

## Missions Fest to see rebirth of puppet ministry

by Doris Fleck

After a six-year wait, Missions Fest Alberta will finally be able to feature Maralee Dawn, the world-renowned ventriloquist, at its annual conference in Edmonton this February.

This will be the first event Maralee Dawn has accepted since a devastating accident six years ago damaged her diaphragm and robbed her of the puppet ministry she had begun as a teen.

"My re-launch is going to be in Alberta, in the city where I grew up, in the city where I had my television debut,"

Maralee Dawn said. "That is the miracle – I'm actually coming to Missions Fest."

When Maralee Dawn first accepted an invitation to minister at Missions Fest Alberta back in 2011, she had no idea of the catastrophic events ahead.

At the time, her award-winning children's show, *Maralee Dawn & Friends*,

was broadcast on six continents and across Canada on Saturday mornings. She had travelled to over 40 nations giving live performances with her kid-friendly puppets, supporting mission agencies and taking along teens so they could experience the mission field first hand.

On December 27, 2011, right after a ministry trip to Singapore where hundreds accepted Christ, Maralee was headed to a Christmas gathering in Lethbridge. In the early evening, her husband fell asleep at the wheel. Their



Wreckage of Maralee Dawn's car in December 2011.

vehicle went off the road, became airborne and rolled four times. Maralee Dawn was hit repeatedly on her right side injuring her head, shoulders and hips as well as breaking four ribs that punctured her lungs and diaphragm.

Maralee Dawn lay in the freezing cold, fighting to breathe. Her husband was unconscious and their shattered ve-

hicle had stopped in a farmer's field where they couldn't be seen from the road.

As she looked up through the icy wind, she whispered, "Jesus!" then fought for another breath, "Help!"

A man seemed to appear out of nowhere, put a blanket on her and went to the nearest farm to call for an ambulance.

"My horrific nightmare started that night," Maralee Dawn said. "I lost everything. I lost my finances, my ministry, my identity, my heart."

After years of therapy she was still in constant pain and would often have spasms that affected her breathing. She gave up on ever using her gift of ventriloquism again, until the spring of 2017.

"Miraculously, when I was praying for someone else and not even expecting it, I was healed," Maralee Dawn admitted.

Though her pain was gone and her breathing began returning to normal, she is still working with a voice coach. Having been proficient in 12 different puppet voices before the accident, with much struggle, she has recovered one of them and is working on others.

"I'm still just trying to learn ventriloquism again," Maralee Dawn explained. "And I mean honestly, some days I just want to throw the puppet across the room!"

When Missions Fest heard she was doing better and invited her back, Maralee Dawn's initial response was, "I don't know if I can do that... But I am believing God will do what He sovereignly intends to do."

She said God gave her the gift of



Maralee Dawn's rejuvenated ventriloquist skills will be featured at Missions Fest Alberta.

ventriloquism at a young age. She loved puppets and children, building her first puppet out of a doll's face and the stuffing from a kitchen chair. She would give ventriloquist shows in her backyard and invite other kids into her basement, packing it out when 30 or more children from her Edmonton neighbourhood showed up.

Maralee Dawn had been introduced to the Gospel message at age seven and the first time she heard John 3:16, she believed in Jesus.

"I ran to Him and embraced Him," she said. "Through that – one child coming to know Jesus – later in my life, at a time of great tragedy in our family – my mother, step-father and siblings all came to Christ."

Much of her ministry is based on her belief that "just one child, coming to know Jesus, can change an entire family, and can change an entire generation."

Maralee Dawn will be performing with her puppets at a plenary session, a workshop for children, and a seminar for women where she will share more of her personal testimony during the February 23-25 event.

More information on Missions Fest Alberta can be found at [www.mfest.ab.ca](http://www.mfest.ab.ca)

**"Do you want The King to come?  
... then finish The Job!"**

*"And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."*

Matthew 24:14 ESV

**MISSIONS FEST ALBERTA 2018**  
**February 23 - 25**

"24<sup>th</sup> Annual  
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\*\*Tickets or Pre-Registration required only for noted activities, details will be posted on our website. Free-will Offerings will be taken in Assemblies and the Donation Centres. "Scent/Fragrance Free" Conference



MISSIONS FEST  
ALBERTA

MFA Mission Statement:  
"FIND YOUR PURPOSE, MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

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### Edmonton Events

**December 8** Songs & Sonnets Advent Concert featuring Steve Bell and Malcolm Guite held at All Saints' Anglican Cathedral, 10035 - 103 St. Edmonton, 7:30 pm. Tickets \$21/person. Tickets and more information can be found at [www.stevebell.com/events](http://www.stevebell.com/events).

**January 26-28** Break Forth One - One God. One Church. One Weekend. A renewal and equipping conference held at the Shaw Conference Centre featuring Hillsong Worship. Speakers include Levi Lusko, Mark Clarke, Dr. Gary Chapman & Margaret Feinberg. Registration and more information can be found at [breakforthcanada.com](http://breakforthcanada.com).

**February 23-25** Missions Fest Alberta - Do you want The King to come - then finish The Job! held at West Edmonton Christian Assembly, featuring children's ministry, youth activities, men's and women's seminars, plenary sessions, worship and much more. Admission is free. Offerings will be taken. Information can be found by calling 780-451-0080 or [www.mfest.ab.ca](http://www.mfest.ab.ca).

If you would like to see your events in our Events Corner, contact Doris Fleck at 403-396-7417 or email [doris@calgarychristian.com](mailto:doris@calgarychristian.com).