

Publishing For The Scholarly Market

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Scholarly publishing can be a long-term investment with great returns. In most developing countries there is a perceptible need for scholarly books on theology, leadership, finance, management, and other topics to train effective local leaders. The market is small but the impact is great! It is like throwing a tiny stone into a still pond. The splash is small but the ripples may reach the far shore. Why, and how, should a publisher get involved in scholarly publishing?

Why

Students in developing countries often have a limited comprehension of the language and flow of logic of their

Western textbooks. Since they do not fully understand the books, they memorize vast amounts of material. When the course is over they “erase” that knowledge and it contributes little to their life and work. This is a significant academic problem.

The applications and basic concepts in Western books often do not apply to local conditions. Family relationships, employer and employee relationships, how children are raised, friendships, teaching traditions and methods, and basic concepts of love and forgiveness often differ greatly from one people group to another. Bible truth does not change, but how to communicate it, making it come alive, is more varied than the languages of the world.

When local people begin to study in their heart language, they begin to think, talk, and teach in that language—and then to write. When they write, a publisher has the opportunity to publish.

How

Start with a topic that is popular, needed, or controversial—for example, charismatic gifts, biblical authority, end times, financial management, or accountability. First projects must be inexpensive. At the same time, they should carry a good margin of profit. Whenever possible, partner with others of like faith and practice; cooper-

ate, but do not compromise. Church Strengthening Ministries (CSM) partnered with the local Bible society to publish the first concordance of the New Testament in Tagalog. CSM has also produced a Greek-Tagalog dictionary, a Bible encyclopedia in Cebuano, and more than 60 theological texts. Scholarly publishing will not help a publisher get rich fast, but the long-term, steady income from scholarly books may help create a stable publishing base.

Five years ago we prayed for potential authors and only received one or two contacts a year. Now, CSM is considering at least five proposals that have been offered during the past two months. For 15 years Church Strengthening Ministries has published scholarly materials. Our long-term investments are yielding great returns. ❖