

June 7, 2008

Janet,

I always understood the power of story. But never in a million years did I think I would become a Christian fiction author.

I didn't find a personal relationship with the Lord until I was in my mid-twenties. At that time, I thought Christian fiction was a plastic version of secular fiction. I wanted to write about real-life issues, real-life characters, and real stories of redemption. In fact, my first four books were true-crime stories that came out of my time as a Los Angeles Daily News reporter. Those books were an answer to prayer - that I might work at home with our newborn daughter. But after writing four crime books, I'd had enough. I wanted to write fiction, deep, emotional stories that would touch the hearts of my readers. Stories that would change lives. When I wrote my first novel, *Where Yesterday Lives*, I passed it on to a friend who worked at a Christian bookstore. After she read the manuscript, this friend smiled. "Obviously God is calling you to write Christian fiction," she told me.

I shook my head. "No. That's not what I'm hearing." I proceeded to submit my manuscript to half a dozen publishers in NYC, publishers I'd worked with and knew about from my experience as a true-crime author. Always their answer was the same - we love it, but we're not interested. One editor wrote, "Your novel made me laugh and cry. I loved every page. But it has no sex and no language. I'm not sure what genre we'd place it in, so I have to tell you no."

I was baffled and discouraged. Finally, my friend from the bookstore told me to read Francine Rivers' book, *Redeeming Love*. I fell into that story, and when I finished I dropped to my knees and cried out to God. In that precious hour I repented for thinking His work would somehow be second-best or plastic. I knew from that moment on that I would seek to become a Christian novelist, to change lives with the power of story and to do so by telling fictional tales of real-life issues, real-life redemption.

Now, I'm receiving more than five hundred emails every week from readers telling me that God used one of my *Life-Changing Fiction I* titles to make the difference in their lives.

A few days ago, a woman reader wrote that she and her husband had contacted a lawyer about getting a divorce. They would take care of the details after her husband returned from a two-week business trip to Europe. After he'd left, this woman read *A Time to Dance*. God used the story to so move her and change her, that as she set down the book, she picked up the phone and purchased a next-day flight to Europe. She surprised her husband at his hotel room, and with tears in her eyes she told him, "I read this novel. I'm not ready to give up on us." She stayed the night and gave him the copy of my book. "Read it," she told him, "and call me when you reach the states." A week later the woman received a phone call from her husband. With tears in his voice he told her. "I read the book. I'm not ready to give up on us, either." The two are now making plans for counseling and have renewed a lifelong commitment to each other. The picture of God at work through the power of story.

In the course of life as a novelist, I've learned to watch for the quiet whispers, the words from a friend or a publisher or agent that just might set the course for the next leg of the journey. And I thank God for that long ago friend, the one from the Christian bookstore who took the time to pass on that novel to me, and for my readers who today are passing my books on to other people. The power of story must be shared in order to be realized. That's something God has made extremely clear along the way.

That newborn daughter of ours? She's a senior in high school, with five younger brothers, and none of them have ever known a single day where I did anything but work from home. They have shared in the ministry of fiction, and they are reading the books themselves, allowing God to speak to them through fiction in a way that's stronger, somehow, than even our precious talks together.

And so I thank God daily for His guidance and direction, His gift of characters and plot. And for the way my life and the lives of the readers continue to be touched by the power of story.

Blessings in His light,

Karen Kingsbury  
Pacific Northwest

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**KAREN KINGSBURY** is America's No. 1 Inspirational Author. There are more than 6 million copies of her Life-Changing Fiction (TM) titles in print. Several of her novels are currently being developed into feature films. Kingsbury's titles have hit the New York Times and USA Today bestseller lists, and have generated unprecedented activity around her website - [www.KarenKingsbury.com](http://www.KarenKingsbury.com). Kingsbury is best known for her Redemption series, Firstborn series, and Sunrise series, along with titles such as *Even Now*, *Ever After*, and *Between Sundays*. Karen also writes songs with several of country music's top singers and songwriters. She lives in the Pacific Northwest with her husband, Don, and their six kids - three of whom are adopted from Haiti.

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