



## 2009 WRITERS' CONFERENCE

### MEET OUR SPEAKERS

#### **LINORE ROSE BURKARD**

Linore Rose Burkard creates Inspirational Romance for the Jane Austen Soul. Her characters take readers back in time to experience life and love during the Regency England era (circa 1800 – 1830). Fans of classic romances, such as *Pride & Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Sense & Sensibility*, will find a kindred spirit in Ariana Forsythe, a feisty heroine who finds her heart and beliefs tested by high-society London.

Ms. Burkard's novels include *Before the Seasons Ends* and *The House in Grosvenor Square*. Her stories blend Christian faith and romance with well-researched details from the Regency period. Her books and monthly newsletter captivate readers with little-known facts, exciting stories, and historical insights.

Publishers Weekly affirms, "Ms. Burkard's command of period detail is impressive, evident in material details, but also in dialogue. Her novels even help non-Regencyphiles learn the difference between ladies' pelisses and spencers...On the whole, it's a tasty confection."

Ms. Burkard began writing when she couldn't find a Regency romance with an inspirational twist. "There were Christian books that approached the genre," she says, "but they fell short of being a genuine Regency. I knew that many women like me wanted stories that are historically authentic and offer glimpses of God's involvement in our lives. So, I finally gave up looking and decided to write one myself."

Ms. Burkard was raised in New York, where she graduated magna cum laude from the City University of New York with a Bachelor of Arts in English literature. She lives with her husband and five children in a town full of antique stores and gift shops in southwestern Ohio. Her hobbies include writing four new Regency novels, family movie nights, swimming, and gardening.

#### **DEB PORTER**

Deb Porter is from Sydney, Australia, and has been a long-time member of FaithWriters.com, joining in November, 2001, and working with FaithWriters founder, Scott Lindsay, since 2003. Her passion and enthusiasm for FaithWriters stems from her early realization of its enormous potential for encouraging, equipping, empowering and inspiring Christian writers – particularly those taking their very first steps into the public writing arena.

This passion for FaithWriters and its members is easy to understand in light of Deb's own personal ministry, *Breath of Fresh Air*. Her work at FaithWriters flows naturally from her mission statement: "To take a message of love, grace, encouragement and wisdom to Christian men and women of all ages, race and social status, using every form of media and communication available; so that they may believe in their God-given potential and rise up to take hold of the destiny that He has prepared, in advance, for their lives."

Deb is a published writer, editor, and popular public speaker, with a particular gift for communicating in a way that is both enjoyable and easy for readers and listeners to understand. Deb spoke at the inaugural US conference held in Detroit in 2007. She is also the writer and presenter of the weekly *Cool Country Gospel Hour* on Western Sydney radio station, 2KA.

As the Coordinator of the FaithWriters' Writing Challenge, Deb has helped to shape this weekly contest into arguably the most popular aspect of FaithWriters.com. She is the editor of the FaithWriters' anthologies, and acts as coordinator and reviewer for the FaithWriters' Book Review section.

As well as her work at FaithWriters and through Breath of Fresh Air, Deb also runs her own business, *Finesse Writing and Editing Service*, and will be starting a publishing company in the near future. Once again, this gives her the opportunity to help writers become everything they were created to be.

### **CORINNE SMELKER**

Cori Smelker was born in England, educated in South Africa, and now makes her home in San Antonio. She may be vague about nationality, but when it comes to writing she's specific and passionate. She loves nothing more than getting people to talk about themselves and their area of expertise in order to share their knowledge with others.

Her previous jobs include teacher (short-lived as she realized she'd actually have to teach!), corporate trainer, and curriculum and technical writer. She writes for many local and regional publications. She is a moderator for Faithwriters and enters the Writing Challenge on occasion.

Cori was a speaker at the inaugural FaithWriters' Conference, and her professionalism and experience as a freelancer provided invaluable information for all those who attended. She is also the winner and champion of the 2008 FaithWriters' Page Turner Contest, one of the most prestigious awards given at FaithWriters for manuscripts with the greatest reader appeal and potential for publication.

### **JAN ACKERSON**

Jan Ackerson joined FaithWriters four years ago, and it became an instant addiction for her. Although she loves to enter the Writing Challenge, she believes the best thing about FaithWriters is the sense of community—of writers helping and encouraging other writers—and the close friendships that develop there. It was through FaithWriters that Jan discovered her love for critiquing, editing, and teaching writing.

Jan will be celebrating her 34th anniversary on the conference weekend—without her husband Ben! They live in Michigan with their toilet-flushing cat, Sophie. They have two married daughters, and their first grandchild will be here very soon. She has recently retired from 30 years of teaching teenagers with learning disabilities, and she looks forward to seeing what God has in store for her retirement years.

Jan is the very deserving winner of the 2008 FaithWriters' Best of the Best award for her short story, *Sniggles*. The Best of the Best award is given to the most outstanding entry received in the Writing Challenge over the previous 12 months. Jan not only placed first (out of over 1,500 entries), but she also placed third with her poem, *A Poet Rests in the 131st Psalm*. A number of Jan's other entries were also in the running for this award.

### **DAVID IAN**

David Ian is an author whose writings have been performed for stage, video and radio, as well as being published. He is a national award-winning playwright and his two-time winning "Shakespeareanesque" play *Esther, the Hebrew Queen* was sold out every evening it was performed. His Christian material has been performed all across the country, and his space opera series *Burton Sound Byte* has been published in various literary magazines and performed for live audio drama.

He has conducted writing seminars for Christian groups, international writing conferences and has guest lectured for college and high school classes. David is the founder of Unchained Productions, and when he's not writing or teaching about writing, he is acting, directing, and doing fight choreography, as well as live sound effects for the stage, radio and film.

David was also a speaker at the inaugural FaithWriters' Conference in 2007, where he left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of those who were present.