

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

MURRAY PURA

Take every good and decent opportunity God brings your way to get your stories and books out there. Don't turn down anything. I say this because I have friends who won't publish anything, anywhere, unless there's a big contract or big advance attached. Most of them are still unpublished. Don't begin with arrogance. Begin with humility and gratitude. And stay that way.



Murray is the author of over 60 books, including non-fiction (devotional, travel, theology, biography) and fiction. Recently, Murray presented a paper on Dylan Thomas and his poetry at the Conference on Christianity and Literature Western Regional Conference. He has spoken in Toronto, Vancouver; Halifax, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Denver. Murray continues to pastor and write in southern Alberta, near the Rocky Mountains.

Your New Executive



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The New Executive brings strengths from all sectors of society. From school board trustee, to architect, foster parents, former pastors and pastor's wives they run the gamut. All are passionate about growing INSCRIBE to a new level of professionalism, accessibility and credible presence across Canada.

The New Executive brings the strength of seasoned professional writers and the fresh enthusiasm of newer writers. Together they will rise to the challenges as they are presented. All will serve you in your pursuit of writing excellence, education and encouragement.

A Visitor's Perspective

Travelling to Wetaskiwin for the 2013 Inscribe writer's conference, I wondered what awaited me; what the facilities were like, who I would meet again . . . It has been several years since I attended a writers' conference, so was looking forward to seeing what I would discover.

I felt the positive atmosphere of hope and excitement as creative people met to share life's stories and experiences and to encourage each other.

Everywhere, there was someone with a pleasant "hello" or enquiry about how my life and writing were going. Everyone was helpful. It was a blessing seeing writers face to face, having read their blogs and other writings.

The meals were good and I appreciated all the hard work that went into preparing them.

It was exciting to meet old friends, and be introduced to new ones.

The book displays were interesting and well presented.

The workshop leaders had interesting presentations and helpful comments on our writing and shared their experience.

The main speaker had helpful tips on marketing, had interesting stories to share, and good encouragement for us to keep writing. He said, "let your words go out into the world as you never know where they will bless, give unexpected opportunity, or challenge someone."

In all it was a refreshing experience and gives me courage to keep on writing.

© Janice Mansell, Red Deer

I started writing when I was nine. At that point they were simple stories I wrote for my mother . . .

Murray Pura

FALL CONTEST 2013

WINNERS:

Blog Post

First: **Janice Dick** of Guernsey SK for **After all These Years.**

Second: **Janet Sketchley** of Dartmouth, NS for **What do Writers Need?**

Third: **Shirley Williams** of Barrhead, AB for **Inspired Writing vs Disciplined Writing.**

Fiction

First: **Isabel Didriksen** of Gwynne, AB for **She Came with an Alabaster Jar.**

Second: **Bryan Norford** of Lethbridge, AB for **Give the Dog a Bone.**

Third: **Shirley Tye** of Little Britain, ON for **Starling Havoc.**

Honourable Mentions: **Carolyn Wilker** of Kitchener, ON for **Of His Own Accord.**

Glynis Belec of Drayton, ON for **The Light.**

Devotional

First: **Andrea Kidd** of Longview, AB for **The Castle.**

Second: **Sandi Somers** of Calgary, AB for **The Slashed Tire.**

Third: **Glynis Belec** of Drayton ON , for **Whistler's Mother.**

Honourable Mention: **Janet Seever** of Calgary, AB, for **What is Your Plumb Line?**

Poetry

First: **Jan Wood** of Big River, SK for **Dad Talk.**

Second: Not Awarded.

Third: **Dayna Mazzuca** of Victoria, BC for **The Garden Poet.**

Honourable Mention: **Carolyn Wilker** of Kitchener, ON for **Retirement.**

Essay to Theme

First: **Bryan Norford** of Lethbridge AB, for **The Road to Ready.**

Second and Third: not awarded.

Barnabas Award

Winner: **Brenda Leyland** of Sherwood Park, A

Brenda exemplifies an exceptionally high skill level in composition/execution itself, producing work of excellent quality (likely earned through the prolific amount of writing she's done—a *thousand* posts!—and fuelled by her dream to "help and encourage women").

She seems to have a particularly sound and mature theology that informs her writing (her devotional piece is really well done). She knows her path in nonfiction writing and follows it up through ongoing education. I think she's going to go far—the sort of writer Inscribe can be proud to support.

Special Mention; Kimberley Payne of Millbrook, ON

Kimberley is enthusiastic beyond belief, and it shows up in her joyful tone (in article and throughout the application form). She exhibits commitment to writing and continual improvement; as well, she is very productive and is a diligent marketer of her published works.

I love her goal-oriented focus (15 years of recorded goals in a folder!) and also her very clear statement of what she would intend to use the Barnabas money for (hiring an illustrator for her next book).



Contest Winners

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write . . ."
Exodus 34:27

Then the angel said to me, "Write . . ."
Rev. 19:9

BARNABAS RULES

The **Barnabas Fellowship** is a grant of \$250 enabling a member of InScribe to further his or her progress in writing. This cash award is presented annually at the ICWF Fall Conference. The Fellowship is named for Barnabas, a co-worker with the Apostle Paul. His story is found in the book of Acts. Barnabas means "encourager" which coincides with the purpose of this award. The recipient will be chosen by a panel of judges whose task is to select the writer they think will most likely benefit from this grant. Carefully read the following rules before making application.

- Applicants must hold a current InScribe Christian Writers' Fellowship membership.
- Application must be postmarked no later than August 31 of this year.
- Both published and unpublished writers may apply.
- The form below must be completed entirely and included with the application.
- In addition to this form, the applicant must supply the following with the application:

Biography / brief history of your writing experience: describe when you became interested in writing, the progress you have made, courses you have taken, conferences attended and any other relevant information. Length: no more than one page.

- Curriculum vitae / summary of published writing: include books, magazine articles, poetry, newspaper features, columns, etc. You can include work published in church bulletins and newsletters. If your work has not been published in any form, mark "Never published" on your curriculum vitae. Length: no more than one page.
- Personal essay / explanation of your writing goals and how this award could help you.
- Tear sheet of a published article / photocopy is permissible: demonstrating your writing ability. If you have not been published, send 1-3 pages (maximum) of your writing as a sample of your work.
- Recipient will not be required to account for their use of this grant but ICWF asks that the winner respect the stated intention of this Fellowship award.

Please send copies (not originals) as no applications or manuscripts will be returned.

CONTEST WINNERS' ENTRIES

Devotional Winner

THE CASTLE:

"For this is what the high and lofty One says – he who lives forever, whose name is holy: 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite'."

Isaiah 57:15

Hard stone walls, rough against my skin, tower above me, high and alone on the hill top, haughtily overlooking the busy neighbours greeting each other in the market place below. These domineering castle towers are strong to keep out intruders; the arrow slits are manned with archers ready to attack any who dare to approach.

My heart is like that castle. My guard is up. My self sufficiency is my pride. I need no man by my side. My position is attack. My armour has no crack. I accept nothing. I owe nothing. I am rich in myself and need no one else.

But my castle walls hide a soul that is pitifully poor. I must protect the poverty of my spirit from outsiders, withdraw from sight, back into my castle with the drawbridge raised. My riches are inadequate, fed by fear and useless activity. I guard my empty, lonely heart.

Jesus says, "Come out of that prison that you put yourself in. You know your spirit is thirsty for life. You're so tired of the effort to maintain this strife. Drink deeply from my bottomless well of fresh, clear water." He invites me to leave the dark keep* and cross the moat. "Toss your boots aside," He smiles, "and wiggle your toes in my lush, green grass. See the white daisy-stars and blue harebells I made for you. Feel the breath of my Spirit in the breeze; let it dispel your fears; let it ease away your resentment, your criticism, your cynicism, your shame and hurt pride. Let my Spirit fill you and preserve you from evil, releasing you to stand tall. Let go of your will, let the castle crumble. Your heart is safe with Me and no one can measure my peace.

My rules crippled me; my iron will ruled me. Now I choose to dwell under the sovereignty of the One whose truth has the right to dominate me and in that domination I find an inexplicable freedom.



"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3)

*A "keep" is the term for a strong central fortress inside of a castle, which usually contained stores of food, water and weapons for use during sieges.

© Andrea Kidd

... Contest Winners' Entries

Blog Post Winner

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

"You'd think I'd have learned to cook after all these years," I complain as I slide the dried-out beef roast from the oven. I should have added more water; I should have covered the roaster; I should have just dumped a can of mushroom soup on top. After thirty-odd years of assembling three squares a day, give or take, I can still make a royal mess of a meal.

The same can apply to my writing. After thirteen years, I sometimes wonder if I've learned anything.

Every time I start a new novel, I determine to take a more direct approach. This time I'll follow Donald Maass's Breakout Novel workbook; this time I'll create detailed character arcs even before I start writing; this time I'll map out the story into three acts, making sure the main turning points fall at appropriate places.

I'm trying to avoid the messy stuff, and writing, like cooking and life in general, tends to be messy. There's no way around it. We must push through various difficult phases until the finished product is pulled out of the creative oven.

Writing takes a lot of work. Period. There will be preliminary phases where we don't quite know our characters, developmental phases where the whole thing resembles a bland soup, and organizational phases where things seem to be coming together, only to reveal great gaps that need filling.

The important thing for us to remember is to keep at it. Continue to learn, continue to practice, continue to improve. And let's not allow ourselves to be derailed by occasional or even frequent failures. These are simply methods that did not work—this time.

Nothing worthwhile comes easily, therefore I will cook more beef roasts. I will write more novels. I will continue to attempt to live my life to please my LORD because that's what I'm here for. Cooks cook; writers write and people who love the LORD live for Him through the messy stuff. Life is made up of opportunities waiting to be used.



You'd think I'd have learned after all these years that:

"Mistakes are made, I'll not deny, but only made by those who try."

© Janice L. Dick

Poetry Winner

dad talk

Sitches in ear and knee, goose egg on forehead
you've fallen again, and are distraught
trying to remember
the weight of a quart of milk,
something you used to know
in your dairy business days
now churns in an unreachable circle
you try to hide the shame and guilt you feel
for not knowing the answer
want to know how you will sleep

we pray
we give thanks for what was given in the time of need
it becomes your mantra
thank you Lord for the answers when i needed them
we talk about the wheelchair
and God not expecting you to stand
you ask forgiveness for not remembering anymore
is it any different
to lose use of a leg or a bit of memory?
we talk of yokes and burdens
and cups that do not pass from us

i came for your blessing tonight
like Elisha i wanted a double portion
yet, you thank me for teaching you
as crumb by crumb i feed
you from the bread on which you raised me



© Jan Wood

You have a contribution to make that God put in your heart. Be faithful to that.

Murray Pura

Fiction Winner

SHE CAME WITH AN ALABASTER JAR

The 'old boys club' ruled the world, women were meant to be in their homes, caring for children, cooking, cleaning. But Mary was a woman of the night. Pompous men had no respect for her—she was an object to be 'used'. Mary had no respect for herself either. For too long she had been told she was dirty, useless and unwanted, except for men's pleasure.

She had followed the crowds that were perpetually around the newest man in town, the one said to be from Nazareth. Mary longed to get closer to him, not because he was a man, but because she felt drawn to him by a strange 'power,' but the crowds were dense, and she was always pushed to the back. "You don't belong here—you filthy woman—we know what kind of woman you are!" Beaten down, she would retreat into the shadows, hating those who called her names, hating herself, hating the world.

The man named Jesus was becoming more and more famous. Mary heard some say that he was the Messiah, the long awaited one, the one she had heard about from the elders. If he truly was the Messiah, maybe she could get out of her hateful way of living.

One day, she took all of the money she had earned and walked down to the market place. People stepped aside when they saw her coming, not wanting to be 'contaminated.' Looking for a very special item, she went up one side and down the other, searching, searching, and then she saw it! A beautiful alabaster jar—carved into a round shape, polished and smooth, almost white, but with a slight yellow/pink tinge.

"That is exactly the right thing!" Paying the merchant, she continued down the street, looking for something else. Rounding a corner, in a hidden away shop, she caught a wonderful aroma on the breeze. She hurried into the shop and inquired about the perfumes. The man eyed her suspiciously, however, not wanting to lose a sale, he brought out various jars and held them up for her to smell. The perfume in one was so overwhelming that she was almost dizzy. When she asked how much it would cost, she was astounded to hear that it was exactly the amount she had left in her pocket! "I'll take it. Thank you very much."

Every day, she looked at the alabaster jar and dreamt about how she would present it to the Messiah. Then she overheard a Pharisee inviting Jesus to come to his home for an evening meal. She decided that this would be the time to bring her gift to the Messiah. That evening, as the shadows grew darker, she walked down the street, careful not to draw attention to herself or pay any heed to the occasional man who would make a suggestive remark. She was on a mission and would

not be deterred. When she arrived at the Pharisee's house she peeked in the window to see where the men were sitting. Jesus reclined at the table, talking to those gathered. She saw the kindness and concern on Jesus' face and knew she HAD to get near him. The alabaster jar almost burned her hand, as she held it close to her body. She stepped to the door and knocked. A servant opened the door and ushered her in. The men were so absorbed in what Jesus was saying they didn't notice her. Quietly she walked towards Jesus' back, her heart pounding so loud she was sure all could hear. She knelt down beside Jesus' feet, which extended out behind him. Carefully she opened the jar, allowing the sweet fragrance to fill the room. Bowing down, she began to weep while pouring the perfumed oil on his feet.

Memories of her past and present sins rolled over her, but she felt power and love emanating from this man—so different from any other man she had ever met. Tears blended with the oil to wash the sand and grim from his feet. Totally awed, she bent down and dried them with her hair.

"Forgive me! Forgive me! I am not worthy to be forgiven, my sins are too many."

In the distance, she heard the Pharisee talking to Jesus, but she didn't care. All her tears and emotions were suddenly spent, but rather than feeling empty, she was filled to overflowing with a peace that could not be described. Peace like she had never known in all her life; peaceful and clean at the same time.

Gradually she became aware of the words Jesus was saying to the Pharisee, something about two men owing a debt. Then he turned to her and the words he spoke melted her heart again. "Your sins are forgiven" She didn't consider how he was able to say those words, she just accepted them. She knew they were true, and without a doubt she was certain she had been cleansed from her sins. It wasn't because she was good or because she had spent her last money on the alabaster jar and the perfumed oils, it was simply because she knew Jesus loved her—unconditionally. All she had to do was humble herself before him and repent.

She gathered her cloak around her, picked up the alabaster jar, quietly turned, and left the room. She heard the Pharisees debating about how Jesus could forgive sins, but she paid no heed; all that mattered was that her sins were forgiven.

She made her way toward home, feet barely touching the cobblestones. A song of praise arose from

her spirit to the Almighty God, the Father God of generations past. It was true, the Messiah had come! Tears of joy flowed but quickly stopped—her sins were forgiven! She did not need to weep anymore!

© Isabel Didricksen



. . . Contest Winners' Entries

Essay to Theme Winner

THE ROAD TO READY

He was hardly worth a glance. Nothing about him drew me to him. His unkempt appearance—hair matted with blood and sweat, *probably drunk and fell*, my first thought; his beard in tufts and holes, his face disfigured with lines and scars of suffering—kept my face averted. I stole the briefest glance as I passed by.

He smiled at me. I glanced back. His smile belied his condition, lighting up a tired face. My mouth twitched into a fleeting smile as I walked on. But something bothered me. Despite his unruly appearance, his clothing was clean. It struggled for ordinary: crumpled plaid shirt, jeans, and an old unbuttoned raincoat. But it was clean. I stopped.

Pretending to watch children in a playground I pondered this contradiction. The homeless were common, and this man fitted the bill, but incongruent. A mother gave me a long suspicious look. I turned away and walked haltingly back. He was still there. Passers-by, if they noticed him at all, barely hid their disdain.

I stopped short. That smile again; it drew me as much as his appearance repelled me. I fumbled in my pocket. *Clearly glad to see me, I can spare a few coins.* He shook his head and patted the seat beside him. *If it wasn't for that smile . . .* I sat beside him. He wiped his brow with a stained handkerchief. His head was still bleeding. He took the clean handkerchief I offered.

I limped out a few words. "Are you okay?"

"Today is better than most," he replied

"You've had a hard life?" I volunteered.

"Oh yes. You can see I have the scars to prove it. But I'm satisfied."

I wasn't sure I could claim satisfaction, although my life was way above his. *Surely I must have something to give.* He read my thoughts.

"You've already given it to me," he said,

"How so?"

"You're here aren't you? Your presence is sufficient."

Some people passing looked at us, puzzled, curious, derisive. My sitting with him created a strange scene.

He went on. "But I have something for you."

He put his hand in his raincoat pocket and pulled out a loosely crumpled page of exercise paper. I gave it a questioning look. He nodded towards me, urging me to take it. I thrust it in my pocket, and he looked away. It was as if I wasn't there; rather, that *he* wasn't there. It was time to go.

I smiled at him and walked on. The experience haunted me. The talk was bizarre. He'd implied he had more to give than I did, outwardly a straight

contradiction matching his inconsistent appearance. However, as I pondered the meeting, a bright side emerged. Perhaps this was something I could write about. But who would believe my report? Even if they did, it seemed meaningless; why would anyone read it?

I arrived home, the incident fading from my mind usurped by urgent things. I emptied my pockets onto my desk. I glanced briefly at the crumpled paper, smiled and tossed it in the waste basket. I enjoyed a pleasant evening with my family in a warm comfortable home. But I woke in the early hours of the morning, the incident etching itself afresh on my mind. I arose. Perhaps if I wrote about it, the cathartic exercise would excise it from my mind.

I switched on my computer and looked at the blank screen for some minutes. Again the incident seemed pointless, not really worth writing about. Yet it continued to dog my thoughts. Whatever it was I wanted to say, I was not ready to say it—not even sure what to say. I switched the computer off.

"Honey, take the garbage out," reminded me of my morning chore. I collected a bag, poured the contents of each can into it, including my own. The crumpled paper lay on the top. I retrieved it, tossed it on my desk, and took the garbage out. That evening, I faced my empty screen once again.

I opened the paper up. It contained a two inch stub of a pencil, probably his last writing implement. There were words written in pencil on the sheet: "The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught."

I wondered why a tramp on a park bench would give me this. What had it to do with my inability to write? I knew the facts; there should be nothing to hold me back. Then it dawned on me. I was not ready to write because I was not ready to listen. My arrogance flashed before me: pride assuming he was inferior and had nothing to offer me.

Images of the suffering Christ flitted across my vision, epitomized by the scars of this old man. Identification with Christ infused his speech; mine driven by pride and knowledge was blocked. I looked up Isaiah 50:4 he had quoted, and read in the following verses it led to suffering—originally of Christ, but also to those who might follow Him.

Other Scriptures tumbled out. For Paul it meant filling up in his body what was still lacking in Christ's affliction, Colossians 1:24; that Christ took the lowest station humbling Himself to the death on the cross, Philippians 2:8; only by taking up his cross, and losing his life could a person follow Christ and find life, Luke 9:23–24.

My thoughts turned back to the man on the bench. Who was he? I'd passed that way many times before but had never seen him. Again, Scriptures popped up.

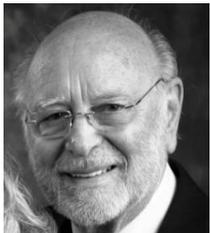
. . . Contest Winner's Entries

Whatever we do for the least, we do for him, Matthew 25:40; the hated Samaritan recognized the one in need as his neighbour, Luke 10:36–37. Whoever this man was, he had represented Christ to me, awakening the astounding fact that God expresses Himself in humility.

I stuffed his paper and pencil stub in my pocket and wandered back to his park bench. It was empty. I sat in his place for a while hoping he might appear again. He didn't. At least, not in person. But I recalled his written words to me. "He wakens my ear to listen." I began to realize I needed to express myself, like Christ, from humility. But to do that, I had to *listen* in humility.

The stream of passers-by continued as the day before. Some nodded or smiled a greeting. They hadn't to the old man on the bench the day before. They probably wouldn't to me if they could see inside my heart. I began share in the old man's humiliation; their greetings seemed trite. My pride shattered, Proverbs 18:12 came to mind: "Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honour."

To represent Christ I needed to share in the fellowship of His sufferings. Then I could see the world as He saw it: cruel but precious. I understood the significance of the despised vagrant. I pulled out the pencil stub and screwed up paper, ready to write.



© Bryan Norford

God chose to give us His word in written form. Do not belittle the 'writing of words' or let anyone else belittle that calling on your life. In everything you do, including your writing, never lose sight of the fact that you are a child of God. In the end, remember that you are ultimately writing for Christ, so do all things, large or small, for Him

Murray Pura

WRITING IN THE MIDST

I imagine finding time to write, while working a regular 9-5 job would be challenging on its own. I wouldn't personally know though, I don't have a regular job, mine is more of a 7 am to 9 pm volunteer position, and I often work overtime. I work from sun up until sun down Monday through Sunday raising my four boys.

As a single parent my days are certainly busy. However when I put my mind to it, I've found there is always time to write. I believe the discipline developed at a young age, as I would write journals to vent my thoughts, but it developed into more as I discovered I had a knack for writing.

A few minutes here and there while the children nap, or are otherwise preoccupied eating lunch or playing quietly adds up to more than one would think. There are nights I forfeit a half hours sleep, or a sink full of dishes when inspiration strikes so that I can capture my thoughts while they're fresh.

I find writing to be soothing to my soul, and a welcome mental release amidst the incessant chatter of small children.

At first I felt I wasn't good enough, and then I realized it didn't matter. Should no one ever lay eyes on my works it is enough for me to enjoy the creative outlet, the mental stimulation and the joy of seeing my thoughts in print, whether they be typed or handwritten.

There is an underlying hope that one day my words shall be an inspiration to others, such as yourself; if you have the desire to write you would make the time and realize sometimes the dishes can wait.

© Carrissa Kurtz

Carrissa lives in Melville, SK. She is a part-time auto detailer, full-time mom and avid book reader. She occasionally finds time to edit articles for grammar. Recently she submitted a piece on Overcoming Challenges to Chicken Soup for consideration.

The more you read, the more people you meet, the more places you go, and the more prayers you pray, the more you have in your story well. You dip your bucket in at any time and there is always a story for you to draw out

Murray Pura

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Murray Pura, multi-published author, treated conference goers to some encouraging and inspiring words. Several important themes surfaced during his sessions.

Perseverance

He talked at length about the need for perseverance and cited some personal examples where a couple of his own books took long and twisted roads to publication. His advice? If you are genuinely excited about writing, then never give up! The writing life is not unlike the life of faith. There will be ups and downs; trials and disappointments.

Writers throughout history have faced many obstacles. Even iconic writers have had to face rejection and criticism, so you are in good company. Persevere because 'you know that you know,' in both your faith and your calling to write, for the call to write is as powerful a ministry as that of a missionary, pastor, or evangelist. In fact, as writers, we can go places that we can't go as 'other' people. As a writer you are like a 'Christian Without Borders.'

God chose to give us His word in written form. Do not belittle the 'writing of words' or let anyone else belittle that calling on your life. In everything you do, including your writing, never lose sight of the fact that you are a child of God. In the end, remember that you are ultimately writing for Christ, so do all things, large or small, for Him.

Write Like an Artist

Another important thread running through the weekend was the idea that writers are artists. In fact, he says, "Dare to be an artist." There is a lot of formulaic writing out there, but there is a growing desire for something deeper. People are getting tired of reading simple fare. This trend toward books that 'transcend genre' is appearing throughout the publishing industry, including within Christian circles. To transcend genre means to write so well that it resonates with the human heart. It will connect with people beyond their typical genre and even beyond the Christian market.

Strive for an entertaining story that also has a deep message. He advises: "entertain, engage and enlighten." To write eloquently does not necessarily mean you are 'highbrow.' Write distinctly, write deeply, write well. Be faithful to the creativity in you and stay true to your own voice and calling. Of course, you can be influenced and

inspired but that is not the same as being an imitator. Be unique. Maintain your distinctive voice. We may learn from one another, but we aren't looking for homogenized writing. Instead, celebrate differences.

Seize Each Opportunity

Another important message was, "Do not despise the day of small things." In the Bible, Elijah prayed for rain and kept asking his servant to see if there was anything on the horizon. Finally, there was a cloud in the distance the size of a man's fist. This small cloud turned into a storm that flooded the land.

Like that small cloud, seize each opportunity, no matter how small. Take whatever opportunities come your way, paid or not. You never know what might come of it. As long as the offer is decent and morally sound, say, "Yes I can!" Even if you are afraid or feel inadequate, do it! You just never know when a small beginning will lead to something bigger.

Murray shared a wonderful example of this when he wrote a short story for a professor who then asked for permission to publish it for free in a magazine. This led to more stories in the magazine which was subsequently read by a well know author who then recommended him to a publishing house.

The snowball effect continued and Murray attributes this small beginning to his breakthrough into the American market and several book deals with well known

publishing houses. Be faithful in the small things for you never know what God's bigger picture might look like. It may be the smallest and seemingly most insignificant offer that brings the biggest gain.

Practical Tips

Murray also shared some information about the practical side of the writing life. He talked about finding an agent, the importance of social media, the changing face of the publishing industry, and the resurgence of 'serialization' and the huge impact it is having.

He also dealt with the self-discipline of writing. You are in control of your muse, not the other way around. If you are serious, you won't wait for inspiration. You will sit down and write and the inspiration will come to you. Once you start the flow usually comes and the more you write as a disciplined act, the easier it becomes to summon the muse. Push past procrastination and ignore your own excuses. The more you write, the better you

God chose to give us His word in written form. Do not belittle the 'writing of words' or let anyone else belittle that calling on your life. In everything you do, including your writing, never lose sight of the fact that you are a child of God. In the end, remember that you are ultimately writing for Christ, so do all things, large or small, for Him.

... Conference Highlights

will write and the easier it will be to write. Use up all your good ideas. Don't save them for the next book. When you do that, more good ideas will come. He says he doesn't have time for writer's block. There is too much writing to be done!

For anyone who missed the conference, I would encourage you to buy the recorded sessions. There is a lot of great information as well as encouragement and inspiration.



© Tracy Krauss

Tracy is a high school teacher by profession, and a prolific author, artist, playwright and director by choice. She is an Inscribe Member. Tracy lives in Tumbler Ridge, BC



Outgoing President Jack Popes with Brenda Leyland



Tracy's workshop



Murray in Session

SEVEN TIPS FROM MURRAY:

- Write distinctly, write deeply, write well
- To transcend genre means to write so well that it resonates with the human heart
- You are in control of your muse, not the other way around
- Push past procrastination and ignore your own excuses
- Dare to be an artist
- Be a Christian Without Borders
- If you are genuinely excited about writing, then never give up!

OUR BLOG WANTS YOU

Are you looking for an opportunity to share your writing, develop your craft and connect with an enthusiastic online community of bloggers who share your love for God and your passion for writing? Then you might want to consider becoming a contributing writer on our blog InScribe Writers Online.



Begun in 2006 on Blogger, InScribe Writers Online was created at a time when some of our InScribe members didn't have a website, and blogging was beginning to capture the attention of the average person as a new and easier way to get one's message out there. Writers were also recognizing the possibilities of gaining exposure for their work.

With the aim to encourage and support our members in their writing journey, InScribe Writers Online provides you with a place and an opportunity to publish your writings in a public forum as well as build an online community with fellow writers. The blog's main target audience is our own membership across the country, although we are pleased to also draw in readers and writers from places beyond our borders.

REGULAR INSCRIBE BOOK REVIEWER NEEDED:

Fast reader – accurate - good at critique and offering a hook. We are looking to develop new talent. These books would be solely books written by Inscribe members who want a book review.

Compensation – keep the books reviewed, regular contributor – no pay.

*APPLY: Sheila –
fellowscripteditor@gmail.com
Other book reviews still welcome!*

So, who can be a contributor? Anyone who is a member in good standing with InScribe Christian Writers' Fellowship is welcome to join. Our contributors are a mixed group of published authors, developing writers, and people who are just beginning their writing journey. Whether or not you're published, you are invited to use this venue as a way to practice your writing craft, develop your message and take part in the conversation with our bloggers and readers. If you join our monthly roster, you would be making a commitment to post once a month and to follow the topic schedule. Sometimes there is a waiting list to get on the roster, but don't let that stop you—we keep a few dates open for the occasional 'guest blogger.'

What about blogging experience? Having some experience is an asset, but not necessary. Posting guidelines are available on the blog (which we are updating). Currently, each writer posts his/her own pieces on the blog. If you're not familiar with blogging, not to worry, we are happy to help you get started.

Wondering what our bloggers write about? At this time, our contributors post on various topics based around two main themes: writing and faith/spiritual matters. As we consider the focus for 2014, there will be opportunities to write about your own works in progress and there will be months when we'll use writing prompts and specific themes.

Our current needs? We are looking for 3-5 new monthly bloggers for 2014, and any number of occasional guest bloggers.



*Brenda Leyland, Blog
Moderator*

Contact Info:

Brenda.inscribewriteresonline@yahoo.ca

*To visit InScribe Writers Online, go to
<http://inscribewritersonline.blogspot.ca>*

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Murray Pura