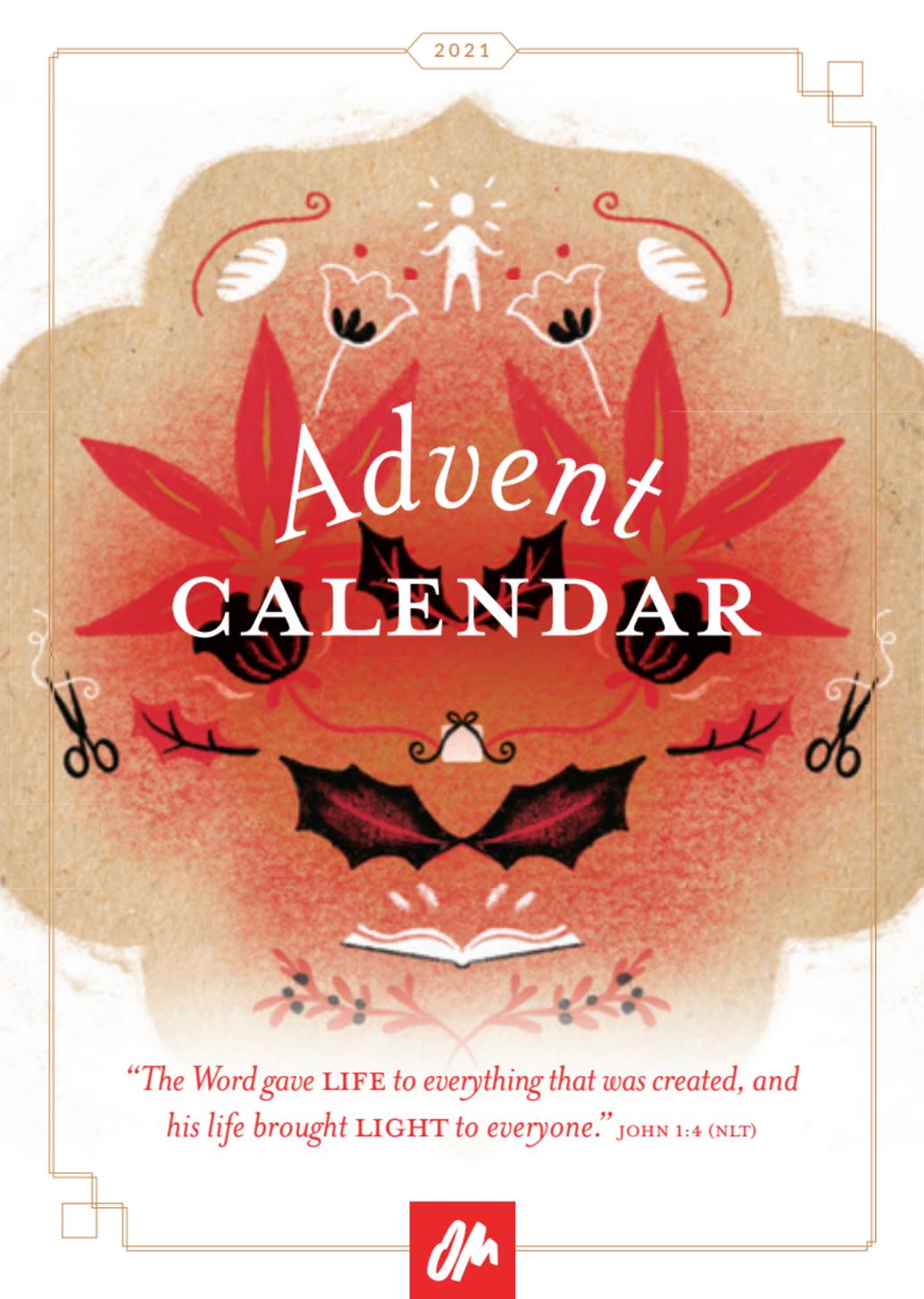


2021



Advent CALENDAR

“The Word gave LIFE to everything that was created, and his life brought LIGHT to everyone.” JOHN 1:4 (NLT)





ADVENT *Calendar 2021*

Join us this Christmas season as we look at one Bible passage each week that shows how Jesus changed the lives of people just like you and me.

After reading the verses and answering the questions each Sunday of Advent, complete the **daily challenges**—the transformational love of Christ is too good to keep to yourself!



[OM.ORG/CHRISTMAS](https://om.org/christmas)



HOPE *for our*
COMMUNITY

HOPE *for our* COMMUNITY

WEEK 1

This week we learn about Saul... or is it Paul? Together with your family or by yourself, read **Acts 9:1-22** and retell it in your own words.

QUESTIONS

01. How does encountering Jesus change someone in this passage?
02. What does this passage show me about how I should respond to Jesus?
03. What can I do to obey what I've learnt this week?

CHALLENGE

*Share this Bible story with someone
in your life this week!*

Levy's HOPE



When Levy from the Philippines first decided to follow Christ at the age of 10, she was so grateful for what He had done for her that she prayed to God: “I want to serve you for the rest of my life.” Indeed, she spends her life serving Him in a variety of roles using her individual gifts and passions.

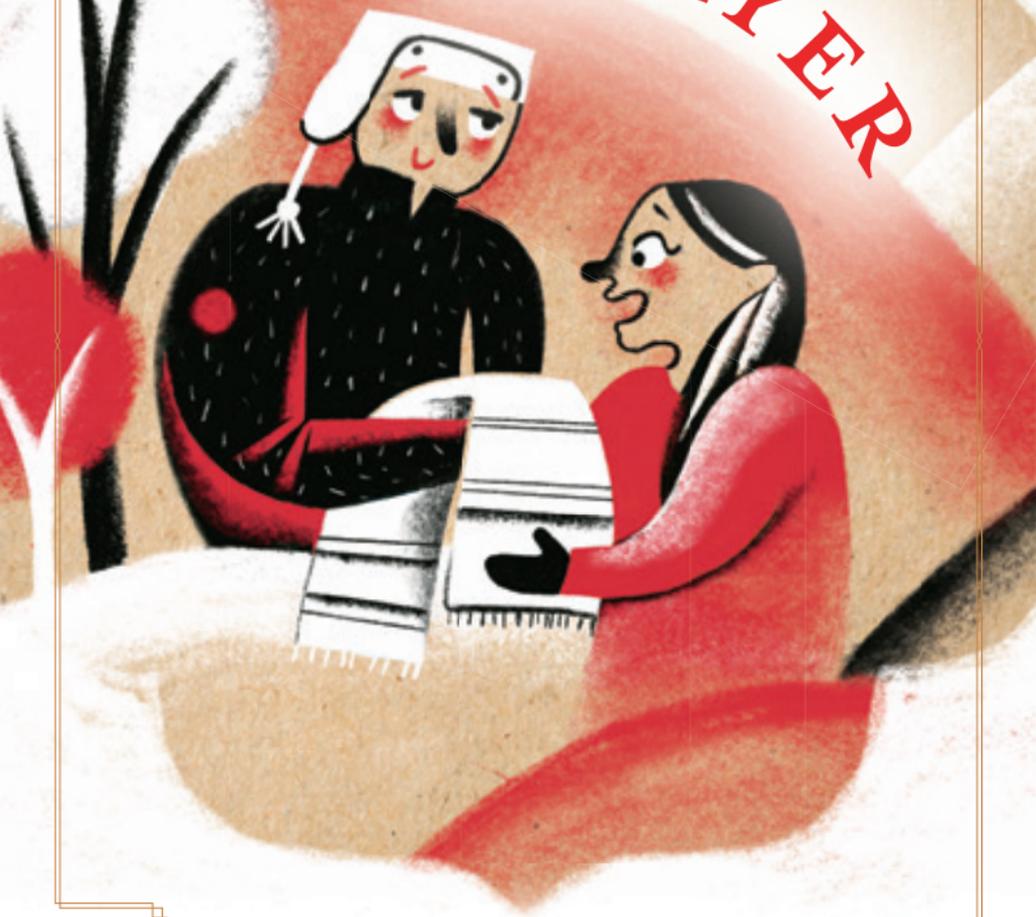
After the coronavirus pandemic limited travel, Levy decided to intentionally invest more in her local community.

Now, around 15 women, from late teens to grandmothers, gather each week in the early morning hours to study the Bible with her—hungry to learn and grow in their relationship with Jesus.

CHALLENGE

Maybe you are unable to travel as well because of lockdowns and restrictions related to the coronavirus. Join us in today's challenge and, like Levy, pick one person to connect with in your community.

Roberto's PRAYER



Roberto* began to follow Jesus when he was 20 years old after witnessing his mother's faith. Through realising God's love for him, Roberto felt a great love for others and wanted them, too, to know Christ.

Every day Roberto prays over his community in Argentina. This habit has led to opportunities to encourage others.

On one occasion, a woman who needed food and a mattress knocked right on Roberto's door. This led to the gathering of donations from neighbours, which, in turn, started activities such as a feeding programme and a clothing and blanket drive.

One person praying over his neighbourhood has started a movement!

** Name changed*

CHALLENGE

What are some ways that you can serve people's practical needs in your community? Maybe you can you donate groceries or clothing to a local food bank or shelter. If there is nothing currently happening in your area, what is something you could start?

Nigel's CHOICE



Though Nigel, from South Africa, stopped going to church at a young age, his family never stopped reminding him that he needed Jesus. “They didn’t just speak the gospel to me, but they lived it out for me. They had peace, joy and love,” Nigel said.

Years later, Nigel’s brother helped lead him back to God and from that moment on, Nigel was a changed man. Today, through OM’s international youth ministry TeenStreet, Nigel seeks to break the cycle of bad choices youth sometimes find themselves in.

“With almost 60 per cent of Africa being young people below the age of 25, I believe TeenStreet can play a positive role in guiding the young generation into thinking differently about who they are and the role that they could play in impacting our continent and beyond for God’s glory,” said Nigel.

CHALLENGE

It is often said that “youth are the future.”

*How can you invest in the youth in your community?
If you are a young person, what are you doing to ensure
that the future is bright? How can you share the hope
you have in Christ with your peers?*

Clara's CREATIVITY



From age 12, Clara* knew God wanted her to tell people “in the ends of the earth” about Jesus. As an adult, when she and her family moved to the Arabian Peninsula, she looked for ways to creatively connect with local women.

One time she gathered new Arab friends and other international Jesus followers and introduced them to one of her hobbies. Beyond learning a new skill, Clara and the other believers prayed that the local women would experience God’s love through the event.

Samira*, one of the local participants, loved the experience so much that she asked Clara if she’d share that same hobby at her house for her sisters and cousins. Clara did this multiple times and rejoiced when Samira decided to follow Jesus.

* Name changed

CHALLENGE

Sharing your skills with others is a great way to make connections! Which of your hobbies would you enjoy teaching others? Pick a time and invite someone to try out or participate in your hobby together.

Robbie's VISION



Born to a Turkish Muslim mother and Dutch Jehovah's Witness father, Robbie never quite felt he fit into either side. In his twenties, he struggled with depression, anxiety and exhaustion. Then Jesus changed everything.

Robbie met a follower of Jesus who prayed for him and extended an invitation to a house group. Soon after, Robbie had a vision of a man in white with arms open wide and a face like the sun. Robbie's life immediately shifted, and he dove into a relationship with Jesus.

"God reminded me of my identity," said Robbie. "I was 100 per cent Dutch and 100 per cent Turkish and 100 per cent born again in Jesus."

Back in the Netherlands, Robbie is ready to share the hope he has in Jesus with others—particularly the Turkish community.

CHALLENGE

*Is there a part of your identity that you are avoiding?
Pray that God will give you the ability to accept yourself.
Remember that you are a child of God and He loves you.
Spend time journaling about your unique identity.
Ask God to use 100 per cent of you for His glory.*

Siew's BLESSING



For the past six years Siew* has regularly visited Singapore's red-light district sharing Christ's love with people there. Friendships take time and are formed over multiple meetings but are always worth it.

"Our purpose was to show God's love through the gifts we give and through the conversations with them," she shared. "As we talked, if we were able to offer them a prayer or blessing and they were glad for us to pray for them, then we would also do it."

Siew said: "I hope more young people will see missions as also reaching out to the people around you, which can be somewhere as close as the door next to you. I want to encourage young people to be aware of the people in their communities and their brokenness. We ourselves were also broken, but we have been embraced by God."

* Name changed

CHALLENGE

How do you define missions? Pray about building a relationship with one of your neighbours. Write a Christmas card for them and add a special Bible verse as a blessing. Don't forget to deliver it!



LOVE for **FAMILY**
and **FRIENDS**

LOVE *for* FAMILY and FRIENDS

WEEK 2

This week we learn about the healing of a paralysed man who had some very dedicated friends. Together with your family, or by yourself, read **Mark 2:1-12** and retell it in your own words.

QUESTIONS

01. How does encountering Jesus change someone in this passage?
02. What does this passage show me about how I should respond to Jesus?
03. What can I do to obey what I've learnt this week?

CHALLENGE

*Share this Bible story with someone
in your life this week!*

Delysia's DANCE



Delysia joined OM's ship *Logos Hope* right before it closed to the public in early 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Though her onboard experience wasn't like she expected, Delysia chose to trust in the Bible's promises and was willing to be used according to God's plan. She became more intentional in her friendships with fellow crewmembers, began mentoring other young women and even started a dance group!

Delysia's life has impacted her family back in Namibia, who aren't yet believers. "At first, they couldn't grasp that I wanted to volunteer for God instead of a job. It has shown them that God is alive within me as I trust Him, and now I know they are extremely proud of me having this faith, being here to help people and growing so much."

CHALLENGE

Ask yourself this: does your life reflect the love of Christ or are you hiding your light under a bushel like in Matthew 5:15? Pray for God to help you live out His love to reach your family and friends.

Two sisters' WITNESSES



For sisters Grace* and Sophia*, sharing Christ's love with those who don't know Him is what they are used to. They—along with their two younger brothers—were born and raised in North Africa, far away from their parents' home countries.

After a country-wide lockdown to curb the coronavirus ended and the teens were able to meet with their friends again, “everyone was talking about how they were afraid of the virus and what that means for our world,” Sophia shared. “That led to conversations about how they didn't have to be afraid but that they could trust God.”

Grace and Sophia remind us that there are opportunities every day to share the love of Christ. From praying for a friend before a test to being a listening ear, people will see the light of Christ in you.

** Name changed*

CHALLENGE

*How can you show Jesus' love to a friend today?
Maybe you could bring them a coffee or initiate
a phone call to catch up. Be intentional and
see where Jesus leads you!*

Ahmet's ANCHOR



Ahmet* grew up in a small Turkish village. From a young age, he remembers pondering the purpose of life and having a spirit that “was always like a restless boat without an anchor.” Years later, while living in South Africa, Ahmet met Jesus followers for the first time and asked them to take him to church.

Over the next seven years, Ahmet studied the Bible and found his Anchor. He became passionate about telling other Turks about the love and peace of Christ, and, after serving in France among the Turkish population, he moved back to his home province with a heart for the 300,000 people living there without access to the gospel.

Jesus changed Ahmet’s life, and now his goal is to see other Turks transformed as well.

** Name changed*

CHALLENGE

*It can be scary and hard to share your faith,
but the good news is you don't have to do it alone!
Rely on the Holy Spirit to guide you. If you've never
written your testimony, take time to write down
some of the ways God has changed your life.*

Kristina's TESTIMONY



God provided a new opportunity for Kristina to reach women in the Caucasus: working as an eyebrow artist. “For women here it is essential to look beautiful. That is why this service is very appealing to them,” said Kristina.

For her, it is not just a job or a way to earn money. It is an opportunity to live out her faith. “My colleague hairdresser always recommends her clients to use my service, and she also tells them that I am Christian,” Kristina said. “It helps me to easily start a conversation about God with women in the salon.”

Kristina desires to be a light to her colleagues as well. One woman often asks Kristina questions. “She also sees my attitude to people, to her and her family, and that is a big testimony to her. I try to live my life in such a way that it testifies about Christ.”

CHALLENGE

Do your co-workers or friends know what you believe? What is a way you can live out your faith in the workplace or at school?

Flor's HEART



After participating in a discipleship course in her native Mexico, Flor knew she needed to share the gospel with her family. This meant travelling two hours one way on weekends to the homes of her mother and sisters to disciple them. “But it was worth the effort,” said Flor.

Soon, she and her sisters felt led to forgive their father, who had done great harm to his family years ago. “Forgiving my father was like taking a weight off my back because it was something I knew I had to do. The Holy Spirit moved me to do it,” commented Flor. “I am free of all that weight now. The cycle of all that resentment and hatred is closed.”

Flor and her family then shared the gospel with their father and his wife and daughter, who all accepted Jesus.

CHALLENGE

How have you seen Jesus at work in your own family? Are there any relationships that need healing? Pray for Jesus to work in your heart and show you the way forward.

David's GAME



When David*, from southern Africa, moved to Central North Africa, he headed to the sports field. Having played football for years, he started coaching and mingling with other players. Sports are “a good bridge builder,” David explained. “It doesn’t know any language barriers or cultural barriers; it destroys them.”

Being involved in football gave David a place to share the love of Christ with others. In the teams he coached, David incorporated prayer and emphasised Christian values.

“I think it’s the prayer that attracts them,” David explained as to why non-believers would want to be a part of his team. “In other teams, they just come to play soccer, and after they go back to their places. But with our team, it’s different.”

** Name changed*

CHALLENGE

David is seeing Jesus transform athletes’ lives on the sports field. Take a few moments to reflect on how God has changed your life. Look at your notes from earlier this week if you need to. Today, we challenge you to share that transformation story with a family member or friend. You can do it!



JOY for our
CHURCH

JOY for our CHURCH

WEEK 3

This week we learn about a few unsuspecting shepherds who were surprised by a heavenly sight. Together with your family, or by yourself, read **Luke 2:8-20** and retell it in your own words.

QUESTIONS

01. How does encountering Jesus change someone in this passage?
02. What does this passage show me about how I should respond to Jesus?
03. What can I do to obey what I've learnt this week?

CHALLENGE

*Share this Bible story with someone
in your life this week!*

Andy's
SONGS

Several years ago, Andy*, from the USA, spent two weeks in a prayer house in Malta, praying for outreaches occurring across the Mediterranean region. He said: "It was during this time that I realised how my songs of love and worship, as well as my prayers, delighted God. He enjoyed my time with Him. It stunned me that He wanted that kind of intimacy with me and that He would put into my heart things He wanted me to pray about where He was already working. It was so enjoyable! I never saw prayer in that way before."

Prayer houses are key in countries where the majority of the population don't know Christ, Andy believes. "It is only through praying and being sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit that we can know what to do, what to say and how to do it," said Andy.

** Name changed*

CHALLENGE

Do you pray for your community? For your country? For other countries where it is hard to share the gospel of Christ? Spend a few minutes today praying for needs in your neighbourhood, your nation and for a country that is far away. Jesus changes everything for everyone!

A giver's JOY



In early 2020, the Garcias* family serving in Israel saw their financial support decrease, leaving enough for only three more months in the country.

They shared their story and needs, leaving it in God's hands. A couple in South Africa, Petrus* and Maria*, who had been praying about serving in Israel themselves, read the Garcias' story and felt compelled to give. "It was almost all of our savings, but we chose to trust God as our provider," said Maria.

From half a world away, through people they'd never met, God supplied exactly what the Garcias needed.

** Name changed*

CHALLENGE

Take part in how Jesus is changing people's lives around the world. Visit [om.org/Christmas](https://www.om.org/Christmas) to give a special gift today, or set aside some money for the rest of the month to help equip more Jesus followers to reflect Christ's transforming love to those who have never heard His name.

Cateea's EXAMPLE



A small church in Moldova recently started delivering warm meals to elderly people in the community. Driven by another member of the church, Catea is the one who delivers the food to ten people five days a week.

Initially, the recipients were sceptical – wondering if the meals were really free and how long they would last. But having Catea visit reliably each week has built up trust and started relationships.

One man Catea visits is 80-year-old Petru, who lives by himself. After a few weeks, Catea started reading the Bible and sharing about God's love to Petru. After discovering that he didn't have a Bible, Catea got one for him. Now they occasionally discuss truths from the Bible when she visits. Pray with us that, through God's Word and Catea's example of faith, Petru will accept Jesus into his heart.

CHALLENGE

How is your church showing Christ's love to elderly people in your community? Is there a ministry you could be a part of?

Markus' MISSION



For Markus, it was a challenge to step full-time into teaching churches in Argentina to share the gospel. The country is considered reached, and churches “aren’t made aware much of the need for every Christian to share the gospel in countries where people have never heard the message of hope,” said Markus.

With restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, the OM team went virtual to host a seven-week training called Xplore. “Our vision for Xplore was to mobilise 1,000 believers with little or no mission involvement and guide them to discover their place,” explained Markus.

All in all, 1,200 people attended the course throughout Latin American in 2020.

CHALLENGE

Did you know that as a follower of Christ you are called to fulfil the Great Commission? For some, that means moving to a different country. For others, that means financially supporting projects. For all of us, it means we live out our lives for Christ as a light wherever we are. Take a few minutes to read Matthew 28:16-20, and write down what the Great Commission means to you. Then ask your family or friends what they think.

Laura's JOY



Struggling as a stay-at-home mom with a busy husband, Laura, from the USA, noticed how a few of her neighbours who were Jesus followers “had this joy” about them. She wanted that, too, but didn’t think it was possible.

A friend gave Laura a Bible and invited her to a Bible study. From the first pages of Genesis, God’s love jumped off the pages, and Laura realised her Heavenly Father loved her.

Today, the joy Laura saw in her Christian neighbours is also part of her life. She shares God’s love through the Freedom Challenge, a ministry of OM that helps women and children who are oppressed. “I look at the world with hope because Christ has given me so much hope,” she said.

CHALLENGE

Just as Laura noticed joy in her neighbours, have you thought about what fruit of the Spirit your neighbours see in you? Is it joy? How about patience? For today’s challenge, think of a way to bless one of your neighbours. Maybe you could invite them over for a cup of tea. Or bake cookies and deliver them with a handmade card. Be creative!

Pippa's
INITIATIVE



At the age of 10, Pippa*, from the UK, organised a group of friends to pray for a woman from their church who was serving God in Japan. They gathered weekly for two years. Unaware of how remarkable this commitment was for a 10-year-old, Pippa simply explained that “something moved in me to pray and keep praying.”

Today, Pippa is serving in the Himalayas, sharing the love of Jesus and encouraging local believers in their faith. “Our goal is to see these churches in the lower valley share God’s love in the valleys above, supporting the few young believers already there,” said Pippa.

The vision is big, but Pippa’s conviction is steady and certain. “God is faithful. He will do again what He has done before. And it begins with prayer.”

* Name changed

CHALLENGE

Join us as we pray for unreached communities around the world, that they, too, may know that Jesus loves them. For specific prayer requests and more country information, download a prayer app: Operation World, The Joshua Project or Prayer Reach.

PEACE *for* the WORLD

WEEK 4

This week we learn what Jesus promises His disciples. Together with your family, or by yourself, read **John 14:1-14; 23-27** and retell it in your own words.

QUESTIONS

01. How does encountering Jesus change someone in this passage?
02. What does this passage show me about how I should respond to Jesus?
03. What can I do to obey what I've learnt this week?

CHALLENGE

*Share this Bible story with someone
in your life this week!*

Gabriel's LIFE



The Great Commission propels and fuels Gabriel's* life and the decisions he makes. But with so much division in Israel, oftentimes, local believers are reticent to share God's transforming work in their lives.

The church he attends, which has around 50 regular attendees, is the only evangelical presence in Gabriel's village of 15,000. Despite the small number of believers, Jesus is making a big impact—particularly amongst the youth. What used to be a meeting of two to four students has grown to over 20, and the teens have started sharing with others how Christ changed their lives.

This change isn't instant. Gabriel noted that it takes multiple encounters with the gospel before a person surrenders their life to Christ, and usually even more encounters in the Middle East.

** Name changed*

CHALLENGE

Sharing the gospel can take time, but don't give up! Is there someone you shared the Good News with who didn't respond? Write their name on a card and put it some place you will see daily to remind you to pray for them.

Igor's CALLING



As a teenager, Igor* from Russia was kidnapped by people from the Caucasus region. From that moment on, he hated them.

In rehab for drug addiction, Igor experienced the love of Christ and came to faith. Determined to share this love with others, Igor and his family committed to serve among those who had never heard it before. God directed them to the North Caucasus.

One morning when Igor was praying, he saw a local Muslim man, and something changed in his heart. "I understood they were ordinary people in need of Jesus," he said. From that moment, God filled Igor with love for people in the Caucasus.

** Name changed*

CHALLENGE

Look at your own life. How is Jesus calling you to love people you don't understand or even hate today?

Samuel's OUTREACH



When his country in South Asia was hit particularly hard by the second wave of the coronavirus, Samuel* and other Jesus followers started reaching out to people in their community, offering prayer and, in some cases, food relief packages. “The Lord blessed that,” he said. “We saw new fellowships forming. In all of our lives, we have never shared the gospel with so many people.”

Samuel also used strict lockdown times to lead online classes for fellow Jesus followers and church leaders, including those in other countries, training them how to share their faith. Despite the continued risk of infection, Samuel has peace in God’s plan for his life. “As long as we are here, the Lord is putting us here, we are serving Him, there’s great joy to share the good news with the people,” he said. “That’s the promise we are holding.”

* Name changed

CHALLENGE

*What promise from Christ are you holding on to?
Write out Isaiah 43:2 on a piece of paper and put it
somewhere you see daily. Then memorise the verse
over the next week and share it with your family!*

Mick's STRUGGLE



When high school sweethearts Mick and Tracey from Australia suddenly had to take over the family carrot farm it “was a tough stretch,” said Mick. “One day I cried out to God: ‘I need a dad!’ And then I ran into Robert.”

Their friends Robert and Vicky, also farmers in the area, had just come back from a trip with OM to India and shared with the couple about the need they had seen there. That made a deep impact on Mick and Tracey. “We realised: we might be struggling here, but there are other people elsewhere in the world struggling a lot more than us,” shared Tracey. “We could also see the purpose. We went through something tough so that we could share with others who are going through very tough situations.”

CHALLENGE

Is there a struggle from your own life that could help someone going through their own tough time? Ask the Lord to guide you to someone who needs to hear your story and for the courage to share with them.

Ezra's PROVISION



In the midst of ongoing conflicts along the Armenia-Azerbaijani state border, Ezra* and Maryam* have been propelled into a new form of demonstrating Christ's love.

“When the conflict first started, we only prayed for the situation,” Ezra shared. “Then we thought of Matthew 25:35 where Jesus tells the story about when ‘I was hungry you gave me food; when I was thirsty you gave me water, and when I needed clothes, you provided them for me.’ And this passage encouraged us to act.”

The couple stepped out in faith—using their own personal funds and taking out a loan. Gradually donations came in as well, and they provided food, hygiene supplies and clothing for over 500 people.

** Name changed*

CHALLENGE

Is there a need you see in the world today that you can help with? Think about giving your time or resources to a cause that promotes peace.

Merry
CHRISTMAS

Jesus
CHANGES
everything

Merry CHRISTMAS



John 1:14 (NLT) says:

“So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing LOVE and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.”

Jesus changes everything—from being born as a baby in a manger and fulfilling God’s promise to His people to providing eternal hope today for those who trust in Him!

CHALLENGE

Let us continue wrapping our whole lives around God’s mission and sharing His love to the ends of the earth.
