

Special Edition

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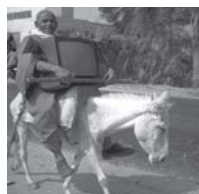
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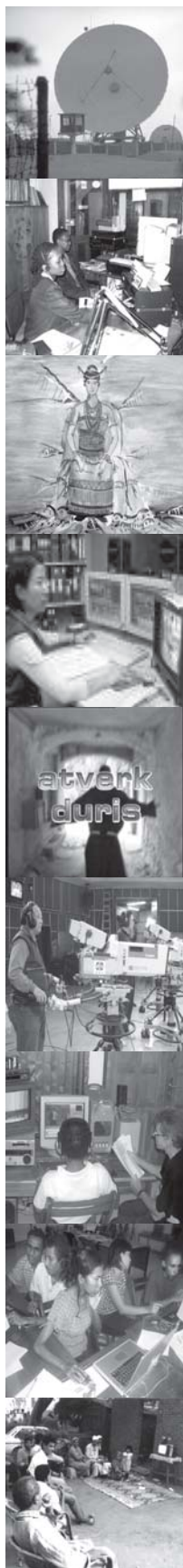
Taking on

Television



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# Ownership Programming Range

## Different Models of Religious TV

by A. Sofie Jannusch and  
Daniela Frank, CAMECO

On a global scale, television is the most intensively used medium and also the one, that is considered to have the strongest influence on people's perception of the world and the organisation of their daily life. Through the technical innovations of the last decades a tremendous boom could be registered all over the world, especially in those countries where at the same time the access to airwaves and satellite connections was liberalised. The case of Congo-Kinshasa gives an example of how a mushrooming TV scene can provide public access to all sorts of "miracle healers" (see p. 35).

The different ways, of how the Church's presence can be ensured best in the different media environments, are still widely discussed. While doing research for this special issue it became obvious again what a tremendous variety of models of Catholic TV work are to be found worldwide. To arrange the vast variety into a kind of simplifying ordering structure, they can be differentiated along three main features: ownership, programme contents or format and the geographical range.

### Ownership

Still one of the most widely discussed questions is whether the Church should possess stations of her own or find better ways to be present in the existing television market of a certain country or



region through programmes produced by efficient studios. CAMECO has asked two media experts from Africa to briefly state their arguments PRO (Fr. Eustace Sequeira) and CONTRA (Camille Sawadogo) running one's own TV stations. They also give an example of how the general reluctance to opt for the big investment into a station of one's own is overcome under specific circumstances (see article p. 14). Concrete experiences do not really give a certain prospect for future decisions. There are stations such as *Canal 13* of the Catholic University in Chile which have played an important role in the process of democratisation, reaching financial self-sustainability at the same time. On the other hand, the Franciscans in Poland had recently to declare their *TV Familjana* bankrupt, although they had co-operated with potent private financiers (see p. 9).

In most Western and Central European countries, however, there is another model of being present in TV for the Churches through religious departments in the public service TV stations. It has to be stressed here that in the majority of European countries the public service stations are the market leaders, acquiring the highest ratings with their programming. Generally, those departments are an integral part of the station, and the staff are considered to be regular employees while the heads of departments may be chosen by the Church authorities. This is, of course, the cheapest way to





reach a big audience. It is, nevertheless, a common complaint by the persons responsible, that their programmes rarely get the most attractive places in the schedule. *J&G Productions*, a private studio in Kaunas, Lithuania, has recently made one of the rare exceptions, by placing their documentary "Open the Doors" at prime time on the national channel (see innovative programme examples on p. 45).

Few are the cases in which Catholic groups co-operate with others to jointly run a TV station. Some community initiatives may follow this line. But also the national channel *VisionTV* in Canada, has chosen a profile and structure, integrating several religious groups and Churches in the country (see article on p. 32) — from Anglicans to Zoroastrians. FE-TV in Panama or SAT-7 in the Middle East (see p. 28) could also be named here.

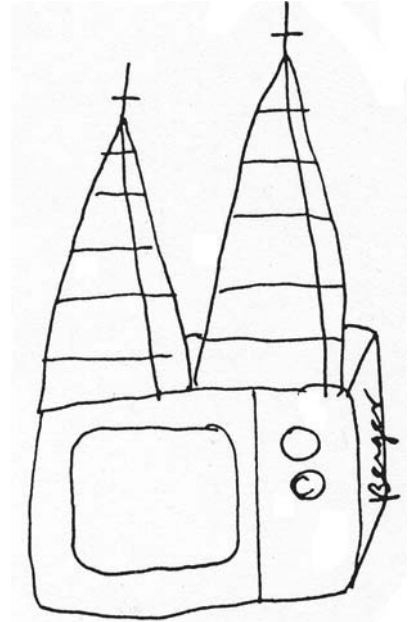
## Programming

While SAT-7 and *VisionTV* concentrate on programmes related to faith and religion, others,

such as *Canal 13* in Chile, have decided to attract their audience with a general interest programme, hardly identifiable as specifically Catholic or religious. Some, like *Televisa* in the Dominican Republic, offer a wide range of programming while putting a strong emphasis on explicitly religious broadcasts.

The decision about the programme profile normally determines also the financial resources. While the general interest formats are aiming to raise enough income through commercials/advertisements, the predominantly religious ones are depending on donations by funding organisations or private sponsors and the faithful audience. Others like *Rede Vida* in Brazil with a "mixed profile" also try to secure their funding from different sources.

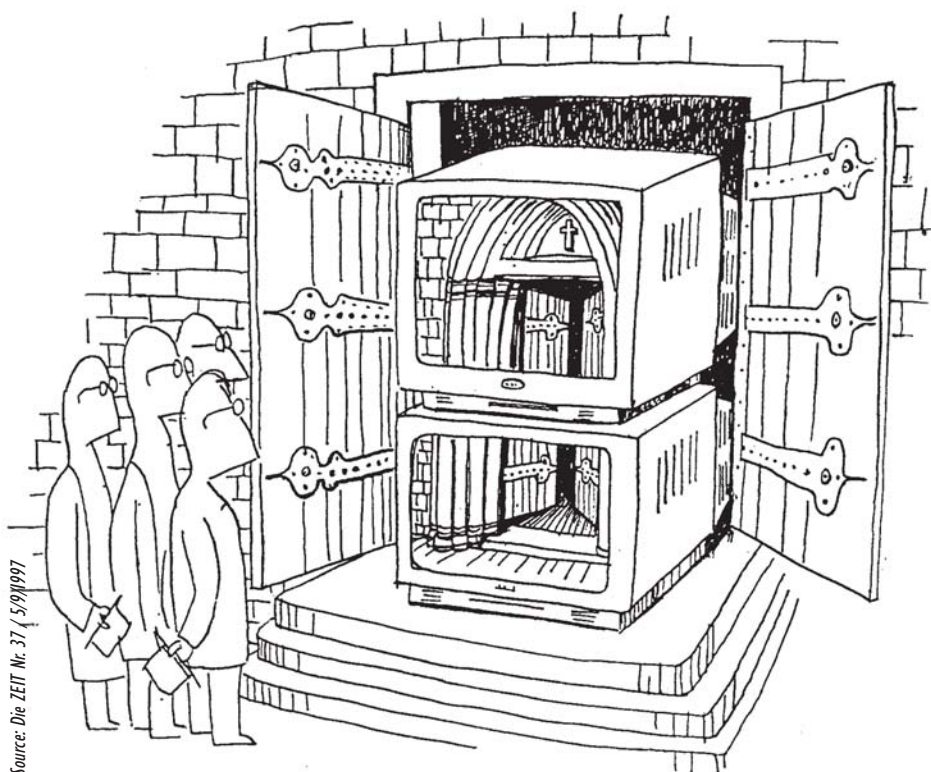
Where audience research was carried out, it became manifest, that channels with an explicitly Catholic profile attract almost exclusively the active Catholic community.



Logically, lots of studios are seeking new ways of attracting those parts of the population which are not or no longer reached by other church services. The "Sunday for Sceptics" produced by the *Jesuit Communication Foundation* in Manila, is an example, where an integral part of the Catholic service is presented in a different way to bring it closer again to those, who are critical towards the Church or are in doubt of their faith (see p. 45).

While the Philippines are still a predominantly Catholic country, *Kuangchi Programme Service* (KPS) in Taiwan has to find its audience primarily among people of different faith. KPS delivers the basic moral orientations through educational programmes, and addresses important social issues with a strong option for disadvantaged people in society (see p. 54).

A much wider vision is also followed up by the *Casa de Produção Audiovisual* (CPA) in the newly founded Republic of East-Timor. CPA does not want to make their programmes an extension of the pulpit, but put the Church's commitment into a broader context of development, making culture and identity key issues in a state where a common concept of history and nationhood is yet to be defined (see article p. 49).



## Geographical range

While most of the television stations and production studios are having a national orientation, there is a view aiming to cover bigger territories. A specific example is SAT-7, a satellite channel addressing the scattered and declining Christian communities in 21 countries of the Middle East. SAT-7 gives also an example of co-operation: Launched out of a grassroots Christian media initiative the partnership comprises 25 Christian and media agencies as well as Churches and foundations from the Middle East, Europe and North America (see p. 26). Fr. Hugo Ara, a researcher from Bolivia, even reaches out to the model of a continental station for Latin America (p. 16).

The strongest advocacy group consists certainly of supporters of local community initiatives, challenging the top-down models of traditional communication and media structures. In this issue of the MEDIAFORUM Alfonso Gumucio-

Dagron, a Bolivian with wide experience on four continents, shows the basic principles defining community television (p. 18), while Zoli Schwarz, a Dutch film director, reports of his experience with video initiatives in Brazil, how to use local TV to empower parishes and local communities (p. 23) and Harry Letsebe describes, how the absence of a legal framework affects the development of a lively community television scene in South Africa (see p. 26).

## One way – one strategy?

After studying this fascinating plurality of models of how to be present in TV, it becomes very clear, that there is not a single concept valid for the Church's commitment to television on a global scale. Any decision depends on the specific audience that should be reached, it depends on the local media environment, on economic, social, cultural factors as well as the understanding of the aims that should be followed by the TV initiatives. However, there are quite a number of

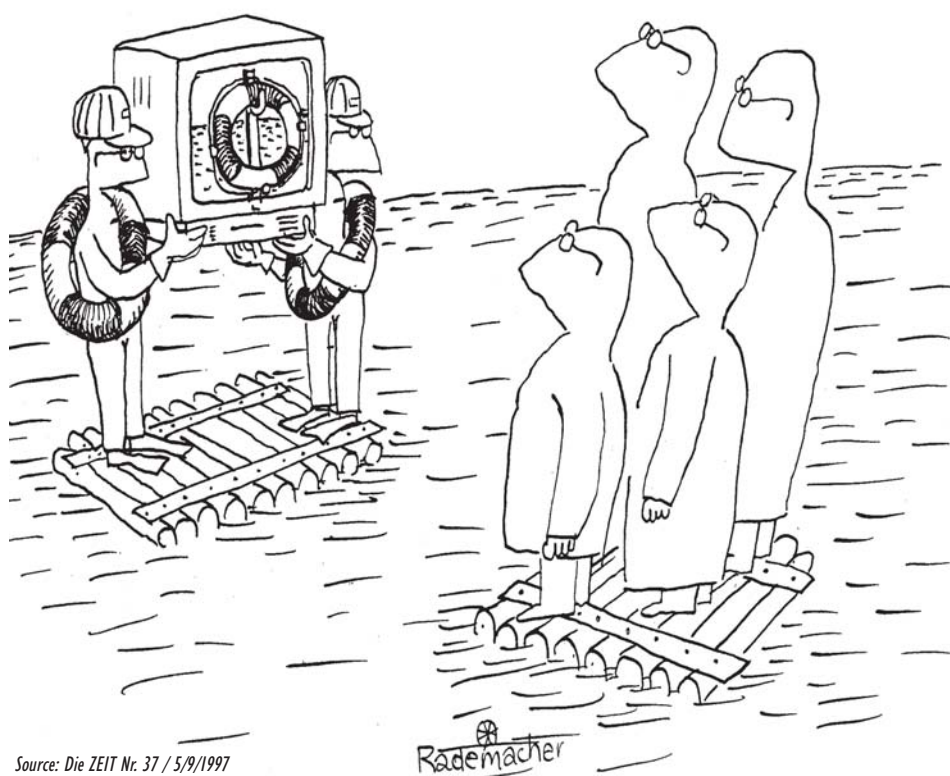
factors, that have to be considered by all of them: only qualified staff can produce attractive programmes, adequate organisational structures have to be implemented, supporting and facilitating the general development and the daily work routine, and last but not least a financial concept has to be followed securing the sustainability of the venture in the long run under the special circumstances of any given environment.

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

Comment l'Eglise peut-elle le mieux assurer sa présence dans les différents environnements médiatiques? Cette question est en débat permanent. Devant la large palette de modèles possibles offerts par les télévisions catholiques à travers le monde, l'article propose de les cataloguer selon quelques critères : la propriété, le format et le contenu des programmes de variété ainsi qu'en fonction de l'espace géographique couvert. Certes un tel système de classement est réducteur, mais il a au moins l'avantage de mettre de l'ordre dans cette immense scène de la télévision religieuse, qui est illustrée tout au long de ce numéro spécial de MEDIAFORUM.



Los diferentes caminos para asegurar lo mejor posible la presencia de la Iglesia en los distintos ambientes mediáticos todavía son objetos de la discusión. En este artículo se clasifica la gran variedad de modelos que existen en todo el mundo con respecto al trabajo de televisión católica por las siguientes categorías principales: propiedad, programación en cuanto a contenido/formatos y el alcance territorial. Este sistema categórico que presenta una estructura ordenada y simple sirve para orientarse en el amplio escenario de la televisión pública religiosa, ilustrado en la edición especial del MEDIAFORUM.



# What's so Special about TV?

## Characteristics and Functions of Television as a Medium of Communication

by Renate Hackel-de Latour

What's special about TV? was the — admittedly — rather general question we put to Dr. Renate Hackel-de Latour, assistant professor for mass communication at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Germany. In her contribution, she gives a rough overview of the specific characteristics of television in comparison to other media, describes the recent technical changes as well as how television is "used" by different audiences in the world.

In our society television is considered to be a central medium. Because of its importance in society it attracts special attention. This applies to the way in which it is organised and controlled, to the contents and quality of programmes as well as to the different ways in which it is used. The considerable technical effort required for the production and distribution and costs related to the latter, the big range, the intensive use of the medium television as well as aspects of the "global media village" are specific to television. I would like to make some brief observations on this vast subject.

In the western world two basic organisational models of broadcasting have evolved: the public and the commercial type. Internationally speaking, the model known as "öffentlich-rechtlich" in the Federal Republic of Germany is probably best summarised by the expression "public service". "Public service" means that a public institution which is more or less independent of the state is controlled by the general public and wholly or mainly financed through fees (TV and radio licences). Commercial providers usually finance themselves exclusively through commercials. Broadcasting companies in countries which once claimed to represent "real socialism" are still subject to state regulation to varying degrees and partly they are commercialised. Today's media structures in the Third World either came into being during the period of colonial rule or did at least grow under the strong

influence of western hegemonic states. Subsequently, even to this day broadcasting structures survive in the former colonial states of Africa, which strongly resemble those of the former motherlands — at least in their exterior form.

The socio-cultural institution television fulfils a multitude of functions which are expressed in almost all statutes of media organisations as follows: information, education, entertainment. In the public service broadcasting system of the Federal Republic of Germany television is also given an advisory role. In general, three, at times considerably overlapping political functions, are assigned to all mass media in a democracy: information, opinion building, control and criticism.

Every mass medium has considerable advantages and disadvantages which can largely be explained because of its technology:

Television and radio restrict the user in terms of space and time to a much higher degree than newspapers and magazines.

Taking part: While the print media only allow to imagine what happened, a live broadcast on the radio or on the screen makes it possible to actually witness events. The live experience, specific to television, proved to be of great fascination.

The main interest in television is stimulated by the programme flow with the promise of constantly new pictures and information as well as by the change of formats, contents and viewers gratification. By doing this, television claims to organise the world on the screen — and to make it more consumable this way. The broad choice of television programmes gives everybody the chance to become his or her own programme director. Everybody can compile their information, education and entertainment programme according to their individual interests.

85 percent of the German public are reached by television and radio every day. The choice of programmes exceeds the amount of time that



viewers can on average dedicate to television. If we look for example at the period from 1960 to 1990 and explore how the choice of TV programmes offered by the German public service providers *ARD* and *ZDF* has developed, we will see that it has increased by 1250% while the duration of television reception has only doubled. People do not dedicate this much time to any other leisure activity.

The citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany watch TV for 185 minutes a day on average. Entertainment programmes are used overproportionately in comparison to informative or educational ones. Worldwide the average daily viewing time is two and a half to four hours, in some Central- and Eastern European countries as well as in the USA it is even higher with 262

minutes. At the top of the list are Macedonia with 286 minutes, Hungary with 260 minutes and Estonia with 253 minutes. Countries with a lower use of television are Switzerland, Iceland, Luxembourg and Israel.

If we compare the use of the media in various parts of the world, the first thing we notice are the at times extremely different conditions of access. Where wide coverage of electricity is not taken for granted, the distribution of electronic media is severely restricted from the start. Examples are India with only 41% of households with television sets or South Africa with 67%. In comparison, in parts of Latin America, radio and television are considered to be the most important media. In Brazil the furnishing of all households with television sets has almost been achieved.

Although the time spent watching television has not increased considerably with the proliferation of programmes, new forms of dealing with television have evolved. Different types of utilising television are establishing themselves:

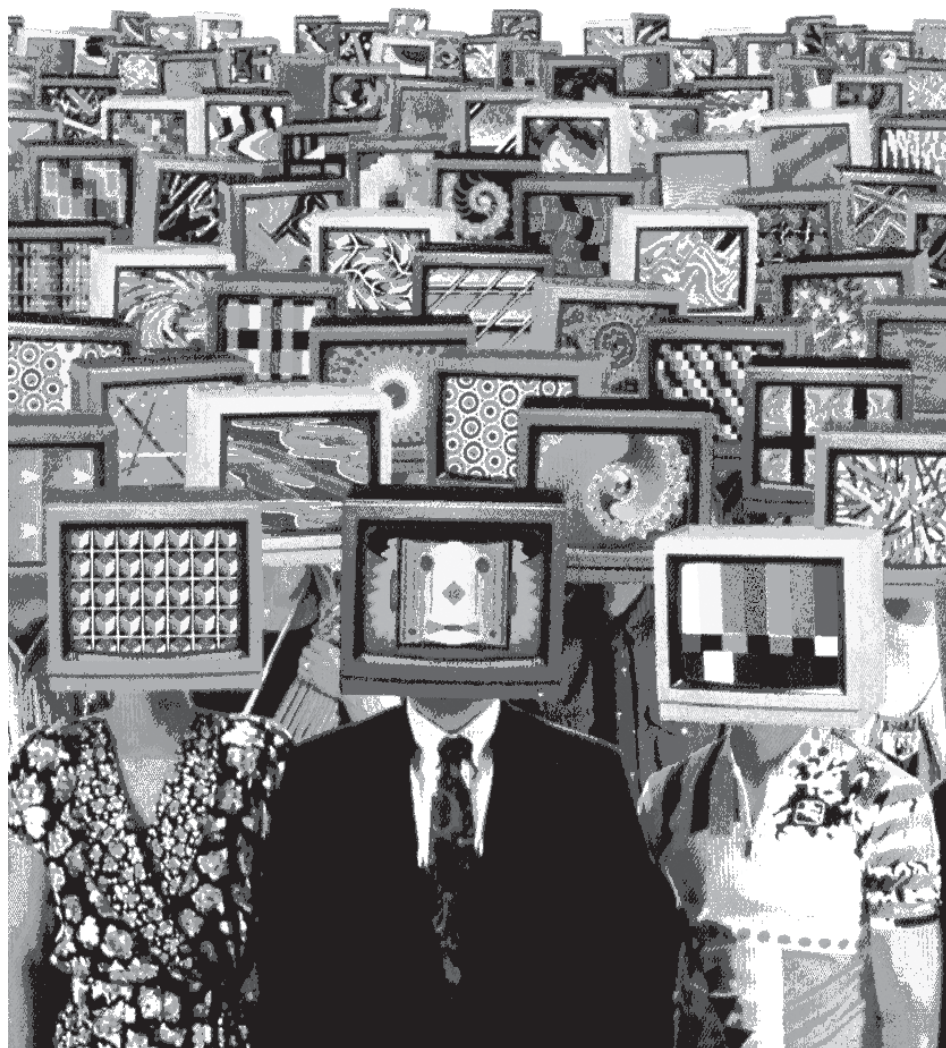
Ritualisation of viewing — the embedding of the television set into the communication space of the inner family — has attached particular importance to regular programmes, e.g. the start of the main news programmes or the Friday-evening-thriller. However, one has to increasingly get away from the image of television as a family medium, as more and more people are watching television on their own. With the increasing amount of daily programme time, different viewing patterns have evolved which represent the result of different strategies of individual time management. The structuring of time in everyday life by television has become an important function of this medium.

Another form of television is what could be called “revitalisation television” — watching television to distract oneself from everyday problems.

Utilisation of television to make use of spare time: television is — especially as it is available permanently — used by many in between other activities and increasingly as an on-the-side medium.

With the drastically increased offer of programmes, television is becoming a target group medium and loses its power of social integration. Critics of the new flood of programmes fear a segmentation of society, a disintegration of the general public into a multitude of “segregated publics”. As everybody hears, sees or reads something different, the common social discourse is damaged. Critics fear that many viewers could drown in the flood of programmes. The world and density of perception of citizens is more and more dramatically marked by television.

The proliferation of programmes on offer has had its effect on programme development: In the fight



for the audience's attention, spectacular events and extreme dramaturgic formats have become increasingly important. This is true for informative and entertainment programmes alike.

Technical innovations play a central role in the development of broadcasting. At present the digitalisation of broadcasting technology, the efficient use of transmission capacity through data compression and innovations in terminals (bigger screens, multifunctional terminals, for example) are the innovations of the future. The high costs of television production and distribution can be lowered considerably by digital television. While so far television companies paid up to 7 million Euro a year for the distribution of a programme via satellite channel, through digitalisation and data compression the costs were cut down to a sixth. Instead of just one TV programme, up to ten can be transported via one channel. For some television journalists the technical load in the field of production has increased considerably, especially at private stations with tight budgets, reporters and editors have to take on numerous technical tasks as well as their journalistic duties.

The basic structures of broadcasting are subject to change which is determined by technical, economic and political processes. The handed down broadcasting regulations are founded on the allocation of frequencies to individual countries, pertaining to international law and according to the principle of territory within the framework of the *International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*. The technology of terrestrial television with its shortage of transmission frequencies did allow the autonomous development of government broadcasting regulations largely independent of one another, for a long time. These conditions have been subject to profound change. The combining of satellite and broadband technology has led to a substantial increase in the possibilities of technical transmission. This applies to the distribution of television programmes via satellite and their further dissemination via cable channels. Apart from the convergence of distribution

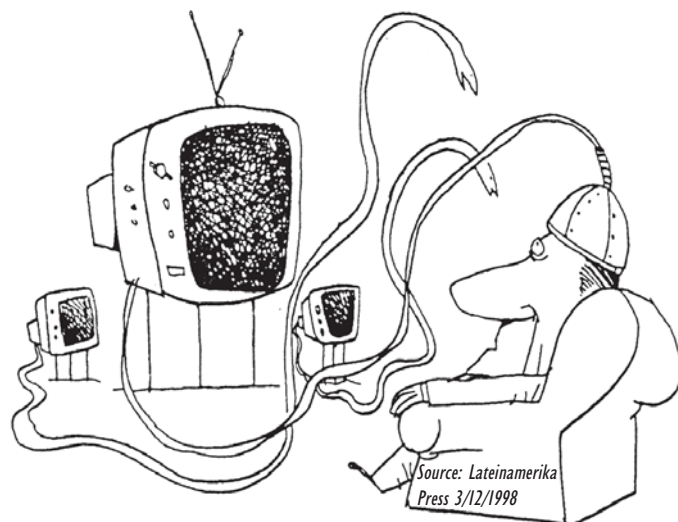
technology of broadcasting and telecommunication (digitalisation) an important characteristic of the electronic media is that their dissemination does not stop at country borders.

Because of this, international players are gaining a lot of influence. The already existing imbalance within the global media situation caused by the international programme markets is being worsened by satellite technology. I would like to clarify the already existing North-South and East-West disparities by quoting some figures.

In Latin America three quarters of all imported programmes originate from the USA.

In sub-Saharan Africa 40% of all programmes are imported. Here too, the USA are by far the largest supplier.

An uneven flow of programme material also became evident in East-West relations, already during the existence of the so-called "real socia-



listic systems". Back then two thirds of all programmes imported by Eastern Europe came from non-socialist countries, while Western Europe only obtained two percent from Eastern Europe, and the USA none. Nowadays after the dramatic changes in the region these figures would certainly be significantly higher. Through the opening up of the Central and Eastern-European markets and the imminent EU enlargement to the East, the process of international economic interdependence together with the emergence of multinational media organisations has gained additional momentum.

## S U M M A R Y R É S U M É R E S U M E N



La télévision façonne le monde à l'écran — question de le rendre plus consommable, dit Dr. Renate Hackel-de Latour, professeur à l'université catholique de Eichstätt, Allemagne. Dans son article elle propose un aperçu des caractéristiques spécifiques de la télévision en comparaison d'autres médias, décrit ses fonctions, l'influence des évolutions techniques récentes ainsi que la manière dont la télévision est utilisée par différents publics dans le monde.

La televisión pretende organizar el mundo en la pantalla — y de esta manera hacerlo más consumible, dice Dr. Renate Hackel-de Latour, profesora universitaria de la Universidad Católica de Eichstätt, Alemania. En su artículo hace ver las características específicas de televisión en comparación con otros medios, describe sus funciones, la influencia de recientes cambios técnicos y cómo la televisión está utilizada por diferentes audiencias en el mundo entero.



# A Public Giant and Catholic Dwarfs

## Religious Television in Poland

by Krzysztof Oldakowski SJ

Among the states of the former Eastern Bloc, Poland is definitely the country with the strongest representation of the Church in Television. Despite its own departments in the public broadcasting system, three religious stations were opened, trying to find their audience with different formulas and financing models and — up to now — with very limited success. Although not being typical for the Central & Eastern European region, Poland seems to exemplify a big variety of different models of the Church's TV commitment that are discussed also in other parts of the world.

At the end of communist rule in Poland the government, knowing that the end was near, began to change its attitude towards the Catholic Church. On 17th May 1989 an unprecedented document defining the relations between the State and the Church in the Peoples' (then) Republic was signed. The right to broadcast programmes on state-owned Radio and Television was officially given to the Church. The Bishops assigned this task to the Jesuits. The Church was also given the possibility to establish its own Catholic stations.<sup>1</sup> This document was followed by certain executive decisions and on 28 June 1989 a historic agreement was signed between the *Conference of the Episcopate of Poland* and the *Radio and Television Council* with its chief director at the time — Jerzy Urban — who had previously held the position of government spokesman for martial law.

I was appointed the first editor in history of the *Catholic Programmes Editorial Body* in Polish Radio. The doors in front of us started to open slowly. We were allowed to use the radio's production and broadcasting equipment but at the same time we were employees paid by the Church. There was a feeling of tenseness in radio and television then as the Church was beginning to be seen as the "new leading power". The place of the former Communist Party officials was taken over by new

representatives of a totalitarian power who would from then on tell everyone what was good and true. It was a peculiar kind of projection of the former system onto the new times.

This uncomfortable situation was overcome after about 18 months, when in February 1991 the employees of the *Catholic Programmes Editorial Body* were incorporated in the structures of Polish radio and television. A new era had begun; we became a part of the public media structure as employees were remunerated on the same basis as all other staff. Both the editor and the vice-editor were nominated by the General Secretary of the *Episcopal Conference of Poland* and this nomination was confirmed by the Director of Polish Television. This rule has not been changed until today.

### The Catholic Church in public TV

The presence of the Catholic Church in public TV is stable and well grounded. We operate today on the basis of an agreement between the Secretaryship of the Polish Bishops' Conference and *Polish Television TVP* signed in July 1994. This agreement allows for the realisation of certain programmes on all four public television channels. On *TVP1* there are four 25-minute programmes: informational, for children, for teenagers and a family programme. Apart from these we transmit the Sunday Papal Prayer. On *TVP2* there is one 25 minute broadcast and a short insight programme which is a comment on the Sunday readings. The majority of these programmes is retransmitted by *TV Polonia* — the public satellite channel, which also transmits the Sunday Holy Mass for Poles living abroad. Within the public television structure there are a number of regional channels operating in 12 broadcasting stations in Poland. Each of these channels is obliged to prepare at least one 30

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**TVP** TELEWIZJA  
POLSKA



minute programme in agreement with the local

Church. Many of these regional stations rebroadcast the Sunday Holy Mass from *TV Polonia* or produce their own.

Of course the themes dedicated to faith and Church are also discussed in other programmes, mostly informational and educational. We have been observing great progress in the way the Church is perceived and that is mainly due to the *Catholic Programmes Editorial Body*: from a look at the liturgy and folklore to the whole spectrum of public activities such as education, charity and culture-forming. We have gone through a lot to make religious matters present in all television programmes but mainly in informational ones.

We differ, however, public



fer, how- from other television

editors, with regard to religious matters, in that our start-off point is different. We are not interested in faith and Church from the historic, moral, folklore or scientific point of view. We are first of all interested in the message, i.e. advocating a way of life taught by the Gospel in a language register that is comprehensible to modern people.

The problem is not the amount of Catholic or religious programmes but the Christian spirit they should convey. With the great competition on the commercial market it is hard to broadcast religious programmes at times with peak audience ratings. As for now we have no programmes between 5

p.m. and 10 p.m. We have noticed clearly that reli-



gious programmes are of secondary importance and are often treated as a "necessary evil". There is an obligation to broadcast them as these are the terms of the signed agreement but there is no support from the TV executives' side. We spend quite a long time on overcoming the "ghetto logic", i.e. emitting the religious programmes in limited time blocks. This is not easy as our executives seem to be guided by the idea of the so-called "controlled generosity" — let's give them some but not too much.

We try to be present during the important liturgical holidays to have influence on the general climate on the screen during the day. We are

## The Polish TV Market - A Short Overview

Public television (*TVP*) has about half of the shares in the Polish market. In April it received an award for the best public television in Europe in 2002. The Poles watch *TVP First Channel* willingly (24,5%), then the Polish TV Second Channel (21%), while the biggest commercial TV stations reach 15,4 (*Polsat*) and 15,1% (*TVN*) of the Polish viewers regularly.

Public television is the biggest film producer in Poland. Yearly 130 Mio. Zlotys (approx. 34 Mio. US-\$) is being allotted to programmes on cultural issues; 15 mio. Zl. (3,9 US-\$) to the TV Theatre. The so-called "educational mission" offers constitute 47% of the Polish TV programming (on culture and

arts, for children and youth, documentaries, educational, informational and sports broadcasts). Programmes of a commercial character like fiction films and entertainment comprise 44% of *TVP's* airtime.

Public television is a giant in the Polish audio-visual market which now represents the scene of a fierce battle between public and commercial broadcasters about money and power. So far legislators have not ensured a clear and transparent law on financing public TV. It is currently financed mainly from viewer subscription fees (20%) and from advertising revenues (73%). TV stations receive more than 2 billion Zlotys (more than 500 Mio. US-\$) per year for

broadcasting commercials. Half of this share goes to the public channels. In the situation of fierce competition for these shares the public broadcaster is getting increasingly similar in character to the commercial stations. Many valuable programmes are being addressed only to viewers who suffer from insomnia.

As far as a *TVP* programming is concerned, fiction films constitute 38,3% of the airtime, informational programmes 16,5%, commercials 8,5%, entertainment 6,6%, and religious broadcasts 1,7%. For comparison: 64% of the airtime of the private commercial stations is allotted to commercial genres, 20% to educational programmes.

Another serious problem is the dependence of public television on the political sphere. The *Polish National Radio and Television Broadcasting Council (KRRiTV)* which is the highest constitutional body in charge of media legislation is appointed according to the political balance of power by the president, the Senate and the Sejm, the Polish parliament.

The *National Council* appoints supervisory Boards of the public media which in turn appoint the Boards of the station. This structure creates strong party influence since politicians have an irresistible tendency to use media as a tool of their propaganda.

Krzysztof Oldakowski SJ

sometimes able to create an artistic event that corresponds to the character of the feast. We are always attending important religious events of great social significance like the Papal pilgrimages. The Pope's visits to Poland are among the most popular television events and that is why our government pays special attention to their television presence being most professional and attractive. We have great opportunities as far as the choice of different forms of transmission from video-clips, news, short commercials to documentaries and more complex artistic forms is concerned.

The few independent and reliable producer companies in the market working for television could be counted on the fingers of two hands. Their existence is to a great extent also determined by the position of the public TV which is the most serious contractor in the market.

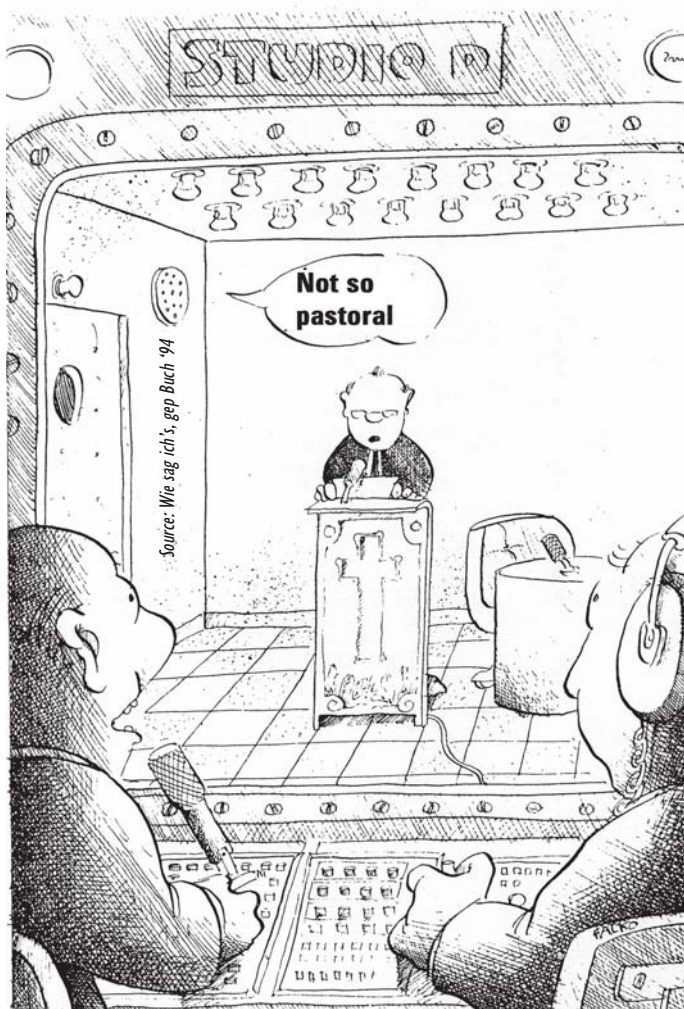
### Stations bound to the Church

An important problem today is the status of television stations operating within Church structures. In Poland, the station is recognised as being Catholic automatically when activated and registered by the *Episcopal Conference* and has a Church assistant. A Church station is a station owned by a diocese or a monastic province. The notion of a welfare broadcaster also exists in the Polish media legislation. In the case of television the main criterion for falling into this category is the complete lack of advertising on air.



The Church in Poland is tied, in different ways, to the following three TV stations:

**Puls** television — from March 2001 this station has been broadcasting a universal, multi-subject programme on the basis of a licence granted to the Warsaw Province of the Franciscan Fathers on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1994. They established a joint stock company called *Telewizja Familijna* which was the producer of the *TV Puls* programme. At the beginning of April 2003 the company declared



itself insolvent. 56.7% of the shares in *Telewizja Familijna* were owned by the Franciscan Fathers who also hold the TV licence. Other shareholders included some leading state-owned companies tied to the government and one privately-owned enterprise.

During the first year of its operation *TV Puls* became a vivid, modern and even disputatious station mainly by introducing its own news service and developing journalistic programmes.

Why did *TV Puls* cease to broadcast? There may be several reasons.

First of all — a limited reach. Originally, the frequency (analogue) was granted to *TV Puls* only in some of the bigger cities. The *Radio and Television Council*, dominated by the political option that did not favour the *TV Puls* authorities, active-

ly supported other commercial stations such as *TV4* and *TVN*.

Another reason for the fall of *TV Puls* was the fact that the shareholders did not respect the contracts. The state-owned companies ceased to finance the initiative together with the failure of the AWS government<sup>2</sup>. The station was too strongly tied politically and became overdependent on the government. It operated in opposition to the majority of the political elite, especially the leftist one, and paid the price for the fall of the rightist government.

The whole investment was a market failure. During its best period the station had only a 0.6% share in the market when at least

a 2% share was required to operate successfully.

It seems that those who put forward the idea were too optimistic in their estimates about the potential interest in the profile of the channel and its target group. *TV Puls* should have filled a certain culture gap instead of modelling its programme so similar to the existing commercial television stations that promote an easy-living philosophy.

Meanwhile, it seems that the television market lacks a channel that would be non-violent, child-friendly, family-focused, promoting an open Christian philosophy of living. The Polish media experts anticipated *Puls*'s illsuccess right from the beginning. There are rumours that the Franciscan Fathers are looking for a new financial partner to create a new channel. But is there also a new formula as to its format and message?





**Niepokalanów II** television — it broadcasts a specialised, religious satellite programme. It is also available through certain cable networks and through *Nowa Cyfra Plus* — a digital Pay TV provider. The licence belongs again to the Franciscan Fathers who made their original one available to *TV Puls*. The licence states that at least 50% of the programme should have a religious profile. In 2002 *Telewizja Niepokalanów II* was on air for eight hours a day according to the agreement with the *National Radio and Television Council*. About 60% of *TV Niepokalanów II* programmes were of religious character, subordinate to the mission of the Church and in a clear way promoting the Franciscan ideals. They were also open to other creeds. Others deal with travel/geography and education; arts and children's programmes supplement by their appropriate selection the religious character of the station. The outlined programme is complemented mainly by biblical films of Italian production. Almost nothing can be said about the audience of the station, since the *Radio and Television Council* does not supply the viewer statistics for this station and the Franciscans have not published any figures so far.

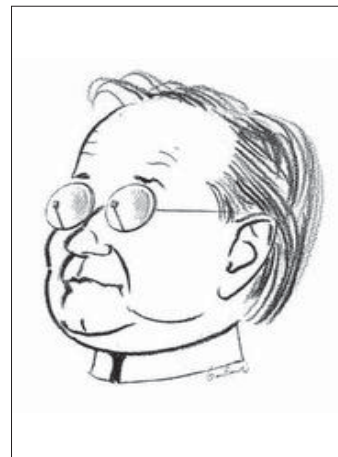


**Trwam** television — on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2003 the *National Radio and Television Council* decided to grant a television licence to the *Lux Veritas* Foundation directed by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk. *Trwam* is a privately owned commercial enterprise that started its regular broadcast on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2003. This station has not asked for a Church assistant. The Bishops learned of its creation and programme schedule through the press. The spokesman for the *Episcopal Conference* defined it as "religious television".

*Trwam* is to be financed by the Foundation mainly through different donations and by advertising revenues. *Lux Veritas* has asked for the maximum



Fr. Tadeusz Rydzyk, the director of *Radio Maryja* and the newly founded TV channel *TRWAM*, is one of the favourite targets of Polish caricaturists. Both examples are from the *Gazeta Wyborcza*



advertising allowance, i.e. 15% of transmission time. The foundation has raised a loan of 9 million Zlotys (approx. 2,4 mio. US-\$). *Trwam* will be a station of educational, guidance and religious character. It will at first broadcast for six hours a day with plans for a 15-16 hour transmission later on in the future. In order to facilitate access to *Trwam* television Father Rydzyk's foundation offers satellite equipment at 440 Zlotys (approx. 116 US-\$) each. The educational and guidance programmes are to take 40% of the transmission time, between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Religious broadcasts will take 20% of the airtime — apart from the Holy Mass, the Rosary and the Angelus there will also be time for the evening "self-contemplation". It will be *Radio Maryja* television<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, there will be seven foreign language courses and "Quarter of an Hour Latin" everyday. Great attention will be paid to the viewer-station-interaction. Among the basic programme objectives as part of the licence contract are: the shaping and care for the development of the ecumenical spirit, the promotion of inter-religious dialogue, spreading the religious message according to the Vatican and the Episcopal teachings. Additionally, *TV Trwam* aims to promote the "cultivation of the Polish character and national awareness and spreading the Christian tradition and culture". Father Rydzyk is also planning (according to the licence application) to broadcast a news service. There will also be fictional and documentary films. The persons assigned to and responsible for particular

programmes do not seem to have any special training in television production.

The objectives of *Trwam* television are identical to those of *Radio Maryja* and it is expected that it will have a similar "therapeutic profile" — supporting those people who want to complain about something and those who are dissatisfied with the direction of the changes in today's society and culture. It will probably be the only forum where they will be listened to and where the possibility to speak out will be given. *Trwam* will give people a strong feeling of identification. For a certain kind of faithful viewer it will be truly "their television".

### The Church and commercial stations

The ties between the commercial stations and the Church are rather loose. However, the religious subjects are present in the informational and journalistic programmes as one of the most important aspects of social life. In numerous talk shows discussing moral matters, the authors are interested in presenting the Christian point of view. It is obvious that religion is well-grounded in the Polish tradition and its presence is found even in commercial stations whose main objective is to make money. The situation of religious programmes as they are is much worse. They are of minor importance. There is a relative interest in the commercial stations in Church sensations and scandals, but they are never a start-off for deeper analysis or explanation.

The beginnings of commercial television in Poland show that there was an interest in religious matters. *Polsa*, the biggest national private channel, which recently celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, had a *Religious Programmes Editorial Body* supported by the Church. It was closed down soon, as it was stated by the President of the *Episcopal Conference* of Poland, the general profile of the channel did not correspond with the Christian spirit. There is an editorial team at this channel today which compiles religious programmes but the representatives of the Church who appear in those programmes express their own private opinions. It is very important though, and there is awareness in the Polish Church that the affiliation with the commercial broadcasters should not be lost and the Church should use every opportunity, to meet and deliver important messages on air.

The exception in the length of time devoted to religious matters in commercial television was the recent Papal Pilgrimage to Poland which was broadcast with greatest professionalism by the informational channel *TVN24*. This event is an excellent example of the fact that the commercial broadcaster knows it can also be attractive in the market sense.

## Conclusion

In the future the presence of the Church in the public media depends on the ability to create media events of religious character that can arouse greater public interest. Such events are for example important liturgical festivities, music festivals or charity events accompanied by artistic happenings. The language of religious programmes has to correspond to the form of the message chosen by the given channel. It must also meet the current needs of the viewers who are looking for the interpretation of their problems in a Christian way. Religious broadcasts should continue to produce high quality serial programmes but the staff should also be open to the co-operation with other teams within television stations to find subjects of mutual

interest especially when the objective is the human good and the condition of society as a whole.

As for the religious Church channels, it seems that their biggest problem is the lack or the surplus of certain ideas and also the dispersion of initiatives in the Church. Religious stations should use a language that unites instead of intensifying and emphasising the dissonance in the Church. The media should start thinking in the universal categories of the Church as a whole without getting involved in particular subjection to certain political or financial groups. It is, of course, very important to calculate whether the local Church has the resources for the completion of this task or at least any clear perspectives on acquiring them. Otherwise it is better to relinquish starting something that may not be successful.

It is vital to keep close, vivid relations with the commercial stations because their viewers are people who are neither overtly intrigued by religious matters nor by Church life. One may expect that in a society — so close to faith and Church as Poland — religious matters will become a market necessity. It is important to meet this demand in a competent and attractive way. However, creating the Church's image on television and on air with the use of modern audio-visual media seems to be more difficult for the Bishops than building new churches.

<sup>1</sup> This document was also a remarkable impulse for the development of radio. Today, after almost 14 years of change in the Polish political system the Catholic Church administers 44 radio licences, i.e. 38 diocesan, 3 parish and 3 monastic ones.

<sup>2</sup> *AWS* — the *Solidarity Electoral Alliance* — constituted the government in Poland from 1997 to 2001. It emerged from the Solidarity trade union movement as an alliance of very different parties with a sole unifying factor, their anti-communism. After the *AWS* had received only 5.6% of the vote in the 2001 elections (after 36% in 1997) it had announced its dissolution.

<sup>3</sup> *Radio Maryja*, the Redemptorists' broadcasting station, has 118 frequencies today; it can reach 82% of the population and has around 8% of regular listeners among the Polish people. The Torun based network led by Fr.

Tadeusz Rydzyk has been in the Polish headlines since its foundation in 1991. A monitoring study undertaken by the *National Radio and Television Council KRRiTV* has recently shown that *Radio Maryja* airs anti-Semitic and anti-EU content. It was also reported that the station has "frequently highlighted an untrue report on the Holy Father's blessing for *Radio Maryja* and the *Trwam* Television network (just launched by the same owner) and comes to the conclusion that the network "treats the Holy Father and his teachings instrumentally". (Editorial note/aj/source: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Warsaw, 02/06/03)

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

Parmi les Etats de l'ancienne Europe de l'Est, la Pologne est le pays dont la présence de l'Eglise dans le champ de la TV est la plus forte. En plus de ses propres départements dans la radio-diffusion publique, l'Eglise catholique compte trois stations qui essaient de trouver leur audience avec des formules et des modèles de financement différents, jusqu'ici avec un succès très limité. Le Père Krzysztof Oldakowski SJ, directeur des programmes religieux sur la chaîne publique *TVP*, donne une vue d'ensemble des différentes stations et décrit leurs programmes, leurs philosophies et cibles, leurs difficultés pour atteindre une grande audience et - dans le cas de *TV Puls*, les raisons de son échec.



Entre los estados del anterior bloque oriental, Polonia es definitivamente el país con la representación más fuerte de la Iglesia en televisión. A pesar de sus propios departamentos en el sistema de TV pública, tres canales de TV católicos salieron al aire buscando su audiencia con diferentes fórmulas y modelos de financiamiento y — hasta ahora — con un éxito muy limitado. P. Krzysztof Oldakowski SJ, el director de programas religiosos del canal público *TVP*, da una vista general de las diferentes estaciones y describe su programación, las diferentes filosofías y los objetivos, los problemas de alcanzar una audiencia más amplia y — en el caso de *TV Puls*, las razones de su fracaso.

# Television Stations for the Church in Africa?

Over the last few years CAMECO has received an increasing number of projects with a view to starting up Catholic TV stations in Africa. Does the Church really need stations of her own? And is she in a position to operate them adequately? We have asked two media experts from the region for their opinion.

by Fr. Eustace Sequeira SJ\*



**P R O  
CONTRIBUTOR**

I had things worked out to begin a TV station in Lusaka, Zambia. This plan did not take off yet, because the government is still considering the application from the *Zambia Episcopal Conference* for a license to own and operate a TV station.

If left to reasoning alone, I would belong to the group of people that are “contra” TV stations being owned and operated by the Church in Africa. The difficulties which come to mind, and which I would understand as being weighty, are the lack of management experience, the absence of a model Television station that could work in Africa, the difficulty of financing such an enterprise which is very expensive to run, and the lack of technical and broadcasting know-how among Church personnel.

However, the church shall use every opportunity available to spread the gospel. In Africa the old way of the churches is by physical preaching. Today we have other means and we must adapt ourselves to the possibilities. It is a non-intrusive means of linking every person who has a television set and reaching out to those who are not practising Catholics, but to all peoples. In Africa, with few televi-

sions available, there is a greater possibility of reaching the entire middle class from where leadership comes. Changing the future leaders can change the world. The future growth of religious and priestly vocations for the world is expected to come from Africa, and television is one very powerful means of preparing people to become missionaries.

For Europe this may sound far fetched, but Africa needs not just the weekly dose of preaching from the pulpit, but a lot of input into the spiritual and daily life of the people, regardless of whether they go to church or not. Religion is part of the way of life of Africans.

Radio was an innovation once and is now accepted as possible and necessary for the Church in Africa. The experience of Zambia with the introduction of radio is incredible. We have changed the face of Lusaka with our radio. People are now proud of calling themselves Catholic because of their identification with the radio station. Training volunteers for radio has provided the public and private media with dedicated Catholics who are now in every station in the Country, thanks to the local radios.

Television is a medium that is much more difficult to operate and manage. But it is a means that has to be used, as most people in the cities of Africa are accustomed to watch and to be influenced by it. The Seventh-Day-Adventists had a monopoly of television personnel in Zambia for many years. For

instance, they were able to disturb the live transmission of the Pope’s visit to Zambia in 1989. The Catholic Church has stood by as the born-again Tele-evangelists have just taken over the media, both by owning their own TV stations and starting Education for Journalists. The proof of their influence is that Dr. Nevers Mumba, a gifted Tele-evangelist, has just been appointed as Vice President of Zambia. He became famous because he used television, not radio, as the medium for evangelisation.

The teachings of the Church are important enough to be spread by television as well. However, the productions of the Catholic studio, owned by the Church in Zambia, can only be broadcast through national state TV, when they pay for air-time. This was possible when Zambia had a socialistic government that subsidised all the public institutions. Today the costs of buying broadcasting time have grown, due to the capitalistic trend in policies of public ownership. One hour of television time in Zambia costs more than the licence fee per annum.

Recording the programs, editing and planning transmissions using computers no longer needs a large team of skilled people at the beginning. With a couple of hands, such work is easily done. The old method of building television film-sets too is now no longer essential. Virtual imagery, when figures can be put into any scenery generated by a computer, allows even the single presenter to be put into a colourful scene. which will give the viewers a better picture, though unreal, than any real set world. The station could use a foreign broadcast, *EWTN* for example, as a source, and introduce local flavour into the program before broadcast. This needs a talented and hard worker on the computer who can edit and insert painlessly, and quickly produce a broadcast that is meaningful for the local population. That is the path to go, but only if such dedicated and hard working individuals can be found!

*Fr. Eustace Sequeira SJ was head of Vatican Radio’s Africa Service. In 1995 he was appointed National Communications Secretary of the Zambia Episcopal Conference and contributed greatly to the establishment of Radio Yatsani, the Catholic radio station in Lusaka, and planned the first TV station in Africa for Zambia, which was awaiting government approval. Since April 2003, he is on sabbatical in the US.*



# CONTRA b b o



by **Camille Sawadogo**

*Mr. Camille Sawadogo is the director of the Diocesan Communication Centre of Dédougou in Burkina Faso. This centre, founded in 1990 to support the pastoral work and the development of the dioceses of Nouna and Dédougou with audio-visual and communication means, includes a rural radio station for development, "Radio Fréquence Espoir", and a video production unit.*

*The originally French text was translated into English by CAMECO.*

Since I launched the *Centre Diocésan de Communication* (CEDICOM) of Dédougou in Burkina Faso in 1990, my greatest ambition has been the creation of a television channel. Today my enthusiasm has slowed down. After 11 years of experience at the head of a TV/video production structure and of a diocesan radio station, I would, without hesitating, advise all African church institutions against venturing into private television. The reason is very simple: for our context private television is not profitable and is very costly.

Concerning its impact, television is certainly not the most privileged medium at the moment. In our African societies the television set still remains a luxury good, even though it is an attractive object and often one of the first consumer goods that a family wants to acquire. Apart from its unaffordable cost for the majority of the population, the use of TV requires electric energy which is often inaccessible. Despite the effort by the state to extent televisual coverage to the countryside, TV remains the privilege of city dwellers in most countries.

When it comes to putting it into practice, television is the most expensive medium. The excessive cost of the equipment does not allow a consistent investment. The necessary material is not affordable. Every radio director knows how constraining the management of a station is. However, this burden is nothing compared to that of a television channel. For example, a team of four people of the TV/video service of CEDICOM produces a documentary of 26 minutes at Euro 5,335.72 for a production period of at least two months. Based on this, to maintain a television programme of four hours a day would require employing more than 20 full-time staff and a budgetary provision of Euro 10,671.43 an hour. To this the mobilisation of a substantial logistic system needs to be added. This is a veritable economic disaster. The danger exists that one would fall into mediocrity or "artisanal television".

I call "artisanal television" these little stations equipped with rudimentary material and functioning in an informal way and without consistent budget. Ever since my recent visit in April 2003 to Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of

Congo (DRC), I have seen many private television channels of this type. Disregarding all professional standards, they broadcast local amateurish and boring productions or imported cassettes. These very informal and inexpensive television stations circumvent the burdens and difficulties of professional television. But in the end, what do they communicate? Do they not constitute a form of contempt for the viewer and the promoter himself? In the audio-visual media the meaning is born out of the form. In this type of television, what is the point if one does not take the form into consideration? The most dramatic in my opinion is that the public often identifies the quality of the message with the quality of its channel.

From this point of view, is it not really perilous for our African Churches of which we know the limited means, to dash off in conquest of television knowing that they will never have the necessary resources to develop quality television? And even if they had the means would it be worth the effort? Is it not more appropriate to put professional production structures in place offering quality programmes to already existing channels? There is no shortage of examples: in Kinshasa again the TV/video production service of the National Bishops' Conference of DRC is equipped with production material. Every Sunday they offer a programme of an hour, broadcast on five local channels including national television. This broadcast which is very popular is part of the leading programmes of these channels. This experience which is shared by CEDICOM and many other TV/video production centres shows how to be on air and at the same time avoid the numerous constraints and burdens of running one's own private television station. These programmes can be made even more accessible by mobile broadcasting units for the projection of films to the benefit of remote communities.

It is important to brush aside all feelings of rivalry that say: 'The other religious creeds have television, so we too need a channel to counteract them'. Before going to work too quickly, it is necessary to define one's objectives and the results expected. To dispose of one's own television station is not necessarily the way that leads to the best results.

# Mejor un Canal Continental

que muchas Estaciones Nacionales en América Latina?

## Entrevista con P. Hugo Ara, Bolivia



El Padre Hugo Ara, realizador de televisión y cine, es Vicario Episcopal de Comunicación y Director de la Escuela Superior de Comunicación Audiovisual Diakonia en Santa Cruz (Bolivia). En la siguiente entrevista el P. Ara destaca el uso adecuado del lenguaje televisivo como factor decisivo para una imagen positiva de la iglesia en televisión a la vez que se pronuncia en favor de un canal católico latinoamericano en vez de canales nacionales.

**Mediaforum:** La calidad profesional de algunos productores religiosos ha mejorado sustancialmente. ¿En qué consisten actualmente las fuerzas más visibles de los productores y canales de televisión católicos? ¿Cuáles son sus debilidades? ¿Ya estarían capaces de suministrar una programación diaria atrayente?

**Hugo Ara:** Comunicación no sólo es tecnología y contenido. Es también Marketing, imagen corporativa, imagen institucional, es toda una red de lenguajes que deben posesionarse en un conglomerado de otras ofertas de programación atractiva. Hoy no es posible salir al aire — emisión — con puras intuiciones, hay que conocer y dominar la ciencia de la cultura mediática donde la TV es la más influyente y la más exigente de los medios de comunicación social. Es cierto que hay mejoras, en algunos casos, y se nota dominio del lenguaje televisivo, estos han comprendido que un canal primero es televisión y después confe-

sional, es decir primero la capacidad de producir imágenes televisivas con encuadres correctos, luz que ilumina — no sólo alumbra —, sonido que se entienda y ritmo que mantenga la atención de la audiencia con contenidos cargados de sentido.

Hay profesionales en la Iglesia que han superado las expectativas que se tenían cuando nuestra Iglesia encaró el desafío de hacer frente a la arremetida de la llamada Iglesia Electrónica. Las debilidades que se presentan están en la comprensión conceptual de la TV, se tiene el medio sólo como instrumento y por ello la programación sólo presenta algunos estilos devocionales como oraciones o clases magistrales de teología teniendo como público objetivo a bautizados de la Iglesia. Por otra parte se ha caído en la tentación de creer que estar en la vanguardia televisiva es ofrecer la misma programación comercial de otros canales y que solamente se transmite la misa, al abrir programación y una oración para cierre de emisión sin que el mensaje de la Buena Nueva penetre — como una columna vertebral — toda la rejilla de programación transmitida.

La Iglesia insiste en el reto de evangelizar la cultura haciendo parte de los procesos que van creando la nueva cultura mediática que vivimos, en el planeta globalizado. En este caso la TV debe saber re-crear y transmitir los contenidos de la Fe a los lenguajes televisivos expresados en diversos géneros y formatos de manera continua.

Finalmente respecto a que si podríamos los productores ofrecer programas, la tarea está en

reunir las producciones que se hacen a nivel continental hasta mundial, quizás se pueda tener una programación diaria de calidad y con contenidos valiosos para la evangelización de todos los pueblos en un universo de identidades e imágenes particulares. Sería un Pentecostés que celebre la Iglesia entera.

**MF:** ¿Cuáles son los factores principales que determinarían el éxito o el fracaso de un canal católico latinoamericano?

**HA:** En Internet descubrí los objetivos que tiene un nuevo canal católico en España que decía: “La visión cristiana de la existencia comprende toda la realidad. En ella tienen cabida todos los grandes interrogantes. Todas las circunstancias humanas (la propia vocación, el trabajo, los problemas cotidianos, el dolor, la muerte), todas las respuestas que nacen de la Revelación cristiana y que dan sentido a la vida. Esto es algo que puede traducirse en imágenes, en televisión. No en vano la televisión es hija de la luz”. ¡Que acertada esta intencionalidad televisiva! La TV Católica debe ser abierta al público en general, familias, mujeres, niños, jóvenes todos tienen su momento y hay momento para todos.

Esta programación debe estar iluminada por el Evangelio. Al igual que Jesús hablaba profundo mediante parábolas, el mensaje televisivo es atractivo visualmente, agradable temáticamente y profundo en el mensaje. Ética y Estética al servicio de mayor humanización de las personas y los pueblos.



Esta programación debe también estar al servicio de los procesos evangelizadores que tiene la Iglesia, y cada Iglesia en particular no podemos pretender estar al margen del servicio pastoral.

**MF:** *Producir en alta calidad cuesta mucho dinero. ¿Cómo financiar los altos costos de producción y mantenimiento?*

**HA:** No soy especialista en marketing pero me pregunto que si existen canales con éxito financiero, es que hay mercados que posibilitan esa financiación. Hay que producir con calidad, sin miedo de mostrar nuestra identidad cristiana y con la capacidad de “vender” a otros canales. Hay alguna experiencia de ello en América Latina, se han producido buenas series que fueron compradas por redes televisivas internacionales.

A pesar de estar inmerso en una sociedad de la información, hay que estudiar las preferencias del público para producir diversos géneros televisivos, en América Latina hay mercado para telenovelas, debates con temas atractivos, documentales, reportajes, musicales, etc.

Existen canales que han creado todo un software para promover socios o amigos del canal que aportan sistemáticamente para el funcionamiento de su obra al servicio de la Evangelización.

Es verdad que hay prioridades básicas de salud, educación y vivienda en América Latina y muchos financiadores van a cubrir estas necesidades a través de proyectos sociales. Ojalá pueda haber investigaciones que nos hagan comprender que promoviendo campañas de concienciación o gene-

Source: epd, Entwicklungspolitik 8/9/2003



rar acciones solidarias a través de los diferentes géneros y formatos televisivos se podrían crear redes de mayor solidaridad tanto en países desarrollados como en países en vías de desarrollo.

**MF:** *¿Cuáles serían las ventajas comparativas de un canal continental en relación a canales locales o nacionales?*

**HA:** Un canal continental, a nivel de costos de operación, sería más factible que subvencionar un canal local con 12 horas de emisión que tenga

que hacer su propia programación y pagar sus planillas de personal especializado, no solo técnico, sino también administrativos, mercadeo, periodistas y creativos.

En cambio teniendo una señal internacional donde todos podríamos cooperar con producciones locales y más aún entraríamos en una comunión compartida de todo tipo de bienes, se reducirían costos. Este canal continental debe estar al servicio de todos promoviendo participación de cada Iglesia en particular, y la comunión de esta parte del Pueblo de Dios con toda su riqueza, su expresión, vivencia religiosa y necesidades pastorales.

En la “Globalización” entraría lo local, enriqueciendo la programación de un canal que difunda y comunique a una Iglesia Viva en América Latina.

**MF:** *¿Ya se cuenta con las condiciones propicias para poder implementar exitosamente un canal continental?*

**HA:** Hay iniciativas con buenos pasos, una fundación de Televida Internacional que está buscando financiamiento. Hay varios canales locales que están interesados en participar, el CELAM que le da su apoyo y los creativos que tienen el espíritu de colaborar en este gran proyecto.

Christoph Dietz



Source: alerta 4/96



# Follow the Heartbeat

## Guiding Principles of Community Television

by Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron\*

Following the experience of Latin American community radio, local television stations emerged in various countries as a way to enhance the communication within their respective communities. Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron, a Bolivian communication specialist with wide experience in four continents, summarises in this article the guiding principles which distinguish community television from the public and commercial TV models.

Community television can only be understood in the context of public and commercial television. Commercial television has grown like a virtual octopus; its tentacles reach every corner of the earth through a network of satellites and cable distribution systems. The apparently generous offer of hundreds of television channels made everyone dream about the potential scenario of pluralism and cultural access, but it only revealed to be a short lived mirage. A simple zapping exercise confirms that there is next to nothing to see on commercial television, unless the individual standards have fallen very low. Global television does not offer a wide range of alternatives to the viewer; on the contrary, it has been built as the one and only hegemonic network, with a unilateral vision of the world, with contents that are homogenised, 24 hours around the clock. Most private national television channels are no more than an echo of multinational networks, their programming does not differ much from cable and satellite television.

State or public television which survived in some countries of Latin America in spite of the tidal wave of commercial networks, is often the pulpit from which governments air their policies. The credibility of public television was so low that nobody complained when commercial stations took over. Very few public networks have had the vision to open up towards programming that is

sensitive to the cultural environment and have tried to increase local production as an alternative to canned programming from the United States. Even the most credible public channels, in poor nations as well as in rich industrialised countries, have faced problems of legitimacy and survival.

### Filling the communication vacuum

Community television was created as a solution from within, by communities, to fill the communication vacuum that often suffocates local voices. No commercial octopus and no political pulpit, community television does not aim to compete on a large scale or to preach to the converted. What it does best is to listen to the community heartbeat and the pulse of daily life.

In the absence of national policies to promote the use of radio and television for educational, cultural and social development objectives, in various countries of Latin America the civil society has come up with its own communication alternatives. The most common of all is community radio, which has multiplied by thousands.

Community television has not been as successful so far. Universities have conducted the main attempts but then, their television channels often target the academic community and not the society at large, with few exceptions in Bolivia and Chile. One of the most interesting examples is Channel 13 at the Catholic University in Chile, which is — along with the National Television Network — the most successful in terms of audience and advertising. When the first commercial networks were authorised in Bolivia, the country already had eight university TV channels in the main capital cities. While modest in their equipment and staffing, they represented a genuine alternative to the national television network, and offered programming relevant to the social and cultural context. However, they could not survive the antagonism of new commercial networks offering a lighter menu, mostly made of canned imports and sports attractions.

\* Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron (Bolivia) is a development communication specialist with wide experience in Africa, Asia, South Pacific, Latin America and The Caribbean. He is the author of "Making Waves: Participatory Communication for Social Change" (Rockefeller Foundation, 2001), "Las Radios Mineras de Bolivia" (co-editor with Lupe Cajías), "Popular Theatre" (UNICEF 1995), among other books. Since 1997, he is part of The Rockefeller Foundation communication for social change initiative.

## Technology hype and guerrilla video

It might be important to establish the relation — and the distinction — between community television and participatory video.

The activity in the field of independent community video has been tremendous during the past two decades. The starting point was the evolution of video equipment: better quality, lower cost. The “format wars” in the eighties between Sony, the creator of Beta video, and JVC, producer of VHS, actually resulted in speeding up the availability of higher-end technology in the consumer market.

The changes were revolutionary: both Beta and VHS, for the first time, incorporated the video recorder and microphone inside the camera, thus allowing great freedom for the cameraman in any difficult situation. The weight was greatly reduced and from then on, one single cameraman could do the job. Today, Beta has disappeared and VHS is no longer appreciated as a format for production. Cameras became even smaller with the introduction of 8mm, Hi8, and Mini DV, and Micro DV whereas the quality improved tenfold. The Micro DV cassette is approximately 20 times

smaller and lighter than a VHS cassette. Editing on computers has become cheap and easy, at least for non-professional users.

The independent video movement benefited from those changes in technology. Women’s groups, unions, indigenous activists, young people, went out on the streets to document social reality and to demand changes. New independent video activism mushroomed everywhere in the world, intimately related to freedom of expression and organisation movements.

Illiterate women of India organised themselves in video production teams within their grassroots organisation, *SEWA* (Self Employed Women’s Association). In Brazil, the Kayapo Indians found in video the ideal tool to fight for their lands and their culture, against those that had planned the destruction of their forests and traditional life. Maneno Mengi, in Tanzania, uses video with fishing communities and peasants as a tool for auto diagnosis and reflection; video facilitates dialogue among themselves. Zapatista villages in the south of Mexico also use video to communicate with others and to offer a testimony of the repression by the army. The Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka have

trained 350 young cameramen to document their guerrilla struggle, and many have died in doing so.

There are many other examples of an alternative use of video cameras. Amazingly enough, a few of them are called “television” but they actually are not. In Brazil alone, *TV Viva*, in Recife, and *TV Maxambomba*, in Rio de Janeiro, have included TV in their name but they are actually independent groups that

produce videos and show their work in public spaces.

The reason why they call themselves “television” is because they represent an alternative facing the huge monopoly of private television. In a very different context, *TV Serrana*, in Cuba, is also an independent group producing documentaries and *video-letters* for very isolated rural communities on the island.

Regardless of the name, the vitality of independent video is tremendous. Its strength is the participatory approach, rather than the products. It is the addition of so many independent initiatives, going on at the same time, that counts. Independent video facilitates the migration of social memory and testimony to collective actors.

During the past twenty years, an important segment of the non-official history of Latin America has been documented on video, while it was denied and hidden by commercial and official networks. The cultural identity is being maintained and even rebuilt with the help of video tools, as happened with the Nambikwara Indians of Brazil<sup>1</sup>. Over a period of ten years *Comunicarte*, an independent video group of Guatemala, recorded images of popular demonstrations that were never shown on TV, and recently documented the discovery of clandestine burial sites where thousands of Maya Indians killed by the army, including children and women, were buried.

Independent video is not a poor relative of cinema, or a tadpole transiting to its definitive shape. Independent video is something in its own right. It is a large world-wide libertarian movement developing in the direction of social justice, collective memory and community organisation. It is not only a production phenomenon which defies the most conventional ways of making films and television; but also an alternative option of diffusion, in public squares and collective spaces.

From independent video to community television, there is a path that we will attempt to define.



Source: *Interacción* 5/6/1997

Reasonably, independent video should feed community television programming, so to maintain the same spirit of cultural pertinence and social commitment. However, we cannot avoid considering issues of context, which are the ones that ultimately define community television. Whereas independent video requires the minimum of "guerrilla" equipment, light and cheap, community television has to compete with commercial networks and thus requires a production infrastructure and organisations that impose different rules of the game.

### Community heartbeat

What justifies the existence of community television?

Mass media do not care about the communication needs of communities, so communities often make provisions for their own communication tools: radio, video, press, popular theatre, murals, among other.

Community radio can serve as inspiration for community television. It is undeniable that half a century of community radio in Latin America demonstrates the power of it as a tool for cultural identity, for the strengthening of community

organisation and for development. Community television or local telecentres should apply the same principles: access and participation, language and cultural pertinence, appropriate technology, development of local contents, convergence and networking, all of which are components of the process of appropriation (social, technical and managerial).

Similar to a community radio station, a community television channel has to adjust to a programme grid, a minimum of hours-per-week produced, and to be on the air every day for a set number of hours. Contrary to community radio, the cost of production is higher, and some other aspects are to be taken into consideration: better production equipment that can withstand harsh daily use, specialised staff, etc.

### Basic conditions

Nevertheless, the communication process is alike and should be based on the same principles and values. The same five conditions for legitimating any community media apply:

#### 1. Community ownership

Community media follow a need to communicate that has been expressed by the community. During

the process of creating, installing and managing a new community television project, community leaders with a democratic mandate should be consulted. Participation is essential to guarantee the process of acquiring ownership, thus ensuring sustainability over time. This is where community television differs from commercial TV: it is capable of integrating the community and becoming the expression of democratic values, in search of social change and better living conditions.

#### 2. Local content

The most obvious difference between commercial and community television is local content. There is no advantage of community television over commercial networks if it does not produce and air enough programming with local contents. If community TV just fills its airtime with films or music clips or international sports, it is not meeting any educational or cultural objectives. Local issues such as health, environment, education, social organisation, legislation and rights, are some of the topics that should find their way into programming. But it is also a responsibility of community media to go to the rescue of local traditions, music, artistic expressions, as well as the memory of the elders, the games of children and other manifestations of culture and identity as lived in the daily life of the community.

#### 3. Appropriate technology

Technology has to be sufficient; not more, not less, than what the community can afford, not in terms of funding or handling equipment, but in terms of participating in the decision-making process without feeling overwhelmed by technological hype. Many projects fail because they either overestimate or underestimate their needs or wrongly choose the type of technology in terms of maintenance, spare parts, skills needed and durability. Is the community ready to cover the replacement of equipment as it completes its life cycle? Can equipment be repaired locally? Are spare parts readily available? How much





specialised training is needed for technicians to run the equipment? Are human resources enough, in number and skills, to make the most of the technology and avoid having the equipment idle for long periods?

#### 4. Language and cultural pertinence

One of the main challenges of community TV is to develop an aesthetic and cultural approach where the unique features of the social and cultural environment can be recognised by the community and gain legitimacy. Community media should satisfy the expectations of a demanding and critical audience.

Local culture and society are the roots on which should rest the communication policy of a community television station. It does not mean that other cultures will be rejected, but rather that they will be considered under the prism of local identity, so often denied or negotiated with commercial media. The distinctive use of local languages is central to this reaffirmation of local identity. Cultural pertinence is also reflected in programme schedules which have to be compatible with the working hours of the potential audience. Dress codes, studio decoration, station logos and the formatting of programmes should be coherent with local culture and tradition, which does not mean that folklore imagery will take over the symbolic representations of local culture and identity.

#### 5. Convergence and networking

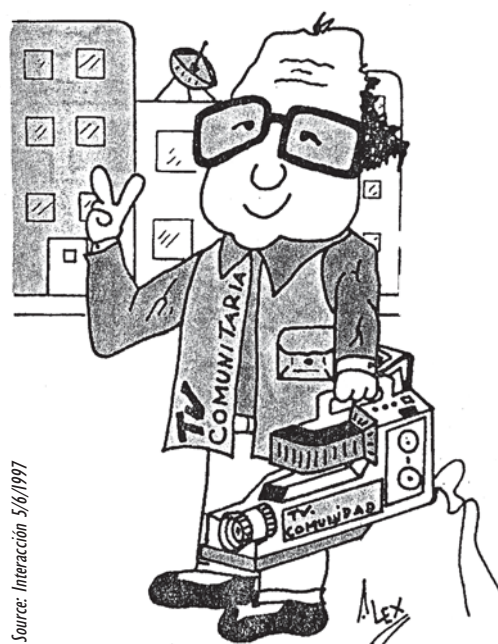
In a world where technology has reduced distances and where mass media reach the most isolated corners of the planet, community television should not see itself in isolation, free from external influences. Its survival depends on the capacity to negotiate with similar communication processes and experiences, and its convergence to new technologies that can strengthen its reach and enhance its capability for dialogue. Networking with organisations that have similar interests and long-term objectives — such as local NGOs, schools, co-operatives, unions, public libraries or develop-

ment programmes — prevents community media from self-isolation.

#### The sharp edges of the law

Community television needs an enabling regulatory environment to operate and exist. Few countries have created legal provisions for it and if they have, clear policies are seldom in place to ensure sustainability and development.

Legislation can be a double-edged sword,



Source: *Interacción* 5/6/1997

particularly if legal definitions are not clear and communication policies are not implemented. In some countries, small private local stations are operating under the label of “community television”, mostly airing old canned material and very often infringing rights. They have little to do with real community needs, but may exert a pervasive influence through offering films, music and sports programming in contexts where no other option is closely available.

Apart from commercial ventures, the label has been also exploited by evangelist denominations with a clear project of expanding their influence.

Too often legislation is written and approved without any process of consultation with the organisations of civil society. Moreover, only the private sector and the national elites who have vested interests in controlling communication networks, usually participate in drafting the legislation and regulations. Community media are often condemned to sudden death by the laws that are supposed to protect them. Bureaucratic red tape on community media is generally tougher than the one applied on commercial stations.

In 1995 Colombia approved legislation that recognises five categories of television stations: private, public, regional, local and community (Law 182 of 1995). Because of its strategic value, the State safeguards the national telecommunications infrastructure. Ironically, the regulation plants many obstacles on the path of community television. For example, it limits the audience to 6,000 people, making any investment almost suicidal. Also, it prevents the stations from any cost-recovery from announcements of community interest. It seems the original draft of the law included a prohibition to air news and editorial programmes<sup>2</sup>.

The ideal legislation protecting community media would be one drafted with the participation of civil society groups, independent journalists and video producers, educators and social scientists. We are very far from that.

#### Financing freedom of expression

The bottleneck of community media is sustainability, often understood only in economic terms. Few consider social and institutional sustainability as components that ensure the survival and development of grassroots communication experiences.

National governments have a responsibility in providing concrete support to community media, because community media are doing part of the job of maintaining social cohesion for cultural, economic and social development. The state

should support community media the same way it supports public libraries and schools, without exerting any political influence or censorship. There are ways to channel funding to community media without interfering in the local communicational project. In Europe public television is partly funded through the "canon" system, a tax that is automatically applied to any owner of a television and radio set. This principle could also benefit community media, if there was a real commitment with freedom of expression and promotion of cultural diversity.

Economic sustainability should be possible through a combination of public funding, community contributions and local advertising. A balance must be struck to prevent advertising of government funding to take over. A report from UNESCO and the World Council for Radio and

Television suggests that in order to maintain the objectives of public television, funding must be "substantial, independent, predictable and equitable"<sup>3</sup>. Substantial to underplay commercial services; independent from political and marketing pressures; predictable to guarantee stability and continuity; and equitable to prevent controversy.

<sup>1</sup> AUFDERHEIDE, Patricia. *Latin American Grassroots Video: Beyond Television*. Public Culture, The University of Chicago, May 1993.

<sup>2</sup> LÓPEZ DE LA ROCHE, Fabio. *Medios Comunitarios, medios alternativos, tejido social y ciudadanía en Bogotá*. Ponencia en el Congreso de ALAIC, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO-CMRTV "La Radio y Televisión Pública: ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo?" UNESCO, Paris. (no date).

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

Estaciones locales de televisión surgieron en varios países latinoamericanos para mejorar la comunicación dentro de las comunidades respectivas. Gumucio-Dagron, un especialista de comunicación de Bolivia con amplias experiencias en cuatro continentes, resume en este artículo las condiciones básicas para legitimar la televisión comunitaria. Según el autor, los principios básicos son los siguientes: propiedad comunitaria, contenido local, tecnología apropiada, idioma apropiado y pertinencia cultural, y enredamiento con otros actores de la sociedad civil. Ya que medios comunitarios juegan un rol importante para mantener la cohesión social, los gobiernos nacionales deberían aceptar su co-responsabilidad financiera para operar estas estaciones.



Des stations de télévision locales ou de proximité apparaissent dans divers pays d'Amérique latine en vue de renforcer la communication à l'intérieur des communautés concernées. Gumucio-Dagron (Bolivie), expert en communication avec une vaste expérience dans quatre continents, rappelle dans cet article les principes fondamentaux d'une télévision communautaire, principes valables d'ailleurs pour tout processus de communication communautaire, à savoir : l'appartenance du média à la communauté, les contenus locaux, l'utilisation de technologies appropriées et d'un langage adapté, la pertinence culturelle et la participation de tous les acteurs de la société civile. Compte tenu du rôle important des médias communautaires en faveur de l'intégration et de la cohésion sociale, les gouvernements et autorités nationales devraient accepter d'apporter une contribution financière au fonctionnement de ces stations.



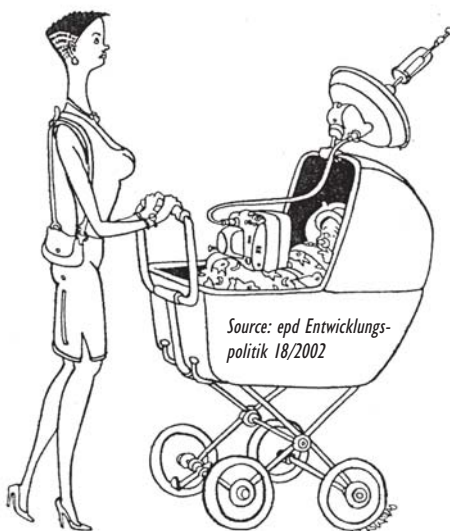
## by Zoli Schwarcz\*

I would like to share with you my experiences with the local TV station *TV Vida* in Santarem, geographically positioned between Belem and Manaus on the border of the Amazon River in Brazil. The city has 180.000 inhabitants, next to the indigenous population. The majority of the population fled from the dry North East to the fertile Amazon region, not knowing that the land had already been divided by the local landlords and multi-national corporations. The immigrants ended up in the slums of Santarem. The area of the city is extensive, public transport is poor, so means of communication are important. In the city of Santarem one can receive three local radio stations and seven TV channels retransmitting programmes from stations located in the south of Brazil. Two radio stations are commercial FM music stations, the third one is the short-wave station *Radio Rural* owned by the Catholic Church. Research has shown that 50% of the population tune into *Radio Rural* frequently with an estimated

In 2001 I was introduced to the Catholic station *TV Vida*. The Diocese of Santarem owns a very modern transmitter which re-broadcasts programmes of the national Catholic station *Rede Vida*. Rede Vida offers religious and “family



The retransmitter and its technical possibilities impressed me. By using small digital cameras, sufficient sound equipment and appropriate



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editing software, the transmitter — far out the most expensive part of the technical infrastructure — could be used to broadcast local television programmes. Up to then the retransmitter was only used to broadcast media content produced 4000 kilometres away in São Paulo with very little relation to daily life in Amazonia. So I offered the Diocese a three week TV course for free under the condition that the Diocese would invest in a digital camera and editing equipment. Some months later I returned to Santarem and started the course with eight students.

### Training in basic TV skills

None of the students had had any professional education in the field of communication. Most of them had finished high school and participated in voluntary work within the Church. Only one participant was skilled in the techniques of camera and digital editing, while one girl was attached to *Radio Rural* as a journalist.

In three weeks the students got acquainted with the principles of the different stages in the production process, transformation of an idea into a script, audience related selection and research, the technical process of gathering images and sound, interview techniques, the organisation of the production, editing and postproduction, working with camera, sound and digital editing. The group produced several short movies and developed a script, which focussed on the social and economic contradictions of the *Saire* Festival,



a main cultural event in the region. The script would be filmed when I had left.

During the three weeks I worked with the group, progress could be seen in the development of basic technical skills like camera recording and editing. More intellectual skills like the transformation of an idea into a concept, interview approach, audience-related selection, script writing and reflection on the need of a Church related TV station were much more difficult aspects of the course.

### Eight months later

Eight months later I returned to Santarem. Now the *TV Vida* team consisted of four members: the priest responsible, a technician — paid by the Diocese — and two volunteers. The script of the *Saire* had not been filmed due to technical problems. TV production of the last eight months turned out to be a mixture of recordings of religious and traditional cultural events chosen without any policy or concept. The format was based on a decent use of the camera with the narration of a radio journalist.

### Lack of own concepts

My experience with *TV Vida* Santarem is not unique. Local TV stations in Brazil often fail to

develop a professional TV production as they lack a clear concept, strong management, technical infrastructure, technical, organisational and programmatic skills and sufficient financial backing. Many local TV stations try to copy the formats and styles of the dominant national channels.

The main energy of local TV stations is invested in technical effects instead of the development of a specific local concept. As soon as the moving images are fluently edited with special effects, the music is atmospheric, nice and the deep voice-over tells us what we see, the film looks professional. Often it seems the ultimate goal. It seems that the message is not important — it is the medium that is important.

First of all one should be aware that a small local station cannot compete with national and international commercial TV channels. You cannot expect young volunteers to produce on the same level as their educated colleagues of the national broadcasters. With all their money and skills even these professionals are often unsuccessful in making interesting TV programmes. But how can we use the medium in a way that it empowers the parishes? In what way can the medium contribute to the interaction between people at local level?

### The strength is the local involvement

Nice pictures of local events do not make local television. Television is a means, not a goal. It passes information about people to other people. Often information flows best in an organisation where a structure of communication already exists. The Diocese of Santarem consists of six municipalities with 300.000 inhabitants. These six municipalities are divided into 15 parishes with 8000 organised communities where 2000 laymen and women are active. In the Diocese are working 16 priests and eight religious sisters.

The parishes are very well organised. In every community you will find a variety of groups that deal with aspects of youth, religion, education, public health, social care and labour. And in every community laymen and women together with priests and volunteers are working to strengthen the community. Here exists an enormous potential of talent and involvement. And with this involvement we can make local interactive television.

### Local TV is interactive

In this concept the parish is the resource of local television. It will be used by the parish to communicate with other parishes about issues which are of importance for everybody. In the

community groups the members have to express and discuss which item or event in their parish is important to be screened on local TV. Besides, they are invited to criticise messages and media content which other parishes have screened. At meetings and Masses, leaders can discuss the events broadcast and stimulate people to react. In this way local TV can empower the community. Local TV becomes a trigger, a democratic marketplace where all-important events of the village will be communicated.

In this concept editorial staff is not the primary need, but technical facilitators and producers helping the people to organise and produce their own programme. With small digital cameras, good microphones and a digital editing set they have the basic tools to make TV programmes.

### Responding to which criteria?

The programmes have to be topical, they have to address a problem, they have to provoke discussion, and they have to reflect the ideas of the people in the parish. Programmes to be screened will focus on pastoral as well as on development issues. For instance: at the moment relevant issues for the community are the implementation of a new water system and the construction of a new agro-industrial complex by a multinational firm.

Production time will be short with a maximum of three days: one for preparation, one for recording and one for editing and broadcasting. Learning by doing, motivated by the commonly reflected contents and acting in solidarity will give participants in the parishes the conviction that the local station is theirs. At that moment television becomes local, becomes an instrument to improve the local community.

And when *TV Vida Santarem* is paying attention to the poor transportation system in its own region, Maria Conceição will zap from national or international television channels to *TV Vida*. Besides,.... wasn't her daughter Suelinha recently interviewing the neighbourhood about the poor transport?

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

¿Cuáles son las fuerzas específicas y dificultades de canales y programas de televisión local eclesial? Este artículo resume las experiencias del autor en cuanto a la formación de colaboradores de televisión local en la Diócesis Amazónica de Santarem (Brasil). Hicieron progresos en adquirir conocimientos técnicos básicos mientras se mostró más difícil desarrollar conocimientos intelectuales como el guión o la planificación de la programación según las preferencias de la audiencia. Según el autor muchas estaciones locales de televisión no disponen de un concepto claro aunque la fuerza de la Iglesia es el involucramiento local. En vez de tratar de competir con canales nacionales, la estación local debería ser una parte integral de la vida parroquial y así convertirse en un instrumento para forzar la propia identidad de las comunidades locales.



Quels sont les atouts et difficultés spécifiques des stations de télévision locales appartenant à l'Eglise ? L'article présente l'expérience personnelle de l'auteur engagé dans la formation des collaborateurs de la télé locale du diocèse de Santarem, dans la région amazonienne du Brésil. Des progrès significatifs ont été atteints dans l'acquisition de compétences techniques de base, mais le succès fut plus mitigé du point de vue des compétences "intellectuelles", notamment la production de programmes adaptés à l'audience. Selon l'auteur beaucoup de stations de télévision locales manquent d'un concept clair. Au lieu de se lancer dans une compétition frontale avec les chaînes nationales, les stations locales devraient s'intégrer dans la vie paroissiale et communautaire, et ainsi devenir un instrument en vue de renforcer l'identité des communautés locales.



# Missing Frameworks

## Community Television in South Africa

by Harry Letsebe

In South Africa the establishment of community based television initiatives is considered a crucial component of an overall developmental strategy to redress apartheid imbalances and to empower communities to take control of the process of transforming their living conditions. The present activities to provide a formal licence framework have also given new impetus on the debate over the future of community based television initiatives in South Africa. Harry Letsebe gives an overview on current initiatives and major problems.

In South Africa, community television is defined as part of community media and does unlike private and public television in South Africa not seek to benefit a few people, but the majority of the population, especially those who do not have access to facilities and infrastructures to realise freedom of expression as a right.

Community television provides the community in which it is situated with a tool through which its own stories will be told and images created. This promotes participatory governance, sustainable development, conflict resolution and a range of other social goals. Concretely, it seeks to break down the separation between the audience as subject and the filmmaker as the professional and expert who intends to represent the images of others.

The developmental objective of community television is to build ongoing and sustainable capacities within communities to utilise the audio-visual media for social objectives. To this a host of other benefits will accrue to the community — amongst others these include skills development, job creation (albeit on a small scale), access to information and a culture of freedom of expression is facilitated and created — resulting in cultural enrichment.

Harry Letsebe, is presently working as media programme manager for the German *Heinrich Böll Foundation*, Southern Africa Regional Office. In the late 1990s he was the national training co-ordinator and General Secretary of the *South African Students Press Union*.

### Formal Regulations

Since the early 80s the community media movement in South Africa has always been based on activists who worked mostly on a voluntary basis. The respective activism germinated from the student media scene led by the *South African Student Press Union* (SASPU) which is associated with the mass democratic movement in South Africa as a social movement.

After the lifting of the ban on (party) political activities and activism, SASPU joined hands together with other progressive community media organisations to establish a forum through which a lot of advocacy and lobbying could be realised to create a conducive climate for the formal recognition of community media.

In the process of developing a formal broadcasting policy in the early and mid 90s, the importance of community media and particularly community broadcasting was taken seriously into account, as can be seen in the *Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act*. The purpose of the *IBA Act* was to provide regulations of broadcasting activities according to the public interest and to establish a council which is free of political, business and any other forms of interest or control. The *Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act 153, 1993* (as amended) recognises community television in its three tier definition of broadcast services (public, commercial and community television). Despite this legislative recognition of community television there is no framework for its licences.

### The Open Window Network (OWN)

However, a national network of audio-visual media training and development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) exists, which is based on the community television's potential and mainly functions as a lobby group for its formal recognition by the authorities.

This network is loosely organised around the *Open Window Network (OWN)*. OWN was established



in 1993 by a group of activists working in the area of community media. It is a non-profit, national (South African), membership based organisation of community and democratic media initiatives, which intends to promote democratic video productions and community access towards television in South Africa. These (audio) visual media projects are working within the *historically disadvantaged communities*<sup>1</sup> to build production capacities through skills development and production support.

OWN has forty five (45) member organisations in seven of the nine provinces of South Africa. The majority of them are community video projects which function as production houses for

development oriented videos. For these organisations the establishment of community based television is seen as a crucial component of an overall development strategy to redress the imbalances of the past and to empower communities to take control of democratic processes in order to transform their living conditions.

In the absence of a formal recognition and commitment from the government to support community television initiatives in South Africa, the NGOs and community based organisations — some affiliated to the *Open Window Network* — remain to serve as development nodes for community audio-visual media on the one hand and for providing space for the training and development of upcoming independent film makers on the other.

### Preparations and tests for the future

Some community television initiatives, particularly those based in Metropolitan areas such as Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg were given the opportunity by the public broadcaster to use the public access time slots in the regional service windows. Where these initiatives were provided with time slots and allowed to broadcast, the test transmissions were successful.

A striking example of a successful community broadcasting initiative which was given a special broadcast license took place in 1998, when a collective of community video and media production organisations came together to run a test transmission of one week during the Second General Assembly of *Videazimut*<sup>2</sup> in Cape Town.

The *Videazimut* General Assembly was combined with an international seminar on the "Right to Communicate and the Communication of Rights" — to also commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Another example of a licensed community television initiative is *Trinity Broadcasting* located in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. This church based initiative goes back to the pre-1994

democratic dispensation and was given a special license condition since then.

### New impetus and setbacks

The government linked regulatory body, the *Independent Communications Authority of South Africa* (ICASA) has targeted the current year, 2003, towards actions to provide a formal framework within which licensing has to take place. However, it is still not clear what model community television will be adequate for South Africa once the necessary formal framework has been completed. This is still a matter which will have to be determined by the public process.

Unfortunately, the impetus for community television initiatives in South Africa is eventually waning and this is due to a variety of reasons as the scarcity of resources for the support of organisations working in the sector.

One of the main reasons is further the lack of support amongst policy makers who refer to the argument that community television is an expensive undertaking and that there is not enough capital to invest in the infrastructure of such projects. The logic of these arguments, however, has repeatedly been refuted by several studies carried out by community media activists as baseless.

Another frustrating scenario is the ICASA's delay to implement a legislative mandate to undertake research into the commercial viability and social relevance of community television. Despite the delays by ICASA to undertake the much needed studies to justify the use of public money on community television, there are still some activities going on albeit on a much smaller scale than it is desired.

<sup>1</sup>A historically disadvantaged community refers to the black townships and rural areas of South Africa in general. The concept of historically disadvantaged is used on the basis that black people have for years during apartheid been subjected to inhuman treatment. No infrastructural development has taken place in their areas because of the policy of separate development where black people were not considered as deserving real development projects.



<sup>2</sup>*Videazimut* is a global network of democratic audio-visual communicators. The *Videazimut* network has over 95 members in 45 countries worldwide. Among the members, are community television stations, independent producers and non governmental organisations.

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

En Sudáfrica el establecimiento de iniciativas de televisión comunitaria es una parte esencial de la estrategia general de desarrollo para restablecer el equilibrio entre las razas después de la abolición del régimen apartheid y para fortalecer a las comunidades en mejorar sus propias condiciones de vida. Para su realización, sin embargo, la televisión comunitaria requiere un desarrollo y sostenimiento activo, pero el *South Africa Independent Broadcasting Authority* (IBA) hasta ahora no pudo legalizar la concesión de licencias — lo que rige todavía es el cabildeo. Harry Letsebe, el actual director para programas comunicacionales de la *Fundación Heinrich Böll*, Departamento Regional Sudáfrica, emprende el debate y presenta ejemplos de iniciativas de video/televisión y redes importantes.



En Afrique du Sud, la création de télévision communautaire fait partie intégrante de la politique nationale de développement dans le but de compenser des déséquilibres sociaux créés au temps de l'apartheid et de permettre aux communautés de participer à la transformation de leurs conditions de vies. Cependant, à ce jour le *South Africa Independent Broadcasting Authority* (IBA) n'a pas encore établi le cadre formel pour l'octroi des licences. Le débat reste ouvert à ce propos. Harry Letsebe, media programme manager au bureau d'Afrique Australe de la *Fondation Heinrich Böll*, situe les discussions et controverses en cours et présente des exemples d'initiatives de vidéo/televisión dans ce pays.

# Diversity as a Strength



## A Satellite Television Service for Christians in the Middle East

by David Harder\*

### PROFILE SAT-7

The satellite TV service SAT-7 was officially established in November 1995 for the Christians of the Middle East and North Africa, comprising 21 Arab countries, plus Iran and Turkey. The international office of SAT-7 is located in Cyprus with additional TV production studios in Egypt and Lebanon. The initial two hour per week service, started in 1996, has increased to a daily broadcast covering 84 hours per week. The number of personnel has increased accordingly from only one person in the beginning to about 100 staff members at present.

SAT-7 is a unique project in at least two ways: About 25 Christian and media agencies as well as Churches and foundations from the Middle East, Europe and North America committed themselves in an unusual partnership as founding partners of the project. Through satellite TV a sense of identity and legitimacy is provided for the scattered Christian communities in the Middle East and North Africa.

Based on the alarming fact that Christianity in the Middle East and North Africa is continually shrinking, a research project — very much involving the Catholic Information Office in Beirut — was commissioned in the early 1990s to explore ways to aid the Church in these regions.

Resulting from that research study it was stated that satellite TV, despite its enormous costs and the relative novelty of technology by that time, was the most effective means of ministering Christianity in the Middle East and North Africa.

It was found out that over 90% of all the inhabitants living in the region, now served by SAT-7, already had access to TV and were continually buying and installing satellite receivers. The increasing popularity of satellite TV was partly driven by the 1990-91 Gulf War and people's desire to see news coverage that was not governmentally controlled. It was also driven by the technology itself, which became more affordable in price and opened a window to the world for people living in extremely remote and impoverished areas. Additionally the medium was and is usable to both the literate and the illiterate people, unlike newspapers and books. Illiteracy rates are very high in North Africa but television-viewing rates are higher! Arab governments also noticed this trend in the early 90s and launched their own satellite networks.

*David Harder is currently the Information Manager of SAT-7*

### The ecumenical approach

Taking into account the above mentioned aspects, SAT-7 was launched out of a grassroots Christian media movement in the Middle East. In November 1995 the project was officially established as a satellite TV service for Christians in the Middle East and North Africa. But, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and input from all the denominations of the Middle East, were crucial in the formation process of SAT-7. The ministry is committed to supporting all the Churches of the region. Taking this ecumenical approach has been a challenge for SAT-7 because at times some Churches do not want to work together, but the process has also been very rewarding. Unlike some other Christian broadcasting operations, SAT-7 sees diversity as a strength. People on the staff come from various Church backgrounds, being Anglican, Orthodox or Catholic. All of them, however, must agree with SAT-7's ethos, and to its doctrinal statement: the Nicene Creed (I). They must also agree to respect the beliefs of other Christians.

Owned and operated is SAT-7 by a board of directors which, according to the statutes, consists in its majority of Middle Eastern Church leaders. Among the board members are for example: Bishop Marcos and Bishop Moussa from the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt, the Catholic Bishop Aboujaoudé from Lebanon as well as Metropolitan Saliba from Mount Lebanon.

### A voice for and of the Church

SAT-7 is more than just a source for Christian information and education; it is also a voice for the Church. Working with all the denominations of the region, it seeks to provide a stage from which Christians can address the needs of their communities. More than 60% of SAT-7's programmes are produced by Arab Christians for Arab Christians. While Christians are its primary audience, SAT-7 also seeks to build bridges between different religions by explaining the Christian faith "with gentleness and respect" to an audience that has few sources for accurate information about Christ and his followers.

### The wide range of programmes

In the beginning SAT-7 had only one member of staff, now it has nearly 100, most of whom are Middle Eastern Christians living in Beirut or Cairo where SAT-7 has TV production studios. Many of these workers did not have prior experience in television before coming to join the ministry, and SAT-7 has trained them with a focus on excellence and integrity.

Starting with only one hour of programming a week, the network has grown significantly and currently airs more than 80 hours of television broadcasts per week. Over 50% of them are produced in its own studios. The programme formats range from cartoons to documentaries, homilies to music videos, films to situation comedies. The first programme aired on the network (which is still running) is called *As Sana-bel* or *Ears of Wheat*. It is a children's programme in which a host named Rita tells Bible stories and through creative drama helps children understand the morals of the stories as they impact Rita's friends, Sanboul the clown and Angelo, an alien from space.

Cartoons also help illustrate the daily Bible story. *Nafita* or *Windows*, which is a news programme focusing on the activities of Christians. Christian groups from across the globe send stories to air on *Nafita*. These stories help isolated Christians in the region to make them feel they are part of a world-wide family.

Other programmes include *Message from a Church* which profiles a different Church service each week, records the homily, and broadcasts feedback from the members of the congregation about the message.

*F.A.Q.* or *Frequently Asked Questions* tries to answer viewers queries about spiritual or practical issues. *"N.R.G."* is a youth oriented programme that includes Christian music videos. *"Icons"* is a show that helps viewers to better understand the meanings of icons. Other programmes focus on practical issues such as how to build a strong





marriage or how to start your own business. These are just a few of the more than 50 types of programmes now airing on the network. Films are also shown and so are advertisements for Christian websites and radio stations. Each day's broadcast begins with a reading, in Arabic, from the Holy Bible, and ends with a short testimony programme in which a viewer is interviewed and answers the question "Who is Jesus to me?"

In addition to its own productions SAT-7 also obtains quality Christian programmes from partner organisations and many Christian media organisations in other countries. Further, often the producers of shows targeted for a western audience will allow SAT-7 to dub their programmes into Arabic and then to air them on the network. Each of these programmes goes through an intensive review process to ensure that it is culturally sensitive and spiritually relevant to the Arab audience. Some TV production companies will even pay for the dubbing and for the eventual airtime, which is a significant financial contribution that helps SAT-7 to air highly specialised products, such as major films, which it could not otherwise afford.

### Christians in the Middle East

In 1900, Christians represented around 20% of the total population of the Middle East. This percentage has fallen to less than 5% at present. And these numbers are even more striking in the so-called Holy Land. Historically, the percentage of Christians in the West Bank and Gaza has declined from nearly 20% to 1.5% today. And, according to Israeli officials, 2,766 Christians have emigrated from the West Bank since the beginning of the current Intifada — 1,640 from Bethlehem alone.

Many of the Churches in these regions are still under threat and leaders of these groups say it is possible that the Church in the Middle East could disappear completely.

### Counselling centres for viewers

In addition to providing high quality, Bible-based programming, SAT-7 is committed to answering questions viewers may have about issues raised on the programmes, and to help address their personal concerns. SAT-7 and its partners operate a total of 12 counselling centres for viewers, located across the Middle East and Europe.

Sometimes people call with urgent personal matters. For example, last year a woman who wanted to commit suicide called one of the SAT-7 phone counsellors. The counsellor convinced her not to take her life because God could help her. Now this same woman is an active participant in her church and has seen God answer her calls for help. Other people call the counselling centres because they have no other Christians living in their area and just want to talk with a fellow believer. Many people call because of spiritual questions and often want to know more about basic Christian beliefs and on such issues as "Is what you are showing me about Christianity true?" or "Isn't the Bible corrupted?," or "What are angels?"

Each year the number of people contacting SAT-7 and its counselling centres increases, and now some 500 to 1500 people are approaching the service each week! The numbers also have grown significantly with the recent addition of a SAT-7 viewers website [www.sat7.com](http://www.sat7.com) in Arabic. A second website, [www.sat7.org](http://www.sat7.org) is available for English speakers.

### Financial challenges

SAT-7 is funded by financial donations from Churches, Christian agencies and individuals. Its budget is nearly seven million US\$ a year of which two million US\$ are spent to purchase satellite airtime and another two million US\$ for creating and acquiring programmes. Television is an expensive endeavour and Middle Eastern Churches give directly to the ministry, nevertheless much of the funding comes from the West.



Financially, the ministry currently faces some significant challenges; donations have been down during the past two years because of the impact of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and a depressed global economy. SAT-7 is working to develop other sources of revenue but it is difficult to find corporations who are willing to advertise to a minority audience, even one that measures in the millions. SAT-7's broadcast licence, and its internal policy, prohibit the ministry from soliciting funds "on-air," so SAT-7 relies almost completely on the generosity and prayers of the Christian community to meet its needs.

### Perspectives

Despite some challenges, SAT-7 has potentially an exciting future, taking into account its current number of viewers. One recent survey of viewers in Algeria indicated that 5.4 million people of the general population claim to watch SAT-7, from which about 1.5 million people state to watch SAT-7 regularly! And Algeria is just one of the 21 Arabic speaking countries into which SAT-7



broadcasts — not to mention all the Arab communities in Europe.

The survey about Algeria shows that people are watching SAT-7 and the increasing number of calls and letters sent to the counselling centres indicate that the programmes have an impact on viewers' lives. In letters, viewers say they have a great thirst to know more about Jesus and the Bible and are unable to receive teaching in any other way.

*(1) The Nicene Creed, also known as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, is a formal statement of Christian belief which is very widely used in Christian liturgies. The Creed was originally formulated by the Council of Nicea in 325 and later affirmed, with modifications, by the Council of Constantinople in 381.*

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

SAT-7 a été créé en novembre 1995 comme canal de télévision par satellite couvrant le Moyen-Orient et l'Afrique du Nord. Au total 21 pays de langue arabe, plus la Turquie, reçoivent les programmes de SAT-7. Par une cinquantaine de programmes différents, SAT-7 contribue ainsi à soutenir et renforcer dans sa foi la minorité chrétienne de cette région du monde, tout en offrant au grand public constitué principalement de Musulmans une fenêtre de dialogue avec la chrétienté. David Harder, membre de la direction de SAT-7, décrit l'approche œcuménique de SAT-7, la variété de programmes produits localement et l'impact des télécentres auxquels les téléspectateurs peuvent s'adresser pour des conseils et de la guidance.



Con más de 50 programas diferentes actualmente, el servicio de televisión por satélite SAT-7 resultó ser un canal árabe atractivo para las comunidades „minoritarias“ de cristianos en el Medio Oriente y el Norte del Africa, incluyendo los 21 países árabes, Turquía e Irán. Como la cristianidad en estas regiones disminuye continuamente, SAT-7 fue fundada en noviembre de 1995 por una asociación que abarca 25 agencias cristianas y de medios, Iglesias y fundaciones del Medio Oriente, de Europa y Norteamérica. David Harder, el director de informaciones de SAT-7 describe en su artículo la filosofía ecuménica de SAT-7, la variedad de programas producidos localmente y el impacto de los 12 centros de asesoramiento en el Medio Oriente y Europa a los que cristianos pueden dirigirse con sus inquietudes personales.



Foto above: SAT-7 production team in Libanon. On page 29: Earth station in Egypt. Previous page: Satellite dishes on houses in Morocco. All photos by SAT-7

# From Anglicans to Zoroastrians

## Canada's VisionTV Provides a Model for Multi-Faith Broadcasting

by Bill Roberts\*

Instead of licensing TV channels operated by single denominations, in Canada the decision was taken to establish the multi-faith network *VisionTV*, presenting a wide range of faith communities, including Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Baha'is. Their common ground is a Code of Ethics, Standards and Practices, and a structure of ownership ensuring the representation of different religious groups. Although, in many aspects *VisionTV* is a uniquely Canadian undertaking, it might be an encouraging example to think of new ways of being present in television as a Church.

It is a notion so idealistic as to seem almost absurd: a national multi-faith television network that seeks to celebrate diversity and promote understanding among people of different beliefs and backgrounds.

In September 2003, Canada's *VisionTV* celebrates 15 years on the air. To have reached such a milestone is no modest achievement for a tiny, not-for-profit faith channel like ours. Indeed, given the size of our operating budget of around US\$ 15 million\* and the fiercely competitive environment in which we operate, one cannot entirely rule out the possibility that divine intervention has played a hand. Theological speculation aside, I would submit that *VisionTV's* decade and a half on television is a testament to what a small but dedicated group of people can achieve in the field of faith broadcasting. [\*Please note that this figure includes the budget for our sister station, one: the Body, Mind & Spirit channel. This station, launched in September 2001, is a digital speciality network dedicated to programming on "natural health, personal growth and living a planet-friendly lifestyle." It accounts, at present, for a relatively modest share of the total budget.]

*VisionTV* is, in many ways, a uniquely Canadian undertaking. As a service dedicated to multi-faith and multicultural programming, it reflects the

importance that we in this country place on the values of pluralism and tolerance. This network is also the product of a national commitment to the concept of public service broadcasting. Canadians, like people all over the world, look to television for entertainment. But as citizens, we also share the belief that the medium should do more. One of the most striking aspects of Canada's TV system (certainly in contrast to that of the USA) is the variety of channels established to address public and civic needs. These include not only our national public service, the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)*, and an array of provincial public broadcasters, but also several innovative private networks with "public service" mandates — among them *VisionTV*.

*VisionTV* exists because federal broadcasting policy makers understood that faith plays an important role in the lives of Canadians, and recognised the need for a national television network that would address itself to matters of spirituality and morality. Canada's broadcast regulator, the *Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)*, steered deliberately away from the single-faith network model, favouring instead the idea of a broadly based service that would speak to the spiritual needs of all Canadians, from Anglicans to Zoroastrians. And so, in 1987, the *CRTC* licensed *VisionTV* to present the widest possible range of faith programming in an atmosphere of respect for all voices and viewpoints. At present, *VisionTV* can be seen in 7.8 million Canadian households. Approximately 1.3 million Canadians (i.e. a bit more than 4% of the total population) tune into the network each week.

### Independence

Our network is neither owned nor financially supported by any single faith group or denomination. Rather, *VisionTV* is a registered charitable organisation with a volunteer Board of Directors that includes representatives from at least five different religious communities.

\*Bill Roberts is President and CEO of *VisionTV*. For more information on the network, visit the website, at [www.visiontv.ca](http://www.visiontv.ca)





Individual faith groups are given the opportunity to purchase airtime on the network. This paid faith programming makes up approximately half of our broadcast schedule. *VisionTV* airs programmes produced and presented by a wide range of denominations, including Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Baha'is. In all, we serve approximately 75 different groups each year.

### Variety of topics and formats

The balance of our schedule consists of various other forms of programming that explore issues

related to faith, ethics and the diversity of cultures. *VisionTV* has a particularly strong reputation for supporting independent documentary filmmakers. Over the years, we have co-produced and broadcast an extraordinary variety of documentaries and documentary series, on topics ranging from the history of female mystics in Medieval Europe to the fight against AIDS in present-day Africa. Our line-up also includes a selection of drama series, movies, and family shows, along with human affairs programmes that offer spiritual and moral perspectives on current events.

It is a hallmark of *VisionTV* that we refuse to approach this subject with the stony solemnity of a country preacher. Our goal, always, is to be inspirational, insightful and original. There is no greater adventure than the exploration of the human spirit, and television that concerns itself with this subject ought to be as engaging and entertaining as anything else on the small screen.

### Values and principles for operation

Another distinguishing feature of the network is our stringent *Code of Ethics, Standards and Practices*, which articulates the values and prin-

ciples by which we operate. This document ensures that our programming shows respect for the diversity of faith groups in Canada and provides balance on matters of public concern. It also places strict limits on the kinds of on-air fundraising practices to which viewers are subjected. The Code has been a key to successfully bringing together such a wide variety of religious groups to broadcast on a single network.

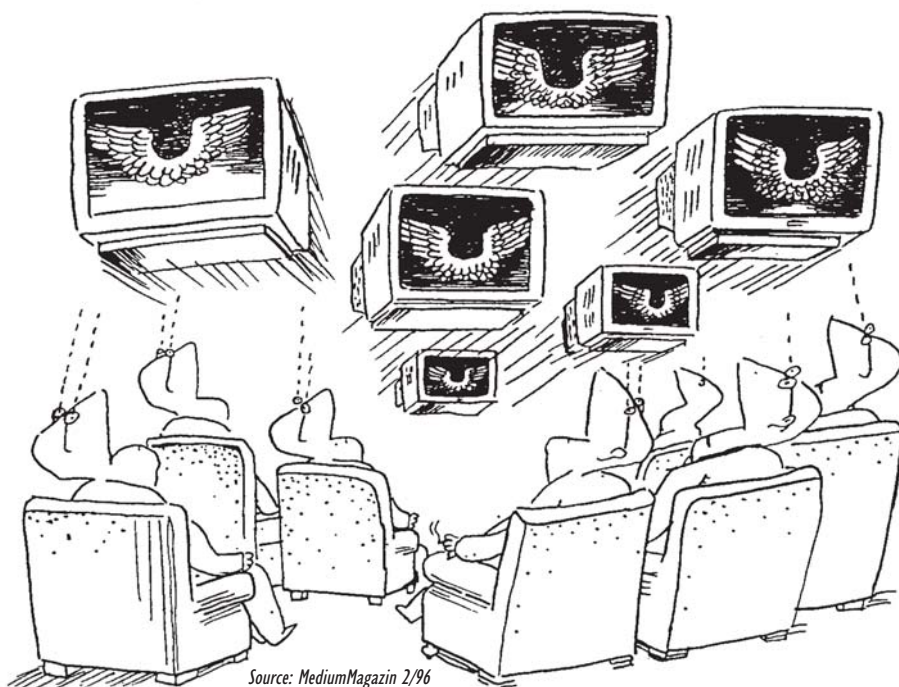
### Culture of diversity

If there has been one other quality that sets *VisionTV* apart, it is the commitment to diversity not just on the screen, but behind the scenes as well. The men and women who founded the network understood the importance of fostering a corporate culture that welcomes people of all backgrounds. They knew *VisionTV* would never be credible as a multi-faith and multicultural broadcaster unless the organisation itself fully embodied these core values.

*VisionTV* has been a leader when it comes to creating professional opportunities for people of colour in the Canadian television business: Approximately one in five staff members (altogether approximately 70 people) comes from a visible minority. We have also taken it upon ourselves to play a major role in industry events geared to promoting diversity within the broadcast business, such as the annual *Innoversity Creative Summit* in Toronto.

### Success stories and difficulties

Over the past 15 years, we have recorded many successes. *VisionTV* has received numerous honours, including the *Canadian Council of Christians and Jews Human Rights Award* and the *Canadian Women in Communications Employer of the Year Citation*. Our documentary presentations and human affairs programmes have also earned recognition at festivals and awards shows around the world, from Canada's own *Gemini Awards* to the *Sydney International Film Festival*. And we have, on occasion, broken significant new ground with our programming.



Source: MediumMagazin 2/96

In March 2001, we broadcast the acclaimed two-part special *Residential Schools: Moving Beyond Survival*, an unprecedented collaboration with two other national public service networks, in which we explored the legacy of Canada's controversial system of Aboriginal residential schools. And in February of this year, we presented this country's first truly multicultural situation comedy, *Lord Have Mercy!*—a 13-part series set in a storefront church at the heart of Toronto's Caribbean community.

Its track record of past successes notwithstanding, *VisionTV* is grappling today with serious questions about its future. As a small, independent broadcaster, we face tremendous competitive disadvantages in an industry increasingly dominated by large corporate players. Simply put, our organisation lacks the economies of scale, the marketing resources and the clout with cable operators and broadcast regulators that the major media conglomerates in Canada currently enjoy.

Accordingly, we have spent considerable time urging federal broadcast policy makers to establish some form of protected "green space" within the TV system for public service networks. Our proposal calls for the creation of a special

"foundation tier" exclusively for channels in this category. Such an all-Canadian public service package would be the basic, "must-buy" offering to customers from every cable and satellite provider in the country. Our efforts to promote this concept continue.

### A channel for all spiritual seekers

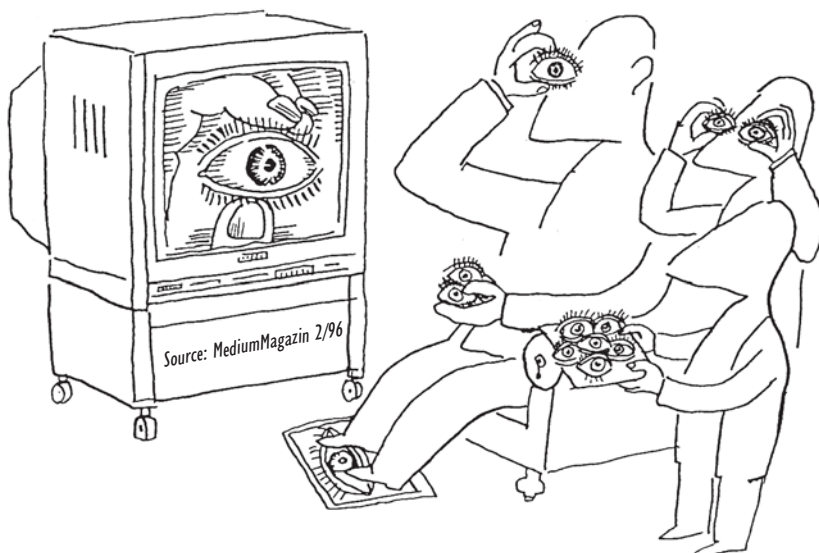
Some people might well question the continued need for a national multi-faith channel in Canada. Statistics, after all, seem to suggest that ours is an increasingly secular nation. According to the current census figures, 16 percent of Canadians say they have no religious affiliation, up from four percent little more than a decade ago.

Still, it's a bit premature to conclude that Canadians are abandoning belief. Recent surveys have shown that more than 80 percent of the population—including 40 percent of those who profess to have no religion at all—still believe firmly in God. Half claim to have personally experienced God. As human beings, we are all seekers after spiritual understanding. For some Canadians, clearly, the quest now goes on outside the bounds of traditional worship. But it goes on all the same. And as long as it does, there will continue to be a place for *VisionTV*.

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

En vez de establecer canales de iglesias particulares, la autoridad canadiense de televisión competente para la concesión de licencias—CRTC—otorgó la licencia en 1987 a *VisionTV*, una red nacional de televisión multi-religiosa para promover la comprensión entre gente de diferentes creencias y culturas. *VisionTV* tiene una junta directiva que representa al menos cinco diferentes comunidades de fieles. Un código común de ética asegura la cultura de respeto y diversidad, lo que determina tanto la programación como la organización interna del canal. Durante los últimos años, *VisionTV* ha logrado reconocimiento por su perfil con una amplia variedad temática y diferentes formatos. No obstante, el canal tiene que encontrar su camino en el contexto de una creciente comercialización e insignificancia de religiones (tradicionales).

Au lieu d'accorder des licences à des dénominations religieuses spécifiques, l'instance canadienne de régulation de la communication—CRTC—a autorisé la création en 1987 d'un réseau national multiconfessionnel, *VisionTV*, pour promouvoir la compréhension et le dialogue entre gens de différentes croyances et origines. *VisionTV* est une organisation caritative légalement reconnue, dirigée par un conseil d'administration représentant au moins cinq communautés religieuses différentes. Un code déontologique commun garantit une culture de respect et de pluralisme, balise à la fois la programmation et l'organisation interne de la station. Durant les dernières années, *VisionTV* a gagné de plus en plus de reconnaissance grâce à la grande variété de sujets et de formats utilisés. Néanmoins, la chaîne doit trouver son chemin et son équilibre dans un contexte de commercialisation croissante et de défection du religieux (traditionnel).



# D'où vient

# le succès?

## Les télévisions religieuses à Kinshasa

Par Jean-Baptiste Malenge

*Le P. Jean-Baptiste Malenge, (o.m.i.) enseigne la communication et la philosophie de la communication dans plusieurs grands séminaires de Kinshasa. Ecrivain, journaliste, producteur et animateur sur la radio catholique de Kinshasa, il est aussi membre du conseil de rédaction du magazine catholique *Renaître* et webmaster du site internet *Prêtre dans la rue* ([www.multimania.com/malenge](http://www.multimania.com/malenge)).*

Kinshasa. Une mégapole de 6 millions d'habitants. Un laboratoire de la télévision en Afrique: 20 stations de télévision, dont la moitié appartenant à des groupes religieux. Le succès et la popularité de ces „chaînes privées religieuses à Kinshasa“ inquiètent les responsables de l'Eglise catholique qui voit ses fidèles la quitter ou au moins être „sous influence“ des messages séducteurs, simplificateurs voire anti-catholiques de ces télévisions. D'où vient leur succès? Que proposent-elles en fait? Quelle peut être la réponse de l'Eglise catholique face à ce défi de la toute puissance des télévisions religieuses en RDC?

La démocratisation des années 90 en République démocratique du Congo a ouvert le paysage médiatique à l'initiative privée. Les « Eglises indépendantes », à Kinshasa, se sont ainsi précipitées dans cet espace libre. Des télévangélistes congolais sont nés : Fernando Kuthino, Denis Lessie, Mutombo, Mukuna, Sony Kafuta, Kiziamina...

On peut facilement se faire un nom en demandant, par exemple, au croyant de toucher le poste de radio ou de télévision et de recevoir ainsi l'onction nécessaire afin de guérir de toute maladie physique ou de toute malédiction, de la pauvreté, de la stérilité, du chômage...

Dans les quartiers populaires, la télévision reste allumée depuis le matin jusqu'à la fin de l'antenne ou jusqu'au moment où la chaleur et les moustiques ou le bruit du bar et de l'église du voisinage vous permettent de dormir, c'est-à-dire au-delà de minuit. A toute heure du jour, la musique « chrétienne » vous habite, un télévangéliste arrive aussitôt avec force « témoignages » de prospérité. Qui peut discerner entre le sermon du dimanche et l'enseignement à la fois fascinant et lancinant débité alors au quotidien ?

### La puissance de la « foi » ?

Les difficultés et la pauvreté générale du pays ne semblent pas rebuter les plus modestes sectes religieuses et leurs leaders qui commencent par une radio, puis une télévision pour gagner le cœur des adeptes et se faire une place au soleil dans le firmament religieux et audiovisuel de Kinshasa.

Comment font-ils ? L'opacité caractérise les sectes. On ne vous révélera jamais les ressources financières. Mais lorsqu'un incendie a détruit les studios de *Sango Malamu*, un appel à la générosité des chrétiens avait suffi pour récolter l'argent nécessaire pour acheter le matériel du studio.

Des cotisations « spontanées » des adeptes sont régulières. En 1997 déjà, un responsable de la *Radio Message de Vie* de la secte *Mission Universelle* de l'archbishop Kuthino Fernando disait ignorer lui-même comment Dieu faisait parvenir les 100 ou 400 \$, salaire mensuel d'un agent de la station.

Comment se finance le fonctionnement courant de ces nouvelles chaînes ? La question resterait une énigme si on taisait que les animateurs et journalistes ne perçoivent pas un salaire régulier, qu'ils sont appelés à être des adeptes dévoués bénévolement au service du temple. La plupart des nouvelles chaînes s'élèvent sur un équipement matériel rudimentaire, un personnel bricoleur et des règles juridiques et déontologiques des plus douteuses.

### Culte de la personnalité

Mission quasi impossible aussi d'établir l'audience de ces télévisions religieuses. Les mesures d'audience crédibles à Kinshasa sont rares. Les récents sondages effectués par le *Bureau d'Études de Recherches et de Consulting International* (Berci) et le cabinet de sondage *Experts* ne signalent aucune télévision religieuse dans les meilleurs scores réalisés concernant les émissions musicales, les sketches (théâtre), les magazines, les informations, les films. Les chaînes



Sigle	Chaîne	Propriétaire
<b>Chaînes publiques</b>		
RTNC 2	Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise	Service Public RDC
RTNC 2	Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise	Service Public RDC
<b>Chaînes privées commerciales</b>		
Raga TV	Raga TV	
AA	Antenne A	
RTKM	Radio-Télé Kin-Malebo	
Tropican	Canal Tropical Television	
CMB	Canal Media Broadcasting	
CKTV	Canal Kin Télévision	
CFTV	Canal Futur Télévision	
RTGA	Radio Télé Groupe l'Avenir	Pius Muabilu Mbayu Mukala
CEBS	Channel Education Broadcasting	
<b>Chaînes privées « religieuses »</b>		
SSMTV	Studio Sango Malamu TV	Eglise évangélique
RTK	Radio Télé Kintuadi	Mvila Nguvubaka
RTMV	Radio-Télé Message de Vie	Kuthino Fernando
RTAE	Radio-Télé Armée de l'Eternel	Sony Kafuta
ATV	Amen TV	Mutombo
RTDV	Radio Télé Dieu Vivant	Mukuna
RTVA	Radio Télévision de l'Aigle	Léonard Baruti
RTP	Radio Télé Puissance	Kiziamina
RTS	Radio Télé Sentinelle	Mbiye
<b>Chaînes émettant de Brazzaville</b>		
CTV	Télé Congo	Service Public Congo Brazzaville
DRTV	Digital Radio Télévision	
<b>Chaînes internationales relayées à Kinshasa</b>		
TV5	TV 5	
CFI	Canal France International	Public (France)

« chrétiennes » ne se disputent que la dernière catégorie : les prédications ! Ces prédications, semble-t-il, et surtout les variétés musicales « chrétiennes » sont les plus suivies. On peut encore y relever le culte de la personnalité : ces chaînes de radio ou de télévision appartiennent davantage à leurs fondateurs-propriétaires excellant dans les guérisons-miracles, qu'à des Eglises ou communautés.

### Le téléphone, mesure de la popularité

A Kinshasa, le téléphone cellulaire fait furie. Avec les sociétés brassicoles, les sociétés de téléphonie cellulaire sont les seules entreprises prospères du moment. Les cellulaires font leur publicité sur

tous les écrans. Elles offrent un autre avantage : Vodacom, Celtel ou Oasis ont installé des appareils de réception dans les régies des radios et des télévisions.

Et les programmes à téléphone ouvert sont toujours débordés. L'interactivité devient une évidence pour la liberté d'expression lorsqu'il s'agit notamment de discuter de la politique dans un Congo en « transition », attendant la fin de la guerre après la signature de bien des accords de paix...

Grâce au téléphone, on peut suivre de façon empirique l'audience des chaînes de télévisions. Tous ceux qui croient avoir un mot à dire ou un

poste à briguer et ceux qui veulent se faire voir choisissent la chaîne où ils passeront.

Le dimanche après-midi, c'est *Amen TV* qui crève l'écran avec « Question au pilori ». Pendant deux ou trois heures, un ou deux leaders politiques évoquent l'actualité et se soumettent aux questions des téléspectateurs. Ceux-ci se précipitent littéralement. Ils déclinent juste leur nom et adresse. Toutes les sensibilités et convictions peuvent ainsi se confronter, sans aucune discrimination. Techniquement, le présentateur et le réalisateur n'ont d'ailleurs pas le moyen de contrôle ni de censure.

Est-ce pour cela que le cabinet du ministre de la communication et presse, craignant l'approche de la transition politique et des élections prochaines, tente d'ores et déjà d'interdire d'une manière ou d'une autre aux médias privés confessionnels l'organisation des émissions politiques voire des bulletins d'information ?

C'est que ces « chefs spirituels » et ces télévisions peuvent réserver des surprises. Ainsi, au début du mois de juin 2003, la radio et la télévision *Message de Vie* ont semé le doute. L'archevêque Kuthino Fernando avait initié une campagne « Sauvons le Congo » pour rappeler à tous leurs droits et devoirs civiques. Le pasteur avait oublié son thème favori de la prospérité et des miracles ; il ne parlait plus que de « politique ». Deux semaines plus tard, en direct à la télévision, des échauffourées éclatèrent dans l'assemblée. La police vint rétablir « l'ordre public ». La radio et la télévision furent réduites au silence, tandis que le pasteur-fondateur entra dans la clandestinité...

### Œcuménisme en acte

Pendant la journée, les télévisions de Kinshasa se ressemblent et se confondent. Elles diffusent des plages musicales ou des films piratés. Seule la musique dite « chrétienne » permet alors de distinguer les chaînes « religieuses » des autres.

C'est en soirée que les télévangélistes reprennent le monopole sur leur chaîne respective. On voit

alors Kuthino, Mutombo, Kiziamina, Sony Kafuta prêcher, guérir des malades, opérer des miracles, etc.

La confusion des esprits, mais aussi le nivellement par le bas, est à son comble. Les mêmes sujets se trouvent partout, sans aucune originalité. Un œcuménisme de fait est vécu sur les écrans.

### Des espaces pour l'Eglise catholique

Dans ce capharnaüm télévisuel, l'Eglise catholique parvient bien à trouver des espaces et des lieux de présence. Forts et positifs le plus souvent. Mais non sans risque réel de perte d'identité et de syncrétisme dangereux.

Ainsi en avril 2003, pour parler des enfants de la rue et du phénomène de sorcellerie, la télévision kimbanguiste *Radio Télé Kintuadi*, dite *Télévision chrétienne de développement* réalisa un reportage dans une maison d'accueil de filles accusées de

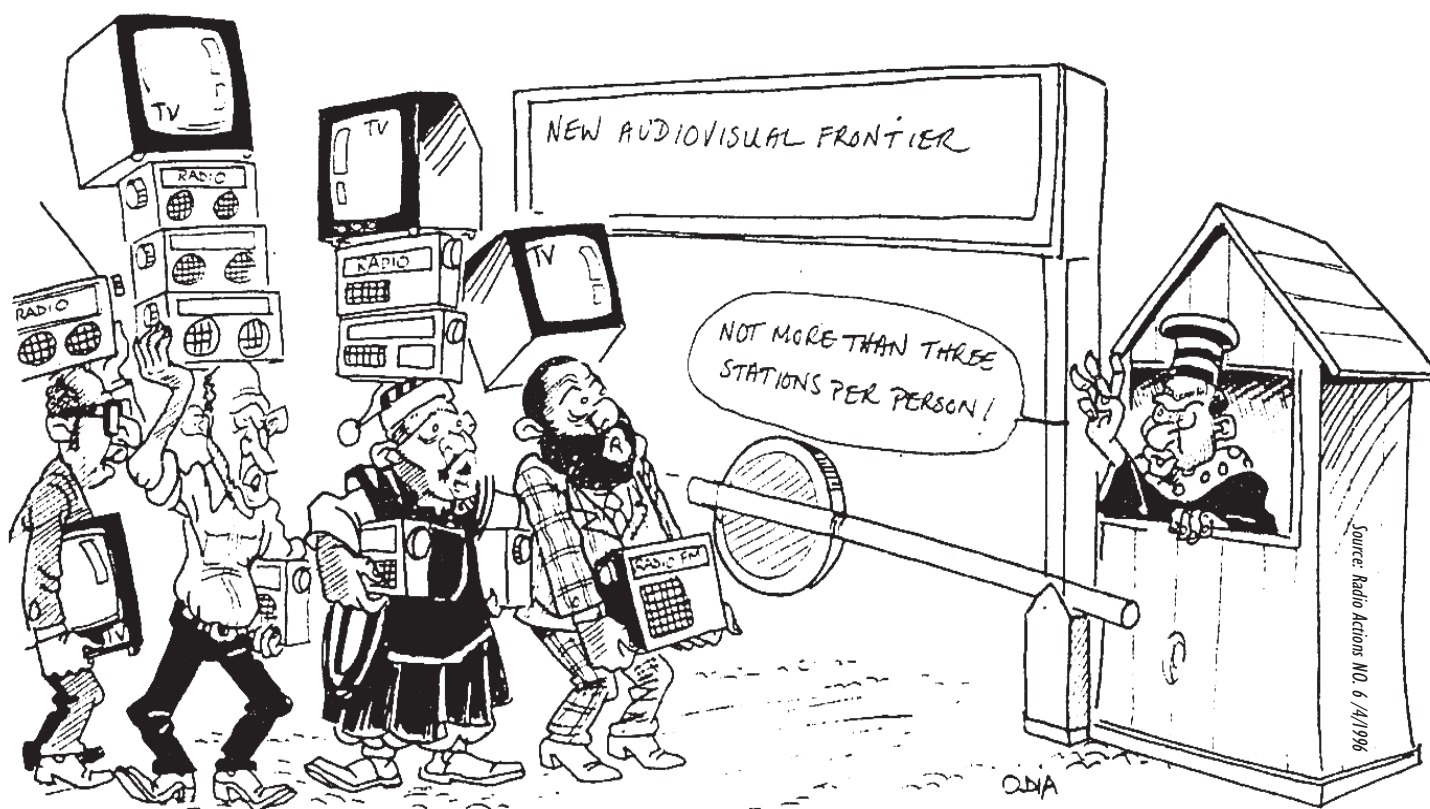
sorcellerie tenue par des sœurs de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus de Kinshasa. Et lors de la diffusion, la sœur responsable, Isabelle Tshitulula, était sur le plateau pour répondre aux questions des téléspectateurs et d'autres invités, dont l'abbé Joseph Mpundu, psychologue, ayant recueilli un enfant dit sorcier. Et un téléspectateur de dire au téléphone : « Le prêtre a bien parlé. Les pasteurs devraient l'écouter ».

Un téléspectateur se disant pentecôtiste a émis une semblable réaction le dimanche 11 mai 2003 lors de l'émission *Kairos* sur la chaîne RTG@. La télévision RTG@ appartient à un catholique, Pius Mwabilu. Déclinant plusieurs offres d'argent de « pasteurs », il a décidé de n'offrir de religion que celle de l'Eglise catholique. Et il a offert un espace aux Œuvres Pontificales Missionnaires diocésaines dirigées par l'abbé Kibwila. Dès 20h30 le dimanche, et deux heures durant, l'émission

*Kairos* à téléphone ouvert. Elle est devenue ainsi l'unique espace télévisuel où l'Eglise catholique peut s'exposer et exposer son point de vue. La rediffusion intervient le lundi après-midi.

Lorsque le doyen des Facultés catholiques de Kinshasa veut présenter ses dernières publications, il est accueilli dans le « Salon de la culture » d'*Amen TV*, qui lui consacre une heure le vendredi soir. Par ailleurs, si les Facultés catholiques et l'Institut Saint Eugène de Mazenod des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée organisent un colloque, un samedi soir la télévision protestante *Sango Malamu* rediffusera gratuitement l'intégralité des conférences.

Après la fête des Martyrs de l'Ouganda, c'est la toute nouvelle chaîne de télévision du Dieu Vivant (Sikatenda) qui a diffusé le film retraçant le martyre de Saint Charles Lwanga et de ses compagnons.



## La Nécessité d'une TV catholique ?

Devant tant de libéralité et d'ouverture, ne faut-il pas préférer une présence disséminée dans de tels espaces plutôt que de créer une chaîne de télévision propre, forcément onéreuse ?

A Kinshasa, dans les milieux catholiques l'hésitation n'est pas de mise. Les deux options sont à prendre ensemble pour répandre partout la bonne parole mais aussi pour afficher son identité.

Mais le projet de création d'une station de télévision catholique à Kinshasa pose de multiples questions, et se heurte à de nombreuses difficultés. Certaines très pratiques, matérielles et financières : Où trouver l'argent ? Dispose-t-on de l'expertise nécessaire et d'un personnel approprié ?

D'autres de fond : Que signifie évangélisation et que signifie l'expression « médias pour l'évangélisation et la promotion humaine » dans le contexte d'un pays en développement dont la conscience nationale a été mise à rude épreuve par des années de guerre ? Une télévision catholique évitera-t-elle le piège bien tendu par le pouvoir politique et les sectes spiritualistes d'une évangélisation confinée dans le « religieux » ?

Ces questions sont largement débattues au sein même de la communauté catholique de Kinshasa. En février dernier, quatre semaines durant, elles ont été au centre de l'émission *Devoir d'intelligence*, sur la radio catholique de Kinshasa, *Radio Elikya*. L'abbé Phocas Pfunga-Pfunga, ancien doyen de la faculté de développement des Facultés catholiques de Kinshasa, résumait ainsi l'enjeu : « Notre incapacité de réaliser jusqu'ici la télévision catholique peut être un signe d'aliénation. D'abord, il faudrait clairement préciser les objectifs de la télévision. Est-ce seulement parce que d'autres Eglises ont une télévision que nous devons aussi en avoir une ? Est-ce pour se comparer ou pour entretenir le défi de polémiquer ? »

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

Kinshasa. A megalopolis of six million inhabitants. A testing ground for television in Africa : 20 television stations, of which half belong to religious groups. Their success and popularity worry those responsible in the Catholic Church who see their faithful followers leave them or at least being 'under the influence' of seductive, simplifying and even anti-Catholic messages sent out by them. Jean-Baptiste Malenge, researcher and teacher of communication in Kinshasa, describes here these "private religious television channels". In his opinion their popularity rests on the "believe" (if not naivety?) of the followers and the personnel, the rudimentary and cheap technical means, the abundance of "miracles" and shock testimonies, the personality cult of their leader, but sometimes also on a surprising sense for communication and opportunism, even political at times.

Kinshasa. Una metrópoli de seis millones de habitantes. Un campo de experimentación de televisión en África: 20 estaciones de televisión, de las cuales la mitad pertenece a grupos religiosos. El éxito y la popularidad de los canales religiosos inquietan a los responsables en la Iglesia Católica quienes notan la pérdida de sus fieles o por lo menos „la influencia“ de mensajes tentadores, simplificadores e incluso anticatólicos transmitidos por estas estaciones de televisión. Jean-Baptiste Malenge, investigador y profesor de comunicación en Kinshasa describe en su artículo estos „canales religiosos privados de televisión“. A su ver la popularidad se basa en la „fe“ (¿o quizás ingenuidad?) de los fieles y del personal, el equipamiento técnico rudimentario y barato, la abundancia de „milagros“ y testimonios chocantes, el culto de la personalidad de sus líderes, pero también en una sensibilidad sorprendente para la comunicación y el oportunismo, a veces incluso político.





# God on TV

## The Phenomenon of Brazilian Tele-evangelism

by Attilio I. Hartmann SJ\*

Tele-evangelism is a complex, intriguing, multifaceted and fascinating phenomenon, challenging communicators, researchers, media entrepreneurs, sociologists, church authorities, pastoral agents, liturgists, believers, atheists and the indifferent. It is exploding in the media, generating or stimulating the appearance of new forms of religious expression and of a new concept of religion and community relations. Reflecting the actual trends of Brazilian tele-evangelism, it becomes evident that this phenomenon concerns both, the media as well as Churches and religious organisations.



Tele-evangelism<sup>1</sup> can be understood as an intentional and systematic usage of the mass media, especially television, for converting and/or evangelistic purposes. The intensive use of the mass media started already in the 1950s with two North American tele-evangelists: the Catholic Bishop Fulton Sheen and the mass preacher Billy Graham. Even though, none of them can be identified with the persons we shall refer to as “social media actors” in this article, it is possible to establish a first and fundamental distinction between the discourse of both of them: While Sheen, with his special charisma of easy and direct talk, intends to multiply the number of his listeners in a clear “extension of the pulpit”, Graham induces the space of the media as a new place of religious interaction. Yes, in this way Graham turns into the true precursor of the term “electronic church”, with all the connotations and controversies that the understanding of the term contains. In the 60s and, principally, in the 70s and 80s, the tele-evangelists Oral Roberts, Rex Hambard and Pat Robertson with his 700 Club and, in the last decade, the Catholic nun Mother Angelica, followed in the footsteps of the two precursors, all in the United States<sup>2</sup>.

It can be confirmed that the new religious directions opened up by F. Sheen and B. Graham

continue, roughly, signalling to religious authors of decades gone by: if in the Roman Catholic world, the media are instrument or means for the announcement of the Gospel, for Protestant Pentecostalism the media are the place of the evangelising message. If for the Catholic the temple is the place of celebration of the Eucharist and signal of the communal evangelising process, for Pentecostalism the temple is the place of cure and testimonial manifestation of the spectacular action of God in people’s lives.

### Catholic vs Pentecostal tele-evangelism

Roman Catholic tele-evangelism — today a movement present in the whole of Latin America (and the world) — arrived in Brazil in the 70s with the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (*Renovação Carismática Católica, RCC*), the ecclesiastical model of which has its precursors in the country in the North American Jesuit Fathers Haroldo Rham and Eduardo Dougherty<sup>3</sup>. There exists an intrinsic relationship between the growth and popular acceptance of the RCC and the inclusion of Catholic tele-evangelism in the media. This movement contributed decisively to the presence of a religiousness of the neo-Pentecostal type in radio and television and the blurring of the demarcating lines that define and distinguish the

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Note: The original version of this article, written in Portuguese, is available on demand. Please contact [cameco@cameco.org](mailto:cameco@cameco.org)

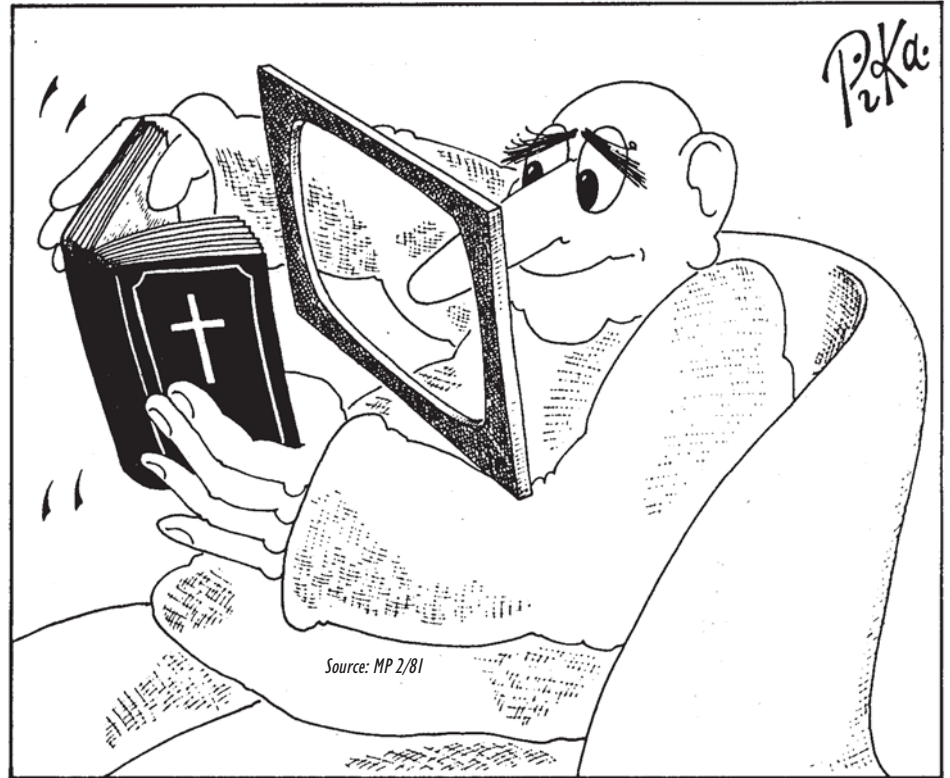
media productions of Roman Catholicism from the productions of neo-Pentecostal Christianity which have in Bishop Edir Macedo<sup>4</sup> their principal and best known exponent.

Differently to what is happening in the Roman Catholic environment, where the actors are visually identified on television, having a body and image, the Bishop Edir Macedo has no face, he has no body but only a voice (radio). Hence, this raises the necessary question: is this not a marketing strategy based on the hypothesis that too much media exposure trivialises and dispels the myth surrounding the person, taking away the "mystery" from it? The assertion that myth and mystery are fundamental components of attraction in the reception of media productions, is generally accepted.

### Panorama of Brazilian tele-evangelists

Among the Brazilian tele-evangelists of the Pentecostal type it is necessary to also point out the founder of the Church *Deus é Amor* David Miranda and, very recently, the founder and "owner" of a Church that gains more fans every day, the pastor S.S. Soares with his *Igreja da Graça Universal*. Soares maintains a daily programme on the national television network at prime time, which is called the *Show da Fé* (show of faith), promoting cures and live exorcisms.

In the Catholic environment, a key media actor who lets himself be inspired within the celebrative parameters and theological-pastoral contents of the RCC and has in the believers of this ecclesiastical scene his principal followers and consumers of his production, is, without doubt, Father Marcelo Rossi. Singer of average talent without major artistic inclination, he recuperates old songs from the more traditional Catholic song collection, creates some new music titles, associates his production with the mysterious Byzantine Third Tone, is present in all the media, beats sales records of all his productions (CDs, magazines, audio recordings, "religious" articles, etc.) and can appear, on the same day, in programmes of



the three principal television networks of the country, with a wide general audience. The celebrations that he presides or co-presides over, leave the temple, the private space of the chosen few, and seek the public space of the squares, stadiums and television studios, and transform into religious megashows, where Marcelo is the central person and megastar.<sup>5</sup>

A typical tele-evangelist, not a singer, is Father Alberto Gambarini, with daily television and radio programmes, books, CDs and other publications, whose style gets closer, in form and contents, to the style of the pastors and neo-Pentecostal preachers. If it was not for his references to Our Lady, Gambarini would certainly be confused with some fundamentalist pastor or "missionary".

Indirectly, and apparently without a causal intention, Father Marcelo has propagated a virtual explosion of the so-called "singing Fathers". Here, we can only name a few of those who reach, today, a national public via Catholic<sup>6</sup> inspired television networks, presenting themselves in music shows

or "show-Masses". The singing Fathers Antônio Maria and Joãozinho (São Paulo), Father Zeca (Rio de Janeiro), Father João (Blumenau/SC) and Father João Carlos (Belo Horizonte) should be mentioned.

There is also another category of "singing Fathers" almost as a counterpoint to those mentioned above. If it is a characteristic of the former to induce more or less "discardable consumerist" productions, the latter consider the historical background in their artistic-cultural productions.

Two Fathers, both from the Federal State of Minas Gerais, distinguish themselves in this category, also by their pioneering work in using the media in their evangelising activities: Padre Zezinho (José Fernandes de Oliveira), a multimedia-style Father, composer, singer, writer, presenter, with a vast and constant cultural production, accumulated over more than 30 years, and Nereu de Castro Teixeira, liturgist, communications expert, university professor, conductor of choirs, singer and composer who in the celebration de *Corpus Christi*, makes the *Mineirão* stadium vibrate with

his Mass with artistic show<sup>7</sup> that reunites more than one hundred thousand faithful that go by the name of *Torcida de Deus* (followers of God). More recently another singing Father emerged, Júlio Gotardo from Brazil's most southern state, Rio Grande do Sul, whose production is of more social character with a clear concern for singing of the joys and sadness of Latin America.

Finally, there is Paiva Neto who, without wanting to represent nor identify his work with any religion, strictly speaking, founded the *Legião da Boa Vontade*, LBV (*League of Good Will*), a philosophical-religious project that realises an aid project and already famous humanitarian campaign. Traditionally using the radio to convey his aid project, the LBV recently entered the medium of television through independent productions that communicate in paid time slots. This is charitable tele-evangelism and Paiva Neto is its leading actor.

As one can feel, the waters of this religious media sea are becoming more mixed every day. Religion has increasingly become a mass phenomenon accessible to everybody. Only some particularities like Nossa Senhora (Our Lady) and the celebration of the Eucharist, which can easily be overlooked

by the lay person, still bear testimony to the religious roots. It is a democratic space, disputed in a veritable war with specific demands and media language, to which the actors are obliged to adapt. And the Churches, even the important ones, have to humbly accept, that their message is only one more message in the world of electronic media.

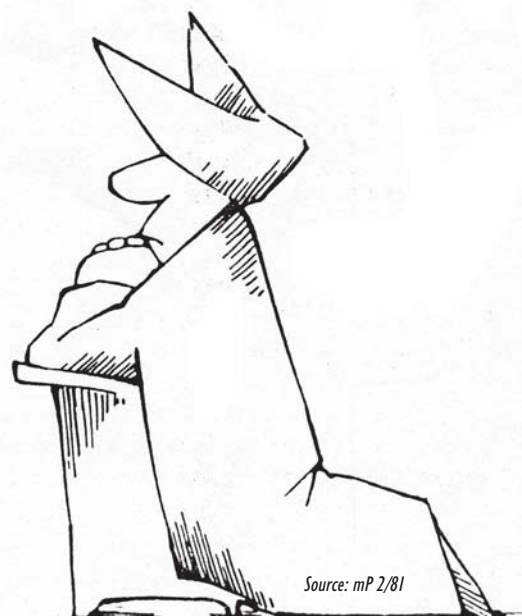
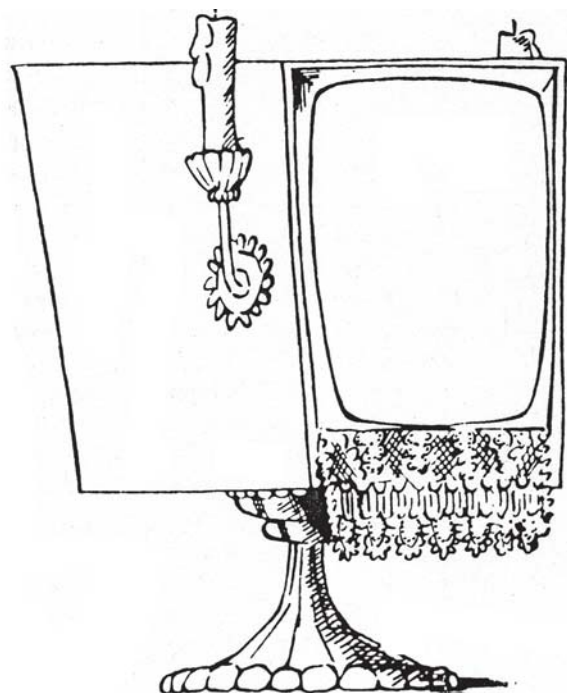
### A new style of religious community

The examination of the phenomenon of tele-evangelism starts from the observation of an increasingly reduced participation of organised communal processes and in the present liturgical celebrations on one hand, and on the other hand, the increase of fans of the "virtual communities", where the believer consumes the good of faith individually. In these virtual communities the protagonism has passed from communitarian/collective to individual actors/artists who occupy the "stage", while the faithful, massive and anonymous, make themselves comfortable in the stalls<sup>8</sup> and applaud their leader and religious "guru".

In the last 40 years since the beginning of transmissions of Masses on television, the audience of cults and of other explicitly religious expressions,

did not only not diminish, but grow. In the last few years and with the appearance of the "singing Fathers" and the co-opting of the "religious" with the media, the media consumption of the "religious" literally exploded, reaching very elevated audience levels. In his doctoral thesis Jesus-Martín Barbero elaborates this question of religiousness in the electronic media. He states that the religious socio-cultural mediation of television becomes a place of production of the meaning of life for an ever growing number of people of the most different religious views. The search for the meaning of life appears to be one of the motors that take this growing pilgrimage of believers away from the celebrations with community attendance towards the consumption of electronically mediated celebrations, through which they establish another type of interaction.<sup>9</sup>

The real or imaginary consumption of cultural media goods presents itself as an immediate answer to the meaning of life. The consumption of faith related goods is very present in the offers of religious fundamentalists and pragmatics who establish a material "space of exchange" with the deity, where the faithful/client arrives with his share, be it in the form of "promises", the offering





of objects or money. In this way the deity is "pressurised" to answer with the "miracle" (good job, health, money, luck, the biblical "theology" of prosperity, of "give one, get a hundred"). The followers of this form of religious expression usually worship an individual deity and do not consider organising, experiencing and celebrating faith in the community as important or necessary. The historic background of an ecclesiastical institution does not mean much to them either. The important thing for this type of believer and this form of faith is that the "Church" responds to their topical needs of immediate happiness, here and now. It is in this group of believers that we find the religious transmigrates of faith.

### Religion for individual well-being

In a chaotic world, that invades the everyday life of relations between people, religiousness and its manifestations can present themselves as a solution, magical perhaps, where people have a point of reference, that for them makes sense,

constructs a meaning. And this meaning can come, to a large extent, from the sensation of harmonisation that the religious world offers or can offer. Today many places of ritual worship are little cosmoses of harmony, peace, feeling of well-being. There, the music, the singing, moving the body in a sensual rhythmic balance, closing one's eyes, the invitation to "contemplation", to ecstasy, serve as a counterpoint to violence and everyday aggression. In the Brazilian case television has co-opted this feeling and has transported it through its programming, legitimising this form of "celebrating".

Reginaldo Prandi<sup>10</sup> points out some characteristics of neo-Pentecostal religions, among them, the magical cult of divine cure which in the Roman-Catholic world corresponds to the classical blessing and laying on of hands. Scenes of these cures and blessings are presented in programmes with a big audience, followed by tele-spectators or radio listeners in an interaction with all the ingredients of presence. For the author exemplary models of

this neo-Pentecostalism are "the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God" (*Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, IURD*), *Deus é Amor* (God and Love) and the *Casa da Oração* (House of Prayer). None of these religions intends to transform the world. Pentecostalism of divine cure, very different of its original disenchanted protestant Mother Church, reintroduces the importance of magic and desires the moral transformation of the isolated individual within the religious community, in which he watches and is watched over."<sup>11</sup>

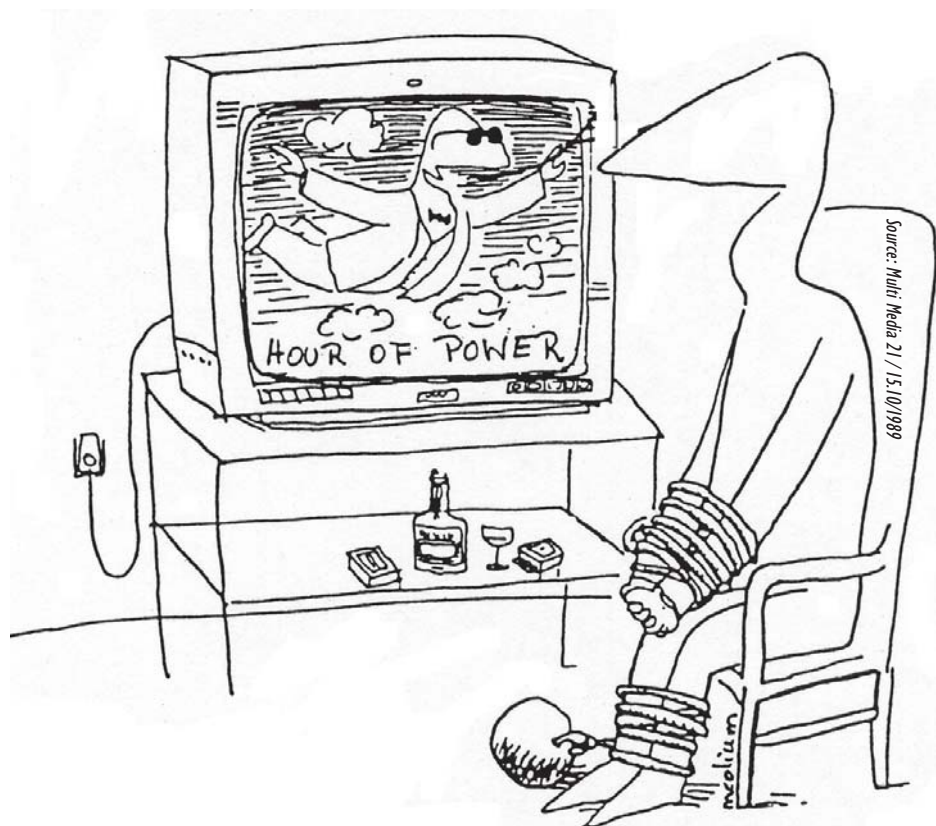
Today Prandi considers the *Igreja da Graça Universal* of pastor Soares to be the most typical example of Pentecostalism of divine cure. In addition he identifies some similarities between the Afro-Brazilian religions and the Brazilian Charismatic: "The Afro-Brazilians concentrate on the individual in the world, benefiting from self-fulfilment and reaffirmation of the power of divinity (...). The charismatic Catholics bet on immediate transcendence, very different from the big and distant transcendence of the base communities, they believe in cure by laying on of hands, the direct contact with the sacred, through the Dons of the Holy Spirit, completely abandoning all of the old ideals of solidarity founded in the theology of liberation and in the Option for the Poor by Catholicism in the 60s and 70s."<sup>12</sup>

In the scenario of the new kind of religiousness and on the stage of the electronic church, women are practically absent, especially when we are talking about the high-profile media actors. The female absence seems to be an intentional arrangement of the marketing which promotes the new religious trends. More than 75% of the public that consumes the goods of media faith are women who prefer a man to be their religious "guru".

### Religion for profit

One of the most polemic subjects is the utilisation by the media of the product "religion" to generate economic profits with the religious feeling, universally present in our culture. Business people





in the television media perceived the religious lead story and agile as they are, started to make of it a place of audience and a source of profit.<sup>13</sup>

Knowing the soul of the people better than the ecclesiastical institutions, they rescued symbols, myths and a whole religious language easy to digest and very emotional and the “religious” programmes/products gradually invaded all the schedules, with a varied menu for all tastes and palates of this macro-world of gods and myths, of saints and Afro-Brazilian deities, of Maria and Yemanjá, of tupãs and oloduns, of guides and gurus<sup>14</sup>.

To what extent do the isolated individuals of the one man show count on economic business machines such as professional marketing to guarantee public success and sale of their products? The contradiction of objectives — evangelisation/profit — leads the religious actors to adapt to the different media, as much in terms of language as in terms of their respective Churches.

The creation of idols and myths as an answer to the emotional needs and as an incentive for the sale of whichever product is an essential part of media-style marketing. The religious actors seem to frequently succumb to the “temptation” to be mythical/idolatrous, however much they affirm and reaffirm that they are only “instruments of the Lord Jesus”! In this way they become monopolisers and the sole points of reference for people’s faith. The virtualisation of religiousness reduces the importance of personal relationships as a result of the new global order in which the individual is valued according to its capacity of consumption, in this case, the consumption of religious goods and products. This consumption and its visibilisation are the distinctive signs of belonging to and being faithful to this media-neo-religion.

The phenomenon of ecclesiastical transmigration is characterised by the faithful moving away from organised communities towards an individual and mediated consumption of faith. This is not only an internal issue for the Churches, but seems to

require a psycho-social and communicational analysis. It is certainly intriguing to understand the reasons for the abdication of a growing number of believers who pass from actors of their faith in actual communities to spectators of religious expressions, considering themselves satisfied in applauding the new protagonists from the “stalls”. The current expression of religiousness in the media (electronic church) seems to signal a globalised religion of the same divinity for all kinds of faith, without ecclesiastical institutions, without institutional norms, identification with or commitment to a certain community, more spiritualistic philosophy than church (New Age). Taking into account the little or no allusion to particular Churches that they make in their apparitions, the social media actors have been contributing to the establishment of this global religion. Even with all the possibilities offered by modern communication technology, is a global religion possible “with only one faith, only one hope, only one Lord and God”? Or will the two thousand year old dream of Jesus of Nazareth, always be like a challenging utopia on the horizon of human existence?!

<sup>1</sup> Tele-evangelism: simplified, it identifies the activity of evangelising from a distance (from the Greek: *teleos*)

<sup>2</sup> The development of this process has been studied and discussed thoroughly by ASSMANN, Hugo. *A Igreja Eletrônica e seu Impacto na América Latina*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1986.

<sup>3</sup> Founder and director of Rede de Televisão “Século XXI”, located in Valinhos, Campinas/SP; Pe. Eduardo, because of his constant appearance in the televised media can certainly be considered to be a religious media actor.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Edir Macedo is the founder of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (*Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (IURD)*) and has a whole media empire at his disposal (a national radio and television network with 16 channels), apart from an international network of temples, usually ample locations linked to places with high population density

<sup>5</sup> Since 29 July 2001, Fr. Marcelo presides over a Sunday Mass transmitted by *Rede Globo* to the whole of Brazil. Historically, conveying celebrations explicitly determined by religion/church was rejected by the national network, *Globo* sets an absolutely new precedent in the more than 50 year history of Brazilian television.



<sup>6</sup> At present there are three national Catholic television networks: *Rede Vida*, *Século XXI*, *Canção Nova* and, already in the experimental phase, *TV Aparecida* and *TV Milícia da Imaculada*, all of them in the state of São Paulo).

<sup>7</sup> It seems fundamental to distinguish between a show-Mass and Mass with show: while Marcelo tries to make a show of the whole Mass, Nereu organises orthodox liturgical celebrations with separate slots for artistic expression, music and dance, at liturgically appropriate moments.

<sup>8</sup> Marita Mata, a Latin American researcher and author of important cultural productions, especially in the radio broadcasting sector, works on this question of abdication of more and more faithful people from their being a subject in the celebrations by turning into spectators, getting off the "stage" and to make themselves comfortable, passively, in an armchair in the "stalls".

<sup>9</sup> See MARTÍN-BARBERO, Jesús. Secularización, desencanto y reencantamiento massmediático. In: *Diálogos de la Comu-*

nicación, Lima, FELAFACS, n.41, mar. 1995

<sup>10</sup> PIERUCCI, Flavio Rafael and PRANDI, Reginaldo. *A Realidade Social das Religiões no Brasil*. São Paulo, Ed. Hucitec, 1996.

<sup>11</sup> PRANDI, *Perto da magia...*, op.cit., p.103.

<sup>12</sup> Idem, *ibidem*, p.104.

<sup>13</sup> I have been present and active in the media for 40 years, a lot of radio broadcasting, as much television, and I can confirm a radical change in the attitude of the big national networks: before, in order to get a slot, however small, to insert a "message" or to put a celebration on air, a dose of patience was required and it often depended on the fortuitous good will or the personal friendship of a local TV director. Today it is the powerful *Globo* that puts three productions of religious background on air and carries out a Sunday Mass.

<sup>14</sup> Orixá, Olodum and Iemanjá are Afro-Brazilian deities; Tupã is the indigenous deity of the Tupi/Guarani people.

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

Tele-evangelismo es un fenómeno que gana cada vez más importancia en muchas partes del mundo. Muy probablemente, el Brasil es uno de los países con la variedad más amplia de tele-evangelistas católicos y pentecostales. A pesar de sus diferentes contenidos y métodos de predicación persiguen una línea común con respecto a sus tácticas comunicacionales para atraer a una gran audiencia. Partiendo de un panorama de actores y tendencias actuales del tele-evangelismo brasileño, P. Attilio Hartmann SJ reflexiona sobre estas nuevas formas de expresión religiosa y nuevos conceptos de la relación entre religión y comunidad, lo que resulta en una transmigración desde grupos religiosos tradicionales a comunidades virtuales, orientadas hacia un „guru“ religioso.



Le télé-évangélisme est un phénomène en plein développement dans beaucoup d'endroits du monde ; très probablement le Brésil est-il un des pays qui connaît la plus grande diversité de télé-évangélisme, tant catholique que pentecôtiste. Cependant, si leurs contenus et méthodes de prédication sont différents, ils recourent finalement à une même stratégie de communication en vue d'attirer la plus vaste audience possible. Offrant un panorama des acteurs et tendances du télé-évangélisme brésilien, le P. Attilio Hartmann SJ s'interroge sur ces nouvelles formes d'expression religieuse ainsi que sur les transformations religieuses et de vie communautaire induites par ces mouvements, provoquant un déplacement de croyants de plus en plus nombreux des groupes religieux traditionnels vers des communautés virtuelles, inspirées par des „gourous“.





# What's

# New?

# Special?

# Different?

# Innovative Programme Formats

What's new, what's special, what's different in the field of religious programmes? Trying to answer these questions CAMECO came across three productions from different parts of the world: *Open the Doors* a documentary from a private studio in Lithuania has really opened the door — to the TV presence at prime time and it has changed the image of the Church in the Baltic country.

A second example comes from the Philippines, the *Sundays for Skeptics*, aiming to attract an

audience to the Holy Mass that has long ago given up on the church service. From India we received a report about a discussion programme bringing together representatives of different faiths, not addressing Church or Religious matters but discussing political and social issues. CAMECO is sure that there are many more such examples. And the editors of the MEDIAFORUM are looking forward to receiving a flood of further articles on innovative formats in religious broadcasting from our readers.

Sundays *for* SKEPTICS

## A Designer TV Mass

by Fr. Peter Pojol, SJ, and  
Fr. Johnny Go, SJ

Today, in the Catholic country of the Philippines, only one out of five young people attends some kind of religious service regularly. Most of our young Catholics, for example, complain about the Sunday Mass, that it's boring and meaningless. The result? A number stop going altogether, while the rest continue to go only because they have to.

*Sundays for Skeptics* is a weekly TV show produced by Jesuit Communications Foundation in Manila. The programme, aired every Sunday on national TV, is a Sunday TV Mass — with a twist. It has a special objective, target audience, and approach.

As the title suggests, this Sunday TV Mass is designed especially for the so-called “sceptics” —

i.e., people who have questions and doubts about the faith, or even criticisms against the Catholic Church. Our objective is to persuade people to ask questions, express their doubts, and air their criticisms because we believe that these can all be legitimate starting points to a deeper appreciation of the faith, or even a return to the faith. In a special way, the show tries to reach out to those who have “lapsed” in the practice of their faith.

The primary target audience of *Sundays for Skeptics* is the youth, particularly young professionals. Although “sceptics” might connote a specialised group of people verging on agnosticism or atheism, we take “sceptics” to simply mean those who desire to understand what they have come to practice and believe in all these years. This TV Mass can therefore serve as a venue to teach them about the faith and to help form them into “thinking Catholics” — believers who are not afraid to use their intelligence to appreciate the faith more deeply.

*Fr. Peter Pojol, SJ acts as director of Jesuit Communications Foundation (JesCom) in Manila, Fr. Johnny Go, SJ, collaborates as producer.*

*For more information*

*email: [jcf@admu.edu.ph](mailto:jcf@admu.edu.ph)*

*website: <http://www.ignaciana.org/jescom>*

Given our special objective and target audience, our approach in the TV Mass is also different. It has the following special features:

- **VJ:** In the style of music video programmes today, the show features a young and articulate “VJ” (video jock) who introduces the Mass and recaps its message. Having the same VJ every week also serves as the viewer’s personal link to the show, while allowing us to invite different priest presiders for variety.
- **Catechism of the Mass:** Aside from the catechesis that can be done during the homily and the opening and closing spiels of the VJ, the richness of the Mass can be shared by calling the viewer’s attention to the very structure of the Mass. The show introduces each major section of the Mass with an appropriately instructive bumper.
- **Enhanced homilies:** The weekly homilies are prepared and delivered by a pool of carefully

selected preachers. The homilies are a central feature of the show since it is the occasion to instruct the viewers about the Scriptures and the faith. For better appreciation, the homilies are enhanced with stories, images, and music.

- **Prayerful atmosphere:** A lot of attention is given to the production values to create the proper atmosphere for prayer during the programme. Moments have been designed so that viewers can actually pray during the programme. The General Intercessions, for instance, consist only of soft wordless music accompanied by images and sparse text. The text of all the readings is flashed on the screen as it is being read, to make it easy for the viewer to follow. The moment of Communion is enhanced by a short prayer through VO (voice over) or by an appropriate music video.

In a sense, *Sundays for Skeptics* is a “designer” TV Mass, meant especially for young thinking Catholics today. It is intended not to replace the Sunday Mass, but precisely to invite seekers and

sceptics to rediscover the value and beauty of the Eucharist. The programme ends with an invitation to the viewer to attend Sunday Mass.

In our single year of airing the show, we were consoled by the warm reception and keen interest showed by our viewers from all over the country. Requests came in for copies of the homilies and post-Communion prayers. Questions and comments about the faith, as well as petitions for the Mass, were sent through e-mail and the mobile phone (via Short Message Service). Many have told us how the show became a part of their Sunday routine, a valuable preparation for going to Church, and a source of inspiration for their faith lives.

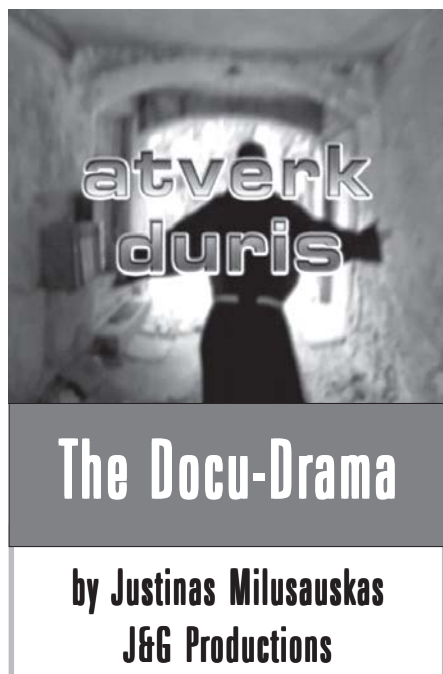
Perhaps, through *Sundays for Skeptics*, we did catch the attention of the other four young people who have fallen out of an active faith life. We believe that our experience here will assist us as we explore new and effective ways in our mission to reach out to young people and to help them rediscover the treasures of the Catholic faith.

## PROFILE JESCOM

*Jesuit Communications Foundation (JesCom)*, founded in 1990, represents the communications apostolate of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines. It is a non-stock, non-profit

organisation dedicated to assisting the local Church in its work of evangelisation and education through audio-visual production. In the last six years, JesCom has produced 25 video programmes and two radio programmes on religious and values education, Philippine culture and history, and socio-political issues. Through Jesuit Music Ministry, a division of JesCom, it has produced 30 audio recordings (CDs and tapes) of Filipino liturgical music and contemporary inspirational songs. One of its special concerns is to reach young people, taking into account their specific ways and style of communication.





## PROFILE J & G

*J&G Production* is a private enterprise, owned by Justinas Milusauskas, the former director of the Catholic Studio in Kaunas, Lithuania. The TV production company concentrates

on prime time entertainment programmes for commercial broadcasters. It claims to be the biggest independent television production firm in Lithuania which is also involved in international TV and film projects. *J&G* offers developed TV programme formats and know-how together with consulting. Some formats have been sold on the international market. Contact can be made via E-mail: [just@kts.lt](mailto:just@kts.lt).

After a long time of deliberation how to produce a prime time religious TV programme I came up with a rather simple but unique idea of a documentary drama which incorporates entertainment and a Christian message at the same time. I called it *Open the Doors* as the name reflects the basic idea, and it became a hit very fast on Lithuanian national TV.

Fr. Astijus, a Franciscan, sets off with a camera-team spontaneously knocking on people's doors (not pre-selected or announced), discussing with them the issues of "Life and God".

*Open the Doors* has many unexpected turns and twists — some of the "visited" welcome the surprise guest, some just slam the door, sometimes he is greeted by a mad dog. But often people open the doors to their hearts.

Meanwhile 28 episodes of the 30 minute programme have been broadcast at 7.30 p.m. via the public station LRT (*Lietuvos Radijas ir Televizija*) and reached a ranking of 8.9 GRP (Gross Rating Points). The format was so successful that every week secular media were writing and analysing the latest show. What created the popularity?

There was of course the fact, that the format was totally new to a Lithuanian audience. There is always this excitement, what will await Fr. Astijus behind the next door. This is what keeps the audience on the edge of their seats.

Moreover, it is interesting to gain entrance to the very private and personal world of ordinary people. Topics are discussed most of the audience might share or at least understand:

- Fr. Astijus meets a woman whose daughter has been paralysed for 20 years, and they discuss the meaning of suffering and "curse".
- A woman welcomes him into her house; she knows that her husband is cheating on her. The husband comes home as they are talking (...)!
- A family invites him for dinner, but they are staunch protestants, and strongly attack the Catholic Church. A fierce and intense discussion evolves.

- A woman had an abortion and now she cannot deal with it. She is trying to repent. Finally she asks Fr. Astijus for a confession. Camera and microphone are switched off.

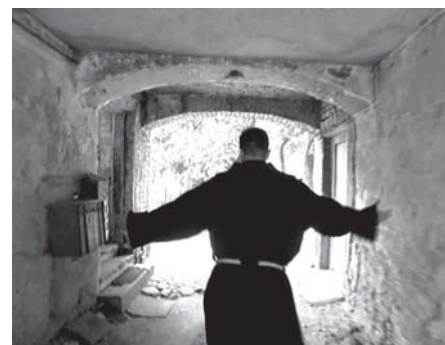
- At another door, a retired dancer opens. He tells his life story and even performs a dance.

Even those secular media which had been always extremely critical towards the Catholic Church reacted to this kind of Reality-TV with positive articles. It was widely acknowledged that the Church is coming to listen to people and taking part in their lives instead of preaching to them. And this leads very much to the factor of success rooted in Fr. Astijus personality. He is an open minded person, able to talk with people in a language they can understand, he can quickly adapt to new situations. Besides he was quite often praised for his non-didactical style, his ability to listen rather than to "teach" and the fact that he does not try to give the impression that he has the answers to all questions raised.

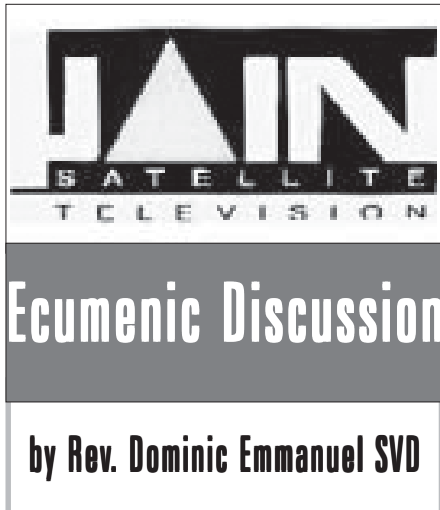
What made Fr. Astijus popular with "ordinary" people, led to strong criticism from the side of the Church's clergy. Listening to many "sinful" stories without judging and condemning the people seemed to be "too tolerant".

Nevertheless, the image of the Catholic Church in Lithuania has definitely earned a lot of credit by this programme and religion has become a prime time issue in Lithuania.

The docu-drama is now known as a complete format available for the international market. TV companies, studios, or production companies can buy it as a format and produce their own version of *Open the Doors* in their countries.







When being approached by the national satellite TV channel JAIN TV to produce a series on Christianity, I opted for quite an unusual model: a panel discussion with participants from different Christian Churches, focussing on church-related issues that are relevant to Indian Society, sometimes even controversial ones. Covered were so far, among others: Christianity and the issue of "Untouchability", Christianity and women, Christianity and the current political scenario in India, and recently the preparations for American War in the Middle East.

The format of „Voice of Christianity“ or, as it is called in Hindi, „Isa Ke Log“, is a studio based panel discussion that is pre-recorded. Right from the beginning the programme has followed three ground rules for each of the programmes i.e.

- a) It should be ecumenical, representing various Churches and Christian denominations
- b) There should be always (at least) one lady on the programme to keep the gender balance
- c) To keep it bilingual (English and Hindi) — quite important in a country that has many languages, but not one that is spoken by everybody.

The 30-minute episodes of the programme are aired on the private TV Channel JAIN TV every Sunday. By June 15th 2003, we have completed the first 52 episodes.

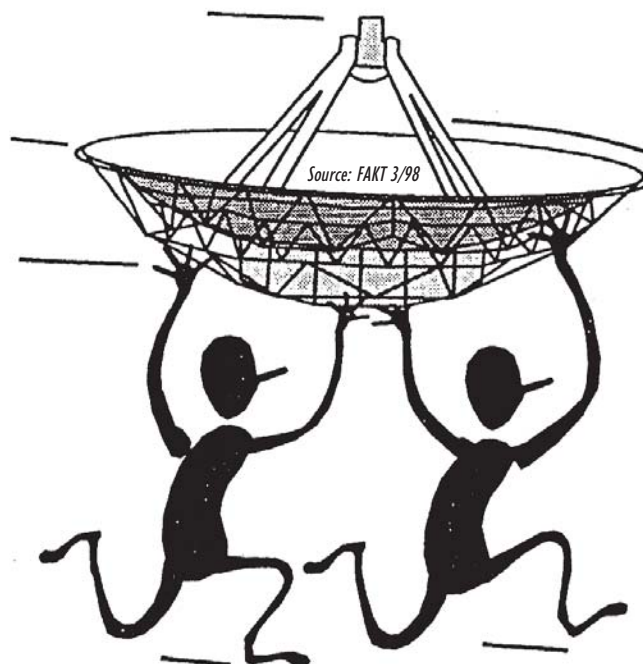
The programme is in line with another programme JAIN TV telecasts for Muslims and a similar programme for Dalits ("Untouchables"). However, it took nearly two years to finally get „Voice of Christianity“ on air, although the president of JAIN TV had been pushing for it and the channel charged only a nominal amount for airtime and studio use for recording. Being the regular presenter or anchor person, I also carry the responsibility for selecting the topic, conducting research, preparing scripts, contacting panellists, co-ordinating with the studios etc. — so far single-handedly.

The initial response from the official Catholic Church was cold. There must have been a 'wait and see' approach. Now, however, there seems to be quite some enthusiasm for it.

„The programme is very helpful in clearing up many misunderstandings that exist in the minds of non-Christians about Christianity“, says Bishop Anil Coutou, Auxiliary Bishop of Delhi. A young college girl from Mumbai (Bombay), Nestle Mathias, adds: „I got a good direction for my life after watching the programme on Christian Youth“.

One of the accomplishments of the programmes is that we have had several Members of Parliament, Archbishops and Bishops on the programme as well as many Jesuits and other Church representatives. Due to the positive response by the public, the station decided to repeat the episodes on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings.

*The host of „Voice of Christianity“, Rev. Dr. Dominic Emmanuel svd, (age 51) has been involved with the communications apostolate in the Church since 1987. In 1988, he set up the Hindi Service of Radio Veritas Asia in Manila and while doing his PhD in Communication in London he also worked at the BBC World Service. He publishes regularly in Indian secular national dailies and religious weeklies. He is the Director of the Communication/Information Bureau and spokesman for the Delhi Catholic Archdiocese since 1998 and was also the spokesperson of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India from 1999 to 2002. The author of four books is currently planning another television serial on inter-religious harmony.*



# Searching for a New Culture

## Television apostolate in East Timor

by Ruedi Hoffmann SJ

### PROFILE CPA

The Video Production Centre in East Timor's capital Dili is known by the Portuguese name *Casa de Produção Audiovisual* or CPA and has been operational for about two years.

It has been conceived by Ruedi Hoffmann, a Swiss Jesuit who worked in the *Puskat* Audiovisual Studio in Yogyakarta / Indonesia for many years. Technical guidance and trainers from there were used in setting up CPA. The centre does also trains young Timorese people in the techniques of production. Work is now focussing on a bi-weekly series of 30 minute programmes on Timorese history to be broadcast on national TV.

The vision of *Casa de Produção Audiovisual* or CPA, the newly found production centre in East Timor, is quite special: Television programmes are not to be seen as an extension of the pulpit. Instead, the Church's commitment is to be put into a broader context of development. Culture and identity are key issues in a state where a common concept of history and nationhood is yet to be defined. We have asked the Initiator, Fr. Ruedi Hoffmann SJ, to describe how CPA transfers its philosophy into concrete programmes.

### The *History of the Future*...

*Casa de Produção Audiovisual* or CPA, a new initiative of the Jesuits in East Timor, is launching a television serial under the title *History of the Future*. The inspiration for the title comes from Father Antonio Vieira, a Portuguese Jesuit of the 17th century, who kept working on a book about his vision for society, until his death at the age of almost 80 years. In this work, he dreamed about a world where all human beings were treated as equals — inspired by the terrible sufferings of the indigenous population under colonial rule that

he witnessed in Brazil, by the persecutions of Jews in his own country and by unjust prejudices against Moslems. He had wanted to give the book, which was never finished, the title „*História do Futuro*“.

In the 17th century Antonio Vieira's medium was the pulpit. It is reported that in Lisbon people crowded the church as early as midnight when Father Vieira was going to preach during the morning mass. Today only television would have a comparable popularity.

### ... on Timorese television

Young Timorese people respond very well to the wisdom of their predecessors. It is true, the old legends are almost forgotten. But as soon as these are brought back to memory, there is great interest. In each broadcast of the *History of the Future*, a traditional Timorese folktale is presented to balance a historical narration. Both — the folktale and the historical narration — are animated picture stories. To produce these, three artists have been employed. Each of the series also contains an interview with a historian and group discussions that are pre-recorded and then cut into the series.





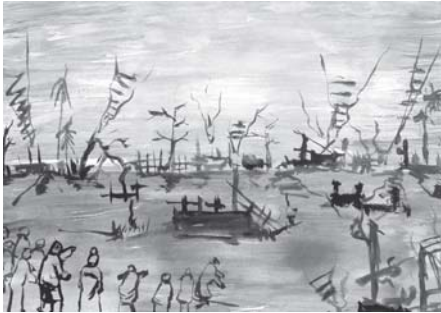
*In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was a kingdom in Timor by the name of Mena which was ruled by a queen.*



*At that time 150 galleys, i.e. sailing boats with oars, came from Makassar.*



*The evil king Telo was the commander of this war fleet. He had 6000 warriors with him.*



*When the queen and her people returned they found nothing but rubble. All their treasures which they had acquired by trading sandalwood from China, had vanished.*



*Suddenly a Portuguese ship appeared on the horizon.*



*The captain of the ship was Padre António São Jacinto, a Dominican priest from Portugal, who had been doing missionary work on the neighbouring island of Flores.*

## The example of sandalwood

In the programme on natural richness with the example of „sandalwood“, this concept takes the following shape: first we see how the sandalwood almost disappeared due to deforestation for high profits, because it played an important part in the economy of Timor until the late 19th century. For centuries, sandalwood has been the main interest for Portugal and the Netherlands to colonise Timor.

But even much earlier, merchants from Arabia, India and above all China came to Timor in search of sandalwood, since it was held in high esteem to produce cosmetics and drugs, and thus contributed enormously to the public welfare of the island. It is reported that during a raid on Timor in 1641, shortly before the arrival of the first Christian missionaries, Moslem warriors from

Macassar encountered enormous treasures from the trade with China. They got so insolent that on their way back they exchanged their sails for Chinese silk cloth!

An animated picture story on a folk tale complements this historical account. It is about *John the Gambler*, who travels from island to island, gambles and wins all the time. But his fate changes suddenly when he plays cards against a giant. He becomes a slave of the giant, and can escape only with the help he gets from the giant's daughter. The two marry and lead a decent life, being well accepted by the population of a remote village.

The television programme continues with a conversation about planned off-shore drillings in the so-called Timor Gap between East Timor and Australia. The country is expecting great profits

from this enterprise in the near future; however, there is also lots of controversial discussion about details of the deal with Australia.

In each of the programmes, a small group of people is invited to comment on the programme in process, guided by a leading question. In this case they are asked: „Are treasures of nature such as sandalwood and mineral oil a blessing or a curse for poor people?“

One of the commentators whose remarks are included in the final programme mentions the corruption which is already part of daily life in this new nation. Inspired by the folktale he does not accuse anybody, but he asks: „Why are we like this?“ Later on, as in every programme, the viewers will be asked to give additional comments through letters. The best comments will be rewarded with a T-shirt.





The warriors from Makassar raided the country and robbed the people. Then they burnt the villages. They caused havoc for three months.



With Padre Jacinto came another two Dominicans as well as 70 soldiers.

Queen: What is the purpose of your visit?

Another programme looks at the arrival of Portuguese missionaries in Timor, and how the above mentioned raid by Moslems from Macassar became the reason for the Timorese to convert to Catholicism.

When the Dominican Father Antonio de Sao Jacinto arrived in Timor in the year 1641 and asked for permission to proclaim the true „Maromak“ (God), the queen refused saying that her people already had a „Maromak“. But then Father Jacinto succeeded in convincing her that only the Portuguese „Maromak“ was able to protect Timor from further raids by the Moslems. (See the example above). Incidentally, the priest had arrived in Timor together with 70 soldiers with firearms. Thus, the first successful Christian mission and the first permanent European presence began in Timor. Several previous attempts during more than a century had failed.



Terrified, the queen and her 2500 subjects fled for the hills.



Padre: We want to spread the word of God.

Queen: We already have our own God. We do not need a new one.

Padre: But your God did not help you when the

The CPA and its television series are still at an initial stage. As of now, this is how it sees its task: not just as an additional form of propagating the Catholic religion, but as a forum where even sensitive issues can be discussed in a relaxed atmosphere. In times of ideological confusion, a new indoctrination will not help. Infallible answers are not asked for. People really need a possibility to express their feelings and opinions, a forum where they can listen to each other in a cheerful environment of mutual trust.

### Church in East Timor

The Church of Timor has a great chance. About 90 per cent of people in East Timor are Catholics. Generally the Church's role in the struggle for independence is valued positively. One of the two Timorese Nobel-prize holders is Ximenes Belo, the former Bishop of Dili.



The robbers were so vainglorious that they exchanged their sails against silken cloths. They took 4000 prisoners

warriors from Makassar destroyed all of your villages.

Queen: The Makassar are cruel. But now they have gone. We are going to rebuild our villages again and trust in our own God.

Padre: If your majesty and her people do not want to receive the word of God from me, the Makassar will return and kill you all.

Queen: And your God will protect us from this?

Padre: I promise.

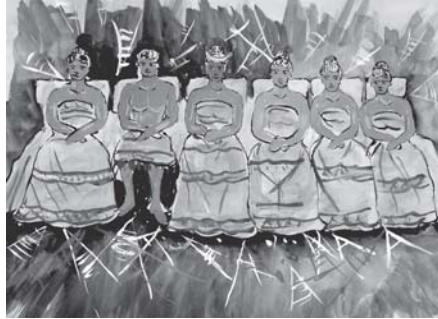
At present the Church of East Timor is planning a Catholic University. It will be a huge project on 370 acres (150 hectares) of land for a country with barely 800.000 inhabitants. In this trend it could easily be imagined that the Church also wants to have its own television station. But is this really necessary?

The Church as news is already present on Timorese television. Catholic religious events belong to the favourites among the news-casts of the government station. Statements from the Bishop and from other high ranking clergy get wide coverage. The Church does not need to increase its power. Lacking, however, is participation from the grassroots.

If produced professionally, a serial like the „History of the Future“ from a Catholic production house should be attractive enough for government



*On the feast day of Saint John the Baptist, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1641, Padre Jacinto christened the queen of Mena and her eldest son. The son was given the name João.*



*The queen of Lifau, the neighbouring kingdom to the west, heard of the events in Mena. She sent a message asking that Padre Jacinto should come to christen her and her entire family.*



*Shortly afterwards the ship of Padre Jacinto arrived in Lifau.*



*For eleven days Padre António de São Jacinto explained the secrets of faith. Then he christened the queen and her son. The son was given the name Pedro.*



*Afterwards the three Padres christened all infants. The older children and the adults had to wait until they could be taught the catechism.*



*From Lifau Padre Jacinto and his companions crossed the mountains and reached the South coast of Timor. There the queen of Amanubão asked to be christened.*

owned or later maybe for commercial television, so that no Church owned station is needed to get our message across.

Anyhow, a production house is much cheaper than a complete broadcasting station, and it causes less problems. In a year's time, when this serial will have completed its first 26 programmes, we will be in a better position to tell whether the *History of the Future* has a future on state owned television.

Television cannot be seen just as an expansion of the pulpit. Few people are looking for television programmes which offer the same thing they can also get in church. And, of course, state owned television would not be much interested in Church propaganda.

But there is another reason for this option. In the

course of the last few centuries too much has been brought to Timor from outside, whereas the values of the people themselves have been underestimated. Who is really interested in the Timorese themselves, in the Timorese soul?

The soul has always been seen as the main target of religious propaganda. However, if the soul just becomes an object for conversion, if the aim is just to make the Timorese become Catholics, are we not at the same level as the Portuguese imperialists or the Indonesian occupiers?

It is true, we will not invite the Timorese to join an empire but nevertheless we want to make them part of „our“ Church. The Timorese are at home neither in Portugal nor in Indonesia. But neither are they at home in a preconceived Catholic Church. As all human beings, Christians and Non-

Christians alike, the Timorese are in search of their own homeland. This homeland must be found in Timor itself.

### **Not proclaiming a given truth**

Such considerations about the Timorese soul are the main reason why CPA does not want to proclaim a given truth but accompany the viewers in a common search. This is especially true in view of television as an all pervading means of communication. Because for a considerable part of humanity, television has become like a „family member“. This will happen soon also in Timor, when the wounds of destruction have been healed. Like no other means of communication, television can create a mood. But what kind of mood will it create? And will the Timorese be able to create their own television?



Perhaps more than anywhere else workers are needed in television to “plant and to irrigate”, as the disciple Saint Paul says, so that they can develop according to their own identity. People who are able to grow and to improve their technical and artistic skills are of greater value than imported products of high perfection.

For the time being, CPA has only eight Timorese collaborators. But these have learnt a lot during the past year, and they will continue to learn so that one day they can pass on their skills to many others. Intentionally, CPA is called a production house. It must produce. There must be fruits. Many television programmes are needed. But not only events on the television screen must grow. More importantly people who participate in these events must grow. The people who are being trained at CPA may end up producing television programmes in other institutions; but what has been planted and irrigated will not be in vain, as long as the plants keep growing.



*The photo above and on the previous page are taken by the author Ruedi Hoffmann during production at CPA. The drawings are the programme about Sandalwood broadcast as part of the series The History of the Future*

## S U M M A R Y

Le Timor oriental est le plus jeune Etat du monde. La culture et l'identité nationales y sont des questions sensibles, car il n'y a pas de perception collective d'une histoire et d'une nationalité communes. Les médias peuvent jouer un rôle important à cet effet. Le centre de production de programmes pour la télévision, *Casa de Produção Audiovisual (CPA)*, récemment établi par les Jésuites, prépare une série bimensuelle de trente minutes sur l'histoire du Timor intitulée *L'Histoire du futur*, qui sera diffusée par la chaîne nationale. Contes et histoires populaires en dessins animés mélangés avec des panels et interviews d'historiens mettent en lumière des aspects importants de l'histoire du Timor et relèvent leurs implications pour le futur de la nation. CPA évite de présenter un point de vue arrêté ou une “vérité

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établie”, mais invite les téléspectateurs à se façonner leur propre analyse et interprétation de cette histoire. Ce faisant, CPA donne un exemple remarquable de la manière dont l'Eglise dans cette jeune nation qui compte 90 pour cent de catholiques, peut aider et promouvoir dans la population la participation à la construction d'une nouvelle société et le sens de la citoyenneté, mais aussi plus directement d'une télévision “incultivée”.



En Timor del Este, la nación más joven del mundo, la cultura e identidad son asuntos claves, ya que falta un concepto común de historia y la identidad nacional. En este proceso los medios pueden jugar un rol importante. *Casa de Produção Audiovisual (CPA)*, el centro de producción de los Jesuitas

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recientemente fundado, produce una serie bimensual de programas televisivos con una duración de media hora sobre la historia de Timor del Este, llamada *Historia del Futuro* y transmitida a nivel nacional. Cuentos populares presentados como dibujos animados son combinados con discusiones en grupo y entrevistas con historiadores, poniendo de relieve aspectos importantes de la historia de Timor del Este y las implicaciones para el futuro. Mientras ayuda a los televidentes a desarrollar su propio análisis y entender la historia, el CPA no anuncia una vista específica o „la verdad“. Más bien quiere dar un ejemplo cómo la Iglesia en este país tan joven, donde el 90 % de la población son católicos, puede ayudar a la gente a crear su nueva sociedad y estado — y también su televisión „inculturada“.



# Humorous Skits and Thought- provoking Stories

## Key Factors for Success at the Taiwanese Production Centre KPS

by Jerry Martinson, SJ

### PROFILE KUANGCHI

*Kuangchi Program Service*, founded by the Jesuits in 1958, is a television production centre that focuses on producing human values programming for Chinese audiences in

Taiwan and Mainland China. KPS produces cultural, educational, and religious TV and video series as well as documentaries for international distribution. It is also well known for training Catholic communicators throughout Asia. KPS is run by a board of four lay professionals and five Jesuits. The name *Kuangchi* is derived from a Chinese layman who was converted to Christianity by the 16<sup>th</sup> century Jesuit missionary, Mateo Ricci. Paul Hsu Kuangchi, who attained one of the highest official posts in the Ming Dynasty Empire, remained a faithful and exemplary Catholic and a living model of Chinese culture coupled with Christian faith.

Church-related production centres have various advantages as compared to Church-run TV Stations: They are cheaper and their programmes may be present on different TV channels and may therefore reach a much higher number of viewers. Success not only depends on the quality of productions, but also on the management: How can a production centre generate sufficient income to cover recurring expenditure and depreciation of technical equipment? How to ensure organisational sustainability in the long run? How to forge strategic alliances, how to place productions with the TV networks? We have asked Jerry Martinson SJ from *Kuangchi Program Service* to share his experience.

The presence — or lack of presence — of the Catholic Church in today's world of electronic mass media is a frequent topic of discussion among church leaders and the Catholic laity. Often these discussions focus on the prospect of radio and television channels owned and operated by the Church. Then, when the costs of operation and the amount of available financial resources are calculated, discussion ends abruptly. Less frequently does discussion turn to the feasibility of production centres as church content providers for secular mass media outlets.

Perhaps the lack of interest stems from the fact that content providers are by nature dependent on commercial mass media channels for distribution of their programmes. Many church leaders may feel that this subsidiary role, and the limitations it imposes, would not justify the effort and expense involved.

The case of *Kuangchi Program Service* (KPS), a Jesuit-run TV production centre in Taipei, Taiwan founded 45 years ago and still operating effectively today, may prove enlightening to church groups considering greater involvement in electronic mass media. The management methods used by *Kuangchi* at various stages of its development are key factors in its effectiveness and longevity.



### Foundations

For any new organisation, the initial phase is crucial for setting a good foundation and charting a direction for long-term development. The Jesuit who founded KPS, Fr. Philip Bourret, began planning a TV production studio as soon as he realised that Taiwan would soon have its first television station. From his experience in radio production, he knew that it would be in constant need of good programmes. Although videotaping was still in the distant future, he saw that it would one day be a reality and a TV production studio could then deliver to the TV station taped programmes ready for broadcast.

In the meantime, he contented himself with providing software. KPS writers and producers prepared scripts and rehearsed programmes in the KPS studio, and then went to the TV station to broadcast their programmes live. Because KPS had only to concentrate on one or two programmes a week, programme quality was generally equal to or higher than that produced by the station. The audience reacted favourably both to the production quality and to the positive values inherent in the programmes. The reputation of KPS as a producer of entertaining and educational programmes suitable for family viewing grew rapidly.

*Kuangchi* had identified needs of both the communication industry and of Taiwanese society for quality educational TV programming, and had responded to that need. What Taiwan did not need or want at that time was direct religious programming. *Kuangchi's* approach was to subtly embed values messages as subtexts within its educational productions. The eagerness of the Taiwanese audience to be entertained and at the same time to learn new things made the programmes popular. While the audience watched, they also absorbed the values KPS wished to communicate to Taiwanese society.

Today, *Kuangchi* still adheres to its initial formula. In its daily English learning series, KPS uses humorous skits and thought-provoking stories that illustrate values such as reconciliation, social harmony, respect for others and the environment, integrity, peace, justice, and self-sacrifice. In its TV series for the elderly, KPS uses humorous situations to demonstrate how people can live a full and productive life after retirement. Its weekly TV series on the physically and mentally challenged employs a variety show format that entertains while revealing the religious faith that frequently sustains, motivates, and helps individuals overcome substantial obstacles in their lives. KPS children's TV series are notable for their entertainment and educational value as well as

for their treatment of children as persons deserving of respectful and loving interaction. The combination of grasping the opportunities available at the beginning of a technical breakthrough (when there is little or no competition), identifying needs, and finding the necessary resources (facilities and personnel) to respond to these needs are key factors at this stage. In *Kuangchi's* case, fund raising and training were essential, enabling activities.

### Development

Having its own up-to-date production facilities made it convenient for KPS to train needed TV production personnel. Some of these became tops in their fields and moved on to important positions in Taiwan's growing number of TV stations and media companies. There, they contributed to *Kuangchi's* reputation and prestige as one of the best places to learn TV production.

By consistently maintaining high production quality and values content in their productions, *Kuangchi* built an excellent reputation with TV viewers, and this became a key factor in its continued development. In order to maintain this reputation, however, the training of personnel (in Taiwan and abroad) and continual upgrading of equipment and facilities was an absolute necessity.

While KPS was registered with Taiwan's Ministry

of Education as a non-profit organisation, it committed itself to a policy of covering all running expenses through the sale of its programmes. This policy of self-support gave it credibility with benefactors and funding agencies that were needed to pay for personnel training and major equipment and facility upgrades.

In order to be self-supporting, programme distribution is, of course, crucial for production centres like *Kuangchi*. This is the greatest challenge for all content providers, church and secular alike, but it is obviously greater for church producers. They produce for a smaller market, especially in non-Christian countries. Their programmes are of an educational nature and are aimed at communicating positive values, while the mass media normally feed on lowest common denominator programming. A church production centre cannot use questionable, immoral, or illegal business practices (e.g., bribes, kickbacks) so common in the secular world if it wants to give a true Christian witness. What then can a church production centre do to offset these 'liabilities'? The following elements proved effective throughout the various stages of KPS's development.

### Organisational structure

As *Kuangchi* developed, a professional and dedicated Board of Directors became essential.



Host Fr. Jerry Martinson (left), with Taiwan Labor Minister, Kuo Ching-Jen, Lorna Kung, Ms. Ning-ning and Lee Daw Ming, director of the Documentary entitled *Asian Exile* (right) in a 90 minute TV special on migrant laborers. The KPS documentary *Asian Exile* was broadcast all over Taiwan.



Fr. Jerry Martinson, dressed as a police officer in one of KPS's famous programme *Uncle Jerry's Practical English*.

On the following page: Mhike and Apple with the kids in *Wawa ABC*, an English Programme for Kids

The ideal Board for a church production centre is one composed of both church and lay professionals, led by a capable and responsible Chairman, and guided by a carefully worked out constitution and set of by-laws which can be up-dated as needed. This Board, although it may not receive any substantial compensation, takes ultimate corporate responsibility for the organisation and appoints the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must be able to identify with and carry out the directives of the Board and achieve the goals of the organisation. This CEO must insure that the key areas of finance, production, distribution, personnel, and facility maintenance are operating properly and effectively. It was *Kuangchi's* experience that when its Board of Directors was strong and operating effectively, the CEO tended to guide KPS properly and produce desired results. When the Board was weak, the CEO was likely to lose direction or become involved in distracting, non-essential, or undesirable projects.

To achieve the goals of a church TV production centre, the CEO must make sure that the organisation has: (1) a good financial officer and a sound, secure financial system that provides accurate financial data and analysis; (2) a marketing officer that promotes services and distributes products creatively and effectively, bringing in necessary income for the organisation; and (3) a personnel officer that insures employee security, satisfaction, training and advancement.

For many years, it was thought that *Kuangchi's* CEO must be a Jesuit priest in order to insure the preservation of *Kuangchi's* original charisma and culture. When it finally became clear that it was no longer possible to find a Jesuit who was qualified and available to run *Kuangchi* effectively, the search began for a lay professional. After some initial hesitation and false starts, the Board eventually identified a competent layman. After his promotion to CEO, this native Taiwanese lay professional with a background in public relations and marketing management, who identified with

*Kuangchi's* goals and values, proved every bit as capable of managing *KPS* as any of the former Jesuit directors.

While KPS has always pursued an ideal organisational model, it must be admitted that the ideal has proved elusive and it has not always succeeded in maintaining a totally balanced and effective core management team for an extended period of time. Generally, problems centred around KPS's inability to hire top managers. Either the candidates' salary demands were too steep and they chose other more lucrative offers, or they preferred to start and run their own

companies. When the Board of Directors provided pressure and/or assistance in this area, the situation tended to improve markedly.

### Corporate culture

*Kuangchi's* periodic problems with business promotion and financial management are counter-balanced by a corporate culture that places a high value on teamwork and personal concern for the needs of its personnel. This culture tends to create a warm, mutually supportive environment that influences the values content of KPS programmes and contrasts with the atmos-





phere of purely commercial production companies. While never imposing religious practices or beliefs, religious and Christian personnel at *Kuangchi* try to manifest their ideals and values in their life and behaviour. As such, *Kuangchi* has a subtle spiritual dimension that is experienced and absorbed by its personnel. This contributes greatly to personnel motivation — an all-important element in programme production and distribution.

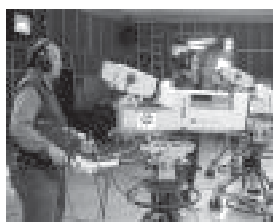
### Partnerships and alliances

In today's highly competitive and commercialised media world, a Church production centre can hardly exist without dependable long- and short-term partnerships and alliances.

These relationships of mutual trust, collaboration and sometimes friendship can greatly compensate for the so-called liabilities and handicaps inherent in Church business organisations. *Kuangchi* has enjoyed partnerships with TV stations, advertising agencies, freelance producers and directors, composers, music production studios, post-production facilities, schools, commercial businesses, government organisations, NGOs, etc. The



longer these alliances existed, the greater the advantage for *KPS*, both in production, distribution, and compensation for its programmes.



Such alliances are forged by mutual interest and advantage and by the exchange of services and expertise. They can be enhanced and preserved by trust and by authentic



friendship. In addition, if a partner appreciates the ideals, goals and reputation of the church organisation, it will value being closely identified with it and will nurture the relationship.

Currently *Kuangchi* is sharing its facilities with an educational technology organisation called *Digiseed*, which is digitising audio-visual material from *KPS*'s video archives and making it available to schools by means of servers that are constantly updated via an intranet. This process simultaneously serves to recycle, organise and preserve valuable video footage from *Kuangchi*'s many years of video production.

The international sports channel ESPN has installed a satellite dish at *Kuangchi*'s office and production centre which can down-link live sports events, provide Mandarin commentary, and up-link it again for instantaneous distribution to Chinese communities in Mainland China and throughout Asia. Through this close collaboration, *Kuangchi* is able to keep abreast of the rapidly developing technology that enables world-wide distribution of television productions.

In addition to more than 10 years of collaboration with the *Star* and *Phoenix* satellite channel's broadcasting in Mainland China, *Kuangchi* is rapidly becoming the major producer of children's educational programmes for Taiwan's *Eastern Broadcasting Co.* now distributing programmes throughout the Chinese speaking world by satellite, cable, and digital set-top boxes.

### Public presence and image

With a limited income from the sale of religious and educational TV programmes and video productions, a church production centre can usually afford only a small budget for promotion and marketing; even less can it fund expensive advertising campaigns. What can be done to supplement promotional efforts at a reasonable cost? *Kuangchi* discovered the following cost-effective activities:

1) On-going relationship with the press. When an organisation cultivates good relations with the press, key journalists, and individual reporters by regularly responding to their requests for information and supplying news, this organisation will naturally and gradually develop a positive presence in the media. Because of friendly relations with a number of journalists, *Kuangchi*'s name, activities, and related personalities frequently appeared in the news. For *Kuangchi*, this was free and effective advertising. It led to good public relations and attracted needed business and good projects.

2) Public Image. Certainly one of the main reasons for the success of the *Eternal Word Television Network* (EWTN) in the U.S. is the image and personality of Mother Angelica, its founder and sometime programme host. If a church production centre can present to the public an interesting, inspiring, friendly, or unusual face, through its personnel or spokesperson, it can achieve a degree of notoriety very beneficial for securing projects and distributing programmes. *Kuangchi* has had several people, either on its staff or appearing regularly in its programmes that have become media personalities synonymous with the name *Kuangchi*. This amounts to free advertising and effective branding. It can also highlight the values messages in productions. While such publicity may not give a church production centre a highly competitive edge over other producers, it can certainly help them compete better in a cost-effective way.

### Flexibility and adaptation

Society, technology, and the world of media is changing at an increasingly rapid pace. This phenomenon has seen the demise of many church media operations, usually because those organisations found it impossible to match the pace of change. From live black and white TV broadcasts to colour TV; from huge, bulky 2-inch analogue videotape recorders to small convenient digital recorders; from expensive and short-lived

plumbicon camera tubes to convenient tubeless digital video cameras; and now the imminent prospect of high-definition TV and the convergence of the television set and the computer in the not so distant future. All these pose great challenges for a Church whose culture and resources are not accustomed to frequent and drastic changes.

When a church communication organisation starts to show signs that it is no longer as important or relevant as it used to be, or when financial problems begin to appear insurmountable, there are only a few choices available: (1) continue as before and die a slow death; (2) dissolve the organisation; (3) re-engineer the organisation so that it fits the new situation.

The third option is generally the most difficult. Changing an old, established institution is not easy. Often, time honoured skills and services have to be discontinued or out-sourced; dedicated personnel have to be laid off or retired; a whole new organisational structure and business model may be necessary; important managerial positions held by religious personnel may have to be turned over to lay professionals.

*Kuangchi* was forced to undergo many of the above challenges and is still in the process of reducing personnel, cutting costs, and re-shaping its new identity. A competent and engaged Board of Directors is all-important in the process of re-engineering. It can help the organisation identify which of its core competencies are unique, competitive, and still needed. It can help identify a niche-market for these services, if such a market exists. It can assist in finding new partnerships, alliances and funding sources.

### Caution

While adequate financing is essential for any church production centre, money can never become more important than the Christian values and practices that the organisation stands for. While flexibility, adaptation, and even compromise is essential in the media business, each organisation must clearly know the whereabouts of the

invisible line it cannot cross. When crossed, that organisation loses its identity, credibility, and reason for existence. Its business, too, will ultimately suffer.

### Conclusion

How to balance an entertaining TV programme format with an educational and values content? How to insure that public service programmes have market value and reach a wide public? These are questions that can be answered only by experience (often trial and error) in each unique socio-cultural context. A clear vision of what the organisation stands for, what it means to accomplish, a sound organisational structure, and the ability to find the right people for the right jobs will contribute to a healthy, effective and enduring church production centre. Such an organisation can be a dynamic link insuring a

prominent place for the Church in the planet's *new areopagus*—the all pervasive and ever changing world of mass media.



*Handicapped Hosts Ling Mu Ching (left) and Fan Ke Chin (right) in a TV show entitled The Conquerors, a TV Series on handicapped persons*

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN



Pour assurer la présence de l'Eglise dans le champ de la télévision, les centres de production peuvent être une alternative crédible aux stations de télévision. Pour l'éducation aux valeurs chrétiennes, *Kuangchi Program Service (KPS)* a fait l'expérience de l'efficacité de présenter ces messages dans des productions pédagogiques. Jerry Martinson, le directeur de KPS, décrit ici plusieurs facteurs importants du succès de KPS: maintenir une haute qualité de la production, et ainsi créer une réputation positive tant auprès des téléspectateurs que des diffuseurs. Pour assurer la viabilité économique de l'entreprise, la vente des programmes est essentielle, mais aussi une gestion professionnelle et la capacité de développement et d'adaptation aux changements.

Centros de producción pueden representar una alternativa a canales televisivos, ya que también pueden facilitar la presencia de la Iglesia en televisión. Para la transmisión de valores cristianos, *Kuangchi Program Service (KPS)* ha experimentado que es efectivo intercalar estos mensajes en producciones educativas de buena calidad. Jerry Martinson, el director de KPS, describe varios factores importantes del éxito: guardar siempre una alta calidad de producción como punto clave para crear una buena reputación tanto con los televidentes como los canales de televisión. Para ser financieramente independiente, la distribución de programas desempeña un papel preponderante para los centros de producción. La gestión profesional (incluyendo asuntos financieros) y la capacidad de adaptarse a cambios son importantes para el desarrollo continuo de centros de producción y el sostenimiento a largo plazo.

# Des Comptes — on tourne !

## Budget et dossier de production

Par Yves Pierre, AMS-Video, Bruxelles

*M. Yves Pierre a participé à la création de plusieurs stations de télévision de proximité en Belgique : « Télé-Bruxelles » et « TV-Lux ». Actuellement, il est managing directeur de la société Athalys Media Systems à Bruxelles qui regroupe diverses unités : vente, location, unité de production. Avec des partenaires congolais, il vient de fonder une association d'appui aux médias de la RDC, dont un des projets est la création d'une « école professionnelle aux métiers des arts de la communication » Email : media-congo@skynet.be. Media-Congo a mis récemment au point un tableur pour le calcul d'un budget de production. Ce logiciel peut être demandé directement à Média Congo.*

500 dollars : c'est fréquemment le prix d'un documentaire vidéo de 15 ou 26 minutes, voire de 50 minutes, en Afrique. Du moins à en croire les dossiers de demande de financement présentés par des producteurs de l'Eglise en Afrique. Comment est-ce possible? 500 dollars. Mais c'est à peine le prix des consommables. N'y a-t-il donc aucune règle pour calculer le budget d'une production ? C'est la question que nous avons posée à M. Yves Pierre, managing directeur de Athalys Media Systems à Bruxelles et enseignant la « production audiovisuelle » dans le cadre des écoles et des organisations professionnelles des arts et métiers de la communication.

Depuis des années, j'ai eu l'occasion de consulter de nombreux dossiers de production. Aucun ne se ressemble réellement. Chacun écrit le dossier qui lui convient le mieux. Les ouvrages spécialisés proposent des trames plus ou moins classiques de budget et de dossier de production. Les consulter peut être utile, mais en fin de compte ces deux documents qui sont au cœur de la démarche de production audiovisuelle, comportent les éléments suivants.

### Le budget de production

Etablir un devis de production n'est pas facile. Pour établir un devis précis, il est important de réaliser au préalable le découpage technique. Ce découpage détermine par séquence les besoins techniques et logistiques du film. Il permet également de définir la durée de prise de vues, le nombre de « minutes utiles » par jour de tournage, ainsi que la masse de prestation des acteurs ou des intervenants. Ce travail va également permettre de répertorier les contraintes de réalisation. Afin de calculer le coût de votre projet, il faut tenir compte de tout. Et d'ailleurs en valorisant ainsi votre propre travail, vous y gagnerez beaucoup.

### La préparation

Dans certains dossiers de production, même bien construits, on ne tient pas compte de la préparation ni du repérage, ni de l'élaboration du scénario, ni des frais administratifs, ni de la réalisation du dossier de production. Bref, beaucoup de démarches et d'aspects sont oubliés. Ou plutôt escamotés. Pourtant, ces éléments sont importants. De plus, ils pourront constituer un apport de l'équipe dans la production, une contribution au projet.

### Le budget de tournage & de montage

Quand vous calculez un budget, soyez réalistes. Tenez compte des prix réellement pratiqués sur le marché, cela évitera probablement des surprises. Afin de vérifier si le prix que vous avez indiqué pour votre matériel vidéo est correct, consultez le site de sociétés du secteur : je vous conseille de jeter un coup d'œil sur [www.ams-video.com](http://www.ams-video.com) : les montants que vous y trouverez correspondent au prix pratiqué sur le marché international tant pour le matériel que pour le personnel.

Tenez compte des consommables en prévoyant une réserve d'au moins dix pour cent. Idéalement il convient de prévoir une assurance solide, autant pour les personnes que pour le matériel, mais cela n'est pas d'application sous toutes les latitudes.

Comptez vos jours de tournage en prenant une sécurité : celle-ci sera d'autant plus importante que vos conditions de tournages seront difficiles.

N'oubliez pas de vous inclure dans les frais, ainsi que les membres de votre organisation : vous n'êtes nullement des bénévoles. Vous avez une valeur précise, cette valeur viendra grossir votre mise de fonds personnelle.

Prévoyez les frais de déplacement, d'hébergement, les repas et boissons en suffisance : une équipe a le droit de travailler dans des conditions décentes ; la qualité du repas et du logement contribue souvent au bon achèvement d'un tournage. Un





minimum de confort et de bien-être vous permettra probablement d'obtenir plus de votre équipe, et donc au bout du compte vous permettra de réaliser des économies substantielles.

Après le tournage, prévoyez une période relativement longue pour le dérushage, afin de diminuer vos frais de montage et une nouvelle fois, augmenter votre apport personnel. Tenez compte de la post production, mais également des finitions des images et du son, comme l'étalonnage.

### Les frais complémentaires

Sous le terme générique d'administration, on inclut le suivi des obligations juridiques, comptables, fiscales et sociales. Il est capital que les démarches et les documents soient faits dans le respect des échéances (baux, assurances, commandes, règlements, relations avec les sociétés d'auteurs s'il y a lieu, relations avec les fonds d'aides, les subventions, contentieux, recettes annexes, droits dérivés, éléments comptables et synthèses des réunions de travail, ...). Si vous tournez avec des techniciens ou des artistes étrangers, n'oubliez pas les frais de visa, les vaccinations et autres frais divers.

Enfin, élaborez une politique commerciale et de communication. Définissez votre stratégie de promotion et de diffusion de votre film : quels seront les moyens mis en œuvre pour qu'il soit diffusé ? Quel sera le coût de cette campagne de distribution et de promotion ?

Le budget sera clôturé par une brève note d'explication concernant les diverses rubriques et les raisons de certaines dépenses.

### Le plan de financement

Tout budget comporte un volet de dépense (les coûts de production) et un volet de recettes. Comment allez-vous récolter les fonds nécessaires à la réalisation de ce film ?

Certains montants peuvent être déjà acquis.

- Parmi ceux-ci, vous mentionnerez votre apport personnel : entre autres, une partie ou l'intégralité

des moyens financiers consacrés à la préparation, la valeur de vos droits d'auteur si vous êtes l'auteur du scénario et du découpage ; vous tiendrez compte également des prestations de votre organisation dans le cadre de la prise de vue et du montage, du matériel que vous mettez à disposition de la production. Une partie de frais liée à la politique commerciale et de communication, etc.

- Certaines recettes peuvent être prévues : comme des « préventes », des activités de soutien ou les droits dérivés comme l'exploitation de la musique du film, il est probable que ce budget représente peu, mais il est judicieux d'en tenir compte.

- L'aide ou les subventions déjà acquises : le cas échéant, les lettres de promesses seront jointes en annexe.

Enfin, le plan de financement comprendra la partie restante à financer. C'est pour la recherche de ces moyens financiers que le dossier de production sera nécessaire.

Le budget sera présenté sous forme de tableau, reprenant de façon précise dans chaque rubrique l'ensemble des postes de dépenses et de recettes. Le tout devant être équilibré.

### Le dossier de production

Le dossier de production est avant tout un outil. D'abord pour vous : il vous guidera tout au long du travail de production. Par ailleurs, il vous servira pour contacter les personnes et organisations intéressées à votre projet, ou que vous souhaitez intéresser. Le dossier de production est un peu l'équivalent du menu dans un restaurant bien tenu : ils sont là pour ouvrir l'appétit et créer l'envie.

Le dossier de production est l'outil qui traduit votre projet, aussi créatif ou innovant soit-il, en une valeur financière et temporelle. La production détermine surtout la faisabilité d'un projet. Même si le produit que vous désirez réaliser est de la plus haute importance à vos yeux, il faut en convaincre d'autres qui accepteront de vous

apporter les moyens nécessaires. C'est pourquoi vous ne pouvez pas échapper à cette traduction financière de votre réalisation en un dossier, qui vous permettra de solliciter des moyens auprès des différents bailleurs de fonds. Bref, votre dossier de production est votre sésame.

### Le plan d'un dossier de production

Votre dossier de production s'ouvrira par un sommaire. Celui-ci guidera votre lecteur et lui permettra de sélectionner les documents et parties qu'il désire consulter.

Introduisez votre dossier par un résumé du projet en quelques lignes. Ne dépassez pas une page.

### Synopsis

Faites suivre d'un synopsis ou d'une brève description pour les documentaires. S'il s'agit d'une série des documentaires, donnez une vision globale de la série, la trame commune et donnez la liste des épisodes et une description très courte du contenu.

Pour les œuvres de fiction, ajoutez le scénario ; pour les documentaires, un découpage servant de base à la réalisation. S'il s'agit d'une série, je propose que soit présenté exclusivement le pilote. Les autres épisodes seront présentés dans un dossier séparé joint au dossier de production ou adressé à l'organisme où vous soumettez votre dossier, à sa demande.



Source: Leadership 11/8/1997

## Note d'intention et de motivation

Prévoyez une note d'intention du réalisateur, avec une description de la conception du son et de l'image. Cette note doit mettre en valeur les motivations du réalisateur, mais également montrer sa maîtrise du projet au niveau de l'image, du son et en cas de fiction du jeu dramatique. Encore une fois, il s'agit d'être concis, mais complet. Dans le cas où il serait fait usage des nouvelles technologies numériques, il sera apprécié qu'un chapitre de la note d'intention du réalisateur y soit consacré.

## Fiches de synthèse

Cette note d'intention sera complétée par plusieurs fiches :

- une première reprenant les caractéristiques générales : support film ou vidéo, format, durée, couleur ou N/B, son, dates de repérages prévues, dates de tournages escomptées, lieux de tournages, types de montages, modes de finitions, types de distributions. Si les lieux de tournages ou certains personnages, animaux... ont une importance, une image voire plusieurs seront les bienvenues.
- Une fiche technique, reprenant l'ensemble de l'équipe technique en n'oubliant pas de mentionner leur nationalité, ainsi qu'une description du matériel utilisé pour la production. Si nécessaire, les curriculum vitae des techniciens principaux seront joints en annexe.
- Une fiche artistique, s'il s'agit d'une forme de fiction ou d'une œuvre contenant une partie de fiction, reprenant tous les acteurs, leur nationalité, ainsi qu'une brève explication quant à leur choix, si c'est possible, un extrait du casting s'il a déjà eu lieu pourrait être joint au dossier. Les curriculum vitae seront joints en annexe, avec une photo de chaque acteur, en tout cas des principaux. La fiche artistique reprendra également les auteurs de la bande sonore, ainsi que l'auteur du décor et du costume.

## Le budget

Avant la présentation du budget, une note de production sur l'exploitation sera la bienvenue.

Le budget sera présenté en deux parties, une partie contenant le devis prévisionnel, la seconde le plan de financement avec la mention des montants déjà acquis.

## Conclusion et annexes

Le dossier se termine sur une conclusion de quelques lignes. Il s'adresse brièvement au lecteur pour le remercier de l'attention qu'il apporte à ce dossier. Il sera suivi d'une liste des annexes qui clôtureront le dossier.

En annexe seront joints tous documents officiels : autorisations, conventions nécessaires au bon déroulement du projet ; des extraits de presse se rapportant au projet et tout document ayant un lien avec le présent produit et pouvant être d'un intérêt quelconque pour les bailleurs de fonds (lettre de l'auteur s'il s'agit de l'adaptation d'un livre, autorisation de tournage s'il s'agit d'un lieu très particulier, etc.).

## Les Aides

Il existe différents types d'aides : des fonds de soutien, du mécénat, des coproductions. La liste des « sponsors » potentiels est longue. Si vous désirez trouver ces organisations, ne perdez pas votre temps, il n'existe pas de répertoire complet, ni de notice d'emploi pour les trouver. Votre meilleur outil sera probablement un « browser », un outil de recherche sur Internet. Ou, si vous en avez l'occasion et la chance, une formation à la production où votre formateur, probablement producteur lui-même, vous confiera quelques adresses et quelques contacts que vous pourrez exploiter à votre tour.

Encore faut-il que votre projet corresponde au cahier de charge de ces organisations d'appui à la production audiovisuelle. Donc, prenez le temps de vous renseigner à leur propos avant de les contacter ou de leur faire parvenir un dossier. Cela vous (leur) évitera une perte de temps et d'argent.

Vous devez faire la différence entre les structures qui vous apporteront une aide financière directe

et d'autres qui peuvent vous apporter un soutien financier en mettant à votre disposition du matériel, du personnel d'encadrement, un soutien logistique, une aide à l'élaboration de votre dossier ou qui vous proposeront des formations. Même si une organisation vous aide sans apport financier direct, cette aide a une valeur et cette valeur devra se retrouver dans votre budget et votre dossier.

Votre dossier de production prêt, avec son budget et les adresses des sponsors et autres fonds d'appui en main, il vous reste à rédiger une lettre de demande motivée : celle-ci spécifiera que vous sollicitez une aide. Vous y résumerez en quelques mots votre projet et le contenu du dossier. Soyez bref, agréable et surtout clair. Cette lettre peut être considérée comme une synthèse générale : grâce à elle, votre interlocuteur prend connaissance de votre projet et il trouvera dans le dossier de production toutes les informations complémentaires. Bonne chance et bon tournage.

## SUMMARY RÉSUMÉ RESUMEN

For Yves Pierre, the managing director of *Athalys Media Systems (AMS)* in Brussels, Belgium, the drawing up of a budget and a production dossier are at the heart of an audio-visual production. In his article he describes the (professional) rules and all factors that have to be taken into consideration for a proper cost calculation for a documentary or a fiction film: from the storyboard via the work process up to the marketing.



Para Yves Pierre, el director de *Athalys Media Systems (AMS)* en Bruselas, Bélgica, el borrador de un presupuesto o un expediente de producción son la parte esencial de una producción audiovisual. En su artículo describe las reglas (profesionales) y todos los factores a considerar para una buena calculación de costos de un documental o una película de ficción: desde el guión y el proceso laboral hasta el marketing.



# Let's Talk about Money

## Recipes for Financial Success of Catholic Video Studios

Let's talk about money!, was our request to quite a number of different Catholic video studios all over the world. Only few of them disclosed their recipes for financial success. Pedro Pablo González Llorente, a Jesuit father, running the CEPA studios in Santo Domingo, even sent his ten financial "commandments" as a prerequisite for self-sustainability of his venture. The three other contributions, all of them from Africa, describe the different measures like improved marketing or strategic partnerships to increase their income or how they mastered an organisational crisis or could reduce their expenditures.

Parlons d'argent!, telle fût notre question à un bon nombre de studios catholiques différents dans le monde entier. Seulement quelques uns nous ont fait part de leurs formules aboutissant aux succès financiers. Pedro Pablo González Llorente, un Jésuite responsable des studios CEPA à Santo Domingo, nous a même envoyé ses 10 „commandements“ financiers comme base à l'auto-soutien de son opération. Les trois autres contributions, toutes africaines, décrivent les différentes mesures comme p. ex. le marketing amélioré ou le partenariat stratégique, afin d'accroître leurs revenus ou comment maîtriser une crise d'organisation.

Hablemos de dinero!, era nuestro pedido cuando contactamos una cantidad considerable de centros de producción de video católicos en todo el mundo. Son pocos que finalmente proporcionaron sus „recetas“ para el éxito financiero. Pedro Pablo González Llorente SJ del estudio CEPA en Santo Domingo (República Dominicana) mandó sus „Diez Mandamientos Financieros“ como base para el autosostenimiento de su empresa. Las otras tres contribuciones, todas de África, describen diferentes actividades como el marketing optimizado, colaboraciones estratégicas para incrementar sus ingresos o las técnicas de superación de crisis institucionales.



### Diez Mandamientos

Por Pedro Pablo González Llorente SJ  
ppgonzalezllorente@hotmail.com

La crisis económica que sacude al mundo desde el 11 de septiembre de 2001, aumentada en los países del Tercer Mundo por problemas locales, fraudes, desempleo, inflación, ha hecho que muchos centros de producción de video y materiales audiovisuales hayan tenido que cerrar. El

centro que he dirigido durante veinte años, CEPA, está en medio de esta crisis, luchando por sobrevivir. Su éxito aún no está asegurado, pero estamos luchando a brazo partido.

A continuación recojo algunas medidas de emergencia que estamos tomando para salvar el centro. Es posible que algunas sean de utilidad también para otros.

**1.** Tratar de asociarse a una institución más grande y con mayor solidez económica. Por ejemplo, una Universidad, o bien un canal de Televisión, o alguna institución educativa, como un Politécnico. En estos casos se trataría de seguir produciendo los programas habituales, y comenzar a producir programas para la institución que acoge al centro. Y además poner los equipos, o una parte de ellos, al servicio de la docencia en ese lugar. De manera que los equipos siempre estén ocupados, y permitan la entrada de nuevos ingresos.

**2.** No producir nada que no sea rentable. Cada trabajo debe cubrir sus propios gastos y dejar ganancia.

**3.** No tener más empleados de los necesarios. Reducir al mínimo el personal fijo. Es posible que algunos técnicos de producción no tengan que permanecer en el Centro a tiempo completo, sino ser contratados para trabajos específicos. Por ejemplo, un camarógrafo, o un sonidista, o un productor o productora, pueden ser contratados por una semana, o diez días, lo necesario para completar ese trabajo.

**4.** Tratar de sacar alguna utilidad de equipos que ya son obsoletos para la producción, pero que todavía pueden dar mucho fruto en el área docente. Por ejemplo, cámaras de fotografía para producir montajes audiovisuales, o proyectores de vistas fijas, o cámaras de video que ya no se están utilizando. O islas de edición lineales, en buen estado. Estos equipos, colocados en un Liceo de Secundaria o en una Universidad con facultad de comunicación que no tenga equipos propios, pueden rendir mucho.

**5.** Reducir espacio. Los espacios cuestan dinero. Es preferible sacar todo aquello que no esté siendo productivo. Por ejemplo, material de archivo, equipos obsoletos. No se trata de botar todo, sino de buscarle un sitio donde lo alquilen y así sacarle provecho. O bien venderlos.

**6.** Mejorar los sistemas de distribución de videos y programas audiovisuales. La distribución ha sido siempre la mayor dificultad de los centros de producción. Valerse del internet para publicitar los productos producidos. Seguir empujando los intercambios, las redes de centros y de usuarios. Los catálogos de centro de producción y de videos

producidos por temas. Darse a conocer lo más posible. Cada video producido debe garantizar un número mínimo de copias mayor de mil, para que sea rentable y aporte ganancia.

**7.** Evitar el pirateo. Perseguir, incluso legalmente, a los piratas.

**8.** Diversificar los servicios: no solo producción, sino distribución, docencia, club de videos, asesoría, acompañamiento de procesos de otras instituciones, investigación, etc.

**9.** Buscar la forma de „colocar“ los productos en grandes instituciones, como son los ministerios de educación, las organizaciones de colegios privados, las ONGs, etc.

**10.** Mejorar el „rostro“ del centro, o sea, su presencia. Buscar asesoría de especialistas en embellecimiento de espacios. Pintar, maquillar.

## PROFILE CEPA

El Centro de Comunicación y Producción Audiovisual del Centro Bonó - CEPA - tiene su sede en Santo Domingo (República Dominicana). Fundado en 1981, es una institución de la Compañía de Jesús, dedicada a trabajar con organizaciones populares y ONGs en el campo de la comunicación para el desarrollo, la promoción educativa y cultural y la evangelización. Sus actividades incluyen la producción de videos, el acopio de materiales audiovisuales, la distribución a través de un servicio de alquiler de videos educativos y la capacitación en comunicación participativa. Por varios años, CEPA mantenía un programa de televisión comunitaria, llamado TV Machepa, que se realizó en los barrios marginados de Santo Domingo. Lamentablemente, tenían que terminar esta iniciativa exitosa, por falta de fondos. Actualmente produce en colaboración con la Secretaría de Educación una serie de videos para la „formación integral humana y religiosa“ para el uso escolar.



## Les ONG en partenariat

Par Gabriel Lafia, Responsable du CAV

Le CAV est essentiellement financé par l'extérieur. Mais il a le devoir de rechercher des fonds locaux pour assurer une part importante d'autofinancement. Seulement, il est difficile de concilier un travail pédagogique pour la population du Borgou qui dispose de peu de moyens et de produire à but lucratif.

Le Borgou est le plus grand département du Bénin. Il couvre à lui seul plus de la moitié du territoire national. La population est essentiellement rurale et compte beaucoup d'ethnies différentes. L'agriculture, principale activité, connaît de nombreux problèmes. Il en résulte une dégradation de l'environnement et des problèmes de gestion de l'argent dont les paysans souffrent. Dans cette société traditionnelle, la femme est reléguée à un second plan par rapport à l'homme.

C'est dans ce contexte que l'Eglise a mis en place le *Bureau Interdiocésain du Borgou pour le Développement* (BIBD). Le BIBD est une structure qui regroupe plusieurs secteurs: hydraulique, promotion féminine, agriculture, droits humains et le centre audiovisuel (CAV). En vidéo le CAV réalise des documentaires et fictions à caractère pédagogique. En dehors des reportages courants, deux films ont vu le jour pour le compte de l'année 2003. L'un sur la relation entre l'eau et la santé, l'autre sur la non violence active.

Les principaux partenaires du CAV sont les ONG, les privés et les agents pastoraux. Le terme « agents pastoraux » regroupe les religieux, les religieuses, les prêtres, et, depuis quelques années, des laïcs qui travaillent dans les structures « pastorales » de l'Eglise.

S'il est vrai que les médias font partie du quotidien de nos populations, force est de remarquer que

beaucoup ignorent le coût réel des infrastructures et des coûts de la production audiovisuelle. Il est fréquent que nos devis soient contestés, car perçus comme trop chers : une production d'une demi-heure pour un prix de 3 millions de FCFA (euros 4.500,00) dépassent souvent les prévisions du client. En particulier pour les « agents pastoraux ». A leurs yeux, le CAV étant une structure diocésaine, ils attendent de lui des prestations presque gratuites.

C'est peut être un problème d'information et de formation ! Dans ce sens, le CAV s'est lancé dans la formation de groupes cibles au langage audiovisuel. Ceci leur permettra, espérons-nous, de mieux connaître les médias et leurs contraintes.

Si le bonheur est tant recherché, il faut être prêt à en payer le prix. Cela, malheureusement, nos partenaires sur place - nos « clients » - ne le comprennent toujours pas.

## PROFILE CAV

Depuis 1990, le *Centre Audiovisuel* du diocèse de Parakou appuie le travail de développement et d'évangélisation de l'Eglise dans la région du Borgou (Nord du Bénin). En plus

de la production vidéo, le CAV entretient une vidéothèque qui compte près de 500 cassettes sur des thèmes variés. Il produit aussi des cassettes de chants religieux, des cassettes sur des thèmes de sensibilisation et des émissions radio. En attendant de pouvoir diffuser ses émissions sur une radio locale, le CAV collabore essentiellement avec la seule radio catholique du pays, « Radio Immaculée Conception », installée dans la région de Cotonou, mais qui couvre presque tout le pays. Au nombre des activités du CAV, figure aussi les séances mensuelles de ciné-vidéo forum dans les collèges et lycées de Parakou en lien avec le programme scolaire. D'autres projections régulières sont organisées dans des centres de formation religieuse ou professionnelle.



## Strategic Partnership

by Bs. Method Kilaini, Dar es Salaam

*Radio-Video Tumaini* covers in general its own running costs and is self-supporting through a variety of financial sources and the strategic partnership between *Radio* and *Video Tumaini*. The Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam only provides the premises for free, pays the electricity, water, some of the taxes and contributes towards big extra expenses. The technical equipment at hand, however, is funded or subsidised by overseas donor agencies.

### Sources of income

The main source of income for *Video Tumaini* is the sale of videos. These productions are of both religious and secular events, documentaries

explaining church teachings, political or social issues.

*Video Tumaini* is sometimes contracted by different organisations, who have to pay for the services offered. Those clients include church organisations as well as international organisations like USIS (*US Information Service*) with which the studio filmed documentaries on civic education, World Vision etc.

Besides, *Video Tumaini* offers small services like editing and dubbing other people's videos.

One Sunday a year the collections in all the parishes of the Archdiocese are for *Radio-Video Tumaini*. The faithful have come to appreciate the service so much that the contributions continuously increase. In 2002 they were equivalent to € 21,000. Apart from that there are people who spontaneously bring in their donations.

Additionally, we are now in the process of introducing other fundraising activities like charity walks, dinners, donation forms etc. These means have also succeeded in raising money for other church charity activities.

### Partnerships

The most important strategic partnership is between the video studio (*Video Tumaini*) and

*Radio Tumaini* which has very much helped our financial survival by sharing expenses.

*Radio-Video Tumaini* has a total of 21 workers while the video section only has three permanent producers. But all overhead services are provided by *Radio*





*Tumaini* and additional staff for the video section is available on demand.

To stress the importance of financial sustainability in the Board of Directors two financial experts for financing and popular fundraising have been nominated as members.

Some of the videos prepared by *Video Tumaini* are broadcast as audio programmes by *Radio Tumaini* thus cutting production costs and promoting the videos.

The contacts that *Radio Tumaini* has with international Radio Stations like VOA (*Voice of America*), RFI (*Radio France International*), DW (*Deutsche Welle*), *Radio Netherlands* and *Radio Canada* are also of advantage for *Video Tumaini* especially in terms of training and equipment as well as the selling of programmes.



Another strategic partnership is the close co-operation with the local TV station, CTN (*Costal Television Network*).

*Video Tumaini* produces a weekly one hour programme for CTN treating both religious and social current issues. In all of Eastern Africa *Video Tumaini* is the only church studio with a regular weekly programme at prime time (Sunday 6.00 – 7.00 p.m.).

CTN does not pay for the programmes but provides *Video Tumaini* with airtime for free without making any restrictions on programme contents etc. This agreement is good publicity for the productions and as their copyright remains with *Video Tumaini* the programmes can later be sold to private customers.

### Times of crisis

*Radio-Video Tumaini*, however, was facing a crisis when its director and founder Rev. Fr. Francois Galtier, a missionary of Africa, left in 2001, because many customers and external partners were

identifying *Radio-Video Tumaini* with him.

The Archdiocese had two choices either to drastically cut down the services or heavily subsidise the enterprise hoping that it will pull up and win people's confidence again. The Archdiocese made the second choice and in the first year it had to pump in more than US\$ 40,000.

Now two years later *Radio-Video Tumaini* has again gained momentum and is self-reliant except for the above mentioned subsidies from the Archdiocese.

### Future dreams

After the venture has stabilised *Video Tumaini* wants to engage itself more in documentary productions and the film industry for educational, religious and sensitisation purposes. This would increase our financial sustainability and serve as a preparatory step for further TV activities.

Finally, we are heading towards setting up our own TV station for the city of Dar es Salaam with a later extension of range upcountry. Therefore we have already started to link up with other church radio and video studios in Tanzania.

## PROFILE TUMAINI

*Video Tumaini* (*tumaini* is the Kiswahili word for hope, confidence, trust) is the visual branch of *Radio-Video Tumaini* which was established about ten years ago by the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. The basic objective was to produce quality and creative videos that would complement the audio programmes of *Radio Tumaini*. Since its creation *Video Tumaini* has produced a variety of videos including dramas, documentaries, interviews, children's programmes etc. covering a wide thematic spectrum of social, economic, religious and civic issues, including HIV/AIDS awareness and democratic processes. For more information see <http://radiotumaini.tripod.com>

**UKWELI VIDEO**

**PRODUCTIONS**

**A Profitable Sister**

by Sr. Lando, Video Producer

The greatest challenge for *Ukweli Video Productions* is to produce quality programmes which can be used as a pastoral and educational tool. In financial terms this does mean producing at minimum cost and to be as self-reliant as possible.

### Ukweli's sister company

As *Ukweli Video Productions* did grow and expand in terms of capacity — by now we have three editing suites — and personnel, *Real Time International* was established as a sister company in January 1997. Apart from lacking space another reason for creating *Real Time International* was to lower the costs for video covers. *Real Time International* could employ a graphic designer within *Ukweli* and it was then no longer necessary to go to other companies for the video cover production which formerly created additional costs.

Further, we can offer graphic design and layout services to other interested people or companies; in which case we get some income. Profit is not

the base-line for *Real Time International* but if it comes, we appreciate it.

### Main sources of income

Producing at least six to eight major productions every year and about four to five low-budget ones generates about 45%-50% of our total income.

The duplication of video tapes and editing services for outside clients make about 32% of our total budget. In our duplication department we copy video tapes in large quantities on demand. Apart from these sources of income our interest on fixed accounts is about 12% of our total income and another 6% are generated through sales and miscellaneous services like the sale of a catalogue. This catalogue contains more than 300 pages with over 4,000 titles. At least 200 of the listed titles are *Ukweli Video Productions*, while the rest is a collection from different worldwide Media Houses.

### Five ways to sell/promote videos

Due to the recent anti-HIV/AIDS campaign launched by the present Kenyan government, the most purchased videos are those touching on the care and management of persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Other well-selling videos are productions on pastoral teachings like the *Catholic Answers Series*. But how are they sold and/or promoted?

Basically, there are the following ways through which we are able to sell and/or promote our



productions: Through a full time marketing person, the *Ukweli* employees, walk-in clients, the Internet and the Catholic Bookshops in Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan.

The fulltime marketing person at *Ukweli Video Productions* basically promotes our videos outside the *Ukweli* premises. He moves from schools to parishes, different organisations, government ministries, NGOs or banks. There he enlightens people on the different videos we have and encourages them to use the tapes for educational or pastoral activities, in seminars, workshops etc. On a daily basis, he may sell two videos or none! But occasionally he receives orders of over thirty videos from various government ministries, banks, NGOs, schools, hospitals etc.

Additionally, in one way or another, each *Ukweli* employee is marketing our video productions. For instance, we encourage religious men and women to come to purchase certain good videos for pastoral use, teachings in schools, or for antenatal clinics in dispensaries.

If our productions have been aired on the local television channels, people also come to our premises to purchase them. Further, there are those clients who know us already and just walk in to buy tapes. Others come to us because they have heard about *Ukweli* from verbal propaganda, or because they have visited our website.

Within Kenya we further try to sell videos through the Diocesan communication offices and beyond the Kenyan boundaries through the network of

Catholic Bookshops located in different African countries.

### Attractiveness

Besides the quality of productions another factor which contributes to the selling of our videos is our pricing system. We sell our own productions (up to 60 minutes) at a cost of KSH 500.00 (US\$ 7.00) or KSH 600.00 (US\$ 8.00) for tapes over 60 minutes respectively.

Such selling prices for video cassettes make them comparatively affordable and attractive compared to other video tapes available on the local market — especially, as most of the other production houses even charge twice as much as we do!

### Problems

Finally, some problems we are facing should be mentioned. Just like in all other businesses, the sale of videos encounters low seasons. There are times when sales do not come by, simply because people have no spare money (they have spent it on school fees etc). The second problem is the payment. Some customers place orders for videos and then do not pay on time, thereby forcing us to incur extra expenses in chasing the money.

## PROFILE UKWELI

*Ukweli Video Productions* (*ukweli* is the Kiswahili word for truthfulness) is a professional Christian production house under the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. An executive Board

of ten members oversees its general running. Established more than twenty years ago in 1981 *Ukweli Video Productions* has videotaped up to now films in eight different African countries and produced close to 250 productions. The big variety of programmes covers for example the following categories: social concerns (family, youth), health issues, developmental issues, environmental concerns, pastoral/religious concerns, commercials etc. For more information see <http://www.geocities.com/ukwelivideo>



ISSN 1433-6472

*Publisher: Catholic Media Council  
Anton-Kurze-Allee 2, D-52064 Aachen  
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