

MITRI RAHEB
FRED STRICKERT

BETHLEHEM 2000

FOREWORD BY
YASSER ARAFAT

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PAST
AND
PRESENT





Mitzi Blaseh, born in 1902 in Bethlehem, studied theology in Germany. Today he is the pastor of the Lutheran Church and director of the International Center of Bethlehem.

Fred Stricker, born in 1948, is professor of religion at Wartburg College, Waverly (Iowa, U.S.A.). His special fields are New Testament studies, biblical archaeology and Palestinian Christian issues.

Gere Nalbantian, born in 1943 in Jerusalem, is one of the most famous Palestinian photographers. He lives in East Jerusalem.

Bethlehem: Cliché and Reality

The millennium is about to turn. Bethlehem is the town where what is now called our common era began. Who does not know that Jesus was born there, if only from Christmas carols, crèches and all the sentimentality of Christmas? But very few people are aware of the actual history and culture of this town – its political and social reality at the end of the twentieth century.

Known as the birth-place of Jesus Christ, Bethlehem is one of the most important places of pilgrimage and tourism in the world. Even nowadays the impact of religion and history on this town can be felt. However, Bethlehem is also part of a region that was shaped by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the twentieth century; for nearly thirty years the town was under Israeli occupation.

The book describes history and culture, religion and political situation of Bethlehem in detail, as well as the traditions and everyday life of the Palestinians. The variety and fascination of the town are illustrated by 130 impressive color photographs and rare historical images.

"The text and photos give a uniquely full view of the town and its people: the reader is taken on a trip to one of the most sacred cities of human history. I am certain that this book will contribute to promoting a dialog between cultures and religions, a dialog that is a precondition for peace between the peoples of Israel and Palestine."

From the foreword of Yasser Arafat.



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