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A Newsletter of the Amy Foundation



Celebrating 25 Years of the Amy Writing Awards

By Mary Jackson

This year the Amy Foundation marks 25 years of encouraging and empowering Christian writers through its writing awards. Each year, the Amy Writing Awards gives a total of \$34,000 to writers whose articles present a biblical perspective on a current topic, include a Scripture quotation, and appear in a secular publication.

Over 350 prizes and \$836,000 have been awarded since 1985, when founder and businessman Jim Russell

what was dubbed, "the Christian ghetto." Christians had their separate set of reading materials while the rest of the world was fed a non-biblical version of current news and trends, with the exception of the Sunday Religion page. Rather than gripe about it, Russell decided to act. First, he bought a typewriter and on a Florida vacation he tried to write his own article to submit to a newspaper. After many fruitless attempts, he told one interviewer: "I really am not a writer. So I began to consider how I could motivate Christians who were writers to be bold in their proclamation of biblical truth."

When Russell and his wife Phyllis first launched the Amy Writing Awards, 154 entries came in. By

Jim Russell recognized the special value of Christian writing, and he wanted to establish a forum in which it would continue through the years.

launched the writing contest as a way to "get God's truth and biblical principles out there in the marketplace of ideas."

Russell passed away in 2005 at the age of 80. He was a visionary who shared a growing frustration with many evangelicals in the 1980s of

"Jim Russell recognized the special value of Christian writing, and he wanted to establish a forum in which it would continue through the years," said Bill Campbell, the 2009 first prize winner of the Amy Award. "That has happened," he said.

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Prayer Requests

We believe "The prayers of the righteous availeth much." We invite you to pray with us about various aspects of the Amy Foundation Ministry.

Amy Prayer List:

- Amy Writing Awards — increased number of submissions in 2010 as we move to include submissions that are published online.
- That the Internet Syndicate will reach new outlets and more people will be able to access these excellent, professionally written columns dealing with today's issues from God's perspective.

Start planning now! If you or anyone you know would like to submit an article to the Amy Writing Awards, check our web-site for details as to how to enter. Entries must be postmarked on or before January 31, 2011 to qualify for the 2010 Amy Writing Awards.

Spread the Word!

The Pen & Sword is now published online only. If you or someone you know would like to receive a notice when the next issue is posted, along with a link to the online edition, send your e-mail address to amyfoundtn@aol.com

Pen & Sword

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► Celebrating 25 Years, cont'd from p.1

"I am most grateful; I am sure other Christian writers share my profound gratitude."

As an offspring of the awards, the Amy Foundation encouraged church congregations nationwide to start their own writing groups, providing support and materials for the "Church Writing Group Ministry." Also in the late 1990s the foundation started the Amy Internet Syndicate, its own syndicate with biblically-based articles from a pool of talented writers available free to secular newspapers.

The foundation and awards are named after the Russell's fifth and youngest child, Amy, who was born with Down syndrome. Russell's son, Jim Russell, Jr., along with a board of directors, oversees the foundation and continues to promote the mission of the awards to "recognize creative, skillful writing that applies in a sensitive, thought-provoking manner the biblical principles to issues affecting the world today, with an emphasis on

discipling."

With the newspaper industry in a state of fluctuation and decline, the Amy Writing Awards program is now accepting online entries. Articles that have been published on the web pages of mainstream, non-religious newspapers, news or e-magazine websites are now accepted.

"We believe that the Internet has the opportunity to increase the awareness of the Amy Writing Awards," said Jim Russell, Jr. "With so many newspapers having online editions, and the space in those online publications being virtually limitless, the potential to expand participation in the Amy Writing Awards is tremendous." ◀



Amy Internet Syndicate

Free - Fresh Commentary and Ideas
just a CLICK away!

Real Answers™, a variety of editorial page opinion columns, are now available for your use simply by downloading them from **The Amy Foundation Internet Syndicate**.

- The columns are free. We do ask you to identify your publication, city and state.
- New columns appear weekly. We suggest you publish *Real Answers*™ on a regular basis so your readers will anticipate finding this informed commentary on the same days and at the same place each week.
- Should you need to do minor editing, please do not remove either the publication credits at the end of the column or the biblical references within the text.

Visit www.amysyndicate.org or call 877-727-4262.

 The Amy Foundation
Discipling Our Nation in this Generation

Congratulations to the 2009 Amy Writing Award Winners

You can read the full text of all 15 winning entries for 2009 at www.amyfound.org.



Bill Campbell
Rachel Coleman
J. Mark Fox
Rusty Wright & Meg Korpi
Jodi Whisenhunt
Norris Burkes
Michael McManus
Mary Cinadr
Janice Lane Palko
Bill Dunn
Rev. Steve Cornell
Claudia Brantley
Patty Mondore
Dr. Delvyn Case
Ed Jordan

The Clay County Advocate-Press; Flora, IL
The Southwest Times; Liberal, KS
The Times News; Burlington, NC
The Sun; San Bernardino, CA
McKinney Kids Magazine; McKinney, TX
The Elk Grove Citizen; Elk Grove, CA
El Dorado News-Times; El Dorado, AR
The Saratogian; Saratoga Springs, NY
Northern Connection Magazine; Pittsburgh, PA
Republican-American; Waterbury, CT
The Morning Call; Allentown, PA
The Herald-Journal; Spartanburg, SC
Thousand Islands Sun; Alexandria Bay, NY
Portland Press Herald; Portland, ME
Idaho State Journal; Pocatello, ID

Pen & Sword Interviews 2009 First Prize Amy Award Winner Bill Campbell

To read Bill's winning article, "Faith and Football," go to our website, www.amyfound.org.

Q: How do you get your ideas for articles or books?

A: I function much like a sponge in gathering my ideas to write. When people around me are hurting, and/or happy, my eyes and ears are always open. Unusual social events or happenings attract me and pull me inside to learn more. Then, people and events provide a means for Scripture to be applied and better understood in actual context.

Q: How do you structure your writing time?

A: I cannot write according to a pre-set schedule or agenda. My thoughts and ideas emerge when I do not rigidly structure myself. My heart and mind are able to flow best when I free them to respond naturally. I believe the Holy Spirit is able to best function in this way.

Q: What resources do you depend on for writing?

A: It depends upon the nature of what I am writing about. If I am writing creatively I want to have a good dictionary to give word definitions, as well as synonym and antonym information. Should I be researching a particular subject, I want to retrieve the available information from research volumes. Anything I choose to write about, I try and see how others have written about it.

Q: What inspired your Amy Award winning article, "Faith and Football"?

A: It all began at a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. This unusual football game was touched upon by the pastor in his sermon. I was convinced the story had a great Christian message underlying it. I found

the Christian message through the words of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive," (Acts 20:35).

Q: How did you go about marketing the article and getting it published?

A: For five years I wrote the weekly religious article for the *Clay County Advocate Press* (Flora, IL), where I lived until recently. This was one of the many articles I submitted each week to the newspaper.

Q: How did you hear about the Amy Awards?

A: I heard about the awards through the publisher of the *Clay County Advocate Press*, Bob Hiemenz. He would always bring me copies of the *Pen & Sword*. I noticed in this newsletter the appeal for writers to submit articles. ◀

Bill Campbell has transitioned out of pastoral ministry into serving as a church consultant in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has published numerous works, including three books: *The Magnificent Journey*; *The Magnificent Church*; and *The Magnificent Life*. Possessing degrees through the doctoral level, Bill has been an adjunct professor at St. Louis Christian College and Cincinnati Christian Seminary. As a mentor to pastors and a community leader, Bill has been an active contributor to many lives.

Here are some of Bill Campbell's favorites:

Books:

One Small Barking Dog by Ed Gungor
Everyone Communicates Few Connect by John C. Maxwell
The Me I Want To Be by John Ortberg
How to Reach Your Full Potential for God by Charles F. Stanley
ReChurch by Stephen Mansfield

Periodicals:

Christianity Today
USA Today
Newsweek
Reader's Digest
Guideposts

Web resources & blogs:

www.churchcentral.com – Church Central
www.barna.org – George Barna
www.godissues.org – Dr. Jim Denison
www.billeasum.com – Bill Easum

The Amy Writing Award

Submit Today!

15 writers will receive \$34,000 in cash prizes, including a \$10,000 first prize.

To learn more or to read past winning articles, visit our website

Your information is safe with us.

The Amy Foundation will maintain the newsletter's email distribution list and **will not sell or give out** any personal information.

Tell us a discipling story

Do you have an interesting discipling story to tell? Send a vignette (200-400 words) about a situation or interaction that led to your discipling another person—or group of people—in an unusual or unexpected way. How was God faithful in supporting, reinforcing or extending your obedient actions?

Send stories to:
Pen & Sword
Editors,
Amy Foundation,
P.O. Box 16091,
Lansing, MI
48901;
or email
amyfoundtn@aol.com.

Pen & Sword's Summer Reading List:

Summertime often provides extra time to read and reflect. Here are four inspiring and provoking books, along with excerpts of reviews by trusted sources, that are sure to encourage you in your walk with Christ. Two of the four books are recent releases; all are available online through most preferred book wholesalers.

Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy by Eric Metaxas (Thomas Nelson, 2010).

"In 'Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy,' Eric Metaxas tells Bonhoeffer's story with passion and theological sophistication, often challenging revisionist accounts that make Bonhoeffer out to be a 'humanist' or ethicist for whom religious doctrine was easily disposable. In 'Bonhoeffer' we meet a complex, provocative figure: an orthodox Christian who, at a grave historical moment, rejected what he called 'cheap grace'—belief without bold and sacrificial action."

—Joseph Loconte, *Wall Street Journal*, April 23, 2010.
Editor's note: Joseph is a

former 1st prize Amy Award winner.

Somewhere More Holy: Stories from a Bewildered Father, Stumbling Husband, Reluctant Handyman, and Prodigal Son by Tony Woodleif (Zondervan, 2010). Editor's note: Tony was the 2008 1st prize Amy Award winner.

"This is not an easy book, because it shows a real man with real failures—but Tony Woodleif delights in his children, and God uses them as a means of grace to teach Tony about his need for Christ. The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy that women shall be saved by childbearing. Men who fear fatherhood should realize that they need children even more."

—Dr. Marvin Olasky, Provost, The King's College, and editor-in-chief, *World*.

The Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity by Nancy Pearcey (Crossway, 2004).

"There is a line in one of Darlene Zschech's numerous Hillsong masterpieces in which she laments that she wor-

ships passionately on Sunday but then 'can't even find my Bible on Monday.' It is an apt description for many of us who claim to be Christians, especially among Evangelicals and Fundamentalists. Faith is kept in a neat little compartment totally separate from the rest of our lives. Nancy Pearcey wrote 'Total Truth' to explain how the once-Christianized West has come to view Sunday and Monday and to point the way to recovery of a philosophically informed, politically dynamic and biblically grounded faith that informs every thought and action of every day."

—Mark Tapscott, The Heritage Foundation, 2005.

Overcoming Subtle Sins: The Key to Dynamic Discipleship by Dr. Jim Dyet and Jim Russell (The Amy Foundation, 2002).

"Powerful, Perceptive, Practical: What every Christian must do to survive and make disciples in these uncertain days."

—Dr. Ralph S. Bell, Associate Evangelist, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 2002.

Writers' Conference Opportunity on Lake Michigan

Know any writers looking for more opportunities to turn writing ideas into materials God can use? Both beginners and experienced writers have a rare opportunity to receive individual guidance through creative group sessions, 36 elective workshops, and one-on-one conferences at the 33rd annual Maranatha Christian Writers' Conference, September 27-October 1, 2010.

Leaders with a passion to serve Christian writers will help you meet goals and discover new opportunities. This year's staff includes best-selling author Jerry Jenkins of the "Left Behind" series, humor columnist and author James Snyder, and Crystal Bowman, who will focus on writing for children. Holly Miller, senior editor for *The Saturday Evening Post*, is not only instructing on article writing, but is also accepting registrants' manuscripts for review prior to the conference. Bob Hudson, senior editor at large for Zondervan, brings his wealth of experience to an extensive poetry track. This year the conference will also host a Young Writers' Day on Tuesday, September 28. Students who are high school and college age will be exposed to publishers, editors, instructors, and published authors and may be able to schedule a professional consultation to share their writing samples. Jim Barrett will represent the Amy Foundation at the conference.

For complete details and a schedule of the conference, go to www.WriteWithPurpose.org or request a brochure by calling Maranatha at 231-798-2161. The deadline for registration is September 1, 2010. Don't miss this great time of instruction and inspiration!