

Inside Story

Support Canada's Christian authors

The talent indeed is willing, but the market is woefully weak

"How many Canadian authors who are Christian can you name?" is the question on the front of bookmarks I've been handing out recently. On the back are 18 names: Marg Brouillette, Sigmund Brouwer, Phil Callaway, Hugh Cook, Connie Brummel Crook.... I've given them out at Word on The Street in Toronto, home education and Christian teachers' conferences, Equip, Missionfest and church library conferences. I've also mailed them to interested individuals, churches and bookstores.

Many people recognize Sigmund Brouwer or Phil Callaway, although they often add, "He's Canadian?" Connie Brummel Crook's name is recognized by school-aged children, teachers and home-schooling parents. The adults often add, "I wondered if she might be a Christian!"

But the majority of names on my list are recognized only occasionally, or vaguely. And that saddens me.

"Who cares what the author's nationality is?" one person asked. "Isn't a good book just a good book? Does it really matter if we know who the Canadian authors are?"

I believe it does matter.

We are Canadian. We have our own history, traditions, mannerisms and abilities. We need to know what God is saying to the creative minds in our country.

God gives gifts and talents, not for the pleasure of the individual with the gift, but for the benefit of the rest of the body. The ability to write is a talent through which people can use gifts such as teaching, leading and exhorting.

Unfortunately, here in Canada, many talents for writing are being buried, either because the people with the talents have little encouragement to develop, or because those trying to use their talents face an uphill struggle to get their work in the hands of people who need to read it. Unless we make an effort to identify, encourage, support and develop people's gifts and talents, we will all lose out.

But even finding our published authors can be difficult.

The Christian book publishing industry in Canada is not strong. Canadian presses tend to be small, denominational or ministry-related, and lack the resources to do much promotion. Secular publishers publish some Canadian authors, like Connie Brummel Crook, but their books may not be found in Christian bookstores.

For various reasons, some authors choose to self-publish. They should be admired for their tenacity, but their road is steep and rocky.

The vast majority of books in our Christian bookstores come from U.S. Christian publishers. These include Canadian authors Janette Oke, Sigmund Brouwer, Phil Callaway and Linda Hall—all prominent



international authors.

However, even these authors may not receive specific promotion in Canada. Several years ago at a Canadian Christian Booksellers Association convention I visited a booth and asked to see a copy of a Canadian author's new release. It took a good five minutes of hunting by three men in suits before they found a copy. It had not occurred to them to do anything special to promote the book in Canada.

I recently asked several bookstore owners if they have many customers asking for books by Canadians. The answer was a resounding, "No." One bookstore owner said that telling people a book is written by a Canadian author is almost a negative. Another case of the prophet not being valued in his or her own country?

On the secular front, Canadian authors are recognized as among the best in the world. There is no reason why our Canadian authors who are Christian should not achieve the same kind of recognition.

Janette Oke has already received numerous awards, including the Gold Medallion Award, The Christy Award of Excellence, and the Life Impact Award from the Christian Booksellers Association International. Both Sigmund Brouwer and Linda Hall were nominated for Christy Awards this year. Connie Brummel Crook has won numerous awards. The quality is there.

I believe if we start asking our bookstores and libraries for books by specific Canadian Christian authors, we will create a demand. And increased demand will in turn create more recognition and support for the writers we already have as well as more opportunities for new writers.

My goal in this column is to profile Canadian authors who are Christian, not merely giving information about their books, but presenting a glimpse into their lives—who they are and why they write what they do—so those who would benefit from reading their books will know how to find them.

Nancy Lindquist is versatile writer, whose work includes four novels for teens. If you would like a Canadian authors' bookmark (or enough for your church) contact her at or phone toll free: 1-877-842-8754.

[Top](#)

[Home](#) | [Opinions](#) | [Archives](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Extras](#) | [Press Room](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Search](#) | [Contact](#)
[contact the webmaster](#)

