



Christian Writers for Life Monthly Digest

October 2023: Everything You Need to Know About Literary Agents!

October! The very name evokes a symphony of colors as God's artistic brush turns verdant leaves into mesmerizing shades of crimson, amber, and gold. Each leaf, painted with divine precision, echoes the melodies of His love and reminds me of the ever-present Creator, who orchestrates the world in brilliant hues. As I witness this awe-inspiring transformation, it provides the perfect ambiance for me to craft tales, Bible studies, and tomes that echo messages of hope, joy, and unwavering faith. In every whisper of the October breeze, I hear a sacred song – a reminder of the bountiful promises and blessings of a fresh season. Please take time to thoroughly enjoy October's beauty.

Drawing inspiration from this month, I've chosen the Bible verse in Psalm 100:1-2: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." October, particularly in the Northern Hemisphere, heralds a season of harvest. This harvest time is not only a reflection of the physical yield of crops but also mirrors the journey of a writer. Just as a farmer plants seeds, tends to them, and eventually reaps the fruits, we as writers sow ideas, nurture them with care and

passion, and, in time, witness the blossoming of our words into stories that touch souls. October beckons us into a season of contemplation, metamorphosis, spiritual growth, and abundance. Take those quiet times and focus to feel God's presence in them. It's a time when we, as Christian writers, are invigorated to deepen our writing prowess, fortify our bond with God, explore uncharted genres, and gather the wisdom we've cultivated.

This month, let's delve into a transformative approach to elevate your writing journey. Whether you're an aspiring author or a seasoned one, engaging a literary agent could be the catalyst your writing ministry needs. In this edition, discover how a dedicated Christian literary agent can be instrumental in refining your narratives, guiding you through the publishing maze, and propelling your writing vocation.

As we transition from the warmth of summer to the comforting embrace of fall, may you find joy in every fleeting moment. Let each rustling leaf, every ripened pumpkin, and each embrace of a cozy sweater inspire a narrative. Above all, may you be constantly reminded of the limitless reservoir of God-given creativity that dwells within you.

God bless you as you write for Him!

Denise George

October's Writer Profile:

Calvin Miller

Calvin Miller is one of my favorite authors and was one of my most-admired mentors. I had the amazing privilege to enjoy more than a full decade of his friendship, learn from his personal tutorship, and for several years to design and co-teach the course “The Writing Minister” at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University.

Dr. Miller introduced me to my book agent, Greg Johnson, bringing us together over dinner at his home. For the following twenty-five years or more, I have worked with Greg, a Christian book agent who has opened publishers’ doors for me that I could only dream about writing with. Greg is still my book agent, and I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Miller for recommending me to Greg.

Calvin Miller was an American author and pastor who was best known for his *The Singer* trilogy, a set of three beautifully written book-length poems that sold more than 3,000,000 copies. His poetic trilogy appealed to those who appreciate a more literary take on Christian themes. In his lifetime, he wrote 40 books, many which explored the themes of spirituality, leadership, and Christian living.

Dr. Miller was not only a writer but also an academic, teaching as a professor at several theological seminaries, including Beeson Divinity School. His works on Christian leadership and pastoral service provided timely insights for those preparing for the ministry.

Some of his books explored the interior life of Christians, focusing on the relationship between the believer and God. He wrote in a variety of formats and genres—poetry, essays, books—giving readers deep theological thought, practical advice for Christian living, poetic explorations of faith, and even picture books for children.

Dr. Miller was blessed with a beautiful and devoted wife, Barbara, who worked beside him typing, proofreading, editing, and encouraging him. They proved a beautiful couple, well-loved by their many friends.

Calvin Miller was a dedicated Christ-follower and gifted writer who offered a rich tapestry of Christian thought that could be both intellectually stimulating and spiritually nourishing. He passed away in 2012 but left behind him a legacy for writers and readers in the years to come.

I thank God for bringing me alongside the path to walk with both of these Christian men, Calvin Miller, my friend and literary mentor, and Greg Johnson, my literary agent.

What a Literary Agent Can Do for You

A literary agent serves as a representative for authors, championing both their written works and book ideas to publishers. This agent bridges the gap between authors and the ever-evolving world of publishing. They not only introduce your manuscript and book idea to traditional publishers but also negotiate contracts that safeguard your interests, secure publishing deals, and uphold your literary rights. Beyond these roles, they furnish you with invaluable editorial feedback, marketing strategies, and insights into the publishing industry, helping you adeptly navigate its intricate landscape.

Literary agents are pivotal in securing optimal publishing agreements. Armed with an extensive network of contacts and deep industry knowledge, they present your book proposal and manuscript to the most suited editors within the most appropriate traditional publishing houses. This not only heightens the likelihood of your book getting published but also saves you considerable time and effort, ensuring your work reaches its target audience.

Their expertise doesn't stop there. Literary agents are adept at discerning the intricacies of contracts, negotiating deals that are favorable to you. They vigilantly ensure that you're justly compensated for your efforts and retain the literary rights you're entitled to.

Furthermore, an agent's editorial counsel is indispensable. They provide constructive and insightful feedback on your book proposal, honing it to resonate with its intended audience and to align with the industry's standards.

They might comment on character development, plot structure, thematic elements, and the overall narrative arc, always with the aim of enhancing its marketability and appeal.

So, what kind of feedback can you expect from an agent?

- Manuscript feedback
- Market trends feedback
- Pitch and query letter feedback
- Title and cover design feedback

An agent acts as your champion and pillar of support within the publishing realm. They manage the business intricacies of your writing career, allowing you to wholeheartedly immerse yourself in your craft. When you align with the right literary agent, they can evolve into an invaluable ally on your writer's journey.

Build Your Platform

A literary agent can play a crucial role in helping a writer build a platform, which is essentially the writer's visibility and reach to a target audience. For a writer who wants to publish with a traditional book publisher, a well-

established platform can make a writer more attractive to publishers and can increase chances of higher book sales.

Here are some ways a literary agent can help you build your writing platform:

- **Strategic Guidance:** A literary agent can provide advice on how to build and enhance your platform based on your target audience and genre. This can include the best social media platforms to use, networking events to attend, and the types of content to produce. They may also provide advice on how to present yourself professionally online.
- **Building a Brand:** An agent can guide you in creating a consistent brand across different platforms, including social media, a personal website, and other public appearances. He can help you in defining what you stand for, what you should focus on in your messaging, and how you can differentiate yourself from others in your genre.
- **Career Development:** Over time, an agent can help you expand your platform by guiding you towards opportunities that can enhance your reputation, such as pursuing speaking engagements, literary events, and contributing to anthologies or literary journals.

Building a platform requires consistent effort, regular engagement, and good content creation to make a meaningful connection with your target audience. A good literary agent can help you do that.

Read Like a Writer

Reading like a writer essentially means scrutinizing what you're reading from a craft perspective. You're not just absorbing the story for the story's sake, but you're examining the elements that make the story work. Here's

how a Christian writer might analyze the writing. And this is also how a literary agent will read your book proposal, sample chapters, and complete manuscript.

- **Writing Style:** This refers to the author's choice of words, sentence structure, tone, and rhythm. As a Christian writer, pay attention to how authors convey their Christian themes and messages. For instance, are they subtle or overt in expressing Christian values or referencing biblical narratives? This will help you determine how you might want to present your own Christian themes.
- **Character Development:** Look at how the fiction/story author shapes characters, particularly those who embody Christian virtues or struggles. How does faith influence his actions, decisions, and personal growth? This can give you some ideas for creating realistic, nuanced Christian characters who resonate with readers.
- **Plot Structure:** A well-crafted plot is crucial for any story. Examine how the author has structured the plot. Is there a clear progression, a moment of crisis or revelation, and resolution? As a Christian writer, note how authors integrate faith-based conflicts and resolutions into their plots. This will help you develop compelling Christian narratives.
- **Themes:** Every book has central themes or messages. As a Christian writer, identify the religious or moral themes that the author explores. How does she tie these themes to the characters, plot, or setting? This will help you understand how to weave Christian themes into your own writing seamlessly.
- **Literary Devices:** These are techniques authors use to create certain effects or convey their messages more powerfully. They include symbolism, foreshadowing, metaphors, and more. Notice how authors use these devices to reinforce their themes. For example, do they use symbols or metaphors that have particular significance in

Christianity? This can inspire you to use literary devices more effectively in your own writing.

In addition to analyzing the writing, you might also consider how the author engages with an audience and handles potentially sensitive topics. This can provide valuable insights into how to write in a way that is both engaging and respectful of your readers' beliefs. And it helps to know what those (literary agents and others) who analyze your writing will need to see.

Think Like a Writer

Serious writers must think about the whole writing business, not just writing skills and sentence crafting.

Here are some things to think about as you build your writing career:

- Reflect on your understanding of the publishing industry, how you can further deepen your knowledge to make more informed decisions and impress potential agents and traditional book publishers.
- Learn how you can enhance your author platform to be more attractive to literary agents and book publishers. Think about the online platforms you need to focus more on, and how you can engage and network better with your readers and fellow writers.
- Identify literary agents who specialize in your chosen genre. Learn how you can use an agent's market expertise, industry connections, contract negotiation skills, editorial insights, and career guidance to increase your chances of getting published with a traditional book publisher.

Let's Get Published!

Choosing a Literary Agent

If you intend to write Christian books and want to get published with a traditional book publisher, seek to find a literary agent who will assist, guide, and represent you well.

Consider an agent who:

- Understands Christian themes, values, and narratives, and possesses a deep knowledge of the Christian marketplace and literature
- Shares your Christian values
- Knows what is appropriate to write about and publish for Christian audiences to read
- Knows how to address and navigate sensitive and controversial topics with thought and respect, topics that will be read by Christian readers

Let's Make Some Money!

A literary agent can help you make more money when you publish with a traditional publisher than you can make without the agent's help. While agents do not work for free, the money you pay them to help you is well worth the expense. What is the cost associated with hiring a literary agent and is it worth the investment?

Reputable literary agents work on a commission basis. This means they only receive payment when they secure a publishing deal for a client. The standard commission rate for agents is 15 percent of all income derived from the sale of the book, including advances, royalties, and any subsidiary

rights. These percentages are deducted from the author's earnings, not added as an additional fee. The literary agent makes money only if you make money, and they are paid by the publisher, not by you, the client.

Is a literary agent worth the investment? My answer is yes! The benefits that a skilled agent brings to the table far outweigh the cost. My agent has opened doors to major publishing houses, negotiated higher advances, secured better royalty rates, and so much more than I could do on my own.

October's Writing Tip

A simple way to approach a potential literary agent is to write him a brief query. Tell him something about yourself and your writing and share your book idea so that he may be able to consider you as a possible client.

In a nutshell, let's look at what to accomplish in this initial query:

- Grab the agent's attention with a well-crafted hook.
- Introduce yourself, your writing and publishing background, and your work.
- Highlight your unique book idea's selling points.
- Include a brief synopsis of your book if it is a narrative or novel.
- Include a brief chapter outline if your book is nonfiction.

Always be professional and courteous. Study and follow the literary agent's guidelines before you approach him. You'll find these guidelines online on his website.

How to Market Your Book

When you publish your book with a traditional publisher, the publisher will supply a certain amount of book promotion. But it is limited, and in order to help book sales, you'll need to self-promote your book. Here are some ways a good literary agent can help you to that.

He can:

- Leverage his existing networks—media outlets, bloggers, and influencers—to gain more exposure for your book
- Guide you in managing and optimizing your social media presence and author website to gain followers and maintain their continued interest
- Assist you in coordinating book signing events, readings, and conferences where you can meet fans and potential readers

Remember, while book agents typically focus more on selling rights and negotiating contracts on your behalf, he can be invaluable to help you in these other promotional efforts. Before you sign a contract or agreement with an agent, talk about if he is willing to help you in these ways with book promotion.

The Writer's Toolkit

Here are some valuable tools for your writer's toolkit for helping you work well with a literary agent:

- **Christian Market Guides:** Books like *The Christian Writers Market Guide* provide information about Christian publishing houses, literary agencies that represent Christian authors, and what types of works

they're seeking. These guides can be crucial for understanding where a manuscript might fit in the current market.

- **Bible Concordance:** This can be useful in finding specific verses or themes within the Bible that relate to the work at hand. This could help in backing up the themes of your book with scripture when pitching it to an agent. Another source that is helpful is the online website for finding different translations of Scripture versions: Biblegateway.com. It's completely free to use.
- **Commentaries and Bible Study Guides:** These can provide context and deeper understanding of biblical passages that can inform the writer's work, providing depth and nuance. This understanding can then be communicated to the agent, helping him to better represent the work to publishers.
- **Style Guide:** A Christian writer should also have a style guide like *The Christian Writer's Manual of Style*. This guide can help ensure that Christian terms and Biblical references are used correctly, which can lend credibility to a manuscript when it's being considered by an agent or publisher. When you land your book with a publisher, your editor will tell you which style guide the publishing house uses.
- **Portfolio/Binder of Work:** This tangible collection of past published works, testimonials, endorsements, or pieces reflecting the writer's Christian perspective can be a handy tool during discussions with a literary agent.

These tangible items, while helpful in the practical sense, should be complemented with the intangible attributes of patience, persistence, and prayer, which are also crucial for any Christian writer's toolkit who is aiming to collaborate successfully with a literary agent.

Industry Lingo

Terms Agents Use

When you consider working with a literary agent, here is some necessary lingo to learn:

- **Query letter:** This is a formal letter you'll send to a literary agent to propose a book idea. The letter typically includes a short description of the book, a bit about yourself, and a suggestion as to why your book idea might appeal to a certain audience. It's important for you to master writing a compelling query letter, as it is your first impression on the agent.
- **Manuscript:** This is the term for a completed, unpublished book. It is the version of a book that you'll submit to an agent for consideration. Understanding how to properly format and prepare a manuscript (and book proposal) for submission is vital.
- **Pitch:** This is a brief, compelling description of a book that is intended to entice the agent and make him interested in reading/learning more. Crafting a compelling pitch can be crucial in attracting an agent's interest. This is different from a **book proposal**, which you will want to have prepared as well, ideally before pitching an agent.
- **Genre:** This term refers to the specific category of literature to which your book belongs (e.g., mystery, self-help, science fiction, romance, etc.). Knowing your genre and its market can help you target appropriate agents who specialize in that area.
- **Advance:** This is an upfront payment that you (might) receive before your book is published. It's essentially a pre-payment of royalties that you'll earn, and it is typically recouped through your book sales before

any additional royalties are paid. (Some traditional book publishers do not offer advance royalties.)

- **Royalties:** These are the earnings from book sales that you'll receive after your book is published. They are typically a percentage of the book's sale price, and the exact amount can vary greatly depending on the publishing agreement your agent negotiates with the publisher.
- **Subsidiary Rights:** These are the rights to produce versions of the book in different formats (like audio or film) or to sell the book in different regions or languages. Agents often negotiate these rights separately from the main publishing agreement, and they can potentially be a significant source of income for you.
- **Exclusive Submission:** This means that you, the author, agree to submit your manuscript to only one agent at a time. Some agents require exclusive submissions, and it's important for you to understand the implications of this—namely, that you can't submit to other agents until you've heard back from the first one.

Understanding these terms can greatly aid you as an author in navigating the complex world of literary representation and publishing, ultimately leading to more successful and efficient collaborations with literary agents.

How to Work Well with a Literary Agent

Working well with a literary agent is like working well with any industry professional.

Here are some suggestions:

- **Show strong writing skills** that include a correct use of grammar, syntax, punctuation, etc.

- **Develop a unique voice** that sets you apart from other writers.
- **Create compelling book ideas** that are fresh, interesting, and marketable.
- **Learn to handle rejections** and feedback well, agreeing to make needed revisions.
- **Be organized, reliable, and professional** in all your dealings.
- **Accept necessary changes** and become adaptable.
- **Build a strong platform** and become visible to potential readers.
- **Write books that are marketable** and will appeal to a large readership.

The Marketplace

Understanding the Traditional Publisher's Marketplace

The marketplace, and how it works when working with a traditional book publisher, is essential to know and understand.

Here is some marketplace information that's important to learn:

- **Literary Agencies:** These are the actual firms that represent writers and their work. They can range from small, boutique agencies to large multinational firms, and some may specialize in certain genres or types of literature, like Christian literature.
- **Publishing Houses:** These are the companies that will ultimately print and distribute your book. Some publishers specialize in Christian literature while others have specific imprints for it. Physical offices,

though many meetings might occur online, represent a tangible aspect of the marketplace.

- **Bookstores and Retailers:** Physical bookstores, both independent and chains, are important elements of the marketplace where books are sold. Also, online retailers, like Amazon, are critical to the marketplace, especially as online sales continue to grow.
- **Conferences and Trade Shows:** Events like the Christian Book Expo, writer's conferences, or the annual Book Expo America are where many of the key players in the publishing industry gather. These events can be great places to network and learn about trends in the industry.
- **Libraries:** Libraries represent another element of the physical marketplace. They purchase books, often based on demand from patrons, and can help generate word-of-mouth buzz for a book.
- **Readers:** Ultimately, the most important part of the marketplace is the readers themselves. They purchase books from a variety of physical and online retailers, check books out from libraries, and help promote books through reviews and recommendations.
- **Marketing and Publicity Channels:** This includes physical marketing materials like posters and bookmarks, as well as digital marketing through websites, social media platforms, and email newsletters.

All of these elements represent the tangible marketplace that a writer, along with an agent and publisher, will navigate in order to publish and sell your book.

Q&A

Questions About Working with a Literary Agent

Here are three questions (with the answers you should expect from a good agent) that you, as a Christian writer, might ask if you are considering hiring and working with a literary agent to publish your book with a traditional publisher:

Question: How experienced is this agent with publishing Christian-themed literature?

Answer: An agent should have experience in your genre to represent you effectively. They should have a track record of successfully negotiating book deals with reputable publishers, specifically in the Christian literature field. This indicates that they have relevant contacts, understand the marketplace, and can guide you through the specifics of publishing Christian-themed and secular books.

Question: How does the agent approach the intersection of faith and marketability in the books he represents?

Answer: Good agents should understand the balance between faith-driven content and mainstream marketability. They need to ensure your book communicates its intended message while still appealing to a broad audience. They should have a clear plan on how to present your work to publishers, understanding how to highlight its unique selling points and the audience it is targeted towards.

Question: How involved does a literary agent get in the editorial process of book publishing?

Answer: The role of an agent can vary. Some are involved in the editing process, providing feedback and suggesting revisions, while others focus more on the business aspect of selling the manuscript to publishers. A good agent will get involved in guiding you in an editorial way as you write the book proposal that he can take to a publisher showing and explaining your book idea. It is important to know what level of input an agent will

have on your book proposal and manuscript to ensure it aligns with the publisher's expectations. He should always respect your vision for your book while offering constructive advice to improve its chances of being published.

What Book Editors, Publishers, and Agents Wish Writers Knew

Book editors across the spectrum—secular or religious, fiction or nonfiction—**value effective storytelling**, and this is especially relevant for Christian authors.

Here are a few reasons why:

- **Connection with readers:** Stories are a powerful way to connect with readers. They allow the audience to identify with the characters, their struggles, their victories, and their faith. This emotional connection helps to draw the reader into the piece, holding their interest throughout.
- **Illustration of principles:** Stories are an excellent way to illustrate Christian principles, teachings, and values. They make these abstract concepts more tangible and relatable. Instead of merely telling readers what to believe, stories can show them these beliefs in action, leading to a more profound understanding.
- **Memorable messages:** Stories tend to be more memorable than abstract ideas or dry exposition. People are more likely to remember a story that moved them emotionally or provoked thought. This memorability can help to ensure that the message of the article resonates with readers long after they've finished reading.

- **Engaging format:** Stories inherently have a structure—beginning, middle, and end—that naturally pulls readers along. This format can make an article more engaging and enjoyable to read. This is crucial in today’s media environment, where readers are inundated with content and have short attention spans.
- **Application of faith to real life:** Stories, especially personal testimonies and real-life experiences, provide an opportunity to show how Christian faith can be applied in daily life, making it more relatable and practical for readers.

In summary, effective storytelling can help Christian writers create compelling, memorable, and impactful books. It helps deliver their message in a way that resonates deeply with their readers, thereby fulfilling the Christian writer’s purpose of edifying, inspiring, and potentially leading others towards faith.

Stay Savvy

Here are two key aspects for Christian writers who want to stay informed and relevant in their work—and who want to better understand the professional position and work of literary agents.

- 1) **Be informed about contemporary issues, events, and topics relevant to your writing:** This aspect speaks to the need for authors to understand the context and culture in which they are writing. It means understanding contemporary societal issues, key events happening in the world, and topics that are particularly relevant or contentious at a given moment.

This could include areas like politics, science, sociology, and many other subjects. For a Christian writer, it may also involve an understanding of current discussions and debates within Christianity itself. For instance, what are the major theological debates

happening? How are churches responding to societal changes, like shifts in perspectives on social justice, gender, or sexuality?

By staying informed about these topics, Christian writers can ensure that their work speaks to the issues that are currently most relevant and pressing to their readers. It helps to avoid creating work that feels dated or disconnected from the world in which their audience lives.

2) Engage with diverse perspectives within and outside of the Christian faith, allowing for a broader understanding and more nuanced approach:

This aspect is about recognizing and understanding the diversity of thought that exists both within Christianity and outside of it. Christianity is a global faith with many different denominations and theological perspectives, and it's important for Christian writers to engage with these varied perspectives in order to create work that is rich, nuanced, and respectful of the diversity within their faith.

Engaging with perspectives outside of Christianity is equally important. This could involve understanding and engaging with other religious traditions, as well as secular perspectives on various topics. By doing so, Christian writers can challenge their own assumptions, enrich their understanding, and create work that is informed by a wide range of viewpoints. This allows for a more nuanced approach to writing that can engage a wider audience, deepen the author's perspective, and create more compelling, thoughtful work. It also makes your work more appealing to readers, agents, and publishing houses.

Staying informed about contemporary issues and engaging with a diversity of perspectives are crucial ways for Christian writers to remain relevant and effective in their writing. These steps can help writers to better connect

with their audience, write with greater depth and nuance, and create work that is responsive to the world in which we live.

October's Template: A Template Letter to Use When First Approaching a Literary Agent

Subject: Query: (Your Book's Title)

Dear (Agent's Name),

I hope this message finds you well. My name is (Your Name), and I am seeking representation for my (genre or category of the book), titled (Your Book's Title).

(Your Book's Title) is a (provide a brief description of the book, whether it is fiction or nonfiction, and a brief summary [nonfiction] or [storyline for fiction] of what it will include).

As a writer with a strong Christian background, I have written (or am writing) this book with a dual aim: to explore (key theme of the book) and to resonate with readers who appreciate (what your book will do for your targeted reader). I am confident my book and genre will fit well with the portfolio of authors you represent.

(If you have relevant writing credentials, include them here. For example: "My short stories [or articles] have appeared in [publications], and I have a degree [and/or work experience, expertise] in [relevant field].)

I am enclosing (whatever the agent's submission guidelines request, such as the first three chapters, first 50 pages, or the entire manuscript). I look

forward to the possibility of working with you and appreciate your time and consideration.

Thank you,

(Your Name)

(Your Contact Information)

Note: This is the basic structure of a letter to initially approach a potential book agent. It can vary and be adjusted based on whether your book idea is nonfiction or fiction. But this sample letter/email is brief, concise, to the point, and tells the agent something about yourself and your book idea.)

Advice from Our Writers:

Brian H. Cosby

“Before working with a literary agent, I submitted and negotiated contracts for nine books with a variety of popular and academic traditional publishers. Doing this required extensive work in tracking down acquisition agents, submitting proposals according to each publisher’s guidelines, obtaining most of the endorsements, and getting a relatively small advance (if any at all!). Moreover, my access to larger publishing companies was limited because most of them required manuscript submissions through a literary agent.

“That’s when a fellow author recommended that I contact Chip MacGregor, a well-known and recognized literary agent in Christian and nonfiction book market. I submitted a book proposal to him, which he accepted. He then searched for an appropriate book publisher—which ended up being David C. Cook—and he negotiated the contract. Even with paying his agent fee (for me, 15%), I received a much higher advance. Having a literary agent

saved me a lot of time and earned me more money. Couldn't be more pleased!"

[Brian H. Cosby is senior minister of Wayside Presbyterian Church (PCA) on Signal Mountain, Tennessee, adjunct professor of historical theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta, and adjunct professor of biblical and theological studies at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia. He holds degrees from Samford University (B.A.), Beeson Divinity School (M.Div.), and Australian College of Theology (Ph.D.). He is the author of twelve books.]

Looking Ahead:

Writing Articles & Books for Future Events

Writers must always be looking ahead, searching for those significant anniversaries, scheduled events, observances, happenings, and holidays that will grab the world's undivided attention. Here are some great writing opportunities just around the corner:

For online magazines: Many online magazines, newspapers, blogs, etc. can be published immediately and need only a short lead time.

October 2023:

- October 1: International Day of Older Person (UN), a recognition of the contributions of older persons and an examination of issues that affect their lives
- October 2: World Habitat Day (UN), a day to reflect on the state of our towns and cities, and on the basic right of all to adequate shelter
- October 10: World Mental Health Day (WHO), a day for global mental health education, awareness, and advocacy against social stigma

- October 24: World Development Information Day (UN), a day designed to draw the attention of the world to development problems and the need to strengthen international cooperation to solve them
- October 31: Halloween/Reformation Day, a celebration observed in many countries on the eve of the Western Christian feast of All Hallows' Day

November 2023:

- November 1: All Saints' Day, a Christian holiday celebrating all the saints of the church, both known and unknown
- November 5: Guy Fawkes Day (UK), a UK holiday marking the failed Gunpowder Plot to blow up the Parliament and King James 1 in 1605
- November 11: Veterans Day (US), an American holiday that honors military veterans
- November 20: Universal Children's Day, a day established by the United Nations to promote the welfare of children worldwide
- November 23: Thanksgiving Day, an American holiday celebrating the harvest and blessings of the past year

For print magazines and books: Print magazines need at least 8 – 12 months lead time to publish. If you self-publish your book, you might need at least a year's lead time. Here are some observances to query now for magazine publication and for self-published books one year from now.

October 2024:

- October 3: Germany's Unity Day

- October 5: World Teachers' Day (UNESCO), a day to celebrate the unique role that adults play in children's lives
- October 9: Canada's Thanksgiving Day, a national holiday in Canada to give thanks for the harvest and blessings of the past year
- October 9: Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day (US), a U.S. holiday that commemorates Christopher Columbus's landing in the New World on October 12, 1492—532 years ago
- October 12: National Farmers' Day, an observance in the U.S. that pays tribute to all farmers throughout American history, acknowledging their important contributions to society
- October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (UN), a day to present and promote efforts to eradicate poverty worldwide
- October 22: World Mission Sunday, a day within the Roman Catholic Church dedicated to Christian missionary activity and raising funds for missions around the world
- October 24: World Development Information Day (UN), a day designed to draw the attention of the world to development problems and the need to strengthen international cooperation to solve them

November 2024:

- November 1: All Saints' Day
- November 14: World Diabetes Day, a global awareness campaign focusing on diabetes mellitus
- November 19: International Men's Day, a day to highlight issues particularly affecting men and boys

- November 28: Thanksgiving Day (US)

What's Ahead

New Course: October 2023

This month, be on the lookout for this month's brand-new course, **"Everything You Need to Know About Literary Agents."** If you're interested in publishing with a traditional publisher, this course is for you!

And remember ... this new course is included with your course membership!

If you're currently a \$7/month subscriber and would like access to all of our online courses, you can upgrade your subscription at any time. In your online Account, use the coupon code FREEMONTH when you upgrade to take receive your first month for free!

Email us at info@christianwritersforlife.com if you need help with your plan.

Zoom with an Expert

This month, we are thrilled to welcome Denise and Rebecca's personal literary agent, Greg Johnson, president of WordServe Literary!

Greg has been in publishing for more than 25 years. Before becoming a full-time literary agent in 1994, he wrote and published 20 works of nonfiction with traditional publishers, as well as being an editor for a teenage boys magazine for five years. In his years as an agent, he has personally represented more than 2,300 books and negotiated more than 1,800 contracts to over 85 publishing houses. These works include adult trade

books (non-fiction and fiction), children's books, specialty Bibles, movie options, video curricula, audio products, gift books and greeting cards.

Rebecca will record this interview with Greg Johnson and upload it to our Christian Writers for Life Facebook group. Please email the questions you have for Greg to info@christianwritersforlife.com with "Question for Greg" in the subject line. Plan to email your questions by Monday, October 9, to ensure they're included in the lineup!

Helpful Writing Courses

We have so many additional courses that will help you as you prepare to publish with a traditional publisher!

Consider adding the following courses to your list:

- "Traditional Publishing"
- "Writing Narrative Nonfiction"
- "Book Collaboration"
- "Memoir Writing Magic"
- "Effective Story Crafting"
- "Book Beginnings That Hook"
- "Book Endings That Satisfy"
- "Conquering Writer's Block"
- "Believing in Yourself as a Writer"

All of these courses, and so many more, are included with your course membership.

Weekly Group Coaching Calls

Great news, CWFL Course Members and Monthly Subscribers! Your membership includes our **weekly Group Coaching Calls!**

We offer two options each week, both hosted by Rebecca George:
Mondays at 6:00 PM Central and **Wednesdays at 12:00 PM Central.**

You can attend one or both meetings each week!

These Group Coaching Calls are designed to help you personalize what you've learned in our Monthly Digest and our fantastic writing courses, and for you to receive guidance on your own writing projects.

If you have a question best suited for Denise George to answer, bring it to our Coaching Call and Rebecca will report back with her answer next time.

Also, if you're unavailable to attend the Coaching Call live, you can watch the recorded replay. Feel free to submit questions ahead of time via email (info@christianwritersforlife.com).

When you're ready to join each Coaching Call, click the link below (these are the links you'll use every week):

Mondays at 6:00 PM Central

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81316875348...>

Meeting ID: 813 1687 5348

Wednesday at 12:00 PM Central

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88602685801...>

Meeting ID: 886 0268 5801

If you have difficulty joining the call, downloading the Zoom app to your device often solves the problem.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Our Prayer for You

Father, the world of agents and traditional book publishers is vast and complex. The information I need to know is almost overwhelming. Please give me the focus, clarity, and understanding I need in order to write the books that will testify of your love, goodness, and power so that my potential readers can learn of the Gospel's truths, promises, and, through Christ, Your great gift of spiritual transformation. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.