS Kinderdorf. All of these institutions are dedicated to the glory of God and to show He really is a Father to the fatherless. Glory to His blessed Name.

18.

**It has cast him often into fires...
Mark 9:22**

During my twenty-three years of service in Bethlehem, I experienced the Lord in a mighty way. What I learned in the Bible College and at the university, I put into practice. I studied all areas of Biblical and Theological subjects including Old & New Testament theology, Systematic Theology, Comparative religion, - Church history, Homiletics (which is learning how to preach Biblical messages and evangelism) and philosophy. I also studied counseling which proved to be one of the most important subjects in my ministry. I was often called to counsel people in their time of need. Let me mention one such incident as I will never forget it and it shows the mighty hand of our Blessed Lord.

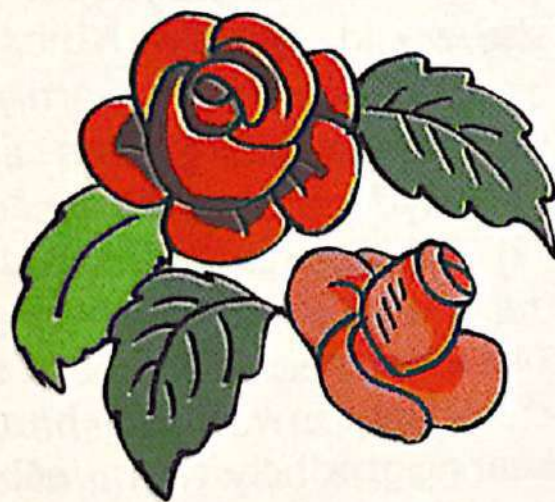
One day, I was called around 4 a.m. to go and visit a family. One of their sons came to our home and told me that his older brother was going to commit suicide. He asked for my help. So I left as soon as possible and went to their home. When I got

there, I saw the boy in question, a young man about fourteen or fifteen years of age. I looked at him and saw he was full of anxiety. He had a match in his hand and had poured kerosene on his body and was ready to burn himself. His parents, brothers and sisters were trying to take the match from his hand. I was touched deeply by this shocking scene. I couldn't imagine how this was possible. I saw there were many problems between him and his parents. He thought that ending his life was the best way to end the misery of his life. Immediately, I urged the young man not to take his own life. I told him that no matter how bad the situation in his life was that Jesus was the answer to his problems and that he really needed to be calm and talk this situation through. He agreed and said that he would think about it. I told him that I wished to counsel him and pray with him and find out more about him and his life. I requested that he accompany me to my home. Thankfully, he agreed and we went to my home. There we talked and prayed together and that same morning he was well enough to go to school.

A few days later, he came to visit our family. After several visits, I eventually asked him to help in the Sunday school with

the youth. He was happy to help with the Sunday school and the youth group. After high school, he chose to go to the university since his marks were good. I helped him secure a scholarship and he went to Beir Zeit University. This university is located to the north of Jerusalem about 20 kilometers. While attending Beir Zeit University, he was always on the honor list for his high academic performance. Because of this, he applied for and received an additional scholarship to attend the American University of Beirut. There he became active in a fine Christian group known as "The Navigators." They are an organization doing work in universities to strengthen young Christian men and women in the faith. They concentrate on Bible reading, prayer and biblical discussions. It was an extension of the youth work that he took part in through our church in Bethlehem. He eventually got a BA in Sociology. Then, he got another scholarship. He pursued his post-graduate work, completing an MA in psychology. He went on to obtain his doctorate in sociology and now he's a professor of Sociology in America. How honored I feel that I was able to see this young man turn his life fully over to Jesus. He married a true believer in Jesus and they are living a good life in America.

They also have two sons. He honored me with the privilege of baptizing his children in Bethlehem. I am thankful for that. How amazed and blessed I am that the Lord used me in the life of this young man! Thank God for the wonderful things He has done and let us give glory to His name!



19.

**At the name of Jesus every knee
shall bow...**

Philippians 2:10

I have encountered many difficult trials in my ministry including conducting spiritual warfare. I will never forget the time I was called with another pastor to pray for a young lady from our congregation. I noticed that when she would come with her husband to church service, she could hardly sit still and eventually she would get up and leave the service. This young woman was disturbed by something. Finally, she told us that: "I can't hear the Name, I can't hear the Name." We knew that she meant the holy name of Jesus. In actual fact, it was not she who had a problem hearing the holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Unholy spirits possessed her. I noticed that when I mentioned the precious Name of Jesus, she would run away from the church. I was asked by another pastor to pray for her. So I decided to go and pray for this dear child of our Lord Jesus Christ. We prayed many nights for long hours that the Lord would touch her and heal her and that Jesus Christ would be her Lord. One day, her

father asked us to come and pray for her in his home in Beit Jala, a town right next to Bethlehem. As soon as we entered the room, she looked at us in a strange way and shouted in a rude voice that she wanted to kill us! Her eyes were very red. I will never forget them! She literally wanted to kill us. Then she said: "I know you, I know who you are, don't speak about Him and don't use His Name!" A Christian brother had accompanied me to the house. We agreed together that while I was speaking to her that he would be praying and while he was speaking with her that I would be praying. When I said: "In the Name of Jesus," she became enraged and picked up a large potted plant and tried to throw it at us. It was amazing to see this small woman move this large pot. It broke and dirt poured out everywhere. Then she fell down and began weeping intensely. She tried to kiss my feet begging me not to mention the holy Name of Jesus. The brother who was with me began to pray and I prayed once more and she then became calm. This was a turning point in her life. The spiritual victory was won and the holy Name of Jesus was victorious. This lovely Christian woman is now living a good life with her husband and children free from spiritual torment and

is joyfully serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I remember the story of the Lord Jesus Christ when He told us that even Satan with all his might would tremble in His presence. In the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ there is no spiritual power that can be stronger than He. Jesus is stronger, Jesus is mightier and Jesus is the Lord of all and He overcame all the powers of darkness. Paul had this experience also and he knew that the one who was with him was greater than the ones against us. This pushes me forward to stick with the Lord and to keep on praying that He might be glorified in our lives.

20.

**The LORD our Healer and
provider...**

Exodus 15:26 & Genesis 22:14

During my pastoral ministry in Bethlehem, I had an amazing experience of divine healing and I am today living proof that our Blessed Lord works miracles and still cures our sicknesses.

In 1974, I became sick. I had great pain one night in my side. My wife told me to get a doctor, but when we checked, we realized we didn't have much money. In order to call a doctor to come for a home visit at night, it can be quite expensive. I tried to bear the incredible pain. It became unbearable and finally, at 4 a.m., my wife called the doctor. He came and gave me an injection. I became calm and was able to sleep a while. We went to pay him and he said he would come at seven in the morning and check on me again and then I could pay him.

Then at about 5:30 that morning, the bell of our house rang. We went and saw a member of our church who was an old lady. She

asked me: "What is the matter with you? I was tormented the whole night because of you. Do you have a problem? What is wrong?" We knew that this was from the Lord. She gave me five Jordanian Dinars for the church. She asked me for a receipt. Then she gave us another five Jordanian Dinars for ourselves. She told us: "I don't know your need, but please accept this as from a mother to you." So, I looked at my wife and looked towards heaven to our blessed Lord. After an hour, the doctor came and we were able to pay him as though nothing had happened. This was a great miracle for us. Although we lived on salary, sometimes salary was not enough since we had four people in our house plus my mother. We needed money, but the Lord provided and we were able to pay the doctor.

He then advised me that I should go to the hospital. So that next day I went and they examined me. They then thought there was a tumor in my stomach, so they felt that I needed an operation to investigate and find out what it was. I knew many people were praying for me, so I submitted myself to the doctors since they were well qualified. They finally did find a tumor around my stomach. This tumor did not expand and did not open.

It was malignant cancer and I was thankful that it was not spreading to the rest of my stomach or intestines. They removed this tumor without complications. I was then able to go back home. What a joy for the people when they saw that I had recovered and that God had showed me such great love. People came to our house in groups. One day, the head of our church at that time came and said: "Oh, you'll never have a rest from this and you need to go to Germany." He wanted me to go to Germany and check to make sure that the tumor was gone and had not spread or come back anywhere else in my body. I agreed to go and I flew to Germany via Beirut, Lebanon. We left our two girls (who were young at the time) with my wife's family and went to Germany to the oldest hospital in the country. It was the university hospital in the city of Heidelberg. The professors examined me and they also looked at the test results conducted by the other doctors. They examined me again and again. They decided that I should take chemical injections intravenously. They told me that it would be a series of nine injections. They had not been used before and they wanted to experiment on me. I was very nervous and after five injections, I told my wife that I did not want to take anymore.

I found the treatment to be very painful. I could hardly bear it. I wanted to go home. When she went to speak to them they said unfortunately what I did have was indeed cancer, so they told her to take her husband and go because if he lived, it would only be for six more months anyway.

So we went home, first to Beirut to get our children and then back to Bethlehem. I was told that many people were praying for me. I can remember our daughters were learning piano at that time. The nuns serving in Saint Joseph's School in Bethlehem were teaching them. These nuns were very kind and visited us frequently. When they heard of my sickness, they would pray for me. They would go to the Nativity Church and pray for me. I was humbled by how many people wrote to me and told me that "we are praying for you," and thank God that He answered their prayers and I am still living to this day. The doctors had only given me six months. Yet I am living even to this day over 28 years later. Praise God!

I still remember an instance when I was sick and a group of young people came to me. Among them were Brother Bishara Awad, Brother Alex Awad and others. They

said that they felt a need to pray for me. We knelt and we started to pray and the promise came to us while we were praying and it was shining like a great light. This promise is from the epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans, It says: "That if we live, we live for the Lord and if we die, we die for the Lord, so whether we live or die we are the Lord's." These words from the Lord were a great comfort at that time.

The professors in Germany referred me to another doctor who worked in the University of Tel Aviv in Israel. This was also a teaching hospital, so this doctor was working as a professor training new physicians for their work as doctors. Rather than remain under their care in Germany, they suggested that I could be treated further in Tel Aviv, which was obviously much closer to my home. So I went to see this new doctor and he told me that I had a truly serious cancer. For a short time, there was no treatment for it. He pointed out that this cancer could be treated in 3 ways: by an operation that I had already had and by chemical therapy that I had also already undergone. The remaining option for me was radiation therapy. He said I could proceed and undertake a new radiation treatment. I

took his advice and began the treatment. I underwent it for two years. I drove my car to Tel Aviv five times a week for two years. I continued in my work at the church as normal. Then, after two years, the doctor told me that I could come and visit him as a friend, but not any longer as a patient. He told me that I was completely cured. He said that it was an absolute miracle. Imagine what a joy it was to hear. This was a blessing for family, my friends and me that God healed me and now He is taking care of me as a father. He is looking after me. He is the Father of the fatherless. He is my Father.

At this time I began to think about my own father. How I regret that I never knew him since I was only three months old when he died. So I am always ready and eager to tell somebody about our Father. What a blessed word, Father: Thank you Lord that I know my Father who is the Almighty God, and His Son who is the Lord Jesus Christ who came to this earth to be the Father of the fatherless. Oh won't you trust Him, won't you believe in Him? Give Him all your sins and let Him take your burden. Turn your face to Him; repent! Believe in the Almighty God; He is able to save you to the uttermost. He is able to father you and able to bring you

safely home. Glory, Glory to His precious
Name. Amen.



21.

Thy sins are forgiven...

Matthew 9:22

I wish to speak now about an event that happened to me and encouraged me greatly. One Easter Sunday, we were sitting in our home after the Easter service. The bell rang and when I answered the door, I saw a middle aged man crying. He was crying bitterly and was asking: "Does the Lord Jesus forgive me? Do I have forgiveness when I have done such bad things?" I said to him: "What is the matter? Tell me and let us kneel and pray. Tell anything you want to the Lord Jesus and He will hear you and forgive you." I also said: "I will not tell you, I will read to you from the Bible what He says. "If our sins are like scarlet, they will be as wool. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us all our sins." If you come to the Lord and confess to the Lord your sins, and believe that He is able to forgive you, He will forgive you. Definitely, there is no sin too big for Him. There is no sin too great for Him. He can save you from the uttermost because His precious blood is valid even today. We need

only to confess to Him, repent from our sins and change our ways and to trust in Him and apply His precious blood to all of our sins, regardless of what the sin is. Just tell Him. Come let us kneel together and pray." We then knelt together and he opened his broken heart to the Lord and he wept bitterly confessing his sin. His sin was that he used to gamble and took all the money he earned and instead of using it to buy food or clothing for his children, he used to gamble with the money instead. He was not properly caring for his family. Of course, with gambling, he would always lose his money. So, we knelt together and he confessed and I asked the Lord to cover Him with His blood and to forgive Him and to give him a new life in our Lord Jesus Christ. You should have seen his face glittering when he got up from his knees and how happy he was. He left rejoicing and blessed and he was filled with joy. After that he became active in our church and began to be a blessing to others. He left his sin at the Blessed Cross of our Lord. We see this happening over and over again in the Bible, when people confessed their sins, repented and forsook them; they received forgiveness and eternal life. I believe as the people during the time of our Lord when there would be a time of forgiveness they would be

happy. When they were healed, they would leave rejoicing. Also, this man left rejoicing and I thank God for that and I pray that he will continue to love the Lord and continue in His love.

22.

Let the least of you be the greatest...

Luke 22:26

There is a time for everything under heaven as the Scripture relates. A time had come when we had to appoint a new Bishop for the old Bishop who was retiring. Many of the youth told me that they wanted me to be the candidate for the position of the Bishop. In the beginning, I hesitated as I realized the great responsibility and the burden that the position of being Bishop carries, especially in our situation in the Holy Land. The day for the election came and on June 4, 1984, all the votes were given to me and I became the Bishop elect. It took a while for the old Bishop to hand over the position to me because he liked it. He wanted to stay longer and longer, but his age wouldn't permit it, so they asked me to take over. I waited until October 31, 1986, which was Reformation Day, and I was installed as the new Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Jordan. That day we conducted an incredible church service. The

Bishop of Sweden, two Bishops from Finland, two Bishops from Germany and the Bishop of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem were all present at my consecration. It was a solemn service. I was very touched. I asked myself: "Who am I to assume this position?" As long as it was the will of God, I accepted it. Numerous other representatives attended the service from many other churches as well as some political figures. We also had a boy's choir from Berlin, Germany in the service. The atmosphere was lovely. We then had a reception in the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem and all the attendees were invited. Later that night, we had a special dinner. I was humbled because of this gathering and because of this position. My only prayer was that I would be able to cope with the responsibilities that God had given to me. My prayer was really that God might help me to do something for His Honor and His Glory. I didn't seek any honor. I only sought His Honor and Glory. I gave a message that day testifying to my reliance on the Lord and His Holy Spirit to guide me in this position. I trusted the Lord that day and asked that I might be a blessing to His people. I called for unity between the Lord and His people and I hoped to be a part of

nurturing the people of the Lord. I wanted His Name to be glorified.

I stayed as a Bishop for about 12 years. During these years, I felt that I had an effective ministry. I had a testimony to give to other church leaders. I felt that I needed to bear in my mind always that our Lutheran church has a great heritage. The Lutheran Church stands on four pillars. These are: Sola Gratsia, Sola Fides, Sola Scriptura and Sola Christos. These mean: Only by grace, faith, the Word of God and Jesus Christ Himself. It is on these things that our evangelical heritage is built, that salvation is by faith. Our faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ who died on the cross for us. It is all from Him and for Him; it is only by His precious blood that we can enjoy this fellowship. We can see this fact by His precious grace that opened our eyes to see the power of His precious blood that cleanses us from all of our sins.



23.

You will hear of wars...

Matthew 24:6

In 1987, the Palestinian people were suffering the yoke of occupation. They had waited for so many years for a political solution and to live in their own homeland in freedom and liberty. However, unfortunately, this did not happen. The people were frustrated and fed up by the situation. Therefore, the *Intifada*, or uprising, started. This involved organized protests and worker strikes. At first these actions were peaceful. I had a difficult time during the *Intifada*. There were times when it was difficult to move from one place to another, because of curfew and because of the problems of shootings. Several times I was unable to come back to my home. In the process of going to my work in Jerusalem, something would happen near my house and I would be unable to return home due to a curfew that was put in place. This happened regularly, but we managed with the Lord's help. Upon returning home, I was able to continue my spiritual service. One time there were two

young boys in Beit Sahour who needed to go to Germany to their parents. It is a town located 2 kilometers east of Bethlehem where the "Shepherd's Field" mentioned in the Bible is located. It was under curfew at that time and their families contacted me to help the boys get out of there and get to the airport and return to Germany. I went to the military governor and I waited four hours in order to see him and he eventually gave me the permission I needed. There were no cars on the road except my car. I took advantage of this situation to go to a store and I filled the back of my car with bread, cans of meat, beans, all sorts of food and milk. After filling the car, I went to Beit Sahour and I distributed these things to people in need. I was glad that I was able to help them get food for their children. Thank God I was able to do this. After that, I picked up the boys and brought them to our home in Jerusalem. The next day, I took them to the airport and they went safely to Germany. I thank the Lord that He allowed me to help those people in Beit Sahour and to help the young boys return home to their families.

24.

Buried in the way to Ephrata which is Bethlehem...

Genesis 35:19

My position as a Bishop gave me some opportunities to do what others cannot do and to go places where others cannot go. I was even given a VIP pass so that I would be able to get through checkpoints easily. They would allow me to pass through to get into villages and towns where there was curfew.

A poor man from our Beit Sahour congregation passed away and our pastor from Bethlehem was unable to go and perform the burial service. They contacted me and I agreed to go to Beit Sahour, which was under curfew, and perform the service. This time when I was at the checkpoint they would not let me through in spite of the VIP card. So I explained, "There is a dead man who needs to be buried. I have to go there." The soldiers told me: "No, no, you are not allowed to go." So I contacted the mayor of Beit Sahour and then they spoke to the military governor and they told me that there

was another way from the eastern side of Beit Sahour. I went there and as I approached I found two military jeeps waiting for me. One jeep drove in front of me and another one behind me and they escorted me to the home of the deceased man and then to the church. Next, we had the burial service and then we went to the cemetery to lay this dear departed brother to rest. The whole time the soldiers were paying close attention to us. Then they escorted me out of the city. Afterwards I was telling my wife: "Who am I that I was escorted like a great person, but I am a simple man -- of course, I am great because I am the son of our Heavenly Father, the Father of the fatherless -- but still this is the way the Lord lead us in." We need to be thankful and appreciate what God has done for us. It was dangerous to drive between two military jeeps because if any stones were thrown upon them, there could have been a shooting battle. Thankfully, this didn't happen and we reached the other side safely and made it back to Jerusalem and then back to our home. I was glad that I was able to do this service for this man who died and had gone to be with the Lord.

25.

Let them go up...

II Chronicles 36:23

It seemed during the period I was serving as Bishop, I was always helping people move around the tight curfew and checkpoints that had become a part of daily life. One day I was called. An old lady was visiting her daughter in Beir Zeit, which is north of Jerusalem, and she was not allowed to come back to Jerusalem where she lived because of the curfew. So my wife and I passed the checkpoint and they allowed us to pass, but they told us that if we went it was under our responsibility. This lady had an important appointment with her doctor and needed to return to Jerusalem. So I went and drove to the village and brought her back to her home in Jerusalem. I was able to help this lady who needed to visit her doctor; otherwise she could have been there with her daughter for a long time. We were happy that we were able to do these things for His Name and for His Glory.

26.

Their words to the end of the world...

Psalm 19:4

During my ministry as Bishop, our church used to welcome many visitors from all over the world. Our fellow Lutherans wanted to know more about our situations, so we welcomed them by taking them to the refugee camps, to the University of Beir Zeit, to Bethlehem or Beit Sahour, to Beit Jala or Jerusalem where our congregations were located. One time the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) sent a high-ranking delegation headed by the general secretary, Dr. Noko. He brought with him several Bishops who are members of the executive committee of the LWF. They had expressed their wish to visit Yasser Arafat in Gaza. So we sought permission. I, as a Bishop, and with friends from around the world, was able to make the arrangements. When we came to the border in Gaza, the Eretz checkpoint, after we waited, they finally allowed the foreigners to go into Gaza, but we were told that the Palestinians could not go with them.

We told them that we had permission, but they would not accept it. We had signed papers and authorization, but they still would not let us through. Some of the Bishops, who were permitted to go into Gaza, did not want to go, but to stay behind in solidarity with us. Some did end up going. They wanted to borrow my car since it had a white license plate, a diplomatic plate. This plate was given to diplomats and the heads of the churches. So our friends from overseas took this car and made their visit to Yasser Arafat and came back to Jerusalem. We went before them to Jerusalem and the people asked me what happened and I said that we weren't able to go and that some of our friends went to visit Mr. Arafat and should be coming back soon. They asked me how I felt about this and I said, "Oh, I have been thinking about Napoleon, of course with great difference, who wanted to enter Akko and conquer it, but he was unable to do it, so he threw his hat over the wall of Akko, and his hat entered Akko instead of him. So though I was forbidden to go in, my car went in so it was like the "hat of Napoleon." Of course, this is only a joke, but we need to see that there were difficult times when we were unable to do what we wanted to do. As we were under a military government, we

needed to do what they wanted us to do. With great pain in our hearts, we did not go to Mr. Arafat at that time. Of course, we had opportunities at other times and we were able to go with other dignitaries.



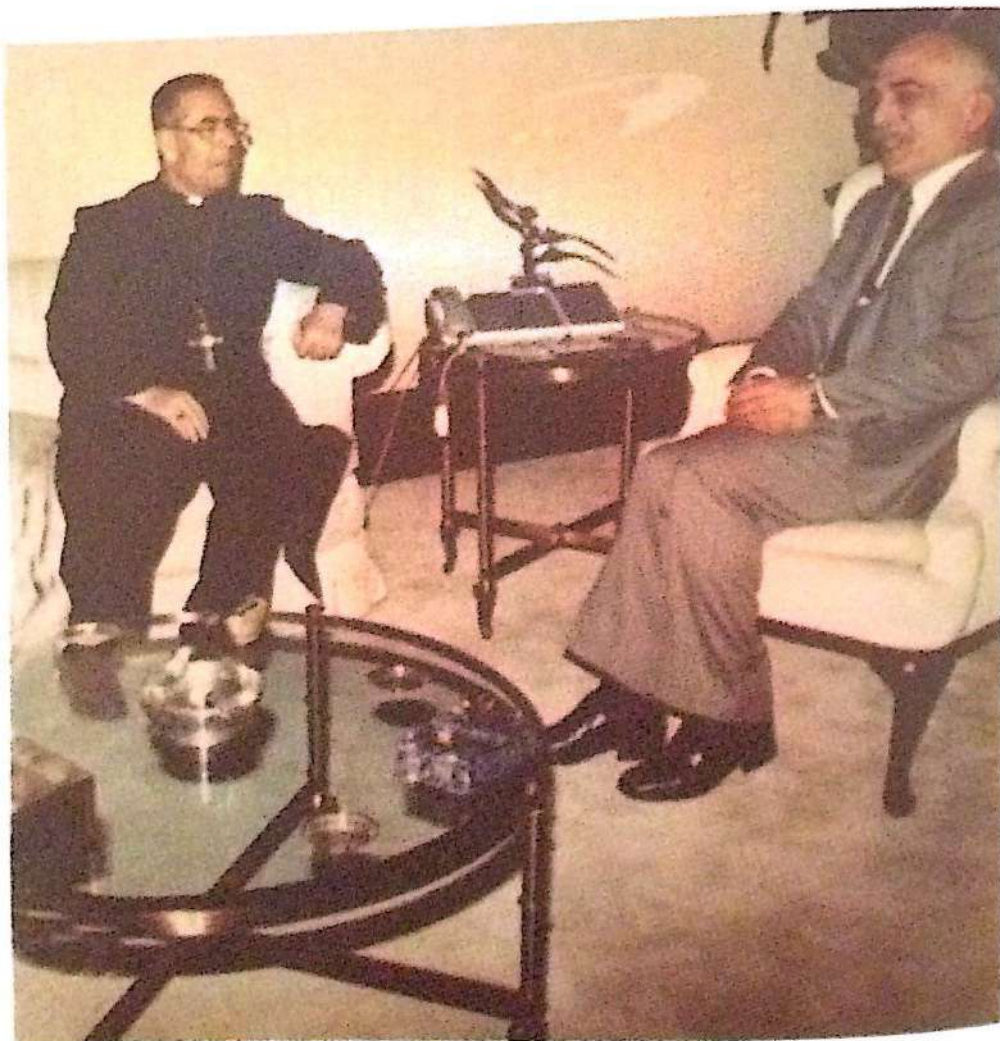
27.

Bring with you the books...

II Timothy 4:13

I want to tell about an incident also when we went with some people who were the heads of various churches, and were invited to have lunch with Yasser Arafat. We were wondering about a present to bring to him, so we took a copy of the Koran covered with Mother of Pearl, a beautiful piece. I presented it to him and he was happy and he put it on the table and said, "Where is the Gospel? Where is the Bible? Where is the Bible?" In Arabic, the Bible is called the Gospel. I said: "Oh, Mr. President, the next time I come I will bring it to you." The next time I was invited to lunch with President Arafat along with a group of prominent church leaders. The church leaders, Bishops, Patriarchs and Palestinian government officials also attended. This time I remembered and I presented the Bible to him and he was very humble in taking the Bible from my hands. He kissed it and put it on his head and then on the table and all of the people clapped their hands in a very

enthusiastic way. And it when was a very touching moment when President Arafat accepted the Bible with great joy. He asked for it and I was able to give it to him. By this act, I was able to witness even to Mr. Arafat. We prayed for the political leaders, that God might lead them to do the right things and make the right decisions for the welfare of the people. In spite of everything, they can help to ease the burden on the people and this itself will be a blessing.



28.

He shall stand before Kings...

Proverbs 22:29

The Lord also allowed me to visit the King of Jordan, King Hussein. He became ill and went to an American clinic to be treated for cancer. The first time he came back there was a great rejoicing in the kingdom of Jordan. All of the religious leaders were invited and I, being the head of the Church, went to Amman with the Bishops and Patriarchs to meet the king. He invited us for lunch. Afterwards I asked to talk to the king, and I went to see him. I felt that I wanted to witness to him and encourage him in his sickness. I told him: "Your Majesty, I too was sick and had cancer and the doctors told me that I would live only for 6 months. Many people prayed for me and here I am, still living and this is a clear sign that God will answer the prayers of His people. We want to pray for you and for God to help you and heal you and that God would be glorified in you." He said: "Thank you, thank you." We prayed and I was able to witness to him. I know that my witness was very feeble and

very humble, but even with that the Lord Jesus can use these humble words to glorify Himself. A long time after that he passed away. What a loss for the Kingdom of Jordan, as he was such a wise man and a religious and good man.



29.

**Jesus went to a quiet spot and
prayed...**

Luke 5:16

During my service as Bishop, I wanted to concentrate on the inner life of the church. Therefore I began to start adult retreats. The church received this very well so we continued to have them every year. Once a year the adults came together from all the five congregations. This was a time to build up their faith. I would take subjects that would concern the people of the church and discuss them. We dealt with subjects such as: What does it mean to be a Lutheran? What are the meanings of the two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper? These two subjects are important aspects of Lutheran identity. We studied these subjects to strengthen the adult believers in the church. These retreats would last three or four days. We had a great opportunity to be together as a Christian community and to fellowship together. This was a great time for congregation members to begin to know each other better. They would sit together

and talk. They also prayed and sang together.

I also concentrated on pastoral retreats. We would assemble the pastors from our churches. We would go to different places where we would focus on the Lord's work without distraction. There were no telephones ringing, no interruptions, etc. We would just sit and study the things of the church. We would sometimes go to Cyprus or to the north of the country to Mt. Carmel or to the hostel of St Margaret in Nazareth. Each year we would go to different places. I noticed that the pastors needed a time of fellowship together. These were great meetings. They were serious times, but you should see how sometimes they laughed together and joked with each other. This was really special. Of course, the pastors also prayed together and shared their love with each other. We had these retreats once a year and would look forward to this time for the fellowship that we needed, and we were happy that these retreats were a blessing to all of us.

30.

Hitherto the Lord has helped us...

I Samuel 7:12

Everyone likes to be appreciated in his work, his clinic, his company, or wherever he is working. It is a basic human desire to be appreciated. Bishops also have these same feelings. It is natural to desire appreciation and recognition for your work, even though our work is to glorify God.

One day, some years ago, a magazine conducted a poll. A question was asked of several hundred people. The question was: "What would you say you like in your job?" Several choices were presented. There was a high salary, fringe benefits, vacations, privileges, a flexible schedule or appreciation. Of the respondents 80% said that appreciation was the most important thing to them. It is very difficult for a person to work in a place where there is no appreciation. The feeling of being appreciated helps the person to be more productive, diligent and faithful.

This is how I felt one day in 1996.
Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South

Dakota in the USA is a Lutheran College. They decided to bestow upon me a Palestinian Bishop and Church leader the degree of "Doctorate of Humane Letters". This degree not only honors spiritual efforts but also social work in the community. During that time, I was still working in the ministry of our Lord as a Bishop, so they wrote to people who knew me and made an inquiry. I became familiar with this by meeting Dr. Donald Sneen. He was a religion professor in the college. My wife and I became friends with him and his wife when they came to visit us in Bethlehem some years before. Fortunately, the college decided to grant me this honor. So on May 22nd 1998, I was invited to go to South Dakota to be awarded this degree. My wife and I went and what a great joy it was to us.

We arrived there on May 23rd and that evening the college had a dinner reception for us. They invited many people, especially Palestinians living in Sioux Falls. Among them there were some dignitaries such as Senator James Abourezk. It was a joy and an honor to meet him and all the people who gathered at the reception. Of course, the president of the College, the dean and some of the faculty attended the reception as well.

I was asked to speak and later that was followed by a discussion. The next morning, there was a service for all the graduates numbering about 300. This service was a great blessing to all in attendance. It was joyful to see such a large crowd of young people who consecrated themselves for service in different ways. The same day, at 3 p.m. there was the commencement. In a large hall, about 6,000 people gathered for this event. This included all of the relatives of the graduates. My daughter and her husband, who live in Los Angeles, California, attended the ceremony. We were very glad to see them there.

To begin, the President of the college gave a short welcome to all and mentioned me briefly. Then, Dr. Sneen said the following:

"On the occasion of this, the one hundred and thirty-eighth commencement exercises for Augustana College, we do well to honor a person who had distinguished himself as an eloquent, compassionate and humanitarian leader of the Christian faith in the Middle East. Dear Bishop, your leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan has been of paramount importance in the

quest for a lasting peace and stability in this troubled area of the world. Your life has been dedicated to young people and to the charitable causes, which have been touched by your kindness. Bishop Nassar, we welcome you and your lovely wife, Georgette, to Sioux Falls, and we say thank you for what you have done and continue to do to make this world a better place.

Naim Nassar was born in Mujedel near Nazareth on June 11th, 1932. Orphaned at an early age, Nassar viewed the opportunity to become educated as a way to complete that, which was missing in his life. He studied at the Beirut Bible College; then in the United Kingdom; at the School of Theology in Neuendettelsau, West Germany; and finally at the University of Hamburg where he received his bachelor's degree. Following his ordination in 1964, Bishop Nassar became the pastor of the Christmas Church in Bethlehem, where he emphasized the organization of youth activities and exchange programs with youth from Europe. In 1986, Nassar was consecrated as Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan, a position held until his recent retirement.

Bishop Nassar helped found and has served, or currently serves, on the boards of many charitable organizations including the SOS Kinderdorf in Bethlehem, the Arab Charitable Society in Beit Jala, and the House of the Light for the Blind in Beit Jala, and the Bethlehem Bible College.

Bishop Nassar is a highly respected church leader in the eyes of Palestinian political and cultural leaders. He is also a highly respected and knowledgeable counterpart to his fellow bishops in the Greek Orthodox, Latin Armenian, Syrian and other church traditions represented in the Holy Land. One would not find it unusual to see the Bishop heavily involved in the dialog between Jews, Muslims and Christians -especially when contributing to the understanding between these three religions which is so important in light of the difficult and volatile situation, in the Middle East. As the initiator of several relevant statements on issues of Palestinian identity and the fate of the Palestinian people, Nassar is seen as a staunch defender, on the basis of solid Lutheran theology, of the rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and his native Palestinian culture.

Mr. President, Bishop Naim Nassar epitomizes what it means to be a leader in our Lutheran faith. He has earned the respect and admiration of all sides in one of the most troubled regions of our world, and has served as a beacon of hope to those who are in need. I am pleased to present Bishop Naim Nassar as a candidate for the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa."

After he finished, I was asked to speak and I spoke about three ideas. They were "come, go and to pray for the peace of Jerusalem." What I wished to convey was first that we should come to Jesus with all our burdens and he will give us rest. Once we have this rest, we can think of others. Therefore, then we should hear the words of Jesus who said: "go, ye into the entire world and preach the Gospel to all without any discrimination knowing that He is always with you." The third point I urged the people to do was to for the peace of Jerusalem. We are passing through great difficulties. It seemed that Jerusalem was always suffering and it needs our prayers and needs to experience the same rest we all have.

After this, the President presented me with the degree and then the other graduates

received their degrees and the ceremony concluded. Oh how humble I feel toward the President, the Dean and the faculty who helped to bestow on me this honor.

After the ceremony, my wife and I were invited for a dinner held by Dr. Sneen and his wife who are our good friends and we experienced a lovely evening.

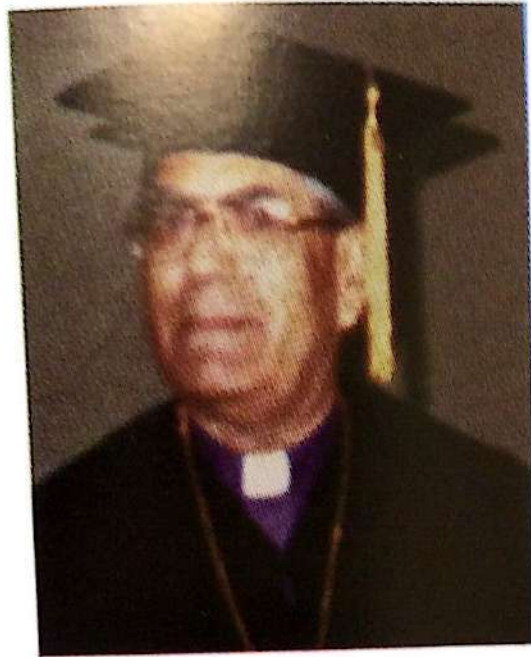
The next morning, we left South Dakota by air and went to Los Angeles and we stayed with my daughter and her husband for several weeks. Then we returned to Jerusalem. I am humble and thankful to have been granted this degree in the spirit of appreciation. I feel that the Lord through my friends at Augustana College gave this degree to me. I want to thank God, our Heavenly Father, that He always finds ways to appreciate His children, even when people around him do not appreciate him. He watches closely and appreciates whatever they do in His Name for Him. Even the Bible says if one will give a cold glass of water to one in need of it, he will not lose his reward. Thank God for that.

I want to encourage all my Christian brothers and sisters not to look for a reward, but to

look toward the one giving the reward, our Lord Jesus Christ. He will reward us openly.

I remember a hymn that says: "Casting all our crowns before Him, lost in wonder, love and grace." Even when we have crowns of appreciation, it is our pleasure to cast them at His feet because He is our Savior and Lord. He gave us all without any reservation. To Him be all Honor and Glory! Amen.

"O Father of the Fatherless, You are my
Father, You are my God; my Savior; my
Hope, Now and Forever more!"

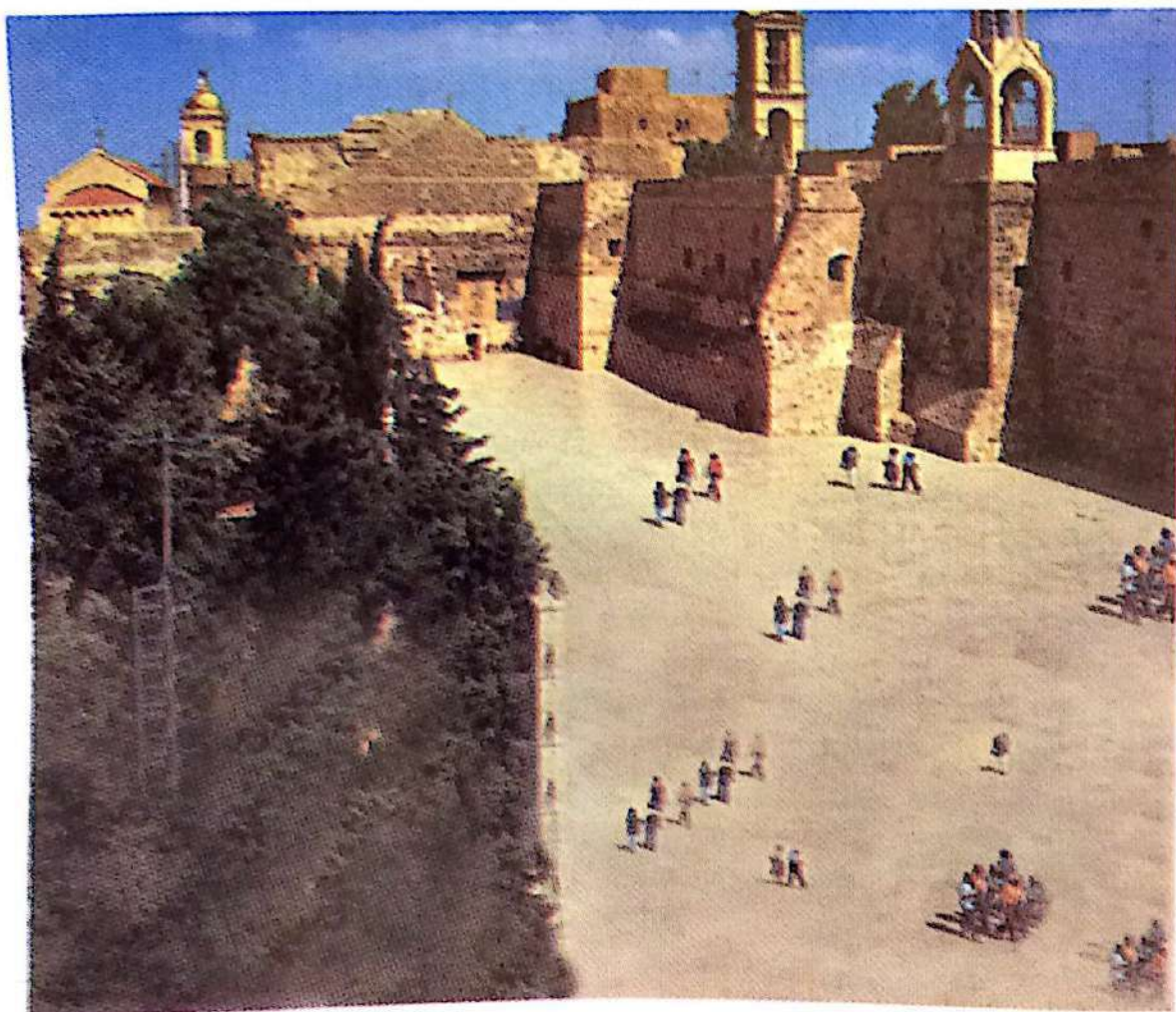


Autobiography

The Bishop Dr. Naim Nassar was born in the village of Mujedel in the Nazareth District on June 11, 1932. He studied his elementary studies in the Schneller School in Jerusalem and continued his undergraduate studies in Beirut, Lebanon. He began his theological education in Great Britain and he completed them in Germany graduating from the University of Hamburg with a B.Th. and a B.D.

He was ordained as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in 1964 and began his service in the ministry of our Lord at the Evangelical Christmas Church in Bethlehem. He pastored that church until 1986. He was then consecrated Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan in 1986 and remained in that position until his retirement in 1997. Bishop Nassar was chosen and awarded the Doctorate of Humane Letters from Augustana College located in the state of South Dakota in the USA.

He is married to Georgette Mousa. God has given them two daughters. The eldest, Hala, is married to Bishara Sahhar and the younger, Helen, is married to Bassem Muallem. Bishop and Mrs. Nassar now have 6 grandchildren and are living currently in Jerusalem.



**Church of Nativity
Bethlehem**

