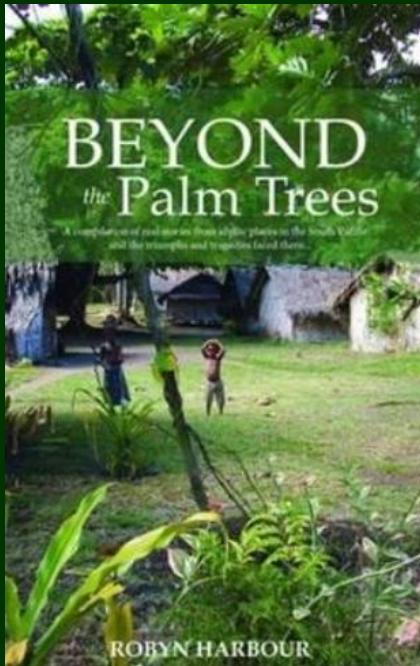


THE CHRISTIAN WRITER

NZ CHRISTIAN
writers

August – September 2015



Supporting
Members' Writings

**BEYOND
the Palm Trees**

By Robyn Harbour

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)

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Membership, Subscriptions and Address Changes:

Jan Pendergrast (email: jan@roads-end.co.nz)

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

Website:

Our vibrant, user-friendly website is full of interesting information, such as details of workshops and copies of past magazines. It also gives each individual member an online presence. So please encourage other Christian Writers you know to join us via our website.

The link is as follows:

www.nzchristianwriters.org

From the President

Greetings to you all as Spring is rapidly approaching. I do hope you haven't frozen this winter. Recently we were staying in the Waikato region where some of the frosts were quite severe. It seemed a good time to stay indoors and hone my writing skills.

We were sad to hear of the passing of Erling Jensen. Our sympathy goes to his wife, Glenice. Mike and I attended his funeral service at Ranui Baptist Church and what a victorious service it was. How wonderful to know that our loved ones who knew the Lord are with Him and that we will soon meet them again.

Do remember the Spring Seminar to be held at Ross Grove Chapel on 19th September. Our AGM will also be held on this day. Speakers for the seminar are Jeanette Knudson and Richard Waugh. (See advert on page 5 for more details.) If you have any items for the trading table Beth would appreciate them.

As you no doubt have heard many times, it is so important to read and re-read what you write. I have also discovered this can be very important if you use predictive texting. I was surprised when I received a text asking what smart mutton was. I had meant roast mutton. More recently Jan suggested I re-read the text I sent to her. It said 'Julie did not know until I sinned.' It should have read 'until I phoned'.

I attended our church conference today. The speaker's topic was 'Weathering the Storms of Life'. I'd like to quote the verses he read from Isaiah 41:9a and 10. 'I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you... So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'

May you rest in this knowledge today.

Janet Fleming



Mike and Janet Fleming with one of their grandies



Spring Seminar

19th September 2015

from 9:30am – 4:00pm

Rossgrove Chapel, Rossgrove Terrace
Mount Albert, Auckland



Morning Speaker: Jeanette Knudsen

Former secondary school English teacher, Jeanette worked in Promotions at Bethlehem College from 1990 to 2010 and is now a director of DayStar Books. She co-authored her first book, *Fire at the Mount*, with Beverley Coad in 2010, and published her second book *Great Futures: 25 Years of Christian Education in Bethlehem* in 2013. Jeanette's topic will be:

Creating Your Own Travel Blog:

principles of good travel writing that can also be applied to other genres.

Afternoon Speaker: Rev Dr Richard Waugh

National Superintendent of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in NZ, Rev Dr Waugh is a well-known evangelical church leader who is always keen to promote unity across the whole church. An historian, Richard has written and published extensively on New Zealand transport (aviation), church, and social history topics. He is currently working on three diverse book projects; *Wesleyan Theology*, *Jaguar Cars*, and *Nelson in the 1970s*. His topic will be



Research, Photos & Events— bringing history alive!

NB: There will also be a Trading Table and Book Fair at the Seminar.
Bring your cheque book or some cash as no Eftpos is available.

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

Horoeka Heritage Holiday Part Two

By Jan Pendergrast

I had forgotten about the Horoeka winds where the trees lean over and grow on one side only. The branches just wrap around the tree! We returned from our walk to find a mighty gust of wind had wrapped our awning over the top of the bus. The children ate lunch and played patiently while Hans and I spent almost two hours untangling the warped mess.

We spent the afternoon exploring the native reserve where my grandfather remembered seeing Huia during the early twentieth century. I wanted to find the raupo swamp which was so huge when I was little. When I found it, the not-so-interested children just wanted to move on! I remembered carving my name in a big totara tree in the sixties, but we couldn't find the right tree among the many giants there. Or maybe it had grown over!



At the foot of a giant totara tree

We were around the river bend in the silence away from the falls' roar when we heard a deer disappear across the muddy water into the forest opposite. The children became anxious that 'we might get lost' so left arrow signs made of sticks on the

ground and markers on the trees so we could find our way back.

Before dinner Hans and the boys set some eel lines in the murky water. I didn't like their chances although I know there are some eels of serious size in the river.

We made good use of the solid, wind-resistant picnic shelter for our meals. This was our night of no phone reception or electricity. Instead of a movie before bed, I read the children *Harry and the Red Poppy*, a picture book story of an ANZAC soldier in WW1.

ANZAC Day dawned warm, windy and sunny. Another visit to the bottom of the falls was imperative; just to sit, listen, feel and enjoy—and check the eel lines. No eels. Lyndon and Tyler tried throwing rocks at the cascading water, but the wind was strong enough to flip them out with the spray. Breahn carved our names, with the date, into a drift log for posterity—or as long as the log lasts.

Our trip to Akitio via Pongaroa was punctuated with the kids crying, "Scary bridge, scary bridge!" a game inspired by their noticing out the car window how high the homestead bridge was over the deep Waihi River—but that's a story to be left for the separate telling.

Pongaroa on ANZAC Day was full of country cars and 4WDs; the people of the large district were attending the ANZAC service at the cenotaph. Although a bracing wind was whistling down the wide street, we could hear the speaker reading a letter written home by a soldier—her grandfather—who died in hospital before his planned return home; the same scenario as the story I had read the children the night before.

An hour later we were at Akitio Beach, the beach I visited often as a child. Once again, the children disappeared to enjoy the sand and waves. Ignoring my warnings about it being too cold to swim, they challenged the waves and were tumbled—fully clothed! Nothing a hot shower couldn't solve.

Akitio is a wonderfully wild, rugged and windy place, popular with fisherman. My memories are of family picnics, swimming, games, and in my teenage years, dances in the old landing shed which has long gone. I was able to point out the three remaining poles of the old jetty from which the coastal ships were loaded with wool bales from the sheep stations for Napier.

We left Akitio later than planned on Day Five. It wasn't just the children who didn't want to leave. Besides my meeting a primary school classmate on the beach (he recognised me!) who caught me up on fifty years of news, the beach has an atmosphere I've not experienced at others around New Zealand.

After purchasing a fish and chip lunch at the historic Wimbledon Pub and eating it at **Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotama teaturipukakapikimaungahoronukupok aiwhenuakitanatahu**, we arrived at the National Aquarium in Napier in time to spend two hours enjoying the marine life.

We returned to Snapper for our last night. It rained again! The children disappeared to the beach—again.

We delivered four tired children home at the end of Day Six. In three years' time we plan to repeat the journey with the next three grandchildren, and in another two years, the last three.

What a precious time we had.

Write a Book Review

By Rodman Philbrick

1. Before you begin writing, make a few notes about the points you want to get across.
2. While you're writing, try thinking of your reader as a friend to whom you're telling a story.
3. Try to mention the name of the author and the book title in the first paragraph—there's nothing more frustrating than reading a review of a great book but not knowing who wrote it and what the title is!
4. If possible, use one paragraph for each point you want to make about the book. It's a good way to emphasise the importance of the point. You might want to list the main points in your notes before you begin.
5. Try to get the main theme of the book across in the beginning of your review. Your reader should know right away what he or she is getting into should they choose to read the book!
6. Think about whether the book is part of a genre. Does the book fit into a type like mystery, adventure, or romance? What aspects of the genre does it use?
7. What do you like or dislike about the book's writing style? Is it funny? Does it give you a sense of the place it's set? What is the author's/narrator's 'voice' like?
8. Try using a few short quotes from the book to illustrate your points. This is not absolutely necessary, but it's a

- good way to give your reader a sense of the author's writing style.
9. Make sure your review explains how you feel about the book and why, not just what the book is about. A good review should express the reviewer's opinion and persuade the reader to share it, to read the book, or to avoid reading it.
 10. Do research about the author and incorporate what you learn into the review. Biographical information can help you formulate your opinion about the book, and gives your review a 'depth'. Remember, a book doesn't come directly from a printing press; it's a product of an author's mind, and therefore it may be helpful to know something about the author and how she or he came to write the book. For instance, a little research will reveal the following about author Harper Lee:
 - *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which won the Pulitzer Prize, is the only book she's ever published.
 - The town she called Maycomb is really Monroeville, Alabama. Many of the residents thought the author had betrayed them by writing the book.
 - Some people think she based the character Dill on Truman Capote, a famous writer who was her childhood friend.
- **Describe the setting of the book.** How does it compare or contrast to the world you know? A book's setting is one of its most vital components—particularly for a book like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which is set in the past. Does the author make you feel like you're a part of the setting? Can you picture the book's setting if you close your eyes? As you write, try to pass on to your reader the sense of the setting and place that the author has provided.
- **Describe the book's main characters.** Does the writer make you believe in them as people? Why or why not? Think about whether you like the characters and about how liking them or disliking them makes you feel about the book. As you write about the characters, use examples of things they've said or done to give a sense of their personalities.
- **Give your reader a taste of the plot, but don't give the surprises away.** Readers want to know enough about what happens in a book to know whether they'll find it interesting. But they never want to know the ending! Summarise the plot in a way that will answer some questions about the book, but leave other questions in the reader's mind. You may want to make a list of questions about the book before you begin.

Every book review is different, but each successful review includes a couple of key elements. As you think about what you want to say in your review, complete these challenges. They're designed to help you work on telling your reader what's most important.

Once you're done with the challenges, you're ready to write a first draft of your review! Take these elements and weave them together into a complete review.

For further writing tips, go to the Writing With Writers website

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/index.htm>

Memories of Erling Jensen

By Debbie McDermott



Erling Jensen was not only a fine writer, playwright, poet and linguist, he was also passionate about coming alongside others as a mentor and a friend. I know because that's just what he did for me at NZ Christian Writers 25th Anniversary Retreat and ensuing workshop, held in 2008 at Willow Park, Eastern Beach, Auckland.

As a workshop delegate, I had the opportunity of bringing the first 15 pages of my completed manuscript for assessment. Erling immediately took an interest and gave me good advice. Shortly afterwards, he provided me with some professional tutoring. This resulted in me rewriting much of my manuscript and submitting it for publishing a year later. To my surprise, *Voyage of the Redeemed* received a first acceptance from Melrose Books, and this is all thanks to Erling's valuable input and mentoring.

But Erling was more than just my mentor. He and his lovely wife Glenice have been wonderful friends to me and such an example of the love of Christ in action. Sadly for Glenice and those of us still here, Erling passed away suddenly on 23rd June 2015. He will be sadly missed by many, but what joy to know he awaits us in heaven.

Warm Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Anna Chambers
Hillsborough, Auckland

Emily Cooper
Balmoral, Auckland

Lisa Ligget
Te Kopuru, Northland

Pamela Lowrey
Havelock North

Pauline Marshall
Darlington, Christchurch

Yvonne Mossom
Whangarei

Kathryn Owler
Papatoetoe, Auckland

Looking for Professional Editing/Writing Services?

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Janette Busch
E: WritingAnswers1@gmail.com
Mob: +64 21 233 7691

Marie Anticich
E: marieanticich@gmail.com

Sue Beguely
E: sue@triplecoilscript.co.nz
Mob: +64 27 533 0188

Selina Chan
E: selina_chan@hotmail.com
Mob: +64 21 104 3686

Guidelines for Taking Photos to Accompany your Written Articles

By Janice Gillgren

Most articles, whether written for online or printed media, benefit from including photographs as well.

Even if you are not a professional photographer, you should still be able to take photos to accompany most articles, and most editors will be happy to use them if they are of suitable quality and resolution.

This is particularly the case for articles about people or subjects who aren't famous (so therefore are very unlikely to have publicly accessible images of them), and are situated a long distance from the publishers' or photographer's office.

A digital camera is much easier for this purpose, as there is no need to wait for development of film, and sending digital images is simple.

If you are taking photos for an online article, a low resolution is nearly always best. However, if there's a chance that the photo might be useful offline too, taking it in higher resolution would still be a smart idea.

Printed media can require quite a high resolution, depending on the glossiness and size of the images being printed. The better the quality of photographs required, the more likely it is that the publishers will want to use their own photographers. However, I have found that editors are always happy to at least consider any photos I can send them.

Here are some important guidelines to follow if you are going to take your own photographs.

Quality:

- Research copies of the publication you intend to write for, and check the quality of the photographs used. If you are able to offer photographs, be honest about what you expect to be able to provide and / or ask what resolution is required.
- Set your camera resolution to the highest it can take, even if it is higher than required. Remember that you can easily reduce the resolution of an image, but increasing it (even with computer programs that claim to do so) is much less successful. A higher resolution also means cropped images should still be useable.
- If your camera takes RAW versions of the images, use that facility. Even if you don't have a program such as Photoshop, your editor will, so pictures may be improved if necessary.
- Revise your camera's lighting and focus instructions if you need to, as these two aspects are crucial.
- If you are photographing people, try to get them in a complimentary light, and beware of strong sun and the shadows it can create. Objects need well-diffused and clear (but not overpowering) light, in order to show the best detail.
- Check your images on your camera screen for things like trees or power poles appearing to sprout out of people's heads, and retake photos if necessary.

- Take plenty of pictures—certainly far more than you will actually need—so you have plenty to choose from when sending a selection to the editor.

Style:

- Study the style of photographs in the publication. Are people viewed up close? Are they always busy doing something? Are objects shown in great detail (particularly for DIY topics)? What are the backgrounds or landscapes like? Even the photos used in adverts can give you some information about what the editor likes.
- Take note of any particular requests given by the editor.
- Send a selection of images of similar styles to what you see in the publication.
- Choose only the best to send to your editor. Avoid sending photos that are so similar to each other that they are nearly duplicates.
- You can crop your photos first, but editors usually prefer to make other changes themselves.

One last point: I have found that most editors appreciate being sent a selection of photos in low resolution first. This means they only need to be sent high resolution copies of the images they choose.

Alternatively, the editor may like to receive them by mail on a disk or zip drive.

Suitable photographs will add value to your written articles. It is therefore worth learning how to take them well.

Tips on Writing a Good Feature for Magazines

The process of writing a feature article for a magazine is not much different from writing an article for a newspaper or newsletter. One of the main differences however, is that a feature article is designed to be written in a way that the information is not time-based, but is timeless. The key to writing a good feature article is to select the proper venue for your article and then to write the article directed at that audience.

A feature article typically delves deeper into a story than a regular article. More than mere facts are presented and the creative writer finds other points of interest and information about the story. Feature articles sometimes even allow the writer to express personal thoughts and opinions on the topic.

Organisation of the Story

A feature article takes a specific format and outline. There will always be a title, introduction, body of the story and a conclusion. This format is different from a general article. The title of the article should grab the reader's attention quickly to keep them reading. It should highlight the general topic of the story.

The introduction of the story is contained in the first few paragraphs of the article. It should provide any background information relevant to the story and should create a relationship between the writer and the reader. The tone of the article will be set in the introduction.

The body of the feature should be broken into pieces with subheadings for easy organisation. This section has most of the details of the story. It includes

names, places, times and quotes from those interviewed. The opinions of the writer, those at the location of the story and from experts involved in the topic are presented in the body of the article. Any pictures that illustrate the story and diagrams or charts would also be included at this point.

The conclusion should leave a lasting impression on the reader and provoke some sort of reaction. The conclusion should prompt action on the part of the reader and encourage a change of opinion on the part of the reader or encourage the reader to make a decision.

How to Write a Good Feature

The leeway an author is given in the style of a feature article is much greater than in other types of writing.

- You have the ability to use colloquialisms, first person narrative and a conversational tone in your article.
- You are free to throw in a few rhetorical questions if it emphasises your point.

Avail yourself of the added freedom to write a feature that you would want to read if you were on the other side of the print.

Remember to include all the facts and to comment on the location of the story. It is always preferable to bring in such facts to support your viewpoint. These extra facts will add force to your story. Sprinkle in relevant jargon to add authenticity to the information that you are sharing and to the opinions of those interviewed. To enhance the relationship with your audience, make use of creative descriptions that will draw on the reader's imagination.

- The imagery that you create in the telling of the story captivates the reader and keeps them with you until the end.
- The use of quotes from people involved makes your story more personal and generates emotion in the reader.

While these are not the only tips on writing a good feature for magazines, they will carry your writing a long way towards landing a feature article.

With acknowledgements to Your Dictionary Website.

<http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/grammar-rules-and-tips/tips-on-writing-a-good-feature-for-magazines.html>

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business account.)*

Puzzle Page #3

P	U	N	C	T	U	A	T	I	O	N	P	C	A	E
A	A	P	O	S	T	R	O	P	H	E	O	N	Q	V
R	P	R	N	S	I	S	P	I	L	L	E	U	D	I
T	H	E	A	O	E	S	H	H	C	O	L	O	N	T
S	S	D	R	G	T	E	N	S	E	O	L	N	U	C
O	C	I	Q	I	R	T	F	A	A	C	L	O	R	E
F	I	C	M	B	O	A	A	P	D	D	J	R	E	J
S	L	A	M	R	L	D	P	M	U	V	M	P	G	D
P	A	T	C	E	J	B	O	H	A	N	E	E	S	A
E	T	E	N	V	E	R	B	A	L	L	C	R	U	Q
E	I	Y	P	U	Y	V	S	P	E	E	C	H	B	I
C	O	M	M	A	O	R	E	P	O	R	P	E	J	E
H	Y	P	H	E	N	N	O	L	O	C	I	M	E	S
E	V	I	T	C	A	D	A	B	S	T	R	A	C	T
V	K	R	A	M	N	O	I	T	S	E	U	Q	T	K

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Fit to Print. A Writing and Editing Style Guide for Aotearoa New Zealand. Janet Hughes and Derek Wallace. Dummore Publishing 2010

Powerful Punctuation: Researched and collated by Jan Pendergrast for the NZ Christian Writers Guild 2007

PUNCTUATION AND PARTS OF SPEECH are a fascinating—and sometimes tricky—part of writing. Below are clues for words describing parts of speech and the principal usage of common punctuation. All answers are in the FIND-A-WORD above.

1. The voice used when the subject performs the action.
2. Specific nouns requiring capitalisation.
3. Set of three dots indicating omission of words, interruption or tailing off of an idea.
4. Secondary noun in a sentence.
5. Shows that something has been asked.
6. Allows a short breather in a sentence; separates items in a list.
7. Word expressing an action or state of being.
8. An article.
9. Infinite verb which does not change form when used in different tenses.
10. Indicates the time the narrative occurs.
11. Font used for thoughts, names of famous books, films etc.
12. Sentence or group of sentences on the same topic.
13. Used between parts of a word or between many compound words.
14. Another name for a full stop.
15. Used to indicate a break between a complete clause and a related clause.
16. Verb ending with -ing that is used as a noun.
17. Used in place of a previously named noun.
18. Can be used to mark parenthesis. Enclosed information is emphasised.
19. Example of a conjunction.
20. Marks used to show something is being spoken.
21. Noun describing an intangible concept such as kindness.
22. Indicates possession or missing letters.
23. Main verb or verb part of a sentence.
24. Main noun in a sentence.
25. Naming word.
26. Describes or modifies a noun.
27. Describes or modifies a verb.
28. Used to indicate what follows explains, illuminates or lists. May indicate a break before a main clause which could stand alone.

ANSWERS can be found on page 31

Winter Retreat

By Belinda McCallion

Linda and Heather

We full of expectation, came to the planned retreat
We all were looking forward old and new friends to meet.
From different roads and journeys our paths would now collide
A fresh inspiring weekend our Father would provide



We shared our weekend goals; there was a common thread—
Most wanted to seek first the things that God had said
The sparks of inspiration, as many of us found,
Were views from up this mountain with bushland all around.
Some hands that had been dormant again began to write—
Some heads were looking forward to a quiet and restful night!

The Ruths finding words

The hospitality was grand from dearest Hans and Jan
So when things did not go according to the plan
Hans worked with all his might to make the water go;
When finally successful he surfaced, face aglow.



Justin came from Auckland, to join in all the fun
His well-presented pointers showed how marketing was done.
To make your writing known there's things that you
should heed—
We may not do it all, but he surely planted seed.
He then went into town, wife Sara by his side,
To see some local beauty that Auckland can't provide. ☺

Mealtime again

With solitude now over, came time for word-game fun
And fancy that! Oh what a shock to hear Ruth Linton won!
When Sunday morning came glad praise was in the air
And freely we acknowledged our Father God in prayer.
Some words of wisdom given, then we were all dismissed:
“Oh, no!” we said, “We cannot go, as lunch is on the list!”



The food was like a banquet at every single meal;
With many hands-a-helping it was no big ordeal.
Then several lingered on into the shades of night
Not wanting to disrupt the flow of what they had to write.

*Sara-Marie, Heather
and Justin*

If you are feeling doubtful, you may surprise yourself
By picking up that manuscript forgotten on the shelf—
You may become inspired to work on it again.
Come to the next retreat, and don't forget your pen.



W R I T I N G B R I E F S

Inspiring Christian writing of today and yesteryear—by Frederick Swallow

The Ship of Fame

What ship is this you're sailing on
This wondrous Ship of Fame?
The ship is called the *Church of God*
And Christ's the Captain's name.

Do you not fear the stormy seas
Your barque may overwhelm?
You need not fear the Lord is near
And Christ is at the helm.

(Two verses. Google full hymn)



Pitcairn Islanders heading to a ship

When attending a service and sing along at Norfolk Island's All Saints Anglican Church, built in 1835, we learnt that 'The Ship of Fame' chant in their attractive hymn book was penned in the 1800s by George Nobbs, Chaplain of Pitcairn and Norfolk, and Driver Christian, Headmaster of Norfolk. The chant was based on early sailing ships calling at South Sea Islands to replenish water and fresh food, and the islanders asking the captain's name, ship and where bound.

In the 1930s when the *Rangitoto* called briefly at Picairn on a New Zealand to England voyage, Pitcairners climbed aboard from their longboats to sell Pitcairn souvenirs. Before sailing time they returned to the longboats to sing as a farewell the hymn 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye' as the ship moved slowly away.

Today the singing takes place on board cruise liners before the Islanders leave the ship, so more people can hear than from the motorboats alongside the ship. On February 16, 2014, Cunard's *Queen Victoria* called at Pitcairn. One passenger said his visit and the singing was "Magical".

Bibliography: Google; The Pitcairners by Robert Nicolson: F Swallow Norfolk Island visit.

Library Corner

Book Review

By Debbie McDermott



BEYOND the Palm Trees

By Robyn Harbour

Beyond the Palm Trees is a compilation of 36 true stories telling of the challenges, triumphs and tragedies people living in the South Pacific Islands face on a day to day basis. While the location of each story may seem idyllic to the tourist, it is truly ‘beyond the palm trees’ that Robyn brings the reader face to face with the culture of the Island peoples and how hardship for most of them is a way of life. One cannot help but be moved by the struggles the characters in each story have to deal with, yet they do it with an admirable resilience, strength—and in many cases—a genuine faith in God who they call ‘Papa on top long Heaven’.

I particularly enjoyed the way Robyn used Pidgin English to express the Islanders’ thoughts and way of speaking. It somehow brought the culture of the people to life.

Although *Beyond the Palm Trees* is not overtly Christian in content, several of the characters are involved in church and the early missionaries are mentioned as well. The difference between right and wrong living is also regularly woven into the stories, as is the clash between the old ways and the new.

In conclusion, *Beyond the Palm Trees* is a book worth getting, particularly if God is calling you to be a missionary to the Islands. NB: Robyn and her husband Russell served as missionaries in Vanuatu, so reaching the Islanders with the gospel is very dear to her.

To get your own copy, visit
www.arkhousepress.com

Additions to the Library

Many thanks to the following members for donating copies of their recently published books:

Making a Real Difference

Christian Movers and Shakers

George Bryant

The Love of the Father

Carole Soole

The Way I See It

Rod Hickman

NZCW Writers’ Groups

AUCKLAND – WEST

Hosted by Dianne Spain

Tel: (09) 626 3141

dispain54@gmail.com

CHRISTCHURCH

Dave Palmer

Mob: (027) 216 5743

davepalmer@xtra.co.nz

HAMILTON

Eion Field

Tel: (07) 856 6518

eionfield@gmail.com

HAURAKI

John Milne

Tel: (07) 862 6861

johnrmilne38@gmail.com

NORTHLAND

Janice Gillgren

Tel: (09) 433 9752

jangill1359@gmail.com

TAURANGA

Jan Pendergrast

Tel: (07) 543 2147

jan@roads-end.co.nz

Competition Results

Under 20s

Judge:
Vicki Nogaj

Requirement: You're a reporter and you just saw Jill push Jack down the hill. What happens to Jill? Write the resulting article. 200-250 words (standard press article).

General Comments

I was intrigued at the in-depth storylines and characters in the entries on Jill's Incident. I was interested that some of the entrants took the nursery rhyme world and converted it to the adult world with adult consequences. This was very creative but I enjoyed the ones which kept a bit of the children's perspective in their entries and light humour. I was focusing specifically on those who told me the consequences of Jill's actions post-pushing in answer to the competition question.

First Place



**Bonnie
Smithies**
of Christchurch
(16 years old)

Two Children Injured on Steep Hill

By Mary Muffet

A daily chore ended in injury when Jill Smith pushed Jack Smith down Steep Hill on Friday at 4pm. Jill, aged 8, and Jack, her older brother by two years, had climbed the hill in order to fetch water for their large family. On the crest of the hill a dispute arose between the two of

them, which ended in Jill shoving her brother down the hill. As Jack tumbled down, Jill lost her footing and also fell.

Jack was fortunately mostly unhurt, apart from a paper crown that he wore on his head being crumpled and broken. Jill was not so lucky. As she tumbled, she injured her wrist, breaking it in six places. She has received the appropriate medical attention from Doctor Foster (who unfortunately drowned several hours afterward in a terrible flood near Gloucester) and is now well on the road to recovery.

"Jill's father and I have talked to Jill and we can assure you that she has learnt her lesson. She will not be pushing her siblings or anyone else down the hill in future", said the children's mother, Janfrey Smith. "She will also be gathering all the family's water from now on."

Jack said that he couldn't understand why Jill pushed him down the hill, and that she is normally the sweetest sister imaginable.

Judge's Comments

This entry was my favourite as it was simple yet entertaining and I enjoyed the nursery rhyme theme being kept throughout with the mention of poor Doctor Foster. It included consequences for Jill and was generally well written in report format and nicely presented. I don't have any major critique for this one. Well done Bonnie!



Second Place



**Danella
Smithies**
of Christchurch
(15 years old)

Celebrity Causing Trouble Again

Celebrity Gillian Winslet (commonly known as Jill) has been causing trouble again. On Thursday she was seen pushing rival celebrity Jack Hewton down a hill in Hewton's estate.

The incident happened after Hewton received a contract with 'CHARACTERS' magazine ahead of Winslet. It appears that Winslet had been searching for a way to get back at Hewton and saw her opportunity for revenge when he was out in his garden. Winslet was caught in the act so when she attempted to escape to town she was met by the police.

Winslet is currently residing in a secure facility until further notice. She will appear before the courts this week. The punishment is likely to be quite severe due to her history of trouble making. Winslet's previous offences include pushing another rival, Dumpty McVean (known as Humpty Dumpty) off a wall last week which ended up with McVean in hospital where he remains in a serious condition.

An insider reveals that Winslet has quite a temper. "I am always telling her to get her act together and practice self control but she never listens. After the last incident I told her that the penalty would be worse if there was a next time but she ignored it."

-Reported by eye witness Howard O'Callin

Judge's Comments

This is written as a report but the style is more informal than expected. Unfortunately the wrong sized font was also used. Entries are to be in 11 point Times New Roman. There were very real consequences for Jill and the punishment did fit the crime.

The final sentence in the second paragraph would read better if there were commas after 'so' and 'town'.

In paragraph three the word 'quite' is not needed. It is used again in the next paragraph and could be deleted there too. The last sentence in paragraph three is too long and reads better '...Dumpty McVean (known as Humpty Dumpty) off a wall last week, hospitalising McVean. He remains in a serious condition.'

Nice work Danella. A unique twist on the traditional nursery rhyme

Third Place



**Georgia
Martin**
of Hamilton
(11 years old)

Jealous Jill Jostles Jack!

News came in this morning that Jack and Jill Jones had both tumbled down the hill on Big Hill Lane. Jinglepie Times reporter Georgia Martin was there as it happened and got a confession from Jill before her mother came and took her home.

Jill confessed that it happened like this; Jack had just been to a birthday party where he had won a plastic crown in the game of pin the crown on the King, and when he went home he had refused to take it off. The next morning Jack wore

his crown to do their chore of fetching a pail of water. So off they went skipping merrily, although in her heart Jill was not skipping merrily. She was jealous of Jack, after all he had a crown and she did not! By the time she and Jack got to the hill she had a plan. Jill told Jack that she would pull the heavy pail of water up from the well. Jack agreed and turned his back on her to count his Father's sheep. Jill put the bucket quietly down and then tiptoed towards the unfortunate crown. A naughty thought popped into her mind 'Push him down the hill'. Jill thought that was a splendid idea. With great force she shoved Jack down the hill before suddenly realising that Jack will tell mother! So Jill decided to make it all look like an accident and threw herself down the hill where she landed in a heap!

Judge's Comments

I liked this piece because the characters were believable, especially the sibling rivalry! In saying this, it needs a bit of work to make it more readable. Paragraphing is needed to separate each new point. A paragraph can be very short; one, two or three sentences even. For example I would make 'By the time she and Jack...' the beginning of a new paragraph. I challenge you to find the next one. There needed to be a short description of what happened to Jill after her fall down the hill to prove the consequences fitted her crime. However, overall, well done.

Level One

**Judge:
Debbie McDermott**

Requirement: A CAT'S POINT OF VIEW— Have you ever wondered why cats often treat their owners with just the slightest bit of disdain? Using your imagination, pretend you're one

of those snooty cats and write about what's going through your head as you turn your nose up at your master or mistress. 350 words.

General Comments

I was pleased to receive nine good entries to this competition. Sadly I could not accept two of them because one was from a person who has already progressed from Level One to Level Two, and the other was a second entry from one of the Level One entrants. Do note that the rules of the competitions (which are stipulated on the Competition Reference Sheet forwarded to members each year) state that only one entry per person is allowed. Not only does this make judging easier, it also gives all who choose to enter a fair shot at winning.

All entrants met the requirements of the competition very well by clearly portraying their cat's disdainful attitude and point of view. Two of the entries in particular were very humorous, which is what I was hoping for. The level of writing was also generally very good. In this regard, I especially congratulate Keith Willis for his excellent grammar and punctuation. He made no mistakes that I could see and I think this is a first since I've been judging Level One.

Once again, well done to all entrants. I look forward to receiving more entries from you.

First Place



**Keith
Willis**
of Kaukapakapa,
Auckland

Freedom

I feel rather sorry for the humans. They are always busy, rushing about doing things they don't seem to enjoy. No

freedom like I have. Freedom to do what I like when I like. My time is my own. I wonder why they don't follow my example and join me, snoozing in the sun.

I feel sorry for the dog too. How terrible not to be allowed out except when a human deigns to take you for a walk. Or not being fed when you are hungry and being shouted at when you complain. Or the ultimate horror of being shut in at night! Surprisingly the dog doesn't seem to mind. I guess it just confirms what an inferior creature he is! I used to be scared of him but now I rather despise him.

I have managed to train the humans to do a few useful things for me. It took me a while to teach them my language but now they know the basics like, 'open the door' and 'feed me'.

They seem to enjoy stroking me and tickling my tummy and I must admit I quite like that, so I encourage them by purring. But I mustn't allow too much of that sort of thing. Better to only jump onto a knee when I feel like it, and certainly not when they call me. They mustn't think they can take me for granted.

My coaching on the art of catching mice seems to be a waste of time. They are hopelessly inept. Every time I bring in a live one for them to practice on, they scream and scare it. They seem incapable of keeping quiet and stalking before pouncing.

I don't like them screaming, particularly screaming at me. I was really scared when they saw me drinking out of the milk jug. I had to hide up in the big oak tree, (they are hopeless at climbing), until they calmed down. I'm careful now to only help myself to milk when they aren't around.

Now, maybe I'll have another snooze before I go hunting.

Judge's Comments

Keith submitted a very good and exceptionally well written entry. There were no mistakes with his grammar or punctuation that I could see, and his sentence structure was excellent. His description of the independent behaviour of a typical cat is also very good. However, a little more emphasis on the snooty attitude of the cat would have made the piece even more humorous. Apart from this recommendation, this is a highly commendable piece of writing. Well done, Keith.

Second Place



**Laura
Martin**
of Hamilton

No Title

Bonjour Diary.

Common, I tell you! My poor Mistress, I don't know how she puts up with such behaviour apart from her own excellent breeding. To what do I refer? The dog! Old Aunt Daisy has departed this life and has left her common mutt to us. My sweet Mistress wept at the news, her tender heart indicative of her elegant disposition. The Master however, roared at the news, apparently delighted to have an animal in his home which does not think more highly of itself than it ought. I cannot pretend that I do not know what he means, but knowing that the Master comes from an undesirable part of town, I will excuse him. No, his poor breeding is not his fault at all.

But oh, the dog! He is shaggy, unkempt,

and his digestive system causes him to expel a foul odour at the most inopportune moments. The Mistress of course is appalled. The Master, very sadly, is amused. He says the household is finally reaching a masculine balance. I can only turn my well groomed face away from the lowering tone of our home.

But what would you make of this? The Master throws a ball of socks for the creature to chase. Of course the barrel is too fat and stupid for any such activity and looks blankly at the Master, pathetic tail wagging, mouth wide open in a stupid grin. And here comes the alarming part. The Master drops to all fours, crawls to the sock, picks it up with his mouth and drops it at the dogs feet. I declare, dear Diary, I am left wondering if the Master is actually ‘all there’? My dear Mistress upon walking in on this charade covered up her horror of having a deranged husband with an elegant giggle, gently telling him that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks.

How shall I respond, dear Diary? I know not. But for now I will give that dog a good swat around the head, and then I’ll go have a suck on the Masters toothbrush.

Adieu!

Judge’s Comments

Laura met the requirements of this competition exceptionally well and, out of all the entries I received, hers was the most amusing. She has also been very clever in writing the thoughts of her cat in such a way that I can almost hear its French / English accent. The utter snootiness of her cat is woven throughout her piece and the detail concerning the master’s toothbrush is particularly funny. Had she been more careful with her grammar and included a title and word count in the body of her entry, she would have tied with Keith for first place.

Corrections that need to be made are:

- No capital letter is needed for ‘master’ and ‘mistress’ as they are common nouns such as ‘boy’ and ‘girl’ rather than proper nouns such as ‘Richard’ and ‘Helen’. However, had your cat been directly addressing their master or mistress, then it would have been appropriate to use a capital: e.g. “Good morning, Mistress.”*
- Para 1, sentence 5—Delete the second ‘has’.*
- Para 1, sentence 8—As you use the word ‘knowing’ in the very next phrase of this sentence, I suggest changing ‘know’ to ‘understand’.*
- Para 3, sentence 5—There should be an apostrophe in the word dog’s*
- Para 4, last sentence—there should be an apostrophe in master’s.*

Apart from these changes, Laura’s story was excellent and I hope to receive more entries from her.

Third Place



**Yvonne
Mossom**
of Whangarei.

No Title

Dear Dora,

The behaviour of my human disgusts me. She appears to be unaware of my royal heritage. (I know Daddy was a travelling man and Mommy was a pushover but I still lay claim to unique genes).

She rejects my right to status in the family. I have to eat in the kitchen and defend my meal from the exuberant Labrador puppy who is obviously of

lower class. As to the meal ... scraps from the table. Occasionally I am ‘served’ a ‘Gourmet’ meal OUT OF A TIN. No special preparation. Just the wielding of a can opener.

My sleeping accommodation leaves a lot to be desired. I would prefer to spend the nights on a comfortable duvet with warmth from the human child to comfort me. This is not allowed. I have a basket (if you please) in the drafty laundry accompanied by whining , clunking and swishing of the machines.

I have shed hair on my chair in the lounge so that visitors know it is my throne. There is one human who is of poor intellect who persists in ensconcing herself. If this continues I will leap up and knead her lap with claws in operation. If all else fails I will have to resort to making a smell. (How degrading).

My contributions to the commissariat have been met with expressions of horror. This really offends me. It takes time and careful surveillance of the forest to select delectable morsels. I have decided to eat the morsel and leave the tail on the mat so that she will be wondering where I will throw up.

The human child is displaying the respect I am due. This has taken training on my part. She has learnt to stroke and rub my tummy and knows when to stop. A quick cuff (claws retrenched) made my feelings known. She has even rescued me from the freezing floor of the laundry and hidden me on her bed. I am confident that she will develop into a cat-respecting human, not like “She -who-must-be tolerated”.

Your advice is appreciated.

Lady Catterly

Judge’s Comments

I thoroughly enjoyed Yvonne’s entry. Her style of writing is easy to read and she uses words and phrases that clearly portray her cat’s snooty and inflated opinion of itself. There is also quite a bit of dry humour throughout the piece, particularly in the hilarious ‘Lady Catterly’ signoff. Apart from some slipups with grammar, punctuation and spelling, her piece is well written and entertaining. Corrections that need to be made are as follows:

- *Para 1—No brackets needed as ‘I know Daddy...’ follows on nicely from the previous sentence.*
- *Para 2—No space required before the 3 ellipsis points in the 3rd sentence. In the 4th sentence, Gourmet does not need to be in quote marks as it is a brand name and therefore a proper noun.*
- *Para 3—in the last sentence, the word ‘the’ needs to be inserted before ‘whining’. I also recommend inserting an exclamation mark after (if you please!) to add emphasis to the cat’s righteous indignation.*
- *Para 3—The correct English spelling of ‘drafty’ is ‘draughty’.*
- *Para 4—last sentence: The full stop should be inside the closing bracket, not outside of it. However, I think the brackets are not needed.*
- *Para 6—The word ‘retrenched’ in the 4th sentence is incorrect. It should be ‘retracted’. In the same sentence, the word after the closing bracket should be ‘make’ not ‘made’ in order to make the tense consistent with the previous sentence.*
- *Para 6—last sentence: the word ‘that’ is not necessary. Also ‘she who must be tolerated’ should not begin with a capital S. It should also be in single*

quote marks. Speech marks (double apostrophes) should only be used for direct speech.

Well done Yvonne for a first great entry. I look forward to receiving more from you.

Level Two

Judge:

Janice Gillgren

Requirement:

CHILDREN'S PLAY— Write a play based on a Bible story, suitable for up to six children aged about 9-11 years old. Avoid preaching and moralising. It can be up to three acts long, and between 400-500 words. (The word count includes details of cast, scenes and characters.)

General Comments

Each writer clearly put some thought into the stage directions, which was good. Most of the word counts, grammar, spelling and punctuation were fine too. There were problems with each of the entries though.

Ruth was awarded first place. The children have interesting and enthusiastic parts to play, although unfortunately, nearly all the action is in the last scene.

Jean's entry was chosen for a close second place because, while I could imagine it being acted with good success, she uses so much repetition that there is little room left to really tell much of a story.

400-500w doesn't allow for a long play, but the remaining two entrants unfortunately wasted space by including extra parts that then left them with little room to develop their stories.

As with all stories or plays, start with action, interesting dialogue or questions if possible. Concentrate on the main action and minimise extraneous details. Keep the story and instructions simple.

Don't be discouraged. Writing plays for children isn't always as easy as it seems it should be. The important thing is to keep giving things a go, and learning in the process.

A little point: where I am quoting your words in my critique, if they are in italics, I have changed them to plain text so that your words aren't confused with mine.

Another reminder: please don't manually add spaces between each line, as the editor or I then need to manually remove them all. Spaces can be added automatically via the line spacing option if you want to use them, and can then be just as easily removed. I have asked this before, so please take the time to learn about line spacing in your word processing program. Thanks.

First Place



**Ruth
Jamieson**
of Whakatane

Who is He?

Cast: Leah and Sam (11-year-old twins)

Mother of twins

Rebecca (friend of twins)

Mr. Jairus (father of Rebecca)

Jesus

Mourners –some of audience prepared in advance with word cards.

Cards- # 1 *Later that day...* #2 *Next day after school*

Scene 1 (outside synagogue)

Jairus (looking important); Sam (carrying paper bag) and Leah walk over

Sam: Greetings Mr Jairus. Is Rebecca coming with us today?

Jairus: No Sam. She's not feeling well.

Leah: I'll stay with Rebecca. You go Sam and listen well so you can tell us all about it.

Jairus: Be careful young man who you listen to. That teacher seems to be causing quite a stir.

Sam: You should come and hear him Mr. Jairus.

Jairus: As a leader of our temple church, I must help our people follow God's rules.

Sam: What if He is the Christ, the Messiah?

Leah: He has done some amazing miracles.

Jairus: I can't be sure about that...now run along you two.

Scene 2 (inside twins home) Card #1

Sam: (*enter excited*) Mum. Leah.

Mother: Over here Sam.

Sam: It was unbelievable.

Mother: Slow down...take a deep breathe... (*Sam does*) now tell us.

Sam: My lunch...those five bread rolls and two fish....I gave them to Him.

Mother: To Jesus...and you are hungry now I suppose.

Sam: Yes...no. Jesus prayed and then started giving my lunch to his disciples.

Mother: Your lunch would not have filled twelve men.

Sam: Jesus just kept breaking up the rolls and fish. He didn't stop until everyone was full. There were heaps of people. Someone said there were about five thousand.

Leah: Wow. That would have to be another miracle.

Mother: Who is this man Jesus?

Sam: He has to be someone sent from God.

Mother: I don't think your father would agree. He and Mr. Jairus have been looking into it.

Sam: (*to Leah*) How is Rebecca?

Leah: Not good. Her mum and dad are very worried.

Sam: Jesus could help her. Let's go tell them. (*pull Leah along*)

Mother: Be home before dark. It's school tomorrow.

Scene 3 (Outside Jairus' house) Card #2

Mourners wailing, Sam and Leah walk over.

Leah: (*distraught*) Oh no!

Sam: I'll go find out what's happened. (*push through crowd*)

Sam: (*return tearful*) Rebecca has died. Mr. Jairus left this morning to get Jesus but hasn't returned.

(Leah cries while Sam tries to comfort her)

Sam: Look. Jesus is coming.

(Jesus and Jairus move into scene)

Jesus: (*to mourners*) Stop this noise. The girl is not dead. She's only asleep.

Mourners: (*laugh, scoff*) She is dead. D.E.A.D.

Jesus and Jairus go inside house

Sam: I saw her Leah. She was dead.

Leah: Do you think...Jesus can make her come alive again.

Sam: Only God can do something that big.

Jesus comes out with Rebecca holding his hand. Rebecca runs to twins

Rebecca: Jesus has made me alive again.

(Sam and Leah hug Rebecca)

Leah: Thank you Jesus.

Jairus: *(come out)* I do believe You are the Messiah, our Saviour

Judge's Comments

Hi Ruth. I've awarded you first place for your entry. You have clearly put some thought into stage directions and dialogue. However, there is plenty you could do to improve the story. Your introduction (all of scene one) slows down the start, and scene two is mostly children taking turns narrating, but with little action. The real action is in scene three, and it would be ideal if you could concentrate on this one scene and develop it.

If you still wanted to include the miracle in scene two (and I can see there could be good reasons you might want to), then make sure you start with action, and minimise anything not absolutely essential to the story. For example:

Sam: *(excitedly shaking his empty lunch bag)* Mum. Leah. It was unbelievable.'

You don't need the line by Mum between these two sentences.

Note: 'breathe' is a verb. You want the noun 'breath'.

You would also need to better connect scenes two and three. Jairus should be noticeably concerned about his daughter, because it is he who goes to Jesus. And, when Jesus later comes to their house, Jesus could remember Sam as the boy

who gave him his lunch. This would help to connect Sam to both events in the audience's mind. However, it would probably be better to dwell only on the final scene's miracle and develop it well. This is a matter of focus, which is something all writers (myself included) always need to work on.

Sam: I'll go find out what's happened. (push through crowd). *'What crowd does Sam push through?*

Leah: Do you think...Jesus can make her come alive again.' *This needs a question mark.*

Concerning your scene instructions: You could use a narrator to introduce scenes or tell the audience about jumps in time.

You have six actors before including mourners, so the sound could come from a few extra children loudly crying offstage.

Finally, when you have directions such as at the start of scene one, when Sam and Leah 'walk over', you need to say where they are actually going.

Second Place



**Jean
Shewan**
of Christchurch

David and Goliath

Scene 1:

Divide the children into two groups. Army 1 is the Philistines with the tallest child, Goliath, in the centre. Army 2 is the Israelites, with the smallest of the children, David, in the centre. River (scarf or coloured paper) runs across stage)

Army 1 (*marching across the stage on one side of the river*)

We are the army of the Philistines coming to fight against Israel's God.

Then:

Army 2 (*marching across the stage in the opposite direction and opposite side of river*)

We are the army of Israel's King Saul coming to fight for the People of God.

Repeat this sequence twice more.

Scene 2

The two armies line up from front to back of stage facing one another. River turned to run between them)

Army 1: Who will fight for us against the forces of King Saul?

Goliath steps forward carrying a large sword.

I, Goliath, will fight with all my might against the forces of Israel's God.

Army 2: Who will fight against the giant to keep the land of Israel safe?

David steps forward carrying a sling and stones.

I can fight Goliath the giant with my stones and sling and faith.

The two face each other and Army 1 laugh, pointing at David, while Army 2 hides their faces in fear and shame.

Goliath: Would you fight me without armour, send your stones against my sword

David: Because my master is God's King I will kill you with my sling.

David swings the sling round his head and Goliath falls to the ground

Scene 3: *The two armies march across the stage, this time in the same direction. Army 1 hurries as if running away.*

Army 1 Goliath fought for the Philistine army. Now he's dead and we must run.

Army 2: David has saved the people of Israel. God has brought us victory.

Repeat sequence as before.

Judge's Comments

Hi Jean. Congratulations. I've awarded your play 2nd place. Your instructions are simple and fairly well thought out. The occasional rhyme adds some appeal. Your Scenes are also sensibly placed.

This play could be acted with 6 children, (at a bare minimum) as required. Each army could then include three children; one of them being either David or Goliath; a spokesperson to ask the questions in Act 2; and the third child to add a bit more volume to the other two for the declarations.

I haven't been able to work out how you estimated your word count, but it still appears to be within the required 400-500w, so I'll accept it. You have pared the story down to its absolute basics and kept it really simple, which is good, but I think you have overdone it.

While I presume you have repeated lines to add emphasis and some fun, the amount of repetition you've used is probably more than necessary for children this age. One repetition for the first and last two phrases would probably be quite sufficient. The repetitions have unfortunately significantly reduced the space you have in which to develop your storyline. They give plenty of emphasis to the beginning and end of the story, but without leaving enough room for the part of the story that excites children the most: the central action!

You could have included more of the context of the story, such as the taunting by the Philistines or David's previous successes to show why he believes he will be successful, and why King Saul has trusted him to battle against the enemy. You could also have expanded the action of David finding stones to put in the sling, or swinging it.

This context would be most valuable for children who aren't familiar with Bible stories (and less children are these days).

'Would you fight me without armour... ' needs a question mark. You also have an extra closing parenthesis near the beginning, and one missing at the start of scene two.

Aside from the above, I can imagine this play being acted and basically enjoyed, especially if there is a rousing and active song to go with it.

Third Place



**Judith
Powell**
of Canterbury

Daniel's Dilemma

Characters

DARIUS, King of the Chaldeans

DANIEL, A Jew who is one of Darius' officials

TWO MEN, also officials

TWO GUARDS

Act One

*Front stage before the play begins.
DANIEL and DARIUS are not in full costume.*

DANIEL. I'm scared. I don't think I can do this. Not with everyone watching.

DARIUS. Don't worry. This is just a rehearsal and we'll pray for you.

DANIEL. Do you think that will help? OK, I'll try.

Act Two

An ancient city street. DANIEL looks out his window.

DANIEL. King Darius made a rule that we have to ask him for anything we want. I won't bow down to him. I can't stop praying to my God. I trust Him.

(DANIEL kneels and prays).

TWO MEN enter street.

MAN ONE. Look! Daniel's praying to his God. I told you he would. I knew our trick would work.

MAN TWO. It sure has. The king will have to get rid of him now.

MAN ONE. Yeah. We don't need a foreigner making us look bad. Let's go tell the king. *(MEN exit).*

Act Three

A lions' pit covered with a lid. Lions roar offstage. The GUARDS enter holding DANIEL.

GUARD ONE. Lift the lid. We'll drop him in. The lions will make quick work of him.

GUARD TWO. That's for sure. Glad it's not me going in there.

GUARD ONE. But that's what happens when you break the King's laws.

Night falls. The GUARDS keep watch. Dawn breaks. DARIUS enters, hurrying.

DARIUS (aside). I'm so tired. I didn't sleep. I didn't want Daniel to die.

(Loudly). Daniel, servant of the living

God. Has your God, whom you serve, been able to save you from the lions?

DANIEL (*calling from the lions den*). Oh King. Live forever. I'm alive! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths so they haven't hurt me. I did nothing wrong before Him or you.

DARIUS. He is alive! Bring him up. Quickly!

The GUARDS pull Daniel up from the pit. Lions roar.

DARIUS. Fetch the men who accused Daniel. Throw them in with the lions.

GUARDS exit and return with the TWO MEN. They drop them in the pit. Lions snarl and growl.

DARIUS. Tell everyone they must tremble before the God of Daniel. He is the living God. His kingdom will endure for ever. He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth. He delivered Daniel from the lions.

All characters bow. All except DANIEL and DARIUS exit.

DANIEL (*pulling off costume*). I did it. I was a bit scared but I did it.

DARIUS. Good on you. (*High five*). How come?

DANIEL. I thought about the real Daniel. God shut the mouths of the lions for Daniel so I asked Him to stop the audience from laughing at me if I messed up, especially as the play's about Him. He's a good God and He took away my fear.

DARIUS and DANIEL. Thank-you God!

The End.

Judge's Comments

Hi Judith: You have captured some of the excitement of this well-known story, which is good. However, there are some major problems with your entry. Be careful about wasting space on extra offstage pieces that only confuse the story. Although I can see that you want to show that the boy acting as Daniel is helped by God despite his lack of confidence, the extra introduction and conclusion are effectively like a sub-plot, and you really don't have room for it in such a short story.

Additionally, as Act One is taken up with the two boys in their pre-play act, Act Three ends up being too long, and the conclusion of the two boys' discussion on the challenge of acting is included in Act Three. To be correct, (and less confusing) this last section should be in a separate Act.

It's always a good idea to start a story (especially for children) with action. You could start with the two men and the two guards coming into Daniel's room as he is praying so that both actions can be combined in one, and thus also economise space in your story.

One of the men could say: "You know the rule: you have to ask King Darius for whatever you need or you get thrown in the lion's pit. No praying to anyone, not even your god!"

Daniel: "I can't stop praying to my God. I trust him."

1st man: "Those lions sure are hungry. I wouldn't want to be in your place!"

*The guards grab Daniel and take him.
2nd man: "We don't need a foreigner making us look bad! Good riddance to you!" (Aside to the 1st man): "I knew our trick would work!"*

Do you see how this could get necessary information, plus action and intrigue, into

the start of your story?

Also, Daniel should be taken before King Darius before he goes to the lions so that the king's distress at this event, and his efforts to stop it, can be shown to the audience. The Act Two break would probably be better placed later, just as night falls. The audience needs to be able to understand why Darius is so distraught. Later, when Daniel is pulled out of the lion pit, Darius needs to express his surprise and delight at Daniel's safekeeping.

Darius could then say something about the deliberate trickery of the men who had conned him into making the rule, so that the audience then understands what the trick was, and why the king wants them thrown to the lions instead. (Remember that not all children will be familiar with the story.)

Concerning scene instructions: 'An ancient city street'. I cannot see how this is actually portrayed. I suggest that unless you have a narrator to briefly describe the scene, or a background picture or setting describing it in some way, it may be best to leave this out.

You also need a better description of a lion pit opening, and some way to create the background noise of lions. At present, it is difficult to imagine quite how you mean this aspect to be played.

Level Three

Judge: Ruth Linton

Requirement: RESEARCH the pattern of immigration over the past ten years. Identify three major groups/ nationalities. What issues could result from their increased participation in our society? How should we, as Christians, respond to these challenges? 450 words max.

General Comments

This assignment required careful research and the ability to analyse issues. The word

length made it very challenging. Sadly only one entry was received—an indication, perhaps, of the difficulty of the task.

Information on patterns of immigration can be found on Government and Local Body websites and by comparing figures on the two most-recent censuses. However, accessing it does require a lot of digging. Even an observant walk around your nearest urban centre will give clues as to which nationalities are living and working locally. How many dairies are owned by Indians? Who are the drivers in the local taxi fleet? Observation is a good tool, though it doesn't look so good in a bibliography that should be part of this type of assignment.

In Tauranga the major group of migrants are, according to the council, Indians, followed by Chinese (this is especially so in Auckland I am told) and other Asians. Less obvious are the number of Australians and folks from UK, especially in the more-affluent areas. Because they act and speak in similar ways to most New Zealanders they are not always recognised as immigrants.

Having decided on the nationalities the second part of the assignment was to give an overview of how these immigrants fit into New Zealand society and how we, as Christians, should respond. Clearly there are differences in cultural values and behaviour, different dress codes, different festivals and often language challenges. Do they take jobs and houses that New Zealanders should have? Is there friction between groups? What effect do Sikh parades, Muslim Mosques and Hindu temples have on the spiritual atmosphere of our communities?

As Christians how best can we help these people to fit into New Zealand society and play a positive role? Should we be involved in language teaching? Is this an opportunity for evangelism right on our doorstep?

Remember, too, that most of these migrants maintain strong links with family in their country of origin. How we respond here will have impact in other countries around the world. With these thoughts in mind I commend Julia's entry to you.

First Place



**Julia
Martin**
of Cambridge

New Zealand's Changing Image

New Zealand has always been a desirable place to live, and during the past 200 years people from all over the world have migrated here and made Aotearoa their home. During the past decade our population has grown from 4.1 million to 4.5 million and the ethnic makeup has also changed.

The 2013 census classifies our population as 65% New Zealand European, 14.9% Maori, 11.8% Asian and 7.4% Pacific Island. Today, 25% of our population was born overseas compared with 19.5% in 2001.

Three of the largest ethnic groups immigrating here recently are from India, China and the Philippines.

In the 1800s, Chinese men migrated to New Zealand to work in the goldfields.

During the past ten years large numbers of Chinese men and women have arrived for education, business and a better way of life.

Last year, 7168 arrived – 45.5% were on student visas, 25.6% on residence visas, and 13.9% had work permits. Chinese migrants don't always stay. Many use

New Zealand as a stepping stone to gain access to other countries with greater opportunities.

Last year, Indians represented the largest group of migrants -10,088 compared with 4933 in 2011. Most were males and 75% were on student visas.

Migrants from the Philippines last year numbered 3648 (1820 in 2011). Those on student visas were 30.6% and 45% had work visas allowing them to work in horticulture, farming and construction.

So what are the issues we face with a changing population?

New migrants bring different philosophies, cultural practices, religious and political ideas which often challenge our existing traditions and beliefs. Hindu temples and Moslem mosques are springing up in city suburbs where migrant groups choose to live close by.

Because Asian immigrants gravitate towards the cities, especially Auckland, pressure is put on our housing, schooling and infrastructure. There is disquiet in some quarters as Asians with abundant capital are buying up our houses and land.

From a Christian perspective, migrants also present challenges.

During the last century we sent missionaries overseas, but we now have a mission field right on our doorstep.

Many migrants arrive disoriented and lonely and that's where churches can play a role through friendship and practical support. We can teach classes in English, provide social events to share our lives and faith, and to learn from their cultures and way of life.

In our workplaces and neighbourhoods we should make an effort to befriend these people and help them to assimilate and become 'kiwis'.

While multiculturalism can enrich our nation, I believe we must ensure our Judeo-Christian foundation upon which our nation was based is not eroded away by excessive tolerance and compromise. We used to be known as 'God's own country'. For many reasons that label now seems inappropriate.

References

1. Census 2006 and 2013
2. Statistics New Zealand websites
3. Demographics of New Zealand (Wikipedia)
4. Brian Gaynor, *Record migration population game-changer.* (Weekend Herald, Feb 7, 2015)
5. Brian Fallow, *Migration rhetoric misplaced.* (NZ Herald, June 26, 2015)
6. Richard Meadows, *No signs of record migration slowing down.*(Dominion Post, June 23, 2015

Judge's Comments

Congratulations to Julia Martin for tackling this assignment. I have awarded her first place for a well-researched article which covered a large amount of information while keeping within the word count allowed. Her bibliography showed her thorough research.

The final paragraph lost the objective approach of the rest of the article. Our Judeo-Christian heritage is being eroded but the terms 'excessive tolerance and compromise' are hard to quantify. My suggestion would be to focus more on the need to battle in the spiritual realm and to seek to model and reinforce the positive as we walk with the Lord. However, this paragraph does tie in well with Julia's title. Thank you for your great effort, Julia.

The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives.

—Psalm 37:23

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLE #3

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Active (voice) | 15 Semi colon |
| 2 Proper (noun) | 16 Gerund |
| 3 Ellipsis | 17 Pronoun |
| 4 Object | 18 Em dash |
| 5 Question mark | 19 And |
| 6 Comma | 20 Speech (marks) |
| 7 Verb | 21 Abstract (noun) |
| 8 The | 22 Apostrophe |
| 9 Verbal | 23 Predicate |
| 10 Tense | 24 Subject |
| 11 Italics | 25 Noun |
| 12 Paragraph | 26 Adjective |
| 13 Hyphen | 27 Adverb |
| 14 Period | 28 Colon |

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Competitions for October 2015

Due by September 10th

EMAIL 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—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: BOOK REVIEW— Read a book that has been published in the last two years, and then write a brief review on it. Include author and publisher details as well as your name as the reviewer. 250 words.

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



*Debbie
McDermott*

Level Two—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: PASS IT ON: ADVICE FROM YESTERYEAR— Give clear instructions on how to do a useful skill that used to be common, but seems to be little known by the younger generation today. If you prefer, or if you include yourself in the younger generation, write about a current skill as if for the next generation. 300-350 words.

Email entry to: Janice Gillgren at: jangill1359@gmail.com



*Janice
Gillgren*

Level Three— for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: MAGAZINE ARTICLES—Choose one of the following topics. Write an article on the topic including examples and practise exercises for the reader. Maximum 400 words.

Topics: Writing ‘Voices’ e.g. First person, second person etc.

Tenses – Past, Present, Future, Perfect and Continuous.

Colons and Semi Colons and their uses.

Rules for using good direct speech

Email entry to: Ruth Linton at: ruthlinton2015@gmail.com



*Ruth
Linton*

Under 20s—for members 7-19 years old

Requirement: Write a poem describing a favourite vacation spot. It could be real or imaginary. The poem must be three stanzas long with a minimum of four lines per stanza. It doesn’t have to rhyme.

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



*Vicki
Nogaj*