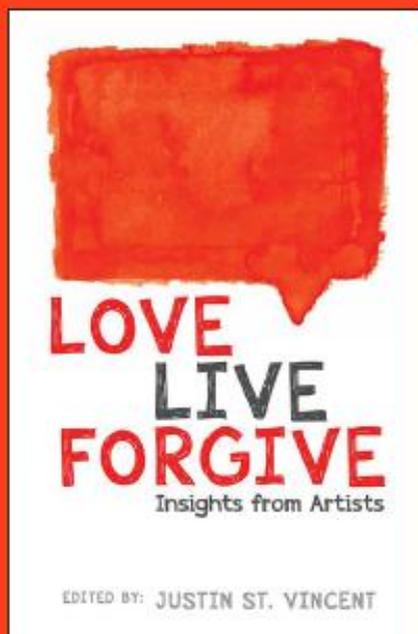


THE CHRISTIAN WRITER



MAGAZINE OF THE CHRISTIAN WRITERS
GUILD NEW ZEALAND

August – September 2014



Supporting
Members' Books

LOVE LIVE
FORGIVE
Insights from Artists

Edited by Justin St Vincent

Rightly explaining the word of truth – 2 Timothy 2:15

(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)



Editor: Debbie McDermott (email: sddp@xtra.co.nz)

Postal Address: 18 Matai Street, Waiuku 2123

Annual Subscription: Single \$30—Double \$35—Student \$10

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The Christian Writer is published bimonthly by the New Zealand Christian Writers Guild and distributed to all its members. Contributions on the theme of writing are always welcome. If you have some advice or encouragement for Christian writers, or an announcement of some event of interest to Guild members, do send it to the editor for consideration by the 20th day of the month prior to the publication date. Submissions should be no more than 500 words long and hard copy manuscripts will not be returned unless a self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed.

The editor reserves the right to condense and / or edit any contributions for reason of space. Ideas and opinions will not be edited, but editing of a technical nature may occur to maintain the highest quality of writing possible.

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Contents

Page 4	President's Report – Janet Fleming
Page 5	Spring Workshop AGM Details
Page 6	The Father is Waiting – Carole Soole
Page 6	Great Quotes – Various
Page 6	Reminder – Subs Due 1 st August 2014
Page 7	CWG Tauranga Workshop Report
Page 8	What Skills & Traits Make a Top Ghostwriter? – Marg McAllister
Page 10	The Surprising Origins of 11 English Phrases – Luke Lewis
Page 11	Get Creative: Winter Is My Season – May Y Scott
Page 12	Your Writing is an Expression of You – Janice Gillgren
Page 13	Writing Briefs. Series by Frederick Swallow – Glaucoma
Page 14	Writing Techniques – how-to-study.com
Page 14	Welcome to New Members
Page 15	Book Review: Love Live Forgive – Justin St Vincent
Page 15	New Additions to the Library: Rubble to Resurrection – Melissa Parsons
Page 15	CWG Writers' Groups Details
Page 16	Republished Level 3 Entry: Choose to Trust God – Lois Farrow
Page 31	Notice Board

CWG Competitions

Page 17	Under 30s Results	Page 22	Level Two Results
Page 20	Level One Results	Page 26	Level Three Results
Page 32	Competitions for October 2014		

The views and opinions of authors expressed in this magazine do not necessarily state or reflect those of the editor.

Website:

The site provides useful information on the Magazine, Links, Writing Courses, Groups, Competitions, Workshops and the Library. It also has an interesting 'Current News and Views' blog site, as well as a 'Write to Us' page.

www.nzchristianwritersguild.co.nz

From the President

Today has been a beautiful winter's day in Northland, so different to what it was two weeks ago. We missed the bad weather as we were away. Wayne, our son, called us one night to say that he didn't think the barge would be there in the morning. We prayed, and although it had broken away the Lord guided it to the one place in that vicinity where it was safe. Mike later followed its course. The barge had been heading straight for a shed and then changed direction thus avoiding the shed before parking alongside it. God is good! Wayne, his wife and family also needed to evacuate due to flooding. I trust that you were all fine.

Around the time this was happening I attended the Tauranga Workshop. Kara, our daughter-in-law, kindly took me over for the day. It was great to meet old friends from the Guild and to make some new ones as well. Thank you to Jan and your helpers for the hard work you put into the day.

There is a change in the programme for the Spring Workshop. Patricia Bawden is unable to attend, so Debbie McDermott will now speak. Her topics will be 'The Positive Critique' and 'Learning to Write Outside Your Preferred Genre'. Duncan Pardon, from the N.Z. Baptist magazine, will be speaking on 'Interviewing'. He, along with Debbie and Jan Pendergrast,

will bring us some challenging practical exercises. Jan states that hers will be a hands-on 'Power of Brain Storming'.

The AGM will also be held this day so if you have any suggested nominees for the Committee please feel free to get in touch.

We are planning to hold our next retreat over the long weekend that coincides with Waitangi Day 2015. This would start on the evening of the 5th February and conclude on Sunday the 8th. The retreat will be held at Narrows Park, Waikato. See the next magazine for more details.

The verse I had read prior to our going away was Isaiah 30:15 which says 'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength'. May you know that confidence and strength as you write for Him today.

Janet Fleming



Mike and Janet Fleming with their newest grandchild, Jeremiah

NZ Christian



Writers Guild

Spring Workshop and AGM
Saturday, 6th September 2014

9:30am – 4:00pm

Rossgrove Chapel, 12 Rossgrove Terrace,
Mount Albert, Auckland



Morning Speaker:

Duncan Pardon

from the N.Z. Baptist magazine will be speaking on:

**Tips on Interviewing Techniques &
How to Write a News Article**

First Afternoon Speaker:

Debbie McDermott

Published author, competition judge and editor of
The Christian Writer will be speaking on:

**Learning to Write Outside of Your
Preferred Genre & The Positive Critique**



Second Afternoon Speaker:

Jan Pendergrast

Published author, CWG Vice President and
Treasurer will be speaking on:

The Power of Brain Storming



Cost: \$20.00 pp or \$35.00 for a couple

Don't forget to bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided.

For more details contact:

Janet Fleming or Jan Pendergrast on

Tel: (09) 405 0126 / Email: mjflamingos@xtra.co.nz / Email: jan@roads-end.co.nz

The Father is Waiting

By Carole Soole

The Father in heaven is waiting
For His children to come home
The banqueting table is ready
Come boldly before His throne.

The prince of heaven will nourish
And satisfy each weary soul
Body, mind and spirit
Complete, restored and whole.

Tell His children time is short
The door will be closed soon.
Call His people to worship
Before the coming doom.

“Come home, come home,” He calls
To His children far and near,
“My banqueting table is ready
Come with holy fear.”

*Rev 3:20 “Look I stand at the door and
knock. If you hear my voice
I will come in and we will share a meal
together as friends.”*

GREAT QUOTES

Love is kindled in a flame, and
ardency is its life. Flame is the air
which true Christian experience
breathes. It feeds on fire... True
prayer MUST be aflame.

—E M Bounds

The Gospel is not an old, old story,
freshly told. It is a fire in the Spirit, fed
by the flame of Immortal Love; and
woe unto us, if, through our negligence
to stir up the Gift of God which is
within us, that fire burns low.

—Dr R Moffat Gautrey

Could a mariner sit idle if he heard
the drowning cry?

Could a doctor sit in comfort and just
let his patients die?

Could a fireman sit idle, let men burn
and give no hand?

Can you sit at ease in Zion with the
world around you DAMNED?

—Leonard Ravenhill

REMINDER

Annual Subscriptions

were due on 1st August 2014

\$30 single—\$35 double—\$15 student

To renew your membership, please post your subscription fee to

Jan Pendergrast, Seales Road, Oropi RD3, Tauranga

Or pay online to: NZ Christian Writers Guild, a/c No 12 3040 0547346 00

(Be sure to include your name as a reference if using a business account.)

CWG Tauranga Workshop Report

‘Raining and Writing’

by Dorothy Finlay

Angela introduced the day with a short devotional and Jan warmly welcomed all. Despite disappointment that many did not attend (18 participated), the thunderous rain and wind could be blamed. We greatly appreciated that Janet Fleming joined us—all the way from Kaeo.



Jenny Argante

The morning speaker, Jenny Argante, was a lively, experienced, published writer from Tauranga. She kept us on our toes. In two sessions, she took us through the stages of preparation for publishing all the way to the complete print-ready copy. A practical exercise gave some laughs as in groups we crafted a short story based on introductory lines given to us. Just before lunch we presented our masterpieces.

Graham Aitchison, from Hamilton, discussed ‘The Power of a Story’ based on his own experiences through a very dark time in his life. His book, *No Way Out but Through*, fell into three areas: prior to receiving help, the process of emotional healing and then various treatment approaches. The Lord



Graham Aitchison

brought him through to victory. It was an intensely personal road and would be helpful for those who identify with the battles he faced.

Jeanette Knudsen finished the very interesting day with insights on travel writing. She encouraged Blog writing and suggested ways to set these up. Jeanette highlighted the need to take the reader along every journey, smell the roses, taste the food and get up close to the action through this style of descriptive writing, using the active voice rather than the passive.

The theme inherent in all the presentations was to be honest in our writing, and not be afraid to show times of fear or doubt. Be real.

At the end of the day it was still bucketing down. Jan’s prayer for safety on the roads was most welcome.

Workshop venue



Jeanette Knudsen



Eion & Peter



Ruth, Karyn & Janet



What Skills and Traits Make a Top Ghostwriter?

With acknowledgements to Marg McAllister

What are the personality traits of a good ghostwriter? What is the most important: mindset or ability? What skills do you need? Can anyone be a ghostwriter?

Lots of people can string words together without actually enjoying the process. To establish a career as a ghostwriter, it really helps if you like to write. After all, to make money, you're going to have to put in quite a few hours.

Some people won't even consider writing nonfiction: to them, 'being a writer' is all about writing a novel. Others simply enjoy making words come to life on a page—they consider it a challenge to draw readers in, no matter what they are writing.

Look at your history with writing. Did you get all A's in English class? Did your friends copy your notes because they were so neat / comprehensive? Did you daydream about writing a novel or being the author of a work of non-fiction?

Then... you might just have the talent, skills and traits of a great ghostwriter.

In all honesty not everyone has the personality and skills to be a top-notch ghostwriter. However there are some things that are common to most good writers. Look through this list, and see if you might be a good fit for this great profession.

1. You're Detail-Oriented

A good ghostwriter pays attention to details. They notice the little things that can add up to a good article or

book—things that can 'tell a story'. Great content is a compilation of small details presented in a way that involves the reader.

2. You're a Story-and-Ideas Person

Some people like to talk, a lot. They love to share ideas and stories that they've come across during their day. Quite often someone who talks a lot can also write easily. They simply take the content they have available to them and put it down on paper, or on the computer screen. But you don't have to like talking to share ideas and stories on paper; there are lots of people who find they can present the story better if they have the time to think about how to present it to a reader.

3. You Love to Research & Learn New Things

Are you one of those people who has a new hobby every month? Well that's a good indication that you like to learn new things and research new projects. A ghostwriter needs to be willing and able to take in a lot of information, sort through it and pump out something new as a result. It helps if you LOVE to do this sort of thing because you'll be researching up a storm on a regular basis.

4. You Can Hammer out the Words – Fast!

If you want to write a lot of content fast then you need to learn how to type at an above average speed. Hunt-and-peck won't do it if you

want to make a good living with ghostwriting. (Even people who insist that their ‘hunt and peck’ method is quite fast are amazed at the improvement in speed and accuracy after they spend a few weeks doing a touch-typing course. There are plenty available for download to computers.)

If you can’t type fast now but have all the other skills, resolve to learn.

Commit a few weeks to learning and practice—you’ll pick up speed very quickly.

Another option is voice recognition software such as Dragon Naturally Speaking.

5. You’re a Self-Starter

Anyone can be self-motivated given the right incentive. (If you’re a parent you have seen this in action: a teenager will rarely be motivated to get up early to do chores, but dangle the carrot of an outing with his mates and watch the transformation!)

Being able to set and meet deadlines is essential for a successful ghostwriter. (Would YOU want to hire a writer who makes you sweat at the deadline wondering if he or she is going to call to say the work isn’t ready?) It’s all about how badly you want to do this thing—and knowing that the cash you need will only be coming your way when you finish the work is A HUGE incentive!

6. You Can Take Criticism

Say this after me: “The customer is always right!” Sometimes they’ll want to include something you are sure is unnecessary—or even wrong—but who’s paying for it? You can try to tactfully voice your opinion, but in the end, you don’t have the final say. If you think you are right about everything and your work is the most awesome in the world, then you may not be cut out to be a ghostwriter. Making clients happy requires being open to some criticism and being able to adapt to a client’s needs as they come up.

This list of traits, skills and talent is not etched in stone. Consider the six points above a guideline, to help you decide whether you want to explore the potential of being a ghostwriter further.

What is MOST important? That’s easy. It’s having the ability to deliver what your client wants and more. You must have heard the sales slogan: ‘Under-promise and over-deliver’! Make your minimum standard over and above what most others offer, then consistently surprise and delight with superior quality and service—and you can’t go wrong. The word will spread, and you’ll find yourself in the happy position of picking and choosing your jobs because you haven’t got enough hours in the day to fit all those would-be clients in!

When a woman decided to send the old family Bible to her brother in another state, the postal worker asked her if there was anything breakable in the package. "Only the Ten Commandments," she replied.



The Surprising Origins of 11 English Phrases

By Luke Lewis of BuzzFeed

1. **Above board**

Meaning: Legitimate.

Origin: Cardsharps place their hands under the ‘board’ or table to stack the deck. If they keep their hands above the board, they can be presumed to be performing without trickery.

2. **Armed to the teeth**

Meaning: Fully prepared for a confrontation.

Origin: Medieval warriors were often so laden with weapons that sometimes they would have to carry one in their teeth.

3. **At one fell swoop**

Meaning: All at once.

Origin: The phrase originally meant ‘swift and brutal murder’, and was first used in *Macbeth*. Macduff utters the words on hearing of the death of his wife and children. A ‘swoop’ is the sudden descent of a bird of prey on its victim. ‘Fell’ is from the Old French word *fel*, meaning ‘merciless’.

4. **Balls to the wall**

Meaning: Pushed to the limit.

Origin: It derives from aviation. The ‘balls’ sat on top of the levers controlling the throttle and fuel mixtures. Pushing them forward toward the front wall of the cockpit made the plane go faster.

5. **Bandy around**

Meaning: To argue, discuss in a lively fashion.

Origin: Bandy was a medieval bat-and-ball game, similar to hockey. To ‘bandy’ words is to knock them back and forth as one would bandy a ball.

6. **Beat about the bush**

Meaning: To avoid the issue.

Origin: In hunting it’s often necessary to beat the underbrush noisily in order to flush animals out into the open. A timid and unwilling hunter will ‘beat about the bush’, making a show of finding and killing the beast, but not actually doing so.

7. **Between a rock and a hard place**

Meaning: Out of options.

Origin: It’s a somewhat inaccurate reference to the Greek epic poem *The Odyssey*. There’s a passage where the hero has to choose whether to sail close to the monster Scylla or the whirlpool Charybdis.

8. **Bite the bullet**

Meaning: Face up to unpleasant reality.

Origin: Before anaesthetics were invented, injured soldiers would bite on a bullet to help them endure the pain of an operation / amputation.

9. **Chance your arm**

Meaning: Take a risk.

Origin: The arm in question refers to a stripe of military rank worn on the upper sleeve. Take a risk and you might be demoted, thereby losing a stripe.

10. **Cold feet**

Meaning: To show reluctance.

Origin: It’s a military term. A man who has cold or frozen feet—a common affliction until the late 19th century—can’t rush into battle, and so proceeds slowly.

11. **Cold shoulder**

Meaning: Made to feel unwelcome.

Origin: In times gone by, an unwelcome visitor would have been given the cheapest and most common type of food: cold shoulder of mutton.

GET CREATIVE

Many thanks to May Scott for submitting her lovely testimony on the topic of *Winter Haven*.

Winter Is My Season

By May Y Scott

I have to believe many memories in my life are closely linked to a certain season.

During the years spent in China, summer had always been my season. There is so much to remember: the long sun-baking days, the damp boiling-hot nights, the brick balcony, the trellis and the towel-gourds, the rationed food, the family meals and laughter, and the howling of an owl traversing the sky. The starkness of the sound made my heart quiver because Chinese people believe that when someone is dying, owls come to cry.

Being alone in Auckland over the past ten years, summer had become a hard time to endure—the lonely evenings, terribly long; the falling of the night in the sky, forlorn and bleak. I don't remember when I decided to like winter for a simple reason—the evening is a blink. As soon as the sun goes down, night is here, like a dark backdrop plummeting to the earth. How many wintry evenings I have turned on the lamp, while reading and warming my cold hands in a small patch of yellow light!

This winter is different. I'm not alone, not anymore. In the morning, I turn on the heat pump to keep me warm. I spend most of the day painting. I paint Whatipu beach, where my husband encountered God; I paint a Kiwi boy on a skateboard; I paint a pohutukawa tree. In the evening, sitting in front of TV, we eat and we talk.

This lounge has become my winter haven. This winter haven makes winter my season.



The next topic will be **Awakening Hope**

Maximum 40 lines for poetry and 250 words for prose.

Include the words 'Get Creative' with your submission. Although work is not judged, the best pieces received will be considered for publication.

Email submissions to the editor no later than 10th September 2014

Your Writing is an Expression of You

By Janice Gillgren

This fact may delight or daunt you.

It's an obvious statement of course. We all know it.

Some take this deeply personally. "If people dislike my writing, they probably dislike me too." Every item of writing they produce is treated like litmus paper for relationships.

This may be an extreme example but if you find yourself feeling scared of exposing your precious words to other readers lest rejection hurts too deeply, you may be suffering what I call 'writer's anxiety.'

It is hard to expose yourself to other people when you are insecure.

Perhaps your education wasn't ideal, and you can't spell for peanuts (or for monkeys, either). Every time you write anything, you feel scared of that dreaded schoolteacher looking over your shoulder, reprimanding you yet again.

Let me reassure you—while good spelling skills will make writing easier, it is not all there is to being a writer. Spelling is merely a tool that can be learned. The best speller in the world—if he or she has nothing much to say—will not entice readers as much as someone with a great story to tell.

Perhaps you have been very hurt in this life, with cruel taunts and painful bullying, and have learned to keep yourself firmly to yourself. Exposure in any way will therefore be scary.

However, if you have come through

rugged stuff in your life, and feel strongly that you have something to say that could help others, remember this:

Your writing is not you. It is an expression of who you are, but it is separate from you. It could be helpful for you to think of it as a testament to where you are on your path to becoming a better writer.

I'm going from one extreme to another here, but there are other people who need to be reminded of the hefty responsibility that words bear.

They need to be reminded that words are an expression of who they are. If writers use words to cut people down, they cannot distance themselves from their writing. The writer, using words as tools of destruction, has done the cutting.

I believe our Heavenly Creator has gifted some people with the talent of writing, so they may ultimately use that talent for the good of others. Using the talent given to us in the best way we know how is a way of expressing our thanks for that talent. It is also a creative way to love our neighbours, if it helps them in some way.

**Log Onto
JANICE GILLGREN'S
weekly blog**

offering inspiration,
encouragement and useful tips
for writers at all levels.

www.wordsandscenes.co.nz

Writing Briefs. Series by Frederick Swallow



Acknowledgements with thanks: Professor Helen Danesh-Meyer
and Ophthalmologists—Glaucoma NZ Eye.

A ruthless silent thief of eyesight is the incurable disease of glaucoma.

According to Glaucoma NZ Eye, if left unchecked it surely, slowly and silently robs small amounts of vision; creeping to the point where most folk are not aware of this until they visit an optometrist for a test and could then be registered blind—not because they cannot see clearly, but because blind spots have developed in their field of vision. Thankfully your optometrist, eye specialist or surgeon can treat this to halt further deterioration. Daily drops will help but must be applied for the rest of your life.

A family history of glaucoma means you have greater risk of developing glaucoma.

About 68,000 Kiwis live with glaucoma. About half are not aware of this silent eyesight thief. Glaucoma can strike children but this is very rare.

If you have never visited an optometrist to have your eyes checked, the time to make an appointment is now. When checked, your optometrist will advise you when to have further eye examinations. For a glaucoma pamphlet or more info, ask your local optometrist or Eye Clinic, or visit the following website: info@glaucoma.org.nz

Writing Techniques

Writing is an important form of communication. Good writers use different writing techniques to fit their purposes for writing. To be a good writer, you must master each of the following writing techniques.

1. Description

Through description, a writer helps the reader use the senses of feeling, seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting to experience what the writer experiences. Description helps the reader more clearly understand the people, places, and things about which the writer is writing. It is the most common form of writing. You will find descriptive writing in newspapers, magazines, books, and most other forms of written communication.

2. Exposition

Through exposition, a writer informs, explains, and clarifies his / her ideas and thoughts. Exposition goes beyond description to help the reader understand with greater clarity and depth the ideas and thoughts of the writer. Expository writing, like descriptive writing, is commonly found in newspapers, magazines, books, and most other forms of written communication.

3. Narration

Through narration, a writer tells a story. A story has characters, a setting, a time, a problem, attempts at solving the problem, and a solution to the problem. Bedtime stories are examples of short stories while novels are examples of long stories. The scripts written for movies and plays are further examples of narrative writing.

Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Lesley Evans

of Hamilton

Carol Hudson

of Tauranga

Gaynor Lincoln

of Rotorua

Raema Low

of Te Awamutu

Richard Yarrall

of Tauranga

4. Persuasion

Through persuasion, a writer tries to change a reader's point of view on a topic, subject, or position. The writer presents facts and opinions to get the reader to understand why something is right, wrong, or in between. Editorials, letters to the editor in newspapers and magazines, and the text for a political speech are examples of persuasive writing.

5. Comparison and Contrast

Through comparison and contrast, a writer points out the similarities and differences about a topic. Comparison is used to show what is alike or in common. Contrast is used to show what is not alike or not in common. Describing living conditions in 1900 and living conditions today would allow for much comparison and contrast.

By using the writing technique that fits your purpose, you will be able to communicate your ideas effectively.

With acknowledgements to how-to-study.com

Library Corner

Book Review

By Debbie McDermott



LOVE LIVE FORGIVE

Edited by
Justin St Vincent

Love Live Forgive is a well presented eBook comprised of exclusive interviews with over 100 artists from a wide range of backgrounds, and with varying beliefs, values and talents. Despite this diversity, the common theme throughout each interview is the need for love, forgiveness and compassion, and how these can be communicated to the world through all art forms—but most particularly through music and song. Perhaps this is because ‘Communication of the heart is perfectly spoken by the language of music, including love and forgiveness’ (p.52).

Each of the book’s five chapters (which consist of interviews, accompanying photos, and an opportunity to apply any lessons learnt) is based on specific themes—Artistry; Love and Forgiveness; Compassion and Healing; Transformation; and Unity. Although some of the interviews are complex and perhaps a bit too mystical, they all demonstrate the artist’s deep passion for using his / her craft to make this world a better place.

Many of the artists represented in this book say their craft was birthed during times of great difficulty or heartache, and that it was instrumental in bringing them to a place of peace, forgiveness, self-acceptance and love. And it is from this positive emotional state that they produce their best work. This point alone is, I think, something we can all learn from.

Love Live Forgive is available at no cost. Simply log onto www.LoveLiveForgive.org and download your FREE copy.

Additions to the Library

Many thanks to Melissa Parsons for donating her recently published book:

Rubble to Resurrection

Churches Respond in the Canterbury Quakes

CWG Writers’ Groups

AUCKLAND – WEST

Dianne Spain

(in the absence of Beth Walker who is in Christchurch attending to family matters)

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Choose to Trust God

By Lois Farrow

Ed's Note—due to a typesetting error, the last part of Lois's Level 3 winning entry for May 2014 was accidentally left out. I sincerely apologise for this mistake and herewith republish Lois' story in full

3. Jerry and Sue bought land in the country with a creek and a long line of pine trees.

They planned their new house.

4/5. "I want my lego room," said Katy.

"Don't forget my train room," said Dan, holding his Marklin engines.

"We have to have a swimming pool," said Dad, pretending to swim.

6/7. "We can't have everything we want," said Sue, looking at the plans. "It will cost too much."

Their new puppy, Fynn, spun round and round chasing her tail. All she wanted was to be with her family.

8/9. The digger came and made flat land for the house. The digger dug channels for the drains. At weekends the family stayed in their caravan.

10/11. The wooden frames were built and the roof was put on.

Katy and Dan played with Fynn in the long grass. Grandad flew his model plane in the paddock and it stuck in a tree.

12/13. One day strong winds blew across the paddocks. "We must go and check the house," said Dad.

14/15. The roof had blown everywhere. Pieces were stuck in the pine trees; some were in the next paddock.

The builder came and built a new roof. He built the sides of the house.

"That is stronger now," he said. "The roof won't blow off again."

16/17. The rains came and filled the drains with water.

"Look, Dad," said Dan. "You've got your swimming pool." Grandad sailed his model boats. Fynn fell in the water and was a muddy mess. She ran around in circles to get dry.

18/19. Grandad checked the section.

"Look," he said. "The creek is blocked. That's why the water flowed over."

The digger came and cleared the creek and the water drained away.

20/21. Jerry and Sue planted one hundred trees that would grow fast and make good firewood. Every weekend they watered them.

One night sheep from the next farm ate all the baby trees.

22/23 "We must choose to trust God," said Jerry. "Building this house is like building our lives. It takes time and is not always easy, but God will take care of us."

24/25. Strong winds blew off the mountains. Two gum trees crashed down.

Fynn raced among the fallen branches. She had her family and a fun place to play.

"Now we have our firewood," said Sue.

26/27. Jerry and Sue chose paint colours, carpet, and tiles.

Workmen hurried to finish the house.

28/29. At last the house was finished. They could move in.

30/31. "It hasn't been easy," said Dad. "But we learnt a lot about trusting God. We have our new house and all our family together."

32. "Woof," said Fynn.

Competition Results

Under 30s

Judge:

Vicki Nogaj

Requirements: Rewrite a parable using a modern day context. 400 words. Include your age with your entry.

General Comments

I enjoyed reading the entertaining and creatively written modern day parables so much that I had to ask for feedback from another member to make my final decision. I made my decision based on originality of context and relevance to a modern day audience yet still conveying the same message. I also enjoyed those that didn't use a 'church' theme, making it more suitable for both church and unchurched alike.

First Place



**Danella
Smithies**

of Christchurch
(14 years old)

All He Had Was A Degree

Jim Farley was an affluent business genius with a sharp eye and quick brain. He had made his fortune by starting up a strategic partner business to The Warehouse. July 2000, he was called away overseas on important business matters and he knew that his trip would be a long one. Rather than leave all his investments in the care of a broker he decided to put a sum into the hands of three young business graduates who had recently completed their B.Com degrees.

Jim called the men into his office and drew up a contract with each of them.

Paul had a Management Diploma, in addition to his degree. Jim entrusted him \$500,000.

Stewart had a Business Certificate, in addition to his degree. To him \$200,000 was entrusted.

Richard stood a step back from the others. He was only a recent graduate, but he was entrusted \$100,000.

Paul put his money to work straight away, investing in the share market and commercial property. He attended frequent meetings and was always analyzing new investment opportunities.

Stewart also worked hard. He would attend auctions and dig for bargains in sales then sell them off at market prices. He was a busy man, always searching out good deals.

Richard would sigh deeply when he heard of the achievements of the others. He would simply say, "I'm not as smart or experienced as them".

Eventually Mr Farley arrived back. His time away had been very successful and he was feeling generous.

Firstly, Paul came to him and proudly handed over \$1,000,000. Mr Farley smiled broadly and said, "Well done, you have shown wisdom and dedication. Come, I want you to be my new business partner."

Next Stewart came. "Sir," he said. "You gave me \$200,000. Now I return to you \$400,000." Again Mr Farley smiled and

invited him to join in the business also.

When Richard came, he hung his head low. He handed back the \$100,000.

“Richard,” Mr Farley angrily said, “You have been very lazy and shown your ignorance of business matters. Give the money to Paul. I will no longer employ you or give you a reference. Obviously you haven’t learnt anything from your time at University. I suggest that you pursue a new career.”

Richard trudged slowly away.

Judge’s Comments

This was an original and well presented idea. The content flowed logically and clearly portrayed the message. It was not only modern day but also with a New Zealand flavour, i.e. ‘The Warehouse’. I like that you used dialogue and succinct sentences to ‘show not tell’. Well done.

Second Place



Benjamin Smithies
of Christchurch
(11 years old)

The Rebellion

Barack Obama decided to give Hawaii temporary self-governance under the condition that after five years he would collect all the taxes from those years.

After five years he sent a senior official to collect the taxes but they booted him out of the country.

Next he sent a frigate with another official. They sank the frigate and sent the official home on a life-raft.

He tried a third time. This time he sent a destroyer with his official. They raked the ship up and down with machine gun fire from fighter jets and sent it away with most of the crew dead or wounded.

Then Barack Obama said, “What shall I do? I will send my personal advisor in my private jet. Perhaps they will respect him.”

After talking the matter over, the Hawaiian Government decided to shoot down the plane so that Hawaii would be completely theirs. They shot down and killed Obama’s personal advisor.

When Barack Obama heard this, he was very upset and ordered secret agents to blow up the Hawaiian Government buildings and he chose new governors.

Judge’s Comments

I gave you second place Benjamin as your idea was original, humorous and thoroughly entertaining to read. It could have challenged your sister for first if you had just finished it off with a bit more of a conclusion as it ended a bit suddenly. I realise you tried to stick to the facts so as not too stray too far from the parable itself. This is definitely a boy's story as the topic is so riveting and full of action, yet realistic for today using modern day war tactics and existing agencies. It sounds like a possible movie idea for the future. Congratulations Ben!



Third Place



Sophie Smithies

of Christchurch
(13 years old)

The Lost Son

Mr Longfellow had two sons. The oldest son was named Hamish and the younger one was named Sammy.

One day Sammy came to his Dad and said, "Dad, I know that when you die I will inherit some of your money. But instead of having to wait for you to die, can I just have it now?"

Sadly his Father handed him a credit card and waved goodbye as his youngest son shouted, "Goodbye Dad, goodbye Hamish, I am off to America to have some fun!"

In America, Sammy got tattoos all over his body so that none of his skin was bare and as many piercings in as many places as possible. He wore sloppy shirts and jeans that hung around his knees. In fact, anything that would make his friends think he looked cool, he got. He lived a wild life.

After Sammy had reached the credit limit on the credit card there came a great earthquake and he began to be in dire need. So Sammy went and hired himself out to a citizen of the country who sent him to work on a rubbish truck. He longed to fill his stomach with the food scraps in the truck, but no one gave him anything.

When Sammy finally came to his senses, he said, "All Dad's employees have food to spare and here I am starving to death! I

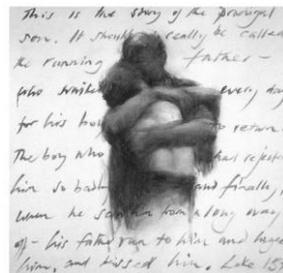
will set out and go back to him and say, "Dad, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; please make me one of your employees." So Sammy got up and headed back towards his father's home.

While he was still a long way off, Mr Longfellow saw him and was filled with compassion for him. He ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

Before Sammy had a chance to speak his Dad said to his workers, "Quick, buy a set of the best clothes and shoes you can find in Ballantynes and give them to him to wear. Prepare a feast for him. Lets have a party and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost but now he is found."

Judge's Comments

Choosing third place was difficult but I enjoyed the simplicity of this story which kept the message clear but brought it into this century. There was a good mix of dialogue and narrative as well as nicely presented and organised structure. I like how you chose a specific country to increase familiarity but I would have liked to know Sammy's home country to enrich the setting and provide contrast. Overall a lovely piece, nice work.



Painting by Charlie Mackesy

Welcome to

Jessica McPhearson

who put in a great first entry

Level One

Judge:
Debbie McDermott

Requirement: POETRY— Rewrite Psalm 1 in modern poetry form, using one of the standard rhyming and rhythm formats, and with the same number of verses as the psalm itself.

General Comments

I was very impressed with the five entrants to this competition. It is not easy to write good poetry, but—apart from some inconsistency with the number of syllables in four of the entries—each poem is well formulated and enjoyable to read. This made judging between them quite hard. I finally awarded Belinda First Place for maintaining a consistent number of syllables and alternating each four line verse with a two line verse to give her poem an interesting rhythm.

Deciding between the remaining four entries was very difficult. After some consideration, I awarded Susan Second Place for using such a creative rhyming technique. Ruth and Eion would have tied with Lesley for Third Place had they not failed to properly reflect verses 4 and 5 of the original psalm. When rewriting someone else's poem, story or article in your own words, it is important to ensure you fully express or give an accurate concept of what the author originally wrote.

With regards to punctuation, it should be noted that the modern trend is to use no commas or full stops unless absolutely necessary. For instance, each verse in Lesley's poem is written as a single sentence, so commas and semi-colons are required to create pauses. However, you will notice she has followed the modern trend by not including a full stop at the end of each verse.

NB: as this assignment was to put an original piece of writing into your own words, it would have been appropriate to include a suitable title other than Psalm 1.

First Place



**Belinda
McCallion**
of Tauranga

Psalm 1

How richly blessed people will be,
Who do not keep bad company;
Who don't endorse an evil tongue,
Nor scoff against the Holy One.

The Word of God is their delight;
They meditate both day and night.

They stand like trees with splendourness;
Near water's edge they find success.
Their roots connect straight to the source;
They bear their fruit as planned, on course.

The wicked ones, they will not see,
These blessings set aside from thee.

They will not stand the judgement call.
No, they indeed will surely fall;
They won't be called out when he comes,
To gather up the righteous ones.

For God protects the righteous man,
But casts the wicked from his hand.

Judge's Comments

Belinda fully met all the requirements of this competition. I particularly like the way she alternates the four line verses with two line verses. As every line consists of exactly eight syllables, this has given her poem an interesting rhythm that may not have been there otherwise. Apart from the word 'thee' she has also taken care to use contemporary

language and each verse of her poem clearly 'mirrors' or expresses the meaning of the relevant verse of the original psalm.

Although the word 'splendourness' in verse 3 is not recognised by the dictionary, poetic licence does entitle a poet to create new words so I have not penalised Belinda for using it. Besides, I rather like the word.

Well done, Belinda, for an excellent effort. Do keep writing.

Second Place



**Susan
Flanagan**
of Paihia

Psalm 1

1. Keep clear of the cunning,
don't walk with the wicked,
or mix with the mockers,
then you will be blessed.
2. Take time with God's teachings,
and love the Lord's law,
study the scriptures,
and you will find rest.
3. Then you shall grow stronger,
your roots will go deeper,
your fruit will be sweeter,
and you will do well.
4. But not so the naughty,
who run from righteousness.
They run the gauntlet,
and even chance hell.
5. The ungodly will fail,
they'll fall at the finish.
The assembly will stand,
but the wicked will not.

6. For God sees our hearts,
and He knows our ways.
The righteous shall reign.
The unrighteous rot.

Judge's Comments

What I like most about Susan's poem is the unusual rhyming format she has used, whereby only the last word in the last line of every two consecutive verses rhyme, while the rest of poem is written in free verse.

Although there is some inconsistency with the number of syllables in each verse except the last, Susan has maintained good flow and rhythm by keeping each line short and punchy. The tempo in verses 1 and 3 is particularly good. Except for the word 'gauntlet', she has also taken care to use modern language and each aspect of the original psalm has been clearly expressed verse for verse.

All of the above makes this a well written contemporary poem. Well done, Susan. Do keep writing.

Third Place



**Lesley
Evans**
of Hamilton

Psalm One

God's joy fills my heart
when I don't follow the ways
of doubters and schemers
who'd lead me astray

As I ponder His Word
every morning and night,
I find it to be
my hearts true delight

Like a flourishing tree
planted next to a stream,
my life bears good fruit
and leaves that stay green

The doubters and schemers,
like dry chaff blow about,
for they don't know the Lord
and His ways they all flout

God's judgment will come
to one and to all;
those who don't follow Him
are all set to fall

His eye is upon me
to watch and to care,
but the doubters are lost,
caught in Satan's cruel snare

Judge's Comments

There is a deeply personal aspect to Lesley's entry that wasn't evident in the other four. This is because her poem is written almost entirely in the first person POV. Despite this personal aspect, her exhortation to those who don't follow God's ways is also clear—which is what the original psalmist intended.

Although there is a lot of inconsistency with the syllable count in most of the verses, Lesley has maintained good rhythm by keeping her lines short and concise. Her rhyming is good and, apart from the word 'chaff' which may now be unfamiliar to most people, she has used contemporary language throughout. She has also reflected each aspect of the psalm verse for verse in an enjoyable way.

Concerning accuracy with grammar, there is only one mistake in the fourth line of verse two, where 'heart's' should be written with an apostrophe 's'.

This is otherwise a commendable entry. Well done, Lesley, and do keep writing.

Level Two

Judge:
Janice Gillgren

Requirement: Read a biography, published within the past five years, about someone you know nothing about. Then write an article as if you have interviewed that person for a magazine, using a Q and A format. Include the title and author of the biography.

General Comments

This competition involved authoring both the questions and the answers, and entrants therefore had to create both, based on their understanding of their chosen book. You wouldn't have to do this in a usual interview, since an interviewee would be supplying you with answers. However, this exercise was intended to help you form succinct and appropriate questions and answers from a large body of work.

The questions you ask an interviewee are very important for guiding the direction of the discussion, even if only as conversation starters. I therefore critiqued the questions just as much as the answers. For example: Were they pertinent? Did they lead naturally to the answers you would want for an informative article? Did they convey an interest in the subject?

The word counts, and spelling and grammar, were generally of a good standard.

First Place



**Judith
Powell**
of Canterbury

Interview with Mrs Isabella Robinson

JP: In 1858 your husband, Henry, was the eleventh person to bring a petition for divorce under a new English law. Why?

Mrs R: I was ill. Henry found my diary. He read it. He thought it proved I'd been unfaithful.

JP: Can you tell me about your diary?

Mrs R: I started it after my third boy was born. It was a special book with a red Russian calf hide cover that smelled faintly of birch bark. Writing gave me some relief from my circumstances.

JP: What were those circumstances?

Mrs R: I wasn't very well. I was lonely and depressed. Henry had no interest in poetry or literature and he wouldn't talk to me about business even when he was home, which wasn't often. He controlled my money and he had a mistress and two daughters. I wanted to leave but he would have kept my boys.

JP: What did you write in your diary?

Mrs R: Everything. When writing I relived and recreated the excitement, the thrill and pleasure, of my activities and dreams.

JP: Tell me about the trial.

Mrs R: Henry's only proof was my diary. It was private. It was barbaric to read my words and show other people.

JP: Who else read your diary?

Mrs R: Everyone. Henry thought it showed I was guilty.

JP: Is that what happened?

Mrs R: No. He lost the case. He couldn't prove what was true and what I'd imagined.

JP: So is your life happier now?

Mrs R: No. We have a legal separation but he has my boys. I have to live on only three hundred pounds a year and pay the court costs because Henry can't. I am disgraced. I have no husband, no friends. It was dishonourable of Henry to read my diary.

Bibliography

Summersdale, Kate *Mrs Robinson's Disgrace: The Private Diary of a Victorian Lady* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012

Judge's Comments

Hi Judith. Congratulations. I've awarded you 1st place. Your questions are pertinent and have a logical flow, though there is some needless repetition, and some of the questions seem a bit terse or stilted. Most of the answers are appropriate. A title, followed by a short introduction to set the scene, would help to create interest in the subject at the start.

The Q & A's about the trial could be improved by re-writing, or moving, a few of the answers around. For example:

'JP: Tell me about the trial.

Mrs R: Henry thought my diary showed I was guilty of infidelity. But it didn't!

JP: Who else read your diary?'

Mrs R: "Everyone! My diary was private. It was barbaric of him to read..."

While articles do not tend to reveal the same depth of emotion as fiction, it is certainly acceptable to show it when appropriate. Some body language could show Isabella's misery more effectively, such as twisting a hanky between fingers to show nervousness, shedding some tears, or lifting up her otherwise downcast head to answer a question.

Overall, well done.

Second Place



**Jean
Shewan**
of Christchurch

Niromi de Soya - Child Soldier

Q: Born in Sri Lanka, you spent your early years in the hill country near Kandi with your mother's family. When did you become aware of differences between the Tamils and your mother's Sinhala people?

A: When I reached the age of seven it was decided that I should go and live with my Grandparents in Jaffna. This is a strong Tamil area where I would get a better education at the Roman Catholic School, and learn about my father's family. When I was twelve years old fighting broke out between the Sinhala and Tamil people, led by the Tamil Tigers, a group of young men prepared to fight for freedom.

Q: What was it like to become a Tamil tigress?

A: It was four years before I was allowed to join the fighters, because it was regarded as no place for females. Then I discovered that most of the other girls were from lower caste rural families, with very little education and cultural appreciation. I had to go from a privileged child to an independent, obedient young woman. It was very difficult physically and emotionally, especially as my family, apart from my mother, disowned me.

Q: You were continually on the move, short of food and clothing, and you saw

your friends die. Is this what caused you to give up your role?

A: These contributed of course, but more importantly it was the realisation that the leaders whom I looked up to, did not live up to my high ideals. Several different groups of Tamil independence fighters existed in the early days, but they fought amongst themselves rather than together against the common enemy. I saw many unwarranted acts of violence committed against fellow Tamils which the leaders ignored. I realised at last that fighting violence with violence was never going to achieve freedom for the Tamil People.

"Tamil Tigress" my story as a child soldier in Sri Lanka's bloody civil war. By Niromi de Soya.

Published in 2011 by Allen and Unwin.

Judge's Comments

Hi Jean. Congratulations. This has been awarded second place. I am sure this must be a very interesting story, and you have clearly shown some of the things Niromi went through.

Put the title of the book, which is self-explanatory, at the start. A short introduction would probably be a good idea as well. Note that when you quote the name of a book, you don't need double quotation marks (single will do); and you need to include the entire title of the book.

This entry could have been improved first by asking more questions, and then writing shorter and more targeted answers. Your first answer doesn't actually answer the first question; and the next two answer much more than just the questions asked.

In the first answer, the word 'grand-parents' doesn't need to be capitalised, as it isn't a proper noun.

'A: When I reached ... my father's family.'

This would be better as: 'When I reached... in Jaffna, a strong Tamil area. This was so I would get...'

The phrase 'a strong Tamil area' properly belongs with the name Jaffna, which it describes.

The two sentences would actually make the best sense merged into one, but it would be an unacceptably long sentence for many editors and readers today.

Well done.

Third Place



Prue Francis
of New Plymouth

Fitting Pieces Together : the Enigma of Priscilla Thompson.

Priscilla Thompson was born in 1916, married a Frenchman in 1938, was arrested in Paris in 1940 and lived as a fugitive during the war. When I visited her on the farm owned by her second husband, Raymond, I observed the sadness reflected in her beautiful face. Prue Francis.

Prue Francis: What experience had the most impact on you as an English-woman in Nazi-occupied France?

Priscilla Thompson: That's a difficult question, as many events affected me. In 1940, I lived in an internment camp in Besancon near the Swiss-German border. Life was hard and many died.

PF: You eventually left Besancon. How did that happen?

PT: I feigned pregnancy, as the authorities eventually allowed expectant women to leave.

PF: How did you convince them of that?

PT: We had a French Jewish doctor who confirmed my 'pregnancy'.

PF: Did you have children of your own?

PT: No, but I became mother to Raymond's children by his first marriage.

PF: I understand that you had an unhappy childhood. Can you tell me about that?

PT: My parents separated and I was sent to Paris to live with my mother. At nine years, I felt my father's rejection as he had a new woman in his life. I was emotionally insecure.

PF: What happened after you left Besancon?

PT: I was an enemy alien in Paris. I found consolation in several romantic attachments, but life was precarious. I changed addresses frequently because I feared denunciation.

PF: If you had to give advice to young people of the 1970's, what would you say?

PT: Try not to hurt anybody. Don't play with people's feelings and don't leave your husband for somebody else. It's never worth it

Priscilla: The Hidden Life of an Englishwoman in Wartime France by Nicholas Shakespeare.

Judge's Comments

Hi Prue. I have awarded you 3rd place. I suspect this story was quite detailed, so you did well to cut it down to this length.

The title of the book would be better at the start of your article.

The introduction is useful, although the 2nd sentence suggests you know Priscilla personally. Perhaps that is the case but that then implies you interviewed her, rather than doing this assignment from her biography, which is confusing.

Introduction—whatever form they may be in—pique interest, and create expectations about what we are likely to learn. Your first Q & A is excellent in this regard, but your following questions and answers don't meet that expectation.

For example, when I read that Priscilla was 'an Englishwoman in Nazi-occupied France', I want to know more. What was her life like in that internment camp? How was she affected by the events? Did she have close family and friends that died? Is that why she tried to leave? These are the questions I start asking after the first answer.

The Q & A's about how she left Bescanson and what she did after that both belong near the end. The questions about her childhood, and children of her own, don't actually add much to the article.

I wonder why the last question is directed to young people of the 1970s instead of today, but perhaps that comes from the time frame the book is written in. While I think this last Q & A fits this article, be aware that such answers would often be disparaged as 'moralising' or 'preaching' these days.

Level Three

Judge: Ruth Linton

Requirement: DRAMA: *A Chance Encounter*—At a bus stop you meet a person you do not know and start up a conversation. As a result you are able to insert a relevant testimony to the power of God to help in life. Produce a short dramatic sketch suitable for

using as a tool for an evangelism seminar or an open-air outreach. Max time: Four minutes. Please note the time at the end of your entry. (Around 400 words plus stage directions.)

General Comments

Thank you to all who entered this competition. Special thanks also to Erling Jensen for his willingness to look over my comments and advise on the quality of the entries. His comments are as follows:

'The entries were all short, and the dialogues do reveal Christian concern but lack dramatic impact. I think the word 'drama' has become overused and thus quite weakened in its effect. I looked up the definition for being dramatic and read:

- 1. Exciting. 2. Sudden and striking, drastic.*
- 3. Flamboyantly emotional. (Chambers Combined Dictionary)*

Drama is essentially a tension between two or three voices—a clash of divergent points of view, and dialogue has three functions:

- 1. To distinguish the individuality of the characters.*
- 2. To create a mood.*
- 3. To advance the plot.*

Be careful that your stage directions do not cramp the actor's style. They want freedom and space to unfold their talents.'

I would like to add two observations to Erling's comments:

- 1. In judging I leaned toward those showing practical examples of Christian love—sharing an umbrella, for example. It is the old adage: 'show, not tell'.*
- 2. Too many writers tried to incorporate the entire Christian message, from Creation to the Second Coming and became too theological. The competition required a personal testimony (for example, a healing resulting from prayer or an unexpected provision to meet a need).*

The comments following each placed entry are mine (Ruth's) not Erling's.

First Place



**Vicki
Nogaj**
of Welcome Bay,
Tauranga

Shoes of the Gospel

This is based on a chance encounter my friend had when she had to stop driving due to her diagnosis of Epilepsy. She encountered people she never would have if she was driving. I have changed the names and embellished the tale with my own version of events.

CHARACTERS: Two women. Leslie is a homeless lady who is waiting at the bus shelter to keep warm. Cara is a working Mum who is waiting to catch the bus home.

PROPS AND COSTUMES:

A wooden bench or row of chairs

Shabby 'op shop' clothes worn by homeless lady

Smart work clothes/suit with new boots worn by a working Mum

Mobile phone

Large shopping bags

Pair of boots in shoebox in one of shopping bags

DESCRIPTION: Cara and Leslie find themselves the only passengers waiting to board a bus. Cara is a working mother who's been diagnosed with Epilepsy and can no longer drive. Leslie is a recovering addict who's had her children taken off her and she is trying to get her life back together but is living on the streets. The scene opens with Cara talking on her mobile while approaching Leslie who is seated on the bench seat by the bus shelter.

CARA: *Enters speaking on her mobile phone.* It's an everyday miracle! I needed a new pair of boots and you know the doctor says I can't drive; so I prayed I'd find them at the mall the bus stops at. Viola! I found the perfect ones in my exact size and on sale! I know, just like He clothes the wild flowers Talk soon, bye. *Puts phone in her bag.*

While Cara is talking Leslie is mimicking her and rolling her eyes.

LESLIE: *Muttering to herself,* Huh! Typical.

CARA: Oh, excuse me, did you say something?

LESLIE: No.

CARA: Sorry, I must be hearing things.

LESLIE: *Muttering under her breath again,* You can say that again. *Circles her finger around in the 'crazy' gesture.*

CARA: Hello, I'm Cara, I thought I'd introduce myself so you can talk directly to me instead of about me, to yourself.

LESLIE: Whoa, lady-

CARA: Cara. *Extends her hand.* You are?

LESLIE: *Stares at hand then reluctantly shakes it, then crosses her arms.* Leslie.

CARA: Have I said or done something to offend you, Leslie?

LESLIE: No, it's just your delusional fantasy of a God who cares about the meaningless details of your wardrobe; when people are homeless and dying of starvation. THAT offends me.

CARA: It's not a fantasy, God is a loving Father who promises to take care of His kids if we put Him first in all things, even our wardrobe. Leslie, are you talking about yourself? Are you homeless?

LESLIE: Wow, ever heard of small talk? Yes, I'm temporarily residentially challenged.

CARA: You started it, hon. We don't have much time before the bus but I believe God meant for us to meet. He wants to show His provision for you right now.

LESLIE: Back to delusional. *Gestures 'she's cuckoo' with her finger.* Go ahead, enlighten me how God would provide for an ex-druggie who's lost her home and family and is waiting for the bus to take her to a supervised visit with her children?

CARA: By sending someone like me; forced to rely on the bus due to Epilepsy, without which we never would have met at this exact moment.

LESLIE: What's so special about this moment?

CARA: Your bare feet. *She hands her the shopping bag with her boots inside and puts her hand up to signal the bus while walking off stage then stops.* I think you'll find they're exactly the right fit.

Leslie is left stunned until she stops and tries on the shoes then looks heavenward, shakes her head and smiles.

LESLIE: Okay God, you have my attention.

Judge's Comments

The layout of this drama was excellent throughout. The introductory paragraph was not necessary as the comments in the 'description' paragraph explained the background well. I was confused about the meaning of 'hon' used in Cara's eighth speech. Was it short for 'honey'?

or 'honestly'? When entering the competitions please make sure you use the font New Times Roman as this saves extra editing.

I was pleased with the way the characters were portrayed—two very different people with very different life values—and the twist at the end of the story was wonderful. God's love was clearly shown. However, I am not sure Leslie would have responded as in her final speech. A comment such as 'Whoa! Sounds like there could be a God after all' sounds more in keeping with her character.

Second Place



**Deborah
McDermott**
of Waiuku

Room for One More

Principle Characters:

Kate – a casually dressed young woman.
Gertie – a shabby old woman.

Extras:

Lisa – a funky teenage girl with a large handbag.
Paul – a business man with a briefcase and newspaper.

Props:

A four-seater bench – centre stage.
A bus stop sign behind the bench.
A rubbish bin between the bench and stage left.

The sketch:

The scene opens with Kate seated at one end of the bench (stage right). Lisa is seated next to Kate, filing her nails. The large bag is on her lap. The briefcase is on the bench between Lisa and Paul, who is reading the newspaper.

Gertie enters from stage left, digs in the rubbish bin for several seconds, then slowly shuffles to the bench. Paul rolls his eyes and Lisa wrinkles her nose, but Kate looks concerned. Gertie clears her throat and politely addresses Paul.

Gertie: Please can you move your briefcase so I can sit down?

Paul ignores her and raises his newspaper so the audience cannot see his face. Lisa also ignores Gertie and begins scratching around in her bag for some gum. Kate stands up.

Kate: You can have my seat if you like.

Gertie: I couldn't do that. Where will you sit?

Kate: Don't worry about me. You need to sit more than I do and the bus will soon be here anyway.

Gertie looks relieved as she sits down.

Gertie: I wish everyone was so thoughtful, dear.

Lisa pulls a face and inches away from Gertie until she is pressed up against the briefcase. This upsets Kate but Gertie shrugs it off with a smile.

Gertie: This world is not kind to old, homeless people like me.

Kate sits on the floor (sideways to the audience) and looks up at Gertie.

Kate: I know what you mean.

Gertie (*chuckling*): I don't think you do. You're young, clean, well-dressed—nothing like me at all.

Kate: But I do know what you mean. I may look good now, but I once was so low I wanted to die.

Intrigued, Lisa stops chewing and Paul stops reading to listen.

Gertie (*showing concern*): Oh, my dear! What did you do to put things right?

Kate (*enthusiastically*): It's not what I did. It's what God did for me.

Gertie: God?

Kate: Yes, God. I desperately needed help but was too ashamed to ask for it at first. When I finally did, a mate suggested I see a Christian counsellor.

Gertie: Really? I'm not sure I would have. I don't like people delving into my private life.

Kate: Neither do I, but I was desperate and not knowing the counsellor made it easier. After I'd poured my heart out to him, he told me about the new life Jesus Christ could give me. I found myself wanting to know more, so went to church. During the service, God showed me how much he loves and values me. That revelation changed me. It wasn't easy getting my life back on track, but God showed me how. He also gave me new friends to help me become who I am today.

Gertie (*showing real interest*): God, hey? Friends of mine are just as enthusiastic about religion as you are, but it doesn't seem right to turn to God after ignoring him for so long.

Kate: Perhaps, but real Christianity isn't about religion. It's about a loving God who wants to help us live fulfilled lives.

Gertie: Now that's something I'd like to know more about. But here comes the bus. How far are you going?

Kate: Newmarket.

Gertie: Good! That means we have another twenty minutes to chat. I'm Gertie, by the way.

Kate (*shaking Gertie's hand*): Hi, Gertie. I'm Kate.

As the four stand up, Lisa taps Kate on the shoulder.

Lisa (*awkwardly*): Um, can I also sit with you on the bus? I heard what you said about God and... Well, my life is crazy mixed up and I need help like you did."

Kate (*beaming*): Of course you can! God made room for me. He can make room for you too.

Judge's Comments

Again the drama is well set out. A large number of stage directions are included but most do add to the mood of the drama.

Kate's eighth speech was too long for this type of drama and both the eighth and ninth speeches became theological and preachy. 'Revelation' and 'fulfilled lives' are not used in everyday speech in the same way among non-Christian circles, for example.

I enjoyed the unexpected ending when Lisa, the funky teenage girl, shows interest in Kate's faith.

Commendations to

Lois Farrow

and

Julia Martin

for achieving 3rd Place Equal.

Unfortunately, their entries cannot be published due to space limitations in the magazine.

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?

That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"

...So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

— Romans 10:13-15, 17 (NLT)



Notice Board

NZ Writers College 2014 Short Story Competition

Competition entrants must submit their 2000-word stories based on a theme that draws from a line written by Charles Dickens: '... it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.'

Entries must display originality, authenticity, unpretentious writing, believable characters and that hint of bitter-sweetness that runs through all our lives.

First Prize: \$1,000
plus publication in an anthology of stories

Second Prize: \$500
plus publication in an anthology of stories

People's Choice Award: \$500

DEADLINE

Submit entries to Nichola Meyer at nichola@nzwriterscollege.co.nz by midnight 30 September 2014.

For full competition details, go to www.nzwriterscollege.co.nz



NZSA Janet Frame Memorial Award For Literature

Biennial grant of \$3,000

offered to authors of literary or imaginative fiction or poetry, who are members of the New Zealand Society of Authors (NZSA). The purpose of the award is to support a mid-career or established writer to further a literary career.

Deadline: 31 October 2014

For further information go to <http://www.authors.org.nz/wa.asp?idWebPage=38553&idDetails=185>

Christian writers look into this

Have you ever lost your reading or computer glasses? I have. Thankfully comprehensive insurance replaced mine at no charge. This would've otherwise cost around \$800
—Frederick Swallow



Taumarunui Writers' Group Heartland 1000 Short Story Competition

Entries are now open for the Taumarunui Writers' Group Heartland 1000 short story competition (up to 1000 words.).

Prize – \$500

Award-winning novelist William Taylor will judge the entries.

Closing date
September 30th

To get an entry form and details on conditions of entry, either

email:

*dickwendy@clear.net.nz or
helenbarryx@xtra.net.nz*

or send your enquiry by post to:

*Heartland 1000, 9 South St, Taumarunui 3920.
(Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your letter.)*



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Competitions for October 2014

Due September 10th

EMAIL YOUR ENTRY AS AN ATTACHMENT, COMPLETE WITH WORD COUNT AND YOUR NAME.

Font: Times New Roman, 11 points. Line spacing: single

Spaces between Paragraphs: 6 points Paragraph Indentation: None

Please send a high resolution photo of yourself in the event you are awarded a place.

Level One—no age restrictions

Open to beginner writers or new members

REQUIREMENT: NATURE: Excluding poetry, you may write about any aspect of this topic in your preferred genre (i.e. a devotional, or a creative fictional story, etc). 500 words maximum, 300 words minimum.

Email entry to: Debbie McDermott at : sddp@xtra.co.nz



*Debbie
McDermott*

Level Two—no age restrictions

Only members promoted from Level One are eligible to enter

REQUIREMENT: Write a story in exactly 125 words, excluding your title, using all of the following eight words anywhere in the story, but once only. (They may be used in singular or plural form). Give it a surprise ending. Handbag. Lemon. Cat. Glove. Bee. Clock. Photograph. Barometer.

Email entry to: Jan Pendergrast at : jan@roads-end.co.nz



*Jan
Pendergrast*

Level Three—no age restrictions

Only members promoted from Level Two are eligible to enter

REQUIREMENT: DEVOTIONAL— Pain, grief, and disappointment are part of most people's life. Prepare a devotional to help people cope with such situations. Finish the devotion with four lines of poetry, preferably original. Don't forget to give credit to the writer if using someone else's poem. (See Julie Belding's article, Let's Write a Devotional, in *The Christian Writer* Oct – Nov 2012 for tips.) Maximum 300 words.

Email entry to: Ruth Linton at : noru@woosh.co.nz



*Ruth
Linton*

Under 30s—11-30 year age group

All members within this age group are eligible to enter, provided they do not enter at another level in the same month

REQUIREMENT: Bad guys / girls of the Bible. Pick one and tell their side of the story. 500 words.. Include your age with your entry.

Email entry to: Vicki Nogaj at : nogaj@vodafone.co.nz



*Vicki
Nogaj*