



Looking to the Cross

ANXIETY

STRESS

TWR CANADA PRAYER AND DEVOTIONAL GUIDE FOR
MARCH 3 - APRIL 27, 2024

THE CROSS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”
(John 3:14-15)

This passage refers to a story in Numbers 21:4-9 and gives us a picture of Jesus and the cross in the Old Testament. Although God had been perpetually faithful to the Israelites, they still grumbled and complained against God and against Moses. So, God disciplined his people by sending fiery serpents among them to bite them, causing many of them to die. The people recognized their wrongs and went to Moses, asking him to pray to God to take away the snakes.

God commanded Moses to *“make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live”* (Numbers 21:8). Moses obeyed God, and the people of Israel were healed when they looked to this serpent on a pole.

While this may seem strange and superstitious, this act of looking at the serpent was actually an act of faith. While

that lifeless piece of metal had no ability to heal, by looking to the serpent, the people of Israel were acknowledging their need and trusting in the God who could and would heal and save them.

This serpent on a pole is like Jesus. Those who look to Jesus, who look to the cross in faith, are saved and healed, just as those who looked upon the serpent were healed. Those who look to Christ’s work on the cross and believe in him will be saved.

But Jesus is greater than this serpent. Jesus is alive and is God in the flesh. He has the power to heal and to save. The people of Israel had only the promise and symbol of salvation, but we now have the fulfillment of that promise in Jesus Christ. Let us turn our faces to the cross and fix our eyes on Jesus for healing and salvation.

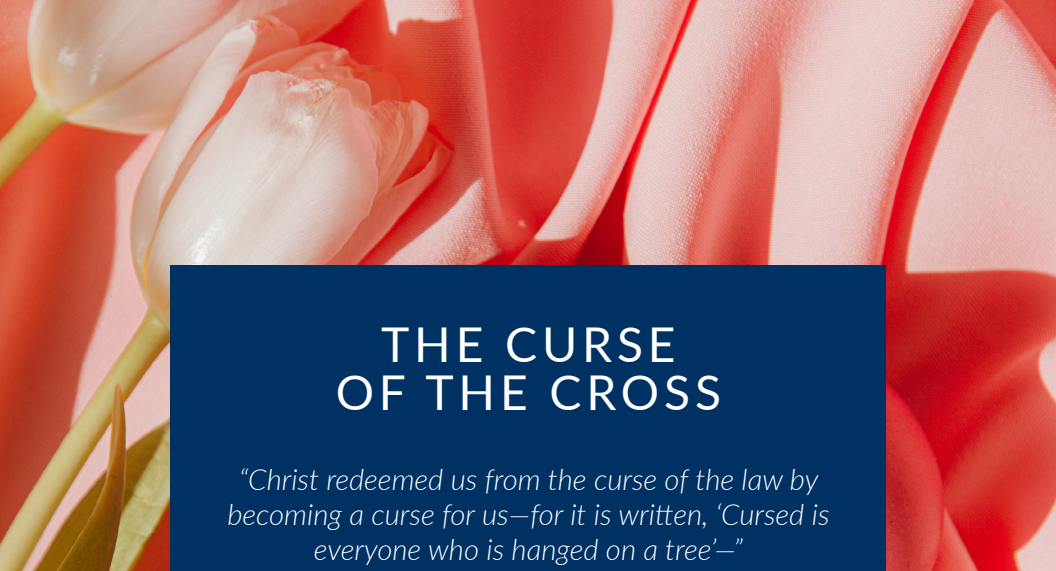
Women’s Ministry

TWR Canada’s ministry to women includes TWR Women of Hope, which equips women around the world to understand the Word of God, grow in faith and discover the hope of Jesus.

March

3. Around the world, thousands of women pray for the ministry of TWR Women of Hope each month. Praise God for these faithful prayer warriors!
4. Praise God Susie Pek, TWR Women of Hope global director, received her visa to be able to meet with the US TWR Women of Hope team! Pray for Susie as she makes and acts on plans to grow the TWR Women of Hope ministry.
5. Pray for the listeners of *Women of Hope* programming across West Africa. Praise God for the lives changed through spiritual and practical teachings!
6. TWR Canada missionary Jonathan Griffiths is a consultant with TWR Women of Hope. Pray for him and the global leadership team as they strategize and make plans for the future.
7. Pray for Jeanne, TWR Women of Hope coordinator in Mali, as she plans for and speaks at churches and conferences in her own and surrounding countries.
8. Around the world, TWR Women of Hope has women who oversee the various country teams in their regions. Pray for Miiia, Inja, Yicell, Paulina and Sphiwe in their roles as regional coordinators.
9. Pray that the TWR Women of Hope team in Paraguay would effectively reach out to imprisoned women across the country with the hope of the gospel.





THE CURSE OF THE CROSS

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’—”
(Galatians 3:13)

This verse can often seem confusing to us. What does it mean that Christ became a curse? Or as 2 Corinthians 5:21 puts it, that God “*made him to be sin who knew no sin*”?

First, we need to remember who Jesus is. He is the Son of God, the holy, sinless God in the flesh. He is perfect and pure and unstained by sin. This sinless God-man took our sin upon himself. And not just the “small” sins of which we rightfully are overcome with guilt and shame, but every single sin of all his chosen people from the beginning of time until the end.

Not only did he have to carry the shame and guilt of these sins, but on the cross he

was cut off from the loving presence of God and was faced with the fullness of God’s wrath and justice instead.

This is what it meant for Jesus to become a curse for us. This is what we rightfully deserve. But Jesus took this curse upon himself for the glory of God and the salvation of his people.

Not only that, but he rose to life from the dead and ascended to heaven to intercede for us so that we are free from this curse for all eternity. Let us look to the cross with sorrow for our sins but let us not stay in that sorrow. Let us rejoice for the freedom and salvation from the curse that Jesus Christ has bought for us!

China Ministry

Our China ministry includes SOTA, our 3-4 year seminary program for the Chinese church, as well as other ministry initiatives including Discipleship Essentials, *Bible Stories Alive*, and training events for Chinese church leaders.

10. Pray for wisdom for the China ministry team. They are developing several new courses and study tracks to meet the needs of the Chinese church.
11. Praise God for new staff in our Canadian office who are assisting in promoting, organizing and developing training programs associated with church leadership development and the SOTA ministry!
12. Pray that SOTA students around the world remain steadfast and dedicated to their studies. Pray that what they learn can be implemented quickly into their churches and ministries.
13. SOTA now has three study tracks: the pastoral, ministry-focused and missions tracks. Pray that students would be effectively equipped in these focused paths of study.
14. Pray for SOTA in Germany, where there are over 50 active students and seven graduates. These students and graduates represent churches in approximately 30 cities across the country.
15. Pray for good health and encouragement for the China ministry team. Many have been experiencing sickness and strain from travel and other life stresses.
16. Many of the China ministry’s training sessions are done using online platforms. Please pray for protection while using these platforms.



GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE CROSS

"... this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it." (Acts 2:23-24)

This verse makes it clear that the crucifixion of Jesus was God's plan. But how can this be? How can this evil be a part of God's plan? And what was the goal of this plan?

God's plan, and the end goal, was that God would be glorified. God does not need us. God would be no less majestic if he had never created us. He would be no less holy if he condemned every one of us for our sins. But this was not the way God chose to be glorified.

What was intended and desired by the enemy and by those who put Christ to death was evil, but God intended it for his glory and for our good. Yes, God would still be beautiful if he never created anything. Even after creating everything, he could have *not* redeemed us, but this is how glorious he is!

Before the beginning of the world, God had a plan. He created man and woman and made them very good. Humanity sinned against him time and time again and he gave them the promise of a coming salvation to look forward to and to trust in.

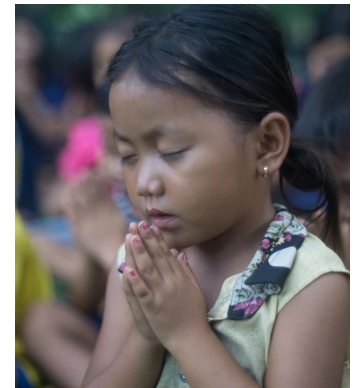
Then, at the right time, God came to earth in the form of a man to be born of a virgin and to live the sinless life which his people have never been able to live. That God-man, Jesus Christ, died the death that we deserved. He then rose to life and ascended to the right hand of the Father to intercede for us. While it is true that God did this out of love for us, even more importantly than this, he did this for his own glory.

Let this piece of God's plan cause us to be comforted by his love and drive us to praise him for who he is and what he has done.

Ministry to Children

Our ministry to children includes *Bible Stories Alive*, a series of stories chronicling the lives of people in the Bible, such as Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, in a way that brings the stories to life and makes the listener feel like they are there.

17. Praise God for the infrastructure to share *Bible Stories Alive*, including on four FM stations in Kenya, on TWR360, and on the Speak Hope and Bible Stories Alive Android and iOS apps.
18. Please pray that God would instill in children all over the world a curiosity to know God and develop a strong foundation rooted in his truth and goodness.
19. Across Cambodia, children listen to the *Bible Stories Alive* programs in groups. Praise God for the growth in faith in these children and their families.
20. The Spanish and Arabic stories are recorded in the studio in our London office. Pray for the production teams, including TWR Canada missionary Jeremy Mullin, as they produce the stories.
21. Please pray for the translation and production of the *Bible Stories Alive* programs in Arabic, Spanish, Persian, Swahili, Somali, Hindi and Gujarati. Praise God that the series is complete in Mandarin!
22. Pray for Dr. Griffiths and his team at Bible Stories Alive as they edit the English stories for translation into other languages. Praise God for Dr. Griffiths' faithful life of ministry!
23. Pray for the distribution of the Mandarin stories on tablets and online through TWR Canada's Chinese ministry. Pray that the children and families who read and listen to these stories grow in their faith together.



JESUS GOING TO THE CROSS

“For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” (John 10:17-18)

“And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.’” (Luke 22:41-42)

These verses give us some insight into Christ’s journey to the cross. Before arriving at his final hours Jesus makes it abundantly clear that what is coming is not something that is being forced upon him but that he has the authority to lay down his life and to take it up again. Some people question how God could possibly send his own Son to suffer the death he had to face and still be called a good Father, but Jesus makes it clear that he is obeying his Father not out of force but out of willing submission.

On the other hand, we see the agony and dread of what was soon to come.

It makes sense that Jesus was in great agony at this time. As the second member of the Trinity, Jesus had never been separated from the Father or the Spirit. But in a few hours, he would experience separation from the loving presence of God and receive the wrath of God which he did not deserve. And yet, even in this pain and agony, Jesus submitted himself to the will of God instead of walking away from this task. In this, he glorified God and he saved us. And, just as he said he would, after laying down his life, he took it up again!

We are saved by Christ’s faithful obedience in going to the cross. Praise the Lord!

Africa

From radio broadcasts to capital projects to on-the-ground ministry and the work of missionaries, our reach across Africa is vast, just like the region.

24. Across West Africa, people gather in groups to listen to Discipleship Essentials and other biblical programs and discuss what they have learned. Pray that each member would grow in faith.
25. Pray that God would work through our two programs in Burundi, *Good News for All* and *Jesus is the Answer*, to continue changing the lives of listeners.
26. Over the last year, we have partnered with several organizations to distribute media players full of biblical content across Africa. Pray that all those who received a media player would grow in their faith.
27. Pray that TWR Canada missionaries Nathan and Megan Dunlop would have a fruitful and restful season of furlough in Alberta before returning to South Africa.
28. Pray for TWR Canada missionaries Greg and Ingrid Clarke in their roles as station manager and in the finance department at the transmitting site in Eswatini.
29. Praise God that the radio program *Strengthening Families through the Word of God* has been healing families in Eswatini.
30. Pray that *Women of Hope* programs would continue to provide women across Mali and Côte d’Ivoire with hope and healing in Jesus.





AT THE CROSS: THE CURTAIN TORN IN TWO

“And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was the Son of God!’”
(Mark 15:37-39)

What is the significance of the curtain being torn in two? Symbolically, the curtain separated a holy God from sinful people. The act of tearing the curtain announced to the people that Christ had opened the way for sinful people to have full communion with God.

This also brought an end to the rituals of altars and sacrifices. God’s people no longer had to shed the blood of an animal in order to atone for their sins. Jesus became the final sacrifice, and his blood washes us white as snow. In God’s eyes, we are justified. Jesus,

as the Son of God, was able to take humanity’s sin and bear it on the cross. His death brings us life, as Colossians 2:13-14 reminds us: *“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”*

Christ’s sacrifice on the cross brings us freedom! We are no longer bound by our sin and we are welcomed into the loving arms of the Father.

Europe & CAMENA

While Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa are diverse in culture and language, one commonality is the need to hear the gospel. Radio programming, media content, training conferences and missionaries are all part of our ministry in this region of the world.

31. Pray that our teams in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus can continue speaking hope through media during this time of war and hardship.



April

1. Pray that God’s love would unite and rebuild communities through *How Are You, Out There?*, TWR Ukraine’s newest video series.
2. Across the Middle East and North Africa, our partner, Together Network, trains believers to lead small groups and disciple others using *Discipleship Essentials*. Pray for those who have received this training and are discipling believers across the region.
3. As we work with several TWR partners across Europe and CAMENA to create Android and iOS apps, please pray that the development process will be smooth and that these apps will assist believers as they grow in faith.
4. Pray for those listening to *Voice of Truth* in Prilep, North Macedonia. Praise God for the way he uses this program and the faithful ministry of pastor Edijan to speak hope to the Roma people.
5. We created a series of biblical songs and videos for Roma children in Serbia. Pray for the leaders who have recently received training in ministering to children. Pray that these songs will reach the children and make a profound impact.
6. In partnership with Words of Hope, we are in the early stages of translating and producing *Discipleship Essentials* into Albanian to provide foundational Christian teachings for this nation. Pray for those involved in this process and for those who will use this material to grow in their faith.



GOD MADE US ALIVE THROUGH THE CROSS

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—”
(Ephesians 2:4-5)

We have a merciful and gracious God. He is not in debt to us in any way, but because of his love and compassion towards us, he has brought us to life out of our deadness in sin. As Christ has been raised to live, so we, too, are raised together with him!

Paul writes a similar sentiment to the Colossians, saying, *“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against*

us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:13-14).

Our sins are nailed to the cross with Christ, our record of debt is cancelled, we are fully forgiven, and because Jesus is alive, we are too! When we look to the cross and trust in Christ and his salvation, we can also trust that we have been made alive and new.

What wonderful news this is!
We are new creations in Christ.
Praise be to our merciful, loving and gracious God!

Digital Ministry

Our digital ministry allows anyone, anywhere, at any time to gain access to a wide range of resources in their heart language.

7. Across the Persian-speaking world, people hear God’s Word preached on our web radio station. Pray that their faith would be deepened.
8. With digital technology, we have the opportunity to reach people at any time all around the world. Pray for those who discover these digital resources and that they would come to know God through them.
9. In partnership with the team in Europe, we have released an app for Macedonian speakers containing programming such as *Voice of Truth* and *Life of Jesus*, as well as from InTouch. Pray for those accessing this content on the app.
10. Many TWR radio stations around the world also stream their broadcasts online. Pray for those listening in this way from all around the globe.
11. Pray for those accessing content on TWR Canada’s Android and iOS apps, including the *Speak Hope* and *Discipleship Essentials* apps. Pray that these apps would be a beneficial resource to many around the world as they grow in their faith.
12. Steve Shantz leads TWR’s global digital media ministry. Pray for Steve as he works with teams around the world to build and enhance their digital outreach.
13. Using digital and social media to reach out with the hope of the gospel in India, we have partnered with Media Impact International to share the gospel and disciple believers. Pray for all those reaching out and for the team as they offer biblical resources and encouragement.



BLESSED ASSURANCE THROUGH THE CROSS

“Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?” (Romans 8:33-35)

These verses set one question before us but phrase it in many ways. The question being asked is this: can we truly be assured of our salvation, or is there something that can separate us from the love of God? The question is largely rhetorical, but the answer is given anyway.

No one can bring a charge against God’s elect. Any charge brought against them will not stand, for God justifies those whom he calls (Romans 8:30). No one can condemn because the One who has the power to condemn died and was raised, and now intercedes for us. No trial, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger or sword can withstand the power of God, nor can it sever us from God.

Because of what Christ has done, we can confidently say that yes, we have complete assurance that we are saved by God. We can say that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37-39).

Let us look to the cross – the promised cross, the cursed cross, the purposed cross, the chosen cross, the now empty cross. Let us see Jesus, high and lifted up, strong to save, and let us draw near to the throne of grace with confidence (Hebrews 4:16). Christ has saved us once and for all and there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. Praise God!

Persian Ministry

For more than 40 years, we have been reaching the Persian-speaking world with the hope of the gospel. Through web radio, social media, training conferences and more, we continue to see believers strengthened in their faith and new disciples being made.

14. Praise God for the recent conferences that have brought together seekers and believers in the Persian-speaking world for Christian love and fellowship!
15. Pray that those who listen to our web radio station would be encouraged by the messages they hear and choose to place their faith in Jesus.
16. Pray for those interacting on our Persian social media channels. Many young Persian-speakers are tired of religion and have questions about Jesus and Christianity. Pray that they would find the answers they seek.
17. Pray for the ongoing development of youth and short programs and for those who will listen to these programs.
18. Pray for those across the Persian-speaking world who receive SD cards, Bibles and other resources. Pray that they would grow in faith.
19. Pray for our Persian ministry leader, Tony, as he encourages and mentors Persian believers.
20. Pray for the new Persian ministry team as they learn their roles and work together to grow the Persian ministry.





LIVE BY FAITH BECAUSE OF THE CROSS

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jews first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” (Romans 1:16-17)

When we look to the cross and place our trust in Jesus, we are called righteous, and the righteous live by faith. God makes us into new creations, and we are called to a new standard of living that honours God, not ourselves.

Jesus tells us in John 14:15, *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”* Living a life of faith requires knowing God’s Word and acting on it; it requires good works. And while these good works please God, they are not what brings about our salvation.

There is a tension we often face in living a life of faith. Because of God’s great mercy and love, he has saved us. When we consider the suffering of Christ on the cross on our behalf and what it cost God the

Father to save us, we should be moved with gratitude and our response should be to say, “Yes, Lord. Whatever you say, I will do!” But it is not because of our response that we are saved. We have already been saved! The work of salvation has been completed on the cross.

We are freed from our life of sin to live a life that pleases God. We obey out of praise, not out of obligation or to earn salvation. Our obedience is a means of saying ‘thank you.’

When we look to the cross and place our faith in Jesus, let us then go forth and respond to God’s great mercy and love through obedience to his Word. Let us live by faith and thank God for what he has done for us.

Training

Around the world, pastors and church leaders don’t have the same opportunities we have in Canada to grow in faith and leadership. By partnering with the Church in training, we build a stronger global Church, helping local churches grow in faith and reach their communities with the hope of Christ.

21. Pray that Leadership Essentials would help small group leaders across the Middle East, North Africa and the Philippines be better equipped to lead.
22. Persian ministry conferences allow believers to gather safely for fellowship and Bible teaching. Pray that those needing spiritual encouragement will attend these conferences and will be blessed.
23. Pray for the release of CultureCross later this year. This is a tool for the Canadian church to assist Christians in knowing how to share the gospel with people of other cultures. Pray that many would be encouraged and motivated to share the gospel cross-culturally in their own neighbourhoods.
24. Praise God that Christian communities across the world benefit from using Discipleship Essentials for both small group study and for training small group leaders. Pray that all who use this resource would grow in their knowledge and understanding of God’s Word.
25. Pray for the many Chinese pastors and church leaders who attend training seminars, workshops, and other events in Canada and online. Pray that what they learn would strengthen their ministries and build up healthy churches.
26. Praise God for providing online platforms Christians can use for training and fellowship, particularly in parts of the world where it may be unsafe to gather in person.
27. Every Man a Warrior is TWR’s ministry for men. Pray for Director of Every Man a Warrior Canada Robert Barbeau as he shares about this ministry across the country and invites men to grow in their faith.



STORIES OF FAITH IN CHRIST

“My children participate in the program every Saturday and this has helped them to know the Word of God by memorizing Bible verses. The program is powerful as it is slowly helping children grow spiritually. I love the program and I’m committed to following it through.” – A listener of Bible Stories Alive, Kenya

“I faced great pressure from my classmates and most people around me to change my religion. Actually, this is very common and almost all Christians face this situation where I live. I was so confused about my religion and faith. Then my pastor shared about Discipleship Essentials and when I start studying it, my confusions turned into strong faith in Christ. Now I am confident to share about Jesus, salvation and my faith. This wonderful tool is helping not only me but many who are struggling in situations of doubt and pressures. God bless you.” – A believer in South Asia

“I grew up in a Muslim family. As a child, I respected all customs but did not know to whom we were praying. Later, I heard from a friend about Christ, the only Saviour. She told me I could listen to Voice of Truth on the radio. As I wanted to know more about Christ and the Bible, I started listening to the program. Many things that were not clear to me became clearer. I gave my life to Christ. I really feel like I was born again, like my eyes opened. I am happy and grateful because God’s great love and mercy have taken me out of the spiritual darkness that I was in.” – A listener of Voice of Truth, North Macedonia

“After listening to this program for the first time, I wondered, ‘is there any other hope in this world than the god I worship?’ Curious, I continued to listen to the program faithfully. Eventually I discovered that the real hope is in the God of the program Women of Hope.” – A listener of Women of Hope, Mali

“Yesterday, while I was shopping at the grocery store, a lady approached me and wanted to talk. Mrs. C. began to share with me, in addition to her faith in Jesus Christ, her heavy burden and her sorrows following her divorce and especially her difficulties in finding an evangelical church because of the turbulence her situation was causing with her church. She was finally able to find a church and receive the necessary care for her burdens and sorrow. She wanted to point out that during this very difficult period, lasting almost four years, it was our TV show La Parole Vivante that sustained her and kept her faith in God, and the relaxed atmosphere that emerges from these shows was for her a blessing and comforting. Glory to our Great God.” – As shared by a presenter of La Parole Vivante, Quebec

“In one of the online classes this month, one student joined the meeting with lots of frustrations and problems. She was thinking of quitting SOTA at the time. During the meeting, this student was encouraged by another student who is over 70 years old. When she saw how this elder student had overcome all the barriers and continued her SOTA studies, she was moved and decided to press on. After the meeting, she texted me and said, ‘Thank God that I joined this meeting today! I was so encouraged by the testimonies of the other students. Please pray for me as I have decided to continue my studies. Pray that God will grant me wisdom and strength to face the challenges! God bless SOTA and all the coworkers.’” – As shared from a team member of our SOTA ministry, China

“My sister had changed a lot in the last few years and finally she told me why! A few years ago, she found your Facebook. After a few months she believed in Christ and her life was changed. So, I started listening to your programs which are highly effective. Also, I am reading the Bible online too! Is it possible to send me a Bible? Thank you for all your efforts.” – A Persian-speaking believer

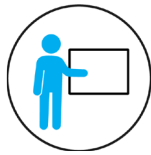


About Us:

Using media, we partner with churches around the world to share the message of salvation among the nations.



**Media
Content**



**Training
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**Digital
& Media
Technology**



**Missionaries
and
Mobilization**

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