

Next Step

If you are a church leader, pastor, or a lay person and you have on your heart to bring a group to Israel, please connect with us and we will send you an organizer guide to get you started.

Marie and I appreciate you so much, and we will be praying for you. We believe the best for you, and that you will see your dream of visiting the Holy Land come true. We would like to be part of your journey here and to help you at every step. We would love to hear from you!

Contact Us

Israel tel: +972 2579-8159
Fax: +972 2579-8158
Mobile: +972 545-231-145
USA tel: +1 512-222-3160

Email: twinstours@gmail.com
Website: www.twinstours.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/andre.moubarak
Skype: [twinstours](https://www.skype.com/people/twinstours)



Twins Tours and Travel Ltd.
Clal Building
Jaffa Road 97,
Floor C2, Office #201
P.O. Box 28314
Jerusalem 91283
Israel



Check out my YouTube Channel for updates about my project and sample teachings from biblical sites all over the Holy Land.

<https://youtu.be/q2QS57YbQmo>



To make a donation towards the editing and publishing costs for My Via Dolorosa, please visit www.gofundme.com/viadolorosa

My Via Dolorosa

A True Story - by Andre Moubarak



I am Andre Yousef Antone Moubarak, a Palestinian Maronite Arab Christian from the lesser-known Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. I was born on August 17, 1975. I grew up around the holy sites and places of this ancient city. The Via Dolorosa was my playground, and over the years, my life as a “living stone” has become a testimony of the pages of the Bible.

I am a tour guide by profession, taking people to holy sites around Israel and along the path Jesus may have taken on His way to Calvary. I have guided many people from all over the world. Almost every group I have had the privilege to lead has advised me to write down the valuable information that I shared with them. This dream has now become a book, a journey to reality, confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

On September 11, 2009, while I was praying alone in my Jerusalem apartment, I was immersed in the presence of the Holy Spirit and enjoying the Lord. Suddenly, I felt the Spirit surrounding me strongly and a great measure of peace and love fell upon me. I was experiencing God’s rest, and during that time, a startling thought penetrated deeply into my soul, spirit and mind: “The Stations of the Cross.”

That thought developed into a book about my neighborhood—the Via Dolorosa. This “Way of Grief,” “Way of Sorrows,” or simply “Painful Way”, is a street within the Old City of Jerusalem believed to be the route along which Jesus, carrying His Cross, walked on the way to his crucifixion. I have carried my own cross as part of a despised minority in the Holy Land and the Middle East.



We Palestinian Christians are the successors of several Christian heritages in the Middle East. My ancestors were Maronite Christians, a Lebanese blend of the Eastern Assyriac Church and the Latin Roman Catholic influence, with some French undertones. The Maronite Christians guided the Crusaders when they first entered the Holy Land, and we still protect the western Christians visiting the Middle East, roles that have helped to shape our faith in modern times.

Our history dates back to the early church. Our earliest ancestors were the Jewish disciples of Jesus and those Phoenician Gentiles who joined the followers of Christ during and after the 1st century.

What makes the Maronites special is that we still pray in the ancient Aramaic language. This means that our prayers are offered to God in the same language that Jesus and His disciples spoke every day (only in the synagogues were the Scriptures (the Tanach) read and prayers said in Hebrew). While the Disciples spoke a Galilean dialect of Aramaic, we speak a Syrian dialect reflecting the origins of the Maronite church in the countryside near Damascus, Syria before it spread to the mountains of Lebanon.

The Aramaic language is similar to Hebrew and Arabic.

For example, my family name in Aramaic is:

MEBORAK ܡܒܪܟܐ

In Hebrew it is almost the same:

MEVORAKH מְבוֹרָךְ, which means blessed.

In Arabic, it is: MOUBARAK مَبَارَك

My vision and heart for this book is to take the depression and sadness of the streets of the Via Dolorosa and of the Christians living there and to convert it to hope, victory, and abundance of life. This is the heart of God the Father. This can happen when you arrive in Israel. We can connect your ministry or church to meet with the living stones of Jerusalem.



Managed and operated by **Andre and Marie Moubarak**, Twins Tours & Travel specializes in building customized tour packages to the Holy Land, allowing travelers to explore the land where Jesus once walked and to experience the Bible's living history first hand. By retracing the path of the patriarchs and walking in the footsteps of Jesus, we hope that every traveler gains greater insight into the Scriptures and a new understanding of the land

where Judaism and Christianity were born.

Andre and **Marie** have over 25 years combined experience in the tourism industry. Married for nine years, their relationship blends the Middle Eastern and the western cultures together.

Andre is a licensed tour guide, tour operator, and a gifted Bible teacher. His teachings strengthen the faith of tour participants by offering new revelation into Scripture and causing the stories of the Bible to come alive. As an indigenous Christian from the Old City of Jerusalem, **Andre's** passion is to connect visitors with both the ancient and the modern, while focusing on what God is doing today throughout the Holy Land and within the local believing community.

While **Andre** has guided countless groups, all of whom are special and meaningful, the group with which he connected the most was from the Living Faith Christian Center led by Bishop Raymond W. Johnson, whom he first met and guided in October 2013. The Lord opened the way for **Andre** to visit Bishop Johnson's church in Baton Rouge Louisiana two years in a row, which further strengthened his genuine connection with this church. The Living Faith Christian Center visited Israel again in October 2015, and at the conclusion of their tour, **Andre** was ordained as "Minister of the Gospel" by Bishop W. Johnson.

Marie is the Director of Program & Partnership Development. She has a heart to see visitors and pilgrims encounter the land and the people of Israel and Palestine in a meaningful, integrity-filled way. She is skilled at listening to a group's goals and vision and translating that into a customized tour that will meet and exceed their expectations. Born in America, **Marie** first came to Israel as a tourist before returning as a volunteer Tour Co-coordinator at Christ Church Jerusalem, where she met **Andre**.

Through their work, **Marie** and **Andre** endeavor to cultivate long-term relationships and partnerships for the Kingdom of Heaven. All groups hosted by Twins Tours contribute to the local communities and churches through different service projects, prayer meetings and leadership development with the Living Stones.

Twins Tours & Travel's extraordinary customer retention rate is a testimony to both **Marie** and **Andre's** expertise, commitment to excellence, customer service, and prayerful care for each tour participant.

I believe we have to go back to these Jewish roots to understand our Christian faith. By looking at Scripture from a Middle Eastern point of view, three things will happen to you.

First, what you already know will be **confirmed** and more details will be added. There will be confirmation of what you already believe took place in Scripture.

Secondly, what you already know will be **clarified** and expanded, as yet more details are added to the story, and as a person you will understand the story much more clearly.

Thirdly, there will be times when the Middle Eastern point of view **corrects** what you thought you knew from Scripture, revealing that your perspective may be biased or incomplete. The Hebraic point of view can challenge those erroneous impressions.

When you look at the Bible from this perspective, the result will always serve to add more confidence about Jesus's dominion and divinity, on earth as in heaven.



Where was Jesus born? Where did He grow up and play? Where did He die? Let's adjust and develop our spiritual eyes and ears to 1st century sight and hearing.

I have much in common with Jesus through the culture, geography, landscape and archeology that we share. After all, the exact locations in which Jesus' story took place is where I was born, grew up and played.

To learn more about Jesus and the Via Dolorosa, we can study the land and also the culture, the customs and the context of that time. By coming here, by visiting the land in person, we gain a deeper understanding. This is my specific theme – it drives every tour and is the foundation stone of my teachings.

So let us step together on to the path that Jesus walked. Perhaps you will find, as I did, your own Stations of life and become transformed by Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

As a sweet-natured young boy, I ran around in the dark, filthy streets and alleyways bisecting the Via Dolorosa. My parents' home was near the Eighth Station of the Cross, close to the intersection that leads from the Muslim market road to the Christian neighborhood.



I used to play hide and seek with my twin brother, Tony, by my parent's house. I loved the ancient round pillars near the Ethiopian Church, and I especially remember one particular limestone bench that Tony and I would jump on in an effort to climb to the top of the pillars. Although they were just outside my house, I did not know anything about their history or significance. To me, like to any kid, they were just a pile of old pillars that nobody cared about, that had stood for thousands of years in the same place, abandoned and half-destroyed. But, of course, they were so much part of a special history that only became known to me as I grew up.

While we were playing – hide and seek when I was little and then soccer when I as older – I would always meet tourists, and they would always need my help. "Where is the Holy Sepulcher?" they would ask me. "Can you take me to Jaffa Gate? Where is Damascus Gate?" I would guide them and lead them to their destinations.

I'll be honest, though, it was tiring helping them, and the frequent noise and clamor of the many tourists passing by often made it hard to even rest in my own house.

Even when I was coming home from school, my services would be required. I went to a private French Catholic school located just inside New Gate on the northern side of the Old City, and not far from Jaffa Gate on the western side. Many Christian pilgrims enter the Old City through these gates, which both lead to the Holy Sepulcher (Calvary).

The school yard was located just inside the Old City walls, so we often saw tourists on the Ramparts Walk, which runs along the top of the walls. As cheeky kids, we were always shouting in broken English "Hi! Where you from? Do you want a tour guide?" When I was in class, the window of my classroom was just two meters from the Ramparts. During my boring math class, I preferred to sit near the window and watch the stream of visitors constantly passing by rather than focusing on my work.

Eventually, I realized that the tourists who were all around me, everywhere I looked, were a part of my being. I have come to understand that I did not choose to become a tour guide, guiding chose me and it soon became a way of life, my vocation and destiny; one from which I could not escape.

The path of Via Dolorosa, which was developed by the wonderful Catholic tradition into 14 stations as a way to prayerfully remember what Jesus has done for all of us, speaks of the hard, but very real moments of Jesus' life as He carried the burden of humanity from condemnation to the cross.

The Via Dolorosa is a testimony of human brutality, inflicted upon the only sinless man to have ever lived, but it is also about how God's love conquered and cleared away the darkness, obtaining salvation from the bondage of sin. My own life was saved from the bondage of sin through Jesus Christ, and I have lived this path of redemption from my childhood to this day.



My heart's desire is to help bring peace, reconciliation and hope, through the gospel, to this land of conflict and war. This is the same message Jesus delivered to the Jews living under Roman occupation two thousand years ago, a message that is still fresh and alive today. I wish to present the Via Dolorosa as a real story, one that I live every day in the streets of the Christian Quarter. It is this story that increases my faith and gives me hope when life is difficult.

My committed Christian walk of faith has matured into deeper levels because I have lived and grown up here. I feel deeply connected with Jesus Christ, and I find my faith growing stronger every day. The way of the Cross is so much a part of my identity and life. In a way, I feel that I am living in continuity with Biblical heroes.

As a tour guide, I feel that I share nearly the same **culture, customs** and **context** as Jesus, with a mindset that sees Jesus differently to the way in which He is viewed by the western world. This is what I teach to the groups I take on tour—to see Jesus as a Jew. He was born as a Jew in Bethlehem, He lived his childhood learning the Torah as any other religious, Jewish child did in Nazareth, He had His ministry as a rabbi in Galilee, He was sacrificed as the Lamb during Passover in Jerusalem, and He will come back as a Jew, the Lion of Judah.



The Holy Land is the source, the place of origin, where the events of the Old and New Testament Scriptures took place. This is why the Old City of Jerusalem, the Via Dolorosa, and the land in which I live are so valuable and important to me. Together they have shaped my heart, my identity, and my Faith.

For those of us who come from the Middle East, our land and place of birth are important in many ways. We are intrinsically connected and they are very significant to our well-being. This is different from the thinking in most western cultures, where people often travel and migrate from one country to another and the land of their birth has much less value to them.

One of the goals in this book is to explain the Bible stories that took place here from a Middle Eastern way of thinking. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the three monotheistic religions originated in ancient Middle East, so to really understand the meanings of the stories that took place here, we need to learn about the way of life as it was, to begin to see it all from an Eastern mindset. When the culture, customs and context of the Middle East are viewed from the Hebraic traditions rather than western interpretations, the scriptures become alive.

Most of the Bible translations we have today came from a western mentality, one heavily influenced by the Greco-Roman theology that has pervaded the church since the early centuries. The western church today is an inheritor of the early church's anti-Semitic teachings, from Emperor Constantine onwards. As a tour guide, my purpose is to reawaken the 1st century way of thinking, to return to the origins and beginnings of the early church.