



April, 2019

Dear AWR Friend,

“THEY STABBED HIM! OH NO, NOT AGAIN! FIRST WITH A KNIFE, AND THEN WITH A MEAT FORK!”

Stabbings are common in Israel, where the local population is not allowed to carry guns, so they resort to knife attacks.

But to understand this story, let’s turn back the clock 20 years to the city of Nazareth where Jesus grew up. Today, the largest group of people in Nazareth Arabic, not Jewish, and they operate with tribal councils.

Wisam was born into a powerful Muslim family in Nazareth where his father was the chief and his uncle the imam, or Islamic religious leader.

As a young man, Wisam was taught to hate Christians and their pork-eating and alcohol-drinking ways. So one day, when he learned that his sister—who had gone to Austria to pursue her studies—had become a Christian, he was irate, and immediately told his family.

A family tribal council was called, and when Wisam recounted what he had learned, his uncle immediately exclaimed, “You must go to Europe and find her and kill her!”

Before long, Wisam was on a flight to Europe, and then on a train to Austria. Not having his sister’s address, he phoned her and said, “I have been sent by the tribe to kill you.”

Much to his surprise, his sister remained calm. She said, “Okay, that’s fine, but will you give me a year?”

As he had no choice since he didn’t know where to find her, he agreed. She suggested he stay at Bogenhofen, our Seventh-day Adventist school, and study German while he waited. What Wisam didn’t know is that she had a boyfriend—and he was an Adventist pastor!

But as time passed, something began to change in Wisam. There grew in him a desire to know the Jesus who raised the dead and forgave sins. One of the theology teachers at the school befriended Wisam and offered to study the Bible with him. This opened up a whole new understanding for him. All his life, he had been taught “an-eye-for-an-eye and a-tooth-for-a-tooth”—but this Jesus taught forgiveness!

Soon, there was no holding back—Wisam gave his heart to Jesus and was baptized. When the year was up, instead of killing his sister, he was present at her wedding and gave her his blessing!

Now Wisam returned to Nazareth, eager to share this newfound truth with his family.

When he arrived, he was received with suspicion, and his relatives called a tribal council. He was questioned about his loyalty to the Muslim faith, and the men asked him, “Did you kill your sister?”

Instead of answering, Wisam asked them if they knew Jesus the Creator. He said, “Please tell me who this Jesus is that is mentioned in the Quran.”

This made his family very angry. His uncle, incensed at Wisam’s insolence, shouted, “Stone him!”

The young men picked up rocks and began to pelt Wisam until he fell to the ground. Wisam’s father said to his other son, “Save your brother!” His brother fell over his body, blocking the stones from hurting him even more.

Wisam was immediately taken to the emergency room and in a few days was well enough to be released from the hospital. But after he recovered, the same thing happened again!

This time, his family suggested he leave Israel. So Wisam returned to Bogenhofen where he studied theology.

Shortly thereafter, Wisam came to Southern Adventist University in Tennessee and eventually married Adri, a beautiful Adventist girl from South Africa.

They then moved to Europe and pastored several churches. But four years ago, Wisam received a call to work as a pastor in the Israel Field—in the Nazareth Adventist Church! His mother was thrilled and assured him his uncle was dead and if Wisam returned, he would be safe. His family would protect him. Wisam said, “Mother, if I return, no one can stop me from preaching the truth.” She not only agreed, but offered him a special place in the family business.

Wisam and Adri have now been working in Nazareth for four years. If Wisam’s story sounds familiar, it’s because last year AWR went to Israel and delivered GodPods to Wisam and Adri for their ministry in Nazareth. We personally had the privilege of giving GodPods to Wisam’s family—his mother, brothers and sisters—



Duane and Kathy McKey (far left and far right) visit with Wisam, his wife, Adri, and their daughter (front center).

and gave Wisam a supply to share with his community. These GodPods contain the whole Bible in Arabic and Farsi, plus Bible studies and children's stories.

But the story doesn't end here, because something happened recently that shook the Arab community and showed how God continues to protect Wisam and guide his ministry.

THE REST OF THE STORY

Recently, my wife Kathy and I returned to Israel and again met with Wisam and Adri. After hearing their most recent testimony, I just have to share it with you:

Six months ago, two of Wisam's cousins, still angry because he became a Christian, rallied a mob and went early in the morning to Wisam's house to attack him. His cousins carried a large butcher knife and a meat fork, and when Wisam came out of the house, they rushed him screaming, "We're going to kill you!"

Adri was upstairs when she heard the commotion. She looked out the window and saw what was happening, and realized that Wisam was about to be killed. She fell on her knees and cried out to God. These cousins were of the same family who 20 years before had tried to stone him. Their father, the imam, was now dead, but his sons continued his legacy of hatred toward Wisam and Christianity.

As Adri prayed, Wisam faced his aggressors. Unwilling to fight, and finding they would not be appeased, Wisam turned to go. In that moment, his cousins charged, stabbing him in the back with enough force as to plunge the sharp blade and long fork deep into his body.

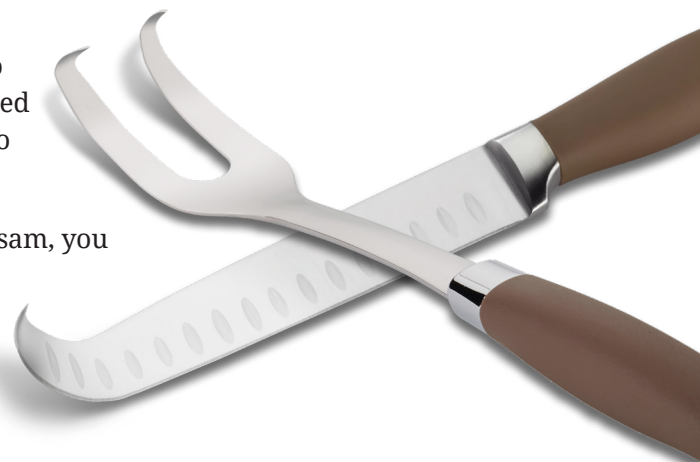
Well, at least that was their plan, but what happened next was a different story. Both the blade of the knife and the long fork bent at a 90-degree angle! It was as if Wisam had a bullet-proof (or knife-proof) vest!

The cousins dropped their weapons in confusion, unable to understand what had just happened. Wisam's brother picked up the now-useless knife and fork and handed them back to the cousins saying, "Never come back to this house!"

One of the cousins, as he was leaving, turned and said, "Wisam, you will not know how or when or where, but I will kill you!"

After they left, Wisam's family checked him for injuries. There were none. All they discovered was a small tear on his shirt.

Wisam's family said, "We will plan an attack on their house." This seemed like the best plan because ironically, both families live side-by-side in similar four-story houses.





But Wisam said, “No, we will not attack. God will fight for us.”

As Wisam recounted the story to Kathy and me, he shared what happened just two weeks before we arrived. These two cousins who had threatened Wisam were riding their motorcycle, and coming around a corner, they hit a truck head-on. One cousin was killed instantly. The other died a week later from his injuries, never regaining consciousness. Both of Wisam’s attackers were dead shortly after threatening his life!

This has caused a huge impact in the Muslim community. Wisam’s family is prominent in the city, and it was a well-known fact that his uncle’s family had vowed to kill him for being a Christian. People are amazed not only for the miraculous way Wisam was delivered, but also for his refusal to fight back and instead trust in Jesus. He is now so well-respected by both Arabs and Jews, that he was recently asked to be board chair of the largest school in Nazareth.

Wisam and Adri have opened a center of influence in the heart of Nazareth. He teaches English straight from the Bible, and despite people knowing this, there is a long waiting list to attend his classes! He is studying the Bible with several Muslim men, and Adri is working with the women in the community. Many Muslims are having dreams and seeing visions, and are searching for answers that Wisam gladly shares.

We may not all be called to face peril like Wisam, but God has promised, “I say to you, ‘Do not be terrified or afraid of them. The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you...”

God is calling all who are willing to proclaim His last-day message. Adventist World Radio not only broadcasts into all the Muslim countries in their own languages, but we are working with people like Wisam, helping to share the gospel message in countries that still need to hear the story of Jesus.

Thank you for supporting the work of Adventist World Radio. Jesus is coming soon, and He invites all of us to be a part of this great movement that will light the world with the knowledge of His truth.

Yours in the Blessed Hope,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Duane McKey".

Duane McKey
President



P.S. If you would like to hear Wisam tell his story and learn additional details, please visit www.awr.org and click on “videos.” You can view many of the amazing stories happening right now around the world! Your support is making a real difference—it’s what makes these stories possible, and it’s changing lives for eternity.