20 SAT-7

YEARS OF

BROADCASTING GOD'S LOVE

1996 - 2016



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Samia Kessai, presenter and producer from Tunisia recording a women's program in Cyprus, 2015

WHAT IS SAT-7?

SAT-7 is a Christian satellite television network broadcasting across 24 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, reaching millions of viewers. The network consists of five distinct channels: SAT-7 ARABIC, SAT-7 KIDS, SAT-7 PARS, SAT-7 TÜRK and SAT-7 PLUS. More than 80 percent of programming is produced in the Middle East by Middle Easterners.

SAT-7 was founded as a non-profit organisation in 1995 with support from Middle Eastern churches. SAT-7 is the first, oldest and largest Christian satellite organisation operating in the Middle East and North Africa. Founder Dr. Terence Ascott has served as International CEO since the beginning.

The SAT-7 ethos is distinctive and effective. Among its elements are: seeking to educate, inform, inspire, motivate; producing programs that are culturally, politically and religiously sensitive; avoiding criticism of other churches, or of ethnic or religious groups; seeking to show the unity of Christianity, with all its diversity; not promoting any political party or ideology; encouraging the defence of peace, human rights, justice and social and economic development; not selling airtime to other parties; not soliciting funds for itself on air.

"I have been watching your kids' programs for many years. I am now 15 years old and last week my mother said to me you are getting old and you still want to watch the kids' programs!"

20 YEARS WITH GOD'S BLESSING



For 20 years SAT-7 has been on a journey. Not only has our broadcasting grown from two to more than 840 hours per week on five different channels; it has also had a remarkable impact on our viewers.

Every single day for 20 years people, in the Middle East, North Africa and across the globe have responded to SAT-7 via fax, email, letter, telephone, or on social media. Viewers have openly shared their lives with SAT-7 staff: they have expressed how much it has meant to them to watch a particular program, to receive a Bible verse from a presenter, to experience a church service or to learn to pray. For 20 years we have travelled with millions of viewers in the Middle East and North Africa. Through SAT-7, God's hand has touched an entire region.

SAT-7 has had an amazing impact on the churches in the Middle East and North Africa. When different denominations and people couldn't speak openly about their faith, they found a voice through television. SAT-7 provided that voice for many Christians and churches.

There have been difficult times for SAT-7 - times of exhaustion, instability…and insecurity in some of the countries SAT-7 works in, and often a lack of funds to fulfil all the dreams. But we are so thankful to God for providing us with everything we have needed, when we needed it, every single day. I am reminded of Proverbs 3:5-6:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths."

It has been an amazing journey, and we are very grateful that many people around the world have travelled it with us and supported SAT-7 through prayers and donations.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Habib Badr
Chair of the SAT-7 International Council
Senior Pastor of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut

THE VISION

To see a growing Church in the Middle East and North Africa, confident in Christian faith and witness, serving the community and contributing to the good of society and culture.

THE MISSION

To provide the churches and Christians of the Middle East and North Africa an opportunity to witness Jesus Christ through inspirational, informative, and educational television services.



SALAH

MAN FROM ALGERIA

VIEWER FOR 18 YEARS

"I learned about Jesus when I was twelve. Strangely enough, I used to pray in my own way to God without even knowing about Christianity. One day during my prayers Jesus appeared to me, but I did not know it was Jesus. He said, 'Come into my house.' I asked, 'Where is your house?' He answered, 'The Church.'

"When my family bought a satellite dish, I zapped through the channels, my eye was caught by the 'First Arabic Channel for Christians in the Middle East and North Africa' It was SAT-7. 'This channel is for me,' I said to myself. The program was the kids' show *Assanabel* with Rita and Sanboul. There was a quiz question about the founder of the Scout movement, and I knew the answer. But then my mother walked in and saw me watching the program. She turned the TV off and forbade me from watching TV. But I wrote to *Assanabel* without anyone knowing.

"One afternoon no one was at home so I turned the TV on, but after a short while my mother came in and started screaming at me. But at that moment, Rita was announcing the names of the winners, and she clearly said my name. We were startled. After that my mother did not stop me from watching TV again.

"I received a package from SAT-7 with a T-shirt and a copy of the Gospel of John. My mother gave me the T-shirt and hid the Gospel. I kept searching until I found it and began to read it eagerly. The first words I read were, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God…" Suddenly everything was clear to me… He who appeared to me in prayer when I was younger is Jesus Christ, and He is the Way."

KAREEM

MAN FROM EGYPT

VIEWER FOR 20 YEARS

"SAT-7 is the first channel I turn on when I wake up in the morning, and I have asked the person who set up my satellite dish to put it at the top of the list.

"I have been watching SAT-7 since it started broadcasting 20 years ago, and I am especially glad that it dedicates a lot of time to broadcasting Christian songs and hymns. SAT-7 is unique because it represents many Christian denominations, and the network certainly unites the body of Christ.

"I really like the talk shows because they always discuss topics from a biblical perspective. I also like watching the family programs. I love SAT-7 and never get bored with it, especially not with the programs about the Church in Algeria."



Photos are representational and not actual viewers. Names have been changed for security purposes.

ARAD

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MAN FROM IRAN

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VIEWER FOR 7 YEARS

"I started watching SAT-7 PARS seven years ago, and one of the first things I heard on your channel was, 'If you have tried fixing the problems in your life and have not found a solution, it is time to give Jesus a chance. He can change things for you.'

"After hearing these words I started to watch SAT-7 PARS regularly. I was a drug addict, and would always watch the programs that helped me to deal with my problems. My family quickly realised that I had started to change.

"I like to call you regularly. I admire the way your presenters speak with the viewers; it shows that they care. SAT-7 PARS likes to hear from anyone; it does not matter who they are. I don't have any other source of help; I have no Christian friends and no Bible. I owe the changes in my life to SAT-7's programs."



ELMIRA

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WOMAN FROM IRAN

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VIEWER FOR 6 YEARS

"Before I started watching SAT-7 PARS, I had very limited access to theology. Although we went to church, it was very crowded and the pastor didn't have time to answer all of my questions. SAT-7 PARS widened my world and extended my understanding of Christianity. It was very effective in consolidating my faith.

"I became a viewer at the time when the government was starting to close down the churches and monitor people. Many of our friends were arrested, so watching SAT-7 was very helpful and heartening for me. If it wasn't for your channel, many things would have faded in me.

"SAT-7 PARS helped me strengthen my relationship with God. I could feel His presence in all my difficulties. It grounded my heart and spirit and made my faith secure and stable."



KIARASH

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MAN FROM AFGHANISTAN

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VIEWER FOR MANY YEARS

Many years ago a man e-mailed SAT-7 PARS to say that he had begun to watch the programs and asked what he could gain if he followed Christ. He wanted to leave his country and said he needed financial help. The counsellor shared the Gospel with him and explained that we were not able to help financially but could help with counselling, prayer and links to programs, etc. He was very offended.

He wrote back to SAT-7 PARS recently and said, "I was not happy with your response years ago, but I continued to watch the programs through the links that you sent me. I moved to Europe and afterwards I gave my life to Jesus Christ. I now realize what it means to be a true follower of Christ, and I don't want any other gain. I have everything I need now with Jesus in my life. Every opportunity I get I watch your programs."



Photos are representational and not actual viewers. Names have been changed for security purposes.

FLASHBACK TO THE FIRST BROADCAST

Rita El Mounayer, one of the first presenters on SAT-7, takes us back to the very first broadcast on 31 May, 1996



Rita on the set of the first broadcast in 1996

In the rented corner of a small production house in Lebanon, the filming crew had just two cameras and two metres of studio space for Rita to walk back and forth. There were no props, teleprompter, script or mixer. It took five hours to film only ten minutes of programming! Then unfortunately the first day of filming did not produce usable footage, so the team came back another day and started again.

At the time, television was completely new to Rita, who had been working at Feba Radio. She recalls, "In radio … you read the script and that's it. But in television, you have to fix the light, the angle of the camera. The producer says, 'No, repeat that sentence. No, you didn't smile.' I had to walk from left to right… We didn't have a mixer; we were taking feeds from two cameras and mixing them later. We had virtually nothing. That's why I feel amazed when I look back and see how much more professional God has made us after all these years."

A passion to serve

SAT-7 aired just two hours of Arabic-language programming in that first week. It included Rita presenting a 15-minute children's Bible story program called *Assanabel* (in English, *Ears of Wheat*). Then, a music clip was presented, with the words: "We have one faith, one love, one God for us all, one baptism." Watching for the first time, Rita had tears in her eyes. She says, "I felt more and more of a passion to serve in this ministry… In Lebanon, we have 17 or 18 different denominations. And here comes a ministry that is trying to unify Christians in a good cause: to help our society regardless of denomination, and also to reach out to people who are not Christians to show them God's love."

Totally new

The following week, the same two hours of programming were repeated because the ministry had not managed to produce a new program for the second week. But as a result of this simple broadcast, letters started arriving from excited viewers in Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, and other parts of the Arab world.

Viewers were stunned because SAT-7 was doing something unconventional in the Arab media world. Except in Lebanon, the Church in the Middle East had existed only behind walls. People were not allowed to worship or share their faith in public, to such an extent that many Arabs did not even know that Arab Christians existed or that Christianity was born in the Middle East. Rita says, "The Church, twenty years ago, had the opportunity to go out from behind its walls and share the faith."

Would-be suicide bomber

Our programs were shining a light in darkness. Since the launch of satellite TV in the early 1990s, children's programming had changed dramatically. Negative messages were being sent out. Rita remembers watching a children's program, on another Lebanese channel, that encouraged children to share what they wanted to be when they grew up. One wanted to be a doctor. Then another child called and said he wanted to be a suicide bomber, and to make matters worse, the host praised and encouraged him. It became clear that some people were manipulating satellite TV to indoctrinate children with their own political agendas. Rita says, "The difference at SAT-7 is the message: it's a message of love and forgiveness. The stories we were sharing were from the Bible."

(continued on page 8)

Main photo: Rita El Mounayer on set of *Assanabel, 2004*

Top right: Rita on one of the kid's sets, 2003
Middle right: Rita in SAT-7 studios, 1988
Bottom right: Rita with a participant on set of *I Love You That Much*















In those early days, the ministry overcame its share of obstacles. The dreams of producers and directors have always been bigger than the ministry's budget. It was also difficult to find the right staff to produce the programs. Someone might have technical expertise but not a heart for ministry. Another person might be passionate about the ministry but not have the necessary skills and so would need training. In recent years this has no longer been a serious issue, because many Arab Christians are attending universities and being equipped with professional expertise for the broadcasting industry, or have learnt key skills while working with SAT-7.

In touch with children

Today, SAT-7 has five channels airing 24/7 to over 15 million viewers in the Arabic, Farsi and Turkish languages. Rita is the Chief Channels and Communications Officer (CCO) overseeing all the channels, but she prefers to be known by her viewers as the presenter of *Bedtime Stories*. She says, "I don't want to lose the connection with the parents and the children because this is my ministry… It opens doors for me that I don't want to close."

Among SAT-7's newest initiatives is *My School* (in Arabic, *Madrasati*), an on-air educational program for refugee children. This gives a second chance to children whose education has been interrupted by war and displacement. When they turn fourteen or fifteen and face unemployment without an education, they are easy targets for radicalisation. But with the right help, they will be empowered to read, think, and make important life choices for themselves. In this way, SAT-7 can invest in people's lives at a young age and enable them to create a brighter future for themselves and their societies.

Looking ahead, we asked, "Will the mission of SAT-7 ever be complete?" Rita replied with another question: "Do you think that there is a solution to the problems in the Middle East or that it will come soon? SAT-7 is needed now more than ever.

"I hope a day will come when SAT-7's mission is complete because we'll have a perfect Middle East. I have hope, as long as we have people on their knees who don't give up, praying every day for the region... But seeing what is happening in society around us, I think we need more time."

"I hope a day will come when SAT-7's mission is complete because we'll have a perfect Middle East. I have hope, as long as we have people on their knees who don't give up, praying every day for the region..."

Top: Rita and Terence Ascott at 10-year anniversary celebrations in 2006 / **Middle:** Rita and Samia Kessai, a producer from Tunisia, working for SAT-7 ARABIC, in 2012 / **Bottom:** Rita with children at the Bekaa Valley Syrian Refugee Camp, 2015

MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7



ESTHER

BTS AND AUDIENCE RELATIONS
COORDINATOR SAT-7 PARS

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8 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"One evening I had a phone call from a man. He said that he liked our programs and that he wanted my advice about a big problem. Then he began to cry. He had found out that his wife was having an affair and, in Islam, that meant she should be stoned; he didn't want this to happen to her. "So I talked to him, looking at how he could show more love to her and we prayed together. After a while he called again and said that he had done what we had agreed and had also talked to his wife about God's love and forgiveness. She understood that she had been wrong and had agreed to be honest with him and talk about their problems. The last time he called me they were happy together. He thanked us for our help, which had changed his life."

MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7



AMGAD SAMIR

CHURCH RELATIONS SUPERVISOR
SAT-7 EGYPT

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18 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"My highlight was in 2004, when SAT-7 attended the annual International Book Fair in Egypt for the first time. We had a booth to display and distribute our publications and specially designed calendars for visitors. Children ran to the booth to see our presenter Essam, "Mr Know", and our producer, Mounir Zachary, who was also there to meet them. The event is visited by thousands of people every day for two weeks. It provides an opportunity for the public to communicate face to face with SAT-7 personnel and for us to get direct feedback from viewers. We distributed presents, balloons and flyers in the booth and took photographs. SAT-7 KIDS broadcasts the event on the *Assanabel* news program."

MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7



DAPHNE LOUKA

OFFICES COORDINATOR
SAT-7 PARS

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13 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"For me what stands out most is that nothing can stop a vision given by God. I have seen this principle in practice at SAT-7. For example, I was in one meeting where we were focusing on a big financial crisis that threatened to stop us from covering our expenses for the next few months. After that gloomy conversation ended, Terence (our CEO) raised another part of the vision: the new SAT-7 TÜRK channel. Some people in the meeting felt uncomfortable committing to such an extra expense at a time of crisis, but Terence seemed undisturbed. That was when I really understood what having a God-given vision means."

A younger generation of SAT-7 professionals have grown up with the ministry and stand ready to take up the torch carried by today's leaders

Here they talk about their years working with SAT-7

Former Child STARS LOOK BACK



MARIANNE AWARAJI DAOU

PRESENTER OF THE PROGRAM *LET'S SING TOGETHER* ON SAT-7 KIDS

Take us back to the set of your first program.
It was 2000, and I was ten years old. The set was really simple. I had a small corner with a white board where some drawings from the viewers were hanging, and a small table where I had some letters to read.

How was production back then different from today?
The filming was really slow. If there was any technical problem we had to repeat lines over and over again. But there was always a peaceful atmosphere, as I was surrounded with nice people who all had the same aim, to share Jesus with all the children in the Arab World.

Today, filming is much better and we have live shows. The quality of the programs improved because of more experience, new equipment and good cameras. Best of all, we can be in direct contact with our viewers, hear their voices, and get their feedback.

What has been the most fulfilling part of working with SAT-7?
Knowing that what I'm doing isn't in vain. It has a purpose, the highest, most precious purpose: presenting Jesus, to children who probably have been given a very different and cruel image of God. Kids also call and ask for prayer, which proves to me that they believe in its power.

What has encouraged you to remain with SAT-7 all these years?
Knowing that I have become a role model whom the kids have grown to love and become attached to over the years it gives me a big responsibility to keep doing what I'm doing.

Could you give an update on the latest program or project you've worked on?
I've been doing *Let's Sing Together* since 2006, when the war in Lebanon started. I was the writer… I mostly wanted kids to experience God's unconditional love and to love Him, not because our Church or parents want us to, not out of fear of the god that some religions believe in, but because He is our loving Father who cares for us.





Top (polaroid): Young Marianne on the set of *Assanabel*
Bottom: Marianne with contestants on the set of the program *Let's Sing Together*



NIKOO ORDODARY

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AND PROGRAMMING MANAGER
SAT-7 PARS

Take us back to the set of your first program.
In late 2005, when I was sixteen, I started working on a Farsi youth program entitled *Friendly*. The first day I went on set, I was nervous; I had spent the night before going over my script a hundred times and had prayed for hours! My mother gave me this advice: "When you talk in front of the cameras, imagine that you are talking to your friends, your grandmother and aunts and cousins, the people that you would love to know God in a personal way. Tell them what Jesus has done for *you*. And that's what I did.

When my grandmother died in 2008, I cried for days. Shortly after that, I stopped working on programs, got a job and went to law school. But the Executive Director of SAT-7 PARS came to me a few months later and said that viewers missed me and had asked where I was… So I came back, for the millions of others who were still alive and needed to hear about Jesus.

How was production back then different from today?
There was no studio or fancy digital cameras then. We did not have much experience in production, so we had to re-work many parts of the programs at the post-production stage.

What has been the most fulfilling part of working with SAT-7?
Being able to meet with talented new presenters and producers, and to hear their passion and desire to serve as they proposed new ideas and programs. Also being able myself to serve in front of the camera and reach out to millions of viewers, and to hear them call in and give their testimonies.

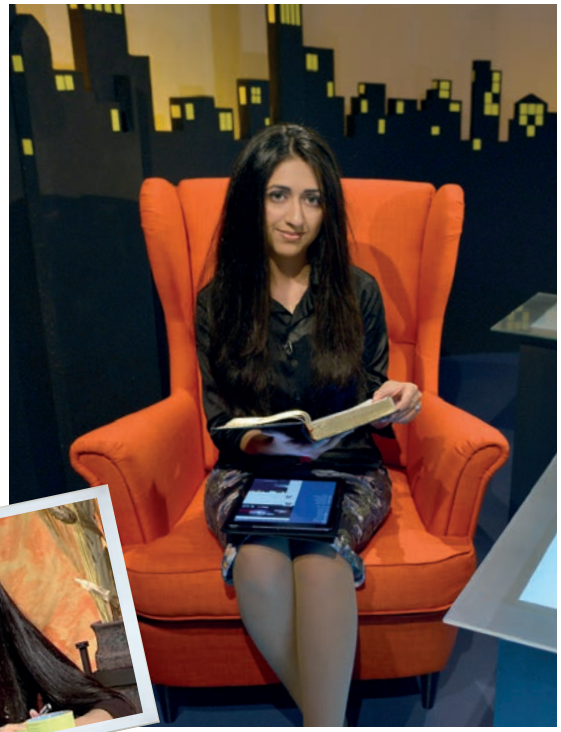
What has encouraged you to remain with SAT-7 all these years?
My love for God and desire to do His will, rather than mine! Also, the wonderful team that I work with. With all our flaws and limitations, we are united in our goal and our heart's desire for the Farsi-speaking world to know God's love, and we support each other in love, and all this sustains us in our work!

I know that my work will change lives and have an impact for generations to come, even after I am gone. And finally, SAT-7 gives young people a chance to grow in ministry.



Could you give an update on the latest program or project you've worked on?
I'm continuing to work on a program called *Dandelion*. In July 2015, together with Dr. Sasan Tavassoli, I worked on a 15-episode series called *I Beg to Differ*, based on Tim Muehlhoff's book with the same title.

> "…we are united in our goal and our heart's desire for the Farsi-speaking world to know God's love."





Top: Nikoo on the set of Dandelion
Middle: Nikoo on the latest Dandelion set
Bottom (polaroid): Young Nikoo filming *Daily Bread*

GOD PROVIDES IN MIRACULOUS WAYS

"Yes, it *is* a miracle."
Although Terence Ascott, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of SAT-7, admits that the word "miracle" is overused, he is happy to apply it to the Christian broadcaster's achievements over the 20 years since it was launched



Terence Ascott's first years in engaging with Middle Eastern culture, in Egypt 1976

Without a doubt God has provided in a miraculous way in terms of people, funding, security, and overcoming obstacles," he says. "We've had disappointments, most of them to do with people messing up, but that's the same in all Christian organisations! But after twenty years we now have people who know how to make programs as good as those seen on any other Arab channel. It's really very exciting to see how God has raised up these people and provided for us year by year."

An amazing story

Terence Ascott laughs at the suggestion that he thought SAT-7 would ever grow to the size it has.

He says, "When we first launched, we were hoping we could have a full-time channel eventually, but in multiple languages: Arabic, Turkish, and Farsi. I thought if we ever managed that it would be amazing, though I couldn't really see how we would get there. But we had to try!"

An idea takes root

By the mid-1980s the idea of broadcasting Christian television into the Middle East via satellite was occupying Terence's mind.

"The growing importance of television became clearer to me in the early 1980s, and we had several consultations with church and mission leaders, mainly in Egypt, to talk about what we could do," he says.

"There was Christian radio, which was doing a good job, and there were Christian publishers, but there was only one Christian television station, Middle East Television – a local terrestrial broadcast station based in South Lebanon.

"In 1986-88 I began to write about the possibilities, but it was a bit early. People in the region hadn't seen Christian television, and so they thought it was science fiction."

Gradual evolution

Key technological developments helped Terence to believe his dream could become a reality. These included the launch of Arabsat in 1986, which connected Arab countries with television services through satellite; the first satellite broadcasts over Europe, which could be picked up in the Middle East by the late 1980's; and the launch of the first Arabic satellite TV channel (MBC), funded by Saudi Arabia and seeking to imitate the success of CNN, whose satellite coverage of the Gulf War in 1990-91 set a new standard in news broadcasting.

"From 1980 to 1989 there was a gradual technological evolution that began to reveal the potential," he explains, "but when we shared the vision with people in the Arab world, we were faced with the common objections." Arab Christians would not risk showing their face on camera; it would be impossible to fund the station; governments wouldn't permit it to make or broadcast programs; and local church leaders did not want Christian television based on the American models they had seen.

"Of course we have had many, many requests from ministries in North America asking for air-time or offering to help us financially if we carried some of their programs, and it's been tempting to agree when we've been in financial difficulty, but this is not a model we want," Terence says.

"It's not appropriate for many countries in the Arab world, certainly not when there's so much anti-Western feeling. We don't want the Gospel to look like it's a foreign import."

(continued on page 14)

Top: Elie Hayek, Rita Elmounayer and Terence Ascott filming in Morocco, 2001 / **Middle:** Terence Ascott in the old International Ofiices
Bottom: SAT-7 Egypt offices and studios opening ceremony

Main photo: Terence Ascott visiting the construction site of the new SAT-7 Lebanon offices and studios























A Middle East ethos

Terence says that these thoughts motivated him to ensure the ethos and policies of SAT-7 were driven by Christians from the Middle East and North Africa. "We worked with the Middle East Council of Churches on a program policy and a business plan and we responded to their concerns. From the very beginning of SAT-7 we designed the structure so that at the highest level of decision-making (the SAT-7 International Board, which is now the International Council) the majority of voting members would always be Middle Eastern Christians living in the Middle East."

A reluctant director

Terence says that he was not expecting the role of a Christian broadcaster in the Middle East to become his next career move and to be a major part of his professional and personal life over the decades to come. "I wasn't envisaging being the CEO at that time," he says. "I was just heading up the feasibility studies and was hoping I could find a director with experience in television, but everybody I spoke to just backed away in horror. It was too scary.

"It was one of the hardest decisions of my life to leave the organisation that I was with at that time, Middle East Media, where I was the International Director. It involved stepping into a new ministry, which was exciting and challenging, but there was a sense of guilt at leaving a ministry that I had helped to grow over a period of 20 years, so I wasn't comfortable taking that step."

Dangers and difficulties

The success of SAT-7 has come at personal cost to many, including Terence himself. "There's wear and tear," he admits. "In my 40 years in the Middle East I've encountered a number of dangers and difficulties: ill-health, security issues, deportation… I've been arrested a few times, been shot at, had the windows of my apartment blown in twice. But when you look at the current unrest and the challenges that our offices in various countries are facing, my problems don't seem very significant or unusual."

Brave presenters

Terence also points to the bravery of current staff members who ensure that SAT-7 has programs to air and Christians to present them.

"Some of the Egyptians were concerned at the beginning," he says. "They weren't sure how the government was going to react to SAT-7. But perhaps the bravest people we've had on air are the Algerians and Tunisians. They are willing to go on screen and publicly testify to their faith, even though they're not from a Christian background. One of the SAT-7 directors was once in Algeria and explained to a congregation that they were going to record a program for SAT-7 and that if anyone didn't want their face shown they should move to the back of the church. Nobody moved; they were ready to have their faces seen and to be known as believers in Christ."

Ground rules

Terence says that some of SAT-7's key rules have helped it to be accepted into millions of homes across the region: the use of local presenters and the network's refusal to criticise other religions. "Our children's channel would not have been accepted into millions of homes if we had attacked other people's religious beliefs or been politically or culturally insensitive. But parents of all religious backgrounds can entrust their children to this channel," he says.

Top left: Terence Ascott speaking at the SAT-7 *Network* meeting, 2002 / **Top right:** Terence Ascott with Bishop Marcos from Egypt / **Mid left:** Terence Ascott with Habib Badr, Chair of the SAT-7 International Council / **Mid right:** Terence Ascott at the opening of the new SAT-7 Lebanon offices and studios in 2014

Lower left: Terence Ascott at the SAT-7 International Offices, 2015 / **Lower right:** Terence Ascott and Rita El Mounayer at the SAT-7 Christmas party, 2013 / **Bottom:** Terence Ascott with VIPs' at the opening of the new International Offices in Cyprus, 2015

Satellite or Internet

As Terence had not dreamt that SAT-7 would grow to the size it is with the reach it has, he has had to reassess what it might achieve in the future. He says that despite satellite television's undoubted strengths, the Internet will become increasingly important.

"The Internet today is still heavily censored, and it's very expensive for many, especially if you're watching video and you're paying by the megabit," he says. "And you need to be literate to navigate the Internet, even literate in Latin scripts, so intentionally or unintentionally its development is being held back in many areas. But although satellite television is still the best option for the efficient delivery of content, there's no doubt that this is going to change over the next decade.

"We're beginning a series of consultations to look at what our response will be. Do we need a social media strategy that doesn't just support the television ministry but is a media ministry in its own right and, if so, what will that require of us?"

Changing lives

SAT-7's achievement is not measured solely by the number of channels and programs, but also in the change it brings to people's lives. Terence says that by this measure too the broadcaster has been a major success.

"If you remember the ignorance among our viewers in the early 1990s about Christ, Christianity and the Church, you can see what a difference it's made," he says. "People no longer call a show to ask the basic questions about who Christ is. They now understand this much better.

"The first phone call from a viewer that we took, on the first day of broadcasting in 1996 was, 'I saw a lady speaking Arabic wearing a cross around her neck. What is this? Who is this?' That viewer had never realised that you could be an Arabic speaker and a Christian, and it was a real shock to them.

"That shows you where we were then, but today there is a much higher level of awareness of who Arab Christians are, what they believe and what they practice."

God is the provider

So has God done a miracle with SAT-7? Terence says that the collective evidence of the past twenty years amounts to an overwhelmingly affirmative answer.

"I remember that a few years ago we didn't have enough money to pay local salaries, and then suddenly, in the middle of August when all the Cyprus government departments are closed, we got a long-awaited VAT refund for 80,000 Euros", he says.

"How did that happen in August when everything stops here? And the timing was just perfect. We were able to pay the rent and the salaries and move on. God has provided miraculously at the last minute on many occasions and has shown that He is our provider. We've never missed paying the salaries anywhere in 20 years, which is amazing when we consider our cash flow and some of the difficulties we've had.

"So yes, there have been miracles, and we thank God for each of them!"

CONGRATULATIONS TO SAT-7

Rev. Ashton T. Stewart
Chairman, SAT-7 PARS Board

"In 1979 the Iranian Islamic revolution took place and with it a dark spiritual cloud settled over Iran. The future of a Christian witness in that land seemed bleak. The following year all Western missionaries were deported, and the Christian community felt cut off from the rest of the world. But now there is rapidly expanding underground church movement. It has been confirmed that Christianity is growing faster in Iran than in any other part of the world, and a major reason for this growth is the impact of Christian satellite channels such as SAT-7 PARS.

Every day we get testimonies from people who have come to faith in Christ. Our satellite programs are piercing the darkness of despair with programs that give the hope of Christ to the people of Iran."

Lord David Alton
UK

"There are millions of Arabic-speaking Christians scattered all over the Middle East. These believers need access to the media, they need pastoral help and care – things they have been denied in the past. SAT-7 is such a good idea because it reaches right into peoples' homes. We in the West should get behind this idea now – urgently!"

TIMELINE O

1996-

1991-95

Research and feasibility studies.





1995

November 17-18 Founding meeting.

SAT-7 is legally incorporated.

Twenty agencies join the partnership.

1997

February First telephone counselling training workshop, Nicosia.

SAT-7 UK office registered.

July SAT-7 studio in Lebanon opens.

October Broadcasts expand to 2½ hours per week on two satellites (Eutelsat 2F3 and PanAmSat 7).





December First SAT-7 office opens in Egypt (Shoubra El Kheima).

1999

April Broadcasts expand to four days per week.

November SAT-7 Partner-operated telephone counselling centers begin operation.





1996

January Nicosia office opens with five staff (and one in Lebanon)

May 31 SAT-7 starts weekly broadcasts (two hours) on Eutelsat 2F3 (analogue).





1998

April SAT-7 buys its first camera.

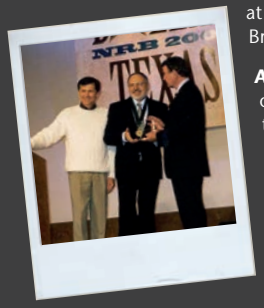
May SAT-7 North America registered.

June SAT-7 Egypt office moves to Heliopolis.



OF EVENTS

-2006



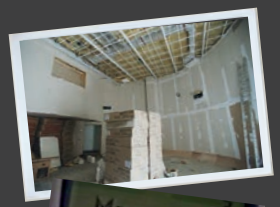
2001

February SAT-7 receives "Ministry of the Year" award at NRB (National Religious Broadcasters) convention.

April SAT-7 signal on digital channel expands to 24 hours a day.

September SAT-7 Benelux office opens.







2003

March Rebuilt Cairo studio reopens.

April SMS text messaging service for viewers begins.

May "Rolling schedule" brings more variety to SAT-7's broadcasts.





2005

January Analogue broadcasts stop.

April & May SAT-7's first live broadcasts.

November Ten-year celebration of SAT-7 Incorporation.

December Launch of SAT-7 supporter office, Canada.





2000

April Start of daily broadcasts (analogue).

May Start of additional daily digital broadcasts on Eutelsat HotBird.

August SAT-7 Norden office opens.



2002

January SAT-7 studio Mokattam, Cairo opens.

September Deliberate fire destroys Cairo studio.

Iranian Christian Broadcasting (IBC) launched.





2004

April Twenty-four hours of regular programming on the digital channel every day.

May Daily one-hour program for children, SAT-7 *KIDS*, launched.





2006

January TÜRK-7 begins regular Turkish broadcasts on SAT-7.

February SAT-7 begins broadcasting from its Master Control Room in Cyprus.

May 31 SAT-7 broadcasts 2 hour "live" Ten-Year Anniversary Special.



TIMELINE O

2006-



2006

August Because of the war in Lebanon, SAT-7 Beirut staff begin regular "live" news and current affairs program.

December 18 SAT-7 PARS channel launched.

SAT-7 PARS

2007

September 16 SAT-7's second live show is launched from Lebanon, running until March 2008 and expanding from its original one hour

December 10 SAT-7 KIDS is launched.

SAT-7 KIDS

2008

February
Launch of new SAT7.org website. SAT-7 KIDS begins live streaming online.

November Re-structuring of production facilities in Egypt.







2009

February *From Me to You*
SAT-7's first live & interactive show for youth begins airing.

May First live broadcast from Egypt.



June Iranian "Green Revolution" erupts. SAT-7 PARS responds with prayer programs.

October SAT-7 ARABIC & KIDS go live on Eutelsat AB4, co-located with Nilesat—the most popular satellite platform in the region.



SAT-7 TÜRK

2010

January TÜRK-7 merges with SAT-7 and becomes SAT-7 TÜRK.

September Start of regular live shows on SAT-7 KIDS. Viewer responses on Arabic channels double.



December Start of new BTS remote-controlled scheduling at new outsourced playout centre in Slovenia (STN) for all channels.

SAT-7 PLUS

SAT-7 PLUS launches on Hot Bird, replacing the two separate Arabic channels on Hot Bird.









2011

January Start of the "Arab Spring" and year of special live programs on Arabic channels, including a 12-hour live broadcast from Egypt on 11/11/11.

July SAT-7 International Board becomes SAT-7 International Council, with a new Executive Board. New Constitution agreed.

OF EVENTS

-2016





2012

January Melih Ekener appointed as new Executive Director for SAT-7 TÜRK.

April TÜRK team move to new, much larger facilities in Istanbul.

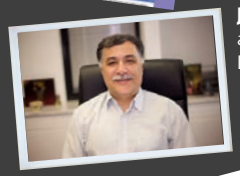
May SAT-7 ARABIC airs first-ever live program from Erbil, Iraq.



December The new "Upper Room" studio in Cairo is officially opened.

October SAT-7 KIDS' new website wins gold prize at Pan-Arab Web Awards ceremony.

SAT-7 ARABIC broadcasts two separate live events, each attended by 10,000 mostly young Egyptians.



2014

March SAT-7 Partner meetings (Network) held for the first time in Turkey. A record 250 people attend from 24 nations.

July Rev. Mansour Khajehpour appointed as new Executive Director of SAT-7 PARS.

September SAT-7 TÜRK awarded Turkish Government (RTÜK) broadcast license.

November New SAT-7 Lebanon studios officially opened by Patriarch Raii. 400 guests and VIPs attend.





March SAT-7 Lebanon moves into beautiful new studio facilities.

April SAT-7 International Office moves to new offices after 19 years in same down-town Nicosia building.

2015

January SAT-7 TÜRK begins broadcasting as the first and only Christian channel on the TÜRKSAT platform.





August Intermedia research shows total SAT-7 audience of 14 million, with 9.25 million watching SAT-7 KIDS.

September VIP Ground Breaking ceremony for new Beirut studios.

December Viewer responses from Iran double in 2011.





2013

March Renovated PARS studio in London re-opens to host five live shows per week.

July SAT-7 Lebanon documentary producer given Human Rights Journalism Award.

August One hundred Coptic churches or institutions burnt by supporters of Muslim Brotherhood. Non-violent response by Christians is a great testimony.







April SAT-7 International Council member Mar Gregorios Ibrahim (Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo) is kidnapped in Syria.

TWELVE YEARS IN THE MAKING

SAT-7 PARS' former Executive Director, Sara Afshari, reflects on the channel's beginnings and growth over the twelve years she served the ministry



Sara Afshari's first steps with SAT-7 PARS

As the founder of an NGO encouraging the education of women in Iran, and a trained teacher, Sara Afshari, did not feel a call to work in a television ministry.

Sara had her eyes set on furthering women's education in Tajikistan. However, her plans were frustrated, especially by the outbreak of the war in Afghanistan in 2001. So SAT-7's CEO, Terence Ascott, invited her to help initiate the provision of Christian teaching for the Farsi-speaking world instead. She saw that she could adapt her dreams to bring the Word of God to her people through the format of a TV channel, and ultimately make an impact on people's spiritual lives. Sara flew to Cyprus on 17 September, 2002 five days after Iranian Christian Broadcasting (ICB) was launched.

Humble beginnings

At first, a modest single hour of ICB programming was broadcast weekly on SAT-7 ARABIC. Sara was working alone, as the only Iranian based in Cyprus for her first eighteen months. Owing to the small budget and lack of staff, ICB was able to increase its weekly programming by only one hour each year in 2003 and 2004.

ICB did not begin its life under the SAT-7 legal umbrella. It was an independent ministry with its own board, but shared the SAT-7 ethos and partnered with it for guidance and resources. The partnership generated many benefits, but fulfilling the needs of both ministries proved challenging. "It was hard for Terence (CEO), myself and the ICB chairman. We had to go through a tough time, but it led to growth in 2005.

"The roles of the two organisations and how they related to each other were rather unclear, and the ambiguity created difficulties between them," says Sara.

Transition

In 2006, SAT-7 invited ICB to join with it instead of continuing as a separate ministry. On 18 December, 2006 the newly re-named ICB was launched as SAT-7 PARS, and the channel began broadcasting 24/7. "It had been a very interesting journey up to this point," says Sara. "But the change meant I could focus fully on programming and channel content." By defining clear targets, SAT-7 PARS was ready to launch on its new exciting projectile.

Unaltered focus

"In Iran I have experienced persecution and the closure of churches," says Sara, "but I've also seen people's thirst to know Christ. This has all helped me to focus on the channel's teaching." Combined with her experience as an educator, it has also convinced her of the importance of offering culturally relevant material to SAT-7 PARS' audience. "Other channels started appearing in 2006. They were more aggressive in their approach but weaker in their teaching methods," she says.

In a highly censored society, it is crucial to provide politically sensitive and appropriate resources. By focusing on the coordination and quality of its programming, SAT-7 PARS was able to promote non-Westernised Christianity, faith that was relevant in the Iranian context.

With its sights set on promoting discipleship and investing in its viewers' lives, SAT-7 PARS remained on an upward course. In 2011, viewer responses from Iran doubled!

Foundations

Much has changed since SAT-7 PARS was conceived. Many staff members have come and gone, and the structure of the

(continued on page 22)

Main photo: Sara Afshari cutting the ribbon of the new *Carousel* live set
Top right: Sara in the first SAT-7 PARS UK studios / **Middle right:** Sara in SAT-7 Limassol studios / **Bottom right:** SAT-7 PARS UK studios









ministry has adjusted to meet the needs of a growing channel, ensuring that programming is continually adapted to remain relevant to viewers in the region.

However, Sara feels there are three core pillars of strength that SAT-7 PARS stands on that enable it to reach its audience effectively.

1. Emphasising cultural transformation. "Preaching peace and love and providing a voice for Christians creates cultural harmony."

2. Humility. "SAT-7 was not building a kingdom for itself but a kingdom for God, to serve the people of the Middle East and North Africa and stand with them through their suffering."

3. Quality of teaching. "By not conforming to one ideology, SAT-7 informs people rather than indoctrinating them."

Passing on the baton

In July 2014, Rev. Mansour Khajehpour was appointed as the new Executive Director of SAT-7 PARS. Sara is now focusing on her PhD studies.

Speaking about the end of her time with SAT-7, Sara quoted Ecclesiastes 3:1: 'There is a time for everything and a season for everything under the sun.' "After these twelve years, I realised I had never had the chance to evaluate what we had done. I like to start something and let it go and watch from afar to see if it will be sustained. If it is, that means the foundation was built well."

Escalate, Expand, Extend

Rev. Mansour Khajehpour speaks about strengthening the foundations that SAT-7 PARS was built upon to connect better with it's viewers.

As 2015 was beginning, I felt that we needed to invest more energy, resources, and time into our Audience and Public Relations (APR). Our relationship with our viewers needed to go deeper, wider, and further than it had before," says Mansour. "The same applies to our production, programming and broadcasting departments."

Introducing VOIP

During 2015, SAT-7 PARS introduced a new phone system, Voice Over the Internet Protocol (VOIP), in order to ensure that no calls were missed. The VOIP system helps SAT-7 PARS to catch every opportunity to hear from the audience, and enables them to respond quickly to viewers. APR coverage has increased from nine hours a week, answering phones, to be a 24-hour ministry presence in a variety of forms: phone calls, social media, messenger apps and more. "As a result of SAT-7's perseverance in making dynamic connections with our viewers, we now have over 8,000 interactions per month. There has also been a massive increase in requests for Bibles."

Tailoring live shows

Increasing the variety of programming in the London, Limassol and Canada studios, SAT-7 PARS offers a broadrange of live shows to its viewers. From exploring the basic principles of Christianity to engaging children with current events, the channel is constantly adapting to remain relevant to their audience. "Today, television is a two-way street," says Mansour. "Providing channel content with what we assume to be good programs is not how we form relationships with our viewers. We listen to them, and we try to meet them wherever they may be."

Envisaging the future

As SAT-7 PARS produces more and more programs, we asked Mansour what its focus is for the coming years. "We want to continue this fruitful dialogue with our viewers so that we will be able to escalate, expand and extend in all areas of our ministry. We want to keep our witness and share God's message to serve, particularly, the persecuted Church in Iran, and its isolated secret believers."



Mansour Khajehpour on the set of the program *Ghasedak*, in the Limassol studios

NASEER

•

MAN FROM SAUDI ARABIA

•

VIEWER FOR MANY YEARS

"I have been watching SAT-7 for a long time, and I often watch SAT-7 KIDS with my nephews. I encourage them to listen to what you say about Christ, even though they have been taught completely different ideas. This has got me into trouble with some of my family members, because none of us is from a Christian background.

"My family and community would be embarrassed to accept the truth about Jesus. But I am convinced of it, and your channel inspires me to persist in my faith. I invite all those around me, young and old, to draw near to Him."



WAFAA

•

WOMAN FROM EGYPT

•

VIEWER FOR 18 YEARS

"When I watch SAT-7, I feel like I am drinking from a spiritual fountain. I have been watching for eighteen years. I used to watch SAT-7 KIDS with my son when he was a young boy. Now he is an adult, but he still likes to watch SAT-7.

"SAT-7 is never stagnant. Whenever a program ends, a new one begins. It reminds me of the Bible verse: '…like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old' (Matthew 13:52). There are no mediocre programs on SAT-7. Everything is excellent: individual programs and series. It is a fascinating channel that is always changing for the better."



IBRAHIM

•

MAN FROM MOROCCO

•

VIEWER FOR 14 YEARS

"As a bored 13-year-old, I was flicking through the channels for a program to watch when I came across SAT-7 KIDS. I heard the presenter read something, but it did not make sense to me. I continued watching episodes of the program and I slowly began to understand. I said to myself, 'I will try to pray like this presenter.' I prayed to Lord Jesus from the bottom of my heart, and I asked Him to show me the right way.

"The following morning I was so happy, full of life and energy. It has been the same every day since. Whenever I feel down or in distress, I pray to Jesus and immediately feel His comfort. Thank you for striving to give us the best you can give. I will always be a faithful viewer of SAT-7: today, tomorrow and forever."



Photos are representational and not actual viewers. Names have been changed for security purposes.

NEW WAYS TO GET IN TOUCH

The Internet and new social media platforms have made the greatest difference to the way SAT-7 interacts with the viewers

The millions of viewers who watch SAT-7 every day are the main reason for our broadcasting. Over the past twenty years our interaction with them has changed a great deal.

At the beginning, most viewers who wanted to share their story, ask a question or request a Bible called on the phone or sent hand-written letters or faxes to SAT-7.

"The internet was a revolution in many ways, but the new social media platforms have made the biggest difference to the way we 'talk' with our viewers. They have much easier access to us, and we can contact them much more easily too," says Communications Director, Mette Swartz.

People are now able to contact SAT-7 through a wide variety of social media platforms: many different Facebook pages, more than ten YouTube channels, multiple Twitter accounts, Yahoo Messenger, Skype, ooVoo, Telegram, Google+ and several others.

9,036,907 TOTAL MINUTES WATCHED ON SAT-7 KIDS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

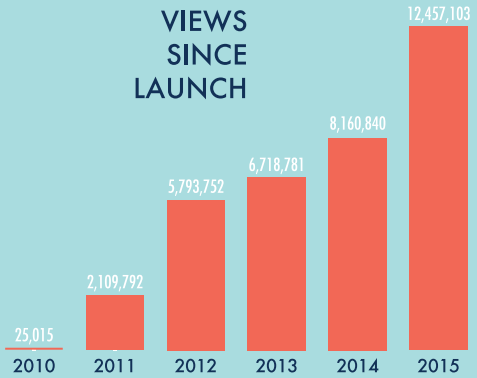
SAT-7 KIDS MARKED **SAFE** FOR LITTLE EARS

80% OF SAT-7 PROGRAMMING IS PRODUCED LOCALLY

34,228,972 T S SA

2 TIMES UP ON MONTHLY NEW SAT-7 ARABIC YOUTUBE CHANNEL FOLLOWERS IN 12 MONTHS

SAT-7 ARABIC YOUTUBE VIEWS SINCE LAUNCH



840 HOURS OF BROADCASTING EACH WEEK

1 OUT OF 3 CHILDREN IN IRAQ WATCH SAT-7 KIDS

6,274 EMAILS TO SAT-7 KIDS CHANNEL IN 2015

368% MORE LIKES THAN LAST YEAR SAT-7 TÜRK FACEBOOK PAGE

933,064 FACEBOOK TOTAL FANS (LIFETIME) FOR ALL CHANNELS

17,692 CALLS INCOMI AND OU CALLS O IN 6 MO

TOTAL VIEWS
INCE LAUNCH
AT-7 ARABIC YOUTUBE CHANNEL

SAT-7 TÜRK APP DOWNLOADS
4,079 last 12 months

2,000
DAILY
TELEGRAM
MESSAGES
SAT-7 PARS

64%
OF SAT-7 ARABIC FACEBOOK PAGE VIEWS COME FROM
EGYPT



16,438
TWITTER
TOTAL
FOLLOWERS

57% FANS
43% SAT-7
ARABIC
FACEBOOK
PAGE

58% OF VIEWS COME FROM MOBILE AND TABLET DEVICES
KIDS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

5,371
WHATSAPP MESSAGES
RECEIVED IN 2015
SAT-7 ARABIC

MYRIAM'S
MESSAGE OF
HOPE
WAS
TRANSLATED
INTO
13
LANGUAGES

833
PEOPLE
RECEIVE FOLLOW UP
CALLS FROM SAT-7 PARS
EVERY MONTH

MORE THAN
50,000
DOWNLOADS OF THE BIBLE
OR A PART OF THE BIBLE
DURING THE FIRST WEEK ON SAT-7 PARS' TELEGRAM

7
TIME
ZONES
COVERED

NG
TGOING
N SAT-7 PARS
NTHS

653K
VIEWS
MOST POPULAR VIDEO
SAT-7 KIDS YOUTUBE
CHANNEL (Noah Song Arabic)

Numbers and data collected December 2015

The newly developed SAT-7 smartphone apps allow users to access Video on Demand features, view current programme guides, live stream channels and benefit from many other services that keep them coming back day after day. Telephone counselling centres have also been established in 13 countries.

During SAT-7's first year on air in 1996 we received 824 audience responses. In the second calendar year, that number more than tripled to 2,640. Fast forward to the end of 2014, and SAT-7 had almost 200,000 responses from our dedicated viewers.

In February 2015, within 42 hours of appearing on the SAT-7 ARABIC's Facebook page, a clip of the 11-year-old Iraqi refugee, Myriam, asking "God to forgive IS" reached more than one million people and was watched by another 200,000. Since then, it has been translated into 13 languages, it has been seen by millions on SAT-7 web and social media pages as well as featured in many other TV networks and social platforms.

A particular highlight for SAT-7 PARS during 2015, which has been an abundantly fruitful year in terms of audience responses, was the introduction of the new VOIP Telephone system (see page 22). In addition to VOIP, SAT-7 PARS also improved communication with its audience through an alternative social media platform known as Telegram. Since November 2015, SAT-7 PARS' audience relations team has used Telegram to upload videos of shows, scriptures from the Bible and other Christian resources. Within just four days of launching a chat platform on Telegram SAT-7 PARS had received an estimated 20,000 posts and comments from viewers and fans. SAT-7 PARS is now receiving more than 2000 messages daily on this single platform.

NEW CHANNEL BRINGS JOY FOR TURKISH CHRISTIANS

There was no doubting the joy of Christian leaders in Turkey when SAT-7 TÜRK was launched as the first and only Christian channel on the TÜRKSAT platform in January 2015



Melih Ekener, SAT-7 TÜRK Executive Director

The chair of the channel's board, Tamar Karasu, who is also the Executive Secretary of the Bible Society of Turkey, used words such as "miracle", "blessing", "enriching" and "amazing" to describe its impact on Christians in the country. One of the greatest benefits of the new channel, she said, was its correction of misinformation about Christian beliefs. Christianity has been taught to the people in Turkey by non-Christians," she said, "so there is a lot of misinformation about Christianity and Christian beliefs."

"At the Bible Society we have been working to change this, but we have limited resources and limited connections. However, TV can reach wider audiences to express our perspective, and this is a big opportunity for us to say to the people, 'This is what we believe'."

Humble beginnings

SAT-7 TÜRK's origins are in the TURK-7 ministry, which was founded as a partnership of 22 Turkish and international churches and Christian agencies in October 2003.

However, the financial resources available to the ministry were extremely limited, and the number of local Christians with experience in television production was next to none. Nevertheless, with God's help, and the commitment of the staff and partners, by the end of 2004 TURK-7 had completed some pilot programs.

Important tool for the church

A year later, during the final months of 2005, the small TURK-7 team was working enthusiastically around the clock in preparation for an exciting development in its ministry, the provision of a twice-weekly two-hour Turkish Christian television service. On 10 January 2006, for the first time ever, Turkish Christian television programs began to be broadcast regularly, thanks to the donation by SAT-7 of broadcasting time on its Arabic channel.

At the time a leading Turkish pastor who was one of TURK-7's partners said, "TURK-7 will be an important tool for the Church in Turkey. Turkey is a big country and the number of Christians is still small. Television is a really effective method of communicating the gospel across the entire nation. Most exciting of all is that TURK-7 is helping Turks to proclaim the gospel to their own people, in their own language."

National news

TURK-7's launch was national news in Turkey with reports in both the press and on the main national TV channels. The reports were mainly negative and sensationalist, and they demonstrated the importance of a positive presentation of the Christian message. Despite this, however, eleven months later the same small team was gearing up for another important change as it prepared to move to four-hours-per-day of broadcasts.

This development was again made possible by the generous provision of broadcasting time by SAT-7, this time on its new 24/7 Farsi channel, SAT-7 PARS. Step by step and with God's help, the ministry was growing and developing and giving a new voice of witness to the church in Turkey.

SAT-7's key role

The TURK-7 team continued to work with SAT-7 towards the goal of creating a permanent presence on air. Four hours of daily broadcast was maintained on SAT-7 PARS during 2007 and 2008. The next stages of development included the launch of an internet channel as part of a new website and a full merger between SAT-7 and other TURK-7 partners in 2010.

> **"We've seen what we believe to be many miracles of God."**
> **SAT-7 TÜRK Staff Manager, Ayşegül Frame**

A nervous wait

After that long, exhausting and sometimes troublesome history, SAT-7 TÜRK staff waited nervously on the first of January 2015 for the official launch of the channel on the main TÜRKSAT satellite platform.

"We really couldn't enjoy this good news at first," Staff Manager Ayşegül Frame says. "Some of our staff were waiting in front of the television for around three hours to catch the first broadcast. We were still in shock when our channel went on air, as TÜRKSAT has the greatest reach of any broadcaster in the country and we were the first-ever Christian Channel to get a license to use it.

"Turkey is one of the top countries for television viewing. Despite the relatively high rate of literacy, people mainly turn to television for entertainment or information. So to be on a state-owned satellite for the first time is a very significant step for all the Christians in Turkey"

Witnessing miracles

Ayşegül says that it is hard to overestimate the impact that being on TÜRKSAT might make.

"TÜRKSAT reaches 50 million people," she says, "so each of these people is one of our potential audience. They live not only in Turkey, but also in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Bulgaria, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Europe..."

It all makes for exciting times for Christians in Turkey.

"We've seen what we believe to be many miracles of God," Ayşegül says. "We strongly believe God's hand is here and He would love to do things in this country. Surely God will complete the work He started."











Upper left: SAT-7 TÜRK founding meeting / **Upper right:** Recording in the new SAT-7 TÜRK studios in Istanbul **Middle:** Sound engineering in SAT-7 TÜRK today Vs TURK-7 in 2003 / **Bottom left:** One of the most popular SAT-7 TÜRK programs *The Doctor Is In* / **Bottom right:** Recording *Prophecy Books in the Holy Bible* program

WHO OWNS SAT-7?

SAT-7 is not owned by any one corporation, media mogul, church or ministry. Instead, it is governed by Christians from the Middle East and North Africa through an International Board (now called an International Council) of Directors

Throughout the long campaign to launch SAT-7, it was the overwhelming desire of the people involved to provide a service that reflected the nature and diversity of the Arab church and Arab Christians in the Middle East and North Africa.

SAT-7's constitution actually states that the majority of voting members on the International Board of Directors must always be Christians from the Middle East and North Africa, so that SAT-7 is effectively owned and directed by the local Christian community. Current council members include leaders of the Evangelical Churches in Lebanon and Egypt, a Coptic Orthodox Bishop, an Armenian Archbishop serving in Iran, a Maronite Archbishop and other church leaders from across the region. One seat on the board is also given to an elected representative of SAT-7's Partners.



Directors and Members of the SAT-7 International Council, March 2015

Founder and CEO of SAT-7, Dr. Terence Ascott, says that Christians from the Middle East and North Africa have been involved in the planning of SAT-7's structure from the very beginning. He explains: "In 1991-92 we did some research through the Cooperative Strategy Group that brought 90 different mission and church leaders together for a series of consultations. We looked at how to quantify the Christian presence in the Middle East, the challenges facing the churches there at the beginning of the 1990s and what they considered to be the priorities for ministry. Interestingly, one of the questions was, 'If you had a million dollars to spend, what would be the most strategic way to spend it?' "Some people said, well, you can't spend a million dollars in this region because there aren't any opportunities, all the doors are shut, you can't send missionaries in, you can't do this, you can't do that.

"Other people, by far the majority, said that we should try to start a Christian satellite television service, so there was already a strong vision. But there was also a lot of skepticism, and so from 1992 to 1994 we worked on feasibility studies, looking at how we would acquire programs and devising a programming policy and business plan. We had discussions with various church leaders, and the Middle East Council of Churches appointed a working committee on the subject.

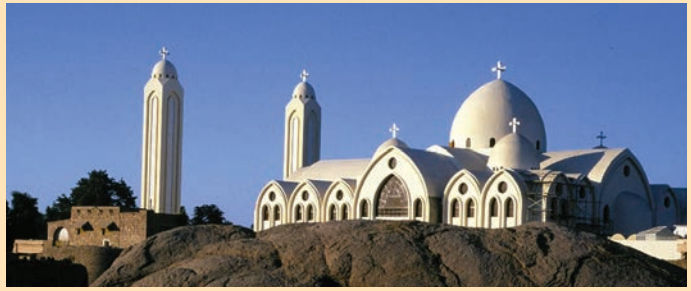












Top left: Family watching SAT-7 ARABIC at Minya Egypt, 2004
Top right: Children watching SAT-7 KIDS at Bekaa Valley Syrian Refugee Camp, Lebanon, 2015 / **Upper middle:** Satellite dishes in Allepo, Syria
Lower middle left: Interviewing a man in the street, Beirut, 2015
Lower middle right: Filming in Egypt, 2008 / **Bottom:** A Coptic Church in Aswan, Egypt

CONGRATULATIONS TO SAT-7

Åslaug Ihle Thingnæs
The Norwegian Mission Society, Partner with SAT-7
"Thank you SAT-7 for the hope and the inspiration you give, not only to your viewers, but also to us in The Norwegian Mission Society. We are proud and happy to be one of your longstanding partners, and we hope to be able to stand by you in the years to come. Your creativity and commitment challenge us as a mission agency.

"Congratulations on 20 years of an amazing story; through you God has changed so many lives and relationships! May God bless all of you in your work, lives and families, whether you are employees, freelancers or viewers. Stay tuned to Him, our Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

David Kerrigan
General Director of BMS World Mission
"Not since the invention of the printing press has technology played such a significant role in world mission. Through the skills and passion of SAT-7 the good news of Jesus is made available to any who wish to tune in to its various TV channels. It also supports and encourages Christians throughout the Middle East and North Africa. I thank God for BMS World Mission's partnership with SAT-7 over the last ten years."

Canon Andrew White
St George's, Baghdad
"The vast majority of Christian TV is totally in appropriate and not understood in the Middle East. Then there is one station SAT-7 – that is not only appropriate but is totally understood by all our people of any faith in the region. I love all that SAT-7 does and support them with no hesitation."

Leonard Rodgers
Board of Reference, SAT-7
"It was 1994 and five of us were sitting in a circle in Nicosia, Cyprus, where we met almost every week for prayer and fellowship. Given the volatility in the Middle East at that time, it seemed laughable to think that a satellite could be used for spreading the Good News of Christ. We listened as Terence Ascott shared his vision, and I wondered, 'Does this chap from Britain really know what he's talking about?' It seemed as improbable as sending people to Mars.

"Over time, as our conversation unfolded, we knew Terence had done his homework. His vision, determination, and background in communication had prepared him for such a time as this. The team that now makes up SAT-7 shows the same qualities as Terence: a personal relationship with Jesus, tough love, professional skill, and the willingness to sacrifice."

"One of the many delightful results our little circle never envisioned was how SAT-7 would pull the churches of the Middle East together, regardless of denomination. Today millions of people watch SAT-7, and it makes me want to weep with joy. A little seed was planted and God gave the increase."

Phill Butler
VisionSynergy
"SAT-7 has been a pioneer in developing a distinctly Christian television voice for the Middle East. It consistently demonstrates quality of production and great relevance to the rapidly changing challenges of the region's audiences. Through its trend-setting development SAT-7 has demonstrated enormous vision, faith, and innovation. It would be hard to overstate its demonstrated commitment to reaching the largest possible number in the region with the power of the Good News."

Troy Carl
Vice President, Faith Comes By Hearing
"Congratulations SAT-7 on twenty years of broadcasting the Good News into the homes of people who so desperately need to hear it. The quality and originality of your programming have long set the standard for Christian broadcasters and have opened countless hearts to the Gospel. Faith Comes By Hearing has been honored to partner with you to broadcast the Audio Bible in the major languages of the Middle East. Thank you for your dedication to the work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Lord George Carey
Former Archbishop of Canterbury
"I have been much inspired by the careful work that SAT-7 has been doing to nurture the Christians of the Middle East. Through its impressive broadcasting operation it reaches out to many thousands of people, bringing news, information and teaching from a Christian perspective. It has made a great contribution in sustaining the Christian presence throughout the region and brings hope to many. SAT-7 continues to serve individual Christians, the churches of the region and their communities."

David A. Baer
President & CEO, Overseas Council
"I hope I'm around in another twenty years to help assess the impact of SAT-7's first twenty years of ministry in the Middle East and North Africa. I have no doubt that its effect will be recognised as enormous.

"Sometimes television is the best medium for high-quality communication of Christian faith. More often it is the only one. In both cases, SAT-7's leadership has known how to work both with the possibilities of satellite broadcasting and with its limitations. My hat is off to SAT-7, one of those ministries that – if it did not exist – would need to be invented."

• MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7 •



ANITA HOVSEPIAN

OFFICE MANAGER / AUDIENCE RELATIONS SUPERVISOR SAT-7 PARS

•

6 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"The highlight during my time at SAT-7 was talking to a viewer on a day when I was feeling down myself. Although she didn't have any source of Christian teaching other than our channel, I was so blessed talking to her.

"Another highlight was in December 2009, the first time we had a live program. It was a huge step to decide to go live once a week, and all the team members were very excited. We didn't know that soon afterwards we would have live programs almost every day."

• MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7 •



SEYFI GENÇ

NEWS DIRECTOR
SAT-7 TÜRK

•

4 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"Our launch on the Türksat satellite was so exciting. At first we were broadcasting on Hotbird and then the Internet, but many people in Turkey were not able to watch us. Now people can watch us on Türksat, including my family and friends. The day we launched our broadcast, I waited in front of the TV at home for hours with my camera to catch the first seconds. Suddenly, our broadcast started on the screen, and SAT-7 TÜRK's logo appeared. I started shouting, 'The broadcast has started! The broadcast has started!' I took some photos; that was a really big highlight for me."

• MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7 •



ENAAM HADDAD

AUDIENCE RELATIONS MANAGER
SAT-7 ARABIC AND KIDS

•

15 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"It's hard to identify one highlight from 15 years of work spent with dozens of people at the office and hundreds of thousands of those who interact with us.

"Through it all, I've seen people come and go; we've had setbacks and recovered from them; we've taken wrong turnings and got back on track; we've experienced so much, accomplished so much, learned so much – and we always keep learning. Work changes, positions change, people change, but what matters most is our relationships with people."

• MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7 •



DALIA MALAK HANA

ASSISTANT IT MANAGER
SAT-7 ARABIC

•

14 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"The period of the revolution in Egypt in 2011 was very special for me. It was a difficult time, and there was a lot of fear and uncertainty about where the country was going as well as concerns about our personal safety. However, for SAT-7 it was a time of blessing because we joined in prayer as one body in Christ, both for our country and for the safety of SAT-7 and all its staff. Focussed prayer meetings were held during that time, and the SAT-7 premises and staff were kept safe even though many Christian properties suffered vandalism and arson."

MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7



HOVAN HOVSEPIAN MEHR

SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST AND PROGRAMMING ASSISTANT, SAT-7 PARS

•

6 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"In 2015 I led a group of musicians and singers in a recording project in Finland for the Purpose Driven Life program. Although our time was very short – we had to record 44 songs in five days – we completed the work. It turned out to be one of my most successful projects with SAT-7 PARS."

MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7



DEBORA BAYTEKIN

BTS SCHEDULER AND ARCHIVIST, SAT-7 TÜRK

•

10 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"One of my highlights at SAT-7 TÜRK, one of the times I enjoyed best, was soon after I started working here. I knew nothing about how to operate a camera, but after nearly a week's training in how to do it, I was a camerawoman. I was really excited and greatly enjoyed it."

MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7



SOUHA KHOURY

SCHEDULING COORDINATOR, SAT-7 ARABIC

•

16 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"I joined SAT-7 ARABIC when it was broadcasting for only two hours per week. I have seen the channel develop and grow and also witnessed the birth of four other channels through our faith and perseverance. SAT-7 has a great story and a great mission."

MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7



REZA JAFARI

EDITING MANAGER, SAT-7 PARS

•

11 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"The day we launched SAT-7 PARS as a 24/7 Christian satellite channel for Farsi-speaking people was so special and emotional for me as an Iranian. I felt proud and blessed to be part of this big step forward. I also enjoy to work with remarkable and faithful colleagues from different countries and continents across the globe. This all makes for an outstanding working experience."

MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7



MIKAEL TUNÉR

TV DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER, SAT-7 PARS

•

7 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"The recurring highlights during my work for SAT-7 PARS are two fold:
1. Seeing the preproduction of a program come to life each week when I am in a studio directing the recording. 2. Each time that I send the channel the final master episodes of an edited program that is ready for broadcast after postproduction."

MY HIGHLIGHT IN SAT-7



NIKI PONTOU

ACCOUNTANT, SAT-7

•

7 YEARS WITH SAT-7

"The ceremony to open the new SAT-7 studio in Lebanon in October 2014 was very enjoyable. Many VIPs came, despite the unexpected heavy rain that day which made it difficult for some people to access the premises. While Terence our CEO was speaking on the stage, water kept coming through a hole in the roof, but he managed to deal with this in his unique and humorous way!"

A younger generation of SAT-7 professionals have grown up with the ministry and stand ready to take up the torch carried by today's leaders

Here they talk about their years working with SAT-7

Former Child STARS LOOK BACK



KAMAL KHAIRALLAH

PRESENTER IN SAT-7 KIDS

Take us back to the set of your first program.
It was back in 2001, and I was the presenter of our kids' news program, *Assanabel News.* I was about twelve years old. Being at the studios for the first time was a very exciting experience with all the lights and cameras. I used to go most Fridays after school for filming.

How was production back then different from today?
We had really tiny studios then, and now we have definitely taken the quality of our production to a whole new level. In fact we are as up to date as possible with technology.

What has been the most fulfilling part of working with SAT-7?
Definitely the opportunity to share God's message with a potential audience of millions.

What has encouraged you to remain with SAT-7 all these years?
My support for SAT-7's vision to make God's love visible, which is something I live by in my personal life as well.

Could you give an update on the latest program or project you've worked on?
I am currently one of the hosts and band members of *Let's Sing Together.*

I am also in the pre-production phase of a new kids' musical drama show that will be presented by my wife and daughter, very soon I hope.





Top: Kamal Khairallah on the set of *Let's Sing Together*
Middle (polaroid): A younger Kamal in *Assanabel* program
Bottom: Kamal with his family



PARASTOO POORTAHERI

PRESENTER IN SAT-7 PARS

Take us back to the set of your first program.
It was in 2007 in the Netherlands, where I had my first show for kids, called *King of the Ark*. (Before that I was partly involved with two teenage shows.) The setting was a wooden house with lots of animals, resembling Noah's Ark. I played the queen living with the Lion King, who used to act like a child, and I would sit on his throne and share Bible stories with him and the kids. I was nervous as it was my first show and I wanted to do my best. I was travelling every month for around two years and made four series, each of 26 episodes. I learned a lot from that experience and have good memories of it.

How was production back then different from today?
It was a lot different; of course technology has changed so much. We were facing a lot of challenges that we don't nowadays, but we were still enjoying what we were doing and passionate about the work, so that made it easy.

What has been the most fulfilling part of working with SAT-7?
To talk to kids about God's love and teach them more about Jesus. Every time I receive a phone call from kids who say that they love Jesus and want to know more about Him it's the best feeling and makes me very emotional.

What has encouraged you to remain with SAT-7 all these years?
Being part of this great ministry and sharing God's love with millions of kids who are growing up in a world without true love, showing them that God is love and that he wants us to love one another, even our enemies.

Could you give an update on the latest program or project you've worked on?
Currently I am presenting two live shows per week, and each is 90 minutes long. One is Smile, for children between three and seven, and the other is Smile Magazine for children between eight and thirteen. A new show for young girls is at the planning stage; more information later…







Top (polaroid): Parastoo Poortaheri's first program, *King of the Ark* / **Middle:** Parastoo speaking at the SAT-7 Network 2013 / **Bottom left:** Parastoo on the set of *Carousel* / **Bottom right:** Parastoo with co-host Majid Akhavan Masouleh and puppet on the set of *Smile Magazine*, 2015

THANK YOU

Thousands of people and many partners and foundations around the globe have supported SAT-7 in the past twenty years.

We know that our ministry and reach to people in the Middle East and North Africa through broadcasting is all dependent on the support we get from many places and in many different ways.

All the staff and leadership at SAT-7 want to say **thank you** for your support in both prayer and donations. That support is such a blessing to us; it enables us to keep doing what we love to do: to serve our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, through broadcasting to people in the Middle East and North Africa.

Thank you!

In 2015 there were 204 staff members in SAT-7's offices worldwide.












Top left: SAT-7 Lebanon staff / **Top right:** SAT-7 Egypt staff / **Mid left:** SAT-7 PARS, UK / **Mid right:** SAT-7 staff in Nicosia, International Offices, Cyprus

Lower left: SAT-7 USA staff / **Lower right:** SAT-7 UK staff / **Bottom left:** Francois Botha (SAT-7 South Africa), Kurt Johansen (SAT-7 Europe & Asia), Lars-Göran Gustafsson (SAT-7 South America) / **Bottom right:** SAT-7 PARS staff in Limassol, Cyprus

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The lack of proper facilities and utilities in Egypt is not an obstacle for hundreds of satellite dishes to be installed, giving millions access to satellite television

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