

Skywaves



November/December 2021



Warming Hearts with the Love of Jesus

In Russia, Christmas is celebrated from December to January 7th, but as a feel-good, traditional holiday. Very few Russians ever open the Bible. The bitterly cold Russian winter is a stark reflection of hearts grown deadly cold in the nation. Alcoholism is a problem, exacerbated during the COVID lockdowns. The consequence – Russia is facing two other epidemics. The nation has the highest number of underage suicides in Europe, and the number of social orphans (children abandoned by their parents) is higher today than it was after World War II.

Less than two percent of the nation identify as evangelical Christians. Russia is becoming more and more authoritarian, as political and religious freedoms diminish rapidly.



Skywaves Aug 1986, when Russia was still the Soviet Union

Still, FEBC Russia has been warming hearts with the news of God's love and purpose for their lives since the late 1940s. Today, apart from radio broadcasts, FEBC has been reaching out using social media, touching millions of listeners and inspiring many to follow Jesus.

Families are being restored through radio and online dialogues. Dozens of teens

have shared with Eugene, a presenter, that they were persuaded not to take their lives after hearing about the hope of Christ. One 19-year-old listener named Andrey said, *"My thinking changed dramatically when I began listening to these (Christian) programmes. But the real transformation in my life happened when I came in contact with believers, and eventually joined my church."*



Click to watch Eugene in action.

Thousands have come to know Jesus and the eternal hope and life found in Christ, especially during the pandemic. An emergency doctor who had to face life and death decisions daily was one such listener. *"I cannot tell you how helpful your broadcasts are for me personally, and for the crew – the driver and two paramedics. None of us were religious. We were 'normal', like everyone else, not militant atheists, but never really paying attention to the question of God. Let me tell you, we are not like everyone else now. Because of your programmes, we know that Jesus cares for us and that He is involved in our lives. I am praying to Jesus every day. And I know our team members are very, very blessed by your programmes."*



Click to watch FEBC Russia listener's full testimony.



Click to watch Stories from the Field - Russia.

Hope for Hungry Hearts

Afraid. Grieving. Depressed. That is how more than half of Yemeni children are feeling, with more than one in five feeling this constantly. A far cry from the nation it once was in Biblical times, when it was under the rule of the Queen of Sheba. The country desperately needs the peace and hope that Jesus came to give more than 2000 years ago.

Civil wars in Yemen have ravaged the country for six long years, with no signs of abating. More than four million people have been uprooted from their homes. Airstrikes have destroyed healthcare and water and sanitation facilities. Cholera broke out, with over two million Yemenis infected, and thousands of deaths. The United Nations has labelled this as the largest humanitarian crisis in the world.

COVID has further aggravated the crisis. Fuel imports have reduced, pushing food and transport prices beyond the reach of many Yemenis. Nearly half of the population do not have enough to eat. UNICEF states 11 million children are at risk of malnourishment. 21 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, and any trickle of hope.

In the midst of this prolonged oppressive darkness, FEBC partners in Yemen have been shining the light of Christ, seeking to nourish hearts famished of all hope, and giving practical support. Programmes on shortwave radio tackle the real problems that the Yemeni community face. Follow-ups on Facebook and social messaging provide the human touch. Biblical perspectives are introduced through teachings, such as on the parables of Jesus and the sermon on the mount. Presenters also encourage listeners to call in and respond in a segment called "Hot Issues".

Today, an estimated 200,000 Yemenis listen to the programmes, though the number is likely to be significantly more as many listen in secret. Yemen

is the 7th most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian. Leaving Islam is forbidden and may draw a death penalty. Yemeni Christians may also find it harder to receive medical help or emergency aid as these are usually distributed through Islamic leaders or mosques. Our faithful FEBC media partners in Yemen, therefore, have been making practical provisions accessible for the children of Christians in the event that their parents are taken for their faith.

Despite the persecution, dangers and difficulties, the team has received more than 100,000 communications, and nearly 2,000 new contacts. The broadcasts have brought real hope and an assurance of community amidst the increasing isolation of Yemeni Christians.



A Yemeni child is in his school, destroyed by civil wars. The class is in session in the background. More than one in five Yemeni children feel afraid or depressed constantly.



Displaced Yemeni children. An estimated 11 million children are at risk of malnourishment.

"My husband died two years ago. I have two sons and one daughter. I live with my parents. I had many troubles caused by my family and neighbours because I didn't want to remarry. I began to believe that I am worthless, and that I should only be a slave. I lost my trust in myself and in people around me.

I started to find solace in group chats on the internet, where no one knew me. Three months ago, someone in the chat sent a link and wrote 'If you want to know who you are and your value, open the link'. I was curious, opened the link and came to your radio website. I was interested to know more about this Yemeni Christian radio and those subjects. I said to myself, 'I need to see if there are Christian Yemeni people.'

I listened to your programme with your guest, sister Merriam. The way you spoke with each other with respect, and transparency affected me in a positive way. It made me think about my life and values. When you started to talk about old prophets and people such as Deborah and Esther, I felt more and more that I have value. When you both discussed issues, I could feel as if I am at Merriam's place, that I could trust myself and speak about my own feelings.

*Then I contacted you, S, and asked for a Bible. You did all you could, always contacting me in a very careful way because you knew about my sensitive situation, and you always answered my questions. Last week I could not reject Jesus anymore. I opened my heart to Christ; I believed in Him. He is my God and Saviour. Now I know my value – that it comes from God. Jesus opened my eyes. Thank you, because you are my real family now."- Listener Amat**

*Name changed to protect person mentioned.



Representative image

“I shared my prayer requests for my husband who was not a believer at that time. Recently he was hospitalized. But by the grace of God and through the fervent prayers of FEBC’s prayer team, my husband survived and came to Christ, accepting Him as his personal Saviour and Lord. He was also baptized. I’m highly grateful for FEBC Korea’s great ministry for many souls.”

- South Korea Pohang Station listener

Welcome

Just like that, we are at the end of the year. Our hearts are filled with thanksgiving for God’s faithfulness and love in carrying us through. We are also thankful for your faithfulness in partnering in God’s mission with FEBC to let every tongue, tribe and nation hear the gospel.

With COVID still raging, particularly the widespread Delta strain, increased persecution of Christians around the world, the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, 2021 has been a tumultuous year. Melbournians, we stand with you in the challenges you have faced from the extended lockdown, and indeed with all across Australia.

More than 2000 years ago, Jesus came down to earth, entering into a similarly turbulent time. The ruling Romans oppressed the Israelites. Herod the King poured out his reign of terror, killing innocents and crushing lives. Weary hearts were crying out for the Messiah

prophesized about so many years ago.

Into this darkness, the Messiah was born, in a displaced family, in a poor country, a refugee. Emmanuel came to be with us, to save the world from eternal death, to give hope for the future and life to the full.

This was the good news of great joy that the angels were heralding when Jesus was born. Through radio and digital media, this is the Good News FEBC heralds each day to those similarly oppressed. This is the hope we, together with your partnership, bring to the weary. This is the light we shine in the darkest places. This is the joy of Christmas we share.

May you rejoice with heaven in the stories of salvation, and remain prayerful for the unreached as we take you through Christmases in different countries, unravelling stories. There are stories and testimonies that speak of God’s plentiful harvest, reaching minority tribes, and bringing hope to the most oppressed.



Kevin Keegan, National Director, FEBC Australia

Jesus may not have been born on December 25, but what’s more important is that, through your partnership, He now dwells in the hearts of many who were once unreached. And that is indeed good news.

May Emmanuel dwell in your homes and hearts always. Merry Christmas.

Kevin Keegan
National Director, FEBC Australia

In the Heart Languages

How do you say “Merry Christmas” in the different heart languages?

Korean - 행복한 크리스마스 되십시오 (haengbokan keuriseumaseu doesipsio)

Filipino - Maligayang Pasko

Russian - Счастливого Рождества (Schastlivogo Rozhdestva)

Arabic - كرابم دي جم داليم دي ع (īīd miyilād mağīd mubaārak)

From Headhunters to Children of God

Christmas is the most important holiday in the predominantly Catholic Philippines. Celebrations actually start months before, as early as September (the Christmas 'ber months)! For many, the favourite decoration is not the Christmas tree but the parol. The parol is a star lantern hung on doors. It symbolizes the star that guided the magi to Jesus on the night He was born.

Just like that star, for over 70 years FEBC Philippines has been guiding those who do not yet have a personal relationship with Jesus to the Messiah. This includes 14-17 million indigenous peoples spread amongst 110 people groups. Although many know how to speak a common language, having moved into cities, they remain closely connected to their heart languages and cultural roots.

Through 13 local radio stations broadcasting in 42 languages, FEBC makes the gospel culturally relevant for these often-overlooked ones. On Palawan island, FEBC Philippines airs a devotional and cultural programme called "The Indigenous Voice" in the Palaoan and Tagbanua languages. These teach Christian principles and values aligned to the cultural practices. Over on the Western side of Mindanao island, Station 1116 AM DXAS Zamboanga reaches the Moro, Tausug, Yakan and Badjao Muslim ethnic groups.

For the Bugkalot, a minority group in the remote villages on the Sierra Madre Mountain, the programme "Gold in Sierra Madre" reminds them of their rich cultural heritage whilst sharing about Jesus. Once animist headhunters, many are now a part of God's family.



The parol or star lantern is central to Christmas décor in the Philippines

Apart from broadcasts, FEBC Philippines also bring their love of, and hope in Jesus to the people in very practical ways. Together with local churches, FEBC Philippines fed and provided relief aid to the Badjao people in Santiago City, Isabela (Luzon). Bibles were also distributed to local communities.

The FEBC First Response Radio teams distributed relief supplies with COVID kits to survivors of typhoons and earthquakes. Some 220 families who were still living in evacuation centres a year after a recent disaster received radios with LED



Feeding physical and spiritual food to the Badjao community in Santiago City, Isabela



Displaced children having a special treat of burgers and Bible stories.

lights and other supplies, as well as counselling and prayer. The children were given flip flops and treated to Bible stories and cheeseburgers, which they have not had for a

year. For some Muslim radio talents struggling in the pandemic, FEBC gifted essential food supplies.

FEBC's First Response Radio network is able to set up vital radio communication to areas affected by disasters within 72 hours. The broadcasts provide critical information and comfort to those trapped in disaster zones, and give words of life and hope. During the pandemic, they also provide important medical and counselling support.

Listener Testimonies:

"The situation in our area during COVID was the worst. My family was badly affected during this strict lockdown in our area. Radio was the only source of information and comfort to us."

"Thanks for sending me these informative booklets that have really helped me to take care of my family and me during this pandemic. Apart from all protective measures, I have learnt to trust in the Lord through your special programme series. Thank you for sharing the true love of God with us. God bless you all."



Click to watch about the work on the Bugkalot.



FEBC Philippines distributing relief aid and COVID kits

Harvest Amongst the Reached

Christmas is a public holiday in South Korea. Special Christmas church services and carolling parties pop up during this time. 31% of the population are evangelical Christians, but the majority of Koreans still do not know or acknowledge the Christ of Christmas. To these, Christmas is just a festive time spent shopping or with friends along the streets decked out in Christmas lights.

Through 14 radio stations, FEBC Korea has been sharing the Christ of Christmas to the South and North Koreans. This ministry has borne much fruit. Each month, the ministry receives over 13,000 requests for follow-up on-air, and over 2,000 individual counselling requests. **Every month God draws anything from over 300 to over 700 into His kingdom.** Their lives are forever changed.



Photo taken pre-COVID

The Listener's Father programme, Gwangju station



Passion talk concert in Daegu



Intercessory Prayer team in Yeongdong

Heart to Heart

I found Jesus through listening to a Christian radio station when I was a child. We grew up on a farm in Western Australia, where there was no church. Sunday service happened rarely and in someone's house. A Christian newsletter and Radio Sunday School were the only two ways my siblings and I received Christian content. On Sundays, we would sit by the radio to listen. I would also do the workbook. The station also organised summer camps. It was in one of these camps that I was saved.

So, I know intimately the impact of Christian radio. This is even more so during COVID, where radio would have been so crucial for isolated remote communities to get critical information. I have been praying for Christian radio for more than 30 years, and FEBC for more than 11 years, when I was still in South Africa. When I see the need or feel led to, I also donate to FEBC. Without radio, the gospel would not be heard in some places. And the gospel has to be heard.
- G. Knott, Bundaberg, Queensland



Listener Testimonies:

"Through FEBC Korea, I came closer to God, realizing that God has forgiven my sins and saved me from death. I have found the true gospel while listening to FEBC Korea. It felt like pouring living water into my thirsty soul. My life was saved! Thank you." - Yeongdong Station listener

"FEBC Korea has revived me like a welcoming rain. The broadcasts are sometimes like a friend, sometimes like a mentor, and sometimes as a watchman who makes me repent of sin. Just as you can't live without air, FEBC Korea is the air that makes me breathe." - Mokpo Station listener

"I was a monk for 20 years. During this time, I had cerebral haemorrhage. Through the ordeal, I answered God's call and received Jesus. FEBC Korea introduced me to one church, where I have been attending worship service. I am gradually learning and realizing that the life I have now is more precious than the life I have enjoyed in the world. Even though my physical discomforts are not gone, God has been my strength through FEBC Korea." - Pohang Station listener

"I've been praying for my colleague, Ms. Jang, for her soul, and also sent the prayer request to FEBC Korea's radio prayer team. One day, she told me that she was thinking of God's agape love, and I led her to realize God's unconditional love for His children. She immediately gave a phone call to FEBC Korea where she finally accepted Jesus Christ as her Saviour. Thank God

for His perfect plan and timing for the salvation! Thank you, FEBC Korea, for praying with me for her." - S.E. Jeolla Station listener

"There is a nine-year-old girl in our church who is the only Christian in her family. She is the precious fruit of our prayers for three years. We finally had the chance to invite her younger brother to a FEBC Korea online children's evangelical event. He could experience the joy of the gospel through interesting activities, such as singing, dancing, craft-making, and solving quizzes. The day after the event, the eight-year-old boy came to attend the worship service. Please pray for all the family." - Gwangju Station listener

"My mother was not a Christian. She went to the temple in the mountains every day. She always had a negative attitude towards churches and Jesus Christ. I've prayed for a long time for my mother's soul to be saved, but telling the gospel of Jesus Christ to her was very difficult. So, I decided to give her a radio as a gift and encouraged her to listen to FEBC Korea. She started listening to the radio every day when she was at home. One day, she listened to the pastor's sermon saying 'Let's have a morning worship service' on the radio. Then she opened the Bible while having the morning worship service through the radio. Hallelujah! Thank God for answering my prayer!" - Yeongdong Station listener



febc.org.au/gifts

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