



HONG KONG

CHRISTIAN PUBLISHER NOT *Left Behind*

Lau Mei Po, marketing manager with Christian Communications Ltd. in Hong Kong, discussed the distribution of the *Left Behind* series in China with writer Stephanie Dickerson.

The team at Christian Communications Ltd. (CCL) in Hong Kong is not afraid to take risks. "Our company has a brave heart, with good leaders who have vision and who dare to do new things," says Lau Mei Po, Marketing Manager for the Literature Ministry Department at CCL.

Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region of China in 1997. Though continued economic freedom has been guaranteed for the region under the government of China, some prohibitions still restrict commerce with the mainland. CCL is not permitted to sell and distribute its products in other Chinese regions and provinces. In compliance with the law, CCL has donated books to libraries, churches, seminaries, and universities in mainland China.

Two years ago, however, CCL began a new partnership with a major general interest distributor in Hong Kong. CCL secured a

contract that granted that distributor the rights to distribute CCL material for the secular market, such as bookstores and chain stores. "We give the distributor a good discount and so it makes a profit," says Lau.

CCL usually publishes Christian living, family, reference, Sunday school and small group material for Chinese believers. Chinese Christians are usually not supportive of novels, and tend to be in favor of more practical Christian material. Last year, however, CCL chose to translate and publish the *Left Behind* series by

Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye.

"We took a big risk in publishing this series," says Lau. "We sent the whole series to a prominent non-Christian fiction publisher and asked for his endorsement and advice. He liked the book, respected CCL, and liked the possibility of a partnership between the two companies." The secular publisher is the official dis-

tributor for the general Chinese market all over the world, while CCL handles, translates, edits and publishes the series.

Left Behind was launched in July of 2000 and immediately made an impact. "It has been a great success with Christians and the secular world ... we are getting extremely exciting responses and stories from readers," says Lau with enthusiasm. "This series is not only entertaining, but evangelistic." Many Christians in China gave *Left Behind* as a Christmas gift, using it as a "bridge" to friends and family. It is some of the first Christian fiction published in Chinese. The second title of the series, *Tribulation Force*, was released a couple of months later, and the third title, *Nicolae*, was released in March of 2001.

CCL is now considering translating the *Left Behind* youth series. "The youth of China have

decreasing ability and interest in reading," says Lau. "CCL hopes these books will interest young people."

The Harry Potter series was introduced to China at the same time as *Left Behind*, so the distributor marketed them together as imaginative books from the western world. "We are surprised but excited at how God used Harry Potter books to get *Left Behind*

on the shelves of general bookstores," adds Lau.

This successful partnership with a secular fiction distributor has prompted CCL to consider doing more projects with specialty publishers. CCL is active in the publishing industry in Hong Kong and Lau is hopeful other publishers will be receptive to future projects.

CCL's trust, however, is in God. "We thank God to have the privilege to do this," says Lau, "This is exciting!" ❖

