

A Study in Failure, Part 3

In response to God's call, we were starting a small, specialized publishing company. Our focus was getting Christian materials into the hands of people who wouldn't go to a Christian bookstore and buy and read a book. God had led us through the planning stages. (See "A Study in Failure, Part 1", and "A Study in Failure, Part 2".)

In the fall of 1998, we released our first two pocketsize books, *Knowing God* and *Simple Prayers*. The following February we released *For Servants of God* and *The Satisfied Life*, then another two in August, *The Most Beautiful Way to Live* and *Step by Step*. In 2000 through 2002, we published six more: *Seeing God in the Darkness*; *Christmas Is Jesus*; *Your Will Be Done*; *Daily Love*; *Make Music to the Lord*; and *Help Me Pray*. These twelve included evangelistic books and devotional books, both seasonal and non-seasonal, touching a variety of topics and uses.

In spring, 2000, we published the first issue of a free quarterly newsletter, *Knowing Christ*. Then in late 2001 we launched our website, LNWbooks.com, containing only the 12 pocketsize books. A fellow employee named Ross Kimbrough built that first edition of the website. It was soon taken over by my daughter, Kindra Bible, then a young computer programmer.

My wife, Gloria, my partner in the business, helped as much as her time allowed, primarily taking care of our mailing list.

People seemed to love the product. It was meaningful, fresh, attractive, and very practical. The website gradually built up good traffic.

But the company was only a few years old when I began to realize that I couldn't make it profitable. Running my own business, being responsible for most of it by myself, had brought me face-to-face with my own weaknesses and limitations. It was only me, and even with my years of experience, there were important publishing functions I couldn't do well. I'm weak in marketing, and in sales I am the world's worst! That's right: THE worst. In high school I couldn't even sell band candy, and who doesn't love a chocolate bar?

The product was beautiful and had great content, but I lacked the ability to get the circulation up to profitable levels. Hiring someone was out of the question.

After 12 books, we quit releasing new titles. We let the program continue for several years after that, and we did our best. But we knew that a difficult decision was coming. Without God's miraculous intervention, the company could not survive.