

## **KENYA / ETHIOPIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

### **A REPORT ON TRAINING SESSION IN UMC COMMUNICATION RADIO NETWORK HELD IN WEST ANGOLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN LUANDA COMPLEXO TURISCITICO DO MORRO BENTO FROM 18TH TO 27 APRIL 2018.**

Dear Bishop, I left Kenya in April to attend a training session in radio communication of United Methodist network in West Angola Annual Conference of United Methodist Church, several conferences were represented including representatives from Kenya/Ethiopia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, Uganda/southern Sudan, Liberia, Mozambique, and Phillipine respectively.

Theme: **AMPLIFY HOPE.**

I got a chance to do practicals in Radio Kairos owned by West Angola annual conference where our choir Tazama Christ UMC songs were aired and are still being aired to date. I visited The Methodist University of Angola and through the spirit of three pillars of broadcasting Entertainment, Information and broadcast. I thought it is a high time Kenya/Ethiopia Annual Conference should have the Several Radio/ TV station, several bible schools and A university since we know that Knowledge is power.

It's no longer quietly whispered. Christian media experts are openly predicting that an explosion of Christian content online, changes in media consumption habits, and the fast development of communication technology will end the era of listening to preaching and teaching of the gospel on radio. That day may come ... but not yet. Radio is still an effective platform for delivering the gospel.

## **Radio-towers**

So it has been from the beginning. The origin and history of radio is intertwined with the story of using the technology to preach the Word.

## **THE GROWTH OF THE PLATFORM**

From the invention of radio to the present day, there seems to have been Divine guidance in the medium's rise to prominence as a tool for ministry.

Physicist James Clerk Maxwell, who discovered radio waves in 1865, was a Christian. Guglielmo Marconi, known as the father of radio, thought his work in science to be a part of God's will.

In 1921, just a few months after becoming the world's first radio station, KDKA (Pittsburgh, PA) aired the first religious radio program...a sermon from the evening service at Calvary Episcopal Church. A short time later, Paul Rader, Charles Fuller, Donald Grey Barnhouse and other pioneering pastors and evangelists ventured into the new medium with innovative strategies.

Today, the platform consists of about 2400 radio stations broadcasting Christian programming in the United States. When combined with television, the total audience reach is 75 million.

According to Craig Parshall (senior vice president of the National Religious Broadcasters), "About 40 percent of people who regularly listen, do so specifically so they can listen to teaching, preaching and talk formats."

Granted, studies have shown a decrease in the overall audience size of Christian radio in the last few years (offset in part by population growth). But, there is still

no other Christian media platform in existence today that daily impacts as many people for Christ as religious broadcasting. Under God's guiding hand, Christian radio has grown into the largest platform for proclaiming the gospel the world has ever known.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PLATFORM**

In 2005, The Barna Group reported that a greater percentage of adults were getting their religious information from Christian media – radio and television predominantly – than from monthly church attendance. The headline of an article about the report said it all, “More People Use Christian Media Than Attend Church.”

Millions of American's are still turning to some of America's most trusted Christian communicators, exclusively for their spiritual information. Radio station personnel, in turn, steer these audiences – better prepared for effective service – into local church fellowships.

The local audience for Christian radio consists of individuals from all walks of life and religious backgrounds. The radio station and its gospel programming are common ground. Listeners will often connect, support and fellowship with one another at special events. They link arms at times to work together in ministry and mission, making their communities a better place to live.

## THE FUTURE OF THE PLATFORM

It's true. There's an ever increasing amount of excellent Christian media accessible online. Online distribution channels and relational networks are growing. The audience for new media ministry endeavors is expanding locally and globally, among Christians and non-Christians alike.

So, it does raise the question. In a world where every ministry platform has audio, video and text, could the audience for terrestrial broadcast only diminish to the point that Christian radio's business model is undermined? A case could be made for that scenario. Is it inevitable? The outcome hasn't been decided.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.  
Hebrews 11:6

Over the next few years, Christian broadcasters have a historic opportunity to be among the leaders in shaping a new future for Christian communication.

It will mean a change in thinking about methods for broadcasting and ministry. It will mean becoming more intentional about collaborating with the local church to find new ways of creating and delivering Christian content to the world. Like the early days of broadcasting, it will mean taking action steps of faith that involve risk, uncertainty, even danger. It will require audacious faith and a total dependency on God.

Can Christian broadcasters, in concert with local churches, create a new and stronger platform for the gospel to reach a perishing world? The answer to that question and others like it will determine the the future of radio's continued effectiveness for the gospel.

With bold leadership, joining together with new allies, and God's guiding hand, the single most important chapter in the story of Christian radio is still to be written.

my humble request is to propose that the Kenya Ethiopia Annual conference should join together and start the Radio I have spoken to few Individuals who are ready to support this noble task of reaching the unreached through the radio.

General Council on Finance And administration of United Methodist church Shared services manager central Conferences Mr. Ndzulo Tueche Of nashville,TN,Dan Mai Chief Technologist officer communications UMCOM assured us of his support as we start our Radio project.

Bishop we need well-wishers to help us in this noble cause. If some of our friends abroad can donate a transmitter, amplifier, Mixer, computers. Laptops etc we will be good to go.

## **SUMMARY.**

### **A. The Role of Radio in the Mission of the Church.**

We need to first remind ourselves that the rationale for any ministry by radio begins not with the recording of the radio programme itself or with the knowledge that radio time is available for the taking. It must of necessity begin with a clear understanding of the role that radio can play in the building of the Church among a given people group. It is a missions approach.

On a worldwide basis the same principles apply. As we examine the current status of Christianity we do not need to look far before we discover situations where radio could potentially make a significant contribution toward the establishment of God's Kingdom among select people groups or in whole nations. Unfortunately, many church and mission leaders are only now coming to recognize this fact. Till now their confidence in radio as a medium has not been sufficiently high to consider the effort and expense justifiable.

Understanding the role of radio derives from the nature and strengths of the tool and how it is best used. This tool of radio is best understood if we use the analogy of a toolbox. A wide variety of different tools are at the disposal of the church today – literature, television, film, etc., to name a few – and each is designed for a different task, though there may be some overlap. Matching the tool to the job to be done is what we are concerned about. Unfortunately for a large number of challenging opportunities many of the tools we would like to use are missing. In some instances radio may be the only tool at our disposal whereas in others radio may not even be an option.

This is why we need to do our homework to find out what tools God has made available to us to do the job. Happily, vast amounts of useful information are available to us today, and computers are making the accessing and processing of data almost a matter of routine. Thus we have no excuse for not viewing the world – or “our world” – with greater objectivity and seek opportunities for developing radio strategies as an integral part of evangelism and church-planting.

## **B. The Strengths of Radio in Reaching the Unreachable**

Viewed against the backdrop of other church-related ministries, the particular strength of radio which stands above all others is its ability to transcend barriers.

In our world today we find barriers to the Gospel of various kinds. The ideological barrier, as characterized by Iron and Bamboo Curtains, has perhaps attracted the most attention and evoked the greatest sympathy for those thus separated from us. Less obvious have been the more subtle barriers erected by religion and culture, in many ways more formidable than the ideological. How can those bound by the caste system of India, for example, be given a reasonable opportunity to hear and understand the Gospel? Or the strictly Muslim Aceh of North Sumatra in Indonesia? How likely is it for the Japanese teenager to defy family pressures in order to go to church?

Even in western cultures, overtaken by materialism and vulnerable to movements such as New Age, radio may effectively be used to spread a Christian world view and uphold Christian values.

For each of these the Gospel can be put in the marketplace of ideas by radio. As radio stations today are continually spewing out entertainment, propaganda and a variety of viewpoints we too as Christians can float our beliefs, outlook and opinions to put alongside philosophies alien to the Gospel. Thus seeker and non-seeker alike can 'shop' in that marketplace without even leaving the seclusion and safety of his own room.

As a listener's interest is built up he becomes a regular listener. If he writes in response to the program the contact may be further strengthened through personal

correspondence; literature can be used to put the Word of God into his hands and furnish further study materials such as Bible correspondence courses.

Such contact may go largely unnoticed even in hostile surroundings. In India, where churches have been successfully planted among caste Hindus through radio, the resulting Christian groups have been spared ostracism because their origins appeared to have sprung from within rather than being brought in by an alien group.

Opposition to the Gospel may be stronger in certain Muslim contexts than in communist countries, but pressures are more likely to come from the immediate family and neighborhood rather than the government. For this reason it is unlikely that even jamming would be effective in deterring people from listening. Even in communist countries today the jamming of religious broadcasts is largely unknown. A constraint common to both Muslim and communist situations, however, is the strong opposition mounted by the authorities to prevent listeners making contact with the broadcasting station. In some instances reprisals are extremely heavy, a fact which calls for extreme caution on the part of Christian broadcasters in following up on a listener's enquiry.

Some language groups – mostly minority peoples – may be inaccessible due to geographical or other local factors. A number of the minority peoples of Myanmar (Burma) and Vietnam are being accessed daily by radio broadcasts in their own tongue.

What other strengths of radio also apply? Here are some of the more obvious ones:-



– Its personal nature as a medium. A listener comes to feel he knows the radio announcer as he listens to him regularly. Although he has never met him face-to-face a relationship develops. The speaker becomes more than a voice, but a personality, a friend, such that the listener even develops an image in his mind of what the announcer looks like (often inaccurate!). When the announcer is not on the air any more there is a deep sense of loss. The listener also develops a keen sense for the sincerity of the announcer when speaking about deeper things. He knows whether he can be trusted and if his opinions count.

– The enormous multiplication of effort it represents. If we broadcast over a local station one broadcaster can potentially speak to the population of a whole city and beyond. On the international scale one broadcaster can potentially speak to all who speak his language within his country at the same time. Even if we take a handful of people who can work as a team to produce a variety of programs, the economy of people is remarkable. This multiplying effect holds great potential when it comes to unreached people groups such as found in India or Mongolia, for example, among which enough believers can scarcely be found to count on one's hands.

– Its cost effectiveness. Although the capital outlay of radio facilities may be high the ultimate cost of speaking to each listener every day is minimal.

– Its timeliness. Radio is a living medium with live sounds and voices speaking. It also has the edge in being current with news and current affairs. In times of crisis people tune in their radios for the latest updates. It also means that our message content can relate to the issues of the day and not be divorced from day-to-day realities. Phone-in programs introduce a new dynamic to broadcasting and serve to make the station a real part of the community while providing practical dimensions to the Gospel.

– Its potential among illiterates. It may be argued that the poverty of illiterates may preclude them from having radios. But this is not necessarily the case. Happily the solid-state revolution in electronics has brought the cost of transistor radios down to very affordable levels and today a radio is one of the first luxuries

that most people will buy for themselves. To these illiterates radio may become their primary source of information and education. They can listen just the same as anyone else – in fact they become more dependent on this source of information than literates.

Finally the conference should pray for the project God bless All us.

Report by

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