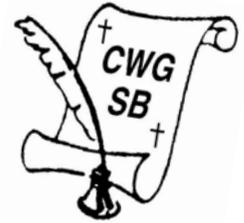


# WRITER'S VOICE !



"...I recite my composition concerning the king; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." Psalms 45:1 (NKJV)

Summer 2008

Volume 4, Issue 3

## From the Editor ...

Greetings in the mighty name of **Jesus**.

The clock is ticking, the calendar is moving right along, just as we are, preparing for our Twelfth Annual Writers Conference to be held once again at Westmont College on October 18, 2008. The enclosed flyer will give you a clue of many surprises we have in store for you this year. Please note the special prices available for the first time: Bring a friend for only \$50.00.

We are still the best priced conference on the west coast, without compromising quality: Number-one speakers, great location, outstanding food, and great fellowship.

Make your plans now for an unforgettable writers conference that will bring you rewards for years to come. It is our pleasure to bring you this gift.

Why not send in your registration slip and your check right now, so you don't forget about it and miss out on this grand opportunity.

Once again Larry Skahill and Corrinne Abele have blessed us with new articles. Larry shares about his continuing journey writing his first book. Cory writes about a question we all should be asking ourselves: As Christian writers, what should we be writing about?

Have you ever wondered why your book or article was returned to you unpublished? Eva Shaw, a new contributor to *Writer's Voice!*, presents the article "Why Do Books Fail?" to answer that question.

I trust each one of you will find one or more tidbits of wisdom and knowledge to further your writing skills.

*And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.*

Exodus 32:16



Opal Mae Dailey  
Editor-In-Chief

**NOTE: New  
Date !**

## Points of Interest ...

**The Road Ahead** P-2  
Think you're finished? ...

**From My Heart  
To Yours** P-3  
Writing for Him ...

**Why Books Fail?** P-4  
Checklist for authors ...



## Calendar ...

### CWGSB Monthly Meeting:

**2nd Thursday**

**12:00 p.m.**

IHOP Restaurant

1701 State Street

Santa Barbara, CA

**September 26-27, 2008:** San Diego

CWG Fall Conference

[www.sandiegocwg.org](http://www.sandiegocwg.org)

**October 18, 2008:** 12th Annual  
Santa Barbara Christian Writers  
Conference at Westmont College:

[cwgsb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cwgsb@sbcglobal.net)

(805) 682-0316

## The Road Ahead . . .

Larry Skahill

The first time I “finished” my book, *Propeller Baptism*, I took the advice of family and friends and attended the 2006 Mount Hermon Christian Writer’s Conference. Although the thickening marine layer above threatened to chill the early twilight of my first evening there, I strolled among the magnificent redwoods, bubbling streams and fern-laced waterfalls to relax after the five hour drive.

Finding a small, one-hundred person amphitheater made of weathered concrete, I made my way down to the eight foot tall cross at center stage. Realizing that I had never knelt at the foot of the cross, I did so and prayed. “Father, guide me as I travel this new road. I’ve never written a book before. I’m not even sure if this is your will for me. Help me, Lord.”

Beyond my understanding, I became utterly convinced that despite all my preparations for this weekend, I needed to be willing to be redirected and know that the road ahead of me was a long one.

Looking up at the rough-hewn four-by-four beams of the cross, I wondered: *If this were the real cross, would His blood have poured out on me here below?* I watched in amazement as the thick overcast directly above me cleared. A perfect circle opened allowing the light from the moon and two stars to beam through the trees and light up the cross.

*Wow! Is that you God?*

Over the next five days, I attended dozens of track sessions, workshops and night-owl coffee breaks. I spent nearly two hundred dollars on CDs of classes I could not attend due to scheduling conflicts. When it was all over, my head spun with all of the information and potential future directions. Even the “What Do I Do Next?” CD provided little help.

Since that weekend two and one-half years ago, I’ve invested hundreds of additional dollars on books, CDs, videos and conferences. I finished two complete rewrites and dozens of cover to cover edits of *Propeller Baptism*, my previously “finished” book. Upon finalizing the last copyedits

last month from an acquaintance who works for Penguin Books, I rejoiced and celebrated with friends.

Days later, the “What next?” blues hit. All the sage advice from the afore-mentioned sources struck like machine gun bullets: marketing, platform, self-publish, website, public speaking, magazine articles, blog, newsletter, inventory, credentials, publicity and more.

*Aaaaaaah!*

Desperate for wisdom, I prayed and quickly recalled Proverbs 16:3, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” And then Proverbs 4:18, “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.”

I didn’t see any moonbeams, but I don’t need them anymore as I excitedly look forward to whatever redirections He sends my way on the long road ahead.

### WRITER’S VOICE !

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Corrinne Abele  
Michael Abele

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We welcome your input: ideas, suggestions and article submissions. Please use the addresses above.

## From My Heart To Yours . . .

Corrinne Abele, Associate Editor

Someone once told me, probably Opal, our CWGSB Editor-In-Chief, that “writers write.”

I’m wondering why?

More specifically, what compels a **Christian** writer to write?

If you read Larry’s article on the preceding page, we can hear his heart and see the actions he has taken to write and to publish his first book. Webster’s Dictionary defines the word **write**: to form or inscribe (words, letters, symbols, etc.) on a surface; to create, produce, to compose; to communicate or describe in writing; to set forth ideas or facts in writing.

I am reminded of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. When he inquired who Jesus was and about the miracles He was performing, Jesus jumped ahead to this bottom-line truth: Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. (John 3:6) And, of course, as Christians, we are very familiar with the specific instructions of how we are born again in Romans 10:9-10.

This “new creation” is a wonderfully unique species walking on planet earth. As a citizen of heaven, full of God’s Spirit, we have said yes to the call of God. We are a people of purpose, sent out to do the will of our common Father. We are not conformed to this world, but we are separated and holy vessels of His righteousness. The greater One lives within us. We are carriers of God!

So what are we writing about and what books are we buying and reading? What is our goal? What do we desire to communicate to the world as we sit staring at a blank screen or paper? What is inside of you that is worthy to be shared? I realize of course that not all Christian writers will always write about their faith and the gospel. But whatever we are writing about, should it not be worthy enough to be brought before our Savior for His opinion? And whatever books we the church are buying and reading, are they books that are uplifting and edifying to us? Are these books stirring up the call of God

within us to advance the Kingdom of God?

Times and seasons upon the earth have changed, and as we get closer to the coming of the Lord, we must be even more fervent to walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him and being fruitful in every good work. Jesus said we are to be the salt of the earth. If the salt loses its flavor it is good for nothing but to be thrown out. You are the light of the world, **Christian** writers. Your light should not be hidden under a basket but should be put on a lamp stand to give light in this present darkness. But you can’t give what you don’t have. Your inner light and strength comes from continually being nourished in the word of God. It is not only a light unto your own path but to others as well. Remember this: **Jesus is the Word of God!** And staying in the word of God on a daily basis will not always be easy. Most of us will have to make the decision to put it first place in our lives and then: **persevere!**

One final passage of scripture for us to meditate on is the parable of the ten virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish. Those who were **ready** went in with Him to the wedding, and then the door was shut. Just as Jesus spoke to the multitudes and His disciples back then, He says to us **His Christian writers** today:

**WATCH, PAY ATTENTION, STAY READY!**

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### North County Meeting of the CWGSB?

Would those of you living in the northern part of Santa Barbara county be interested in a monthly North County meeting of the CWGSB?

If so, please let us know: (805) 682-0316 or email [cwgsb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cwgsb@sbcglobal.net).

Also, please help us with your suggestions for the following:

- Meeting place
- Time
- Frequency (if not monthly)

## Why Do Books Fail? . . .

Eva Shaw

Every year in the US more than 250,000 new books are presented to readers. Only a few make it to best-seller lists. Most fail.

The majority of these books do not make it to the bookstore, best-seller lists or back for a second printing for seven reasons.

**1. Confusion:** Are you clear on the genre, the point of view, the thesis? Books have categories, or genres, and too often emerging authors do not study the genre that they're targeting OR they change genres while writing. This doesn't mean one needs to be a copycat: rather, by reading in the genre to be targeted, one becomes familiar with length, structure, and concept. Go to a bricks and mortar bookstore and find the section where your book would be. Check the competition. What do they have you don't? And vice versa? What "added value" does your book provide? Memorize these facts. You'll need them to sell your book.

**2. Lack of original insight:** It's been said, "There's nothing new under the sun." However, smart authors create twists to make the "old stuff" fresh. What's your twist? Don't know? Find out, get help, talk to others who know about originality and marketing.

**3. Poor or ineffective research:** If you're in doubt about the authenticity of anything in your book, whether it's fiction or nonfiction, double check. Readers demand truth; the public is leery of unsubstantiated claims.

**4. Insufficient self-editing:** You really can do most of the polishing yourself. Put your book away to cool. Then keeping a copy, ruthlessly edit out anything that doesn't strongly support your book. Hint: Look for redundancy or repetition. Readers don't need to be told things twice. That last sentence was an example of sneaky redundancy. If you're not a native English speaker or want some insight, hire a reputable content or copy editor.

**5. Hook-less beginning or lackluster end:** Readers are fair and will give you about ten minutes time reading your book to prove that they should spend money on it. However, everything in the book and especially the chapter beginnings must hook the reader. This takes skill with nonfiction and fiction.

The end must fulfill the promises you've proposed in the text and support your thesis. It must be done in a creative, fresh way.

**6. Bad mechanics:** If you need to brush up on grammar or the mechanics of manuscript preparation, do it before sending out review copies. Hire a professional even if you have a degree in English from Harvard. After reading a manuscript twice or twenty times, the eye skips over mistakes. As a much published writer and ghost, I admit to typo and grammar blindness. It's an embarrassing "condition" once the book is published. Don't let it happen to you.

**7. Lack of perseverance:** Publishing and writing are not for wimps. The hard work starts when the boxes of books arrive. Hire a PR pro, or you do it yourself. How? Write articles based on the premise of your nonfiction book to get exposure, lure book buyers, and generate income. For fiction, create "events" by teaching hopeful writers about the technical side of your genre. A book signing shouts you're selling the book (which is true), but an event is an activity. Then the attendee buys your book. Get that "elevator" speech down, explain your book in 25 words or less, and get comfy whipping business cards out and extending your hand. Ask for business; ask people to buy your book. What's the worst that can happen? If you're going to stop being a publisher or a writer when you hear the word "no," move on over. There are hundreds of others who want to take your place. I call this "literary Darwinism" and I'll be first in line to take your place.

The list of best-selling books that were rejected by publishers again and again is shocking. Here is a list of several:

1. *Dubliners* by James Joyce
2. *Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison* by Charles Shaw
3. *Kon-Tiki* by Thor Heyerdahl
4. *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach
5. *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books, Hansen, Canfield
6. *Peter Rabbit* series, Beatrix Potter
7. *60-Second Shiatzu* [sic], Eva Shaw

Eva Shaw ([www.evashaw.com](http://www.evashaw.com)) is the ghost/author of 70 books. She's regularly in the media. She teaches writing at 2000 colleges and universities, speaks at conferences and has a new DVD "Write Your Book in 20 Minutes." Reach her at 866-244-9047

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