

Let the bread bake awhile

There is increasing pressure on the large number of people entering public ministry to attain instant "exposure." Unfortunately, only a few are wise enough to realize that bread taken too soon from the oven always falls.

The quickest way to obtain exposure—and credibility—is to have someone write a book on your life. Somehow, seeing it on paper makes folks think you've obtained favor with God and man. Sadly, though, most modern books come off the press like Ephraim—a cake not turned.

A ministry should first obtain credibility. The book should follow. Writers and publishers have a responsibility to prospective authors which may compel them to say, "Come back in 10 years—when the dough no longer sticks to the broom straw." I know from personal experience that nothing is more exasperating than trying to help a man crank a car which has no gas.

Last week a man who, for some years, has been established by God in a credible ministry, sent me a copy of his earlier book. It was poorly written, had an abominable cover, and—except for copies bought by his mother and a few friends—had gone unsold. Years before, while his

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yeast was still leavening, he became impatient and employed a writer. He got his book. It came off the press with the consistency of raw dough.

"Can you fix it up?" he pleaded.

But like the sailor who fell in love with Juanita and had her name tattooed across his stomach in huge letters—and then wanted it removed when he got ready to marry Susan—he should have waited. A person has but one life story. If, because of greed, anxiety or impatience he chooses to write it too soon—it's too late to fix it up after he has 5,000 copies stacked in his living room. (And if you think it's hard to get rid of books, you ought to try peddling phonograph records where you've accompanied yourself on the accordion.)

Books aided Kathryn Kuhlman's ministry. But she was wise enough to insist her life story be told only after she died. She didn't need to establish credibility.

Lesser lights, desiring to burn brightly for God, should be willing to follow the same pattern—and remain in the oven until the loaf is done.