

TWO Strategies for Growth

by Mark Carpenter

The Brazilian Book Chamber recently released a study that shows sales of religious books have skyrocketed in the past few years. Though by far the largest market share is textbooks, over 50 percent, the second largest is religious books. Of course, the Book Chamber includes Bible sales as part of the category. Nevertheless, the growth has been incredible.

Editora Mundo Cristão has reaped the benefits. Though not all Christian evangelical publishers in Brazil have grown, Mundo Cristão has grown and steadily. Most recently, the publisher has helped the publish-

Telephone sales

In Brazil, there are very few bookstores relative to the overall Christian population. There are perhaps 1200 Christian bookstores in the entire country, compared to an evangelical population of 25 million people. Not only are there very few bookstores, but many of them are having financial difficulties and are not purchasing as much stock. To sell Christian titles into all areas of Brazil, Mundo Cristão has invested heavily in building a telemarketing publishing house has opened and three of them are dedicated to this area.

Church pilot project

Nearly two years ago, we began a pilot project selling directly to churches in the city of São Paulo, a city with 16 million people. There are 450 churches involved in the pilot program. Brazilian law does not allow churches to start bookstores. Churches are non-profit organizations and to maintain that status they cannot operate commercial businesses.

The law does permit a church to provide space for a bookstand, as long as it is not a permanent arrange-

ment, which would be considered a bookstore. Mundo Cristão has 150 bookstands available. Each one of these bookstands is placed in a church for a month. After one month, it is placed in a second church, then in a third church, and then the cycle begins again.

The quarterly cycle works in our favor. People want to see what the newest titles are. When a stand is kept in the same church all year long, fewer books are sold than when it is in the church just three or four months

ear. The kinds of books that sell well in church stands include books on the family, prayer, leadership and management, and books for children. Our translation of Normie O'Martian's *The Power of a Life*, has sold well, 35,000 copies in two years. *The Power of a Life*, released in November, sold 30,000 copies just nine days. The success is continuing to be the results of the pilot project, to determine if it is worth continuing on a long-term basis. The pilot project is a part-

nership with the Brazilian Bible Society. We constantly evaluate the product mix offered to customers and collaboration would enable Mundo Cristão to offer more Bibles in addition to books on Christian living. Meeting our readers' needs is critical.



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