

Special Edition

3/4

1999

30
Years of
Cameco:
Media
with the
Poor?



Introduction

In 1999, the Catholic Media Council looks back on 30 years of serving Church communications for development and evangelisation. On the occasion of this anniversary, we organised the seminar „Media with the Poor? The Church in a Multimedia Culture“, which took place in May in Aachen. In this issue we offer a documentation of the conference, which includes the speeches held during the forum, and the reports on the workshops realised.

We had several intentions in mind when we decided to publish such an extensive special issue. The seminar was also an opportunity to reflect on the objectives of our work and develop perspectives towards the future. During the last decades, the Church as a whole and a many of the Church media made a clear option for the poor. In the communications field, we learnt that it is crucial not only to speak for the poor but to open the floor for them to express and accompany their efforts to improve their living conditions. Therefore we asked our partners to share their reflections with us on how media can act on the side of the poor.

Experiences from Asia, Africa, Latin America as well as Eastern and Central Europe give some insights on how communicators try to put this objective into practice.

In support of „Media with the Poor“, the funding agencies also took over an important role. Some of them followed our invitation to outline their ideas on the role of communications for development and evangelisation and their experiences with media projects in the different continents.

Last but not least — taking the 30 years of existence into account also gives the chance to reflect on the history of an institution — we have also outlined the origins and the development of CAMECO.

The CAMECO conference offered the opportunity of sharing experiences with communicators from different backgrounds and to look together for perspectives on how we can face and act adequately in a continuously changing new media culture. May this issue also open the floor for a further common reflection towards a better service in favour of the „media with the poor“.

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Foto: Round table at the conference on the occasion of CAMECO's 30th anniversary: On the left Fr. Franz-Josef Eilers SVD, one of the founders, the facilitator Toni Görtz (Editor-in-Chief of MISSIO aktuell), Dr. Daniela Frank, present Executive Director and her predecessor Hans-Peter Gohla sitting next to the President Fr. Henk Hoeckstra.

30 YEARS OF CAMECO

A Look back ... to the Future

Celebrating 30 years of an institution's existence is also an opportunity to look back to its origins and to reflect on how the original objectives were put into practice and could possibly have changed over the years. During our seminar, we had the chance to bring several people together who were directly involved in the foundation of the Catholic Media Council. Together we shared memories and reflections at a roundtable.

One of the key persons in the history of CAMECO is Fr. Franz-Josef Eilers SVD. He was very much involved in the preparatory activities which finally resulted in the foundation of CAMECO and he became one of its former executive directors. He remembers: „At the 1968 world congress of UCIP¹, in Berlin, Dr. Otto Kaspar told me that they had a development commission in UCIP, a group of people of which he was president, trying to promote support for Catholic press projects. From his experience, he realised that there should be more co-ordination, co-operation and planning for publication projects. Struggling for support from the funding agencies for publication projects, it became clear that they should have some kind of office to promote these projects and the necessary planning. That was the basic idea for the founding of CAMECO.”

In 1969 — a few years after the Vatican Council II with its Decree on the Means of Mass Communication „Inter Mirifica“ — there was already a growing awareness in several funding agencies, about the importance of communications and accordingly a growing need for professional advice for these types of projects. Dr. Kaspar asked Bishop Heinrich Tenhumberg, the head of the co-ordination office of the German Bishops' Conference with the government in Bonn, to arrange a meeting, on neutral ground, of the funding agencies and the representatives of the Catholic media organisations Unda², OCIC³ and UCIP, to discuss the idea of founding an office dedicated to this area of concern. The first official meeting in preparation of the future Catholic Media Council took place on June 14th, 1968. Six months later, Cardinal (at that time Msgr.) Andrzej Deskur participated for the first time, thereby representing the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, which had been involved right from the beginning. After many discussions the association known as the Catholic Media Council was founded in Germany on June 16th 1969. The principal objectives formulated in the first statutes are still valid: “The objectives of the association are the promotion of the work of the Catholic Church in the field of social communications in developing countries, particularly with advice, planning and assistance in education and further studies”. (Original version in German)

The name was Fr. Agnellus Andrew's (Unda) suggestion, and at a later meeting it was proposed that it be abbreviated to CAMECO. Msgr. Jesús Iribarren from UCIP became CAMECO's first president and Mr. Karl Höller was nominated as first executive secretary in October 1969. The office in Aachen opened on January 15th 1970, in three rooms with one pencil, one typewriter

¹ UCIP is the International Catholic Union of the Press

² Unda is the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television

³ OCIC is the International Catholic Organisation for Cinema and Audio-visual

and Mrs. Dangel, a very committed secretary. Karl Höller recalled the many questions they were dealing with in the beginning, like: What are the criteria for the evaluation of communication projects? How to define the role of press and communications in the process of development? Would it be sufficient to evaluate a single communication project without taking the communication system of a society into account? How to underline the importance of qualified training? How to make use of the modern communication technologies for the Christian media groups?



When CAMECO started operating there was already a clear idea of its tasks and these tasks were in four major areas:

Firstly, to animate round table discussions between mass media organisations and funding agencies. A „Kuratorium“ or advisory board consisting of representatives of agencies, of experts and of the media organisations OCIC, UCIP and Unda, was founded for that purpose. Secondly, to open new fields of co-operation with non-Catholic or non-Christian groups and institutions. CAMECO representatives travelled a lot in the first year for that reason, including visits to the World Council of Churches in Geneva, WACC¹ in London, UNESCO in Paris, FAO in Rome and American foundations like the Rockefeller Foundation, all of which dealt with media projects.

The third task was to prepare the basis for the evaluation of media projects. Therefore it was necessary to read scientific papers and studies, to visit congresses, etc. The Catholic Media Council's archives were set up at that time, and are meanwhile, one of the most important archives for communication — and not only for Christian communication — worldwide.

The fourth task was to evaluate media projects presented to the funding agencies by the Third World partners. CAMECO soon gained the confidence of most of the agencies and in July 1970 was already “overloaded” with 22 mass media projects from all continents.

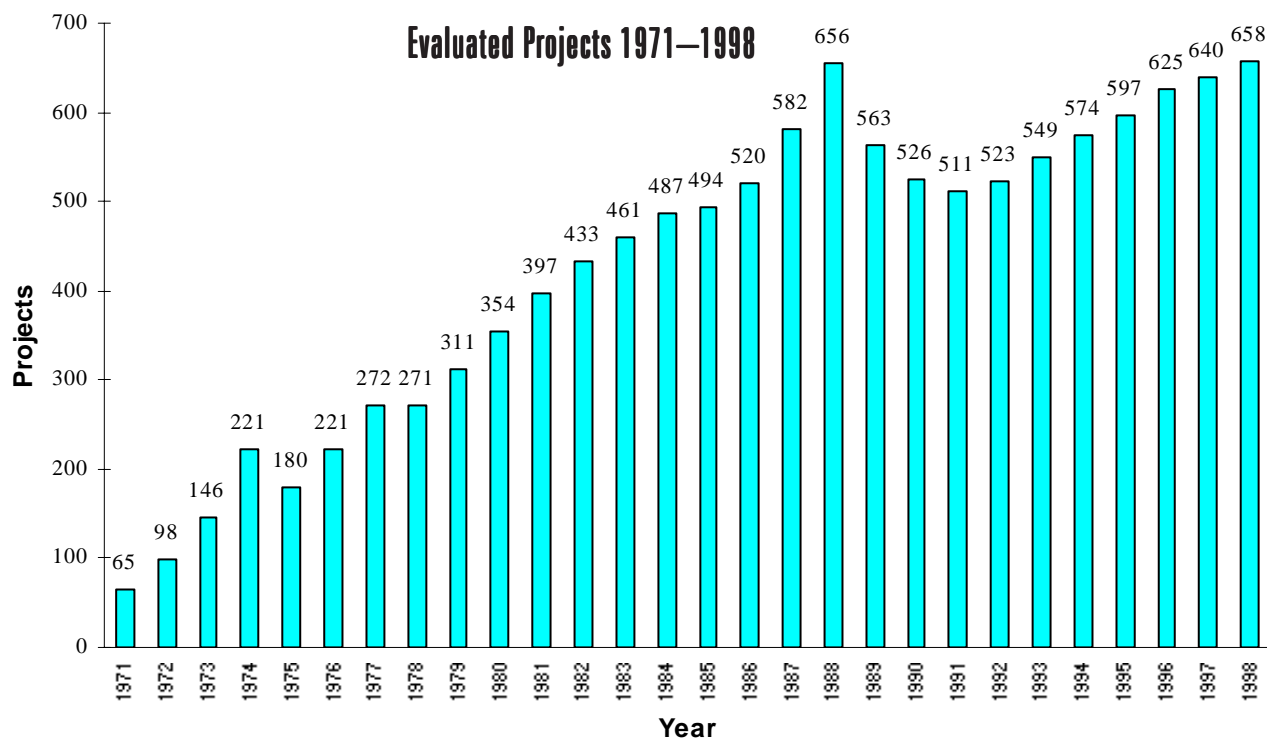
Although the initiative was started in Germany, it soon became clear that not only German agencies (like Missio, Misereor, Adveniat, Church in Need) were interested in the services offered by CAMECO, but also those of other European countries too. Thus, Swiss Lenten Fund joined, as well as Vastenactie, AMA and Cebemo (Netherlands), Katholische Jungschar Österreichs and the „Koordiniierungsstelle“ (Austria), Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium) or the Catholic Relief Service (USA/Geneva), to name just some of them.

In his review of the “good old days” Franz-Josef Eilers stated “that more and more people started to approach CAMECO directly before presenting an application to a funding agency. By that time the number of projects had, of course increased because the funding agencies’ trust in the Catholic Media Council was growing.”

He also remembers that in the beginning, during initial discussions, certain people in the funding agencies were hesitant to the need for a new organisation. Contrary to this, other agencies emphasised the necessity of a joint venture, as not all funding agencies had their own communications department.“ Therefore, CAMECO developed, step by step, into a specialised office where basically all western funding agencies were co-operating, including those working in the field of development as well as those oriented towards pastoral activities”, Fr. Eilers summarised.

¹ World Association of Christian Communication

The following statistic gives an overview of how the number of initiatives evaluated by CAMECO has developed since its beginning:



In all these years, the central activity of the CAMECO staff, but not the only one, has been the evaluation and assessment of project applications in order to be of help in the decision-making process for the funding agencies. With the growing experience of the collaborators and the establishment of contacts with media initiatives and organisations in the different continents, it has also been more and more possible to give direct advice to people on the spot concerning the professional development of their work, and also with regard to the question, if, and how their initiatives could receive financial support from the international funding agencies. Meanwhile, more than a third of the applications received at CAMECO are so-called “advice projects”.

Even in the early years of CAMECO, there were requests to realise in-depth-researches on the situation of a specific media sector or the work of an institution. As early as 1971, CAMECO had already completed research on the situation of the Catholic press in francophone Africa. Other works followed on daily and weekly papers, on radio-school projects in Latin America or on the use of “cinema mobiles” in India. CAMECO is frequently involved in the preparation and realisation of on-the-spot evaluations in the different regions and in the overall planning of communication activities in a specific sector.

The following are some important projects in which CAMECO collaborated in the past:

- Data Transmission System (DTS) in the Democratic Republic of Congo

- Content analysis and evaluation of the management of “Lakroa n'i Madagasikara” (Tananarive, Madagascar)
- National Institute for Social Communication, Research and Training of the Indian Bishops' Conference in New Delhi
- Evaluation and new conception of the “Communications and Pastoral work” courses (Latin America)
- The planning of journalistic training at the “European Centre for Communication and Culture” of the Jesuits in Warsaw (Poland)

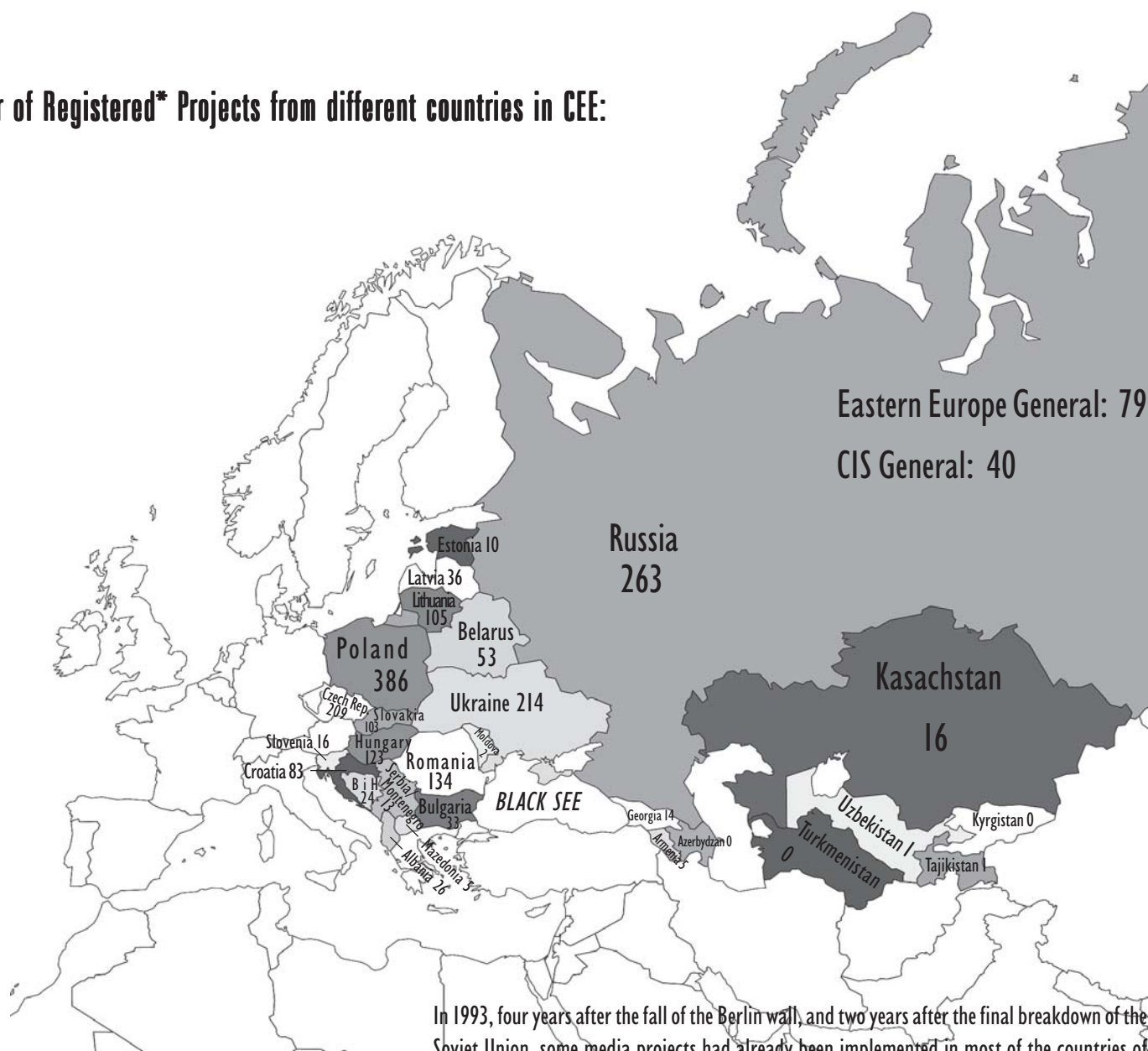
Some structural changes also took place in all these years. Originally, according to the Statutes of 1969, the three international Catholic media organisations UCIP, Unda and OCIC were the legal members of the Association and formed its General Assembly, while representatives of the funding agencies and a certain number of media experts would constitute the “Kuratorium”, a counselling body. In 1982, the agencies brought up the discussion of how their active participation in CAMECO (including Board and Assembly) could be assured, also giving them voting rights.

Up until then, they financed the operational budget of CAMECO and had an advisory role in the “Kuratorium”, but no official possibility to influence CAMECO's policies. The following consultations resulted in a revision of the Statutes, according to which one third of the members of the General Assembly would be members of the funding agencies, one third representatives of the international Catholic media organisations and one third independent media experts, proposed by the Zentralstelle Medien, the secretariat of the Episcopal Commission for Social Communications of the German Bishops' Conference. In 1992 it was finally agreed to extend the number of funding agency members to six.

After the fall of the iron curtain, several organisations, particularly in Germany and Austria, extended their support to the local churches in Central and Eastern Europe, but mainly without co-ordination in the first years. After the breakdown of the Eastern Bloc, the churches in the old as well as in the newly formed countries faced a tremendous need of educational and informational material and they also searched for publications, news agencies and publishing houses to spread the gospel; their messages could now be heard on radio and their presence could widely be seen through TV. A growing number of applications were sent to funding organisations, and CAMECO was also asked for assistance. As a result of these increasing demands CAMECO established a desk for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in 1993 on a provisional basis.

There were two underlying reasons for the temporary status: It was too optimistically assumed, that the Churches in CEE would need only a short period of time to re-build their own self-sustaining structures. Besides this it was also obvious, that the needs and the concepts of the development of the Christian media landscape in those countries was completely different from the regions that CAMECO had been dealing with traditionally. The question was therefore, whether CAMECO could really offer adequate services to the funding organisations as well as to the partners in the East.

Number of Registered* Projects from different countries in CEE:



In 1993, four years after the fall of the Berlin wall, and two years after the final breakdown of the Soviet Union, some media projects had already been implemented in most of the countries of CEE, while CAMECO somehow had to start from the beginning in building up the informational structures (archive, personal and organisational contacts etc.) for the work of the new department, which was fully integrated and received permanent status in the third year of its existence.

The partners in the respective countries were not used to funding organisations' procedures or to consultative institutions like CAMECO. They were suspicious and afraid of openly stating their ideas and the philosophy of their projects, while the donors in the West had to present clear views and perspectives, based on proper planning to enable the respective board to come to a decision. This was only one of the factors, which made CAMECO's work more difficult.

At the same time, the countries were undergoing processes of accelerated changes in society: The political systems and the laws, the economy, the culture and the official languages changed rapidly. The ability to react to those new needs was restricted, not only by financial problems but also by the fact that Catholics were not allowed to work in the media sector in many countries during communist times. Therefore most of the communications projects were started with an euphoria of new freedom, but lacking professional personnel.

*Registered projects include — besides those evaluated by the CAMECO staff — the data taken from the project lists provided by nearly 20 funding organisations.

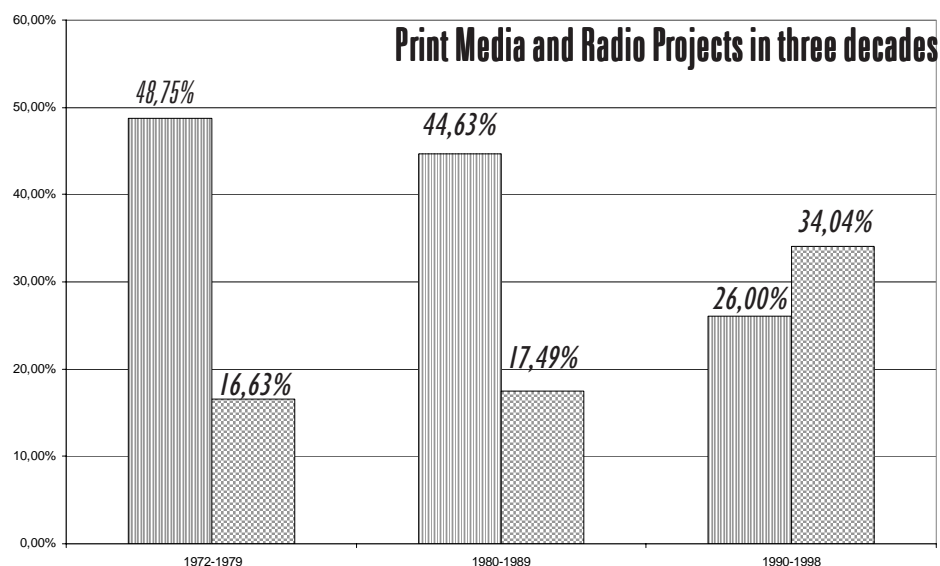
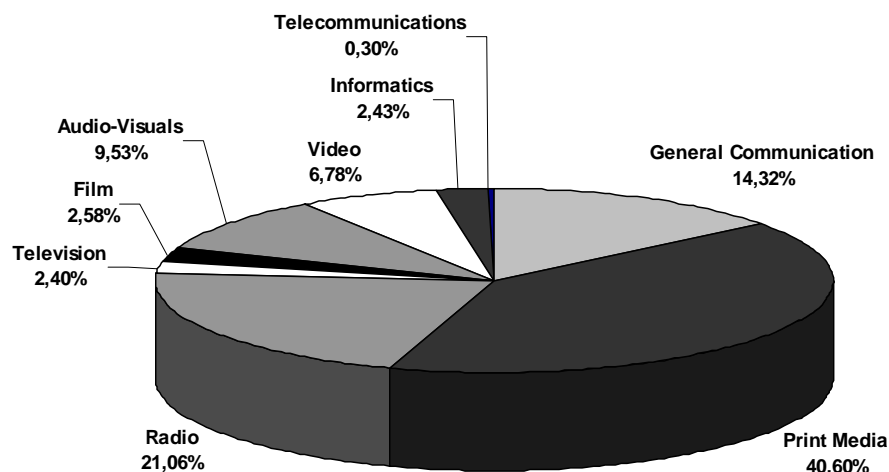
Meanwhile it would be difficult to find common characteristics in the variety of countries that the department for CEE is dealing with, ranging from the middle of Europe to the centre of Asia, including the countries of the former and present Yugoslavia. There are different needs, pre-requisites, cultures and visions of the national Churches. Therefore it would be misleading to generalise the development too much. However, the map shows, that some of the smallest countries had a tremendously high number of applications registered, e.g. Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary or Lithuania. It can be assumed, that this is due to the fact that the majority of the population is Catholic and the church structures were built up quite soon, or — like in the case of the Czech Republic — the involvement in the media field was considered as one of the main “political” priorities by the church hierarchy.

If we consider the different fields of media engagement, we can presume, that the Churches followed the traditional structures: they first (re)established publishing houses (incl. printing presses), (re)opened their own periodicals before they started being active in radio or video or TV production. However, in most of the countries this period of catching up was rather short, compared to other regions of the world.

Nevertheless, with the globalisation of the media scene we also find that the problems and challenges that the Church has to face in a global media world do have many similarities.

Whereas the involvement of CAMECO in the communication activities of the Churches in Central and Eastern Europe is relatively new, we were in touch with partners from Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific from the beginning. During the 30 years of CAMECO’s existence, tremendous and rapid changes in the communication sector have taken place, which also influence the media involvement of the Church strongly. For a long time, CAMECO predominantly received projects in the print sector (magazines, publications and printing presses), in the meantime the audio-visual or electronic media have gained importance in most regions. Whereas Latin America can be traditionally considered as a continent of radio, it is only in the last few years that changes in legislation have made it possible to operate private or community radios in many African countries. Accordingly more and more local Churches have jumped into audio production or established radio stations, sometimes in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations. This development is clearly reflected in the number of radio projects registered at CAMECO during the last years. The trend from “print media” to “radio” (see

Evaluated Projects 1972–1998



„Categories of CAMECO's Documentation Department“) can be verified by comparing the number of projects evaluated during the three decades of CAMECO's existence. Whereas the number of “print media” projects has declined during this period, there is also a clear growth of projects in the field of radio, particularly since 1990.

Which development tendencies are perceptible in the different regions?

Looking back on the Church media scene in Africa over these 30 years, it can be stressed that during the '70's and '80's, the situation was very stable, and largely dominated by print media, predominantly printing presses and periodicals. At that time the Church newspapers were the only independent voice all over the continent, except in a few countries like Senegal, Nigeria,

Categories of CAMECO's Documentation Department:

General Communication: Media centres and communication commissions, traditional communication media (dance, theatre, puppetry, oral communication, etc.), training at academic level and general communication courses.

Print Media: Establishment of printing presses, purchase of printing equipment, news agencies, daily newspapers and non-daily periodicals, publication of books, support of publishing houses, training in printing technologies and publishing.

Radio: Purchase of broadcasting and studio equipment, production of radio programmes, support of production centres, establishment or extension of radio stations, training in radio technologies and production.

Television: Purchase of broadcasting and studio equipment, production of television programmes, support of production centres, establishment or extension of TV stations, training in TV technologies and production.

Film: Purchase of production and projection equipment, film production and support of production centres, support for mobile film units, cinemas, film libraries, training in film production.

Audio-Visuals: This category comprises audio cassettes, film strips, slides, posters, charts, photolanguage, comics, etc.

Video: Purchase of video production and projection equipment, video production and support of production centres, support for mobile units, video libraries, training in video production and technologies.

Informatics: Purchase of hard- and software, Local/ Wide Area Networks, support of data bases and Electronic Data Processing centres, multimedia, Internet/ Intranet, training.

Telecommunications: Purchase of consumer and professional satellite devices, telephone systems, satellite communication, training.

Research, freedom of expression or legal matters of the respective media are further items considered within all media categories.

Kenya and South Africa. The main question however — even now still valid and of great importance — was how to reach solid ground for a financial self-sustainability. The second concern during these two decades was the presence of the Churches on state radio and television.

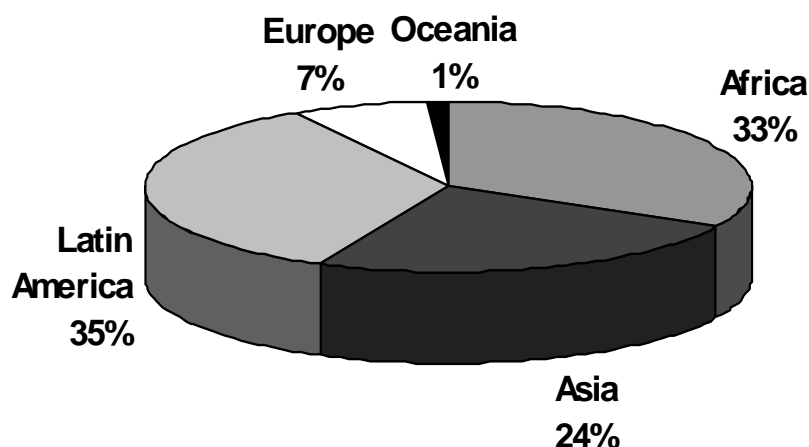
At the end of the eighties, the wind of democratisation brought tremendous changes: newspapers mushroomed all over Africa, but particularly in the frankophone areas and in Western Africa. This new independent press corresponded to the strong popular call for freedom: freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of association. In many countries, new media and communication laws were passed, opening new opportunities. The most important result was the development of independent (commercial, local, community, rural) radio stations. Although we could question whether the Churches took the changes in the print media scene serious, there is no doubt that they jumped into broadcasting with its new opportunities, and this process is still going on. These developments have also changed CAMECO's work drastically.

Training in communications was always an important concern of the Church in Africa as well as of CAMECO. During this last decade, a large number of highly qualified and skilled people have entered the communication field at the service or in relation with the Church of Africa. This fact also influences the quality and strategical importance of the applications received from Africa. The growing potential of human resources in the media, and Church media in particular in Africa, is definitely the most promising sign for this continent, and especially for the Church in Africa. The emphasis on training has been an important concern over this period, and now the seed is slowly giving fruit, although there is still a long way to go. Training programmes in communication at all levels continue to be a demanding priority, including the challenge to create an overall concept for the different formation activities.

A review of the last 30 years of media work in Asia shows that the print medium is still the main tool for the Catholic Church to communicate in the region. While nowadays there certainly is excitement among the Catholic media workers about the possibilities of new communication technologies, we have to realise clearly that most of Asia still uses traditional means of communication. Besides the print medium, dance, puppetry and street theatre play a significant role. However, the utilisation of audio-visuals, for example — slides, photography and audiocassettes has decreased strongly, here obviously the invention of video technology and the steadily falling hardware prices have replaced these traditional group media tools. Mass media such as radio and TV are slowly being utilised by the Church, but in several Asian countries there are still too many legal restrictions of the state owned media, so that the Church has very little opportunity to use the full potential of these influential mass media for its social communication apostolate. And more important, church-related media workers have too little know-how on the best means of professionally using it, particularly with regard to the potential of the visual medium. Hence training remains top priority.

During the latest Unda/OCIC Asia meeting in Taiwan another alarming development was noticed by the Asian media workers themselves. Never before has such a small number of women been engaged in church-related media work. One could count on one hand the number of female

Evaluated Projects by Continents:



participants — sisters and laywomen — who attended the meeting. It was decided to start a project with media training exclusively for women to counter this commonly considered negative tendency. 30 years ago such a project would have been non-existent — the necessity would not even have been recognised or felt. Obstacles in the way of professionalizing media work in Asia obviously seems to be affected by wider issues than lacking resources, for example the fact that in the majority of Asian countries the Christians form a minority, and that co-operation attitudes seem to be difficult to develop in spite of dwindling resources.

As already stressed, Latin America could have been seen as the continent of radio. Most Latin American countries can look back to a long tradition of Catholic radio stations, running mainly in rural areas. Many of them started as so-called radio schools, dedicated to the formal and non-formal education of the rural and marginalised population. During the last three decades, the concept of alternative radio was regularly adapted according to new challenges faced on social and cultural levels. Humberto Vandenbulcke's article on „The Changing Role of ‚Radios Populares‘ in Latin America“, published in this issue, gives an overview on these developments.

Community radios have gained importance in several countries, strengthening the possibilities of participation of the population and thus strengthening civil society. In Bolivia, Peru and the Dominican Republic the long-running radio networks of Catholic and development-oriented radio stations are an important voice in their national context. Thousands of community radio stations have emerged recently, particularly in Brazil and Colombia. In Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay the Church is also involved in the endeavours for the legalisation of community radios. Wherever permissible by law, networks are created to foster the exchange of programmes and the creation of a stable financial basis, e.g. by offering transmission time for advertisements as a network, and not as a single station as used to be.

During the last few years, there is a clear tendency in the Latin American Church to jump into TV. Taking the growing importance of television into account, the Church also has to face the question of how she wants to be, and how she can be present, in this influential medium. The range of answers is very broad, from national Catholic TV channels (like in Brazil and the Dominican Republic) to small community TV initiatives under the auspices of the Church or efforts to strengthen the production capacities to reach a qualified presence in existing public and commercial channels (see also the report about the workshop „TV, Civil Society and the Church“ in this issue).

In all these years, CAMECO's policy was to encourage the partners in the developing countries as well as in Central and Eastern Europe towards the planning of communication structures beyond isolated initiatives, facilitating the co-operation of different projects on national and regional level and effecting thus a stronger unity of the Church and the non-governmental sector in the media field. From CAMECO's point of view, the Episcopal Commissions for Social Communications should and could play an important role in co-ordinating the communications efforts of the local Church, promoting the development of a common pastoral plan of communications according to their specific context.

Special attention should be paid to training. Without any doubt, the availability of qualified and experienced personnel is a key factor for an effective performance of Church media institutions as well as for the development of adequate media strategies and the continuity of projects. Thus, in all these years much attention has been paid to the formation of communicators and of pastoral agents involved in media activities, including the development of adequate training programmes and the corresponding institutions in the continents themselves.

CAMECO was founded to support the work of the Churches in the field of social communications. The way that this support has been given might have changed in some aspects. In the same way that communication strategies and techniques are developing, CAMECO has the duty to constantly reconsider the services we should and could offer, to support on the one hand the donor organisations and on the other hand the project holders in their work. Therefore CAMECO tries to offer itself as a dialogue partner, asking together with communicators, Church leaders and agencies how the possibilities of the media can be used in an adequate and effective way for evangelisation as well as for development. To be able to offer this service, one of the great advantages of CAMECO has always been its independence and „neutrality“. Hans Peter Gohla, Executive Director of CAMECO between 1991 and 1999, put it as follows: „My desire was to be as impartial, neutral and professional as possible. I wanted to continue with this professional approach in assessing and analysing projects. From my point of view, one of the most important things for CAMECO has always been that we never had own funds for projects.“

This position makes it possible to be in close contact with the funding agencies as well as with communicators all over the world, mostly those working at the services of the Christian Churches, but often also with secular organisations committed to the same objectives. These contacts also force us to learn and adapt ourselves to the new dynamics of communications introduced by political and social developments, by new technical possibilities or new legal conditions. All these aspects are not only challenges for CAMECO but — according to our understanding — for the Church, for her presence in the world and her way of handling communications as well as for all our partners around the globe.

Dr. Daniela Frank, Executive Director

Documentation

Media with the Poor?

The Church in a Multimedia Culture

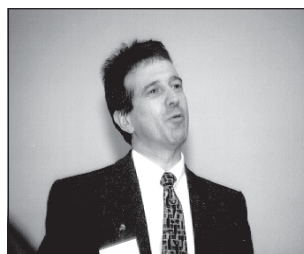
Conference on the Occasion of the 30th
Anniversary of the Catholic Media Council

Lectures:

Evangelisation of the Multimedia Culture
Radios Populares in Latin America
What Media can do for Women in the South
Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe
Hate Media — Peace Media in Africa
Church Media during war-time Liberia

Workshops:

Media as Peace Makers or War-mongers
Perspectives of Print media in Africa
Television, Civil Society and the Church
Communications and Inter-religious Dialogue
Internet — a Medium for the Poor?



Evangelization of the Multimedia Culture

By Archbishop John P. Foley

My emphasis on evangelization results from several profound convictions:

Firstly, the most important task of Catholic communications efforts all over the world must be an enthusiastic response to the mandate of Jesus Christ: „Teach all nations“.

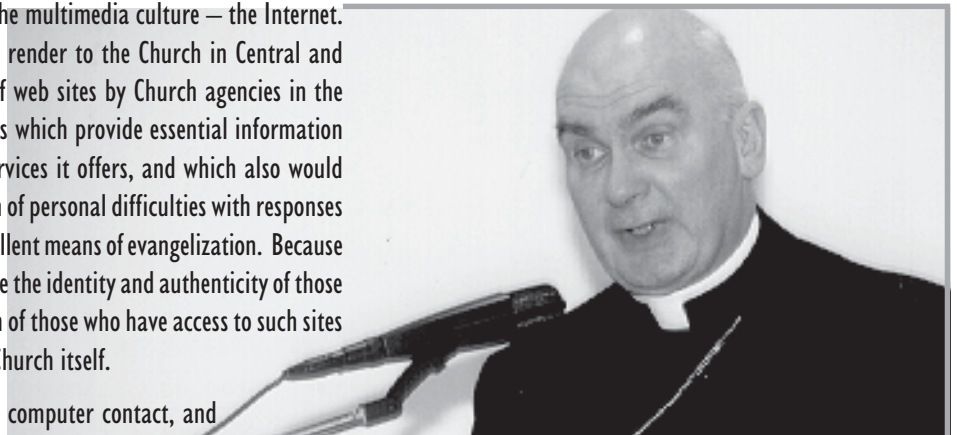
Secondly, the air waves and the printing presses are filled with the messages of many false prophets — whether they be the fundamentalists of many different religions or the seductive voices of materialism, consumerism and secularism, and we have only ourselves to blame if some succumb to the siren call of such false prophets if we have not offered, in the most attractive and convincing manner possible, the authentic Good News about Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

How is such evangelization to be done in the modern multimedia culture?

First, let us consider one of the newest technologies in the multimedia culture — the Internet. Especially for the service which you are called upon to render to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, I would think that the development of web sites by Church agencies in the various languages of Central and Eastern Europe — sites which provide essential information about the Church, about its teaching and about the services it offers, and which also would provide opportunities to allow questions and a discussion of personal difficulties with responses by experienced priests or counselors — would offer an excellent means of evangelization. Because of the vast number of web sites, it is essential to guarantee the identity and authenticity of those sites offered in the name of the Church, for the protection of those who have access to such sites and indeed, for the protection of the reputation of the Church itself.

Young adults especially could be reached through such computer contact, and they could pursue their interest in the privacy of their own homes. It could be even better than door-to-door evangelization, because it goes directly to the person who is indeed the one who searches and does the inviting.

Such an interest, however, would not be restricted to Central and Eastern Europe. Latin America already has the presence of „la Red Informatica de la Iglesia in America Latina“ and many local or national home pages offered by the Catholic Church. In Asia, perhaps it would be helpful to offer web sites in the local languages; while English is widely used in Asia, the appeal of one's own language is always very great — and it offers a type of inculturation of the Church in the computer culture. In Africa, while I understand that the computer culture and the Internet are not as widespread as they are on other continents, we must help the Church to be ready — not only to offer services in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, but also and perhaps especially in languages such as Swahili and other more widely spoken indigenous languages.



Archbishop John P. Foley, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications

A second priority, I am convinced, should be radio. The possibility of the Church or those associated with the Church receiving broadcast licenses has increased greatly. This is an opportunity which should not be missed. Radio brings an intimacy, a portability and a presence which no other medium can match.

Local Catholic radio stations, which offer an attractive format and authentic formation not only in the faith but also in the values which contribute to a strong and healthy society, can provide a real service in the formation of a sound community life.

I know that I personally hesitated to ask for assistance for a continent-wide short-wave station in Africa, because I thought that the continent and the local Churches of the continent would be better served by local radio stations broadcasting not only in the modern European languages of the former colonial powers but also and especially in local indigenous languages for which it would be impractical to use a continentwide station.

I am convinced, however, that sound formation and effective cooperation are needed in the development of Catholic radio.

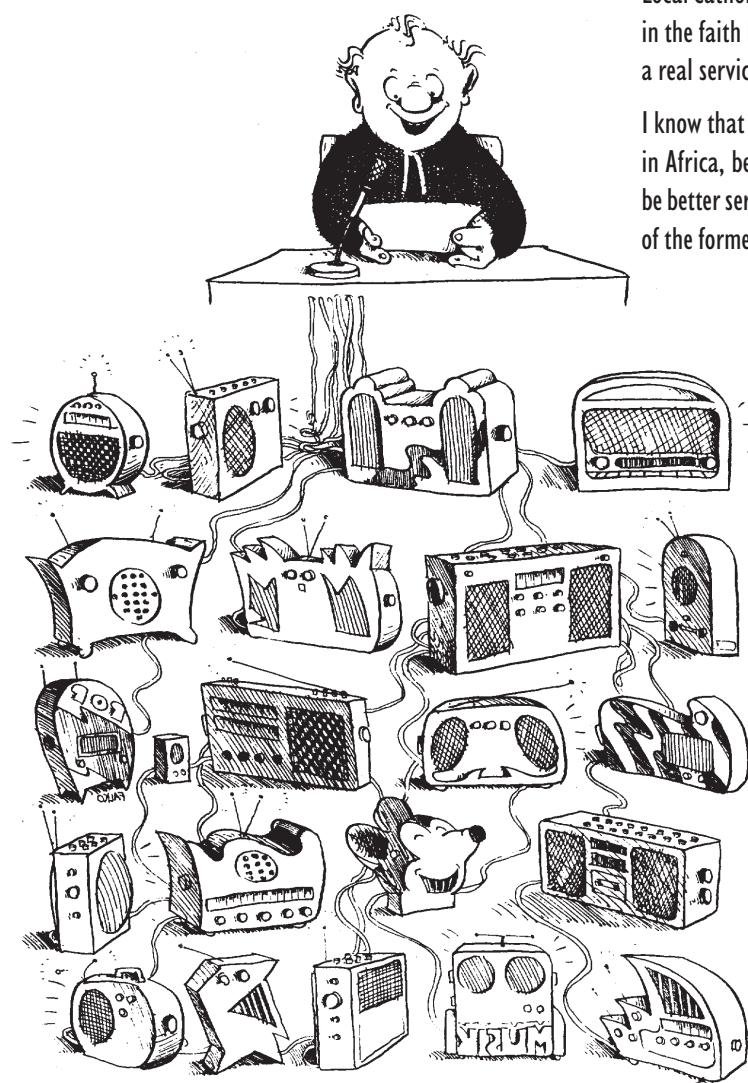
Thus, my third point will touch on sound formation programs. While excellent formation programs in communications and in philosophy, theology, history and spirituality exist in Rome and in some other European and American centres and while I can understand the need and desire to send those who will be professors of communications in the Church to such centres, I am convinced that it is ultimately in the best interest of nations and of local churches to have their communicators trained in local centres where there is an appreciation of the local culture and of the locally available means of communication.

For that reason, I rejoice in the development of such training centres in Africa, in Asia and in Latin-America — and I hope, that the centres themselves and the funding agencies recall that it is not enough to provide technical „know-how“, but also the „know-what“ and the „know-why“, that is, the theological, philosophical and historical education and the spiritual formation so much needed by those who would be Catholic communicators — and, thus, evangelizers.

Fourthly, I heard Msgr. Bernard Prince of the Pontifical Mission Societies say that his organizations receive very few requests for assistance for Catholic publications.

As a former editor of a Catholic publication, I am not naive enough to think that Catholic publications in the nations of Central and Eastern Europe and in the developing world are so successful, that they have no need of assistance. I do think that sometimes people forget the importance of the printed word, and — as I heard one bishop say in a Synod, citing Sacred Scripture — they go „lusting after images“ — that is, after the more „romantic“ media of communications such as television.

As a former editor and as president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, I have always said that the printed word, which has such a wonderful history in the Church, beginning with the Bible of Gutenberg, is invaluable as a means of information, formation, inspiration, continuing religious education and reinforced catholic identification. Also, „Scripta manent“ — the written word remains — to provide a means of reference, of consultation, of concrete and continuing contact with the Church and indeed with the word of God.



In the same context of the printed word, I would like to say a word in support of Catholic news agencies and their needs. Such agencies are the nervous system of Catholic publications, since they provide the news about the Church around the world and make it even clearer to the readers of the Catholic press, of both the universality and the unity of the Catholic Church and the significance of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Finally, I come to television — which certainly cannot be left unmentioned in a discussion of evangelization in a multimedia society.

Certainly, we know that in much of the world television has become a constant presence and that cultures are being formed and deformed as a result of television.

We also know that some western fundamentalist Christian televangelists have made significant inroads among Catholics in some areas of the world — but have also disillusioned many with their appeals for money and with their message that material prosperity is a consequence of religious faith. Thus, the Church must be present in television — but how?

Firstly I am convinced that there must be a continuing public relations effort by the Church involving television and indeed all forms of media so that the good things that the Church does in the name of the Lord might be better known.

Secondly, I am almost convinced that there should be a legal obligation for television and radio stations, since they use the public airwaves, to provide time to respond to the religious and spiritual needs of their viewers and listeners.

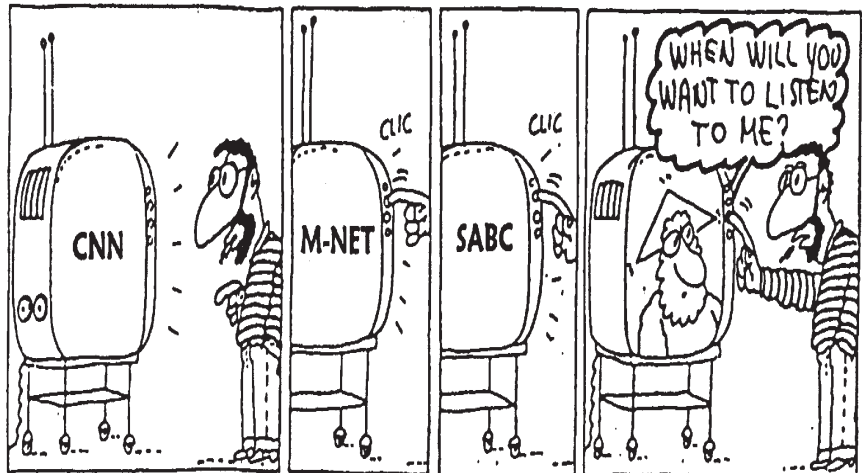
Thirdly, I am convinced that the Church, whose schools have made such excellent contributions in all societies, should consciously form the writers, directors and producers of television and radio programs and films so that that which we see and hear will be enriching, uplifting, inspiring and not degrading.

Finally, in overwhelmingly Catholic societies, if the television stations do not reflect the values of a Catholic society, then it would seem that there is a need for a Catholic alternative — a place in which Catholics can see programming which does not offend their sensibilities and which reinforces their values.

In those areas in which Catholics are in the minority, it would seem better to work with existing stations at least to be able to explain in a society which is not Catholic what Catholics believe and how they worship — not to engage in proselytism, but to promote understanding and social concord. In this, the ten-year-old document of our Council would be most useful: „Guidelines for Ecumenical and Interreligious Cooperation in Communications“.

The most important conviction all of us must have, however, is that, in evangelizing, in communicating the Good News of Jesus Christ, we must ourselves live that Good News and, as St. Francis de Sales so wisely said, „be reservoirs and not merely conduits“ of what we communicate.

Our credibility depends upon our own conversion and upon our own conviction, and the media are just that: media, means by which our lives transformed by the grace of Jesus Christ might reach and touch the hearts of others.

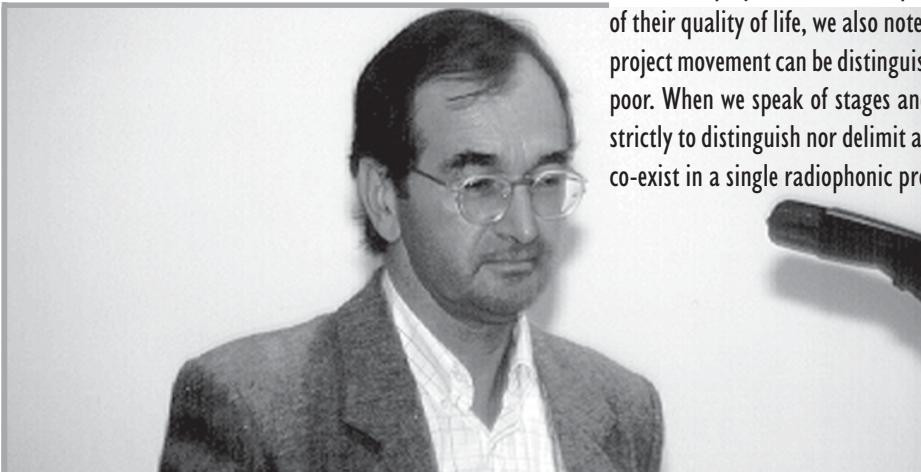


Radios Populares in Latin America:

Concepts for the Future

By Humberto Vandenbulcke

Over the last 30-40 years, the Latin American *radios populares**, have made great efforts to support the marginalised people of Latin America. During this period, hundreds of radio stations were born, with a vocation for community service. Additionally, thousands of community radio stations presently serve their local communities in the various countries of the continent. A variety of work models have been developed. A number of alternative communication experiences accumulated, which contributed to the process of change. While the basic inspiration for many of the radio projects was solidarity with the poor in terms of „development“ and the improvement of their quality of life, we also note that some stages during the growth of the *radios populares* project movement can be distinguished by their particular style and way of making radio for the poor. When we speak of stages and distinct models, it should be noted that these are neither strictly to distinguish nor delimit across certain timespans. Various traits of certain models can co-exist in a single radiophonic project. Therefore we will attempt to outline — in broad terms — the stages and models which have become most established.



Humberto Vandenbulcke. For more than a decade he was the General Secretary of the Latin American Association for Radio Education (ALER) in Quito. Since 1994 he is the General Secretary of UDECA (the Union of Catholic Radio Stations in the Dominican Republic).

„The ignorant are slaves, education will free them.“ This was the motto of one of the educational radio stations in Latin America at the end of the ‘60s. Latin America was effervescent. The Catholic Church proclaimed its option for the poor. The United States launched its „Alliance for Progress“. This raised hopes to defeat poverty in the continent. Under-development was seen as an issue of economic delay with regard to the progress of northern countries. It appeared conditional to incorporate the poor in economic processes in order to increase the productive capacity of under-developed countries. But to do so, it was considered necessary to prepare them. The need was realised to educate and orient them in order to pull them out of their marginality. And on this line, radio was considered a powerful instrument for reaching the poor masses. The radio schools emerged, offering formal and informal education to the marginal sectors, especially in rural areas. In a vertical teacher-student relation, the mass medium adopted during those days a „top-down“ approach in the process of „education“ of poor and ignorant people. Beneficiaries

were regarded as passive recipients who had to accept (from the radio) what the radio considered to be the people's needs, in order to become the subjects of development.

Throughout the 1970s, many Latin Americans became disillusioned with the approach that education would be the key to development. It was discovered that development was not a quantitative process. To overcome poverty it was not enough to integrate the poor in the existing political and economic system. It was realised that they were already included, namely by labelling them as „the poor“ in the social system. Hence, it was considered necessary to change the system. And, most important now, the poor would be the protagonists of this change. The concept of this kind of „development“ had expanded into the structural and cultural arenas. The largest obstacles to development were investigated in the entrenched political, economic, and social structures. Consequently, development meant promoting political participation and improving the social and civil conditions of the poor.

It was in this phase that *radios populares* emerged. Priority was no longer given to formal education but instead, *radios populares* were meant to accompany popular organisations, farmer's associations, housewives, and the youth. *Radios populares* promoted and propagated the world view of the poor. Accordingly, new methods of radio production were created: ideally, these would forge a participatory radio in which the poor would be given a voice, from which the world would be seen through their eyes, where the version of reality would be theirs. Radio stations were midwives to the voice of the poor, they were organisers and carriers of the mobilisation and the identification of the poor as protagonists of social change. Radio stations trained local people to produce their own programs and information, rooted in the realities and perspectives of the poor. Voice and expression were given to the new social and political cultures which were growing in people's and social organisations.

Radios Populares

Dreams of radical social change were cut short at the end of the 1980s. It was a time of crisis among political parties and people's organisations. It came to be understood that the processes of change depended on the whole of society, not only on the organised poor. The presence of a civil society grew; it was accompanied by new protagonists, such as women, youth, indigenous groups, and ecologists. Radio stations attempted to affiliate themselves with these new groups in order to influence public opinion.

Radios populares came to understand that they could no longer work exclusively for groups focusing on ideological issues, but instead saw the need to collaborate with the people as a whole: i.e. radio as a mass medium. Slowly, a range of educational possibilities began to open from and for the society as a whole. Radio broadcasting learned to establish communication with and from the subjective and daily world of radio listeners: their tastes, their expressions, dreams and worries.

The tendency is towards concentration of control over media in the hands of a few powerful economic groups. Broadcasting laws favour such monopolies and do not facilitate the survival of



Here and on the following pages: impressions of radios populares from Guatemala and Costa Rica





community radio stations. This seriously endangers the democratisation of communication activities and recreations.

Radios populares ceased to be a medium restricted to those grouped in social action initiatives. It was realised that in order to implement significant social change, the consensus of a much broader spectrum of people would be required, hence the following slogan emerged: „The new society is for everybody, and we will all promote or impede its progress.“

Throughout the 1990s, an overwhelming neoliberal political context obliged *radios populares* broadcasters to redefine their role. The present decade brought years of much confusion. The *Latin American Association for Radio Education (ALER)* promoted reflection on this situation through various workshops and seminars. And gradually, new concepts of radio communication were defined with respect to working with the poor. Important theoretical innovations were made on the subject of development. The mission of *radios populares* could now no longer be its contribution to a „radical change“ of the structures of poverty and injustice. It includes, rather, the concept of integral development: a development as process and perspective, which embraces different areas of the people's lives and which is produced in a context of participation, debate and untried actions. It is a development which goes hand in hand with the practice of democracy. The processes of development advance towards more complete living conditions through dialogue, articulation, and negotiation.

Radios populares and communications play a fundamental role in these processes.

The *Popular Radio Association of Peru, CNR*, in its national discussion forum (1996) on the theme of „Communication and Development,“ formulated the following objectives: „Our concept of development is not centred exclusively on economic issues, although it considers economic aspects. Our concept of development presents interaction between the different dimensions of social life - the economic, the social, the cultural processes, the political - where the subjects must decide and promote the kind of society that they wish to maintain, with freedom...“

In this context, media play a specific and invaluable role. As the most popular medium, radio broadcasting plays a key role in collecting different viewpoints about regional or local development, and for socialising, sustaining, justifying and analysing, through a participatory methodology of open discussion. Radio broadcasting is the most easily accessible popular medium able to promote a communication which we call horizontal, meaning it stimulates debate and interest in basic societal issues, paving the way for dialogue, and for overcoming both provincialisms and the traditional tendency towards centralism.“

Radios Populares claim the right to call themselves „radios for development“, by promoting a culture of debate and discussion of different ideas and to view points between diverse sectors of society, and they help to form consensus on the solutions to the various needs of the people. It

gives special supporting processes to different voices on themes related to development. Thus, radio is regarded as a „social mediator.“ Similarly, we speak of „citizen radio,“ for promoting the right of citizens to actively participate in the construction of a more human world.

Radios Populares

Democracy is the ideological concept that guarantees advances in the processes of development. Development is the result of the interaction between various sectors and actors of society aiming for more wholistic co-existence. The practice of debate is not exclusively limited to formal decision-making bodies (such as parliaments, congresses, etc.). It takes into account the integration of civil society in the dynamics and processes of change. *Radios populares* actively promote this new democratic practice creating communication strategies which aim to promote and strengthen democracy. These strategies are based on three central elements: participation, plurality, and critical involvement.

Radios populares help to include the poor in the practice of democracy. They help them to make their drowned voices heard, express their ideas, and be accepted as a relevant social and political force. These are the same poor whose exclusion from media is often justified by accusations that their efforts are disorganised, spontaneous, violent and improvised. *Radios populares* provide an alternative communication opportunity to commercial media, not only giving voice to the poor, but also unveiling the harsh reality of marginalisation, namely that of the exclusion of the basic goods necessary for survival. Radio furthermore promotes the inclusion and the identity of the poor by defending their interests in decision-making processes. Democracy also demands plurality. The radio stations respect and recognize different currents and political tendencies present in society. This requires contact with many sources and the participation of individuals representing a diversity of thoughts and opinions, precluding the exclusion of anyone. *Radios populares* for democracy promote critical communication, analysis, polemic, argumentation and debate. They view these mechanisms as crucial and hold that citizens must nurture them in order to foster a civil conscience and to construct democracy.

In finishing this retrospective of the various decades of educational radio in Latin America, we can conclude that this project is marked by solidarity, identification and empathy with the continent's poor. In several ways these radio stations strive to be useful agents in the development of their respective communities. They stimulate an alternative communication, in which they promote the participation of various sectors, principally the poor, representing their needs and their hopes for more dignity. They are able to assemble large listening audiences, primarily in rural areas. Their contribution to the history of growth of the people and communities is the fruit of the dedication of numerous media workers whose basic aim is to serve the community.

radios populares

Various difficulties have emerged which present a challenge to the future of *radios populares*. They include:

— In most of the countries, there are no media laws referring to community radios. Only in a few countries recently have significant legislative efforts been initiated to ensure the survival of the community radios.





— Rapid changes in technology, which require the modernisation of equipment and the re-training of personnel.

— The problems of economic maintenance. Foreign aid has declined, and locally-based attempts to enter into broadcasting have become more difficult due to the competition presented by commercial media interests.

— The stagnation of radio programming, and the slackening in creativity and production capacity of radio personnel. There are fewer opportunities for training and professionalisation. It is common practice for personnel to leave stations in search of better pay. The absence of shining examples and the temptation to imitate commercial radio broadcasting is another problem.

— Weaknesses in the management of radio broadcasting projects. Administrative duties absorb the energies of the directors and this again reduces their ability to update and restructure their projects.

— On one hand there is the tendency to keep radio work restricted to a local area and the resistance to link the radio project to more global (national, international) realities. On the other hand, there remains the temptation to passively use radio programs received via satellite.

Radios Populares

(1) As regards the project of consumption-oriented commercial media, *radios populares* must promote and facilitate the presence and expression of the impoverished majorities. They must support their inclusion in society, give them true recognition as subjects of processes and as owners and protagonists of projects of change.

(2) Faced with the erosion of democracy caused by the interests of individuals and small economically influential groups which can hardly represent the interests of the greater majority, *radios populares* broadcasting need to work with the marginalised and the excluded, „giving public voice, promoting the construction of identities in ‘their recognition’ of their differences, of their lives, of their rights, of their demands, of their necessities, and of their cultures“ (Jesús Barbero).

(3) Emerging new technologies are not a short-lived mode. They are an opportunity for *radios populares* to operate more effectively and more efficiently. They are a tool to represent the interests of the poor more effectively.

(4) *Radios Populares* articulate the voices of the distinct members of civil society concerned with the formulation of proposals and common strategies of development. It should promote public debate on relevant themes.

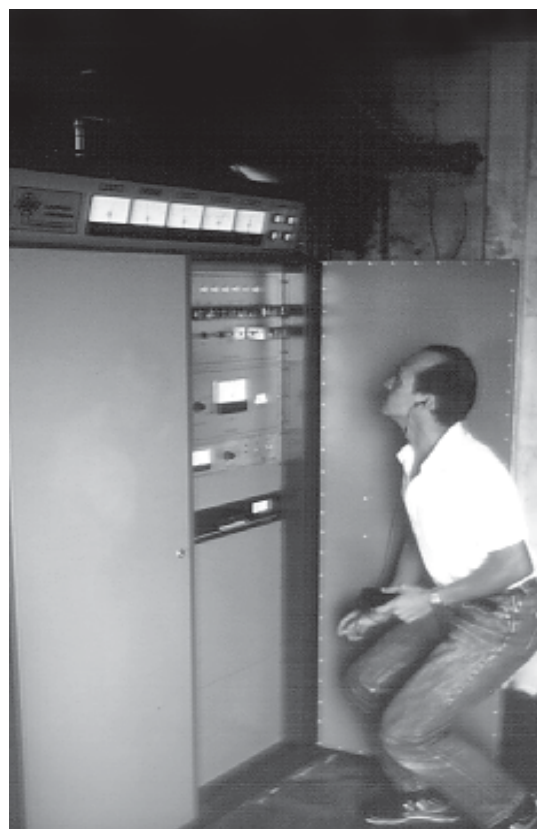
(5) They should realise their communicative task from their immediate, local setting. However, they cannot confine themselves to exclusively local issues, disconnecting themselves from global perspectives and issues (regional, national, international).

(6) *Radios populares* broadcasting must participate in national and continental radio networks in order to project themselves not only as local radio, but as part of a larger communicative matrix. Using the cyberspace technologies, they should form functional and temporary networks

in order to stimulate, sensitise, or have exchanges on themes of common interest between individuals, organisations, sectors and groups within society.

(7) The formation of radio networks with national and continental coverage, which are making use of digital and satellite technology, will increase the presence, coverage and influence of *radios populares*. *Radios populares* must involve themselves in national and continental networks, creating dynamic working collectives, at national and continental level, to achieve common goals, to insert locally rooted problems into more global contexts and to contribute with greater effectiveness to the development processes.

(8) *Radios populares* must fully realise their powerful force as a mass medium and socio-political agent. However, these radio stations working with and operated by the poor, should not necessarily imply the production of poor quality. They must maintain broadcasting quality and competitiveness. They must realise their potential strength, which lies primarily in their ability to establish alliances and consensus, from an open and co-operative standpoint, with other forces of society for the sake of majorities and just causes.



(9) Attention to the economic sustainment of *radios populares* projects must be a priority. The difficult economic reality of the majority of the *radios populares* demands a new strategy which includes marketing, the sale of services, the aid of support groups, the rent of air time to NGOs, partnerships with universities and other entities which drive development, and other alternative funding sources.

(10) Radio broadcasting must create new programs to supplement the efforts of the agents of social action in their projects and to accompany the various cultural and social changes being produced by the

greater population (migration, violence, corruption, secularisation, etc.).

(11) It is crucial to deepen and sustain people's constructive initiatives with regard to the fundamental themes in *radios populares* such as: solidarity, human rights, environmental protection and conservation, the defense of minority groups, street children and indigenous people, women, etc.

(12) And finally, *radios populares* must promote the values of the Gospel as both a driving force of and a perspective on the development and changes for the better of people's living circumstances.



**We did not translate the term "radios populares" into the common expression "community radio" as we wished to signify the special concept, that is meant by the author, whose original article is written in Spanish. The Latin American "radios populares" could be called community radio in some anglophone countries, rural or local radio in Africa, public radio in Australia and free or associative radio in Europe. These all have one common phenomenon: that of gaining a voice and democratising communication.*

The Philippines:

Media and Women in the South

By Anna Leah Sarabia*

The role of television and other forms of public media is very important in the Philippines as seen by the viewing figures which can be as high as 95% of the seventy four million strong population watching television every other day. Despite the Philippines being a very poor country, it comes second only to Hong Kong in the number of regular TV viewers. The geographical dispersity of its seven thousand islands means that the role of television becomes even more important due to the difficulties of face to face communication.

Some years ago, in 1996, the Secretary of Education himself made the statement:

"More than 70% of the education of Filipino children comes from the media and television, not from schools, not from the family and not from the church"

something which has very serious implications, especially taking into account the opinions of the various columnists as regards television. One very respected columnist commented that:

"The enemy of education is TV. Along with TV, computers are creating a visual culture that is generally unhelpful to reading and writing."

However, we must try to understand what is being said: each of the top ten television programmes in the Philippines is a situation comedy or a soap opera. There is no system of public television or public radio and everything is left to the private businessman, which is understandably extremely problematic. Two further quotations must be cited:

"Our TV and movie producers have not enhanced our collective tastes or elevated our understanding of life. This is because these people conspire to keep us thinking like morons."

Another columnist said,

"Cynical and predatory television breeds a cynical and predatory public. Networks that routinely feature the bizarre and the violent and aspire this in their daily repertoire of what is significant, is for me, an abuse of their power"

and who sees more and more every day that violence against women is becoming part of a "normal society". I don't wonder why, for instance, that the average age of a rape victim today



Anna Leah Sarabia is the founder and executive director of the initiative called „Women's Media Circle“, based in Manila, Philippines since 1985. The initiative is a non-stock, non governmental organisation of professional women dedicated to the empowerment of Philippine women through direct use of mainstream and alternative media as well as through the arts.

Source: Radio Actions 9/1996



in the Philippines has gone down from sixteen years old to eleven and a half. This is a huge problem for us.

So how does one go about trying to change this? More than 70% of the people are poor and more than 60% of those poor are women. We have to try to find out who makes these programmes, who runs the networks, and what we can do to change all of this. As a small NGO¹ (Non Governmental Organisation) we don't own any networks so we try to use our own small connections to those who do own the networks and those who write the programmes by lobbying and by networking. We talk to the various producers or the

leading performers of these programmes who could perhaps integrate the issues into their own work. At the same time we look for the means or resources to create alternative programmes that give a different choice. We have to create prototypes of programmes that are both issue-oriented and issue-friendly but are entertaining enough to be competitive. If the programmes are so serious that nobody watches them, then they are almost useless and counter-productive.

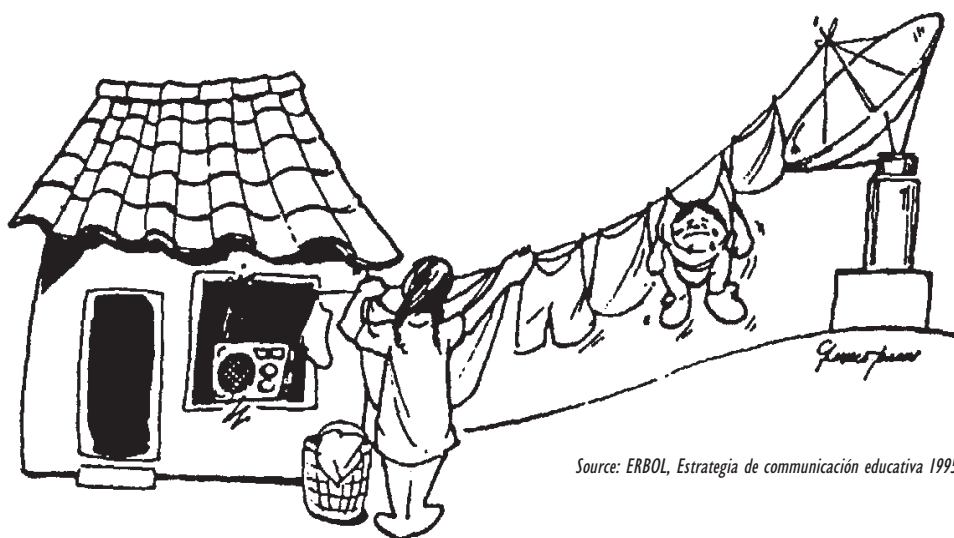
One of the channels with the highest rating at the moment is MTV. Therefore, we have to create some kind of programme that is similar to MTV but which deals with women's or social issues, which are also being discussed by young people. However, as with all such initiatives funding is necessary because many people tend to claim, rather negatively, that our programmes will die and of course, when the programme does die, they gloat over our misfortune. They always like to tell us how '...an issue-oriented programme will never last'. We try to disprove the theory that our programmes will die quickly, by being creative and finding the support.

During Martial Law and after the overthrow of the Marcos government we had five TV channels and we could get a television programme on the air, for an hour a week, the production of which was paid for by the government station. This was in 1986. In 1999 there are seven TV channels, five UHF channels and 80 cable channels but our TV programme has now been reduced to once every two weeks, so instead of improving, the situation has worsened. This is particularly due to the Asian financial crisis: it's very difficult to get advertising if you don't show skimpily clad women who are talking about fashion, which means of course, in the stereotype roles.

So, what can be done when only a little money and very few sponsors are available? Furthermore what can there be in the media for the poor women and the children of these poor women? One way to do it is by simply producing. We try to discover where we can fit in, so if we don't have the funds to make our own TV programmes, we approach a producer to make the programmes for us. We suggest to them the



Source: Health on Air



Source: ERBOL, Estrategia de comunicación educativa 1995

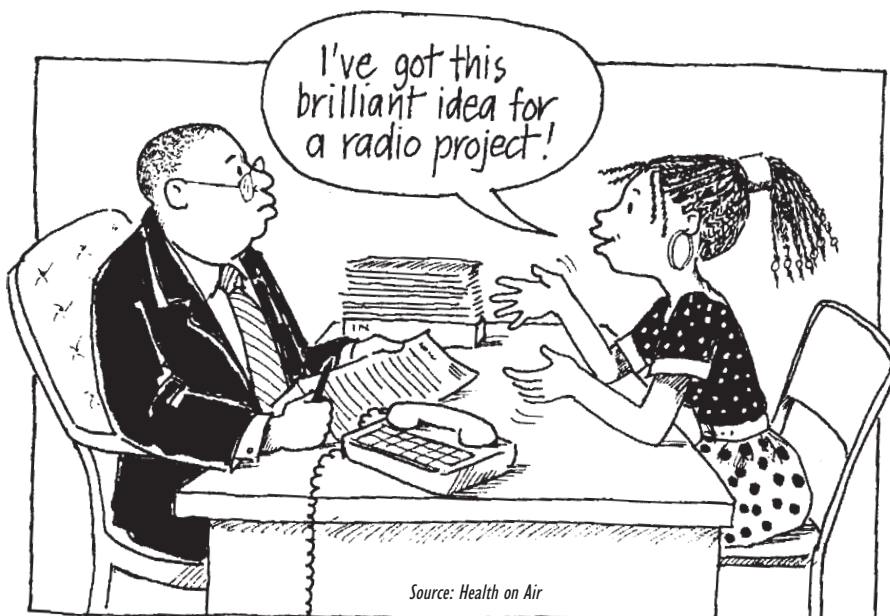
possibility of talking about violence in one programme or perhaps of doing another programme on girls in sport and so on and so forth in order to ensure that women's issues are discussed. However, at the same time we try our best to find people who are willing to support us. We were recently given free air-time on a large radio station for our programme on violence against women and we continue using this type of partnership with mainstream media. We also have, for instance, articles in some of the highest circulation magazines in our country. For example, I was able to ask for four pages from one particular magazine and two pages from another, both of which gave us the pages free of charge. They are very happy as they are presented with new, camera ready material free of charge. This is the way for us to take. We're well aware that they would have to pay about 200 000 Pesos for four pages of material, which is about 50 000 per page. However, by giving them something interesting, we get our messages out, which is very useful for us.

The slogan of the Women's Media Circle is 'No voice, no choice, no power'. If women don't have the chance to speak out and to receive information, they won't be able to make informed decisions about what to do with their lives. The same applies if they don't have the right to express themselves or if they don't even know that they have the right to seek justice for harm inflicted on them. When they don't know what to do when they have a problem, we give them different choices which means that they won't always accept that suffering is the way to live. It is true to say that sometimes one has to suffer in order to understand life but to be in constant suffering and pain is another matter; and something we have to try to change. People being empowered is the result of being able to make intelligent choices in their lives. We want women to have this power, to have the strength to come together and to make a world according to their own vision, according to their own needs. Women also need the power to be leaders in society; not giving women the opportunity to be productive is like a butterfly with one wing: both wings are necessary to achieve peace and justice.

We see that the media for women, as a rule, is to connect women with each other so that they understand that they have common needs as well as differences across borders and races, across cultural and historical backgrounds and across differences in economic styles and opportunities. We believe that women should understand each other due to having been, for many centuries, strangers to themselves. Women still don't really know what is occurring

around them or how to develop their full potential. Whilst under Martial Law, all media was censored and it was forbidden to gather in groups of more than three. Because of this, the skill of public speaking had to be relearnt after we won democracy and the media has been helping women to do this. Media can connect women with the mechanisms for their own social, political and economical development and when women are able to do this they can change and improve and develop the next generation of people. Media can help women achieve their own potential so that they can contribute to social class formation and we believe that women, when educated, when articulate, when able to express themselves, are a very powerful force. Before Islam and Christianity came to the Philippines, women held high positions in our society. In fact, before the eleventh century, the priests in the Philippines were women, very few of the priests were men. However, this all occurred under the old religion. I'm not aware of many women priests nowadays but it goes to show that the past contributions of women have been neglected. We are trying to make people remember and media can be a powerful tool for stirring people's memories.

We have already had people from China, from Thailand, from Malaysia and we will hopefully, in the future, have representatives from Indonesia, coming to our offices and looking at what we've been doing. We've also held one or two exchange conferences on how we can use the media. The media has always been traditionally an enemy of women, of women who want to improve themselves, because of the stereotypes and impressions constantly promoted by advertisers. However, we realise that we should also take advantage of the advertising companies. We like to look at their strategies and see what they are trying to do and what techniques they are using, we want to find out if we can use some of the techniques for our own issues. The rich and powerful are not the only ones who can be smart, anyone can see what these people are doing and be smart themselves by using all of these modern advertising techniques, the tools of the media, to give power and hope to women. We are of the opinion that, instead of allowing women to become annoyed and angry to the point of revolt, that the media can actually guide the development and empowerment of women in the right direction so that they can undergo a more peaceful transformation towards justice and peace.



Central and Eastern Europe:

Challenges and Realities

By László Lukács

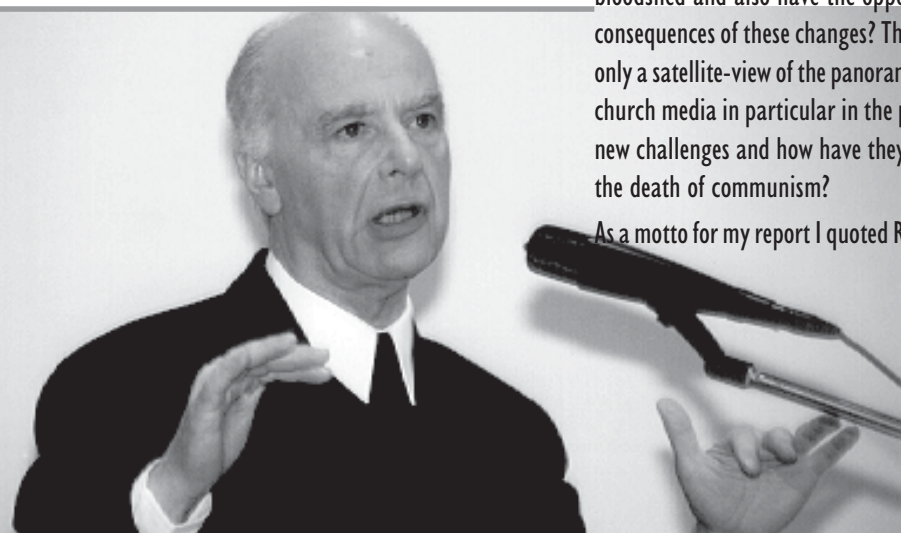
„The future of mankind cannot be built up against the believers or even without them; and the future of mankind cannot be built up against the communists or even without them.“ (Roger Garaudy)

It is unprecedented in history that with the collapse of the Soviet Union one half of a whole continent including more than twenty countries, gain back their political freedom without bloodshed and also have the opportunity to build up their democratic system. What are the consequences of these changes? The limited span of time given does not allow a detailed report, only a satellite-view of the panorama of the new challenges for the churches in general and of the church media in particular in the post-communist countries. How did the churches react to the new challenges and how have they changed their activities in Central and Eastern Europe after the death of communism?

As a motto for my report I quoted Roger Garaudy, the once famous Marxist philosopher. He spoke at the Marxist-Christian dialogue-conference in Salzburg in 1965. We can add: the communists have disappeared. Will the Christians also ever disappear from the scene of history?

Let me make just one preliminary remark. Though the Communist ideology and the party-system was basically the same in Eastern Europe, there were great differences in the situation of the Churches in the different countries. One extreme is the example of Poland where the Church has always been very strong with a fervent Christian faith and a strong influence in society (second only to Ireland in Europe), the other extreme is Albania, the country where religion was officially and legally forbidden and where this was sanctioned by the constitution of the state, or in as far as the Churches themselves are concerned, the Greek Uniate Church was suppressed in most countries of Eastern Europe by law, while other Churches could continue their activities, even if it was in a very limited way. The Catholic media landscape also varied from country to country.

If we try to make a comparison, we could say that besides the excellent and well established Catholic media of Poland, the relatively free Church press in Yugoslavia, the restricted but



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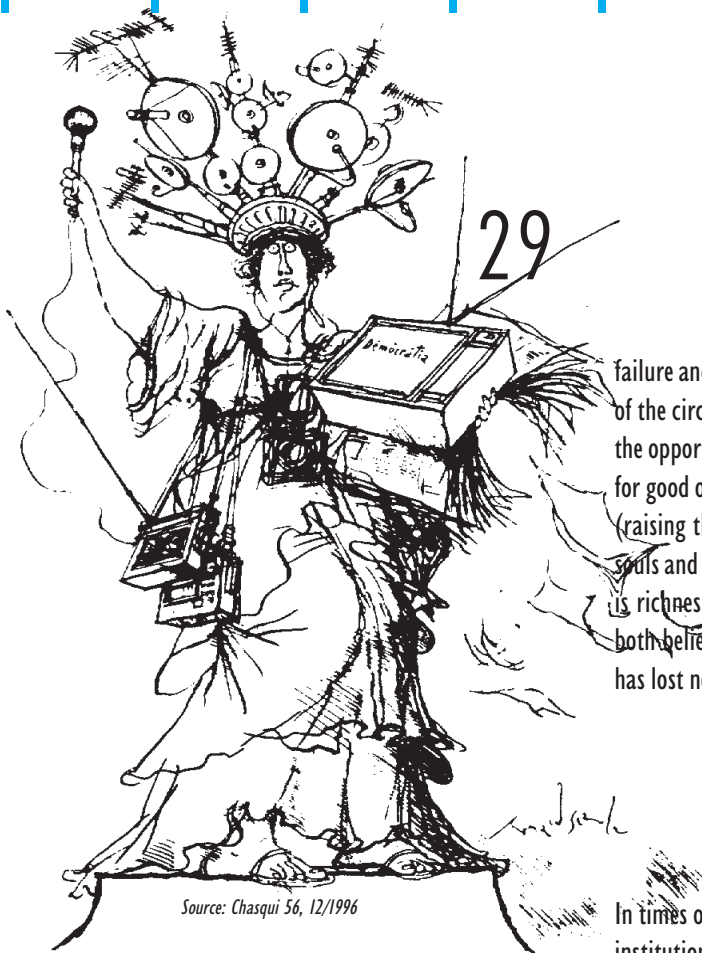
existing press in East Germany and Hungary, there was nothing at all like Catholic media in the other communist countries, so they had to start their activities from a zero-point in 1989-90.

For shortness' sake I would like to characterise the new situation of Central and Eastern Europe after the political changes of 1989-90, by describing three illusions, three types of transition and six needs of the present and the future.

The greatest desire of the nations and people in the Soviet bloc countries was freedom and independence. They wanted to get rid of the Soviet oppression and achieve national independence, but they also wanted to get rid of their own dictatorial governments. Freedom was almost divinised in the expectation of most people. It was seen as a sort of Paradise: according to widespread illusion: if one becomes free, one will be happy. Political freedom automatically leads to a free market system, and people will be happy overnight, following the model of the countries of the first world. At the same time nobody realised that freedom is ambivalent, it also has its shadows and even its dangers. The result of political freedom was not a growing commonwealth to all, but the growing gap between the rich and the poor: big capital accumulated in the hands of few, whilst the majority of the population have become poorer. The danger of Latin-Americanisation is on the threshold. Along with McDonald's and Mercedes cars inflation, unemployment and social insecurity also arrived in these countries. Disillusion could not be avoided for long. That is one reason why in a number of post-communist countries the communists could return to power in the mid-nineties, this time democratically elected by those who were discontented with the results of newly gained freedom. „Back to the slavery of Egypt.“

The euphoria of freedom also reigned in the Churches in the first years after the changes. They fostered the illusion that the only reason for the diminishing number of church-goers had been the fear of the atheist regime, the loss of faith only being due to the atheist communist dictators. The collapse of communism was expected to lead to a boom in church-life. The Churches are by now completely free, and there is a certain but modest growth in Christian practice, but the expected blossoming of church-life has not been achieved. Atheism is not identical with communism, there are a lot of non-believers who do not belong to any political party. Marxist materialistic theory could not convince people. Consumerist materialistic practice, however, has more and more followers.

A further illusion among some church leaders was that the Church as an institution can be built or reconstructed as houses or other buildings can: they have to be designed, planned and then constructed following the instructions of project managers and architects. Ten years have passed and one must realise that in most countries this is not the case. Church life can only grow and develop in a slow and organic way, with fresh and effective initiatives, but also with much



Source: Chasqui 56, 12/1996

failure and frustration. Though the Churches are free they often have to act under the pressures of the circumstances. The greatest challenge (but also temptation!) was that the Churches had the opportunity to claim back their properties in most countries. A historical chance – whether for good or for evil? Should the Church fight for the returning of its once confiscated properties (raising the hostility of those whose interests would be hurt), or should they try to reach the souls and minds of the people? How can they evangelise without material means? But what good is richness without spiritual values? The Church under communism enjoyed the sympathy of both believers and non-believers – the Church-institution with growing material background has lost not little of its popularity.

In times of oppression hardly any free communication was made possible in these countries on institutional and official levels, neither in the whole of the society nor in the Church. The free cells under the totalitarian dictatorships were the small underground base communities whether of Christians or of atheist-liberals. These small groups were the centres for communion and communication, for a small number of people but in a very personal and intensive manner. A dynamic micro communication system functioned with little or no macro communication. Social communication was in the hands of the party bosses. The press was centrally managed and controlled. Freedom of expression was very restricted and truth was deliberately distorted. Still to a certain extent the media was easily handled by the average person. Their information was one-sided or even distorted, but always in the same direction, so one could safely read between the lines.

The „good old days“ of dictatorship are over. The media are free, open for everybody. The huge media concerns entered into even this part of Europe, radio and TV channels are sold to commercial enterprises. The entertainment or infotainment industry dominates the TV. Sensation mongers rule the press. The media in these countries have lost the dull, sometimes stupid innocence of the past. They are no more accountable, one can easily be lost in the jungle of the freedom of expression. The wind doesn't blow from one definite corner any more, it is constantly changing: instead of a safe harbour one has to sail on rough water. People have to learn: the once hated prisons are not 100% uncomfortable places. One can perhaps like their quiet safety, even from within.

The freedom of expression and so the freedom of the press is a natural entity within a free society, even if there are lots of evil excesses and the press can become one of the worst enemies of humanity with its manipulative power. There are certain tendencies in the Churches of Western Europe where Catholic journalists do not exercise their profession with due responsibility and love for the Church. Most Churches of Eastern Europe, on the other side, could not yet overcome their underground way of living and thinking. Secrecy and lack of information is still reigning, the faithful are not sufficiently informed and are not given an opportunity to express their views and exchange different ideas either with their fellow Christians or with the clergy. This is why one

can hardly speak about public opinion and a real inner-church dialogue. The reception of the Vatican II has not yet been finished, and the challenges for the future are to understand and welcome the synodal process launched by the Council and the idea of the Church as communion — with all the consequences for the field of social communication.

The dialogue has to be learnt and exercised in two directions: within the Church and with the world in which we live in.

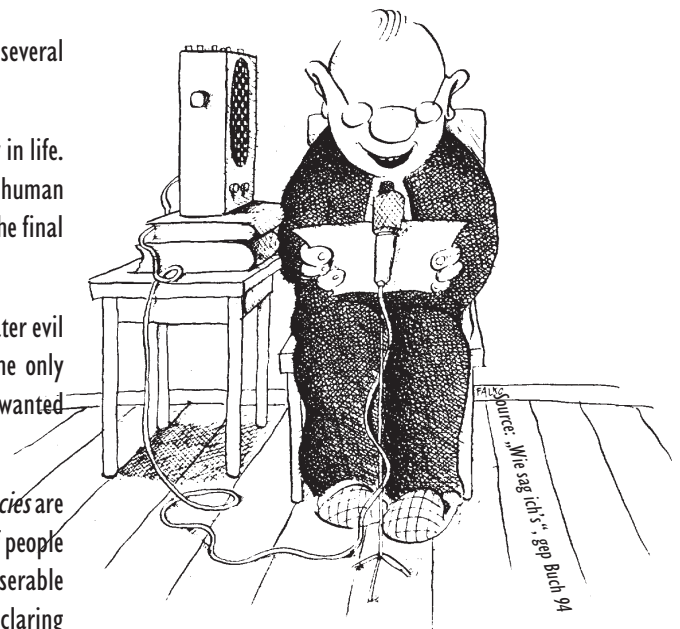
Following the guidelines of *Communio et Progressio* the role of Catholic press is not only to spread the faith and make official church documents available for the faithful, but also to create and promote public opinion. „Since the Church is a living body, she needs public opinion in order to sustain a giving and taking between the members. Without this she cannot advance in thought and action“, (Nr. 115). For this „individual Catholics have the right to all the information they need to play their active role in the life of the Church“, (Nr. 119). And: „Catholics should be fully aware of the real freedom to speak their minds, which stems from a feeling for the faith and from love“, (Nr. 116). The task is even more difficult in a relationship with the world. Monologue can be converted into a genuine dialogue only if both (or all) participants are ready to speak and to listen, when they are well informed and well disciplined, when they are stable in their views but humble and open to take the views of others into serious consideration. The Church in the countries of Eastern Europe was closed into a ghetto where a hostile press was led and controlled by a hostile ideology which attacked the Church in a continuous monologue and in which the Church had no chance for defence, response or any type of apology. No wonder that the spirit of dialogue has died out and contemporary culture in general is still considered as a dangerous enemy to be mistrusted. This defensive attitude is reinforced by the ongoing or restrengthened hostile tone of the new press which claims to be liberal. The liberal journalists of today are in fact the same persons as the Communist journalists of yesterday who fire against Christian ideas with the same fervour but now from the opposite direction. The new liberal press of the free market system wants to be sold and is therefore mainly a „gossip-monger“, chasing scandal stories even in the life of the Church or serving the anticlerical propaganda of the once-Communists sitting in influential positions even today.

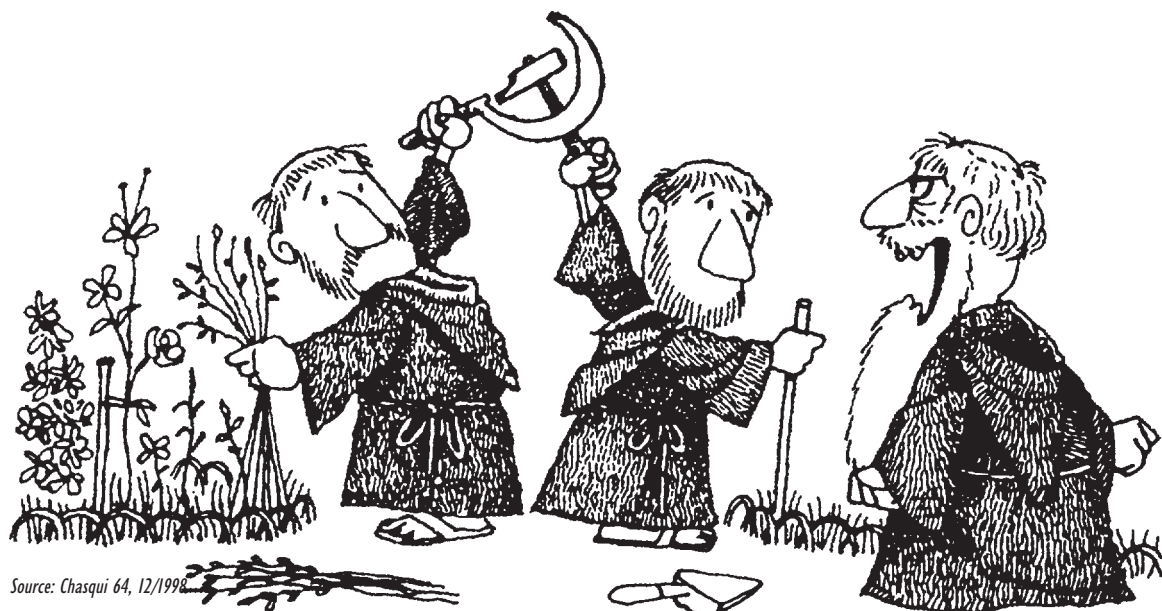
On the other side, in the society there is an immense expectation from the church in several respects.

a/ Many people in these societies live in a *spiritual vacuum*. They cannot find their way in life. Marxist ideology went into bankruptcy, no other valid philosophies have appeared on the human horizon, except practical materialism and consumerism. This, however, cannot answer the final questions of life: why do we live and what is the meaning of our lives?

b/ *Moral corruption*, the lack of all firmly established laws turns out to be an even greater evil than economical crisis. People cry for a better and more effective education, and the only credible institution for a proper education seems to be the church. Church schools are wanted by many people, believers and non-believers alike.

c/ With the introduction of private enterprise and free market economy *social discrepancies* are rapidly growing. A small group of society is getting wealthy, while an immense number of people live, with a growing bitterness and poverty, beneath the living standard and under miserable conditions. The only institution who could and should be in solidarity with the poor, declaring





Source: Chasqui 64, 12/1998

a clear *option for the poor*, is the Church, thus making credible its endeavor for a new Evangelisation.

How can the Church answer all these challenges without the proper means of communication, without getting into real dialogue with the whole of society, even outside the Church? How can the Church find its place in the society without paying attention to the „signs of the times“, without listening to the voices

— perhaps harsh and rude — coming from outside and without inviting all people of goodwill to help in the human development of the nation?

Ten years have passed since the collapse of communism. Still the most frequently quoted argument to explain any type of misery today is: „It is the heritage of the communist dictatorship“. It is now time to discover: with the passing of time there is less and less reason to use this argument. We have to turn to our future, and we can hardly use the reference of the past anymore. This phenomenon is in particular vividly experienced in church-life. A peculiar „persecution syndrome“ is still to be felt in a lot of Christians, mainly among the clergy. In other words: it is difficult to forget the times of oppression and persecution and change the attitudes caused by the continuous pressure of discrimination. As a consequence, the oppressors are to be blamed for all the failures, mistakes and weakness of persons and institutions in the Church.

This attitude may have dangerous consequences particularly in two areas:

Firstly: the system of self-control, the examination of conscience for the past, strategic planning, realistic analysis of the situation and feasibility study for the future have not yet been learnt and developed. The reason is that this type of activity is hardly known and exercised. The time of oppression was a favourable time for charismatic personalities and private adventures, but also destroyed the need for cooperation, organised structures, flexible adjustment to the external situation even in an economical sense. The outstanding partisans of the past are often unable to be enrolled into a regular army. As a result many people in the Church think they have a right to all subsidies, even without a realistic budget and regular control.

Secondly: the desire for freedom („free Church in a free state“) has been fulfilled in our days, but some people in the Church accept it with sober disappointment. What they really wanted was not genuine freedom but a privileged position in state and in the society. Some still dream about the myth of the pre-war past as the Church was still part of the establishment with

bishops sitting in the House of Lords with a rich and influential Church. It is hard to accept the fact that we are living in a pluralistic, democratic society, where the church has to find its own place within the society.

After four or more decades of persecution, fear is one of the most typical syndromes of the adult population. Not even people in the Church are spared from it. Three types of fear can be frequently detected even among the clergy and the hierarchy.

One is suspicion or even fear of Western Europe, the Churches in Western Europe included. Those who suffered under a totalitarian dictatorship and proved faithful to their faith and vocation, look at the Christians of the west as liberal, secularized, who betrayed their Church and Lord. This fear and suspicion has diminished but has not yet dissolved in a lot of people.

Secondly, many church officials have a fear of journalists. Generalising some bitter experiences, they condemn all the journalists and all the media, blaming them for most of the corruption and sin in our societies. The relationship between the Church and the press is not cloudless in many countries. More patience and effort should be invested to create better public-relations for the church.

Thirdly, most of the clergy has never confronted different views and has little experience and skill in having dialogues with people who have different ideas or ways of thinking. No culture of dialogue could develop in a monolithic society like the communist regime. There is a fear of dissident thinkers. In the spirit of the Vatican Council. II Christians ought to learn this attitude and the Catholic press can be their master — for good or for evil.

Media is a costly enterprise. The words of the famous Italian general, Montecuccoli are true even in this context: „There are three things necessary in war: Money, money and money“. I need not speak about the lack of financial resources in all these countries and the fact that they cannot build up a church media without essential aid from abroad. We have to add, however, that money alone is not sufficient, what is more it may have some dangerous effects.

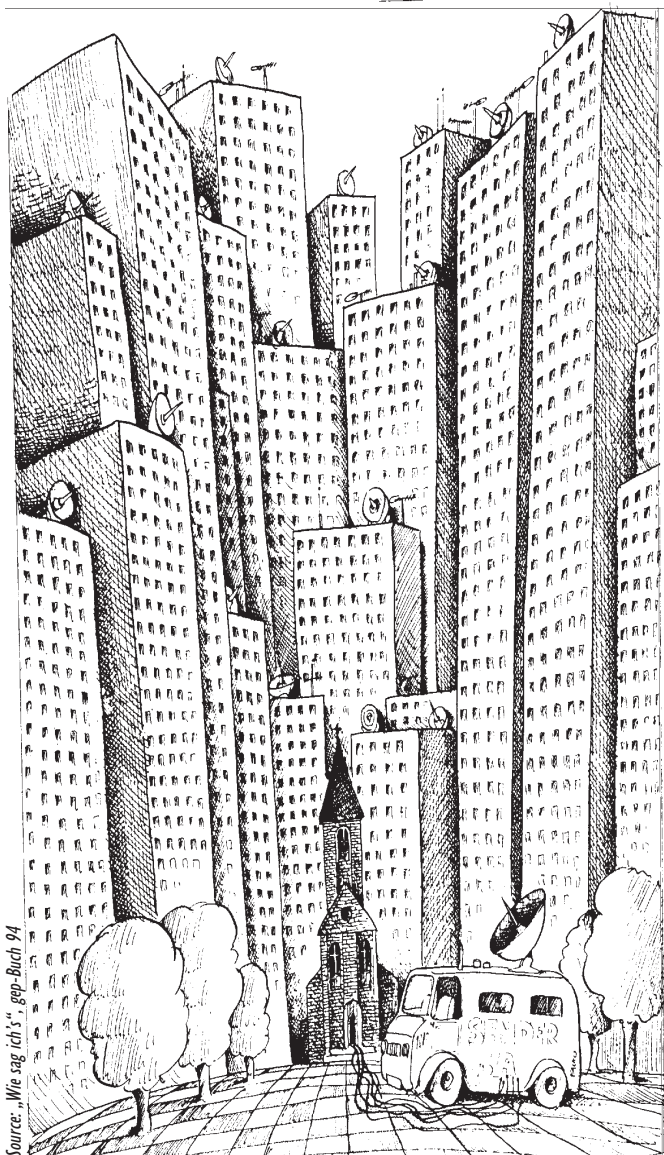
One compelling factor for making a realistic strategy for the media is not yet present in most post-communist countries, and this is — surprisingly — money. Because of their poverty most Catholic publications rely on western aid agencies. No one can deny the urgent necessity of this subsidy for the media. But as a consequence the church leaders or media professionals are not forced to make a feasibility study and a realistic strategy to achieve an economical balance for their publications. The result: though Church funding agencies try to make a „discernment of spirits“ and select between real needs or unreal dreams and wishes, however in some cases it is



still not quality or the real existing need or expectation of the readers that keeps a publication alive, but good personal contacts with some funding agencies.

The lack of a real analysis of the situation and strategic planning leads to some unreasonable and unrealisable wishes and dreams. Quite a number of church leaders and church members dream about a Catholic daily newspaper, some about a nationwide radio or even a television station with a 24 hour daily program, without taking their financial and human resources into consideration, or their situation in a pluralistic society and without pondering the advantages and the risks of such an enterprise.

In this way a pastoral plan for Catholic communications may be created, setting all the measures that can and should be taken in the future. Countries with a developed communications' system can help not only with money but perhaps with their expertise. The aid, however should be adjusted to the real situation of the respective country. The counselors must not arrive with fix clichés based on the media-life of their own country, they have to undertake a learning process to adjust their skills to the real possibilities and needs of the country, to the cultural and social context of that very Church.



Source: „Wie sag ich's“, gep-Buch 94

Church press was completely oppressed or strictly limited and controlled in most countries of Eastern Europe. Needless to say: no press, no machines (in many cases even simple typewriters were confiscated), no access to radio and TV and no Catholic journalists. What is more, due to the Marxist hegemony in culture, hardly any Christians had a chance to study arts in general or communication in particular. (As a result: the percentage of Christians is much less among those who studied literature or fine arts or philosophy, than among those who studied engineering or medicine.) Written and electronic press was in the hands of the party state. Consequently there were no or only very few Christian experts who could restart anything like a church press.

After the political changes when it became possible to publish Catholic periodicals and books and after the church had received access to public radio and television, doctors of medicine, engineers, teachers, students and other intellectuals with much good will and enthusiasm, with fervent Christian commitment but with no professional knowledge, edit Catholic monthlies and weeklies, make programs for radio and even for television. While the Catholic media field in Western Europe has an immense wealth in professional know-how, an elaborated network for Catholic publications and adequate financial background granted mostly by bishops' conferences, in the East a few lonely pioneers led a desperate struggle for economic survival, for improving their professional quality and for the training of young journalists.

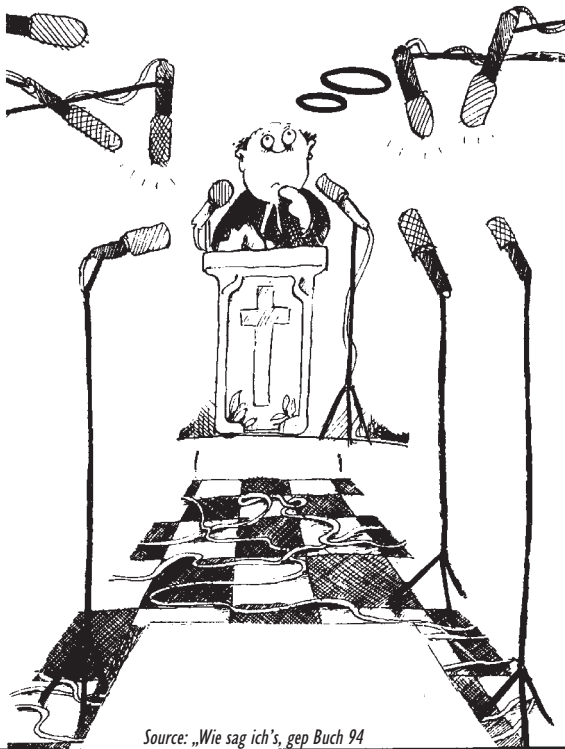
The scenario has changed for the better in the past three or four years, still the quality of the Catholic media is lower than much of the secular media. Professionalism is badly needed not only in the content and creation of productions but also in management, to adjust to the market economy and try to make a responsible and professional budget of their own resources.

As far as the printing press is concerned, there is an immense — perhaps greater than necessary — variety of publications. A surprising but also embarrassing richness with various advantages and disadvantages. By now there are several national and a lot of diocesan weeklies and monthlies in all post-communist countries, even in countries like Belarus, Bulgaria and Albania. The European part of Russia has a weekly since 1994 and another weekly exists since 1995 for the Catholics of Siberia (who number only 200,000, spread in an area of the biggest dioceses of the world).

Behind the promising results there are also some tensions and difficulties. In several countries there is no or hardly any coordination between the publications, no dialogue among the publishing houses and editorial offices, no survey about the real needs of the readers and no analysis about the financial possibilities. What is more, in some countries the church press is also divided by languages (e.g. in Romania or in Serbia) or even by rites: the Greek United Church has its own weekly in both countries. The question to be put is clear: who has the authority and responsibility to decide which publications should be preferred and which ones should be stopped? Which areas of pastoral life are neglected or forgotten? A serious warning sign of a possible crisis is that the circulation of many publications is diminishing. A new and reasonable project for the written press, a pastoral plan for the media is unavoidable.

There is an urgent need for education and training in the field of the media. Catholic communications need well trained experts who can produce high quality films or programs with a deserved name and fame even in the highly competitive field of the media. The situation differs again from country to country. In Poland there are four training centres for Catholic media, in other countries, however, education of Catholic journalists is still an unfulfilled dream. When possible, professional training should be achieved locally within the country, if there are institutions for higher education in the media in that country. It is strongly recommended that Catholic communicators should have a faithful commitment to the Church, but also a solid theological training.

We could continue enumerating the needs of these Churches in Central and Eastern Europe. But as I have to finish, let me do it in just one sentence. The challenge is immense, the possibilities and expectations are unique for these Churches. It is a real „Kairos“ to them and the call of the Lord must not be in vain, without our proper response. The grace of the Holy Spirit and the good will effort of so many committed Christians cannot remain in vain. We can trust in divine providence that our efforts will be accompanied by His blessing.



Source: „Wie sag ich's, gep Buch 94

Africa:

Hate Media - Peace Media

By **Julienne Munyaneza**

For decades, Africa has been known to be a continent of conflicts of all kinds. I don't have to tell you about it, this is common knowledge. It is also known that there are similarities in the causes behind those conflicts but also big differences.

Here are some examples: power or rather struggle for power (most of our leaders on the continent want to stay in power, they hang on to it even when constitutionally their term has ended and they have nothing more to contribute to the development of their country and to the well-being of their people, and they don't care who gets hurt in the process!).

To achieve this (I mean to stay in power), they rule with the so-called iron-fist and complicate the situation by introducing indirect conflicts which cannot be traced back to them but which involve more people. Here I am referring to tribalism/racism or ethnicity, regionalism, nepotism, religion, you can add to the list. In the whole process, they use different tools like bribery/corruption, blackmailing, scapegoating, detention, misuse of judicial power and law (change of constitution to suit their interests). There are also arranged accidents, threats, etc. And as you also know many such situations end up in national insecurities and instabilities which lead to wars and in extreme cases, to genocide like Rwanda.



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Think of what happened and is still happening in ex-Zaïre now the

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), or in my country Rwanda (but I will come to that in a moment), think of Kenya, Burundi and Togo and their aborted democracies, what about Congo Brazzaville, look at Sierra Leone, Liberia, Niger

and Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Ethiopia/Eritrea, etc. I don't want to talk about the situation in North Africa, especially Algeria, the conflict situation there is also unique. All this is really sad. And by the way, power is always linked to riches, money, thousands of acres of land, mansions inside the country and abroad, bank accounts in Zürich, etc. Just a small clique of people benefit from the economy of the country and the rest are rotting in misery (excuse the term but most of you know what I mean).

In most African countries, the mass media especially broadcasting (radio and television where it exists) more than the press, are government-owned and controlled. You know what that

entails. The mass media are made to serve as the mouthpiece of the leadership. Nothing goes without their permission. Censorship is at its highest. What else would you expect?

But the most common trend and most worrying aspect of it all lies in the fact that, those media are manipulated into serving as instruments of political and ideological propaganda. This goes without saying. The electronic media in particular are in some cases fashioned into tools of terror, as was the case in Uganda during Idi Amin's dictatorship who used radio to maintain his reign of terror. And the most recent example is of course the 'hate radio' also known as the 'killing radio', la Radio/Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) du Rwanda. Somehow Christine L. Kellow and H. Leslie Steeves argue along the same line that 'The government seeks to use its power over the media to exhort its citizens to greater effort and at the same time prevent the media either from questioning policy or being sufficiently critical of political authority'. (Kellow & Steeves, 1998, p. 115-6).

Unfortunately, in such cases, journalists find themselves faced with a big dilemma. They either participate actively in the government affairs or associate themselves with the leadership in place and allow themselves to be used by the politicians, by agreeing with them and supporting them all the way without comment. Or in rare cases, they may decide to make responsible judgements and stand up for reason and tell the truth, thus risking their very lives. You know for sure of journalists who were either detained or at the very worst assassinated or lynched for having disagreed with or contradicted the leadership. Examples are many in Rwanda, Algeria and elsewhere, even in the so-called developed countries!

With the introduction of the multiparty system, there is always a proliferation, a mushrooming of newspapers but unfortunately these are always full of a political party's ideology, and do nothing else than criticise the other(s).

Allow me to single out radio and say a few words about its impact in Africa. Many of you know that radio is still the most effective communication medium in Africa. It is the medium of the people, even those living in the remotest areas. Statistics tell us that more than 50% of the Black African population can neither read nor write. Oral communication still prevails in many societies. Of course the rate changes from country to country.

I have come to agree with Loraine Sweeney that in rural areas (she was referring to Rwanda but the same could be said of any other country), where „illiteracy predominates, radio propaganda is particularly powerful as people only understand information broadcast in their own language (here Kinyarwanda)“. (Sweeney, 1997, p.14). In cities, the attitude is different because the urban dwellers gain another point of view from different sources, other international radios, denied to the rural population who can only listen to the broadcasts in the local language. And the tragedy is that such 'Listeners tend to conceive the radio as literally the government itself speaking'. (Kellow & Steeves, 1998, p. 116). Did you know that in many African countries, people (men especially!) take their radio sets to the fields, to drinking places, markets and other meeting places? Did you know that radio is the first personal belonging people take with them when they flee a situation of crisis? And as I have mentioned earlier, African leaders have long recognised the impact of radio, and in many cases, the population takes the broadcast messages of their leaders as a law in itself to be obeyed blindly.

To have such a faithful audience can be beneficial if messages are positive and constructive, but

The 10 Hutu commandments

These so-called 10 Hutu commandments were first published on Dec. 10, 1990 by KANGURA. From its inception till the time it was destroyed, RTLM broadcasted them repeatedly:

1. Every Muhutu should know that a Mututsi woman, wherever she is, works for the interest of her Tutsi ethnic group. As a result, we shall consider a traitor any Muhutu who:

- * marries a Tutsi woman,
- * befriends a Tutsi woman,
- * employs a Tutsi woman as a secretary or a concubine.

2. Every Muhutu should know that our Hutu daughters are more suitable and conscientious in their role as woman, wife and mother of the family. Are they not beautiful, good secretaries and more honest?

3. Bahutu women, be vigilant and try to bring your husbands, brothers and sons back to reason.

4. Every Muhutu should know that every Mututsi is dishonest in business. His only aim is the supremacy of his ethnic group. As a result, any Muhutu who does the following is a traitor:

- * makes a partnership with Batutsi in business,
- * invests his money or the government's money in a Tutsi enterprise,
- * lends or borrows money for a Mututsi,
- * gives favours to Batutsi in business (obtaining import licences, bank loans, construction sites, public markets...).

5. All strategic positions, political, administrative, economic, military and security should be entrusted to Bahutu.

6. The education sector (school pupils, students, teachers) must be majority Bahutu.

7. The Rwandese Armed Forces should be exclusively Hutu. The experience of the October [1990] war has taught us a lesson. No member of the military shall marry a Tutsi.

8. The Bahutu should stop having mercy on the Batutsi.

9. The Bahutu, wherever they are, must have unity and solidarity, and be concerned with the fate of their Hutu brothers.

* The Bahutu inside and outside Rwanda must constantly look for friends and allies for the Hutu cause, starting with their Bantu brothers;

* They must constantly counteract the Tutsi propaganda;

* The Bahutu must be firm and vigilant against their common Tutsi enemy.

10. The Social Revolution of 1959, the Referendum of 1961, and the Hutu Ideology, must be taught to every Muhutu at every level. Every Hutu must spread this ideology widely. Any Muhutu who persecutes his brother Muhutu for having read, spread and taught this ideology, is a traitor.

also dangerously fatal if messages are destructive like the case of Rwanda. That's why the language used in the media, whether on radio or in newspapers, plays on people's psychology and feelings. Journalists know how to choose their words, full of imagery, describing, comparing, demonising, denouncing, inciting, insulting, poisoning, undermining, etc. They completely forget their code of conduct and media ethics.

It is not because 'all the devils met in Rwanda' as one British paper put it in 1994, but because of some egoistic and selfish people who never valued other people's life as their own, and loved power and money more than people.

Power-hungry people who did not want and would not admit that the time to share power and money had finally come. People who would not accept defeat even when it was obvious. And ironically in war like in love, all weapons are allowed.

Rwanda (and Burundi for that matter), was before 1994 and still is a typical rural country. Both countries have a history full of periodical and repetitive upheavals. Whatever happens in one affects the other deeply, and vice-versa. We are the same people, we have the same culture, speak the same language, have had common colonial masters, etc. But while the Rwandan genocide shook the world by its intensity in just three months, the Burundian killings have been going on for decades, no one can even guess how many Burundians have perished because of their ethnic group.

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda has been called a media war, why? Because 56% of the Rwandan population are or were illiterate, because Rwandans come from a hierarchical background where authorities were obeyed without flinching or questioning, and definitely because the government and the opposition 'transformed media into macro-agenda-setting tools with an agenda of ethnic hatred'. (Kellow & Steeves, 1998, p. 116). Not to allow the language used by *RTLM* and some journals like *Kangura* (to wake Hutus up) get at you was just a miracle. I will give one example only, the Hutu 10 commandments. In broad terms, if you were a Hutu, you were incited to defend your honour through violent acts and brutality, as a Tutsi you were made to feel undesirable, a dangerous insect, a cockroach to be crushed, an enemy. The genocide in Rwanda found a ready, fertile ground. The majority of the population was angry, insecure, very poor, while a few hundreds were living in opulence. People were hungry for a change, any change. That's why they participated body and soul in the killings. How else do you explain a man killing his wife and children and vice-versa, just because the radio tells them so? No way! (See the copy of the 10 Hutu commandments on the previous page).

In Rwanda there have been claims that the Churches allowed the conflict to get out of control by their silence. It has even been proved, I am pained to say, that most of the Church leaders, whether Catholic or Protestant, because of their involvement with and support of the former regime, were unable to speak out against its excesses and evil doings.



Many church people, priests, nuns, pastors and bishops, have been accused of having participated in the killings. Some are even languishing in prisons like any other criminals, others are living in exile.

While it would be an exaggeration to label church leaders as the initiators of the conflict, one wonders however what the outcome of the conflict would have been if the Churches had played a prophetic role – by being at the forefront, denouncing evil and wrong-doings of the politicians, by speaking out against discrimination and bigotry, by making declarations, giving warnings to their people and inter-preting the political messages through civic education, for the Christians. As a consequence of their compromising passivity,

the Churches are currently struggling to wash off the stigma of some of their sectors for having turned a blind eye to the 1994 genocide and having colluded with a murderous government. They are now involved in peace building, trauma counselling and healing, and reconciliation programmes.

Do peace media exist? What are they? How do they function? In other words, can the media play a positive constructive role especially in Africa?

They definitely can. But unfortunately, we think of the positive role of the media, a curative one, after conflicts have destroyed people's lives and the socio-economic fabric of a nation is torn in pieces. Following what happened and is still happening in the Great Lakes Region and in other

sub-regions on the continent, *WACC* in collaboration with other partners launched a very interesting programme targeting armed conflict and other critical situations with special emphasis on the role of the media. I know also for sure that *PANOS* Institute is doing the same. Under this programme, radio broadcasts in Rwanda, focusing on reconciliation, trauma healing, peaceful cohabitation, forgiveness, love, etc. have been supported through the Council of Churches. Church-owned or related newsletters *BATISSONS - LET'S BUILD TOGETHER* trying to bring together through reconciliation and forgiveness Tutsis and Hutus; *TALK I'M LISTENING* which addresses issues related to women who were subjected to all kinds of abuse during the genocide, have been and are still published. In Burundi, *LOVE EACH OTHER* radio programmes and newsletters are being produced. The *MEDIATOR* magazine is published in English, French for the whole Great Lakes Region putting a special emphasis on personal testimonies which show that peaceful cohabitation is still possible, and many more.

We have also supported a consultation on „The role of traditional/cultural ways of communication e.g. dance, music, poetry, drama/theatre...) and the search for common values“ in Burundi and Rwanda. Media can promote common values instead of focusing on the differences. You will be surprised to see how effective these are in bringing together people who otherwise should be fighting each other. When we dance or sing, in Rwanda and Burundi, you could not tell who is who because we dance the same, sing the same. And when we sing or dance, or dramatise a story, we are one.

At that particular consultation, the following topics were addressed:

- The role of traditional communications in building a culture of peace;
- The concepts of music and dance for peace;
- Education to the culture of peace in Rwanda and Burundi with references to traditional values;
- How to integrate church music in the process of peace-building;
- Poetry, story-telling and theatre in conflict resolution and reconciliation in both countries.

WACC would like to make these kind of activities an ongoing priority because they involve people from all fields of life, from grassroots to the educated groups.

At the continental level, *WACC-AFRICA REGION (WACC-AR)* has started holding a series of seminars on *The role of the media in building a culture of peace and stability in Africa*. The launching seminar took place in Kigali in March 1999 and participants came from Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC. Unfortunately nobody represented Congo Brazzaville. The next one will be in West Africa. Liberia and Sierra Leone will be among the participating countries. In the year 2000, we plan to hold two meetings: one for the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa, the other for Southern Africa involving Angola, Mozambique and the rest.

‘We believe that in focusing our media initiatives on conflict resolution and prevention, we will, however humbly, help towards the realisation of the prophet Isaiah’s dream of a world devoid of war-mongering and sabre-rattling - no matter how long it takes’. (*WACC-AR Magazine, Beacon*). And by the way, if we need peace media, we also need peace-making, peace-building and mediating journalists. And I am convinced that this is feasible but we need to work together, all of us.

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ELCM Community Radio during War-Time Liberia:

For Peace and Justice

By Archbishop Michael Kpakala Francis, Monrovia

"The genius of humankind, especially in our times, has produced marvellous technical inventions from creation, with God's help. Mother Church is particularly interested in those which directly touch the human spirit and which have opened up new avenues of easy communication of all kinds of news, ideas and directives. Chief among them are those methods of communication which by their nature can reach and influence not just single individuals but the very masses and even the whole of human society. These are the press, the cinema, radio, television and others of like nature. These can rightly be called the means of social communication."

"Mother Church knows that if these means are properly used they can be of considerable benefit to humanity. They contribute greatly to relaxation, the enrichment of peoples' minds and the spread and consolidation of the kingdom of God." (Inter Mirifica I.)

"At the dawn of a new era, a vast expansion of human communications is profoundly influencing culture everywhere. Revolutionary technological changes are only part of what is happening. Nowhere today are people untouched by the impact of the media upon religions and moral attitudes, political and social systems, and education." (Aetatis Novae I.)



Dr. Michael Kpakala Francis was ordained Archbishop of Monrovia in 1981. He is also President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Liberia and Executive Member of the Liberian Council of Churches and the Inter-Faith Council of Liberia.

Convinced of the necessity, urgency and needs of communicating God's word and the truth — in faith we established the ELCM Community Radio Station in Monrovia in 1981. It was a year after the bloody coup of 1980. We had tried to get the necessary license from the civilian government before the coup of 1980 but we were not successful. There was already a powerful fundamentalist radio station.

It was the military government that granted us the license and the vice-head of state who opened the station on March 8, 1981.

In 1978, the Archdiocese of Monrovia applied to the government of Liberia for a license to operate a radio station. Although there were two radio stations in the country, one the government's

ELBC and the other, a religious station ELWA, the government did not give us the license but used delaying tactics — why, I don't know.

In April 1980, there was a bloody coup and the civilian government was overthrown. A military junta took its place. In September of 1980, we again applied to the government showing our previous application. We were granted the license. With the help of the SMA Fathers in the USA, we purchased an FM station and established ELCM Community Radio, the first Catholic radio station in West Africa, if not in the whole of Africa. It is ironic that a military government was the one to grant the license for operation.

There were three phases in the operation of ELCM Community Radio:

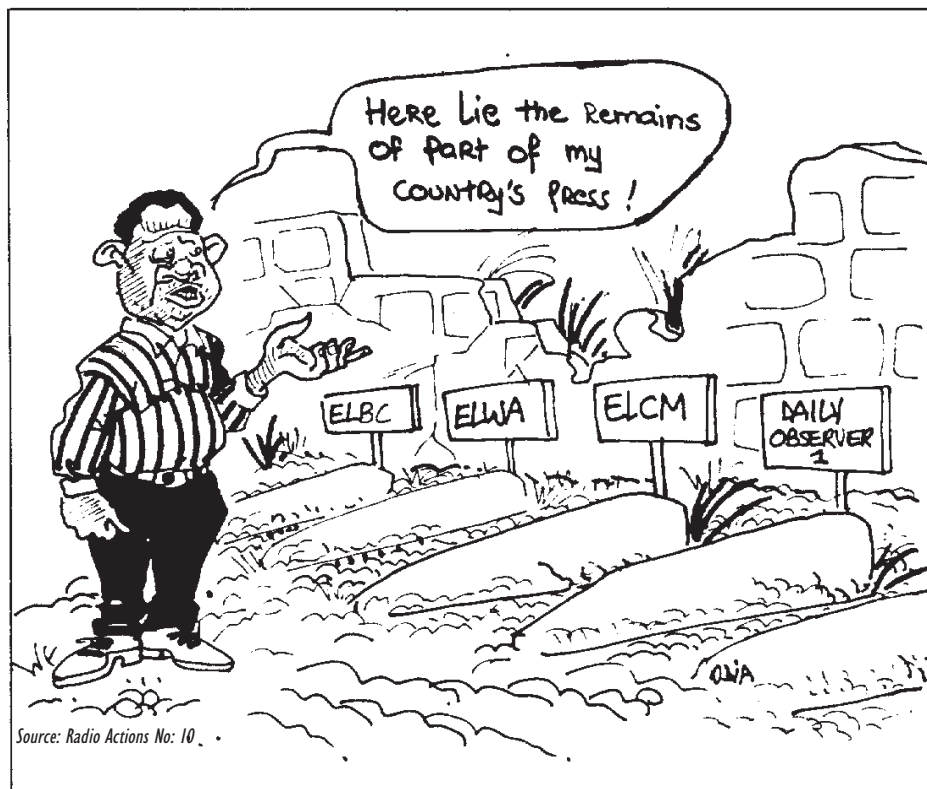
- a) 1981 - 85: Military Regime
- b) 1986 - 89: Civilian Government
- c) 1990 - 96: Civil Crisis

At the beginning of our operation as a community radio the government was favourable to this new station in that there was no molesting or curtailing of our freedom to broadcast the truth in all its forms and dimensions. As the government became repressive and as we were the only radio station that addressed itself not only to religious matters but especially to the social evils that existed, we gradually became targets of the Ministers of Information and Telecommunication. During the election campaign of 1985, I was called several times by the Head of State to be warned that our station was one of opposition. This became serious when we interviewed leaders of the opposition concerning the rigged elections. We explained our situation and requested that if the military government found anything we broadcasted to be contrary to the facts they may take us to court and we would have our day there. They threatened that our license would be withdrawn but we remained undaunted, for we believed we were doing and saying the right things.

Though the government threatened us they never attacked the station or closed it down.

In 1989 there were elections followed by protest as they were openly rigged. Mr. Doe, the military junta leader was “elected”, with everyone admitting that the elections were rigged. Two weeks after these rigged elections there was an invasion by Liberian dissidents to overthrow Mr. Doe which he suppressed violently resulting in the loss of thousands of lives. From 1986 - 1990 the regime violated all aspects of human rights, Liberia was virtually a police state. ELCM Community Radio had to address the questions posed and give answers in these years of state terrorism. Of course it became the target of the government but it forged on regardless of the consequences — preaching peace, reconciliation, justice and fair play.

In February 1989 I issued a pastoral letter on human rights condemning in clear and precise



forms what was happening in Liberia and proposing remedies. I read the pastoral letter on the radio programme, as I am accustomed to doing. The government was angry but could not legally close the radio station. A few months later — June 1989 — it summoned up the courage to shut us down due to, as they put it, subversion. We told our lawyer to sue the government but he was afraid and delayed. ELCM Community Radio was closed, as the late President Doe said, forever.

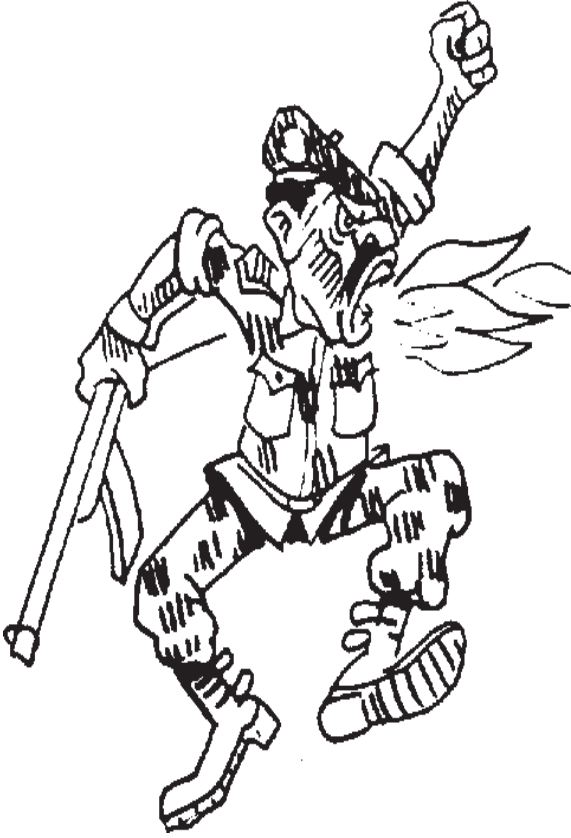
In March 1990, when the rebels came from the north to Monrovia to unseat Mr. Doe's government, he lifted the ban on ELCM and we were told we could operate again. We wisely refused to do so. In fact, as the civil war came nearer to Monrovia we disabled the station so that no faction, be it governmental or any of the then two rebel factions would take it over, as surely one of them would attempt. This was a wise move.

The station was damaged during the fight in Monrovia in 1990. In late 1991, when the rebels had been driven from Monrovia, we purchased a new FM Transmitter and were back on the air — preaching peace, reconciliation and educating the people about their rights and responsibilities — condemning in the process the atrocities being perpetuated by the warring factions.

On April 6th, 1999 fighting broke out in Monrovia and on the 12th of April 1996, ELCM Community Radio was burnt down to the ground by the so-called "government" troops — two of the warring factions. The reasons were obvious: ELCM Community Radio Station was against the violation of human rights and was preaching peace, reconciliation, etc.

Undaunted, we changed the name of our station from ELCM Community Radio to Radio Veritas and were on the air just before the elections of 1997 — it was in June in a new location and with the new name, Radio Veritas, that we continued our mission — interrupted for a year — to educate our people on peace, reconciliation, reconstruction and respect for the fundamental rights of our people. With an FM and SW transmitter we are doing just this. As with all the former governments we have also had problems with the present one but we are continuing the evangelization of our people. There are now good positive relations between Radio Veritas and the government — the Ministers of Information and Telecommunications.

I. Despite our limited resources, we continue to be an instrument of reconciliation and an educator of our people on their rights and obligations. From the latest independent survey, 80%



of radio listeners tune in to Radio Veritas.

2. During the war and now, we have continued advocating reconciliation dialogue and peace. The government and the people know we have been consistent in this and that we will continue. When all independent electronic media during the heat of the war was closed, we rose up and continued our electronic apostolate. We have, according to an independent assessment, done tremendous work for the peace process.

3. We have had very dangerous moments and

difficult times but by trusting in God and our commitment to be the voice of the voiceless we continued to be on the air.

Our radio apostolate was and is the most valuable contribution to the peace process and reconciliation in Liberia. Ours is a radio trusted by the generality of our people. The media — in this particular case the electronic media — has played a tremendous part in bringing us to where we are and in spite of the difficulties, threats and obstacles that came our way — we have survived.

Even our critics have admitted that we were objective and had, as one supreme principle, the aim to bring the truth to all for it is in knowing the truth and accepting it that we can have true reconciliation. Through justice, peace and truth are brought to us.

The civil crisis in Liberia from 1989 - 1997 showed us the tremendous impact the news media had and still has on our people for better or for worse. In our case it was for better and we are proud of our achievements despite the limited resources and the many serious and dangerous difficulties that came our way. We did our best and the country, it seems to me, is better for it.

The stopping of the fighting is just the beginning of the peace process and the healing of the deep-seated wounds. Every village and hamlet in Liberia has someone with a transistor radio and so, through the radio we continue to educate our people about the necessity of reconciliation, the need to respect the rights of others and the need to love each other - justice, peace and love.

WORKSHOP 1:

Media as Peace Makers or War-Mongers

With two keynote speeches, the poles of the workshop “Media as Peace Makers or War-Mongers” had already been set: *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTML)* in Rwanda, the radio station, that has become a symbol of hate radio throughout the world and *ELCM Community Radio* (later called *Radio Veritas*), which advocated for reconciliation, dialogue and peace in war-time Liberia. Therefore the participants of this workshop used the time for discussions, concentrating on radio in Africa, although everybody was aware that hate radios are a world-wide phenomenon, occurring since the medium radio exists.

Reflecting on their own experiences, the participants mentioned a variety of different factors, giving evidence to the complex situation in each conflict area, which can contribute to violent crises and agreed that the media could not be considered as being isolated from their social environment. The first theme agreed on in the workshop was:

(1) To encourage violence or to foster conflicts — between races, ethnic or social groups — hate radios have to find fertile ground in society (in the socio-economic factors, the power structures and/or the value system).

However, media and particularly radio is a powerful tool especially in rural areas in Africa, where we find a high rate of illiteracy, where people don't have access to any other news medium, and tend to consider the radio as literally the government itself speaking. Thus radio becomes an “authority”, which can create a “faithful” audience. On a background like this, the influence of radio may be considered extremely important.

At the same time, the possibilities to counteract processes of negative image-building are restricted, where journalists can either support the government or risk their lives if they are not “just” detained. In addition, the small possibilities of at least passive resistance may be further lessened by a lack of professional skills.

Under such circumstances hate messages could be spread quite effectively and could manipulate people even against their own value system, as experienced in the case of Rwanda.

However, some of the participants learned from their own work, that:

(2) The usage of radio for reconciliation and the promotion of peace is limited.

Here the responsibility of the Churches as a national protagonist was emphasised, which may be particularly important because of the lack of other strong civic organisations.

(3) Media can play a significant role in countries where we already find at least a “negative” peace (meaning the absence of war) but a “positive” peace has to be created, also including values like justice, safety, tolerance, charity, trust etc.

The following factors were identified as being important to contribute to the media playing a constructive role for peace-keeping or -building:

- **Professionalism:** The conveyance of professional skills can enable journalists to balanced and objective reporting, to reflect about the role of journalism in their societies, and to foster the

ethical standards of their profession, which may also lead to a certain amount of independence of the respective authorities. Fair and reliable news coverage is the basis for not becoming an instrument of the pure propaganda purposes of either side, and gives the chance to act and to take decisions based on facts and not just on images or rumours.

- *Proper Payment:* Adequate salaries are a prerequisite for journalists and producers in many countries in Africa to really concentrate on their media job and to prevent them from being susceptible to bribery.

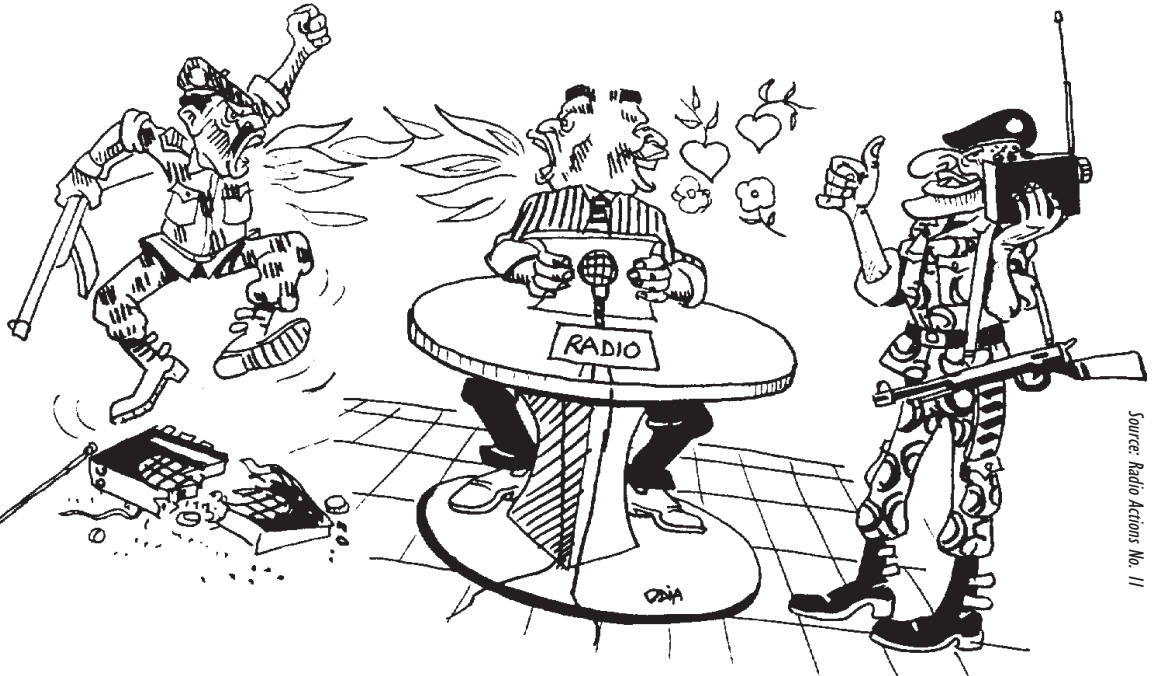
- *Networking:* On the national level, strong journalists' associations could be the promoters of ethical values, and a common counterpart against all other interest groups trying to use the existing media for their own purposes. The creation of an international public could function as a shield for endangered journalists, to protect them from violence, imprisonment, torture or killing.

- *International support:* Financial support from foreign organisations could in many cases help to guarantee the independence of the media. However, all participants could report about a number of failed projects in that field. It was agreed, that all respective measurements should be undertaken only through the help of "local antennas", to make sure, that a project really fits into a certain society and the projected aims may be realised.

- *Traditional means of communications:* Theatre, dramas, poetry, music, storytelling, dance are traditional means of communications, which are considered quite effective. To boost reconciliation processes, they should concentrate on common grounds rather than differences between the hostile groups, to open up new perspectives of a peaceful future development in the promotion of peace processes. Most of them can at least partly be taken over by the media. The existing oral informational systems can also be used by the planned spreading of "positive rumours".

- *International stations:* In situations of civil wars or dictatorship, the programmes of the international radio stations like the *BBC*, *Radio France International*, or the *Deutsche Welle* (*Voice of Germany*) can still play an important role, because they may pick up topics or address issues the local stations would not dare to broadcast.

- *Specific potentials of each medium:* Every medium has its strengths and weaknesses and specialities, which should be considered when human rights issues or questions of truths and reconciliation are addressed, personal testimonies are published, processes of trauma counselling, of education through entertainment or of social action groups are supported. A. *Sofie Jannusch*



Source: Radio Actions No. 11

*For a brief overview and further information about hate and peace radios on all continents, see the web sites from Radio Netherlands, where Morand Fachot gives an overview of the current hate and peace radio stations under the address: <http://www.rnw.nl/realradio/information/html/hateintro.html>

WORKSHOP 2:

Is there any Perspective of Self-Sustenance for the Press in Africa?

From the time of independence until the end of the eighties — with the exception of Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa — Catholic newspapers in most of the African countries were the only independent voices. It was the time of state media and of state and party monopoly of the media.

During all these decades, as well as during the fight for independence, the Catholic press composed great pages on the history of their respective countries. Some of the editors-in-chief and responsables of these newspapers were the real fighters for independence, and later for the freedom and development of their people : in this regard we could mention l'Effort Camerounais, Moto in Zimbabwe, Lakroa n'i Madagasikara . . .

In 1980 as CAMECO in collaboration with WACC and the Lutheran World Federation published the first volume of the "Christian Communication Directory" many newspapers already existed, some having quite a high circulation (see table Nr. 1).

At the end of the eighties as the wind of democracy swept over the continent, it brought an unexpected mushrooming of new newspapers in most of the countries, as well as a deregulation of the communication laws.

While in many countries so far only a few titles were known (governmental, and sometimes one or two „independent“ voices, mainly produced by the Church), many new and independent newspapers were on the market in a very short time, debating on all issues, in particular on politics.

According to an article written by PANOS Paris „in 1994 in the 12 Francophone and Lusophone West African countries there were 131 newspapers, 103 of which were less than 5 years in existence“!

The Golden Age of the Catholic press in Africa is over. The still existing Catholic press, as well as some new titles which they would like to produce, for instance in Guinea, Burkina Faso, RDC, Angola . . . does not give the impression that they have a new vision, nor that they have realised that Africa has changed or that they have to face a completely different communication landscape. They have competitors, among whom a few are really excellent, and attractive to the (few) readers.

The printing press as a whole printing industry (book publishing) must face innumerable difficulties in the present situation of Africa today:

- Low rate of literacy, and a tremendous lack of reading culture
 - Low standard of living of the population, while at the same time the production costs and the selling prices of the newspapers are very high, making them unaffordable for the people : for example, in RD Congo the selling price of a daily newspaper is the equivalent of US\$ 1.00 !
 - Poor means of communication for collecting the information and for organising an efficient and proper distribution; the newspapers and print media in Africa are mainly for the elite and urban population
 - Strong competition from radio and audio-visuals
- However, internal points have to be mentioned too, for instance
- Many newspapers are very poor in terms of content: many are rather (politically) propaganda-oriented, or report more rumours than information
 - Among the journalists, there is a great lack of „general“ culture and of „journalistic“ culture, as well as lack of professionalism (journalistic skills and ethics). It is very common to blame the lack of training — or to say this in a more positive way — to recommend better training and qualifications for journalists and managers.
 - But there are also many well trained and competent journalists in Africa. „But how can we carry out this job, when we have such bad salaries, no social security, no future after retirement. . . and when we have to search for ways to feed the children, to take care of the family. . . “ In this case the journalist is a „mercenary“ instead of a servant of the truth!
 - The relevance of the newspapers also has to be questioned.

In the eighties we arrived at some proposals to give a certain self-sustenance to the press in Africa: one solution was to develop a joint-venture between the newspapers and a printing press,

Table 1:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Circulation in 1980</i>	<i>Circulation in 1998</i>	<i>Periodicity</i>
La Croix du Bénin	Benin	7,000	3,500	Weekly
Ndongezi	Burundi	10,000	5,000	Fortnightly
Effort Camerounais	Cameroon	suspended	4,000	Weekly
La Semaine Africaine	Congo-Brazzaville	6,500	1,500	Weekly
The Standard	Ghana	25,000	8,000	Weekly
Lakroa n'i Madagasikara	Madagascar	6,500 15,000 in 1990	5,500	Weekly
Kinyamateka	Rwanda	9,500 14,000 in 1981	15,000	Fortnightly
Afrique Nouvelle	Senegal	9,300	Stopped in 1987	Weekly
Umafrika	South Africa	16,000 in 1980 over 60,000 around 1990	25,000	Weekly
Kiongozi	Tanzania	69,000 up to about 100,000 copies in the past	8,000	Fortnightly
Munno	Uganda	7,000	Stopped in 1988	Daily



Sources: New People 3./16.05./8/9.1999

to establish a supportive link between them, to create „press groups“.

In the Catholic Church, there were some tentative reactions in this respect:

- in Senegal: „Afrique Nouvelle“ and l’Imprimerie Saint-Paul
- in Cameroon first of all: „L’Effort Camerounais“ and l’Imprimerie Saint Paul, and now: MACACOS in Douala
- in Zimbabwe “Moto” — Mambo Press
- in Rwanda: “Kinyamateka” — Pallotti Presse (created in 1985)
- in Madagascar: “Lakroa” — Saint Paul Fianarantsoa
- in Congo-Brazzaville: “La Semaine Africaine” for whom a new printing press integrated into COMAFRIQUE was created, but the project failed and a new structure was developed...

This joint venture pursued two objectives : firstly, it could be expected that by being produced by its own printing press the production costs would be lower, and secondly thanks to commercial jobs, the printing press — as a productive and profit-making enterprise — was supposed to generate some profit which would finance the newspaper. We have to accept that this great hope of the eighties has failed in every respect. The only exception was Pallotti Press in Rwanda which succeeded in allocating an annual subsidy for the newspaper for about 7 years ... until the genocide in 1994!

Why did this dream fail? Using the experience and expertise of resource people participant in the workshop, Mr. Gerard Tassinari who is at the present time the technical adviser of the Episcopal Conference of Congo in the merging process of the Catholic printing presses in that country as well as Bro. Karl Kälin, the CAMECO technical adviser in the field of printing presses who knows most of the Catholic printing presses in Africa, the workshop tried to analyse and understand the reasons for their failure. From their experience they underline that the idea of combining a newspaper and a printing press as a productive and profit-making branch, is still at least in theory, brilliant and meaningful. In most cases, the problems and the failures are located in the lack of management and human capacities!

However, most probably the quality of the newspapers is also an important factor. Reporting on the results of the in-depth evaluation of the Catholic weekly, “Lakroa N’i Madagasikara” (Madagascar) conducted last year, Prof. Frédéric Antoine from the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium) pointed out some important questions: What kind of newspaper do the Churches produce? For whom ? How can newspapers in Africa become relevant and attractive to the people? to the readers? to the buyers? As regards the Church, is it a priority to launch newspapers for urban and educated people or to start „post-literacy“ and „rural“ newspapers produced in the local languages: i.e. „Tekemanayi“ in Kananga, DRC, which had a circulation of more than 25,000 copies a few years ago, and still has a circulation of about 11,000; or „Isika Mianakavy“ in Madagascar (17,000 copies in 1980 and now about 25,000)?

But a newspaper consists not only of a concept and a content. Even the best vision is not sufficient to establish a newspaper on a sound basis: the press is also a business! Where is the African press today, and where is the Church in this respect?

Michel Philippart

WORKSHOP 3:

Television Civil Society and the Church

During the last years, television has gained importance in audience' preference nearly all over the world. More and more, television tends to be the medium accompanying people in their everyday lives — a role, which up to several years ago, was played by radio. Accordingly, the Catholic Church is asking more strongly how she should and how she wants to be present in TV.

Based on the experiences of Catholic TV activities in Poland [see the following contribution from P. Grzegorz Dobroczyński SJ] and in Latin America, the participants in the workshop "Television, Civil Society and the Church" collected and discussed criteria for an appropriate (and reasonable) involvement of the Church in television: Under which circumstances should the Church install and operate her own TV stations, and when would it be preferable to place church programmes in existing public and/or commercial TV channels?

The first result of the discussion was clearly that there is no „either/or“, no general „Yes“ or „No“ for one of these options. Both possibilities of the Church's presence in TV have their pros and cons, their specific advantages and their risks. However, there was a clear agreement that the church should use all existing possibilities to insert or participate both in the public and in the commercial direction.

To be able to make any proper decision on the most appropriate way, a profound diagnosis of the existing television landscape should be realised. How should and could the Church be present in that specific context? For example there is a difference in implementing a Church community television channel in a rural area, where nearly no local programmes exist and only national television channels can be watched — or in establishing a national Catholic station within a quite saturated television market (as the one in most Latin American countries). Both situations demand specific concepts including programme profiles, personnel, financing and technical infrastructure. And of course, the local Church should examine her corresponding sources very carefully.

Based on this analysis, the next fundamental question would be the types of programmes to be transmitted: Should the future television involvement of the local Church concentrate on pastoral and catechetical programmes — or are those responsible interested, willing and able to offer a broad range of productions, including e.g. news and general information as well as entertainment? To answer this question, it is also necessary to define who the target audience of the Church's TV programmes is. Are the programmes produced under Church auspices mainly oriented to a Catholic public with a close link to the church — or should the presence of the church in TV open new ways to reach the people, including those with a greater distance to religious questions? And what would be the most appropriate means to reach the defined objective, taking audience habits and the media context also into account?

An essential aspect to be examined very carefully is the financial sustainability of the Church's TV involvement. To run a television channel professionally with high quality programmes is a very costly undertaking. Church channels will only be able to compete in a specific TV market, if they attract not only a big share of the audience but also a sufficient number of enterprises

who will place their commercials in that channel, allowing a stable financial basis for the station. According to experiences gained in Latin America, this normally means that a Catholic station won't be able to run on a financially self-reliant basis if the programme profile is orientated mainly towards explicit evangelisation. If access to public or commercial TV is possible, it can be economically more interesting to concentrate on TV production — i.e. to equip a church-owned production centre to prepare one or two hours of high quality programmes per week with a well-defined profile.

There was a clear agreement among the participants of the workshop, that there should be qualified people for the church related television activities. Thus, more attention should be paid to the training of these producers. Additionally, the operation of some solid production centres, well equipped and well staffed with the right resources to prepare excellent productions is preferable to a large number of small units with a low standard. Within the Church, we must therefore improve on our ability to share resources, talent, techniques and technology to come up with really effective productions.

Taking into account the actual developments in the field of television, i.e. a growing number of channels with more diversified programme profiles for very specific target groups, the Church could prepare herself to run special channels for special audiences where people can get top class church programmes, similar to other secular channels where they have quality channels and quality programmes for special interest groups.

Daniela Frank

Poland:

Church in Public Service TV

By P. Grzegorz Dobroczyński SJ

During the Polish communist regimes in the years 1945 to '89, the state-owned media — and starting in the sixties the state-owned television — were the means of anti-religious and anti-Church propaganda. Even if some presence of the Catholic press and publications were allowed, their circulation was very limited and the contents strictly controlled by state and party authorities. Officially declared „freedom“ was subject to many forms of limitations. In broadcasting, not only the content of the programming was planned according to propaganda rules, the same applied to the „human resources policy“. People who openly confessed to be Catholics and/or were not members of the communist party (or its ally) could not work in any state-owned editorial. The journalistic departments of universities were just propaganda formation courses. They were also regarded by intelligence and secret security services as the base for recruitment of their new functionaries.

The conditions mentioned above can explain the genesis of an important actual problem of the Church communities in the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe. The understanding of the Church in communist media was obviously one of a hostile ideological force which had a big potential power over the working class. The communist ideology collapsed, but the paradigm of the Church as a purely sociological group empowered with big influence upon the people has remained. Even in countries like the Czech Republic where Catholics form a minority, and where Church practices are very limited, the paradigm has been preserved. In most countries, where communist ideology was replaced by extreme liberalism, the media coverage tends to prove that the totalitarian structure of the ancient regime was replaced by the Church. According to popular saying „reds have gone — blacks have come“, independent media see their role in uncovering the threat of Church dictatorship.

Another tendency is to focus attention on Church hierarchy and clergy only. The lay people are often forgotten as active Church members, with the exception of some coverage of liturgical events or folk traditions connected with feasts and solemnities.

Both biases have to be taken into account by those now involved in Church broadcasting.

The experience of the last ten years shows that not only the use of the media and the presentation of the Church in the media need to be corrected. A profound change in understanding the media as such is still urgently needed. This change should be achieved on both sides: on the one hand by media managers and journalists and on the other hand by the Church herself. The propaganda model of viewing mass media as a kind of one-way transmission is still present in the minds of people. In Polish it has its linguistic shadow in the term „śródku masowego przekazu“ (= media for mass transmission). The word „przekaz“ means „order“, „ordering“. So it is a pervasive element which is seen as dominating in media understanding. The notion of mass communication doesn't seem to be very present in the consciousness of all. In the present situation it may be in danger of deforming the evangelising mission of the Church into a new kind of propaganda activity confirming the biases of Church presentation in mass media.

The Church in Poland got the government's guarantee to have access to state-owned media shortly before the elections of June 1989 took place. The communist party, seeing the unavoidable crisis, was trying to seek a dialogue partner within the Church. One of the agreements, stated by the „Law on the mutual relationships between the Catholic Church and the People's Republic of Poland“ of May 1989 stated that the Church has the right not only to be present in state-owned radio and television, but also to establish her own radio stations and television network. Accordingly, in autumn of 1989 the first departments for radio and television programmes started their work.

The further base was a special agreement signed by the Secretary of the Polish Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Bronisław Dąbrowski, and the head of the Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting, regulating concretely the air times and the types of programmes allowed to be aired. The staff was first paid by the Church, slowly being passed on to be financed by the state



Source: „Wie są ich 5“, gep Buchi 1994

television (or radio) budgets, and from there to be acknowledged fully as an interior part of the structure of both: Polish Television and Polish Radio broadcasting houses.

The presence, even if established, was however not deprived of problems. Two major phases can be distinguished here:

People working on Church broadcasting were seen as „Church agents“, new „apparatchicks“ and „Church propagandists“. Budgets were limited, all sorts of obstacles were found to make the production more difficult. The situation was also connected to the political power-play. This period was in the years of the first term of Solidarity governments. Mass media milieu was a kind of open opposition against it.

„Time is the best medicine“ — people say — to cure human problems. This was also the case in the overcoming of hostility in the case of religious programming on Polish broadcasting. As time was passing, even the greatest opponents got used to the Church's presence on state media.

In 1993, the Bill on Public Broadcasting was passed in Parliament, giving new status and new responsibilities to the former state broadcasting companies. The public service ideal was slowly changing the mentality of producers and media managers, giving more and more space for Church programmes.

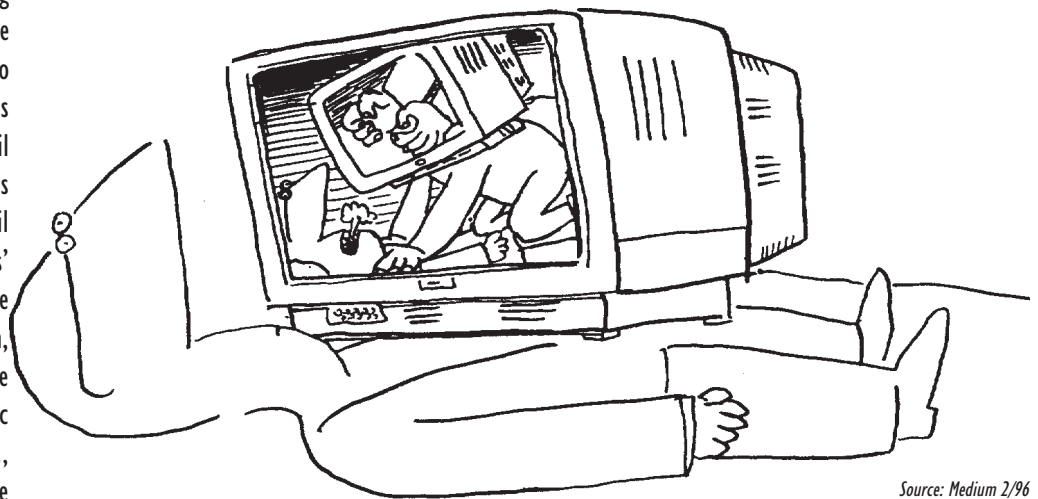
The passing of time also gave the chance to find more professionally skilled people to work in religious

programming as well as to develop television formats and genres.

Another breakthrough was the visit of Pope John Paul II in Poland in 1997 and the record ratings achieved by live coverage and other Church programming gave new impulses to strengthen and normalise the position of Church departments working in public television and radio. Although all obstacles and problems have not been solved, yet since then, the general climate is very close to normal.

Television programmes are important not only because of the larger number of people being able to receive them (compared to the number of press readership) but also because of their mission of changing the biased vision of the Church by the structure of the programming itself. In Poland, like in other countries of the region, Church broadcasting on public media has not been closed into narrow „sacristy issues“. The programming includes a variety of genres. Not only live worship transmissions but also talk shows on culture, society, education or problems of human existence, music programmes, features, radio drama and entertainment are on air. The programming intends to show how the religious dimension enters into the normal life of every man and woman.

The Church's presence in public broadcasting however does not limit itself to the programme times. Since 1993, due to a reform intending to reshape state radio and television into institutions of public service, and after the National Council for Broadcasting was founded, regular meetings take place every six months between the Council members and a delegation of the Polish Bishops' Conference. The meetings do not primarily serve to achieve specific goals on the part of the Church, but rather, to promote the reflection on the role of media in the society. Issues like mission of public broadcasters, media ethics, new media, multimedia as well as the perspective of the information society were taken into consideration, leading to a profound exchange of ideas and insights. Additionally, for the Church it is very important to keep in touch with media people as well as shaping formation projects for journalists (one of them is going to be realised on European level, guided by the Polish Province of the Society of Jesus in Warsaw). Programmes like this should serve as inspiration for a deeper understanding of a journalist's task within European societies as well as his/her ethical responsibilities.



Source: Medium 2/96

Even if the work done by the Church up until now in our region really seems to be a giant achievement, new challenges still have to be taken. I would like to enumerate briefly on the main issues which seem to be of crucial importance in the future:

- a. contribution to mass media research: inspiring new mass media philosophy with ethical insights, stressing their role as the important part of social processes and communication,
- b. confronted with commercial media, participating in the debate on the role of public broadcasting within the range of social processes,
- c. developing of the Church's own media production as the free offer for other broadcasters,
- d. media education programmes for pastoral workers, as well as for clergy and, last but not least, the hierarchy!
- e. forming an active attitude of the Church towards all kinds of mass media: „public relation art“.

WORKSHOP 4:

Communication and Interreligious Dialogue

A rather small working group of five people, all of "Asian" work experience joined to discuss how media can support and facilitate interreligious dialogue. Amongst those present was Fr. Ruedi Hofmann, SJ, the founder director of PUSKAT, an Indonesian Communication, Training and Production Centre with a broad experience in producing interreligious TV programmes. Through his contribution to the workshop he enriched the discussion with examples from his work (see page 59). Moreover, Divine Word Father Franz-Joseph Eilers, respectively Chairman and Executive Secretary of the FABC Office of Social Communication, facilitated the group discussion by giving substantial background explanations and information from the findings and statements released over the years by the Asian Bishops Commission for Interreligious Dialogue and the Bishops' Commission for Social Communication.

"Interreligious Dialogue? You can compare it with a road on which different cars of different style, colour, size etc. are all moving in the same direction. But this has to be done in a peaceful, responsible manner and in agreement on certain commonly agreed regulations in order to avoid accidents or to be in collision with the other participants."
(participant's quotation)

Just a short time into the discussion it was agreed upon by the participants that television currently in Asian countries belongs to the "way of life" and can reach most of the poor just as well as traditional media forms, therefore making it the ideal place to "propagate friendship and peace". Mother Mary or better still, Mother Earth, was considered an ideal symbol for interreligious messages. Such a symbolic language in general was considered a very important tool for interreligious dialogue, implying the importance to study and understand the symbols of other religions.

It was furthermore regarded as most important to create a mood where people of all religions would feel safe, at home and in a family-like atmosphere. Touching on the historical dimension, the participants realised that mission did not demonstrate a capability in the past to initiate friendly communication with other religions, but instead showed strong patriarchal patterns. This historic inheritance still nowadays causes misunderstanding among the different religions in Asia, while at the same time it was emphasised that St. Francis Xavier could be a positive example for Catholic communicators regarding the practice of interreligious dialogue and evangelisation as a gesture of friendship and peace.

"United religious presence" as called for in the pastoral instruction, *Aetatis Novae*, would be the ideal approach for media workers to ensure an interreligious element in their work. However, it was considered most important to take into account that interreligious dialogue means a three-fold dialogue, namely with the poor, cultures and religions, something which demands careful planning. In this context it was discussed, with regard to the current interreligious conflicts and clashes, such as in India or Indonesia, that mostly the people from marginalised sectors of society are involved in such riots. This was considered a clear indicator that 1. uneducated and economically unsatisfied people are more likely to become victims of political agitators, 2. that all well-minded statements, suggestions and necessary information from experts regarding

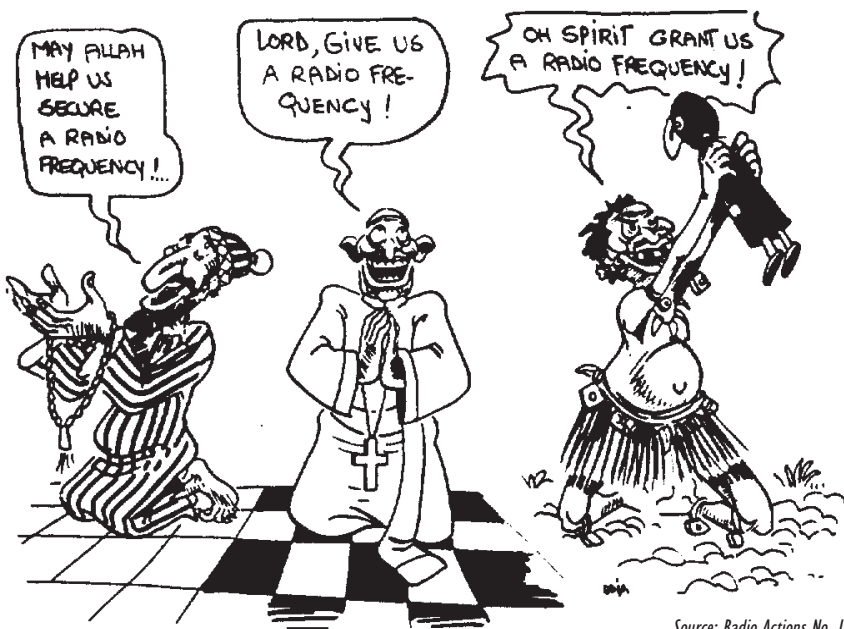
interreligious dialogue do not trickle down to the grass-roots level and a serious information gap between these sociological groups has to be overcome.

In conclusion, a stronger service to these sectors of society should be provided by media workers. The youth in particular should receive more attention as an important target group, e.g. by holding youth congresses and seminars on interreligious dialogue.

However, time and again during the workshop it was considered necessary to emphasise that all initiatives should be based on bringing the different religions together as communities of dialogue, and that it would be important to have joint actions to develop a feeling of togetherness and harmony and to experience each other. The workshop concluded in a resolution which is presented as follows:

- A great deal of training among communicators and media workers on the topic of interreligious dialogue should take place, with special attention given to the change of the mission approach (VATICAN II).
- Communication should provide a means to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding.
- The two-way flow of communication between Bishops/experts with their various recommendations and advice and the grass-roots people needs to be enforced.
- The means of communication (alternative media!) and especially mass media should ensure a united religious presence to create peace, justice and harmony among people.
- Christian communicators so far show a lack of awareness regarding the vital importance of interreligious dialogue.
- Christian communicators should study, wherever possible as a joint venture with members of other religions, the means and processes of communication in other religions. Here the demand for stronger efforts in the field of united research is also required so as to be in a position to communicate properly with the grass-roots sector of society.

Karen Waterman



Source: Radio Actions No. 10

Experiences from Indonesia:**United Media Presence****By Ruedi Hofmann SJ, Yogyakarta, Indonesia**

Considering the fact that about two thirds of the Indonesian population can be categorised as poor and that according to the National Socio-economic Survey of 1997, 59.2% listen to radio and 78.2% watch television, we can assume that a large part of the poor population is exposed to these two media. Print media, on the other hand, does not seem to reach a large percentage of the poor, since in 1997 only 22.8% of the whole population answered “yes” to the question whether they had read a newspaper or a magazine during the last week.

Among the two most popular media, radio is still on the decline. Since 1981 the figures have gone down by 15% whereas television viewing has increased by almost 30%.

However, is Indonesian television as we know it today really with the poor? In most cases we would have to say “no”. The world reflected on the television screen is not the poor people’s world. It is the world of the affluent. And this is how the owners of television want it to be. The local Nielsen ratings are only interested in the five largest markets and it can be assumed that the diaries upon which the research is based are placed only in middle to upper class households. If the poor watch the programs that’s fine. But advertisers are not interested in the poor. For them the target audience should have maximal purchasing power. This consideration certainly affects the content of the programs. One area where rich and poor can easily meet is religion. We do not have statistical data on the number of poor people who watch religious television. However, even without such data we can say that today it is very important to make religious programs attractive to the poor and to get the poor involved in the production.

It is not only appropriate but necessary for Christians [...] to act; in more direct co-operation with other religions, to ensure a united religious presence in the very heart of mass communications. (AN 3)

This passage from the Pastoral Instruction “Aetatis Novae” shows that it is not just the Church which has to be present in mass media, but a “united religious presence” should be ensured.

On the six national television channels, each of the five officially recognised religions gets a slot.

Typically this allotted time is used by the religions for an exclusive transmission aimed at a particular segment of the audience. Members of other religions are not supposed to watch the program. This system can hardly be called a “united religious presence”. It also contradicts the very nature of television as a medium which is basically open to all.

Much more suitable would be an interreligious program aimed at believers of all religions and focused on issues rather than on denominations. For example, there could be a program about peace from a religious point of view with stories, verses, comments, and songs from the scriptures and traditions of various religions. Such a program could be very powerful, since it would show that all religions support peace and none of them promotes violence.

Unfortunately, the television stations are not yet ready for this type of dialogue. The religions have been put into compartments as if they were in competition with each other, whereas in fact more often than not the religions share a common cause. They are all against inequalities, consumerism, excessive luxury, slavery, discrimination, and domination. All of them favour love, compassion, care, and friendship with all creatures.

Even if the television stations are not willing to open their channels for common interreligious productions, the Christians can at least “ensure a united religious presence” utilising their allotted air-time for interreligious dialogue hoping that gradually others will follow suit.

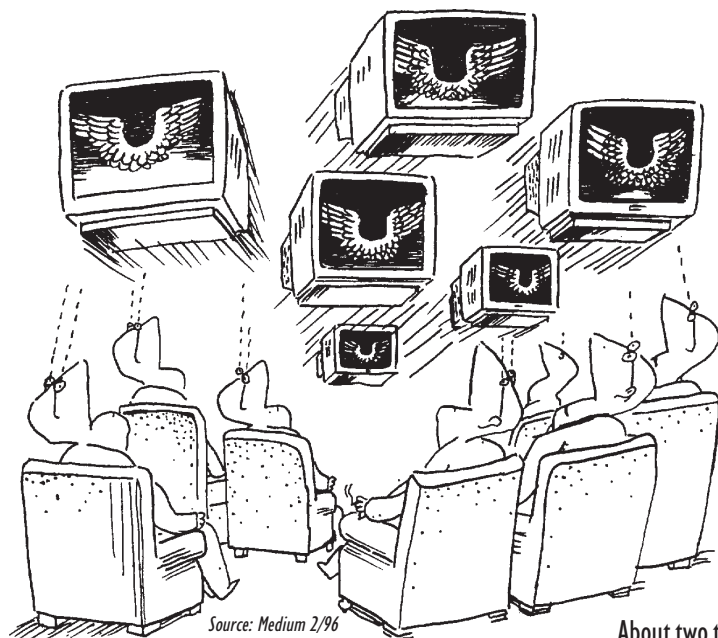
In the remaining part of this short paper I want to report about our experience with this method during the last four years.

Censorship both by the government and by the television stations is quite strict. However, dialogue with the censors is sometimes possible. Our first attempt to invite other religions to our program involving a Gandhi ashram was rejected. We were told that our program should be confined to Catholic faith only and that we were not allowed to speak in the name of other religions. After we explained that our aim was friendship with other religions, and that we did not intend to speak in their name, the same program which had been rejected could finally be shown at a later date. Since then many programs were censored, but mostly for political rather than religious reasons.

Sometimes we also receive protests from viewers. Once even the Indonesian Secretary of State phoned the station because we had shown the arrest and trial of Jesus in a drama which according to him was too “contemporary”. His protest had nothing to do with our interreligious approach.

In a letter to the editor of the Catholic weekly HIDUP a viewer complained that while he was expecting comfort from his own Catholic faith that when he tuned into our program he was forced to sit through a Buddhist performance. Since then we have tried to be more sensitive making the contributions from other religions shorter and more acceptable to conservative Catholics.

The Catholic travel agency RAPTIM invited our team to cover a pilgrimage tour to the Holy Land. After we had shown some of the pictures with the religious sister who accompanied our team as a commentator, a popular Moslem daily newspaper published a letter to the editor written by a Moslem who resented the way the city of Jerusalem was presented: “While a beautiful mosque



could be seen in the film, the nun did not even care to mention it". We apologised for this shortcoming and prepared a new version in which we included comments about Jerusalem as a holy city also for the Moslems. This version was shown a few weeks later.

Gradually we are learning from our experience. The number of letters which are sent to our office at present is about 250 per broadcast. Among them there are many who ask for more information about contemplative life. Answering these requests in several consecutive programs we showed a number of monasteries, including Taizé, centred around an interview with an Indonesian monk who lives there. In one of the programs we presented a Trappist monastery on a mountain in Central Java followed by the report about a Buddhist monastery near the temple of Borobudur. This particular program was appreciated in many letters. A Buddhist viewer commented: "I am convinced that this program has made many people happy, Buddhists as well as Catholics." This is exactly what we try to achieve with our interreligious approach: we want to make people happy.

About two thirds of the Christians in Indonesia are Protestants. So we want to make them happy too. The minister of a very small Church called "Nazarene" sent us a letter offering his choir to sing in our program. When we listened to the songs, one of my colleagues commented: "We can't use this. The songs are so exclusive and fundamentalist. They contradict our interreligious approach." - "Never mind, I said, these are not bad people. Even if we don't agree with their theology, we can still give them a chance to appear on television. However, we shall put the choir in the proper context. Let's make a little report about this Church congregation." It turned out that the whole congregation consisted of less than 100 very simple people. But the joy of being filmed for television was so great, that the Nazarenes now belong amongst our closest friends. When the program was finally broadcast, the fundamentalist theology did not hurt anybody, but the sincerity of the Church members was quite impressive.

In Irian Jaya (West Papua) there are some excellent choirs. When we showed one of them which happened to be Protestant, a Catholic man from Jakarta by the name of Rudolf sent us a letter complaining that he felt humiliated, because a Protestant friend had teased him: "You Catholics don't even know how to sing, so you have to invite a Protestant choir." Rudolf felt very strongly, that as a minority we should assert ourselves and we should never cede our precious air-time to other religions. During the next broadcast Rudolf's letter was read by our presenter. Among the many comments we received about his letter, the overwhelming majority was in favour of our interreligious approach. But on a following program we purposely read the few letters which supported Rudolf, besides some others, of course. This created a new wave of reactions, most of them urging us to continue the interreligious dialogue. To Rudolf we sent a bag with our interreligious symbol as a present. This was a great surprise for him. In a recent letter he confessed that he now likes our program very much and that he never misses it.

Under military rule, Indonesia has experienced compartmentalised religion for more than four decades. As a result, hundreds of churches, but also dozens of mosques and other places of worship have been burnt by angry mobs. Of course, behind these riots there are political motives, and the mobs are stirred up by provocateurs. Nevertheless, I sometimes ask myself whether such things could have happened, if from the beginning the aim of our Christian mission had been friendship and happiness for all.

WORKSHOP 5:

Internet — a Medium for the Poor?

The western public in general considers the Internet as an important means of democratic culture as it facilitates the direct experience exchange and discussion between citizens. User groups share their common problems and sometimes the actual information provided by the Internet can't be found elsewhere.

The workshop "Internet for the Poor" asks the question, if the developing countries — and especially the poor sectors — can also profit from the new technology. On the one hand, the telecommunication infrastructure especially in Africa, but also in the extended rural areas of Asia and Latin America are so deficient that there is no access to the Internet (or it is very expensive). On the other hand, most of the contents of the Internet reflect the needs and interests of the industrialised countries, or of the local economic and scientific elite of the developing countries. The workshop presented three case studies.

Red Científica Peruana

pres. by Nina Fluck (cand. M.
Sc. Geographical Institute of
the University of Aachen)

Peru was one of the first countries in Latin America with access to the Internet. However, in contrast to other countries the first Peruvian Internet Service Provider was a non-governmental, non-profit organisation. It is called Red Científica Peruana (RCP), the Peruvian Scientific Network and was founded in 1991 by 43 private organisations. Central goals of RCP are the democratisation and the decentralisation of the information supply providing Internet access to ALL Peruvian people.

Although RCP is a non-profit organisation it is a self-sustainable enterprise. The organisation started its work with only one computer, three modems, three telephone lines and US-\$ 5000. RCP has only once received financial help (from the Inter-American Development Bank) since it was founded. All profits were invested in the infrastructure of RCP and in the meantime this infrastructure has a value of more than US-\$ 38 million. Despite the economic success, Red Científica tries to keep the price level for all their services as low as possible.

Peru is a poor country: more than 50 percent of the Peruvians are living on a subsistence level. The basic equipment for Internet access — a computer, a modem and a telephone line — is only at the disposal of a few people and only in the upper classes. This could contribute further to the increasing of the gap between rich and poor. The Internet could be a valuable tool for development but only if it's available to everybody. Red Científica had to find a way of making it possible for the poor to have access to the Internet. The first step to resolve this issue was to create "cabinas públicas", i.e. public Internet cabins. However, giving the public access was not enough: the people had to learn how to use and profit from the Internet. Therefore RCP provides training to teach not only the technological know-how but also to teach which benefits one can receive from

this new technology. Additionally Red Científica started pilot projects to demonstrate which possibilities the use of the Internet offers. A small farmer community in the Andean region, for example, could increase its income by selling its crops to a US-American food-trader, with the help of Internet contact. The logic behind this idea from RCP is: „We want to demonstrate that the Internet really is able to enhance the life of the people. We provide the know-how and the equipment to everyone”.

On the web sites of Red Científica and their more than 300 member organisations are lots of interesting contents which reflect the information needs of the poor, too. There are, for example, web sites in Quechua, the most important indigenous language, regional information and news from every part of the country, agricultural information, presentations of NGO's, Universities, handicraft manufactures and so on.

At the beginning of 1999, about 180 Cabinas Públicas existed in Peru. Cabinas Públicas have become a manner of doing business in Peru and an increasing number of Peruvians are discovering the Internet. 180 seems to be a lot, but Peru is a big country with an area of more than 1,2 million square kilometres and most of the Cabinas are concentrated in the capital Lima and the big cities of the coastal region. In other parts of the county they are rarely found. For poor people who live in rural areas of the Andean region or in the poor districts of Lima and other cities it is hard to reach a Cabina Pública. To add to this, the vast majority of the Cabinas Públicas are commercial companies which do not offer the training and education which poor people need to benefit from using the Internet.

Until 1995 RCP was the only Internet Service Provider in Peru. Since then, other providers have started to compete on the Internet service market. The most powerful competitor of RCP is Infovia, a subsidiary of the powerful telecommunication enterprise Telefónica del Peru. With aggressive advertising campaigns and price-dumping, Infovia conquers more and more shares of the growing Internet market. However, Infovia has no development-orientated background and entices the RCP-clients away. RCP is losing its financial basis for educational and development work and Peru's Internet service market runs the danger of being only profit oriented and turning into an exclusive supply for the upper class. This situation makes it difficult to realise the plans of Red Científica to install Cabinas Públicas especially in the villages and rural areas of Peru.

Conclusion: The actual situation of competition with commercial Internet service providers makes it harder and harder to realise the development plans of RCP for the diffusion of the Internet and to make Internet accessible for every Peruvian citizen, especially for the poor.

pres. by Antoine Gnofam
(CAMECO collaborator)



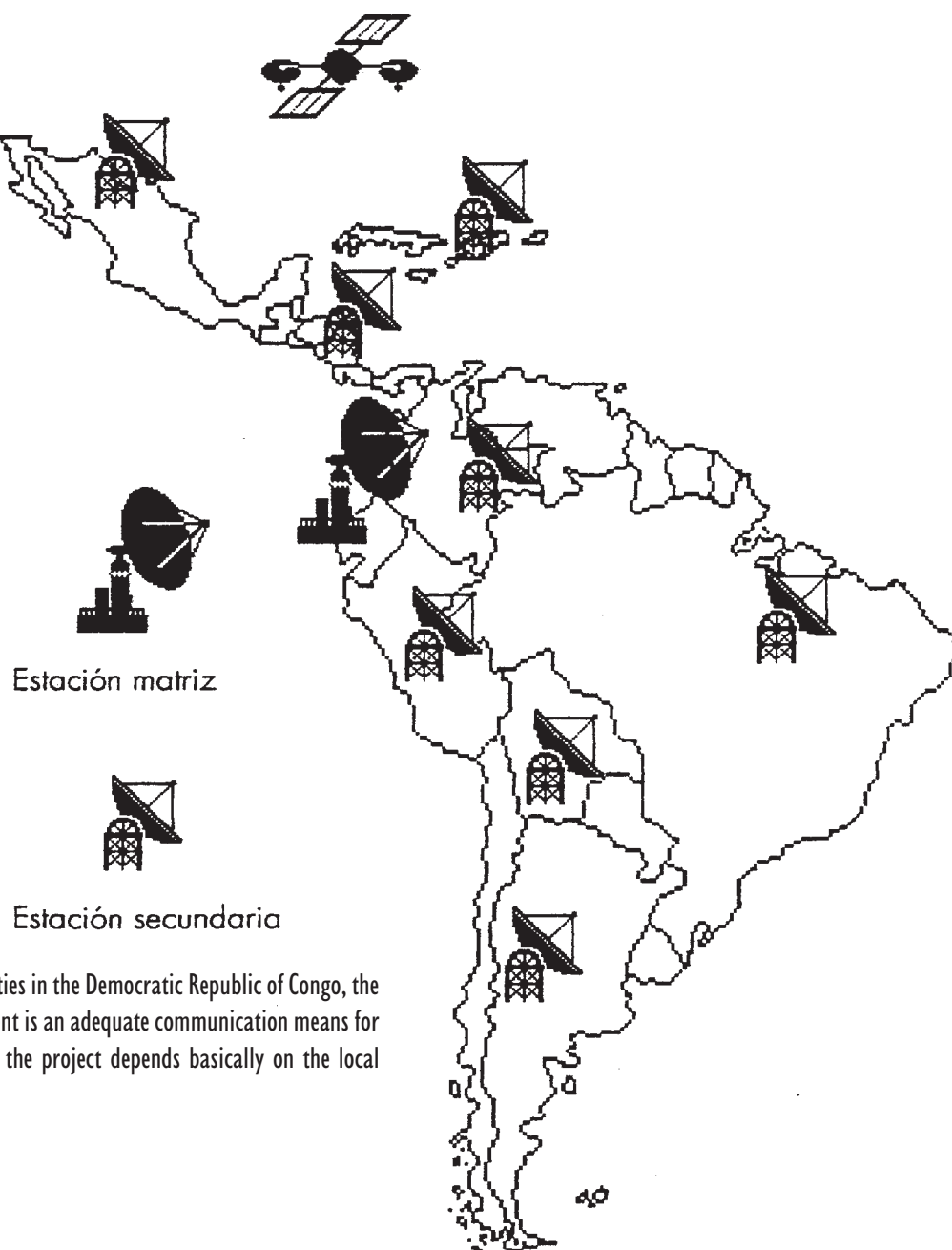
For many years the public infrastructure in Zaire has been systematically abandoned by the Mobutu government. Nowadays outside of Kinshasa and the main cities there are hardly any roads, no telephone lines and no reliable postal service. There is also no sufficient provision of electricity, a precondition for use of computers and of having access to the Internet. Therefore

different NGO's sought to implement a telecommunication network aimed to have an uncensored, quick and reliable internal information exchange with the possibility of establishing continuous contacts to the international development community. Financed by a consortium of European donor agencies, the Réseau Européen du Congo (REC), high frequency (HF) radio stations were installed in the three most important cities (Kinshasa, Mbandaka and Kisangani). Each station was equipped with a HF modem and computer. By means of an appropriate protocol this system permits the transmission of data (as e-mail) using the atmosphere as medium.

It was foreseen to implement seven additional stations in the second phase. CAMECO was asked by some members of REC to evaluate the first project experiences. The on-the-spot study showed, that the system itself is really needed by the NGO's and at the moment it is an adequate technology, but the main problem of the project is the lack of training of the users. A European NGO specialised in technical projects has been responsible for the implementation of the project, and at the technical level they fulfilled the goals. Nevertheless the European specialists didn't succeed in the training and follow-ups of the local users.

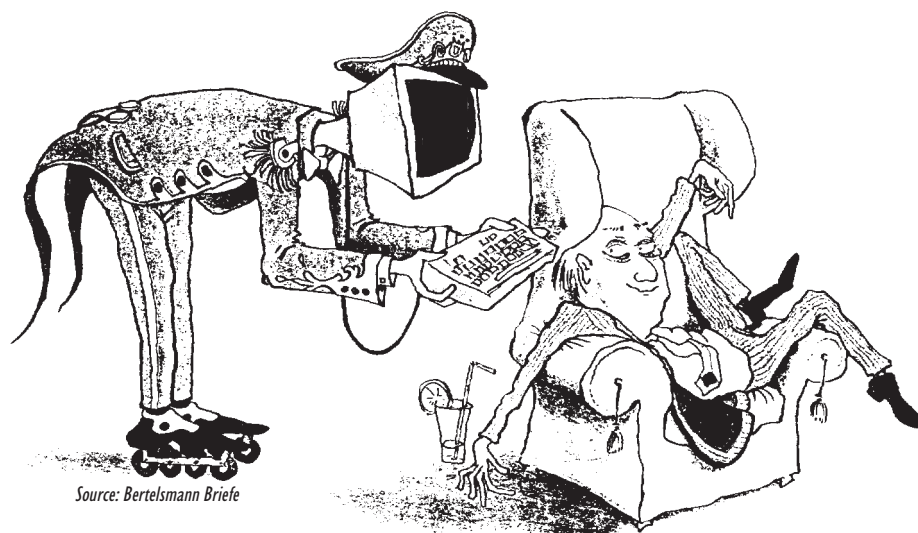
Conclusion: Given the scarce communication facilities in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the short-wave data transmission system at the moment is an adequate communication means for the NGO network, however, the sustainability of the project depends basically on the local follow-up capacities.

Estaciones transmisoras de ALRED



pres. by Humberto Vandenbulcke (Latin American Association for Radio Education ALER / Union of Catholic Radio Stations in the Dominican Rep.)

In September 1997 the network of Latin American educational radios, Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica (ALER), started with the transmission of different radio programmes



via satellite which at the moment are retransmitted by about 60 indigenous, community and educational radios all over the continent. According to the philosophy of ALER as a network of decentralised radio stations with the main focus on the poor sectors of society, the satellite programmes are conceived as an international forum of experiences provided by the member radio stations. The contributions from the different countries and regions are sent to the central station in Quito (Ecuador) by e-mail. From there they are sent to the ALER satellite segment, so that the participating radio stations receive a real-audio programming which they can retransmit immediately. The communication via Internet – especially its e-mail function – is vital in this process as it is the quickest and cheapest

communication means between the contributing stations and the main office in Quito.

At the same time, in some Latin American countries e-mail is intensively used by the community radios for their local information needs. Many stations have established a local network of „community reporters“, i.e. delegates especially from rural area communities who inform the radio station about relevant developments in their area. In the Dominican Republic, for example, there are stations which maintain a network of about 80 „community reporters“, and now with the e-mail facilities the information flow between the „community reporters“ and the radio station has been significantly improved.

Conclusion: The ALER radio stations predominantly perceive the e-mail facilities of the Internet as a very helpful tool for recollecting information from the marginalised sectors of society and, in consequence, giving the poor a public voice. Internet is considered a medium to present the reality of the poor, although the great majority of the poor doesn't have access to the Internet at the moment.

As the case studies demonstrated, there are very different experiences regarding the use of the Internet in the developing world, and it has become clear, that the benefit for the poor depends on the specific purposes of a project as well as the national economic and political context. There was not enough time during the workshop to deepen all aspects of the Internet in the developing world, but it should be stressed that many participants of the workshop have accumulated significant experiences in the field. E.g. that is the case of the International Catholic Film Organisation OCIC (network of satellite phones, four Internet servers in Africa, web site of the Ouagadougou Film Festival etc.), the Stichting Porticus (collaboration with the Information Network of the Latin American Episcopal Conferences RIAL and the Catholic Migrant Farmer Network in USA), the Center for Religious Telecommunications in Dayton, USA (offering interactive distance education since 1983; which at the moment offers seven courses on theology and catechetics via Internet) and the German NGO for Appropriate Technology FAKT (specialised in communication technology for health purposes, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa).

Christoph Dietz and Nina Fluck

ADVENIAT

Bischöfliche Aktion



In the fiscal year 1999, Adveniat has, up to August 31st, approved more than 4,800 projects, of which about 90 can be considered as media projects. The following is a list of the most important types of media projects in the stricter sense (leaving aside e.g. grants towards publications):

- production of radio and TV programmes and of videos
- buying broadcasting time for Catholic radio and TV programmes
- subsidies to sell videos at a reduced price
- purchasing equipment for Catholic radio and TV stations and printing machines
- scholarships and travel allowances for journalists and other media people
- media seminars, work-shops and congresses
- contributions towards the operational expenses of Catholic radio and TV stations
- contributions towards the on-going expenses of media organisations, media departments of bishops' conferences etc.

These projects are dear to Adveniat. They are considerably dearer than the average project.

Given the limited space in this "Mediaforum" we do not dare to try and do justice to such a large number of projects and the broad variety of Catholic communication they stand for. Instead, I would like to focus on one country and I choose the one which is the poorest of all in the New World: Haiti. Is the poverty of Haiti reflected in the fact that Catholic media in Haiti are media with the poor, even more so than in other countries?

One method of finding out is to review the media projects of the quinquennial 1995 to 1999, analysing both the applications and the reports which Adveniat received — the underlying assumption being that it is unlikely that media with the poor can become a reality if such a perspective is not even envisaged when the proposal is outlined. How, then, are media projects from Haiti presented?

1. "media of": That is by far the most common way of introducing a media project, e.g. "the Catholic Radio of the diocese XY". The simple fact that it is owned and operated by the Catholic Church matters more and shapes it more than the objective of the enterprise or the question of what the audience would like to hear. For some, the local Church "is" the bishop. Thus in some places the Catholic radio station is commonly known as "la radio de Monseigneur".

2. "media for": Second in place among the aspects which are used to describe the media projects are the purposes it should serve: education, catechetics, evangelisation and others. It

The funding organisations play an important role in support of „Media with the Poor“. CAMECO asked them, about their ideas on the role of communication for development and their experiences with media projects in the different continents of their concern. Some of them followed our invitation:

is here that the poor come in to it for the first time. Not even one proposal fails to point out that the project shall serve the poor in particular. If one analyses the content of the programmes/publications, one finds that many indeed live up to that promise, i.e. that considerable time/space is given to issues of poverty and the living conditions of the poor.

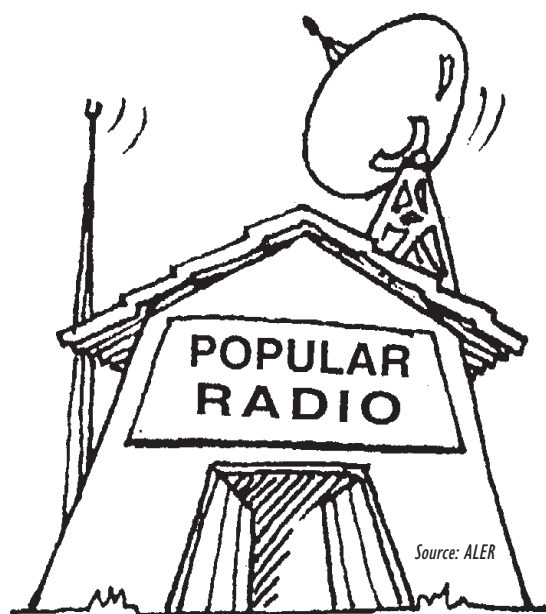


3. “media against”: The purpose of the media is to fight AIDS, drugs, violence, corruption, etc., all the suffering and all the vices which appear in an almost stereotype sequence like a litany (and which are, to be sure, neither stereotype nor litany, but Latin American and Caribbean reality), in order to convince the donor agency to help: a proof of necessity by means of unfolding the misery. Another “against” are the Protestant-fundamentalist sects which attack the Catholic Church through their media. In that perspective Catholic media should establish an “equity in weapons”.

4. “media — why not?” It may seem paradoxical, but sometimes the reason given for setting up Catholic communications is: “We need them because one should have them” or “because the others have them”. The feeling is: “We must do something”. I believe that this motive should not be underestimated, and I mean not only in Haiti.

5. “media with”. In recent years there is not very much consideration for “participation populaire” in media projects. A decade ago Radio Soleil strove to do this, but times have changed.

Summing it up, there appears to be few if any efforts to achieve “media with the poor”. In any case, reading the projects I found no explicit trace of such a concept in the sense of “the poor should have a say”. There is an awareness that — if they aren’t media subjects — they should at least be the privileged media objects in the sense that they should receive particular attention. But this good-will has to struggle with the adversities of life in Haiti and the adversities with which any media project in Haiti has to struggle with every day. It is not a lack of intentions and plans, or even visions, but a lack of personnel, know-how and money which not only limits, but which also reduces the effects of the Catholic media. If anything is to be blamed, it is first and foremost the state of the country. People are struggling to survive. To be sure, all Haitians like the movies and a good many possess a transistor radio (and one radio in a hut is usually enough for all neighbours to hear because the volume tends to be turned on sufficiently), but “the media” are not a matter of interest. Haiti is too poor for media with the poor and — I am aware that such an assertion is going very far, but it may be worth discussing — maybe even too poor for media projects of the type that a funding agency would like them to develop. A French missionary who has spent much of his life in Haiti told me: “Media can come in once we have left the worst behind us”. Perhaps he is wrong and media may well help to master the misery — a light in the tunnel and not at the end of it. *Michael Huhn, Adveniat*





Overall number of projects:

The project support arm of our organization, EMW (Protestant Association of Churches and Missions in Germany), is not organized regionally but according to four fields of activity, one of which is communications. Hence the Communications Desk deals only with projects in media. We receive about 150-200 applications a year, some of which are sent on to us by sister organizations in the AG KED (Association of Church Development Services of the Protestant churches in Germany). The number of applications reaching us has increased markedly over the past three years, while our funds have been decreasing.

Struggles to attain some degree of sustainability are common to almost all regions, along with the need for capacity building and strategic planning. Community radio is a dominant vehicle of grassroots communication in Latin America, and it is becoming increasingly important in southern Africa as well. Additionally mobile video and film are being used more and more there as tools of education, community building and cultural awareness.

Enough consideration given to media projects?

Again, since we do not work regionally, our perspective is different from that of other “donor agencies”. Certainly we see that the Churches — in our case predominantly Protestant Churches — often fail to recognize the need to enhance their communication skills, though communication forms the essence of the Churches’ task. In addition, while church people may throw up their hands in horror at the effects of western media on the culture and morals of their society, they rarely embark on programmes of media awareness to enable their parishes to deal critically with the issues involved.

Another problem is that some donor agencies are prepared to support programmes of NGOs and Churches or ecumenical bodies in the fields of women, the environment, agriculture etc. but do not support communication projects, which may well be essential to all other programmes. Some project holders shape their programmes at least partly according to what the donor agencies will support - and in so doing they exclude communications.

Role of media in evangelisation, development etc.

EMW has been supporting communication projects for some 20 years now because it recognizes the role to be played by media initiatives in evangelisation, democratisation and development. In the eighties, for example, EMW supported initiatives set up to channel information about the struggle against apartheid in South Africa to the outside world, while at the same time ecumenical bodies were able to start skills-building projects in disadvantaged communities, albeit not



Source: FAO: DevCom Case Study No. 12

without difficulty. Today in many countries, women are assisted in gaining skills needed to play an active part in the media world and in lobbying for their rights using various means of communication.

The impact of a media project is not as easily demonstrated as that of a well-digging or tree-planting initiative. In Zimbabwe a women's mobile video project went into a village and used video as a tool in a process uniting the community — especially the women — to consider ways of solving their water problem. The villagers eventually gained the confidence to approach the local authorities, and after some time a well was dug near the village.

There is still a need for instruments to assist in measuring the impact of communication initiatives, and there is a great need for project holders in this field to build monitoring steps into their projects from the start. Do we know that a particular measure is really serving the needs of the target group adequately, for example? The more participatory a project is, the more input the target group gives continually.

Successful/unsuccessful media projects:

I would class the example just cited (women's video project in Zimbabwe) as a successful project. At the same time, the organization itself is struggling with questions of viability. How does one measure success? I think too of a weekly paper in Papua New Guinea which faces court cases due to its investigative journalism in cases of corruption. This may well be a measure of success!

Unsuccessful projects would include print media initiatives that cater only for a small literate minority, show photos of important males but hardly ever of women and rarely of anyone from the grassroots. Some Church papers are like this. They are wasting resources and opportunities. Or a project in radio or video which was not properly thought through — or has been inadequately advised on — its equipment needs, so that in the end the goals of the project cannot be fulfilled and the equipment sits idle. CAMECO can play a crucial role here in helping to guard against such failures.

Glenine Hamlyn, EMW Communications Desk



Kirche in Not
Ostpriesterhilfe e.V.

CAMECO: According to the overall number of projects received by your organisation, do media projects hold a noteworthy share? Has this number increased or decreased during the last years? Which dissimilarities do you recognise in the different regions?

The number of media projects we received has stabilised over the last few years: its percentage fluctuates at around 1 to 2% of the total number of projects. We received 183 projects in 1994; and 177 in 1998. There have however been some changes in the regions: for instance, Africa used to send more media projects. This has decreased sharply and is now steadily increasing in Latin America. Eastern Europe remains our priority region for media projects, however the number of

projects and costs remain stable there. It should also be said that our answers to applicants from Africa have been mostly negative, whereas they have been of a more positive nature in Latin America. This is due to the fact that many African projects are not well conceived.

Cameco: Would you say that media projects receive enough consideration in the regions you are working in?

Yes, definitely. We consider the use of media as absolutely essential for evangelisation efforts in the present secularised and media orientated world, and as media projects tend to be costly, they must be examined in a very thorough way to check their feasibility and continuity.

Cameco: Are you of the opinion that media play an important supportive role in development, evangelisation, promotion of human rights and democratisation? Can they contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the poor? Do you have any examples in mind from your region of concern?

Somebody once said that television is the most efficient pulpit ever built. However, this is only true if it is used well and professionally. The example of a young priest in Brazil comes to mind: Fr. Rossi's televised masses attract more viewers than many popular programmes. If the Church does not use media in today's world — or does not use them efficiently, as we may observe in some European countries, her redemptive Word is simply not heard by the immense majority of society and the Church is then marginalised. In Russia, for instance, radio was and still is (now together with television) a strong influence in the democratisation of the country. Media in Russia also play an important role in ecumenical affairs in the face of mounting nationalism. In Latin America — Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador — radio is also important to teach the poor and the isolated populations. Both radio and TV are of great significance in Latin America in countering the enormous media presence of the sects.

CAMECO: Can you recall media projects (i.e. magazines, radio, video productions, training activities for journalists and pastoral workers involved in communications, etc) which you would consider successful? — Why? Are there media initiatives you would consider as being a failure? Why?

Failure: Printing presses in Africa have often been a failure due to mismanagement, miscalculations and the dire economic situation of African countries. How to cover the running costs of media projects is a general problem in almost every country in Africa. Many failures were due to problems in the areas mentioned above.

Success: Radio Resurrection in Ukraine. In a very complex environment (still an anti-religious biased government, anti-Catholic and anti-Uniate feelings from the majority of the population, as well as no previous experience from Catholics in media in that country), a group of young Greek Catholics started a radio programme ten years ago which is still running today with a sizeable and appreciative audience.

Radio Catedral, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and the "Rede Católica de Radio": a Christian radio station which has built up a large audience, with popular religious and educational programming. Rede Católica is a national network of over 100 religious radio stations linked by satellite and also has effective programming similar to that of Radio Cathedral — which is an affiliate of the network.

Königstein, August 30th 1999



Source: FAO: DevCom Case Study No. 12

missio

INTERNATIONALES
KATHOLISCHES MISSIONSWERK E.V.

MISSIO aids the local Churches in Africa, Asia and Oceania in the areas of pastoral work. MISSIO's priority is the basic and advanced training of Church personnel (e.g. lay leaders, sisters and priests). The means of social communication play a significant role in today's pastoral. This is mirrored in MISSIO's project policy, which promotes a comparatively high percentage of media projects.

It is not the number of projects nor is it a projects (financial) extent which gives a conclusive answer to the question of its importance in the field of media and communications. For example, relatively small projects such as Bible translations can be most important in that they may be the first step from the oral to the written language for many ethnic minorities. Such Bible

translations are often the first texts to serve as a basis for learning to read and write. Thus their influence on social development cannot be overestimated. Financial aid for the translation and distribution of the Bible, therefore, has priority at MISSIO because they are the basis for the preaching of the Good News of Christ. In a very practical way MISSIO supports the demands of Vatican Council II: "Access to sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful" (Dei Verbum, 22).

MISSIO promotes media projects at varying levels (parochial, diocesan, regional, national, continental, global), whereby it is not usually possible for MISSIO to bear the running costs of these projects. CAMECO is usually asked to provide their opinion, and their inspection of media projects ensures that the project in question is adapted to the requirements of the respective culture. Media projects range from providing the parish with media equipment (TV, video recorder, slide projector etc.) to the promotion of street theatres and the building of radio stations. The range of projects corresponds to the diversity of situations and cultures.

The promotion at continental level, for example at Radio Veritas and UCAN, the Catholic News Agency, has central significance for MISSIO. Again, at global level MISSIO has accompanied the work of OCIC and UCIP critically, constructively and financially.

Critical inspection of project applications means, for example in the case of radio programmes, that special importance is attached to the balanced relationship between vital commercial interests and the task of preaching the Gospel. MISSIO does not promote individual interests. It is also important to avoid the double promotion of initiatives. Media projects are only suitable when they build up the community or communities.

Media projects can, of course, be badly planned due to a prestige-orientated mentality. This usually occurs when a partner of MISSIO makes a wrong assessment of his or her own capacities. The evaluation of the results is the joint task of partner and promoter, a task which is seldom tackled — for whatever reason.

Good co-ordination and co-operation are all-important. It is important to make a correct assessment of the educational background of the course participants when planning basic and advanced training which is relevant to the media. If need be the subject matter of training courses has to be planned much more in line with general cultural, political and economic matters and less connected to particular media affairs. In the case of the training of journalists it is important to take into account that these persons can also find employment later with the secular press. The (political) effects which they can indirectly have on social development are significant. The location of basic and advanced training courses near the living and working context of the participants is usually a guarantee that the persons being supported will work effectively and successfully at grass-roots level. Courses abroad, however, as in the case of Crec Avex in Lyon/France, are only subsidised by MISSIO if appropriate training courses are not available in the home region of the respective candidate.

MISSIO knows how important it is “to use them solely for the good of humanity, for its fate becomes more and more dependent on their right use” (Inter Mirifica, 24). Especially in the area of Human Rights work – an issue of ever-increasing importance to MISSIO – the electronic media which allow a rapid transmittance of data (TV, radio, Internet, e-mail, fax) play a significant role. It is essential to utilise them.

MISSIO Aachen, September 1999



As MISSIO München, we would like to introduce three media and communication ventures, which play a major role in the wide range of projects supported by our agency: a training course in Africa; a radio station in Mali and an ecumenical publishing house in Papua, New Guinea.

1. Three month training course for IMBISA/AMECEA national and diocesan coordinators of social communication, IMBISA Centre, Harare, January 18th - April 18th 1999

IMBISA (Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa) and AMECEA (Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa) are two regional conferences of the Catholic Church in Africa. They have similar needs and face the same challenges in training people, helping to provide them with the skills and professional capacity to strengthen their human dignity and faith.

The AMECEA and IMBISA regions are well aware of the importance of both traditional and modern media in evangelisation, as well as of the scarcity of both personnel and finance. So they decided to join forces in the training of media personnel at national and diocesan level. The main objective of the course was to provide basic foundations in social and pastoral communication skills, theological criteria and guidelines for socio-economic and pastoral planning.

Each participant prepared a pastoral plan for his or her department in line with their diocesan pastoral plan. A follow-up programme will take place to support the participants and ensure



Source: DevCom Case Study No. 12

that they are putting their new skills into practice in their pastoral and development projects.

The Parana communication centre in the diocese of San in Mali was inaugurated on September 9th 1995. It comprises of the radio station „Parana“, a training centre and a media centre.

The radio station is the main focus of the centre. It broadcasts for four hours each day in three languages: Bambara, Bore and French. Courses offered at the training centre include not only communication, but also cover development and social activities. The media centre has a small editing and printing unit (in three languages), which is used for literacy projects and diocesan information. There is also a small video library with some 200 titles.

All diocesan publications are printed at the Parana Centre. These include the „Eglise de San“ in French and Bore, the monthly diocesan journal, and all publications concerning literacy and pastoral work.

The radio programmes deal with such themes as health, agriculture, education, politics and women. Radio Parana is a christian radio station, aimed at everyone involved in development and pastoral work. There are four permanent staff members: a director, two trainers and a technician. The transmission range is between 80 and 100 kms. It is a very important medium in the diocese of San as it responds to the oral culture of African people. Only 3.5 % (26,665) of the population of San are Catholics. More than 52% (400,000) are Muslims, 5,000 are Protestants (0,66%) and the rest are Animists. Radio Parana acts as a bridge between the different religions, dealing with everyday problems which affect everyone.

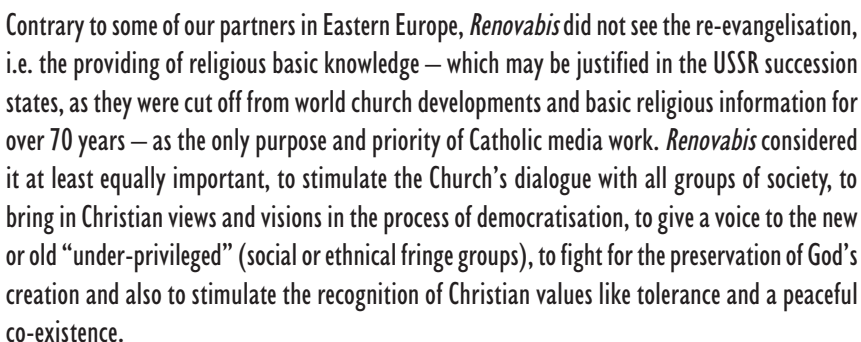
Word Publishing is a registered company under the laws of Papua New Guinea. The shares are held by the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church and the United Church. The company began in 1970 when Fr. Francis Mihalic SVD launched „Wantok“. Today Word Publishing has three main publications: „Wantok“ (15,000 copies), a weekly in Tok Pisin, for rural villagers and urban workers; „The Independent“ (10,000 copies), a weekly in English, for decision makers at all levels, and „PNG Business“ (12,000 copies), a monthly magazine for management level business people.

Word Publishing's philosophy is to promote gospel values, by encouraging total human development to help people mature intellectually and spiritually. Its publications can assist them in seeking the truth, opposing injustice, inequality, violence and destruction of the environment.

Word Publishing as an ecumenical venture is a voice of the Christian Churches. It tackles topics of importance for the future of Melanesian civil society, such as youth, education, human rights questions, corruption and clearing of the rain forest.

For MISSIO München, as for its partner agencies in the ecumenical consortium of donors, the support of an independent and free press in Papua New Guinea is a priority issue.

Barbara Pauli, MISSIO München / Foreign Dept.



MANDREL

Even if the media cannot remedy all that is wrong, cannot directly change the living circumstances of poor populations and cannot create democratic states, they do in many cases bring it to the consciousness of society and so bring an awareness to matters of concern. They can also bring new patterns of orientation to the so-called “transformation countries” which help people in this time of great change.

It is much the same in the media’s contribution to evangelisation: Of course books, radio or television programmes can’t substitute a priest, however they can stimulate the discussion about faith, they can reach those with which personal contact is not possible for many reasons, they open an extra dimension for practising Catholics and last but not least media promote the community of Christians with other countries and continents, a matter of concern which e.g. the video journal KANA from Inigo Novosibirsk takes into account.

It has always been *Renovabis*’ most important aim, to help our partners to find their own way and be able to follow it, independent from western help. Therefore one of our priorities has been the training and further education of media personnel. The higher the professional skills are, the bigger the chances are, that through a high communicative competence and effective management and marketing, the initiatives will be able to successfully change the social environment.

This is one of the reasons why *Renovabis* is involved in the foundation of a journalistic training centre, which will be opened up near Warsaw next year. Christian media people from all fields will find training courses to be conducted under the motto “European, professional, Christian” (as in the former Robert-Schuman-Institute in Brussels). The fact that a centre is being built where media people from Western and Eastern Europe work together, underlines a further important matter of concern to *Renovabis*, to contribute to partnership, and to the “exchange of offerings”.

Renovabis, August 1999



World Association for Christian Communication

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), whose central office is based in London, is not an international donor agency but rather an association of communicators which aim to prioritise Christian values in the world’s communication and development needs. WACC has, therefore, a strong advocacy role. Support for communication activities and projects is another crucial aspect of their work and goes hand in hand with the advocacy aspect.

Concern for the poor lies at the very heart of WACC’s support for media projects and activities amongst grass roots groups, NGOs and churches in the South. Since its creation, some 25 years

ago, WACC has prioritised and emphasised the crucial role of communication in the transformation and democratisation of societies. This commitment was crystallized during the 1980s in WACC's *Christian Principles of Communication* which encourage us to strive for the kind of communication that creates community, is participatory, liberates people and contributes to the support and development of cultures. A further, very important dimension is that communication must be prophetic, expressing itself in words as well as deeds, and must be willing to challenge the powers that be. It is through the communication projects that WACC supports that these principles and beliefs materialise and grow.



Source: Radio Actions 9/1996

Based on the number of requests we receive for support, interest amongst grass roots and marginalised groups in developing communication projects is increasing year by year. There is evidence of a growing awareness among these groups that the freedom to speak with their own voices and participate actively in society, i.e. to communicate, is a fundamental human right. This awareness raising, combined with new and cheaper technologies, means that more groups now have the skills to handle and access forms of communication and information which they never had before. A good example is the way community radio stations throughout Latin America are using satellite links and digital technology to receive and distribute information relevant to the needs of the communities they serve. Another example is how a group of African women, some of whom had participated in a WACC-funded electronic network workshop, were able to organise a successful international email campaign to have a fatwa, imposed by the country's religious authorities, removed from one of their members.

WACC-supported projects involve communication and the development of awareness amongst individual human beings, small groups or whole communities. Communication plays a central role as a building block in the development of the whole community, as a tool for the preservation of people's culture, and as a prophetic voice which unmask and makes explicit the causes of social and economic injustice. WACC has seen this very clearly in some of the projects in Haiti where the broadcasting, publication and dissemination of news and information in Creole is playing an important role in the strengthening of civil society, and in particular of the poorest sectors, in that country.

It is WACC's belief that the media projects it supports play a key role within their respective countries in the process of development and democratisation, and that they are indispensable in the quest for true citizenship for everyone.

María Teresa Aguirre,

*Director Regional Development Sector and
Regional Coordinator, the Caribbean & Latin America*

QUESTIONNAIRE

In two editions of the MEDIA FORUM we asked our partners to reflect on our topic „Media with the Poor?“ On the following pages contributions outlining experiences from Asia, Africa, Latin America as well as Central and Eastern Europe give some insights.

The questions are repeated below:

MAKE YOUR POINT!

PRENEZ LA PLUME!

¡ESCRIBAN O

1. What images of „the poor“ and which manifestations come to mind in your own environment?

2. In what way are these groups or topics reflected in your communicational work?

3. What concrete experience have you made working WITH the poor?

4. Do you think that the media can contribute substantially to social changes and the improvement of life for the poorest sections of your population? (Please, state briefly your opinion.)

1. Quelles images du « pauvre » et quelles expériences viennent à votre esprit dans votre milieu de vie et d'activités ?

2. Comment ceux qu'on appelle « pauvres » et ces thèmes sont-ils présents dans votre travail ?

3. Quelles sont vos expériences concrètes de travail AVEC les pauvres ?

4. Pensez-vous que les médias peuvent contribuer de manière significative au changement social et à l'amélioration du niveau de vie des populations les plus pauvres ? Merci d'être bref dans vos commentaires.

1. ¿Qué imágenes de los „pobres“ y que manifestaciones de la pobreza se le ocurre en su entorno?

2. ¿Cómo se repercuten estos grupos o temas en su trabajo comunicacional?

3. ¿Qué experiencias concretas tiene trabajando CON los pobres?

4. ¿Piensa que los medios de comunicación pueden contribuir sustancialmente a cambios sociales y el mejoramiento de las condiciones de vida de los sectores más pobres de la población? Le agradecemos sus opiniones al respecto.

Le pauvre, c'est qui ?

« Le pauvre c'est celui qui est incapable d'atteindre les buts qu'il s'est proposés par lui-même et pour lui-même. C'est très souvent aussi celui qui essaie d'avoir les mêmes choses que les autres. Il m'a été donné de constater que la première chose qu'un pauvre va acheter sera une radio ou une télévision. Le pauvre c'est celui qui ne peut pas atteindre les buts qu'il s'est donnés, peut-être

parce qu'il ne sait pas comment il peut rendre fertile les dons qu'il a ou bien parce qu'il n'a pas les moyens nécessaires de le faire. Personnellement je m'élève toujours contre la définition du pauvre comme celui qui ne peut rien faire. C'est parfaitement faux, le pauvre peut faire quelque chose, mais il n'arrive pas à l'organiser ! »

Comment ceux que l'on appelle pauvres sont-ils présents ?

« Nous, chrétiens dans le Magreb, donc en Afrique du nord, nous ne sommes pas présents dans les médias dans les quatre pays de l'Afrique du nord. Le message de l'Evangile dans notre région, nous parvient à travers les médias étrangers, p.ex. Radio Monte Carlo, les transmissions à la télévision d'événements religieux comme Noël et Pâques, la bénédiction du Pape, une messe retransmise de Bethléhem la nuit de Noël, messe transmise directement en arabe, mais aussi par exemple le dimanche l'émission religieuse sur l'Islam, le protestantisme, le catholicisme sur France 2, qui est écoutée d'une manière très suivie par les Algériens. »

Quelles sont tes expériences de travail avec les pauvres par rapport aux médias ?

« Premièrement cela peut-être une expérience avec des amis pour réfléchir sur ce qui est présenté dans les médias. Je connais une communauté des Petits Frères du Père Foucauld qui est branchée clandestinement sur l'antenne parabolique du voisin. Un jour le voisin est venu leur dire : « Ce soir il ne faut pas regarder, il y a de mauvaises émissions (il s'agissait d'un truc porno). Ce soir, je vais couper l'antenne ». Ce qui est intéressant, c'est la préoccupation de nos amis musulmans pour la santé morale des Petits Frères. Il y a cette honte chez beaucoup de gens, qui ne sont pas du tout des intégristes en Algérie, chez beaucoup de Nord Africains envers nous, Européens qui sommes en Afrique du nord, quand ils sont confrontés à des émissions de violence, de pornographie ou même de mise en doute des bases religieuses. Il y a aussi à propos de la situation en Afrique du nord et spécialement en Algérie, tout ce questionnement concernant l'identité : qu'est-ce que cela veut dire d'être un Algérien. On est dans une crise de société en Algérie. Le fait pour nous d'être restés sur place nous permet de dire avec les Algériens ce que nous comprenons par l'identité algérienne. »

Penses-tu que les médias peuvent contribuer dans ton pays au changement social et à l'amélioration du niveau de vie des populations les plus pauvres ?

« Je pense que oui, et spécialement en proposant des émissions d'éducation ou bien aussi des reportages sur la culture agricole. Il faut savoir que le Ministère de la Culture algérien a un grand nombre de cassettes vidéo sur la culture agricole, qui ont été diffusées à la télévision; mais comme le nombre d'Algériens qui regardent la télévision publique a diminué, il y a un problème. C'est sûr aussi que des émissions équilibrées pour une information sur les différentes religions

peuvent extrêmement être utiles, même si ce n'est que pour enlever cette ambiguïté : chrétien c'est l'Occident ; arabe c'est musulman. Une émission religieuse qui met cela au point ou qui parle de l'Islam et qui dit que 5% seulement des musulmans sont arabes, cela fait déjà des questionnements à l'intérieur des sociétés algériennes, au moins pour ceux qui ont le courage de réfléchir un petit peu. » *Romain Stäger, MA, secrétaire général de la Commission Episcopale Régionale du Nord de l'Afrique (CERNA), Algérie*



L'Eglise du continent ouverte au monde

Je voudrais répondre à la première question: « Quelles images du pauvre et quelles expériences viennent à votre esprit dans votre milieu de vie et d'activités ? »

Le premier numéro de la revue « *Afriquespoir* » est sorti en avril 1998. Le numéro 8 vient de paraître : 6.500 exemplaires.

Le mot *pauvre* nous a accompagnés dès le début. Ceux que nous mettions au courant du projet de lancer une revue pour l'évangélisation, réagissaient étonnés: « Mais nos gens n'ont pas d'argent !... Ici on n'aime pas lire... Vous voulez partir avec une publication ? D'accord, mais vous devriez la distribuer gratuitement ! Qui vous financera ? »

Au fur et à mesure qu'on cherchait à créer un petit réseau de distribution, la 'pauvreté' est devenue encore plus réelle. La guerre, éclatée début août 1998 et toujours présente, a créé de nouvelles entraves aux possibilités de diffusion. Un tableau sombre, qui néanmoins nous permet de formuler les conclusions suivantes.

1. Malgré tout ce qu'on dit, les gens aiment lire. Sans doute, la suppression d'une trentaine de publications catholiques et protestantes dans les années '70 a causé du vide, de la désaffection et de la pauvreté culturelle. Mais les curieux qui s'entassaient tous les matins autour des vendeurs ambulants de journaux, prouvent le contraire. Le désir de s'informer est grand et visible. C'est une vraie richesse.

2. L'argument prince *on n'a pas d'argent* conforté par l'inflation, la lutte pour la survie et la quasi-paralysie dans les transports à l'intérieur du pays et avec l'extérieur, représente sans doute un défi majeur. Mais dans ce coin d'Afrique comme ailleurs, vaut la loi: on n'apprécie pas ce qu'on ignore. Combien de fois n'avons-nous pas entendu aux portes des églises où le dimanche on présentait la revue, les gens s'exclamer: "on n'était pas au courant ! On ne savait pas qu'il existait une publication pareille! Depuis quand ça sort ?..." Des questions très simples, traduisant la joie de la découverte, qui permet de passer à l'opération suivante, toujours très difficile: sortir de la poche les 4 francs congolais — une bouteille de bière coûte 8 — pour l'achat d'un exemplaire. Certains n'ont pas manqué de nous reprocher: « Vous avez le courage de demander aux pauvres fidèles tout cet argent là? ». Une question qui au fond ne respecte ni la nature du service qu'on offre ni la dignité des gens.

3. Dans le travail de diffusion on cherche à engager des jeunes étudiants. Les 20 % de la vente qui leur reviennent représentent la possibilité de payer le minerval et aussi des fournitures scolaires.

4. Qui pourrait compter les initiatives qu'on réalise pour les pauvres ? On a investi beaucoup de ressources pour bâtir des écoles, dispensaires, hôpitaux, églises, léproseries, foyers, coopératives etc. Des choses magnifiques et qui contribuent au développement. Mais quand se persuadera-t-on qu'investir dans l'information destinée aux pauvres n'est pas facultatif ? *P. Neno Contran, Missionnaire Combonien, AFRIQUESPOIR, Kinshasa, RDC*

Réponse de Niger

Question Nr.4 : « *Pensez-vous que les médias peuvent contribuer de manière significative au changement social et à l'amélioration du niveau de vie des populations les plus pauvres ?* »

Dans mon pays le Niger et dans la sous-région Ouest Africaine, la population croît fortement en tout ce qui se dit à la Radio, à la Télé ou dans un journal. Souvent, dans des discussions, ou sociales ou politiques, chacun avance sa source. Puisque c'est la radio, soit la Télé, l'information ne peut qu'être vraie.

Cette réalité du pouvoir des médias sur les populations explique le fait que dans la sous-région, l'Etat a pendant très longtemps monopolisé les médias. Cela n'a pas empêché des conférences nationales de se tenir dans des pays comme le Niger, le Mali, le Togo et cela à la suite du Bénin. Pourquoi ? Simplement, parce que la population a suivi ce qui se fait chez les autres par l'intermédiaire des médias, et ils se sont posés la question pourquoi pas chez nous ?

Ceci est un aspect du pouvoir des médias sur une population et comment ils contribuent à la naissance d'une conscience politique.

Dans le domaine de développement intégral de l'homme, les médias ont une action immédiate et efficace.

Je me permettrai ici de vous donner quelques exemples d'actions qu'ont les médias sur l'amélioration du niveau de vie des populations les plus pauvres.

A travers des émissions sur la santé, la radio touche un large public qui est non seulement informé, mais en plus est sensibilisé aux mesures à prendre pour éviter une maladie. Nous pouvons citer les campagnes radiophoniques contre le paludisme, la méningite, le sida...

Il a été constaté que les populations rurales écoutent ces messages, et les prennent en compte dans la gestion de leurs vies quotidiennes.

Au niveau de la formation civique, de plus en plus de radios proposent des émissions de formation à leurs auditeurs. Résultat, ils connaissent de plus en plus leur droit.

Nous pouvons citer autant d'exemples. Simplement, la radio et la télé participent de manière très efficace à l'amélioration du niveau de vie. Mais une question de fond, face à l'excès de crédibilité que nos populations ont par rapport à ces moyens, il est nécessaire de les éduquer à une écoute et un regard critique sur ce que l'on entend et ce que l'on voit. *Achille Kouawo, Centre Audiovisuel Niamey, Niger*

ASIA

Andhra Pradesh Social Service Society

The response is based upon the experiences of APSSS which is presently involved in animation works with 80,000 marginalised, of which nearly 72,000 are women. These are spread over 1600 villages in Andhra Pradesh.

APSSS believes that Development will be achieved by conscientizing the poor and by helping them to build a peoples' organisation from micro to semi-micro levels leading to macro level organisation. In 21 years of its history APSSS has only followed this methodology and has never distributed any money to any of its members. However, our groups did generate their economic resources through various Govt. programmes and their own savings and have greatly improved their economic situation.

What image of the poor and which manifestations come to mind in your own environment?

Answer. Various images and definitions:

- one whose only resources are his two working hands
- one who is illiterate
- one when not animated, is ready to de-humanise himself in order to survive i.e. to generate pity to get some resources.
- From the p.o.v. of Social Analysis, one who is exploited by all systems of society, but in spite of this is highly creative in means of survival.
- From the p.o.v. of capacity one who has the stamina to slog away for 8-12 hours a day for meagre wages but yet is depicted as lazy and unskilled.
- one who accepts exploitation as the normal God-willed reality.
- From the p.o.v. of production, one who is ready to sell his skill for meagre returns.
- one, when animated, can become a great potential to transform society and make it more just.

In what way are these groups or topics reflected in your communication work?

Animation or conscientization is to experience the specific life situation of oppression of the poor and to analyse the root causes of this so that the poor develop a new vision (awareness) of their own life situation and how to transform it. Animation or conscientization is communication of the new vision based on analysis of the present reality and its untenability. Documentation of the reality with analysis and new vision through songs, pictures, role play, sharing the experiences of liberated groups are also all communication works.

What concrete experience do you have working with the poor?

APSSS has used the Frerian Method from 1979 and targeted a change of ideology of the poor, as per Gramsci, through cultural tools. The poor became empowered and changed the social, economical, political and cultural realities of their lives. For example, in 1995 when an election was held for village level administration bodies, 639 people from our groups were elected to various posts. 327 out of these were women.

Due to this empowerment, the poor were able to create a new history of their village where the dominant had to change their exploitative practices that had been handed down for generations.

Our experiences are recorded in our document: COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (copy of the book provided to CAMECO as well as Misereor by the undersigned. Document prepared by the undersigned along with Prof. Ramachandran and Mr. Coutinho) Please refer to Chapter 2 which describes in some detail the media used in our work and the messages contained in them. Chapters 5 and 6 also illustrate concrete case studies of change after empowerment.

Do you think that the media can contribute substantially to social change and improvement of life for the poorest sections of your population?

I want to make a distinction. The communication process, when used effectively, makes a substantial contribution to social change and improvement of life for the poorest sections of the population. Media material and for that matter mass media without a communicator introducing or inducing the communication process, does not contribute effectively to social changes and improvement of life for the poorest sections of the population. The whole question is, will such media material be allowed in mass media owned and controlled by the dominant sector who will label this material as “subversive”. May I further be allowed to state that mass media “throws a wide net” with no particular client/target group in view. In contrast, the communication process is effective at micro level with a defined group, i.e. the poor because: (i) the target is definite (4) the message becomes sharper because it is relevant and (iii) the aim is to move from information to inducement.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, Ch 5/6 of the above cited document proves our statement.

However, there is one case where mass media can play a positive role. I find that the success of the Green Movement or Ecological Awareness was due to mass media. A few years ago when the oil rig in the North Sea was to be dismantled and left in the sea, mass media helped by generating a public controversy and debate that led to the reversal of the decision. Movement building is to introduce a new thinking and mobilise it by taking a concrete controversial situation and showing the validity of the new thinking. Such a process leads to change in public opinion. The poor have also benefited by the Green Movement.

*Fr. Raymond Ambroise,
Vice-Chairman, Andhra Pradesh Social Service Society (APSSS)*

Initiation of Dialog

Your topic, „Media with the Poor: the Church in a Multimedia Culture“ is as challenging as it is difficult. I offer here a few reflections, based on my own experiences at Xavier Institute of Communications, Bombay, and on my perceptions of the media world as it exists today.

To begin, I do believe that the media can contribute to the integral development of the person and of society. But having said this as a principle, I hasten to add that media themselves can be oppressive as well as liberative; and that society consists of rich and poor, powerful and powerless, where the media use and communication patterns vary greatly.

At XIC, we have used the „group media“ particularly (audio-visuals, video, audio-cassettes, street-plays, etc.) to bring home certain messages to the urban and rural poor, our aim being not so much information, as the initiation of a dialogue. Through this conversation between us, the media producers, and they, the media users, we wished to invite them to reflect on what they saw and heard, to challenge our points of view, and to collaborate with us in shaping their own messages through the media that they were most comfortable handling. In other words, to pass from being passive consumers of media messages, to becoming active producers themselves.

In this process of working with the poor to produce messages for themselves on themes relevant to them, we did important work related to issues of women's sexuality and health, literacy and learning skills, AIDS prevention and cure, and religious myths about women (seen through folklore and rituals).

Such programs did in fact make a difference; though for how long, and to what extent, is hard to say. Cultural change is essentially a change of attitude, which then brings about changes in behaviour. But all this is long-term.

All that I have written does not deny other uses of the media, as when the mass media of newspapers or television, for instance, highlight injustice or neglect in society, and pressure the government to bring relief to the poor in a more speedy fashion. There is certainly a place for such „advocacy“ in the role of the media, but this was not our main focus. *Myron J. Pereira*
Director, Xavier Institute of Communications, Bombay/Mumbai

chitrabani

My additional comments about an adult literacy project of Chitrabani is by invitation (not on the impulse to blow a trumpet for this institution). Named Chetana (awareness) the project is a programme concerned with the education of illiterate Bengali women in India and Bangladesh through radio. Transmission of the programmes is courtesy of Radio Veritas Asia, Manila but their planning places emphasis on local involvement and participation.

Members of the Chetana team go into the field to obtain suggestions for self-development topics (e.g., child care, domestic hygiene, increased earnings, AIDS prevention) and record discussions, interviews, skits, etc. When these programmes go on the air they are backed up by a system of organised group listening with enrolled (literate) helpers through whom questions are put, answers being rewarded with certificates. In the eight years of the programme's running, over 7,000 such certificates have been awarded.

All this could not have been achieved without the help of Christian friends abroad, MISSIO and MISEREOR of Germany helped to get the project started while the current three-year programme is indebted to the spontaneous heart-warming response of friends in Austria. The helpless masses of this country need and deserve such help.

Horace Rozario, SJ,
Director, Chitrabani, Calcutta

EASTERN EUROPE

Truth and Life Magazine

When we think of the poor in Russia, we think first of all the homeless, of the children who live on the streets, of the large section of the elderly population living on meagre pensions and of the refugees from the former Soviet Republics. There are also a lot of people, especially in the depressed areas, who are unemployed or semi-

employed. Obviously, they are very poor, although they are quite able to work and earn a living. However, this is another problem.

These are the groups which are mainly regarded as being poor. However, 90% of the whole population could probably be described as poor if we look at them through the eyes of the small well-to-do group of Russian citizens. The percentage of the poor is even greater among churchgoers.

The social problems of Russian society are so immense, and the churches and their media are so marginal that it would be naive to think that they can have a direct impact on social changes.

Of course, Christian Churches try to organise social actions to bring relief to the most needy. The church media try to alert the faithful to the existence of extreme poverty and get them involved in the actions. I am not quite sure that we are very successful in the latter. These actions, I am afraid, have a purely institutional (I mean CARITAS in the Catholic case) character and their funding sources remain almost 100% western.

In the case of ISTINA I ZHIZN (Truth and Life) monthly we have published a number of stories touching on the topics of the poor. Here we try to focus the readers' attention on the personalities engaged in social work and their inner spiritual motivations which are explained by either themselves or the reporter. In my view, there is very little else the church media in Russia can do about the problem at the moment. *Fr. Alexander Khmel'nitsky OP, Editor, ISTINA I ZHIZN*



Slovakia is not one of the poorest countries in the world, but it isn't rich either. The economic situation in the country is still very difficult. Many businesses collapsed after the non-violent revolutions. Half a million people became unemployed, this is more than 20% of the 5,5 million population. The present inflation rate is around 11% and it is a fact that the living standard of many families has declined

in the past few years. Catholic families have suffered most as they usually live in rural areas, and have on average more children.

The Catholic publishing houses have to operate under the circumstances described above. How should we react? How can we realise our main goal — to be a part of the media apostolate — and still manage to survive economically?

We at the LUC publishing house have chosen a way in these difficult times, which is not very popular in the “west”. We try to keep the price of books low enough to enable our customers to afford them, however, this is still not always possible.

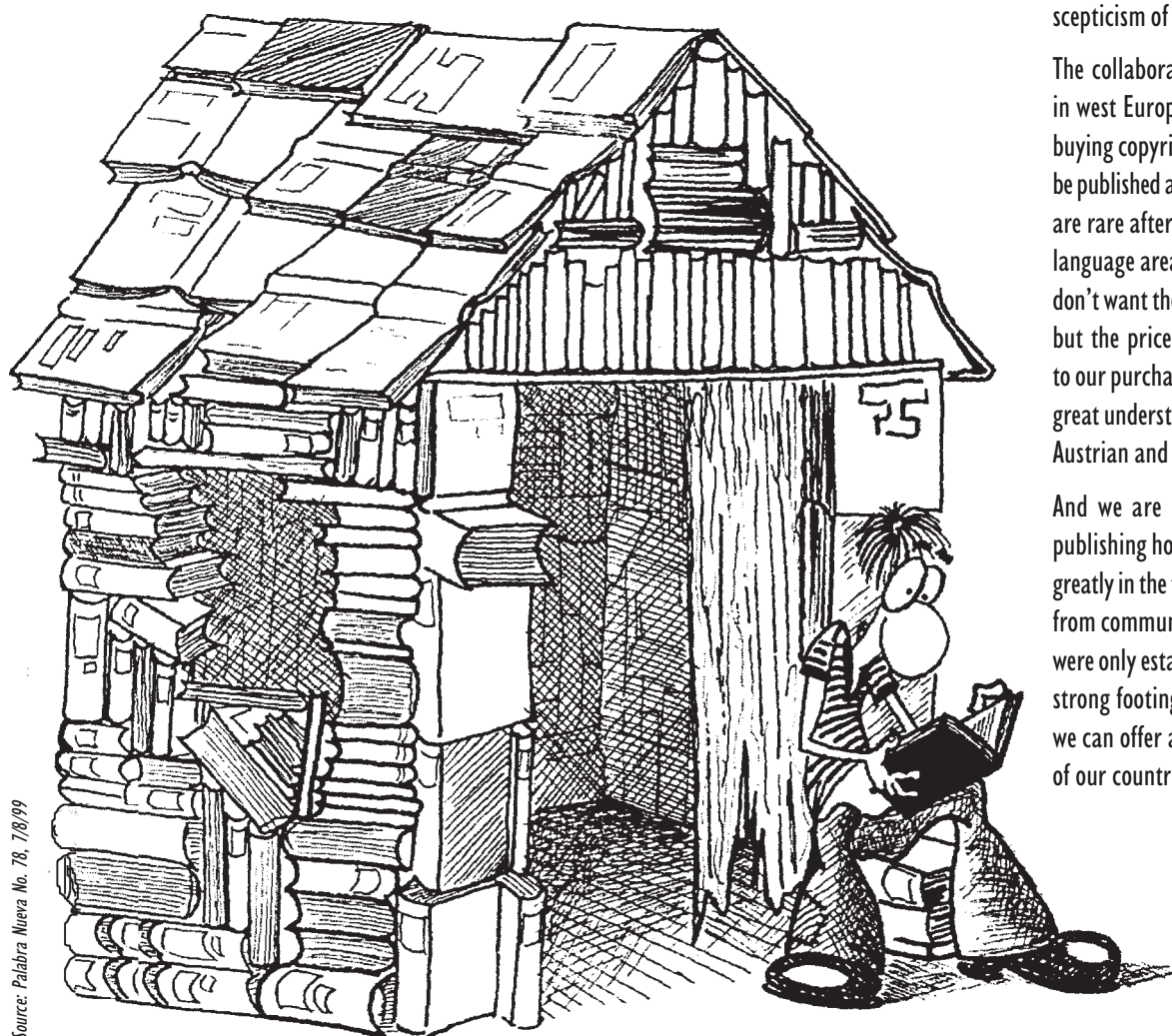
One of our main areas of concern is the production of books for children of pre-school and primary school age. We are convinced that access to books in which God is mentioned in the appropriate manner, is particularly important at this age for the religious formation. The need to give the youth access to appropriate publications is very important for this reason. The books are sold under the production price to make sure that they reach the target group. The publishing house then searches for sponsors if it is not able to balance these losses with the sales of other books. The fact that there are many reprints or new editions of our books seems to prove us right.

We are dependent on the help of priests, religious schools and other Catholic media for the sale of our Catholic publications. But unfortunately, there is a lot of “reserve” in this area. We can only hope for a very gradual improvement here. A lot of priests still suppose that our publishing house is merely a commercial economic business, that makes a lot of profits, although on the one hand we are often dependent on help from foreign Catholic organisations. On the other hand we are even more dependent on the help of social Catholic institutions, because of the great scepticism of secular organisations about us.

The collaboration with the publishing houses in west Europe was a great help. We relied on buying copyrights and many themes could only be published as translations, as religious authors are rare after 40 years of communism and our language area is relatively small. Of course we don't want the translation rights free of charge, but the prices should be measured according to our purchasing power. In this regard there is great understanding on the side of the German, Austrian and Swiss publishing houses.

And we are proud to say that the Catholic publishing houses in our country have changed greatly in the ten years after the political change from communism to democracy (most of them were only established then), and we have found strong footing in the publishing scene, so that we can offer an unique service to the believers of our country.

Anna Kolková, Director



Femmes & Medias en Afrique:

L'Assaut de la Citadelle

By Rokia Ba Toure*

Le 21^e siècle est qualifié, avant même d'avoir commencé, de siècle de la communication. On parle de village planétaire, de globalisation, de mondialisation tant on est persuadé que les nouvelles technologies de la communication briseront les barrières actuelles. Les médias, gros consommateurs de ces nouvelles technologies, constituent le secteur où la mutation technologique est parmi les plus visibles. De façon générale, les médias sont mêlés à toutes les grandes problématiques actuelles, certains n'hésitant pas à en faire même un enjeu de pouvoir.

Ainsi, on s'attend à ce que les médias contribuent effectivement à jouer un rôle dans le changement de la société. Cependant ce rôle dominant des médias n'est perceptible que depuis peu dans bon nombre de pays africains.

En effet, les années 90 (La Baule, juin 1990) ont entraîné une vague de démocratisation, parfois sous l'impulsion populaire. On s'est alors aperçu qu'il ne saurait exister d'État moderne et démocratique, de changement profond dans la société sans liberté d'opinion et de presse. À l'instar des autres secteurs de la vie : éducation, santé, économie, politique, etc., des réflexions sur le secteur de l'information et de la communication ont été organisées un peu partout, tant sur le plan national qu'international. C'est dire qu'avec l'ouverture politique, le changement social et l'amélioration de la qualité de vie des populations d'une façon générale et des plus pauvres d'une façon particulière sont devenus des priorités pour bon nombre de gouvernants et d'institutions. Persuadés que les médias doivent pouvoir jouer un rôle prépondérant dans ce changement recherché, ces gouvernants et institutions n'ont pas hésité à les impliquer souvent. Ainsi, l'UNICEF a bâti toute sa stratégie autour des médias avec au Mali un programme de mobilisation sociale dont les objectifs consistaient entre autres à développer une politique plus structurée en matière de mobilisation sociale visant à amener les individus et les ménages à un changement de comportements par le biais d'activités de communication efficaces, avec une large part accordée aux médias, et particulièrement à la radio rurale.

Mais, comment les médias peuvent-ils contribuer de manière significative au changement social et à l'amélioration de la qualité de vie des plus pauvres, et des femmes en particulier ? Comment les médias peuvent-ils être mis au service des plus défavorisés et des plus « pauvres » et soutenir leur « mieux-être » ?

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En prenant le cas du Mali, on peut dire que la démocratie et les libertés sont tombées comme une manne qu'il fallait expliquer et rendre accessibles et consommables par la plus grande partie de la population, alphabétisée à seulement 23%. Les radios, prolongeant la tradition d'oralité, ont ainsi eu un rôle d'accompagnement, voire de renforcement du tout nouveau processus démocratique. Elles sont venues répondre ainsi aux préoccupations et attentes des populations souvent enclavées, allant parfois jusqu'à remplacer le téléphone et le télégramme.

En effet, les radios de proximité, animées généralement par des gens du terroir, avec l'implication et la participation des populations locales, sont devenues un instrument efficace d'information, de sensibilisation, d'éducation et de distraction. Elles ont par ailleurs, permis aux citoyens de mieux comprendre la vie de la cité et d'y participer activement grâce à leurs productions : magazines, documentaires, fictions, débats, théâtre, sketches. Ce qui amène à croire que la radio locale, si elle est utilisée à bon escient, contribue de façon décisive à l'habilitation (*empowerment*) des populations, devenant une pièce essentielle de toute politique conséquente qui vise, comme au Mali, la décentralisation. Et c'est parce qu'elle offre une opportunité de susciter un débat local et de moduler les messages en fonction de la réalité locale, qu'elle peut, si elle connaît bien son auditoire, contribuer à amener celui-ci à changer d'attitudes : l'émission *Bribra ton* (le club des désordonnés) de Radio Kayira, une des radios privées de la capitale malienne, où l'animatrice se met elle-même en jeu, en étant la reine des désordonnés, a conduit bon nombre de femmes à faire un peu plus attention à l'assainissement de leur cadre de vie ; *Kunafoni mpalan*, revue de l'actualité en langue nationale (*bamanan kan*), émission de Radio Bamakan, sans doute parmi les plus écoutées de la place, contribue, de façon très originale, à « offrir les journaux aux auditeurs », une manière pour cette radio de mettre la presse écrite à la disposition des populations analphabètes en français (langue officielle); *Le beau ani la belle*,

autre émission interactive de Radio Bamakan, est une véritable radioscopie du social, elle permet, grâce à un jeu de rôle des plus réussis, d'aborder les thèmes parfois très délicats comme l'accès des femmes à des postes de prise de décision, la polygamie...

Le succès de certaines émissions et de certains animateurs aidant, la télévision nationale a de plus en plus recours à des comédiens célèbres pour faire passer des messages publicitaires ou de sensibilisation. Même s'il n'y a pas d'indicateurs officiels sur la portée des micro programmes télévisés, la célébrité des acteurs chargés de véhiculer les messages, atteste que ces derniers sont bien reçus par les populations.

Ce sont là certes des exemples isolés, localement, mais l'essentiel ici est l'opportunité qu'offre aujourd'hui la radio de proximité et les micro programmes télévisés, pour donner l'information utile juste, qui aide les populations à prendre conscience de leurs conditions de vie et surtout à prendre des initiatives pour améliorer leur propre sort. Ce changement de comportement et d'attitudes est surtout visible chez les enfants et les femmes qui constituent 53.7 % de la population contre 46.3 % qui sont des hommes.



Source: Health on Air

Mais, plus que de simples auditrices, les femmes doivent s'impliquer dans la production de l'information qui les intéresse et surtout de celle susceptible de les impliquer, ce qui n'est pas évident au vu du nombre de femmes travaillant dans les Médias.

C'est pour rééquilibrer leur place dans les médias et y renforcer leurs rôle et place en tant qu'actrices dans les médias, productrices d'information que l'Institut Panos a initié un projet régional Femmes et Médias.

En effet, depuis trois ans, l'Institut Panos exécute un programme *Médias pour une Afrique de l'Ouest démocratique* dont l'objectif est de renforcer le rôle des médias dans la démocratisation de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Le renforcement des organisations médiatiques et leur ancrage social a constitué un des objectifs généraux du programme avec un accent particulier sur les synergies entre les médias d'une part et entre les médias et d'autres acteurs de la société civile d'autre part.

Si nous considérons aujourd'hui la société civile dans les pays de l'Afrique de l'ouest, les femmes en constituent la majorité. Mais paradoxalement pendant longtemps, elles ont formé, avec les enfants, l'éternel couple des laissés-pour-compte, avant de bénéficier à partir des années 1990, de programmes divers de développement, à la faveur de l'émergence de la démocratie dans bon nombre de pays africains. La quatrième conférence mondiale des Nations unies sur les femmes, tenue à Beijing (Chine) en septembre 1995 a fustigé l'inégalité dont souffrent les femmes dans tous les secteurs d'activités, à travers le monde. Des actions visant à rééquilibrer la place des femmes ont alors été initiées dans les pays.

Le projet régional Femmes et Médias de Panos qui s'inscrit dans cette ligne, entend favoriser l'accès des femmes aux métiers et responsabilités dans les médias, tant il est vrai qu'on n'est jamais mieux servi que par soi-même.

Car les médias constituent un tremplin pouvant permettre aux femmes de briser bon nombre de tabous contre elles. Par exemple, au Burkina Faso, la perception de la parole chez les Mossé est comme « un phénomène, mystérieux, une entité vivante qui prend sa source dans le domaine métaphysique ». Dans cette société, la parole quand elle est dite, est perçue de plusieurs manières, mais dans la globalité, les femmes ne jouissent pas d'une liberté d'expression, surtout quand elle doit se dérouler en public car, « la femme n'est pas maîtresse de sa bouche » : elle est réputée être très prolixe, mais il est généralement admis qu'elle ne sait pas se maîtriser dès lors qu'elle commence à parler.

En encourageant les femmes à s'assumer en tant que journalistes et non seulement en tant qu'épouses et mères, à s'attaquer à la citadelle(les médias) jusqu'ici occupée par les hommes, elles arrivent à dépasser les pesanteurs socioculturelles, ce qui constitue en soi un changement social profond, sans doute le plus perceptible. La soumission de la femme, vue selon la coutume, n'est pas compatible avec les métiers de la communication. La formation en journalisme - comme dans de nombreux métiers modernes du reste - ne définit pas de tâches séparées selon que l'on est homme ou femme. Ce métier est celui de l'ouverture par excellence, et on ne peut pas, une fois dans les médias, se payer le luxe d'observer des tabous qui cultivent la timidité, ou la vertu de se taire en public, face à des hommes. C'est cela l'espoir pour les couches dites défavorisées : les femmes et les enfants..

Radio Don Bosco en Madagascar:

Une Radio proche aux Pauvres

L'Amour pour cette terre, pour ses gens, pour ses jeunes.

La radio Don Bosco (RDB) a été conçue, depuis sa création (juin 1996) comme *“une radio malgache pour Madagascar”*.

Une radio éducative et culturelle, qui s'inspire du message chrétien et de l'enseignement de l'Église, dans l'intention de collaborer au développement et à la promotion intégrale des gens et, surtout, des jeunes de Madagascar qui représentent la majorité de la population.

Audience privilégiée: Les Sans-Droits.

Une attention particulière a été donnée, depuis le commencement, à tous ces gens qui vivent dans des situations difficiles.

Notre objectif principal a toujours été d'atteindre en particulier tous ceux qui vivent dans des conditions défavorisées, dans les endroits de grande pauvreté, d'isolement, dans les quartiers de la capitale comme en brousse.

Le manque d'infrastructures de communication, l'insuffisance de formation et d'éducation au niveau culturel, social, sanitaire et religieux, la difficulté d'accès à l'information de chaque catégorie sociale sont quelques-uns des signes typiques d'une situation de sous-développement et d'une qualité de vie en dessous de la normale. En fait il ne peut jamais y avoir un développement vrai et intégral, respectueux de la dignité de la personne, si les droits et valeurs fondamentaux ne sont pas garantis et sauvegardés tels le droit à l'information, à l'éducation, à la sauvegarde, et la défense de l'éducation des nouvelles générations; à l'expression libre de sa propre foi, à la santé pour tous, à la démocratie, et si ne sont pas mises en oeuvre des “structures” qui sont capables de faire oeuvre d'éducation et de supporter ces droits et valeurs.

Ces autres “structures” ne sont pas que des communautés organisées en vue de la réalisation de tels objectifs. Les médias peuvent représenter quelques-unes de ces “structures” à travers lesquelles



il est possible de faire oeuvre d'information et d'éducation. En plus, en considérant le contexte social, culturel et économique de l'Afrique, la radio se présente pour les médias, comme le "medium" capable de contribuer, de manière significative, au changement social et à l'amélioration de la qualité de la vie des gens, en particulier les plus faibles et les plus défavorisés, comme les enfants, les femmes et les personnes âgées. En effet la radio se présente comme l'outil de communication le plus accessible, le plus diffusé, et le plus utilisé!

Une radio jeune par les jeunes.

Une réflexion de ce type est à l'origine et aussi la conséquence de l'existence de Radio Don Bosco à Madagascar. Une "communauté" de jeunes opérateurs en radiodiffusion, profondément convaincus des droits et des valeurs dont nous avons déjà parlés, et qui est organisée en vue d'une diffusion plus large et d'un enracinement plus profond de ceux-ci dans le contexte malgache.

L'expérience de trois années d'activités permet d'affirmer que la RDB a entrepris un chemin difficile mais valable, en réussissant à créer autour d'elle un cercle de sympathie, d'estime, de respect et d'espoir! C'est pour cette raison que tous ceux qui opèrent à la RDB, ont créé à la Radio Don Bosco:

Une activité multiforme.

- Un **atelier** pour la formation et la qualification des jeunes gens dans le domaine de la radiodiffusion (*RDB, centre de formation en radiodiffusion*)
- Un **lieu** de rencontre, d'échange et de partage de connaissances, d'expériences, de vécus culturels et d'élaboration de messages (*RDB, centre culturel*)
- Une **radio qui émet** des messages éducatifs et culturels, issus de la mentalité populaire la plus profonde et la plus authentique, trouvée dans la tradition et dans la vie du peuple malgache (*RDB, une radio malgache pour Madagascar*)

Le choix de la *qualité*.

Dans les structures et dans le matériel,

- RDB a clairement opté pour la qualité à tous les niveaux dans la technique de diffusion et dans l'élaboration des programmes et des émissions: dans le professionnalisme des opérateurs et dans l'organisation toute entière.

Tous ces aspects peuvent être considérés comme la première contribution à l'amélioration de la qualité de la vie de gens et des auditeurs. Les auditeurs doivent être respectés et doivent être satisfaits, en leur offrant un produit radiophonique qui permet de goûter les finesses de l'art de la communication, qui rend l'approche et l'écoute agréable et stimule en même temps la résonance critique des messages écoutés.

C'est pour cette raison que la grille de la RDB a été étudiée jusque dans les détails anodins. Elle couvre 24 heures. Sur un fond musical continu, étudié, bien articulé, aidée par une animation vivante et agréable, la programmation alterne différentes émissions, des informations, des interventions en direct par téléphone, la participation d'invités, des reportages, etc. . .

Une attention particulière est donnée aux *programmes éducatifs et culturels*. Ils sont conçus avec beaucoup de modestie, ils n'ont pas la prétention d'apprendre ou de dire le dernier mot ou le meilleur. Ils sont des suggestions dans les domaines les plus variés:

- la vie de tous les jours
- l'hygiène et la santé,
- la famille, les garçons, les jeunes gens, la femme...
- la terre et son agriculture, la sauvegarde de l'environnement,
- les traditions, la musique, l'art, le divertissement,
- l'actualité,
- la dimension spirituelle et religieuse de la vie,
- les expériences, les témoignages
- les événements de l'Église universelle et particulière, etc...

A la *promotion de la femme* Radio Don Bosco a toujours réservé une attention particulière; et maintenant elle consacre des émissions hebdomadaires produites avec la contribution et les expériences de femmes de toutes les catégories sociales.

50% des opérateurs de la radio sont des jeunes femmes de grande créativité et de professionnalisme, qui ont donné et donnent continuellement à toutes les émissions une touche féminine malgache, faite de charme délicat et de mystère.

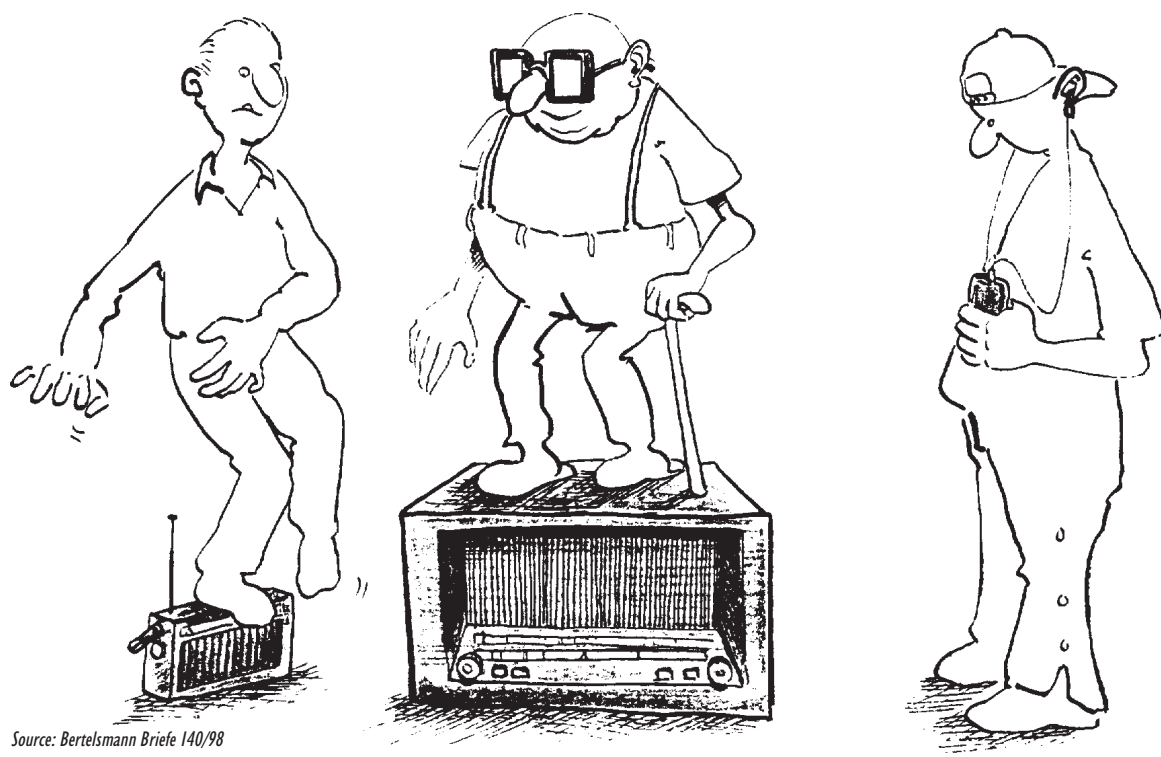
Aucune polémique, mais en même temps aucun optimisme exagéré.

Madagascar vit son histoire en supportant la situation avec patience, mais aussi avec courage et espoir.

De ce pays Madagascar, de ses habitants, de ses "pauvres", Radio Don Bosco cherche à se faire

"proche" et colle au plus près des réalités quotidiennes, en partageant leurs espoirs, en encourageant et en soutenant les initiatives, les activités culturelles et humaines, surtout si elles sont organisées par les jeunes. Elle devient alors une aide, mais aussi un stimulus continu, parce que développant une meilleure qualité de vie.

Modestie, partage et respect colorent l'attention continue de Radio Don Bosco pour Madagascar en général et pour son audience en particulier: l'amour pour cette terre, pour ses gens, pour ses jeunes. *Radio Don Bosco*



Montfort Media Malawi:

Call the Poor to the Feast

“Invite them to the feast...”.

This is the last part of a famous parable that Jesus loved to tell, even if it was meant to shock his followers.

While it is a very challenging task, the gathering, the calling of the poor to come together, it is the ideal that Montfort Media is trying to achieve.

Situated in a small town in Malawi, Montfort Media has a very simple approach to implement the proclamation of the Good News, in words and deeds.

It started during the thirty long years of dictatorship, under the so-called Life-President Kamuzu Banda, when even drunkards were put in prison for uttering rebellious statements. A duplicating machine and a simple typewriter were all the technology employed in those days. Religious leaflets, prayer booklets and a simple youth magazine that could evade the strict censorship of the regime was all that could be printed. This long apprenticeship however, helped to build the first simple structure of a small but active printing press.

It was with the help of the German agency Church in Need that the first Kord Heidelberg printing press was bought and installed in 1990, just in time for the publication of the Pastoral Letter of the Episcopal Conference in Malawi, “Living our Faith”. It was secretly printed and distributed by sisters who transported copies of it in ambulances in order to avoid police road blocks. 16,000 copies in three languages reached all the Churches in time for the first Sunday of Lent in 1992.

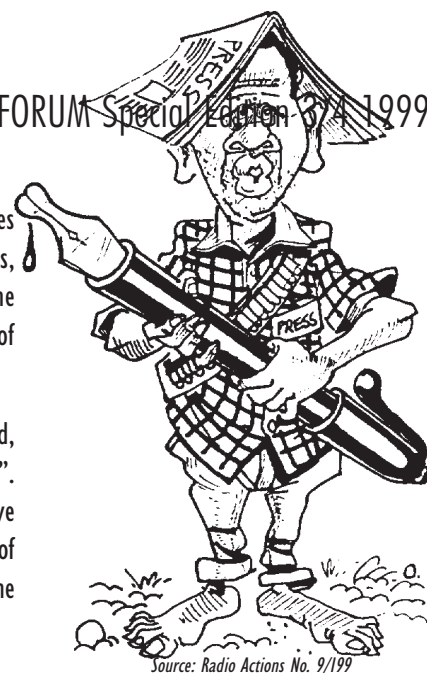
For the first time people were asked to take charge of their future and the dictatorship was openly challenged. The government’s reaction was frightening, as soon as it was discovered where the printing press was located, it was burned down. However, no one could stop this first call for change.

Then democracy arrived: the participation of people in the referendum and general elections; the re-writing of the constitution; the years in which over 20 newspapers flourished; the endless discussions on political matters....

A long journey to democracy had started. Yet it proved to be a strenuous wandering way in the desert. It takes generations to heal the scars of a 30 year long dictatorship. Corruption, violence, mob-justice, mismanagement, lack of accountability, the struggle for money at any cost, are just some occurrences which disrupted Malawi during this time.

Montfort Media doubled its printing capacities and with the use of sophisticated computers, continued to keep the calling alive and the invitation to participate vividly in the process of change, hence upholding human rights.

In 1993 the magazine "The Lamp" was launched, with the subtitle "Christians, Politics and Culture". The magazine wanted, in a simple and positive way, to be a platform, a gathering place, a place of peaceful confrontation for the development of the "common good".



Simultaneously the great event of the Synod of Africa occurred. Montfort Media has constantly defined their presence as a Christian printing house by making available all the texts and material required for the implementation of this new Pentecost. Every year nearly 50 new titles are produced or translated into local languages, in successful collaboration with many other Catholic publishing houses in Africa.

With the level of literacy being around 50% of the total population, and with the expansion of TV and private radio stations, Montfort Media could no longer remain only in printing activities. Greater presence in society is being sought and a studio for radio programmes is under construction.

A mobile bookshop carries the simple publications even to very remote parishes and small bookshops are being established in the effort to reach out to people, especially those in the villages where 85% of the population lives.

Montfort Media is a very small "voice", yet the results are beyond expectations. Not because we claim that they are the fruit of our own work, but we have discovered that the participation of the people can truly move mountains. For example a prison newsletter titled "New Hope" is now being published, it is written by inmates, prison wardens and NGO's committed to the prison reform. In a country where being taken to prison often meant disappearing, the newsletter represents a dream come true. It has been possible with the intervention of the President of the Republic to stop all executions, although the constitution in Malawi still supports the death sentence. The youth magazine "Together" surpasses more than 8,000 copies and unites the youth with positive ideals. A reprint of the translation of the book "Violence against Women" was necessary, and not even the police could stop the distribution at a rally.

The story of Montfort Media is still very much in the making. It is in the call of the poor and the marginalised, whose voice is often not heard, that we see our present Christian ministry in the Church and in society. It is the proclamation of the Good News that has led to a change in the Church and in society. We are very much part of a larger family in this effort, a part of the Christian community all around the world that has sustained this effort. MISSIO, CAMECO, Church in Need... they have all greatly participated in this effort and have helped Montfort Media to become a beautiful sign of sharing and also a part of life in Malawi.

Fr. Piergiorgio Gamba, Montfort Media

Television and the Culture of Indigenous People:

Searching for Niches

By Ruedi Hofmann SJ

According to a certain logic it would be correct to say that in the long run television is going to destroy the culture of indigenous people. However there are strong signs that the opposite might also be true. Television might well become a challenge and a new opportunity not only for the survival, but even for a new and exciting development of indigenous culture. The following thoughts are based on a recent experience in Indonesia where a series of workshops brought traditional artists with media experts together.

Commercial television which depends on advertisements is not likely to give up a menu which serves the tastes of a metropolitan consumer society. In the big cities of newly industrialised or at least “commercialised” countries, television stations are confronted with an elite that has acquired or hopes to acquire a lifestyle which is alien to indigenous culture. Such society ideals can be found in Singapore, Tokyo, New York or Paris, but certainly not in places where indigenous traditions are still alive. Indigenous culture to these people means poverty, a world which they have left behind. Even if they wanted to go back to their village lifestyle the advertisers won’t let them. They want to sell their goods, luxury goods that belong to a metropolitan world. People who don’t consume industrial products are simply not interesting for advertisers. This is why television programs which portray a simple life are not normally considered suitable carriers of advertisements. Indigenous art performances usually don’t bring money and are therefore rejected by the television stations.

There are of course many attempts to integrate traditional art into commercial programs.

Metropolitan taste does not necessarily mean that viewers in Jakarta prefer American, Chinese or Japanese productions rather than local productions. The television programs with the highest ratings are typically 70-80% of local production. One factor may be that the government doesn’t allow Indonesian dubbing of foreign television serials. All have to be shown with subtitles, which of course, makes them less attractive. But apart from that, a familiar setting and actors with Indonesian faces are always preferable. However, these local productions are just as unrealistic in their display of luxurious lifestyles, there is just as much sex and violence as in imported programs. Where the culture of indigenous people is shown, more often than not this serves only as a contrast to enhance the superiority of metropolitan life. Protagonists tend to belong to the urban upper classes. To be rich seems to be normal, living conditions which resemble those

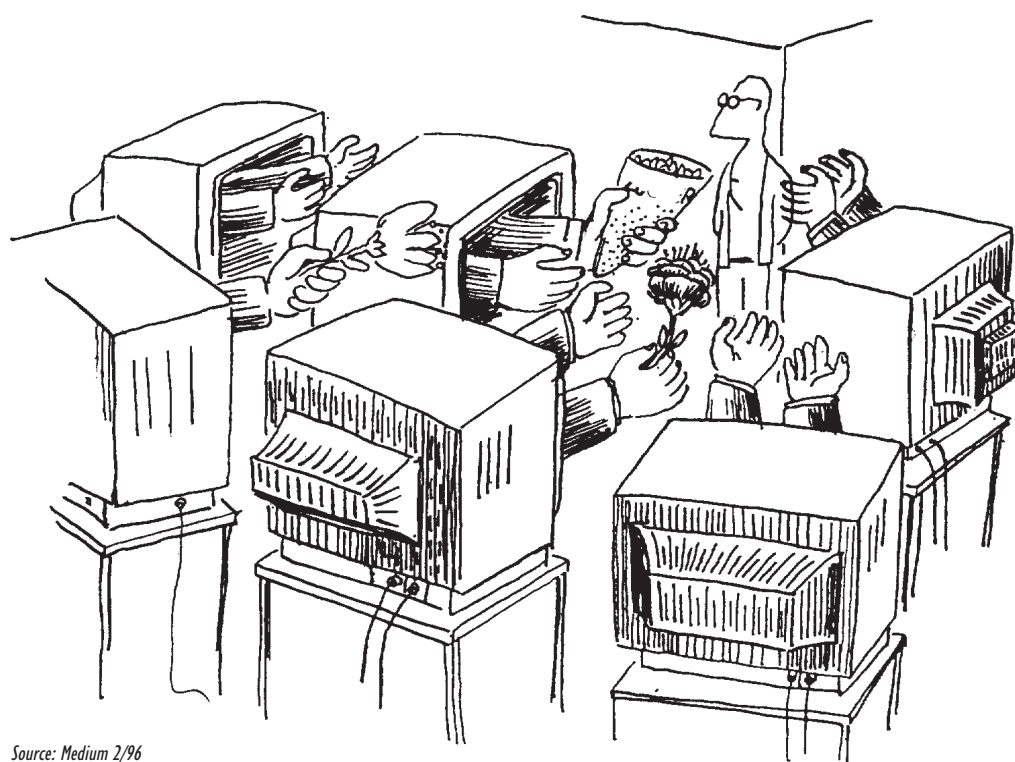
of 90% of the less fortunate Indonesians are marginalised. This is certainly not a climate where traditional artists can prosper. Is this the viewers' choice? Certainly some of the viewers seem to like it, as the ratings show. In Indonesia the ratings are based on diaries. Typically such diaries are placed in households where there is a telephone, and samples are taken only in the five biggest markets of the country, which means that 70% of the population who live in rural areas, as well as the low class urban people are not represented. Nevertheless these people watch the same programs. Do they have the same preferences as the urban elite from which the ratings are taken? There is strong evidence that this is not the case. In the cultural city of Yogyakarta and on the island of Bali, (no ratings are available from these two places), where there is local television, people are seen crowding around television sets whenever a traditional drama is shown. These local stations are government owned and don't depend on advertising.

In 1981, as it was still a government monopoly, Indonesian television (TVRI) abolished commercial advertising on television. Television advertisements reappeared in great quantity with the introduction of commercial stations in 1989, and it seems that advertising will also be reintroduced to government television, since TVRI is having a hard time competing with the five national commercial stations which now exist. TVRI suffers however not only from lack of funding but also from many bureaucratic handicaps.

Neither commercial nor government television are, as we know them today, ideal domains for the development of indigenous culture. Nevertheless traditional art will have to live with this situation for the time being. No fundamental change can be seen for the immediate future. In the meantime, according to an annual government census, 80% of the population have become

television viewers, whereas the average viewing time per day (according to the ratings) is 3 hours 42 minutes. Even without this statistical data we can see that it is becoming more and more difficult to gather an audience for any kind of cultural event, since more and more people get addicted to television. So it seems that there is really no other choice left. Traditional art has to find its proper place on television to survive.

Not all of a full day's programming of a given television station is equally commercial. The big money is on prime time. Therefore popular culture will have a very difficult stand indeed. Prime time is business, and business doesn't go well with popular culture unless this culture gets popularised commercially to become pop art. One of the handicaps is the star mania. Television viewers feel happy when they meet people they know, they want to see familiar faces.

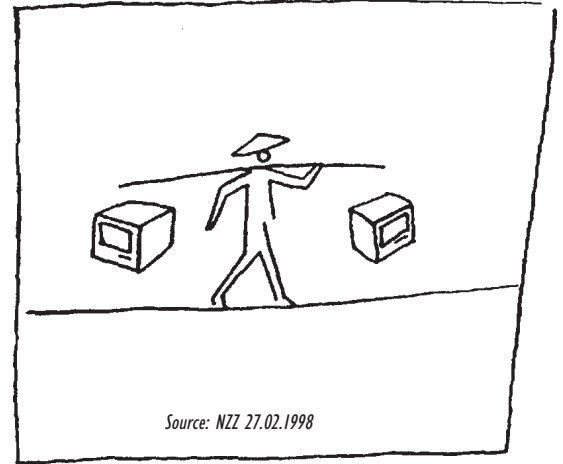


Naturally the number of familiar faces is limited. So the chosen few become celebrities. They are the stars, and it is extremely difficult for outsiders to become accepted in this privileged circle. Being a star means money. Since the producers need audiences they are willing to pay huge amounts for a star, and they can't make use of an unknown traditional artist. Of course sometimes a traditional artist can also become a star. But living his life as a star in metropolitan luxury he would soon be separated from his indigeneous culture. Indigeneous culture is very different from star business.

On the other hand Indonesia boasts a great variety of cultural forms. Besides being rooted in deep ancestral wisdom, these art expressions also provide fascinating entertainment. Many of the indigeneous dances and plays which have developed during centuries are still alive today. Some of them, e.g. the "Wayang" shadow play and its offsprings, have come into new life thanks to radio. In Yogyakarta you can listen to a "Wayang" playing every night by tuning into one station or another. Never before during the one thousand year old history of the "Wayang", was it possible to experience "Wayang" with such a frequency, not even in the sultan's palace. But now television poses new problems.

Evidently traditional art must find its place outside of prime time, in a slot where competition is less fierce and where there is not so much money involved. It is here, that television stations will be more ready to suffer financial losses for the sake of popularity among the indigeneous viewers. One of the two most popular television networks in Indonesia broadcasts a "Wayang" shadow-play every Saturday night. It starts very late when the popular shows are over. However it lasts for four and a half hours and is interrupted by very few advertisements. As the manager confesses, the owner of the station, a Chinese tycoon, personally provides the subsidies to keep this program going. He is convinced that it serves a purpose. Since ratings cannot evaluate the performance, he sends observers out to drive through low-income quarters and remote villages to ascertain from how many homes the sound of his station's shadow play can be heard. The results are overwhelming. People love it. Of course, the advertisers are still unimpressed. What can these poor people buy anyhow? The shadow play helps to improve the overall image of the network, especially when the performances are praised in newspaper articles. Other niches for indigeneous culture are local stations which are still the monopoly of the government owned TVRI, so there is something which can be done. With the great efforts of those who see it's importance indigeneous culture will work on television. If it's left to the free flow of market dynamics, indigeneous culture will certainly die, and not only the culture but the indigeneous people as well, since people can't live without culture. To let market laws regulate everything comes down to nothing less than genocide.

People who watch television for hours every day will become even more critical, not so much as regards its cultural content, but more as regards its technical perfection as an entertainment medium. Even outside of prime time, traditional art must to some extent adapt itself to television standards. This is not an easy task. On television a traditional artist has to serve several seemingly conflicting interests. First he has to convince a producer, he in turn must satisfy the demands of a television station. If the station is a commercial one, the next step will be the financing. Without any advertisements at all, the program will probably never reach an audience,



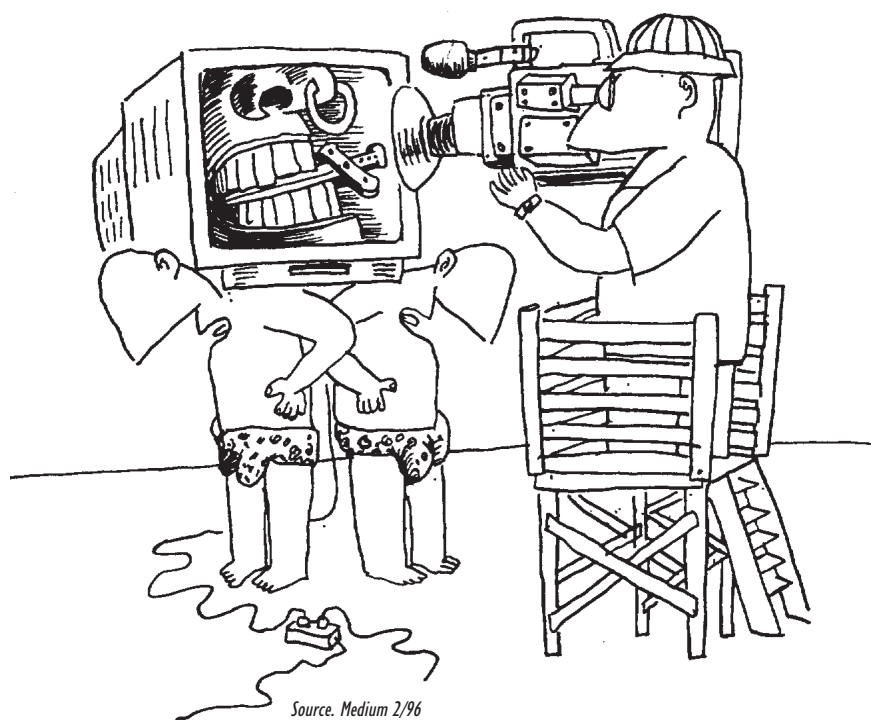
and finally, the traditional artist will have to satisfy the audience. This audience can be divided into three groups. There are the viewers, maybe even the great majority, who just want to be entertained. They don't mind whether the entertainment is of cultural value or not, but they want to be well entertained. The next group are those who are already familiar with a particular art form from live performances. They are happy to watch it on television, but they don't want to be disappointed. This group would resent it if television destroyed the art as they know it. Finally there is a relatively small group of viewers who can be considered experts. They are very critical and will react immediately if the performance breaks the rules of the tradition. Even if these viewers are not important numberwise, they are able to kill the show by writing angry articles in newspapers making the producers shy away from the experiment.

In a series of workshops which started two years ago, these challenges are discussed thoroughly between traditional artists and television people. For most of the participants this sort of encounter is a first experience. The discussions are sometimes very fierce. The aim is not only to find theoretical solutions, but also to come up with experimental productions. Five experimental programs have been produced by one local and four national television stations up to now. One national station has already broadcasted all five programs, and the other stations will follow soon.

Thanks to generous funding by the Ford Foundation for those experimental programs, television people are able to use advanced technology to satisfy their own demands as well as the demands of traditional artists. In the process traditional artists learn to make concessions. The television screen is very different from the stage they are used to. Certain things which happen on stage can't be reproduced on television, but then there are an enormous amount of new possibilities. All in all it is an exciting experience for the participants. The launching of the first five programs

was celebrated twice: in the capital and in Yogyakarta where most of the productions were made. Some of the most severe critics were invited to these events. While it was not possible to convince them all, a general agreement could be reached that the experiment is worth the effort and should certainly be continued.

This experiment is also an example of Church involvement. Some of the workshops and productions used the facilities of the PUSKAT Audiovisual Studio in Yogyakarta which belongs to the Jesuit order, and the PUSKAT staff have been chosen as the main organizer for the whole project. In Indonesia the Church can't do much on its own, the number of Catholic's being only about 3% of the population, but by collaborating with other institutions it can do a lot. Christianity is a religion of the people, and Christ is certainly an "indigenous artist" par excellence. He was in His time largely rejected by the upper classes but He was very popular among the indigenous people. Following Christ we are well prepared to help pave the way for indigenous culture on television. People of other religions notice this, and traditional artists are happy to collaborate, especially since PUSKAT refrains from using too many exclusive symbols which might frighten them.



Source. Medium 2/96

Media Education in Asia:

A Vital and Necessary Task

***By Augustine Loorthusamy**

The need to study the media in a critical and coherent way has become increasingly urgent in a globalised world of telecommunications. More so when we realise that media has become a central activity in our daily lives.

Living in a media-mediated society, virtually everything we know or think we know about the world comes to us through the media. This would not be a problem if the media truly reflected reality and not a re-structured reality.

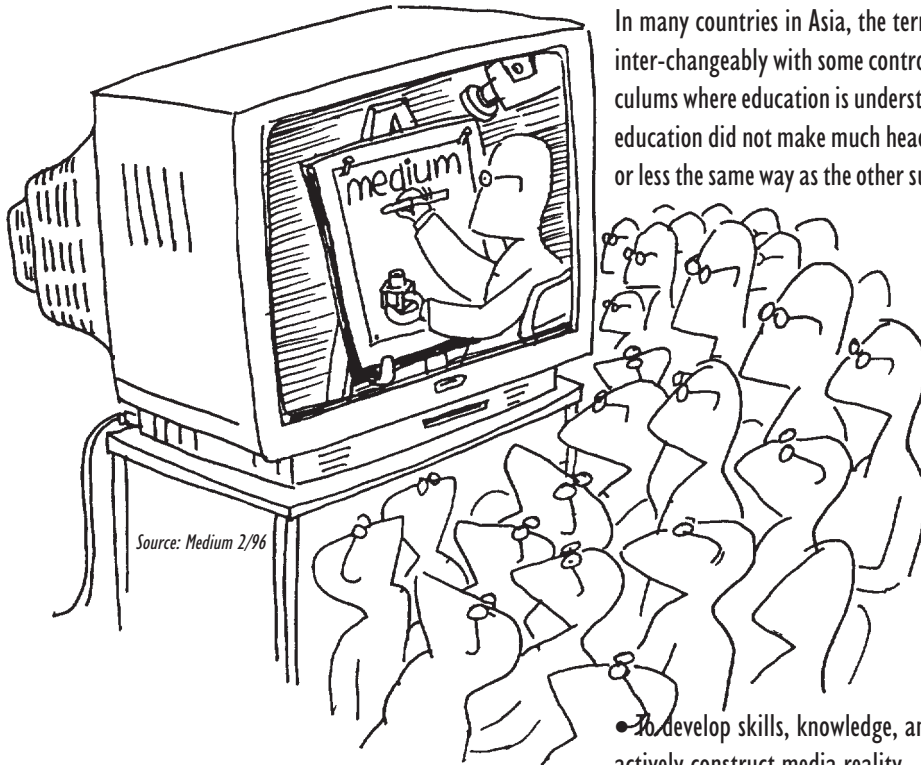
Mass media which today is allied to commercial and political interests, have produced a materialistic culture that has captured and manipulated the hearts and minds, especially, of youth and children. The mass media directs the world to a life of its own making. In this process the media today have become rivals to the priests, religious, teachers and parents. In a media saturated world, there is little time for God, the church or her teachings. This should be a concern for all.

Media education or EDU-communication first began around the early 1980's in Asia. We began to study the media under the title TAT or Television Awareness Training. At that time we saw the media and particularly television as "dangerous". We focused on sex and violence in media and those in church circles still do this.

We then moved on to media awareness — an understanding that there are other forms of communication in society and that media has sub-consciously taken centre stage. This is still occurring with varying degrees of success.

We finally settled down to media education in the mid-eighties. Media education was understood as an activity to help readers, listeners and viewers to be critical, appreciative and discriminating users of the mass media. Over the years the vocabulary began to expand thanks to Len Masterman and John J. Pungente (doyen of media education). Getting acquainted with media literacy helped us in some way to understand media education in a more organised way.

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Source: Medium 2/96

In many countries in Asia, the terms “media education” and “media literacy” have been used inter-changeably with some controversy. This normally happens when you get into school curriculums where education is understood as a “left brain” activity — logical and linear. That media education did not make much headway is precisely because we taught media education in more or less the same way as the other subjects were taught. This is not surprising since most teachers are products of the “book culture”. Thus media education in Asia in the 1980’s can be described as a “sputtering car” moving in fits and starts.

We got into gear at the beginning of the decade, thanks to WACC and OCIC/UNDA, these organisations got the activities started through seminars and symposia at the international level. They brought much clarity and meaning to media education in terms of aims and objectives.

Thus the aims and objectives of media education is:

- To understand how media shapes and influences society.
- To develop skills, knowledge, and activities necessary to interpret the ways in which media actively construct media reality.
- To develop an appreciation and aesthetic understanding of the media.
- To see how media operates technically.
- To understand the difference between conceptual/logical thinking and the sensorial/experiential learning which is the media fare of television.
- To be critical, appreciative and discriminating readers, listeners and viewers of media.
- To develop relevant curricula for formal media education courses in educational institutions.

In Asia, media education took active roots in India, Korea and the Philippines where media education entered the formal education system. There was also a flurry of media education activities in Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Macau, Pakistan and Malaysia. In the latter countries media education was more parish based. Despite excellent church documents on the subject, media education did not really fare well in seminaries and religious houses of formation. They were suffering from “the seminary-rector-syndrome”. Seminary rectors seem to have a great difficulty in finding time and space for the subject. The evils of media have become legion. The spoken and written word still holds much power. Governments in general also shied away from this, recognising the impact and necessity of media education for their people, as their idea of media was to possess it.

An evaluation of media education in Asia would show mixed results. There has been marked success in countries where human and material resources were made available. This success was due to a built-in evaluation base. India, Korea and the Philippines have had real movement. This is still not nation-wide but just pockets of successes. The churches are still not “one” here. It is still the individual bishop, priest, religious and lay who are actively involved.

There are reasons for this and they include:

- A real lack of properly re-numerated trained teachers and animators in media education.
- Weak methodological approaches — teaching media education in a logical/linear way rather than a participative /discovering mode.
- Lack of interest in teachers as the development of a media education curriculum needs a lot of imagination and creativity on the part of the teacher. Teachers are already loaded with work and this is an additional job for which they are not paid. Why bother?
- Lack of material resources — TV,VCR,OHP and school supplies. No real budget is available.
- Hardly any horizontal research on the subject in the region.
- Poor networking between and among practitioners and the international corporations are doing a better job.
- Lack of financial support (for full time workers) from local church hierarchical structures despite the good work being done by the FABC/OSC, OCIC/UNDA and WACC.
- Still a lot of ignorance on how to really go about media education.

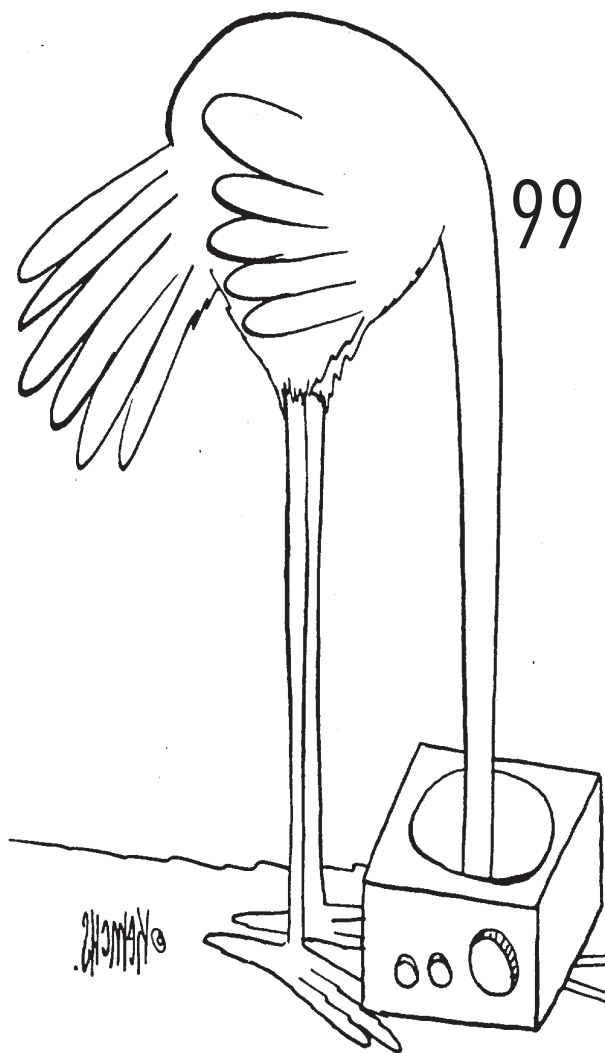
As if an average of four hours a day with the media is not enough, our youth have expanded their horizons to the Internet with their computer games, e-mail and chat groups. We really have another important reason for media education as we enter the third millennium. New communication technologies threaten to take over the child completely.

In this information age a two-year-old can master the button of the VCR, a three-year-old can manipulate the mouse on the computer, a four-year-old can handle the cell phone and the five-year-old can record songs on the VCR's and CD's. They are getting younger and younger. A twelve-year-old child in Malaysia does not talk to the next-door neighbour but chats on the Internet with friends in the Philippines, Indonesia and Hong Kong all at the same time. It is starting as a trickle but before we know it will wash away everything in its path.

The new information technologies, like the TV, VCR's, computers, LCD's, DVD's, cell phones, Internet services and video games have made our youth poor readers and writers and they don't even like schools. They may end up on the technology net on a "permanent" basis. Very often parents are the culprits. They want their child "up to date" and lose them completely in the process.

Today's children are living with many more stresses than ever before — the single parent, dual employed parents, teen parents, unemployed parents and poverty. The quality of the life of students is also affected by parent' divorce, substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), alienation and mental sickness.

The problems of society are washing over our schools and our children are distracted. The mass media and the new information technologies are very often the last escape. Last week I was in Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia to give a talk on media awareness to about 300 youth. They listened politely but when I played the latest MTV by Ricky Martin and Cher they went crazy and Miri is just a small town on the island of Borneo. I was really shaken. Satellite TV and Internet have arrived in Miri and life will never be the same again.



A whole new vocabulary has grown around the Internet. Someone sent mail to my daughter and asked for her ASL, meaning, age, sex and location. The Internet has hit the youth in a big way and soon we will be facing Internet addiction. By the end of the year Asia will have 64 million Internet users and the number will grow by 40% annually from then on. This is one of the highest growth rates in the world. The Electronic-commerce people are watching this carefully as this promises "big bucks" for them; the youth has turned into a target for profitable business.

Together with the avalanche of information and services on the Internet, we also face a heavy dose of pornography, paedophilia, hate groups, digital crooks and cyber-snoopers.

Media education must now move ahead to embrace this new phenomena or we are in danger of losing our children in Cyberspace.

In a globalised communication environment where media oligopolies threaten to hijack the media for their own interests some urgent action is necessary. On the topic of media education Len Masterman says:

"In a world in which images are fast becoming of greater significance than policies, in which slogans often count for more than rational argument and in which we will all make some of our most important democratic decisions on the basis of media evidence, media education is both essential to the exercising of our democratic rights and a necessary safeguard against the worst excesses of media manipulation for political purposes".

In responding to a globalised media one needs a form of media education programme that is also "globalised". This means moving towards:

- A comprehensive understanding of public communication including new technologies.
- A critical understanding of global and local media realities including structures, processes and value orientation. The success of the present World Trade Organisation led market economy is dependent on a subservient media at the service of the political and economic elite of nations.
- The formation of an active, discriminating public, linked to a citizen movement for democratic media reforms, the establishment of alternative media voices at a variety of levels. This may go beyond the schools to involve religious institutions, non-governmental organisations, civic organisations and even enlightened governments of countries in the south.
- Networking and sharing of human resources at the sub-regional, regional and global level. A global reality needs a global response. A media education movement may be an adequate response.
- The success of a media education movement needs the active participation of the ordinary citizenry. The citizens who make up the global media audience. Those that pay license fees and those that spend billions of dollars purchasing the overpriced and sub-standard products advertised on the media networks. These should have a say on how media should function in a pluralistic environment. This can only happen if people know what is happening around them. It is media education for all.

Media education seminars should first start with communication awareness and we should avoid talking about media until much later. I normally begin with the fundamentals of human communication. It starts with seeing communication as life, as a life resource, and communication as a basic human right. It is like stepping back into history. We focus on communication rather than media. The style is parabolic.

I have found some success in this approach to media education. I call this the “history of communication and social change approach”. It works on paradigm shifts and its effects on society. It is the why, what and how of human communication through the ages. It is done chronologically. As we move from 30,000 years ago back to the future, we discuss not only inventions in communication technology that has affected life and lifestyles, but we also talk about politics, economics and the culture of those times. The role and function of communication in society is then seen holistically. In a parallel way we can also include, the history of the church and communication here.

In this process of “revelation” we can also discover how human conflicts, ideologies and colonial enterprises have shaped society and have in the process usurped or restored the communication rights of people. This is part of the democratisation of knowledge that is necessary if we are to understand the modern media age and its impact on society.

The objective here is to show that all communication, including media, should contribute:

- To total human development.
- To a participative approach to decision making.
- To the democratisation of society.
- To the empowerment of civil society.

It is too risky to leave our lives in the hands of politicians, businessmen and all those who claim to believe they know how we should live.

Global mergers by transnational media conglomerates will further consolidate their hold on the world’s communication systems. George Orwell’s 1984 may yet come true albeit subliminally. Mental colonisation of the developing world is a real danger and is already taking place. In all this God and religion will take second place or may not have a place at all. This should awaken us to re-double our efforts to face the new challenges. Media education was never more relevant than now.

A new media education approach should be both liberating and innovative. It should specifically focus not only in understanding the phenomena but more on the democratisation of the means of social communication through an active civil society.

This calls for:

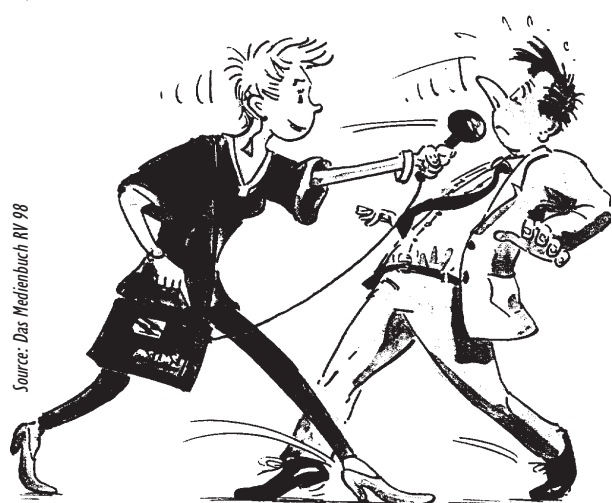
- A strong line of communication educators in our respective countries in the region (to handle the worst we need the best).
- The building of a database of resource persons with very specific skills and competencies (if the business world can network so should we).

- Networking between and among church and secular agencies involved in communication education. We need to go beyond OCIC/UNDA, WACC, AMIC and also move into the academe and United Nation agencies.
- □ Sub-regional, regional and even global symposia and conferences on media education.

As a start, we can offer specially packaged media awareness programmes for:

- All religious leaders in Asia (of all denominations and faiths).
- All clergy and religious and seminarians and novices.
- Teachers/parents.
- Non-governmental organisations.
- Government personnel when possible.
- Students, youth and children — in school and out of school.

The defence of public information systems needs the involvement of both producers and consumers. The airwaves are the patrimony of the people. If ordinary citizens are to fulfil their role as active citizens in an increasingly mediated world then media education becomes a vital and necessary task.



Source: Das Medienbuch RV 98

School of Journalism in Prague:

Courses for Romany Journalists

In the school year 1998/99 the College of Journalism in Prague organised a special course for the Romany. Important for us was, that this initiative was brought about by the Romany themselves, namely by their organisation "Dzeno". The chairman of this organisation, Mr. Ivan Veselý was recommended to our school by Mr. Peter Uhl, the present chairman of the Commission for Romany community affairs. The journalism course was the main part of a wider project about media training for the young Romany, with which "Dzeno" contributed to the international co-operation of gypsies from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania.

The four month course concentrated mainly on the field of communication. At the moment there are only a few gypsy journalists who could work in the mass media and report (credibly for the gypsy population) on the growing number of problems between the Czech majority and the Romany minority. Therefore the agreement with Czech Television and radio that the course "bests" would be used in their programmes was part of the overall media project. The participants had the opportunity, to become familiar with practical work for television and radio during the course.

The theoretical classes, which should provide the prerequisites for a factual and cultivated start in the communication field, were ensured at our College of Journalism. The course took place twice a week. The programme included the following subjects (with the total number of hours

in brackets): *History and Culture of the Romany* (24), *Czechoslovakian Language, Style and Language Culture* (24), *Communication and Rhetoric* (12), *Journalistic Genre* (18), *Creative workshop – Writing* (18), *Means of Mass Communication* (12), *Introduction into contemporary thinking* (18), *General and Journalistic Ethics* (12), *Media* (20), *Basics of Civil Society* (18), *Fundamental Political Concepts* (18), *Social Communication* (6), *Computer Training* (20).

About 50 people applied for the course. 25 took part in the entrance examination, 20 were accepted and 18 completed the course. Most of the students could not meet the requirements of completed studies at a high school. However, all participants passed the rather difficult entrance examination (comparable with the demands made of high school students) in which they had to prove their knowledge of the Czech language and of communication in general.

A requirement for the successful completion of the course was the writing of an article, this led to a great number of interesting features, reports, interviews and personal stories, which usually dealt with the problems of co-existence between the Romany and non-Romany citizens in the Czech Republic. Dzeno is preparing a collection of them.

The school made very positive experiences with this course: The professors showed great interest in teaching it – they also had a great sense of responsibility – and they understood that it was a long time since most of the participants had sat on a school bench, and were therefore not used to studying anymore. The participants used the chances given to them with this course to acquire new knowledge and abilities, which would enable them to work in the media field. As participants in the discussions regarding Romany problems, they were not only very spontaneous in their answers but also had great trust in the people who took their problems and arguments seriously. The gypsies got on well with the other school students. Together they organised evening entertainment, to get to know each other better. The friendly atmosphere was most noticeable in the canteen, where the students could meet at breaks.

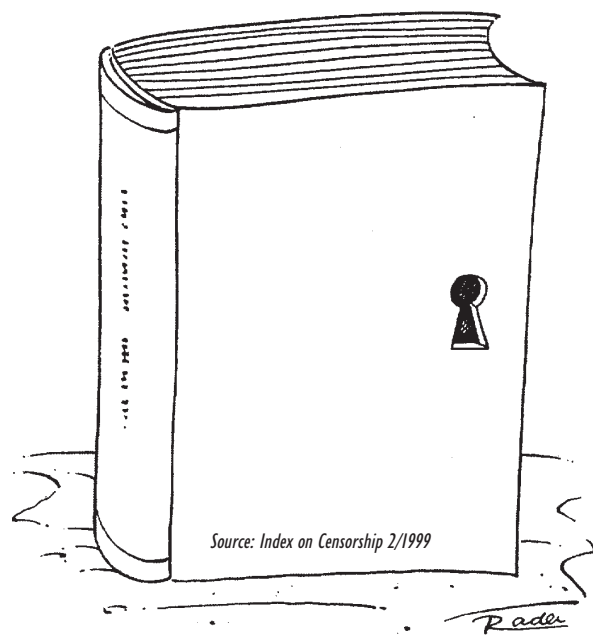
A large number of the successful course participants are working for Romany magazines and as editors for Romany programmes in public service broadcasting. A few are activists for “Dzeno” and support public relations. Two course participants work as news editors in Czech Television. The others work as free-lancers for other media.

A television programme was produced on the subject of the Journalistic Course for the Romany, made by one of our teachers, and was broadcasted on Czech Television. Interested persons may acquire a copy with a German translation.

Kvetoslava Neradova, Josef Gabriel, Directors of the School of Journalism, Prague, Czech Republic



Source: Das Medienbuch RV 98



Don Bosco Salesians in St. Petersburg:

The Russian Adventure

True to our motto, we Salesians began our “Russian adventure” in Gatchina: We started a joint-venture with an official school there, and integrated a training centre for skilled trades in the technical college. How did this come about? Different Russian concerns had a meeting in Venice in 1991 with their Italian partners. The Russians asked for help in training factory managers and qualified employees. The Italian companies showed their Russian guests a Salesian technical school in Venice and the Russians were very impressed by it. Why weren’t there similar schools in Russia? Shortly afterwards we followed up on the invitation to Russia and looked for a place near St. Petersburg to open up our school. This was made possible as the director of a school in Gatschina was willing to co-operate with us.

The Salesian Centre “Don Bosco” which is supported from the Salesian province Venice and the Minister of Culture of the region, opened a college for printing and graphics in 1993, where after three years 80 print and graphic apprentices (men and women) had finished their education. In 1994, due to the support of Swiss friends, the “Business School” (Natschalnaja Schkola Bisnesa) was opened which has two speciality branches: banking and bookkeeping.

The graphical college has modern machinery and tools, which are sometimes used for orders from customers. These commercial orders are a means of generating income for the college. However it is not enough to cover all the running costs, and this work depends too much on chance and the limited possibilities which the teacher-students have, because our teachers were our first apprentices in the college, who now give their knowledge on to the new apprentices, and at the same time further their own studies at the Technical University.

The Salesian Centre “Don Bosco” is not only a school where one can learn languages, the students home beside the school is also supported by us and includes: sport and leisure events, a youth club, summer and weekend activities for children and youth, a language centre with modern computers, advisory services for parents and children, etc.

The Centre has expanded further this year with the opening of a publishing house, which was licensed by the authorities on the 25th of March 1999.

Why a new publishing house? What made us Salesians decide to open a publishing house in Russia? What plans for the future could be realised?

The idea came spontaneously after we analysed the situation:

- The school already printed various articles from the Salesians in the east province, and brought out a small magazine. This activity should have a more long-lasting character as more Salesian literature was needed in the Russian language. This however, is a more intern matter.

- The printing machines (all are Heidelbergs) and the other expensive machines were not being used to their fullest capacity, as there were not always enough orders. It was a shame to see them standing idle.
- The school, the teachers and the Salesian community were almost entirely supported from abroad, but (with the modern machinery) there was the possibility to help ourselves if we could use the machines to full capacity.
- Other reasons arise from the present situation in Russia: the complete shortage of good religious literature. One can speak of poverty in this respect too. The Russians read a lot. Their hunger for religious information cannot be satisfied, as there is too little "on the market". The Orthodox often print old books from the beginning of this century. Other books are printed abroad from different organisations and then imported into Russia. The solution however, must be found in Russia, and an additional publishing house can contribute to this.
- We Salesians also like the possibility to have more contact with our own students, with the many boys and girls who live in our area, and to be able to offer them much more. We organise a summer camp every year for hundreds of children between the ages of 9 and 14 and at the weekends there are usually another 30-40 of them in the youth club. So how can we reach all the boy and girls? We would like to publish interesting books for them, and maybe a magazine, to bring to them our ideas and ideals. We also want to offer parents adequate educational material.
- The distribution of good books would increase the effectiveness of the Salesians presence in Russia. In a reality which is being more and more influenced by the media, it is important to have a clear position, to think about possible changes and to start strategically innovative processes. A model could be the example of Johannes Boscos, in the way he analysed the signs of his time: with the means of social communication "to be a school for all classes of society, that creates culture and shows the right way to live". For the Salesians' media involvement today this means: to identify relevant topics and to mediate them, to shape society and to offer models of successful live fulfilment in uncertain times through information and attractive public relations.
- Representatives of all the Salesian media institutions in North and East Europe met in Munich in November 1998, to rethink how their services and help measures could be used in co-operation with other social organisations, to reach certain goals. Organisations are not there for their own purposes, but for the aims decided upon foundation. When thinking about publishing activities it is necessary to put these aims first. Our small publishing house SZDB (Salesianer Centre Don Bosco) puts the main emphasis on the following points, which have arisen automatically from analyses of our previous work:
 - Firstly, we want to produce Salesian literature in Russian for the first time. The Salesian community in Gatschina (which are partly made up of Italians) has a standing order in this regard. We want to complete many translations and print them in limited editions. The number of (mostly young) Salesians working in the East European province amounts to around 160.
 - Secondly, the education: Now we can help the Russians with our specific Salesian aims. Education is the most important thing for the renewal of Russian society. Different pedagogical brochures and books are being prepared for publishing.
 - Thirdly, the catechesis. After a long period of forced atheism, the hunger for religious information

The Salesian Don Bosco congregation was founded by the Italian priest Johannes Bosco, 130 years ago in Turin. Don Bosco was the first to recognise that the wayward youth could best be helped with a good education and apprenticeship. Today, the Salesians have made it their main task to start up and promote simple craftsmanship training programmes for young men and women.

According to the conception of the founder Don Bosco (1815-1888), the Order's values of tolerance and esteem are not only confined to Catholics and Christians. They do not just want to evangelise, but as Don Bosco put it "To be there, to simply be there, with interest". Although Don Bosco was convinced that evangelism is the way, the truth and the life for the whole world. However, the respect for other religions, cultures and ways of thinking, is still the Salesian's main principle.

The Salesians don't see themselves as just being development helpers in the Third World, but also as being part of on the spot educational and training programmes. Their main statement concerning their work there is "Education overcomes poverty".

Already over 150 job centres have been set up, many combined with basic school education. Help in setting up a livelihood, makes it quite often possible for young people to be self-employed. The Salesians also maintain 935 primary and high schools and 295 secondary schools.

has raised considerably. The inexperience in all social classes is huge: and so our small publishing house tries to help to fill this gap with the distribution of religious literature. Together with the Catholic Commission for the Catechesis we have published small quantities of some texts, as there are not many Catholics in Russia. However, in the meantime the doors are open for co-operation with the Orthodox.

- Fourthly, let us look at the schools, which have also suffered since the fall of communism. Good didactical books are missing for all subjects. Therefore we are preparing school grammar books for graphic and design together with the St. Petersburg branch of the Moscow University of the press.

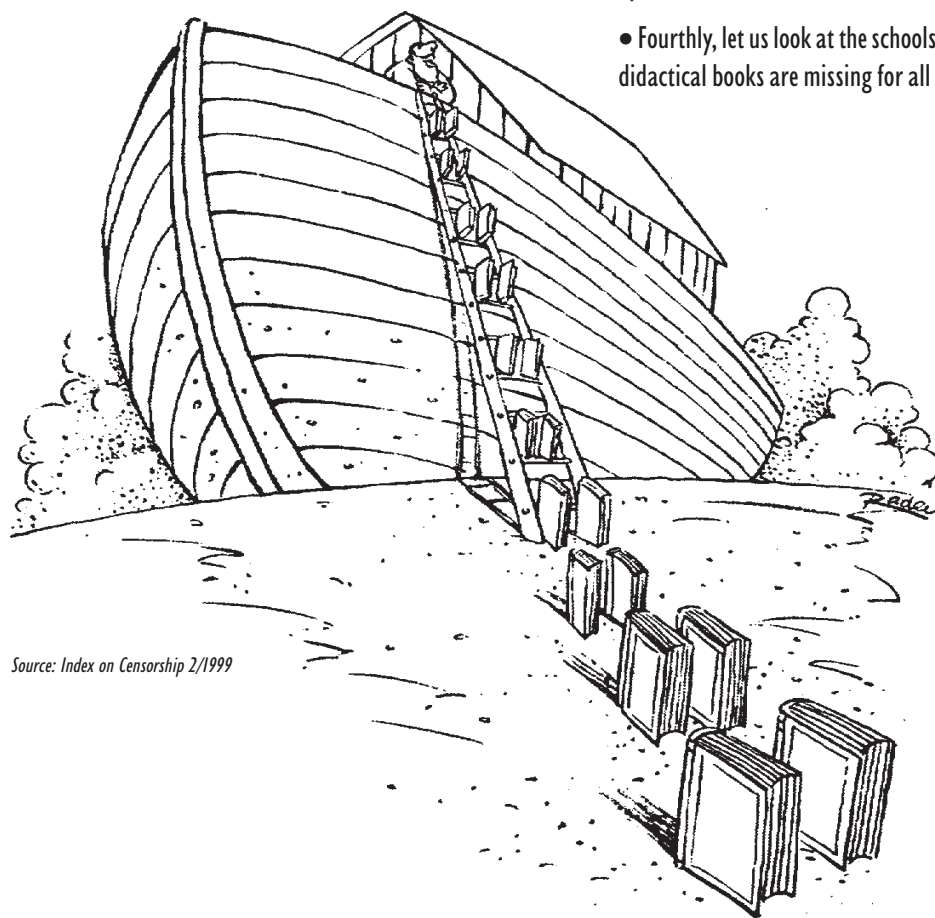
It is like a miracle that shortly after we became our licence for the publishing activities, we unexpectedly received suggestions which we saw as divine providence. We deeply appreciated these proposals as they came from the Orthodox Church. It was the unexpected possibility to work ecumenically, for which we had always wished. After some searching and deliberating we decided to publish books regularly, for the religious education of adults. This seems like a big financial step for our small publishing house, but this didn't stop us as we know that many benefactors are willing to support us. Isn't it strange that a Catholic publishing house produces books for the Orthodox Church? Isn't it wonderful that a tiny new Catholic publishing house can concentrate fully on the education, training and evangelisation of people in the 3rd millennium and that in Russia?

The series for the religious education of adults is called "Catechista", the subtitle is Christian Readings. It is issued monthly and each one consists of about 160 pages. The first three issues dealt with acts of the apostles and other

apostolic writings from the New Testament, with liturgy remarks, that make it easier for the Orthodox believers to take part in the liturgy. The next four issues contains the four Gospels in two languages: the old Slavic church language beside the modern Russian texts. These four issues are also meant for lay people who may not understand the special expressions, so that they can take part in the liturgy. For these issues, after a small research, we will dare to print 10,000 copies of each. The series will continue with other Christian themes.

For this project and for others we require financial support. There are many troubles in Russia, but now at the beginning of our publishing activities, it is especially difficult to get by. On the one side we have high production costs because of the low number of copies printed, and on the other side the tremendous poverty in the country, and so we have to sell the books quite cheaply, very often under the production price. In spite of all difficulties, we will go ahead as we are sure that we are on the right road, even if our efforts in the huge areas of Russia are like a drop in the ocean. "The means of social communication (in our case the press) serve human society and social development, the church society and the re-evangelisation." (Aetatis Novae 7-II).

P. Josef Tabarelli, SDB



Source: Index on Censorship 2/1999

An example from Chile:

TV for the Poorest Sectors

By Valerio Fuenzalida*

1. The poor relationship between the churches and television

The Christian churches — together with many progressive sectors concerned with the fortunes of those who are most poor — generally have a bad relationship with terrestrial TV in underdeveloped countries². They want didactic television scheduling, education in values and virtues. They bitterly accuse TV of having, conversely, an entertainment schedule which is distracting and alienating.

This tension is quite obvious and it has not been beneficial either to television nor to the poor. This tension, in my opinion, arises from a great misunderstanding in these sectors towards television and the media; more specifically, it arises from a lack of understanding of the televisual language, the devaluation of the reception situation in the home and of the awkwardness that causes the administrative operation of the industrial condition of television. The televisual language has an intrinsically ludic-affective³ and dramatic character and it is due to this that it is most suited to entertainment. However, in the Christian tradition and in rationalism, entertainment has been negatively portrayed as a useless distraction and something which takes away from the more important chores in life. Furthermore, television is principally received in the home; a place that has traditionally been considered to be rather more concerned with behaviour and awareness of daily life than with learning; learning has been understood uniquely as a systematic education and something which takes place outside the home — in schools or in training centres for young people and adults.

The intention of this article is to motivate in the search for a more positive relationship with TV, demonstrating that the home is a very necessary place of learning for the poorest sectors of society and that televisual entertainment could be highly educational. In effect, other positive conceptions do exist that value entertainment not only as relaxation but also as a motivating factor and as a fantasy, useful to the extent that it widens self-understanding and the comprehension of reality.

Quantitative and qualitative audience studies indicate that the poor and the less wealthy sectors of Chilean society — and of other underdeveloped countries — have in general, high

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educational expectations in terms of television as a media; educational expectations that do not manifest themselves as regards the written press and radio.

However, the depth of these educational expectations has produced many surprises. This is because they are neither related to children's schooling nor to the training of young people or adults — a didactic function which is considered to belong to schools and to other educational or training establishments. It is from here that one of the major contradictions arises, that while social directors associate education uniquely with school and therefore only appreciate formative television as long as it is educational, the formative expectations of the audience itself are related to needs in other areas thought to be very important such as improvement of the quality of daily life — the growth in self-esteem and self-confidence and the exploration of feminine and young identities.

a) Improvement of the quality of everyday life: It is within the home that poverty affects daily life most severely: it manifests itself in somatic and psychological illnesses, violence among the couple or against children, poor sexual and emotional relations, poor academic performance, drugs, delinquency, etc. Through television, received in the home, it is particularly the main female of the household who would expect help to improve in those aspects that affect her quality of family life.

As regards this necessity, a very successful programme on TVN is the morning show *Buenos Días a Todos* (Good Morning Everyone), which is shown from 8.00 a.m. until midday from Monday to Friday, in all a weekly total of twenty hours air-time. The programme is a magazine style show, adapted to the attention quality of the viewers at this time of day, that is to say that the attention of the viewers is more towards the audio than the visual. This happens when people have another primary activity and only turn their attention to the television screen now and then. The programme's primary function is to provide company for and to communicate with the audience, inspiring them to be happy and energised in their everyday chores and difficulties faced in their home lives. On this affective and stimulating communicational basis, the brief segments emphasise useful information which aims at helping to solve the numerous needs of the home.

The programme does not go into conceptual discussions about whether daily life in the home is a place of alienation for the woman, as was maintained by some feminists in the past. Neither does the programme talk about today's sociologists who claim the same, or who discuss the most adequate socio-political conditions to confront the current crisis of the family. Neither does it recite idyllic poetry about the beauty of the family, nor deliver severe sermons regarding the obligations of this life and it does not attempt to replace the religious groups that reflect upon a conjugal-familial spirituality, that some couples have today. This programme does not attempt to provide an academic diagnosis concerning family life through a verbal code which analyses reality but rather it provides the family with a useful aid in the ludic-affective language of television; in other words, through audio and visual images, which communicate affects and emotions interwoven with information, and which together help people to face up to the adversities in the home. In this way the home can be encouraged to help itself in its conversion to an active centre in the improvement of the quality of life and in overcoming poverty.

b) Increasing self-esteem and self-confidence. It is not only in the country-dwelling and urban popular adult sectors but also in children and young people that television



can have a very necessary formative impact: that is, in increasing self-esteem and self-confidence in their own capabilities so that they can articulate their energies and therefore face up to problems or adversity.

An important trend exists today which is all for doing more than taking stock of the failings of the poor, it precisely diagnoses their capabilities and resources to provide them with potential and to transform them into active agents in their battle against poverty (Cfr. Parker, 1999). Rather than educating in terms of knowledge and skills, the popular sectors need television to guide them into learning their own self-confidence. This learning is indispensable in overcoming self-pitying attitudes and devaluation, which encourage passive and paternalist behaviour. People and groups with increasing self-esteem reinforce their enterprising capacity and they themselves look for the necessary knowledge and learn the required skills.

As an example, *Tierra Adentro* (Inside Land) is a magazine which is shown on TVN every weekend in the afternoon. In contrast to the normal broadcasting of innovations, in the programme they do not bring experts on to teach the audience; instead the presenter travels across the Chilean countryside and also the cities and coastal areas of the country, showing the innovation and creativity of those who own their own concerns in the agro-industrial sector. The presenter does not come across as a teacher nor as an expert who teaches the viewers but rather as a communicator who shows in each episode the creativity and innovation in the area of agricultural production, forestry, fishing and all that is involved in a serious ecological concern.

The programme does not attempt to demonstrate a country-like, compassionate folklorism nor one that lays claim to a nostalgic past. It is a programme that hopes to unite productive learning with anthropology, the differing identities of the countryside with the customs of daily life, the memory of the past with a creativity that looks towards the future; therefore, young innovators often appear alongside older people who conserve memories. The cultural identity and the diversity stop being abstract ideas, or discussions between intellectuals and instead appear in faces, landscapes, sounds, traditions and innovative energies. The programme shows the innovative energy of a civilised society spread out right across the country in hundreds of people and places, so that it can reach out to the audience to potentialise their capacity for self-empowerment.

c) Exploration of feminine and youth identities. In an era of great changes in the social role of the woman, the female television viewer can explore her identity potentials, particularly in fictional stories such as in the Latin American soap operas. The important curiosity about the world of affections and love affairs between young people and adults – the sexual-erotic theme being taboo in family conversation – means that



the woman watches a lot of soap operas. There is evidence to show that some soap operas, especially those about the embarrassments of youth, facilitate conversations between fathers and sons about unlikely situations or about inadequate ways of facing up to problems.

Much evidence exists, obtained through televisual reception studies, which indicates that the way in which the audience learn from television is very different to the way in which they learn at school. While school education is systematic and based on abstract concepts, through television, learning comes in a more anecdotal form — particularly in the popular sectors, including children and young people. Learning also occurs through personal accounts that facilitate the recognition of and the identification with concrete experiences.

This explains the lure of the soap opera stories where situations and characters appear that make it possible to recognise differences and similarities. Thus, the preference for programmes in which the viewer feels as if they have a friend and that they are loved — that is, entertained — instead of programmes which make the viewer feel criticised, or taught by experts and teachers whose knowledge makes them different and inaccessible. This also explains the preference for television presenters with whom it is possible to empathise and identify oneself with and aspire to, instead of passively listening to academic debates or political discussions.

There exists a type of report — called Agonal reports — which is particularly appropriate as a televisual form that permits the viewer a look at the effort and the self-empowerment of real people solving their problems. This type of report could exist as a unit-based programme and could be used as a brief note within news bulletins and magazine shows. It is also a form that could be used in the production of videos with reports and documentaries for group teaching.

Some children's programmes allude to self-esteem, to self-confidence for the reaffirmation of the capacities for success, to astuteness for survival during hardships; these programmes are constructed with ludic-dramatic entertainment schemes, which are very different from the scholarly methods of education.

Educational Needs

Programmes with ludic-dramatic schemes

Self-esteem and Self-confidence

- Identification with fiction
- The dim-witted adult and the clever child
- Fight between the strong and the weak
- The crazy child

a) Identification with history and characters. The American series *Bobby's World*, for example, ludically narrates the adventures of a pre-school child who lives in a family that goes through the normal conflict between brothers and sisters in the various stages of personal and familial growth. Bobby comes across as an imaginative child, reflective and full of questions, with a joy for life and knowledge. His family is the place where he belongs, where we see the loving protection of his parents, with brothers and sisters seeking out their own ways to develop, with conflicts of interest, but in an atmosphere of humour and love. In the Japanese series inspired by the book *Pinocchio*, the puppet goes through various adventures in each episode, in the majority of which he is fretting explicitly due to an intense desire to "become a real little boy". Pinocchio's search for transformation is shown to the child-viewer as a metaphor

for his own motivation to become a big boy, to grow up into an adult⁴ In these programmes, through the pleasure of recognition and of clear identification, the child can affectively feel attitudes of happiness and strength to grow in the world.

b) The scheme of the dim-witted adult and the intelligent child. Various children's comedy programmes are built around the generative scheme of the dim-witted adult, who carries out various activities very badly and with little skill; the scheme is completed, to make it more eloquent, with skilful children who do very well what the adult cannot; this is clearly shown in the series *Inspector Gadget* and in *Donald Duck* with his nephews. According to some studies, the child finds this representation fun because his cultural-genetic development demands that he acquire skills (in the home and in school). The scheme entertains children; but furthermore it is useful in satisfying the need to neutralise the fear of failure — by laughing at the dim-witted adult — and in affectively reaffirming the capacity to succeed in life — by identifying with the clever child.

c) The scheme of the fight between the weak and the strong. In practically the majority of cartoons we come across, another very basic, although notably attractive to children, generative scheme: it is the scheme of the fight between the strong and the weak. The dramatic action in the cartoons featuring the situation between the cat and the mouse is entertaining to children. According to some studies, the cat symbolises the adult, with his monopoly on strength and power, while the mouse, who is frequently more astute than the cat, represents the child who is physically weaker but a trickster, quick and ingenious. These cartoons are metaphoric fantasies, with a ludic-affective lesson that confirms the capacity of the intelligent child to survive in the face of an adverse, apparently stronger world.

d) The scheme of the dim-witted child. Another scheme which is very entertaining to children is that of the character which represents „the dim-witted child“: it is the generative scheme of *Daffy Duck*, *Woody Woodpecker*, *Dennis the Menace*, *Bugs Bunny*, *Garfield*, and it appears in *Top Cat*. The scheme allows „crazy or evil people“ to live symbolically, including their particular tendencies to cause chaos. Some psychologists value the stage of „infant craziness“ as complementary to the need for routine habits, and as something that motivates the imagination and creativity.

The schemes of children's programmes reveal the internal structure of televisual entertainment and simultaneously they appear as ludic-dramatic forms of knowledge and affective education. These television programmes can enrich the family atmosphere with valuable formative elements, especially necessary in deprived sectors. These formative elements are not concerned with cognitive materials to memorise the academic curriculum, but rather with affective attitudes and motivating factors such as those which clearly appear in the aforementioned programmes.

But the potential formative influence is not mechanical or direct — as the behaviourist theorists believe; according to them, it is enough to watch one episode of a television programme to fatally convert the viewer towards good or evil. However, the polysemy of televisual language does not guarantee that the viewer will catch on to whatever the programme proposes. The educational influence requires familiar and scholarly mediation; in this way the usefulness of these programmes for families and children would really increase if the programmes were enjoyed and discussed in the kindergarten, in school and in the home.

Televisual entertainment, understood in this way, is not like the sugar which is added to a nasty tasting medicine. Televisual entertainment is a natural structure different to the didactic academic structure, but from which we sometimes learn a useful lesson for our lives; the lesson that we learn is less by means of rational conceptual analysis but rather more by means of recognition of situations which allude to our own life and by the identification with significant people — whether they be real or fictional (Fuenzalida, 1997).

The programmes that are useful to audiences in our underdeveloped countries require a terrestrial TV channel. To create and maintain a terrestrial TV station is a long and complex job in which certain difficult conditions need to be overcome:

- The diffusion of entertaining/formative programmes in the indicated direction, rather than high culture or academic-didactic programmes.
- A programming schedule which is widely accepted by the audience, then the elite and marginal stations would not have social influence.
- A station which is professionally managed in terms of both production and administration.
- An industrially solid and competitive station; capable of obtaining funds from the existing publicity market and from other sources of public and private funding.

A TV station which is useful to the development of a country is a challenge which systematically ties together aspects which have frequently been disassociated and devalued, such as ludic-dramatic entertainment, the formative needs of the particular audience susceptible to being satisfied in their own homes and the intrinsic industrial condition of the television for production and funding.

² Terrestrial TV or broadcasting, different to cable TV, satellite or closed circuit TV.

³ Ludic, from latin Ludus: playful, characterised by play. Cfr. The classical book *Homo Ludens* by Johan Huizinga.

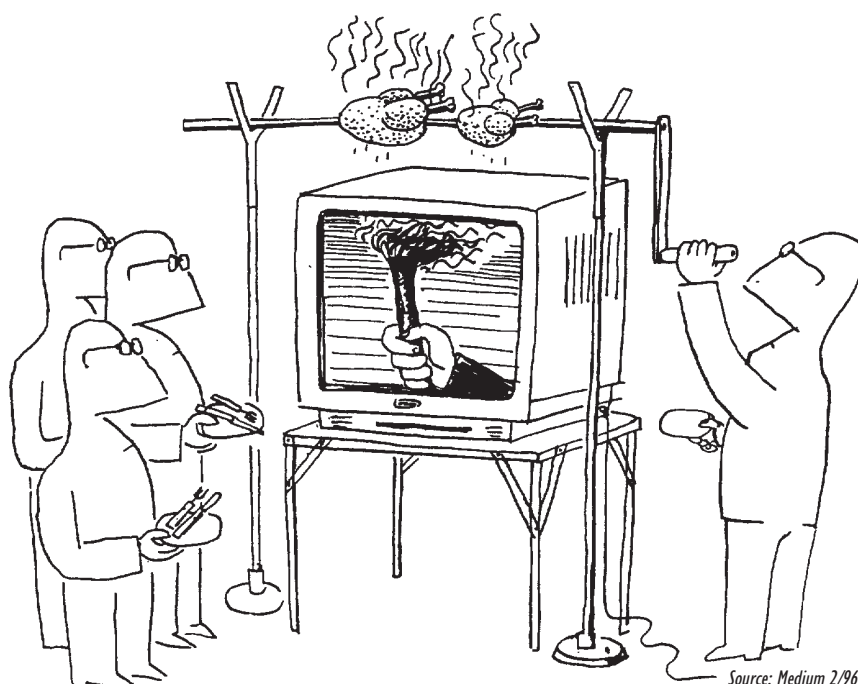
⁴ The metaphor is a feature of language in which, from a different reality, we allude to a similar aspect or analogue.

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Source: Medium 2/96

Rural Library Network in Peru:

Barefoot messengers

By John Medcalf*

„*Senores bibliotecarios*, I am a simple illiterate woman but, thanks to one of your books, I have learned to make trousers and shirts. The men used to buy their clothes from a village called Hong Kong, but now they buy them from me.“

The Rural Library Network in northern Peru was inspired by a 12 year-old boy. In 1972, I was the new priest of the isolated and poverty-stricken parish of Bambamarca. Twenty thousand peasant families eked a living from maize and potatoes harvested at heights of up to 12,000 feet above sea level.

One wet afternoon a poncho-clad boy came to my office.

„Padre, our teacher says you have books.“

„Well of course I have books.“

„But I’ve never seen a book and I want to.“

„Well how did you learn to read without books?“

Leonardo Herrera then described how the teacher had a minuscule blackboard, and how the pupils would cut a cactus leaf on which they would carve letters and numbers with a nail, a key or a knife. So I selected from my book shelf a history of Peru written in Spanish and handed it to Leonardo. „I will lend this to you for a week, Leo. Then perhaps I’ll lend you another book if you’ve looked after this one.“

Shortly before dawn the next day, I woke up to knocking of MacDuffian insistence. Expecting a sick-call, I confronted Leonardo instead.

„I’ve finished the book!“ he shouted triumphantly.

„You can’t have done. There’s no electricity in your village.“

„Oh, I borrowed a few candles from your church.“

The lad had sat up reading all night. He had even made spidery notes on paper I had given him and he wanted the second volume of the history of Peru.

Three decades later there are nearly 600 village libraries spread over the length of this mountainous country. The three principal influences on the network are the pedagogy of Paulo Freire, the barefoot doctors of China and the British public library system. Freire taught that literacy programmes were pointless without the availability of suitable reading materials; China warned us against vehicles, which would be difficult and expensive to maintain (we refused several

**John Medcalf spent 30 years as a priest in south and central America, founding the Rural Library Network in Peru in 1971. He is currently chairman of the Peru Support Group (PSG). Donations to the libraries may be sent to 122 Ladbroke Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 1LF For further information about Peru, call PSG at 0171-620-1103.*

offers of 'bibliobuses'); the British system encouraged us to give readers direct access to books (not just to a filing cabinet) and to adapt the Dewey System to our very special requirements.

The earliest rural libraries were attached to village schools, but when teachers failed to cooperate, village elders took over control. Librarians were proposed and elected by a show of hands. In addition to monthly visits to Cajamarca City to exchange the books, librarians took on responsibility for all cultural activities and even the protection of archaeological sites from marauders and tomb-robbers.

After a few years of modest success, a conservative mayor (who was also a big landowner) approached me one day: „Padre, what's so special about books? Why don't we put a television in every village instead?“ His intentions were obvious. Books were subversive, awakening the minds of the *campesinos*. Television — especially the *Dallas* and *Dynasty* type of programmes to which we were then subjected — would quickly numb any tendency to creative thinking.

Our barefoot librarians walk up to 15 hours a day with a knapsack or — if they are lucky enough to have a pack animal — with a saddle-bag. These contain an average of 24 books. A typical selection would include books on health and first aid (*Where There is No Doctor* is a favourite);

history; children's stories (which are read by adults as well, making up for lost infancies); legislation (surprisingly popular, especially where the defence of their own interests is concerned); poetry, legends and folktales; a religious book or two; and perhaps a book about cooperatives and current affairs.

In recent years, my successor, Alfredo Mires, has encouraged the writing and publication of books by the peasant librarians and their readers. These illustrated books have proven to be enormously popular. After all, reading and writing (like charity) begin at home.

We were at a coordinators' meeting one day when a *campesina* woman interrupted us. „*Senores bibliotecarios*, I am a simple illiterate woman but, thanks to one of your books, I have learned to make trousers and shirts. The men used to buy their clothes from a village called Hong Kong, but now they buy them from me.“ Her children, who went to the village school, were able to read to the mother the text that accompanied the drawings.

Once we linked up with the Technical University of Cajamarca, when villagers requested practical help with

bee-keeping. The students were amazed at how proficient the *campesinos* had become thanks to books on agriculture published in Argentina and Uruguay.

The libraries continue to grow, in spite of government indifference and, in the past, open hostility. The network provides a cheap imitable model of adult education. Peasant families are encouraged not to migrate to the big cities. Leonardo is now a village schoolteacher, but libraries are still his first love. Like MacDuff, he knocked — and was answered.



Source: TAZ, 18.2.1998

Las Radios Indígenas en Guatemala:

¿Radios del Pueblo?

Por Aurora Velasco*

Amanece. En la radio, un local sencillo, una cabina, una consola más o menos moderna, un indígena frente al micrófono leyendo las noticias, saludando, escogiendo la música, hablando la lengua propia. Afuera, el pueblo despierta y sintoniza su emisora, la que les habla a ellos, en su propia lengua, la que los convoca, identifica, relaciona.

La Radio Indígena hace presencia, da fe de la existencia de muchos grupos ignorados y los hace presentes porque una persona, un grupo sin voz, no existe para los demás. Al decir nuestra palabra nos afirmamos como seres humanos, hacemos presencia y entonces empezamos a existir para los otros, para los que no sabían que nosotros también existimos. Con la palabra decimos lo que pensamos, lo que sentimos, lo que creemos, cuál es nuestra filosofía de la vida, y al existir para los demás hacemos posible la discusión de temas que generalmente no se tocan en los medios, hacemos conciencia y muchas veces, movemos a la acción. Por eso hay tanto control sobre los medios de comunicación por parte de quienes están en el poder, de quienes quieren imponer una forma de ver las cosas, por parte de quienes saben que ignorar a los demás, es hacer que “no existan”.

Entre los pobres, a quienes ha estado vedado el acceso a los medios de comunicación, los más pobres son los indígenas, los “indios” relegados por el color de su piel y sus costumbres; ignorados por muchos, etiquetados como curiosidad folklórica por otros y en muchos casos vistos como una amenaza, como un peligro, como personas indeseables a quienes hay que exterminar. Sin embargo, los indígenas tienen mucho que decir, una enorme sabiduría y un lenguaje oral muy rico junto con una tradición de dignidad y de lucha por sobrevivir y conservar una serie de valores y formas de ver el mundo a pesar de la invasión y la presión de otras culturas.

La historia de las radios populares, participativas entre las que se encuentran también las radios indígenas, es una historia compleja que ha ido demostrando a través de los años, que el derecho a la comunicación, derecho universal no llevado a la práctica, es un derecho fundamental; que el espacio debería de ser de todos y que aunque mucho se ha avanzado, hay mucho todavía que caminar. Podríamos decir que las radios indígenas en casi toda América Latina, menos en México (en donde nacen como una forma de control de parte del gobierno), nacieron por un impulso de la iglesia católica que las pensó como una forma de evangelización y de alfabetización. Nacieron como emisoras cuyo público preferencial eran los grupos marginados, los grupos indígenas y campesinos. Estas radios trabajaron durante muchos años con mensajes que se elaboraban desde fuera, para “educar a la gente”, es decir para hacerlos más parecidos a la cultura

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dominante, para integrarlos a la sociedad. Dentro de esta visión, se fueron invitando personas de diferentes grupos indígenas para que hablaran en lengua y llegaran a todos los que no eran bilingües. Podríamos decir que fue el primer acceso de los indígenas a la radio, un medio de comunicación masivo. Sin embargo, aunque los indígenas hablaran por la radio, la radio no era “de” ellos. Era “para” ellos. Ellos decían lo que otras gentes “más preparadas” les decían que dijeran. Así nació, la radio indígena.

Poco a poco, se fue evolucionando, se empezó a ver a los demás como sujetos y no como objetos, se empezó a hablar de desmitificar el medio, de dejar que la gente dijera su propia palabra, del concepto de cultura y se inició un plan de capacitación tanto para el aspecto técnico como para la realización de programas radiofónicos. Los indígenas se convirtieron en productores de radio, a veces copiando los esquemas de la radio que habían venido oyendo, a veces, buscando formas propias de expresión y creatividad. Se logró dejar de lado la idea de que para hablar por radio se necesita “preparación profesional, voz bonita, un sistema de vocalización que uniformara el estilo” etc. etc.

Muchas fundaciones se emocionaron con la idea de apoyar esta comunicación y apoyaron económicamente a grupos de iglesia que promovían estos proyectos. Y los indígenas, a veces bajo la tutela de los obispos, a veces a pesar de ella, se fueron convirtiendo en **comunicadores**.

Las radios indígenas fueron haciendo presencia, fueron teniendo peso, fueron demostrando su fuerza y se fueron enfrentando también a una gran competencia: frecuencias con más cobertura, subasta de concesiones, emisoras con mucho mejor equipo, con mucho más dinero, con mucha más música que ellas, con producciones más costosas, con un amplio conocimiento del mercado, de la publicidad y de cómo jalar gente y ganar más dinero.

En la actualidad las radios indígenas enfrentan una problemática bastante compleja: Por un lado la de ser más profesionales, la de capacitarse para mejorar la producción y “competir” por la audiencia; por otro lado el reto de seguir siendo una radio indígena que convoque y reúna a un pueblo que lucha por ser él mismo, por conservar sus costumbres y su dignidad a pesar de la globalización. Por un lado la necesidad de “ser autosuficientes” pues las fundaciones piensan que ya es tiempo de que lo sean y por otro el reto de subsistir con dignidad sin caer en las falacias de una comercialización contraria a sus principios. Y lo que es más grave, por un lado son presentadas como radios indígenas, de los indígenas, con directores indígenas y por otro, en muchos casos, las radios no son realmente de ellos, son radios de la iglesia en donde trabajan indígenas.

Una emisora es realmente indígena, cuando pertenece a un grupo, a una organización indígena, cuando es la misma gente indígena la que la trabaja, la que la planea, la que la gestiona y la defiende porque la siente suya. Para que esto sea una realidad se necesita el trabajo y el esfuerzo de muchos:

Si las radios de la Iglesia que nacieron “para” los indígenas no evolucionan para que las radios sean “de” los indígenas, pueden quedar como las radios indigenistas de México, tuteladas siempre por alguien que desde arriba decide y con una participación por parte de los indígenas bastante limitada en lugar de ser unas radios en manos de los indígenas y gestionadas por ellos.

Si las fundaciones que han venido apoyando a la Iglesia con estos proyectos, no evolucionan y aprenden a apoyar directamente a los grupos indígenas que están tratando de llevar adelante



estas radios, las emisoras indígenas no van a poder salir adelante abandonadas de pronto a sus propios recursos después de años de tutoría y dependencia.

Si los grupos Indígenas no luchan por su derecho a ser gestores de su propia comunicación, seguirán siendo empleados sin alcanzar nunca la mayoría de edad como ciudadanos y como personas.

Si los gobiernos no respetan el derecho a la comunicación y promulguen leyes que permitan el acceso a las frecuencias por parte de estos grupos, las radios indígenas serán siempre de poco alcance y verán limitada su audiencia.

La lucha de la Radio Indígena que ha venido desarrollándose y haciendo presencia, es pues una lucha compleja por lograr derechos fundamentales de todos los hombres: el derecho de ser reconocidos como personas con capacidad de gestión, el derecho a la comunicación, el derecho a la capacitación y a un reparto más justo de los bienes que permitan a los pueblos su desarrollo.



Source: Comunicación 3/97

La experiencia de FM Esperanza en Buenos Aires:

Marginalidad Urbana y la Radio

Durante los últimos años, más y más iniciativas han surgido para luchar contra la pobreza urbana creciente, un problema grave en muchas partes de América Latina. Aparte de proyectos de salud, de infraestructura básica o de creación de empleo, también existen grupos cuyo fin es organizar espacios de comunicación para que los pobladores de zonas urbanas marginadas puedan expresarse, comunicarse con sus vecinos, intercambiar ideas y compartir alegrías y tristezas. Igual como los medios populares en el ámbito rural, intentan ser voz de aquellos que no tienen voz en los medios masivos y comerciales. Guillermo F. Fossati, director de FM Esperanza, describe las experiencias de esta emisora que opera en una zona marginada en Ciudadela Norte, Gran Buenos Aires, Argentina

En 1987 nos juntamos un grupo de ex-religiosos, con un fraile franciscano, con el que compartimos nuestros estudios, para buscar una solución al problema de la falta de comunicación en un barrio marginado del gran Buenos Aires. Así, y luego de un arduo trabajo, un año después nació F.M. Esperanza, como una radio comunitaria y popular. El desafío era grande, porque necesitábamos, siendo ajenos al barrio, ser carne del mismo, para poder lograr nuestros objetivos que eran muy simples:

1. Que la comunidad se pudiera expresar,
2. Crear lazos de unidad entre los vecinos,
3. Reflotar los lazos solidarios y los valores éticos,
4. A través de las anteriores consignas, evangelizar.

Para entender nuestro trabajo, tenemos que explicar brevemente nuestra realidad. El Barrio Ejército de los Andes (mal llamado por los medios de comunicación „fuerte apache“), es un barrio compuesto en sus principios por personas provenientes de las villas miserias, que molestaban a la imagen de la Capital Federal, por lo tanto el proyecto desde su comienzo nunca fue solidario sino, por lo contrario marginalizador, marcándolo como un lugar propicio para la delincuencia, empeorada en los últimos años con la aparición de la drogadicción. En los primeros reportajes hechos a los jóvenes del barrio ellos nos decían: „vivir en el barrio es como tener SIDA, nadie nos quiere cerca y menos dar trabajo“.

El trabajo no es fácil, el desafío es día a día un reto, ya que por un lado la comunidad entendió la consigna de la participación, pero los objetivos hay que refrescarlos continuamente.

Nuestro trabajo apuntó desde el comienzo a lo comunitario, chocándonos desde el primer momento con un gran problema, lo económico, problema que subsiste hasta hoy. Aunque hay una realidad que es interesante y que nos motivó desde el comienzo, somos la radio más escuchada en la zona, dato que surgió del trabajo realizado por las radios comerciales de la zona; aunque esta realidad nunca nos ayudó ante los comerciantes de la región, porque estamos dentro de un barrio marginal.

¿Cómo se puede marcar las diferencias en el trabajo de un medio comunicación tradicional comercial o comunitario, a un medio comunitario, inmerso en una realidad de extrema pobreza? Quisiera mencionar algunos aspectos que me parecen ser esenciales:

El mensaje o lo que se comunica es diferente: Los pobres, los marginados comunican su verdad, sus esperanzas, sus ansias de superarse, su vida, sustrayendo la sustancia vital del hombre. Por lo cual atrapa a la audiencia, pero no interesa a los sectores financieros, que prefieren lo vacío. La riqueza que se genera en los medios alternativos en los sectores de pobreza es el principio de un cambio de imagen y de vida, que luego es copiado por otros, los medios de comunicación masivos, que copian las recetas de los triunfos, haciendo campañas solidarias ante inundaciones, etc., que nacieron en los medios comunitarios.

Desde el inicio, la participación de la comunidad y entidades intermedias fue excelente; pero hay que tener en cuenta que éramos uno de los primeros medios alternativos del país, por lo cual la novedad ayudó en nuestra labor. Esta participación también se notó en los cambios que tuvimos que realizar en estructura, programación, etc. proyectada, adaptando nuestra forma de pensar de la comunidad.

El sentido de pertenencia: Cuando la gente comenzó a decir „en nuestra radio“, a defenderla y mejorarla, comenzamos a comprender que verdaderamente era una emisora comunitaria.

Existe una familiaridad entre el comunicador y la audiencia: tienen una ida y vuelta, una relación continua, por lo que se forma una gran familia. Esto lo vemos en la gente que no es de la zona y que formaron parte del proyecto, pero fueron tomando otros rumbos laborales, en su testimonio todos quedaron marcados por la familiaridad y apoyo de la audiencia, es más cuando pueden y sus otras labores se lo permiten acercarse a la emisora.

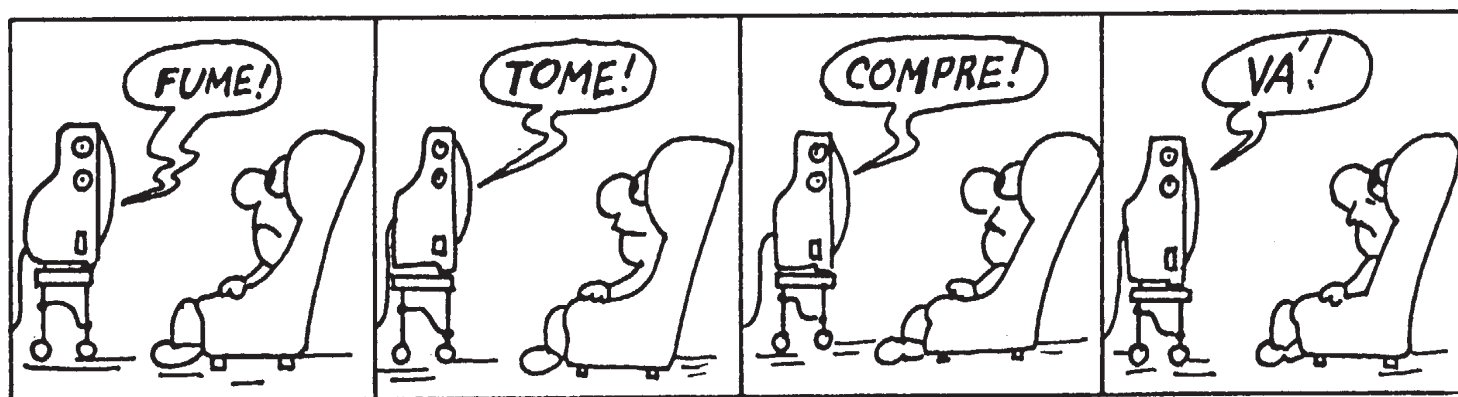
Finalmente sentimos una solidaridad profunda. Es increíble ver como ante una necesidad, la comunidad, aunque pobre responde con lo que puede, y no solo con lo material, sino con el corazón.

En la experiencia personal remarco lo que cada persona aprende. Cuando uno trabaja en un medio de comunicación masivo, cumple con un horario o un trabajo específico. Cuando uno trabaja en un medio que está insertado en la comunidad, va compartiendo con la gente la vida: sus riquezas, sus miserias y aprende junto a los demás mucho más de lo que uno imagina y que ninguna escuela puede enseñar.

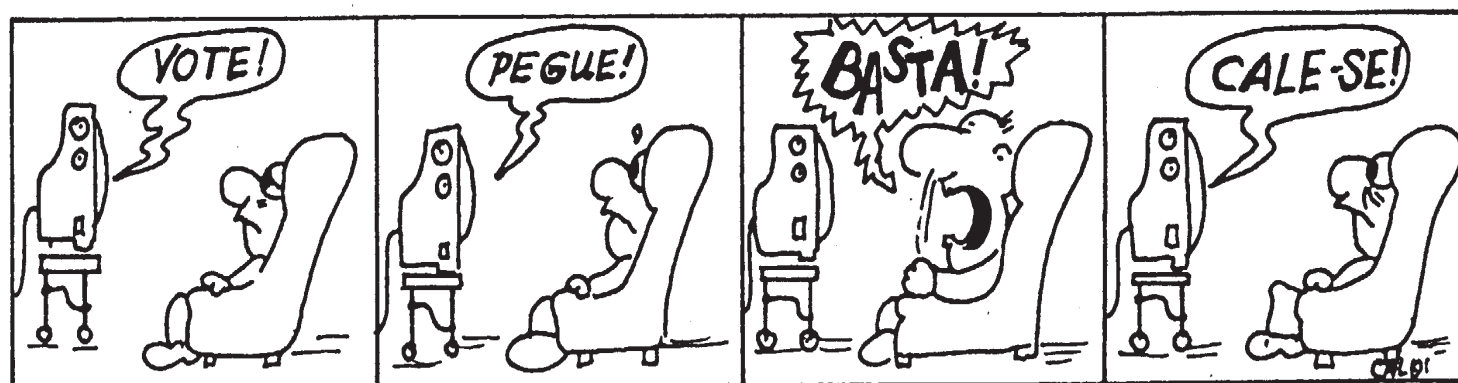
Quiero remarcar que cuando uno habla de la audiencia, no puede encerrarse en la gente de un determinado barrio, ya que por lo menos en nuestro caso llegamos a muchas personas a varios kilómetros a la redonda, a los cuales también los motiva el trabajo que realizamos y se insertan en el trabajo diario de la comunicación.

Cuando nos preguntamos si es posible un medio de comunicación en los sectores pobres, si lo hacemos de una óptica economista, la respuesta es negativa; pero si queremos realizar un proyecto comunitario, la respuesta es positiva, sabiendo que la creatividad en lo financiero tiene que ponerse de manifiesto todos los días.

Guillermo F. Fossati, director de FM Esperanza



Brose, Reinaldo: Cristaos usando..., Sao Paulo 1980



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