1. Maron (Arab)[1]

During the 1948 war, Maron's family escaped to the Old City of Jerusalem. After the fighting had stopped, they returned to see their land, only to find it had been confiscated by the Israeli government.

Maron's family was nominally Christian, and they were very poor. He had nine siblings and they all lived together in one tiny room. There was no electricity and there was often friction. Many times Maron had nowhere to sleep, and so slept outside in the street. And so it was that he grew up as a refugee and hated the Jews for his situation.

> . . . I was told time and time again that it was the Jews who had robbed my family of their land and caused us so much hardship . . . Sometimes we would go out on to the streets to throw stones at them and do bad things to them.

As a teenager, Maron was always fighting with his father, who often would beat Maron and throw him out of the house. Sometimes in the winter he had nowhere to sleep. He couldn't go home. He was cold.

> Looking back, I can only say I felt in such a hopeless situation. My father used to tell me I was no good; even as a young child I was told I was no good. It seemed as though he was always shouting at me, saying I would never succeed in life . . .

When Maron was 23, he was looking for somewhere to sleep and met somebody he had known from school. He told Maron he was sleeping in a hotel and invited Maron to join him. Maron jumped at the opportunity, but soon realized that his friend was taking hard drugs. Maron soon started to use the drugs with him.

One day Maron was walking along the street returning from work when some Israeli soldiers noticed him and gave him a severe beating, breaking bones in his face. The hatred that was already inside of him for Jews started to increase.

> Things went from bad to worse . . . I used to steal and did a lot of bad things to get the money I needed to buy drugs . . . I was arrested and sent to prison— many times . . .

> My view on life started to shift when my father became a Christian and I saw a huge change in him, which surprised me. He died shortly afterwards, sadly before he saw a change in me. But seeing him mellow and become so sweet-natured really shocked me and I started to wonder about my own life. Could I change too? Could I make something of my life? Could I ever kick the drug habit and be somebody, and do something worthwhile?

Maron agreed, reluctantly, to visit a Christian rehab centre called the House of Victory in Haifa[2]. Maron thought he would stay for a week and then escape. But the Lord kept him there. Maron is happy to testify that "It was there that I met the Lord, and there that the Lord changed my life."

During Sukkot ("Feast of Tabernacles"),

> . . . Danny, who was Jewish, asked me if I could help him build a sukah (shelter) . . . When I was working with him, I realized I was finding it a pleasure . . . before I had become a Christian I would have wanted to destroy this Jewish guy—now I loved him like my own brother . . . since I had given my life to Jesus Christ, he was living in me and changing my attitudes in a radical way . . .

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NOTE:

You will find Maron's great story along with 19 wonderful others – Jews and Arabs Jesus has set free from hatred and other problems – in my book, *Following Jesus, Our Cruciform Example,* available through Amazon. See details at my website: www.becruciform.com. .

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1 Maron's story is condensed from a former website of his ministry, a website that no longer exists.

2 Beit Nitzachon (House of Victory) is a ministry of Kehilat HaCarmel. Website: http://www.carmel-assembly.org.il/houseof.html.