

A Word of Joy FOR CATHOLIC READERS

"We want Filipino Catholics to delight in God's Word," says publisher Glenn K. de Guzman.

Word of Joy, founded by *Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon* ("Joy of the Lord"), a Catholic movement in Manila, helps Filipinos grow by promoting renewal in the Catholic church. It does this through the publication, printing and distribution of charismatic renewal literature.

Word of Joy operates with a seven-member Board of Trustees, elected each year from the *Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon* membership. Daily operations are supervised by a five-person team. The ministry has over 20 staff members.

Books

Word of Joy distributes 12,000 books each month. These resources "bring the Gospel to our Christian brothers and sisters in the Philippines," says Gerry Concepcion, marketing manager.

With a catalog of over 120 titles, the ministry offers resources on prayer, spiritual growth, pastoral development, community building, spiritual gifts, marriage and family renewal, and church doctrine. Word of Joy publishes over 10 new titles a year, with average print runs of 2,000 per title. With constant sales, though, the ministry does as many as 100 reprints per year.

When Word of Joy began, books for the spiritual formation of Filipinos "were scarce," says Glenn K. de Guzman, executive director. "The titles available were imported and priced beyond the reach of average Christian readers," he adds.

Thus, most Word of Joy releases are authorized reprints of foreign titles. Recent releases include: Charles Sheldon's classic *In His Steps, If You Only Knew* by Mary Whelchel, and *More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks*, by Wayne Rice.

Book club

To broaden its reach, Word of Joy started a book club. For an annual subscription or lifetime membership fee, readers enjoy borrowing privileges of up to three titles at any time. With a wide range of books for readers, including reference materials, Word of Joy even offers home-delivery service.

"We spread the Word of God in as many ways as possible," says Concepcion. "Our book club is one more way to fulfill our mission."

Devotionals

Another way to promote God's Word is through periodicals. Word of Joy serves 10,000 subscribers to *The Word Among Us* (and its Tagalog version *Ang Salita sa Piling Natin*), a monthly devotional magazine with daily Bible meditations.

Music and other products

"Certain population segments are easier to evangelize by means of non-traditional print materials," says de Guzman, "so Christian publishing institutions have expanded their product lines to include not only books but other products."

Word of Joy carries Christian audio products, distributing over

3,500 music and teaching tapes each month. Other items sold include inspirational cards, stationery, gift wrap, activity books for children, gift items, and even a videoke microphone.

"Diversification not only evangelizes a wider market," says de Guzman, "it enables us to keep book prices down."

In the Philippines, printing machinery and supplies are, for the most part, imported, so their cost is vulnerable to abrupt fluctuations. This affects all publishers. Word of Joy's earnings from non-book items offset rising print costs.

Challenges

"Current technology and market sophistication force us to be more attuned to the times," says de Guzman. "Word of Joy must deliver value for money but also balance costs with profits. We want to be profitable enough to survive and to continue our mission."

"We must improve distribution," says de Guzman. The Philippines, with over 7,100 islands, is a difficult territory. With a tight budget, a limited staff, and stiff competition, Word of Joy wants to reach the market more effectively. Its publications are sold primarily to religious bookstores and to charismatic Catholic communities, parishes, and individuals.

"Much work still needs to be accomplished," he adds. "We want to expand evangelization through our books." ♦