

Building a Bridge of Hope

In an age of political, social and economic uncertainty in America, *New York Times* best-selling Christian author Karen Kingsbury believes God has contracted her writing talents to bring about hope and encouragement to the masses.

She has written nearly 70 fiction novels and has developed an incredibly rabid following among her readers. Considering today's social climate that is filled with gloom and despair on a daily basis, Kingsbury considers her Christian duty to "bring some salt and light to a dark and tasteless world."

"You have to look at it as a responsibility," Kingsbury said. "And, in some ways, it heightens the calling these days because there is so much need for hope. This country is filled with apathy, discouragement, depression and defeat. I feel like, 'OK Lord, let me give them a little hope."

"As with any book, *The Bridge*—my latest book—I hope to hear that people just couldn't put it down and that it changes them; it cuts their heart. That's especially true during this holiday season, Christmastime, when we desperate need hope. *The Bridge* is a story of the miracle of second chances. It's a novel that I believe will inspire them and will give them a reason to believe that better times are ahead. It's a story of hope against all despair that really resonates with all of us."

The Bridge is an uplifting Christmas story—a two-fold tale of a neighborhood mom-and-pop bookstore struggling to stay in business in light of current technology and in the face of desperation and lost opportunities; as well as the story of long-lost love with little chance of reconciliation.

Kingsbury has trademarked her literary works as "Life-Changing Fiction." She has written several series of fiction books, including her popular Bailey Flanigan series and her 9/11

series.

Kingsbury has more than 270,000 likes on her main Facebook reader page and more than 32,000 followers on Twitter.

"I'm a little unusual as a novelist in the sense that I'm very extroverted," Kingsbury says. "I'm not the recluse that finds my life in the pages of my story, but rather I find the pages of my story from my real life.

"I love my readers. I pray for them, and I really care for them. The social media gives me a chance to connect with people all over the world on a daily basis without ever leaving my home."

She has three other Facebook pages, one called Karen Kingsbury's New Testament Challenge, which is devoted to a Bible study for her readers. She has nearly 3,000 likes on that page.

Kingsbury also likes to think of her book signings as a time for personal connection with her readers.

"When I'm at a book signing, I don't sit down. I can't hug someone when I'm sitting down," she says. "They're waiting on line on their feet, so I can be on my feet, too. When a person comes through, it's all about them.

"For me, that's face to face. Sometimes I hug them, sometimes I pray for them if I'm led to. It's a very close connection. And, my readers are very loyal. They're the best reader friends anyone can have. I love interacting with them."

Kingsbury's literary popularity has become so widespread that movie producers have contacted the firm who handles her public relations inquiring about a film version of *The Bridge*. She said she is also in discussions with a "major" television network to produce a series based on her Flanigan series of books.

Meanwhile, Kingsbury and her family are still getting familiar with their new surroundings in Franklin, Tenn.—the setting for *The Bridge*—after moving from the Northwest nearly six months ago. The Kingsburys' oldest daughter, Kelsey, married Christian recording artist Kyle Kupecky in June.

"The Lord has brought so many blessings and so many surprises into our lives," she said. "The move has been great because we love this area. We feel like we've been misplaced southerners all of our lives.

"The best thing is I'm doing new things, including some songwriting. This is a great place for inspiration, and we're hoping to continue to do really great things that will change the world for Christ. The world really needs that right now."