



A simple sentence... a profound statement.

by David Mehlis

**FINAL
FOLIO**

Beyond Ourselves

If you take responsibility for leading your team to carry out the vision God has given to your publishing house, there might be a time your faith falters. The business of book publishing is not easy. It has high development costs and low profit margins. Most books never see a second printing, and the uncertainty about the success of each new release can take its toll—especially in times of crisis.

But the Bible says, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.” (Hebrews 11:1, 2). The rest of the chapter lists people whose faith has inspired Christians through the ages. When we are discouraged, we are to look at the example set by those before us.

That is what I have done at Cook. This ministry was founded in 1875. While 130 years’ existence hardly qualifies as “ancient,” such longevity is remarkable in our industry. Cook resulted from a simple prayer uttered by David C. Cook I: “God, make all you can of my life,” and his faith, like the ancients’, inspires and encourages me.

David C. Cook I started by focusing on God—not on his own human needs and desires. What better theological starting point is there? We must fix our vision on God, on his mercy, his favor, his purposes. We need to live for something that is greater than ourselves. *Grand Hotel*, the 1927 film, one of the most powerful non-Christian evangelistic sermons I have ever seen, makes this point. The setting is a Berlin hotel in 1917. The guests at the hotel pursue beauty, fame, power, prestige, money... and all walk away empty-handed. Only God’s purposes endure.

The next word in Cook’s prayer is “make.” Our God is powerful—he created the universe. We are created in his image. When we are dissatisfied with ourselves, we must remember that we are his children, endowed with the gifts he gave us.

If today you feel like you are not good enough, remember he made you. God knows your worth. Even if no one else sees it, he sees it. He knows what your publishing house is worth, and the value of each and every product in your catalog. He cares for every person on your staff.

God, the Almighty and Sovereign Creator, does not need us. His work will happen anyway, but in our publishing ministries, he has given us the privilege of participating in it.

Cook’s prayer is a very simple sentence—with profound theology: “God, make all you can of my life.” The word “all” is unqualified. Our lives—and our publishing houses—must be completely surrendered to God.

God knows it all. He sees through all our pretenses, doubts, and fears. He understands—far better than we do—the challenges we face in our publishing as we seek to serve him. The financial statements, the production schedules, the customs paperwork, the tax regulations, every aspect of our business—nothing is hidden from him. We cannot hide our sins from him. From beginning to end, God knows.

He will fulfill his purposes. God can do anything; we live but by his grace. He is the Potter; we are the clay. May our lives and our ministries be fully surrendered to him. ❖

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