

## Books Can Be Powerful Tools

It has been a while since I have sent out an edition of “*What I Hear From You*”. Your exciting testimonials of how my books have helped to change your whole perspective thrill me. But my publishing those notes has always seemed to border on immodest ego-building. However, receiving those notes still lifts my spirit and makes me feel that my work is not in vain. Those kind expressions coming from hundreds, even thousands, of you have brightened many a day for me. But then they also leave me with a feeling of sadness and longing.

I am saddened that others who struggle under a yoke of bondage in the oppressive system we have developed in such sincerity do not know they, too, can be free. Too many do not realize that there may be legitimate help in bringing a happy, acceptable liberation.

These testimonials and the more than 75,000 copies of *Free In Christ* now in print speak of their value so that I am emboldened to write this. I hope to convince you that the books can help you and can also be powerful, affordable tools for your use in teaching grace and unity. Most of the distribution of those books has been due to person-to-person advertisement. Many of you have learned the effectiveness of the printed page and have used it with rewarding effectiveness. Others have made it possible financially for me to send out over 45,000 copies of *Free In Christ* free of charge.

It is an ongoing ministry, not a business, yet profits have helped supplement our Social Security income. In the last two weeks, I have sent 122 copies in English to two areas of India where printings have been made also in the Telugu language. Thousands of copies in both languages have gone to India where readers are always eager for more.

Then, too, last week I sent \$1,000.00 in partial payment for another printing in Nigeria which makes about 9,000 printed there. I had no money in my fund for that expenditure. In Cape Town, 4,000 copies were printed last year to be given especially to preachers in various nations. Hundreds of books besides those printed in Africa have been sent in parcels through the years to disciples in various countries. There are always requests for more. Books sent to those people are not put on a shelf and forgotten. They are read eagerly – and shared.

I wish that I could send books without charge to everyone. No one receives a penny for the books printed abroad. I pay for the printing of all books in our country, so when I give *Free In Christ* free, I recover one dollar per book. When I started doing that years ago, a dollar would pay for the actual printing cost. Now it is quite a different story, as you may well assume. Since this is more a ministry than a business, I have made the books easily affordable. The profits I receive probably would not pay for hiring someone to pack and mail them for me.

After your congregation spends a few thousand dollars on a seminar or evangelistic outreach, how many testify of a dramatic change in their lives as a result of it? Perhaps, some, and that is good. Yet for the outlay of \$31.00 for the five books, *Free In Christ*, *Free To Speak*, *Free As Sons*, *Free To Change*, and *Free To Accept*, many of you have brought a person or family to a life-changing and deeply enriching understanding of the will of God.

Because they have been so effective, at the risk of being a conceited braggart, I am urging you to add the power of the printed page to your efforts. It is not enough to tell others about my web site where all of my writings may be read or printed out without charge. In the first place, I highly prefer that a person at least read *Free In Christ* before reading the “Freedom’s Ring” essays. Then, too, it requires much more openness and eagerness for learning for a person to take the initiative to look up material on the web.

Maybe you do not know anyone who is willing to read what may challenge their long-held beliefs. I do not recommend that you try to force-feed anyone. Don’t even send a book anonymously. God sent one last message to the Hebrews anonymously and Israel did not heed it.

You may cultivate an openness of mind in your family and friends by sincere discussion, asking them questions, and probing inconsistencies without entering into a contest with them about who is right and who is wrong. Have books on hand so that, when a heart is opened, you may give that person helpful material.

The Bible can certainly be taught without my books and without a preacher, but we may find both to be helpful – and the books may be much more cost effective than the preacher. (☺)

Few in our congregations seem to know or care very much about our roots. Many who have been reluctant to read of our development have been greatly surprised by what they learned from reading “*Our Heritage of Unity and Fellowship*.” In this book I have collected writings of Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett, two lovers of our heritage, who tell of our beginnings in America, the aims and purposes of our movement, our departure from those aims, and how we may regain the heritage of our pioneers from which we strayed. It is 350 pages of interesting and revealing reading.

I reprinted two great books by Carl Ketcherside, “*The Twisted Scriptures*” and “*The Death of the Custodian*” because our people so desperately need to understand their basic messages leading to grace and unity.

Then, too, in handling “liberating books,” I had to include “*I PERMIT NOT A WOMAN ... To Remain Shackled*” in which my friend, Robert Rowland, so simply and forcefully makes the scriptural case for expanding the role of women in our congregations.

I handle a few more “liberating” books, but this little library of nine books can be yours postpaid (in the USA) for only \$68.00.

One of the least effective means of teaching is the monologue, yet that is the method we depend upon the most. I spent a career teaching audiences who were distracted and, when they listened, thought I said things I did not say and, unless it was shocking, soon forgot what they thought I said. But a book stands ready to repeat the message over and over without variation – “in black and white.” And different people can read the copy repeatedly. A book is a tool that does not forget or wear out. It can sit on a shelf for years and then set a spiritual fire when it is read at last. God has not just depended on monologues from his prophets but he has given us the sacred writings also which do not grow dim or wear out.

Thanks to all of you who have helped in this outreach either financially, by telling others of the books, or by passing the books along to others. God has used them beyond what I could have imagined, and he has used some of you as partners. And yes, if you would really like to read *Free In Christ* but cannot afford to buy a copy, send me your name and address and I will send you a free copy. []

(Cecil Hook; August 2004)

Talkin’ Texas: Austin is farther south than any other capital in the adjoining states.