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For immediate release  
From The Word Guild, [www.thewordguild.com](http://www.thewordguild.com)

## **TOP CANADIAN CHRISTIAN WRITERS COMPETE FOR AWARDS**

Toronto – The best Canadian writers who are Christian are competing for top honours in The Word Guild Canadian Writing Awards. This contest recognizes the most outstanding work published during 2005 in 30 categories.

Winners from across Canada will be announced on June 14 at 7 p.m. at The Word Guild Writing Awards Gala in Mississauga, Ont., the premiere black tie event honouring Canadian writers who are Christian. The Gala will feature a worship band, celebrity presenters, recording artists, excerpts from shortlisted work, book signings and a reception. The public is invited to celebrate with the finalists.

"We received a record 144 entries in our short work categories, which include articles, columns, short stories, poems and song lyrics. That's an increase of 40 percent over last year," commented Wendy Elaine Nelles, co-founder and associate director of The Word Guild, the association that sponsors the contest. "These awards are gaining in national recognition and reputation. We want our writing contests and our Awards Gala to draw attention to the variety and the quality of writing by Canadians who are Christian," she added.

The largest categories were profiles/human interest articles, long feature articles and columns/editorials/first person essays – each received 15 to 20 entries. There were a total of 65 book entries. The most hotly contested book category was life stories, which has seven finalists vying for first place.

Entries were sent from eight provinces and from Africa. Ontario writers submitted 121 entries, while there were 35 from British Columbia, 17 from Alberta, 16 from Manitoba, five from Saskatchewan, four from Nova Scotia, four from New Brunswick and two from Quebec.

Twenty-four expert judges were recruited, including Hugh Cook, author and professor of English at Redeemer University College; Larry Cornies, editor of the *London Free Press*; Harold Jantz, founder of *ChristianWeek*; Patricia H. Rushford, internationally known author and speaker; Bramwell Ryan, a writer who has published more than 1,000 articles; Kathy Shaidle, Governor General's Literary Award nominee for poetry; Marianne Meed Ward, columnist for the *Toronto Sun*; Donald Bastian, editor and publishing consultant; Joe Woodard, a journalist with the *Calgary Herald*.

Winners of The Word Guild Writing Awards will be presented with a cash prize, a certificate and a specially designed lapel pin to mark their achievements.

Other writing awards will be presented on June 14, including the Leslie K. Tarr Award for outstanding career achievement; the Best New Canadian Christian Author prize for an unpublished book-length manuscript; and the Partnership Award which recognizes individuals or

organizations who have offered exceptional support and encouragement to Canadian writers and editors who are Christian.

Tickets can be ordered online at [www.thewordguild.com](http://www.thewordguild.com); the price is \$15, with a discount rate of \$12 if ordered by May 31. The Gala will be held at the World Vision Canada headquarters, 1 World Drive, in Mississauga, Ont. (near the 401 and Hurontario Street).

Award sponsorships are still available. Book retailers, publishers, businesses, religious and educational institutions and individuals who would like to provide concrete support and encouragement to Canadian writers who are Christian are welcome to inquire about sponsorship benefits. Charitable tax receipts are available. Contact [fundraising@thewordguild.com](mailto:fundraising@thewordguild.com) to obtain details.

Book jacket stickers labeled "Finalist" are available as a promotional tool for all shortlisted books. These eye-catching, removable stickers may be obtained at cost from The Word Guild by contacting [info@thewordguild.com](mailto:info@thewordguild.com).

The Word Guild also sponsors Canada's largest Christian writers' conference, offering professional development, networking and marketing opportunities. From June 15 to 17, writers, editors, speakers, agents and publishers from across North America will gather at Write! Canada, which will be held at the Guelph Bible Conference Centre, Guelph, Ont. Full details about the keynote speaker, the 35 classes being offered, the special track for teens, and the manuscript critique service are available at [www.thewordguild.com/writecanada](http://www.thewordguild.com/writecanada).

Entry guidelines and forms for the 2007 contests will be posted at [www.thewordguild.com](http://www.thewordguild.com) later this year. Entries for work published in 2006 will be accepted until January 19, 2007.

The complete shortlist of finalists for The Word Guild 2006 Writing Awards is posted at [www.thewordguild.com](http://www.thewordguild.com).

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## **ATTACHED:**

### **1. Backgrounder – The Word Guild Writing Awards**

#### **BACKGROUND – THE WORD GUILD WRITING AWARDS**

The awards are sponsored by The Word Guild, a national association with the mandate of connecting, developing and promoting Canadian writers and editors who are Christian. Formerly known as The God Uses Ink Awards, these writing prizes have been awarded annually since 1988. The Word Guild assumed responsibility for the awards in 2002, revamping and expanding the program.

The Word Guild contests are open to all eligible writers who have Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status, and are not restricted to members of The Word Guild. All entrants are asked to affirm The Apostles' Creed as a condition of acceptance in the contest. However, the

opinions and viewpoints expressed in the short-listed and winning works represent the authors' personal beliefs and are not necessarily endorsed by The Word Guild.

Although contest rules do not require an explicit statement of Christian belief, judges looked for an underlying expression of the writer's Christian worldview informing and influencing the writing. Entries were judged according to excellence of writing; impact (the inspirational/informational value making it worthwhile); fulfillment of stated purpose; suitability to target audience; and originality/freshness of style.

The Word Guild, an association of more than 250 Canadian writers and editors who are Christian, was founded in 2002. Members are committed to encouraging one another and fostering standards of excellence in the art, craft, practice and ministry of writing.

The long-term vision is to impact the Canadian culture through writing from a Christian worldview. Immediate goals are to help writers and editors at all stages connect with each other, develop new skills, discover new publishing opportunities and promote their work. Co-founders N. J. Lindquist of Markham, Ont. and Wendy Elaine Nelles of Toronto serve as executive director and associate director, respectively. See [www.thewordguild.com](http://www.thewordguild.com) for further information.