

Communicate Life & Truth

by J. U. Gurung

People need a forum to express themselves. Interaction on the thoughts and ideas expressed in the media builds community. Therefore, successful avenues of communication are needed.

One of the most powerful means for communication is the magazine. Because of increasing literacy rate in developing countries, magazine publication is becoming even more important. However, many of today's magazines are filled with vain thoughts and

With increasing literacy rates in some nations, Christian publication ministry is becoming more important.

human philosophies. In contrast, Christian publications communicate life and truth. As Christian editors and writers, we have the great challenge of creating attractive and effective publications to communicate life and truth to our audiences.

Here are three keys to consider when entering into magazine publishing:

1. Have A Long-Term Vision. To start a regular magazine, a publisher needs a long-term vision. Putting out one issue of a magazine is not publishing. It is simply a one-time event. Even the second and third issues are still only events. Once you decide to publish a magazine, plan to be in business for the long-term.

In Nepal there's a saying: "Swallow a bone according to the size of your throat." In other words, don't bite off more than you can chew. It is much better for a publication to be simple, small, and to be issued with regularity, than for it to be big, fancy and issued irregularly. Remember, the soul of your publication (its message) will not be heard unless people read the publication on a regular basis.

2. Have a Message. Why go to the expense and trouble of producing a magazine if it does not have a worthwhile message? Remember the Bible story of Ahimaaz (2 Samuel 18:19-30). In this account, Ahimaaz runs so fast he overtakes the Cushite messenger. But when King David questioned Ahimaaz, the young man did not have a message for the king, and both had to wait for the Cushite to arrive. He went to the trouble of running without a message, but he accomplished nothing worthwhile.

In contrast, Christians should be purposeful. As publishers who "hold out the word of life" we should run in such a way that "on the day of Christ" we may boast that we "did not run or labor for nothing" (Phil. 2:16, NIV). Decide what message your publication will carry, and make sure your efforts support the message.

3. Have Discipline. A long-term vision, and a message, will not succeed if you do not have the discipline to make the magazine a priority. Once you embark on a publication program, make sure other obstacles do not hinder its implementation.

The production of a magazine does not occur magically without work. The publisher, the editor, and the marketing staff must collaborate to be effective. Editors must strive to maintain good relationships with writers. When many changes are necessary in an article, writers should be consulted. Writers should also be paid. No one ploughs without hope of a reward. God rewards those who labor for him and magazine staff should be paid appropriately as well.

When you have a long-term vision, a message, and the discipline to carry out the tasks before you, look for God's leading. God can open doors for your publication by providing the right employees and financial resources. His open doors serve as the "Amen" to your efforts. ❖

J.U. Gurung edits *Aenon*, a monthly Christian magazine in Sankhuwasabha, in the Himalayan region of the far Northeast part of Nepal. This article is adapted from material he shared at an editor's gathering in Dharan, Nepal.