

the  
**COMMONPLACE**

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## BURNING FIRE: ONE AUTHOR'S STORY

BY JILL ROMAN LORD

Jill still enjoys her morning quiet time with God, still works as a Nurse Anesthetist at the same hospital that has changed its name to Atrium, still carves out time to write, is still happily married to Bill, and still delights in spending time with her three now-grown children, wherever they may be. Jill's newest award-winning books, *"Dream Big, My Precious One"* and *"You're More than a Sprout"* are available on Amazon, as well as her Easter books – *"That Grand Easter Day!"* and *"The Quiet Crazy Easter"*.

*Jill's story is one of submission to God, adjusting to change, learning balance, and persistence in the face of rejection. I know you will be inspired as I was to read her story. -Editor*

How does an author become an author? While I can't say how that happens for other authors, I'm glad to share my story with you. In 1996, I worked three days a week as a nurse anesthetist, was happily married, and felt truly blessed with our one- and three-year-old precious girls. I enjoyed spending my days off with my two children. Life was good. I didn't feel like I needed anything else.

But one day I felt a yearning to write a children's book. It was more than a yearning. It was a fire burning deep within me to write for publication. This, I could not ignore. I had no idea what to write. It's not like I had a story brewing in my heart that needed to be written. I had nothing. I prayed and prayed and after two weeks I felt inspired to write a children's devotional. I knew how to write in rhyme, so I decided to write four-line rhyming verses and pair them with scripture. There. I had my idea. But when would I write? My days off were filled with time with my children. I did not want to lose that! I truly felt like this was the Lord's inspiration, because like I mentioned, I was not actively seeking to add anything else to my life. I remember laughing and telling God, "OK. I'll do it. But if you want me to write, then YOU are going to have to provide the time."

On my days off work, the Lord began waking me up early in the morning. I mean, wide-awake at dark thirty. I figured I might as well get up and write. I'd make a cup of coffee, sit on the sofa with my pen, paper (this was before I used a computer), and my Bible. I wrote until the girls awoke. I never set an alarm, but God was faithful in waking me up on my days off, each week.

Those mornings became so precious to me. I loved spending that time with God, feeling his inspiration flow, and digging into the Word. I didn't know how long a devotional should be, so I wrote 365 verses with the correlating scripture. It took me six months to complete it.

Done, at last, I handed my finished masterpiece to my husband, Bill, and asked him kindly to type it up for me. He laughed and told me if I was going to write books, I needed to learn how to use the computer. What? He made me so mad.

My place of work began offering courses on how to use *"Microsoft Word"*, so I enrolled. Taking those classes became one of the most beneficial things I've ever done. Thank you, Bill!

I typed it up, bought a book on "how to get published", and followed the instructions methodically. I purchased the Children's Writer's Market Guide to discover which publishers might accept manuscripts like mine, then sent out query letters and proposals.

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BURNING FIRE..., continued

That year, I received so many rejection letters. I'd cry, stomp my feet, then send out more letters. I got a positive nibble by the end of the year, requesting my full manuscript! Wahoo! A few months later I received a contract from that publisher and my first deadline!

By this time, I was nine months pregnant with my third baby and went into labor. I tweaked my project in my hospital bed, between contractions and wound up with a polished manuscript and a bouncing baby boy! My son Jamie's first outing was to the post office to deliver my finalized manuscript. This became my first book, which was published in 1999 by Honor Books, *Snuggles with God - Big Hugs for Little Hearts*.

After I completed this book, God stopped waking me up to write. It's as if he was saying, "Okay, Jill. You know what to do. Take it from here." I carve out time to write now, but He still freely gives His inspiration. He provides opportunities to grow my writing skills, speak with writer friends so we might encourage one another, obtain an agent to advance my writing, and gave me experiences in the writing world that I never would have imagined. God is faithful.

At the time of this writing, I've had 26 children's books published. I have another book due out in 2022, one more under contract, and the hope of several more to come.

I don't know if God places this same "burning fire" to write inside all other authors or not, but I'm so glad he placed it in me.

## CHRISTIAN DISCUSSIONS WITH HUMANISM

BY CYNTHIA PATTERSON

Cynthia is a wife and mother of three children. She enjoys serving the Church through SBkids, ABIDE, and the Meals ministry. She enjoys family time, baking, reading, writing, and walking her crazy dog, Boomer.

*In the past, Cynthia has written beautiful poems that we have been honored to publish. This one is different from her usual subject matter but serves as an effective and critic apologetic, the first we've seen in poetic form. As a guide, the bold print is the humanist "voice," and the italic responses belong to the christian. Thank you, Cynthia - Editor*

**Do you realize you are ignorant to think the Bible is God's Word?**

**For to claim it is inerrant is to the modern man absurd.**

*Friend, my trust is not in my own mind to lay your concerns to rest,  
But the truth of God's enduring Word will put your motives to the test.*

*Calvin said that to itself the Word attests it should be trusted.*

**Can you prove that love is beautiful or that hate leaves you disgusted?**

**OK, but you cling to superstitions that have ceased to be a virtue.**

**Why not fill the longings of the heart with what it craves; it will not hurt you?**

**And if God is love then he would tell you to fill your time with pleasure,**

**For who wants to serve a god whose wrath would take away life's treasures?**

*My friend, if you fill your life with pleasure and seize whatever you are yearning*

*Could it ever curb your hunger? Can the mind reach its fill of learning?*

*Do you not know your deeds rebel against the Lord Almighty?*

*The sun recalls the pagans as they worshiped Aphrodite.*

**Don't you know this God you fear is someone that you cannot touch?**

**And if he doesn't save a suffering child, his power can't amount to much.**

**If Christians love their brothers so, explain the "holy" wars of old.**

**The Inquisition burned the heretics, the Crusades left kindness cold.**

*You're right, I see Him dimly now, but one day will see His face  
Sin's curse would leave man hopeless were it not for common grace.  
As for the great wars of the past where the Saints fell in their transgression,  
This proves man's heart is evil and must bring to Christ confession.*

**Why then are you intolerant? You tell me that I live in sin.**

**Let's each just live the way we want, that way both of us will win.**

**Here is truth that you must face: your god lies in a grave**

**The Enlightenment has slain him; only the intellect can save.**

*The sin you love has wages, and those wages lead to death.  
How can I look away when both our lives are just a breath?  
If the mind could save the heart of man, it would have happened long ago,  
But history repeats the sins the soul cannot forego.  
The dead can't call the living into depths of love and trust.  
I know your prince has blinded you and that follow him you must,  
But I will pray to the living God, the awesome great I AM  
To gift you with His gift of faith in the sacrificial lamb.  
You think that you are free, my friend, but to sin you are a slave.  
I once was just as you are now, but my Redeemer is swift to save!*

## STUDYING THE WORD WITH A SENSE OF JOY AND WORSHIP

The discussion in class was about miracles. It was our second session, and I had asked if we had miracles today as the first Christians did in Acts. We agreed that yes, there were miracles today. Then I asked for examples from the participants' personal lives. There were stories of miracles from every one of the participants.

Christi kicked us off, sharing about how food was miraculously multiplied at an evangelistic meeting in India some years ago. The planners had the food already prepared. However, they realized they had seriously underestimated the crowd—500 people had come to hear the Word of God and enjoy a meal together. It was too late to buy more provisions. The leaders gathered the workers, including Christi and her husband, and stated the need: a miracle that would feed 500 souls when only food for 100 had been prepared. They prayed, asking God for the miracle they needed. And the result was that no one went away from the meeting hungry. And there was food left over! Hadn't we all read of this same sort of miracle in the Gospels? Wow!

The testimonies continued in class that day, and with each new one shared, there was a growing sense of awe and worship - perhaps the same sort of awe the disciples felt as God made provision for various needs in supernatural ways in the early pages of Acts.

It was a good reminder that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). We can identify with the people of Christ in Acts, and worship him with the same fervor and excitement that the early Christians had, with one exception—we have the completed Word of God to help us see how he can affect the way we live our lives today.

While we were not one of those who stood by the empty tomb of Christ, it is no less a reality today than it was that first Easter Day. When we experience the awesome truth of Christ's life, death and resurrection, not as a thing of the past, but as part of the here and now, we can only surrender to a great sense of joy, and gratefully worship him to whom we owe all!  
- Editor

DEAR READERS,

Each of us has a story or two (or more!) to tell. Why not share one of yours with your sisters in Christ? You never know how your story might encourage someone else! We are so grateful to those who have shared something special that God has done for them with our readers in *The Commonplace*. And there's always room for your story too! To contribute or inquire further, reach out to us via [commonplace@stonebridge.org](mailto:commonplace@stonebridge.org)

OUR LORD HAS  
WRITTEN THE PROMISE  
OF THE RESURRECTION,  
NOT IN BOOKS ALONE,  
BUT IN EVERY LEAF IN  
SPRING-TIME.

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