

During the worst drought America has ever seen,  
two sisters struggle to find  
a place to belong.

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## FOCUS ON RETAIL

### Another Man's Treasure

by Kirk Ford, Owner, The Christian Store of Cedar Rapids, IA

During the summer of 2013, after two of the Christian bookstores closed in Cedar Rapids, IA, I found myself going to our local Half Price Books to browse for Christian books, Bibles, DVDs and CDs. As I was considering opening a new Christian bookstore in Cedar Rapids, I wondered why selling used products wouldn't work in a Christian bookstore! From my days at Family Christian Stores, I knew that our customers were always on the lookout for their favorite Christian authors and music artists.



A few months before we opened The Christian Store, I visited several of our local resale stores to pick up any lightly used Christian product to kick-start our used product section. The couple hundred titles I purchased seemed to sell very quickly, which was a good sign of things to come. We put a "Used Book" counter in our store, and within no time, our customers were champing at the bit to sell us their used products. Of course, we kept our purchase prices very low, but our customers seemed to be happy with whatever we could give them.

During 2020, we decided to just take product donations to keep expenses low because of decreased traffic due to the pandemic and the derecho which hit Eastern Iowa hard in August. Donations of used product began to flood in. I believe that our customers wanted to really support their local Christian bookstore! Since then, we now tell our customers that we will always take used product as donations, but we can make them a cash offer if they have some good sellable material.

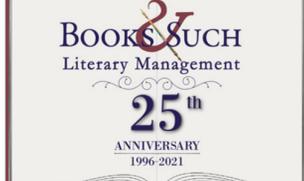
As retailers, we're always on the lookout for high margin items, and used product fits the bill perfectly. This year, our used product margins will be about 90-95% and our sales will be at least \$30,000 in that category.

Here are some keys to selling used product:

- Make your customers aware that you are purchasing used product or taking donations. You might be surprised at how many of them will just donate their used items in order to support their local Christian bookstore.
- Keep your pricing right. With a little bit of experimentation, you'll eventually find the "sweet spot" that most items will sell for.
- Keep all used items in a particular area in the store. Also, keep them neat, clean and organized (separating out various genres just like you would in your new sections). Our used product areas have a bright yellow department sign to distinguish them. Several of our guests will head straight back to the used product sections. If they can only get into the store a few times each year, they might end up buying between \$100-\$200 in used products during one visit!
- Bibles sell surprisingly well especially if they are in good condition or are a rarer study Bible. Many of our guests actually like used Bibles with the previous owner's notes written in the margins!
- We price paperbacks at \$3-\$4 and hardcovers at \$5-\$6. After we have had a used title in the store for a year, we move it to a half-off table or a \$2 table. After a few months, if it still hasn't sold, we'll move it to our FREE table. The bestsellers in this department will probably be fiction and classics.
- CDs still sell fairly well. Of course, our customers find it hard to part with their favorite artists (which are usually everyone else's favorite artists). On average, we sell used CDs for about \$3. Sometimes we will bundle several CDs together and sell them as a "lot" on eBay.
- Used (or clearance) DVDs are hard to keep stocked. Even with the advent of streaming services, there are many folks who still have DVD players and have large DVD collections.
- Yes, some of our customers are willing to part with their old vinyl album collections! We've never had success selling them at the store level, but we've been able to sell them for up to \$10 on eBay.

## FOCUS ON THE INDUSTRY

### Books & Such Literary Management Celebrates 25 Years Serving the Christian Publishing Industry



Santa Rosa, CA—Books & Such Literary Management, which was founded by innovator Janet Kobobel Grant in 1996, is celebrating 25 years serving its authors and the Christian publishing industry.

Grant says, "From the outset, I saw the agency as bigger than one person. That's part of the reason I didn't use my name for the agency. And I envisioned the possibility of dipping our toes into publishing-associated ventures, not necessarily just books. Only two other agencies focused on the Christian market when Books & Such began, and neither was headed by a woman. That left me feeling there was plenty of room to create what I envisioned."

She adds, "As time went on, it became apparent that Books & Such was instinctively headed toward being women-centric. Since most readers are women, we brought a sensibility as to what those readers were yearning for in their books."

The six Books & Such literary agents (Wendy Lawton, Rachel Kent, Cynthia Ruchti, Barb Roose, Mary DeMuth, and Grant) currently serve more than 200 clients and sell hundreds of projects each year. In 2020, five of the six agents exceeded their individual yearly sales goals.

"Sometimes it seems as though I've grown up with Books & Such," notes Vicki Crumpton, Executive Editor of Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group. "I barely remember a time in my career before Janet and then Wendy and then the wonderful team that's come together over the years. Books & Such curates a fabulous stable of authors, cares for them and their proposals like family members," Crumpton says, "and always makes my role as an acquiring editor a pleasure. They are absolutely Top Shelf in every way. Congratulations on the first 25 years...and here's to many, many more."

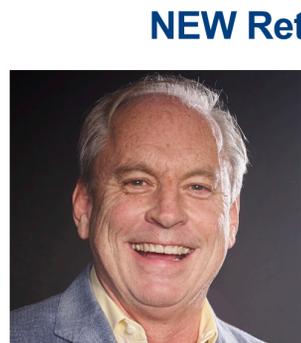
Among its year-long celebratory events, Books & Such is conducting a writing contest for unagented writers. Additionally, the team of agents will meet for a working retreat in the Sonoma, California, area. Whimsical polls and contests are ongoing with the Books & Such clients as well as bimonthly educational webinars.

With 25 years to celebrate, Books & Such Literary Management and its leader, Janet Grant, look ahead to continue serving its authors, the industry, and the reading community well.

For more information about Books & Such Literary Management, visit [www.booksandsuch.com](http://www.booksandsuch.com).

## FOCUS ON CPE

### NEW Retail Training at CPE Fall 2021



Bob Phibbs, The Retail Doctor, has been confirmed to lead a FREE, 2-hour, professional seminar for retailers on Sunday, August 15, only at CPE.

Bob Phibbs is an internationally recognized business strategist, customer service expert, sales coach, author of three books and motivational business speaker.

In 1994, Phibbs founded his retail consulting company, The Retail Doctor, and created *SalesRX*, a strategic and done-for-you virtual training. The firm specializes in working with retailers and brands who want to sell their merchandise more profitably. His clientele has included many of the *Fortune* 500, Aramark, Brother, Hunter Douglas, Land O'Lakes, Lego, MasterCard, T-Mobile, Vera Bradley and more.

In 2020, he earned the speaking profession's highest earned designation, the CSP®, Certified Speaking Professional™, achieved by less than seven percent of speakers worldwide. Phibbs was awarded World Retail Forum's Innovation Leadership Award 2020 in recognition of his efforts to help retail recover stronger from COVID-19 through his online training platform *SalesRX* and relentless messages of hope. To learn more, visit [www.retaildoc.com](http://www.retaildoc.com).

Don't miss out on this exclusive, expert training session with hands-on ideas for your store that you can start implementing immediately at the show.

CPE Fall 2021 will be August 15-17 at the Embassy Suites & St. Charles Convention Center, located less than 10 miles from St. Louis Lambert International Airport. Registration is FREE for all retailers!

[Register Now](#)

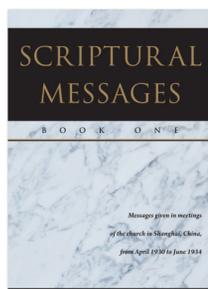
## FOCUS ON PRODUCT

### Book Review: Scriptural Messages, Volume 1

by Watchman Nee (Living Stream Ministry)

This book contains basic messages given by Watchman Nee in the church in Shanghai, China, from 1930 to 1934 originally published for young believers. Presenting expositions of scriptural passages, the topics include messages on the Passover, the salvation of the soul, redeeming the time, and a believer's worth before God. Additional volumes will be released every four months.

**How this book helps readers:** All believers, but especially new believers, need to be rooted and grounded in the fundamental truths of Christ being the reality of the Passover and of the need for an on-going salvation through dealing with the soul-life that frustrates a believer's growth in Christ.



Orders can be placed through Living Stream Ministry (1-800-549-5164) or through Ingram (Spring Arbor) and Baker & Taylor. ISBN: 978-1-5360-1169-2, \$8.25