

I Write

*By Sheila Johnson*

2016 has been a difficult year. Like many years throughout my life, it has birthed new levels of political, racial, institutional, and ecological injustices. Like many years in my lifetime, 2016 has also gifted to the world many scientific, technological, and medical miracles. Many have seen and experienced the best of the best and the worst of the worst in six short months. Like one of the many truisms now turned cliché, time is filled with swift transition.

But unlike the years between 1951 and 2015, 2016 has sent my mind on a scavenger hunt, looking for 'who knows what' as I uncover clues that send me to the next wonderment. I feel like I am walking in circles on ungrounded turf. The needle on the compass is confused: North is no longer north, and south is now east, and west must be north. I don't like feeling lost, and 2016 has confused my internal map. 2016 has been a difficult year.

Our churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques used to be safe havens for prayer and education and even miracles. Some of our places of worship have become burning infernos at the hands of evil. I would have never fathomed that our school buildings would be armed with metal detectors and hidden cameras. Halls of justice are now halls of plea bargains and prescriptions for penal death traps. Hunters are now the hunted. Civil obedience has turned into uncivilized murder. 2016 has been a difficult year.

I am pastoral by nature therefore, this year, 2016, has found me chasing after the one lost sheep, the Samaritan sheep, the black and the white sheep, the ewe living with HIV/AIDS, and the ram who had to abandon his young for lack of resources. Have you ever heard the sounds of crying lambs? 2016 has been a difficult year.

So I write. I write when the well of tears is unable to surface. I write. I write because it is God's way of healing, holding, guiding, and making me stronger for the journey ahead. I write. I write because I know the next six months are not promised, and I don't want to delay into 2017. I write. I write to regain my bearings and rebuild the ground beneath my feet. I write. I write because I can still love through the pain and heartache of God's people throughout the world. I write. I write, because written words bring hope, joy, laughter, and change. I write. I write over the silence of my voice.

I write.