
John Allen Chalk: Personal Correspondence

John Allen Chalk

1-6-1969

From: David Stewart

David Stewart

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Recommended Citation

Stewart, D. (1969). From: David Stewart. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hst-chalk-personal/6641>

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DAVID STEWART, Ph.D.
Executive Editor

January 6, 1969

Mr. John Allen Chalk
Herald of Truth
Highland Church of Christ
Abilene, Texas 79601

Dear John:

You may think that after our phone conversation I couldn't have researched the mass paperback market very well. But after talking with Bill Williamson of Gospel Light, I am convinced that breaking into the newsstand market is almost insurmountable.

Bill travels all over the country and has called on most of the news dealers in the metropolitan areas. In Chicago he dealt with Paul Horowitz, sales manager for one of the largest newsstand distributors in the area. The upshot of all his conversations with these people is that, whether we like it or not, people just do not buy religious titles off the paperback rack. They may pick up a title by Billy Graham, Bishop Sheen or James Pike. But an unknown author has little chance. The sex and violence things do the best. And these dealers have everything figured to a fine point--including how much each inch of display space costs them. If a book doesn't move, it goes out to the dump, and the publisher credits the dealer's account for the unsold merchandise.

Just to salve his conscience, and perhaps to prove again to himself that he was right, Paul Horowitz put several Regal titles on paperback racks in the "Bible Belt" area west of Chicago--including such cities as Wheaton, Elgin, and other small midwestern communities. The experiment was a total flop.

The upshot is that if Gospel Light can't break into the market with their excellent Regal series, we have small chance with

just one or two titles. This is why I think that Herald of Truth should consider using the book as a giveaway item. Only by advertising it over the air will the people who need it the most get it.

I am returning the manuscript, regretfully, because I would really like to see us go the paperback route with it. But in the absence of substantial sales potential, we just can't justify it. I do hope that you can work with Tom on bringing it up to thirteen lessons for possible inclusion in the Living Word series.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David".

David Stewart

DS/ks