

LIBERIA – MAKONA RIVER UNION RADIO PROJECT PROPOSAL

June 2006



Joseph Kebbie – Director of the Radio School, Media Village/YWAM, Cape Town, South Africa. A Liberian citizen.

Lee Sonius – Africa Director, HCJB World Radio, Accra, Ghana. On loan from SIM.

Sandy Day – Administrator, Radio Africa Network, Cape Town, South Africa.

BACKGROUND

Joseph Kebbie had spoken with RAN and HCJB about his vision to establish a radio station in Foya in Northern Liberia, which is his home town. Pursuing this vision, he shared his vision with the Vice President of Liberia (Hon. Joseph N. Boakai) and he recently visited Liberia where he also had the opportunity to share the vision with the Liberian Govt. representatives to the Makona River Union as well as the Sierra Leonean representatives to the Union.

The representatives from these countries include:

Name	Position	Email:
• Hon. Eugen F. Kpakar	Lofa County Representative – MP Liberia	honkparkar@yahoo.com
• Hon. Saa Philip Joe	Secretary General MARU	saaphilipjoe@yahoo.com
• Hon. Francis S.D. Tengbeh	MP Kailahun East Constituency - Sierra Leone	dunnohtengbeh@yahoo.com
• Hon. Augustine N. Kortu	Chairman Finance Committee MRU	augnkortu@yahoo.com

Of note, the countries of Sierra Leone and Liberia have recently emerged from war so the economy is very poor and there is very little infrastructure left such as reliable electricity provision etc.

SIM/HCJB did ground breaking work in establishing ELWA in Monrovia, Liberia. This ministry operating in SW and FM held its ground despite the conflict and the evacuation of missionaries. This foundational work is recognized.

MAKONA RIVER UNION

The need for the Kissi People of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to come together as one people.

The idea was conceived for the promoting of peace, unity and development in the Kissi people who live in the area where the 3 borders meet. The Makona River runs along the borders of these countries. It is felt by these governments that if the Kissi people can be united it will prevent cross-border invasions as the Kissi will unite with their counterparts in the other countries and will collectively prevent other invaders pushing through them and also develop this area that have been forgotten about.

The Kissi people have the full support of the countries.

They believe the development of the Kissiland can be enhanced by media and would like to see a radio station established in the area, hence their invitation to Joseph to meet with the above four reps on the MRU.

DEVELOPMENTS

The MARU would like Joseph to find partners that will build a radio station in the Makona River border area.

Concerns regarding this invitation are:

1. Three countries are involved in this union and will have to agree on all aspects of the radio including which country it will be placed in.
2. The need to preserve unity and focus for the station although three countries are involved.
3. How the radio station will be funded and sustained in a poor economy.
4. How it will function in an underdeveloped area.
5. The need for this station to be unapologetically Christian and how this will be viewed by secular Governments especially in light of the Guinea regulations which do not allow radio stations to have religious affiliations.

Advances

Joseph was able to contact the Sierra Leone rep and put to him that although the Kissi people are one tribe, there is diversity in unity and perhaps there would be room for more than one radio station to cater for different faiths within that unity. He explained that the partners he worked with were only interested in establishing Christian radio stations and that the right to operate with a Christian ethos would have to be written into any radio station constitution. Of course, the station will be happy to air community development programmes eg healthcare or education that could be distributed to radio stations of all faiths. They have thus far verbally agreed to these proposals.

They have also verbally agreed to fund the operational costs of the radio station if the cost of establishing it can be found. A formal agreement for this ongoing support for the station must be obtained.

WAY FORWARD

It is felt that the need to unify the radio station under 3 countries could be achieved by calling for 3 respected Christian leaders that are nominated by the Kissi Christians in each country to sit on the radio Trustees or Board ie a 9 person Board. This representation can be written into the constitution and will allow a fair voting process on radio matters, where it becomes necessary.

Technical – there is need for a proper technical study to be done to determine where the best location is for the radio station as well as the most suitable mast and equipment etc to cover the proposed area. Challenge – can one radio station cover this whole area?

Staff – need training. Challenge – provision must be made to allow Kissi from all 3 nations to work on the station if they choose to do so.

Programming – in time perhaps studios in other areas can hop in and out of programming. Until then, news reports and/or pre recorded items of interest from the different areas can be sent to the studio for airing. Eg programming could be general with certain slots set aside for news from the regions.

Funding - needs to be found for all the equipment.

A budget needs to be drawn up and an agreement of who to fund the monthly running costs and repairs of the station needs to be made. Challenge – the 3 nations will need to agree on the reliability and sustainability of this.

Registration – the need to legally register the station and the constitution must be attended to. Land and a building have to be legally allocated.

PROPOSAL

HCJB, Joseph Kebbie, RAN proceed with discussions to find out if this partnership has a future and the terms of any partnership. That funding opportunities be investigated.

That a Skype meeting be set up between HCJB, Joseph and RAN on Monday afternoon at 2pm SA time.

Sandy Day
24/6/06