



## Writers Workshop 2003 by Thema Black

What do a beautician, an accountant, a radio announcer, a farmer, and a musician have in common? They want to be writers! As participants in the second annual Writer's Workshop sponsored by the College of Communications at the U of N Kona campus, they discovered creative liberty in fresh ways. Drawn by a desire to grow in creative expression, they journeyed from Oregon and Georgia, as well as from Brazil and Sweden, to join others already living in Kona for the two-week workshop (March 3-14, 2003) taught by world-renowned authors, Brock and Bodie Thoenes. Both seasoned and beginning writers learned together, as the Thoenes shared personal stories, practical teachings, and generous words of encouragement.

"God has given us the potential to reach someone who is sitting in a waiting room needing to hear YOUR story in the magazine they read" the Thoenes emphasized several times. This type of encouragement led to a radical "about face" for some who believed there was no need to tell their story since there were so many books and articles already written. But magazines need to fill space each month; they are looking for fresh material.

Thoenes suggested that answering one question: "Why did this bad thing happen?" is a major article idea. Our answers or experiences of getting through difficult situations allow God's light to shine in these dark episodes so that readers may be encouraged. The power of personal story is often God's love missile to a hurting heart.

Bodie shared an inspiring story of how God guides writers. She had just accepted a writing assignment, due in two weeks, about the British withdrawal from Israel in the 1940's. Minutes later, she sped along the LA freeway to gather research at UCLA. Taking a wrong turn and getting desperately lost, she pulled up to a bookstore and went inside. The couple inside directed her to the exact book she needed. Clutching the book to her chest, she asked, "Do you know anyone who was in Israel when the British forces left?" The women hesitated, and then replied, "My uncle received the key to Jerusalem from the British general as he left the city!" With that divine appointment, God provided the needed background for the assignment and her future books.



This workshop covered topics such as the basics of journalism, interviewing techniques, writing for theater, and creating a story skeleton, both with the Thoenes and with other guest teachers in the afternoon sessions. However, the best part was hearing God's faithfulness written on the hearts of all the participants and speakers as they read aloud their memories of good and bad times.

by Thema Black, workshop participant, U of N Kona staff