

Susan Barnes



EXTENDED BIO

Susan was engaged in pastoral ministry, alongside her husband, Ross, for nearly 30 years. She is now semi-retired and devotes much of her time to her writing and speaking pursuits.

Ross was working for a bank when Susan and Ross married. They moved frequently as Ross took up different roles mostly in rural bank branches. After they had been married for 14 years, Ross became a pastor and together they have enjoyed living and ministering in many small country towns. They have three married children and three grandchildren and live on the Murray River.

Susan started writing devotional articles in 1988. However, it wasn't until her children left home that she devoted more time to writing. She started a blog where she posts her devotional thoughts on Bible passages, book reviews, and inspirational articles. Her devotions have been published in a variety of settings such as church newsletters and local newspapers. She has hundreds of devotional articles online and in print.

Susan also has a degree in Christian ministry and previously worked as a librarian. She has also been a chaplain and pastored several rural churches in an interim capacity.

For an overview of her latest manuscripts click on the links below:

[10 Biblical Women who made a difference](#) and [10 Blessings of God you don't want to miss](#).

And just for fun, you might like to know, Susan's favourite things are books and computers. She loves wearing red or blue and quite likes purple. She loves eating baked potatoes with bacon, coleslaw, cheese and sour cream. Her idea of bliss is curling up in front of a roaring fire with a good book and a block of chocolate.

How Susan became a writer (in her own words)

I have always been an avid reader and when I came to faith in my teens, I found a whole new world of reading material. After I was married, we moved often and I have been involved in a variety of churches where I have played many different roles. We had three children in four years which certainly slowed down my reading!

It wasn't until after my husband, Ross was diagnosed with cancer in 1988, that I became serious about writing. At the time I needed a distraction so I completed a couple of writing courses at my local community house. A few years later, after Ross recovered, he went into pastoral ministry. At our first church, my husband was told that he was to write a devotional thought for the newsletter every fortnight. He promptly gave the job to me. At the time, I thought it was a huge commitment and how would I ever find enough to write about? Three years later, we moved to a church that had a newsletter every week, but at least by then, I could recycle a few thoughts from the previous church. This was 30 years ago and I have been writing devotional thoughts ever since.

My writing became more of a priority after our three children all left home in the space of two years and suddenly I had time on my hands. In October 2006 I attended the Glorieta Christian Writers' Conference in New Mexico, US and was motivated to work towards building a body of work and getting published. In April 2017, I attended the Mount Hermon Christian Writers Conference in California, US.

My theological beliefs

My theological beliefs are those stated in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds which have been believed by Christians for hundreds of years. I attend an evangelical protestant denomination. I believe that "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16) but not God dictated. This means God inspired the biblical authors yet their words also reflect their personality, context and culture.

FAQs

Who do you write for?

Primarily, I write for Christians who may be a little bored or disillusioned with their Christian faith. I write to encourage them to go deeper with God and live beyond the status quo. I also write to teach, disciple and encourage mature Christians.

What do you write and why?

*Mostly I write devotional thoughts based on Bible verses but I've also written book-length manuscripts. My manuscript, *10 Blessings of God You Won't Want to Miss*, recently won the CALEB unpublished non-fiction award. Currently, I'm working on a manuscript where each chapter is a Bible character. I particularly like to write about obscure characters or difficult stories. For*

example, Priscilla, Lydia, Jephthah, Jonathan, Nebuchadnezzar, Abraham sacrificing Isaac etc. I like delving into the lives of biblical characters to see how their faith is relevant to our lives today.

Tell us something about your process

Initially, my process for writing devotions was random but these days it's highly structured. As part of my devotional times, I write about a verse that stands out to me. I have been doing this for over ten years. This means I have exercise books full of thoughts on Bible verses. When I want to write a series of devotions from a particular Bible book, I find the exercise book where I've written about that book of the Bible.

When I'm writing a book-length manuscript, I look for a theme that I can break into ten chapters and as I approach each chapter, I look for one overall idea with about three main points. The ideas for my books usually come from my devotional thoughts.

What challenges do you face?

My biggest challenge is not to rush. I've come to accept that it takes as long as it takes. If I rush the process the standard of my writing suffers. I loosely aim to write or edit 4,000 words a week for three weeks of the month. (The fourth week I write articles for my blog.) I hold this goal lightly and if it doesn't happen, that's okay.

What helps you the most?

It helps me to have a routine. Most mornings I write or prepare sermons (which is quite similar). In the afternoons, I shop, exercise, read, socialise, do housework etc. It's been difficult to explain to my hairdresser why I don't like appointments in the morning!

How does your faith impact and shape your writing?

Without my faith, I would have nothing to write about! Over the years, I've felt a growing sense of my writing becoming a ministry rather than just a hobby.

Do you charge to speak?

As a rough guide, I usually receive an honorarium of about \$150 for a 20-30 minute message plus approximately 20 cents per kilometre for travel. This is negotiable if the church service or event is likely to have less than 20 people attending.

EDUCATION

Graduate Certificate in Creative Writing (currently studying)

From Tabor College, Adelaide, SA., 2021

Bachelor of Arts (Christian Ministry)

from Harvest Bible College, Dandenong, Vic., 2012–2015

Diploma of Christian Ministry

from Harvest Bible College, Wodonga, Vic., 2010–2011

Diploma of Library & Information Services

from Victoria University of Technology, Footscray Vic., 2000–2004

CAREER SUMMARY

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| 2020 | Interim Pastor, Walla Walla Baptist Church |
| 2018-2019 | Interim Pastor, Euroa Baptist Church |
| 2016-2017 | Joint interim Pastor Wangaratta Baptist |
| 2016-2017 | School Chaplain, Table Top Public School |
| 2014-2015 | Librarian, Adelong Public Library |
| 2011-2012 | Digital & Information Service Officer, Upper Murray Regional Library Wodonga |
| 2007-2011 | Librarian, Corryong Public Library |

HONORS AND AWARDS

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| 2020 | <i>10 Blessings of God You Don't Want to Miss</i> won the best unpublished, non-fiction manuscript for the Caleb Award with Omega Writers, Australia. |
| 2016 | <i>10 Things I Hate about God and How He Won Me Anyway</i> was shortlisted as an unpublished manuscript for the Caleb Award with Omega Writers, Australia, and for the Page Turner Contest with FaithWriters, USA. |

PUBLICATIONS

Self-published, *Short Thoughts from Short Street* in 2004. A book of 52 devotional thoughts

Self-published, *10 Things My Children Taught Me About God* in 1996. E-book of 10 devotional thoughts.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Australian Society of Authors since 2012

Press Service International – columnist since May 2019

This group received the 2019 Gutenberg Award (The Premier Award of the Australasian Religious Press Association). Links to my articles can be found here:

<https://www.pressserviceinternational.org/susan-barnes.html>.

FaithWriters – contributor to the Great Multitude Christian Daily Devotional since 2013 and member since 2012

Omega Writers Inc. since 2012 (<https://www.omegawriters.org/>)

- 2017-present Management Committee Member, in charge of Membership.
- 2016-present Joint Administrator Omega’s Facebook page for non-fiction writers (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/OMEGAnonfictionWRITERS>) and Omega members’ Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/omegapromo>)
- 2014-2016 Annual Conference Co-ordinator

Christian Writers Downunder since 2012 (<http://christianwritersdownunder.blogspot.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/121373687949378/>).

CONTACT

50 Mellool Street

Barham, NSW 2732, Australia

barnesybarnesy@bigpond.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website: <https://www.susanbarneswriter.com>

Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com.au/susanbarnes_writer

Goodreads: <https://www.goodreads.com/user/show/17111557-susan-barnes>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/susanannebarneswriter>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/susanbarnes_writer

Twitter Account: <https://twitter.com/susanannebarnes>