



Writing to the Choir

LOOKING BEYOND THE CHRISTIAN MARKET



We have been commanded. . .


Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20 NIV



How can we deny that
command?

YET WE DO! AND WE DO IT ALL THE TIME.



Jesus told us to go into the world and preach the gospel, but as Christian writers, too often we only write in an echo chamber to readers who already know and have accepted the Good News of Christ.

*HOW DO WE REACH THE LOST?

*HOW CAN WE SPREAD GOD'S MESSAGE, MORALS, AND IDEALS TO A WORLD OFFENDED BY THE MERE MENTION OF THE WORDS, "JESUS" "CHRIST" OR "GOD"?

*WHAT TOOLS DO WE NEED AND WHAT BOUNDARIES MUST WE CROSS?

What is Christian Fiction?

Deborah Bryan of the Kansas Library Associations writes, “Christian Fiction is a genre of books that typically promotes values, teaches a lesson, always has a happy ending (good prevails over evil), and adheres to a decency code. Certain boundaries such as sexuality, strong language, and topics of such cannot be crossed”


Bryan also notes a Christian Fiction author must also comply with other restraints:

1) Accept the truthful authority of the Bible

2) Address dilemmas through faith in Jesus

3) BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED AND ROSE FOR THE SINS OF ALL PEOPLE

4) AVOID WRITING ABOUT CERTAIN “TABOO” TOPICS



This last prohibition on taboo topics is open to interpretation and is expanding, but it's still a dilemma.

We live in touchy world. Easy offended.
Folks carry a chip on their shoulder.

What's acceptable to one reader will be offensive to another.

In a culture where the divide between what Christian readers will accept and what the world wants, continues to grow wider.

WHO READS CHRISTIAN FICTION?

“READERS OF CHRISTIAN FICTION IN AMERICA ARE CAUCASIAN WOMEN, OF CHILDBEARING THROUGH ‘EMPTY NESTER’ AGE, WHO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS.”

THE COMPLETE IDIOT’S GUIDE TO WRITING CHRISTIAN FICTION – RON BENREY)

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In 2017 The Public Religion Research Institute found that the percentage of evangelicals in America, declined from 23% in 2011, to an all time low in 2016 of 6-17%

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**CHRISTIAN FICTION IS DYING AND THE
MARKETING IS SHRINKING!**

Not very encouraging if you are a Christian fiction writer? At least if you refuse to look outside the box.

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Before we get to the Nitty Gritty,
here's some numbers for you.

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*The average monthly sales potential for the top 100 Kindle ebooks in the **Religious Women's Fiction category is \$112,673**

*The average monthly sales potential for the top 100 Kindle ebooks in **General Women's Fiction category is \$6 million**

In Romance . . .

*The average monthly sales potential for the top 100 Kindle ebooks in **Christian Romance category is approx. \$293,380**

*The same potential in **General Market Romance is \$4.8 million**

In Mystery & Suspense. . .

- The same potential in **Christian Mystery is approx. \$189.034**
- For **General Market - \$10.3 million**
(1)



Could this be any more disheartening?

THE HARD TRUTH IS, CHRISTIAN WRITERS NEED TO STOP PREACHING TO THE CHOIR AND START REACHING INTO A WORLD FILLED WITH PAIN, HURT, AND CHAOS.

STOP JUDGING THE LOST. STOP HIDING BEHIND RELIGION. AND WALK OUTSIDE THE CHURCH WALLS.

How do we do it?

GENERAL MARKET READERS ARE PUT OFF BY:

***CONVERSION STORIES** (THEY CALL THIS MANIPULATIVE AND “PREACHY”)

* **WORDS LIKE:**

PRAYER

PRAY

JESUS

CHRIST

GOD

SALVATION

SIN

HEAVEN

SPIRITUAL

***LIKEWISE, READERS EXPRESS DISCOMFORT WITH STORIES THAT OVERTLY INCLUDE AND PROMOTE VIOLENCE, PROMISCUITY, AND PROFANITY**

Remember the Parable?

SCRIPTURE GIVES US PLENTY OF EXAMPLES OF SOLID STORIES, CALLED PARABLES, BASED ON GOD'S MORAL TRUTHS.

*THESE STORIES MOVE READERS INTO ACTION.

*CHALLENGE THEM TO CHANGE

*LOGICALLY POINT OUT WRONG

*AND THEY NEVER MENTION GOD, JESUS, CHRIST, SIN, SALVATION, HEAVEN, HELL, OR JUDGEMENT.

JESUS KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING! HE TAUGHT THE PEOPLE WITH COMMON SENSE STORIES THAT CONVICTED THEM ON THEIR OWN LEVEL.

The Prodigal Son - A story of a parent's unconditional, long-suffering love.

Possible themes in this story: *Trust, hope, the importance of home and family.*

The Good Samaritan – A story of inclusiveness.

Possible themes in this story: *Tolerance, institutional pride, religious hypocrisy, service to others, and generous giving.*

The Hidden Treasure – A story of one individual's journey to find his purpose.

Possible themes : *Passion, perseverance, risk, commitment to a noble cause*




The point is:

A great writer can shape a story without relying on cliché “Christian” words.

LEARNING TO SPIN STORIES THIS WAY TAKES US OUT OF THE CHRISTIAN MARKET AND INTO THE GENERAL MARKET WHERE WE CAN NOW MINISTER TO THE LOST.

SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER SET FOOT IN A CHURCH COULD FIND CHRIST.



One thing general market
readers say about
Christian writing is . . .

**IT'S CHEESY. NOT TRUE TO LIFE.
GUSHY. NOT WELL WRITTEN.**

Why do we attend conferences if we are not learning the craft?

Christian writers must craft stories that bring readers into reality. We must learn to address current issues and we can't always have a peachy ending.

Instead, we learn to spin stories that hit home. Stories that show how making good decisions makes a difference. How kindness, hope, and belief in something grounds us. General market readers need to see faith is not easy....that it experiences trials, and it's our choices that change our attitudes.

This makes us relatable! Not haughty, or better than others. We no longer look as though we stand in judgement or that our lives are cushy. Now we can encourage them to look up, set a higher standard, and not give into a world that insists differently.

Christian writers must learn the craft

We must be able to compete with general market writers and become great authors . That can only come through:

INSTRUCTION

PRACTICE

READING GREAT

WRITING BOOKS

GREAT EDITORS

PATIENCE


HUMILITY

CONFERENCES

PRAYER

STUDY

WE HAVE TO THINK OUTSIDE THE
CHRISTIAN BUBBLE AND INTO THE WORLD THAT
NEEDS CHRIST!



We're not saying to stop
writing Christian work. . .
We're saying look deeper
than your own backyard.

MAYBE. . .JUST MAYBE. . .

WHAT YOU WRITE WILL CHANGE A LIFE.

PERHAPS IT WILL INTRODUCE THE LOVE OF CHRIST

IN A WAY YOU NEVER IMAGINED.

MAYBE...YOU MAY HELP SAVE A SOUL.