

FellowScript

Inspiring
Christian
Writers
Canadawide

FEBRUARY 2021

Motivation



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A close-up photograph of an orange t-shirt with the word 'UNITE' printed in large, white, block letters. The letters are partially cut off on the right side of the frame.

THE BOBBI PROJECT

Bobbi Junior had a lot of friends in inscribe over a relatively short period of time. She left a large impact and a huge hole. Currently, with her husband and daughter's blessing Ramona Furst and I are working on piecing together an important piece of Bobbi's work—the story of how she dealt with her mental health challenges. There are holes in the manuscript and so I would like people to send short pieces on what they remember from her sharing with you. One of the best sources of this information sadly also passed away last year and those emails are lost.

Once this is pieced together it will be approved by Rick and Andrea. Thanks for any help. Please send information to Sheila.wanaza@gmail.com with The Bobbi Project in the subject line.

WANTED: Treasurer

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Receive InScribe mail and deposit cheques.

Write cheques and make e-transfers.

Liaise with bookkeeper, membership tracker, and other ministries.

Knowledge of bookkeeping and/or Quicken software helpful.

Training and assistance from the Executive is available.

Contact Marnie:
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**COMING:
MARCH
2021**

Easter

STORIES AND MORE



INSCRIBE CHRISTIAN WRITERS' FELLOWSHIP

Contents

Features

- 7 Thoughts on Motivation
- 8 Commas in Complex Sentences
- 10 Writing as Worship
- 16 Inspiration Lost and Found
- 17 Do You Love What You Do?

Columns

- 6 Guest Column
Lorilee Guenter
- 6 Mini-Column
Marie Blanche-Mitchell
- 12 Fearless Freelancing
Ann-Margret Hovsepian
- 13 Writing for Cultural Diversity
Sandi Somers
- 14 Writing to Heal Yourself
Alan Anderson
- 15 Discovering Our Creative Purpose
Caran Jantzen

Upcoming Columns

By Carol Harrison

Here's a sneak peek at the upcoming new columns which begin with our May 2021 issue of FellowScript. Watch for a series by Sally Meadows called Wide Open Spaces, Tandy Balson writing about Explore, Dream, Discover, and Lorilee Guenter writing about A Creative Journey.

We will have two guest mini columns written by Charity Mongrain and Eleanor Bertin. Anticipate, with me, these new columns and mini columns along with the second installment in Caran Jantzen's Discovering our Purpose as Writers.

Departments

- 2 From the Editor
- 2 President's Column
- 4 Contacts List
- 5 Devotional
- 9 From Our Members
- 11 Vivid Verses
- 18 From the Mailbox

From the Editor



Motivated By Love

By Sheila Webster

Sometimes in the middle of life we get discouraged and think we have no motivation to pursue our writing. We want to go through the boxes of scribbled notes, thoughts, and faded dreams declaring them all a waste of time and a silly notion.

Recently my daughter Hannah finished compiling a manuscript which either took several decades to write or five years, depending on how you count time. The book contains various genres, photos, and memories of writing by my mother, myself and my daughter. Three generations who were all 'twenty something once,' and wanted to express something about their individual and communal lives.

I could have added some of my grandfather's poetry and made it a four generations of writing book, but that was not my main motivation to ask my daughter to bring the book to life. I would have loved to add some of Hannah's art, a painting by my mother, an abstract by myself, and my two-year-old granddaughter Arwen's synchronous ambidextrous abstracts. However, that was not in the scope of what motivated me to start this arduous project. Imagine how exciting a book spanning five generations of creativity would have been! However, I stuck to the main purpose behind the pages.

Perhaps my sole motivation was to encourage my mother Janice Mansell, who has lost much of her sight. At eighty she has often felt, over the five plus decades I have known her, that she has not added anything of note or lasting to the world. Within this manuscript there is a legacy of writing she has passed on without being intentional in many respects. It is a celebration of what is important to each of us at the time of the writings.

The genres, the themes, the pictures, and the memories contained within have brought smiles and tears to her eyes. Perhaps behind each written work, the formatting, the pictures my daughter added she will see how much she is loved and honored even if I can never say it. †



President's Column



What Motivates You?

By Tracy Krauss,
President

If I could hear your responses, I'm sure there would be a variety of answers. Some might talk about writing goals or meeting deadlines. Others might focus on how their writing meets a need or ministers to people. Still others might mention the things they find inspiring. Even when we don't feel motivated to write, sometimes circumstances force us to do it anyway and that is a form of motivation, too.

Motivation is a multi-faceted topic. It is part inspiration and part obligation. On a personal level, I need a balance of both. Deadlines - even self-imposed ones like NaNoWriMo - are highly motivating for me. I also appreciate having an accountability partner. Reporting to someone increases my productivity. On the inspirational side, someone once told me if I lose interest in what I'm writing, then readers will likely lose interest as well. I believe in writing what I am passionate about, so if I find a piece inordinately difficult, or don't feel inspired by it any more, I am learning to let it go and move on.

As an organization, InScribe has a long and rich history which motivates the current executive to continue this legacy of encouragement and community. Our highest goal is to meet the needs of our members. We do this through the many programs and benefits we offer. (I could insert a long list here including FellowScript magazine, conferences and events, contests, writing groups... There is so much more.) It is our hope that we can inspire and encourage those who align themselves with us, despite the wide range of genres, skills, and years of experience we represent. That's what we mean when we say our purpose is to, "Minister to writers so that they can minister to others."

Our legacy is, indeed, something to celebrate. But times are changing, too. When InScribe began in the 1980s, email wasn't even invented yet! Now, most of our meetings are conducted online and many of our operating systems have been automated. Of course, we still need to communicate with one another, but as most of you know, some of our tried and true methods of communication like the "listserv" have disappeared, so we are moving to different forms of staying connected.

Change is always difficult. There have been hiccups and unforeseen challenges during the process. As we continue to hone and refine our methods of operation, please continue to be patient with us. It is our honour to serve such a wonderful group of Christian writers in Canada and it is truly our desire to do that in the best way possible. We value your input and feedback, so don't be afraid to reach out to an executive member. Despite any challenges, the underlying message is the same. We are here for you! †

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- | | |
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Read the submission guidelines online at:
www.inscribe.org.

Deadlines for submission:

Nov 1, Feb 1, May 1 and August 1

We prefer complete manuscripts emailed to: fellowscripteditor@gmail.com as .doc, .docx or.rtf attachments. *FellowScript* also welcomes letters, feedback, comments, and news about your writing.

Payment is provided on publication for work that exceeds 500 words. Editors may edit or condense material accepted for publication. Payment details are available at <http://inscribe.org/fellowscript/>.

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Upcoming Themes:

May 2021: Mosaic (Overlooked Genres, Mentors, Tools)

Aug 2021: Marketing (Social Media, Elevator Pitches, Launches)

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Devotional

Get Rid of the Excess

By Carol Harrison

Stuff clutters my home, my desk, and often my mind. Watching organization shows or reading posts on how to declutter and simplify my life will not help unless I put their ideas into practice. Ridding myself of the excess, unused items, allows me to focus on what is important and meaningful.

I often jot down ideas for a story, a book, a devotional, or even a poem. I might even flesh the basic idea out a little bit but then it sits, forgotten, in a notebook or on my computer. New ideas grab my attention. My focus is scattered.

I chose to begin sorting through the pieces of paper, the computer files, and the notebooks to find out what ideas are hidden away. Sitting on a shelf, hidden in a drawer, or locked in a computer file never to be completed makes them empty words. They can't educate, entertain, or encourage others.

My heart and mind get cluttered as well. Negative thoughts make me want to hide the stuff of life deeper into the cracks and crevices, to be looked after later. God tells me to come and give everything to him. Hiding the hurts, disappointments, fears, and yes, even the gifts He has given will not help me grow into the person He has planned me to be. It doesn't allow the gifts to be used for His glory.

God met with Moses while he was hiding in the desert, tending sheep and sent him to lead the people of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. God met Gideon hiding from the Midianites in the winepress, threshing grain to feed his family. God sent him to defeat the Midianites from oppressing Israel.

God meets people right where they are, in the mess and clutter, in their fear and uncertainty, and in their stubbornness and pride. He asks each one to let go of their own expectations and struggles and trust Him completely.

James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

When all I do is gather information on how to get rid of the excess in my life but do nothing about it, the stuff remains, the clutter keeps me from progressing, and it all weighs me down. When I don't pull out the writing ideas and finish them so others can read them, I am squandering the storytelling gift God has given me and not being a good steward like the Bible instructs us to be. But when I give them all to God, He uses those words, just like He used Moses and Gideon.

I need to let go of all the bits and pieces that clutter my life, mind and heart, and allow God to create the masterpiece of His design. Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Philippians 1: 6 reminds me that I can trust God no matter what mess happens in and around me. "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

It's time to trust God, get rid of the excess, and allow Him to shine in and through me. How about you? Do you have some excess to give to God, some talents He wants you to use, and some broken bits to let him create a beautiful you?



Carol Harrison is a published author, inspirational speaker, and storyteller who loves to encourage and mentor others to find their voice and reach their fullest potential. She loves spending time with family and friends and finds stories and inspiration all around. Reach her at carol@carolscorner.ca



Coming this Spring: "Virtual Events"

- *New ways of connection and content.*
- *Stay tuned for more details...*
- *Check your inbox and FaceBook!*



A Misunderstood Calf

By Ashlee Kirshner

It's a story we've read over and over. A sin we've scoffed at. Making a golden calf and worshipping it—something so odd—so stupid. When presented with the option of a calf protecting them, my children even laugh.

You see, it's easy to laugh. It's easy to point the finger when we don't know the full story. In Exodus 32, the Israelites wait and wait for Moses to come back. They've been rescued from bitter slavery in Egypt, miraculously walked through flood waters only to be taken to the middle of nowhere, and then their leader leaves not for hours, but days.

We read this story as if these people know the whole Bible story. But the truth is their knowledge of Yahweh was sparse—their ancestor, Abraham, interacted with a divine being, they saw miracles in Egypt, and after receiving their freedom were given a list of guidelines.

So, there they are with fairly little idea of who this God is and left leaderless for forty days. They resort back to what they know, but bring the mysterious Yahweh into the mix. The pagan gods of the Canaanites were often represented as standing on calves or bulls. Upon reading this story, you will see this calf has no rider—most likely a hint "the unseen God" was to be represented. This idea is solidified when, after finishing the calf, Aaron announces, "Tomorrow, there will be a festival for Yahweh."

The Israelites did not start worshipping a new thing. In a tumultuous and unfamiliar place, they added the familiar parts of a culture they knew into worship of Yahweh—heedless of Yahweh's words to not make any gods alongside Him (Ex. 20:23). They were not innocent, but they were not stupid. Maybe this story highlights the integration of yoga (a practice steeped in Hinduism) in a faithful church body. Maybe it highlights the greed for bigger and better among a people singing the praises of Jesus. Maybe it shows we're pointing four fingers back when we point one. †

Ashlee Kirshner is a working mom, always striving to love life. She is a mom to four wild children, owner and co-owner of two small businesses, a canner, a gardener, and a writer. There seems to always be something on the go. Find her books, Longevity and Backyard Food Security on Amazon.



Don't Hold It In

By Pat Gerbrandt

I write today with a heavy heart. Death comes close. Illness rages. Health workers (our daughter and a sister-in-love included) are exhausted. What can we, as Christian writers, do at this time? Will our words matter to anyone? Will they even be read?

Jeremiah knew all about the loneliness of writing. "I sat alone," (Jeremiah 15:17). The challenge of communicating was real. To demonstrate the way God planned to break disobedient people, Jeremiah broke an earthenware pot (19:1-10). He knew opposition. The Judean audience challenged Jeremiah. "Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come," (17:15). This resistance could not quench the conviction he was to speak. "If I say, 'I will not speak any more in his name,' there is in my heart as it were a burning fire...I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot," (20:9).

We have advantages the ancient prophet did not have. As InScribe members, we are assured of prayer support. We can connect electronically or by telephone. We know we are not alone in the world, even though we can't connect in person with others who share our passion. We find support and wisdom in the Bible. God's Holy Spirit reminds us of His truth.

Jeremiah didn't know his words would be read, for generations, by people all over the world. He wrote out of obedience. The Bible is complete, but we can write to create awareness of its relevance for our readers. We don't need to know what will happen to our writing, but if we don't make it happen, it can't have the effect God wants it to have.

When God says, "Write...everything I have told you to say..." (Jeremiah 36:2), don't try to hold it in! Let's offer hope to our hurting world. †

Pat Gerbrandt writes devotionals and does developmental editing. Pat and her husband live in Steinbach, where they enjoy watching birds in their backyard – when they're not reading! Walking, and cycling (when the snow is gone) make exploring enjoyable. Pat has just revived her blog, patgwriter.wordpress.com





By Sheila Webster

In the book *Business Boutique* by Christy Wright, she shows a deep understanding of what every writer should grasp about why they write with her first chapter title "It All Starts With A Story: Find Your Motivation."

To find your motivation, find your story—not the one you will write but the one you are the lead character in. Christi talks in the opening chapter about the backdrop to her life being her mom's cake business and how that influenced her life. What was your backdrop?

When I was a pastor, I knew people's motivations were not always purely defined no matter what they said. Knowing their story often helped clarify which passage of Scripture would help them heal or change or be confident etc. Proverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." You can't convince someone about any aspect of their life if they are thinking differently than what they want to believe. James and other New Testament writers also talk about knowing who we are in Christ and acting out of our transformed life, not the old life. Change your thinking, change your life – only God can change our hearts though. If you believe you have a story to tell and don't think you can, you won't.

As a counsellor I have seen this as well. A person can be engaging, bright and have enviable skills, but if they think they are nothing or their backstory tells them they are, they very well may become as they think or feel.

A writer may want to tell unknown stories about their shared history growing up to leave as a lasting legacy for their progeny. An advocate may write a passionate missive to challenge the status quo and change policy for women or children. I have seen people write life challenges in poetry just to help externalize their own pain or story and go on to have a large audience without that being their motivation.

As a pastor I used to help people rewrite their spiritual stories, through prayer, Bible study, and application and that was enough, they did not need to write about it, but others who were influenced by them went on to write about them. As a counsellor, I have helped people rewrite their trauma or grief-laden stories to become more successful and move forward. So many angles to consider on what are really the motivators in our life.

How can you use this to clarify your thinking and motivation for writing? Writing is a calling more than a vocation and should be consciously elevated and cultivated as such. †

By Ruth L. Snyder

"Overall, while all types of motivation are either intrinsic or extrinsic, there are really many types of motivational incentives that can help you succeed. Each type has its own motivating factor, but you can use multiple types of motivation together to help you achieve optimal levels of motivation."

-Evan Tarver, writer and business owner¹

What motivates you? We are all motivated by many things, internal and external, including gaining competence or learning new things, changing attitudes, achieving goals, expressing ourselves creatively, getting basic needs met, receiving incentives, escaping fear, earning power, and gaining social status.

What writing goals do you have? Why do you want to write? As a coach, it's my job to help clients understand their motivations and discover strategies for overcoming barriers so that they can move forward in their writing journey. People usually are more successful if they can combine several different motivational factors. For instance, a client may say their goal (first motivational factor) is to write a book. They may also be motivated by expressing themselves creatively, gaining social status, and learning new things.

What helps you reach your goals? Sometimes clients simply need someone to act as a sounding board or ask clarifying questions. Other times people need constant assurance, support, and simple strategies so that they can succeed. My work as a coach is to take a person from where they are today and help them move forward to where they want to be in the future. Typically I help clients set three goals which are achievable within a few months. We spend our time together coming up with strategies and focusing on motivation—including how they will feel when they achieve their goals. Then the client implements the strategies and reports whether they worked or not. Two clients may try the same strategy. One client will find the strategy works for them while the other client needs a different strategy. During follow-up sessions we discuss what worked and what different strategies they can try so that they are able to continue moving forward towards their goals.

What's holding you back? There are times when I suggest a client needs counseling rather than coaching. A person may be determined and motivated to move forward, may choose logical and reasonable goals, and may have the skills to reach those goals, but sometimes they are "stuck" because they need to go back into their past and allow God to heal their hurts before they are able to move forward. There are other times when we just need to adjust mindset, strategies, or expectations and then the client is able to move forward. †

¹ Tarver, Evan. "11 Types of Motivation: What They Are & How to Use Them 2020" <https://www.evantarver.com/types-of-motivation/>

Commas in Complex Sentences

By Hannah Lenz

Whether I'm editing someone's writing or teaching English, one thing that I find people struggle with is comma usage. Commas mystify, and the result is that many people put them in wherever their gut tells them to rather than where they actually belong. Like all punctuation mistakes, improperly placed commas can make texts unclear and unprofessional. Thankfully, there are a few extremely helpful rules to guide comma usage. I'm going to share one rule with you today in the hope that you can save your editor time and yourself money by getting it right the first draft.

The most essential skill for understanding where to put a comma is being able to recognize an independent clause when you see it. An independent clause is one that can stand alone as a complete sentence. All independent clauses have a subject, verb, and represent a complete thought. For example, "I like ice cream." The subject of this independent clause is "I". The verb is "like," and this particular verb needs an object, so "ice cream" is that object. Another example is, "I jumped." This is a complete thought without an object. These two examples represent simple sentences that do not need commas.

There is also something called a dependent clause. It is so called because it depends on an independent clause to make sense. When we use at least one independent clause and one dependent clause together, it is called a complex sentence. For example, "Because he really likes ice cream, he buys a gallon every month." In this example, our dependent clause comes first. If it said instead, "He really likes ice cream," then it would be independent. However, since we used the word "because" (which is called a subordinating conjunction), it is now a dependent clause. Subordinating conjunctions always create a dependent clause.

There are lists of subordinating conjunctions online and becoming familiar

with them will help a lot for identifying dependent clauses.

Now that we have established the difference between an independent and dependent clause, it is time for the comma rule. **If the dependent clause comes first, put a comma between it and the independent clause. You do not need a comma in between the independent and dependent clauses if the dependent clause comes second.** Take a look at the two bolded sentences preceding this one. They are prime examples. The word "If" used in both sentences is a subordinating conjunction. Thus, it creates a dependent clause. In the first sentence, the dependent clause comes before the independent clause. This makes a comma necessary between the clauses. In the second bolded sentence, the independent clause comes first, so a comma is unnecessary between the clauses.

Let's look at our ice cream example again.

- 1) **Because** he really likes ice cream, he buys a gallon of it every month.
- 2) He buys a gallon of ice cream every month **because** he really likes it.

I have put the subordinating conjunction in bold in the above two sentences so that you can easily see where the dependent clause is. In the first example, it comes at the beginning of the sentence. This makes a comma necessary between the clauses. In the second example, the subordinating conjunction (and therefore the dependent clause) comes after the independent clause, making a comma unnecessary.

That feels like a lot at once, so I will do a quick vocabulary recap.

Independent clause

A clause containing a subject, verb and complete thought. It can stand alone as a sentence.

Dependent clause

Also called a subordinate clause, this is a clause that has a subject and verb but not a complete thought. It needs to be joined to an independent clause. Subordinating conjunctions always create a dependent clause.

Complex sentence

A sentence in which there is at least one independent clause and one dependent clause.

Subordinating conjunction

A word that introduces a dependent clause. Examples of subordinating conjunctions include: if, although, when, once, after.

To finish, I will recap the comma rule that guides complex sentences visually:

Independent dependent
Dependent, independent

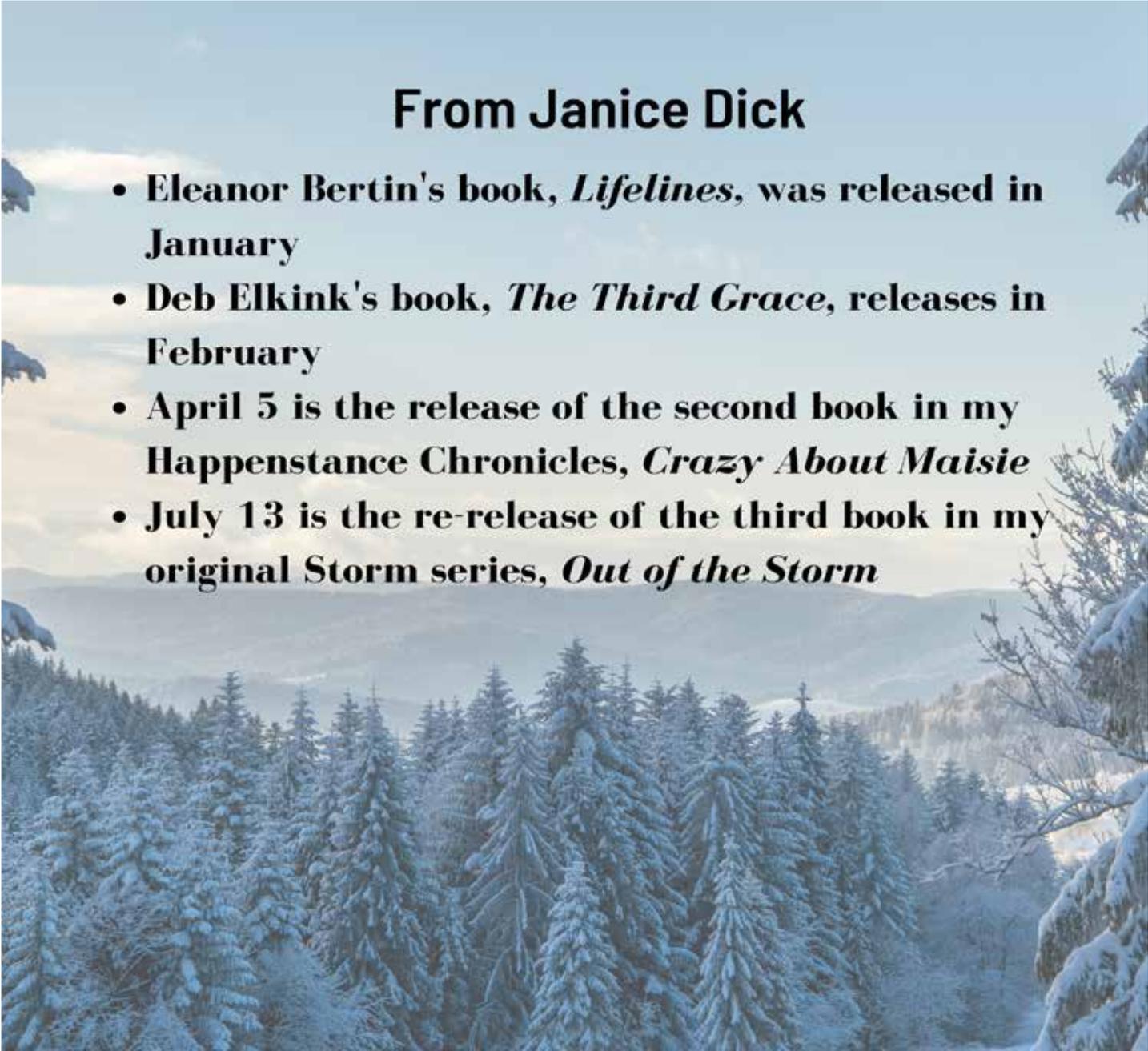
Practice identifying those dependent clauses and you will eliminate one aspect of comma confusion in your writing.



Hannah Lenz is an English Language Instructor and full-time mother to two wonderful babies. In her spare time, she likes to read, write, paint, and chase beauty. <https://www.facebook.com/hannahlenzart>

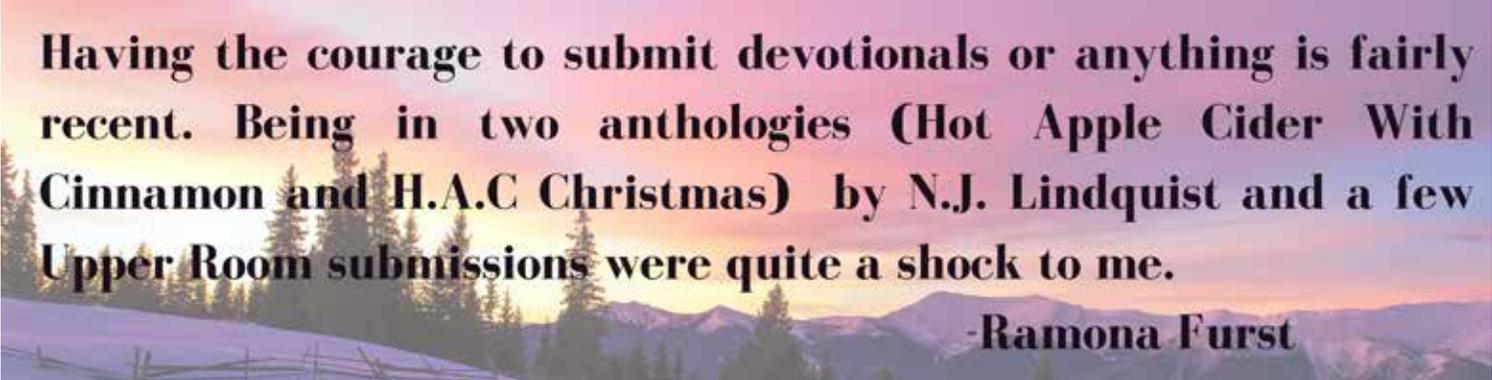


From Our Members



From Janice Dick

- Eleanor Bertin's book, *Lifelines*, was released in January
- Deb Elkink's book, *The Third Grace*, releases in February
- April 5 is the release of the second book in my Happenstance Chronicles, *Crazy About Maisie*
- July 13 is the re-release of the third book in my original Storm series, *Out of the Storm*



Having the courage to submit devotionals or anything is fairly recent. Being in two anthologies (Hot Apple Cider With Cinnamon and H.A.C Christmas) by N.J. Lindquist and a few Upper Room submissions were quite a shock to me.

-Ramona Furst



By Bobbi Ann Cole

Lockdown had led to lethargy. Time stretched like elastic. Deadlines floated away like bubbles. I played Scrabble. I went for walks.

I still had the pull—that call to write for God. But... After a few weeks, I felt yucky: I wanted to be writing. I picked myself up enough to ask other writers around the world what, if anything, was holding them back. Their replies are in a report I collated: 10 Reasons Christian Writers Don't Write and 1 Compelling Reason They Do, (available free at www.forchristianwriters.com).

A lot of the issues these writers came up with are the same as for writers in the secular world. For instance:

- I'm too busy and don't have time to write
- I couldn't face rejection
- Who would want to hear from little old me?

Yet Christian writers are fundamentally different from secular writers. For a start, we pray. The Bible urges us to, "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying." (Eph 6:18)

Prayer can accomplish what striving cannot. Jesus once healed a boy suffering convulsive fits. His disciples had been unable to help and wondered why. They had been trying to do things in their own strength. Jesus told them, "This kind can only come out by prayer" (Mark 9:29).

Prayer is powerful.

Secondly, we have faith. The boy's father had begged Jesus to heal his son, "If you can." Jesus replied, "All things are possible to him who believes!" The father said, "I do believe; help my unbelief!" (23-24). Faith isn't always easy to sustain, but if we believe that we are called, our approach will be missional.

Thirdly, Christian writers write truth. Jesus told the Roman governor, Pilate, "For this reason, I was born and have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to My voice."

Pilate's response was, "What is truth?" (John 18:37-8). He represents the secular world that believes only in perspectives and, possibly, "as many as six impossible things before breakfast," (Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll).

Prayer, faith and truth make Christian writers different. Whatever we write, even apparently secular prose, can be God-filled. So it's a wonder, isn't it, we are not all beavering away at our writing? Why aren't we like Ezekiel in the Bible, to whom God said, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and *fill your stomach with it*"?

He ate it, "and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth" (Ezekiel 3:3).

The bitter taste we experience is that writing is lonely and speculative and seems self-indulgent. Unsurprisingly, we are apt

to drift away, even though we have prayer, faith and truth. As social, sentient beings we still need in our practice:

- Direction
- Accountability
- Fellowship
- The Holy Spirit

How can we find these things?

Direction can be sought in the Word of God. I recently found direction—and encouragement—in the story of Joshua following God's weird instructions to conquer the city of Jericho, (Joshua 5:13-6:27). If warfare can be worship, then so can my writing! Accountability isn't a big stick, nor your sister or spouse telling you your writing is 'very good'. It should be constructive—a wise and reasoned discussion with someone about the writing promises you make for yourself.

Fellowship is about sharing our wins and our woes with others who understand what it means to be a Christian writer.

We invite the Holy Spirit into our practice through prayer, poetry, the Word, worship music... It's connection. Do we always do it? I realised as I was writing this piece that I didn't begin that way. But I have finished by asking the Holy Spirit to help me make it as helpful and inspirational for you as it can possibly be. †

Bobbie Ann Cole is a Christian writer and writing teacher with two Amazon bestselling memoirs to her name plus a novel, *Being Lena Levi*, that was shortlisted for the 2019 Eyelands Book Award. Her Bible-based motivational courses for Christian writers include *Eating the Scroll* and *MAP (Monthly Accountability Project)*. Download *10 Reasons Christian Writers Don't Write* and *1 Compelling Reason They Do* free at www.forchristianwriters.com and explore her website.



My main motivation to write springs from a desire to encourage people and give them hope. There is always someone perhaps stuck in their grief and this also motivates me to keep writing. My tagline is, "Touched by grief and held by hope." This summarizes my motivation.

-Alan Anderson



Vivid Verses

I Believe

I believe that Death is unable to imprison us. We will rise again.
Trumpet blast! Graves break open, the Dead street-walking.
Then Believers who are still alive and remain
Finally heaven bound. No formality;
Mortal will put on immortality.
Forever on eternity's shore,
Pain and tears no more.
Far beyond the Grim Reaper's flinty grasp,
Death has lost its power to hurt.
Grave destroyed, you no longer possess the final word!

-Dennis Wilson

Previously published in its entirety as the First Prize winner of the Poetry category in the Inscribe Fall Conference Supplement, 2019.

Hope in the Distance

No cup
No bread
No oil
Upon the head.
No touch
Unclean
Rampant fear
For unseen.
Blood shed
Cleansing stream
Flowing down
Calvary's beam.
Love prevailing
Unseen Savior
Rampant faith
Father's favor.
Filled cup
Sacred bread
Anointing oil
Upon the head!

-Lois Trotter

Rosy and Blue Days

Life has its rosy days
Pleasant as pastel colors
When all is smooth and symmetrical
And fits neatly within the lines

There are also the blue days
When things are not clearly defined
And don't adhere to normal shapes
And sharp points prick us

But if God is the center of our lives
He works both rosy and blue days
Together for our good
And holds our lives intact
In the circle of His love

-L. Marie Enns

The Insatiable Weed

The insatiable viney weed of greed
Invades invisibly the dark earth of our hearts
Spreading ever wider its searching roots
And thrusting up its tendrils to grasp, twist
and tighten,
Choking off joy.
Rampaging shoots open full leaf and feed,
Smothering love.
Never enough, never enough.
Money, houses, cars
Beauty, intelligence, attention
Education, opportunity, fame
Family, friends, creatures
Excitement, adventure, pleasure
Always something more.
Infinitely destroying days, years, lives.

Yank out the voracious plant with
contentment.
We are enough, we have enough.
Life is enough.

-Jennifer Duncan

Previously published on Jennifer's
blog : jennigarden.blogspot.com



Marketing and Networking for the Long Term

By Ann-Margret Hovsepian

Marketing is something that comes after your work has been published, right? Wrong. You should be doing it before, while, and after you write. What's the point of being a good writer if no one publishes your story?

Pitch Perfectly

Study the markets and identify which ones are a good fit for your style and expertise. A strong pitch involves more than simply choosing the right publication. You also need to know which section of that magazine or newspaper your story belongs in. There are many possibilities: "front of the book" (short articles, ideal for newer writers), profile / interview, how-to, round-up (list) or "listicle" (less formal), service piece (improves the reader's life), report, essay / criticism, column / commentary, personal essay, humour, inspiration, quiz, etc.

Pitches should answer two questions: What is the story, and why should the reader care? Then tell the editor what need your story fills, how you will fill that need, and why you're the right person to do it.

Pitch at the right time (most publications work on issues a few months in advance). Use the same language as the publications you query (don't talk over or below them) and show you've done your research. Hook the reader in the first 25 words of your pitch, which should be brief.

Polish your query letter until it reflects the level of excellence the editor will expect in your finished manuscript. Write a catchy subject line for your email. Mention your credentials but avoid small talk.

Be Your Editor's Favourite Writer

Building lasting relationships with editors is a writer's golden ticket. These four qualities will make you a winner:

Reliability – Meet your deadlines, stick to the word count or other specifications, and proofread and fact-check everything.

Irresistibility – Be a pleasure to work with. Treat your editors with respect. Be a problem solver, not maker. Be readily available and reachable as much as possible. If you're not around, another writer will happily take your place.

Honesty – Be upfront about what you can or can't do and about setbacks or possible delays. Most editors are understanding and reasonable when they know you are doing your best.

Creativity – Show you care about the publication and are thinking ahead by presenting fresh ideas. Wow your editor by going beyond

the assignment when you can. (But don't change the assignment! That's not creative. That's annoying.)

Beware How You Measure Success

Once you start getting your work published, it's natural to wonder how well you're doing. From a business standpoint, certain factors can point to success: repeat assignments, opportunities to write for bigger publications, positive feedback from editors, lots of shares and likes online, more followers on social media, and, of course, an increase in income. Networking opportunities (online or at conferences) can feel like sporting events where you need to push the competition aside as you make your way to the top of the podium. Resist this temptation. Networking is about giving as much as taking, and it's a long-term investment, not a short-term strategy.

For the Christian, the true measure of success is when you are obedient and faithful to God's calling and direction—when your stories go where He wants them to go (even if that audience is smaller than what you might have been dreaming of) and He is glorified through your work. The other markers of success are not in your control so don't stress about them. God will bless your faithfulness in your work just as He does in other areas of your life.



Ann-Margret Hovsepian lives in Montreal and has been freelancing for about 25 years. She has had hundreds of articles published in a wide variety of (mainly Christian) magazines and is the author and/or illustrator of several books. She serves as managing editor of the *Christian Freelance Writers Network* blog.

Your question about motivation is an interesting one. I definitely go through times when I don't feel motivated at all. It can come through something as mundane as a deadline through to need to connect with God or share my faith with others in some way. A lot of the time it's that something is chattering in my head and won't leave me alone until I start writing about it.

Donna Gartshore



The Gospel for All Cultures

By Sandi Somers

The gospel is a many-sided diamond, And God wants people in all cultures to experience his complete salvation.

~Jayson Georges~

A mother in a tribal area of China takes a chicken to the shaman to heal her gravely-ill daughter. He sacrifices her chicken and recites a magic spell. But her daughter is not healed. In desperation, this mother turns to a Christ-follower who prays to Jesus, and her daughter is healed. "Your Jesus has power to heal. I will trust him," she says. Now she and her family believe in Jesus.

A teenage girl in the Middle East becomes pregnant. She brings shame to her family and clan, and they threaten to kill her so that they can restore their honour. She flees to another part of the country where she meets Christians who welcome and take her into their home. Through their love and compassion, she receives hope, knowing that Jesus took her shame and honours her as a member of a new spiritual family.

Introducing the gospel from these perspectives may seem strange to us in the Western world. We experience salvation through the guilt-innocent perspective. We present the gospel to ones who are guilty of sin and ask them to receive forgiveness and a new life in Christ through His death and resurrection. Many scriptures speak to our needs, including Ephesians 1:7 and 2:5. "In Him (Jesus) we have redemption through his blood, the *forgiveness of sins*." God "made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in *transgressions*."

People from an animist background, often tribal peoples, live in fear-power societies. They fear evil spirits that affect all areas of their lives. In attempts to gain control over these spirits, a witch-doctor or shaman performs magical rituals. Effective ministry focuses on the power of Jesus. Meaningful scriptures include: "(God's) power is the working of his *mighty strength*, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him...*far above rule and authority, power and dominion*" (Ephesians 1:19-21).

Further, in honour-shame societies, belonging to a family, clan, and community is of utmost importance. Behaviour must conform to societal values. To break these codes of conduct brings shame, not only to the person, but also to the family's reputation. To restore honour, the disgraced one can be persecuted, expelled or even killed. (Honour killings occur in some shame-based societies. Suicide in eastern Asia is more common.) In presenting the gospel, we emphasize how Christ took our shame and restores us to a new family of loving Christ- followers. Ephesians 2:19 speaks to their need: "You are no longer *foreigners and aliens*, but *fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household*."¹

While in different contexts we begin with one facet of Christ's

work on the cross, we need to present all three concepts for a fuller understanding of salvation. Christ set us free from sin and guilt. He brought freedom over fear and Satan's power, and He lifts us from shame to an honoured relationship with Him. Even here in Canada, some people have asked forgiveness from their sins but need deliverance from such things as alcohol, drugs, fear and anxiety. Others need Christ's restoration from shame and rejection from the past.

As Canada and our neighbourhoods are becoming more multicultural, let us value the unique *spiritual* and felt needs of each people group. As writers, let us explore culturally-sensitive facets of Christ's sacrifice for us. Let us search the Scriptures and so come to "a place of common understanding...that is meaningful" to them.² Let us ask God to empower us to introduce others to Jesus and the gospel in its entirety, bringing them to a full understanding of Christ's work in their lives. †

² Roland Muller. *Honor & Shame: Unlocking the Door*. Xlibris Corporation. 2000. 105.



Sandi Somers has a passion for people of different cultures. She lived in Colombia, South America for two years, and has engaged in a number of short-term mission trips. As she taught English to immigrants and refugees, her passions led her to focus her MEd program on cross-cultural communication and cultural psychology.

I watched this two-part documentary on Mark Twain. It was very well done and packed with amazing facts. I also noticed that he, along with other creative people, had a deep undercurrent of tragedy. It seems a paradox that humourists are in the quiet hours of the night, deeply saddened and troubled by the inhumanity of people and the apparent cruelty of God. I guess comedy is our way of dealing with a sorrow which would drive us insane. (From Bruce Atchinson)

¹ Jayson Georges. *The 3D Gospel: Ministry in Guilt, Shame and Fear Cultures*. Time Press. 2014, 2016. 10-14



Move Toward Meaning Through Expressive Writing

By Alan Anderson

This is the last article in our four-part Writing to Heal Yourself series. The articles are an introduction to expressive writing as an effective tool in helping people move forward in life.

According to James Pennebaker, the fourth day writing exercise is the least enjoyable for people. Concentrating on a trauma can exhaust a person. Pennebaker suggests taking a break from the exercise if this is the case. Go back to the exercise after a couple of days and review. The break is helpful to re-energize people as they seek to review their story and discern its meaning.¹

Fourth Day—the final writing day of the four-day writing exercises.

Please note, this does not mean the last time you will write your story. You may go back to it again and again. Keep doing this for it is your story.

- Focus on your deepest emotions and thoughts regarding the trauma, grief matter, or emotional upheaval you have written about
- What issues are more problematic for you?
- Give thought to the events, issues, thoughts, and feelings your writing has brought to the surface
- Perhaps there are issues you can resolve as this four-day exercise ends

1 James W. Pennebaker and John F. Evans, *Expressive Writing: Words that Heal*, (Idyll Arbor Inc. 2014), 41.

- Write your expressive writing experience into a meaningful story.

The meaning of your story

- Why are you telling this story to yourself?
- Why has it had a traumatic effect on you?
- What thoughts and emotions are going through your mind as you take part in this exercise?
- What have you learned, lost, and gained because of this upheaval in your life?
- What have you learned about yourself or others during the exercise?
- Find words that help you heal as you rewrite your story.²

While reviewing the results of the exercises, there are a few points to consider. A person may notice changes in one's outlook on the traumatic event. One may notice a moving forward has already taken place in life. This will help to free a person to know more positive changes lie ahead.

The end of the four-day exercises need not mean one's writing as healing practice is complete. Dr. John F. Evans created a program called Transform Your Health: Writing to Heal.³ This program assists a person in building on lessons from the four-day exercises.

2 Pennebaker and Evans, *Expressive Writing: Words that Heal*, 116.

3 Pennebaker and Evans, 105-170.

Closing Thoughts

Through Expressive Writing, one becomes his or her own writing project. This intimate project is an aid as one heals from an emotional upheaval or trauma. The prospect to heal means a person may carry on with life without a traumatic event holding them back.

Perhaps as you read this series, you thought of someone who might benefit from a writing as healing approach. In fact, a woman who lives in Spain contacted me about this. I have sent her content I wrote to help her in her grief. She is now finding meaning in her grief story. I cannot do it for her because it is her story.

My prayer for readers of this series they will see the value in a writing as healing approach. May we move forward and realize the beauty and meaning of the life free of emotional barriers like rumination. †



Alan lives in Deroche, B.C. His overall theme is "Touched by grief, held by hope." He is co-author of *Good Grief People* by Angel Hope Publishing, 2017. In November 2018, he had four stories published in *Story by Story: the Power of a Writer, Unstoppable Writers Publishing*, and has written articles for *FellowScript*. Alan is the Provincial Rep Liason and BC rep for *InScribe*. His blog: <https://scarredjoy.ca/>

What motivates me to write? Usually a nugget of truth I hear in a movie or a sermon. I always ask "What if..." and it turns into a story. For example, I asked what would happen if a couple fell in love during Covid but weren't allowed to see each other? That led to "Love is on the Line", set in Italy, where Alessa sends love notes over the clothesline to Stefano. I can't say the nugget of truth or it would give away the story but it was from a verse I'd read in the Bible. Genres: I started writing human interest, and devotionals, and then discovered I really liked writing little fantasy stories and now I like to write short romances. My favourite is probably still the devotional type. (From Pam Mytroen)



Does God Care About My Writing?

By Caran Jantzen

What motivates you to write? Is it a burning desire you have in your gut? Is it the ideas that swirl around in your mind at all hours of the night? These are common reasons writers give for writing. Here is another one: to honour Creator God who made you in His image as a creative being.

But, does God really care about my writing?

I regularly asked myself if God cares about my writing early in my writing journey. After all, I wasn't writing anything overtly Christian or Biblical; I was writing a food blog. And yet, as I poured my time and heart into my humble blog, I was reminded again and again of the creativity that God has woven into our DNA; we were created to create.

Our creativity reflects His own creative nature. Once I discovered this truth, writing became an act of worship; the kitchen counter I wrote on became the altar where I lay down my gift in glory to God. My words reflected the joy I felt as I expressed myself before my Creator. I rejoiced that "every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17), including the gift of writing.

But, is writing the best way to use my time and creativity to honour God?

I asked myself if writing was the best use of my time when I began writing my first full-length book. I only had so many hours

available each day and I wondered if God would be pleased with me using my time this way. As I wrestled through this question with God, I was reminded of 1 Corinthians 3:17, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

I began moving forward in faith, believing that He had equipped me with the creativity of writing. I felt confident knowing that He would use my words and my work for His purpose, even if I wasn't writing a directly Christian message. I became determined to pursue writing with a thankful heart in glory to God.

As I struggled to get my thoughts onto the page, I continued to give thanks to God. As my ideas unfolded like blossoms, I praised God for the gift of creative expression. Even though the theme of my memoir was modern day homesteading in rhythm with the seasons, I began to notice a second theme emerge—God's nature reflected throughout His magnificent creation.

In describing my family's interaction with God's creation, I was actually describing the nature of God. As I wrote about the seeds beginning to sprout, my words pointed to God's faithfulness. As I wrote about our goats giving birth to their kids, I was writing about the new life God creates, and ultimately the new life He offers us through Jesus. Just as God reveals Himself through creation, I was using my words to point my readers to Him.

I can confidently answer the question I had early on with a celebratory yes. God cares about my—and our—writing. He created us to be both in relationship with Him and to point others to Himself. The time we take to hone our words becomes worship to God as we give thanks for the gift of writing He gives us. Our carefully crafted words become a reflection of who God is—His goodness, beauty, faithfulness, and love—for all of our readers to see.

What motivates you to write? Is it to honour Creator God who made you in His creative image? †



Author of Grow. Cook. Eat. Share. A Memoir, Caran Jantzen and her family live in Abbotsford BC. When not working around the homestead, Caran can be found entertaining family and friends while serving up their homegrown food. Caran enjoys writing prose by day and poetry by moonlight.

In my younger years I was not a writer. I was a chatterbox. I loved to argue and debate. I even debated with my Sunday School teacher about doctrine.

The year I graduated from high school I met the Lord and He changed my life. I got married and we dedicated our lives to telling people about the Lord in missionary work and pastoral work. Great fit for a 'talker'.

My favorite Bible passage was Psalms 71:18. "O God, you have taught me from my earliest childhood and I constantly tell others about the wonderful things you do."

After 40 years of marriage my husband died and when I was 65 I was diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. But it wasn't the usual type of ALS. It was Bulbar ALS. Which meant it started in my throat and mouth. My tongue shriveled and I lost the ability to speak.

But Psalm 71 continues: verse 18. "Now when I am old and gray, do not abandon me, O God. Let me proclaim your power to the next generation, your mighty works to those who follow after."

Since I couldn't talk, the Lord motivated me to write. I blog, I post a short message every morning on Facebook. And I have written and published six books with a couple more started. As long as I can hold a pen, or punch computer keys, I will continue to write. God knew the plans He had for me. (From Carol Ferguson)



Inspiration Lost and Found

By Tandy Balson

There was a time when my writing inspiration seemed limitless. I was caught by surprise when it slowed to a trickle. Story ideas flitted around the outskirts of my mind but didn't linger long enough for me to capture them.

Looking back, I can see what happened. My mind was filled with worry over a loved one's illness, anger with someone I thought was taking advantage of my husband's generous nature and doubt over some decisions I needed to make. These thoughts crowded out everything else.

A few years ago, I developed a talk on fear for both Christian and secular marketplaces. In it I quoted some research that helped me regain my positive state of mind.

Scientists used highly sensitive brain scans to show that fear and gratitude could not co-exist in the brain. I knew that worry is fear of something that hasn't even happened. It stood to reason that if I could focus on gratitude, the worry and fear wouldn't be able to take hold of my mind.

Instead of focusing on what could go wrong, I chose to praise God for all the blessings in my life. It wasn't always easy and I had to go deeper than this brief snapshot can show but I'm sure you get the picture. My outlook shifted and I started looking for the positives.

I also got curious about my surroundings. I saw things from a new perspective and started taking pictures of anything that captured my interest. I read a quote by Ellen Parr that said, "The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity." I'd like to alter it slightly to say, "The cure for lost inspiration is curiosity."

I took some pictures while wandering through the fields of a friend's farm last summer. Way out in the pasture I came across an abandoned vehicle under a tree. A decrepit farmhouse stood nearby. Over the months I'd forgotten about these, but when scrolling through my camera roll I saw them and my curiosity took over. Who may have lived in that farmhouse? What happened to the vehicle that it was left to rust under a tree? Since I don't know the details, my imagination fills them in. These thoughts can provide inspiration for a future story.

In early January I was walking through a park where a large light display had been. The display was being dismantled and in one area, the police tape that had been used to keep people on the pathway, was laying across the ground. I reached for my phone and took a picture of my foot crossing the police tape. I look at that image now and see numerous directions its story could take.

When my negative attitude, with its self-imposed restrictions lifted, I became free to embrace the limitless possibilities the Lord has for me. Inspiration found! †





Do You Love What You Do?

By Emily Duffield

There is a story about Annie Dillard that makes a lot of sense to me. I don't know if she said it, but it seems like something she would say. It goes like this: A creative writing student once asked Ms. Dillard if she thought they had a shot at becoming an author. Her response was simple, but threw the ball back in their court: "Do you love sentences?"

If you love putting words together into sentences, you have a shot at being an author, because you like the work, so you will do the work. This has always been my internal motivation for writing. I love sentences. I love words. I love stories. I love the work, even when it's hard. It is rare for me to step outside and examine the thing, because I live in the sentences, in the trenches with the words. Day to day I dwell in the work; in seas of ink and paper. I contribute through sentences and I keep making them because I like them.

Jean Rhys said once that "all of writing is a huge lake. There are great rivers that feed the lake, like Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. And there are mere trickles... All that matters is feeding the lake."

Writing is one way of enacting a love for books. There are others, like the study of English Literature, publishing, and the fine craft of editing. I reckon that all of these feed the lake. It is, after all, the same lake.

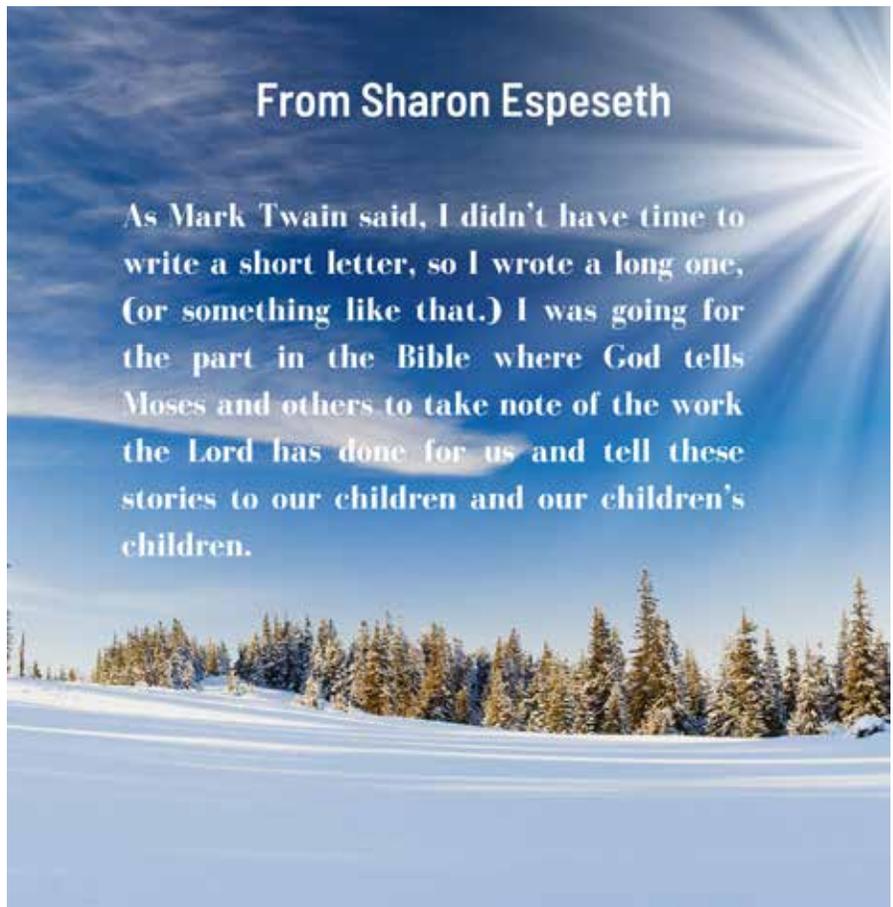
Literature is the words and the sentences, laid out beautifully before the reader because someone loved them enough to use care. This brings me to my external motivation. Authors are often advised to consider their audience. This is, in one sense, crucial and in another almost meaningless to me. I'll explain. In terms of demographics, I find an audience impossibly broad, especially for fiction. Imagining an audience gives me stage fright, so instead, I choose a reader. Sometimes a few, but often just one in particular—a friend, or the child of a friend. I write for them and hope there will be more like them. They will likely never read it, but it was for them. At least for the them I imagine. In this, I think I am not alone, in the trenches with the words. They say that people volunteer for the military to protect their country in the abstract and general sense. But when the shooting starts, a soldier doesn't fight to save an idea, she/he fights to save the friend beside them. In the trenches with the words, I write for a friend. This keeps me going when it's hard. I don't write for the idea of a person, or a general, possible audience. I write because I don't want to let my friend down, although they may never know.

The most important thing—whether you feed the lake in a great stream or a small, seasonable brook—is to knock out the words like you mean them. They come from a well that does not dry up. In *The Writing Life*, Annie Dillard gives this advice: "One of the few things I know about writing is this: spend it all, shoot it, play it, lose it, all, right away, every time. Do not hoard what seems good for a later place in the book, or for another book; give it, give it all, give it now... Something more will arise for later, something better. These things fill from behind, from beneath, like well water. Similarly, the impulse to keep to yourself what you have learned is not only shameful, it is destructive. Anything you

do not give freely and abundantly becomes lost to you."

If you love to write, you can and will be a writer. If you love the idea of being a writer, but not the craft itself, you will struggle every day of your life. Write for someone real, and write what springs up when you come thirsty. It might be a stream or a tiny creek, but add it to the lake, to keep the words alive. After all, if you love them, write them like you mean it and set them free. †

Emily Duffield is a freelance author, editor, and book designer in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, where she is pursuing her MA in English and Creative Writing from the University of Regina.



From Sharon Espeseth

As Mark Twain said, I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one, (or something like that.) I was going for the part in the Bible where God tells Moses and others to take note of the work the Lord has done for us and tell these stories to our children and our children's children.



From the Mailbox

FellowScript Magazine,
InScribe,
P.O. Box 68025,
Edmonton, AB T6C 4N6

January 17, 2021

Dear FellowScript Editor,

I'm writing to encourage the young writer, Cheyenne Wakulchyk, who wrote the story, *How to do Things the Takao Way*, which appeared on page 14 of the November FellowScript magazine. Cheyenne's story gripped my heart on more than one level. Generations of Indigenous youth in Canada grew up with government policy that devalued their culture and broke natural family relationships. The brokenness that Cheyenne described is all too common a result, and I am so sorry for all that she's endured. Her story, though, is one of hope and resilience. As a fellow dog lover, I related to the healing she described through a faithful furry friend's unconditional love.

Cheyenne, you have the gifts of self-knowledge and insight and the ability to take others into your mind and heart through words. I wish you God's blessings on all of your hopes and dreams—and the determination to not give up on them, even though you may feel like it sometimes.

Sincerely,
Belinda Burston



From the Mailbox

Editors Note: I often find other emails interesting. This ordinary email from a distant relative coincided with our theme for February. There are always other writers out there writing and being motivated!

Every thing that I am normally involved with has been cancelled so I have much more time on my hands than I normally would. I had to cancel the last meeting of my writing group a few weeks ago but am toying with the idea of trying a video conferencing meeting on the computer for our meeting next week.

I downloaded a program called ZOOM last night and tried it out with George, our daughter, Michelle and me on the call. It worked fairly well so might suggest we try it when I email everyone on the weekend. I know some of the members of the group are missing our twice a month meetings greatly. It keeps people spurred on with their writing and they have become accustomed to that motivation.

We have quite an interesting group. One member mentioned she was overwhelmed at the moment because she had a lot of letters and she didn't know what to do with them. I suggested she scan them and put them into a document. She could then add thoughts after each letter to help write a story.

I've read 2 books that were completely comprised of letters. One was 'The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society'

and 'The Last Christmas in Paris'. I'm sure you've heard of the first one. Those types of books are called Epistolary stories. I had never heard of the name until I was trying to find out what they were called.

She loved the idea and is going to do that. Others had given her suggestions too. That's the great thing about a group like this, we learn from each other!

Years ago the 4 of us went to Australia. Michelle was 18 and Mike was 15. I bought a coiled scribbler and all of us wrote in it. We just kept passing it from one to another. After I finish writing my story, I'm going to put those journal entries into an Epistolary book. I'll add some of the pictures we took during our 3 week trip. That one should take me about a year to write too! So much to do, so little time! (Not really, just have to get busy!)

One of the members in my writing group was an English teacher. Can that woman ever write! I get drawn right into her stories about her Grandfather and more than once have had chills running down my spine as I listen to her.

These people motivate each other too which is quite amusing to observe.

Sheila Copley
BC

WRITING FOR CHANGE

By Dorene Meyer

With increased restrictions on free speech rallies, "fact-checking" by big tech companies, and hotlines for those who wish to snitch on their neighbor, Christian writers might be tempted to lie low and avoid controversial topics these days.

Writing to effect change in our time may come with a price. In 1521, Martin Luther had his writings banned and was declared a heretic and an enemy of the state. Fast forward to 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated after writing and delivering his famous "I have a dream" speech (delivered in 1963).

The Bible is pretty clear on this topic. In Isaiah 1:17, we are told to "seek justice" and "defend the oppressed." And Proverbs 31:19 tells us to "Speak up" and "defend the rights of the poor and needy."

I won't come down on one side or the other in this brief article; we all know the issues that are "polarizing" the church these days. Let me just say that hiding our light under a bushel has never been part of the deal. Jesus told us to take up our cross and follow Him (Luke 9:23). In Matthew 10:34, Jesus said that He didn't come to bring peace but a sword.

Writing to effect change in our time takes courage. And yes, we might end up being ridiculed, vilified, unfriended, and banned from some platforms. I am reminded of the verse in Hebrews 12:4 where we are told that, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." In other words, we haven't been martyred yet. But as our world spirals further away from the truth of the Scriptures and faith in Jesus



Buh bye, 2020

It's my habit, during the last week of the year, to reflect and set intentions. To make a list of my top ten reads. To choose a word for the coming year. To tidy up files and create new ones.

I've done some of these things. But mostly I've wandered and wondered and tried to put down the weight that's wearing a hole in my psyche.

We walk gingerly toward the dawn of a new year and wonder how history will remember us. We set intentions and make plans knowing full well as never before that life can knock our house of cards down in an instant.

Last night I lay awake and looked into the dark. I prayed, listened, and wondered about things. I thought not so much of the year that's ending as I did other years in which horrible things happened. Not so much about newsmakers as ordinary folk who stumbled through unfathomable things and remained standing and the character it took for them to do so.

But this morning I can't help but reflect on the year we're saying goodbye to. I look at photos and create a grid of memories. Then, because it doesn't capture enough, I create a second.

This is 2020.

Void, yet full. Quiet, yet oh so loud.

I have neither energy nor desire to philosophize or do anything other than consider the gems in the past twelve months. And there were some.

I published a book. That's a Big Thing in my world but it's lost in the chaos. (Note to authors: don't release a book in a pandemic year.)

I enjoyed good conversation in parks and coffee shops and on the phone.

I enjoyed spending time with our granddaughter and daughter.

I made face masks.

I sang the doxology while I washed my hands.

I grew tomatoes. And canned tomatoes. And roasted tomatoes. And made tomato soup.

I grew a loofah.

I filled my canning shelves and freezer with an obsession I eventually realized wasn't healthy.

My chess game improved.

I read good books.

I wrestled with my faith.

I was surprised by grace.

I let go of some things.

I played with watercolour paint.

I got another dog.

I stayed home. I took walks. I stayed home. I stayed home. I stayed home.

I listened to the news. I took a break from the news. I set boundaries around how much news I could stomach.

I didn't do nearly all the things I could have done but I did what I could. And now, as the year winds down, like many of you, I'm just tired.

I'm going into the new year with few expectations, just a measure of hope and faith. Not necessarily a large measure, but a measure nonetheless, trusting it's sufficient for one day and that enough will be provided for the days that follow.

We made it through, friends. To say "happy new year" seems trite so I won't. Thank you for reading my oftentimes rambling posts this year. Let's link virtual arms and walk forward into whatever lies ahead together. It's still a beautiful world.

Linda Hoyer is a writer, photographer, gardener, and somewhat-fanatical grandma. She lives in British Columbia, Canada with her husband and their doted-upon Yorkshire Terrier but will always be a Saskatchewan prairie girl. She is the author of *Two Hearts: An Adoptee's Journey Through Grief to Gratitude* and *The Presence of Absence: A Story About Busyness, Brokenness, and Being Beloved*. Find her online at www.lindahoyer.com where she ponders ordinary days and thin places where faith intersects.



Call for Workshop Proposals

Do you have a workshop you could teach at the InScribe 2021 Fall Conference? The executive is accepting proposals until February 28, 2021. Please send a description of the workshop along with your CV and headshot to: president@inscribe.org

Rolling and rocking with industry changes!

In the 25 years since incorporating PageMaster, there have been significant disruptions. The intention was never to become a commercial print or graphic design shop; but to provide efficient, high-quality services around publishing.

From type to press

An area of significant change has been how type made its way to the press. The hot-metal and handset type I began with in 1976 had been relegated to a back corner. Cold type, which had been a huge driver in the development of community newspapers, gave way to desktop publishing as the new standard for graphic production. Easy access to typesetting tools also brought a proliferation of output from those unfamiliar with typesetting and design concepts.

PageMaster's initial production was newspaper and magazine assembly to be printed on web offset presses. Throughout the printing industry shooting paste-ups, gave way to direct film output. Running our own film provided additional control, time-savings and convenience for our clients. But technology and disruption continued.

As digital technology matured, direct to plate eliminated film. The PDF format significantly improved and became the standard for passing work to the next service provider. At the same time, digital printing moved from photocopies to efficient short-run manufacturing. So PageMaster rolled, expanding digital printing past the proof and office functions.

Short-run book production

By 2000, efficient printing and binding books in small quantities became possible,

and in 2001 PageMaster added a perfect binder and entered print-on-demand book production as a service.

True POD technology became available to print one book at a time with reasonable quality. Instead, PageMaster embraced a small batch model. Paper use is efficient, and it finds a good balance for author or training session copies.

Art publishing

Digital printing quality matured, surpassing offset. PageMaster added a digital press in 2005. By the time PageMaster was 10, high-quality digital printing and photo-capture for art were included in our services.

A medium format digital camera and wide gamut archival inkjet output further enhanced our art publishing options. As we also printed books, art notebooks and art books fit naturally in our offerings.

The web and marketing

Back in the '90s, I realized the internet would be huge. PageMaster's first web site was on connect.ab.ca/~pagemaster in 1997. Our web presence has expanded much from that first on-line brochure.

PageMaster.ca has rich content. An on-line catalogue for books, built in 2005, developed into a full e-commerce site to sell books. PageMasterPublishing.ca grew to include art prints, cards and art notebooks in 2016, and currently has 1,196 products available worldwide. Our on-line portal and customer care system served us well coming through "the great lockdown" and the challenges of 2020. We also build sites for publishers, authors, artists and musicians.

Book distribution was expanded with POD through Lightning Source to combat shipping costs, and through e-book platforms, to further support our authors. Media kits and marketing material round out our offerings.

Finding our fit

Our old \$20 bill quoted Gabrielle Roy, "Could we ever know each other in the slightest without the arts?" I love the wide variety of work and approaches shown by our clients. Tools for creating, polishing, marketing and distributing change, but core processes and values remain. Today there is proliferation of self-publishing services, hybrid publishing options, and the publishing industry in disruption. Opportunities and challenges abound.

Growth has not been a straight line. There have definitely been rocks in the road. A lot has changed in 25 years, but great work, produced efficiency, is core.

The mission of, "a complete Canadian publishing service, championing life, diversity and hope," rings true and guides decisions. Calls come in that would fit our equipment and tempt me to spread out. But our role is to embrace artists, authors and associations in publishing. Our goal is to push back globalism and "help 5,000 Canadians successfully publish by 2025."



Dale Youngman began his career in printing as a floor compositor in 1976. Twenty years later he launched PageMaster Publication Services Inc. with the purpose of increasing quality and efficiency for independent publishers.

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God's Word Never Changes

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23 (NKJ)



Keynote Speaker:
D.S. Martin

D.S. Martin is a Canadian poet who is Series Editor for the Poiema Poetry Series from Cascade Books, and is Poet-in-Residence at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. His books of poetry include: *Ampersand* (2018), *Conspiracy of Light: Poems Inspired by the Legacy of C.S. Lewis* (2013), *Poiema* (2008), and the chapbook *So The Moon Would Not Be Swallowed* (2007, Rubicon Press).

His poetry has appeared in many journals in both Canada and the US, such as *Canadian Literature*, *Christian Century*, *Dalhousie Review* and *Queen's Quarterly*. He and his wife, Gloria, live in Brampton, Ontario. They have two adult sons.

Fall Conference Registration Includes:

- Thursday Night Mixer
- Awards Ceremony
- (Individual/Guest Tickets available)
- Saturday Lunch
- Keynote Presentations
- Panel Discussions
- Friday & Saturday Sessions
- Networking
- Friday Lunch
- Blue Pencil Sessions
- Friday Evening Banquet
- Book Table Sales
- (Guest Tickets Available)
- Author Readings

Fall Conference Online Registration

Opens June 2021

<http://inscribe.org.fall-conference/>

Watch *FellowScript* and our website for more details to come.