

Christian radio stations based on educational campuses can help train broadcast journalism students while at the same time sharing the good news of the gospel. For 31 years, the radio ministry of KJCR, 88.3 FM, has reached the Dallas-Fort Worth community from the campus of Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas.

“Since we are an Adventist radio station, we bring our unique message to the listeners,” says Randy Yates, a former KJCR employee, current station manager, and assistant communication professor at the university. “Inspirational music, a sundown devotional on Friday, and a special airing of *Bible Answers Live With Doug Batchelor* are part of the Sabbath programming.” Sabbath worship services from the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church are recorded during first service each weekend and then broadcast at 11:00 a.m. during second service. Throughout the week, programs like the *Voice of Prophecy* and *Your Story Hour* cover the age gamut with audience-focused broadcasts.

Each day, a Bible text is chosen as KJCR’s Verse of the Day sound bite. A schedule reminds the disk jockeys (DJs) to read the verse on-air several times during the day. “I remember one young mother who called the station,” says Yates. “She said that she had been listening to the Verse of the Day, and it was exactly what she needed to hear at that moment.”

In the Beginning

Serious discussion about starting a campus-based radio station began in 1968. Financial support did not materialize until three years later. Primary donors Raymond and Anna Beem had originally planned to fund a planetarium on the campus (then Southwestern Union College). When other funding for the planetarium fell through, they decided to allocate money for the establishment of a radio station.

Bob Mendenhall, current chair of the university communication department, was the first general manager of the station. He applied for the call letters, KSUC, and the FM frequency, 88.3, through the U.S. Federal Communications Commission. “The station was run by student volunteers when it began in June 1974,” says Mendenhall, “because the communication degree was just being established.”

Steve Cavender was the first student on-air at KJCR. He worked with turntables and reel-to-reel tape recorders to broadcast music and religious programs. In those days, the station broadcast for only 12 hours a day. In late 1984, KSUC became KJCR after applying for a signal upgrade to avoid interference from another station. Broadcasting capabilities have advanced with the times. Many years later, in 1996, SWAU stu-

Christian radio stations based on educational campuses can help train broadcast journalism students while at the same time sharing the good news of the gospel.

BY DEBBIE BATTIN

CHRISTIAN RADIO FOR A HURTING WORLD

dent Jason Mustard joined the staff. “In my first training session, I learned how to play music based on a rotation clock that was posted on the wall,” says Mustard. By the time Mustard graduated and left the station, everything was digital.

Broadcast Journalism Education

Today, the station is fully computerized and powered by 15 watts of broadcasting power. The station reaches a radius of about 60-100 miles. KJCR is run almost entirely by students, who not only receive a blessing through the music, but also gain valuable work experience and money to defray tuition expenses. “Many of the former KJCR staff work as broadcasters for various stations around the world and Seventh-day Adventist radio ministries,” says Glen Robinson, associate communication professor and former KJCR manager.

Students program the automated broadcasting system with songs and pre-recorded announcements. News and



KJCR's ministry reaches a radius of 60-100 miles with its 15 watts of broadcasting power.

weather reports are written by the student DJ, who reads them frequently on-

air throughout the day. From 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., the station broadcasts preset music



Station Manager Randy Yates says, "KJCR is run almost entirely by students, who gain valuable work experience and money to defray tuition expenses."

and programs. Announcements that run during that time are recorded and programmed into the computer. "I have worked at KJCR for three years, and it is really something special when you get to broadcast Christian music and Bible-based programming day in and day out," says Jessica Protasio, a senior mathematics major and music director at KJCR.

KJCR's repertoire goes far beyond the typically defined modes of modern musical entertainment. Lyrics and melodies resound with meaning and depth. Protasio spends hours picking out music that is modern, while still fit for worship and inspirational. "Music selection is something I take very seriously," says Protasio. "I know that someone is listening on the other end, and they need to hear the precious message of the unconditional love of Christ." Thousands of testimonials from listeners



Jarrod Purkepile, sophomore broadcasting major, is the voice of "Marco Palogney" on a student-produced radio show for youth.

show the station's influence over the years.

Kristina Pascual, junior broadcasting major, works as the promotions director and especially enjoys doing remote broadcasts. "The time I spend at the station is something I can put on my résumé to help me get a job in the career-

world someday," says Pascual.

University students often attend community events to give away Christian CDs, books, or other promotional items from KJCR. In recent months, the station has broadcast live from an Adventist Book Center during its grand opening, and from a newly built Habitat for Humanity house in Arlington, Texas.

Music for a Hurting World

Live broadcasts give a face to the voices that listeners hear in their cars on the way to and from work. "In this world that changes so rapidly and violently, I'm glad that God has provided a venue to keep people focused on Christ instead of all the many distractions out there," says Mike Holland, an Adventist pastor in Cleburne, Texas.

"We want our listeners to hear the words, and know that whatever problems they are having, Jesus is the answer," says Yates. ✍



Debbie Battin is Director of Marketing at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas.



Students gain technical skills by recording news stories, weather reports, public-service announcements, and the Bible verse of the day. In the two years senior journalism major Alexis Franklin (shown above) has been a student DJ, she has discovered that radio is a career she hopes to pursue.