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**Write-to-Publish 2007 Conference**  
**“Taking Biblical Truth to the General Market”**

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:** Following is an excerpt from the *Guidebook to Successful Christian Writing*. Anne Harrington Dewolf, a Writer, Editor and Christian Writers Institute Instructor, shared the following thoughts:

“As Christian authors, we are called to be mediators between God’s help and man’s hurt. People today are empty and searching. They need to know of God’s grace. We have a tremendous responsibility to communicate to them His love, acceptance and forgiveness...”

But, how can we communicate those important things to a world that rejects Christians and much of what we stand for?

The answer? Very skillfully...

### **“Taking Biblical Truth to the General Market: Five Ways to Infiltrate the World with the Word”**

#### **1. Let Others Say What You’d Like to Say...**

**\*By skillfully using good quotes, you can work God into just about any article from sports stories to disaster coverage.**

\*Example: Here is a hunting story about a guy who experienced divine intervention on a deer hunt. Here is his quote that stuck out to me:

“Looking back on my deer hunt, I almost didn't even go hunting on that particular day... Then, after I did go hunting, I almost talked myself into leaving early.

So the bottom line is, if you get a chance to go deer hunting you'd better go. You never know what's going to happen. Its like that old saying, ‘A bad day of hunting is still better than a good day at work.’ Just when I think life can't get any better, God lets something unbelievable happen to me.”

## 2. Follow the Master’s Example—Use Stories to Illustrate Your biblical Message...

### **\*Jesus used parables to get His message to the world, and so should you!**

Did you know that about one-third of Jesus’ teachings in the Gospels come to us through parables? See Jesus understood the power of a story.

Stories have sticking power. They get into your mind and you remember them years later.

Those stories that Jesus told didn’t appear to have any religious significance, did they? He talked about lost coins, building barns, casting nets into the sea, wedding banquets, planting seeds, children who leave home, a friend who wakes you up in the night, etc. But those stories had great impact, didn’t they?

Dr. Eugene Peterson, a pastor, scholar, noted author and poet—probably best known for *The Message*, a contemporary paraphrase of the Bible, explains it this way:

“[The parable] is a way of saying something that requires the imaginative participation of the listener. Inconspicuously, a parable involves the hearer...Parables are Jesus’ primary language of choice to converse with people, stories that don’t use the name of God, stories that don’t seem ‘religious.’...Stories, when told well, can break down walls, bypass resistance, and steal into the heart and soul through the door of the imagination.”

## 3. Lose the Christianese, Please...

**\*Wikipedia defines Christianese as:** a form of jargon sometimes used by members of the Christian church, especially within, though not limited to, contemporary Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism. Christianese is characterized by the use of certain words, theological terms, and catchphrases in everyday conversation in ways that are only comprehensible within the context of Christian belief.

### **\*How can we reach an unchurched world if we write in a foreign “Christianese” language?**

Here is what Brad Powell’s new book “Change Your Church for Good...The Art of Sacred Cow Tipping” (Thomas Nelson) says about “Christianese.”

"In order to work right, the church must be relevant. It must communicate God’s truth and hope in the language of the culture in which it’s situated. Unfortunately, many consider cultural relevance a compromise for the church. Though they may be sincerely motivated, they’re wrong. As an

incontrovertible example, let me share some words from Jesus Himself on this.

Videns autem turbas ascendit in montem et cum sedisset accesserunt ad eum discipuli eius et aperiens os suum docebat eos dicens beati pauperes spiritu quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum beati mites quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram beati qui lugent quoniam ipsi consolabuntur beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt iustitiam quoniam ipsi saturabuntur beati misericordes quia ipsi misericordiam consequentur beati in mundo corde quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt beati pacifici quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum beati estis cum maledixerint vobis et persecuti vos fuerint et dixerint omne malum adversum vos mentientes propter me gaudete et exultate quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in caelis sic enim persecuti sunt prophetas qui fuerunt ante vos

Wasn't that awesome? It defines the foundational message of Christ and explains His life and ministry, doesn't it? I wouldn't be surprised if you stopped to read it a couple of times and contemplate its importance to your life. You just read a portion of the greatest sermon ever given by the greatest preacher in history ... the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12). The truths you just read are a part of the foundational hope that Jesus Christ came to give us.

Let me ask you: how much hope did you experience as a result of reading them? How relevant was it to your life? If you're honest, unless you're proficient in Latin, it was totally irrelevant. And the reason it was irrelevant is because you couldn't understand it. It didn't make any sense. Your inability to understand it rendered it inoperative in your life. Though it contains powerful truths, reading it was boring and a waste of time. More than likely, you either didn't try or you quickly gave up.

We need to realize that this is the experience of lost and unchurched people when they choose to attend a church (or read a book or article) that communicates God's truth in, what I call, "Christianese."

Whether they know it or not, this is the language most churches all over the world are speaking. "Christianese" is the private language of any given church's culture and tradition. As with all languages, it is clearly understood and considered beautiful by those who have been raised with it. The only problem is that only insiders can understand and appreciate it.

When outsiders, either unchurched or different-churched people, attend a church that speaks Christianese, they don't get it. They have no clue what's being said. It's like a foreign language to them."

PS Using culturally relevant language is not the same as watering down the Word of God...just thought I'd throw that in for those who might find their spiritual toes a bit stepped on by this line of thinking...

Beware of words like: saved, sanctified, redeemed, etc. It's not that we're "dumbing it down" for the world—we're just saying it in their language. Kind of like the Message and Contemporary English versions of the bible...

#### **4. Good writing makes a way for the Word...**

**\*Since 9-11, the publishing world and the buying public became more open to inspirational messages—but we have to write well to take advantage of that open door...**

\*Magazine such as “Woman’s World” and other secular women’s magazines often run inspirational stories of courage, hope and divine intervention. So, query them with your stories.

\*There is a mindset out there that goes something like this—“Oh, you’re a CHRISTIAN writer” as if that’s like being second class. Some feel that Christians, especially Christian writers, are right-wing nuts with sub par writing skills and nothing to say. So, let’s prove them wrong! ☺

\*Determine to write well all the time. We want to make our writing sing so that readers won’t be able to tear themselves away from our articles and books.

Here are a few “checkpoints” to help you on the journey to great copy! Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does the lead or story opening grab me? Is it startling enough to draw me into the article?
2. Is my story wordy—loaded with excess adjectives, unnecessary articles, and trite phrases? (If so, get rid of them.)
3. Are my sentences long and hard-to-follow?
4. Does my story center around one—and only one main point or theme or problem?
5. Did I use correct grammar and spelling? Need help, go to <http://odp.shrinker.net/pod.cgi?search=Guide+to+Grammar+and+Writing>
6. Did I fact check all of the information and identify sources correctly?
7. Did I answer all of the “W” questions: who, what, when, where, why and how?
8. Is my article missing any key information that the reader will need to know?
9. Did I let the story sit a few days and then come back to it to re-edit it before submitting it?
10. Would I read this article if I hadn’t written it? (If not, how can I make it more appealing?)

## 5. See how others are taking the Word to the World...

**\*Play off of recent news happenings or trends and give readers the Christian worldview/touch without announcing that you're doing so...**

**\*A website worth checking out...The Amy Foundation Writing Awards**  
[http://www.amyfound.org/amy\\_writing\\_awards/amy\\_writing\\_awards.html](http://www.amyfound.org/amy_writing_awards/amy_writing_awards.html)

### **Rules to Enter:**

Amy Foundation Writing Awards program is designed to recognize creative, skillful writing that presents in a sensitive, thought-provoking manner the biblical position on issues affecting the world today.

To be eligible, submitted articles must be published in a secular, non-religious publication and must be reinforced with at least one passage of scripture.

Here is a copy of a first-place winner's story—Read and learn!

### **“Forgiveness is the Key to Unlocking Hatred”**

**Jan White**

*First Prize - \$10,000*

Jan's articles have appeared in Charisma, Focus on the Family, CBA Marketplace, Christian Retailing and the Pentecostal Evangel, as well as devotionals in Devo 'Zine and God's World for Today. She has worked for three newspapers and written a weekly religion column for her local newspaper, The Andalusia Star-News, for over eleven years. Her column has also been published in the Southeast Sun in Enterprise, AL for the past three years. For five years, Jan has written the Marketlines column for Cross & Quill, a Christian writers' newsletter. Early in her writing career, she worked as a ghostwriter on the publication staff of a national ministry. She has also co-authored two books. She graduated from Evangel University in Springfield, MO with a B.S. in History and English/Journalism. Jan and her husband, Greg, live in Andalusia, AL where she is active as a community volunteer.

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A horrible tragedy occurred in rural Pennsylvania last week when a gunman walked into a one-room Amish schoolhouse and killed five schoolgirls.

It's inconceivable the evil that one person is capable of committing against innocent human lives. The Amish community - grieving their great loss - has asked for prayer and privacy, following the shooting rampage that also wounded five other girls.

News reports of the shocking tragedy tell of a disturbed man filled with hate toward himself, hate toward God, and "unimaginable emptiness." In the aftermath of the tragic event, reporters have repeatedly been amazed that the Amish people have emphasized the need for forgiveness, not anger, toward the gunman.

"We're very concerned that no message of revenge gets out. We believe in forgiveness," an Amish man was quoted as saying. Another said, "We want to forgive. That's the way we were brought up – turn good for evil."

It's inconceivable that a community suffering such a senseless tragedy could make contact with the gunman's family with the message of forgiveness. Amish elders went to meet with the gunman's widow. Marie Roberts was reportedly invited to attend the girls' funerals.

One Amish woman said, "We can tell people about Christ, and actually show you in our walk that we can forgive; not just say it, but in our walk of life. You know you have to live it, you can't just say it."

Watching and reading about these Amish people, I thought of the saying, "Preach the Gospel, and if necessary, use words." Last week they have preached to the world the forgiveness of Christ who, while dying on a cross said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

One newsman made reference to the statement, "To ere is human, to forgive divine." Extending forgiveness in this situation would be humanly impossible were it not for their faith in Christ that enables them to show His compassion.

What is forgiveness? "Forgiveness is surrendering my right to hurt you for hurting me," according to psychologist Archibald Hart. "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive," C.S. Lewis once said.

Hopefully, you and I will never have to forgive someone for something so horrendous as murdering our children. But, are we willing to forgive the friend or

family member who hurt us this week or even many years ago? Sometimes we find it hard to forgive ourselves.

Holocaust survivor Corrie Ten Boom has written, “Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hate. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.”

Ann Curry, a Today Show anchor, commented after covering the tragic event, “I realize I did not know what forgiveness was until now.” Would someone learn the meaning of forgiveness by looking at our lives?

**MORE FOOD FOR THOUGHT:** A Christian writer is simply a writer who is a Christian. Christian builders don't just build churches, get the idea? So, get your writing out there. Don't hide your light under a bushel.

