

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2016

THE CHRISTIAN writer



BOOK REVIEW

Small Beginnings

BY DENNIS McLEOD

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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Membership, Subscriptions and Address Changes:

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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 must be emailed as Microsoft Word or Open Office documents and are to be no more than 500 words long, except at the discretion of the editor.

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

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Contents

Page 2	Contact Details – Editor Membership Secretary Book Review Requests
Page 4	President’s Report – Janet Fleming
Page 5	Spring Seminar 2016 Details
Page 6	Subscription Reminder and Notice Board
Page 7	Intimacy With Christ – Dave Palmer
Page 8	Junior Puzzle Page (solution on Page 13)
Page 8	NZCW Writers’ Groups
Page 9	I’m the Smart One – Beth Walker
Page 9	Archivist Required
Page 10	Revitalising Writers’ Retreat, Tauranga – Report by Ruth Linton
Page 11	A Friend Who Sticks Closer – Dianne Spain
Page 12	Get Creative: Pointless Panic – Ruth Linton
Page 13	Welcome to New and Returning Members
Page 13	Professional Writing Services / Promote Your Book in Christian Life
Page 14	Literary Devices: Allegory
Page 15	Writing Briefs: Scribing the Torah Scroll – Fred Swallow
Page 16	How to Write a Children’s Story – WikiHow
Page 17	Reviews: Small Beginnings – D McLeod / Love of the Father – C Soole
Page 17	Additions to the Library
Page 30	Letter to the Editor

CW Competitions

Page 18	Under 20s	Page 23	Level Two Results
Page 19	Level One Results	Page 27	Level Three Results
Page 31	Competitions for October 2016		

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

Greetings to you all.

We have had a busy few weeks with the arrival of another grandson, Charlie Michael, and my sister Jillian's return from Japan.

It's great to hear that George Bryant's booklet has been published, and that he is travelling around New Zealand encouraging other Christians to write well. Keep up the good work George.

Do remember the Spring Seminar to be held at Rossgrove Chapel on 3rd September. Check our magazine advert. We look forward to seeing you there.

Our next retreat is planned for 27th to 30th April 2017. This is to be held at Flaxmill Beach, Coromandel. You can check out this lovely venue at www.flaxmillbay.co.nz. More details next magazine.

I wonder how many of you have looked at our NZ Christian Writers'

website recently. You can find it on www.nzchristianwriters.org. Thank you Justin for the work you put into the website. Do remember if you are a member and have not yet sent in your profile, you are welcome to do so.

I was looking through my late mother's Bible and came across this anonymous poem which she had written in the front of her Bible

*My life shall touch a dozen lives before
this day is done;
Leave countless marks for good or ill,
ere sets the evening sun.
This is the wish I always wish,
the prayer I always pray:
"Lord, may my life help other lives
it touches by the way."*

May this be our prayer as we continue to write for the Master.

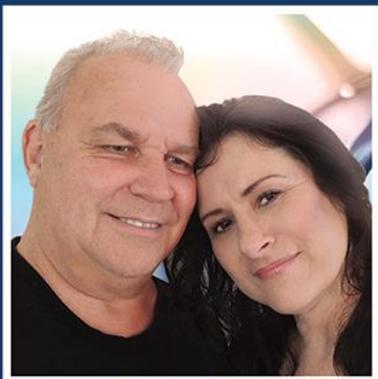
Janet Fleming



Janet and Mike Fleming with their new baby grandson, Charlie, Charlie's brother Isaac, and the boys' cousin, Kiralee.

SEMINAR 2016

SEPTEMBER 3rd



**Janet BALCOMBE
& Ray CURLE**

Janet wrote the rollercoaster memoir, *Take a Walk on the Wild Side*. Janet's topic is: **"From outlaw to Ashton Wylie Literary Award finalist"**. Ray Curle, from pirate radio ad salesman to global media advertising manager. Ray's topic is: **"Tips on Self Publishing"**



Mark HOLLOWAY

Mark Holloway is the No. 1 best-selling Kiwi Christian author of *The Freedom Diaries*. He is Director of the advertising/marketing company Holloway & Hudson. Mark's topic is: **"How to know what to write about"**

DATE & TIME:

Saturday
3rd September
9:30am - 4:00pm

VENUE:

Rossgrove Chapel,
12 Rossgrove Terrace,
Mount Albert, Auckland

COST:

\$20 Per Person
\$35 Per Couple
(Bring a packed lunch)

www.nzchristianwriters.org

Notice Board

Membership Renewal Reminder

Just a friendly reminder that each member's annual subscription renewal is due by **August 1st**.

Annual Subscriptions	A:	<input type="checkbox"/> Single (\$35)	<input type="checkbox"/> Double (\$50)	<input type="checkbox"/> School Student (\$15)
	B:	<input type="checkbox"/> Single (\$45)	<input type="checkbox"/> Double (\$70)	<input type="checkbox"/> School Student (\$20)

A = Digital Magazine, or **B** = Printed Magazine

Payment	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque enclosed (<i>Made payable to NZ Christian Writers</i>)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct Debit : To ASB, NZ Christian Writers. 12-3040-0547346-00

Please include YOUR NAME in the Reference



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Treasurer & Membership Secretary

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William Taylor Memorial Heartland Short Story Competition

Run by the Taumarunui Writers' Group, the nationwide Heartland 1000 competition has been renamed in memory of William Taylor, who gave freely of his time and advice to help establish Taumarunui Writers.

The details of the 2016 competition are as follows:

First prize
\$300

Requirements:
Up to 750 words in any fiction genre
on any theme

Closing date
September 30th

To obtain an application form and terms of entry conditions, go to:

www.taumarunuiwriters.nz/short-story-competition/

James Patterson MasterClass Writing Course

James Patterson, the author of 19 consecutive No 1 New York Times bestsellers, reveals his tricks of the trade for the very first time. In this course, he guides you through every part of the book writing process.

At a cost of only US\$90, the course comprises the following:

- **22 Video Lessons and Exercises**
in which James teaches you how to create characters, write dialogue, and keep readers turning the page.
- **100% Exclusive Content**
James Patterson teaches you everything he has learned. Only available through MasterClass.
- **Lifetime Access to the Entire MasterClass**

To find out more go to:
www.masterclass.com/classes/james-patterson-teaches-writing

Intimacy With Christ

By Dave Palmer

“If you think you have come to the mission field because you are a little better than others, or as the cream of your church, or because of your training, or for the service you can render, or even for the souls you may see saved, you will fail. Remember, the Lord has only one purpose ultimately for each one of us; to make us more like Jesus. He is interested in your relationship with Him. Let Him take you and mould you as He will; all the rest will take its rightful place.”

(Team leader Jack Scholes to Dr Helen Roseveare the night she arrived to start her missionary service in the Belgian Congo in 1953—as quoted in her 1966 autobiography, *Give Me This Mountain*.)

When I was converted it was with the conviction that the Bible from first word to last is the truth. From the start I sensed that if I was to know God I would have to read it.

But I got busy. Everything I did—marriage, shifting, study, church—was done with prayer and the belief that God was in it. But closeness to God slipped as other 'good' things or stresses crowded in.

In 1993, with marriage gone and work life a failure, I was given a prophetic word which said in part: ‘As you open My Word I will come to you.’ Still I struggled. In 2000 a visiting preacher walked past me and yelled “Get into the Word!” In 2002 another one said, “‘My way,’ says God, ‘is in the secret place, and in the quiet place, that I would speak into your heart and into your life.’”

A man in my church had a vision of a vestibule with doors marked 'prayer', 'service', 'compassion', 'worship', and 'faith' among others. There was a door marked 'intimacy with Jesus' that he believed Jesus wants us all to choose.

Often since then I have heard the message about being in the Word—notably when a retired missionary, feeble in body but strong in spirit and voice, asked me if I read my Bible every day. When I said no, she asked, “Then how do you expect to hear from God?”

Maybe I've got it this time. Since reading Dr Roseveare's book this year I have had a renewed vigour in reading the Bible. I'm poring over the Scriptures because they testify about Christ (John 5:39). Reading the Word will lead me to fellowship with him. My attention has especially been drawn to the descriptions of Christ in Paul's letters. He could not have written these things without knowing Christ intimately. My expectation is that, as I open the Word, the same Christ who had fellowship with Paul and led him will do the same with me.

‘But when it pleased God... To reveal His Son in me’ (Galatians 1:15-16). I am looking for that to be my daily testimony too.

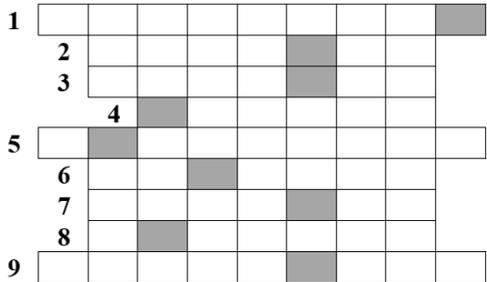


JUNIOR PUZZLE PAGE

Bible Places

Fill in the answers to the questions below. When you have finished take the letters in the shaded squares and rearrange them to find the name of a town Jesus often visited. (Extra clues with the solution on page13.)

1. Main city of Israel in Jesus' day.
2. The walls fell down: later called the 'City of Palms'.
3. Once the capital of the northern kingdom, people who lived here were hated by the Jews.
4. A rocky island where the Apostle John was exiled.
5. One of the four rivers flowing out of the Garden of Eden.
6. The city where God sent Jonah to preach.
7. The home town of Martha, Mary and Lazarus.
8. A famous city where Israel and Judah were sent in exile.
9. Naomi's home town. Name means 'house of bread'.



The town Jesus often visited:

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NZCW Writers' Groups

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I'm the Smart One

By Beth Walker

Why's the boss so grumpy today? I wondered as we set out with several other men. Suddenly I saw an unusual stranger standing in the road, holding a weird-looking stick. The man had something special about him, though I couldn't explain it, but my boss acted as though the striking stranger wasn't there.

You must be blind or something, I worried, and turned off the road to avoid him.

"Idiot—what's wrong with you?" my boss cried, and smacked me.

You're worse than usual, I frowned, as we turned onto a narrow path. *Why's that man in the way again? There's no room... Boss, why are you so stupid that you can't see him? Have you been drinking again?* I stressed silently.

I tried to dodge the charismatic man by squeezing against a wall, but ended up squashing the boss' foot.

"What are you doing?" he yelled, and whacked me. "Why are you so stupid?"

You wouldn't understand—you're the one who's stupid. I'm the smart one, I whimpered to myself as we continued.

Oh no—that stranger's in our way again. Why's he doing this? I can't get past him. What am I supposed to do? I'd run out of ideas and sat down, and this time my master hit me with a stick.

By now I'd had it. So I opened my mouth and told him what I thought of him, then added, "All these years I've worked hard for you, and you beat me like this!"

The awesome stranger was even angrier than we were. How crazy could it get?

Suddenly my master must've seen him, because he bowed then fell to the ground in respect.

He's an Angel! it hit me. Well, that Angel tore strips off my boss. "You are perverse!" he thundered, and no wonder.

Usually the boss has a tough hide, but today he was mincemeat. He even admitted he was wrong. Then the Angel told him to continue his trip with the men, and I went with them grinning all the way.

What a day, I sighed after my well-earned supper of straw, as I hit the hay at last.

Based on the story in Numbers 22:22-35



Archivist Required

After a couple of decades as NZCW's Archivist, Beth Walker is now ready to hand on the baton to someone with the technical skills to convert hard copy records into a digital format that can be uploaded to our website.

If this is something you feel you would like to do, please contact the editor on:

sddp@xtra.co.nz or (09) 235 0199

Thank you.

Revitalising Writers' Retreat, Tauranga

Report by Ruth Linton

So... we are Christians who like to write. Why then do we find it difficult to complete our writing goals? One of the main reasons is lack of dedicated time and space. That is why writer's retreats are so valuable and the Tauranga Christian Writers Retreat on July 9 was no exception.

The group was especially blessed with a quiet and remote venue, Jan and Hans Pendergrast's home at Oropi in the hills behind Tauranga. During the day 12 writers could be found in warm corners of their home, busy with laptops, high-lighter markers and other writing tools.



Jeanette Knudsen at work on her latest project

At times some walked and prayed and enjoyed the beautiful scenery while seeking fresh inspiration.

During the day the group was enriched with a talk on writing and editing skills, learned at an in-depth course one of the members had attended, and a wealth of information was gained.

The day's programme allowed for writing times and regular breaks to talk and eat which all enjoyed immensely—

certainly not the day to lose weight! Because all participants brought food to share there was a wonderful variety of dishes to sample.

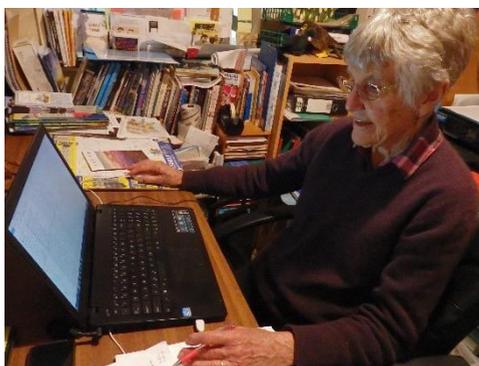
Around the dinner table the group reported back on how well they had achieved the goals they had set themselves at the start of the day.



Not the day to lose weight!

The unanimous feeling was satisfied success and an enthusiasm to pursue our craft more diligently and consistently in the future.

Writers Retreats are a highly-recommended tool for any writing groups.



Ruth Linton at work

Editor's note: If you are interested in joining a NZCW writers' group, details of hosts and venues can be found on page 8 or on our website, www.nzchristianwriters.org

A Friend Who Sticks Closer...

A Devotion by Dianne Spain

One morning recently, I was meditating on the story in Luke 5:17-26 about the paralysed man whose friends brought him to Jesus for healing. They couldn't get him past the crowds so they went up on the roof of the house and dug through the roof and lowered him down in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw the faith of this man's friends and what they did to help him, he said to the paralysed man, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." Maybe Jesus called him 'friend' because he could see how much this man had been a friend to his mates. Jesus called him 'friend' even though he didn't personally know the man. I began to think about how much more we, who love Jesus and know him, are called his friends.

In John 15:14 Jesus says to his disciples, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." He had just finished telling them that his command was this: to love each other as he had loved them. If we love as he loves, then we are his friends.

Then he goes on to say in verse 15: "I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." Just as we love to tell our earthly friends everything, so Jesus tells us, his friends, everything he has learned from his Father.

What else is there about having a friend?

- A friend is someone we can talk to about anything.
- A friend is someone who listens to us and who has earned the right to speak into our life.
- A friend is someone we can laugh with, cry with, rejoice with, do things with.
- A friend is someone who is there for us, who loves us even though they know our faults and failings.

- A friend is someone we can call on any time.
- A friend is someone we can be ourselves with.
- A friend is 'gold' in our life.

We are never alone when we have a friend like this.

Having a friend and being a friend is reciprocal. You cannot have a friendship without the other person being involved in that friendship. Friendship is not one-sided.

It then struck me that, just as I do with my earthly friends, so Jesus also looks forward to spending time with me and sharing his heart with me. He loves the fact that I love him and he loves being with me, sharing everything about my life and also sharing his life with me. He shares everything he is and has done. Everything he has is mine also (Luke 15:31).

Jesus pointed out that there is no greater love than laying down one's life for one's friends. And that is what Jesus did for us, his friends. He ultimately gave his life for us so that we would live into eternity with him and not die. How amazing that Jesus, the Son of God, is our friend and shares everything freely with us.

There is an old hymn that comes to mind when I remember that Jesus is my friend:

*What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.*

Sometimes I forget that I have the greatest friend of all in the person of Jesus Christ, but in his unfailing love and mercy he keeps reminding me he is with me and that he is indeed my friend.

GET CREATIVE

Many thanks to Ruth Linton for the following amusing story on ‘I felt frightened when...’

POINTLESS PANIC

I felt frightened when I opened the email—an assignment due in only five days! My mind went blank. My shoulders tensed. I breathed rapidly—pressure! I grabbed my computer. Quick. Open WORD. You’re out tomorrow. There is only today...

The day of the meeting arrives...

I’d better get my assignment printed. Oops! I forgot the word count. I look at the screen. Only 350 words! Not enough. Does it matter? I hope not.

I clutch two sheets of print and head for the car. Panic, panic! I drop the keys. As I stoop to grab them the pages slip out of my hand, fortunately landing print-side up on the wet grass. Groaning, I scoop them up and spread them on the car seat to dry as I drive.

It seems everyone is going my direction, and so slowly. Consequently, I arrive late. There are already ten cars at Carol’s house.

I sneak in. A wasted effort. “The kettle is empty. We had our drinks ages ago,” Carol grumbles. I decide I’m not thirsty and slide onto the nearest chair.

Jan, the chairperson, glares at me as I place my literary offering on the table. “You haven’t written much. Really! The Level Three judge should do better!”

The others agree. Jeanette and Dot murmur: “No dedication.” “Poor time management too.” I slide further down on the chair.

My pen drops. I bend to grab it. The sudden movement sends a sharp spasm into my knee. Cramp! I jump up to put weight onto it... and realise I have just jumped out of bed.

Whew! It was only a dream.

©Ruth Linton 14.06.16 (Names used by permission.)

The next topic will be **All that glitters is not gold**

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 September 2016

Email submissions for consideration to

sddp@xtra.co.nz

Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Andrew Martin

St Heliers, Auckland

Josh & Caitlin Herbert

Kaeo

Welcome Back to RETURNING MEMBER

Maurice Harvey

Central Auckland

REMEMBER

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

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JUNIOR PUZZLE PAGE

Solution:

1. Jerusalem Matthew 2:3
2. Jericho Joshua 6:20
3. Samaria John 4:4
4. Patmos Revelation 1:9
5. Euphrates Genesis 2:14
6. Nineveh Jonah 1:2
7. Bethany John 11:1
8. Babylon Jeremiah 29:1
9. Bethlehem Ruth 1:1

The town Jesus often visited:

CAPERNAUM

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synopsis of your book in the
editorial pages and advert in
the Resources section

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p 09 281 4896 or email
ray.curle@initiatemedia.net
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Literary Devices

Allegory

Allegory is a figure of speech in which abstract ideas and principles are described in terms of characters, figures and events.

It can be employed in prose and poetry to tell a story with a purpose of teaching an idea and a principle or explaining an idea or a principle. The objective of its use is to preach some kind of a moral lesson.

Difference between Allegory and Symbolism

Although an allegory uses symbols, it is different from symbolism. An allegory is a complete narrative which involves characters, and events that stand for an abstract idea or an event. A symbol, on the other hand, is an object that stands for another object giving it a particular meaning. Unlike allegory, symbolism does not tell a story. For example, Plato in his ‘Allegory of Cave’ tells a story of how some people are ignorant and at the same time, some people ‘see the light’—this stands for an idea and does not tell a story.

Examples of Allegory in Everyday Life

Allegory is an archaic term used specifically in literary works. It is difficult to spot its occurrence in everyday life, although recently, we do find examples of allegory in political debates. The declaration of ex-US president GW Bush was allegorical when he used the term ‘Axis of Evil’ for three countries and later the term ‘allies’ for those countries that would wage war against the ‘Axis’.

Allegory Examples in Literature

Below are some famous examples of Allegory in Literature:

1. *Animal Farm*, written by George Orwell, is an allegory that uses animals on a farm to describe the overthrow of the last of the Russian Tsars, Nicholas II, and the Communist Revolution of Russia before WWI. The actions of the animals on the farm are used to expose the greed and corruption of the revolution. It also describes how powerful people can change the ideology of a society. One of the cardinal rules on the farm for the animals is:

‘All animals are equal but a few are more equal than others.’

The animals on the farm represent different sections of Russian society after the revolution.

For instance, the pigs represent those who came to power following the revolution; ‘Mr. Jones’, the owner of the farm, represents the overthrown Tsar Nicholas II; while ‘Boxer’, the horse, represents the labourer class etc. The use of allegory allows Orwell to make his position clear about the Russian Revolution and expose its evils.

2. *Faerie Queen*, a masterpiece of Edmund Spenser, is a moral and religious allegory.

The good characters stand for the various virtues, while the bad characters represent vices. ‘The Red-Cross Knight’ represents holiness while ‘Lady Una’ represents truth, wisdom and goodness. Her parents symbolise the human race. The ‘Dragon’ which has imprisoned them stands for evil. The mission of holiness is to help the truth, fight evil, and thus regain its rightful place in the hearts of human beings. ‘The Red-Cross

Knight' in this poem also represents the reformed church of England fighting against the 'Dragon' which stands for the Papacy or the Catholic Church.

3. John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is an example of spiritual allegory. The ordinary sinner 'Christian' leaves the City of Destruction and travels towards Celestial City, where God resides, for salvation. He finds 'Faithful', a companion who helps him on his way to the City. On many instances, many characters 'Hypocrisy', 'Apollyon', 'Mr Worldy Wiseman' and 'Obstinate and Pliable' try to discourage or stop him from achieving his aim. Finally, he reaches Celestial City carried by Hopeful's faith.

The moral learnt through this allegory is that the road to Heaven is not easy and it is full of obstacles. A Christian has to be willing to pay any price to achieve salvation. A man is full of sins, but this does not stop him from achieving glory.

Function of Allegory

Writers use allegory to add different layers of meanings to their works. Allegory makes their stories and characters multi-dimensional, so that they stand for something larger in meaning than what they literally stand for.

Allegory allows writers to put forward their moral and political point of views. A careful study of an allegorical piece of writing can give us an insight into its writer's mind as to how they view the world and how they wish the world to be.

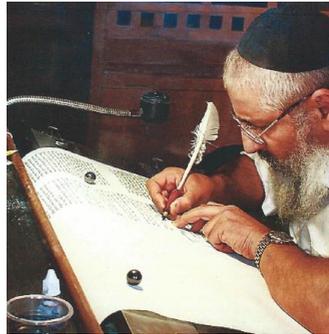
For more information on literary devices, visit

<http://literarydevices.net>

WRITING BRIEFS

Inspiring Christian writing of today and yesteryear—

by Frederick Swallow



Scribing the Torah Scroll today and around 3,500 BC

In a glass climate-controlled booth, cut out of rock at the top of Israel's Masada Plateau overlooking the Dead Sea, Shai Abramovitch, a Jewish scribe, penned in Greek the five books of Moses (the Torah). Each morning he trekked for 45 minutes to the top of Masada to explain his painstaking task to onlookers.

About 3500 years ago God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, which He wrote on tables of stone for Moses to teach.

A Jewish Essenes Community lived on Masada. Excavations there have uncovered a scriptorium as well as several ink wells.

Bibliography:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/135144>

How to Write a Children's Story

Writing a children's story requires a vivid imagination, good speech, enthusiastic creativity and the ability to put yourself in the mind of a child. To write a children's story, follow these helpful guidelines.

Brainstorm story ideas

Consult some of your favorite books for inspiration. Choose a story that fits your interests and talents, such as action, fantasy, or mystery. If you have children, involve them in the brainstorming session. What their minds will come up with may send you into a new direction and level of creativity!

Develop your characters

To have a good story, you need interesting characters. Who is the main character? Is there more than one? Are the characters human, animal or fantasy, or all three?

Ensure your writing is age appropriate

Smaller children enjoy stories with simple plots and plays on words (e.g. a repeated phrase like, 'No, no fat cat. Scat! Scat! Scat!'). Older children will want a more intricate plot and a tone that treats them like they're not children. Since it's harder to put oneself in the mind of a very young child, consider some of these guidelines:

Ages 3 to 5 years: Use sentences with a low level of complexity that explain the motivation behind actions shown on the page. Themes may include: adventures; getting lost and finding your way home; being brave; telling the truth; thinking of others before yourself; telling parents if someone hurts you; how to resolve arguments; disappointment.

Ages 5 to 7 years: Use bigger words but explain them so as not to frustrate new

readers. At this point, books can be long enough to read over two or three nights. Themes that you can use might include overcoming challenges; learning new skills; understanding good reasons to do something and bad reasons to do something.

Make a story outline if necessary

Unless you're writing for a very young age level where it's appropriate not to have a traditional plot, it's wise to carefully plan the story structure in advance. The important thing is to have a general understanding of the beginning, middle and end of the story, and of how the characters will interact and evolve. A good story usually has some conflict or obstacle that the main character has to resolve, after which everyone lives 'happily ever after'.

Make sure your writing has flair

Use humour when possible. For young children, focus on the silly things that will have both the child and the adult reader laughing together.

Whenever possible, show the character's personality through speech and actions, not bland statements like 'Sally is selfish.' Say instead: Sally took the bucket from Tommy. "It's mine now," she said.

Try to differentiate between different characters by having them react differently to the same situation.

Consider whether or not to add pictures

If you're a professional illustrator, adding your own artwork can add to the interest of the story and make it easier to follow. If you're not a professional, publishers will most likely replace your design ideas with images created by another illustrator.

With acknowledgements to WikiHow.

To view the full article, go to

www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Children's-Story

Library Corner

Featured Book Review



Small Beginnings

By Dennis McLeod

Reviewed by Julia Martin

Born in the Waikato in 1943, Dennis could have used his loveless, disadvantaged childhood as an excuse for an unfulfilled life; but instead he overcame his feelings of rejection and went on to become a soldier, mechanic, athlete, teacher, family man, pastor and missionary to several countries, including Israel.

All through the failures and challenges of his early life, Dennis was aware that God's hand was on him and was drawing him to Himself. Once he and his wife surrendered their lives to God, an exciting adventure of faith began.

As Dennis recounts the events of his life's journey, he makes observations and comments on a wide range of subjects such as parenthood and Christian living, drawn from the hindsight of wisdom and experience he's gained along the way.

This well-written autobiography makes compelling reading, as it's a powerful testimony of God's faithfulness in the provision and protection of His children.

In conclusion Dennis writes: 'I pray my story will inspire people to know that no matter where you come from or what your background, God does have a hope and a plan and a future for you.'

Published by Balboa Press 2015

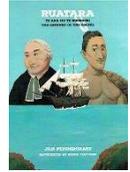
The Christian Writer

Library Additions

Thanks to Jan Pendergrast for donating her two recently published books:

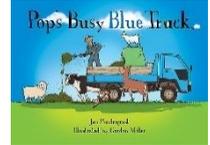
Ruatara

—the true story of how Samuel Marsden and his young Maori friend, Ruatara, worked together to build a better New Zealand-Aotearoa. Well illustrated and suitable for 14-year-olds plus.



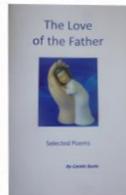
Pop's Busy Blue Truck

Stinky mud, a wild bull, road works, the beach—these are all part of Pop and Zac's busy week with the blue truck.



To order, email jan@roads-end.co.nz

Second Book Review



The Love of the Father

By Carole Soole

Reviewed by Julia Martin

The **Love of the Father** is Carole Soole's self-published collection of poems. Inside the front cover she explains her intention for compiling this selection of 36 poems:

'I pray these poems will draw you closer to God and make you realise how much the Father loves you.' I believe her collection achieves this. Each poem is accompanied by a suitable illustration or photograph, as well as a relevant verse of Scripture.

Carole's poems cover a variety of themes including: God's faithfulness and love, His call to fellowship, worship, praise, prayer, and hope for this life and the one to come.

These poems express Carole's deep love for God, and will encourage readers in their personal walk with him.

Competition Results

Under 20s

Judge:

Vicki Nogaj

Requirement: What are three everyday problems that bother you and what can you do about them? (Opinion piece.) 250 words.

First Place



**Bonnie
Smithies**

of Christchurch
(18 years old)

3 Everyday Problems

There are many everyday problems we face in the first world. In general, it is our attitude towards these problems that is important.

For example, many people complain about not having enough hours in the day. There is too much to do and not enough time to do it in. The thing is, every single person on the face of the earth has exactly the same number of hours and minutes as the next person! It's all about your attitude towards it. If you prioritize your time by doing things like making lists, you'll find that you get more done and most importantly, do the important things.

Another problem we all face is the ever-increasing epidemic of technology use. Cellular phones and social media are a blessing to society- but they can also be a curse. They must be controlled or they will control us. It is helpful to do things

like switching off your device when you spend time with family and friends. You are in charge of your technology, not the other way round!

The third problem I would like to discuss is when your icecream melts before you can eat it. You know the feeling – holding your icecream cone and watching the cold treat slowly melt before your eyes and dribble down the cone onto your hand. As with the previous two problems, it is all about your attitude. It is wise to have a good attitude towards it and calmly manage the problem – in this situation, eat the icecream as fast as you can.

Judge's Comments

Once again Bonnie is the lone writer to take on the challenge of facing some everyday first world problems. Well done!

I have a couple of suggestions with regards to this piece. Firstly, make sure that your point of view stays in the same person; that is, either first, second or third throughout the piece. For example, you start off in the third person, then switch to the second person, then to first person when you say, 'I would like to discuss...'. '

The next thing to watch out for, particularly when discussing a general topic, is not to make sweeping statements or use clichés and over-simple exaggerations like 'many' and 'every single person... earth'. I like how you finished with a light and humorous topic after the two more serious ones. This highlights the triviality of the other topics and reinforces the importance of having the correct attitude, even when only eating ice cream. This would also have been good as an opener. Thank you for enlightening us!

Level One

Judge:

Debbie McDermott

Requirement: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE—Interview someone who is making a real difference in your community. Then, with their permission, write a short newspaper article about them. You may include a photo with your entry if you wish. 350w.

General Comments

I was pleased to receive three good entries to this competition. Each article was well-written and worthy of the placing it received. I particularly enjoyed the fact that each entrant chose a Christian to interview and write about. It is always encouraging—as well as challenging—to hear of believers who are impacting their community.

One mistake Lynda and Pamela made was to not include the full name of the person they were writing about in the article itself. While this may be due to a request for privacy, the reality is that most newspaper editors require full names, because verifiable facts are what give a story credibility with the public.

When writing for a secular newspaper from a Christian perspective, avoid using Christian jargon that unchurched people may misunderstand or react negatively to. For instance, in Selina's entry the phrase, 'Who does she work for? The Lord, and she does it cheerfully...' could be off-putting to a non-Christian editor. However, if this sentence was rewritten to read, 'As a Christian, Debbie believes she has a responsibility to go about her work cheerfully...', it would still highlight Debbie's values as a Christian without making her sound elitist or religious.

Well done to Lynda, Pamela and Selina for giving this competition a go. You all made an excellent effort and I look forward to receiving more entries from you.

First Place



**Lynda
Otter**

of Tamatea, Napier

Old age does not limit service

Talk to a few people in Tamatea, Napier and it won't be long before someone mentions 'Major Sam'.

At 87 years young Sam puts many of us to shame when it comes to working for his community. For starters, Sam helps pick up and deliver goods three days a week for The Salvation Army Family Store. He also collects old wooden pallets, removes the nails and turns them into firewood for those in need. Last winter he delivered twenty five trailer loads of firewood and he is well on the way to exceeding that this winter. Recently he repainted a widower's house and repaired the windows for the cost of the materials.

Sam's most regular mode of transport is his trusty bicycle but even this offers the opportunity to make a difference in the community as he picks up discarded bottles and cans along the way for recycling.

Sam loves playing bowls! But not content just to enjoy the game, he is the secretary treasurer of one club and maintains the section at another club building. He is an active member of Greendale Probus Club and has completed 63 years teaching Bible in Schools.

As a Christian, service is very important to Sam. He runs a ‘home group’ weekly and facilitates an over 50’s ‘Companions Club’ fortnightly. This is in addition to running a church service at a rest home every second Sunday evening for the last thirteen years. He is rostered to drive the van to pick up worshippers on Sunday mornings and in his spare time keeps in touch with all his ex-Sunday School children from ‘up the coast’.

Sam has worked tirelessly for the Napier community for the last 22 years since retiring here after 40 years work as a Salvation Army Officer.

Sam, who lives with his wife Eva, doesn’t generally talk much about his activities. He is a humble man who just wants to give a helping hand to others! When asked if there was anything else he had not mentioned, he grinned and said “I look after Eva”.

Judge’s Comments

Lynda has met all the key requirements of this competition exceptionally well. Her title is strong and her introduction excellent. This is particularly important, as many newspaper readers will not read further than the first sentence or two if the introduction does not grab their attention strongly enough.

Ending the article with a light touch of humour is also excellent. My only recommendation to Lynda would be to include a couple more quotes directly from Sam, to personalise his story a little bit more. Apart from this, she has presented me with an interesting and very well-written newspaper article. The only areas requiring correction are:

- *Para 1—quote marks are not required.*
- *Para 2—write twenty five as 25.*

- *Para 3—sentence 2: delete ‘But’ and rewrite the sentence as ‘Not content just to...’ Also insert a forward slash between secretary/treasurer.*
- *Para 4—sentences 2 and 4: home group, Companions Club and up the coast do not need to be in quote marks.*
- *Para 4—thirteen should be 13.*

Well done Lynda for an excellent entry.

Second Place



**Pamela
Lowrey**
of Havelock North

Every Village needs a Margaret

I grew up hearing Patricia Bartlett’s penetrating voice endeavouring to raise New Zealand’s morality standards in the 1960’s. As a single lady she was considered a butt for jokes, sniggered at and crucified for her stand.

Here in Havelock North is another lady who stands for righteousness. After emigrating from England as a twelve year old, Margaret has used her radio voice and her newspaper pen for the past thirty years. When a fledgling Christian Radio Station was mooted Margaret took on the role of Secretary, “did a bit of announcing.” and was asked, “Why don’t you do a programme?” She started with a Request Show for favourite songs.

Margaret has faithfully produced 880 - weekly one hour programmes on secular Hawkes Bay Kidnappers Community Radio at a personal cost of fifty dollars a slot. Every week this gallant lady ferrets out information on current topics, health,

Biblical Signs of the Times, special Holiday programming, book reviews, conducts interviews interspersed with magnificent Christian songs, and endeavours to encourage, bringing godly comfort to ‘shut-ins’ and those who face illness, death, troubled marriages and loneliness. Margaret’s husband, Bob, works the technical side while she concentrates on the Script. Her aim – “to get God’s word out to the community.”

Do you hear from listeners? “Yes. People ask for tape copies.” Recently she was berated for her stand for Israel by a pro-Palestinian. When Margaret sent out some balanced information to the person she received it back chopped up in pieces in an envelope!

Margaret enjoys finding new things and sharing them. She is a lone voice that will not go away. As a lively newspaper correspondent irate readers challenge her letters, Editors reluctantly print her comments, fail to publish her letters or worse still abridge the poignant paragraphs. Still Margaret will not be discouraged. This fit tennis player ranked seventeenth in the World for her age is planning to compete in the eighty plus World Tournament in Orlando, Florida next year.

In the meantime Margaret will continue to challenge, treading on toes in a nice way!



Margaret Burgess at the Radio Station

Judge’s Comments

Pamela met this competition’s requirements very well. She is also the only entrant who provided a photo, which I have published even though the resolution is so low. Please remember that accompanying photos should always be at least 200-300 kilobytes in size, so that clarity is not lost during the printing process.

The main content of Pamela’s article flows very well for the most part. Her conclusion is also good. However, her introduction is misleading because it is not about the person being interviewed. NB: The whole purpose of an introduction is to introduce the prime subject (in this case, Margaret) or the topic.

The comment on Margaret’s achievements in tennis is disconcerting because it is a such a sudden change of topic. It would be better to mention her sport directly after the first sentence in para 5, as follows:

‘Margaret enjoys finding new things and sharing them. She is also a fit tennis player...’

Then write ‘She is a lone voice that will not go away... poignant paragraphs’ as a new paragraph, and make the next two sentences into one final paragraph.

Apart from unnecessary spaces before and after punctuation marks, Pamela’s grammar and punctuation are good overall. The only corrections needed are:

- *Numbers above ten should be written as numerals, not words: i.e. 12, 30, 50, 80 and 17th.*
- *Paras 3 & 4—replace the short hyphens with a long dash.*
- *Para 3—sentences 2 & 3: Put ‘biblical signs of the times’, ‘holiday’ and ‘script’ in lower case.*
- *Para 4—sentence 3: replace the comma after ‘her letters’ with a full stop.*

Well done, Pamela, for presenting me with a commendable entry. Keep up the good work.

Third Place



**Selina
Chan**

of Henderson, Auckland

Order in the Court

Debbie Lear is leaving for the Gold Coast. Her workmates will miss her as she was a constant presence in the Waitakere District Court for over ten years. While her job was not high level, neither police nor judge, she played a vital role in keeping the court running smoothly, filing the paperwork, clearing the desks, making sure the coffee and tea was hot and freshly brewed.

Who is she working for? The Lord, and she does it cheerfully each day as she faces juvenile delinquents, careless drivers, quarrelling families, thieves and drug dealers. “The naughty people” as she puts it. Each day she prays for His wisdom and presence as she enters the courtroom, that justice will be served and moreover mercy for the victims and their families. She hears stories that could break your heart into a million pieces, of broken homes, neglect, abuse, disrespect and rebellion. Her order in the court is not with words but a meek and quiet spirit that is efficient and tidy with everything in its rightful place.

“Often we don’t know how God can work on a person’s heart but our place is not to judge. That’s the judges role - not ours.” She shows me her Bible – I notice it is well used and has the words CRIMINAL written on the side.

“What’s that?” “Oh that’s my criminal Bible. I was given it as a present. They use this to swear on when they taking oaths to tell nothing but the truth” “Do people know you are a Christian?” “Yes I am called on to bless the food for lunch and other functions. Sometimes they are so busy that they forget to have lunch..or something happens like someone tries to escape from the dock. Thankfully we have security. “

She’s dedicated and the staff clearly love her. She says the best thing about her job is meeting different judges and the friendships she forms with her work colleagues. They will all miss her when she goes to her new life in Australia.

Judge’s Comments

Although the introduction and conclusion to Selina’s article are rather ordinary, the main content of her entry flows well and she has used dialogue effectively. Direct quotes make an article engaging for the reader—particularly if the person being interviewed is well-known to the local community.

While most of the content in Selina’s article is suitable for any newspaper, the beginning of paragraph 2 could be off-putting to a non-Christian editor and thus limit her chances of getting it published. Suggestions on how to change the phrasing of this paragraph can be viewed in my general comments.

Selina’s grammar and punctuation are fairly good overall. Unfortunately, some unnecessary mistakes have been incurred through inserting spaces in the wrong place or not inserting them at all. e.g. the closing speech marks at the end of paragraph 3 are facing the wrong way because of the ‘rogue’ space after the full stop. Minor though these mistakes are, they do result in

a loss of marks, so do ensure you check your entry properly before submitting it.

Other areas for correction are:

- Para 1—sentence 4: delete the first two commas and put (neither police nor judge) in brackets as shown.
- Para 2—sentence 6: delete the apostrophe in ‘...its rightful place’. It’s means it is, whereas its is possessive.
- Para 3—sentence 2: the word ‘judges’ should have an apostrophe as follows: judge’s (singular) or judges’ (plural).
- Para 3—sentence 3: Replace the long dash with a full stop.
- Para 3—sentence 7: ‘taking’ should be ‘take’.
- Para 3—sentence 10: delete ‘that’. There should be 3 ellipsis points after ‘lunch...’

Well done for a very good effort, Selina. I hope to receive more entries from you.

Level Two

Judge:

Janice Gillgren

Requirement: Write a story for children, telling about an event in your childhood which was and still is meaningful to you, and what you learned from it. (Avoid moralising.) This should be aimed at children between ages 5-8, so make sure the language and style is appropriate. 250-300 words.

General Comments

Children’s stories are usually harder work than expected, especially for those who are fairly new to writing.

Keith Willis’ story is poignant, sensitively written, and delightfully concluded. Its primary shortfall is being fully written in narrative, with words that are at a higher level than readers that age could usually manage, so they would probably need to have the story read to them. However, I am sure most children would enjoy hearing it.

I awarded Shirley 2nd place for a story that doesn’t have a strong storyline, but is well written for children.

Like Shirley, John made good use of dialogue. His story is interesting but has quite a few errors.

All word counts were close to maximum, suggesting each writer edited carefully to make full use of the allowed word count, which is terrific. Well done all.

First Place



Keith Willis

of Kaukapakapa

A Beautiful Bomb

I slept in the broom cupboard under the stairs with my sister in England during World War 11. My parents thought the broom cupboard was the safest place for their precious children during an air raid. German bombers flew over us nearly every night but seldom dropped their bombs on our town. They were usually heading for the big cities further north.

My father was an air raid warden during the night. His job was to walk around looking for any houses with poor black-out curtains allowing light to escape and also to assist anyone hurt in an air raid.

One night a German bomber dropped a cluster of incendiary bombs on our street. These were small bombs that burst into flames when they hit something hard. They were designed to crash through the roof of a house and then set the house on fire. I remember Dad was very relieved the next morning because no houses had been destroyed. But on looking around

the back garden he found an incendiary bomb hanging in one of our apple trees! Its fins had been caught in the branches so that it hadn't gone off.

Ignoring my mother's warnings, Dad unscrewed the end of the bomb and shook out the powder that was inside. He then made little fireworks with the powder. That evening I watched in amazement as Dad lit those simple fireworks. It was a dazzling display of brilliant sparkling lights. To someone who had never seen a sparkler or any other firework it was pure magic.

I still marvel at how something as ugly and evil as a bomb could be turned into such a delightful memory for a small child. Maybe beauty can be found everywhere and anywhere if we look hard enough.

Judge's Comments

Congratulations on first place, Keith. Your story drew me in with an account of a potentially very frightening event made into something almost magical in its effect. The title is appropriate. Although the 1st paragraph isn't very strong, the conclusion is delightful.

I'm sure it would be of great interest to children, especially if read aloud to them, because you use some words that would be difficult for children this age to read for themselves. The requirements didn't state that children should be able to read the story, so I won't knock you back for that.

The story could have been improved by attention to style and format. By 'style', I mean a style of writing that would better appeal to young readers, with dialogue telling the story as much as possible. You shared your experience with your sister, so you could have talked back and forth about what was happening.

For example: "Has the bomber flown past yet?" I whispered to my sister (who you haven't named), as we huddled in the broom cupboard, shivering with fear.

"Yes, I think so," she said, wriggling to get more comfortable in the narrow space. The broom cupboard was our bedroom during the war, because our parents thought it was the safest place...

"You're safe," Dad assured us. 'But make sure you keep those blinds shut firmly!'" Dad was an air raid warden...'

Lead into a story with action and dialogue if you can, rather than narrative.

The three longer paragraphs could be cut in half. Start new paragraphs after 'air raid' (1st para), 'set the house of fire' (2nd para), and 'fireworks with the powder' (4th para).

Second Place



**Shirley
Jamieson**
of Featherston

A Tree in our Bedroom

"Tell me a story Grandma," Maddy said, sitting down by the fire. "One about when you were a little girl in Wanganui."

Grandma smiled. "Would you like to hear why I sneaked into our neighbour's garden?"

"Oh yes!" Maddy couldn't imagine Grandma being sneaky. She laughed. "What happened?"

"It was summer, not raining and cold like now. My sister Margaret had a narrow garden just outside our bedroom window, and she planted a plum stone in it."

"Did it grow?" Maddy asked.

"Yes, it began to grow into a little tree."

"Wow! You could reach out your bedroom window and get plums whenever you liked."

Grandma nodded. "That's what Margaret and I hoped too. We couldn't wait until it was big and had lots of fruit. But it didn't happen."

"Why?"

"Our Dad told Margaret to pull it out. He said it would grow into the house, we'd have branches all over our bedroom."

"That would be fun."

"Maybe, but rain and wind would come in with no glass in the window. Dad was right. The tree had to go."

"That's sad."

"It was. So Margaret had an idea. She dug out the tiny tree, took it and a trowel, and together we climbed over the back fence."

"You planted it in your neighbour's garden and she didn't know?"

"Exactly." Grandma said. "Then we raced back over the fence. I knew it was wrong. We should've asked if it was okay. And no one watered the little tree."

"It died?"

"Yes. But years later, in Waihi when your Uncle Tony was a boy he planted an acorn. There wasn't room in our garden for the oak tree, so he asked our neighbour if she wanted it. She did."

"Is it still there, Grandma?"

"Absolutely. You'll see a lovely strong tree."

Judge's Comments

Well done, Shirley, for 2nd place.

'Tell me a story' is a much-loved way for children to urge an adult to do just that, and you've used this to good effect in your introduction.

You have used dialogue well, at a suitable reading level mostly, and your title is appropriate. The storyline is simple, though it may not have wide interest because it seems like it was mostly aimed for family. Although it's a good idea to use what happens in our families as story-starters, move away from the original idea far enough so that your story doesn't seem just like it was simply written to entertain them.

I suggest the following improvements to a story that otherwise flows well:

In the 10th para, the comma after 'house' would be better replaced with an 'and'.

In the 3rd to last para: 'But' isn't a good way to start a sentence; and one comma is missing, while another seems unnecessary. Instead, I suggest: "Yes, but years later in Waihi, when your Uncle Tony was a boy, he planted an acorn."

Finally, your concluding para could be improved; e.g. "It sure is! Now that oak tree is lovely and strong."

Third Place



**John
Lindsay**
of Christchurch

A Tiny Spark Starts a Big Fire

"Fire! Come quickly, there's a fire," we yelled as we burst into the room where Mum was talking to our neighbours Mrs Gray and Mrs Price

As they rushed outside we pointed across the road, “See, Mum, a fire in the hedge between the houses.”

“It’s going to burn my house,” cried Mrs Gray.

“Take the beds out of that room by the hedge. I’ll hit the fire alarm,” urged Mum as she ran to the red box on the pole at end of the street. She broke the glass cover with her shoe and pressed the button.

Moments later we heard the siren on the hill calling the volunteer fire crew.

The paint on Mrs Gray’s house was melting when the fire engine arrived, but the flames were soon put out.

“Looks like the wind blew hot ashes into the hedge,” reported the fire chief.

“I’m sorry our carelessness nearly set your house on fire,” sobbed Mrs Price as she hugged Mrs Gray.

“Let’s put the mattresses back inside and then come to me for a cup of tea,” suggested Mum.

They quickly organised the bedroom and returned to our kitchen.

“Thank you,” said Mrs Gray. “I really needed that cup of tea. Now, I’d better go home.”

“I’ll come with you, to make sure everything’s all right,” offered Mum.

“Another fire!” cried Mrs Gray as she set off. “There’s smoke coming out of my house.”

“Stay here,” ordered Mum, “it’s not safe over there. I’ll hit the alarm again.”

And so the firemen returned, and began dragging the smoking mattresses from the bedroom.

“Must have been sparks from the first fire,” said the firemen. “You’re lucky there’s only smoke damage.”

Two alarms in one day.

And we never forgot: a tiny spark can start a big fire.

Judge’s Comments

Well done, John. I’ve awarded you 3rd place for your entry. You’ve made very good use of dialogue, the language level is mostly suitable, and your title is appropriate.

Your story needed more attention to detail. e.g. in paragraph 1, was the room where the women were talking in your house? Who was told to remove the beds? The two women other than your Mum, or the children? Did you mean the mattresses were removed, as indicated further in the story, or the whole beds? Was Mrs Price apologetic because the ashes had been from her place? Had she left a container of hot ashes from her fireplace somewhere the wind could blow them? It seems unlikely she would be blaming herself so severely if they were from her chimney.

The sentence “Let’s put the mattresses back...” would be better finished: “...then we’ll come back here...” because ‘let’s’ means ‘let us’ – i.e. it’s plural.

‘Volunteer fire crew’ would be better as simply ‘firemen’, for children’s stories.

Some punctuation could be improved, and sentences simplified. Although an overuse of exclamation marks should be avoided, you could have used some more to good effect, considering the event. e.g. ‘We all rushed outside, and I pointed across... “Look Mum! There’s a fire...”’ Another exclamation mark could be used after ‘house’.

Add a comma after ‘urged Mum’ (4th para),

and take the comma out of the later sentence: 'Now, I'd better go home. (11th para)'

The attribution 'sobbed Mrs Price' (8th para) is best changed, as it's hard to sob and talk at the same time. I suggest: 'Mrs Price hugged Mrs Gray. "I'm sorry..." Mrs Price said between sobs.'

Attributions can be tricky, and a simple 'said' is still often the best option.

Although it is all right to start occasional sentences with a transition such as 'and', it is better not to start paragraphs with them.

Please don't press 'enter' (on your keyboard) between paragraphs to create an extra line, as these just have to be deleted again before publishing.

Finally, the concluding sentence is quite short, so the colon seems to chop it even shorter. I suggest inserting the word 'that' there instead.

Level Three

Judge:

Ruth Linton

Requirement: Write a poem about the change of seasons in NZ. Encourage the reader to use their imagination by using 'images' based on our five senses. Maximum of five stanzas and 20 lines. Rhythm and a rhyming pattern required.

General Comments

Most of us enjoy reading poetry but writing it seems daunting, especially when regular rhyme and rhythm is required. However, there is a large amount of excellent blank verse written so you need not always be limited by the constraints of rhyme and rhythm.

Poetry gives the opportunity to explore our emotions and our senses. We can create meaningful images using language devices such as similes and metaphors, alliteration and onomatopoeia. Poets do not have to be completely explicit but can invite the reader

to interpret the ideas they convey according to the reader's own knowledge and experience.

There are two main facets of regular rhythm: there should be the same number of syllables (not complete words) in each matching line and the pattern of accented syllables should be the same. In most cases it is wise to ensure the final rhyming word or syllable in each line is also accented. The most common rhythm pattern is iambic where the rhythm rollicks along with a da **DUM**, da **DUM** pattern where **DUM** represents the accented syllable, but there are other patterns also. A good tip is to clap the rhythm (the accented syllables) as you read your poem aloud.

As for rhyme, the sound not the spelling is what counts. Normally the rhyming words also have the same number of syllables but this is not essential.

I awarded two first equals as two entries had very good rhyme and rhythm as well as apt images of NZ seasons. Two other entries earned third equal; their ideas and images were appropriate, their rhymes excellent but the rhythm was not consistent.

First Place



Janet Fleming
of Kao

God You're Amazing!

Pitter-patter, raindrops,
dancing on the ground,
Filling up the gutters,
hear that winter sound.
Raging, rushing rivers,
tumbling to the sea,
God has brought refreshment
and so generously.

Fragile, fluffy chickens
feel so good to touch,
Mother hen is proudly
showing me her clutch.
Staggering, skipping newborns -
tiny limbs set free,
God my great Creator
made each splendidly.

Fragrant, fluffy flowers
dancing in the breeze,
Scattering your perfume
from those plants and trees:
Streaming, scorching sunshine
bringing warmth to me;
Ripening fruits of summer -
tasted plenteously.

Dancing dropping colours
bouncing all day long,
Summer now is over,
come and join their song:
Patterns on the pathway,
there for all to see,
God the greatest artist
paints so beautifully.

Summer sunsets shining
from the western sky;
Windy winters following
autumn by and by:
Sparkling, sprouting springtime,
shouts new life to me;
God you made each season
just so awesomely!

Judge's Comments

This is a delightful poem full of fresh outside images and using all the five senses though smell and taste images were not so common. The rhyming pattern is in couplets (two lines, then the next two lines in each verse) but with the fourth line of each stanza ending with a longer word concluding with -ly. This final word has

the effect of linking the stanzas together—a clever idea.

The rhythm is consistent throughout but, when read aloud there is a faint hint of a pause in the middle of each line. In the second verse, 'staggering' needs to be read as 'stagg'ring' to keep the rhythm intact. 'Generously' in stanza one and 'plenteously' in stanza three also need to be condensed slightly when reading the poem. In the final stanza 'follows' would give an easier flow rather than 'following'. On a more-technical note there are 5½ rhythm 'feet' in each line. Well done.

Overall I enjoyed this poem and God's greatness, as suggested by the title, is woven throughout. Top marks, Janet.

First Place Equal



**Julia
Martin**
of Cambridge

Seasons of Aotearoa

Pohutukawas grace the coast
High rollers crash and foam the sand
Sun lovers laze while children squeal
It's summertime in kiwi land

The days shrink back, the air is cool
Large flocks of birds fly far away
Green leaves turn scarlet,
gold and brown
And blooms of summer fast decay

As sleet and raindrops pelt the glass
The blazing log fire sears the grill
A steaming pot of pumpkin soup
Is shared and beats the winter chill

The days stretch out and earth awakes
Green shoots and swollen buds appear
The newborn creatures greet the day
And celebrate that spring is here.

As summer, autumn, winter, spring
Survive as promised by the Lord
Our nation then should recognize
And worship Him with one accord

Judge's Comments

This is a carefully crafted poem; the images chosen and the regular rhyme and rhythm patterns display care and ability with writing. A suitable title has been given. Great work Julia.

There are four iambic feet (of rhythm) in each line. The rhyming pattern does not work in couplets but instead only the second and fourth lines rhyme. In some ways I feel this is a more 'mature' pattern.

The words 'Kiwi Land' in the first stanza should be capitalised as they stand in place of New Zealand.

Our dependence on God and gratitude for the seasons is encapsulated well in the final stanza.

Well done.

Third Place Equal



**Judith
Powell**
of Oxford

Canterbury Seasons

The seasons circle, come and go,
From sun and heat, to sleet and snow.
We don't have weather here, they say,
The Plains have samples, every day.

In winter we sit by the fire,
That keeps our home cosy and dry.
We warm ourselves with soup and stew,
With fruit that tastes of summer too.

In spring and fall nor'wests will blow,
White blossoms from the plums will go.
Torn leaves from trees, in autumn cold,
Cover the soil with summer gold.

The sticky buds on chestnut trees,
Are God's promise that leaves we'll see,
The spring is coming very soon,
With golden daff's and kowhai bloom.

From over seas the scented rose,
Beside the cabbage tree will grow.
The thrush and bellbird mingle songs,
A mix, like seasons, all belong.

Judge's Comments

As the title suggests, Judith has chosen to write about her local area which she knows well. This is always a good idea. The poem covers all the seasons and there are images relating to all our five senses.

I was uncertain what Judith was referring to in the last two lines of the first stanza. Does the weather change often in Canterbury?

The rhyming pattern, written in couplets, is regular. The only suggestion would be to omit the 's' on 'songs' in the final stanza.

Generally there are four iambic feet (rhythm) in each line but there are problems when the wrong syllable of a word must be accented to maintain it. An example is 'cover at the start of the fourth line of the third stanza. The first syllable of 'COVER' is emphasised in normal speech but to keep the rhythm we'd need to read it as 'coVER'. The same is true of 'cosy' in the second stanza. Line two of the third stanza starts with 'Are God's promises...' It is difficult to read this within the rhythm pattern as both God's and the first syllable of promise need emphasis and there is no soft syllable between.

There are a few words that could be changed to an advantage: 'circle' in the very first line would be better as 'cycle'; 'nor'wests will blow' could be 'nor'westers blow...' and

'White blossoms from the plums will go' would be better as 'White blossoms into plums will go'. Overseas (stanza five) is one word.

Apart from these comments this is a good poem and a great effort by Judith.

Third Place Equal



**Janet
Pointon**
of Auckland

A Year of Seasons

Spring is young, full of joy and life
Blossom and fragrance smells are rife
Birds build nests wherever they can
Life is beginning—tis God's plan

Summer with heat and fun is here
Long hot days with sky so clear
Weeks of warmth to work and play
Life is maturing every day

Trees, tall and bare now line our street
Colourful leaves crunch under feet
Autumn is here but not to stay
For death and winter come our way

Our world is still, grey and cold
Birds cuddle together with life on hold
Wind whips through the icy street
The cycle of life is now complete.

Judge's Comments

There are lots of lovely images in this poem. My favourite is birds cuddling together as in the last stanza. The first line—Spring is young, full of joy and life—stirs my spirit.

The rhyming pattern is in couplets and is consistent throughout. Good work!

The problem is with the rhythm. Although many lines have four 'feet' (all of the second stanza and most of the third) many do not.

Here are some suggestions:

Stanza 1:

Line 1—insert 'and' between young and full.

Line 4 - rewrite as 'Life's beginning as in God's plan'.

Stanza 2:

Line 1—omit 'with'.

Line 4—Change 'Life is...' to 'Life's ...

Stanza 3:

Reword Line 1 as 'Tall bare trees now line our street.

Line 2—change 'colourful' to 'coloured' which removes an extra syllable.

Line 3—Change 'Autumn is...' to 'Autumn's....

Stanza 4:

Line 1—Insert 'and' between 'still, grey...'

Line 2 - Try 'Birds cuddle close...'

Line 3 - Rewrite as 'Wild wind whips through icy streets'. Lovely alliteration!

Line 4 - Rewrite as 'Season's cycle's now complete'.

Letter to the Editor

Good morning Debbie. Just a note to say brilliant work on the latest magazine of The Christian Writer for June-July 2016.

The content and layouts look great.

Congrats on another gorgeous magazine for our members. I am delighted and thrilled with all the wonderful work you do.

Blessings and Best Regards

Justin St. Vincent

Competitions for October 2016

Due by September 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: WRITING FOR CHILDREN—Write a new and modern parable or allegory that 12-16 year olds can relate to. Ensure you use appropriate language and imagery that will clearly convey the Christian message you want to get across to this age group. 450 words.

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



Debbie

Level Two—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: BLOG ARTICLE—Write a blog article on any subject that interests you. Name a website that you could imagine your blog being published on, and write in an appropriate style for that website. 350-400 words.

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



Janice

Level Three—for members 20 years old and over

Requirement: Write a TRAVELOGUE about a place you have been or know well from family or friend's reports. The article must appeal to, and meet the needs of the 65+ age group which is a strongly-emerging market. Supply two clear photos which will be printed as magazine space allows. Max 500 words. (*Resource articles are listed on the 2016 Reference Sheet. If you have not received one, contact the editor on sddp@xtra.co.nz.)*

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



Ruth

Under 20s—for members 7-19 years old

Requirement: 'Message in a Bottle'. Write your message in an informal letter format addressed to a stranger or someone you know. Be creative. You could even put it in a bottle and send it as a gift. 300 words.

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



Vicki



NZ CHRISTIAN
writers



DENNIS MCLEOD started life not wanted and being told he would never amount to anything. He served in the Army and later served the community in many roles: President of the Hamilton Harrier Club and also

Club Captain, President of the local school committee, and member of his church's Social Services committee. He has also served as a Church Synod representative.

In 1992 the Lord called him and his wife Penny to serve in Israel and since his return he has served as a missionary in several other countries. Along with his wife, he pastored a church in their hometown of Hamilton. For over 35 years he was also a top tutor at WINTEC, (Waikato Institute of Technology)

For more information on the book, his writings and teaching letters please visit the website below:

www.smallbeginnings.org.nz