Country Report – Radio in the Philippines

Radio is still the King- having the widest reach; and this continues to expand. There are more than 800 radio stations covering all regions: Luzon - the biggest island where Manila is located; and the Visayas and Mindanao. According to the most recent data-1998 -97% of adults in radio- listening households were reached by radio every month, an increase of 7% from 1992. Eight (8) major networks have increased their radio ownership from 227 stations in 1992 to 358 in 1998.

Especially for people in the mountains and rural areas-radio is their only window to the world. From sunrise to sunset- radio accompanies the farmer in the fields, the fisherman in the river or the sea, the neighborhood store-owner, the market vendor, the tailor, the rig driver, etc. Thus- radio is on all day long - variably educating, informing, entertaining, selling an idea or galvanizing people to action. As a matter of fact, it was radio i.e. CMN- Radio Veritaz Manila- a church-run station that brought tens of thousands of people to action to oust the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in a bloodless “people Power Revolution”. Radio therefore- in the Philippine context is still seen as a power to educate, stirring up communities to act on their convictions.

Practically everybody in the Philippines is exposed to current events through radio broadcast. Estimates have it that there are more than 25 million radio sets all over the country having a population of about 75 million. Metro- Manila alone is a metropolis of over 10 million. Most Radio Networks in the Philippines are privately owned. The government has its own television and radio network. The influential Catholic Church in the Philippines- operates the CMN- Catholic Media Network with 50 radio stations and 4 small cable TV nationwide. A few other Christian denominations also have TV and radio stations.

The advantage of the CMN over networks is the widespread perception that CMN’s broadcasts are The Truth and nothing but. That is the reason why all the CMN stations have the name Radio Veritaz attached to the official call letters of the station; Veritaz- meaning Truth. Although all the Veritaz-CMN stations are run by the Catholic Church, their broadcasts are not religious but commercial. That is not to say that CMN has forgotten its evangelization role; it just operates commercially to survive a very cruel and consumeristic world.