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## P. Steven Khoury



My name is Steven Khoury. I am an Arab Israeli living in Bethlehem where my father, Dr. Naim Khoury, established our ministry in 1980. Today we are spreading the gospel throughout the Palestinian Territories and in Jerusalem where I pastor Calvary Baptist Church.

I was born in Jerusalem and grew up a few miles south in the small town of Bethlehem, the place of Jesus' birth. Growing up in the mission field of my own culture teaches what it means to live by the power of God's Spirit. It also opens my eyes to the struggles of fellow believers, and to the spiritual deprivation of neighbors drowning in toxic wastes of self-pity, fear and hate.

When I was a younger man, the focus of my dream was ministry in Bethlehem. That changed when my Uncle George accepted Christ. He lived on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. After his conversion, he longed to see a congregation of fellow believers in the city he called home.

"The vision must continue, Jerusalem must be saved," he said over and over again. His passion for Jesus cost him his life. Uncle George was murdered for his faith.

But his vision lives on. It is a seed that was transplanted to my soul. In July of 2004 this seed gave birth to Calvary Baptist Church. Since that day more than 1,500 people have entered our doors. Also since that day our doors have been repeatedly closed because of pressure from extremist forces in the community, the same forces that killed my Uncle George.

Every time our doors have closed, God has made a way to open them again. Our most recent meeting place has been in a Muslim neighborhood. In this location our church has seen growth like never before. And along with it, growing opposition too: discrimination, harassment, loss of income, physical assaults and an always-present threat of death.

Even so with God's help, we do not despair. I am encouraged by handwritten letters from members of our body. "We are with you," they write. "We are ready to die for Jesus' sake."

And so we persevere.

Recently our current landlord served us an eviction notice. He said that pressures from neighbors and unseen extremists reached a point where, for his own safety's sake, he was compelled to evict. We immediately began to search for another place to rent. But sympathetic Muslim realtors advise that a new lease is unlikely. "Your reputation for evangelizing in this community," they say, "makes it impossible for landlords to take the risk of giving you a lease."

The only option left is to purchase a building. As I write these words, there is a place that seems ideal. Its location would permit easy access to people from all backgrounds in Jerusalem, regardless of religion or nationality.

Still, purchase a building in Jerusalem? Impossible. Impossible for us, but not for God. And not for his family of believers standing in unity with us in the city of Jesus' redemptive death and resurrection. Will you join us in this ministry of God: Arabs for Jesus, from Jerusalem to the world?