

# Sounds from the Equator



Quito, Ecuador



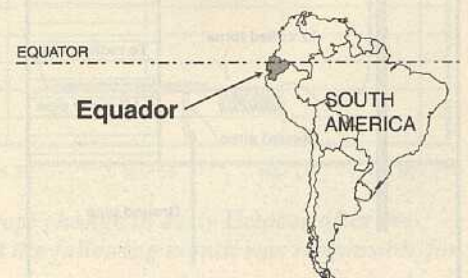
By Valter Aguiar

**R**eflecting its historical, cultural, and geographical significance, Quito is sometimes called the light of the Americas and the cultural heritage of mankind. Nearly 1.5 million people live in what is one of the most beautiful capital cities in South America, where historical sites are mingled with modern shopping centers—and all just a few kilometers away from the Equator that marks the middle of the world. Ecuador's capital since 1830, Quito has managed to maintain the old historical buildings while developing to meet the needs of its inhabitants.

The city was, of course, very different in 1931. It was more of a rural village, and the large avenues did not even exist at that time. There was no cable television as there is today (in fact, there was no television at all), and radio was just beginning. In fact, in 1931 only 13 people had radio receivers in Quito—very fortunate people indeed, as they were able to hear the first broadcast of HCJB, the Voice of the Andes, destined to become one of the most popular shortwave stations in the world.

*Top photo: HCJB announcers use the studio's facilities to take their message to the whole world. Transmitter control is completely computerized.*

*Above: Part of HCJB's antenna system in Pifo. These antennas are linked to Quito via microwave.*





## ■ From Humble Beginnings

Two Americans, Clarence Jones and Reuben Larsen, undertook the task of working out an agreement with the Ecuadorian government, on behalf of the corporation World Radio Missionary Fellowship, to put a station on the air. The first broadcast was made on Christmas Day 1931 with a one-hour program in Spanish and English. The 250-watt transmitter was installed inside a sheep shed and two eucalyptus poles served as antenna towers—very different from the current huge transmitter site in Pifo, some 18 miles east of Quito, with its 32 antennas and twelve transmitters ranging from 50 to 500 kW. HCJB's antenna site also includes a rotating antenna, which can be targeted to any direction.

Although it is lower in altitude than Quito, Pifo was chosen as the transmitter site because of its higher humidity. The transmitters come from the United States, where HCJB maintains a center to develop and manufacture transmitting equipment.

The energy requirements to feed the transmitter site are very high and HCJB was forced to build its own hydroelectric plant on the Papallacta River, on the east side of the Andes. It was put into operation in 1965, with the power to generate 1.8 million watts. The second unit (inaugurated in 1982) increased the power to 6 megawatts. Such power is more than enough to cover the needs of HCJB. In fact, during some times of the year the station is even able to sell energy.

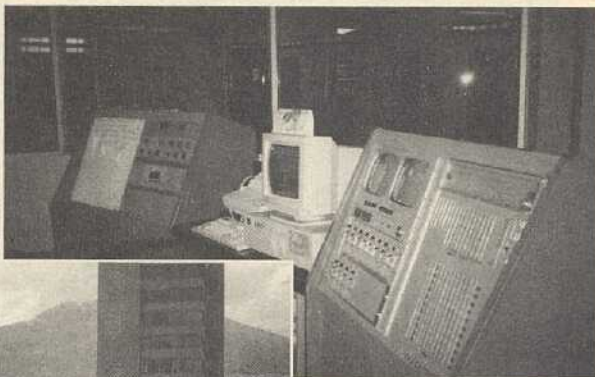
## ■ A Missionary Station with a Twist

The Voice of the Andes can be heard worldwide, and today receives around 70,000 letters each year. I am proud to say that Brazil is by far the letter-writing champion! Funds for HCJB's activities come from donations from all over the world. The majority come from the USA, where the corporate headquarters of the World Radio Missionary Fellowship are located. The callsign HCJB has become known as "Hoy Cristo Jesús Bendice" in Spanish, or as the English phrase, "Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings."

Despite being primarily a missionary broadcaster, the type of programming and services rendered make HCJB a somewhat different broadcaster from most such stations. The Voice of the Andes maintains local radio stations in Quito and Guayaquil, which operate like commercial stations. Their programs include music, news, and sports, offering a competitive choice for the Ecuadorian audience of any religion. HCJB also maintains local radio

*Right: Transmitter control is completely computerized.*

*Below: Under the shadow of the Andes, these are HCJB's headquarters in Quito.*



be rebroadcast back to Brazil on shortwave.

Vozandes is also the name of the hospital maintained by HCJB and located next to the station's headquarters in Quito. A second hospital is located in the Ecuadorian town of Shell Mera, in the

Amazon Region. Medical services offered include eye treatment and treks to more distant places in the country where no medical treatment is otherwise available. Another service offered by HCJB is the Christian Centre of Communications in Quito, which trains broadcasters from a Christian perspective.

The Voice of the Andes has 25 offices in various countries, which also produce radio programs for HCJB itself and for rebroadcast by local radio stations. This means that a portion of HCJB programs are, in fact, recorded outside Ecuador. Most programs in Portuguese, for instance, are produced by the HCJB offices in the Brazilian city of Curitiba. They are then sent to Quito on cassette tape to

Amazon Region. Medical services offered include eye treatment and treks to more distant places in the country where no medical treatment is otherwise available. Another service offered by HCJB is the Christian Centre of Communications in Quito, which trains broadcasters from a Christian perspective.

The Voice of the Andes agreed in 1985 to join efforts with other missionary broadcasters, in order to increase their presence worldwide. This project is called "World by 2000." In 1994 HCJB signed an agreement

### The Conet Project

Recordings of Shortwave Numbers Stations.

Numbers Stations are found all over the shortwave spectrum. They emit unusual transmissions of synthesized voices reading sets of phonetic letters and/or numbers. The origin of these stations is in dispute. Their purpose is unclear. There are many dozens of different signal types on the air, each run by different organizations. Some of these organizations should have been closed down after the 'end of the cold war', yet they continue to transmit like clockwork. No one has ever compiled a set of Numbers Stations recordings for sale to the public. Until now.

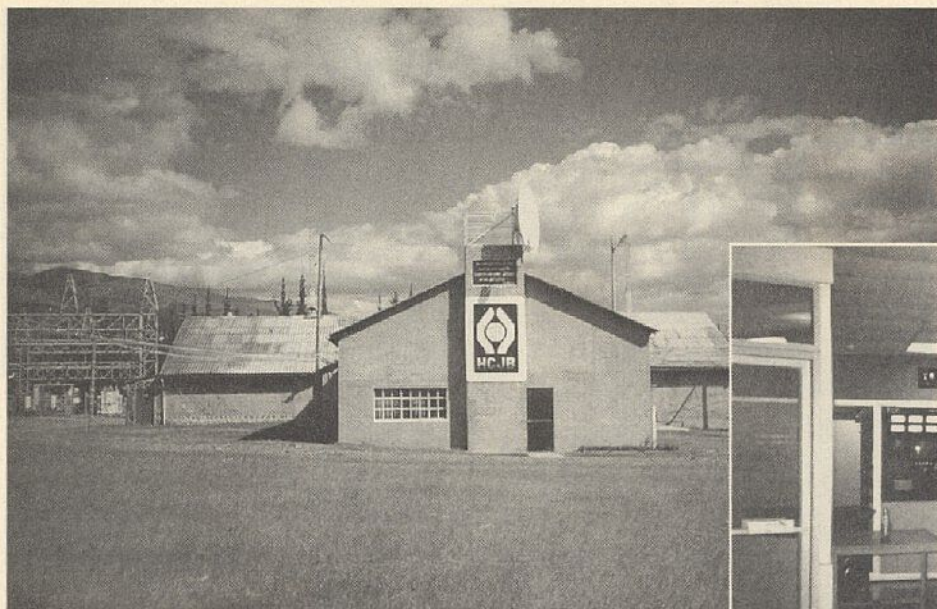
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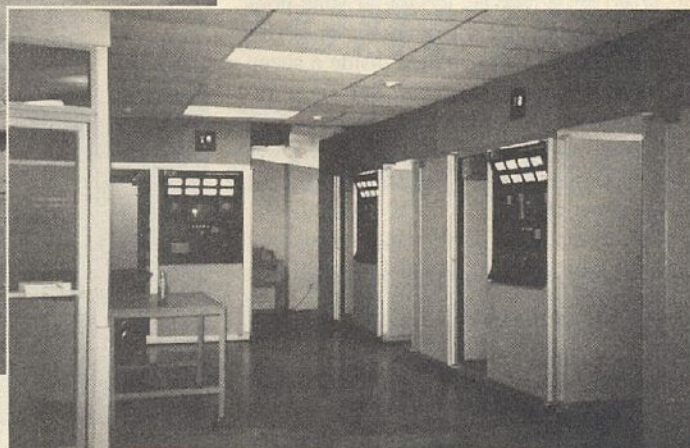
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*With the world in its hands, this is HJB's transmitter site in Pifo. Modern transmitters allow HCJB to be heard worldwide.*



with Trans World Radio, called the Alas Project. Alas is a satellite network intended to make Christian radio programs available to local Latin American stations, 24 hours a day. Currently, Trans World Radio uses the Alas system twenty hours a day, while the rest comes from HCJB.

### ■ Diversified Programming

Although it is making use of new technology, shortwave radio still plays a very important part in HCJB's activities. The Voice of the Andes broadcasts in a number of languages and local dialects. Its computerized transmitting room at Pifo, linked to Quito via microwave, allows the station to stay on the air 24 hours a day, broadcasting in several frequencies simultaneously.

HCJB's English language programs are primarily targeted to the Americas, Europe, and South Pacific, although they can be heard worldwide. Their main focus is, of course, on religious programs, but the output also follows HCJB's intention to reach every kind of audience.

Listeners in North America can hear the news daily at 0100 and 0500 UTC, and from Monday to Friday at 1200 UTC. *Musica del Ecuador* (Music from Ecuador) can be heard on Fridays at 0130 and 0530 UTC, while the science program *El Mundo Futuro* (The Future World) is broadcast every Tuesday, at the same times as above. Although names of some pro-

grams are in Spanish, their content is in English.

Interested in Ecuadorian food? *What's Cooking in the Andes* will inform you on food recipes every Thursday at 0130 and 0530 UTC. Listeners letters are answered in *Saludos Amigos* (Hello Friends) on Sundays at 0105 and 0505 UTC, just after the news.

If you're a DXer or ham operator, you're in luck. *Ham Radio Today* airs on Wednesdays at 0130 and 0530 UTC, and the famous *DX Partyline* is available every Saturday at 0105 and 0505 UTC. DX editor Richard McVicar (who is also the station's frequency manager) keeps an active HCJB DX club, called Andes DX International, or Andex. Over the years *DX Partyline* has become one of the most respected DX programs worldwide, thanks to Richard.

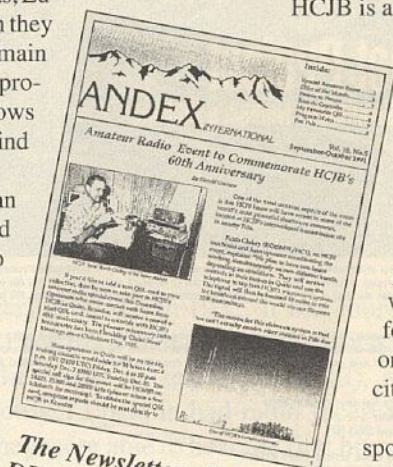
HCJB is also known worldwide for its beautiful QSL cards showing Ecuadorian scenery, people, typical food, etc. For 1996, the Voice of the Andes made a 12-card series—one card per month—which, when put together, formed a complete panorama of the beautiful city of Quito.

People who are responsible and dedicated to their positions and assignments—this is what you will find at HCJB's

facilities. The Voice of the Andes is a strong voice from Ecuador and South America, as is evident by their daily programs. HCJB is a real proof that shortwave is alive and well, and that the introduction of satellite technology should be an addition (and not a substitution) to shortwave radio. I invite you to tune in to the Voice of the Andes, and welcome you to South America!

### How to contact HCJB:

HCJB - the Voice of the Andes  
English Language Service  
Casilla 17-17-691  
Quito, Ecuador  
Phone: +593 2 466-808, ext. 441  
Fax: +593 2 447-263  
E-mail: english@hcjb.org.ec



*The Newsletter of Andes DXers Intl or Andex*

### HCJB's English Broadcast Schedule

0000-0700	9745am	21455am
0700-1000	5865eu	9645pa
	21455au	
1000-1100	9645pa	21455au
1100-1200	12005am	15115am
	21455au	
1200-1600	12005am	15115am
	21455am	
1900-2200	12015eu	21455am

*The author would like to thank Mr. Jonas, Iria Braun, Maria Aparecida, and the staff of HCJB's Portuguese section for their help in the preparation of this article.*