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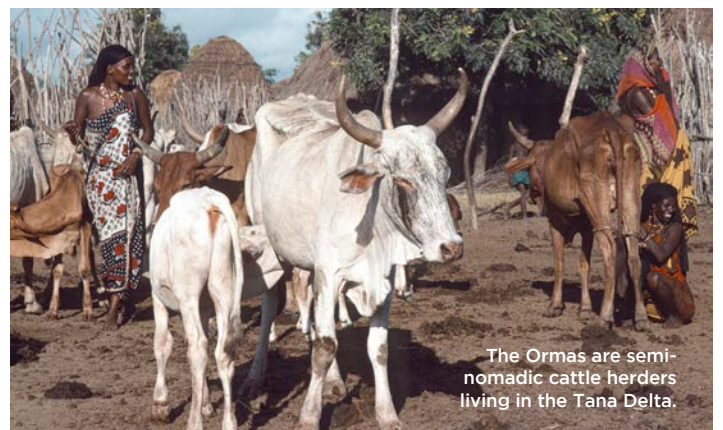


## Making Peace on the River

Imagine fearing for your life each time you went into the bush to get to or from the river. Imagine having to walk a much longer route to get to water for bathing, cooking, washing, drinking, and for your cattle because the alternative could be fatal. For decades, this was life for the Orma and Pokomo people groups along eastern Kenya's Tana River County.

### From living waters to deadly disputes

The Tana River County gets its name from Tana River, the longest river in Kenya and a source of life to Kenyans. Residents living along or around the river can be seen bathing or washing in its caramel-coloured water. Nairobi residents get most of their water and power from the river. Pokomo farmers along the river rely on it for their crops. The semi-nomadic Orma people group also depends on the river to water their cattle.



The Ormas are semi-nomadic cattle herders living in the Tana Delta.

But the river has become a source of deadly conflict. As corporations and organisations took up the hinterland, the Orma were forced to move closer to the riverbank, where the Pokomo stayed. Longer droughts meant the Orma needed the river more,



## Making Peace on the River ... cont'd

and hungry cattle meant increased crop raids. The Pokomo, on the other hand, were squeezed into smaller areas of land when dams displaced thousands of families. The clans also believe that political power equates to land ownership, and this tension is played out during elections.

Centuries ago, the elders of these two people groups would peacefully meet to negotiate the use of the land and river. But not today. Since the '90s, the two clans have had large scale ethnic clashes. "Many lives have been lost - women, children and cattle," Filikita Jillo (Fili), station manager of FEBC's partner Vox Radio shared.



Amani FM ('Peace' in Swahili) promoted peace on its radio programs. The station is now called Vox Radio.

### Hate Speech Havoc

Hate speech perpetuated by the media didn't help. Words like 'we' and 'they' promoted enmity, not peace. Accusations without facts increase animosity. One group will accuse the other of diverting water supplies for their own ends. Another village will claim to be the original landowners. Murmurs of land

grabs fanned the flames of unfounded fear. That is, until Vox Radio stepped in.

The only radio station in the lower Tana River area (where the clashes happened) recognised that stories have the power to shape people's relationship with the world and influence how groups behave. They started to share stories that fostered positive change, and revealed current issues that caused the divide.

### Peacemaking

Through radio programs, training and dialogue centred on peace, the peacemakers started changing the tide. "We were doing a lot of training on-air and in person. We had discussions with religious leaders, youth and clan elders. We also trained journalists," Fili explained.

In addition, the station, formerly called Amani FM (Swahili language for 'Peace'), ran SMS broadcasts where misinformation is corrected and hate speech was discouraged. They organised road shows, had focus groups and featured stories on their on-air programs, all talking about peace. "Peace, peace, peace, peace, peace. We were always talking about peace. That is how we overcame the violence," Fili elaborated.

After five years of sowing nothing but peace, communities are now finding common ground and communicating despite conflicting narratives. Vox Radio has been officially recognized as 'heroes' in spreading peace in Tana River County. "Previously, people from one village cannot visit another. Now, they can sit down together and there have even been intermarriages," Fili rejoices.



Vox Radio team out listening to the community's fears and concerns.



Dear friends,

I've just returned from a trip to Moldova and other regions of Central Asia to visit our tremendous local teams, volunteers and leaders. Their knowledge of your love and support in the midst of difficult situations was a great blessing and encouragement to them. They in turn wanted me to share with you their gratitude for your partnership in God's mission. Your standing with them makes a huge difference.

Many times on this trip the people shared personal stories of the difficult circumstances they have been journeying through for some time. In Moldova, I was joined by Eduard and Inna from Ukraine. They shared about the weariness and stress caused by constant drone and missile attacks day and night; and yet their heart to serve their people in the name of Jesus remains. They know our only hope is in Christ. In Moldova,



Kevin with Moldovan and Ukrainian team members.

people are also anxious, and the needs are great. Yet the new young FEBC team there is changing lives and attitudes, and bringing hope, especially among the youth.

Being in Eurasia, seeing the pain and concerns in people's faces as they seek to continue their lives reminds us that our work is not yet completed. Indeed, worldwide there are millions caught in other very difficult situations and millions yet to know the love of God and hear for the first time the Good News of Jesus.

We are in this blessed work of God's mission together, and I pray that as you read these stories, you are humbled, comforted, encouraged and challenged.

In Jesus we can have peace, for true peace is not found in the absence of the storm but in His presence.

We see this many times in the Bible, such as when the disciples were buffeted by the waves in storms, but the moment Jesus was present the wind died down and peace of heart came (Matthew 14:32, Mark 4:39). In Psalm 4, David was running for his life and, despite the extremely painful and fearful circumstances, he claimed he "will lie down in peace" because God makes him dwell in safety. In beautiful Psalm 23, God has green pastures in His presence.

Genuine peace is only found in a relationship with God through Christ. And so, our desire, through media is to make Him known; to not only be God's peace-bringers but peacemakers. For when we go into areas of conflict to bring resolution, we are peacemakers. When we go into impoverished communities to bring about God's kingdom and justice, we are peacemakers. When we, despite challenges, pray, share and give to inspire others to be reconciled with Jesus, we are peacemakers. That is what we are called to be: peacemakers.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

Thus, with a heart like yours for others, I share with you the stories in this Skywaves. Be blessed.

In His service

**Kevin Keegan**

*National Director/CEO*



# Warring for Peace

When the Ukraine war started, neighbouring Moldova found itself with an influx of over 700,000 Ukrainian refugees. Despite being one of the poorest and smallest countries in Europe, the landlocked country has warmly welcomed over 100,000 Ukrainians who have chosen to remain.

But the war has rattled the country. There is constant fear of the former Soviet Union state being next in the line of fire. Within the country there is a separatist state, militarily and politically supported by Russia. Russian TV news and political shows are now banned in the country, but the media still plays out the pro-Russian or pro-West division amongst the people.

FEBC Moldova's broadcaster and her husband taking neglected and hurt local children into their own home.



## Agents of peace

FEBC Moldova is combating fear and division with the peace and love of Jesus. Even before the war, one broadcaster and her husband have been taking parentless children to raise in their own home. When refugees crossed over, the team stepped in to help hundreds of families. The team also distributed thousands of radio programs on USB drives and other carriers. These programs, prepared specially for the refugees by FEBC Ukraine brought much hope and comfort. Over 70,000 refugees were helped, out of which nearly 80 people were served in deeper, life changing ways.



Broadcaster Iliia Bodnari and his wife were helping thousands of refugees, including family members of FEBC Ukraine's team.

God is using the ministry's radio programs on seven stations and videos on social platforms, in both Romanian and Russian, to reach those desperate for peace. The videos have been viewed more than 18 million times, and hundreds of meaningful conversations started. The ministry was also a critical support when some FEBC Ukraine's stations could no longer broadcast.

## Finding true peace

Ivan was one listener who contacted the station. On the surface, Ivan's life seemed fine – he had an apartment, a car, a job. But tormented within, Ivan often harboured suicidal thoughts.

“When I'm stressed, I will barely sleep or eat for weeks. What can I do?”

As FEBC counsellors addressed Ivan's questions, they began to talk about faith. Ivan was eager to talk about God.

“I didn't use to believe in God,” he said, “but last Sunday I went to a church. I wanted to become a Christian. It was all very ceremonial though, and it happened quickly. I didn't understand what really happened.”

Counsellors shared with Ivan about God – about life, sin, repentance, and God's love.

Ivan listened eagerly. “I so desperately want this!” he said.

Ivan prayed a prayer of repentance. Afterward, he said: “The tormenting feeling is gone! This is such a huge relief, thank you!”

Ivan found the true peace that can only be found in Jesus.



FEBC Moldova has programs for children and teens too.



FEBC Indonesia's YASKI Foundation making house visits, bringing rations and hope to marginalised individuals and families.

## Calm in the Storm

Yao Shun used to be a thug, until he met the love of his life. He got married, had five children, turned 180 degrees from being a thug to a follower of Jesus.

But seven years ago Yao Shun suffered a stroke. His wife deserted him and took their children with her. With no one to take care of him, Yao Shun stopped taking his meals. He could not. There was no food, and nothing he could do. Even just going to the restroom, Yao Shun was helpless.

When FEBC Indonesia's charity arm YASKI Foundation visited Yao Shun, the team found him with very limited mobility. They helped him to the restroom. Yao Shun admitted that he was forced to sleep in the living room. The bedroom, not having been maintained, was too dirty to be in.

Yao Shun's condition weighed on his mind. Ignored by his own family, he felt rejected and utterly alone, until the YASKI team's visit. FEBC's YASKI Foundation has been actively reaching out to the marginalised and the forgotten in Indonesian society. During COVID, they distributed necessities, visited and prayed for many individuals and families. They also gave out radios so people hear God's Word.

## Finding hope and peace

That was how Yao Shun became a listener of FEBC Indonesia's Heartline FM Tangerang radio. Although his body's mobility was impeded, Yao Shun's hearing was not. His ears were still able to listen well.



Yao Shun sharing with the YASKI team that he would have ended his life if not for Heartline's radio programs.

"Heartline radio is my friend every day. I feel less lonely, and my heart becomes calm listening to Heartline's spiritual programs," said Yao Shun to the team.

Yao Shun confessed, if there was no Heartline radio program, he probably would have already killed himself. He hopes that through the interaction program on the radio, he can find friends to talk to and they can strengthen one another.

## Unreached in Focus



**People Group:** Rakhine

**Location:** Western Myanmar (primarily) & Bangladesh

**Population:** 2.6 million

**Main Language:** Rakhine

**Bible Translation:** Portions

**Largest Religion:** Buddhism

**Christian\*\*:** 0.1%

**Reached by:** FEBC's partners in Myanmar

*Statistics from The Joshua Project.*

*\*\* Anyone who professes to be Christian. It is not an indicator of the degree of commitment or theological orthodoxy.*



# Heart-to-Heart

"I am the only Christian in my family, in my village, in the area. I have no hymn book, no Bible, no other fellowship but the radio station." This was the most common message Pat May received on postcards from India when she volunteered in FEBC Philippine's office in 1990.

## Radio can travel where people cannot

Message after message, the long-time partner of FEBC read about lives transformed as they came to the saving grace of Jesus through radio. "I was very privileged to answer those letters, to encourage them to keep trusting God. It was a very special thing for me and a lifelong memory."

Pat May reflects, "Radio can go where people can't. It doesn't have any physical barriers. And when people hear it in their own language, they get very excited about that. God can use it. He uses His Word. It is just a blessing."

## Jesus is the only hope

So convinced of the value of radio to bring people to God's saving grace, Pat May is now a broadcaster on Esperance's 103.9 HopeFM! And why is Pat May so passionate about saving souls? She shares with

conviction: "If you look at the world today, what is the alternative? It's a ghastly place. Satan seems to reign supreme. It's horrible. There is no hope. People are hopeless. People are dying without hope. They are taking their own lives. There are mental health issues all around. It's because Satan is a hard taskmaster."

"But Jesus came to set the captives free, to give sight to the blind, healing to the deaf. He came to liberate people into salvation. That's the most important thing, whether it's by radio or the written page, or somebody speaking, it is so important."



Pat May is so convinced of radio as a tool for God's mission that she is now a radio broadcaster.



Pat May interviewing FEBC staff Cherylyn on Esperance's 103.9FM.

## Ways to partner with FEBC



**PRAY**

[febc.org.au/prayer-guide-sign-up/](http://febc.org.au/prayer-guide-sign-up/)



**GIVE**

[febc.org.au/2307-n-dg/](http://febc.org.au/2307-n-dg/)



**TELL**

[febc.org.au/socials](http://febc.org.au/socials)

*Thank you!*

Thank you for your generous support this past financial year to reach the unreached with the Good News of Jesus. Together we can let them hear.