



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Over 30 years ago, I was "introduced" to a man named Charlie "Tremendous" Jones. Though he was the guest speaker at and for an event to which I had been invited, "introduced" was far more than a from-the-audience description. I've always tended toward front-rows; that day, I secured an up-close spot so that I wouldn't miss a thing.

That day, I was introduced to Mr. Tremendous. He wasn't a *mechanical droner*; Charlie was an *animated engager*. To hear Charlie "speak" was to enter into a conversation with a peculiar ("*strange or odd; unusual*") person. Beyond that communication distinction, he was also known to involve non-verbal elements to his addresses. When Charlie "worked a crowd," it was the front row (*remember where I was*), and he would punctuate his wisdom with his reference to "thumb-suckers," and point that jab at the "close enough to touch" audience. Before he was finished, everyone within reach had either been popped or hugged by the 6'4" business success on the dais.

Charlie became a lifelong friend and occasional mentor. From Charlie, I was affirmed on a pursuit that had already captured my commitment. As he put it, "*That was the beginning (his own introduction to Jesus Christ at age 22) of an adventure that has*



grown more exciting and meaningful for fifty-six years. My life has been blessed by the lives of many great men but none like the miracle power of a book. A book you can hold, hug, feel, smell, underline, memorize, realize and even caress. Many of the great men that have shaped my life have been dead many years. Fred is special in my life because of his love for Jesus, Oswald Chambers and Fenelon. For me I've added Spurgeon, Tozer and Nee plus many others. The leader needs three categories of books: his profession, biographies and devotionals..."

Charlie never pulled punches regarding the importance of reading, or relationships: "You are the same today as you will be in five years, except for two things: the people you meet and the *books you read*." I believed that... and I acted on it. Though Charlie's first - and, highly successful - career was in life insurance, his animated articulation of the prerequisites for success made his "second half"

role as a Christian business speaker the basis for his broad reputation and relationships.

His passion for reading was behind the founding of Executive Books, the private company through which Charlie published, reprinted and/or distributed millions of books to people who had more to learn before they would reach their zenith in life.

When leaders - men and women alike - find their way into **The Master's Program**, one of their earliest comments is: "do you really expect me to read all these books?" (about 28 are provided, over 36 months). My answer: "eventually." Why? Because, "Leaders are Readers." Where did I hear that? From Charlie "Tremendous" Jones. His words: "The heart of my life is books."

Last October, Charlie filed a "change of address:" he moved from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to heaven.

Charlie would love the summer emphasis on books. What have you read, most recently? What are you reading, right now? *Are you becoming different because of the people you meet and the books you read?*

Book reviews, beginning next week. Most weeks this summer, I'll feature another book. *Thanks, Charlie, for the great wisdom you gave me when I was 22...*

Bob Shank

Bob Shank is Founder and Chief Mentoring Officer of The Master's Program (TMP).

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