

BURTON B. THURSTON  
1920–1990

DR. THURSTON pastored churches in Oregon, Washington, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. From 1953 to 1955 he was president of Manhattan Christian College, Manhattan, Kansas. From 1958 to 1970 he chaired the department of religious studies and was chaplain to the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, and he directed the university centennial celebration in 1966–67. From 1964 to 1967 he was a consultant in the development of National Universities in the Middle East. In 1970, Dr. Thurston came to Bethany College as professor of Middle Eastern Studies, a post he held until 1983, when he directed the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins in Tübingen, Germany. He retired in 1985 and devoted research to Christian origins and the relations among Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, subjects on which he had lectured and published widely.

He was an officer of the Joint Christian Committee for Refugees in Lebanon, was on the Board of Managers of Aleppo College in Syria, was Secretary of the Near East Association of Theological Schools, and lecturer in the Near East Council of Churches study program in Jerusalem. He was a member of the Middle East Studies Association, among other scholarly associations.

BASHEER K. NIJIM  
1936–1991

BASHEER K. NIJIM died on February 11, 1991, having lost his three-year fight against cancer. With his passing, Middle East studies lost a talented, active scholar and a gentle warrior for the cause of peace in Palestine. Basheer was born in Tulkarm, Palestine on September 13, 1936. He and his family were victims of the 1948 fighting, and moved to Jerusalem and Ramallah. Basheer then came to the United States in 1957, where he earned a Bachelor's degree at Augustana College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Geography at Indiana University in Bloomington. In 1962, he began teaching at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) in Cedar Falls, a place he and his family decided to call home. At UNI, Basheer quickly rose through the ranks to full professor and served as head of the Geography Department for over eighteen years (1969–1987). He also served as a visiting professor at the American University of Beirut (1966–67) and at various universities in the People's Republic of China in the Fall of 1985.

Basheer published extensively and in a variety of areas. His main specialty was political and population geography, but his research interest was broader, especially concerning Middle East issues. In particular, he wrote and lectured widely about Palestine and the Palestinians. His numerous articles appeared in a variety of scholarly publications, including the

*Journal of Geography*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. He also edited three books: *The Arab World: A Handbook* (1978, 1980, with Hassan Haddad); *American Church Politics and the Middle East* (1982); and *Toward the De-Arabization of Palestine/Israel 1945–1977* (1984). Basheer also served as editor of *Geographical Perspectives* from 1972 to 1979, and as editor of Pacesetter Books (1983–1989), a series of upper-level undergraduate books published by the National Council for Geographic Education.

Basheer's commitment to the profession and to Middle East studies was reflected in his numerous scholarly and volunteered activities. He presented papers at scholarly conferences on a regular basis until a brain tumor and partial stroke slowed him down. Still, his dedication, his will power, and his intense desire to help others never waned. Thus, only a mere few months before his untimely death, he traveled to Cyprus to help launch the Organization of Palestinian Geographers. Also, he was a life member of MESA and was elected to the national board of the Middle East Outreach Council.

As an American citizen of Arab background and Palestinian birth, Basheer worked hard to spread greater understanding among the peoples of his former and adopted homelands. In the process, he joined many organizations active in these endeavors, especially the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, in which he served in various capacities including that of Vice-President.

Basheer had many wonderful qualities. Most of all, he was a caring, loving, and considerate person. He was a family man, whose love and dedication to his wife, Germana, and his children, Faris and Sharif, were always his top priorities. Basheer was a scholar, a gentleman, a true friend, and a wonderful human being. He will be sorely missed.

In Basheer's honor, the Basheer K. Nijim International Student Scholarship was established at the University of Northern Iowa to help foreign students in need.

MICHAEL SULEIMAN

MARTIN DICKSON  
(14 May 1991)

ILSE LICHTENSTADTER  
(23 May 1991)

Obituary notices will appear in the December 1991 issue.