



# Speaking Volumes

*Even a little book can have a powerful impact.*

*by Isaac Phiri*

**I**t was a bright Monday morning but I felt lethargic. The fatigue from seven busy but exciting days in the Philippines was finally catching up with me. The 17-hour flight home was also taking its toll. Thankfully, it was also a quiet morning at home. My wife and children were at school, so I could lazily flip through the many book samples I had accumulated during the trip.

The piles of books included a thin little book on prayer. The author made bold claims. First, the book would teach the need to pray. Second, the book would prove that God answers prayer. I was surprised by its simplicity and drawn to its sincerity. Before long, I was deeply engrossed in this book.

I am not given to enthusiastic responses. However, I must admit that little book did and said something to me that morning.

After reading it I was encouraged, renewed, challenged and reminded of the basics of prayer in the Christian life.

Later, as I thought about the impact of that little book, the power of the ministry of literature was reaffirmed. Think of it.

The book was written by someone who was a missionary in the East African nation of Tanzania in the

early 1950s. Many of the answers to prayer described in the book took place before my time. The chapters were first presented in churches in Africa, Australia and North America as talks by the author, who died in 1981. The material was first published in Tanzania in the Swahili language. Later, the work was translated into English and published in Australia. An Australian friend brought the thin book to Manila and passed it on to me as a sample of their publishing work. Finally, the book spoke to me in the privacy of my home in Colorado.

The book gave me insights on prayer I had not heard in a while. It exposed me to the depth of reflection and spirituality of a church leader who lived before my time and served in parts of the world far from mine. The book delivered a blessing I would otherwise not have received.

I am writing this during one of Cook's International Christian Publishing Institutes, while editors from 15 nations discuss how to develop more effective editorial products. On a table, at one end of the room, is a collection of samples from the different publishing houses represented at the Institute.

One publisher from India just released a hefty Bible encyclopedia. A publisher from the Philippines has a collection of colorful Christian education books. A seminary from Guatemala has books used by lay Christian leaders to improve their Bible knowledge. A mission organization in Bulgaria has an exciting magazine for teens. A denominational publisher from Cameroon prepares a study guide for women every year.

Each one of the editors at the Institute is committed to developing publications that will touch people at home, at church, at work or in schools. They want to produce books and magazines that will bring people closer to God, that will help them and influence them for good.

This issue of *InterLit* takes us back to the enduring issue of the power of publishing. The writers remind us that publishing is ministry. It strengthens the weary, renews our passion and revives our commitment.

This is our prayer in publishing—that the books we publish will speak to readers in the same way the little book on prayer spoke to me. Books have a special ability to minister to people; our prayer is that we may discover manuscripts that can be used by God to speak love and truth to readers. ❖

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