

## 2. Aaron (Jewish)

### **A Jew, a Palestinian, and a Border Crossing<sup>1</sup>**

While serving in the Israeli army, Aaron saw things hard to forget: He dealt with his pain by burying these memories: close friends killed in suicide bombings, Hezbollah terrorizing women and children as human shields in Lebanon, shoot-outs with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Deep inside, he developed a deep hatred for Arabs.

After his military service, Aaron opened his heart to Jesus as his Saviour. Later on, an Arabic pastor preached one Saturday in the messianic congregation that Aaron attended. He cried throughout the sermon, as “God began to replace his hatred for Arabs with love.”

Aaron became friends with Palestinian believers in the West Bank. Because he did not look particularly Jewish, he could move around amongst the Palestinians with ease. He studied the Bible and prayed with them and learned what it was like to “live on the other side of the fence”. Some of his non-Christian friends said he had “lost his mind” and that he was making friends with their enemies.

One day as he was returning from Ramallah, Hamdi, a Muslim Palestinian guard that day at the border crossing, questioned him about why he was in the West Bank. Fearing that if he was too specific some of the Palestinian believers might be compromised and eventually persecuted, Aaron kept his answers short and somewhat evasive.

Aaron certainly knew how to defend himself, but he had decided that

“Since Jesus didn’t fight back when he was questioned and beaten before his crucifixion, neither would he.”

Getting nowhere with his questioning, Hamdi, out of frustration, slapped Aaron’s face. With no Israeli guards in sight and the Israeli military out of the West Bank, Hamdi realized he had the chance for which he had long been waiting. He would beat the Jew until he begged for mercy . . . but when Aaron took every punch in silence, Hamdi’s determination to make a fool of him faded. Aaron lay on the cement, covered in blood.

. . . Aaron slowly arose and looked Hamdi directly in the eyes. Then, in all sincerity, he said, “I am sorry that I made you angry. **I pray that you will forgive me.** I know things are probably tough here in the West Bank for you and your family. I am going to pray to Jesus for you. I know that you hate me, but **Jesus said to love our enemies.**”

(Emphases added)

With those words Aaron leaned forward and gave Hamdi a hug. Then he was on his way. Hamdi declares this was “the most powerful moment of his life.”

I could not forget those words. They replayed in my ears over and over for the next few days. I realized that the people of my religion have plenty of weapons. We’ve had the best swords for 1,400 years now! We have plenty of hate that makes us want to kill anyone who gets in our way. But we don’t have love. How could a Jew take that kind of beating from me and then turn around and show love to me? I had to find out.

Hamdi then went on a quest, and God led him straight to some new believers in the West Bank. He gave his life to Jesus and now pastors a church somewhere in the West Bank.

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<sup>1</sup> Condensed from: Tom Doyle, *Breakthrough: The Return of Hope to the Middle East* (Colorado Springs, CO: Authentic Publishing, 2008), 51-54.