

From time-to-time Elias receives phone calls from listeners and while the volume is not overwhelming (understandably), it is dedicated. Elias shares one call he gets every night from Jerusalem and the request is always the same "Please send more teaching. Reduce the music and give more teaching." This is not surprising. During my visits to Israel since I first went there in 1982, I have come to appreciate the dedication Israelis have to biblical study. It's just in their DNA I suppose.

But our focus is on the global travellers who resonate with good Christian music...although we are certainly open to more good teaching as the Lord sends.

### GROWING

While visitors enjoy the many ancient Holy Land sites found within Jerusalem and Bethlehem, they also come to see so much more, in places like the pools of Solomon... the hills of Moab in Jericho...the nearby Dead Sea...the port of ancient Jaffa in Tel Aviv and so much more.

Elias asked for help to add more stations to reach them, and by the grace of God, funding came, dramatically expanding Orient radio coverage to reach as far as the Jordan Valley; recently Elias was driving to Tel Aviv and enjoyed his own station well down the road from Bethlehem.

### EXPENSIVE MINISTRY

Building radio is one thing-keeping it on the air is another challenge I know only too well! It wasn't long before Elias faced normal (but expensive) challenges when intermittent power damaged sensitive electronic equipment; when changing government regulations demanded increasingly larger commitment to staff; when rental sites suddenly stopped renting tower space. Each and every time calls for help came; sometimes we could help and sometimes we could not.

But somehow, Elias never sat down-he had made a faith commitment on the very first day and he was determined to wait on the Lord.

### GLOBAL SUFFOCATION

But then COVID hit the Middle East and as businesses closed, his income dropped dramatically. And just one year after the pandemic subsided, the Oct 7 attack came, causing a complete loss of income for Orient Radio. All business stopped and the only income that reached him was from donations we received for airing our Joyful Skies Broadcast...and it too was suffering from the same challenges.

### REMEMBER

Not long after that angelic army declared Good News over the Shepherds' Fields, King Herod tried to eliminate the source of this long-prophesied Good News and slaughtered many children in his effort to kill Jesus! He tried to suffocate the messenger.

But the Good News went on and King Herod did not!

This spiritually driven global suffocation will not stop the Good News in and for Jerusalem (the center of the earth Ez 5:5) or Bethlehem (produced the Shepherd of Israel Matt 2) or any other area where Joyful Skies must reach, so global visitors and local residents might hear...

### TIME NOW

As peace resumes, we will have a moment in time when we might reach the many who will soon flood back into the Holy Land. The nations will come and they will pray and they will give and they will love the people of this land. But when they arrive, they must hear what the Book says for them, and to them, and about these times we are in. They must find Joyful Skies in the Holy Land!

### WEAKENED WARRIOR

Elias has found himself in a difficult place. At a time when his funds are exhausted, he faces expenses beyond his ability; his license and related tax fees (\$15,000) have miraculously been covered as I prepared this letter, but he still faces an immediate need to rebuild his on-air presenter staff who had largely left when funding dried up .

I find my friend defending his "lentil patch" (2 Sam 23: 11,12) valiantly, but he does need help. I would ask that you pray about the Lord intervening for him in a tangible way. We are committed to finding appropriate supported radio programming, but that is a longer solution.

He really does need help now! Any gift given will be used to help with this radio ministry!

### AND ONE MORE THING

Elias has a vision to reach all tourists wherever they go and already has more radio locations picked out...one day when the Lord puts more in our hands, we wish to join him in this strategic vision. As we work to strengthen him now, let's begin to pray about this future expansion. Matt 24:14.

Don



**BROADCASTING FROM ORIENT RADIO STUDIOS**



**DON AND ELIAS IN STUDIO**



**CANADIANS ON THE MICROPHONE IN BETHLEHEM**



**SHEPHERDS FIELDS TODAY**



**TOURISTS TAKING WALKING TOURS IN ANCIENT JAFFA**



**POOLS OF SOLOMON**



**TOURISTS ENJOY THE MEDITERRANEAN AT JAFFA**



**TOURISTS AT THE DEAD SEA**



**PLANTING TREES IN ISRAEL**



**ENJOYING ESPRESSO IN JERUSALEM**



**ELIAS WITH TEAM IN MANGER SQUARE**

**SOUTH LEBANON**







EAST JERUSALEM

**“There is dancing in the streets of Gaza”**

Elias’ words were like fresh air. News of possible peace rippled across the world, and even a prospect of peace after so many months of intense fighting brought optimism alive in our conversation. After all, who has not seen the horrific events that took place beginning with the attack on Israelis on Oct 7, 2023 and who has not felt the pain of so many civilians and abductees, caught in a fight they did not want and cannot control? The world hurt with them and the world prayed for them!

**EARLY COURAGE**

I have never forgotten my first meeting with Elias, just days after he was presented with an opportunity to start a radio station (with Christian programming) in ancient Bethlehem. Situated beside Jerusalem, this beautiful city was populated primarily with Arabs whose faith is rooted in Islam in a region where less than 5% of residents identify as Christian. Feeling his “smallness” no doubt, he was understandably concerned. Like every believing person facing a life circumstance that requires faith, Elias stood before his God that day, and made a choice, recounting later “if I have a voice and I don’t use it, why have a voice”? I just knew I would work with him...

**FOCUS**

Elias looked around him and saw fields white unto harvest; and his field was filled with people from the nations, coming to enjoy the Biblical sites we have all come to know and love during our scripture readings...so many tourists! And with that focus, Elias started Orient Radio!

**BIBLICAL VIEW**

Waves of tourists, from so many nations, and most with biblical perspective; it seemed right to reach out to them. That’s where we came in. Elias could create local content for local need, but he had nothing in hand for the nations. Our ministry history which included broadcasting to the nations, had actually begun in South Lebanon so many years earlier (1979), and was perfect for this very unique opportunity.

We reached out to trusted programmers who demonstrated excellence over years of ministry, explaining the vision was to reach world visitors who travelled to the Holy Land, with radio programming that would encourage and inspire them to investigate every possible site they could within their time here; to pray for the people of the land; to pray for the land and to find a way to love all who call the Middle East their home!

**SPECIAL LUNCH**

As we enjoyed the unique and very tasty lunch fit for royalty (especially our favorite mint lemonade), Marty and I looked out from our table in The Tent Restaurant, over the skies of nearby Shepherds Fields which had once been the heavenly stage for an angelic choir (called an army of angels) who declared:

*“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased.”  
Luke 2 NASB*

And it just made sense that as we considered sending out Good News once again over the Shepherds Fields but this time on Orient Radio, that we create a program for all to remember; there are indeed **Joyful Skies** over the Holy land! And so, our Joyful Skies broadcast occupied the night shift, reminiscent of biblical history itself, continuing its 8-hour Biblical programming for all global visitors and surrounding residents to hear.

**MORE VOICES**

But people come from every land-not just Western communities like ours. So, it seemed right to invite and include Asian voices, including Korean and Chinese. And the Lord did send excellent Asian programmers. We happily moved over on the “broadcast bench” so our believing Asian friends could reach Korean and Chinese tourists in their own language. It was wonderful to share the microphone with them.

This was starting to feel right. The Good News came to Bethlehem as prophesied, but it was for all nations to hear (also prophesied).

**WHO WAS LISTENING**

On every visit to Israel, I would bring my radio. On one such visit when Marty and I led a “Do Something” visit when our friends joined us to donate time in Israeli soup kitchens, fields and medical outreaches. After one such service day, we had returned to our apartment in Jerusalem across from the Knesset (Israeli Parliament Buildings) and there it was loud and clear- Joyful Skies – sending out Christmas music for us (and our tourist friends). There just had to be angels nearby...

And on another time, Marty and I had arrived at the King David Hotel where I so much enjoyed an espresso on the patio, listening to Orient radio. I knew it could be heard in Jerusalem, but would anyone else hear?

As it turns out the answer is yes.



TOURISTS VISIT MANGER SQUARE CHURCH



ELIAS CHECKING HIS TOWER OVERLOOKING BETHLEHEM

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