

A QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION WITH AUTHOR
WILLIAM D. BURT

THE “KING OF THE TREES” SERIES

Why does your series appeal to homeschooling families?

Homeschoolers are among my most ardent and loyal fans, in part because many of them are Christians seeking age-appropriate fiction that doesn't glorify the occult, youthful rebellion, sex, vampires, zombies, etc. (My books have been featured on “Squeaky Clean Reads.”) In my series, each title recapitulates Christ's redemptive sacrifice and victorious resurrection with unique metaphors woven into the kind of high adventure that appeals to young readers.

Moreover, as a former homeschool father myself, I have created an Activity Book supplement with a Study Guide (and answer key!) that helps homeschooled students delve into my use of Biblical symbolism and make personal life applications. The Activity Book is available ONLY on my website in PDF format (<http://bit.ly/1zkbZcl>) and is free to anyone who purchases the entire set of seven titles. (<http://bit.ly/1Gg4yY9>)

Finally, each title incorporates a glossary/pronunciation guide at the back for easier reading and for reading aloud. Many families have told me they read a chapter or two together before bedtime—and some families have read the entire series aloud.

For what ages are your titles appropriate?

The minimum age for reading my first title (*The King of the Trees*) is seven or eight. Some younger children with advanced reading skills can manage Book I with the help of the appended glossary/pronunciation guide. Also, as mentioned above, my titles make great read-alouds. (Young adults and adults enjoy this series as well.)

Who is “The King of the Trees”?

The King of the Trees is God Himself. In my series, He goes by the name of “Gaelathane” and possesses all of God’s attributes, including self-existence, pre-existence, omniscience, omnipotence, creativity, immortality, holiness, righteousness, mercy and love.

What is the central metaphor of the series?

The central metaphor is what I call the “Torsil Principle.” Torsils are trees that transport climbers into other worlds by a natural process that is usually as consistent as gravity. In my books, a towering tree known as the “Torsil of torsils” leads not only to all Gaelathane’s worlds, but also to His home, a deathless paradise called Gaelessa, symbolic of Heaven. Since this Tree of trees is the only torsil to Gaelessa, it represents Christ, Who is the only way to Heaven. Moreover, the Tree gives its life for the salvation of all torsil worlds, thereby vanquishing the story’s villain.

Another metaphor is the Amenthil, a type of tree whose flower-scent confers the gift of understanding the speech of trees and animals. The Amenthil symbolizes the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What makes your style of storytelling unique?

Most modern fantasy authors create imaginary worlds and settings that are cosmologically humanistic. That is, there is no room for God, unless it is a pagan god. Characters in these soulless fantasies must rely upon their own wits and resources, magic, and/or their unique superpowers in order to resolve conflicts.

By way of contrast, I scrupulously avoid the use of magic and the occult, which I debunk. Instead, I introduce a God-figure Who specializes in working miracles, especially those of the heart and soul. My characters pray for wisdom, guidance and divine assistance and are at their best when they are trusting Gaelathane to help them.

Tell us about your current project.

I'm putting the finishing touches on the first title in a new series featuring Creation Science and cryptozoology.

Readers can also learn more about me and my series on Facebook ("Windsong the Griffin") and on my blog: <http://www.kotbooks.blogspot.com/>.