Words, words, words. They’re everywhere. Clogging our Inboxes, filling our computer screens, and plastered on billboards and the occasional city bus. My days overflow with words—the ones I think, the ones I speak, and the ones I write. As an author/editor, I’m always searching for just the right sentence or turn of phrase. I agree with Mark Twain, who said, “The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.”

Like the firearm I held once—only briefly because it frightened me—I’m ever conscious of the power of words. King Solomon, a writer himself and the author of the books *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes*, agreed. “Death and life are in the power of the tongue,” he said in Proverbs 18:21, “and those who love it will eat its fruits.”

As I interviewed actor and comedian Torry Martin for our profile piece this month, he reminded me how life-giving the right words can be. Socially awkward and a poor student, he was flunking out of school until one teacher’s words unearthed the writing seed that was just beginning to sprout. Years later six words from his pastor gave him the courage to take the risk that fully launched his writing career.

Henry Foster, the visionary behind the art studio/office/library/meeting and fellowship space called The Climb, also embraces the value of words. In our cover story, he describes the mental give and take that happens over meatloaf and mashed potato lunches at his place. “We have meaningful conversations about religion, relationships, books, art, writing, financial stuff, you name it,” he said. “There are men who are able to give advice, share wisdom, and provide encouragement, and others who need all three.”

And finally, in a shout out to godly fathers, Christy Fitzwater shares how her husband uses his words as well as his actions to demonstrate God’s love to his children.

The apostle Paul, in Ephesians 4:29 admonished, “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” His words form a fitting plumb line for everything we say.

As you read this issue of *Reach Out, Columbia*, I hope you’ll realize anew the mighty weapon we wield with our words. We can choose to use them recklessly and destructively, or we can use them wisely and effectively. As Emily Dickinson once wrote, “A word is dead when it is said, some say. I say it just begins to live that day.”

When harvest time comes, what fruit will we reap from the words we have sown?

May God be glorified.

Lori