

Awards

Fortress Press Title Chosen as One of the 50 Best Spiritual Books of 2004

MINNEAPOLIS (May 19, 2005) — *Bethlehem Besieged: Stories of Hope in Times of Trouble* by Mitri Raheb has been chosen for a Spirituality & Health Book Award as one of “The Best Spiritual Books of 2004.”

Spirituality & Health is a bimonthly print magazine covering the people, the practices, and the ideas of today’s spiritual renaissance. This renaissance is affecting millions of people who are seeking deeper meaning in our times, who want their everyday lives to reflect their spiritual values, and who believe that the spiritual diversity found around the world is something to celebrate and learn from.

Bethlehem Besieged is a riveting story, beginning with the siege of Bethlehem in 2002 and continuing into today’s scene of occupation, the wall, and suicide bombers. Like *The Diary of Anne Frank* it also chronicles the personal struggles of Palestinians and their families to survive the violence and to act with integrity in extreme circumstances. It gives full voice to the sound bites of the nightly news.

Author Mitri Raheb’s powerful collection of compelling personal stories — stories of desperation and hope in the midst of lethal conflict — brings the Palestinian/Israeli conflict up close and personal.

Raheb’s lifelong commitment to his people has kept him in the legendary birthplace of Christianity, even as the town has become a flashpoint in the world’s most volatile and hate-filled conflict. His passionate personal testimony lifts up the stray gesture toward friendship, the brave attempts to rebuild life and livelihood in a destroyed land, and the unquenchable desire for justice and peace.

“This is a heartrending account of what has happened to ordinary people, and how they have lived and survived [in] Bethlehem, the birthplace of the Prince of Peace. It should shake us out of complicity with the injustice being visited on ordinary people.”

— DESMOND TUTU, Retired Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa

“A Palestinian narrative of suffering and sacrifice that is infused with hope. It is a story that has cried out to be told.”

— DR. JAMES J. ZOGBY, President of the Arab American Institute

“*Bethlehem Besieged* is a wonderful book by a man of rare insight who fully understands those familiar lines, ‘Yet in thy dark street shineth the everlasting light...’”

— GEORGE MCGOVERN, former U.S. Senator and President of the Middle East Policy Council

Mitri Raheb is a Palestinian Arab and Christian Pastor who ministers to his people in Bethlehem, where his family has lived for hundreds of years. Pastor of the Evangelical Christmas Church there, he holds a doctorate from Marburg University in Germany. Internationally honored for his work, Raheb has been interviewed by CNN, the Washington Post, Fox News, ABC News, and CBS News, sharing his stories of the Israeli bombing of Bethlehem and the fears and hopes of ordinary people living there.

The 50 recipients of the 2004 Spirituality & Health Book Awards were chosen from the more than 300 books reviewed on the Web site during the year. The full list of awards is available at www.SpiritualityHealth.com/bookreviews. The list is also printed in the May/June issue of Spirituality & Health magazine.