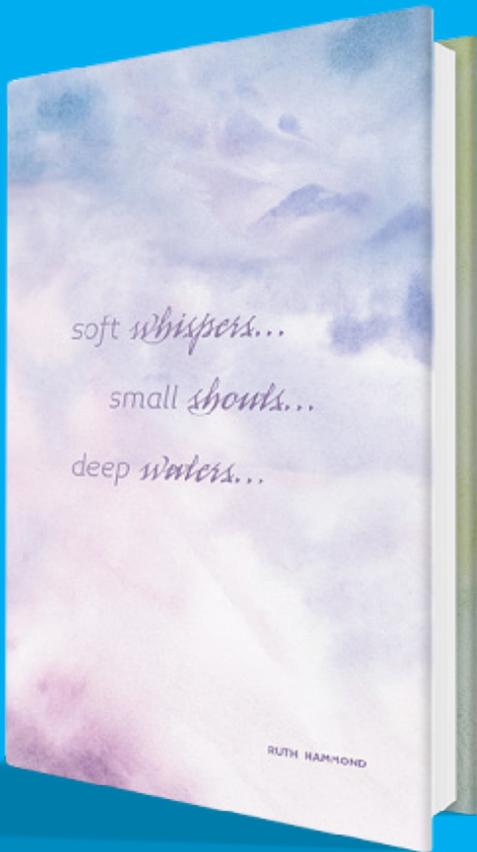


APRIL - MAY 2016

THE CHRISTIAN writer



BOOK REVIEW

soft whispers...
small shouts...
deep waters...

BY RUTH HAMMOND

SEE INSIDE FOR

**Competitions
New Members
& Latest News**

Rightly explaining the word of truth – 2 Timothy 2:15
(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)



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

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Cheques can be sent via post to Jan Pendergrast, Seales Road, Oropi RD3, Tauranga

Book Review Requests: (members only)

Post a copy of your book to Julia Martin

286 Karapiro Road, RD4, Cambridge 3496

(NB: Your book will be added as a donation to the NZCW library on completion of the review.)

The Christian Writer is published bimonthly by the New Zealand Christian Writers 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 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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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.

www.nzchristianwriters.org

President's Report

Hello to you all.

Last weekend Mike and I were staying with our older daughter Maree, her husband Kent and their daughter Kiralee in Putaruru. Kiralee started school on Monday when she turned five. It was interesting watching her practicing writing her letters. Maybe there's another writer in the making.

Congratulations to George Bryant on the publication of his latest book. This is his 18th book published. Great work George. He is also writing a 36-page booklet on his writing journey with 'hot tips from the files'. Would anyone be interested in such a booklet? If so, please contact him on bryantgw@xtra.co.nz.

We are looking forward to our seminar aboard the Pacific Hope. This is to be held on 23rd April. Remember that spaces are filling fast so do book promptly to avoid disappointment. Speakers at that time are John Peachy

and Rosie Boom. Also remember to get in your entries for the evening concert.

Speakers for the morning session of the Spring Workshop on 3rd September are Ray and Janet Curle. The afternoon session will be taken by Mark Holloway. (More details in the next magazine.)

Some years ago I remember John Sturt bringing a devotion at a committee meeting. He read from Psalm 46:10 which states 'Be still and know that I am God'. This same verse hangs in the doorway of our daughter and son-in-law's home and it was a challenge to me this weekend when I needed to drive our van home from Auckland. Before leaving Auckland our granddaughter, Madeline prayed, "Dear God, please help Grandma to lose her fear." And I did. May you place your hand in His hand today and know that He is God.

Janet Fleming



Mike and Janet Fleming with granddaughter, Kiralee

Reflections on the Passion of Christ

By Deborah Mcdermott



In Christianity, **The Passion** refers to the final week in the earthly life of Jesus—from His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, to his crucifixion. **Passion** (Passionem in Latin) means ‘suffering’ or ‘enduring’. One only needs to watch an epic film such as *The Passion of Christ* to realise just how much Jesus suffered so we can be forgiven and made whole.

While Good Friday may be the crux of Jesus’ suffering, it is also important to focus on what He endured in the hours leading up to His crucifixion if we are to have a full appreciation of the salvation He won for us at Calvary. Below is what I believe to be the chronological order of events, and what they mean to me.

The Last Supper—Luke 22:14-20

In these verses there are two cups. The first, given to the disciples before Jesus breaks the bread, represents the Old Testament Passover Lamb. The second represents Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The Foot Washing—John 13:3-5 (NKJV)

The New King James version of the Bible says Jesus washed the disciples’ feet after supper, rather than before the meal which was the custom of the day. Is this a picture of the cleansing from sin that can only come about through Jesus’ shed Blood? Why else would He give His disciples the cup that represents His shed blood before He washed their feet?

Gethsemane—Mark 14:34-36

Three times Jesus asked the Father to remove the cup of suffering from Him, and three times He said ‘not my will, but Yours be done’. This causes me to think about the three times Peter denied Christ. Jesus knew this would happen, but He could see past Peter’s denial to the powerful witness for Christ Peter would become. Jesus sees me too. There’s not much I can do about my failures, but when I choose Him, His love enables me to become all He has created me to be.

Pilate’s Shame—Matt 27:1-2, 11-26

Pilate knew the accusations against Jesus were false but, when he could not prevail against the demands of the mob, he called for water and washed his hands of ‘the blood of this Just Person’ (vs 24). He then delivered Jesus to be crucified. Pilate washed his hands for the wrong reason, but there is a right reason. That is, we must wash our hands of everything that is not of God. Psalm 24:3-4 says: ‘*Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? He who has clean hands and a pure heart*’.

Flogged and Crowned—John 19:1-3

Jesus was flogged with a lead tipped whip. Then a twisted crown of thorns was jammed onto his head and a purple robe draped over His severely torn and bleeding body—a body that was broken for me and for you, that we might be completely whole and healed.

The King on a Cross—John 19:17-31

Jesus willingly let Himself be nailed to the Cross for our sake. I too need to be crucified of all that is not of him. He also willingly yielded His Spirit to the Father, then rose again from the dead on the third day. Because death could not hold Him down, I have received eternal life—simply by believing in all He has done for me. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Letter to the Editor

Dear Debbie,

Just thought our many members may be interested to see the results from Google Analytics over the last few months from our website: www.NZChristianWriters.org.

We currently have 75x Writer Profiles published online, raising the profile of our Members throughout NZ. In addition, we have 102x Book Features showcasing the brilliant books available from our members. Each has a complimentary link for book purchases, plus contact details to the writer.

Our website hits have significantly increased since our radio ads were heard on Life FM Auckland 99.8FM and Rhema Auckland 1251AM. Dec 2015 had 162x unique hits, Jan 2016 received 237x website hits (a 1/3 increase!), Feb 2016 249x website hits, and Mar 2016 252x website hits.

NZChristianWriters.org has excellent traffic from New Visitors, 85% new in Dec 2015, and 82% new in Jan 2016. Interestingly enough, our top visitors are currently from these countries: NZ, USA, and Russia! For NZ, Auckland is our strongest market with 56% of people in December 2015, and 65% of all website traffic in January 2016.

These website stats are encouraging, and it prompts me to consider that we all continue our culture of invitation by encouraging other Christian Writers we meet to join our growing collective. We have a wonderful group of talented writers, and I'm convinced there are many more Christian Writers throughout New Zealand who would benefit from being part of NZ Christian Writers.

Blessings & Best Regards,

Justin St. Vincent
NZCW Vice President

Jan Pendergrast's Book Launch

Report by Ruth Linton

Launching three recently-published children's books on one day is quite an achievement!

Set beside 'The Cargo Shed' (inspirational showcase of Tauranga artists) with a backdrop of the beautiful Tauranga Harbour, Jan Pendergrast presented her three new books—*Pop's Busy Blue Truck*, *Hut Hangout* and *Ruatara*—to friends, fellow writers and interested public.

Pop's Busy Blue Truck, a simple picture book based on daily farm activities, reinforces colours and days of the week. Husband, Hans, the model for artist Gordon Miller's colour illustrations, arrived decked out in farm overalls and driving the blue truck—a real attention focus for the children.



Hans with illustrator, Gordon Miller

(You need to buy the book to see the antics of the farm dog—he's up to something new in every picture!)

Hut Hangout, illustrated in black and white by A Brice, was written for reluctant readers, mainly boys eight to ten years.

Ruatara is a factual record of early NZ history for readers ten years upward. It is illustrated by Simon Fletcher from Auckland.

Jan paid tribute to the many people who helped the publishing journey, and to Creative Tauranga for a grant to help pay for illustrating *Ruatara*.



Jan's three grandchildren and son engrossed in their respective books

These new books, plus two earlier books, *Tui's Friends* (a beautiful picture book) and *Dam Disaster* (another book for reluctant readers) are available from Jan Pendergrast, 309 Seales Road, Oropi, R D 3, Tauranga. Email: jan@roads-end.co.nz

Promote your book in **Christian Life**



Low-cost package with **free synopsis** of your book in the editorial pages and advert in the Resources section

Contact Ray Curle, Initiate Media
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GET CREATIVE

Many thanks to Janis Cusack for submitting this lovely piece on the topic of 'If I were...'

TIME

If I were a full stop
in time,
I'd have a job for life.
All these people
rushing
everywhere...
I'd make them all
a still point
so they could hear
the birds sing
and watch
the setting sun.
Then they could
sit
and think
and play
instead of run.

Janis Cusack

The next topic will be **I jumped for joy when...**

Maximum 250 words for prose and 4 verses (6 lines or less per verse) for poetry. Include the words 'Get Creative' with your submission, as well as set the next 'Get Creative' topic. You may also include a picture with your piece if you wish.

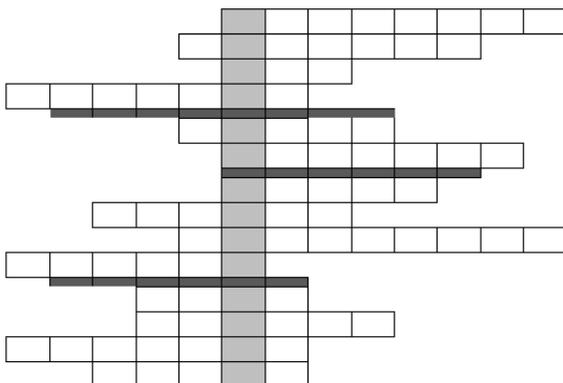
Deadline: 10th May 2016
Email submissions for consideration to
sddp@xtra.co.nz

JUNIOR PUZZLE

The Bible talks a lot about different kinds of writing.

Fill in the answers to the clues, going across the puzzle. The letters downward in the shaded spaces show the safe place where we are kept. (Isaiah 49:16 John 10:28).
(I used the New King James Bible.)

1. Wise sayings. (King Solomon wrote 3000 of them! 1 Kings 4:32)
2. God told Habakkuk to write His message on them. (Habakkuk 2:2)
3. God wrote the and commandments on stone. (Exodus 24:12)
4. The songs and poems that David wrote.
5. King Solomon wrote 1005 of these of which Song of Solomon is the greatest.
 (1 Kings 4:32 & Song of Solomon 1:1)
6. This part of a person wrote on the wall in Daniel 5:5.
7. John wrote his third epistle or letter addressed to this man. 3 John 1
8. Jeremiah wrote his prophecies on this and King Jehoiakim sliced them up and burned them. Jeremiah 36:2, 22-23
9. Saul took letters, written by the High Priest, to this city hoping to persecute the Christians there. Acts 9:1-2
10. Only Jesus could open the scroll of judgement in Revelation 5:1. It was shut with seven
11. A New Testament writer who wrote one gospel, three letters or epistles and a book of future events.
12. God will write his laws on our Hebrews 8:10
13. Jesus wrote on it when they brought an adulteress to him. John 8:6
14. God will also write his laws on our Hebrews 10:16



□

Answers on Page 15

Literary Devices

Alliteration

Alliteration is derived from Latin's *Latira*. It means 'letters of alphabet'. It is a stylistic device in which a number of words, having the same first consonant sound, occur close together in a series.

Consider the following examples:

- But a better butter makes a batter better.
- A big bully beats a baby boy.

Both sentences are alliterative because the same first letter of words (B) occurs close together and produces alliteration in the sentence. An important point to remember is that alliteration does not depend on letters but on sounds. So the phrase *not knotty* is alliterative, but *cigarette chase* is not.

Common Examples of Alliteration

In our daily life, we notice alliteration in the names of different companies. It makes the name of a company catchy and easy to memorise. Here are several common alliteration examples.

- Dunkin' Donuts - Best Buy
- PayPal - Coca-Cola
- Life Lock - Bed Bath & Beyond
- Park Place

We also find alliterations in names of people, making such names prominent and easy to be remembered. For instance, both fictional characters and real people may stand out prominently in your mind due to the alliterative effects of their names.

Examples are:

- Fred Flintstone - Lois Lane
- Donald Duck - Porky Pig
- Mickey Mouse - Marilyn Monroe

Alliteration Examples in Literature

Example #1

From Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

'The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.'

In the above lines we see alliteration ('b', 'f' and 's') in the phrases 'breeze blew', 'foam flew', 'furrow followed', and 'silent sea'.

Example #2

From James Joyce's *The Dead*

'His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.'

We notice several instances of alliteration in the above mentioned prose work of James Joyce. Alliterations are with 's' and 'f' in the phrases 'swooned slowly' and 'falling faintly'.

Example #3

From Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

'Up the aisle, the moans and screams merged with the sickening smell of woollen black clothes worn in summer weather and green leaves wilting over yellow flowers.'

Maya gives us a striking example of alliteration in the above extract with the letters 's' and 'w'. We notice that alliterative words are interrupted by other non-alliterative words among them but the effect of alliteration remains the same. We immediately notice alliteration in the words 'screams', 'sickening smell', 'summer', 'weather' and 'wilting'.

Example #4

From William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (prologue to Act 1)

'From forth the fatal loins of these two
foes;
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life.'

This is an example of alliteration with the 'f' and 'l' in words 'forth, fatal, foes' and 'loins, lovers, and life'.

Example #5

Percy Bysshe Shelley's (English Romantic poet) *The Witch of Atlas* is a famous poem that is full of examples of alliterations. Just a few of them are:

'wings of winds' (line 175), 'sick soul to happy sleep' (line 178), 'cells of crystal silence' (line 156), 'Wisdom's wizard... wind... will' (lines 195-197), 'drained and dried' (line 227), 'lines of light' (line 245), 'green and glowing' (line 356), and 'crudded... cape of cloud' (lines 482-3).

Function of Alliteration

Alliteration has a very vital role in poetry and prose. It creates a musical effect in the text that enhances the pleasure of reading a literary piece. It makes reading and recitation of the poems attractive and appealing; thus, making them easier to learn by heart. Furthermore, it renders flow and beauty to a piece of writing.

In the marketing industry, alliteration makes the brand names interesting and easier to remember. This literary device is helpful in attracting customers and enhancing sales.

For more information on literary devices, visit
<http://literarydevices.net>

Images of Christ

By Rodney Hickman

Do you see Jesus
as being meek and mild?
Holding lambs
or perhaps holding a child?
Able to do miracles,
and is kindly and good?
Caring for orphans and widows,
as one should?

Do you see Jesus as the crucified one
Who turned the other cheek,
the pacifist son?
Who's weak and frail
and had to give in
To those who are powerful,
who's evil is sin?

Do you see Jesus
as some religious man
Who started a movement
the best he can?
He had good ideas,
but old fashioned they are
Not applicable for this day,
outdated by far

Perhaps you see Jesus
as a soon coming king
Holds a flaming sword
to finish the problem of sin
Who sits on high
but not concerned with my stuff
Who doesn't appear to care
personally enough

These pictures are part wrong,
and also part right
They are images of Christ
distorted by sight
The more we look at Him,
the better we see
That He is our example,
the model I need to be.

Warm Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Daryl Fowles

Red Beach, Auckland

Shirley Hall-White

North Harbour, Auckland

Patrick Hallis

Pakuranga Heights, Auckland

Margaret Harris

Tauranga

Clare Matravers

Whangerei

Raewyn Pattemore

Unsworth Heights, Auckland

Linda Raleigh

Bethlehem, Tauranga

Joy Ravela

Beachlands, Auckland

Kaylene Subritzky

Eastridge, Auckland

Christine Sullivan

Mt Albert, Auckland

Laree Taula

Papakowhai, Porirua

Valeria Tokoar

Onekawa, Napier

REMEMBER

to email your photo and mini bio
to Justin St Vincent for
uploading to our website
editor@xtrememusic.org

Fundraiser for Hospice

Janice Aish was a member of NZ Christian Writers until her death in 2014.

Recently, in appreciation of the wonderful care shown to her by Hospice, husband Phil organised a tractor trek from the Bluff to the North Cape as a fundraiser for Hospice.



Pictured are Wayne and Ethan Fleming in Phil's tractor when trek members visited Kaeo Primary School on their way to the Cape.

Need Professional Editing/Writing Services?

Then why not contact the following
NZCW members?

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Selina Chan

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Mob: +64 21 104 3686

On the Way to Market

(based on Matthew 20:29-34)

By Dianne Spain

I live in Jericho and my mother sends me to the market each day to buy fresh food for our family. On the way I walk past two blind men who sit by the side of the road begging every day. I usually walk quickly by as I don't have anything to offer them. My mother only gives me enough to buy the things we need.

One day, on the way to the market, I saw a large crowd walking behind a man called Jesus. People said Jesus could do healing miracles but I didn't know anyone who had been healed by him. This was the first time I had even seen him. I knew it was Jesus because I heard people saying his name.

Suddenly the two blind men shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Some of the people told them to be quiet but they shouted even louder. I pushed my way to the front of the crowd and saw Jesus stop and ask them what they wanted him to do for them.

"Lord, we want our sight," they said.

I thought to myself, *Why are they asking Jesus for their sight? No one can do that. They are both blind as bats.* But then I saw Jesus' face and it shone with kindness and gentleness. He wasn't angry with them and he didn't tell them off for asking for something that was impossible. I watched as he gently touched both

their eyes and straight away they were able to see. They jumped up and joined the crowd following Jesus as he continued to walk down the road.

I was so amazed! I had just watched Jesus heal those two men. I completely forgot about the market and ran straight home to tell my family what I had just seen.



**Surely He has borne our
griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him
stricken,
Smitten by God, and
afflicted.**

**But He was wounded for our
transgressions,
He was bruised
for our
iniquities;
The
chastisement for
our peace was
upon Him,
And by His
stripes we are
healed.**



—Isaiah 53:4-5 (NKJV)

West Auckland Group Writer's Retreat

11-13 March 2016

As a newbie I didn't know what to expect from a writer's retreat but I knew that six of us probably wouldn't be getting any writing done...

So I left the pen and paper at home, the laptop remained untouched and, when I arrived at the bach at Snell's Beach, I went for a walk in the fresh air instead.

The sea air did a world of good, and after a nap and long lunch I was ready to face the challenge of Upwords, think of writing ideas, share a slap up meal and commune with our Lord.



Dianne Spain & Beth Walker

We weighed in on Debbie's love life, marvelled at Rod's ingenious card tricks, saw God's hand in Dianne's family history, catered to Mary's relaxation needs, listened to snippets of Beth's autobiography... which were all grist to this writer's mill as I gathered seaweed for my garden.

This bibliophile also managed to polish off three books in the process of retreating.



Mary Welham



Selina Chan

A relaxing and inspiring time was had by all and we decided we would definitely do this again next year.

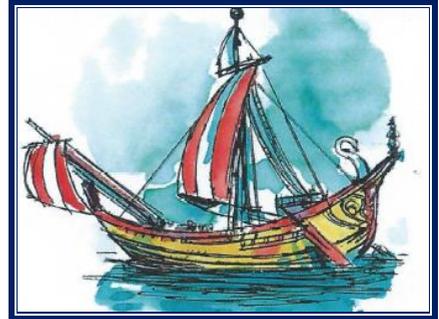
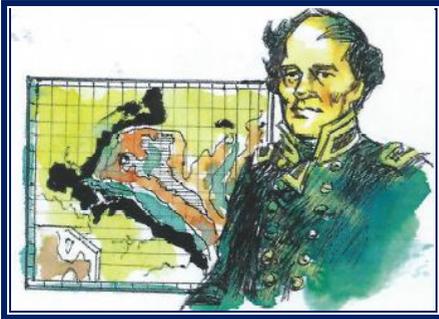
Selina Chan



Rob Hickman & Debbie McDermott

Just for Grins from the Langalist

1. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
2. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
3. Avoid clichés like the plague.
4. Be more or less specific.
5. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
6. Also, too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
7. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
8. Don't use no double negatives.
9. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
10. Never use a big word when substituting a diminutive one would suffice.



Matthew Maury and US East Coast Gulf Stream

Nautical terms, Life at Sea as Penned in the Scriptures and an Oceanographer's faith

Vivid accounts in hundreds of references in the Scriptures about sailors, sea terms and ships, include skiffs, galleys, warships, ferry boats, canoes and the floating papyrus cot of Moses. Ship building starts with the *Ark* of Noah and follows with Phoenician vessels in Ezekiel. The Apostle Paul, a friend of Timothy, warns in 1 Tim 1:19 that those leaving the Christian faith are like seafarers disregarding safe directions on a chart. Luke, the observant writer of Acts, made several Mediterranean voyages with Paul. When taken from Crete to Rome in a Roman cargo ship, Paul was shipwrecked near St Paul's Bay, Malta. The Bay's depth at 15 and 20 fathoms in Acts 27:28 is the same as today's Royal Navy charts.

Lieutenant Matthew Fontaine Maury, oceanographer of the US Navy, wrote *The Physical Geography of the Sea*. Included are winds, currents and Gulf Stream findings. He states the Bible record is true and divinely inspired.

Bibliography: Bookmark Stores No 13 *Ships in The Word*
Royal Naval Museum Portsmouth. US Navy Museum, Washington

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ANSWERS TO JUNIOR PUZZLE:

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

Notice Board

Ruminate Magazine

An award-winning quarterly literary-arts print magazine engaging the Christian faith. Publishes poetry, short stories, photography, visual art reproductions, short fiction, memoir, creative nonfiction, essays, reviews, and interviews.

Pays US\$15 per poem and US\$15 per 400 words for prose.

For further information and guidelines, go to:

www.ruminatemagazine.com

Biography Writing for the Terminally Ill

Many branches of Hospice provide a voluntary biography writing service for the terminally ill, so they can leave behind a legacy of memoirs for their loved ones.

If you would like to be involved in this service, please contact your nearest hospice for further information.

Attractive Book Marks

Available directly from Fred Swallow. For further details, email Fred at

rise@xtra.co.nz

Library Corner

Julia Martin's Book Review



Soft whispers...small
shouts...deep
waters...

By Ruth Hammond

The origins of this unusual book began when Ruth was woken from sleep one night by a soft voice calling her to get up and write. She recounts: 'Words flew into my mind. Pictures filled my imagination, insights into the depths of emotional hurts that people were carrying entered the core of my being.'

The writings kept coming, but for many years Ruth's collection remained unpublished until the sudden death of her son prompted her to re-visit her writings and share them with those who were needing comfort and the assurance of God's love.

Ruth's collection of 66 inspirational writings cover topics such as sorrow, grief, fear, temptation, forgiveness, worship and fellowship. Some are in poetic form. There are prayers and spiritual musings, while other pieces involve a stream of intimate conversations with God, where God does much of the talking. Each piece of writing is super-imposed on coloured pages which makes the book attractive and easy to read.

I recommend this beautiful hard covered book for mature Christians who need encouragement for life's journey. It deserves to be placed on a coffee table or beside one's bedside for regular referral, and to be shared with those going through the storms of life.

As Ruth concludes: 'It is when we extend Him a heartfelt invitation to be a part of our innermost being that His loving peace and strength gently diffuses our soul.'

Enquiries about Ruth's book can be directed to: hello@softwhispersbook.com

Library Additions

Thanks to the following members for donating a copy of their book to NZCW:

Radical Lives

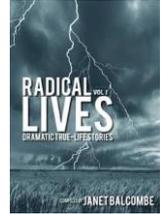
Volume 1

—true-life stories of radical people making a radical impact in the world today.

Compiled by

Janet Balcombe

www.wildsidepublishing.com

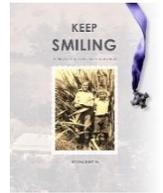


Keep Smiling

—a tribute to an uncle and namesake the author never knew.

By Eion Field

ejfield2000@yahoo.com



Living the Fairy Tale

—Gleaned from the author's personal experience with a 'frog', this book gives insights on how to find your 'Prince Charming'.

By Lisa Liggett

www.lisaliggett.co.nz

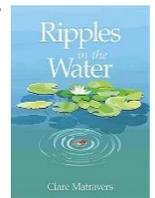


Ripples in the Water

—an enjoyable novel with a storyline involving tragedy, romance, an illness and faith.

By Clare Matravers

www.castlepublishing.co.nz

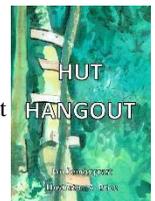


Hut Hangout

—For young boys who prefer the outdoors to reading, this is an easy-to-read book that will enable them to do both with great enjoyment.

By Jan Pendergrast

www.roads-end.co.nz



Competition Results

Under 20s

Judge:

Vicki Nogaj

Requirement: Write a poem or song about one of the following: Bullying, Friendship, Refugees, Graffiti or Speak Life. Four verses maximum.

First Place



**Bonnie
Smithies**

of Christchurch
(16 years old)

Speak Life

“Sticks and stones can break my bones
but words can never hurt me”
Whoever said that has
never been hurt
by words.

With our words we have the power
to build up or break down
God’s word says our
tongue is like
a sword.

We need to think before we speak!
Too often we speak unkindness
and regret it as soon
as it leaves
our mouth.

We have the power to speak death
and to speak life with our words
Think before you speak.
Today,
speak life.

Judge’s Comments

Congratulations to Bonnie for being the only brave soul to enter her poem! What happened to your siblings?

Your syntax and sentence structure of descending lines was well done and made each stanza flow naturally to a focal point, the final two words leaving the reader with the lasting message. In the first stanza, third line, ‘this’ would read better than ‘that’.

My only suggestion is to try not to be too ‘preachy’ in your delivery, as the wonder of poetry is to explore creative ways to say your message using imagery and other creative literary forms. Overall a nice poem with an important message which ‘speaks’ to all generations. Well done.

Level One

Judge:

Debbie McDermott

Requirement: LETTER — An organisation such as Voice of the Martyrs has put you in touch with a Christian living in a country where followers of Jesus are severely persecuted for their faith. Now write a letter of hope and encouragement to this person about whom you know very little. 250 words.

General Comments

I received five well-written entries to this competition. Each entrant has met the competition requirements very well by clearly conveying their empathy and compassion for the persecuted Christian to whom they are writing. This is highly commendable—particularly if you have never personally witnessed or suffered such persecution. I hope each entrant will seriously consider sending their letter to a Christian who is being persecuted for their

faith. However, do ensure you do so through an organisation (such as Voice of the Martyrs) that will give you guidelines on how this should be done. This is particularly important if you wish to send your letter to a believer in a country where Christianity is outlawed. As First Place winner, Lynley Smith, so rightly points out in the footnote to her entry:

‘...it is unwise to mention the name of Christian organisations, or any other name related to the Bible or missions, so commonly-known code words are used, which won’t be picked up by the government’s digital scanning surveillance.’

Lynley’s letter is an excellent example of how to not further endanger a persecuted Christian and I hope you will take the time to read and examine it. Her footnote is also included in full with her entry

Once again, well done to all who entered this competition. Keep up the good work.

First Place



**Lynley
Smith**
of Snells Beach

Dear Betty,

I met up with a friend of mine, Stacey H, who has recently returned from China. She told me about you and your work among local Chinese in your village of Q. I felt compelled to write to you to encourage you in your important mission, as it is also close to my heart.

Firstly, let me tell you of a vision the Lord gave me when I left China 2.5 years ago. He showed me a massive sea of people who seemed to be sinking in a swamp. They were terrified, each uselessly waving an arm in the air as they sank. They had no

help, no hope! I was seeing a whole generation, masses of people, pass into oblivion without knowing our friend J. The vision shocked me.

I am now seeking opportunity to pray for those working for this lost generation. People say that the number of J’s friends in China is growing daily, but what I saw told me it is merely a drop in the bucket. We must redouble our efforts. We can make a difference.

I would like to offer to intercede for your work.

I also want to encourage you with words from our book: In Joshua 1, G says: “I am giving you every place you will step on with the sole of your foot.” Be bold, take hold of this promise and do not fear, for we were not given a spirit of fear, but of love, strength and a sound mind.

Stepping out in Him,

Lynley Smith

NB: In emails/correspondence to China it is unwise to mention the name of Christian organisations, or any other name related to the Bible or missions, so commonly-known code words are used, which won’t be picked up by the government’s digital scanning surveillance. For example they say “going for a swim” to mean “baptism”.

Judge’s Comments

Lynley has met the requirements of this competition exceptionally well. I particularly commend her for being careful to avoid names or words that could put Betty into even more danger than she is currently facing. Lynley does not say how long she lived in China, but it is clear from her footnote that she has seen (and maybe even experienced) the difficulties believers face in this anti-Christian country.

The other notable aspect of Lynley's letter is how well she relates to Betty. However, it is the vision she shares with Betty that makes her letter so personal and engaging. She also identifies with Betty by using phrases such as:

'...to encourage you in your important mission, as it is also close to my heart'

'...our Friend, J'

'We must redouble our efforts. We can make a difference'

Such words show Betty that Lynley doesn't just want to intercede for her work, she also wants to come alongside her in prayer and partnership.

The verses Lynley concludes her letter with are also excellent.

Lynley's grammar and punctuation are excellent. My only recommendations are:

- *The commas after 'Dear Betty' and 'Stepping out in Him' are unnecessary.*
- *Final para—replace the colon after '...our book' with a full stop and make 'In Joshua I...' a new sentence.*
- *The scripture from Joshua should be in single quote marks as it is not direct speech or dialogue.*

Well done for an excellent entry, Lynley. I look forward to receiving more from you.

Second Place



**Dennis
McLeod**
of Hamilton

Voice of the Martyrs Request

Dear Christian Brother,

Greetings my friend, my name is Dennis and I have been informed by Voice of the

Martyrs that you are having a few problems as a believer in your land.

I would like to encourage you to keep strong and always remember the One who gives us the strength to climb every mountain and to cross each raging river. I know from my own experiences it is not always easy to stand firm on the word and our faith can waver when things go bad. Remember Jesus is always there for us; He is our strength, He is our Friend and He is our Salvation, the Light of the world and the Bread of Life. Remember friend, we are all in a spiritual battle and the Lord Himself quoted scripture when confronted by the enemy, be strong in the word. My friend you are not alone, Jesus is there for you, and so are we. I have sent out your prayer requests to our Church and to my friends.

We love you and we promise to pray for you every day. Just know friend even if we have not been through what you are going through, know you have a family here in New Zealand supporting you in every way we can.

When you have time, these are some of the scriptures that have helped me over the years while in the mission field. Psalm 46:1 – John 14:26 – Ephesians 6:12

Your brother in Christ

Dennis McLeod

Judge's Comments

Dennis' letter is well written and full of the hope and encouragement a believer living in an anti-Christian country needs. He not only reminds this brother that Jesus is our strength and salvation, he also identifies with and comes alongside him with love and compassion. Phrases such as 'My friend you are not alone', 'Jesus is there for you, and so are we', 'we love you and promise to pray

for you everyday' show Dennis' commitment to partnering with and supporting this believer in whatever way he can. This is vital for persecuted Christians, who can feel very cut off from the rest of the world.

With regards to the beginning of the letter, I feel Dennis should have addressed this person by name rather than just as 'Dear Christian Brother'. This would make his letter far more personal and meaningful to this brother.

The scripture references Dennis provides at the end of his letter are excellent. However, as Christians living in anti-Christian countries do not always have access to Bibles, it would have been better to write at least one of them in full.

Grammar and punctuation are good. My only recommendations are as follows:

- *The comma after 'Dear Christian Brother is unnecessary.*
- *Para 2—Insert a full stop after 'Greetings my friend'. Then write 'My name is Dennis...' as a new sentence.*
- *Para 3—third to last sentence: Put a full stop after '...confronted by the enemy'. Then write 'Be strong in the word...' as a new sentence.*
- *Para 3—second to last sentence: Replace the comma after '...you are not alone' with a full stop. Then write 'Jesus is there for you...' as a new sentence.*
- *Para 4—2nd sentence is incorrect. Rewrite as 'Just know, friend, that even if we have not been through what you are going through, you have a family here...'*
- *Para 5—should read '...on the mission field'.*

This is an excellent entry, Dennis. I look forward to receiving more from you.

Third Place



Gail Pickett
of Blenheim

Stand Strong you are not Alone

I would not assume to understand your situation since I have never been under pressure for my faith. Be assured however that brothers and sisters in Christ like me pray for you every week. In the face of the severe persecution you are under I pray that your spirit will receive the peace of God that passes all understanding.

Be encouraged that Jesus has the victory and I pray that by God's grace you will be able to hang onto that fact to the end. I along with others stand beside you in prayer and in our finances. Whilst I don't know your exact circumstances the magazine from Barnabas Fund I receive every two months is very informative. What has been encouraging for me is to hear that many Muslims are coming to Christ. From what I can gather he comes to them in dreams and visions in the night. So while it may seem the enemy is winning, Jesus is still reaching the unreachable. Jesus will become more and more famous as time goes on.

As our summer in New Zealand comes to an end I trust you are able to look forward to nicer weather in your springtime. Most of all, ultimately you and I have the hope of spending time with our Lord and Saviour in Heaven soon. In that place there will be no more sickness, tears, fighting or death. That's the wonderful future you can look forward.

Judge's Comments

I really enjoyed the content of Gail's letter. It is full of empathy and written in a manner that shows she really wants to come alongside this person in a prayerful yet also practical way. However, I feel she could have made her letter even more encouraging for the person receiving it by greeting them by name (e.g. Dear Shanti), and then concluding it with a personal farewell (e.g. Your sister in Christ, Gail).

In paragraph 3, it would be prudent to use the word 'unbelievers' rather than 'Muslims'. I am, of course, assuming Gail is writing to a persecuted Christian in a predominantly Muslim country—in which case she needs to consider that such a letter may be intercepted by a devout Muslim (to whom conversion to Christianity is a travesty) and result in making things even more difficult for the person to whom she is writing.

In paragraph 4, the sentence on the weather is a distraction to the general theme of the letter. It also breaks the flow slightly, which otherwise is good.

Gail's grammar and punctuation are good. The only changes required are:

- *Split the heading in two so that it reads: 'Stand Strong. You are not Alone'.*
- *Para 1—sentence 2: Insert a comma before and after 'however'.*
- *Para 1—sentence 3: I suggest putting a comma after '...persecution you are under' as this sentence is very long.*
- *Para 2—sentence 1 would read better as two sentences. I recommend deleting 'and', then making 'I pray that by God's grace...' into a new sentence.*
- *Para 2—sentence 2: Insert a comma before and after 'along with others'.*

Apart from these recommendations, you have presented me with a very good entry, Gail. Well done, and do keep writing.

Level Two

Judge:
Janice Gillgren

Requirement: MAGAZINE ARTICLE — If you could invent a new technological marvel to help mankind, what would it be? Tell us what you would invent, why, and how you could imagine it being used. It isn't necessary to explain how it could be made. Write it as a magazine article, with research (even if some is fabricated), dialogue, clear points, and a strong introduction and conclusion. 400-450 words.

General Comments

This was an unusual competition, and I enjoyed reading the entries. The enthusiasm for the 'inventions' showed through, and there was an element of fun in most of them. This was great, though it made most of them seem more like an infomercial than a magazine article. Most magazine articles are not written in first person point of view. However, there are exceptions, and Cindy did this well in her entry. All entries except for Keith's were almost entirely in first person POV, and Keith cleverly wrote his article as if he was the interviewee.

All of the entries could have benefitted from a better title.

Word count and language skills were generally good.

First Place



**Keith
Willis**
of Kaukapakapa

A Revolutionary Invention

The news reports that you have been reading are true! Patents have been

granted for a Gravity Blocking Mat that will revolutionise the transport industry.

I was somewhat sceptical when I visited the inventor, Mr Willis, on his back country farm. It wasn't until I saw two of his children lifting a wooden pallet off his truck and carrying it into a shed, that I became excited. On the pallet was half a tonne of calf meal! "It's not heavy," they shouted. Apparently the prototype Gravity Blocking (GB) Mat, attached to the bottom of the pallet, reduced the weight by 95%. Later, I'm told the mat could have been made to block gravity completely, but then things would float off into space – not desirable.

The inventor, told me he had been working on this project in his spare time for many years. He was inspired to continue, despite many disappointments, by a fellow farmer, Bill Hamilton, who had invented a boat jet engine so he could navigate shallow rivers. The Hamilton jet is now used worldwide and Mr Willis is confident his GB mat will be equally successful. I have no doubt that it will be. Imagine furniture, with a mat attached, that can be nudged aside by the vacuum cleaner! Or imagine being easily able to leap over a fence or onto the roof! Obviously the mats will not be allowed on athlete's feet in sporting events.

Imagine loaded shipping containers that can be lifted manually! The cost of fuel to move them by ship, truck or plane will be enormously reduced, with a corresponding reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. Cars will use far less fuel when fitted with a GB mat, though Mr Willis warns that the mat must only be fitted under the rear half of a front

wheel drive car, "otherwise steering and traction will be compromised".

"But the greatest application for my mat," says Mr Willis, "is in the space industry. Those huge expensive rocket boosters that are being used to launch satellites will be totally redundant. The payload, mounted on one of my mats, will require only a tiny rocket to blast it into space. And think how small the wings of a jumbo jet will need to be and how little fuel will be required to fly it."

Mr Willis exudes excitement as he outlines his plans. "Just a small factory at first but plenty of room for expansion. There should be no shortage of investors once the world realises the potential. We will be bigger than Fonterra in three years!"

The economic future of New Zealand has never looked brighter and the world's targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions now seem achievable.

Judge's Comments

Hi Keith. I've awarded you first place for this enthusiastic article. Well done. I like the way you have interviewed 'Mr Willis' rather than writing it in 1st person.

You fulfilled the requirements for this entry the best of all entrants, although I would like to suggest some improvements.

The title is a vitally important introduction to any article. Instead of 'Revolutionary Invention', I suggest: 'Blocking Gravity Lightens the Load', which hints at the subject of the article, and invites curiosity.

Your second sentence could then be used as an introductory sentence, although 'could' would be better than 'will'. (The first sentence doesn't really fit the style of your article. It is also better not to start an article with an assumption.)

'Back country' (2nd paragraph) is one word.

Commas here are unnecessary: 2nd paragraph '...carrying it into a shed, that I...'; and 3rd paragraph '...The inventor, told me...'

It is also important to keep tenses consistent. For example, you have used past tense in most of the 1st paragraph, except for 'Later, I'm told...'

Articles can benefit from listing points that are similar in nature and purpose. They don't have to be in bullet-style points, but can be put into short paragraphs of similar size. You have several advantages of your GB mat that could be emphasised this way:

'Imagine furniture...'

'Imagine leaping over a fence...' etc.

Remember if you use points in this way: don't do more than about 5 points, and keep them in the middle of the article, not the beginning or end.

Great article; well done.

Second Place



Cindy David
of Titirangi

Musical Alarm: Better Than Smoke Alarms

The idea of this musical alarm came to me after the death of two children in my neighborhood. Away for an overseas trip, the parents left their 15-year-old daughter in charge of their household and two younger siblings. One morning, as the daughter was preparing breakfast, her boyfriend came by and invited her to walk to the dairy to pick up some bread.

Less than an hour later, as the two walked home, they saw fire trucks parked along the streets and spectators standing by. She panicked after realising it was her family's house that was going up in flames. But the more tragic news that would change her life forever came shortly after: Her two younger brothers, 5 and 3 years of age, were trapped inside as the house burned down. Much later, she was to learn that the fire started from the kitchen stove- the one she left on before she and her boyfriend headed to the dairy.

"We would deal with this kind of event every time, even after smoke alarms were invented," said Stu Rooney, national operations manager for New Zealand Fire Service. New Zealand Fire Statistics indicated that there is an average of 3,730 fires in apartments and residential properties every year and 25 percent of all these house fires start in the kitchen. Furthermore, there are around 30 fatalities from fire every year and more than 300 civilian injuries. "We need something better than smoke alarms, don't we?" Something better than smoke alarms? That's when I thought of musical alarms!

A musical alarm is a device that can be attached to any place on the stove top, next to a burner. When you turn on the stove, the musical device sensors detect the heat and then it starts to play music. You can turn on the volume when needed or even change the tune. At night, you can switch it to "alarm" mode, so that it turns into a smoke alarm.

Unlike smoke alarms, this musical alarm is not attached to the ceiling or far off where you can hardly reach it, so it is a lot easier to test to see if it is working or to change its batteries. Smoke alarms don't remind people that something's cooking on their stove. Often, they don't set off until there's

heavy smoke or fire sweeping through the kitchen wall and could hardly be controlled.

As I finished writing about this idea this morning, I turned on the stove to prepare breakfast. Like always, I would get distracted by a phone call and other things, that I'd forget about my cooking. Our smoke alarm went off, but then by the time it did, it was too late to save my eggs!

Judge's Comments

Hi Cindy. I enjoyed your simply but effectively written article, and have awarded you 2nd place. It is serious but genuine in nature, and it elicits empathy. There are some things that could improve it though.

First of all would be a better title, such as: 'Music can improve home safety'.

Second, a strong introductory sentence, on its own, would lead into the content. For example: 'A musical alarm reminds you when heat is being used in your kitchen, unlike a smoke alarm which only goes off when a disaster is developing.' Then continue with your next two paragraphs.

In your 3rd paragraph, I recommend: "We've dealt with this kind of event often; even since smoke alarms were invented." This is clearer. The words 'Fire Statistics', in the next sentence, don't need to be capitalised.

Apart from your 4th, one-line paragraph, all your paragraphs are about the same length. It's a good idea to bring some variety into the length of your paragraphs, as it generally makes them easier to read than narrow blocks of text as seen in magazines.

I suggest a separate paragraph for 'Smoke alarms don't... be controlled' (para 6). In its last sentence, the word 'and' would be better replaced with 'which'.

In your last paragraph, you have mixed tenses. 'Finished', 'turned on', 'went off' are all past tense; but 'would get distracted... and...that I'd forget' suggest a past perfect tense. Simplify this by writing: 'Like often happens, I got distracted by a phone call and forgot about my cooking.' In the last sentence: 'Our smoke alarm went off, but by then it was too late...'

Third Place



**John
Lindsay**
of Christchurch

Revealing the Hidden Meaning

I do it and I guess you do too. We listen to politicians and product demonstrators and say to ourselves, "I don't believe you. What you're telling me is not what you really believe."

After considering the problem for years I reckon I have a solution.

I call it the WIRM (worm), a tiny device that can be inserted in a microphone. It will give us the clear, *What I Really Mean* version of political statements, marketing campaigns and similar proclamations.

The development of the WIRM depends on two recent discoveries, one in Neurology and the other in electronics.

In the September 2014 issue of *Advances in Cerebral Research*, Professor D F Cornwall published the results of his research into brain wave activity triggered when we speak.⁽¹⁾ He describes the astounding result, never previously suspected, that when we make a statement we do not actually believe, our brain

simultaneously creates the version we do believe.

A team of electronic engineers in California read the professor's paper and set out to design a detector.⁽²⁾

They succeeded in creating the tool I had dreamed of, the key component for my WIRM.

Around this detector I had to build a machine that interpreted the information gathered. Not a simple task because there was no previous work to guide me.

As a first step I asked my long suffering friend, Henry, to try and sell me his car and I was delighted to uncover the variation between his sales pitch and his brain signals. I refined my electronic tools and the results soon exceeded my expectations.

After Henry had made several attempts to sell me his possessions and convince me to try a meat-free diet I was confident I had a reliable prototype.

Now to create a miniature version that would fit inside a microphone, before finding another test subject.

Henry's sister, a product demonstrator, agreed on condition I kept the results confidential. After all, this little gadget could destroy her credibility.

This time, the outcome was less clear, but we seemed to be making progress and I pressed on.

Another product demonstrator came on board and the refinements continued.

Today I am close to realising my dream of uncovering the truth, of revealing a speaker's unspoken thoughts.

Yes, I have considered the dangers. This technology could be misused by

authorities who wish to expose our beliefs and control us, but the potential of the WIRM to save us from the clutches of smooth talkers is surely worth the risk.

Judge's Comments

Hi John. I enjoyed the humour in your article, and although there are some problems with it, I have awarded you 3rd place, so well done. Your use of 'References' is well done too.

First of all, the title should tell more about the content at the same time as arousing curiosity. Perhaps: 'Microphone device detects speaker's true meaning.' A strong introductory paragraph—preferably of short to medium length—is the next important part of any great article. (Your 1st sentence doesn't do this well). It should lead into the content of the article without summarising it. For example:

'Have you ever listened to a politician and thought: "I don't believe you. You're not saying what you really believe"?' My new invention, called a "WIRM" (a tiny device... microphone), is capable of giving us the 'What I Really Mean' version of political statements... proclamations.'

This would make the 3rd paragraph redundant.

To avoid making your article seem like an infomercial, reduce the 1st person point of view to a minimum.

I suggest you rewrite the paragraph telling the Professor's views as a quote from him. e.g. "When we make a statement we do not actually... do believe" says Professor Cornwall. (1)' You can also shift all the information about the referenced article to the References, rather than having some of it in the body of the article.

While short paragraphs are more acceptable than long ones these days, it is still better to put closely linked sentences together into one

paragraph. There are several places in your article where sentences could be added to the one before them for a more effective paragraph, so I'll only demonstrate one: 'A team of electronic ...my WIRM.'

In your second to last paragraph: replace the 'of' with an 'and'.

A last paragraph should be a strong conclusion and wrap-up of your points, so I don't recommend ending on a negative note. Your note of caution is fine, but another paragraph needs to be added after that to tie in to the introduction with a neat and positive summary.

Level Three

Judge:
Ruth Linton

Requirement: DEBATE the following statement: 'Being politically correct is important for our Christian testimony.' Be sure to present both sides of the debate. 400 words max.

General Comments

Congratulations to the six brave entrants in this competition. Writing a quality debate in only 400 words is a challenge. Judging it was also a challenge!! Here are some of the qualities I was looking for.

Firstly it was important to clarify the meaning of the moot—what is being politically correct?—plus give specific examples of it. (e.g. not speaking against same-sex marriage or different cultural practises we feel are unhealthy.)

Then there needed to be two or more arguments for and against the moot with reasons, statistics, quotes and scripture to back up these opinions. (Examples of persuasion and comparison and contrast writing as in the resource article, Writing Techniques.)

Finally, the conclusion was to tie up the arguments and express the writer's considered opinion. (Resource article: Your Writing is an Expression of You)

In a spoken debate each side takes turns to bring their own side of the moot—for it or against it—as well as rebutting their opponent's arguments. (See 'How to Write a Debate Outline', The Christian Writer Feb-March 2016) For this competition, however, it was necessary to present a well-developed article that flowed smoothly from point to point. Difficult, but do-able!

Several entries presented each side separately. The arguments were good but the flow of the article was often disjointed so it was more difficult to award them a place.

Well done to the three writers who were placed. Thank you to those not placed, often missing out by a very small margin.

First Place



**Julia
Martin**
of Cambridge

Debate: Being politically correct is important for our Christian testimony

When Jesus Christ lived on earth he set the perfect example for Christians to follow.

But was Jesus politically correct in everything he said and did? And should we still follow his example in today's modern world?

The term 'political correctness' means using words and behaviour that won't offend anyone.

At face value it means treating people equally, regardless of race, culture, religion or gender.

This concept must surely be biblical and should influence our Christian behaviour and testimony. Some Christians believe it's important to be tolerant and inclusive; to reach out to people with different viewpoints and seek common ground. They therefore encourage dialogue with other faiths and beliefs and are prepared to compromise for the sake of harmony. But while dialogue can be constructive, there are grave dangers and the truth can become the casualty.

Political correctness purports that all religions are equal and all lead to God. Jesus however claimed to be the only way to God. Clearly there is no middle ground, and if our Christian testimony is valid, we must stand fast and risk the consequences of being politically incorrect.

The Bible teaches we must be good citizens – pay our taxes, obey the laws and authorities, and love our neighbours. But we must also stand up for the truths of Scripture which are often politically incorrect. Compromise and the corruption of God's ways can only lead to confusion and chaos.

True believers are not of this world. Their citizenship is in heaven and they must expect opposition from the world's systems. Jesus did not promise popularity for those who base their lives on his teaching. Where Scripture and culture clash, Christians must remain counter-cultural, but not anti-cultural and offensive. We're told to give our answers with gentleness and respect and to teach the truth in love.

The politically correct movement seeks to intimidate people into using language and ideas that have been pre-approved and often have sinister goals. Scripture however, shows no interest in being politically correct and nor should true

believers. By attempting to become relevant to the culture we risk becoming subservient to the culture and thus lose our identity as Christ's followers.

The real issue regarding political correctness is whether it's right to obey God or men.

When the ethics and laws of society start to conflict with biblical principles, then we must make a stand and obey God rather than men - regardless of the consequences.

Judge's Comments

The strength of Julia's entry is her ability to present a balanced article that flows well and challenges the reader to consider their own opinion on politically correct behaviour.

Her attention-grabbing introduction turns the reader's focus to Jesus and the lifestyle he modelled.

Her conclusion concisely sums up her opinion on the issue—obedience to the clearly-revealed will of God is paramount, rather than submitting to man's changing standards.

A different attention-grabbing title, with the debate moot as a subtitle, would have been useful. Also one or two specific examples of areas where political correctness is expected would have strengthened Julia's writing.

Positive and negative aspects of the topic are woven throughout the article and Scriptural values are highlighted. However, biblical references (in brackets or as footnotes) were not included.

Julia's skill with words is evident in the following sentence (Paragraph 4): 'Where Scripture and culture clash, Christians must remain counter-cultural, but not anti-cultural and offensive'.

Great work, Julia!

Third Place Equal



**Vicki
Nogaj**
of Tauranga

Being politically correct is important for our Christian testimony.

I disagree with this statement based on the definition of ‘politically correct’ which speaks of ‘belief’; inferring it comes from a specific ‘politically’ motivated driving force.

The term is defined as “**Conforming** to a **belief** that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex and race) should be eliminated.” [www.merriman-webster.com/dictionary...]

Therefore, in order to be a ‘politically correct’ follower of Christ one must first ‘conform’ to a worldly belief that maintaining political sensibilities is paramount to personal faith, opinion and in this case, ‘testimony’.

Romans 12 verse 2 begins with a warning to believers, not to ‘conform’ to worldly patterns of thinking but be transformed by the renewal of the mind in order to prove the perfect will of God.

If Christian testimony depends on being politically correct, the primary motivation for being a witness for Christ would stem from the fear of causing offense to any person or group. If this is under the guise of showing ‘love’, it is counterproductive as perfect love is not fear driven but ‘casts out’ fear (1 John 4:18).

On the contrary a Christian’s primary testimony is to reflect Jesus’ love to others,

stemming from their love for God. It is important not to masquerade ‘political correctness,’ which has a clear worldly agenda, as showing grace or mercy, eternal Kingdom principles.

We cannot compromise speaking the Truth in love by watering it down to culturally acceptable terms. The opposite of causing offense is to placate or mollify, this then becomes my approach to others.

Paul speaks about being ‘all things to all men in order to save some’ (1 Corinthians 19:23) and to ‘live peaceably with all’ (Romans 12:18) showing a dramatic change from Saul, the persecutor, which some can argue is grounds for political correctness if read out of context.

Was Jesus politically correct when he called the Pharisees hypocrites and a brood of vipers? Was Paul, when he wished those disturbing the Galatians would be castrated? Lukewarm Christians becoming God’s phlegm?

In John 4:5-26, Jesus knowingly approaches and converses with an unsavoury Samaritan woman unaccompanied by his disciples. He exposes her as an adulteress who’s been married five times and is currently shackled up with another man and asks her to serve him a drink then come on ‘staff’ to spark a mass revival.

I wonder if this story would be different if Jesus conformed to their political sensibilities.

Judge’s Comments

Vicki began by stating her opinion on the topic and provided a very clear definition of political correctness, plus some specific

examples. Throughout the article she presents an argument for the moot followed by a rebuttal—almost in the style of a spoken debate. She used Scripture to back up her case and supplied the references and this strengthened her case.

The layout of the article is clear but a more interesting title could have been chosen. There were several errors / places where her thoughts were not clear or punctuation could have improved the article and this cost Vicki a higher placing:

Para 6: The last sentence would be better ending ‘agenda...claiming it is grace or mercy...’

Para 7: Use a semi-colon instead of a comma after ‘mollify’ as the last part is actually a sentence in its own right, but it is very closely linked to the first part.

Para 9: The last rhetorical question isn’t quite a complete thought. I wasn’t sure of its relevance to the argument being presented.

Para 10: The phrase ‘unaccompanied by his disciples’ is almost ambiguous. Who was unaccompanied by the disciples? Jesus or the woman? I suggest putting this phrase after ‘Jesus’ at the beginning of the sentence. Also the phrase ‘...then come on staff...’ doesn’t fit the context. It would be better to complete the paragraph with a sentence such as ‘Then her testimony sparks a mass revival.’

Concluding the article with a rhetorical question was a great idea. However, it would be more correct to use words such as ‘...had been different...’ and ‘...if Jesus had conformed ...’ changing it to past tense. Despite these issues this is a very thoughtful article and deserving of a placing.

Third Place Equal



**Deborah
McDermott**
of Waiuku

Debate Topic: Being politically correct is important for our Christian testimony

Arguments for:

Whether we like it or not, the truth is that we live in a politically correct world that sees radical Christianity as being politically incorrect. Preaching the gospel in the good old fashioned way is now unacceptable in many parts of today’s world because it goes against the grain, so it’s little wonder Christianity is on the decline.

However, God commands us to preach the gospel to the unsaved, so how do we do it without causing offence? By showing respect for the worldview of others (even if we disagree with it), and by speaking the same politically correct language as they do. This will encourage them to lower their defences and listen to what we have to say. The important thing is that we share our faith with the unsaved. Using politically correct language will enable us to do this more effectively than traditional methods of evangelism will.

The apostle Paul—perhaps the greatest evangelist of all time—said in 1 Corinthians 9:22: ‘I become all things to all men that by some means I may save some.’ Surely this verifies that using political correctness in an appropriate manner can enable us to share a credible witness with others.

Arguments against:

Political correctness is in direct opposition to our Christian faith and witness. To quote *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, Martin Beckford, ‘Christianity is in decline in England because politically correct churches are more interested in accommodating other people’s views than putting forward their own...’ In the same report, the Rev Nezlin Sterling said: ‘I am of the belief that we in the church are so anxious to be politically correct that we on occasions forget to reflect on whether our actions are Christ-correct.’

Although that report was made on 11 February 2009, I believe it is just as relevant to Christians today as it was then. While we need to respect the worldview of others, to water down God’s Word by using politically correct language is misleading for the true seeker of truth. Jesus never resorted to being politically correct or ‘user-friendly’. Surely he is our great example to follow if we are to avoid having our Christian witness discredited or undermined.

So let’s stop walking on eggshells when it comes to witnessing and sharing our Christian faith. Our responsibility is not to be accommodating, but to save the lost by preaching the gospel in plain and honest terms like Jesus did.

Judge’s Comments

Although written in two separate sections making it slightly disjointed, this article has much to commend it. The arguments are clear and flow on well from one to another. Especially pleasing was the use of quotes from noted journalists and clergy which Debbie used along with scripture to back up her arguments.

Again it is a pity that a different title was not supplied with the debate moot given as a subtitle.

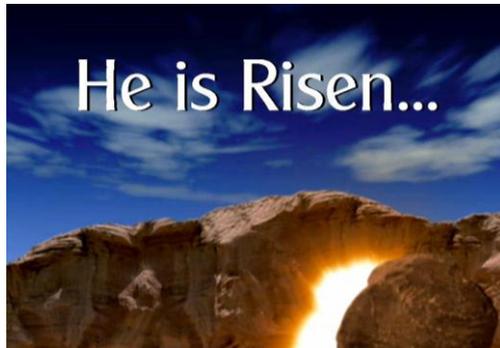
There were several other places where the article could be improved:

Para 1: The words ‘...the truth is that... are not needed. The final phrase ‘...Christianity is on the decline...’ could be contested, especially in many Asian countries where the church is growing exponentially.

Para 3: ‘...in an appropriate manner...’ needs clarifying. What is appropriate?

Para 5: The phrase ‘...for the true seeker of truth...’ would be better reworded as ‘true’ and ‘truth’ come from the same root and used so close together give a feeling of repetition. The ‘earnest seeker of truth’ is a possible alternative.

Debbie’s concluding paragraph is clearly and strongly written, leaving the reader with no doubt as to her personal conviction regarding political correctness. Well done.



Competitions for June 2016

Due by May 10th

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

Font: Times New Roman, 11 pt. **Heading:** Bold, 14 pt. **Line spacing:** single.

Spacing between Paragraphs: 6 pt. **Paragraph Indentation:** None.

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

NB: If you are not sure what level you're on, email the editor at sddp@xtra.co.nz

Level One—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: CREATIVE—Write a tale that is full of suspense or intrigue. Use the following 10 words at least once in your story: *bag, clock, tissue, can, cuckoo, screech, ball, lamp, snap, window*. 500 words.

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



Debbie

Level Two—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: LETTER TO THE EDITOR—Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper, on a current social or moral issue. Present a sensitive Christian view of the subject, although it isn't essential to use Bible references or even use the word 'Christian'. 200-250 words.

Email entry to: Julia Martin at: pemburyestate@slingshot.co.nz



Julia

Level Three—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: PERSONAL TESTIMONY—In a maximum of 500 words write a personal testimony of 'How I overcame ...', or 'What I learned when ...' (*Resource articles: Writing the Personal Experience Article by Janice Gillgren, Page 14 The Christian Writer Oct-Nov 2014 and Writing to Make a Difference by Janice Gillgren, Page 10 The Christian Writer Feb-Mar 2015.*)

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



Ruth

Under 20s—for members 7-19 years old

Requirement: Pick a Fruit of the Holy Spirit to focus on for a week and journal your experience and observations of how it outworked in your life or another's. Use Galatians 5:22-23 as a reference. 300 words.

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



Vicki



NZ CHRISTIAN writers



RUTH HAMMOND believes writing is something that captured her twenty nine years ago. The words came into her mind and she knew she had to get them recorded. Following the death of her husband and, twenty five years later, the death of a son she realised

the power of the comfort contained in the words she had been given. Writing was not something she consciously chose to do. It seems to her that it is something she has been given. Currently, she is feeling nudged by God to produce another book, so she is recording her conversations with God to see what eventuates. Once again she is feeling amazed at some of the insights she is receiving. She confesses to a feeling of bemusement at the whole process.

You can contact Ruth at hello@softwhispersbook.com or if you'd like to purchase her book, please visit the website below:

www.SoftWhispersBook.com