



## VOICES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



### FINDING NEW TRADITIONS

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The Algerian church is seeing tremendous growth. "The Kabyle revival", as some call it, was neither inspired by missionaries nor introduced as a foreign movement but was ignited by a small group of faithful believers inside the country. God is using dreams and visions to turn people to Christ. In a country considered 'closed' to the Gospel and where proselytism is illegal under Algerian law, the steadfast devotion of Algeria's Spirit-led Church has overcome the government's resolve to control the growth of its Christian minority. The authorities launched a major campaign against Christians by abruptly closing churches across the nation. These attacks result from massive Church growth in Algeria over the last 40 years. In 2008, there were approximately 10,000 Christians in Algeria. Today there are at least 200,000!

Today the Algerian believers face the same persecution and oppression as in the past. Of course, the closure of the churches in the country has a great impact on the believers who live in fear; some have been arrested and prosecuted because of their faith.

All Christians in Algeria are from a Muslim background. For most of them Christmas and Easter are "new stuff"! This means that they need

time, perhaps even some years to understand these traditions. It's not easy for a Muslim background believer to get rid of some customs and traditions that mark the behavior of many, especially in overwhelmingly religiously conservative societies.

We thank God that during the last decade, the church in Algeria has become open to many eastern and western teachings, which gave the zeal to the leaders to encourage their congregations to celebrate Christmas and Easter. But the challenge remains: how can the celebration of Christmas and Easter become "events" celebrated by families inside homes during this tough time when churches are closed in Algeria?

Given this difficult situation, SAT-7 programmes are like a spring of hope for all ages. SAT-7 offers a variety of programmes that deal with all the daily human concerns. The diversity and variety – discussion, testimony shows, drama, documentaries, Christian teaching and worship, children and youth shows – contribute to the growth of the young church in Algeria.

SAT-7 covers events inside and outside the church, and this has weight in Algeria, making it attractive to Christians and non-Christians. SAT-7 is an open door for isolated Christians here in Algeria, especially after the closure of the churches. The programmes encourage Christians in their faith and give a fresh perspective to those who have questions. And we see through feedback to our programmes and the interactions with viewers that many people came to Christ through SAT-7.

Please pray this Advent that many more in Algeria will learn about the Saviour through our Christmas broadcasts.