

Q&A With Author Randy Singer

✘ *Randy Singer reveals the unique inspiration for his new book, False Witness. He also discusses how a trip to India changed his perspective.*

Q: Where did you first get your inspiration for *False Witness*?

At a funeral.

The deceased was David O'Malley, a good friend and former client. His wife had asked me to give the eulogy. I talked about David's generosity, his big heart. He was always inviting someone to live at his house until they could get back on their feet. He ran a used car lot and hired people down on their luck. David believed in second chances. And he was a character. He had this larger-than-life personality that made people laugh. He sang in a gospel quartet. Everybody had a David O'Malley story. Heads nodded as I shared mine.

David's pastor followed me in the pulpit. He spoke about a man named Thomas Kelly. The man was a scoundrel involved in organized crime. He turned on everyone he knew. Jaws dropped and the mourners stared in disbelief at this pastor. The man had clearly lost his mind! "You don't think you know Thomas Kelly, but you do," the pastor insisted. "David O'Malley was Thomas Kelly before he went into the witness

protection
program—before he came to the Lord.”

Prior to that moment, the only people that knew about David’s past were the government, his family, myself, and his pastor. The men he had testified against had died in prison. His wife had obtained the government’s permission to reveal his past. There was utter silence as the pastor concluded with a line I will never forget. “The government can give you a new identity,” he said. “But only Christ can change your life.”

“That would make a good book,” I thought. I hope I was right.

Q:

Your book also includes in its theme the plight of the church in India. When did you first become familiar with India and its caste system?

I took a trip to India with a group from my church in 2009. The culture was amazing. The cities were alive with commerce, technology and development. This was India shining, a new world economic giant. In the rural areas, we saw the colorful traditions of a proud, hospitable and hard-working culture, a relaxed contrast to the frenzied city life. But everywhere we went, we also encountered the underpinnings of the caste system and our hearts were captured by the struggle of the lowest castes to overcome centuries of economic and educational

discrimination, as well as social isolation. I was particularly moved by the plight of the Dalit children, struggling to get a good education so that their generation might rise above the oppression and gain real equality and human dignity.

The leaders of the Christian church in India helped us understand that while India has passed many laws guaranteeing equality for the Dalits, the fabric of society still oppresses them at every turn. We knew that we needed to become engaged in the human rights struggles of the lowest castes in India. It is, in the words of one leader, the struggle for the soul of a civilization.

Q: Who are the Dalits?

The Dalits, formerly called the “untouchables,” comprise nearly one quarter of India’s society, with population estimates of 250 million people. The term *Dalit* means “those who have been broken and ground down deliberately by those above them in the social hierarchy.” Dalits live at risk of discrimination, dehumanization, violence and enslavement through human trafficking every day. By all global research and reports, the Dalits constitute the largest number of people categorized as victims of modern-day slavery.

Q: You are donating all the proceeds from your book to the

Dalit

Freedom Network (DFN). What is the DFN?

The Dalit Freedom Network is a human rights, nongovernment organization that partners with the Dalit people in India. The DFN represents a vast network of justice-minded, modern-day abolitionists committed to bringing freedom to history's longest-standing oppressed people group. The DFN believes that we can end Dalit injustices, such as human trafficking and child labor, and make slavery history in India. Major partners include Operation Mercy India Foundation (OMIF) and the All-India Confederation of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Organizations (SC-ST Confederation).

Q: What can we do to help the DFN?

You can become involved in many ways. First, there is the child-sponsorship program that provides books, uniforms and a midday meal to Dalit children attending an English-speaking school with a Christian worldview that affirms the dignity, worth and equality of each child. The cost to sponsor a child is \$28 per month. Updates will be sent to the sponsor twice a year and photos of the children will be provided. There are approximately 67 schools with over 10,500 children presently in this program. Second, a micro-enterprise movement is helping the Dalits to

break free by providing micro loans and vocational training in marketable skills. Most of these groups are organized and run by the women in the Dalit community. American Christians can contribute to this program of Dalit self-sufficiency as well. Third, the DFN acts as an international advocate for Dalit rights in places like Washington, London and the U.N. Those with a desire to be part of this global human rights initiative can contribute to the DFN advocate fund.

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False Witness.