

Examples of Cruciformity

19. Tass Saada

Part B: Joel Rosenberg Meets Tass Saada

Following are the words of Joel Rosenberg¹ in his Foreword to the book by Tass Saada, *Once an Arafat Man*.² Read also a summary of Tass Saada's life story — #18.

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Tass and I met on a Saturday night in January 2008. I had been invited to preach at a Messianic Jewish congregation in Jerusalem that night. My sermon title was "What God Is Doing among the Muslims." This is not a typical message for a Jewish audience. But after much prayer, I felt the Lord wanted me to share with my Israeli friends what he had told me to share with my Jordanian friends when I had preached in Amman not long before: We need to get serious about obeying Jesus' command to love our neighbors and our enemies. We can only do this when we have the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through our lives. But when we do—when we truly obey the words and model of Jesus—heads will turn. People will be shocked when they see us love those who hate us. Then they will ask questions. Their hearts will be softened. They will be curious to know more about the God we serve. And then, hopefully, they will want to know this God personally for themselves.

We are already seeing it happen, all over the Middle East. More Muslims are coming to faith in Jesus Christ over the last ten to fifteen years—and particularly since 9/11—than at any other time in human history. The question for Israeli believers and for all of us who claim to be followers of Jesus is this: What role does the Lord have for us in strengthening our brothers and sisters who come to Christ from a Muslim background, and how can we actively love our neighbors and our enemies when humanly speaking this is impossible?

That was the message I came to share in Jerusalem, and who was the first couple I was introduced to that night as I came in the front door of the congregation? Tass and Karen Saada. When I was told who they were, I could hardly believe it. When they gave me an executive summary of their story, I was deeply moved. Here we were, a former aide to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and a former aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, hugging each other—not trying to kill each other—in the heart of Jerusalem. All because of the work Jesus had done to give us hearts of love rather than hatred.

I had a sense that this was the beginning of a story, not the end. So the next day we decided to travel together with several other colleagues to the Israeli city of Ashkelon. There we visited a hospital that treats Jews and Arabs wounded in the ongoing border

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1 Joel C. Rosenberg is a best-selling author of *The Last Jihad*, *The last Days*, *The Ezekiel Option*, *The Copper Scroll*, and *Dead Heat*. He is former aide to Benjamin Netanyahu and is the founder of The Joshua Fund, a humanitarian relief organization whose mission is to bless Israel and her neighbours.

2 Tass Saada, *Once an Arafat Man: The True Story of How aq PLO Sniper Found a New Life* (Clarksville, TN: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008).x - xiii

skirmishes that have plagued that region for so long. As we met with the hospital administrators, we both presented checks from our respective ministries to help finance the purchase of desperately needed medical equipment. When the doctors and staff asked why we had come to bless them, we both told them our stories. Tass explained that he had been born just a few miles south of where we were gathered, and raised with a desire to kill everyone in the room where we were sitting.

"You really worked for the PLO?" asked one doctor. Tass nodded.

"Then what happened? What changed you?" another asked.

Tass gave all the credit to Jesus Christ. He briefly explained how God had changed his heart and given him a love for the Jewish people. And then he stunned us all. He asked the hospital staff to forgive him for what he and the Palestinian people had done over the years to harm them. It was a powerful moment. Everyone was in tears. These Israelis had never seen anything like it, and honestly, neither had I.



. . . please pray for Tass and Karen and their family and team, and enlist others to pray for them too. Pray for their safety. Pray for continued courage. Pray for wisdom and discernment. Pray Colossians 4:2-4 for them:

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Pray for open doors for the Saadas to share the good news of Christ's radical love with many more in Gaza, the West Bank, and throughout the Muslim world. Pray, too, that the Lord would bless them with the physical, spiritual, and emotional strength and energy they need to do his work, and that he would bless them with the financial resources they need to advance the gospel and care for the poor.

Finally, please pray about what God is calling you to do. Are you loving your neighbors? Are you making disciples of *all* nations, as Jesus commands us in Matthew 28:18-20? Are you praying for the Palestinian people, and for Muslims everywhere, to find new life and new hope in Jesus? Are you investing in the work of ministries like Hope for Ishmael?

You and I are living at a remarkable moment in human history. Before Jesus returns, God the Father is drawing men, women, and unprecedented among the Muslim people. Why not join him? Why not be part of the spiritual revolution that is saving souls and making true peace in Jesus' name? Personally, I cannot think of a greater adventure of which to be a part. . . .