

2010 Presbyterian Writers Conference Breakout Session Descriptions

Please note that each breakout session will last 50 minutes to allow 10 minutes passing time between classes. Choose A or B for each time slot.

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

10:00 a.m.

A. Drinking Deep: Commercial Songwriting As Spiritual Practice (Kyle & Lydia Gott)

*How do you write a great song? We will explore the practical and spiritual discipline of songwriting. We will also explore developing a pop song that holds water theologically, emotionally, and commercially. **Song submissions are welcome for analysis. All typed lyrics and/or music (.mp3 format only) need to be submitted no later than April 1 in order to receive professional feedback. Please limit one song/lyric per person. Email to KyleGott@aol.com. You must attend the class to get feedback on the material.***

B. Writing from the Heart: Daily Devotions As Craft (Mary Lou Redding)

Those who are sensitive to words already know much of what goes into crafting effective devotionals—even if they're unaware of it. This workshop will guide participants in identifying what they already know about this subject, introduce the many markets for short devotionals, and help writers get assignments for writing devotionals.

11:00 a.m.

A. An Introduction to Screenwriting (Jon Nappa)

Today's market is hotter than ever for inspirational motion picture screenwriting. There are growing numbers of opportunities for new writers to break in. Gain every advantage you can by understanding proper screenplay and treatment form, knowing who to send it to, and what makes a commercially viable project. Learn tips about budget and casting considerations, asking price and contract negotiations.

B. The Subtle Touches of Good Writing (Cec Murphey)

We can't easily define the difference between good and excellent writing, but quality writing shows. After three decades of mentoring writers, Murphey shares the secrets of restrained-but-powerful prose.

2:15 p.m.

A. Songwriting Collaboration: A Recipe for Disaster or Healing? (Kyle & Lydia Gott)

Co-writing can be a spiritual exercise. But unlike co-writing a book, collaboration on a song means agreeing on a very small amount of material. The phenomena of co-writing is both daunting and liberating depending on who you are in the room with. We will practice collaboration and talk about finding safe, creative communities in which great songs are written. Also, we will explore the emotional dynamics as well as the practical aspects of co-writing.

B. Ten Tips to Breaking the Publishing Barrier (Anita Higman)

In this workshop we'll discuss finding and filling holes in the marketplace, generating fresh ideas, and creating a great opening and title.

3:30 p.m.

A. The Occasional Writer (Mary Lou Redding)

How to write while holding down a full-time "real" job.

B. The Right Tools for the Right Job: Building Your Magazine Article (Mike Brewer)

Shaping your article is like building a house: The writer needs a clear blueprint that fits the goals of the article. Learn the most common article structures and how to select the appropriate "blueprint" for your subject matter.

4:30 p.m.

A. Manuscript Preparation (Cec Murphey)

Prejudice editors and agents in your favor by making your manuscript look professional. Because of the glut of submissions, editors look for reasons to reject your manuscript. This class shows you how to get editors and agents to regard you as a professional because of your presentation.

B. Stringing for Presbyterian Publications (Jerry Van Marter)

Hungry Presbyterian publications are always looking for good stories, which means they are always looking for good writers. Tips on how to pitch a story, who to pitch a story to, and what kinds of story ideas are most apt to grab the attention of Presbyterian editors.

Thursday, April 29, 2010

10:00 a.m.

A. Finding and Working with a Literary Agent (Greg Daniel)

B. Having a Dynamic Editor/Writer Relationship (Denny Boultinghouse)

Every author will have an editor, even if they don't want one. What is the role of editor and how does that mesh with the author? We will mention a few hints to develop this relationship into a strong asset in the book process.

11:00 a.m.

A. Maximizing Your Creativity (Anita Higman)

This workshop will cover a list of 40 ideas to help writers think more creatively. Some of the concepts covered are: a dream diary, brainstorming with the clustering method, stream of consciousness writing, interviewing your characters, creating a prompt box, and some of the enemies to our creativity.

B. Before You Collaborate or Ghostwrite (Cec Murphey)

Working with another writer can be exciting or difficult and sometimes both. It's a lucrative field, and people constantly seek others to help them get articles and books written. Learn what kind of skills and temperament you need to work for others.

1:15 p.m.

A. Writing Fiction with a Purpose (Jon Nappa)

In our calling to demonstrate God's manifold wisdom to all of creation, fiction is an excellent opportunity to wield allegory, metaphor, and other devices to demonstrate profound truth to a culture in desperate need of seeing what God sees. Learn how to weave powerful truth-telling into your novel that empowers, inspires, enlightens, and builds up your readers.

B. Online Opportunities to Build Platform and Create Community (Twila Belk)

Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, blogging, e-mail, and online articles are some of the methods you can use to make connections and get the word out about you, your book, or your ministry. We'll discuss networking, creating community, building your platform, and best of all—the benefit of doing it in your pajamas.

2:15 p.m.

A. The Proposal and the Pub Board (Denny Boultinghouse)

In this session we will discuss some of the makeup of a good proposal that will capture the attention of the pub board. We will examine some of the dynamics of the who, what, why, when, & how of the pub board.

B. Why Not Write Your Personal Experience? (Cec Murphey)

Personal experience articles are the easiest to sell and a good way to build your résumé as you move toward becoming a professional writer.

3:30 p.m.

A. Turning Facts into Truth: Using Fiction Techniques in Nonfiction (Mike Brewer)

We live in a culture glutted with information, but starving for truth. We can turn dry facts into vital truth when we adapt fiction techniques in our articles and devotionals. Hook readers and grab their emotions.

B. How Your Publication Tells Your Story (Jerry Van Marter)

If you aren't excited about the story you're telling, neither will your audience. Get tips on how to inform, inspire, and invite readers into the story your publication is trying to tell. Learn the basic principles of good storytelling, what to leave in, what to leave out, and how to write stories that will most effectively tell your story.