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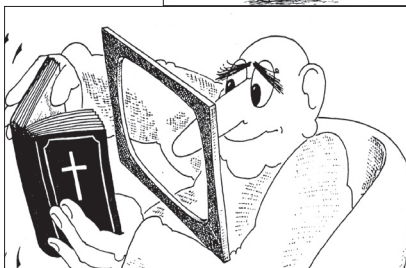
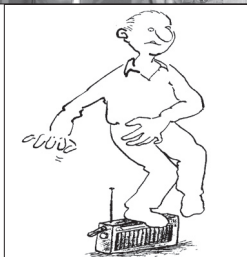
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## Stories of Faith in Audio Form

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1-Minute-Bible-Teaching in a News Programme

# Stories of Faith in Audio Form

## The Disciples with Microphones Promote Podcasting

By Carlos Briceno

In early 2005 a new content delivery method called podcasting began to seep into the public consciousness. The *Disciples with Microphones* (DwM) – an initiative based in the U.S.A. – use primarily this new technical potential. The Catholic journalist Carlos Briceno, a co-founder of the DwM, presents the group and shows how podcasting can be used “to tell stories of faith in audio form”.

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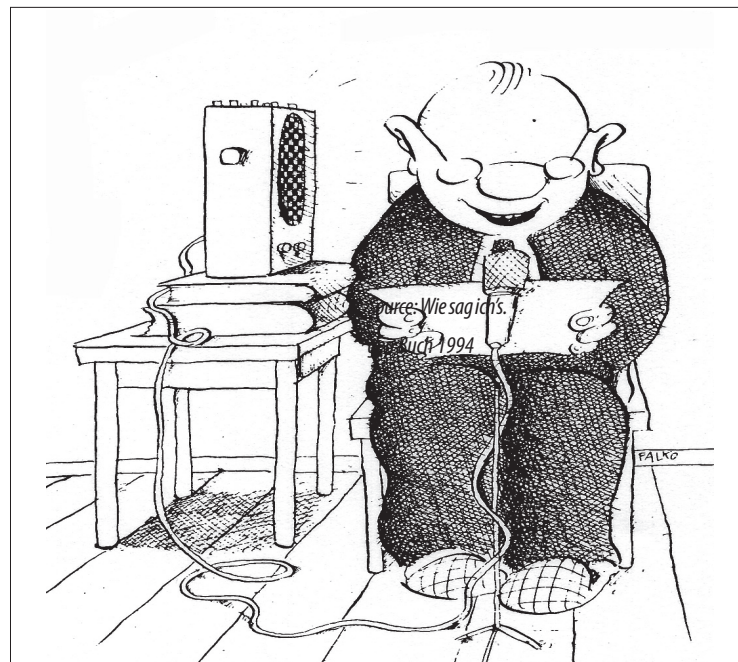
I love stories. I love hearing them, and I love telling them. So it is no wonder that I ended up becoming a playwright and a journalist. After my eldest sister was diagnosed with cancer seven years ago, I felt called to tell stories of faith. That is why I helped to create a community of faithful Catholics who want to use their talents to help evangelize. The group is called *Disciples with Microphones* (DwM) and we are a radio training and production company that helps and encourages others to tell stories of faith in audio form.

The greatest story of all time is the story of Christ. It is a story that has many witnesses. And, just like in the early days of the Church, we have a choice to make: We can stay silent, or, we can tell others of the Good News. Unlike those days, today we have simple ways of shouting it from the roof tops.

### What is Podcasting?

One way is a new medium called podcasting. The term “podcasting” comes from combining the word iPod with broadcasting. Defined simply, podcasting is the distribution of audio files over the internet, which can be listened to on your computer or your mobile MP3 player, such as an iPod.

The person creating a podcast can record a program in an MP3 audio format and then upload it to a website. A listener can then click on the file while at his computer and listen to it at his desk, or, if he owns an iPod or another MP3 player, he can subscribe to the show for free. This subscription then allows something called an RSS feed to check the internet regularly and automatically download the show you subscribed to into your iPod every time a new show is placed



on the internet. You can then listen to the show whenever you want on your mobile device. Quite simply, podcasting allows anyone to be a broadcaster. It is that simple and that inexpensive. All you need to create a show is to have a computer,

a microphone that plugs into the computer and free audio editing software that can be downloaded from the internet (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net>). The podcaster can then talk into the microphone, edit the sound waves that appear on the

computer and then mix in whatever sound effects or music he wants later. Other people can appear on the program, too.

Another way of producing content is to buy a recorder – such as a

## Podcasting in eight easy steps:

**1. Content:** The adage is still true – Content is King. It is important to have a clear idea of what you want to say before you start recording a show. It is a good idea to outline your show or at least have show notes on what you want to talk about. Next, who are you talking to? Knowing your audience is essential.

**2. Equipment:** First you need a microphone. The type you will need depends on the type of show you will be doing. Most podcasts involve speaking. In this case your best bet is to go with a condenser microphone. Make sure you purchase a cable of sufficient length for your needs. This cable will be an XLR cable. It has three prongs to it and will not plug

directly into the computer. An XLR to mini jack (which is the size plug you need to get audio into your computer) will run around \$20. Optional, you can go with other interfaces, such as a mixing board, or an audio interface. It allows for a two microphone input and then attaches to the computer using a USB port. Semi-optional, a mic stand (either desktop or freestanding). Highly recommended is a pop filter to prevent “popping” that can occur when you speak certain sounds. For recording in public, mini disk recorders are good to buy. But a newer generation of digital recorder also exists, which is highly recommended.

**3. Editing:** Once you have the content recorded, you will need to do some amount of post production. This could be moving, cutting, or ‘cleaning-up’ the recording. It could also involve adding music or sound effects. A favorite of podcasters is Audacity. The free software is

available at (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>). If you are using a Mac, then you have excellent editing software already: GarageBand.

The choice of professional sound engineers is Adobe’s Audition. While it does provide a cleaner sound and is easier to manipulate, it is expensive (around \$350).

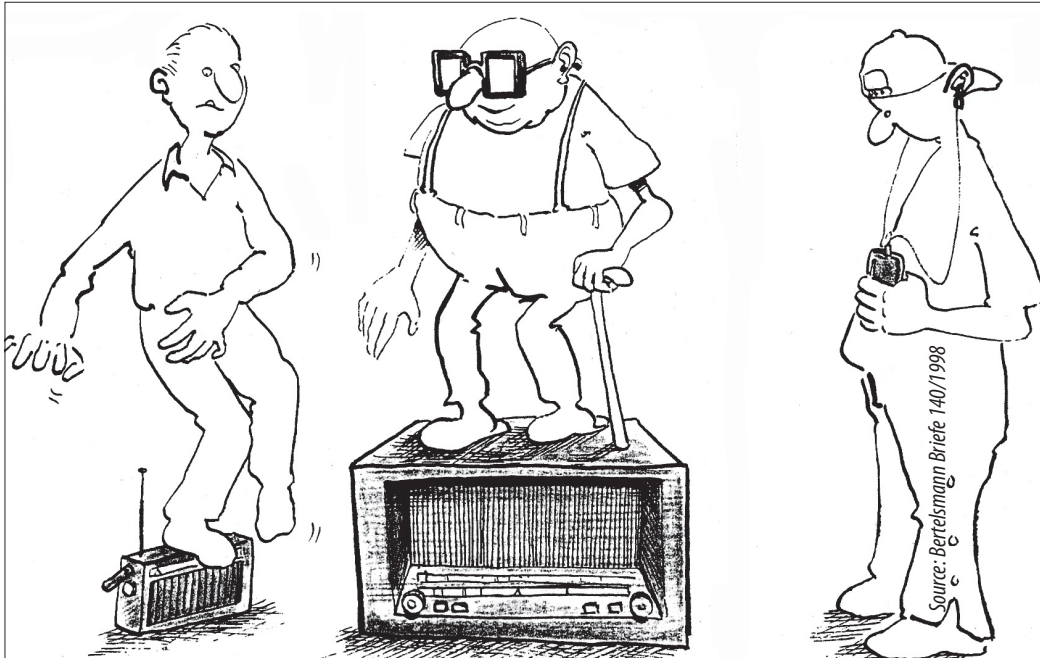
**4. Conversion:** Once the sound is recorded and edited, it needs to be converted into a format that can be easily used by the listener. The standard for audio podcasts is the MP3 format.

**5. Hosting:** You will need to upload the content, now in the MP3 format, to a host. It is best to work with a company that specializes in podcasting such as libsyn.com (<http://libsyn.com/>) or podlot.com (<http://podlot.com/>). There are many advantages to using one of these services. They do not charge you for additional bandwidth and they manage your feed.

**6. Feed:** Your content is now hosted, but how do people access it. Your listener will ‘subscribe’ to it. They do this by copying your subscription information into a ‘podcatching’ program. The most popular is iTunes.

**7. Market:** Your content has been created, edited, converted, hosted, and you have a feed to which people can subscribe. Now you need to let people know your podcast exists. You should make sure your podcast is listed on the major directories such as iTunes, Podcast Alley, Podcast Pickle, and Yahoo. Next, you should join a group that supports podcasts, such as *Disciples with Microphones*. Do a Google search on podcast networks to find many others.

**8. Repeat:** It is important to have your cast consistently posted. If you commit to a weekly cast, make sure it is available on the same day each week. Many of your listeners will unsubscribe if you don’t.



mini-disk or digital audio recorder – and go out and record interviews in the street, from the pulpit, at a conference, in a lecture hall, or at an event, such as *World Youth Day*. Then the ambient sounds and interviews can be edited into a story or a show.

Because audio files are big, a server that can host the storage space necessary for the audio files is needed. An excellent company to work with is called *Liberated Syndication* (<http://www.libsyn.com>). For as little as \$10 per month, it will help you to place your MP3 files/podcasts up on your website so that many others can click on and listen to the podcasts.

**Potential Stories**

What is needed, of course, is content. For instance, a diocese can record the best homilies from one or several of their priests or from their

bishop and put those audio files up on the diocesan website. Or, the vocations director from the diocese can record stories of how priests felt the call to become priests in order to inspire more vocations. Or, a parish may decide to record some of the most compelling conversion stories of its parishioners in an effort to evangelize. Or, a parish may decide to place excerpts from the speaker at its parish mission on its website, so that others who may not be able to make it to the mission each day, or missed a day, can hear what was said.

Or, the coordinator of youth ministry at a parish may put together a show involving youths talking about Christ. Or, lay movements may record some of their founders' writings – along with faith experiences of some of their members of how belonging to the movement has helped their faith lives. Or, young adults who are going to go

to the next *World Youth Day* may record what their experiences are there, along with interviews with others. Or, playwrights could write radio dramas about the faith and get actors and put the play up as a podcast on a website. Or, a married couple may decide to talk about their faith in the form of a show. Or, feature stories could be produced about events going on in your town or at your parish. Or, people could record their experiences while visiting pilgrimage sites.

You get the picture. There are thousands and thousands of potential stories out there that could be recorded. Many young people get their information from the internet, and many of them listen to recordings on their iPods. Others are also searching for God. These are the people the *DwM* need to reach. And even if people in developing countries do not have the financial means to own a computer or an iPod, we still need to send disciples with

**PROFILE**  
**D W M** *Disciples with Microphones (DwM) is a lay-run Catholic worldwide training and production company which was founded end of 2004. The mission of the DwM is to spread the Gospel by using internet radio podcasts. The DwM set up a website on which its members started to offer podcasts, share information and resources and encourage others to podcast also. For more information about the DwM, go to <http://www.discipleswithmicrophones.org>.*

microphones to their countries to record their stories of faith. That is how we inspire missionaries to help those people and help spread the faith, as well.

### ***Disciples with Microphones***

So how do we get excellent Catholic audio content on the internet? We need disciples with microphones. Who is such a person? A *DwM* is a person well formed in the faith who wants to evangelize; someone who knows how to tell stories or put stories together; a creative person who wants to record someone sharing something about the Catholic Church. Or creates a show about the faith. Or someone who wants to interview others. Or helps edit content.

*Disciples with Microphones* has been reaching out to others to form collaborations and to form a community of podcasters. We know that broadcasting is an art, and that radio is a craft that, when done well, can really touch hearts because it is such an intimate and personal medium. To me, radio is theater of the mind. It can transport listeners through them using their imaginations. The *DwM* intend to help train others who are seeking to broadcast, but don't know too much about how to create a show or a story. We are seeking funds to be able to buy equipment for those who need microphones and recorders and funds to be able to hire a worldwide staff of trainers and editors who will help podcasters edit their audio and help them craft interesting and compelling shows or stories. And then, just as

importantly, we want to help them market these podcasts so that as wide an audience can listen to them. We want to be able to help Catholic archdioceses, dioceses, parishes, universities, newspapers, lay movements, pro life groups, etc., tell the story of the Church in different languages.

We want to build a community of podcasters who are all talking to each other, helping each other, encouraging each other, praying for each other, and collaborating with each other. We want to be able to provide Catholics and Catholic organizations with a creative and imaginative communications tool.

We want to help them humanize the Church. For instance, some podcasts may contain the voices of people you sit next to in the pews, whom you do not know, but whose stories of faith and encounters with Christ need to be proclaimed to encourage others on their paths to holiness.

In conclusion, the content is there. The medium tailor made for the New Evangelization — podcasting — is there, as well. By using podcasting to produce week-to-week stories and events Catholic websites of the Church can be transformed from being just a bulletin board of information to becoming a lively audio destination.

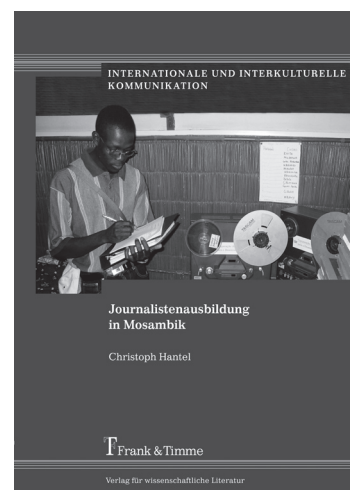
## Book Review — Book Review — Book Review

***Christoph Hantel: Journalistenausbildung in Mosambik Berlin: Frank & Timme 2006 (= Internationale und Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Bd. 3)***

*In Mozambique, after years of war, independent media have started to develop — including a number of Church-related community radios. These media are now looking for people willing and qualified to develop independent journalism, committed to fostering the democratic developments in the country. Christoph Hantel, a German journalist, has worked for three years at the communication faculty of the Catholic University in Nampula, Northern Mozambique. In his doctoral thesis, he evaluates the current qualifica-*

*tion programmes for journalists and develops some perspectives on how to better coordinate both local efforts and initiatives of international organisations and NGOs.*

*The thesis is published in German but a 3-page English abstract is available on request: christoph.hantel@gmx.de*



# Discussion Dialogue Discovery

## ACN focuses on Seminary Formation

By Chainarong Monthienvichienchai,  
Dr. M. Nadarajah and Conrad Saldanha

**In a highly media-*ted* world, the Church needs to look for new ways to get her message across. Accordingly, priests and seminarians need to be prepared to integrate communication into their ministry, as has already been demanded in respective guidelines since Vatican II. Nevertheless, in many countries, their implementation is still insufficient. Therefore, the *Asian Communication Network (ACN)* has been focussing on communication training in seminaries, aiming both at professors and future priests. ACN's formation concept is still in a process of development, but some key strategies have already been opening up new perspectives on how to integrate social communication into pastoral work.**



The Asian Communication Network, or ACN, brings together Catholic media practitioners and academics interested in the relationship between communications, culture and religion. As inter-disciplinary, inter-faith communication network, ACN aims to serve as a catalyst, creating and sustaining communities that promote justice, peace, compassion, and dialogue by being reliable, responsible, accountable, honest, and transparent. ACN's key activities cover a wide area concerning communication in Asia and the Pacific region, e.g. inter-religious dialogue, media education, process journalism, network building, cultural audio-visual production

and advocacy. However, in terms of priorities for the next four years ACN's focus is on training/formation in seminaries.

### Why this priority?

Communication is central to human-being. And it is central to the idea of community and of being Church. Future priests will have to be able to communicate in the language of a new culture if they truly want to get their message across. Their professors need new communication skills to make their lessons more effective and interesting, and to become communication role models for the seminarians. The professors as well as the priests who have been formed by them have competitors who are far more superior in communicating with the faithful: the media. It is most important and urgent that the Church pays serious attention to upgrading the communication





skills of the seminary professors who in turn form future priests and to support seminarians and young priests to prepare for their ministry in a context essentially marked by communication and media.

### **Approach and Objectives**

In early 2004, ACN started to create its formation policy, which currently focuses on two projects: introducing social communication to seminary professors (including new teaching methodologies) and enhancing the communication competence of young priests, religious and lay professionals.

In our courses, we use ACN's 3D approach of discussion, dialogue, and discovery. As a team, we do not lecture but encourage the participants to discuss and to have a dialogue with us and among themselves. By doing so, we believe they will

discover the most effective way of communicating and applying it to their teaching. Certainly this approach is not just about having listened and discussed but to put the skills into practice.

The seminars emphasise problem-solving and active project work (both as individuals and in a group) whilst providing mentoring and networked learning. As teaching aids, they utilise innovative media and new information and communication technologies. Finally, the seminars will also be complemented with on-site and on-line strategies through open source e-learning software.

The ACN aims to achieve both short and long-term objectives through short single as well as a series of seminars. Its short-term objective is to initiate the formation of a strong social communication component

and curriculum in the seminaries and to strengthen and enhance social communications competencies in the seminaries and parishes. Its long-term objective is to reinforce its short-term achievements by institutionalising a network of seminaries actively involved in social communication education, the formation of parish communication ministries, and the formation of networks of parish communication ministries.

### **Seminars in Practice**

ACN has been involved in communication formation in seminaries as part of its work for the past four years, supported by SIGNIS World. Of special mention would be two formation events that have been successfully completed in Manila, Philippines in May 2004 (at ICTC, the *Inter-Congregational Theological Centre*) and in Bangkok, Thailand

*Intensive discussions among the participants of the course at the Inter-Congregational Theological Centre in Manila, Philippines. Photos (left and above): Chainarong Monthienvichienchai*

## MEDIAFORUM 1/2006

in October 2005 (for *Lux Mundi Major Seminary* at Baan Phu Waan, Samphran, near Bangkok) with sessions in China, Vietnam and Cambodia in the pipeline. The formation sessions, initially of a duration of five days, are meant for seminary professors, seminarians, religious and lay trainers involved in seminary formation.

A total of 130 people (50 in the Philippines and 70 in Thailand) have

### PROFILE ACN

ACN – the Asian Communication Network – started in 2000 with three members of SIGNIS Asia (at that time still divided into Unda/

OCIC). Gradually a tentative vision of an organisation started taking shape, aiming at going beyond the mere skills-training approach to communication. A meeting of the core members was organised towards the end of 2001 to clarify how ACN would operate mostly virtually, without a bureaucratic set-up. To expand its outreach, it would be a networking organisation, avoiding competition and duplication of effort. ACN believes that in working with others in synergy, much creativity and mutual benefit will result for the greater good. Apart from its formation activities, ACN offers communicators in Asia and the Pacific various services, e.g. two mailing lists covering communication and social issues in Asia, the blog *Voices of ACN*, an e-library of web-resources on media and communications, and a weblinks-based e-newspaper (*ACN Monitor*).

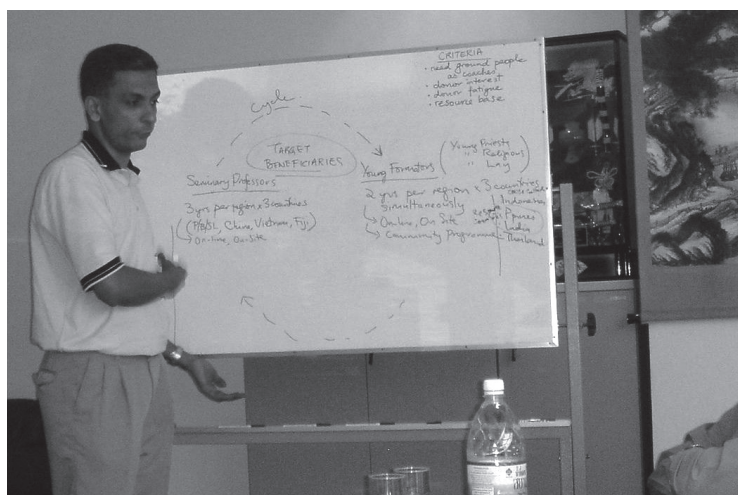
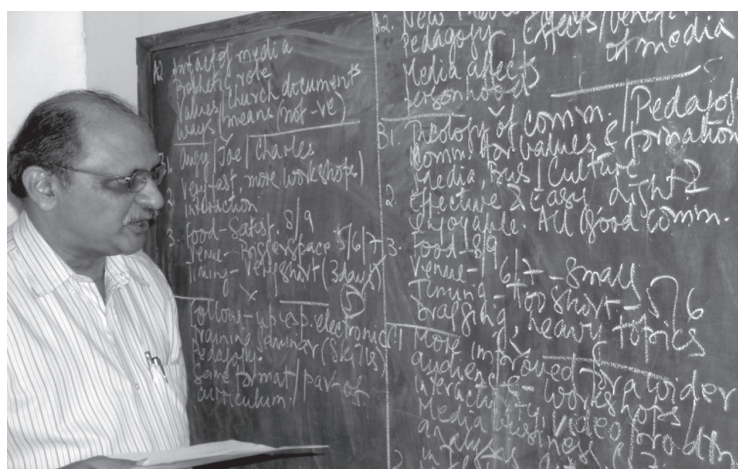
For more information, visit [www.acn-online.org](http://www.acn-online.org)

attended these ACN sessions. The formation programme consists of both theory and practical subjects and generally covers the following areas:

- A New Approach to Communication and Priestly Ministry;
- A New Theology of Communication;
- Church Documents and Communication Structures;
- Philosophical Implications of Media Marketing;
- Communication, Media and Values;

- Mediation, Pluralism, and Globalism;
- New Pedagogy in Teaching and Learning: Principles and Practice;
- Web and Electronic Networking;
- Homiletics and Presentation Skills.

The programmes intend to offer hands-on experience on improved and/or new methods of communication, including the use of new information and communication technologies for teaching and learning. Therefore, participants are exposed in theory and practice





to new ideas and frameworks to encourage re-thinking the area of social communication for seminary formation, taking into account that today's Church is located within a highly mediated, multicultural and globalising world.

### Evaluation and Feedback

At the end of the two seminars in the Philippines and Thailand, participants undertook an evaluation process with three components:

- Internalising the Learning
- Assessing the Content, Process and Environment, and
- Dreaming the Future.

The evaluation was done as a group process. The general consensus was that the seminars were good and relevant, being very effective and easy to follow. All participants understood the need for a new Theology of Communication and saw the positive uses of the media as well as its challenges. At the same time, they became aware of the relevance of Social Communication for pastoral work and the necessity for a new Pedagogy in teaching and learning.

### The Future Models

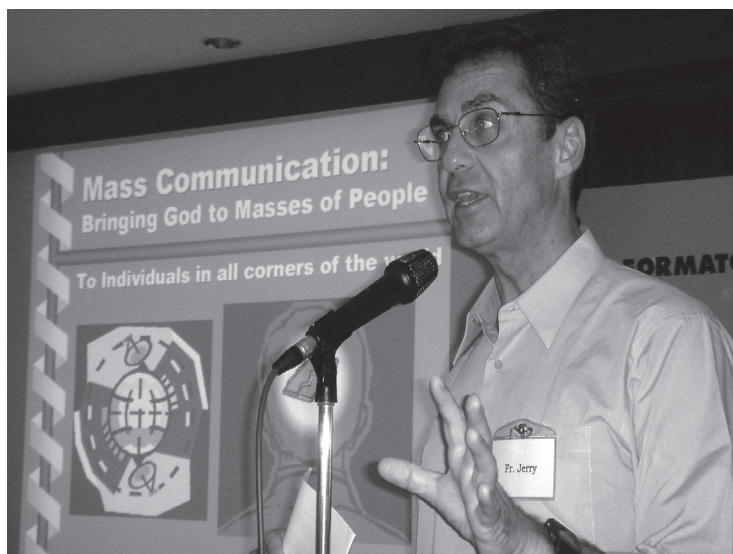
Of course, this focus on seminary formation is in process. With the previous two seminars, ACN has started to look for more effective ways to integrate communication in seminary formation. Therefore, ACN will continue to develop some innovations in its formation strategies.



These innovations will be pursued in the direction of creating "models of formation" suitable for the Asia-Pacific region.

We want to avoid the "one-time approach" of formation sessions, but will shift to continuous contact throughout the formation project period (following our principle of accompaniment). ACN views formation as a process. To accomplish this, a number of innovative elements

including e-learning, are being conceived and developed. ACN also will employ sensitive evaluative techniques to track the process development and sustain follow-up. While there would be an emphasis on quality input, what would set the training apart would be the manner in which it was imparted: the approach (orientation, process and practices), the team spirit and trainers with complementary backgrounds.



*ACN trainers challenged by participants' questions during the seminar in Manila. On the left page: Conrad Saldanha (India), Charles Bertille (Malaysia). On the right: Augy Loorthusami (Malaysia) and Fr. Jerry Martinson (Taiwan). Fotos: Chainarong Monthienvichienchai*

# The other Perspective

## 1-Minute-Bible-Teachings in a News Programme

By Anca Berlogea

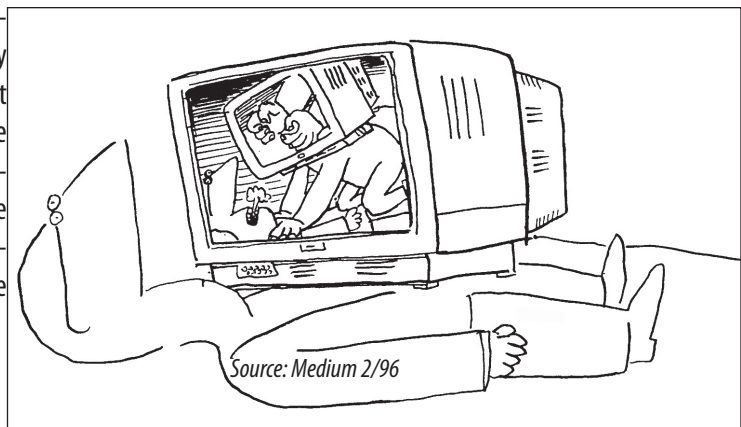
Programmes that reflect current developments from a Christian perspective with references to the Bible are a widespread format especially in radio. Such broadcasts are often entitled “reflections”, or “thoughts of the day”. A Romanian TV news channel, however, offered to integrate these “commentaries” as a regular part of the daily news programme, though reduced to one minute. Anca Berlogea, a theologian, film and theatre director in Bucharest, was allured by this challenge and describes what has been on the agenda so far.

Commenting on the political reality using the wisdom of proverbs, the teachings of the Bible or the Tao? Is there anything new about that? Biblical prophets were already making political statements. Lao Tse annotated the political situation in China some 2500 years ago. Proverbs are incredibly dense observations and teachings on human behaviour and the patterns of misdemeanours. “You catch birds with seeds and men with money”, says an Armenian proverb. It helped me to open a one minute commentary about corruption in Romania, a problem that the country has to solve – or at least has

have to talk for one minute about the main news of the day using the Bible’s teachings, proverbs or philosophers’ insights... The underlying questions are dealing with justice, corruption, child protection, disagreements between the two coalition parties forming the present government, or laws that would keep former high party members from benefiting from political privileges.

The guiding principle underlying this one minute “exercise”: nothing is new. Everything has already happened and will happen again.

to successfully attempt to solve – before entering the



Source: Medium 2/96

European Union (as planned for 2007).

From the beginning of Lent, the Romanian news channel *Realitatea TV*, has invited its viewers to take a step back and look from a distance at the puzzle of events, hence aiming to get another perspective upon reality: To search for the meaning of things. Twice a day, between the newscasts, a special programme discusses the main headlines of the day. It presents the most important events and debates with journalists and politicians. Last but not least, I

It echoes the words of the Bible, the words of the Qohelet. “All that is, has already been, and all that happens, will happen again.” Or, in the words of the Romanian-French philosopher Emil Cioran: “Man is starting each day anew in spite of everything he knows and against everything he knows”. So, if we look at current events in politics or the economy and try to understand where they are heading, we can justly ask ourselves: didn’t we know that already? Hasn’t there been a warning of the negative consequences we are witnessing? How can one choose the

right thing to do? Looking at reality doesn't mean summing up facts. So, what is the meaning?

The first week the news dealt a lot with poverty in Romania, with small pensions that bring people to

despair, about rich people who are suspected to be corrupt, about the difficulties of getting ahead with inquiries on the wealth of politicians. "Better poor but honest" was the leading theme of March 3. These words made me think of a proverb

in the Bible. "Better is a little with righteousness than large income with injustice" (Proverbs 16,8), advice, that might be hard to put into practice. In many cultures, poverty is looked upon as being a sin or as a first step that will lead people to steal or to commit a crime. The Indians think that poverty is the enemy of virtue. Poverty makes man a thief, such as love makes man a poet. And if some assume that "a woman prefers love in poverty, to richness without love," others, more realistically, admit that "when poverty enters through the door, love gets out by the window". Those people who renounce richness and take care of the poor are considered to be either saints or fools. Or they receive a Nobel Prize, as Mother Theresa. Mahatma Gandhi proposed to politicians: "When you have doubts or when you are too selfish, make a test. Remember the face of the poorest man you ever saw. Whatever you are doing, ask yourself whether it is

## Book Review — Book Review — Book Review

***Communication in Theological Education: New Directions,***  
***Edited by Michael Traber***  
***Delhi: ISPCK - Indian Society for Promoting Christian Know-ledge 2005,***  
***234 pp. ISBN 81 7214 839 9***

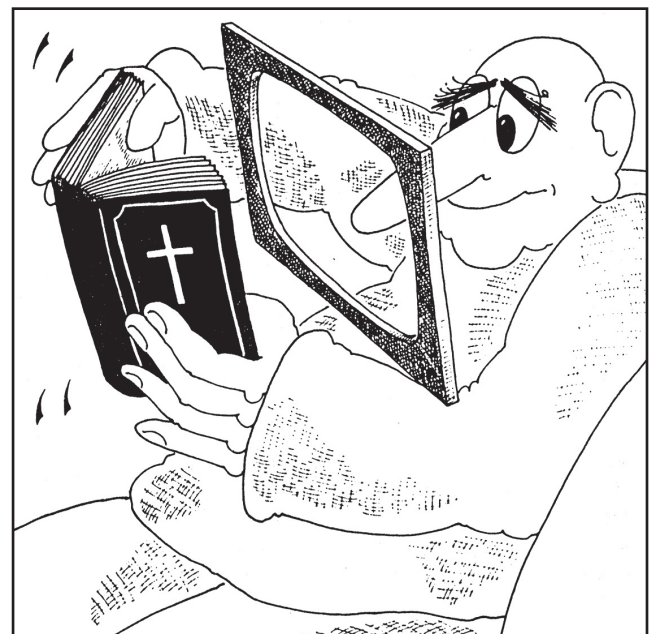
Among Church communicators, the issue of how to embed communication in theological formation has been a burning issue for decades already – beyond denominational borders.. Michael Traber, among many other

tasks, former research director of WACC (World Association for Christian Communication), was one of the most passionate and effective advocates for taking communication seriously. And also the last book he edited, published only a few months before his death at the end of March 2006, is a vehement plea, how urgent it is to equip students of theology with those communication skills they will need to be effective and credible priests and ministers to people whose culture is highly characterised by communication.

The book has its origin in a consultation of theological educators and communication specialists held in 2003 at the United Theological College in Bangalore, India, where Michael Traber had taught communications during the last ten years of his life. It is divided into three parts, laying the "foundations" with a series of reflections and some principles which

can be of help for those who want to develop a curriculum according to their specific contexts and priorities in different regions. The second part on "new directions" discusses the specific challenges of different forms of communications: information technologies, images, cinema and music. The publication concludes with some biblical reflections on communications.

Rooted in the Indian context, this book can stimulate and challenge anyone who shares the concern of helping theologians to be better communicators – with a sound theoretical foundation and practice, able to open the hearts and minds of people. Hopefully, many in charge of theological formation will accept this challenge. (df)



benefiting him. Would it help him regain control over his life and over his destiny? Would it bring peace to those who are hungry, because they have nothing to eat, or those who are hungry for the lack of spiritual nourishment? If you follow this exercise, you will know what path to take." If we look at politicians like him, we might also understand what Pope John Paul II meant by saying that God has put a limit to evil, and that limit is mercy. When you have the courage to be poor out of your own choice, it actually means that you are fighting against poverty. But if we look at things from a more humorous point of view, one can also say with popular proverbs: "If you stay poor, no relative can gain from your death."

I had to talk very often about justice; about justice and corruption; about a fair and correct judgment. I started by alluding that a fair judgment always depends upon who the judge is, how and whom he or she is judging. The Bible speaks very often of judgments and mentions two types of judges: men and God. One of the first rules given to human judges is to be impartial. They should listen to "the small and the great alike". "You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's", says Deuteronomy 1,17. But in spite of this directive, judges became corrupt easily. Things got more complicated when God was the judge. Yet, King David was lucky. He had the privilege to choose his punishment, between seven years of hunger, three months of flight from his enemies or three days of

pest. What would you choose? David chose three days of pest, adjudicating: It is better to fall in the hands of the Lord, than in the hands of men. There is still mercy by God, but who knows what might happen if one falls into the hands of men!

Depending on the subject discussed, the 1-minute-commentaries are sometimes getting funny and at other times turn out more serious. It is a challenge to find a "key" to reflect the news of the day from another angle. Once I had to talk about the right to conduct a search in a deputy's house. The deputy in question appealed against it, the Romanian parliament blackballed the search. Do you remember a search in the Bible? There is one: Jacob is searched by his father-in-law, Laban, when he is suspected to have stolen his idols! Jacob permitted to be searched because he didn't feel guilty. The idols were not found, and Jacob could leave in peace. (The real thief had been Jacob's wife, Rachel, but she was clever enough to hide them well. Without concrete proof, the suspicions could not lead to a conviction.)

So far, there has only been one reaction from a viewer to my challenging attempts to find in the teachings of the Bible an answer to very concrete contemporary questions. Through the clipboard on the website of *Realitatea TV* a viewer disclosed that he was shocked that I dared say angels are also cheating. I made that comment referring to paintings depicting the last judgment in orthodox churches. Angels

are discretely pushing the scales when good deeds and bad deeds are weighted. In fact, they are not cheating. The viewer was right saying that, when angels are trying to increase the weight of good deeds, this is a sign of God's mercy. Anyway, it was a way to comment on judgment and juridical proceedings in our country. The rating of my "minute" is the same as for the whole show, indicating it is neither more nor less interesting than the "ordinary" parts of the programme. Personal acquaintances gave me the feedback that reflecting for one minute more deeply on reality really makes a difference. To me it seems a bit like taking time for prayer, arresting for a little while the constant flow of overwhelming events. But, as we are not really used to spare this minute, my interventions are sometimes dropped – being the last minute of the show!

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