

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Christian Fiction

Author: Salvatore Esposito

Synopsis: “The hardest person to forgive is yourself. “

Benjamin Orry, a wounded Iraq War veteran, sets out to visit the hometown of fallen comrade Uriah Landon. His goal is to return Uriah’s personal effects to his family which includes Uriah’s last letter home. Uriah’s Christian faith had been tested to extremes in Iraq, and at home. Ben is uncertain of the composition of the letter but is certain Uriah expressed heartbroken feelings in another item he carries: Uriah’s personal leather-bound journal.

The brutal truths in Uriah’s final entries may damage the faith of many in the close-knit town. For the sake of peace, Ben considers not revealing the journal to anyone, but having witnessed Uriah’s violent death, he feels he owes it to his memory to let his final entries be read. As he limps painfully through Uriah’s neighborhood he wonders what he’ll do, what justice might be, and what several of Uriah’s loved ones must do to have self-forgiveness. However, a series of encounters and circumstances keeps hindering the well-disciplined soldier.

Ever since I was a teenager, writing has been a way to release the pressures of everyday life. Within my latest Christian fiction young adult novel is the way to release the pressures of guilt.

Most people, at some point in their, life will struggle with guilt or self-condemnation over past failures or mistakes. I know I certainly had some regrets as a teenager, brother, student, and soldier. At all points in life my Christian faith motivated my writing, especially after I made a big, idiotic mistake. The Bible ALWAYS helped me get past my stupidity and doubts. It is why I wrote *The Sure Mercies*. I owed it to the forgiving God, his Holy Spirit, and his Son, Jesus to share the great Biblical teachings and technique with all others. The best way for me to do that is through writing. The Trinity and the Word of God brings me a lot of relief and joy, joy which transfers unto others who have learned what I have.

The characters in *The Sure Mercies* include disciplined soldiers, a driven student with and a promising future, and a church pastor who is dedicated to his flock and the Word of God. All

the characters appear infallible yet it doesn't take long to see they are as culpable as anyone to temptation, failure, and, most especially, guilt. The primary benefit readers will gain in their heart of hearts is that no matter how severe your self-condemnation is there is a way to let it go and move forward in life without ever having to look back on any mistake with doubt, shame, or guilt.

If I had to compare this book to any other book out there it would be the books of Second Samuel & the Psalms. This story was inspired by the Biblical story of Israel's King David and Bathsheba, who was the wife of a captain in David's army. Many only know David from the Sunday school story as the young shepherd who slew the giant Goliath with a sling and stone. David was so much more than that boy. His entire life is chronicled throughout many books in the Bible. It is said that no man was closer to God than David. Still, he could be as vulnerable as anyone when it came to temptation. David was a warrior king who struggled mightily with shame over terrible sins and mistakes. On many occasions the Lord reassured David that He had totally and unconditionally forgiven him of everything, that David's heir would reign on Israel's throne forever. King David wrote many of the Psalms in the Bible. They reveal that in spite of knowing that God had forgiven him, he still had a very hard time letting the shameful feelings go.

Why do I relate to this story?

After David sinned and tried to cover up his mistakes through deeds and self-righteousness, God intervened, took the guilty weight off of him, and promised him and his heirs the sure mercies; everlasting forgiveness, everlasting peace, and an everlasting name in everlasting salvation. Those are just a few of the sure mercies recorded, and I need very one of them. I am imperfect, even stupid at times, yet but I'm still loved and favored by God.

One of my reviews on Amazon reads "This is a book written by a man with a deep spiritual and religious faith. I thought that might get in the way of the story but to my surprise it did not. I found the story to be a surprisingly moving human one." That's exactly the response I aimed for when I wrote it. Sometimes Christian fiction stories go too deep in the faith for a novice to get all of the Christian messages at once. I guess what sets my Christian fiction story apart is

that it simply breaks down what the sure mercies are all about. It will appeal to fellow believers as well as those who are not well versed in the Bible. It tries to help anyone who is dealing with the negative, life-altering emotions of guilt. You don't have to be a Christian or devout person of faith to get the message, or appreciate it.

The target audience for this work is wide. Shame, guilt, and self-condemnation can affect any one at any age so I'm hoping to reach as many people as possible, no matter where they are, whose primary interests are learning the way to be guilt free. That can be the greatest, life changing benefit of all. Albeit, the main characters are teenagers and twenty-somethings, soldiers and students, so I feel this would appeal to a young adult audience first.

Please don't laugh at me, but I want to aggressively market this book in ads, newspapers, magazines, on Twitter etcetera, so that it gets to the best seller list and onscreen in a full length feature. However, there are so many obstacles for writers, even in the information age.

As a native New Yorker and veteran of the Armed Forces there are many huge, worldwide media outlets at my disposal, aside from the usual social media platform giants. Still, I learned I can't be an instant, overnight success. My first book showed me that marketing is a marathon, not a sprint. Patience is the challenge. Looking at Amazon every day and see that no one is buying my books in spite of all the marketing ploys can be very discouraging and humiliating. The trick is to keep going and never give up!

God bless!