

# «NOTHING IS TOO GOOD FOR THE LORD»

by V. J. Naidu S. J.

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You have to begin somewhere

The Media Centre began work in June 1984 with permission from the Jesuit Provincial to serve the needs of the Karnataka Jesuit province and the Archdiocese of Bangalore. It is a centre for training, production and research. The charter from the Jesuit provincial giving permission to begin also said that we would be entitled to a grant from the province of an equal sum for two years. Suffice it to say that one year's grant covered just the cost of purchasing a Revox B - 77 spool recorder and paying the customs duty and freight for the same! But you have to begin somewhere.

The centre as a self-financing venture, at least for day-to-day running

One of my first thoughts while planning to have a Media Centre was how to finance the operation. And I decided that as far as possible it would be best to have the centre as a self-financing venture, at least for day-to-day running, salaries, maintenance, electricity and so on. We turned to the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide) through UNDA and OCIC for grants that would cover costs of an audio studio with basic recording equipment. The audio studio was meant to provide a service to NGO's, other centres like ours, Church personnel and all those who could not make use of the more expensive facilities available in the area. We have basic facilities for production of radio programmes, hymns on cassettes, sound tracks for slide or video programmes, mood music for dramas with sound effects and similar work. We combine an acceptable quality and service with a smile, all at a reasonable price, and clients are satisfied.

We need funding for new equipment, staff, training, conducting, training programmes and research

We also finance our work by the projects we undertake for agencies such as the Christian Children's Fund, Central Silk Board, Indian Social Institute and others. Basically we accept work from organisations that are concerned with service, justice, values, faith, help to the marginalised. The projects give us work to do, bring out our creativity and provide us with income to keep the centre going. Of course, we need funding for the purchasing of new equipment, sending staff to training, conducting our own training programmes, wherein we offer scholarships and also for our research. In this area we have just completed a project in Media Education where we have produced separate text books for primary and high school level and for NGO's with a video support component. This is a joint project with the Xavier Institute of Communications, Bombay.

Working for a Church-related institution does call for some sacrifice

On the matter of salaries. Our centre gives a salary that is comparable with other similar institutions. We cannot match those offered by the media world for sure. In addition to basic salaries there are allowances for those who work in the area of production. The end result is a fairly good take-home packet. As I said we cannot match those of the world outside, but we do our best and salary structures are constantly being revised consonant with improvement in the centre's financial position. I do feel that working for a Church-related institution does call for some sacrifice and I am glad that our staff is ready to do that.

Without a dedicated laity not much can be achieved

The wealth of an organisation especially a voluntary one is in its people. It is true, our staff could earn more elsewhere, so why do they stay here? They stay because they like what they are doing, the freedom to create and the challenge to make something out of the limited resources that are available. Fr. Jerry Martinson S.J., of Kuangchi Program Service in Taipei wrote a long time ago to Cardinal Lourdasamy, then Secretary of Propaganda Fide, that he felt OCIC in Asia was proud of its people and therein lay its wealth. Equipment was necessary he felt, but without a dedicated laity not much can be achieved.

In my many years of screening projects both for UNDA and OCIC, I have seen both sides of the coin! Duplication of efforts and energies, sometimes in the same city or region, expensive equipment under-utilised because of improper planning, overqualification of some personnel for the simple job at hand, and buildings which are too elaborate. On the other hand I have seen people working with meagre resources, cramped conditions, basic equipment, yet producing acceptable programmes because of inventiveness and dedication, because 'small can be beautiful', in Indonesia, Burma, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Philippines and India. In the other countries of Asia, Church technology has matched the best available and also produced excellent work. Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Korea are examples. I do not believe we can do without funding. This is necessary. For example while we are providing good programmes for training locally, we also need a few personnel to be trained abroad. This encounter between East and West is necessary. Since training is expensive it is necessary to offer scholarships. Hatch End did a lot in the past. Today, Lyon, Dayton, the Gregorian are good examples. It is not enough to send trainers from Europe, I do feel that some of us need to meet Europe at large and in the process be enriched and give our enrichment too. So do not take that away please.

It is not easy nor is it advisable to confine funding to a set of rules and regulations. Situations in countries differ, even within countries! Each situation needs to be handled individually as far as possible. That is why one needs CAMECO and screening committees. There is a story told of the old parish priest who used to take the Eucharist to the houses of his sick parishioners riding in his Cadillac. When questioned about his rather showy tastes he seems to have replied «Nothing is too good for the Lord!» Obviously he had not experienced resource crunches, faulty equipment, lack of spares, powercuts, heat and dust or religious fundamentalism!

What is basically needed by those who work for Church organisations is that sense of 'nothing is too good for the Lord', minus the Cadillac, of course! I would be happy with the humble 'beetle', though I am 6ft 5 inches tall!

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#### «NOTHING IS TOO GOOD FOR THE LORD»

Joe Naidu SJ desde hace años está trabajando en el campo de los medios de comunicación católicos no solamente en su patria, India, sino desde sus experiencias como anterior secretario de OCIC Asia puede dar comentarios al respecto con una vista continental. Ya desde la fundación del Centro de Comunicación, su director tuvo como objetivo principal el autofinanciamiento. Aparte de ayuda financiera inicial para la adquisición de equipos, los costos operacionales fueron más y más cubiertos con ingresos por trabajos realizados para diferentes agencias religiosas y sociales situadas en la región. Sin embargo, el sector de capacitación y becas está considerado como una de las tareas principales a ser subsidiados por fondos externos. Concerniente a sueldos el autor destaca que - según sus experiencias - es difícil pagar sueldos competitivos con los del nivel de medios seculares. Todavía cuenta con la buena voluntad del equipo de sacrificarse por poder trabajar en «la viña del Señor». De este modo, el laico comprometido sigue siendo la 'conditio sine qua non' para poder producir cualquier beneficios emprendidos por una organización voluntaria relacionada con la Iglesia.

RESUMEN

Joe Naidu, SJ, travaille depuis longtemps dans le secteur des médias de l'Eglise, non seulement dans son pays, l'Inde, mais aussi au niveau international, en particulier lorsqu'il fut secrétaire d'OCIC-Asie. Il partage ici avec nos lecteurs l'expérience du «Media Centre» de Bangalore en Inde, dont il est le directeur. Ce «Media Centre» poursuit activement une politique d'auto-financement, même s'il est difficile d'offrir des salaires compétitifs et d'assurer la formation permanente du personnel. Bien souvent seul le dévouement peut motiver le personnel laïc à accepter des sacrifices pour poursuivre leur collaboration dans la «Vigne du Seigneur».

RESUME