

News from SAT-7
June 2016

INSIGHT



THE GREAT ESCAPE

**SUPPORTING REFUGEES
IN THEIR HOUR
OF GREATEST NEED**

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**MAKING
GOD'S LOVE
VISIBLE**



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WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

There are now a total of over 4.85 million registered Syrian refugees living in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Another 6.6 million are internally displaced in Syria, and 800,000 have bypassed the refugee processing centres altogether and found their own ways into Europe. Together, this represents the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II.

Church leaders have spoken out to say that it is not wrong or racist for Christians in Europe to be concerned about the growing influx of refugees in Europe. However, being concerned is not the same as taking a political position, and if Jesus was living in Europe today it is thought that He would not be taking one either.

We sometimes forget that Jesus became a refugee in His early childhood. He would have remembered very little of those early and difficult days, fleeing to a country with an alien language and religion and facing a dangerous desert crossing as His family journeyed down to Egypt.

So, how would Jesus respond to the refugees on the streets of Europe today, be they "refugees" or "economic migrants"? As He did with the dispossessed and needy in His own time – with love and compassion, seeking to help and to heal, but also being vitally concerned about their relationship to His Heavenly Father.

He would bless those who hunger and thirst for justice. He would bless the merciful and the peacemakers. He would see those who have suffered persecution because of righteousness as legitimate heirs to the kingdom of heaven. He would have prayed for those doing the persecution...yes, even for the leadership of the Islamic State.

Perhaps we should more often see ourselves as the Hands and Voice of Jesus here on earth. Today, surely we see Jesus in the lives of those who waded out into the cold Aegean waters each morning to help exhausted and hypothermic families make it ashore; in the faces of those providing food and medical services in the make-shift camps along the long-closed borders in the Balkans; and in the love and hospitality shown to dazed migrants arriving at the central station in Berlin last year. Perhaps we feel that we cannot do much to help, but let us not use that as a reason to do nothing!



Terence
Dr Terence Ascott
Founder and CEO

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SYRIANS BAPTISED AT YOUTH EVENT

A SAT-7 TÜRK film crew visited the first ever Christian youth event in Mardin, Turkey, at which two teenage Syrian refugees were baptised.

More than 30 young Christians from across politically troubled eastern Turkey gathered in the ancient city of Mardin for the historic meeting. The three-day gathering included teaching, worship services and visits to historical sites, as well as fun recreational and team-building activities. Two Syrian refugees, aged 14 and 16, were baptised on the third day of the event.

New church in a timeless city

The meeting was organised by Mardin's newly established Protestant church. The congregation, which was founded in January 2016, meets in an ancient Syriac Orthodox church building that was previously unused and has been refurbished.

Pastor Ender Peker spoke at the youth event about the importance of collaborating as the Body of Christ: "We used to fear the traditional churches before our church was established, and we accused them of being prejudiced towards Protestants. But we have experienced the opposite here.

"This community has been more than welcoming, and we found that we were the ones who were being prejudiced. This youth meeting shows how Christians can come together as one in Jesus."

Support in Christ

Also at the event was Syriac Orthodox Priest Gabriel Akyüz, who further emphasised the importance of working together. "It is essential that we continue to communicate and support one another in our faith," he said. "We should not pull one another down because of our differences. We all believe in Christ. We must encourage one another."

Spreading the news

SAT-7 TÜRK aired the footage on its weekly live news program. Its coverage highlighted the underlying theme of the event, which was inspired by 1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing". ■



MARDIN, TURKEY

On the Syrian border in eastern Turkey.

87,000

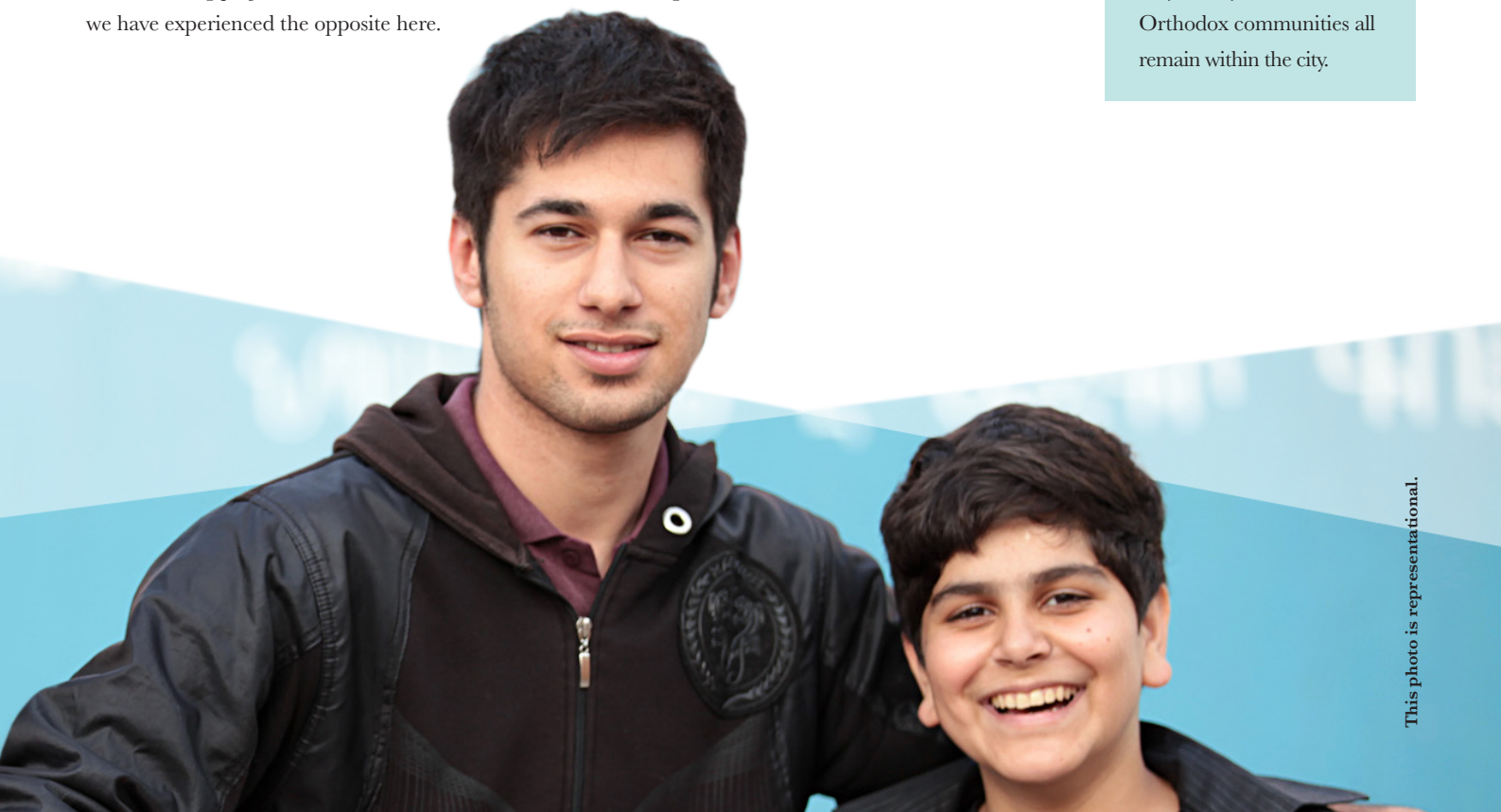
people live in the ancient, cosmopolitan city, which is considered an "open-air museum" due to its diverse architecture.

Historically important

The city was ruled by many empires including the Persians, the Assyrians, the Romans and the Mongols.

Religious beginnings

Churches with ancient roots in Mardin are still there today. Armenian Apostolic and Catholic, Chaldean, Assyrian, Syriac Catholic and Orthodox communities all remain within the city.



"I PRAY FOR MY SONS' KILLERS"

An Egyptian mother who lost two sons in a terrorist attack was a special guest at a gala event to mark 20 years of SAT-7. Mrs Isis Ghattas Dawood was among 600 attendees at Beacon of Light, a televised celebration held in Cairo, Egypt.

In an evening featuring music from leading Egyptian Christian singers and choirs, video highlights of SAT-7's broadcasting and speeches by national church leaders, the night's longest applause came for the brave widow from Upper Egypt.

Mrs Dawood is the mother of Coptic Christians Bishoy and Samuel Estafanus Kamel, who were among 21 Coptic Christians beheaded on a Libyan beach in February 2015 by militants from the so-called Islamic State (IS). The night after IS released a video of their deaths, Mrs Dawood's eldest son, Bashir – who also attended Beacon of Light – spoke live on SAT-7. He said that their loss had made the family "stronger in our faith, because the Bible tells us to love our enemies and bless those who curse us."

At the event, which was held on 30 May, guests at the Anba Rweis Theatre in Cairo's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral watched a video in which Mrs Dawood spoke of her faith in God. Millions more watched her testimony live on SAT-7 ARABIC and online via YouTube.

Mrs Dawood voiced her forgiveness and said she prayed for her sons' killers. She spoke of how Bishoy and Samuel had chosen martyrdom rather than renounce their faith, saying: "If my children weren't scared, why should I be?"

Mrs Dawood was applauded once again when she was presented with a special award topped with a beacon-shaped flame. ■

Top left: Dr Terence Ascott, founder and CEO of SAT-7, said in his speech: "It has been a great privilege for SAT-7 to provide the Church (in the Middle East and North Africa) with a platform to speak and to share stories of the Church-in-action and testimonies of forgiveness and grace." Here, being interviewed by Essam Nagy.

Top right: Christian directors, the heads of partner ministries and SAT-7 staff members received awards for their contribution to the TV network's growth and impact. Among those honoured was Rita Elmounayer, SAT-7's Chief Channels and Communications Officer, who has been with the ministry for 20 years.

Centre: A long shot of the SAT-7 celebration at the Anba Rweis theatre in the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral.

Bottom left: "SAT-7 has been a success story on all levels in the past 20 years – successful in transmitting its message and successful in expressing the voice of the Church to society as a whole and to the Middle East," said Dr Mouneer Anis, Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

Bottom right: Musicians Nassef Sobhi (left) and Maher Fayeze (right) perform. Maher hosts a weekly worship show on SAT-7 ARABIC.

Farid Samir, SAT-7 Egypt's Executive Director, kisses Mrs Dawood's hand in honour and respect as she receives her award.







“

Our programs are not just aimed at a niche audience who always tell us they are watching. We are trying to bring a unique message that will comfort viewers, challenge them and encourage them to think and choose for themselves.

Farid Samir, Egypt Studio Director speaking on World Press Freedom Day (3 May)

A VIP ON SAT-7 TÜRK

Viewers in Turkey recently heard the Good News of Christ's resurrection from Os Guinness, the renowned Christian author and social critic. Guinness visited the SAT-7 TÜRK studio in Istanbul to record a half-hour lecture. He said, "Nothing represents modernity better than TV, and modernity is the biggest 'can opener' of closed societies in history. What SAT-7 TÜRK is doing is of momentous significance."

As well as a prominent writer, Guinness is a co-founder of Trinity Forum and a Senior Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics. Melih Ekener, Executive Director of SAT-7 TÜRK, explains that a message about Jesus' death and resurrection from such a distinguished guest holds great weight. "Os Guinness is one of the best-known thinkers and philosophers of our time. Having him on SAT-7 TÜRK was very significant because as an expert in his field, he is credible for believers and non-believers in Turkey alike." ■



Because of many events, SAT-7 ARABIC's main Facebook page reached more than **7.2 MILLION** people in April with over **1 MILLION** video views.

Os Guinness (left) with Executive Director Melih Ekener (centre) and presenter Yeşua Özçelik (right).

NEWS FOR CHILDREN

With 150 million children under 17 living in the Middle East and North Africa, SAT-7 has always been committed to sharing God's love with them just as it does with adults.

As Sannabel ("Ears of Wheat") was a 15-minute children's segment in the channel's first Arabic broadcast on 31 May 1996. Twenty years later, a spin-off program, *As Sannabel News* (or *AS News*) is the network's longest running show, now on SAT-7 KIDS.

AS News is a news show with a difference: its reporters are all children or young people. The stories it tells focus on the good things children are doing and on their

physical and spiritual wellbeing.

AS News itself started life in the summer of 2006. The show's aim was to provide news and support to children who were facing frightening times in Lebanon. During that year, more than a thousand Lebanese people lost their lives in a brief but intense conflict between Lebanon and Israel. Producer-director Roy Abu Khalil remembers how the show's first report featured child refugees from southern Lebanon.

The dangers of venturing out when an air raid could happen at any time meant that "we didn't have a child presenter then

because parents wouldn't allow their kids to go out," he said. Rather than find an adult presenter, Roy found an innovative solution: "We had a puppet as a replacement for the young reporter!"

Today, the show receives many reports from Syria and has told the stories of children who have escaped conflict in both Syria and Iraq. ■





CELEBRATING CHILDREN'S DAY

On 1 June, which was the International Day for Protection of Children or Children's Day, the team behind the program *Let's Sing Together* visited the OASIS school for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The presenters invited the youngsters to share their testimonies, perform songs and talk about their experiences at the OASIS school, and together they prayed for all the refugees in the country. ■



THE EARLY YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY

SAT-7 PARS is working on a new program called *The Hard Sayings of Paul*. Based on 2 Peter 3, the show looks at the difficulties that the early Church had in accepting Paul's letters and teachings. Each 30-minute episode will discuss one "hard saying", aiming to explain its purpose and use tools from the past to help address today's issues. ■



ON THE MOVE!

A long-awaited new OB (Outside Broadcast) van is now in use by the team in Egypt. The new vehicle, which functions as a mobile production control room, will help the channel to cover events across Egypt. The first broadcast from the van was SAT-7's live coverage of the Easter service at the Evangelical Church in Heliopolis, Cairo, during Eastern Easter on 1 May. ■



“

**Dear SAT-7 PARS,
thank you very much
for contacting me.**

**I thank God that I
got to know you and
that you introduced
me to Jesus. He gave
me health and peace.
I pray for God's
protection over my life.**

**Arezou, via the
Telegram messaging app**

800

**people contact SAT-7
every day.**

**The number has trebled in
the last five years — from
around 270 a day in 2010
to over 800 a day in 2015.**

SAT-7 TÜRK GETS INTERACTIVE

Two new live shows are bringing fresh momentum and zest to SAT-7 TÜRK. In a first for the channel, *About Life* and *The Sound of Your Heart* will include live audience calls to boost viewer participation. The new programs joined SAT-7 TÜRK's busy schedule in May and are running alongside the channel's two other weekly live shows.

The programs are both hosted by Madlen Özçelik, who appeared on the popular show *Womanly* in 2015.

In *About Life*, Madlen presents a topic from the Bible, and audience members call in with questions. The topics of these calls, which are discussed with a different guest each week, have so far included forgiveness, relationships, family and the reliability of scripture.

The Sound of Your Heart invites viewers to call to receive prayer. Callers have requested prayer for family, relationship and problems with their health. Thus far, most of the calls have come from Istanbul.

"More people have been calling in to tell us that they like the shows, that they are blessed by them and to thank us," says Audience Relations Manager Ümit Teymur. He hopes that the team will be able to have more of a dialogue with viewers as the shows become more widely known. ■



In early June SAT-7 TÜRK also started a daily live show for children called *Morning Joy*, presented by Ecem Okcular and Merve Alışır.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

The millions of refugees and internally displaced people in the world today face unimaginable trauma and hardship. In Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, to name a few, people are fleeing conflict, instability, oppression, hunger and death. They dream of a better future. Within Syria alone, 6.6 million people are displaced, and over 4.85 million have fled to other countries. Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are struggling to cope with the numbers of Syrian refugees they have received.

SAT-7 strives to respond to these tragedies with programs such as *My School*, which aims to offer young people brighter futures by teaching children who

cannot attend school, maths, Arabic, science and English through our on-air classroom.

The SAT-7 KIDS live show *Why is That?* visited Iraq, dedicating several episodes to refugees. Other noteworthy programs: *Medicine and Life*, which provides trauma and healthcare advice to the displaced, and a new upcoming documentary show *Beyond Persecution*, which focuses on Iranian Christian refugees in Turkey and Greece.

Please pray for the millions of refugees and displaced people and that SAT-7 will be able to respond to many of their needs. ■



1/122

One in every 122 people
worldwide is now either a refugee
or internally displaced.

52%

of refugees
from the Middle East are
under the age of 18.



NEW SHOW GIVES HEALTH ADVICE FOR REFUGEES

Traumatised by war and unable to access healthcare, countless refugees across the MENA region cannot get the help they need to recover from the terrible ordeals they have suffered.

With host governments and aid agencies completely overwhelmed by the vast needs, SAT-7 is using its strategic platform to provide imaginative and alternative forms of support. We launched a new program in May, *Medicine and Life*, that addresses the physical and psychological needs of those who have been displaced from their home. It is a weekly program with 30-minute episodes that feature expert advice on a range of issues that affect refugees as well as those living in poverty. The program is helping viewers to overcome symptoms of trauma, such as feelings of anger and fear, and is also dealing with the practical health and hygiene challenges of living in a refugee camp or in sub-standard temporary housing.

Good advice viewers can trust

George Makeen, SAT-7's Arabic Programming Director, says: "People want to take care of their health but they don't have access to healthcare and they don't know whose advice they can trust. "Refugees are living in circumstances that they are not used to: overcrowding, no heating, freezing winters, hot summers, no running water, not enough food. Similar issues are facing poor people in the region, so the program serves mainly the refugees but a wider audience as well.

"*Medicine and Life* features experts from different countries giving good advice that viewers can trust."

Holistic program

The program illustrates SAT-7's commitment to holistic programming, as we seek to minister to the needs of our viewers in every area of life – especially in light of the severe humanitarian crisis facing the Middle East and North Africa.

Millions have been displaced by conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya in what has been described as the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. As well as health programs like *Medicine and Life*, our children's channel is helping to meet the educational needs of youngsters who cannot go to school because of war and/or displacement. The current series of *My School* is providing daily "lessons" in maths, Arabic, English and science for 5 to 7-year-olds. We know from visiting various refugee communities in the region that many already have access to satellite TV, but SAT-7 is working with partners on the ground to provide others with the equipment they need to enable even more people to watch the programs. ■



The new program *Medicine and Life*, will help refugees and displaced people to overcome trauma and deal with their practical health and hygiene challenges.



WHERE BEING A CHRISTIAN CAN BE CONSIDERED A CRIME

It can be extremely difficult to be a believer in Iran, especially for those who were not born into a Christian family.

Iran is a repressive country with a history of imprisoning political opponents and church leaders, persecuting those who leave the religious tradition into which they were born and supporting radical movements around the world.

Yet despite the potential dangers, many in Iran are turning to Christ. Because of the huge risk, many are forced to leave Iran. Many undertake the long, difficult journey to Europe, seeking new lives in places where they are free to follow Jesus. SAT-7 representatives meet many of these believers, while producing new documentaries, as they travel through Greece and Turkey. Here are some of their stories. ■

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We know that new Christians in Iran face many problems, but we also know that God is faithful. Christians experience great fear when simply going to church, worshipping or during their devotions. We had to be so careful when organising our house-church gatherings. We often had to change the date or place and send each other emails or text messages with encrypted information. Although we cannot estimate the number of active churches or house churches, God is moving. It amazes me, and gives me both fear and joy, to see how much God is working among our people. Despite our problems, His light is visible in our lives.

Many refugees here [in Turkey] are living with so much uncertainty. The only thing that keeps them secure is faith. I get anxious just hearing about their situations. But they stand firm, trusting in Him. I have been a Christian longer than many of them, yet they are so strong and mature in their faith. It leaves me speechless.

A man from northern Iran.



“

Before I left Iran, I couldn't tell people in school that I'm a Christian. If I spoke about it, I would be expelled. It is very difficult for believers. If anyone in our classes or jobs found out about our faith, we would be rejected by the community. I have heard about strict religious families who help get Christians arrested. If something like that happened to me, I wouldn't be allowed to continue going to school. My education would be over.

A teenage girl from Iran.

“

Becoming a Christian in Iran is a crime. One of the most common problems we face is in attending house churches; people have to come and go from our meetings very discreetly. There are moments when worshipping the Lord that I want to praise His name loudly and with passion. I have to suppress these desires. The fear of our neighbours hearing us and making problems for us holds me back. Our church services have to be very low-key. I wish we were free to worship.

A man from Iran.

THE PASTOR WHO TRULY UNDERSTANDS REFUGEES

At German railway stations last autumn, cheering crowds welcomed trainloads of refugees after the country opened its doors to hundreds of thousands of migrants. The public mood may have shifted since then, but one pastor who will not be withdrawing his support is Rev Hanna Yeshou.

Pastor Yeshou, who recently appeared on SAT-7 ARABIC's live discussion program *Forbidden*, understands the experiences of the refugee more than most. He himself left behind a war-torn Middle Eastern country to find peace and opportunity in the West. Today, Pastor Yeshou leads the Evangelical Arab Church in Stuttgart, but 35 years ago he left Lebanon to escape the long and bitter civil war in his home country. He now receives many appeals for help from migrants and refugees. Pastor Yeshou told *Forbidden* host, Dr Imed Dabbour, that he has more than once abandoned his sermon, just minutes before preaching, after hearing that a member of the church had lost multiple family members as they had attempted to cross the Mediterranean.

Struggling to adjust

In addition to the trauma of war and perilous journeys, Pastor Yeshou has witnessed another form of distress.

He says growing numbers of refugees are shocked by their experience of life in Europe, which they had imagined would be the answer to all their troubles. "A person's problems turn from facing hunger, thirst, insecurity and homelessness to a new struggle adjusting to a different society, language and culture," he says.

One risk is that the refugees will retreat into cultural ghettos, along with their old sectarian divisions. "I beg our Arabic-speaking brothers and sisters who are coming into Europe to recognise this and be ready to meet those who receive them," he says. "Don't bring the problems of the East to the West, but begin a completely new life."

Losing his sight

When Pastor Yeshou speaks about challenges, he does so with the wisdom of experience.

Rev Hanna Yeshou oversees Auslanderseelsorge, a telephone counselling centre in Germany for Arabic-speaking viewers of SAT-7's television programs.

10

Ten other such centres are running in the Middle East and North Africa.



When hundreds of thousands of refugees entered Germany last autumn, many people welcomed them.

One of his greatest personal struggles was losing his sight – partially at the age of three, to typhoid, and completely as an adult in 1985.

“One of the toughest moments in my life was in 2010, when my daughter graduated from the School of Media and Arts,” Pastor Yeshou told *Forbidden*. “She organised the commencement celebration [an event arranged for students expected to graduate]. My wife told me our daughter was like a princess as she moved around, arranging everything. I asked God, ‘Why can’t I see her?’ I found this difficult, and I still do.”

Fulfilling God’s plans

Pastor Yeshou’s blindness, however, has never prevented him from achieving God’s plans for his life. He left Lebanon for Germany in 1981 after graduating from the American University in Beirut. Horrified by the sectarian strife in his country and frustrated by attitudes to his disability there, he hoped eventually to enter politics.

But the opportunity came to work as an assistant editor on a revision of the Van Dyke Bible, the most popular Arabic translation. Pastor Yeshou then studied theology and completed a PhD. Meanwhile, he had become a church leader and met his German wife, Haidy. The couple now have five children.

Participation and peace-making

Despite living for more than three decades in Germany, Pastor Yeshou remains deeply connected to the Middle East. He laments the region’s continuing sectarian strife and the marginalisation and emigration of so many of its Christians. “Christians are at the root of Arab society and culture. We are an inseparable part of this setting, but we have failed to fulfil our role,” he says.

Pastor Yeshou believes many Christians have chosen isolation from society rather than participation, keeping God’s love to themselves rather than showing it to others.

“We live with each other, but we don’t share the truth,” he adds.

The church leader says that peace will only be achieved if both Christian and Muslim leaders work towards it. He gives the example of Christian figures who have held leadership roles in international peace initiatives, such as the former United Nations secretary general, the late Egyptian Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

On the other hand, the pastor stresses that more Muslims must address the fear that Christians in the Middle East are feeling and assure them that they are an integral part of society. Muslims must create a compassionate environment for Christians to help them feel that they are brothers and co-citizens, not enemies. He cites how the number of Christians in Iraq has plummeted from as many as 1.5 million in 1981 to around 200,000 today.

Handling trials

An immigrant himself, Pastor Yeshou feels for those who have left countries, where they once had comfortable lives, to settle in strange and unknown environments. But despite the pain of leaving his homeland and being unable to regain his vision, his faith in Christ is strong.

“What I love about Jesus Christ is that He became human like me and was homeless and a stranger among His people: ‘He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him’,” the pastor says.

He adds that there is a tension on this earth between being believing Christians and ordinary human beings who face temptations in every situation, just as Jesus did. “The question is; how do we deal with the trials when they come?” Pastor Yeshou says. ■

“

What I love about Jesus Christ is that He became human like me and was homeless and a stranger among His people.



I AM SAT-7

EMAD NABIL

Director of Photography, SAT-7 Egypt

What does your role with SAT-7 involve?

I am the Director of Photography for SAT-7 Egypt. I manage the camera crew for a number of productions, including the popular women's magazine show *Needle and Thread*.

What did you do before you worked with SAT-7?

I worked as a freelance cameraman. I filmed many different types of footage for a number of production houses, including Christian hymns, video clips, programs, live shows and drama series.

Why do you like working with SAT-7?

SAT-7 features content from many different churches and denominations. This results in great production variety, meaning that audiences of all ages can find something to watch and enjoy. This richness of the programming enables me to develop my creativity across diverse formats.

Tell us a little about your spiritual journey so far.

I grew up in church and developed a personal relationship with Jesus in my early teens. SAT-7 has added a lot to my spiritual life. Listening to the sermons we record and following the programs has really had a positive impact on me.

What would you like to ask Jesus about?

Isaiah 19:25 says, "Blessed be Egypt my people". I would like to ask Jesus when we will see the fulfilment of God's promise to Egypt. The unstable political climate creates ups and downs in people's spiritual lives. When things get tough, Christians gather and pray fervently, but when things stabilise, laziness creeps in. I pray that Egyptian Christians will experience a deeper relationship with God. ■



Be a part of the Day of Prayer

SAT-7 is Answering the Cry for Education in the Middle East – whether it be through educational programs for the millions of refugee children who cannot attend school, or through Bible teaching for isolated Christians.

Our annual Day of Prayer, held this year on 6 November 2016, will focus on the desperate need for education in the Middle East and North Africa. Don't miss out on taking part, whether as an individual or with your church or Christian group – mark the day in your calendar! More information and resources can be found at www.sat7.org/day-of-prayer



On the Day of Prayer we will ask God to continue enabling SAT-7 to be a trusted educational resource for millions across the region.

Network 2017

Our next Network conference will be held on 29-31 March 2017. The location will be announced soon but, for now, please mark the date in your calendars and we look forward to seeing you there!

How to find SAT-7

SAT-7 ARABIC	Nilesat (E7WA) at 7° West, 11.355 GHz Vertical; Middle East & North Africa
SAT-7 KIDS (ARABIC)	Nilesat (E7WA) at 7° West, 11.355 GHz Vertical; Middle East & North Africa
SAT-7 PARS	Eutelsat Hot Bird 13B at 13° East, Txp 122, 10.949 GHz Vertical; Middle East, North Africa & Europe
SAT-7 TÜRK	Türksat 4A at 42° East, 11.824 GHz Vertical; Turkey, Europe & Central Asia
SAT-7 PLUS (ARABIC)	Eutelsat Hot Bird 8 at 13° East, 12.380 GHz Vertical; Middle East, North Africa & Europe

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SAT-7 PLUS	www.sat7.com

OPERATIONS TEAM'S “UNGLAMOROUS” WORK IMPACTS MILLIONS

Without SAT-7's Operations team, our life-changing Christian programs would never reach our viewers. We asked Chief Operating Officer Andrew Hart to explain the vital work that goes on behind the scenes.

For the technophobe, the operational side of SAT-7's massive broadcasting ministry can seem daunting. But Andrew Hart makes it sound very straightforward.

While a lot of the work, Andrew Hart says, “is rather unglamorous”, it is very rewarding when a viewer sends a message saying, for example, “Thank you for the mobile app. My parents don't let me watch SAT-7 on TV, so this is how I experience church.”

Being where people are watching

This objective of “being where people are watching” has driven the development of SAT-7's broadcasting operations. SAT-7 has moved with the times as viewers have gradually switched from large regional satellites to smaller, more localised satellites that broadcast only in their own language.

“The same principle also applies to the methods we use to interact with viewers, which are very different from country to country,” says Andrew Hart. “For example, the messaging app Telegram has become extremely popular in Iran because it offers end-to-end encryption – in other words, protection from government spies.”

When SAT-7 PARS launched on Telegram last year, the team was inundated with messages from viewers who felt they could safely share and ask questions.

Behind every click is a person

SAT-7's presence on social media has increased dramatically over the past few years, with its Facebook pages attracting millions of followers. But our strategy is not about getting more clicks or “likes”, but instead about reaching out to individuals and helping them move forward in their journey of faith. “If you can engage with people where their needs are, you're doing what Jesus did,” Andrew says.

Preparing for tomorrow

Andrew's team spends a lot of time planning ahead, so that SAT-7 is ready to be where viewers are tomorrow. Although most viewers within the MENA are not yet able to access “on demand” and TV everywhere [Internet TV streaming], Andrew says that in 5-10 years' time, things will be very different. “So we are investing in TV Everywhere,” he says, “but that is still something for the future.” ■

“

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Romans 10:14



SAT-7 PREPARES THE WAY OF THE LORD

When Amir, a believer in the Arab Gulf, gave a Bible to a neighbour he had no idea that SAT-7's Christian programs had gone before him.

Amir's knees shook as he approached his friend's house. Nervous and conflicted, he wondered if giving the Bible in his hand to "Mr D" was the right thing to do. But, he asked himself, what if God had brought Mr D into his life for a reason? What if seizing this moment was the very purpose for which God had led him to this country from Iran?

Amir had good grounds to be nervous. Mr D held an important position in the security department. So when he bravely presented Mr D with the Bible, Amir was delighted and relieved to find that God had already prepared his friend's heart - through SAT-7's Christian programs.

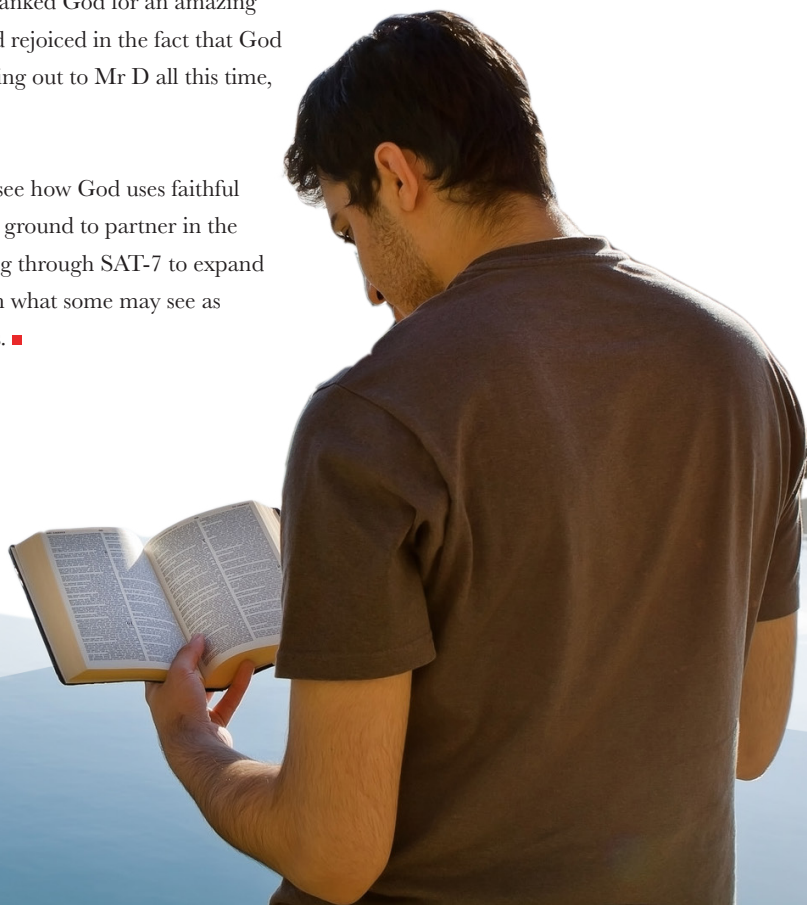
"What translation is this?" asked Mr D as he studied the Bible carefully. He then reached for the TV remote and tuned in SAT-7 ARABIC. Mr D pointed to the verses that appeared on the screen and asked, "Will I be

able to find these scriptures in this Bible?"

When Amir replied that he could, and showed him how to look up the verses, Mr D was delighted. "This is great," he said. "It will help me better understand what the presenters are talking about." He explained that he enjoyed watching SAT-7 and had wanted to find out more about the Christian faith for some time.

There were tears in Amir's eyes as he walked away from his neighbour's house after being told he and his family were welcome to visit any time. He thanked God for an amazing opportunity and rejoiced in the fact that God had been reaching out to Mr D all this time, through SAT-7.

It is exciting to see how God uses faithful believers on the ground to partner in the work He is doing through SAT-7 to expand His Kingdom in what some may see as closed countries. ■



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