

Inside Story



Versatile writer leaves his mark

Author makes a name for himself writing books for others

You won't find Kevin Miller's name on all of the 30 books he's written, co-written or edited. They may say instead: Larry Burkett, Rick Osborne or another name you may recognize. Some of these books were co-authored; others written completely by Kevin—but the bottom line is that the farm-boy from Foam Lake, Saskatchewan is on his way to becoming a household name.

Kevin was drawn into the world of writing from childhood. Books, magazines, movies, comic books—words captivated him. "I've always found something magical about the written word," he says. "I fell in love with the idea of writing and the challenge of telling a really good story."

Kevin's parents didn't discourage him from writing, but they did urge him to find a more reliable way to make a living.

However, the dream to write full-time didn't die. "Probably the biggest influence on me during my growing-up years was my Grade 9 Social Studies teacher, Mike Fedyk. Mike was an avid comic collector, and he even wrote his own stuff. He allowed me to read through all of it—as well as his valuable comics. This really fired my imagination and inspired me to write my own comics and stories."

After high school, Kevin attended Columbia Bible College, where his first article was published in the campus newspaper. Following that, he attended the University of Waterloo, where he studied social sciences. After spending a summer planting trees—Kevin's second season—he wrote and self-published *The Tree Planter's Survival Guide*. "I sold about 1,200 copies across Canada and made a tidy profit," he recalls.

After working for a short time in youth custody, in September 1996 Kevin landed his first writing job as a reporter/photographer for Northern Pride newspaper in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. "It was a dream come true—writing for a living. But after nine months, I felt I'd reported on virtually everything there was to report on in that small town."

So Kevin and his new bride, Heidi, moved to Vancouver, where he hoped to become a screenwriter.

While he worked towards his big break, Kevin took a job with Lightwave Publishing in Maple Ridge, B.C., a production house that developed and sold books, games, videos, and other products to the Christian publishing industry. Over the next two years, Kevin says he "wrote books, book proposals, a treatment for an animated children's series, you name it."

Unfortunately, Lightwave ran into financial difficulties and had to lay off most of its staff. However, Kevin continued to freelance books for them over the next two years. "Some of these were co-written. Others were written completely by me but marketed under the name of a known author," he says. "I won't tell you which books were which."

While Kevin may wish he received more acknowledgement for some of his



early work, he doesn't have any regrets. "The experience was positive overall in that it allowed me to develop my skills on the job and to make some excellent connections and friendships in the industry. The credentials I developed at Lightwave have allowed me to write and edit for people all over the world, from Australia to Ireland."

Today, Kevin is able to choose what he writes. He is currently working on a supernatural thriller screenplay with director David L. Cunningham, and helping launch a new magazine called Clarion: Journal of Spirituality and Justice. He also has several novels and screenplays in various stages and still does some editing.

Kevin became a Christian when he attended a church camp at the age of nine. While his faith has impacted his life, it hasn't always impacted his writing as much as it does now. "More and more," he says, "I believe in writing as a prophetic activity. That means my spiritual state is as important as my ability to communicate through the written word. Ideally, everything I write should come as a result of time spent with God. I don't always attain this ideal, but it is my goal."

Kevin also enjoys teaching others what he has learned. He and his family (wife Heidi, three-year-old son Huw, and two-year-old daughter Gretchen) are in Kona, Hawaii from January to May where Kevin is helping lead an author's training school at YWAM's University of the Nations. This is the his second short-term stint with YWAM.

The farm-boy from Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, has indeed come a long way. Kevin Miller's appropriately named web site is www.kevinwrites.com

N. J. Lindquist is a versatile writer, whose work includes four novels for teens. If you would like to see some Canadian authors' bookmarks (or enough for your church) contact her at njlindquist@rogers.com or phone 877-842-8754.

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