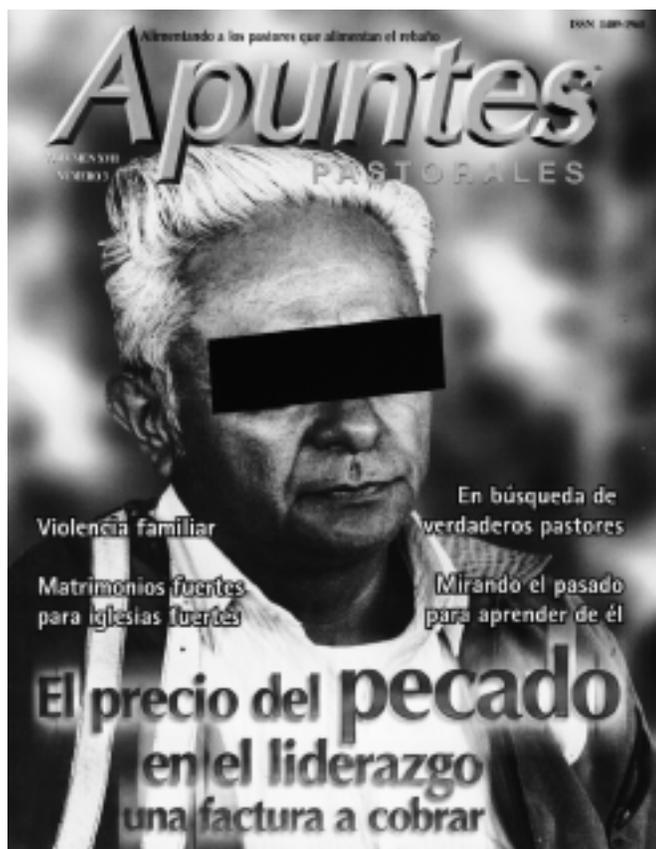




LATIN AMERICA

Successful Partnership

Bill Gibson, editor of Red Viva's magazine *Alcanzando a los Niños en Riesgo*, discusses how a partnership with another magazine, *Apuntes Pastorales*, serves children's ministries in Latin America.



Little information is available to aid at-risk children's workers in Latin America. Three years ago Red Viva, a Miami-based network for ministries to children at risk, began plans to launch a quarterly journal named *Alcanzando a los Niños en Riesgo* (Reaching

Children at Risk), to help those in this difficult and urgent ministry.

The publication was to be financed through grants, donations and subscriptions and mailed to 1,000 ministries. Red Viva hoped to eventually make this resource available to every

church with an interest in ministry to children at risk.

"Our strategy changed," says Bill Gibson, editor of the *Alcanzando* journal, "when the editors of *Apuntes Pastorales*, a magazine for pastors, suggested that we run our publication as a supplement in their magazine."

With 37,000 subscribers, *Apuntes Pastorales* is the most widely distributed Christian magazine in Spanish. It is published by Desarrollo Cristiano Internacional in San José, Costa Rica.

"At first, Red Viva was skeptical about partnering with another organization

with which we had little prior relationship," says Gibson. "Perhaps the additional costs would not be a wise investment of our limited funds." Nevertheless, the plans for collaboration were put into place and Red Viva and Desarrollo Cristiano Internacional have been working together for more than two years.

Enhanced ministry

"The results have been very positive," says Gibson. "The purpose of *Alcanzando* is to help people minister more effectively to children, and the added circulation through *Apuntes* has broadened our journal's impact significantly. Our circulation has grown from 1,000 to 39,000. It would have taken Red Viva many years to achieve the same result on its own," he adds.

Alcanzando's format has evolved in the past three years from a two-color, 8-page bulletin, to a four-color, 24-page publication. The enhanced format is financially possible only because *Alcanzando* goes to press with *Apuntes*.

Randy Wittig, publisher of *Apuntes Pastorales*, also speaks warmly of the partnership. "The inclusion of *Alcanzando a los Niños en Riesgo* in *Apuntes Pastorales*," he says, "brings added value to our publication."

Though the *Apuntes* focus is on Christian leadership and especially the pastoral ministry, *Alcanzando* adds a new dimension to the *Apuntes* magazine. Although not all its readers may read *Alcanzando*, they do see its titles, photos, advertisements, and themes.

"We hope that many become interested in this important ministry [to children at risk]," says Wittig.

"Feedback from readers shows many find the material very helpful and challenging," he adds.

Costs

The *Apuntes/Alcanzando* partnership has produced positive results, but this has not come without a cost.

Red Viva's budget has dramatically changed. Because *Alcanzando* (24 pages) goes to press with *Apuntes* (100 pages @ 37,000 copies) Red Viva is able to take advantage of volume printing prices. Of the 42,000 copies of *Alcanzando* that are printed, 37,000 copies are inserted, bound, and distributed with *Apunte*. The remaining 5000 are shipped directly to Red Viva for use at conferences and ministry events.

Even with the benefit of volume discounts, the cost of printing 42,000 magazines is higher than it would be for 5000 copies. To help offset this cost, Red Viva sells several pages of advertising in each issue.

Advertising now covers about 60 percent of Red Viva's annual publishing budget. Such sales would not be a viable option for *Alcanzando* were it not for the large circulation boost it receives via *Apuntes*. But because advertising sales require a significant time commitment, the Red Viva ministry has had to postpone other projects.

For *Apuntes Pastorales*, the additional weight of including a 24-page supplement has increased shipping costs paid by Desarrollo Cristiano Internacional. However, other benefits of the *Apunte/Alcanzando* partnership help offset this cost. For instance since *Alcanzando* targets a different audience, *Apuntes* is now better able to serve

companies that wanted to advertise in the publication, but whose products were not geared to *Apuntes'* primary audience. "Now *Apuntes Pastorales* attracts a greater number of advertisers with a wide range of interests," reports Wittig.

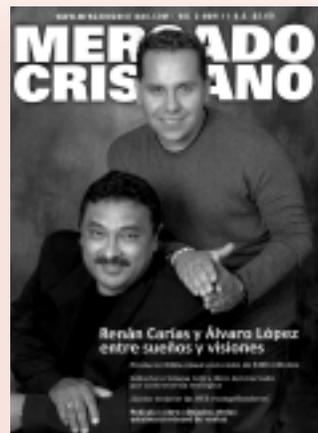
Mutual Commitment

Besides the business gains brought about by the partnership, both Wittig and Gibson are excited by the increased opportunity to help evangelicals respond to the needs of children at risk.

"The *Apuntes/Alcanzando* partnership encourages pastors to be more aware of the needs of children in their churches," observes Wittig.

"We are working together to benefit God's Kingdom," concludes Gibson. ❖

MULTI-MEDIA IMPACT



Mercado Cristiano is a quarterly print and on-line magazine focusing on the Spanish-language Christian market. Based in Miami, Florida, USA, this publication began four years ago. Now, it is reaching 30,000 readers, including bookstore owners, distributors, church leaders, musicians, writers and publishing house.

Two years running, this publication won the "Best Design" category of the Florida Magazine Association, where it competes with secular magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Vanidades*.

In addition to its glossy, 4-color publication, *Mercado Cristiano* publishes a weekly e-mail bulletin sent free of charge to 2,250 subscribers in over 21 countries. Bulletin contents are often announced on radio stations and television programs, and are reprinted in Christian newspapers and denominational publications. This has greatly multiplied the publication's impact.

Mercado Cristiano's greatest growth in readership has resulted from its web site, www.mercadocristiano.com. With over 304,282 pages of content, the web site has become one of the most popular Christian sites in Latin America. In the past year, the site grew from 5,270 to 12,400 unique hits per month. If America Online and Compuserve users were included, this figure might increase by as much as 20 percent.

—Aradí Vega-Rivera, director, Mercado Cristiano