

Books to Mobilize GOD'S PEOPLE

Rosely Fornoles, of Christian Growth Ministries, describes why literature is key to its work in the Philippines.

Formerly known as Christ for Greater Manila, Christian Growth Ministries (CGM) was formed in 1961 to reach the masses for Jesus. It partners with churches to facilitate evangelism, discipleship, and holistic development.

CGM has multiple ministries. It includes Home of Joy, where care is provided to abandoned, orphaned, neglected or foster children. Some report there are over 1.5 million street children in the Philippines, with 10 percent in Manila itself.

Home of Joy's ministry includes family welfare services and child sponsorship. More than 44 percent of Filipinos are under 18, and 40 percent live below the poverty line.

CGM runs a conference center, school, campground, and film and video library. It aids churches in staff strengthening and evangelism, especially in prisons and in the least evangelized provinces. To top it off, CGM publishes books. With such wide-ranging ministries, why does CGM engage in publishing?

Equipping

"Our objective is to equip the body of Christ for effective ministry," says Rosely Fornoles, the manager of CGM's literature work. "We publish Bible-based, relevant, inspirational materials for pastors, Christian leaders, Bible school students and lay workers."

"There is such a great need," agrees Dodi Green, a CGM staffer who formerly worked for Cook. "At one church, I gave the pastor three



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books. I was shocked when the entire congregation stood up and clapped!" she continues. "Most pastors, especially in the provinces, have no formal training, and few can afford books."

Over 95 percent of all Filipinos can read. Proficiency levels vary depending on the language. The Philippines has two official languages, Tagalog and English.

"How can we minister to more people nationwide?" asks Fornoles. "We must mobilize God's people." CGM is committed to offering quality resources to equip Christians.

Evangelism

"God's word needs to be in a language people can understand," says Fornoles. "We dream of strengthening the publication of Christian books in Tagalog." The first step is to obtain materials in

Tagalog. "We can ask pastors to compile their messages," she adds. "We want to use Christian literature to reach nonbelievers."

Through partnership with Cook in the fall of 2000, CGM distributed 2,000 *Picture New Testaments* to needy families in a very short time.

Effectiveness

CGM used to run a bookstore in addition to conducting its present ministries. "It was a hard decision," says Fornoles, "but after training at Cook, we decided to close the bookstore." CGM's overhead dropped. The ministry now distributes and sells its books through the nation's largest secular bookstore chain and through Christian bookstores.

"Now," reports Green, "the publishing work is going very well. Ministry leaders want to strengthen CGM's donor base and financial position in other ways."

Two years ago, CGM published eight Cook titles. "They have been a success," reports Fornoles. "We reprinted almost all of them."

"We want additional bestsellers and must expand our contacts with foreign publishers," says Flordeliza Jalotjot, CGM's officer in charge.

Publishing profits could fund CGM's outreach work. Jalotjot and Fornoles are excited about this, but take a cautious approach. CGM is moving to new facilities in 2003, and other changes are underway.

"CGM is in God's hands," says Jalotjot. "We want to do His will." ♦