

BROADCASTING CHANNEL AS TOOL FOR MISSIONS:

A CASE STUDY OF CROWTHER FM RADIO ABUJA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to evaluate the use of Radio Broadcasting as tool for Missions, especially with regard to Crowther FM Radio station, Abuja. The Crowther FM Radio Station is promoted and fully funded by the Church of Nigerian (Anglican Communion) and is located within the Federal Capital City of Abuja with signals beaming across states in the North Central Region of Nigeria namely Kogi, Niger, Kaduna, Nassarawa and the FCT. In carrying out the study the researcher undertook a careful study of the structure and operations of Crowther FM Radio for two months during which he served as part-time consultant to the station.

Furthermore, a questionnaire was designed and administered on listeners to the radio station within the Federal Capital City. Highlights of the results are:

- (a) It appears that most people have access to radio sets and do listen to programmes aired by Crowther FM Radio Station.
- (b) It is generally agreed that radio Broadcasting Channel is an effective tool for Missions. Christian radio stations all over the world have utilized this powerful medium to spread the gospel of Christ to unreached peoples and societies that are closed, to the open sharing of the gospel message. However only a few radio stations are really focused on Missions, which is the propagation of the gospel of Christ; that men everywhere might be saved.
- (c) Crowther FM Radio in spite of its limitation arising from the federal government's policy of allowing only 20% of its airtime for religious programmes, the station has a few programmes that endeared it to its listeners. The station will need to do more by sourcing for good broadcast materials and

talents (programme personnel) to be able to reach out the more in its coverage area.

The National Broadcasting Commission, which is the sole regulatory body under the deregulation of the Broadcast media in Nigeria, disapproves complete religious stations and allows only 20% of its airtime or programme content to be religious in nature. This poses a very serious constraint on the operations of Crowther FM Radio Station and others whose ownership clearly suggests its main objectives.

This study is an attempt to evaluate the factors that can aid the use of Radio Broadcasting Station as tool for missions and to contribute to the work of scholarship in this area. The study recommends that in future studies should be carried out on evaluating the effectiveness of its religious programmes to test if the messages are actually turning men's heart to God or if at all they are making any spiritual impact on listeners and leading to conversion of souls and the growth of the Church.

In summary Crowther radio is a good initiative which if well managed can be used effectively for missions in its coverage area.

B. Conclusion

This study has revealed that radio broadcast channel is an effective tool for mission, through the propagation of the Good News of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to unreached people groups. Radio removes the barriers of distance, time and racial or human antagonism to the gospel.

The study confirms that a few well-packaged programmes of Crowther FM radio are generally listened to in its area of coverage. This is therefore prospects for Crowther FM radio to increase its listeners' profile with the introduction of innovative and popular programming in different languages spoken by residents of the Federal Capital Territory.

C. Recommendations

On the basis of the study carried out and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are here posited. It is hoped that the recommendations will enable Crowther FM radio re-evaluate its programming with a view to focusing on its primary objective of presenting the gospel through several of its activities.

- (i) In future a study can be carried out on evaluating the effectiveness of its religious programmes to test if the messages are actually turning men's heart to God or that they are making any spiritual impact leading to conversion of souls.

- (ii) The Crowther FM radio should embark on strategic promotion of its programmes and its uniqueness to visitors and residents of the Federal Capital Territory by mounting billboards, street walk/displays and village square live programmes in the various satellite towns of the Federal Capital City.
- (iii) The total commercialization of all programmes including religious programmes whereby sponsors are required for every programme is a disincentive for good programme development. This policy should therefore be slightly relaxed to accommodate few free Christian programmes and airing of popular syndicated programmes from media outfits within and outside the country. The Radio Worldwide and Bible Voice Broadcasting organisations provide high quality programmes format in different languages to Christian Radio Stations at no cost.
- (iv) Christian Festivals such as Christmas and Easter and other seasons of celebrations should be utilised to organise and promote activities that would enhance the outreach of both the station and its message.
- (v) The Anglican Communion, which is the proprietor of the station should involve other notable Christians outside the Anglican fold in the management and running of the station in order to create the necessary awareness and appeal for other Christian denominations such as Methodist, Baptist, Foursquare, etc to be involved in the station.
- (vi) In view of the fact that this study has confirmed the fact that radio broadcasting channel is an effective tool for Missions, the Crowther FM Radio should re-emphasize its basic objective and put in place strategies and necessary co-operation with other similar agencies that are involved in

promoting funding and developing manpower in the broadcast industry for the purpose of missions.

- (vii) To achieve an over-all best result for the station in the performance of its functions and attain the lofty objectives of its proprietors as the first religious (Christian) owned radio broadcasting station in Nigeria, the management should attract outstanding Christian talents and artistes to feature in some of its programmes while prominent Christian personalities e.g. politician, professionals and church leaders should be invited regular to speak on contemporary issues in order to give a Christian touch or view about them.