

An Interview with Mark Creech

October, 2010 Featured Author

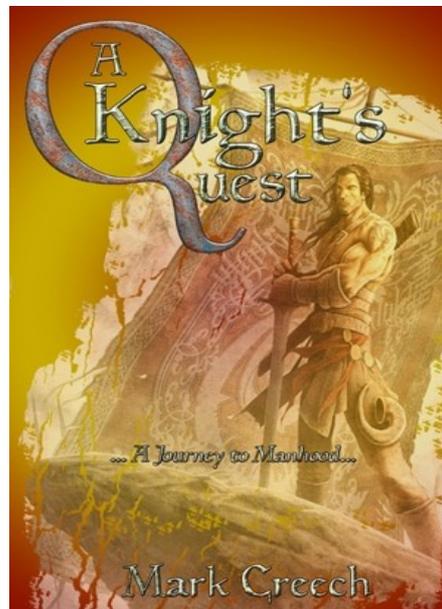
at

Time with Tannia

(<http://timewithtannia.tripod.com>)

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés



1. Tell us about yourself.

Mark Creech has served as a missionary to Brazil and currently serves as Senior Pastor of Kathleen Baptist Church in Lakeland, Florida. Mark graduated from the University of Central Florida and has been in ministry since 1981. Mark earned his Masters degree from Southwestern Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas and has a Doctorate of Ministry from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been married to his wife, Linda K. since 1981. They have three sons: Justin, who serves in the U.S. Air Force, Keilan, who is a musician and serves as church planting worship leader in Virginia, and Nolan, who attends high school in Lakeland. Currently, Mark is finishing his next book, "The Song of the Archer," which follows the adventures of Kethew the Archer upon his quest.

2. On October 1984 you were ordained as a pastor by Peniel Baptist Church in Palatka, FL. How have this ordination helped and prepared you for your missionary work in Brazil?

Ordination is required to obtain a missionary visa from Brazil but beyond the legalities of it, having a body of believers who support you in prayer and through encouragement provided great comfort and strength for us while we were in Brazil.

3. Do you believe that those years of Church planting in Brazil paved the way for other missionaries and the baptism of many in that country devastated by drugs?

Missionary work through the International Mission Board of the SBC has been going on for over 125 years in Brazil. It was an honor to be a part of a great tradition of sharing the gospel in a country whose heart is open to the good news of Jesus Christ. My part was to train pastors with mission strategies that would enable them to better reach the people in their communities. Other missionaries with whom I partnered are working in prisons and favelas (slums) to share the message of Jesus so that people might find true freedom from such things as drugs.

4. You worked for several years with teens as part of the Youth Ministry of your church. What do you considered the biggest challenge Youth Ministers faced today considering all the recent Church scandals? How do you encourage the youth to remain faithful to their Christian beliefs and trust the Lord for their needs?

Scandals have happened and will continue to happen as long as we deal with flawed humanity. The biggest challenge I had as a youth pastor was helping young people reach a place where they owned their faith and it owned them. What I mean is this: So many young people go to church because their parents make them, or they have a friend who goes, or they meet somebody they want to date, so they go that person's church. They adopt the culture and behavior of "church kids" but they do not own a faith in Christ. So when the parents don't make them go, or they find friends somewhere else, or they break up, they stop going to church because it was never about a personal faith in Christ that they owned but about themselves and others. My task was to lead them to a point of decision where they decided that they believed in Christ because they desired it - not just to fit in or please someone else. They owned their faith and so when challenged about it, they could defend it and wouldn't abandon it because it was something that was a part of them. The part about their faith owning them relates to the fact that when we become followers in Christ, we surrender ourselves to Him and become His possession, bought with the blood of Christ. So I tried to help young people see that this life is not all about them, rather it's about Christ and His purposes for us. Ephesians 2:10 says that we are God's masterpiece, but that masterpiece doesn't occur unless we put ourselves in the hands of the Master.

As far as staying faithful and trusting in God's provision; A follower of Christ has to make the commitment of being in God's presence through prayer and Scripture in order to stay strong. The church is responsible to help through encouragement and accountability. But with all that, it boils down to personal choice to stay true to the quest.

5. How do the training of exceptional students and their disciplinary methods differ from those of regular students? Have this work, somehow, given you a better understanding of your limitations and strength as a teacher and as a Christian?

[Mark Creech] Man, that's a question for the ages. I'm in no way qualified to give you an answer on the first question. I taught "exceptional" students (ones who were discipline problems, or immigrants with limited English, or ones with some learning disabilities) because I needed a job during our leave of absence between our two terms in Brazil. The principal could find no one to take the job and gave it to me based on my 10+ years experience as a Youth Pastor. My spiritual gift is that of teaching, so I was able to put it into practice as a teacher. I would say that because of the Holy Spirit's gifting as a teacher I was able to teach well enough to be offered to return the next year. The job also helped confirm my calling as a missionary because I knew I was NOT called to be a middle school teacher and the offer to return had no appeal because I knew that my heart longed to return to Brazil.

6. Now let us talk about your book, *A Knight's Quest* (2004 Tate Publishing). The main character, Judan, must endure some rigorous training and past some test in order to become a Knight of the Realm. What motivated you to write this story? Is the main character inspired by any of your children? Share with our readers the inside story.

Tannia, the book is all about my son, Justin Daniel (Judan is the blending of his names). At 16, Justin and I did not have a very good relationship. Personal struggles for him in leaving the US behind and for me in getting established as a missionary created a rift in our relationship as father and son. God put it in my heart to write a book for Justin because there are things that a father needs to say to his son and Justin wasn't listening to me. I knew that he loved King Arthur and medieval tales, so I wrote a book which contained some of the things that I as a father needed to say to him by telling a story of a knight on a quest for his king. The seven jewels that Judan is sent in search of equal seven character traits that I believe that he needs to form in his life, so as Judan acquires each jewel, he develops character. Judan (Justin) encounters his brothers in the story (Kethew the Archer - Keilan and Timolan the Squire - Nolan), along with meeting others who are on quests for the King.

Here's the info from my website www.markcreech.com about the book:

"Looking like a knight is easy – a suit of armor, a sword – being a knight is a different matter."

***A Knight's Quest** takes the reader into medieval times to follow the adventures of a young knight who proves his courage and loyalty by acquiring precious stones to be placed in the king's crown. Written into this story are subtle yet powerful spiritual applications. In his grand quest to bring honor to his king, Judan, the brave knight, battles evil beings, discovers the importance of comrades-in-arms, and learns the secret to victory in his battle with the Great Dragon, Acuza. With each adventure, he learns the important life principle that will help him become a true knight – a man of honor. Each jewel gained enables him to discover that the pursuit of manhood requires the development of key character qualities. He discovers the importance of perseverance, the necessity of faithfulness, and the sacrifice of love.*

***A Knight's Quest** definitely attempts to teach us the essential values and the characteristics needed by any young man to confront life with love, honor and courage. The book was first a gift to the author's oldest son, but the story was too intriguing and its message, much too important to keep from a wider audience. *A Knight's Quest* will appeal to all readers. Teen and pre-teen readers especially will be spell-bound by the action and*

parents will find the book a great discipleship tool.

7. Paracletus, plays an important role in your book, too. Did you deem necessary to incorporate this character into the story to bring a balance to Judan's quest and his knight formation?

Paracletus is the Holy Spirit (from the Greek word, Paraclete). He is necessary to give guidance to Judan throughout the story because every believer in Christ needs to have his ear and heart tuned to the voice of God. As Judan travels on his quest, he needs to hear wisdom from God so that he might stay true to that quest.

8. Where can our readers purchase your book, *A Knight's Quest*?

www.tatepublishing.com, www.christianbook.com, or www.amazon.com. Or if they are in the Central Florida area, they can contact me directly.

9. Have you considered authoring another book based on your missionary work in Brazil and your Youth Ministry experience?

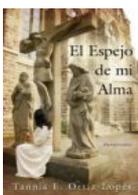
Not really. There are many great books about missions and mission life, along with great books about youth work. Aside from writing a book for each of my boys (currently working on "The Song of the Archer" for my musician son, Keilan), I have considered writing a book called, "Rasslin' with Jesus - Lessons My Children Taught Me." I loved to write, just don't seem to have the time lately.

10. How can our readers contact you?

Several ways: go to my website <http://www.markcreech.com/> or email me at knightsquest@pobox.com or mark@markcreech.com.

11. A word of advice to parents of adolescents looking for ways to teach their teens how to be strong and resist negative peer pressure.

Set the example. Parents who know what they believe and refuse to be moved from those beliefs can set the example for their teen. Then begin early to teach your teen the principles of Scripture so they know WHAT they believe and then as they look at their parents they will know HOW to live. Talk to your teens and share life with them, making sure to impart those eternal truths in teachable moments. That way they'll know WHY they should live a Godly life. Finally, pray much so that the WHO for which we live will impact your teen's life. One other thing, know your teen's friends because they shape their principles also.



Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés, author of *The Window To My Soul; My Walk With Jesus* (2004 Tate Publishing;). *El Espejo de mi Alma* (2010 Pleasant Word) .

Author's websites: timewithtannia.tripod.com., www.shoutlife.com/tanniaortizlopes,

and www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopes **Stock photography website:**

<http://www.bigstockphoto.com/search/photographer/Boricua63/>

Gift Shop: <http://www.zazzle.com/teolpuertorico>

READERS' COMMENTS:

Date Received: October 1, 2010

Name: John DeBevoise

Email Address:(optional)

Web site URL:(optional)

Where did you hear about this interview?

Comments: A great book with great values!