



ACWA: Providing Encouragement to Writers in Kenya

By Maria Kiio

Mary Kiio marykiio@yahoo.com is a member of the African Christian Writers' Association (ACWA) based in Nairobi, Kenya.

Peter Wamwea walked into his first African Christian Writers Association (ACWA) meeting loaded with a stack of A4-sized papers, which were full of poems he had written while at home in rural Kenya. By faith he had come to Nairobi in search of a publisher. He was not successful in getting his poems published, but he met someone who told him about ACWA and gave him directions to the place where its members meet.

Peter joined ACWA. He started out attending the writing workshops that the association conducted and later joined a local Christian university where he is currently pursuing a degree in communications. He realized that there are many opportunities to hone his writing abilities. His vision has grown. ACWA came into existence in 2000 during a Media Associates International <http://www.littworld.org> publisher's workshop in Kenya. The objectives of the Association are to encourage members to write and publish their work while providing fellowship. The meetings are usually held every third Saturday of the month from mid morning to lunchtime.

The association draws members who are experienced writers as well as those who are just starting off on their journey. ACWA members do not necessarily make their living as writers; there are also members working in non-governmental organizations or the private sector, among others. To view another *Cook Partners* article by an ACWA member, click [here](#) (link to article by Samuel Kahura Chege).

A typical meeting starts with a prayer. Willing members share what has been going on in their lives. We may have critiquing sessions of some stories of the members or writing activities that are aimed at challenging everyone to try new avenues of writing or to keep creative juices flowing.

For example, in 2007, one of the ACWA members created a blog <http://www.africanchristianwriters.blogspot.com> to encourage members to post their writings and thoughts on issues affecting the country or in their personal lives that would be of interest in a public domain.

On occasion we have a training session conducted by an expert in a certain aspect of writing as well as speakers from the publishing industry. One of our members, Vip Ogolla, is a freelance writer who writes book reviews. Even though she writes for a secular market, she has been quite forthright in reviewing Christian books even in magazines we had never envisioned would

allow a religious book to be included. In the first quarter of 2008, Vip will train interested members on how to write book reviews for an ever-expanding print market. Other programs are being planned as well. At ACWA we look forward to forging networks with other writing clubs across the

continent and the world as well as providing Christian material written by Africans on issues that are pertinent to Africa.

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